

January - March 2021

Spirit + Life



Journal of Franciscan Culture
Issued by the Franciscan Friars (OFM Malta)

135



Quarterly journal of Franciscan culture published since April 1986.

Layout: John Abela ofm
Computer Setting: Raymond Camilleri ofm

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EDITORIAL

THE DEMOCRATIC DIMENSION OF AUTHORITY

The Catholic Church is considered to be a kind of theocratic monarchy by the mass media. There is no such thing as a democratically elected government in the Church. On the universal level the Church is governed by the Pope. As a political figure the Pope is the head of state of the Vatican City, which functions as a mini-state with all the complexities of government and diplomatic bureaucracy, with the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Offices and the esteemed service of its diplomatic corps made up of Apostolic Nuncios in so many countries. On the local level the Church is governed by the Bishop and all the government structures of a Diocese. There is, of course, place for consultation and elections within the ecclesiastical structure, but the ultimate decisions rest with the men at the top. The same can be said of religious Orders, having their international, national and local organs of government. The Franciscan Order is also structured in this way, with the minister general, the ministers provincial, custodes and local guardians and superiors.

Indeed, Saint Francis envisaged a kind of fraternity based on mutual co-responsibility. He did not accept the title of abbot or prior for the superiors of the Order, but wanted them to be "ministers and servants" of the brotherhood. Even so, canon law does not make any distinction in the acts of government between a minister and a prior. The superior is always the person in charge of ultimate decision making.

Given this fact that forms part and parcel of the juridical framework of the Order, one has to understand in what way the organs of government in the Franciscan Order can truly function as democratic institutions. To do so one has to have a clear view of what true democracy is all about. Indeed, we live in a world where true democracy is being eroded in a serious way even in those countries that have been hailed as champions of democracy. Democracy is defined as a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. That means that true democracy is born at grass-roots level and is a guarantee for the sharing of rights and duties in a free society, characterised by the rule of law and the respect for the human person.

Such an ideal of democracy is still a utopia for many countries. Although apparently they can be called champions of human freedom, in practice new systems of power control have sprung that render true democracy a difficult end to achieve. The power of the economic machine that ends up dictating the rules of the market, the power of tycoons who influence politicians to bend to their will and sometimes also succeed in luring them into the net of corruption, the power of the mass media that influence public

opinion to the point of suffocating individual expression of free thinking, the power of lobbies of all kinds that try to force down the throat of the majority the will and whims of minorities who go beyond their just and fair right of social acceptance and respect for human dignity, all combine to erode the true notion of democracy. This is what happens in the political sphere.

What about democracy in the ecclesiastical framework, and particularly in religious life? Here I would like to refer in an explicit manner to our Franciscan style of government and promotion of our Christian and Franciscan values that have shaped us for centuries. It is not a question of changing structures of government in the Church or in the Order. All the useless discussion about whether we Franciscans are a “clerical” or “lay” Order leads to no solution. In effect, we are inserted in the clerical framework of the Church and, to be honest, we all know that the vast majority of us are clerics. But this is not the point. It’s not the clerical nature of the Order that is dangerous. It is clericalism that erodes its true values. Clericalism, like all “isms” is intrinsically devious of truth. It hides power behind a pseudo-sacred screen that appears holy and untouchable, but which smacks of a false notion of sacredness.

Francis of Assisi was the author of a new world order, in which there is no need to change structures, including structures of government, but rather a need to change attitudes towards people. In religious life the problem does not lie with authority and its exercise, nor does it lie with the vow of obedience to a superior. Nowadays, religious life is being eroded because of two extreme dangers. On the one hand, there is a temptation to indulge in a kind of laissez faire mentality on the part of superiors, who do not know how to face the continual challenge of individualism that has crept into the life of many consecrated persons. On the other hand, the same superiors take refuge into a kind of cocoon existence in which they stand aloof from concrete persons, and prefer to dedicate time and energy to projects and to the continual need to move about in order to appear that they are visiting their brethren. Although we are all aware of the continual use of informative structures, and seem to be bombarded with information, it is sadly a false picture of the truth. Indeed, even in religious life, just like in the social sphere, we are often given the information that is deemed important to make us feel that we get the feel of what is going around us. In truth we are never consulted on the nitty-gritty of the real issues and challenges that we face. Thus, we become disoriented or alienated. Decisions are taken behind our backs, at the spur of the moment and in response to emergencies, without any real planning and time-consuming consultation. The crisis of religious life has to do a lot with the crisis of lack of information, that is, of relevant information. Just like we experience with politicians who want us to swallow the sour pill by winning our trust with sugar candies. This was not the kind of democracy that Francis of Assisi envisaged. It takes courage to admit the truth and live in the truth. It is all about faithfulness to the Gospel and to the true notion of authoritative service. That is what stating that one is “minister and servant” is all about.

Noel Muscat ofm

THE CRONICA DUORUM CONVENTUUM BY GIOVANNI ANTONIO MERCIECA OFM (1731)

Noel Muscat OFM

The Archives of the Maltese Franciscan Province [APF = Arkivju Provinċja Franġiskana] preserve a small 88-page volume, which is a Chronicle regarding the two first friaries of the Franciscans of the Regular Observance in Malta, namely, the friaries of *Santa Maria di Gesù* [Ta' Ġiezu] of Notabile (Rabat tal-Imdina) and Valletta. The Chronicle, which bears the Latin title *Cronica duorum conventuum*,¹ is the work of Fr. Giovanni Antonio Mercieca (ca. 1660 - 1753), and was written in 1731. The document is a precious source of information regarding the first two churches and friaries of the Observant Franciscans, and is also composed against a general background information of the history of the Maltese islands, with particular reference to the presence of the Order of the Knights of Saint John and to local ecclesiastical history and prominent representatives of the ecclesiastical institution.

Biographical note²

Giovanni Antonio Mercieca was born around 1660, probably in the village of Hal Qormi.³ We don't know when he entered the Franciscan Order in the Province of Val di Noto (Sicily and Malta). We know for certain that he received the subdiaconate in Siracusa on 19 September 1682.⁴ After his ordination to the priesthood he became an expert Latinist, as well as a *Lector*, or lecturer, of Philosophy and Theology. He lectured Physics, Philosophy and Theology for three years in the *Studium Generale* of the Franciscan Order in the friary of Sant'Angelo in Milan.

Mercieca was also an able preacher and orator. He preached in various towns of Lombardy, including Milan, Lodi and Cremona.⁵ Among the churches where he preached, we know that in 1688

he preached Advent in the collegiate church of Maleo. In 1692 he preached in Milan, as well as in Pavia, Crema and Piacenza. In 1696 he preached Lent (*Quaresimale*) in the parish of Pozzo Barozzo, diocese of Cremona.

On 31 January 1695, the Minister General Fr. Bonaventura Poerio sent him to teach Theology in the *Studium Generale* of Modica, in Sicily. Just two years earlier, on 9 and 11 January 1693, Sicily and Malta were struck by strong earthquakes, particularly the one on the night of 11 January 1693, with the epicentre in the Gulf of Noto. Around 50 Franciscans died in eastern Sicily⁶ as a result of the 7.4 magnitude tremor, and many friaries and churches collapsed or were damaged beyond repair. Even in Malta the earthquake resulted in major damage to many buildings, including the Cathedral of Mdina and also the two friaries of the Franciscans in Rabat and Valletta.

After 13 years of teaching, on 29 August 1705, Giovanni Antonio Mercieca was appointed *Lector Jubilatus De Numero*.⁷ This title would refer to a select number of lecturers who could teach in the various general *studia* of the Order.

Back in Malta, Mercieca became Guardian of both friaries of Rabat and Valletta, Definitor, Provincial Commissary for the friaries of Malta, Custos,⁸ Synodal Examiner and in 1714 he was co-visitator during the Pastoral Visit of Bishop Giacomo Cannavez.⁹ He was also appointed Theologian of the Jerosolymitan Order.¹⁰ For many years he taught Gregorian Chant to the Franciscan students and friars, and also to diocesan clergy. Being a famous Latin scholar and a scholar of Literature he composed some inscriptions in public places, among which one in the old hospital of Santu Spirtu in Rabat, and one on the façade of the water fountain below Saqqajja Hill in Rabat.¹¹

Giovanni Antonio Mercieca left a whole list of manuscripts, among which the most important

is the *Cronica duorum conventuum*. He died in Valletta on 2 January 1753 in the venerable age of 93. He was a Franciscan religious for 75 years.¹²

The Cronica duorum conventuum

As its name suggests, the *Cronica duorum conventuum* is divided into two parts. The first section, covering 35 pages of the volume, deals with the friary of *Santa Maria di Gesù* of Notabile (Rabat), while from page 37 onwards (page 36 being blank) until page 88 the *Cronica* deals with the friary of *Santa Maria di Gesù* of Valletta. The title *Santa Maria di Gesù* is of Sicilian origin, since many of the churches of the Friars Minor of the Regular Observance built in Sicily during the 14th century were dedicated to the title *Santa Maria di Giesu* (hence *Ta' Giezu* in Maltese), particularly to the Virgin Mary during her Visitation to Saint Elizabeth. As churches dedicated to the Madonna and Child they were not only an expression of genuine Franciscan spirituality centred upon the humanity of Christ, but they were also a kind of trade-mark of the reform of the Regular Observance brought over to Sicily and its adjacent islands by Blessed Matteo Gimara (Giumarra), bishop of Agrigento (ca. 1376 - 1450) and disciple of Saint Bernardine of Siena. In the same way the churches of the Conventual family of the Friars Minor were nearly always dedicated to Saint Francis, particularly the large conventual churches in the cities and towns.

The chronicler starts off with a short excursus of the geography and history of the Maltese islands. It seems that he intended his work to be published outside the confines of Malta and, indeed of Sicily, given that he presents details that were well-known in the local sphere. The same thing can be said regarding his continuing praises of the Order of the Knights of Saint John. Given that Mercieca produced his work in 1731, when he was around 71 years old, and therefore had retired from active professional work abroad, might have been instrumental in the fact that the *Cronica* remained a manuscript and was never published.

The author begins his description of Malta by explaining its geographical position in the centre of the Mediterranean, and hence its importance in the historical unfolding of events in this region ever since the times of the Phœnicians. His historical description is, however, very short and devoid of

any erudite details. Indeed he seems to accept many popular beliefs that have been proved wrong by subsequent historians. When he mentions Roman rule in Malta he arrives immediately to talk about the central issue of his work, namely, the Christian identity of Malta, evangelised by the Apostle Paul, who converted Publius. For Mercieca Publius was made *Antistite Principe* (Bishop and Prince) of the Maltese islands. The next section of his narration regards the Arab domination, which Mercieca calls *tyrannide Arabum et Saracenorum*. For him the important thing was to speak about the strong faith of the Maltese inhabitants during this period, which came to an end with the Norman conquest of the islands. Here Mercieca mentions the building of the cathedral and the bishop's benefice in Lentini, Sicily. The history of Malta continues with the Angevin domination, the Sicilian Vespers of 1282 and the Aragonese domination. Thus he arrives at the moment when the islands were given as a fiefdom by emperor Charles V to the Order of the Knights of Saint John. He describes how, at Castelfranco di Emilia, close to Bologna, on 24 March 1530, emperor Charles V confirmed his promise to the Knights Hospitallers, ousted from the island of Rhodes in 1522, to give them the islands of Malta and Gozo and the garrison of Tripoli, with the symbolic payment of a falcon every year on the feast of All Saints.¹³ The Knights took possession of Malta on 26 October 1530 under the leadership of Grand Master Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam.

Mercieca again mentions Malta's strategic importance with its safe harbours, but immediately passes on to describe the ancient fortified town of Notabile, a name acquire during mediæval times, which during Roman times was known by the name of *Melite*, and later on, during Arab domination, took the name *Mdina*, by which it is still known today. He explains how the town was reduced to its present dimension by the Arabs, in order to be able to defend it better, and how it got separated from the suburb, known as Rabat. He also speaks about the building projects of the Knights in the same city, and about the re-building of the Cathedral by bishop Davide Cocco Palmieri in the early 18th century, after the mediæval building had been damaged by the 1693 earthquake. The rest of the description mentions the various grand palaces of Notabile, the role of the bishops in the See of Malta, who were suffragans to the Archbishop of Palermo, and the other friaries and monasteries in the city.

Regarding the suburb of Rabat, Mercieca first mentions the Grotto of Saint Paul, with the popular

legends regarding the miraculous properties of the rock of the same Grotto. He also speaks about the College of Canons established on the site. Then he continues to mention the Hospital of Saint Francis and the adjacent friary where, according to him, bishop Nicola Papalla, himself a Franciscan, established the earliest Franciscan presence in Malta, dated 1370, and which remained in the hands of the Conventual Friars Minor.¹⁴ Mercieca lists other ancient mendicant convents, including the Lunzjata church of the Carmelites, outside Rabat, the church of Saint Mark of the Eremitical Augustinians, the church of *Sancta Maria de Cripta* of the Dominicans, and lastly the church of *Santa Maria di Gesù* of the Franciscan Observants. It is at this point that he arrives at the detailed description of the first among the two churches and friaries, which are the object of his study.

The foundation of the first friary of the Friars Minor of the Regular Observance is traced back to 1492. The chronicler delves into the history of the foundation, that has been documented in a scholarly manner in more recent times.¹⁵ Mercieca copies the text of the testament made by Giacomo Hakim, known as *Malf*, one of the *Mdina jurati*, in front of notary Ingomez de Brancato (6 April 1492), entrusting his nephew Fra Mariano, who was a Franciscan living in Messina, with the task of establishing a friary in Malta.

The chronicler also gives us a description of the first church, which was built in Gothic style and was smaller than the present one. There is an interesting description of the main altar piece of the church, of which only two panels survive in the same church.¹⁶ The rest of the description concerns the church and its side chapels, with particular reference to the cult of Saint Joseph and his Confraternity Oratory annexed to the same church, as well as to the Grand Masters who were benefactors of the church and friary, particularly Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam (1521-1534), Claude de la Sengle (1553-1557) and Alof de Wignacourt (1601-1622).

The chronicle also provides a description of the ancient friary as well as of the gardens and cloister of the same friary. When Mercieca wrote the chronicle, the church and friary had undergone profound restorations after the deadly earthquake of 1693. The Rabat church itself had been rebuilt in its present form in 1752-1757.

Mercieca then includes a section dedicated to holy Maltese religious. Among them he mentions two Franciscan friars who are venerated as Blessed in the Franciscan Order, namely Fra Domenico Mifsud from Ħal Għargħur, who died in Noto,

Sicily, on 1 May 1570, and Fra Bonaventura De Caro from Siggiewi, who died in S. Vito, Agrigento, also in Sicily, in an unknown date of 1576.

Among the bishops of Malta the author mentions the legendary Publius, who is confused with Saint Publius of Athens, bishop and martyr. He also mentions other 14th century bishops who were Franciscans, even though historians doubt as to whether they ever set foot in Malta. These include Enrico da Cefalù (1334 -?), Nicholas Bonet (1342-1343) and Nicolò Papalla (1392-1393). Many of these figures are shrouded in mystery and bear no relation whatsoever to any presence of Franciscan friars in Malta during that century. The last section of this first part of the *Cronica* mentions other prominent figures, including other Maltese erudite religious, theologians, philosophers, historiographers and noblemen.

The second part of the *Cronica duorum conventuum*, which covers pages 37 to 88, deals with the friary of *Santa Maria di Gesù* of Valletta. Even in this second section the author begins with a description of the founding of the city of Valletta after the Great Siege of Malta of 1565. He mentions the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the new city by Grand Master Jean Parisot de Valette on 28 March 1566, and the engineering feat of Francesco Laparelli, sent over by Pope St. Pius V, to plan and build the *Humilissima Civitas Vallettæ*. Mercieca dedicates a certain number of pages to speak about the fortifications of the new city, the two harbours, and also the three cities on the other side of the main harbour, particularly Victoriosa, with its *Castrum Maris*, where the Knights of Saint John initially placed their headquarters from 1530 until they transferred to the new city on 18 March 1571, when Grand Master Pietro del Monte solemnly took possession of the new fortified city.

The description of Valletta is centred obviously upon the various palaces of the Knights, particularly their *Auberges* according to the languages of the Order. Pride of place is given to a description of the conventual church of the Order, nowadays Saint John's Co-Cathedral. The chronicler describes not only the various works of art and each one of the chapels belonging to the various *Langues*, but also gives us an idea of the beauty and solemnity of the celebrations and of the festive pomp with which they would be celebrated. He also insists upon the charitable work of the Order in the great hospital, the *Sacra Infermeria*, which at the time was one of the most renowned hospitals in Europe. The description he gives is a vivid one and is all the more precious since the building was razed

to the ground during the war, but was fortunately rebuilt according to its original form. After a brief description of the convents of the other mendicant religious present in the city, Mercieca begins his account regarding the history and artistic beauty of the Franciscan church of *Santa Maria di Gesù*.

On 19 April 1571 the Franciscan Observants petitioned the Grand Master to donate to them a plot of land *gratis* like all other religious, in the new city. On 18 May 1571 Grand Master Pietro del Monte donated to the Franciscans of the Regular Observance a plot of land in the new city, close to the main entrance leading down to the harbour, called *Porta Del Monte* (nowadays, Victoria Gate). This plot of land was flanked by *Strada Del Monte* (Saint John Street) on the SW, *Strada San Pietro* (Saint Ursola Street) on the SE, and *Strada della Vittoria* (Santa Lucia Street) on the NE. The contract made in front of Notary Placido Abela and in the presence of Fra Nicola di Calabria, the Vicar (Vicar of the Provincial of Sicily to which Malta belonged?), Fra Battista da Malta, Fra Michele da Malta, Fra Domenico da Malta, Fra Benedetto da Sciacca, Fra Antonio da Trapani and Fra Salvo da Malta. It seems that the building of the new church started immediately, but took a long time to finish because of the scarce resources of the friars. Indeed, the foundation stone was laid four years later, on 21 September 1575. By 1577 the church was functioning, although we do not know whether it was completed by that date.

The Franciscan chronicler gives a good description of the church, which has undergone no major changes since his own times, except for the artistic wooden ceiling enclosed in a wrought iron structure that is protected by the stone roof of the church resting on iron beams. This splendid work of engineering was accomplished in 1923-1926 under the direction of architect Rinaldo Soler. The wooden panels are the work of a Franciscan lay brother, Ċels Micallef, who was a master carpenter.¹⁷

The author dwells upon the titular painting of the church, the work of artist Antonio Catalano of Messina (1600) and then describes all the side chapels, many of which were a *juspatronatus* of some noble families or else had as their titular saints the patrons of guilds and confraternities, such as Saint Eligius, patron of metal workers, Saint Blase, patron of the city of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) from where hailed a group of merchants who traded between Malta and the Adriatic republic. A special attention is given to the *Cappella della Passione*, the chapel that is *juspatronatus* of the Archconfraternity of the

Holy Crucifix. When the chronicler was writing it was the seat of the Archconfraternity and also of the *Addolorata* Confraternity. Mercieca mentions the artistic Crucifix of Frate Innocenzo da Pietralia, but he does not mention the author by name.¹⁸ In the chapel of the *Madonna dell'Itria*, nowadays dedicated to Saint Francis, the chronicler mentions an ancient wax Baby Jesus in swaddling clothes brought over from Bethlehem, the work of the Maltese Franciscan lay brother Fra Bonaventura Fava in 1726, which was venerated with great devotion.¹⁹

One of the most interesting details regarding the Valletta Franciscan church that is underlined by Mercieca is its popularity with the Maltese people. The church was built half way up the slope that led from the harbour to the hub of Valletta in front of the conventual church of Saint John. All persons coming from the other side of the harbour by boat would have to go up the city through *Porta Del Monte* and *Via Del Monte*, where the *Ta' Ġiezu* church stands. In this way it was visited by all those who passed in front of it, especially because of the devotion towards the Crucifix, but also because the friars offered a full-time service to the faithful by way of Masses and confessions. The chronicler proudly states that the church was considered as *quasi ea esset omnium parœcia communis*, as if it were the common parish church of everybody.²⁰

A list of prominent ecclesiastics buried in the church follows. Among these the author mentions Fr. Serafino Agius, who died in 1728 and was buried in the crypt under the main altar. This Franciscan had just been appointed Bishop coadiutor in Comacchio, Emilia, but died before his episcopal consecration. A marble slab was placed on the wall of the chapel of Saint Peter of Alcantara to commemorate him by his brother, the priest Gerolamo Agius, member of the clerics of the Order of Saint John.

The description of the Valletta friary as it looked during the 18th century follows. The description is somewhat complicated, since no ancient plans of the friary exist and many structural changes have taken place during the centuries. The author, however, describes the main structural works in the friary, also with the help of inscriptions on marble slabs, which still exist, and he gives us a clue as to the internal division of the friary itself. The most ancient sections were those on the ground floor, where the entrance to Saint Ursola Street now stands. The refectory was located in this section, together with the cloister, sacristy and Oratory of the Archconfraternity of the Crucifix. A staircase

led to the upper floor, the only part of which still standing is the ancient narrow corridor with Gothic vaults. The chronicler mentions the various sections, including the night chapel, *coro di notte*, the theological seminary, and the Library, founded in 1681 by Fr. Filiberto Peylabere, and enriched with many volumes by Fr. Costanzo Vella, a contemporary of Mercieca.

The *Cronica* also mentions various eminent Maltese Franciscans who became Ministers Provincial of Val di Noto, or who were lecturers of theology, scholars, historians, missionaries, etc. Indeed the author also includes other religious from other mendicant Orders who gave fame to their homeland in their respective fields of specialisation.

Giovanni Antonio Mercieca's *Cronica duorum conventuum* can be rightly regarded as a prime source of information for the history of the first two churches and friaries of the Friars Minor of the Regular Observance in Malta. Its value as a historical document that also deals with the general history of the Maltese islands and with the prestige of the Order of the Knights of Saint John is relative, in the sense that it does not provide any new material that is not to be found in more erudite and detailed publications of that age. However, it aptly places the presence of the Franciscan friars in Rabat and Valletta within the historical context in which they lived and worked, and in this way it can be considered as a complete historical and chronological account of Franciscan presence in Malta from the end of the 15th century to the mid-18th century.

Notes

- 1 GIOVANNI ANTONIO MERCIECA, *Cronica duorum conventuum*, Archives of the Franciscan Province [APF], Sectio III, Malta 1731, pp. 88.
- 2 Source of information: G. AQUILINA, *Il-Frangiskani Maltin (Ta' Ġiežu) 1482c - 1965c*, Klabb Kotba Maltin, Malta 2011, Żjieda Ċ, 592-593.
- 3 Ġ. SCERRI, *Patri Gian-Anton Mercieca OFM*, in *L-Anġlu tal-Paċi*, 10 (Ottubru 1917), 307-309.
- 4 APF, *Atti Originali* [AO], VII, doc. 38.
- 5 APF, AO, VII, doc. 39; XIII, ff. docs. 13-14.
- 6 APF, *Necrologio Antico*, n. 11.
- 7 APF, AO, VII, doc. 40; XIII, 19.
- 8 APF, AO, IV, doc. 16; XVII, doc. 43.
- 9 Archives of the Archdiocese of Malta, *Visite Pastoralis*, XXX, Cannavez 1714-1717.
- 10 APF, AO, VII, docs. 44-46.
- 11 The two inscriptions, copied by Ġ. Scerri, read respectively: (1) D.O.M. Sub auspiciis, Eminmæ. ac Sereniss. Celsitudinis Fr. D. Antonii Manoel De Vilhena, Sacri Hospitalis Hyerusalem Magni Magistri et Melitæ ac Gaudisii Piissimi Principis feliciter regnantis benefactorum Christiana pietas dilatatis visceribus ad plus infirmas suscipiendas antiquum Xenodochium nova hac aula dilatavit 1727. (2) D.O.M. Omnes sitientes venite ad aquam quas Emsmo. ac Serenmo. Sacræ Hyerosolimæ Militiæ M. Magistro Fr. D. Antonio Manoel De Vilhena Melitæ et Gaudisii Principe feliciter regnante illustres Vestustæ Civitatis Notabilis Magistratus sedentibus in eo ad commodiorem usum huc benigne transtulit ut populus biberet et iumenta et prospectum nobilium delineatum fecit extrui Anno Dni. XXVII Sæculi XVIII fluentis.
- 12 APF, *Necrologio Antico*, n. 2: In Valletta A.R.P. Giò. Antonio a Malta, Lect. Jubil., Custode 1753.
- 13 H.C.R. VELLA, *The Report of the Knights of St. John's 1524 Commission to Malta and Quintinus' «Insulæ Melitæ Descriptio»*, in *Melita Historica* Vol. VIII, 4 (1983) 319-324.
- 14 In the past the issue has often been a source of thorny debate among local Franciscan historians. Lay historians have repeatedly asserted that the Mendicant Orders were absent from Malta during the 14th century, and that they could only have established their friaries during the mid to late 15th century. Cfr. B. FIORINI, *Il Convento di S. Francesco in Rabat (Malta) dei Frati Minori Conventuali*, in *Melita Historica* Vol. III, 3 (1962), 1-41; G. AQUILINA and S. FIORINI, *New Documents relating to the Origins of Religious Orders in Malta*, Proceedings of History Week 1994, The Malta Historical Society, 1996, 1-23.
- 15 G. AQUILINA and S. FIORINI, *The Origin of Franciscanism in Late Medieval Malta*, TAU Edition, Malta 1995.
- 16 N. MUSCAT, *Franciscan Spirituality of early 16th Century Artefacts in the Church of Santa Marija ta' Ġesù in Rabat*, in *Spirit+Life* 134 (Oct-Dec 2020), 19-24. C. VELLA, *Long-lost paintings rediscovered from a 1515 altarpiece in Rabat*, in *Times of Malta* (4 November, 2020), 14-15.
- 17 G. AQUILINA, *Il-Frangiskani Maltin (Ta' Ġiežu)*, 319-320.
- 18 *Cronica duorum conventuum*, 66: Altare devotissimus Sanctissimi Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Cruci affixi, naturalem proceritatem excedentis, per egregie sculpti a quodam nostro Religioso, qui apud Fratres huius Conventus divertere contigit.
- 19 *Cronica duorum conventuum*, 64-65: Ab anno vero 1726 in hoc eodem Altari [...] posita fuit Divini Infantis Iesu figura ad naturalem, quam in Bethlehem ex cæreo benedicto multisque Sanctuariis composuit, ac Melitam detulit Religiosus ingeniosus Frater Melitensis de numero Conversorum Bonventura nomine similem prorsus illi, cum quo celebratur ibi Nativitatis eius sollempnitas.
- 20 *Cronica duorum conventuum*, 68.

THE PAINTING OF SAINT BLAISE IN THE TA' GIEZU CHURCH OF VALLETTA, AND ITS LINK WITH MERCHANTS FROM DUBROVNIK (RAGUSA)

Noel Muscat ofm

The Franciscan church of *Santa Maria di Gesù (Ta' Ġiezu)* in Valletta is characterised by a layout of side chapels akin to that of Saint John's Conventual Church (Co-Cathedral) built by the same engineer of the Order of the Knights of Saint John, Girolamo Cassar, during the second half of the 16th century. Although the dimensions of the Franciscan church are rather limited, it still boasts 10 side chapels which originally housed 12 altars, plus the main marble altar, a gift of the Knight Commander Bailiff Fra' Melchior Alvaro Pinto, brother of Grand Master Manoel Pinto de Fonseca, in 1754. The side chapels were given as *juspatronatus* to various noble families or confraternities, but they also changed their titular dedication with the passage of time. One of the typical examples of this change is found in the first chapel on the left hand side of whoever enters the church, a chapel with an altar dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and, nowadays, a sarcophagus containing the remains of Blessed Nazju Falzon (1813-1865), with a painting of the same Blessed, placed in the 1980's that is totally out of place in the baroque church. This painting marks the spot where there stood another altar, which was removed, and which was dedicated first to the Crucifix of Lucca and subsequently to Saint Blaise, Bishop and Martyr.

The chapel of the Immaculate Conception originally had two altars. One was the altar of the Immaculate Conception, which is still stand-

ing, right against the inner façade of the church. The other altar was in line with all the other side altars, and was originally dedicated to the Crucifix of Lucca. According to the research done by the Franciscan historian Ġoġ Aqlina, "The first mention of this altar is found in a contract drawn up in 1588 by the Flemish painter Giovanni Brix in which he ordered a frame with the wooden shelf above the altar table from Mastro Ambrogio Gascon *carpentiere*, for the Crucifix of Lucca. The friars were not involved in this contract, and they are not mentioned in the payment. It could be that the same painter Brix was the founder of the altar. In 1768 the titular of the altar was changed to that of Saint Blaise, Bishop, patron of Ragusa [Dubrovnik]. The altar was founded by many merchants from Dubrovnik who lived in Valletta. From that year they began to celebrate the feast of the saint with a sung Mass and a sermon. The Consul of Ragusa used to take part in this feast. On 12 November 1803, in the acts of Notary Antonio Delicata, the Provincial Commissary Fr. Francesco Antonio Azzopardi and the Apostolic Syndic Antonio Cini donated this altar to the community of Ragusa with the right of *juspatronatus*, together with a tomb in the church. The community was represented by the Consul Francesco Zacaria Zammit and by the Vice-Consul Pietro Radmilli. As time passed business with Ragusa dwindled, and in 1814 Ragusa lost its autonomy and passed under Austrian control. In spite of this it seems

that until 1870 the feast of Saint Blaise continued to be celebrated. Nowadays the painting of this altar has been placed in the friary.”

The fact that Malta was a maritime power in the hands of the Knights of Saint John brought it into close contact with the Republic of Ragusa on the Dalmatian coast in modern day Croatia, which was a flourishing maritime power in the Adriatic, the only independent entity from Venetian hegemony in the region. In fact, contacts between Malta and Dubrovnik for the sake of trade go back even further than the time of the Knights, even as far back as the late 14th century. Since Malta is rather arid and devoid of trees, wood was normally imported from the Dalmatian coast, particularly from Senj, and ships from Dubrovnik would make regular trips to Malta, even though the danger from corsairs of Barbary was always present.

Saint Blaise (Sveti Vlaho) is the patron saint of Dubrovnik ever since the year 972. Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, who originally hailed from Sebastia in Cappadocia, and suffered martyrdom circa 316, became the symbol of freedom of the Republic of Ragusa against the Venetians and subsequently against the Turks. The city of Dubrovnik appointed Saint Blaise as its patron in 1153-1158, and in 1346 it also acquired relics of the martyr bishop and the legend of the apparition of the saint to Don Stojko in 971 became a popular way of proving the ancient cult of the martyr in the city. His feast day is celebrated on 3 February and is an annual festival in Dubrovnik.

The painting of Saint Blaise that used to hang on the altar of the saint in the Franciscan church of Valletta is nowadays hanging in the friary. It portrays the saint with the Latin mitre and crosier, or pastoral staff, and vested in a splendid red liturgical cope. Angels hold the palm of his martyrdom, and at his feet lies the instrument of his torture, namely the iron comb with which he was flayed alive. Above the saint on the upper left hand side of the painting is an image of the Immaculate Virgin. Maybe the reason why the Virgin Mary was included in the painting was simply because the altar of Saint Blaise stood right alongside the altar of the Immaculate Conception, titular of this chapel. At the feet of Saint Blaise there is the coat of arms of Dubrovnik, with the colours that were popular from the 18th century onwards, namely red and blue stripes, instead of the original white and red stripes. Above the coat of arms there is a view of a bay with a fortified



city towering above it on the rocks, obviously a representation the town of Dubrovnik that is built sturdily on the rocky cliffs overlooking the open sea, where the fortress stands, and guarding the inner harbour where vessels would find shelter from storms, particularly from the dreaded *jugo*, or south-east gales.

The fact that the merchants’ association from Dubrovnik chose the Franciscan church of *Santa Maria di Gesù* in Valletta as the place in which to dedicate an altar to their patron saint shows that there was a thriving Croatian mercantile community in Malta and that they wanted to chose a church very close to the harbour where they would celebrate their devotions and feasts, being close to their vessels and mercantile activities. Both Malta under the Knights, and Dubrovnik as an independent maritime Republic, had common interests in trade and in the common war against marauding Turkish fleets in the Mediterranean. This collaboration meant that the sea lanes between the central Mediterranean and the Straits of Otranto at the entrance to the Adriatic could be monitored and controlled effectively, and that trade could proceed in relative security.

SAINT FRANCIS IN THE “LEGENDA AUREA” BY IACOPO DA VORAGINE

Among the less known sources for the life of Saint Francis, the Quaracchi editors of the 10th volume of *Analecta Franciscana* in 1941 published a short biography of Saint Francis by a Dominican friar who lived during the 13th century, namely, Iacopo da Varazze, or as he is also known, Iacopo da Voragine.¹ The biography forms part of a voluminous work by the same author, with the title *Legenda Aurea*, which was the most popular encyclopedia of hagiography of the Middle Ages.²

*Life of Iacopo de Voragine*³

The date of birth of Iacopo is probably 1228 or 1229. His place of birth, according to the Latin name *Iacopus de Varagine* can be Varazze, a coastal town some 30 km west of Genoa on the Ligurian coast, or else Genoa itself, since in the city lived a family that originated from Varazze, and was known as *de Varagine*. The name *de Voragine* with which Iacopo is known could be a variant of *de Varagine*.

We do not possess many details regarding the life of Iacopo. In the *Chronica civitatis Ianuensis* it is written that Iacopo witnessed a solar eclipse in 1239, when he was still a young boy, and that in 1244 he entered the Order of Friars Preachers (Dominicans), when he was an adolescent. In 1267, during the general chapter of the Order in Bologna, Iacopo was chosen as prior of Lombardy, which was a large province including northern Italy and Piceno. During this period he resided in Milan and Bologna. Between 1281 and 1286 he was again chosen prior of the same province. This goes to show that it could be true that Iacopo was also *lector* and *magister theologiae* in Bologna, or maybe even in Paris.

Between 1283 and 1285 Iacopo became regent of the Dominican Order, after the death of Giovanni

da Vercelli, before the election of Munio de Zamora as Master General of the Order. In 1288 he was a candidate for the post of archbishop of Genoa, but Pope Nicholas IV rejected his nomination. Instead Iacopo became a definator of his Order.

In 1290, during the general chapter of Ferrara, Iacopo received a letter from some Roman cardinals, who tried to pressure him to work for the resignation of the Master General Munio de Zamora, who was judged as being too oppressive in his style of government. However, Iacopo did not cooperate with this initiative, and even went as far as defending the reforms of his Master General. As an act of vengeance for his support, Iacopo had to endure an attempt on his life when some of his confreres tried to drown him in the well of the Ferrara convent.

In 1292 Nicholas IV appointed Iacopo as archbishop of Genoa. Since the same pope died on 4 April, Iacopo was consecrated bishop on 13 April by cardinal Malabranca. Thus Iacopo dedicated the final years of his life for the government of the diocese of Genoa. He summoned a provincial council in the cathedral of Saint Lawrence in June 1293, during which he conducted a public recognition of the relics of Saint Siro, the ancient patron saint of Genoa. In 1295 Iacopo brought about a peace treaty between the two factions of the town, namely the Ghibellines and Guelfs. In April he also went to Rome to see Pope Boniface VIII, who entrusted him with a peace-keeping mission between Genoa and Venice. His efforts at keeping the peace in Genoa were shattered in 1295, when the two factions fought an open battle and the cathedral church of San Lorenzo was burnt down. Iacopo embarked on the restoration of the cathedral and even requested financial aid from the Pope in 1296.

Iacopo died on 13-14 July 1298. He was initially buried in the church of San Domenico of the Friars

Preachers of Genoa, but at the end of the 18th century his remains were transferred to another Dominican church, Santa Maria di Castello, where they are still buried. Iacopo da Voragine enjoyed a local cult and was even proclaimed Blessed by Pope Pius VII in 1816.

Among the many works by Iacopo da Voragine are listed the following: *Sermones omnibus Sanctis*, *Sermones de omnibus Evangeliiis dominicalibus*, *Sermones de omnibus Evangeliiis que in singulis feriis in Quadragesima leguntur*, *Liber Marialis*, and the *Chronica civitatis Ianuensis*. However, Iacopo da Vorgaine remained famous for this masterpiece, namely the *Legenda aurea*, or *Golden Legend*.

The *Legenda aurea*

The *Legenda aurea* is the first and most famous among the works by Iacopo da Voragine. The title is, however, the popular version of the original name of the work, namely *Legende sanctorum*. The *Legenda aurea* is made up of 178 or 182 episodes⁴ regarding the lives of the saints, structured according to the order of the liturgical calendar.

The Golden Legend begins with a prologue, and is structured in five parts, which refer to the five seasons of the liturgical year, corresponding to five moments of the history of salvation: Advent (*tempus renovationis*), Christmastide until Septuagesima (*tempus reconciliationis et peregrinationis*), Septuagesima to Passiontide (*tempus deviationis*), Easter to Pentecost (*tempus reconciliationis*) and Pentecost to Advent (*tempus peregrinationis*). The saints included in this voluminous work are normally those of the first centuries of Christianity. However, there are saints from the 12th century, namely Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Becket, and other from the 13th century, namely Dominic, Francis, Peter the Martyr and Elizabeth of Hungary.

The *Legenda aurea* belongs to the genre of the *legendae novae*, which were compiled during the 13th and 14th centuries. Their aim was to gather the hagiographic material from the first centuries of Christianity and present it in a more condensed form through a work of summary and abbreviation. These compilations were characteristic within the Order of Preachers, since they were used in pastoral evangelisation, and had the aim of offering a spiritual reading that would edify laity

and clergy alike. This was precisely the aim of the *Legenda aurea*, which Iacopo began to compose from 1260 onwards. The miraculous episodes prevalent in the lives of the saints had the aim of spiritual edification, but could also serve for the ministry of preaching.

Iacopo made use of various sources in order to compile his text, namely Holy Scripture, some Patristic texts, writings from the more authoritative exponents of the monastic and canonical tradition, hagiographical sources coming from the Dominican Order, particularly the *Abbreviatio in gestis sanctorum* by Jean de Mailly, and the *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum* by Bartolomeo da Trento. He also made use of historical sources, like the *Historia scholastica* by Peter Comestor, the *Speculum historiale* by Vincent of Beauvais, and the *Chronica* of Martino Polono. Other sources include the *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus* by Stephen of Bourbon, philosophical and theological texts, like the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard and Averroes's commentary on the *Liber de anima* of Aristotle. Liturgical and juridical sources include the *Corpus antiphonarium* and the *Collectio canonum*.

The Golden Legend had an immense success, and came second only to the Bible in the number of copies produced. More than 1200 manuscripts of the *Legenda aurea* have been found. In 1470 an *editio princeps* was published in Köln. The translations in various languages are also many.

Saint Francis of Assisi in the *Legenda aurea*

The figure of Saint Francis is presented in chapter 149 (144) of the Graesse edition. According to the Quaracchi editors of the Golden Legend in Volume 10 of *Analecta Franciscana*,⁵ Iacopo made use of the following Franciscan sources when he composed the section on Saint Francis: (1) Thomas of Celano, *Legenda ad usum chori*, *Vita II (Memoriale)*, *Tractatus de miraculis*; (2) Saint Bonaventure, *Legenda maior*. According to these scholars the section on Saint Francis was composed roughly between 1265 and 1280.

Iacopo begins his section on Saint Francis by reminding his readers of what Celano had already stated in the *Memoriale*, namely that Francis was given the name of Giovanni in baptism, and that his name was changed to Francesco. He also

mentions Francis' link with the French language learned from his mother's lips.

Iacopo continues by stating that Francis was a merchant, that he took part in the battle against Perugia and was taken prisoner. After his return home he went to Rome, where he changed his clothes with those of a beggar. His conversion began with his encounter with the leper, and with his experience of prayer in front of the Crucifix of San Damiano. Persecuted by his father he renounced to all his possessions in front of the bishop of Assisi and became a penitent, begging for alms for his living. His vocation became clear when he heard the words of the Gospel of the mission of the Apostles in the Portiuncula. Iacopo places here the episode of Francis who encounters brigands who threw him into a ditch full of snow. The episode should rather be placed after the renunciation of his father's property in front of the bishop.

The episode is followed by a collection of different events of the life of Saint Francis. These include the writing of the first Rule and its approval by the Pope, the episode of Brother Leonardo di Assisi who judges Francis who was riding a donkey, the meeting of Francis with a woman abused by her husband, the episode of Francis begging alms from the brothers on Easter Sunday in the hermitage of Greccio, and Francis' love for the poor and his words of admonition to the brother who judged a poor man by his appearance.

Paragraph 15 of the *Legenda aurea* is dedicated to citations from the Church Fathers, Saint Augustine and Saint Ambrose, regarding the need to accept correction and particularly not judge those who are poor, but find joy in God's justice in defence of his friends the poor. The same theme continues in the following paragraphs in which Francis sends a brother to ask forgiveness from a poor man, and has the vision of the three poor ladies who saluted him with the words: "Welcome, Lady Poverty."

The Legend continues with the episode of the exorcism of demons from the city of Arezzo, through the obedient service of Brother Sylvester, who was a priest and who Francis commands to pray and cast out the demons who were the cause of civil strife. The figure of the devil who tempts Francis is present in the episode of Francis who wins over a temptation of carnal lust by throwing himself naked in the snow. Another episode involving demons who disturbed Francis during

prayer is that of the night he spent in the tower of the residence of Cardinal Leo of Santa Croce.

In paragraph 23 Iacopo suddenly skips over the many other episodes of the life of Saint Francis and concentrates upon the event of the stigmatisation.⁶ This is followed by two miracles that occurred through the intercession of the stigmatised Francis.

Paragraph 26 is dedicated to the supposed meeting between Francis and Dominic in the house of Cardinal Ugo of Ostia, who offered the two saints the possibility that their brothers could be promoted to ecclesiastical offices. Iacopo was obviously interested in this episode, since he was a Dominican friar and even became bishop. He draws his source from Celano's *Memoriale*, 148.

The love of Francis towards creatures is next on the list of episodes in the Golden Legend. It is followed by the episode of Brother Sylvester who sees Francis marked by two swords in the form of the cross.

Other miracles are linked with Francis' power over irrational creatures. Thus we find the episode of the fire that was tamed by the terrified Francis in front of the surgeon who cauterised Francis' eyes at Fonte Colombo. At the Speco di Sant'Urbano, or Speco di Narni, Francis changed water into wine.

Francis' humility is then praised in the episode of his renunciation of the office of superior of the Order in favour of Peter Cattanio.

Another group of miracles regard the preaching of Francis to the birds, and his praises to God because of the joy he experienced whenever birds would welcome him.

Paragraph 38 is dedicated to the theme of humility, and here Iacopo quotes sayings of the Fathers of the Church, namely Bernard of Clairvaux, Augustine, Gregory the Great and Jerome.

Another episode regards the brother who found a money bag in Apulia and opened it to discover that it contained a large serpent.

Paragraph 41 is dedicated to the blessing given to Brother Leo on Mount La Verna, on the *Chartula* containing also the Praises to the Most High God.

Francis' tender love for Christ and his Blessed Mother are mentioned in paragraph 43, followed by another comment, chosen this time from the writings of Anselm and Jerome, which speak about the following of Christ, poor and crucified. Francis also showed love and reverence towards priests, because they administer the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord.

Paragraphs 46 to 57 conclude the section on Saint Francis in the *Legenda aurea* with a list of miracles. Paragraph 48 is particularly dedicated to the vision of Brother Augustine, who saw Francis' soul being taken up to heaven like a bright star, and called upon Francis to wait for him, since he was dying in Naples, where he was minister provincial. Many of the miracles listed in this section are taken from the *Tractatus de miraculis* by Thomas of Celano.

If we go through the short biography as written by Iacopo da Voragine we are prompted to make some observations. First of all, we are struck by the seemingly haphazard way of choosing various episodes from the life of Saint Francis and placing them together without any chronological order. However, there is a pattern in Iacopo's plan. It seems that he intended to imitate Thomas of Celano in the *Memoriale*, when the biographer presents a list of Francis' virtues. One also notes a kind of resemblance between the *Legenda aurea* and the themes that are developed in the *Testament* of Saint Francis. The fact that Iacopo makes ample use of Celano shows that, even if he was writing after 1266, when during the chapter of Paris, Bonaventure prohibited the use of the older legends, in order to propose his *Legenda maior* as the official biography of the saint, he might still have had access to copies of Celano's *Memoriale* that lay hidden in libraries outside the Franciscan Order, maybe also in Dominican friaries. The end result is a splendid synthesis of the life of Saint Francis, with the aim of providing material for meditation in the context of the liturgy or during moments of community spiritual reading. The fact that Iacopo inserts commentaries by the Church Fathers, relating to the various virtues practiced by Francis, shows that the background of this section of the *Legenda aurea* was that of a conventual community commemorating the saint in a liturgical

setting. For this reason, although being considered as one of the minor sources for the life of Saint Francis, Iacopo da Voragine's *Legenda aurea* merits a more thorough attention on the part of scholars of Franciscan hagiographic literature.

Notes

- 1 IACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *Vita Sancti Francisci*, in *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. X, 681-693. English translation in FAED II, 790-805.
- 2 IACOPO DA VARAZZE, *Legenda Aurea. Nuova Edizione*, a cura di A. & L. VITALE BROVARONE, Giulio Einaudi editore, Torino 2007, pp. XLIV - 1142. This is a complete translation of the *Legenda Aurea* in Italian.
- 3 C. CASAGRANDE, *Iacopo da Varazze*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 62 (2004).
- 4 The difference between paragraphs regards two distinct editions, namely (1) IACOPO DA VARAZZE, *Legenda Aurea*. Edizione critica a cura di G. P. MAGGIONI, Edizioni del Galluzzo, SISMEL, Firenze 1998, 2 voll. (2) JACOBI A VORAGINE, *Legenda Aurea vulgo Historia Lombardica dicta*, ed. TH. GRAESSE, Lipsiae 1810. The Maggioni edition has 178 saints, while the older Graesse edition has 182. The English edition of the *Legenda aurea* is: *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, Translation by W. GRANGER RYAN, 2 volumes, Princeton University Press 1993.
- 5 *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. X, Praefatio, LXXXII-LXXXIII.
- 6 IACOBUS DE VORAGINE, *Vita Sancti Francisci*, 23, in *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. X, 686: In visione Dei servus Dei supra se Seraphim crucifixum adspexit, qui crucifixionis suae signa sic evidenter ei impressit, ut crucifixus videretur et ipse; consignantur manus et pedes et latus crucis caractere. Sed diligenti studio ab omnino oculis ipsa stigmata abscondebant. Quidem tamen haec in vita viderunt, sed in morte plurimi conspexerunt.

THE FORMULATION OF THE MINORITIC RULES DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 13TH CENTURY

Roberto Rusconi

Translation of the paper

La formulazione delle regole minoritiche

nel primo quarto del secolo XIII,

in «Regulae, Consuetudines, Statuta».

Studi sulle fonti normative degli ordini religiosi

nei secoli centrali del Medioevo,

a cura di C. ANDENNA - G. MELVILLE,

Münster 2005 (Vita regularis, Abhandlungen, 25), 461-481.

1.

The episodes of the first decades of the 13th century, connected with the procedures for the approval of the Order of friars Minor and of its definite *regula*, can be widely evidenced on the basis of documentation and of the sources, as well as by the accounts that were successively given by the Franciscan hagiographic *legendae*.¹ In this case, without any doubt, primary importance was given personally to Francis of Assisi, even though we cannot underestimate the context in which these biographies place the relationship between the *fratres* and the ecclesiastical institutions, even local ones, up to the moment of the definitive approval of a Rule, as well as the conditionings that the nature and circumstances of a process of regularisation could have exerted. In this process an active part was also played by those who followed the example of the saint of Assisi in his choice of religious life.² While keeping in mind the efforts that can be done to reconstruct, step by step, the formal edition of these normative texts, it is not so much their effective literal tone that we have to consider, but rather the modalities with which the formulation took place.

2.

In the group of the main events regarding his personal religious experience, which Francis of Assisi entrusts to the *recordatio* that he inserted in the summer and autumn of 1226 in his *Testamentum*, he places the beginnings of the process of regularisation of the religious life of the *fratres*³ in the moment of the formation of the minoritic *fraternitas*: “And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel. And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me.”⁴

The behaviour of the *fratres*, in this text and after having recalled these words to their minds, which were referring to a text written in that circumstance, should have shown in a concrete manner which modalities that form of evangelical life asked them to implement in practice.

In this densely autobiographical but also strongly pragmatic text, Francis summarised a complex history that, ever since its beginnings, had presented many problems for all its

protagonists. To a simple, and not at all common, choice of penitential life on his part and on the part of his first companions, referred a scant group of first memories on the origins of the Order. These memories were recorded in the beginning of the 1240s, and were integrated in a rather evasive manner by Thomas of Celano in his *Vita beati Francisci*,⁵ composed during the winter immediately following the canonisation of the saint, proclaimed officially by Pope Gregory IX in July 1228, just two years after Francis had died. In the *De inceptione vel fundamento Ordinis*, written by an anonymous brother who can justly be identified as having been Brother John of Perugia, as well as in the *Legenda trium sociorum*, to the question, “To which Order do you belong?”, the brothers simply answered, “We are penitents and were born in Assisi.” The *De inceptione* adds: “At that time the religion of the brothers was not yet called an Order.”⁶

Judging from the sequence of the events as suggested by later hagiographic sources, the penitential configuration of the minoritic *fraternitas* would have occurred before the journey to Rome, of which the *Testamentum* of Francis speaks, and it therefore appears that it historically took place in 1209.⁷ Besides, one should keep in mind that, at least in the sources, beginning from the last writing of Saint Francis, namely the *Testamentum*, this journey to Rome is presented as a spontaneous initiative of Francis and of the other *fratres*, even if the concrete modalities with which their permanence in the papal city occurred, and the procedures, through which they arrived at the *confirmatio* of their *forma vitae* on the part of Innocent III (not formalised in any curial document known to us), lead us truly to exclude a pretentious ingenuity on the part of all the protagonists, at least judging from the weight exerted by those prelates who were involved in the matter, from the bishop of Assisi, Guido,⁸ to the Benedictine cardinal Giovanni di San Paolo.⁹ This was a moment in which Italy was witnessing numerous forms of religious life that made recourse to the pontiff in Order to gain official recognition.¹⁰

An analysis of the events leads us to conclude that, in any case, the authorisation was not so easily given, since the central element resulted in being the faculty to preach given to Francis and to the other *fratres*.¹¹ This problem had involved the pontifical approval of recent forms of religious life, including some groups of *pauperes* linked

with Waldo of Lion and his followers, and also the Italian Umiliati. These had to face the limitations regarding their approval, which went back to the *Decretum Gratiani* (composed around 1140), and especially because of the prohibitions formulated in the decretals *Ad abolendum diversarum heresum pravitatem* of Pope Lucius III in 1184.¹² Within this context it is not surprising that, in a natural way, there ensued a formal clericalisation of the *fratres*, which can also be considered as a hypothesis to have occurred in a similar way as that indicated for the first time by the *De inceptione vel fundamento Ordinis*, and which was repeated in the *Legenda trium sociorum*. In that moment this did not bring with it an ulterior sacerdotalisation of the brothers:

“The Lord Pope approved the Rule for him and his brothers, both present and future. He also gave him authority to preach everywhere as the grace of the Holy Spirit was given him and that the other brothers were also to preach provided that blessed Francis gave them the office of preaching [...] Because of his great love for the Brother, that Cardinal (Giovanni di San Paolo) had all twelve of them given the tonsure.”¹³

On the basis of this point, the subsequent preaching of the brothers appears to be totally licit (in the light of these two hagiographic *legendae*, it does not seem plausible to place this kind of phrase in a re-reading *a posteriori* of what happened in the beginning. I refer to the moment of great tension regarding the Franciscan and minoritic identity, that the Order went through during the 1240s, just after the deposition of Brother Elias in 1239).

Neither should one forget or underestimate, even though it is considered to be a late source regarding the facts it narrates, the witness of the Premonstratensian monk Burchard of Ursberg († 1230), who in his *Chronicon*, when he speaks about the fact that it was during the occasion of that journey to Rome, that the brothers adopted the name *fratres minores*, instead of the preceding name of *pauperes minores*.¹⁴ Such a name was not uncommon in the varied panorama of religious experiences in Italy during that period.¹⁵ In the first hagiography by Thomas of Celano, written during those years, there is a similar saying placed on the mouth of Saint Francis: “I want this fraternity to be called Order of friars Minor.”¹⁶

From that date the normative process of which Francis and his *fratres* were subjects and objects at the same time, occurred in close relationship to the Roman Church, in spite of resistance and

perplexities,¹⁷ as one can see in the prologue of the *Regula sine bulla* of 1221 and as is recalled in the beginning of the definitive Rule of 1223:

“This is the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Brother Francis petitioned for the Lord Pope to grant and confirm it for him and his brothers present and to come. Brother Francis - and whoever is head of this religion - promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Innocent and his successors. Let all the brothers be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.”¹⁸

It is rather useless to try to reconstruct a text that certainly existed, namely a kind of *propositum*, which would have, in truth, been very short, and of which we have no further information except for the fact that it would have included Gospel texts on the call for a Christian vocation, modelled on the ones that have been conserved in the first chapter of the *Regula sine bulla*.

3.

In the account of *De inceptioe vel fundamento Ordinis*, departing from that date, the first specific modalities of the organisation of the *fratres* were concretely actualised, since the author writes: “Afterwards, Blessed Francis ordered that a chapter be held twice a year, on Pentecost and on the feast of Saint Michael in the month of September.”¹⁹ The first norms designated to lead the minoritic *fraternitas* were formed in the first decade of the 13th century. Effectively, many years before the edition of the first hagiographical memory of the beginnings of the minoritic Order, namely when Jacques de Vitry, the prelate from Brabant, wrote a letter from Genoa in October 1216, he already notes the way in which these meetings took place, and especially the procedures by which, in that circumstance, the friars minor formulated norms regarding their peculiar way of *vita religiosa*:

“The brothers of this Order assemble once a year in a designated place to rejoice in the Lord and eat together; with the advice of good men they draw up and promulgate holy laws and have them confirmed by the Lord Pope.”²⁰

Scholars have also tried to reconstruct a group of norms which, taken from the *Regula sine bulla*, would have already been elaborated in 1216.²¹ One should not underestimate the fact, with the aim of underlining a document which is contemporaneous to the facts it refers to, that we

are dealing with the immediate aftermath of the approval of the constitution *Ne nimia religionum diversitas*, on the part of the IV Lateran Council in November 1215.²² As a result of its dispositions, for example, Domingo de Caleruega and the other *fratres Praedicatorum* had been obliged to bring about, as rapidly as they could, namely in 1216, the canonical approval of their own Order.²³

If the periodic meeting of religious in an Order during a chapter was by then considered to be a novelty, we should not forget the peculiar character of these meetings of the friars Minor, since it was within their context that norms were approved from time to time. Indeed, we can justly consider these chapters as one of the principal sources of the period of the origins of the minoritic *fraternitas* and of its gradual transformation into an Order. A document which goes a long way to express this development²⁴ is the *Regula non bullata* (even though in the manuscript tradition it normally appears to be called by the name of *Regula sine bulla*). An indication of the complex and arduous process is represented by the oscillation in the titles of the first papal letters that regard the minors, and that were published by Honorius III between 1219 and 1220.²⁵

The Franciscan chronicler Giordano da Giano implicitly takes for granted the existence of a *prima regula* of the minors that preceded Francis’ journey to the East in 1219.²⁶ On his part, Jacques de Vitry, in his *Historia Occidentalis*, written between 1219 and 1221, refers to a Rule that was ‘confirmed’ by the pope in a date anterior to the time he was writing:

“The Lord Pope confirmed their Rule and gave them authority to preach at any church they came to, although out of reverence having first obtained the consent of the local prelates.”²⁷

4.

At the end of the second and the beginning of the third decade of the 13th century, the friars Minor had not yet accomplished an effective adjustment to the precise dispositions published by the conciliar decree of the Lateran *Ne nimia religionum diversitas*. The memories handed down by the tradition that made reference to Brother Leo, considered to be the witness of the minoritic origins,²⁸ insisted upon a strenuous opposition by Francis to differ, which he manifested particularly

in the course of a chapter that could be dated in 1219, just before his departure to the East,²⁹ as a long text of the *Legenda antiqua* known as *Perusina* narrates. Here we quote the entire text:

“When blessed Francis was at the general chapter called the Chapter of Mats, held at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, there were five thousand brothers present. Many wise and learned brothers told the Lord Cardinal, who later became Pope Gregory, who was present at the chapter, that he should persuade blessed Francis to follow the advice of those same wise brothers and allow himself to be guided by them for the time being. They cited the Rule of blessed Benedict, of blessed Augustine, and of blessed Bernard, which teach how to live in such Order in such a way.

Then blessed Francis on hearing the cardinal’s advice about this, took him by the hand and led him to the brothers assembled in chapter, and spoke to the brothers in this way: ‘My brothers! My brothers! God has called me by the way of simplicity and showed me the way of simplicity. I do not want you to mention to me any Rule whether of Saint Augustine, or of Saint Bernard, or of Saint Benedict. And the Lord told me what He wanted. He wanted me to be a new fool in the world. God did not wish to lead us by any other than this knowledge, but God will confound you by your knowledge and wisdom. But I trust in the Lord’s police that through them He will punish you, and you will return to your state, to your blame, like it or not.’

The cardinal was shocked, and said nothing, and all the brothers were afraid.”³⁰

While Francis went to the East, the friars minor continued to assemble in chapter, to approve norms, as was after all foreseen in the Rule they observed. Apparently this was the meaning of the dispositions taken regarding fasting, during the meeting of Pentecost of 1220 through the initiative of the two ‘vicars’ who Francis left in Italy, namely Brother Gregorio da Napoli and Brother Matteo da Narni, which were later on presented in very negative terms in the chronicles that were elaborated in the Order in those years, particularly by Giordano da Giano who writes: *eo quod presumpserat aliquid addere regule sancti patris*, since they pretended to add norms to the Rule of the holy father.³¹ Francis’ return to Italy, which is dated towards the summer of that year, coincided with the introduction of an unavoidable, if not forced, solution of the problem in the

approval of a Rule of the friars minor, particularly after 22 September 1220, that is, a week before the chapter of autumn, when Pope Honorius III wrote the letter *Cum secundum consilium*, imposing the year of novitiate already observed as a norm by other regular religious Orders.³²

In coherence to the practice adopted up till that time, without doubt the question was discussed in the course of the minoritic chapters, in which the position of Francis of Assisi, who had also renounced to the role of governing the Order after his return from the East, had conserved an authority that had not greatly diminished, neither as a result of pressure by the Curia in favour of a regularisation, nor by the numerous presence of brothers who were oriented towards a formal regularisation (and who were identified with the *ministri* in the polemic tradition that saw in Brother Leo its ring leader).³³ In the course of the Chapter of 30 May 1221 at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, in the plain under Assisi, to which according to the Chronicle of Giordano da Giano some thousands of brothers participated:

“Blessed Francis, seated at the feet of Brother Elias, tugged at his tunic to attract his attention. Elias bent down to him to inquire what he wished.”³⁴

If it is true that such a large number of brothers were present, most probably because of the great influx of Italian brothers, this could only have happened before the effective application of the disposition contained in chapter 18 of the *Regula sine bulla*.³⁵

5.

In the normative field, represented by minoritic Rules, there remains a punctual witness of the peculiar role of Francis of Assisi, and in the first place of his concrete attitude in the period in which he tried to give consistency to a *regula* that would have to be approved by the papal curia. In fact, the *corpus* of the anterior normative tradition, represented in substance by the *Regula sine bulla* (*non bullata*), did not respond in an acceptable way to the juridical expectations of the Roman See.³⁶

In this period we encounter a letter that was addressed by Francis to a certain minister, who could plausibly have been Brother Elias. The letter indicates the way in which Francis intervened in a factual way in the procedure of the formulation

of those norms that had to be approved, in the first place, by the friars minor. In this letter we read:

“During the Chapter of Pentecost, with the help of God and the advice of our brothers, we shall make one chapter such as this from all the chapters of the Rule that treat of mortal sin.”³⁷

In the same letter, these words are followed by a text which has no parallel in any version of the minoritic Rule. One could ask whether it was to this way of proceeding that the *Legenda trium sociorum* refers, when it states that Francis of Assisi “composed several Rules and tested them, before writing that which he ultimately left to the brothers.”³⁸ These words precede a citation of a disposition regarding the need to despise money, which became part of the process of the editing of the Rule, in such a way that it is effectively found in chapter 8 of the *Regula non bullata*. Even the normative *fragmenta* found in the second hagiographic biography of Thomas of Celano, the *Memoriale in desiderio animae*, in the commentary on the minoritic Rule written by the Provençal brother Hugh of Digne and in an English manuscript, and which do not have parallel texts, refer to this modality of formulation of the norms, independently from the fact that these are to be placed in the period between 1221 and 1223.³⁹

It is the same tune of the *Regula non bullata* which gives witness to the fact that, before an edition that was seemingly approved in the course of the chapter of Pentecost of 30 May 1221, a set of norms were being inserted within the same Rule.⁴⁰ If in the second chapter the reference to the *annum probationis* appears to be clearly inserted after the publication of *Cum secundum consilium* on the part of Honorius III on 20 September 1220, and if there are obvious incongruencies regarding the organisation of the penitential *fraternitas* in its transition into a regular *ordo*,⁴¹ and if the edition of some of its chapters is dated to around 1216 in Order to implement some of the provisions of the IV Lateran Council,⁴² it is only as an effect of the accumulation of Franciscan texts in the manuscript tradition that a writing that Francis addressed to all the *fratres* before leaving for the East and the prayer *Omnipotens* could have entered into the *corpus* of the writings of Francis. The final chapter regards the moment of the complete and final edition of the *Regula non bullata*.⁴³

Indeed, in the text of the *Regula non bullata*, it is possible to come across formal verbs and expressions, on whose basis it is licit to hold, in a

reliable manner, that we are dealing with topics for which Francis requested, and obtained, a clearly-defined formulation. In particular, his personal interventions were marked first of all by the use of verbal forms in the first person singular, and always in reference to problems that, later on, would have entered to be part of the Rule when it was definitely approved. As a conclusion to the text in the manuscript tradition we find a phrase that was formulated with a strongly imperative tone, with which Francis of Assisi ordered to observe the Rule literally, without intervening in its contents through modifications of any sort whatever. In this endeavour he made use of terms which, later on, would mark true and proper insertions in the normative text of the *regula* approved and published by Honorius III, and which were also used in the dictation of the Saint’s last writing, namely his *Testament*:

“On behalf of Almighty God and of the Lord Pope, and by obedience, I, Brother Francis, firmly command and decree that no one delete or add to what has been written in this life. The brothers may have no other Rule.”⁴⁴

If the presence of Francis in the proceedings of the implementation of these norms, which found their complete expression in the *Regula non bullata*, can be also found in other forms, which are less imperative, this modality marked in an unavoidable manner a direct intervention, with the aim of modifying the normative text of the same *Regula bullata*. Once more it is easily traceable in the use of formulations of the first person singular, which are foreign to a rigorously impersonal juridical language, and in the recourse to verbs and expressions which are highly peculiar. Indeed, precisely because of the more essential character of the normative text, which had to be discussed by a minoritic chapter and which had to pass through the screening of the Roman Curia, with reference to the fragmentary accumulation of dispositions that are characteristic in many sections of the *Regula non bullata*, such Franciscan inertions assumed even greater significance.

Beyond the more elaborate juridical formalisation, which undoubtedly many contributions had conferred to the dictate of the *regula*,⁴⁵ we immediately see standing out the diverse character of the dispositions that were approved, with respect to those preceding them, for an evident reflection of the different physiognomy that in the meantime the Order

of friars Minor had assumed. In more than one point, and this does not concern only marginal aspects, Francis of Assisi had also obtained the faculty to insert some texts, which did not have at all the aim of restoring a preceding normative dictation, as much as in substance to impose his own convictions on questions which, on the level of evidence, seemed to him to be indispensable for the minoritic identity.

Such interventions were articulated on various levels. They were either admonitions - on the re-proposing in many points of the ideal of *minoritas* as a specific horizon of the religious experience of the brothers, both in the ascetical and moral levels (passing also through a touching praise of poverty) - to the Order, strong and decisive, which was formulated by using the same terms adopted in the *Regula non bullata* and in the *Testamentum*, not to receive money, to obey superiors, to occupy oneself in the pastoral care of female religious and nuns only in determinate conditions. In this last case there existed the very obvious deformity with the exhortations contained in the corresponding chapter of the *Regula non bullata*, in front of a process of incorporation of the female communities having a minoritic inspiration within the monastic Order that was instituted some years before by Ugo of Ostia. One can see, for example, the tone of this last topic:

“I strictly command all the brothers not to have any suspicious dealings or conversations with women, and they may not enter the monasteries of nuns, excepting those brothers to whom special permission has been granted by the Apostolic See; and they may not be godfathers to men or women, so that scandal may not arise among the brothers or concerning them on account of this.”⁴⁶

On the basis of the documentation in our possession it is rather difficult to say in what measure such interventions of Francis in the text of the approved *regula* were the result of a pressure that he exerted directly on the Papal Curia, or whether they had been subjected previously to the approval of a minoritic chapter. On the other hand the passage from a normative which was substantially elaborated for internal use, at least in the perspective in which some of its parts were formed during the course of time, to a legislative text destined to be sanctioned by the highest level of the ecclesiastical institutions.⁴⁷ Regarding this aspect, we can consider the text which is improperly called *Regula pro heremitiis data*,⁴⁸

and which at the basis of the manuscript tradition in a very correct manner can be indicated as *De religiosa habitatione in eremis*.⁴⁹ Far from being a precocious example of a normative mania on the part of Francis of Assisi, and hence of being a forecast of behaviour for the *fratres* that did not find hospitality neither in the *Regula sine bulla* nor in the definitive *regula*, since it became an expression of a penitential practice that was by then discarded by the *multiplicatio fratrum*,⁵⁰ it appears more plausible to hold that this was a reflection of Francis' personal experience in the last years of his life, when he isolated himself in the margins of his own Order.⁵¹

6.

Among the many testimonies that Franciscan hagiography has transmitted, in a way that is more or less interested in a determinate reconstruction of facts, some episodes that refer to the growing preoccupations of Francis of Assisi regarding the process of regularisation have a certain relevance, since they are expressed by making a particular recourse to narrative models that have an exemplary character, as he himself had utilised many a time. Through the collection of memories promoted by Crescenzo da Jesi from 1244, there is an episode under the form of a vision, that is deeply troubling, and which is found in the *Memoriale in desiderio animae* by Thomas of Celano:⁵²

“The most holy Father once saw by heavenly revelation a vision concerning the Rule. It was at the time when there was discussion among the brothers about confirming the Rule, and the saint was extremely anxious about this matter. This is what was shown to him in a dream. It seemed to him that he was gathering tiny bread crumbs from the ground, which he had to distribute to a crowd of hungry brothers who stood all around him. He was afraid to give out such little crumbs, fearing that such minute particles might slip between his fingers, when a voice cried out to him from above: ‘Francis, make one host out of all the crumbs and give it to those who want to eat.’ He did this, and whoever did not receive it devoutly, or showed contempt for the gift received, soon appeared obviously infected with leprosy. In the morning the saint recounted all this to his companions, regretting that he did not understand the mystery of the vision. But shortly afterward, as he kept

vigil in prayer, this voice came down to him from heaven: ‘Francis, the crumbs you saw last night are the words of the Gospel; the host is the Rule, and the leprosy is wickedness.’”⁵³

To remind us of the contrasts that were tearing apart of the Order of friars Minor in the phase of editing the text of the Rule to present to the Roman Curia in Order to obtain papal approval, a true and proper official tradition was created, in the beginning of the 1260s, which was entrusted to the pages of the *Legenda Maior* of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, according to which the text of the Rule was lost *per incuriam* by Brother Elias (who at that moment was an object of an irresistible *damnatio memoriae*).⁵⁴ In the text Francis is assimilated on the hagiographic level to an *alter Moises*, and he would have re-written in an identical manner the text of the Rule, which was soon taken to the Pope for approval. In Order to sanction this normative dictate in a miraculous way as formulated by the saint, in the Bonaventurian *legenda* the seal of the stigmatisation is also brought in to intervene:

“To confirm this with greater certainty by God’s own testimony, when only a few days had passed, the stigmata of our Lord Jesus were imprinted upon him by the finger of the living God, as the seal of the Supreme Pontiff Jesus Christ, for the complete confirmation of the Rule and the commendation of its author.”⁵⁵

Equally polemic, but in a totally different direction, was the reconstruction offered previously in the Franciscan memories collected some twenty years before 1260, and which find their affirmation in the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, according to which, after the text of the Rule was lost, Brother Elias would have led a delegation of ministers of the Order, who were intentioned to protest with Francis for the excessive harshness of the precepts that he inserted in the minoritic Rule. At a certain point the voice of Christ himself, invoked by Francis, came down from heaven, in Order to support him and to silence his opponents in a miraculous way:

“Francis, nothing of yours is in the Rule: whatever is there is all mine. And I want the Rule to be observed in this way: to the letter, to the letter, to the letter, and without a gloss, without a gloss, without a gloss. I know how much human weakness is capable of, and how much I want to help them. Those who refuse to observe it should leave the Order.”⁵⁶

To give an idea of what could have been the points of contrast, one can see, always in the narration of the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, an episode which had as its protagonists Francis and a minister, and was precisely concerned with the precepts of the minoritic Rule. The author also took pains to date it in the moment when time was running short for the definitive approval of the Rule:

“At the time when he returned from overseas, a minister spoke with Francis about the chapter on poverty. He wanted to know his will and understanding, especially since at the time a chapter had been written in the Rule from prohibitions of the holy Gospel: *Take nothing with you on the journey* (Lk 9:1-6).”

In the hagiographic narrative, the drastic and harsh answers of Francis, who still claimed the Gospel roots of his choice of poverty, placed his interlocutor in difficulty. With an undeniable polemic note, the one who composed the text noted at the very end:

“Although the ministers knew that, according to the Rule of the brothers they were bound to observe the holy Gospel, they nevertheless had that chapter of the Rule where it says: ‘Take nothing for your journey’ removed, believing, despite it, that they were not obliged to observance of the perfection of the holy Gospel.”⁵⁷

The lexicon of expressions attributed to Francis of Assisi recalls an ulterior problem, which was particularly thorny, regarding the complex process of regularisation of the friars Minor, namely the sense and value to assign to his *Testamentum*, namely that of a “remembrance, admonition, exhortation, and my testament, which I, little brother Francis, make for you, my blessed brothers, that we might observe the Rule we have promised in a more Catholic way.”⁵⁸ In this writing the successive expressions refer in truth to that hagiographic text and echo the imperative tones of Francis in the inclusions of the *regula* which was definitively approved:

“And in all the chapters which they hold, when they read the Rule, let them also read these words. And I strictly command all my cleric and lay brothers, through obedience, not to place any gloss upon the Rule or upon these words saying: ‘They should be understood in this way.’ But as the Lord has given me to speak and write the Rule and these words simply and purely, may you understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with a holy activity until the end.”⁵⁹

7.

There cannot be any doubt that some of the most severe expressions of the *Testamentum*, and the problematic sections to which these can be linked in the various hagiographic *legendae*, do not give a consent to a different conclusion to that of affirming that Francis of Assisi held dear to his heart, first and foremost, the observance of the *regula* as solemnly approved by Pope Honorius III on 29 November 1223. Moreover, some harsh indications on his part were not at all addressed in Order to restore a practice, which had been re-dimensioned or suppressed in the passage to the definitive *regula*, with respect to what was indicated in the chapters of the *Regula non bullata*. Rather, it was addressed against some dispositions by the Papal Curia, which were contained in pontifical letters during the years 1224-1226, concerning the friars Minor, whose contents had persistently emptied the contents of what the *regula* had approved and decided just some time before.⁶⁰

In truth, we do not have indications, in the *corpus* of Franciscan Sources, relating to the eventual unfolding of some chapters of the Order of friars Minor in the years 1224-1226. When chapters were held after the death of Francis, and if the mandatory final ordinances of the *Testamentum* regarding the reading of this text were kept,⁶¹ it results that the dictates of the *regula* ended up in being irremediably frozen. At the same time, that practice, on the basis of which during preceding minoritic chapters the problems that emerged had been faced in Order to search for a solution that would respond to the needs and aspirations of the friars Minor, by now had ceased to function.

After having received a delegation of the Order, in which, among other brothers, formed part Anthony of Padua and Haymo of Faversham (minister general from 1240), who went to the Pope, some years after the death of Francis of Assisi, asking him to intervene in the question of the interpretation of some points of the *regula*, as well as regarding the value to be attributed to the *Testamentum* of the saint, Pope Gregory IX, the old cardinal Ugo of Ostia and protector of the Order of friars Minor, personally claimed his precise role regarding the approval of their definitive *regula*, which occurred some years back, by writing from Anagni on 28 September 1230 the letter *Quo*

elongati (once again published on the vigil of a minoritic chapter):

“For as a result of the long-standing friendship between the holy confessor and ourselves, we know his mind more fully. Furthermore, while we held a lesser rank, we stood by him both as he composed the aforesaid Rule and obtained his confirmation from the Apostolic See. And so you have petitioned us for a clarification of the doubtful and obscure points in the Rule, together with a response to the difficulties.”⁶²

8.

During the fourth decade of the 13th century the Order of friars Minor had been in a certain way forced to take provisions, following upon the traumatic deposition of Brother Elias in 1239, a ‘lay’ brother who had occupied the post of minister general of an Order of *clerici*, namely, of English *magistri*. These provisions were taken not so much by Alberto da Pisa, but by Haymo of Faversham. In this phase we can place the unfolding of an evolution that, within the period of two decades and passing through the crisis of ‘eschatological’ identity connected with the generalate of Giovanni da Parma, and resolved in 1257 with the ascent to the heights of the Order of the Paris *magister* Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, led the brothers from a definitive assimilation to a configuration to the structures and institutions of a regular mendicant Order - just as had happened some time before in the case of the Order of friars Preachers.⁶³

During that period of time hagiographic memories and normative elaborations became intertwined, and developed around the event of the significance of the formulation and approval of the minoritic Rule. On the one hand, the *legendae* of the first years of the fifth decade of the 13th century, the *De inceptione vel funamento ordinis* of Brother Giovanni da Perugia, and the Assisian *Legenda trium sociorum*, and then the request of the chapter presided over by Crescenzo da Jesi in October 1244, which provoked the collection of material from which ulterior hagiographic efforts were born, namely the *Memoriale in desiderio animae* and the *Tractatus de miraculis* of Thomas of Celano, and the tradition leading to Brother Leo and to the *socii* who had been close to Francis of Assisi during the last years of his life (this tradition is evident especially in the manuscript

of the *Compilatio Assisiensis* and in the *Speculum perfectionis*). On the other hand there are the first commentaries to the minoritic *regula*, beginning from that of 1241-1242, which takes its name from the Four Masters,⁶⁴ to the commentary on the Rule composed around 1252 by the Provençal Brother Hugh of Digne, from which are derived the normative fragments that are not contained in the definitive *regula*, and which have not been conserved in the *Regula non bullata*.⁶⁵ Effectively, even in the second hagiographic *vita* by Thomas of Celano, there exist ulterior normative Franciscan fragments⁶⁶ that can be found: the expression *unde in quadam regula fecit scribi hec verba* precedes some exhortations to the *fratres meos infirmos*, expressed in the first person and which do not find any parallel text, not even in the tenth chapter of the *Regula non bullata*.

9.

In his personal history as initiator of the evangelical life of the *fratres minores* and as the mentor of the canonised *institutor* of the Order of friars Minor,⁶⁷ Francis of Assisi, there was a man who had the destiny of trying to make out a way how to become a new institutional figure, who would have exerted great importance in the history of the regular Orders born in the following centuries.⁶⁸ Here we are referring to the figure of the cardinal protector, who had been instituted with the final dispositions of the *regula* approved by Pope Honorius III at the end of 1223, giving in this way an institutional framework to the relations that, during the course of a 15 year period, existed between the friar from Assisi and Ugo di Ostia.⁶⁹

“In addition to these points, I command the ministers through obedience to petition from our Lord the Pope for one of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who would be the governor, protector and corrector of the fraternity, so that, being always submissive and subject at the feet of the same Holy Church and steadfast in the Catholic faith, we may observe poverty, humility, and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as we have firmly promised.”⁷⁰

This was a request which, in the following narration of the chronicle by Giordano da Giano, stated that Francis had made a direct request to Pope Honorius III as soon as he had returned from the East.⁷¹ In this matter it seems that Francis was

personally convinced, and a proof of this is found in the *Testamentum*, where he dictated very harsh words regarding disobedient brothers:

“And let the minister be bound through obedience to send him with such brothers who would guard him as a prisoner until they deliver him to the Lord of Ostia, who is the Lord, the Protector and the Corrector of this fraternity.”⁷²

Notes

- * Translator’s note: The notes have been adapted because of limits of space. References to the Franciscan Sources in English are reproduced from the three volume series *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*. I. *Francis the Saint*; II. *Francis the Founder*; III. *Francis the Prophet*, ed. R.J. ARMSTRONG, J.A. WAYNE HELLMANN, W.J. SHORT, New City Press, New York - London - Manila 1999. Many of the notes refer to the state of Franciscan studies in 2005 and are therefore not up to date. This fact is most evident in the case of the *Memoriale in desiderio animae* by Thomas of Celano, which in this paper is still called the *Vita secunda*, since at the time of writing Rusconi did not yet have recourse to the *Vita sancti Francisci*, known as *Vita brevior*, written by Celano between the traditional *Vita beati Francisci (Vita prima)* and *Memoriale (Vita secunda)*.

The references to the Sources are those taken from *Fontes Franciscani*, a cura di E. MENESTÒ, S. BRUFANI, Assisi 1995. 1Cel: Thomae de Celano, *Vita prima sancti Francisci*; 2Cel: Thomae de Celano, *Vita secunda sancti Francisci*; 1Bon: Bonaventurae de Balneoregio, *Legenda maior sancti Francisci*; APer: *Anonimi Perusini De Inceptione vel Fundamento Ordinis*; CAss: *Compilatio Assisiensis*; 2Spec: *Speculum Perfectionis*. The following reflections are based on the criteria elaborated in: R. RUSCONI, «Clerici secundum alios clericos». Francesco d’Assisi e l’istituzione ecclesiastica, in *Frate Francesco d’Assisi*. Atti del XXI Convegno internazionale di studi francescani (Assisi, 14-16 ottobre 1993), Spoleto 1994, 71-100. Cfr. ID., *Francesco da Assisi (Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone), santo*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XLIX, Roma 1997, 664-678; ID., *Francesco d’Assisi nelle fonti e negli scritti*, Padova 2002.

- J. DALARUN, *Francesco d’Assisi: il potere in questione e la questione del potere, Rifiuto del potere e forme di governo nell’ordine dei frati Minori*, Milano 1999. French edition: *François d’Assise, ou le pouvoir en question: principes et modalités du gouvernement dans l’ordre des*

- Frères mineurs*, Paris/Bruxelles 1999. "It is certain that the activity of legislator became a continual occupation, nearly an obsession, on Francis from 1210 to 1226" (*Ibidem*, 39, translated into English).
- 3 T. DESBONNETS, *De l'intuition a l'institution. Les franciscaines*, Paris 1983.
 - 4 *Test* 14-15 (FAED I, 125).
 - 5 R. MICHETTI, *Francesco d'Assisi e il paradosso della 'minoritas'. La 'Vita beati Francisci' di Tommaso da Celano*, Roma 2004.
 - 6 APer 19 (FAED II, 43). Parallel text in L3C 37 (FAED II, 90): Some people listened to them willingly; others, on the other hand, mocked them; and many tired them out with questions by saying to them: "Where do you come from?" Others wanted to know which was their Order. Although it was tiresome answering to so many questions, they responded simply that they were penitents originally from the town of Assisi. At that time their religion was not yet called an Order.
 - 7 W. MALECZECK, *Franziskus, Innocenz III, Honorius III und die Anfänge des Minoritenordens. Ein neuer Versuch zu einem älteren Problem*, in *Il papato duecentesco e gli ordini mendicanti. Atti del XXV convegno internazionale di studi francescani* (Assisi, 13-14 febbraio 1998), Spoleto 1998, 23-80.
 - 8 N. D'ACUNTO, *Il vescovo Guido oppure i vescovi Guido? Cronotassi episcopale assisana e fonti francescane*, in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Moyen Age* 108 (1996), 479-524.
 - 9 Cfr. MALECZECK, *Franziskus, Innocenz III, Honorius III*, 44-45. ID., *Papst und Kardinalkolleg von 1191 bis 1216. Die Kardinäle unter Coelestin III und Innocenz III* (Publikationen des Österreichischen Historischen Institutus in Rom, 1. Abt. 6), Wien 1984, 114-117.
 - 10 The relative hagiographic episodes are found in 1Cel 32-33; APer 32-34; L3C 47-49.
 - 11 J.F. GODET, *Le role de la prédication dans l'évolution de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs d'après les écrits de saint François*, in *Franziskanische Studien* 59 (1977) 53-64; MALECZECK, *Franziskus, Innocenz III, Honorius III*, 32ss.
 - 12 R. ZERFASS, *Die Streit um die Laienpredigt. Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zu seiner Entwicklung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Untersuchungen zur praktischen Theologie 2), Freiburg i.Br. 1974.
 - 13 APer 36 (FAED II, 51). Parallel text in L3C 51-52 (FAED II, 98): [Pope Innocent III] embraced him and approved the Rule he had written. He also gave him and his brothers permission to preach penance everywhere, with the stipulation that the brothers who preach obtain permission from blessed Francis. Afterwards he approved this in a consistory [...] After receiving a blessing from the Supreme Pontiff and visiting the tombs of the Apostles, blessed Francis and the other eleven brothers were given the tonsure, as the lord cardinal had arranged, wanting all twelve of them to be clerics."
 - 14 BURCHARD OF URSBERG, *Chronicle* (FAED I, 594): Later on these men realised that their name could possibly lead to self-gratification under the cover of great humility and that, as many bear the title "poor" to no purpose, they could boast in vain before God; therefore, obedient to the Apostolic See in all things, they preferred to be called Friars Minor instead of Poor Minors. Latin original in the edition by O. HOLDER EGGER - B.V. SIMSON, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* 16, Hannover 1916, 107-108, quoted by L. LEMMENS, *Testimonia minora saeculi XIII de sancto Francisco Assisiensis*, Quaracchi, Firenze 1926, 18: Hi temen postea attendentes, quod nonnumquam nimiae humilitatis nomen gloriationem importet et de nomine paupertatis, cum multi eam frustra sustineant, apud Deum vanius gloriantur, maluerunt appellari Minores Fratres quam Minores Pauperes, apostolicae Sedi in omnibus obedientes.
 - 15 A. RIGON, *Dal Libro alla folla. Antonio di Padova e il francescanesimo medioevale*, Roma 2002. Already published in: *I compagni di Francesco e la prima generazione minoritica*. Atti del XIX convegno internazionale di studi francescani (Assisi, 17-19 ottobre 1991), Spoleto 1992, 167-199.
 - 16 1Cel 37 (FAED I, 217). The Latin reads: *Volo ut Ordo fratrum Minorum fraternitas haec vocetur*. The English translation "Lesser Brothers" does not render the true significance of the Latin. Hence I prefer to use the name "friars Minor" (note of the translator).
 - 17 G. MICCOLI, *La storia religiosa*, in *Storia d'Italia*, II: *Dalla caduta dell'Impero romano al secolo XVIII*, Torino 1974, 740ss; G.G. MERLO, *Tra eremo e città. Studi su Francesco d'Assisi e sul francescanesimo medioevale*, Santa Maria degli Angeli (Assisi) 1991, 68-69.
 - 18 *The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata)*, Prol. (FAED I, 63). *The Later Rule (Regula bullata)*, I, 2-3 (FAED I, 100).
 - 19 APer 36 (FAED II, 51).
 - 20 JACQUES DE VITRY, *Letter I (1216)* (FAED I, 580). *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/1170-1240), évêque de Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Édition critique*. Ed. R.B.C. HUYGENS, Leiden 1960, 76. See also LEMMENS, *Testimonia minora*, 80.
 - 21 B. VOLLOT, *La règle des frères Mineurs de 1216*, in *Franciscana* 2 (2000), 137-151; ID., *La vie des frères mineurs de 1216. Le texte*, in *Miscellanea Franciscana* 99 (1999) 265-319.

- 22 Text in *Conciliarum Œcumenicorum Decreta*, ed. J. ALBERIGO, ET ALII, with the expert guidance of H. JEDIN, Bologna 1973, 242, const. 13.
- 23 *Domenico di Caleruega e la nascita dell'Ordine dei frati Predicatori*. Atti del XLI convegno storico internazionale (Todi, 10-12 ottobre 2004).
- 24 Cfr. PELLEGRINI, *Le regole dell'Ordine dei frati Minori*, 243-249; D. FLOOD, *Die 'Regula non bullata' der Minderbrüder (Franziskanische Forschungen 19)*, Werl 1967; K. ESSER, *Textkritische Untersuchungen zur 'Regula non bullata' der Minderbrüder*, Grottaferrata (Roma) 1974; K. ESSER, *Die 'Opuscula' des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi*, 363-404.
- 25 RUSCONI, *Clerici secundum alios clericos*, 88-89.
- 26 *Chronica fratris Jordani*, ed. H. BOEHMER (Collection d'Études et de Documents 6), Paris 1908, 11, § 11.
- 27 JACQUES DE VITRY, *Historia Occidentalis* (FAED I, 583). *The 'Historia Occidentalis' of Jacques de Vitry. A Critical Edition*, ed. J.F. HINNEBUSCH (Spicilegium Friburgense 17), Fribourg/Suisse 1972, 159.
- 28 E. MENESTÒ, *Leone e i compagni di Assisi*, in *I compagni di Francesco*, 31-58; A. BARTOLI LANGELI, *Gli autografi di frate Francesco e di frate Leone*, Turnhout 2000.
- 29 Cfr. RUSCONI, *Francesco d'Assisi nelle fonti e negli scritti*, 33. The hypothesis of the date of 1222 is held by M.P. ALBERZONI, *'Unus novellus pazzus in mundo.'* *Individualità e affermazione del carisma*, in G. MELVILLE - M. SCHÜRER (ed.), *Das Eigene und das Ganze. Zum Individuellen im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum* (Vita regularis 16), Münster 2002, 285.
- 30 CAss 18 (FAED II, 132-133). The cardinal who mentioned was Ugo di Ostia. Cfr. G. MICCOLI, *La proposta cristiana di Francesco d'Assisi*, in *Studi medievali* III/24 (1983) 17-73.
- 31 Giordano da Giano wrote around 1250. Cfr. F. DAL PINO, *Giordano da Giano e le prime missioni oltralpe dei frati minori*, in *I compagni di Francesco*, 201-257.
- 32 HONORIUS III, Letter *Cum secundum consilium*, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. J. SBARALEA, 4 voll., Roma 1759-1768, I (Roma 1759), 6, doc. 5.
- 33 In this context one sees a parallelism with Moses and the law on Mount Sinai as proposed by the hagiographic reconstructions. M. CONTI, *Sinai-Fonte Colombo: il peso di un'analogia nell'interpretazione della regola francescana*, in *Antonianum* 53 (1978) 23-55.
- 34 GIORDANO DA GIANO, *Chronicle*, 17, in *XIIIth Century Chronicles. Jordan of Giano. Thomas of Eccleston. Salimbene degli Adami*, Translated by P. HERMANN, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1961, 33.
- 35 *Earlier Rule* 18 (FAED I, 76-77): "All the ministers who are in regions overseas and beyond the Alps may come to the Chapter of Pentecost in the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula once every three years, and the other ministers once a year."
- 36 R. RUSCONI, *'Moneo atque exhortor [...] firmiter praecipio'*. *Carisma individuale e potere normativo in Francesco d'Assisi*, in G. ANDENNA - M. BREITENSTEIN - G. MELVILLE (ed.), *Charisma und Gemeinschaft*, Münster 2005.
- 37 *Letter to a Minister*, 13 (FAED I, 98).
- 38 3Soc (L3C) 35 (FAED II, 89).
- 39 L. PELLEGRINI, *'Fragmenta'*. *Frammenti di un'altra redazione della 'Regula non bullata?'*, in *Scitti*, 335-337. C. PAOLAZZI, *Nascita degli scritti e costituzione del canone*, in A. CACCIOTTI (ed.), *'Verba Domini mei'*. *Gli 'Opuscula' di Francesco d'Assisi a 25 anni dalla edizione di Kajetan Esser OFM*. Atti del convegno internazionale (Roma, 10-12 aprile 2002), Roma 2003, 86. According to him these *Fragmenta* "come from an intermediate edition" between 1221 and 1223.
- 40 D. FLOOD, *La genèse de la Règle*, in D. FLOOD - W. VAN DIJK - T. MATURA, *La naissance d'un charisme. Une lecture de la première règle de saint François d'Assise*, Paris 1973, 25-84. ID., *Regulam melius observare*, in CACCIOTTI (a cura di), *'Verba Domini mei'*, 329-361. G. MICCOLI, *Gli Scritti di Francesco come fonti per la storia delle origini minoritiche*, in *Ibidem*, 149-171.
- 41 Cfr. L. PELLEGRINI, *La prima 'fraternitas' francescana: una rilettura delle fonti*, in *Frate Francesco*, 59-60, regarding chapters 4-6 (*De ministris et aliis fratribus qualiter ordinentur, De correctione fratrum in offensione, De recursu fratrum ad ministros et quod aliquis frater non vocetur prior*).
- 42 *Regula non bullata*, chapters 18-20 (*Qualiter ministri convenient ad invicem; Quod fratres vivant catholice; De penitentia et receptione corporis et sanguinis Domini Ihesu Christi*).
- 43 *Regula non bullata*, chapters 22-24 (*De admonitione omnium fratrum; Oratio gratiarum et actio: Conclusio*).
- 44 *Earlier Rule*, 24 (FAED I, 86).
- 45 Regarding the edition of the *Regula sine bulla* the Franciscan *legendae* later on recalled only the role of a German brother, Caesar of Speyer, in relation to his personal biblical culture and to the citations from Scripture contained in the same Rule. On this personage, cfr. A. GATTUCCI, *Cesario da Spira*, in *I compagni di Francesco*, 119-165.
- 46 *Later Rule*, 11 (FAED I, 106). M.P. ALBERZONI, *Chiara a San Damiano tra ordine minoritico e curia papale*, in *'Clara claris praeclara'*. Atti del convegno internazionale (Assisi, 20-22 novembre

- 2003), S. Maria degli Angeli (Assisi) 2004, 27-70.
- 47 Cfr. L. PELLEGRINI, *Le regole dell'Ordine dei frati Minori*, 246.
- 48 ESSER, *Die 'Opuscula' des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi*, 405-412.
- 49 The title *Regola pro Eremitoriis data* is retained in: FRANCESCO D'ASSISI, *Scritti*, edizione critica a cura di C. PAOLAZZI, Frati Editori di Quaracchi, Fondazione Collegio S. Bonaventura, Grottaferrata 2009, 340-345.
- 50 To the *fratres*, who *fuerint in eremis vel in aliis locis*, the *Regula non bullata* makes a reference in chapter 7,15. Another reference can be found in the letter of 1216 by Jacques de Vitry (*nocte vero revertuntur ad eremum vel loca solitaria*). Cfr. LEMMENS, *Testimonia minora*, 79-80.
- 51 L. PELLEGRINI, *L'esperienza eremitica di Francesco e dei primi francescani*, in *Francesco d'Assisi e francescanesimo dal 1216 al 1226*. Atti del IV convegno internazionale di studi francescani (Assisi, 15-17 ottobre 1976), Assisi 1977, 279-313.
- 52 Regarding this episode, and in general regarding episodes in the hagiographic Franciscan *legendae*, see the general presentation by J. DALARUN, *La Malavventura di Francesco d'Assisi*, Milano 1996.
- 53 *Memoriale in desiderio animae*, 209 (FAED II, 381).
- 54 G. BARONE, *Da frate Elia agli Spirituali*, Milano 1999, in particular c. 1: Frate Elia, 29-72, and c. 2: Frate Elia: suggestioni di una rilettura, 73-86. Cfr. also in *Bollettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo*, 85 (1974-1975), 89-144, and in *I compagni di Francesco*, 61-80.
- 55 1Bon IV,11 (FAED II, 558-559).
- 56 CAss 17 (FAED II, 132).
- 57 CAss 102 (FAED II, 206).
- 58 *Testamentum* 34 (FAED I, 127).
- 59 *Testamentum* 37-39 (FAED I, 127).
- 60 RUSCONI, '*Clerici secundum alios clericos*', 96-99.
- 61 L. PELLEGRINI, *Gli Scritti e la reinterpretazione della proposta francescana nella storia dell'Ordine minoritico*, in CACCIOTTI (a cura di), '*Verba Domini mei*', 127.
- 62 GREGORY IX, *Quo elongati* (FAED I, 571). H. GRUNDMANN, *Die Bulle 'Quo elongati' Papst Gregors IX*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 54 (1961) 20-21.
- 63 G.G. MERLO, *Nel nome di san Francesco. Storia dei frati Minori e del francescanesimo sino agli inizi del XVI secolo*, Padova 2003.
- 64 *Expositio quattuor magistrorum super Regulam fratrum Minorum (1241-1242)*, ed. L. OLIGER, Roma 1950.
- 65 Cfr. D. FLOOD, *Hugh of Digne's Rule Commentary* (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 14), Grottaferrata (Roma) 1979.
- 66 Cfr. D. FLOOD, *Hugh of Digne's Rule Commentary* (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 14), Grottaferrata (Roma) 1979.
- 67 *Institutor et rector Ordinis fratrum Minorum*. These words describe the role of the cardinal protector in the letter *Sicut phialiae aureae* of Pope Gregory IX (9 July 1228). For the contents of the text, see the observations of M. BIHL, *De canonizatione Sancti Francisci*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 21 (1928) 506-507.
- 68 Essential information in A. BONI, *Cardinale protettore*, in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, II, Roma 1973, coll. 276-280. More specifically in W.R. THOMSON, *The Earliest Cardinal Protectors of the Franciscan Order*, in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 9 (1972) 17-80.
- 69 M.P. ALBERZONI, *La memoria contrastata. Ancora su Francesco e Ugolino d'Ostia*, in M.C. DE MATTEIS (ed.), *Ovidio Capitani. Quaranta anni per la storia medioevale*, 2 voll. Bologna 2003, II, 89-104. MALECZECK, *Franziskus, Innocenz III., Honorius III.*, 64-80.
- 70 *Regula bullata*, XII,3-4 (FAED I, 106).
- 71 *Chronica fratris Jordani*, § 14.
- 72 *Testamentum* 33 (FAED I, 127).

Radical stand of the Assisian faced with power

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In its beginnings, the Order that is called “Franciscan,” or more accurately “Order of Friars Minor,” was a fraternity of mostly lay individuals who decided to do penance. The founder, in his concern to live “according to the form of the Holy Gospel,” chose to establish in a rule of religious life the condition shared by the most powerless classes in the society of his time: destitution, precariousness, itineracy, manual labour. He showed a loathing for all forms of power that went far beyond the scorn of the world as found in the monastic and ascetic tradition. With Francis, there is less of a merely visible break with the world; at the heart of his life there is instead more intransigence toward any compromise with the world and its powers. He accepted, seemingly, with regret, the institutionalisation of his experience, which, born in central Italy, is strictly contemporary with the blossoming of the communal regime at the moment in which it passed from its so-called “consular” and “ruling” phases. Both of these phases, which emanated from the factions of an urban aristocracy - evolved into a so-called “popular” phase. In this “popular” phase, the “arts” - the new trades - allowed access to political expression and government participation. There is therefore some cause, not for asserting that Francis of Assisi was in any way the founder of modern democracy - the search for these origins being in itself absurd - but rather for wondering whether the radical stand of the Assisian faced with power had any influence on the determination of the governmental structures of the Order which he started and which claims to follow his teachings.

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Jacques Dalarun
Francis of Assisi and Power,
 Franciscan Institute Publications,
 Saint Bonaventure University, NY, 2007, 17-18

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.

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Cover picture:

Confirmation of the Rule. Basrelief in the pulpit of St. Francis Church, Hamrun, Malta