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## EDITORIAL

### COMMEMORATING AND CELEBRATING

Celebrating anniversaries has become the order of the day. Indeed, we are the result of our memory, of our history. Remembering the past and the glorious deeds of our forefathers gives us the courage to become a prophecy for the future. To commemorate and to celebrate are, therefore, important aspects of our quest for identity and for the redefinition of how we are.

Our Order has been at the forefront in commemorating and celebrating. Ever since the mid-1970's these commemorations have increased and multiplied. The following are just some of them. In 1974 the Order celebrated the 700 years of the death of St. Bonaventure and 750 years of the stigmatisation of St Francis on La Verna. In 1976 it was the turn of the commemoration of the 750 years of the death of St. Francis. In 1982 we celebrated the 800 years of the birth of St. Francis. In 1992 the Order celebrated, not without a polemic note, the beginning of the evangelisation of the Americas. In 1994 we celebrated the 800 years of the birth of St. Clare. In 1995 it was the turn of the 800 years since the birth of St. Anthony of Padua. In 2009 the Order celebrated the 800 years of its foundation, recalling the oral approval of the first form of life of St. Francis by Pope Innocent III. In 2016 the Order celebrated the 800 years of the granting of the Portiuncula Indulgence to the chapel of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi. This year the whole Franciscan family celebrates the 500 years of the Bulla *Ite vos*, by which Pope Leo X unified all reform families under the Regular Observance, and separated the latter from the Conventuals. On its part, the Custody of the Holy Land, with the presence of the Minister General, commemorates the 800 years since the arrival of the first Franciscan brothers in Acre. In 2019 it will commemorate the 800 years of the meeting of St. Francis with the Sultan of Egypt in Damietta.

These commemorations have been occasions to celebrate solemn liturgies, pilgrimages, congresses, conferences, study days, seminars, and to present new publications. Indeed, these occasions are always a boost to Franciscan studies and to the awareness of our identity and our history.

One question presents itself, however. What should be the true outcome of commemorations and celebrations? As long as we are organising venues and publishing books we are truly experts. But what about seeing how our memory can be translated into prophecy? What about our future? Where are these commemorations and celebrations exactly taking us?

The issue of identity has been assailing the Order for a long time. We have experimented our identity to the point of being fixated on the fact that we are not a clerical Order, neither are we a lay Order, but rather a "mixed" institute of brothers. Our insist-

ence to place this new notion into the Church's official legislation, so as to have our own legislation recognised on these terms, has brought us close to nowhere. Entire general chapters have dedicated precious time to discuss such an issue, which could be diluted to Shakespeare's famous quote: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / buy any other name would smell as sweet."

The Order has had some outstanding figures who succeeded in continuing to be faithful to a celebratory tradition of historical roots (which are important if we want to know who we are), and launched the same tradition forward to a future prophecy. I am referring to figures, like Br. Giacomo Bini (1938-2014), who dedicated his life to missionary evangelisation and to the sacredness of a fraternity of brothers who are itinerant and poor, without necessarily living like vagabonds, but giving new life to a "conventual" setting which is open and flexible enough to resemble the primitive way of life of Francis and the brothers. This is a figure of a man whose mental and affective balance was extraordinary. Sadly, he was not always well understood by the same persons who applauded his charisma.

What the Order has failed to accomplish in these last decades is to arrive at a healthy balance between the rock of historical experience and tradition where our roots lie, and the ability to restructure our edifice on the same foundations in order to render it more responsive to contemporary ideals of Franciscan life. Unfortunately, in many provinces, the notion of humane brotherhood based on a stable and continuous presence in a "conventual" setting open to itinerant evangelisation has been discarded in favour of a way of life that is, to say the least, disordered and unhealthy to be called "religious" or consecrated life. Our young men in formation have lost their bearings and have found themselves lost in a maze of frenetic activity without guidance, without hope, without support from the same brothers who were their formators and superiors and who should have known better.

The easy way out is to celebrate. Celebrating gives the impression of prestige, of accomplishment, of the power to organise and make good use of money. I repeat: in itself, this is not wrong and can be encouraging to make us go forward. The problem lies with the hangover after the party. When the celebration is over we tend to slumber and drowse off in peace, or at best, plan another celebration by looking at our historical records. The role of those who shoulder the ministry of the brothers is not only that of being personally and physically present for such commemorations, even though they do so in order to encourage the brothers. They are called to give direction, to be the first and foremost to go forth and give proof that our solid historical roots are not for sale, but rather they are to be cherished and developed in new ways. To demolish what others have done is easy. To rebuild from scratch is not. Commemorating and celebrating are not ways of admiring our structures as if they were museums or ancient monuments. They imply courage to mend our own house on the same values and foundations that are untouchable pillars and buttresses of the edifice we call the Order of Friars Minor.

*Noel Muscat ofm*

# THE STIGMATISATION OF SAINT FRANCIS IN THOMAS OF CELANO'S *VITA BEATI PATRIS NOSTRI FRANCISCI (VITA BREVIOR)*

NOEL MUSCAT OFM

The discovery of a new life of Saint Francis, critically edited by Jacques Dalarun,<sup>1</sup> has already been treated in a preceding issue of *Spirit + Life*.<sup>2</sup> Its relevance in the study of the Franciscan mediaeval sources has drawn the attention of many scholars, since it is not just an abridged form of the *Vita Sancti Francisci*, which Thomas of Celano presented to Pope Gregory IX on 25 February 1229, but it also adds other new details that Celano had gathered from the mouth of the companions of Saint Francis, and particularly from that of Brother Elias, who at the time was leading the Order as Minister General (1232-1239), and who had been quite close to Francis during the last two year of his life in 1224-1226, occupying the office of Vicar of the Order (1221-1227).<sup>3</sup>

Our intention in this paper is that of examining the text of the *Vita Brevior* dealing with the episode of the stigmatisation of Saint Francis on La Verna in September 1224. We shall analyse the Latin text of the *Vita Brevior*, and present our own translation of the text, underlining some particular elements worthy of being noted, in comparison with Celano's *Vita* of 1229.<sup>4</sup>

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## ***Vita Brevior 70-74: On the opening of the book and the apparition of the seraph and the stigmata of Christ that appeared on his body***<sup>5</sup>

70. He [Francis] completed all these actions in

*the eighteenth year of his conversion. At a certain time, this most holy man, having left behind him the cares of this world, asked to withdraw to a quiet place and entered the secret of solitude. He was accustomed to spend his time, as it was fitting, by dividing it between working in favour of his neighbours, and consuming the rest of his time in the true contemplation of the blessed. He would take some companions with him, in order that they might defend him from all that might disturb him, and thus serve him in this manner. Whenever he would remain in this state and dedicate himself to unceasing prayer and contemplation, he would become engaged in divine familiarity in such an ineffable manner, that he would desire to act as if he knew that he was offering himself in sacrifice to the Lord with all the members of his body. He had a great desire to know in which way he could unite himself most perfectly to God's will.*

71. *Since he was daily burning fervently with this desire, one day, in the hermitage where he was staying, he approached the altar with devotion, upon which the book of the Gospels reverently lay. He prostrated himself in prayer, and with great devotion and reverence prayed the Lord that, at the first opening of the book, He would deign to show him His will. Then, with his eyes bathed in tears, he rose from his prayer and marked himself with the sign of the cross. He took the book of the Gospels from the altar and opened it with fear. He immediately came across the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but since he did not wish that this might be the fruit of chance, he opened the book for the second and third time, and always found similar words. The intrepid knight of Christ was*

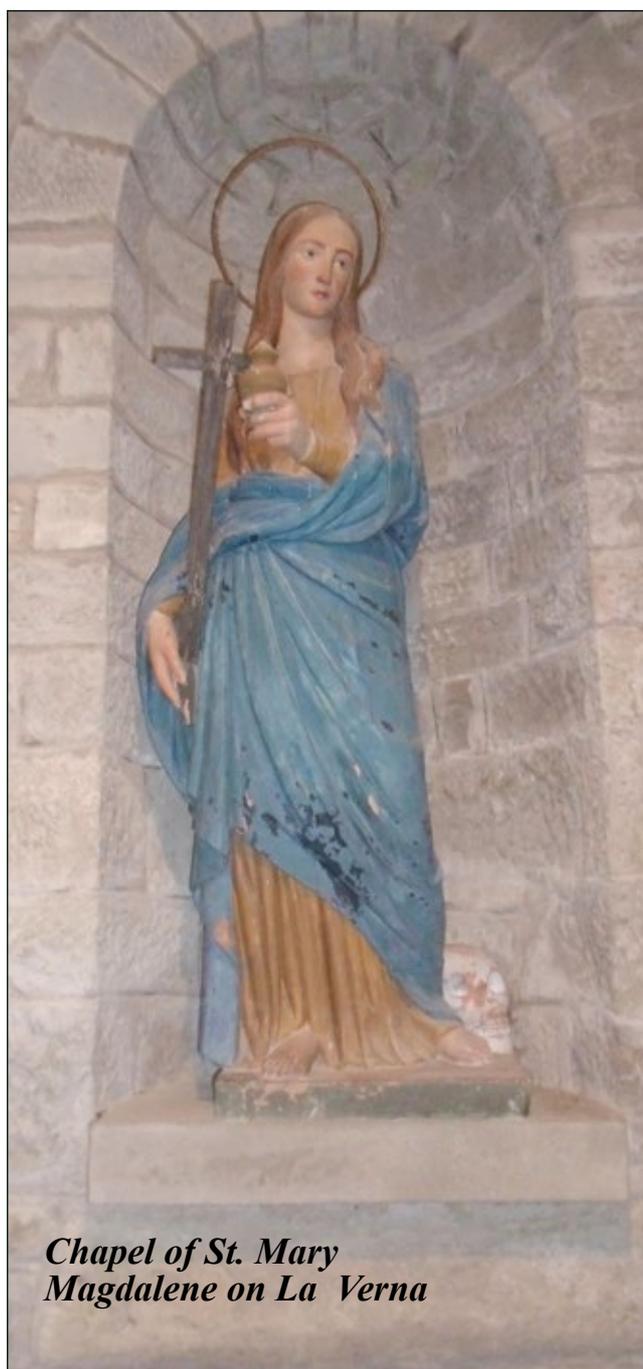
not confused by what he read, and neither did he lose heart, since above his desires he cherished to become a martyr. Thus he remained strong his resolve and full of joy, and he was always uttering joyful canticles with his mouth, coming from his heart, since he knew that in a short time he would receive a great revelation of a mystery and would be enriched with an uplifting grace.

72. Two years before he rendered his spirit to heaven, while he was staying in a hermitage called La Verna, the friend of God Francis saw in a vision a seraph flying in the air, with six wings spread above him, and with his hands and feet affixed to a cross. Two wings rose above his head, two were extended in order to fly, and two were covering his entire body. When the holy man saw this vision, he was greatly astonished, since he could not understand this vision and wanted to do so, but at the same time he was feeling joy and sadness alternating in his heart. He was overjoyed at the gracious gaze with which the seraph showed him, since it was of an immense beauty, but the fact that he saw it affixed to a cross was frightening to behold. He was full of desire to be able to know as quickly as possible the meaning of that vision, in order to understand its meaning with his intelligence, and because of this his spirit was filled with great doubts. He could not understand anything clearly in that vision, until he saw the unfolding of a most glorious miracle in his own person, namely a miracle that was unheard of in the preceding centuries.

73. In that moment, in his hands and feet there began to appear the signs of the nails, just as he had seen some time before in the crucified man above him. His hands and feet appeared to be nailed in their centre, with the heads of the nails appearing on the palm of his hands and the surface of his feet, and their pointed ends coming out of the opposite part. These signs were round on the inside of the hands, while on the outside they were protruding as if flesh had grown around them, and the head of the nails looked twined and recoiled, and were growing out of the surrounding flesh. In the same manner the signs of the nails were impressed in his feet and they were growing out of the remaining flesh. His side looked as if it had been pierced by an overlaid wound, which often emitted blood, in such a way that his tunic and underwear were often stained and spattered with that sacred blood.

74. The man of God strove to keep these pearls

of this most precious treasure hidden from the eyes of all living beings, and he did not speak about them to the brothers, so as not to spoil such a great grace that he had received. He would always carry this secret in his heart and would frequently quote the prophetic saying: I have hidden your words in my heart so as not to sin against you (Ps 118:11). Although many succeeded in seeing the signs on his hands and on his feet, for as long as the friend of the Crucifix was living, no one succeeded in getting a glimpse of the wound on his side, except for brother Elias, who out of the great love that he showed to the saint, once begged him to change his tunic with his own. And thus, after having showed such a pious desire, he succeeded in getting what he asked for since [Francis] did not



**Chapel of St. Mary  
Magdalene on La Verna**

want to disappoint him. Brother Rufino also, who was permitted to massage [Francis' breast], once touched the wound lightly with his hand. As soon as he touched it, the saint of God suffered greatly, and he pushed Rufino's hand away from him, and begged the Lord to have mercy on that brother.

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## Contemplation in action

Celano begins the episode of the stigmatisation by noting that Francis would spend his time between working for the salvation of the brethren and dedicating quality time in the secret of contemplation to God. In the Franciscan Sources we meet various examples of episodes in which Francis would retreat to solitary places in order to be with the Lord. Examples include the period of conversion that Francis spent at the hermitage of Poggiobustone,<sup>6</sup> the Lent that he spent on the

island of Lake Trasimeno,<sup>7</sup> the retreat at the Speco di Sant'Urbano,<sup>8</sup> where he changed water into wine.

These retreats were part and parcel of the life programme of Francis and the first brothers. The periods spent in the evangelising ministry were accompanied by such experiences. Indeed, the first brothers did not have houses in the towns and cities, but preferred to withdraw to solitary hermitages on the mountains of central Italy. The hermitages would be located close enough to inhabited centres as to be reached easily by walking in a relatively short time. The brothers would spend their days in the open spaces of the towns and cities preaching the Word of God, and then would withdraw to their hermitage in the evening in order to dedicate their time to rest, fraternity and especially prayer. Prayer would include also a period of the night when the brothers would wake up to pray Matins. As proof of this assertion we have the case of the *Rule for Hermitages* that Francis composed for the brothers living in these places.<sup>9</sup> It is seemingly a Rule written for brothers who explicitly chose to live in a hermitage for a short period of time, but the practice of living in solitude was widespread in the Order during the early stages of its history.

Celano does not mention the hermitage of La Verna except when he explicitly speaks about the episode of the stigmatisation. The episode of the consultation of the Book of the Gospels is placed before the reference to La Verna, when Francis was staying *in heremitorio*, without any further specification. According to tradition, which is the result of the meditations on *The Considerations of the Stigmata* at the end of the *Fioretti*, the episode of the triple consultation of the Book of the Gospels occurred on La Verna some days before Francis had the vision of the crucified Seraph. Celano describes Francis as a knight of Christ who was prepared to face the combat of martyrdom.

This description fits in perfectly within the mediaeval mentality of chivalry and within the crusading spirit of the Middle Ages. Although many have tried to present Francis as an enemy of the Crusades and a friend of the "infidels", they have done so within the contemporary mentality of dialogue of fraternal approach towards

*Sanctuary of La Verna*



other religions. This mentality is a disservice to the original spirit of Francis, who although a peacemaker, was a son of his times. The fact that Celano describes the stigmatisation as a participation in the crusading spirit of the Crucified and an expression of martyrdom is quite relevant.

Indeed, Bonaventure himself would later on repeat this frame of mind in the *Legenda Maior*. When he describes the visit of Francis to the Sultan of Egypt in Damietta, Bonaventure concludes the narrative with the following reflection:

“When he saw that he was making no progress on converting these people and that he could not achieve his purpose, namely martyrdom, he went back to the lands of the faithful, as he was advised by a divine revelation. Thus by the kindness of God and the merits of the virtue of the holy man, it came about, mercifully and remarkably, that the friend of Christ sought with all his strength to die for him and yet could not achieve it. Thus he was not deprived of the merit of his desired martyrdom and was spared to be honoured in the future with a unique privilege. Thus it came about that the divine fire burned still more perfectly in his heart, so that later it was distilled clearly in his flesh. O truly blessed man, whose flesh, although not cut down by a tyrant’s steel, was yet not deprived of bearing a likeness of the Lamb that was slain! O truly and fully blessed man, I say, whose life the persecutor’s sword did not take away, and who yet did not lose the palm of martyrdom.”<sup>10</sup>

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## *The stigmatisation of Saint Francis*

The description given by Celano in the *Vita Brevior* follows closely the classical description contained in the *Vita Sancti Francisci*, 94-95. Indeed, the details of the two descriptions are very similar. One notes that the description of 1C is the oldest one among the Franciscan Sources, dating from 1229, and therefore the one in the *Vita Brevior* is also unique in its ancient dating. Celano gives great importance to the description of the crucified Seraph and to the stigmata of Saint Francis. Indeed, the description by Celano is by far the most detailed one, and all the other Franciscan Sources depend upon it in their way of presenting this unique event. What is also unique about Celano’s description is the inner sensation that Francis felt at the vision of the crucified Seraph.

Celano insists that Francis was feeling joy and sadness at the same time, joy at the beauty of the heavenly vision, sadness at beholding the image of the crucified man. The union with Christ in his suffering and glory left its seal upon the body of Francis, marking it with the signs of the passion.

Francis is truly the *amicus Crucifixi*, the friend of the Crucified. For Celano the intimate union between Francis and Christ was that of a unique love between friends who have known one another for a long time. The notion of friendship is quite interesting, if one notices that it is hardly relevant in many of the Sources, which prefer to speak of the notion of fraternity and brotherhood. The link of friendship, however, can assume an attitude of deep closeness even more inscribed in the heart than that of spiritual brotherhood. The reason is simple. Brothers do not choose another. Francis himself states in his *Testament*: “The Lord gave me brothers.” Friends, on the other hand, have the freedom of choosing to be with one another just because of a free act of the will. Therefore, friendship develops with a sense of pure freedom even more than brotherly love. If we take this approach to the relationship between Francis and Christ, we understand why Celano presents Francis as Christ’s friend in the consideration of the mystery of the Cross.

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## *The role of Brother Elias in the witness to the stigmatisation*

The Franciscan Sources do not mention Brother Elias as having been personally present on La Verna in September 1224 when Francis received the stigmata. It is difficult for us to know exactly the whereabouts of Brother Elias at that time, but it seems that he was present at the hermitage of Celle di Cortona. Indeed, Elias had been vicar to Saint Francis ever since 29 September 1221, since on 10 March of that year the first vicar, Pietro Cattani, had died at the Porziuncola. Given the important role of Elias when Celano was writing the *Vita Brevior*, that is, during the time when Elias was occupying the role of Minister General (1232-1239), it is necessary to try to understand how Elias might have been a source of information to Celano himself in the account of the stigmatisation. It is not difficult to imagine such a possibility, since the brothers with whom Francis was staying on La Verna, including Rufino and especially Leo, who

were the primary sources for the information given to Celano in 1228, were acting certainly under the leadership of Elias first as vicar (1221-1227) and then as Minister General of the Order (1232-1239).

Celano states that Elias enters the picture during the last six months of Francis' life, but that he had been forewarned by God regarding Francis' death two years before, that is in 1224. The text of the *Vita Brevior* is, again, modelled upon that of the *Vita Sancti Francisci* 105-109 (FAED I, 272-277). Here we present our translation of the episode regarding Elias' role following the episode of the stigmatisation.

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### *Vita Brevior 83-84: How brother Elias took him sick from Siena to Assisi.*

83. *In the sixth month before his death, when he was staying close to Siena, his condition grew worse with his stomach ailment and with that of his eyes. His body was assailed by serious suffering and it seemed that his death was approaching. Brother Elias hurried to come to him. When he [Elias] arrived [Francis] rejoiced at his coming. Elias took him to rest and receive cure at the Celle di Cortona. But when the illness became more serious, he decided to carry him to Assisi with him. The whole town rejoiced at his arrival, and since the populace hoped that they would now have a most precious treasure with them, all were rejoicing unanimously. In the meantime his illness progressed, and while he was staying in the palace of the bishop of Assisi, all his bodily strength abandoned him, and he felt himself deprived of all health and all his bodily members were suffering atrocious pain. When he was asked how he could tolerate such a passion of his body, he humbly answered that he was ready to welcome all kinds of martyrdom. He said: "God's will makes every difficult thing easy to carry."*

84. *Thus, when he saw that his final days were approaching, as brother Elias had come to know two years before, since God had deigned to reveal this to him, he called to him all the brothers who he willed, and he blessed each and every one of them just as the patriarch Jacob once did.<sup>11</sup>*

Elias was not physically close to Francis in 1224, but he certainly was after the episode of the night of Siena in April 1226, when Francis was on the verge of dying. Celano, however, gives us an

interesting hint in the *Vita Brevior*, which is more developed in the *Vita Sancti Francisci*, regarding Elias' premonition that Francis would soon die. Here is the text:

*Twenty years had now passed since his conversion, and his time was ending just as it had been shown to him by God's will. For, once the blessed father and brother Elias were staying at Foligno, one night while they were sleeping, a priest of venerable appearance and great age dressed in white clothing appeared to brother Elias. "Get up, brother," he said, "and tell brother Francis that eighteen years have passed since he renounced the world and clung to Christ. He will remain in this life only two more years; then he will go the way of all flesh when the Lord calls him to Himself."<sup>12</sup>*

This detail is a proof that Elias was aware of the failing health of Saint Francis, and he certainly took care of the blessed father. In fact, we know that during the summer months of 1225 Elias had Francis carried to Rieti to be cured by the papal physicians. It was then that Francis resided at the hermitage of Santa Maria della Foresta, and underwent the terrible operation of the cauterisation of his eyes at the hermitage of Fonte Colombo. Elias was following Francis closely during this period.

All these details point to the fact that Elias must have been well informed on the events that occurred on La Verna, and their after effects were of prime responsibility to him. Since Celano was writing the *Vita Brevior* and dedicating it especially to the Minister General, it is natural that he would underline the role of Brother Elias during the last two years of Francis' life, and that he would present Elias as a loving and caring father and brother to the stigmatised Francis.

#### NOTES

- 1 J. DALARUN, *Thome Celanensis Vita Beati Patris Nostri Francisci (Vita Brevior). Présentation et édition critique*, in *Analecta Bollandiana. Revue Critique d'Hagiographie. A Journal of Critical Hagiography*, Publiée par la Société des Bollandistes, Tome 133, Bruxelles 2015, 23-86.
- 2 N. MUSCAT, *Vita Brevior Sancti Francisci by Thomas of Celano*, in *Spirit + Life* 113 (July-September 2015), 17-18.
- 3 J. DALARUN, *The New Francis in the Rediscovered Life (Vita Brevior) of Thomas of Celano*, in *Ordo et Sanctitas: The Franciscan Spiritual Journey in Theology and Hagiography. Essays in honour of J.A. Wayne*

- Hellmann O.F.M.Conv*, edited by M.F. CUSATO, 32-46.
- 4 The official English translation of the *Vita Brevior* is: J. DALARUN, *The Rediscovered Life of St. Francis of Assisi*. Thomas of Celano, translated by T.J. JOHNSON, Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University, NY 2016.
- 5 J. DALARUN, *Thome Celanensis Vita Beati Patris Nostri Francisci (Vita Brevior)*, 70-74, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 133, 58-60:
70. *His enim ita gestis, conversionis sue annus octavus decimus complebatur. Quo in tempore vir iste sanctissimus, relictis secularibus turbis, locum quietis petiit et secretum solitudinis introivit. Mox eius erat tempora, prout oportebat, dividere et alia lucris impendere proximorum, alia vero contemplationis beatis secessibus consummare. Paucos sibi socios assumpsit, qui ab omnibusurbationum incursibus suam quietem defenderent et servarent. Cumque illic aliquandiu permansisset et oratione continua frequentique contemplatione divinam familiaritatem modo ineffabili fuisset adeptus, quid in agendo sacrificium se Domino magis gratum posset offerre scire totis visceribus cupiebat. Piissime anelabat cognoscere in quo perfectius adherere posset Dei voluntati.*
71. *Cumque huic desiderio cotidie ferventius adhereret, die quadam, in heremitorio in quo ipse manebat, ad altare devotus accessit, super quod evangeliorum librum reverenter inposuit. Sicque prostratus in oratione, cum devotione et reverentia multa, Dominum precebatur ut, in prima libri apertione, suam sibi de se dignaretur ostendere voluntatem. Tandem, lacrimis irrigatus, ab oratione surgens ac signaculo crucis se muniens, de altari librum accepit et acceptum cum timore aperuit. Cui cum Domini nostri Ihesu Christi passio primitus occurrisset, ne casu evenisse hoc posset aliquatenus extimari, bis et ter librum aperuit et idem vel simile scriptum invenit. Non turbatur propter hoc intrepidus miles Christi, nec decidit animo, utpote qui superior desiderio martir fuit. Manebat proinde inconcussus et letus et, letitie cantica corde semper et ore revolvens, paulo post letificatur maioris revelatione misterii et ditatur gratia potiori.*
72. *Duobus namque annis antequam spiritum redderet celo, in heremitorio quod Alverna dicitur, amicus Dei Franciscus vidit in visione seraphym unum in aere, sex alas habentem, extensum supra se, manibus et pedibus cruci affixum. Due ale super caput elevabantur, due ad volandum extendebantur, due denique totum velabant corpus. Vir sanctus, hec videns, vehementer obstupuit, sed quid sibi vellet hec visio advertere nesciens, gaudium atque meror cor eius sollicitudine alternabant. Letabatur in gratioso aspectu, quo a seraphym conspici se videbat, cuius pulcritudo inextimabilis erat nimis, sed eum cruci affixio deterrebat. Cogitabat sollicitus quid posset hec visio designare et, ad capiendum ex ea intelligentie sensum, anxiebatur plurimum spiritus eius. Nichil tamen ex illa liquido potuit intelligere, donec in seipso tandem vidit gloriosissimum miraculum illud retroactis seculis inauditum.*
73. *Ceperunt eo tempore in manibus et pedibus eius apparere signa clavorum, quemadmodum paulo ante virum supra se viderat crucifixum. Manus et pedes eius in ipso medio confixe videbantur, clavorum capitibus in interiori parte manuum et superiori pedum apparentibus*
- et eorum acuminibus existentibus ex adverso. Erant enim signa illa rotunda interius in manibus, exterius autem oblonga et caruncula quedam apparebat, quasi summitas clavorum retorta et reperienda, que carnem reliquam excedebat. Sic et in pedibus impressa erant signa clavorum et a carne reliqua elevata. Dextrum quoque latus quasi lancea transfixum cicatrice obducta erat, quod sepe sanguinem emittebat, ita ut tunica eius cum femoralibus multotiens respergeretur sanguine sacro.*
74. *Talibus igitur in se vir Dei resultantibus margaritis studuit sumopere pretiosissimum illum thesaurum ab omnium viventium oculis conservare reconditum, ne, alicuius familiaritatis occasione, in tantam sibi datam gratiam pati contingeret detrimentum. Gerebat proinde semper in corde suo et in hore frequenter habebat propheticum illud: In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua ut non peccem tibi (Ps 118,11). Sed, licet manuum et pedum signa, dum in carne viveret Crucifixi amicus, multi vidissent, pretiosum tamen lateris vulnus nullus potuit intueri, nisi frate Helyas, qui semel ab eo, ob precipuam dilectionem quam habebat sanctus in eo, tunica eius se induit et suam sibi versa vice donavit. Et sic ipsum pia delusione deludens, optinuit quod obtavit. Frate Rufinus vero, ad eum scalpendum admissus, manu illud sensibiliter sed fortuito contractavit. Ad cuius tactum sanctus Dei non modicum doluit et, manum a se repellens, ut Dominus ei parceret exclamavit.*
- 6 1C 26 (FAED I, 205); 2C 131 (FAED II, 333).
- 7 ABF 6 (FAED III, 448).
- 8 3C 17 (FAED II, 410).
- 9 *Rule for Hermitages* 3 (FAED I, 61): “And let them always recite Compline of the day immediately after sunset and strive to maintain silence, recite their Hours, rise for Matins.”
- 10 LMj 9,9 (FAED II, 603-604).
- 11 J. DALARUN, *Thome Celanensis Vita Beati Patris Nostri Francisci (Vita Brevior)*, 83-84, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 133, 63: *In mense autem sexto ante obitum sui diem, cum esset apud Senas, stomachi defectus infirmitati prevaluit oculorum et, gravius solito corpore toto attritus, morti visus est propinquare. Frater Helyas festinans venit ad eum, de cuius adventu gaudens, convaluit et ad Cellam de Cortona cum ipso recessit. Ubi morbo gravius invalescente, fecit se Assisium deportari. Letata est civitas in adventu eius et, tam pretiosissimum thesaurum apud se in proximo recondi sperantes, omnes unanimiter exultabant. Interea infirmitate crescente, dum esset in palatio Assisinati episcopi, omne robur corporis eius elanguit et, viribus destitutus omnibus, in singulis fere membris torqueri cepit atrociter. Interrogatus namque quid sentiret de tanta quam tolerabat corporis passione, mitius fore sibi asseruit aliud quodcumque genus martirii. “Sed Dei voluntas,” inquit, “leve facit omne difficile.” Enimvero, cum iam sibi diem videret propinquare extremum, sicut a fratre Helya biennium ante didicerat, cui Dominus patris exitum dignatus est revelare, vocatis ad se fratribus et filiis quos volebat, sicut ei dabatur desuper, velut olym patriarcha Iacob, unicuique benedixit.*
- 12 1C 109 (FAED I, 277).

# 800 YEARS OF FRANCISCAN PRESENCE IN THE HOLY LAND

NOEL MUSCAT OFM

The Franciscan presence in the Holy Land goes back officially to 1217. In that year the first brothers were sent as missionaries as a result of the decision of the general chapter of Pentecost, celebrated at the Porziuncola on 14 May 1217. An ancient tradition holds that the first brothers arrived at the Crusader port of Acre under the direction of brother Elias, who is therefore considered to be the first minister provincial of Syria or Outremer, as the region of the Holy Land was called during the first century of its history.

Historians base upon this tradition the arrival of Saint Francis in the East during the course of the fifth Crusade in the summer of 1219. To this day pilgrims can visit the remains of the mediaeval Pisan port of Acre, which is traditionally considered to have been the place where brother Elias welcomed Saint Francis, who had left from Bari or Brindisi (another tradition mentions Ancona) on 24 June of that same year. Francis stopped in Acre before continuing on his journey by sea along the coast of Palestine until he arrived in Damietta, on the Nile delta in Egypt. After the tragedy of the battle of Qarne Hattin (4 July 1187) and after the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin (2 October 1187), the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was reduced to a handful of fortified cities and castles on the coasts of Palestine and Lebanon, which included Jaffa, Arsouf (Apollonia), Caesarea Maritima, Atlit (Castrum Peregrinorum), Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli and Antioch. These were the last Crusader fortresses in Palestine. One after another they all fell into the hands of the Saracens. Antioch fell in 1268 and Acre was taken by Al-Ashraf Khalil on 18 May 1291.

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## *First signs of Franciscan presence in the Holy Land*

The *Vita Prima* of brother Giles of Assisi (*Vita*

*beati Aegidii Assisiatis*, in L. LEMMENS, *Documenta antiqua franciscana*, I: *Scripta fratris Leonis socii S.P. Francisci*, Quaracchi 1901, 37-63) states that this humble Franciscan friar was the first brother who arrived at the Holy Land and visited the Tomb of Christ in Jerusalem: “After these episodes, he desired to visit the tomb of the Lord and the other places of the Holy Land where the Lord had dwelt together with the Virgin Mary and with his disciples. One day, since brother Francis asked him what he wanted to do, he expressed this desire to him. After having given him one of his companions, the blessed Francis gave him obedience to leave. When he was travelling he arrived at the town of Brindisi and lived there for some time. While he was waiting for the ship he bought a pitcher in which he carried water, and he would go round the town shouting: ‘Who would like to buy water?’ Thus he would live with what he acquired. Then he crossed the sea, and with devotion of reverence he visited the tomb of the Lord and also the other places that he desired to see. While he was living in the town of Acre, he strove to make a living with his work. He used to weave canes into baskets as the people of that place were accustomed to do. When he was not able to do so, he would beg for alms by doing from door to door. At last he returned to Saint Mary of the Porziuncola with the brothers.” (Translation from: *Storia della vita del beato Egidio (Vita Perugina)*, 4, traduzione di S. BRUFANI, in *Fonti Agiografiche dell’Ordine Franciscano*, a cura di M. T. DOLSO, Edizioni Francescane, Padova, 2014, marginal number 1198).

The historian of the Custody of the Holy Land, Girolamo GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca bibliografica di Terra Santa*, I, Quaracchi 1906, 105, regarding the date in which brother Giles went to the Holy Land, chooses 1215, whereas other scholars prefer to go back to 1213-1214. Golubovich states that Giles was: “the first Minorite who placed his foot on the

Holy Land in order to visit the Tomb of Christ and the other Holy Places of Palestine.”

The episode of the visit of brother Giles is also given to us by Arnald of Sarrant in the *Chronicle of the XXIV Ministers General of the Order of friars Minor* (*Chronica XXIV Generalium*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III, 77).

The visit of brother Giles was certainly an exception and the first sign of Franciscan presence, which lasted only for some months in the Holy Land before 1217. However, it marks an important beginning, also because brother Giles succeeded in visiting the Tomb of Christ in a period in which it was very difficult for Christians to go there. The visit of Giles can be considered to be unique in this period of the history of the Order. The friars who arrived in Palestine after the chapter of 1217 lived in the fortified cities of the Crusaders, even though they certainly risked their lives to venture into the lands of the “infidels” for missionary endeavours. We have some examples of Franciscan martyrs in the Holy Land, who were killed by the Saracens *in odium fidei*, as was the case of brother Philip of Le Puy, martyred in Ashdod in 1288.

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## *The General Chapter of 1217 and the first missions*

The Franciscan chronicler Jordan of Giano wrote: “In the year of Our Lord 1219 and the tenth year of his conversion, in the chapter held at St. Mary of the Portiuncula, Brother Francis sent brothers to France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and the other provinces of Italy to which the brothers had not yet gone” (JORDAN OF GIANO, *Chronicle*, 3, in *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, Translated by P. Hermann, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 21). This is a reference to the year 1217 rather than 1219. It was in that year that the first brothers were sent to the regions beyond the Alps and beyond the sea.

From the same Jordan of Giano we know that the first missionary expeditions beyond the Alps were a failure, most probably because of the lack of adequate preparation of the missionaries who volunteered to go. The brothers in France were suspected of being Albigensian heretics, but Pope Honorius III defended them in front of the bishops in the Bulla *Cum dilecti* (11 June 1219). In Germany and Hungary the first missionaries experienced all kinds of persecutions, since they had no knowl-

edge of the local languages and the people thought that they were Cathar heretics. It was only in 1219 that the first organised group of missionaries established themselves in Paris and Germany. In Spain and Portugal there was a Franciscan presence ever since 1219. It was Francis himself who went to Spain in 1213, but he fell sick and had to return to Italy. In 1219 a group of brothers had a friary at Olivais, outside Coimbra in Portugal. From there they went to Morocco and died as martyrs at Marrakesh on 16 January 1220. They were Berardus and his companions, whose remains were taken back to Coimbra and provided the occasion for the Augustinian canon Fernando from Lisbon to enter the Franciscan Order and become brother Anthony (St. Anthony of Padua).

During those years the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land became consolidated with the presence of brother Elias and the first brothers. The Franciscan historian Heribert Holzappel shows that the provinces or regions of the Order in 1226, the year in which Saint Francis died, were 12 in all, 6 of them in Italy and 6 in the regions beyond the Alps and beyond the sea: (1) Tuscia (Umbria and Tuscany); (2) Marche; (3) Lombardy; (4) Terra di Lavoro (Naples); (5) Puglie; (6) Calabria (and Sicily); (7) Outremer (Syria); (8) Spain; (9) France; (10) Provence; (11) Germany (and Hungary); (12) England (H. HOLZAPFEL, *Manuale Historiae Ordinis fratrum Minorum*, Friburgi-Brisgoviae, 1909, 142).

The province of Syria, known as Outremer, included also the region of Romania (Constantinople and Greece), and was spread out over the entire Middle East (Asia Minor, Cyprus, Syria, Antioch, Palestine and Egypt). It was present in all the territories controlled by the Saracens and by the Byzantine Empire. As we have already seen, the fortified cities of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in those times included some fortresses on the coast of Palestine, Lebanon and Cyprus. In 1217 Acre was the capital city of the Latin Kingdom, with the presence of the Knights Templars and Knights Hospitallers. From Acre brother Elias and the first brothers could organise their missionary apostolate.

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## *The first friary of the Franciscans in Acre*

The presence of the Chivalric Orders in Acre

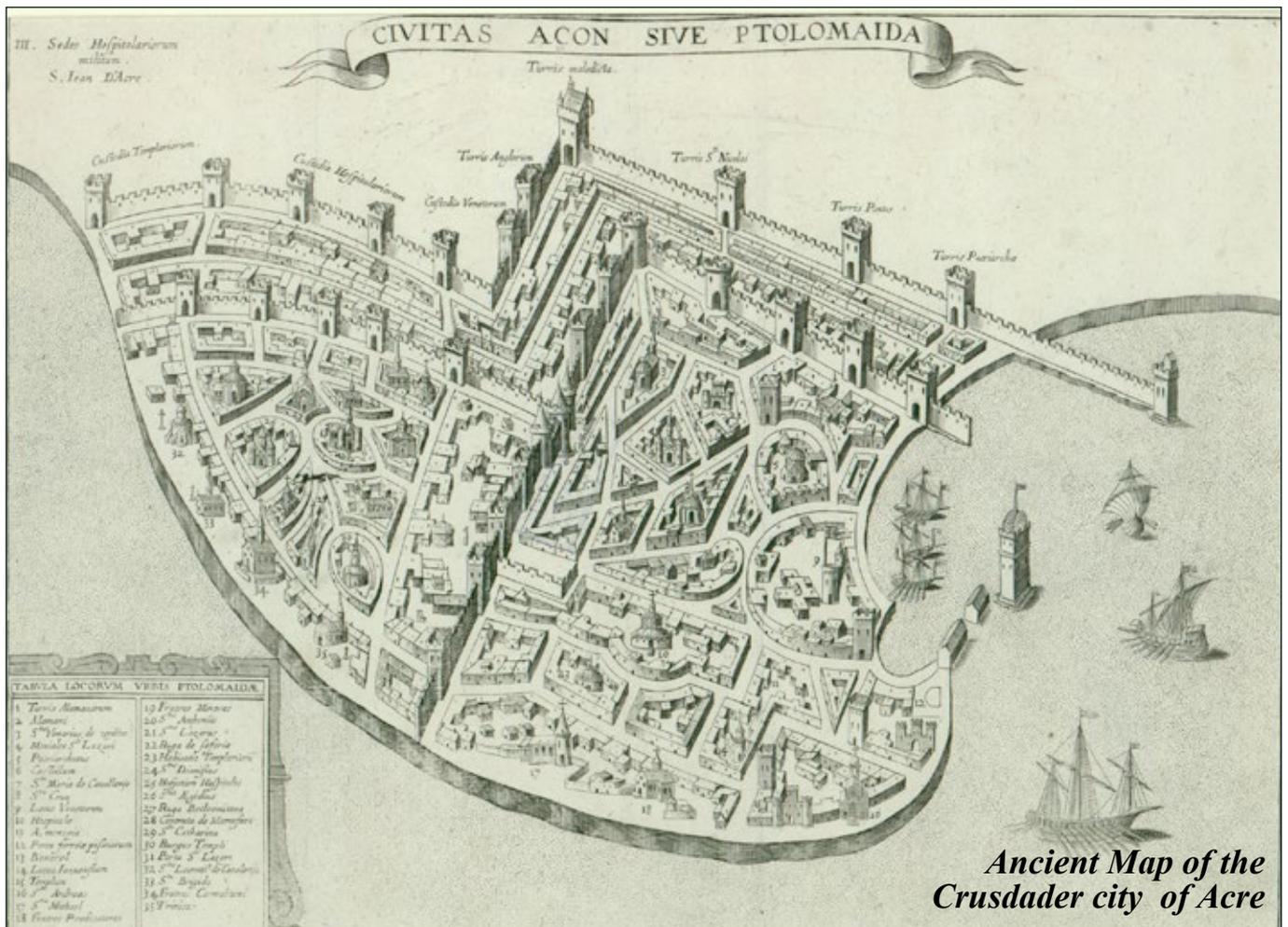
meant that in this capital city of the Crusades the other newly-founded mendicant Orders could also establish themselves during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. These Orders did not only possess convents, but also schools of theology: “Because of the presence of the numerous religious houses in Acre, there were Christian schools in Acre. Theology was taught here since 1218. Besides the likelihood of a school connected with the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, the Franciscans and the Dominicans must have had *studia* in Acre. William of Rubruck had been assigned to the Franciscan convent (established c. 1219) as *lector* in 1255. Certainly, both the Franciscans and the Dominicans were actively involved in the study of oriental languages, including Arabic and Armenian, for their missionary activities” (Jaroslav FOLDA, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land. From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre (1187-1291)*, Cambridge University Press 2005, 400).

We do not know exactly where the first friary of the Franciscans in Acre was to be found, at least at the very beginning when brother Elias arrived. We do know, however, that later on, the friars Minor had a church and convent in the quarter of Montmusard (FOLDA, 183). This was a newly-built resi-

dential quarter, that grew in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the northern section of Acre, and was surrounded by its own fortifications. Already in 1206 there was a Dominican priory in Acre, which was situated in the northern section of the quarter of the Templars, whereas during the same time a Carmelite priory was built in Montmusard.

Brother Elias certainly established the friary of Acre, and most probably also other residencies of the brothers in Antioch, Tripoli, Beirut and Tyre (S. VECCHIO, *Elia d’Assisi*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 42 (1993): [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/elia-d-assisi](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/elia-d-assisi)).

We do not possess information regarding the friars who lived permanently in the province of Syria during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Jerusalem and the Holy Land remained important centres for Christianity. During the same time, the ministry of evangelisation of the Franciscans in the Middle East was directed towards different aims, and not just to the Holy Land in a specific sense. We know, for example, that after 1220 brother Benedict of Arezzo was present in Antioch as minister of the province of Syria and successor of brother Elias. We do not know whether he was the direct suc-



cessor of Elias, or else was the third brother in succession after brother Luca, who is mentioned as minister of Romania (the region of Greece, the Aegean islands and Constantinople). Before 1221 a certain brother Andrew, *ultramarinus de civitate Achon*, that is, from Acre, entered the Order and was present in Parma, together with the Bailiff of Sidon, for the baptism of the famous Franciscan chronicler Salimbene de Adam of Parma. William of Tyre states that in 1228 two brothers arrived in Acre, sent by Pope Gregory IX, in order to deliver the sentence of excommunication of the Emperor Frederick II. The two brother were killed by the same Emperor as a retaliation to the Pope for the sentence of excommunication. There were other Franciscans who suffered persecution in the hands of the same Emperor, every time they sided with the Pope in their missionary expeditions in the Holy Land (A. MUSARRA, *Outremer dinanzi a Francesco. Gli Stati Latini di Terra Santa e la predicazione minoritica in età pre-custodiale*, in *Frate Francesco* 82 (Aprile 2016 – n. 1) 15).

“The Franciscans had their house in the southeast corner of Montmusard, near the Gate of St. Anthony; the house was said to have been founded by St. Francis himself” (FOLDA, 183).

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## *Historic profile of the arrival of the Franciscans in the Holy Land*

The scholar Filippo Sedda presented an interesting conference on the figure of brother Elias of Assisi, or of Cortona, during the celebrations marking the 800 years of Franciscan presence in the Holy Land, organised by the Custody of the Holy Land in October 2017. The discovery of the codex of the *Vita Brevior* of Thomas of Celano by the scholar Jacques Dalarun led to a re-evaluation of the figure of brother Elias in his relationship with Saint Francis. The fact that brother Elias was known as the minister general of the Order (1232-1239) who ended up excommunicated until 1252, just one year before his death in 1253, left in a shadow his role as the first minister provincial of Syria or Outremer. We have already stated that Jordan of Giano gives us information regarding brother Elias, when he speaks about Caesar of Speyer, who entered the Order precisely in Acre, and was given the Franciscan habit by brother Elias.

When Saint Francis went to the East in 1219, Thomas of Celano insists that he went there with the aim of dying a martyr's death. This is an important element in order to understand the aim of the Franciscan presence in the region of Outremer. We know that when Francis returned to Italy in 1220, he took with him brother Elias, the minister of Outremer, together with brothers Peter Cattani and Caesar of Speyer. The fact that Francis entrusted Elias with such an important responsibility in a difficult region for the Order shows that Elias was an important figure, so much so that Thomas of Celano states that Elias was a “mother” to Saint Francis. It seems that Elias remained for 3 years in the region of Outremer (1217-1220), and that he exercised a penitential preaching ministry, since he was not a cleric.

We have seen that the information regarding the general chapter of Pentecost of 1217 is very scarce. We do know, however, that this was the first time that Francis sent the brothers as missionaries in the known world of those times. The *Chronicle of the XXIV Generals* states that in 1217 the provinces of the Order were instituted. Now this chronicle was written towards the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century (1365), and is therefore considered to be a late document among the Sources.

The scholar Filippo Sedda insists that the term “province” in the Franciscan Sources does not necessarily indicate a juridical entity of a religious family as we know it today, but rather a “region” in which the brothers would go in order to preach. These documents insist that the first places in which the brothers went were those in which people followed the Catholic religion, even though these were not always ready to welcome the brothers as Catholics, as we have seen. In the very beginning the brothers did not have permission to build friaries. It seems that the brothers lived in *loca*, or provisional dwellings, most probably hermitages.

The *Later Rule*, when speaking about the general chapter, states that the ministers who lived in the regions beyond the Alps and beyond the sea, were obliged to come to the chapter once every three years. Therefore Elias was a minister not of a province in the present juridical sense of the term, but rather of a region.

It was the chapter of Pisa of 1263, during the time of Saint Bonaventure, that divided the province of Outremer into two provinces, namely the province of Outremer (Syria) and the province of

Romania (Greece). The oldest reference to the region of the Middle East is that of the province of Outremer, or Syria. Sometimes we meet the expression *partes ultramarinas* (the regions beyond the sea).

In the *Bullarium Franciscanum* we find some references to this region. There is a group of papal letters sent to the friars Minor and friars Preachers who lived in the kingdom of Miramolín (Morocco). The most important letter is entitled *Constitutus in praesentia* (9 December 1220), and was sent to cardinal Giovanni Colonna, papal legate for the Latin empire, and again on 18 February 1221 to the Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Pope Honorius III defends a certain John, *praepositus* (provost) of the church of Constantinople, or *monachus*, who had entered the Franciscan Order. The bull is addressed to a certain brother Luca, *magister* of the region of Romania, who had received the profession of this John. Romania referred to Greece (not to modern Roumania), and after 1221 its minister was brother Benedict of Arezzo. Since the Franciscan Rule states that it is the minister who should accept the profession of a brother, this is a hint that brother Luca was, in effect, the second minister of the province of Outremer, that is, successor of brother Elias and predecessor of brother Benedetto.

Golubovich states that in 1230 Pope Gregory IX addressed a *Breve* to the Patriarch of Antioch and to other prelates of the Orient, in which we see that the friars Minor were already living in a stable way in these regions. Since the bishops were obstructing the apostolic work of the Franciscans, the Pope defended the latter with the Bulla *Si Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, which is the most ancient document preserved in the Archives of the Custody of the Holy Land, and is a witness to the presence of the Franciscans in these regions. The Pope tells the bishops that they had to give permission to the brothers to build oratories and convents in their dioceses (Beatrice SALETTI, *I Francescani in Terra Santa (1291-1517)*, Edizioni Libreria Universitaria, Padova 2016, 39-46).

The Bulla *Si Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* is a precious document, since it shows us how the Franciscans were already established in the Holy Land in 1230, especially after the truce agreed upon between Emperor Frederick II and the Sultan of Egypt al-Malik al-Kamil in 1229. The following is our translation of the Bulla, published in Perugia on 1 February 1230 (GREGORY IX, Bulla *Si Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, in *Bullarium Francisca-*

*num*, Tomus I, Ed. Sbaralea, Roma 1759, 58-59):

“GREGORY, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God. To our Venerable Brothers the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, and Legates of the Apostolic See, to the Archbishops, Bishops, and our beloved sons the Abbots, Priors, Provosts, Deans, Archdeacons, and the other Ecclesiastical Prelates, to whom this Letter reaches, we wish health and Apostolic Blessings.

If you pay attention to the Order of friars Minor, you will realise fully that they do not desire to possess earthly riches, since they have professed that they are content with what is necessary in their poverty. They profess poverty in a special way. Therefore, we ask you to show them your favour, as is convenient for them, and that you do not place obstacles in front of them, since they are not looking for or desiring temporal comforts. As a consequence, we advise all of you and encourage you with great earnest, that if any one of the Faithful would like to build for them Oratories in your Parishes, so as to help them in their work, since they desire the good of souls and all those things that are beneficial for their salvation, you are to give them this favour with benevolence, and you are to give them permission to do this with full freedom, so that with the permission of the Minister Provincial they can send men who are worthy of proclaiming the Word of God in your Parishes. We also will that they are not to accept Tithes, First Fruits, or other offerings, and they are not to have the right of Ecclesiastical burial if they are not Brothers, members of this Order that we have mentioned. We also will that, every time that you are requested, you are to see that you bless the cemeteries that the Apostolic See will give them for their own use; you are not to bind them with any interdict, neither are you to publish any sentence of excommunication against them, without the special command of the Apostolic See. You are to observe this command and precept that we are giving you, so that you may give witness that you want to further the good of this Order. May you be the ones who will make us favourable and full of goodness towards you, so that we will not be compelled to provide otherwise in this regard.

Given at Perugia, on the *Calends* of February, the Third Year of our Pontificate.”

The Bulla was sent to the Patriarch of Antioch, and to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and had the aim of defending the rights of the Order of friars Minor in the same line of privileges that the Apos-

tolic See accorded it ever since 1224, when Saint Francis was still alive, and when Pope Honorius III gave the friars Minor the faculty to have their own Oratories in order to recite the divine office and celebrate Mass (HONORIUS III, Bulla *Quia populares tumultus* [3 December 1224]).

The Franciscan historian of the Custody of the Holy Land, Girolamo GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca Bio-Biografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Cristiano*, Tomo I (1215-1300), Quaracchi 1906, 158-160, narrates the story regarding how the Franciscans entered for the first time in Jerusalem in 1229, just three years after the death of Saint Francis.

We have already seen that, in 1217, Saint Francis had established the province of Syria or Outremer, and that the first minister provincial was brother Elias in the friary of Acre. In 1229 the emperor Frederick II succeeded in establishing an agreement with the Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Kamil, with the aim of declaring a truce between Christians and Muslims for a period of 10 years. The emperor had commercial interests with Egypt. On his part, Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) had asked the emperor to organise another Crusade after the failure of the fifth Crusade. The fact that the emperor did not take notice of the Pope's request, but rather preferred a diplomatic agreement with the Sultan of Egypt, made Pope Gregory IX declare the emperor excommunicated.

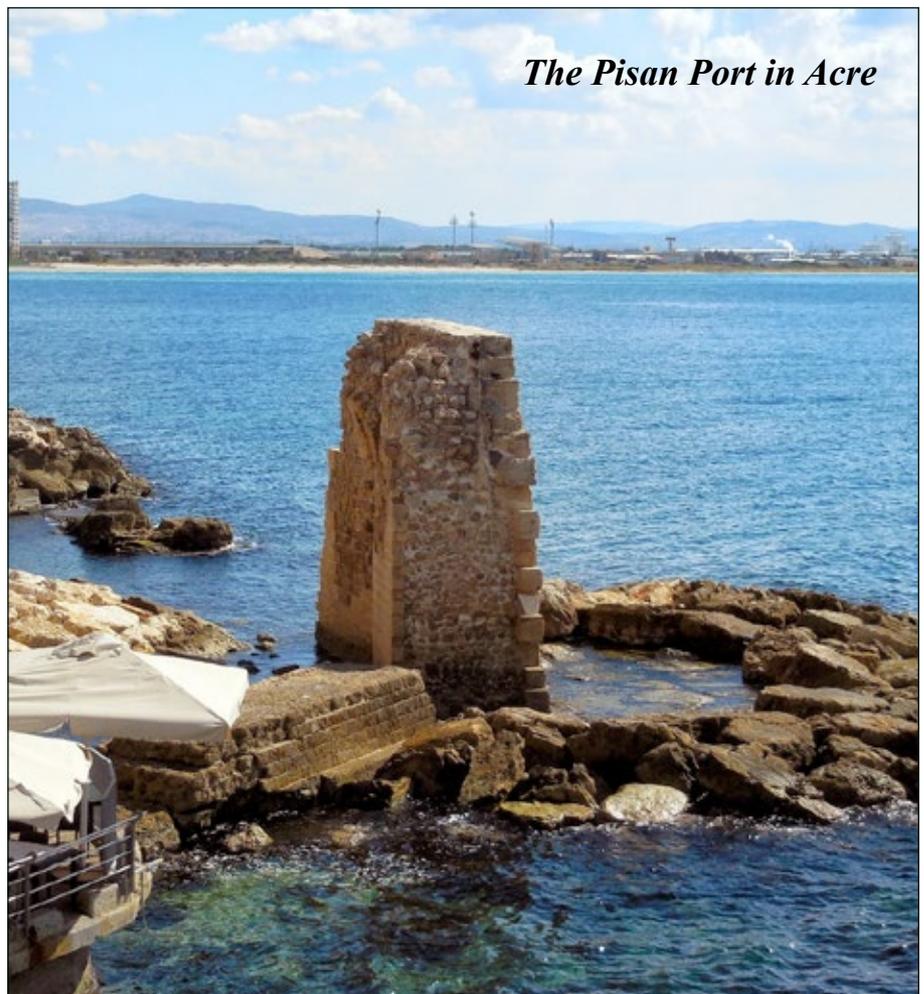
The action of the emperor, although it was one of disobedience to the authority of the Pope, had also its positive aspects. In fact, as a recognition of the end of hostilities, the Sultan of Egypt offered to cede the city of Jerusalem to the Christians, except for the *Haram al sharif* or the holy enclosure where the Muslims have the Mosque of Al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock, as well as to give to the Christians the holy places of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

In March 1229 Emperor Frederick II entered Jerusalem and crowned himself King of Jerusalem in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. In the meantime, he had already gone to Acre on 7

September 1228, where he was welcomed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Grand Masters of the Templars and Hospitallers. But during that same period two Franciscan brothers had arrived in Acre bearing the letter of Pope Gregory IX in which he declared the emperor excommunicated. Thus the emperor did not find the desired support. As soon as he had declared himself King of Jerusalem he punished the Franciscan brothers harshly and then returned to Europe.

Thus, in 1229, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Gerard of Lausanne (1225-1239) together with his clergy took the occasion of the truce and re-entered the Holy City in March 1229. The historian Matthew Paris wrote that the Patriarch retook possession of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been closed since 1187, as well as of many other properties that used to belong to the Latin Patriarch during the time of the Crusades. Paris does not give us any clue as to whether the friars Minor arrived in Jerusalem with the Patriarch. However we know from other historical sources that the Franciscans entered Jerusalem also at that time.

In fact we know that on 1 February 1230 Pope Gregory IX addressed the Brief *Si Ordinis Frat-*



*The Pisan Port in Acre*

*rum Minorum* to the Patriarch of Antioch, Albert de Rezato (1226-1245) and to the Patriarch of Jerusalem Gerard. In this document the Pope speaks about the fact that the Franciscans were already present in Jerusalem in that year. Thus we know that, at least in 1229, the friars Minor had a dwelling in Jerusalem. This document shows how the Pope wanted the bishops to respect the right of the Franciscans to have their own oratories and convents in which they lived under the jurisdiction of the same bishops, particularly the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem.

This papal document is the oldest witness we possess that is a proof that the Franciscans were certainly present in the Holy City of Jerusalem in 1229, just three years after the death of Saint Francis, and that there were many other religious and prelates who had returned to Jerusalem during this brief period of cessation of hostilities between Frederick II and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil.

Our question is: where was the first Franciscan friary in Jerusalem to be found? We know that, during the Crusader era, the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre was officiated by the Latin Patriarch and the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, and therefore these probably re-entered into the possession of the Basilica during this brief period of peace. The historical documentation referring to the presence of the Franciscans in Jerusalem during this period exists, and is a proof that they were living in the Holy City.

When he describes the Via Dolorosa during his visit to Jerusalem (1288-1291), the Dominican Ricoldo di Montecroce speaks about the place in which the soldiers who were leading Jesus to death had compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross. He mentions this place as the cross-roads between the Street of Jehosaphat (today known as al-Wad) and the street that comes down from Saint Stephen's Gate (today Via Dolorosa). "Close to this place there is the house (*locus*) that had been the property of the friars Minor" (Denys PRINGLE, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus. Volume III: The City of Jerusalem*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, No. 290, p. 97).

Ricoldo was writing some 50 years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Kwarezmian Turks in 1244, when the Christian presence and the Franciscans disappeared from the Holy City. The memory was still fresh. He certainly speaks about the period between 1229 and 1244, when Jerusalem

was in the hands of the Latins (Catholics) during the truce established between Emperor Frederick II and the Sultan of Egypt. As we have seen, this presence was possible because Pope Gregory IX had asked the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem to let the Franciscans have their oratories and convents in the parishes of the secular clergy, with the condition that they were to respect the rights of the same clergy. Golubovich states that in this friary lived a certain brother Aridizio Corradi (1230-1234) who returned to Italy and died in Senigallia in November 1235 (GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca*, Tomo II, 291-291, no. 28).

We know nothing else regarding this friary and the exact place where it was situated. The friary was certainly abandoned in 1244 when the Kwarezmian Turks invaded Jerusalem and massacred the Christians. However the *Chronicon Sampetrinum* III, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana Crucesignatorum* (saec. XII-XIII), ed. Sabino DE SANDOLI, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior* XXIV, 1978-1984, Vol. IV, 82, mentions the Franciscans as being present in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre for the ceremony of the Holy Fire on Easter Saturday of 1267/68.

The historian Golubovich wrote in 1898 (*Serie cronologica dei Superiori della Terra Santa*) that in 1240 there were two friars Minor who were officiating the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. But the same historian then discovered that the manuscript he had consulted was corrupt, and that the possibility of a Franciscan presence in the Holy Sepulchre during the 13<sup>th</sup> century cannot be proved.

The problem of the exact place where the first friary of the Franciscans in Jerusalem was situated regards the fact that the station that nowadays marks the meeting of Jesus with Simon of Cyrene is a small chapel that has been in the property of the Franciscans since 1850. Thus the original place is lost, although it would certainly have been located in this area. In the Middle Ages pilgrims would commemorate the meeting of Jesus with Simon of Cyrene in the corner between Jehosaphat Street and al-Wad Street (Via Dolorosa) where the Austrian Hospice now stands on one side and a mosque on the opposite side. This place is nowadays linked rather with the third and fourth stations of the *Via Crucis*, whereas the chapel of the Franciscans is to be found some metres further down, at the spot where from al-Wad Street one turns right and begins to climb the Via Dolorosa.

# THE *LIBER* OF FRANCESCO DI BARTOLO ON THE PORTIUNCULA INDULGENCE: FROM THE CODEXES TO A PRINTED EDITION

STEFANO BRUFANI

Stefano BRUFANI, *Il "Liber" di Francesco di Bartolo sull'indulgenza della Porziuncola: dai codici alla stampa*, in *Franciscana, Bollettino della Società Internazionale di studi francescani* Vol. XVIII (2016), 225-241. Translation from the original Italian of the first part of the paper, and translation of extracts from the second section.

The *Liber* or *Tractatus* of Francesco di Bartolo of Assisi<sup>1</sup> represents the point of arrival of a long itinerary of a documentary-hagiographic collection that, from the last quarter of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century had taken root and progressed in the province of the friars Minor of St. Francis in Umbria and also in the nearby custody of Arezzo. All the process began with the realisation that in the official Franciscan *legendae* and also in those going back to the tradition of the companions of Francis of Assisi there reigned the most absolute silence on the supposed concession of a plenary indulgence in favour of the small chapel of the Portiuncula.<sup>2</sup>

Already in 1230 Pope Gregory IX, in the letter *Is qui ecclesiam*, had declared the church-sepulchre of St. Francis in Assisi and its convent as head and mother of the Order (*caput et mater*).<sup>3</sup> In the Franciscan hagiographic tradition in the course of the succeeding years there developed a particular attention towards the Portiuncula as the place of the memory linked with some bio-hagiographic episodes of Francis and to the institutional events of the Order of friars Minor as the seat of legislative chapters. In the hagiographic narrations, the community of brothers of the Portiuncula became the idealised model of the Franciscan-minoritic fraternity according to schemes and stylistic fea-

tures (*stilemi*) that had little in common with the daily life of the first fraternity, since they were inspired by more conventional religious models, if not by the monastic-eremitic model. The increasing praise of the Portiuncula and of the brothers who lived there culminated in the *Compilatio Assisiensis* and then in the *Speculum perfectionis* in the qualification of the Portiuncula as head and mother of the poor Minors.<sup>4</sup> One should besides underline that in the *Compilatio* the terms already present in the papal letter *Is qui ecclesiam* were re-utilised in reference to the church of St. Francis, but the order was inverted (*mater et caput*),<sup>5</sup> as if to underline the indisputable primacy of the Portiuncula regarding the generative role of *sacra parens* of the fraternity.<sup>6</sup>

The idealised role of the Portiuncula during the 1270's concentrated upon a specific Franciscan bio-hagiographic episode: the concession of an extraordinary indulgence to the chapel dedicated to Saint Mary of the Angels, during a meeting in Perugia between Pope Honorius III and Francis of Assisi. The general chapter of Padua of 1276 had encouraged the collection of memories of edification: «Iniungitur omnibus Ministris ... quod inquirant de operibus beati Francisci et aliorum sanctorum Fratrum aliqua memoria digna, prout in suis Provinciis contigerint, eidem Generali sub certis verbis et testimoniis rescribenda.»<sup>7</sup>

In the following year three testimonies that constituted the first nucleus of the dossier were collected. It was around these testimonies that all the narration of the history of the indulgence later developed.<sup>8</sup> In Arezzo, close to the friary of the friars Minor, on 31 October 1277, brothers Benedetto

and Raniero d'Arezzo left their own declaration.<sup>9</sup> With all probability in the same year, with the initiative of the minister of the province of St. Francis, brother Angelo da Perugia, the testimonies of Pietro Zalfani<sup>10</sup> and of Giacomo Coppoli of Perugia, friend and follower of Giles of Assisi, third companion of Francis of Assisi, were collected.<sup>11</sup> This nobleman had already donated to the friars Minor, in 1276, the friary where brother Giles had lived, and which then took the name of San Francesco al Monte.<sup>12</sup> Some elements of the narration in the various documents are convergent and complementary: Honorius III conceded to Francis on his request, a plenary indulgence in favour of the Portiuncula chapel for 2 August on the occasion of the annual anniversary of its consecration. Some details were in contradiction between themselves: according to Giacomo Coppoli, Francis of Assisi had imposed silence upon brother Leo regarding the matter, telling him to cherish this memory in secret of the Order until his death (*Teneas tibi secretum*). However, the same witness had referred to a public debate between the cardinals in the presence of the Pope, and Pietro Zalfani asserted that he had been present in the publication of the indulgence proclaimed by Francis to the faithful in the presence of the bishops of the region. Other information, however, was lacking: the year 1216 was fixed only a century later in the notes of the chronicle of Francesco Venimbeni da Fabriano,<sup>13</sup> and above all there existed no papal document of concession, even if, according to the witness of Pietro Zalfani, Francis was holding in his hands a *cedulam* that he showed to the faithful who had gathered for the occasion, and which could, in some way, refer to the document in question. When they were reworked in hagiographic narrations or re-proposed as integral documents, these declarations were the primary sources for the successive documentation. In particular these witnesses were the sources of the narration that the bishop Teobaldo d'Assisi inserted in an episcopal diploma in 1310.<sup>14</sup>

When, in the years 1331-1334 the friar Minor Francesco di Bartolo d'Assisi produced the *Liber*, the first declarations constituted also in this case the nucleus of the *historia* of the concession of the indulgence,<sup>15</sup> narrated in chapters 5-10.<sup>16</sup> These were integrated with the diploma of the bishop Teobaldo d'Assisi and in particular with the imaginary description of Michele Bernardi da Spello,<sup>17</sup> where the taste for the marvellous and the miraculous explodes in all its force.

In the *Liber* follows the transcription of the let-

ter of the declaration of Pietro Zalfani, of Benedetto and Raniero d'Arezzo and of the noble Giacomo Coppoli of Perugia (chapters 11-13).<sup>18</sup> These chapters (5-10, 11-13) are the nucleus of the first part of the *Liber*.

The second part is dedicated entirely to the narration of miracles.<sup>19</sup> The author could make use of a collection that some years before brother Pietro Teutonico had created by registering facts regarding miracles that confirmed the truth of the indulgence.<sup>20</sup> Francesco di Bartoli notably increased his source with new episodes that he could register thanks to his activity as collector of documents and of testimonies in preparation to the writing of the *Liber*. As the rubric which introduces the second part of the work recites, the miracles were intended to serve the purpose to render certain (*certificant*) those who were uncertain or dubious, thanks to the apparitions of saints and also the confirmations and to the preaching of Dominican friars, who were regarded as a religious Order in competition with the friars Minor.

A notable number of episodes is dedicated to a specific aspect, which could always have more relevance in the popular devotion of succeeding centuries: the possibility for the pilgrims who went to the Portiuncula on the occasion of the Pardon of Assisi to gain the indulgence also for the faithful departed. Purgatory was the place where the osmosis between living and dead was more effective, thanks to the possibility that Christians have to hasten with their prayers and penances the salvation of the souls in purgatory.

In the treatise, there is no mark of the two elements that were to characterise the debate in the following centuries. The friars Minor of the Observance, who were the custodians of the chapel of the Portiuncula from the first half of the XV<sup>th</sup> century, during the course of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century were already upholding the idea that the plenary indulgence of the Portiuncula had been conceded not only for the day 2 August, anniversary of the consecration of the small church, but for all the days of the year, not only, but also for all those times in which a penitent would observe the penitential obligations requested, namely, the pilgrimage and the sacramental confession. The expression *toties quoties*, each and every time, rooted in the faithful also the idea that in one day a pilgrim who would enter repeatedly the chapel of the Portiuncula could gain the indulgence many times. From here was born the custom of the faithful to enter from the main door and exit from the side door of the

chapel many times, and in this way they gave life to the practice of the 'passate.'<sup>21</sup>

The Pardon of Assisi became object of inter-confessional polemic, between the Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches, in particular the Lutheran Church, and often also became object of a lively confrontation between the diverse Franciscan families on specific aspects. In fact, in the Roman Catholic Church there was agreement in accepting the historical truth of the concession by Honorius III to Francis of Assisi; however, there was no unity of intent of opinions on the daily nature of the indulgence. Moreover, precisely this theme was the occasion of numerous writings, and thus contributed to the production of a specific thread of apologetic literature and of historical and erudite studies in modern times.<sup>22</sup>

In the course of time another particular motive of divergence of opinion was added between the friars Minor Conventuals of Assisi and the friars Minor Observants of Santa Maria degli Angeli regarding the way that the solemn procession was to be organised. In the vigil of the feast, during the afternoon of 1 August, the procession used to depart from the church-sanctuary of St. Francis and go down to the Portiuncula, in order to inaugurate officially the feast of the Pardon with the opening of the door of the chapel. During the course of centuries this event gave occasion to quarrels, even physical ones, and to interventions on the part of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to guarantee the orderly progress of the feast and the fairs that used to be organised during those days.<sup>23</sup>

Let us return to the *Liber*. This was the first point of arrival of that activity of collection of testimonies, of narrations and of miracles that took place between the last quarter of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the XIV<sup>th</sup>. The documentation and its hagiographic re-elaboration and the wide collection of miracles placed together by Francesco di Bartolo constituted the complete *dossier*, that should have assured and confirmed in time the indulgence of Saint Mary of the Angels, in spite of the absence of a papal letter of concession on the part of Honorius III. It was precisely the lack of official documentation of the papal chancery that rendered insecure the destiny of the extraordinary indulgence, which could be compared only to that of the papal jubilees, but which according to the initial desire of Boniface VIII was planned to occur only once every hundred years, or to the indulgence for the crusades of the Holy Land, which was gained only with the risk of one's

own life.<sup>24</sup> For the width and variety of the genres which were utilised (documents, hagiographic narrations and miracles), the *Liber* had to substitute that unique papal letter that had been the object of such carelessness on the part of Francis, and had been so painfully desired by the friars Minor. Thus, narrates Teobaldo di Assisi in the episcopal diploma published in defence of the indulgence in order to justify the absence of a document of concession of the papal chancery, placing in the scene a dialogue between Honorius III and Francis: « "O semplice quomodo vadis? Quid portas te de huiusmodi indulgentia?" Et beatus Franciscus respondit: "Tantum sufficit mihi verbum vestrum. Si opus Dei est, ipse suum opus habet manifestare. De huiusmodi ego nolo aliud instrumentum, sed tantum sit carta beata Virgo Maria, notarius sit Christus et angeli sint testes".»<sup>25</sup>

In the mid-XV<sup>th</sup> century the legitimacy of the indulgence seemed to be affirmed in a definite manner. The Apostolic See had not provided to confirm it with a letter from the chancery, but it had not intervened to deny it, as Boniface VIII had done when he revoked in an explicit way the letter by which Celestine V had conceded the plenary indulgence to the church of Santa Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila.<sup>26</sup> The silence of the Popes was interpreted as a silence of assent; in the *Liber* is quoted in an explicit way the silence of John XXII, who certainly was not a gentle Pope with the Order of friars Minor.<sup>27</sup>

When the long phase of foundation and legitimisation of the indulgence had ended, a phase of systematic disclosure among the faithful started. Already from the end of the preceding century we have witnesses of an increasing number of pilgrims.<sup>28</sup> The articulated and complex liturgy that would be celebrated in those days, in particular the liturgy of the procession, attest to the coming together of friars from various parts of Italy and also from other parts of Europe. The participation to the procession by the religious followed an order that was gradually perfected with the passage of time, also in consequence to the division of the Order of friars Minor in various families (Conventuals, Observants, Capuchins, Third Order Regular).

In the days that preceded the procession the friars from all Europe preached in their own language for the benefit of the faithful coming from their own countries.<sup>29</sup> What was the theme of the preaching? In the codex 344 of the library of the Sacro Convento, in the first years of the 1380's, brother Giovanni da Iolo added to the transcription of the

*Liber* of Francesco di Bartolo some rubrics for the progress of the liturgy of the seven days which, from the feast of St. James the apostle on 25 July, culminated in the solemnity of 1 and 2 August. It is probable that the rubrics were the codification of a tradition which in part goes back to the beginning of that century, as is evident in two *Instructio-nes* of Angela da Foligno.<sup>30</sup> The sermons on those days, both in San Francesco and in the Portiuncula, were all to be «de materia sacrae indulgentiae».<sup>31</sup> The *historia* of the concession of the indulgence, the way in which Francis obtained it from Honorius III, could be part of the *materia* of the sermon. The nucleus of the narration was already present in some chapters of the *Liber*, but they were divided in such a way as to be more easily utilised by the preachers and to be particularly interesting and to the devout faithful who were able to read.

Already in 1335, some months after the writing of the *Liber*, the bishop Corrado d'Assisi had extracted chapters 5-10 and 11 and had made them the heart of the narration of his diploma.<sup>32</sup>

The codex 344 of the “Fondo antico comunale della biblioteca del convento di S. Francesco in Assisi” is one of the two fundamental witnesses of the *Liber* of Francesco di Bartolo. The edition of the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, made by Paul Sabatier, is based on this witness and on the codex of the historical Archive of the Basilica of St. Francis and of the Sacro Convento (*Instrumenti*, XI/4).<sup>33</sup> The codex 344 was written, at least in part, by the hand of the famous librarian brother Giovanni da Iolo who, in 1381, drew up an inventory of the public library and of the reserved library of the convent of Assisi and also of the library at Saint Mary of the Angels.

In the folios 105r-108v of the codex 417 (second half of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century) of the “Fondo comunale antico della Biblioteca del Sacro Convento” is transmitted an extract of the *Liber*.<sup>34</sup> A first section corresponds to a selection identical to the one made by bishop Corrado. In fact, in folios 105r-107v are transcribed chapters 5-10 and 11.<sup>35</sup> A significant element is given by an *explicit* inserted at the end of the transcription of the witness of Pietro Zalfani: *Explicit tota veritas ystorie indulgentie supradicte*. Thus, is confirmed the hypothesis that in a codex taken as a model by bishop Corrado and by the copyist of the codex 417, chapters 5-11 constituted a nucleus by themselves, with a proper *explicit*. The detailed rubric of chapter 5 could be an *incipit* that permitted to individuate easily the section of the

*historia* («Modo sequitur quomodo beatus Franciscus paucis annis post conversionem et post reparationem hujus ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae de Angelis, semel in quadam nocte, Christi persuasione fretus et ejus gratia confortatus, petivit a Domino Jesu Christo indulgentiam omnium peccatorum sibi concedi pro omnibus venientibus et introentibus ecclesiam supradictam. Et quomodo Christus suam petitionem admisit et ut eandem indulgentiam a papa Honorio peteret familiariter revelavit»<sup>36</sup>).

There is another mysterious and fascinating Assisian codex from the mid-XIV<sup>th</sup> century, which has a note of possession of the XIV-XV<sup>th</sup> centuries leading to the Eremo delle Carceri, which is now found in the Library of Chiesa Nuova 9, and which conserves in Occitan language chapters 5-11 of the *Liber*.<sup>37</sup> One notes that, at the present moment, this is the first witness of the use of the term *perdonansa* in relation to the indulgence of Saint Mary of the Angels.<sup>38</sup>

In the section of codex 417 which corresponds to folios 105r-108v there are present other chapters of the *Liber*. First of all is added chapter 12 with the witnesses of Benedetto and Raniero d'Arezzo and chapter 13 with the witness of Giacomo Coppoli. Then the author transcribed chapter 41, in which he presents the witness of brother Pietro Teutonico, who was the editor of a collection of miracles drawn by the *Liber*. He referred to the declaration of a collaborator of cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta, to whom Pope Martin IV wanted to confirm the concession of the Portiuncula indulgence attributed to Honorius III. In order to remain faithful to Francis, who had refused the written privilege that Honorius III had offered him – according to the narration of the diploma of bishop Teobaldo -, the cardinal who was a friar Minor did not request a letter of confirmation from the papal chancery, even though he had the authority to do so based upon a papal delegation. In this way the Pope would have provided a document with his own initiative and not upon the request of the cardinal («Et dominus papa respondit: “Frater Matthaeae, bene dicis quod litteras non requiris, sit ergo ibi indulgentia ipsa, ut diximus de verbo et concessione nostra”»). To the *historia* and the traditional witnesses was added the witness of a papal confirmation.

Thanks to the transcription of a miracle from chapter 17 of the *Liber*, the truthfulness of the indulgence is confirmed also by two saints of the Order of friars Preachers, namely St. Dominic, founder of the Order, and the inquisitor St. Peter, Martyr.

This intervention is particularly significant, since when we read other chapters of the *Liber* we find the maximum opposition to the Pardon of Assisi precisely coming from the friars of the Order of Preachers. St. Dominic in person appeared to a group of friars from his Order who were dubious, if not hostile, to the indulgence, in order to reassure them: «Fratres, indubitanter hoc scitote quod indulgentia Sanctae Mariae de Angelis prope Assisium vera et certa est, et coram Deo major quam ab aliquo dicatur. Et ut verum me dicere comprobetis noverati me esse sanctum Dominicum et istum socium meum sanctum Petrum martyrem.»

At the end is transcribed chapter 23, in which a miracle confirmed the truthfulness of the indulgence through sensitive and irrational creatures.

The logic followed by the copyist of codex 417 to compile this part of the manuscript by choosing chapters from the *Liber* is highly evident: first the narration of the history (chapters 5-10), then the testimonies used as sources for the *historia* (chapters 11-13); there follows the confirmation of the papal authority (chapter 41) and of the saints in heaven (chapter 17), and lastly the divine sanction thanks to a miracle (chapter 23).

I have concentrated on the choice and ordering of the one who compiled this Assisian codex, since this codex, or another which is closely linked to it, with all probability and according to our current knowledge, was the source that a copyist utilised to transcribe the same texts on two large parchments destined not to become a codex, but to be a kind of grand ‘manifesto’ divided into two parts. The two parchments are conserved in the historical Archives of the Basilica of St. Francis and of the Sacro Convento in the series *Instrumenti* with the numbers 7 and 8. The two parchments-manifesto were written by the minister general Francesco da Napoli in November 1450, at the time when Pope Nicholas V was residing in the convent of St. Francis («Scripta per minimum omnium fratrum Minorum ac maximum peccatorem fratrem Franciscum Valente de Neapoli in hoc sacro conventu Assisii tempore sanctissimi domini nostri Nicolai pape V ibidem residentis in anno Domini MCCCCL die vero mensis novembris quinto completa. Tempore autem sacrarum litterarum doctoris eximii ac egregii magistri fratris Nicolai de Prato reverendi custodis degnissimi. Semper cum prole pia laudetur Virgo Maria. Amen»).

Regarding the selection of the chapters of the *Liber* made by the compiler of the section anal-

ysed in the Assisian codex 417, in the ‘manifesto’ a chapter 24 has been added (*Iterum quomodo declaratur haec sacra indulgentia valere pro mortuis*), which regards a dominant theme in the second part of the *Liber*, namely the effectiveness of the indulgence of 2 August to free the souls of the dead from the punishment of Purgatory.

It was precisely the addition of this last chapter on the souls of Purgatory that makes closer, if not more certain, the identification of this manifesto as the source of the *editio princeps* of an extract of the *Liber*. The editorial effort was promoted in Trevisa da ser Costantino di ser Giovanni Lucarini, representing a noble family of the city, which in 1470 formed a society with the German printer Johannes Reinhard. The society was active in the years 1470-1472, before the Reinhardts transferred to Rome. The edition of this extract of the *Liber*, which re-proposes faithfully the texts already utilised for the ‘manifesto’ on the parchments of 1450 conserved in Assisi, was the first publication in Umbria and the first Franciscan publication of all times.<sup>39</sup> Just to make a significant comparison, one can consider that the *editio princeps* of the writings of Saint Francis of Assisi had to wait more than a century and half before they came to light with the work of Lukas Wadding in 1623.

The *opusculum* has a long *incipit* (*Quomodo beatus Franciscus petivit a Christo indulgentiam pro ecclesia Sanctae Marie de Angelis*), which is summarised with the term *Historia*. Even in the explicit we meet the same term: *FINIS ystoriae cum quibusdam miraculis impresse in Trevio Anno Domini MCCCLXX*. In the second half of the XV<sup>th</sup> century the friars of the Observance established themselves definitely at the Portiuncula, which with its plenary indulgence became the place of the observant identity. It is maybe not by chance that the initiative to print the *opusculum* on the indulgence was taken in this religious province. The history of the concession of the indulgence was an important theme in the observant preaching, as, after all, confirm the sermons of the famous friars Minor *de familia*, such as Giacomo della Marca and Cherubino da Spoleto.<sup>40</sup>

#### NOTES

The notes are reproduced in the original Italian version.

1 FRATRIS FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus de indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncula*, nunc primum integre edidit Paul Sabatier, Paris 1900 (Collection d'études et de documents sur l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du Moyen Âge, II).

- 2 S. BRUFANI, *Il dossier sull'indulgenza della Porziuncola*, in *Assisi anno 1300*, cur. S. BRUFANI – E. MENESTÒ, Assisi 2002 (Medioevo Francese. Saggi, 6) pp. 209-247, particularly pp. 209-212. For a presentation of the witnesses of the manuscript tradition, cfr. ID., *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola: dalle prime testimonianze ai diplomi episcopali*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi. Storia agiografica erudizione*. [Mostra di documenti – codici – libri a stampa antichi, S. Maria degli Angeli, Museo della Porziuncola – Sala s. Pio X, 2 luglio – 10 novembre 2016], cur. S. BRUFANI, Spoleto, Fondazione CISAM, 2016 (Medioevo francese. Cataloghi 1), pp. 87-96, 97-117 (schede con figure di codici e documenti d'archivio).
- 3 *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum*, ed. J.H. SBARALEA I, Romae, 1759, pp. 60-62. Cfr. P. MAGRO, *Gregorio IX e la chiesa di San Francesco in Assisi*, in *Fratre Francesco. Tracce, parole, immagini*, [cur. C. BOTTERO – S. BRUFANI – C. ROCCAFORTE], Milano 2014, pp. 49-57; ed. dall'originale e trad. a cura di Daniele Sini.
- 4 LU. PELLEGRINI, *La Porziuncola: da oscura toponimo a «caput et mater pauperum minorum fratrum»*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi*, cit. (nota 2), pp. 49-85.
- 5 *Compilatio Assisiensis* 56, in *Fontes Franciscani*, a cura di E. MENESTÒ e S. BRUFANI e di G. CREMASCOLI, E. PAOLI, L. PELLEGRINI, STANISLAO DA CAMPAGNOLA. Apparati di G.M. BOCCALI, Assisi 1995 (Medioevo francese. Testi, 2), p. 1534.
- 6 *Speculum perfectionis* 84, 8, *ibid.*, p. 1988.
- 7 *L'Anonimo Perugino tra le fonti francescane del secolo XIII. Rapporti letterari e testo critico*, in *Miscellanea Franciscana*, 72 (1972), pp. 117-483, in part. p. 383.
- 8 Cfr. BRUFANI, *Il dossier sull'indulgenza* cit. (nota 2), pp. 212-227.
- 9 Cfr. P. SABATIER, *Introduction a FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO Tractatus de indulgentia* ed. cit. (nota 1), pp. XLIV-XLV. Cfr. la scheda con la relativa figura del documento *Instrumenti XI/I* dell'Archivio del Sacro Convento di Assisi, in BRUFANI, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola* cit. (nota 2), pp. 97-98; Fig. 1, p. 109.
- 10 Cfr. SABATIER, *Introduction* cit. (nota 9), pp. LIV-LV
- 11 Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. LI-LIII. Cfr. la scheda con la relativa figura del cod. 417 del Sacro convento di Assisi in BRUFANI, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola* cit. (nota 2), pp. 99-100; Figg. 2-3, pp. 110-111.
- 12 A. BARTOLI LANGELI, *La famiglia Coppoli nella società perugina del Duecento*, in *Franciscanesimo e società cittadina: l'esempio di Perugia*, cur. U. NICOLINI, Spoleto 1992 (Perugia 1979) (Quaderni del Centro per il collegamento degli studi medievali e umanistici nell'Università di Perugia, 21), pp. 113-143.
- 13 Cfr. L. MARCELLI, *Cronica di Francesco Venimbeni da Fabriano*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 101-103; Fig. 6, p. 114.
- 14 S. BRUFANI, *Il diploma del vescovo Teobaldo d'Assisi per l'indulgenza della Porziuncola*, in *Franciscana. Bollettino della Società Internazionale di Studi francescani*, II (2000), pp. 43-136.
- 15 Cfr. ID., *Francesco di Bartolo e il Liber sacrae indulgentiae S. Mariae de Portiuncula*, in *San Francesco e la Porziuncola. Dalla "chiesa piccola e povera" alla Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli*. Atti del Convegno di studi storici (Assisi 2-3 marzo 2007), a cura di P. MESSA, S. Maria degli Angeli-Assisi, 2008 (Viator, 5), pp. 186-205. Per una presentazione dei testimoni della tradizione manoscritta, cfr. ID., *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola* cit. (nota 2), pp. 119-129, 131-148 (schede con figure di codici).
- 16 Cfr. FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus de indulgentia* cit. (nota 1), pp. 13-25.
- 17 Cfr. SABATIER, *Introduction* cit. (nota 9), pp. LXXXII-LXXXVI.
- 18 Cfr. FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus de indulgentia* cit. (nota 1), pp. 26-30.
- 19 Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 35-101.
- 20 F.M. DELORME, *Un recueil de miracles ou exempla source de François Bartholi*, in *Studi francescani* XII (1926), pp. 366-404. Cfr. la scheda con la relativa figura del codice in BRUFANI, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola* cit. (nota 2), p. 132.
- 21 Cfr. A. TEETAERT, *Portioncule*, in *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, XII/2, Paris, 1935, coll. 2602-2611, in part. coll. 2608-2609.
- 22 Cfr. L. BERTAZZO, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola: apologetica ed erudizione nei secoli XVII-XIX*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 267-302, in part. pp. 271-276.
- 23 L. MARIOLI, *La processione per l'apertura dell'indulgenza della Porziuncola*, *ibid.*, pp. 303-326.
- 24 Cfr. M.G. DEL FUOCO, *L'indulgenza plenaria: dall'iter dei crociati all'iter dei pellegrini*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 169-204.
- 25 Cfr. BRUFANI, *Il diploma del vescovo Teobaldo d'Assisi* cit. (nota 14), pp. 127-128.
- 26 Cfr. DEL FUOCO, *L'indulgenza plenaria* cit. (nota 24), pp. 172-174, 183-184 and E. PASZTOR, *Celestino V e Bonifacio VIII*, in *Indulgenza nel medioevo e Perdonanza di papa Celestino*. Atti del convegno storico internazionale (L'Aquila 5-6 ottobre 1984), L'Aquila 1987, pp. 61-78. Cfr. R. PACIOCCO, *Papa Celestino V e la Perdonanza aquilana*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi e le indulgenze plenarie*. Incontro di studi (in corso di stampa).
- 27 FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus de indulgentia* cit. (nota 1), p. 89.
- 28 Cfr. P. MONACCHIA, *Pellegrini e ospitalità*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 205-236, in part. pp. 205-207.
- 29 Cfr. MARIOLI, *La processione* cit. (nota 23), pp. 303-305.
- 30 Cfr. M. VEDOVA, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola nelle Instructiones di Angela da Foligno*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 158-162.
- 31 Cfr. M. SENSI, *Il Perdono di Assisi*, S. Maria degli Angeli-Assisi, 2002, p. 293.
- 32 FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus* ed. cit. (nota 1), pp. XC-XCVI. Cfr. anche la scheda 3.6 *Diploma del vescovo Corrado d'Assisi*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), p. 108 e p. 117 (Fig. 9).
- 33 Cfr. S. BRUFANI, *Per una edizione del Liber di Francesco di Bartolo d'Assisi*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi e le indulgenze plenarie* cit. (nota 26).
- 34 Cfr. FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO *Tractatus* ed. cit. (nota 1), p. 25 nota 1.
- 35 Cfr. C. CENCI, *Bibliotheca manuscripta ad Sacrum Conventum Assisiensem*, II, Assisi 1981 (Il miracolo di Assisi, 4), pp. 461-462.
- 36 Cfr. BRUFANI, *L'indulgenza della Porziuncola* cit. (nota 2), pp. 99-100 (scheda 3.2 *Testimonianza di Giacomo Coppoli*) e Figg. 2-3, pp. 110-111.
- 37 FRANCISCI BARTHOLI DE ASSISIO, *Tractatus* ed. cit. (nota 1), p. 13.
- 38 Cfr. C. MENICHETTI, *Volgarizzamento in occitano del Liber di Francesco di Bartolo di Assisi*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 133-134, pp. 142-143, Figg. 4-5.
- 39 M. FALOCI PULIGNANI, *Della storia del perdono di Assisi stampata in Trevi nel 1470*, Foligno 1882, p. 15.
- 40 Cfr. D. SOLVI, *L'indulgenza in predica. I sermoni sul Perdono nel '400*, in *Il Perdono di Assisi* cit. (nota 2), pp. 237-266.

## Vi affido la Custodia dei Luoghi Santi



*Ho appreso con gioia che codesta Custodia, in occasione degli 800 anni della presenza francescana in Terra Santa, ha voluto celebrare l'importante e lieta ricorrenza con numerose iniziative religiose, pastorali e culturali, orientate tutte alla riscoperta dell'encomiabile contributo dei 'frati della corda' – come furono soprannominati – nei luoghi dove il Figlio di Dio si è fatto carne ed ha abitato in mezzo a noi (cfr Gv 1,14). In tale occasione, mi è gradito rivolgere uno speciale saluto a Lei e a tutti i frati, che costì mantengono viva la testimonianza cristiana, studiano le Scritture e accolgono i pellegrini. Il serafico Padre Francesco, nel Capitolo di Pentecoste del maggio 1217, aprì l'Ordine alla dimensione 'missionaria e universale', inviando i suoi frati in tutte le nazioni come testimoni di fede, di fraternità e di pace; e così venne creata la Provincia di Terra Santa, inizialmente chiamata d'Oltremare o di Siria. Tale allargamento dell'orizzonte di evangelizzazione fu l'inizio di un'avventura straordinaria, che portò otto secoli fa i primi frati minori a sbarcare ad Acri, dove l'11 giugno scorso avete iniziato le celebrazioni centenarie, rinnovando la vostra adesione alla chiamata di Gesù, in fedeltà al Vangelo e alla Chiesa. Assidui nella contemplazione e nella preghiera, semplici e poveri, obbedienti al Vescovo di Roma, siete impegnati anche nel presente a vivere nella Terra Santa accanto a fratelli di diverse culture, etnie e religioni, seminando pace, fraternità e rispetto. A tutti è nota la vostra disponibilità ad accompagnare i passi dei pellegrini provenienti da ogni parte del mondo attraverso l'accoglienza e la guida. Vi siete dedicati alla ricerca delle testimonianze archeologiche e allo studio attento delle Sacre Scritture, facendo tesoro della celebre affermazione di San Girolamo, che per molti anni visse ritirato a Betlemme: «L'ignoranza delle Scritture è ignoranza di Cristo stesso» (Comm. in Is., Prol.: PL 24,17). Non voglio dimenticare, oltre alla custodia e all'animazione dei Santuari, il vostro impegno al servizio della Comunità ecclesiale locale. Vi incoraggio a perseverare lieti nel sostenere questi nostri fratelli, soprattutto i più poveri e i più deboli; nell'educazione della gioventù – che spesso rischiano di perdere la speranza in un contesto ancora senza pace –; nell'accoglienza degli anziani e nella cura degli infermi, vivendo concretamente nel quotidiano le opere di misericordia. Unendomi ai miei venerati Predecessori, a partire da Clemente VI, che con la Bolla 'Gratias agimus' vi affidò la custodia dei Luoghi Santi, desidero rinnovarvi tale mandato, incoraggiandovi ad essere testimoni gioiosi del Risorto in Terra Santa.*

Papa Francesco  
Città del Vaticano  
17 ottobre 2017



## Abbreviations

### Writings of St. Francis

Adm	Admonitiones.
CantAudPov	Cantico Audite Poverelle.
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis.
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi.
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data.
EpAnt	Epistola ad sanctum Antonium.
EpCler I	Epistola ad Clericos (Redactio prior).
EpCler II	Epistola ad Clericos (Red. posterior).
EpCust I	Epistola ad Custodes I.
EpCust II	Epistola ad Custodes II.
EpFid I	Epistola ad Fideles I.
EpFid II	Epistola ad Fideles II.
EpLeo	Epostola ad fratrem Leonem.
EpMin	Epistola ad Ministrum.
EpOrd	Epistola toti Ordini missa.
EpRect	Epistola ad populorum rectores.
ExhLD	Exhortatio ad Laudem Dei.
ExpPat	Expositio in Pater noster.
FormViv	Forma vivendi sanctae Clarae data.
Fragm	Fragmenta alterius RegulaeNB.
LaudHor	Laudes ad omnes horas dicendae.
OffPass	Officium Passionis Domini.
OrCruc	Oratio ante crucifixum.
RegB	Regula bullata.
RegNB	Regula non bullata.
RegEr	Regula pro eremitoriis data.
SalBMV	Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis.
SalVirt	Salutatio virtutum.
Test	Testamentum.
UltVol	Ultima voluntas S. Clarae scripta.

### Sources for the Life of St. Francis

1C	Tommaso da Celano, Vita Sancti Francisci.
LCh	Celano, Legenda ad usum chori.
2C	Celano, Memoriale in Desiderio Animae.
3C	Celano, Tractatus de Miraculis S. Francisci.
LJS	Julian of Speyer, Vita Sancti Francisci.
OR	Officium Rhythmicum S. Francisci.
AP	Anonimo Perugino.
L3C	Leggenda dei Tre Compagni.
CA	Compilatio Assisiensis.
LMj	S. Bonaventura, Legenda Maior S. Francisci.
LMn	S. Bonaventura, Legenda minor S. Francisci.
SP	Speculum Perfectionis.
SC	Sacrum Commercium S. Francisci.
ABF	Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius.
Fior	Fioretti di San Francesco.

### Sources for the Life of St. Clare

BICl	Blessing of St. Clare.
1-4LAg	Letters to St. Agnes of Prague..
LCl	Legend of St. Clare.
PC	Acts of the Process of Canonization.
PrPov	Privilege of Poverty.
RegCl	Rule of St. Clare.
TestCl	Testament of St. Clare.

**Editor: Noel Muscat OFM**

All correspondence should be  
addressed to  
muscatnoel@yahoo.co.uk



**Cover picture:**

*Mount La Verna, where St. Francis received the Stigmata in 1224*