On Manuscripts, Prints and Blessed Transformations: Caterina da Siena’s *Legenda maior* as a Model of Sainthood in Premodern Castile

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**Abstract:** In this article, I analyze the translation commissioned in 1511 by Cardinal Francisco Ximénez Cisneros of the *Life of Catherine of Siena* by Raimundo de Capua, which includes the *legendae* of Giovanna (also known as Vanna) da Orvieto and Margherita da Città di Castello in the light of its translation, commission, and reception in premodern Castile. In the first place, I clarify the medieval transformations of Caterina’s text by discussing the main branches of her manuscript tradition and explaining the specificities of the editions authorized by Cisneros in order to know what exactly was printed. In the second place, I put these specificities into the courtly, prophetic context in which those books were published. Finally, I analyze the reception of these editions in the Iberian Peninsula, especially in relation to the figure of María de Santo Domingo, the famous Dominican tertiary.

**Keywords:** Catherine of Siena; Raymond of Capua; Cardinal Cisneros; María de Santo Domingo; *Legenda maior*

1. Introduction

Raimondo da Capua, the first biographer of Caterina da Siena, finished his *Legenda maior* in 1395 (Nocentini 2013a, p. 4). As is implied in its title, this work was conceived as a long (*maior, prolīxa*) account of the life and facts of Caterina Benincasa, the daughter of a well-established Sienese family who had worn the habit of the *mantellate* and who had been involved in various high-level political debates (Luongo 2006; Beattie 2012). In the following lines, quoted from this hagiography, Caterina is talking directly with Christ who, just before these words, mandated that she teach other men. She answers him in this fashion: “[A]s you know, Lord, being a woman as I am does constrain me in following your orders. On the one hand, because women cannot teach men; on the other, because women are disregarded by men and, also, because for the sake of decency they should not mix with men” (Raimundo da Capua 1511, f. 25r, my translation). Christ responds some lines after:

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1 About the short version (*reducta*), the *Legenda minor*, see (Nocentini 2013a, p. 30; 2013b, p. 175). The *mantellate* were the original group of penitent women very closely associated with the Dominican Order.

2 I will translate the *Legenda* from the Castilian version of 1511 (see the complete reference in point 4 of the list of post-incunabula below). I provide the reader with a transcription of the original in footnotes, where I expand the abbreviations and modernize the orthography of the text. In this case, the original reads: “... porque siendo yo mujer por muchas cosas como tú... [Señor], sabes contradice a esto que tú me mandas. Lo uno, porque a la mujer no pertenece enseñar a los hombres; lo otro, porque la mujer es cosa despreciada por los hombres y, también, porque por cosa de la honestad no le conviene estar mezclada con los varones”. There is a digitization of one of the copies of the second edition (see note 5 below), made by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid: http://dioscorides.ucm.es/proyecto_digitizacion/index.php?b21722559 (accessed 4 September 2019).

3 The original reads: “... Dime tú: ¿Yo no soy aquel que crié el linaje humano, y formé la distinción de hombre y mujer, y derramo la gracia de mi espíritu donde quiero? Cerca de mí no hay diferencia de hombre a mujer, ni de aldeano a noble”.

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“Answer me: Am I not the creator of the human race and the distinction between male and female, and do I not pour the grace of my Spirit wherever I want? Around me there is neither difference between male and female nor between peasant and nobleman” (Ibid).

From the point of view of content, these words express one essential issue: how a revelation, in this case given by Christ, authorizes prophetic teachings by charismatic women. That is, how the kind of knowledge that is later denominated “libro vivo” [living book] in the work by Teresa de Jesús (2014, pp. 192–93) authorizes the role of the prophetic woman’s word as a medium. On the other hand, from the point of view of form, I am not translating from the original Latin text that Raimondo wrote, but directly retranslating from a Castilian version by the Dominican Fray Antonio de la Peña, printed in Alcalá de Henares by Arnao Guillén de Brocar in 1511.4 This translation is part of a group of books currently classified under the label “devotional literature” (in which “feminine mystical literature” is normally emphasized) whose printing was commissioned by Cardinal Cisneros between 1502 and 1512 (Bataillon 1996, pp. 49–58; Sainz Rodríguez 1979, pp. 33–56; Howe 2002, p. 284; Herrán Martínez de San Vicente 2011, pp. 258–369). Some highlights from this list include:5

1. Ludolphus de Saxonia. *Vita Christi cartuxano romançado por fray Ambrosio* [Montesino]. Alcalá de Henares, 1502–1503;
2. San Juan Climaco. *Sant Juan Climaco que trata de las tablas et escalera spiritual: por donde han de subir al estado de la perfeccion*. Toledo, 1504;
3. Sancti Joannis Climaci. *Scala spiritualis*. Toledo, 1505;
4. Angela de Fulgino [Angela of Foligno], *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino*. Toledo, 1505 (also includes Mechthild von Hackeborn’s *Liber spiritualis gratiae* and the First rule of Francesco d’Assisi);
5. Angela de Fulgino [Angela of Foligno], *Libro de la bienaventurada sancta Angela de Fulgino*. Toledo: 1510 (also includes First Rule by Chiara d’Assisi and some chapters of the *Tratado de la vida e instrucción espiritual* by Vicente Ferrer);
6. Raymundo de Capua. *La vida de la bienaventurada sancta Caterina de Sena trasladada de latín en castellano por el reverendo maestro fray Antonio de la Peña de la orden de los predicadores. Y la vida de la bienaventurada soror Juana de Orbieto, y de soror Margarita de Castello*, trans. Antonio de la Peña. Alcalá, 1511;
7. Sancta Catherina de Sena, *Obra de las epístolas y oraciones de la bienaventurada virgen Sancta Catherina de Sena de la orden de los predicadores. Las cuales fueron traducidas del toscano en nuestra lengua castellana por mandado del muy Ilustre y Reverendísimo señor el Cardenal de España, Arzobispo de la Santa Iglesia de Toledo, etc.* Alcalá de Henares, 1512.

This corpus has been traditionally understood as the first massive dissemination of feminine mystical literature in Castile and it has been linked with the Cisnerian reform of religious life (in general, García Oro 1971; for the Dominican case, Sastre Varas 2004). As is known, the promotion of feminine models of sanctity through the translation and publication of late medieval texts was one of the main tools used by the Cardinal in order to reform the daily life of the convents following the guidelines of the Catholic Monarchs Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, who supported the aspirations of the Observants (García Oro and López 2012). In fact, this is information that the first biographers of Cisneros report in their works (Gómez de Castro 1569; De Aranda Quintanilla y Mendoza 1653) and it seems to be reinforced when he supported the famous visionary María de Santo Domingo, known as Beata de Piedrahita, as one of his trusted people for the reform of the Dominican convents (Sastre Varas 2004). These two facts (the orientation of these publications plus his relationship with

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4 Catalina García (1889, p. 7, number 7 and p. 8, number 9) registers two different editions of this translation (27 March 1511 and 26 June 1511, respectively). Their typographical differences are described by Martín Abad (1991, pp. 212–13). In the following pages, I focus my analysis on copies of the second edition (26 June 1511), to which most of the surviving copies pertain. For other vulgarizations of the *Legenda maior*, see (Nocentini 2013b, esp. pp. 175–77 (Italian) and Schultze 2013 (English)).

5 I expand the abbreviations and respect the original orthography of the titles.
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Maria and other charismatic women) have led to a clear differentiation between two periods: during Cisnero’s life, when late medieval mystics were promoted as an imitational model, and after his death, when those ways of life were considered dangerous (Surtz 1995).

However, there are several problems that I cannot address here related to the possible dissemination of European mysticism in premodern Castile. Perhaps the most important one is that, despite interesting research studying specific cases (for instance, Graña 2014; Bara Bancel 2014; Sanmartín Bastida 2013a, 2017), we still have no systematic information about any early dissemination of Christian “mystical” literature in either secular or religious Castilian frameworks. Accordingly, at the moment it is only possible to use synchronic and comparative perspectives to study the impact of the European tradition in Iberia.6 This is the case for Raimondo da Capua’s Legenda maior: although in the Supplemento it is declared that several copies were sent to Catalonia, Sicily, Aragon, and Spain (Caffarini 1974, p. 411), no global research has been done on the reception of the Legenda maior in Iberia (focusing especially on the manuscript evidence), although such studies exist for other regions (Zarri 2013; Nocentini 2013b; Schultze 2013). In sum, although there are clues pointing to the medieval dissemination of this text in the Iberian Peninsula (Huerga 1968, p. 183; Casas Nadal 2007), Cisneros’ printed version is still the only stable milestone from which to study Catherinian presence in Castile (Hamburger and Signori 2013, p. 11).

In this article, I explore the text of Caterina da Siena’s life published in 1511 through the methodology that I have been developing in my later research, in which I examine the dissemination of this group of post-incunabula. I assess the premodern reception of medieval women’s mysticism in Castile through this case study of the historical impact of Catarina’s vita, drawing on critical textual analysis and reception history. I also attempt, as far as it is possible, to describe the manuscript written in Latin from which Fray Antonio de la Peña, translator of the 1511 version, declared he took the Legenda maior. Therefore, in the first two sections, I contrast both the textual version of 1511 and the manuscript used by the friar with the Italian manuscript tradition, highlighting key differences from the perspective of the reception of the text. In the third, I discuss the implications of implementing precisely this Catherinian model of sanctity in Castilian society (cf. Zarri 2013). Accordingly, I try to extract Cisneros’ editorial intentions, establishing a specific model of sainthood from the post-incunabula and then comparing it with the contemporary Castilian “living saint” (Zarri 1980, 1990) María de Santo Domingo.

2. The Cisnerian Base Manuscript

I address the initial question about Raimondo da Capua’s 1511 text using a conceptual dichotomy proposed by Hamburger and Signori (2013). This dichotomy contrasts what they call the construction of an exemplary saintly figure through texts and images with the making of a saint, that is to say, the process of integration of the saintly model in a specific society through the dissemination of those texts and images, their readings, or their imitation by individuals. In the case of the books commissioned by the Cardinal of Spain, the study of the construction is normally taken for granted, preventing an enriching comparative study with the different makings that are found in the Castilian context. My main aim here is, in the first place, to understand the different medieval avatars of Caterina by using some tools provided by philology and, in the second place, to contrast these transformations with the behavior developed by several women saints who lived in 16th-century Castile. In other words, it is crucial to first separate the different diachronic levels of construction of Caterina to correctly understand her making in the 16th century.

For instance, in the case of the Legenda maior, the original intentions of Raimondo da Capua (and the text’s main disseminators) must be analyzed separately from those processes of re-signification

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6 This is the main objective of my Project Late Medieval Visionary Women’s Impact in Early Modern Castilian Spiritual Tradition (Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 842094).
that it finally acquired in Castile. First of all, it should not be forgotten that Raimondo da Capua was one of Caterina’s confessors and that he started to write her *Legenda* when she died in 1380, thus just after he was promoted to be General Master of the Dominican Order and when he himself was supporting the canonization process of the Sienese saint (*Krafft 2013*). According to André Vauchez, Raimondo was troubled by writing the life of an “atypical and unusual character” (*Vauchez 2017*, p. 140, my translation), who was located away from conventual life and who had been involved in upper-class politics (also *Luongo 2013*). In this sense, the *Legenda maior* “constitutes a long and complete text that is located, delicately balanced, between the exigency of historical truth and the theological and doctrinal interpretation of the experience lived by Caterina da Siena” (*ibid.*, p. 143, my translation). In other words, when sanctity is textually constructed, the author intends for it to be comprehensible—thus, if it is directed at a certain public, its symbolic language must be conventional (*Cirlot and Gari 2008*, p. 181). This double dimension, both symbolic and factual, forms part of the *construction* of the saintly *persona* and it is necessary to interpret every version commissioned by Cisneros from this point of view.

This approach leads to some important questions. First, which version did Cisneros decide to publish? And second, can we infer Cisneros’ intentions in disseminating this specific version? In other words, can we discuss the intentions of the *making* of Saint Caterina da Siena or assess the desired impact of the spreading of her 1511 version? If we follow the words that Fray Antonio wrote in his Prologue of the post-incunabulum, his main intent in translating the text was “... that it [the *Legenda*] would be more disseminated, so that it was known by everybody and that everybody could benefit from it” (*Raimondo ?*, [f. 3rB13-religions-630012]). This “everybody” (*todos*), repeated twice in the quoted sentence, points to the implicit target of the book and, indirectly, to the main function of its dissemination, that is to say, the reformation of Castilian religious life beyond the cloister.\(^7\)

Returning to Fray Antonio’s Prologue, there is a direct allusion to the manuscript that he used to translate Caterina’s *vita*: “And it happened that I found a book in Latin which contains the legend in a long version” (*Raimondo da Capua, [f. 3v]*)\(^9\). This *libro* containing the *Legenda maior* has been neither conserved nor identified, but I would argue that the printed book can give us some precious information about its predecessor. Of course, as the base manuscript cannot be directly studied, some of the following assertions are hypothetical, but the discussion will provide us with some enriching information about the previous circulation of Catherinian scripts in Castile. Perhaps the most important question about the Latin codex in which the Dominican friar found the *Legenda* is whether the contents and structure of the post-incunabulum take the layout used in the original version as a model, or whether the printed volume is just a miscellanea created ad hoc by the friar. I will explore the different possibilities. Some of these will not aid in establishing a clear line of transmission, but they will provide us with information on the different transformations that the life of Caterina had in its original dissemination, linking them with historical campaigns of propaganda moved by very definite objectives. As the volume of 1511 is directly related with Cisneros’ religious reform, it will be important to understand these transformations in detail, in order to contrast them later with the version which finally was chosen to be translated and published in Castile.

### 2.1. The Contents of the 1511 Edition

The book printed in Alcalá de Henares in 1511 contains various works: the aforementioned Prologue by Fray Antonio addressed to Cisneros, which is not numbered; a second Prologue to the *Legenda maior* by Raimondo da Capua (which in most medieval manuscripts is divided in two different

\(^7\) “... que ansí fuese [la leyenda] más comunicada y a todos fuese común y a todos aprovechase más”. Since the foliation of the book starts in “Chapter One”, the previous first two Prologues (the translator’s and Raimondo da Capua’s) are not numbered. For this reason, I provide a Roman number between square brackets, counting the folios from the first page of the first prologue.

\(^8\) This wider target of the Cisnerian reform is discussed in (*Acosta-García*).

\(^9\) The original reads: “Y así vino a mis manos un libro en latín que contiene muy largamente toda la dicha leyenda”.

paratexts, also not numbered); the *Legenda maior* (Raimondo da Capua 1511, ff. 1-104v, divided in three parts of 12, 12, and six chapters); one epistle (ibid., fols. 99v-114v, titled “Epistle written by a Carthusian monk, which replies to another one written by Brother Thomas Antonio of Siena [the famous Caffarini] … ” dating from 26 October 1411); and, closing the volume, two “abbreviated and very synthetized” ("abreviadas y muy sumarias")

10 *vitae* of Margherita da Città Castello and Giovanna (also known as Vanna) da Orvieto (ibid., fols. 105r-116v; Lungarotti 1994; Paoli and Ricci 1996). In reference to this list, the Prologue by Fray Antonio informs us about the origin of two items: the Epistle is declared to be included at his own decision and the two *vitae* are in the same codex from which he translates Caterina’s *Legenda*. Whether both the Epistle and the two short *vitae* were in the same manuscript or not, it is important to state the following: all this hagiographical material had been combined on previous occasions with the life of Caterina da Siena by Raimondo da Capua in its codicological tradition. As I will explain in the following pages, in the history of the *construction* of Caterina different combinations of items in a single manuscript imply different political objectives and, therefore, different *makings* of the saintly figure; it is the intent of this article to illuminate which functions were preserved or altered in the Castilian post-incunabulum.

2.2. The Epistle

For instance, the inclusion of the *Epistle* by a Carthusian monk addressed to Thomas Antonio of Siena links Fray Antonio’s manuscript with the main sources of dissemination of the *Legenda maior*: a network of late-medieval Dominican and Carthusian monasteries (Nocentini 2005, pp. 87–88). Several campaigns disseminating the life and facts of the Sienese *mantellata* developed in the years after her death (Nocentini 2005, pp. 87–93; 2013a, pp. 8, 25). Caterina’s *vita* was distributed mainly through two routes: the first, Stefano Maconi, to whom Raimondo da Capua sent a copy of the *Legenda maior* in 1396, one year after he finished it (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 8–13; ibid., p. 87ss; Hamburger and Signori 2013, pp. 1–2); Maconi distributed the text through his network of Carthusian monasteries (Nocentini 2013a, p. 10; see Figure 1). The second route was begun by Thomas Antonio de Sena (Tommaso da Siena, traditionally called Caffarini; see Figure 1), who had the *Legenda* copied in the *scriptorium* of the Dominican convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 25–39). According to Silvia Nocentini, these routes imply different intentions in the dissemination of the *Legenda*: in the Carthusian case, for instance, Maconi wanted to maintain the hagiographer’s text as pure as possible (at least, as I will show, to a greater degree than Caffarini, see Nocentini 2005, p. 89). The Dominican case, however, is related to Caffarini’s political and propagandist purposes. As Nocentini (ibid., p. 88) has shown, Caffarini tried to construct different versions of Caterina at different points of his career in the Dominican order and his main avenue to do so was through manipulating Raimondo da Capua’s text by including it in very specific compilations. To which of these two channels does Fray Antonio’s codex point?

To answer this question, it will help to identify the aforementioned *Epistle* addressed to Thomas Antonio of Siena included in the 1511 version: The “Carthusian” who wrote the letter which Fray Antonio translated is Stefano Maconi and this letter is none other than famous “Epistle by Stefano Maconi”, which he sent to Caffarini as a testimony in the first years of the *Processo castellano* (1411–1416), when a dossier about Caterina’s life was compiled by a commission headed by Pietro Bembo, bishop of Castello (Ferzoco 2012).11 In the manuscript tradition of the *Legenda maior* (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 39–96; Krafft 2013, pp. 29–30), there are three *codices* of identified origin which included this letter with the

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10 The original title reads: “Epistola que escribió un religioso de la Cartuja, respondiendo a otra que le hubo escrito fray Thomas Antonio de Sena de la Orden de los frailes Predicadores sobre las cosas maravillosas de la vida y muerte de Santa Caterina de Siena”.

11 I thank Silvia Nocentini for her help in identifying this epistle. For the Epistle’s text, see (Société des Bollandistes 1643, pp. 969–70), and (Laurent 1942, pp. 258–73).
prolix version by Raimondo da Capua: manuscripts B, C and M (see Figure 1). Two of these codices (B and M) have a Carthusian provenance: B is late (c. 1485) and comes from the reformed Monastery of Enghien; M comes from Pavia’s Charterhouse and it contains annotations from Maconi himself. On the other hand, manuscript C has a Dominican origin (the Convent of Saint Dominic in Cesena). Although this information on the manuscript tradition of the Epistle does not help trace the origin of the lost Castilian codex, understanding its use by different orders helps clarify some of the main possible sources I discuss in the following pages.

Figure 1. Stemma codicum based on (Nocentini 2013a, p. 95).

2.3. Caterina’s Campaign of Canonization

If we want to understand the implications of the different versions of the vita by Raimondo da Capua, however, it is essential to locate it not only in time, but in a specific diffusion context. As Silvia Nocentini (2013a, pp. 25–39) has shown, Caffarini’s objectives for the dissemination of the Legenda maior shifted. In the first phase between 1396 and 1405, Caffarini looked for the approval of the rule of the Dominican Third Order Regular, while in the second between 1405 and 1417, he focused on Caterina’s canonization (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 29–34; 2005, pp. 95–98; Hamburger and Signori 2013, p. 4; Krafft 2013, pp. 27–28). Both of Caffarini’s campaigns produced different texts and manuscripts in which Caterina’s construction changed and in which Raimondo da Capua’s vita was transformed to support different objectives. Is the codex used by Fray Antonio related to either of these periods? As he wrote in the Prologue to his translation, Fray Antonio believed that the Legenda maior which he was translating was written: “to convince the Apostolic Holy See to canonize the holy virgin,” because he was aware that the text has the characteristics of a proceso, that is, a process of canonization (Raimondo

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12 I will use the abbreviations of the manuscript catalogue in (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 39–68). I thank Silvia Nocentini for the supplementary codicological details provided via private mail. B = Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria 1741, it has a date: “14 February 1485”; C = Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, S. XXIX.17, according to (Nocentini 2013a, p. 44), “seconda metà del XV sec.”; M = Milano, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, AD.IX.38, according to the editor’s description (51), the text of the Legenda is from the 14th century but the Epistle is from the 15th, because the manuscript is composed of three different codicological units, with the Legenda and the Epistle in different ones. I do not include in my analysis manuscript Wsch [= Wien, Schottenstift, 207 (193), 15th century, see http://manuscripta.at/hb_detail.php?ID=28707 (accessed on 3 March 2019)], which also contains the Epistile, because its origin is not specified in Nocentini’s catalogue.
In the context of Caffarini’s activity, this objective of canonization corresponds to the aforementioned second campaign of distribution of texts through Dominican convents; however, because of the combination of works included in Cisneros’ volume, this seems not to be the case with the Castilian manuscript. In fact, while the translated text of the *Legenda maior* is very close to Raimondo da Capua’s, Fray Antonio declares in the Prologue that he deleted specific information about people and dates that existed in the original Latin because the objective of canonization had been achieved. Instead, in the Prologue he declares himself editor of the text, since he intentionally reduced the quantity of specific information about the original. He understands this activity as the adaptation of a document supporting a “process” (of canonization) to a contemporary hagiographic style that respected the account of the original (Raimondo da Capua 1511, f. 3v).

2.4. The Lives of Vanna and Margherita

Excluding the Epistle from the analysis, there are five manuscripts that present similar contents (*Legenda maior, legendae* of Vanna and Margherita, which according to the translator were included in the same codex): R, V, Pi, Na and O (Nocentini 2013b, p. 178; see Figure 1). At first sight, this compilation of three works seems to point to a Dominican provenance of the manuscript, but this assertion should be made cautiously. Even though all the surviving codices were used in a Dominican context, V and Pi contain a text of the *Legenda maior* that, using Nocentini’s (2013a, p. 56) words, “carries a text derived from an autograph of the Carthusian tradition” (my translation). This fact is reinforced by the presence of notes attributed to Stefano Maconi in both volumes (Nocentini 2005, p. 92; 2013a, pp. 13–25, 45, 56). In the second place, the rest of the manuscripts (R, Na, and O) are directly related to the scriptorium of the convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, that is to say the copy and distribution center of Caterina’s life under the orders of Caffarini (Nocentini 2005). As I will show later, this is not irregular because this specific compilation was intended to show a multifaceted feminine Dominican model of virtue and it was a Caffarini’s invention.

2.5. Partial Conclusions

To sum up, the data from these approaches to the texts included in the post-incunabulum do not confirm a Carthusian or Dominican origin of the codex used by the Castilian translator. However, the data do locate the text of the *Legenda maior* together with the lives of Vanna and Margherita in the context of Caffarini’s first campaign of dissemination, in which he was trying to use Raimondo da Capua’s text together with other texts about Dominican women of virtue to support the legalization of the Third Order Regular (Lehmijoki-Gardner 2004; Nocentini 2005, pp. 95–96 and, about its function, p. 98; Zarri 2013, p. 71), in which the Carthusian monasteries played an important role as well (Hamburger and Signori 2013, p. 5). Most importantly, given my identification of the hagiographical tropes originally shared between the lives of Caterina, Vanna, and Margherita, I suggest that the resignification of these same tropes in the context of Cisneros’s reform of the spiritual life of Castile allows us to explore different Iberian *makings* of Caterina.

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13 The original reads: “… suadir a la Santa Silla Apostólica a la canonización de la santa virgen”, in the first case, and “a manera de proceso”, in the second.

14 I also follow here the list of abbreviations of (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 39–68) (see Figure 1): R = Roma, Archivium Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum, XIV.3.24, between 1396 and 1398, from the convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, joins different works together and was in the possession of Tommaso da Siena; V = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 10151, from 1396 and 1398, from the Convent of Saint Dominic in Orvieto, which contains just the three works; Pi = Pisa, Biblioteca Cateriniana del Seminario Arcivescovile, 24, second half of the 15th century, from the Dominican Convent of Santa Caterina de Pisa, together with different works; Na = Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII.B.48, between 1396 and 1399, from the Convent of Saint Dominic in Orvieto, which contains just the three works; O = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon Misc. 205, beginning of the 15th century, from the Convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, which contains other lives of blessed women. The combination of Caterina, Vanna, and Margherita is also found in (b), one of the Italian vulgarizations (Nocentini 2013b, p. 176): it is the unfinished translation by Pagliaresi and it was copied in the scriptorium of Tommaso da Siena.
3. The Cisnerian Base Manuscript II: The Legenda maior Text

Linking the Castilian base text to this first Caffarini distribution phase is essential information, especially when comparing it to later versions. In fact, later accounts of the life of the Sienese saint by Caffarini (for instance, in his Legenda minor or in the Libellus de supplemento) present different versions of the Sienese mantellata that, had they arrived in Castile, would have changed the saintly model in the making of Caterina (Vauchez 2017, pp. 146–47). In this sense, it is very important to keep in mind that the Carthusian tradition promoted by Maconi contrasts with the Dominican tradition commissioned by Caffarini: the latter manipulated the construction of the saint in order to attain her canonization. Perhaps the most evident of these textual manipulations are his addenda to Raimondo da Capua’s text (Nocentini 2005, pp. 103–12, 129–44; 2013a, pp. 34–39; 2013b, pp. 171–72), which reinforce the creation of that “second Caterina” about whom Vauchez (Vauchez 2017) wrote. This version of Caterina was a woman surrounded by more and more striking miracles, a holy woman who wrote (Luongo 2013, esp. p. 150; Mooney 2013), and whose stigmata were visible to her followers (Tylus 2013). However, in the Dominican compilations quoted in the last point, the texts of the Legenda maior of R and Na do not possess the three addenda provided by Caffarini, in contrast with O, which does.

Since these three additions to the Legenda maior are missing in the Cisnerian translation, the Caterina who could be read in 16th-century Castile was, in this sense, less miraculously excessive than her homologue in the second medieval campaign of dissemination.15 The idea that in this first campaign Caffarini focused on the image of Caterina as a writer is, as I will develop later in these pages, especially relevant. Caterina—the Castilian version—cannot be the author of her own work (at least in the sense of writing), but on the other hand she can be seen as an oral medium, a prophetess who miraculously learnt how to read and whose teaching was focused on the revealed oral learning she was given by grace (Raimondo da Capua 1511, f. 22v).

Although this first version of the Legenda maior was disseminated by the scriptorium of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, it was the charterhouses—through the figure of Stefano Maconi—that were the best keepers of the primitive version without any Caffarini addition and they transmitted it to other convents. This is the reason why two of the codices that contain this version together with the vitae of Vanna and Margherita (V and Pi, see Figure 1) keep marginalia from Stefano Maconi himself (Nocentini 2013a, pp. 56–57, 70–71). Does the existence of a primitive version of the Legenda maior together with the lack of the addenda point to a Carthusian link for the Cisnerian manuscript? According to Nocentini (2013a, pp. 22–25), there is a passage that allows us to distinguish certain codices directly related to Maconi from those with a Dominican origin. In this narrative fragment, Pagliaresi—one of Caterina’s travel companions—falls ill. As this was an episode directly experienced by Maconi, who at the time was part of Caterina’s travel group, he annotated the margins of some manuscripts with his impressions; these notes were incorporated later into the corpus of some versions of the Legenda maior. I am not interested here in the content of the changes introduced in the account by Maconi, but rather in checking that this variant is also lacking in the Castilian version (Raimondo da Capua 1511, f. 63r). This distances the Cisnerian manuscript from the Carthusian variants of the family θ (again, following the stemma codicum of the critical edition by Nocentini; see Figure 1), making it approach the variant V, which contains just a marginal note with Maconi’s alternative story.

To synthesize these last two points: it can only be definitely asserted that, at a purely textual level, the Legenda maior translated by Fray Antonio de la Peña is a version that follows Raimondo da Capua’s original quite closely, without any addenda by his disseminators.16 This relates it to the texts kept in the surviving codices of the period before 1396–1399 (V, Carthusian provenance; R and Na, 15
16

15 The additions by Caffarini are in the manuscripts P, O, and S, a fact that locates them in a different family of the stemma codicum (Nocentini 2013a, p. 95; see Figure 1) which is also late (15th century). This fact points to the second phase of Caffarini’s dissemination project.

16 Always keeping in mind the editorial activity of the translator, which he described in the Prologue, see note 14, above.
Dominican). This can be easily verified when we look at the Castilian *Legenda maior*, not only because of the lack of the additions by Caifarini but also because of the Maconi variant (and this separates the codex from the variants of the family θ): the lack of both characteristics reinforces the hypothesis of an early date for the Latin text. On the other hand, examining the Castilian *Legenda maior* in the context of this precise Cisnerian compilation and comparing it to the diverse combinations of texts with which the life of Caterina had been traditionally assembled, leads to the following reasoning: the presence of the “Epistle by Maconi” plus the translator’s fidelity to an early version of the *Legenda maior* seems to reinforce the hypothesis of a Carthusian transmission, and the inclusion of the short lives of Vanna and Margherita in the same codex do not necessarily contradict it. While this structural information seems to point to the first dissemination campaign by Caifarini—and most of the manuscripts that include this combination come from Dominican convents—one of the codices, V, keeps this structure and is annotated by Maconi. Thus, although both possibilities regarding the origin of the manuscript remain open, we have clearly located the version arrived to Castile in a very specific time of dissemination of the *Vita* by Raimondo da Capua. This allows us to examine the characteristics of the Caterina translated in 1511 by diachronic contrast: if textual manipulation have historically created different Caterinas who served different objectives, we can reflect now on what are the implications of the Cisnerian decision of translating specifically that version.

4. Illiterate Prophetism, the Stigmata and Courtly Politics

However it may be, the textual characteristics of the *Legenda maior* translated in Castile that I have just examined and the package that it forms with the short lives of Vanna and Margherita need a hermeneutical reading in their new Iberian context. As we have seen, textual manipulation had a political basis in the construction of Caterina. From my point of view, the publication of 1511 needs to be read also from a political perspective. If we compare the very different versions of the Sienese saint which were circulating from the end of the 14th century with the Castilian one, it is clear that it implies very definite intrinsic characteristics which need to be read in the context of Cisnerian reformation. These intentions are not simply a working hypothesis: the two prologues which face the Cisnerian compilation express very definite ideas which are supported by the chosen texts. Both the prologue by fray Antonio de la Peña and the second one contain very clear ideas about feminine authority and prophecies. In my judgement, these paratexts need to be considered as programmatic assertions by the commissioner of these books, the Cardinal of Spain.

By way of example, although the Caterina drafted in the primitive version by Raimondo da Capua (which, I repeat, was the Caterina translated by Fray Antonio) was presented in a “moderate” fashion in terms of bodily phenomena, she was also a recipient of divine messages when she dictated her prophecies to scribes or performed them before an audience (Luongo 2013, p. 142). As Lehmijoki-Gardner (2004, p. 675) asserts, this quality of Caterina was one of the main agents of changing the *vestitae* (that is to say, the original penitent women linked to the Dominican spirituality) into “a proper religious order”. From the perspective of the Cisnerian version of the saint, illiterate prophetism is stressed from the beginning of the book: Raimondo da Capua’s Prologue begins by introducing John the Evangelist to the reader through the image of the eagle—with all the visionary implications that this had in the Late Middle Ages, especially in mystical contexts (Hamburger 2002)—and he links him directly to the Sienese mantellata. The prologue writer develops some apocalyptic images and, at one point, writes that, as John says “I saw”, he can say the same thing about the revelations of the Sienese woman: “I saw and heard them [great things], so not only me, but everybody present were, as Saint John the evangelist said: ‘We proclaim only what we saw and heard from the Word of life, who lived in this

17 “Catherine’s prophetic and mystical charisma and her model of the disciplined penitent vocation facilitated the transformation of the Dominican penitential life from a loose association of widows into a proper religious order”.
This is clear, for instance, with Maríaprophetic feminine prophecy was looked for and promoted by the Castilian court in Cisneros’ times. In those versions, there is an interest in developing not the words of an illiterate tertiary (which was the original reception of Angela’s Liber), but rather the revelations of a “prophetess” who received the word of God and who transmitted it to her contemporaries. This use of the feminine word as a medium with a prophetic quality is found not only in the exemplary models structuring the lives of Caterina, Vanna, Margherita, and Angela da Foligno, but also in the prologues written for the Castilian editions. In fact, Fray Antonio asserts in the Prologue to his translation that the essential fact is not that woman was created from a rib, but that she was created by the same divine power as man (Huerga 1968, pp. 179–80).

Raimondo da Capua’s original Caterina (and, therefore, her Castilian homologue) is clear in this sense, because passages explain how she orders “her scribes who used to write the letters or epistles” to be ready to copy “whatever she said in raptu” (da Capua 1511, ff. 76v-77r). By following this path in the short lives of Vanna and Margherita, he never mentions the ability to write (though he declares that Margherita could read), yet he highlights the prophetic characteristics of their experiences. For instance, in the life of Vanna, the narrator states: “This holy virgin, full of every virtue, evidently had spirit of prophecy and a lot of things were revealed to her (in a state of contemplation and oration, Raimondo da Capua 1511, f. 108r).” As in the case of Caterina, the contexts in which these “sante vive” communicate their messages are generally to be found in front of an audience and they contain a clear performative character. According to Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida (2012), “beatas” such as María de Santo Domingo and Juana de la Cruz built a prophetic performativity in which their bodies, gestures, and voices were part of a living text that could be decoded by different audiences. It is easy to find traces of these theatrical experiences, in which such powerful figures as Cisneros, the Duke of Alba, or King Ferdinand himself were part of an engaged audience attending ecstatic performances by María or Juana. For example, both the Libro de oración (1518–1520) of María de Santo Domingo and the Libro del Conhorte (between 1508–1517) of Juana de la Cruz indirectly register those public ecstasies where the pronounced words were based on revelation, and some must be read following a political key. This is clear, for instance, with María de Santo Domingo’s printed discourse about what needed to be done with the conversion of indigenous people in the newly discovered America. This kind of prophetic feminine prophecy was looked for and promoted by the Castilian court in Cisneros’ times and beyond. In short, in the Legenda maior of 1511 there is a strong defense of the “profecíadé virgen”.

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18 “Vilas, pues, y oílas [muy grandes cosas], de manera que así como a mi a las otras personas que presentes fueron conviene muy bien decir con San Juan Evangelista: que vimos y oimos del Verbo de la vida, el cual moraba en esta maravillosa virgen, aquello y no otra cosa os anunciamos”.

19 The biblical feminine prophetic model in the Castilian translation of Angela da Foligno of 1510 is “Holde profetísa” (Acosta-García). In Raimondo da Capua (7, ff. 1v-2rB13-religions-630012), the main feminine biblical models are: “Ana, viuda profétísa” and “María, su hermana de Moysén con otras muchas”, plus a long list of women from the Old and New Testaments.

20 The original reads: “a los escribanos suyos que le solian escribir las cartas o epístolas” and “lo que ella dijese in raptu”, respectively.

21 “Esta santa virgen de ans cuntida toda virtud también tuvo evidentísimamente espíritu de profecía y muchas cosas (estando ella en su contemplación y oración) divinamente le fueron reveladas”. For her spirit of prophecy, see also (Raimondo da Capua 1511, f. 62r). For Vanna’s, see (da Capua 1511, f. 108r).

22 For instance in Raimondo da Capua (1511, ff. 39r-v): “... y su espiritu tan firmemente era allegado al hacedor suyo y muchas cosas de todas las cosas, que por la mayor parte del tiempo quedaba sin sentidos algunos, en tanta manera que sus brazos se separaban tan recios y tan yertos juntamente con las manos, que primero los pudieran quebrantar de donde habían trabado. Otrosi en tanto que estaba actualmente ansí puesta en actual contemplación, tenía los ojos del todo cerrados y ningún sonido oía por gran ruido y sonido que hiciesen”.

23 For María’s case, the negative viewpoint given by Mártir de Anglería in his famous Epistle 428 is important (Sanmartín Bastida 2012, pp. 318–19).
which is also present in other books pertaining to the group that Cisneros supported. This seems to be part of the making of these medieval religious women that was imitated by some Castilian mulieres religiosae, but a comparison of the adaptation of the written model with the data of the lives of specific figures such as the aforementioned María de Santo Domingo indicates a more complex scenario.

For instance, as I have written above, the Legenda maior of 1511 is based on an early, non-manipulated version of Raimondo da Capua’s text, which avoids one of the most controversial episodes in Caterina’s life: her receiving the stigmata (Kraft 2013, pp. 38–39; Schultz 2013). Bartolomei Romagnoli (2013) has reflected deeply on the game of allusion and elusion developed by Caffarini in his different versions of the life of Caterina, since the subsequent controversy had a real impact in the construction of a visual representation of the Sienese visionary (Ganz 2013; Giunta 2012). Both in the Dominican’s version of the Legenda maior (where one of his additions mentions this episode) and in the Libellus de supplemento, the text insinuates that some witnesses saw the stigmata literally piercing Caterina’s body (Bartolomei Romagnoli 2013, pp. 415–38). And these were the versions of the story generally adopted, at least in late-medieval Italy, in the communities of Dominican tertiaries.

Nevertheless, the Castilian case is different, because the reception of the stigmata in the Cisnerian version highlights the invisibility of the bodily marks. In the first place, it describes how Christ pounded a nail into her right hand yet the wound was invisible to everyone (Da Capua, ff. 42r-v). Later, in a church of Pisa, with her arms widely opened in the posture in which Francis of Assisi received the holy wounds, the texts speak about “five rays of blood” which come from Christ to her and which are later transformed “in the shape of pure light and similar to rays of sun”. 24 The effect was that five transparent, invisible stigmata made of light illuminated her flesh (Bartolomei Romagnoli 2013; Tylus 2013, pp. 295–96; Vauche 2017, p. 147). Since a side wound was visibly opened in 1509 in María de Santo Domingo’s case, her stigmata were not invisible at all. 25 As with Caterina, this event “marks . . . the beginning of a new life, it ‘orders’ her towards prophetic action” (segna . . . l’inizio di una vita nuova, la ‘ordina’ all’azione profetica” (Bartolomei Romagnoli 2013, p. 413); the prophetic authority of the beata seems to be reinforced by the carnality of the wound. Here, as in other cases, María surpassed the saintly model that Cisneros was trying to implant in Castile. 26 Subsequently, the life of Caterina from 1511 shows us a more tentative model of a female “living saint” (Zam 1980; 1990, pp. 87–163) than the Caterina that was disseminated in Italy following Caffarini’s second campaign. The Caffarinian one is more radical in her miracles and associated phenomena: the Castilian Caterina only learnt to read miraculously, but not to write, and her stigmata were luminous, but invisible. If we take this into account in our approach to María de Santo Domingo—the Castilian Caterina’s model follower par excellence (Sanmartín Bastida forthcoming)—her bio-hagiographical facts must performe be read in a special light. 27

As is well known, in the period between 1508 and 1510, before the publication of the Cisnerian post-incunabulum, María de Santo Domingo herself, despite being protected in the court of King Ferdinand of Aragon, was accused of various charges and is believed to have been judged four times by an ecclesiastical court (Sastre Varas 1990, 1991). Sanmartín Bastida (2012, pp. 328–37) synthesizes the charges as follows: first, there are suspicions about the performativity of her raptures, because it seemed odd that she could decide exactly the moment in which the ecstasy starts. Second, her clothing is described as too luxurious. 28 Third, they question her relationship with food, in particular her extreme fasting. Fourth, her nocturnal habits are suspicious, because they involved her confessors and

24 The original reads: “cinco rayos de sangre” and “en forma de pura luz y como rayos de sol”, respectively.
25 This physicality of the wound, which other Castilian beatas such as María de Ajofrín had suffered earlier, was probed with a direct examination recorded by a notarial act (Sanmartín Bastida 2012, p. 347). Stigmata and the beatas are discussed in (Sanmartín Bastida forthcoming).
26 About the problems with the later controversy about the stigmata, the stigmatics, and the representations of Caterina in Castile, see (Huerga 1968, pp. 201–07).
27 El libro de oración, fol. A 6v, quoted in (Sanmartín Bastida 2012, p. 320).
28 The documents of the process list: “corales, granas, sombreretes, bolsa de seda, cordón de San Francisco y otras cosas de oro y plata.”
other friars with whom she used to travel because of her reform work. One of the essential surviving documents of this legislative process is the “writ of prohibition and defense of the blessed one” ("carta inhibitoria y la defensa de la beata"), written by Fray Antonio de la Peña (Sastre Varas 1990, p. 360; 1991, pp. 378–86), which established a direct link between the translation of the Legenda and the activity of María, one of the main actors of Cisneros’ Observant monastic reform.

It is interesting to compare these charges directed at María de Santo Domingo with some passages in the 1511 Legenda maior and in the short lives of Vanna and Margherita. In the first place, hagiographical tropes about Caterina’s clothing and personal care are scarce in Cisneros’ Caterina: they are found only in folio 5v, where it is written that early in her life she refuses to beautify herself as her father requested so that she could find a good suitor. This character trait of rejecting the beauty treatments imposed by the social standards of the time signifies, hagiographically speaking, Caterina’s desire to cut the bonds with an earthly life (and marriage). However, penitential clothing, particularly donning the habit, seems to play a different role in the account of Vanna’s life, reinforcing this trope in Cisneros’ volume. We should recall that the original compilations in which Vanna appears with Caterina and Margherita had a very specific objective: to promote, regulate, and validate the Dominican Third Order Regular. Given the example of the penitential habit, clothing proves to be an especially sensitive topic (Paoli and Ricci 1996, pp. 61, 65; Lehmjoki-Gardner 2004, pp. 668–69, 671–76). As in the aforementioned Catherinian case, wearing the “correct” habit would be “a defense of her physical and spiritual integrity” (pp. 38, 68). Therefore, in this fashion Vanna would be, as Boesch Gajano-Redon (apud Paoli and Ricci 1996, p. 58) asserts: “a model of feminine sainthood integrated into the Dominican Order” (“un modelo di santità femminile integrato nell’ordine domenicano”). On her behalf, the hagiographic model that Caterina presents highlights the significance of the legendary origins of the Third Order Regular and points to the habit as a form not only of identification, but also of regulation inside the Dominican family. In the context of the Cisnerian reform, where the reinforcement of the rules in the convents was a clear objective, regulation about dressing could have aimed at the same target. In fact, the primitive rules of Francesco and Chiara d’Assisi (included respectively in the Latin and Castilian versions of the Liber of Angela da Foligno, printed in 1505 and 1510) form a strong complement on issues concerning religious clothing. Additionally, the controversy about the garments of María de Santo Domingo seems to fit into the contemporary debates about the control of the religious orders, especially the secular branches.

5. Conclusions

In the first place, I would state that the implications of the paradigms of feminine sanctity proposed by Cisneros have perhaps been taken for granted too quickly, especially when we confront their hypothetical reinterpretation by some of his protégées. My studies on these post-incunabula have shown overall that there is a real contrast between the way in which these women represent sanctity, the normativity that they are intended to generate, and the charismatic activity of contemporary living saints such as María de Santo Domingo. The role of the Cisnerian books in the creation of models of behavior thus needs to be critically revised: his editorial agenda does not seem to be simply one of supporting “affective mysticism”, whatever its effects are on individuals, but rather to be concerned with spreading controlled paradigms of charismatic women. Concerning the group of books that I have discussed, we should recall that not only are Angela and Caterina presented in a very specific fashion, but also the volumes in which they appear are sealed with a Franciscan rule (those of Francesco and Chiara, respectively). In other words, the relatively free practices represented by the Tertiaries contrast

29 The original reads: “...lavarse el rostro y curarse los cabellos y pelarse las cejas...”.
30 The original reads: “defensa de su integridad espiritual y física”.
31 Food and dietary habits and night-time activities are, without any doubt, issues to be interpreted in this comparative light, because they appear both in the 1511 post-incunabulum and in the life of the living women saints of the Cisnerian reform. In a future article, I will analyze these issues in depth.
with the instructions for a regulated life inside a community, which includes instructions on eating, dressing, and resting (Lehmijoki-Gardner 2012, pp. 113–15).

Accordingly, it is important to address Cisnerian sources with some philological and hermeneutical prudence—because this can give us some keys about what he was trying to promote in 16th-century Castile—and contrast them with the original late medieval objectives. In Caterina’s case, we find a *mulier religiosa* who is very close to the one created by Raimondo da Capua: one who Stefano Maconi promoted through the charterhouses and one who ultimately coincides with the “first Caterina” identified by Vauchez. This woman is a female living saint who, together with Vanna and Margherita, is prepared to establish a very specific model of tertiary, a model that the regulation of the Third Order Regular needed. Thus, the manuscript that Cisneros had translated by Antonio de la Peña fits perfectly with his reformist objectives, because it implies a discourse about the necessity of keeping a regulated religious life, including wearing a modest habit and, additionally, sleeping in a modest bed and following a modest diet. In fact, from the point of view of a “mystical phenomenology”, when this model describes the miracles of Caterina it is less excessive than the Italian miraculous tradition of Caterina: in Castile, her stigmata are not visible and she does not learn how to write by divine grace.

In relation to this, we find the fascinating figure of María de Santo Domingo, who was one of the people in charge of the reform promoted by Cisneros and who interpreted the reform in her own way. She was an illiterate prophetess but bore visible stigmata and, for some contemporary ecclesiastical authorities, her behavior was excessive in certain respects, including her dress, her accessories, her night-time habits, and the visibly opened wound under her ribs. Comparing the models promoted by the Castilian edition with the lives of previous and later “sante vive”, we can state that the “siembra mistica” of Cisneros (Sainz Rodriguez 1979) supports not only the mystical but also more moderate practices related to his reform.

Another general conclusion from my studies of these printed books is that, at least in the case of the volumes on holy women, illiterate prophetism should be highlighted as one of the key characteristics that Cisneros tries to disseminate. Therefore, applying concepts such as Hamburger’s and Signori’s *construction* and *making* in a diachronic way provides us with essential information about the choice of one *constructed* model that is published to *make* charismatic authority in Castile. This is only possible through a strong editorial intention by Cisneros and his working group. In this sense, I think that it should be accepted that certain saintly *constructions* interpreted by historical audiences are conscious choices that resignify a specific figure at the level of textual embodiment. Consequently, when we read these books in the light of their paratexts, the newly produced visionary texts in Iberia, and courtly life, they produce and reflect a coherent spiritual landscape.

Finally, it is necessary to point out again that in the coming years we should address what is lacking in the studies of the reception of medieval religious texts in the Iberian Peninsula, especially those authored by women. As I have asserted in this article, there is no current global, comprehensive research that allows an assessment of the impact of the late-medieval feminine mystical literature in Castile before the birth of the printing press. As the classic bibliography (Huerga 1968, pp. 207–27) pointed out and as later research has confirmed or simply accepted (for example, McGinn 2017), the iconic figures of Teresa de Jesús and Juan de la Cruz cannot be understood without previous spiritual movements such as the *beatas* or the tertiaries whose lives and visions are sometimes recorded in hagiographies or in documentation kept in archives. Perhaps the years to come will show us a different picture of this network of women mystics.

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32 In this sense, as Bilinkoff (1992, p. 26) explored many years ago, María’s model of imitation followed not only Caterina’s but especially that of Lucia da Narni (See also Beltrán de Heredia 1939, pp. 129–31).

33 This is evident when reading the new sources edited by members of the Research Project “La conformación de la autoridad espiritual femenina en Castilla” (FFI2015-63625-C2-2-P, MINECO/FEDER): http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/P%C3%A1gina_principal (accessed on 29 December 2019).
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