Gender and economy in medieval Milan: The autonomy of lay and religious women in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Giuseppe Celico

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School of Humanities

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

In the last hundred years, scholarship has become increasingly aware of the importance of women in medieval history and has covered their lives from a variety of angles. Overall, it has emerged that women often lived in subordination to men and had limited economic and legal agency. However, studies from various parts of Western Europe have identified a large variation in the experience of women across different regions and different points in the medieval period. Depending on the legal system of an area, its economic welfare, and its cultural and religious situation, women could have important economic rights, a central place in family politics, and significant religious freedoms, or they could find themselves completely controlled by men, sidelined in their families, and forced to cloister against their will.

Despite the evidence for variation over time and space, many regions and time periods have not received enough attention. In the Italian peninsula, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan is the most notable gap. By the end of the thirteenth century, this city had become an economic powerhouse, a central point in international politics, and had experienced significant legal and governmental changes. However, the role of women in the city or how this changed in this turbulent period has not been discussed. This creates a blind spot in our understanding of medieval women, as we largely ignore how they lived in a fundamental city in Southern Europe.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the economic agency lay and religious women had. To do so, this study relies on almost 6,000 parchments from the Archivio di Stato di Milano, which detail the economic transactions and disputes of most Milanese religious institutions of the period. Through this large amount of economic data, this study quantifies how frequently lay women participated in the economy and with what legal and cultural limitations. It focuses on the way abbesses managed the economy of their nunneries compared to the management styles of abbots and other male leaders. It continues with a quantification of the wealth and size of nunneries and male religious institutions, finally finishing with a discussion on the participation of nuns in the economy.

This research shows that Milanese women, whether lay or religious, could participate less freely in the economy than men and generally had less wealth. However, abbesses had a great deal of control over the economies of their monasteries, which allowed them to play a large role in the Milanese economy. Among laywomen, widows could act with the greatest independence, but some exceptional examples exist of wives or unmarried women also acting with great freedom. This research therefore confirms that women had limited independence, especially when participating in the economy, but significant exceptions could exist. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the benefit of quantitatively analysing the surviving parchments of ecclesiastical institution to better understand the religious and lay life of a city in the twelfth and thirteenth century.

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Introduction

Scholars have focused more and more on the history of women, so much so that Giovanna Balbi, introducing the volume *Dare Credito Alle Donne* (Giving Credit to Women) in 2012, suggested that "the topic may appear so unoriginal and repetitive that it may even generate a sense of annoyance".[1] In the last hundred years, medieval scholarship has covered women from a variety of angles. Most frequently, powerful and exceptional women have received scholarly attention. This has produced multiple biographies of queens, powerful landowners, abbesses, and saints. However, scholars have also covered less important women by reflecting on their roles in chronicles and literature and by seeking their presence in court, tax, and notarial records. Across these studies, two themes – female subordination to men and limited participation in their surroundings – have emerged.

Laywomen generally acted as part of their family, following the lead of their fathers, husbands, or sons.[2] Men took over certain trades originally practiced by women as these became more lucrative and the countryside became more commercialised.[3] Women had less legal agency than men. In Roman law, women had a guardian for life, and in Lombard law, this male protector, called the *mundualdus*, had complete legal control over the woman.[4] In Italian communes, women did not have the status of citizens by themselves and could not directly participate in the political life of the city.[5]

When studying religious women, this theme continues. Only men could reach the highest levels of the Church's hierarchy; at most, a woman could become an abbess, ruling over other religious sisters. Nonetheless, abbesses and nuns had to obey their bishops and had limited control over the religious rule they followed.[6] Priests generally wrote these rules, and bishops or popes approved them. Sometimes, an abbess would request a rule more tailored to the needs of her nunnery. Most famously, Eloise asked Abelard to write a rule for her new order, the Oratory of the Paraclete, to

[1] "L'argomento proposto può apparire poco originale e ripetitivo al punto da generare anche un senso di fastidio" Giovanna Petti Balbi, "Forme di credito femminile: osservazioni introduttive," in *Dare credito alle donne. Presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi and Paola Guglielmotti (Asti: 2012), p.9

[2] Kathryn Reyerson, "Urban Economies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford Academic, 2013), pp. 296-298. This work provides a general overview of women's role in the urban environment and provides further historiographical discussion.

[3] Jane Whittle, "Rural Economies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford Academic 2013), p. 319

[4] Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire : A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), p.35. and Janet L Nelson and Alice Rio, "Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford Academic, 2013), p.111

[5] Maria Teresa Guerra Medici, *L'aria di città: donne e diritti nella città medievale* (Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1996), pp.16-18

[6] Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire : A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood*, p.20

better adapt the Benedictine rule to her and her nuns' lifestyle.[7] However, often bishops would impose a new rule on a group of nuns as a response to real, or more often perceived, faults in morality without the abbess' request.[8] These impositions could upend the life of a monastery and sometimes the lives of many female religious communities in Europe.[9]

Religious women had also to contend with growing restrictions on their movement due to increasingly strict enclosure rules. This had the potential to stop abbesses and nuns from leaving their monastery, which could limit their interactions with the communities around them and from personally managing their estates.[10] While most monastic rules for both men and women envisioned some form of enclosure for their members, rules of enclosure for men were less ubiquitous and less stringent, especially after the thirteenth century. Furthermore, religious women had to rely on male clergy for access to the sacraments, a basic need for their religious life, their vocation, and their ultimate salvation. This created conflicts with parishes and male religious orders that did not want to or could not provide spiritual services.[11] Beyond inequality in leadership, scholars have found that nunneries generally had less wealth than male institutions. For example, Penelope Johnson found that Northern French female monasteries had lower incomes and more members than male monasteries.[12]

Overall, medieval women fared less well than medieval men; however their experiences varied significantly across time and space. Different time periods had different political and religious issues to contend with, which changed the lives of men and women alike. The gradual changes in legal traditions from the Roman empire to a mixture of Germanic laws, and finally to various local common laws across European cities and states, impacted the relationships between women and their families, the state, property rights, and various other issues. The change in statehood, moving from family-based monarchical governments, where a woman had a strong direct influence on a

[7] Julie Ann Smith, "Debitum Obedientie: Heloise and Abelard on Governance at the Paraclete," *Parergon* 25, no. 1 (2008)

[8] Steven Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries: The Ambiguous Identity of Female Monasticism, 800–1050* (Cornell University Press, 2018), here Vanderputten discussed the Carolingian reforms, and the push by Louis II to cloister women. James Brundage and Elizabeth Makowksi, "Enclosure of nuns: the decretal Periculoso and its commentators," *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994) Brundage and Makowksi discussed the novel impact of the Decretal of Boniface VIII

[9] Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries: The Ambiguous Identity of Female Monasticism, 800–1050* chapter 2 discussed the movement of nuns following laws on cloistering.

[10] Elizabeth M Makowski, *English Nuns and the Law in the Middle Ages: Cloistered Nuns and their Lawyers, 1293-1540* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011), chapter 1 discussed the potential impact of the Boniface decree, but also how nuns and lawyers undermined the decree.

[11] The issue of *Cura Mulierum* has received ample historiographical attention. Penelope Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) discussed the issue in chapter 6 for Northern France. Giulia Barone, "Scelta della Chiesa e delle Chiese: il Papato e l'episcopato di fronte alla vita religiosa femminile nel Due e Trecento," in *Vita religiosa al femminile (secoli XIII- XIV): ventiseiesimo Convegno internazionale di studi: Pistoia, 19-21 maggio 2017.* (Pistoia 2019). Barone instead provided a specific example of the foundation of San Sisto and papal attempts to find an order to take care of the institution.

[12] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France*, pp. 207-227

government, to monarchies supported by complex bureaucracies or republics ruled by communal assemblies, changed the relationship between women and power.[13] Changes in canon law, especially with the rise of the cloister, changed what religious women could do. Across the medieval period, multiple other changes in law, government, economy, and spirituality impacted women's role in society.

Similarly, different regions and cities followed different legal, religious, and civic customs which impacted women's experiences. Lombard law influenced the legal customs of most Italian cities, but not in all cities, and not uniformly. For example, Genoa had followed Frankish law, which gave women more avenues to inherit wealth than Lombard law, amongst other differences.[14] Furthermore, cities like Milan transitioned from Lombard law to Roman law earlier than cities like Pavia, where Lombard law dominated even by the end of the thirteenth century, or the Apulian region, where Lombard law dominated well into the fourteenth century[15]. Given the significantly different role that women had in Lombard, Roman, or even Frankish law, I expect that the experience of women varied across these areas. Communes and signorial city states became prominent across Italy from the twelfth century, but the strength of communal power and the relationship to other entities like the Kingdom of Sicily, varied drastically across the peninsula. The differing structures of power could give women varying levels of access to said power, and create vastly different experiences across the region.

Given the variance in women's experiences, detailed studies of specific localities in specific periods provide us with essential building blocks to understand the situation of medieval women in general. Without these studies, we can easily fall prey to inaccurate generalisations about entire regions. Many areas of the world have not received enough scholarly attention. In the Italian landscape, Milan during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represents the most notable gap, given the importance of the city. Since late antiquity, Milan has occupied a place of central importance in Europe. The capital of the Roman empire relocated to Milan for almost the entirety of the fourth century, and after a period of obscurity under Lombard rule, Milan began to regain dominance of Northern Italy from the period of Charles the Great, becoming a hegemonic power in Lombardy by

[13] Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100," *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1973) pp.136-137

[14] Nelson and Rio, "Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe," pp.111-112

[15] Laura Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," in *Dare credito alle donne. Presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi and Paola Guglielmotti (Asti: 2012), p. 54, Patrizia Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV)," in *Dare credito alle donne. Presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi and Paola Guglielmotti (Asti: 2012), p.80

the eleventh century.[16] In the second half of the second millennium, the city played a dominant economic and military role in Northern Italy, and it had some political influence throughout Europe.

For the city, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represented a pivotal moment of development. During the eleventh century, the city experienced a twenty-year civil war, which still resonated in the chronicles of the early twelfth century.[17] After this unstable period, the city's government began to shift from the rule of archbishops to a communal rule led by consuls. Cesare Maranesi identified the beginning of the commune with a plaque found in the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, dated to 1098, which describes a new tax commissioned by the archbishop but approved by the people.[18] The communal period lasted officially until 1276, when the Visconti signoria began, but the Della Torre family had ruled the city as a de facto signoria since the 1240s, albeit maintaining the communal vestiges. [19]

During the communal period, Milan engaged in several wars, particularly against the Holy Roman Empire and its allies. Notably, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa destroyed the city in 1162. Milan then contributed to the Lombard League, which defeated the emperor at the Battle of Legnano in 1176. The league continued to clash with the empire, fighting Frederick II in the thirteenth century, and was ultimately dissolved in 1250.

Beyond its political and military involvements, the legal structure of Milan changed drastically from the beginning of the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth. No single legal custom existed in Northern Italy at the beginning of the twelfth century; instead, a plurality of legal traditions worked alongside each other.[20] People who belonged to the Lombard tradition, the majority in Milan and other Lombard cities, followed Lombard laws. Those who belonged to the Roman tradition, generally members of the Church, followed Roman law. Those who belonged to a Frankish tradition, very common in Genoa but rare in Milan, followed Salic or Frankish law. Therefore, in the twelfth century and in preceding centuries, a person conducting a transaction or participating in a dispute would employ a notary or a judge who followed their same legal tradition. Towards the end of

[16] Gian Luigi Barni, "Parte I - Dal governo del vescovo a quello dei Cittadini; Parte II - Milano verso l'egemonia," in *Storia di Milano*, ed. Martini Giuseppe et al. (Milano Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la storia di Milano, 1954), Enrico Besta, "Parte IV - Milano sotto gli imperatori carolingi," in *Storia di Milano*, ed. Martini Giuseppe et al. (Milano Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la storia di Milano, 1954), p. 325

[17] Landulfus Seniore, *La cronaca Milanese di Landolfo Seniore sec. XI*, trans. Alessandro Visconti (Milano: Soc. An. Editrice Stucci, Ceretti, 1928)

[18] Cesare Maranesi, *Gli atti del comune di Milano fino all'anno MCCXVI* (Milano: Banca commerciale italiana 1919), p.xxxiii

[19] Paolo Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'Alto Medioevo, 2001), pp. 498 -508.

[20] Claudia Storti, "Ascertainment of customs and personal laws in medieval Italy from the Lombard kingdom to the communes," *Rechtsgeschichte / Legal History: Zeitschrift des Max-Planck-Instituts für europäische Rechtsgeschichte* 24 (2016), pp.23-24

the twelfth century, this legal plurality began disappearing, with Roman law becoming more prominent.[21]

Furthermore, each city, generally having a communal government in the twelfth century, began drafting its own legal customs, which replaced the use of individual traditions. The *Liber Consuetudinum Mediolani* of 1216 represents the earliest example of a collection of Milanese customary laws. No other legal code survives for Milan in the thirteenth century, but the fact that multiple statutes of the *Liber* reappear in law codes of subsequent centuries suggests that its laws remained used in Milan, at least in part, throughout the period.[22] While Roman law increased in importance and became central to the local laws of northern Italian cities, local laws continued to mix various traditions. Therefore, customs in Milan continued to follow aspects of Lombard law in the thirteenth century. Pavia, the old capital of the Lombard kingdom of Italy, maintained many clauses of Lombard law until the late thirteenth century, although jurists changed the names of these clauses.[23]

In sum, Milan experienced various levels of change in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The city shifted from an archiepiscopal city to one of the earliest communes and then one of the earliest signorie in Italy. The city participated in multiple large-scale conflicts with the empire and other neighbouring cities, and it experienced a civil war lasting almost half a century. Legally, the city shifted from a centre of Lombard law to one of the first cities to redact local laws, which often rejected Lombard law clauses. Changes in the economy, law, and governmental structure certainly impacted women's lives. Despite the importance of the city and the significance of the period, I could only find one work that touched on Milanese laywomen, a chapter by Thomas Kuehn in Andrea Gamberini's *Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Milan*.[24] This chapter touched on laws that impacted women in the thirteenth century but then focused on the legal developments of later centuries. Some work on Milanese laywomen in later centuries does exist, most notably Maria Zanoboni's various works on Milanese women and their participation in the workforce.[25] In other socio-economic works about Milan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, where laywomen ought to appear, they do not. For example, in Paolo Grillo's *Milano in età comunale: (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, women only appear as appendices of family interests, and they do not feature as active agents, unlike the many men discussed in the otherwise excellent work.[26]

Other scholars have discussed the lives of Milanese religious women. Elisa Occhipinti scrutinised the collection of documents from the thirteenth century of the Monastero Maggiore, the

[21]Mario Ascheri, *I diritti del Medioevo italiano: secoli XI-XV*, vol. 193 (Roma: Carocci, 2000), pp.132-135
[22] Thomas Kuehn, "Gender and Law in Milan," in *A companion to late medieval and early modern Milan: the distinctive features of an Italian state*, ed. Andrea Gamberini (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.411
[23] Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," , p.54
[24] Kuehn, "Gender and Law in Milan,"
[25] Maira Paola Zanoboni, *Produzioni, commerci, lavoro femminile nella Milano del XV secolo* (CUEM, 1997)
[26] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*

largest Milanese nunnery, to delineate the holdings of the nunnery and how its abbesses managed the inhabitants of these holdings.[27] She also discussed the nunnery of Santa Margherita.[28] Maria Pia Alberzoni discussed the Franciscan nunnery of Sant'Apollinare, and Stella Ferrari wrote her doctoral thesis on the architecture of Milanese Benedictine nunneries.[29] Furthermore, Luisa Zagni and Liliana Martinelli wrote introductions for various other Milanese nunneries when publishing a collection of relevant parchments.[30] Ross Balzaretti discussed Milanese nunneries in the ninth and tenth centuries.[31] Scholars of the Humiliati also touched on Milanese women, as they formed a large part of the Humiliati ranks, and this group became increasingly important in thirteenth-century Milan.[32]

These works provide some understanding of how Milanese religious women fared in the city, but they either do not discuss the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or they mostly focus on architectural or diplomatic history or specific institutions. This limits our understanding of religious women in Milan to their experiences in a few specific institutions. Did the wealthy nuns of the Monastero Maggiore truly represent how all Benedictine nuns lived in Milan? Did the experience of the Franciscan nuns of Sant'Apollinare represent the lives of all women following a mendicant life? A general understanding of religious women in Milan requires consideration of all nunneries from which sources survive.

Fortunately, Milan has a wealth of parchments from the twelfth and especially thirteenth centuries to help fill this gap. The Archivio di Stato di Milano, in its Fondo Pergamene, contains tens of thousands of parchments; a few are from before the millennium, but most are from the twelfth century onwards.[33] These parchments record transactions between religious institutions, lay institutions, lay individuals, and entire cities, providing granular economic data. These parchments

[27] Elisa Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese nel secolo 13. : l'amministrazione della proprietà fondiaria del Monastero Maggiore*, Studi e testi di storia medioevale, (Bologna: Cappelli, 1982)

[28] For her work on Santa Margherita: Elisa Occhipinti, "La famiglia milanese dei Grassi in età comunale," in *Lo sguardo lungimirante delle capitali: saggi in onore di Francesca Bocchi*, ed. Rosa Smurra, Hubert Houben, and Manuela Ghizzoni, I libri di Viella (Roma: Viella, 2014) and a specific discussion of Santa Margherita in Elisa Occhipinti, "Clausura a Milano alla fine del XIII secolo: il caso del monastero di S. Margherita," in *Studi Giuseppe Martini* (Milan: 1978)

[29] Maria Pia Alberzoni, "Il Monastero Milanese di S.Apollinare di fronte all'autorità ecclesiastica (1223-1264): I 1223-1240," *Aevum* 58 (1984) and Maria Pia Alberzoni, "Il Monastero Milanese di S.Apollinare di fronte all'autorità ecclesiasitca (1223-1264): II 1241-1264," *Aevum* 59 (1985); Stella Ferrari, "I monasteri femminili di Milano nella topografia liturgica: contesti architettonici e figurativi tra VII e XII secolo" (Corso di dottorato in Scienze dei Beni Culturali e Ambientali Università degli Studi di Milano, 2016)

[30] Luisa Zagni, *Le pergamene del secolo 12. del Monastero di S. Margherita di Milano conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Milano* (Milano: Università degli Studi, 1984), Liliana Martinelli Perelli, *Le pergamene del secolo 13. del Monastero di S. Maria del Lentasio conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Milano* (Milano: Universita degli studi, 2004)

[31] Ross Balzaretti, "Women, Property and Urban Space in Tenth-Century Milan," *Gender & History* 23, no. 3 (2011), pp. 560-561

[32] Frances Andrews, *The early Humiliati* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.3-5

[33] Eleonora Saita and Carmela Santoro, "Inventario D 4 Pergamene Per Fondi " (Archivio Di Stato di Milano, 2007),

also describe thousands of disputes, recording both the final sentence and, sometimes, preceding documents that investigate the claims. Compared to other Italian cities, Milan has significantly more parchments of this kind. A brief look at the records of the Florentine, Venetian, and Genoese state archives reveals that only a few hundred parchments from ecclesiastical institutions survive in each city.[34] This does not necessarily mean that more parchments do not exist, but if they do, no archivist or scholar has collected them in cities' central archives or catalogued them as such.

The Milanese parchments constitute a mine of information on society at all levels. Milanese and foreign scholars have dipped into this vast resource to conduct focused studies. Besides the studies on nunneries mentioned above, other scholars have focused in greater detail on the specific holdings of male institutions. For example, Fabio Carminati and Andrea Mariani studied the holdings of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, the wealthiest religious institution of Milan, in Capiate.[35] Ardengo Lozza examined the holdings of the same monastery in Ternate.[36] Alberto Lucioni investigated the monastery's holdings in the north of Lombardy, and Simone Sironi studied its holdings in Cologno Monzese.[37] All four studies used, in large part, parchments from this Fondo. Outside of studies on specific institutions, no one has attempted to systematically record the information held in these parchments and use them in a large-scale quantitative study, not even when focusing on specific centuries.

The absence of scholarship covering wider parts of this Fondo relates directly to the volume and range of parchments available, which makes large-scale studies difficult and time-consuming. On the other hand, focusing on a single institution or a single holding does not allow a scholar to quantitatively explore the economy of the city or to compare religious institutions and does not make full use of the potential behind this large collection of parchments. This work examines the Fondo di Pergamene more widely. While theoretically this would mean studying all parchments contained in the Fondo, I had to limit the scope of the research. Firstly, I have focused only on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even with this limitation, the inventory of the archive indicates around 256 boxes

[34]"Elenco dei fondi Repubblicani," Archivio di Stato di Firenze, accessed 13/06/2023, , Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli, "Ecclesiae Venetae. Archivi storici della Chiesa di Venezia," Sistema Infromativo Unificato per le Soprintendenze Archivistiche, accessed 13/06/2023, , to find documents relevant to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries use the "Ricerca Avanzata" option, "Guida ai fondi archivistici," Archivio di Stato di Genova 2013, 13/06/2023, Genoa mostly has notarial books, not found in the Milanese archive, but some single contracts on parchments also survived.

[35] Fabio Carminati and Andrea Mariani, "The Court and Land of Capiate during its Tenure by the Monastero di Sant'Ambrogio of Milan, from the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: The State of Research," *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies* (2017) pp. 109-140

[36] Gerolamo Lozza, "L'abate Ardengo Visconti e il patrimonio del monastero di s. Ambrogio a s. Sepolcro presso Ternate (anni 1227-1240)," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 55, no. 2 (2001), pp 395-438

[37] Alfredo Lucioni, "Il monastero di s. Ambrogio di Milano nelle terre settentrionali della regione lombarda: due «brevia de fictis» dei secoli xi - xiii," *Aevum* 59, no. 2 (1985), pp.208-231, Simone Sironi, "Gestioni patrimoniali a Cologno Monzese. Il monastero di S. Ambrogio e la collegiata di S. Giovanni di Monza (secoli XII-XIII)," *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica - Nuova Serie*, no. 19 (2018), pp. 17 -90

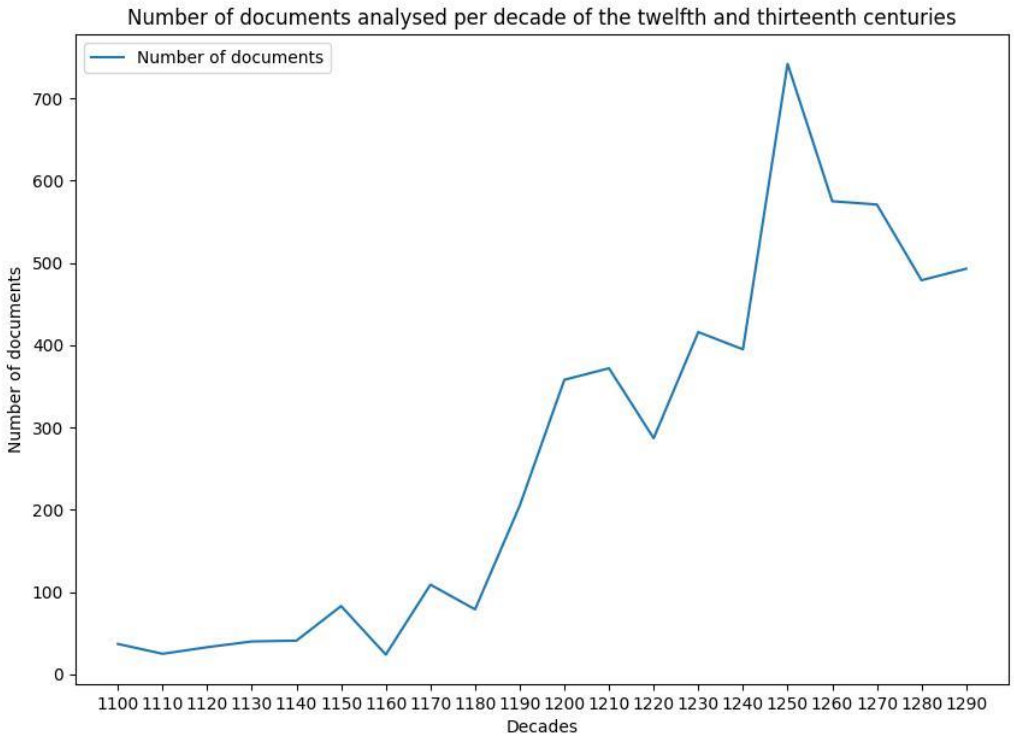
containing parchments from the period. Furthermore, each parchment contained multiple records. Frequently, for example, a parchment that began with a writ of sale would end with a writ of renunciation from someone connected to the land sold. Similarly, parchments regarding a dispute would contain multiple parts of that dispute, even if it occurred over various years. Throughout this study I will refer to each record as a "document". A single parchment could therefore contain multiple documents. Each box has an average of fifty-three documents, which means that the archive contains approximately 13,568 relevant documents. On the other hand, the parchments in the Archivio di Stato originate only partially from Milan and partially from other towns in Lombardy. Therefore, I narrowed the scope of research further, studying parchments that originated from Milan alone. This meant that this study considered around 110 boxes relating to Milan itself, comprising 5,847 documents. While not covering the entire documentary range of the archive, this project uses more parchments than other studies on the city.

For this thesis, I only used the original parchments present in the Archivio di Stato of Milano, but scholars have published these and other similar parchments in various editions, especially in the *Atti del Comune di Milano* edited first by Cesare Maranesi and then expanded by Franca Maria Baroni and in the twenty-volume series of *Le pergamene Milanesi del dodicesimo e tredicesimo secolo* from various authors.[38] Not all the parchments published in these volumes entered my study, mostly because these publications often went beyond what the Archivio di Stato of Milan had in the Fondo Pergamene for the area of Milan. Nonetheless, the 5,847 documents analysed already provide more information than a single study could coherently present.

While this study aims to discuss the twelfth and thirteenth, the documents found do not uniformly cover the entire period. Indeed, I was able to find and analyse far more documents from the thirteenth than the twelfth century, as Figure 1 below shows.

[38] Maranesi, *Gli atti del comune di Milano fino all'anno MCCXVI*, Cesare Manaresi, Roberto Perelli Cippo, and Maria Franca Baroni, *Gli atti del Comune di Milano nei secoli 12. e 13.* (Milano: Universita degli studi di Milano, 2000). For the full list of the *Pergamene Milanesi* please refer to the bibliography

Figure 1: Number of documents analysed per decade of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries



The spread of documents means that while I will discuss the twelfth century and will be able to draw some conclusions regarding Milan in that period, the conclusions will hold more significance when discussing the thirteenth century. In this treasure of documents, both laywomen and religious women appear in all manner of transactions and disputes. This allows us to observe and quantify how they participated in the Milanese economy and society. In the first chapter, the thesis will observe laywomen and how they could and could not engage with the Milanese economy, quantifying how this changed over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The chapter will compare women's actions to those of men to quantify the inequality between these two groups. In the second chapter, the thesis will focus on abbesses and how they managed their nunneries and the extent to which they relied on other men to conduct their institutions. The chapter will compare the action and freedom of abbesses to that of abbots and other male leaders. The third chapter will delve into the economic structure of religious institutions, comparing the way nunneries and male institutions of various kinds engaged the market. The chapter aims to quantify the wealth inequality between nunneries and male institutions in Milan. The last chapter will briefly discuss ordinary nuns and their participation in Milanese society. This thesis therefore provides a multifaceted understanding of Milanese women and how their engagement with various aspects of Milanese life differed from men's experience in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Chapter 1: Milanese laywomen in the economy

Women and the family

Scholarly work on medieval women indicates their economic participation often stemmed from familial roles. The next few paragraphs highlight various examples throughout Europe, and especially Italy, and throughout the medieval period where women acted and had agency through their families. This provides a framework in which to place the experience of Milanese laywomen, although direct comparisons do not always work due to differences in time and space.

Eileen Power's analysis of English women revealed that noblewomen were frequently entrusted with the management of their husband's estates. This role extended beyond daily affairs: women often took direct control during their husband's absence due to war, business travel, or death.[39] Prominent accounts beginning from eleventh century of women leading defences of their husbands' castles illustrate their capacity for direct action.[40] Beyond England, Suzanne Wemple's research into the Frankish women of the fifth and sixth centuries highlighted the importance women had in the family as child bearers.[41] While Frankish society mostly valued them for this aspect, through marriage women connected families and could support their cognates, while in motherhood they became advisors and protectors of their children.[42]

Stanley Chojnacki noted that fifteenth-century Venetian society considered women the custodians of purity and stability for the family and the state. This resulted in women occasionally sponsoring their children in the ritual entering of society Venetian men did when eighteen, which brought them at the centre of a part of the Venetian political life[43]. Through marriage, women united different families, which had a passive yet vital political contribution.[44] Women typically maintained strong ties with their paternal family, often drawing their husbands into closer affiliation with their kin. Thus, through their familial roles, noble Venetian women could access wealth, exert private power, and wield public influence within their communal society.

Examples of famous women also highlight the importance of family relationships for women to achieve power in their societies. The life of Eleanor of Aquitaine highlights the importance of marriage for the power of a queen. Eleanor first married Louis VI, then divorced him, and then married Henry II, leading to a tumultuous relationship that even saw her imprisoned by Henry for a

[39] Eileen Power, *Medieval women*, ed. M. M. Postan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.35-36
[40] Elizabeth den Hartog, "'Defending the castle like a man': on belligerent medieval ladies.," *Virtus : bulletin van de Werkgroep Adelsgeschiedenis* 27 (2021) p. 79
[41] Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish society : marriage and the cloister, 500 to 900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p.28
[42] Ibid, pp 56-58
[43] Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and men in Renaissance Venice: twelve essays on patrician society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p.176
[44] Stanley Chojnacki, "At Home and Beyond: Women's Power in Renaissance Venice," in *Donne di potere nel Rinascimento*, ed. Letizia Arcangeli and Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi (Rome: Viella, 2008), p.32

period. Through her two marriages, Eleanor became one of the most powerful European women of the time. She controlled the lands of Aquitaine and had an essential political role in Henry's kingdom through her personal action and her influence on her sons.[45]

Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi's life illustrates the political role a prominent Florentine woman could secure through her marriage and subsequently in her widowhood. Alessandra married Matteo di Simone Strozzi, aligning herself with a significant Florentine family opposed to the de Medici. When Cosimo de Medici returned from exile, he expelled members of the Strozzi family, including Matteo and Alessandra. Matteo died in exile in 1435, and in widowhood, Alessandra became the head of the family. This involved managing the affairs of the family, rearing her five children, and managing their matrimonial prospects. Her two surviving male children became powerful merchants but also faced temporary exile. Alessandra then continued to manage the family business in Florence and sought to obtain the return of her children from exile, which occurred in 1466.[46] Alessandra's role as head of a branch of a politically powerful family gave her influence in many aspects of Florentine political and social life.

Margherita Datini, another member of a powerful Florentine family, also wielded significant powers through her marriage. Hundreds of letters exchanged between herself and her husband, Francesco di Marco Datini, highlight how Francesco entrusted her with running his business and maintaining the family's social network in the city. Margherita had an unusually active role in Florentine economy and society for a wife, and possibly this occurred because of her barrenness. Nonetheless, the life of Margherita, like that of Alessandra, proves that even without access to the government of the Comune, women from powerful families could wield great economic and political power in Florence.[47] Aristocratic and wealthy women could wield significant powers thanks to their families before, during, and after the period in study, despite the multiple limitations women had in civic life.

When looking at non-aristocratic women, the importance of family also emerges. Mark Angelos analysed 4,500 Genoese *commenda* contracts between 1155 and 1216. Through *commendas*, people invested money in maritime trading ventures. Women participated in 1,076 (24%) of these *commendas*. While many women invested for themselves, notaries identified 85 percent of women through their family connections, calling them either wife, daughter, or wife of the deceased.[48]

[45] McNamara and Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100,", p.134
[46] Simone Brambilla, "Ritratti femminili nelle lettere di Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi," *Arzanà* 20 (2019), pp. 63-90
[47] Ann Crabb, *The merchant of Prato's wife: Margherita Datini and her world, 1360-1423* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2015).
[48] Mark Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216," *Journal of Medieval History* 20, no. 4 (1994), p. 307

Furthermore, often women invested in family business or they invested for a family member, and often acted alongside their husbands.[49]

Jamie Smith, studying the legal persona of Genoese women in the aftermath of the plague, found a continued importance of family relationships. She found that mothers acted frequently as tutors of their children, and wives acted as agents of their husbands.[50] In both cases women led the management of the family business. Tutors managed the estates of underaged children when the *pater familias* died or travelled for long periods of time, a common occurrence in Genoa. Mothers became tutors in most cases, and when an underaged son had multiple tutors, the mother held the leading position. Smith argues that families considered mothers or grandmothers to have the child's best interest, and even when the tutorship involved the interests of the wider family, leadership was given to the mother.[51] As tutors, women invested the property of their children and remained liable to cover any losses that those investments incurred. In all effects, a tutor became the *pater familias*, or the de facto head of the family. Women invested on behalf of their husbands when they travelled or had other business to attend to, and it appears that they acted independently when doing so.[52] In a study of Apulian wills of the fourteenth century, Patrizia Mainoni also found that husbands appointed their wives as tutors in most situations, suggesting that similar experiences to those of Genoese women occurred in other Italian cities.[53]

Dowries and other matrimonial gifts further confirm the connection between family and female wealth. Dowries constituted almost the entire wealth of a woman, alongside other matrimonial gifts and matrimonial rights.[54] Laura Bertoni quantified the presence of women in the credit circles of the city. She found that women borrowed money relatively often using their dowries or their rights over the goods of their husbands as collateral. Furthermore, Pavese women invested their dowries and other rights in commercial or agricultural enterprises in the city, similarly to what women did in Genoa.[55] Gabriella Piccinni observed a similar phenomenon in a Sienese hospital. The hospital Santa Maria della Scala operated as a charitable enterprise and a sort of investment bank. People could open an account with the hospital, and it would invest their money in local endeavours, granting a healthy return to the account holders. Piccinni counted that 25 percent of new accounts between 1347 and 1377 belonged to women who, generally, invested their dowries to guarantee a pension in their old age.

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[49] Ibid, pp. 304-309
[50] Jamie Smith, "Women as Legal Agents in Late Medieval Genoa," in *Writing medieval women's lives*, ed. Charlotte Newman Goldy and Amy Livingstone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.113-114
[51] Ibid, p.121
[52] Ibid, p.122
[53] Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV)," , pp.86-87
[54] Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," , p.53
[55] Ibid, pp.63-65.

These studies reveal that medieval women participated in the economy and society in various ways, often showing independence, entrepreneurship, and leadership. However, these studies also reveal women's dependence on their families for participating in society, to various degrees. While Milan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries stands far from a geographical or temporal sense from the examples above, I would expect that family played an essential role in the ability of Milanese laywomen to act independently in the period in study.

Chojnacki, while revealing interesting ways in which Venetian women had influence, also revealed the inequality of their state. While they could participate in the political life through marriage and sponsorship, they could not officially act in the government. Women may have had significant soft power in Venice, but did not have the formal power men had.[56] Similarly, women's role as guardians of purity, something which increased in importance during the fifteenth century, bestowed them respect as much as it limited their freedoms. Dennis Romano suggested that the importance of female purity created gendered spaces in Venice. For example, Romano argued that Venetians saw mercantile areas like Rialto as male spaces dangerous for women, who therefore could not enter them.[57] Romano's article does not quantify the rigidity of this gender division of the urban environment, but the literary evidence he uses confirms that the role women had as guardians of purity possibly hindered their freedoms.

Various studies quantifying female investment in the economy of specific cities revealed a sharp inequality between what men did and what women did. Men acted alone in 75% of the *commendas,* and men opened and owned 75% of the new accounts in Santa Maria della Scala. In Pavia, women participated in 13% of the credit transactions Bertoni identified. Furthermore, the sums transacted differed even further. Angelos' data provides the clearest example. Of all the money invested in Genoese maritime trade, women provided 6%.[58] Even when they could participate in the economy of their cities, they did so less frequently and with a far smaller impact than men.

Furthermore, reliance on dowries brought widows into conflict with their sons and other heirs of the deceased husband. Many scholars have discussed the frequent litigations in the central and high Middle Ages caused by dowry reclaim, including the abovementioned Bertoni and Mainoni. Rossella Rinaldi, looking at around 300 documents that survive from communal archives of late thirteenth-century Bologna, found that most of these documents related to widows trying to reclaim their dowries.[59]

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[56] Chojnacki, *Women and men in Renaissance Venice: twelve essays on patrician society*, pp. 181 -182

[57] Dennis Romano, "Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 2 (1989), p. 340

[58] Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216,", p.304

[59] Rossella Rinaldi, "Figure femminili nel sistema produttivo bolognese (secoli XIII-XIV)," in *Dare credito alle donne. Presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi and Paola Guglielmotti (Asti: Centro studi renato bordone
sui lombardi, sul credito e sulla banca, 2012), pp.104-105

Isabelle Chabot explored the dynamic of dowry reclaiming in Florence, highlighting the difficulties widowhood could bring. In cases when the acquired family of a widow did not wish her to remain with them, widows faced a problematic situation.[60] Chabot analysed the Florentine Catasto and noticed how wealthy widows often had to wait long periods for their husband's heir to return their dowry to them. In the interim they had to find a house to live in, as the husband's house went to the heirs, and they had no money to live on, as their entire wealth consisted of their dowry.[61] Generally, fathers prepared for such situations, and widows had the right of *tornata,* of coming back to their original family's house.[62] Often, the husband would grant the wife the right to remain in the house after his death. Nonetheless, widows became dependent on the charity of relatives while waiting for their dowries and sometimes had to retire to the countryside, which meant losing social connections in the city.[63] Christine Klapisch-Zuber found examples of widows remaining in the care of their brothers for the rest of their lives, without managing to receive any money from their husband's family.[64] Chabot also suggested that for poorer classes, the loss of a husband often meant destitution. Poorer widows only brought small dowries into marriage, which the husband would use to start the family. At his death, the widow could continue with the family business or struggle on with small jobs, but generally she would face poverty.[65]

Besides financial issues, widows also faced more personal struggles. Klapisch-Zuber highlighted how they had to choose between staying with their children, supporting them financially and educationally, or leaving them to remarry.[66] If a woman became a widow young, her family would pressure her to remarry and reclaim her dowry. Because the dowry often formed the keystone of a family's wealth, the sudden withdrawal of that wealth would result in a financial disaster for the rest of the household. Klapisch-Zuber discussed scenes of children or stepchildren begging their widowed mother not to leave, and the widow choosing instead to obey her family's wishes, abandoning her children.[67] A widow, therefore, had the choice between independence or obeying her family's wishes. According to Klapisch-Zuber, women, because of the patrilineal focus of society, experienced tensions between obeying their parents and supporting their children. The arduous task of doing both increased the misogynistic feelings during the Florentine Renaissance and created the figure of the "Cruel Mother" who abandoned her sons and daughters for her own benefit.[68]

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[60]Isabelle Chabot, "Widowhood and poverty in late medieval Florence," *Continuity and Change* 3, no. 2 (1988), pp. 296-7

[61] Ibid, p.298

[62] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, family, and ritual in Renaissance Italy* (London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.122

[63] Chabot, "Widowhood and poverty in late medieval Florence,", pp.299-300

[64] Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, family, and ritual in Renaissance Italy* , p.123

[65] Chabot, "Widowhood and poverty in late medieval Florence,", p.305

[66] Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, family, and ritual in Renaissance Italy*, p.130

[67] Ibid, p.127

[68] Ibid, pp.129-130

Families allowed women throughout the medieval period to obtain power and at the same time limited what women could do. The examples above occasionally discuss periods after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and cities distant from Milan. However, I expect that twelfth and thirteenth century Milanese women were also limited by their lack of political power and the limitations and controls family could impose. To test this, I investigated the laywomen who appeared in the contracts of twelfth and thirteenth century Milanese ecclesiastical institutions. To understand the importance of women's relationships in the family, I explored how notaries referred to them and how differently they described men. I then analysed the types of contracts women participated in and how they could participate in these contracts.

Table 1 below details how notaries described women and how often each descriptor occurred. This table only includes women who did not have an affiliation with a religious institution. Therefore, the table contains mostly laywomen and some anchoresses, therefore laywomen who embraced the religious life without entering a convent.

Table 1: Different classifications of women and how many times they appear

Count	Classification	Percentage
271	Spouse	53.03%
107	Widow	20.94%
68	Daughter	13.31%
31	Sister	6.07%
24	Mother	4.70%
5	Anchoress	0.98%
4	Lone Woman	0.78%
1	Niece	0.20%

On four occasions notaries did not describe a woman conducting a transaction through her family connection, and on five occasions they acted as anchoresses. Notaries described all other women (98 percent) in relation to their family: 53 percent as wives, 21 percent as widows, 13 percent as daughters, 6 percent as sisters, and 5 percent as mothers. Not all of these women acted alongside their family, but when they acted, the notary described them in relation to their family. This did not occur for men, as shown in Table 2, which states the descriptors notaries used for men and their frequency. As in Table 1, this table only includes men who did not have an affiliation with a religious institution.

Table 2: Different classifications of men and how many times they appear

Count	Classification	Percentage
5060	Lone Man	52.29%
1997	Neighbors	20.64%

1276	Son	13.19%
1073	Brother	11.09%
103	Consuls	1.06%
84	Intermediary	0.87%
42	Nephew	0.43%
20	Tutors	0.21%

The majority of the time (52 percent), notaries did not identify a man with a reference to his family, only naming him *dominus* or not providing any other descriptor beyond his name. I classified these instances as Lone Man. This occurred even if the man acted alongside his family. For example, when a father and son acted together, the notary generally identified the man as *dominus* and the son as *filius*, therefore describing the father without a reference to his family while describing the son through his father. Similarly, when a man acted alongside his wife, the notary would describe the husband as *dominus* and the wife as *iugales* or *uxor*.

Besides having no descriptor, notaries described men in a variety of other ways, which I collected under a few rubrics. Neighbours represent men from the same locality who acted together in a judicial or communal action. Consuls and judges represent men who acted on behalf of the government, sometimes representing the commune of Milan or other localities, sometimes presiding over a dispute. Intermediaries represent agents, whom the notaries described using a variety of terms. Most often intermediaries acted for a religious institution, but sometimes, like in these 84 occasions, they acted for another layperson or lay institution.

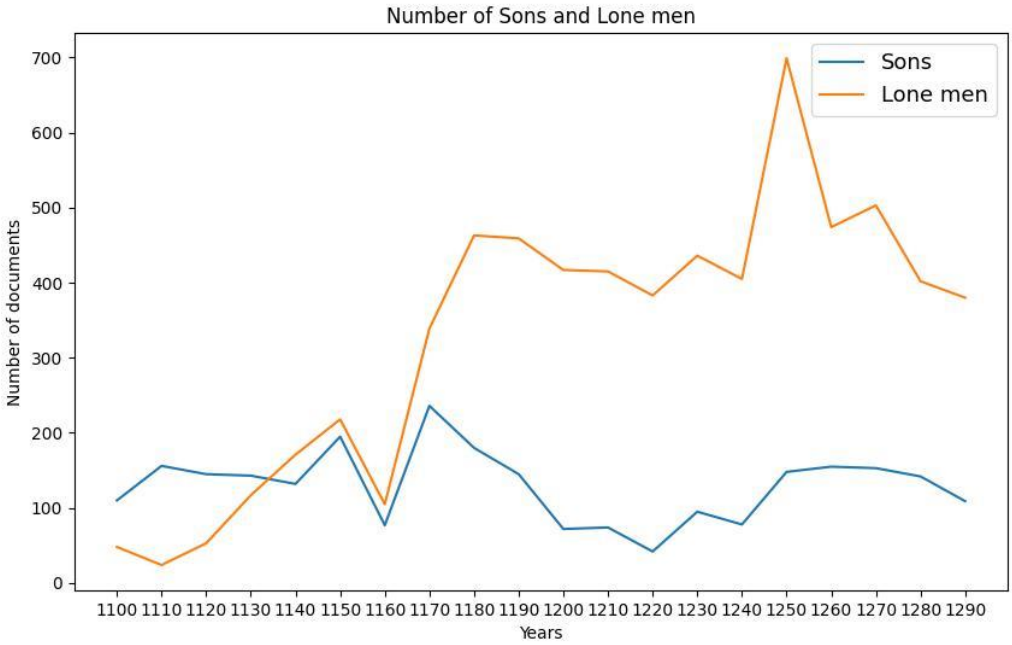
Often notaries described men in relation to their family. The descriptor *filius* or *filius quondam*[69] was used for 13 percent of the men, and 11 percent had the descriptor *fratres*.[70] I artificially divided these two categories, as often notaries would describe men both as brothers and sons, or a father would act alongside his sons, but the notary would not describe the sons as brothers. The percentage of brothers I recorded represents the frequency with which notaries described men only as brothers, with their father not acting alongside them. The instances of 'brother' I recorded therefore represent those instances when brothers would manage the family business together, for example, when settling debts left by their father.

While the descriptor of brothers entailed that men acted as a family, the descriptor *filius* did not. Notaries described men as sons even when they acted without their father or if they acted alone. This use of *filius*, known as a patronymic, allowed notaries to identify the person acting in a document in an age when family names had just begun to appear.[71] Over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the

[69] Son of, or son of the once. Notaries used the latter descriptors when the father had died.
[70] Brother
[71] David Herlihy, "Land, family and women in continental Europe, 701-1200," *Traditio* 18 (1962), p.101

use of patronymics remained stable, but the number of men not identified by their parent increased dramatically.

Figure 2: Number of 'Sons' and 'Lone men' through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries



The consistent presence of men described by a patronymic highlights that families still acted together and that identification with one's father still carried importance. However, the rise of 'lone men' suggested that men acted more frequently alone, or without using their father as a source of identity. The change also relates to the rise of family names, which became more frequent in the thirteenth century and prevalent in the fourteenth.[72] A man did not have to identify himself through his deceased father if he could do so with a family name. Women also used patronymics or matronymics occasionally, but more often the notary did not give them this descriptor, instead connecting them to their husband, whether alive or deceased.

Comparing the descriptors of Milanese men and women not only reveals that women's identity existed only in relation to their families but also reveals that men's identity did not. They could act as their own person. However, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milanese private documents reveal further ways in which women had a less prominent role in the family than men. Women relied on male permission to act, whether as a wife, a widow, or a daughter.

As discussed in the introduction, Lombard and Roman law codified the need for women to have male protection when acting. Lombard law especially limited women's freedoms with the clause of the *mundualdus.* The *mundualdus* had to approve any action by a woman and theoretically

[72] Simone Maria Collavini, "I cognomi italiani nel Medioevo: un bilancio storiografico," in *L'Italia dei cognomi: l'antroponimia italiana nel quadro mediterraneo.*, ed. Andrea Addobbati, Roberto Bizzocchi, and Gregorio Salinero (Pisa: Università di Pisa, 2012), p.53

controlled her possessions and her life choices. The father, or tutor, of an unmarried woman would hold the *mundium* first, which generally passed to the husband on marriage. In widowhood the woman could choose her *mundualdus*, often choosing a son, but the *mundium* could go to the king or to another person of her choice. Lombard law edicts clarify that if the *mundualdus* did not treat the woman well, it was lawful for her to either find refuge in the king's court or to her paternal relatives, bringing the mundium with her.[73] This clause had the potential to strongly limit women's independence, as she could do nothing without a man at any point in her life. However, even in a society that strictly followed Lombard law, women would have different levels of independence at different stages of life. Before marriage a woman would have the least freedom, as she had to obey her father or tutor. As a wife, a woman would also have to obey her husband, but she had property rights and had influence in the running of the family. Finally, as a widow, a woman could choose her *mundualdus*, and often her son would act in this role. Widows therefore had more control over the *mundualdus* and probably could act with greater freedom.

Over the last decade, some scholars have debated the importance of the *mundualdus* in Italian communes. Thomas Kuehn explored the impact the *mundualdus* had in fifteenth-century Florence, strongly qualifying the control husbands had over wives. He argued that, while the requirement of a *mundualdus* for any public act reinforced a woman's subordinate position in society, it did not necessarily make her dependent on her husband, nor did it give her husband direct control over her actions. Kuehn found evidence that any man could act as a woman's *mundualdus*, even a stranger appointed for the occasion by a court. He observed that in some cases the wife even acted against her husband. [74] On the other hand, Patrizia Mainoni observed that in fourteenth-century Apulia, *mundualdi* still had the power to strongly interfere with a woman's decision, especially regarding marriage.[75] She tells the story of a girl whose *mundium* belonged to her uncle, who pressured her into a marriage she did not want because he had the legal right to do so.

In Milan, in a period before the studies of Kuehn or Mainoni, I did not find examples of women using strangers as *mundualdi*, nor did I find examples of *mundualdi* imposing their will on their charges. However, during the twelfth century, any lay woman who acted did so with the permission of a *mundualdus*, if they followed Lombard law. Women who followed Roman law did not have a stated *mundualdus*, but they nonetheless had to act with the permission of a man, generally a husband or son. During the thirteenth century, when Milan had moved to following a mixture of Roman, canon law, and local law[76], the role of *mundualdus* disappeared, but women, and especially

[73] Katherine Fischer Drew, *The Lombard laws* (Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), p.85
[74] Thomas Kuehn, *Law, family & women: toward a legal anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 211-237
[75] Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV).", p. 91
[76] Kuehn, "Gender and Law in Milan," , p.408

wives, consistently acted with the permission of a man. Therefore, regardless of legal tradition or period, Milanese women could not act independently.

A series of documents from 1280 demonstrates the importance of men in controlling women's economic choices. These documents involve an orphan called Agnesina, probably a little older than fourteen, who had to sell two houses and the produce of her father's rented lands to cover her father's debt of £116. To do so, Agnesina required the permission of two men, a consul of justice and an appointed guardian, probably an uncle. The process started with Lord Leo de Venzago, the consul, assigning Perato Gastoldo, a relative of Agnesina's father, as her guardian. In the same document, Perato asked permission for Agnesina to sell her property to cover part of the debt the girl had towards the Monastero Maggiore, a large Milanese nunnery.[77]

After this preamble, Agnesina personally sold her property to cover the debt in two documents, but she acted again with the permission of her guardian and the consul of justice.[78] The situation of Agnesina, an orphan faced with crippling debt, was not unusual. Bertoni found that around the area of Milan, between the end of the thirteenth century and during the fourteenth century, the autonomous small landowner disappeared. She argued that one or two bad harvests, coupled with the rising price of foods and tools, could force the small owner to borrow or sell its land.[79] After selling their land, people often rented land to work on behalf of the larger owner. This could lead to further debt, as they would occasionally struggle to pay their dues, contracting greater amounts of debt to pay what they owed and maintain their equipment. This allowed urban institutions, like the Monastero Maggiore, to expand their territories by buying out indebted farmers.[80] In the documents, I found multiple similar examples, although only Agnesina faced this situation without the presence of siblings or a mother.

As a woman who could not work the land the father had rented from the monastery, Agnesina faced more difficulties. She could not do anything other than sell all she had and rely on the support of an uncle, who might have taken her in afterwards, although in the documents Perato Gastoldo only acted as a guardian, and the judge prescribed no further action. Had she been a boy, Agnesina might

[77] "dominus leo de venzago consul iustitie mediolani ex offitio suo dedit et constituit peratum gastoldum de loco novate curatore agnexine filie quondam merli gastoldi maiori annis quatuordecim presenti petenti et volenti ad venditionem per ipsam agnexinam... In solutionem et pagamento librarum quadragintasex tertiolarum ex illis libris centumsedicem tertiolarum quas ipsa domina abbatissa nomine illius monasterii seu ipsum monasterium habere debe ab ipsa angexina", Archivio di Stato di Milano (ASMi hereafter), Fondo Pergamene, Box 491, folder 211g, document 606.

[78] "Cum Domino Leone De Venzago consule iustitie mediolani eoquem approbante... venditionem et datum in solutum... fecit Agnexina filia quondam Merli Gastoldim de Barenzate sive de Novate maior annis quatuordecim ... consensu et autoritate perati gastoldi curatoris sui", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 491, folder 211g, document 606, document 609.

[79] Laura Bertoni, "Le campagne lombarde nel primo Trecento: Rilettura di un caso 'eccezionale'," in *La congiuntura del primo Trecento in Lombardia (1290-1360)*, ed. Paolo Grillo (Rome: École française de Rome, 2019) pp. 217, 227-228

[80] Ibid, pp.229-230

have inherited the investiture of her father and continued to manage it without losing the house. But as a girl she could not inherit and keep the invested land. Agnesina does not appear in other documents, but these ones might record the destitution of Agnesina, who had neither family nor wealth left to her name after servicing her father's debt.

Agnesina's actions occurred with the direction and permission of two men. While as an orphan girl Agnesina faced more restrictions than other women, Milanese women generally acted only with the permission of one or more men. Some exceptions occurred, which I will discuss further below. By contrast, only in exceptional circumstances did men need permission to act.

The language notaries used to describe the actions of a woman and her relation to her family further emphasises her subordination. Notaries described wives either as *iugales* or as *uxor*. The latter term occurs occasionally in documents, and the *Liber Consuetudinum* refers to wives only in this way.[81] I have only encountered the term *iugales* in private documents. Using *iugales* could have some significance, as it refers to the wife as literally an equal to the husband. The husband would also refer to the wife as 'iugale mea' when giving her permission to act. Perhaps the use of this word recalled the equal importance husbands and wives had in marriage from a spiritual perspective. However, notaries described only wives as *iugales*, and not consistently, while never describing husbands in relation to their wives in this way. Indeed, they rarely described husbands in relation to their wives in any way.

The way notaries discussed widows paints a more ambiguous picture. Occasionally they conducted transactions with their families, generally acting alongside their children. Frequently, one of her sons had reached maturity and would act as the male protector for his mother. Notaries would sometimes list the widow first, before her sons or daughters, but, sometimes, they would list sons before their mothers. By contrast, when a husband and wife acted together, the notaries always named the husband first. In documents involving religious people, communal officials, or even neighbours of a locality, the notaries recorded the more senior and important people first. For example, an abbot or abbess would appear before the other members of the monastery when acting in concert with them more senior people in the communal government appeared before junior ones, and nobles or local consuls appeared before other members of a locality. Following the same logic, listing a widow first would suggest she had more importance than her sons and daughters. The irregularity of this raises the question as to whether Milanese society saw widows as senior to their children. The perception might have changed depending on whether the woman became the tutor of her children. Certainly, it does not appear that notaries saw widows as the default head of a household.

Women in the Milanese society and economy of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries acted as part of a family and had their identity intrinsically tied to their family. Their reliance on family

[81] Unfortunately, I did not distinguish between the two uses when collecting data from documents, and I cannot quantify the use of one or the other.

reduced their independence and left them subordinate to men in the family at all stages in life, although to differing extents. The situation in Milan, therefore, resembles what other scholars have observed for other parts of Italy during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as well as later periods.

The decline of women's role in the family

Women's reliance on family for access to economic and political left them susceptible to cultural and governmental changes, which could decrease the importance of women in families and the power of families overall. Over the last sixty years, scholars have debated how women's role in twelfth- and thirteenth- century society changed. Joan Kelly-Gadol wrote perhaps the most influential essay on the topic, titled: "Did women have a Renaissance?" She addressed the issue of decreasing female power from the twelfth century to the Renaissance by comparing literature between the twelfth, thirteenth, and sixteenth centuries.[82] She also compared the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine with the life of Caterina Sforza. Overall, Kelly-Gadol concluded that the Renaissance occurred only for men, while women's freedom and role in society shifted from an active to a passive and aesthetic role. Kelly-Gadol's reliance on literature and examples of single women limits the applicability of these conclusions to these specific arenas. However, her ideas galvanised the research of other historians, who gave greater attention to the changing role of women in society.

Others analysed how the participation of women in the economy and society changed over time. In a 1973 article, predating Kelly-Gadol's work, Suzanne Wemple and Jo Ann McNamara identified the turn of the millennium as a moment when women's ability to participate in society worsened. They argued that women held power through their family, either by having influence in powerful familial groups or by inheriting wealth. However, they argued that family power decreased from the eleventh century, as stronger monarchies developed better administrative systems, which reduced the need for kings to rely on powerful families for governance. This reduced the influence noblewomen or queens could have on the government. Furthermore, they saw the imposition of clerical celibacy as the elimination of another avenue for women to have influence in society. Finally, they argued that economic struggles and the division of family inheritance pushed families to exclude women from any inheritance beyond dowries.[83] In *Women in Frankish Society*, Wemple also argued that the rise of monogamy weakened women's access to power.[84] She found that in pre-monogamous Francia, women in quasi-marriage or in a polygamous marriage had legal protection, especially regarding wealth and possessions. With the growing prominence of monogamy, the wife obtained significantly more importance, but many other women became concubines, with almost no protection.

[82] Joan Kelly-Gadol, *Women, history & theory: the essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp.19-51

[83] McNamara and Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500-1100,", pp. 137-138

[84] Wemple, *Women in Frankish society : marriage and the cloister, 500 to 900* , pp.36-38, 87-88, 95-96

David Herlihy also recognised the diminishing power of women in the second millennium. Rather than focusing on governmental change, Herlihy sought to explain the shift in women's roles through the rise of agnatic inheritance, something Wemple and Mc Namara also emphasised. He found that families began to focus on patrilineage and agnatic inheritance around the twelfth century.[85] Before the 12th century, wealth passed through cognatic lines; thus, men and women inherited equally, and both functioned as transmitters of wealth. On the contrary, agnatic inheritance meant that property passed only through the male line. [86] Women, instead of inheriting property, would receive a dowry upon marriage and then would have no other inheritance. Jurists saw the dowry as a replacement for inheritance, but the replacement did not always fairly compensate daughters.[87] Furthermore, as Christine Klapisch-Zuber pointed out, an agnatic focus practically excluded women from the history of a family. She found that writers recording their family histories included women rarely, and only after exceptional achievements, for example, becoming a saint.[88] Agnatic inheritance apparently pushed women to the outskirts of family memories. Emphasis on agnatic structure also appears in Milanese law. The *Liber Consuetudinum Mediolani*, emphasised the importance of agnatic inheritance. In a rubric discussing last wills, it stated that agnates would inherit before anyone except for a sister or an aunt living under the roof of the deceased.[89]

Herlihy proposed two reasons for the rise of a patrilineal societal structure. First, he identified the rise in monogamous marriage as a key factor.[90] As Wemple also highlighted, the Church managed to strengthen monogamous practices from the 8th century and firmly established monogamy in the 10th century. He argued that before monogamous marriages became common, children could not easily track their paternal ancestry, whereas they could always track their maternal one. On the other hand, with stricter monogamy, paternal identity became more certain, and a familial structure based on male ancestry became possible. Herlihy understood the growing importance of monogamy as a necessary but insufficient explanation for the shift in inheritance practices.[91] He argued that the new economic needs of families ultimately caused a shift to an agnatic system. Aristocratic families, or large landowning families, experienced important changes from the twelfth century. Firstly, Herlihy argued

[85] David Herlihy, *Women, family and society in Medieval Europe : historical essays, 1978-1991* (Providence, R.I. ; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), p.52
[86] Ibid, pp 45-52
[87] Thomas Kuehn, *Family and gender in Renaissance Italy, 1300-1600* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp.112-114
[88] Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, family, and ritual in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 118-119
[89] "Praeterea in successionibus agnati exeppllunt omnes mulieres quamvis gradu sint proximiores sola sorore et amita quae est in capillo excepta sed nec uxor succedit viro agnatis vel congtais eistentibus" Francisco Berlan, *Liber consuetudinum Mediolani anni MCCXVI*, Ex Bibliothecae Ambrosianae Codice, (1868), p.37 B. The phrase "quae est in capillo" identifies someone still living under the father's house, or in this case, the deceased house, as footnote 8 of the same text clarifies.
[90] David Herlihy, *Medieval households*, Studies in cultural history (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 1985), p.83
[91] Ibid, p. 83

that these families had fewer opportunities to increase their wealth through warfare and plundering and became tied to their lands. Secondly, the church reform movement, and especially its focus on simony, reduced the porosity between lay and ecclesiastical property, removing another source of wealth and stability for these families. This pushed them to avoid dispersing family property and keep their patrimony intact through an increased focus on agnatic inheritance.[92] The development of the *Consorteria*, or a consortium of family businesses from the eleventh century also favoured the rise of agnatic inheritance. This practice envisioned all male heirs inheriting equally and owning land, or towers in cities, in common, as well as taking decisions together and optionally owning shares of each other's business. Again, agnatic inheritance allowed the development of such organisations and became more important because of these organisations. [93] Herlihy therefore saw that the changing economic landscape of Italy from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, coupled with an increased importance of monogamy, promoted the development of agnatic inheritance, which sidelined women inside their families.

Diane Owen Hughes, studying Genoa, also connected a growing patriarchal structure with a weakening of women's rights.[94] In 1143, Genoa abolished the Frankish law of the *tercia*, which granted women a third of their husband's property upon his death. The city also capped the gift that husbands could give to wives upon marriage at 100 Genoese pounds. This gift transferred wealth to the woman rather than to the agnatic line and therefore weakened rather than strengthened a *casata*, because in marriage the men would give wealth to someone extraneous to the family. Instead, the dowry would help the newly established family but would revert to the father in the case of childless death.[95] Consequentially the dowry grew rapidly in importance and became the sole means through which women could access property. In Hughes' view, these legal changes robustly placed noblewomen in subordination to men, as they reduced their primary role to the establishment of family alliances.

Samuel Cohn also found that a focus on the family line led to poorer and less societally active women. He compared last wills from six Italian cities: Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, Siena, Assisi, and Pisa. In Arezzo, Perugia, and, most significantly, Florence, testators heavily regulated the possible use of the inheritance. Often, the testator would demand the building of a monument in honour of the family and forbade heirs to sell family property. Testators excluded women from the inheritance, even in the case of granddaughters, or, when testators did account for their female relatives, they gave them little freedom in the use of the bequeathed wealth and land. By contrast, analysis of Pisa, Siena, and Assisi suggested that testamentary practice focused far less on patrilineage and more on charitable

[92] Ibid, pp.83-88
[93] Ibid pp.88-92
[94] Diane Owen Hughes, "Urban growth and family structure in medieval Genoa," *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 66 (1975), p. 13
[95] Ibid, p.15

projects and provisions for the afterlife. Here, women inherited property more often. Cohn suggests that the greater mendicant influence in these cities led people to focus less on their influence on earth after their death but rather on heavenly things, therefore away from the continuation of the *Casata*.[96] Besides highlighting regional differences in fifteenth-century central Italy, Cohn's study confirms the negative impact focus on dynastic building and agnatic inheritance had on women.

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber also found that Renaissance Florentine women suffered due to the importance of agnatic descent. They wrote an extensive study on the city of Florence through a quantitative analysis of the 1427 Florentine Catasto.[97] By studying the Florentine demographic, the two scholars observed the numerical disparity between men and women, especially during childhood, when men survived to adulthood far more frequently.[98] Fathers preferred male babies; firstly, they could participate in the life of the household and carry forth its name, and secondly, a daughter entailed a large dowry, which fathers at times struggled to afford. Thus, Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber suggested that parents abandoned infant girls more often or sent them into the countryside for nurturing, a locality with higher mortality rates. They also found that women became religious more often than men, and that women of wealthy families tended to marry downward.[99] Furthermore, Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber found that Florentine marriage patterns led to more widows than widowers, as women married in their teens, while men married in their 30s. They suggested that male economic needs, and the need to support the *Casata*, dictated this trend. A man had to establish his own business before he could afford to move out of his paternal house. Given the disparity of marriage ages between men and women, women tended to become widows in their 20s, and they tended not to remarry, which Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber explained was tied to the difficulty of finding a suitable partner in older age.[100]

A greater importance of agnatic descent changed women's role in the family, which, as these studies indicate, limited their participation in the economy and society at large and worsened their status. While different studies focus on different periods, Hughes, Herlihy, Wemple, and McNamara agree that the shift to agnatic inheritance occurred sometime in the eleventh or twelfth century. However, cities placed different importance on the *casata* and on agnatic descent. Cohn demonstrated this for fifteenth-century central Italy. Furthermore, women remained active in cities where a patrilineal focus became more important. In Genoa, although since 1143 women had lost the right to an important source of wealth and influence, they continued to participate fully in the economy, as Angelos demonstrated for the thirteenth century and Smith for the fourteenth. Indeed, Angelos

[96] Samuel Kline Cohn, Jr., *Women in the streets: essays on sex and power in Renaissance Italy* (London; Baltimore, Md;: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp.39-56
[97] David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families : a study of the Florentine catasto of 1427*, Yale series in economic history, (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp.132-138
[98] Ibid, pp.133-134
[99] Ibid, pp.151-152
[100] Ibid, pp. 215,218

indicated that in the early thirteenth century women began participating more frequently in Genoese *Commendas* due to a change in law that eased procedures around such investments.[101]

How did Milanese women fare in the period when agnatic inheritance became generally more important throughout Italy? Firstly, an observation of Milanese legal texts and traditions, and of legal practice between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reveals that agnatic inheritance also increased in importance in this city to the detriment of female property rights. This occurred partially through preventing women from inheriting feudal land, a *feudum*. The *Liber Consuetudinum Mediolanensis*, the earliest collection of Milanese communal laws and the most important of the thirteenth century, stated that, if previously agreed, a male heir could inherit a piece of a *feudum*, and in the absence of a male heir a daughter could also inherit the land, but only temporarily. If she did not marry, then after a certain period, the land would revert to the investor, or lord. If she did marry, the land would go to the husband as a dowry, but at his death, it had to revert to the investor if he died without heirs.[102] When discussing inheritance, the *Liber Consuetudinum* restated the preference for agnatic inheritance multiple times.

Secondly, the rejection of Lombard law in favour of Roman and local law favoured agnatic descent and weakened women's property rights. Lombard law included the clause of the *quarta*, a clause like the Frankish *tercia* discussed by Hughes. This clause dictated that a wife had the right to a fourth of her husband's property, which she could claim at his death. The wife could also claim a part of the goods the husband had sold before his death. The *quarta* was on top of the right the woman had to the dowry, called *faderfio* in Lombard law, and to the wedding gift the husband had to give the wife.[103] These rights gave women power. Firstly, they could access significant land and monetary wealth. Mainoni argued that fourteenth-century Apulian testators did not bequeath their wives goods because they assumed the *quarta* would cover their needs in widowhood.[104] Bertoni observed that in thirteenth-century Paiva, women would use their *quarta* as collateral for obtaining credit. Secondly, the *quarta* gave women a voice in family affairs. Bertoni points out that a husband needed his wife's consent in transactions, especially in large international transactions.[105] If he did not obtain it, the wife could litigate the exchange, especially if the husband had squandered the wealth of the family.[106]

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[101] Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216,", p.303

[102] Berlan, *Liber consuetudinum Mediolani anni MCCXVI* p. 71 section E, rubrica xxix "Et si fæmina ad quam feudum per Successionem vel Investituram pervenit , illud in dotem marito suo dedit , illa defuncta maritum in beneficio non succedit sed ad dominum revertitur si absque filijs decesseri"

[103] For the faderfio: Drew, *The Lombard laws*, p.85. For further discussion on the *quarta* see Manlio Bellomo, *Ricerche sui rapporti patrimoniali tra coniugi: contributo alla storia della famiglia medievale*, vol. 7 (Milano: Giuffrè, 1961), pp.1-25

[104] Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV)," , p.80

[105] Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," , pp.53-55

[106] Ibid, p. 58

While the *quarta* empowered and protected women, it could also create uncertainty in commerce and land exchanges, as it could result in disputes if the husband did not act carefully. Furthermore, litigation could also occur during the inheritance process, in the same way that the transmission of the dowry could create disputes. If the husband did not leave enough wealth to provide for the children and the wife, the woman had to renounce her rights[107] or dispute the inheritance. Furthermore, the *quarta* might have introduced complexity in the formulation of transactions, adding extra steps to a writ of sale and complicating the work of the notaries. In a transaction with only men, the seller would declare that he sold land and had been paid in return. The document would then detail the land sold and include penalties in case either party did not respect the terms of the exchange. A sale with a man and a woman acting together required the paternal relatives of the woman, or a judge, to interrogate her to ensure that she had not suffered violence and had agreed of her own free will to participate in the sale. She also had to declare that she renounced her rights to the land transacted. This process involved more people, and it theoretically required that the husband and wife, or mother and son, agree on the sale, which could limit the freedom of action of the man.

Besides practical issues, the *quarta* contrasted with agnatic descent, as the *tercia* did. Matrimony did not directly channel wealth into the patriarchal family; instead, the wife had control over the management of patriarchal wealth and could remove wealth from the line of agnatic descent. The wealth she inherited through the *quarta* could in part return to her own family or descend to her daughters, rather than her sons.

While no clear rejection of the *quarta* appeared in Milanese laws, evidence exists to suggest the increased dislike for the *quarta* in the city and its diminishing importance. The *Liber Consuetudinum* contains a whole rubric regarding the *quarta*: “Of the action which is given in the matter of the quarta”.[108] The rubric delineates when a woman could claim the *quarta*, specifying that the debts of the husband came before her right of the *quarta* even if he had sold land without the wife’s consent. Manlio Bellomo highlighted the phrase “*Odio quartae”* or “hate of the *quarta*” from this rubric.[109] He argued that this line proves the extent to which this Lombard law had fallen out of favour in the city by the early thirteenth century. In the rubric the writers use the phrase to explain why in a certain situation the wife could not claim the *quarta*. The *Liber* therefore does not eliminate the *quarta* fully, but it limits its applications, especially in its impact on the business of the husband.

[107] Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV)," , p.82

[108] Berlan, *Liber consuetudinum Mediolani anni MCCXVI* ‘De Actione, quae in rem pro quarta datur’, pp. 33-35.

[109] Bellomo, *Ricerche sui rapporti patrimoniali tra coniugi: contributo alla storia della famiglia medievale*, 7, p.9

Changes in the notarial structure of sales and other documents during the twelfth century further suggest that the *quarta* fell into disuse. In an analysis of 1,860 parchments from the twelfth century,[110] I found that during the first half of the twelfth century, between 30 and 50 percent of the documents included actors that followed Lombard law. After 1160 this fell to 20 percent or less. During the thirteenth century, as observed in the parchments studied for this thesis, fewer than one hundred people declared a Lombard descent. The law did not completely disappear from the city, but I found no one declaring Lombard law after 1255, and most actors did not declare any legal affiliation in the thirteenth century. In the same analysis of twelfth-century documents, I tracked the frequency of other customs tied to Lombard law, most notably the *mundualdus.*[111] Before 1160, I found that a woman would declare a *mundualdus* between 50 and 70 percent of the time. This fell to 30 percent or less in the second half of the century. As people identified less with Lombard law and used fewer of its clauses, the use and importance of the *quarta* probably experienced a similar decline. We can observe the opposite phenomenon in cities where Lombard law remained important, like Pavia or Apulian cities.[112] There, the *quarta* remained important, and in Apulia the *mundualdus* also remained important.

Therefore, legal changes in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan suggest that the city experienced a transition to an agnatic mode of inheritance, which, similarly to Genoa, limited the property rights of wives. We can observe the impact of this shift in the participation of women in transactions. In the 5,847 parchments analysed, laypeople appear in 4,256 (73 percent),[113] and women appear in 378 (9 percent) of these, while men appear in 4,156 documents (97 percent). I counted 10,029 actors in total,[114] 518 women (5 percent) and 9,518 (95 percent) men. Women participated in a small percentage of all transactions, and far fewer women appear overall than men.

These numbers do not evenly represent the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I counted 559 documents in the twelfth century; women acted in 156 (28 percent) of these. In the thirteenth century, I counted 3,697 documents, with women acting in 222 (6 percent) of these. Overall, female participation clearly dropped in the thirteenth century, confirming that the legal shifts that favoured agnatic inheritance limited female participation in the market.

[110] These documents appear in the Michele Ansani, "Codice diplomatico della Lombardia medievale," (Universtià di Pavia, 2000), I analysed them for my Master's thesis.

[111] Clause explained on page 22 of this work; in Lombard law each woman had to have a male protector named *mundualdus* when acting in documents.

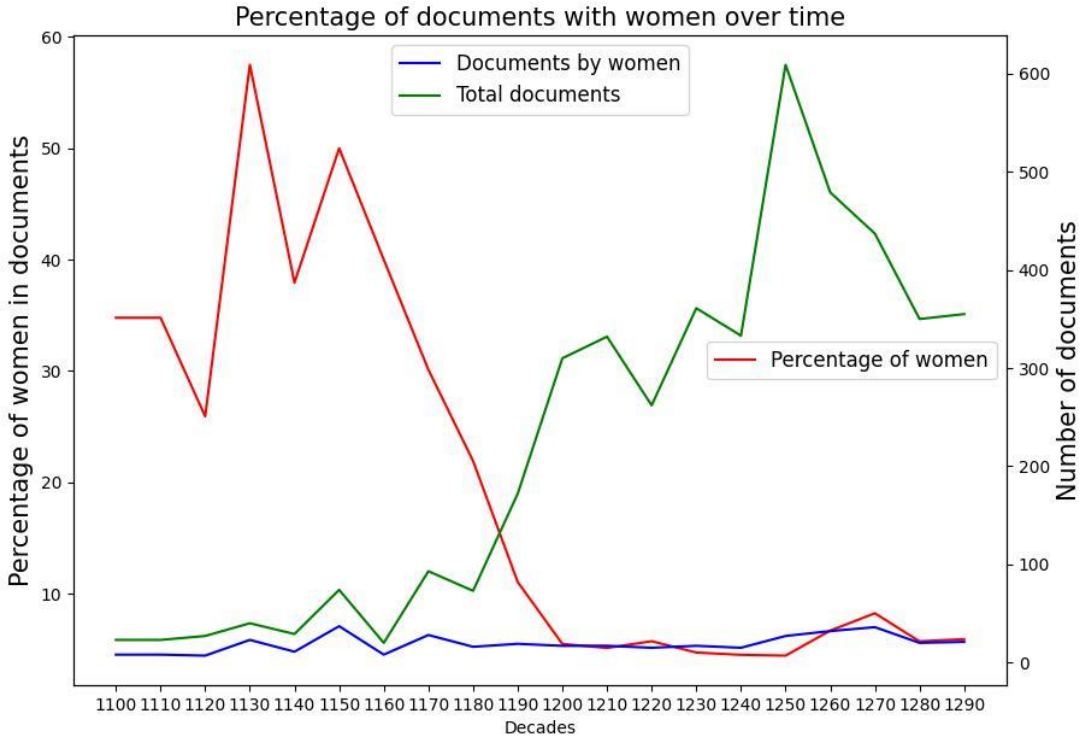
[112] Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," p.54 and Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV)," p. 80

[113] The other documents consist of transactions or disputes between ecclesiastical institutions.

[114] In this number I did not include the number of witnesses, but only the people described by the notary as participating in the document.

This becomes even clearer when looking at how the percentage of women acting in parchments changed through each decade of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as displayed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Percentage of documents with women over time



Women participated in the economy most often in the first half of the twelfth century, acting in between under 30 percent to under 60 percent of the documents. From the second half of the century, they appeared in fewer documents each decade, reaching 10 percent in the 1190s. Throughout the thirteenth century, they appeared in fewer than 10 percent of the documents and generally in only 5 percent. Women appeared in slightly more documents during the third quarter of the thirteenth century, around 8 percent of them. However, their participation decreased again in the last two decades of the thirteenth century. Figure 3 illustrates that towards the end of the twelfth century, the ability of Milanese women to participate in the economy of the city sharply declined, alongside the sharp increase of overall document production in the thirteenth century. The decline continued until around 1220, but then the trend slowed, occasionally even reversing. Therefore, as expected, women's economic prospects worsened with the observed legal changes and the nationwide shift to agnatic preference. However, these shifts did not completely remove women from participating in the economy.

While the change over time matched the expected trend, the absolute number of women found in the documents appears excessively small when compared to the studies on Pavia or Genoa mentioned above. Angelos found women mentioned in 25 percent of Genoese *commendas*, and

Bertoni found that women made up 13 percent of people who borrowed money in Pavia and 3 percent of people who lent money.[115] By contrast, in Milan I found women in only 9 percent of all documents and in 6 percent of thirteenth-century documents. In part, the nature of the sources used for this study explains the difference. All the sources originated from the archives of ecclesiastical institutions, and therefore they recorded information needed by each institution. This does not represent a complete or even balanced picture of the Milanese economy. 66 percent of the collected documents dealt with three specific issues: investitures, land sales, and litigations or disputes. The rest of the documents dealt with around twenty other different issues, including promises, debt payments, wills, donations, and renunciations, but none of these occurred frequently, and all of them related back to the property interests of religious institutions. While laywomen participated in land sales, they had limited participation in investitures and disputes.

All religious institutions frequently rented their lands through investitures, as the 1,031 investitures present in the collection reflect. With investitures, I refer to various kinds of documents sharing a similar purpose: assigning an estate, a property, or a right to someone in exchange for a rent or a promise of service. In modern public consciousness, feudal investiture, where a lord would grant land to a vassal in exchange for military duties, holds most prominence, but feudal investitures represent a small proportion of the investitures in this collection. Instead, institutions frequently conducted *Investiture ad massaritium*, where a person would receive land to cultivate and pay rent in produce or, more rarely, money. I also encountered numerous *investiture locationis* where an institution or a person would rent a house, generally for a monetary rent.[116] One type of investiture, the *investiture ad consultum*, regarded women specifically. The husband would invest his wife with land or money as a guarantee towards her dowry. In the parchments studied, a husband would invest his wife with a *consultum* after he had sold property to which she had some rights. This ensured that she would have enough wealth to survive during her widowhood.

As discussed above, the *Liber Consuetudinum* states that women could neither inherit nor receive feudal investitures. The codex does not exclude women from *investiture ad massaritium* or *ad locationis* equally clearly. Rubric nineteen states that even if a husband appointed the wife as *massaria* of some land, therefore as the holder of an *investiture ad massaritium*, she would only receive the usufruct of the land.[117] This clause does not clearly stop women from receiving

[115] Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216," p. 300, Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," p. 72

[116] Unfortunately, I did not differentiate between these three types of investitures when recording the documents, so I do not have a precise breakdown of these documents. Nonetheless, *investiture ad feudum* occurred most rarely, and *investiture ad massaritium* occurred most frequently.

[117] "Etsi domina, et Massaria , el usufructuaria , ut moris est à marito suo constituatur vel domina tantum vel massaria tantum vel usufructuaria tantum nihil amplius habebit quàm usum fructum" Berlan, *Liber consuetudinum Mediolani anni MCCXVI*, p.37, the rubric discusses last wills, including what a husband can leave the wife.

investitures of this kind, but it suggests that they could not inherit them. However, the documents suggest that either law or custom fully excluded women from these investitures, as they almost never acted in any kind of investiture. They appear in 15 out of the 1,031 investitures (1.4 percent). In the fifteen investitures, women invested land onto someone on six occasions and received land through an investiture nine times. Of these nine times, they received it eight times through *consultum* and only once through an *investiture ad massaritium.*[118] The notary redacting this single investiture does not denote it as exceptional. It simply states that "Lady Agnixia" received an investiture from "the priest Rolandus from the church of San Mercellino." In all the investitures in which women acted, notaries did not mark the presence of a woman as exceptional, describing these women as they described other men. However, one *investiture ad massaritium* out of hundreds does demonstrate the extreme rarity of this occurrence. Therefore, whether for legal or customary limitations, the most frequent type of document ecclesiastical institutions archived did not involve women.

This influenced how frequently women would appear in disputes, which form the third most frequently found type of document. Under the rubric of dispute, I included all documents where a party denounced another and documents where a judge, lay or religious, gave a verdict on a dispute. Often, multiple judges of increasing seniority would deal with the same dispute. Theoretically, women ought to frequently appear in disputes. The *Liber Consuetudinum* did not exclude women from acting in disputes, and neither did Roman or Lombard law. Studies on women in courts in other Italian cities have demonstrated that women did defend their interests through litigation. Samuel Cohn's study on Florentine litigations regarding altercations between individuals in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florence demonstrated that women frequently appeared in Florentine courts.[119] Carol Lansing similarly used the example of a Bolognese woman denouncing her rapist in 1295 as a case study of how women could use the courts effectively.[120] In a study exploring disputes over wealth and land, Rinaldi highlighted that women often went to court to reclaim their dowries in thirteenth-century Bologna.[121] Furthermore, in all contracts studied in this thesis, women selling land or goods swore to not claim the goods in the future, demonstrating that women could initiate litigation in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan. I would therefore expect to find women acting in secular and canonical courts.

However, women only appear in 34 out of 764 disputes (4.4 percent). The lack of women in investitures mostly explains this low participation of women, as often these disputes involved ecclesiastical institutions and their renters. Furthermore, many disputes occurred between an institution and an entire locality, where the heads of households of a locality would litigate the

[118] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, box 434, folder 192, document 4
[119] Cohn, *Women in the streets: essays on sex and power in Renaissance Italy*, pp.16-38
[120] Carol Lansing, "Conflicts Over Gender in Civic Courts," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.118-119
[121] Rinaldi, "Figure femminili nel sistema produttivo bolognese (secoli XIII-XIV)," ,p.105

demands of an institution. Regulatory charters from the Monastero Maggiore specify that the male heads of each household had to participate in such disputes.[122] Indeed, 1,982 of the 9,506 men acting in the documents did so as heads of household in either a dispute or a communal action. Finally, religious institutions had no interest in recording disputes that directly involved laywomen. The archivists of monasteries did not keep records of disputes of dowry reclamation or disputes about insults, rape, and altercations, unless they directly involved the institution itself. So, while women could access the courts, they rarely participated in disputes related to the landed estates of a religious institution.

Therefore, the prevalence of investitures and disputes in the collections studied partially explains the low percentage of women acting in the Milanese economy. However, the documents studied also include many documents of land or property sales where women acted frequently. Under this rubric, I combined normal sales and *carta ad libellum.* Selling land *ad libellum* was equivalent to selling land normally, but it included the payment of a small token rent, for example, one denarius every year. The difference between these two types of sale decreased between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the early twelfth century, notaries clearly differentiated between the two, describing a normal sale as a *carta venditionis* and one at *libellum* as a *carta ad libellum*. Towards the late twelfth century, and especially during the thirteenth century, *carta ad libellum* appeared instead as carta *venditionis ad libellum*. Under the rubric of sales, I also combined all types of sales. Most commonly, an institution would buy land from a layman, but sometimes, instead of land, an institution would acquire houses, tithes, or produce. Women acted in 214 of the 1,020 sales (21 percent) I counted. Therefore, focusing only on land sales reveals that women's participation in the Milanese economy did not differ so greatly from other cities.

On the other hand, the decreased importance of Lombard law impacted women's participation in sales. Figure 4 below demonstrates this by plotting the percentage of sales conducted with women for every decade of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

[122] Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese nel secolo 13. : l'amministrazione della proprietà fondiaria del Monastero Maggiore*, p.90

Figure 4: Percentage of women in sales over time

Until 1190, women acted in between 45 and 75 percent of sales found. Then, their participation fell to less than 20 percent in the 1190s and then declined to around five percent by the 1250s. After a spike of participation in the 1260s, when they acted in over 20 percent of sales, women participated in only 10 percent of sales in the last thirty years of the century. Therefore, while women sold property far more frequently than they received investitures or acted in disputes, the decrease in property rights also decreased the frequency with which women acted in sales. This becomes clear when observing the sum of denari transacted in each sale. Laypeople transacted a total of 11,853,935 denari (pennies), or £49,391 4s 15d, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sales where women acted amounted to a total of 1,780,832 denari, or £7,420 1s 12d, 15 percent of all the denari transacted. However, this percentage changed drastically during the period, as Figure 5 demonstrates.

Figure 5: Percentage and sum of denari transacted by women over time.

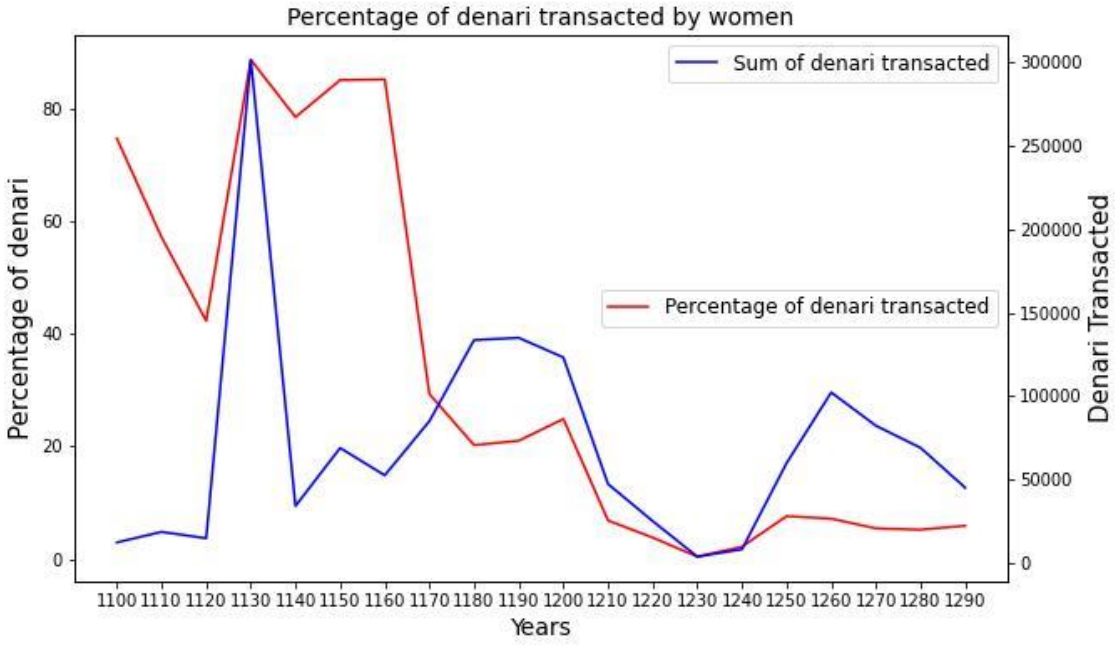


Figure 5 suggests that while women participated in most sales until the 1160s and still acted frequently in sales until the 1180s, the value of the sales they participated in decreased before then. In the 1170s, sales in which women participated accounted for 20 percent of all denari transacted, while in the previous fifty years, sales in which women participated accounted for around eighty percent of all denari transacted. The decline continued in the thirteenth century, when women transacted consistently less than 15 percent of all denari transacted. Women still participated in transactions totalling between 5,000 and 10,000 denari every decade, but the overall market had buoyed in value, and their participation had become increasingly negligible.

Women acting independently.

The overview of laywomen's activities in the Milanese economy suggests that women lived in clear subordination to their family, and their ability to participate in the economy worsened between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, scholarship has not only focused on the subordination and worsening of women's status in medieval society but also on what women could do and how they circumvented societal limits.

Thomas Kuehn, through his studies on the legal structure of Renaissance Italy, has questioned the negative impact of an agnatic structure on women. Kuehn's first major work, published in the 1990s, analysed the impact of Florentine law both on family and on women.[123] Firstly, he demonstrated that although the husband controlled the property of the wife, he did not have *patria*

[123] Thomas Kuehn, *Law, family & women: toward a legal anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp.1-20

podesta over her.[124] This remained with the father until his death or until he emancipated her. In early imperial Rome, the husband could have *patria podesta* over his wife in a specific type of marriage. This meant that the wife became like a daughter to the husband and fell fully under his jurisdictional control, which disadvantaged the woman. Since the later centuries of the Roman empire, the *patria podesta* stopped transferring upon marriage. [125] In medieval Florence this resulted in the wife needing to seek paternal permission for certain transactions, and it stopped the father from transferring certain types of properties to his daughter, unless he emancipated her. Kuehn argues that the *patria podesta* maintained the connection between father and daughter even after marriage, which meant that a daughter did not become estranged from her own paternal family, and she continued to play an important role in the family of origin. If the father found himself in financial difficulties, he could emancipate his daughter and transfer to her his landed property. This allowed him to escape debtors and save family land.[126] With this work, Kuehn highlighted that married women in fifteenth-century Florence did not entirely depend on their husbands but rather connected their paternal and their married family. Through this, she could have an active role and have opportunities to act for her own interests, beyond those of either her paternal or marital family.

In *Family and Gender in the Italian Renaissance,* Kuehn addressed the rise of agnatic inheritance and men's desire to establish a *casata.*[127] He also argued that this ideal often diverged in practice.[128] Firstly, a large amount of wealth entered a newly created family through the dowry of the wife. An essential building block of a family did not descend through the agnatic line. Secondly, cognatic lines of inheritance remained important; when inheritance could not pass through the male line, the cognatic line could inherit. Although Kuehn dealt with an older period, he highlighted that while laws could limit women's power and subordinate them to male interests, these same laws could allow women to act independently. I expect to find that in twelfth and thirteenth century Milan, women could occasionally act independently despite the limitations on property management and their general dependence on male relatives to act.

Carol Lansing investigated how women could act outside of the patriarchal structure of their families by becoming religious. She focused on Umiliana de Cerchi, who in widowhood decided to sidestep the new marital plans of her father and became an anchoress in a room of the family tower. Lansing found that other noblewomen chose this path, and she argued that this choice gave them freedom.[129] Not only noble Florentine women sought to live a private religious life. The movement of

[124] Ibid, pp.197-211
[125] Herlihy, *Medieval households*, pp.8-9
[126] Thomas Kuehn, *Law, family & women : toward a legal anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 197-211
[127] Ibid, pp. 31, 57
[128] Ibid, p. 32
[129] Carol Lansing, *The Florentine magnates: lineage and faction in a medieval commune* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 98-99

anchoresses spread throughout Europe between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Eleonora Rava found that these quasi-religious women had an important place in medieval Pisa, as they frequently received small donations from local men and women. [130] By embracing a personal calling to the religious life, women could act independently outside a family framework.

In Milan, various examples survive of women who acted outside of direct family influence or acted for their own interest. Firstly, laywomen drafted wills and donations, where they could direct the fate of their property with greater freedom than other transactions. In the 128 wills and donations involving laypeople, women acted in 38 of them (30 percent). This makes up 10 percent of all the documents women acted in. Therefore, women participated in Milanese society in large part by donating or bequeathing their possessions to religious institutions and to members of their families. By contrast, male donations and wills make up 2 percent of all the documents men acted in. In absolute numbers, men acted in more donations, but this formed a smaller part of how men engaged in the Milanese economy. This reinforces the difference between what men and women could do. Women generally relinquished land and goods by selling or donating them. Men engaged in a far wider range of actions, and alienations of any kind formed a minority of what they did. However, through donations, women could influence their communities and perhaps act outside strict family confines. As Rava highlighted, the donations of women especially benefitted female anchoresses, creating a sort of female fellowship.[131] Giuliana Albini found that in female wills from various thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian cities, women tended to favour the female members of their families, as well as poorer women around them, or female servants. In general, Albini also found that through wills, women could impose their own will, favouring mutual support with other women.[132] From the few surviving documents found in Milan detailing donations made by women, we cannot conclude that women favoured female endeavours; however, the surviving donations demonstrate that Milanese women could and did bequeath their property through donations, which formed an avenue for independent action.

A wider example of female independence comes from focusing on the actions of widows. Widows occupy an ambivalent place in studies on medieval women. As discussed, widows faced important challenges. However, in widowhood a woman had more freedom than in other stages of life. She could become the head of her family; she had fewer legal and societal limitations; she could access significant wealth through either the *quarta* or the dowry; and she could choose to leave the secular world altogether.

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[130] Eleonora Rava, "Le testatrici e le recluse: il fenomeno della reclusione urbana nei testamenti delle donne pisane (secoli XII-XIV)," in *Margini di libertà: Testamenti femminili nel Medioevo. Atti del convegno internazionale (Verona, 23-25 ottobre 2008)*, ed. Maria Clara Rossi, Biblioteca dei Quaderni di storia religiosa (Verona: Cierre, 2010), p.323

[131] Ibid, p.316

[132]Giuliana Albini, "Pauperismo e solidarietà femminile nell'Italia settentrionale (secoli XIII-XIV)," *Storia Delle Donne* 13, 1 (2018), p.119 -123

The documents of this study provide various examples of the independence of widows. Widows appear in 111 documents, and in around half of these, widows acted independently, without any male supervision. They bought and sold land, they received rents and payments, they participated in disputes, they acted as part of their community, they divided land amongst themselves, they invested lay and religious people with land, they produced wills, and they donated land. On one occasion, discussed above, a widow even received an investiture. All these transactions occurred only a handful of times each, and their rarity suggests that widows did not consistently act in these ways. However, the existence of these documents demonstrates that widows could theoretically widely engage with the Milanese economy and were not limited to relinquishing lands through sales and donations.

The documents demonstrate that while widows engaged most frequently in exceptional actions, women in different stages of life also could act in exceptional ways. Three case studies highlight a range of actions that women could perform with limited or no male supervision. In a document of 1235, from the archive of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, a married woman renounced her rights to a tithe. The initial part of the parchments read, "Lady Erena, the daughter and heir of Petri Sansoni, and now the wife of Arorario de Arorari from Borgo Porta Orientale in the city of Milan, made a sale to Guidotto Busteche with the consent of her husband. This sale was carried out under the permission and authority of Guglielmo de Casate, the royal emissary, who questioned her and granted his approval according to custom."[133]

Similar to what was observed in the case study of Agnesina, Erena needed the permission of two men to conduct her sale. However, Erena did not act as part of the family and for her family's interest, but for herself. She sold to Guidotto "the whole tithe and right to the tithe (which she inherited from her father)[134]" of one piece of land for the price of 15s of Milanese coins.[135] She did not do so to repay a family debt or as part of a larger transaction conducted by her husband. She sold her land because she inherited a right which she either did not want to keep or could not keep as a woman, and she managed to obtain a small sum of money from her inheritance. We do not know what Erena did with her money; perhaps it went back into the marital family, or she saved it for future needs. This document, though, illustrates that married women acted in their own name, even though they needed consent from multiple sources. We cannot know whether she acted in her own interest, but she did not act as part of a family.

[133] "Venditionem ad proprium fecit domina Erena filia et heres Petri Sansoni, et nunc uxor Arorarii de Arorariis de burgo porta orientale civitatis Mediolani, ipso viro suo eidem Erene consentiente et per consensum et licentiam et auctoritatem et interrogationem Gulielmi de Casate missi regis qui eam interrogavit et ei consensit et licentiam et auctoritatem prestitit ut moris est, Guidoto Busteche.", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 316, document 14

[134] "Tota decima et iure decimationis", Ibid

[135] "Accepisse et habuisse a suprascripto guidoto solidus quindecem tertiolarum", Ibid

Erena appears in another transaction that the notary composed on the same parchment and on the same day. This read "[Lady Erena] renounced all her rights and agreed to not litigate the transaction in the future."[136] While the formula itself is standard, it demonstrates that Erena had had a strong claim on the tithe she inherited from her father, even though tithes represented an invested right, which women could not theoretically keep. The potential litigation from Erena suggests that in practice women could hold invested rights and defend their claims in courts.

A transaction from 1274 highlights how women could act outside the land market. This transaction occurred between Bellacara, the daughter of a Milanese judge, and Giovanni de Pesana. The beginning of the transaction states: "Iohannes de Pesana acknowledged that he received a cow and a calf from Domina Bellacara, the daughter of the late Dominus Iacobi Menclotii, a judge from the city of Milan."[137] The transaction with Bellacara differs from most other transactions recorded. Bellacara acts completely alone. While the notary refers to her as 'daughter of …', her father had passed, and she acted without his permission. She had not married, as the notary does not mention her husband either in the present or the past tense, and she did not receive permission from other family members, nor did she receive permission from a judge or royal emissary.

This transaction did not involve the land market directly, as Bellacara engaged in a transaction of livestock, an important part of the Milanese economy. From the chronicle of Bonvesin della Riva, we know that Milanese people consumed a very large amount of meat daily.[138] Bellacara acted in a market that appeared to have different rules than the normal land market. She could act without permission even though she was not a widow and managed to set up a relatively complex business where she rented the cow and calf in exchange for money and part of the produce of the animals. Perhaps the cattle market gave more freedoms to women, as regulators might have considered it less vital to the income of the city or to the inheritance of family lines. Unfortunately, the lack of documents discussing the cattle market, an issue Grillo also highlighted, does not allow us to quantitatively assess female participation in this market.[139] However, the action of Bellacara suggests that Milanese women could act in the cattle market with greater freedom than they could in the land market.

The last case study details the actions of the anchoress Caracossa. Caracossa acted in three different documents: in two she bought houses, and in a third she invested the seller with their house for a rent. The first document, redacted in 1261, reads: "Lanfranco Belenzono and his sons Iacomello and Symonetto, from Porta Comacina in the parish of San Protaso sell and transfer ownership of a

[136] "Finem et refutationem et totius sui iuris remisionem et pactum de non agendo et non petendo fecit", Ibid
[137] "Confessus fuit et contentus iohannes de pesana … recipisse et habuisse … a domina bellacara filia quondam domini iacobi menclotii iudicis civitatis mediolani porte horientale vacha una cum vitulo uno", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 490, folder 211f, document 558
[138] Bonvesin Da la Riva, *Le meraviglie di Milano*, trans. Giuseppe Pontiggia (Milano: Bompiani, 2015), p.61
[139] Paolo Grillo, "Alcune note sull'allevamento del bestiame a Milano nella seconda metà del Duecento," *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica - Nuova Serie* 1 (2019), p.162

house to Lady Caracossa de Berradagio, who is enclosed at the walls of Sant'Apollinare. The property is in the parish of Saint Protaso."[140] The notary described Caracossa as *morata*, which I interpreted as "murata" and translated as "enclosed", and indicates an anchoress, or someone who lived in the monastery, but not as a nun. This places Caracossa in a liminal place between being a laywoman and a religious woman. It does not appear that Caracossa did not follow a specific religious rule, like a normal nun would. This began to change in the thirteenth century as the papacy attempted to regularise anchoresses by integrating them into an existing order or creating new houses for them.[141] This attempt did not successfully regulate or recognise the great variety of religious people that had a private and individual experience of reclusion.[142] Caracossa appear to belong to these religious who had not been encapsulated in a specific rule. She lived in Santa Apollinare, the major Milanese Damianite house, but she remained an independent recluse. This means that she lived in a 'safe' place while not fully following Franciscan rule.

Her business actions demonstrate that she did not embrace the Franciscan spirit of poverty, as it appears that she kept for herself a significant amount of wealth. She spent £37 in the transaction above to buy a house in the city in 1261, and in 1270 she proceeded to buy the neighbouring house for the same price. She had at her disposal at least £74, which amounts to 17,760 denari. In comparison, Sant'Apollianre spent 419,399 denari throughout the thirteenth century. So Caracossa, in less than ten years, spent 4.2% of what the second wealthiest nunnery in the city spent in seventy. Furthermore, Caracossa did not act for the nunnery and rented at least one of the houses she bought, evidenced by the second transaction conducted in 1261. Following the original acquisition of the house, Caracossa rented to Lanfranco the house she had bought from him.[143] The sellers agreed to pay £3 a year for the house. Nothing specifies that these rents went to Sant'Apollinare, and so I assume that the revenues of the acquisitions remained with Caracossa.

The three documents where Caracossa acts demonstrate that she played a role in the neighbourhood of San Protaso. In the first two documents, Caracossa interacted with Lanfranco Belenzono and his sons. She bought their house and then rented it to them. This series of events resembles the pattern of religious institutions buying the land of indebted farmers and then investing the land on the same farmers. Perhaps Lanfranco and his sons faced crippling debt and had to sell

[140] "Venditionem et datum ad proprium fecerunt Lafranchus Belenzonus et Iocomellus et Symonetus filii eius de porta comacina de parocchia sancti protaxi... in domina Caracossam de Berradagio que morata ad sanctam apollinarem. Nominative de domo una ... iacente in parrochiam sancti protaxi...", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 359, document 99

[141] Anna Benvenuti Papi, "Donne religiose nella Firenze del Due-Trecento; appunti per una ricerca in corso," *Publications de l'École Française de Rome* 97 (1987 1987), p.49

[142] Simone Allegria, "Costituzioni sinodali diocesane e reclusione volontaria in Italia centrale tra Due e Trecento. Qualche riflessione," *Quaderni di storia religiosa medievale* 1, no. gennaio-giugno 2021 (2021), p.150

[143] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 359, parchment 41

their house, and Caracossa stepped in to help. This suggests that the Belenzono family, and perhaps the whole San Protaso neighbourhood, knew the recluse and sought her for financial support.

The transaction of 1270 provides further evidence of the close connection between Caracossa and the Belenzono family and of Caracossa's influence in the neighbourhood. The transaction occurred between "Lady Iacoba, daughter of the once Alberto Bellenzono and sister and testamentary heiress of the once lady Yuilla"[144] and Caracossa. Caracossa bought the house of Iacoba, which, as the document reveals, neighboured the house of Lanfranco. Caracossa bought two houses from members of the Bellenzono family, both of which happened to be in the San Protaso neighbourhood. No investiture or rent agreement follows the acquisition of 1270, but Caracossa might have set up the same arrangement with Iacoba as she had with Lanfranco. Whether Caracossa received rent from both houses or from only one, she remained involved in the lives of the Belenzono family even after the acquisitions, and she certainly remained a landlord in the neighbourhood. This involvement of Caracossa with a specific neighbourhood resembles what Eleonora Rava observed for Pisan anchoresses but demonstrates the opposite dynamic. Rather than receiving support from her community, Caracossa acted as a source of support for a community. Nonetheless, it appears that anchoresses could hold a prominent place in urban neighbourhoods in Milan as well.

Caracossa's freedom of action resembles that of Bellacara. Both women acted fully alone and had substantial wealth at their disposal. Neither engaged in the land market directly, as Caracossa bought houses instead of land and Bellacara acted in the cattle market. Both engaged in complex market transactions that ensured a future income from their property. Bellacara rented her cattle, while Caracossa bought houses to rent them. Both women could act with freedom when they participated in markets not directly connected to the land.

Erena, Bellacara, and Caracossa represent three living examples of Milanese women who, despite changing laws and an overall culture of female subordination to men, acted independently, selling, buying, and renting properties and goods with little or no male oversight. These three cases do not demonstrate that women frequently acted with such freedom. However, they demonstrate that women did not ubiquitously submit to men and could have an active role in Milanese economy and society.

Conclusion

The way Milanese women could act in their societies closely resembles what wider scholarship had observed for the rest of Italy and Europe before, during, and after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Milanese women generally acted as part of a family framework. Notaries identified almost all the women who appear in thousands of private parchments found in the Milanese Archivio di Stato in relation to their families, most often describing women as wives and widows.

[144] "Domina Iacoba filia quondam Albertum Bellenzoni... et soror et heres testamentaria quondam domine yullie...", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 359, parchment 41

When acting in the land market, women required permission from men, something which remained true throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Men did not share women's dependency on the family. While notaries identified around 25 percent of active men with their family, using descriptors as *filius* or *fratres*, most men appeared as single units, acting independently from their families even when participating in the same transaction. Furthermore, only women required permission to act throughout their lives; men had almost no limitations on their actions once emancipated.

Through their families, women could access wealth and property. In twelfth-century Milan, this occurred through the dowry and the *quarta*. With this wealth and these property rights, women had the chance to participate in the Milanese economy and could avoid destitution in widowhood. These rights, especially the *quarta*, gave women some control over their husbands' decisions, as wives had to approve the sales of most property, and therefore they would have to act alongside their husbands.

However, Milanese women's access to wealth and their role in the family changed over time. Legal changes, such as the abolition of the *quarta* and the codification of limitations on inheritance found in the *Liber Consuetudinum Mediolani* of 1216, diminished how much wealth wives could expect from their husbands and what they could inherit from their fathers. This change corresponded to the general shift to agnatic inheritance visible throughout Italy from the period. A chronological quantification of women's action in society further demonstrates the deterioration of their place in the Milanese economy. Towards the end of the twelfth century, the presence of women in documents moved from around 30 percent to less than 10 percent. The change becomes even clearer when tracking women's participation in the sale of land and other rights. In the 1150s women appeared in almost 80 percent of the documents of sales, while in the 1250s they appeared in fewer than 5 percent of these. Similarly, in the 1140s, 50s, and 60s, the sum of denari transacted in sales involving women made up between 70 and 80 percent of all denari transacted through sales. In the 1250s this fell to less than 5 percent. While the documents studied only provide a very specific metric for women's involvement in the economy and society of Milan, they reveal that Milanese legal changes, and the connected transition to an agnatic society, strongly limited women's participation in this aspect of the economy.

However, the documents also revealed instances of women acting with great independence and various occasions of women who continued to participate in the economy despite the legal and societal changes. Wives and widows appeared in many documents throughout the thirteenth century, and widows occasionally acted without significant male oversight. Furthermore, women commissioned wills and other donations. Some unique cases exist of women acting independently at different stages in life in various transactions. One participated in the cattle market, one acted as a landlord, and one managed land rights.

The sources used to conduct this study strongly limit the extent to which we can track women's activity. Not only do these sources mostly discuss the land market, but they do so from the

perspective of ecclesiastical institutions. These institutions kept documents related to their landed interests; therefore, over 1,000 documents detail investiture contracts with the laity, and over 700 detail disputes between ecclesiastical institutions and other parties, often laypeople or entire localities. In both these types of documents, women appear extremely rarely, between 1 and 4 percent of the time. Milanese women did not receive investitures from ecclesiastical institutions, and therefore they did not participate in disputes related to these investitures or other issues connected to land management and ownership. Women only participated frequently in documents of sales, but even these represented only the land market, as it appears that religious institutions had less frequently recorded interactions with the cattle market.

The specificity of the source might explain why the involvement of women in the Milanese economy appears so limited when compared to other neighbouring cities, especially Pavia or Genoa. In the early thirteenth century, Genoese women acted in 25 percent of commendas, while women from mid-thirteenth century Pavia appear in 16 percent of lending and borrowing contracts. Milanese women appear in 20 percent of sales in the 1260s, but in less than 10 percent of sales throughout the rest of the thirteenth century. It would then appear that Milanese women participated in the economy slightly less often than women of other cities in the same period. However, the disparity in documents used makes a direct comparison difficult, and this study cannot conclude that Milanese women participated less frequently in the economy than women of neighbouring cities. However, it does appear that Milan embraced aspects of agnatic traditions faster than other cities, rejecting the quarta faster than Pavia and much faster than the Apulian regions.

While the sources used limit what we can discover about women's lives, they also provide an avenue for further quantitative research on medieval laywomen. While I studied many documents related to Milan, especially from the thirteenth century, the Archivio di Stato contains thousands more documents related to institutions in the Milanese countryside and institutions from other Lombard cities from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Exploring these other parchments would allow us to compare the female situation in different cities.

Beyond expanding the research across space, the surviving documents in the Archivo di Stato of Milan would allow us to expand this research through time. The archive has thousands of documents of the same nature that relate to the fourteenth century. This research has revealed that women participated far less in the thirteenth-century Milanese economy than they did in the twelfth. How did this trend continue in the fourteenth century? Milan went through large political changes at the turn of the century with the establishment of the Visconti Signoria. Did this change further diminish women's ability to act in the city? Furthermore, other city archives across Italy contain far more documents originating from ecclesiastical institutions from the fourteenth century than from preceding centuries. This expands the comparative possibility of a study of ecclesiastical parchments from only Lombard cities to Italy overall. This study lays the groundwork for a quantitative study of

private documents originating from ecclesiastical institutions, which have until now received less attention than they deserve.

The current chapter focused on laywomen, but laywomen only appear in a small percentage of all the documents studied. Abbesses and their institutions appeared far more frequently. Therefore, the rest of the thesis will focus on religious women in Milan and how their ability to act differed compared to that of religious men.

Chapter 2: Did abbesses control their nunneries?

An historiographical overview

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a religious vocation could provide men with a spiritually fulfilling life and often a lucrative career. Most of the saints of the period came from the clergy, demonstrating the possibility for a rich spiritual life. The Church controlled, through a variety of institutions, a great deal of land, which allowed religious people to access large levels of wealth. Becoming a bishop, an abbot, or even the rector of a parish often bestowed economic and political power. While men held the most important positions in the hierarchy of the Church, women could also become enriched in all ways by entering a nunnery. Some suggest that women mostly made inroads in medieval society through their participation in religious life. Daniel Bornstein, in the introduction to *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, stated: 'Active participation in religious life (…) offered women access to power in all its forms, power that was otherwise denied them.'[145] Here Bornstein suggested two potentially controversial points. Firstly, he suggests that outside of religious life, women did not have access to power. Scholarship on laywomen demonstrates that outside of religious life, women did access power, and the findings of the previous chapter suggest that, albeit infrequently, Milanese laywomen could have economic power too. Secondly, he expressed great confidence in the possibilities created by religious life. The rest of the thesis aims to test this confidence.

Scholarship on religious women has highlighted many areas where women held power, often focusing on the leader of a female institution, generally an abbess. An abbess had the highest level of authority a woman could have in the Church. Johnson stated '[an abbess] rule[d] over the convent as an absolute authority to her nuns, lord to her tenants, feudal vassal to her secular overlord, and equal to the abbots of her order.'[146] She then described a few examples of French abbesses strongly enmeshed in the management of their institutions. In one, a disagreement over a land boundary had arisen between a local lord and the nunnery of Notre-Dame in Saintes in 1150. The intermediaries of the two parties met at the boundary to clarify the dispute. This escalated into a physical conflict. The abbess, present at the meeting to verify that all would go well, stepped in to stop the fight, but the lord's steward pushed her to the ground and insulted her.[147] The abbess physically participated in the management and defence of her nunnery. This implies that she also had an intimate knowledge of the estates of her nunneries and its material needs. She did not simply delegate her business to an agent, and instead actively worked alongside her agent.

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[145] Bornstein, D. and Rusconi, R. (1996) *Women and religion in medieval and Renaissance Italy. Women in culture and society* Chicago; London, University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-2

[146] Johnson, P. (1991) *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 166

[147] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession*, pp. 167-168

Similarly involved abbesses existed throughout Europe. Another dispute from Barcelona, analysed by Linda McMillin, highlights the power an abbess could have vis-à-vis the local ecclesiastical hierarchy during the thirteenth century.[148] The Barcelonan nunnery of Sant Pere de les Puellas had the right to appoint the parish priest of the church of Santa Maria of Montemelò and also had the right to some of the income from that church. For 15 years the priest who presided over Montemelò also presided over the church of a nearby village, under the jurisdiction of the Barcelonan bishop. At the death of this priest, the bishop saw an opportunity to extend his influence over Montemelò and attempted to appoint his own priest over both churches, ignoring the rights of the nunnery. The abbess objected to the bishop's action and went to Montemelò before the newly appointed priest could arrive and locked the doors of the church. This began a difficult, and at times violent, dispute between the bishop and the nuns, which lasted forty years, eventually resulting in the victory of Sant Pere. The abbess of Sant Pere once again demonstrated a physically active role in defending her nunnery. She also demonstrated that an abbess had the power to withstand the bullying of a bishop, even in the matter of appointing clergymen.

San Zaccaria, the most important Venetian nunnery, provides a final example of the type of power an abbess could hold. Founded in the ninth century, it had close ties to the Doge of Venice, enjoying his protection and functioning as a mausoleum for various Doges.[149] This placed the nunnery in a position of political importance, alongside other key monastic institutions of the city. Yet, in the twelfth century, the power structure in Venice changed. It shifted from a close collaboration between the Doge and monastic institutions to a greater prominence of communal institutions, which limited the power of the Doge and large monastic institutions.[150] These institutions lost their influence on the politics of the city. Anna Rapetti describes how this did not occur for San Zaccaria.[151] The nunnery managed to tie itself to the reformist movement of the period, and more importantly to the papacy. This allowed it to remain close to the city's government, as the abbess acted as mediator between the interests of the city, its leaders, and the papacy. Furthermore, thanks to the lands it possessed on the border between Venice and Verona, San Zaccaria had a role in mediating conflict between the two cities. Rapetti not only identified how the nunnery remained relevant, but also highlighted the key role the abbess played in this success. The abbess Gertrude, elected in 1151, allowed the nunnery to navigate this transitionary political environment.[152] Rapetti suggests that Gertrude had an active decision-making role in the monastery. Following Gertrude, abbesses came from local Venetian

[148] McMillin, L. (1992) 'Gender and monastic autonomy in thirteenth-century Barcelona: abbess vs. bishop', *Journal of Medieval History,* 20(18), pp. 267-278

[149] Carraro, S. (2019) 'Dominae in claustro: San Zaccaria tra politca, società e religione nella Venezia altomedievale', *Reti Medievali Rivista,* 20, pp. 376-377

[150] Rapetti, A. (2019) 'Uscire dal chiostro. Iniziative di riforma e percorsi di autonomia di un monastero femminile (Venezia, secolo XII)', *Reti Medievali Rivista,* 20, p.129

[151] Rapetti, 'Uscire dal chiostro', pp.130-150

[152] Ibid, pp.134-135

nobility, and they managed to use their family connections to benefit the nunnery, highlighting the key role abbesses could have as sources of patronage and political influence.

These examples corroborate Johnson's argument, however single examples do not need to represent the general experience of abbesses and other female religious leaders. As Rapetti argued, San Zaccaria in Venice was an exception, while generally 'Female monasteries experienced, during the twelfth and thirteenth century, more stringent forms of control, from central and local ecclesiastical authorities […] and of lay ones in the urban environment.'[153] Female religious institutions faced structural limitations that limited the range of actions of an abbesses could do vis-à-vis male leaders.

Enclosure represents one of the most significant limitations female religious institutions faced, especially regarding their ability to manage the lands of the nunneries. The rule of enclosure did not impact only female monastics but applied to male ones too. For example, the benedictine rule, which regulated the life of Benedictine monastics and formed the basis for many other orders, indicates that a religious should not wonder, and should remain in the monastery. The rule also indicates that if required, a religious can leave the monastery after having obtained the permission of their superior.[154] Furthermore, this kind of enclosure did not apply to all religious men and women but to monastics and other specific orders. Canons, canonesses, and the secular clergy did not follow any enclosure. The rule of Saint Augustine, which governed canons and canonesses, does not discuss any specific rule of enclosure but states in the fourth chapter of the rule, "Whenever you leave the house, go together; wherever you are going, stay together."[155]. Canons and canonesses could leave the house, but only accompanied. There was no explicit need to have permission from the superior. Most importantly though, the rule that canons and canonesses followed did not differ in this sense. Theoretically then, religious women, if belonging to a Benedictine or Augustinian tradition, and whether they were abbesses or simple nuns, should not have faced a stricter rule of enclosure than religious men. Nor should abbesses have faced stricter limitations than abbots in the management of their monastery.

However, at multiple times in the middle ages the hierarchy of the church attempted to enforce a more stringent rule of enclosure on religious women specifically. For example, during the reforms of Louis the Pius, Benedictine nuns had to follow a strict enclosure. Steven Vanderputten, analysing the impacts of these reforms in Lotharingia, found that remote nunneries had to move to urban locations as they could no longer leave their monasteries to conduct necessary business and

[153] Ibid, pp.127-128

[154] *The Rule of Our Most Holy Father St. Benedict, Patriarch of Monks*, Edition of 1638 ed. (London: Washbourne, 1875), Chapter 50, explains how those brethren sent on a journey should behave while on a journey, Chapter 67 explains how those who are sent on a journey should behave before and after the journey is complete.

[155]George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, Latin Texts and English Translations, (Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1990), p. 112

required more local support. [156]Overall, Vanderputten found that the Carolingian reform had a significant impact on the life of female monasteries. The reforms of Lous also officially regulated the lives of canons and canonesses. Canons and canonesses did not live in a monastery and did not need to follow the rule of enclosure and could own possessions. Therefore, the Carolingian reforms attempted to have a more stringent rule of enclosure for monastic nuns but did not impose the rule on all religious women.[157]

This changed in 1298 with the decretal *Periculoso* from Boniface VIII. The decretal made it universal that all nuns of all orders ought to follow a very strict enclosure, and even the abbess ought to not leave the cloister for any reason beyond the gravest emergency. The pope did not distinguish between nuns, addressing the decretal to "… nuns collectively and individually both, both at present and in future, of whatsoever community or order…".[158] The pope urged lords to accept fealty from the abbess for any land she may hold under their jurisdiction from an agent sent by her. While *Periculoso* did not tread on new theological grounds, it placed far greater emphasis on strictly adhering to the rule of cloister than any other document before or after.[159] *Periculoso* had in reality a limited impact on nunneries because it received important legal challenges and was often ignored on the grounds that it forced nuns to obey vows they had not taken. Furthermore, it would have had a large economic impact, which many nunneries could not sustain.[160] However, the decretal of 1298 had precedents, and since the twelfth century various orders had increased the strictness of their enclosure rule, like the Gilbertine nuns, or received a strict rule of enclosure like the Clarissians and Damianites.[161] Boniface decretal can be seen as the culmination of a growing push for all nuns to follow a strict rule of enclosure.

Despite the potentially stricter rule of enclosure, abbesses and their male counterparts ought to have had the same degree of control when managing their institutions. It was they, with the occasional consultation of their communities, who decided how to manage the wealth of their monasteries and who had the ultimate authority over the life of the community. This chapter aims to test whether this theoretical equality held, despite the different pressures experienced by female leaders. However, no clear unit exits to measure and compare the level of control a leader had over their institution. This chapter focuses on the use of agents by religious leaders to manage the

[156] Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries: The Ambiguous Identity of Female Monasticism, 800–1050*, p.37
[157] Ibid, p.14-15
[158] Brundage and Makowksi, "Enclosure of nuns: the decretal Periculoso and its commentators," p.154. The article of Brudnage and Makowksi contains a full translation of the decretal at pages 154-155.
[159] Ibid, p.148
[160] Makowski, *English Nuns and the Law in the Middle Ages: Cloistered Nuns and their Lawyers, 1293-1540*, p. 21
[161] Jean Leclercq, " Il monachesimo femminile nei secoli XII e XIII," in *Movimento religioso femminile e francescanesimo nel secolo XIII: atti del VII Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 11-13 ottobre 1979* (Assisi: Società internazionale di studi francescani 1980), pp.83-85

economic life of an institution, especially regarding landed wealth. The use of agents features frequently in the study of leadership in religious institutions.

Anne Lester, studying northern French Cistercian nunneries in the thirteenth century, argued that in other important decisions, such as land acquisitions, abbesses did not have absolute control. Instead, abbesses acted alongside the whole community of nuns and lay-brothers when making managerial decisions. Furthermore, the abbess cooperated with her lay-brothers, clerics, and agents to 'navigate changes in secular administration'. Lester highlighted that 'for lesser matters concerning day-to-day administration, Cistercian nuns often relied on male clerics with ties to their convents.[162]

Similarly, in a study of the Monastero Maggiore of Milan, Elisa Occhipinti argued

'We have seen previously that the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore – but this certainly occurred also in other monasteries – gave to their family of origin a role of primary importance when they assumed power, giving therefore to them the means to impose a certain line of conduct in the administration of the monastic institution, certainly to their own interest'.[163]

She envisioned that abbesses gave patronage through their families by using relatives as agents, which simultaneously allowed the family to control the institution. In an article from 2014, Occhipinti argued a similar point for Santa Margherita, a smaller Milanese nunnery, while studying the development of the DeGrassi family. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Colomba DeGrassi became abbess of Santa Margherita, and from this point onwards, Occhipinti argued, the nunnery became a 'family monastery'.[164] The abbess began relying on her family to help her conduct the business of the nunnery, and a member of the DeGrassi family held the position of abbess for most of the fourteenth century. Occhipinti therefore argued that could almost supplanted the power of abbesses in the management of their institutions to favour the interests of the abbess' family.

Art historian Julian Gardner studied the importance of agents in the patronage of altar pieces in Benedictine nunneries following the publications of *Periculoso.* He identified that the commission of these altar pieces did not come from the abbess or the nuns, but from intermediaries appointed by them, as the nuns could not leave the monastery and commission the art due to the stricter rule of enclosure. From this observation, he asked, 'Did the completed altarpiece represent the taste of the Benedictine nuns or that of their male agents?'[165]. Therefore, arguing in the same vein as Occhipinti,

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[162] Anne Elisabeth Lester, *Creating Cistercian nuns the women's religious movement and its reform in thirteenth-century Champagne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp.172-180

[163] 'Abbiamo visto precedentemente che le badesse del Monastero Maggiore – ma questo avveniva sicuramente anche per gli altri monasteri – nell'assumere la carica conferivano un ruolo di primo piano alla famiglia di provenienza, dando cioè modo ad essa di imporre una certa linea di condotta nell'amministrazione dell'ente monastico, indubbiamente rispondente ai propri interessi' – my translation, Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese nel secolo 13. : l'amministrazione della proprietà fondiaria del Monastero Maggiore*, p.94

[164] Occhipinti, "La famiglia milanese dei Grassi in età comunale," , p. 211

[165] Julian Gardner, "Nuns and Altarpieces: Agendas for Research," *Romisches Jarhbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 30 (1995), pp. 30, 45

Gardner envisioned agents as supplanting the decision making role of abbesses, at least in the patronage of the arts.

When discussing male institutions, agents and networks around the leader remain important when discussing economic and political management. Grillo, in *Milano in Età Comunale*, argued that abbots and provosts used their position to provide patronage and employment to families, and belonged to a network of people who strove to promote family interests. [166] Similarly, Miriam Rita Tessera argued that Ambrogio Boffa, provost of the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, had strong nepotistic tendencies. She described him as 'decisive in his long provostship for the social development of his family'. He recruited three family members as canons of Sant'Ambrogio and employed them as agents of the canonry. [167] Agents could also be selected to advance the goals of a political faction, besides more narrow family interests, as Lozza argued happened in the church of San Sepolcro, when successive abbots of Sant'Amborgio of Milan changed the administrator of this church and its lands in the early thirteenth century. [168]

While scholars interpret the relationship between leaders and intermediaries differently depending on whether an abbesses relied on them or an abbot did, it remains true that agents played a consequential role in the life of religious institutions and could supplant or influence the decisions and actions of a leader. Therefore, measuring how involved agents were in the life of Milanese religious institutions provides a way to measure and compare the control of Milanese religious leaders. Doing this analysis for the twelfth and thirteenth century allows also to explore whether the growing limitations that abbesses faced and the growing importance of enclosure changed the way an abbess could manage her nunnery.

To do so, I analysed all the contracts, disputes, and other records of the religious institutions that entered my scope of research, as discussed in the introduction. Hereafter, I will refer to these primary sources as documents. From these, I extracted who acted on behalf of the institution and what the document dealt with. This allowed me to quantify how frequently abbesses and male leaders acted alone, with the express support of the members of their institutions or delegating the action to an agent. It also allowed me to quantify in which circumstances a leader decided to delegate the needs of the institution to an agent rather than acting personally.

The institutions of this research

This chapter aims to analyse the actions of Milanese abbesses and male leaders however, significant differences existed between different institutions in the city, as they occasionally followed

[166] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp. 270-278

[167] "determinante nel corso della sua lunga prepositura per la promozione sociale della sua famiglia" – my translation. Miriam Rita Tessera, "Canonici di S. Ambrogio e giudici delegati papali: un caso milanese agli inizi del Duecento," in *Legati e delegati papali: profili, ambiti d'azione e tipologie di intervento nei secoli XII-XIII*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni and Claudia Zey (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2012), p.287

[168] Lozza, "L'abate Ardengo Visconti e il patrimonio del monastero di s. Ambrogio a s. Sepolcro presso Ternate (anni 1227-1240)," pp. 402, 405- 406, 419

different rules and all had different political and cultural importance. These differences could significantly impact what the leader of an institution could do and the limitations a leader faced. The following analysis will mostly focus on the data from a select number of institutions. In specific, I will consider in this and the following chapter twenty religious institutions that had a significant presence in the documents I analysed. These twenty institutions are a selection from the 205 institutions I encountered in the documents analysed.[169] To select these institutions, I counted the number of documents they appeared in and selected the ten male and female institutions with the most documents.[170] This selection does not guarantee that the institutions studied in this chapter were the biggest and most important in Milan, as multiple factors could impact the survival of medieval parchments. However, this approach provides a way to roughly quantify the action of ecclesiastical leaders, despite the issues of document survival and limited sampling. Table 3 below lists the twenty institutions that will form the core of this and the following chapter's analysis.

[169] Find the full list of the institutions in Appendix 1 with a reference to where each document is found in the archvie.

[170] I used the gender of the actors partecipating for the institution and the gender of the leader of the institution to determine whether it was a male or female one. For example, if the notary mentioned that a nun represented a monastery, or an agent represeted an abbess, I noted the institution as female. I did not encounter in the documents which clearly appeared as mixed houses.

Table 3: Twenty Milanese Institutions with the largest number of surviving documents[171]

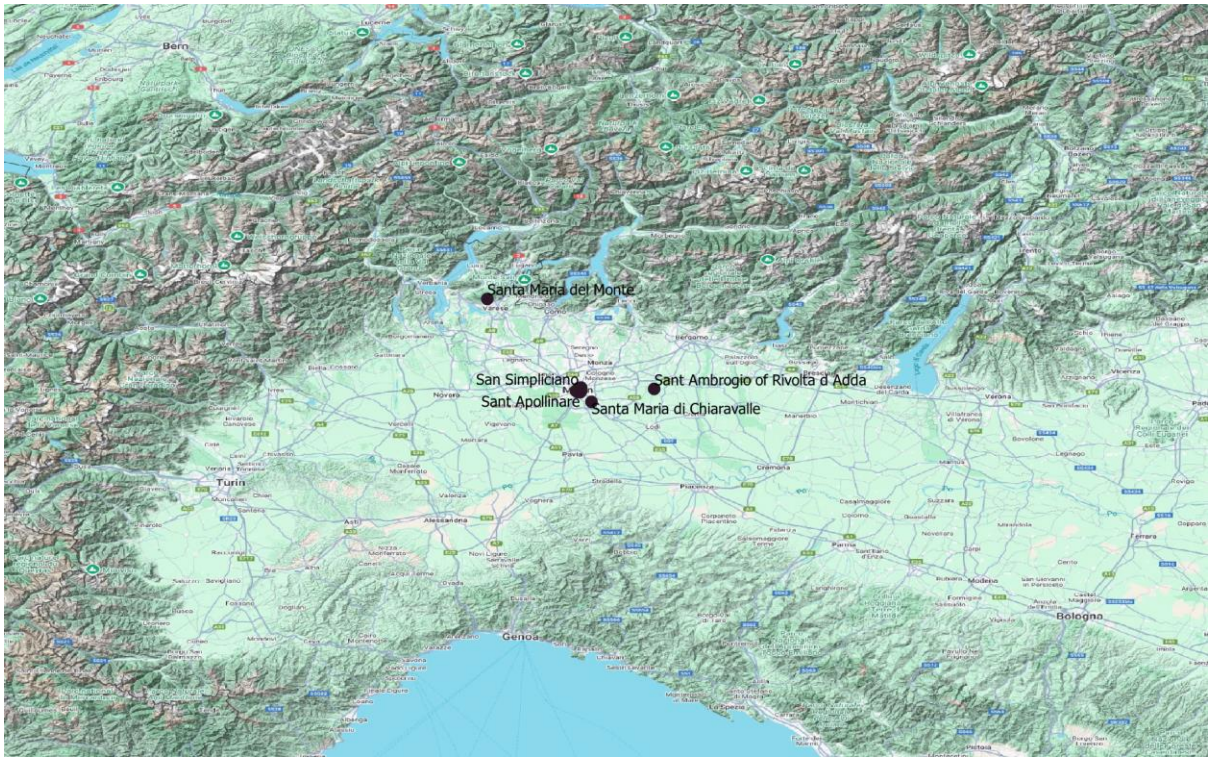
Religious institution	**Number of documents**
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio (Male)[172]	795
Monastero Maggiore (Female)[173]	775
Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio (Male)[174]	406
Santa Maria del Monte (Male)[175]	332
San Giorgio al Palazzo (Male)[176]	250
Major chapter of the cathedral (Male)[177]	235
Santa Maria di Chiaravalle (Male)[178]	209
San Lorenzo (Male)[179]	180
Sant'Apollinare (Female)[180]	127
Santa Maria d'Aurona (Female)[181]	121
Minor chapter of the cathedral (Male)[182]	119
Santa Margherita (Female)[183]	107
Santa Radegonda (Female)[184]	69
Santa Maria al Lentasio (Female)[185]	65
Sant'Agnese (Female)[186]	57
San Simpliciano (Male)[187]	52

[171] Not all institutions had surviving documents I could find or analyse from the beginning of the twelfth century, or until the end of the thriteenth century. I will indicate the earliest and latest document I inlcuded in the anlayses for each institution.
[172] Earliest document 1123, latest 1300
[173] Earliest document 1104, latest 1300
[174] Earliest document 1100, latest 1300
[175] Santa Maria del Monte is the only institution studied outside of the Milanese section of the archive. This institution was included to provide a rural point of comparison to the mostly urban institutions on this list. Earliest document 1100, latest 1260
[176] Earliest document 1123, latest 1298
[177] Earliest document 1100, latest 1300
[178] The number of documents analysed for Chiaravalle does not represent the entirety of the documents that survive from this monastery. However, the main fondo of Chiaravalle was categorised in the Archivio di Stato inventory as outside Milan and did not enter the scope of my research. Nonetheless, Chiaravalle appears in the fondo of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, and therefore entered the study. Earliest document 1191, latest 1300
[179] Earliest document 1116, latest 1299
[180] Earliest document 1162, latest 1299. The documents of Sant'Apollinare include those composed before the church of Sant'Apollianre became part of the monastery of Sant'Apollianre.
[181] Earliest document 1105, latest 1299
[182] Earliest document 1106, latest 1297
[183] Earliest document 1102, latest 1300
[184] Earliest document 1115, latest 1298
[185] Earliest document 1151, latest 1298
[186] Earliest document 1227, latest 1299
[187] Earliest document 1114, latest 1295

Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda (Female)[188]	51
Ospedale del Brolo (Male)[189]	35
San Felice (Female)[190]	20
Cappucine di San Pietro (Female)[191]	17

The two following figures map the twenty institutions, the first map shows a larger view of northern Italy, to highlight the three institutions outside of Milan, while the second figure represents only Milan, and shows the spread of the remaining institutions in the city.

Figure 6: Map of Northern Italy highlighting institutions outside of Milan.



[188] Earliest document 1106, latest 1293

[189] The church of San Pietro di Brebbia of Varese had 41 surviving documents. I decided to discuss the Ospedale instead because it held a position of importance in Milan while still having a similar number of documents. Earliest document 1246, latest 1296

[190] Earliest document 1265, latest 1294

[191] Earliest document 1254, latest 1299

Figure 7: Map of the centre of Milan showing the insitutions of the city[192]

Beyond the difference of these institutions in terms of the number of surviving documents, they also differed significantly in terms of historical pedigree, wealth, political influence, and the rules they followed. Religious institutions relied on the initial and continued patronage from local, royal, imperial, or papal powers for their economic well-being and their political stability. Silvia Carraro found that powerful Venetian individuals tended to fund new religious institutions at the height of

[192] I could find no precise location for San Felice, omitted from this map.
Location of Sant'ApollinarePaolo Rotta, *Passeggiate Storiche Ossia Le Chiese di Milano Dalla Loro Origine Fino Al Presente* (Milano: Tipografia del Riformatorio Patronato, 1891), p.63
Location of Sant'Agnese ibid, p. 112
Location of Cappucine di San Pietro ibid, p.112
Location of Santa Maria d'Aurona, ibid, p.172
Location of Santa Margherita, ibid, p.167,
Location of Santa Radegonda, ibid, p.34
For Santa Maria al Lentasio I indicated the newer location next to San Nazario, as indicated by Martinelli Perelli, *Le pergamene del secolo 13. del Monastero di S. Maria del Lentasio conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Milano* , pp.v-vi
For the Ospedale del Brolo, I used the location of the current parish of Santo Stefano Maggiore, the church next to the hospital, Giuliana Albini, "L'ospedale del Brolo di Milano e i diritti sulle acque della Muzza (sec. XIII)," in *Milano medioevale. Studi per Elisa Occhipinti*, ed. Giuliana Albini (Milano –Torino: Pearson Italia, 2018), pp. 5, 8
The other institutions are still present.

their power, but after their deaths these institutions would lose patronage and rapidly close. [193] The twenty institutions of this study had varied histories: some had existed since Roman times, while others were founded in the thirteenth century. They also had received different levels of support both in their foundation and through the centuries.

The ten male institutions can be split into three chronological groups: those institutions founded around the fifth century, those founded in the eighth and ninth centuries, and those founded around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

San Lorenzo[194] and San Simpliciano are the two oldest churches on the list, which have maintained their names since their foundation in the fifth century. San Lorenzo was a collegiate church, an institution housing canons headed by a provost. As canons, following the rule of Saint Augustine, the priests of San Lorenzo did not follow any rule of enclosure. The building existed since Roman times, where it was a temple to Mars before Milan became a Christian city, but in the fifth century an archbishop consecrated the building to San Lorenzo, demonstrating the initial illustrious initial foundation of the institution. The work of various chroniclers suggests that the institution remained wealthy through the centuries. A Lombard writer of the eighth century described its exterior as covered in gems,[195] and twelfth-century chroniclers described the church as the most beautiful of the world, especially because of its golden altarpiece.[196] The church suffered two great fires in 1071 and 1119, which destroyed much of its decoration and the building itself in 1119. However, "devout citizens" rebuilt and redecorated the church rapidly.[197] Clearly, San Lorenzo had an illustrious origin and continued support through its life, up to the thirteenth century.

San Simpliciano's history has less clear evidence. Tradition has placed the foundation of the church in the time of Saint Ambrose, but we find no mention of this church in the saint's writing. Probably San Simpliciano himself founded the church with a dedication to the Holy Martyrs, burying under the altar the bones of recent martyrs from Trentino. While the date of foundation is uncertain, most argue that it occurred at the end of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century.[198] Little information survives regarding this church during the rest of the first millennium,[199] but in the eleventh century Benedictine monks moved into the church.[200] In the twelfth century, the monastery received support from the emperor and the pope and managed to grow enough in wealth to expand its building.[201] San

[193] Silvia Carraro, "Dominae in claustro: San Zaccaria tra politca, società e religione nella Venezia altomedievale," *Reti Medievali Rivista* 20, 1 (2019), pp.379-380

[194]Serviliano Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, vol. 3 (Cairoli, 1737), pp.293-311

[195] Ibid, p.301

[196] Ibid, p.302,

[197] Ibid pp.303-304

[198] Costantino Baroni, "S. Simpliciano, abbazia benedettina," *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 61 (1934), pp.6-14

[199] Ibid, p.22

[200] Ibid, p.30

[201] Ibid, pp.41-43

Simpliciano had therefore a slightly less illustrious history than San Lorenzo, but nonetheless it received support and interest from various parties throughout its history, especially in the first centuries of the second millennium. Unlike the canons of San Lorenzo, the monks of San Simpliciano would follow the rule of enclosure as discussed in the Benedictine rule. This meant that they could leave the monastery only for special circumstances and with permission of the abbot. The abbot himself could leave the monastery more freely, although the rule recommends all monks to avoid leaving the monastery.

The major chapter of the cathedral was a group of clerics who managed the cathedral and supported the archbishop in pastoral care of the city, as well as covering judicial roles. This was an exclusive group of priests, led by an archdeacon, and which drew members generally from the Milanese aristocracy. The Milanese aristocracy had strong ties with the archbishop and, therefore with the major chapter since the ninth century, when Archbishop Landolfo created a caste of noble vassals by investing them with large estates to obtain their military and political support. These nobles still had many estates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and played key roles as powerful lay families and leaders of Milanese ecclesiastical institutions.[202]

The power of the minor chapter of the cathedral, or the Decumani, also had ancient origin. This chapter probably formed in the seventh century, when a group of priests remained behind to care for the Catholics left in Milan after the Lombards exiled the archbishop and the members of the major chapter. It rose further in prominence between 1162 and 1167, when once again the archbishop and the leaders of the major chapter had faced exile during the wars with Barbarossa. [203]The Decumani had juridical roles, and many priests in the minor chapter also belonged to other churches. For example, the archpriest of Santa Maria del Monte belonged to the order of the Decumani.[204] All of the canons of Sant'Ambrogio also belonged to this order.[205] Furthermore, the Decumani managed funerals in the city and had other similar pastoral duties, which connected this institution with many others in the city.[206] Both the priests of the minor chapter and those of the major chapters were canons or secular priests, belonging to various churches or serving the cathedral. They did not follow a rule of enclosure, and we can expect their leaders and members to travel without significant restrictions.

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[202] Giancarlo Andenna et al., *Comuni e signorie nell'Italia settentrionale: la Lombardia*, ed. G. Galasso, vol. VI, Storia d'Italia, (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1998), p.317 and Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp. 325-329, 361-371. For a wider discussion on the major chapter Michele Pellegrini, *L'ordo maior della Chiesa di Milano, 1166-1230* Studi di storia del cristianesimo e delle chiese cristiane, (Milano: Biblioteca francescana, 2009)

[203] Pellegrini, *L'ordo maior della Chiesa di Milano, 1166-1230* , pp. 35-48

[204] Patrizia Merati, *Le carte della Chiesa di Santa Maria del Monte di Velate: 922-1170* (Insubria University Press, 2005), p.1

[205] Annamaria Ambrosioni, "Controversie tra il monastero e la canonica di S. Ambrogio," in *Milano, papato e impero in età medievale : raccolta di studi / Annamaria Ambrosioni ; a cura di Maria Pia Alberzoni e Alfredo Lucioni*, ed. Annamaria Ambrosioni, Alfredo Lucioni, and Maria Pia Alberzoni (Milano: V&P università, 2003), p.17

[206] Ibid, p.19

During the seventh and eighth century, Milan witnessed the foundation of multiple monasteries and churches. The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, the canonry of San Giorgio al Palazzo, and Santa Maria del Monte were all founded in this period. Sant'Ambrogio and San Giorgio al Palazzo were founded in the eighth century, while Santa Maria del Monte was founded at some point between the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The site of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio had religious importance since pre-Christian and early Christian times as an important burial site, where also numerous early martyrs like Saint Prasius and Gervaius were buried. In 774 Charles the Great rededicated the basilica to Sant'Ambrogio, in honour of the saint's body buried under the altar. From that point, the monastery maintained a dominant position in the religious, political, and economic life of the city.[207] Throughout its life, powerful Milanese families maintained close ties with the basilica through large donations.[208] As with many institutions strongly connected to the Carolingian empire, political changes impacted this monastery. Rapetti highlighted a short period when the monks supported an adversary to the emperor, and this resulted in social isolation, which forced the monks to quickly revert their allegiance.[209] Similarly, Carminati and Mariani highlighted that the weakened empire of the early fourteenth century aggravated the many problems of the monastery, pushing it into a period of crisis.[210] The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio grew greatly through the patronage of various powers, reaching a dominant place in the city by the thirteenth century. The reliance on this patronage proved at times a weakness. As a Benedictine monastery, the monks and the abbots of Sant'Ambrogio followed the rule of enclosure of the Benedictine rule; thus, they could not wander, but I expect that they still travelled occasionally for exceptional circumstances.

The canonry of Sant'Ambrogio had close ties to the monastery. This institution was founded later than the monastery, between the tenth and eleventh centuries. It occupied the same building, but the canons lived in the opposite wing of the basilica and shared the same altar. The canons had the duty of conducting the liturgy in the basilica. Throughout the twelfth century, the two institutions had frequent disputes and conflicts, which partially reflect political conflicts in the city, according to Ambrosioni.[211] Although the political landscape of Milan changed rapidly between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in the twelfth century the canonry enjoyed the favour of the Milanese church, while the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio had closer ties with the aristocracy and the empire.[212] The canonry had a later foundation than the monastery, and the number of surviving documents suggests

[207]Ross Balzaretti, "The lands of Saint Ambrose: The acquisition, organisation and exploitation of landed property in north-western Lombardy by the Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio Milan, c.780-1000" (PhD University College London, 1990), p.8

[208] Anna Rapetti, "Il monastero di Sant'Ambrogio tra ambizioni di crescita e strategie di protezione.," *Reti Medievali Rivista* 22, no. 1 (2021), p.19

[209] Ibid, p.18

[210] Carminati and Mariani, "The Court and Land of Capiate during its Tenure by the Monastero di Sant'Ambrogio of Milan, from the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: The State of Research,", p.133

[211] Ambrosioni, "Controversie tra il monastero e la canonica di S. Ambrogio," , p.19

[212] Ibid, pp.6-7

that the institution did not reach the same level of wealth. However, the canonry had political connections of similar importance and enjoyed the spiritual and financial benefits of the body of Saint Ambrose. This institution clearly occupied a place of great importance in the city.

Archbishop Natalis founded San Giorgio al Palazzo in 750.[213] In 1129, archbishop Anselmo reconsecrated the church, but San Giorgio had achieved the rank of "matrix church", or foundational church of the city.[214] Therefore, the canonry had maintained an important place in the city's religious landscape since its foundation. Besides this, no other special historical information exists for the church; particularly, it does not appear that the canonry received specific imperial patronage. The 251 documents that survive from San Giorgio suggest that this canonry did not attain the same wealth as the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, which has 796 surviving documents, despite being officially founded in the same period. Nonetheless, San Giorgio has one of the largest surviving collections of parchments, a testament to the importance of the church in the twelfth and thirteenth century.

The first document referring to Santa Maria del Monte dates to 922, and probably the church had existed since the end of the ninth century.[215] Located in the countryside of Milan, on the Sacro Monte of Varese, the canonry belonged to the archdiocese of Milan and had strong ties with the archbishops of the city. Theoretically it answered to the church of San Vittore of Varese, but in the late twelfth century the archbishop San Galdino replaced the archpriest Landolfo, appointed by the church of Varese, with Pietro de Bussero, a member of the Decumani of Milan. This started a dispute only resolved by Ottone Visconti, who finally established the archbishop's right to assign the archpriest.[216] Although this canonry had close ties with the city, its rural location probably limited both the patronage it received and its opportunity to engage with the politics and society of Milan. The priests of the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, of the canonry of Santa Maria del Monte, and of the canonry of San Giorgio al Palazzo all followed the rule of Saint Augustine, and I expect that the canons and the provosts of these canonries had no real limitation on their ability to travel for the business of their institutions.

The last two institutions, Santa Maria di Chiaravalle and the Ospedale del Brolo, did not exist before the twelfth century. Santa Maria di Chiaravalle, a Cistercian monastery founded in 1135, became one of the largest institutions in the Milanese countryside. Like many other Cistercian institutions, Chiaravalle transformed the surrounding landscape, bonifying swampy lands into very fertile farms and creating various villages (granges) to farm the reclaimed lands.[217] The size of the institution does not transpire fully in Table 3, because Milanese archivists categorised Chiaravalle as

[213] Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, 3, p.128
[214] Ibid, p.130
[215] Merati, *Le carte della Chiesa di Santa Maria del Monte di Velate: 922-1170*, p. XXXIII
[216] Ibid, p. XXXIV
[217] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp.151-171

part of the Milanese countryside, recording the relevant documents in a different part of the inventory.[218] Nonetheless, I encountered many references to this monastery in the collections of other Milanese institutions, especially that of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. Even from these tangential references, Chiaravalle appears as one of the twenty most important institutions in Milan. This demonstrates that while the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio had exceptional wealth in the city of Milan, other institutions of similar size existed in the Milanese countryside. Like the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, Chiaravalle enjoyed imperial protection, as many diplomas demonstrate. The Cistercian monastery also grew in wealth by efficiently exploiting its available resources. The daily life of Cistercian monks followed a stricter version of the Benedictine rule. Furthermore, the Cistercian rule and spirit placed a renewed focus on early Christian monks and their pursuit of the "desert" or isolated life. [219] Therefore, I expect these monks and their abbot to travel less frequently than either the Benedictine monks or the canons. However, occasional travel for exceptional circumstances was still permitted.[220]

Archbishop Galdino della Sala, alongside powerful Milanese families, most notably Goffredo da Bussero, founded the Ospedale del Brolo, in the proximity of Santo Stefano in Brolo, in 1145.[221] This hospital enjoyed papal protection because of its work with the poor of the city, and it received donations from neighbours. With its wealth and protection, the hospital became a powerful landowner and held rights over the politically important Muzza canal.[222] Bonvesin Della Riva recognised this hospital as the most important in Milan by the late thirteenth century.[223] Albini suggested that the hospital had generally more income than other Milanese religious institutions thanks to its rights over the Muzza.[224] This institution highlights how large donations and papal and local support could rapidly grow a new institution to rival the wealth and importance of older monastic institutions. While always a religious institution, in 1268 Pope Clement IV intervened to clarify the rule of the hospital, tying its brethren and master to the rule of Saint Augustine. [225] As for the other institutions following the Augustinian rule, the canons of the Ospedale had no restriction on their movement outside of the institution.

This rapid overview of the history and patronage of the ten most important male institutions of Milan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries revealed that all had a significant connection to local and external powers, which allowed them to accumulate wealth and local importance. Furthermore, many male institutions existed from ancient history, some dating back to Saint Ambrose or before.

[218] Eleonora Saita and Santoro, "Inventario D 4 Pergamene Per Fondi ", pp.52-54
[219] Janet Burton and Kerr, *The Cistercians in the middle ages* (Boydell & Brewer, 2011), pp.5-6
[220] Ibid, p.118
[221] Da la Riva, *Le meraviglie di Milano,* pp.43-44
[222] Albini, "L'ospedale del Brolo di Milano e i diritti sulle acque della Muzza (sec. XIII)," , pp.5, 8
[223] Da la Riva, *Le meraviglie di Milano,* p.43
[224] Albini, "L'ospedale del Brolo di Milano e i diritti sulle acque della Muzza (sec. XIII)," , p.6
[225] Ibid, p.6

Amongst these male institutions are the two central judicial and pastoral bodies of the Milanese archdiocese. These institutions had few differences in terms of rules followed; most were canonries, with only three institutions being monastic. I expect that only for these three institutions the rule of enclosure might have an impact on how the abbot conducted the business of the monastery. By contrast, a similar overview of female nunneries reveals a significantly different level of historical pedigree and a far greater number of enclosed orders.

The ten nunneries can be divided into two distinct groups from the perspective of their history and three groups from the perspective of the rules followed. During the Lombard and Carolingian period, many nunneries benefitted from aristocratic support. Lombard and Carolingian queens especially favoured nunneries as they allowed them some control over their wealth. For example, they could ensure that strategic lands would remain under the control of a loyal institution, and not become fragmented through inheritance.[226] Five of the nunneries originate from this period and all followed the Benedictine rule. The Monastero Maggiore, or San Maurizio, belongs to this group. The first document involving this monastery appeared in 853, but the nuns themselves had argued that King Desiderius (756-774) had founded the monastery.[227] While the exact foundation date remains unclear, the Monastero Maggiore belonged to the same era as the foundation of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, and like this monastery, the Monastero Maggiore also had important imperial connections. Emperor Otto I (912-973) donated lands to the nunnery and granted the abbess various exemptions, but other imperial donations do not survive.[228] The monastery had a place of honour in the will of the Milanese archbishop Ariberto da Intimiano (1018-1044), as its abbess, alongside the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio, were tasked to uphold the will.[229] Ariberto was the last bishop to control Milan from both a spiritual and political sense and led the city in various victories against its neighbours while playing a major political role in European politics.[230] The importance of the Monastero Maggiore in the will of this archbishop demonstrates the central role of the institution in the life of eleventh-century Milan. The large number of surviving documents further indicates that the monastery remained very important in the political and economic landscape of Milan during the twelfth and thirteenth century.

[226] Tiziana Lazzari, "Patrimoni femminili, monasteri e chiese: una proposta (Italia centro settentrionale, secoli VIII-X)," in *Dare credito alle donne. Presenze femminili nell'economia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi and Paola Guglielmotti (Asti: 2012), p.35

[227] Ferrari, "I monasteri femminili di Milano nella topografia liturgica: contesti architettonici e figurativi tra VII e XII secolo,", pp.88-92 and Elisa Occhipinti, "Appunti per la storia del Monastero Maggiore di Milano in età medioevale. Il problema delle origini e la configurazione giuridico-patrimoniale " *Studi di Storia Medioevale e Diplomatica* (1977)

[228] Ferrari, "I monasteri femminili di Milano nella topografia liturgica: contesti architettonici e figurativi tra VII e XII secolo,", p.95

[229] Ibid, p.119.

[230] Miriam Rita Tessera, "L'immagine rifratta: Ariberto nelle cronache del Medioevo," in *Ariberto da Intimiano: fede, potere e cultura a Milano nel secolo XI*, ed. Martina Weatherill Basile Ettore Bianchi (Milano: 2007)

Santa Maria Assunta al Lentasio, Santa Margherita (or Santa Maria al Gisone), Santa Maria d'Aurona, and Santa Radegonda also existed before the twelfth century. Of the four, Santa Maria al Lentasio was founded last. The nunnery probably existed before 1034, as Archbishop Ariberto mentioned it in his will, but no earlier evidence survives of its existence. In 1235 the Milanese commune forcibly moved the nuns to a new location to build the Broletto, the communal palace.[231]

Santa Maria d'Aurona had an earlier foundation date. The name originated from Aurona, the daughter of the Lombard king Ansprando, who founded the nunnery around 740. The woman had sought safety in a nunnery after an enemy of her father had killed him and mutilated her.[232] No other information exists regarding this nunnery until the early eleventh century, when Archbishop Ariberto remembered the nunnery in his will.[233]

Santa Radegonda appears as the most ancient of the nunneries, founded in the second half of the seventh century, with the name Santa Maria di Vigelinda, becoming Santa Radegonda in the eleventh century. Santa Radegonda, through a will of the ninth century, had obtained control of the church of San Simpliciano Minore. It also had some rights over the church of San Raffaele. Finally, it became involved in various disputes regarding the development of the area around its nunnery.[234]

The earliest documents relating to Santa Margherita appear in 912 under the name Santa Maria Gisonis, but no other information survives regarding the foundation of this nunnery.[235] The nunnery received donations from Archbishop Anselmus in the late tenth century and later received further donations from Archbishop Ariberto, but no other evidence of local or royal support survives.

While these five nunneries shared a similar foundation period, they had different relationships with patrons. Of the five, only the Monastero Maggiore had strong ties with the empire, and only the Monastero Maggiore and its abbess had an important place in Ariberto's will. The other nunneries instead received limited patronage, with only Santa Maria d'Aurona having royal support. Furthermore, the nunneries received limited patronage after their foundations. However, all these nunneries lived according to the rule of Saint Benedict; therefore, we can expect both abbesses and nuns to respect the rule of enclosure to the same extent as their male counterparts. They could occasionally travel but would generally remain in the monastery. I also expect the abbesses and nuns of the Monastero Maggiore to travel more frequently, due to the economic needs of the institution.

The other five nunneries date to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. These nunneries of later foundation do not share a common rule. One followed the Damianite rule, one followed the Benedictine rule, two belonged to the Humiliati, and one followed the rule of St. Augustine, therefore

[231] Perelli, *Le pergamene del secolo XIII del monastero di S. Maria del Lentasio conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Milano*, 16, pp.v-vi
[232] Ferrari, "I monasteri femminili di Milano nella topografia liturgica: contesti architettonici e figurativi tra VII e XII secolo,", pp.133-135
[233] Ibid, p.101
[234] Ibid, pp.159-163
[235] Balzaretti, "Women, Property and Urban Space in Tenth-Century Milan,", p. 556

being an order of canonesses. Sant'Apollinare was the Damianite institution. In 1222 various local and external religious forces, headed by archbishop Enrico Settala, donated land to create the nunnery of Sant'Apollinare, building the monastery next to a parish with the same name.[236] The archbishop granted the nunnery the income of the hospital of San Biagio di Monza to support the institution. The archbishop moved the clergy of the existing parish to the church of San Giovanni in Brolo, and donated Sant'Apollinare to the nuns.[237] The nunnery therefore received substantial initial patronage. In addition, the nunnery benefitted from the rationalisation of Franciscan nunneries conducted by Innocent IV. Male and female institutions based on a Franciscan spirituality proliferated throughout Italy during the first half of the thirteenth century, but new houses followed disparate rules, if all with a similar central spirituality. Innocent IV attempted to limit the number of official Daminite nunneries, which in Milan resulted in the closure of various nunneries or their integration with Sant'Apollinare. This made Sant'Apollinare the only official Damianite nunnery in Milan by the end of the thirteenth century.[238] As a new foundation, and furthermore the only female Damianite institution of the city for the period, Sant'Apollinare received large initial donations, which continued throughout the period. Furthermore, many of the donations that other Damianite nunneries received before their closure flowed into Sant'Apollinare. These donations played a key role in allowing the nuns to rapidly expand their possessions. The Damianite rule, as it developed in the thirteenth century, placed great importance on enclosure. In theory, travel outside the nunnery should not happen, and all business should have been delegated to agents.[239] I expect the abbess of Sant'Apollinare to have the most limited range of actions of all the nunneries studied in this chapter.

Two of the smaller female institutions, Sant'Agnese and San Felice, belonged to the order of the Humiliati. The Humiliati occupied an important place in the religious landscape of Milan. Bonvesin Della Riva stated that by the end of the thirteenth century, over 200 Humiliati houses existed in Milan.[240] The order of the Humiliati was not monolithic, being instead made up of three orders. The first and second order followed a rule akin to a mix of the Benedictine and Augustinian rule, at least according to the rule of 1227, *Omni Boni Principium*.[241] Women belonged to the first and second order and followed a rule of enclosure. It is not clear how strictly this was enforced, and female leaders of humiliati houses could directly manage property.[242] The third order did not follow a codified rule of life and did not live in a community. They worked, observed fasting periods and

[236] Alberzoni, "Il Monastero Milanese di S.Apollinare di fronte all'autorità ecclesiastica (1223-1264): I 1223-1240," pp.217-218
[237] Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, 3, pp.33-35
[238] Alberzoni, "Il Monastero Milanese di S.Apollinare di fronte all'autorità ecclesiasitca (1223-1264): II 1241-1264,", p.314
[239] Ibid, p.307
[240] Da la Riva, *Le meraviglie di Milano*, p.46
[241] Andrews, *The early Humiliati*, pp.111-120
[242] Ibid, pp.154-157

prayers, and met together on Sundays and at funerals. Our understanding of the structure of the third order comes from the 1201 letter of Innocent III, *Incumbit Nobis*; in this letter women do not feature prominently, nor does the pope command members of the third order to follow a rule of enclosure.[243] Sally Brasher, analysing the inventory of Humiliati houses from 1298 and 1344, highlighted that the order had many female members, especially in houses of the third order, where women formed the majority of the membership.[244]

I have encountered many references to Humilaiti houses across the documents studied, with Sant'Agnese and San Felice featuring more often than most other houses. Of the two, we know more of Sant'Agnese, also known as *Domus de Arcagnago*. Serviliano Latuada tells us that the house belonged to the order of the Humiliati but followed the rule of Saint Augustine.[245] In the documents I analysed, the institution is not named as *domus humiliatorum*, but only *domus*, while its leaders are named *ministra*. Girolamo Tiraboschi, in the *Vetera Humiliatorum Monumenta* argues that the house never belonged to the order of Humiliati but was always an Augustinian nunnery.[246] However, Latuada argues that often houses of Humiliati followed the rule of Saint Augustine, something that Tiraboschi does not discuss in the context of Sant'Agnese.[247] Given the use of *ministra* and the recognition from Latuda and other scholars cited by him that Sant'Agnese indeed belonged to the Humiliati order, I will consider Sant'Agnese as part of the Humiliati, despite it following the Augustinian rule. Sant'Agnese was a newer institution, and while no foundation document exists, Sant'Agnese first appears in a document of 1227.[248] As the institution followed the rule of Saint Augustine, I expect that the leaders had relatively few limitations on their ability to travel for the business of the house.

On the other hand, San Felice belonged more clearly to the order of the Humiliati, as in the documents the house is consistently referred to as *domus humiliatorum,* and the leader of the institution is a *ministra.* No foundation date is known for San Felice, and I could not find this house mentioned by Latuada or by Tiraboschi or mentioned anywhere else in the historiogrpahy. The first document regarding this institution is from 1265, and only 17 documents reference this house.[249] It is unclear whether San Felice belonged to the first, second, or third order of the Humiliati. However, in

[243] Sally Mayall Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati a lay religious order in medieval civic life* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp.31-32
[244] Ibid, p. 42
[245]Serviliano Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, vol. 4 (Cairoli, 1738), p.408
[246] Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Vetera humiliatorum monumenta annotationibus: ac dissertationibus prodromis illustrata, quibus multa sacræ, civilis, ac literatiæ medii ævi historiæ capita explicantur*, vol. 2 (1767) p. 369,
[247] Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, 4, pp. 408-409
[248] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 504, Folder 215 document n.3
[249] For Sant'Agnese: ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 504, Folder 215, document n.3. For San Felice: ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 293, Folder 151, document n.2

all three cases, the leader could have travelled for business of the house, as even *ministra* of the first and second order could manage the buinsess of their houses occasionaly.

Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda, founded in 1106, is the only rural nunnery that entered this study.[250] The nunnery was a dependency of the Monastero Maggiore, which explains why documents relating to it appeared in my research. I could find almost no information regarding this institution, outside of the fifty documents that survive and a mention in an article from Francios Menant.[251] The dependency on the large Milanese nunnery does not transpire clearly in the documents, besides a few occasions when the abbess or her nuns go to Milan to participate in disputes with the Monastero Maggiore. Situated far from Milan, without patronage from powerful urban families, nor in a new and fertile locality, Sant'Ambrogio remained a small nunnery. As a Benedictine nunnery, I expect these nuns to behave like the ones from other Benedictine nunneries in this study.

Only 17 documents survive from the Cappucine of San Pietro, also known as the Cappucine of Concorezzo. This nunnery had a complex history. The original foundation was a Franciscan nunnery in Casorezzo, but in 1258 the nuns moved to Milan near Porta Vercellina and became Augustinian. [252] The variety of names and changing nature of this institution has made it hard to properly track its possessions and find information on this nunnery. However, the nuns clearly obtained some patronage, as the church survived until the sixteenth century. As an order of canonesses, I would expect the nuns and abbesses of Concorezzo to have the most freedom of action when managing the needs of the nunnery. However, the limited number of documents surviving for this nunnery means that any conclusions drawn will have limited significance and will have only an impressionistic value.

Comparing the histories and rules of the ten largest female institutions to the ten largest male institutions revealed significant differences in patronage and history. Of the other nunneries, only the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare demonstrated deep ties with local and external powers. The other nunneries received initial support at their foundation and little else afterwards. By contrast, all ten male institutions occupied an important place in the city's economy and society. Two had a central judicial and pastoral role in the city; two had remained important since the fourth century; the monastery and canonry of Sant'Ambrogio had long-lasting connections with imperial and local powers; Santa Maria di Chiaravalle had a dominant place in the Milanese countryside; and the Ospedale del Brolo was the largest hospital in the city, which enjoyed significant rights on rivers,

[250] Piero Majocchi, "Monastero di Sant'Ambrogio sec. XII - 1580," Lombardia Beni Culturali, 2006, 2023,
[251] François Ménant, "La vita monastica fino al XIII secolo, Diocesi di Cremona," in *Storia religiosa della Lombardia: Diocesi di Cremona*, ed. A. Rimoldi A. Caprioli, L. Vaccaro (Brescia: La scuola, 1998), p.62
[252] Latuada, *Descrizione Di Milano: Ornata Con Molti Disegni In Rame Delle Fabbriche più cospicue, che si trovano In Questa Metropoli*, 4, pp. 203-204 and Lavinia Parziale, "Monastero di Santa Maria del Cappuccio sec. XIII - 1784," Lombardia Beni Culturali, 2006, 2023,

received large donations, and had papal protection. This brief analysis suggests that male institutions had far more importance than most female ones in Milanese society.

The type of limitations members of these institutions faced in regards to travel and the economic management of their institutions also differed. Canons made up most of the male institutions in this study, with seven out of ten institutions following either the Augustinian rule or housing regular clergy, which means that most leaders of male institutions had no limitations on movement. Only three male institutions followed a rule that limited, although only partially, the ability of their members to travel. On the contrary, eight out of the ten female institutions followed a rule that restricted, or in the case of Sant'Apollinare, forbade the members from leaving the cloister. Only two monasteries followed the rule of Saint Augustine, which in theory did not significantly limit the ability of nuns to travel for the business of their institutions. On average, therefore, I expect female leaders to travel less and manage their institutions less directly.

Direct management and the employment of agents

To successfully analyse the range of actions Milanese religious leaders had and their freedom to travel outside of their institution, I aggregated various actors under the larger rubrics. Specifically, I will refer to the rubrics of agent, intermediary, nun, clergy, female leader, and male leader. Under the label intermediaries, I included men who acted for the monastery and had no other titles, as well as men with specific descriptors, such as 'Gastaldus', 'Sindacus', or 'Beneficiales'. These different descriptors indicated slightly different responsibilities held by these men, but in the parchments themselves they all served the same purpose of acting as intermediaries for the leader and the community. I also included under the rubric of intermediary lay-brothers, or 'conversi'. While lay-brothers generally lived in the institution, they remained lay, and therefore closely resemble lay male agents, especially as they serve the same purpose as other intermediaries. I identified clergymen as any actor described as a lower member of the clergy, not holding a position of leadership. Clergymen include priests, deacons, canons, and monks, but not abbots, provosts, archpriests, or bishops. With nuns, I identified both regular nuns, members of the Humiliati order, and members of other orders. I did not include anchoresses, as they acted outside of an official institution. Highlighting the different types of agents employed provides insight into the different management structures of both nunneries and male institutions. Overall, these different groups represent people who acted instead of their leader for the interests of their institution, which I collectively refer to as agents. In the documents, notaries identified all types of agents with the phrase '… in the name and for the utility of …'.[253]

Under the rubric of male leaders, I included abbots, heads of monastic institutions, provosts, heads of canonries, archpriests, heads of specific institutions like the major chapter of the cathedral, and Humiliati leaders, who, under different names, led Humiliati houses of the first, second, and third order. The rubric of female leaders had less variety, as it mostly included abbesses, who headed a

[253] "…nomine et ad partem et utlitatem…"

monastic or mendicant institution. I also identified female leaders of Humiliati congregations, called 'ministre', with female leaders. However, I used female leader and abbess interchangeably.

Counting the number of times a leader acted and the number of times they used an agent to act in their stead provides a simple way to assess the control a leader had over their institution. Table 4 below outlines the number of times a female leader appeared in documents connected to nunneries. The table also reports the number of times nuns appeared alone, the number of times they appeared with the abbess, the number of times an intermediary appeared, and the number of times a member of the clergy appeared. The table includes documents from all the nunneries I found in the collections.

Table 4: Number of parchments with abbesses, nuns appearing alone, nuns appearing with the abbesses, intermediaries, and religious men for all nunneries of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

	Abbess alone	**Nuns without abbess**	**Nuns with abbess**	**Intermediaries**	**Clergy**	**Total**
Number	861	34	300	514	76	1785
Percentage	57 %	2 %	19 %	34 %	5 %	119 %

When looking at an aggregate view of all Milanese nunneries for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, this table demonstrates that abbesses managed their institutions directly. They presided over more than half of the recorded affairs of their nunneries, and it does not appear that abbesses had to relinquish all their power to intermediaries. Certainly, abbesses worked with a network of male agents to manage their institutions, as 34% of the documents were conducted by intermediaries. More often they governed alone or alongside their chapter.

While not as important as abbesses or intermediaries, Table 4 indicates that the other religious women, and occasionally the clergy, played a role in managing nunneries. Nuns appeared in 21 percent of the documents of nunneries. 19 percent of the time acting together with the abbess. In these cases, the notary recorded all the nuns present and stated that they were 'there present and confirming'[254] the decision of the abbess. Unfortunately, we know little more of the ways in which nuns shaped the life of their own nunnery, as these parchments record only their approval and presence and do not highlight any internal discussion that preceded this approval. This could mean that nuns in these cases played only a ceremonial role, having no real influence on the proceeding. However, the frequency with which a large part of the congregation met to confirm certain decisions could also indicate complex discussion before a major decision was taken and an influence of the chapter on the decision-making of their abbess.

Clergymen acted in around 5 percent of all the documents, suggesting that only in some rare cases would an abbess employ a religious man as an agent; generally, abbesses used laymen for the

[254] "Ibi astantibus et confrimantibus"

job. Besides acting as agents, clergymen appeared in documents of election when an abbess appointed a parish priest to a dependent church. Only in 2 percent of the documents does an abbess use a fellow sister to conduct some business for the nunnery. This indicates that, while a possibility, abbesses did not, or could not, frequently use members of their own institutions as agents.

Lester suggested that when managing lands, French Cistercian abbesses relied on a variety of people to help them. Milanese abbesses acted in the same way. They relied on a variety of lay and religious men, and occasionally on their sisters, for help in conducting the business of their nunneries, while maintaining clear leadership.

Johnson argued that French abbesses and abbots had the same level of authority. The frequency with which male leaders acted in documents of their own institution allows us to test whether male and female leaders in Milan managed their institutions in similar ways. Table 5 details the number of parchments led by leaders, clergymen, and intermediaries in all Milanese male institutions. As with nunneries, I also include those times when the clergy of an institution acted alongside their leader.

Table 5: Participation of leaders, intermediaries, and clergymen in all male Milanese institutions between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

	Male Leaders alone	**Clergy alone**	**Clergy with leader**	**Intermediaries**	**Total**
Number of documents	1314	853	322	600	3089
Percentage	46 %	30 %	11 %	21 %	109 %

The types of actors who appeared in documents of male institutions differ significantly from those of nunneries. Male leaders appeared in documents of their own institution 46 percent of the time, less frequently than abbesses. From this perspective abbesses, had more direct control over their nunneries than male leaders. When using agents, abbesses generally relied on lay intermediaries, while male leaders used their own clergy and intermediaries with similar frequency. This means that the clergy of male institutions behaved drastically differently from nuns in female institutions. Nuns acted mostly with abbesses and almost never represented the nunnery by themselves. By contrast, in 853 documents (30 percent), the clergy acted without their leader, representing their institution alone. This indicates that male leaders could use their religious brothers as trusted agents. However, only around 11 percent of the male clergy acted alongside their leader, suggesting that a leader sought approval when taking decisions less frequently than abbesses did. This could indicate that nuns had a different influence on their institutions than their male counterparts. Nuns could not act directly in the business of the nunnery, apart from on special occasions, but they acted more collegially to decide on the policies of the nunnery. Religious men had instead the chance to act in the name of their institution

but rarely came together to decide the overall direction of the monastery; at least, fewer official records survive of these moments of deliberation.

Both male and female leaders, therefore, acted frequently alone but also relied on a network of lay and religious agents to conduct the business of their institutions. Comparing the gathered numbers of all documents studied suggests that female leaders acted more often alone. However, as analysed when overviewing the core twenty institutions active in the documents, important internal differences existed between institutions. A numerical comparison of aggregate numbers does not provide a statistically significant result and risks being skewed by large institutions, like Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore. To statistically compare the wealth and social engagement of nunneries and male institutions, the rest of the chapter will move away from aggregate numbers to focus on the twenty core institutions discussed above.

To confirm that the differences observed between Table 4 and Table 5 represent a statistically significant difference, I calculated the frequency with which each of the variables discussed in these two tables occurred for each institution. From this, I calculated an average for male and female institutions and compared the data sets through a t-test.[255] Table 6 below reports the average frequency with which each category acted across the institutions tested,[256] alongside the p-value obtained from each t-test.

Table 6: T-tests between different actors of the ten largest male and female institutions, and average frequency for each category

Actors	**p-value**	**Average male**	**Average female**
Leaders	0.0268	41.24%	62.95%
Clergy and nuns alone	0.0016	37.27%	4.48%
Clergy and nuns with leader	0.0298	8.07%	18.27%
Intermediaries	0.1637	21.49%	32.57%

[255] All statistical analysis of this thesis has been conducted through Python. All t-tests in this study are Welch's t-test. A t-test is a hypothesis test that compares the means of two groups. This test compares two sets of data and aims to understand if they belong to different distributions or if the perceived differences only occurred through chance. The t-test returns two values, a t-value and a probability value, or p-value. Both values indicate the extent to which the data sets differ. The t-value measures the difference in the means relative to the variability of the data. The p-value is used to determine whether the difference is significant. A smaller p-value indicates a lower probability that two sets have the same underlying distribution and therefore that the two sets are statistically different. Different thresholds exist to determine whether a p-value is small enough to accept that two distributions differ. 0.05 is the most common p-value accepted, and it is what I will use in the following analysis.

[256] This table contains data from the ten largest male and ten largest female institutions in Milan according to the number of surviving documents. This allows me to ignore the many institutions from which very few documents survived and which would provide unreliable data.

Agents[257] combined	0.0208	56.85%	34.63%

Table 6 demonstrates that the management style of male and female institutions differed to a statistically significant extent in most areas. Male leaders acted on average 41 percent of the time, while abbesses acted on average 63 percent of the time. Comparing the frequency with which the leaders of the ten largest male institutions and the ten largest female institutions acted together returned a p-value of 0.0260, just below the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, abbesses led their institutions more frequently also from a statistical perspective. Similarly, clergy acted alone significantly more often than nuns, while nuns acted alongside their leader significantly more often.

When looking at the use of intermediaries, the difference becomes statistically insignificant. Abbesses used intermediaries in 32.6 percent of the documents, while male leaders did so in 21.5 percent: the t-test for this category returned a p-value of 0.16, above the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that male and female leaders used a network of laypeople with similar frequency. However, when looking at the combined use of agents, the difference between male and female leadership again becomes significant. Male leaders used agents 57 percent of the time, while abbesses used them only 34.6 percent of the time. Statistically, male leaders relied more frequently on a network of others to manage their institutions than abbesses did.

This statistical analysis has allowed us to look beyond simple numerical averages; however, it still hid the variation of experience between institutions. Table 7 below provides the percentages for each of the twenty institutions used in the test above. From these institutions, I will focus on six that represent various points on the spectrum of experiences male and female leaders had. While this data allows us to study the behaviour of single institutions in a more granular way, it still provides an abstraction that ignores change over time or different foundation dates. Further sections of this chapter and chapter 3 will explore the change of behaviour of leaders and the change of some institutions overt time.

Table 7: Percentage of parchments in which a classification appears for the top twenty Milanese institutions

Nunneries	**Female Leaders**	**Nuns**	**Nuns with Abbess**	**Intermediaries**
Santa Margherita	88.17%	1.08%	24.73%	10.75%
San Felice	78.57%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%
Sant'Agnese	74.55%	5.45%	12.73%	20.00%
Cappucine di San Pietro	71.43%	0.00%	19.05%	28.57%
Santa Maria al Lentasio	70.77%	0.00%	30.77%	29.23%

[257] This represents the frequency with which any agent represented an institution.

Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	64.00%	28.00%	38.00%	8.00%
Santa Maria d'Aurona	59.32%	1.69%	20.34%	38.98%
Monastero Maggiore	58.70%	1.02%	21.61%	40.28%
Santa Radegonda	40.43%	6.38%	4.26%	53.19%
Sant'Apollinare	25.00%	1.14%	10.23%	73.86%
Male institution	**Male Leaders**	**Clergy**	**Clergy with leader**	**Intermediaries**
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	71.09%	12.35%	8.41%	16.56%
Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	59.39%	21.57%	16.75%	19.04%
San Simpliciano	55.10%	24.49%	8.16%	20.41%
Santa Maria del Monte	53.35%	8.63%	0.32%	38.02%
Minor chapter of the cathedral	44.25%	49.56%	11.50%	6.19%
San Lorenzo	41.90%	52.51%	18.99%	5.59%
Major chapter of the cathedral	38.39%	48.82%	3.79%	12.80%
San Giorgio al Palazzo	35.11%	17.78%	8.44%	47.11%
Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	12.56%	60.00%	4.19%	27.44%
Ospedale del Brolo	0.00%	78.79%	0.00%	21.21%

From these twenty institutions, I will use six throughout the rest of the chapter as case studies. For the three female institutions, I focused on Santa Margherita, the Monastero Maggiore, and Sant'Apollinare. For the male institutions, I focused on the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, Santa Maria del Monte, and San Giorgio al Palazzo. I selected these institutions because they represent different frequencies with which leaders acted. The leaders The Monastero Maggiore and Santa Maria del Monte represent those institutions where the leader acted in around half of the documents; Sant'Apollinare and San Giorgio al Palazzo represent those institutions where the leader acted least often, and Santa Margherita and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio represent those institutions where a leader acted most often. For the male institutions, I did not consider Chiaravalle, because this study could only consider a fraction of the surviving collection of parchments from this monastery, and therefore it does not provide an accurate case study, despite being an institution useful to consider in the overall thesis. I did not consider the Ospedale del Brolo because the small number of surviving documents probably hides the true participation of its leaders in the management of the hospital.

As expected, given the importance of enclosure for Damianite nuns, the abbess of Sant'Apollinare appeared in documents significantly less often than any other abbess. This demonstrates the impact of enclosure on the way an abbess could manage her institution, forcing her to rely more heavily on a network to govern the worldly concerns of her nunnery. The other two nunneries had leaders who acted significantly more often alone and relied significantly less on a lay

network of intermediaries. The Monastero Maggiore used intermediaries frequently, 40 percent of the time, but Santa Margherita only used intermediaries 11 percent of the time. The frequency with which two Benedictine abbesses could act suggests that, as expected, Milanese Benedictine nuns in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were not limited by a strict rule of enclosure when managing the business of their institutions.

None of the nunneries frequently used nuns as agents; this is consistently below the 2 percent average recorded in the aggregate data. Only Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta, a rural Benedictine monastery, used nuns as agents with significant frequency, and I will discuss this phenomenon further at the end of this chapter. On the other hand, the nuns of the Monastero Maggiore and Santa Margherita acted as a group more often than the nuns of Sant'Apollinare. These acted together significantly below the average. This suggests that while the three nunneries confirm the trend that nuns almost never acted alone, Sant'Apollinare stands out for the limited control that the abbess or the nuns had over their own institution.

The three male institutions demonstrate a smaller variance in behaviour. The abbots of Sant'Ambrogio acted far more frequently than leaders of the other two institutions and far more frequently than the norm, presiding on 71 percent of all the documents. Indeed, no male institution had leaders as involved as Sant'Ambrogio. This difference might reflect a combination of large wealth and a limited number of monks. In the middle of the thirteenth century, only six monks lived in the monastery, which might have forced the abbot to manage the monastery's business alone.

San Giorgio falls on the opposite side of the spectrum, with provosts acting in only 35 percent of the transactions and agents acting in 55 percent. As in Sant'Apollinare, agents acted more often than the leader and in most of the documents; however, the provost of San Giorgio acted significantly more often than the abbess of Sant'Apollinare, suggesting that he had more control over the church than the abbess did. Furthermore, the provost could travel and had no significant limitations placed on his rule. Further analysis of the provost's behaviour will attempt to understand why he acted so infrequently.

All three male institutions employed their own clergy less frequently than the average for all institutions but still significantly more than the nunneries employed nuns. Santa Maria del Monte used clergy most infrequently, but they employed lay brothers more frequently than any other institution. While recorded as intermediaries, lay brothers belonged to the *familia* of the institution, which places them in a middle point between intermediaries and clergy.[258] Santa Maria del Monte then had a particular management structure, where the archpriest acted most often but used lay members of his

[258] Antonio Olivieri, studying *conversi* in a thirteenth-century hospital in Vercelli, illustrates how *conversi* and regular clergy behaved and dressed in the same way. Yet, *conversi* did not become priests after their "conversion" but would enter into the service of the institution and support it in more menial tasks. Antonio Olivieri, "Formule di conversione. Esempi dalle carte di un ospedale vercellese (secoli XIII-XIV)," *Scrineum Rivista* 16 (2019), pp.208-209

institution to manage what he did not do. The rest of the chapter will elucidate whether the use of agents in Santa Maria del Monte differed in other ways compared to the average and compared to the other urban institutions.

These results confirm Johnson's view: abbesses had the same level of authority as their male counterparts, and, broadly, both male and female leaders controlled their institutions. However, the frequent use of agents suggests that male and female leaders alike relinquished some of their authority. The following analysis will determine when and why leaders relinquished their authority and how this differed between male and female institutions.

Reason 1: Leaders need administrative help.

The discussion above focused on data spanning two hundred years. The economic and political situation in Milan, and the specific activity of any institution, did not remain consistent over this period. In some years an institution could appear in ten or more documents, while in others it might not appear at all. This points to a possible explanation of why leaders employed agents: an increase in the economic and social activity of an institution required the employment of people to keep the work of the leader manageable. For example, if an abbot had a series of investitures to conduct in his monastery but also had to deal with a dispute in one of its territories on the same day or same week, then he would have to send an agent to manage litigations for him. When studying the involvement of wives in the business of Genoese merchants, Angelos pointed to a similar phenomenon.[259] When the husband had some business in one part of the city, he would delegate business occurring on the opposite side of the city to his wife.

To test whether leaders used agents due to time constraints, I conducted a regression analysis of the number of documents where agents and leaders appear. In this analysis, the number of documents conducted by the leader in a year is the independent variable, and the number of documents conducted by agents in the same year is the dependent variable. I expect that in years when leaders acted in more documents, agents would also act more, because workload would push a leader to employ more agents. A regression analysis returns a variety of results, all stemming from the regression line, the line that best fits the data points of the graph. This analysis will focus on three key results of the regression analysis: the slope of the regression line, the r-value, and the r-squared value.[260] The slope of the regression line indicates the rate at which the dependent variable (number of documents conducted by agents) changes with an increase of the independent variable (number of documents conducted by leaders). For example, in this analysis a slope of 2 would indicate that for every document a leader acted in, he would send an agent to conduct two.[261] The r-value, also known

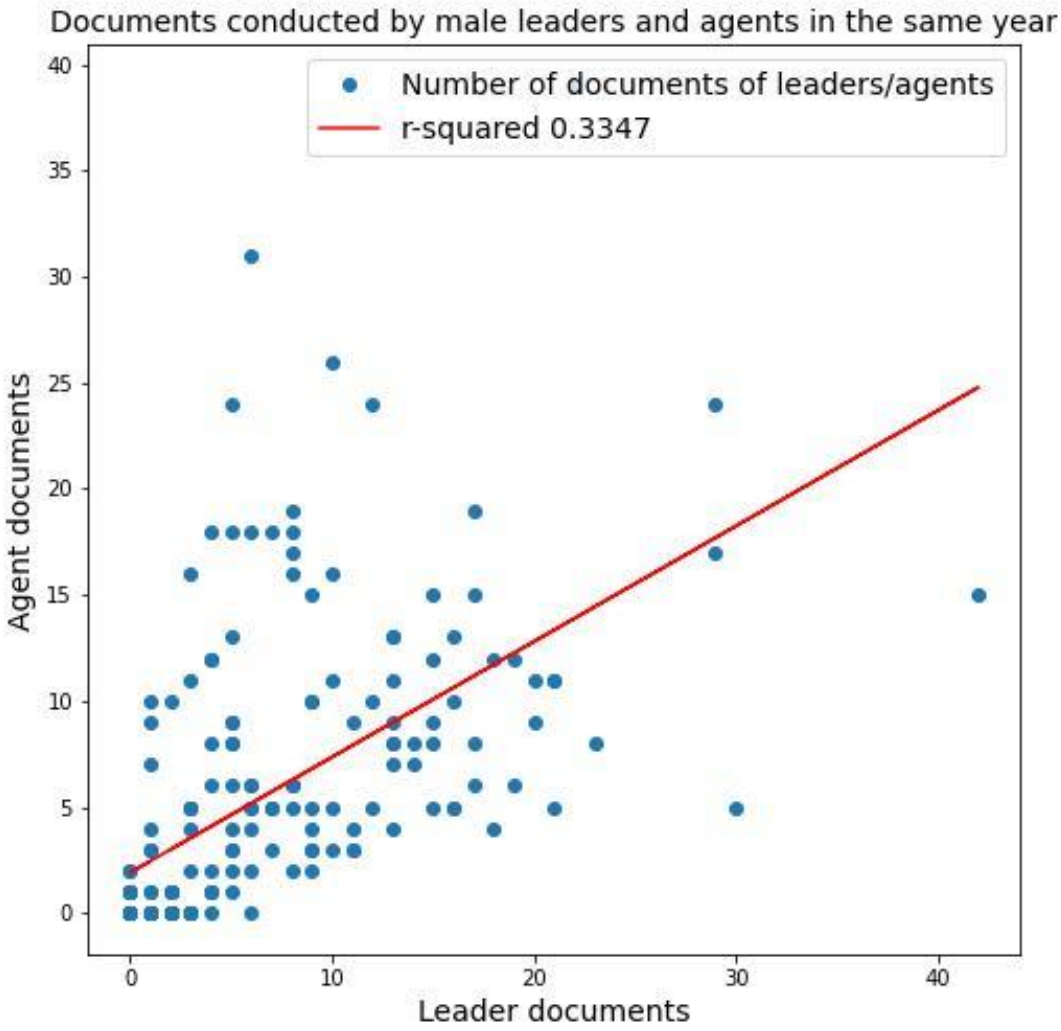
[259] Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216,", pp. 299-312.
[260] The test also returns the intercept value, the p-value, the standard error of the estimated gradient, and the standard error of the estimated intercept. I will not discuss these in this analysis.
[261] David M Diez, Christopher D Barr, and Mine Cetinkaya-Rundel, *OpenIntro Statistics - Fourth Edition* (OpenIntro, 2019), p. 321

as the correlation coefficient, measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the two variables. It ranges from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates a strong positive correlation, -1 indicates a strong negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation.[262] For instance, in this analysis, an r-value of 0.90 would indicate a strong positive correlation: as the number of documents conducted by a leader increases, the number of documents conducted by an agent also tends to increase. The r-squared value, on the other hand, represents how the data clusters around the regression line. This reveals the amount of variation in the data that the model explains.[263] In this analysis, variance indicates the spread of data from the mean or regression line. This number also ranges from 0 to 1 and is usually expressed as a percentage. For instance, an r-squared value of 0.75, or 75 percent, would suggest that the number of documents conducted by leaders explains three quarters of the variability in the number of documents conducted by agents.

Figure 8 and Figure 9 plot the number of documents led by agents and leaders for each year between 1100 and 1299 for male and female institutions. In each figure, I included the r-squared value to express the extent to which the model fit the data.

[262] Ibid, pp. 310-312
[263] Ibid, pp. 322-323

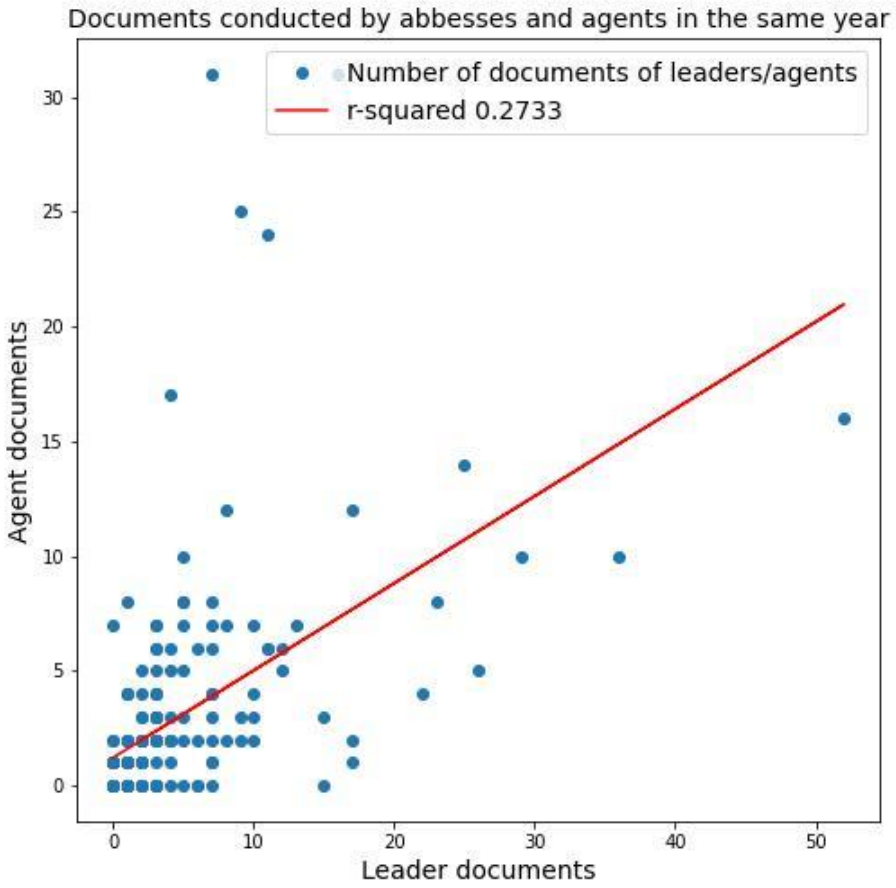
Figure 8: Number of documents conducted by male leaders and agents in the same year, with fitted regression line



The regression analysis on the data of Figure 8 returned a slope of 0.54, an r-value of 0.57, and an r-squared value of 0.33. This result suggests that for every document where a male leader appeared, an agent would appear in 0.54 documents. The r-value suggests a relatively weak positive correlation, meaning that generally an increase in documents conducted by the leader resulted in an increase in documents conducted by agents, but not always. Finally, the r-squared value suggests that the model explains only 33 percent of the variance in the data; therefore, 67 percent of the data points do not fit with the idea that an increase in documents conducted by leaders resulted in an increase in documents conducted by agents. The figure above indicates high variance in the data. In some years when a leader appeared in between five and ten documents, agents acted in between zero and thirty-three documents. Overall, Figure 8 and the connected regression analysis suggest that, although time

constraints of male leaders may at times explain why they employed agents, combinations of other factors played a significant role.

Figure 9: Number of documents conducted by abbesses and agents in the same year, with fitted regression line



A regression analysis of the data in Figure 9 returns a slope of 0.37, an r-value of 0.52, and an r-squared value of 0.27. The slope of 0.37 indicates that we would expect that for every three documents an abbess handled, she would send an agent to act in one. A male leader would employ an agent for almost every 2 documents, therefore relying more heavily on agents as he got busier. The r-value of 0.52 indicates a slightly weaker correlation between the number of documents conducted by an abbess and the number of documents conducted by her agents compared to male leaders and their agents. The low r-squared value indicates that the model does not explain over 70 percent of the variation in the number of documents conducted by agents. This corresponds with many occasions in Figure 9 when abbesses appeared in a high number of documents, but agents did not, or vice-versa. Therefore, the idea that an abbess employed more agents when she got busier explains only a small part of the use of agents from female leaders.

Conducting the same analysis on the documents of the six institutions selected above allows us to compare the aggregate results with the specific experiences of institutions of varying sizes. Table 8 below details the p-value, r-value, and r-squared value for each of the six institutions.

Table 8: Regression analysis results for six selected institutions

Institutions	**Slope**	**R-value**	**R-squared**
Monastero Maggiore	0.34	0.46	0.21
Sant'Apollinare	0.61	0.33	0.11
Santa Margherita	0.05	0.15	0.02
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	0.30	0.58	0.34
San Giorgio al Palazzo	0.12	0.05	0.00
Santa Maria del Monte	0.42	0.39	0.15

When analysing specific institutions, the number of documents where leaders appear correlates less with the number of documents where agents appear. Only the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio has an r-value above 0.5, which indicates a relatively strong correlation between the number of documents the abbot conducted and the number of documents his agents conducted. However, this r-value remains below the aggregate data for male institutions, as does the r-squared value of 0.33. This means that for the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, an increase in how busy the abbot was only explains 33 percent of the number of documents conducted by agents.

The Monastero Maggiore has the second highest r-value and r-squared value, at 0.46 and 0.21, respectively. This suggests that for this nunnery, an increased workload of the abbess had a weak correlation with an increased use of agents, but this does not explain around 80 percent of the variance in the number of documents conducted by agents. Therefore, for these two large institutions, the number of times a leader acted somewhat correlated with the frequency with which they employed an agent. However, the regression analysis of these two institutions confirms that other reasons existed for leaders to employ agents.

The correlation between the independent and dependent variables becomes negligible when looking at the other four institutions, all of which had fewer surviving documents than the Monastero Maggiore and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. All have an r-value below 0.4 and an r-squared value below 0.2. This means that they all have a weak correlation and that the model explains less than 20 percent of the variance in the data. The frequency with which the leaders of these institutions acted has no significant explanatory power for the use of agents. Among the four, San Giorgio al Palazzo stands out, as not even a weak correlation exists, and the r-squared value is below two significant values at 0.002.

The aggregate data suggests that some correlation existed between the frequency with which a leader acted and the frequency with which they employed an agent. However, breaking down the aggregate data in specific institutions reveals that, overall, the degree of time constraints a leader

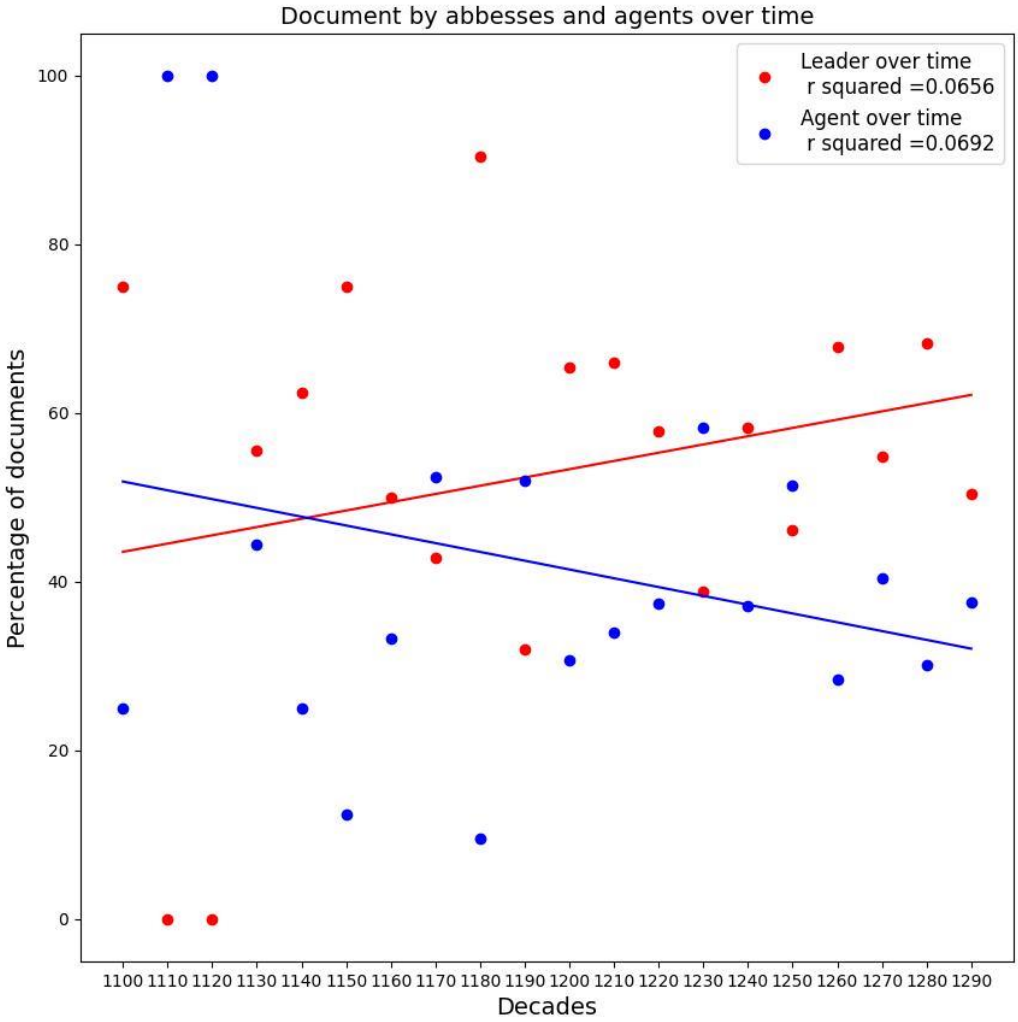
experienced does not explain why they employed agents. For large institutions, some explanatory power exists, but it is limited even for those cases. For smaller institutions, the analysis reveals no explanatory power. A leader could act in almost no documents in certain years and send agents to do their business often, or they could act frequently in a year and send almost no agents to act on their behalf.

Reason 2: Change over time and the cloister

As Sant'Apollinare illustrates, abbesses who lived in a strictly enclosed order could not easily manage their institutions directly. While the pressure on all female monasteries to follow strict enclosure increased drastically only after 1298, the thirteenth century saw a general increase in the desire to enclose nuns. If this pressure had an impact on Milanese nunneries, I would expect abbesses beyond Sant'Apollinare to increasingly rely on agents throughout the thirteenth century, explaining why they used agents.

I will test whether this occurred through a regression analysis. This will use the decades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the independent variable and the percentage of documents redacted by abbesses or agents as the dependent variable. Figure 10 plots the percentage for both abbesses and agents over each decade in the period and the fitted line for both data sets. The same test for male leaders is conducted in Figure 11. If both male and female leaders use agents more frequently over time, this would indicate that some other change in the period outside of the increased pressure to cloister moved leaders to employ agents more frequently.

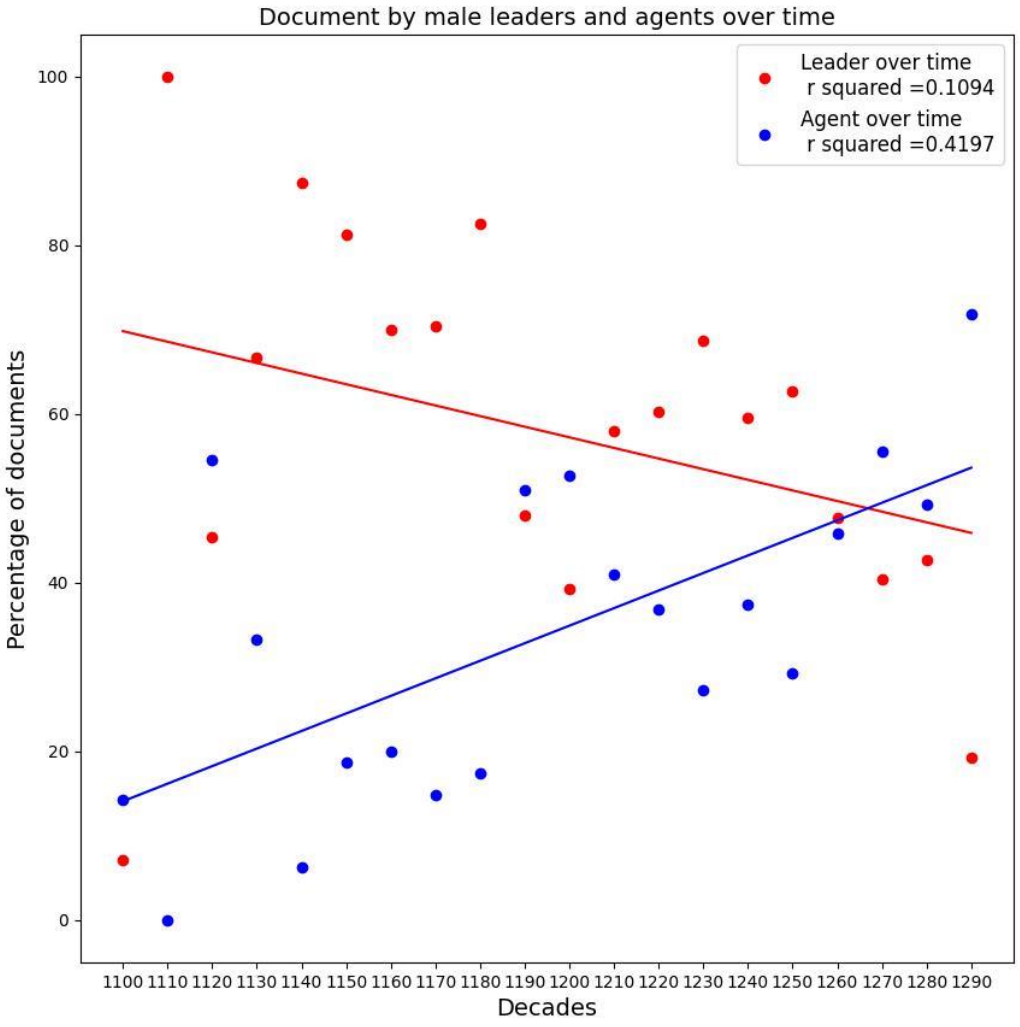
Figure 10: Percentage of documents redacted by abbesses and agents per decade, with fitted regression lines



In Figure 10 the red dots indicate the percentage of documents in which an abbess (leader) appeared for each decade of the period, while the blue dots indicate the percentage of documents in which an agent appeared for each decade of the period. A regression analysis on the data of the abbess returned a slope of 0.01, an r-value of 0.26, and an r-squared value of 0.06. While the r-value might suggest a slight positive correlation between the progression of the century and the frequency with which an abbess acted, the small slope points to a practically negligible change: an abbess would appear in one percent more documents with every passing decade, on average. Furthermore, the low r-squared value indicates that the model does not explain 93 percent of the variance in the data. Figure 10 highlights the large variance in the data. In the 1150s, abbesses appeared in over 80 percent of the

documents, while in the 1110s and 1120s abbesses appeared in no documents at all. The thirteenth century demonstrates more consistency, with abbesses appearing in between 40 percent and just under 70 percent of documents. Overall, these results indicate no significant changes in the frequency with which abbesses acted over the two centuries. A regression analysis on the data of agents over the same period returned a slope of -0.01, an r-value of -0.27, and an r-squared value of 0.07. The results mirror those of the previous analysis. While a slight negative correlation appears, the small slope and the small r-squared value demonstrate no significant correlation. These results indicate that abbesses used agents with a similar frequency throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the growing pressure to follow stricter enclosure did not decrease their ability to lead their institutions, nor did it force them to employ more agents.

Figure 11: Percentage of documents redacted by male leaders and agents per decade, with fitted regression lines



As in Figure 10, the red dots indicate the percentage of documents in which male leaders appear, while the blue dots indicate the percentage of documents in which agents appear. A regression analysis on the leader's data returns a slope of -0.01, an r-value of -0.33, and an r-squared value of 0.1, suggesting a slight negative correlation between the variables. However, similar to the previous analysis, the very low r-squared value indicates a large variance in the data, which the model cannot explain. Therefore, although it appears that the frequency with which male leaders acted slightly decreased over time, the variance indicates that change over time does not explain why the frequency with which a leader acted fluctuated.

On the other hand, Figure 11 indicates that agents for male institutions became more active as the century progressed. The regression analysis returned a slope of 0.02, an r-value of 0.65, and an r-squared value of 0.42. These results indicate a relatively strong positive correlation. Even though significant variance existed in the frequency with which agents acted each decade, the model explains around 40 percent of this variance, far more than what the model can explain for variance in the male leader data. Therefore, male leaders employed agents more frequently towards the end of the century than towards the beginning, suggesting that the structure of male leadership in Milan experienced some changes in the period. Perhaps, given that leaders had the slight tendency to employ more agents when busier, the increased document production of the thirteenth century explains why towards the end of the thirteenth century agents appeared more often.

However, the large variance in data, the significant changes in the number of documents available across the period, and the low r values for both analyses, especially that of leaders suggests a limited significance of the observed change over time for the action of agents. Furthermore, no clear explanation exists for why male leaders employed more agents towards the end of the thirteenth century than towards the beginning.

Analysing the behaviour of specific institutions confirms that no significant change over time occurred for most institutions. Table 9 below details the slope, r-value, and r-squared value for the six institutions detailed above.

Table 9: Regression results for each institution for the change in frequency of leader and agent participation over time

Institution[264]	**Type**	**Slope**	**R-value**	**R-squared**
Monastero Maggiore	Leaders	-0.01	-0.24	0.06
	Agents	0.01	0.32	0.1
Sant'Apollinare[265]	Leaders	0.02	0.36	0.13
	Agents	0.11	0.9	0.81
Santa Margherita[266]	Leaders	-0.03	-0.23	0.05
	Agents	0.02	0.13	0.02
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	Leaders	-0.02	-0.39	0.15
	Agents	0.02	0.51	0.26
San Giorgio al Palazzo	Leaders	-0.02	-0.31	0.09
	Agents	0.03	0.35	0.12
Santa Maria del Monte[267]	Leaders	0.1	0.92	0.85
	Agents	-0.1	-0.94	0.89

Some institutions, like the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio or Santa Margherita, demonstrate some change in the frequency with which agents and leader appeared in document over the thirteenth century. Most others demonstrate very small changes or none at all. Overall, similar to what the aggregate data suggests, over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries male and female leaders continued to employ agents frequently and continued to act frequently. Furthermore, the consistently low r-squared values indicate that variance in data remains very high across all institutions, which further indicates that factors not connected to chronological change explain the use of agents. Only Santa Maria del Monte demonstrates a significant change over time. Figure 12 illustrates the frequency with which the leader of the church and his agent appeared between the 1190s and 1260s.

[264] Data for this analysis comes from documents dated from 1100 to 1300, but when institutions did not have relevant documents for large parts of the period, the data originates from a smaller time frame, specified in the footnotes.
[265] Data from 1220 to 1300
[266] Data from 1200 to 1300
[267] Data from 1190 to 1260

Figure 12: Frequency with which the leader of Santa Maria del Monte and his agents appeared for every decade between 1190 and 1260

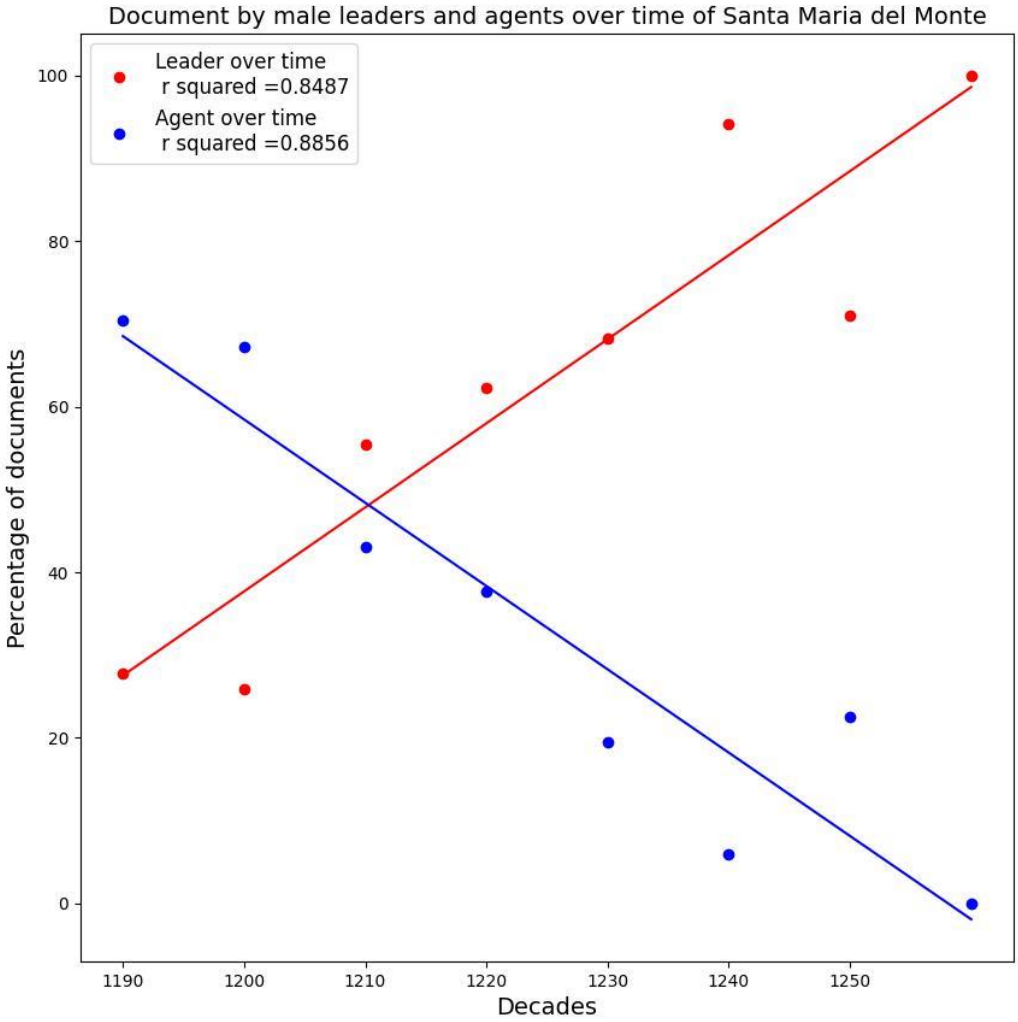


Figure 12 looks only at the period between 1190 and 1260, because I could not incorporate documents from the rest of the period.[268] The red line, plotting the percentage of documents in which the leader of the church acted, has a slope of 0.1, an r-value of 0.92, and an r-squared value of 0.85. The blue line, plotting the same data for agents, has a slope of -0.1, an r-value of -0.94, and an r-squared value of 0.89. These results indicate a very strong correlation between the progression of the thirteenth century and the decreased employment of agents. Over these sixty years, the leader of Santa Maria shifted from employing agents often to acting almost fully alone, which suggests that the leader's management style changed significantly in the period. The changes in archpriests might

[268] I accessed these documents during the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the restrictions it imposed on the Archivio di Milano, I did not have the opportunity to gather all the documents of this institution.

explain the increased activity of the leader. Between 1190 and 1201, Pietro de Busso ruled Santa Maria, and he appeared in only 30 percent of the documents for that period. From 1205 to 1237, Albergado ruled the monastery, and he acted with greater frequency, appearing in between 50 to 70 percent of the documents. The next archpriest, Giovannibuono de Canali, ruled for the rest of the period, acting with even greater frequency, appearing in between 70 and 100 percent of the documents.

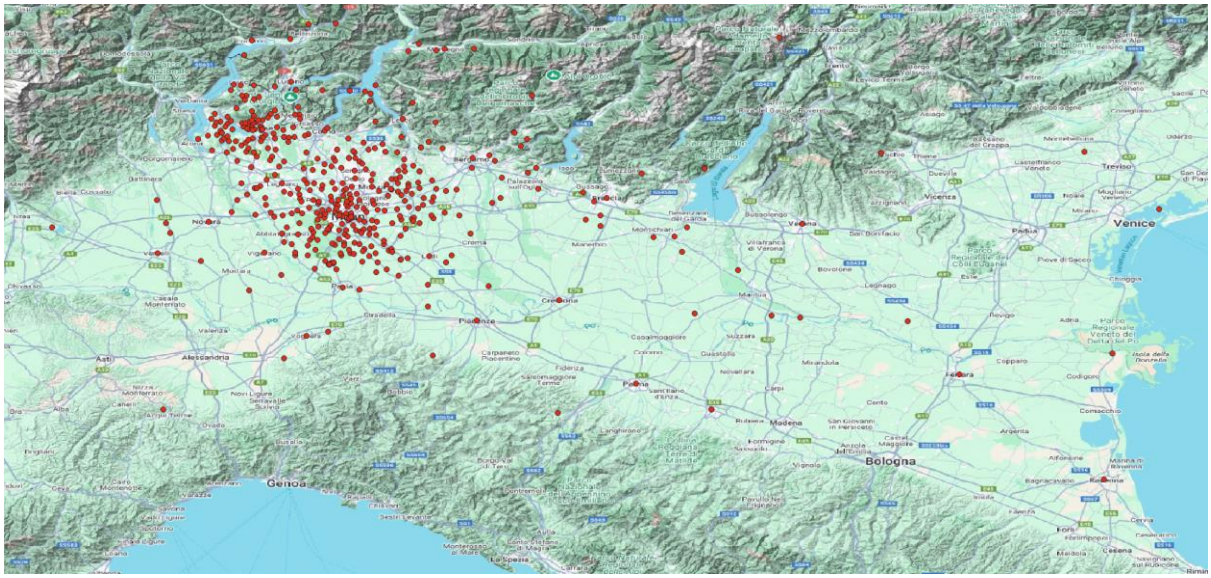
It seems that successive leaders had less need or interest in employing agents. This could indicate a distancing from Santa Maria del Monte and Milan. Archbishop Galdino della Sala appointed Pietro as archpriest in the 1170s, but he remained a member of the Milanese clergy, which could have required him to occasionally travel to the city and employ agents when he was away. Perhaps Albergado and Giovannibuono did not have similar duties in Milan and did not need to travel to the city as often. This situation, though, appears unique to Santa Maria del Monte, a rural institution. No other Milanese institution experienced a similarly clear change of behaviour of the leadership throughout the thirteenth century.

Reason 3: Travel

Neither time constraints nor a shift in customs over the thirteenth century provides a satisfactory explanation for why leaders employed agents. Travel might better explain why leaders employed agents. Not all the business of an institution occurred in the same location. Some occurred in the institution itself, while some occurred in other parts of Milan or in the Milanese countryside. Enclosure should limit the ability of abbesses and abbots to travel, which in turn would limit their ability to conduct business outside of their institutions. However, in the twenty institutions studied here, only the nuns of Sant'Apollianre followed a strict enclosure. Benedictine and Cistercian nuns and monks could leave to serve their monastery, and so could their leaders. Therefore, I expect only the abbess of Sant'Apollianre to practically never travel outside of the monastery, while Benedictine abbots and abbesses should travel a similar amount, and the leaders of non-monastic institutions should travel more often. From the perspective of aggregate data, I expect female leaders to travel less than male leaders, as most female institutions were monastic, and one was strictly enclosed.

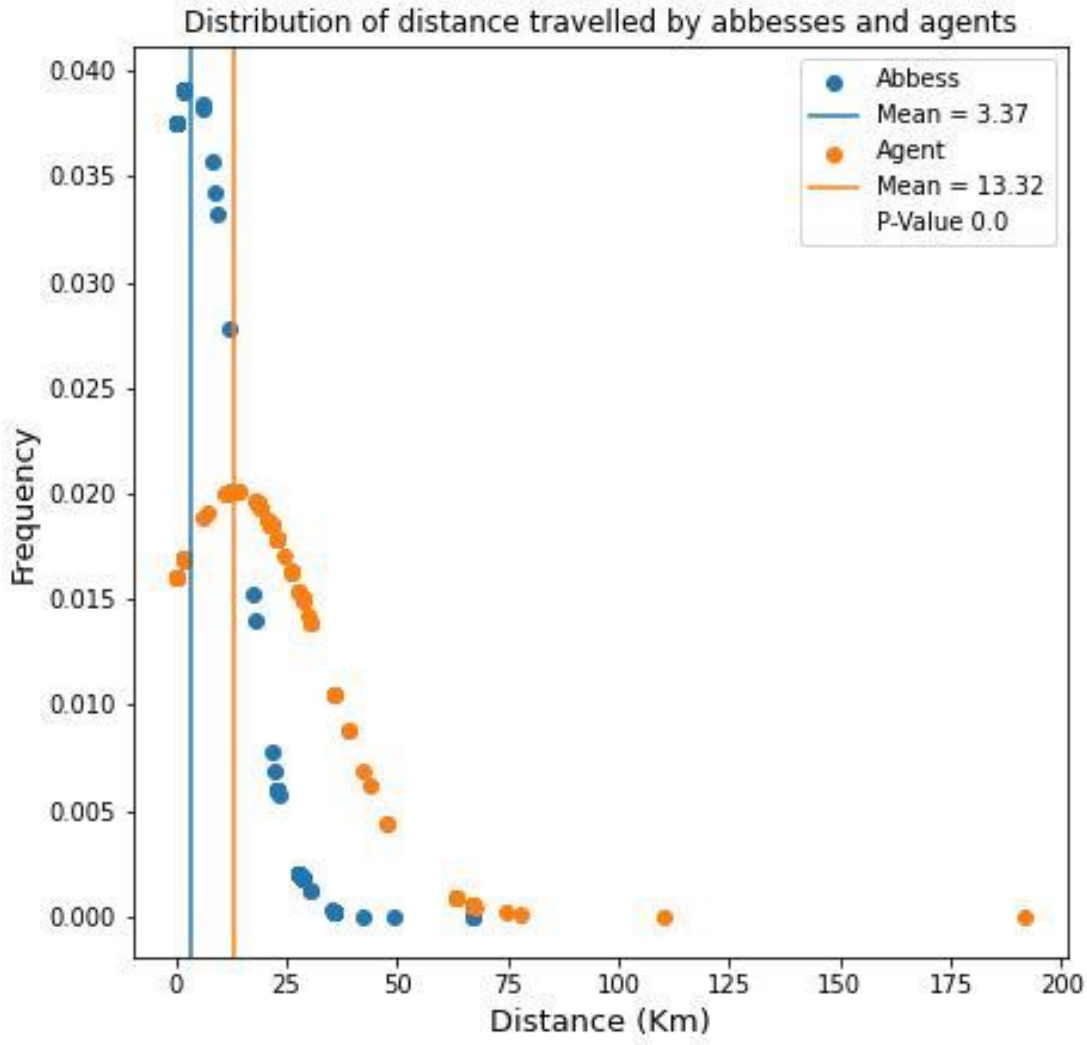
To provide a scale for the spread of landed estates of these institutions, Figure 13 below shows the location of all the estates I encountered in the documents for all institutions on a modern map.

Figure 13: Location of all the localities encountered in the parchments studied



To measure the extent travelled by leaders, I took note of where each document was redacted, something notaries almost always recorded. This allows us to measure the distance between the institution and where a transaction occurred. This section will compare the distances travelled by leaders and agents to conduct business, analysing aggregate data from all institutions and also from the six institutions detailed above. Figure 14 below presents the distribution of distance travelled by abbesses and agents for all nunneries in the study. The distance plotted in this and the following graphs represents the distance in kilometres between the institution's location and the location of a document's redaction.

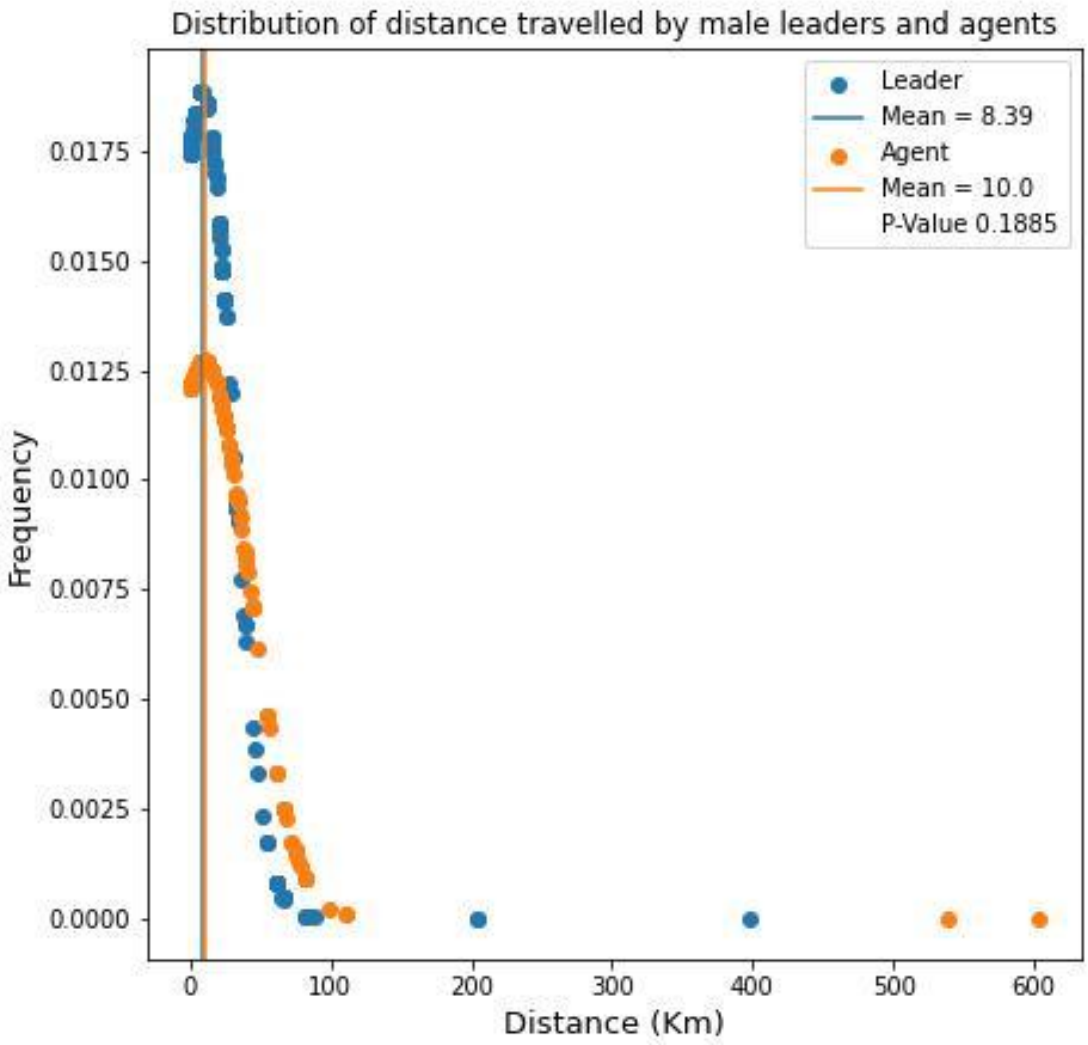
Figure 14: Distribution of the distance travelled by abbesses and agents of Milanese nunneries



Abbesses travelled on average 3.37 kilometres, and their agents travelled on average 13.32 kilometres. A t-test conducted on the two sets of data returns a p-value of 0.00 (4.83×10^{-15}), indicating a significant difference between the travel of abbesses and of their agents. Abbesses acted mostly around the mean, travelling most often between 0 and 10 kilometres, but mostly stayed in their institutions. The presence of a few blue dots farther away from Milan indicates that an abbess would occasionally travel for specific business to farther away locations and that abbesses sometimes left their institutions to conduct business in the city. Agents instead travelled farther away more frequently, occasionally to locations almost 200 kilometres away, but also conducted business close to the institution or in the institution itself. Therefore, agents had a role in representing their institutions in distant locations, but they remained important in the city too, which suggests that travel only

partially explains their employment. By contrast, Figure 15 below represents the distance travelled by male leaders and their agents.

Figure 15: Distribution of the distance travelled by leaders and agents of male institutions



Male leaders travelled on average 8.4 kilometres, while their agents travelled on average 10 kilometres. Almost no difference exists in the variance between the two curves, and a t-test returns a p-value of 0.18, proving that no significant difference existed between the travels of leaders and agents. While abbesses travelled significantly less than their agents, male leaders did not. From an aggregate perspective, male leaders could travel far more than female leaders. Agents of male institutions still travelled, proving also that male leaders employed agents to conduct business outside of the city, but not because they could not travel themselves.

A closer look at specific institutions will help to clarify the impact of enclosure on female leaders specifically. If female leaders faced in general a stricter rule of enclosure, I expect the abbess of the Monastero Maggiore and of Santa Margherita to travel significantly less than the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio. As discussed above, I also expect the abbess of Sant'Apollinare to not travel at all and the provosts of San Giorgio and Santa Maria del Monte to travel more frequently than anyone else. The table below illustrates the results of a t-test between the distance travelled by agents and leaders for the six selected institutions.

Table 10: T-test results of the comparison of distance travelled by leaders and agents for each of the six institutions

Institution	**P-value**	**Average distance travelled by leader (Km)**	**Average distance travelled by agent (Km)**
Monastero Maggiore	0.0000	3.42	19.64
Sant'Apollinare	0.0621	0.00	1.78
Santa Margherita	0.5899	0.89	2.05
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	0.0000	8.34	19.09
San Giorgio al Palazzo	0.3404	6.04	3.05
Santa Maria del Monte	0.1526	12.91	10.19

Table 10 suggests that female leaders of any institution travelled significantly less than male leaders. Firstly, the abbess of Sant'Apollinare did not travel. Secondly, the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore and of Santa Margherita also did not travel frequently. Perhaps, in the case of Santa Margherita, the abbesses did not need to travel frequently, as their agents also did not travel very frequently, and no significant difference exists between the distance travelled by abbesses and their agents. The abbesses of this smaller monastery had infrequent need to manage business outside of Milan or the nunnery. However, the same argument does not apply for the Monastero Maggiore. The agents of this institutions travelled far and significantly more frequently than the abbesses. Clearly, the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore had interests far from the city but rarely went to manage them directly.

On the other hand, the leaders of all three institutions travelled frequently. The provosts of the two canonries travelled more frequently than their agents, although not to a significant extent. The abbots of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio travelled instead significantly less frequently than their agents. However, they still travelled on average over 8 kilometres per transaction, significantly more than the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore or of Santa Margherita. These results suggest that a significant difference existed between female and male Benedictine monasteries in the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries regarding the ability or willingness of abbots and abbesses to travel, despite both following substantially the same rule.

Table 10 also suggests that not all leaders employed agents specifically to travel. For all six institutions, agents travelled to conduct business, but to differing extents. Smaller nunneries had less need to conduct business outside of Milan, while the leaders of Santa Maria del Monte and San Giorgio al Palazzo travelled as frequently as their agents, suggesting that other reasons pushed them to use agents rather than simply the need to travel itself. Only for the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Ambrogio does travel explain a large part of why abbots and abbesses hired agents. For these institutions, agents travelled on average over 19 kilometres per transaction and did so significantly more frequently than their leaders. To manage the possessions of large institutions, it appears it was essential to have agents travel in your stead.

Reason 4: Agents had a specific role

The analysis so far has dealt with all documents as a single entity, but institutions engaged in various types of business, and this could impact the participation of leaders as much as where a transaction occurred. The variables the chapter has explored so far do not fully explain why leaders employed agents. Understanding the types of documents for which leaders employed agents provides the final variable to explain the use of agents. For this analysis I focused on the seven most frequent types of document found in the collection: investitures, sales, disputes, exchanges, payments, promises, and renunciations. Chapter 1 explores in detail what an investiture, a sale, and a dispute entailed and discusses the range of documents that I categorised under these rubrics. Exchanges represent those documents when two parties exchanged lands of theoretically the same value, generally without exchanging money or imposing a rent. This type of transaction allowed religious institutions to alienate lands without selling them. Renunciations resemble sales, as a party renounced a right in exchange for money. Generally, these documents accompanied land or house sales and involved the relatives of the party who had sold a property. Payments recorded an exchange of money between two parties. This happened when a party had a debt to pay, when they paid a rent, or when they paid an agreed price for an acquisition in instalments. Promises resemble payments, as a party promised to make a payment in a specific timeframe. Figure 16 plots the number of different document types conducted by abbesses or their agents, while Figure 17 plots the number of documents conducted by male leaders or their agents.

Figure 16: Types of documents led by abbesses and agents in all nunneries

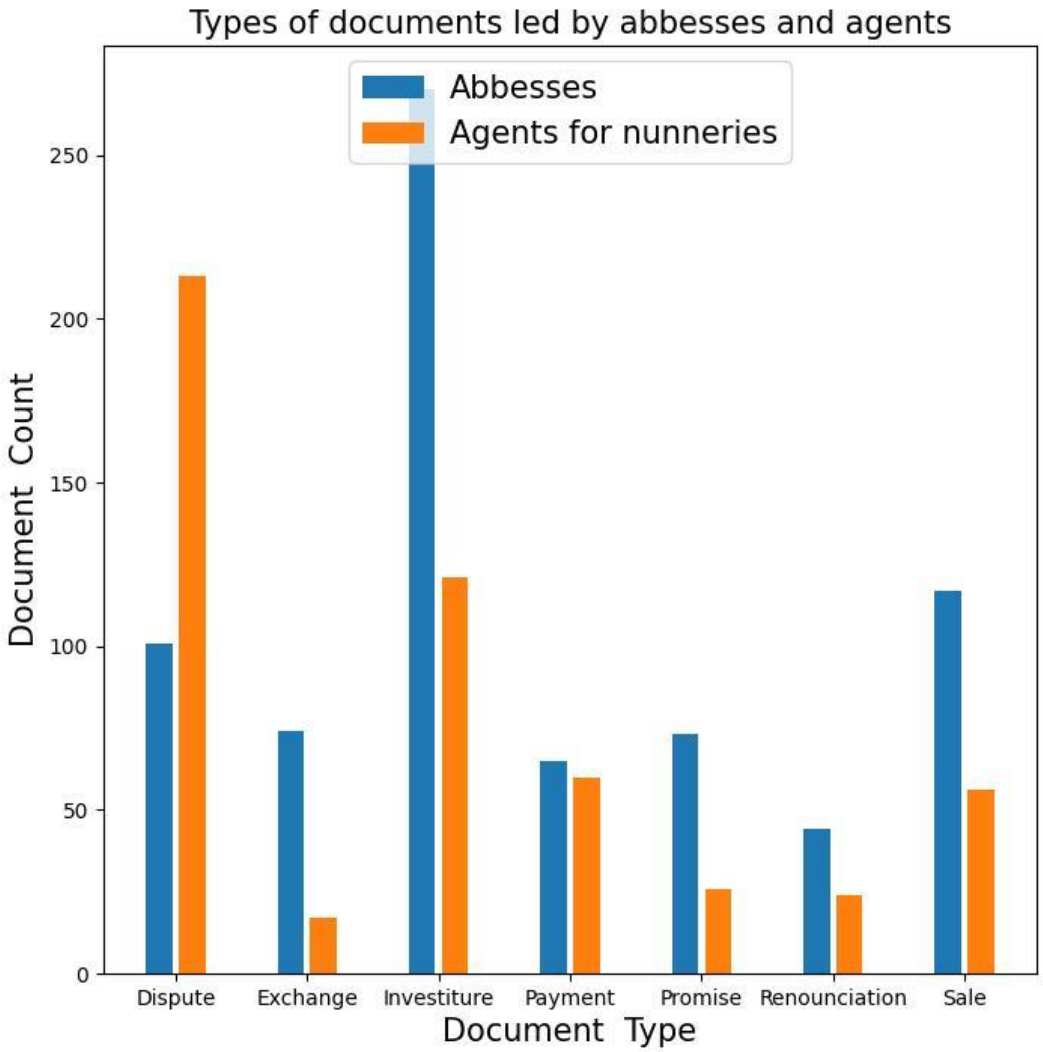


Figure 16 demonstrates that abbesses employed agents in all types of business, but the frequency changed according to the business. Agents conducted around 66 percent of the disputes of nunneries, but only 25 percent of the investitures.[269] Overall, abbesses participated in most of the different types of transactions, and only in disputes did they relinquish most cases to agents.

[269] In chapter 1, pp.37-38, I discussed the range of investitures and disputes that appeared in the documents studied.

Figure 17: Types of document redacted by male leaders and agents in all male institutions

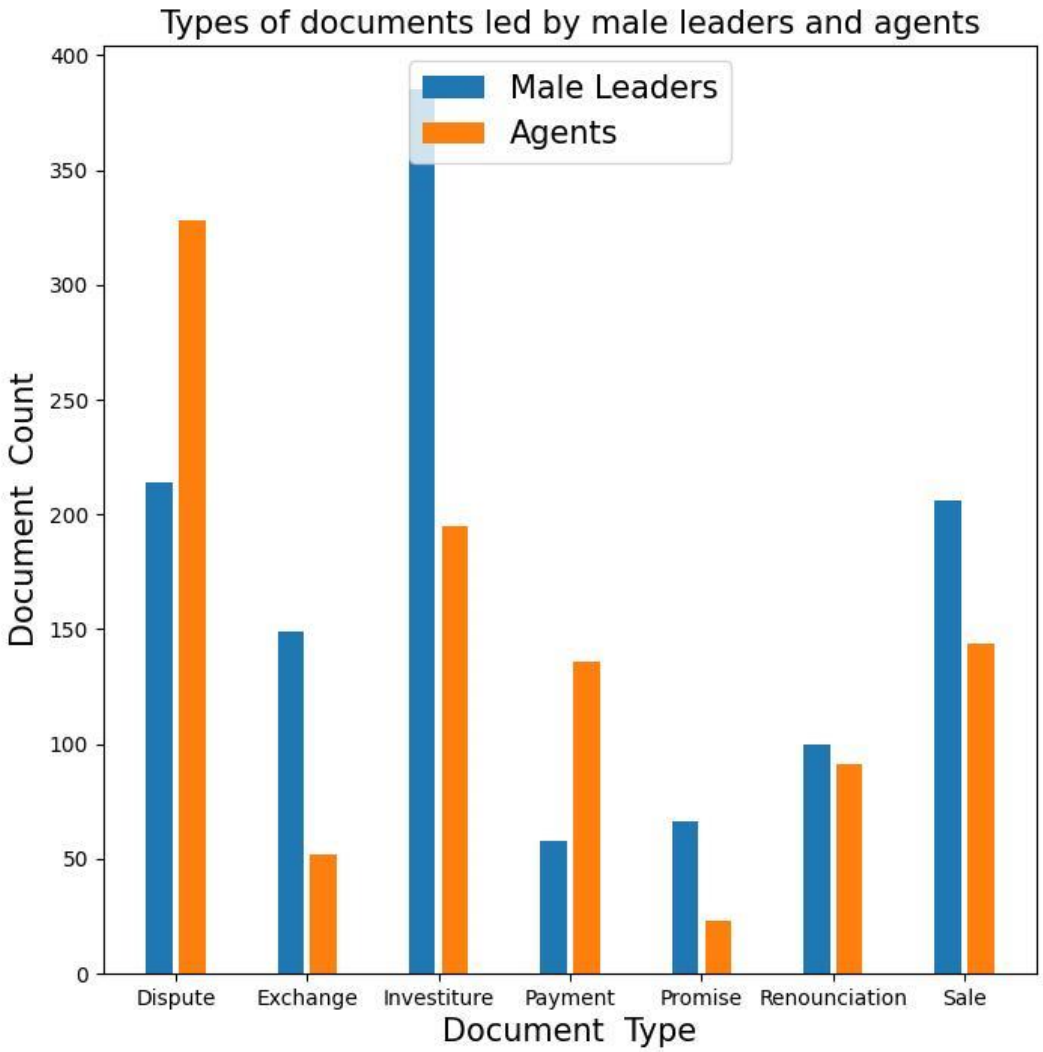


Figure 17 outlines how male leaders acted more frequently than agents in investitures, exchanges, and promises, while they employed agents more frequently for all other business. For acquisitions and renunciations, leaders and agents acted with similar frequency, although agents acted slightly more often. Male leaders relinquished most control when engaged in a dispute, acting in only a third of all disputes.

Compared with abbesses, male leaders acted less frequently in all transactions, although they still often participated in all facets of their institutions. This suggests that abbesses had more direct control than male leaders over aspects of their institution. The need for more direct control might relate to the fewer management options an abbess had. A male leader could act directly, employ a layman as an intermediary, or send a monk or a priest from the community. Abbesses instead could either act directly or employ a layman, as they would almost never send a nun to represent the

institution. A male leader had the option to send a trusted member of the institution to deal with business that required direct representation from the institution, rather than an intermediary, while abbesses had to act directly in these circumstances. This would also explain why no significant difference exists between the percentage of intermediaries employed by abbesses and by male leaders, as both employed intermediaries for business that could be or had to be delegated to a layman. This does not diminish the fact that abbesses relied less on others to manage their monastery than male leaders, but it also demonstrates the greater challenges abbesses faced, instead of representing greater control.

The reliance on agents for managing disputes is not surprising. From the perspective of canon law and tradition, a man or woman of God should not get involved in disputes and litigations for material goods, as that was seen as running against the whole idea of the religious vocation. Therefore, a religious person, whether in a position of leadership or not, should not get involved in courts, especially lay ones.[270]It should follow that no religious leader would participate in a dispute, at least not in one that involved secular courts. Indeed, the surprising result of Figure 16 and Figure 17 is the frequency with which leaders appear in disputes, as they should only act in lay courts in exceptional circumstances. Partially, the frequency of ecclesiastical disputes in the documents studied explains the presence of leaders in this category, as Table 11 below shows.

Table 11: Number of lay and ecclesiastical disputes done by leaders and agents of male and female institutions

	Type of Dispute	**Ecclesiastical Disputes**			**Lay Disputes**		
	Actor	**Leader**	**Agent**	**Total**	**Leader**	**Agent**	**Total**
Institution							
Male Institutions	**Number**	99	126	225	130	264	394
	Percentage	44.00%	56.00%	100.00%	32.99%	67.01%	100.00%
Female Institutions	**Number**	14	16	30	85	158	243
	Percentage	46.67%	53.33%	100.00%	34.98%	65.02%	100.00%

While leaders acted in disputes involving ecclesiastical and lay courts, they acted in a greater percentage of ecclesiastical disputes and delegated to agents more frequently in lay disputes.

The structure of disputes also explains the large number of documents in which both agents and leaders appeared. A litigation involved a complex process, which could span multiple years, and involved the creation of multiple documents.[271] Therefore, leaders and agents appeared in far fewer litigations than the numbers of Table 11 suggests as a single litigation could involve the same leader for multiple documents.

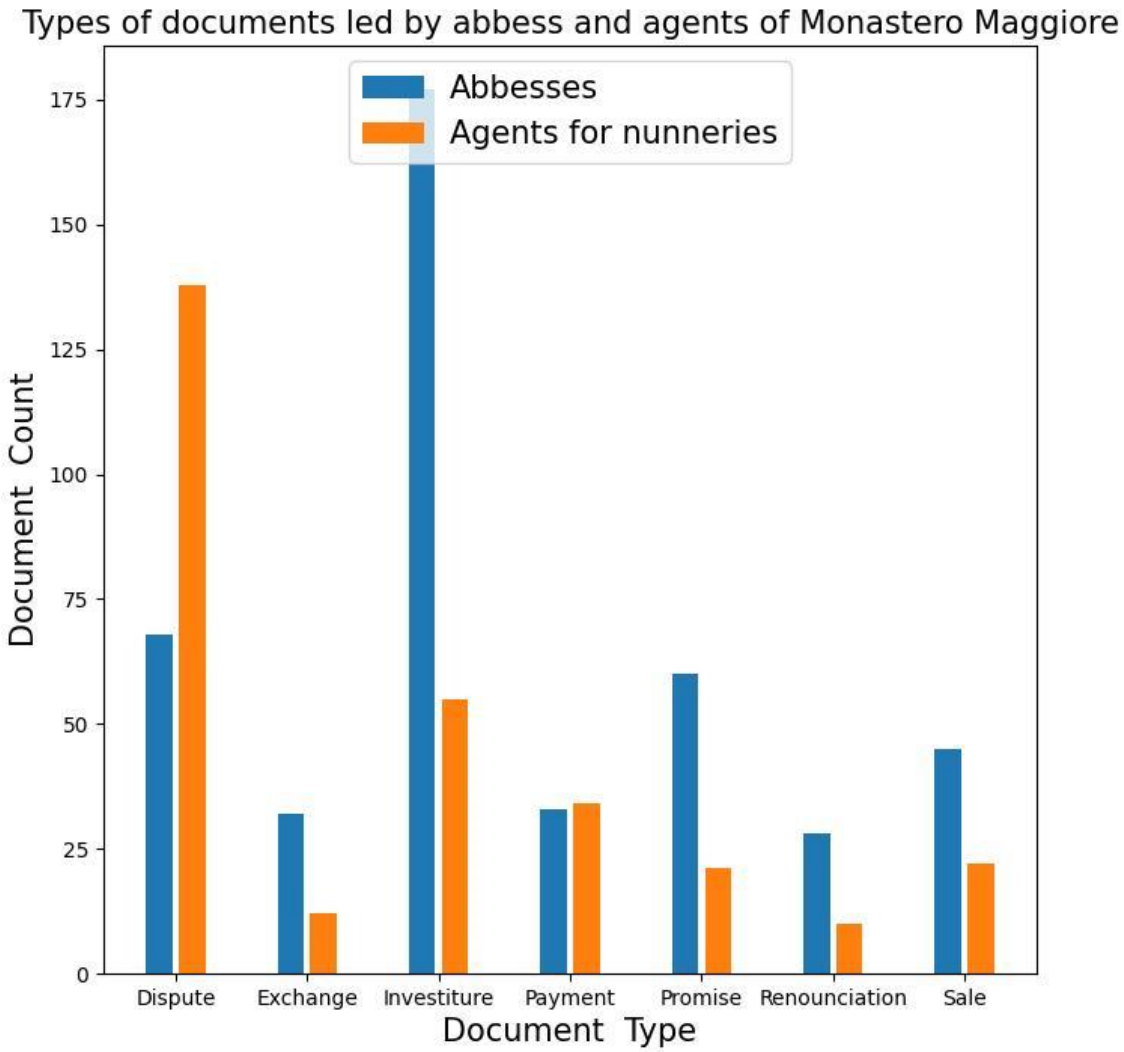
[270] James Brundage, "Shorter Studies: The monk as lawyer," *Jurist* 39 (1979), pp.423-424
[271] For a more detailed discussion of the different stages of a dispute, see Heidi Febert, "The Poor Sisters of Söflingen: Religious Corporations as Property Litigants, 1310–1317," *Traditio* 68 (2013) pp.339-400

Furthermore, it is not clear whether leaders or agents presided over documents or disputes or were simply named by notaries. In each document, the notary would identify the parties in the dispute, the judges who heard the litigation, and then detail the arguments from either side or the sentence of the judges. Given the nature of documents of dispute, this does not necessarily entail that either party was present at each stage of the dispute, or whether the notary was simply recording arguments submitted in writing, or previous parts of a litigation. The fact that a notary would mention a leader or an agent simply highlights the representatives of each side in the dispute, and not necessarily physical presence. Therefore, the frequent mention of leaders in documents of disputes does not always mean that they were physically present but that they at least abstractly represented the institution in the litigation process.

Whether leaders were present in each document draughted by a notary, they still represented their institutions in a large number of disputes, and this did not appear to differ between male and female leaders. However, for both canonical and practical reasons, leaders tended to hire agents to manage litigations and directly represent them when hearing sentences or delivering arguments. The need of agents to manage disputes certainly explains a large part of why agents were essential for Milanese leaders of the twelfth and thirteenth century.

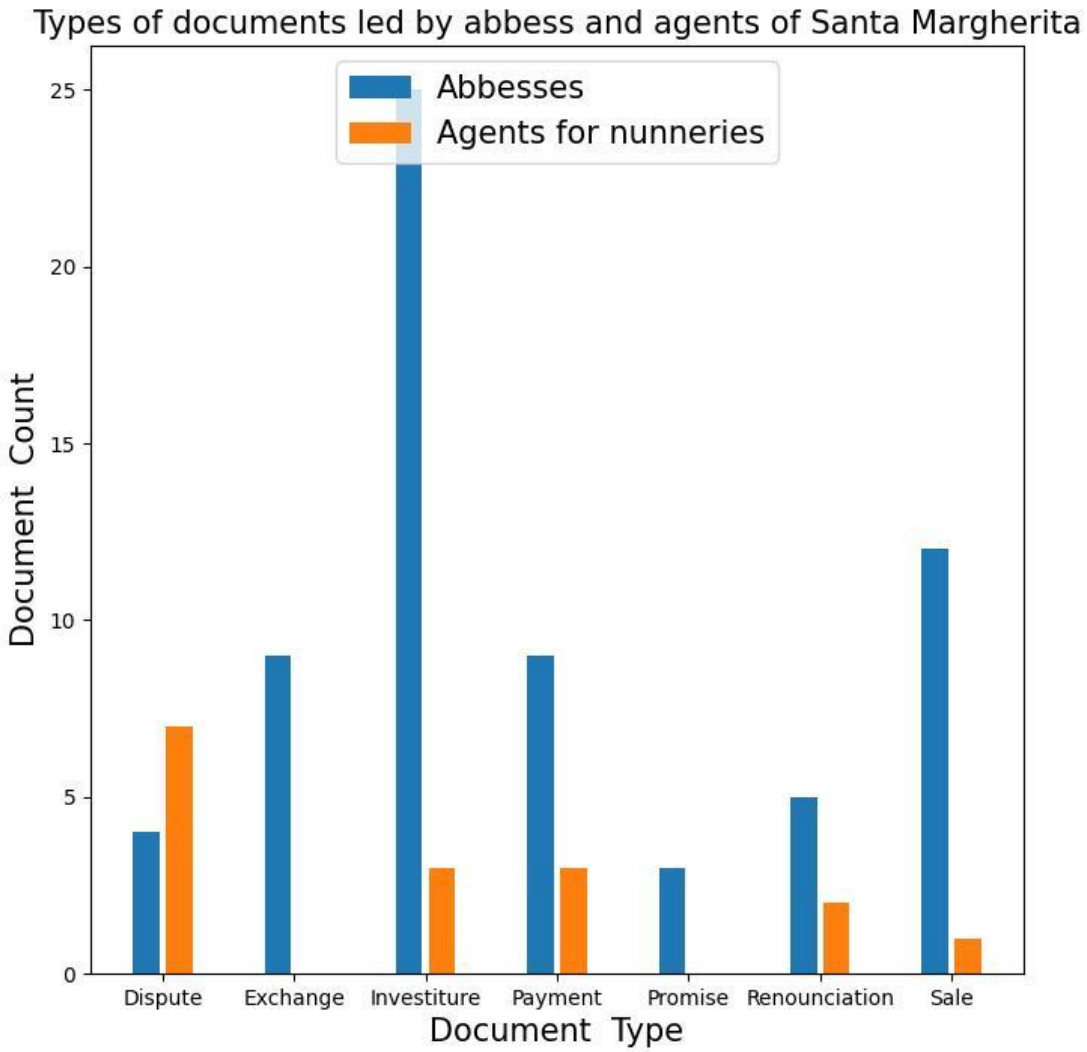
The discussion above referred to aggregate data, but, as with other variables, differences existed between institutions. Of the six institutions that form the basis for specific analysis, only the Monastero Maggiore fits the aggregate data cleanly. Figure 18 below illustrates the number of parchments divided by document type conducted by abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore and the number conducted by agents.

Figure 18: Types of documents led by abbesses and agents of the Monastero Maggiore



The abbess of the Monastero Maggiore employed agents in all types of transactions but acted most frequently in all but two types, disputes and payments. In payments, abbesses and agents appeared in almost the same number of documents. Agents appeared in far more disputes, reflecting the trend of the average nunneries. Compared to the aggregate data, agents appeared more often in investitures but less often in disputes. Otherwise, abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore behaved like the aggregate data. Santa Margherita, for which data is displayed in Figure 19, and Sant'Apollinare, for which data is displayed in Figure 20, demonstrate a different reality.

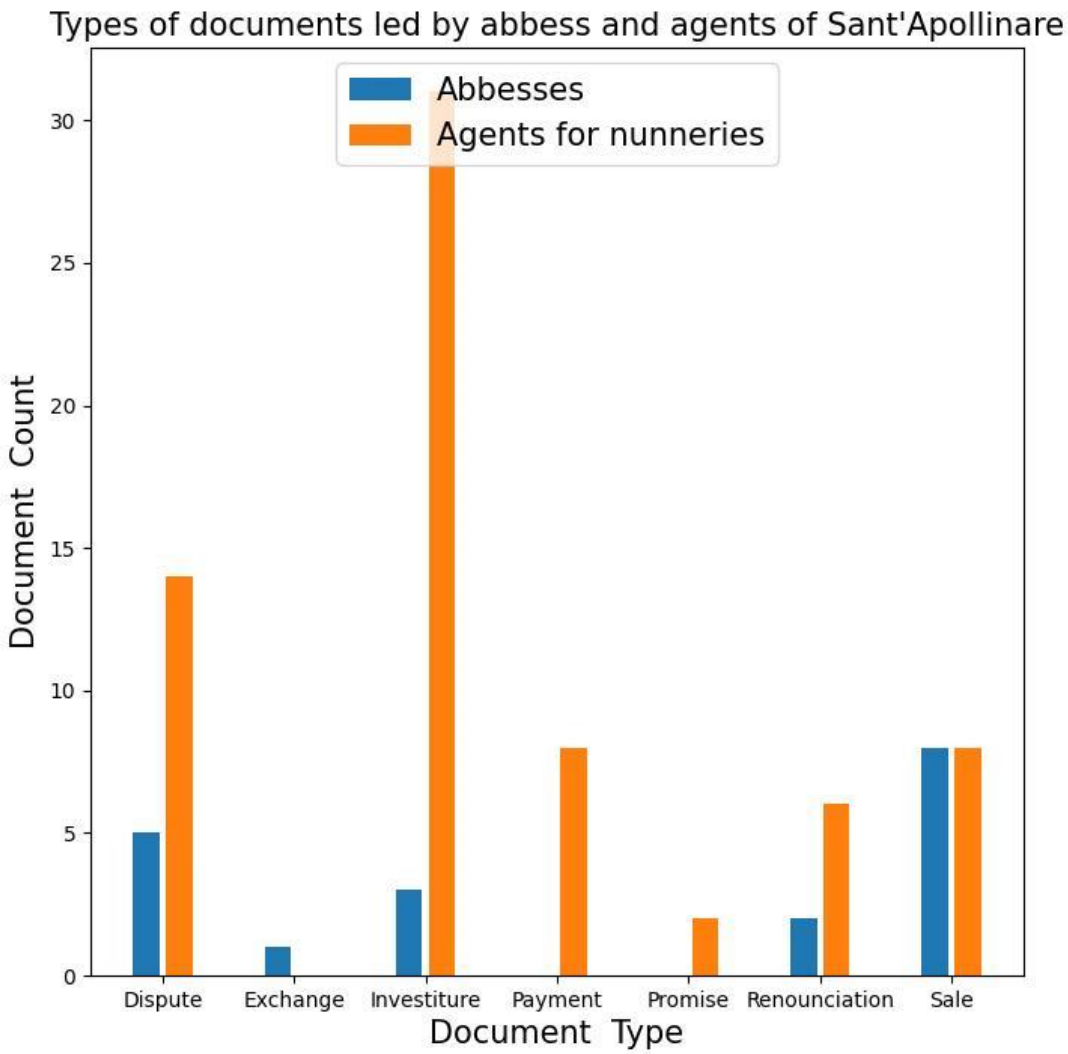
Figure 19: Types of documents led by abbesses and agents of Santa Margherita



The abbesses of Santa Margherita acted more frequently than agents in all transactions but disputes. Compared to the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore, those of Santa Margherita appear to have had far more control over their institution and exemplify a situation where abbesses could rule undisputed. This also relates to the size of Santa Margherita: the abbesses had less business to delegate to agents and less business that required travelling. Figure 19 also confirms that abbesses had a systematic need to employ agents, especially for managing disputes.

The abbesses of Sant'Apollinare behaved in the opposite way and differed completely from the aggregate data.

Figure 20: Types of documents led by abbesses and agents of Sant'Apollinare



The abbesses acted more often than agents only when buying and exchanging land, but in all other types of transactions they relinquished control to agents almost completely. This stands out most for investitures where both male and female leaders acted frequently. A strict enclosure did not only limit the ability of an abbess to travel, but also her ability to invest and manage her land. Given this, it appears odd that abbesses conducted as many acquisitions as she delegated to agents. However, as discussed in the previous section, the abbesses of Sant'Apollinare did not travel; she conducted these acquisitions from the cloister. This indicates that land acquisitions required in more cases the direct involvement of a monastic leader, even when following a strict enclosure.

After sales, abbesses of Sant'Apollinare participated most often in disputes. This suggests that on some occasions disputes required the presence of the institution's leader, at least as a theoretical representative. Even abbesses with such limited involvement in the management of their institutions

acted in around a third of the disputes of the nunnery, and this even though both Innocent IV and Alexander IV had exempted abbesses from appearing in court if challenged.[272]

These three nunneries highlight how the management styles of abbesses varied. The three male institutions reveal a similar situation. Figure 21 outlines the number of times abbots and agents of Sant'Ambrogio acted in different types of documents; Figure 22 and Figure 23 do the same for San Giorgio al Palazzo and Santa Maria del Monte.

Figure 21: Types of documents led by abbots and agents of Sant'Ambrogio

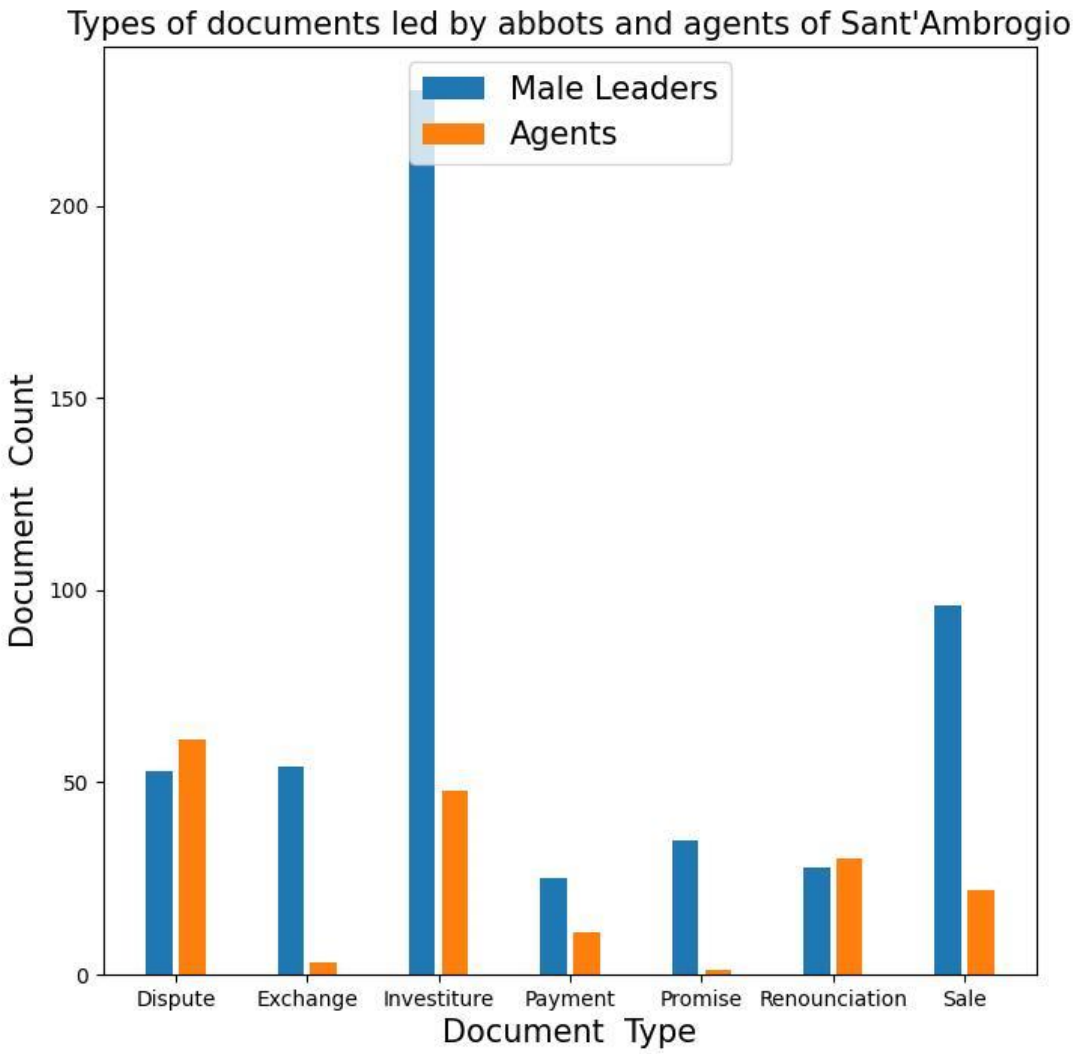


Figure 21 agrees with the other observations on the Ambrosian monastery: abbots acted more frequently than other male leaders and conducted most transactions by themselves. The abbot employed agents more frequently than he acted himself only in disputes and renunciations. Also in

[272] Alberzoni, "Il Monastero Milanese di S.Apollinare di fronte all'autorità ecclesiasitca (1223-1264): II 1241-1264," p.316

disputes, abbots participated almost as often as their agents. Agents remained an important aid to the abbot's rule, as they acted in all document types, especially frequently in disputes, sales, renunciations, and investitures. While the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio generally approached the aggregate data, San Giorgio behaved differently.

Figure 22: Types of parchments documents led provosts and agents of San Giorgio al Palazzo

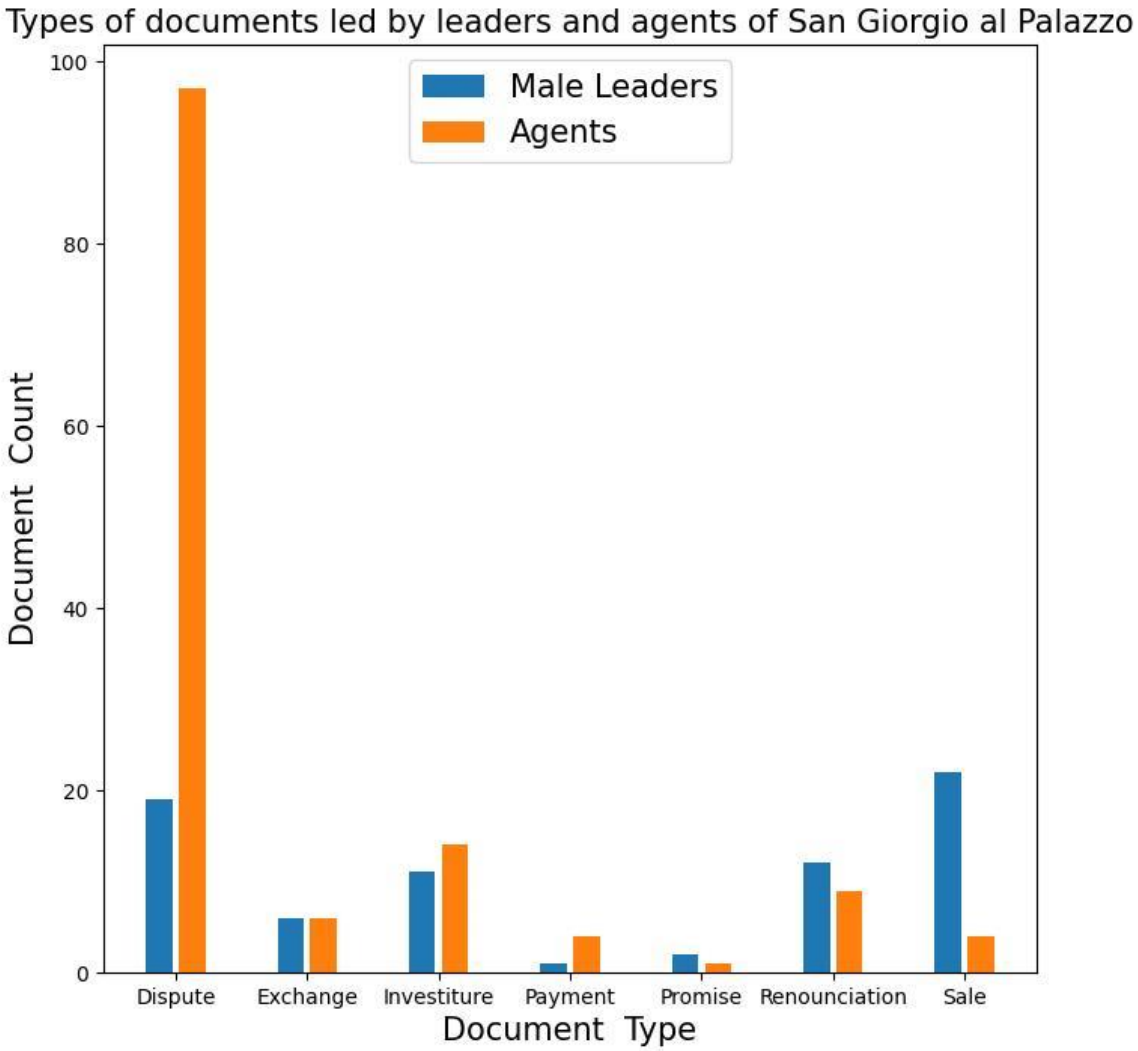
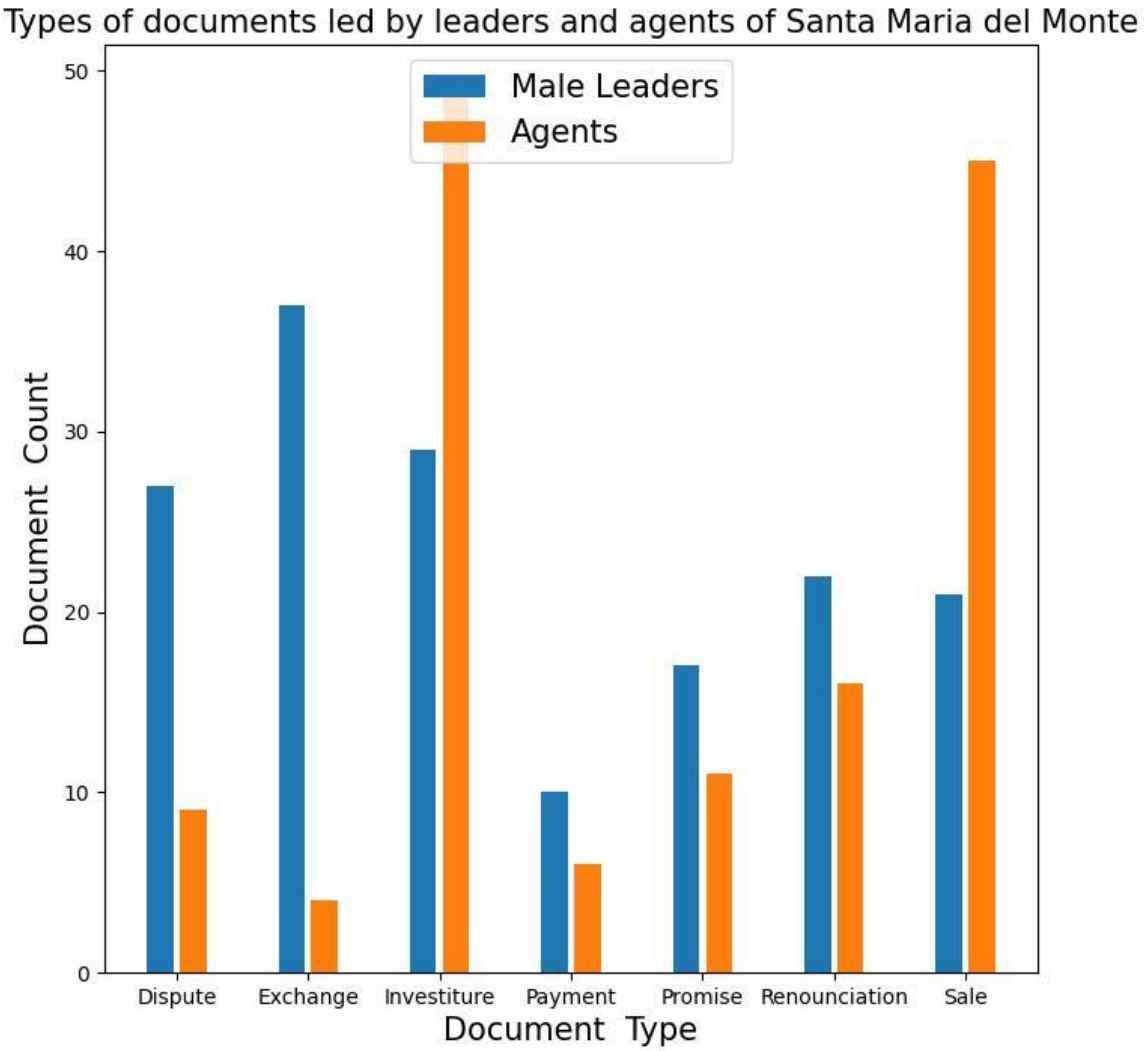


Figure 22 reveals a peculiarity of San Giorgio: its leaders and agents participated in far more disputes than average. Furthermore, the provosts of San Giorgio had to delegate the management of these disputes to their agents more frequently than average. However, in other transactions, the behaviour of the provosts appears more normal. While they generally delegated more often than other male leaders, they still participated in most transactions frequently. San Giorgio confirms that agents had a great importance in managing disputes. However, Santa Maria del Monte does not fit as well in the general trend observed for male institutions.

Figure 23: Types of documents led by the archpriest and agents of Santa Maria del Monte



The types of documents in which archpriests acted differ from the aggregate data. They acted more than their agents in disputes, but in both investitures and sales they employed agents significantly more often than they acted themselves. The location of Santa Maria might explain this peculiarity. As observed in the discussion on travel, both archpriests and their agents travelled significantly, and the business of the institution spread across the villages around the mountain of the monastery. This might have forced the archpriest to focus on managing some of the monastery's lands and sending agents to others. Therefore, agents conducted investitures where the archpriest would not frequently go. Furthermore, tenants might have struggled to frequently climb the mountain to visit the monastery and might have waited for an agent or the archpriest to tour the monastery's holdings. The location of the monastery might also explain why he acted frequently in disputes. Disputes would

occur in Milan, which would mean travelling to the city. It seems that leaders had to occasionally manage disputes directly. Therefore, the archpriest of Santa Maria del Monte might have attended the entire procedure rather than sending agents to deal with some parts of the dispute and then having to travel to Milan for others. Furthermore, the archpriest of Santa Maria del Monte also acted as an ordinary priest of Milan, which required visiting the city and made it easier for him to stay there.

Observing these six institutions more closely has revealed that internal differences existed, but in most cases, leaders employed agents to act in disputes. Furthermore, in most cases, leaders and agents acted in all types of transactions. Only the abbesses of Sant'Apollinare delegate most kinds of transactions to agents, acting nonetheless in most of them. This confirms that institutional leaders, whether male or female, did not fully rely on agents to manage their institution but also consistently used agents in any kind of transaction.

Why did leaders employ agents?

Male and female leaders employed agents frequently. The analysis above has attempted to understand why and in which circumstances. It became clear that only for the largest institutions did the time constraints of the leader have any impact on the employment of agents. For the smaller ones, leaders employed agents also during years when they acted infrequently. Similarly, it does not appear that during this period the importance of agents changed. Only for Santa Maria del Monte did a change in frequency occur in the thirteenth century, with the leader of the monastery acting significantly more frequently after each decade. This probably relates more to a change in leadership than a general change in customs.

For nunneries, it became apparent that the need to travel corresponded with an increased employment of agents, as abbesses travelled on average significantly fewer kilometres than their agents. This was especially true for abbesses of Sant'Apollinare, as they followed the strictest rule of enclosure. Most male leaders travelled as much as their agents. Only abbots of Sant'Ambrogio travelled significantly less than their agents. Nonetheless, these abbots still travelled significantly more than any abbess. This suggests that enclosure impacted the way an abbess could manage her institution even when she followed a rule that did not demand strict enclosure. Most abbesses still acted very frequently but could only do so from their own nunnery, besides some exceptional circumstances.

However, travel alone does not explain the employment of agents. Abbesses of smaller nunneries did not travel frequently, but they also did not frequently employ agents to travel, probably because they had limited business to attend to outside of Milan. Furthermore, even abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore, who travelled significantly less than their agents, continued to employ agents to act in their stead for business occurring in Milan. Finally, male leaders could and did travel often. Studying the types of documents leaders and agents acted in revealed that both male and female leaders frequently employed agents to act in disputes, while they tended to personally manage other

types of business. Agents, therefore, were essential to help leaders manage disputes, which were often drawn-out affairs lasting multiple years.

Overall, a network of agents helped male and female leaders manage their institutions, especially when dealing with disputes and, in the case of abbesses, in situations that required a leader to travel. For the largest institutions, employing agents allowed them to manage vast possessions, while for strictly enclosed nunneries, agents became essential to manage most aspects of the monastery's life.

Family influence on leaders

The chapter has demonstrated that abbesses had strong control over their nunneries, even though they had to employed agents and despite the greater impact enclosure had even on Benedictine nuns. However, the discussion so far has not included the influence powerful families had on religious leaders and in the administration of institutions. Leaders, both male and female, could face significant pressures from their families, a pressure that could remove their agency as leaders. Scholars have identified different ways in which families impacted leaders of religious institutions. Paolo Grillo, in *Milano in età Comunale*, outlined the vast network that existed between families and ecclesiastical institutions.[273] He identified that most important families had, at some point, a member at the head of an important religious institution. He argued that some families, for example the Cotta family, used their ecclesiastical connections to maintain and grow their wealth and influence. Grillo did not comment on the impact that families had on the independence of abbesses and other religious leaders, focusing his analysis on the benefits that families could obtain from their connection to these leaders. Therefore, Grillo did not see families as threatening the agency of leaders but rather envisioned a symbiotic relationship between families and leaders. Elisa Occhipinti focused more on abbesses and the governing structure of nunneries. She also identified strong connections between powerful Milanese families and nunneries. In a 1977 article about the administration and family connections of the Monastero Maggiore, she argued that families could impose a line of conduct on an abbess through imposing certain agents. Occhipinti saw the relationship between families and abbesses as one where the family had great influence on the abbess, and the abbess lost much of her authority to her family.[274]

The works of Sharon Strocchia and Anna Rapetti explored how abbesses benefitted from family connections. Strocchia in 'Nuns and nunneries in Renaissance Florence' initially stated that 'Baronial families viewed ecclesiastical institutions as an extension of private interests',[275] therefore seeing families as a strong controlling force. As she explored this connection further in the article,

[273] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp. 270-278

[274] Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese nel secolo 13. : l'amministrazione della proprietà fondiaria del Monastero Maggiore*, p.94

[275] Sharon T. Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (ProQuest Ebook Central: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 43

Strocchia highlighted how families donated large amounts of land and money to nunneries, benefitting these nunneries greatly.[276] She argued that families gave lavish donations to ensure that the commune could not appropriate their lands in case of banishment during a political conflict. She suggested that families expected abbesses to manage the donated land in the family's best interest. Whether or not this occurred, nunneries benefitted from an influx of wealth originating from the familiar connections of their abbesses and nuns. Strocchia's article on the abbess Piera de'Medici and her kinsmen reinforced this point.[277] Strocchia argued that Piera used her family connections to greatly benefit her nunnery, both economically and in legal disputes. Strocchia once again insisted that the Medici family benefitted from having Piera as the abbess of her nunnery, but it is not clear how the Medici family could ensure that the lands donated were ultimately used to benefit the family and not to simply benefit the monastery. Strocchia's work highlighted that families had a strong connection to nunneries through abbesses, but, while she argued that families benefitted from this connection, her evidence better demonstrated the benefits that abbesses received from this connection. While Strocchia discusses fifteenth-century Florence, her model of family influence could apply to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Families could donate lands and money to an institution that a family member controlled to ensure profits for themselves, beyond helping the receiving monastery.

Rapetti's work on San Zaccaria also highlighted the benefits a nunnery obtained from having close connections to powerful families. San Zaccaria recruited nuns for positions of leadership from various important Venetian families, which allowed the nunnery to have educated and capable leaders, as well as nuns with powerful connections in the city.[278] Unlike the other scholars mentioned above, Rapetti does not delve into the ways in which families benefitted from having a relative as head of the powerful nunnery.

The works of Grillo, Occhipinti, Strocchia, and Rapetti outline a spectrum on which to judge the relationship between family and leaders. One extreme focused on the control that families had over leaders, and abbesses especially, and on the benefits a leader brought to their own family. The other focused on how male leaders and abbesses could use their powerful families to bolster themselves and their institutions. Where did Milanese leaders fall in this spectrum? Occhipinti suggested that in all nunneries, families had primary importance. The documents used in this study do not include letters between family members, which would highlight influence and family connections. However, leaders and agents acting are often named, which allows us to observe the families involved in the reign of each leader.

[276] Ibid, pp.39-71

[277] Sharon T. Strocchia, "Abbess Piera de' Medici and her kin: gender, gifts, and patronage in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 28, no. 5 (2013), pp. 695-713

[278] Anna Rapetti, "Uscire dal chiostro. Iniziative di riforma e percorsi di autonomia di un monastero femminile (Venezia, secolo XII)," *Reti Medievali Rivista* 20, 2 (2019), pp. 145-146

Number of powerful families

To identify the impact that families might have had on leaders, I had first to clearly identify the leader of the institution and which family, if any, they belonged to. Without this knowledge, and without personal correspondence, it becomes difficult to identify influences of families on leaders. Identifying a connection between leaders and an important family presents two main issues. Firstly, I could only reconstruct a full list for a few institutions, and only for the thirteenth century, because of the limited availability of documents for most institutions. When looking at the top twenty institutions, only five of them, the Monastero Maggiore, Santa Margherita, the monastery and canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, and San Lorenzo, have identifiable leaders consistently acting throughout the thirteenth century. For the other six institutions, I could reconstruct a partial chronology, which contains gaps of ten or more years. In these gaps I could not identify the leader of the institution.

Secondly, even after reconstructing a chronology of leaders, not all leaders had a stated family connection. Family names only became frequent in the thirteenth century, as Simone Collavini highlighted in his study of Italian surnames,[279] and even then, notaries only occasionally recorded them. Without connecting a leader to a family, the identification of family influence becomes impossible.

The lack of family names in the thirteenth century provides a point of reflection. Sometimes I could not identify the family of a leader because they appeared in a handful of documents in which the notary did not record their family name. However, sometimes leaders did not belong to a powerful family. Examples of leaders from unassuming families exist in the period. Rapetti highlighted the abbess Giseltruda of San Zaccaria, an abbess who steered the nunnery to prosperity in a difficult period of its history and who did not come from Venetian nobility but probably from an unknown family in the countryside.[280] If not all leaders came from a notable family, then Occhipinti's view that family routinely controlled abbesses becomes less clear. Poorer families had limited or non-existent political influence and had therefore less reason to "impose a line of conduct" on an abbess. They might also have fewer or no resources to influence an abbess or their monasteries with. Most importantly, if we do not know the family of origin of an abbess, establishing possible influences they might have received becomes impossible in the absence of documents of personal correspondence, and therefore it becomes unclear that abbesses were routinely controlled by their families. Table 12 below shows how many leaders had a connection to a family. I could only explore the ten institutions from which I could reconstruct a rough chronology of leaders.

[279] Collavini, "I cognomi italiani nel Medioevo: un bilancio storiografico," , p.53
[280] Rapetti, "Uscire dal chiostro. Iniziative di riforma e percorsi di autonomia di un monastero femminile (Venezia, secolo XII),", pp. 132-133

Table 12: Number of leaders and leaders with a family name from ten Milanese institutions in the thirteenth century

Institution	**Number of leaders**	**Number of leaders with a family name**
Male institutions		
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	6	6
Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	7	7
San Giorgio al Palazzo	7	7
San Lorenzo	5	4
Santa Maria del Monte	3	2
Nunneries		
Monastero Maggiore	5	4
Santa Maria al Lentasio	3	3
Sant'Apollinare	5	3
Santa Maria d'Aurona	6	2
Santa Radegonda	5	3

Table 12 demonstrates that most leaders had a family connection and male leaders had more consistent family connections than abbesses. Of all the nunneries, only in Santa Maria al Lentasio were all abbesses connected to a powerful family. For some nunneries I scarcely found any such connections. In Santa Maria d'Aurona, only two of the six abbesses who ruled in the period had a relationship to a powerful family. Furthermore, the abbesses who ruled this nunnery in the last years of the century had no family connections I could identify, something which occurred for no other nunnery. Given that by that period family names had become common, the situation in Aurona seems unusual. Sant'Apollinare also had few identifiable families, probably a result of the infrequent activity of the abbess. Santa Radegonda had a similar problem: with only a handful of surviving documents and the abbess acting infrequently, connecting abbesses to family was more difficult. Nonetheless, families did not control abbesses as clearly as Occhipinti suggests, as many abbesses did not have a powerful family that could have clearly controlled them.

By contrast, Table 12 indicates that almost all leaders of male institutions came from a known family, generally a prominent one in Milan. This might suggest that families had less economic or political interest in placing a relative at the head of a nunnery than at the head of a male religious institution. The difference also suggests that more male leaders had important enough families to receive pressure from them or to use them for their own or their institutions' benefit.

Nepotism

While suggesting a difference between male and female leaders, Table 12 still confirms the involvement of powerful families in all institutions. This, however, does not alone prove a nepotistic or exploitative relationship between a leader and their family. I envision an undue relationship between a leader and their family taking two forms. Either a family controlled the institution through a leader they appointed, or the leader excessively helped their family by appointing relatives to key positions. I discussed possible examples of families controlling leaders in the introduction of this section, with the works of Occhipinti and Strocchia, but the historiography has also highlighted many examples of nepotistic leaders.

Gerolamo Lozza found that both Ardengo Visconti, abbot from 1227 to 1235, and Guglielmo Cotta, abbot from 1235 to 1267[281], invested a family member with control over the lucrative territory of San Sepolcro in 1234 and 1240 respectively.[282] Lozza argued that the two abbots had different interests in the area. Ardengo wanted to increase his own influence on the territory to ensure a retirement place for himself.[283] Guglielmo instead wanted to remove the territory from the influence of the rival Visconti family.[284] Both leaders used family members to conduct their schemes, and both acted in the context of the wider political struggle in the city.

Miriam Rita Tessera argued that Ambrogio Boffa, provost of the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio between 1217 and 1244, had similar nepotistic tendencies. She described him as 'decisive in his long provostship for the social development of his family'.[285] He recruited three family members as canons of Sant'Ambrogio and employed them as agents of the canonry. Grillo highlighted that Guglielmo Cotta similarly recruited multiple relatives as agents and monks, and in doing so raised the profile of the Cotta family.[286] The tomb of this abbot further highlights the patronage he gave to his family. The epitaph contains a description of the abbot, with a list of the twelve monks who buried him. Of these, two belonged to the Cotta family, Umberto and Giovanni. A sixth of the members of his monastery, the wealthiest of the city, belonged to his family.

Leaders therefore recruited family members and used them to conduct their business. Measuring how many agents belonged to the family of a leader can reveal the nepotistic tendency of each leader, as well as the strength of the connections between families and leaders. The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore provide the perfect case study for this. These two

[281] Lozza, "L'abate Ardengo Visconti e il patrimonio del monastero di s. Ambrogio a s. Sepolcro presso Ternate (anni 1227-1240)," p.395
[282] Ibid, pp. 404, 414
[283] Ibid, pp. 402, 405-406
[284] Ibid, p.419
[285] "determinante nel corso della sua lunga prepositura per la promozione sociale della sua famiglia" – my translation. Tessera, "Canonici di S. Ambrogio e giudici delegati papali: un caso milanese agli inizi del Duecento," , p.287
[286] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp.270-276

institutions have the clearest leader chronology and the greatest number of surviving documents. However, this analysis will also assess the family background of the agents used in most of the eleven institutions from which I could find a connection between a leader and a family. In the case of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, other scholars have highlighted the nepotistic tendency of the abbot Guglielmo Cotta. However, comparing his tenure with that of other abbots' casts doubt on the extent of his nepotism.

From the perspective of agents use, Cotta's reign had two phases. The first one, from 1235 to 1251, saw Guglielmo acting regularly, but in relatively few documents per year. In this period, he frequently used the intermediary Adam Allegrantius, especially between 1242 and 1243, when Guglielmo employed him to conduct thirteen investitures. In the second phase, from 1252 until 1266, he acted more frequently, participating in around fifteen documents per year and acting in thirty in 1257. In the second phase of his reign Guglielmo, employed very few agents, until his final year as abbot.

In the first few years of his reign, and more markedly in the last few years, Guglielmo relied on members of his clergy to act on his behalf far more often than in other periods. This suggests that when he had less experience, and in periods of transition, the abbot had to rely on members of his monastery. At the beginning the abbot, might not have yet found trustworthy aids, while sickness might have weakened his hold over the monastery in the last years. Indeed, the last four years reflect the confusion that reigned in the monastery after the death of Gugliemo. Nineteen different agents acted for the monastery in this period, far more than previously. It seems that as the abbot got older, he probably could travel less and had to employ more agents. In contrast, over the previous twenty-nine years, Guglielmo had employed twenty-six different agents.

This analysis of Guglielmo's reign aligns with the idea that the abbots of Sant'Ambrogio had direct control over their institution, but it does not highlight a great reliance on family nor an exclusive patronage of his family. Of all the agents he employed, he most often sent Adam Allengrantius, 11 percent of the time. He sent multiple family members to conduct the monastery's business, but this amounted to only 18 percent of the total actions conducted by agents. Furthermore, he did not leave the monastery to another Cotta but instead left a leadership vacuum. Whether by design or inability, Guglielmo did not impose a rule of the Cotta family on the monastery.

Compared to other Ambrosian abbots, his leadership does appear nepotistic. No other abbot employed his own family members as agents, or at least they did not send a person with the same surname, and no other abbot recruited family members to the chapter of the monastery. However, Guglielmo ruled in a peculiar time for the monastery. On the one hand, the number of monks fell to six in the 1250s, and the archbishop threatened Guglielmo with excommunication if the abbot did not

increase the number of monks.[287] These pressures might excuse his recruiting family members in the monastery, especially as he could then rely on these relatives to act as trusted agents. The other peculiarity lies in the wealth of Sant'Ambrogio and its exceptional activity of this period. Under the leadership of Guglielmo, the monastery appeared in 504 documents. During the reign of all the other abbots of the thirteenth century combined, the monastery appeared in 253 documents. In 32 years of abbacy, Guglielmo oversaw twice the level of economic activity that the other abbots did in 61 years.[288] Seeking support from his family probably allowed him to manage such an increase in activity. Guglielmo had strong ties with his family, and he favoured them. However, he did so to support his own reign, without excluding other members of the monastery and other laypeople in acting as agents and without installing a dynasty in the monastery.

Comparing Guglielmo to the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore or the priors of Sant'Ambrogio eliminates the impression that the abbot was excessively nepotistic. Two families dominated the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, the abovementioned Bossa and the Longus family. The first Longus provost, Pietro (1192-1208), hired two different relatives as agents, one of whom, Goffredo, became the subsequent provost in 1208. While the relatives of Pietro acted infrequently, Pietro still employed them as agents. Furthermore, Pietro managed to install a sort of family dynasty on the canonry, as a relative succeeded him as provost. Pietro therefore appears as nepotistic as Guglielmo, and he certainly tied the Longus family to the canonry more than the abbot tied the Cotta family to the monastery. The Bossa provosts went beyond the Longus. Again, they build a sort of dynasty, with Ambrogio Bossa ruling from 1215 to 1244 and Rainero Bossa ruling from 1267 to 1279. Ambrogio had a significant nepotistic tendency, using four different relatives as agents. This confirms what Tessera argued: Ambrogio used his position to favour his family.

While the Longus and Bossa families had a clear influence on the canonry, they did not dominate its life. Provosts from different families ruled throughout the thirteenth century. Furthermore, as in the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, multiple agents from different families acted, demonstrating a plurality of possible influences on the business of the institution. In this, the canonry and the monastery resembled other Milanese male institutions. The provosts of San Giorgio al Palazzo and of San Lorenzo behaved similarly, employing a wide variety of agents, and not only employing relatives as agents.

Nunneries behaved differently, something most visible in the Monastero Maggiore. Of the four abbesses with a discernible family, three employed family members as agents, and two, Mattea de Pirovano and Pietra degli Osii, did so extensively. Mattea employed Ruggero de Pirovano 113 times out of the 164 times she employed agents (69 percent). Pietra degli Osii employed her relative

[287] Renato Mambretti, "Il monastero di S. Ambrogio nel XIII secolo: Guglielmo Cotta abate (1235 - 1367)," in *Il Monastero di S. Ambrogio nel Medioevo: convegno di studi nel XII centenario, 784-1984 : 5-6 novembre 1984* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1988), p.425

[288] The two numbers do not total 100 because there was no abbot for seven years.

Alcherio degli Osii 34 times out of 50 (68 percent), and she also employed Ossi Osii for two further transactions. Vittoria Cotta, abbess during the second decade of the thirteenth century, employed her relative Amadeus Cotta only 3 out of 18 times. So, two abbesses relied on family to conduct their business, and one used family members occasionally. Guglielmo Cotta, in comparison, barely engaged with his family.

The differences between the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Ambrogio extend beyond this. The thirteenth-century Ambrosian abbots employed many agents. In chronological order, Arialdo da Melegnano employed eighteen different agents; Ardengo Visconti employed five, but to conduct only seven transactions; Guglielmo employed forty-four agents; and Anselmo Garzatore employed twenty. The rest of the abbots acted for very short periods and did not return useful data. By contrast, Vittoria Cotta employed four agents, Mattea de Pirovano nine, Agnese dell'Orto five, and Pietra degli Osii nine. These agents acted in a large number of documents, sometimes more than the abbesses themselves. Furthermore, all abbesses favoured a single agent over others, as also Vittoria and Agnese dell'Orto employed a single agent for the majority of their transactions. Vittoria employed Alberto Baratia for 61 percent of the transactions conducted by agents, and Agnese employed Giovanni de Vaprio for 68 percent of an agent's transactions. The abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore used a far smaller range of agents and relied heavily on one, while even the most nepotistic abbot or provost chose from multiple men. This implies that abbesses had a different, and much closer, relationship with their agents than abbots had. Such a closer relationship might have allowed the agents undue influence over the abbess and her decision, and, when this agent belonged to the same family as the abbess, it might have allowed the family undue control over the abbess. On the same token, a close working relationship might have given the abbess further control over what their agent did. Certainly, abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore had a different relationship to their agents than most other male leaders.

From this perspective, then, Occhipinti's arguments seem correct: a single layman probably had a very strong influence on abbesses and their decisions. Two factors soften this conclusion. Firstly, as shown during this chapter, abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore might have used agents, but they remained steadily in control of their own institution, using agents to travel and for disputes. Secondly, the chapter has highlighted significant differences between nunneries. In this case, the experience of the abbesses of Santa Maria al Lentasio contrasts the experience of the Monastero Maggiore.

Of the four abbesses of the Lentasio, two belonged to the Perego family, and they ruled the nunnery from 1255 to the end of the century. The persistence of the Perego as heads of the Lentasio suggests that the family had a particular ascendency in the nunnery. Perhaps the connection with the archbishop Leone de Perego (1245-1257) allowed Concordia de Perego, abbess from 1255, to rise to the abbatial position, and the family pedigree allowed Gemma de Perego to take over at her death. No other connection with the Perego exists in the documents, as neither abbess used any agent from their

family. So, while the two de Perego abbesses had a family pedigree, their connection did not appear to impact their leadership at all. As observed during the earlier analysis, nunneries could act independently from both lay agents and families. Sant'Apollinare, Santa Maria d'Aurona, and Santa Margherita all behaved in a similar way. In Sant'Apollinare, no abbess relied on relatives as agents. In Santa Maria d'Aurona, one abbess, Miriana de Cumini, used a relative as an agent, but only in 14 percent of the documents. In Santa Margherita, one abbess, Colomba de Grassi, clearly relied on her family, employing a relative 70 percent of the time. No other abbess of Santa Margherita used relatives as agents. Thus, while the abbesses of the Lentasio had more consistent independence from their family, other nunneries also generally experienced limited meddling.

The abbesses of the Lentasio used agents in an exceptional way; no abbess relied on a single agent to conduct business. For example, Gemma de Perego used nine different agents, each in a single transaction. The paucity of documents each agent conducted relates partially to the few documents the monastery produced overall. The two de Perego abbesses acted, together, in forty-four documents, in almost fifty years. On the other hand, other nunneries with smaller collections behaved like the Monastero Maggiore. Sant'Apollinare, Santa Margherita, and Santa Maria d'Aurona had abbesses who employed a single agent for between 57 percent and 80 percent of transactions. The abbesses of the Lentasio had exceptional independence from their family, an exceptional way of handling agents, and exceptional control over their nunnery. They represent an exception, but an important one to consider when discussing the connection between families and religious leaders. It is not a given that the family of an abbess got involved in the life of the institution, even if the family in question was politically important.

This brief analysis indicates that powerful families could play an important role in the life of leaders connected to them. Relatives could work as agents or become part of the community. The analysis also revealed that this influence differed between institutions. Male leaders appear more as nepotistic figures, who benefitted their family members, while female leaders seem reliant on single relatives to conduct their business. However, many abbesses and male leaders managed their institutions without any clear family connections. This analysis did not uncover all possible ways in which families influence leaders and leaders could benefit families. Further research, perhaps focused on wills or personal correspondence, could provide further understanding of this complex relationship. Certainly it does not appear that abbesses were consistently directed by the wills of their families.

The actions of simple nuns

The chapter has focused so far on the power and independence of abbesses and the importance of agents in managing institutions. However, shows that in 2% of the documents analysed for nunneries, nuns in a non-leadership position acted alone. This indicates that nuns could occasionally act as agents of an institution, or at least they acted alone while being identified as

notaries as part of that institution. If an abbess used nuns as her agents, then the nuns would also participate in the land market. This would let them represent an institution and make some decisions for the institution while finalising a transaction. Clearly, abbesses very seldomly chose a nun of their monastery as an agent. Only in Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta did nuns acte consistently as agents. Analysing the behaviour of this institution demonstrates that when nuns acted, they could act as freely as male clergy.

Compared to nunneries in the city, the abbesses of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta relied most heavily on nuns as agents. A single nun, or two nuns together, conducted 27.5 percent of the nunnery's documents, far more than the average 2 percent. The abbess acted in 65 percent of the documents, while male intermediaries only acted in 8 percent of them. In the nunnery of Rivolta, nuns played the role that intermediaries did in Milanese nunneries, supporting the abbess when she could not act herself. Furthermore, nuns from Sant'Ambrogio appeared to have faced very few limitations.

A sale from 1204 stated[289]: "in the monastery of Saint Ambrose of Rivolta, Alberto, his mother Ghisila, and his wife Domenica sold to *domina* Solemariam, acting for the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta, ten perches in the territory of Rivolta […]". This resembles the sales conducted by intermediaries. For example, a sale from the Monastero Maggiore in 1191 stated, "We, Guifredum and Oldevarandum brothers, accept from you Alberto, emissary of lady Colomba, abbess of San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, acting for the abovementioned monastery, four hundred pounds […]". [290]

The two documents differed in style. Firstly, Solemaria did not mention her abbess, while Guifredo mentioned her before stating that he acted for the monastery. I observed this detail in most of the actions of the nuns of Rivolta, but not all of them. This probably did not constitute a rule, but either a stylistic difference of notaries or the fact that Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta did not have an abbess at the time. Secondly, the structure of the documents also differs. For example, the notary from Rivolta specified the price of the land transacted towards the end of the document, while the Milanese notary did so before even describing the land sold. This again points to a difference in notarial style, but not to a different treatment for nuns compared to intermediaries.

However, the content of the two documents remained similar, and the role of the agents remained the same. Solemeria acted in the name of her nunnery and paid for land. Guifredo acted in the name of the abbess of the Monastero Maggiore and for the monastery and paid for land. Neither has any further restriction on their actions.

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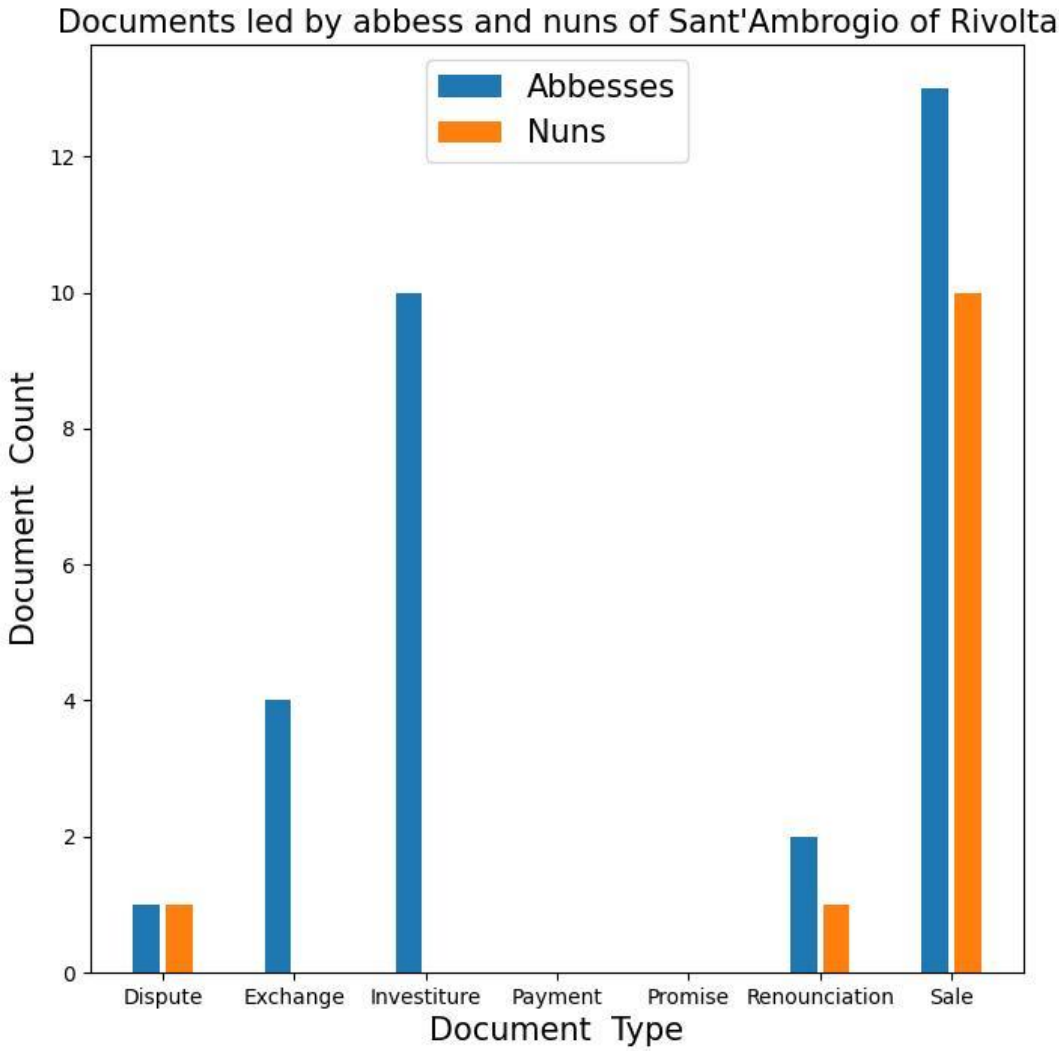
[289] "Venditionem fecerunt ad proprium Albertus…. et ghisila eius mater et dominica eius uxor... in monasterium sancti ambrosii de rivolta per dominam Solemeriam, monacam ipsius monasterii, nominative de pertiche decem... que iacent in territorio de rivolta... pro pretio de solidus viginti et duobus... quas suprascripta solemeria monaca vice suprascripti monasterii eis solvit..". ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 486, parchment 10

[290] "Constat nos guifredum et oldevrandum fratres... quod accepimus a te misso domine columbe abbatisse sancti mauritii monasteri maioris... ex parte supradict monasteri... libras quatrocentum..." ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 485, parchment 101

Beyond the lack of restrictions, nuns resembled intermediaries in what kind of transactions they participated in. Figure 24 below plots the type and number of documents conducted by the abbesses and nuns of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta.

Figure 24: Types of parchments redacted by nuns and abbesses of Sant'Ambrogio Rivolta



Nuns acted mostly in sales and rarely participated in other documents. Compared to the graphs observed above, male agents acted more frequently in disputes than nuns from Rivolta did, but otherwise they behaved similarly. Regarding disputes, only two parchments survive from the period, and in one of these, nuns acted instead of the abbess. Becoming a nun of Sant'Ambrogio might have granted a woman a way to participate in her local economy with a freedom rarely granted to Milanese women, and which equalled that of male agents in Milan.

Observing the amount travelled by abbesses and nuns of the monastery also demonstrates that they had more freedom to travel than their urban counterparts. On average, abbesses travelled 12

kilometres to conduct business, and nuns 11. Overall, no significant difference existed between how much nuns or abbesses travelled, while in Milanese nunneries, neither abbesses nor nuns left their institution often. While nuns from Rivolta only travelled a few times, they clearly had more freedom of movement than Milanese nuns, although they followed the same rule. This might indicate that the nunnery had more exceptional circumstances that required both abbesses and nuns to leave the monastery.

Only the nuns of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta consistently acted for their nunnery; otherwise, most Milanese nuns do not appear to have had an active economic participation in the life of the city. How does this relate to Bornstein's point? Milanese nuns could not generally act more freely than other women, nor did they represent their nunneries in the world. Only in exceptional circumstances did nuns access power through religious life. This does not differ from what chapter 1 observed for laywomen. Most laywomen acted in subordination to their families, besides some exceptional occasions.

While Milanese nuns acted rarely as agents, they often participated in the decision-making of their nunneries through collective action. Table 4 highlighted how nuns acted alongside their abbess in 19 percent of all the surviving documents from nunneries. In these cases, the nuns of an institution acted together to approve the decisions of the abbess, and presumably they had a voice in directing the institution.[291] I have not found sources that detail internal debates between nuns[292], but examples from the historiography suggest that these occurred. Stefano Bernardinello discussed how the abbess of San Vittore de Meda expelled two relatives from the convent in 1137 following a fight in her family. Apparently, she did so to avoid internal conflicts in the management of the nunnery.[293]

A more direct example comes from Santa Maria al Lentasio. Elisa Occhipinti highlighted how in 1297 all the nuns had gathered to discuss the incomes of the year, but before the responsible nun could read these out, three other nuns left the meeting in protest, demanding a review from the archbishop.[294] We do not know further details of this internal conflict, but probably the three nuns disagreed with the management of the relevant properties. The examples from Bernardinello and Occhipinti suggest that nuns of an institution did not have consistent unity. Before acting together to

[291] Notaries did not specifiy whether this was all the nuns of the institution or two thirds, but simply listed the nuns present.
[292] While I did not find any such example, my analysis of the documents did not cover every possible aspect, and certainly a future study, designed to uncover internal disagreements, would find a few examples of internal discussion in the documents I used for the present study.
[293] Stefano Bernardinello, "Le divisioni in seno all'aristocrazia milanese del XII secolo: le cause politiche dell'emarginazione di un ramo dei capitanei de Raude a partire da un documento del 1137," *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica - Nuova Serie*, no. 1 (2019), pp. 37-49
[294] Elisa Occhipinti, "Ascesa sociale e vita religiosa: i *de Perego* e il monastero milanese di S. Maria del Lentasio nel secolo XIII," in *Flos studiorum. Saggi di storia e di diplomatica per Giuliana Albini*, ed. Gamberini Andrea and Marta Luigina Mangini (Milano - Torino: Diparetimento di Studi Storici dell'Univesità delgi Studi di Milano - Bruno Mondadori, 2020), p.133

expand or invest lands of the monastery, nuns probably had to find a common agreement. In this way each nun obtained a small amount of secular power and had influence on the life of the monastery.

Occasionally, nuns participated in the economy for their own interests, without representing their nunnery. This suggests that some nuns could have greater freedom than normal laywomen through their station. Zaccaria Visconti of the Monastero Maggiore stands out in this regard. She acted in eight different documents during the 1190s and 1200s.[295] She received two large inheritances, one from her mother and one from her brother, each with a specific duty of prayer attached. With one of the received inheritances, she bought a few pieces of land in different localities in 1197, for which we have one writ of sale surviving. From the larger inheritance, she bought a field in Rho in 1194. Zaccaria dealt in the same period with two different streams of money and two different bequests to fulfil. In 1199 she might have feared death as she wrote her will. Here she stated that the field in Rho ought to fund prayers for her soul, and the other set of lands ought to fund the continued prayers for her mother and brother. She entrusted the abbess of the Monastero Maggiore to carry out the will about Rho and a nun named Tarsilla for her family's bequest.[296] She did not die in 1199, as she appeared again in 1203 and 1204, once investing land and once exchanging it.[297] She invested lands related to the bequest from her mother, and the exchange regarded her own lands.

Zaccaria engaged the land market in various ways. Firstly, she received a personal donation that did not revert to the monastery. Secondly, she invested her wealth in complex ways, indicating that she had precise control over her goods and knowledge of how to best use them, as no one advised her or directed her decisions. The exchange of 1204 further demonstrates this. Zaccaria exchanged land she had in Bollate for four pieces of land in the territory of Baranzate, the same area where she had bought land in 1197. Thus, Zaccaria, while acting for herself, sought to consolidate her land and exploit it as best as possible. She acted like an independent landowner while being a nun.

Besides engaging in the market, Zaccaria occasionally ignored the limitations of the cloister. When buying land in 1194, Zaccaria did not act inside the monastery, but rather in Rho. The notary did not see this occasion as strange, although I demonstrated how rarely nuns left their monasteries for official business in chapter 2. The notary simply stated that "lady Zacharia, nun of the Monastero Maggiore of San Maurizio,"[298] received the land in a document of sale. In the other documents, Zaccaria acts twice in the city of Milan, without further specification of the location, and four times in the Monastero Maggiore. She could leave the nunnery but did so infrequently.

Zaccaria never acted for the Monastero Maggiore, although she entrusted the nuns of the monastery to look after inherited lands, and the notaries always described her as a nun of the

[295] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 485_211a, parchment 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 96, 104
[296] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 485_211a, parchment 88
[297] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 486, parchment 7, 9
[298] "In domina Zacharia monacha monasterii sancti mauritii... siti in suprascripta cive", ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 485_211a, parchment 96

monastery. The fact that Zaccaria willed her possessions to nuns of the monastery suggests that ultimately Zaccaria's action existed in a context ultimately beneficial to the monastery, and therefore it entered the archive of the institution. The archivist of the institution did not keep records of the business of other nuns, which might explain the rarity of Zaccaria's action. However, to manage the bequest left by Zaccaria, the nun Tarsilla might have left the cloister, which suggests that other nuns might have had Zaccaria's experience, as Tarsilla or the abbess would have had to manage Zaccaria's lands at her death while not acting as agents of the monastery.

Zaccaria belonged to the Visconti family, and therefore she had significant economic privileges. This connection becomes apparent only in the last two documents she conducted, where the notary described her as Zaccaria Visconti. In previous documents she went by "Zaccaria Monaca". We can assume that Zaccaria Visconti acted in all the documents because they refer to the same lands and bequests.

Her family connection might explain her wealth and her actions, which resembled those of an institutional landlord. Indeed, her family connection might also explain her exceptionality. No other Milanese nun left the cloister to conduct personal business, at least according to surviving evidence, but other nuns had a similarly complex land portfolio. Two nuns from Santa Maria d'Aurona acted together to buy and then invest some land. The notary described them and their action as "lady Herena de Pannisalibus and lady Palma de Marinoni, nuns of the monastery of [Santa Maria d']Aurona of the city of Milan, receive [the land] in their name only, and not in that of their monastery".[299] Both nuns came from important Milanese families, and Palma became abbess of Aurona in subsequent years. However, these two nuns did not leave the monastery to act.

The examples of Herena, Palma, and Zaccaria do not demonstrate that religious life granted women access to exceptional power, but they demonstrate that nuns could act alone, especially if they already had existing wealth and connections. In these cases, a religious woman could manage her business with greater freedom than most laywomen, as they could act without the approval or supervision of anyone. By contrast, I only observed laywomen acting with the same level of independence when they did not participate in the land market. Here Bornstein's quote again rings true. A religious woman obtained a level of independence that a laywoman rarely reached. Of course, enclosure hampered this economic independence, and the decretal of Boniface attempted to destroy it completely, albeit with limited success. However, in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan, a rich woman could become emancipated from male control through religious life. The examples of these three aristocratic nuns also suggest that religious life allowed for independence from family while enjoying the benefits of connections to them.

[299] "dominam Herenam de Pannisalibus et dominam Palmam de Marinonis que sunt monache monastery aurone civis mediolani. Recipientibus eorum nominee tantnum et non nomine illius monastery." ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 295, folder 151g, parchment 47

This discussion on the independence of nuns, and especially the example of Zaccaria, again brings forward the issue of exceptionality. Eighteen documents described nuns acting for themselves. Seven are from Zaccaria, and two are from the nuns of Aurona. The others include disputes, small-scale payments, and other transactions of smaller importance. In almost two thousand documents connected to nunneries, only a handful of nuns behaved independently. These represent statistically insignificant numbers, but their existence points to an entire world that the surviving parchments do allow us to study. If Zaccaria, Herena, and Palma could so easily act as independent landlords, so could other nuns of wealthy families. Milanese nuns then could live a religious life while also participating with few limitations in the economy of the city. These experiences probably went unrecorded in the institutional archives, as they mostly did not matter to the nunnery, unless the land eventually reverted to the monastery. Therefore, perhaps religious life gave a wealthy nun exceptional independence, but the surviving evidence only hints at this, without providing conclusive proof for it.

Conclusion

Looking at different roles religious women could take, it does not appear that religious life necessarily offered women power in all its forms. Nuns who did not have a leadership role acted rarely and almost never outside the cloister, unless they belonged to a rural institution. Only when wealthy did nuns appear to have greater independence than most religious women. For abbesses, this chapter has revealed that their freedom to exercise their authority differed significantly from that of male leaders.

Firstly, and I believe most significantly, abbesses consistently travelled far less frequently than any male leader. For Benedictine abbesses, travel occurred but rarely, while for Damianite abbesses, travel never occurred. I argue that the rule of enclosure limited or eliminated the ability of abbesses to attend to business outside of their institutions even in the thirteenth century, before *Periculoso*, and therefore limited their ability to freely manage their institutions. On the other hand, male leaders consistently travelled, and while Benedictine abbots travelled less than secular clergy or canons, they still travelled significantly more frequently than Benedictine abbesses.

Secondly, abbesses only relied on laymen as agents, never using their nuns as agents, besides the exception of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta. On the contrary, male leaders could use both members of their community and lay agents to conduct business. Male leaders could therefore trust specific businesses to religious people directly under their authority, while abbesses could only use external individuals. Abbesses could not therefore send people more closely related to their institution to conduct perhaps delicate business. This might explain why abbesses tended to rely on a single agent to conduct the majority of their business rather than employ a large number of people, like most male leaders did.

Finally, the abbesses of some institutions, for example the Damianite abbesses of Sant'Apollianre, and probably the abbesses of any other strictly enclosed institution, had very limited

control of the economy of their monastery, as they delegated the majority of transactions to agents. This detachment from the worldly side of institutional management does not mean that a Damianite abbess did not have great authority as a spiritual mother, but she had less authority than any other male religious leader outside of her cloister.

However, important similarities existed as well. On average, both male and female leaders acted in most documents by themselves, indicating that, in general, leaders of religious institutions did directly manage their institutions. Furthermore, both male and female leaders relied on a network of agents to support them in transactions and disputes they could not manage alone. The need to travel often dictated the need to delegate to agents, especially for larger institutions.

Therefore, an overview of the actions of Milanese abbesses and male leaders does suggest that, in general, abbesses could obtain significant religious and secular power through their station, and they had as much power as any abbot or provost. On the other hand, a closer look reveals that in some key aspects of life, abbesses had far less freedom to exercise their authority than their male counterparts and faced significant limitations despite their position.

Chapter 3: Wealth of institutions

When managing their institutions, the authority and independence of abbesses resembled that of male leaders, but they also had significant disadvantages. Instead of focusing on freedom of action, this chapter attempts to compare the wealth that these leaders managed. Did the average abbess rule over a poorer institution than the average male leader? Given the nature of the sources that form the analytical core of this thesis and given the nature of the surviving sources for Milan in the period, I cannot measure the wealth of any institution with either precision or exhaustiveness. This is because not all the relevant information about these institutions survives, because the documents studied mostly relate to the land economy, which is only a part of the wider economy of any institution and of the city. Furthermore, due to restrictions in the scope of the thesis, this study does not include all possible documents relating to Milan or its countryside.

However, surviving information provides a way to establish a rough metric of wealth and economic power for the twenty selected institutions, which can be used to compare these institutions and replicated for further studies. I compared these institutions through five metrics. Firstly, I used the amount of denari spent by institutions and the number of lands invested by institutions as proxy for their expenditures and income. Then I assessed the composition of the surviving cartulary of each institution to quantify their economic priorities. Then I calculated the frequency with which they interacted with laypeople or other institutions to assess the size of their economic networks. Finally, I use the list of names present in documents to assess membership size. These five measurements will reveal the economic differences between these twenty institutions and within Milan in general. Furthermore, they will indicate the overall difference in the economic power abbesses and male leaders could wield.

Quantifying wealth differences

Various scholars have quantitatively studied religious institutions, using two main methods. One method relies on single records, like a tax assessment, or repeating records from the same perspective, like an institution's book of expenses. Through these sources, scholars have managed to quantify wealth and other relevant information, like membership numbers. Penelope Johnson quantified the finances of Northern French nunneries through the visitation records of Archbishop Eudes Riguad, who recorded the income and debts of each institution, and a tax assessment of the Count of Flanders in 1294.[300] To quantify various details of Italian Humiliati houses, Sally Brasher used inventories from 1298 and 1344 that listed all Humiliati houses and their members.[301] Claudia Sutter conducted a chronological financial analysis of the convent of Saint Catherine of Saint Gallen.

[300] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France*, p.211
[301] Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati a lay religious order in medieval civic life*, pp.42, 46

She had access to a rent book from the convent, which detailed all the rents paid to the nunnery from 1480 onwards. Through this book the author could track the wealth of Saint Catherine and its relationship with the outside world.[302] These sources provide extremely detailed and systematic information, but they do not consistently survive. For example, records of archiepiscopal visitations in Milan during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do not survive, nor do tax assessments from the Comune.

The second method of quantitatively assessing the wealth and societal connections of religious institutions relies on analysing many private parchments related to religious institutions. Andrea Oldani used a register of private transactions between 1306 and 1381 from the monastery of San Prospero of Reggio Emilia to understand how the monastery managed its lands and what relations it had with the laity in the city and countryside and with the network of churches inside the city.[303] In the introduction of this thesis, I have outlined the various scholars who have used Milanese private transactions to discuss the landed possessions and connections of religious institutions, especially for the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. This method has the advantage of using sources that span longer time periods and provide granular information on various aspects of an institution's life. However, these private parchments do not provide a complete account of an institution's economy and behaviour, as institutions did not archive these parchments as an accounting tool, unlike tax records or rent books. Furthermore, collections of private parchments contain a variety of documents, which do not cover a single issue, like taxes paid, but instead provide information over a variety of transactions and events. The thesis so far has demonstrated the complexity of analysing these private parchments. Therefore, using these collections requires the scholar to extrapolate wider conclusions about an institution's wealth from limited and incomplete data.

To compare the wealth of institutions, I used two metrics, one focused on monetary transactions and the other focused on landed wealth. Calculating the total yearly income and expenditures of an institution would provide a direct measurement of the wealth of said institution. A precise figure for either would allow us to understand the financial health of an institution and their level of activity in the economy. While the documents used in this study do not provide a complete picture of all incomes and expenditures of an institution, they contain a variety of monetary transactions, which include payments for acquisitions, repayment of debts, payment of fees, and payment of fines. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the primary modes of financial transactions utilised by male and female institutions. I represented these as a percentage of total denari spent by

[302] Claudia Sutter, "In Touch With The Outside: The Economic Exchanges Of The Observant Dominican Convent Of St. Catherine In St. Gallen.," in *Women Religious Crossing Between Cloister And The World. Nunneries In Europe And The Americas, ca. 1200-1700,* ed. Mercedes Pérez Vidal (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2022), pp.41-42

[303] Andrea Oldani, "Il monastero di San Prospero nella crisi del Trecento: aspetti gestionali e relazionali," *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica - Nuova Serie* 2 (2019), pp.156-158

male and female institutions to highlight which types of documents contains the most information regarding monetary transactions.

Table 13: Sum of denari transacted in different types of documents by male and female institutions.

Types of documents where denari appears	**Percentage of total denari transacted by male institutions**	**Percentage of total denari transacted by female institutions**
Sale	52.9 %	34.9 %
Disputes	18.9 %	19.8 %
Payment	13.6 %	18.9 %
Promise	6.6 %	11.1 %
Investiture	3.7 %	1.3 %
Exchange	2.1 %	0.6 %
Renunciation	1.6 %	6.9 %
Agreement	0.6 %	4.7 %

This table highlights the wide variety of ways in which money was exchanged in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan. Each rubric represents a collection of similar transactions that had the same end, although redacted in different ways by notaries. Not all these documents provide useful information to assess the wealth of an institution. Specifically, in this study I ignored documents of disputes, payments, promises, investitures, exchanges, and agreements.

In the case of disputes, notaries would record either the debt that caused the litigation or the penalty that the losing party had to pay. However, what notaries recorded in disputes did not necessarily correspond to what an institution would pay or receive, because documents of dispute did not represent receipts of payments, nor did they necessarily represent the final sentence of a litigation. Therefore, I could not use money discussed in disputes to assess financial transactions of an institution.

Under the rubric of payment, I included those documents that dealt with only the transaction of money. Generally, such a document would begin with the phrase *Confessus et contentus fuit…*which with further context I translated as "acknowledging and being satisfied with the receipt of…". These documents functioned as receipts of payment for transactions that had occurred in previous documents or for fees and fines. This means that the money detailed in a payment could have already appeared in a previous document of the collection. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in connecting series of documents unless the notary wrote them on the same parchments, I could not distinguish between those payments that I had already recorded and those that I had not.

A similar situation occurred with promises. In these documents, people would promise to pay a debt in the future, and I recorded the sum of denari promised. However, similar to disputes, an

amount promised does not represent immediate cash flow. Furthermore, promises of payments occurred in connection with disputes, and the same debts would appear in documents of payments. Agreements strongly resemble promises. In these documents the two parties would consent to an arrangement, often connected to management of land or the resolution of a dispute. The money recorded in these documents did not necessarily exchange hands, and often the notice of the money represented a fine or a recompense in case of a broken agreement. Therefore, using values from these three categories creates the risk of counting some transactions multiple times or counting transactions that might not have happened, and I excluded them from the financial analysis.

Investitures and exchanges did not generally involve any exchange of money. Table 13 highlights that this occurred rarely, for 5.8 percent of all denari transacted for male institutions and 1.9 for female institutions. In the case of investitures, the monetary transaction generally involved the party receiving the investiture giving money to an institution, and therefore the transacted money represents an income. The invested person would pay their rent yearly or biannually, so the amount recorded in these investitures does not represent a single payment. In exchanges, parties gave each other land without monetary transactions. Occasionally, a party would have to give some money to fully compensate the value of the land exchange, and in these cases the institution received the denari. The rare occasions that money was transacted in an exchange represent another income for institutions. The incomes in exchanges and investitures cannot be used as a proxy for the general income of institutions because they were exceptional incomes. Most regular income of institutions came from the produce of their lands, rather than from monetary rents. Furthermore, most of the documents studied show expenditure, not income, and therefore I had to exclude these transactions when calculating the expenditures of the institutions studied.

Only two rubrics return reliable and useful data to calculate expenditure: acquisitions and renunciations. Both male and female institutions transacted most money through acquisitions; for male institutions, this made up 54 percent of all denari transacted, while for female institutions, it made up around 40 percent. This money exclusively represents expenses, as I only encountered religious institutions buying land.

Renunciations represent a similar document to sales, as in these documents people would renounce their land, tithes, or claims on land for a fee. These transactions generally occurred alongside or after a sale and involved the relatives of people who had sold something or other interested parties. The money transacted through renunciation generally represented an addition to the money transacted in a sale. Adding money spent in acquisitions and money exchanged in renunciations provides us with a relatively accurate approximation of the expenses of an institution.

Table 14 below lists the twenty institutions in order of most denari spent in the twelfth and thirteenth century. As detailed in Table 3, when introducing these institutions, not all were founded before the twelfth century, and I did not find documents for all twenty institutions for the entire two-hundred-year period. This ought to disadvantage female institutions, as four of the ten discussed were

founded in the thirteenth century and therefore had less time to acquire land. However, the institutions selected represent the largest ones for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from the perspective of documentary survival; therefore the table below provides a fair overview of the entire period.

Table 14: Denari spent in transactions by selected institutions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Rank	**Monastery**	**Denari spent**
1	Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	1499722
2	Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	1301509
3	Monastero Maggiore	1035511
4	San Giorgio al Palazzo	615034
5	San Lorenzo	591047
6	San Simpliciano	586990
7	Sant'Apollinare	580450
8	Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	503315
9	Sant'Agnese	201040
10	Major chapter of the cathedral	190250
11	Ospedale del Brolo	188400
12	Santa Maria del Monte	186610
13	San Felice	163379
14	Cappucine di San Pietro	143632
15	Santa Maria al Lentasio	140388
16	Santa Margherita	93370
17	Minor chapter of the cathedral	65710
18	Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	51397
19	Santa Maria d'Aurona	38020
20	Santa Radegonda	36641

Table 14 demonstrates that between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these twenty institutions spent vastly different sums of money. The top three institutions spent from 1.0 to almost 1.5 million denari each, while the five institutions at the bottom of the list spent less than one hundred thousand denari each. This highlights a clear disparity; some institutions could commit considerable sums to expand their holdings, while others either could not or chose not to do so.

The difference in spending loosely correlates with the differing levels of patronage each institution received. The institutions with the most patronage, like the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio or the Monastero Maggiore, spent by far the most denari. The ancient Milanese churches of San Lorenzo, San Simpliciano, and San Giorgio al Palazzo spent less than these monasteries, but they still acquired more than half a million denari worth of lands and rights. Newer, popular institutions, like Chiaravalle and Sant'Apollinare, could also spend a similar amount of denari, demonstrating the importance of donations and, especially in the case of Chiaravalle, good land management. Indeed, the expenditures of Chiaravalle represent a fraction of the denari the Cistercian monastery spent, given that the monastery conducted far more business that did not enter this study. New institutions that did not have the popularity of the largest Cistercian or Franciscan house, spent significantly less, with the Ospedale of the Brolo, the two Humilati houses of San Felice and Sant'Agnese, and the Cappucine spending between 140,000 and 200,000 denari, a tenth of what the wealthiest institutions spent and less than half of what the ancient churches or the popular new institutions spent. Finally, older nunneries, without large recent patronage, spent by far the least, with Santa Radegonda, the nunnery at the bottom of the list, spending only 36,000 denari. This might have occurred because older nunneries already had enough land and did not need to grow further. A leader of an institution with historically high levels of patronage, or at the head of a popular new institution, had far more denari to spend for their institution than a leader of a smaller new institution or the abbess of a small ancient nunnery.

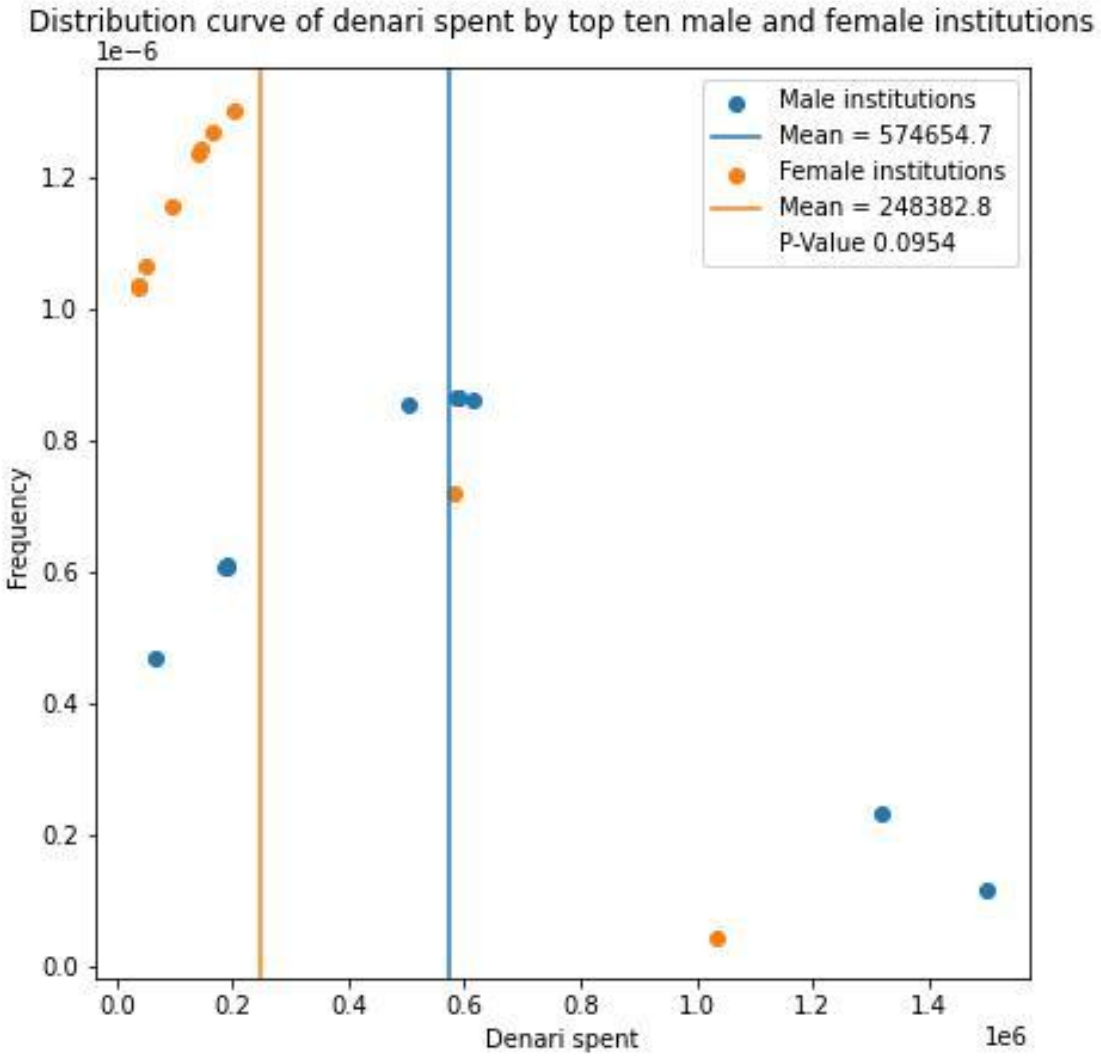
Table 14 lists a few institutions that appear not to fit this general model. The two chapters of the cathedral spent relatively little money given their importance in the city. This relates to the nature of these two institutions, as neither functioned as a monastery or a parish church. These two cathedral chapters had an administrative function for the cathedral and for the archdiocese at large, but their members also belonged to other institutions, especially the members of the minor chapter. Therefore, I suspect that neither institution would have a strong drive to expand their landed possessions, as they did not need to support their members. Furthermore, the holdings of the archdioceses probably produced enough to support the administrative work of the clergy when needed.

Santa Maria del Monte and the Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta also do not appear to fit the suggested model well. As an important older church, I expected Santa Maria del Monte to spend as much as San Lorenzo, and as a newer institution, I expected Sant'Ambrogio to spend more like the Humiliati houses of the city. However, both spent significantly less than expected. I suspect this occurred because these institutions existed relatively far from Milan. This might have caused them to

receive less patronage and fewer donations. Furthermore, land in the outskirts of the Milanese archdiocese probably cost far less than in the city or its immediate proximity, which would mean that even when frequently buying land, they would spend relatively little.

Table 14 suggests that regardless of gender, religious institutions in Milan could spend from millions to a few tens of thousands of denari. However, the table also suggests that institutions with less patronage spent less, and nunneries fell into this category more often than male institutions. To understand whether these male and female institutions spent significantly different sums of denari, I created a distribution curve of the sum of denari spent and compared them through a t-test.[304] Figure 25 below plots the curves, stating the mean denari spent and the p-value of the t-test in the legend.

Figure 25: Distribution of denari spent by top ten male and female institutions

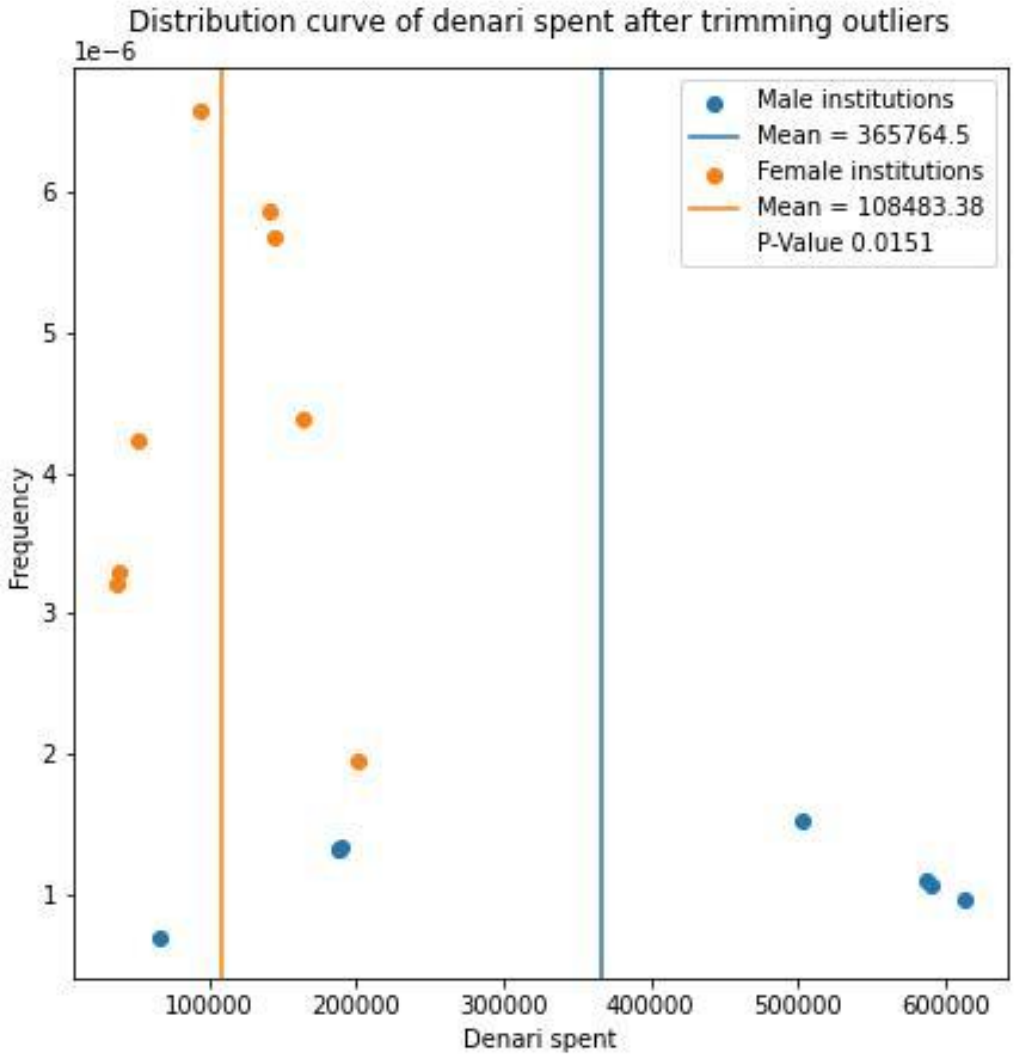


[304] The use of the t-test is explained in footnote 255.

Female institutions spent on average 248,382 denari, while male institutions spent on average 574,654 denari. Looking at the expenses of male and female institutions over two hundred years, male ones spent on average a little less than twice what female ones spent. However, a t-test on these two sets returns a p-value of 0.09. This does not meet the p-value threshold of 0.05 and suggests no statistically significant difference between the two sets. Perhaps if the study considered more institutions, for example, all Lombard ones, then the average spending of male and female institutions would not have differed to such an extent. While the possibility exists, the raw data suggests that, at least in Milan, female institutions spent significantly less.

Furthermore, Figure 25 and Table 14 have clear outliers for both male and female institutions. The monastery and canonry of Sant'Ambrogio spent far more denari than other male institutions, and the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare spent far more money than other female institutions. Removing these four outliers allows us to compare the middling or poor institutions without having the data skewed by very large ones. Figure 26 below illustrates the same analysis as Figure 25 after removing these institutions.

Figure 26: Distribution of denari spent not including the largest institutions



Smaller female institutions spent on average 108,483 denari, while smaller male institutions spent on average 365,764 denari. Middling male institutions spent three times as much as female ones. The statistical test returns a p-value of 0.015, which passes the threshold of 0.05 and confirms a statistically significant difference between the two sets of institutions. Figure 26 also illustrates how smaller nunneries had less variance in spending than smaller male institutions. The standard deviation of denari spent by smaller male institutions is 213,641 denari, while that for smaller female institutions is 58,573 denari.[305] By contrast, the standard deviation for all male institutions is 458,010

[305] The standard deviation calculates the spread of data in a data set. In a normal distribution, 68 percent of the data will fall in one standard deviation of the mean. Diez, Barr, and Cetinkaya-Rundel, *OpenIntro Statistics - Fourth Edition* , p.45

denari, and for all female institutions it is 428,638 denari. Therefore, male institutions had a wide distribution of spending, with a few institutions spending much more than others, a few spending little, and a few spending a middling amount. On the other hand, female institutions had a few institutions spending far more than others and the rest spending very little. This means that male leaders could oversee a wide range of institutions, with varying levels of monetary wealth, while most abbesses would oversee institutions with limited funds to spend on expansion. Therefore, albeit generally having as much freedom as male leaders, most abbesses had fewer chances to lead their institutions in expansionary policies.

This exploration of monetary wealth only reveals part of the expenditures of an institution. By their nature, expenditures for land or rights acquisitions represented exceptional outlays, as institutions did not daily buy property. No document survives detailing more regular transactions, for example, regarding the acquisition of food and clothing. The analysis above demonstrates, therefore, the amount of money male and female leaders could and wanted to use in the exceptional event of buying land. Furthermore, these outlays represent the wealth of an institution only by proxy. The more income an institution had, the more land, houses, and rights it could buy, but lack of spending could also indicate that an institution spent money in other ways, saved it for other needs, or did not need to buy more land as it had enough to maintain its members. A better understanding of incomes would therefore supplement our understanding of the wealth of institutions. For most institutions, income came from landed wealth.

All institutions had significant amounts of land and other rights from which they obtained regular income. Measuring this income precisely necessitates the survival of some accounting book, like those that Sutter used for her analysis, or some other form of income record. Amongst the documents studied, I encountered 87 records that indicate the rents or other payments due to an institution from some of their possessions. Unfortunately, these documents do not exist for all twenty institutions and generally represent the incomes of an institution from a single area under their possession. While they contain valuable information for the analysis of a specific locality or a single institution, they do not provide enough information for a comparative study.

However, the collection studied contains almost one thousand investitures that relate to these twenty institutions. Each investiture represents the institution giving a piece of its land, house, or tithe to another for a rent. Adding up all the rents present in these investitures could provide a way to quantify income, but the great variety of rents, the fact that people generally paid rent in foodstuffs, and the large number of investitures place this type of analysis outside the scope of the present work. On the other hand, given that each investiture represents a piece of property, and that all religious institutions managed most of their property through investitures, counting the number of investitures provides us with a way to estimate how much property an institution had, and therefore with a way to approximate the income of the institution. Table 15 lists the number of investitures conducted by each of the institutions.

Table 15: Number of investitures conducted by the top ten male and female institutions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Rank	**Monastery**	**Number of investitures**
1	Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	275
2	Monastero Maggiore	224
3	Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	87
4	Santa Maria del Monte	64
5	Santa Maria d'Aurona	45
6	Minor chapter of the cathedral	36
7	Sant'Apollinare	34
8	San Lorenzo	30
9	San Giorgio al Palazzo	27
10	Santa Margherita	24
11	Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	17
12	Sant'Agnese	13
13	Santa Maria al Lentasio	13
14	Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	10
15	Ospedale del Brolo	6
16	San Felice	6
17	Santa Radegonda	4
18	San Simpliciano	4
19	Cappucine di San Pietro	4
20	Major chapter of the cathedral	2

Table 15 demonstrates that the number of possessions of religious institutions differed significantly. The largest institutions conducted between 224 and 275 investitures, while the six smallest ones conducted fewer than ten. Furthermore, while Table 14 suggested that patronage and distance from the city correlated well with expenses, this table suggests that landed possessions did not correlate equally well with these two factors.

Of the three institutions that appeared as clear outliers in Table 14, the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore conducted the most investitures, as expected, but the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio had far fewer possessions, conducting a third of the investitures of the two large institutions. This suggests that while all three had large supplies of usable cash, only the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore had exceptional landed wealth to support this expenditure. This finding matches the study of Miriam Tessera, who found that the income of the

canonry decreased in the thirteenth century, and the canonry had issues with debt and poor monetary investment.[306] The large monetary expenditures of the canonry did not allow them to significantly grow their landed possessions and their income but instead burdened the canonry with debt.

Of the three ancient churches, San Lorenzo and San Giorgio demonstrated significant landed wealth, conducting thirty and twenty-seven investitures, respectively, but San Simpliciano only conducted four investitures. While the lack of investitures partially relates to the few surviving documents connected to San Simpliciano, it also probably indicates that San Simpliciano's monetary wealth did not mainly originate from landed wealth. Perhaps it had an income from tithes or other rights which it did not need to invest.

The number of investitures conducted by older nunneries reveals a disconnect between lands and rights owned and denari spent. These nunneries spent little in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but Santa Maria d'Aurona conducted forty-five investitures, the fifth highest number. Santa Margherita conducted twenty-four, only slightly less than San Giorgio or San Lorenzo. Santa Maria la Lentasio and Santa Radegonda conducted far fewer investitures, thirteen and four, respectively. This suggests that these four older nunneries had different amounts of landed wealth, even though they originated from roughly the same period and received similarly limited patronage throughout their existence.

Of the newer institutions, only Sant'Apollinare behaved roughly as expected. The Damianite nunnery conducted fewer investitures than the largest institutions, but nonetheless the number conducted demonstrates significant landed wealth, matching the high spending seen in Table 14, and reflects the patronage received. The smaller nunneries instead did not conduct many investitures, with Sant'Agnese conducting the most, thirteen; San Felice conducting six; and the Cappucine only four. It appears that, although they received enough donations and patronage to spend significant sums of denari in expansion, they did not have much land or many rights to manage and ultimately had limited landed possessions. This contrasts with older nunneries, which had perhaps less money but more land.

The two chapters of the cathedral acted significantly differently than what was observed in Table 14. The minor chapter conducted thirty-six investitures, one of the highest of the twenty institutions, while it spent only a few tens of thousands of denari. This indicates that the minor chapter had more landed wealth to manage than denari to spend. The major chapter had the opposite situation. It conducted only two investitures but spent almost twice as many denari as the minor chapter. The duties and structure of the major chapter might explain the low number of investitures this institution conducted. While the archdiocese certainly had a large number of landed estates, the responsibility of managing these estates through investitures might have fallen on the minor chapter or the archbishop. Furthermore, the members of the major chapter had their benefices connected to their role and

[306] Tessera, "Canonici di S. Ambrogio e giudici delegati papali: un caso milanese agli inizi del Duecento," , p.292

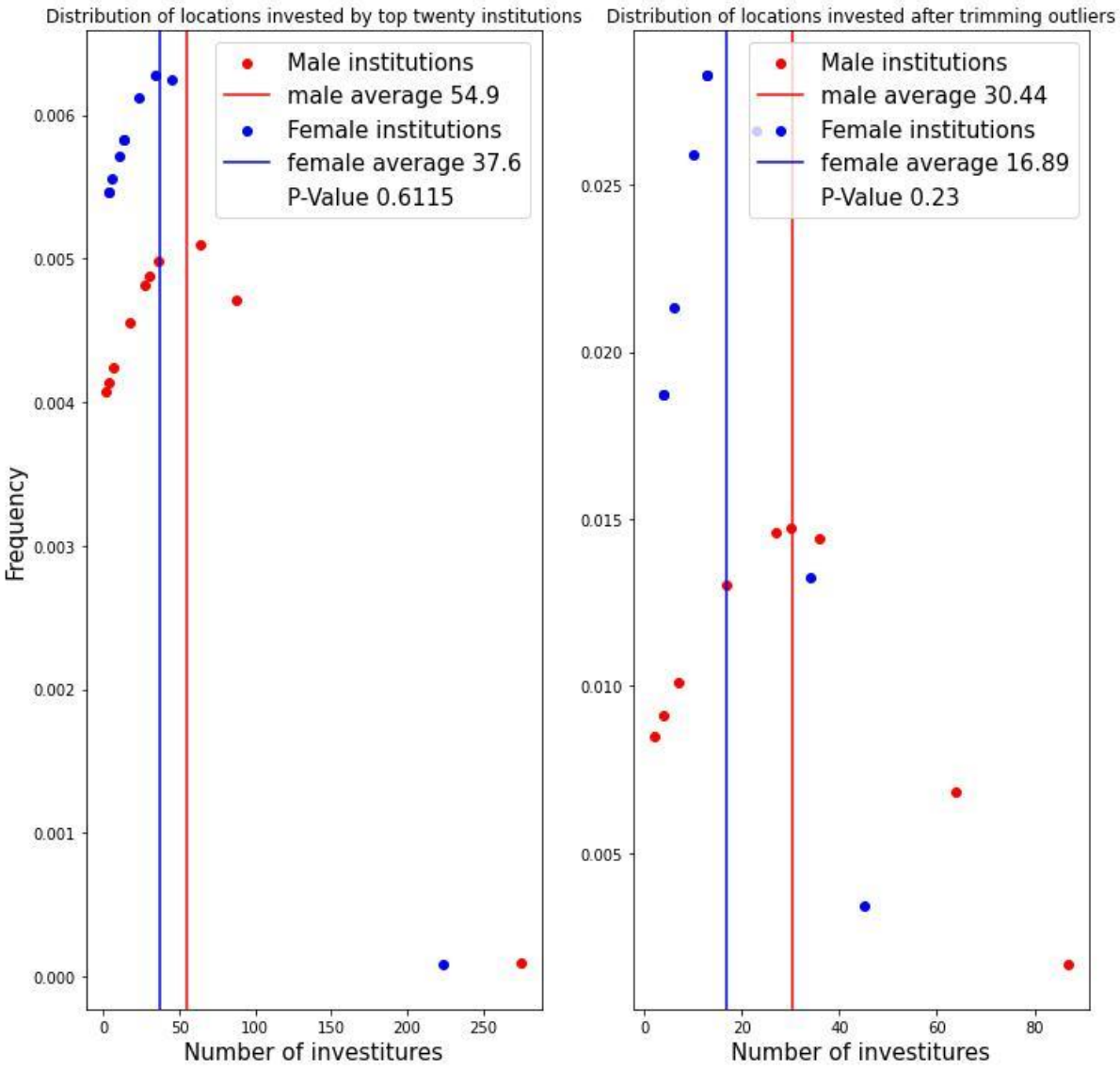
therefore probably managed their own independently. Certainly, the archpriest who ruled the priests of the major chapter of the cathedral did not conduct investitures, but he had the possibility of spending money when needed.

The low number of investitures conducted by Chiaravalle does not reflect reality. In the other hundreds of surviving documents this study could not cover, many investitures survive. However, the discrepancy between the sum of denari spent by the monastery and the number of investitures conducted suggests that the Cistercian monastery's action in Milan focused more on acquisitions than land management.

The number of investitures conducted by Santa Maria del Monte represents the last difference between what was observed in Table 14 and Table 15. The rural church spent a relatively small sum of denari, but it conducted sixty-four investitures, the fourth highest number. Therefore, while it spent little, the monastery had a significant amount of land. This difference confirms that the church had significant landed wealth, but land around it cost far less than in Milan.

The number of investitures conducted demonstrates a large variance in landed wealth between Milanese institutions, whether male or female. This suggests that less difference existed in the income of male and female institutions than it did for expenditure. Plotting the distribution of conducted investitures of male and female institutions and a t-test between these two sets of data will evaluate whether the impression represented reality. Furthermore, given the clear existence of two outliers in the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore, I will conduct the same analysis but excluding these two institutions. Figure 27 below illustrates both distributions, with the mean and p-value of the t-test in the legends. The left graph contains the distributions and relevant information of all twenty institutions, while the right graph contains the trimmed distributions.

Figure 27: Distribution of investitures conducted by the top ten male and female institutions, and the same distribution after removing outliers



When considering all twenty institutions, female institutions conducted almost thirty-eight investitures on average, while male institutions conducted almost fifty-five on average. On average then, male institutions owned almost twenty pieces of property more than female ones. However, this difference does not carry statistical significance, as the t-test returned a p-value of 0.61. Given the high p-value, the observed difference in averages could feasibly have arisen due to random variation in the sample data. A more complete set of documents, one that did not suffer from document loss but recorded all investitures conducted by all institutions, could reveal that male and female institutions conducted, on average, the same number of investitures. Having said this, the raw evidence from twelfth- and thirteenth-century Milan indicates that male institutions had more landed wealth and therefore more income and considering more data could instead confirm that male institutions had more landed wealth.

Trimming the data provides another way to clarify differences in wealth. Removing the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore allows us to better compare smaller institutions. With this trimming, female institutions conducted, on average, seventeen investitures, and male institutions conducted thirty. The t-test between these two curves returns a p-value of 0.23, much lower than the graph on the left, but still above the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, no statistically significant difference exists between the number of investitures conducted by smaller male and female institutions. However, the difference between the two sets becomes clearer. Female institutions mostly congregated around the mean, with a standard deviation of 13.5, while male institutions had far greater variance, with a standard deviation of 27.2. The higher standard deviation among male institutions suggests that there was a wider range of wealth levels, with some male institutions managing a significant number of estates and rights. This indicates that a male leader might have had more opportunities to head an institution with substantial wealth, compared to an abbess.

Studying landed wealth through the proxy of investitures demonstrated differences between the wealth of male and female institutions; however, this methodology has a few limitations. Firstly, not all investitures had the same value. For example, Ardengo Visconti gave the control of all the possession of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in the villages of Ternate and San Sepolcro to his nephew through an investiture.[307] By contrast, some investitures only rented a few fields to a farmer. In addition, land management techniques also impacted profitability. Landlords bought land to rent out, but the contracts varied between institutions and over time. Bertoni discusses how changing contracts of investitures impacted peasants in the fourteenth century. Religious institutions moved from contracts of thirty years to far shorter contracts, which led to an increase in dues and the bankruptcy of many workers.[308] Oldani observed the same situation, noting that this shift allowed the monastery of San Prospero to increase its control of the countryside.[309] Grillo noticed that a shift in the structure of investitures had occurred from the late twelfth century, especially from powerful lay families. He suggests that religious institutions implemented these changes slowly, which cost them revenue, as they could not take advantage of the changing agricultural techniques of the thirteenth century.[310] Not all scholars agree with the importance of these changing contracts. Sironi suggested that the short investitures did not necessarily lead to increased revenues. If a tenant could not pay, an institution would struggle to force him to pay, as it could not easily find people to take over the plot of land.[311] The study above considers all investitures as of the same length and as providing a similar

[307] Lozza, "L'abate Ardengo Visconti e il patrimonio del monastero di s. Ambrogio a s. Sepolcro presso Ternate (anni 1227-1240),", p.404
[308] Bertoni, "Le campagne lombarde nel primo Trecento: Rilettura di un caso 'eccezionale'," , pp.213-215
[309] Oldani, "Il monastero di San Prospero nella crisi del Trecento: aspetti gestionali e relazionali," p.164
[310] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia*, pp.140-142
[311] Sironi, "Gestioni patrimoniali a Cologno Monzese. Il monastero di S. Ambrogio e la collegiata di S. Giovanni di Monza (secoli XII-XIII),", p.68

income, but some investitures dealt with large estates and vast rights over decades, while others only dealt with a tenant for a few years.

Secondly, revenues from different estates varied. Bertoni described the importance of controlling rivers and the land around them.[312] River land, and rights over rivers, could provide far more income than other territories but would also face more threats in times of war. Grillo described the overall regional differences in the lands around Milan. He highlights two core differences between land north of the city and land south of the city. People had cultivated land north of Milan for longer than in the south of Milan, and therefore the north had more established and organised communities of farmers, which also allowed for the development of a local artisanal economy.[313] By contrast, only the Cistercian monasteries of Chiaravalle and Morimondo had begun cultivating the swampy land south of Milan. Bonified swampy land allowed the monasteries to engage in far more productive farming, which rapidly enriched them, as well as families who had invested in the area.

Furthermore, disputes with tenants could limit the profitability of lands. Firstly, tenants could not always pay the required dues, which could lead to litigation. Secondly, tenants often had become tenants reluctantly. Often a small landowner would have to sell their land to a large institution, to then receive it back as investiture. These tenants often resented the amount of produce they had to send back to the institution or the rule the institution imposed, which would lead to further litigation. [314] The vast number of surviving disputes from all institutions indicates the frequency of litigations on rents that institutions had to deal with. These litigations highlight that landowners could not always rely on steady rents.

This problem was exacerbated by war, which ravaged Milan and its countryside in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The twelfth century mostly saw continued conflict with Frederick Barbarossa. The emperor destroyed the city in 1162, causing significant economic damage. The thirteenth century saw further wars against the empire and a rise in intracity conflict between two powerful families, the Della Torre and the Visconti. The Visconti found refuge in their castles north of Milan, and for a large part of the thirteenth century they ravaged the rich lands on the river Vepra and the river Seprio.[315] They would stage their armies along those rivers, foraging the lands around them. Landowners of these areas saw the rents of very wealthy lands cut off. War occurred frequently also with Pavia, which bordered Milan in the south. This impacted mostly the monasteries of Chiaravalle and Morimondo and local families. [316] Many settlements had to be abandoned in the area, again impacting the revenues of fertile lands. Therefore, even assuming that each investiture

[312] Bertoni, "Le campagne lombarde nel primo Trecento: Rilettura di un caso 'eccezionale'," , pp.221-222
[313] Grillo, Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia, pp.129-137
[314] Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese nel secolo 13. : l'amministrazione della proprietà fondiaria del Monastero Maggiore*, pp.40-43, 49-59
[315] Bertoni, "Le campagne lombarde nel primo Trecento: Rilettura di un caso 'eccezionale'," , pp.221-222
[316] Grillo, *Milano in età comunale (1183-1276). Istituzioni, società, economia* , pp. 153-154

represents a similar amount of lands or rights, the location of these rights, the solvency of tenants, and the realities of war changed what each estate or claim would provide to the institution.

These issues highlight the complexity of the study of landed wealth and its associated income. Using the number of investitures alone to measure this represents a severe simplification of historical reality, as these differed in size and possible income. However, the analysis above has simplified this reality equally for male and female institutions, revealing a difference between the two. Future analysis might delve deeper into the details of land management, attempting to calculate incomes from investitures and land records. This might reveal in greater detail the differences between male and female institutions. Nonetheless, given the difference in the number of investitures, I assume that even a more detailed analysis would show that nunneries had less income than most male institutions.

Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare, a chronological discussion.

The above comparison of wealth lacks a precise chronological dimension. This broad brush stroke allowed me to compare broadly Milanese institutions. This section compares the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare specifically. My analysis indicates that the Monastero Maggiore eclipsed Sant'Apollinare in both expenditure and income when ignoring the later foundation date of the Damianite institution. Comparing the economic metrics discussed above for the periods before and after the foundation of Sant'Apollinare will allow us to understand better how the Monastero Maggiore changed and the impact of my methodological decision in understanding the wealth of Milanese institutions.

While the nunnery of Sant'Apollinare was founded in 1223, some documents survived from the parish church of Sant'Apollianre, which had existed before the nunnery. I used these earlier documents to compare the activity and wealth of both institutions from before and after 1223. Table 16 below compares the amount of denari spent and the number of investitures conducted by both institutions before and after 1223, and it also compares the number of documents surviving from both periods for both institutions.

Table 16: Wealth compaarison between the Monastero Maggiore and the Church of Sant'Apollinare before and after 1223

Monastery	Number of documents	Denari Spent	Number of investitures
Before 1223			
Monastero Maggiore	86	670127	12
Sant'Apollinare	11	43820	6
From 1223			
Monastero Maggiore	689	365384	212
Sant'Apollinare	116	536630	28

Looking at the number of documents surviving for both institutions before 1223 suggests that most business occurred after 1223. For the Monastero Maggiore documents before 1223 make only 11.1% of all the documents analysed in this study for the institution (86 out of 775), while the documents before the foundation of the nunnery make up 8.7% of all the surviving documents of the institution (11 out of 127). This suggests that, from the perspective of sample size, ignoring the later foundation of Sant'Apollinare should not have made a large difference in the wealth comparison of these two institutions. After all, activity soared from 1223 onwards, with 689 documents surviving from the Monastero Maggiore and 116 surviving for Sant'Apollinare. For both institutions, the later part of the thirteenth century represented a period of very brisk economic activity, where, from the perspective of sample size, the Monastero Maggiore dominated.

The amount of denari spent shows instead a different picture. Before 1223 the clergy of Sant'Apollinare church had spent around 43820 denari, or 7.5% of the total spent. After its foundation, the nunnery spent over 500.000 denari in 77 years. As expected, the vast majority of Sant'Apollinare's growth occurred after it became a Damianite nunnery. On the other hand, the Monastero Maggiore spent far more before 1223, spending 670.127 denari, or 64.7% of all the nunnery spent in two hundred years. These were land acquisitions spread through the period, with three of major significance. In 1134 the monastery acquired land in Arosio for 225.360 denari, in 1191 it acquired land in Baranzate for 115.920 denari, and in 1214 it acquired land in Bugonzo, Cugliate Fabiasco, and more land in Arosio for a total of 122.400 denari. The Monastero Maggiore had significantly expanded its territories throughout Lombardy in the period. Afterwards it spent less money, with no acquisition as large as those done before 1223. Sant'Apollinare spent more denari than the Monastero Maggiore from its foundation, and from 1223 it spent more denari than any other

nunnery in the city. In terms of denari spent, the Monastero Maggiore fell behind Sant'Apollinare after 1223, nevertheless maintaining second place in terms of spending.

Despite the important expenditures, Sant'Apollinare did not become as large as the Monastero Maggiore in terms of landed wealth. While after its foundation the nunnery invested far more lands than before (6 investitures before 1223 and 28 afterwards), the Monastero Maggiore still had far more lands to manage, and after 1223 conducted 212 investitures. While Sant'Apollinare had transformed from a small church to a dominant monastic institution in the city, the Monastero Maggiore had grown greatly in the twelfth century and focused on land management in the thirteenth.

This comparison demonstrates that neither institution behaved consistently throughout the two centuries under study. The Monastero Maggiore spent far more money on land expansion in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries than afterwards, while it focused more heavily on land management after 1223. On the contrary, Sant'Apollinare transformed from a relatively insignificant parish church to a nunnery that spent more than most institutions in the city. However, the comparison also demonstrates the importance of accumulated wealth for these institutions. The wealth of the Monastero Maggiore displayed in the hundreds of lands invested in the thirteenth century connects to the acquisitions before 1223. On the contrary, without prior large investments, the acquisition spree of Sant'Apollinare did not immediately result in a large portfolio of lands to manage. I suspect that in the fourteenth century, the Daminiatie nunnery would have been more actively involved in managing lands than in the decades immediately after its foundation.

This comparison indicates that focusing on a smaller number of years does change how institutions compare to each other. In this case, a focus on the last 77 years of the thirteenth century would have identified Sant'Apollinare as the highest spending female institution, leaving the Monastero Maggiore in a distant second place. However, this comparison has demonstrated that the broader approach taken in most of this study provides a generally correct understanding of the wealth of Milanese institutions. The Monastero Maggiore spent less, but it remained at the centre of far more transactions than Sant'Apollianre and owned far more land. The Monastero Maggiore remained the wealthiest nunnery in Milan, even when focusing on a part of the thirteenth century.

Quantifying the participation in the market

Quantifying wealth differences has revealed that while both male and female institutions could have significant levels of income and expenditure, female institutions conducted fewer investitures and spent less money. Combined with the fact that female institutions received generally less patronage than male institutions, these findings suggest that a significant disparity existed in the wealth of Milanese religious institutions. However, the analysis so far has assumed that no difference existed in how each institution participated in the Milanese market and society. Therefore, the analysis has assumed that all leaders faced a similar number of legal issues, had the same attitude towards expanding their possessions, and consistently rented their properties through investitures. The

available data allows us to test this assumption and to further compare the economic life of male and female institutions. This section will divide all the surviving documents into three main areas: documents that recorded the management of an institution's existing properties, documents that recorded the expansion or other change of what an institution owned, and documents that recorded disputes where an institution defended its property rights and other interests. Comparing the number of documents in each category provides an insight into the main economic concerns of institutions and reveals whether nunneries not only had less wealth but also participated differently in the economic and social life of Milan.

To create these three categories, I combined a variety of document types. In the category of property management, I included documents of investitures, documents of election,[317] documents detailing agreements, and land records. In the category of property expansion, I included documents of sales, exchanges, and renunciations. I decided to include documents of exchange in this category because they represent attempts of an institution to improve the profitability and unity of their estates, as generally an institution gave away an isolated piece of land in exchange for one that bordered its own property. Therefore, rather than representing an institution managing their estates, exchanges represent institutions seeking to improve the value of their estates. The section discussing denari spent already explained the similarity between sales and renunciations. Finally, in the category of litigations, I included all the documents of disputes and documents detailing testimonies during litigations.

I did not consider documents detailing payments or documents of promises. Both these categories represent events that connected with all three categories. Documents of payment occurred when a person had to finish paying for a purchase, when they paid their rent, or when they paid a fee in a dispute. Similarly, people made promises for the same reasons. Given the way I collected information from these documents, I did not have a consistent way to discern the purpose of a promise or a payment, and therefore I excluded them from the analysis.

To compare the actions of male and female institutions, I used the chi-square goodness of fit test.[318] The test compares the distribution of variables in a specific population against the distribution in the general population. In this case I first counted the number of documents for each category in the twenty selected institutions and calculated the frequency of each category. Then I calculated the expected number of documents in each category for male and female institutions, given the previously

[317] In these documents a leader, alongside their religious brothers or sisters, assigned either a priest to a subordinate parish or an agent to manage a set of lands.
[318] Diez, Barr, and Cetinkaya-Rundel, *OpenIntro Statistics - Fourth Edition* pp.229-240 for a detailed explanation of the test. The test was calculated using Python SciPy module.

calculated frequency.[319] Using the chi-square test formula, I compared this expected number to the actual number I found.

The formula returns a chi squared value and a p-value.[320] The higher the chi-square value, the higher the difference between the expected and actual results. The p-value represents the likelihood that the differences between the expected and actual values occurred because of chance. As for the t-tests, I used a p-value threshold of 0.05. A low chi-square and a p-value above 0.05 would suggest that no significant difference exists between the expected and actual results.

Table 17 below shows the number of documents in each category for all twenty institutions together and for the ten male and female institutions together. The table also shows the frequency for each category. The frequency with which each category occurs for all institutions represents the expected value used in the chi-square test. The expected values represent the average behaviour of all Milanese institutions studied. I will compare the behaviour of male and female institutions and of single institutions against these expected values to statistically evaluate their differences.

Table 17: Number of documents in each category for the twenty largest Milanese institutions, and male and female institutions only.

Type of document	**All institutions**		**Male Institutions**		**Female Institutions**	
	Count	**Percentage**	**Count**	**Percentage**	**Count**	**Percentage**
Documents regarding management, (M in graphs)	1139	33.76%	689	30.94%	450	39.23%
Documents regarding expansion, (E in graphs)	1135	33.64%	789	35.43%	346	30.17%
Documents regarding litigation, (L in graphs)	1100	32.60%	749	33.63%	351	30.60%

[319] For example, if I had calculated that documents of expansion made up fifty percent of all the documents, then I would multiply all the documents by female institutions by 0.5, and the result would be the expected number of documents of expansion from female institutions.

[320] The chi-squared value represents the sum of the squared differences between observed and expected values, divided by the expected values.

Looking at all twenty institutions, each category held equal importance, with around 1,100 documents in each. However, Table 17 also suggests that some differences existed in the structure of male and female institutions. Thirty-nine percent of documents conducted by nunneries involved managing property, 30 percent involved expanding property, and 31 percent involved litigating rights. By contrast, only 30 percent of documents conducted by male institutions involved land management, while 35 percent of documents involved expansion and 34 percent litigation. This suggests that male leaders tended on average to expand the possessions of their institutions rather than focus on managing land, while female leaders gravitated towards managing lands. Male leaders had to deal with more disputes than female ones, although litigations played a key role in the structure of both types of institutions.

Figure 28 below plots the observed number of documents in each category for male and female institutions and the expected number, giving the overall distribution. It also states the p-value of the chi-square test, which compared female and male institutions to the general distribution.

Figure 28:Expected and observed number of documents for male and female institutions

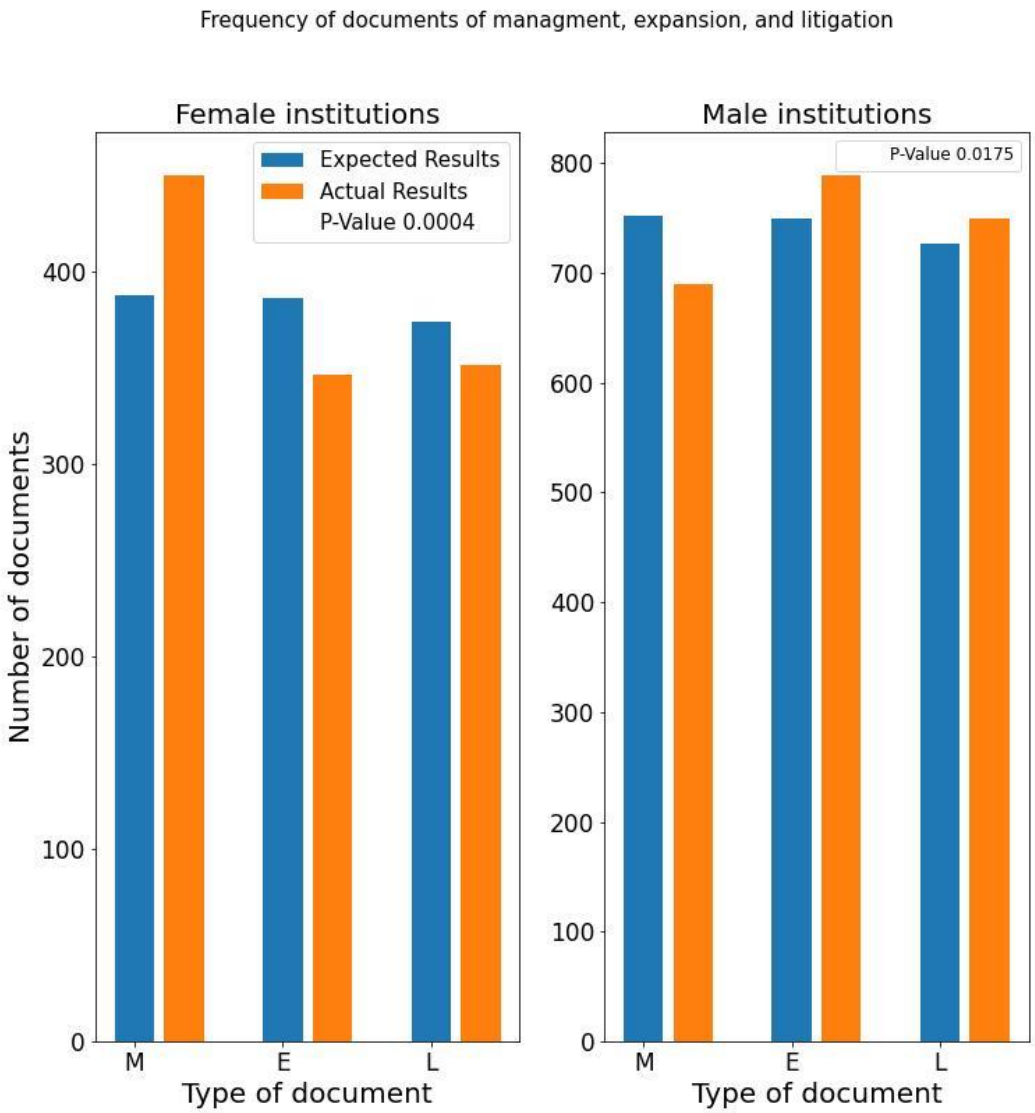


Figure 28 clearly illustrates the difference between the expected and observed results, as well as the difference between male and female institutions. The chi-square test for female institutions returned a p-value of 0.0005, while for male institutions it returned a p-value of 0.02. This confirms that on average both male and female leaders acted significantly differently from the expected result, and it also suggests a significant difference between their actions. The tendency of male leaders to buy property might have widened the wealth gap between these two types of institutions, as male institutions would have more income from more property, which could create a cycle of wealth accumulation. These different propensities might also explain the existing wealth gap between male and female institutions.

Figure 28 sums together the data from all institutions; however, as demonstrated throughout this work, a great variance existed between institutions. Conducting the same chi-square test on all

twenty institutions confirms that variance also existed in their economic structure. Table 18 below lists the twenty institutions with their respective chi-square values and p-values.

Table 18: Result of chi-square test comparing economic structure of the twenty largest Milanese institutions.

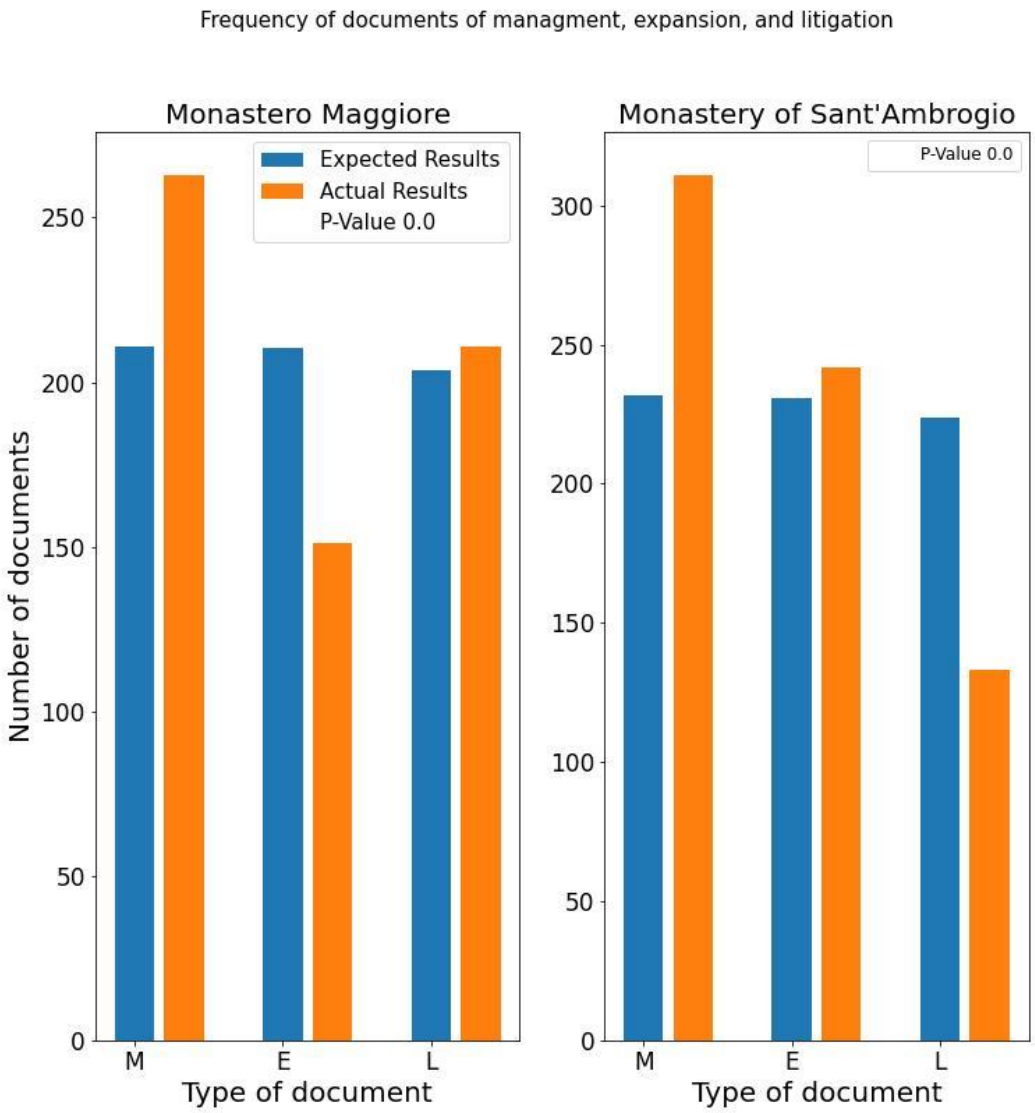
Institutions	**chi-square**	**P-value**
San Simpliciano	0.08	0.9597
Sant'Apollinare	0.24	0.8876
Santa Maria al Lentasio	0.27	0.8727
San Lorenzo	0.35	0.8407
Santa Margherita	4.65	0.0979
Minor chapter of the cathedral	4.84	0.0890
Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	5.56	0.0620
Ospedale del Brolo	6.07	0.0480
Cappucine di San Pietro	7.67	0.0216
Santa Maria d'Aurona	8.94	0.0115
Sant'Agnese	9.22	0.0100
San Felice	9.24	0.0098
Santa Radegonda	22.60	0.0000
Monastero Maggiore	29.77	0.0000
Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	31.21	0.0000
Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	48.89	0.0000
Santa Maria del Monte	59.62	0.0000
San Giorgio al Palazzo	62.20	0.0000
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	64.53	0.0000
Major chapter of the cathedral	173.61	0.0000

Only four institutions have a structure that strongly resembles the expected results: San Simpliciano, San Lorenzo, Santa Apollinare, and Santa Maria al Lentasio. Three more institutions, Santa Margherita, the minor chapter of the cathedral, and the canonry of Sant'Amborgio, have a relatively high chi-square value, but the p-value does not indicate a statistically significant difference. The other institutions differ significantly from expected results. Of these, Santa Radegonda, the Monastero Maggiore, Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta, Chiaravalle, Santa Maria del Monte, San Giorgio al Palazzo, and the major chapter of the cathedral have a p-value smaller than 0.0000, with the major chapter reaching a chi-square value of 168. These institutions differed extremely from the expected structure of institutions.

The Chi-Square test alone does not reveal how these institutions differed from the expected economic structure. To understand the actual differences, this section will analyse each institution's behaviour. Did all female leaders mostly spend their time managing land, and did all male leaders exhibit a propensity to acquire more land than expected?

Figure 29 below begins this granular analysis by showing the expected and observed data for the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore.

Figure 29: Observed and expected number of documents for each category for the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and the Monastero Maggiore



These two institutions were the wealthiest in Milan. Both differed significantly from the expected results, as Figure 29 confirms. The documentary collections of the Monastero Maggiore and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio had far more documents related to land management than expected. This reflects the exceptional landed wealth of these institutions. Otherwise, the two institutions

differed from each other. The abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore engaged far less in expanding the territory of the nunnery than expected but engaged with expected frequency in litigations. This contrasts with the findings of denari spent in transactions, which showed very high spending by the Monastero Maggiore, but it matches with the chronological analysis of the Monastero Maggiore. The nunnery spent large amounts of denari on a few selected acquisitions. The institution had ample access to cash, but it did not buy land as frequently as the sum of transacted denari would suggest. On the contrary, the abbots of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio engaged in expansion as frequently as expected but participated far less in litigations. Furthermore, while the Monastero Maggiore participated in as many disputes as expected, by comparison it participated in relatively more disputes than Sant'Ambrogio.

This might indicate that the Ambrosian abbots handled their tenants better than the abbesses of the Monastero Maggiore, potentially due to their ability to travel more extensively. Better travel might have meant better relationships with tenants or better knowledge of what tenants could provide, therefore reducing the frequency of litigations. The significant difference in the number of litigation documents might also stem from the Monastero Maggiore's difficult relationship with their holding in Arosio. This locality appears in forty disputes of the Monastero, and the nunnery's leaders never managed to properly control the area. Therefore, beyond different abilities to travel, the nunnery's ownership of a more complex locality might have caused the differences in the number of litigation documents.

The economic structure of the Monastero Maggiore and of Sant'Ambrogio differed from the general trends of male and female institutions; however, as Table 18 demonstrates, the structures of most other institutions also differed. Figure 30 and Figure 31 present the structure of the other four ancient Milanese nunneries and four old Milanese churches, respectively. These institutions had roughly a similar foundation period to the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Ambrogio. By comparing their economic structures, we can observe whether institutions of a similar age had comparable economic structures.

Figure 30: Frequency of documents of the four ancient nunneries of Milan

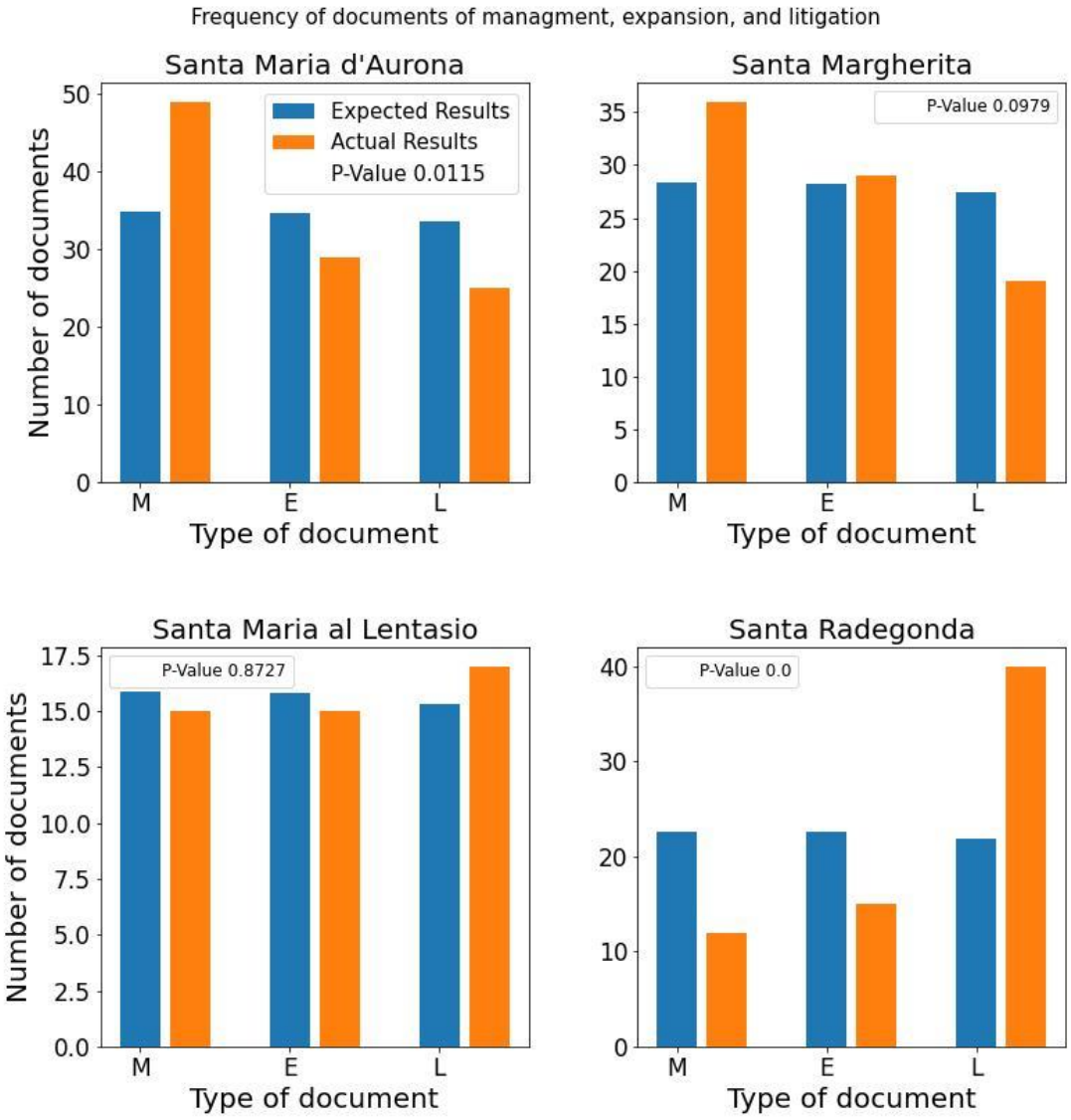


Figure 30 above reveals that the four nunneries had different economic structures compared to each other and compared to the Monastero Maggiore. The abbesses of Santa Maria d'Aurona and Santa Margherita engaged more frequently than expected in managing their possessions, like the Monastero Maggiore. This confirms that these institutions had significant landed wealth, as the leaders had to focus on managing it rather than participating in other endeavours. Furthermore, the abbesses of Santa Maria d'Aurona expanded the lands of the nunnery less than expected, resembling the Monastero Maggiore. However, in other ways these two nunneries differed from the large nunnery. Both participated in fewer disputes than expected, which suggests that these abbesses had less trouble managing their tenants and could avoid constant disputes. In addition, Santa Margherita had as many documents relating to expansions as expected, contrary to the Monastero Maggiore, to Santa Maria d'Aurona, and to the average of nunneries. While Santa Margherita did not have large

expenses, a third of the surviving documents regarded land expansion, suggesting that the nunnery tended towards land acquisition as often as expected. This suggests that the abbesses of Santa Margherita sought to expand the territories of the nunnery frequently by buying smaller estates in relatively inexpensive areas. Abbesses did so in a few localities around Milan but mostly focused on the town of Novate, a village north of Milan and a satellite of the larger town of Bollate. The nunnery had owned land in Novate since its foundation, and the focus on this smaller locality probably allowed abbesses to buy land without spending large sums of denari.[321] The structure of Santa Margherita suggests that although some older nunneries had less money to spend, their leaders could still frequently engage in the land market.

Santa Maria al Lentasio and Santa Radegonda had drastically different structures. The observed spread of documents of Santa Maria al Lentasio almost perfectly matched the expected one, with the chi-square test returning a p-value of 0.87. The nunnery had one less document regarding land management and one less document related to land expansion than expected, and two more documents related to litigations than expected. This paints a picture of a balanced institution, with its abbesses buying lands and rights as often as they managed existing ones and as often as they engaged in disputes to protect them. This confirms that Santa Maria al Lentasio did not have as much landed wealth as the other older nunneries, perhaps because of its slightly more recent foundation. Therefore, it had less land to manage, and its leaders had to dedicate more time to expanding their property. Furthermore, given the trend of nunneries engaging less in disputes than expected, the relatively high number of disputes involving Santa Maria al Lentasio appears strange. Some of these disputes involved a litigation between the nunnery and the government of Milan. The Comune had forcefully removed the nunnery to construct the new town hall, the Broletto Nuovo, in 1225 and provided limited compensation to the nuns.[322] This pushed the abbesses of Santa Maria al Lentasio to successfully seek redress through the archbishop and eventually the pope. This allowed them to buy a new building to house their monastery in the city. This issue alone probably explains the relatively high number of disputes that the nunnery engaged in.

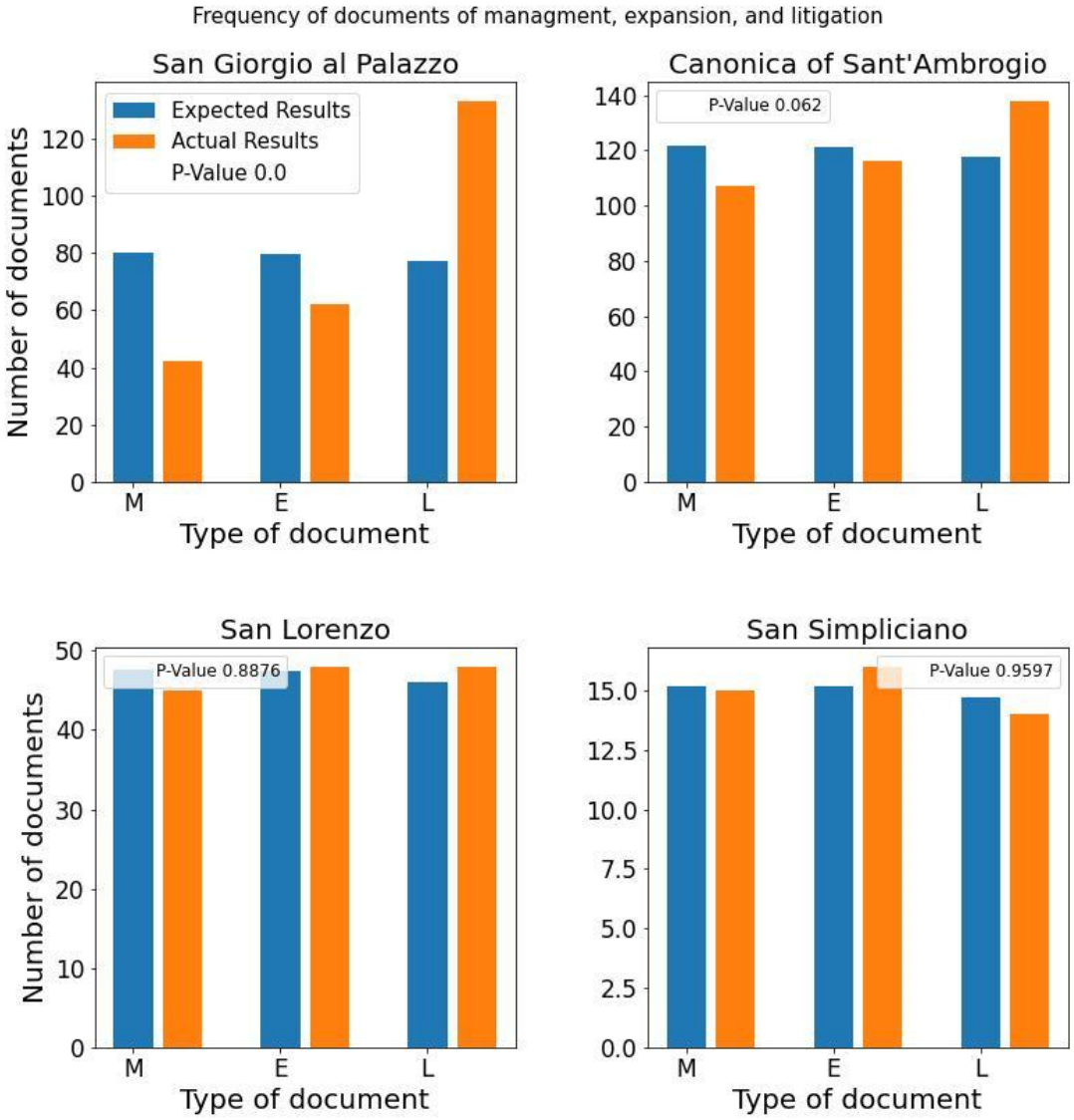
The abbesses of Santa Radegonda also engaged in far more disputes than expected, and its structure differed significantly from the expected structure, with the Chi-Square test returning a p-value below 10^{-4}. Similar to Santa Maria al Lentasio and the Monastero Maggiore, the specific circumstances of the monastery explain the large number of disputes. Santa Radegonda could appoint priests to San Simpliciano Minore, a small hospital near the monastery, and the nearby parish of San Raffaele. Both churches, and especially San Rafaelle, disputed this right over the thirteenth century, although the nunnery always won the disputes. Besides managing these disputes, few documents remain in Santa Radegonda to describe other aspects of their economic life. This could either mean

[321] Balzaretti, "Women, Property and Urban Space in Tenth-Century Milan,", p.556
[322] Perelli, *Le pergamene del secolo XIII del monastero di S. Maria del Lentasio conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Milano*, 16, pp.v-vi

that they were lost or that the economic life of the nunnery revolved around managing these disputes and the connected possessions. This might have limited the potential growth of the nunnery, as the abbesses could not focus on growing the income of the institution.

The behaviour of the Monastero Maggiore and the four other ancient nunneries of Milan suggests that multiple economic structures existed amongst nunneries. Wealthier institutions spent more time managing land, and if specific issues arose between the nunnery and tenants, local government, or dependent churches, then a large portion of the abbess's attention would go towards these litigations. Otherwise, abbesses of older nunneries would not need to frequently participate in litigations. Male institutions acted in a slightly more uniform way, as Figure 31 suggests.

Figure 31: Frequency of documents of four ancient churches of Milan



The canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, San Lorenzo, and San Simpliciano's structure did not significantly differ from the expected one. Their leaders and agents participated with similar frequency in documents regarding land management, land expansion, or litigations. Small differences existed between each institution and the general structure of Milanese institutions, but none statistically significant. These three institutions differed from the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, as their leaders participated less in land management and more in litigations than the wealthy monastery. The relative lack of documents relating to land management corresponds with the vast differences in landed wealth between these institutions. Sant'Amborgio had so many estates that most of the surviving documents related to the management of these estates, and its abbots had to dedicate more attention than others to this. On the other hand, the leaders of these other institutions did not have to dedicate undue attention to managing lands, and instead they could dedicate more time to expanding their territories.

The relatively high number of litigations from these three churches also indicates that the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio represented an exception amongst other older male institutions. Perhaps the strong leadership of the monastery explains the difference. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the abbot Guglielmo Cotta led most business of the monastery in the thirteenth century and ruled for almost thirty years with a limited use of agents. A long-lasting and active leader might have allowed the monastery to solve litigations more easily with its tenants, neighbours, and dependent churches. The other institutions did not have leaders who ruled for equally long stretches of time, nor did they have leaders who so clearly dominated the life of the institution, which might have limited their ability to deal with disputes rapidly and efficiently.

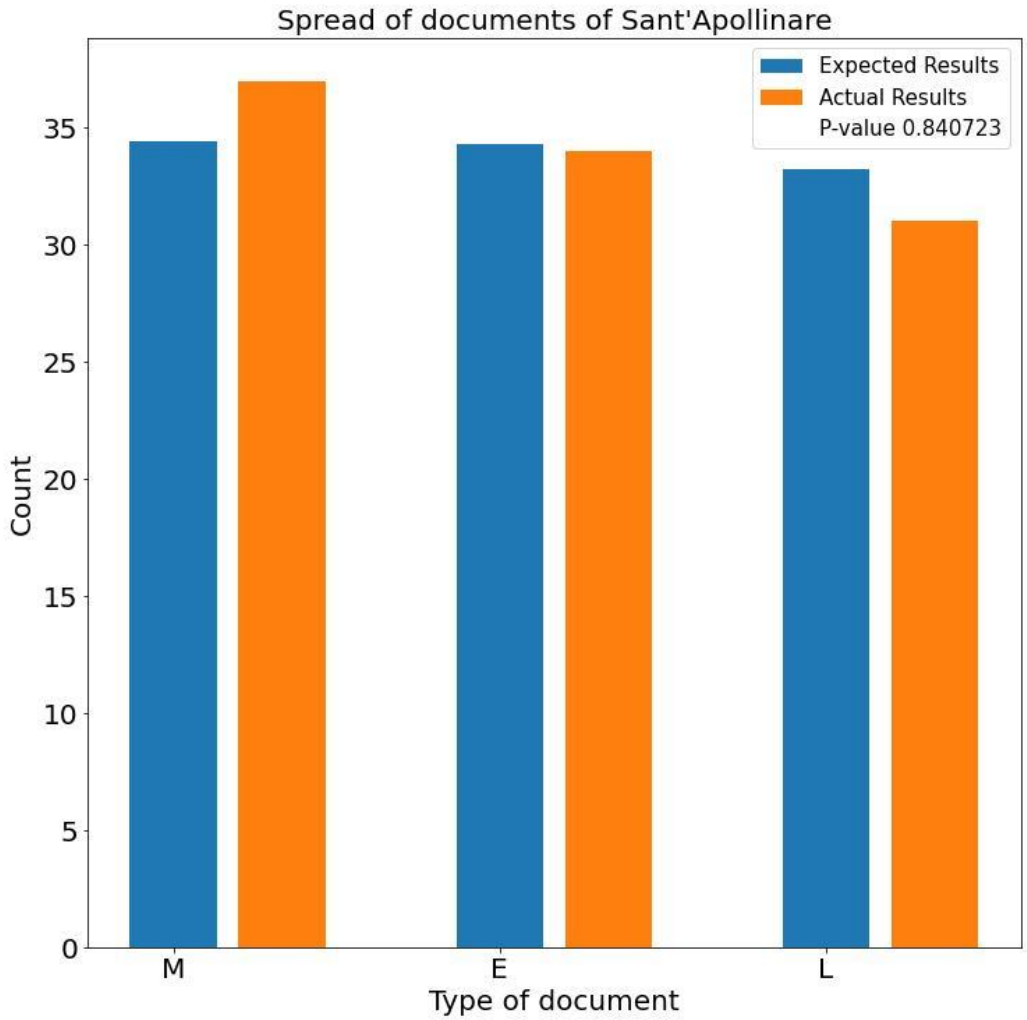
Unfortunately, the lack of clear records of leadership and lack of overall documents for many institutions impedes a more statistical analysis of the correlation between unstable leadership and number of disputes.[323] Certainly, the situation of San Giorgio al Palazzo corroborates this conclusion, although only anecdotally. Agents conducted more than half of the business of the priory, and the priors acted infrequently. [324] The absence from the documents of a prior for a large part of the thirteenth century suggests that the church had a weak or absentee leadership in the thirteenth century. Figure 31 illustrates that San Giorgio had far more disputes than expected while having relatively few documents connected to other aspects of the economy. Furthermore, although San Giorgio mostly had litigations with tenants, it did not have a specific locality that caused far more trouble than others. It appears that the types of litigations San Giorgio faced roughly resembled those of the other three churches, but in greater number. Although San Giorgio had significant landed and monetary wealth,

[323] Table 11: Number of lay and ecclesiastical disputes done by leaders and agents of male and female institutions
[324] Table 7: Percentage of parchments in which a classification appears for the top twenty Milanese institutions

Figure 31 above suggests that whoever controlled the institution had to spend more time managing issues with tenants than managing or expanding the properties of the church.

So far, our discussion has focused on institutions founded before the twelfth century. However, five of the ten nunneries this chapter focused on were instead founded during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. This divide allows us to compare the structure of older and newer nunneries and observe differences between the two groups. Did the abbesses of newer nunneries also focus on land management while engaging in relatively few disputes, or did the more recent foundation require abbesses to have different priorities? An analysis of Sant'Apollinare begins this comparison. Figure 32 illustrates the expected and actual behaviour of Damianite nunnery.

Figure 32: Frequency of documents for Sant'Apollinare



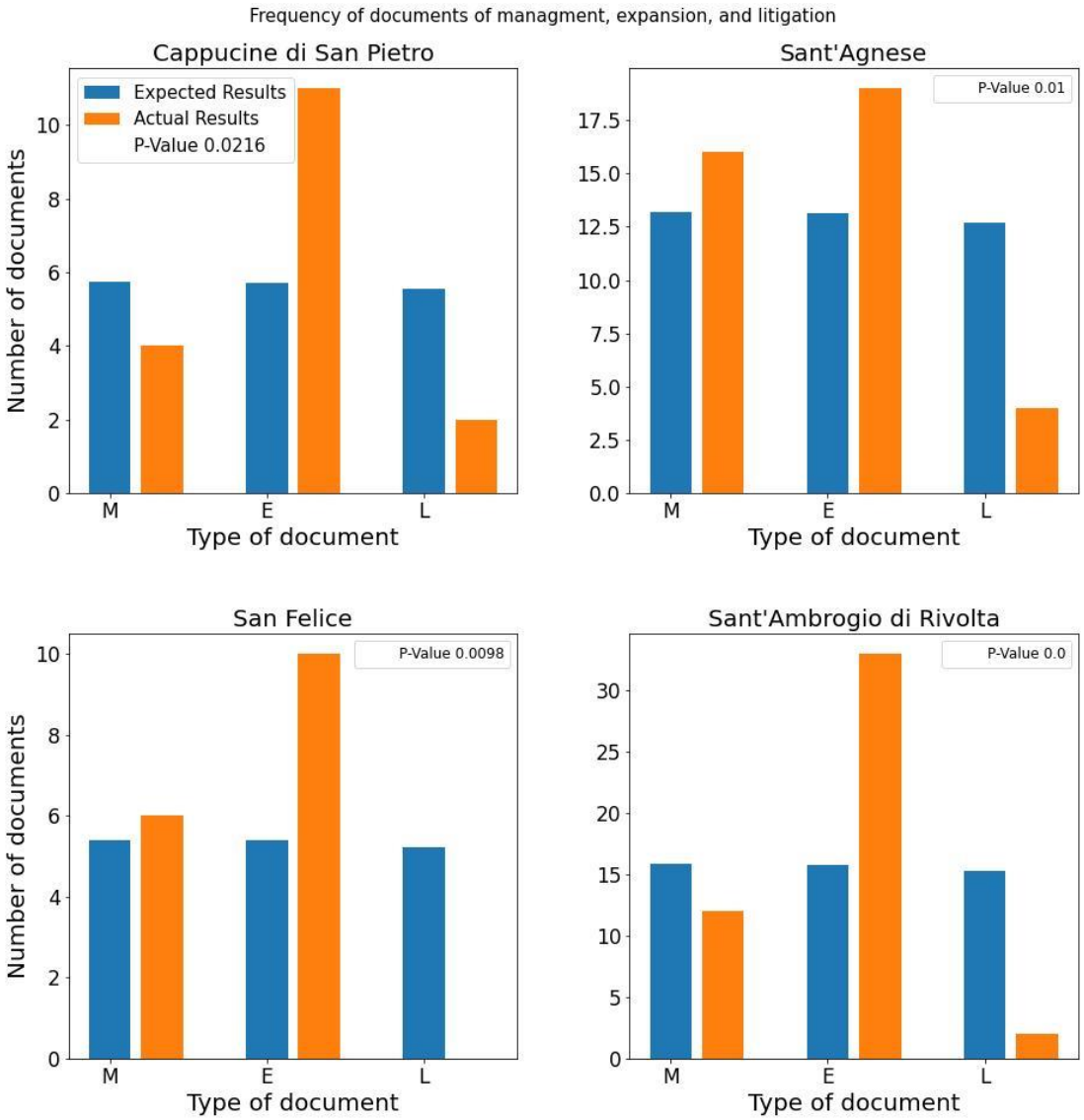
The structure of Sant'Apollinare did not differ from the expected results, with the Chi-Square test returning a value of 0.9. The figure above suggests that the leadership of the nunnery sought to

expand frequently but had to manage lands and engaged in disputes with similar frequency. Given the volume of denari spent by the nunnery, I expected that documents of expansion would feature more prominently in the cartulary. This indicates that while the nunnery did not conduct extremely large land acquisitions, like the Monastero Maggiore did, most of the lands acquired had a relatively high value. The nunnery engaged in disputes more frequently than Santa Maria del Monte and Santa Margherita, but less frequently than the expected results. However, these disputes differed from those of older nunneries and older male institutions. Sant'Apollinare mostly had litigations with other religious institutions in the city; only twice did it have disputes with the laity. Amongst other things, these disputes involved claims the nunnery had on rivers. Multiple documents detail a dispute between Sant'Apollinare and the Ospedale del Brolo regarding rights on a mill.[325] Similar to most other older nunneries, Sant'Apollinare conducted more investitures than expected, indicating that managing lands, even if newly acquired, required significant effort. Therefore, the structure of Sant'Apollianre did not differ greatly from other older nunneries, although some differences, like the type of disputes conducted or the number of documents of expansion, existed.

The other newer nunneries behaved significantly differently, as Figure 33 below demonstrates.

[325] ASMi, Fondo Pergamene, Box 361, document number 101; Box 360, document number 161, 165, 166, 172, 174

Figure 33: Frequency of documents for the four newer nunneries



These four nunneries had a similar economic structure, but this differed from the expected structure and from that of older nunneries, and especially from that of Sant'Apollinare. Firstly, all four nunneries scored a p-value of less than 0.05, demonstrating a significant difference from the average structure of all institutions. Secondly, the abbesses of these nunneries sought to expand their territories relatively frequently, which stands in contrast with the abbesses of older nunneries, who generally focused more on land management or disputes. The recent foundation dates and the relative poverty of these four institutions probably explain the focus on expansion, especially for Sant'Agnese, San Felice, and the Cappuccine. As new foundations, these institutions had little land to manage beyond what they acquired, and they probably had an influx of initial donations with which to acquire new property. Furthermore, the Cappucine's move to Milan in the 1250s certainly forced the abbess to buy property in the city.

Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta had a very similar structure to the other three nunneries, with most of the documents involving land expansion. However, the nunnery spent significantly fewer denari than these other institutions. The discrepancy between denari spent and land acquired suggests that the nunnery, like other newer institutions, had to establish its landed wealth, but it could only buy low-value plots due perhaps to its poverty and limited initial patronage. On the other hand, the location of this nunnery, relatively far from the expensive lands around Milan, might also explain this discrepancy. In either case, this discrepancy demonstrates that establishing a rural nunnery required fewer funds than establishing one in the city.

The low number of documents related to litigations common to all four nunneries further differentiates them from the other institutions. Of the five older nunneries, the Monastero Maggiore, Santa Radegonda, and Santa Maria al Lentasio had more litigations than expected. Santa Margherita, Santa Maria d'Aurona, and Sant'Apollinare had almost as many disputes as expected, which is still a significant number of disputes. On the contrary, these four nunneries engaged in between zero and two disputes. In the case of the Cappuccine, I suspect that the small number of disputes directly relates to the poverty and limited size of the nunnery in the thirteenth century. The nunnery appeared in around twenty documents, and I could find no record of special rights like those given to Sant'Apollinare. Therefore, the Cappucine had little land and few other interests to defend during the thirteenth century.

For the two Humiliati houses, the lack of disputes might relate to the structure of the Humiliati order. While male and female houses existed, men remained in charge of the order overall. Probably, instead of resolving disputes directly, female leaders of Humiliati houses would refer issues to the higher male authority, which then resolved the issue centrally. Frances Andrews detailed the centralising tendency of the entire order, with Master General Beltramus and his successors holding somewhat ultimate authority from the middle of the thirteenth century.[326] Alongside this, Andrews identified senior provosts who maintained a great deal of power around Milan and continued to grow this power towards the end of the thirteenth century.[327] Furthermore, Andrews argued that in general female leaders of Humiliati houses answered to male superiors, despite having some authority, and despite some exceptions.[328] I suspect that when a female Humiliati house would enter a dispute, a superior male leader would generally head the resolution. This might have concealed the involvement in disputes of these institutions. Furthermore, Sant'Agnese and San Felice had limited possessions which could have caused disputes.

The lack of disputes of Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta might relate to the rural and non-Milanese nature of the institution. All the documents I analysed for this were found in the cartulary of the

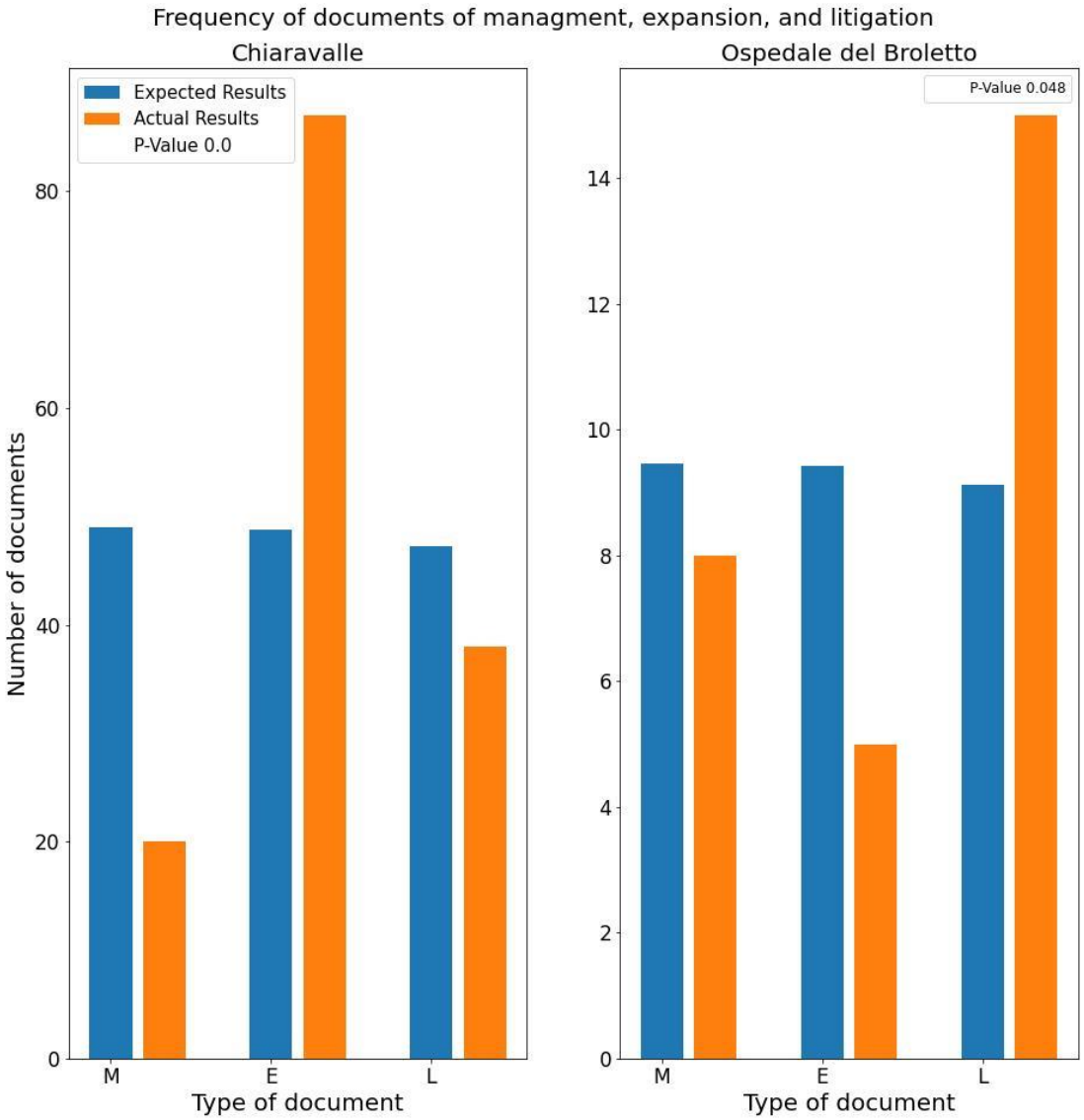
[326] Andrews, *The early Humiliati*, p. 218
[327] Ibid, pp. 218-219
[328] Ibid, p.152, p.156 highlights a few instances of humiliati women acting autonomously, something found also in this thesis.

Monastero Maggiore. Sant'Ambrogio was a dependent of the Monastero Maggiore, and this could mean that detailed documents of litigation of a foreign institution would not have much utility, unlike detailed documents of rent agreements or, more importantly, land expansion. Perhaps the abbess of Sant'Ambrogio did litigate with her tenants, but mostly in local courts of Rivolta d'Adda, instead of Milan. Whatever the reason, in the documentary collections of these four nunneries, disputes do not often appear.

Analysing these ten Milanese nunneries highlights that the business of nunneries could differ greatly. Leaders of newer nunneries spent most of their time buying property, with limited need to engage the civil or religious courts or manage estates. Abbesses of older nunneries spent less time expanding their property, and when they did, they had limited cash to do so, except for the Monastero Maggiore. Instead, land management and, to a lesser extent, dispute settlement formed a central part of the business life of these abbesses. Sant'Apollinare represents something of an exception. The abbesses and agents of the nunnery dealt with similar frequency with litigations, land expansion, and land management. The actions of Sant'Apollinare, paired with the wealth demonstrated in the previous sections, suggest that Sant'Apollinare was a dynamic force in the Milanese economy.

The structure of older and newer nunneries differed. Did a similar phenomenon occur with male institutions? By comparing older institutions with Chiaravalle and the Ospedale del Brolo, both founded in the twelfth century, I will investigate whether the tendency of older male institutions to act evenly in land management, land expansion, and litigation persisted for newer institutions also. Figure 34 below illustrates the expected and actual spread of documents of Chiaravalle and the Ospedale del Brolo.

Figure 34: Frequency of documents for Chiaravalle and the Ospedale del Brolo



Neither institution had a structure that approached the expected one, and they behaved differently from each other. Chiaravalle's abbots and agents, when acting in Milan, mostly sought to expand the property of the monastery, participating in thirty more documents of expansion than expected. Furthermore, the monastery participated in around thirty-five litigations rather than the almost fifty expected. Unlike other male institutions, which mostly litigated with their tenants, the disputes connected to Chiaravalle mostly involved other religious institutions, with only fifteen litigations involving lay people. This suggests that abbots and their agents came into the city mostly because of issues with other institutions, rather than to manage problems with the monastery's tenants. Analysing the full collection of documents of Chiaravalle would certainly reveal more disputes with the laity. However, Chiaravalle still frequently participated in disputes, despite the smaller than expected number.

The small number of documents related to land management, twenty instead of almost fifty, indicates that Chiaravalle's business in Milan did not involve managing property. Given that most of the documents regarding Chiaravalle were not considered in this study, the data of Figure 34 does not represent the entire structure of Chiaravalle's economy. The monastery had great landed wealth, and certainly its abbots spent much time managing it, but not when acting in the city.

The documents of the Ospedale reveal that the leaders and agents of the hospital spent most of their time dealing with disputes, with only twelve documents involving the management or expansion of property. The Ospedale had only one dispute with laity, while ten documents record the hospital's dispute with Sant'Apollinare over mill rights. Similarly to Sant'Apollinare, this newer institution, which had received ecclesiastical support due to its charitable role, spent a significant part of its time defending the rights it had obtained. Unlike Sant'Apollinare or Chiaravalle, the leadership of the hospital did not attempt to frequently expand its territories or could not do so, at least according to the surviving documents. However, the relatively large sums spent on land acquisitions, around 200,000 denari, suggest that the few documents of expansion involved valuable lands. The institution conducted few but important acquisitions and otherwise focused on managing its property, and especially on defending its rights.

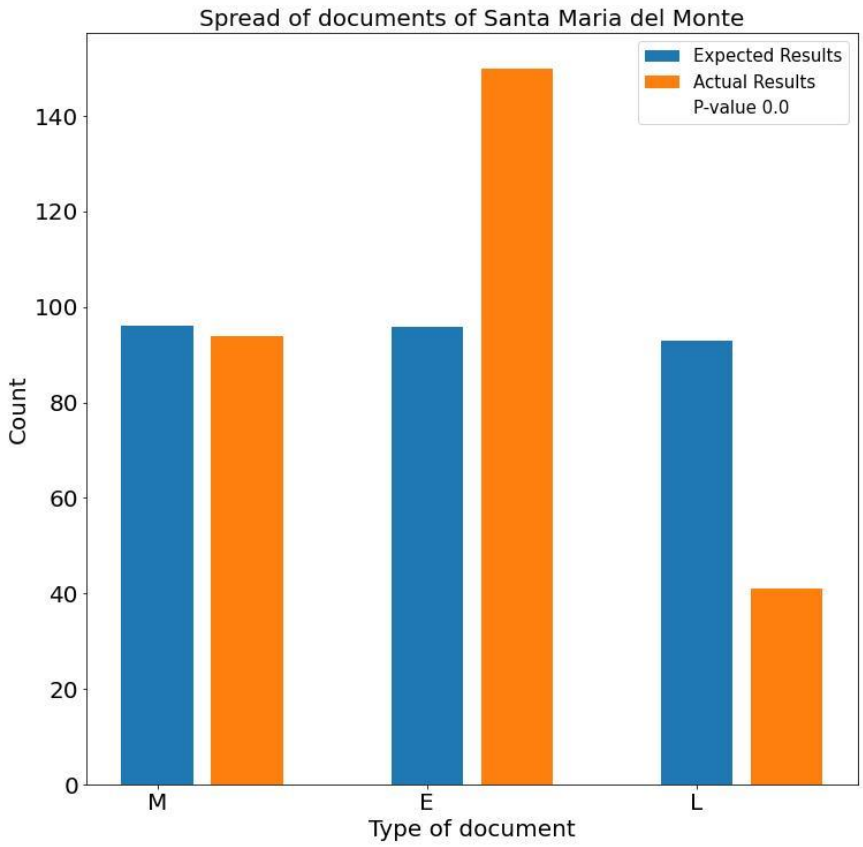
The discussion of older male institutions has identified that male leaders spent a significant portion of their time participating in litigations, more than abbesses from older female nunneries. Chiaravalle and the hospital also participated frequently in litigations, with Chiaravalle acting in almost as many litigations as expected and the hospital acting in far more. On the contrary, most newer nunneries, besides Sant'Apollinare, barely participated in disputes. While exceptions existed in both male and female institutions, it seems that male institutions had a greater propensity for participation in litigation, regardless of their foundation date.

Comparing newer female foundations with older ones also revealed that newer female institutions sought to expand their territories more frequently than older nunneries, often spending more denari in the process. No comparable difference appears between newer and older male institutions, for while Chiaravalle's business in Milan focused on expansion, the hospital business did not. Furthermore, the leadership of older male institutions did not uniformly focus less than expected on landed expansion. Therefore, it appears that male institutions founded in different periods had similar structures, while nunneries founded in different periods had more varied structures. Differences in wealth and institutional size might explain this observation. Newer nunneries had far less landed wealth than older nunneries or any male institution, which forced them to focus on expanding their possessions to establish an income base. The poverty of newer female institutions also kept them away from courts, as they had fewer rights to defend than older nunneries or male institutions. On the contrary, the new but wealthy Sant'Apollinare acted similarly to older nunneries and acted frequently in litigation. Similarly, newer male institutions had a similar structure to older male institutions because they had comparable levels of wealth. If the analysis had included poorer

male institutions, a greater difference might have appeared. Unfortunately, poorer institutions produced fewer documents, and therefore not enough data with which to analyse them.

This comparison so far has ignored three male institutions: Santa Maria del Monte and the two chapters of the cathedral. These institutions did not fit well in the previous analysis. Santa Maria del Monte was founded later than the other older institutions, and it was located outside of Milan. The two chapters of the cathedral had a pastoral and judicial role in the city, and therefore they participated differently in the economy than normal institutions. While these differences impeded a simple categorisation of these institutions, they allow us to compare how the structure of a large foreign monastery and that of the two chapters of the cathedral differed from that of other male institutions. Figure 35 illustrates the actual and expected structure of Santa Maria del Monte, providing a unique comparison to the other urban institutions, while Figure 36 does the same for the two chapters of the cathedral, allowing us to understand how their pastoral and judicial roles influenced their economic participation.

Figure 35: Frequency of documents of Santa Maria del Monte



Around a third of the documents of Santa Maria del Monte related to managing land, and more than fifty percent of the documents involved expansion of property, with the rest involving litigations. The exceptional focus on landed expansion from the leadership of Santa Maria del Monte and their limited engagement with the Milanese courts contrasts with all other male institutions analysed so far. Only Chiaravalle focused mainly on landed expansions, but only from the limited perspective that the present documents provide, and Chiaravalle appeared frequently in litigations. Furthermore, unlike Chiaravalle or Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta, the two other rural institutions in this study, the information on Santa Maria del Monte arrived directly from the archive of the institution conserved in the Archivio di Stato and not from references found in other collections. Therefore, Figure 35 provides the fullest possible perspective of the monastery, and not only the business the institution conducted in Milan.

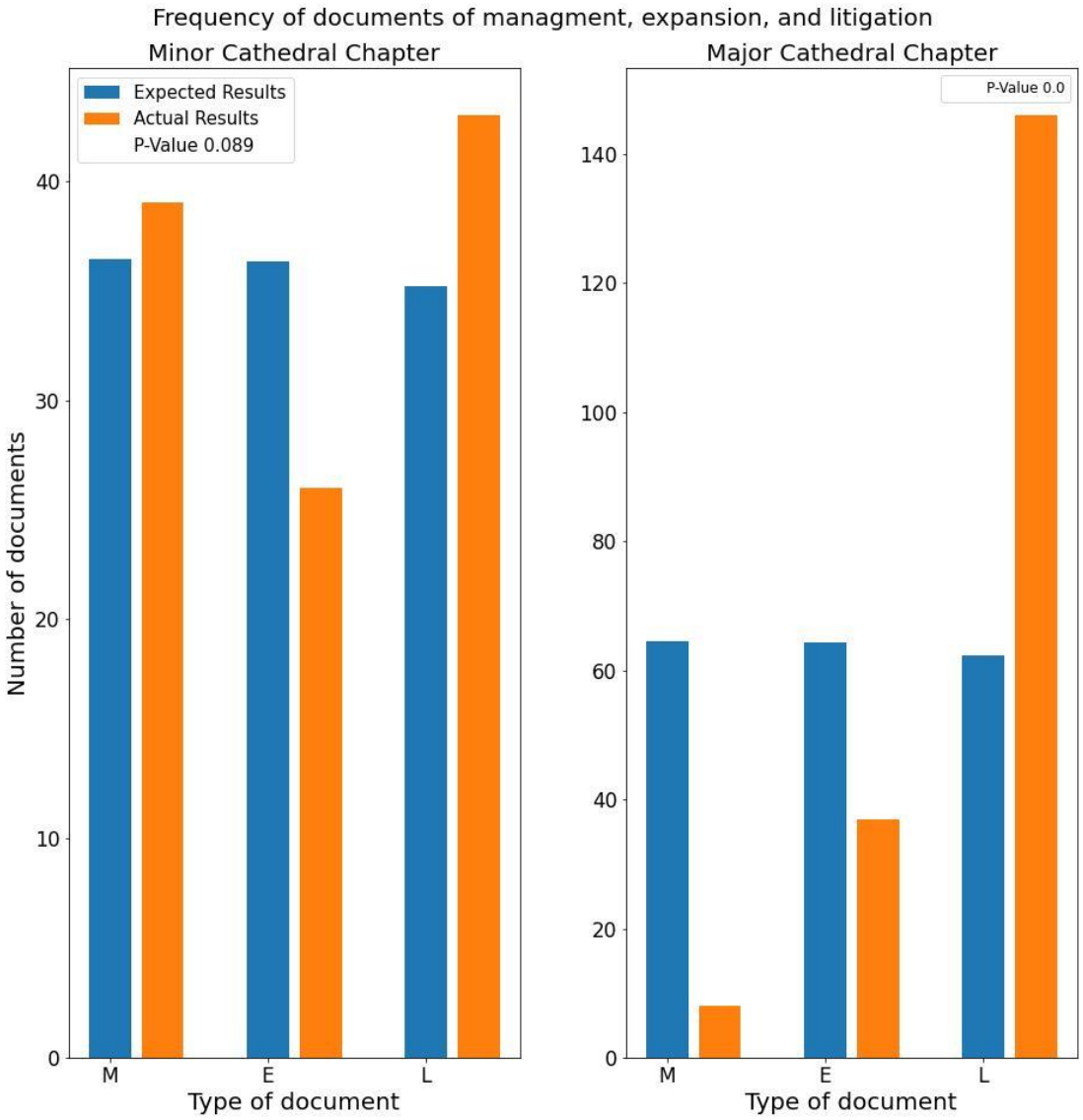
The structure of Santa Maria del Monte confirms the idea that a rural institution had different needs than urban institutions, especially regarding litigations. Unlike the hospital of the Brolo, Santa Radegonda, or Sant'Apollinare, which had to dispute their rights with neighbouring institutions, Santa Maria del Monte had limited litigious contact with other religious institutions beyond San Vittore of Varese, the main nearby church that had a claim on Santa Maria. Furthermore, while urban institutions had to manage distant localities, which tended to resist urban control, Santa Maria del Monte owned territories relatively close to the church. The archpriest and the agents of the monastery travelled extensively through these territories and probably maintained close relationships with the tenants. This probably resulted in less frequent disputes with tenants and almost none with other religious institutions.

While frequently expanding its property, Santa Maria del Monte spent a relatively low sum of denari. The church spent as much denari as the Ospedale del Brolo, while its leaders acted in over 140 documents related to expansion, or 28 times more documents of this type than the hospital. This partially demonstrates that the archpriest of the church engaged in frequent small acquisitions, reinforcing the idea of a close relationship with the laity around the church. However, the disparity between denari spent and documents of expansion also confirms that the land around Varese had less value than that around Milan, and that the archpriest could frequently seek to expand the church's properties without spending large sums of money. This observation confirms what was already observed for Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta: establishing and growing rural institutions required fewer funds than doing the same for urban ones.

Comparing Santa Maria del Monte with other Milanese institutions revealed, therefore, that a rural institution had less need to use Milanese courts and could dedicate more time to expanding its territories. In the area of land management, the church acted as expected, with fewer documents of this type when compared with the exceptionally large landowners of the city, but otherwise having a structure similar to the wealthy urban churches. This suggests that despite other differences, large urban and rural landowners had to dedicate significant resources to managing existing territories.

Figure 36 below returns the discussion to urban Milanese institutions, illustrating the structure of the minor and major chapters of the cathedral.

Figure 36: Frequency of documents of the cathedral chapters



The major and minor chapters of the cathedral had two different structures. The minor chapter had a significantly different structure from the expected one, as the Chi-Square test returned a p-value of 0.09. By contrast, the major chapter scored a p-value below 0.0000, and the highest Chi-Square value of any institution in the city. This becomes visually apparent in Figure 36, with the minor chapter appearing relatively often in all three types of documents, while the major chapter had predominantly litigations. This indicates that the minor chapter overall acted like a normal institution, with its leaders and agents buying land, managing the property of the cathedral and of the chapter, and frequently participating in litigations, whether as plaintiffs or judges. On the contrary, the members of the major chapters appeared in the religious courts alongside the archbishop, most often as judges.

The major chapter also expanded its possessions frequently, but its members almost never appear to have managed its properties.

These conclusions partially confirm what the analysis of monetary and landed wealth found for these two institutions. The minor chapter conducted many investitures, while the major chapter did not, although it did spend a significant sum of denari in acquisitions. On the other hand, the relatively large number of expansionary documents the leaders of the minor chapter engaged with contrasts with the small sum of denari it spent. The major chapter spent three times as much as the minor chapter, but the members of the minor chapter acted in around twenty-five documents of expansion, while those of the major chapter acted in more than thirty-five documents of expansion, so they acted in around 50 percent more documents. This suggests that the minor chapter only bought smaller and cheaper plots of land. This probably suggests that the minor chapter did not have as much funding as the major chapter.

The structure of the minor chapter resembled that of other male institutions. The minor chapter acted as a relatively large landlord with limited funds but still with a drive to expand its territories. Its litigations involved laity fifty percent of the time, confirming the importance of enforcing contracts with the laity for most male institutions. The rest involved a variety of Milanese religious institutions. Overall, the peculiar role of the minor chapter did not drastically change its behaviour as a religious institution, unlike the major chapter.

This section sought to establish whether the types of business abbesses and male leaders dealt with differed and revealed a significant difference. Abbesses and their agents tended to focus on managing their property and less on expanding it, whilst also engaging less in litigations. Male leaders and their agents instead acted frequently in disputes and acquired new property even more frequently while spending less time than expected managing the property.

The analysis also revealed significant variation amongst different institutions of the same gender. In the case of nunneries, older institutions had a different structure compared to newer institutions. Abbesses of older institutions, generally having access to greater landed wealth, spent more time either managing these lands or, in the case of Santa Radegonda, defending their various rights. Abbesses of newer institutions, having few properties, spent far more time buying land and rights, except for Sant'Apollinare.

Amongst male institutions, no clear difference existed between older and newer institutions. However, exceptions existed to this general observation. The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio had remarkably few litigations given its size and given the frequent disputes with the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio. The archpriests of Santa Maria del Monte spent most of their time expanding and managing the church's possessions, barely engaging in disputes. The major chapter of the cathedral instead acted mostly in disputes, something expected given the role of its members in representing the archiepiscopal curia.

While an abbess and a male leader had the chance to oversee and act in all types of business, the frequency with which leaders acted in different businesses could vary according to the gender of the institution, its location, its role in the city and rule followed, its wealth, and, in the case of nunneries, its age.

Assessing the relationship of institutions

The analysis has so far focused on the wealth and economic structure of institutions. It discussed the amount of patronage institutions received since their foundation, and it quantified how much these institutions spent and their landed wealth. In the previous section, the analysis has focused on the importance of land management, land expansion, and litigations in the life of these institutions. Across these different points, the importance of relationships and networks emerged for both male and female institutions. Milanese institutions demonstrated that strong ties to the papacy, the empire, or a powerful religious order granted an institution a great deal of patronage. Local networks. However, remained essential. Smaller institutions like Sant'Agnese and San Felice must have relied on local support to obtain their funding, as they had no clear support from external and larger powers. Sant'Apollinare, although strongly connected to the archbishopric of Milan and the Papacy, also received ample donations from local families.

Furthermore, all institutions had frequent relations with their tenants, as demonstrated by the large number of disputes with them. Andrea Oldani also emphasised the importance of tenants in the social relations of an institution. He found that the laity received 84 percent of the investitures conducted by the abbots of San Protaso of Reggio Emilia in the fourteenth century. These investitures involved land and property in the city and its outskirts.[329] While Oldani dealt with a slightly later period than this study, he relied on the same documents I used in my study. In the cartulary of San Protaso, he also found many investitures, which used similar or identical clauses to the investitures found in Milan in the twelfth and thirteenth century. [330] Many differences certainly existed between twelfth and thirteenth century Milan and fourteenth century Reggio Emilia, but Oldani's study provides an interesting methodological parallel. In the case of Milan, it appears that most surviving documents detail leaders and their agents renting their property to lay-people, buying property from them, and confronting them in court when they did not fulfil their obligations towards the institutions. Furthermore, Milanese institutions had land across the countryside and in different parts of Lombardy, which means that they had connections with communities across Lombardy. The management of this lay network certainly constituted a major part of the life of any leader.

Finally, through property and religious obligations, every institution had relations with other religious institutions. These relationships most often come to the fore through disputes, when either institution failed to uphold their duties. For some institutions, managing relationships with other

[329] Oldani, "Il monastero di San Prospero nella crisi del Trecento: aspetti gestionali e relazionali," pp.172-173
[330] Ibid, pp. 158-159

institutions could prove vital. The hundred-year conflict between the monastery and the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, while not necessarily financially burdensome, caused frequent physical fighting between monks and canons, something which certainly threatened the stability of the Ambrosian complex.[331] Similarly, the long-standing conflict between the nunnery of San Pietro of Cremella and the canonry of San Giovanni di Monza revolved around the free election of the abbess. The canons wanted to select the abbess as they provided services to the nunnery, rather than allow the nuns to elect their leader.[332] This dispute threatened the end of the nunnery's independence or threatened the loss of needed spiritual and corporal services. While the litigations highlight times when relationships between institutions broke down, the existence of these relationships demonstrates a certain degree of interconnectedness between institutions.

The documents studied so far reveal that male and female institutions existed in a network of religious institutions and lay-people. However, the size and structure of these networks remain unclear. Did Milanese institutions uniformly interact most frequently with the laity? Did nunneries and male institutions have a different number of connections with other religious institutions? To assess the networks of the twenty selected institutions, this section will firstly discuss what percentage of documents involved the laity and what percentage involved other male or female institutions. In female institutions, I included all the institutions led by female leaders as defined in chapter 2, and in male institutions, all those led by male leaders as defined in the same chapter. The percentage of documents conducted with these two types of institutions represents the religious network of an institution.

I excluded judicial religious institutions from the group of religious males. For example, most of the actions of the major chapter of the cathedral involved adjudicating disputes. While this brought most religious institutions into contact with the archbishop or another member of the chapter, this relationship differs significantly from that of two monasteries with a business agreement or another similar relationship. Therefore, I did not consider interactions with the major chapter of the cathedral or with other bishops as part of the religious network of an institution.

The laity group includes all the actors featured in the first chapter: people acting without further association and neighbours or nobles acting together on behalf of their locality. This group excludes judiciary bodies, for example, the commune of Milan or the commune of neighbouring towns to adjudicate disputes, for the same reason it excluded religious bodies. In most documents, these judiciary bodies interacted with institutions not as business partners or spiritual dependents, but as adjudicators of disputes. Due to the categorically different type of relationship this entails, I did not consider as part of the lay network lay judiciary bodies

[331] Ambrosioni, "Controversie tra il monastero e la canonica di S. Ambrogio,"

[332] Martina Basile Weatherill, "Il monastero di San Pietro di Cremella e la canonica di San Giovanni Battista di Monza nel medioevo: nuove ipotesi sugli interventi dell'arcivescovo Robaldo," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 56, no. 1 (2002), pp.17-18

While this analysis excludes both religious and lay judicial bodies, certainly both individuals and institutions could have strong relationships with judges. Furthermore, calling upon papal or imperial support formed an essential part of the judicial process, as parties sought to use their political connections to resolve personal issues. However, this type of network deserves a separate investigation, and including these bodies in the present analysis would confuse the definition of 'network'. This analysis seeks to understand the direct relationships between laity and religious institutions and between religious institutions themselves, rather than the political network of these institutions. Table 19 shows the average frequency with which male and female institutions interacted with other female institutions, with other male institutions, and with the laity.

Table 19: Percentage of documents conducted by nunneries and male institutions with female institutions, male institutions, and the laity

	Female institutions	**Male institutions**	**Laity**
Average for the ten largest female institutions[333]	0.35 %	14.68%	85.28%
Average for the ten largest male institutions	11.74%	19.55%	68.71%

Observing the network of San Protaso, Oldani concluded that in fourteenth-century Reggio a "clear separation existed between religious institutions", suggesting that religious institutions did not often interact with each other.[334] Table 19 suggests that Milanese female religious institutions interacted as often as San Protaso with the laity, which might indicate that this clear separation also existed in Milan, at least for nunneries, as only 15 percent of the documents of nunneries involved other religious institutions. Male institutions had more connections with religious institutions than what Oldani observed, as 33 percent of the documents involved other religious institutions. Male institutions therefore had closer ties to institutions in the city, while nunneries focused on their lay networks.

However, the variance in the behaviour of both male and female institutions weakens these conclusions.

[333] The values do not add to 100 percent because some documents involved multiple institutions

[334] 'Contribuendo quindi a rafforzare l'immagine di una Reggio Trecentesca nella quale esisteva una netta separazione degli enti religiosi' Oldani, "Il monastero di San Prospero nella crisi del Trecento: aspetti gestionali e relazionali,", p.177

Table 20 below reports the frequency with which each of the twenty institutions interacted with female religious institutions, male religious institutions, and the laity.

Table 20: Frequency of interactions with laity, male institutions, and female institutions

Institutions	**Laity**	**Male institutions**	**Female institutions**
Sant'Agnese	94.64	5.36	0
Santa Maria del Monte	94.52	5.16	0.32
Cappucine di San Pietro	94.12	5.88	0
Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	93.75	6.25	0
Monastero Maggiore	93.21	6.36	0.42
Santa Margherita	91.95	5.75	2.3
San Giorgio al Palazzo	91.32	7.31	1.37
Santa Maria al Lentasio	88.89	11.11	0
San Felice	88.89	11.11	0
Santa Maria d'Aurona	88.39	11.61	0
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	86.97	11.13	1.9
Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	81.02	18.18	0.8
Minor chapter of the cathedral	77.57	17.76	4.67
San Simpliciano	75	21.15	3.85
San Lorenzo	72.67	19.33	8
Sant'Apollinare	72.31	26.92	0.77
Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	68.78	21.69	9.52
Santa Radegonda	43.55	56.45	0
Major chapter of the cathedral	24.58	53.2	22.22
Ospedale del Brolo	14.71	20.59	64.71

Eleven of the twenty institutions (eight nunneries and three male institutions) had business with laity more frequently than what Oldani found for San Protaso. This seems to confirm that even when looking at individual institutions, nunneries had fewer interactions with other religious institutions. However, conducting a t-test between the size of lay-network of female institutions and male institutions returns a p-value of 0.09, indicating that no significant difference existed between

the two sets of data, suggesting that overall male and female institutions had a similar propensity to interact with the laity. Similarly, no significant difference existed between the size of the network that male institutions and female institutions had with other male institutions. This indicates that female institutions conducted business with other male institutions with a similar frequency to male institutions themselves, despite a difference in the average percentage.

The major chapter of the Cathedral and the Ospedale of the Brolo acted as clear outliers, which skewed the results when observing overall percentages. As suggested above, the major chapter had relationships with almost all institutions of the city due to its judicial role. While these connections did not constitute a significant addition to the network of the institutions that conducted litigations, it constituted a major source of power for the major chapter itself, as it held authority over most institutions in the city. However, the major chapter had limited business interactions with the laity, as its members spent little time managing or expanding their possessions. The hospital, on the other hand, had most connections with female institutions, specifically Sant'Apollinare, because of the disputes discussed above. Overall, most of the business of the hospital revolved around protecting its own rights from other institutions rather than managing lay tenants and neighbours, at least in the thirteenth century. These outliers partially explain why male institutions had a relatively low average number of interactions with the laity.

Nunneries differed significantly from male institutions in their almost complete lack of interaction with other female institutions. This probably occurred because female institutions would rarely have reasons to form relationships with other nunneries, unless the institution depended on a mother monastery, like the relationship between Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta and the Monastero Maggiore. Nuns could not provide sacraments to each other and therefore would not enter into agreements to exchange goods for priestly services. Therefore, while nunneries could have relationships with other male institutions, they barely had any with female ones. On the contrary, male institutions had relatively frequent business with nunneries, although this varied drastically between institutions.

The average lay and religious network of male and female institutions differed in size, but not to a statistically significant extent. Overall, regardless of gender, institutions interacted mostly with the laity, generally their tenants. Nonetheless, while the frequency of interaction with other religious institutions resembles what Oldani found in Reggio, it is clear that significant interactions existed between institutions. Besides the evidence of interactions and agreements in the economic sphere, institutions could have important ties to each other, especially regarding guardianship and appointment of priests. Religious networks had an important place in the life of both male and female leaders.

Differences in membership

Milanese abbesses ruled institutions that generally received less patronage from local and outside forces and generally had less monetary and landed wealth. Nunneries also had slightly larger lay networks and slightly smaller religious networks than male institutions. None of these metrics, however, measures the size of the institutions that abbesses ruled over. How many nuns belonged to nunneries? Did this differ from the number of clergy or monks in male institutions?

Measuring the number of members of an institution carries similar difficulties to measuring wealth: the absence of membership records. In 1944, Josiah Cox Russell published a study of the clerical population of medieval England. He reported data from the conquest to the dissolution, using mostly tax records, which reported the number of people in an institution.[335] The archiepiscopal visitations and tax records used by Penelope Johnson also provided the number of members for each institution.[336] Sally Brasher instead used an inventory of Humiliati houses conducted in 1344 to measure the number of male and female Humilati members.[337]

These studies relied on lists that provided a number of members for various institutions in a narrow time period. However, no such list survives for Milan during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; therefore, I used private parchments to approximate membership numbers. To do so, I used documents where a leader and the members of his institution acted together. These documents generally represent all or most of the members of an institution coming together to approve a transaction, and therefore adding the actors provides an approximation of their total number. Neither the documents of Benedictine monasteries nor those of canonries indicate that the chapter did not gather in its entirety. The notary simply listed the members of the institution confirming them to be present and consenting to the transaction or action. This method misses those members who did not participate in the transaction due to sickness or absence. This method does also not consider other members who did not have the right to participate in the decision-making of the institution. Furthermore, this method relies on a specific kind of document, which does not appear for all twenty institutions in the study, which means that some institutions will appear to have had fewer members than they had. Finally, these numbers represent the situation of an institution in a single year because I selected the document with the highest number of members. This allows us to see the highest point of the institution during the period of study. When counting members, I counted leaders, priests, deacons, lay brothers, monks and canons for male institutions and nuns for female institutions. According to the documents I analysed, almost all institutions had most members acting together in the thirteenth century.

[335] Josiah Cox Russell, "The Clerical Population of Medieval England," *Traditio* 2 (1944), p.177
[336] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France*, p.272
[337] Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati a lay religious order in medieval civic life*, p.46

Table 21 below shows the peak number of members for each institution in the thirteenth century according to the documents I could find.

Table 21: Membership for the twenty largest institutions in Milan

Rank	**Monastery**	**Membership**
1	Sant'Apollinare	71
2	Santa Maria di Chiaravalle	66
3	Santa Maria d'Aurona	55
4	Sant'Agnese	44
5	Ospedale del Brolo	32
6	Cappucine di San Pietro	30
7	Monastero Maggiore	29
8	Major chapter of the cathedral	18
9	Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	17
10	Santa Maria al Lentasio	16
11	Canonry of Sant'Ambrogio	15
12	Santa Margherita	14
13	San Giorgio al Palazzo	11
14	San Lorenzo	11
15	San Simpliciano	10
16	Minor chapter of the cathedral	8
17	Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta d'Adda	6
18	Santa Radegonda	5
19	Santa Maria del Monte	2
20	San Felice	1

Table 21 highlights two institutions that did not have a surviving document useful for this analysis. San Felice had only documents with the *ministra* acting, while Santa Maria del Monte had only documents with the archpriest acting alone, or at most alongside a lay brother of the monastery. All other institutions had at least one document where the leader and members acted together. The lack of relevant documents for San Felice corresponds with the few surviving documents regarding the Humiliati house. However, the lack of communal action from Santa Maria del Monte, despite the institution having over three hundred surviving documents, further indicates managerial differences between the monastery and other institutions in the city. It appears that either the archpriest did not have to involve the other priests of the institution in taking decisions for the monastery, or no documents of this happening survive. All the other institutions had at least one relevant document surviving.

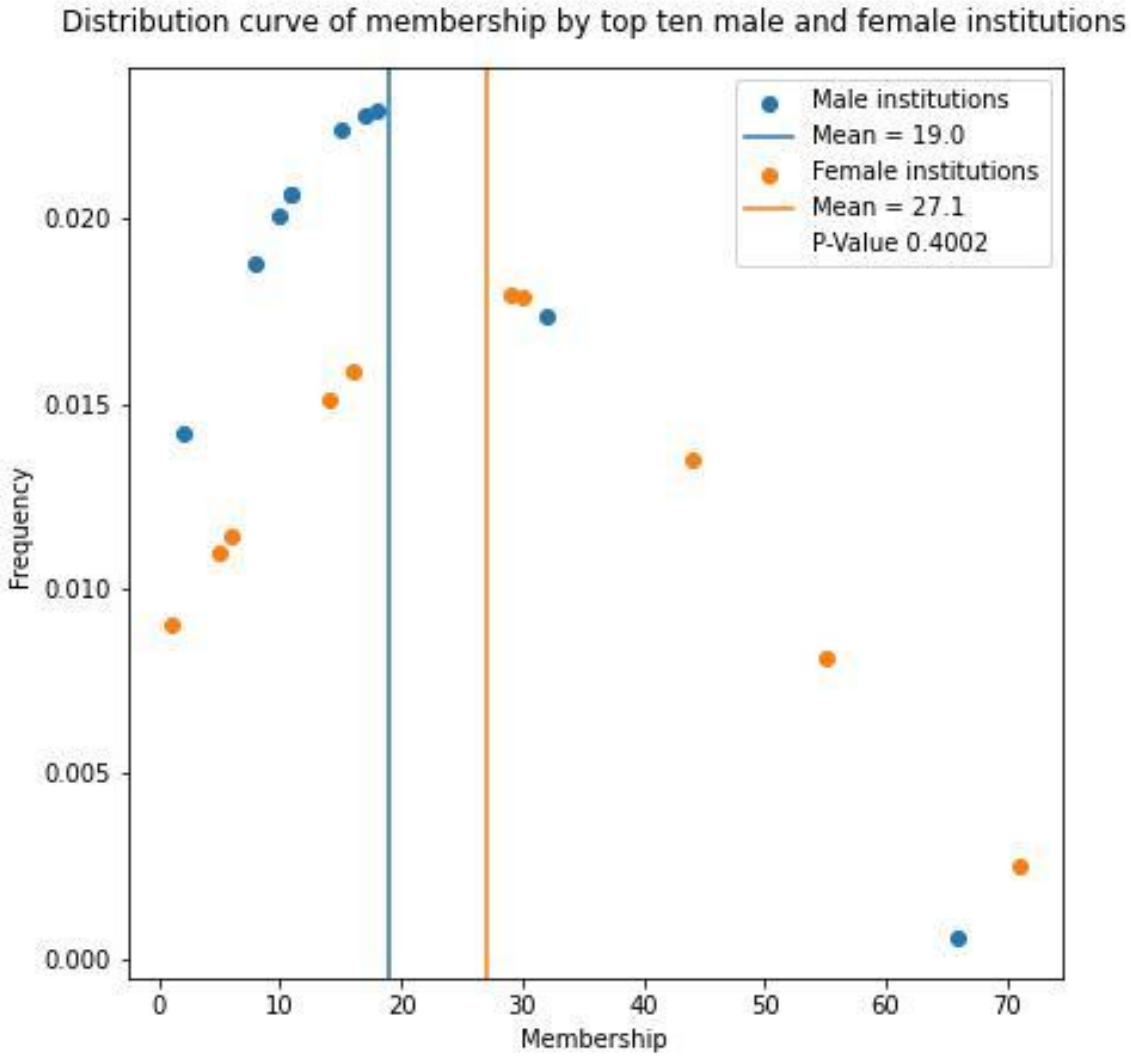
The monastery and the canonry of Sant'Ambrogio had a very low number of monks and priests compared to their wealth, seventeen and fifteen, respectively. According to Mauro Tagliabue, the number of monks in the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio decreased to six in 1256, when the archbishop Leone de Perego threatened the abbot Guglielmo Cotta with excommunication if he did not recruit more monks. The number of monks then increased until the end of the fourteenth century, when it began decreasing again.[338] The monastery therefore had issues in recruiting members, or the current members did not want to spread the wealth of the monastery by increasing its numbers. The canonry of Sant'Ambrogio and other wealthy and old institutions followed a similar pattern. The canonry had at most 15 members, while San Lorenzo, San Giorgio al Palazzo, and San Simpliciano all had between ten and eleven members each. The minor chapter of the cathedral had eight members acting together, and the major chapter had eighteen. The minor chapter certainly had more members connected to it, but it appears that only eight engaged in its active management. These numbers suggest that older, elite, urban male institutions had few members, especially when compared to newer, rural, or female institutions.

Sant'Apollinare had the most members, and its size confirms that the Damianite order attracted vocations. Furthermore, if a Milanese woman wanted to enter a Damianite house, she could only enter Sant'Apollinare. However, nunneries of all orders had many members, with Santa Maria d'Aurona, an old Benedictine nunnery; Sant'Agnese, a Humiliati house; and the nuns from Concorezzo, an Augustinian house, having between thirty and fifty-five members, far more than the older male institutions in the city. Not all nunneries were the same size, with Santa Maria al Lentasio, Santa Margherita, and Santa Radegonda having between five and sixteen nuns. However, it appears that nunneries in general attracted a good number of vocations in the period. In the case of male institutions, Chiaravalle had the most members of any male institution, followed by the Ospedale del Brolo. This suggests that newer institutions attracted more men than older male ones in the city.

While this initial observation suggests that nunneries had overall more members than male institutions, a statistical analysis suggests a different conclusion. Figure 37 below plots the distribution of members between male and female institutions.

[338] Mauro Tagliabue, "Cronotassi degli abati di S.Ambrogio nel Medioevo (784-1497)," in *Il Monastero di S. Ambrogio nel Medioevo: convegno di studi nel XII centenario, 784-1984 : 5-6 novembre 1984* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1988), p.324.

Figure 37: Distribution of members of ten male and ten female institutions in Milan



On average, nunneries had twenty-seven nuns, while male institutions had nineteen clergymen. A t-test between these two sets of data returned a p-value of 0.40, indicating that a significant difference did not exist between the two sets. However, half of the nunneries had more members than the average, while only two male institutions had more members than the average. Of these, Chiaravalle represents the largest outlier, with sixty-six monks at one time, forty-eight more than the average. While generally abbesses led institutions with more members, this difference was not statistically significant.

The studies mentioned above by Russell, Johnson, and Brasher also found that nunneries had, on average, more members than male institutions, although they did not conduct further statistical analysis. Russell found that pre-plague England had 4,831 nuns spread over 130 houses, for an average of thirty-seven nuns per house, while in pre-plague England he counted 647 male institutions

with a total of 13,600 members of the clergy and an average of twenty-one clergymen per house.[339] Johnson counted fourteen Northern French nunneries with 516 nuns in total, for an average of thirty-seven nuns per institution. She counted sixty-one monasteries with a total of 1,443 monks, for an average of 23.6 monks per house.[340] Finally, Brasher found 1,608 nuns living in 217 Humiliati houses of all types, for a mean of 7.4 nuns per house, while she found that the same number of houses had 1,146 male members, for an average of 5.3 men per house.[341]

Consistently, female institutions or dual institutions had more female members than male institutions had male members. This strengthens the significance of the averages found in Milan. Across Europe and across different orders, a female leader would oversee more members than a male leader. However, my findings and the findings of Russell and Johnson point to a vast discrepancy between the overall number of male and female institutions.

I encountered 205 institutions, 173 male and 32 female. Female institutions constituted 15.5 percent of all institutions connected to Milan. Russell found that nunneries made up 16 percent of the religious houses in pre-plague England, and Johnson found that nunneries made up 18 percent of all northern French monasteries. Women had fewer opportunities than men to enter religious institutions because far fewer of them existed. This may explain why the existing ones had, on average, more religious women.

The burden of the *cura mulierum* likely explains the sharp difference in number between male and female institutions. As discussed above, nuns needed clerical support in multiple ways, and male clergy did not always want to dedicate resources to support nearby nunneries. Furthermore, local bishops worried about the poverty of nunneries. Johnson provides examples of bishops either stopping the foundation of new French institutions or pressuring abbesses to reduce the numbers of sisters to ensure that the nunnery could economically sustain its members.[342] With an increased pressure to cloister, nuns had even fewer opportunities to earn money in society through services such as teaching, which possibly exacerbated the problem. A variety of female religious experiences had developed since the twelfth century, and in Milan this became most visible through the Humiliati and anchoresses. However, by the end of the thirteenth century, the church had regulated new female foundations and streamlined existing ones, further limiting the number of female institutions that could exist.[343] From the perspective of abbesses, then, nunneries surpassed male institutions in membership, but women had fewer opportunities to participate in religious life.

[339] Russell, "The Clerical Population of Medieval England," p.180-182, p.212.
[340] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France*, p.272
[341] Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati a lay religious order in medieval civic life*, p.46
[342] Johnson, *Equal in monastic profession: religious women in Medieval France*, pp.174-175
[343] Maria Pia Alberzoni, "'Regulariter vivere quot': le nuove forme duecentesche del monachesimo femminile," in *Vita religiosa al femminile (secoli XIII- XIV): ventiseiesimo Convegno internazionale di studi: Pistoia, 19-21 maggio 2017.* (Pistoia 2019), p.30

Conclusion

This chapter has compared the patronage, wealth, economic structure, social engagement, and membership of the twenty Milanese institutions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that have the highest number of surviving documents. Overall, this comparison has revealed inequality between institutions of different genders and inequality between institutions of the same gender.

Nunneries received less patronage from emperors, popes, bishops, and the local nobility than male institutions. Most often, a nunnery would receive donations and grants at its foundation and little afterwards. Only the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare represented exceptions to this trend. Male institutions instead had received significant patronage at their foundation, which then continued over the centuries. This resulted in a visible difference in wealth, which this chapter measured by counting the denari expended in sales and renunciations and by counting the number of investitures each institution conducted. The former measurement functioned as a proxy for liquidity and expenditures, while the latter functioned as a proxy for landed wealth and income.

Nunneries spent on average half as much as male institutions, and only the Monastero Maggiore and Sant'Apollinare spent sums of denari comparable to larger male institutions. Removing these two big spenders, alongside the monastery and canonry of Sant'Ambrogio, two male institutions that also spent disproportionally large sums of denari, revealed that poor and middling nunneries spent a third of what poor and middling male institutions spent. Nunneries conducted on average seventeen fewer investitures than male institutions, which suggested a smaller discrepancy in landed wealth and income than the discrepancy in investitures. Overall, while some exceptionally wealthy nunneries existed, most nunneries appeared similarly poor. On the contrary, male institutions had a far greater range of experiences.

This contrasted with the economic structure of male and female institutions, which demonstrated greater uniformity in the structure of male institutions. To assess economic structure, this chapter measured the frequency with which leaders and agents of the various institutions sought to expand their possessions, the frequency with which they managed them, and the frequency with which they engaged in disputes. In the case of nunneries, a clear difference appeared between older and newer nunneries. Most abbesses of older nunneries spent most of their time managing land and engaged in relatively few disputes. Instead, most abbesses of newer nunneries mostly expanded their possessions, acting in almost no disputes and often spending little time managing their possessions. On the contrary, leaders of male institutions generally engaged frequently in disputes, except for Santa Maria del Monte, which mostly expanded its possessions. The leaders of the cathedral chapters had different responsibilities than other male institutions but nonetheless engaged mostly in disputes. I could not detect a clear difference between the structure of older and newer male institutions.

While in wealth and economic structure male and female institutions demonstrated some clear differences, their networks appeared similar. Male and female institutions alike participated in a

complex network of transactions and agreements with the laity and other religious institutions. Male institutions interacted frequently with other female and male institutions, while female institutions did not interact at all with other female institutions. However, both had a significant network with male institutions. Furthermore, they both had a large lay network, which formed most of their interactions. Therefore, while male institutions interacted slightly more frequently with other institutions, nunneries did not significantly differ from male institutions.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated that nunneries had slightly more members on average than male institutions. This difference was not statistically significant, but nunneries had, on average, seven more nuns than male institutions. This corresponded with data from other studies. However, while each institution had more members, my study and other studies highlight that drastically fewer nunneries existed than male institutions, which means that overall, Milan had far more male religious than female religious people.

Conclusion

Analysing almost 6,000 documents conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Milano has revealed that Milanese women during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had fewer rights, less access to wealth, and far less autonomy than men. Often men had legal authority over them. This held for most lay and religious women, and in some cases women's status worsened throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, analysis of such a large volume of documents has revealed that a general conclusion does not truly encompass the variety of experiences of women. While women generally lived in subordination to men, the experiences of lay and religious women differed significantly. Equally, women's experiences changed according to their status; an abbess faced different challenges than a simple nun. For laywomen, their marital status had a significant impact. For religious women, the rule a nunnery followed, and its wealth, had a drastic impact on abbesses and nuns alike. Each chapter of this thesis, therefore, highlights the clear difference between the economic agency of men and women while also unearthing the varying levels of freedom and power different women had.

The first chapter focuses on laywomen. The nature of the documents only permitted me to qualify and quantify their participation in the economy of ecclesiastical institutions. Laywomen mostly sold the property they owned while acting in conjunction with their family, having almost no involvement in other types of transactions. Even in the context of selling property, women acted in only 20 percent of all sales conducted between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Furthermore, the frequency with which women acted in sales decreased significantly from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, from participating from 40 to 80 percent of all sales in the twelfth century to only 10 to 20 percent in the thirteenth.

The limited presence of laywomen in the documents directly relates to legal and societal limitations placed on them. Firstly, the Milanese law code of 1216 highlights that women could not receive fiefs through investitures, nor could they inherit fiefs. This prohibition probably extended to other types of investitures, given the almost complete absence of women from *investiture ad massaritium*. This exclusion limited women's ability to hold and manage land and other properties. They could own land, but they could not manage it for religious institutions or other powers. Therefore, only women who sold their properties or their rights to these properties appeared in the surviving documents, with rare exceptions. By contrast, men appear frequently in all types of documents. They received investitures; they disputed obligations they had towards institutions; they bought land and engaged in complex market transactions involving promises and payments protracted through time. Men overall had far more freedom to act and manage their property than women had.

The decreasing frequency with which women appeared in the documents resulted from changing laws, specifically changing property rights. Milan, like many other Italian cities, used Lombard law for a large part of the twelfth century. This legal tradition, similar to other Germanic laws, granted wives in particular important property rights. It stated that a husband had to give a gift to the wife on the morning after the wedding, and, more importantly, it granted a wife the right to claim a fourth of all her husband's property upon his death. These rights gave married women access to significant landed wealth, gave them power in their family, and granted them economic safety in widowhood. Furthermore, these rights also forced husbands to include their wives when they sold land, which explains the frequent participation of women in twelfth-century sales. However, a gradual elimination of Lombard law in Milan and the desire of men to act with less restriction led to an erosion of these property rights. This in turn led to fewer women having the need or possibility to participate in land sales, which caused a drastic reduction in the number of women who appeared in Milanese parchments during the thirteenth century.

Women's participation in the thirteenth-century economy remained relatively stable, which suggests that after the initial deterioration of property rights, women did not experience further limitations. The numerous surviving parchments in the Archivio di Stato di Milano for subsequent centuries would allow one to study women's participation in the economy following the same methodologies used in this thesis. These further studies would clarify whether women's role in Milan remained marginalised for the rest of the mediaeval period or changed.

Beyond measuring the frequency with which laywomen acted, the chapter also measured the freedoms laywomen had when participating in business. From a legal and notarial perspective, most women acted in subordination to their families or other men. Married women best exemplify this subordination. I highlighted the example of Erena, who sold her property alone, yet still required her husband's permission to act. All the married women I encountered in the documents acted with the permission of their husbands. Furthermore, married women following Lombard law also needed the permission of their paternal relatives before selling their own property.

On the other hand, widows had far more freedom, which constitutes a first example of the varying experiences of laywomen. Around 50 percent of the widows I encountered acted without male supervision and outside of clear family interests. The other half acted alongside their children, generally with the permission and approval of the oldest male son. Compared to wives, widows acted more often as independent agents, and, given that their son gave them permission to act, they had a close relationship with the men who approved their action when they required that approval.

Wives and widows appeared most frequently, but women at other stages of life also appeared. Notaries often described unmarried women as 'daughter of', and when acting in this capacity, women's independence could vary drastically. For example, Agnesina had a tutor assigned to her and needed the permission of a judge to act. By contrast, Bellacara acted completely independently, managing her own business without intervention from family or other men. Similarly, quasi-religious

women, like Caracossa, could act with great freedom. She bought and leased multiple houses in the thirteenth century with no male supervision and without any visible supervision from other religious women. Laywomen in Milan had a wide range of experiences, from almost full dependency on men to complete independence. Despite this variation, wives appeared most often in the documents; therefore, most women acted in subordination to men and generally did not manage their own property.

The analysis of Milanese laywomen focused primarily on quantitative data: how often women acted, in which transactions they acted, how frequently they acted alone or with their families, and how frequently notaries used specific descriptors. This quantitative focus could allow scholars to compare Milan with other cities. In the first chapter, I highlighted studies on Pavia, Genoa, Bologna, and the Apulian region, which quantified women's actions.[344] A high-level comparison of these studies suggests that lay Milanese women had, in general, less engagement with the economy and fewer opportunities to act independently than other Italian regions. However, these studies relied on different sources. Some studies used notarial records; others used tax assessments, dowry disputes, or loan records; and no study before mine has used private parchments from religious institutions to discuss laywomen. Furthermore, while all studies touched on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, those regarding Bologna and Apulia also touched on the fourteenth century.

To properly compare my findings with the situation in other cities, the same type of source must be used. While Milan has the highest number of surviving private parchments, smaller collections from the thirteenth century exist in other cities. Furthermore, parchments from the fourteenth century survive more widely across Italian archives. A wide comparative study, perhaps with a greater chronological scope, would reveal whether Milanese laywomen truly participated less frequently in the economy than women of other cities. Comparing the roles women could play in these sources would also reveal whether Milanese women had fewer opportunities to act independently or from a position of authority than women from other cities.

I used the strong connection between family and women as evidence for women's subordination. However, one might argue that such a subordinate relationship represented normalcy for the period. Men acted as part of a larger family group as well, often needing permission from an elder member of the family. My findings do not support such a statement. Some men acted with permission from their fathers, but most acted alone, and with increasing frequency notaries did not identify men with their families. Only women acted in constant connection with their families, and only women had limitations on property and inheritance rights; only women had no way to directly

[344] For Pavia: Bertoni, "Investire per la famiglia, investire per sé. La partecipazione delle donne ai circuiti creditizi a Pavia nella seconda metà del XIII secolo," For Genoa: Angelos, "Women in Genoese commenda contracts, 1155–1216," For Bologna: Rinaldi, "Figure femminili nel sistema produttivo bolognese (secoli XIII-XIV)," For the Apulian region: Mainoni, "A proposito di fiducia: mogli, tutrici ed "epitropisse"nei testamenti pugliesi (secoli XIII-XIV),"

participate in a communal government or in many of the jobs related to the government, from judicial to notarial work.

Because of their close connection with ecclesiastical institutions, the documents studied provided a limited perspective on laywomen's lives. This weakened the analysis of Milanese laywomen, but it allowed an extensive study of Milanese religious women, with chapter 2 focusing on abbesses and chapter 3 focusing on the economies of their nunneries. These chapters sought to understand the differences between the lives of male and female religious and the differences between the institutions they inhabited and ruled. Both concluded that significant differences existed and that the experience of female religious was disadvantaged vis-à-vis the male one.

This is already apparent when comparing abbesses to male religious leaders. Firstly, abbesses consistently travelled far less than male leaders and had to rely on agents for business outside of Milan. Secondly, abbesses had to rely on male agents when they could not act themselves, and rarely did nuns appear as agents of their nunnery. In contrast, male leaders routinely employed monks or priests to act on their behalf. Thirdly, enclosure impacted abbesses and religious women far more than male leaders and other religious men. All female religious followed a rule that envisioned some kind of enclosure, while, of the ten male institutions analysed in depth in this thesis, only three were monastic and had a rule of enclosure. Furthermore, some nunneries followed far stricter rules of enclosure than any male institution. Therefore, while abbesses had direct control over their nunneries and did not have to rely on agents to conduct business, they faced important limitations to their rule that male leaders did not face.

Beyond differences in the agency of abbesses and male leaders, wealth differentiated male and female institutions. To measure wealth, I relied on the amount of denari spent to represent the expenditures of institutions, and I used the number of investitures conducted to represent the income of an institution. These measurements do not provide a complete picture of the wealth of any institution and focus almost entirely on the landed economy of an institution. However, they provided a way to compare male and female institutions. A statistical comparison of the ten largest male and ten largest female institutions, as detailed in chapter 2, revealed that no statistically significant difference existed between either the amount of denari spent or the number of lands invested by these institutions. However, absolute differences existed. On average, male institutions spent twice as much as female ones, with a difference of 250.000 denari. This difference became even more stark when excluding the two largest male and female institutions, which spent far more than any other institution. Only comparing middling or smaller institutions revealed a significant difference between male and female institutions. From the perspective of investitures, no statistically significant difference was observed.

The partial lack of statistical significance does not mean that the observed difference did not exist. Of the twenty institutions studied, male ones appear to have consistently more denari and more land. However, these results call for further research on the wealth of institutions to better understand

the differences between what kind of institutions male and female leaders managed. One avenue of research could again be to expand the radius of research, analysing, for example, all parchments in the Lombard area. This would allow for more institutions to be studied, providing more complete data. Another avenue could explore wealth from different or more detailed perspectives. For example, a study could rely on land records, which detail all the possessions of an institution in certain areas, or focus on details found in parchments, like the size of land or the rent required in investitures. In short, the comparison of wealth highlights that while female institutions appear poorer, further research is required to properly understand the significance of this difference and how it occurred.

The discrepancy between the experience of male and female religious becomes more apparent when looking at people not in positions of leadership. Monks, canons, and other regular male clergy acted frequently and with few or no limitations. On the contrary, nuns appear almost exclusively in documents where a decision of the abbess was ratified by the entire congregation. Only on a handful of occasions did I find nuns acting alone, whether for their own interests or as agents for their institutions. The few insights on nuns that the parchments allowed me to draw indicate that if abbesses faced more limitations than other male leaders, nuns had far more restrictions.

Finally, this study found that religious women lived in nunneries with generally more members, but far fewer nunneries existed in and around Milan. Women appear to have had fewer options regarding religious life. Furthermore, the nunneries had more members but less wealth than male institutions, which strengthens the conclusion that nunneries were poorer than male institutions.

While this thesis confirmed that nunneries had, in general, less wealth, and abbesses faced more limitations in some areas than their male counterparts, chapters 2 and 3 also highlighted many areas where similarities existed. Both male and female leaders acted most frequently for their institutions, with abbesses acting on average in 63% of their institutions' documents and male leaders acting on average in 41% of the documents. Both male and female leaders relied on agents for a large amount of their institution's business. The involvement of leaders in their institutions did not significantly change over time. Their use of agents was also generally similar, besides the differences highlighted regarding travel. Agents acted in all types of documents but predominantly did so for disputes. The general structure of the economies of male and female monasteries was, on average, similar. On average, the documents of an institutions were spread evenly across documents relating to the acquisition of property, to the managing of property, and to disputes. The networks of male and female institutions were also similar, as both acted most frequently with laypeople and only rarely with other institutions. Therefore, while abbesses had less freedom of movement and fewer options regarding the agents they could use and on average, they also ruled over poorer institutions and more crowded institutions, the management and structure of a nunnery do not appear to differ significantly from the management and structure of another monastery or canonry.

Beyond highlighting the differences and similarities between leaders and institutions, chapters 2 and 3 underlined an essential factor in the study of twelfth- and thirteenth-century religious life: the

variety of experiences between single institutions. Some nunneries, like Sant'Apollinare, relied almost exclusively on agents to conduct their business. Others, like Santa Margherita, used almost no agents. Some nunneries, like the Monastero Maggiore, often relied heavily on a few agents related to the abbess to conduct business, while others, like Santa Maria al Lentasio, had abbesses related to the powerful family of the *de Perego* but did not use a single relative in their business. The number of nuns in each nunnery varied drastically, from less than ten in the case of Santa Radegonda or Sant'Ambrogio of Rivolta to more than 70 in the case of Sant'Apollinare. The wealth of nunneries existed on a wide range, with nunneries spending between a few thousand denari in two centuries and others spending more than a million. The same variance, and in some cases an even starker one, can be seen across male institutions. The causes of this variance are partially touched on in this study. Different rules followed by different institutions impacted the ability of leaders, especially abbesses, to manage various businesses. The location of an institution impacted its needs, its wealth, its relationships, and therefore how it was managed. The history of an institution had a drastic impact on its wealth and connections, especially as some institutions, like Sant'Apollinare, were founded only in the thirteenth century.

This thesis sought to compare as many Milanese institutions as possible from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This breadth of scope clashed with the highlighted reality of variance amongst institutions. This meant that I had to aggregate institutions that had significant differences. For example, I aggregated institutions founded in the thirteenth century with those founded in the twelfth century or before. While this allowed for a wider scope of comparison, it also meant that the conclusion I could reach had less explanatory power on why differences or similarities existed between male and female institutions. Furthermore, these aggregations might have impacted the statistical significance of the comparison. Perhaps, if I had focused only on the thirteenth century, or had used a more specific measure for landed wealth, a clearer statistical difference between institutions would have emerged. Future research could therefore employ the same comparative analysis but aggregate data less or choose different parameters of aggregation to clarify further why and how the female religious experience in Milan and in other cities differed from the male one.

Appendix 1 – Full list of institutions found

The table below lists all the religious institutions I could identify and the parchments in which these institutions had been referenced. The references to each parchment indicate the box in which a parchment is found, if relevant the folder in which the parchment is found, and the position of the parchment in the folder or box. So the reference for the 1st parchment in box 2, folder 3a, would be '2_3a': ['1']. This reference system is born out of necessity. I had not originally planned on creating this appendix, and therefore I had to rely on the pictures I had already taken in 2020 to create this reference table. Furthermore, different monasteries had different archiving systems, and no uniform reference system exists for all parchments studied. The main drawback of the referencing system used in this appendix is that parchments may have been moved out of place in the intervening years.

Monastery Name	Box, folder, and parchment location.
Abbazia of San Pietro Cerreto	'326': ['6'], '340_154oo': ['4', '6', '8'], '315': ['3', '29', '41', '43', '73'], '316': ['39', '40', '54', '74', '75', '102'], '317': ['33', '63', '68', '94'], '318': ['27', '34', '35', '52', '54', '59'], '319': ['37', '51'], '320': ['56'], '321': ['6', '15', '24'], '322': ['80']
Arcivescovo di Milano e Capitolo Maggiore	'379_163bc': ['1', '11', '12', '4', '6', '8', '9'], '393_175oc': ['1', '2', '23', '5', '8', '10'], '513_229cc': ['1', '36'], '340_154oo': ['14', '18', '26'], '341': ['2', '7', '11', '29', '31', '33', '34', '38', '47', '48', '50', '51', '58', '68', '70', '75'], '303': ['20', '244', '88'], '315': ['42'], '316': ['2', '52'], '304': ['50', '74', '81'], '314_154d': ['33'], '305': ['42', '138', '145', '146', '147', '148', '149', '150', '151'], '317': ['95'], '318': ['3', '67', '82', '83', '88'], '306': ['9', '27', '29', '32', '36', '48', '52', '55', '63', '64', '90'], '319': ['9', '24', '73'], '321': ['10', '38'], '322': ['20', '67'], '418': ['10', '21'], '486': ['2', '23'], '397_178a': ['11', '3', '4', '7'], '510': ['13', '4', '5', '10'], '361': ['14'], '477': ['49'], '433_191i': ['11', '13', '39', '40'], '360': ['17', '43', '46', '50'], '419_188pa': ['24', '23', '62', '64', '70', '76', '77', '79', '80'], '344_154': ['2'],

	'133_134': ['121', '142', '308', '314', '315', '6', '10'], '379_163C': ['8', '25', '30'], '434_193m': ['1'], '435_193a': ['25', '28', '41'], '419_188g': ['1', '3', '5', '7', '8'], '485_211a': ['29', '42', '43', '57'], '358': ['32'], '508_227a': ['24'], '424_190': ['36', '57', '58'], '430_191b': ['8'], '488_211d': ['1', '3', '33', '86'], '524_Tommaso': ['2', '3', '4'], '295_151G': ['43', '61', '90', '97'], '430_191c': ['9'], '387_166de': ['6'], '489_211e': ['7', '32', '34', '37', '43', '45', '46', '72', '89'], '383_164a': ['5'], '490_211f': ['2', '3', '27', '29', '30', '121', '131', '138'], '405_181a': ['6'], '366_159il': ['7'], '391_174b': ['26', '47'], '417_188b': ['33'], '293_151c': ['10', '26'], '491_211g': ['28', '39', '42', '43', '65', '70', '90'], '492_211h': ['9', '48', '51', '52', '54', '55', '57', '59', '60', '62', '64', '68', '69', '70', '71', '72', '73', '74', '75', '79'], '431_191g': ['39']
Canonica di Gallarate	'435_193a': ['29']
Canonica di Pontirolo	'387_166de': ['6']
Canonica di San Nabore	'303': ['252']
Canonica di Santa Maria in Porta Vercellina	'513_229cc': ['34', '35', '45']
Canonica di Sant'Ambrogio	'303': ['103', '108', '109', '111', '114', '143', '149', '154', '156', '165', '166', '168', '14', '170', '171', '172', '173', '180', '181', '182', '183', '184', '188', '189', '190', '191', '192', '196', '200', '202', '212', '215', '216', '220', '224', '227', '229', '20', '230', '231', '232', '234', '235', '236', '237', '238', '240', '241', '242', '244', '245', '252', '46', '47', '5', '50', '51', '54', '7', '84', '93', '97'], '341': ['23', '25', '28', '29', '31', '33', '34', '35', '38', '41', '44', '46', '47', '48', '58', '65', '67', '68', '70', '71', '72'], '315': ['62', '63'], '304': ['5', '6', '12', '14', '16', '18', '20', '21', '23', '28', '30', '31', '34', '37', '38', '39', '40', '41', '43', '44', '46', '48', '49', '50', '51', '52', '53', '54', '55', '56', '57', '58', '60', '62', '63', '64', '66', '67', '68', '69', '70', '71', '72', '73', '74', '75', '78', '80', '81', '84', '85', '86', '88', '89', '90', '91', '92', '93', '94', '95', '96', '97', '98', '99', '100', '101', '103', '104', '106', '107', '109', '110', '112', '113', '114', '117', '118', '119', '120', '122', '123', '124', '125', '126', '128', '130', '131', '132', '133', '135', '136', '137', '139'], '305': ['1', '2', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9', '10', '11', '13', '14', '15', '17', '18', '19', '20', '21', '22', '23', '24', '26', '27', '28', '33', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '39', '40', '43', '45', '46',

	'47', '48', '49', '50', '54', '55', '57', '58', '59', '62', '63', '64', '65', '66', '67', '68', '69', '70', '72', '74', '75', '76', '77', '78', '79', '80', '81', '82', '83', '84', '85', '86', '87', '88', '89', '90', '91', '92', '94', '95', '96', '97', '98', '99', '100', '101', '102', '103', '105', '106', '107', '108', '109', '110', '111', '112', '113', '114', '116', '117', '118', '119', '121', '123', '124', '125', '126', '128', '129', '131', '133', '135', '139', '140', '141', '142', '144', '145', '146', '147', '148', '149', '150', '151', '154', '157'], '306': ['1', '3', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9', '11', '13', '14', '15', '16', '17', '18', '19', '20', '21', '26', '27', '29', '30', '31', '33', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '42', '43', '44', '45', '46', '47', '48', '49', '50', '51', '52', '53', '54', '55', '56', '57', '58', '59', '60', '64', '65', '66', '67', '68', '69', '75', '77', '80', '81', '82', '83', '85', '88', '90', '93', '98'], '321': ['73'], '508_227a': ['13'], '424_190': ['62'], '492_211h': ['76']
Canonica di Summa	'304': ['37']
Cappucine di Concorezzo, o di San Pietrro in Vigna	'383_164a': ['1', '10', '11', '14', '15', '2', '20', '22', '23', '27', '3', '30', '4', '7', '9'], '395_176': ['9'], '393_175oc': ['23']
Chesa di San Giorgio in Brolo	'504_215': ['2']
Chiesa dei Santi Babila e Romano	'453': ['10']
Chiesa di Anglera	'306': ['38']
Chiesa di Baggio	'303': ['75']
Chiesa di Baradagio	'321': ['67']
Chiesa di Bripia	'390_174a': ['26'], '391_174b': ['15']
Chiesa di Castonovo	'489_211e': ['43']
Chiesa di Cisano	'306': ['18', '26', '30', '33', '46', '47', '50', '80', '81', '82', '83', '85', '88']
Chiesa di Corbetta	'322': ['67'], '431_191f': ['3'], '492_211h': ['21']
Chiesa di Desio	'358': ['57']
Chiesa di Gorgonozla	'318': ['23', '112', '118'], '475': ['15']
Chiesa di Gravedona	'393_175oc': ['18']
Chiesa di Rivolta	'492_211h': ['10']
Chiesa di *Salteam*	'433_191i': ['40'], '393_175oc': ['27']
Chiesa di San Barnaba in Brolo	'417_188d': ['16']

Chiesa di San Bartolomeo	'393_175oc': ['12', '13', '14', '21', '24', '26', '5', '6'], '508_227a': ['6', '31', '35'], '435_193a': ['28'], '417_188b': ['3']
Chiesa di San Bartolomeo di loco *Carugo*	'490_211f': ['30']
Chiesa di San Benedetto di Milano	'320': ['14'], '393_175oc': ['19'], '508_227a': ['24']
Chiesa di San Blasio di Ternate	'314_154d': ['2']
Chiesa di San Calimero	'359': ['47', '3'], '361': ['3', '4', '5', '7', '8', '9', '13'], '360': ['45']
Chiesa di San Casciani di Vellate	'133_134': ['403']
Chiesa di San Cipriano	'509': ['1'], '508_226': ['5', '1', '2', '3', '4'], '513_229cc': ['3']
Chiesa di San Dalmatio	'453': ['6']
Chiesa di San Dimitro	'133_134': ['154']
Chiesa di San Domino alla Mazza	'395_176': ['1', '10', '11', '2', '3', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8']
Chiesa di San Donato	'321': ['38'], '314_154d': ['90'], '490_211f': ['5']
Chiesa di San Fermo	'489_211e': ['89']
Chiesa di San Gervaso	'488_211d': ['11']
Chiesa di San Giorgio *in noxeda*	'295_151G': ['38']
Chiesa di San Giovanni *de castro*	'303': ['217']
Chiesa di San Giovanni *de loco Gizano*	'306': ['85', '86']
Chiesa di San Giovanni di Monza	'536_241': ['1'], '319': ['79', '80'], '419_188pa': ['4']
Chiesa di San Giovanni Quarto	'524_Spirito': ['5']
Chiesa di San Giulio	'318': ['121'], '433_191i': ['39'], '431_191g': ['24']

Chiesa di San Gregorio di Brinate	'317': ['104']
Chiesa di San Gregorio in Udrigio	'317': ['39'], '510': ['6']
Chiesa di San Iacopo di Pavia	'303': ['244']
Chiesa di San Iacopo in Porta Nuova	'393_175oc': ['21', '4', '8', '10'], '508_227a': ['24']
Chiesa di San Marcellino	'434_192': ['1', '2', '3', '4', '5']
Chiesa di San Marco *ad Bachetam*	'317': ['107']
Chiesa di San Martino al Corpo	'405_181a': ['29']
Chiesa di San Martino di *Baniolo*	'508_227a': ['14']
Chiesa di San Martino di Garbagnate	'303': ['101', '102', '144', '99'], '341': ['35'], '304': ['98'], '306': ['49', '90']
Chiesa di San Martino Morbeno	'393_175oc': ['1']
Chiesa di San Michele di Viglono	'319': ['9']
Chiesa di San Nazaro in Arosio	'490_211f': ['130']
Chiesa di San Pietro al Olmo	'293_151c': ['11']
Chiesa di San Pietro *de Bovulto*	'435_193a': ['34']
Chiesa di San Pietro *de Vicoboldono*	'429_190f': ['1'], '293_151c': ['10', '22']
Chiesa di San Pietro di Brebbia	'524_Spirito': ['1', '10', '11', '13', '17', '18', '20', '22', '25', '26', '27', '5', '7', '9'], '524_Tommaso': ['9', '10', '11', '12', '15', '16', '17', '18', '19', '20', '21', '22', '23', '24', '25', '26', '27', '28', '29', '30', '31', '32', '33', '34', '2', '36', '3', '4', '6']
Chiesa di San Pietro di Dubino	'317': ['16'], '318': ['60'], '319': ['92', '93', '101'], '320': ['22']
Chiesa di San Pietro in Campo	'303': ['100'], '430_191b': ['3']

Chiesa di San Pietro *in Vinea*	'508_224': ['1', '2', '3', '4', '5'], '508_227a': ['5']
Chiesa di San Raffaele	'510': ['13'], '379_163C': ['8'], '508_227a': ['25', '26', '27', '40']
Chiesa di San Sepolcro	'314_154d': ['11', '13', '149', '17', '38', '50', '58', '66'], '315': ['40', '64'], '316': ['1', '44', '73']
Chiesa di San Silvestro	'508_227a': ['24']
Chiesa di San Tommaso Apostolo	'524_Spirito': ['14', '15', '16']
Chiesa di San Tommaso *in terra mara*	'379_163C': ['3', '18'], '524_Tommaso': ['13', '14', '1']
Chiesa di San Vittore al Teatro	'372_161a': ['18']
Chiesa di San Vittore di Varese	'133_134': ['15', '17', '30', '60', '154', '215', '249', '439', '6']
Chiesa di Santa Maria *ad pedonum*	'315': ['67'], '316': ['61'], '305': ['42']
Chiesa di Santa Maria *de Calvayrato*	'379_163C': ['29']
Chiesa di Santa Maria di Inzago	'318': ['101', '121']
Chiesa di Santa Maria *di Talamora*	'393_175oc': ['3']
Chiesa di Santa Maria Fulchere	'405_181a': ['34', '35'], '424_190': ['59']
Chiesa di Santa Maria in *Passarello*	'417_188d': ['15']
Chiesa di Santa Maria Madre di Dio	'435_193a': ['28']
Chiesa di Santa Sophia *De Putatam*	'490_211f': ['121']
Chiesa di Santa Valeria	'488_211d': ['72'], '489_211e': ['3', '74'], '490_211f': ['22']
Chiesa di Sant'Alessandro	'419_188g': ['26']
Chiesa di Sant'Ambrogio	'341': ['70']

Chiesa di Sant'Ambrogio *De Mollina*	'133_134': ['469']
Chiesa di Sant'Ambrogio di Settara	'133_134': ['108']
Chiesa di Sant'Andrea di Torcello	'314_154d': ['114']
Chiesa di Sant'Andrea di Varano	'133_134': ['184', '376']
Chiesa di Sant'Anna	'360': ['42']
Chiesa di Sant'Eufemia	'396_177a': ['1', '2'], '358': ['12'], '366_159il': ['4']
Chiesa di Sant'Eusebio	'397_178': ['1', '10', '11', '12', '14', '15', '17', '18', '19', '2', '20', '21', '22', '23', '24', '25', '26', '27', '28', '30', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9']
Chiesa di Sant'Ilario	'303': ['53']
Chiesa di Settara	'133_134': ['120']
Chiesa di Trena	'477': ['49']
Chiesa di Trenno	'303': ['244'], '306': ['39', '40', '51']
Chiesa di Trernate	'326': ['5']
Chiesa di Udrigio	'317': ['16'], '320': ['39']
Convento di San Francesco di Milano (San Francesco Grande)	'405_181a': ['14', '15', '18', '22', '23', '24', '38', '4']}
Damianite di San Vittore all'Olmo	'359': ['20']
Domus della Misericordia sita in San Michele al Castello	'405_181a': ['31', '40']
Domus di San Felice	'293_151c': ['39', '45', '49', '54', '22', '26', '30', '31', '34', '37'], '293_151a': ['26', '28', '60', '63', '62', '64']
Domus di Santa Maria in Lavagnia	'295_151G': ['68']
Domus di Sant'Agnese o di Arcagnago	'293_151c': ['41', '43', '51', '52', '1', '29', '32', '35'], '293_151a': ['14', '15', '17', '18', '21', '1', '22', '23', '24', '2', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '39', '42', '45', '4', '55', '59', '62', '5', '65', '7', '9'], '424_190': ['27'], '504_215': ['3'], '372_161a': ['42'],

	'387_166de': ['3'], '492_211h': ['51']
Domus di Sant'Agostino	'396_177a': ['1']
Domus di Sant'Agostino	'435_193a': ['36', '6'], '344_154': ['9']
Domus Santa Maria di Cantalupo	'372_161a': ['11', '12', '13', '14', '15', '16', '17', '18', '19', '2', '20', '3', '30', '48', '6', '8', '9'], '405_181a': ['25']
Eremiti di San Marco	'435_193a': ['17', '18', '2', '21', '22', '25', '4', '41', '43', '9'], '486': ['118']
Frati Minori non meglio identificati	'419_188pa': ['22'], '405_181a': ['26', '34', '35', '39'], '359': ['3'], '293_151c': ['26']
Minor Chapter of the Cathedral	'379_163bc': ['1', '10', '11', '12', '2', '4', '6', '7', '8', '9'], '390_174a': ['1', '10', '11', '13', '14', '15', '16', '18', '19', '20', '2', '21', '22', '23', '24', '25', '26', '27', '28', '29', '30', '31', '33', '34', '35', '36', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9'], '341': ['16', '29'], '314_154d': ['157', '161', '4'], '306': ['52', '53', '54', '56', '57', '58', '65'], '379_163C': ['1', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '10', '11', '12', '13', '15', '16', '19', '20', '23', '24'], '477': ['62', '63', '64', '65'], '419_188g': ['23'], '391_174b': ['3', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9', '11', '12', '13', '14', '15', '16', '17', '18', '19', '20', '21', '22', '23', '24', '25', '28', '29', '30', '31', '33', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '39', '40', '43', '45', '46']
Monastero *de Zereto*	'326': ['11']
Monastero di Borgo Nuovo	'316': ['52']
Monastero di Campiliono	'316': ['50']
Monastero di Cumizago	'366_159il': ['5']}
Monastero di Lactosa	'322': ['87']
Monastero di Lutedio	'341': ['51', '61']
Monastero di Monetebello	'314_154d': ['40']
Monastero di Monte Gaudio	'322': ['33']
Monastero di Morimondo	'314_154d': ['4']
Monastero di San Dionigi	'393_175oc': ['1', '11', '12', '13', '14', '19', '2', '21', '23', '24', '26', '27', '3', '4', '5', '6', '8', '10'], '314_154d': ['6'], '433_191i': ['40'], '360': ['50'], '508_227a': ['31'], '387_166de': ['6'], '490_211f': ['121'], '492_211h': ['75']

Monastero di San Iacopo di Pontida	'508_227a': ['3'], '435_193a': ['19', '30', '35']
Monastero di San Lorenzo	'486': ['96']
Monastero di San Lorenzo Cremonese	'492_211h': ['10']
Monastero di San Michele di Voltero	'133_134': ['302']
Monastero di San Michele in Porta Nuova	'536_241': ['1'], '314_154d': ['34', '35'], '317': ['67'], '318': ['88', '89'], '358': ['35']
Monastero di San Salvatore *de Batiuaccha*	'305': ['64']
Monastero di San Vincenzo detto Monastero Nuovo	'372_161a': ['10', '28']
Monastero di San Vito	'315': ['22'], '361': ['39'], '490_211f': ['6']
Monastero di San Vittore al Corpo	'133_134': ['370']
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Monastero di Santa Maria di Cereto	'316': ['83']
Monastero di Santa Maria Maddalena	'315': ['3']
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Monastero di Sant'Ambrogio di Capornago	'386_166c': ['17', '20', '22']
Monastero di Sant'Ambrogio di Rivolta d'Adda	'485_211a': ['106', '12', '19', '31', '32', '34', '36', '38', '45', '46', '51', '52', '53', '54', '56', '65', '70', '71', '77', '78', '79', '80', '81', '87', '97'], '486': ['10', '24', '31', '81', '87', '88', '92', '96', '105', '112', '114', '116', '117', '118', '119', '120', '145', '165'], '489_211e': ['52', '86'], '490_211f': ['24', '68'], '492_211h': ['47']
Monastero di Sant'Antonio di Legonate	'133_134': ['301']
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Monastery di San Benedetto di Oltrirono	'319': ['46']
Monastery di San Celso	'341': ['19'], '315': ['43', '56', '59', '65'], '317': ['27', '121'], '318': ['3'], '361': ['1'], '485_211a': ['14'], '360': ['7', '32', '51'], '359': ['22', '26']
Monastery di Santa Maria di Lampugnano	'314_154d': ['142', '166'], '316': ['48', '61', '62', '94'], '318': ['11'], '321': ['73'], '344_154': ['2']
Monastery of Sant'Ambrogio	'314_154d': ['1', '103', '107', '108', '109', '115', '116', '119', '120', '121', '122', '124', '127', '128', '140', '141', '142', '145', '146', '147', '148', '150', '151', '166', '28', '20', '25', '26', '38', '39', '40', '4', '43', '44', '45', '46', '52', '54', '6', '61', '62', '63', '64', '67', '69', '70', '72', '73', '76', '77', '79', '83', '86', '87', '88', '89', '92', '93', '94', '95', '96', '97', '98'], '322': ['83', '85', '1', '2', '3', '4', '5', '6', '9', '11', '13', '14', '16', '18', '19', '20', '27', '29', '30', '31', '32', '34', '36', '37', '38', '39', '40', '41', '43', '44', '45', '46', '50', '54', '57', '58', '59', '60', '61', '62', '63', '65', '66', '68', '69', '70', '71', '72', '73', '74', '75', '76', '78', '81'], '326': ['4', '12'], '340_154oo': ['10', '19', '23'], '341': ['1', '2', '3', '6', '7', '8', '9', '10', '11', '12', '15', '16', '18', '20', '21', '23', '25', '28', '29', '31', '34', '38', '41', '42', '43', '46', '47', '48', '58', '61', '62', '70', '71', '72', '75'], '315': ['1', '6', '7', '13', '14', '15', '16', '17', '21', '23', '25', '26', '27', '30', '33', '35', '37', '42', '44', '46', '47', '48', '49', '50', '51', '52', '53', '54', '58', '60', '68', '69', '70', '71', '72'], '303': ['200', '74'], '316': ['1', '2', '3', '4', '5', '7', '10', '11', '13', '14', '15', '17', '20', '22', '23', '25', '26', '27', '28', '29', '30', '31', '32', '33', '34', '36', '37', '42', '44', '46', '47', '48', '50', '51', '53', '56', '57', '58', '60', '65', '66', '67', '69', '73', '78', '80', '82', '84', '86', '88', '89', '90', '92', '94', '95', '96', '100', '101', '103'], '317': ['1', '2', '3', '4', '5', '6', '7', '8', '9', '10', '11', '12', '13', '14', '15', '16', '17', '18', '19', '21', '22', '23', '30', '31', '32', '34', '35', '36', '37', '39', '42', '43', '44', '49', '50', '51', '53', '54', '56', '57', '58', '59', '60', '61', '62', '64', '65', '66', '67', '69', '70', '71', '74', '75', '76', '78', '81', '82', '88', '90', '93', '95', '98', '99', '105', '106', '108', '109', '110', '112', '114', '115', '116', '119', '120', '121', '122', '123', '126'], '305': ['14', '15', '42'], '318': ['1', '2', '3', '4', '5', '6', '8', '9', '11', '14', '15', '19', '23', '24', '25', '29', '30', '31', '32', '35', '37', '39', '42', '43', '44', '45', '47', '48', '50', '57', '58', '60', '62', '63', '64', '65', '66', '67', '69', '70', '71', '72', '74', '78', '80', '84', '85', '86', '87', '88', '89', '94', '95', '96', '98', '99', '100', '102', '104', '107', '109', '110', '111', '112', '113', '114', '115', '117', '118', '119', '120', '122'], '306': ['37', '55'],

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Ospedale dell'ordine *cruciferorum*	'431_191g': ['46', '61'], '397_178a': ['11'], '431_191h': ['2'], '433_191i': ['45', '61'],

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Umiliati di Uglanno *in castro Aroxio*	'490_211f': ['91']
Umiliati di Varadeo	'293_151a': ['34'], '508_227a': ['38']

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