

## Medieval Franciscan Approaches to the Virgin Mary

# The Medieval Franciscans

*General Editor*

Steven J. McMichael

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# Medieval Franciscan Approaches to the Virgin Mary

*Mater Sanctissima, Misericordia, et Dolorosa*

*Edited by*

Steven J. McMichael  
Katherine Wrisley Shelby



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Cover illustration: Cimabue, Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint Francis, Lower Church, Basilica of Saint Francis, Assisi. Photo: © Stefan Diller Photographie, Werbung Industrie Portraits, permission to use granted 4 April 2018

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# Introduction

*Steven J. McMichael*

Miri Rubin's introductory remarks to her chapter on the medieval friars and the Virgin Mary highlight the great importance that the Franciscans contributed to the world of medieval Mariology:

While the parishes offered for most people the main occasions for religious education, for the sacraments and the communal celebration of life, the friars added new qualities to the experience of lay people, beyond the parish. With urgency and exhortation, the friars transmitted religious ideas and images in sermons, in devotional writings, in religious drama and in theological reflection.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages and for the medieval Franciscan tradition in particular cannot be overestimated. She is a pivotal figure in the theological, artistic, spiritual, and liturgical life of the friars. Beginning with Francis and Clare of Assisi, a constant focus was given to the mother of Jesus Christ in the life of devotion, theological reflection, and in many sermons given by the friars. Besides Jesus Christ himself, there is no other religious figure so prominent in the Middle Ages than the Virgin Mary.

This volume attempts to provide a sample of the many ways that medieval Franciscans wrote, represented in art, and preached about the 'model of models' of the medieval religious experience, the Virgin Mary. Its objective of presenting a 'sample' is the realization that many Franciscan authors, artists, and preachers are not included in this volume. What is offered is an extremely valuable collection of essays that highlight the significant role the Franciscans exercised in developing Mariology in the Middle Ages.

On one hand, this book builds on the foundation of previous literature on the medieval Franciscans and the Virgin Mary that was written during the last century. Authors such as Luigi Gambaro, Luca M. Di Girolamo, Leone Veuthey, Leonhard Lehmann, and Peter Damian Fehlner blazed the trail for many of the studies in this volume.<sup>2</sup> Several of the articles, on the other hand, also develop

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1 Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven and London, 2009), 197.

2 This previous research and writing appear in such volumes as *Maria Corredentrice, Storia e teologia* 1–11: Scuola Francescana (Frigento, 1998); *La 'Scuola Francescana' e l'Immacolata*

this research in significant and innovative ways by showing Franciscan Mariology as a living and vibrant tradition.

The title of this volume is *Medieval Franciscan Approaches to the Virgin Mary: Mater Sanctissima, Misericordia, et Dolorosa*, which captures the major themes that are here explored, even though there are a host of other titles given to her in the Middle Ages (see the essays by Bertazzo and Brown especially). The medieval Franciscans saw the Virgin as the most holy one, who was full of all graces and the model of holiness not only for the Church but also for the individual believer. Her honor was proclaimed especially by the development among the friars of two foundational dogmas of faith: The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Several essays in this volume have these two Marian feasts as their focus. For the friars, she was also the bearer of God's mercy, and after her son, was the principal conduit of God's mercy in the world. The friars similarly regard her as the one who was with her son from 'womb to tomb' and beyond as the first resurrection witness and a participant at Pentecost. She shared everything with her son, including her flesh, a fact that will be crucial for the development of the doctrine of the Assumption. In the later Middle Ages, her participation in her son's suffering will likewise become a major focus of popular piety: Since one of the dominant experiences of medieval people in general was suffering—from illness, plagues, famine, violence, and acts of penance, for some examples—there was no better role model than Mary to show humanity the redemptive role of suffering. Because of her holiness, her embodiment of mercy, and her role as the bearer of suffering, the Virgin Mary deserved to be seated to the right of her son in the heavenly court. She is the advocate of those seeking holiness, their own experience of God's mercy, and their own understanding and embrace of redemptive suffering in their lives.

## 1        **The Foundations of Franciscan Marian Reflection: Francis, Clare, and Anthony**

The volume begins with the three foundational figures of the Franciscan Movement, Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi, and Anthony of Padua/Lisbon. Their

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*Concezione: Atti del Congresso Mariologico Francescano* (Assisi, 2003); and *La Vergine Maria nella teologia e nella spiritualità francescana. Incontri di spiritualità francescana* (Città del Vaticano, 2005).

own devotion, reflection, and writing provided the cornerstone for subsequent Marian spirituality among Franciscans and the general public.

The essay written by Michael Blastic investigates the role of Mary in the life, teaching, and spirituality of Francis (c. 1182–1226) and Clare of Assisi (1193–1253) as this emerges from their writings. For both Francis and Clare, Mary is recognized first and foremost as the Mother of God's Son who gives human flesh to Jesus and chooses a life of poverty with him and his disciples in this world. Two of the titles attributed to Mary by Francis—'Mary the Virgin made Church' and 'Mary the Spouse of the Holy Spirit'—while not new in the tradition of the Church, are given a dynamic interpretation in the context of the Minorite and Clarian vocation to follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ. The early Franciscan understanding of the role of Mary in Christian life has implications for all men and women as they are called as disciples to become themselves and to create spaces for others where men and women can experience God's presence in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. Francis and Clare are always focused on Jesus, and Mary is always there next to Jesus with his other disciples to model what it means to live the Gospel.

Luciano Bertazzo presents an overview of the Mariology of Anthony of Padua/Lisbon (1195–1231), the first lector of Franciscan theology, according to the task entrusted to him by Francis of Assisi. Bertazzo's study is based on the recent critical edition of the Sunday and Festive Sermons that has given us a firm foundational text upon which to base any future studies relative to the preaching of Anthony. There are seventy-seven sermons that are developed within the course of the Sundays of the liturgical year, plus a series of sermons for the main festivities of the year that ends at the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on 29 June. In regard to the Virgin Mary, seven sermons are dedicated to Marian festive celebrations; other quotations about Mary are variously scattered in other sermons; and fourteen prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary can be found at the end of various other sermons. This collection of sermon material constitutes almost a corpus in its own right, which allows one to read the Mariological thought of *Il Santo* of Padua. As Bertazzo assays, Friar Antony does not express an original and particular Mariology, but rather reflects the Mariological thought of his time, wherein a systematic Mariology was still in the process of being developed. While using significant Old Testament images and terms that were later to become the basis of the most important Marian titles ('Immaculate' and 'Mediatrice'), Anthony's Marian sermons express an intensely affective Mariology as the result of his own personal devotion. They are a reflection of a culture that comes from the Cistercian world and which will become vogue in the broader Catholic tradition thanks to Franciscan preaching.

## 2 The Virgin Mary in Medieval Franciscan Theology

J. Isaac Goff next considers the place and importance of Bonaventure's (d. 1274) sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary for understanding his overall Mariology. Focusing especially upon Bonaventure's two sermons on the Annunciation, attention is given to the manner in which Bonaventure understands and explains the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in relation to the Incarnation and the Church. In these sermons, Bonaventure presents a developed and clear vision of Mary's essential role and agency in every phase of the mission of Jesus Christ, viewing Mary as uniquely active in bringing forth Jesus and his mystical body, cooperating in the redemption and in the continuing sacramental life and ministries of the Church.

Christopher Shorrock's essay on the *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* of Conrad of Saxony (d. 1279) presents him as a unique example of a thirteenth-century German Franciscan lector and preacher developing a predominantly pastoral approach to Mariology and Marian piety of the day based on the phrases of the Hail Mary. Drawing heavily on Richard of St. Laurent, an Augustinian Canon who wrote a Marian treatise some twenty years earlier, Conrad of Saxony by way of contrast presents a briefer and more sober example of Marian piety. Conrad's text draws heavily upon Scripture and Patristic and Medieval authorities, with special reference to Bernard of Clairvaux and Richard of St. Laurent. According to Shorrock, Conrad significantly contributes to the doctrinal development of the theme of 'Mary, the Mother of God' and 'Our Mother' based on pious Marian titles and key statements in the Angels' Salutation to Mary.

Rachel Fulton Brown's essay concerns the *Mariale* of Servas Sanctus of Faenza (1220/30—d. ca. 1300), which is almost wholly unknown today but survives in at least fifteen manuscripts, with provenance from across Europe. The *Mariale* consists of 150 chapters, each dedicated to a name of Mary which Servas Sanctus found in Scripture. While puzzling to modern readers, such catalogues of titles lie at the center of late-medieval devotion to Mary as practiced in the recitation of the *Ave Maria*. This article first suggests why modern readers have found these catalogues of titles so difficult to situate in the history of Marian devotion, and second, it provides an introduction to Servas Sanctus's method and purpose. Mary, as Servas Sanctus and his contemporaries believed, was first and foremost the sacred place—the temple—in which God became visible to the world. His catalogues of her titles were meant to celebrate this mystery, as the Creator of all things entered into creation through her.

Marzia Ceschia's article, through an interpretation of some passages of the *Liber* that relate the spiritual experience of the Franciscan tertiary, St. Angela

of Foligno (1248–1309), proposes some new ideas for elaborating the Mariology of the saint. It particularly highlights the mystic's predilection for the image of Mary beneath the Cross: This emphasis underscores Mary's exemplary function in Angela's spirituality, as well as the conformative power that allows us to find profound Marian resonance in the Saint's life. Mary taught Angela about redemptive suffering and how such suffering is correlated with the Franciscan approach to poverty and humility. It is indeed Mary who teaches Angela that her suffering is the means through which to be related to Mary's son, Jesus. If Angela gives us a certain image of Mary, it is also Mary herself who gives it to Angela.

The last two essays of this section on the Virgin Mary in medieval Franciscan theology deal with two main proponents of the Immaculate Conception. The first essay, written by Mary Beth Ingham, is focused on the theology of John Duns Scotus (c. 1265–1308) that promotes the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which would become Roman Catholic dogma in 1854. Ingham discusses how Scotus developed a theology of prevenient grace that would allow Mary to be conceived without original sin. She shows how Scotus's Christology also came into play with this Marian belief, that is, how his affirmative answer to the question of whether Christ would have come into the world without Original Sin is foundational for the belief in the Immaculate Conception. This essay, though, is not only about Mary and Jesus, but further shows how Scotus's Christology and Mariology provide his readers with a vision of the highest dignity of the human person. Ingham argues that Mary epitomizes the very essence of what it means to be a human person in light of the Incarnation and the Immaculate Conception.

The second essay, written by Christiaan Kappes, then turns to Francis of Meyronnes (c. 1288–c. 1328), who was a student and interpreter of John Duns Scotus, especially in regard to the issue of the Immaculate Conception. Francis Meyronnes uses a heavy dose of biblical and patristic texts in the formation of his theology of the Immaculate Conception. He capitalized on the rediscovery of Roman law not only in its civil and ecclesiastical usages, but also as it applies to scriptural exegesis, especially with respect to the writings of Paul of Tarsus. Meyronnes went beyond his peers in providing an incipient juridico-theological approach to theology that reflected the context of not only Paul, but of the juristically inclined theologians of the third century, culminating in the synthesis of Augustine of Hippo. His surprising awareness of the applicability of Roman institution to theology led him to develop legalistic arguments on behalf of Mary's exemption from original sin. This study demonstrates the meticulous application of Roman law to universitarian Scholastic theology in order to provide a Mariology that retains its exegetical force even in light of

modern scriptural scholarship. What is more, Meyronnes's tour de force in the realm of immaculist apologetics marks a key point in the early Renaissance, where Latin Christians began to transition from considering Mary's Immaculate Conception as a theological opinion to affirming it increasingly as the default opinion of university faculty. Meyronnes's treatises were fundamental in overcoming the timidity of Scotus's formulation in favor of boldness.

### 3 The Virgin Mary in Medieval *Vita Christi* Tradition

Leah Buturain focuses her attention on the Virgin Mary in the *Vita Christi* tradition of the fourteenth century. The Trecento *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*MVC*) belongs to a time and place of growing Marian devotion and a flowering of Franciscan spirituality. The Franciscan friar who wrote the *MVC* for a Poor Clare possessed a pictorial imagination that at once opened new doors of perception while participating in a larger visual devotional praxis in popular piety. The earliest known illustrated manuscript of the *Meditationes* is the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Ms. Italien 115 (BnF ital. 115), which was probably made in Pisa about 1350 and intended for a group of Poor Clares, and it may indeed be the earliest if not the original *Meditationes*. Its copious illustrations offer a fecund resource for examining the inherently visual nature of Franciscan meditation, one that participates in the larger visual praxis of religious imagery. Buturain's essay analyzes how the BnF ital. images and text of the Annunciation is re-presented and incorporated into a *meditatio/imitatio* exercise for the reader as meditant. The friar expected and engaged the reader/viewer's capacity to 'behold' and 'see' and envision the Virgin and Gabriel in order to pray, to 'be present,' and to recapitulate the Annunciation.

Pacelli Millane also deals with this same *Vita Christi* text. The fourteenth-century manuscripts, *Meditationes vitae Christi*, center principally on the life of Jesus Christ; nevertheless, they are also a reflective meditation on the unique role and relationship to Mary, his Mother. The main focus of Millane's essay is on the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*; however, an attempt is made to discover and rediscover the original Franciscan charism of Francis of Assisi with reference to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Since it would be impossible to note in detail all of the meditations where Mary plays an important role in the *Meditations*, Millane's concentration is on two central mysteries during the life of Jesus: First, the mystery of the Incarnation, including the Annunciation by the angel, as well as the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth and the birth of Jesus. Second, she turns to the mystery of the Resurrection, including Mary's participation in Jesus' life during his death, resurrection, and return to

the Father. In correlating these two central mysteries, this *Vita Christi* text highlights Mary's central role in Jesus' life and creates a much clearer perspective of their relationship.

#### 4 The Virgin Mary in Medieval Art

The Virgin Mary appears so often in medieval art that it would be very difficult to write a comprehensive presentation on medieval art as it pertains to Mary. She is not only found among many cycles of art found within Franciscan churches, including the Basilica of St. Francis, but also in panel paintings, manuscript illuminations, stained glass, terracotta, and other devotional artistic forms.

That said, the articles in this section are specifically concerned with Franciscan art devoted to the Virgin Mary in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Holly Flora's essay deals with Cimabue's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint Francis*, also located in the Lower Church of the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. This painting has long been the object of religious devotion, yet it has never been adequately analyzed in terms of its original audience and devotional function. Flora argues that Cimabue's *Madonna with Saint Francis* was created as a reminder of the beginnings of the Order and in celebration of Francis and his earliest followers. Her argument is based on the evident concern among the friars of the Sacro Convento for commemorating the Porziuncola, the first true home of the Order and the place where Francis, at his request, died. She proposes that the Madonna was designed by Cimabue and the friars in the Sacro Convento as an emblem of that locus, and as such, it became an icon to the formative days of the Franciscan Order and to Francis' love for Mary. Flora first briefly presents the fresco's position within the church and what that means for its evolving viewership, and then discusses the connections between Cimabue's image and the sacred site of Santa Maria degli Angeli at the Porziuncola.

Darrellyn Gunzburg next focuses her attention on certain images of Mary in the Lower Church, an ecclesiastical building that was dug into the rock and served as a sanctuary for the tomb of St. Francis. Because of its origin underground, it is a place into which little natural daylight falls. In the reconstruction and redecoration of this space that occurred from 1288 onwards, two frescos of Mary were painted in the second decade of the fourteenth century in the north and south transepts, both with gilded backgrounds: *La Madonna dei Tramonti* (Madonna of the Sunsets) painted by Pietro Lorenzetti (c.1280–c.1348) and *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, painted by Simone Martini

(1284–1344). The name of the first fresco openly suggests a relationship with the sun; the second fresco does not. Nevertheless, in the transepts, these two frescoes are the only frescoes whose backgrounds are gilded, and both frescoes face west, suggesting that both were configured for reflecting sunlight at sunset. Gunzburg conducted both actual and virtual fieldwork to ascertain when the frescoes would be illuminated by the sun's setting light. Her research found that both frescoes are strategically placed to receive sunlight, or *lumen*, the radiation of light, and that the gilding of each creates *splendor*, the multiplication of light as expressed by St. Francis and defined by Bartolomeo da Bologna (d. after 1294). When the radiating sunlight moves across each fresco in combination with those that surround them in late April, the summer solstice, and mid-August, it animates the theological story contained within the frescoes. Gunzburg's research further suggests that the phenomenon indicates a loyalty to using the true position of the sun for theological purposes, as opposed to the Julian calendar dates. Ultimately, what emerges in this essay is a dynamic visual manifestation underscoring what is already known of the central position of Mary in the Franciscan worldview.

## 5 The Virgin Mary in Medieval Franciscan Preaching

Finally, almost every Franciscan preacher of the Middle Ages delivered a series of sermons on the Virgin Mary. These collections almost always include sermons on the major feasts of the Virgin Mary that include her Nativity, Purification, Annunciation, Immaculate Conception, and Assumption.

The contribution of Alessia Francone focuses on the Marian themes in the Latin and vulgar sermons of the thirteenth-century German Franciscan preacher, Berthold of Regensburg (c. 1220–1272). Checking the different sermon cycles directly or indirectly attributed to Berthold, she shows that it is possible to build a corpus of fifteen sermons, fourteen Latin and one in Middle High German, which are related to Marian topics. Most of these sermons are found in the cycle known as *Rusticanus de Sanctis* and are connected to the Marian feasts of the Nativity of Mary, Purification, Annunciation, and Assumption. Especially significant are two sermons which explain the prayer *Ave Maria*. Francone's analysis of the Latin sermons reveals a particular interest about some topics: On one hand, the sermons emphasize the physical and spiritual privileges of the Virgin, such as the nexus between her virginity and maternity, her peculiar union with Christ in the Incarnation, her fullness of grace, her freedom from actual sin, her Assumption, and her majesty in Paradise; on the other hand, they highlight the special virtues and exemplary life of Mary,



especially accentuating her poverty and religious practices. These themes would have appealed to the audience of these sermons, which were intended to be preached to laypersons and to provide them with religious instruction. They explain the main prerogatives of the Virgin and the most popular prayer devoted to her without approaching difficult or controversial arguments, even as they present Mary as a model of behavior for the believers, who should conform to her virtues. In comparison to the Latin sermons, the only extant German sermon related to a Marian feast from Berthold shows a very limited interest in Marian topics, preferring to instruct its audience on the Christian practices of everyday life.

Steven McMichael focuses his attention on the Assumption sermons of the fifteenth-century Franciscan, Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444). His sermons reveal that he saw Mary as the most perfect human being in life as well as in heaven. She was the most faithful disciple who not only shared all at the moment of his very conception, but was also there for his passion, death, and resurrection. Her own Immaculate Conception and Assumption confirm in the mind and spirituality of Bernardino that all of Mariology supports Christology, and therefore she shares in the glory of her son. McMichael shows how Bernardino believed Mary to be the ultimate model of human behavior in life and also the perfect model of heavenly glory.

Kimberly Rivers's essay examines two sermons by Johannes Sintram (d. 1450), a Franciscan preacher and lector from Würzburg. Sintram preaches about Mary by using the imagery of the book, the hymn, and the letter, common methods of communication in the fifteenth century, which would have perhaps enjoyed a special resonance for a scribe who transcribed copies of everything that came into his grasp and for his German contemporaries. Though none of these approaches are unique to Sintram, the careful way that he lays out his sermon-composition process is especially clear and will be examined here. The material demonstrates how Sintram could use hymns, marginal notation, popular tropes about books and letters, and vernacular translation to create new sermons about Mary. His literary presence is felt through the marginal notations and explicit directions for composition in the texts, especially in PrinG 90.

The final essay of the volume should really be the first in terms of how scholars do research in the Middle Ages. Filippo Sedda shows the reader what has to be done in terms of establishing the manuscript tradition in order to provide a foundation for any further scholarship on medieval preachers and their sermons. In other words, in order to provide an analysis and commentary on any medieval writer, the manuscript tradition must be established. This is what Sedda does in his own essay on the Marian sermons of John of Capistrano

(1386–1486) as he presents a listing of the various manuscripts we can now identify as authentic sermons that were preached by one of the four pillars of the Franciscan reform movement of the fifteenth century. Based on this study of the manuscript tradition, Sedda argues, we are now in a position for scholars to edit the sermons and provide the commentary that these sermons deserve. As with the other Franciscan preachers mentioned above, the Mariology of John of Capistrano will hopefully see the light of day.

I wish to thank all of the authors who submitted essays for this volume, especially for being patient with me throughout this editing process. Many thanks to Katherine Wisley Shelby who did the copyediting of these essays. Mille grazie is owed to Nancy Celaschi, who translated two of the articles in this volume from Italian to English.

**PART 1**

*The Foundations of Franciscan Marian Reflection:  
Francis, Clare, and Anthony*





# The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Francis and Clare of Assisi

*Michael W. Blastic*

In the church of the Virgin Mother of God, her servant Francis lingered and, with continuing cries, insistently begged her who had conceived the Word full of grace and truth, to become his advocate. Through the merits of the Mother of Mercy, he conceived and brought to birth the spirit of Gospel truth.<sup>1</sup>

As Bonaventure describes it here, the context for the founding of the Lesser Brothers has both an external and internal dimension for Francis: It was in the church of St. Mary of the Angels, or the Portiuncola, where Francis conceived within himself ‘the spirit of evangelical truth.’ Bonaventure establishes here an analogy between Mary, ‘who conceived the Word full of grace and truth,’ and Francis, who ‘conceived and gave birth to the spirit of evangelical truth.’ Mary as mother, as many scholars have noted, is central to Francis of Assisi’s understanding of and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>2</sup> What Bonaventure

1 Saint Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis* 3.1, in *Francis of Assisi Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder*, eds. Regis Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York, 2000), 542, modified (the translators have added the phrase ‘and brought to birth’ in the first sentence, which does not appear in the Latin text) (hereafter, *FAED* 2). Enrico Menestò e Stefano Brufani, eds. *Fontes Francescani*, (Assisi, 1995) (hereafter *Fontes Francescani*; the abbreviations for the Writings of Francis and Clare used throughout are those from this edition), 794: ‘In ecclesia igitur Virginis Matris Dei moram faciente servo ipsius Francisco et apud eam quae concepit Verbum plenum gratiae et veritatis, continuis insistente gemitibus, ut fieri dignaretur advocata ipsius, meritis Matris misericordiae concepit ipse ac peperit spiritum evangelicae veritatis.’

2 For example, Leonhard Lehmann, ‘La devozione a Maria in Francesco e Chiara,’ in *La ‘Scuola Francescana’ e l’Immacolata Concezione*, ed. Stefano Cecchin, Atti del Congresso mariologico Francescano, S. Maria degli Angeli, Assisi, 4–8 dicembre 2003 (Città del Vaticano, 2005), 1–54. Stefano M. Cecchin, *Maria Signora Santa e Immacolata nel pensiero francescano: per una storia del contributo francescano alla mariologia* (Città del Vaticano, 2001), 47–51. Oktavian Schmucki, ‘St. Francis’s Devotion toward the Blessed Virgin Mary,’ in *Greyfriars Review*

drew specific attention to in the above text from the *Major Legend* is the dynamic and active dimension of Mary's role in the foundation of the order: Francis conceived (*concepit*) and gave birth (*peperit*) to the 'spirit of evangelical truth,' an expression which names the essence of the brotherhood, as Mary conceived and gave birth to the Word of God. As Bonaventure implies, Francis conceived the Word first in his heart through contemplation and gave birth by sharing that Word with others in mission. Thus for him, Mary becomes the analogical key for understanding the nature and purpose of Minorite Life, which Bonaventure continues to develop in the early chapters of the *Legenda* with an explicitly maternal metaphor as Francis gives birth to the first brothers who join him in his gospel project.<sup>3</sup> While Bonaventure develops the analogy of the motherhood of Mary, as well as the role of the church of St. Mary of the Angels in the life of Francis and the Order according to his own theological vision of Francis and the lesser brothers, he does capture a basic insight of Francis and his brothers about Mary, the Mother of God, as that emerges from their Writings: Becoming and living as a Lesser Brother is ultimately about giving flesh to Christ in the world after the example of Mary.

Clare's hagiographer develops a similar analogy for the relation between Clare and her sisters in the Latin prose legend *Admirabilis femina*: 'She encouraged them in their little nest of poverty to be conformed to the poor Christ, whom a poor mother placed as an infant in a narrow crib.'<sup>4</sup> The author of the legend echoes here words from Clare's *Form of Life* where Clare admonishes the sisters to live poorly: 'Out of love of the most holy and beloved Child wrapped in poor little swaddling clothes and placed in a manger and of his most holy mother, I admonish, beg, and encourage my sisters always to wear poor garments.'<sup>5</sup> Clare links the motherhood of Mary to the life of poverty of the Poor Sisters, and in this way, the motherhood of Mary—all she did to

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5 (1991), 201–232; Linda Conroy, 'The Virgin Mary in the Lives and Writings of Francis and Clare,' in *Maria* 3.1 (2002), 37–40.

3 *Major Legend* 3.3, in *FAED* 2, 543. Bernard 'merited to be the firstborn son of the blessed Francis...' in 3.7, *FAED* 2, 546: 'For the poor and sterile simplicity of our holy father had already brought seven to birth and now he wished to bring to birth in Christ the Lord all the faithful of the world called to cries of penance.'

4 *The Legend of Saint Clare* 9.13.7, in *Clare of Assisi: The Lady, Early Documents*, ed. and trans. Regis Armstrong (New York, 2006, 2001) (hereafter, *The Lady*), 293. *Legenda latina: Sanctae Clarae virginis Assiensis*, Giovanni Boccali, ed., (Assisi, 2001) (hereafter *Legend latina*), 124: 'Hortatur eas in paupertatis nidulo Christo pauperi conformari quem pauperula mater in arto praesepio parvulum reclinavit.'

5 ReCl 2.24, *The Lady*, 113. *Fontes Francescani*, 2294–2295: 'Et amore sanctissimi et dilectissimi pueri pauperculus panniculis involuti, in praesepio reclinati, et sanctissimae matris eius

conceive, give birth, and care for her son Jesus—becomes a metaphor for the lifestyle of the Poor Sisters. Thus, for both Francis and Clare, the motherhood of Mary images their *forma vitae*, and the Writings of the early brothers and sisters develop this personal and living metaphor of Mary's maternity into a dynamic and active model for Minorite and Clarian life.

## 1 Francis, Jesus, and Mary

In the *Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful* 10–14, Francis introduces his universal call to penance with a description of the incarnation and *kenosis* of the Word, underlining the function and presence of Mary beginning in the incarnation and continuing in key moments of Jesus' ministry, including the institution of the Eucharist, his agony in the garden, and his self-offering on the cross. These verses serve as the basis for the Minorite choice of the penitential life, functioning as a kind of creedal or theological basis for the brothers and sisters who follow the footprints of Christ. Francis begins with this statement:

The most high Father made known from heaven through his holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father—so worthy, so holy and glorious—in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from whose womb he received the flesh of our humanity and our frailty. Though *he was rich* (2 Cor 8:9), he wished, together with the most Blessed virgin, his mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else (EpFidII 4–5).<sup>6</sup>

Reflecting on the incarnation of the Son of God, Francis' focus is on the abasement of the Word, the Word who, though glorious, chose embodiment in frail human flesh. Francis is very concrete and specific in describing the

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moneo, deprecor et exhortor sorores meas, ut vestimentis semper vilibus induantur.' Clare makes a similar reference to the manger and poverty in 4ECL 21 and TeCL 45.

6 EpFidII 4–5, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*, eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York, 1999), 46 (hereafter, *FAED* 1). *Francisci Assisiensis: Scripta*, ed. Carlo Paolazzi (Rome, 2009), 186 (hereafter, *Scripta*): 'Istud Verbum Patris, tam dignum, tam sanctum et gloriosum, nuntiavit altissimus Pater de celo per sanctum Gabrielem angelum suum in uterum sancte ac gloriose Virginis Marie, ex cuius utero veram recepit carnem humanitatis et fragilitatis nostre. Qui cum *dives esset* (2 Cor 8:9) super omnia, voluit ipse in mundo cum beatissima Virgine matre sua eligere paupertatem.' Carlo Paolazzi dates this letter to 1225–1226. See his comments in 'Le *Epistole* maggiori di frate Francesco, edizione critiche ed emendamenti ai testi minori,' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 101 (2008), 55–59.

incarnation of the Word—the Word does not simply become human flesh, but frail human flesh like our own—*carnem humanitatis et fragilitatis nostre*. Mary is glorious—*gloriose Virginis Marie*—in her truly fragile humanity which she gives to the Word—*ex cuius uterum*. As Jacques Dalarun comments, ‘Mary—and more exactly, the womb of Mary, a womb in which the Word is made flesh, the Divine Word made human flesh—is the privileged place of this mysterious exchange between divinity and humanity, power and fragility, riches and poverty.’<sup>7</sup> The emphasis is placed clearly on frail human flesh as the specific choice of God in the incarnation. And, as Francis reflects further, sharing this fragile human flesh with Mary, Jesus chooses poverty with Mary as the condition for their life. As Francis begins his exhortation to all men and women in this letter, he thus emphasizes that as Jesus and Mary share a common fragile human flesh, and as they choose to make poverty the condition for their life in this world, so those who hear him in this letter must do the same.

Francis understands the human condition of everyone as mirrored by Mary.<sup>8</sup> In the *Office of the Passion*, he prayed, ‘Because the Most Holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, sent his Beloved Son from on high and he was born of the Blessed Virgin holy Mary’ (Foff 15.3).<sup>9</sup> In this verse, which Francis inserts in the Christmas psalm that he composed from verses taken from various Psalms, he echoes the description of the incarnation in the *Letter to the Faithful*. Here what is emphasized is the choice of the Father, who sends his Son to be born of Mary. In a later verse in the same psalm also composed by Francis, he prays: ‘For the Most holy Child has been given to us and has been born for us on the way and placed in a manger because he did not have a place in the inn’ (Foff 15.7).<sup>10</sup> Without making this explicit, Mary’s presence is implied, and Francis describes in more detail the condition of Jesus’ birth in terms of poverty—which he chose together with his Mother Mary—because he was born ‘along the way’ as were the weak, the sick, the poor, and the beggars of Francis’ own

7 Jacques Dalarun, *Francesco: un passaggio: donna e donne negli sdritti e nelle leggende di Francesco d'Assisi* (Rome, 1994), 31.

8 Mary is cited five times in relation to the Incarnation: Adms 1.15; RnBu 23; 2EFi 4; EOrd 21; Foff 15.3. She is cited three times in close connection to poverty: RnBu 9.5; UVol 1; 2EFi 5.

9 *FAED* 1, 156. *Scripta*, 104: ‘Quia sanctissimus Pater de celo, Rex noster ante secula, misit dilectum Filium suum de alto; et natus fuit de beata virgine sancta Maria.’

10 *FAED* 1, 156. *Scripta*, 106: ‘Quia sanctissimus puer dilectus datus est nobis; et natus pro nobis in via et positus in presepio, quia non habebat locum in diversorio.’ The phrase ‘Natus fuit nobis in via’ comes from a sermon of Gregory the Great. See Felice Accrocca, ‘*Natus fuit nobis in via*’ (Off. Pass. xv.7). Gregorio Magno fonte di Francesco d'Assisi, in *Collectanea Franciscana* 70 (2000), 341.



day.<sup>11</sup> Francis again makes Jesus and Mary's poverty explicit in the *Regula non bullata* 7, 4–5, where he exhorts his brothers to beg when necessary without being ashamed because: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the all-powerful living God... was poor and a stranger and lived on alms—He, the blessed Virgin, and His disciples.'<sup>12</sup> Here Francis describes the chosen condition of Jesus, Mary, and the disciples in the world—they were poor and lived on alms. What also emerges from these and other texts of Francis in which Mary is cited, is that she is never alone, or by herself, but rather is always with others—she is a part of a community with Jesus and others. Linda Conroy suggests that attention to the earthly life of Mary, which is the focus of these texts of Francis but which received little attention prior to Francis, is the most original dimension of Francis' reflection on Mary.<sup>13</sup>

Returning to the Christmas Psalm from the *Office of the Passion*, Francis concluded this celebration of the Incarnation, which emphasized that the birth of Jesus from Mary was an incarnation in poverty 'on the way,' by exhorting those celebrating Christmas to: 'Take up your bodies and carry His holy cross, and follow his most holy commands even to the end.'<sup>14</sup> The incarnation of the Word in frail human flesh from the Virgin Mary, and the choice of poverty as the condition for living in the world, leads here to the invitation for those celebrating this feast to take up their own bodies and follow Jesus and Mary by carrying His cross. Here, as the incarnation is connected to the cross in the same feast, the theme of redemption is introduced. This connection is more clearly stated in Psalm 7, the Easter Psalm of the *Office of the Passion*: 'For the Most Holy Father of heaven, our king before all ages sent His Beloved Son from on high and has brought salvation in the midst of the earth.'<sup>15</sup> There is a clear parallel between the Psalm for Christmas which celebrates how the Father sent 'His Beloved Son from on high' to be born of the Virgin Mary, and the Psalm for

11 In the *Regula non bullata* 9,2, living 'by the wayside' is the condition of the poor: 'They must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside' (*FAED* 1, 70). *Scripta*, 256: 'Et debent gaudere quando conversantur inter viles et despectas personas, inter puaperes et debiles, infirmos et leprosos et iuxta viam mendicantes.'

12 *FAED* 1, 70. *Scripta*, 256: 'Dominus noster Jesus Christus, Filius Dei vivi..., et fuit pauper et hospes et vixit de helemosinis ipse et beata virgo et discipuli eius.'

13 Linda Conroy, 'The Virgin Mary in the Lives and Writings of Francis and Clare,' in *Maria* 3:1 (2002), 35–36.

14 Foff 15.13; *FAED* 1, 157. *Scripta*, 106: 'Tollite corpora vestra et baiulate sanctam crucem eius, et sequimini usque in finem sanctissima precepta eius.'

15 Foff 7.34; *FAED* 1, 147. *Scripta*: 'Quia sanctissimus Pater de celo, rex noster ante secula, misit dilectum Filium suum de alto, et operatus est salutem in medio terra.'

Easter which celebrates how the Father sent ‘His Beloved son from on high’ to work salvation on earth. For Francis, the incarnation is redemptive, and Mary is present in both moments.

This becomes more explicit, including Mary’s participation and role in salvation history, in a text from the *Regula non bullata* 23.3: ‘We thank you for as through your Son you created us, so through your holy love with which you loved us you brought about his birth as true God and true man by the glorious, ever-virgin, most blessed holy Mary and you willed to redeem us captives through his cross and blood and death (RnBu 23:3).<sup>16</sup> Mary gave Jesus true, frail human flesh, the same human flesh that was the instrument of human redemption, as the mention of ‘blood and death’ here suggests, pointing back to the incarnation and Mary’s role in that key event in salvation history.<sup>17</sup>

Francis’ reflection on the passion in the *Letter to the Faithful* is also significant in this context. He wrote:

Then He prayed to His Father, saying: Father, if it can be done, let this cup pass from me. And his sweat became as drops of blood falling on the ground. Nevertheless, He placed his will in the will of the Father, saying: Father, let your will be done; not as I will, but as you will. His Father’s will was such that his blessed and glorious Son, Whom He gave to us and Who was born for us, should offer Himself through His own blood as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the cross; not for Himself through whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we might follow His footprints (2EFi 8–13).<sup>18</sup>

16 *FAED* 1, 82. *Scripta*, 282: ‘Et gratias agimus tibi quia, sicut per Filium tuum nos creasti, sic per veram et sanctam dilectionem tuam qua dilexisti nos, ipsum verum Deum et verum hominem ex gloriosa semper Virgine beatissima sancta Maria nasci fecisti, et per crucem et sanguinem et mortem ipsius nos captivos redimi voluisti.’

17 The San Damiano cross, which played a significant role in Francis’ own conversion, portrays Mary at the side of Christ who reigns from the cross. Johannes Schneider analyzes in detail the influence of this image of Mary at the side of Jesus on the cross in his, *Virgo ecclesia facta: la presenza di Maria nel crocifisso di San Damiano e nell’Officium Passionis di san Francesco d’Assisi* (Assisi, 2003).

18 *FAED* 1, 8–13. *Scripta*, 186–187: ‘Deinde oravit Patrem dicens: Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste. Et factus est sudor eius sicut gutte sanguinis decurrentis in terram. Posuit tamen voluntatem suam in voluntate Patris dicens: Pater, fiat voluntas tua; non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu. Cuius Patris talis fuit voluntas, ut filius eius benedictus et gloriosus, quem dedit nobis et natus fuit pro nobis, seipsum per proprium sanguinem suum sacrificium et hostiam in ara crucis offeret, non propter se, per quem facta sunt omnia, sed pro peccatis nostris, relinquens nobis exemplum, ut sequamur vestigia eius.’

Jesus' incarnation in the frail human flesh provided by Mary and his choice of poverty together with her as the condition for living in this world, leads to an understanding of the passion and death of Jesus as the consequence of his and Mary's choice. Jesus chooses to be for others, in the same way that he was given and 'born for us.' By emphasizing Christ's choice to do the Father's will in his passion—that Jesus be for others—Francis reaffirms the original choice of God to take on frail human flesh. The example Jesus left us to follow embraces all of these choices: The choice of God to take on frail human flesh in and through Mary, their choice to live poorly in the world, and his choice to give himself for others on the cross. For Francis, Mary together with the disciples chose to follow these footprints of Jesus. As the instrument of God's corporeal self-giving presence in the world, Mary thus becomes in her own human life a personal embodiment of the footprints of Jesus.

The connection of Mary with Jesus and his presence in the world is further developed by Francis in his reflections on the Body and Blood of the Lord. His first *Admonition* is a reflection on the Eucharist. Developed as a commentary on John 14:6–9, where Philip asks Jesus to see the Father, Francis is led to reflect on the necessity of faith, or 'seeing and believing,' which is made possible in the Spirit. Thus the Spirit empowers us to see and believe that Jesus is present under the forms of bread and wine which we see with our eyes on the altar. Mary features prominently in this text, which describes Francis' experience of the mystery of the altar as the mystery of God's presence with us:

Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day He Himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down from the bosom of the father upon the altar in the hands of a priest. ...And in this way the Lord is always with His faithful, as he himself says: Behold I am with you until the end of the age (Adms 1, 13–18, 22).<sup>19</sup>

As the text describes, the mystery of the Body and Blood of the Lord continues the incarnation, and as Mary is to the Incarnation, so the priest is to the Body

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19 *FAED* 1, 129. *Scripta*, 354: 'Ecce, quotidie humiliat se, sicut quando a regalibus sedibus venit in uterum Virginis; quotidie venit ad nos ipse humilis apparens; quotidie descendit de sinu Patris super altare in manibus sacerdotis. ...Et tali modo semper est Dominus cum fidelibus suis, sicut ipse dixit: Ecce ego vobiscum sum usque ad consummationem seculi.' Robert Karris, *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* (St. Bonaventure, 1999), 31–45, discusses this section of the Admonition and its verbal parallels in Bernard the Cluniac's *Tractatus de Corpore Domini*, and he suggests that both Bernard and Francis were dependent on the same source, though Francis uses this in his own creative manner.

and Blood of the Lord on the altar. Again, the role of Mary is connected to both incarnation and redemption in salvation history.

Given the centrality of the mystery of the Body and Blood of the Lord to the church, Francis is focused here on how the divine Word becomes accessible to us. Conroy comments, ‘This connection of the poor Son of Mary, the Incarnate Word, with the Eucharist made food and drink, ultimately aims at making visible the invisible divinity in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.’<sup>20</sup> What is significant is Francis’ insistence on how God makes Godself available daily as a dimension of everyday existence, and it is Mary, the mother of God’s Son, who has made this possible and who helps us understand and appreciate the mystery we celebrate.

## 2 The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>21</sup>

All of the themes developed thus far in terms of the place of Mary in Francis’ experience and reflection are brought together and developed further in the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Written in the style of a medieval lauda, it appears to be a mature work of Francis.<sup>22</sup> The text unfolds as a prayerful meditation on the Annunciation scene in the gospel of Luke (Lk 1:26–38).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Conroy, ‘Mary in Francis and Clare,’ 40.

<sup>21</sup> A critical analysis of this text and its possible sources is provided in Lorenzo M. Ago, *La ‘Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis’ di san Francesco d’Assisi* (Rome, 1998). An excerpt was published as ‘La Questione critica intorno alla *Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis* (SalBVM) di san Francesco di Assisi,’ in *Antonianum* 73:2 (1998), 255–303. Also helpful is Jean François Godet-Calogeras, ‘The Salutations of Brother Francis,’ in *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, eds. Michael Blastic, Jay Hammond, and J.A. Wayne Hellmann (St. Bonaventure, 2011), 301–327. Still valuable is the essay by Optato van Asseldonk, ‘Il saluto alla beata vergine Maria,’ in *Maria, Francesco e Chiara*, *Dimensioni spirituali* 11 (Rome, 1989), 133–244.

<sup>22</sup> *Scripta*, 40. Contrary to many commentators who argue for a connection between this text and the *Salutation of the Virtues*, there is not a certain connection. The fact that the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of Francis’ writings while the *Salutation of the Virtues* does, is a significant piece of evidence that cannot be ignored. Ago argues that the *Sitz im Leben* of the text is the church of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, *La Salutatio*, 147–148. Bonaventure affirms this in the *Legenda maior* 4.1, as cited above.

<sup>23</sup> See Ago, *La Salutatio*, 133–181. Ago suggests that the *Salutation* combines elements of the Angelus, the Hail Mary, and elements of Luke’s account of the Annunciation. In addition, the liturgy, both the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours, were also a significant influence on Francis. Consult Pietro Messa, ‘Le feste liturgiche di Maria vergine e l’esperienza spirituale di Francesco e Chiara d’ Assisi,’ in *La Vergine Maria nella teologia e nella spiritualità francescana*, *Quaderni di Spiritualità francescana*, 26 (Assisi, 2005), 9–29. In addition, Messa

- <sup>1</sup>Hail, O Lady, Holy Queen, Mary holy God-bearer, Who are the virgin made church,  
<sup>2</sup>Chosen by the Most Holy Father in heaven whom he consecrated with His most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the paraclete,  
<sup>3</sup>in whom there was and is all fullness of grace and every good.  
<sup>4</sup>Hail His Palace! Hail His Tabernacle! Hail His House!  
<sup>5</sup>Hail His Robe! Hail His Servant! Hail His Mother!  
<sup>6</sup>And hail all You holy virtues which are poured into the hearts of the faithful through the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, that from being unbelievers You may make them faithful to God.

Lady, Queen Mary is celebrated as the God-bearer and the 'virgin made church' because of her consecrated relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The effect of her consecration by the persons of the Trinity with grace and goodness is described with six titles: Mary is the Son's palace, tabernacle, house, robe, servant, and mother. Each of these titles has a rich biblical background in the Jewish scriptures and history of salvation.<sup>24</sup> In a sense, Mary recapitulates the history of God's dwelling with Israel, from the tabernacle in the desert wanderings, to the palace that David attempted to build as God's house; this history of God with his people comes to fruition in Mary, the 'virgin made church.'

The sequence of the six descriptive nouns applied to Mary is deliberate, as they move from the external to the internal, and from the impersonal to the personal, arriving finally at what names her most intimate and closest relationship with her Son, that of mother. The prayer then turns, in closing, to all the faithful as Francis prays that the same power of the Holy Spirit that consecrated Mary as mother of God's Son, might bring to birth in the hearts of the faithful the virtues of the Son, so that they in turn might reach out to non-believers to awaken faith in them. This *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* then is not only a prayer in praise of Mary, but it is also a call to the faithful to make their own Christian lives fruitful by modeling their lives on that of Mary, calling them to bring the Son of God to birth in the hearts of all people.

The central insight of Francis in the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* revolves around the phrase, '*virgo ecclesia facta*,' indicating that the church is the space in which God dwells with humans. While the *Salutation's* image of Mary's relationship to the church is not new, Francis embraced and reflected

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has edited the feasts of Mary from the Breviary of Francis, 'Le feste Mariane nel *Breviarum sancti Francisci*,' in *La 'Scuola Francescana' e l'Immacolata Concezione*, 55–85.

24 See Ago, *La Salutatio*, 257–281.

on it from the perspective of his own religious experience.<sup>25</sup> A church played a determining role for Francis in the process of his conversion. While he was at prayer before the crucifix in the church of San Damiano, which had fallen into physical ruin, he heard the cross speak to him, ‘Francis, don’t you see that my house is being destroyed? Go, then, and rebuild it for me.’<sup>26</sup> As the story continues, Francis initially believed he was being asked to repair a physical building—that of San Damiano—but he gradually came to understand that God was asking him to repair a home, a space in which God could dwell with men and women in their ordinary lives. Mary became for Francis, from this perspective, God’s house rebuilt through her faith and openness to the power of God in her own life, which made her receptive to the Spirit’s power. As a result, she became ‘the virgin made church,’ that is, God’s palace, tabernacle, house, robe, servant, and mother. Conroy comments that, ‘In addressing Mary as the Virgin made Church, Francis shows that he saw her as the anticipation, “the figure or icon of the church.” Mary prefigures what the Church will be in its fullness at the end of time.’<sup>27</sup> Mary as the ‘virgin made church’ also suggests an alternative style for being church, significantly different from the hierarchical church of the thirteenth century.

### 3 The Antiphon, *Holy Virgin Mary*<sup>28</sup>

Employing imagery that reflects the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, this Antiphon appears in the context of a devotional prayer Francis recited before and after each of the canonical hours of the Office, which has come to be known as the *Office of the Passion*. It is a text that underwent ongoing elaboration and correction, and did not reach its present form until sometime after the death of Francis in 1226. The rubrics of the *Office* indicate that this Antiphon was to be recited both before and after the psalm Francis composed to

25 For a closer examination of the title, *Virgo ecclesia facta*, and its antecedents in the tradition, consult Hilary Pyfferoehn, ‘Ave... Dei genetrix Maria, quae es virgo, ecclesia facta (S. Francesco),’ in *Laurentianum* 12 (1971), 412–434. Ago, *La Salutatio*, 168–179. Schneider, *Virgo Ecclesia Facta*, 69–86, develops the Johannine background to this title.

26 Legend of the Three Companions 13, in FAED 2, 76. Fontes Francescani, 1386: ‘Francisce, nonne vides quod domus mea destruitur? Vade igitur et repara illam mihi.’

27 Conroy, 49.

28 For an analysis of this prayer, consult van Asseldonk, 37–132; Schneider, 103–142; and Laurent Gallant, ‘Office of the Passion,’ in *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, 253–279.

be recited for every hour, meaning that this prayer would be repeated fourteen times each day, and therefore had a great capacity to shape the religious experience and devotion of the one praying the office:

Holy Virgin Mary, among the women born into the world, there is no one like you. Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King and of the Father in heaven, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel and all the powers of heaven and all the saints, at the side of your most beloved Son, Lord and Teacher. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.<sup>29</sup>

In this Antiphon, the relationship of Mary to the persons of the Trinity is affirmed: She is Daughter and servant of the Father, Mother of Jesus Christ, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit. These titles are not new in the tradition, but their connection to each of the persons of the Trinity is very specifically determined. Mary is celebrated here as an icon of the Trinity because of her openness and receptivity to God. As Francis affirms, Mary is unique among all women because of her relationships, and she is a model of prayer as well, as the conclusion to the *Antiphon* demonstrates.<sup>30</sup> These titles are not simply honorific, but each describes an aspect of Christian life that Mary models for Christians. Mary becomes a model for Franciscan and Christian life in very concrete and practical ways as Clare and her sisters at San Damiano exemplified this in their life.

29 *FAED* 1, 141, modified. *Scripta*, 73: 'Sancta Maria Virgo, non est tibi similis nata in mundo in mulieribus, filia et ancilla altissimi summi Regis Patris celestis, mater sanctissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sponsa Spiritus Sancti: ora pro nobis cum S. Michaelae archangelo et omnibus virtutibus celorum et omnibus sanctis apud tuum sanctissimum dilectum Filium, Dominum et magistrum.—Gloria Patri. Sicut erat.'

30 Francis concludes the *Antiphon* by asking for Mary to intercede for us together with all the angels and saints. In addition to being a model for all Christians, Mary is thus asked to join with all the saints to pray for us, as here in the *Antiphon*, and in a text from the *Regula non bullata*, to give thanks to God for us. In *A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father*, Francis calls on Mary to intercede with God for forgiveness: 'Forgive us our trespasses: through your ineffable mercy through the power of the passion of your beloved Son and through the merits and intercession of the ever blessed Virgin and all your elect.' ExPa 7, in *FAED* 1, 159. *Scripta*, 58: 'Et dimitte nobis debita nostra (Mt 6:12): per tuam misericordiam ineffabilem, per passionis dilecti Filii tui Domini nostri virtutem et per beatissime Marie Virginis et omnium electorum tuorum merita et intercessionem.' Mary is also called on to give thanks to God with the saints and angels in RnBu 23.6.

#### 4 Francis, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and Discipleship

Mary, celebrated as ‘Spouse of the Holy Spirit,’ develops an image that emerges from reflection on the Annunciation in Luke’s gospel. Luke’s Annunciation story also provides a foundation for the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* as described above. Mary’s openness to the Spirit makes her Mother of God’s Son. But for Francis, this is not a unique prerogative for Mary alone, as it also serves as an invitation to all Christians to shape their relationship to the Spirit with the same openness and docility as Mary. Francis reflects on this in his *Letter to the Faithful*, where he exhorts all men and women to do penance. When they live lives of penance, the Holy Spirit will rest upon them, and they will be, ‘The children of the heavenly Father, whose works they do. And they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ...’<sup>31</sup> The matrix of this experience is the ordinary, everyday reality of daily living in a home, *in domibus propriis*, and is characterized by the relationships of mutuality and family, as brothers and sisters, as mothers and spouses of Jesus Christ. Thus, the human life lived in authentic relationships as brother, mother, and spouse, reflects those relationships which identify God as a Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mary becomes the model for this. After describing how the faithful Christian is a spouse of the Holy Spirit, Francis continues: ‘We are brothers, moreover, when we do the will of His Father who is in heaven; mothers when we carry him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience; and give him birth through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example.’<sup>32</sup> For Francis, to follow the footprints of Christ means to assume and incarnate the Word. Here Francis is not speaking from theory. Rather he is describing his own experience. Here the Christocentrism of Francis becomes the text of the entire life of the believer, which opens up and out into relationship with the Trinity.

Every disciple of Christ is called, like Mary, to live the Gospel in one’s life. As Mary’s body gave flesh to the Son of God, so, by following the footprints

31 2EFi 48–50, in *FAED* 1, 49–50. *Scripta*, 194: ‘Et omnes illi et ille, dum talia fecerint et perseveraverint usque in finem, requiescet super eos spiritus Domini et faciet in eis habitaculum et mansionem. Et erunt filii Patris celestis cuius opera faciunt. Et sunt sponsi, fratres et matres Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Sponsi sumus, quando Spiritu Sancto coniungitur fidelis anima Jesu Christo...’

32 EFi 52–53, in *FAED* 1, 51–53. *Scripta*, 194: ‘Fratres eius sumus, quando facimus voluntatem Patris eius qui est in celo; matres, quando portamus eum in corde et corpore nostre per amorem et puram et sinceram conscientiam et parturimus eum per sanctam operationem, que lucere debet in exemplum.’



of Jesus Christ in and through one's body in the world, one lives as a disciple of Christ. Embodied discipleship, modeled on that of the perfectly realized disciple, Mary, the God-bearer, accomplishes the mission Francis received to rebuild the church, the *Domus Dei*.

## 5 Mary Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Clare and the Poor Sisters

The images of relationship from the Antiphon of the *Office of the Passion* describe every Christian's relationship with the Trinity, but for Francis, those relationships become clearly visible in the life of Clare and the Poor Sisters. At the center of Clare's *Forma vitae*, approved by Innocent IV on her deathbed in 1253, Clare placed the text of the *Forma vivendi* given to her and her sisters by Francis early on in their life at San Damiano. This simple text reads as follows:

Because by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and handmaids of the most High, most Exalted King, the heavenly Father, and have espoused yourselves to the Holy Spirit choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers always to have the same loving care and special solicitude for you as for them (ReCl 6.3–4).<sup>33</sup>

In this short descriptive text, Francis uses the same titles that describe Mary's relationship to the persons of the Trinity from the Antiphon to define the relationship of the Poor Sisters to the persons of the Trinity: Like Mary, they are daughters and servants and spouses because they chose to live the Gospel of

33 English translation adjusted from that of *The Lady*, 118. *Fontes Francescani*, 2399: 'Quia divina inspiratione fecistis vos filias et ancillas altissimi summi Regis, Patris caelestis, et Spiritui Sancto vos desponsastis eligendo vivere secundum perfectionem sancti Evangelii, volo et promitto per me et fratres meos semper habere de vobis tamquam de ipsis curam diligentem et sollicitudinem specialem.' The authenticity of this text as a text of Francis' as well as the *Ultima voluntas* for the Poor Ladies has been challenged by Maria Pia Alberzoni, who holds that, since there are no extant manuscripts of the texts except as they appear in Clare's *Forma vitae*, it appears to be a creation of Clare in the 1240's in her struggle with the church to preserve her Franciscan vision. See her introductions to the texts in *Francesco d'Assisi: Scritti*, ed. Aristide Cabassi (Padua, 2002), 419–427. Alberzoni's argument has been challenged by Carlo Paolazzi, 'Per l'autenticità degli scritti di Francesco alle pauperes dominae,' in *Clara Claris Praeclara*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Clara Claris Praeclara. L'esperienza cristiana e la memoria di Chiara d'Assisi in occasione del 750° anniversario della morte. Assisi 20–22 novembre 2003 (Assisi, 2004), 307–337, based on a philological examination of the texts.

Jesus Christ. Living this way, Francis promises that he and his brothers will remain in relationship with the Poor Sisters and care for them as they do for each other.

What Francis saw in the Poor Sisters was a human experience akin to that of Jesus Christ, and what Francis recognized in these women was the embrace of a humanity like that which Jesus embraced in the incarnation. Just prior to recording this *Forma vivendi* from Francis, Clare described what Francis saw in the lives of the sisters at San Damiano, that is, what he was responding to with his words. She wrote: 'When the blessed Father saw we had no fear of poverty, hard work, trial, shame, or contempt of the world, but, instead, we held them as great delights, moved by piety he wrote a form of living for us as follows...' (ReCl 6.2).<sup>34</sup> What led Francis to commit himself to the Poor Ladies was the example of their real human embodied experience, characterized by poverty, hard work, trials, shame (*vilitas*—opposite of *nobilitas*), and contempt of the world. These qualities appear throughout Clare's writings as characteristic of the sisters' life, or in the words of Francis, of living according to the *perfectio-nem sancti Evangelii*.<sup>35</sup> It was this choice (*eligendo vivere*) for the perfection of the Gospel experienced as an embrace of this human condition in weakness, which was the basis for Francis' identification of these women as spouses of the Holy Spirit. In other words, one is spouse of the Spirit to the extent that one chooses and lives the perfection of the holy Gospel in this human condition. This identifies these women as icons of Mary, who Francis celebrated as 'spouse of the Holy Spirit.'

Clare uses the expression, *eligendo vivere*, three other times in her writings, each of which appears in the context of their vocation and its identification with the consequences of poverty.<sup>36</sup> In addition, this phrase appears in the text of Francis' *Letter to the Faithful*, where he summarizes the Franciscan

34 English translation adjusted from *The Lady*, 117–118. Boccali, 174: 'Attendens autem beatus pater quod nullam paupertatem, laborem, tribulationem, vilitatem et contemptum saeculi timeremus, immo pro magnis deliciis haberemus, pietate motus scripsit nobis formam vivendi in hunc modum.'

35 *Paupertas* appears 42 times, too many to note here; *tribulatio* 4 times: ReCl 6.2; X:10; TeCl 27; 2EAg 21; *labor/laboro* 7 times: ReCl 6.2; TeCl 23, 27; 4EAg 22; *contemptus/contemptibilis* 4 times: ReCl 6.2; TeCl 27; 1EAg 22; 2EAg 19.

36 TeCl 16, 36; 1EAg 6. Maria Maddalena Terzoni, 'I due testi di Francesco inseriti nella Regola di Chiara (Parte 1),' in *Frata Francesco* 70:2 (2004), 458–459, comments that the term '*eligendo* recalls the preferential option of poverty. The verb *eligere* in fact has the meaning not only of choice, but of preferring among different realities each of which is present to the person who chooses.'

commitment to following in the footprints of Jesus in terms of Incarnation, Eucharist, and Passion, and where with regard to the Incarnation, Francis wrote, as explained above, that ‘Though He was rich, He wished, together with the most Blessed Virgin, His mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else’ (2EFi 5).<sup>37</sup> One can conclude that for Francis, to espouse the Holy Spirit meant the commitment to embrace one’s weak, frail, and vulnerable humanity as the choice which embodies the perfection of the Gospel, lived in poverty, hard work, shame, and contempt of the world. This is precisely what Francis saw in Mary, who together with Jesus’ disciples followed Jesus in poverty and humility. To espouse the Holy Spirit is to embrace the life of poverty and humility after the example of Jesus and Mary.

Chronologically, the reference to the ‘espousal of the Holy Spirit’ appeared first in the *Forma vivendi* that Francis gave to the Poor Ladies sometime after they arrived at San Damiano around the year 1211.<sup>38</sup> Francis would subsequently use the terminology of espousal to the Holy Spirit in the later version of the *Letter to the Faithful*,<sup>39</sup> written in 1225–1226, as well as in his Antiphon for the *Office of the Passion*, which is difficult to date. If this chronology is accurate, then the lived experience of Clare and her sisters became the source for Francis’ reflection on this spousal understanding of the Christian/Franciscan life of the perfection of the gospel. With time, Francis would move from his experience with Clare and the sisters as the exemplar of this spousal experience, using this expression to describe the Franciscan life and then the Christian life in general. Throughout, Mary served as the exemplar of espousal of the Holy Spirit for both Francis and Clare.

37 *FAED* 1, 46. *Scripta*, 79: ‘Qui, cum dives esset (2 Cor 8:9) super omnia, voluit ipse in mundo cum beatissima Virgine, matre sua, eligere paupertatem.’

38 Clare writes at the beginning of Chapter 6 of the *Forma vitae ordinis sororum pauperum* that Francis wrote this for her and her sisters after they had promised obedience to him. Since she joined Francis and the brothers on March 27/28, 1211, according to Giovanni Boccali, and she was forced to take responsibility for the sisters in 1214, this text was probably written sometime in this period. See Giovanni Boccali, ed. and trans., *Santa Chiara di Assisi, I Primi documenti ufficiali* (Assisi, 2002), 57–58.

39 2EFi 48–55, where Francis describes the effect of the Spirit of the Lord on those who do penance: ‘We are spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ’ (v. 51), in *FAED* 1, 48–49. *Scripta*, 194: ‘Sponsi sumus, quando Spiritu Sancto coniungitur fidelis anima Jesu Christo.’ FOff, Antiphon, 2: ‘Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King and of the Father in heaven, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit’ (*FAED* 1, 141). *Scripta*, 146: ‘Filia et ancilla altissimi summi Regis Patris caelestis, mater sanctissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sponsa Spiritus Sancti.’

## 6 Mary, the Poor Sisters, and Jesus

In writing to encourage Agnes of Prague in her choice to enter the monastery of Poor Sisters that she established in Prague, Clare extolled Agnes' choice of espousal to the Poor Crucified by describing her as 'worthy to be called a sister, spouse and mother of the Son of the Most High Father and of the glorious Virgin.'<sup>40</sup> Using the example of Mary, Clare encourages Agnes to pursue her intention to live her life in poverty like the Poor Sisters at San Damiano, as she wrote in the third letter:

May you cling to His most sweet mother who gave birth to a Son Whom the heavens could not contain, and yet she carried Him in the little cloister of her holy womb and held Him on her virginal lap. ...As the glorious virgin of virgins carried him materially, so you too by following in his footprints, especially of humility and poverty, can, without any doubt, always carry Him spiritually in your chaste and virginal body, holding Him by Whom you and all things are held together, possessing that which, in comparison with the other transitory possessions of this world, you will possess more securely.<sup>41</sup>

Clare points to Mary pregnant with the Son of God as an image of the life of the sisters within the monastery: Within the enclosure, the sisters give flesh to Christ in their manner of life, especially through their embrace of poverty and humility. This is what Mary models in her own life with Jesus, and this is what she, following Francis, urges her sisters to remain faithful to, 'Following the poverty and humility of His beloved Son and His glorious Virgin Mother.'<sup>42</sup>

40 1EAg 24, *The Lady*, 46. *Fontes Francescani*, 2265: 'Et fore digne meruistis soror, sponsa et mater altissimi Patris Filii et gloriosae Virginis nuncupari.'

41 3EAg 18–19, 24–26, in *The Lady* 51–52, modified. *Fontes Francescani*, 2276: 'Ipsius dulcissimae matri adhaereas, quae talem genuit Filium, quem caeli capere non poterant, et tamen ipsa parvulo clastro sacri uteri contulit et gremio puellari gestavit....Sicut ergo Virgo virginum gloriosa materialiter, sic et tu, sequens eius vestigia, humilitatis praesertim et paupertatis, casto et virgineo corpore spiritualiter semper sine dubietate omni portare potes, illum continens, a quo et tu et omnia continentur, illum possidens quod et comparate cum ceteris huius mundi possessionibus transeuntibus fortius possidebitis.'

42 TeCl 46, in *FAED* 1, 63. *Fontes Francescani*, 2316: 'Insequendo paupertatem et humilitatem dilecti Filii sui et gloriosae virginis Matris suae...' In ReCl 6.7, Clare cites Francis' *Last Will* for the sisters, in which he urges the sisters to remain faithful to poverty: 'I, little brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother and to persevere in it to the end.' See the comments of Stefano Cecchin, *Maria Signora Santa e Immacolata nel pensiero Francescano: per una storia del*

The enclosure functions then as a kind of womb in which Christ is given flesh in the lives of the sisters who live there. Thus enclosure takes on Marian value for the Poor Sisters.

When admonishing her sisters to wear poor clothes, Clare wrote in her *Forma vitae*: 'Out of love of the most holy and beloved Child wrapped in poor little swaddling clothes and placed in a manger and of His most holy Mother, I admonish, beg, and encourage my sisters always to wear poor garments.'<sup>43</sup> Mary, together with Jesus, becomes the reference point for the clothing of the sisters. The emphasis placed here on *vestimentis vilibus* describes the social location of the sisters, which Clare sees modeled by Mary, whom Francis described in the *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* as 'His robe.' In extolling poverty, Clare wrote in the *Forma vitae*, 'Clinging totally to [poverty], my most beloved sisters, do not wish to have anything else in perpetuity under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy mother.'<sup>44</sup> For Clare, as for Francis, together with Jesus, Mary models the concrete conditions of life which the Poor Sisters choose as their own. Embracing these conditions of Jesus' life, they give birth to Jesus in the monastery through their manner of life.

In a text which Francis sent to the Poor Sisters at San Damiano shortly before his death in the Umbrian dialect, he encouraged them to remain faithful to their choice. In it, Francis pointed to Mary the Queen as the goal toward which the sisters should live. He wrote:

Do not look at the life without, for that of the Spirit is better. I beg you out of great love, to use with discernment the alms the Lord gives you. Those weighed down by sickness and the others wearied because of them, all of you: Bear it in peace. For you will sell this fatigue at a very high price and each one will be crowned queen in heaven with the Virgin Mary.<sup>45</sup>

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*contributo francescano alla mariologia* (Città del Vaticano, 2001), 43–65. Cecchin describes the charism of the Poor Sisters as 'to be like Mary.'

43 ReCl 2.24, in *The Lady*, 112. *Fontes Franciscani*, 2294–2295: 'Et amore sanctissimi et dilectissimi pueri pauperculus panniculis involuti, in praesaepio reclinati, et sanctissimae matris eius moneo, deprecor et exhortor sorores meas, ut vestimentis semper vilibus induantur.'

44 ReCl 8.6, in *The Lady*, 120. *Fontes Franciscani*, 2301: 'Haec sit portio vestra quae perducit in terram viventium; cui, dilectissimae sorores, totaliter inhaerentes nihil aliud pro nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi et eius sanctissimae matris in perpetuum sub caelo habere velitis.'

45 CAud 4–6, in *FAED* 1, 115. *Scripta*, 127: 'Non guardate a la vita de fore, ka quella dello spirito è migliore. Io ve prego per grand'amore k'aiate discrezione de le lemosene ke ve dà el Signore, Quelle ke sunt aggravate de infirmitate et l'altre ke per loreo suò affatigate, tutte

Clare and her sisters, who lived enclosed in the small monastery of San Damiano in the plain below the city of Assisi, followed in the footprints of Jesus in the context of the everyday life they shared together in that 'house' that Francis rebuilt. In and through the very ordinary, everyday, mundane life of the sisters there, Christ's presence was made real—they gave flesh and blood to Jesus Christ, as did Mary in the Incarnation of the Son of God. The truth of life, human life, made present by the Spirit of the Lord within the enclosure of San Damiano in their way of life made the sisters, like Mary, God-bearers. The church, God's house, was realized in them through the attention and care they gave each other, especially the sick, as this Canticle describes. Their reward, Francis promised them, was to be crowned as queen with Mary in heaven, because they lived as did Mary on earth—the church militant would become the church triumphant in the Poor Sisters just as it had in Mary, just as Francis prayed, 'Hail, O Lady, Holy Queen, holy mother of God, who are the Virgin made Church.'

## 7 Conclusion

Francis came to understand the deep meaning of the titles of Mary present in the tradition of the church for centuries through his own commitment to follow the footprints of Jesus, who was always to be found together with his Mother, according to Francis, and by contemplating the lives of Clare and her sisters at San Damiano, who embodied those titles in their everyday ordinary lives. In the conclusion to her essay on 'Mary and Francis and Clare,' Conroy comments that:

Francis and Clare's Marian images are out of their lives, organically rising up from their personal devotion and service to others. Neither leaves us a systematic theology, but they do provide a significant, albeit small, link in the long story of the Church's reflection on Mary. An essential feature of the 'link' they offer us is an image of an earthly poor woman who stayed faithful to her 'yes' to the Father. This decision led her to give birth in a stable and took her to the foot of the cross of her Son and our Brother.<sup>46</sup>

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quante lo sostengate en pace, ka multo venderite cara questa fatica, ka ciascuna serà regina en celo coronata cum la Vergene Maria.'

46 Conroy, 59–60.

Neither Francis nor Clare prescribed devotion to Mary as part of their form of life. In fact, Mary appears neither in Francis' *Regula bullata* nor in his *Testament*. But the form of life that is described in each of these documents reflects the example of Mary, an 'earthly poor woman who stayed faithful to her "yes" to the father.' Neither Francis nor Clare addressed Mary as 'Our Mother'—she is always and only referred to as the Mother of the Son of God. At the same time, Mary was a mirror of Jesus for Francis and Clare in which they tried to see themselves and their brothers and sisters. They could identify with Mary because she was poor and lived on alms like her son Jesus. They could identify with Mary because she cared for her Son Jesus with a mother's love, she created a home for him in this world, and she served God by serving others. They could identify with Mary because she stood at the side of Christ at his cross and modeled compassion and love when others abandoned him. They wanted to identify with Mary because she made the presence of Christ tangible and real in the world. Mary was the realization in her world of what Francis and Clare hoped to realize in their world with their brothers and sisters: They wanted to live as spouses, sisters, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ! While Jesus Christ is always at the center of their lives and devotion, Mary stands next to and with Jesus as he lives his life for others. To follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ for both Francis and Clare means to keep an eye on Mary's example who always points us back to her Son.

## *Maria Oliva Benedicta: A Reflection on the Mariology of Anthony of Padua/Lisbon*

*Luciano Bertazzo*

The opportune appearance of the critical edition of St. Anthony's *Sermones*, published in 1979,<sup>1</sup> has allowed us to delve deeper into and construct—on the foundation of a secure text—the thinking of the 'first master' of the Franciscan Order, as he is called in his thirteenth-century biography, commonly called *Benignitas*.<sup>2</sup> A single text, the *Sermones*, which Anthony himself defines as his work of evangelization (*opus evangeliorum*), was intended for the formation of friars who were increasingly engaged in the ministry of preaching, and not just penitential preaching that Francis of Assisi called for in the Franciscan Rule.

The Antonian sermons, a total of seventy-seven, are divided into two parts. The first part, the Sunday Sermons (*Sermones dominicales*), constitute an entire cycle of biblical reading (*lectio*) based on the readings for each Sunday of the liturgical year. This cycle was based on the system in use until the liturgical reform of Vatican II, beginning with Septuagesima Sunday, continuing through the whole annual cycle, until the Third Sunday after the Octave of the Epiphany. The second part, the Marian and Feast Day Sermons (*Sermones mariani et festivi*), ended at the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June) and were never completed, since in his last stay in Padua Anthony was seized by a 'burning desire' for preaching, and so never finished the *festivi*, as he had been asked to do by Rainaldo of Jenne, Bishop of Ostia.<sup>3</sup> It is based on these premises that the primitive Franciscan itinerant preacher, Brother Anthony, used texts belonging to different liturgical traditions, depending on where they were composed.<sup>4</sup>

1 Sancti Antonii Patavini, *Sermones dominicales et festivi*, ed. B. Costa, L. Frasson, I. Luisetto, with the help of P. Marangon, I–III (Padua, 1979). There is an English translation based on the critical Latin edition: *Sermons for Sundays and Festivals*, trans. Paul Spilsbury, I–IV (Padua, 2007–2010). This article was translated by Nancy Celaschi, OSF, with the assistance of Steven J. McMichael.

2 *Vita del Dialogus e Benignitas*, 13, 1–2, ed. Vergilio Gamboso (Fonti agiografiche antoniane) 3 (Padua, 1986).

3 *Vita Prima o Assidua*, 11, 4–6, ed. Vergilio Gamboso (Padua, 1995).

4 F. Costa, 'Relazione dei sermoni antoniani con i libri liturgici,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, ed. A. Poppi, (Padova, 1982), 109–144 (= *Il Santo. Rivista antoniana di*



Perhaps we should note that the word *sermones* does not mean homilies were written or handed down through the *reportationes* given by Brother Anthony. They are rather *lectiones* which he himself composed for the formation of the friars, in accord with the task he was assigned by Brother Francis in the letter in which the saint charged him with teaching theology to the friars.<sup>5</sup> The aim of this task was to prepare the friars for a preaching ministry that could no longer be merely exhortational-penitential, but would have a solid theological foundation, as was asked by Canon X of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>6</sup> They are texts that still reflect a system typical of the monastic tradition, soon destined to be overtaken by the 'new' scholastic thought.<sup>7</sup> This explains the lack of reference made to them throughout the centuries, except in rare cases.<sup>8</sup>

The structure of Anthony's sermons is characteristically in the form of a *quadriga* (chariot), the result of an interweaving of a *lectio* in four parts: The Old Testament passage from the Divine Office, the Introit, Epistle, and Gospel of the Mass of the Sunday or feast.<sup>9</sup> All of these texts are brought into a type of concordance with an explanation in which Scripture is elucidated by Scripture itself through internal references. The result is, in the words of the author himself, a 'chariot-throne ..., so that in it, with Elijah, the soul may be lifted up from earthly things and borne away into the heaven of celestial conversation,' with a surprising way of harmonizing the Scriptures, citing almost all its books.<sup>10</sup>

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*storia dottrina arte*, 22 [1982], 109–144); F. Costa, 'Sulla natura e la cronologia dei sermoni di s. Antonio di Padova,' in *Il Santo. Rivista francescana di storia dottrina arte* 39 (1999), 29–69 (= *Il Santo*).

5 *Francisci Assisiensis Scripta*, critical edition by Carolus Paolazzi (Grottaferrata, 2010), 170–171.

6 L. Bertazzo, 'Il servizio della parola,' in *La Regola di frate Francesco. Eredità e sfida*, ed. P. Maranesi e F. Accrocca (Padua, 2012), 471–504.

7 J. Leclercq, 'La spiritualità dei "Sermones" antoniani e la sua connessione e dipendenza dalla spiritualità monastica-canonica,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 203–216 (note 4); J. Châtillon, 'Saint Antoine de Padoue et les Victorins,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 171–202.

8 A. Rigon, 'La fortuna dei "Sermones" nel Duecento,' in Rigon, *Dal Libro alla folla. Antonio di Padova e il francescanesimo medioevale* (Rome, 2002), 69–88. It is interesting to note that excerpts from Anthony's sermons can be found in the recently discovered codex of the *Vita beati patris nostri Francisci*, which dates back to the period from 1232 to 1239; see A. Postec, 'Un nouveau témoin des Sermons d'Antoine de Padoue,' in *Il Santo* 56 (2016) 231–246.

9 J.G. Bougerol, 'La struttura del "sermo" antoniano,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 93–108 (note 4).

10 'Quadriga fabricavimus, ut in ipsa cum Elia a terrenis anima elevetur et in caelum caelesti conversatione deferatur' (Prologue, 5). On Anthony's use of scriptures, see B. Smalley, 'The Use of Scripture in St. Anthony's "Sermones",' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni*

This is not only the case with Scripture, as Anthony makes a no less surprising use of quotations and references to authors and passages, especially the book of nature (*liber naturae*), the macrocosm reflecting God in creation,<sup>11</sup> creating *catenae* and florilegia of quotations.<sup>12</sup> He does this because:

Nowadays, preachers and congregations are so shallow that if a sermon is not full of polished and studied phrases, and a dash of novelty, they are too critical to take any notice of it. So in order that the word of the Lord should come to them in a way they will not disdain or scorn, to the peril of their souls, I have prefaced each gospel with a suitable prologue, and included in the work itself illustrations drawn from physics and natural history, and explanations of the meanings of words, expounded from the standpoint of morality.<sup>13</sup>

## 1 The Marian Sermons

The seven Marian sermons constitute a bloc of their own within the wider whole of Anthony's sermons in addition to the two found within the cycle of the *festivi*, namely the Feast of the Purification (2 February) and the Annunciation (25 March).<sup>14</sup> Four other Marian sermons are composed after the Twelfth

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*antoniani*, 285–297; C. Leonardi, 'Il vangelo di Francesco e la Bibbia di Antonio,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 299–318. Concerning the system of concordance, see P. Spilsbury, 'Concordantia in the Sermones Dominicales of Antony of Padua,' in *Il Santo* 39 (1999), 71–83; A. Figueiredo Frias, *Lettura ermeneutica dei "Sermones" di sant'Antonio di Padova. Introduzione alle radici culturali del pensiero antoniano* (Padua, 1995), especially pages 111–172.

- 11 See M.C. Monteiro Pacheco, 'O homem como microcosmo,' in *Santo António de Lisboa. Da Ciência da Escritura ao Livro da Natureza* (Lisboa, 1997), 197–212; Il Liber naturae nella lectio antoniana. Atti del Congresso internazionale per l'8° centenario della nascita di s. Antonio di Padova (1995–1995), Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, Roma 20–22 novembre 1995, (Rome, 1996).
- 12 J. Hamesse, 'L'utilisation des florilèges dans l'oeuvre d'Antoine de Padoue. À propos de la philosophie naturelle d'Aristote,' in *Congreso Internacional "Pensamento e Testemunho". 8° Centenário do nascimento de Santo António*, Actas I–II, (Braga, 1996), I, 11–124.
- 13 'Ad hoc nostri temporis lectorum et auditorum devenit insipida sapientia quod, nisi verba polita, exquisita et novum quid resonantia invenerit vel audierit, legere fastidit, audire contemnit. Et ideo, ne verbum Domini, in animarum suarum periculum eis veniret in contemptum et fastidium, in cuiuslibet evangelii principio prologum eidem consonantem praesimus, et quasdam rerum et animalium naturas et nominum etymologias, moraliter expositas, ipsi operis inseruimus' (Prologue, 5).
- 14 For a general overview of medieval Mariology, I particularly refer to *Storia della mariologia...; Testi mariani del secondo millennio*, vol. 4, *Autori medievali dell'Occidente sec.*

Sunday of Pentecost, which normally occurred during the month of September, coinciding with the feast of the Birth of Mary. This gave him the opportunity to compose four Marian sermons (Birth of Mary, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption) that have a certain unity among themselves,<sup>15</sup> as the author explains in the prologue to them:

'He shone as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the full moon in its days; and as the sun when it shines ... and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds; and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring; and as the lilies that are on the brink of the water; and as the sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer; as a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire, as a massive vessel of gold, adorned with every precious stone, as an olive-tree, budding forth, and a cypress-tree rearing itself on high' [Ecclus 50:6–11]. Behold the twelve precious stones in Aaron's diadem! Behold the twelve stars in the crown of the glorious Virgin, in whose praise, and according to the four festivals of her Nativity, Annunciation, Purification and Assumption, we mean to divide this text of Ecclesiasticus into four sermons, and briefly concord it with each festival, as our Lady herself shall grant.<sup>16</sup>

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XIII–XV, ed. L. Gambero (Roma, 1996); *Marie. Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale*, eds. D. Iogna-Prat, É. Palazzo, D. Russo, preface by G. Duby (Paris, 1996), with particular reference to the contributions of G. Rupalio, 'La Vierge come "système de valeurs"', 5–12; É. Palazzo and A.K. Johansson, 'Jalons liturgiques pour une histoire du culte de la Vierge dans l'Occident Latin (V<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles)', 15–43; S.C. Mimouni, 'De l'ascension du Christ à l'ascension de la Vierge. Les Transitus Mariae: représentations anciennes et médiévales,' 471–509.

15 For Feasts of the Church found also in the breviary used by St. Francis, see. P. Messa, 'Le feste liturgiche di Maria Vergine e l'esperienza spirituale di Francesco e Chiara d'Assisi,' in *La Vergine Maria nella teologia e nella spiritualità francescana: Incontro di spiritualità francescana. Santuario della Verna, 17–23 August 2004, S. Maria degli Angeli-Assisi* (Perugia, 2005), 9–26.

16 'Quasi stella matutina in medio nebulae, et quasi luna plena in diebus suis lucet. Et quasi sol refulgens. Quasi arcus refulgens inter nebulas gloriae, et quasi flos rosarum in diebus vernis, et quasi lilia, quae sunt in transitu aquae, et quasi thus redolens in diebus aestatis; quasi ignis effulgens et thus ardens in igne, quasi vas auri solidum, ornatum omni lapide pretioso, quasi oliva pullulans, et cypressus se in altitudinem extollens (Eccli 50:6–11). Ecce duodecim lapides pretiosi in diademate capitis Aaron (cf. Ex 26:17–21, 36–38; Sap 18,26). Ecce duodecim stellae in corona gloriosae Virginis, ad cuius laudem, secundum ipsius quattuor festiuitates, scilicet Nativitatem, Annuntiationem, Purificationem et Assumptionem, istam auctoritatem Ecclesiastici in quattuor sermonibus volumus dividere et unicuique festiuitati breviter, prout ipsa dederit Domina, concordare.' (Prologue to the Four Sermons for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

Thus he presents the four themes that he will develop in the respective sermons:

On the Birth of Mary: 'As the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the full moon in its days.' On the Annunciation: 'As the sun when it shines, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds.' On the Nativity of the Lord: 'As the flower of roses in the days of the spring, and as the lilies that are on the brink of the water.' On the Purification: 'As the sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer; and as a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire.' On the Assumption: 'As a massive vessel of gold, adorned with every kind of precious stones, like a green and full-bodied olive tree and as a cypress swirling in the clouds.'<sup>17</sup>

Another sermon, *In laudem beatae Mariae Virginis*, is found in the appendix to the sermon for the Third Sunday of Lent. Thus we have seven sermons that constitute a type of *mariale*,<sup>18</sup> although there are many Marian citations scattered throughout the various sermons.<sup>19</sup> They are, in fact, essential for reconstructing the Marian titles used by the evangelical doctor, as are the fourteen prayers (out of a total of one hundred and sixty three) with which he concludes

17 'Sermo in ipsius Nativitate: "Quasi stella matutina in medio nebulae, et quasi luna plena in diebus suis." In Annuntiatione: "Quasi sol refulgens, et quasi arcus refulgens inter nebulas gloriae." In Nativitate Domini: "Quasi flos rosarum in diebus vernis, et quasi lilia, quae sunt in transitu aquae." In Purificatione: "Quasi thus redolens in diebus aestatis; quasi ignis effulgens, et thus ardens in igne." In Assumptione: "Quasi vas auri solidum, ornatum omni lapide pretioso, quasi oliva pullulans, et cypressus se in altitudinem extollens"' (Prologue to the Four Sermons for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary). In the Franciscan tradition, the Feast of the Assumption had special relevance, celebrated with an Octave, as was the custom at the end of the twelfth century in the Divine Office of the Roman Curia, which Haymo of Faversham adopted for the Order of Friars Minor. See P. Messa, *Le feste liturgiche di Maria Vergine*, 13 (note 15); S. Cecchin, 'L'assunzione di Maria nella Scuola mariologica francescana,' in *L'Assunzione di Maria Madre di Dio. Significato storico-salvifico a 50 anni dalla definizione dogmatica. Atti del 1° Forum Internazionale di Mariologia. Roma, 30.31 October 2000*, eds. G. Calvo Moralejo and S. Cecchin, (Città del Vaticano, 2001), 585–686.

18 Concerning the use of the word *mariale*, see J. Longère, 'Le orationes ad sanctam Mariam e il genere letterario del Mariale,' in *Storia della mariologia. Dal modello letterario europeo al modello manualistico*, eds. E. Boaga and L. Gambero (Roma, 2012), II, 567–589, especially 586–587 (note 14).

19 The Marian references are indexed in the contribution of D.M. Montagna, 'Tracce di pietà Marian medievale nei "sermone" di S. Antonio,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 529–533 (note 4). A total of 760 uses of the words *Maria* and *Virgin* can be found in them. See Saint Antoine de Padoue, *Sermons des dimanches et des fêtes. V. Index biblique, analytique, bestiaire et lexiques*, ed. V. Strappazzon (Paris-Padua, 2013), 719.

the sermons themselves,<sup>20</sup> capable of expressing in the ‘today/*hodie*’ of liturgical prayer, the perennial prayer of the human heart.<sup>21</sup>

Despite this consistent Marian presence, we cannot speak of a true and proper Mariology in Antonian thought, if by this term we mean a systematized theological doctrine. This does not develop until later, at least beginning with John of la Rochelle (d.1245), regarding the figure and role of Mary in the work of salvation.<sup>22</sup> On the occasion of Pope Pius XII’s conferral of the title of ‘evangelical doctor’ on Saint Anthony in 1946,<sup>23</sup> there was no lack of a commitment to try to construct an ‘Antonian Mariology’ with a reflection that used theological terms of that time and which then stopped at that historic moment, seeing in the sermons of the saint more than a systematic thought, a ‘kerygmatic Mariology’ of proclamation.<sup>24</sup> These authors would use many biblical quotes and references, the expression of a devotion laden with affectivity and pathos more than a theologically complete thought,<sup>25</sup> which rather seems to be emerging in more recent attempts at Mariological interpretation in a Franciscan perspective.<sup>26</sup>

20 See also L. Poloniato, ‘La preghiera dei “Sermones” di s. Antonio di Padova: contenuti teologici e spirituali,’ in *Il Santo* 29 (1989), 71–195.

21 Montagna, *Tracce di pietà mariana medievale*, 533 (note 17).

22 On this topic, see *Storia della mariologia*, IV. *Testi mariani del secondo millennio*, vol. 4, *Autori medievali dell’Occidente*, 184–197 (note 14). Concerning the Franciscan school, especially in the thought of Duns Scotus, see *La dottrina mariologica di Giovanni Duns Scoto*, eds. R. Zavalloni and E. Mariani (Rome, 1987).

23 Pius XII, Apostolic Letter, *Exulta Lusitania felix*, (16 January 1946), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 38 (1946), 200–204. Concerning the conferral of the title of Doctor to Saint Anthony, in which he was also recognized for his Mariological contribution, see L. Bertazzo, ‘*Exulta Lusitania felix*: la lettera apostolica di Pio XII per il titolo di dottore evangelico a sant’Antonio di Padova (1946). Genesi ed evoluzione,’ in *Il Santo* 56 (2016), 335–386.

24 F.M. Bauducco, ‘Mariologia cherigmatica di S. Antonio di Padova,’ in *Civiltà Cattolica* 4 (1952), 547–551.

25 See L. Di Fonzo, ‘La mariologia di sant’Antonio,’ in *S. Antonio dottore della Chiesa. Atti delle settimane antoniane tenute a Roma e a Padova nel 1946* (Città del Vaticano, 1947), 83–172, which has a bibliography updated until 1947 on pages 92–93; G. Roschini, ‘La mariologia di s. Antonio di Padova,’ in *Marianum* 8 (1946), 16–67, which states that ‘St. Anthony’s Mariology has these characteristics: substantially complete, rich in biblical flavor, images and unction,’ on 51–57; B. Apperibay, ‘La asunción de la Virgen según san Antonio de Padua,’ in *Verdad y Vida* 4 (1946), 697–710; B. Costa, *La mariologia di s. Antonio di Padova* (Padua, 1950).

26 See M.P. Perillo, ‘Scuola francescana e corredenzione mariana nella Chiesa per la Chiesa,’ in *Immaculata mediatrix* 9 (2004), 340–358; G.M. Iannelli, ‘La predestinazione di Maria e l’Immacolata concezione nel pensiero francescano,’ in *Immaculata mediatrix* 10 (2010), 199–233 and 374–428; P.D.M. Fehlner, ‘The Franciscan Mariological School and the Corredemptive Movement,’ in *Marian Studies* 59 (2008), 59–88.

Since it is impossible to present a defined structuring of the Saint's thought, our proposal is to highlight some Mariological aspects found in the sermons, aspects that come from the faith tradition of the Church, of the Marian revival of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and which will only later be amplified and defined in a theological context. We will intentionally make use of ample citations that will permit us to take the pulse of Antonian reflection and devotion.

## 2 Marian Traces in the Sermons

There was a revival of interest in the Marian dimension of Anthony's sermons due to the critical edition of the sermons which precipitated renewed attention to this topic,<sup>27</sup> directing it in a two-pronged approach to interpreting Marian devotion in 'the way of beauty' (*via pulchritudinis*), as can be found expressed particularly in the thought of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux<sup>28</sup> and in the theological context of the last patristic period before it was welded into scholastic thought.<sup>29</sup> There is a similar Marian devotion to be found in the poetry of the time,<sup>30</sup> as well as in women's circles of that day:

'The virgin's name was Mary' (Lk 1:27). A sweet name, a delicious name, a name that comforts the sinner, a name that infuses blessed hope. Who is Mary if not the star of the sea, that is, the shining beacon that leads

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- 27 See G. Calvo Moralejo, 'Santa Maria en los sermones de s. Antonio de Padua,' in *Verdad y Vida* 53 (1995), 331–348; T. De Poi, 'La vergine Maria nei sermoni del Santo,' in *Antonio di Padova, uomo evangelico. Contributi biografici e dottrinali*, ed. L. Bertazzo (Padua, 1995), 157–175; T. De Poi, the entry for *Maria*, in *Dizionario antoniano*, Padua 2002, coll. 449–462; F. Ossanna, 'Le immagini di Maria nei "Sermoni" di sant'Antonio,' in *Maria nel pensiero di sant'Antonio e nell'arte della Basilica Antoniana*, eds. F. Ossanna and C. Bellinati (Padua, 1995), 9–68; J. Vieira Gonçalves, 'Gloria de Maria à luz dos sermões de santo António,' in *Itinerarium* 47 (2001), 417–480, reviews the Marian titles of the sermons. Along these same lines, see also the recent contribution of V. Redondo, 'María en los sermones de san Antonio de Padua,' in *Estudios Franciscanos* 117 (2016), 1–36.
- 28 It was Laurentin who pointed out the *via pulchritudinis* in Antonian mariology, see Laurentin, 'La vierge Marie chez saint Antoine de Padoue,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 491–520, at 516 (note 4); Gambero, 'Maria nel pensiero dei teologi latini medievali,' 155–168 (note 13); A. Montanari, 'San Bernardo di Clairvaux e la sua Scuola,' in *Storia della mariologia*, II, 636–661 (note 14); A. Burlini Calapaj, 'Le citazioni da san Bernardo nei "Sermones" antoniani,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 217–227 (note 4).
- 29 L. Gambero, 'Il XI secolo e la fioritura della scolastica,' in *Storia della mariologia*, II, 774–829, especially 813–829 (note 14).
- 30 See P. Dronke, 'La maternité de Marie dans la poésie médiévale,' in *Micrologus*, XVII (2009), 167–184, which is an article dedicated to the topic of *La madre/The Mother*.

to safe harbor those still being tossed about by the flood of bitterness? A name beloved of the angels, terrible for demons, salutary for sinners, delightful for the just.<sup>31</sup>

Some authors claim that the devotion demonstrated by the medieval women mystics was more Christocentric than Mariological, positing that Marian devotion is a construction bearing more of a masculine stamp than a female one, a response to specific intellectual and emotional needs.<sup>32</sup>

Another significant passage speaks of the intensely affective connotation of the Saint's devotion, with probable personal accents, that can be repeatedly seen:

The first woman, Eve, is earth of the earth, flesh from flesh, bone from bone; she is told 'Woe (*Vae*, *Eva*) I will intensify your toil in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children' (Gen 3:16). But to Mary, whose life was already in the heavens (cf. Phil 3:20), it was said: Hail (*Ave*), full of grace! And observe that the angel does not say Hail, Mary (*Ave*, *Maria*)! But: 'Hail, full of grace! It is we who say Hail, Mary!' (*Ave*, *Maria*) that is, 'Star of the Sea' (*Stella Maris*), because we are still at sea, we are being tossed about by the billows, swamped by storms, and therefore we cry out, 'Star of the sea!' so that we may arrive at the harbor of salvation with her help. It is she who saves from the tempest those who invoke her, she who shows the way, who leads to safe harbor. The angels, however, have no need of being saved from shipwreck, because they are already safe in the homeland: The splendor of God illumines them and their lamp is the lamb (Rev 21:23). Therefore the angel does not say, Hail Mary! We wretches, however, tossed in the sea, far removed from the gaze of the eyes of God, battered at all times by storms, at the edge of death, continually cry out: *Ave*, *Maria*!<sup>33</sup>

31 "Et nomen Virginis Maria" (Lc 1:27). Nomen dulce, nomen delectabile, nomen confortans peccatorem et beatæ spei. Quid est Maria, nisi maris stella, idest fluctuantibus in amaritudine ad portum clara via? Nomen angelis amabile, daemonibus terribile, peccatoribus salubre, iustis suave' (*Annunciation*, 3, 10, 13).

32 A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'L'immagine di Maria negli scritti delle donne medioevali,' in *Hagiologica. Studi per Réginald Grégoire*, ed. A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, U. Paoli, P. Piatti (Fabriano, 2012), 491–535; see especially page 495; *Storia della mariologia*, II (note 14).

33 'Prima femina Eva, de terra terrena, caro de carne, os de osse; ei dicitur: "Vae", quia "multiplicabo aerumnas tuas, et in dolore paries" (Gen 3:16). Sed beatæ Mariæ, cuius conversatio iam in caelis erat (cf. Phil 3:20), dicitur: "Ave, gratia plena." Et nota, quod angelus non dixit: "Ave, Maria," sed: "gratia plena." Nos vero dicimus: "Ave, Maria," idest "maris stella," quia in medio maris sumus, fluctibus concutimur, tempestate submergimur, et ideo: Stella maris! clamamus, ut per ipsam ad portum salutis veniamus. Ipsa est enim,

For the devout believer, the Virgin is ‘an impregnable tower; the sinner takes refuge in her and is saved. Sweet name, name that comforts the sinner, name of blessed hope! My Lady, your name is a yearning for hope!’<sup>34</sup> We should recall that this aspect of Brother Anthony’s Marian devotion was already mentioned in the first biography, which recounts how at the moment of his death at the place (*locus*) of the *Pauperes Dominae* in Arcella, he asked that the hymn ‘*O gloriosa Domina*’ be intoned.<sup>35</sup>

The architecture that constructs Saint Anthony’s theological vision is highly Christological.<sup>36</sup> Jesus is the skillful merchant (*Mercator*) who, in an admirable exchange (*admirabile commercium*) ‘redeems’ human beings from the dominion of the devil to win them back for God, as was said by Saint Augustine, whose theology is a constant point of reference for Anthony given his formation as an Augustinian canon.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to this reference, we can see another as a background to Antonian theology, this one also of an Augustinian matrix, that of *Christus victor* over sin and death.<sup>38</sup> The finality of the incarnation of the Word is that human beings can proceed from the kingdom of dissimilitude (*regnum dissimilitudinis*) of sin to the kingdom of similitude (*regnum similitudinis*) of God’s original plan. Through the incarnation of the Word, they are redeemed from the fear of the hell in which they dwell, ‘thanks be to God (he) was finally sent the comfort that healed the sick, consoled the afflicted, and rendered the fearful brave.’<sup>39</sup>

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quae se clamantes a tempestate eripit, viam ostendit, et ad portum ducit. Angeli vero a naufragio non indigent liberari, quia sunt in patria securi, quos claritas Dei illuminat et lucerna eorum est Agnus (cf. Apoc 21:23). Et ideo non dixit angelus: “Ave, Maria.” Nos vero miseri, a facie oculorum Dei in mare proiecti, omni hora, procellis concussi, in confinio mortis positi, clamemus omni hora: “Ave, Maria” (*Annunciation*, 2, 13).

34 ‘Turris fortissima nomen Dominae, ad ipsam confugiet peccator et salvabitur. Nomen dulce, nomen confortans peccatorem et beatæ spei. Domina, nomen tuum in desiderio animæ’ (*Third Sunday in Lent*, 6).

35 *Vita prima o Assidua* 17,11; on this topic, see also M. Melone, ‘La Vergine gloriosa nei sermoni di s. Antonio di Padova,’ in *La Vergine Maria nella teologia e nella spiritualità francescana*, 27–43 (note 15).

36 J. Galot, ‘La cristologia nei “Sermoni” di s. Antonio di Padova,’ in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 395–411 (note 4).

37 See Figueiredo Frias, ‘Lettura ermeneutica dei “Sermones” di sant’Antonio di Padova,’ 11–61 (note 10).

38 This doctrine, which was originally expounded by Irenaeus of Lyons and later developed by Augustine, would be transmitted to the Middle Ages: See B. Sesboüé, ‘Nella scia di Calcedonia: cristologia e soteriologia,’ in *Storia dei dogmi*, vol. 1, *Il Dio della salvezza*, eds. B. Sesboüé and J. Wolinski (Casale Monferrato 2000<sup>2</sup>), 412–416.

39 ‘Sed, Deo gratias quia missa est confortatio, quae et infirmum sanavit et desolatum deliciauit, et timidum securum fecit’ (*Annunciation*, 2).



In Mary's 'yes,' humanity is recreated, joining together God and the human being, through the sacrifice of the cross, and if 'creation was light and easy, it was achieved by a mere word: That is, by God's will alone, for to him to will is to do. But re-creation was very difficult, by means of his Passion and death.'<sup>40</sup>

It is therefore in this Christological vision that we can interpret Mary's role, understanding the titles used for her through an increasing number of attributions, parallels, and allusions derived from biblical images, explicitly aware of the weakness of words in an attitude that moves from devotion to contemplation: 'To her praise, who surpasses all praise, and in whose praise every material thing falls short and every tongue stammers.'<sup>41</sup>

### 3 Mary in the Christological Horizon

It is from the Christological event, therefore, that we can focus on the Marian thought of the sermons.<sup>42</sup> The titles attributed to Mary refer back to the Christological event of the incarnation: God's plan (*progetto*) for Mary, which she learned from the angel in her freedom, and which is seen in light of her divine motherhood, 'from the creation of the world she was destined to be the Mother of God.'<sup>43</sup>

The Marian title of *Theotokos/Mater Dei/Mater Domini*, from the ancient Christian tradition and defined at the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.), can be interpreted with a particular weight in St. Anthony's use of the term. We need to keep in mind that his stay in Padua was connected to the *titulus* of the Church of 'Santa Maria Mater Domini,' which received his remains after his death, and which has always been a significant part of the Antonian memory even when the great basilica was built in his honor.<sup>44</sup> The result of

40 'Levis et facilis fuit creatio, quia solo tantum verbo, immo sola Dei voluntate, cuius dicere est velle; sed recreatio valde difficilis, quia passione et morte' (*Fourth Sunday after Easter*, 5).

41 'Ad cuius laudem, quae omni laudi superenatat, in cuius laude omnis materia deficit, omnis lingua balbutit, quia materia se offert' (*Purification*, 1, 3).

42 F. Cecchin, *Maria signora Santa e Immacolata nel pensiero francescano. Per una storia del contributo francescano alla mariologia* (Città del Vaticano, 2001), 67–147; F. Cecchin, *L'Immacolata Concezione. Breve storia del dogma* (Città del Vaticano, 2003), especially 5–74.

43 '...idest a mundi constitutione, praedestinata est Mater Dei' (*Assumption*, 2).

44 See the recent, innovative contribution by G. Guazzini, 'Un nuovo Giotto al Santo di Padova: la cappella della Madonna Mora,' in *Nuovi studi. Rivista di arte antica e moderna* xx (2015), 21, 5–40.

the divine plan of motherhood was that ‘the glorious Virgin was prevented by a singular grace, and filled with it, that she might have as the fruit of her womb, him whom from the beginning she acknowledged as Lord of the whole universe.’<sup>45</sup>

Without delving into a more thorough theological reflection, and although the title of *Immaculate Virgin* is used rather generically, such statements anticipate the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which would develop later, especially in the reflection of Duns Scotus.<sup>46</sup>

Mary’s reply to the message of the angel is narrated based on the lived experience of the prophet Elijah in the cave of 1Kgs 19: 11–12:

There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake; after the earthquake, fire—but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, a light silent sound.

Anthony interprets the episode in this way:

The ‘great wind’ was the angel’s greeting, promising great things. It was spoken to the strongest of women by Gabriel, whose name means ‘strength.’ ... Well said, then, Behold a great wind, etc., and the Lord (the Incarnation of the Word) was not there. And after the ‘wind’ of the greeting, the ‘earthquake’: She was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be [Lk 1:29]. And the Lord (the Incarnation of the Word) was not yet there. And after the ‘earthquake,’ the ‘fire’: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee [Lk 1:35]. Yet the Lord was not there either. And after the ‘fire,’ the ‘whisper of a gentle breeze’ (that is, Mary’s response): Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. And the Lord was there, the

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45 ‘Illa autem gloriosa Virgo singulari gratia praevenita est atque repleta, ut ipsum haberet ventris sui fructum, quem ex initio habuit universitatis Dominum’ (*Third Sunday of Lent*, 1).

46 For the theological proposal of the Immaculate Conception sanctioned by John Duns Scotus in Franciscan theological debate, see A. Boureau, *L’inconnu dans la maison. Richard de Mediavilla, les Franciscains et la Vierge Marie à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 2010). For the Marian reflection in Ubertino da Casale, see. C.M. Martinez Ruiz, ‘La figura di Maria en el “Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu” de Ubertino de Casale,’ in *Collectanea Franciscana* 85 (2015), 487–522.

Incarnation of the Word! As soon as she said: Be it done unto me according to thy word, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.<sup>47</sup>

The end result was the event of the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of the Word, which is symbolized by Anthony through nature imagery. The birth of the Virgin is likened to the *Morningstar* (*stella del mattino*), she who dissolves the darkness and announces the Christ.<sup>48</sup> In cosmological terms, she is also compared to the moon, perfect in every aspect when it is full, and so Mary 'had no spot in her birth, because she was sanctified in her mother's womb [...] and no horns of pride in her days, so that she shines fully and perfectly.'<sup>49</sup>

In the sermon on the Annunciation, Mary progresses from moon to 'shining sun and a bright rainbow' (Sir 50:7–8). Again, quoting Sirach (43:2), she is defined as a 'vessel' because (she is) 'the bridal chamber of the Son of God, the guest-room of the Holy Spirit, and the banquet hall of the Holy Trinity; a vessel formed by God to receive the Word.'<sup>50</sup>

And she is the 'gate of heaven and the door of paradise,' indicated by her similarity between the doors of the temple that Solomon had carved (1 Chr. 6:32), and her womb 'is as ivory, set with sapphires. Because she surpassed all in the whiteness of virginity, as regards the body; and in the beauty of contemplation, as to the soul.'<sup>51</sup>

Mary is the one who contained the Word, and the image of the vessel will return again in the sermon on the Assumption, which is basically a commentary on Sirach 50:10–11.<sup>52</sup>

47 'Spiritus grandis fuit angelica salutatio, grandia promittens et a Gabriele, qui interpretatur fortitudo, mulieri fortissimae prolata. [...] Bene ergo dicitur: "Ecce spiritus grandis" etc., et ibi non fuit Dominus, idest Verbi Incarnatio. Et post spiritum salutationis, commotio: "Turbata est," inquit, "in sermone eius, et cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio" (Lc 1:29); et ibi non fuit Dominus, idest Verbi Incarnatio. Et post commotionem, ignis, idest Spiritus Sancti superventio et virtutis Altissimi obumbratio (cf. Lc 1:35); nec ibi fuit Dominus. Et post ignem, sibilus aurae tenuis, scilicet: "Ecce ancilla Domini" (Lc 1:38); ibi fuit Dominus, idest Filii Dei Incarnatio. Cum enim dixit: "Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum" (Lc 1:38), statim "Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis" (Io 1:14; *Annunciation*, 1, 10).

48 *Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord*, 2; 937.

49 'Nativitate habuit maculam, quia in utero matris fuit sanctificata [...] ; nec in diebus suis cornua superbiae, et ideo plena et perfecta lucet' (*Nativity*, 4).

50 'Beata Maria dicitur vas, quia thalamus Filii Dei, speciale hospitium Spiritus Sancti, triclinium Sanctae Trinitatis' (*Annunciation*, 1, 10).

51 'Gloriosae Virginis venter fuit eburneus et distinctus saphyris, quia virginitatis candore, quoad corpus, et contemplationis pulchritudine, quoad animam, praepollebat' (*Annunciation*, 1, 4).

52 See *Assumption*, 1.

In conceiving the Word, Mary is compared to a rainbow. According to the common opinion of that day, a rainbow is formed when the sun enters into a cloud; and so it was for the Son of God, the Sun of Justice, who entered the cloud of the womb of the Virgin, who therefore ‘became “as a bright rainbow,” the sign of the covenant of peace and reconciliation.’<sup>53</sup> In giving a body to the Word incarnate, recreating the ancient Covenant in the sign of the rainbow, Mary becomes the ‘*mediatrix*’ in the sign of peace and mercy: ‘The Blessed Virgin Mary, our *mediatrix*, re-established peace between God and sinner. Therefore, it says of her in Genesis: I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of a covenant between me and the earth’ (Gen 9:13).<sup>54</sup>

In receiving the Word, she also becomes his tent, likened to the tent (tabernacle) that received the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 26:1–7, 14–15), constructed according to the instructions given to Moses.<sup>55</sup> The description of the tent (tabernacle) is the occasion for a lengthy digression in which, analyzing all its elements, Anthony interprets it symbolically as referring to Mary and, in a ‘key’ of ecclesiological interpretation, to the Church militant and triumphant. Concerning the former, Mary possessed the virtues of all the just, with great compassion for the penitent; in the latter: ‘Now she reigns in glory, enjoying the reward of all the saints, because she is lifted up above the choirs of angels.’<sup>56</sup>

In a continuation of these parallels, and in a crescendo of mutuality in nature with respect to the relationship between Jesus and Mary, when the Word wanted to put on a woolen garment, he took it from Mary, ‘a lamb in her innocence,’ who restores springtime to the wintry earth.<sup>57</sup>

In order to construct ‘the home for his humanity,’ Jesus, the Wisdom of the Father, had to be welcomed into the womb of the Virgin Mary.<sup>58</sup> Mary’s body, therefore, is that blessed land that conceived and gave birth to the blessed fruit that has overcome every curse.

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53 ‘Sic, sole iustitiae Dei Filio, hodierna die, intrante in nubem, idest gloriosam Virginem, ipsa Virgo facta est quasi arcus effulgens, signum foederis, pacis et reconciliationis, inter nebulas gloriae, idest inter Deum et peccatores’ (*Annunciation*, 1, 6).

54 See *Annunciation*, 1, 11.

55 See *Purification*, 1, 4.

56 ‘Modo vero regnat in gloria, in qua omnium sanctorum habet praemia, quia super choros angelorum exaltata’ (*Purification*, 1, 6).

57 See *Annunciation*, 1, 13.

58 ‘Sapientia Dei Filius aedificavit sibi domum suae humanitatis in utero beatae Virginis, quae domus fuit suffulta septem columnis, idest septiformis gratiae donis’ (20 *Pentecost*, 4).

Anthony interprets this event with allegorical accents based on biblical references that flow into, as often happens, a paean of praise, a characteristic note of his devotion. A citation of a verse from the Song of Songs becomes the reason behind an interpretation in a Mariological vein:

Blessed, then, is that womb of which, in praise of his Mother, the Son says in Canticles: Thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies. [Cant 8:2] The womb of the glorious Virgin is likened to 'a heap of wheat'; a 'heap,' because in it were gathered up all the privileges of merit and reward; 'of wheat,' because in it, as in a barn, there was stored by the industry of the true Joseph the wheat to prevent all Egypt from dying of hunger. ...[Wheat], white on the inside, ruddy on the outside ... represents Jesus Christ who was hidden for nine months in the store-room of the blessed Virgin, to be ground for us in the mill of the Cross; white by innocence of life and red by the shedding of his blood. This blessed womb was 'set about with lilies.' Lilies, the color of milk, represent the shining white virginity of the blessed Virgin Mary. Her womb was 'set about,' fortified with humility as with a wall... The daughter bore the father! The poor little Virgin bore the Son! ... O earthly sons of Adam, to whom is granted this grace and special privilege, that with contrite hearts and prostrate on the ground you may worship the ivory throne of the true Solomon, high and lifted up as the throne seen by Isaiah, say: Blessed is the womb that bore thee! [Cf. 3(1)Kg 10:18–20; Cant 3:9–10; Is 6:1]<sup>59</sup>

These are the images that open up room for allegorical interpretations of the theme of the Incarnation of the Word. In fulfilling the Father's plan, Mary's *fiat*

59 'Beatus ergo venter, de quo in suae Matris laudem Filius dicit in Canticis: "Venter tuus acervus tritici vallatus liliis" (Cant 7:2). Venter gloriosae Virginis fuit sicut acervus tritici: "acervus", quia in eo coacervatae fuerunt omnes praerogativae meritorum et praemiorum, "tritici", quia in eo, quasi in cellario, industria veri Ioseph, repositum fuit triticum, ne tota Aegyptus fame periret. Triticum dictum, [...]; album interius, rubicundum exterius, Iesum Christum significat, qui in cellario beati ventris gloriosae Virginis novem mensibus fuit reconditus, qui in mola crucis pro nobis fuit attritus: candidus innocentia vitae, rubicundus sanguinis effusione. Hic beatus venter fuit "vallatus liliis". Lilium dictum, quasi lacteum, beatae Mariae Virginis, propter sui candorem, virginitatem significat. Cuius uterus fuit "vallatus", idest valle humilitatis munitus [...]. Portavit Patrem Filia; portavit Filium Virgo pauperula. [...] O terreni Adae filii, quibus ista gratia, ista specialis praerogativa est concessa, fide devoti, mente compuncti, terra prostrati, veri Salomonis thronum eburneum, excelsum et elevatum (cf. 3Reg 10:18–20; Cant 3:9–10), nostri Isaiae solium (cf. Is 6:1) adorate, dicentes: "Beatus venter qui te portavit" (*Third Sunday in Lent*, 3).

becomes the *locus* of our sanctification,<sup>60</sup> expressing a song of gratitude in the prayer that concludes the pericope:

To you, O blessed Virgin, be praise and glory, for today we are filled with the goodness of your house, that is, of your womb. We, who were empty before, are full; we who were sick are healthy; we who were cursed are blessed, because as Canticle 4 says: Thy fruits are paradise [Cant 4:13].<sup>61</sup>

In her *fiat*:

... After the Sun entered the Virgin, peace and reconciliation came about, because he himself, the Son of God and of the Virgin, made satisfaction to the Father for man's guilt and restrained God's anger lest it strike man.<sup>62</sup>

It is for having given humanity to the Word that the Virgin was taken up into heaven, 'the eternal chamber' (*all'eterno talamo*), bodily as well: 'From this you may clearly infer that the blessed Virgin was assumed in the body.'<sup>63</sup> The explicit affirmation of the evangelical doctor was quoted in the Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, by which Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of Mary's Assumption.<sup>64</sup> In a progressive play of symbolism and biblical allegories, likened especially to Queen Esther, 'who figuratively is the blessed Virgin Mary, who lay hidden, enclosed on every side, when the angel found her in her hiding-place.'<sup>65</sup> Anthony breaks into a song of astonished wonder:

O immeasurable dignity of Mary! O inexpressible sublimity of grace! O unsearchable depth of mercy! What grace so great, what mercy so great,

60 'Beata Virgo fuit locus sanctificationis nostrae, idest Filii Dei, qui nos sanctificavit' (*Assumption*, 2).

61 'Tibi, o beata Virgo, laus et gloria, quia hodie in bonitate domus tuae, idest uteri tui, repleti sumus. Nos, prius vacui, pleni sumus; prius infirmi, sani; prius maledicti, benedicti, quia, ut dicitur in Canticis IV: "Emissiones tuae paradus" (Cant 4:13)' (*Christmas*, 5).

62 'Postquam vero sol intravit in Virginem, facta est pax et reconciliatio, quia ipse Dei et Virginis Filius, pro culpa hominis Patri satisfaciens, ipsius iram, ne hominem feriret, refrenavit' (*Annunciation*, 1, 6).

63 'Surrexit et arca sanctificationis suae, cum in hac die Mater Virgo ad aethereum thalamum est assumpta' (*Assumption*, 2).

64 Acta Apostolicae Sedis 42 (1950), 765.

65 'Esther est beata Virgo Maria, quae circumquaque clausa latuit, quam absconsam Angelus invenit' (*Assumption*, 3).

was ever shown or could be shown to angel or to man, as that of the blessed Virgin, whom God the Father willed to be mother of his own Son, equal to him and begotten before all ages?<sup>66</sup>

In the glory of the Assumption, as Mary crowned her Son, giving him the 'diadem of human flesh,' so the Son 'crowned her with the diadem of the kingdom.'<sup>67</sup>

There is an interesting iconological theory advanced recently that claims that Giotto's fresco in the chapel of Saint Mary '*Mater Domini*' in Padua is the first depiction of the coronation of the Virgin, which became a recurring *topos* in later Marian iconography.<sup>68</sup>

#### 4 Franciscan Assonance and Resonance

The discussion about whether or not there exists a foundation of Franciscan inspiration in Anthony's *sermones* was quite lively in the years immediately after the publication of the critical edition, with some sustaining that there was none while others found some evidence, even if only hints of it.<sup>69</sup>

There are clearly some resonances and expressions that were perhaps common to an experiential, liturgical, or devotional *koiné* of that time, which we find expressed in St. Francis' sensitivity and writings and in the sermons of Anthony. Concerning the former, Celano writes that 'he embraced the Mother of Jesus with inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us. He honored her with his own *Praises*, poured out prayers to her, and

66 'O inestimabilis Mariae dignitas! O inenarrabilis gratiae sublimitas! O ininvestigabilis misericordiae profunditas! Quae tanta gratia, quae tanta misericordia angelo vel homini umquam facta fuit vel fieri potuit, quanta beatæ Virgini, quam Deus Pater sui proprii Filii, sibi aequalis, ante saecula geniti, Matrem esse voluit?' (*Assumption*, 3).

67 'Quia beata Maria Dei Filium coronavit diademate carnis, in die desponsationis suae, idest conceptionis, qua unita est divina natura, tamquam sponsus, humanae naturae, tamquam sponsae, in thalamo eiusdem Virginis, ideo idem Filius suam Matrem coronavit hodierna die diademate gloriae caelestis' (*Assumption*, 3).

68 Guazzini, *Un nuovo Giotto al Santo di Padova* (note 44).

69 I will limit myself to referring the reader to R. Manselli, 'La coscienza minoritica di Antonio di Padova di fronte all'Europa del suo tempo,' in *Le fonti e la teologia dei sermoni antoniani*, 29–35 (note 4), who asserts the thesis '*negazionista*'; M.C. Monteiro Pacheco, 'Santo Antonio e o franciscanismo,' in *Santo António de Lisboa*, 121–139; Pinto Rema, *As riquezas da pobreza*, in *Actas* 11, 723–738 (note 12); and finally, A. Rigon, 'Per una biografia di Antonio di Padova. I Sermoni come fonte della vita di Antonio e delle origini minoritiche,' in *Il Santo* 54 (2014), 257–277.

offered her his love in a way that no human tongue can express.<sup>70</sup> Anthony also felt this brotherhood with Jesus, calling him ‘flesh and our brother’<sup>71</sup> and thus Mary is ‘the “sister” of Christ, from their common dwelling in the flesh.’<sup>72</sup>

With an intense touch of what is surely of an autobiographical flavor that mirrors the experience of the first Franciscan fraternity, taking the example of the dove that remains alone after losing his or her companion, Brother Anthony writes:

The poor in spirit, the truly penitent who by sinning mortally have lost their companion Jesus Christ, live alone, in loneliness of mind and even of body, far from the tumult of the world ... Again, they are as simple as doves. The nest of their conversation, and even the bed where they sleep bodily, is rough and poor. They injure no-one, indeed they forgive those who injure them. They do not live by robbery, rather they share what they have. They feed on the pure grain of the Church's preaching, not that of heretics, which is unclean. Being ‘all things to all men,’ they love everyone in the Heart of Jesus Christ. They dwell by the flowing waters of sacred Scripture, so as to see from afar and avoid the temptation of the devil who is scheming to catch them. They build their nests in the clefts of the rock, the wounded side of Jesus Christ. If some storm of fleshly temptation blows up, they flee to the side of Christ and hide themselves there... They defend themselves with the wings of humility and patience, not with the talons of revenge.<sup>73</sup>

70 Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2 Celano), 150. *Francis of Assisi Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder*, eds. Regis Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York, 2000), 374.

71 ‘... cuius coheredes sumus, quia caro et frater noster est...’ (8 *Pentecost*, 14).

72 *Purification*, 1, 5.

73 ‘Sic pauperes spiritu, veri scilicet poenitentes, quia mortaliter peccando comparem suum, scilicet Iesum Christum, amiserunt, ideo solitudine mentis et etiam corporis, a tumultu saecularium remoti, soli vivunt [...]. Item, sunt simplices sicut columbae. Nidum suae conversationis et etiam ipsum lectum, quo corporaliter dormiunt, asperum et pauperem habent. Neminem laedunt; immo se laedenti parcunt. Raptu non vivunt; immo sua distribuunt. Verbo praedicationis sibi commissos reficiunt, et ex gratia sibi concessa cum aliis gratanter dividunt. [...] Puro grano, idest Ecclesiae praedicatione, non haeticorum, quae immunda est, vescuntur. Omnibus omnia facti [...] omnes diligunt in visceribus Iesu Christi. Super Sacrae Scripturae fluentia resident, ut tentationem diaboli, se rapere machinantis, procul praevideant et praevisam caveant. In foramine petrae, idest latere Iesu Christi, nidificant, et si qua carnis tentationis tempestas ingruerit, ad latus Christi fugiunt, ibique se abscondunt. [...] Non unguis vindictae, sed alis humilitatis et patientiae se defendunt. Optimum, inquit philosophus, genus vincendi patientia’ (*Purification*, 1, 8).



The theme of the value of poverty is recurrent. Inspired by the saying of Bernard of Clairvaux:

In heaven, there is stored up an abundance of things; only poverty is not found among them. This kind of thing abounds on earth, and man knows not its value. Therefore the Son of God came to seek it, so that he might make it precious in his estimation.<sup>74</sup>

Anthony comments:

Concerning this gold [of poverty] we read in Genesis that ‘in the land of Hevilath gold grows, and the gold of that land is very good’ [Gen 2:11–12]. Hevilath means ‘bringing forth,’ and it stands for the blessed Virgin, who, when she brought forth the Son of God, wrapped him in the bands of golden poverty. O finest gold of poverty! He who has you not, even if he has all else, has nothing! Temporal things puff up, and in so inflating they make empty. In poverty is joy; in riches, sadness and lamentation.<sup>75</sup>

This resonance is found again when, in the praises of the Virgin, he defines her maternity as:

The throne coated with the gold of poverty. O golden poverty of the glorious Virgin, who wrapped the Son of God in bands and laid him in the manger! And justly it is said that Solomon coated the throne with gold. In fact, poverty coats the soul of virtue, but riches make it naked.<sup>76</sup>

Analogously, we have the expressions found in the *Writings* of St. Francis referring to Mary as the Mother of God, emphasizing the theme of the incarnation.<sup>77</sup>

74 *On the Nativity of the Lord* 1, 5.

75 ‘De hoc auro [paupertatis] dicitur in Genesi, quod “in terra Hevilath nascitur aurum, et aurum terrae illius optimum est” (Gen 2:11–12). Hevilath interpretatur parturiens, et significat beatam Virginem, quae, Dei Filium parturiens, aureae paupertatis panniculis involvit. Optimum paupertatis aurum! Qui te non habet, etiam si omnia habet, nihil habet. Temporalia enim inflant, et inflando evacuant. In paupertate, gaudium; in divitiis, tristitia et lamentum’ (*Assumption*, 3).

76 ‘Iste thronus fuit vestitus auro paupertatis. O aurea paupertas gloriosae Virginis, quae Dei Filium pannis involvisti, in praesepio reclinasti! Et bene dicit “vestivit”; paupertas enim animam vestit virtutibus, divitiae vero expoliant’ (5 *Pentecost*, 14).

77 See also *LR*, 23,3: ‘[...] you brought about His birth as true God and true man by the glorious, ever-virgin, most blessed, holy Mary’; *2LTF*, 1, 4: ‘The most high Father made known

Particular evidence for this can be found in the *Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, where she is hailed as ‘holy... virgin made Church.’<sup>78</sup>

In addition to these common titles, the title most commonly used is definitively Franciscan, namely, the expression ‘poverty or poor’ (*paupercula*), particularly with the words ‘virgin’ and ‘mother’ (*virgo* and *mater*),<sup>79</sup> but used also in reference to the ‘poor church tossed by the storm’ (*ecclesia paupercula tempestate convulse*), distinguished by the ‘poverty of her spouse.’<sup>80</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

From an analysis of these many references, which go beyond Anthony’s strictly Marian sermons, we can speak of an Antonian Mariology only to the degree that we succeed in appreciating the symphonic richness of his sermons. These sermons are capable of interweaving images, symbols, references, and associations that refer back not only to his vast knowledge and use of Scripture and the patristic tradition, but also, particularly in reference to the figure of Mary, a deep devotion to the one who became human in the womb of Mary, a devotion that was able to sustain Anthony’s life as a human being, a Friar Minor, and a preacher of the Word of God.

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from heaven through His holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father... in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary; *LtOrd*, 11, 21; FF 220: ‘If the blessed Virgin is so honored, as is becoming, because she carried Him in her most holy womb;’ *OfP V*, 3: ‘[He] sent His Beloved Son from on high and He was born of the Blessed Virgin Holy Mary.’

78 *Fontes Francescani*, eds. Enrico Menestò and Stefano Brufani (Assisi, 1995), 259. For an analysis of the text in the biblical and liturgical context, see L.M. Ago, *La “Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis” di san Francesco d’Assisi* (Rome, 1998); J. Schneider, *Virgo Ecclesia facta. La presenza di Maria nel crocifisso di San Damiano e nell’Officium Passionis di san Francesco d’Assisi* (Perugia, 2003); L. Pérez Simón, ‘O beata Maria, quae es habitatio Ecclesiae,’ in *Carthaginensia XX* (2004), 132–162; E.J. Ondrako, ‘Virgin Church. Reflections on Mary in the Franciscan Tradition,’ in *De Maria numquam satis. The significance of the Catholic Doctrines on the Blessed Virgin Mary for all People*, eds. J.M. Gentle and R. Fastiggi (Lanham, MD, 2009), 93–105.

79 See also *The Second Sunday in Lent*, 5: ‘*paupercula virgo*’; *The Fifth Sunday in Pentecost*, 14: ‘*paupercula mater*’; *The Twenty-First Sunday in Pentecost*, 13: ‘*paupercula virgo*’; *The Second Sunday for the Nativity*, 13, and *The Third Sunday for the Octave of Epiphany*: ‘*paupercula virgo*’; and *The Conversion of Paul*: ‘*virgo paupercula*.’

80 ‘Ecclesia, sui sponsi paupertate consignata in medio nationis pravae atque perversae, quae sibi appropinquat nomine non numine, corpore non mente, clamat ad Dominum, a nationis pravae oppressione postulans liberari’ (9 *Pentecost*, 9).

**PART 2**

*The Virgin Mary in Medieval Franciscan Theology*





## ***Mulier Amicta Sole: Bonaventure's Preaching on the Marian Mode of the Incarnation and Marian Mediation in His Sermons on the Annunciation***

*J. Isaac Goff*

Bonaventure's homiletical works on Mary provide a wealth of insight into his mature and maturing views on the person and role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and are pivotal in grasping the development of his Marian thought that began in his scholastic works.<sup>1</sup> His vision of the 'Woman' is couched within, yet helps illumine, his presentation of the Trinity, Christology, Anthropology, and Sacramental theology, providing many key links between these different areas of his theological reflections. Together Bonaventure's sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary provide the general outline of what later systematic Mariologies would treat. His presentation of Mary's role in both the order of the Incarnation and her mediatory role in the Church, especially as it relates to questions of Pneumatology, has, arguably, not been surpassed.

Bonaventure's two sermons<sup>2</sup> on the Annunciation, the topic of this essay, provide a striking picture of Mary's unique sanctity and singular agency

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- 1 These sermons are divided according to the solemnities of the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, and Nativity of Mary. A larger collection of twenty-four sermons on Mary were first gathered and published in 1901 in a single volume in Bonaventure, *Sermones de tempore, de Sanctis, de B. Virgine Maria et de diversis, Opera Omnia*, 10 vols., eds. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi, 1882–1902), vol. 9, 633–721. A new critical edition of Bonaventure's Marian discourses was published in 1993, which retains only nine of the original twenty-four sermons and adds collation 6 of *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti* as the second sermon on the Annunciation for a total of ten. Bonaventure, *Sermons de diversis*, ed. Jacques Guy Bougerol (Paris, 1993), vol. 2, 554–578. See Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5, 483–489 for placement of the Annunciation sermon in *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti* in the Quaracchi edition of Bonaventure. This essay will follow the Bougerol edition. Any modifications to Bougerol's text will be noted. The Bougerol edition will henceforth be cited as *SD 2* with appropriate page numbers.
  - 2 This number follows the Bougerol edition. The Quaracchi edition contains five additional sermons on the Annunciation that were thought by the editors to have come from Bonaventure. These are *Sermo II, Ecce virgo concepiet* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 9, 659b–667a); *Sermo III, Dominus dabit benignitatem* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 9, 667a–670a); *Sermo IV, Qui creavit me requievit* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 9, 671b–677b); *Sermo V, Ave Maria gratia plena* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 9, 677b–682a); *Sermo VI, Benedicta tu inter mulieres* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 9, 682a–687b). Bougerol determined

throughout the different phases of the Incarnation from its origin, through the redemptive sacrifice on the Cross, fully justifying his claim in the *Breviloquium* that the mode of the Incarnation is Marian.<sup>3</sup> The sermons on the Annunciation also manifest Bonaventure's vision of Mary as an order unto herself,<sup>4</sup> and thus uniquely hierarchized under Christ, yet positioned above the other hierarchies: Angelic and ecclesiastical, or celestial and subcelestial.<sup>5</sup> As a hierarch Mary stands with and under Christ as a mediator with respect to the Church in terms of her continuing activity in both exemplifying and realizing the Church's ultimate eschatological perfection through assisting it, in a maternal mode, as a direct and constant intercessor, bringing the whole Christian

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from manuscript evidence that these texts are passed down as anonymous and, thus, cannot safely be ascribed to Bonaventure. Scholarly discussion will likely continue over whether these excised sermons ought to be re-introduced into the authentic Bonaventurian *corpus*. For the purposes of this essay it is sufficient to simply follow Bougerol's editorial decisions. For a recent presentation of the *status quaestionis* of Bonaventurian textual studies, regarding questions of authorship and inclusion within the Bonaventurian *corpus*, see Aleksander Horowski, 'Opere autentiche e spurie, edite, inedite di san Bonaventura da Bagnoregio: bilancio e prospettive,' in *Collectanea Franciscana* 86 (2016), 461–544.

- 3 On the Marian mode of the Incarnation, see Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* p. 4, c. 3, in *Op. omn.*, vol. 5, 243a–244a. In this section, Bonaventure discusses '*de incarnatione quantum ad modum*.' For discussion of the metaphysical and theological implications for Bonaventure's Mariology, see Lorenzo Di Fonzo, *Doctrina sancti Bonaventurae de universali Mediatione B. Virginis Mariae* (Rome, 1938), 41–42. More recently Peter Damian Fehlner has a discussion of this aspect of Bonaventure's understanding of the incarnation in Fehlner, '*Mater Unitatis*,' in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-III*, ed. Peter Damian Fehlner (New Bedford, MA, 2003), 1–24; idem, 'Opening Address,' in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-VI*, ed. Peter Damian Fehlner (New Bedford, MA, 2007), 1–10; idem, 'Coredemption and the Assumption in the Franciscan School of Mariology: The 'Franciscan Thesis' as Key,' in *Studies in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe-1*, ed. Peter Damian Fehlner (New Bedford, MA, 2013), 163–249.
- 4 Bonaventure, *II Sent.*, d. 9, q. 7, fund. 4 (*Op. omn.*, vol. 2, 253a): '*cum... sit [Virgo Maria] supra omnes ordines, per se constituet ordinem*.' This statement is to be understood in terms of Bonaventure's notion and application of hierarchy, which implies mediation and mediators in the superior hierarchies, hierarchizing members in lower grades of these hierarchies. Mary is under Christ but above all other hierarchies and thus has a unique relation to Christ in the incarnation and a singular relation to the Spirit in the mediation of his graces. For a helpful recent study, with relevant bibliography and texts from Bonaventure, see Katherine Wrisley Shelby, 'Bonaventure on Grace, Hierarchy, and the Symbol of Jacob's Ladder,' in *Ordo et Sanctitas: The Franciscan Spiritual Journey in Theology and Hagiography: Essays in Honor of J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.* (Leiden, 2017), 207–228.
- 5 For Bonaventure's commentary on Mary's status vis-à-vis angels and humankind, see Bonaventure, *Sermo 39: De purificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, in *SD* 2, 526, 531; *Sermo 49: De assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, in *SD* 2, 648–652. For Bonaventure, the unique hierarchical order that Mary constitutes in the economy of salvation as Panagia and mother of God is what allows her to function directly with and through the Holy Spirit as *Purificatrix*, *Illuminatrix*, and *Perfectrix* in the Church.

people to perfection in the communion of the Church, Christ's Body. Mary's position and role stem from her absolute virginal purity in mind, which by the power of the Holy Spirit flourishes into her divine and virginal maternity. Taking Anselm's dictum to heart and applying it systematically throughout his reflections on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bonaventure can describe Mary's transcendent sanctity, which allows her to become a source of purity for others. He writes: 'It was fitting that the conception of that man [Jesus Christ] should be from a mother most pure, *her purity than which nothing greater under God could be understood*.'<sup>6</sup>

As this essay will show, the Marian theology presented in Bonaventure's sermons clarifies and manifests Bonaventure's understanding of the purpose of theological preaching and the various modes of theology that he has described in other texts. Bonaventure's preaching on the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary provides the lineaments of the person and activity of Blessed Mary, insofar as she is revealed to be the greatest work of the merits of Christ's redemption through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Mary is the ultimate *good* of creation: A good that flowers into the conception from on high of the Incarnate Son of God himself. Thus, Mary is, under Christ, the great theologian and teacher of Christians<sup>7</sup> who is actively engaged in realizing the purpose of theology: *Ut boni fiamus*. As an active person, who herself modalizes the Incarnation and by the Spirit forever intercedes on behalf of the world, Mary, for the Seraphic Doctor, is *the* singular co-worker with Christ in every phase of his redemptive Incarnation: From conception to consummation on the Cross; from the institution of the Church to its eschatological perfection. In sum, for Bonaventure, Mary is the 'Woman Clothed with the Sun,' the 'Great Sign' (Apoc. 12:1) of the Trinity and its divine work of creation for the sake of recreation. This perfection is shown to be fulfilled in Mary because it is already realized in an exemplary manner in the concrete perfection of her perfectly deiform soul and assumed body, and stands as the promissory note of fulfillment of the whole Church. Mary, for Bonaventure, therefore actively and continuously participates and intercedes as an instrument of the Spirit's grace both in the life of the Church in general as well as in the life of each individual believer.

As with all of his Marian sermons, Bonaventure's discourses on the Annunciation weave biblical, patristic, and contemporary sources into a magnificent

6 Bonaventure, *Sermo 39*, in *SD 2*, 520, emphasis added: 'Decebat ut illius hominis conceptio fieret de Matre purissima ea puritate, qua maior sub Deo nequit intelligi.' Note here the conceptual and verbal parallels to Anselm's description of God as 'aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit' in Anselm, *Proslogion*, c. 15.

7 See Bonaventure, *Sermo 39: De purif.*, in *SD 2*, 537–538; idem, *Sermo 50: De assumpt.*, in *SD 2*, 652–653.

tapestry revealing how salvation history is totally encompassed within the Blessed Virgin Mary's maternal embrace. Addressed in the greatest likelihood to his Franciscan brothers, these sermons show how his Franciscan confreres<sup>8</sup> depend upon Mary's unique intercession in a radical way and must be conformed to her image so that they in turn can become images of her Son. Only in dependence upon and invocation of Mary, therefore, can his Minorite brothers effectively live out their religious and clerical vocations by achieving a Marian state of perfection in themselves. For Bonaventure, this is an essential condition for their pastoral and sacramental ministry to the souls in their care, so that as individual believers and together, the Whole Christ can be brought forth in them.

### 1 Sermons as Sources of Bonaventure's Mariology in Scholarship

Bonaventure's Mariology has received a significant amount of scholarly attention over the past century. These studies have focused on Bonaventure's Marian thought as it relates to questions concerning theological history, theology, dogmatic questions, such as the immaculate conception, the coredeemption, the mediation of the grace of the Holy Spirit, the church, and the sacraments, among others.<sup>9</sup> Such scholarship has proven very valuable in establishing and assessing Bonaventure's place in the history of the development of theological reflection on the person of the mother of God as well as in deepening our understanding of Bonaventure's own positions and rationale in the light of his own historical context and speculative theological questions that arose post-Bonaventure, but were arguably, at least in part, occasioned by Bonaventure's writings.<sup>10</sup> These studies, though extremely valuable, nevertheless have limitations in the light of the most recent critical studies and critical edition of Bonaventure's corpus of sermons. This is because such studies were most often

8 For Bonaventure's homiletical audience being most likely Franciscans, see Timothy J. Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, eds. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff (Leiden, 2014), 412.

9 For a complete bibliography of studies on Bonaventure's Mariology, see Peter Damian Fehlner, 'Bibliografia Mariana-Bonaventuriana,' in *Immaculata Mediatrix* 4 (2004), 241–256.

10 On the history of Franciscan Mariology, see Stefano Cecchin, *Maria Signora Santa e Immacolata nel pensiero francescano: Per una storia del contributo francescano alla mariologia* (City of the Vatican, 2001); Peter Damian Fehlner, 'The Franciscan Mariological School and the Coredeemptive Movement,' in *Marian Studies* (2008), 59–88.



framed according to theological questions that arose post-Bonaventure and because sermons, now known to be inauthentic, were unwittingly included in their analyses, or not placed in their most likely literary context.

Interest in medieval sermon literature has recently seen growing interest.<sup>11</sup> Naturally, as Bonaventure is one of the principal figures of medieval theology and philosophy, who also composed numerous sermons, research and writing on his sermon corpus has seen a corresponding increase.<sup>12</sup> A profoundly important result of recent scholarship on medieval sermon literature, including Bonaventure's, is that sermon literature is now more and more considered in its own right as properly theological and/or dogmatic and representative of the theological and dogmatic convictions of their authors. In fact, modern scholarship has caught on to the fact that for medieval theologians, preaching was the highpoint and ultimate ministerial purpose of theological study.<sup>13</sup>

Current interest in sermon literature, which takes seriously the sermon genre's theological import, is quite clearly a salutary shift in scholarly approach to sermon literature. In older studies, in comparison to an author's 'proper,' i.e., scholastically expressed, theological positions, sermons were more commonly viewed as 'unscientific' or unclear in their expression and thereby as likely as not to be given to pious overstatement.<sup>14</sup> Recent studies, however, likely, at least in part, because of a diminished concern for a perfect and consistent uniformity of scholastic expression, have very persuasively argued that sermon literature, rather than being mere exercises in pious exhortation given to theological exaggeration, are in fact best understood as privileged sources of theological research and reflection if one wants to gain an adequate theological

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11 For an introduction to the style and purpose of medieval sermons and preaching, see Timothy J. Johnson, 'Introduction to the *Sunday Sermons* of Saint Bonaventure,' in *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, vol. XI of *Works of St. Bonaventure*, trans. and notes by Timothy J. Johnson (St. Bonaventure, NY, 2008), 1–58; idem, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 403–434; idem, 'Reform, Hagiography, and Sanctity: Bonaventure's Sermons on the Saints,' in *Ordo et Sanctitas*, 186–206; Randall B. Smith, *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Steubenville, OH, 2016); Peter Damian Fehlner, 'I discorsi mariani di san Bonaventura,' in *Immaculata Mediatrix* 4 (2004), 17–65. These studies provide an essential introduction to the developments that lay behind the *sermo modernus*, its style, purpose, and setting along with key bibliographical references. Particularly important in the *sermo modernus* is the 'thematic approach to a specific scripture text ... [which] supplanted the earlier patristic-monastic technique of verse commentary': Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 405.

12 As instanced in the studies mentioned in the immediately preceding note.

13 For discussion of the importance of preaching and its essential relationship to study, see Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 407–413.

14 Fehlner, throughout 'I discorsi' provides numerous examples of this approach to Bonaventure's sermons in the literature (see Fehlner, 'I discorsi,' 26–28).

understanding of a given author.<sup>15</sup> According to this approach, although different in manner of expression and immediate purpose, the medieval sermon is now seen as a valid genre and mode of theology and therefore worthy of serious theological research. Scholars following this approach are actually in much closer sympathy with their medieval counterparts in viewing the sermon as having equal dignity with theological and philosophical works composed in a scholastic idiom, and perhaps of greater practical import in the minds of their composers.<sup>16</sup>

This general scholarly increase in appreciation of medieval sermon literature is particularly important in the case of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio because this shift very clearly harmonizes with his own stated understanding of both the modes of theology and the purpose of theology. This essay, however, because of space, limits itself to Bonaventure's two sermons on the Annunciation.<sup>17</sup> This is not to the exclusion of Bonaventure's sermons on Mary's Nativity,<sup>18</sup> her Purification,<sup>19</sup> or her Assumption.<sup>20</sup> These other sermons are essential for grasping the way in which Bonaventure traces the main lines of his Marian portrait with finer detail and greater clarity in terms of the needs and purposes of his audience according to the given solemnity. However, it is arguable that the two sermons on the Annunciation adequately present his overall Marian vision of the mystery of Christ's supernatural virginal conception and its Marian implications. For our purposes, therefore, Bonaventure's discourses for the feast of the Annunciation have a pivotal place in terms of their themes and content in his cycle of Marian sermons, and touch upon the main points of Mary's universal maternal personality and mission that Bonaventure presents in greater detail and completion in his other sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary. These two sermons on the Annunciation lay out virtually every

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15 Johnson writes: 'Three activities defined a Parisian master of theology, according to Peter Cantor: reading (*legere*) or commenting on scriptural and theological text, arguing (*disputare*) theological questions, and preaching (*predicare*).' See Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 403. Fehlner explains that any down playing of the importance of Bonaventure's sermon literature for understanding his thought is severely misguided because of the inherently sapiential and practical nature of Bonaventure's theological approach. See Fehlner, 'I discorsi,' 27–28.

16 As noted in the immediately preceding footnote, Bonaventure preached in a theological milieu governed by Peter Cantor's view that preaching is an integral part of the responsibilities of a master of theology in thirteenth-century Paris.

17 Bonaventure, *SD* 2, 554–578.

18 *Ibidem*, 679–684.

19 *Ibidem*, 517–554.

20 *Ibidem*, 641–679.

key theme in Bonaventure's Mariology regarding Mary's exemplary purity and holiness as well as the nature of her role and activity in the incarnate, redemptive, and sacrificial mission of the Son and the grace-filling mission of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup>

## 2 Scope and Method of This Essay

In terms of scope, this paper's focus will be almost exclusively upon the content of the aforementioned Marian sermons. Rather, however, than make the mistake opposite of earlier times by failing to incorporate Bonaventure's scholastic texts, his sermons will be read in concert with his more 'scientific' texts, allowing the differing modes of expression to both mutually illumine and mutually clarify one another. Thus, in terms of method, key principles from Bonaventure's scholastic writings will be first presented and then presupposed and employed in analyzing the meaning and implication of his sermons. I intend, therefore, to interpret and apply Bonaventure's preached statements in harmony with his argued positions. To this end I will first provide what I believe to be Bonaventure's relevant governing theological principles found in his scholastic writings in order to make clearer the nature and purpose of his sermonizing as such. This is an important first step, I believe, because for Bonaventure the sermon, in terms of his own theological convictions, is, arguably, the culmination of academic or 'proper' theology.

### 2.1 *Bonaventure's Sources for His Marian Sermons*

Since they were first collected and published together in 1901, Bonaventure's sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary have been the subject of many scholarly studies. Scholarly research on these sermons was most intense between 1921 and 1966.<sup>22</sup> The topics of research regarding the twenty-four sermons initially included in the Quaracchi edition mainly dealt with the authenticity and integrity of the twenty-four sermons or their theological content.<sup>23</sup> Modern research into Bonaventure's Marian homiletical corpus, based upon Jacques Guy Bougerol's 1993 critical edition of Bonaventure's *Sermons de diversis*, now

21 While Bonaventure's sermons on the Purification and Assumption go into greater depth and detail on the precise nature of Mary's purity and her role in the order of grace, respectively, the two sermons on the Annunciation provide the essential overview of Bonaventure's views on these matters. See Fehlner, 'I discorsi,' 28.

22 Fehlner, 'I discorsi,' 47–50.

23 Ibidem.

affirms only ten sermons as authentically Bonaventurian. The other fourteen sermons, based upon more recent manuscript research and/or evidence, have been excised as having uncertain or anonymous provenance, or as possessing a clearly non-Bonaventurian origin.<sup>24</sup>

Bonaventure's impressive learning is on display in his sermons, clearly demonstrating his mastery over the Vulgate text of Scripture, the extant and accessible Greek and Latin patristic corpus, as well as the most important theological writers closer to his own times. With a virtuosity perhaps unmatched, Bonaventure employs a stunning array of scriptural texts and images and is able to draw upon passages from the church fathers and important Marian writers and saints in constructing rhetorical masterpieces that at once expounds the feast being celebrated and speaks directly to the needs of his listeners. He achieves this all in his unique, synthetic vision of the whole of theology, emphasizing the *theologic* that is both informed by as well as informs his understanding of the inextricable relationship between Jesus and Mary in the councils of the divine will as realized in the mysteries of the incarnation and the Church. Bonaventure possessed unparalleled mastery of Old Testament types, images, and personages as they foreshadowed and were fulfilled in the person and work of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Bonaventure's set of patristic and post-patristic sources for his sermons on Mary includes most all of the standard authors that one would find then cited by thirteenth-century theologians. This includes: Ambrose, Anselm, Augustine, Bede, Bernard of Clairvaux, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Great, Hugh of St. Victor, Jerome, John of Damascus, Paschasius Radbertus, Peter Damian, Ps.-Augustine, Ps.-Dionysius, Ps.-Jerome. Naturally, Bonaventure was also perfectly familiar with other more recent authors and works, which, although not cited in his sermons, informed his reflections on the Blessed Mother. These include: Lombard's *Sentences*, Richard of St. Victor, Allan of Lille, to name only a few. Bonaventure also displays his impressive learning through his citations of non-Christian and pagan sources in his Marian discourses. In his ten authentic sermons, Bonaventure cites Josephus, the anonymous *Liber de causis*, Aristotle, Ovid, and Plutarch.

In general, although Bonaventure cites from such a wide array of theological sources, Augustine (or his pseudo counterparts) and Gregory the Great seem to be Bonaventure's favorite patristic sources. Ps.-Dionysius provides Bonaventure with the framework for his engagement with the notion of sacred order

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24 For a list of all the sermons no longer considered as certainly authentic, see Bougerol, *SD* 2, 424, 425–426, 428–430; Horowski, 'Opere Autentiche,' 502, 503–506.

and Mary's unique place under and with Christ in the hierarchy of salvation history.<sup>25</sup> Anselm provides key axioms for understanding and articulating Mary's unique sanctity within the context of hierarchy. And, finally, Bernard is Bonaventure's guide in preaching about the necessity of a fervent devotion and conformity to the Blessed Virgin. It is Bernard's insights that are most prevalent in Bonaventure's sermons on the Annunciation. However, the Seraphic Doctor fully integrates Bernard's Marian spirituality into a synthetic vision of Mary that encompasses and integrates insights from Augustine, Anselm, and Ps.-Dionysius into the Franciscan metaphysical-theological-spiritual key, whose melody was first sung by Mary's minstrel, the Seraphic Father, Francis of Assisi.

### 2.2 *Bonaventure on the Purpose and Modes of Theology*

For Bonaventure, philosophy and theology, faith and reason are fully integrated while preserving their relative order and distinctness.<sup>26</sup> Theology in turn, when considered according to its formal content, is speculative.<sup>27</sup> However, for Bonaventure, as for St. Francis and the majority of Franciscan thinkers prior and post-Bonaventure, study, knowledge, and speculation are not ends in themselves. On the contrary, speculation is for the sake of action, namely, a pure and holy life of worship of the Trinity in conformity with Jesus and Mary in the company of the saints. For Bonaventure, this means that study can never be carried out merely for the sake of idle curiosity.<sup>28</sup> Study, rather is both a preparation and an inducement to love of God and neighbor. Thus, intellectual labor, though a spiritual perfection, is for the sake of living a life in charity. In the first stages of his theological career Bonaventure succinctly provides the governing principle of his entire theological outlook and output. In his *Commentary* on the first book of Lombard's *Sentences*, Bonaventure, discussing the nature of theology, explains that theological knowledge is perfected in contemplation 'in order that we might be good': *Ut boni fiamus*.<sup>29</sup>

25 See Shelby, 'Bonaventure on Grace, Hierarchy,' 207–228, for Bonaventure's notion of hierarchy and bibliography.

26 See Christopher M. Cullen, 'Bonaventure's Philosophical Method,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, 122–124.

27 See Gregory LaNave, 'Bonaventure's Theological Method,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, 100–109.

28 On this point, see Bonaventure, *Letter in Response to Three Questions of an Unknown Master*, in *St. Bonaventure: Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, ed. and trans. Dominic Monti (St. Bonaventure, NY, 1994). This text clarifies that study is appropriate for the sake of better understanding scripture and preaching. However, friars break the Rule if study is motivated by mere curiosity, which stifles prayer and devotion.

29 Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, prooem., q. 3, conc. (*Op. omn.*, vol. 1, 13ab).

This brings us to a second key aspect of Bonaventure's theological method. In the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*,<sup>30</sup> Bonaventure distinguishes three modes of theology: Symbolic, proper, and contemplative. Bonaventure explains that *symbolic* theology pertains to the proper use and understanding of sensible things, including the symbolic or semiotic aspects of the physical creation, and more importantly the public profession of the faith and its creedal and dogmatic formulations. *Proper* theology corresponds to the academic mode of theology and pertains to the right use of intelligible truths. Finally, *mystical* or contemplative theology pertains to the believer's being drawn up into ecstatic experience. For Bonaventure, these three modes exist simultaneously and are in various ways mutually illuminating. They present a certain hierarchical order. While not every person will be an academic theologian, every member of the faithful engages in symbolic theology and is called to enter into contemplation. The Church in general benefits from the progress of theology proper, yet academic theology, for Bonaventure, must never be severed from the common faith of the Church. Both symbolic and academic theology are intrinsically perfected in mystical experience. Academic theology, therefore, has a practical end, and the vocation of the theologian is inherently apostolic: To articulate and preach the faith for the sake of conversion and contemplation.

When Bonaventure's three modes of theology are grasped, his sermons take on greater importance. Theology is pursued in order that we may be good, and the perfection of theology comes only through purification, illumination, and perfection, ending in mystical theology. While not mystical theology, Bonaventure's sermons on Mary are an exercise of theology proper that comes closest to the performative and transformative purpose of theology: A call to understand Mary's unique role in salvation history, that she is the unique mystical theologian who is at once mother, exemplar, and teacher of what it is to be good.

### 3 De Annuntiatione Beatae Mariae Virginis (March 25th)<sup>31</sup>

*Sermo 42: 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...' Isaiah 11:1–2.*

30 Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, c. 1, n. 7 (*Op. omni.*, vol. 5, 297b–298a). On the three modes of theology according to Bonaventure, see LaNave, 'Bonaventure's Theological Method,' 83–85.

31 All texts and citations of Bonaventure's sermons on the Annunciation are from *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermons de diversis*, vol. 2, ed. Jacques Guy Bougerol (Paris, 1993) (*SD 2*). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. Scriptural translations are taken from the Challoner revision of the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate.

### 3.1 *Introduction*

In this sermon, Bonaventure is at once dealing with how his Minorite family ought to understand and integrate into their lives the mystery of the Incarnation, the person of Mary, and the intimate relation between Mary and the Holy Spirit, both in terms of her nobility and purity as well as in terms of her role in bringing forth the God-man, Jesus Christ, in the mystery of the Incarnation and its extension through history. Bonaventure writes, 'because the mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord is so secret and profound that no intellect can fully understand it and no tongue explain it, the Holy Spirit, condescending to human infirmity, willed to designate it by many metaphors, as if leading us by the hand, so that we could come to some understanding of it.'<sup>32</sup>

Basing himself on Isaiah 11:1–2, Bonaventure highlights three key scriptural metaphors: Root, rod, and flower. These three metaphors, for Bonaventure, indicate three themes: (1) The nobility of Mary in conceiving, (2) the purity of her conception of Christ, and (3) the sublimity of her child. Bonaventure adds another theme, which (4) considers the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>33</sup>

By treating these themes, Bonaventure wants to indicate the interrelation between Mary's humility, her supernatural fecundity, and her cooperation in every phase of the Incarnation. The typological metaphors from Scripture, when rightly interpreted, foreshadow and clarify the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit in the (a) conceiving, and (b) bringing forth of Jesus Christ, who is (c) the heavenly source of all wisdom and knowledge. These metaphors, therefore, pertain to a double aspect of the mystery of the Annunciation that locates the convergence of earthly humility and heavenly wisdom. This locus of convergence is in the persons of Mary and Jesus. Mary and Jesus together show forth at once how the ladder from earth to heaven is ordered and unified in humility and fear of the Lord as well as how heavenly wisdom bursts forth from the humility of the earth and its types through the loving fear and holy obedience of Mary. Bonaventure expounds each of the four themes of this sermon by means of three typological metaphors taken from Scripture, which together total twelve scriptural metaphors pointing to the mystery of Mary and the supernatural conception of her Child.

This sermon, like so many of Bonaventure's sermons, is saturated with Scripture. Through his selection of biblical texts, Bonaventure is demonstrating that

32 *Sermo 42*, n. 1, in *SD 2*, 555–556: 'Quia mysterium dominicae incarnationis ita est arcanum et profundum, ut nullus intellectus valeat hoc capere, nulla lingua valeat explicare, Spiritus sanctus, humanae condescens infirmitati, multis illud metaphoris voluit designari quibus quasi manuducti in eius qualemcumque notitiam veniamus.'

33 *Sermo 42*, n. 1, in *SD 2*, 556.

when interpreted according to their spiritual sense,<sup>34</sup> the types of the Old Testament were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and from the beginning referred directly to the persons of Jesus and Mary. This means that for Bonaventure the Holy Spirit directed the lives, writings, and activities of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Evangelists in a manner that would show how the *Verbum Increateum* was working from the inception of creation through the order of the biblical ages to reveal how the *Verbum Incarnatum* would be brought forth through Mary's virginal motherhood. Standing at the heart of this order is the Holy Spirit.

A full appreciation, both of Bonaventure's selection of scriptural metaphors as well as his exposition of these metaphors as types of Mary and Jesus, would require an extended study of Bonaventure's theological and scriptural writings and methodology as well as his antecedents and contemporaries in patristic and scholastic theology and biblical exegesis. Here, for sake of space, we will merely outline Bonaventure's discussion of these twelve typological metaphors, which, for Bonaventure, are synthesized and summed up in another Marian image, namely, the 'Great Sign' of the 'Woman' in Apocalypse 12.

For Bonaventure, on the one hand, these types progressively disclose the person of Mary as standing in a radical and unique relation to the Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of the promises to Israel given to the Patriarchs and Prophets, which indicates that Mary is a mediating personal agent who both unites and fulfills the phases of biblical history. On the other hand, as culminating in the vision of the 'Woman clothed with the Sun' in Apocalypse 12, Mary inaugurates a radically new and transcendent phase of history and human existence by bringing forth 'from her own substance'<sup>35</sup> Jesus Christ, a divine person, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure writes:

It must be noted therefore that the mystery of the Incarnation, as designated by [these] twelve metaphors, commence from the earth of humility and stand in the sun of wisdom because 'where humility is, there also is wisdom';<sup>36</sup> and 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'<sup>37</sup> Therefore, because these twelve metaphors insinuate the Blessed Virgin and her offspring, the Apocalypse speaks fittingly of her when it says: 'A woman clothed with the sun,' namely, ornamented by the clarity of

34 On the method of expounding Scripture, see Bonaventure, *Breviloquium, prologus*, 6 (*Op. omn.*, vol. 5, 207a–208b).

35 See *Sermo 43*, n. 17, in *SD 2*, 573: 'Virgo gloriosa misericordissima, pia et devota obtulit totum substantiam suam.'

36 Proverbs 11:2.

37 Sirach 1:16.



divinity; '[having] the moon,' the changing of the seasons, 'under her feet'; and 'on her head a crown of twelve stars' because of the already stated mystery designated by the twelve metaphors.<sup>38</sup>

Each of the four main themes, according to Bonaventure, therefore, establishes an essential connection between Mary as agent, her unique sanctity, and her activity in the Spirit together with her Son, synthesized in the biblical image of the Sign of the Woman. Central to this sermon is the intimate relation between Mary and the Holy Spirit. Through her unique holiness, Mary is the source and commencement of a new phase of creation in Christ. Mary therefore stands in a double relation to her divine Son. She is prior to his humanity as being inwardly filled with the Holy Spirit, which sets the condition of the pure, sacrificial incarnation of the Word. She is also the perfect disciple and therefore mystical spouse of her Son as primary and exemplary member of his mystical body.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in a certain sense, Mary is both mediator and perfect fulfillment of the mission of the Holy Spirit because she is the human origin and therefore cause of the incarnation, whose exemplary activity, through her joint acceptance and cooperation with the sacrificial and redemptive mission of her Son, continues in the Church.

### 3.2 *The Nobility of the One Conceiving and the Purity of that Conception*

#### 3.2.1 Mary's Nobility

The first two themes that Bonaventure discusses in this sermon pertain to Mary's inner purity of mind, which purity redounds to and is signified exteriorly primarily through her virginity, as well as through her role as virginal

38 *Sermo 42*, n. 6, in *SD 2*, 562–563; Apocalypse 12:1: 'Notandum igitur quod incarnationis mysterium sic est duodecim metaphoris designatum quae a terra humilitatis incipient et in sole sapientiae divinae sistunt quia ubi humilitas ibi sapientia; et initium sapientiae timor Domini. Unde quia hae duodecim metaphorae beatam Virginem et eius prolem insinuant, convenienter de ipsa dicitur illud Apocalypsis: Mulier amicta sole, scilicet ornate divinitatis claritate; lunam, temporalium mutabilitatem, habens sub pedibus; et in capite habens coronam duodecim stellarum propter dictum mysterium duodecim metaphoris designatum.'

39 See below, 79–80, for references to *Sermo 43*. Bonaventure makes this point explicitly in *Sermo 43* on the Annunciation from 25 March 1268. He explains this double relationship of Mary to Christ and his ministry through his exegesis and application of the biblical types of Virgin Earth and New Eve. This tradition finds one of its earliest advocates in St. Irenaeus of Lyons, whose texts Bonaventure did not have, but is also found in other early Christian writers. For the patristic usage of this type, see Peter Damian Fehlner, 'Il cammino della verità di Maria Corredentrice,' in *Maria Corredentrice. Storia e teologia* (Frigento, 2002), vol. 5, 75.

mother in the conception of her Son. Bonaventure therefore speaks first of the ‘nobility of the one conceiving’ and then of ‘the purity of that conception.’<sup>40</sup> Bonaventure selects three scriptural metaphors indicating the lowliness and humility which flows forth from the loving obedience of Mary’s pure heart. First, the ‘germinating of the earth’ (Gen. 1:11) implies Mary’s most profound humility, and her reception of the ‘dew dropping from the heavens’ shows forth heavenly wisdom (Is. 45:8).<sup>41</sup> Second, the ‘rod blossoming forth’ and ‘taking root’ (Sir. 24:15–16; Apoc. 22:16) intimates Mary’s immovable and firm humility (James 4:6) in her reception of a confirming and stabilizing heavenly grace from the Holy Spirit.<sup>42</sup> Third, the ‘gushing forth of the fountains’ (Song 4:15; Esther 10:6) indicates that Mary most abundantly received the grace of charity that ‘waters the entire Church’ above all others.<sup>43</sup> For Bonaventure, these three typological metaphors pertaining to Mary’s nobility indicate the manner in which her humility bursts forth into supernatural fecundity, a fecundity that overflows in terms of its charity, a charity that religious and laity must imitate.

### 3.2.2 The Purity of Her Conception

The second theme, dealing with the ‘purity of conception,’ highlights the miraculous and supernatural mode of Mary’s virginal conception. Upon the angel Gabriel’s announcement that she would bring forth through the power of the Spirit her Son, Jesus, Mary in humble charity and faith accepted this message as the will of God. In Mary’s immediate acceptance of the Father’s will, Bonaventure notes three miraculous aspects that further characterize her virginal conception. First, Mary conceived without corruption of the flesh. Second, this conception was without temporal succession. And third, it was without libidinous delight.<sup>44</sup> Bonaventure explains that her perfect humility was the condition of Mary’s supernatural conception of the Son of the Most High with these three miraculous characteristics. He then discusses these three wondrous aspects of Mary’s conception of Jesus through the Old Testament types of (1) the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:3); (2) the flowering of Aaron’s Rod (Num. 17:8); and (3) Gideon’s Fleece (Judges 6:37–40).

The figure of the Burning Bush, Bonaventure points out to his audience, indicates that the conception of Christ neither stemmed from nor resulted in any diminishment of Mary’s integral purity. Moreover, the image of the Burn-

40 *Sermo 42*, n. 1, in *SD 2*, 556: ‘Nobilitatem concipientis; Puritatem conceptionis; Sublimitatem conceptae prolis.’

41 *Sermo 42*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 556.

42 *Sermo 42*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 557.

43 *Sermo 42*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 557.

44 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 558.

ing Bush signifies that Mary's charity was a heavenly affection and not rooted in fleshly, fallen desire.<sup>45</sup> As the fire burning in the bush did not consume the bush and reduce it to its imperfect constituent elements, but rather preserved the bush whole and entire as a conduit of the divine word, so also the divine charity in Mary did not consume her, but preserved and perfected her in order to be the bearer of the unique divine Word. In this sense, the conception of the *Verbum Incarnatum* served to further manifest and intensify Mary's already perfect purity of charity.<sup>46</sup> Her charity is that of the Holy Spirit, who does not consume or destroy but purifies and perfects.

The figure of Aaron's Rod is a key scriptural image that when interpreted in a spiritual manner undergirds Bonaventure's understanding of the biological, spiritual, and charismatic aspects of the Incarnation. The four aspects of the miraculous flowering of Aaron's Rod, for Bonaventure, signify various aspects of the perfect human nature assumed by the Word in the Annunciation. According to the biblical account, Aaron's Rod (a) 'sprouted leaves' and (b) 'immediately produced (c) flowers and (d) fruit.'<sup>47</sup> For Bonaventure this figure is a metaphor of Mary's virginal conception of perfect God and perfect man. The unity of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ, explains Bonaventure, like Aaron's Rod, occurred in the very instant of the conception of Christ's humanity. The dignity of Jesus Christ as a divine person and the unique mode of the conception of his human nature, posits, for Bonaventure, not only that the union of God and man in Christ must be perfect and instantaneous, but also that the body of Christ must be perfectly formed at conception and his soul filled with the fullness of every virtue and all wisdom. This is because 'it is not fitting for the Deity to unite itself to a soul that is ignorant.'<sup>48</sup> Thus, Bonaventure sees in the Rod a type of virginal flowering. The Rod's immediate sprouting of leaves, flowering, and producing of fruit typifies the corporal, spiritual, and supernatural perfection that Christ possessed from the first instant of his human existence. 'In the conception itself perfect God and perfect man was in the womb of the Virgin.'<sup>49</sup> Pointing out the absolute and radical novelty of the Marian virginal mode of the Incarnation and its absolute perfection from conception, Bonaventure cites and then comments upon Jeremiah 31:22: 'The Lord

45 *Sermo 42*, n. 2, in *SD 3*, 558: 'Sic etiam est duplex ignis in homine, scilicet affectionis caelestis conservans qui est caritas; affectionis carnalis consumens qui est cupiditas.'

46 See Di Fonzo, *Doctrina Sancti Bonaventurae*, 71, n. 94 on the nature of the increase in Mary of her purity-grace in the Annunciation.

47 This is a paraphrase of the Vulgate.

48 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 558.

49 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 559: 'ergo quod perfectus Deus perfectus homo fuit in ipsa conceptione in Virginis utero.'

hath created a new thing upon the earth: A woman shall compass a man.<sup>50</sup> Applying this text to the mystery of the Annunciation, Bonaventure writes: 'A man certainly not only in sex, but also in wisdom and virtue.'<sup>51</sup> Thus, Mary is radically new in her purity and virginal conception and maternity, and Jesus Christ is an absolute *novum* in the assumption by a divine person of a created nature that is perfectly formed in body and full of wisdom and virtue from conception.

Gideon's miraculous fleece is the third scriptural metaphor Bonaventure selects to illumine the theme of the purity of Mary's conception of Christ. The fleece typifies the absence in Mary of any feelings of carnal passions and her total lack of corruption in soul and body. Quoting a text he attributed to Jerome, Bonaventure explains, 'the fleece, though it be part of the body, does not sense the passion of the body; so also virginity, though it be in the flesh, does not know the pollution of the flesh.'<sup>52</sup>

### 3.3 *The Sublimity of Mary's Offspring and Christ in His Divinity*

#### 3.3.1 The Sublimity of Mary's Offspring

In the third and fourth themes, Bonaventure turns to a more direct consideration of Mary's offspring, namely, Jesus Christ. However, rooted in Mary's perfect charity and obedience to God's will, Bonaventure has taken pains to make clear that Mary was always an active and free, yet subordinate, agent in the conception of her son. The third theme is the 'sublimity of the child conceived.' Here Bonaventure touches upon the most difficult and profound mystery of the Christian faith, namely, that a virgin conceived and brought forth a 'giant of twin substance':<sup>53</sup> 'Divine and human natures in one person.'<sup>54</sup> This indicates that in the person of Jesus Christ the humility of earth and the wisdom of heaven are united. In signifying the heavenly origin of Christ, Bonaventure selects three metaphors based in biblical cosmology. The first is the 'cloud dropping moisture,' which signifies that in Christ there is a fullness of heavenly grace. The second is the 'rainbow glittering,' which signifies the beauty of Christ's supernatural wisdom. The third is the metaphor of a 'gleaming

50 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 559: 'Creavit Dominus novum super terram: feminam circumdabit virum.'

51 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 559: 'virum certe non tantum sexu, sed sapientia et virtute.'

52 *Sermo 42*, n. 3, in *SD 2*, 559; Paschasius Rabertus, *Epist. 9*, c.5 (PL 30, 127): 'Vellus, cum sit in corpore, non sentit corporis passionem; sicut virginitas, cum sit in carne, nescit carnis pollutionem.'

53 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 559; Ps. August., *Lib. Contra serm. Arian.*, c.8 (PL 42, 689): 'gemine gigas substantiae.'

54 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 559: 'una scilicet persona divinae et humanae naturae.'

star,' which signifies the uprightness and perfection of Christ's justice or righteousness.<sup>55</sup>

The text of Scripture (2 Kings 18:44)<sup>56</sup> Bonaventure uses to expound the first metaphor is meant to indicate that Christ as an infant came from Mary whose name means 'bitter sea.'<sup>57</sup> Christ's infancy is signified by the 'little cloud arising from the sea,' which, nevertheless, produces a great rain of grace that fecundates the entire Church.<sup>58</sup> The second metaphor of the rainbow has an implicitly Trinitarian thrust that corresponds to Bonaventure's anthropology of the soul possessing three powers: Memory, intellect, and will. In the first place the rainbow is a *memorial* of God's covenant with humanity. In the second place the rainbow on account of the diversity and fullness of the broken spectrum of light into a multiplicity of colors is representative of the abundant and supernatural *wisdom* found in the soul of Christ.<sup>59</sup> This metaphor indicates for Bonaventure that Christ is the source of all knowledge and wisdom, especially the knowledge of faith. The arc of the rainbow indicates for Bonaventure the need for divine illumination with respect to both natural knowledge as well as the knowledge of faith. 'Christ, the sun of justice is the cause and origin of all knowledge of the soul, namely the knowledge of faith as in a certain sense broken into rays.'<sup>60</sup> Finally, the rainbow indicates the finality of the *affective* movement through charity in drawing the soul up into contemplation. Christ is the cause and origin of 'reasoning [*ratiocinationis*] as by a ray [of light] reflecting in the middle of the arc, namely, the natural human ability [to reason] illuminated by his grace; and, again, contemplation is by means of a direct ray, namely, the excess of the mind.'<sup>61</sup> Summing up his understanding of Christ's

55 *Sermo* 42, n. 4, in *SD* 2, 559.

56 This text relates events of the prophet Elijah's life shortly after his encounter with the prophets of Baal.

57 This Marian association is easily made by Bonaventure on the basis of Jerome's *De nominibus Hebraicis*. See Bonaventure's discussion of the meanings of *Maria* in its Hebrew original, according to Jerome in *Sermo* 39, nn. 10, 12, 527, 528.

58 *Sermo* 42, n. 4, in *SD* 2, 560: 'et subito facta est pluvia magna, id est Christus infans de Maria quae interpretetur amarum mare, qui totam Ecclesiam pluvia gratiae fecundavit.'

59 On the perfect knowledge of Christ, see Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* (*Op. omn.*, vol. 5, 3–43); idem, *Breviloquium*, p. 4, c. 6 (*Op. omn.*, 246a–247b). For discussion of Bonaventure's position and the development of his thought on this question, see Joshua Benson, 'The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, 272–277.

60 *Sermo* 42, n. 4, in *SD* 2, 560: 'Christus, sol iustitiae, est causa et origo omnis cognitionis in anima, scilicet fidei quasi per radium fractum.'

61 *Sermo* 42, n. 4, in *SD* 2, 560: 'item, ratiocinationis quasi per radium reflexum in arcum medium, scilicet humanum ingenium ab ipsius gratia illuminatum; item, contemplationis quasi per radium rectum, scilicet mentis excessum.'

activity in the realm of knowledge and faith, Bonaventure writes that Christ ‘himself is the origin of faith in as much as he is the *Verbum Incarnatum*. He is the origin of reasoning [*ratiocinationis*] in the mind illuminating the intellect, and the origin of contemplation drawing the affections towards the Father.’<sup>62</sup> The image of the rainbow provides a concrete image to Bonaventure’s conferees of the beauty of the divine wisdom, a beauty manifested in a Marian mode through Christ, the Incarnate wisdom and beauty of God.

The third metaphor Bonaventure adduces to shed greater light on the sublimity of Mary’s offspring is that of the gleaming star. Quoting Sirach, ‘He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of the cloud,’<sup>63</sup> Bonaventure notes that the brightness of the Incarnation shines in the midst of a cloud of sinners, and shows forth the light of justice in all of his words and actions.<sup>64</sup> Bonaventure points out that it is the light of the star of Christ that leads us to justice and knowledge. Thus, it is to this light that believers must be conformed in order to avoid the darkness of sin, ignorance, and injustice.<sup>65</sup>

Bonaventure admonishes his brothers to learn justice from Christ and be conformed to the light of his justice, otherwise ‘they will become “wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever.”’<sup>66</sup> If, however, teachers in the Church learn from and conform themselves to Christ and so teach the faithful, quoting Daniel, Bonaventure applies the following promise: ‘They that instruct many to justice, [shall shine] as stars for all eternity.’<sup>67</sup>

### 3.3.2 Christ in His Divinity

The fourth and final theme Bonaventure discusses returns to an explicitly Marian framework. He notes that ‘as Christ, the offspring of the Virgin according to humanity, [is signified] through the cloud, the rainbow, and the star, it is well fitting that [Christ], according to his divinity, be denoted by the metaphor of the sun.’<sup>68</sup> This is because the sun according to nature is truly heavenly, uniquely influencing and affecting the natural order. Moreover, the sun,

62 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 560–561: ‘Ipse enim est origo fidei in quantum Verbum incarnatum, origo ratiocinationis in mente illuminans intellectum, origo contemplationis ad Patrem trahens affectum.’

63 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 561.

64 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 561.

65 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 561.

66 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 561; Jude 13.

67 *Sermo 42*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 561; Daniel 12:3.

68 *Sermo 42*, n. 5, in *SD 2*, 561: ‘Et sicut Christus proles Virginis secundum humanitatem per nubem, per iridem, per sidus; ita bene secundum Deitatem per solis metaphoram denotatur.’

in a sense, stands apart from the natural order. Bonaventure writes: 'There is no visible creature in any way more apt to lead us to a knowledge of [Christ's divinity].'<sup>69</sup> The sun as a visible creature has 'in itself an incomparable dignity, an invariable stability, and an inaccessible clarity.'<sup>70</sup>

Bonaventure locates three events from the Hebrew Scriptures that he believes correspond to the three noble attributes of the sun as a symbol of Christ. The first is the incident wherein the sun worked backwards ten degrees as a sign to King Hezekiah (Is. 38:8). The second is when the sun miraculously stood still in the heavens for Joshua (Josh. 10:13). The third is the opposition between light and darkness (cf., Gen. 1:3–5). Darkness is instanced in Israel's time in Egypt just prior to the Exodus, when God sent a plague of darkness over Egypt (Ex. 10:22). This is juxtaposed to light, which the book of Wisdom, discussing this episode from Exodus, describes as 'enlightening the whole world,' which Egypt effectively rejected by not freeing the Israelite people (Wis. 17:19–20). For Bonaventure, the light of the sun's presence and/or absence metaphorically and typologically corresponds to the acceptance or rejection of the light of faith in Christ's divinity and believers' adherence to and conformity to Christ through charity.

### 3.3.3 The Woman Clothed with the Sun

As noted above, Bonaventure relates all twelve of these typological metaphors directly to Mary. In Mary, earth and heaven, in a manner analogical with her Son, are united. Mary clearly is not divine, yet because of her perfect humility and purity, she is perfectly and uniquely deiform, and, thus, can be the virginal mother of the Incarnate God-man as well as the Great Sign of the Trinity, signifying in her own perfection the work of the Spirit, drawing all humanity back to the Father in the eschatological perfection of the Church. For Bonaventure, Mary, by her obedient trust in the Good News announced by Gabriel, is the exemplar of humble wisdom and fear of the Lord, mentioned in Proverbs 11:2 and by the women mentioned in Sirach 1:16: 'Where humility is, there is wisdom'; 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' This perfect humility and wisdom of soul, making Mary the antitype of the Virgin Earth, germinates, by the power of the Most High and the overshadowing espousals of the Holy Spirit, in the conception of the 'giant of two substances': Jesus Christ, God and man. By virtue of her sublime holiness and cooperation, Bonaventure sees

69 *Sermo 42*, n. 5, in *SD 2*, 561: 'Nec est visibilis creatura aliqua aptior ad manuducendum nos in ipsius cognitionem.'

70 *Sermo 42*, n. 5, in *SD 2*, 561: 'Et quia secundum hanc naturam est in ipso incomparabilis dignitas, invariabilis stabilitas, inaccessibleis claritas.'

Mary as taking on personally, yet as a public or corporate personality, the all-encompassing significance of the Woman in Apocalypse 12.<sup>71</sup> For Bonaventure, Mary is integral to and inseparable from the one mystery of the saving incarnation of the Son because she stands in a double relation to her Son as both heavenly germinated earth and the New Eve,<sup>72</sup> the first member of the Body of Christ. She acts in the origin of Christ and the Church. Mary works together with her Son in the carrying out of his ministry. And, for Bonaventure, Mary cooperates in the consummation of the redemptive mystery of his sacrificial incarnation through her acceptance of and willing offering of her Son in the fullness of the sacrifice on the cross.

The 'Great Sign' of the 'Woman' in Apocalypse 12 has four aspects which correspond to the four mysteries discussed by Bonaventure throughout this sermon. Mary (1) is clothed with the sun; she (2) has the moon (3) under her feet; and she (4) possesses a crown of twelve stars.<sup>73</sup> That she is clothed with the sun indicates that she is adorned with the brightness of divinity by virtue of both her interior and exterior purity, which flowers forth into the conceiving and bringing forth of God incarnate himself. She has the moon of earthly and temporal mutability under her feet because she is perfectly stable as the integral point of resolution and departure, uniting the mission and witness of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and Evangelists as they flourish in the Holy Spirit, through her unique mediatory cooperation with her Son in the Church's life of grace. And, finally, she has a crown of twelve stars because she is intimately and essentially located within the order of the hypostatic union, namely, she is the most pure virginal mother who is 'an order unto herself.'<sup>74</sup> Thus, for Bonaventure, Mary is most conformed to her Son in the Holy Spirit, and therefore, in an analogical sense, both heavenly and earthly. Moreover, even if Mary is singularly hierarchized by the perfection of the grace of the Spirit in her and uniquely related to the order of the Incarnation, she is simultaneously the

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71 Here we see how Bonaventure in each of his sermons on Mary, though discussing a specific Feast and themes specifically related to that Feast, sees the whole. The character of the Woman in Apocalypse 12 is mentioned in at least one of the sermons for each of the Marian solemnities. However, the Great Sign of Apocalypse 12 takes on particular significance in Bonaventure's sermons on the Assumption because, for Bonaventure, the Woman-Ark appearing in Apocalypse 12 is primarily the gloriously assumed Mary, who takes on the fullness of her mediatory role and activity vis-à-vis the Church Militant-Mystical Body of Christ in the Assumption. However, Mary, during her earthly sojourn, exercised a mediatory role.

72 See *Sermo 43*, n. 20, in *SD 2*, 574–575.

73 *Sermo 42*, n. 6, in *SD 2*, 563–564.

74 See note 4 *supra*.



sign, fulfillment, and guarantee of the eschatological perfection of the whole Church.

*Sermo 43: Theme: 'Who shall find a valiant (fortem) woman?' Proverbs 31:10. Protheme: 'Now therefore pray for us, for thou art a holy woman' Judith 8:29.*

### 3.4 *Introduction*

Bonaventure's purpose in this sermon is to show that in the Blessed Virgin and in her divine maternity we find the 'Strong Woman' sought by Solomon as well as the Holy Woman to whom all faithful must have recourse. This is because Mary is the strong and wise woman whose price (*pretium*) is sought from afar even to the ends of the earth. She is the woman who brings forth, pays, and therefore possesses the price of our salvation in the person of her divine Son.

As with his other Marian sermons, Bonaventure first emphasizes the interior purity of Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit. Of particular interest for Bonaventure in this sermon are Mary's fortitude and wisdom. Mary's purity of heart makes her perfect in fortitude and wisdom so that, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, she (1) conceived and brought forth the price of our redemption, she (2) paid this the price of our redemption, and she (3) possesses this price.

Bonaventure writes on Mary's relation to the Holy Spirit and her fullness of his gifts:

The Wise Man desiring to explain the Virgin's conceiving, addresses first (*praemittit*) the spirit of fortitude joined to the gift of counsel. This is because She, upon whom there must (*debut*) rest the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety and the spirit of the fear of the Lord, must (*debut*) be full of the spirit of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the spirit of fortitude and counsel.<sup>75</sup>

Mary's fullness of the gifts of the Spirit is posited as a debt because there is an essential order of agency in which the Spirit and Mary together bring forth God Incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit's supernatural initiative

75 *Sermo 43*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 565: 'Ideo sapiens volens explicare de conceptu Virginis praemittit de spiritu fortitudinis et subiungit de dono consilii, quia illa super quam debuit requiescere spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis et spiritus timoris Domini debuit esse repleta spiritu septiformi donorum Spiritus sancti, specialiter vero spiritu fortitudinis et consilii.'

and power, working through Mary's *fiat*, that causes her to conceive in a miraculous, virginal manner. On account of Mary's faith-illuminated wisdom and fortitude, Bonaventure is able to argue that Mary is the clearest exemplary mirror of the perfection and charity appropriated to the Holy Spirit. As divine mother, she stands at the origin of the new covenant established in Christ and carried out through time and space in the unity of the church.

When Bonaventure, quoting Solomon, asks 'Who shall find a valiant (*fortem*) woman' (Prov. 31:10), he argues that, according to the spiritual interpretation of the text, Solomon is speaking of the glorious Virgin who brings forth, pays, and possesses the price (*pretium*) of our redemption.<sup>76</sup> He writes:

Where shall that price be discovered? Certainly, nowhere except in the womb of the glorious Virgin... [For] it is not fitting for a Virgin to have a son unless he be God, nor for God to have a mother unless she be a virgin. That price, therefore, cannot be discovered except in the Virgin... Because in her son the highest with the lowest and the first with the last have been joined.<sup>77</sup>

Bonaventure understands the author of Proverbs to be commending the Blessed Virgin in three ways: (1) On account of her spiritual fortitude, (2) on account of the supernatural fecundity of her conception, and (3) on account of her discretion of salutary counsel.<sup>78</sup> These three commendations all depend upon the agency of the Holy Spirit and find a certain focal point in the Annunciation. This event, according to Bonaventure, is a new and perfect point of departure regarding the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup> The mission of the Son is to offer the sacrifice of truth and justice and thus make atonement to the Father as the first advocate on behalf of humankind. The mission of the Spirit, the second advocate (*paraclete*), is to establish and increase the bond of supernatural charity within the Church through the sacramental ministries carried out by its priests. Mary in her person and agency, therefore, serves as a point of integration, pivoting from the Old Covenant to the New, mediating the missions of the Son and Spirit through her fullness of the Spirit and

<sup>76</sup> *Sermo 43*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 563–564.

<sup>77</sup> *Sermo 43*, n. 4, in *SD 2*, 566: 'Illud pretium ubi invenietur? Certe nusquam nisi in utero Virginis gloriosae... Non decebat virginem habere filium nisi Deum, nec Deum habere matrem nisi virginem. Pretium istud non potuit inveniri nisi in Virgine... quia in ipso coniunctum est summum cum infimo et primum cum ultimo.'

<sup>78</sup> *Sermo 43*, n. 2, in *SD 2*, 564.

<sup>79</sup> For Bonaventure on the temporal missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit as also manifestations of themselves, see Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, p. 1, c.5 (*Op. omn.*, vol. 5, 214b).

supernatural conception of the Son of God. Thus, Bonaventure seeks to point out the essential and integral place and role of Mary in the inception, carrying out, and consummation of the joint, yet distinct, missions of the Eternal Son as Incarnate and the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation.

Because Mary is an order unto herself as the virginal mother of God, she is uniquely and, according to the will of God, essentially related to the order of the hypostatic union. She is therefore doubly linked, reasons Bonaventure, to the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit. By uniquely being the strong and wise woman, Bonaventure writes:

Far-off and from the last end is her price; and who possesses this price? [The price] is of this blessed woman, the Virgin, through which we prevail to obtain the kingdom of heaven. It is hers, that is, taken from her, paid through her and possessed by her. It is taken from her in the Incarnation of the Word. It is paid<sup>80</sup> through her in the redemption of humankind, and it is possessed by her in the pursuing of the glory of paradise. She herself from afar brought forth, paid, and possesses that price. Therefore, that price is hers as the one originating, as paying, and as possessing. That woman brought forth that price as strong (*fortis*) and holy, paying as strong and pious, possessing as strong and strenuous.<sup>81</sup>

Key here is Bonaventure's emphasis on the manner in which Mary's fortitude and wisdom dispose her and allow her to actively and directly cooperate in the

80 In Bougerol's critical edition of this sermon, when in nn. 15–19 (*Sermo 43*, nn. 15–19, in *SD 2*, 572–574), Bonaventure is discussing the manner in which Mary *paid* the price of our redemption, Bougerol has '*protulit*' instead of '*persolvit*.' This is clearly in error because *protulit* denotes 'bringing forth,' which Bonaventure has just finished discussing in nn. 6–14. Moreover, the subject under discussion in nn. 15–19 is precisely the paying of the price of redemption. Finally, the Quaracchi edition of this sermon has *persolvit* in each of the corresponding instances, which is in keeping with the structure and logic of the sermon. In this instance, therefore, we follow the Quaracchi reading. See *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti*, col. 6, nn. 15–19 in Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5, *Opuscula varia theologica* (Quaracchi, 1891), 486b–487a.

81 *Sermo 43*, n. 5, in *SD 2*, 566: 'Procul et de ultimis finibus pretium eius; et cuius eius? Huius mulieris Virginis benedictae est pretium per quod regnum caelorum obtinere valemus; vel eius, id est ex ea sumptum, per eam solutum et ab ea possessum. Ex ea sumptum in incarnatione Verbe; per eam sumptum [sic, should read *solutum*] in redemptione generis humani et ab ea possessum in assecutione gloriae paradisi. Ipsa procul istud protulit, solvit et possedit; ergo est eius ut originantis, ut persolventis et ut possidentis. Mulier ista protulit istud pretium ut fortis et sancta, solvit ut fortis et pia et possedit ut fortis et strenua.'

sacrificial economy of the Incarnation from its inception to its termination on the cross. Mary actively participates in the origination of the price of the redemption, the paying of that price, and forever possesses that price uniquely. Thus, we see here that Bonaventure is very clearly articulating an understanding of the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mission and sacrifice of her son that is not limited to the conception, birth, or even education of Jesus. While she truly accomplishes these things, her cooperation runs along the entire work of Christ. To Bonaventure, the mode of the Incarnation, therefore, is essentially Marian in both her consent and the Incarnation's content.<sup>82</sup> She is exemplar of supernatural fortitude and wisdom who is active throughout each and all of the three phases of the Incarnation as originator, payer, and possessor of the price of salvation and thus the Kingdom of Heaven.

### 3.5 *Mary as the Strong Woman Who Brings Forth the Price of Redemption*

Bonaventure explains Mary's bringing forth of the price of redemption as strong and holy in terms of (1) her incorrupt purity, (2) her prompt and holy obedience, and (3) her perfect benevolence.<sup>83</sup> Commenting on the progressive relationship between Mary's interior and exterior purity, Bonaventure, citing Sirach 26:19, states that 'grace upon grace is the woman holy and chaste.' Quoting St. Bernard, he writes, 'Gabriel was sent to the Virgin, described by the apostle as holy in both mind and body, not recently nor fortuitously found, but as foreseen from the ages, foreknown by the Most High, pre-signified by the patriarchs and promised by the prophets.'<sup>84</sup>

Mary's fortitude and holiness in bringing forth the price of redemption is indicated by her prompt obedience to the divine mandate.<sup>85</sup> Bonaventure explains:

The Church ought (*debut*) to have been founded, therefore it was opportune to lay the foundations, namely, the mandates of God. It was [furthermore] opportune that in some person these be brought together. This cannot be except in the glorious Virgin.... For the Virgin was not lazy,

82 See Fehlner, 'I discorsi,' 18–22.

83 *Sermo 43*, n. 6, in *SD 2*, 566.

84 *Sermo 43*, n. 6, in *SD 2*, 567; Bernard of Clairvaux, In laud. Virg., homily 2, n. 4 (PL 183, 63; ed. Cisterc., IV, 23): 'Missus est Gabriel ad Virginem qualem describit apostolus, mente et corpore sanctam, nec de novo nec fortuito inventam, sed a saeculo provisam, ab Altissimo praecognitam, a patriarchis praesignatam, a prophetis promissam.'

85 *Sermo 43*, n. 7, in *SD 2*, 567.

she did not have knowledge and fail to act upon that knowledge. Rather, she was obedient. Therefore, in her heart the mandates of God were founded.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, where 'Eve transgressed the commandments of God thereby destroying the house which God was preparing for us unto salvation, the woman [Mary] built that house and repaired our salvation' by her prompt obedience.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, Mary as the strong and pious woman brought forth the price of our salvation through the fullness of her charity. Quoting Hugh of St. Victor, Bonaventure writes that 'because the love of God singularly burned in the mind of the Virgin, therefore [that same love] accomplished wonders in her flesh.'<sup>88</sup> In explanation, he draws an analogy: 'As from the love of a man with a woman is born a carnal son, so also from the love of the Virgin with God was born the son of God.'<sup>89</sup> This love Bonaventure speaks of, by which Mary conceived, is appropriated to the person of the Holy Spirit, who is 'fervent love, fecundity, purity, virility, incorruption, and deification.'<sup>90</sup> Applying this to the Church and more specifically to the priestly ministry and clerical state, Bonaventure explains that the purity in which the Virgin conceived her divine Son also signifies that purity of incorruption, obedience, and benevolence that believers are to attain. For Bonaventure, this means that we cannot imitate Eve who gave up these three gifts through her disobedience; rather, we must follow the glorious Virgin in order to be made precious and holy. We must believe the message of Gabriel and not the message of the serpent.

### 3.6 *Mary as the Strong Woman Who Paid the Price of Redemption*

The Blessed Virgin Mary paid the price of our redemption as the strong and pious woman. Bonaventure locates this action in the passion and crucifixion

86 *Sermo 43*, n. 7, in *SD 2*, 567: 'Ecclesia debuit fundari, igitur oportuit iacere fundamenta, scilicet mandata Dei, et oportuit quod in aliqua persona esset collocata. Non potuit esse nisi in Virgine gloriosa.... Non fuit otiosa, non fuit sciens et non fuit faciens, sed fuit oboediens.'

87 *Sermo 43*, n. 7, in *SD 2*, 568: 'Eva, transgressa mandata Dei, destruxit domum quam Deus nobis praeparavit ad salutem, sed mulier aedificavit domum et reparavit salutem nostram.'

88 *Sermo 43*, n. 8, in *SD 2*, 568; Hugh of St. Victor, *De B. Mariae virginitate*, c. 2 (PL 176, 872b): 'Quia amor Dei in mente Virginis singulariter ardebat, ideo in carne mirabilia faciebat.'

89 *Sermo 43*, n. 8, in *SD 2*, 569: 'Sicut ex amore viri cum muliere nascitur filius carnalis, ita ex amore Virginis cum Deo natus est Dei Filius.'

90 *Sermo 43*, n. 11, in *SD 2*, 569: 'Quis fecit, quod Virgo conciperet? Certe Spiritus sanctus, qui est amor fervens, fecundus, impollutus, virilis, incorruptus et deificus.'

wherein Christ paid that price in order to purge, wash, and redeem us.<sup>91</sup> Bonaventure states that the Blessed Virgin at the cross was ‘present, accepting, and agreeing with the divine will, and that it pleased her that the price of her womb was offered on the cross for us.’<sup>92</sup> Bonaventure sees an explicit affirmation of this close link between Christ and Mary in the work of paying the price of our redemption in John 19:25–27. In this passage, Jesus from the Cross declares that Mary is the Woman<sup>93</sup> who has become the mother of the Apostle John and that John is now her son. For Bonaventure, John is not only an Apostle, but also a representative of the entire Church, whose first stage of commencement is the Cross and full constituting is at Pentecost. As Mary becomes the mother of John, so Mary becomes the mother of the Church by co-offering the price of our salvation with her Son.

Bonaventure links the fortitude of Mary in paying the price of her Son with the virtue of piety. He sees Mary’s piety manifested in three ways: (1) The piety of divine veneration, (2) the piety of compassion for Christ, and (3) the piety of mercy for the entire world, especially for the Christian people.<sup>94</sup> For Bonaventure, ‘piety principally consists in the worship of God.’<sup>95</sup> Thus, where Anna offered Samuel for the sake of service in the Temple and Abraham offered a ram in substitution for his son Isaac, the Virgin offered in truth her own Son.<sup>96</sup> Mary’s obedience, mercy, and concern for the divine honor motivated her to offer her Son, who alone ‘was the man able to return the honor<sup>97</sup> taken from God.’<sup>98</sup> Therefore, Bonaventure can conclude that ‘the Blessed Virgin is venerative [*venerativa*] and restorative of the honor taken from God, and [she is] the consenting mother to Christ being offered as the price.’<sup>99</sup>

91 *Sermo 43*, n. 15, in *SD 2*, 572.

92 *Sermo 43*, n. 15, in *SD 2*, 572: ‘Tunc beata Virgo fuit praesens, acceptans et concordans voluntati divinae et placuit ei quod pretium uteri sui offeretur in cruce pro nobis.’

93 Bonaventure clearly understands Jesus’ reference to his mother as ‘Woman’ as theologically linked to the other passages in Scripture where a/the Woman is spoken of in an exemplary-typological-antitypological manner. Some central passages of Scripture, along with John 19:25–26, are Gen. 3:15, John 2:4, Galatians 4:4, and Apocalypse 12:1.

94 *Sermo 43*, n. 16, in *SD 2*, 572.

95 *Sermo 43*, n. 17, in *SD 2*, 573: ‘Pietas principaliter consistit in cultu Dei.’

96 *Sermo 43*, n. 17, in *SD 2*, 573.

97 Bougerol has ‘*hominem*’; should be ‘*honorem*.’ See *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti*, col. 6, n. 17 in Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5, *Opuscula varia theologica* (Quaracchi, 1891), 486b.

98 *Sermo 43*, n. 17, in *SD 2*, 572: ‘Nullus autem est qui posset reddere hominem [sic, should read *honorem*] subtractum Deo nisi Christus.’

99 *Sermo 43*, n. 17, in *SD 2*, 572: ‘Et beata Virgo est venerative et restaurativa honoris Deo subtracti.’

Mary is strong and pious in paying the price of redemption in the second place on account of her compassion towards Christ. Here we must understand that this compassion concerns both Christ the head as well as Christ in his members, the Church. This is made clear by Bonaventure's comments on the birth of Christ. He reasons, because Mary conceived without sin, she brought forth her Son without pain and sorrow. However, Mary did experience pain and sorrow after the birth of her Son on account of sin and the need for the paying of the price of redemption. 'Whereas in other women there is a sorrow of the body, in Mary there is a sorrow of the heart. In other women, there is a sorrow of corruption, in Mary there is the sorrow of compassion and charity.'<sup>100</sup> This Marian sorrow, Bonaventure exhorts his listeners, 'must pierce [*transverberare*] every mind.'<sup>101</sup> On account of Mary's compassion and sorrow for her Son, her sorrow for sin, and her zeal for the honor of God, 'she was pleased to offer Christ for our sakes.'<sup>102</sup>

Bonaventure relates the third way in which Mary paid the price of our redemption as the strong and pious woman to her mercy and care for the entire world, especially Christians. On this point, Bonaventure makes very clear that 'the whole Christian people is the product of the womb of the glorious Virgin.'<sup>103</sup> Bonaventure makes use of the ancient patristic type of the Virgin Earth as a type of Mary. He writes, 'as man was formed from the Virgin Earth so also Christ was formed from the glorious Virgin.'<sup>104</sup> In this sense Mary, typified by the virgin earth, precedes both the New Adam and the New Eve because she stands as an originating principle both of the humanity of Christ and the entire Church. Thus, she gives birth to Christ the head, on account of her virginal conception, and she also gives birth to the whole church through her paying together with her Son the price of our redemption, when blood and water flow from the side of the dead Christ on the Cross, typifying the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Bonaventure, then, specifies Mary's place as the New Eve, the first and exemplary member of the Church, in relation to

100 *Sermo 43*, n. 18, in *SD 2*, 573–574: 'In aliis mulieribus est dolor corporis, in ista est dolor cordis. In aliis est dolor corruptionis, in ista est dolor compassionis et caritatis.'

101 *Sermo 43*, n. 19, in *SD 2*, 574: 'Iste dolor debet transverberare mentes omnium.'

102 *Sermo 43*, n. 19, in *SD 2*, 574: 'Beata Virgo compatiebatur ei maxime; sed ex altera parte placebat ei quod pro nobis traderetur.'

103 *Sermo 43*, n. 20, in *SD 2*, 574: 'Et potest intelligi quod totus populus christianus de utero Virginis gloriosae sit productus; quod significatur nobis per mulierem de latere viri formatam, quae significat Ecclesiam.'

104 *Sermo 43*, n. 20, in *SD 2*, 575: 'Sicut homo formatus est de terra virginea, sic Christus de virgine gloriosa.'

the New Adam from whose side is formed the bride, the Church, on the cross. He writes:

As from the side of the sleeping Adam the woman was formed, so also the Church [was formed] from the side of Christ, hanging upon the Cross. And, as Abel and his progeny were formed from Adam and Eve, so also from Christ and the Church [are formed] the whole Christian people; and, as Eve is the mother of Abel and of us all, so the Christian people have the Virgin Mother.<sup>105</sup>

For Bonaventure, by virtue of Mary's double relation to Jesus Christ, typified by the Virgin Earth and the New Eve, she is designated both Virginal Mother of the Whole Christ as well as spiritual Bride of Christ as a member of his Body.

The manner in which Bonaventure arranges the origination from Mary of Christ, head and members, indicates the manner in which his statements concerning her direct participation in every phase of the sacrificial incarnation as well as his statements about Mary's unique status as an order unto herself are to be understood. In one sense, as Christ is both a descendent of Adam, yet stands in a unique and principal place amongst human persons as the New Adam and head of the newly created people of God, so Mary stands, specifically in her relation to Christ, as the perfect work of the Holy Spirit in the three phases of the incarnation, in a principal place with respect to the Church. However, because Mary herself is sanctified by the Holy Spirit on account of the merits of her Son, she is also a member of Christ's body. This means that with Christ she is a unique and principal hierarch in the constitution of the church yet at the same time the exemplary member of that same Mystical Body. By framing his consideration of Mary in this way, Bonaventure is able to explain the utter uniqueness of Mary with respect to the origin and constitution of the Church, thus indicating her mediatory role with and under Christ. At the same time, Bonaventure can preserve the essential theological truth that Mary is also a member of that same Church, as the first and primary beneficiary of the perfect grace of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure concludes his consideration of this matter with an exhortation to his confreres: 'Oh what a pious mother we have! Let us be configured to our mother and follow her piety.'<sup>106</sup>

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105 *Sermo 43*, n. 20, in *SD 2*, 575: 'et sicut de latere Adae dormientis formata est mulier, ita Ecclesia de Christo in cruce pendente, et sicut de Adam et Eva formatus est Abel et successores sui, sic de Christo et Ecclesia totus populus christianus; et sicut Eva est mater Abel et omnium nostrum, ita populus christianus habet Matrem Virginem.'

106 *Sermo 43*, n. 21, in *SD 2*, 575: 'O quam piam Matrem habemus.'



### 3.7 *Mary as the Strong Woman Who Possesses the Price of Redemption*

Lastly, the Blessed Virgin possesses the price of our redemption as glorified in heaven.<sup>107</sup> This is because Mary as strong and strenuous is in glory 'fighting in a manly way [*virile, viriliter*], nobly triumphing and sublimely reigning.'<sup>108</sup> Mary fights vigorously, indicating her present activity in and for the Church Militant, and she always fought vigorously by never permitting the deceits of the serpent to enter into her heart through suggestion.<sup>109</sup>

Mary possesses that price of our redemption because she nobly triumphs with fortitude and strenuous effort. For Bonaventure, Mary is signified or typified this way by the Old Covenant heroine, Judith, who decapitated the oppressor of God's people, Holofernes, taken as an image of Satan, and caused his servants to flee.<sup>110</sup> This decapitation of the serpent occurred in Mary's own heart in the most intense and concentrated manner when she heard the prophecy of Simeon that a sword would pierce her heart, yet she remained willing to accept and approve the sacrifice of her Son for the sake of the honor of God and for the salvation and redemption of sinners. At this point, Bonaventure again exhorts his listeners: 'In accord with her [Mary's] example let us not permit ourselves to be conquered.'<sup>111</sup>

The final reason Bonaventure provides for why the Blessed Virgin possesses the price of our salvation and redemption is because she sublimely reigns with fortitude and strenuousness. Presenting Esther as an Old Testament type of Mary, Bonaventure explains that Esther pleased the King and received a crown and delivered her people. 'Esther found grace in the sight of Assuerus above all other women and he placed a diadem upon her head and made her Queen' (Esther 2:17).<sup>112</sup> Like Esther, but in an unimaginably more sublime manner, 'the Blessed Virgin because of her sanctity, piety, and sublimity has a crown of precious stone.'<sup>113</sup> Christ is that stone who also is the precious foundation stone of

107 Here Bonaventure is drawing out the implications of Mary's status as absolutely holy and cooperater with Christ and the Spirit in terms of the mystery of her bodily assumption into heaven, a theme he develops at much greater depth in his sermons on the Assumption, especially as this theme pertains to Mary's active and exemplary role in the economy of grace: i.e., the Church, the sacraments, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the faithful.

108 *Sermo 43*, n. 22, in *SD 2*, 576: 'quia fortis et strenua viriliter pugnans, nobiliter triumphans et sublimiter regnans.'

109 *Sermo 43*, n. 22, in *SD 2*, 576–577: 'Non permittas quod serpens intret in cor tuum per suggestionem.'

110 *Sermo 43*, n. 23, in *SD 2*, 577.

111 *Sermo 43*, n. 22, in *SD 2*, 577: 'Igitur ad eius exemplum non permittamus nos vinci.'

112 *Sermo 43*, n. 24, in *SD 2*, 577.

113 *Sermo 43*, n. 24, in *SD 2*, 577–578: 'Beata Virgo propter suam sanctitatem, pietatem et sublimitatem habuit coronam de lapide pretioso.'

the Church. Bonaventure explains, 'the Blessed Virgin has been crowned with that stone in the flesh, seeing the glorified body of Christ in the flesh, seeing in spirit his glorified soul and in her mind his divinity. First Christ was crowned and she after.'<sup>114</sup>

### 3.8 *The Woman Clothed with the Sun*

Mary's Coronation pertains to the glorification and coronation of the entire Church. Christ was crowned, Bonaventure explains, 'in the flesh and in mind, because he first put on flesh, suffered, and afterwards was glorified, and the whole church was crowned through him.'<sup>115</sup> In this sermon, like in the preceding, he interprets the 'Great Sign' of the 'Woman' in Apocalypse 12 as referring primarily to Mary as the exemplar of the glorious and heavenly triumph of both the mission of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Holy Spirit. By virtue of their triumph in Mary and her triumph with them, Mary becomes the primary exemplary type and prophecy of the final glorious triumph of the whole Christ, head and members, who continues her mediatory, hierarchizing work in the Church through the Spirit to bring forth Christ in the hearts of every believer, endowed with the sevenfold gift of the Spirit. Bonaventure closes this sermon with a final exhortation of his confreres: 'If we would have this crown we must will to imitate the glorious Virgin.'<sup>116</sup>

## 4 Conclusion

Bonaventure's sermons on the mystery of the Annunciation represent a high-water mark of medieval preaching on Mary's unique and active part in every aspect of the economy of salvation, bearing upon Christology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology. These sermons effectively helped set the early course of a nascent Franciscan Mariology. In two relatively brief sermons, Bonaventure ties together the most important theological themes pertaining to the Blessed Virgin Mary, setting into stark relief her unique place in the lives of believers and the Church. By virtue of her absolute holiness Bonaventure could present

114 *Sermo 43*, n. 24, in *SD 2*, 578: 'Coronata est lapide isto beata Virgo in carne; videns in carne corpus Christi glorificatum, videns in spiritu animam eius glorificatam et in mente eius divinitatem. Coronatus est primo Christus et ipsa post.'

115 *Sermo 43*, n. 24, in *SD 2*, 578: 'id est in carne et mente, quia induit primo carnem, passus et postea glorificatus et etiam tota Ecclesia coronata est post ipsum.'

116 *Sermo 43*, n. 24, in *SD 2*, 578: 'Istam coronam habebimus si volumus Virginem gloriosam imitari.'

Mary as at once the perfect work of grace and simultaneously a mediator of the grace of the Holy Spirit to others: A hierarchized hierarch under Christ alone in the communion of saints. By virtue of her virginal maternity, established in sublime holiness, Bonaventure could present a picture of Mary as the perfect co-worker with Christ in every phase of redemption, to the point of giving the redemption achieved by Jesus Christ a specifically Marian mode. Adroitly, synthesizing a vast range of biblical, patristic, monastic, and scholastic traditions, Bonaventure provides a sublime, yet immaculately balanced, vision of the Woman Clothed with the Sun of divine grace, secured upon sure metaphysical and theological bases that continues to bear much fruit in the development of the Church's Mariology.

## The Mariology of Conrad of Saxony (d. 1279) as Presented in His *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis*

*Christopher Shorrock*

Conrad was born at Braunschweig (Brunswick), an important town of old lower Saxony. In the Chronicles and in the manuscripts he is called by various names: 'Conradus de Brunwick, de Brunopoli, de Saxonia, Chunradinus Saxo, frater Saxo, Saxo, Saxo antiquus, Chunradus, Conradinus, Chuonradinus, Conradlinus, Magister Conradus, Conradus de Holtnykheri, Holthnicker, Holxingarius.'<sup>1</sup> In some manuscripts the family name is Holzinger, Holthniker, or Holtnykher.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know the year of his birth or when he entered the Franciscan Order. All we can ascertain from the Chronicles is that in the year 1247 he was already a Lector at Hildesheim,<sup>3</sup> seat of one of the older Franciscan study houses in Germany,<sup>4</sup> and in September of that year he was elected Minister Provincial of Saxony.<sup>5</sup>

Conrad of Saxony appears as one of the long-forgotten Franciscans of the thirteenth century. He has been described as a zealous preacher, a scholarly writer, and an excellent superior.<sup>6</sup> He is also described as one of the most eminent German Friars Minor of his time. Very little biographical material exists

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- 1 Jordanus, *Chronica*, para. 63, 77, 78; Glassberger, *Chronica*, para. 70, 76, 83; Adolph Franz, *Drei Deutsche Minoritenpredig aus dem XIII und XIV jarhundert* (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1907), 10f.; S. Bonaventurae, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1x (Rome, 1882), xiv.; J.H. Sbaralea, *Supplementum et castigation ad Scriptores trium Ordinum S. Francisci*, Second edition, vol. 1 (Rome, 1908), 213f; *Speculum* (Rome, 1904), ix.
  - 2 S. Clasen, 'Konrad von Sachsen,' in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* vol. VI, (Freiburg, 1961), col. 471. See De Turrecremata, *Tractatus de Veritate Conceptionis B.M. Virginis* (Rome, 1545), 125 where he indicates the surname or family name: '... frater Conradus Saxo, cognomento Holxingarius...' (cited by Samuel Giroto, *Corrado di Sassonia, predicatore e mariologo del sec. XIII*, Biblioteca di Studi Francescani 3 [Firenze, 1952], 9).
  - 3 Jordanus, *Chronica*, para. 75; Glassberger, *Chronica*, 70. According to the Chronicle of Jordanus (*Chronica*, para. 36), the first Franciscans arrived at Hildesheim in 1223.
  - 4 Franz, 2; Clasen, col. 471.
  - 5 Jordanus, *Chronica*, para 75.
  - 6 Leonardus Lemmens, 'Die Provinzialminister der alten sachsichen Provinz,' in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sächsischen Franziskanerprovinz vom Heiligen Kreuze*, vol. II (Dusseldorf, 1909), 3.

about him, and what we do have is rather fragmented throughout the various sources of history.

From the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries his writings were erroneously attributed to St. Bonaventure. It was only after the critical edition of the works of the Seraphic Doctor (1880–1902) that Conrad began to gain the attention of some historians in his own name.<sup>7</sup>

It has been estimated that Conrad was born probably in the first decade of the thirteenth century or the first years of the second decade, because we know at that time a friar had to have reached the age of thirty to hold such a position.<sup>8</sup> Of course we are not able to state this for certain, nor are we able to trace any details of his early education. We can presume that he would have learnt to read and speak Latin well enough to undertake his theological studies.

The Chronicles record that Conrad was elected Minister Provincial of Saxony in 1247 and later resigned in 1262.<sup>9</sup> They say nothing of his activities from 1262–72. Perhaps after some years of rest, he returned to the office of Lector, because in those times, those who had reached this office of teaching Theology were held in high esteem and often returned to this work after other duties. Perhaps during this time he worked on editing his sermons.

He was re-elected Minister Provincial at the Chapter in Magdeburg in 1272 and remained in this office for the next seven years, where he governed his subjects with great mercy. He would have continued to govern the Province had 'sister death' not called him. While on the way to Assisi for the General Chapter, he died at Bologna on 30 May 1279.<sup>10</sup>

7 During the twentieth century, some still attribute this work to Bonaventure. See the English translation by Sr. Mary Emmanuel OSB, *The Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Speculum Beatae Virginis) and *The Psalter of Our Lady* (Psalterium Beatae Mariae Virginis) by Saint Bonaventure (St. Louis, MO, 1932). Also Nicholas Ayo CSC mentions commentaries on the Hail Mary by Bonaventure and Albert the Great, which are probably Conrad and Richard of St. Lawrence respectively. See Nicholas Ayo, *The Hail Mary: A Verbal Icon of Mary* (Notre Dame, IN, 1994), 9. With regard to Richard of St. Lawrence, see Richardus Sti. Laurenti (pseudo-Albert the Great), *De laudibus Beatae Mariae Virginis, libri duodecim*, in *Opera Omnia S. Alberti Magni*, eds. Augusti and Aemilli Borgnet (Paris, 1898), vol. 36.

8 See also *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* vol xxxv (1942), 300.

9 See also Jordanus, *Chronica*, para 75 and para. 78.

10 See also Lemmens, *Die Provinzialminister*, 4, n.3, where he reports from an old Franciscan necrology of Limburg the date of the death of Conrad of Saxony—following the date of 30 May with this brief mention: 'Obiit frater Cunradus, minister Saxoniae.' See also P. Schlager OFM, *Das Nekrologium des Hamburger Franziskanerklosters in Beiträge*, vol. 111 (1910), 20 where it is noted for 30 May: 'Felicis Papae et Martiris. Obiit reverendus pater frater Conradus Holtinkere, minister Saxoniae.' This necrology was written in 1478.

Daniel Michaels points out that there is a monumental tradition of texts, which follow the literary genre of *speculum* (mirror).<sup>11</sup> As he will describe it, the genre that uses the title '*Speculum*' and its protocol fills a significant number of manuscript collections within the Franciscan tradition alone.<sup>12</sup> In referring to the text, the *Mirror of Perfection*, he says that the historic continuity 'within the corpus of Franciscan texts is lost, or at least incomplete, without a proper understanding of the popular and influential medieval genre of the mirror.'<sup>13</sup>

Even though the volume of medieval mirror texts is too massive to summarize, it is possible to identify three dominant categories of mirror texts that are significant to the Franciscan tradition.<sup>14</sup> These three include, firstly, mirror texts that are formed by selections from scriptures; second, mirror texts that focus on virtue; and third, mirror texts that are primarily compilations or encyclopaedic texts. As Michaels writes: "These three groups of texts share a lineage of function, following a protocol of mirror conventions. Each mirror text, while distinct, develops and applies the metaphor of mirror in a consistent manner."<sup>15</sup>

According to him, the mirror texts of this period were almost exclusively devoted to the formation of virtue, in so far as 'they followed the Victorine mirror tradition of presenting a moral code to be followed (mirrored) by the reader, with the intention of again echoing, "who you are," and "who you should be".'<sup>16</sup>

There are many instances throughout the *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* when Conrad calls upon the reader to look upon or gaze upon the example and virtues of Mary, who is most worthy of imitation. For example, Conrad writes: 'Mary is indeed famous for her praiseworthy virtues and example, more

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- 11 Daniel T. Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' in *Francis of Assisi: History, Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents*, ed. Jay M. Hammond (Hyde Park, N.Y., 2004), 250. Although this article deals specifically with a particular Franciscan document, namely, the *Mirror of Perfection*, Michaels offers a number of valuable insights into the medieval genre of mirror (*speculum*). For more information on the function of texts entitled 'mirror' he refers the reader to the above-cited article by Rita Mary Bradley. For the development of the mirror metaphor in spiritual literature, he refers to Margot Schmidt, 'Miroir,' in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique: Doctrine et Histoire*, vol. 10 (Paris, 1980), 1290–1303. For a partial index of medieval Latin mirror texts see the appendix of Herbert Grabes, *Speculum, Mirror and Looking Glass, Kontinuität und Originalität der Spiegelmetapher in den Buchtiteln des Mittelalters und der englischen Literatur des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1973), 246–351.
- 12 Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' 251.
- 13 Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' 251.
- 14 Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' 251.
- 15 Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' 251.
- 16 Michaels, '*Speculum: Form and Function in the Mirror of Perfection*,' 255.

famous for her unspeakable mercies and gifts, most famous for her wonderful graces and privileges. What is more wonderful than to be mother and virgin and to be the Mother of God?<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Conrad calls the reader to gaze upon the example of Mary in order to be able to faithfully persevere in good works and thus resist evil: 'Then he will work as from the breaking of dawn, when the example and life of Mary shine forth, the patronage and mercy of Mary shine forth, and we are inspired to work well. We ought to work well until the stars come out, that is, until our souls bright as stars leave our bodies and turn to the stars. Beyond all the stars is our dawn, Mary.'<sup>18</sup>

Thus, Michaels concludes his treatment of these three categories by stating:

In total, mirror texts (exemplary and instructive) reflected all of the various levels of order: Mirror of Scripture (divine), mirror of saints (heavenly), and mirrors of saintly texts (human). Augustine first identified the model of mirror in Scripture, and from this, there was a prompting to explore the nature of creation to further unlock the mystery of Scripture. It is no small wonder that in successive generations after Augustine the reflection of God became more clearly articulated, from Scripture to creation and creation to Scripture. In retrospect, it is evident that each of the forms of mirror texts supported the double function of revealing one's identity and leading one to purity of life: 'Who you are,' and 'who you should be.'<sup>19</sup>

17 *Conradus De Saxonía, Speculum Seu Salutatio Beatae Mariae Virginis Ac Sermones Mariani*, ed. and trans. Petrus de Alcantara Martinez, Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi, vol. XI (Rome, 1975), Chapter 8. II. 4, 307: 'Famosa quidem est Maria propter virtutes et exempla sua tam laudabilia; famosior autem propter misericordias et beneficia sua tam inenarrabilia; famosissima vero propter gratias et privilegia sua tam mirabilia. Quid enim mirabilius quam esse matrem et virginem et esse Dei matrem?' All citations from the *Speculum* will be taken from this source (unless indicated otherwise) and will be cited as *Speculum* followed by Chapter, Paragraph, and page; English translations unless otherwise noted will be taken from Campion Murray, *Conrad of Saxony, The Angel's Greeting to Mary* (unpublished manuscript used with permission of the translator) and cited as 'Murray' followed by page. See also Murray, 52.

18 *Speculum*, Chapter 9, II, 4, 350: 'Tunc quasi ab ascensu aurorae operamur, quando irradiante exemplo et vita Mariae, quando irradiante patrocinio et misericordia Mariae, ad bene operandum incitatur. Bene autem operari debemus, donec egrediantur astra, hoc est, donec animae nostrae lucidae tamquam astra, exeuntes de corporibus evolent ad astra, sed super omnia astra iam egressa vel adhuc egressura ad astra spendidissimum astrum est aurora nostra Maria'; Murray, 64f.

19 *Speculum*, 256f.

Conrad's *Speculum* stands within the traditional parameters of Medieval *specula*, whose origin is rooted in the basic tradition of Christian Platonism. As Peregrinus set out in the *Speculum Virginum*, maidens look into mirrors to see whether there is an increase or decrease in their beauty, but Scripture is the mirror from which they can learn how they can please their eternal Spouse. In this mirror, they can find themselves and what they ought to perform.<sup>20</sup> Medieval *specula*, however, are not simply clear glass in which one's own reflection is visible. They already contain an image against which to compare one's own appearance. Conrad's *Speculum* praises an image of the Blessed Virgin and encourages readers to copy it.

Even a superficial glance at the evidence provided by Martinez reveals the wealth of manuscripts, 247 in all, in which the works of Conrad are contained.<sup>21</sup> The relatively recent work by Felice Accrocca explores the theological tradition in which Conrad works and expounds his Mariology.<sup>22</sup>

## 1 *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis*

Conrad wrote the *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* during the thirteenth century, which is indicated by some manuscripts and by the text itself. He writes: 'The first mercy of Mary was while she was yet living on earth; the last instance is what she has now shown from heaven for more than one thousand two hundred years.'<sup>23</sup> Martinez indicates that it was probably written between 1262 and 1272, the years in which Conrad was free from the office of Provincial of Saxony and probably returned to the office of Lector. It certainly had to have been written after 1257, the year of composition of the *Breviloquium* of St. Bonaventure,<sup>24</sup> which is cited by Conrad in the *Speculum*,<sup>25</sup> and also probably after 1264, the year of the institution of the office of *Corpus Christi*,<sup>26</sup> which was

20 Arthur Watson, 'The *Speculum virginum* with Special reference to the Tree of Jesse,' in *Speculum* 3 (1928), 445–469.

21 Martinez, 95–113; for a special treatment of manuscripts of the *Speculum*, see 113–133, 577–579.

22 See also Corrado di Sassonia, *Commento all'Ave Maria*, Felice Accrocca, Traduzione di Modestino Cerra, Edizione PIEMME (1998).

23 *Speculum*, Chapter 12, III, p. 403: 'Prior Mariae misericordiam fuit quam exhibuit dum adhuc viveret in mundo; posterior autem eius misericordia est, quam iam amplius quam per mille duecentos annos exhibuit de caelo'; Murray, 80.

24 Martinez, 63.

25 See *Speculum*, Chapter 6, IV, 2, 259, especially n. 32; Murray, 38.

26 The office of *Corpus Christi* was instituted by the Bull *Transiturus* of Urban IV on 11 July 1264 and attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas. See T. Bertamini, 'La Bolla "Transiturus" e



also cited by Conrad.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, according to Martinez it seems that the best assumption is approximately between the years 1264 and 1270.<sup>28</sup>

Based on phrases taken from the Angel's greeting to Mary, Conrad has written an exhortation to praise Mary, which he expands into a comprehensive theology of the Blessed Virgin composed in the literary form of a *speculum*. The work is a product of its time adopting an interpretation of Scripture which predominantly used a spiritual interpretation of the text. In it, he expounds etymology and prophetic figures and symbols, citing traditional authorities from the Fathers right down to contemporary scholars both as confirmation of his Scriptural interpretations and taking up a presentation of dogmatic themes in which exegesis was complimented by philosophical disciplines, an approach being developed by masters at the universities, notably the Mendicants.

The work makes a special contribution to our knowledge of the development of what we know today as Mariology. It remains within the common framework of Marian teaching of the day, an area which received a substantial boost following the work of St. Bernard in particular, and has much in common with the technical presentation of its material with the work of Richard of St. Lawrence. However, Conrad is also his own man, and there are significant contrasts in both his understanding and presentation of the material with which he deals. Finally, while he has a deep respect for the Fathers and the masters of Monastic theology who went before him, he is also a child of the scholastic system in which he received his education, as is evidenced by the logic of his divisions and subdivisions of the material. For example, in his classification of the virtues, he follows a line of logic which, although it can be traced back to Ambrose of Milan and his funeral oration over the body of his brother Satyrus, did not develop into a rigorous and thorough doctrine of the cardinal and moral virtues for another millennium in the universities.

Another development saw a shift in the interpretation of the Song of Songs from an understanding of the bride being the Church, according to some of the Fathers, to the bride being Mary, which is clear in Conrad's *Speculum*, and many devotional as well as didactic works of the time.<sup>29</sup>

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l'Ufficio del "Corpus Domini" secondo il codice di S. Lorenzo di Bognano,' in *Aevum* 42 (1968), 29–58.

27 See *Speculum*, Chapter 14, 3, 452 (especially n. 27); Murray, 94.

28 Martinez, 63.

29 Kim Power has explored this with respect to the *Speculum virginum*. See Kim E. Power 'From Ecclesiology to Mariology: Patristic Traces and Innovation in the *Speculum virginum*,' in *Listen Daughter: The Speculum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York, 2001), 85–110.

Conrad has taken the Angel's greeting to Mary, as found in the Gospel of Luke, and developed the five statements of that greeting throughout the eighteen chapters or lessons of his Marian treatise the *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis*.

These five statements form the first part of the traditional Catholic prayer known as the 'Hail Mary':

Hail [Mary],<sup>30</sup>  
 full of grace,<sup>31</sup>  
 the Lord is with you,<sup>32</sup>  
 blessed are you among women,<sup>33</sup>  
 and blessed is the fruit of your womb.<sup>34</sup>

During the Middle Ages, there appears to have been a particular surge in Marian devotion. In fact, as Luigi Gambero notes, 'the thirteenth century saw a continued climate of lively interest in Marian doctrine and devotion.'<sup>35</sup> He further notes that:

A particular stimulus to the study of Marian theology and the practice of devotion toward the Mother of God came from the new mendicant orders. The Franciscans, Dominicans, Servites, and Carmelites, even while considering themselves primarily committed to the spirit of their vocation and the choice of the most radical evangelical life, did not excuse themselves from the responsibility to contribute to theological debate, especially through the works of their members best prepared for this task.<sup>36</sup>

With this in mind, Gambero points out, we must recognize 'that the scholars who made the most valuable contribution to the advancement of theological learning in this time were predominantly religious members of mendicant orders.' Ellington also notes, 'It was the Franciscans, who, from the beginning, made the most lasting contributions to popular Marian piety in the thirteenth

30 Lk. 1: 28: 'Ave.'

31 Lk. 1: 28: 'gratia plena.'

32 Lk. 1:28: 'Dominus tecum.'

33 Lk. 1:28: 'benedicta tu in mulieribus.'

34 Lk. 1:42: 'et benedictus fructus ventris tui.'

35 Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco, 2005), 195.

36 Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 195.

century.<sup>37</sup> As such, we find ‘Franciscan and Dominican masters making an enormous contribution to bringing Scholasticism to maturity.’<sup>38</sup>

Graef also indicates that it was about this time that the Angelus became a popular devotion, though in a more primitive form than today. She states: ‘Its practice originated with the Franciscans; at their general chapter, held at Assisi in 1269, the preachers were instructed to tell the people to say the *Hail Mary*—still in its short form—in the evening, at the threefold ringing of the bell.’<sup>39</sup>

Conrad was doubtless a part of this mendicant tradition and, in line with the General Chapter of his Order, comments on the Hail Mary. However, he depends for the most part on Benedictines, Cistercians, or Canons as his authorities and does not refer to works by his brother Franciscans. He ‘is faithful to the tradition of the Church and is fond of quoting or frequently referring to authors who lived in the century before him, such as Bede, Ambrose Autpert, Anselm, Peter Damian, the pseudo-Jerome and the pseudo-Augustine of the treatises on the Assumption and Bernard.’<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the *Speculum* Conrad recognizes various titles and roles of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As Graef notes: ‘He calls her Help, Mediatrix, Advocate of human beings before God, higher in dignity and power than all angelic and earthly beings, Associate of the Redeemer in the work of salvation, Mistress of heaven and earth, and universal Mother of the faithful. But he is content especially to extol the greatness, the dignity, and the holiness of the Mother of God.’<sup>41</sup>

The *Speculum* has been held in great esteem and recognised as ‘a work that is noteworthy, most devout, very famous, and very pious.’<sup>42</sup> The ‘*Speculum* was

37 Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 28.

38 Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 195f. Gambero further states ‘The magnificent phenomenon known as Scholasticism took its first steps with Anselm of Canterbury and produced its finest fruits in the *summae theologicae*, those amazing cathedrals of religious knowledge. Because of the untiring labours and efforts of the mendicant friars, Marian doctrine became able to take its place within the newly devised structure and division of the theological disciplines that had been worked out according to the new scientific method of Scholasticism’ (see *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 196).

39 Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols (New York, 1963; combined edition, 1985), vol. 1, 308. See also Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul*, 29. Perhaps it was this Chapter of 1269 that promoted Conrad to write his *Speculum*.

40 Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, vol. 1, 216f.

41 Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, vol. 1, 217.

42 See also De Turrecremata, *Tractus de veritate Conceptionis B. Mariae Virginis* (Rome, 1545), 125; see also P.A. Spinelli, *Maria Deipara thronus Dei*, (Naples, 1613), Admonitio ad lectorem, n. 2; Hurter, *Nomenclator literarius theologiae catholicae* vol. II, col. 451, n. 237

extremely popular in the later Middle Ages, as is proved by the 173 manuscripts of it (between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries) still extant.<sup>43</sup> Anne L. Clark adds to this number and notes that ‘Conrad’s rationale for Marian veneration became well known in the later Middle Ages: There are 247 extant manuscripts of his work with provenances from across Western Europe.’<sup>44</sup> She further adds that:

Marian devotion during the later Middle Ages is often traced back to new expressions of intimate prayer and meditation that developed in Benedictine and then Cistercian monasteries, and were taken up with great fervor by Franciscan and Dominican preachers who introduced this piety into lay practice.<sup>45</sup>

With this in mind, we can perhaps see why the *Speculum* has also been called a masterpiece of medieval Marian literature widely circulated among the faithful.<sup>46</sup> Tozzetti describes the work as a magnificent synthesis of Catholic thought about the Virgin; a small summary of Marian mystical theology.<sup>47</sup> As she writes:

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(Oeniponte, 1906). This recognition is also supported by the large number of manuscripts found and the widespread distribution of these.

43 Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, vol. 1, 291.

44 See Anne L. Clark, ‘The Cult of the Virgin Mary and Technologies of Christian Formation in the Latter Middle Ages,’ in *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*, ed. John Van Engen (Grand Rapids, MI, 2004), 224f. Clarke notes that the issue of the relationship between devotion to Mary and devotion to God ‘elicited various responses from medieval Christians. To some the affective outpouring of devotion to Mary was not understood as detracting from God but was itself praise of God’ (224). Conrad asserted this view in his *Speculum*. She also notes, ‘The equivalence between praising Christ and Mary is also asserted in Bernard of Clairvaux, *De laudibus virginis matris*, Homily 4, Chap. 1, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais (Rome, 1966), 4,46’ (n. 3, 225). She also states that everyone did not accept this equivalence; see Anne L. Clark, ‘An Ambiguous Triangle: Jesus, Mary, and Gertrude of Helfta,’ in *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* 1 (2000), 37–56.

45 Clark, ‘The Cult of the Virgin Mary,’ 225.

46 A. Berthautier, *Historie de Saint Bonaventure* (Paris, 1858), 311: ‘C’est un des plus beaux ouvrages composées à la louange de Marie; anssi est-il devenu un des livres les plus populaires du moyen-âge, et comme le manuel où les serviteurs de la Mere de Dieu aimaient à apprendre les faveurs dont elle fut comblée.’ See also F. De Sessevale, *Histoire générale de l’Ordre de Saint François*, vol. 1, (Le Puy-en-Velay, 1937), 376: ‘En dix-huit leçons il commente la Salutation angélique avec tant de doctrine et d’onction, qu’on se demande si le moyen-âge a produit une plus belle oeuvre sur ce sujet.’

47 As cited by Giroto, *Corrado di Sassonia*, 133.

Intimately related to prayer was the strong cultivation of Marian devotion in preaching and teaching. Teaching about Mary took place in many settings. The most obvious we have already encountered: The instruction and explanation of the Ave Maria by parish clergy. Treatises dedicated to this task, such as that of Conrad of Saxony, began to appear in the thirteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

One criterion of the value of the *Speculum* is its popularity as a manual of piety. Although the work never reaches into mysticism or touches on spiritual experiences, it was used by contemplatives to assist them with their spiritual exercises. At the time of the Reformation when Church structures were under review and spiritual experience highly valued by the Capuchins, who claimed to implement the contemplative aspect of the Franciscan charism, they published an edition of the *Speculum* and used it widely. Christoforo da Verucchio, known as the Verucchino (+ 1630), a Conventual friar who joined the Capuchin Reform in Bologna and became one of the most popular preachers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and who wrote extensively regarding instructions for following spiritual exercises, drew from Conrad's *Speculum* in his work on how to recite the Hail Mary with devotion. His interpretation of the triple woe of the Book of Revelation, which we shall consider later in this study, is taken from Chapter 2 of the *Speculum*.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, *specula* were used widely as handbooks to educate practitioners and served as a reference against which to check one's progress. In discussing the background of the title *Speculum* in Medieval literature, it should be noted that the title 'speculum' was used so widely, especially from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries.

Conrad's *Speculum* fits only partially into the limits we have mentioned above. Clearly it does propose devotion to Mary and the imitation of her virtues. However, it is also an anthem of praise to the Mother of God and a summary of Marian doctrines and can be classified as a *Speculum* even though there are uneasy overlaps with other literary styles. Classical students of Conrad's work, such as Martinez, do not approach the work as a *speculum*, and in doing so, we have departed from what has been customary. We readily admit that Conrad's *Speculum* is nowhere near as didactic as the *Speculum virginum*, for example. It is therefore a formation document in so far as it supplies

48 Clark, 'The Cult of the Virgin Mary,' 239. She also notes that for further examples of Latin texts commenting on the Ave, see Martinez, 71 (n. 42) and points to vernacular examples, 'The Cult of the Virgin Mary,' 239, n. 65.

49 Costanzo Cargnoni, ed., *I Frati Cappuccini* (Perugia, 1991), vol III/1, 1116.

material for meditation, rather than showing how meditation should be practiced. It does not touch on what is mystical because it says little about the experience of prayer or union with God. Nowhere does it come anywhere near the heights or depths of Bonaventure's *Soul's Journey Into God*, for example. But it does deal with the doctrine which underwrites devotion. It is an adequate preacher's guide for stimulating the laity towards devotion to Mary.

By way of a general introductory comment, something similar might be said with regard to Conrad's exegesis in the *Speculum*. It is adequate and it is orthodox, but it is taken ready made from others. What is original is the particular selections made by Conrad from what was available to him.

Conrad's approach to exegesis contrasts deeply with the approach of his fellow contemporary Franciscan Peter John Olivi (1248–1298), for example. Conrad uses Scripture to prove a point. The Hail Mary, as it appears in Luke's Gospel, serves to demonstrate Mary's privileged position in the economy of salvation. It produces an emotion of wonder in the audience and assures them of powerful intercession in all their needs. Peter John Olivi sees the word of God as an invitation to become involved in a dialogue with God. He begins by insisting on a fundamental disposition within the one who hears the word of God: '*Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus* (Ps. 45:11).'<sup>50</sup> In fact this is quite similar to the opening Psalm verse of the *Speculum virginum*, 'Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear...'<sup>51</sup> Olivi goes on to say:

And firstly, it invites us to the orienting and preparatory act of contemplation, which is perfect discontinuity and abdication of distracting impediments to the contemplation of God, it does this saying 'Be still.' Secondly it invites to an important, inner and specific act, saying, 'see.' Thirdly by this invitation its principal and most glorious object is specified adding: 'That I am God.'<sup>52</sup>

Olivi goes on to note that there are seven motivating factors associated with this activity. It must be performed out of strong necessity, for practical

50 'Be still and see that I am God' (Vulgate).

51 Ps 44:11. *Speculum virginum* (CCGM 5 [1990]).

52 David Flood, O.F.M. and Gedeon Gál, O.F.M., eds. *Peter John Olivi On The Bible, Principia Quinque In Sacram Scripturam: Postilla in Isiam et in I Ad Corinthios* (St Bonventure, N.Y., 1997), 20: 'Et primo nos invitat ad contemplationis actum dispositivum et praeambulum, qui est perfecta intermissio et abdicatio impedimentorum distrahentium a clara contemplatione Dei, et hoc facit dicens; "Vacate". Secundo invitat ad actum substantialem et intrinsecum atque specificum, dicens: "Videte". Tertio invitando specificat eius obiectum principalissimum et gloriosissimum, subdens: "quoniam ego sum Deus"'

effectiveness, out of the ardour of charity, produce sweet contentment, establish the natural order of things, follow an official version of Scripture, and end in the perfection of all hierarchies.<sup>53</sup> In other words, the one who seeks must do so impelled by a necessity to find a practical solution in charity which will bring peace and contentment in the natural course of events based on an authoritative text that applies to any level of life. This is an invitation to find inner unity and peace in a practical way through hearing the word of God. This approach is much closer to the '*lectio divina*' of monastic days than to the rather more objective approach to the Word of God developing in scholastic classrooms.

Conrad seems to stand astride the time of the '*lectio divina*' and systematic theology while resisting an emotional presentation of Marian doctrines. He is setting out points to be preached to the people without being overly emotional.

Perhaps one example to illustrate how critically selective Conrad is of his sources is to consider his attitude towards his fellow Franciscan, Bonaventure. There is certain ambivalence in the respect he shows towards Bonaventure's method of interpreting Scripture according to the four traditional senses and his rejection of certain applications of this method. Among the rewards given to Mary both on earth and in heaven, Conrad and Bonaventure record three gifts. Conrad identifies them as marvellous knowledge (*mirae cognitionis*), wonderful delight (*mirae dilectionis*) and wonderful enjoyment (*mirae fruitionis*). Then, as Martinez points out, he refers to Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* when saying that they are identified 'according to some moderns, [as] the gift of vision, the gift of enjoyment and the gift of possession.'<sup>54</sup> Bonaventure explains the meaning of his terms in his Commentary on Book Four of the *Sentences*,<sup>55</sup> where he states that these three activities are performed by the powers of reason, desire (*concupistia*), and comprehension. In other words, vision pertains to the faculty of reason which analyzes its object, enjoyment (*fruition*) pertains to the faculty of the will where what is seen is savored, and comprehension (*tentio*) embraces the object that has been seen and desired. While the distinctions made by Conrad might seem to be only playing with words, he explains his meaning in what follows in the text of the *Speculum* by saying that Mary's knowledge involved penetrating the depths of eternal light, and he quotes Bernard as saying that it crossed a gap and involved personal familiarity. Mary's delight is to be measured by the measure of the love by which

53 Flood, *Peter John Olivi On the Bible*, 20.

54 *Speculum*, Chapter 6, IV, 2, 259: 'secundum modernos quosdam, dotem visionis, fruitionis et tentionis.'

55 S. Bonaventurae, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, p. 1, a.1, q.5, in corp. (*Opera omnia*, vol. IV, 1009b).

she was loved by God. Mary's possession of God is to be measured by her joy as a mother feeding her child, a conclusion Conrad supports by quoting Augustine.<sup>56</sup> Such reflections on the part of Conrad are reminiscent of a passage found in the *Speculum virginum* where Peregrinus interprets the Song of Songs in the context of Mary lying beside her Son's manger. Concerning this passage, Kim Power commented: 'The author's careful combination of texts draws the imagination away from Mary the Bride to Mary the mother, crooning over her infant.'<sup>57</sup>

In spite of these contrasts, Conrad follows Bonaventure's method of interpreting Scripture and would have agreed with Bonaventure's quote from Augustine at the beginning of the *Breviloquium*: 'What we believe we owe to authority; what we understand to reason.'<sup>58</sup> Christopher Cullen observes:

In the *Breviloquium* Bonaventure presents succinctly what came to be the four standard 'senses' or meanings of Scripture as distinguished by medieval authors. First, of course, there is the literal sense of the text: In addition there are the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical. Allegory signifies something other than the literal that is in the realm of faith. The moral sense involves learning what we must do through the example of another. The anagogical concerns the eternal happiness of the elect.<sup>59</sup>

Conrad's *Speculum* is a work in praise of Mary, but it raises certain problems in that while it sits within a tradition, it makes an individual contribution in its uses of Scripture, selection of authorities, and its presentation of Marian doctrine. Conrad emerges as a member of the tradition of Franciscan preachers who has maintained his own individuality but is steeped in the Benedictine and Cistercian heritage. This is no obstacle to him being authentically Franciscan if we recall that Francis received all his early spiritual formation from the Benedictines in Assisi.

While respecting Bonaventure, he can also be dismissive of some of his opinions. He stands at the crossroads between a biblical-based *lectio divina* and scholasticism, which proposes a logical analysis of theological questions. It is a moment in the history of the development of religious thought that is perhaps represented better by Bonaventure's scriptural commentaries, which,

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56 Martinez, 260–263.

57 Power, 'From Ecclesiology to Mariology,' 93.

58 Augustine, *De utilitate credendi*, 2, n. 25; quoted in Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, p. 1, c. 1, n. 4. (*Opera Omnia*, vol. v, 210).

59 Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford, 2006), 116.



at the same time as commenting on the text, append 'questions' to accommodate both devotional thirst and logical analysis. The medium of the *speculum* does the same but in a slightly different manner. While it takes its inspiration from Scripture, it sets out norms, lists subdivisions of virtues, and caters to those seeking direction in ascetical practices. It would be presumptuous to set limits on the literary form of Conrad's *Speculum*, as this would not respect its variety as a proclamation of praise, a preachers' guide, and a summary of Marian teaching at the time.

## 2 Mariology in the *Speculum*

Let us briefly examine Conrad's Mariology and how he presents Mary at the center of God's plan for salvation yet always subject to the working of the Trinity. In order to summarise Conrad's Marian doctrine, we will consider what he has to say concerning her unique position in salvation history, his treatment of the Eve/Mary comparison, his stand on the Immaculate Conception, and what he has to say regarding her role as mediator, her role as intercessor, her compassion manifested at the foot of the Cross as the clearest expression of her spiritual motherhood, her role as spouse of the Holy Spirit, and the significance of her being virgin and mother.

Martinez states that Conrad is the last in a line of significant Mariologists made up of Bernard, Richard of St. Lawrence, and Conrad, with Conrad drawing heavily from his predecessors.<sup>60</sup> Conrad betrays no traces of dependence on his fellow Franciscans. All would agree that the basis of Mary's excellence lies in the fact that she was the Mother of God. Indeed this makes her unique in history, and it is this point where the Eve/Mary equation, so dear to so many fathers and preachers, falls down.<sup>61</sup> Mary's privileges far outweigh any defects symbolised by Eve.

In agreement with Bernard, Conrad denies the Immaculate Conception. When considering how one of the scriptural figures for Mary is the dawn, he says:

Therefore, because almost all the saints are conceived in sin and born in sin, it is well that the stars are darkened by this night. But because Christ was neither conceived nor born in sin, it is well said that the night did not

60 Martinez, 85.

61 Lee Jones, 'Oure First Moder: Eve as representative and representation in Medieval Thought,' in *Limina 2* (1996), 77–86.

see the light. However, because the blessed Virgin was conceived in sin, but born without sin, she did not have her origin in sin: Hence that night saw the dawn but not the origin of the dawn. This is against those who claim that she was not only born without sin but also conceived without sin.<sup>62</sup>

Conrad supports this opinion by citing Bernard's Letter to the Canons of Lyons, in which he says that Mary was conceived in sin because sin is associated with the pleasure of the act of conception, but later sanctified in the womb before being born.<sup>63</sup>

The Eve/Mary dichotomy came about as a natural parallel to the Old Adam versus the New Adam parallel proposed by St. Justin (+165–6) and St. Irenaeus (+202–3). It was taken up by the Fathers of the Church and used even more extensively in the Middle Ages.<sup>64</sup> Both Eve and Mary are regarded as important women in their own right because of their position of privilege and trust in the history of humanity. One is the mother of humanity upon whose shoulders the moral fortune of the human race rests; the other, the Mother of Christ upon whose consent the moral redemption of the human race depends. Conrad says that Mary was faithful because the faithful Lord was with her:

You are the faithful dove which proved to be a faithful mediatrix between the heights of Noah and the world submerged under a spiritual flood. The raven was unfaithful but the dove was faithful. So Eve was unfaithful but Mary faithful. Unfaithful Eve was a mediatrix of perdition, but Mary a faithful mediatrix of salvation.<sup>65</sup>

62 *Speculum*, Chapter 9, 1, 1, 330f.: 'Quia ergo fere omnes sancti in peccato concipiuntur et in peccato nascuntur, ideo bene hic dicitur quod stellae per hanc noctem obtenebrantur. Sed quia Christus nec conceptus nec natus in peccato fuit, ideo bene hic dicitur quod nox ista lucem non vidit. Quia vero beata Virgo in peccato concepta fuit, sed sine peccato nata, in peccato orta non fuit: ideo non auroram, sed ortum aurorae dicitur nox ista non vidisse. Hoc est contra illos, qui ipsam non solum sine peccato natam, sed etiam sine peccato conceptam dicunt.'

63 See also *Epistola 174 Ad Canonicos Lugdunenses, De Conceptione S. Mariae* (SBO, VII:388–393). For an English translation, see 'Letter 215: To the Canons of the Church of Lyons,' in *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Bruno Scott James (London, 1953), 289–293.

64 Th. Camelot, O.P. 'Marie la nouvelle Ève, dans la patristique grecque du Concile de Nicée à Saint Jean Damascene,' in *Etudes Mariales* 12 (1954), 172 ff.

65 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 11, 3, 304f.: 'Tu enim es illa fidelissima columba Noe, quae inter summum Noe et mundum spirituali diluvio submersum, mediatrix fidelissima exstitisti. Corvus infidelis fuit. Sic et Eva infidelis, Maria vero fidelis inventa est. Eva infidelissima mediatrix perditionis, Maria vero fidelissima mediatrix salutis fuit.'

The two women soon became more than individuals and subsequent literature saw them as symbols. Lee Jones has examined a strain of literature in the Middle Ages in which 'Eve's flaws were not perceived as those of an individual, but as those of a gender.'<sup>66</sup> For such authors, every woman was foolish, fickle, and a temptress.<sup>67</sup> Conrad does not contribute to such literature for two reasons, firstly because he moves away from considering the status or position of the two women and develops his points against the practice of the seven virtues which are contrary to the seven vices, and secondly he praises many valiant women who appear in the Old Testament as prophetic figures of Mary. Both Richard in the *De laudibus* and Conrad in the *Speculum* treat the Eve/Mary dichotomy at the level of morality.<sup>68</sup> Neither author appears to be very interested in dwelling on the status of these two women. Richard simply notes in passing: 'Just as Eve is called the mother of all the living by natural life, Mary is the mother of all the living by the life of grace.'<sup>69</sup>

Conrad compares Eve and Mary by contrasting the Capital Sin of gluttony to its opposing virtues of sobriety, abstinence, and moderation:

Sixthly, let us pay attention, dearly beloved, how blessed Mary is for her sobriety against gluttony. For the gluttonous are cursed, as is apparent from the gluttony of our first parents, because of which, both they and the whole human race incurred a curse. Mary obtained the blessing of abstinence and temperance against this curse of gluttony... For just as Eve's gluttony produced a curse not only in her soul but in her body, she incurred not only a spiritual curse, but also a physical curse, so also Mary's temperance not only produced a blessing in her soul, but also in her body, not only a spiritual blessing, but also a physical [blessing]. For Eve's curse of gluttony was to give birth in pain, Mary's blessing of temperance was to give birth without pain.<sup>70</sup>

66 Jones, 'Oure First Moder,' 78.

67 Alcuin Blamines, ed., *Women Defamed and Women Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1992), offers an overview of texts in this tradition.

68 Giovanni M. Colasanti OFM Conv., 'Il parallelismo Eva-Maria nel «De Laudibus B.V.M.» di Riccardo da San Lorenzo,' in *Marianum* 21 (1959), 222–230.

69 *De laudibus*, Book VI, Chapter 1, 12, 372: 'sicut Heva dicta est mater omnium vivientium vita naturae (Gen. 3, 20), sic Maria mater omnium viventium vita gratiae.' Barré states that the expression "mother of all the living" became popular in the West in the twelfth century. H. Barré, 'La nouvelle Eve dans la pensée médiévale d'Ambroise Autpert au pseudo-Albert,' in *Etudes Mariales* 14, (1956), 1–26. The article contains an inventory of medieval texts.

70 *Speculum*, Chapter 13, 6, 431f.: 'Sexto, audiamus, carissimi, quomodo benedicta sit Maria pro sobrietate contra gulam. Gulosi namque maledicti sunt, sicut patet in gula primorum

Conrad demonstrates that he is fully abreast of contemporary scholastic learning when he contrasts the virtues of Mary to the Capital Sins. The doctrine of the four cardinal virtues reached a peak in its development in the Catholic Middle Ages.

In Chapter 13 of the *Speculum*, Conrad states: ‘The world incurred a curse by means of the capital vices, Mary obtained a blessing by means of the contrary virtues.’<sup>71</sup> Conrad follows the layout of the vices and virtues established in the schools even to the numbering of the ‘parts.’ He identifies humility as the fundamental virtue for Mary since it was her humility that caught the eye of the Father. He sets out the schema, in true scholastic style, and then finds Scriptural passages to back up his claims. While Richard of St. Lawrence sets his exposition in the context of the allegory of a fortifying wall and introduces the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as the source of the virtues, Conrad simply speaks of Mary’s virtues:

This is Mary, I repeat, who was completely clear of the seven capital vices, and fully endowed with the virtues opposed to these. For Mary possessed the deepest humility against pride; Mary possessed the most tender charity against envy; Mary possessed the most meek gentleness against anger; Mary possessed the most untiring zeal against sloth; Mary possessed the most temperate sobriety against gluttony; Mary was a virgin against lust.<sup>72</sup>

The introduction of the virtues and their parts by Conrad shows how the move away from pure *lectio divina* or meditation on Scripture had been influenced by the return to philosophical insights—in this case taken from politics and

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parentum, pro qua et ipsi et totum genus humanum maledictionem incurrerunt. Contra hanc gulae maledictionem Maria obtinuit abstinentiae et omnis temperantiae benedictionem.... Sicut autem gula Evae non solum maledictionem in anima, sed etiam in corpore, non solum maledictionem spiritualem, sed etiam corporalem incurrit, sic temperantia Mariae non solum benedictionem in anima, sed etiam in corpore, non solum benedictionem spiritualem, sed etiam corporalem obtinuit. Maledictio enim Evae gulosa fuit parere cum dolore, benedictio autem Mariae temperatae fuit parere sine dolore.’

71 *Speculum*, Chapter 13, 419: ‘Maledictionem per septem vitia capitalia mundus incurrit, benedictionem per virtutes contrarias Maria obtinuit.’

72 *Speculum*, Chapter 4, 203–204: ‘Ipsa, inquam, est Maria, qua a septem vitiis capitalibus fuit immundissima et virtutibus eis contrariis fuit munitissima: Maria enim contra superbiam profundissima humilitatem; Maria contra invidiam affectuosissima per caritatem; Maria contra iram mansuetissima per lenitatem; Maria contra accidiam indefessissima per sedulitatem; Maria contra avaritiam tenuissima per paupertatem; Maria contra gulam temperatissima per sobrietatem; Maria contra luxuriam castissima per virginitatem fuit.’

ethics, accepted among the scholastic masters in the universities—and how this filtered down from the classroom into preaching and spiritual formation.<sup>73</sup> Neither the *De laudibus* nor the *Speculum* are lectures, but both authors echo what they heard at university. As a part of the intellectual environment in which they were bred, they witness to the struggle to bridge what was absurdity to the Greeks and blasphemy to the Jews.

The comparison between Mary and Eve places Mary at the center of the plan of salvation. This involves a discussion of her relationship with God as well as her power of intercession. Conrad discusses much of this when dealing with the phrase, ‘the Lord is with you.’ He speaks of Mary’s relationship to the Persons of the Trinity and uses terms such as mistress of the universe, daughter, mother, and spouse. Let us now examine some instances of how Conrad uses these terms.

In Chapter 8 of the *Speculum*, where Conrad explains the phrase, ‘*the Lord is with you*,’ he describes Mary’s relation to the one God as the basis of her power of intercession, for Mary is the mistress of the universe, the mistress of humanity, the daughter of the Father, the mother of the Son, the spouse of the Holy Spirit, and the handmaid of the Trinity:

The Father is the Lord of whom Mary is the noble daughter; the Son is Lord of whom Mary is the worthy mother; the Holy Spirit is the Lord of whom Mary is the gracious spouse; the Lord who is three and one of whom Mary is the obedient handmaid.<sup>74</sup>

Conrad calls Mary spouse or bride in his treatment of her being free from fault, and as a Scriptural basis, he uses the Song of Songs 4:11–12.<sup>75</sup> The main aspect in the spousal relationship that is of interest to Conrad is that of intimacy or union and that is why we also find him treating this title when considering the phrase ‘the Lord is with you.’ Mary’s pure soul was the garden and paradise of the Holy Spirit. He supports this by invoking the passage in which the Song of Songs refers to the enclosed garden. Whereas this metaphor is often interpreted as signifying the religious cloister or a place of separation from the world,

73 See also R.E. Houser, trans., *The Cardinal Virtues: Aquinas, Albert and Philip the Chancellor* (Toronto, 2004).

74 *Speculum*, Chapter 8,4, 312: ‘Ipse est Dominus Pater, cuius Maria est filia nobilissima; ipse est Dominus Filius, cuius Maria est mater dignissima; ipse est dominus spiritus sanctus, cuius Maria est sponsa venustissima; ipse est dominus trinus et unus, cuius maria est ancilla subiectissima.’

75 *Speculum*, Chapter 2, 1, 157–162.

as Janice M. Pinder has shown, with respect to *De claustrum animae* by Hugh of Fouillooy, the anonymous *De modo bene vivendi* and the *Speculum virginum*, Conrad rather interprets it to signify Mary's heart.<sup>76</sup>

The use of nuptial imagery by spiritual writers has a long and complex history. In the early centuries of Christianity, either the Church or the individual soul, as Origen argued, was the Bride in the Song of Songs. Ambrose of Milan developed nuptial imagery in the West and applied the Song of Songs to Mary as a model of the Church. Ambrose had an undoubted influence on Paschasius Radbertus (+865), who is cited by Conrad in the *Speculum* and who, with his Marian interpretation of the Song of Songs, was a forerunner of authors using this trope from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>77</sup> In the fourth century the image of the bride was counterbalanced with that of the virgin in so far as virginity was used to promote ascetical discipline through which humanity might regain the innocence lost by Adam and Eve. Tensions still remained and where Ambrose might be content to speak of the virgin bride, Augustine and Jerome were more comfortable with referring to the virgin mother.

In the *Speculum* we also find statements whose interpretation is at times ambiguous. One of the most glaring contrasts between Conrad and Richard is that Conrad uses the passage from the Song of Songs that refers to the 'locked garden' only once, where Richard devotes a whole book containing seven chapters stretching over two hundred pages to the 'locked garden' and interprets it as applied to Mary.<sup>78</sup> Conrad, on the other hand, uses the passage to indicate that Mary's heart is locked away from evil and goes on to quote Jerome's sermon *De virginibus* which speaks of a garden full of all kinds of flowers that are virtues.<sup>79</sup> The emphasis here is obviously on the ascetical rather than the nuptial. The two aspects belong together in as much as it is through asceticism that spiritual union is achieved and preserved. It is because of interconnections such as these that elements in the imagery used change with confusing rapidity. This also explains why different authors produce different applications which are both true in their respective contexts.

Like Conrad, Richard views the relationship of spouses as the deepest kind of union, yet he notes that the Book of Revelations says that the virgins follow the lamb wherever he goes.<sup>80</sup>

76 Janice M. Pinder, 'The Cloister and the Garden: Gendered Images of Religious Life from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,' in Mews, ed., *Listen Daughter...*, 159–180.

77 See Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*.

78 *De laudibus*, Book XI, 600–841.

79 *Speculum*, Chapter 2, 1, 159f.

80 Rev. 14:4.

Usually the Church or the faithful soul is the spouse of Christ. However, it is sometimes applied to Mary in the West after the seventh century.<sup>81</sup> The most obvious problem faced by exegetes old and contemporary when interpreting the Song of Songs is the identity of the lovers. Rupert of Deutz (c. 1070–1129), a Benedictine who became abbot of Deutz, near Cologne in 1120, identified the Bride in the Song of Songs as the Virgin Mary. Nicholas of Lyra (+ 1340), a Franciscan who taught at the university of Paris and was in contact with many Jewish exegetes and who had grave reservations regarding the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, insisted that the Bridegroom and the Bride represent God and God's people.<sup>82</sup> Amongst Jewish exegetes this manner of interpreting the Song of Songs dates from the seventh-century Targum, an Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew. Following Hippolytus of Rome and Origen, Christian exegetes developed this interpretation with Origen stating that the Bride might also represent the individual soul as the basic constituent of the people of God. By the time the Benedictine monk, Honorius of Autun, in Burgandy, who spent most of his time in the abbey of St. James at Ratisbon in Germany, and who began his monastic life under Anselm of Canterbury, wrote his commentary on the Song of Songs, the doctrine of the 'four senses' of Scripture was well accepted. According to this doctrine, Scripture could be understood according to the literal meaning of the text as well as its spiritual meaning, and at the spiritual level there could be more than one meaning to the text. Richard, Conrad, and other authors of their time are experts in multiplying interpretations, often by a process of word association, and in this context the bride or spouse might equally well be the Church, the individual, or Mary.

When Mary is interpreted as being the bride there are further distinctions. At times she may be said to be the bride of the Father because Jesus is the Son of Mary and the Son of God. Rarely is she said to be the Bride of Christ when intimate union with Christ is implied, since as St. Francis says, 'she is the Virgin made Church,' the perfect Christian and model for all others who are members of the Church, or when the Church, which is the bride of Christ, is described as the mystical body of Christ.<sup>83</sup> At times Mary is said to be the bride of the Holy Spirit, since it was through the work of the Holy Spirit that Mary became the mother of Christ.

81 H. Barré, 'Marie et l'Église Du Vénérable Bède à Saint Albert le Grand,' in *Études Mariales* 9 (1951), 59–143.

82 See also Richard A. Norris Jr., trans. & ed., *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, M.I., 2003), xviii.

83 *Salutatio beatae mariae virginis* 1, 'Ave Domina, sancta Regina, santa Dei genetrix Maria, quae es virgo Ecclesia facta ...' in *Fontes Franciscani*, Enrico Menestò and Stefano Brufani (Assisi, 1995), 218.

Rupert of Deutz wrote:

Therefore, the Blessed Virgin, the best member of the early Church, merited to be the Bride of God the Father, so that she might also be the exemplar of the early Church, which was the Bride of the Son of God, her Son. For the same Holy Spirit, who accomplished the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God from her womb or by means of her womb, would accomplish the rebirth of many sons of God, from the womb of the Church or by means of her womb in the life-giving bath of his grace.<sup>84</sup>

Conrad calls Mary the spouse of the Lord and supports this by citing Hosea 2:19–20: *'I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness and you shall know the Lord.'* The union here is based upon spiritual beauty since he goes on to say that she is beautiful in justice and judgment, in the mercy she shows to others, and in the faith she shows in God.<sup>85</sup> Conrad invokes beauty as a characteristic of a bride again when he says that Mary is the Lord's daughter, the Lord's mother, the Lord's spouse, and the Lord's maid servant, explaining that as the spouse of the Lord she is of outstanding beauty (*singulariter speciosa*).<sup>86</sup>

The Lord [is] certainly [with you], whose daughter you are, than whom no one is more noble, the Lord, whose mother you are, than whom no one is more wonderful; the Lord, whose maid servant you are, than whom no one ever was, is or will be more humble for ever.<sup>87</sup>

Conrad cites Ambrose Autpert, whom he calls Augustine, as saying to Mary: *'The King of kings, loving you above all as his true mother and beautiful spouse, united himself to you in a loving embrace.'*<sup>88</sup>

84 *De Operibus Spiritus Sancti*, CCCM, 24 (1972), 1829–30: *'Sic autem beata Virgo, prioris Ecclesiae pars optima, Dei Patris sponsa esse meruit, ut exemplar quoque fuerit junioris Ecclesiae sponsae Filii Dei, filii sui. Qui enim Spiritus sanctus in utero vel de utero eius incarnationis optatus est unigeniti Filii Dei, ipse de utero vel per utero ecclesiae per vivificum lavacrum gratiae suae multorum operaturus erat regenerationem filiorum Dei.'*

85 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 3, 319–320.

86 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 3, 311, see also 324.

87 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 3, 324: *'Dominus certe, cuius filia es, qua nulla nobilior; Dominus, cuius mater es, qua nulla mirabilior; Dominus, cuius sponsa es, qua nulla amabilior; Dominus, cuius ancilla es, qua nulla humilior unquam fuit nec est nec erit in aeternum.'*

88 *Speculum*, Chapter 6, 1, 2, 261: *'Te ipse rex regum, ut matrem veram et decoram sponsam prae omnibus diligens, amoris amplexu sibi associate.'*



When Conrad cites Ambrose Autpert again in respect to a 'beautiful spouse' he does so after calling Mary the spouse of the great one who consoles (*sponsa summi Consolatoris*).<sup>89</sup> He had already stated that Mary was the maidservant of the Trinity as a whole and numbered humility as a distinguishing virtue of virgins.

Following a usage most common among other authors, Conrad usually refers to Mary as the Bride of the Holy Spirit.<sup>90</sup> Hugh of St. Victor states that Mary gave birth to Christ who in turn gave birth to the Church, and thus Christ loves both equally, Mary as his mother and the Church as his bride.<sup>91</sup> Just as the motherhood of Mary became spiritualized, so too emphasis was laid on the spiritual qualities of the symbolism of the bride, particularly that of the intensity of love or intimacy presumed to exist between spouses. Richard wrote:

Just as whatever the groom or bride possess is held in common, thus whatever belongs to the son belongs to the mother and vice versa... However this situation is different from the other [similar situations] since the son owes nothing to the mother, but the mother receives everything from the son.<sup>92</sup>

Elsewhere when commenting on Mary as a wife, Richard refers to Mary as a bride of Christ: 'Blessed Mary is said to be the wife of Christ; for if every soul is the wife of God she, to whom the greatest amount of grace was given, is most uniquely his wife.'<sup>93</sup>

The fundamental quality underlying the bridal imagery in these authors, a quality also stressed by Conrad, is that of intimacy. In the relationship between groom and bride, the two have become one flesh. Conrad is steeped in this tradition, which he shares with the Benedictines and Victorines, among others, and this is quite distinct from the quality that St. Francis ascribed to a spousal relationship as he applies it.

In the Antiphon in the *Office of the Passion*, St. Francis adopts the standard interpretation of Mary's relationship with the Trinity:

89 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 3, 321.

90 See *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 4, 312; and Chapter 8, 3, 319–320. See H. Barré, 'Marie et l'Église Du Vénéralbe Bède...', esp. 67.

91 *De Assumptione Beatae Mariae*, PL 177, 1211 AB.

92 *De laudibus*, Book VI, Chapter 6, 3, 338: 'Sicut quidquid habent sponsus et sponsa, utique commune est, ita quidquid habet filius, habet et mater, et e converso ... Aliter tamen et aliter: quia non a matre filius, sed omnia a filio mater.'

93 *De laudibus*, Book VII, Chapter 7, 341: 'Beata Maria dicitur uxor Christi: nam si omnis anima spiritualiter uxor Dei est, illa praecipue uxor dicitur, in quam plus contulit gratiarum.'

Holy Virgin Mary, among the women born into the world, there is no one like you. Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King and of the Father in heaven, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit ...<sup>94</sup>

St. Francis identified the spiritual quality of the spousal relationship as fidelity. In his *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance*, after stating that the Spirit of the Lord will make his resting place in those who love the Lord, Francis calls them children of the Father and spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we have seen above, Francis gained this insight by listening to Benedictine preachers. However, he makes an application not found either in Conrad's *Speculum* or sermons. This may support our claim that Conrad was not familiar with the writings of Francis although well aware of other contemporary spiritual traditions. What follows is the interpretation given by Francis:

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matt 20:50). We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others.<sup>95</sup>

Conrad also refers to Mary as the spouse of the Holy Spirit and interprets the sweet honey mentioned in the Song of Songs 4:11 as the sweet words she spoke in response to the Angel's proposal.<sup>96</sup>

In the Angel's greeting, Mary is identified as a virgin, and in line with the theology of his day, Conrad indicates the attributes associated with this title.

94 Translation from Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York, 1999), 14; further cited as *FAED*, followed by volume number and page. See also 'Officium Passionis Domini,' in *Fontes Franciscani*, 146: 'Sancta Maria virgo, non est tibi similis nata in mundo in mulieribus, filia et ancilla altissimi summi Regis Patris caelestis, mater sanctissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sponsa Spiritus Sancti.'

95 Translation from *FAED* 1: 41–42. See also 'Exhortatio ad fratres et sorores de Poenitentiam,' in *Fontes Franciscani*, 74: 'Sponsi sumus, quando Spiritu Sancto coniungitur fidelis anima Domino nostro Jesu Christo. Fratres ei sumus, quando facimus voluntatem patris qui in caelis est. Matres quando portamus eum in corde et corpore nostro per divinum amorem et puram et sinceram conscientiam; parturimus eum per sanctam operationem, quae lucere debet aliis in exemplum.'

96 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, n. 3, 320.

He states what is probably the most comprehensive summary of Mary's virginity and its consequences when dealing with the phrase 'blessed are you among women,' since, as Conrad understands it, Mary's virginity is a blessing. He says:

You are truly blessed who gave birth to your child in such a way that before the birth, during the birth and after the birth you remained a virgin. Thus this is the main reason why you deserve to be called blessed because you gave birth not to just a man, nor, indeed, to an angel, but to the Lord of men and angels.<sup>97</sup>

Here Conrad links Mary's virginity with her motherhood and goes on by means of associations raised by the word 'blessed' to expound how she was unique among all women in being blessed by God, by the angel, by humanity, in the person of Elizabeth, being blessed in the dignity of her offspring, by becoming the spiritual mother of all the spiritual brothers and sisters of her Son, since the fruit of Him to whom she gave birth was the salvation of humanity. This line of reasoning, which is not unique to Conrad, but is the pivot around which his Mariology turns, places Mary's motherhood at the center of comparisons which elucidate her virginity, her power of intercession, her role in the Church, and her ultimate position in heavenly glory.<sup>98</sup> The elements in the argument are so closely related that it is hard to deal with one without touching the others.

Conrad refers to Mary as the center of the universe in the context of a description of how Mary makes humanity agreeable to God, and he is concerned with how Mary shows mercy towards humanity.<sup>99</sup> Conrad seems to be paraphrasing a quotation from Bernard. In this case the argument is developed by a process of logic with Scripture used either as a launching pad or a support:

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97 *Speculum*, Chapter 12, 2, 400–401: 'Vere benedicta, quae sic partum effidisti, quae ante partum, et in partu, et post partum permansisti. Et ideo praecipue benedicta dici meruisti, quia non hominem purum, non, angelum verum, sed hominum et angelorum Dominum peperisti. Propter quod bene ait Beda sic: "vere benedicta in mulieribus, quae, sine exemplo muliebris conditionis, cum decore virginitatis gavisa est honore parentis, quodque matrem virginem decebat, Deum ac Dei Filium procreavit?"

98 The theme occurs again and again throughout the *Speculum*, but is summarised most concisely in Chapter 12, 388–418.

99 Concerning Mary's cosmic role as presented in the *Speculum virginum* and high Mariology, see Power, 'From Ecclesiology to Mariology,' 85–110. In particular 96–100 treats the pre-existence of Mary as Wisdom. Conrad also speaks of Mary as being known by God from all eternity.

Similarly, dearly beloved, Mary is not only blessed because humanity was reconciled to God through her, but also because humanity was made acceptable to God through her, so that by her being blessed humanity was blessed. Thus Isaiah 19:24–25 says accurately Israel will be blessed in the midst of the earth by the Lord of hosts saying: Blessed be my people etc. The middle of the earth, which the Lord blessed, can be said to be the blessed Virgin, the center of the earth where the blessing of our salvation began according to the Psalms: God is our King from of old working salvation in the earth (NRSV 73:12). Blessed Bernard says concerning the center of the earth: ‘Mary is called by the marvellous trait of the center of the earth. Those who live in heaven and who live in hell, and who preceded us and who come after us look to her as to the center, as to the secret of God, as to the cause of things, as to the events of the ages. Those who are in heaven to be restored; those in hell to be delivered, those who preceded us to be found faithful prophets; those who follow us to be glorified.’ Therefore, in this blessing of the center of the earth Israel is blessed, God’s people are blessed, while through the blessed mother of God [humanity] is accepted.<sup>100</sup>

Before going on to consider the title of mother as applied to Mary by Conrad, let us pause to look at the title of virgin as it appears elsewhere in the *Speculum*.

When dealing with the phrase ‘blessed is the fruit of your womb’ in the *Speculum*, Conrad raises the subject of Mary’s virginal womb taking his inspiration from Bede’s sermon *Lectio quam audivimus*, which he quotes twice.<sup>101</sup> Conrad

100 *Speculum*, Chapter 12,2, 407–408: ‘Item. Carissimi, Maria non solum benedicta est, quia per eam Deus homini placabilis est, sed etiam ideo benedicta est, quia per eam homo acceptabilis est, eo quod per ipsam benedictam homo benedictus est. Unde bene Is 19: 24–25, dicitur quod erit Israel benedictio in medio terrae, cui benedixit Dominus exercituum, dicens: Benedictus populus meus etc. medium terrae, cui benedixit Dominus, dici potest beata Virgo, in quo terrae medio inchoata est salutis nostrae benedictio iuxta illud Psalmi: Deus autem, rex noster, ante saecula, operatus est salutem in medio terrae. De hoc terrae meo beatus Bernardus sic ait: “Maria mirabili proprietate terrae meium appellatur. Ad illam enim sicut ad medium, sicut ad arcanum Dei, sicut ad rerum causam, sicut ad negotium saeculorum respiciunt, et qui habitant in coelo, et qui habitant in inferno, et qui nos praecesserunt, et qui nos sequuntur. Illi qui sunt in coelo, ut resarciantur; qui in inferno, ut eripiantur; qui praecesserunt, ut prophetae fideles inveniantur; qui sequuntur, glorificentur.” In hoc ergo benedictio terrae medio benedictus est Israel, benedictus est Dei populus, dum per benedictionem Dei matrem Deo est acceptus.’

101 For Bede’s homily see *Homelia 4, In adventu (Luc. 1:39–55)*, CCSL 122 (1955), 23, quoted in the *Speculum* Chapter 14, 439, and 453.

takes up Bede's homily on two points: First, when entering the virginal womb, the Son of God consecrated it as a temple of the Holy Spirit; second, the fruit of the virginal womb not only saved humanity but also preserved those who had been saved, in so far as the seed of incorruptibility and the heavenly inheritance which had been lost by Adam was restored through it. Bede's teaching on Mary is noteworthy in as much as he excluded a Marian interpretation of the Song of Songs, which was relied on by most authors, and based his position within other parts of Scripture.<sup>102</sup>

Conrad develops his argument in Chapter 15 of the *Speculum* beginning from the fact that Mary has been blessed in her offspring because Christ is the Son of the Father but also because this fruit is generous, delicious, strong, and abundant. When speaking of the attribute of generosity, he goes on to say that the fruit of the virginal womb is generous because royal through the line of David, which Conrad traces from Psalm 131:11 through the letter to the Romans to the genealogy in the Gospel according to Matthew. His second point focuses precisely on virginity. He sees a symbol of Mary in Aaron's rod, which represents virginity and fertility at the same time. Such an event had never before been seen in history.<sup>103</sup>

When expanding the meanings of such a fruit, Conrad specifies a particular reading of the text of the prophet Hosea, which reads, *Ex me fructus tuus inventus est*, as opposed to the version which reads *Ex me fructus eius inventus est*.<sup>104</sup> He continues:

Let God the Father say to Mary, to the faithful soul, to the Church: 'Your fruit comes from me.' Yours, O Mary, who were chosen to produce this fruit, yours O soul, who were drawn to love this fruit, yours, O Church, who were gathered together to receive this fruit. Yours, I say, yours; yours certainly physically through the nature He received, yours spiritually through grace, yours sacramentally through the Eucharist, yours eternally in glory. Although He comes from me He is yours, because He was brought forth from my womb, as it is written in the Psalm: From the womb before the day-star I have begotten you.<sup>105</sup>

102 See Benedicta Ward S.L.G., *The Venerable Bede* (London, 2002), 75–77.

103 *Speculum* Chapter 14, 439–441.

104 See Martinez, 442 (n. 8).

105 *Speculum* Chapter 14, 442: 'Dicat ergo Deus Pater ad Mariam, dicat ad fidelem animam, dicat ad Ecclesiam: *Ex me fructus tuus inventus est*, tuus o Maria, ad hunc fructum producendum electa; tuus, o anima, ad hunc fructum diligendum illecta; tuus, o Ecclesia,

It has been said that all theology is ultimately about the Incarnation.<sup>106</sup> This passage comes close to touching upon many aspects of this question in so far as it approaches the election of Mary from all eternity and the roles of Mary, the individual, and the Church in salvation history up to its glorious consummation. The center is Christ, but the role of all the other elements is also mentioned. With respect to Mary, her title as virgin, which we are considering at this point, is also central. The Fathers and medieval writers, such as Conrad, considered Mary's virginity from four aspects. Firstly, the combination of virginity and motherhood was unique and unheard of. Secondly, the attribute of virginity was a model for an ascetical approach to a Christian life of virtue in which God filled human emptiness in the individual. Thirdly, the virgin became the model of the Church. Fourthly, it was important to spell out the exact doctrine of the virgin birth against the position of heretics who stated that Christ had only apparently assumed human nature. Indeed, at the time of Paschasius Radbertus (+865), whom Conrad often quotes, there had been an outbreak of neo-doceticism in certain circles of the Germanic Church that, by appealing precisely to this truth of the Mother's virginal birth, denied that her Son had a true human nature.<sup>107</sup> Modern scholarship is also interested in the topic of virginity, especially investigating how it reveals attitudes towards women, both as a fact of history and as an indicator of the attitudes of specific authors towards women.

Conrad is not writing a doctrinal thesis and does not follow through all the doctrinal points that he raises. Kim Power has analyzed the dialogue between Peregrinus and Theodora in the *Speculum virginum* when they discuss the pre-existence of Mary as Wisdom, where Mary-Wisdom is said to be hidden in Christ-Wisdom. If Mary has such an important part to play in the restoration of the dignity of humanity she should have been part of the original act of creation. The questions raised are not answered satisfactorily, and Peregrinus retreats into speaking about the mysteries of God.<sup>108</sup>

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ad hunc fructum percipiendum collecta. Tuus, inquam, tuus; tuus certe corporaliter per assumptam naturam, tuus spiritualiter per gratiam, tuus sacramentaliter per eucharistiam, tuus aeternaliter per gloriam. Ex me tamen tuus est, quia ex meo utero genitus est, sicut in Psalmo (109, 3) scriptum est: *Ex utero ante luciferum genui te.*' Translation of Psalm 109:3 is from the DRB.

106 See Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M.Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, 2000), and Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectic of Patristic Thought* (New York, 2006).

107 See Gambaro, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, 75.

108 Power, 'From Ecclesiology to Mariology,' 96–100.

The position authors take regarding Mary's pre-existence has important consequences for what they say about her role as mediatrix and her power of intercession. Conrad is quite content to state that Mary was chosen from all eternity. He cites Ambrose Autpert (+781) in support of his statement that Mary was so holy as to merit the Holy Spirit coming to her and Bernard in support of the statement that God could not have had a better mother than the Virgin.<sup>109</sup> Conrad uses the term '*mediatrix*' in such a way that, while it allows for Mary being chosen by God, does not presume her pre-existence.

In Chapter 2 of the *Speculum*, Conrad describes the quality of Mary as *mediatrix* in terms of Mary being chosen by God from all eternity to be the throne of Christ in heaven, a throne which is surrounded with light forever in contrast to the eternal darkness to which condemned souls are banished in hell.<sup>110</sup> Conrad uses the term again in Chapter 8 where he compares Mary to the dove released by Noah from the ark, a dove which returned faithfully to indicate that those on board were now safe. He also contrasts Mary's fidelity to the infidelity of Eve in this same passage.<sup>111</sup> In both passages, Mary is cast as protecting humanity from evil and as being close to God but not pre-existent.

Conrad interprets 'dawn' as symbolizing Mary in as much as he contends that dawn is the time between darkness and daylight, and consequently Mary stands between God and humanity.<sup>112</sup> Once again the sense is that of protection as Mary shields humanity from the blazing sun of God's just anger, which according to Conrad burns strongly on earth, more strongly at judgment and strongest of all in hell. Conrad uses the image of the dawn to signify Mary again in his *Fourth sermon on the Assumption*.<sup>113</sup>

In his use of the term '*mediatrix*' Conrad avoids attributing to Mary equality with God both with respect to her existence and her role in salvation history. In exploring the implications of Mary's virginity, Conrad also describes how she is a bridge between God and humanity without falling into the neo-docetism of his time, which interpreted Mary's virginity to imply that she was a fictitious mother producing a truly human child only in appearance. Conrad does not deal with the question of virgin motherhood from a dogmatic point of view, but there are frequent references to the topic in the *Speculum*.

Conrad begins by stating that Mary is beyond all others, both angels and saints, in the quality of her virtue. With respect to virginity, she is the model

109 Martinez, 321 (n. 47) and 316 (n. 41).

110 *Speculum*, Chapter 2, 3, 173.

111 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 3, 304.

112 *Speculum*, Chapter 9, II, 1, 341–342.

113 *Sermones* (Martinez, 542).

for all others. Conrad bases this assertion on a text taken from Proverbs 31:29, 'Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all':

If we understand these daughters to be saintly souls or angelic intelligences, did not Mary surpass all their special riches? Did she not surpass the riches of the virgins, the confessors, the martyrs, the apostles, the prophets, the patriarchs, the angels, since she is the first among virgins, the mirror of confessors, the rose of martyrs, the sovereign of apostles, the oracle of prophets, the daughter of patriarchs, the queen of angels? For what was lacking in her of all the riches of all of these?<sup>114</sup>

Mary is unique in being a virgin-mother, and Conrad states that it is possible for her to be both virgin and mother both because of the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the way her child was conceived and because of the identity of the child himself.

From the moment the virgin Mary became pregnant through the Holy Spirit her child was divine, in no way was her virginity tarnished by that child, rather she was made precious in such a child. For she was held in regard because of her child, she was consecrated because of her child, she was considered noble because of her child, she was considered enriched and gifted because of her child. Your virginity, O Mary, was sealed and confirmed because of your child.<sup>115</sup>

In fact, for Conrad the preservation of her virginity in motherhood is evidence of the role of the divine in her bringing forth her child: 'The flower of virginity has as many leaves as there are perfumes [in flowers] and tributes to Mary.'<sup>116</sup>

114 *Speculum*, Chapter 2, 3, 171–2: '...Prov. 31: 29: Multae filiae congregaverunt divitias, tu supergressa es universas. Si filias istas intelligamus animas sanctas vel intelligentias angelicas, numquid non supergressa est Maria omnium earum speciales divitias? Numquid supergressa est divitias virginum, confessorum, martyrum, apostolorum, prophetarum, patriarcharum, angelorum? Cum ipsa sit primiceria virginum, speculum confessorum, rosa martyrum, registrum apostolorum, oraculum prophetarum, filia patriarcharum, regina angelorum, quid enim de divitiis omnium horum sibi defuit?'

115 *Speculum*, Chapter 4, 7, 218: 'Ex quo Maria virgo de Spiritu Sancto divina est prole fecundata, nequam virginitas eius tali est prole vitiate, sed mirabiliter est in tanta prole glorificata. Nam in prole approbata, in prole consecrata, in prole nobilitata, in prole ditata et dotata, in prole consignata et confirmata est tua virginitas o Maria!'

116 *Speculum*, Chapter 10, 11, 1, 361: 'Flos virginitatis quasi tot habet folia, quot sunt virginitatis conditiones et praeconia.'



Important as virginity is in showing the hand of God in the origin of the life of Mary's child, Conrad centers his Mariology on Mary's motherhood: 'For what could be more marvellous a mother and a virgin and to be the mother of God?'<sup>117</sup> Conrad is never primarily interested in the physical consequences of either virginity or motherhood but rather in their spiritual aspects. At its deepest level Mary's virginity shows itself in her humility of heart, and at its deepest level her motherhood shows itself in her love for her child and her compassion for humanity. Conrad does not follow either Bernard or Richard in basing Mary's role in redemption on her suffering at the foot of the Cross or on her union with the Church symbolized in the figure of espousal. Rather it consists in her compassion and her desire to share in being an oblation before the Father for the remission of sin. Arguably perhaps one of the best passages in support of this interpretation of Conrad's position occurs in Chapter 3 of the *Speculum* where Conrad draws a parallel between Mary and Naomi:

Thus it might be well put in the Book of Ruth 1:20: 'Call me no longer Naomi, that is beautiful, but call me Mara, that is bitter, because the Almighty has filled me with bitterness.' Naomi was bitter because her two sons were dead. Naomi at once beautiful and bitter signifies Mary, who was indeed beautiful through sanctification by the Holy Spirit, but bitter because of her Son's passion. Mary's two sons are the God-man and simple humanity. Mary is physically the mother of one and spiritually the mother of the other.<sup>118</sup>

Later in the *Speculum* Conrad will speak of the quality of Mary's mercy when dealing with the phrase 'full of grace,' and speak of how Mary is always ready to share this grace. When he does this, Conrad speaks of Mary as both mother and virgin. He begins by quoting the story of Elisha and the widow's oil from the Book of Kings.<sup>119</sup> Mary, according to Conrad, is represented by

117 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 11, 4, 307: 'Quid enim mirabilis quam esse matrem et virginem et esse Dei matrem?'

118 *Speculum*, Chapter 3, 1, 2, 178–181: 'Unde ipsa bene potuit dicere illud Ruth 1, 20: *Ne vocetis me Noemi, id est, pulchram sed vocate me Mara, hoc est amara, quia valde amaritudine replevit me Omnipotens. Amara fuit Noemi, quia duo filii sui fuerunt mortui. Noemi pulchra et amara significat Mariam, pulchram quidem per Spiritus Sancti sanctificationem, amaram vero per Filii sui passionem. Duo autem filii Mariae sunt homo Deus et homo purus. Unius enim corporaliter, alterius vero spiritualiter mater est Maria.*'

119 IV Kings 4:4 (NRSV 2 Kings).

the woman who, after closing the doors of her house, filled all the jars which were then miraculously turned into oil. The closed doors represent Mary's virginity, for she had never been open to a marital embrace. The term 'woman' in the Scriptural text associates this woman with the 'woman' given to John at the foot of the Cross: 'These vats belonging to the woman are her emotions and actions, her desires and gifts, which are all full of the oil of mercy in Mary.'<sup>120</sup>

In the previous chapter, Conrad had already spoken about another episode involving vats at Cana where Mary's mercy marked her out as our advocate. Here Conrad states that the miraculous wine represents the grace of the Holy Spirit, the virtue of compunction, the virtue of devotion, and the virtue of spiritual consolation.<sup>121</sup>

Conrad compares mercy in God and mercy in Mary, but is careful to make the point that while Mary dispenses mercy towards humanity, God is the source of mercy. He does this most specifically in Chapter 8 of the *Speculum* while discussing how the Lord is with Mary. Conrad depicts Mary as the throne of mercy but he who sits on the throne is the author of mercy. While this is undoubtedly an outburst of praise of Mary, the underlying doctrinal position is also abundantly clear. For Conrad there is a relationship, a point of similarity, between mercy as it exists in God and as it exists in Mary, but there is also a point at which Mary is subordinate to God:

Behold, Mary, what the Lord is like, he who is with you; how very kind and very merciful the Lord is, he who is with you! And since the most merciful Lord is with you most mercifully, therefore in company with him you are most merciful, so that that passage in Isaiah 16:5 can truly be applied to you: A throne shall be established in mercy and he will truly sit on that throne. The throne of divine mercy is Mary, the Mother of mercy in whom all find the solace of mercy.<sup>122</sup>

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120 *Speculum*, Chapter 7, 4, 276–277: 'Huius mulieris vasa sunt affectus et effectus, desideria et beneficia, quae omnia oleo misericordiae plena sunt in Maria.'

121 *Speculum*, Chapter 6, 11, 3, 246–247.

122 *Speculum*, Chapter 8, 11, 1, 301: 'Ecce, Maria, qualis Dominis est, qui tecum est; quam piissimus et misericordissimus Dominus est, qui tecum est! Et quia Dominus misericordissimus misericordissime est tecum, ideo et tu es misericordissima secum, ut vere dici de te possit illud Is. 16:5; *Praeparabitur in misericordia solium et sedebit super illum in veritate*. Solium divinae misericordiae est Maria, mater misericordiae in qua omnes inveniunt solatia misericordiae.'

Being an instrument of God's mercy is a defining aspect of Mary's spiritual motherhood, which Conrad sees manifested in her compassion for others. Mary is not selfishly proud of her gifts, but thanks God for recognizing her humility.

Mary had on her lips words of joyful thanksgiving to God, when she said on account of God's recognition of her humility: My soul magnifies the Lord. This is in contrast to those who are ungrateful, who, alas! Return little thanks to God for his many and great gifts and sometimes insult God through His gifts.<sup>123</sup>

In extending the consideration of Mary's spiritual motherhood beyond a quality with her own person to the consequences of Mary's relationship with others, Conrad introduces the theological and moral virtues of which she is a model for all. He also contrasts her conduct to that of those guilty of the Capital Sins and takes up the traditional comparison of Eve with Mary. When telling of her display of mercy at Cana, Conrad remarks that this is in contrast to those who are unmerciful in their attitudes before God and humanity.<sup>124</sup>

It is interesting to see how Conrad approaches the scene of Mary at the foot of the cross. If Mary has been preserved from the effects of Original Sin, and, for example, has been preserved from labor pains at the birth of Christ, why is she not preserved from distress at the foot of the cross? Conrad agrees that the prophesy of Simeon regarding a sword piercing Mary's heart was indeed fulfilled when she witnessed the passion of her Son. He goes even further and says that Mary was offended when she heard her Son belittled as 'the carpenter's son' by people speaking in a derogatory manner. When explaining Mary's sufferings Conrad makes an important distinction:

This represents the very sharp sword of her Son's passion and death. The material sword cannot kill or injure the soul. Although Mary's soul was pierced because of her compassion during Christ's passion, it was not killed by hatred or wounded by impatience. For Mary never hated her Son's executioners, nor was she even impatient with them. Therefore

123 *Speculum*, Chapter 6, II, 1, 246: 'Verbum gratulationis ad Deum Maria in labiis habuit, quando pro eo quod Dominus humilitatem suam respexerat, dixit; *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*. Hoc est contra ingrates, qui, heu! pro multis et magnis et magnis beneficiis parvas Deo gratias agunt er quandoque per ipsa Dei beneficia contra Deum insolescunt.'

124 *Speculum*, Chapter 6, II, 1, 246.

if other martyrs were most patient during their physical martyrdom, how much more [patient] was our Martyr Mary during her spiritual passion!<sup>125</sup>

This passage links Mary's spiritual motherhood and her spiritual martyrdom. It also defines her role in the Crucifixion not as co-redemptrix, for only Christ is the redeemer, but as one who, out of compassion, wants to offer herself as a total oblation to God. Conrad quotes Paschasius Radbertus, whom he calls Jerome: 'Since spiritually and most dreadfully, she experienced the sword of the passion of Christ more than any martyr ever did.'<sup>126</sup>

As we shall see when dealing with the Immaculate Conception, even those spiritual writers who do not believe that Mary was conceived without Original Sin believe that she was born without Original Sin and preserved from all inclination towards sin and from pain and suffering consequent upon Original Sin as its just punishment. Conrad defines her suffering as being independent of any consequence of sinfulness and dependent on her compassion and wish to make a complete oblation of herself. This point is most remarkable when we consider the discussion among modern theologians regarding the impassibility of God and His total transcendence, on the one hand, and His participation in human history through the Incarnation. The Orthodox theologian, Paul L. Gavrilyuk, and the Catholic theologian, Thomas Weinandy, have explored the 'sufferings of the impassible God' in the context of the dialectics of Patristic thought.<sup>127</sup> Both works are a veritable *tour de force* of Patristic and Medieval opinions and the meeting of Hellenistic philosophy with its definitions of the impassibility of God and the Hebrew and biblical portraits of a God who suffers and becomes angry. Weinandy concludes that a God who is impassible is more loving and compassionate than someone who is obliged to suffer but endures it stoically. Conrad makes this same point with regard to Mary, who, although above human pain by right of her innocence, is not insensitive to it and freely becomes involved in the work of compassion. Because of this Conrad

125 *Speculum*, Chapter 4, 3, 210: 'Hic gladius acutissimam Filii sui passionem sive mortem significant. Gladius corporalis animam nec occidere potest nec vulnerare; sic acutissima Christi passio, licet animam Mariae per compassionem pertransivit, ipsam tamen nec per odium occidit, nec per impatientiam vulneravit. Maria enim interfectores Filii sui nunquam odit, nunquam contra eos impatiens fuit. Nam si alii martyres patientissimi fuerunt in martyrio suo corporali, quanto magis martyr nostra Maria in martyrio suo spirituali!'

126 *Speculum*, Chapter 4, 3, 210: 'Quia spiritualiter et atrocious passa est gladio passionis Christi, plus quam martyr fuit.'

127 See Weinandy and Gavrilyuk as cited above.

can refer to her as the martyrs' martyr. As with those who use the resources of both philosophy and revelation to come to grips with questions involving the meeting of the divine and the human, questions succinctly summed up in the problem, 'Can God suffer?', Conrad employs the definitions and divisions of philosophers to clarify issues he then takes to Scripture. This may be well illustrated in his treatment of the way he presents Mary's virtues as contrasting the capital vices. In the *Speculum*, this treatment builds upon the Eve/Mary dichotomy we have already seen.

Having dealt with questions of Mary's earthy life we may turn to what Conrad has to say about her heavenly existence. The heavenly qualities which Conrad attributes to Mary are similar to her earthly attributes but more excellent. For example, Conrad cites a text from Ambrose Autpert (+781), which he attributes to Augustine:<sup>128</sup>

If I call you heaven, you are higher. If I call you mother of the nations, you are more than this. If I call you mistress of the angels you give proof of this in every way. If I call you the image of God, you are worthy to be called this.

The context of the quote is Conrad's explanation of one aspect of Mary's relationship with human beings and angels exemplified by Esther. Esther leaned on one maid and the other carried her train [Esther 15:6]. The human soul is her maid when following her example thus carrying her train. Mary leans on the angels, represented by Esther's other maid, by her familiar association with them, by taking delight in them, by sharing her fullness with them, by commanding them and by ruling over them. What a privilege for us humans that the mistress of the angels is one of us!<sup>129</sup>

In Chapter 3 of the *Speculum*, Conrad presents the figure of Esther as a benevolent mistress. Like Esther, Mary has taken a courageous stand for the benefit of others, and Conrad goes on to quote a saying he attributes to Augustine, but which we could not find in Augustine's works, which highlights the quality of being a protector:

128 *Speculum*, Chapter 3, 1, 1, 197: 'Si te caelum vocem, altior, es; si matrem gentium dicam, praecedis; si dominam angelorum nominem, per omnia esse comprobaris; si formam Dei appellem, digna existis.' See *Sermo De Assumptione Sanctae Mariae* n. 5. (CCCM, 27 B [1979], 1029f.).

129 *De laudibus*, Book IV, Chapter 9, 7, 193. Richard puts a different interpretation on the two maids, saying that they represent the virtues of virginity and humility. In Book x, Chapter 2, 16, 468, Richard compares Esther and Mary as mediators since Esther was invited to ask for whatever she wanted [Esther 5:3].

Michael leader and prince of the heavenly host, together with all his serving spirits, follows your orders, O Virgin, by defending the souls of the faithful both when they have their bodies and when they are received from their bodies, especially those, O Mistress, who commend themselves to you day and night.<sup>130</sup>

In book three, Chapter 13,<sup>131</sup> Richard presents Mary's supremacy over the angels as a prestigious reward. He bases his considerations on the Liturgy of the Feast of the Assumption, in which the Church proclaims that Mary in all her beauty ascends like a dove above the streams of water, and, following an interpretation attributed to Bernard, states that the waters are the angels and the other citizens of heaven who are present in ranks; choirs in the case of angels; and the categories of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Virgins, and Confessors in the case of the others. Mary's standing is beyond that of any of these ranks.

Conrad's perspective is quite different from that of Richard even when Conrad states that Mary's situation of being above angels and humanity is also a just reward, since Conrad views this reward as the source of benefits to others. Where Richard likens Mary's coronation to the magnificence of the sky, which is spotless, immense and above everything else, Conrad does not describe this relationship as that of a powerful person condescending to relieve the needs of underlings.<sup>132</sup> Rather it is a relationship of mother to child in which—although the child always remains a dependent—the mother's love is never motivated by condescension. Both Richard and Conrad see Mary's position in glory as being above all others under God as one of her privileges, of which Richard says that there are twelve and Conrad seven.<sup>133</sup>

Both regard Queen Esther as a figure of Mary and accept 'Esther' as meaning a person who is 'raised above.'<sup>134</sup>

130 *Speculum*, Chapter 3, IV, 1, 197–198: 'Michael, dux et princeps militiae caelestis, cum omnibus spiritibus administratoriis, tuis, Virgo, paret praeceptis in defendendis in corpore et in suscipiendis de corpore animabis fidelium specialiter tibi, Domina, die ac nocte se tibi commendantium.'

131 *De laudibus*, Book III, Chapter 13, n. 1–3, 159–161.

132 *De laudibus* Book VII, Chapter 2, n. 2, 369.

133 *De laudibus*, Book III, Chapter 2, 144; *Speculum*, Chapter 4, III, 7, 253.

134 Note this in his sermon for the First Sunday after the Octave of the Epiphany, *De miseratione Mariae deque eius intercessione apud Christum* in which Conrad states that 'Esther' means concealed or kept out of sight (*Sermones*, Martinez, 566).

**Richard**

Duodecima Mariae praerogativa attenditur in corona gloriae ineffabilis, quis coronata est in coelis in sua assumptione, quando versus Assuerus, qui interpretatur *beatus* sive *beatitudo*, et signat Christum, dixit Esther reginae, quae interpretatur *elevata in populis* et signat Mariam, quae exaltata est etiam super choros Angelorum et omnium beatorum ad coelestia regna.

(*De laudibus* Book III, Chapter 14, p. 161).

*Mary's twelfth prerogative is seen in the crown of indescribable glory, with which she was crowned at her Assumption, when Ahasuerus, which means 'blessed' or 'beatitudo,' and represents Christ, said to Queen Esther, which means 'raised up among the people,' and represents Mary, who was exalted to the kingdom of heaven above even the Angels and all the blessed.*

**Conrad**

Unde ipsa bene significata est per Esther reginam, de qua legitur quod *ducta ad cubiculum regis Assueri, habuit gratiam et misericordiam coram eo super omnes mulieres, et posuit diadema regni in capite ejus.* (Esther 2:16 ff). (*Speculum* Chapter 6, IV, 3, p. 263).

*Therefore, she is well symbolized by Queen Esther, of whom we read that having been taken to the bed chamber of king Ahasuerus she found grace and mercy before him beyond all women and he placed the royal crown on her head.*

Although there was no doubt among medieval writers that Mary is with Christ in heaven, some, particularly those who refused to put any faith in apocryphal sources, were undecided about her physical assumption. Ambrose Autpert (+ 781), for example, accepts that Mary was assumed higher than the angels but cautions 'whether in the body or out of the body' (2 Cor 12:2) we do not know.<sup>135</sup> In his *Cogitis me*, Paschasius Radbertus also expresses doubts about the bodily assumption of Mary and says some things are better left in the realm of God's mysteries.<sup>136</sup> Although Conrad often quotes both these authorities personally he agrees with St. Bonaventure and Matthew of Aquasparta in expressing belief in Mary's bodily assumption. Conrad states:

<sup>135</sup> CCCM, 27B (1979), 1028.

<sup>136</sup> CCCM, 56C (1985), 113.

Certainly some saintly doctors appear to be of the probable opinion and attempt to prove by reasoning that the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed with her body, and that her body is glorified with her soul.<sup>137</sup>

As we have already noted, one doctrine where Conrad followed Bernard was that of the Immaculate Conception, which he denied citing Bernard's famous letter. Conrad writes when speaking of how Mary is symbolized by the dawn:

Because the blessed Virgin was conceived in sin, but born without sin, she did not have her origin in sin: Hence that night saw the dawn but not the origin of the dawn. This is against those who claim that she was not only born without sin but also conceived without sin; Bernard argues against this opinion when he says: 'If Mary was not sanctified before her conception, because she was not, nor in the conception itself on account of the sin inherent in it, it is clear that one must believe she received her sanctification while she was still in the womb, and so with sin excluded her birth was holy, but not her conception.'<sup>138</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

We have reviewed Marian doctrines presented in the *Speculum* following the way they would be presented in systematic theology. Previously we saw how Conrad used Scripture and other authorities in these matters. Our review here indicates that Conrad is conservative in his approach. He follows tradition and does not indulge in the emotive images of later preachers nor delve into the psychology of Mary. He is careful neither to exaggerate her role in redemption nor her power as mediator. Once again we have seen how, although his dependence on Richard is evident, this does not prevent him from being selective in

137 *Speculum*, Chapter 10, 11, 4, 368f.: 'Et certe quidam sancti doctores probabiliter sentire videntur et rationabiliter probare nituntur, et fideles hunc sensus pie amplectuntur, videlicet, quod beata virgo Maria iam cum corpore sit assumpta, et corpus iam cum anima sit glorificatum.'

138 *Speculum*, Chapter 9, 1, 330f.: 'Quia vero beata Virgo in peccato concepta fuit, sed sine peccato nata, in peccato orta non fuit: ideo non aururam, sed ortum aurarae dicitur nox ista non vidisse. Hoc est contra illos, qui ipsam non solum sine peccato natam. Sed etiam sine peccato conceptam dicunt, contra quos etiam beatus Bernardus, arguens ait; «Si ante conceptum suum Maria sanctificari non potuit, quoniam non erat, sed nec in ipso conceptu propter peccatum, quod inerat, restat ut post conceptum in utero iam existens sanctificationem accepisse credatur, quae excluso peccato, sanctam fecerit nativatem, non tamem conceptionem.»'



what he incorporates into the *Speculum*. However, having said this, there is no evidence that he was influenced by fellow Franciscans. His object is to praise Mary and motivate others to do the same, not to present a theological tract. However, his praise is based on traditional theology.

When writing the *Speculum*, Conrad seems to have had two objectives in mind. The first was theological, and from that perspective, Conrad intended to praise Mary and to exhort others to do the same. The second was didactic, and from that perspective, he intended to furnish an example of how Marian doctrine might be presented by preachers. He succeeded in both objectives.

Conrad proclaimed the praises of Mary by interpreting Scripture and outlining Marian doctrine within the context of traditional teachings while yet making his own selection of material and devising his own sequence in presentation.

This can be seen when we are able to examine what we can of Conrad's life and review the list of his different works and the manuscripts in which they can be found. We have also attempted to contextualize the man both within the ranks of his peers and, especially, within the ranks of his fellow Franciscans. Among Franciscans in Germany who have been found to have compromised in political matters, and in many ways lived up to the caricatures found in popular literature, Conrad stands out as a tower of spiritual strength. As an exegete among Franciscans who each have their own approaches to interpreting the word of God, he contributed a moderate spiritual reading of the texts. His sober interpretations contrast with the emotional and psychological excursions into presenting the sorrowful Mother which will thrive in later centuries. He does not overplay the role of Mary in the redemption but acknowledges the unequalled role of Christ in the history of salvation. We mentioned in passing how this is significant in certain contemporary investigations into the understanding of suffering as part of redemption as this is now being followed by Orthodox and Catholic theologians.

It emerged that Conrad took little from Franciscan sources except a familiarity with the new scholastic method taught by them in the universities. Nor does he give any hint of being aware of views being developed by Franciscans at the universities. William of Ware, a Franciscan theologian born at Ware in Hertfordshire who flourished between 1290 and 1305, discussed Mary's active motherhood, a theory based on Galen's contention that both the male and the female made an active contribution in giving life to their offspring. Such a position contrasted with Aquinas's belittling that intellectual capacity of women and the Aristotelian position that described a woman as little more than a vessel for the foetus, whose every positive attribute and strength derived from the male. Ware considered his position to be consistent with the writings of

Ambrose, Augustine, and Hugh of St. Victor. Albert the Great devoted an entire tract of Book IX of his *De animabus* to the question of the opinions of Aristotle and Galen.<sup>139</sup>

Conrad appears to be working outside any Franciscan influence. Instead he relied heavily on Benedictine sources, most obviously the works of Bernard. It also emerged that he was greatly influenced both for his content and arrangement on Richard of St. Lawrence. However, while admitting this indebtedness, we have been concerned to illustrate the differences between Conrad and Richard which demonstrate Conrad's independence and originality. We outlined just a few examples of contrasts between Richard and Conrad, and what emerged was an individual who had indeed made a significant contribution to Mariology but who was also firmly anchored within a tradition.

Signs of the rise of a new systematic theology in contrast to biblical theology were found in Conrad in his treatment of the virtues, both theological and cardinal, where the influence of philosophical ethics was evident. This was placed in the context of the general drift towards what became the scientific mentality of later days. Conrad had taken one significant step in this development.

One could hardly enter the field of Mariology without encountering attitudes towards stereotypes of womanhood. There is a significant contrast between the way Richard presented women as typically fickle where Conrad was much more willing to see Mary and her attributes as an adornment to womanhood. This is not a small achievement for Conrad as he was surrounded by writers who were ambivalent about how they used the Eve/Mary dichotomy, an issue which is dealt with expertly in contemporary research into formation in medieval religious communities both male and female.

The present study has opened more questions than it has provided solutions to most of the issues raised. But it has established how fruitful a study of the *Speculum* by Conrad might be for highlighting the diversity in the approaches of medieval authors and how helpful some of the insights which emerged from their debates may be for contemporary thinking.

To sum up, how might we describe Conrad's position in the history of religious thought and with respect to other writers of his time?

With respect to Conrad's position in the history of the development of religious thought, his position can be assessed by setting it against the background of the launching points of religious reflection. Christian reflection is based either upon the Bible, upon logical consequences deduced from the articles of

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139 For a review of the debate see James Roger Bell, 'Conceiving the Word: Patristic and Early Medieval Sources for the Franciscan Discussion of Mary's Active Motherhood,' in *Marian Studies* 52 (2001), 153–182.

faith or upon the experience of a personal revelation. Conrad makes no claim to a personal experience as do mystics, and this need detain us no longer. He does, however, make use of the Bible as a source of reflection as did monks and others who valued *lectio divina*. However, he is also writing at a time when there is a change in the religious reflection which bases itself on logical principles derived in the main from Aristotle. In the case of Conrad, this is most obvious in his treatment of the virtues in the *Speculum*.

In his authoritative work, Bloomfield traced the development of the theory of the identity and number of the vices from its origin in Greek philosophy through Latin and Patristic sources to the time of Spencer and Middle English literature.<sup>140</sup> Theological discussion of the origin of the deadly sins flourished between 1130 and 1275 when schoolmen such as Bonaventure, Jean de la Rochelle, John of Wales, Hugh Ripelin of Strassburg, Jean Rigard and Ranulph Higden developed a rationale, or *sufficiencia*, as they called it, justifying the number and members of the series in more or less logical terms. We referred briefly to the study of the cardinal virtues undertaken by Houser in which he traced the development of four cardinal virtues from Greek philosophy through the thirteenth century. He proposes three stages of development: The Greek and Roman stage with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, early Stoics, Cicero, and Seneca; the early Christian stage, with Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory; and the medieval stage, with Peter Lombard, Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, and Aquinas.<sup>141</sup>

Medieval authors sorted out the vices according to three models. Such models can be seen in the work of Hugh of St. Victor, Jean de la Rochelle, Robert Grosseteste, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas. In one model all the virtues were linked in such a way that one was fundamental and all the others depended on one another in a logical sequence. A second model approaches the vices as maladies of the soul and associates them with the faculty of soul involved as the seat of activity. Bonaventure, for example, looks to the three parts of the soul and corresponding faculties as identified by Plato.<sup>142</sup> Others invoke the five Aristotelian faculties.<sup>143</sup> A third model also approaches the vices as maladies but associates them with the soul,

140 M.W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction to the History of Religious Concepts with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, MI., 1952).

141 See Houser, *The Cardinal Virtues: Aquinas, Albert and Philip the Chancellor*.

142 See also *Breviloquium*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. III, 9, 238.

143 See Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research,' in *Speculum* 43 (1968), 1-22, especially 7, where a detailed treatment of the division of the vices by scholastics is given.

pride, envy, and anger, and the four elements of the body, that is, air with lechery, fire with gluttony, water with greed, and earth with sloth. Authors readily connect vices and virtues, since Aristotle had claimed that virtue stands in the middle with extremes of vice on either side. Both Richard and Conrad, as we have seen, associate vices and virtues after the manner of the scholastics. Girotto has treated the dependence of Dante on Conrad's *Speculum* at some length.<sup>144</sup> It was from Conrad's *Speculum* that Dante derived his association of humility and pride, charity and envy, meekness and anger, concern and sloth, poverty and greed, temperance and gluttony, chastity and lust. Conrad stands at the cross-roads of a biblical approach to religious reflection, an approach based on problem-solving as articles of faith are discussed using the process of logic as proposed by philosophy. He is not original in this but rather a child of his day, but his method influenced some of those who followed him.

Within his own Franciscan family he was reputed to be an understanding superior and did not become involved in the politics which Freed<sup>145</sup> says rendered some other friars traitors to the Franciscan principles. He relayed a solid spiritual message to people and was concerned to provide a guide to other preachers. His message was traditional and contained no innovations. He followed a Marian spirituality that had been traced by Richard but expressed it in a much simpler style and with great brevity. In doing so he had to depart from Richard's presentation and its sequence and showed a personal approach which renders his work unique. While not outstanding he is authentic and devoted.

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<sup>144</sup> Girotto, *Corrado di Sassonia*, 202–214.

<sup>145</sup> See John B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1977).

## Mary and the Body of God: Servas Sanctus of Faenza and the Psalter of Creation

Rachel Fulton Brown

Riddle me this, as the preacher might say: What do the following things have in common?<sup>1</sup>

Snow, a harbor, the river Doryx, a well, precious minerals including silver, a fir tree, the fragrant resin of the storax, a bee, a window, a dining room, a ship, a fish net, a candelabrum, an atrium, a tambourinist.

Any guesses? What if I told you that, according to the Franciscan Servas Sanctus of Faenza (d. ca. 1300), they were all names found in Scripture for Mary, the Mother of God?<sup>2</sup> What if I added a few more?

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1 This paper was originally presented as a lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, in February 2015. I also presented it at the University of California, Los Angeles (April 2015), and at the University of Mississippi (October 2015). I am grateful to all three audiences for their attention and questions. Much as the Franciscans hoped to bring their studies in theology to wider audiences by adopting more popular forms of address in their preaching, I offer it here in an edited, but still conversational form, as a model for alternative ways in which we as scholars might speak. Like a Franciscan sermon, it is meant to be somewhat interactive, drawing in the audience with questions and vivid images on which to hang their memory of its theological points.

2 On Servas Sanctus as a preacher, see David d'Avray, 'Philosophy in Preaching: The Case of a Franciscan Based in Thirteenth-century Florence (Servasanto da Faenza),' in *Literature and Religion in the Later Middle Ages: Philological Studies in Honor of Siegfried Wenzel*, ed. Richard G. Newhauser and John A. Alford, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 118 (Binghamton, 1995), 263–273; and L. Oliger, 'Servasanto da Faenza O.F.M. e il suo "Liber de Virtutibus et Vitiis"', in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle. Scritti di storia e paleografia I: Per la storia della teologia e della filosofia*, Studi e testi 37 (Rome, 1924), 148–189. For additional bibliography on Servas Sanctus's life and works, see Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, *Franciscan Authors, 13th–18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress*, <<http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/>>.

According to van der Heijden and Roest, Servas Sanctus was born between 1220 and 1230 in Castello Oriolo near Faenza. He entered the Franciscan order at Bologna and was ordained sometime between 1244 and 1260. He was active in the convent at Santa Croce in Florence from the 1260s as a preacher and confessor. His most widely disseminated work was the *Liber de exemplis naturalibus*, a collection of exempla, legends, visions, and miracle stories arranged thematically for preaching on the articles of the faith, the sacraments, and the virtues

Light, the firmament, the sun, the moon, the morning star, the dawn, the rainbow, the dew, the flood, the sea, the river, the aqueduct, the fountain, the earth, the mountain, gold, the cedar, the cypress, the rose, the olive, the vine, cinnamon, balsam, myrrh, the lily, the turtle-dove, the sheep, the city, the castle, the wall, the tower, the bedchamber, the throne, the litter, the oven, the ladder, the ark of Noah, the tabernacle, the temple, the holy of holies, the ark of the Lord, virago, mother, chosen one, queen, daughter, sister, beloved, bride, handmaiden.

Do you see a pattern yet? Do you want more?

Day, cloud, mist, the Ganges, the Nile, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Jordan, paradise, a field, solitude, a rock, the palm tree, the plane tree, the terebinth, the pomegranate, onyx, frankincense, nard, the hind, a fleece, a golden vessel, the gate, the house, the couch, the cellar, the golden altar, the veil, perfect, nurse.

Wait, I left some out.

Heaven, star, noon, air, valley, gemstone, tree, root, rod, fig tree, wood of Sethim, almond, bramble-bush, mulberry, grove, spice-bed, galbanum, drop, flower, dove, neck, heart, exemplar, book, mirror, new vessel, court, granary, treasury, mercy seat, column, one.

Plus a few more while, not strictly speaking mentioned in Scripture, ought to have been.

Crystalline heaven, star of the sea, constellation, chaste tree, opobalsam, cloister, lady, *advocata*, virgin of virgins, queen of confessors, martyrs, apostles, patriarchs and prophets, queen of angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principalities, dominations, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim.

Let's see, how many names is that? Fifteen plus fifty plus thirty plus thirty-two plus twenty-two, which comes to 149. Oh, and *Magnificata*. Now do you see?

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and vices. For the prologue and a table of contents of this collection, see M. Grabmann, 'Der Liber de Exemplis Naturalibus des Fraziskanertheologen Servas Sanctus,' in *Franziskanische Studien* 7 (1920), 85–117. On Servas Sanctus's *Mariale* from which his list of names for Mary is taken, see below, n. 10.

I'm guessing perhaps not, even if you are familiar with the list of titles attributed to Mary in the litany of Loreto.<sup>3</sup> This is not the way modern scholars or Christians are accustomed to think of the Virgin Mary, even less so the way that we are accustomed to read Scripture, that is, as a catalogue of titles for the Mother of God. And yet, in the thirteenth century throughout Christendom, it was a commonplace that to name Mary properly was an exercise doomed to frustration, so numerous were the names under which the woman who had contained the One who could not be contained had been proclaimed to the world. While modern scholars typically begin their studies of the devotion to Mary with an apology for how *little* is said about her in Scripture, Mary's thirteenth-century devotees invariably apologized for how little they were able to say about her given how *often* she appeared in Scripture, not to mention the way in which all the creatures of the world pointed to her.<sup>4</sup>

As one anonymous preacher put it in a sermon on the *Salve regina*: 'All Scripture was written concerning her and about her and because of her, and for her the whole world was made, she who is full of the grace of God and through whom man has been redeemed, the Word of God made flesh, God humbled and man sublimed.'<sup>5</sup> According to the so-called *Biblia Mariana* attributed to Albert the Great (d. 1280), references to Mary might be found in every book of the Old Testament, including Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus (saving only 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and seven of the twelve minor prophets); conversely, the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (d. 1298) discovered names for her beginning with every letter of the alphabet.<sup>6</sup> Poets, including the Franciscan Walter of Wimborne (fl. 1260) and the Benedictine abbot Engelbert

3 For the earliest forms of such litanies, including the litany of Loreto, see G.G. Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, 2 vols., Spicilegium Friburgense 2–3 (Freiburg, 1958–1960), 2:53–62, 222–229.

4 On this discrepancy between medieval and modern readings of Scripture as applied to Mary, see Rachel Fulton Brown, 'Mary in the Scriptures: The Unexpurgated Tradition,' in *The Theotokos Lectures in Theology* 7 (Milwaukee, 2014).

5 In *antiphonam Salve Regina*, sermo 3.2, PL 184, col. 1069. On these catalogues of Marian titles, see G.G. Meersseman, "'Virgo a doctoribus praetitulata': Die marianischen Litaneien als dogmengeschichtliche Quellen,' in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 1 (1954), 129–178.

6 Pseudo-Albert the Great, *Biblia mariana*, ed. Augustus and Aemilius Borgnet, in *B. Alberti Magni Ratisbonensis Episcopi, Ordinis Praedicatorum, Opera omnia* 37 (Paris, 1898), 365–443; Jacobus de Voragine, *Mariale, seu Sermones aurei de beata Maria virgine* (Paris, 1888). Pseudo-Albert does not include Marian references for Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi.

of Admont (d. 1331), would compose whole psalters of 'Aves' in an attempt to greet her worthily, even as they despaired at being able to encompass in words the mystery of her encompassing the Word.<sup>7</sup> As Walter put it in his *Ave Virgo Mater Christi*:

God makes himself little in you,  
lessened he increases you  
to the peak of holiness,  
whom while I try to commend  
I say nothing in so great a matter  
but [merely] blow my horn harshly.<sup>8</sup>

Simply to catalogue, never mind explicate, all of the names under which Mary appeared in Scripture could take books—and did. For Richard of St. Laurent (d. ca. 1260), canon and penitentiary at the cathedral at Rouen, this task took twelve books running in total to some 840 double-columned pages in the 1898 edition of his *De laudibus beatae Mariae virginis*, while Jacobus's alphabet ran to some 560 pages in the 1688 edition of his *Mariale*.<sup>9</sup> For the Franciscan Servas Sanctus, with whose catalogue—more properly, 'psalter'—we are here particularly concerned, it took a mere six books, published in 250 double-columned pages in 1651 as the work of Archbishop Ernestus of Prague.<sup>10</sup>

7 For Engelbert's Mary psalter, see Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos*, 2:133–134.

8 Walter, *Ave Virgo Mater Christi*, stanza 134, ed. A.G. Rigg, in *The Poems of Walter of Wimborne*, Studies and Texts 42 (Toronto, 1978), 176: 'Deus in te se minorat, / minoratus te maiorat / sanctitatis apice, / quam dum conor commendare / nichil loquor in tanta re / sed cornicor actice.'

9 Richard of St. Laurent, *De laudibus beatae Mariae virginis libri XII*, ed. Augustus and Aemilius Borgnet, in *B. Alberti Magni Ratisbonensis Episcopi, Ordinis Praedicatorum, Opera omnia* 36 (Paris, 1898); Jacobus, *Mariale*, ed. Rudolph Clutius, O.P. (Lyon, 1688). On these encyclopedias of Marian titles as sources for our understanding of Marian prayer, see Rachel Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer: The Hours of the Virgin in Medieval Christian Life and Thought* (New York, 2017).

10 *Mariale sive Liber de praecellentibus et eximiis SS. Dei genitricis Mariae supra reliquas creaturas praerogativis, ex arcanis S. Scripturae, SS. Patrum, theologiae et philosophiae naturalis mysteriis concinnatus*, ed. Bohuslao Balbino (Prague, 1651). There has been relatively little discussion of the *Mariale* in the literature. For Servas Sanctus as the author of the *Mariale*, see F.M. Bartos, 'Mariale Servas Sancti et Mariale Arnesti de Pardubic,' in *Antonianum* 18 (1943), 175–177. On the manuscripts of the *Mariale*, see Théodore Koehler, 'Onze manuscrits du 'Mariale' de Servas Sanctus de Faenza, OFM (d. ca. 1300),' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 83:1–2 (1990), 96–117; and idem, 'Une liste d'Ave en l'honneur de la Vierge Marie: 24 titres empruntés à l'éloge de la Sagesse,' in *Revue française d'histoire du livre* 61:74–75 (1992), 5–22.



## 1 Mary, Did You Know?

I know what you're thinking, at least, what you would be if you have read almost any modern discussion of 'proper' Mariology. As Pope John XXIII put it: 'The Madonna is not pleased when she is put above her Son'—which, surely, finding her in Scripture under so many guises threatens to do.<sup>11</sup> Nor have medievalists known quite what to do with this profusion of titles. For literary scholar Helen Phillips, the exercise of reading Scripture for names of Mary smacks of nothing more exalted—or theologically meaningful—than clerical desire to suppress women. In Phillips' words:

The result may be a deeply mysterious, powerfully attractive, and reverent splendour, but the verbal artifice, semantic alienations and dichotomies that play a part in creating the particular type of jewelled and mentally dazzling hyperbole to which writers of late medieval marian praise are so often drawn could be seen also as expressions of unresolved contradictions in the elevation to so high a place in theology and devotion of a woman, in a society that gives women and female qualities in general little power or respect.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, for art historian Cynthia Robinson, it has seemed inconceivable that these dazzling, jeweled hyperboles were necessarily even Christian.

To her credit, in the course of her studies of the Castilian devotion to the Virgin and Christ, Robinson discovered in the library at Madrid a hitherto unremarked, albeit anonymous manuscript copy of Servasanctus's *Mariale* (Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 8952). Finding this *Mariale* so unlike anything that she had been led to expect based on previous scholarship (including mine) about Mary's compassion for her Son, Robinson concluded that the *Mariale* represented a strand of devotion peculiar to Castile, which she argues was as influenced by its contacts with Islam as with Latin or Orthodox Christianity generally. Accordingly, Robinson suggested that the *Mariale*'s images of Mary, particularly her guise as a source of wisdom and light, pointed not to the further complexity of the extra-Castilian Christian understanding of Mary, but rather to Muslim mystical traditions going back to twelfth-century Persia,

11 Invoked by Hilda Graef as the epigraph to her widely-cited *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols. (London, 1963, 1965).

12 Helen Phillips, "'Almighty and al mercible queene": Marian Titles and Marian Lyrics,' in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Turnhout, 2000), 83–99, at 86–87.

in which Mary is said to have ‘experienced the vision of the Illumination of the Manifestation of Eternity’ and thereby become ‘the bearer of the glorious word and the light of the spirit of the Most High.’<sup>13</sup>

Aside from the misidentification of Servas Sanctus’s work as a compilation made, Robinson hypothesizes, at the cathedral of Ávila, there are two significant problems with this hypothesis. Far from being a unique witness to Castilian ‘multiconfessionalism’ (Robinson’s term), Servas Sanctus’s *Mariale* was available in manuscripts throughout Europe from Bury St. Edmonds to Valencia to Prague (thus the misattribution to Archbishop Ernestus in the 1651 edition), making it in fact one of the most widespread witnesses to the late medieval Marian tradition as a whole.<sup>14</sup> Even more problematic, however, is Robinson’s assumption that Servas Sanctus’s imagery was somehow unique or not quite Christian in its emphasis on Mary’s association with light, as well as the other creatures catalogued in the *Mariale*. At the very least, the Orthodox Christian author of the fifth-century *Akathistos* hymn—in which Mary is hailed as ‘a torch full of light’ who ‘by kindling the immaterial light... guides all to divine knowledge, illuminating the mind with brilliance’ (stanza 21)—would have been greatly startled to learn that it was Islam that discovered Mary’s light-bearing properties, not to mention that by praising Mary as ‘container of the uncontainable God’ (stanza 15) and ‘vessel of the wisdom of God’ (stanza 17), one was somehow slighting either God or women, as Phillips has claimed.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere Robinson pays special attention to the list of trees, where she contrasts the *Mariale* explicitly with the ‘better-known Franciscan tradition’ of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, again suggesting rather an Islamic parallel.<sup>16</sup>

Pace Robinson, Servas Sanctus’s *Mariale* was as ‘Franciscan’ as the *Meditationes vitae Christi*.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, it was not the only Franciscan work to present Mary in this way. Conrad of Saxony’s (d. 1279) *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis*,

13 Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park, 2013), 193. Robinson relied heavily on my *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York, 2002), for her understanding of the northern European emphasis on Mary’s compassion.

14 For the manuscripts of Servas Sanctus’s *Mariale*, see Appendix.

15 On the fifth-century titles of the Theotokos, see Leena Mari Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001).

16 Cynthia Robinson, ‘Trees of Love, Trees of Knowledge: Toward the Definition of a Cross-Confessional Current in Late Medieval Iberian Spirituality,’ in *Medieval Encounters* 2.3 (2006), 388–435, at 407–412.

17 Review of Robinson, in *Speculum* 89.3 (2014), 817–819.

itself a commentary on the *Ave Maria*, drew on much the same imagery as did Servas Sanctus and Richard of St. Laurent.<sup>18</sup> Like the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, Conrad's *Speculum* was often attributed to the Franciscan Bonaventure (d. 1274). Even more to the point, to judge by the numbers of known manuscripts of each work, Conrad's *Speculum* (over 240 manuscripts according to his editor) was even more popular than the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (around 230 manuscripts by Robinson's count). Like Servas Sanctus and Richard, Conrad describes Mary as filled with light when the Lord dwelled within her body and mind. 'Behold,' Conrad exclaims, 'if Mary was full of the light of wisdom which she received from the eternal sun before she conceived him, how much more full was she when she so wonderfully conceived this sun and so entirely received him within herself?'<sup>19</sup>

There is no need to explain the emphasis on Mary as a source of wisdom and light with reference to Castile's multiconfessional context or to Sufi mysticism as Robinson suggests we should. This imagery was Orthodox long before it was Castilian, not to mention Muslim. And yet, to a modern scholar steeped as Robinson in the imagery of Mary's Castilian devotees, it seemed so out of place, she could explain it no other way. How is it that we have so little place in our understanding of medieval Marian devotion, not to mention the history of Christian doctrine, for Servas Sanctus's catalogue of names? Something is clearly here amiss, but it is not with Servas Sanctus's or his contemporaries' image of Mary as a container of wisdom and light. It is with our image of her as a woman.<sup>20</sup>

Methodologically, the problem is at once historical, historiographical, and theological, going back at the very latest to the nineteenth century's search for the 'historical Jesus' and its continuing entailments. As Pope Benedict XVI explained in his controversial 2006 address to the science faculty at Regensburg, liberal theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, above all Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), rejected wholesale the philosophical, theological, and exegetical tradition of the ancient and medieval church. In its place, they sought by way of historical-critical exegesis of the New Testament to 'return [Christianity] simply to the man Jesus and to his simple message.' Thus

18 Conrad, *Speculum seu salutatio beatae Mariae virginis ac sermones mariani*, ed. Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, *Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi* 11 (Rome, 1975); trans. Sr. Mary Emmanuel, as St. Bonaventure, *The Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (St. Louis, 1932).

19 Conrad, *Speculum*, VII.1, ed. Martínez, 267–271, trans. Sr. Mary Emmanuel, 65.

20 For a fuller discussion of this misunderstanding in the history of Marian doctrine and devotion, see Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*.

shorn of the 'accretions of theology' to which his image had mistakenly been subjected by centuries of 'hellenization,' Jesus 'was presented [from this perspective] as the father of a humanitarian moral message,' while Christianity was '[liberated] from seemingly philosophical and theological elements, such as faith in Christ's divinity and the triune God.'<sup>21</sup>

The implications of this 'liberation' have had reverberations throughout Christian doctrine and devotion, not least the way in which Jesus' human mother is understood. With the theological emphasis placed thus firmly on Jesus the Man (and the response to him reduced to the bumper-sticker query, 'What would Jesus do?'), there is arguably no longer any significant place for Mary, the 'container of the uncontainable God.' If Mary's son Jesus were simply a teacher of morality, what could Mary have been other than a simple peasant woman who gave birth to a human child?<sup>22</sup> Even the reformers at Vatican II (who included then Professor Joseph Ratzinger among their confrères) were reticent to admit any more than that Mary, having been 'redeemed by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie,' ought to be 'hailed as a pre-eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity.'<sup>23</sup> Just as the focus in much modern Christian thinking—and, arguably therefore, much medievalist scholarship—has been on Jesus in his historicity and on the imitation of his humanity, so for most modern Christians Mary is a mystery only insofar as, while purportedly a virgin, she was said to have given birth to a man.<sup>24</sup> (Certainly, this is almost invariably the first question I am asked when I say I work on the devotion to Mary.) Like Jesus, she is revered (or critiqued) more or less exclusively as an exemplar of human behavior, while any suggestion of her

21 Pope Benedict XVI, 'Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections,' September 12, 2006 <[http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html)>.

22 This is the view of Mary assumed in most recent attempts to imagine 'what would Mary do?' See, for example, Lesley Hazelton, *Mary: A Flesh-and-Blood Biography of the Virgin Mother* (New York, 2004).

23 *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), 8.1.53. <[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)>.

24 On the changes in devotion to Mary since Vatican II, see Charlene Spretnak, *Missing Mary: The Queen of Heaven and Her Re-Emergence in the Modern Church* (New York, 2004). For the contrast of the medieval image of Mary with that developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Barbara Corrado Pope, 'Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century,' in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, ed. C.W. Atkinson, C.H. Buchanan, and M.R. Miles (Boston, 1985), 173–200; and Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*.

having any greater cosmic significance is relegated to traces of left-over 'paganism' or, worse, 'clerical excess.'<sup>25</sup>

And yet, even in our contemporary culture, there are hints that something of the pre-Enlightened vision of Mary (not to mention Jesus) still resonates with Christian devotees.<sup>26</sup> 'Mary, did you know,' Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene asked in their popular Christmas song (first recorded 1991), 'that your baby boy has walked where angels trod? And when you kiss your little baby, you have kissed the face of God?' And even more remarkably:

Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?  
 Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?  
 Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?  
 This sleeping child you're holding is the great I AM.<sup>27</sup>

The twelfth-century Benedictine abbess Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) could not have put it more poignantly. As she sang to the Virgin:

O splendid jewel and unclouded beauty of the sun!  
 The Sun is infused in you as a fount springing from the heart of the Father;  
 It is His sole Word, by Whom He created the world,  
 The primary matter (*prima materia*), which Eve threw into disorder.

The Father fashioned the Word in you as a human being (*hominem*),  
 And therefore you are the matter that shines most brightly (*lucida materia*),  
 Through whom the Word breathed out the whole of the virtues,  
 As once from primary matter He made all the creatures.<sup>28</sup>

25 This is the premise of the critique offered by Marina Warner in *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York, 1976): Mary is bad for women because no living woman can be both virgin and mother.

26 For recent attempts to recover the older tradition for contemporary theology and devotion, see Scott Hahn, *Hail, Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God* (New York, 2001); Sarah Jane Boss, *Mary*, New Century Theology (London, 2004); and Aidan Nichols, *There is No Rose: The Mariology of the Catholic Church* (Minneapolis, 2015).

27 <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,\\_Did\\_You\\_Know%3F](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,_Did_You_Know%3F)>. The November 2014 recording by Pentatonix is angelic: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE>>. In the medieval tradition, the answer to the song's question is a resounding, 'Yes!'

28 Hildegard, *Scivias*, 111.13.1, ed. Adelgundis Führkötter and Angela Carlevaris, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievals* 43–43A (Turnhout, 1978), 615; trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York, 1990), 525, with changes.

Even more famously, Anselm, the Benedictine archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1109), prayed in similar fashion a generation or two earlier:

O Lady...you showed to the world its Lord and its God  
whom it had not known.  
You showed to the sight of all the world  
its Creator whom it had not seen.  
You gave birth to the restorer of the world  
for whom the lost world longed...  
The world was wrapped in darkness,  
surrounded and oppressed by demons under which it lay,  
but from you alone light was born into it,  
which broke its bonds and trampled underfoot their power.<sup>29</sup>

This was the mystery at the core of Mary's proclamation as *Theotokos* at the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) on which ancient and medieval Christian devotion to Mary depended. Again in the words of the *Akathistos* (known in the Latin West in a translation most likely by Christophorus I, bishop of Venice from 803 to 807), Mary was the one 'through whom creation is made new' (*per quam renovatur creatura*), the one 'through whom the Creator is worshipped' (*cum qua adoratur plasmator*) (stanza 1), just as the prophet Jeremiah had promised.<sup>30</sup> In Jeremiah's words: 'The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: A woman shall compass a man' (Jeremiah 31:22). As the author of the *Akathistos* sought to make clear, Mary, the one through whom the Creator had renewed his creation, was far more than just the mother of the man. She was the 'star causing the sun to shine' (*stella demonstrans solem*) (stanza 1), the 'celestial ladder by which God descended' (*scala celestis, per quam descendit deus*) (stanza 3), the 'earth that flourishes with a fertility of compassion' (*arva pululans copiam miserationum*) (stanza 5), the 'fold of spiritual sheep' (*aula rationalium ovium*) (stanza 7), the 'bright dawn of the mystical day' (*mistici diei sol*) (stanza 9), the 'pillar of fire, guiding those in darkness' (*ignea columna ducens eos, qui sunt in tenebris*) (stanza 11), and the 'tree of glorious fruit on which the faithful feed' (*arbor splendida fructiferax, ex qua nutriuntur fideles*) (stanza 13). Coming forth from her 'seedless womb,' the Creator 'revealed a new creation,

29 Anselm, *Oratio 7*, ed. F.S. Schmitt, *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, 1946–1961), 3:20; trans. Benedicta Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm, with the Proslogion* (Harmondsworth, 1973), 118.

30 For the Latin translation of the *Akathistos*, see Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos*, 1:100–127. For the Greek, see Peltomaa, *Image of the Virgin Mary*, 2–19. It is Peltomaa's argument that the *Akathistos* was written in direct response to the council of Ephesus.

manifesting himself to...his creatures' as a humble man (*novam ostendit creaturam manifestans creator nobis ab ipso factis, sine semine germinans fructus*) (stanza 13). But, and this was the heart of the mystery, while 'present wholly among those below,' the 'uncircumscribed Word [was] in no way absent from those above' (*totam erat in imis, et supernis nullo modo aberat incircumscriptum verbum*) (stanza 15). In encompassing the man Jesus, Mary—the 'all-holy chariot of him who is above the Cherubim' (*habitus eius sanctissimus, qui est super cherubim*), the 'excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the Seraphim' (*cella omnifinita ei, qui est in seraphim*)—contained in her heart, mind, and womb the uncontainable God (stanza 15). More particularly, as the one who gave birth to the Word, she was the living ark, tabernacle, and temple, 'greater than the Holy of Holies' (*sancta sanctorum maior*), whom the Lord 'who holds all in his hands' made for himself in which to dwell (stanza 23).

Let us contemplate this mystery for a moment. As ancient and medieval Christians would have it, at the Incarnation, God—the Author of all things visible and invisible, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Lord of all creation, the great I AM—entered into his own work, that is, into the very thing that he made, by taking on the very elements that he made, in the womb of the Virgin Mary and becoming truly man. As Archbishop Anselm put it, turning the mystery round and round, as if struggling to convince himself that it might be thinkable:

All nature is created by God and God is born of Mary.  
 God created all things, and Mary gave birth to God.  
 God who made all things made himself of Mary,  
 and thus he refashioned everything he had made.<sup>31</sup>

But how, after all, was this possible, for the Maker to enter his artifact—as it were, for the singer to enter his tale or the designer enter into his picture—without shattering the very thing that he had made?<sup>32</sup> How was it possible for one of his creatures to give birth to God? What kind of creature could contain its creator without itself containing the whole of creation? How could a creature provide a habitation for God? If for most modern Christians, it has seemed most significant that Mary was a particular historical woman (about whom, we

<sup>31</sup> *Oratio 7*, ed. Schmitt, *Opera omnia*, 3:22; trans. Ward, *Prayers*, 120.

<sup>32</sup> As the devout Catholic Oxford philologist J.R.R. Tolkien had the woman Andreth wonder in her debate with the Elf Finrod: 'How could He the greater [beyond measure] do this? Would it not shatter Arda [the world], or indeed all of Eä [creation]?' See Tolkien, 'Athabeth Finrod ah Andreth,' in *Morgoth's Ring: The Later Silmarillion Part One: The Legends of Aman*, ed. Christopher Tolkien, *The History of Middle Earth 10* (Boston, 1993), 322.

must admit, the Scriptures say very little), for medieval Christians like Anselm, Hildegard, and Servas Sanctus, it was far more significant that she was a creature fashioned by God to be the most perfect dwelling-place of God, about whom the Scriptures, particularly the Psalms that they sang daily in her Office and yearly at her feasts, speak all the time.<sup>33</sup>

'Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God,' they heard the psalmist sing of her. 'Shall not Zion say: "This man and that man is born in her?" And the Highest himself hath founded her' (Psalm 86:3, 5).<sup>34</sup> 'The God of gods shall be seen in Zion' (Psalm 83:8). 'For the Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath chosen it for his dwelling' (Psalm 131:13). 'Adore ye the Lord in his holy court' (Psalm 28:2). 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, unto length of days' (Psalm 92:5). 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all they that dwell therein' (Psalm 23:1). 'The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful; the most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof, she (*eam*) shall not be moved' (Psalm 45:5–6). 'The mountain of God is a fat mountain, a curdled mountain, a fat mountain... A mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell, for there the Lord shall dwell unto the end' (Psalm 67:16–17). 'He shall come down like rain upon the fleece and as showers falling gently upon the earth' (Psalm 71:6). 'The Lord maketh the flood [in which] to dwell, and the Lord shall sit [as] king forever' (Psalm 28:10). 'And his throne as the sun before me and as the moon perfect forever and a faithful witness in heaven' (Psalm 88:38). 'He hath set his tabernacle in the sun, and he as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way' (Psalm 18:6).

This was the Lord who had taken up habitation in the womb of the Virgin: The Lord enthroned above the river on the fat mountain, the God of gods who was seen—who became visible—in Zion, the holy city. To many modern scholars and some Christians, it might seem hyperbolic, even unorthodox, to insist that the creature in whom God made his dwelling might have been peculiarly holy, not to mention unique. Conversely, as many feminist critics have argued, it might seem a slight against the Virgin as a woman to suggest that

33 For a full discussion of the place of Mary in the psalms used in the Hours of the Virgin and the liturgy of Mary's feasts, see Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, chapter 3. Psalms 8, 18, 23, 44, 45, 86, 95, 96, and 97 (Vulgate numbering) were sung throughout Europe for the Marian Office of Matins for both her Hours and her feasts. The psalms for the other parts of her Office were somewhat more variable. Servas Sanctus uses all of the psalms cited here in his exegesis of Mary's titles.

34 Cited according to *The Vulgate Bible: Vol. 3 The Poetical Books. Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Swift Edgar and Angela M. Kinney, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), with changes.



what made her unique was that God had fashioned her for himself with the express purpose of taking up his habitation in her, as if she were but a vessel that he might later discard, although, according to the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven after her death, he most certainly did not.<sup>35</sup> As the Catholic theologian Matthias Scheeben (d. 1888) long ago pointed out, such criticisms of pre-modern Marian imagery have as much to do with the (liberal) Protestant rejection of the divinity of Christ as they do with concerns about whether pre-modern (or, indeed, modern) Marian devotion was somehow overly or imperfectly respectful towards women.<sup>36</sup>

Before we critique ancient and medieval Christians for their hyperbole in attempting to describe Mary or assume that such expressions of Mary's excellence must not be fully orthodox, or even Christian, we need to revise not only our understanding of Mary, but also our understanding of God, Scripture, and creation. Happily, to help us, we have Servas Sanctus and his catalogue of creatures, or rather, to give it its full title as it was published in 1651: *Mariale, sive liber de praecellentibus et eximiis SS. Dei genitricis Mariae supra reliquas creaturas praerogativis, ex arcanis S. Scripturae, SS. Patrum, theologiae et philosophiae naturalis mysteriis concinnatus*. In the vulgar tongue: 'Mariale, or book on the excellent and exceptional prerogatives of Mary, the Mother of God, above all other creatures, harmoniously compiled from the secrets of Holy Scripture, the Fathers, and the mysteries of theology and natural philosophy.'<sup>37</sup>

Appropriately, for a book concerned with the prerogatives of Mary, the Mother of the Word, Servas Sanctus begins with an elementary grammatical exercise involving words.

## 2 The Psalter of Creation

'Dearest brothers,' Servas Sanctus invites his audience, paraphrasing the Venerable Bede's opening to his homily on Luke 1:26–38, 'let us listen with intent ear to the exordium of our salvation that we might merit to attain the promised gift of salvation.'<sup>38</sup> For, Servas Sanctus continues, as Cicero says in the first

35 On Mary as a precious vessel, see Boss, *Mary*, 67–73.

36 M.J. Scheeben, *Mariology*, trans. T.L.M.J. Geukers, 2 vols. in 1 (St. Louis, 1946–1948).

37 For fuller discussion of the *Mariale* in the context of the other thirteenth-century encyclopedias of Mary's titles, see Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, chapter 2.

38 Servas Sanctus, *Mariale*, praefatio, citing Bede, *Homilia XLVII*, ed. J.A. Giles, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, 12 vols. (London, 1843–1844), 5:360–368. This sermon was included in the Carolingian homiliary of Paul the Deacon, making it one of the best-known texts on the Annunciation.

book of his *De inventione*, an exordium is ‘a passage which brings the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech. This will be accomplished if he becomes well-disposed, attentive, and receptive.’<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, Servas Sanctus argues, Christians should listen carefully to the exordium that God spoke through the angel Gabriel to Mary, ‘our most prudent and faithful advocate,’ for the sake of the first father Adam and all his human children, because therein lies something new, wonderful, ineffable, and useful for human beings to receive. For, after all, if there is no jot or tittle of the law empty of mystery (cf. Matthew 5:18), how much the more, Servas Sanctus reasons, must that brief and blessed word which announced human salvation be full of significance. ‘Therefore,’ Servas Sanctus enjoins his audience, ‘let us see, as the Apostle is seen to have advised the Hebrews, what and how many are the elements of this exordium!’

Okay, let’s count!<sup>40</sup> By Servas Sanctus’s reckoning, we find eighty-three elements or letters, most perfectly summed up—because eight is the number of completion—in the three theological virtues (*Theologicis*) which the Apostle Paul enumerated (1 Corinthians 13:13). We find also thirty-seven syllables, signifying Mary, her faith in the Trinity and the divine law, and the plenitude of sevenfold grace with which she was filled. There are fifteen words, signifying the fifteen steps of virtue which she ascended into the temple, plus five distinctions or phrases. The angelic salutation itself contained nine words (‘*Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum: Benedicta tu in mulieribus*’), signifying that she was full of the graces of all the saints and angels. And the result of all our calculations? Servas Sanctus does the arithmetic: ‘Collect, if you will, all these into one, and add that which is customarily added at the end of this salutation, and you will have one hundred fifty, the number of the psalms of David.’

Aha! So we are going to be reading the psalms for what they can tell us about the Virgin Mary? Not quite, for while the psalms of David sing the praises of Christ, it is another psalter altogether in which we hear the praises of Mary. So what is this psalter? Where are we going to find it?

39 Cicero, *De inventione*, lib. 1, cap. 15, trans. H.M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library 386 (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 40–41.

40 Here, as we shall see, Servas Sanctus leads his audience through an exercise with which they would have been familiar from school, but it is not actually clear from what text he is working. From the word and phrase count, it seems to be Luke 1:28, but the letters and syllables do not add up: ‘Et ingressus angelus ad eam dixit: Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus’: 77 letters (6 short), 35 syllables (2 short). Adding ‘Gabriel’ or ‘Maria’ doesn’t help because then there are too many words. Bede gives the verse as ‘Et ingressus *autem* angelus ad eam dixit: Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus.’

‘Seek,’ Servas Sanctus would have his audience,

in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and in every abyss, in the Scriptures, in its figures and in its creatures, until you find the same number as it were of harpists playing their harps in praise of Mary (*donec invenias juxta numerum istum quasi quendam chorum cytharodorum cytharizantium cytharis suis laudes Mariae*), so as to make up a pleasing psalter with harp (*ut sit Psalterium jucundum cum cythara*), so that just as the praises of Christ are sung with the psalter of David, so on this harp the praises of the Virgin might be sung.

And how many such harpists do we find when we search the heavens, the earth, the seas, the abyss, the Scriptures, its figures and creatures? Exactly as many as we found elements in the exordium of human salvation, subdivided according to their natures. In natural things (*in rebus naturalibus*), we find eighty-three; in made things (*in rebus artificialibus*), we find thirty-seven; in moral characters (*in moralibus*), we find fifteen; in orders of the saints, five; in orders of the angels, nine; and one which sums up all the others (*‘Magnificata’*). Moreover, in all of these, if we look carefully, we find—and this is very significant for Servas Sanctus’ purposes—the elements (*elementa*) of Mary’s praise, for they show her in their forms (*quasi quaedam facies ipsam Virginem utcumque*), represent her in figure (*quasi in aenigmate repraesentantes*), name her (*quasi quaedam vocabula nomen Virginis interpretantia*), and wrap the plenitude of her graces in parables (*quasi quaedam parabola gratiarum ejus plenitudinem involutam*) through the particulars they contain (*pro particulis continentes*). For just as, in the words of the Philosopher (i.e. Aristotle), ‘those things which are dispersed in animals by nature are gathered together in man by reason,’<sup>41</sup> so all the graces and blessings which are bestowed upon others in part are gathered together in Mary in full (cf. Proverbs 31:29).

Aha! So we are going to be reading the creatures for what they can tell us about Mary? Yes—but, again, not quite. For in Mary herself there is a further mystery. ‘In me,’ Wisdom says in Ecclesiasticus 24:25, ‘is all grace of the way (*gratia omnis viae*), that is,’ according to Servas Sanctus, ‘of every creature, which is a way to the Creator (*id est omnis creaturae, quae est via ad Creatorem*), for Mary, the book of life and the mirror and the exemplar either is or contains

41 Here Servas Sanctus is most likely citing the Franciscan Alexander of Hales (d. 1245), *Summa theologica*, liber 3, pars 2, inquisitio 3, tractatus 2, sectio 1, quaestio 2, tit. 4, cap. 3, art. 2, num. 344, ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 4 vols. in 5 (Quaracchi, 1924–1948), vol. 4, pt. 1, 512, who cites ‘the Philosopher.’

all these things' (*haec enim omnia est aut continent liber vitae et speculum et exemplar Maria*). As Servas Sanctus would have it, Mary, the 'mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope' (Ecclesiasticus 24:24), is *the* way to the Creator because she is the book of life containing all the creatures of Creation, who herself promises with Wisdom: 'They that explain me shall have life everlasting' (Ecclesiasticus 24:31). 'And I wept,' says John in Apocalypse 5:4, 'because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it.' Somehow, Servas Sanctus implies, we need to learn how to read this book!

Significantly, if frustratingly for his modern readers, other than his analysis of the elements of the exordium, Servas Sanctus offers at this point no further exposition of his method, suggesting at the very least that he did not expect his thirteenth-century audience to need any. Nor, indeed—and this is significant for our appreciation of Servas Sanctus's audience as well as for his purpose—arguably would they, particularly if, being good Florentines, they had received a standard education in the liberal arts.<sup>42</sup> For starters, every Florentine schoolchild worth his or her stylus would have been able to identify the opening of an oration as an 'exordium,' as well as to recite Cicero's explanation of its purpose. They likewise would have been familiar with the exercise of breaking an *oratio* down into its constituent grammatical parts (letters, syllables, words, phrases) so as to discern its structure. Whereas modern readers more often than not find such exercises arcane at best, evidence of purposeful clerical obfuscation at worst, for Servas Sanctus's thirteenth-century audience, they would have been quite literally elementary, the very basics of learning to speak and read, whether in Latin or, increasingly, in the vernacular.<sup>43</sup>

Nor would his thirteenth-century audience have to have had any special training in reading Scripture to follow Servas Sanctus's opening exposition. Even if they had had only the most basic instruction in grammar, they would be intimately familiar with the psalter, because the psalter was the book with which they would have learned to read alongside the grammar of Donatus,

42 According to the chronicler Giovanni Villani, there were between eight and ten thousand boys and girls attending primary schools in Florence in 1283, exactly the time when Servas Sanctus was writing. See Lynn Thorndike, 'Elementary and Secondary Education in the Middle Ages,' in *Speculum* 15:4 (1940), 400–408, at 402. On Servas Sanctus's Florentine audience more generally, see Daniel R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality* (Athens, 1989).

43 For the instruction in these grammatical and rhetorical elements that the Florentine students might have received, see Brunetto Latini's *Rettorica*, on Cicero's *De inventione*, and Bono Giamboni's translation of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, both from the 1260s. Excerpts from Latini translated by Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475* (Oxford, 2009), 753–779.

who would have taught them how to recognize letters, syllables, and the eight parts of speech, including nouns.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, if they had spent any time at all listening to the sermons preached regularly in their city by Franciscans like Servasactus, they would have little trouble enumerating the three theological virtues (faith, hope, love), the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, godliness, or piety; Isaiah 11:2), the five orders of saints (virgins, confessors, martyrs, apostles, prophets, and patriarchs), or the nine orders of angels (angels, archangels, virtues, powers, principalities, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim). Even the least educated among them would have been able to recite the angel Gabriel's greeting in Latin more or less from infancy.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, they would be familiar with the story of the Virgin's own childhood entry into the Temple by way of its fifteen steps, corresponding, as Jacobus de Voragine noted in his *Legenda aurea* in the chapter on the Virgin's birth, to the fifteen Gradual Psalms (Psalms 119–133).<sup>46</sup>

'But, surely,' I can hear you thinking, 'they would have found it difficult to see Mary in all the creatures of the world, not to mention in artifacts such as windows, ovens, and ships.' Perhaps—but, according to Servasactus, not necessarily for the reasons we might expect. 'Many indeed,' Servasactus observes, 'hold the book in their hands while they offer praises piously and devoutly to Mary, but some do not know the letters, while for others the book is closed and sealed by the exigencies of sin.' Far from intending to offer his audience something hard or obscure, Servasactus seems to have believed that what he was doing was fairly straightforward, an elementary exercise, as it were, in showing them how to read a book that they already knew, even if they could not at the moment open it. As Servasactus put it, whoever found himself sweetly moved by love of the Virgin should prostrate himself in all simplicity and humility before the Lamb 'who was the first to know her perfectly' (*qui primus perficit scire eam*) and pray that he might open the book for him. 'For what,' Servasactus

44 On the use of the psalter and Donatus as the textbooks for learning to read, see Robert Black, 'The Vernacular and the Teaching of Latin in Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Italy,' in *Studi Medievali* 3rd ser. 37 (1996), 703–751, at 703–704; and Robert L. Reynolds, 'Two Documents Concerning Elementary Education in Thirteenth-Century Genoa,' in *Speculum* 12:2 (1937), 255–256.

45 For their education in the *Ave Maria*, see Anne L. Clark, 'The Cult of the Virgin Mary and Technologies of Christian Formation in the Later Middle Ages,' in *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*, ed. John Van Engen (Grand Rapids, 2004), 223–250.

46 Jacobus, *Legenda aurea*, cap. 131 (Nativity of the Virgin), trans. William Granger Ryan, as *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1993), 2:152.

reasoned, ‘are all these visible things (*omnia visibilia*), except the rough and unpolished matter (*materiae rudes et impolitae*) out of which the most wise craftsman (*artifex*) or masterbuilder (*architectus*) knows best how to sculpt carved signs (*sculpere signacula sculptilia*) and with the help of grace easily to bring forth the most beautiful images (*imagines pulcherrimas*).’ Of course, Servas Sanctus seems to be saying, Christians can read Mary in the visible creatures of the world, for, after all, they are all creatures of the same Creator, made according to his designs. To see God in his creature Mary, all they need to do is open their eyes!

### 3 Seeing God in Mary

At this point, I suspect, my more *literati* readers are getting decidedly uneasy. What does Servas Sanctus mean, all the creatures point through Mary to God? Particularly since we are reading Scripture—we are reading Scripture, aren’t we? And everybody knows—or, at least, would if he were a thirteenth-century preacher—that Scripture rarely speaks so openly of its mysteries. Shouldn’t Servas Sanctus be talking about the four levels of Scripture, and about how some things are to be read historically, some allegorically, some tropologically, and some anagogically? You would think as much if you had read Henri de Lubac’s magisterial four-volume account of the canons of medieval biblical exegesis, or, indeed, almost any subsequent textbook account of medieval interpretive method.<sup>47</sup> Historically or literally, the Scriptures speak of things actually done; allegorically, they point to Christ or the Church; tropologically, they pertain to instruction in morals; and anagogically, they refer to celestial things, such as God and the angels and saints in glory.<sup>48</sup> Nowhere does this method say anything about reading Mary, the Mother of God, in the visible creatures of the world or about reading Mary the creature of God as the book, mirror, or exemplar of the Masterbuilder of all things visible and invisible in heaven and on earth.

Nor, in fact, does Servas Sanctus expect it to, his proof being in the rare instances in which he does invoke the four-fold method, only to suggest how it does not apply to Mary, or, if it does, not in the way that one might expect.

47 Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Marc Sebanc and E.M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, 1998–2009).

48 Thomas of Chobham, *Summa de arte praedicandi*, prologue, trans. Copeland and Sluiter, *Medieval Grammar*, 618–619.

In Chapter 38, on Mary as the mountain (Psalm 67:16, '*Mons Dei, mons pinguis*'), commenting on her fertility ('fatness'), he mentions almost as an aside (albeit a highly significant aside) how God set the people of Israel, 'that is, of those seeing the Lord, that is, of those seeking to see the face of God' (*id est, videntium Dominum, id est, faciem Dei videre quaerentium*), "upon high land," that they might "eat the fruits of the field...suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone, butter of the herd, and milk of the sheep with the fat of lambs, and of the rams of the breed of Basan; and goats with the marrow of wheat, and might drink the purest blood of the grape" (Deuteronomy 32:13–14). These nine dishes, Servas Sanctus explains, are the nine spiritual foods with which the mountain feeds her lovers, four to fatten the understanding (*intellectus*) and five to fatten the emotions (*affectus*). Of the dishes for the intellect, honey is the anagogical sense which refreshes with the sweetness of contemplation, while oil is the allegorical sense which illuminates with the virtue of faith. Both of these dishes are drawn from the hard rock of the letter of the law, that is, from the rough and disordered multitude of ceremonies. Butter refers to the moral sense separated out from the cheesy letter, while milk, the food for little ones, is the history, plain and sweet, taken from the example of the saints. At no point in this discussion, however, does Servas Sanctus suggest that these modes of understanding refer to the way in which Mary herself may be read as the fat mountain; rather, they are the dishes that her lovers receive from her to sustain them on their quest to see God.

The only other place where Servas Sanctus even alludes to the traditional senses of Scripture is in his description in Chapter 95 of Mary as the house of God (*domus Dei*) (cf. Psalm 92:5). But, again, he takes his readers places that the usual account of the division of letter and spirit would not lead us to expect. 'Behold,' Wisdom says in Proverbs 22:20, 'I have described it to thee three manner of ways, in thoughts (*cogitationibus*) and knowledge (*scientia*).' Servas Sanctus elaborates: Mary is described as the house of God both *in scientia* and *in cogitationibus*. In knowledge, that is, in the example of visible things (*in exemplo visibili*), she is at once the best hospital (*hospitalaria optima*), wealthy and well-administered, for she opens to whoever knocks and abounds in works of piety for pilgrims, the sick, and the poor; and she is a royal residence (*domus Regiae*), where marks (*insignia*) of nobility abound and the bridegroom receives his bride. In thoughts, that is, in imagination (*in imaginariae*), however, she is the house of the Lord that the prophet Ezekiel saw, for, indeed, 'it is certain that many things which are said in this vision about that house cannot be understood except literally (*ad literam*) as most properly (*propriissime*) concerning the Blessed Virgin.' *Ad literam*, according to Servas Sanctus, that is, according to the letter of what is said in Scripture, not allegorically or

mystically, but in the proper sense of the text, Mary was the house of Ezekiel's vision. Its gates were her gates, its walls were her walls, its courtyards were her courtyards, for she contained within herself Christ, that is, the Lamb who is the temple of the holy city of Jerusalem (cf. Revelation 21: 22). This is why the man standing next to him in the inner courtyard of the house said to Ezekiel: 'Son of man, [this is] the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever' (Ezekiel 43:7). *Ad literam*, according to Servasactus, Mary is the house where the man was standing, the house that, as Ezekiel saw it, was 'filled with the glory of the Lord' (Ezekiel 43:5).

Odd as such interpretation may strike his modern readers, Servasactus was, as we have seen, hardly alone in his glorification of the Virgin as the creature whom the Lord made for himself in which to dwell. Nor at any point does Servasactus suggest that in reading Scripture in this way he was doing anything new, any more than Anselm or Hildegard or the author of the *Akathistos* had apologized for hailing Mary as 'gateway of life, door of salvation...vase and temple of life' (Anselm) or 'shining white lily on which God gazed before all creation...[whose] womb held joy when all the celestial harmony resounded from [her]' (Hildegard) or 'tabernacle of God and the Word...greater than the Holy of Holies...ark gilded by the Spirit...inexhaustible treasury of life' (*Akathistos*).<sup>49</sup> For all his use of such newly available sources of natural philosophy as Avicenna, Platearius, and Michael Scot (particularly in his descriptions of Mary as a medicinal plant and of God as an alchemist in making gold out of leaden souls<sup>50</sup>), far from something radically new, Servasactus's *Mariale* may best be seen rather as a distillation of a tradition going back the better part of a millennium to the Council of Ephesus when Mary was hailed as the *Theotokos*, the living temple of the Word.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, as I argue in *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, it may go back even further, to the very origins of Christianity itself, to the tradition on which, as Old Testament scholar Margaret Barker has argued, the worship of the ancient

49 Anselm, *Oratio* 7, ed. Schmitt, *Opera omnia*, 3:20, trans. Ward, *Prayers*, 118; Hildegard, 'Ave generosa,' ed. and trans. Barbara Newman, *Symphonia* (Ithaca, 1988), 122–125; *Akathistos*, stanza 23, ed. and trans. Peltomaa, *Image of the Virgin Mary*, 18–19.

50 On God as alchemist, see chapters 40–41 (precious minerals, gold); on Mary as a medicinal plant, see chapters 50 (olive tree), 51 (plane tree), 57 (pomegranate), 58 (almond), 61 (chaste tree), 66 (myrrh), 68 (galbanum), 69 (onyx), 70 (drop), 72 (balm), 75 (lily), and *passim*.

51 Proclus of Constantinople, *Homily* 1.2, ed. and trans. Nicholas Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5*, Texts and Translations, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 66 (Leiden, 2003), 139.



Hebrew temple depended.<sup>52</sup> Within this tradition, of which, according to Barker, Christianity was not inventor but heir, Yahweh, the LORD of Israel, was believed to have been present on the holy mountain in his temple, the place of his throne, itself filled at the singing of the psalms with the glory of the LORD. This is why the psalmist sang: ‘The God of gods shall be seen in Zion’ (Psalm 83:8)—because, in this tradition, it was believed that the LORD *would* be seen in Zion, if not face to face, then in the glory which filled his temple as the priests and people sang (2 Chronicles 5:13–14).<sup>53</sup> (As the Evangelist John put it: ‘And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father’ [John 1:14], because as the Word of God Jesus was the true light, the Lord.) This same LORD appeared to Moses on the holy mountain in a cloud of glory and revealed to him the pattern (*exemplar*) for constructing the tabernacle in which the LORD would dwell among his people (Exodus 25:40). It was this same pattern on which the temple of Solomon would be built.

Mary, according to Servas Sanctus, was this *exemplar* (Chapter 84). As King David told his son Solomon, having described for him the house of the Lord that he was to build, its porch, temple, cellars, upper rooms, inner chambers, room for the mercy seat, its courtyards and treasuries, along with its gold and silver vessels, lampstands and lamps, tables, forks, censers and bowls, little lions, altar of incense, and the golden chariot of the cherubim that were to spread their wings over the ark of the covenant: ‘All these things came to me written by the hand of the LORD that I might understand all the works of the pattern (*universa opera exemplaris*)’ (1 Chronicles 28:19). ‘Truly blessed,’ Servas Sanctus exclaims, ‘was that man whom you taught, Lord, and blessed [are] your men and your servants, as the Queen of the South said, who stand before you that they might hear your wisdom [cf. 2 Chronicles 9:7] and see face to face that eternal pattern (*exemplar aeternum*), which is the book of life and the unspotted mirror of the Majesty of God [cf. Wisdom 7:26], to see which is to have eternal life.’ For us, however, Servas Sanctus cautions his audience, to attempt to gaze upon this light, this primary beauty would be as blinding to our understanding as it would be for the night-owl to attempt to gaze upon the sun. In his compassion, therefore, the Father has given us a pattern that we can read (*exemplar legibile*), through which we are able to perceive through similitude how much the condition of the creature suffers and what it ought to be. ‘For,’ Servas Sanctus explains, ‘Mary is the pure creature in which the Wisdom of God, the maker of all things (*omnium artifex*), designed and set spiritually whatever

52 Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, chapter 3. For Barker’s full argument, see *Mother of the Lord. Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple* (London, 2013).

53 Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London, 2007), 221–238.

could be designed in every work of gold, silver, bronze, marble, gemstones, and diverse woods [cf. Exodus 31:4–5; 35:32–33], by the work of the jeweler, the carpenter, and the embroiderer.... For in this pattern (*exemplari*) all the works of God are perfected,' unlike in us, to whom, as the Apostle says, the gifts of the Spirit are given only in part (1 Corinthians 12:8–11).

Servasanctus goes on to itemize the way in which the seven types of craftsmanship that went into the building of the tabernacle and the temple (stone-cutting, damask-weaving, woodworking, metalworking, perfumery, glassblowing, and gem-cutting) correspond to the seven actions of the Spirit by which the soul is formed (fear, piety, knowledge, strength, counsel, understanding, and wisdom), by the operation of all of which Mary was perfectly made. All these works came to David written by the hand of God that he might understand the *exemplar* according to which the temple, the most perfect soul, would be made. Mary was this perfect *exemplar* written by the hand of God, filled with the most perfect plenitude of virtues, so that to her, like a true *exemplar*, he might return whoever disposed in his heart to walk from virtue to virtue until he should see the God of gods in Zion, that is, the mirror of eternity. Just as human artisans who write or sculpt or paint always choose the most beautiful models to imitate, so those who strive for perfection ought to hold Mary before their eyes.

'Look at the book of nature and read the book of Scripture (*Vide librum naturae et lege librum Scripturae*),' Servasanctus urged his readers (Chapter 21), for in both, he averred, they would behold the Virgin Mary as the *exemplar* and mirror of God because she was the creature in which he chose to dwell. 'Almost every page of Scripture announces Mary as the city of God (*de Civitate Dei Maria tota pene Scripturae pagina pronuntiat*)' (Chapter 89), for she is the mirror of mirrors reflecting back the knowledge and action of God, so pure that she excels the seraphim (Chapter 86). 'The God of gods shall be seen in Zion' (Psalm 83:8), that is, Servasanctus reiterates, in a mirror. While the Son is the unblemished mirror of the majesty of God, Mary, his creature, is the mirror through which he is seen *in aenigmate* (cf. Romans 1:20). She is the one whom he chose as his habitation from the beginning of the world. In the beginning when God created heaven and earth, he had already conceived her (Proverbs 8:23–24). She is *Magnificata* because everything said in the Scriptures about the history of creation and salvation was actually said about her, the firstborn before all creatures (Chapter 150).

'To see something,' Servasanctus reminds his readers, 'is to know its causes.... [Thus that fountain of goodness says]: "See the rainbow, and bless him that made it" [Ecclesiasticus 43:12], as if to say: He who sees her who was made sees

him who made her, for she is his most exact likeness (*expressissima similitudo*) (Chapter 14). Indeed, nothing is more like God than Mary, even if while on earth, Christians can see her likeness only in part. On earth, the rainbow appears as a semicircle, but in heaven it appears as a circle, perfect and whole, surrounding the throne of God (cf. Revelation 4:3), just as Mary encircled God in her womb. 'For,' Servasanctus comments, citing Jeremiah 31:22, 'when "the Lord made a new thing on earth," that is, "a woman encompassed a man" in the embrace of her womb, then the Most High showed his work and opened his bow, which encircled heaven surrounding his glory when [Mary] encompassed God in the embrace of her womb.'

Nothing in modern Marian scholarship or liberal theology, focused as it has been on the humanity of Jesus and the search for a historical man, prepares us for this vision of Mary as the one in whom the God of gods shall be seen. And yet, for Servasanctus as for his contemporaries like Engelbert of Admont, Walter of Wimborne, Jacobus de Voragine, Conrad of Saxony, and Richard of St. Laurent, as well as for their predecessors like Hildegard, Anselm, and the author of the *Akathistos* hymn, this was literally (*ad literam*) what the Scriptures were about, even if, at times, they might take some unlocking, sealed as they—or, rather, the book of life, who is Mary—had been by seven seals (cf. Revelation 5:1). 'Behold,' Servasanctus invites his readers to marvel (Chapter 85), 'how the Wisdom of God keeps his secret one for himself alone: By wonderfully hiding his mother he shows her, by showing he hides her.' Sometimes he shows her by multiplying the figures by which she is signified, so that sometimes he shows her as the temple, sometimes the tabernacle, sometimes the throne or the ark. Sometimes he compares her to lesser creatures, like the cedar, the cypress, the palm, the plane tree, the olive, the lily, and the rose (Ecclesiasticus 24:17–19). Other times he describes her as surpassing other creatures, as when he says, 'Many daughters have gathered together riches; you have surpassed them all' (Proverbs 31:29) or finds her more beautiful than the stars and sun. Sometimes he says that she is without compare, like the lily among the thorns (Song of Songs 2:2) or like the gates of Zion loved above all the tabernacles of Jacob (Psalm 86:2). Sometimes he denies outright that she may be described, there being no such work as she in all the kingdoms of the world (3 Kings 10:20). Other times he declares her beyond comprehension altogether. And sometimes he shows her by word and sign through the admiration of the angels, who three times say in the Song of Songs, '*Quae est ista? Who is this, who is this?*' (Song of Songs 3:6, 6:9, 8:5), and of the golden cherubim upon the ark, who turn their faces towards the mercy seat as if in mutual admiration, rejoicing for wonder and wondering for joy.

Who is this woman who encompassed God? According to Servas Sanctus and his contemporaries, it would take the whole of creation to say—and even then we would have said hardly enough.

## Appendix

Manuscripts of the *Mariale* (working list, starred items described by Koehler, ‘Onze manuscrits’)

### 13th Century

- \*Florence, Laurenziana Cod. Plut. XXXV.sin. 4
  - Available online TECA digitale
  - Described by Angelo Maria Bandini, *Catalogus codicum bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae*, t. IV (1777), cols. 309–310: Anonymi de laudibus beatae Mariae
  - Endpaper: ‘Iste liber est conventus sancte Crucis de Florentia ordinis Minorum. N. 768’
- \*Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Cod. Conv. Soppr. B.4.725 [incomplete]

### 14th Century

- \*Valencia, Bibl. Eccl. Cath., Cod. 209 [catalogue no. 72], fols. 7–145
  - Attributes *Mariale* to ‘Johis Servas Sancti Ordinis Minorum’ [Johannes Servas Sanctus, O.Min.]
  - Donated to the cathedral library in 1440 by Francisco Rovira
- \*Avignon, Bibliothèque municipale [Bibl. du Mus. Calvet], MS 284, 173 fols.
- \*Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1389, 153 fols.
  - Copied possibly in Bologna, third quarter of the 14th century
  - Acquired by Ernestus of Prague and given to the Augustinian house at Glatz
  - Used for the edition published in 1651
  - Described by H.J. Hermann, *Die italienischen Handschriften des Dugento und Trecento. Teil 2: Oberitalienische Handschriften der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1929), 152–153.
- \*Prague, Statni Kikovna C S R, MS V.A.2, fols. 1–168
  - Date 1385–1386
- \*Prague, Archiv MS C.X. [Arch. Prazskeho Hradu V.10], fols. 112r-250v
- Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 8952, 233 fols.
  - Inc. Exordium salutis nostre dicit Beda
  - Exp. et ita per omnes plateas ierusalem in eternum et ultra contabimus [sic]. Alleluia. Amen, amen, amen.

Ipswich Museum No. 4, xiv (late), 133 fols.

- Inc. Exordium salutis nostre dicit b. fratres karissimi. According to James, ‘The author must be J. Tymworth.’
  - From the library of Bury St. Edmonds, described by Montague Rhodes James, *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury I. The Library II. The Church* (Cambridge, 1895), 65–66.
- Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Nouv. acq. lat. 722, 173 fols.
- ‘Iste liber est de libraria Carmelitarum Parisius.’
  - ‘Anonyme sermone in honorem beatae Mariae.’

### *15th Century*

\*Bordeaux, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 296, 150 fols.

- Belonged to the convent of the Augustinians of Bordeaux

\*Marseille, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 86, 202 fols.

- Date 1410

\*Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 388, 297 fols.

- From the abbey of Marchiennes

\*Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS AG IX 30, fols. 2v-98v

- Date 1455–1456, made at the command of Dominico de Dominici, bishop of Torcello and Brescia, at the monastery of St. Cyprian in Murano
- Fols. 99r-209v contains an unfinished copy of Richard of St. Laurent’s *De laudibus beatae virginis Mariae*

Seville, Bibl. Cap. y Colombina MS 7.4.15

## Marian Devotion in Saint Angela of Foligno (1248–1309), Tertiary and Franciscan Mystic

*Marzia Ceschia*

The only primary source available for reconstructing the life and spirituality of Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) is the so-called *Liber Lelle*, the name by which the text is frequently mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The work is of great interest because of its first-hand knowledge of Angela's religious experience, even as it is the foundation for the narrative of the significance of her life that led her contemporaries to confer upon her the title of 'teacher of theology' (*magistra theologorum*), despite the fact that she was illiterate.<sup>2</sup>

The *Liber* consists of two sections, of which the more important is doubtlessly the first part, the *Memoriale*, a transcription by Friar A. (*frater scriptor A.*) who was her Franciscan spiritual director. Tradition identifies him as Friar Arnaldo, a relative of Angela. We have no further information on him,

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- 1 The manuscript tradition regarding this material is rather complex. An overview is offered by Massimo Vedova in *Esperienza e dottrina. Il Memoriale di Angela da Foligno* (Rome, 2009), 39–73. For the Latin quotes from the *Liber*, this article relies on the work of Fortunato Frezza: *Liber Lelle. Il Libro di Angela da Foligno nel testo del codice di Assisi con versione italiana, note critiche and apparato biblico tratto dal codice di Bagnoregio* (Florence, 2012). The first critical edition of the *Liber* was edited by Ludger Thier and Abele Caluffetti and published in 1985 (Grottaferrata). Recently, Enrico Menestò published a critical edition of the *Memoriale: Angela da Foligno, Memoriale* (Spoleto, 2013).
  - 2 In recent years the bibliographical material on the subject has greatly increased due to the heightened interest in this sainted Franciscan tertiary. We mention only a few of the many recent works, choosing from among those published from the year 2000 and later: P. Anzulewicz, 'L'esperienza di Dio «umanato» pienezza dell'uomo alla luce del Liber della Beata Angela da Foligno,' in *Miscellanea Franciscana* 105 (2005) 3/4, 446–479; V. Battaglia, 'Riflessi di mistica nuziale nell'esperienza spirituale della beata Angela da Foligno,' in *Ricerche Teologiche* 17 (2006) 2, 277–312; G. Benedetti, *La teologia spirituale di Angela da Foligno* (Florence, 2009); *Il Liber di Angela da Foligno e la mistica dei secoli XIII–XIV in rapporto alle nuove culture. Atti del XLV Convegno storico internazionale* (Todi, 12–15 October 2008) (Spoleto, 2009); R. Fusco, *Amore e compassione. L'esperienza di Angela da Foligno* (Rome, 2001); C. Leonardi, *Il Libro di Angela da Foligno: l'amore, la tenebra, l'abisso di Dio*, in *Agiografie Medievali*, eds. A. Degl'Innocenti, F. Santi (Florence, 2011), 99–115; R. Vanelli Coralli, *La retorica dei sensi spirituali in Angela da Foligno* (Bologna, 2010). The original Italian article was translated into English by Nancy Celaschi, OSF, with the assistance of Steven J. McMichael.

however, so his identity nonetheless remains anonymous. This scribe relates Angela's personal account of her experience without failing to frequently point out the inadequacy of his words to describe what she experienced and understood. The second part of the *Liber*, the *Instructiones*, gathers together the *magistra's* instructions to her disciples in the form of admonitions that were presumably edited by several individuals. This part of the *Liber* is particularly interesting because it attests to the existence of Angela's spiritual 'circle,' who served as guardians of her experience (*experientia*) and followers of her teaching (*doctrina*).<sup>3</sup>

Angela was born in Foligno into a well-off family. In a rather short period of time she lost her mother, her husband, and her children. Thus free of every bond and all external restraints, she radically transformed her life. She described this life as one marked by a movement from comfort and vanity to a poor existence, inspired by passionate yearning and marked by an extraordinary and total experience of God perceived as the 'All Good' (*Omne Bonum*). Her conversion was brought about by a lacerating inner conflict: Sorrow for sin and a fear of hell precipitated her 'into an interior crisis that led to her religious *conversio*, to a change in her thinking and lifestyle.'<sup>4</sup>

A critical step in her journey took place in 1285, when she was approximately thirty-seven years old. Going to confession in the Cathedral of San Feliciano in Foligno, she came into contact with the aforementioned Friar A., who at the time was the Bishop's chaplain. At this point in time, she made a resolution to commit herself to a chaste and penitential life, which led her to the decision to rid herself of all her worldly goods. Perhaps in her deliberations about this decision, Angela was inspired by the example of one of her contemporaries, a nobleman from Foligno named Pietro Crisci, who is probably the *Petrucius* mentioned in the *Liber*.<sup>5</sup>

3 The two terms recur significantly together in the *prologus* of the *Memoriale* (hereafter referred to as Mm): 'Quam experientiam et ipsius experientie doctrinam ipse Deus suos fideles facit probare plenissime. Et hic etiam nuper per aliquam suorum fidelium ad devotionem suorum fecit aliquantulum indicare predictam scilicet experientiam et doctrinam' (Mm 1.3-4, 2).

4 U. Köpf, 'Angela da Foligno. Un contributo al movimento femminile francescano del 1300,' in *Movimento religioso e mistica femminile nel Medioevo*, eds. P. Dinzelbacher and D.R. Bauer (Milan, 1993), 261.

5 See A. Calufetti, *Angela da Foligno mistica dell'Ognibene* (Milan, 1992), 47: 'At the origin of her changed life it seems we find the example of the Pietro Crisci from Foligno mentioned above. At that time "Petrucius," as he was called, abandoned his possessions to consecrate himself to an ideal of prayer and evangelical poverty. He dressed in a habit of penance (white sackcloth), but from documents of that time he does not seem to be a Franciscan tertiary, as tradition commonly holds him to be.' See also the comment of Mario Sensi: 'The penitent Crisci...was not only a factor, but also an exemplary witness of evangelical poverty which the

The determinative change, however, took place in 1291, shortly after her reception into the Third Order of St. Francis, although this is not without its problems—as revealed in a most recent work by Alison More—whether she belonged to St. Francis or an institutional Order.<sup>6</sup> As she was traveling to Assisi as a pilgrim to ask St. Francis for the grace to live and die in absolute poverty, she felt within herself a visitation of the Holy Spirit who revealed to her the way to enter entirely into Christ through the Cross. From that moment on, her life's journey took place in a 'difficult, unstable balance between love and sorrow,' between consciousness of her own sinfulness and her mystical experience.<sup>7</sup> This is a motif typical of Angela, in which she could unquestionably see a fundamental choice: What will save her from her 'unworthiness' and her 'deserving hell' is not her 'union with God' and her 'possessing the truth,' but Jesus Crucified.<sup>8</sup>

Angela's account of this experience and reflection on it comprise the main material of the *Liber*. The *Memoriale* is composed of a first section, constituted by the first nineteen 'steps' (*passus*) of Angela's ascetical penitential way, while a second section, the seven 'supplementary steps,' (*passus supplentes*) provide the heart of her true mystical experience.<sup>9</sup> Although transmitted through the inadequate words of Friar A., who transcribed her words into Latin while Angela narrated to him in the Umbrian dialect,<sup>10</sup> Angela's experience can be seen as an 'experiential knowledge' (*cognitio experimentalis*), in which the language of the senses, the aesthetical perspective, is doubtlessly predominant. The senses find in corporeality a symbolic possibility and privileged expression, in

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Spirituals had long considered themselves to be the defenders; perhaps this is the origin of the friendship between Bl. Angela and the penitent Petrucio.' See M. Sensi, *Storie di Bizzocche tra Umbria e Marche* (Rome, 1995), 269.

6 See Alison More, *Fictive Orders and Feminine Religious Identities 1200–1600* (New York, 2018).

7 Benedetti, *La teologia spirituale di Angela da Foligno*, 21.

8 Benedetti, *La teologia spirituale di Angela da Foligno*, 20.

9 See Battaglia, *Riflessi di mistica nuziale*, 281: 'The purpose of the subdivision is also to distinguish between a pre-asceticism and a post-mysticism.' Menestò (Angela da Foligno, *Memoriale*, xxxvi) points out that the *Memoriale* has an asymmetrical structure, in which it is possible to identify three 'moments,' that of the love associated with the way of poverty, of penance, and the cross (the first nineteen *passus priores* and the first five *passus supplentes*), that of nothing (the sixth *passus supplens*) and, last of all, that of the Trinitarian life (the seventh *passus supplens*).

10 On the mediation of Friar A. in narrating the lived experience of Angela, see P. Bourgain, *Angèle de Foligno. Le latin du Liber*, in *Angèle de Foligno. Le dossier*, edited by G. Barone and J. Dalarun (École Française de Rome 1999) 145–167; and Vedova, *Esperienza e dottrina*, 54–63.



which the way of mysticism is both a process of seduction and perception, and the senses are an echo of a contact with the divine.<sup>11</sup>

The crucifix is the primary reference point for the saint from Foligno. Before the cross she senses, knows herself, makes decisions, is transformed, and makes progress along her spiritual journey. In line with the typical Franciscan contemplation of the humanity of Christ, especially in the mysteries of the Incarnation and Passion, Angela's spiritual journey takes on the characteristics of a 'going naked to the cross' (*nuda ire ad crucem*) (Mm 5.4), a 'going towards' which is also a 'going within' and a progressive embrace of the cross within herself through poverty, contempt of self, and suffering.<sup>12</sup> She sees this triad as constantly accompanying her to Christ,<sup>13</sup> to the point of experiencing darkness and total immersion—at the height of the journey (the seventh *passus supplens*)—into the Trinity, in which the soul 'swims.'<sup>14</sup> It is against this background that Angela's Marian spirituality should be approached, and therefore closely connected with the Christo-centeredness that characterizes her experience. For Angela, Mary is constantly cultivated in her relationship to Christ, particularly to his Passion.<sup>15</sup>

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- 11 Regarding the interpretation of the *Memoriale* in an aesthetic perspective, see M. Ceschia, 'Tra senso e sensibilità. Spunti per una lettura in chiave estetica del Memoriale di Angela da Foligno,' in *Il Santo* 52 (2012) 1–2, 179–201; and M. Ceschia, 'I 'sensi' della fede. Una teologia del corpo in Angela da Foligno: donna, mistica, francescana,' in *Il Santo* 55 (2015), 1–22.
- 12 In shorter sentences and phrases, we will be inserting the texts into the main body of this essay. 'Mm' refers to the *Memorial* and 'In' to the *Instructions* with the chapters and numbers of the Latin text (Fortunato Frezza, *Liber Lelle*).
- 13 Angela makes frequent reference to the three-fold company of Christ, identifying it with the triad of suffering-disdain-poverty, to which the true disciple must be conformed: 'Adulterini filii appellantur qui extra disciplinam crucis per carnis desideria evagantur. Sed legitimi filii illi sunt qui suo magistro et patri pro se paxionato student in omnibus conformari, scilicet in paupertate, dolore et despectu; que tria pro certo, fili karissime, habes complementum et fundamentum omnis perfectionis. Nam istis tribus que dixi anima illuminatur veraciter, perficitur et purgatur, et ad divinam transformationem aptissime preparatur' (In 28.20–23; 260). See R. Fusco, 'Il lessico cristologico nel Liber di Angela da Foligno,' in *Cristocentrismo nel "Liber" della Beata Angela. Atti del Convegno tenuto a Foligno il 25–26 November 2005* (Foligno), 191: 'the three companions of Christ must become the three companions of all those who want to seriously imitate the Lord's life. Just as he assiduously kept company with them, so too must the Christian do, if he wants to be truly united to Christ.'
- 14 '... and she was saying: "the soul is delighted and it swims in these things." (Et dicebat: 'Anima delectatur et natat inter illa.')(Mm 88.3; 160).
- 15 To tell the truth, there are rather few studies on the Mariology of Angela of Foligno. A synthetic overview can be found in Massimo Vedova, 'L'immagine di Maria nel Liber di Angela di Foligno. Prime considerazioni,' in *Theotokos* 19 (2011), 355–378.

## 1 An Empowering Presence?

The mediating role of the Virgin Mary in relation to her maternal and intercessory roles—which was recognized in the patristic period, and which especially took root from the sixth century onward—is widely accepted in medieval theological reflection. For example, we see these roles in the Mariology of Bernard of Clairvaux, the twelfth-century Cistercian whose ‘doctrine on Mary’s mediation would have a determining and lasting influence in the Church.’<sup>16</sup> Angela is sensitive to this manner of Marian presence and significantly experiences it in the powerful moments of her existential journey, especially in its delicate beginning phases. She finds in the Mother of the Lord a dialogue partner who not only shares her experience, but one who can arouse in her, through the exemplary nature of her relationship to Christ, a greater awareness of Mary’s presence in her life.

Mary is Angela’s companion in her existential transformation from the very beginning, as the *Memoriale* attests. In particular the Sorrowful Mother (*Mater Addolorata*)—along with St. John—seems to prepare Angela for the way of the cross, almost becoming the entrance to it. In the thirteenth of the *priores*, she experiences a singular ‘enabling’ (*abilitazione*) for suffering:

I entered into the sorrow over the passion suffered by the Mother of Christ and St. John, and I prayed that they would obtain for me a sure sign by which I might always keep the passion of Christ continually in my memory.<sup>17</sup>

This peculiar affective contact with the sorrow of the Mother and the disciple is characterized by Angela’s praying for a ‘sure sign.’ It is interesting that this prayer is not asking for an immediate understanding of the present or some indication about the future, but about the memory which we could, reading between the lines, understand in the acceptance of the *memoriale*. In other words, it is rather a ‘memory that makes [something] present’ and for which Angela herself wants to be present. In this circumstance—as Angela continues in her narrative—she is shown the heart of Christ. She is led into a ‘seeing’ that, in the following step, the fourteenth *passus prior*, where Christ shows

16 S. De Fiore, *Maria. Nuovissimo dizionario 2* (Bologna, 2006), 1097.

17 ‘Intravi per dolorem Matris Christi et Sancti Ioannis et rogabam quod ipsi acquirerent mihi signum certum, quo semper possem habere in memoria passionem Christi continue’ (Mm 8.1-2; 10–12). [Editor’s note: We used the following English translation of Angela’s writings: *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, trans. Paul LaChance (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 128].

himself to her on the Cross ‘more clear’ (*magis clarum*) (Mm 9.1), progresses into a tactile experience. She drinks from the side of the Crucified, which is both a learning experience and one of purification, alternating between the joy of what she experienced and the sorrow of the passion she contemplated:

And then he called me to place my mouth to the wound on his side. It seemed to me that I saw and drank the blood, which was freshly flowing from his side. His intention was to make me understand that by this blood he would cleanse me. And at this I began to experience a great joy, although when I thought about the passion, I was still filled with sadness.<sup>18</sup>

The passages cited implicitly reveal a reference to the Johannine image of the passion (Jn 19:25–27), as does the fifteenth *passus prior*, where once again the figures of Mary and John stand out, figures which were not only ‘seen’ by Angela, but ‘experienced’ and ‘thought,’ to the point of embracing their suffering:<sup>19</sup>

And I fixed my attention on St. John and on the Mother of God, meditating on their sorrow and praying them to obtain for me the grace of always feeling something of the sorrow of Christ’s passion or at least something of their own sorrow. They obtained and still obtain that favor for me.<sup>20</sup>

The disciple and the Mother of Sorrows help form the mystic of Foligno in her relationship with Christ crucified. They invoke her sensitivity, making

18 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 128. ‘Et tunc vocavit me et dixit michi quod ego ponere os meum in plagam lateris sui. Et videbatur michi quod ego viderem et biberem sanguinem eius fluentem recenter ex latere suo. Et dabat michi intelligere quod in isto mundaret me. Et hic incepti et habui letitiam magnam, quamvis ex consideratione passionis haberem tristitiam’ (Mm 9.3-6; 12).

19 It is worth noting, and we shall emphasize again later, the iconographic impact on the spiritual experience of Angela of Foligno in its profound affective resonance. See D. Boquet – P. Nagy, ‘L’efficacité religieuse de l’affectivité dans le Liber (passus priores) d’Angèle de Foligno,’ in *Il Liber di Angela da Foligno: temi spirituali e mistici*, eds. D. Alfonsi – M. Vedova, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo (Spoleto, 2010), 191: ‘Throughout the twenty steps, Angela experiences intense emotions and affective states that change her and increasingly involve her physical being, to the point that one can speak of *her incorporation through emotion* to the Christ of the Passion.’

20 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 128. ‘Et figebam me in sancto Ioanne et in Matre Dei cogitando dolorem eorum, rogando ipsos quod ipsi acquirerent mihi istam gratiam, scilicet quod sentirem semper de dolore passionis Christi vel saltem de dolore eorum. Et ipsi inveniebant mihi, sed et adhuc ipsi inveniunt michi’ (Mm 10.1-3; 12).

themselves intermediaries for humankind by their standing at the foot of the cross. In this peculiar setting, Angela's own desire is in dialogue with and corresponds to what she was given to see, in a confusion of physical and interior solicitations, wherein her impulse to strip herself is an external manifestation of her desire for absolute poverty.<sup>21</sup> Angela enters into the Johannine scene, takes her place in it, acquiring a progressive and deepened understanding of the divine mystery, but also an ever deeper self-knowledge, with the result that the knowledge of the cross (*cognitio crucis*) and knowledge of self (*cognitio sui*) are intrinsically correlated.

In the sixteenth *passus prior*, while she is given a special understanding of the 'Our Father,' the mystic's perceptive capacity undergoes a qualitative leap. She begins 'to taste something of the divine sweetness, because I perceived the divine goodness in this prayer better than anywhere else.'<sup>22</sup> However, her awareness of her own unworthiness and her own sins requires Mary's mediation if she is to continue making progress. Angela asks Mary to obtain forgiveness, as if she is consigning to her maternal nearness and understanding the uncertainty and fear that continue to make her insecure on the path she has undertaken.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, it is Mary who presides over the tertiary's further spiritual growth when, in the seventeenth *passus prior*, a new and different faith, which the Virgin granted her as a grace, enables the saint to experience a more authentic suffering and to be 'enclosed' in the space that has already been given her for her journey, that is, the passion of Christ:

Afterward, in the seventeenth step, it was shown to me that the Blessed Virgin had obtained for me the grace of a faith different from the one I had before. For it seemed to me as if, in contrast to what I now experienced, my former faith had been lifeless and my tears forced. Henceforth, I grieved more genuinely over the passion of Christ and that of his mother ... So I enclosed myself within the passion of Christ and I was given hope that therein I might find deliverance.<sup>24</sup>

21 'Unde et tunc datum est mihi desiderium expoliandi me cum tanta voluntate [...]. Et si non potuissem aliter erogare pauperibus, dimissem omnia mea, omnia quia non videbatur mihi quod possem aliquid reservare mihi sine magna offensione' (Mm 10.7-11; 14).

22 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 129. '...gustare aliquid de dulcedine divina, quia ibi cognoscebam melius bonitatem divinam quam in aliqua re' (Mm 11.6-7; 14).

23 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 129: 'I pictured in my mind the Blessed Virgin so that she would beg forgiveness of my sins for me.' ('Sed repictavi me beate Virgini quod ipsa impetraret mihi indulgentiam peccatorum' [Mm 11.10; 14]).

24 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 130. 'Et post istud demonstratum est mihi quod beata Virgo acquisivit mihi gratiam, quam dedit mihi, fidem aliam ab ea quam habueram, quia

Thus Angela has almost arrived at the threshold of the first *passus supplens*; the quality of the faith obtained for her by the Mother of God enables her to reach this most demanding yet most fascinating stage of the journey. Her ‘reclusion’ in the passion of Christ gives her itinerary a direction towards the internal that, far from being a turning in on herself, is an immersion into the dark depths of her own self in order to receive the radical imprint of the divine seduction, letting herself be attracted and absorbed, stimulated by the desire ‘to have something more from God’ (*aliud habere de Deo*) (Mm 12.13).<sup>25</sup>

## 2 The Exemplarity of Mary

For Angela, therefore, Mary is first and foremost the Mother at the foot of the Cross. The title ‘Mother of the Afflicted’ (*Mater Afflicti*) is a special one, by which the mystic addresses Mary in an already advanced point of her itinerary in the fifth *passus supplens*:

And then my soul cried out loudly, ‘O holy Mary, mother of the Afflicted, tell me something of your Son’s pain which no one else but you can possibly recall. For you saw more of his passion than any other saint; and as I perceive, you not only saw it with your bodily eyes, but also pictured it with your imagination, and out of the continual ardent devotion that was yours toward the one you loved.’<sup>26</sup>

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videbatur mihi quod usque ad istud fuisset fides mea quasi mortua in comparatione, et lacrimae quas habueram fuissent per vim in comparatione. Sed postea dolui de passione Christi efficacius et de dolore Matris Christi. [...] Et tunc reclusi me in passione Christi. Et data est mihi spes quod ibi poteram liberari’ (Mm 12.1-8; 16).

25 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 130. See E. Menestò, ‘Angela of Foligno,’ in *Scrittrici Mistiche Italiane*, eds. G. Pozzi and C. Leonardi (Torino, 1988), 136 (note 12): ‘Angela’s journey is not so much a going towards God, but a going into God; it is an experience—after her conversion and choice of poverty in the Franciscan spirit—that begins with her experience at Assisi in 1291, when the triune God presented Himself without mediation (or only with that of the Holy Spirit), as a person with whom one can enter into direct relationship, without sacramental, biblical or ecclesiastical instrumentalization.’

26 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 180. ‘Et tunc clamore clamabat anima dicens: “O sancta Maria, mater Afflicti, dic michi de illa pena istius tui Filii de qua non audio memoriam, quia tu vidisti de ipsa passione plus quam aliquis sanctus. Quia ego video quod tu vidisti eam cum oculis capitis et cum ymaginatione et pro gelo quem habuisti continue de isto tuo amore!”’ (Mm 53.33-34; 110). Concerning the title ‘Mater Afflicti,’ see Vedova, *L’immagine di Maria nel Liber di Angela da Foligno*, 359: ‘It seems that such a title is not common, because it concentrates Mary’s motherhood on the sufferings of Jesus, the afflicted One, more than on her state of suffering (*mater afflicta*).’

It is interesting to note here the emphasis on the gaze, primarily of Mary totally permeated by the Passion of her Son, so much so that it absorbs the mind, imagination, and desire. Angela's gaze, therefore, seeks to see in the Mother the word that forms the memory, so that she may enter into that same gaze, as actually happens in an interior vision of the Passion as Angela states: 'My soul saw much passion' (*tantam passionem vidit anima mea*) (Mm 53.37). This culminates in a suffering that is new in its intensity, so indescribable that it causes her to lose her strength.<sup>27</sup>

Angela begins a dialogue with Mary regarding her own relationship with the Crucified One, in the proper place of discipleship *par excellence*, where the 'legitimate children of God' (*filii Dei legitimi*) grasp the love of God and their unworthiness: 'They go to the cross to fix their attention and regard upon it, and therein discover what love is' (*ibi se figunt et respiciunt et ibi cognoscunt amorem*) (Mm 36.5). The mystic of Foligno contemplates the 'with-suffering Mother' (*con-dolorosa*), who in her heart suffered the greatest pain (*maior dolor*) (Mm 36.13) at the foot of the Cross in her relationship with her Son, feeling what he felt and allowing herself to be conformed, almost becoming an entranceway into the pain of her son, and thus also a hermeneutical and experiential key to Christ's suffering. In this regard, it is significant that in her *Instructiones*, Angela references Jesus' compassion for his Mother, placing her at the center of the mystery of the Incarnation and the Passion in a singular mystical communion with the Son. He transfixed his flesh for her (*traxerat suam carnem*) (In 5.2), and with her exceptional capacity to suffer, she is included in his suffering:

Some of Christ's sufferings also reflect his compassion for his most dear mother. Christ loved her more than any other creature—from her alone he had received his very flesh. Christ suffered extremely because he saw the extreme suffering that was hers. For endowed with the noblest and deepest qualities, superior to any other creature, she grieved over her own true son, in her own special way, more than any other creature grieved for him. Seeing her in such great pain, Christ suffered all the more out of compassion for her. The mother of God suffered in the extreme, and Christ continually bore this suffering in himself. The foundation for this suffering is the divine plan.<sup>28</sup>

27 'Tunc fui in tanto dolore maiori quod unquam fuerim vel habuerim; quod si corpus meum hic deficit non est admirandum, adhuc enim non possum habere letitiam. Et tunc ego perdi vigorem quo consuevi esse leta, et non potui esse postea in illo tempore' (Mm 53.41-43; 112).

28 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 231. 'Quia enim Christus suam Matrem dulcissimam super omnem aliam creaturam amabat ex qua sola traxerat suam carnem et quia ipsa

The image of the Sorrowful Mother helps make Mary a model of the mystical life, even more so because she is an expert in the way of her Son and his ‘three companions’ (suffering, contempt of self, and poverty), being a model for the assumption of the state of the passionate God-man.<sup>29</sup> The mother of God, even though she came ‘from our great corruption’ (*ex massa nostra corrupta*) (In 9.6), especially gifted with ‘virtues and ineffable gifts’ (*virtutibus et ineffabilibus donis*) (In 9.9), is also constantly—inseparably—united to the Trinity, and she is never separated even a little from that divine relationship (*ab illo divino contubernio numquam etiam ad modicum separari valeret*) (In 9.10).

The communion of the Mother with the Son is manifested in her poverty. The Blessed Virgin was given as an example to Angela by Christ himself, in the third *passus supprens*: ‘To illustrate the above, she was given the example of the Blessed Virgin. This is what Christ told her: “Look at how my mother retained what was her own and granted to others what belonged to them.”<sup>30</sup> Poverty is the path of self-knowledge and togetherness with God; it generates humility and is its mother. In it, a person is taught that all confidence in oneself ought to be removed (*‘est sibi ablata omnis confidentia de se’*) (Mm 74.19). Mary, whom ‘divine wisdom taught in the Incarnation of Christ’ (*divina sapientia docuit in incarnatione Christi*) (Mm 74.24), is again taken as the model – in close relationship with the obedience of the God-man Christ – of this wisdom journey:

It granted her, first of all, knowledge of herself; and after she knew herself, all doubt concerning God was removed, and she immediately entrusted herself to divine goodness; and knowing herself and the goodness of God, she said: ‘Behold the Handmaid of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.’ Divine wisdom grants us this same teaching in the humanity of Christ: He, who was God, nonetheless wished that his

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singulariter plus quam aliqua creatura suo vere filio condolebat propter capacitatem nobilissimam et profundissimam quam habebat et excellentiorem cuiuslibet creature ideo Christus compatiebatur eidem cum summo dolore quia eam summe dolere videbat. Dolebat enim ipsa Mater Dei in summo, quem dolorem ipse Deus et homo Iehsus continue in se ipso portabat, et huius doloris fundamentum fuit in dispensatione illa divina’ (In 5.1-7; 190).

29 An overview of several discussions of this triad can be found in F. Autieri and M. Vedova (eds.), *La triplice compagnia di Cristo: povertà, disprezzo, dolore nelle Instructiones di Angela da Foligno. Atti della giornata culturale angelana, Foligno 14 novembre 2015* (Roma, 2016).

30 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 166. ‘Et exemplum ponebatur ei de beata Virgine, unde dicebatur: Vide exemplum Matris mee, quomodo retinuit semper suum et redidit alienum’ (Mm 44.7; 86).

humanity be bound in obedience to the Father and to every will of the Father.<sup>31</sup>

Always with reference to Christ—who is offered to the disciples as that ‘mirror’ (*speculum*)<sup>32</sup>—Mary is the exemplar of prayer for Angela, a dimension that the mystic reveals in connection with her virginity and total consecration, in her clear and complete knowledge of God and herself:

For we also have an example in the most glorious Virgin Mother of God and in the man Jesus Christ. If it is not possible to condemn her prayer, then why should we not follow it? If we should not condemn it, why then do we not follow it? For she taught us to pray as an example for us by giving her own most blessed prayer. For she prayed when she offered to conserve herself totally in virginity before God. And praying through this proposition, the divine light was overflowing fully within her. From this divine light, she consecrated her virginity and also her whole soul and body to God most gloriously. And in this divine light, she revealed God and herself most perfectly. This prayer, that is, this showing, was an ineffable contemplation.<sup>33</sup>

This meditation on Mary’s prayer seems to allude implicitly and in an intuitive way to her Immaculate Conception. Through the account given by her

31 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 195–196. ‘Que primo fecit eam cognoscere se ipsam. Et, postquam cognovit se, fuit sibi ablatum omne dubium de Deo. Et statim confidit de bonitatem Dei dixit: Ecce ancilla domini. Et cognoscens se et bonitatem Dei dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Et similiter docet nos divina sapientia in humanitate Christi. Qui, quamvis esset Deus, tamen illam humanitatem voluit esse ligatam ad obedientiam Patris in omni voluntate Patris’ (Mm 74.25-30; 138–140).

32 It seems that here there is almost a hint of Clare’s writing: ‘Pone hoc speculum ante oculos tuos et stude toto te de ista oratione habere, quia ipse pro te oravit, non pro seipso. [...] Vide quia Christus divinam voluntatem semper preposuit voluntati sue. Fac tu secundum exemplar’ (In 8.139.141-142; 202).

33 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 238. Katherine Wrisley Shelby made some changes to this translation: ‘Exemplum etiam habemus a Virgine gloriosa Matre Dei et hominis Iesu Christi. Numquid orationem eius condempnemus, quare ergo illam non sequimur? Si non condempnamus, quare ergo illam non sequimur? Docuit enim nos ipsa orare, exemplum nobis proponendo sue orationis sanctissime. Oravit enim ipsa quando suam virginitatem Deo proposuit integre conservare. Et in isto orans proposito divinum lumen in ea plenius habundavit. Ex quo divino lumine suam virginitatem et etiam totam suam animam et corpus Deo gloriosius consecravit. Et in isto divino lumine Deum et se perfectissime manifestavit. Hec oratio, id est hec manifestatio, fuit ineffabilis contemplatio eius’ (In 8.150-158; 204).



narrator, Angela affirms that the Virgin had no need, as we do, of praying to be freed ‘from the eternal penalty, which we deserve because of our sins’ (*ab eterna pena, quam meruimus ex peccatis nostris*) (In 9.2) nor to be purified (*emendari*).<sup>34</sup> Such singular virginity and honesty (In 26.30) is, in the *Instructiones*, a performative memory. Indeed, recalling these virtues as she is embraced by the Mother and loved by her in all her children—and loved by the God-Man himself—Angela has the power to cast out all temptations, in addition to teaching the interior and external integral circumcision, promoting a transformation that involves the total person.<sup>35</sup>

The Virgin Mother, in her conformity to Christ, but also inasmuch as she is a perfect disciple, reveals the step-by-step process (*il passo*)—the style—of how one should follow Christ and adhere to him, taking on a quasi-magisterial role of teaching by the power of her lived experience. In prayer, as we have already pointed out, Mary assumes her other function of *mediatrix*, her role of intercession, especially bound up with special locutions.

In the second *passus supplens*, for example, Angela invokes Our Lady, whom she calls ‘the Lady’ (*Dominam*) (Mm 34.2), that she might obtain from her Son liberation from every sin, absolution, and even the table blessing for Angela and her companions. It is not the Lady who responds to Angela’s request, but the Son replies directly: ‘An immediate response was given to my request as follows: “My daughter, so sweet to me, I grant you what you ask for. I now take away all your sins, absolve both of you, and bless you.”’<sup>36</sup>

In the same *passus*, it is the Mother who speaks at the moment of the elevation of the Body of Christ. She intervenes later in a second encounter, in a communion with the intentions of her Son. She in the position of the disciple who follows and participates in the blessing already offered by Him. She is gifted also with a wisdom that enables her to be the humble voice confirming what Angela sees and moving her to understand:

When I was in the church and at the moment when people kneel down at the elevation of the Body of Christ, words such as these were addressed

34 Vedova (*L'immagine di Maria nel Liber di Angela da Foligno*, 368) notes: ‘Mary’s singular *privilegium* which it speaks of seems to be what would later be called the *immaculata conceptio*. It seems that at a time in which this position was universally accepted, let alone not even dogmatically defined, Angela seems to have had a deep intuition that Mary had been preserved from every stain of original sin from the first moment of her conception.’

35 In 26.30–32; 256.

36 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 156. ‘... responsio facta fuit michi ita dicens: “Filia mea, dulcis mihi, istud quod petisti est tibi factum; omne peccatum est tibi ablatum et absolutio vobis est facta et benedictionem meam habetis” (Mm 34.5–6; 66).

to me by the Blessed Virgin: 'My daughter, so sweet to my son.' She spoke very humbly and in such a way that I experienced a new feeling in my soul, one of utmost sweetness. And she said: 'My daughter, sweet to my Son and to me. My Son has already come unto you and you have received his blessing.' By this she was making me understand that her Son was at that moment already on the altar, and it was as if she was telling me something new and it filled my soul with such great joy that I cannot find words for it, nor do I believe that there is anyone who could express it properly. This joy was so great that I was even amazed afterward that I could in any way stand on my feet while I was experiencing it. And she said to me: 'Now that you have received the blessing of my Son, it is fitting that I too come to you and give you my blessing so that just as you received the blessing of the Son you also receive the blessing of his mother. Receive then my blessing. May it be yours from both my Son and myself. Work with all your might at loving, for you are much loved, and you are called upon to attain something infinite.'<sup>37</sup>

The figure of Mary emerges here not only as the *mediatrix* of the blessing but also as the presence that accompanies spiritual transformations, makes the experience explicit, and indicates its ultimate destination. In fact, the mystic from Foligno prays to her when she feels a need for greater knowledge, to verify or clarify her experience, especially concerning the revelations she has received. And so, in the fourth *passus supplems*: 'I had asked the Blessed Virgin that at the coming feast she obtain a grace from her Son through which I would know that I had not been deceived by the words which had been spoken to you.'<sup>38</sup>

37 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 157–158. 'Quando stabam in ecclesia et erat hora quando persone genuflectebant ad elevationem Corporis Christi, tunc facta est michi talis colloquio. Dixit: "Filia mea, dulcis Filio meo." Et valde humiliter dicebat et cum novo sentimento in anima et maxima dulcedine. Et dicebat: "Filia mea, dulcis Filio meo et michi, Filius meus iam venit ad te et recepisti suam benedictionem." Et faciebat me intelligere tunc quod Filius suus erat in altari iam, quasi diceret michi nova de maxima letitia, et tanta quod nescio eam dicere nec credo quod sit aliquis qui posse eam dicere. Immo mirata sum postea quomodo potueram stare in pedibus dum habebam tantam letitiam. Et dicebat michi: "Postquam recepisti benedictionem Filii mei, conveniens est ut ego venirem ad te et darem tibi benedictionem meam, ut, sicut recepisti benedictionem Filii, ita recipias benedictionem matris. Et habeas benedictionem meam et benedicta sis a Filio meo et a me. Et stude te quantum potes ad amandum, quia tu es multum amata. Et tu venies in rem infinitam'" (Mm 35.1-13; 68).

38 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 168. 'Et ego petiveram beate Virgini quod pro illo festo quod veniebat, impetraret michi gratiam a Filio suo, qua cognoscerem quod non essem decepta in locutionibus que fiebant michi' (Mm 46.13-15; 88).

The circumstance of this petition is that, extraordinarily, of the elevation of the mystic's heart: 'My heart was lifted from the entire earth and placed in God, so that I could not understand and see anything but God' (*cor levatum fuit ab omnibus terrenis et positum in Deo, ita quod nichil poteram cogitare et videre nisi Deum*) (Mm 46.21–22), implicating a reorientation of her senses, drawing her attention away from herself to perceiving in God, to the point of having 'my eyes opened' (*aperti oculi anime*) (Mm 48.3) to the divine fullness and to the world 'pregnant with God' (*pregnans de Deo*) (Mm 48.5).

The experience, moreover, again in a Eucharistic context accompanied by the divine locution of 'God within' (*intus*) (Mm 48.15), is an experience marked by an intimate enduring sense of an 'indescribable sweetness.' This is the space where Angela is reassured that she has obtained the grace she requested, implicitly alluding to a negligible involvement of Mary in the new awareness, in which the mystic of Foligno finds herself at a point in her journey where 'no doubt remains in me' (*non remansit in me aliquid dubium*) (Mm 48.19). From the very first phase of Angela's spiritual journey, the Virgin Mary is a privileged reference point for the mystic's ever maturing self-knowledge, present in the illumination of the grace, as she mentions in this regard in the sixth of the earlier steps (*passus priores*):

The sixth step consists of a certain illumination through which my soul was graced with a deeper awareness of all my sins. In this illumination, I saw that I had offended all the creatures that had been made for me ... And then, I was given to pray with a great fire of love. I invoked all the saints, and the blessed Virgin, to intercede for me and to pray to that Love who previously had granted me such great favors, to make what was dead in me come to life.<sup>39</sup>

Mary's exemplarity in her amazement at being a woman is graphically outlined in a vision received by Angela in the fifth *passus supplens*. There, in a quite unexpected manner, given that she was not in prayer at the time, her soul was elevated so that Angela contemplated the Virgin in glory:

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39 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 125. 'Sextus passus est quedam illuminatio gratie, qua profunde dabatur mihi cognitio omnium peccatorum; et videbam me offendisse omnes creaturas pro me factas in illa illuminatione. [...] Et tunc dabatur mihi cum magno igne amoris orare. Et invocabam omnes sanctos et beatam Virginem, ut intercederent pro me et rogarent amorem quia tanta bona predicta michi fecerant; ut, quia cognoscebant me mortuam, facerent me vivam' (Mm 3.12-13.17-18; 6).

I had great delight in seeing a woman placed in such a position of nobility, glory, and dignity as was the blessed Virgin, and in seeing her placed in the position of interceding for the human race. It likewise was an inexpressible delight for me to see her displaying such human concern and adorned with such indescribable virtues. While I was contemplating this spectacle, suddenly Christ in his glorified humanity appeared seated next to her. I perceived then how he had been crucified in his flesh, tormented, and covered with opprobrium.<sup>40</sup>

The mystic's intelligence and affectivity are involved in a reception of the woman that is not merely external, but which also involves the interpenetration of her aptitude, of her interiority, whereby Angela points out the humanity, humility, and virtue of Mary without exhausting what she sees in words while also experiencing an indescribable delight.

It is worth noting that Christ suddenly appears at Mary's side, ratifying the virtues of his Mother. *Humilitas* emerges as a Christological characteristic of Mary. It is this virtue, the *Instructiones* admonish, 'that provides the foundation and most firm root' (*pro fundamento et radice firmissima*) (In 35.10) of all the others. Therefore, Angela states: 'As if forgetting the many other virtues which abounded in her soul and body, the Virgin Mary commended herself only for humility and affirmed it as the principal reason for the incarnation of God.'<sup>41</sup> In the glory associated with Mary, Angela sees the flesh of her Son. Once again it seems that the Virgin, in her humanity that has been so greatly exalted, offers in herself a key for understanding the passionate God-man.

Lastly, here we can see implied a further function of the Mother in her role as a spiritual director-companion of the faithful, a role which had been attentively deepened in the Franciscan reflections of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio.<sup>42</sup>

40 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 185. 'Et intelligens ego unam mulierem positam in tanta nobilitate et gloria et dignitate, sicut stabat et quomodo stabat beata Virgo rogans pro humano genere, valde delectabar. Et videbam eam cum tanta aptitudine humanitatis, humilitatis et virtutis valde inenarrabiliter, unde et ego inenarrabiliter delectabar. Et dum ego ita respicerem ad predictam, subito apparuit ibi Christus sedens iuxta eam in humilitate glorificanda. Et ego intelligebam carnem illam quomodo fuerat crucifixa, penata et obpropriata' (Mm 58.4-9; 118-120).

41 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 252. 'quasi aliarum virtutum in sua anima et etiam in corpore redundantium oblita fuerit Virgo Maria, de hac sola se commendavit et pro hac precipue de se Deum humanatum esse firmavit' (In 35.15-16; 300).

42 L. Gambero, 'Il XIII secolo e la fioritura della Scolastica,' in *Storia della mariologia, vol. 1 dal modello biblico al modello letterario*, eds. E. Dal Covolo and A. Serra (Rome, 2009), 790. See also p. 791: 'There is also the fact of having been the object of a special divine protection

### 3 Marian Conformations in Angela of Foligno

In light of what we have observed up to this point regarding Mary's presence in the spiritual journey of the tertiary Saint of Foligno, it will be interesting here to investigate whether or not the *Liber* reveals some Marian attitudes that the Saint assumes, makes her own, or are in some way recognizable. This is a question of focusing our attention on the resonance that Angela's contemplation of the Mother of God has on her experience: If Mary is the model for following Christ, what form of imitation does Angela propose or imply to follow her?

First of all, we should note some of the names given to Angela especially during the course of her divine locutions. In the first *passus supplens*, the Holy Spirit repeatedly addresses Angela, calling her 'daughter,' 'spouse,' and 'temple' (*filia, sponsa, templum*) (Mm 20.24–25). Francis of Assisi in particular attributes the titles of 'daughter' (*filia*) of the heavenly Father and 'spouse of the Holy Spirit' (*sponsa Spiritus Sancti*) to Mary in the Antiphon, *Sancta Maria Virgo* of the Office of the Passion.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, in the *Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, he celebrates the Mother of God as a 'palace' and 'dwelling place' (*palatium* and *domus*)<sup>44</sup> of the Son of God but in close connection with the action of the Spirit's 'grace and illumination' (*gratiam et illuminationem*) in the heart (*in corda*). There is another type of annunciation received by Angela, expanded and developed in the seventh *passus suppletentes*, where the Third Person of the Trinity arouses in her an unthinkable 'novelty' such that it leads her to doubt, but also ultimately to feel in herself much humility, and to recognize that 'the Son of the Virgin Mary inclined himself to me' (*Filius Virginis Mariae se inclinaverat michi*) (Mm 20.36). The Trinitarian context that characterizes the Marian praise of St. Francis of Assisi is the space of revelation for the mystic of Foligno, herself inhabited by the Trinity: 'Since I doubted that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had entered into me, unworthy as I am, and imagined that perhaps this had been said to deceive me, it was then repeated to me several times: "It is indeed the Trinity that has entered into you."<sup>45</sup> In the

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from every threat of sin. This divine guarantee places her in a position to plead our case before the Lord.'

43 *Fontes Franciscani*, eds. E. Menestò and S. Brufani (Santa Maria degli Angeli – Assisi [PG], 1995), 146.

44 See *Fontes Franciscani*, 219.

45 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 145. 'Et cum ego de hoc dubitarem, scilicet qualiter Pater cum Filio et Spiritu Sancto venisset in me ita indignam, et cogitarem ne forte posset hoc michi dici ad deceptionem, tunc pluries iteratum est michi et dictum hoc, scilicet "Trinitas venerat in te"' (Mm 24.12-14; 44).

second *passus supplens*, in another locution, Angela receives further assurance of the divine action that is taking place within her: ‘Suddenly, I heard a voice which said: “You are full of God.” I truly felt all the members of my body filled with the delights of God.’<sup>46</sup>

In enunciating this fullness, ratified by the experience of God that ‘embraced her’ (*amplexabatur animam*) (Mm 27.8), the divine voice adds a promise that vaguely evokes the words that Mary proclaimed about herself in the *Magnificat*: ‘Again, on the road to that place of St. Francis, he also told me, “I will do great things in you in the sight of nations. Through you, I shall be known and my name will be praised by many nations.”’<sup>47</sup> The privileged position assumed by Angela is therefore confirmed by a locution that immediately follows:

During this same period, while I was once again in prayer, I suddenly heard him speaking to me very graciously in these words: ‘My daughter, sweeter to me than I am to you, my temple, my delight, the heart of God almighty is now upon your heart.’ And these words were accompanied with a feeling of God’s presence far greater than I had ever experienced. All my members of my body thrilled with delight as I lay in this experience. He said, ‘God Almighty has deposited much love in you, more than in any woman of this city and he takes delight in you ...’<sup>48</sup>

Reading between the lines of this account, the divine superabundance emerges on behalf of the tertiary from Foligno, who is led into a progressive surrender that, in Mary, is instead a prompt acceptance of the journey of obedience. Angela learns obedience primarily at the foot of the Cross, where Christ’s embrace—as takes place in the fourth *passus supplens*—renews the divine embrace and where the mystery of the incarnation is made comprehensible to the soul, and the truth of how the human flesh is ‘associated’ to God:

46 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 148. ‘... subito venit vox in anima et dixit: “Tu es plena Deo.” Et tunc revera sentiebam omnia membra corporis, plena delectamento Dei’ (Mm 27.3-4; 50).

47 ‘Item in alia vice per viam illam Sancti Francisci dixerat michi: “Ego faciam in te res magnas in conspectu gentium et in te cognoscar, et laudabitur nomen meum in te a multis gentibus” (Mm 27.12; 50).

48 ‘In istis autem diebus secunde vicis in alio anno, iterum dum eram in oratione, subito dicta sunt michi verba valde placibilia. Et dixit ita: “Filia mea, dulcis michi multo plus quam ego sum tibi, templum meum, dilectum meum, cor Dei omnipotentis stat modo super cor tuum.” Et simul cum istis verbis venit sentimentum Dei, plus quam fueram adhuc experta et iacui in istis. Et dixit: “Deus omnipotens reposuit multum amorem in te, plus quam in femina istius civitatis, et ipse delectatur in te [...]” (Mm 28.2-6; 50).

Once I was at Vespers and was gazing at the cross. And while I was thus gazing at the cross with the eyes of the body, suddenly my soul was set ablaze with love and every member of my body felt it with the greatest joy. I saw and felt that Christ was within me, embracing my soul with the very arm with which he was crucified. This took place right at the moment when I was gazing at the cross or shortly afterward. The joy that I experienced to be with him in this way and the sense of security that he gave me were far greater than anything to which I had ever been accustomed. Henceforth my soul remained in a state of joy, in which it understood what this man, namely Christ, is like in heaven, that is to say, how we will see that our flesh is made one with God through him.<sup>49</sup>

At the foot of the Cross is the Mother of the Afflicted (*Mater Afflicti*), who, we have seen, is the exemplar for Angela. Reading the *Memoriale*, however, we also see how Angela is moved beyond the Mother. Emblematic of this is the Holy Saturday experience in the fifth *passus supplens*, when, *frater scriptor* notes: ‘The faithful one of Christ, in a state of ecstasy, found herself in the sepulcher with Christ.’<sup>50</sup> The mystic enters the space of the Cross and crosses the threshold of the sepulcher, undergoing an extraordinary experience in the tomb. She experiences a mutual sensory proximity to Christ, kissing him, smelling the fragrance, hearing from him words that inebriate her.<sup>51</sup>

It is the same heart-breaking, lacerating—even demoniac—suffering by which the mystic is tried during certain phases of her journey that identifies her with the Sorrowful Mother. In the sixth *passus supplens*, she experiences a terrifying suspension of the soul, likened to a hanged person, without any

49 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 175. ‘Quadam vice ego eram in vesperis et respiciebam in crucem, et respiciendo crucifixum oculis corporis, statim subito accensa fuit anima uno amore, et omnia membra corporis sentiebant cum maxima letitia. Et videbam et sentiebam quod Christus intus in me amplexabatur animam cum illo brachio cum quo fuit crucifixus, et istud fuit tunc vel parum post. Et gaudebam cum ipso tanta letitia et securitate plus quam unquam consueverim. Et ex tunc remansit anima in una letitia, qua comprehendit anima qualiter iste homo, scilicet Christus, stat in celo, videlicet quomodo ista carnem nostram videmus una societatem esset facta cum Deo’ (Mm 51.2-8; 102).

50 ‘... ipse Christi fidelis, facta in excessus mentis, stetit in sepulcro simul cum Christo’ (Mm 55.2; 114).

51 ‘Et dixit quod obsculata fuit primo pectus Christi. Et videbat eum iacentem oculis clausis sicut iacuit mortuus. Et postea obsculata est os eius. Ex quo ore dicebat quod admirabilem et inenarrabiliter delectabilem odorem acceperat, qui respirabat ex eius ore. Et hic dixit quod fuit parva mora. Et postea dixit quod posuit maxillam suam super maxillam Christi, et Christus posuit manum suam super aliam maxillam et strinxit eam ad se. Et ista fidelis Christi audivit sibi dici ista verba: “Antequam iacerem in sepulcro tenui te ita astrictam”’ (Mm 55.3-9; 114).

support, a 'subversive' somaticized suffering culminating in a maternal cry that invokes God as 'Son':

I perceived that the demons hold my soul in a state of suspension; just as a hanged man has nothing to support him, so my soul does not seem to have any supporters left. The virtues of my soul are undermined, while my soul sees it and knows it and watches it happening. And when it perceives all its virtues being subverted and departing, and it can do nothing to prevent this process, the pain and the anger that it feels pushes it to such a point of despair that at times it cannot weep and at other times it weeps inconsolably. There are even times when I am so overwhelmed with rage that I can hardly refrain from tearing myself apart, while at other moments I cannot refrain from horribly beating myself, and I raise welts on my head and various parts of my body. When my soul sees all its virtues fall and leave, the nit is overcome with fear and grief. It wails and cries out to God repeatedly and unceasingly: 'My son, my son, do not abandon me, my son.'<sup>52</sup>

Angela's predilection for meditating on Mary's divine and human maternity, especially in her poverty and her sharing in the sufferings of Christ, is perfectly in line with Franciscan reflections of her day. In the writings of the mystic of Foligno, this predilection assumes interesting liturgical and iconographical accents.<sup>53</sup> The Marian feasts mentioned in the *Liber* indeed represent occasions of peculiar experiences of conformity. In the *Instructiones*, for example, we

52 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 197–198. 'Video quod demones animam meam ita suspendunt quod, sicut suspensus non habet aliquid sustentamenti, ita anime nullum videtur sustentamentum remanere. Et omnes virtutes anime subvertuntur vidente et sciente et sapiente anima. Et tunc quando anima videt subverti omnes virtutes et discedere, et quod non potest se ibi opponere, est tantus dolor et fit tantus dolor anime desperatus et ira, quod vix aliquando possum plorare propter desperatum dolorem et iram. Aliquando tanta ira postea supervenit quod vix possum me tenere quod non me totam dilanio. Aliquando non possum me tenere quod non percutiar horribiliter me. Et tumefeci aliquando michi caput et alia. Et quando anima videre incipit cadere et discedere omnes virtutes, tunc fit timor et planctus, et nociferor ore dicens Deo et clamans Deo. Multotiens, quasi sine intermissione dicens ei: "Fili mi, fili mi, non me dimittas, fili mi!" (Mm 77.1-10; 142).

53 See F.A. Dal Pino, 'Culto e pietà mariana presso i frati minori nel medioevo,' in *Gli studi di mariologia medievale. Bilancio storiografico. Atti del I Convegno mariologico della Fondazione Ezio Franceschini con la collaborazione della Biblioteca Palatina e del Dipartimento di storia dell'Università di Parma, Roma 7–8 novembre 1997*, ed. C.M. Piastra (SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), 162.



learn of an event—a vision combined with a ‘sacred drama’—in which the faithful one would be taken up into God through an absorption: ‘Her soul was absorbed and transported into the uncreated light’ (*fuit anima in ipsum increatum lumen absorpta et assumpta*) (In 14.16). This event took place in the Upper Basilica of St. Francis on the Sunday before the Feast of the Indulgence, at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. This mention about the event’s location is important: In this place, ‘the image of the blessed crucified God and man appeared to her, looking as if he had just been taken down from the cross’ (*effigies illius benedicti Dei et hominis crucifixi, quasi tunc noviter de cruce depositi*) (In 14.19). Angela seems to take the place of the Mother, identifying so strongly with her that she herself was becoming ‘sorrowful’ in the instant in which the vision, striking her to the core, transforms her and gives her access into the secret of the passion:<sup>54</sup>

At this heart rendering sight she was transfixed to the marrow with such compassion that in truth it seemed to her that she was totally transformed in spirit and body into the pain of the cross. At the sight of the dislocated limbs and the painful distention of the sinews, she felt herself pierced through even more than she had been at the sight of the open wounds. For the former granted her a deeper insight into the secret of his passion and the harsh cruelty of his executioners. The sight of the crucified body of the good and beloved Jesus stirred her to such compassion that when she saw it, all her own joints seemed to cry out with fresh laments, and her whole body and soul felt pierced anew from the painful impact of this divine vision.<sup>55</sup>

54 In the second half of the eleventh century, we have the beginnings of devotion to the *compassio Virginis*, which later finds expression in the *Stabat Mater* (inserted into the liturgy by Benedict XIII in 1720), in the Lauds (see *Donna de Paradiso* of Jacopone da Todi), in the *Planctus Domine Nostre* by friar Niccolò d’Arezzo in the fourteenth century. See M.M. Muraro – M.M. Pedico, s.v. ‘Addolorata,’ in *Mariologia*, eds. S. De Fiores – V. Ferrari Schiefer – S.M. Perrella (Cinisello Balsamo, 2009), 9.

55 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 245. ‘Ad cuius liquefactivum conspectum tanta compaxione trasfixa sunt sua viscera quod vere in crucis dolores videbatur tota et mente et corpori transformari. Et maiori configebatur telo in aspectu tam dire resolutionis compagnum unionis membrorum, ex qua omnes nervi videbantur dolorose protensi, quam in aspectu vulnerum apertorum. Quia in illis magis intimebatur anime videntis paxionis secretum et dira crudelitas inferentium mortem. Eratque tante compassionis aspectus sic cruciati corporis boni et dilecti Ieshu, quod omnes incture in vidente novum videbantur provocare lamentume novum vere faciebant in ea doloris, transfixivi tam mentis quam corporis sentimentum. Eratque stripor in ea divini influxus’ (In 14.24-29; 218).

Equally disruptive is Angela's experience on the day of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (Mm 21, 1–21). In this case, the mystic enters the scene that she sees and specifically receives from Mary—designated as The Lady (*Domina*)—a maternal instruction totally delivered by gestures and glances, and summarily defined by three arts of instruction (*didascalie*). In two cases, a divine voice speaks (in one instance described by the word *locutio*, and in the other with the expression *immensa maiestas*): 'This is the hour in which [our] Lady went to the Temple with her son' (*Hec est hora qua Domina cum Filio suo venit in templum*) (In 21.1), and 'The one who does not see me as little, will not see me as great' (*Qui non viderit me parvum, non videbit me magnum*) (In 21.16). Between the two divine voices, there is a third teaching, the voice of Mary, which accompanies the Mother's act of placing her Son into Angela's arms, who seems to have his eyes closed, as if he is sleeping: 'O lover of my Son, accept him' (*Accipe, dilectrix Filii mei*) (In 21.4).

Once again there is a play of perspectives in which the vision of the soul, to which the gesture of the Mother 'has infused with great security' (In 21.4), is activated by looking at the child and the *Dominam* simultaneously, drawn by the beauty of her actions and movements. Then Mary suddenly disappears as Angela remains alone in the scene with the Child Jesus, totally naked, held in her arms. The mystic's eyes are on him alone and she feels such great love that she is overcome by it. Angela is totally immersed by God in a more intimate understanding of the liturgical feast. The Presentation of Jesus in the temple teaches her the meaning of Mary's offering of the Son, along with her sense of being 'mother':

And he said: 'I have come and I have offered myself to you, now it is your turn to offer.' But he did not say what or how or to whom I was supposed to offer myself. But immediately, my soul, in an indescribable and marvelous way, offered itself to him. Then I offered specifically and by name some of my sons. I offered myself and them perfectly and totally, withholding nothing for myself or for them. After this, I offered all my sons together. My soul perceived and understood that God accepted this offering and received it with great joy. I cannot describe the ineffable joy, delight, and sweetness I felt when God received and accepted this offering with such kindness.<sup>56</sup>

56 'Et dixit: "Ego veni et obtuli tibi, et tu offeras." Sed non dixit quomodo vel cui deberem offerre. Sed tunc anima subito modo mirabili et indicibili obtulit seipsam ei. Deinde obtulit quosdam de filiis in speciali et nominatim, et obtulit se et eos perfecte et totaliter, nichil

Taking Mary's place, Angela assumes with the understanding of the soul her own role in regard to her disciples, a spiritual motherhood validated by Christ through Mary.<sup>57</sup> The mystic herself, therefore, through a process of identification, goes up to the temple to present her children and be recognized as their mother.

#### 4 Conclusion

This essay has intended to offer some suggestions about the deep relationship between the Franciscan mystic of Foligno and the Mother of God that the *Liber* unfolds in its narration. The spiritual dialogue between these two women requires further investigation. It would be particularly interesting, for example, to consider Angela's Marian imagination and identify material from iconography and literature (including popular literature) with which she might have been familiar in order to trace implicit references to them in her narration.<sup>58</sup>

At least two conclusions can be derived from the analysis conducted in this study. The first involves Angela's preferential relationship with the Mother of the *Crucified* Christ, who is the model of total, unconditional dedication and adherence to the way and condition of her suffering Son:

How will the unhappy soul which only wishes to receive consolation in this world go to him, who is the way of suffering? In truth, the soul perfectly enamored of Christ, its beloved, would not wish to have any other bed or state in this world than the one he had. I believe that even Mary, watching her beloved son lamenting and dying on the cross, did not ask

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de se et de eis reservando sibi et eis. E deinde obtulit omnes filios. Et tunc vidit et intellexit anima quod Deus illam oblationem acceptabat et cum magna alacritate recipiebat' (In 21.17–20; 244).

57 Concerning the maternal function of Angela, see M. Vedova, 'La maternità spirituale di Angela da Foligno nel *Liber* e in alcuni documenti coevi,' in Istituto Franciscano di Spiritualità, *Maschile e femminile, vita consacrata, francescanesimo. Scritti per l'VIII centenario dell'Ordine di Santa Chiara (1212–2012)*, ed. P. Martinelli (Bologna, 2012), 585–607.

58 We find interesting comments in this regard in M. Chiellini Nari, 'La contemplazione e le immagini: il ruolo dell'iconografia nel pensiero della beata Angela da Foligno,' in *Angela da Foligno terziaria francescana. Atti del Convegno storico nel VII centenario dell'ingresso della beata Angela da Foligno nell'Ordine Franciscano Secolare (1291–1991)*, *Foligno 17–18–19 November 1991*, ed. E. Menestò (Spoleto, 1992), 227–250.

of him then to experience sweetness but rather suffering. It is in a soul the sign of very weak love to want from Christ, the Beloved, anything in this world but suffering.<sup>59</sup>

The second conclusion involves Mary's role as an exemplar for Angela, or namely, the possibility for Angela to form herself and verify her identity as a woman-mother in Mary. In this regard, the *Instructiones* propose the suggestive image of the Most Blessed Virgin Mother of God (*beatissime Virginis Matris Dei*), of 'the Queen of Mercy and Mother of All Graces' (*Regina misericordie et omnis gratie Mater*) (In 14.91) in the context of a vision of intense affective tonality, during a significant liturgical occasion such as the procession for the Feast of the Porziuncola Indulgence:

She now leaned down toward her sons and daughters, and in a new and most gracious manner redoubled her most sweet blessings. She kissed them all on the breast, some more, some less, and some she held closely in her arms, and was also kissing them. Her love for them was so great that, as he appeared, totally numinous, she seemed to absorb them into the almost infinite light within her breast. It did not seem to Christ's faithful one that she saw arms of flesh, but a wonderful and very soft light into which the mother of God absorbed them as she hid them within her breast and held them with a great and deeply felt love.<sup>60</sup>

Shortly before this episode, during the same processional journey, Angela's disciples enjoyed a representation of the Crucified God-Man (*representatio Dei et*

59 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 197–198. 'Quomodo igitur vadit per ipsum qui est via doloris, illa misera anima que in mundo iste vult superhabere consolationem? In veritate anima que esset perfecte inamorata de suo dilecto, nollet alium lectum nec alium statum in mundo isto nisi illum quem ipse habuit. Iam enim Maria sua mater credo quod videndo Christum filium suum amorosum in cruce plangentem et morientem, tunc non petivit de ipso dulcedinem sed dolorem sentirem. Ita in anima sigum est pauci amoris, si vult in mundo isto a suo dilecto Christo sentire aliud quam dolores' (In 34.129-132; 296).

60 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 249. 'Super istos filios et filias se inclinans, que prius apparebat sursum levata novo modo et gloriosissimo, benedictiones dulcissimas ingeminabat super omnes. Et omnes osculabatur in pectore, quosdam plus, quosdam minus. Quosdam, cum predictis obsculis, amplexabatur brachiis tante caritatis quod eos, sicut tota apparebat luminosa in quoddam quasi infinitum lumen, videbatur intra suum pectus absorbere. Non tamen videbatur sibi quod videret brachia carnea. Sed quoddam ammirandum lumen dulcissimum in quo absorbebat eosdem intra suum pectus claudens cum maximo super ipsos deviscerato amore' (In 14.91-95; 226).

*hominis Crucifixi*) (In 14.78). Around the Crucified, all children, whether present or absent, are gathered to the Mother of desires (*ad matris desiderium*) (In 14.80), and gathered by Christ to his side in the washing of purification (cf. In 14.82), to the point where they seemed ‘transubstantiated and dipped’ in God (*istos videtur totaliter in se transubstantiasse et inabysasse*, In 14.90). This wonderful act is followed by Angela’s ‘absorption’ into Mary’s bosom: Angela’s maternal ministry is inserted into this visceral and life-giving bond. Indeed, her disciples do not hesitate to draw on the merits of the glorious Mother of God through the intercession (*intercessionem*) (In 14.116) of her beloved handmaid, Angela:

On her merits, as onto a root, he has been willing to graft us like saplings, so that through her, that is, with her salutary examples and these same merits as our ladder, we may ascend without ceasing to the heights of her most excellent life and the transformation of ourselves into the most holy passion of the Crucified. May we continue our ascent until we enter together with the blessed Jesus in the bosom of the Father, and find our rest there, the rest of those who are blessed for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>61</sup>

Angela herself is the extraordinarily qualified mother-mediatrix. Indeed, she herself is the trunk onto which her disciple-branches are grafted. She is both the root and the possibility of access, a ladder corresponding to a progressive transformation in the passion of Christ, on the path of poverty-contempt-suffering, to the point of final rest in the bosom of the Father. For the mystic, Mary’s maternal love is ultimately the privileged channel of the knowledge and following in which ‘she learns to understand and suffer, to comprehend the measure of the ALL GOOD which is God,’<sup>62</sup> but it is also the mirror in which the perception of God finds, in a certain sense, a feminine *alter ego*: A possibility for Angela to ascribe to the Mother the extraordinary experience that she cannot contain within herself. It is Angela who explains Mary, but it is also Mary who explains herself to Angela.

61 *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, 251. ‘Cuius meritis ut ramussculos nos est dignatus inserere. Et radicalium meritum. Ut per ipsam tamquam per scalam salutarium exemplorum in summitatem sue excellentissime vite et transformationem sacratissime passionis sue ascendimus continue. Donec una cum benedicto Iesu, introeuntes in paternum sinum, requiescamus cum illo, ubi est omnis requies beatorum in secula seculorum. Amen’ (In 14.117–119; 228–230).

62 M. Ceschia, ‘Pedagogia e scienza della passione in Angela da Foligno,’ in *La triplice compagnia di Cristo*, 106.

## ‘Fired France for Mary without Spot’: John Duns Scotus and the Immaculate Conception

*Mary Beth Ingham*

In his poem *Duns Scotus’ Oxford*, Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins captures the tensions of the dynamic scholarly climate in the Paris debates of the early fourteenth century, wherein John Duns Scotus defended for the third time his position on the Immaculate Conception. His defense ‘fired up’ opposition against the bold Franciscan assertion of human innocence. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that Scotus’s radical defense of Mary’s purity resulted in the Franciscan Order’s decision to send him to Cologne to open the Lectorate School there.<sup>1</sup> The year following Scotus’s death, in a 1309 Quodlibetal disputation in Paris, secular Master John of Pouilly attacked the argument and deemed it heretical.

Despite the reactions of his contemporaries and subsequent Masters,

Scotus initiated a trend that would never die out but would continue to grow until the ‘new theologians,’ as they were first called, would eventually outnumber the old, and the Feast of December 8 would become simply that of the Immaculate Conception and the Marian prerogative it honored would some four centuries later be defined as a dogma of faith.<sup>2</sup>

While the Church of 1308 may not have been prepared to acknowledge the Marian prerogative, declared as dogma in 1854,<sup>3</sup> the Church in 1988 was happily

1 André Callebaut, ‘Le maîtrise du Bx. Jean Duns Scot en 1305; son depart de Paris en 1307 durant la preparation du procès des Templiers,’ in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 21, 214–239. See also Thomas Williams, ‘Introduction,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge, 2003), 6.

2 Allan B. Wolter, OFM, *John Duns Scotus: Four Questions on Mary* (St. Bonaventure, NY, 2000), Introduction, 8.

3 The bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, issued by Pius IX on December 8, 1854, declared that ‘the Most Blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception was by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race, preserved immune from every stain of original guilt; that this was revealed by God and therefore is firmly and constantly to be believed by all of the faithful.’ Heinrich Denzinger,

ready to take this position even further, suggesting that Mary offers the model for human dignity, indeed the ‘most complete expression of this dignity and vocation.’<sup>4</sup>

In what follows, we consider Scotus’s proposed solution to the question of Mary’s innocence insofar as it draws upon the broader Franciscan intuitions surrounding human dignity and salvation history. His solution emerges not simply from the perspective of Marian devotion, so common to Celtic and Anglo-Saxon cultures, which informed the practice of the medieval Church in England. Rather, in Scotist thought, Mary epitomizes the very essence of what it means to be a human person in light of the Incarnation. This means that his opponents were not simply objecting to the cultural invasion of English piety. They understood only too well what it would mean to affirm that there was (at least) one human being who was not subject to Original Sin.

## 1 Honoring Mary

The celebration of the ‘sanctity of Mary’ knows a long history within Christianity. Early apocryphal texts, such as ‘The Gospel of the Birth of Mary’ and ‘The Protoevangelion of James,’<sup>5</sup> fueled popular piety and practice. In these texts, the annunciation to Sts. Anne and Joachim was identified as the moment of Mary’s sanctification in the womb. Her *in utero* sanctification was likened to that of John the Baptist and the prophet Jeremiah, both held to be sanctified before their birth. Originally the feast that celebrated this focused on St. Anne; as it entered the West, the focus soon turned to a celebration of Mary herself in England and parts of France.

Prior to the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Saxon Christians celebrated the Feast of Mary’s Conception, yet there is no evidence that this was a celebration of an Immaculate Conception. With the Norman invasion, many episcopal sees and abbasies were transferred by William the Conqueror to his own ecclesiastical representatives. The celebration of the feast was subsequently suppressed in many dioceses. While suppressed, it would not be eliminated, and Saxons continued to celebrate this extremely popular feast, supported by miracles and

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*Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1911) #1641 (1502), 440.

4 John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year)*, 1988, n. 5 (Boston, 1988), 21.

5 *The Apocryphal New Testament*, trans. James K. Elliott (Oxford, 1993) and *The Other Gospels*, ed. Ron Cameron (Philadelphia, 1982), 109–121.

visions. In 1129, the Council of London approved the celebration for the English province.

The theological arguments in favor of such a feast were not difficult to elaborate. As early as the ninth century, Radbertus [pseudo-Ildephonse] (786-c.860), theologian and Abbot of Corbie, suggested in 'De partu virginis'<sup>6</sup> that since Mary was sanctified in the womb in the manner of John and Jeremiah, she may never have contracted Original Sin. Eadmer of Canterbury (d. 1124) appears to have been the first to connect her sanctification explicitly to the moment of her conception and the presence of Original Sin.<sup>7</sup> In his treatise, Eadmer identified the moment when the soul informed the infected flesh, thereby being tainted by it with sin, as key to his argument. Eadmer used the connection of sanctification with conception as a defense for the celebration of the feast on December 8. And, because Eadmer was the secretary and disciple of Anselm of Canterbury, it is no surprise that even as late as the fourteenth century, this text was falsely attributed to Anselm, Primate of England.

Anselm's own treatment of this question, in *De conceptu virginali et de peccato originali*,<sup>8</sup> offered an important analysis of the nature of sin, separating it from material conditions such as seminal transmission. Since only the soul can be the subject of sin, nothing physical can transmit it. Rightly understood, Anselm reasoned, the term 'sin' refers to the lack of justice and, in this case, to the lack of original justice that God confers on the soul in the form of the *affectio iustitiae* (the metaphysical affection to preserve justice). In possessing the affection for justice, the soul is capable of acting with freedom.<sup>9</sup> However, this affection is a gift from God, and does not belong to the soul by its nature. No soul possesses it in its own right. In other words, as rational creatures, we owe our justice to God as its source and we are under the obligation to preserve

6 PL 96, 211.

7 'Si igitur Jeremias ... in vulva est sanctificatus, et Joannes... Spiritus sanctus ex utero Matris repletus, quis dicere audeat, singulare totius saeculi propitiatorium, ac Filii Dei omnipotentis dulcissimum reclinatorium, mox in sua conceptionis exordio Spiritus sancti gratiae illustratione destitutum.' *Eadmeri monachii Cantuariensis tractatus de conceptione S. Mariae*, ed. H. Thurston and T. Slater (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1904), 1.

8 F.S. Schmitt, *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1968), II.140–145 and 147–149.

9 Anselm identifies the fall as a significant loss of the human capacity for freedom, which he understood to be the 'rectitude of the will *propter se servata*.' Unlike Anselm, Duns Scotus understands freedom in terms of the will's ability to control itself. He argues that what was lost in the fall was not the *affectio iustitiae*, but the harmony that existed between the two affections. See Allan B. Wolter, 'Native Freedom of the Will as a Key to the Ethics of Scotus,' in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, ed. Marilyn M. Adams (Ithaca, 1998), 148–162. Peter of John Olivi had a strong influence on Scotus's development of the will's freedom. See my 'Self-Mastery and Rational Freedom: Duns Scotus's Contribution to the Usus Pauper Debate,' in *Franciscan Studies* 66 (2008), 337–369.



it. The failure to preserve justice results in actual sin; the failure to possess it constitutes Original Sin. Adam's progeny would have been created in the condition he had in the Garden of Eden, had he not sinned. Because of his sin, Adam's descendants are created in his condition *post lapsum*, that is, inheriting the physical punishments of the fall along with the obligation to preserve justice. 'Biological descent is relevant, not because the parents' biological acts somehow *cause* original sin in the offspring, but because it makes the offspring members of a class to whom the laws apply.'<sup>10</sup>

Early Franciscan thinkers, such as Alexander of Hales, accepted this Anselmian distinction and yet did not defend the Immaculate Conception.<sup>11</sup> For Hales, the distinction between the formal cause of original sin (lack of original justice) and the punitive consequences (concupiscence) helped to distinguish between Original Sin (a condition of the soul) and its punishment (inclinations in the body). In the case of Original Sin, the positive disposition toward the good is lacking, making the will susceptible to moral failure. Concupiscence enters into the moral dynamic as a punishment in the sense appetite, leading the will toward sin. The children of Adam inherit concupiscence through seminal transmission and do not receive justice (the superadded habit) until baptism.

Alexander's argument took on legal and juridical aspects, thanks to Anselm's analysis. In the case of Original Sin, the soul, lacking original justice, enters a body already tainted by the effects of Adam's fall. As a descendent of Adam and contained within Adam's 'seed,' each person inherits the blame and needs redemption. The separation of sin in the soul from consequences in the body provided a foundational turning point for the ultimate solution to the question of Mary's Immaculate Conception.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, most Franciscan thinkers prior to Scotus held the position that Mary was born in Original Sin and was sanctified prior to becoming the Mother of God.<sup>13</sup>

10 Marilyn M. Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: A Thought-Experiment in Medieval Philosophical Theology,' in *Harvard Theological Review* 103:2 (2010), 137.

11 For a discussion of Franciscans prior to Scotus, see Allan B. Wolter, 'Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the Early Franciscan School,' in *Studia Mariana cura commissionis Marialis Franciscanae edita* IX (1954), 26–69.

12 Because of Alexander's emphasis on this distinction, Mary's conception through sexual intercourse would no longer be seen as a stumbling-block to her Immaculate Conception. In this way, Wolter emphasizes how the practice of English piety found its deeper doctrinal foundation in the early Franciscans in Paris. See 'Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception...', 68–69.

13 See the discussion of the positions of Hales, Bonaventure, and other Franciscans in Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception...', 139–149.

## 2 Arguments Surrounding This Question

While the possibility of sanctification in the womb was not at all a difficult argument to make and to sustain, Eadmer's shift from sanctification to the moment of conception was a more radical and challenging move. After all, feasts celebrate a singular quality or act in the life of the saint, a sanctifying event. Like John the Baptist and Jeremiah, sanctification in the womb prior to birth had biblical antecedents and could take place at any time during the pregnancy. Sanctification could take place at the moment of 'ensoulment' or animation, when the rational soul informs the developing seminal material, generally held to be 35 days (for women) and 42 days (for men) after seminal conception. However, to celebrate the conception as a moment of sanctification just because it is nine months before the Feast of the Birth of Mary (September 8) defied theological tradition, liturgical practice, and ordinary ecclesiastical sensibilities.

Several theologians, in an effort at compromise on this issue, held that the celebration of December 8 was acceptable as a pastoral accommodation of the celebration of sanctification at ensoulment (January 11), projecting backward from birth to ensoulment and from there to seminal conception. In this way, they could hold both that Mary was conceived in sin (as are we all) and was sanctified prior to her birth. Nothing heretical or radical here.

There were several arguments brought to bear against the position that Mary was not just sanctified but conceived without sin. All, in one way or another, took for granted the centrality of Original Sin and its transmission in salvation history. Augustine was the important authority here, when he argued that Original Sin was transmitted through sexual intercourse, which invariably was accompanied by concupiscence or lust. The tainted flesh (seminal transmission) then tainted the soul, resulting in all the imbalances between physical desires and right action, between psychological and spiritual inclinations, all damaging the capacity for human moral living. And here we see the punishment inherited from our first parents, leaving no one exempt from the taint of sin, except someone (Jesus) whose conception does not involve sexual intercourse. 'In Adam's fall we sinned all.'

Bernard of Clairvaux, in an effort to defend Mary's honor, based his objection to Immaculate Conception on this inherited teaching regarding the role of concupiscence in sexual intercourse and the subsequent inevitable transmission of Original Sin. Because concupiscence during intercourse infected the flesh into which the soul would be infused, anyone who held to Mary's Immaculate Conception actually detracted from her honor and attributed her singular prerogative to her mother, Anne. Mary's honor was that she alone

conceived a child (Jesus) who was without sin. This conception was virginal. If Anne had also conceived a child without sin, then she would share the Marian privilege.<sup>14</sup>

The more significant theological point at issue in the immaculist position, however, was based upon the deeper link between the Incarnation and Original Sin. In other words, if the Incarnation was the result of the human need to be redeemed from Original Sin and its effects, then a sinless Mary would be the only person who did not need redemption. This flies in the face of the Church's teaching that in Jesus Christ 'all are saved.'<sup>15</sup> Christ's dignity as universal savior would be diminished. This, for Aquinas and others, was a far more dangerous implication of the position than attacking the dignity of Mary.

Henry of Ghent (d. 1293) had attempted to defend the position that for all practical purposes, conception and sanctification coincided in a single instant of time. In his 1291 Paris *Quodlibet* xv, q. 13, Henry proposed that one consider an instant of time according to two distinct conceptual aspects, one naturally prior and the other posterior. In this way, it would be possible to argue that Mary's soul could be in a state of sin according to a priority of nature and yet immediately understood to be in a state of grace.<sup>16</sup> Priority of nature here refers to a type of logical or conceptual priority that allows one to understand the state of grace in conceptual reference to its opposite, a state of sin. However, this juxtaposition of two states is not to be confused with temporal duration.

Because a point in time, like a linear point on a line, is not part of the continuum of time, it does not belong to durational temporality. To explain his reasoning, Henry offered the following thought-experiment: Consider a bean thrown into the air. Now consider that the bean strikes a stone that is falling. Glancing off the stone, the bean would begin a downward trajectory, whose angle would be identical to that between the bean moving upward and striking the stone. The last moment of the bean's upward trajectory is identical to the first moment of its descent. Considering the moment of impact as a point in time and not the temporal continuum, Henry proposed that, at one and the same instant there could be two distinct 'signs of nature,' on the one side

14 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistola* 174 in *Opera*, eds. J. Leclercq, C.H. Talbot, and H.M. Rochais (Rome, 1957–1977), VII, 391–392; PL 182, 335.

15 Thomas Aquinas raised the objection in this way: 'If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of his being the universal savior of all.' *Summa Theologica* III, q. 27, art. 2.

16 See Susan Brower-Toland, 'Instantaneous Change and the Physics of Sanctification: "Quasi-Aristotelianism" in Henry of Ghent's *Quodlibet* xv q. 13,' in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40:1 (2002), 19–46 for a close reading of Henry's argument and its contribution to the question of Mary's sanctification.

of which would be sin and on the other side of which would be grace. Based upon this analogy, he proposed an intermediate and conciliatory position.<sup>17</sup> In this way, Henry argued, one could conclude that 'at no time was Mary not in the state of grace.'<sup>18</sup>

### 3 John Duns Scotus and the Immaculate Conception

Franciscan tradition recalls with some documentation that, in 1307, a famous debate took place in Paris, during which John Duns Scotus successfully defended the Immaculate Conception. Naturally, his arguments provoked a storm of opposition among theologians. A year after his death, John of Pouilly attacked Scotus's position in public, calling it heretical.<sup>19</sup>

Scotus treats this question in a similar way in all three of his Commentaries on the *Sentences*: *Lectura*,<sup>20</sup> *Ordinatio*,<sup>21</sup> and *Reportatio Parisiensis*.<sup>22</sup> Allan Wolter suggests that Scotus's 1300 solution, first proposed in Oxford and ultimately the basis for the revised *Ordinatio* version,<sup>23</sup> was so compelling that it may have been the reason Scotus was sent to Paris to become an eventual Regent Master ahead of others who were in line to take up this important position.<sup>24</sup> The Wadding version we have of the *Reportatio* does not appear to have been his Magisterial teaching. Nevertheless, it may represent the lectures he gave in Paris after 1303 that helped inform the final revisions in the *Ordinatio*.<sup>25</sup>

17 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta* xv, q. 13 (Paris 1518, reprint Louvain, 1961), fol. 584r. See the discussion in Allan B. Wolter, *Four questions on Mary*, 13; Marilyn M. Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception...', 133–159.

18 Both Godfrey of Fontaines and William of Ware objected to this argument, saying that such a distinction of nature is a distinction of reason (and not a real distinction). See Allan B. Wolter and Blane O'Neill, *John Duns Scotus: Mary's Architect* (Quincy, IL, 1993), 59–60.

19 Quodl. III, q. 3, in Ioannis de Pollicaco et Ioannis de Meapoli Quaestiones disputatae de Immaculata conceptione B.V.M., ed. C. Balic, Bibl. Mariana Medii Aevi: Textus: I, (Sibenici, 1931), 1–70.

20 B. Ioannis Duns Scoti, *Opera Omnia* (Civitas Vaticana, 2003), vol. XX, 119–138.

21 B. Ioannis Duns Scoti, *Opera Omnia* (2006), vol. IX, 169–191.

22 Ioannis Duns Scoti, *Opera*, Wadding-Vivès (1891), vol. XXIII, 261–267.

23 Which is the focus for this article.

24 See Wolter/O'Neill, *Mary's Architect...*, 81.

25 There are several versions of the Paris Report, located in various manuscripts: Worcester and Balliol (which appear in the Wadding-Vivès edition), along with Troyes, Barcelona, and Valencia. The Troyes version (*Reportatio Trecensis*, 35–47) may contain the report that was widely circulated in Paris to which John of Pouilly makes direct reference. See Wolter, *Four Questions on Mary...*, 16 n. 44.

The *Lectura* version is marked by the influence of a temporal perspective that reflects Scotus's initial understanding of Henry's argument, thanks to his teacher William of Ware.<sup>26</sup> In this text, Scotus refers to divine prescience of all that would happen in history and allows for Mary's prerogative on the basis of the role her son would play along with her compassionate suffering.<sup>27</sup> The *Reportatio* version of the question focuses on a fuller exploration of Henry's solution regarding 'states of nature' and more carefully and fully presents Henry's 1291 position.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to his continued reflection on this question, Scotus is able to introduce his logical (and not temporal) solution in the final version of the *Ordinatio*, allowing a fuller response to the argument posed by Bernard of Clairvaux.

#### 4 The Initial Question

The question is posed as follows: '*Utrum beata virgo fuerit concepta in peccato originali?*' In favor of this position, Scotus enumerates the authorities he will repeat in all three versions: Romans 5:12 (in Adam all sinned), John Damascene 48 (the Holy Spirit purified her), Fulgentius' *De fide ad Petrum* (that she was conceived humanly), Augustine's commentary on John (only Christ is innocent), Pope Leo's sermon on the Nativity (Christ redeemed all), Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (all are born in iniquity), Bernard of Clairvaux's letter and a citation from a commentary on Gratian's *Decretales*.<sup>29</sup> To these sources, the *Ordinatio* and *Reportatio* versions add only an additional reference to Jerome's Commentary on Psalm 21<sup>30</sup> and to Bernard's homily on the Assumption.<sup>31</sup>

26 See Wolter, 'The Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception...', 66.

27 *Opera*, vol. xx, 128.

28 The chronology of these texts is extremely difficult to determine. The Vatican editors place the *Lectura* III to Scotus's exile in Oxford (c. 1303–4), following the dispute between Boniface VIII and King Philip IV. See Vatican edition, volume XIX, 33\*. The *Reportatio* version could be dated to 1304–5, but certainly after the *Lectura* because of the improvement in Scotus's grasp of Henry of Ghent's argument. If this sequence is correct, then the *Ordinatio* version, a revised version that Scotus reviewed toward the end of his teaching in Paris, would represent the basic argument he advanced in 1300 in Oxford, enhanced by the later improvements he inserted when he lectured again on the question.

29 'The feast must not be celebrated as it has come to be celebrated in many regions and especially in England; and this is the reason; because in sin she was conceived like the rest of the saints, the person of Christ being the sole exception.' Hugo Pisanus, *Glossae in Decretum Gratiani*, pars 3, d. 3, cap. 1 (ed. Venetiis, 1591), 1826b. English from Wolter, *Four Questions...*, 33.

30 *Ordinatio*, n. 7 (IX, 170).

31 *Ordinatio*, n. 9 (IX, 170). See Bernard, *Sermones, In Assumptione beatae Mariae sermo 2 n. 8* (*Opera* V, 237; PL 183, 420): 'Originalem a parentibus maculam traxit..., cum omnibus

These several authorities point to two common and recurring arguments against the Immaculate Conception. First, that Mary was conceived through sexual intercourse and is a child of Adam. Second, that the redemption effected by Christ extends to all humanity. To argue in favor of her Immaculate Conception would either remove her from the human race or diminish the power and dignity of her Son.

Against these authorities, Scotus lists the Lombard's references to Augustine, who in *De natura et gratia* states, 'In my mind there is no question of sin in regard to Mary,'<sup>32</sup> and Anselm's *De conceptu virginali*: 'It was fitting that the Virgin be beautified with a purity than which a greater cannot be conceived, except for God's.'<sup>33</sup> In the *Lectura* version of this Anselmian reference, Scotus reasons that we can conceive of greater purity, i.e., other rational creatures created in innocence, such as the angels.<sup>34</sup> In the *Ordinatio* version of this same point,<sup>35</sup> he names the human soul of Christ as the only one created in innocence. In either case, his point is that, following Anselm, if we are to consider the greatest purity, we must attribute innocence to Mary.

The reasoning behind the Anselmian position is easy to see. Between the angelic order (spiritual creatures created in innocence) and the children of Adam (sexually generated creatures who are fallen), there is no intermediate. There is no sexually generated creature who is not fallen. Even Christ would not qualify for this, since his birth did not involve sexual intercourse. There is a gap in the chain of being, a gap of innocence that Mary can fill on behalf of the children of Adam and Eve.

## 5 Elaborating the Points at Issue

The body of the question opens with a presentation of the common opinion on the two central theological points that underlie this issue.

- 1) Since the punishments resulting from Adam's fall accrue to everyone born from his seed, no one is exempt from the need for redemption. Christ is the universal redeemer.

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constet, ab originali contagio sola gratia mundatam esse Mariam.' It is to this point of Bernard's argument that Scotus will reply at the close of the *Ordinatio* version.

32 Augustine, *De nat. et gratia*, c. 36, n. 42 (CSEL 60, 263–264; PL 44, 267); Lombard, *Sententiae* III, dist. 3, c. 2 (Ad Claras Aquas, 1916, 559).

33 Anselm, *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*, c. 18 in *S. Anselmi Opera omnia* (Schmitt, vol. II, 159).

34 *Lectura*, n. 11 (XX, 121).

35 *Ordinatio*, n. 13 (IX, 171).

- 2) Since Mary was conceived in the manner of all humans, her soul was necessarily infected by the tainted flesh.

In addition, Mary shared in all the punishments of the fall: Hunger, thirst, mortality. She did not take these on voluntarily, as did Christ. Her sufferings were justly inflicted; she was not innocent. The two-prongs of the argument against the Immaculate Conception are these: The pre-eminent salvific action of Christ and the reality of what it means to be a child of Adam, *post lapsum*. In both cases the centrality of sin (and Original Sin at that) is the lynchpin.

## 6 The Pre-eminence of Christ

In reply to the common opinion, Scotus reasons backward from his Franciscan Christology, holding that it was precisely *because* of her Son that she did not contract Original Sin. A most perfect mediator has a most perfect act of mediation in regard to the person for whom he intercedes, and no person would be more excellent than his mother, whom he preserved from Original Sin.<sup>36</sup>

In support of this position, Scotus offers what he calls in the *Ordinatio* a 'triple proof.'<sup>37</sup> This argument is based upon a three-fold comparison, first to God to whom Mary is reconciled, second to the evil from which she was liberated, and third to the obligation owed to the person reconciled. In each case the argument is based upon the most perfect act that can be conceived in regard to the redeeming act of Christ. While in the *Lectura* version, the same three proofs are presented, they are divided up within the argument. The *Ordinatio* offers a more concise and systematic ordering.

As to the first, Scotus recalls the argument of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, offering the example of a king who is so offended by someone that the offense is passed down to all the person's children. This offense is so horrific that only someone who is innocent can offer the king the satisfaction that outweighs the injury. Someone does offer this satisfaction, yet nevertheless the king is still offended by all the children at birth. Now, a greater satisfaction would be to

36 'William of Ware, Duns Scotus and Peter Aureol go further [than Bonaventure], contending that maximally perfect mediation entails immaculate animation for some naturally propagated descendant of Adam. Once Christological preeminence has been seen to demand the award, Marian privilege can take over to identify her as the winner of the prize.' Marilyn M. Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception...', 153.

37 'Sed hoc non esset nisi meruisset eam praeservare a peccato originali, —probo tripliciter: primo, per comparationem ad Deum cui reconciliat; secundo, per comparationem ad malum a quo liberat; tertio, per comparationem ad obligationem personae quam reconciliaverat.' *Ordinatio* III, d. 3, q. 1, n. 18 (IX, 175).

prevent the king from being offended by some child—this is greater than the king's forgiveness. And, since the child did not commit the offense in the first place, such an act is not impossible.

Using this example as well as Anselm's clarification that Original Sin is better understood as the lack of required justice,<sup>38</sup> Scotus argues from a quasi-legal perspective that preventing an offense is a more perfect act of satisfaction than forgiving an offense. Here is a greater act of placation than that of appeasement for an injury that has already occurred. Christ pleases the Trinity most perfectly when he not only redeems those who have the fault, but also when he preserves someone from possessing the fault. Consequently, there is such a soul, or at least it is possible that there is such a soul who is a child of Adam and who is preserved from the fault.

The second proof considers the evil from which the person is spared. Here Scotus makes two points. First, a more perfect mediator merits the removal of all punishment for the person he reconciles.<sup>39</sup> While loss of eternal life is a punishment, sin is an even greater punishment. So, if Christ has indeed reconciled us most perfectly, then he has merited that this greatest punishment be taken from at least someone. This would be most proper in regard to his mother. Second, if Christ's act of redemption focused on original sin directly (more so than actual sin), and if it is commonly held that he preserved his mother from all actual sin, then a far more perfect act of mediation would preserve her from Original Sin. The *Ordinatio* notes that it is commonly held that the Incarnation was predicated on Original Sin;<sup>40</sup> the *Lectura* has an interesting reference to salvation history: As if the entire Trinity from eternity foresaw the passion of Christ, pleased by reason of that, such that the Blessed Virgin would be preserved from all fault, actual and original.<sup>41</sup>

The third proof considers the person reconciled. Scotus reasons that such a person is not obligated to the mediator in the highest way unless she has received the highest good that the mediator can provide. No one is obligated in the highest degree to Christ unless she has been preserved from Original Sin. Since Christ has merited grace and glory for many and these are in his debt, why should no soul be indebted to him for its innocence? And in the *Ordinatio*,

38 Anselm, *De conceptu virginali...*, chs. 1–4; Schmitt, vol. 11, 140–145.

39 Here he argues in the tradition of William of Ware as well as Anselm. For the way in which Scotus expands upon William's initial defense of the Immaculate Conception, see Wolter, 'The Immaculate Conception...', 66–67.

40 *Ordinatio*, n. 22 (1X, 177).

41 *Lectura*, n. 20 (XX, 125).



Scotus adds ‘why, since all the angels are innocent, should no human soul in heaven be innocent except the soul of Christ?’<sup>42</sup>

These three arguments address the first main theological concern. They show that Christ is indeed the universal redeemer of all, and the most perfect redeemer in regard to his mother, whom he preserved from Original Sin. Scotus has refuted the objection that an immaculate Mary would not need redemption. On the contrary, he has shown that Mary’s debt to her Son is greater than Mary Magdalene’s debt to him and greater than our debt to him.

## 7 What It Means to Be Human *Post Lapsum*

Scotus next addresses the second concern of the opposition: The nature of Original Sin and its effects upon all persons conceived in the normal manner. To answer this, Scotus again appeals to Anselm’s *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*. There Anselm had clarified that Original Sin is better understood as the ‘privation of original justice’ and a condition of the soul, not the body. The fall of our first parents was a fall from a praeternatural to a natural state as a result of disobedience. The act of disobedience belongs to the will and not the body. Anselm explained sin as a result of the disordering of the will’s two affections (for justice and for happiness) and not the result of the desires of the body. Consequently, there can be damage to the body that does not touch the soul. In addition, the soul could be cleansed (as we experience in Baptism) and the person not be freed from the physical punishments associated with Original Sin.

Scotus adds, ‘even if one were to admit that Original Sin is commonly contracted in this way, inasmuch as this infection of the flesh still remains after baptism, it is obviously not the necessary reason why Original Sin remains in the soul.’<sup>43</sup> Indeed, God could override and delete the impact of Original Sin by giving grace at the moment of conception, in such a way that the soul would not be infected. What’s more, Mary’s physical, emotional, and mental sufferings in her lifetime could have been useful for her own maturity. Original Sin would not have been useful to her. Indeed, given the obligations of punishment, it is possible to reconcile another in such a way that useless pain is removed and useful pain is retained.

Following this, Scotus states the three-fold possibility for this question:

- 1) It is possible that she was never in sin;

<sup>42</sup> *Ordinatio*, n. 25 (IX, 178).

<sup>43</sup> *Ordinatio*, n. 26 (IX, 178–179). English from Wolter, *Four Questions...*, 41.

- 2) It is possible that she was in sin for an instant;
- 3) It is possible that she was in sin for a period of time and then in grace.

As to the first possibility, he argues that God could have infused her soul with sufficient grace at the first instant of union. Since the infected flesh is not the necessary cause of the infection of the soul (because Baptism removes the latter and not the former), God could have preserved her soul. In the *Ordinatio* he adds the possibility that God cleansed the flesh before infusing the soul.<sup>44</sup> Either way, it is possible that Mary was conceived normally and without sin.

As to the second possibility, Scotus refers to what he believes to have been the argument of Henry of Ghent: That the soul of Mary was in sin for an instant and then, once time began, she was in grace. The instant she was in sin could be considered a time of 'rest' prior to motion, a time in which there is not yet time. God is free to act in such a way that grace would be introduced into the soul to cleanse it from guilt.

The third possibility (to be in sin and then in grace) is obvious, Scotus states, because it is what we experience, thanks to the sacrament of Baptism. Following this point, it is only in the *Ordinatio* that Scotus offers his personal opinion in the manner that has come down to us.

But which of these three possibilities is factually the case, God knows—but if the authority of the Church or the authority of Scripture does not contradict such, it seems probable that what is more excellent should be attributed to Mary.<sup>45</sup>

This version of the question is unique in the way that Scotus strongly proposes his own third alternative to the common opinion. This has become known as his 'Marian principle.' In this text we also find a fuller response to Bernard of Clairvaux's position.<sup>46</sup>

In considering these three possibilities more carefully, Scotus raises two objections to the second possibility (that defended by Henry of Ghent). The first objection claims that divine infinite power cannot act over a stretch of time, but must act in an instant. The proposed solution that there was one instant of guilt followed by an interval of time for cleansing is not possible. The second

44 *Ordinatio*, n. 29 (IX, 180): 'aut potuit caro mundari ante infusionem animae, ut in illo instant non esset infecta.' William of Ware had introduced this as a possibility. See Wolter/O'Neill, *Mary's Architect...*, 63.

45 'Quod autem horum trium, quae ostensa sunt possibilita esse, factum sit, Deus novit; sed si auctoritati Ecclesiae vel auctoritati Scripturae non repugnet, videtur probabile, quod excellentius est, attribuere Mariae.' *Ordinatio*, n. 34 (IX, 181).

46 *Ordinatio*, nn. 52–53 (IX, 190–191).

objection holds that the justification would have to be either a movement or a mutation. It could not be a mutation, since that could not occur in an instant. Nor can it be a movement, for this would involve a moving object and a succession of moving parts. This cannot be the soul (since it is indivisible) nor a form in the soul (grace), nor something midway between the two, because there is nothing between these opposites. In short, there is either privation or its opposite.

In response to these two objections, Scotus notes that if God were to act voluntarily at some instant, he would not have to wait for the interval of time before he could act. God can act immediately, and this does not require that he act instantaneously. In other words, God can act in an instant or in a temporal duration, because God is free.

As to the second objection, Scotus states that the passive justification is neither a movement nor a mutation, but 'something having the characteristics of both.' It is similar to a mutation insofar as it is an indivisible form. It is like a movement insofar as it takes place within temporal duration. It is unlike mutation in that it takes place in time, and it is unlike movement because it does not involve intermediate stages.

In an extended response to the first reason given by the authorities ('in Adam all sinned'), Scotus takes up the possible position that being a child of Adam meant that Mary contracted Original Sin. Using the distinction that Henry's argument had introduced ('sign of nature') and without reference to Henry, Scotus argues that being a child of Adam does not necessarily entail that she was deprived of original justice.

When it is argued that 'a daughter of Adam was naturally prior to a justified one,' I concede that her nature thought of in this way [i.e. as justified] in the first instance of nature follows her being a daughter of Adam and not having grace in that instant of nature, but it does not follow 'therefore, in that instant of nature it was deprived,' speaking of that very first instant. For according to that primacy of nature it naturally precedes the privation of justice just as it [i.e., being a daughter of Adam] precedes justice itself. But all one can infer here is that 'under the aspect of nature there is a natural basis for being a child of Adam.' And under that aspect there is neither justice nor lack of it, which I concede.<sup>47</sup>

Scotus's logical insight here is that just because someone is 'not just,' this does not mean that they are 'unjust.' It is possible to consider the soul independently

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47 *Ordinatio*, n. 46 (IX, 187–188). English from Wolter, *Four Questions...*, 51.

of the alternatives 'fallen/justified,' and in this way, the soul has a type of neutral, conceptual existence. Thanks to the objection that Henry's position would still involve contradictories existing simultaneously, Scotus reasons to a more sophisticated solution. He argues that, prior to the instant in question, the soul need not be in a state of injustice simply because it is not in a state of justice.<sup>48</sup> Here he reaches the logical solution that avoids the temporal complexities created by Henry.

Scotus's solution is the result of decades of theological reflection and debate within the Franciscan School. The developments that he inherited from Anselm (Original Sin as the absence of original justice) and from Alexander (the distinction between sin and the punishments that flow from solidarity with the human race), coupled with his modification of the argument of Henry of Ghent, enable Scotus to consider this state of the soul as a 'sign of nature.' In this way, he avoids the charge of contradictories existing simultaneously (the accusation against Henry) because the two states belong to different orders: The first is the order of the supernatural (grace) and the second refers to the absence of the praeternatural gift that was lost (privation of justice).<sup>49</sup>

And it is this very insight about the nature of the human soul that enables Scotus to reply and correct the argument offered by Bernard. The Franciscan explains first, that there is no libido present at the moment of ensoulment (because this is not the moment of sexual intercourse), and second, that in the instant of the conception of [human] nature (ensoulment), Mary's sanctification was not from guilt that was present, but from the guilt *that would have been there* if grace had not been infused into her soul at that moment. What's more, even if one were to allow that the soul was created in the mixing of the seeds (seminal transmission), grace could have been infused at that moment, thus preventing the spiritual infection.<sup>50</sup> And by considering the soul in this way, Scotus has an answer to every variant of the debate.

The important distinction upon which Scotus insists is this: Since Mary's justice is not *ex se*, she is not the cause of her own justice. Her justice depends upon the grace of God and the future actions of Christ, in whose redemptive act she plays a significant role. Consequently, she can be considered just at every moment of her existence and yet not independently so. Here then is the final argument that avoids the two-pronged objections that rely on the salvific preeminence of Christ and on her membership in the human race, a daughter of Adam and Eve.

48 *Ordinatio*, n. 30 (IX, 181).

49 See Wolter's discussion of this in *Mary's Architect...*, 70.

50 *Ordinatio*, nn. 52–53 (IX, 190–191).

## 8 Divine Intention, Incarnation, and the Immaculate Conception<sup>51</sup>

How are we to understand this logical status of Mary's soul? Might it be likened to the soul of Adam or of Eve prior to their creation, prior to the fall, by nature neither fallen nor justified? Does this conceptual and logical approach to Mary's soul open the question to a consideration of the created order as intended by God? This order would be logically prior to the creation of the world, prior to Adam and Eve, prior to the fall and human history. Here Scotus's comment in the *Ordinatio* has enhanced import:

It seems Christ's reparation and reconciliation concerned original sin even more immediately or directly than it did actual sin, since the need for the Incarnation and passion of Christ is commonly ascribed to original sin.<sup>52</sup>

Why does Scotus use the expression 'commonly ascribed'? He refers to the common opinion as a justification for his own position that freedom from Original Sin is a greater gift than Mary's freedom from actual sin, a freedom that all theologians admitted. The fact that he introduces it here, in the context of this latest form of the argument, may point to another dimension of his Christological teaching that bears upon this question: The dignity of Mary and how she images the human person,<sup>53</sup> so loved and intended by God. And this insight relies upon Scotus's separation of the Incarnation from Original Sin.<sup>54</sup>

In *Reportatio* I, dist. 41, Scotus addresses the question of human merit and the predestination of Christ. The point at issue is the relationship between human sin and the Incarnation. In this text, Scotus makes the following assertion:

From this another corollary follows: No one is predestined on account of the fall of someone else, nor is anyone's salvation dependent upon a

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51 It will belong to the followers of Scotus, namely John of Bassolis and Angelus Volpi, to work out a more complete and explicit synthesis of the implications of Scotus's affirmation of the reason behind the Incarnation and his defense of the Immaculate Conception. See Bernhard Vogt, OFM, *Duns Scotus, Defender of the Immaculate Conception: A Historical-Dogmatic Study* (New Jersey, 1955). For the development of the teaching after Aureoli, see Ignatius Brady, OFM, 'The Development of the Doctrine on the Immaculate Conception in the Fourteenth Century After Aureoli,' in *Franciscan Studies* 15 (1955), 175–202.

52 At n. 22 (IX, 177). English from Wolter, *Four Questions...*, 39.

53 As John Paul II, in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, asserts throughout the document. See n. 4 (21).

54 And here, according to Wolter, is the point at which Scotus surpasses his teacher William of Ware in producing an even more intricate argument. See 'The Immaculate Conception...', 66–67.

chance event; hence Christ did not become incarnate, and thus superior to all in merit and reward, on account of sin. Nay, even if no one had ever sinned, he would still have been superior to all creatures in merit and reward.<sup>55</sup>

This assertion, that the Incarnation took place independently of human sin, only appears in the *Reportatio* version of the question. However, it does have parallels in the *Ordinatio* III, dist. 7 discussion of the predestination of Christ. And in that text, Scotus makes use of a key distinction to understand divine intention and action: The orders of intention and execution that constitute salvation history.

When Scotus asks, 'Was Christ predestined to be the Son of God?' he elaborates more fully on the nature of the Incarnation: That the Word would take up (assume) human nature in order that human nature would be (in the Word) glorified. In reply to a doubt that this predestination depended on the fall of human nature, Scotus appeals to his distinction among the orders of intention and execution:

Without passing judgment it can be said that so far as priority of objects intended by God is concerned, the predestination of anyone to glory is prior by nature to the prevision of the sin or damnation of anyone (according to the final opinion given in distinction 41 of the first book). So much the more then is this true of the predestination of that soul which was destined beforehand to possess the very highest glory possible. For it seems to be universally true that one who wills ordinately, and not inordinately, first intends what is nearer the end, and just as he first intends one to have glory before grace, so among those to whom he had foreordained glory, he who wills ordinately, would seem to intend first the glory of the one he wishes to be nearest the end, and therefore he intends glory to this soul [of Christ] before he wills glory to any other soul, and to every other soul he wills glory before taking into account the opposite of these habits [namely, the sin or damnation of anyone].<sup>56</sup>

Up to this point in the question, Scotus had been pursuing the issue of the rationale behind the Incarnation. He agrees that, in the absence of sin, there would be no need for redemption. However, the Franciscan continues:

55 *Reportatio* I, d. 41, n. 72 in John Duns Scotus, *The Examined Report of The Paris Lecture: Reportatio I-A*, ed. A.B. Wolter and O. Bychkov (St. Bonaventure, NY, 2008), vol. 2, 506.

56 *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 61 (1X, 287). English from *Four Questions...*, 23.

Still it does not seem to be solely because of the redemption that God predestined this soul to such glory, since the redemption or the glory of the souls to be redeemed is not comparable to the glory of the soul of Christ. Neither is it likely that the highest good in the whole of creation is something that merely chanced to take place, and that only because of some lesser good. Nor is it probable that God predestined Adam to such a good before he predestined Christ. Yet all this would follow, yes, and even something more absurd. If the predestination of Christ's soul was for the sole purpose of redeeming others, it would follow that in foreordaining Adam to glory God would have had to foresee him as having fallen into sin before he could have predestined Christ. ... No one therefore is predestined simply because God foresaw another would fall, lest anyone have reason to rejoice at the misfortune of another.<sup>57</sup>

A final recall of the difference between the two orders completes the argument:

Which did God intend first, the union of this [human] nature with the Word or its ordination to glory? Now the sequence in which the creative artist evolves his plan is the very opposite of the way he puts it into execution. One can say, however, that in the order of execution, God's union with a human nature is naturally prior to his granting it the greatest grace and glory. We could presume, then, that it was in the reverse order that he intended them, so that God would first intend that some nature, not the highest, should receive the highest glory, proving thereby he was not constrained to grant glory in the same measure as he bestowed natural perfection. Then secondly, as it were, he willed that this nature should subsist in the Person of the Word, so that the angel might not be subject to a [mere] man.<sup>58</sup>

These texts, and the arguments that support them, reveal the power of the distinction between the orders of intention and execution. Thanks to this distinction, Scotus recasts the reason for the Incarnation. His recasting places Christ at the center of human history, as exemplar of divine intent and as model for reflection on the perfections of human nature.<sup>59</sup>

57 *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, nn. 63–67 (IX, 288–289). English from *Four Questions...*, 25.

58 *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, nn. 68–69 (IX, 289). English from *Four Questions...*, 25.

59 For a fuller discussion of this, see my 'Duns Scotus's Christology: Foundations for Franciscan Christian Humanism,' in *The English Province of the Franciscans (1224-c.1350)*, ed. Michael Robson (Leiden, 2017), 314–332.

Scotus's deepened reflection on the reason behind the Incarnation provided a significant backdrop to his reflection on the Immaculate Conception. In other words, if the Incarnation would have taken place whether or not Adam fell, then the person of his mother would have been required from all eternity. And this means that, in the event of Adam's fall, divine preservation would have been needed in order to protect and sustain the soul of the one person whose affection for justice had to be actual.

Divine action can now be explained by means of that very protective or conserving grace that such a person would need and, additionally, as part of an eternal plan whose outcome was fore-ordained and yet not completely pre-determined. Divine protective action ensures that the divine plan continue, despite human sin. Scotus refers to this as 'prevenient' grace. Here is the grace that 'goes before,' attracts, and, in the case of Mary, protects or shields her from what would occur if the grace were not present.

As a child of Adam and Eve *post lapsum*, Mary would naturally inherit the imbalance of desires, emotions, and spiritual inclinations within her soul, were it not for a divine protective act. Because prevenient grace is present at her conception (or her animation), her soul remains untainted even though her body carries the marks of physical fallenness and suffering: The punishment carried by all the children of Adam and Eve. Despite sin, she continues to play the role foreseen for her before the foundation of the world. And, although prevenient grace spares her soul, it does not spare her body from the 'useful' sufferings she will experience in her lifetime. These sufferings will be useful to her in her spiritual journey of maturity and merit.

## 9 Conclusions

Three elements make up Scotus's solution to this question: 1) A reflection upon the nature of sin and its relationship to the Incarnation; 2) a reflection upon the nature of the created soul as intended by God; and 3) a reflection upon how divine action relates to human history.

### 1) The relationship of sin to the Incarnation

The key to Scotus's strong affirmation of his Marian position is seen in his argument for the reason behind the Incarnation. Scotus lays the foundation for his teaching on human dignity with his focus on the centrality of Christ for salvation history. This dimension of Scotist thought reflects the English Franciscan tradition and has methodological antecedents in Scotus's teacher, William of Ware. Indeed, William's influence on Scotus was substantial as well as



methodological. From William, Scotus learned the three-step methodological argument based upon logical possibility and suitability to conclude to the affirmation of fact.<sup>60</sup>

*Potuit:* It would have been possible for God to do such a thing

*Decuit:* It would have been fitting had God done so

*Fecit:* Therefore, God did act in this way

Such a three-fold methodological argument relies on a principle of perfectibility: That is, God's actions, if possible, are always the most fitting and most pleasing. Thus, in any situation, God can always be counted on to act in a way that is most fitting and pleasing. As Scotus reasons, since human error can always be counted on in judging divine actions, it is better to err on the side of generosity! Often cited as his 'Marian principle,' it is also Scotus's Christological principle, found in his teaching on the Incarnation<sup>61</sup> as well as in his position in favor of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>62</sup>

Scotus's discussion of the Incarnation makes use, as well, of an early logical distinction that recurs each time he presents the notion of merit. This distinction is that between two orders of viewing an event: According to the *ordo intentionis* (or order of intent) and according to the *ordo executionis* (or the order of execution). The two orders mirror one another, with the order of execution occurring in time. As such, it is the reverse of the intentional order. What is first in the order of intention is last in the order of generation or execution. For Scotus, the order of intention reflects the divine mind and constitutes the true teleological relationship among events.

The ultimate goal of divine action is framed by love. As an ordered lover, God first wills the end and then those means which are ordered to promote the end. The end, Scotus affirms in *Ordinatio* III, d. 32, is to have 'co-lovers, and this is nothing else than willing that others have his love in themselves.

60 On the influence of William's methodology for Scotus, see Wolter/O'Neill, *Mary's Architect...*, 62–65.

61 'In extolling Christ, I prefer to praise him too much than fail by defect, if through ignorance I must fall into either excess.' *Ordinatio* III, d. 13, qq. 1–4, n. 53 (IX, 406). English translation from *Franciscan Christology*, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY, 1997), 163.

62 William of Ware argued similarly in favor of the Immaculate Conception, cited by Wolter in 'Doctrine of Immaculate Conception...,' 61: 'There is another opinion, he tells us, that Mary did not contract original sin "which I wish to hold, because if I should be wrong, since I am not certain of the other view (viz., that Mary contracted the sin), I would rather fail by excess in attributing some prerogative to Mary than fail by defect in denying one that she has.'"

Now this is to predestine them, if he wishes them to have this good finally and eternally.<sup>63</sup>

By removing the causal link between sin and the Incarnation, Scotus opens the conceptual conversation to dignity beyond human failure. Just as the Incarnation may have taken place in the absence of Original Sin, so too the Immaculate Conception is independent of Original Sin, the seminal transmission of sin, and, indeed, the obligation for justice that was so central in the Anselmian-based analysis. This means that Mary can be understood as a type or model for human dignity, independently of the historical situation that related to her birth. What's more, if she can be imagined to be conceived without original sin, then all persons can be considered as possessing, in the order of God's intention, an innate dignity more significant than their fallenness.

## 2) The soul's natural state

While in the *Lectura* version, Scotus focuses on Henry's argument and the signs of nature as they relate to temporality, in the *Ordinatio* and *Reportatio*, the reflection on the signs of nature and natural priority are introduced as a logical (and not temporal) distinction. By means of this shift from temporality to logic, Scotus can introduce his thought-experiment about the soul prior to the moment of animation, prior to the dichotomy of justice or injustice. Because a pre-justified soul is not necessarily an unjust soul, the divine action of prevenient grace does not, strictly speaking, move Mary from the injustice of sin to the grace of redemption. Nor does divine action fall guilty of allowing contradictory states to exist simultaneously.

Rather, divine action protects her and preserves her from the stain of sin that she would have inherited had grace not been present. And this act of divine gratuity is deemed more gracious than the act of purification or cleansing that sinners receive. Mary's debt to her Son is the greatest debt of all.

To present her soul in its 'natural state' is to imagine it logically or naturally prior to sin or justification. It is a moment of 'rest' prior to movement, a purely conceptual way of thinking about a human person. And indeed, if it is possible to think about one human person in this way, it is possible to think about more than one, indeed many, human persons in this way.

## 3) Divine action at work in human history

Divine action, Scotus repeats in this question and throughout his writings, is able to work within time, whether in an instant or within the continuum. This act is the result of divine freedom and gracious liberality, which always exceeds

<sup>63</sup> *Ordinatio* III, d. 32, n. 21 (IX, 136–137). English from *Franciscan Christology*, 157.

our wildest dreams. Indeed, throughout the three texts of this question, Scotus emphasizes the key role of divine freedom and divine infinite gracious action in human history. And here is the model of divine grace: The co-causality that does not overwhelm human freedom, but rather enhances human action and human choice.

John Duns Scotus weaves together his Franciscan Christology, his insight into divine desire for human persons at the moment of their creation, the power of divine love, and divine sustaining action within time. In this way, he creates a tapestry of human dignity and blessedness in the person of Mary: Fairest daughter of our race. She is the model for our meditation on our human vocation.

Thus the 'fullness of time' manifests the extraordinary dignity of the 'woman.' On the one hand, this dignity consists in the supernatural elevation to union with God in Jesus Christ, which determines the ultimate finality of the existence of every person both on earth and in eternity. From this point of view, the 'woman' is the representative and the archetype of the whole human race: She represents the humanity which belongs to all human beings, both men and women.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, John Duns Scotus's argument in defense of the Immaculate Conception provides more than a rationale for pious practice and Marian devotion. It offers a foundation and provides a solid trajectory for a renewed evangelization saturated with Franciscan optimism. Scotus provides the necessary foundation for a contemporary presentation of the faith and a Christological argument for a vision of human life and the future of our world.

### Acknowledgement

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64 *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 4, 21.

## Francis of Meyronnes and the Immaculate Conception

*Christiaan Kappes*

Francis of Meyronnes, O.F.M. (c. 1288-c. 1328), does not enjoy the name recognition of Medieval and Renaissance confreres such as Bonaventure and Bernardino of Siena.<sup>1</sup> The so-called *doctor abstractionum* nonetheless merits the awe that he once garnered among his fellow Schoolmen.<sup>2</sup> At Francis' zenith, he was named by numerous honorific epithets. Schoolmen even spoke about the *via Mayronis* and about Francis' followers as *Mayronistae*.

Francis was born into a family who were members of the Angevin dynasty. Meyronnes, Francis' birthplace, was a village of Provence (France). Upon coming of age, Francis joined the Franciscans in their convent at Digne where he was first educated. Thereafter, he was sent to the University of Paris and attended lectures of John Duns Scotus, O.F.M. between the years 1304 and 1307.<sup>3</sup> Francis subsequently took up posts reading or teaching the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in Franciscan provincial *studia* in France and Italy until 1318.<sup>4</sup> Afterwards, he returned to Paris (1320–21) as a bachelor of theology, where he lectured on Lombard's *Sentences*.<sup>5</sup> He was promoted to *magister* of theology on 24 May 1323 at the explicit request of John XXII, after solicitation by Robert

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- 1 See Franz Roth, *Franz von Mayronis O.F.M.: Sein leben, seine Werke, seine Lehre vom Formalunterschied in Gott*, in *Franziskanische Forschungen* 3 (Werl, 1936), and Heribert Rossmann, *Die Hierarchie der Velts: Gestalt und System der Franz von Meyronnes OFM mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Schöpfungserlehe*, in *Franziskanische Forschungen* 23 (Werl, 1972).
  - 2 See also Roberto Lambertini, 'Francis of Meyronnes', in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages: Blackwell Companions to Philosophy*, ed. Jorge Gracia and Timothy Noone (Oxford, 2002), 256–57, and William Duba, 'Francis of Meyronnes', in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund, Springer Reference (Heidelberg, 2011), 364–366.
  - 3 Bert Roest, 'Freedom and Contingency in the *Sentences* Commentary of Francis of Meyronnes', in *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), 323–346 at 324.
  - 4 Hans Möhle, 'Einleitung', in *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus' des Franciscus de Mayronis*, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévale: Bibliotheca* 7 (Leuven, 2004), 70–71.
  - 5 Francis defended Mary at the Sorbonne these years per Stefano Cecchin, 'Giovanni Duns Scoto Dottore dell'Immacolata Concezione alcune questioni', in *La 'Scuola Francescana' e l'Immacolata Concezione*, ed. Stefano Cecchin, *Collana Studi Mariologici* 10 (Vatican, 2005), 219–271 at 222.

of Anjou, King of Naples. Later that year, acting as a royally appointed confessor to St. Elzear, Baron of Ansouis (Provence) and Count of Ariano (Naples), Francis pronounced the funeral oration for the saint who had died in his arms. Elzear and his wife, Bl. Delphine, were associated with Franciscan Spirituals and Beguines. This put Francis in touch with the leading lay spirituality movements of the day. Accordingly, Francis was intimately involved in Franciscan apologetics regarding absolute poverty, a controversial question during this period. Francis also enjoyed the favor of John XXII, whose hieratic authority Francis advanced in a work dated to 1321, while yet unable to convince Pope John to canonize the popular Elzear, perhaps due to associations with the Franciscan Spirituals.<sup>6</sup> In 1323, Francis was elected the provincial minister to Aquitaine, in which capacity he served for about five years. During his final years he was invited (1324) to Avignon to deliver sermons and disputations and even to serve in a diplomatic capacity to Gascony.<sup>7</sup> At last, while housed in Piacenza, he died c. 1328.

Francis confessed his devotion to the person and theology of Scotus, calling Duns *doctor noster* and referring to Franciscan enthusiasts of Scotus as *schola nostra*. In recognition of Francis' literary production, successive Scotists understandably awarded this intellectual giant with the appellation *princeps Scotistarum*. Nevertheless, Francis proved a critical reader of Scotus, albeit always respectful of his *Magister*. Notably, Francis speculated beyond the bounds set by his *doctor*, throwing Duns' caution into the wind on the question of the Immaculate Conception. Duns employed language that has been best classified as 'restrained and prudent' regarding the controversial *opinio theologica*.<sup>8</sup> Diversely, Francis gained notoriety for extolling this doctrine, arguing forcefully for Mary's divine 'privilege' or exemption from original sin.<sup>9</sup> My present investigation means to highlight new discoveries about Meyronnes, who managed to tap into ancient and patristic methods of interpreting the Pauline corpus in favor of his immaculist thesis. Francis innovatively developed Augustine's

6 Francis composed his *libellus supplicis* of canonization in 1327, as in André Vauchez, *La Sainte-Église en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge: D'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 241 (Rome, 1988), 5–771 at 94; 244–245; 299; esp. 418–420.

7 Möhle, 'Einleitung', 70–71.

8 Allan Wolter, 'Introduction', in *John Duns Scotus: Four Questions on Mary* (St. Bonaventure NY, 2012), 19.

9 Ioannes Juric, 'Franciscus de Mayronis Immaculatae Conceptionis eximius vindex', in *Studi francescani* 51 (1954), 225–263 at 245–248; Charles Balić, 'De significatione interventus Ioannis Duns Scoti in historia dogmatis Immaculatae Conceptionis', in VI, 241–272 at 257–260.

synthesis of Roman jurisprudence with the theology of St. Paul. In so doing, Meyronnes managed even to adapt Bonaventure's earlier synthesis of jurisprudence with theology to fortify contemporary Franciscan arguments on behalf of the Immaculate Conception.

## 1 Chronology of Meyronnes' Works

Francis' writings on Mary fit well into the context of the University of Paris, where the Immaculate Conception had recently been favored as an *opinio probabilior*.<sup>10</sup> Following Scotus' successful disputation on the matter (c. 1303), the *pars maior* of Parisian Masters eventually endorsed his opinion.<sup>11</sup> By 1314, university parameters set for preaching on Mary's merits and privileges demanded sermonizing only on what was decent (*deceat*) in regard to Mary. Subsequently, Meyronnes returned to Paris to comment upon the *Sentences* in 1320–21. Considering Francis' unusual boldness of language in arguing for the Immaculate Conception, he assuredly delivered his multiple extant sermons on the Immaculate Conception after his second stint in Paris.<sup>12</sup> Bachelors and masters were required to give public sermons on feasts, which also reflected Franciscan custom since at least Bonaventure's time.<sup>13</sup> Strictly speaking, festal sermons fall outside the category of 'academic sermons,' but such were often designed to turn a universitarian controversy into a wider debate.<sup>14</sup> Delivering these kinds of sermons was required of friars in order to advance from bachelor to master.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond piety, the philosophical anthropology underlying the Immaculate Conception provided Franciscans with a causal explanation to account for

10 Alfonsus Pompei, 'Sermones duo Parisiensis saeculo XIV De conceptione B.V.M et Scoti influxus in evolutionem sententiae immaculistae Parisiis', in *Miscellanea Franciscana* 55 (1955), 480–557 at 483–486.

11 Jean de Pouilly witnessed the full outbreak of the controversy by 1308. The date of Scotus' cause for disputation is cautiously proposed in Allan Wolter, *John Duns Scotus: Mary's Architect* (St. Bonaventure NY, 1993), 21–22. These testimonies are scrutinized in Cecchin, 'Giovanni Duns Scoto', 228.

12 Juric proposed this dating for Meyronnes' *Absit* in Ioannes Juric, 'De redactione inedita sermonis "Absit" Francisci de Mayronis in festo conceptionis B.M.V.', in *Studi Franciscani* 53 (1956), 3–54, at 28.

13 Pompei, 'Sermones duo', 482–483.

14 Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210–1517)* (Leiden, 2000), 293. Meyronnes' sermons generally are heavily theological tractates, per Robert Karris, 'Francis of Meyronnes' Sermon 57 on the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32)', in *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005), 131–158, at 132.

15 Roest, *A History*, 294.

Mary's incomparable perfections.<sup>16</sup> In the highly philosophical and speculative environment of Paris, divine psychology and analyses of logical possibility to account for Mary's creation proved irresistibly attractive to numerous Schoolmen. While Francis wrote in the fourteenth century, Lombard's twelfth-century textbook of the *Sentences* still remained central to studies on Mary's holiness, original sin, and guilt (*culpa*) at conception. Lombard's authorities formed the firm foundation upon which generations of academics built their objections to the Immaculate Conception, even in the fourteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

Modern scholars have demonstrated that Meyronnes developed a doctrine in dialogue with Franciscan predecessors. For example, Meyronnes' arguments notably parallel theological arguments of the scotistic immaculist Peter Aureole (*scripsit* 1314).<sup>18</sup> As Balić records, numerous Parisian theologians adopted some variant of Scotus' arguments, reducible to the Marian axiom: '*Potuit, deuit, fecit.*' Since the aforementioned were all Parisian theologians, one cannot exclude them from possible influence on Meyronnes.<sup>19</sup> Notably, Peter Thomae (*scripsit* c. 1322–1330) should be considered as a potential source for Meyronnes' material for Mariology.<sup>20</sup> For his part, Thomae has been argued to depend on Aureole for discussions on immaculatism.<sup>21</sup>

## 2 Meyronnes' Sources for Mariology

Modern discussions of Meyronnes' authentic immaculist writings can be reduced to two redactions of his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences* and to three festal sermons.<sup>22</sup> I have consulted the 1520 edition of redaction 'A' and

16 See Meyronnes, *In festo annunciationis: Sermo primus*, in *Sermones de sanctis* (Basel, 1498), 15, col. 1.

17 Emmanuele Chietini, 'La prima santificazione di Maria ss.ma nella scuola francescana del sec. XIII', in VI, 1–39. Mary's impurity was often argued from Damascene's 'purification' at the Annunciation.

18 Balić, 'De significatione', 142–143, underlines Scotus' and William Ware's renowned (by 1314–15) passages among Englishmen and Parisians on this question. Balić discovered propositions appealing to decency and piety, defending Mary's preservation (*praeservare*) from divine wrath (Eph 2:3) and original sin as prompted by *Sent.* 3.10.2.

19 Balić, 'De significatione', 143–146.

20 Christopher Schabel and Garrett Smith, 'The Franciscan *Studium* in Barcelona in the Early Fourteenth Century', in *Philosophy and Theology in the Studia of the Religious Orders and at Papal and Royal Courts*, ed. Kent Emery, William Courtney, and Stephen Metzger, *Recontres de Philosophie Médiévale* 15 (Turnhout, 2012), 359–392, at 381–386.

21 Alfonso Pompeii, 'L'Immacolata concezione', 241–272 at 248, 250–252; Ignatius Brady, 'The Development of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the Fourteenth Century after Aureoli', in *Franciscan Studies* 15 (1955), 175–202, at 175–177.

22 See Roth, *Franz*, 216–218; 275–283; 317–326; and Pompei, 'L'Immacolata concezione', 257.

the 1665 edition of redaction 'B' of Meyronnes' commentary on book three of Lombard's *Sentences*.<sup>23</sup> However, Francis' commitment to immaculatism permeated the entire corpus of his festal sermons.

Francis' breadth of learning within his sermons betrays his mastery over subjects ranging from Scripture to patrology, even to Roman law. While Francis nourished himself on a standard fare of biblical and patristic citations taken from liturgical texts, florilegia (such as Lombard's *Sentences* or Gratian's *Decretum*), and predecessors' commentaries on Lombard, his critically edited sermon on Mary (i.e., *Absit*) stands as a monument to his capacity to synthesize diverse sciences into one interdisciplinary exposition. *Absit* is extant in two redactions, both of which can be safely attributed to Meyronnes.<sup>24</sup> Francis' second major sermon on the *immaculata* is entitled *Candor est lucis aeternae*. Again, it exists in two redactions, but neither exists in a critical edition.<sup>25</sup> Additionally a sermoninal fragment is extant on Mary immaculate that, thus far, proves authentic.<sup>26</sup> Francis' most systematic treatment of Immaculate Conception is his so-called *Tractatus de conceptione b. Marie virginis*, from which I will cite profusely.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, Francis' other festal sermons include authentic homilies on Mary that are available in incunabulum: *In festo purificationis*, *In festo annunciationis* 1–5, *In festo assumptionis* 1–4, *In festo nativitatis* 1–3, *De nomine/conceptione beate virginis* 1–3, *De creatione anime virginis*, *De domina*, and *Tractatus super Magnificat*.<sup>28</sup> Finally, Francis had a penchant for inserting large Marian *excursus* into other sermons as, e.g., *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*.<sup>29</sup>

23 Two redactions of Meyronnes' commentary on book three of Lombard's *Sentences* exist. Redaction 'A' was printed in three editions (1506, 1519, 1520), while his second redaction is available only in a highly imperfect edition (1665). See Juric, *Franciscus*, 225–230. I have consulted redaction 'A' (1520) and 'B' (1665). Juric provided corrections for the latter presumably defective manuscript of 'B' and discovered the 1520 edition to be nearly exactly that of 1506.

24 Juric, 'De redactione', 23–30.

25 Juric, 'Franciscus', 232–233. Redaction 'B' remains unedited. I utilize redaction 'A' of the last two editions from among those of 1493, 1498, and 1665.

26 Juric, 'Franciscus', 233–234. Authorship seems likely when comparing this to Meyronnes, *De nomine beate virginis*, in *Sermones de sanctis*, 188, col. 2–189, col. 1.

27 *Tractatus*, 283, col. 1–316, col. 2.

28 Meyronnes, *Sermones de sanctis*, 8, col. 1–13, col. 1; 217, col. 1–226, col. 1; 15, col. 2–24 col., 2; 86, col. 1–99, col. 2; 108, col. 2–116, col. 2; 188, col. 2–196, col. 2; 265, col. 1–269, col. 1; 271, col. 1–276, col. 1; 276, col. 1–281, col. 2; 336, col. 2–356, col. 2.

29 Meyronnes, *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*, in *Sermones in sanctis*, 260, col. 2–265, col. 1.



Francis' Christian sources for his Marian sermons reveal a standard cache: Jerome and his *Vulgate*,<sup>30</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo and Ps.-Augustine (Fulgentius of Ruspe and Paschasius Radbertus et al.), Leo the Great, Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory the Great, Venerable Bede, John Damascene, Anselm of Canterbury, Richard of St. Victor, Lombard's *Sentences*, John of Naples, Alain de Lille, Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, and Duns Scotus' *Sentences* commentary. Entirely unanticipated legislative authorities include Emperor Justinian I's *Novellae* and Gregory IX's *Decretals*. In his general *homiletica*, Meyronnes employed pagan authors as well; namely, Sallustius, Ovidius, and Seneca.<sup>31</sup> Yet, in his Marian homilies, I have found only Aristotle and oblique citations of Cicero.<sup>32</sup>

Meyronnes, like many Schoolmen, employed *catenae* and *florilegia* for de-contextualized citations in many theological arguments. Though Meyronnes commentated on numerous *opera*, comparison of his Marian sermons and *Sentences* commentary to aforementioned immaculatists leads one to suspect that many of his citations are from extracts of recent predecessors. Diversely, Francis produced a complete commentary on Gratian's *Decretum* (*Cum Martha*), traditionally dated to 1319.<sup>33</sup> After becoming a *Magister*, from c. 1322, Francis edited selections from Augustine's *De civitate dei* (et al.) and commented on the *opera omnia* of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>34</sup> Francis is attributed authorship of a commentary on the *opera* of Anselm of Canterbury.<sup>35</sup> Upon comparing Meyronnes' festal sermons to his canonical and patristic studies, the former are obviously fruits of synthetic reflection upon Jerome's *Vulgate* through the lens of Augustinian and Justinianic jurisprudence. Because several extant sermons exist for the same Marian feast, Francis' extant *homiletica* reflects not only his preaching in Paris, but also at the papal court in Avignon. A critical edition of Meyronnes' *opera omnia* is sorely needed. Nevertheless,

30 Jerome is accepted as translator/editor of only the *Vulgate* Gospels in the New Testament. See H.A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament* (Oxford, 2006), 31–36.

31 Juric, 'De redactione', 12.

32 See Meyronnes, *In festo annunciationis: Sermo tertius*, in *Sermones in sanctis*, 217, col. 2. The sermon's overtones are Bonaventurian and Anselmian, but one anomalous section treats of right reason and '*iustitia moris*' in juridical and Ciceronian fashion. Furthermore, justice is treated as *recta ratio* between God and man, a predominant theme in Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De legibus*, 1.7–8. For Meyronnes' plausible access to this work, see Andrew Roy Dyck, *A Commentary on De legibus* (Ann Arbor MI, 2004), 42.

33 Roth, *Franz*, 84.

34 See Roth, *Franz*, 161–171. Francis read through numerous authentic and pseudepigraphal works of Augustine, listed in Arnoud Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe 1500–1620* (Oxford, 2011), 23.

35 Roth, *Franz*, 171–172.

much of Meyronnes' theology is accessible from incunabula and sixteenth-century printings of Francis' works.

### 3 Immaculate Conception: Scholastic Methods

Francis paid attention to burning issues of the day, which were signaled by disputed questions, as occasioned by Lombard's *Sentences*. The discussion of Mary was, by then, becoming very technical. Taking their queue from Scotus, immaculatists divided up the structural moments for production of soul, body, and fetus so as to analyze each instant and to discover the cause able to effect supernatural grace in a human subject. This sort of analysis into instants allowed for a precision of focus and study and for meticulous application of logical and philosophical principles to each moment of Mary's life and even to divine motivations behind her creation.<sup>36</sup> In this, Meyronnes indulged in the Franciscan penchant to apply a strict analogy between human and divine psychology so that theologians might describe the process of intellectual production and volition in the divine essence. Furthermore, Meyronnes and his fellow immaculatists viewed Roman law as an interpretive key for understanding the possibility of the Immaculate Conception. This facet of immaculist studies has been notably neglected. As such, I will highlight juristic readings of St. Paul by Meyronnes.

Peter Thomae is catalogued as the first Scholastic to argue the Immaculate Conception *systematically* from liturgical pericopes and antiphons citing Scripture.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Meyronnes adopted scriptural methods, especially developing biblical typology in reference to Mary. Yet, the systematic application of *privilegium* in Roman and canon law is key to Meyronnes' thesis. Francis knew its potential applicability to Mariology from Bonaventure: 'If God will do something beyond [nature], this privilege is special, not being of common law.'<sup>38</sup> Bonaventure meant to assert that '*privilegium* [is] a legal enactment

36 Divvying up of the spermatic and conceptual process in the womb of Ann, as well as the fusion of body and soul and its subsequent operations, appeared as early as Alexander of Hales (d. 1245). See Marilyn McCord Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: A Thought-Experiment in Medieval Philosophical Theology', in *The Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010), 133–159 at 140–141.

37 Brady, 'The Development', 179–180.

38 Bonaventure, *Commentaria*, 2.23.2.3.6 (vol. 2, 546, col. 1). All Bonaventure's works are found in *Opera Omnia*, ed. PP. Collegium Santi Bonaventurae (Quaracchi, 1882–1902). For

concerning a specific person or case and involving an exemption from common rules.' Nevertheless, Peter Thomae (possibly under the influence of Aureole) may have been first to exploit one of Bonaventure's immediate successors who employed his jurisprudence as applicable to Mary, seen in the following statement: 'Now, [Mary] holds a...privilege; namely of a...nativity... specially born without original sin.'<sup>39</sup> Though likely unfamiliar with Aureole's Mariology, Meyronnes similarly pushed back Bonaventure's timing for God's granting of Mary's privilege *to her conception*.<sup>40</sup> When doing so, Meyronnes often ignored medieval analogies of privilege from canon law, as with those of Thomae. For example, a parish priest is alone due a juridical right to hear confessions of a parishioner, but another might be granted this office by privilege. By analogy, Christ is sinless by right and Mary by concession.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, convinced of Saints Paul's and Augustine's ancient jurisprudence, Francis scrupulously investigated ancient sources of Roman law beyond any of his predecessors.

Recent comparisons of Paul's trial in *Acts of the Apostles* to Roman processes in the Greek-speaking Roman East show that Luke's portrayal of Paul describes a citizen who understood Roman institutions and Greco-Roman terminology

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the technical definition, see Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953), vol. 43.2, 651.

- 39 Ps.-Bonaventure, *De nativitate b. virginis Mariae: Sermo 6*, in *Doctoris Seraphici*, vol. 9, 719, col. 2.
- 40 See Peter Aureole, *De conceptione immaculatae virginis*, in *FGG*, 35, col. 2: 'Praeterea: legi generali non detrahitur, nisi per privilegium...'. The work is datable to 1314. For the *status quaestionis* of Aureole's Marian *opera*, see William Duba, 'The Immaculate Conception in the Works of Peter Auriol', in *Vivarium* 83 (2000), 5–34. Meyronnes had no demonstrable access to Aureole's *Liber virginis*, 2.5.9, which cites Ps.-Isidore of Toledo's explicit exemption of Mary from original sin. See Brady, 'The Development', 183, for comparisons to Paschasius Radbertus, *De partu virginis*, 1.156–85. Meyronnes cited only excerpts from Ps.-Augustine or Radbertus' *De assumptione* without knowledge of his immaculatism. No immaculist Schoolman would have conceivably bypassed a presumably Isidoran passage defending the Immaculate Conception.
- 41 Thomae interpreted condemnation to death in Rom 5:12 as a *lex communis* and Mary's exemption as a *privilegium* granted by God. He applied 'privilege' to exempt Joachim and Anna from copulating in passion. Unlike Meyronnes, Peter allowed physical passion to infect humans with original sin. Because a *princeps* may grant a privilege or *beneficium* for the good of his people, this can serve to explain God granting a privilege to Mary for the sake of giving the world, i.e., a pure Jesus. See Peter Thomae, *Liber de innocentiae virginis Mariae*, in *MAS*, 223, col. 2 (1.1.1); 234, col. 1 (2.2.10); 234, col. 2 (2.3.1); 251, col. 1 (2.4.5) 257, col. 1 (2.5.6); 272, col. 2 (3.1.16).

of a legal nature.<sup>42</sup> Paul was a Roman citizen, and Roman law found itself spreading throughout the Greek East. For Schoolmen, Justinian's *Digesta* gave them access to numerous excerpts from ancient jurists relevant to Paul's time and setting. Historically, Paul was located in Antioch (before writing his epistles to the Galatians and Romans), conceivably accessing there the official archives of Roman emperors with its Greek constitutions addressed to Jewish diaspora.<sup>43</sup> In Antioch, Paul perhaps came across Roman legal texts to cite or imitate within his epistles. Nowadays, Paul's use of metaphors of Roman wills and adoption practices to illustrate theological points is generally accepted.<sup>44</sup> Apropos, Paul's Roman contemporary, Seneca (d. 65 C.E.) (whose *De beneficiis* was known by Meyronnes) bemoaned a then current societal craze for making wills.<sup>45</sup> Paul, by appealing to adoption and testamentary institutions, provided a verification of Seneca's observation that citizens were accustomed to obsess over inheritances. Immaculatists, too, assumed that Paul had employed legal concepts familiar to Romans.

Additionally, Jerome frequently inserted legal jargon into his *Vulgate* that was purely Roman.<sup>46</sup> Juristically colored translations undergirded Scholastic

42 E.g., Harry Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul* (Eugene OR, 1989).

43 Antioch was a *conventus* and assize center of its province. Studies on Josephus lead scholars to view this city as a center for Roman legal collections on diaspora Jewry, as cited in *Jewish Antiquities*. See Georgi Kantor, "Decide their controversies with one another": Jewish Courts in the Province of Asia', in *Vestnik drevnej istorii* 282 (2012), 29–50 at 31–32, 35–40. E.g., the imperial constitution to Sardis is auspicious for comparison with Paul, as it would have been in these archives. *Compromissum* or arbitration was granted to Jewish communities in Asia Minor. Paul adopted this legal institution as a metaphor. Compare Gal 3:19–20: 'The law was given through angels and entrusted to an arbiter. However, an arbitrator implies more than one party.' See Ernest Metzger, 'Litigation', in *CCR*, 272–300 at 283: 'Most lawsuits requiring a trial would pass to a *iudex* or *arbiter*. By the end of the republic the distinction between the two was all but lost.' Compare my summary of Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2001), 102: 'A Republican praetor authorized appointments of a *iudex datus* for two parties, after their consent, due to his jurisdictional *imperium*. The parties accepted a written formula along with appointment of their *iudex*. Each was under great pressure to abide by the outcome. In Egypt, under Antoninus Pius, one governor agreed to the nomination of a *μεσίτης* (*arbiter*) by two parties, empowering such to judge (*κρίνει*) their case.'

44 See, e.g., Bradley Trick, *Abrahamic Descent, Testamentary Adoption, and the Law in Galatians* (Leiden, 2016).

45 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *De beneficiis*, 4.9.11.5–20.

46 Numerous examples are provided in Boaz Cohen, 'On the Theme of Betrothal in Jewish and Roman Law', in *American Academy for Jewish Research* 18 (1948–49), 67–135 at 71–76, 81–82, 116–125.

confidence in Jerome's claim that *Paulus noster* (contra the pagan *Paulus* in Justinian's *Digest*) was *jurisconsultus* of the Christian faith.<sup>47</sup> To verify Scholastic suppositions, I explore one impressive example in the *Vulgate*:

However, I declare that as long as a child is an heir, he differs in no way from a slave though he is lord of all: But he is under tutors and guardians<sup>48</sup> until the predefined time by the father. Yet, in the fullness of time God sent his son, made from woman, made under the law.<sup>49</sup> (Gal 4:4)

The Roman and Latin origin of Paul's source becomes very difficult to dismiss after comparison of Paul to Roman jurisprudence:<sup>50</sup>

47 See Jerome, *Epistle* 77, 38–39.

48 Compare *Ms. Cambridge, Trinity College B.17.1*, fol. 72, line 9. The *Vulgate* and *Vetus Latina* differ in that the latter employs 'exactor' instead of 'actor.'

49 Nota Bene, emphasis is my own. A rare and related instance of 'under the law' or 'sub lege' (= ὑπὸ νόμον) appears in *Digesta*, 35.2.28 (*Lex Falcidia de legatis* [40 B.C.E.]): 'Statuliber heredis non auget familiam...servi in utriusque patrimonio connumerantur...in dominio domini proprietatis connumeratur, pignori dati in debitoris, sub lege commissoria distracti...'. The singular Greek source with such phraseology occurs in (Ps.-)Plato, *Definitions*, in *Platonis opera* 5, ed. J. Burnet (Oxford, 1907), 415c3: 'Πόλις οἴκησις πλήθους ἀνθρώπων κοινοῖς δόγμασιν χρωμένων· πλήθος ἀνθρώπων ὑπὸ νόμον τὸν αὐτὸν ὄντων.' Plato knew a definition of δικαιοσύνη as 'τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι' (Plato, *Republic*, 331e3, 335e1). Roman definitions of justice are traceable to Ps.-Plato, per Gregory Vlastos, 'The Theory of Social Justice in the *Polis* in Plato's *Republic*', in *Interpretations of Plato: A Swarthmore Symposium*, ed. Helen North, Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava 50 (Leiden, 1977), 1–40 at 5–6. At the head of Justinian's *Institutes*, Ulpian is cited: '*Iustitia* is a constant and perpetual desire to grant to each his right (*ius*).' The Roman jurist Ulpian (170–c. 233) propitiously utilized a Platonic definition for his notion of justice (δικαιοσύνη). Similarly, Paul's Roman legal jargon (Rom 5:16–17) associates δικαιοσύνη (*iustitia*) to what is likely a Roman sense of δικαίωμα (*ius*).

50 Phraseology matches the Latinity of Paulus (c. 200) in *Digesta*, 21.1.12: 'tutores dati sunt... usque ad tempus pubertatis.' Compare Scaevola's (*floruit* 175) passage in *Digesta*, 30.4.29: 'prior enixa filium exposuit: hic sublatus ab alio educatus est nomine patris vocitatus usque ad vitae tempus patris ab eo quam a matri.' Nota Bene, emphasis is my own. Paul's text is slightly anomalous since a paterfamilias cannot set the time of maturity in Roman law. For all constitutional uses of προθεσμία, see Vasilis Anastasiadis and George Souris (ed.), *An Index to Roman Imperial Constitutions from Greek Inscriptions and Papyri* (Berlin, 2000), 152. Paul further alluded to Roman testamentary law in Gal 5:21: 'They who do such [sins] will not inherit (κληρονομήσουσιν) the kingdom of God.' See David Johnston, 'Succession', in *CCR*, 199–212 at 202–203: 'The essential feature of a Roman will was the appointment of an heir or heirs...There was also the formal requirement of disinheriting people.'

Original Source	English Translation	Roman phrase
Cicero (1st B.C.E.)	For <i>Habitus</i> until the lawful time for that judging had never made any will	<i>Nam Habitus usque ad illius iudici tempus nullum testamentum umquam fecerat</i> <sup>51</sup>
Flavius Josephus (1st C.E.)	Payment in accord with the very lawful time of the loan	ἀποδώσειν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν τοῦ δανείου προθεσμίαν <sup>52</sup>
Galatians (58/9 C.E.)	Until the lawful time	ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας
Sopater (4th C.E.)	Until the lawful time	μέχρι τῆς προθεσμίας <sup>53</sup>
Justinian (6th C.E.)	In accord with the lawful time	κατὰ τὴν...προθεσμίαν <sup>54</sup>

Paul's legal and technical terminology precisely agrees with Cicero's attestation, which is equally found in the context of Roman legal wills. Josephus, who often cited imperial documentation, employed similar phraseology.

Greek authors, who were either familiar with Roman legal institutions, or who translated Roman law into Greek, coincided with Paul's legal opinions and even, at times, his phraseology.<sup>55</sup> Significantly, Paul's precise phrase (preposition + genitive) *never* appears to be attested *in Greek* outside the legal description of the Roman-imperial official Sopater.<sup>56</sup> The difference between Paul's choice of the preposition ἄχρι and Sopater's μέχρι is trivial, for studies on Greco-Roman legalese reveal that: (1) Notable latitude existed in legal vocabulary in Republican and early imperial translations, and (2) some variation of

51 Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Pro A. Cluentio oratio*, 15.45.

52 Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, vol. 4, 16.348.

53 Sopater, *Διαιρέσεις ζήτημάτων*, 345.

54 This phrase is ubiquitous in Flavius Justinian, *Corpus iuris civilis*, 3 vols., ed. Paul Krueger and Theodore Mommsen et al. (Berlin, 1895), vol. 3, 1–795.

55 Dionysios of Halicarnasus, *Rom. Ant.*, 2.57.2, 5.12.4, 6.83.4, 16.5.1. See also Gal 4:1: 'I declare that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, even while he is the lord of all.' Compare *Rom. Ant.*, 2.27.1-3: 'The *potestas* (ἐξουσία), granted to fathers via the Roman lawgiver...permitted the father even to sell his son without regarding the imputation of cruelty and of severity...harsh and tyrannical...granting...a greater *potestas* to the father over his son than to the *dominus* over his slave.'

56 I have checked all my Greek claims of exclusivity against the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG).

vocabulary was due to the emperor's curial office (or to local translators), whose skills and membership varied.<sup>57</sup> Scholars already concede the likely Roman reference to tutors and trustees within the same passage.<sup>58</sup> This one example, among many (whether in Galatians or in Romans), uncovers Latin and Greek legal jargon proper to a Roman family (*familia*) and the power (*potestas*) of its paterfamilias. On this account, a number of Meyronnes' hermeneutical practices prove their worth when applied to the Pauline corpus, pointing to the enduring value of the Scholastic reading of Paul in light of Roman institutions.

#### 4 Immaculate Conception: St. Paul in Lombard's *Sentences*

The single most powerful objection to the Immaculate Conception in the history of Christianity must rank as Rom 5:12:<sup>59</sup> 'Just as through one man sin entered into this world, and death through sin, also thusly did it pass into all men, in whom all have sinned.'<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Scotus' greatest obstacle stemmed from this passage, directly addressed by Meyronnes in his sermons. Scotus had been forced to bypass the apparently universal attribution of this judicial sentence to humans; namely, 'all sinned.' Scotus had first argued beyond the temporal order, basing himself upon higher-order principles. Duns contended that human natures, as subjects of properties, are modifiable by contrary properties (e.g., justice and injustice), though not synchronously. In logical analysis of human nature's first instant of existence, it naturally exists as a potential carrier of any *supernatural* property proportioned to the human soul, albeit dependent upon a supernatural act of causation. Mary was never the subject of putative injustice, for a supernatural agent decreed for her justice or, better, sanctifying grace. Such a grant makes good on a godly claim; namely, Christ is a perfect mediator of the attribute demanded of humans to satisfy the Father's requirement of justice in every human nature.<sup>61</sup> Demonstration of such a mediatory power in act, to the highest possible degree, minimally requires

57 Umberto Laffi, *In greco per i greci: Ricerche sul lessico greco del processo civile e criminale romano nelle attestazioni di fonti documentarie romane* (Pavia, 2013), 2–5.

58 Compare Johnston, 'Succession', 162–163. Granted Papianus (c. 200 C.E.) reflects pristine institutions, Paul's assertion mirrors *Digesta*, 26.3.6: 'Si filio puberi pater tutorem aut imuberi curatorem dederit, citra inquisitionem praetor eos confirmare debet.'

59 This originated from Boso's dialogue with Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo*, traced in detail by Adams, 'The Immaculate Conception', 135–138. Compare *Tractatus*, 289, col. 2.

60 This biblical objection had to be overcome before John XXI adopted the Marian feast in Avignon in 1325. See Cecchin, 'Giovanni Duns Scoto', 222.

61 Scholastics using 'the perfect mediator' argument are *ipso facto* scotistic, per Cecchin, 'Giovanni Duns Scoto', 219–221. Compare *Tractatus*, 290, col. 1.

a perfectly mediated justice into a subject. Meyronnes accepted Scotus' argument that, in the actually existing contingent order, Mary was most deserving of such mediation in virtue of her divine maternity. Normally only baptism conveys grace, since sin is imputed at conception by the absence of justice. However, Mary preventiently partook in Christ's merits prior to his death on the cross.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, Meyronnes built upon the legalistic foundations of Scotus' interpretation of Augustinian and Anselmian arguments about original sin and justice.<sup>63</sup> Anselm described original justice as a quality in the will, so that its contrary cannot be an infection of the flesh, but only a privation of an immaterial attribute. Meyronnes' own insight was to read *Roman* Paul according to his *intention* as a legislator, for Roman jurisprudence demanded discernment of the proper sense behind any decree to give it force; so, too, with divine decrees on sin and salvation.<sup>64</sup>

Meyronnes prioritized the use of ancient authors in Justinian's *Digesta* over and above ecclesiastical canons. Also, Augustinian judicial *sententiae* and popular commentaries within Gratian's *Decretum* influenced Meyronnes' exegesis, e.g., interpreting baptismal professions of faith as Roman verbal contracts of *stipulatio*. Meyronnes' theory on the origin of pre-baptismal contracts still enjoys plausibility.<sup>65</sup> He assumed that Scripture should be interpreted as a systematic whole so that Paul's doctrine of baptism (Rom 6:3) harmonized with legal conventions in other epistles.<sup>66</sup> He described Paul's church as *materfamilias* ruled by her paterfamilias, Jesus. Parallel to readings in Tertullian, Christians—as slaves of Jesus—are purchased into the *patria potestas* of the Father by verbal contract of *stipulatio*.<sup>67</sup> Cicero and Augustine (who are referenced in *Glossa ordinaria* on Gratian's *Decretum*) bound a promisor to such contracts of sale and debt in exact circumstances, though such *stipulationes* were nullified whenever some morally higher law intervened.<sup>68</sup> By such a legal principle of a nullifying condition to general contract law, Meyronnes developed a justification for the Immaculate Conception beyond Scotus' higher order principles.

62 Meyronnes' logic justified the fact, noting that circumcision owed its efficacy to being a typological sacrament of baptism and, therefore, saved the patriarchs in virtue of Christ's retroactively applied merits. See *Tractatus*, 289, col. 2 (Compare *Ord.* 3.3.1, nos. 19 and 29).

63 *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.2; 3.3.2.10.

64 *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.2. Compare *Digesta*, 1.3.17.

65 Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids MI, 2009), 192–193. Compare 1 Pet 1:21.

66 Meyronnes, *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*, in *Sermones de sanctis*, 260, coll. 1–2.

67 Alistair Stewart-Sykes, 'Manumission and Baptism in Tertullian's Africa: A Search for the Origin of Confirmation', in *Studia Liturgica* 31 (2001), 129–149. Compare Meyronnes, *Tractatus*, 286, col. 2.

68 James Gordley, *The Jurists: A Critical History* (Oxford, 2013), 61–62.



Harmonizing with common Scholastic convictions that Paul compared *lex naturalis* to *Torah* in *Romans*, Meyronnes argued for the Roman pedigree of Pauline precepts and decrees in *Galatians* and *Romans*.<sup>69</sup> He applied Paul's legal principle that imperial institutions bind Christians to Roman law by God's design (*Rom* 13:1–6).<sup>70</sup> Meyronnes saw Paul's presentation of slavery to sin and the reign of death in *Romans* as Adam's technical *poena* or legally decreed punishment for not giving God what was owed (thus rupturing divine-human justice).<sup>71</sup> Original sin, a divinely imputed debt of Adam for failure to pay what was owed to God (i.e., possessing the attribute of justice), was inherited just as with a legal patrimony in Roman law.<sup>72</sup> The law of debt, leading to debt servitude or slavery, was due to sovereign imperial decree. Yet, Roman law never bound an emperor.<sup>73</sup> Clearly, Jesus was inheritor of God the Father's gift of patrimony to Abraham and King David (*Rom* 1:3).<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, questions arise about the status of the mother of Jesus. In response, though a *princeps* was not absolutely bound by laws, Meyronnes noted Jesus subjecting himself to law in this world (*Gal* 4:1–4). Naturally, then, Jesus employed legal remedies for Mary's legal problems under the reign of sin: 'The *princeps* is unbound by laws, while the *augusta* is not unbound by laws, but *principes* nonetheless grant her the same privileges.'<sup>75</sup> Citing juriconsultants of late antiquity, Meyronnes managed to build on Bonaventurian foundations of jurisprudence. Bonaventure had previously interpreted Paul's *Romans* as if it were a juriconsultant's commentary on natural law (*lex naturalis*).<sup>76</sup> On this reading, Paul classified circumcision (not part of natural law) as a remedy for sin 'ad tempus' or for a certain time and place. Given Bonaventure's exposure to Origen's *Commentary on the Romans* and Augustine's adoption of natural law to comment on *Rom* 5:12, Meyronnes correctly supposed that the *lex communis* or sovereign

69 *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.3.

70 The *Vulgate* calls authorities *principes* who hold *potestas*.

71 *Tractatus*, 284, col. 1.

72 Meyronnes, *In festo annunciationis: Sermo tertius*, in *Sermones in sanctis*, 217, col. 1–217, col. 2.

73 *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.3. Compare *Digesta*, 1.3.31.

74 *Tractatus*, 302, col. 1.

75 *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.3. Compare *Digesta*, 1.2.21.

76 Bonaventure, *Commentaria*, 4.1.2.2.1–3 (vol. 4, 37, col. 1–44, col. 2). Compare, *Absit*, 40–41. Roman juriconsultants typically theorized that some Roman laws, which were common to humans at large (*ius gentium*), hypostasized 'natural law'. See Emmanuelle Chevreau, 'Le *ius gentium*: entre usages locaux et droit romain', in *L'imperium Romanum en perspective: Les saviors d'empire dans la République romaine et leur héritage dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne*, ed. Julien Dubouloz, Sylvie Pittia, and Gaetano Sabatini (Besançon, 2014), 305–320. Bonaventure and his followers were clearly taken with this jurisprudence per Justinian's *Corpus iuris civilis*.

decree of original sin could theoretically be harmonized with higher *lex naturalis* through 'a legal remedy' or 'privilege' granted to friends of the sovereign.<sup>77</sup>

Applying this hermeneutic, God the Father (as heavenly emperor) and Jesus (as earthly *princeps*) granted the grace (*gratia*) of legal benefits to Mary, exempting her from debt servitude or slavery to sin and death. Meyronnes skillfully found such exemptions or '*privilegia*' in ancient Roman law, where '*eximere* [means] to exempt, to free, to release a person from liability (*obligatione*), from special charges...or from penalty (*poena, damnatione*).'<sup>78</sup> Meyronnes applied this jurisprudence, as implied in St. Paul, to the immortals Enoch and Elisha, just as Augustine had done:<sup>79</sup> 'Enoch was translated [to heaven], and Elijah...and they live. Did their *iustitia* merit this? Might it be a *gratia* of God and a *beneficium* of God and a special concession?'<sup>80</sup> Meyronnes accurately identified Augustine's legal analysis of '*gratia*: [which, means] an act of grace by the emperor...'<sup>81</sup> Augustine's use of 'indulgentia' in other passages is merely the application of species of *gratia* dictated by the circumstance in Scripture, where 'grace' is a *beneficium* or kind of amnesty from crime (*crimen*). Consequently, Enoch and Elijah obviously contravened Paul's universal law of sin and death, for they were immortal. Additionally, Meyronnes underlined King David exercising imperial *potestas*, which Jesus inherited, to exempt soldiers from sacrilege by eating loaves of proposition reserved for priests of the Temple (1 Sam 21:6; Mat 12:4; Luk 6:4). This exemplified an imperial privilege from what was otherwise a transgression against divine law. Thus, Meyronnes was able show quite clearly that common law need not bind absolutely according to either the old dispensation or the new.<sup>82</sup> Although every future hypostasization of human nature had been predestined to the pain of loss by divine decree (Rom 5:12, 8:29–30), this normative law was decreed by a sovereign God. Given

77 *Comment. in Rom.*, 3.6 (9–10); Augustine, *pecc. mer.*, 1.10.12. Scholastic theory smacks of Cicero's, *De legibus*, not of pure jurisprudence.

78 Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 462.

79 Meyronnes, *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*, in *Sermones in sanctis*, 262, cols. 1–2.

80 See *Absit*, 40–41, where Meyronnes developed Augustine, *Sermo 299a*, 10.

81 Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 483.

82 Meyronnes, *Candor est lucis aeternae*, in *MAS*, folio. 325, cols. 1–2. Rabbinic interpretation of God and Israel's kings is one of quasi-emperors issuing a species (*πρόσταγμα/διάταγμα*) of divinely ratified imperial constitutions. See Amram Tropper, 'Roman Contexts in Jewish Texts: On "Diatagma" and "Prostagma" in Rabbinic Literature', in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 95 (2005), 207–227. Meyronnes cited Moses Maimonides. See, e.g., Meyronnes, *De eodem festo conceptionis virginis marie: Sermo secundus*, in *Sermones de sanctis*, 207, col. 1. This passage reproduces a common *topos*, making it impossible to prove Meyronnes had familiarized himself with Jewish jurisprudence.

St. Paul's Roman principles of legal interpretation, Meyronnes simply applied putatively Pauline jurisprudence to interpret the Old Testament and to theorize about the status of Mary. He viewed the world as divinely organized into a legal system, where exemptions might be properly awarded in meritorious cases (Scotus' *decurit*). As in Scotus, since God was able (*potuit*) to grant exemptions in harmony with the contingent order, he becomingly privileged Mary without breaking his own rules.

## 5 Immaculate Conception: Augustine in Lombard's *Sentences*

Despite aforementioned arguments, Schoolmen had long been encouraged to place Mary under the dominion of sin *because of Augustine's* account of the Annunciation. The *Sentences* obliquely refer to Augustinian comments on the Annunciation: 'The Word took flesh and soul at the same time...that flesh was first conceived in the Virgin's womb and afterwards taken on...it was conceived as taken and taken as conceived.'<sup>83</sup> This passage reworked *Sent.* 3.3.1. Therein, Augustine discussed an enigma surrounding the moment when Mary's flesh must have been cleansed. For Augustine, traducianism or parental begetting of the fetal soul and body ostensibly provided an explanation for how natural conception acted as the carrier of original sin.<sup>84</sup> After the Pelagian crisis (411/2), Augustine relied upon Greek Fathers to explain his doctrine of original sin in relation to a 'purified' Virgin in his account of the Annunciation:

[He is, consequently, the only one who, remaining God after he made himself a man, never had any sin and did not assume 'flesh of sin,' even if he took on flesh out of maternal 'flesh of sin.']<sup>85</sup> [*Here begins Lombard:*] As for flesh, which he certainly took up from his Mother: [1.] He either actually purified it, needing [it] to be taken up, or [2.] he purified [it] by virtue of taking [it] up. Therefore...She did not conceive through the law of sin (i.e., not through the movement of carnal concupiscence) but she continuously merited a holy seed to be brought about in her through

83 Lombard, *The Sentences*, vol. 3, 8–9 (*Sent.* 3.2.3).

84 Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, *L'embryon et son âme dans les sources grecques (vi<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.-v<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C.)*, Collège de France, Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance: Monographies 26 (Paris, 2007), 269–270.

85 The translation is mine. Scotus left this phrase unaddressed, but it constituted the second objection of William Ware, *Quaestio Gulielmi Guarrae*, in *FGG*, 1, and patristic objection six in Peter Aureole, *Tractatus Petri Aureoli*, in *FGG*, 26 (1.2.6). Ware and Aureole cited Augustine's *pecc. mer.*, 1.29.57.

pious faith. Therefore, how much more has ‘flesh of sin’ been baptized due to [divine] judgment that must be avoided, if ‘flesh without sin’ [i.e., Jesus] has been baptized serving for imitation’s exemplar?<sup>86</sup>

Although Lombard’s citation neglected the phrase in brackets, other sections of the *Sentences* interpreted Augustine to hold that Mary’s flesh was ‘subject to sin’ (*Sent.* 3.3.1). Surprisingly, Gregory Nazianzen may have inspired Augustine’s notion of purification at the Annunciation. Scholars already catalogue instances of Augustine invoking the authority of Nazianzen, whom he claimed to have read profusely.<sup>87</sup> Satisfactory evidence for Augustine’s connection to Nazianzen includes access to Latin translations of Rufinus (*scripsit* c. 398–99). The Augustinian sources for Mary’s purification, above, were plausibly Nazianzian *graecus* and *latinus*. I compare the relevant passage from Nazianzen *latinus*: ‘He was brought forth from a virgin, herself, too, immaculate (*immaculata*) in soul and *body* [*omisit*: ‘by the Holy Spirit’].’<sup>88</sup> With Rufinus, we notice the total lack of literalism when translating ‘*immaculata*’ from the corresponding Greek term: ‘He was conceived by the Virgin, who was prepurified (προκαθαρθείσης) in both soul and *flesh* by the Holy Spirit.’<sup>89</sup>

Rufinus’ translation of προκαθαρθείσα is accurate *ad sensum*, but it managed to convey nothing of Nazianzen’s peculiar terminology (i.e., purification as activity of a holy human nature participating in divine grace). Still, the Latin text perfectly conveyed Nazianzen’s theological point that Mary’s whole *flesh* and soul were immaculate at the Annunciation. Even if Augustine had theoretically read Rufinus’ Latin version of *Oration 38* before composing his aforementioned anti-Pelagian treatise, he still preferred the Greek reading of ‘flesh’ (σάρξ) to Rufinus’ ‘body’ (*corpus*). Augustine’s knowledge of Mary’s purification of flesh at the Annunciation strongly suggests reliance on Nazianzen’s Greek oration. Augustine may have also disagreed with Rufinus’ term, *immaculata*, for Augustine’s traducian commitments put all humanity under Adam’s ambiguous *caro peccati*.<sup>90</sup>

Consequently, a portion of Mary’s *flesh* assumed by Christ was ‘purified’ at the Annunciation. In tandem with Nazianzen’s motif, Augustine emphasized

86 Augustine, *pecc. mer.*, 2.24.38.

87 Joseph Leinhard, ‘Augustine of Hippo, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory Nazianzen’, in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos (Crestwood NY, 2008), 81–100 at 83–87.

88 Gregory Nazianzen and Tyrannius Rufinus, *De Epiphaniis* [*Oration 38*], vol. 1, sec. 13.

89 Gregory Nazianzen, *In Theophania: Oration 38*, 46.1 (PG 36, col. 325B 41–42).

90 Dominic Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo 396–430* (Oxford, 2004), 204.

the formulaic '*caro peccati*' from Origen *latinus* and applied this to Mary's natural mode of being conceived.<sup>91</sup> Augustine's potentially confused interpretation of Nazianzen's meaning of purification at the Annunciation (similar to Nazianzen's 'purification' of Jesus at his baptism) readily explains Augustine's misread of purity language in relation to Mary's flesh in spite of Rufinus' translation. Consequently, Lombard's *Sentences* presented Schoolmen with a perplexing problem in *Sent.* 3.3.2, wherein Augustine wrote (c. 415) in *De natura et gratia*, 36.42:

He confirms by authority that from that time the Virgin was immune from sin. And Augustine, in the book *De natura et gratia*, clearly shows that the holy Virgin from that time was immune from all sin, saying: 'With the exception of the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to exclude all question when discussing sin for the honor due to the Lord (for from that time forth we know that more grace was given to her to conquer sin completely because she deserved to conceive and bear the one who most certainly was without sin).'

Harmonizing this passage with Augustine's *De peccatorum meritis* is difficult. Mary would have had the capacity to merit at the incarnation by some preventient grace. The rationale for arguing Mary's all-holiness might derive from the fact that she had possessed pious faith at the Annunciation *before the taking up of her flesh* and *was not, therefore, a victim of concupiscence*.<sup>92</sup> Augustine's view of the all-holiness of Mary, above, seems incompatible with his mechanistic traducianism, whereby sexual lust and the natural production of the human soul axiomatically result in the infection of concupiscence transmitted to offspring in every passionate act of coitus.<sup>93</sup> Later, Augustine's *Contra Julianum* (*scripsit* 422) and his *Contra Julianum (opus imperfectum)* (*scripsit* 428) claimed Greek sources for his theology of original sin.<sup>94</sup> Referencing the

91 Augustine's source, besides Ambrose, is convincingly argued to have been Origen *latinus* as translated by Jerome. See Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology*, 83, 102–104, 116–122, 142, 204.

92 Meriting while in original sin or concupiscence is impossible for Augustine in response to the Pelagian position. See Ernesto Buonaiuti and Giorgio La Piana, 'The Genesis of St. Augustine's idea of Original Sin', in *The Harvard Theological Review* 10 (1917), 159–75 at 168–173.

93 This unresolved tension is noted in Augustine, C. Iul. Imp., vol. 2, 4.122: 'Non transcribimus diabolo Mariam conditione nascendi; sed ideo, quia ipsa conditione solvitur gratia renascendi.'

94 Buonaiuti and La Piana, 'The Genesis', 170, 174.

Greco-patristic tradition, Augustine claimed only to assert doctrines of his Greek predecessors.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, Augustine's ideas on original sin shared similarities with Ambrose of Milan (save the use of *culpa* to include infants).<sup>96</sup> Later, Lombard's selections of Greek and Latin Fathers produced a hodgepodge from which Schoolmen were tempted to embrace the language of culpability and physicalist accounts of original sin. Theological refinements on the locus and nature of original sin developed only gradually.

In regard to Augustine, Meyronnes was unaware of the fact that Fulgentius of Ruspe was misidentified as Augustine in several problematic citations. Fulgentius had a non-Augustinian notion of infant 'guilt' foreign to Augustine's language and jurisprudence.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Meyronnes inherited relatively exaggerated physicalist vocabulary under the aegis of Augustine, overemphasizing *culpa* as nearly literal. He countered this Augustinian-Fulgentian mesh of metaphors with a detailed analysis of original sin. Meyronnes began by explaining to his interlocutor that original sin is not like other sins. It is not a 'positive stain in the soul,' nor a 'morbid infection in the flesh.'<sup>98</sup> Paul in Romans indisputably

95 Leinhard, 'Augustine of Hippo', 86.

96 Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources* (Oxford, 2013), 147; Buonaiuti and La Piana, 'The Genesis', 160–161; Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition on the Gospel according to Luke*, ed. G. Tissot, Sources Chrétiennes 45, 2 vols. (Paris, 1956), vol. 1, 4.67. Ambrose cited the *Vetus Latina* for Rom 5:12. Compare Augustine, *C. Iul.*, 1.3.10, (PL 44, col. 646). Augustine appealed to Ambrose in his doctrine of original sin. Augustine, *C. Iul. Imp.*, vol. 2, 4.121–122. Herein, Augustine avoided Ambrose's guilt-laden language concerning infants.

97 Fulgentius' vocabulary (*culpa*) and sense, as applied to infants, were all but rejected by Augustine. For the sole exception (conceding the term per the mouth of his opponent), see Augustine, *C. Iul.*, 3.12.25 (PL 44, col. 715). Meyronnes avoided the term *culpa* (save repeating citations from the *Sentences* and its authorities). Meyronnes concentrated on *reatus* (legally accused) or *reus* (debtor). Fulgentius, i.e., (Ps.-) Augustine, was commonly pitted against immaculatism. E.g., see Lombard, *Sent.*, 3.3.1.4. Meyronnes countered authentically Augustinian vocabulary. Less legalistic Schoolmen supposed 'guilt' or 'fault' (*culpa*) in the transmission of parental liability for Adam's sin to all children. Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin*, 49, 177, 259, admits that 'culpa' is lacking in Augustine, calling a child only *reatus* and *reus*. Augustine, practicing Roman law, did not analogize the status of a fetus as (impossibly) bound under contractual 'liability' (*culpa*), implying minimal personal and moral negligence (*culpa levissima*). See William Buckland, *The Main Institution of Roman Private Law* (New York, 1931), 556–559. Augustine was familiar with this language in property, inheritance, and slavery legislation. Robert Dodaro, 'Between the Two Cities: Political Action in Augustine of Hippo', in *Augustine and Politics*, ed. John Doody, Kevin Hughes, and Kim Paffenroth (New York, 1985), 99–116 at 100–111. Augustine's legal activity dates from c. 400, exercising *episcopalis audientia*, as arbiter of his Christian people on questions of property and inheritance. See Caroline Humfress, 'Patristic Sources', in *CCR*, 97–118.

98 *Tractatus*, 283, col. 2.

links eternal reward with justice and justification before God, especially according to Augustine.<sup>99</sup> Such an attribute, as a virtue, must be an immaterial quality in the soul. Secondly, guilt or '*culpa*' is not in the body as a form, but rather is present in humans as 'putative liability (*reatus*) to the pain of loss.' This divine decree of liability for children of Adam derives from the actual '*culpa*' of the first parent and is extrinsically attached to people who are propagated by such a parent. So, original sin's punishment is not due to everyone's deeds but to a decree, whereby humans under the paterfamilias Adam lost their right to an inheritance (in Roman legal fashion) because of Adam's debt servitude and his *hereditas damnosa*.<sup>100</sup> 'Punishment of sense' is only due to an evil action.<sup>101</sup> Through a deductive process, Meyronnes argued a series of disjunctive (either/or) propositions that show original sin to be purely extrinsic to the human person: (1.) Original sin is not in the body, but soul; (2.) it is not in the sensitive power, but in the intellective power because it has to do with 'merit'; (3.) it is not in the inferior, but in the superior faculty of reason that is deprived of 'glory' or the will. This is necessarily the case since the will (per Anselm) is doubly determined by its intrinsic structure (i.e., to incline toward what is pleasant and to what is just).

Next, Meyronnes reminded his reader of the common sentence of Schoolmen *contra* Augustine that parents *do not* create souls in the act of copulation.<sup>102</sup> Hence, because the soul is created supernaturally, only a supernatural cause can withhold or give an immaterial attribute or the grace of preternatural

99 *Absit*, 31.

100 Ps.-Ambrose (Ambrosiaster) inspired Augustine's *massa damnata*, along with 'origin of being an accused' (*originem reatus*). See Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology*, 107–114. Augustine associated *reatus* with Adam, who sinned for and in the entirety of posterior humans, whom he begot after quasi-legal transgression of a divine precept. See Buonaiuti and La Piana 1917, 160–161, 168. Ambrosiaster was commenting on Paul's concept of law in Romans. Augustine likely used Ambrosiaster's interpretation of Rom 5:12: 'in quo omnes peccaverunt' (not to mention *indulgentia*). Compare *Tractatus*, 284, col. 2.

101 See *Absit*, 33, for his theory of original sin as a patrimony based upon analogies from Justinian's *Digesta*. A paterfamilias incurred debt, handing on its entirety to his heir. Augustine treated original sin as a 'damned' inheritance. See Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 485, where 'a damned inheritance' (per Gaius) regards heredity, where debt (versus wealth) passes from father to son. Patrilineal offspring named in a will are legally 'liable' for debt versus assets. Buckland, *The Main*, 199, notes, in Byzantium under Justinian, an inheritor was only liable to turn over existing assets of the paternal debtor. *Contra*, Augustine described debt of liability (too large for humans to pay) as the due of unbaptized infants (*reatus*) from a damned, ancient inheritance of their paterfamilias (Adam).

102 Meyronnes taught that Augustine had questioned this opinion in his *Retractationes* and had expressly affirmed that sin can only exist in the soul. See, e.g., *Tractatus*, 284, col. 2–286, col. 2.

justice (or sanctifying grace) at conception. With Paul's and Augustine's Roman jurisprudence in the background, Meyronnes logically inferred that the imputation of liability from Adam's debt is a matter of an *extrinsic* legal decree, parallel to the Roman legitimization of infants (as fruit of a valid marriage or *connubium*).<sup>103</sup> God—like a Roman emperor—may legitimize by decree any child since it is only a juridical condition (not a natural condition of soul or body) that determines a human to be in the state of original sin. In this scenario, Meyronnes summarized the Roman principle: 'Where privilege is granted, common law (*ius commune*) holds no sway.'<sup>104</sup> Importantly, both Paul and Augustine were generally interpreted among Schoolmen to consider death a decree of punishment for sin. Yet, Meyronnes quoted Augustine's argument that the sovereign God had decreed 'exemptions' or 'privileges' (versus Augustine's *gratia*) for Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) from the common penalty (*lex communis*) of death (Rom 5:12). Conspicuously, he often avoided the term 'original guilt' in his own vocabulary, even if Schoolmen had been wed to the term for ages. Similar to Augustine's own jurisprudence in reading Paul, Meyronnes was legally precise so that *culpa* signified a voluntary act with an evil or negligent intention, while *reus* and *reatus* indicated a legal action and judicial sentence, respectively, against a person irrespective of subjective *culpa*. Consequently, original sin was akin to legal irregularity imputed to those under the jurisdiction of common law, but might be remedied individually by a '*privilegium legis*.'

## 6 Augustine's *indulgentia* and Meyronnes' *privilegium*

Augustine's skills in jurisprudence, along with his reading Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Ambrosiaster, disposed him toward a legalistic interpretation of St. Paul well before any Schoolmen. As with Origen's use of Ulpian to exegete Romans, even his predecessor Clement of Alexandria had used Roman jurisprudence as a heuristic device for fleshing out St. Paul's logic in Romans and Galatians.<sup>105</sup> Consequently, after Augustine had obtained a copy of Origen's *Comment. in Rom.*, he not only adopted Origen's Ulpianic notion

103 *Tractatus*, 286, col. 2.

104 Compare *Digesta*, 1.3.22 (Ulpian): 'Cum lex in praeteritum quid indulget, in futurum vetat.' Rufinus translated *Comment. in Rom.*, 3.6(9), as citing Ulpian: 'Indulgentia namque non futurorum, sed praeteritorum criminum datur.' Augustine read *Origenes latinus* on this question, as discussed in Keech, *The Anti-Pelagian Christology*, 106–141.

105 The Alexandrian interpreted Pauline legislation by recourse to an exact quote from Roman law. See, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, vol. 2, 1.26.167: 'ὁ νομοθετικὸς δὲ ἔστιν



of *indulgentia*, but even Origen's legalistic use of '*privilegium*' within Rufinus' translation.<sup>106</sup> However, Augustine specially applied this notion of 'privilege' to Christ's holy conception *in utero*: 'How was it that Jesus alone was able to be just, since every generation was erring, unless he—born from a virgin of the liable (*obnoxiae*) generation—was by privilege bound in no way?'<sup>107</sup> What is more, for Schoolmen, Jerome's putative translation of the Pauline corpus brought out Roman legalisms in places where the Greek New Testament did not reflect Greco-Roman imperial constitutions or Roman law (whether in vocabulary or sense). For example, Paul allows marriage, while exhorting celibacy, translated thus: 'I say this as an indulgence, not as imperium' (*Vulgate*; 1 Cor 7:6).<sup>108</sup> For Schoolmen, the *Vulgate* encouraged Augustine's reading of St. Paul via Roman institutions. For example, in one work available to Meyronnes, Augustine wrote in relation to Adam, sin, death, and baptism: 'Law (*lex*) was given by a slave, it made condemned persons (*reos*). Indulgence was given by the emperor, it freed those condemned.'<sup>109</sup> By this, Augustine meant the following: 'Indulgence (*indulgere*): An act of grace (by the emperor = *indulgentia principis*), a benefit granted as a favor (*ex indulgentia*). The term occurs primarily in imperial constitutions concerned with acts of amnesty in criminal matters.'<sup>110</sup> Augustine commonly employed a legalistic use of *indulgentia*. Understandably, Augustine interpreted Paul's expressions about God's *gratia* and *donum* as decrees in a divine constitution, exempting the baptized from the effects of inherited sin and debt that had ruined the original patrimony of Adam and his *familia*. Comparing Paul's Greek text to Greco-Roman constitutions of Paul's own time, Augustine's hermeneutic proves capital. Paul becomes perfectly

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ὁ τὸ προσήκον ἐκάστω...καὶ τοῖς τούτων ἔργοις ἀπονέμων.' Compare Ulpian in *Institutes*, 1: 'Iustitia est constans...ius suum cuique tribuens.'

106 *Comment. in Rom.*, 3.6(10).

107 Augustine, *C. Iul. imp.*, vol. 1, 1.66.

108 The Greek terms are συγγνώμη and ἐπιταγή. Extant Greco-Roman legislation attests no usage of 'indulgence' with 'order/imperium.' The *TLG* locates it in only one legal context: Plato, *Leges*, 925d-e. The *Vetus Latina* translates this '*consilium*' and '*imperium*' in *Ms. Cambridge, Trinity College B.17.1*, fol. 39v, lines 22–23. The *Vulgate* translates more propitiously, for Plato alone used *indulgentia* and *imperium* together for granting indulgences to unwilling partners in common laws requiring forcible marriage surrounding intestate patrimonies. Elsewhere, the *Vulgate* employed *indulgentia* as a *beneficium* of the savior to captives and Israel (Isa 61:1 and 63:7). Also, the typological angel-Christ buys back (*redemit*) his 'sons' as an act of *indulgentia* (Isa 63:9), while 1 Mac 10:29 speaks of indulgences from tribute.

109 Augustine, *In Io. tr.*, 3.16.

110 Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 500.

intelligible per vocabulary of Greco-Roman authors and Greek constitutions, as my reworked translation suggests:

For through incorrect payment of what was owed (= παραπτώματι [*debitum*]) many died; much more did grace (τῆς χάριτος [= *gratia*]) and indulgence (τῆς δωρεᾶς [*indulgentia*])<sup>111</sup> in grace abound unto many, which is of one man Jesus Christ. Now, judgment (κρίμα [*iudicium*]) from one sinner was unto debt servitude (κατάκριμα [= *ergastulum*]),<sup>112</sup> but an exemption (χάρισμα ([*exemptio*]) of many unpaid debts unto a right (δικαίωμα [*ius singulare*]).<sup>113</sup> For if death reigned by means of the incorrect payment of what was owed by one man [Adam], how much more will they reign in life, who receive the abundance [for payment] from grace and from indulgence of justice (τῆς δικαιοσύνης [*iustitia*]), through one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as by one incorrect debt-payment it led unto debt servitude for all people, so also by one [singular] right it led unto producing a right (δικαίωσιν) to life for all people (Rom 5:15–19).<sup>114</sup>

By Paul's time, κατάκριμα properly referred to capital punishment in Roman jurisprudence.<sup>115</sup> This notion of condemnation is uniquely reflected in an imperial constitution at Delphi (c. 100).<sup>116</sup> Paul anticipated his apparently Roman notion of 'condemn' (κατακρίνω) by forewarning his readers (Rom 3:19–20) that God judges someone 'condemned' (ὕπόδικος) for sin in terms reminiscent of the Roman death penalty.<sup>117</sup> As with Gal 4:4, above, Paul's sense and

111 See, *An Index*, 172, 184, for very similar usages of δωρεά and χάρις in relation to debts.

112 Compare Meyronnes, *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*, 263, col. 2 and *Tractatus*, 284, col. 2. Meyronnes asserted that Jesus paid the price of the debt that had put Adam and humanity into an *ergastulum*.

113 For δικαίωμα, see *An Index* 69: 'φυλασσεσθαι...τὰ πρότερον δικαίωματα.' This famous edict of Claudius on the privileges or 'ethnic rights' of Jews in the empire was cited verbatim in Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, vol. 4, 19.285.

114 Compare *Ms. Cambridge, Trinity College B.17.1*, fols. 10v-11 (Rom. 5:15–19). The third-century translation has 'delictum' for παράπτωμα, 'donum' for χάρισμα, 'gratia' for χάρις, 'donum/donatio' for δωρεᾶ (versus δωρεά), 'iudicium' for κρίμα, 'condemnatio' for κατάκριμα, 'iustificatio' for δικαίωμα, 'iustitia' for δικαιοσύνη, and 'iustificatio' for δικαίωσις. Χάρισμα and δικαίωσις cannot be considered proper terms in Roman jurisprudence.

115 *An Index*, 109: '...κεφαλῆς κατάκριτον...γένεσθαι.'

116 Laffi, *In greco*, 18: '...[κατ]ὰ τοῦτον τὸν νόμον κατάκριτος ἔσται.'

117 Laffi, *In greco*, 22–23. A Roman citizen (hypothetically) could be legally executed, or (certainly) exiled from his homeland. Debates surround the *legality* of the death sentence in Roman law are discussed in Markéta Melounová, 'Crimen maiestatis and the poena legis during the principate', in *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54 (2014), 407–430.

language best parallels Dionysios of Halicarnassos and Roman institutions, as when Dionysios discussed the Roman Appius Claudius and his opposition to creditors who enslaved for life various persons during the fourth-century B.C.E. *decemvirate*. Paul's sense of being 'a condemned person' was set up in Rom. 3:19–20: 'The law says (λέγει [*dicit*]), it speaks to those in the bounds of the law, so that every mouth should be silenced and the whole world has become liable/condemned toward God.'<sup>118</sup> Here, Paul ostensibly mimicked a Roman constitution similar to that of Vespasian: 'Whoever [does them violence] shall in Roman law be liable/condemned [to charge of impiety toward] the house of the Augusti.'<sup>119</sup>

First of all, we notice the uniquely Dionysian terminology where Appius condemned senatorial rejection of people seeking a legal 'cancellation of debts and forgiveness of debt servitudes' (χρεῶν ἀποκοπὰς καὶ κατακριμάτων ἀφέσεις).<sup>120</sup> Dionysios later used this rare lexical term for a case of debt, where a man was forced into a life of debt servitude.<sup>121</sup> Paul and Dionysios reflect near-exact vocabulary in a shared cultural context at about the same period. Secondly, Paul associated this ghastly life-long imprisonment for debts with the terminology of capital punishment. Schoolmen learned to read Romans in this very same legalistic and juridical sense from Augustine's interpretations of St. Paul. Paul can be read, above, as instructing a Roman world in God's law of condemnation for sinfulness, which led to a corollary, i.e., to death. Augustine often cited an early Latin translation of Rom. 3:19–20 to make this very same point about the status of sinners: 'So that all the world became a condemned [criminal] (*reatus*) to God.'<sup>122</sup> Romans thought of law as sacred and its violation as sacrilege, and Paul admitted that God willed Christians to obey Roman laws, admitting that a Christian should be punished for their violations. For their part, Schoolmen relied on Augustine to help them in their legalistic read of Rom.

118 Pauline notions of law are here foreign to vocabulary and sense of the LXX: 'ὑπόδικος γένηται... τῷ θεῷ' (Rom. 3:19–20). 'The law says' is *oral* (versus *written* Torah) as in the Roman system of a herald publicizing law.

119 Vespasian, *Vespasian's Constitution Protecting Physicians*, A.D. 74, 119–120: [ὅ]που ἂν αἰρῶνται ὡς ἀσύλους· ὅς δ' ἂν [αὐτοὺς ἐκβιάζηται]ι, ὑπόδικος ἔστω δήμωι· Ῥωμαίων [ἀσεβείας τῆς εἰς τ]ὸν οἶκον τῶν Σεβαστῶν.'

120 See *Rom. Ant.*, vol. 3, 6.61.1–2, and vol. 2, 4.12.3 for the use of κρίμα in relation to the *concilia plebis* and its judgments.

121 *Rom. Ant.*, 13.5.1: 'ὁ βίος ἦν αὐτῷ τοῦ κατακριματος, ἀλλ' ἴν' ἀπαχθεῖς εἰς τὸ δεσμωτήριον ὑπὸ τῶν δημάρχων.'

122 Augustine, *Augustine's Commentary on the Galatians*, ed. Eric Plummer (Oxford, 2006), 168: 'reatus fiat omnis mundus deo.'

3:19 ff. and Rom. 5:12 ff., for the *Vulgate* had translated Augustine's 'reatus' by the entirely ambiguous 'subditus'.<sup>123</sup>

Meyronnes' access to excerpts of classical jurists made him aware of the legal institutions undergirding Pauline and Augustinian arguments. Still, Paul never actually penned 'privilegium' or προνομία in Greek, i.e., Meyronnes' *terminus technicus*.<sup>124</sup> Instead, only Origen, the *Vulgate*, and Augustine provided the term *privilegium* for Schoolmen to imitate. Biblically, Meyronnes' Marian *opera* completely fail to reference the one instance of 'privilegium' occurring in the *Vulgate*.<sup>125</sup> Additionally, he (as well as Aureole and Thomae) avoided using the biblical term 'indulgence' for Mary's conception (in favor of 'privilege'). Why? In answer, Meyronnes and his Franciscan predecessors and confreres read *indulgentia* along the lines of a semantic shift among university academics. Papal and episcopal indulgences, by this time, had become the primary referent for *indulgentia* in theology and in canon law, where indulgence was defined as a remission of temporal punishment merited for *actual sins* (not punishment of *original sin*).<sup>126</sup> Since I have found no reference to the *privilegium* of Ruth 4:6 (*Vulgate*) among immaculatists, parsimony leads me to the inference that Roman law satisfactorily provided Meyronnes with a substitute term from the ubiquitous phrase 'to indulge a privilege' (*privilegium indulgere*).<sup>127</sup> While technically a privilege and an indulgence were separate kinds of exemptions, an *indulgent action* supposes a prevenient friendship of the emperor before granting an individual right (*ius singulare*) or privilege outside the bounds of common law: 'As if the *imperator* were to give a friend a privilege so that the son about to be born of a concubine would be born legitimate.'<sup>128</sup>

In effect, the immaculatists had found a way to remain faithful to an entirely patristic mode of reading Paul through Roman jurisprudence, while yet accommodating newer legalistic and theological senses of 'indulgence.' This internally consistent legal system allowed immaculatists to build on Scotus'

123 Compare *Vetus Latina, Ms. Cambridge, Trinity College B.17.1*, fol. 7, line 2 and *Vulgate* (Rom 3:19) translations.

124 *An Index*, 154.

125 Ruth 4:6 (*Vulgate*): '...debeo...meo utere privilegio...'

126 Meyronnes' political discourse applied the notion of 'privilegium' to the papacy (*in loco imperatoris*). See José Antônio de Souza, 'A hierocracia Na quaesio de subjectione de Frei Francisco de Meyronnes O.M.', in *Lógica e Linguagem na Idade Média, Coleção Filosofia 23*, ed. Luis De Boni (Porto Alegre, 1995), 163–96, at 178, 187–88. Compare *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.1.

127 See especially *Digesta*, 8.17.12.

128 Meyronnes, *In commemoratione omnium defunctorum: Sermo quartus*, in *Sermones in sanctis*, 262, col 2. Compare *Digesta*, 1.4.3, and *Novellae*, 74.1.

biblical metaphor that the sovereign Jesus ‘opened the door’ to Mary that nobody else can open or close.<sup>129</sup> Roman jurisprudence explained how the mother of Jesus could have been easily freed from sin and death without threatening the created order of the law of sin and death. Scotus’ additional argument from divine maternity, as a sufficiently meritorious reason for Christ to produce an exemption from original sin, flowed effortlessly from this argument.

## 7 Immaculate Conception: Damascene in Lombard’s *Sentences*

The single most important patristic text to prove Mary’s delayed sanctification from sin, according to maculist authorities, is John Damascene’s *De fide orthodoxa* (cited in Lombard’s *Sentences* by mixing the translations of Burgundio of Pisa and Cerbanus).<sup>130</sup> Commenting on the Annunciation (Luk. 1:35), John wrote: ‘And so, after assent of the holy Virgin, the Holy Spirit descended upon her, according to the Word of the Lord which the angel had spoken, purifying (*purgans*) her and preparing the power to receive and the power to beget the Word of the divinity...’<sup>131</sup> Scotus saw this as a principal objection to his immaculist thesis in his *Sentences* commentary. Yet, even Duns failed to locate a source to provide a direct retort to maculists. He avoided a direct rebuttal to Damascene’s alleged opposition to Mary’s complete holiness in favor of more philosophical and theological principles supporting his thesis.<sup>132</sup>

Auspiciously, Damascene’s use of ‘purifying’ (*καθαίρων*) and its cognates are all traceable to an equivocal but positive definition of cleansing in Nazianzen *graeus*, the very same passage that Augustine seemed to misunderstand. Damascene understood well Nazianzen, who was at the root of the Marian terminology that Damascene applied to Mary’s human nature. Damascene best illustrated this in the account of Mary’s baptism, where he reworked Nazianzen’s doctrine of the purification of Jesus at his baptism:

The air, the fiery ether, and the sky would have been hallowed through the ascending of her spirit, just as earth was hallowed by the depositing of her body. Even water took its share in the blessing: For [water]

<sup>129</sup> *Ord.* 3.3.2, no. 14. Compare Isa. 22:2; Rev. 3:8.

<sup>130</sup> Compare Burgundio of Pisa and Cerbanus, *De fide orthodoxa*, in *Saint John Damascene: De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. Eligius Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications: Text Series 4 (St. Bonaventure NY, 1955), 171, 391.

<sup>131</sup> Peter Lombard, *Peter Lombard: The Sentences*, 4 vols., trans. Giulio Silano (Toronto, 2010), vol. 3, 10 (*Sent.* 3.3.1.3). Nota Bene, I have altered the original translation.

<sup>132</sup> Scotus, *Ord.*, 3.3.1, nos. 3.

washes, not so much by pure (καθαρῶ) water cleansing (καθαίροντι) her, but by [water itself] being purified (ἀγνιζομένῳ) [by her] to the highest degree.<sup>133</sup>

Both human natures underwent actions of cleansing according to Nazianzen, but the entire Greek patristic tradition understood this to mean only that an interior action of grace and exterior action of glorification occurred.<sup>134</sup> Latins, lacking access to Greek sources and even to Latin translations of Rufinus, did not know that 'purification' (προκαθαρθείσα) of Mary at the Annunciation ought to be rendered as 'immaculate' (*immaculata*), just as Rufinus had properly translated the term.

While the Greek tradition of purification, culminating in Damascene, always supposed positive graces, Meyronnes did not have access to Damascene's other Marian works. Instead, he employed a Ps.-Dionysian source that was at his disposal. There, too, Bonaventure and Aquinas admitted the existence of an all-positive definition of purification (contra Lombard) within the Greek tradition. Still, everyone's lexicon attested to this equivocal notion of purification to signify a purely positive attribute, as Bonaventure testified: 'Dionysius says that "holiness is pure and sincere goodness from every contagion." Therefore, to speak thus is to speak of nothing other than sanctification rather than purification... Therefore, the Virgin desired to be purified [but] not because she was unclean.'<sup>135</sup> For his part, Meyronnes openly cited the passage from Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* that had also adopted this Dionysian definition, though maintaining a maculist conclusion:

Argument 3: Besides, the Damascene says that 'The Holy Spirit, while it was purifying her (*purgans eam*), came upon' the blessed Virgin before the time of the conception of the Son of God. But this cannot be understood as other than a purification from concupiscence, as Augustine says in his work *De natura et gratia*, for she did not commit sin. Therefore, she was not profusely cleansed from concupiscence through sanctification *in utero*. (*ST* 3.27.3, arg. 3)

133 John Damascene, *Second Oration on the Dormition*, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter (Berlin, 1988), vol. 5, 528 (11.14–16).

134 Manuel Candal, 'La Virgen Santísima 'prepurificada' en su Anunciación', in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 31 (1965), 241–76.

135 Bonaventure, *De purificatione b. virginis Mariae : Sermo 2*, 1 (vol. 9, 641, col. 1).

Response to Argument 3: It must be said that the Holy Spirit produced a double purification on the matter of the Blessed Virgin: [1.] Indeed, it worked one purification, as if it were preparatory for the conception of Christ, whose conception was not out of any sort of impurity of guilt or concupiscence; but the Spirit was recollecting her mind into a greater concentration and withdrawing her from what is common. For, too, the angels are called 'purified,' in whom no impurity is found, as Dionysius says in chapter six of *De ecclesiasticis hierarchiis*. [2.] However, the Holy Spirit worked another purification in her through of the conception of Christ, which was of the Holy Spirit. Also, according to this, it may be said that it purified her entirely from the kindling [of sin]. (*ST* 3. 27.3, ad 3)

For his part, Meyronnes seized the opportunity to lift the relevant Ps.-Dionysian text from his predecessor's work and to reformulate it into a rebuttal against maculist objectors:

Notwithstanding, [Mary] was truly purified (*purgata*), because Luk. 2:22 says that 'after the days of *her* purification were fulfilled.'<sup>136</sup> ... See Dionysius, chaps. 6–8, on *De ecclesiasticis hierarchiis*, where it is said that the superior angels purify their inferiors, who have nevertheless no stain, from which they need be purified. Therefore, notwithstanding [Luk. 2:22], the Blessed Virgin Mary did not contract original sin, though she was truly purified.<sup>137</sup>

Meyronnes appears as the first medieval immaculatist to utilize the opportune semantic range of the term 'purification,' as defined in the Ps.-Dionysian corpus, on behalf of the Immaculate Conception. Prior, Scotus and others had failed to provide an adequate rejoinder to those objecting from Damascene's text. While the Greek-Dionysian tradition did not actually rely on Nazianzen's terminology and definition of purification, it did affirm an exclusively positive attribute that is an increase in spiritual knowledge. Meyronnes' skillful rearrangement of patristic *loci* from popular florilegia exonerated Mary from damaging inferences ordinarily drawn from Scriptural and patristic interpretations of 'purification' in the Latin West.

<sup>136</sup> This reading in the singular (versus Greek plural) is attested in the *Vetus Latina* as well. See J. Hugh Hatch, 'The Text of Luke 2:22,' in *The Harvard Theological Review* 14 (1921), 377–381.

<sup>137</sup> *Conflatus*, 3.3.2.6 (emphasis mine).

## 8 Conclusions

The present study has notably concentrated on two main aspects of Meyronnes' argumentation for the Immaculate Conception. First, Meyronnes elaborated a profound and powerful argument that St. Paul should be interpreted in light of the Roman law. Nevertheless, Meyronnes' synthesis proves to be somewhat unoriginal in its approach. As we saw, Origen, Augustine, and Bonaventure had previously pressed Roman institutions into the service of exegeting the Pauline corpus in order to understand the logic of divine law. Meyronnes' ingenuity lies in better synthesizing Augustinian and Bonaventurian readings of St. Paul in harmony with the jurisconsultants of Roman law germane to Paul's time and culture. Although limitations of space prevent me from citing each and every appeal of Meyronnes to these pagan authorities, enough of his argument was sampled to affirm the objective value of Scholastic readings of the New Testament with the aid of Roman institutions. Secondly, we saw that Augustine suffered difficulties in understanding the nature of Mary's 'cleansing' at the Annunciation. It is entirely plausible that his confusion came from a misreading of the Annunciation as originally expounded by Gregory Nazianzen. What is more, a very similar Scholastic misread of Damascene's internally consistent exposition of Mary's purification at the Annunciation occurred in the Latin West because of inherent problems in translating correctly the unusual definition of purification as uniformly maintained in the Greek tradition. Nevertheless, Meyronnes' ingenuity and eye to detail capacitated him to find solutions to overcome this problem via the Greek author Ps.-Dionysius, despite the dearth of Greek patristic material then available. Although the Immaculate Conception was a relatively innovative idea with respect to Latin Medieval discussions about the universality of original sin, Meyronnes proved himself a firmly traditional exegete of the New Testament according to the mind of Augustine and Bonaventure, despite the fact that the Seraphic Doctor never applied the notion of a 'Marian privilege' to Mary's *conception*. In short, Meyronnes impressively balanced tradition and innovation in his bold venture to convince the Latin world that the Immaculate Conception was not merely a 'more probable opinion,' but a natural corollary of St. Paul's jurisprudence and of the patristic tradition according to the intention of a divine legislator, Jesus Christ.

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**PART 3**

*The Virgin Mary in Medieval Vita Christi Tradition*





## ‘Beholding’ the Virgin Mary in *Imitatio Mariae: Meditationes Vitae Christi*’s Spiritual Exercises for Sacramental Seeing of the Annunciation

*Leah Marie Buturain*

Glowing with an even greater love of God than ever and feeling that she had conceived, our Lady knelt in happiness and rendered thanks to God for this great gift.

MEDITATIONES VITAE CHRISTI, 20

The Trecento *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*MVC*) belongs to a time and place of growing Marian devotion and a flowering of Franciscan spirituality.<sup>1</sup> The Franciscan friar who wrote the *MVC* wove scriptural meditations with spiritual

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1 The *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*MVC*) proved so helpful that its success is registered in its influence on popular piety, informing iconography in all manner of media, dramatic performances, and vernacular theology. Simultaneously, in Franciscan culture and in the larger social imaginary, donors were commissioning the Virgin Mary in the Annunciation, thereby creating a rich material culture of the Virgin and Gabriel in images painted, carved, illuminated, embroidered, tessellated, and sculpted. ‘If historians of art or of the church were to follow the example of their colleagues in the natural sciences by compiling a “citation index” ... it seems clear that among all the scenes in the life of the Virgin Mary that have engaged the piety of the devout and the creativity of the artists, the annunciation has been predominant. The annunciation has been so prevalent, in fact, that the number of references to it in such an index would probably exceed the number of references to all other Marian themes combined.’ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, CT, 1996), 81. Seeing the shapes of the Virgin Mary and Gabriel’s forms in churches or homes led to praying the *Ave Maria* and recapitulating the drama of the Annunciation. Conversely, upon hearing the Angelus bells or praying the *Ave Maria*, the medieval devout summoned the familiar images of the Virgin and archangel ‘*in oculis mentis*,’ i.e., the inner eye that recollects images imprinted upon the memory. (The Franciscans’ general chapter held at Assisi in 1269 instructed preachers to tell the people to say the *Ave Maria* in the evening at the threefold ringing of the Angelus bell; Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* [New York, 1963], 308). Either hearing the bells or seeing the annunciation figures activated an imaginative sequence that simultaneously ‘beheld’ and ‘envisioned’ as a means to be present to the Virgin Mary at the moment of the Annunciation.

exercises in a vividly visual style that opened new doors of imaginative perception.<sup>2</sup> The Franciscan author of the *MVC* served as a spiritual director to the Poor Clare for whom he addressed this meditation manual. The friar endeavored to instruct her in practicing spiritual exercises mindfully, i.e. 'to be present' for *imitatio Mariae* and *imitatio Christi*. The meditations were used as memory exercises, pre-penitential preparation, and as inspiration for spiritual disciplines and devotional praxis.

This chapter explores the visual and imaginative nature of participatory devotion that the *MVC* fostered. I propose a visual hermeneutic at work in the *MVC* that reflects a larger movement, also fostered by the Franciscans, in what philosopher Charles Taylor has coined as the social and religious imaginaries.<sup>3</sup> While the imaginaries inform both the friar's imagery and assumptions, his work in the *MVC*, in turn, influences these imaginaries. This essay contextualizes the friar's instructions in the *Meditationes* regarding the interaction of image and text as reflecting back a larger visual hermeneutic operating within popular piety, one that yoked two kinds of seeing and beholding. These two manners of seeing were '*in oculis mentis*,' i.e., the inner eye that recollects images imprinted upon the memory, and seeing with the bodily eyes the actual figures of the holy personages, in this case, the Virgin Mary and Gabriel.

We see these two kinds of vision operating in the illustrated version of the *MVC*, the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Ms. italien 115 (BnF ital. 115). Here we will inquire about these kinds of seeing at work in both the text and images of the earliest known illustrated manuscript of the *Meditationes*. The manuscript was probably made in or around Pisa in 1350 and was intended for a group of

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2 Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth-Century*, ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, tr. Isa Ragusa, Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology 35 (Princeton, 1961) (hereafter referred to as Ragusa and Green, *MVC*). I am indebted to Ragusa and Green as well as to Holly Flora, *The Devout Belief of the Imagination: The Paris 'Meditationes Vitae Christi' and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy*, *Disciplina Monastica, Studies on Medieval Monastic Life*, 6 (Turnhout, 2009). Although authorship of the *MVC* until the late nineteenth century was ascribed to Bonaventure, subsequently 'Pseudo-Bonaventure' or 'Ps-Bonaventure' has been the standard usage (or, crediting the Franciscan authorship, 'the Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*'). For a discussion of authorship in addition to Flora, see Sarah McNamer, 'The Origins of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*', in *Speculum* 84:4 (2009), 905–955.

3 Philosopher Charles Taylor offers a helpful framework for organizing sources of identity in his term 'imaginary,' both 'social' and 'religious.' The 'social imaginary' describes the way a society collectively imagines its *raison d'être* and the roles such collectively created meaning play in the community's life. The 'religious imaginary' includes values specific to a particular religious expression, in which I include popular piety, vernacular theology, and the values of visual literacy. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 146.

Poor Clares. Indeed, it may be *the* earliest copy if not *the* original *Meditationes*.<sup>4</sup> Its copious illustrations offer a fecund resource for examining the inherently visual nature of Franciscan meditation, one that participates in the larger visual praxis of the religious imaginary. BnF ital. 115 was written in a local Pisan dialect of medieval Italian. Given the donor's intent to benefit Clarissan nuns, studying the calligraphic beauty combined with the line drawings affords insight into late medieval Franciscan devotional praxis.<sup>5</sup>

The Annunciation's text and images in the *Meditationes* manuscript BnF ital. 115 offer a case in point of the incarnational imagination that fuels sacramental seeing. In effect, they make manifest that the Franciscan imaginative spiritual exercises are inherently visual ones.

How is the Annunciation in BnF ital. 115 re-presented and incorporated into a *meditatio/imitatio* exercise for the reader as meditant? How do two kinds of vision appear to be operating together? The friar expected and engaged the reader/viewer's capacity to 'behold,' 'see,' and envision the Virgin and Gabriel in order to pray, to 'be present,' and in order to imaginatively reenact the Annunciation.<sup>6</sup>

BnF ital. 115 offers evidence of how Franciscan affective devotion, in this case a spiritual exercise for meditation, is an imaginative visual praxis. The friar as spiritual director instructs the Poor Clare as meditant on how to use the inner eye of her imagination to be present to the scriptural event. In effect the meditant as beholder becomes an eyewitness of the Annunciation, repeating the words and reinforcing the images so that, in recapitulating the Annunciation, the enclosed nun can mirror the Virgin Mary. The manuscript images reinforced the spiritual seeing of her envisioned images.

4 Holly Flora and Arianna Pecorini Cignoni, 'Requirements of Devout Contemplation: Text and Image for the Poor Clares in Trecento Pisa', in *Gesta* 45 (2006), 61.

5 Flora examines the manuscript, which contains 193 pen drawings embedded in the calligraphic medieval Pisan dialect of BnF ital. 115, 113 of which were washed with color and 104 illustrations left blank. Flora documents several markers that indicate BnF ital. 115 was made for a Franciscan audience, e.g., the image of Francis, the extended narrative and lengthy treatise on the active and contemplative lives, and passages in the text indicating 'the conscious presence of an advisor writing for his own memory and for that of his audience.' The Poor Clares are addressed e.g. the reader as '*dilecta figliuola*' and enjoin her to emulate '*la beata vergine Clara, madre e dughessa tua*' (Flora, *Devout Belief*, 66). The Virgin's companions perform Clarissan activities such as praying, spinning, and reading. Thirty-one illustrations of the Virgin Mary emphasize virtues prized in a consecrated life of enclosure—faith, obedience, poverty, and humility.

6 Quotations from the *MVC* will subsequently be referenced by page number from the Ragusa translation (Please see n. 1 above). Emphasis mine, here and elsewhere.

I am choosing to focus on the passages regarding the Annunciation as incarnation in the *MVC*, since they both incorporate the dynamic of the two kinds of seeing and indicate how these visual praxes bring the incarnation into focus through and by the Virgin's human form.

Moreover, the Annunciation passages and images serve as a palimpsest of the larger festive honoring of the Virgin Mary, daily in the ringing of the Angelus bells and in the praying of the Office and Marian psalter, and annually in the liturgical enactment on the Feast of the Annunciation. Considered together, in BnF ital. 115, the figurative language in the *MVC* narrative, in dialogue with the drawings, highlights the larger devotional praxis of the period, thereby offering an interpretive hermeneutic of the incarnation, one cherished by Francis and his followers. Franciscans fanned the fires of devotion in part by using the arts to cultivate the 'devout imagination.' To see the Virgin Mary was to greet her, to greet her was to meet her, to meet her was to love her, to love her was to desire to honor her by imitating her.

Envisioning the Virgin and Gabriel upon hearing or reading her name, and subsequently seeing an image of her form and praying to her, brought together these two ways of beholding that strengthened the imagination to remain focused and to 'be present.' The friar's narrative guides the way: 'For the sake of greater impressiveness I shall tell them to you as they occurred or as they might have occurred according to the devout belief of the imagination and the varying interpretation of the mind.'<sup>7</sup>

The Annunciation as incarnation functions as a heartbeat of God's love for humanity in the *MVC* corpus. The Clarissan reader of the BnF ital. 115 text and its figures of the Annunciation would behold with her eyes physically as well as behold with the eyes of her heart spiritually so that she would experience a form of 'double vision' or, if you will, saturated seeing. The friar advocates these two kinds of seeing to demonstrate to the Poor Clares how to participate in the Virgin's *fiat* and be formed in her embodied disposition of heart. In the *Meditationes*, the Virgin's devotion and faithfulness make possible the incarnation. The Clarissan nun, by praying the Annunciation and practicing a prayerful seeing, even a pregnant seeing, sought to generate spiritual conceiving. The Virgin Mary was in her own time and space conceiving by faith: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' Hence, sight of the site could lead to insight. Such pregnant

7 *MVC* 5. The instructions for seeing the Virgin and Jesus occur throughout the text. In Section LXXII, 'How the Lord Jesus Predicted His Death to the Mother,' the author 'interpolates' an extrabiblical meditation (308). He instructs the Clarissan reader to 'observe them as they sit together,' and later, 'Oh, if you could see the Lady 'weeping ... perhaps you too would not restrain your tears' (309). A figure was intended to be depicted here but not completed (Ragusa and Green, *MVC*, 409 n. 269).

words take a long time to gestate. The Virgin Mary's example encourages the Clarissan nuns to conceive Christ in their souls and become spiritual mothers.

The Franciscan imaginative spiritual exercises found in the *MVC* involved loving and beholding the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus Christ. Moreover, Franciscan art, architecture, and manuscripts enriched Marian devotion and visual spiritual practice in the larger culture. Trecento Franciscans and their Dominican counterparts coached and guided the Christian faithful to be visually literate of the images within and without—in the mind and in the physical world—and how to read and pray with these images.<sup>8</sup> Franciscans prepared penitents for confession, preached, and provided spiritual direction, fostering a devotional literacy that continues to bear fruit. Therefore, Franciscans initiated and developed imaginative means to increase the capacity for envisioning and beholding divine love in human form, exercising 'continuous contemplation' as a means of spiritual formation.<sup>9</sup> The activities of 'beholding' and 'seeing' and 'being present' are interdependent and both appear in the text and 'encircle' it, comprising a form of intermediality.

The *MVC*'s urging of *imitatio Mariae* assumes that the Clarissan nun will imitate the Virgin and her Son, yet this imitation is richer and more dynamic than the contemporary use of that word.<sup>10</sup> *Imitatio Mariae* incorporates *contemplatio Mariae*; it includes the meditant's embodied gestures of genuflecting, caressing, raising arms in prayer, bowing the forehead to the ground, and kissing the image. The goal of *imitatio Mariae* encompassed a rich visual literacy that encircled the one beheld and the one beholding within the gaze of the one who gives sight and sometimes visions.

Moreover, the Virgin's disposition of faith in the words of her *fiat*, 'Behold... be it done to me according to your Word,' epitomizes the spiritual seeing of trust within a mutual loving gaze. It is dialogic, existential, and ontological.

8 For others, see, e.g., Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1988), 49–50. For example, Fra Roberto's fifteenth-century preaching on the Annunciation distinguishes three principal mysteries, all of which include knowing and attributing the words of Gabriel and Mary: (1) the Angelic Mission, (2) the Angelic Salutation, and (3) the Angelic Colloquy.

9 The Franciscan contribution that preceded Ignatius and his *Spiritual Exercises* merits underscoring.

10 In Hebrews 6:11–20, Paul urges the Hebrews to demonstrate an eagerness for fulfilling hope, by being 'imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.' For 'we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, which reaches into the interior behind the veil.' Imitation and hope allow the faithful to reach through the seen to the unseen.

Beholding and being beheld. '*Adsum*'—I am present to you and see you.<sup>11</sup> '*Ecce ancilla domini fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*' ('Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word,' Luke 1:38). Both Gabriel and God behold the Virgin. As the meditant beholds the Virgin being beheld, the Poor Clare participates in the incarnation as an embodied reality, also beheld and beholden.

The imagery both in the BnF ital. 115 drawings and in narrative descriptions serves to build up the reader in furnishing her interior 'cell of the soul' and animating her imagination. A 'devout imagination' is comprised of images, figures, and forms from the visual landscape brought into the memory and activated by will. Affective meditation and incarnational aesthetics are residents of the devout imagination, one, in this case, enriched and arguably conditioned by feminine spirituality. It is used to participate empathically in eternal or *kairotic* time, i.e., to be imaginatively present to the scriptural event as if it were unfolding for the first time. In this sense, just as the Eucharist reenacts the Last Supper, a 'devout imagination' can be understood as sacramental. By using her 'devout imagination,' the Poor Clare can envision the facts of the Virgin Mary's life as a mirror and model, using the Virgin's role in the incarnation in order to form, perform, and conform herself in the Virgin Mary's virtues.

This visual devotional praxis, like the spiritual exercises advocated in the *MVC*, is incarnational, involving temporal and spatial material facts while activating an internal imaginative response. That the narrator employs the present tense of the verbs both presumes and reinforces that the enclosed nun will imaginatively enter into the scene as though she were present to the original event as it occurred in real and eternal time. Recapitulation instrumentally offered a vehicle for reentry into *Kairos* time.

This imaginative entering into the charged space between the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin Mary incorporates embodied rituals—kneeling, bowing, making the sign of the cross, and expressing affection. As one prays the 'Ave Maria' or the 'Angelus,' or simply follows the friar's narrative, the reader as meditant weaves together beholding and being, seeing what is actually present and being present to the presence. It is a dynamic process within the mimetic meditation of seeing images and praying, of meditating and envisioning images. Consider the reciprocal reinforcement of the meditant beholding the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and she, the Poor Clare, in turn being gazed upon by

11 Many annunciations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contain the words of Gabriel and the Virgin in Latin, often written upside down for God to behold; e.g., Uffizi *Annunciation* by Simone Martini dated 1333, which preceded and therefore probably inspired the artist for the BnF ital. 115.



them. The line drawings of the Virgin render her as an embodied human. Her gestures and bearing incarnate the virtues for those seeking to imitate her. The confluence of beholding the one beheld with love by God illumines the nun's own praxis of consecrating herself to be like the Virgin Mary, a handmaid of the Lord.

The images in BnF ital. 115 increase the capacity for empathy and devotion, assuming and strengthening the Poor Clare's devout belief of the imagination. The friar articulates his motivation for writing the manual, explaining to the directee that he writes it for 'your accomplishment ... to train yourself with more joy, devotion, and solicitude.'<sup>12</sup> The goal for all the Poor Ladies is a transformation into holiness through the Virgin's virtues and her son's.<sup>13</sup>

## 1 A Marian Devotional Site as a Means of Spiritual Formation

The Franciscan author of the *MVC* advocates spiritual exercises that yoke sacramental seeing and meditative exercises in a synergistic fashion for spiritual formation. Sacramental seeing comprises another way of speaking about the analogical imagination's visual process.<sup>14</sup> Like *lectio divina*, sacramental seeing incorporates intentional attention to and receptivity of the image or object gazed upon.

When does *lectio divina* become *visio divina*? To see the encounter of the Annunciation, to enter into the space imaginatively, to repeat the greeting, and to rejoice is to enter into this *catena* of love, these linkages of beholding and being present to the bearer of love. Repeating the greeting, rejoicing with the Virgin, and remaining with her in silence elevates seeing to beholding, and gazing to envisioning. If the perceiving of this motion of love can lead to conceiving, then the recapitulation of love's gift keeps moving, full of grace.

<sup>12</sup> *MVC* 5.

<sup>13</sup> This is not unlike Anselm of Lucca's advice to Matilda of Tuscany, which represents the first example of instructing a meditant to contemplate her need for Mary's intercession *through* the life of the Virgin. Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York, 2005), 226.

<sup>14</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York, 1981), 408–409. Tracy defines analogical language as that which distinguishes the symbolic nature of Catholic writers, especially from Aquinas to the present. Given that creation is good and the material world is not just a carrier of, but is imbued with and often embodies, even emanates, a holy presence, then the language best suited to discuss classics—those creations and texts that contain an excess of meaning—is analogical.

*Visio divina*, 'divine seeing,' is a means of sacramental seeing. The analogical imagination seeks to bring together disparate parts and find in them a music and meaning that can lead to insight, if not to a vision of the divine. One looks at the image, prays with the image, reads and hears the accompanying Scriptural text, and hopes the Holy Spirit is conceived. In *lectio divina*, one disposes one's heart to listen to the Scriptures not as an analytic or didactic exercise; rather, one seeks to receive the Holy Spirit's prompting and then to reflect or ruminate on the word.

The friar takes care to offer nourishment that he feels is suited to Clarissan needs. This love animates the network of relationships seen and unseen, imaginatively and performatively in a *catena* of love and devotion, and it does so by images both visual and verbal. The friar urges the Poor Clare to use her 'devout imagination' to 'train herself' 'in meditating day and night,' to 'be present at the same' time and place as the incarnation, and 'to take fire and become animated by frequent contemplation.'<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the images that thus fuel the 'devout imagination' are ones that comprised the Franciscan religious imaginary, and then in reciprocal fashion birthed new ones.

Twelve of the BnF ital. 115 figures illustrate the incarnation narrative including the cycle of the Virgin's early life, with five drawings of the Virgin, the first and fifth of the Virgin kneeling in prayer and the middle three depicting the Annunciation.<sup>16</sup>

An example of how image and text work together to support sacramental seeing occurs in the text regarding the young Virgin praying on her knees in the temple. BnF ital. 115 features images placed directly in the middle of the text without frames, borders, or rubrics.<sup>17</sup> At times, the reader of the Paris manuscript would encounter the text before coming to the images. For example, in *Meditationes* 10 the author attributes these words to the Virgin, discussing her time in the temple: 'Continually and with devotion I pondered on what I should do and what would be most pleasing to Him so that He might deign to give me His grace.'<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, the image (Figure 9.1) appears with the Virgin's next words appearing above her kneeling form: 'I kept in my soul and forthwith realized the virtues they contained. The soul can have no virtue if it does not love God with its whole heart. From this love descends all bounty of

15 MVC 3.

16 Flora, *Devout Belief*, offers readers a beautiful example of interrogating images within the text. In this chapter, I will be numbering the figures not as they appear in sequence within BnF ital. 115, which is an amplified version of the Lucan account, but rather as the images demonstrate the visual hermeneutic.

17 Flora, *Devout Belief*, 67.

18 MVC 10.



FIGURE 9.1 The Virgin Praying in the Temple. BnF, ital. 115, fol. 6v.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, © granted 25 January 2017

grace ...<sup>19</sup> The instructions, similar to stage directions, for the artist of the illustration read, 'Here one will show how the little one stayed in prayer before the altar.'<sup>20</sup> The inscription reads, 'Our Lady as she prayed.'<sup>21</sup>

When we look at Figure 9.1, we see the artist has drawn the Virgin as a very young woman, a girl actually, kneeling before the altar, her arms raised and palms open to heaven. Her flaxen hair is unveiled; a halo surrounds her entire neck and head. Behind Mary is a single cell whose doors are open revealing a darkened room. Barely perceptible is an outline on the inside wall. The artist has placed the young Virgin in a prayer of petition and yielded surrender between the altar and her cell, reinforcing to the enclosed nuns that consecration is defined in temporal and spatial terms, that is, by time spent in prayer before the altar and within the space of one's solitary cell. Rhetorically sensitive to the needs of his reader, the author narrates and the donor advises the person directing the artist so the combination of word and image resulted in an entirely original conception, one that encourages the meditant to be humble and persevere.<sup>22</sup> Both author and artist collaborated in conceiving a novel representation of the Virgin.

In order for the artist to depict the passing of time and the inhabiting of a charged and sacred space, he had to compose a form with temporal and spatial coordinates into which viewers could imaginatively project themselves. Incorporating time and space, this form became a vehicle of participation. Similarly, the liturgy is a bounded language and contains those who participate in it. The images used in BnF ital. 115 served, in conjunction with the text, as forms that could be impressed within and then used to reformat the nun's own predilections into a focus on imitating the Virgin Mary.<sup>23</sup>

Summoning images before the inner eye worked in tandem with incorporating drawings within the manuscript to offer a more saturated seeing, helping train the mind to focus attention on beholding those who are spiritually

19 MVC 10.

20 Ragusa and Green, *MVC* 404.

21 Flora, *Devout Belief*, 68. The Franciscan friar who likely served as spiritual advisor for the manuscript commissioned for the Clarissan convent also likely directed the artists, including the captions that were written in the same vernacular Pisan dialect as the text. BnF ital. 115 reinforces the friar-nun relationship; in other copies and manuscripts of the *MVC*, it was adapted to the *donor's* needs.

22 Ragusa and Green, *MVC* 404 n. 5: 'no earlier examples [of this iconography] are known to us.' Artists are called to give birth to new images and metaphors that re-present and incarnate presence, make mystery manifest. They fulfill Meister Eckhart's challenge to his peers to give birth to Jesus for their time, stressing that spiritual conception by faith is more significant than physical.

23 Neuroscience has confirmed the effects of reinforcing neural pathways.

but not physically present. The mimetic meditation expands the capacity of the imagination to envision: It is inherently incarnational.<sup>24</sup>

Annunciation images reinforce to the viewer the central roles the Virgin Mary and Gabriel played in assenting to God's love, initiating the human body as the site of salvation. They honor the radical love that prompted the Word to enter his mother's womb and take on her flesh from within *her* body as the vessel that would bear the divine. The incarnation is a challenging mystery, so the images prompt repetitive prayers, and these renewals of devotion reinforce pathways, or *ductus*, for the mental pilgrimage of traveling in place with Jesus.<sup>25</sup>

The illustrations in BnF ital. 115 help us understand this dynamic. The manuscript's fecundity of visual narrative supports the goal of helping meditants use their devout imaginations to become eyewitnesses of those holy personages being presented, or more accurately, re-presented.

## 2 Annunciation Sequence

The *MVC*'s Annunciation narrative serves as a heartbeat for the pulse of devotion urged on the Clarissan nun and by extension all those who practiced

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24 A person who is formed and disposed to see the spiritual meaning in the material vehicle sees with the eyes of faith in order to perceive what is unseen to the naked eye. The mystery of this divine life is concealed, and only faith activated by a 'devout imagination' can reveal it. In the last fifteen years, scholars have fruitfully interrogated late medieval visuality and identity. See Barbara Newman, 'What Did It Mean to Say "I Saw"? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', in *Speculum* 80:1 (2005), 1–43; See also Reindert L. Falkenburg, Walter S. Melion, and Todd M. Richardson, eds., *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout, 2007); Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, eds., *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2006); Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000). Additionally see Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York, 2008); Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998); Colum Hourihane, ed., *Image and Belief: Studies in Celebration of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton, 1999); Reindert Falkenburg, *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450–1550*, *Oculi* 5 (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1994).

25 There is no space here to discuss this important approach to pilgrimage. The solidarity of Jesus' descent to humility and his consent that is made possible by his mother's consent, the incarnation enabling his final *fiat* on the cross, make of him a pilgrim sibling: 'Today He has become one of us, our brother, and *has begun to go on pilgrimage with us*' (*MVC* 21).

*imitatio Mariae*. The friar's emphasis on the incarnation and what precedes the Annunciation sets the stage for the event that, for the medieval devout, was central to salvation history.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the *MVC*'s instructions for how the Poor Clare is to 'weigh' and 'be present to' in order to 'rejoice' and 'make merry with' offers contemporary readers insight into the centrality of the Annunciation as incarnation in the Trecento through the fifteenth century. The medieval and late-medieval devout were more visually literate in reading their images.

Word and image encourage the Clarissan nun—and subsequent readers—to repeat and recapitulate the Annunciation event, envisioning the words spoken and enacted in time and in space. The images of Gabriel and the Virgin Mary help fuel the Poor Clare's imagination, serving as a vehicle in which she crosses the threshold of her current time by imaginatively being present to the *Kairos* or eternal time of the Annunciation. The depiction of the Virgin's contemplative life promotes direct visualization of the correspondence between the Virgin's consecration and the nun's own.

Of the five drawings discussed in this chapter, three images in BnF ital. 115 feature the Virgin Mary in the Annunciation, bookended by images of the Virgin praying alone. Each of the Annunciation images of Gabriel with the Virgin Mary indicate some temporal and spatial considerations: The figures are close but not touching; the figures are similar in size yet distinguished as heavenly and earthly; the angel moves in, bows, and departs. In each, the artist features an architectural space behind the Virgin indicating a private cell.

These illustrations are similar enough to draw from the religious imaginary, yet are uniquely suited to the donor's intent for use in the Clarissan convent. For example, in Figure 9.2, Gabriel and Mary are both kneeling, the iconographic *Virginis humilitas* with her head inclined in a bow of deference. Mary's arms are crossed over her chest, yet the artist contextualizes her by having her cell enclosure so close as to have her robe covering the front entrance. *Ecclesia* begins in the cell of devotion.

And since the Blessed Virgin had returned to Nazareth, the omnipotent God called the archangel Gabriel and said to him, 'Go to our beloved daughter Mary, wedded to Joseph, and dear to us above all creatures, and tell her that my Son, desiring her beauty, has chosen her as His mother.'<sup>27</sup>

26 The friar's pictorial imagination enables him, drawing on Bernard, to dramatize heaven and earth's struggle preceding the Virgin's *fiat*.

27 *MVC* 15.



FIGURE 9.2 The Annunciation: The Virgin's Response. BnF, ital. 115, fol. 11v.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, © granted 25 January 2017

It is in Section IV, 'Here Begins the Meditation on the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and on His Incarnation,'<sup>28</sup> that the friar changes his tone from one of storyteller to that of the proclaimer of a staged drama sounding the king's arrival, echoing in intent the Angelus bells: 'The time for the Incarnation of the Son ... had come.'<sup>29</sup>

Although the Prologue proposes 'continuous contemplation of the life of Jesus Christ,' the fifteen pages devoted to the incarnation feature the Virgin Mary's election, her life, her virtues, and her grace in actions pertaining to the incarnation. Francis himself had focused on the incarnation; the Virgin Mary's humility, obedience, and courage in her *fiat* at once adumbrates Jesus Christ and embodies him.

The author admonishes the reader:

These are the events prior to the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ that we can contemplate. Weigh them *affectionately* and delight in them, commit them to memory and follow their example, for they are most pious and beneficial to the soul ... We must love them in consideration of the excellent fruits that devoted meditation on them will bring to us.<sup>30</sup>

Affection moves in all directions in the *Meditationes*: Humans for God, God for humanity, the Trinity and angels for Jesus' chosen mother, among many more examples of love begetting love.

The friar has not even written a full paragraph before he feels the need to impress upon the Poor Clare yet once again the significance of her efforts for the goal of showing up, of being present:

Let us pause here and remember that I told you in the beginning, that you must learn all the things said and done as though you were *present*. Thus, here you may *imagine* God and *regard* Him as best you can, although He has no body, *beholding Him* as a great God seated on a raised chair, with benign face, compassionate and paternal almost as though wishing to be or already reconciled as He speaks these words.<sup>31</sup>

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28 MVC 15.

29 MVC 15. In liturgical rhythm, two sets of stage directions occur: That of the spiritual director's in the text and that of the individual in charge of the manuscript writing instructions to the artists.

30 MVC 14.

31 MVC 15–16.



This is an excellent example of how the friar assumes the Poor Clare will employ her inner eye to be present to God. Note, too, the kindness that seeks to connect these visual verbs as though each word becomes a prompt to focus the lens of her inner eye: 'Present'—'imagine'—'regard'—'behold.' Figure 9.3 depicts God as a young Christ seated in a mandorla held up by seraphim, his right hand extended, commissioning the archangel. The instructions are lacking, but the inscription reads, 'The angels who receive the message for Mary.'<sup>32</sup> Figure 9.3 sets the stage as a drumbeat for the Annunciation drama that will unfold.

The Poor Clare is to imitate Gabriel as well as the Virgin, for Gabriel sets the tone for the posture of heart and body that is fitting to revere the most graced of all women. Before God, Gabriel is 'respectful and reverent'; the meditant imagines with her inner eye the archangel messenger. She then views the manuscript's image of the archangel pictured in heaven, 'kneeling with bowed head'; and the angel's demeanor radiates a 'glad and joyful face.'<sup>33</sup> One feels the joy and movement of these words, for love was in motion.

Gabriel has fulfilled his role, as should the reader when she realizes the Virgin Mary's grace and majesty in humility.<sup>34</sup>

The meditant would then read Gabriel's greeting (Luke 1:28) both in Latin and in her own Pisan dialect. The Poor Clare would be envisioning in *oculis mentis* the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin; then she would see the image (Figure 9.4) of Gabriel kneeling before the Virgin, creating a second or double image reinforcing the internal one. Figure 9.4 renders a trinity of lines in a triangle of energetic flow. God's hand extends from swirling blue numinous clouds, and rays of light stream from his two extended fingers, creating lines that connect God's hand to the Virgin's halo. Traditionally, those lines and the Holy Spirit as a dove would be coming towards her ear, yet the lines actually

32 Ragusa and Green, *MVC*, observe that this separation of the scene in which God sends Gabriel before the Annunciation proper occurs earlier but with distinctly different picture types. Therefore, this figure drawing in the Paris Copy of the *Meditations* influenced fourteenth-century Italian annunciations (406). In addition, this double commissioning of Gabriel can be seen in illuminated Books of Hours.

33 *MVC* 16.

34 The friar also identifies with Gabriel as a role model for imitating Mary: 'See also how the angel wisely and assiduously introduces and chooses his words, kneeling reverently before his Lady with pleasing and joyful countenance. Attentively he heeds the words of his Lady that he may reply appropriately and accomplish the will of God regarding this wonderful deed' (*MVC* 19). How lovely a narrative in light of *imitatio Mariae* and rhetorically in light of the spiritual director's commitment to write appropriately for his intended Poor Lady!

9

lo mo aceterata lasua belleffa . r asela electa amate .  
 r p gata dilla riceua allegante . po d plet ablo ordinato  
 topare lasalute ditutta lumana generitice quoglo dmi  
 ticare la i guilia ad me fca . **C**otete q r ricordati di q  
 le cose di idl pncipio toyri . aoc d tu ipari ditutte que cose  
 dffidiceno r fano . dapparechiana di pccete . **C**odunque q i  
 magna r inguida dio come puoi . po dilli e ssa copo .  
**C**onarsiguidalo come gracie dio sedete inalta sedia . vuol  
 to benigno pietoso r patnale . quasi uoletosi ricodiliare  
 uero ricodilato / qste parole dte . **C**Et gabriel r facia  
 la glo f <sup>notue la lafca in</sup>  
 di opario

allegri r io coda / gmochione r coluolto i chmato temoro  
 so r ruerete / labascata di suo signoe attentite riceue  
 te . **C**leuatosi gabriel iocoto r allegro uolo diceio / r i hu  
 mana spete inuomto fu dimati ala uigne laquale  
 era i dela camera dela castella sua . qan uolo suto fto  
 d dio nollu itasse inati r trououu . la sra tntate la  
 quale ato r itro inati almesso suo . **V**n di sipe dhalu  
 sima opa dela i canactoe . fu ditutta l'itntate . auog d  
 sola lapsona di figliuolo fuisse i canata . come accouu d  
 si ue fuisse una gonella itono . Aquale suffeno due . dilli q

FIGURE 9.3 God Sending Gabriel to Mary. BnF, ital. 115, fol. gv.  
 PHOTO: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, © granted 25 January 2017



FIGURE 9.4 The Annunciation to the Virgin. BnF, ital. 115, fol. 10r.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, © granted 25 January 2017

cover more than her ears—her temple, her eyebrows, and eyes—and they manifest illumination.

Below God's hand, Gabriel kneels forward, his left hand holding a scepter, his right hand mirroring God's hand with two fingers lifted. The swirl of his garments and raised wings indicate the archangel has just arrived in flight. The Virgin Mary leans slightly away from his greeting to indicate her humility in response to exalted appellations. The urn of lilies indicates her purity and provides at once a separation from the two and a visual marker of the charged space that connects them.<sup>35</sup> This drawing of Gabriel's Annunciation to the Virgin incorporates established iconographical conventions (the props of scepter, urn, Mary's book, God's hand, and the Holy Spirit as dove), while presenting its own charm and sensibility.<sup>36</sup> The artist stages the Annunciation with all that is needed, except for the viewer's imaginative beholding.

This envisioning and gazing, beholding and contemplating, comprise the visual equivalent of not just stereo, but surround sound. It is a saturated visual field. The images were birthed from within and mirrored from without then brought before the eye of the heart. To embed the illustration in the midst of the text is to make of it more than illustration. The Franciscan visual praxis participates in the incarnation, renewing the embodied words exchanged by heaven and earth.

The Franciscan narrator unfolds the predestined quality of the incarnation's import. He does so by praising Mary's worthiness and by highlighting her Annunciation as one that each believer implicitly needs to imitate. He desires that the Poor Clare actively participates in the drama of heaven on earth. Within the space of two pages, the friar twice directs the meditant to 'see,' three times to 'behold'; and these visual commands support his instructions for her to

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35 Gabriel's extended hand mirrors God's hand extended: Each has the right hand raised, with both index and middle fingers curled as though in a question mark. The Holy Spirit, symbolized as a dove, proceeds from the hand of God descending towards the Virgin bearing an olive branch in its beak. The *Uffizi Annunciation* by Simone Martini dated 1333 also contains both olive branches of peace (and the Sienese preference for distinguishing themselves from their rival artists in Florence) and the lilies. In these figures, heaven and earth are about to be reconciled.

36 It may be that the artist who drew Figure 9.4 is not the artist of Figure 9.2. In Figure 9.4, the artist takes care to apply several different washes of color, but this drawing and its details do not generally measure up to the fineness of Figures 9.2 and 9.5. To place Gabriel's Annunciation to the Virgin (Figure 9.4) next to the Virgin's response (Figure 9.2) reveals a different level of skill. Figures 9.2 and 9.5 suggest a sure hand, a finer ability and technique, for the faces are more finely rendered, the details of feathers crisp, and the alacrity of Gabriel, from head to slippared feet, more evident. The reverence in Figure 9.5 registers the Virgin's conception.

'consider' and 'contemplate' so that she can 'learn by her [the Virgin's] example.'<sup>37</sup> Imaginatively the temporal sequence entails a spatial one. In her meditation and praxis, the nun joins the Virgin Mary in the charged space between Gabriel—kneeling, leaning intensely toward the Virgin—and the Virgin—leaning back, seated on a pillowed bench under an arched enclosure, her right hand pointing to her heart, her left hand holding the sacred text. The Franciscans organically performed art for truth and beauty.

The narrator continues to create the visual scene by instructing: 'But finally the prudent Virgin understood the words of the angel and consented, and, as is related in the aforementioned revelations, she knelt with profound devotion and, folding her hands, said, "Behold the handmaid of God; let it be to me according to your word"' (Luke 1:28).<sup>38</sup> Figure 9.2 depicts the Virgin kneeling. The inscriptions on this illustration highlight Mary's obedience and humility: '*Come Maria accepta*'/ 'how Mary accepts.'<sup>39</sup> In Figure 9.2, the artist makes manifest an intentional energy, a palpable encounter of mutual accord: Gabriel on bended knee delivers and blesses the Virgin, while she, in humility, kneels in astonishment. A light blue veil now covers her hair, and the teal blue garment sweeps down and around her, more a mantle of mercy than a robe. Her flesh-colored long-sleeved tunic conveys simplicity and the vulnerability of trust. The wash and detailed line drawings of Gabriel's feathers shimmer with light and movement. The archangel reverently receives the Virgin Mary's *fiat*.

Note the friar's use of the spatial and temporal in situating the following narrative: The Son of God miraculously 'entered her womb without delay' and 'from her acquired human flesh,' even while simultaneously 'wholly remaining in His Father's bosom.'<sup>40</sup> If the friar advocates two kinds of seeing in the *MVC*, he also deploys dual kinds of temporal and spatial coordinates. The Poor Clare as an enclosed nun is practicing meditation in enclosure, even as her imagination enables her to join the Virgin in the charged space of the Annunciation in the Virgin's house as convent cell. Temporally, the Clarissan nun is reading and viewing the images in the mid-fourteenth century even as she is asked to be present to both the historical event and its ongoing recapitulation. There is movement, change—and constancy, perceived through the Poor Clare's 'devout imagination,' imagining, i.e., *seeing* what is invisible.<sup>41</sup>

37 *MVC* 18–19.

38 *MVC* 19.

39 Flora, *Devout Belief*, 99.

40 *MVC* 19.

41 *MVC* 19.

The Virgin and Gabriel kneel down; they arise; the archangel then bows down a second time 'to the ground,' bidding her farewell, and returns to his Home.<sup>42</sup> As Gabriel then recounts everything to the celestial crowd gathered around the throne, joy and festivity and great exultation ensue. This story within the story expands the material for meditation and also creates a vertical movement corresponding to the incarnation's bringing together heaven and earth in the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb.

After this, the author as stage director draws open yet another curtain to reveal the Virgin's contemplative practice:

Glowing with an even greater love of God than ever and feeling that she had conceived, our Lady knelt in happiness and rendered thanks to God for this great gift. With humility and devotion, she prayed that He condescend to teach her about the events ahead of her that she might do without error whatever was necessary for the Son.<sup>43</sup>

In Figure 9.5, the humble Virgin is again kneeling, this time with her arms extended in praise and thanksgiving to the Father. God is once again elevated above a mandorla of angels. The inscription reads, 'How Mary thanks God for the gift He gave to her.' The instructions to the artist read, 'How our Lady kneels.' This drawing, more than any of the words, illustrates the Virgin in a communion of love, her hands rising spontaneously in wonderment and adoration. Such an eloquent rendering of the Virgin's praise!

If contemplation can be described as a long, loving gaze, then both the friar's words and the artist's illustration in the Paris manuscript make manifest this sacramental seeing, this beholding of love. The Clarissan nuns would behold the Virgin beholding God beholding her and participate in this sacred seeing.<sup>44</sup> They behold one another, and her hands receive the Creator's blessing. God's

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42 Flora, *Devout Belief*, 238. Flora embeds both the text and the ritual in reading the Annunciation scene at San Martino on the south wall of the choir, suggesting that the nuns may have greeted the image of Mary similarly upon entering their choir, connecting the structure of this text with the bows to a Marian hymn that the nuns would have chanted during the Divine Office.

43 MVC 19–20.

44 If one were to place a pencil between the two faces, it would reinforce the strong line between the eyes of God looking and the eyes of the Virgin gazing back into his loving countenance. Moreover, moving the pencil down slightly, the line would parallel God's hand extended and the Virgin's hands raised. Professor Jane Dillenberger taught this exercise to students to help viewers appreciate the invisible geometry underlying compositions.



FIGURE 9.5 The Annunciate: The Virgin Thanking God. BnF, ital. 115, fol. 12r.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, © granted 25 January 2017

hands—extended in blessing—hold a scroll, and leaning towards her, God exceeds the mandorla's container into their shared space.

In Figure 9.5, the Clarissan meditant beholds the miracle. Gabriel's coming to Mary in Figure 9.4 seems a shadow of a scene in contrast to the vivid colors and delicate and more defined contours of both God's face and the Virgin's here. The artist employs a similar color wash to encircle God's figure, a wash that corresponds with Mary's veil and robe. Similarly, in Figure 9.3, the blue wash of God's oval mandorla is the same beautiful peacock blue as Gabriel's garment.

This image of the Virgin entrusting her life in adoration radiates with the love and devotion of her life and with the love and devotion being inspired and strengthened in the Clarissan nuns. The Virgin's wonderment and praise precede her request for wisdom in how to proceed.

The cadence of the following text imparts another aspect of the spatial and temporal coordinates in the medieval imagination by calling up the festivities associated with medieval, and specifically Franciscan, Marian devotion: 'Today is the glorious festivity of the Lady acknowledged and received as daughter by the Father, as mother by the son, as bride by the Holy Spirit.'<sup>45</sup> The author, having completed the visual sequence of the Annunciation event, now instructs the reader directly regarding the significance of this event in salvation history. The Franciscans esteemed Mary's role in the salvation economy as beyond that of any other mortal.

Therefore, the rejoicing and festivities merit their textual repetition: 'Today is the festivity of God the Father, who wedded human nature to His son who is today united to it inseparably ... Today is the festivity of the wedding of the Son and the day of His birth in the womb from which He will later be born.'<sup>46</sup>

Spatially, the Feast of the Annunciation occurs in both heaven and earth, resonates around the throne and with inhabitants of the heavens, and affects those on earth and those who have died, joining all in festivity: 'You must consider how great is the festivity of this day and jubilate in your heart and make merry. Such happiness had not been heard from the beginning of time to the end, and never was there such.'<sup>47</sup>

This movement from heaven to earth, from the God who cannot be circumscribed yet has now chosen to be enclosed, even 'to be baked in the oven of

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45 *MVC* 20.

46 *MVC* 20.

47 *MVC* 20.



the virginal womb,'<sup>48</sup> is not unlike the Clarissan nun who has enclosed herself in the convent so as to consecrate herself to becoming more like her Lady that she too may conceive spiritually her Lord.

As throughout the *MVC*, the words 'seeing,' 'showing,' and 'gazing' that appear in the text of Section IV<sup>49</sup> are integral to the devout imagination and to transformation in sanctification. Later in the *MVC*, the author comments that this practice of being present to Christ's [and Mary's] humanity will enable her to proceed. It may also be that the directee as meditant, in her later stages of meditation, will be gifted with a revelation in visual form or be asked to ascend beyond the use of images.<sup>50</sup>

Note how the friar attributes God's *seeing* of the incarnate Jesus as the means of altering God's emotions and responses:

Today is the beginning and the *foundation of all festivities* and the inception of all our welfare. Up to now God had been indignant with the human race because of the fault of the first parent, but now, *seeing* the Son become a man, He will no longer be angry.<sup>51</sup>

And, again, the friar stimulates the desired response of feeling delight and making solemn merriment:

Today is said to be the fullness of time. Now you *see* what a wonderful deed and most solemn feast this is,  
Full of delight and joy,  
To be: *Desired* and *received with all devotion*,  
To *make merry* and *exult* about, and  
*Worthy of every veneration*.<sup>52</sup>

The Poor Clare practiced recapitulating the Annunciation in order to format her spiritual self to imitate the Virgin's faith and disposition of heart. By exercising her devout imagination, the nun, too, could be a handmaid of her soul as she repeated Mary's words in obedience to God's will. The Clarissan nun's

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48 *MVC* 21.

49 *MVC* 21.

50 Later in the *MVC* the spiritual director tells the Poor Clare, 'You will not be introduced to these three kinds [of contemplation] if you do not know how to enter, unless you first meditate on the humanity of Christ, which is given you in this little book' (263).

51 *MVC* 21.

52 *MVC* 21.

devout seeing would keep her focused on the pilgrimage of traveling in place, rejoicing in the gifts of her companions, the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

### 3 Conclusion

In closing, let us return to two illustrations in the Paris manuscript (Figures 9.1 and 9.5). In the first, the young Mary is praying in the temple, kneeling with her arms raised in supplication and praise to the unseen God whose presence is symbolized by the vessel of flame hanging above the altar. She wears neither veil nor robe, yet her simple garment is a similar shade of blue. In Figure 9.5, the Clarissan viewer would observe that the Virgin kneels so close to the small chamber attached to what seems to be intended as a monastic cell that the Virgin's garment flows behind her and connects her to the open door's threshold. In Figure 9.1, darkness fills the cell. In Figure 9.5, the illustration of the Virgin's praise after conceiving the Word, both the door and the window in the back are open and the inside flooded with light. Mary's *fiat* has become manifest: Even a pillow that bears the indent of a human body reinforces the miracle of the incarnation. The dome of the church, not present in Figure 9.1, is now distinctly delineated. The divine has chosen the human Mary to become the bearer of the Word made flesh. Her *fiat* enables *Ecclesia*.

It is in favoring the solitude of one's cell that the meditant can best practice 'continuous contemplation' in the hope of receiving a vision. The Virgin's diligence in self-discipline, her humility and gracious trust, as well as her purity of heart and obedient faithfulness enabled the incarnation to occur. If the nun continued to practice these spiritual exercises for *imitatio Mariae*, what graces might await her? She, too, may be favored like the Virgin Mary and may gain a word of consolation or possibly *visio divina*.

*Meditate* on these things,  
*Delight* in them, and  
 You will *become happy* and perhaps  
 The Lord will *show* you greater things.<sup>53</sup>

### **Acknowledgement**

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## A Medieval Franciscan Meditation on the Mother of Jesus

*Pacelli Millane*

The fourteenth-century manuscripts of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*<sup>1</sup> center principally on the life of Jesus Christ; nevertheless, they also provide a reflective meditation on his unique role and relationship to Mary, his Mother. This Franciscan text belongs to a much larger written tradition of meditation texts on the life of Jesus. During the fourteenth century, new meditation texts were inscribed, and others spread quite rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

The main focus of this chapter will be the English translation of the *Meditationes vitae Christi* and will also search to rediscover the place of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the original Franciscan charism and spirituality. The relationship between Christology and Mariology, as well as Marian devotion in Franciscan spirituality, has remained throughout the centuries and has been experienced by Franciscan women and men up to the present time.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. and ed. Francis X. Taney, Sr. Anne Miller, O.S.F.C., Mary Stallings-Taney (Asheville, NC, 2000), hereafter *MVC*.
  - 2 To name only a few: St. Bonaventure's thirteenth-century, *Lignum vitae*, with the tree as the basic image, describes how imagination enlightens the understanding. He creates layers of branches to portray the life of Jesus: The lowest branches reveal the origin and life of Jesus, the middle branches present his passion, and the higher branches describe his glorification. Meditation on Mary is less present in the text, but there are several key moments. See Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure* (Mahwah, NJ, 1978), 120, 132, 163. James of Milan presents a very compassionate text with Jesus on the Cross in union with his Mother Mary in the *Good Friday Meditation* in Chapter 15 of the *Stimulus amoris*, circa 1300, also known as *The Goad of Love*. His Mother Mary stands next to Jesus' cross. He addresses her as His Lady and asks why she is standing next to the cross. It is a scene similar to that of the *Meditations* text. Jesus' body is crucified and Mary is crucified in her heart as she sees all the wounds inflicted on her Son's body. See Paul Lachance, OFM, and Pierre Brunette, OFM, *The Earliest Franciscans: The Legacy of Giles of Assisi, Roger of Provence, and James of Milan*, trans. Kathryn Krug (New York, etc., 2015), 70. The *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony, a fourteenth-century Carthusian, gives special attention to Mary in the Passion narratives. Also, note influence in the *MVC*, xxviii–xxix.
  - 3 George Marcil, OFM, 'The Image of Mary in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' in *The Cord* v. 41.11, (1991) 338–345. Marcil notes that 'differences in a Christology affect differences in a

Since it would be impossible to note in detail all of the meditations where Mary takes an active role, this chapter will concentrate on the two central mysteries during the life of Jesus: First, it examines the mystery of the Incarnation, including the Annunciation by the angel, the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, and the birth of Jesus. Second, it will focus on the mystery of the Resurrection, including Mary's participation in Jesus' life during his death, resurrection, and return to the Father. These two central mysteries create a much clearer perspective of the role of Mary in Jesus' life.

The *MVC* will be supported by other Franciscan authors on the affective meditative experience of Mary, Mother of God, as well as by the work of contemporary scholars who continue to research new historical and spiritual data. Some of the contemporary interest in the fourteenth-century manuscripts on the life of Christ also reflects a renewed interest in meditation, its techniques today, and how meditation can continue to be influential in the new millennium.

## 1 Authorship and Manuscripts

The authorship of *Meditationes vitae Christi*, wrongly attributed to St. Bonaventure and later attributed to Pseudo-Bonaventure until the eighteenth century, is usually now attributed to a Franciscan friar, John of Caulibus.<sup>4</sup> However, recent studies by Sarah McNamer are challenging this assumption because of her discovery of another shorter manuscript, possibly written by Cecilia, a Poor Clare. There are new questions regarding the author.<sup>5</sup> The precise date of the original manuscripts<sup>6</sup> vary according to different opinions. It is evident that the historical exploration of the text is ongoing; nevertheless this chapter

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Mariology: Medieval Christology 'from above' accents the divinity of Jesus and a contemporary Christology 'from below' accentuates his humanity.

4 See n. 1.

5 McNamer proposes that Cecilia may have authored the original text which was later developed into a spiritual program of meditation by the Franciscan friar, John of Caulibus. Sarah McNamer, 'The Origins of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' in *Speculum* 84:4 (2009), 905–955. Another new study in 2014 is proposing yet another new author and developing further studies of the text taking a different position than McNamer. See Peter Tóth and Dávid Falvay, 'Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life, New Light on the Date and Authorship of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' in *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe*, S. Kelly, R. Perry, eds. (Turnhout, 2014), 17–105.

6 Sarah McNamer, 'Further Evidence for the Date of the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' in *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990), 241–251.

will use the translation of Taney, Miller, and Stallings-Taney,<sup>7</sup> as the present objective is a spiritual presentation of the compassionate and loving presence of Mary the Mother of Jesus at key points in Jesus' life within this Christological, Franciscan meditation text. Some 220 manuscripts attest to the fact that this was a very popular form of medieval meditation, and about twenty of these manuscripts feature illuminations or illustrations.

The presentation of the manuscripts with illuminations is a very interesting study.<sup>8</sup> In her description of MS 410 of the pictorial images of the *Meditations* or illuminations, Renana Bartal notes that the use of visual analogies aids the practice of meditation and appeals to emotions. Becoming an eyewitness, that is, meditating with the illuminations or representations, reveals a deeper understanding than that which our intellect proposes. In her article, Bartal presents seventeen different representations. She is careful to point out where there is a textual difference between an image and the text. In the first visual presentation of the text, St. Francis is pointing to the wound in his side, while a female figure dressed as a Poor Clare and a coat of arms are presented at the bottom of the illumination. The Prologue notes that both Francis and Clare are presented here as models for the Franciscan life. Bartal notes:

These representations allow the reader-viewer to approach these themes 'inventively' and from an angle different from that of the emotionally charged narrative. They evoke a wider range of devotional connotations; result in a richer understanding of the theological lessons embedded in their visual cues and compositional analogies...<sup>9</sup>

## 2 Different Manners of Meditation

These very popular meditations of the fourteenth century have a special character of exercising the spiritual imagination in meditating on the Gospel texts. The author, John of Caulibus, suggests:

<sup>7</sup> MVC, see n. 1.

<sup>8</sup> An initial list by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the fourteenth century: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms.Ital. 115*, trans. Isa Ragusa, eds. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, 1961), xxiii, n.5. There has been an updated list of the illuminated manuscripts as well as a historiographic account of MS ital.115 by Holly Flora, *The Devout Belief of the Imagination: TH Paris 'Meditationes vitae Christi' and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy* (Turnhout, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Renana Bartal, 'Repetition, Opposition, and Invention in an Illuminated *Meditationes vitae Christi*,' Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 410, in *Gesta* 53.2 (2014), 155–174.

You should not think that all his words and deeds that we can meditate on were actually written down. But to make them stand out, I will tell you about these unwritten things just as if they had actually happened, at least insofar as they can piously be believed to be occurring or to have occurred; doing this in accordance with certain imaginary scenarios, which the mind perceives in a varying way.<sup>10</sup>

However, use of the material and spiritual imagination is not a new concept in contemplative asceticism. Richard of St. Victor, a twelfth-century Canon of St. Victor, developed a process of spiritual growth using both material and spiritual imagination in *The Twelve Patriarchs*, more commonly known as *Benjamin Minor*.<sup>11</sup>

In *Benjamin Major*, this Victorine goes further in developing the difference in the process between thinking, meditation, prayer, and contemplation and how each of these impact spiritual development. Richard sees meditation as relating both to the mind and the soul. With an intense attention of the mind, meditation reduces the multiplicity of thoughts surrounding a text in order to deepen one or more particular aspects of the text. Meditation aids the interior development of the soul in its search for truth. Thus, meditation requires greater effort than ordinary thinking in order to bear fruit. Contemplation freely liberates the soul without any human effort.<sup>12</sup>

In the meditation texts of the *MVC*, the author uses his spiritual imagination to place many words on the lips of Mary. These affective meditations are supported by copious citations from Bernard of Clairvaux inserted within the text. The citations, namely, from various *Sermons* of Bernard, were addressed to different audiences who were part of the twelfth-century Cistercian movement. The author of the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* includes nearly sixty pages of discourse on the manner of living the active and the contemplative life, interspersed with texts from the *Canticle of Canticles*. It is not his intention that Cecilia, this young nun, will always remain a beginner in the spiritual life. The process of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation aids a person in deepening their interior life through an ongoing process, developing an orientation from a reading of the text to quiet meditation, to silent prayer, and to tasting the joy of a profound interior contemplation and union with the Christ of the Gospels. This is not an instantaneous process, but it develops gradually.

<sup>10</sup> *MVC* 4.

<sup>11</sup> Richard of St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (New York, etc., 1979), 65–77.

<sup>12</sup> Richard of St. Victor, 157.

In this long discourse, however, there is no mention of the Mother of Jesus. It is also not clear why the author chose to insert texts of Bernard of Clairvaux rather than another Franciscan author, such as St. Bonaventure, who wrote extensive spiritual and mystical texts during the thirteenth century. Perhaps it could be because he admired Bernard of Clairvaux's *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles*, or perhaps he did not have access to Franciscan manuscripts.

### 3 Methodology in the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*

The author creates a very precise structure for this meditation on the life of Jesus Christ and Mary, his Mother, detailed from each of the four Gospels and the Tradition of the Church. A meditation is created for each day of the week:

On Monday, start at the beginning of the Lord's Life and go as far as the Lord's Flight into Egypt; then stop at that point.

On Tuesday, resume there, and meditate as far as his opening of the Book in the Synagogue.

On Wednesday, proceed from there to the ministry of Mary and Martha.

On Thursday, go from there to the Passion and Death.

On Friday and Saturday, go as far as the Resurrection.

Finally, on Sunday, meditate on the Resurrection itself up to the end of his earthly life.

Follow this schedule every week of the year, so that you familiarize yourself with these meditations. And the more often you do so the more easily and the more joyfully they will reoccur to you. Be glad to have personal conversation with your Lord Jesus, and in imitation of blessed Cecilia, strive to fix firmly in your heart, like Good News, that holy life of his.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, Sister Cecilia will meditate chronologically on the life of Jesus with frequent repetition. The beginning and the end of the meditation instructions for each day are very precise. Even though there is extensive text for each day, the strength and manner of the meditation is in the rereading, familiarization, and memorization of the text each week. Included in this life of Jesus are the same persons found in the canonical Gospel texts. However, the two most prominent persons are Jesus and his mother, Mary.

The basic desire of the author is that with frequent meditation about the Lord Jesus, one's heart will be set on fire and illuminated. This will lead to a life

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13 MVC 332–333.



of divine virtue, so that the person practicing this frequent meditation will obtain the ability to distinguish the truth. The Franciscan friar also distinguishes the difference between simple meditations and ‘elegant discourses’ which he seems to have discovered in the tradition of St. Francis.

The rereading and the counsel which Friar John gives to the Poor Clare can seem contradictory: ‘So, you must understand that one deed of our Lord at a time, or some one thing said or done involving him as recorded in the Gospel, is enough to meditate on.’<sup>14</sup> However, the author is suggesting multiple pages for her to read, and he here then tells her ‘that one deed of our Lord at a time’ is enough for her meditation. ‘Simply make yourself present in the very place where, before your eyes, it occurs to your mind that events were taking place.’<sup>15</sup> Reading leads to meditation, and in meditation, the rational mind gives way to rumination. The person meditating is invited to enter into an affective relationship with these different events of Jesus’ life and into dialogue with Jesus and his Mother Mary.

Through meditation on the biblical text, the author suggests that the text be ruminated perhaps using other expressions of similar content. Ruminating prayer enables the person, who desires to discover Christ, to begin the process of more profoundly entering within the soul, and gradually tasting the hidden sweetness of the Lord. The author ardently desires for this young religious to savour more fully the riches of these mysteries, and thus, he tells her: ‘Therefore, meditate on these things, take delight in them, and you will be filled with joy, and perhaps the Lord will reveal even more to you.’<sup>16</sup> These biblical texts become very familiar to anyone frequently reading the holy Bible.

#### 4      **The Role of Mary as Mother of Jesus and Daughter of God in the *Meditations***

Mary has a unique and profound role in the *Meditations*; the text will reveal that she herself was also a woman of meditation, of reflection, of compassion, of searching to understand, and of living the same experiences as Jesus, but differently.

The *Meditations* begin with a most unusual plan within the Trinity.<sup>17</sup> The three divine persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—decide to send Gabriel the

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14    *MVC* 332.

15    *MVC* 332.

16    *MVC* 17.

17    *MVC* 15.

Archangel to announce to Mary, a virgin of Nazareth, her mission by which she is to participate in the redemption of humanity.

This text on Christ's life creates a unique understanding of the relationship of Mary to her Son in her role as the mother of Jesus Christ. This gentle young girl formed in the Temple, who will become the mother of Jesus, is depicted as a deeply human, strong, and faith-filled woman of character. She will have no fear to remain with Jesus throughout the many obstacles he must confront in fulfilling his mission of salvation for humanity.

In the canonical books of the Bible we are accustomed to finding very few words about Mary or her role in the mystery of salvation. In the *Meditations*, however, the author uses spiritual imagination and enlarges the original text with dialogue, questions, explanations, and creative imaginative verbal portraits, moving from the visible to the invisible.

#### 4.1 *The Early Life of the Virgin Mary*

After two preliminary chapters, chapter three relates the life of the Virgin Mary before the birth of Jesus. According to the text, some of this information comes from a revelation of the Virgin Mary 'to a certain person devoted to her, believed to be St. Elizabeth, whose feast we solemnly celebrate.'<sup>18</sup> Throughout the centuries, there are different responses to the question, who is this Elizabeth?<sup>19</sup>

Presented in the Temple by her parents at the age of three,<sup>20</sup> the young child Mary remains there until she is fourteen, when she decides in her heart to have God as her father. Searching to be 'pleasing to God,' and wanting to receive 'his grace,' she disposes herself 'to be taught the Law of my God.' As a young Jewish maiden, she learns and recites the *Shema, Israel* found in the Torah. From the text, she draws three principles for her life, also found in the Gospel texts of Luke 10:27 and Matthew 6:43: 'Love the Lord your God with your whole person, love your neighbour as yourself and love your enemy.'<sup>21</sup>

Mary explains that these three commands are full of virtues, and they flow from loving God with her whole heart, soul, mind, and all of her strength.

18 MVC 9.

19 Named as a saint, so it is impossible that it was Mary's cousin, whom she will visit according to Luke's canonical Gospel text. Nor is it possible for this to be St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Sarah McNamer continues her research on the question by naming Elizabeth of Töss. See Sarah McNamer, 'Further Evidence,' 237–241.

20 The Gospel texts make no reference to the early life of the Virgin Mary and her presentation in the Temple. The New Testament Pseudepigrapha details many events before and after her birth as well as the events surrounding the announcement by the angel Gabriel.

21 MVC 9.

Receiving God's grace helps her to preserve and observe 'all the commandments of the Law.' In her prayer in the middle of the night, this young Jewish woman formulates seven petitions. The first four ask for the grace to live this love of God and neighbour and to flee anything contrary to it. In the fourth, she asks for 'humility, patience, kindness, and gentleness and all the virtues.'<sup>22</sup>

The fifth petition perhaps expresses the desire of every young Jewish girl, that is, to become the mother of the messiah, but on the lips of Mary it takes on special meaning for the reader. In poignant language, she expresses the necessity to have all of her bodily senses involved:

I asked that I could live to see the birth of that most holy Virgin who was destined to bear or bring to birth the Son of God. And that he would preserve my eyes so that I could see her; my ears that I could hear her; my tongue that I could praise her; my hands that I could serve her; my feet that I could go to her service; my knees that I could adore the Son of God on her lap.<sup>23</sup>

The sixth petition asks for the 'grace of obedience' to the commands and ordinances of the high priest of the temple during her time there. And in the final petition addressed to God, she asks him to preserve not only the temple, but the entire people of God for his service. According to the *Meditations*, the Virgin Mary is betrothed to Joseph in her ninth year. She returns to Nazareth with him after her life in the Temple.<sup>24</sup>

## 5 The Mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus

### 5.1 *The Annunciation by the Angel*

This text, which develops more extensively the use of one's imagination, graphically presents to this young Poor Clare the importance of visualizing the manner in which the archangel Gabriel goes to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Nazareth and invites her to become the Mother of God.

Then, nymphlike, faithful Gabriel approached the Virgin and said, 'Hail, full of grace: The Lord is with you: Blessed are you among women (*Lk.* 1:28).' Deeply disturbed, she answered nothing: Not disturbed with

<sup>22</sup> MVC 9–10.

<sup>23</sup> MVC 10.

<sup>24</sup> MVC 11.

blameworthy distress over the sight of the angel, because she was accustomed to seeing them often, but according to the words of the Gospel, she was disturbed by his words (*Lk.* 1:29), wondering about the novelty of such a greeting, for that was not his customary salutation.<sup>25</sup>

This meditation on the experience of the Virgin Mary suggests that this event was not simply an intellectual or affective exercise of meditation for her. Mary was surprised, even disturbed by the event. And because of virtuous modesty, she even began to question whether or not it was true. As Mary is informed and formed by the meeting with the Angel, the text also teaches the young sister or another reader to see what is needed for the formation of the person's interior life. Through the Virgin Mary's example, it is also possible to teach others how they could experience a more profound relationship with God. Mary, 'surprised by the angel,' is prudent, cautious, and silent until she is reassured that the message and request is genuine and comes from God:

Finally, after hearing the words of the angel, the most wise Virgin gave her consent. And as we read in her aforementioned revelations, she knelt in profound devotion and with clasped hands said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done unto me according to your word (*Lk* 1:38).' Then immediately the Son of God, whole and entire, without delay entered into the womb of the Virgin and took flesh of her, yet remained whole and entire in the bosom of the Father.<sup>26</sup>

Our author continues to expound on the richness of this experience of Mary and affirms that the Incarnation of Jesus is not for herself alone, but for all of humanity. Thus, the Virgin Mary does not remain alone or guard this experience for herself, but departs in haste to go and share with her cousin, Elizabeth, who is also pregnant at an advanced age. Mary's example is one that must be studied, meditated, and imitated especially by this young novice in her relationship to God so that she can celebrate it in the same way as Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

## 5.2 *The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth*

According to the Gospel, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth to assist her and her husband Zechariah at their home as they await the coming birth of their son. However, the Franciscan friar develops this text much further than what has

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25 MVC 14.

26 MVC 15.

been written in the canonical Gospels. He suggests that Joseph goes with her for the journey on foot of about thirty-five miles. They remain together with Elizabeth and Zechariah for about three months, that is, until after the birth of John the Baptist. Mary will assist her cousin, 'humbly, reverently and devotedly ministering to and serving Elizabeth in every way that she could, as if forgetting that she herself was the mother of God and queen of the whole world.'<sup>27</sup> According to the *Meditations*, even though Mary and Joseph are there, they do not participate in the grand celebration on the eighth day for the circumcision of Elizabeth and Zechariah's child, who is to be named John.<sup>28</sup> The text portrays Mary as the true contemplative who listened attentively to the Canticle that Zechariah, John's father, proclaims. Mary's son will be mentioned in Zechariah's Canticle,<sup>29</sup> 'and, as one so wise would, Mary stored everything in her heart' (Lk. 2:51).<sup>30</sup> That Mary kept everything in her heart is a wonderful refrain, a refrain to echo throughout the text. What is stored in the heart and joined together in the memory is a magnificent gift for meditation.

### 5.3 *The Birth of Jesus*

In the meditation on Jesus' birth, the author suggests to the young sister another manner of relating to Mary and to Jesus. John of Caulibus teaches this young sister how to interact with Mary so as to bring her closer to the Infant Jesus. This is important because meditation on the Incarnation, especially on the humanity of Jesus, is a central orientation in Franciscan spirituality in regard to Jesus, who is both human and divine. In her interaction with Mary and Joseph, this young Poor Clare also must learn how to relate to the human and divine mystery of the Christ presented to her for meditation, adoration, and contemplation. Not only is this contemplation meant to aid in the deepening of her own interior life, conforming her life to the life of Jesus, and receiving her own salvation, but she is further learning how to combine love and care with a more profound joy, adoration, and peace.

And you, who have lingered a bit, kneel and adore your Lord God, and then his mother, and reverently greet the holy old man Joseph. Then kiss the feet of the child Jesus lying in the manger, and ask our Lady to hand him to you and even allow you to hold him. Take him and hold him fast

<sup>27</sup> MVC 19.

<sup>28</sup> See Zechariah's vision of an angel of the Lord, exhorting him to name the promised child, John (Lk. 1:13).

<sup>29</sup> 'And you my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him.' (Lk. 2:76)

<sup>30</sup> MVC 20.

in your arms; gaze on his face. Kiss him with loving reverence and delight confidently in him. You can do this because he came to sinners for their salvation.<sup>31</sup>

In very explicit affective and practical language, this interaction with Mary as Mother expresses clearly the dynamics of a loving relationship. In taking her example from Jesus' Mother, Cecilia learns the importance of loving care, meditation, and joy that is not static, but an adoration that is dynamic and interrelational, human and divine:

Afterwards hand him back to his mother and carefully note how devotedly and wisely she minds him, nurses him, and so forth. She is showing her loving care. Stay and help her if you can. Delight in these things, rejoice in them and remember to meditate on them time and time again; and as much as you can, remain close to our Lady and the boy Jesus. And contemplate his face often, on which the angels desire to gaze.<sup>32</sup>

Luke's Gospel describes the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem, where they find Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus lying in the manger and then tell others about the experience. The Gospel text relates that Mary treasured all of these different experiences and kept, pondered, or meditated on them in her heart according to different translations.<sup>33</sup>

## 6 The Mystery of Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension

For the whole world, but especially for Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and John the Beloved Disciple, the death of Jesus alters their entire lives. Jesus' Mother does not play a public role during Jesus' trial nor in the carrying of his cross as he approaches his death. Mary meets him on the way of Calvary, but because of the immense crowd, it is only a brief meeting of much anguish. She continues to be united in heart and prayer with Jesus at a distance until she and John the Apostle are able to come close as they approach the foot of the cross.

Tragically and rapidly for everyone, but especially for Mary the Mother of Jesus and her companions, the death of Jesus alters their entire lives as the

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31 MVC 28.

32 MVC 28.

33 Lk. 2:19.

soldiers nail Jesus, her beloved Son, to the Cross. After Jesus is raised on the Cross, his Mother is able to stand closer to him throughout his agony and death. It is only after the crowd and the soldiers have left that John, Magdalene, Our Lady, and her sisters are able to sit near to the Cross where Jesus is still suspended, naked, tortured, and now dead and so abandoned by all.<sup>34</sup>

This sad little group of five sees some armed men returning. Full of tears, they take their stand in front of the Cross. The soldiers break the legs of the two thieves who are still alive. But Mary summons the courage and cries out:

Fellow men, I beg you in the name of the most high God, not to torment me any longer in the person of my most beloved son. I am his most be-reaved mother and you know, brothers, that I have never offended you nor done you any wrong. But if my son seemed to be antagonistic toward you, you have avenged it, and I forgive you every injury and offense, and even my son's death. In your great mercy, grant me this: Do not break him in pieces, so that I can at least bury him intact. You do not have to break his legs. You can see that he is already dead and gone. He died an hour ago.<sup>35</sup>

The dearly beloved John, Magdalene, and our Lady's sisters continue praying and crying with her. Longinus thrusts the lance into Jesus' side and blood and water flows out.<sup>36</sup> John protests: 'You most wicked men, how can you do this godless act? Don't you see he is dead? Is it that you want to kill his mother here as well? Get away from here, because we plan to bury him.'<sup>37</sup>

After lamenting together in adoration, the sorrowful Mother speaks to Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and the others who came with them for the burial: 'You have done well to remember your Master, because he loved you so much. I have to admit that when you arrived a new day seemed to dawn for me. For we did not know what we ought to do. The Lord reward you!'<sup>38</sup>

The experience of the preparation for the body of Jesus before he is placed in the tomb reveals a very profound affective love and human suffering in the heart of Jesus' Mother Mary and Magdalene. These two women, united in their

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34 MVC 257.

35 MVC 257-258.

36 In Bartal's article featuring the illuminated Oxford manuscript of the *Meditationis Vitae Christi*, at Corpus Christi College, MS 410, figure 10 has a touching image of the three women at the cross after the piercing of Christ's side by Longinius. According to both the image and the text, Mary collapsed at Jesus' feet at the foot of the cross. See Bartal, 167.

37 MVC 258.

38 MVC 259.

love for Jesus, together express their love as Magdalene washes his feet and tenderly wraps them for burial. As the rest of the body is washed and wrapped, the Virgin Mary presses her face to Jesus and says:

My most beloved son, I hold your dead body on my lap. Harsh is the separation of death. Our life together was joyful and delightful. Although you were slain as a criminal, we lived among others without quarrel and offense. I served you faithfully, my son, as you did me, but in this, your painful battle, your father deigned not to help you and I could not. You abandoned your own self because of your love for humanity whom you wished to redeem. Harsh, painful, and excessively costly is that redemption. And although I rejoice in the salvation of humanity, I am grievously afflicted by your sufferings and death, for I know that you never sinned, and they have inflicted on you, an innocent man, a death so very shameful and bitter...Although I cannot be buried bodily, I will bury my spirit with you. I shall bury my soul in the tomb with your body; I give it over to your care. O son of mine, how tortuous is this separation of ours.<sup>39</sup>

His mother—even in the midst of this profound, horrible human suffering and her deep sensitivity—is never able to lose sight of the true mission of her Son, that of the redemption of humanity and her participation in it. Jesus' body must be placed in the tomb because night is coming and they are not allowed to rest there. Even 'though the others' want to take Mary to their home, she goes quietly with John, her sisters, and Magdalene.

Mary expresses her love and strength of soul during this time of absence after the death of Jesus. She suffers intensely, but her capacity to listen, to reflect, and to forgive is remarkable. She creates a marvellous peace in the midst of the chaos that has evolved for the followers of Jesus, both his Apostles and disciples.

### 6.1 *Holy Saturday*

Mary, John, and the women remain together inside the house, but 'shattered and sorrowful, like orphans weighed down with grief, not saying anything, just remembering, as they huddled together.'<sup>40</sup> It is not long, however, before a knock comes at the door and panic strikes. John, glancing outside, sees that it is Peter,<sup>41</sup> who had denied Jesus three times. It is Mary, Jesus' mother, who

39 MVC 262–264.

40 MVC 265.

41 MVC 265.



gives the word to let Peter enter. Once again we see the stature of this woman, a woman who understands the fragility of the human spirit, the necessity of human forgiveness, and the one who understands more fully the divine mission of her Son.

Peter enters with loud sobbing and soon everyone is crying and they are unable to speak. The other disciples begin to arrive also, and even though there is much anguish, gradually they find words to express their sorrow for their fear in the face of the authorities. They speak about the Lord, and Peter again confesses how he abandoned Jesus and even denied that he knew the Lord Jesus. Each one in their turn confesses with bitter tears of remorse their cowardly actions.<sup>42</sup> The Mother of Jesus gradually realizes her double role in the midst of the Apostles, which now becomes even more pronounced following the death of her Son, Jesus.<sup>43</sup>

Mary searches to have her moments of solitude, in which her passive role remains one of prayer, reflection, and meditation in the midst of all that is happening with the apostles and disciples of Jesus. However, she also has an active role in bringing together the apostles and remembering with all of them what Jesus said and did when he was with them. Together in sadness, again and again, each one recalls their perception and experience of these tragic past days and how they had abandoned Jesus because of their fear.

This woman of profound faith and love expresses the sentiments of pardon that 'Our Good Master and faithful Shepherd has left us.' She continues: 'Do not doubt that he will remember you kindly, and gladly forgive your every offense or fault...Do not be upset.'<sup>44</sup>

## 6.2 *The Resurrection of Jesus*

One of the most touching moments of the entire meditations is that of the early moments of Easter Sunday. Together at the home of John, the beloved disciple, the other women ask permission of Mother Mary to go to the tomb with the ointments for the anointing of Jesus' body. Mary chooses to remain alone at the house and begins a prayerful insistent demand to God the Father:

Most gentle Father, most loving Father, my son, as You know, has died; he was fixed to a cross between two thieves; and I buried him with my own hands. But You have the power, Lord; please restore him to good health, and give him back to me. Where is he? Why does he delay for so long his

<sup>42</sup> MVC 265–266.

<sup>43</sup> See also MVC 265–266.

<sup>44</sup> MVC 266.

return to me? Please, send him back to me, because my soul finds no rest until I see him.<sup>45</sup>

Without any interruption in the text, the author of the *Meditations* has Mary immediately beginning a magnificent monologue of prayer with her departed Son, reminding him of his own words that he would rise again on the third day. Remembering how he was so brutally crucified on Good Friday, the day of darkness and gloom, she expresses her strong faith that he will return. Thus, her strong requests give rise to profound hope and assurance that he will return. She recalls, ruminates his words, and addresses them to Jesus in a very pragmatic manner:

O my most beloved son, what is happening to you? What are you doing? Why the delay? Please do not put off your return to me any longer: For it was you who said, 'On the third day I shall rise again.' Is not today the third day, my son? That great and exceedingly bitter day, the day of calamity and grieving, of darkness and gloom, of your dissolution and death, was not yesterday, but the day before yesterday. And so, my son, today is the third day. So rise, my glory and all my good, and return. More than anything else, I want to see you. Your return will console me as much as your departure devastated me. Gladden me by your presence just as your absence made me sad. Return, my beloved, come Lord Jesus, come my only hope, come to me my son.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, her hope is not in vain, as the monologue rapidly becomes a dialogue when the Lord Jesus suddenly appears at her side dressed in beautiful white garments in total serenity and joy, meeting her with the words: 'Greetings, holy parent!' Kneeling to adore him, she asks, 'Is it you, Jesus, my son?' And he kneels in a similar fashion, saying, 'My dearest mother, I am he; I have risen and here I am with you.'<sup>47</sup>

After a long embrace, they sit together, and Mary, 'lovingly and carefully looked him all over: At his face and at the wounds in his hands and throughout his entire body, asking if he was pain free by then. Jesus replies: "My dearest mother, all the pain has left me. I have conquered death and pain and all anguish, and from now on I shall experience none of it."<sup>48</sup>

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45 MVC 280.

46 MVC 280.

47 MVC 280.

48 MVC 281.

The dialogue continues with his mother exulting with praise of God the Father: 'Blessed be Your Father, who returned you to me. Exalted and praised be His name and magnified forever. Therefore, they conversed at some length, rejoicing and observing the Paschal Feast in a delightful and loving way. The Lord told her how he freed his people from hell and all that he had done during the three-day period.'<sup>49</sup>

And the Paschal Feast begins also for the other disciples, as Magdalene and her companions find the empty tomb and the angels. Announcing this to Peter and John who hastens with them, 'they all ran,' and not finding the body, they are filled with 'terrible anguish.'<sup>50</sup>

But only Mary Magdalene remains with a 'tear-strained face;' thus, the author describes how Jesus does not want to wait any longer. Explaining the situation to his mother, Mary wants him to go and be with Magdalene, who is searching for him and who loves him with a profound love. His mother tells him: "But remember to return to me." And embracing him, she sent him on his way.'<sup>51</sup>

### 6.3 *The Ascension of the Lord*

After the forty days of Pascal feasting have passed, Jesus expresses a desire to eat with his mother and the disciples before he will ascend to Heaven; they thus go to the Cenacle on Mount Zion. Gathered there, Jesus explains that it is time for him to return to his Father. Each disciple finds it difficult to speak about his departure. The author continues with another dialogue between Jesus and his Mother Mary:

But what am I to say about his mother, eating there next to him, she who loved him so intensely more than all the others? Do you not imagine her as touched by maternal love and deeply moved by tenderness at these words of her son's departure so that she would rest her head on her son and recline on his breast?...With a teary sigh she asked him a favor: 'My son, if it is your wish to leave, please take me with you.' 'Mother dearest,' the Lord said consolingly, 'please do not grieve at my departure because I am going to my Father (Jn 14:12). You are needed to remain here now to encourage those who believe in me. Later on I will come for you and take you up to my glory.'<sup>52</sup>

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49 MVC 281.

50 MVC 282.

51 See MVC 283.

52 MVC 319.

Their time together being finished, Mary is full of sadness and tears. At the same time, she is filled with an inner joy because her faith reveals and helps her to perceive that this is a glorious moment for all, since Jesus will return to the heavens from which he descended for all humanity. All the preparations having been completed, Jesus invites his mother and the Apostles to go to the Mount of Olives. There, Jesus embraces his Mother, bids her farewell, and she embraces him with much tenderness. The disciples and Magdalene also are with him in this most special moment and bid him farewell.

The author expresses a very personal message of the joy that is to be ours because of this feast of the Ascension and the ensuing gift of receiving the Holy Spirit:

The Ascension is also a feast for our Lady, who thus sees her son crowned with a royal diadem and ascending to the highest heights as true Lord. No less fittingly it is also our feast, because on this day human nature was exalted to the heaven. Besides, unless Christ ascended, we could never have received that gift of the Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

## 7 Meditations Formed in Franciscan Spirituality

Though the author of the *Meditations* never cites words or texts of Francis, it is possible to discover the basic Gospel values of Franciscan spirituality and Marian Devotion promoted in this text. It is not only intended for this young Poor Clare, but for all persons who desire to read, meditate, pray, and contemplate as Mary did and for whomever may read the text.

Francis of Assisi's text on the Virgin Mary, formulated at the beginning of the Franciscan movement, placed Mary within an ecclesial and Trinitarian context. He expresses the importance of the Virgin Mary in the antiphon he composed for recitation before and after the Psalms at each *Office of the Passion* recited daily by Francis and Clare: 'Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like you born in the world among women. Daughter and Handmaid of the most high, sovereign King, the heavenly Father, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>54</sup> These were very poignant and strong

53 MVC 325.

54 Antiphon, Office of the Passion, trans. Laurent Gallant, OFM et al., in *The Geste of the Great King. Office of the Passion of Francis of Assisi* (St. Bonaventure, NY, 2001), 63. This text of the Office of the Passion has recently been re-edited and published both in English and French for communities of prayer.

affirmations of Holy Lady Mary by the little Poverello in the beginnings of this new mendicant Order. The little church in the woods, near Assisi, named Our Lady of the Angels and so dear to Francis, still remains preserved in the interior of the huge basilica at the base of the mountain and is visited by many pilgrims today.

For the founder of the Franciscan Movement, the little Poverello, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, can never be separated from the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the Church.<sup>55</sup> This is a magnificent understanding of the Trinitarian relationship lived by Jesus and his Mother, and expressed in theological terminology. Mary is not only a virgin, but also the Mother of Jesus, as well as the daughter and Handmaid of God the Father. Francis develops this concept of the Virgin Mary by likewise naming her as Spouse of the Holy Spirit. He also invites the young community of San Damiano to enter into this same relationship with the Holy Spirit as Mary.

In a magnificent litany-type meditation of the Virgin Mary also written by Francis and recited by his brothers, he expresses his understanding of how the Virgin Mother Mary figures in God's plan of salvation and becomes an ecclesial model for all Christians:

Hail, O Lady, Holy Queen, Mary. Holy Mother of God, Who are the Virgin made Church, chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven whom he consecrated with His most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in whom there was and is all fullness of Grace and every good. Hail His Palace! Hail His Tabernacle! Hail His Dwelling! Hail His Robe! Hail His Servant! Hail His Mother.<sup>56</sup>

Clare of Assisi, a companion of Saint Francis in the thirteenth century and a young noble woman of the convent of San Damiano near Assisi, Italy, creates a unique manner of Clarian spirituality.<sup>57</sup> As the Cistercians of the twelfth century developed the personal relationship of the soul with Christ using images

55 We know that Francis' hallmark was poverty, but his embrace of poverty was rooted in his understanding of the importance of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Word of God, who accepted our humanity and became poor in his incarnation when his divinity was joined to our humanity.

56 *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*, eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York, 1999), 163.

57 To note the difference between the Clarian approach to an initial form of meditation in *Meditations Vitae Christi*, and Clare of Assisi's approach to spiritual transformation, see Pacelli Millane, OSC, 'Spiritual Direction of a Contemplative,' in *The Cord* 45.4 (1995), 37-45.

from the *Canticle of Canticles*, Clare develops her spirituality in relation to the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ found in the Gospels.<sup>58</sup>

Clare does not speak of reading a text as such, but rather suggests a manner of gazing or looking intensely at the life and person of Jesus Christ.<sup>59</sup> Through gazing, considering, contemplating, and imitating Jesus, Clare always keeps her focus on his entire life: His fragility and glory, his humanity and divinity, moving from the visible to the invisible. She teaches others to live according to this same model of meditation and contemplation. In this manner of Gospel gazing, Jesus Christ is always at the center and engages the whole person.

Clare not only counsels visual meditation, but in her gazing at the Infant Jesus, she also desires her entire life to be transformed by acquiring the virtues of poverty, humility, and charity revealed in the Incarnation. Lady Clare<sup>60</sup> does not often refer to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in her *Letters*, but Mary's presence is implied in her meditation on Jesus' birth, passion, and death. Explicitly in her *Third Letter to Agnes of Prague*, Clare invites this princess, who chose to follow Christ in the same manner as the sisters of San Damiano, to follow the example of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Clare makes a point of therein referencing Jesus' Mother, who carried him physically in her body. She counsels Agnes, that she too, would be able to carry Jesus spiritually within, as Mary carried him in her physical womb to give birth to new life.<sup>61</sup>

In citing texts by Clare of Assisi, Ingrid Petersen reminds readers today of Clare's approach to Franciscan meditation. Clare in her poverty develops her primary focus on Jesus Christ through her gift of sight. By gazing upon, considering, and contemplating the different moments in the human life of Jesus, that is—his incarnation, his suffering, his death, and resurrection—wherein she engages her external senses, she also allows her spiritual senses to be formed and transformed in the mystery of this divine love: 'Clare directs Agnes to meditate on the mental and physical suffering of his lifetime. To gaze on the figure of Jesus is an activity engaging all of the external and spiritual senses in meditation on the events and meaning of his suffering and death.'<sup>62</sup>

58 Brian E. Purfield, *Reflets dans le Miroir. Images du Christ dans la vie spirituelle de sainte Claire d'Assise*, trans. Jacqueline Gréal (Paris, 1993).

59 Edith A. Van den Goorbergh, O.S.C. and Theodore H. Zweerman, O.F.M., *Light Shining through a Veil: On Saint Clare's Letters to Saint Agnes of Prague*, trans. Aline Looman-Graaskamp and Frances Teresa, O.S.C. (Leuven, 2000), 238–249. Hereafter, Goorbergh.

60 Goorbergh, 217–236.

61 Goorbergh, 197–198.

62 Ingrid Peterson, 'Images of the Crucified Christ,' in *That Others May Know and Love. Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes, OFM* (St. Bonaventure, NY, 1997), 174.

## 8 Conclusion

This fourteenth-century text renewing the Gospel story has an amazing history and has continued to captivate the interest of many different persons. Scholarly questions, discussions, and new discoveries continue to develop in ongoing historical research surrounding it. What is the success of this ancient manuscript today? Lawrence F. Hundersmarck gives an insightful response to the question: 'In essence, the source of the *Meditaciones*'s stunning success lies in the work's ability to make the awesome familiar, the intangible tangible, and the invisible visible. Caulibus, ever the preacher, knows the value of the vivid, the emotional, the tender, the personal, and the imaginative.'<sup>63</sup>

Imagining the different events—naissance, passion, and glorification—in the life of Christ reveals not only the presence of the Mother of Jesus, but also her important mission. The great stature of Mary remains a constant throughout the story...In all of these moments, from the statuesque scene of the nativity, to the strength inspiring scene of the sabbath. Mary always seems to stand tall and strong. She is a woman of strength, a pillar, a natural leader.'<sup>64</sup>

The basic thrust of this fourteenth-century text reveals a transcendent attitude for someone who is searching to form her life in a religious context. The importance of the Mother, the Virgin Mary, in the divine plan of salvation and her role in each of these important moments of Jesus' life becomes clearer through the imaginative process of meditation. The text helps us to understand that 'Imagination is not used in the narrow sense of falsification, but in the deeper sense of Logos, offering an articulation of meaning that is personal and significant for persons who have their whole identity embodied within the religious values of the fourteenth century. This is a work grounded in an age longing for intimacy with the Divine.'<sup>65</sup>

Although the manuscript text is often studied from an intellectual or historical point of view, the artistic meditation still fascinates young scholars living in a very different cultural milieu seven centuries later.<sup>66</sup> The illuminations

63 Lawrence F. Hundersmarck, 'The Use of Imagination, Emotion, and the Will in a Medieval Classic: The *Meditaciones Vite Christi*,' in *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 6:2 (2003), 59.

64 George Marcil, 340–341.

65 Hundersmarck, 48.

66 Note the music created by Alvaro Barcala, *Meditationes Vitae Christi I -Generation and Childhood Of Christ*: 'In this musical meditation I've used little fragments of the melody done with trumpets in the former piece, a melody that represents God and Jesus. These fragments are intermingled with another long dialogant melody embodied with the sound of a flute, which represents the angel giving Mary the news and asking her

created within the text of some of the manuscripts also offers the opportunity for visual entry into the whole mystery of life.<sup>67</sup> These magnificent artistic images of Mary in the life of Jesus visually affirm not only the spiritual, but also the human relationship developed between mother and son. The insightful work of Renana Bartal on the illuminated manuscripts as well as the work by Holly Flora and others adds a visual dimension to the imaginative understanding of the manuscript.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout the various experiences of the birth, passion, and death presented here which call for an emotive response, Mary becomes the perfect model. Different events call for different human responses: Be it joy, compassion, sadness, lament, watchfulness, or fidelity. Mary becomes the model presented by the author of the text, not only the model for Cecilia in her humanity, but for anyone who also embodies Christian ideals as well as those of the Franciscan and Poor Clare Tradition of the fourteenth century.

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for permission to conceive Jesus in her. I've used the flute because its soft sound/timbre evokes the tenderness of the angel when communicating. The intermingling of the melody of the angel and that of God/Jesus evokes that the message of the angel is divine.' See «<https://alvarobarcala.bandcamp.com/track/annunciation-and-final-incarnation>».

67 See Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS ital. 115.

68 See footnotes 8 and 9.



**PART 4**

*The Virgin Mary in Medieval Art*





## Cimabue's Santa Maria degli Angeli at Assisi

*Holly Flora*

By the thirteenth century, Marian devotion was at the heart of Christian worship throughout Europe. But St. Francis of Assisi expressed a particular love for Mary, one that shaped his own religious formation as well as his creation of the Franciscan Order. Francis' special connection to Mary was also expressed via a sacred locus. Prior to his conversion to the spiritual life, Francis received his famous vision in the church of San Damiano where the crucifix spoke to him, asking him to 'rebuild my church.' Taking these words literally, Francis then began restoring the dilapidated San Damiano as well as the little church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in the foothills outside Assisi. As Bonaventure recounts in the *Legenda maior*, 'When the man of God saw it so abandoned, he began to stay there regularly in order to repair it, moved by the warm devotion he had toward the Lady of the world.'<sup>1</sup> Santa Maria degli Angeli became the first place of residence for the early friars, who set up simple huts surrounding the church on a piece of land known as the Porziuncola, or 'little portion.'<sup>2</sup> It was there also that Francis prayed that Mary might become the friars' particular champion, 'In the church of the Virgin Mother of God, her servant Francis lingered, and with continuing cries begged her who had conceived and brought to birth the Word full of grace and truth to become his Advocate.'<sup>3</sup> As Francis' biographers attest, the connections between Mary and the Franciscan Order are thus deeply rooted in the Order's early history at Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Given Francis' evident fondness for Mary, it comes as no surprise that a medieval Marian image is one of the most celebrated images in Assisi today: The *Madonna and Child with Saint Francis* (Figure 11.1) by the Florentine artist Cenni di Pepo, better known as Cimabue (ca. 1240–1302).

1 For the hagiography of Francis, I rely here principally on Bonaventure's biography of Francis, which became the only official account of the saint's life in 1266 and would have been well known to the friars in Assisi at the time Cimabue was painting. See Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder*, trans. and ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., J.A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., and William J. Short, OFM (hereafter cited as *FAED* 2), 540.

2 On the significance of the Porziuncola to the early friars, see Xavier Seubert, 'Die Liebligkeit deß Paradeys-Hügls,' in *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trinita Kennedy et. al, (Nashville, 2014), catalogue 1, 92–93.

3 Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, *FAED* 2, 542.

Painted in the north transept of the Lower Church of St. Francis at the end of the thirteenth century, Cimabue's fresco depicts the Virgin with the Christ Child on her lap, seated on a throne. Celebrated as an example of Cimabue's early Renaissance experiments in perspectival effects, the throne is angled obliquely to the picture plane in an effort at the illusion of its recession into space. Painted as though fashioned from intricately lathed wood and draped with a luxurious brocade cloth of honor on its back, the throne presents the regal Virgin as she rests on a plump cushion. She holds the blessing infant Christ on her lap while four angels accompany her, standing in pairs on either side of the throne. At the viewer's right, separated slightly from the Madonna, a figure of Francis stands holding a book. His hands and feet display the wounds of the stigmata, and his tunic is torn open to reveal the wound in his side.

Cimabue's fresco has become an emblem of Franciscan devotion for tourists and pilgrims, reproduced thousands of times on trinkets and postcards in souvenir shops. The Madonna's status as a favored image seems to have been established quite early, for it was spared in the early fourteenth century when



FIGURE 11.1 Cimabue, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saint Francis*, Lower Church, Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi.

PHOTO: © STEFAN DILLER PHOTOGRAPHIE, Werbung Industrie Portraits, permission to use granted 4 April 2018

painters from Giotto's workshop updated the north transept with a new cycle of frescoes that now surround it. The fresco was also restored and repainted several times over the centuries, interventions that, unfortunately, obscured most of Cimabue's original brushstrokes and color scheme. Such attempts to preserve it, however, attest to the longstanding reverence accorded to this image. And yet despite this traditional reverence, Cimabue's Madonna has never been adequately analyzed in context; studies have instead concentrated on its possible place within Cimabue's oeuvre as opposed to its religious function.<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I will argue that Cimabue's *Madonna with Saint Francis* was created as a reminder of the beginnings of the Order and in celebration of Francis and his earliest followers. My argument is based on the evident concern in the Basilica at Assisi for commemorating the Porziuncola, the first true home of the Order and the place where Francis, at his request, died. By the time Cimabue was painting, the Porziuncola and its small chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli had become a major pilgrimage destination. There, a papal indulgence known as the *Perdono* was offered, granting pilgrims complete remission of sins committed up to that point.<sup>5</sup> Pilgrims coming for the *Perdono* would also visit the Basilica, the final resting place of St. Francis, and so the friars forged visual and administrative connections between the two pilgrimage sites. My new reading of Cimabue's fresco as an intentional reminder of Santa Maria degli Angeli is enabled by recent research underscoring the importance of the Porziuncola to the pilgrimage culture of Assisi in the late thirteenth century. Studies by Donal Cooper and Janet Robson demonstrate how the architecture and decoration of the Lower Church reveal the friars' desire to promote pilgrimage.<sup>6</sup> Further, Chiara Frugoni has argued convincingly that the themes chosen for the apse and transepts of the Upper Church of St. Francis, also painted by Cimabue just upstairs his Lower Church Madonna, deliberately recalled the Order's origins at the Porziuncola.<sup>7</sup> I propose that the Madonna

4 For a summary of the literature on this painting as well as a bibliography see Luciano Bellosi, *Cimabue* (Milan, 1998), 277–278; and further, Alessio Monciatti, 'Madonna col bambino, angeli e san Francesco,' in *La Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi*, ed. Giorgio Bonsanti (Modena-Rome, 2002), vol. 2, 426–429.

5 For a discussion of the history and traditions surrounding the *Perdono*, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Il Perdono di Assisi* (Santa Maria degli Angeli, 2005).

6 Donal Cooper and Janet Robson, 'Imagery and the Economy of Penance at the Tomb of St. Francis,' in *Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000–1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, ed. Paul Davies, Deborah Howard, and Wendy Pullan (London, 2013), 165–186; and Janet Robson, 'The Pilgrim's Progress: Reinterpreting the Trecento Fresco Programme in the Lower Church at Assisi,' in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William R. Cook (Leiden, 2005), 39–70.

7 Chiara Frugoni, 'L'ombra della Porziuncola nella Basilica Superiore di Assisi,' in *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen institutes in florenz* 45 (2001), 353–361; and further discussion in Chiara

was designed by Cimabue as an emblem of that locus as well, and as such, it became an icon to the formative days of the Order and to Francis' love for Mary, relevant to the friars in the Sacro Convento as well as to pilgrims. In what follows, I will first briefly present the fresco's position within the church and what that means for its evolving viewership, and then move to a discussion of the connections between Cimabue's image and the sacred site of Santa Maria degli Angeli at the Porziuncola.

## 1 Context and Audiences

Because there is no documentary evidence for Cimabue's commission, various proposals for the fresco's date are based mostly on connoisseurship arguments.<sup>8</sup> Cimabue may have executed his Madonna and St. Francis during the same stay in which he painted the transepts and apse of the Upper Church, which have been convincingly dated to c. 1277–80.<sup>9</sup> But it has also been noted that Cimabue's depiction of the throne in the Lower Church closely resembles that in his Pisa Madonna (Figure 11.2), which some scholars date to the mid-1280s based on its visual affinities to Duccio's Rucellai Madonna, documented in 1285.<sup>10</sup>

In my view, then, Cimabue's Madonna with St. Francis was most likely executed between 1277–1285. But the dating issue may never be conclusively resolved due to the painting's extremely compromised condition. It has been heavily repainted, retouched, or restored at least three times over the centuries. The first recorded restoration dates to 1587, and the painting was repainted again in 1872–73.<sup>11</sup> The most recent conservation projects carried out in the 1970s by the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro of Rome attempted to remove these later layers of paint, but discovered that almost none of the

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Frugoni, *Quale Francesco? Il messaggio nascosto negli affreschi della Basilica superiore ad Assisi* (Turin, 2015), 119–126.

8 For the issue of dating, see Bellosi (1998), 227–230.

9 Arguments for the dating of the Upper Church apse and transepts to the papacy of Nicholas III (1277–1280) has been accepted by almost all recent scholarship; see Maria Andaloro, 'Ancora una volta sull'Ytalia di Cimabue,' in *Arte Medievale* 2 (1984), 143–77. For the case for a later dating for the Upper Church murals, see Bellosi (1998), 154–155.

10 My thoughts on the dating and the chronology of the Madonnas by Cimabue and Duccio concord with those in James Stubblebine, 'Byzantine Influence in Thirteenth-century Italian Panel Painting,' in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966), 85–102, at 96–97.

11 Although scholars have speculated that the painting was retouched as early as the fourteenth century, the first recorded restoration dates to 1587 by Guido da Gubbio, and the painting was repainted again in 1872–73 by Guglielmo Botti. See Monciatti, 426–429.



FIGURE 11.2 Cimabue, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels*, Paris, Louvre (Formerly San Francesco, Pisa).

PHOTO: © STEFAN DILLER PHOTOGRAPHIE, Werbung Industrie Portraits, permission to use granted 4 April 2018

original surface remained beneath them.<sup>12</sup> What viewers see today is mostly a nineteenth-century imagining of the faces, with scant traces of the original modeling of the drapery. Despite the painting's poor preservation, scholars are largely in agreement as to its attribution to Cimabue, but are less sure as to whether or not he designed his Madonna and St. Francis to stand on its own or whether it was part of a larger cycle painted in the Lower Church transepts by him or others.<sup>13</sup> Some have also suggested that a pendant figure of a saint stood on the other side of the Madonna, perhaps Clare of Assisi or Anthony of Padua.<sup>14</sup> If Cimabue painted additional scenes or figures, they became covered in the early fourteenth century when Giotto's workshop painted the frescoes illustrating the Infancy of Christ and the Crucifixion that now surround Cimabue's work.<sup>15</sup> The Madonna shows evidence of the awkward positioning of the new scheme around it. The wings of the angels at the left were truncated in the re-painting of the wall, and the Madonna's halo intersects oddly with the later painted border (Figure 11.3).

Painted on the east wall of the north transept of the Lower Church, the fresco would have been viewed most frequently by the friars in the Sacro Convento during Cimabue's time. Until the late thirteenth century, this Western end of the basilica was separated from the nave by a stone choir screen or *tramezzo* demarcating the sanctuary around the high altar (Figure 11.4).<sup>16</sup>

Pilgrims would have heard mass celebrated at the high altar from the outside of this barrier while the friars celebrated the Eucharist from within it. Inside

12 For portions of the 1973 restoration report, see Enio Sindona, *Cimabue e il momento figurativo pregiottesco* (Milan, 1975), 87–88.

13 In his description of the Basilica written between 1570 and 1580, friar Ludovico di Pietralunga remarked of Cimabue's Madonna: 'They say it was not destroyed [guasto] like the others.' Ludovico di Pietralunga, *Descrizione della basilica di S. Francesco e di altri santuari di Assisi*, ed. Pietro Scarpellini (Treviso, 1982), 70. Restoration work in the transepts has also revealed traces of earlier decoration, but not enough to be sure that additional paintings were completed. See Maria Andaloro, 'Tracce della prima decorazione pittorica,' in *Il cantiere pittorico della Basilica superiore di San Francesco in Assisi*, ed. Giuseppe Basile and Pasquale Magro (Assisi, 2001), 77–100.

14 Bellosi (1998), 230.

15 On the fourteenth-century frescoes in the north transept of the Lower Church, see for example Elvio Lunghi, *The Basilica of Saint Francis at Assisi: The Frescoes by Giotto, his Precursors, and Followers* (London, 1996), 100.

16 Due to the building's position within Assisi, and in emulation of Roman basilicas, the Basilica is oriented to the west rather than the east. Evidence for the original liturgical furnishings in the apse and transepts is lacking, but most likely the choir stalls were located between the high altar and the apse until the early fourteenth century. On this space see Irene Hueck, 'Der Lettner der Unterkirche von S. Francesco in Assisi,' in *Mitteilungen der kunsthistorisches instituts in Florenz* 28 (1984), 173–202.





FIGURE 11.3 View of north east wall of Lower Church transept showing Cimabue's Madonna and Child with Francis amid frescoes by Giotto and Pietro Lorenzetti.  
 PHOTO: © STEFAN DILLER PHOTOGRAPHIE, Werbung Industrie Portraits, permission to use granted 4 April 2018

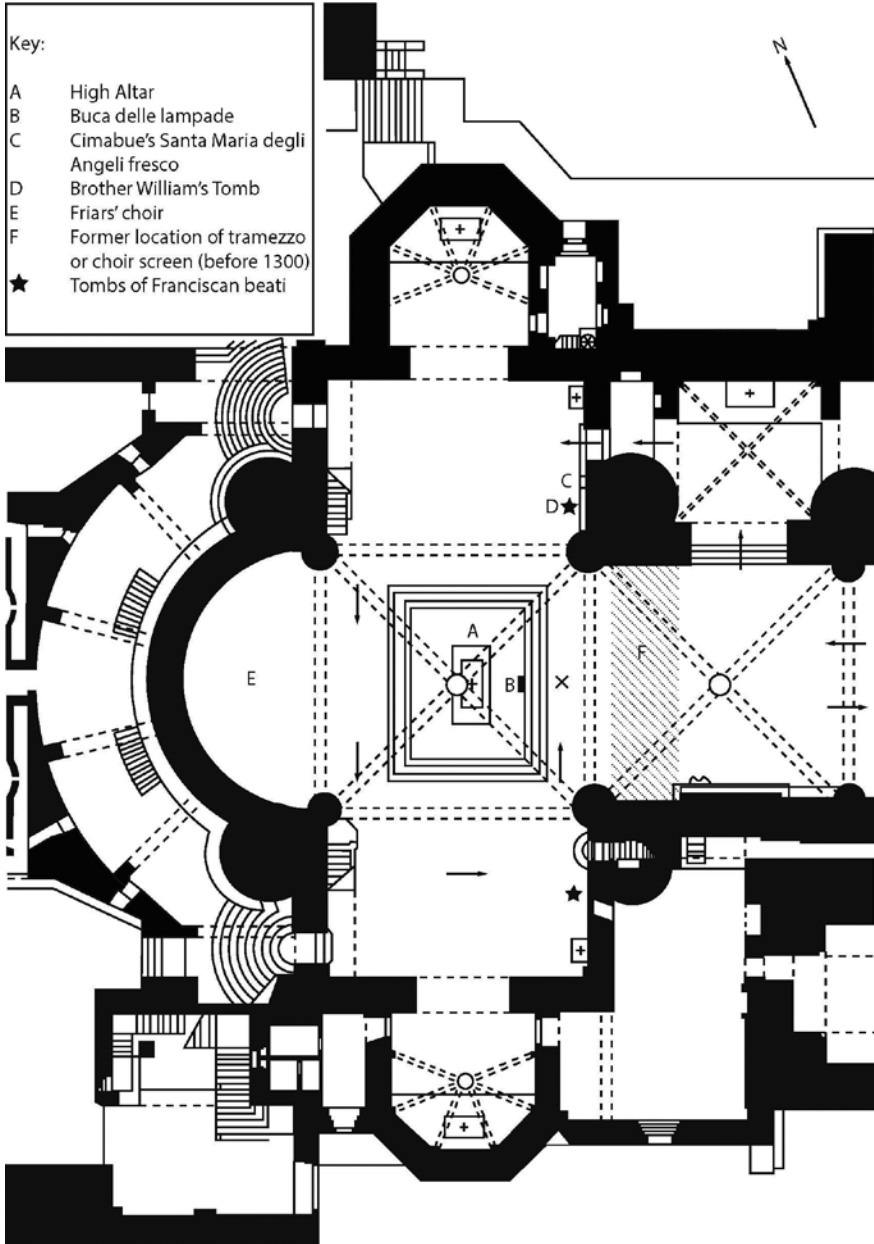


FIGURE 11.4 Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Plan of Lower Church transepts and apse.  
 PHOTO: © STEFAN DILLER PHOTOGRAPHIE, Werbung Industrie Portraits,  
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FIGURE 11.5 View of transept facing east, showing mural altarpieces of Crucifixion by Cimabue, Upper Church of the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi.  
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the friars' church, as the space beyond the barrier was sometimes called, the friars celebrated mass at additional altars located there. Cimabue's Madonna was designed as an altarpiece for a Marian altar in the north transept. Early documentation for this altar is scant, but it probably dates from the time of friar Elias, thus to the 1230s, shortly after Francis' body was brought to the newly constructed church.<sup>17</sup> The position of the painting, on the reverse-facing wall of the transept, mirrors the arrangement of mural altarpieces in the Upper Church, where Cimabue's two monumental crucifixion murals are painted behind the altar blocks on the east walls of the north and south transepts (Figure 11.5).<sup>18</sup>

At the time Cimabue painted his frescoes in that space, ca. 1277–1280, the Upper Church was arranged similarly to the Lower Church, with a *tramezzo*

17 Monciatti, 426.

18 On the Upper Church Crucifixions, see Donal Cooper and Janet Robson, *The Making of Assisi: The Pope, the Franciscans, and the Making of the Basilica* (New Haven and London, 2013), 85.

separating the apse and transepts from the nave. As mentioned previously, scholars have speculated that Cimabue's Madonna formed part of a larger cycle of images painted by Cimabue or others in the transepts of the Lower Church. But because the image was conceived as an altarpiece, as were Cimabue's two crucifixions in the Upper Church, it could have easily stood on its own.<sup>19</sup> As in the apse of the Upper Church, likewise a liturgical focal point and where Cimabue's murals celebrate Mary's death and Assumption, the enthroned Mary downstairs might prompt the friars to meditate on her role in the Incarnation and the creation of the Eucharist.

The friars could also contemplate Cimabue's Madonna outside of liturgical celebrations. Placed on the east wall of the north transept, facing west, it is among the first images a friar might glimpse when entering the transept from the Sacro Convento on the west side of the church. Passing from the door located on the west wall, opposite the fresco, the friars may have stopped to salute Mary or sing a hymn of praise, modeling their devotion on Francis, who composed a hymn to Mary with which he greeted every image of the Virgin he saw.<sup>20</sup> Hans Belting has argued that Cimabue's Crucifixion murals in the Upper Church served a devotional function aimed at the friars, who were to envision themselves in the position of the kneeling Francis featured at the foot of the cross, meditating on Christ's death (Figure 11.6).<sup>21</sup>

Similarly dispositioned in the Lower Church, Cimabue's Madonna with Francis may also have inspired the friars to contemplate Francis' special relationship to Mary via the adjacent image of the saint. Again, Cimabue's murals in the Upper Church offer kindred iconography; in the apse, the enthroned Mary is shown as intercessor and advocate of the Order, with her outstretched right hand open to the friars as she presents them to Christ (Figure 11.7).<sup>22</sup>

Francis' presence alongside the Madonna in the Lower Church offered yet another means for the friars to forge an intimate connection to Mary, as had Francis.

In the Lower Church, the figure of Francis is positioned to the right of the Madonna, and may have been the image in the friars' church that was physically closest to the tomb of Francis, who was buried beneath the high altar.

19 See the discussion of the two Crucifixions in the Upper Church and their potential to be read independently or alongside the other images in the transepts by Serena Romano, *La Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi: Pittori, botteghe, strategie narrative* (Rome, 2001), 77–02.

20 Francis of Assisi, *A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, in *FAED* 1, 163.

21 Hans Belting, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi: Ihre decoration als aufgabe und die Genese einer neuen Wandmalerei* (Berlin, 1977), 53.

22 On the Marian imagery in the apse, see Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, 'Cimabue at Assisi: the Virgin, the Song of Songs, and the Gift of Love,' in Cook (2005), 95–112.



FIGURE 11.6 Cimabue, *Crucifixion*, mural altarpiece in south transept, Upper Church of the Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi.

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Such an image would have been highly desirable given the inaccessibility of Francis' tomb. Francis' body had been translated to the Church on 25 May 1230, and in contrast to the exposed shrines of many other popular medieval saints, Francis' tomb was buried deep within the rock beneath the high altar, his body interred in an impermeable, sealed chamber without points of access.<sup>23</sup> Such a burial was in imitation of early Christian martyrs, such as St. Peter, but had the added advantage of protecting the precious relics from the constant threat of theft, or *furta sacra*. In contrast to the modern subterranean tomb visited today by millions at Assisi, in the thirteenth century, pilgrims could only view Francis' final resting place via a small opening known as the *buca delle lampade* at the base of the high altar, where flickering lamplight would have illuminated

23 On the tomb of Francis, see Donal Cooper, "In loco tutissimo e firmissimo:" The Tomb of St. Francis in History, Legend and Art, in Cook (2005), 1–37; and further, Gerhard Ruf, *Das Grab des hl. Franziskus: Die Fresken der Unterkirche von Assisi* (Freiburg, 1981).



FIGURE 11.7 Cimabue, *Virgin and Christ Enthroned with Franciscans*, apse, Upper Church of the Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi.

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the chamber below.<sup>24</sup> With the *tramezzo* in place in front of the transepts and high altar, pilgrims approached the shrine from the nave.<sup>25</sup> Devotees in the nave could contemplate the scenes from Francis' life painted there in the 1260s by the Saint Francis Master, and may also have viewed an early *vita* panel of Francis displayed near the high altar.<sup>26</sup> But the friars on the other side of the

24 Cooper (2005), 20.

25 Cooper (2005), 22.

26 The *vita* panel, now in the museum of the Sacro Convento, was probably located somewhere near the tomb of Francis, but its depiction of miracle scenes indicates that pilgrims

*tramezzo* must have desired images of Francis in their space as well. Cimabue's Madonna in the friars' church perhaps aided their veneration of Francis' relics, signaling his bodily presence within their space.

Despite the *tramezzo* that stood between the friars' church and the laity in the late thirteenth century, laypeople and pilgrims probably entered the transepts at certain times. Recent studies indicate that the spaces behind such barriers were quite permeable. Laypeople met in ecclesiastical spaces near the high altar to sign important documents, for example, or on certain feast days.<sup>27</sup> Evidence for the presence of pilgrims in the transepts early in the Basilica's history is the legendary account of how Elias of Cortona commanded the departed Brother William of England, who died in 1232 and was buried in the north transept, to stop performing miracles out of reverence for Francis.<sup>28</sup> Brother William's tomb in the north transept would have been much more accessible than that of the Basilica's namesake; Francis was buried so deeply beneath the rock that Renaissance accounts speculated that the friars had deliberately hidden Francis' body.<sup>29</sup> Brother Elias' command to William of England testifies to the friars' concern that the inaccessibility of Francis' body was hindering the miracle-working power of the saint.<sup>30</sup> Fewer miracles were recorded in the Lower Church in the middle of the thirteenth century than had been noted in the years immediately following the saint's death, when his coffin was displayed at the church of San Giorgio while awaiting construction of the Basilica.<sup>31</sup> Unlike at San Giorgio and in other pilgrimage churches elsewhere in Europe, devotees could not get close to or circulate around Francis' tomb in the Lower Church. Crowd control in the Lower Church was also an issue, since pilgrims could only venerate Francis' shrine at the high altar from the nave. Even if allowed behind the barrier on occasion, pilgrims probably found this arrangement of the Lower Church confining and disappointing.

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may have been the panel's primary audience. William Cook associates it with dedication of the high altar of the Lower Church in 1253. See William R. Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi in Painting, Stone, and Glass from the Earliest Images to ca. 1320 in Italy, A Catalogue* (Florence, 1999), cat. no. 27, 62–63.

27 See the discussion in Donal Cooper, 'Access All Areas? Spatial Divides in the Mendicant Churches of Late Medieval Tuscany,' in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages*, ed. Frances Andrews (Donington, 2011), 90–107.

28 *Chronica XXIV Generalium ordinis minorum Analecta francescana* 3 (Quaracchi, 1897), 217. See the discussion of this anecdote in Robson (2005), 51; Cooper (2005), 32; Frugoni (2001), 353–361.

29 Cooper (2005), 1.

30 Cooper (2005), 33.

31 Cooper (2005), 31.

It was thus in effort to create more fluid access to Francis' shrine that the friars decided to remove the *tramezzo* at the end of the thirteenth century. The friars then constructed a series of side chapels on the north side of the Lower Church, with a passageway through those chapels into the north transept. As Janet Robson has proposed, this new configuration allowed pilgrims to circulate in a counterclockwise direction through the north transept and behind the high altar.<sup>32</sup> While this did not fully solve the problem of the lack of access to Francis' relics, it did prompt the creation of an ambitious fresco program offering new visual stimuli for both pilgrims and friars. Giotto and Pietro Lorenzetti were among the famous artists tapped for the re-decoration of the north transept. During this renovation campaign, Cimabue's Madonna was kept and incorporated into the new scheme. What scholars have not explained fully, however, is why Cimabue's Madonna was saved, particularly when the same care was not taken with other earlier paintings in the Lower Church. The frescoes illustrating the life of Francis by the Saint Francis Master, for example, were compromised when doorways were created in the nave to allow access to the new chapels.<sup>33</sup> Cimabue's Madonna must have already been the object of special devotion, a status derived, I will argue, from its allusions to the foundation of the Franciscan Order. Cimabue may have had the friars in mind when he painted his Madonna, but his image became viewed consistently by a wider public of pilgrims within the newly reconfigured space.

## 2 Santa Maria degli Angeli

Large scale images of the enthroned Madonna and Child, with their obvious borrowings from Byzantine icons, had become a commonplace in Italy by Cimabue's time, but in the Lower Church at Assisi, Cimabue created an entirely novel take on this traditional theme. Most of the surviving examples of monumental Madonnas are on panel, and these include versions by the Magdalen Master, now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (Figure 11.8) and Coppo di Marcovaldo, from the church of San Martino dei Servi in Orvieto, both dating from the 1270s (Figure 11.9).

<sup>32</sup> Robson (2005), 51.

<sup>33</sup> Robson (2005), 43. On these frescoes, see Joanna Cannon, 'Dating the frescoes by the Maestro di San Francesco at Assisi,' *Burlington Magazine* 134 (1982), 65–69. On the construction of the chapels on the north side of the nave, see Irene Hueck, 'Die Kappellen der Basilika San Francesco in Assisi: die Auftraggeber und die Franziskaner,' in *Patronage and Public in the Trecento: Proceedings of the St. Lambrecht Symposium Abtei St. Lambrecht, Styria, 16–19, 1984*, ed. Vincent Moleta (Florence, 1986), 81–104.





FIGURE 11.8 Magdalen Master, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, Berlin.  
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FIGURE 11.9 Coppo di Marcovaldo, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, San Martino dei Servi, Orvieto.

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Like the Lower Church Madonna, these feature a seated Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child in her lap, attended by angels. Almost universally, the Madonna, as one would expect, is the unquestioned star of these panels. The attendant angels are supporting cast members in such renditions, relegated to the area behind the Madonna's throne. In the Gemäldegalerie Madonna attributed to the Magdalen Master, for example, two small angels, barely the height of the Madonna's halo, hover in the sky on either side of her. In the Byzantine icons that inspired these Italian adaptations, the angels are similarly presented, standing like stalwart sentinels behind the Madonna's throne or enclosed within roundels, as in the Kahn Madonna now in the National Gallery in Washington of ca. 1250 (Figure 11.10).<sup>34</sup>

In nearly all such surviving examples, the paired angels are not rendered in a way that suggests they inhabit the same space as the Virgin and Child.<sup>35</sup> But in Cimabue's Madonna at Assisi, the company of angels has grown from two to four, and they are depicted in larger scale, approaching, although not quite equaling, the size of the Madonna herself. The angels are unquestionably part of the same space as Mary, their fingers touching the arms of the carved wooden throne upon which she sits. Such a presentation also brings the angels into closer contact with the world of the viewer. They gaze not at the Madonna but outward, serving as active interlocutors between the Madonna and those adoring her. Scholars have noted Cimabue's unusual presentation of the angels here, and it has been considered yet another aspect of the quest for naturalism that made him famous among Renaissance writers.<sup>36</sup>

But the prominence of the angels in Cimabue's painting, I contend, has as much to do with the agenda of the Franciscans at Assisi. To understand this,

34 The Kahn Madonna has been the subject of much debate among scholars, some of whom ascribe it to an Italian painter, while more recent consensus assigns it to a Byzantine artist. For bibliography on this work, see «<http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.37004.html#bibliography>».

35 See the examples compiled in the classic index by Edward Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 40–49; 79–87. I note here that Garrison's index is now over half a century old, so additional material has come to light, and as Garrison notes, the surviving works only represent a small portion of what was originally produced. Yet the thirteenth-century examples are remarkably consistent in their presentation of the angels in smaller scale. Cimabue was perhaps inspired by the larger scale of the angels seen in earlier Byzantine examples, such as the Madonna della Clemenza in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome, but even in such works, the angels do not interact with the viewer or inhabit space in the way seen in the Lower Church Madonna.

36 Early studies of Cimabue's work noted the exceptional composition here. See for example Alfred Nicolson, *Cimabue: A Critical Study* (Port Washington, NY / London, 1932; reprinted 1972) 27; and Stubblebine (1966), 96–97.



FIGURE 11.10 Byzantine artist, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, National Gallery, Washington.  
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we must think again about the Porziuncola. As mentioned above, when Francis received his first vision before the talking crucifix at San Damiano, he began a campaign of restoring that building, another church dedicated to St. Peter, and a church dedicated to Mary:

... he came to a place called the Porziuncola where there stood a church of the most Blessed Virgin Mother of God, built in ancient times but now deserted and no one was taking care of it ... he began to stay there regularly in order to repair it, moved by the warm devotion he had toward the Lady of the world. Sensing that angels often visited there, according to the name of that church, which from ancient times was called 'Saint Mary of the Angels,' he stayed there out of reverence for the angels and his special love for the mother of Christ.<sup>37</sup>

The former Benedictine foundation of Santa Maria degli Angeli was later given to Francis and his early followers, and was celebrated as the birthplace of the Order. As noted by his biographers, Francis had felt a special attachment to the Porziuncola because of his 'reverence for the angels,' since 'angels often visited there' according to local legends. Other early accounts tell that even before the Franciscans were given the church for their use, the singing of angels could be heard there as well. Angels were of great significance in Francis' hagiography; Francis retreated to Mount LaVerna to fast in honor of St. Michael the Archangel, and his stigmatization was the product of a vision of an angel—the Seraph.<sup>38</sup> Bonaventure also linked Francis to the Apocalyptic Angel of the Sixth Seal, a connection commemorated in Cimabue's murals illustrating the Apocalypse in the Upper Church.<sup>39</sup> At the end of his life, Francis requested to return to Santa Maria degli Angeli to die, and his wish was granted. As Bonaventure relates, 'He asked to be taken to Saint Mary of the Porziuncola so that he might yield up the spirit of life where he had received the spirit of grace.'<sup>40</sup> It was also at the Porziuncola that Francis' stigmata, which he had kept hidden for the last two years of his life, became revealed to the crowds who came to venerate his body: 'A great number of the citizens of Assisi were admitted to contemplate those sacred marks with their own eyes and to kiss them with their lips.'<sup>41</sup> The miracle of Francis' stigmata was thus announced and verified at Santa Maria

37 FAED 2, 540.

38 Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, FAED 2, 631–632.

39 Frugoni (2015), 114–116.

40 Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, FAED 2, 642.

41 Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, FAED 2, 646.

degli Angeli, the cradle of the Order. A vigil was then held the night Francis passed, and according to Bonaventure, '... it seemed to be a vigil of angels, not a wake for the dead.'<sup>42</sup> Thus it was the presence of the angels that distinguished the church dedicated to Mary at the Porziuncola, both in the traditions attached to the site and in Francis' particular relationship to it.

One might imagine, then, that Cimabue and the friars at Assisi, wishing to create a monumental Madonna appropriate for the friars to worship near Francis' tomb, invented a new type of Marian image in which angels are unusually emphasized. Such an image would simultaneously commemorate the Order's foundation and the affirmation of Francis' stigmata at his death. Chiara Frugoni has argued that angels, along with an enthroned image of the Madonna and an image of the adult Christ and Francis, were likewise used as a motif signaling the Porziuncola in the so-called 'angels window' in the Upper Church, designed by the Maestro di San Francesco ca. 1260.<sup>43</sup> The notion of a conscious association of Cimabue's Madonna with the Porziuncola gains further credence when one considers that many of the earliest followers of Francis who had shared in his first community at Santa Maria degli Angeli were buried in the Lower Church, close to the tomb of Francis. Another fourteenth-century addition executed by the workshop of Pietro Lorenzetti around 1320 is the painted lintel just below Cimabue's Madonna, featuring five friars gazing up at her in adoration (Figure 11.11).

These friars are early followers of Francis who are buried just beneath Cimabue's Madonna, their tomb now marked by an iron grate placed over a marble slab decorated with *cosmati* work.<sup>44</sup> According to friar Ludovico di Pietralunga's ca.1580 account of now-lost inscriptions, these friars included Brother Bernard of Quintavalle (died ca. 1245), the very first follower of Francis, the one who accompanied him to the church of San Nicolò where Francis first read the texts from the Bible that shaped the Order's form of life. The second companion of Francis, Brother Sylvester (died 1240), a canon of San Rufino and the first priest to join the Order, is also interred there, along with Brother William of England (died 1232) and a layman from Assisi, Brother Electus (died ca. 1253).<sup>45</sup> Two of these, Bernard and Sylvester, were, along with brother Giles,

42 Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, *FAED* 2, 647.

43 Frugoni (2001), 374.

44 Although the tomb of the friars was installed in the north transept earlier, the marble slab is probably a re-used fragment of the *tramezzo* that once separated the nave from the transepts, and it therefore was installed when the *tramezzo* was removed in the early fourteenth century. See Hueck (1984).

45 Pietralunga, 72, misidentified one of the friars, stating that Valentino of Narni is buried there, although Valentino died in 1378, decades after the Lorenzetti workshop painted the images of the five friars.



FIGURE 11.11 Pietro Lorenzetti, *Five Early Followers of Saint Francis*, Lower Church of St. Francis at Assisi.

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the first three companions to take up residence at the Porziuncola with Francis. Lorenzetti's painted lintel has been dated to c. 1320, and thus, by the early fourteenth century at the very latest, Cimabue's Madonna was directly associated with the first members of the Franciscan Order. For the friars in the Sacro Convento, Cimabue's Madonna was 'Santa Maria degli Angeli,' a reminder of their Order's birthplace and the ardent devotion of Francis.

### 3 Pilgrimage and the *Perdono*

The north transept of the Lower Church was therefore a center of devotion to the early friars. The same was true of the south transept, where another group of early followers of Francis was also buried: Leo, Masseo, Rufino, and Angelo.<sup>46</sup> The shrines to these early followers of Francis, as we shall see, became important stopping points for pilgrims who came to Assisi not only to visit the shrine of Francis but also to reap the rewards of the *Perdono*

<sup>46</sup> The bodies of the friars buried in the south transept were moved to the crypt in the nineteenth century. See Cooper (2005), 2.

indulgence offered at Santa Maria degli Angeli. According to later legends, in 1216, Francis petitioned Pope Honorius III, who was then in Perugia, to give complete and total remission of all sins to pilgrims visiting the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli between 1 August and 2 August. Despite this anecdote, the early documentation of the *Perdono* is scarce; it is not mentioned in the biographies of Francis by Bonaventure or Celano.<sup>47</sup> But the feast's growing popularity in spite of its 'unofficial' status is attested by the increasingly large numbers of pilgrims coming to Assisi by the late thirteenth century. Those who traveled to Santa Maria degli Angeli were almost certain to be visiting Francis' tomb as well, and indeed the pilgrimage experiences were connected, as Donal Cooper and Janet Robson have shown.<sup>48</sup> Before receiving pardon for one's sins, a person was expected to do penance, and at the Basilica of Saint Francis, penitent pilgrims heard mass and received communion prior to their visit to the Porziuncola. A visit to Francis' shrine in the Lower Church, and the requisite offerings that went with it, served as spiritual preparation for the *Perdono*. Indeed by the middle of the fourteenth century, if not before, the *Perdono* celebrations began with an elaborate procession from the Basilica down to the Porziuncola. Cimabue's Madonna, surrounded by her angels and placed over the tombs of five of Francis' early companions, would therefore remind viewers of the links between the Basilica and the Porziuncola.

The attendant image of Francis, perhaps intended to provide a focal point for the friars' devotions at Francis' inaccessible tomb, may also have prompted them, as well as pilgrims, to remember the Porziuncola. Scholars have pointed out the affinities between the Lower Church Francis and the painting of the saint now in the Porziuncola Museum at Santa Maria degli Angeli also attributed to Cimabue (Figure 11.12).

Although this painting's authorship was once called into question, recent studies have affirmed its authorship by Cimabue.<sup>49</sup> It and the Lower Church Francis are quite similar in iconography; both show the standing saint in a frontal pose, holding a book and with the side wound of the stigmata prominently displayed via the torn hole in the saint's tunic. In contrast to most of the

47 On the history of the *Perdono*, see Mario Sensi, *Il Perdono di Assisi* (Assisi, 2002).

48 Cooper and Robson, 'Imagery and the Economy of Penance,' 169–170.

49 Both it and the Lower Church Francis have their antecedents in *vita* icons, such as the aforementioned one now in the Treasury of the Sacro Convento, in which a standing figure of the saint is surrounded by scenes from his life. But around 1260, images of Francis himself, independent of the narrative scenes and, importantly, prominently displaying the side wound of the stigmata, gained popularity. On this painting, see Bellosi (1998), 233–236; Angelo Tartuferi, 'San Francesco,' cat. no. 19 in *L'Arte di Francesco: Capolavori d'arte Italiana e terre di Asia dal XII al XV secolo*, ed. Angelo Tartuferi and Francesco D'Arelli (Florence, 2015), 202.





FIGURE 11.12  
Cimabue, *Saint Francis*, Santa Maria degli  
Angeli, Porziuncola Museum.  
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other images of Francis from this period, in both paintings, Cimabue's Francis does not hold a cross. Instead, he holds a book with both hands, a subtle iconographic change that aligns him with contemporary images of the Apostles.<sup>50</sup> Such a presentation would also connote the Porziuncola, for it was there that Francis first created the Order that aspired to be the new Apostolate. The Santa Maria degli Angeli painting, first documented in the eighteenth century, is traditionally believed to be a relic of Francis, painted on a panel of wood from Francis' first coffin, the one in which his body was displayed at the church of San Giorgio from shortly after his death until it was translated to the new basilica.<sup>51</sup> The fact that Francis' entire body was buried beneath the rock at the Sacro Convento meant that there was a dearth of his relics to be found elsewhere, and thus such paintings supplied needed relics of Francis that pilgrims could see and touch.

If indeed Cimabue was commissioned to paint the image of Francis on the wood from the saint's coffin for Santa Maria degli Angeli, a similar image near his actual tomb would have provided a visual link between the two sacred sites.<sup>52</sup> And a likewise related depiction of the Virgin perhaps adorned the Porziuncola, for there was an altar dedicated to her in that church.<sup>53</sup> The account of the pilgrimage visit of the Franciscan tertiary and mystic Angela of Foligno to Assisi to the *Perdono* in 1290 suggests that pilgrims who processed from the Basilica to Santa Maria degli Angeli were greeted by an image of the Virgin there.<sup>54</sup> And even very early on in the history of the Basilica's decoration, a single artist had been commissioned to paint related devotional panels

50 See Bellosi (1998), 233, who notes that Cimabue used the exact same iconography of the standing figure holding a book in his depiction of John the Evangelist in the apse mosaic of Pisa Cathedral.

51 Another example of a painting as relic is in the Porziuncola Museum as well, attributed to the Saint Francis Master and painted circa 1260; like Cimabue's version, tradition holds that it was made from the wood from Francis' coffin. See Enrica Neri Lausanna, 'San Francesco tra due angeli,' cat. no. 17 in Tartuferi and Arelli, 198.

52 Although there is no medieval documentation connecting the Cimabue panel to Santa Maria degli Angeli, sacred images of Francis there would surely have existed, and such tangible relics of the saint would certainly have been desired.

53 Frugoni (2015), 123.

54 For the account of Angela's participation in the *Perdono*, see Ludger Thier OFM and Abele Calufetti OFM, eds, *Il libro della Beata Angela da Foligno* (Rome, 1985), 486–496; and for the suggestion that Angela saw an image of the Virgin at the Porziuncola (albeit as the author suggests, a sculpted image rather than a painted one), see Elvio Lunghi, *La passione degli Umbri: Crocifissi di legno in Valle Umbra tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Foligno, 2000), 19–22. In 1820, the antiquarian Carlo Fea suggested that Cimabue had copied his Lower Church Madonna from an original, older fresco in Santa Maria degli Angeli. See Carlo Fea, *Descrizione ragionata della sagrosanta patriarcal basilica e cappella papale di S. Francesco d'Assisi ... e delle pitture e sculture di cui va ornato il medesimo tempio ...* (Rome, 1820), 12.



FIGURE 11.13 Giunta Pisano, Crucifix, Santa Maria degli Angeli.

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for both it and Santa Maria degli Angeli. Giunta Pisano painted a cross for the Upper Church in 1236 (now lost), and then painted a similar, smaller crucifix for Santa Maria degli Angeli (Figure 11.13).<sup>55</sup>

55 Cooper and Robson (2013), 63–72.

The tradition of connecting the two sites via works of art commissioned by the same artist perhaps continued with the Order's patronage of Cimabue.

Such connections between the Basilica and Santa Maria degli Angeli at the Porziuncola were more important than ever at end of the thirteenth century. The two sites were linked administratively—offerings from the *Perdono* were shared between Santa Maria degli Angeli and the Sacro Convento.<sup>56</sup> The increasing popularity of the *Perdono* brought larger crowds to the Basilica as well as to Santa Maria degli Angeli. The friars in the Sacro Convento must have been especially motivated to remind visitors to the Basilica that it too was a sacred locus commemorating the foundation of the Order. During the renovation of the north transept, it was crucial to underscore the fact that Francis' first brethren were buried there. When the *tramezzo* was dismantled, slabs of its richly decorated marble were re-used underneath Cimabue's Madonna, drawing attention to the sealed *loculi* of the wall tombs.<sup>57</sup> The addition of the painted lintel featuring the five friars gazing in adoration at Cimabue's Madonna pointed out the presence of Francis' first followers even more explicitly. Pilgrims might find intercession and even healing while venerating the remains of the early friars, as the aforementioned story about Brother William's tomb attests. Devotees could then model their own devotion on that of the friars depicted gazing ardently up at the Madonna, turning their eyes in reverence to her and to Francis.

#### 4 Conclusions

It is in this context that we may understand why Cimabue's Madonna and Saint Francis were saved during the early fourteenth-century campaign of re-fitting and re-decorating the Lower Church. The new arrangement of side chapels and an open transept offered pilgrims a variety of stopping points within the church on their way to Francis' shrine, including places for them to have their confessions heard and to do penance. Visits to the tombs of the early followers of Francis also served as spiritual preparation as pilgrims approached the final resting place of the founder. Cimabue's Madonna, placed above the tomb of five of Francis' earliest followers, must have already been considered a sacred image, and it became an essential stop as pilgrims made their way through the Basilica to Francis' shrine. The fact that it was incorporated within the new program, and also that the portraits of the early friars were added beneath it,

56 Cooper and Robson, 'Imagery and the Economy of Penance,' 171.

57 See the discussion of the re-used *tramezzo* fragments in Hueck (1984).

attests to its special status. For pilgrims to Assisi, as for these early friars, she was Santa Maria degli Angeli, representing, along with the adjacent portrait of Francis, the Order's foundation. She also served as a reminder to pilgrims that the Basilica and the Porziuncola were intimately connected, an increasingly important point as growing factions within the Order began to challenge the authority of the Sacro Convento in the early fourteenth century, claiming that the Porziuncola represented the true way of poverty Francis had espoused.<sup>58</sup> By presenting and preserving reminders of the Order's beginnings, Cimabue's 'Santa Maria degli Angeli' became an icon to Francis' early ideals.

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58 Cooper and Robson, 'Imagery and the Economy of Penance,' 171.

## Reflecting on Mary: The Splendor of the Madonna in the Lower Church of Assisi

*Darrelyn Gunzburg*

The Basilica of San Francesco (Figure 12.1), the place that was created as the burial site of St. Francis of Assisi (c.1181/82–1226), the founder and leader of the Friars Minor, consists of two churches one on top of the other, both cruciform in plan with a single nave. As has been well-documented, the Lower Church was dug into the rock and completed on 25 May 1230, when St. Francis' body was translated from the Church of St. George, where it had been taken and buried on his death to avoid being ransacked by the Perugians. Thus the Lower Church served as a sanctuary for the tomb of St. Francis. This Lower Church is a place into which little natural daylight falls. Nevertheless, in the reconstruction and redecoration that occurred from 1288 onwards, two frescoes of Mary were painted in the second decade of the fourteenth century in the north and south transepts, both with gilded backgrounds. *La Madonna dei Tramonti* (Madonna of the Sunsets) was painted by Pietro Lorenzetti (c.1280–c.1348) between the years 1316–1319, located towards the base of the east wall of the south transept. The name was said to derive from the fact that every evening the fresco is lit by the rays of the setting sun. Yet the literature on this fresco is not clear with regards to which sunsets the title is referring, why the sunlight was considered theologically important, nor how sunlight could get into the Lower Church. A second fresco, the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, painted by Simone Martini (1284–1344) slightly earlier than those of Lorenzetti, is situated in mirror position to *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, on the opposite side of the crossing towards the base of the east wall of the north transept. The literature is silent about the connection of this fresco in relation to the sun. This paper, therefore, considers both frescoes from the perspectives of their initial creation, their subject matter, their placements in connection with the sun, and the associated role of the sun in Christian theology as a way of investigating how the medieval Franciscans understood and reflected on Mary.

## 1 Background

As a funerary monument, the orientation of the Basilica of San Francesco differs from other buildings of this kind in that its apsidal end points west rather than east. As Donal Cooper and Janet Robson noted, 'in liturgical terms it can be said to be 'occidented' rather than oriented.'<sup>1</sup> This positioning highlights the Basilica's significance as a papal foundation, since the Upper Church was designed to embrace the specific needs of the papal liturgy, one where the priest celebrated Mass from the apsidal side of the altar facing the congregation, so the priest faced east. This western focus is one that is found in the three major papal basilicas in Rome: St. Peter's, Santa Maria Maggiore, and St. John Lateran.<sup>2</sup>

The town of Assisi sits at the meeting point of the plains and the mountains, and the Basilica is built on a ridge of land that falls away to the west, north, and south (Figures 12.1 and 12.2). When St. Francis was alive, this area was known as the *Collo dell'Inferno*, or 'Hill of Hell,' due to it being a place for the torture and execution of the condemned.<sup>3</sup> Although this appeared to be an eccentric place in which to bury St. Francis, according to Silvestro Nessi, the first unambiguous mention of this fact came in 1277 from Fra Raniero d'Arezzo (d. 1304). Fra Raniero was a contemporary of the companions of St. Francis and he learned from them that St. Francis had explicitly requested to be buried on the Hill of Hell, following the way of Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified and died as a criminal beyond the city wall of Jerusalem. When St. Francis' companions had pointed out the bad reputation of the place, he had replied: 'If the place is now called the Hill of Hell, it will be called the Gate of Heaven and the Entrance of Paradise.'<sup>4</sup> The land was donated by Simone da Pucciarello, who was, according to tradition, a faithful companion to Francis from his youth.<sup>5</sup>

Since it was forbidden for Franciscans to own property, the patronage and ownership of both church and convent was undertaken by Pope Gregory IX (1145–1241), in the name of the Holy See, and it was he who laid the first stone on 17 July 1228, one day after St. Francis was canonised and less than two years

1 Donal Cooper and Janet Robson, *The Making of Assisi: The Pope, the Franciscans and the Painting of the Basilica* (New Haven and London, 2013), xi.

2 Cooper and Robson, *The Making of Assisi*, xi.

3 Carla Pietramellara et al., *Il Sacro Convento Di Assisi* (Roma, 1988), 6, 11, 65.

4 Ms. Vat. 4354, c. 108. 'Si locus ille modo vocabatur Colli Inferni erit quando vocabitur porta coeli et janua paradisi.' Silvestro Nessi, *La Basilica Di S. Francesco in Assisi E La Sua Documentazione Storica*, Vol. 5, *Il Miracolo Di Assisi* (Assisi, 1984), 20.

5 Pietramellara et al., *Il Sacro Convento*, 10–11 and Photo 1.



FIGURE 12.1 The Basilica of San Francesco, from the east. The Basilica is built on a ridge of land that falls away to the west, north and south.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG



FIGURE 12.2 The Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi, Italy photographed from the south. The Basilica faces west with the town of Assisi to the east.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG



after his death.<sup>6</sup> Pope Gregory was also the one who declared the Basilica the head and mother church of the Roman Catholic Order of Friars Minor on 22 April 1230, despite St. Francis' bestowal of that title on the Portiuncula, the tiny church where he had died.<sup>7</sup> The Basilica was consecrated by Pope Innocent IV in 1253.

Major reconstruction on the Upper Church began in 1288 after Pope Nicholas IV (1227–1292, elected Pope 22 February 1288), the first Franciscan friar to sit on the papal throne, wrote two bulls to senior Franciscan officials at Assisi. The ambitious scheme was to enlarge both Upper and Lower Churches with side chapels around the nave and transepts. The Upper Church took two decades to complete and was, as Cooper and Robson observed, 'a radical reconfiguration and expansion of the Basilica complex that far exceeded the ambitions of the original architects or the parameters of the original design.'<sup>8</sup> Construction on the two side chapels off the transept of the Lower Church began in 1295. The aim was to complete the expansion and all the repainting by the first centenary of the death of St. Francis in 1326. It was in the second decade of the fourteenth century that *La Madonna dei Tramonti* and the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* were painted.

## 2 The First Fresco—Pietro Lorenzetti and *La Madonna dei Tramonti*

*La Madonna dei Tramonti* (Figure 12.3), also known as the *Madonna with Child Between St. John the Evangelist and St. Francis*, and the *Madonna Who Celebrates Francis*, is located towards the base of the east wall of the south transept of the Lower Church (Figure 12.4) and forms part of the south transept Passion cycle painted by Pietro Lorenzetti between the years 1316 or 1317 and 1319.<sup>9</sup> Lorenzetti, together with Simone Martini, who painted the north transept, was one of a handful of ground-breaking painters in fourteenth-century Tuscany. Of relevance to this paper is the point made by Keith Christiansen regarding the unprecedented way that Lorenzetti explored the naturalistic effects of light within the subject matter of his painting.<sup>10</sup> Such a skill becomes

6 Nicola Giandomenico and Paolo Rocchi, *Basilica Patriarcale Di San Francesco in Assisi: Il Cantiere Dei Restauri* (Milano, 1999), 6.

7 Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2009), 44–45.

8 Cooper and Robson, *The Making of Assisi*, 4.

9 Hayden B.J. Maginnis, 'Assisi Revisited: Notes on Recent Observations', in *The Burlington Magazine* 117: 869 (1975), 511–517, at 515.

10 Keith Christiansen, 'Pietro Lorenzetti, *The Crucifixion*', in The Metropolitan Museum of Art online catalogue, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/438605>.



FIGURE 12.3 Pietro Lorenzetti, *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, 1316–1319, fresco, Lower Church, Assisi. The Madonna and Child are flanked by St. Francis on the viewer's left and St. John the Evangelist on the viewer's right.  
 PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

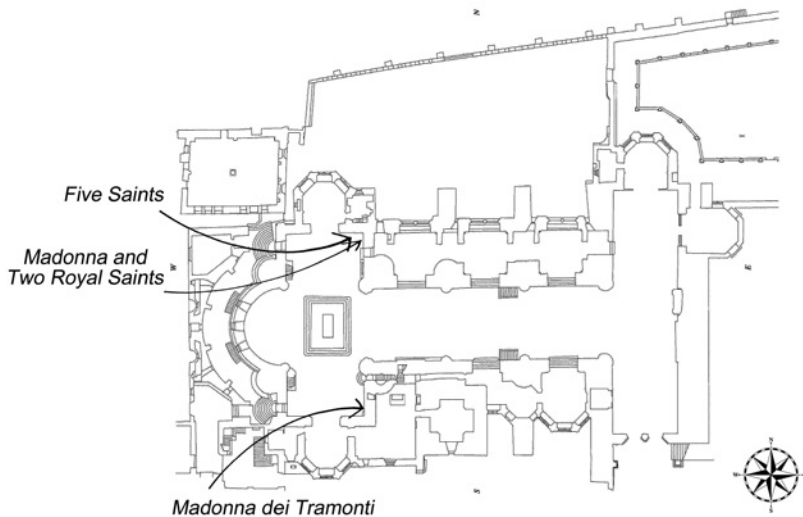


FIGURE 12.4 Ground plan of the Lower Church, Assisi, showing the placement of the frescoes of *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, the *Five Saints*, and *Madonna and Two Royal Saints*.  
 GROUND PLAN © FRANCO COSIMO PANINI EDITORE; permission granted 13 February 2017

even more remarkable when the location of the fresco in the Lower Church, its connection with the light of the sun at its setting, and its gilded background are taken into account, for in this area of the crossing, *La Madonna dei Tramonti* is one of only two frescoes, apart from the *Vele* above the altar, whose background is gilded. During his examination of the fresco in 1974, Hayden Maginnis established that *La Madonna dei Tramonti* was completed as four large *giornata*, which he attributed to the extensive use of tempera and the gold-leaf background of the main picture field.<sup>11</sup> This explicitly Italian technique of true fresco painting that was occurring in Italy in the early fourteenth century had mosaic construction at its origins, and as Daniel V. Thompson has pointed out, the technique for mosaics necessitated the use of *giornata*. When production costs for mosaics rose and the market fell away at the beginning of the fourteenth century, this technique was carried over to wall painting.<sup>12</sup> Pietro Lorenzetti's work was at the forefront of this change.

Changes had already begun in the previous century. In 1236 Giunta Pisano synthesised Byzantine prototypes with Italian panel painting when he painted the monumental crucifix for the Upper Church, destroyed without trace by 1785, and created a new Franciscan visual language. Cooper and Robson termed Giunta's work 'an early sign of artistic eclecticism at Assisi.'<sup>13</sup> This innovative Franciscan reworking of Byzantine ideas is also visible in the way the figures are portrayed in the *Deesis* in the central vault of the Upper Church painted by Jacopo Torriti c.1288–1290, and in the *Stripping of Christ* fresco in the Lower Church, painted in the 1290s.<sup>14</sup> Anne Derbes and Amy Neff have pointed to similarities between the brilliant gold ground originally used for the evangelists in the crossing vault of the Upper Church to simulate mosaics and thirteenth-century Serbian painters who used gold ground to mimic mosaics.<sup>15</sup> This may have been the motivation for the gilding of the backgrounds of the two frescoes in the Lower Church. These two frescoes, however, are the only two frescoes that are gilded in the crossing and, along with the title *La Madonna*

11 Hayden B.J. Maginnis, 'The Passion Cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi: The Technical Evidence', in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 39, 2/3 (1976), 193–208, at 206.

12 Daniel V. Thompson, *The Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting* (NY, 1956), 69–70.

13 Cooper, Donal, and Janet Robson, *The Making of Assisi: The Pope, the Franciscans and the Painting of the Basilica*, (New Haven and London, 2013), 69. On Giunta's cross for San Francesco, see Cooper and Robson, 63–72.

14 Derbes, Anne, and Amy Neff, 'Italy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Byzantine Sphere', in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans, (NY, 2004), 454, 455.

15 Derbes, Anne, and Amy Neff, 'Italy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Byzantine Sphere', in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans, (NY, 2004), 454.

*dei Tramonti*, points towards an intentional relationship between gilding and sunlight.

The *La Madonna dei Tramonti* fresco depicts three figures standing in a small loggia or niche, in front of which is a parapet decorated to simulate a predella. The Madonna, holding the Christ child on her left arm and looking into his eyes, creates the central focus. She wears a blue mantle and a grey cowl. The Child is wrapped in a mantle, which has slipped from around him and now falls over the Madonna's arm. To the left of the Madonna stands St. John the Evangelist, holding a book in his left hand and gesturing with his right hand. The Madonna appears to be answering a question from the Child by indicating St. Francis on her right. The Child raises his right arm in benediction. St. Francis in turn points towards himself with his left hand but opens his right arm. Damage to the fresco and the loss of intonaco make a clear reading of St. Francis' gesture difficult. Maginnis argued convincingly that a most likely premise is that the lower portion of St. Francis' arm and hand extended beyond the frame to include the viewer, suggesting the blessing he is receiving from the Child is not personal but for all people, otherwise there would be no sense in placing his right arm in this position as the parapet moulding would obscure his hand.<sup>16</sup> The haloes are all created three dimensionally by building up the plaster from the head to the outside perimeter. Maginnis observed that some haloes contained a surrounding band and, furthermore, that to account for the fact that the haloes could not be punched, the artist had created a rayed pattern instead by pressing a stick or another purpose-created narrow object into the wet plaster.<sup>17</sup>

The meaning of the fresco was offered in the English Franciscan Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu F.F. Minorum in Angliam*, completed in 1258 or 1259.<sup>18</sup> Eccleston related a story told by Brother Augustine, the Bishop of Laodicia, in the convent of London. Brother Augustine had been at Assisi in 1234 on the festival of St. Francis, the year it was presided over by Pope Gregory IX. In his sermon, Pope Gregory told of how two heretics had been converted at Venice when each found out they had dreamed the same dream. Each saw a vision of Christ seated as judge with his apostles and the holy people of many Orders, yet no Friars Minor were present, not even St. Francis. In the dream a legate preached how St. Francis was greater than St. John the Evangelist due to

16 Maginnis, 'Assisi Revisited', 516.

17 Maginnis, 'The Passion Cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi', 195.

18 Thomas of Eccleston and Fr. Cuthbert, *The Friars and How They Came to England. Being a Translation of Thomas of Eccleston's 'De Adventu F.F. Minorum in Angliam' Done into English, with an Introductory Essay on the Spirit and Genius of the Franciscan Friars* (London, 1903), 224–225.



FIGURE 12.5 Pietro Lorenzetti, *Crucifixion*, 1316–1319, fresco, south transept, Lower Church, Assisi with *La Madonna dei Tramonti* immediately underneath it.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

his stigmata, and as if in proof, Christ sat with his head on the breast of St. John and St. John on the breast of Christ. The two heretics believed therefore that the legate had blasphemed and shouted at him, when all of a sudden, Christ opened the wound in his side and revealed St. Francis hidden in his breast and then closed it again, protecting the saint.

Above this fresco is a monumental Crucifixion (Figure 12.5), also painted by Pietro Lorenzetti, which completely fills the entire east wall of the south transept. The lower centre third of the fresco is damaged. This Crucifixion is said to be the oldest extant wall painting portraying Christ with the two thieves, reinforcing Lorenzetti's innovative approach to portraying subject matter.<sup>19</sup> The scene is set against a dark blue background and fills the top half of the fresco. Fourteen lamenting angels fly around Christ's body. The lower half of the fresco is crowded with soldiers, merchants, and men on horses, along with those people who were described in the Gospels: The Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene (John 19:26), and the Roman soldier Longinus, (Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47, and Matthew 27:54), who pierced the side

19 Hayden B.J. Maginnis, 'Pietro Lorenzetti: A Chronology', *The Art Bulletin* 66:2 (1984), 183–211, at 205.

of Christ and then converted when he was healed of an eye affliction by the spurting blood. This placement of the Crucifixion above the Madonna reinforces the story of Christ's calling as the Child born to be crucified and may also be important in understanding the naming of *La Madonna dei Tramonti*.

Maginnis also identified a trompe l'oeil painted niche to the lower right of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* (Figure 12.3) depicting a book and vessels used for carrying the water and wine of the sacrament. This niche is painted directly above a real cupboard, which, according to Maginnis, was used to contain the real vessels depicted in the fresco above. Furthermore, on the adjacent wall is a frescoed *sedilia* hung with a cloth of ermine (Figure 12.6). This grouping of *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, the trompe l'oeil niche, and the *sedilia*, creates in fresco the essentials of a chapel, all seen, as Maginnis pointed out, from the viewpoint of the worshipper and, along with written evidence from the sixteenth century, it implies that this area was intended to be used as an altar in the transept from the time it was first decorated.<sup>20</sup> Maginnis also pointed to the shadows painted on the left of the frescoed *sedilia* and angled downwards and thus created to look as if the *sedilia* was receiving the only natural light source in this area of the transept, a door opposite the fresco at the top of stairs leading to the Great Cloister (Figure 12.7).<sup>21</sup> Building on Maginnis' observations, these angled shadows, together with the gilded background of *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, imply that the painters wanted to suggest the idea of sunlight shining on *La Madonna dei Tramonti* the whole year round.

As mentioned previously, the Lower Church sits underneath the Upper Church, and the Great Cloister and Sacro Convento surround the western end (Figure 12.12), diminishing the amount of light that enters the transept. Indeed, according to Maginnis, the painters could only have functioned through the use of artificial illumination from torches and candles, since 'very little natural light enters the transept at any time and, with the area filled with scaffolding, the wall surface would have been in near darkness.'<sup>22</sup> Despite these limitations, sunlight does penetrate the Lower Church. As stated previously, the background of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* is gilt, and the name was said to derive from the fact that every evening the fresco is lit by the rays of the setting sun, since the Lower Church is aligned to the west. Yet due to the fact that the sun shifts in its setting position each sunset, it cannot then shine onto *La Madonna dei Tramonti* every evening. Hence two questions remain: Why was sunlight held to be so important, and what times of the year did the sun hit the fresco?

20 Maginnis, 'Assisi Revisited', 516–517 and photograph on 514.

21 Maginnis, 'Assisi Revisited', 516.

22 Maginnis, 'The Passion Cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi', 196.



FIGURE 12.6 Pietro Lorenzetti, *La Panca Vuoto*, 1316–1319, fresco, Lower Church, Assisi. The *sedilia* is painted on the wall adjacent to *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, with shadows angled to the left to suggest the *sedilia* is receiving the only natural light source in this area of the transept coming from a door opposite the fresco at the top of stairs leading to the Great Cloister.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.7 The door opposite *La Madonna dei Tramonti* at the top of stairs leading to the Great Cloister with a clear view of sky in a triangular shape to the right of the column and roof.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

### 3 The Role of the Sun in Christian Theology

The role of sunlight from the early Church fathers to the period of this fresco is a journey into the depths of Christian theology. By the mid-thirteenth century, as Steven P. Marrone pointed out, the Franciscans had shaped a doctrine of divine illumination through the Franciscan school at Paris.<sup>23</sup> These complex ideas were captured in the writings of St. Bonaventure (c.1217–1274). In his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, St. Bonaventure opened with, ‘In the beginning I call upon that First Beginning from whom all illumination flows as from the God of lights, and from whom comes every good and perfect gift.’<sup>24</sup> In *The Tree of Life*, St. Bonaventure recounted how physical illumination flowed from the Father of Lights, and he urged that ‘whoever you are / run / with living desire / to this Fountain of life and light’ in order to raise one’s voice in praise to the ‘pure brightness of the eternal light, / life vivifying all life, / light illuminating every light, / and keeping in perpetual splendor, / a thousand times a thousand lights / brilliantly shining / before your throne of your Divinity / since the primeval Dawn ...and in your light / we will see / light.’<sup>25</sup> This verse is an example of the striking metaphors St. Bonaventure used to describe the heavenly light which he saw as the grace that guided, restored, and uplifted those who prayed, and who were then returned to God.<sup>26</sup> It was in St. Bonaventure’s Sentence Commentary that he articulated the differences between *lux*, the source of light, and its derivatives *lumen*, the radiation of light, and *color*, the materialisation of *lumen* on the surface of bodies.<sup>27</sup> While *lumen* was thought to exist corporally, the underlying understanding of the metaphysics of light of the thirteenth century was that a luminous body had the capacity for revelation when it revealed other objects, expressed in Psalm 36:9: ‘In thy light shall we see light.’<sup>28</sup>

23 Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Vol.1: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought (Leiden, 2001), 113–115.

24 Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum – the Journey of the Soul into God*, trans. Philotheus Boehner and Zachary Hayes, Works of St. Bonaventure Series, vol. 2. (New York, 2003), 34.

25 Bonaventure, *The Soul’s Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert H. Cousins, Classics of Western Spirituality, (Mahwah, NJ, 1978), 171–172.

26 Timothy J. Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union with God*, 2nd ed. (Quincy, Illinois, 2013), 80–84. For the way Bonaventure employed light metaphors theologically, see Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes, vol. 1, Works of Saint Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1996), 4–6, 13–21.

27 Bonaventure, *I Sen.* d.17, p.1, q.1 (l.294), cited in Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes, vol. 1, Works of Saint Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1996), 5.

28 Paul Hills, *The Light of Early Italian Painting*, (New Haven and London, 1987), 11.



St. Francis had earlier captured this idea of *splendor* in the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, where it is Sir Brother Sun ‘Who is the day and through whom You give us light. /And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;/ and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.’<sup>29</sup> In the latter half of the thirteenth century, the Franciscan Bartolomeo da Bologna (d. after 1294) described the term *splendor* in his *Tractatus de Luce* as follows:

However, when rays emanating from a luminous body reach another body that is smooth, polished and shining, such as a sword or gilded panel (*tabulam deauratum*) and rebound back from that body this is called *splendor*. And by such reflections on a polished and shining body the light (*lumen*) in space is multiplied and such multiplication of light is properly called *splendor*.<sup>30</sup>

Gilding the background of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* would have produced this impact of splendor by connecting it with the *lumen* of sunset light. This role the Basilica held in terms of theological light was highlighted in an early fourteenth-century document prior to the repainting of the south transept. In July 1311, extensive flooding damaged the Lower Church. The documented entry for 16 July 1311 described the basilica of S. Francesca as *lumen et status salutifer... totius civitatis et districtus Asisii* (the light and state of health... of the entire city and district of Assisi).<sup>31</sup>

My analysis draws on the work of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, and Bartolomeo da Bologna in connection with Franciscan illumination theory by applying their commentaries not only to divine light but also to physical sunlight.

#### 4 First Site Visit

I first visited the site 2–4 September 2015 to observe the Lower Church in order to take measurements to ascertain when the sun shone on *La Madonna dei Tramonti*. My intended methodology was to measure the azimuth of the door using a Suunto KB-14 compass (with an advertised precision of 0.33°).

29 Jacques Dalarun, *The Canticle of Brother Sun: Francis of Assisi Reconciled* (New York, 2016), 2.

30 Ireneo Squadrani, ‘Tractatus De Luce Fr. Bartholomaei De Bononia’, in *Antonianum* 7 (1932), 201–238, 337–376, 465–494, at 230–231.

31 Giuseppe Zaccaria, ‘Diario Storico Della Basilica E Sacro Convento Di S. Francesco in Assisi (1220–1927)’, in *Miscellanea Francescana* 63, no. 11–111 (1963), 290–361 at 292–293 (16 July, 1311), doc. no.147.

Azimuth is defined as the horizontal angle of the observer's bearing, measured clockwise from a referent direction, typically true north, measured as  $0^\circ$  azimuth (Figure 12.29). Knowing the azimuth would then enable me to find the declination. Declination is a measurement akin to geographical latitude, measured in degrees north or south of the celestial equator. Since the sun's annual orbit, described by the ecliptic, moves above or below the equator, its declination measurement is directly related to calendar dates in the year. The declination of the sun when it is on the equator (21 March and 21 September) is  $0^\circ$ , whereas the declination of the sun when it is at the solstices (23 June and 23 December), its maximum distance north or south of the equator, is  $\pm 23.5^\circ$ , respectively. Knowing the declination, I would be able to find the dates on which the sun shone on *La Madonna dei Tramonti* for the Gregorian calendar and then convert this to the Julian calendar using the conversion factor appropriate to the century in which the art work was painted—this adjustment was seven days.

What I found, however, was that it is extremely difficult to take measurements inside this Basilica due to the magnetic anomalies, one of which was that iron railings have been placed at the base of the walls in front of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* (Figures 12.5 and 12.6). So, whilst standing in front of *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, I looked to see if I could see the sky through the door at the top of the stairs opposite leading out into the Great Cloister (Figure 12.7). What was visible were the column and ribbed vaults of the cloister roof that obscured some of the sky from this vantage point. It was not until 1476 that Pope Sixtus IV (1414–1484, elected Pope 9 August 1471) built the Great Cloister, and thus this door may initially have been unimpeded by any other external part of the building. Even so, clear sky could plainly be seen through the door in a triangular shape to the right of the column. I was, therefore, able to find the altitude measurements using a Suunto PM-5 clinometer (precision of  $0.25^\circ$ ), as this instrument is not affected by magnetic anomalies. This altitude measurement was  $12^\circ$ – $20^\circ$  from the base to the top of the door. Later, using virtual fieldwork via Google Earth and Stellarium, I ascertained the azimuth of the nave to be  $288^\circ$ . Using the middle measurement of the altitude of the door opposite *La Madonna dei Tramonti* ( $15^\circ$ – $16^\circ$ ) produced a declination of  $+23.5^\circ$ , which is that of the summer solstice (21 June).<sup>32</sup>

32 Thanks to Fabio Silva for access to SkyscapeR app v0.3 (31 2017), an online app focused on the visualization and analysis of archaeoastronomical data.

## 5 Dating

The sun's position along the horizon changes every day but its rate of movement throughout the year varies, like the pendulum of a clock. At the equinoxes, the sun is at the midpoint of its movement, in the center of the pendulum swing as it were, and the sun's setting point along the horizon moves relatively quickly, approximately  $11^\circ$  over the course of the month. At the solstices, however, the sun's setting position along the horizon slows down as it reaches the extreme end of the metaphoric pendulum swing, appearing to stand still before it changes direction. Its movement over the course of the month is only  $1.5^\circ$ . *La Madonna dei Tramonti* is so positioned that the fresco will be illuminated for the longest period of time at the summer solstice. Indeed, the sun will take around a week to move across the fresco towards Mary, it will then appear to hold its position on her for three days, and will then take another week to move away from her. The title '*dei Tramonti*' thus refers to these three summer solstice sunsets, as well as to the seven sunsets prior to it as the sun appears to slow down, and to the seven sunsets afterwards as the sun appears to accelerate, a total of seventeen days. Although in this period of time there was a seven-day difference between the Gregorian calendar and the Julian calendar, this seventeen day period of illumination on the fresco meant that the Franciscans saw this period of time as the summer solstice. This tension between the Julian and Gregorian calendars will, however, be addressed later. The week of the summer solstice also includes the feast of the birth of St. John the Baptist, whose chapel lies adjacent to *La Madonna dei Tramonti* fresco.

This phenomenon of sunlight animating Christian painted images has been documented by others. Manuela Incerti found that, around Christmas Day in the Julian calendar, when a spot of sunlight light fell on a fourteenth-century fresco of the Crucifixion in the Cistercian Abbey of Chiaravalle della Colomba, it moved 'in an ascending line from a figure of the grieving Mary to a group of pious women, to Saint John to the knee of Christ, and on to the head of a saint on horseback, perhaps Saint Martin.'<sup>33</sup>

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33 Manuela Incerti, 'Solar Geometry in Italian Cistercian Architecture', in *Archaeoastronomy, the Journal of Astronomy in Culture* xvi (2001), 17. The Cistercian Abbey of Chiaravalle della Colomba was the first daughter house of Clairvaux on Italian soil, founded in 1135 in the Milan area.

## 6 Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints

Whilst standing in the Lower Church examining *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, I also observed another fresco of the Madonna situated in mirror position to it, on the opposite side of the crossing towards the base of the east wall of the north transept (Figures 12.4, 12.8, 12.9, and 12.10), also with a gilded background and a Crucifixion above it. As with *La Madonna dei Tramonti* where a chapel is created through the meeting of the two adjacent walls, so this fresco formed a chapel with the meeting of the north and east walls of the crossing (the St. Elizabeth chapel). Although these altars faced away from the high altar, as Robin Simon observed, they faced east, just as the high altar faces liturgical east.<sup>34</sup> Along the north wall a fictive loggia, divided into five compartments by slender twisted columns, depicted St. Francis, St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the Blessed Agnes of Bohemia, and St. Emeric of Hungary (Figures 12.8 and 12.10).<sup>35</sup> The fresco along the east wall depicts two crowned and haloed saints standing on either side of the Madonna and Child (Figure 12.10). The Madonna, holding the Christ Child on her left arm, gazes out beyond the viewer. The Child twists around to look at the saint on his left, stretching his hand towards the lily-tipped sceptre. The saint returns his gaze. The saint to the right of the Madonna, also holding a lily-tipped sceptre, gazes outward in the same direction as the Madonna. The haloes of all four figures are punched and gilded, as is the brocade cloth of honor background of this fresco.

Both frescoes were painted by Simone Martini, Simon proposed, prior to Pietro Lorenzetti commencing work on *La Madonna dei Tramonti*.<sup>36</sup> The *Five Saints* fresco is painted against a blue background with only the halos being gilded, whereas the gold background of the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* fresco is, like *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, configured for reflecting sunlight. There is, nevertheless, a sense in which Martini's two frescoes (Figure 12.10) could be seen as one eight-figured polyptych in a *sacra conversazione*.

As with *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* also has a Crucifixion scene directly above it (Figures 12.8 and 12.11). This was painted by Giotto's workshop c. 1310; some argue Giotto himself painted this. This fresco depicts Christ on the Cross on a rocky outcrop representative of Golgotha, set against a dark blue background with eight flying lamenting angels (Figure 12.11). It also includes two Roman soldiers, as well as those people

34 Robin Simon, 'Towards a Relative Chronology of the Frescoes in the Lower Church of San Francesco at Assisi', in *The Burlington Magazine* 118:879 (1976), 361–366, at 365.

35 Attribution of saints in Vicenzi, *The Basilica of St Francis in Assisi*, 127.

36 Simon, 'Towards a Relative Chronology of the Frescoes in the Lower Church of San Francesco at Assisi', 366.



FIGURE 12.8 Simone Martini, *Five Saints* on the north wall and *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (below the Crucifixion) on the east wall, 1317–1319, fresco, north transept, Lower Church, Assisi.

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.9 Simone Martini, *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, 1317–1319, fresco, north transept, Lower Church, Assisi.

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with Permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.10 Simone Martini, *Five Saints*, 1317–1319, fresco, north transept, Lower Church, Assisi.

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.11 Giotto's workshop, *Crucifixion*, c. 1310, fresco, north transept, Lower Church, San Francesco, Assisi.

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

mentioned in the Gospel as being present at the event: St. John the Evangelist who clasps his hands (John 19:26), a swooning Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene kissing Christ's feet, and Mary of Cleophas with back-stretched arms (John 19:25), all with gold halos. To the right of Christ are five kneeling friars, one of whom is St. Francis with arms upraised and with a halo, equal in size to the gospel figures, and another of whom is St. Anthony of Padua, also with halo.<sup>37</sup> The fresco also includes women who comfort the Virgin Mary, two of whom have halos, and a small huddling crowd to the left of the soldiers without halos.

Having measured the altitude of all the windows and doorways, and with the aid of virtual fieldwork using Google Earth and Stellarium, I calculated that the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, would be splended in the week of the Assumption. Armed with the dates given by the virtual fieldwork, I could then return on those dates, since the value of virtual fieldwork is to indicate when the visual phenomenon will occur.

## 7 Photographing the Phenomena—Second Site Visit

As I was unable to be in Assisi at the summer solstice, I returned to the Lower Church 15–18 August 2016 with permission to photograph the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*. I was using a Canon 30D EOS camera shooting RAW images at 400 ISO, 19–35mm lens. At 18:40 CEST on Tuesday 16 August 2016, rays of sunlight from the most southerly apsidal window (Figures 12.12 and 12.13) began streaming across the line of five saints along the wall adjacent to the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (Figure 12.14). By 18:50 CEST the sunlight had begun to form a sharp edge as it struck the fresco proper (Figure 12.15), now shining through the middle apsidal window. The sunlight kept moving until it reached a third of the way across the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, giving the fresco a sharp brilliance (Figure 12.16). Then at 19:09 CEST, as the sun lowered in the sky, the sunlight began to move upwards to the base of the Crucifixion fresco above the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (Figure 12.17). By 19:17 CEST, the sunlight had reached the feet of Christ, illuminating the figures to the left of the cross (Figure 12.18). By 19:28 CEST, it had shifted away from the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* fresco and was illuminating only the feet of Christ and Mary Magdalene.

What was displayed was a dynamic light show, the interplay of sun, time, and narrative drawing together with its illumination of light first the witnesses of the *Five Saints*, then moving to the Christ Child in the arms of the Madonna

37 Vicenzi, *The Basilica of St Francis in Assisi*, 125.

and then slowly moving upwards to Christ on the Cross, creating a metaphor of sunlight carrying Christ's spirit upwards. If there is intention here, then the figures have been placed specifically to catch the sun's illumination, for—as it dropped down towards the horizon—the gold halo was the last part of the figure that reflected the light of the sun. By 19:35 CEST, the sunlight began to fade and, in so doing, created, for me, a visual metaphor of life departing from the Crucified Christ as he died and his spirit left the earth, leaving the mourners at the base of the cross in a half-light and the crucified Christ against a darkened space, dividing the living from the dead. It was a deeply moving experience.

This is also the time, in the week of the Feast of the Assumption, when Mary is uplifted to divinity. If this is intentional, then this dynamic solar light show was a vivid visual metaphor of the writings of St. Bonaventure who saw physical illumination as the grace that guided, restored, and uplifted those who prayed and returned them to God. It was an expression of the radiant sunlight of St. Francis' Brother Sun, and it was an illustration of the multiplication of light and splendor to which Bartolomeo da Bologna referred. All of these inflections pivoted visually around Mary.

I returned the following evening on Wednesday 17 August 2016 (Gregorian calendar) at 18:50 CEST. There was heavy cloud in the sky, but as the sun dropped down towards the horizon, the light shone clearly beneath the cloud. On Tuesday 16 August 2016 (Gregorian calendar), I noticed the sun illuminated Mary Magdalene at the base of the cross. This next evening, 17 August 2016 (Gregorian calendar), the sun had moved further south along the ecliptic, and hence the light now shone on John the Evangelist (Figure 12.19).

Curiously this light show was occurring at the correct date for the Assumption for today, in the Gregorian calendar. When it was painted, however, the friars and painters were living with the Julian calendar which, as already stated, was seven days earlier, so in that calendar, the light show occurred a week after their Julian-calendar-based Assumption dates. This calendar aberration is also evident in Cistercian abbeys in Wales, where Bernadette Brady, Fabio Silva, and I found the tendency of these abbeys to be aligned to the astronomical equinox (occurring on 14 March Julian calendar) rather than what would have been considered the equinox in the Julian calendar, one week later.<sup>38</sup> Hence, this is another instance, this time fourteenth-century Franciscans, rather than twelfth- and thirteenth-century Cistercians, that suggests that, when using the light of the sun for theological purposes, the painters and commissioners were

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38 Bernadette Brady, Darrelyn Gunzburg, and Fabio Silva, 'The Orientation of Cistercian Churches in Wales: A Cultural Astronomy Case Study', in *Cîteaux – Commentarii Cistercienses* 67: 3–4 (2016), 275–302.





FIGURE 12.12 View of the three apsidal windows of the Lower Church from the Great Cloister. The most southerly window is the one to the right.  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG



FIGURE 12.13 View of the most southerly apsidal window of the Lower Church from the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*.  
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FIGURE 12.14 Rays of sunlight from the most southerly apsidal window streaming across the line of five saints along the wall adjacent to the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (18:40 CEST, Tuesday 16 August 2016).

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FIGURE 12.15 Sunlight forming a sharp edge as it strikes the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (18:50 CEST, Tuesday 16 August 2016.)

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FIGURE 12.16 Sunlight having reached a third of the way across the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (Tuesday 16 August 2016).

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.17 At 19:09 CEST on Tuesday 16 August 2016 as the sun lowered in the sky, the sunlight began to move upwards to the base of the Crucifixion fresco above the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*.

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FIGURE 12.18 By 19:17 CEST on Tuesday 16 August 2016 the sunlight had reached the feet of Christ, illuminating the figures to the left of the cross.

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FIGURE 12.19 The sun on 17 August 2016 had moved further south along the ecliptic and hence the light now shone on John the Evangelist.

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

working with the actual astronomical alignments, rather than the Feast days, as given in the fourteenth-century Julian calendar.

This animating sun may also help to consolidate a long term scholarly debate regarding the identification of the two royal saints in the fresco (Figure 12.9), one of whom it is argued is St. Stephen of Hungary, whose Feast Day is 16 August.<sup>39</sup> On this date in the true solar calendar (Gregorian calendar), the sun illuminates the figure to the viewer's left of the Madonna, suggesting that this figure may well be St. Stephen of Hungary.

Whilst taking these photographs, I fortuitously encountered Fr. Martin Breski, a Conventual Franciscan, who had seen the sunlight shining onto *La Madonna dei Tramonti* in late June 2015. He generously sent me the photos he had taken depicting the Madonna and Child fully illuminated in light. Their digital identification showed that that they were taken on an iPhone 6 Plus on 27 June 2015 between 19:35 CEST and 19:45 CEST. His photographs confirmed my virtual fieldwork. The date of 27 June in the Gregorian calendar translates to 20 June in the Julian calendar. Thus I resolved to return to the Lower Church once more, to finally observe and photograph *La Madonna dei Tramonti*.

## 8 Third Site Visit

I returned to Assisi with permission to photograph on Wednesday 21 June 2017. The first rays fell at 19:27 onto the base of the fresco along the painted predella between St. Francis and the Madonna forming a cone shape with a wide base, reflecting the shape of the aperture created by the door at the top of the stairs opposite the cloister roof (Figure 12.20). As the sun was also shining through the south apsidal window, I looked over to the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*. The sun, however, only fell onto the south side of the entrance into the Magdalene Chapel and, as expected, did not illuminate the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (Figure 12.21).

As the sun set, the sunlight shining on *La Madonna dei Tramonti* began to rise between St. Francis and the Madonna. By 19:51 the tip of the cone shape had reached the top edge of the fresco (Figure 12.22). As the sun continued to set, the cone of sunlight began to move across the Madonna and Child. By 19:56, both Madonna and Child were completely enveloped in the cone of light

39 Luciano Bellosi, 'La Barba Di San Francesco (Nuove Proposte Per Il Problema Di Assisi)', in *Prospettiva* (1980), 11–34, at 14 n. 22; Adrian S. Hoch, 'Beata Stirps, Royal Patronage and the Identification of the Sainted Rulers in the St. Elizabeth Chapel at Assisi', in *Art History* 15:3 (1992), 279–295, at 286; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002).



FIGURE 12.20 The first rays of sunlight from the door at the top of the stairs opposite *La Madonna dei Tramonti* shining onto the base of the fresco along the painted predella between St. Francis and the Madonna forming a cone shape with a wide base, reflecting the shape of the aperture created by the door and the cloister roof (19:27 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).  
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FIGURE 12.21 Rays of sunlight shining through the south apsidal window onto the south side of the entrance to the Magdalene Chapel and missing the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (19:47 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).  
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FIGURE 12.22 The tip of the cone-shaped sunlight reaches the top edge of the fresco of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* fresco (19:51 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).  
PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.23 The Madonna and Child completely enveloped in the cone-shaped sunlight (19:56 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).  
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FIGURE 12.24

The sunlight begins to move upwards towards the edge of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* and the *Crucifixion* fresco above (19:59 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG.

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FIGURE 12.25

Sunlight touches the Child and the edge of St. John in *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, as well as the hooves of one of the horses in the corner of the *Crucifixion* fresco above (20:02 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



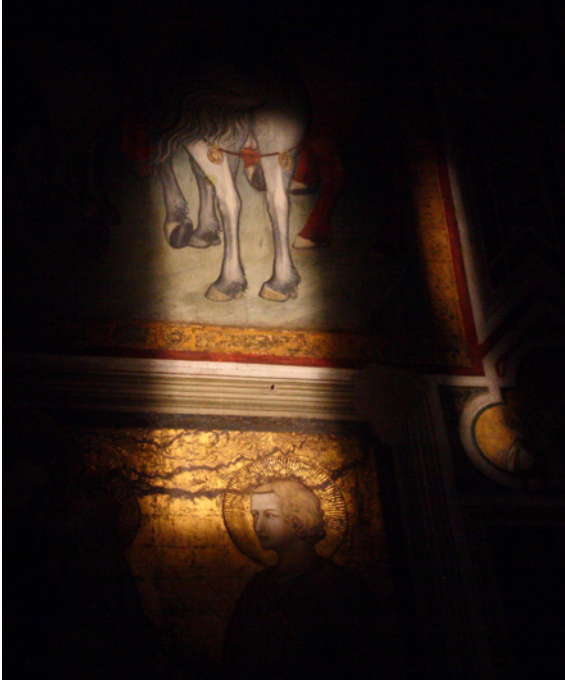


FIGURE 12.26

The sunlight is now situated directly over the face of St. John in the fresco of *La Madonna dei Tramonti* and the legs of the horse in the corner of the *Crucifixion* fresco above (20:07 , Wednesday 21 June 2017). PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.27 The sunlight is now focused solely on the buttocks of the horse in the lower right corner of the *Crucifixion* fresco and begins to illuminate the haloed figure in the lozenge of the border (20:21 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017). PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy



FIGURE 12.28 The waning sunlight is now centered on the haloed figure in the lozenge of the border of the *Crucifixion* fresco (20:24 CEST, Wednesday 21 June 2017).

PHOTO: © D. GUNZBURG. Used with permission from the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy

(Figure 12.23). By 19:59 the sunlight began to move upwards towards the edge of the *Crucifixion* fresco above (Figure 12.24). By 20:02 it touched the Child and the edge of St. John, as well as the hooves of one of the horses in the fresco above (Figure 12.25). By 20:07 it was situated directly over the face of St. John and the legs of the horse (Figure 12.26). By 20:11 it had risen so high that it illuminated only the halo of St. John and now included the legs and buttocks of both horses in the fresco above. By 20:16 and it had moved across to the corner of the lower edge of the *Crucifixion* and continued to illuminate the legs and buttocks of both horses. By 20:21 the sunlight was focused solely on the buttocks of the horse on the far right and also began to illuminate the haloed figure in the lozenge of the border (Figure 12.27). This figure was painted with downcast eyes gazing away from the *Crucifixion*, leaning on his left hand and raising his right hand in benediction. By 20:24 the waning sunlight was now centered on this figure (Figure 12.28). By 20:28 the sunlight had faded.

This phenomenon of the arcing light was one I had not anticipated and it suggested a secondary story. With the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* the sun had moved laterally along the wall and then risen upwards to connect with the *Crucifixion*. Its final position was to illuminate the painted figures at the base of the cross witnessing the *Crucifixion*, the completion

of the story that began with the Christ Child in the fresco below. With *La Madonna dei Tramonti*, the sunlight curved upwards, passing from the predella to shine fully on the Madonna and Child, before moving upwards to hover over the horses in the lower right corner of the *Crucifixion* and coming to rest on the haloed figure witnessing the Crucifixion, as it were, from the border. Although its final position is with this haloed figure, in this seventeen day period, the movement of the sun as it travels across the images means it will always touch the Madonna and Child. In this liminal space, at this time of the year when the sun appears to stand still, it is Mary's role as a mother and guide, offering her wisdom and understanding to the Christ Child, that is being splended.

## 9 Conclusion

In my research, I set out to investigate why the Lorenzetti fresco in the south transept of the Lower Church at Assisi was named *La Madonna dei Tramonti* (The Madonna of the Sunsets) and what this added to the Franciscan understanding of Mary. In investigating this fresco, I discovered its matching counterpart, the cross-axial fresco *The Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*. Initially the aim was to measure the azimuth of the Basilica and altitude of the doors and windows in order to find the declination and thus the date on which the sun fell on *La Madonna dei Tramonti*. This was impeded by the amount of metal in the Basilica, distorting the azimuth measurements. Consequently I used virtual fieldwork to aid me in finding the dates, and the virtual fieldwork was confirmed by Fr. Breski's photographs. I carried out further virtual fieldwork to find out when sunlight fell on the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints*, which I had noted on my first visit, and I returned to the Basilica in the week of the Assumption 2016, and at the summer solstice 2017 for direct observation and to photograph the solar events.

What emerged was a dynamic visual manifestation underscoring what is already known of the central position of Mary in the Franciscan world view. Maginnis pointed out how little natural light enters the transept at any one time. Nevertheless, light does enter the Lower Church at meaningful times, and all of it is devoted to Mary. Two images that revolved around Mary were placed in the transepts of the Lower Church; by being the only frescoes with gilded backgrounds in this location, their potential to receive and reflect the sun's light on specific dates was increased. This created a sunlit narrative of *splendor* enhancing the content of the painted images. *La Madonna dei Tramonti* in the south transept identifies the northern hemisphere extreme position

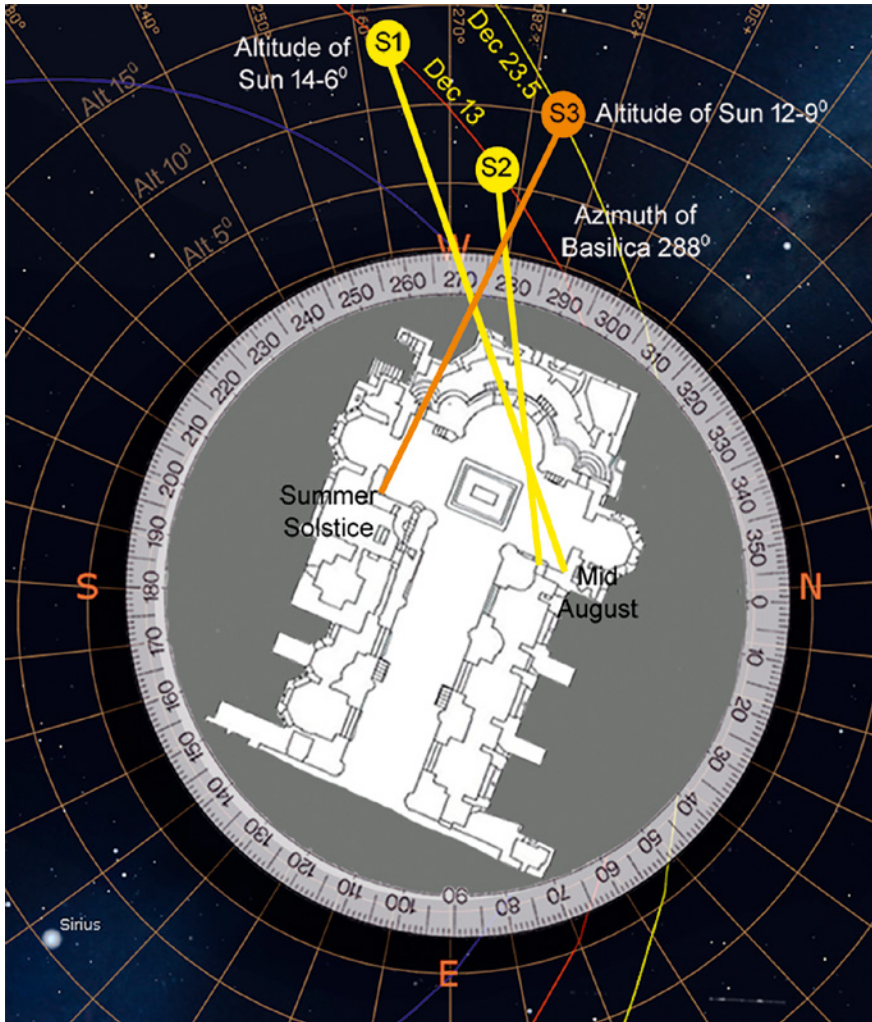


FIGURE 12.29 A graphic representation of the orientation of the Lower Church aligned to the setting sun at the summer solstice (S<sub>3</sub>), and the setting sun in the week of the Assumption (S<sub>2</sub> followed by S<sub>1</sub>) showing the lines of illumination cast by the sun onto the two frescoes on the east wall of the crossing.

GRAPHIC CREATED BY BERNADETTE BRADY; permission to use granted 13 February 2019.

of the sun at the summer solstice (21 June Gregorian calendar) as it moves along the ecliptic (S<sub>3</sub> in Figure 12.29). For seven days prior to reaching Mary it slows down, then stands still for three days, radiating her and the Christ Child with a glorious splendor, after which it slowly begins to accelerate southwards

back across the fresco, continuing to cast its light onto the fresco for a further seven days, a total of seventeen days in all. Then, as the sun changes in its declination moving southwards, it no longer shines through the aperture. After around fifty-five days, in mid-August, the sun shines through the most southerly apsidal window, cascading across the altar of the Lower Church. This altar was the original burial place of St. Francis. A dedicated crypt directly below the altar of the Lower Church now contains his remains. The sunlight also begins to shine through part of the middle apsidal window as it illuminates the *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* and the *Five Saints* fresco in the north transept in the week of the Assumption (15 August Gregorian calendar). Each night for seven or eight evenings the sunlight illuminates these frescoes, shifting from the *Five Saints* acting as metaphoric witnesses across to Mary and the Christ Child, then moving vertically up to the Crucifixion above it, each sunset illuminating a different person at the foot of the cross (S2 followed by S1 in Figure 12.29). The sunlight then leaves this fresco narrative and disappears for a time as it reaches its southern hemisphere extreme at the winter solstice (21 December Gregorian calendar). The sun then begins its journey back to the northern hemisphere again and crosses this same point on the ecliptic around 27 April Gregorian calendar, once more illuminating the *Five Saints* and *Madonna and Child with Two Royal Saints* (S1 followed by S2 in Figure 12.29).

The implications of the connection between this annual solar rhythm with these two gilded frescoes are profound. First, the theology of sunlight as *splendor*, expressed by St. Francis in the *Canticle of Brother Sun* and defined by Bartolomeo da Bologna as the multiplication of light reflected off a gilded panel, is exemplified in this dynamic light show in the Lower Church. Next, the splendor of sunlight that animates the story of the destiny of Christ, the Child born to be crucified, also encourages the viewer to reflect on the theological and doctrinal issues of the Incarnation through Mary. Finally, taking into account the primary evidence of the sunlight, it implies that the original painters and commissioners used the true solar positions for solar theological events, rather than the Julian liturgical calendar.

One can speculate that the act of seeing the sun radiating the frescoes at these different times of the year and punctuating the dimness of the Lower Church with theological symbolism, must have been a powerful experience, for it still is powerful today. Furthermore, since the consistency of the sun never varies, we can watch this light show now and see it as it was envisaged in the fourteenth century, allowing us to partially remove the temporal differences that distance us from the fourteenth century. Ultimately it is this splendoring of sunlight that offers a phenomenological level of appreciation for how the medieval Franciscans understood and reflected on Mary as mother and intermediary in both images.

### Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the Photographic Archive of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, for permission to take photographs in the Lower Church of the Basilica, in particular Fra Carlo Bottero and Dottoressa Giorgia Menghinella. I am also appreciative of the help and assistance given to me by Fr Martin Breski and Fra Marcello Darga inside the Lower Church, Assisi. My thanks to Alessandro Vicenzi for the use of the ground plan in Figure 12.4 © *La Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi – Mirabilia Italiae*, a cura di Giorgio Bonsanti, Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, Modena 2002. Travel to the 51st International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo Michigan USA 2016 to present my first paper on this subject was supported by a grant from the Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture (Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts, University of Wales Trinity St David). I am grateful to Katherine Wrisley Shelby and Brill's anonymous reader for editorial suggestions which have strengthened the paper. Finally I owe a special debt to Bernadette Brady for her invaluable comments, suggestions, and support throughout the various stages of this paper.

**PART 5**

*The Virgin Mary in Medieval Franciscan Preaching*







# The Virgin Mary in Latin and German Sermons of Berthold of Regensburg

*Alessia Francone*

The German Franciscan Berthold of Regensburg was one of the most famous popular preachers of the thirteenth century. We do not know much about his birth (c. 1210), his family, and his education; after becoming a member of the Minorite convent of Regensburg, he embarked on a career as an itinerant preacher that led him to many German towns, in Switzerland, Austria, and Bohemia. He died in Regensburg on 14 December 1272.<sup>1</sup> His preaching activity is mentioned by many contemporary and later sources, among which we shall mention the Italian chronicler Salimbene de Adam and the English

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1 The literature on Berthold of Regensburg is vast. For a general presentation of his biography and his works, see Joseph Klapper, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Wolfgang Stammler and Karl Langosch (Berlin-Leipzig, 1933), vol. 1, 213–223; Hellmut Rosenfeld, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Neue deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, 1955), vol. 2, 164–165; Karin Morvay and Dagmar Grube, *Bibliographie der deutschen Predigt des Mittelalters. Veröffentlichte Predigten*, ed. Kurt Ruh, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 47 (München, 1974), 37–44; Frank G. Banta, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh (Berlin-New York, 1978), vol. 1, 817–823; Irmgard Meiners, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin, 1980), vol. 5, 651–654; Volker Mertens, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (München-Zürich, 1980), vol. 1, 2035–36; Georg Steer, 'Leben und Wirken des Berthold von Regensburg,' in *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi. Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters*, Kataloge des Niederösterreichischen Landesmuseums 122 (Wien, 1982), 169–176; Frank G. Banta, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York, 1983), vol. 2, 199–201; Frank G. Banta, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte, IV: Mittelalter II*, ed. Martin Greschat (Stuttgart, 1983), vol. 4, 7–14; Werner Röcke, 'Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Deutsche Dichter. Leben und Werk deutschsprachiger Autoren, I: Mittelalter*, ed. Gunter E. Grimm (Stuttgart, 1989), vol. 1, 311–322; Hans-Joachim Schiewer, 'German sermons in the Middle Ages,' in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 81–83 (Turnhout, 2000), 868–869, 873, 900–901; Anna Pullia and Eva Goethijn, 'Bertoldus Ratisponensis,' in *Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi* (Firenze, 2006), vol. 11/3, 389–391. For a general bibliography until 1969, see Frank G. Banta, 'Berthold von Regensburg: Investigations Past and Present,' in *Traditio* 25 (1969), 471–479.

philosopher Roger Bacon, both Franciscans and contemporaries of Berthold.<sup>2</sup> These sources often refer to the wide renown of Berthold's preaching, exaggerating the number of his listeners (some chronicles speak of 100–200,000 people) and describing the wonders and the effects on the crowd connected with his sermons. Berthold's renown is also attested by the influence exercised from his homiletic production: Under his name were transmitted five cycles of Latin sermons and some groups of sermons in Middle High German.<sup>3</sup> Three of the Latin cycles, known as *Rusticani*, are considered to be works of Berthold's hand, while for the other two (*Sermones ad religiosos* and *Sermones speciales*),

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- 2 Most of these sources were already analysed in studies of the nineteenth century: See Jakob Grimm, 'Berthold des Franziskaners deutsche Predigten aus der zweiten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts (book review),' in *Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur* 32 (1825), 194–257; Konrad Hofmann, 'Neue Zeugnisse über Berthold von Regensburg,' in *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* 2 (1867), 374–394; Karl Rehorn, 'Die Chronistenberichte über Bruder Bertholds Leben,' in *Germania. Vierteljahrsschrift für deutsche Altertumskunde* 26 (1881), 316–338; Karl J. Rieder, *Das Leben Bertholds von Regensburg* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1901), 1–25. A more recent survey of these sources can be found in Denise A. Kaiser, 'Sin and the Vices in the Sermones de dominicis by Berthold of Regensburg,' (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1983), 1–60; Ariane Czerwon, *Predigt gegen Ketzer. Studien zu den lateinischen Sermones Bertholds von Regensburg, Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation* 57 (Tübingen, 2011), 15–45; Volker Honemann and Gunhild Roth, 'Wundermann und Prediger. Das Bild Bertholds von Regensburg in der Sicht mittelalterlicher Autoren,' in *Mertens lesen. Exemplarische Lektüren für Volker Mertens zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Monika Costard, Jacob Klingner, and Carmen Stange (Göttingen, 2012), 31–46. The analysis of these sources is also an important part of my PhD thesis: Alessia Francone, 'Fama, forme e motivi della predicazione di Bertoldo di Regensburg (1210 ca.–1272),' (Ph. D. diss., University of Torino, 2016), 51–102.
- 3 For an index of the Latin sermons, see Johannes B. Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit 1150–1350* (Münster, 1969), vol. 1, 472–504; a catalogue of the manuscripts is given by Laurentius Casutt, *Die Handschriften mit lateinischen Predigten Bertholds von Regensburg O. Min., ca. 1210–1272: Katalog* (Freiburg im Uechtland, 1961). For a complete survey of the manuscripts and the groups of German sermons, see Dieter Richter, *Die deutsche Überlieferung der Predigten Bertholds von Regensburg. Untersuchungen zur geistlichen Literatur des Spätmittelalters*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 21 (München, 1969). The edition to reference for the German texts remains that by Franz Pfeiffer and Joseph Strobl, *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe seiner deutschen Predigten*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer and Joseph Strobl, 2 vols. (Wien, 1862–1880); it has been reprinted in a single volume with an introduction and notes by Kurt Ruh (Berlin, 1965). Some new German texts are edited in *Berthold von Regensburg. Deutsche Predigten (Überlieferungsgruppe \*Z)*, ed. Dieter Richter, *Kleine deutsche Prosadenkmäler des Mittelalters* 5 (München, 1968); four sermons edited by Pfeiffer were reprinted with a translation in modern German in *Berthold von Regensburg. Vier Predigten. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. Werner Röcke (Stuttgart, 1983).

Berthold's authorship is not sure.<sup>4</sup> The German sermons, once considered as *reportationes* of Berthold's living voice, are written treatises in the form of preaching, probably composed during the last decades of the thirteenth century in Augsburg by anonymous Franciscan friars who worked on the basis of Berthold's Latin texts.<sup>5</sup> The two groups of texts present striking differences. The Latin sermons are composed as written models for other preachers. They are quite synthetic and characterized by the presence of biblical and patristic quotations, suggestions directed to the reader, and learned arguments. Instead, the longer German treatises are intended to be read by laymen and nuns. They are simpler and present a more concrete and pastoral approach.<sup>6</sup> These

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- 4 Most of the Latin sermons are not edited, so the literature about them is not extensive: See Joseph Strobl, *Über eine Sammlung lateinischer Predigten Bertholds von Regensburg* (Wien, 1877); Georg Jakob, *Die lateinischen Reden des seligen Berthold von Regensburg* (Regensburg, 1880); *Beati fratri Bertholdi a Ratisbona sermones ad religiosos xx ex Erlangensis codice*, ed. Peter Hoetzl (München, 1882); Anton E. Schönbach, *Studien zur Geschichte der altdeutschen Predigt*, II–VIII, Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 142, 147, 151–155 (Wien, 1900–1907); Laurentius Casutt, 'Die Beziehungen einer Freiburger Handschrift zum lateinischen Predigtwerk Bertholds von Regensburg,' in *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 56 (1962), 73–112, 215–261; Kaiser, 'Sin and the Vices'; Rüdiger Schnell, 'Bertholds Ehepredigten zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit,' in *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 32 (1997), 93–108; Czerwon, *Predigt gegen Ketzer*.
- 5 The more recent works on these topics are Paul-Gerhard Völker, 'Die Überlieferungsformen mittelalterlicher deutscher Predigten,' in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 92 (1963), 212–227; Richter, *Die deutsche Überlieferung*; and the studies of Dagmar Neuendorff, in particular, 'Predigt als Gebrauchstext. Überlegungen zu einer deutschen Berthold von Regensburg zugeschriebenen Predigt,' in *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter*, ed. Volker Mertens and Hans-Joachim Schiewer (Tübingen, 1992), 1–17; 'Brüder Berthold spricht—aber spricht er wirklich? Zur Rhetorik in Berthold von Regensburg zugeschriebenen deutschen Predigten,' in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 101 (2000), 301–312; 'Deutsche, Berthold von Regensburg zugeschriebene Predigten als Herausforderung an die Editionswissenschaft und die Literaturgeschichtsschreibung,' in *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik* 34/2 (2002), 147–166; 'Überlegungen zu Textgeschichte und Edition Berthold von Regensburg zugeschriebener deutscher Predigten,' in *Mystik—Überlieferung—Naturkunde: Gegenstände und Methoden mediävistischer Forschungspraxis*, ed. Robert Luff and Rudolf K. Weigand, *Germanistische Texte und Studien* 70 (New York-Hildesheim, 2002), 125–178; 'Si vis exponere, hoc fac. Zu deutschen Berthold von Regensburg zugeschriebenen deutschen Predigten und ihren lateinischen Vorlagen,' in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 107 (2006), 347–360.
- 6 On this, see Francone, 'Fama, forme e motivi,' 142–256. About the problems connected with the language of preaching, see Albert Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1886), 233–269; Michel Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (Paris, 1976), 85–113; Carlo Delcorno, 'Predicazione volgare e volgarizzamenti,' in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen-Âge, Temps modernes* 89, 2 (1977), 679–689; David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985), 90–95; Nicole Bériou,

aspects can also be found in the sermons about the Virgin Mary, which will be the specific subject of this contribution.

Checking Jakob's index of the three *Rusticani*,<sup>7</sup> it is possible to identify fourteen Latin sermons which deal with Marian topics. Only one is from the *Rusticanus de Dominicis*, while the others appear in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis*. With the exception of a sermon for Christmas, they are related to the Marian feasts of the Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption, and the Nativity of Mary.<sup>8</sup> Since the Latin texts still lack a critical edition, I will use for this contribution two manuscripts which are considered reliable according to the existing studies on Berthold of Regensburg: The ms. Clm 5531 from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek of Munich for the *Rusticanus de Dominicis*,<sup>9</sup> and the ms. UB 497 from the Universitätsbibliothek of Leipzig for the *Rusticanus de Sanctis*.<sup>10</sup>

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'Latin and the vernacular. Some remarks about sermons delivered on Good Friday during the thirteenth century,' in *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter*, 268–284; Giles Constable, 'The language of preaching in the twelfth century,' in *Viator* 25 (1994), 131–152; Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic sermons. Bilingualism and preaching in late-medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1994); Carlo Delcorno, 'La lingua dei predicatori. Tra latino e volgare,' in *La predicazione dei Frati dalla metà del '200 alla fine del '300*, Atti del XXII Convegno della Società internazionale di studi francescani (Spoleto, 1995), 19–46; Jonathan Adams, 'Language Difficulties in Some Medieval Vernacular Scandinavian Sermons,' and Christoph Burger, 'Preaching for Members of the University in Latin, for Parishioners in French: Jean Gerson (1363–1429) on "Blessed are they that mourn,"' in *Constructing the medieval sermon*, ed. Roger Andersson, *Sermo: studies on patristic, medieval, and reformation sermons and preaching* 6 (Turnhout, 2007), 189–206, 207–220; Franco Morenzoni, 'Les prédicateurs et leurs langues à la fin du Moyen Âge,' in *Zwischen Babel und Pflingsten. Sprachdifferenzen und Gesprächsverständigung in der Vormoderne (8.-16. Jh.)*, ed. Peter Von Moos, *Gesellschaft und individuelle Kommunikation in der Vormoderne* 1 (Berlin-Zürich, 2008), 501–517; Nicole Bériou, 'Latin et langues vernaculaires dans les traces écrites de la parole vive des prédicateurs (XIIIe–XIVe siècles),' in *Approches du bilinguisme latin-français au Moyen Âge. Linguistique, codicologie, esthétique*, ed. Stéphanie Le Briz and Géraldine Veysseyre, *Collection d'études médiévales de Nice* 11 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 191–206.

7 Jakob, *Die lateinischen Reden*, 42–86.

8 The sermons are, according to Jakob's index, the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5 and the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 29, 47, 57–58, 106–111, 117–119; they correspond to the numbers 6, 92, 111, 121–122, 171–176, 182–184 of Schneyer's *Repertorium*.

9 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Clm 5531 [Clm 5531]; for a short description, see Kaiser, 'Sin and the Vices,' 310. The digital version of the manuscript is available at <[http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00095981/image\\_1](http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00095981/image_1)> (accessed 17 January 2017).

10 Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 497 [LeipUB 497]. On this manuscript, see Jakob, *Die lateinischen Reden*, 15–17, and Rudolf Helssig, *Die lateinischen und deutschen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, I: Die theologischen Handschriften*, reprint of the edition 1926 (Wiesbaden, 1995), Part 1 (Ms. 1–500), 801–806. The digital version of the manuscript is available at <<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/dokumente/html/obj31564115>> (accessed 17 January 2017).

The Marian themes are of minor importance in vulgar tongue sermons. Among the texts edited by Pfeiffer and Strobl, only one sermon refers explicitly to a feast for the Virgin, the one titled *Von zwein unde vierzic tugenden* (*Of the forty-two virtues*),<sup>11</sup> written for the feast of the Nativity of Mary.

Through the analysis of the Latin texts, it is possible to identify some themes that come regularly to light and can be defined as the core arguments of Berthold's preaching about the Virgin Mary. The Franciscan of Regensburg concentrates on the main prerogatives of Mary: Her virginal delivery, her innocence and freedom from actual sin, her fullness of grace and her virtues, her intercessory role between God and human beings, and her mercy upon sinners. On one hand, the preacher aims to explain the Catholic teachings about Mary and her privileges. On the other hand, the mother of Jesus is presented as an example and a model of behavior for the believers.<sup>12</sup> It is also worth noting that two Latin texts, the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5 for the third or the fourth Advent Sunday<sup>13</sup> and the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 58 for the feast of the Annunciation,<sup>14</sup> are explanations of the most diffused Marian prayer, the *Ave Maria*. We can see that Berthold's sermons are representative of a pastoral and catechetical preaching that aimed to instruct laypeople about the most important dogmas of faith and about the principal Catholic prayers. Significant examples of this approach were the sermons on the *Pater noster*, the *Credo*, and the Decalogue held by many preachers.<sup>15</sup> That the

11 Sermon X 27 according to the classification of Richter, *Die deutsche Überlieferung*, 27–38. The text is edited in *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 442–461.

12 These themes are common to Franciscan and Dominican preaching about the Virgin during the thirteenth century: see André Duval, 'La dévotion mariale dans l'ordre des Frères Prêcheurs,' and Jean de Dieu, 'La Vierge et l'ordre des Frères Mineurs,' in *Maria. Études sur la sainte Vierge*, ed. Hubert du Manoir (Paris, 1952), 737–782, 783–831; Bartolomeo da Breganze O.P., *I sermones de beata Virgine* (1266), introduction and critical edition by Laura Gaffuri, *Fonti per la storia della terraferma veneta* 7 (Padova, 1993), LXXXIX–CLI; Franco Dal Pino, 'Culto e pietà mariana presso i frati minori nel medioevo,' in *Gli studi di mariologia medievale: bilancio storiografico*, ed. Clelia Maria Piastra (Firenze, 2001), 159–192; Laura Gaffuri, 'La predicazione domenicana su Maria (il secolo XIII),' in *Gli studi di mariologia medievale*, 193–215.

13 Clm 5531, fols. 6v–9r.

14 LeipUB 497, fols. 86r–88r.

15 On the importance of preaching as a way of instruction in the catechetical and pastoral action of the Church from the thirteenth century, see *Faire croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XI<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Publications de l'École française de Rome 51 (Roma, 1981), 7–16, 19–37, 39–65, 67–85, 337–361; Silvana Vecchio, 'Il decalogo nella predicazione del XIII secolo,' in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 10 (1989), 41–56; Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, 'La classificazione dei peccati tra settenario e decalogo,' in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 5 (1994), 377–393; Silvana

'ultimate audience'<sup>16</sup> of Berthold's Latin model sermons consisted of laypeople, through the mediation of the preaching professionals who were the direct addressees of the texts,<sup>17</sup> is explicitly asserted in the text for the Annunciation about the *Ave Maria*: 'And, aiming to let you repeat more gladly this greeting to the glorious Virgin's honor, I intend to explain simply and concisely some of its words, for the edification of ignorant laypeople.'<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, at the end of the sermon, Berthold refers to the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5: 'On this subject and on the whole prayer you can find many useful arguments for simple people in the fifth sermon of the *Rusticano de dominicis*.'<sup>19</sup> Connected to this are his frequent statements about the impossibility and difficulty of preaching about Mary: The impossibility of praising her with adequate human words, but also the difficulty of explaining the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption to the *simplices*. In the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5, for example, Berthold asserts that the angel's salutation to Mary 'is so full of sweetness and

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Vecchio, 'Le prediche e l'istruzione religiosa,' in *La predicazione dei Frati*, 301–335; Bert Roest, *Franciscan literature of religious instruction before the Council of Trent* (Leiden-Boston, 2004), 1–119; Paul W. Robinson, 'Sermons on the Lord's Prayer and the Rogation Days in the Later Middle Ages,' in *A history of prayer. The first to the fifteenth century*, ed. Roy Hammerling (Leiden-Boston, 2008), 441–462; Ronald J. Stansbury, 'Preaching and pastoral care in the Middle Ages,' in *A companion to pastoral care in the Late Middle Ages (1200–1500)*, ed. Ronald J. Stansbury, Brill's companions to the Christian tradition 22 (Leiden-Boston, 2010), 23–39.

16 I borrow the expression from D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 111.

17 The prologue of Berthold to the *Rusticani* is well known: Heinrich Denifle, 'Zu Bruder Berthold,' in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 27 (1883), 303 f. In this prologue, Berthold explains that he had to write his sermons because, as he preached them to his audience, some poorly instructed clergymen took wrong notes: 'Istos sermones ea necessitate coactus sum notare (cum tamen invitissime hoc fecerim) quod, cum predicarem eos in populo, quidam simplices clerici et religiosi, non intelligentes in quibus verbis et sententiis veritas penderet, voluerant notare sibi illa, que poterant capere, et sic multa falsa notaverunt. Quod cum ego deprehendissem timui, ne, si talia predicarentur qualia ipsi notaverant, populus in errore duceretur per falsitates illas, et hoc necessitate coactus sum ipse notare, quod predicavi, ut ad istorum sermonum exemplar alia falsa et inordinate notata corrigerentur. Nec est necesse ut alii litterati et periti eos conscribant, cum multo meliores sermones a magistris facti sunt, qui sufficient ad omnem edificationem et eruditionem fidei et morum, et ideo relinquunt istos rudibus et simplicibus mei similibus et qui alta et subtilia non possunt capere, quia nec in sententiis nec in dictamine aliquid pretendunt, quod sit a litteratoribus appetendum vel curandum.'

18 LeipUB 497, fol. 86r: 'et, ut magis libeat hanc salutationem frequentare ad gloriose Virginis honorem, breviter aliqua eius verba exponere propono simpliciter ad rudiorum laycorum edificationem.'

19 LeipUB 497, fol. 88r: 'De hac materia et de tota salutatione multa pro simplicibus invenies utilia in Rusticano de dominicis in quinto sermone.'

of gentleness ... that no mortal can fully explain it.<sup>20</sup> In the same sermon, speaking about the name of Mary, the preacher states: 'However, at present I think it is better to say nothing about this name, because it claims a spiritual sermon for itself; let me speak less about that which by all means is its own spiritual book; but I think that the whole world itself cannot contain the books which should be written on this name, Mary.'<sup>21</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 57 returns to the same topic (the name of Mary) for the Annunciation: 'As no one can count the sea's drops ... so no pure creature can say anything about the Virgin Mary's excellence.'<sup>22</sup> Later in the same sermon, speaking about Christ's spiritual charisma since his conception, the preacher eludes the topic, saying it is too hard to explain it: 'Christ, the Word made flesh, the Lord, had fullness of all knowledge, not only concerning known subjects [*cognita*], but also in relation to the different ways and modes of knowing [*cognoscendi modos et differentias*], which I leave out ... Indeed, our Lord Christ had the perfection and the fullness of all merit, which I also omit because of the topic's difficulty.'<sup>23</sup> In the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5, Berthold sublimely describes the inexplicable paradoxes of the Incarnation:

Who can tell how a mother was virgin, how God a human being, how a daughter was a mother, how a son a father, how the creator a creature, how the generator generated? How can there be in one person simultaneously the rich and the poor, in Mary's womb the mortal and the immortal, the eternal and the temporal, the highest and the lowest, the last and the first? How did the Virgin carry the one by whom she was carried, enclose the one by whom she was enclosed, and herself the sky, the world, the stars, the sea?<sup>24</sup>

20 Clm 5531, fol. 7r: 'tam plenissima est dulcedine, omni suavitate ... ut nullus mortalium eam valeat plene exponere.'

21 Clm 5531, fol. 7r: 'De quo tamen nomine ad presens melius tacendum estimo, suum enim spiritalem sermonem sibi vendicat; minus dixerim, quid immo suos libros spiritales, immo nec ipsum mundum arbitror capere posse qui scribendi sunt libros de hoc nomine Maria.'

22 LeipUB 497, fol. 85r: 'Sicut enim nemo valet guttas maris dinumerare ... sic nulla pura creatura excellentiam Virginis Marie valet aliquatenus enarrare.'

23 LeipUB 497, fol. 85v: 'in verbo incarnato Christo, scilicet Domino, fuit omnis sapientie plenitudo non solum quantum ad cognita, verum etiam quantum ad cognoscendi modos et differentias, quas transilio ... In Christo enim Domino fuit omnis meriti profectio et plenitudo, quam similiter transeo propter materie difficultatem.'

24 Clm 5531, fol. 8r: 'Quis enarrabit quomodo mater virgo, quomodo Deus homo, quomodo filia mater, quomodo filius pater, quomodo creator creatura, genitor genitura, quomodo sunt simul in unum dives et pauper, in uno ventre Marie mortalis et immortalis, eternus

Berthold's words recall those of Bernard of Clairvaux, one of his favorite sources,<sup>25</sup> and accentuate the complexity of the themes to be handled in his Marian sermons.

A first key question is the exceptional birth of Christ. Mary keeps her virginity before and after Jesus' birth, her pregnancy is easy, and her delivery is painless. She enjoys at the same time the benediction of being mother and the privilege of virginity, while she avoids sexual corruption and sterility. The *Rus-ticanus de Dominicis* 5 about the *Ave Maria* approaches this argument in the explanation of the word *Ave*, which is interpreted as '*sine ve*,' without sorrow: 'She was the only one who avoided sin [*ve culpe*] in conceiving and pain [*ve doloris*] in giving birth ... And the holy Virgin conceived without violation and gave birth without pain; she was fertile without corruption and a mother without pain; without sorrow [*a ve*], because she avoided the curse of sterility and the corruption of conception, because she conceived as a virgin and remained a virgin after her delivery.'<sup>26</sup> In the final part of the same sermon, enumerating twelve privileges of Mary, the preacher synthesises: 'The second [blessing] was to conceive without corruption; the third was to carry your son without labor; the fourth was to give birth without pain; the fifth, to have as a son God, the creator of all things.'<sup>27</sup> Here Berthold also stresses Mary's prerogative of being the mother of God. Mary's particular condition elevates her above the human race and all the angels: 'However, in Mary was realised a union which was not given, nor will it be given, to any angel or human being ... The fecundity of humanity is good, the chastity of angels is better, but Mary 'has chosen the best part,'<sup>28</sup> because she chose the fecundity of humanity and the chastity of angels and was mother and virgin; not only mother of an upright man, but mother of

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et temporalis, summus et imus, ultimus et primus, quomodo Virgo portabat a quo portabatur, circumdabat a quo circumdabatur, et ipsa celum, mundus, astra, pontus?

25 In his Marian texts, Berthold often quotes Bernard's sermons for the Assumption and the octave of the Assumption, and the sermons *In laudibus Virginis Matris*: See Sancti Bernardi *Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, Henri Rochais, and Charles H. Talbot (Rome, 1957–77), vol. 4, 13–58; vol. 5, 228–274.

26 Clm 5531, fol. 7r: 'Ipsa sola caruit ve culpe in concipiendo et ve doloris in parturiendo ... Et beata Virgo fuit sine fractione in concipiendo et sine dolore in parturiendo; fuit sine corruptione fecunda et sine dolore puerpera; a ve, quia caruit ve maledictionis sterilium et ve corruptionis concipientium, quia virgo concepit et post partum virgo permansit.'

27 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'secunda [benedictio] quia sine corruptione concepisti; tertia quia sine gravamine filium portasti; quarta quia sine dolore peperisti; quinta quia Deum creatorem omnium filium habuisti.'

28 Lc 10, 42: 'Maria optimam partem elegit.'



a man who was God.<sup>29</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 29 for Christmas returns to the same subject, using similar arguments:

The holy Virgin Mary, thanks to her fullness of grace, was, so to speak, more than human and angel, because she was a virgin and God's mother. This privilege is not given to any angel in Heaven nor to any human being on earth. An angel, even if a virgin, cannot have children; in the same way, a human being can have children, but loses virginity. Mary, however, has no equal in this, nor has she followers ... Virginity and fecundity coexisted only in her.<sup>30</sup>

Further, the sermon recalls again the privileges of Mary's delivery: 'Only in her coexisted virginity and fecundity, that is delivery; in these things [God] honored her wonderfully with a peculiar privilege of grace, and this in three ways. It was incredible that today the holy Mary gave birth without pain. It was more admirable that, giving birth today, she remained a virgin. It was wonderful that, giving birth bodily to one son, she became spiritually the mother of an infinite many children, that is, of all Christians.'<sup>31</sup> The preacher uses a metaphor to explain the difficult doctrine of perpetual virginity: 'As my face's image, entering and exiting a mirror, doesn't break it, but remains intact, in the same way she remained a virgin in conceiving and giving birth, and she will be a virgin forever.'<sup>32</sup> In this sermon, the topic of Mary's exceptional maternity is enriched by an allusion to the theme of Mary's universal motherhood of all

29 Clm 5531, fol. 8r: 'tamen unio facta est in Maria, quod nulli angelorum vel hominum datum est nec dabitur ... Bona pars est fecunditas hominum, melior est castitas angelorum, sed *Maria optimam partem elegit*, quia et fecunditatem hominum et castitatem angelorum, ut esset mater et virgo; non tamen mater iustumque hominis, sed mater Dei et hominis.'

30 LeipUB 497, fols. 42r–42v: 'Beata autem Virgo Maria ex gratie plenitudine, ut ita dicam, plusquam homo et angelus fuit, quia virgo et mater Dei. Nullus enim angelorum in celo vel hominum in terra hoc privilegio donatus est. Nam angelus, etsi virgo, prolem tamen non habet et similiter homo, etsi prolem habuit, virginitatem perdidit. Maria autem in hoc nec similem visa est nec habere sequentem ... In ea enim sola concordabant virginitas et fecunditas.'

31 LeipUB 497, fol. 42v: 'Fuit enim in ea sola hec virginitas, fecunditas sive partus, in qua eam singulari privilegio gratie honoravit mirabiliter, et hoc tripliciter. Mirabile enim fuit quod beata Maria hodie sine dolore peperit. Mirabilius quod hodie pariendo virgo permansit. Mirabilissimum quod unum corporaliter pariendo filium, spiritualiter multorum infinitorum, id est omnium christianorum mater effecta est.'

32 LeipUB 497, fol. 42v: 'Sicut faciei mee ymago ingrediendo et egrediendo speculum non frangit sed integrum remanet, sic et ipsa concipiendo et pariendo virgo permansit et in eternum permanet virgo.'

Christians that recalls in an implicit way the traditional parallel between Mary and the Church.<sup>33</sup> In the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 58, the other sermon about the *Ave Maria*, he returns to this connection between the virginal maternity and the unique privilege of being mother of God:

The first blessing, for which she must particularly be praised by all saints and angels and the aforesaid blessed above all, is that she gave birth as a virgin, not to any of the saints, but to God himself, saint of saints. For any holy woman, it is sufficient to have kept her chastity, without giving birth, or, without keeping it, to have given birth to any of the saints. Mary will not be deprived of this peculiar privilege, that is giving birth to God and keeping her virginity.<sup>34</sup>

In sermon 108 for the Assumption, which enumerates twelve privileges of Mary, her virginity, fertility, and her conscious choice of chastity are the better parts that Mary has chosen, leaving to the common women the disadvantages of sterility and corruption.<sup>35</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 109, *infra octavam Assumptionis*, also lists twelve prerogatives of Mary, four virtues, four graces, and four honors. Among the graces, we find again her perpetual virginity ('she conceived and she gave birth as virgin')<sup>36</sup> and the fact of being mother of God: 'She not only gave birth as virgin, but she gave birth to Him.'<sup>37</sup> Finally, the *Rusticanus de sanctis* 118, a sermon on the Nativity of Mary, synthesizes in one sentence the privileges given to Mary's body: 'Christ showed particular wonders also in her body, that is fecundity without corruption, pregnancy without labor, delivery without pain.'<sup>38</sup>

33 Laura Gaffuri, 'Verginità e modelli religiosi nella predicazione mariana del domenicano Bartolomeo da Breganze (†1270),' in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 12 (1991), 43 ff.; Luigi Gambero, 'Appunti patristici per lo studio della mariologia,' in *Gli studi di mariologia medievale*, 12–16.

34 LeipUB 497, fol. 87v: 'Prima benedictio pro qua singulariter ab omnibus sanctis et angelis est laudanda et beatissima predicanda pre universis est quod peperit virgo et non quemcumque ex sanctis, sed ipsum Deum sanctum sanctorum. Sufficiat unicuique beatarum feminarum virginitatem suam conservasse et non peperisse vel non servasse et peperisse quemcumque sanctorum. Hoc privilegium singulare, videlicet peperisse Deum et virginitatem conservasse, non auferetur a Maria.'

35 LeipUB 497, fol. 164r.

36 LeipUB 497, fol. 166v: 'virgo concepit, virgo peperit.'

37 LeipUB 497, fol. 166v: 'non solum virgo peperit, sed Ipsum peperit.'

38 LeipUB 497, fol. 179r: 'etiam in corpore suo Christus singularissima mirabilia ostendit, videlicet fecunditatem sine corruptione, gravidationem sine gravamine, parturitionem sine dolore.'

A second important theme handled in Berthold's Marian sermons is grace. Mary's fullness of grace is approached by the preacher especially in the two texts about the *Ave Maria*, where he explains the words *gratia plena*, and in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 29 for Christmas. In the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5, comparing Mary and St. Stephen, he states that Mary's grace is higher: 'Full of grace not such as the holy Stephen ... He was full of suitable grace, which was enough, Mary indeed was full of accumulated grace, which overflowed. Stephen was full of four graces ... Mary indeed was full of all graces.'<sup>39</sup> Though she received so much grace, the Virgin was still humble: 'All floods of grace in Heaven and on Earth flow into the sea, that is, into Mary; however, the sea doesn't overflow because of pride, so she always kept with humility the last place in this world.'<sup>40</sup> A peculiarity of Mary's grace is its superabundance, so that believers and even sinners can take advantage of it: 'Full of grace: A full vase, if it is touched or tilted, easily pours out its liquid; and if we implore Mary piously, humbly, and with purity, we will easily obtain grace from her ... And the holy Virgin, full of all grace, supplies us with something of her abundance, if we beg her humbly and piously.'<sup>41</sup> The Virgin Mary is herself the 'throne of grace ... in whom every grace rests.'<sup>42</sup>

The theme of the *plenitudo gratiae* and the comparison with Stephen return in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 29 for Christmas. Fullness of grace, explains the preacher, is something quite exceptional: 'Even if many saints had great grace ... nevertheless, none of the saints are described in the texts as "full of grace," with the three exceptions of St. Stephen, the blessed Virgin, and Jesus Christ ... These three are called "full of grace" because of singular privileges, which they had in life and in death.'<sup>43</sup> The reference in this case is Christ, since the fullness of grace in Stephen and Mary derives from some similarities

39 Clm 5531, fol. 7r: 'Gratia plena non sicut beatus Stephanus ... Ille fuit plenus gratia apta que sufficit, Maria vero gratia cumulata que supereffluit. Stephanus plenus fuit gratia quadruplici ... Maria autem omni gratia plena.'

40 Clm 5531, fol. 7r: 'Omnia flumina gratiarum que sunt in celo et in terra in mare fluent, id est in Mariam, et tamen mare non redundat per superbiam, sed semper per humilitatem novissimum locum in hoc mundo tenuit.'

41 Clm 5531, fols. 7r-7v: 'Gratia plena: vas plenum si tangitur vel inclinatur facile liquorem effundit, et nos si devote, humiliter et pure Mariam imploramus ab ipsa facillime gratiam optinebimus ... Et beata Virgo omni gratia plena nobis humiliter ac devote petentibus de sua plenitudine aliquando refundit.'

42 Clm 5531, fol. 7v: 'thronus gratie ... in qua omnis gratia requiescit.'

43 LeipUB 497, fol. 42r: 'Licet plurimi sanctorum magnam habuerint gratiam ... nullus tamen sanctorum legitur in textu "plenus gratia" nisi tres, videlicet beatus Stephanus, beata Virgo et Iesus Christus ... Dicuntur autem hii tres singulariter pleni gratia, propter singularia privilegia gratie que pre ceteris habent tam in morte quam in vita.'

they have with Jesus: Stephen was the first martyr, so he was the first to follow Christ's example and to imitate His passion. Mary was rather a martyr with her soul: 'The holy Virgin, alone among all others, suffered for Christ a passion with her soul.'<sup>44</sup> Additionally, if Jesus has the unique grace of being both human and God ('*homo et Deus*'), Stephen and Mary have similarities with the angels: 'Stephen, thanks to his fullness of grace, was among human beings like a human and like an angel in his appearance ... The holy Virgin Mary, thanks to her fullness of grace, was, so to speak, more than human and angel, because she was virgin and God's mother.'<sup>45</sup> Again in this case, the preacher accentuates Mary's higher grace, inferior only to that of Christ himself.

In the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 58, the other sermon about the *Ave Maria*, his explanation of the words *gratia plena* again contains a comparison between Mary's grace and that of Stephen or the other saints, describing once more the overflowing of grace with various metaphors (the sea, the sun, medicines):

We read that Stephen was full of grace, but not in the same way that Mary was full. He was full of suitable grace, which was enough; Mary indeed was full of accumulated grace, which overflowed ... No saint is equally perfect and adorned with all the graces, but each one is given according to the measure of Christ's gift, who gives to each as he wishes and also according to the zeal of the person himself. But Mary was full of every grace, so that she would not be weaker in any part of her virtue than another. She is called sea [*mare*], because, as all rivers flow into the sea, in the same way, all grace flows into Mary; and, as the sea supplies the water for all lands, in the same way, the holy Virgin is so full of grace that she can give plenty of grace to all people, both the upright and sinners ... Like the sun, which enlightens all the stars ... From the abundance of her own grace, the holy Virgin can illumine and fill up all people with grace, whether greater or lessor, lower or higher, if they present themselves to her ... Therefore, no matter what vice or illness of the soul oppresses or tires you: Go to this apothecary, because there you will find effective cures for all illnesses.<sup>46</sup>

44 LeipUB 497, fol. 42r: 'Beata autem Virgo pre cunctis sola pro Christo passionem pertulit in anima.'

45 LeipUB 497, fol. 42r: 'Stephanus fuit ex gratie plenitudine quam habuit inter homines tamquam homo et angelus in aspectu ... Beata autem Virgo Maria ex gratie plenitudine, ut ita dicam, plusquam homo et angelus fuit, quia virgo et mater Dei.'

46 LeipUB 497, fols. 86v–87r: 'Legitur Stephanus plenus gratia, sed non sic plenus qualiter Maria. Ille enim fuit plenus gratia apta que sufficit, Maria vero plena gratia cumulata que supereffluit ... Nemo enim sanctorum in omnibus graciis est equaliter perfectus et

The metaphor of the sun returns also in sermon 110 of the *santorale*, where Mary is described as more helpful for the believers than any other saint, since she is full of grace and so much more useful in obtaining graces and gifts from God himself.<sup>47</sup> As the sun, she can never lose her grace, and she is a great help against temptation and sin.<sup>48</sup> Some words about Mary's fullness of grace can be found also in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 118 for the Nativity of Mary: 'The second holy Virgin's prerogative is that she is not only more virtuous than all saints, but also more graceful ... any grace present in the saints in a scattered way was concentrated in her. She had so much grace, that not only her soul, like some of the loftiest saints, was filled up with grace, but also her whole heart and her whole body.'<sup>49</sup>

Consequently, Mary is full of grace in a unique way compared to any other saint. Her overflowing grace is an important aid for all believers, particularly for sinners, who can hope to have mercy through her mediation and assistance: 'She holds with powerful hands ... the sword of punishment, which the judge already drew ... but the sublimity and the highness of her mercy transcends the heavens, and, as certain ones wish to think, her mercy is as great as that of all the saints and all nine choirs of angels.'<sup>50</sup> These are Berthold's words in the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5; in the same sermon, Mary is called the 'mediator and advocate of human beings.'<sup>51</sup> In the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 106 for the Assumption, the preacher states that 'through blessed Mary, God is showing favor

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ornatus, sed secundum mensuram donationis Christi, qui dividit singulis prout vult et etiam secundum studium hominis ipsius. Maria vero omni gratia plena fuit, ita quod ex nulla parte alicuius virtutis esset debilior quam ex altera ... Dicitur autem mare quia sicut in mare omnia flumina fluunt, sic omnis gratia in Mariam, et sicut mare omnibus terris aquas refundit, sic et beata Virgo adeo plena est aquis gratiarum ut omnibus tam iustis quam peccatoribus gratiam valeat impartiri habundanter ... Sicut enim sol omnes illuminat stellas ... Sic et beata Virgo omnes maiores et minores, omnes inferiores et superiores ex habundantia gratie sue, si se ei exhiberent, illuminare et gratia implere posset ... Unde quocumque vicio sive infirmitate anime deprimeris seu fatigaris ad hanc apothecam recurre, antidota enim omnium infirmitatum in ea reperies efficacissima.'

47 LeipUB 497, fol. 170r.

48 LeipUB 497, fol. 170r.

49 LeipUB 497, fols. 178v–179r: 'Secunda prerogativa beate Virginis est quod non solum omnibus sanctis virtuosior, sed etiam graciosior ... quicquid enim gratie in sanctis fuit spersim, in ea totum coacervatum est. Ita ut in tantum habundaret gratia, ut non solum anima, ut quorundam maximorum sanctorum, gratia repletur, sed et totum cor et totum corpus.'

50 Clm 5531, fol. 7v: 'Gladium vindicte quem iudex vibravit ... ipsa potenti manu retinet ... sublimitas autem sive altitudo misericordie eius celos trascendit et forte, ut quidam putare volunt, tanta est quanta misericordia omnium sanctorum vel omnium IX ordinum angelorum.'

51 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'hominum mediatrix et advocata.'

to sinners';<sup>52</sup> in the same cycle, sermon 108 defines Mary as the 'mother and queen of mercy,' who has chosen mercy and leaves justice to God.<sup>53</sup>

The theme of grace is connected with the mystery of the Incarnation, since all Mary's bodily and spiritual privileges derive from her assent to becoming God's mother. The union with Christ, in Mary's case, is not only mystical, but also physical, as Berthold explains in the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5: 'He [God] is in Mary in a more excellent way through his incarnation and in Christ through union; this union is achieved in Mary in a way that isn't given, nor will it be given, to any other angel or human being.'<sup>54</sup> And further: 'The angel also says "God is with you," in a different way than with other creatures, because he is with you through his incarnation ... God was with you in your mother's womb, not in the same way he was with other women, because he sanctified you there with glory; with you in your womb, unlike with any other person; with you in Heaven, not like with any other angel or saint.'<sup>55</sup> This union transforms Mary's body and soul; another sermon on the *Ave Maria* gives more details about this:

Behold in what an excellent way God was with her, in a different way than the other saints, even if they were virtuous. For any one of them, it is sufficient that God is with him in a shared will, that is, his heart is changed to desire God's will. But God acted otherwise in the holy Mary, because he didn't only change her heart to his will, but he also transformed her whole flesh, so to speak, into something divine. In the same way, he transformed all her bones, all her limbs, her whole blood, so that not a single drop of her blood remained unchanged. In the same way, he transformed all her senses, all her powers and her soul's faculties, and all her affections. He changed all these things in her as if into something divine, and he filled her up with the Holy Spirit and confirmed her in her state in such a way, that from that moment, that is, from her son's conception, she was not able to sin, nor wanted to commit sin.<sup>56</sup>

52 LeipUB 497, fol. 161r: 'per beatam Mariam propiciatur Dominus peccatoribus.'

53 LeipUB 497, fol. 164v: 'mater et regina misericordie.' On the intercessory role of Mary, see Gaffuri, 'Verginità e modelli religiosi,' 31.

54 Clm 5531, fol. 8r: 'Est excellentius autem in Maria per incarnationem et in Christo per unionem, que tamen unio facta est in Maria, quod nulli angelorum vel hominum datum est nec dabitur.'

55 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'Item dicit angelus "Dominus tecum", aliter quam cum aliis creaturis, quia tecum per incarnationem ... Dominus tecum in utero matris, tecum non sicut cum alia femina, ut te ibi gloriosissime sanctificaret, tecum in utero tuo, non sicut cum aliquo homine, tecum in celo, non sicut cum aliquo angelo vel sancto.'

56 LeipUB 497, fol. 87r: 'Ecce quam excellentissimo modo aliter fuit Dominus cum ea, aliter cum ceteris sanctis, quantumcumque virtuosus. Sufficit enim unicuique illorum ut Dominus sit cum eo in concordia voluntatis, ut videlicet cor eius mutet in voluntatem Dei.'

The mystical and physical union with Christ, the transformation of the body and of the soul, as well as this superabundance of grace, are too magnanimous to be accomplished by a human being. So Mary received a particular spiritual privilege, which let her bear all these graces within her humanity, as the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 109 explains:

The fourth [grace she had] was that she was flooded and filled with so much grace in the conception of her Son in her mortal body, that, because of her exceeding fervor, superabundance of grace, and incomparable infusion of the Spirit, her mortal body did not die. We also see the great saints give from themselves [*a se deficere*] when they receive an abundance of grace ... Thus, how could a young girl bear as much grace as, I think, all the people of the world in this life could not secure for themselves, a grace which filled and pervaded her in such an incomparable way, that it filled up not only her soul, but also her whole body? ... For unless God would invite her into a shelter of singular strength, a mortal heart and body would never be able to sustain such great grace, but would need to continuously give itself out.<sup>57</sup>

A similar idea is affirmed in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 118 for the Nativity of the Virgin: 'It is admirable ... that her heart could bear so much grace in her son's conception, so much pain during her son's passion, so much care for Christ's Church.'<sup>58</sup> Bearing so much grace is itself a grace.

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Sed aliter operabatur in beata Maria, quia non solum cor eius mutavit in eius voluntatem, sed etiam totam eius carnem immutavit, ut ita dicam, in quoddam divinum. Similiter et omnia eius ossa, omnia eius membra, omnem eius sanguinem, ita ut nec quidem aliqua gutta sanguinis eius foret que non immutaretur. Sic et omnes eius sensus et omnes vires eius et potestas anime eius et cunctas eius affectiones. Omnia hec in ea immutavit quasi in quoddam divinum et sic Spiritu Sancto replevit et sic eam in illo statu confirmavit, ut ab illo, id est ab inicio conceptionis filii, nullatenus peccare de cetero posset vel vellet.'

57 LeipUB 497, fol. 166v: 'Quarta quod tantum donum gratie qua perfusa et repleta est in conceptione filii in corpore mortali percipere potuit et conservare, quod eius corpus mortale non perit ex nimio fervore et superhabundancia gratie et spiritus infusione incomparabili. Videmus etiam magnos sanctos cum habundanciam gratie percipiunt a se deficere ... Quomodo ergo puella tantam gratiam ferre potuit quantam omnes homines mundi in hac vita ut estimo non perceperunt, que etiam tam incomparabiliter eam replevit et perfudit, quod non solum animam eius, sed et totum corpus adimplevit? ... Nisi enim umbraculum fortitudinis singularis ei Deus adhibuisset, tantam gratiam mortale cor et corpus numquam sustinisset sed a se continuo defecisset.'

58 LeipUB 497, fol. 179r: 'admirandus est ... quod cor suum tantam potuit gratiam sustinere in filii conceptione, tantum dolorem in filii passione, tantam sollicitudinem semper pro Ecclesia Christi.'

Among the spiritual privileges given to Mary, other important topics are those concerning the relation between Mary and sin. The main lines of Berthold's argumentation are three: First, the conception of Mary was natural and not immaculate from original sin, but Mary was sanctified in her mother's body before her birth, as Jeremiah and John the Baptist. Second, she had a pure life and she did not commit any sin before her maternity (even if, potentially, she could have sinned). Third, after Christ's conception it became definitively impossible for her to sin. So Mary's whole life was free from actual sin, a unique privilege among all saints.

The topic of Mary's conception is approached in two passages. The first, from the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 57 for the Annunciation, is actually about the peculiarities of Christ's conception, but nonetheless defines the characteristics of the Virgin's conception:

We do not find in any saint, nor in the holy Virgin, anything of these things we find in Christ himself. Today, when he was conceived, the holy Virgin conceived not only his flesh, but an ensouled flesh also united to the Word, not burdened by any sin, fully holy and immaculate; and for this reason, she is called mother of God, she is the glorious Virgin Mary. And from his conception Christ had the fullness of the spiritual gifts, that is, the fullness of grace, the fullness of wisdom, and the fullness of merit. The holy Virgin had none of these when she was conceived.<sup>59</sup>

Berthold's statement is clear: Christ's prerogatives in his conception are unique, and the Virgin does not share them with him. The other passage, from the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 106 for the Assumption, concerns explicitly the Virgin:

The Ark, which was gold-plated inside and outside with pure gold, is the holy Virgin, who was interiorly and outwardly pure above all others, in her body and in her soul. The Ark was not made of gold, and likewise, the holy Virgin was conceived according to the way of common nature. But she was inwardly and outwardly gilded with the purest gold, because she was sanctified in her mother's womb among all other children, and she

59 LeipUB 497, fol. 85v: 'Nichil enim talium repperimus in quoquam sancto vel etiam in beata Virgine quale in ipso [Christo]. Cum enim hodie conciperetur, concepit Virgo beata non solum carnem, verumetiam carnem animatam et verbo unitam, nullo peccato obnoxiam, sed omnino sanctam et immaculatam, ratione cuius mater Dei dicitur, et est gloriosissima Virgo Maria, et ab instanti conceptionis habuit Christus plenitudinem carismatum spiritualium, videlicet plenitudinem gratie, plenitudinem sapientie et plenitudinem meriti. Nichil talium habuit beata Virgo cum conciperetur.'



was further purified in an incomparable way in her son's conception ... so that she was free from actual sin during her whole life. (Note Jeremiah's and John the Baptist's sanctification).<sup>60</sup>

Further, Berthold insists on the uniqueness of Christ's conception: 'The urn was made entirely of gold, that is, Christ's body, which was in her. Christ was conceived without sin; there was no frailty of this sort in his conception. He was not conceived like the holy Mary, but he was the only one who was conceived, was born, and who lived without sin.'<sup>61</sup> Finally, a short allusion to Mary's sanctification in her mother's body can be found in the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5 about the *Ave Maria*: 'God be with you in your mother's womb ... to sanctify you there with glory.'<sup>62</sup> So Berthold follows, without variations, Bernard's doctrine about Mary's sanctification after her conception, refusing the theory of Mary's immaculate conception.<sup>63</sup>

After her sanctification, Mary 'was free from actual sin during her whole life.'<sup>64</sup> Among the twelve privileges listed by the sermon from the *dominicale* about the *Ave Maria*, two concern this characteristic: 'The first benediction is that, also before your son's conception, you lived in a way incomparably purer and more saintly than all mortals ... the sixth, that after his conception, you didn't feel any temptation, nor you were able to sin.'<sup>65</sup> A text for the Nativity of

60 LeipUB 497, fol. 160v: 'Archa que intus et extra deaurata fuit auro mundissimo est beata Virgo, que mundissima pre omnibus fuit interius et exterius in corpore et anima. Archa non fuit aurea, ita beata Virgo per viam nature communis fuit concepta. Sed intus et extra fuit deaurata auro mundissimo, quia et in utero matris sue fuit sanctificata pre ceteris omnibus pueris et super hoc in conceptione filii incomparabiliter mundata ... ita ut a peccato actuali toto tempore vite sue esset libera et immunis. (Nota de Ieremie et Iohannis Baptiste sanctificatione).'

61 LeipUB 497, fol. 160v: 'Urna fuit aurea tota, hoc est corpus Christi quod in ea erat. Christus sine peccato conceptus fuit, nichil fragilitatis huiusmodi in sua conceptione erat. Non fuit conceptus ut beata Maria, sed solus sine peccato conceptus est, natus et conversatus.'

62 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'Dominus tecum in utero matris ... ut te ibi gloriosissime sanctificaret.'

63 On the Immaculate disputation, see Kari E. Borresen, *Anthropologie médiévale et théologie Mariale* (Oslo-Bergen-Tromsø, 1971), 23–69; Marielle Lamy, 'Les plaidoiries pour l'immaculée conception au Moyen Age (XI<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles),' in *Gli studi di mariologia medievale*, 255–274. On Bernard's position, see Claudio Leonardi, 'La mariologia di Bernardo di Clairvaux nelle "Homiliae in laudibus Virginis Matris,"' in *Figure poetiche e figure teologiche nella mariologia dei secoli XI e XII*, ed. Clelia M. Piastra and Francesco Santi (Firenze, 2004), 129–134.

64 LeipUB 497, fol. 160v: 'a peccato actuali toto tempore vite sue esset libera et immunis.'

65 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'prima benedictio est quia etiam ante conceptum filii tui incomparabiliter purius et sanctius omnibus mortalibus vixisti ... sexta, quia post conceptionem fomitem nec sensisti nec peccare potuisti.'

Mary states that ‘The holy Virgin had this [clear conscience] in such a perfect way, that during her whole life her conscience was never polluted, not only by the mud of deadly sin, but also by the dust of venial sin.’<sup>66</sup> The other sermon about the *Ave Maria*, the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 58, expatiates more upon this subject: First, it interprets the word ‘*ave*’ as ‘*sine ve*’ (without dolor), but this time it does not refer to delivery pains. Here, ‘*ve*’ is ‘*ve peccati*’ (dolor of sin): ‘*Ave*, that is, without three things by which all past, present, and future human persons are burdened, with the exception of you alone. So *ave*, that is, without dolor. This triple dolor is the sin of thought, word, and deed. No saint of any condition could escape from the oppression of some of these dolores during his life.’<sup>67</sup> And Berthold concludes: ‘So it is right to say *ave*, that is, without the dolor of sin.’<sup>68</sup> Mary lived avoiding all kinds of sin before her maternity, as well. Further, explaining the words ‘*Dominus tecum*’ (‘God is with you’) and ‘*Benedicta tu in mulieribus*’ (‘You are blessed among all women’), the sermon approaches the theme of the Incarnation and its spiritual effects on Mary: The Holy Spirit ‘confirmed her in her state in such a way that, from her son’s conception, she was not able to sin, nor did she want to commit sin.’<sup>69</sup> In the same text, the argument is later repeated: ‘The second benediction was that she was the only one, among angels and human beings, who after Christ’s conception was not able to sin, but she could nonetheless accumulate merits.’<sup>70</sup> The angels were confirmed after Lucifer’s fall and now cannot sin, but they also cannot earn the higher prize in Paradise. Human persons can rather merit a better position in the afterlife, but they are always exposed to the risk of temptation and sin; Mary is unique and superior to both: ‘Only the holy Virgin mother was not able to sin after her son’s conception, but she could only accumulate merits.’<sup>71</sup> According to Berthold, although confirmed after conceiving Christ, the Virgin

66 LeipUB 497, fol. 177v: ‘Hanc [amenam conscientiam] beata Virgo tam perfecte habuit ut conscientia sua numquam non dico luto mortali, sed nec pulvere venialis in omni vita sua fuerit maculata.’

67 LeipUB 497, fol. 86r: ‘*ave*, id est sine triplici quo omnes homines mundi preteriti, presentes et futuri sunt miserabiliter involuti, te sola excepta. Ideo *ave*, id est sine *ve*. Hoc triplex *ve* est peccatum cogitationis, locutionis et operis. Nullus sanctorum cuiuscumque conditionis evasit quin aliquo illorum *ve* dum vixit premeretur.’

68 LeipUB 497, fol. 86v: ‘Bene ergo dicitur *ave*, id est sine *ve* peccati.’

69 LeipUB 497, fol. 87r: ‘sic eam in illo statu confirmavit, ut ab illo, id est ab inicio conceptionis filii, nullatenus peccare de cetero posset vel vellet.’

70 LeipUB 497, fol. 87v: ‘Secunda eius benedictio, quia sola pre angelis et hominibus post Christi conceptionem peccare non potuit et tamen semper mereri potuit.’

71 LeipUB 497, fol. 87v: ‘sola beata Virgo mater peccare post filii sui conceptionem non potuit, sed tamen mereri.’

kept her free will and the chance to deserve a higher prize in the afterlife. In this way, just as in her virginal delivery, she was more perfect than angels and human beings, as one of the sermons for the Assumption states:

During her life she chose the best part of all human and angelic states, as is evident in the following way: The status of the angels was that, after their confirmation, they could not sin nor, as many say, merit any further substantial reward ... She chose the first part after her son's conception, but she left them the second one. The status of all human persons was that, during their lives, they could sin and accumulate merits. She left the first to all of us and only she chose the second.<sup>72</sup>

In the following sermon, the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 109, the same privilege is described as one of the four special graces given to Mary: 'One of these [graces] was that she never sinned during her life; further, and more admirable, she was never able to sin after her son's conception, but she could always accumulate merit until she lived ... Not committing sin until she lived, she was higher than all human beings ... Always accumulating merits during her life, she was higher than all angels.'<sup>73</sup> Here, Berthold also distinguishes between these two aspects, choosing his verbs carefully: Mary '*numquam peccavit*' ('never sinned') in her life, but after Christ's conception '*numquam peccare potuit*' ('was never able to sin'). This particular grace makes Mary different than any other saint:

The difference between Mary's fullness of grace and that of the other saints was the highest. Their fullness of grace acted in them so that they did not want to sin; but Mary's fullness of grace acted in her so that she did not want, nor could sin, from the moment of her son's conception. So big is the difference between not wanting and not being able to sin;

72 LeipUB 497, fol. 164r: 'Nam dum vixit elegit meliorem partem de statu omnium hominum et omnium angelorum, quod sic patet: status angelorum erat quod post confirmationem suam nec peccare potuerunt nec, ut multi dicunt, aliquod premium substantiale ulterius mereri ... Primam partem post conceptionem filii sui elegit, secundam illis reliquit. Status autem omnium hominum erat videlicet quod dum viverent peccare possent et mereri possent. Primam nobis omnibus reliquit, secunda sola elegit.'

73 LeipUB 497, fol. 166r: 'Quarum una fuit, quod in hac vita numquam peccavit; immo, quod mirabilis, quod post conceptione filii numquam peccare potuit dum vixit, sed semper mereri ... In hoc quod non peccavit dum vixit supra omnes homines fuit ... In hoc vero quod semper mereri in hac vita potuit, supra omnes angelos fuit.'

such also is the difference between Mary's fullness of grace and that of the other saints.<sup>74</sup>

If the impossibility of sinning after Christ's conception is clearly a peculiar grace given by the Holy Spirit, the purity of her life before her maternity nonetheless depends on Mary's free choice. For example, sermon 107 for the Assumption underscores Mary's free will in avoiding sin: 'She loved her soul so much, that she did not want to damage or to burden it with the smallest sin.'<sup>75</sup> Also the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 111 for the octave of the Assumption accentuates her pure intentions, comparing her to the sun:

Her whole life was absolutely pure in her secrets and in her intention, and because of the purity of her life and intention, when the prophet had to speak about God's incarnation, admiring her, he exclaimed: 'He set his tabernacle in the sun.'<sup>76</sup> He called her 'sun' because she lived more purely than all, and she had a purer intention than all in all her deeds, in eating, drinking, speaking, and other things, just as the sun is purer than other stars; and, just as no light in the sky or in the world can be compared to the brightness of the sun, so in the same way no saint's light can be compared to the light of the Virgin.<sup>77</sup>

If grace is the key word for defining the Virgin's prerogatives during her life, glory is the right word to describe Mary's status in Paradise. When approaching this characteristic, Berthold uses images of majesty and power: Mary has 'full power in the heavenly Jerusalem';<sup>78</sup> she is 'higher in dignity than all heavenly

74 LeipUB 497, fol. 179r: 'Maxima fuit diversitas inter plenitudinem gratie Marie et aliorum sanctorum. Illorum plenitudo in eis effecit quod peccare noluerunt; sed plenitudo Marie in ea fecit in conceptione filii, quod exinde peccare nec voluit nec potuit. Quanta est enim differentia inter nolle et non posse peccare, tanta est differentia inter plenitudinem gratie Marie et aliorum sanctorum.'

75 LeipUB 497, fol. 162r: 'Propriam animam in tantum dilexit, quod non fuit tam modicissimum peccatum per quod vellet ledere ac gravare.'

76 Sal 18, 6.

77 LeipUB 497, fol. 168r: 'tota vita eius in intimis suis et intentione sua purissima fuit, unde propter nimiam vite sue et intentionis puritatem, cum propheta de incarnatione Domini loqui deberet, eam admirans exclamavit: "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum". Ideo autem solem appellavit quia omnibus purius vixit et in omnibus que fecit sive in comedendo, bibendo, loquendo et huiusmodi, puriorem pre cunctis intentionem habuit, ut sol purior est omnibus stellis; et sicut nullum lumen in firmamento celi seu in mundo comparari potest claritati solis, sic nullum lumen sanctorum beate Virgini.'

78 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'plenam potestatem in celesti Ierusalem.'

choirs' and 'elevated above all human beings and angels';<sup>79</sup> she is the 'queen of Heaven,'<sup>80</sup> the 'Lady and empress' of all saints and angels<sup>81</sup> who 'could ask and do whatever she wants, with full will.'<sup>82</sup> This power allows her to obtain anything from her divine son: 'Because you can beg to the Father and, so to speak, command the Son, because you are his mother,' says the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5.<sup>83</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 58 similarly states: 'She can beg in favor of the believers like other saints and angels ... but only the holy Virgin has the higher glory that she can, if she wants, command her son.'<sup>84</sup> Similar words are used in sermons 108 and 109 of the *santorale* for the Assumption: 'She is the only one who can implore her son the Lord, when she wants to implore, and who can command him, when she wants to command';<sup>85</sup> 'when she wants, she can not only implore God like other saints, because he is the Lord and the creator of all things, but she can also command him, because he is her son.'<sup>86</sup> Finally, the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 118 compares some of Mary's prerogatives to those of the Trinity:

Compared to the Father, she is similar to him in some way. Just as the Father is the Son's only father, in the same way, she is the only mother of the same Son ... Compared to the Son, she is somehow similar to him. Just as the Son, because of his divinity, has Mary as a daughter and can command her, so also Mary has him as her son in his human nature, and she can command him because she is his mother ... Finally, compared to the Holy Spirit, she is somewhat similar, because just as the Holy Spirit is the father and giver of all graces, so also is she the mother and giver of all graces.<sup>87</sup>

79 LeipUB 497, fol. 85r: 'omnibus ordinibus celorum dignitate prelatā'; 'exaltata super omnes homines et angelos.'

80 LeipUB 497, fol. 162r: 'celi regina.'

81 LeipUB 497, fol. 164v: 'domina et imperatrix.'

82 LeipUB 497, fol. 162v: 'petere et facere poterit quicquid voluerit plena voluntate.'

83 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'quia et Patrem rogare et filio, pro modo loquendi, ut mater vales imperare.'

84 LeipUB 497, fol. 87v: 'cum ceteris sanctis et angelis potest efficaciter pro fidelibus exorare ... sola beata Virgo ulterius in gloria procedat, quia potest et filio, si voluerit, imperare.'

85 LeipUB 497, fol. 164v: 'ipsa sola filium Dominum cum voluerit rogare potest rogare, et cum voluerit filium iubere, potest iubere.'

86 LeipUB 497, fol. 167r: 'ipsa sola potest cum vult non solum supplicare cum ceteris sanctis Domino Deo, quia Dominus et creator omnium est, sed etiam imperare quia filius est eius.'

87 LeipUB 497, fol. 179r: 'Nam comparata Patri quodammodo similis invenitur. Sicut enim unicus Pater est pater Filii, sic ipsa unica est eiusdem mater filii ... Comparata Filio quodammodo similis invenitur. Sicut enim filius secundum divinitatem habet ipsam pro filia

Mary's position in the glory of Paradise has a direct consequence for believers, since her actions are more useful than those of the other saints.<sup>88</sup> Berthold also devotes space to the doctrine of the Assumption. In the *Rusticanus de Dominicis* 5, the preacher states that many angels and Christ himself delivered Mary into heaven: 'You ascended into Heaven with higher and wider glory and with a more abundant company of angels than other saints ... because Christ himself, as it is believed, came for her, to accompany her to the throne of glory.'<sup>89</sup> Sermons 108 and 109 for the feast of the Assumption are more detailed: 'As we devoutly think, she was not reduced to ashes like us, but she was glorified in her body with her son, which many of the saints try to demonstrate with many probable reasons ... God's son himself, her son, came with many angels for her;'<sup>90</sup> 'as we devoutly believe, she was taken up to Heaven with her body and her soul, while the other saints' bodies remained in ashes and earth; the holy Augustine and the holy Bernard, like many other holy doctors, demonstrate with many reasons that this is probable.'<sup>91</sup> The sentences '*ut creditur*' ('as it is believed'), '*ut pie opinamur*' ('as we devoutly think'), and '*ut pie existimamus*' ('as we devoutly believe'), as well as the references to the authorities of the saints, show the circumspection of Berthold regarding this topic, almost a suggestion of prudence for all preachers who should use his models.<sup>92</sup>

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et potest ei precipere, sic et ipsa eundem secundum quod homo est habet pro filio, et ut illius mater potest ei precipere ... Item, comparata Spiritui Sancto, quodammodo similis est, quia sicut Spiritus Sanctus pater et dator est omnium gratiarum, sic et ipsa mater est et datrix omnium gratiarum.'

88 LeipUB 497, fol. 170r.

89 Clm 5531, fol. 8v: 'cum maiori et ampliori gloria ac copiosiori angelorum comitatu quam aliquis sanctorum celos ascendisti ... quia etiam Christus personaliter, ut creditur, pro ea descendit ut eam ad thronum glorie gloriose deduceret.'

90 LeipUB 497, fol. 164r: 'ut pie opinamur non nobiscum est incinerata, sed cum filio suo et in corpore glorificata, quod multis rationibus probabilibus plures sanctorum demonstrare nituntur ... pro ipsa autem cum multitudine angelorum venit ipse filius Dei et filius suus.'

91 LeipUB 497, fol. 166v: 'ut pie existimamus, quod cum corpore et anima sit assumpta aliorum sanctorum corporibus in cinere et terra remanentibus, quod beatus Augustinus et beatus Bernardus diversis rationibus probabile esse demonstrant, sicut et alii plurimi doctorum sanctorum.'

92 On the Assumption, see Henri Barré, 'La croyance à l'Assomption corporelle en Occident de 750 à 1150 environ,' in *Études mariales* 7 (1949), 63–123; Marie-Dominique Chenu, 'La croyance à l'Assomption corporelle en Occident de 1150 à 1250 environ,' in *Études Mariales* 8 (1950), 13–32; Celestino Piana, 'La morte e l'assunzione della beata Vergine nella letteratura medievale,' in *Atti del congresso nazionale mariano*, Roma 29 aprile-3 maggio 1947, (Roma, 1948), 281–361; Laura Gaffuri, 'Per una storia della primitiva diffusione della "Legenda Aurea": i "Sermones de beata Virgine" del domenicano Bartolomeo da Breganze (†1270),' in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 27 (1991), 238; Ferruccio Gastaldelli, 'Una

In addition to exploring the Virgin's prerogatives, the sermons of the Franciscan from Regensburg showcase one more important theme: Virtue.<sup>93</sup> Before becoming Christ's mother and the queen of Paradise, Mary was a virtuous woman who led an exemplary life. From this perspective, she is presented in Berthold's sermons as a model of behavior for common believers.<sup>94</sup> When approaching this topic, the texts become more pastoral and less theological. Even if Mary 'reached perfectly the highest grade of all virtues,'<sup>95</sup> Berthold focuses on some particular virtues and on particular aspects of her life; the terminology he uses shows that his main interest is to instruct his lay audience.

The most frequently mentioned virtue is humility.<sup>96</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 47 presents this as a teaching of Mary to all Christians: 'The holy Virgin's humility is praised here for us ... even if she was full of goodness, sanctity, and a most excellent grace, she never became proud because of these things ... And in this, she was a model [*exemplum*] for us, because when someone is of a higher rank, with regard to morals and knowledge, or with regard to their life in any kind of excelling grace, so much more humble must they be.'<sup>97</sup> Sermon 109 for the Assumption tells that Mary was so humble that she never attempted to perform any miracle and that she lived a life of silence and invisibility among other invisible people, such as widows and penitents.<sup>98</sup> The *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 117 explains that she had two kinds of humility. First, she considered herself less important than others. Second, she was not offended and did not show anger when she and her son were insulted. She was a model in these behaviors, as well: 'She judged herself lower than all human persons ... and those here who will be more similar to her in this will be nearer to her in grace and in glory ... Though very despised in many ways in herself and in her son,

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mariologia d'avanguardia nel secolo XII. Immacolata Concezione e Assunzione corporea di Maria secondo Goffredo d'Auxerre,' in *Figure poetiche e figure teologiche nella mariologia*, 71–107.

93 On this topic in the Franciscan literature of religious instruction, see Krijn Pansters, *Franciscan virtue. Spiritual growth and the virtues in franciscan literature and instruction of the thirteenth century*, Studies in the history of christian traditions 161 (Leiden-Boston, 2012).

94 Gaffuri, 'La predicazione domenicana su Maria,' 210.

95 LeipUB 497, fol. 164r: 'summum apicem omnium virtutum perfectissime attigit.'

96 On the nexus between the humility and virginity of Mary, see Gaffuri, 'Verginità e modelli religiosi,' 35 f.

97 LeipUB 497, fol. 68v: 'commendatur nobis hic humilitas beate Virginis ... quamvis esset plena omni bonitate et sanctitate et gratia excellentissima, numquam tamen ex hiis superbivit ... Et in hoc fuit nobis exemplum quod quanto maior est aliquis genere, moribus ac scientia, vita aut in quacumque gratia excellens, tanto magis debet se humiliare.'

98 LeipUB 497, fol. 165v: 'infra viduas et penitentes, infra eam de qua eiecta fuerant VII demonia, ineffabili se mansuetudine inclinabat; immo ex mira eius humilitate etiam rarissime loquebatur.'

she never felt anger ... this was a merit for her and an example [*exemplum*] for the world.<sup>99</sup> In the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 119, Berthold states that Mary provided the '*formam vivendi*' ('model of living') for all types of human persons. For those who were prosperous, she taught the way of humility:

To the ones who are superior to others because of some good, she showed a bright way of living, showing in herself that these ones need, above all, to avoid pride and to seek to be humble in all things. She showed them this way of living in a very bright manner during the Annunciation: When she was elevated above all pure creatures by the archangel sent to her by God ... she answered, with incomparable humility: 'I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me'<sup>100</sup> and so on.<sup>101</sup>

Berthold likewise accentuates another virtue of Mary: Patience. In the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 119, this is the '*formam vivendi*' that Mary shows to those who are in misfortune:

To those who are burdened by grave tribulations, the holy Virgin in a similar way taught a doctrine and a bright model of living [*doctrinam et formam vivendi lucidissimam tradidit*], with her example [*exemplo*] during Christ's passion ... At that moment she was afflicted in the highest way ... Just as she taught [*docuerat*] everyone how to behave in prosperity with her example, in the same way during the Passion she taught [*docuit*] everyone how to behave during the greatest adversity, that is, to be patient and not to despair, whatever tribulation may afflict you. For she was most patient with those who were piercing a sword through her soul<sup>102</sup> on Mt. Calvary near the cross of Christ; the sword of her son's passion, a passion which he suffered in his body, that he received from her, and which she suffered in her heart ... And even if she suffered so painfully, she was

99 LeipUB 497, fols. 177r–177v: 'Se ipsam enim omnibus hominibus inferiorem habuit ... et qui hic in hoc similior erit ei, et in gratia et in gloria vicinior ... Licet plurimum et multipliciter contempta tam in se quam in filio, numquam tum ad aliquam nimiam indignationem movebatur ... sibi in meritum, mundo exemplum.'

100 Lc 1, 38.

101 LeipUB 497, fol. 180r: 'illis igitur qui ceteris supereminet in aliquo bono quocumque ostendit viam clarissimam vivendi in se ostendendo, quia inter omnia talibus necesse est ut caveant superbiam et studeant se in omnibus humiliare. Quia viam vivendi ipsis ostendit lucidissime annunciationis, cum enim ab archangelo a Deo ad ipsam misso omnibus puris creaturis preponeret ... ipsa enim incomparabili modo se humilians respondit: "Ecce ancilla Domini. Fiat michi" et cetera.'

102 Lc 2, 35.



very patient, so much that she tenderly loved the torturers. She felt in her heart neither an impulse nor a feeling of impatience nor of hatred against them, but she purely forgave them, teaching [*docens*] all of those who have been placed in the most serious tribulations to seek patience above all other goods, because it is more necessary for them. Patience in prosperity is not praiseworthy, but in adversity it must be highly praised, because the more difficult the tribulation, the more praiseworthy the patience.<sup>103</sup>

Mary is an example and a teacher, as the words '*docere*,' '*exemplum*,' and '*formam vivendi tradere*' underscore: Like her, believers must endure hardships without despair and must forgive their enemies. The Virgin's forgiveness is mentioned also in the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 117, always with an exemplary value: 'Similarly, Mary did this, that is, she forgave. As [Christ] on the cross, she who was standing next to the cross, when the sword of her son's passion was pierced through her soul with a most bitter pain, she immediately forgave them and loved them with the deepest parts of herself, accumulating merit for herself and giving all of us an example so that we can do the same.'<sup>104</sup>

Berthold further refers to the austerity of Mary's life, perhaps with a peculiar Franciscan sensibility:<sup>105</sup>

The hard and polished stones mean her exemplary [*exemplaris*] and cruel life, which she lived exteriorly in her body, for her life in the body was

103 LeipUB 497, fol. 180v: 'Illis vero qui super gravibus tribulationibus premuntur doctrinam et formam vivendi lucidissimam tradidit similiter beata Virgo exemplo suo in die passionis Christi ... Tunc enim in maxima posita est tribulatione ... Sicut autem tunc docuerat omnes exemplo suo quomodo se habere in prosperitate, ita et in passione omnes docuit quomodo in maxima adversitate, sic videlicet ut quisque sit patiens et non desperet in quacumque positus tribulatione. Ipsa enim pacientissima fuit ad illos qui gladium in monte Calvarie iuxta crucem Christi per animam eius transfixerunt, gladium videlicet passionis filii sui, passionem quam ipse pertulit in corpore quod de ea acceperat, ipsa pertulit in corde ... Et licet sic atrociter passa, pacientissima tamen fuit, ita ut suos tenerrime diligeret tortores. Nullum omnino punctum vel attonitum impatientie vel odii ad ipsos corde recepit, sed purissime indulsit, docens omnes in gravissimis tribulationibus positos pre ceteris bonis aliis studere paciencie que tunc magis necessaria est. Pacientia enim in prosperitate in nullo est commendabilis, in adversitate vero omni preconio extollenda, et quanto tribulatio gravior, tanto patientia laudabilior.'

104 LeipUB 497, fol. 177v: 'Hoc similiter Maria fecit, videlicet quod indulsit. Nam sicut in cruce sic et in ipsa stans iuxta crucem, quod animam eius gladio passionis filii sui transfixerunt et dolore acerbissimo, statim pepercit et ipsos intimis visceribus dilexit, sibi ipsi in meritum et omnibus nobis in exemplum, ut similiter faciamus.'

105 Dal Pino, 'Culto e pietà mariana presso i frati minori,' 163, 166 f.

exteriorly very cruel. She suffered many discomforts, restricting herself in eating and drinking, in words and so on, and God did not give her any secular joy; on the contrary, she was always poor ... Further, she suffered many fatigues, she had to escape into Egypt and live there for many years, and then she came back and had to work with her hands and tolerate many other discomforts. Why did God expose her to so many inconveniences? To be an example [*exemplum*] for all people.<sup>106</sup>

In a certain way, the passage is ambiguous. Mary did not choose the poverty and the inconveniences of her life for herself; rather, God decided them for her. But the expression, '*arcendo se in cibo et potu, in verbis et huiusmodi*' ('restricting herself in eating and drinking, in words and so on'), seems also to refer to Mary's conscious lifestyle choice: To her complete faith. So the explicit exemplary value of this passage would reside both in Mary's patience in tolerating her life's '*incommoda*' and in her '*asperrima vita*' itself.

In addition to her austere life, the Virgin was also a model for sanctity insofar as she fulfilled her religious duties. She prayed with devotion and constancy, as the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 117 states: 'If we often pray in the same manner and the human fire burns in meditation, in that fire we can often find God. The holy Virgin went often to this place, that is, pious prayer.'<sup>107</sup> She practiced mercy with misfortunate people: 'She was high, unpolluted, always persevering in merciful deeds ... in favor of the afflicted, the sick, the poor.'<sup>108</sup> Finally, she did not waste her time and was always active in doing something good, and so she was an example for all believers who live in a condition between fortune and misfortune:

But to those in the middle, who are neither in serious adversity nor in high prosperity but stand as if in the middle, she taught a model for living

106 LeipUB 497, fol. 168r: 'Per lapides durissimos et politos significatur eius vita exemplaris valde et asperrima quam exterius in corpore habuit, enim valde asperam vitam exterius in corpore. Nam omnino incommoda multa pertulit arcendo se in cibo et potu, in verbis et huiusmodi, nec quicquam secularium gaudiorum ei Dominus contulit, sed semper in paupertate fuit ... Fuit insuper in plurimo labore, ut patet in eundo in Egiptum, et ibi per plurimos annos demorando, in redeundo et in labore manuum se exercendo et plurima alia incommoda tolerando. Quare autem eam Dominus sic incommodis exposuit? Ut omnibus esset exemplum.'

107 LeipUB 497, fol. 177v: 'Si sic sepe oramus et in meditationes exardescit hominis ignis, tunc in tali igne frequenter invenitur Deus. Hunc locum, id est devotam orationem, beata Virgo iugiter frequentavit.'

108 LeipUB 497, fol. 168r: 'ipsa fuit altissima, inputribilis, id est perseverans semper in operibus misericordie ... erga tribulatos, erga infirmos, erga defectum patientes.'

with her example [*formam vivendi tradidit suo exemplo*] when she was in the middle between the height of her prosperity and the most painful point of her adversity. Because she was never idle, she gave them a model for living, but was always doing something good interiorly or exteriorly ... For this she must be particularly praised, that she was not idle, that she never wasted her time, but she always 'put her hands to the distaff',<sup>109</sup> and so she accumulated heavenly riches above all others. The believer, according to the holy Virgin's example, shall not for any reason waste his time, but he must always spend it in a useful way.<sup>110</sup>

The scene changes, however, when we move from the Latin sermons to the German texts. The only text related to a feast of the Virgin is the sermon, *Von zwein unde vierzic tugenden* (Of the forty-two virtues).<sup>111</sup> It clearly derives from the *Rusticanus de Sanctis* 118: Both sermons are for the Nativity of Mary, and they begin by referencing Christ's genealogy and the forty-two virtues that every Christian needs to reach the Paradise. While the Latin sermon further describes the prerogatives of the Virgin compared to the other saints,<sup>112</sup> the German text dedicates very little space to Mary herself, focusing instead on the correct behaviors and the virtues of a good Christian. Only at the beginning, following the Latin model to some extent, the text drives a comparison between the kinship of the Virgin, composed by forty-two ancestors, and her virtues, which were numberless and among which forty-two were particularly important.<sup>113</sup> These virtues provide the reason why Mary was chosen to be the mother of God: 'And for this reason God chose her as mother of the Lord of all angels and of the Emperor of all kings ... For her many virtues about which we read today and in other times, He liked no other woman among Adam's kinship such as her ... Her pure body had so many virtues that no mouth can suitably

109 Prv 31, 19.

110 LeipUB 497, fol. 180v: 'Mediis vero qui nec in gravissima adversitate nec in alta prosperitate sed quasi in medio consistunt, formam vivendi tradidit suo exemplo posita in meditullio summe sue prosperitatis et gravissime sue adversitatis. Illis in hoc dedit formam vivendi, quod numquam fuit ociosa, sed semper vel interius vel exterius aliquid boni fecit ... In hoc singulariter multum commendatur, quia non fuerit otiosa, quia nullatenus aliquid sui temporis perdidit, sed semper "ad fortia manum misit", unde super omnes ceteros divitias celestes congregavit. Fidelis igitur exemplo beate Virginis nullatenus tempus suum perdat sed semper utilius expendat.'

111 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 442–461.

112 LeipUB 497, fols. 178r–179v.

113 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 442.

speak about them.<sup>114</sup> This sentence introduces a long passage where the key topic is the preacher's humility, since it is impossible to praise the Virgin and her virtues; it is a theme already found in some of the Latin sermons, but here it is more pronounced and is finally used to change the argument of the text:

And if I presumed to praise and to commend her virtue, it would be one of the biggest follies that the world ever saw ... And if I did nothing else, during these eight days, than speaking every day about her many virtues and about her praise, I could never come to an end. I say more: In a half year or in a whole year. And so I prefer to say nothing than to praise her unworthily. And so I want to tell us Christians, how we have to become virtuous, so that we can go to Paradise and see the virtuous Queen in her joy and in her honor.<sup>115</sup>

In the following text, there is really no further space for Mary's prerogatives and for her figure; this introduction ends with a prayer and then the sermon instructs believers how to behave in holy places (behavior in churches, sanctuaries),<sup>116</sup> during holy times (with respect to the feast days),<sup>117</sup> with holy goods (with respect to the goods of the Church),<sup>118</sup> how to relate to holy people (with regard to priests and religious persons),<sup>119</sup> to faith and Holy Communion.<sup>120</sup> It is evident that the German text has different purposes than the Latin sermons. Here the interest does not concern the Virgin; rather, the aim is to teach to a lay audience how to behave as Christians in their every-day lives, paying attention to concrete practices and to the relationships they have with

114 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 443: 'Unde dar umbe erwelte im sie got ze einer muoter aller engele herre unde keiser aller künige ... Durch die manicvalten tugende die man hiute von ir liset unde ze andern zîten, sô geviel im under Adâmes künne nie kein frouwenlîp sô wol ... Als manige tugent hete ir reiner lîp, daz dâ von niemer dehein munt vollesagen mac.'

115 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 443: 'Unde daz ich mich danne annæme, daz ich ir tugent prisen unde loben wolte, daz wære der grøesten tôrheit einiu an mir, die diu werlt ie gewan ... Unde daz ich ouch niht anders pflæge dise aht tage alle tage, wan daz ich seite von der manicvalten tugent unde von ir lobe, sô künde ich ez niht verenden. Ich spriche mêr: innen einem halben jâre oder in einem ganzen jâre. Unde dâ von ist mir vil bezzer geswigen danne krenclîchen gelobet. Unde dâ von wil ich uns kristenliuten sagen, wie wir ouch suln tugent gewinnen, dâ von wir zem himelrîche komen unde danne dâ gesehen die tugentrîche küniginne in ir freuden und in ir êren.'

116 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 446.

117 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 446–449.

118 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 449–451.

119 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 451–452.

120 *Berthold von Regensburg. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vol. 1, 452–460.

religious institutions. The Marian theme remains more a trace of the original relationship with the Latin model than a real topic of the German text.

In conclusion, the Marian themes are well represented in Berthold's Latin *Rusticani*, which concentrate mostly on two perspectives: On one hand, they describe Mary's physical and spiritual prerogatives and privileges (grace, virginity, freedom from sin), through the main phases of her life (the Nativity, Annunciation, Incarnation, and Assumption). On the other hand, Berthold emphasizes the importance of the relationship between Mary and believers, since the Virgin is the main intercessor for sinners and the principal model for Christian behavior. These two points of view are congruous, both with regard to the fact that they aim to provide religious instruction and with regard to the popular destination of these model sermons (through the mediation of preachers, who comprise the first audience of the texts), which do not devote space to difficult topics and to the confutation of heretical doctrines.<sup>121</sup>

Further research could be done determining Berthold's sources and comparing his sermons with other cases of Marian preaching in Franciscan and Dominican environments, looking for similarities and differences in order to better define Berthold of Regensburg's Mariology within the wider context of Mendicant preaching and the Mendicant pastoral approach.

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121 For comparison, see the case of the Dominican Nicola da Milano analysed by Laura Gaffuri, 'Paroles pour le clergé, paroles pour le peuple. Définition de la foi et réfutation de l'hérésie dans deux sermonnaires mariaux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,' in *La parole du prédicateur, ve-xve siècle*, ed. Rosa Maria Dessi and Michel Lauwers, Collection du Centre d'Études Médiévales de Nice 1 (Nice, 1997), 355–360.

## The Virgin Mary Is Taken to the Throne of God: The Assumption of Mary in the Sermons of Bernardino da Siena

*Steven J. McMichael*

The Virgin Mary was remembered in the Middle Ages for many things, especially for her role in the birth, infancy, and earthly life of Jesus. She was present for the crucifixion of Jesus, and she became one of the most significant heralds of the resurrection of Jesus in the Middle Ages as she was acknowledged as the first resurrection witness. She was praised for being the heavenly advocate or intercessor for sinners on earth, which is manifested in the title 'Queen of Heaven.' Her intimacy with her son Jesus was so strong that she came to be recognized as the Bride of Christ. Scripture commentaries, theological reflection, prayer and devotional practices, sermons, and depictions of Mary in art proclaimed that she was a central figure in salvation history. As their advocate, all human beings were invited to turn to Mary in order to seek refuge from sin, suffering, and death. She was not only an advocate for sinners but also the model for them to follow her in reaching heaven. The culminating event in the life of Mary was her Assumption, in which the fullness of her salvific activity is realized as advocate and model for Christian followers of her son, Jesus.

The Assumption of Mary has been a special focus of Franciscan spirituality from the very beginning of the mendicant movement in the early thirteenth century. The founder of the movement, Francis of Assisi, conducted five forty-day fasts during the calendar year after his conversion. The Feast of the Assumption took place during one of these fasts. He fasted from 29 June to 14 August, then began fasting again on 16 August until 29 September, leaving the fifteenth as a non-fast day to celebrate this feast day. The *Form of Life* of Clare of Assisi speaks of the Assumption as one of seven feast days of the year in which the Poor Clare sisters would receive the Eucharist. Anthony of Padua was the first of a long line of Franciscan preachers who delivered a sermon on the Assumption of Mary, a tradition that culminated in the fifteenth century in which many of the famous Observant preachers delivered sermons on this special Marian feast, especially Bernardino of

Siena.<sup>1</sup> He was the main promotor of the devotion to Mary's acceptance into Heaven of both body and soul that began with Francis himself.<sup>2</sup>

What did Bernardino of Siena say about the Assumption of Mary? The papal document entitled *The Most Bountiful God (Munificentissimus Deus)*, which established the Assumption of Mary as a dogma of faith in 1950, contains a paragraph on Bernardino of Siena's contribution to this Marian doctrine:

In the fifteenth century, during a later period of scholastic theology, St. Bernardino of Siena collected and diligently evaluated all that the medieval theologians had said and taught on this question. He was not content with setting down the principal considerations which these writers of an earlier day had already expressed, but he added others of his own. The likeness between God's Mother and her divine Son, in the way of the nobility and dignity of body and of soul—a likeness that forbids us to think of the heavenly Queen as being separated from the heavenly King—makes it entirely imperative that Mary 'should be only where Christ is.' Moreover, it is reasonable and fitting that not only the soul and body of a man, but also the soul and body of a woman should have obtained heavenly glory. Finally, since the Church has never looked for the bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin nor proposed them for the veneration of the people, we have a proof on the order of a sensible experience.<sup>3</sup>

Since Bernardino has been called 'the Doctor of the Assumption,' it is important to present what he said about this Marian doctrine in his preaching

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- 1 The preachers include Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), Giacomo della Marca (1393–1476) Giovanni da Capestrano (1386–1456), and Bernardino da Busti (d. 1513). Stefano Cecchin discusses, besides Francis and Anthony, the following Franciscans as important contributors to the Franciscan tradition in regard to the Assumption of Mary: Bonaventure (1221–1274), Carrado di Sassonia (+1279), Matteo d'Acquasparta (c. 1238–1302), Bartolomeo di Bologna (+1294), Servasanto da Faenza (d.c 1300), and Ubertino da Casale (1259–1305). See his 'L'Assunzione di Maria nella Scuola mariologica francescana,' in *L'Assunzione di Maria Madre di Dio: Significato storico-salvifico a 50 anni dalla definizione dogmatica*, ed. Caspar Calvo Moralejo and Stefano Cecchin (Città del Vaticano, 2001), 585–646.
  - 2 There is a rich Italian scholarly tradition of Marian studies in regard to the Assumption of Mary. See, for example, Guilio Folgarait, *La teologia mariana di S. Bernardino da Siena* (Milan, 1939); Lorenzo Di Fonzo, 'La mariologia di S. Bernardino da Siena,' in *Miscellanea Francescana* 47 (1947), 3–102, and G. Fin, *L'Immacolata Concezione di Maria negli scritti e nella predicazione di S. Bernardino da Siena*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Tesi di Laurea (Rome, 1954).
  - 3 *Munificentissimus Deus* can be found in the original Latin text and English translation on the Vatican webpage: «w2.vatican.va».

activity during the fifteenth century. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to review what Bernardino wrote and preached about in regard to this very important belief that was so prevalent in late medieval theology, preaching, and art. We will focus on two sermons in particular, one that he wrote for inclusion in his Easter Octave cycle and the other in a collection of eleven Marian sermons that he wrote in honor of Mary.

## 1 The Virgin Mary in Bernardino's Easter Octave Sermon Cycle

Bernardino wrote a specific sermon on Mary for the Easter Octave because of his special devotion to her and his understanding of her role in salvation history, especially as it pertains to the resurrection of Christ.<sup>4</sup> He dedicated his Wednesday Octave sermon to the most sublime grace and excellence of the Mother of God after praising her son Jesus (Sunday and Monday) and the angels (Tuesday) during the previous days. Thursday to Saturday are days he devoted to sermons on the substantial, consubstantial, and accidental glory of transformed, resurrected human beings in Paradise. As we shall see, these glories will also be discussed in relation to the Virgin Mary in his Assumption sermon. Bernardino will present her as the model of all gloried human beings in heaven.

He begins with a reference to Psalm 45:10: 'The queen stood on your right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety.' The first phrase, 'The queen stood on your right hand,' refers to Mary's coronation of twelve gifts or excellences with which she is honored. Then we see in Revelation 12:1 (the classical reference text for medieval Mariology), 'And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.' Mary is crowned by twelve stars which represent the twelve marvelous graces that God gifted her and that she manifested in her life through her own meritorious behavior. We will see that the theme of the twelve stars will appear in his Assumption sermon, especially how they relate to the other main symbols of Mary: The sun and the moon.

The first set of four human graces that Mary received is nobility, preservation, merit, and power. In addition, because she bore the Son of God, she

4 This also is included in the eleven sermons (Sermon Eight) on the Virgin Mary of Bernardino, which are located in Volume VI of *S. Bernardini Senesis Opera Omnia* (Ad Clarus Aquas/Quaracchi, 1950–1965). It also appears in the Easter Octave sermons (Sermon LXI) found in the *Opera Omnia*, Vol. II, 371–397. The Latin sermons have been translated into English by Champion Murray (OFM), *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Bernardino of Siena*, Early Franciscan Ascetical Writings, VIII (Phoenix, 2012).



received super-excellence, domination, reign, and stewardship. The four other gifts, showing Mary as having gone beyond all of created reality into a state of perfection, were completion, adornment, retribution, and incomprehensibility. Bernardino gives each of these a separate chapter, which is not characteristic of the structure of his usual sermons, thus enhancing the importance of these graces.

The second article of his sermon is based on the phrase 'on your right hand, in gilded clothing.' Bernardino speaks of the excellent glory that Mary experiences presently in heaven. He explains how this mystery is shown in three ways, spoken of in Revelation 12:1: By signification ('and a great sign'), by apparition ('appeared in heaven'), by glorification ('a woman clothed with the sun'). Then, in separate chapters, Bernardino presents the seven excellences or dignities for which Mary's glory shines forth: Maternity, charity, conformity, tranquility, capability, unity, and bountifulness.

Bernardino holds that she is a 'great sign' because of her abundant grace, glory, and understanding. Since 'a sign opens and closes that which is signified,' her grace comes from her womb because it was the bearer of the 'Word who became flesh and dwelt' in her. She is the 'great sign' because she restores for human beings the grace that Eve lost in the garden. Using typical medieval parallelisms, Bernardino quotes Augustine: 'Eve, one who increases sin, Mary who increases merit. Eve hinders by killing, Mary benefits by giving life. Eve wounded, Mary healed.'<sup>5</sup> The sin and death that Eve brought into the world is now transformed into the grace and new life that leads to risen life by Mary, the New Eve.

Bernardino speaks of her 'great glory' because she is more glorious than any of the other inhabitants in heaven. Bernardino then compares this glory to the moon, one of his favorite symbols of Mary:

Hence, Sirach 43:7 says: 'From the moon is the sign of the festival day.' Literally, at the beginning of the lunar month the moon is hidden from human eyes and yet is completely covered in light by the sun and most closely joined to it; then, as in the text, was the feast of the New Moon. And so the glorious Virgin Mary, in her assumption, was hidden from human eyes and made Godlike by the whole blessed Trinity; she was joined to her Son on his glorious throne and, with a new joy and rejoicing, she consecrated the feast of heavenly and great glory.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 135.

<sup>6</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 135.

What is significant here is his comparison of Mary with the moon and her son with the sun. But it is not only the son who is shining on her in her glory, but it is also the entire Trinity (a theme he will develop in his Assumption sermon). Especially important here is also the key word that Bernardino uses in relation to Mary, that she was made Godlike (*deiformitata*), which is the highest dignity any human person can aspire to. She has accomplished what all human beings are called to do in life: To be transformed through grace to become Godlike in one's own unique ways. Therefore, she is the model of the entire process of deification of the human being that leads to heavenly glory.

She has 'great understanding' because she has complete understanding of her son and the Father. Her great grace, glory, and understanding leads Bernardino to call her the 'gate of heaven' because 'through her the deep and sacred mysteries of heaven, of the scriptures, and of the sacraments are unlocked.'<sup>7</sup> Because of all that she is and does, we can understand then why medieval preachers and theologians such as Bernardino believed that Mariology was the key to the full understanding of theology in general and Christology specifically.

The remaining part of the second article is concerned with the seven excellences or dignities for which Mary's glory shines forth. We will focus here on the theme of the sun, since this is a key symbol of Bernardino's Mariology and reveals a significant aspect of his theology of the Assumption. Once again he returns to the classical phrase from Revelation 12:1, 'a woman clothed with the sun.' Bernardino speaks of Mary as one who is clothed with a triple sun: Love, brightness, and splendor. Here he correlates these three terms to the three parts of a human being, namely, the will, mind, and body: 'The first relates to her will that glows with the love of God; the second, to her mind that shines with the light of God; the third to her body that, more than all the blessed, fills the whole of paradise with splendor.'<sup>8</sup> Her will was totally enkindled by the fire of God's love so much so that she was totally enveloped, overwhelmed, and enclosed by this fire. Her mind was totally illuminated by the brightness of the light of glory (the ineffable brightness). Her body was clothed with the sun of splendor, that is, 'the light that she has also in her body from the overflowing glory given to her soul by God.'<sup>9</sup> Therefore, both her soul and body were clothed with the sun of eternal glorious light.

<sup>7</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 136.

<sup>8</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 138.

<sup>9</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 139. The Latin text reads: 'Tertio etiam beata amicta dicitur sole fulgoris, scilicet quoad lucem quam habet etiam in corpore ex redundantia gloriae, quae sibi a Deo in anima datur...' Quoted from *Opera Omnia*, VI, 385.

A special focus that Bernardino makes here is on the two basic types of overflowing (*redundantia*) that is so important to medieval theology. Mary is given this overflowing of glory in her soul from God, and the glory of the soul then overflows into the body. We will see how this important theme appears in his Assumption sermon; therefore Bernardino's teaching on *redundantia* is very significant to his Mariology and other aspects of his theology.

Because her will, mind, and body were so clothed in sunlight, Bernardino proclaims that her glory differs from any other creature 'as the sun differs from other lights in the sky.'<sup>10</sup> The Assumption of Mary is about how her own light of glory lit up the heavenly world of glory ('just as other greater lights are made bright by the sun'). She adds to heaven not only an increase of joys but glory and light: 'You have adorned with a new and ineffable glory the very heaven and all it contains by your entry into it, and by your presence you have increased its previous glory, beyond what can be expressed; by the new and most excellent glory of your virtues you brighten it and illuminate it with the immense light of your graces.'<sup>11</sup> With this most honorific statement, Bernardino then goes on to speak of the seven excellences or dignities of Mary that clearly show how exceptional her glory is in heaven.<sup>12</sup>

The third article is based on 'surrounded with variety,' and shows Mary honored by all creatures as she stands at the right hand of God. The variety which assists Mary to stand next to God has three dimensions: Eminence (which she had before she ascended into heaven), variety (which she possesses in heaven), and graces (which she dispenses from heaven to all human beings).

Eminence is shown in the three natural excellences she possessed during her life: Temporal (changeableness), intellectual (lucidity), and affectual/affectation (coldness). Variety, obtained in the glory of the blessed, shows the diversity of gifts among the blessed, as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:41, 'for star differs from star in glory.' Bernardino speaks of the graces that Mary dispenses to the world in an allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs 4:8, 'Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come: You shall be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.'

Bernardino presents three articles based on three words. The first is whiteness or 'dressed in white,' and is the meaning of Libanus or Lebanon. This shows the radiance of Mary's divine wisdom, virginal innocence, and most

10 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 139.

11 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 139.

12 These excellences or dignities are motherhood, charity, conformity, tranquility, capacity, unity, and abundance.

honest conversation or manner of living. The second is the inviting Virgin ('Come') who provides a triple invitation: Leave the world, ascend to heaven, and enter into God. The third is crowned ('you shall be crowned') with five precious stones represented by the five places listed in the Song of Songs passage. All of Mary's qualities, gifts, or graces reveal that she is honored as the one who, along with her Son, dispenses all graces to humanity.

Many of the scripture passages Bernardino uses here reveal that he did believe that Mary was the Empress.<sup>13</sup> The title *imperatrix* was given to Mary in other parts of Europe, especially England, to express that she is both the living Queen of Heaven and also the Empress or ruler of Hell. As Empress, she has the power to overturn original sin, defeat Satan and the devils, and conquer humanity's last enemy: Death. She is the New Eve who, through her Son's Incarnation as the New Adam, conquers that sin which was the fault of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Thus, she becomes the main character in the continuing salvific activity of the Harrowing of Hell that took place on Holy Saturday, when her son liberated the righteous of the nations who lived before his coming as liberator. Mary leads all human beings into the process of liberation from evil and death that has its foundation in her son's resurrection. This liberation was for both men and women, and therefore it was fitting that Mary participate fully in this liberating activity by representing all women in reversing the sin of Eve.

Bernardino concludes this sermon on Mary with a comprehensive presentation on the entirety of Mariology that deserves a place here:

O woman, blessed by all and above all! You are the nobility and preservation of the human race; you are the breadth of merit and the perfect power of all creatures; you alone are the Mother of God; you are the Lady of the universe; the Queen of the world; you dispense all graces; you are the perfection of the universe and the adornment of the holy Church; you are our satisfaction before the giver of all good things; you are the incomprehensible breadth of all virtues, gifts and graces; you are the chosen and most worthy vessel made by the first Worker; you who could contain the essence of God are the temple of God; you are the garden of delights; you are the example of all good, the consolation of the devout and the beginning and adornment of all salvation; you are the gate of heaven, the joy

13 Bernardino uses this title in his Sermon on Mary in his Easter cycle (Sermo LXI, Fiera Quarta post Resurrectionem, *Opera Omnia*, II, 371). On Mary as the Empress of Hell, see Catherine Oaks, *Ora Pro Nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion* (London/Turnhout, 2008), 167–199.

of paradise and, beyond what can be expressed, the glory of the supreme God. Stammering, we state these praises and your excellences but as beggars we beseech your great sweetness. In your kindness, make up for our inadequacies so that we may be able to praise you worthily forever and ever, Amen.<sup>14</sup>

## 2 The Sermon on the Assumption of Mary from the *Treatise on the Blessed Virgin*

Because of his great devotion to the Virgin Mary, the famous fifteenth-century Franciscan preacher wrote a *Tractatus de Beata Virgine* which consists of eleven sermons dedicated to Mary.<sup>15</sup> These sermons concern the name of Mary, the activity of grace in the life of Mary, her purest virginity, and a presentation on each of the three Marian feast days in the liturgical calendar: The Visitation, the Purification, and the Assumption. In Bernardino's view, the totality of Mary's life and being—everything stated in Mariology in general—culminates in the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary.<sup>16</sup>

Bernardino's sermon on the Assumption is based on Psalm 131:10 [132:8]: 'Arise, O Lord, into your resting place, you and the ark which you have sanctified.' He divides this psalm into three parts which constitute the scriptural foundation for the three articles of this sermon.

Bernardino interprets the first word 'Arise' as a triple invitation to glory, which is the main theme of the first article. This means that she was raised up, firstly, by the eminence of her holiness of life, the excellence of her way of life, and her excellent life of contemplation. Mary rose up to be the most exemplary model of the Christian life that leads to heavenly glory.

She was raised up, secondly, in a triple dignity: High, broad, and everlasting. This means that she was raised up so high that she magnifies God more than any other creature. She also has the broadest dignity so that 'she rules

14 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 157.

15 As mentioned before, Bernardino provides a comprehensive view of the Virgin Mary in the *Tractatus de B. Virgine*. The eighth sermon is also found in the Wednesday sermon of Bernardino's Easter Octave sermons.

16 In regard to the major sources for Bernardino's Assumption sermon, he mentions the following sources: Ubertino da Casale and his *Arbor Vitae*; the sermons on the Assumption from Bernard of Clairvaux (though the Quaracchi editors state that it is from Nicholas of Clairvaux [Nicolaus Claravallensis], which is found in a collection of sermons by Peter Damian [PL 144]); the sermons on Mary by Augustine; the theological works of Alexander of Hales; and the theological works of Bonaventure.

not only “from Dan to Beer-sheba” but rules “from a sea of grace” to a sea of glory, “and from the river” of divine influences “unto the ends of the earth,” reigning over the whole creation (2 Samuel 3:9–10).<sup>17</sup> She is everlasting because, as symbolized by the mountain in Isaiah 2:2, she is most secure and stable.<sup>18</sup>

She now offers, thirdly, a triple protection to her human admirers, whom she now directs, protects, and offers petitions before God. Because of what Mary experienced in her own life of holiness, she can share with others through her intercession in the heavenly court. She is presented as the most dignified person not only for her role as a model for Christians, but also as the one who has a primary role in helping them find their way to the ultimate destination, heaven, where she is enthroned as Queen of Heaven next to her son.

### 3 The Trinity and the Heavenly Host Welcome the Virgin Mary

‘O Lord, into your resting place,’ the subject of the second article, refers to the entire heavenly host (the angels, the saints, and the Holy Trinity) who come to welcome the Virgin Mary into Paradise and to place her on the heavenly throne. After presenting the beatified beings (prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins) who welcome Mary, Bernardino devotes three sections of the sermon to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who individually welcome the Mother of God into the heavenly world.

The Father comes to greet her, as she was the one chosen to bear His son because of her singular virginity and humility. He welcomes her into Heaven in an embrace because she was the mother of his son.

From the Father she received the source of fertility for all the elect to be born; and also to give the angels some taste and degree and experience of the divine, since even from the beginning of their creation and

17 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 211.

18 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 212. According to Bernardino (pp. 211–212), we can apply the text of Isaiah 2:2: ‘In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountain, and it shall be exalted above the hills.’ Bernardino adds: ‘This mountain, in which God is well pleased to dwell [Psalm 67:17 (68:16)] and from which *a stone was cut without hands* is the glorious Virgin of whom, without human intervention, Jesus Christ was born, a corner stone that filled *the whole earth* [Daniel 2:34–35].’ This text of Isaiah (Isaiah 2:2–4) is usually found in medieval polemics against Jews in regard to the issue of the messiahship of Jesus.

glorification they foresaw the future Mother of the Son of God, and consequently of every rational creature to be raised up in heavenly glory.<sup>19</sup>

The section on the role of the Son is most important, since he is the one whom Mary conceived, gave birth, and nourished in his infancy. Bernardino focuses on two aspects of why Jesus would adore a woman: Her motherhood and humility.<sup>20</sup> Jesus gives honor to her for her motherhood because of her singular sufficiency (she conceived without male seed), singular magnificence (she alone gave birth and remained a virgin), and singular caring (no other mother ever loved and cared for her son as much as Mary). Mary is likewise honored because she is rewarded for her virtuous life in a triple way:

The first is by emptying, as in faith and hope; when these are emptied there follows a vision of faith and a holding on of hope. The second is by completion as in charity and many cardinal virtues to which is added a completion without any defect. The third is by opposition as in poverty, humility, struggle, and humility to which God promises their three opposites.<sup>21</sup>

Mary, therefore, is exalted because of her own *kenosis*, her own self-emptying and humility. Although Bernardino does not explicitly mention this in the text, it seems reasonable to observe that this aspect of mothering, and being poor and humble, would resonate with his Franciscan background. Francis of Assisi emphasized these values in the Virgin Mary: She was the model for the friars to be mothers and poor, humble brothers to each other. It is apparent that Francis had Mary in mind when he wrote about the friars being mothers: 'We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others.'<sup>22</sup>

Bernardino adds a dimension here that has its roots in the medieval mystical tradition. He speaks of how Jesus embraces his mother using the language of a spousal relationship of the Song of Songs. Bernardino compares Mary to Esther:

19 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 216.

20 This was translated by Murray as: 'Why would Jesus bow down to a woman?' The Latin phrase is *quid est quod mulierem adoras*.

21 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 217.

22 Francis of Assisi, 'Early Exhortation' or 'Letter to All the Faithful,' in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents: The Founder*, Vol. 1, ed. by Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and William Short (New York, 2000), 42.

The most blessed Virgin, like another Esther 2:13.16 'from the chamber of the women,' that is, from the Church militant, is brought by the whole company of the heavenly army 'to the chamber' of the blessed 'Artaxerses,' namely, of the most high God. Because of this welcome by her son, the prophetic words may be applied to her: 'You have held me by my right hand and by your will you have conducted me, and with your glory you have received me' [Psalm 72:24 (73:24)].<sup>23</sup>

Bernardino then explains this is the reason why Mary was raised up and now abounds in the 'delights' of the divine embraces as she 'leans upon her beloved' (Song of Songs 8:5). It is the spiritual wedding of the mother and son that is so significant to Bernardino, as he states: 'The fullness of the delights of the mutual embraces is known only to her and her Son, for she has the one who is Son, and bridegroom; although we may be able, if you so wish, to attribute betrothal to the Father.'<sup>24</sup>

Bernardino also explains why the Holy Spirit went to greet Mary as she entered into Paradise, which connects the activity of the Spirit with Mary's role in the creation of the human dimension of her son in the hypostatic union: 'The Holy Spirit goes to meet the glorious Virgin, conscious of the furnace of love and the place of the fantastic work in which and by which a most pure body for the Son of God was made, and how, with a new soul infused, both together were united in one complete and perfect human nature in the person of the Son of God.'<sup>25</sup> It is the giving of grace by the Holy Spirit that all of this could happen internally to this rational creature, Mary.

It is in this section that Bernardino once again uses the Song of Songs as a way to explain the reaction of the heavenly world to her entrance into heaven: 'Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning on her beloved?' (Song of Songs 8:5). Of the various spiritual interpretations he gives to this passage, the most important is how he explains how 'leaning on her beloved' applies to Mary and Jesus.

Fifthly [he divides his commentary into five sections], they admired the glory that could not be shared on account of the bond of union, because according to Bernard, 'she was "leaning on her beloved." That happier Mother leans on him, and lying on the golden couch of the divine

23 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 218.

24 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 218–219.

25 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 219.



majesty, she rests between the arms of her bridegroom, in fact of her Son.' O what dignity, what special glory rests upon her whom the angelic powers reverence! This is what the angels admired most especially.<sup>26</sup>

Bernardino emphasizes here the spiritual bond between Jesus and Mary, with a focus on the physical dimension. The royal body (*in regio corpore*) that bore Jesus was deserving of a glorious, royal entrance into heaven because of the spiritual and physical bond between mother and son.

At the conclusion of this Trinitarian section of the sermon, Bernardino returns to the angels who experienced the Queen of Heaven enter into her glory. They were the connecting link between the Ascension and the Assumption because they were present for both. Because of Mary's Assumption, the bond or covenant between the heavenly host and humans is made stronger. The difference is made evident in that the heavenly host sees first of all the God-human raised up in the Ascension, but now they see 'a mere human put forward ahead of every other creature.'<sup>27</sup> The importance of Mary's resurrected body is very evident: 'The whole heavenly curia rejoices, because after the entry of the divine body of Jesus, with whom perhaps the souls and glorified bodies of the saints came, they had seen no one raised up in a royal body other than the Virgin. Each heavenly order rejoices because it finds in the Virgin some special aspect of her glory.'<sup>28</sup>

#### 4 The Ascension and the Assumption

Before moving on to the third article, it is important to point out that Bernardino makes an extraordinary claim in this second article: The Assumption of Mary is more excellent than the Ascension of Christ.<sup>29</sup> This is based on the

26 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 220.

27 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 220.

28 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 220.

29 Bernardino is not the first medieval writer to make this claim. The fourteenth-century Franciscan author John of Caulibus claims that the Ascension is the most important feast, even more so than Christmas or Easter. John presents the scene of the Ascension of the Lord: 'And so, on the fortieth day after his resurrection, *knowing that his time was at hand to leave this world for his Father, the Lord Jesus, having loved his own, now showed his love for them to the end* (Jn 13:1). Then the Lord gathered the holy Fathers and all those holy souls from their temporary paradise on earth. He blessed Elijah and Enoch [that had been assumed into Paradise without actually dying], who had been lodging there and were still alive, then went to his disciples who were in the cenacle on Mount Zion with his mother

fact that ‘only angels were able to meet the Son of God [when he was raised from the dead]; but as the Mother was lifted up she was met by Jesus himself with the whole heavenly curia, both of the angels and the just, and she was solemnly carried to the gathering of the blessed meeting.’<sup>30</sup> Bernardino even takes it a step further by claiming that ‘not only the Lord Jesus crowned as man in a gloried body, but the God King, three and one, can be said to have met triumphantly the most holy Virgin, not by local movement but by favourable goodwill and from having the principal role in her glorification.’<sup>31</sup>

## 5 Mary as Sun, Moon, and the Stars

The third part of the Psalm, ‘you and the ark which you have sanctified,’ is the foundational text for the third article of his Assumption sermon. Bernardino is mostly concerned with explicating the triple glorious adornment with which the blessed Virgin shines in the glory of paradise. She is pictured as one who is adorned with the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars (Revelation 12:1), so that ‘the sun is her clothing, the moon her covering, the stars the ornament on her head, and so, in royal beauty, she shines gloriously in the kingdom of heaven.’<sup>32</sup> This last article of the Assumption sermon contains information, firstly, about the seven reasons why Mary reigns in soul and body in the glory of paradise

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and the others.’ Jesus then tells them that their mission is to go out and preach to all the nations what they had experienced. He then met with them at the Mount of Olives where he had a last communion of hearts with Mary and the others, and then he ascended into heaven. Christ was welcomed by God the Father and the entire heavenly host. The Holy Fathers who were in Limbo were now welcomed by the heavenly spirits. The triumphant moment is when the ‘Lord Jesus opened the gates of Paradise which up to that time had been closed to humanity, and entered into triumph and joy, with all that happy and magnificent multitude. Reverently he knelt before his Father and said, “Thank you, Father, for giving me the victory over all my adversaries. Here, now, I present to You our friends who were held captive. But I promised to send the Holy Spirit to my brothers and disciples whom I left in the world. My Father, please fulfill my promise: I entrust them to You.” The culminating event of the entire Easter mystery is present at the Ascension because the gates of Paradise are opened, and all those who were waiting for this opening now enter triumphantly with the Risen Christ. We also see the tie-in with Pentecost here and the sending of the Holy Spirit, which traditionally ends the entire Easter liturgical season. John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. and ed. by Francis X. Taney, Anne Miller, and C. Mary Stallings Taney (Ashville, NC, 2000), 318.

30 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 215.

31 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 215.

32 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 221.

symbolized by the sun (union, incorruptibility, honor, dignity, conformity, equity, and integrity). Secondly, Mary is referred to as the moon in how she lived her life on earth and how she reigns in heaven. Thirdly, she is symbolized by the twelve stars with which she is crowned based on what she does presently for humans still on earth.

### 5.1 *Mary and the Twelve Stars*

Beginning with the stars, Bernardino speaks of the twelve stars that are embedded in the crown that Mary wears in the Heavenly court. They are symbolic of the twelve Apostles and Patriarchs. She is also shown to be symbolic of the eternal city of Jerusalem itself as revealed in Revelation 21:10–17:

The glorious Virgin Mary in a singular way is the city, written about in Revelation 21:10–17, in which all the elect are contained mystically. In this city the Twelve Apostles are placed as the twelve foundations of precious stones, and likewise the twelve pearls from which the twelve gates are made, represent the twelve Patriarchs who are adorned with every precious stone; through them faith in the coming of the Son of God was passed on to posterity by the merits of the Virgin.<sup>33</sup>

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33 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary, 230–231.* Revelation 21: 10–21 reads: 'And he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain: And he shewed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God, and the light thereof was like to a precious stone, as to the jasper stone, even as crystal. And it had a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east, three gates: And on the north, three gates: And on the south, three gates: And on the west, three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that spoke with me, had a measure of a reed of gold, to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall. And the city lies in a foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: And he measured the city with the golden reed for twelve thousand furlongs, and the length and the height and the breadth thereof are equal. And he measured the wall thereof an hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was of jasper stone: But the city itself pure gold, like to clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: The second, sapphire: The third, a chalcedony: The fourth, an emerald: The fifth, sardonyx: The sixth, sardius: The seventh, chrysolite: The eighth, beryl: The ninth, a topaz: The tenth, a chrysoprasus: The eleventh, a jacinth: The twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, one to each: And every several gate was of one several pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.'

The twelve stars also symbolize the twelve illuminations of the mind of Mary and the twelve gifts of her prayers from Heaven. These prayers are important to quote here because they reveal the many ways that Mary aids those who are on earth:

In the third way, the twelve stars in the crown of the Virgin are the twelve gifts that in her prayers, as one reigning and glorious in heaven, she asks for us who struggle and work in the world. The first star is giving light to the blind; the second, lifting up the fallen; the third, cleansing of sinners; the fourth, encouraging the downcast; the fifth, help to all who struggle; the sixth, strength in adversity; the seventh, resurrection of the dead; the eighth, softening of the hardhearted; the ninth, leading to Jesus Christ; the tenth, help in the hour of death; the eleventh, refreshment from the fires of purgatory; the twelfth, rejoicing in the glory of all others.<sup>34</sup>

This list is very important as it summarizes all that the medieval theologians and preachers considered essential to Mary's role in the life of human beings. Because of all that she does in heaven for those who turn to her for aid, she is *the* advocate and intercessor for all human beings on earth.

The theme of the twelve stars also appears in two other Marian sermons in his *Tractatus de Beata Virgine*. Bernardino speaks of the stars as singular merits and graces that Mary has received and exercised in her life (Sermon 4), themes that are fully developed in another sermon (Sermon 8). Bernardino speaks of these graces as the twelve elements that make up her heavenly crown.<sup>35</sup> He presents a significant amount of material in which he highlights the main elements of each of these graces.

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34 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 231.

35 The twelve graces are: (1) That Mary in the flesh was more noble than any other creature; (2) That the whole world after the sin of the first parents was, by the love of the blessed Virgin, preserved by God; (3) That the merit of the blessed Virgin in the conception of the Son of God surpasses the merits of all mere creatures; (4) That the blessed Virgin could do for God something God could not do as God; (5) That only the eternal Father and the blessed Virgin were able to have a Son who is God; (6) That as many creatures serve the blessed Virgin as serve the whole Trinity; (7) That by the right of inheritance the kingdom of the whole world passed to the blessed Virgin; (8) That no grace comes down to us other than given through the hands of the Virgin; (9) That the blessed Virgin is the completion and perfection of all created nature; (10) That the whole church militant is adorned and decorated from the blessed Virgin; (11) How much the blessed Virgin gave back to God for all that God gave back to us; (12) How incomprehensible are the perfections of the glorious Virgin.

## 5.2 *Mary and the Moon*

As to the moon ('and the moon under her feet'), Bernardino speaks of the moon as symbolizing the way she lived her earthly life and how she reigns presently in heaven. The moon is waning, changeable, and imperfect; thus, it symbolizes earthly knowledge and material goods. Mary is the model who always loves the unchangeable good rather than all other lower goods. The moon as symbolic of Mary means ultimately that every type of lowly human knowledge is subservient to the most excellent and full knowledge of Christ, which Paul speaks about clearly in Philippians 3:7–8.<sup>36</sup> As a result of her Assumption, Mary now fully embraces in heaven the unchangeable good which is God.<sup>37</sup>

We see an entirely different interpretation of the moon in relationship with the sun in Sermon 1 of *Tractatus de Beata Virgine*, where Bernardino speaks of the sun as Christ and the moon as Mary. Bernardino makes the claim that Mary is called a star (apparently taking the moon to be a special star) because of her stability in regard to her son's death. Standard medieval cosmology held that stars moved but were stable in their movement across the sky. He states that Mary, according to John 19:25, stood faithfully by the cross of Jesus:

She stood without moving like a star in the sky, that is, in her Son, because as the other stars, that is, the Apostles, fell from heaven, she alone stood, according to what is said in Habakkuk 3:11: 'The sun and the moon,' that is, Christ and Mary, 'stood still in their habitation'; or, according to another translation: 'The sun rose,' that is, Christ on the cross, 'and the moon,' that is, the blessed Virgin, 'stood still in their habitation.'<sup>38</sup>

Mary is the one who was truly present at Jesus' crucifixion and therefore truly suffered with him. She is regarded as the only truly faithful disciple of Christ, her son.

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36 'The things that were gain to me, the same I have counted lost for Christ. Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.'

37 The theme of the moon also appears in a few of his other Marian sermons, in which we can see the same meaning that he explicates in the Assumption sermon. He speaks in two sermons about *under her feet* as referring to everything temporal and created (Sermon 3) and how she always chose the super-eminent knowledge of Christ over transitory knowledge and goods (Sermon 4).

38 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 3. 'The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation, in the light of your arrows, they shall go in the brightness of your glittering spear.'

Here we have the two symbols, the sun and the moon, respectively reflecting Jesus and Mary.<sup>39</sup> As we have seen, Bernardino uses the symbols of the moon and the sun differently: At one time Mary is symbolized by both the sun and the moon; at other times she is symbolized as the moon in relation to the sun (Christ); and sometimes she is symbolized exclusively by the sun.

### 5.3 *Mary and the Sun*

The symbolic identification of the sun with Mary is the summit of Bernardino's Mariology. Bernardino's foundational text for this reference is again Revelation 12:1: 'A great sign appeared in heaven; a women clothed with the sun.' The correlation of Mary with the sun is the most captivating because it presents the reader with these important themes: The dignity of the soul of Mary; the complete harmonious relationship of Mary's soul with her body; and the bond between Mary and her son. Bernardino summarizes this identification of Mary and the sun:

It is shown that she was adorned with the sun, not only by the brightness of the divinity of her mind (*mens*); not only because, as his most worthy Mother, she was adorned more than other creatures with the glory of Christ the man, who is the true sun; but also because the splendour of the glory of the glorified soul and body of the most excellent Virgin shown forth.<sup>40</sup>

These are bold claims about Mary, and Bernardino acknowledges that there are doubts concerning this purported glory that Mary now enjoys in Heaven based on her Assumption. Therefore, he answers seven arguments that show how Mary deserves this identification with the sun. In these arguments, we see the full flowering of Bernardino's Marian spirituality.

As most medieval writers would agree, Mary was unified with her son because they shared the same flesh. Since they are fleshly creatures, they both

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39 It is quite possible that Francis of Assisi is speaking of Christ as the Sun and Mary as the Moon in his *Canticle of Creatures*: 'All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, and first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and light you give to us through him. How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars; in the heavens you have made them, bright and precious and fair.'

40 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 221–222. Campion Murray translates the first phrase as 'not only by the brightness of the divinity of her soul.' But Bernardino uses the term *in eius mente*, which, in the Middle Ages, means 'mind.' Later he uses the term *anima*, which is the soul.

died a real death. Christ did not exempt her from the sentence of death that he endured, but Christ preserved her from the corruption of the grave—‘to be reduced to ashes or returned to dust’—so that she could enjoy the glorification of her soul and body in Heaven.<sup>41</sup> We see here the late medieval emphasis that is placed on the fate of the materiality of human beings and of Mary’s body that is now glorified in heaven by way of the Assumption.

Corruptibility is again the main issue in the second argument in which Mary is contrasted with Eve. She was uncorrupted by the birth of her son in regard to sin and therefore she deserved not to be corrupted by death. Both in giving life and undergoing death she was preserved from any sort of corruption.

The third argument concerns the honor that is due to Mary. Bernardino bases this on the honor that is due to parents, especially the father as revealed in the Law (Exodus 20:12; John 8:49). Extending this further to the honor shown to the mother, Christ honored her by not allowing her to undergo any corruption of the flesh that they shared. Bernardino concludes: ‘Just as she was honoured more than others in her life in the grace of the conception and birth of Christ, so undoubtedly one must feel that she has been honoured in her death with a special grace.’<sup>42</sup> This is a clear statement of the correlation of Incarnation and Resurrection in regard to Mary.

The issue of Mary’s dignity and holiness revolves around the medieval notion of merit, in which her full cooperation with God’s grace in doing good works makes it possible for her to enter Heaven. Bernardino calls her the ‘Saint of Saints’ because in her dwelt her son, the treasure of God, and therefore her womb is called ‘the tabernacle of God, the throne of God, the dwelling of God.’<sup>43</sup> It is because of her womb that she would not have to endure the terrors of the tomb:

Therefore, in no way does it seem right or in accord with reason that the most holy body from which Christ took flesh and in which the divine nature was united to a human nature, so that the ‘Word was made flesh and dwelt among us’ [John 1:14], should be given as food to worms and then become most lowly dust.<sup>44</sup>

It is because of their shared flesh that she is saved from the corruption of the grave.

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41 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 219.

42 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 223.

43 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 224.

44 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 224.

An important value in the Middle Ages was given to the human call to not only be reformed by Christ's grace, but also to be conformed to Christ in following his example and living a life of faithful discipleship.<sup>45</sup> Here we see how Mary was viewed as the most faithful disciple of her son as she completely conformed herself to him:

Mary, the main imitator of Christ not only by her footsteps but out of reverence, followed the Lord in a sense of piety, religious faith, and a most strong feeling of love, so that never could she be turned aside from this faith and love, she who knew that she had conceived by the Holy Spirit at the message of the angel. She conceived, carried, gave birth to, fed at her breast, cared for, and hid him from the face of Herod.<sup>46</sup>

She was with him throughout his early life, and therefore she should be with him in heavenly life. Bernardino adds a physical dimension here that is very important to medieval spirituality: This conformity was not simply about her soul, but also about her body. She is received into Paradise with her entire 'person,' meaning her soul and body. Her body appears there without any sort of corruption. We have already seen Bernardino's focus on her resurrected body being correlated with the resurrected body of her son. Since his body was not corrupted by the grave, neither was her body.

Bernardino once again returns to Eve and Mary's role in reversing the effects of original sin on humanity, but in particular for the female sex. Bernardino claims that Christ came to heal both sexes; therefore, he was born of a woman. Through the resurrection of Christ, humanity has been healed and delivered from sin:

Healing and perfect freedom are made clear in the resurrection; therefore, resurrection should be made clear in both sexes as a sign of perfect healing. Just as perfect healing for the male sex was made clear and shown in Christ, so it should be made evident in the female sex. In no other woman could it or should it have been more fittingly shown than in the most sweet Mother of Christ who in life was free from every corruption.<sup>47</sup>

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45 Medieval spiritual writers would think in terms of a theology of the image of God in which the pattern was formation, deformation, reformation, conformation, transformation, and glorification of the image. See Steven J. McMichael, *The Glory of Paradise: Risen Life in the Easter Octave Sermons of Bernardino da Siena*, ed. Kathleen C. Berken (Phoenix, 2016), 103–108.

46 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 224.

47 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 225.



Bernardino then once again returns to the theme of the sun:

The Prophet, in Psalm 88:38 [89: 36–37], says while speaking in the person of Christ: ‘His throne shall endure as the sun before me, and as the moon perfect forever, and a faithful witness in heaven.’ The Mother is the ‘throne’ of the Son, and ‘before’ the Son she is bright as the sun in the adornment of her soul, and like him ‘forever’ in the adornment of her undefiled body, and so she is a ‘faithful witness’ to the resurrection.<sup>48</sup>

## 6 Mary and the Resurrected Body

The last issue concerns integrity, and this proves to be an extremely important section of Bernardino’s sermon. This gives him the opportunity to address the issue of the resurrected body in its fullness, which has theological (especially moral and eschatological) implications for Mary as well as for all human beings. She experienced the fullness of glory just like her son as a result of her soul always being in complete control of her body. She was unlike other human beings whose bodies hold back their souls, since the body wants to be in control of the human person.

She was able to take up the ‘second robe’ (*secunda stola*) of the resurrected body in its full glory. Bonaventure, from whom Bernardino borrows extensively, speaks the second role as the ‘consubstantial reward,’ which is the body’s glorification.<sup>49</sup> Bonaventure speaks of the ‘consubstantial’ reward of the glory of heaven: ‘The glorification of the body, which is said to be a second robe,

48 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 225.

49 *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents: The Founder*, Vol. 2, 646, note a. In his *Breviloquium*, VII, 7, Bonaventure speaks of the ‘consubstantial’ reward of the glory of heaven: ‘The glorification of the body, which is said to be a second robe, once assumed, . . . permits the beatified soul to tend more perfectly “to the highest heaven.” This robe consists of a fourfold dowry of the body: Luminosity, subtlety, agility, and impassibility. This will be granted in the measure of the love that existed in the soul.’ Dominic Monti, translator and volume editor of the *Breviloquium*, explains the ‘second robe’: ‘Christian tradition interpreted the several references in the book of Revelation to the “white robes” of the elect as referring to their being clothed with perfection. Scholastic theologians interpreted these “robes” as the “dowries” with which Christ had adorned his Bride, the Church Triumphant. The primary “robe” refers to the dowries of the soul that Bonaventure has already mentioned—vision, love, and enjoyment [the Beatific Vision]— that perfect its faculties, and thus “unite the soul to God as a bride to her spouse” (In 4 Sent., 49.1. un. 5 [IV, 1008–1009]). But a further “robe” is attached to these, the glorification of the risen body.’ Quoted from *Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic V. Monti, Bonaventure Texts in Translation Series, Vol. IX (Saint Bonaventure, NY, 2005), 291, n. 63. See also Bonaventure’s ‘Jesus, the Adorned Spouse,’ in *The Tree of Life*,

once assumed ... permits the beatified soul to tend more perfectly “to the highest heaven.” This robe consists of a fourfold dowry of the body: Luminosity, subtlety, agility, and impassibility. This will be granted in the measure of the love that existed in the soul.<sup>50</sup>

There is a long tradition in the church to speak of various types of *stolae*, theologically, liturgically (garments), and symbolically:

Christian tradition interpreted the several references in the book of Revelation to the ‘white robes’ of the elect as referring to their being clothed with perfection. Scholastic theologians interpreted these ‘robes’ as the ‘dowries’ with which Christ had adorned his Bride, the Church Triumphant. The primary ‘robe’ refers to the dowries of the soul that Bonaventure has already mentioned—vision, love, and enjoyment [the Beatific Vision]—that perfect its faculties, and thus ‘unite the soul to God as a bride to her spouse.’ But a further ‘robe’ is attached to these, the glorification of the risen body.<sup>51</sup>

For Bonaventure, as well as Bernardino, the second robe is the glorified, transformed resurrection body that forms what is called the ‘consubstantial glory’ of the body in relation to the ‘substantial glory’ of the soul. This is what Mary enjoys in the Assumption into heaven and what human beings will enjoy after the general resurrection of the dead, in heaven as well.

A common argument against the glorification of the body in the resurrection is the corruption that the human body undergoes at the time of death. This is where both Christ and Mary differ from the rest of humanity because of the resurrection. However, Bernardino points out that Mary was not the first one in salvation history who was preserved from bodily corruption. There are three stories in the Old Testament that speak of someone dying without experiencing corruption: The three young men in the fiery furnace, Jonah, and Daniel.<sup>52</sup> But Mary is more special because this is not simply a case of an incorrupt body but also a body that is transformed and glorious.

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Section 44 in *Bonaventure*, trans. Ewert Cousins, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York, 1978), 168.

50 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 291.

51 Dominic Monti, quoted from *Breviloquium*, 291.

52 Bernardino quotes Augustine on examples from the Old Testament: “The divine will kept safe in the crackling fires not only the bodies of the three young men but also kept their clothing from being burnt [Daniel 3:19–27]; why then could he not do for his own Mother what he did for this clothing? He kept Jonah, beyond the normal course of nature,

Then Bernardino brings in the historical reality that, even though her body was buried in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, her body as a whole nor any body parts have ever been found anywhere on earth. There is a difference between Mary and any of the saints because there has never been any claim that any bodily relics of Mary exist. This lack of relics was confirmed and promoted in the very influential chapter on the Assumption of Mary in *The Golden Legend*. All that remained of Mary was the girdle that encircled her body.<sup>53</sup>

Additionally, not being held back by the laws of moral human nature, because 'she in life went beyond every law of nature,' Bernardino held that her body was taken up into heaven in its perfect form.<sup>54</sup> This is the result of the perfection of her moral life that is rewarded in the perfection of her glorious perfect existence in heaven.

Bernardino then addresses the issue of the time that elapsed between her death, which resulted in her body being separated from her soul, and their reunion in heaven. The standard tradition codified in the *Golden Legend* is that, to correspond to Christ, the separation of her body and soul lasted only three days.<sup>55</sup> But Bernardino remarks that a devout lady had a vision in which she tells her readers that after forty days (15 August to 24 September), Mary's body was reunited with her soul as she entered heavenly paradise.<sup>56</sup> The forty-day

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undamaged in the belly of a whale [Jonah 2:10]; did he go beyond nature to keep the Mother undamaged? Daniel was saved from the demanding hunger of lions [Daniel 6:16–27]; why then would not Mary, endowed with such merits of dignities be kept intact?' Quoted from *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 226.

53 Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Reading on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan (Princeton, 1993), 82. This is number 119 in Ryan's translation.

54 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 226.

55 *The Golden Legend*, 81.

56 This is certainly Elisabeth of Schönau (1129–1165). During a vision of Mary, Elisabeth asks her 'whether you were assumed into heaven in spirit alone or in the flesh as well?' She asks Mary this because she believes that the 'fathers' are ambiguous about the issue. A year later, Mary appears to her again in a vision in which she is at a tomb surrounded by a great light, from which she is raised up surrounded by a multitude of angels and greeted by Christ, who was carrying a cross on which a banner hangs. An angel informs Elisabeth that Mary indeed was taken up 'in flesh as well as in spirit' and further comments that 'she departed from this life on the day her assumption is now celebrated. But she was resurrected forty days after this, that is, on September 23.' The angel then explains how the 'holy fathers' were confused about these events of Mary: 'The holy fathers who established the celebration of her assumption in the church had no certainty of her bodily assumption; therefore, they solemnized the day of her death, which they called her Assumption, because they believed without doubt that she had indeed been taken up in the flesh.' Her later visions reveal to her that Mary lived on earth, after the death of Christ, 'for a full year and as many days as are from the feast of the Ascension to the day on which my

period could possibly be a way to relate the Assumption to the Ascension of Christ rather than the three-day period that would relate the Assumption to the Resurrection of Christ.

Bernardino then takes up the issue of the four *dotaes* or gifts of the resurrected body—now applied to the Virgin Mary—that was so important in medieval eschatology.<sup>57</sup> These gifts are explicitly the qualities of the sun, and so we return to the theme of the sun once again.<sup>58</sup> The sun has four qualities: Brightness or clarity, subtlety, impassibility, and agility. Bernardino states that ‘the blessed Virgin, like the sun, has these four qualities in her glorious body.’<sup>59</sup>

Bernardino claims that clarity is the main of the *dotaes* and the gift that all others depend on: ‘Firstly, subtlety depends on it; light of its nature has subtlety to penetrate bodies and especially bodies that are transparent, as is clear in glass and in rock-crystal which are penetrated by light. Secondly, agility depends on its movement and changes are sudden. Thirdly, the incapability of suffering depends on it for it suffers no harm free from others.’<sup>60</sup> Since Bernardino concludes that the gift of clarity is the foundation for the other three, it is fitting that clarity is the primary gift that displays the glory of the resurrected body. This is based on the words of Christ, which is the classic resurrection text in medieval theology and preaching: ‘Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father’ (Matthew 13:43).

The theme of light is extremely important for Bernardino’s theology of resurrection. Bernardino distinguishes two types of light, *lux* and *lumen*. *Lux* is light itself and *lumen* is luminosity, or reflected or radiated light. Thomas Aquinas had spoken of this distinction in the thirteenth century: ‘*Lux* is the form or source of light and *lumen* is the illumination that comes from that source.’<sup>61</sup> *Lux* is the external light that comes from the sun and nature, and *lumen* is the new metaphysical light. It becomes internally consecrated and holy within sacred space. When this light enters into us, he calls this illumination. In his

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assumption is celebrated.’ Quoted from *Elisabeth of Schönau: The Complete Works*, trans. Anne Clark (New York/Mahwah, 2000), 210–211.

57 As far as I know, Robert Grosseteste was the first to speak of the four *dotaes* in relation to the Virgin Mary. See Servus Gieben, ‘Robert Grosseteste and the Immaculate Conception with the Text of the Sermon *Tota Pulchra Es*,’ in *Collectanea Franciscana* 28 (1958), 221–227.

58 This is the only medieval text that I know of that speaks of the qualities of the resurrected body as originally qualities of the sun.

59 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 226.

60 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 227.

61 David L. Whidden III, *Christ the Light: The Theology of Light and Illumination in Thomas Aquinas* (Minneapolis, 2014), 52.

Assumption sermon, Bernardino speaks of differences in light in relation to the glorious body:

The light of the elements and the light of the glorified body are not the same, but the light of the elements is like an imitation of it, just as the spiritual light of a soul is not the same kind as the spiritual light of heavenly glory, but rather a certain imitation of it. Similarly, sunlight is not the same kind as the light of a glorious body, but like it and an imitation of it. This is in every glorious body. But the light of the glorious body of the Virgin is greater than that of all the bodies of the blessed taken together will be, excepting the glorious body of Jesus.<sup>62</sup>

Even though the body is going to be glorious in heaven, the body does not derive its glory by itself, but owes that glory to the soul. The quality of the risen body should be seen from the perspective of the beatified soul, which God created to overflow (*redundantia*) into the body so that it prevents the body from experiencing anything contrary to its perfection. It is important to understand the Latin word *redundantia* (and its verb form *redundare*) when speaking of the medieval approach to the soul/body relationship. The word means 'overflow,' and it speaks of the overflow of the soul into the body. A recent study of the resurrection theology of Thomas Aquinas states: 'Whereas the soul participates directly in the life of God, the body does so only by an 'overflow' (*redundantia*) of the beatitude of the soul.'<sup>63</sup> The overflow of the soul has a dramatic, transforming effect on the body not only in life, but also in the resurrected state. The theology of *redundantia*, therefore, was very important to the entire theology of resurrection in the Middle Ages in regard to the soul-body relationship in human beings, and here applied to the exemplary human being, the Virgin Mary.

Bernardino expands this theological discussion by relating the *dotaes* to the four principal faculties of the human being: Intellect, memory, will, and the spirit. The first three of these faculties have corresponding theological virtues that correlate with them (agility does not have a corresponding virtue). Each of the four also are correlated with one of the four gifts of the risen body.

The intellect is related to active faith, which is rewarded with the vision of God, that is, the infallible truth. What we experience on earth in comparison to heaven is stated by Paul: 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but

62 *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 227.

63 Carlo Leget, *Living with God: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Life on Earth and Life after Death* (Leuven, 1997), 170.

then face to face' (1 Corinthians 13:12). Bernardino then states: 'Because the spirit will be enlightened and glorified in the vision of eternal light, and so will provide clarity to the body, "the just shall shine as the sun."'<sup>64</sup>

The memory will experience the most secure dignity in heaven (*in patria*) because of hope in this life. Paul speaks of this dimension: 'So run that you may obtain' (1 Corinthians 9:24). Because of the holding and possessing of the God who cannot suffer, human beings are prevented from ever suffering again. This security will be experienced both internally and externally. Thus, Paul says, the body 'is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption' (1 Corinthians 15:42). This is the gift of impassibility.

The will shall be rewarded ultimately with what it has desired all along: Love or enjoyment in spirit. This reward is expressed by Job: 'Then shall you abound in delights in the Almighty' (Job 22:36). Therefore, what is fulfilled according to Paul: 'It is sown in weakness,' it shall appear to gain 'in power' (1 Corinthians 15:43).

The spirit, because it has enjoyed and possessed the divine vision, is able to move with ease toward the fullness of the divine. Therefore, this movement is aided by the gift of agility, as Paul states: 'It is sown a natural body,' it shall appear again 'a spiritual body' (1 Corinthians 15:44).

The four faculties are thus transformed in the glorious life of heaven. Bernardino concludes this section about the glory of the human person, both body and soul:

This is the glory of each and of all the blessed. To the extent that in the present life there was a greater faith, firmer hope and more fervent charity, so much clearer will be the vision of God, and the most holy Trinity will give as a reward a firmer or surer clinging to God, a sweeter enjoyment of God, and love in the soul; consequently, as is clear from what has been said, in the bodies of the blessed, clarity will be brighter, the incapability of suffering will be stronger, subtlety stronger and agility lighter.<sup>65</sup>

This entire discussion of the theology of the virtues and the gifts of the resurrected body is intended to show how Mary is the perfect model of the glorious life of heaven. She is the one to whom the glory of her soul flows over into her glorious body, and her body is glorious in all the above mentioned qualities. Because of this, the entire world is brightened by her presence, and heaven is

<sup>64</sup> Matthew 13:43.

<sup>65</sup> *Eleven Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 228.

lit up by her. She truly is, therefore, the one spoken about in Revelation 12:1: 'A great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.'

## 7 Conclusion

The papal document *Munificentissimus Deus* rightly presents three themes that we have seen confirmed in these two Marian sermons of Bernardino of Siena. We have seen how, firstly, Bernardino presents the likeness between Christ and Mary in which they both show the dignity of a harmonious relationship within their persons of soul and body. Secondly, the special role of Mary as a woman (Eve) parallels that of her son, who represents the man (Adam), so that Mary participates in the correcting of what has happened in the Garden with a woman. Thirdly, he affirms the Assumption of Mary and the incorruptibility of her body.

The document does not mention many other factors in regard to the Assumption of Mary that are crucial to Bernardino's Mariology. As we have seen, Mary is not simply the intercessor and advocate for sinners on earth, but also the model from which these same sinners may turn from sin and engage in the transformative process of liberation leading to beatified eternal life. What Bernardino presents is not only a Mariology that focuses on her ontology (being), but also on her morality, because her behavior is to be imitated by human beings.

In summary, we can say that Bernardino operated on three separate but interconnected levels of Mary's perfection that led her to be assumed into glorious life in heaven. On the ontological level (the study of the 'being' of Mary), she is the most perfect, sinless human being who now reigns in heaven through her Assumption. On the level of advocacy, because of her perfection on earth, she is considered to be the most perfect intercessor for human beings as they strive for their own earthly perfection that leads to a glorious risen existence. Mary is also, on the level of the most perfect moral agent, the model of a virtuous life on the road to heaven. She is the model of how a human being can be rewarded with not only the substantial glory of the soul but also the consubstantial glory of the body. Her experience of earthly and heavenly life provided medieval Christians with the hope that they would be at the end of time where she is now: Gathered for all eternity around the throne of God on which sits the Risen Christ with his mother Mary at his side.

## The Book, the Song, and the Letter: Preaching Mary in Two Sermons by the Franciscan Johannes Sintram (d. 1450)

*Kimberly Rivers*

A modern scholar can rarely know how a medieval preacher chose elements to put into a sermon, though sermonists have often asked the question.<sup>1</sup> However, by the fifteenth century, increasing access to paper and parchment, and perhaps an increasing tendency to keep personal copies of one's texts and writings, make some friars a better witness to the composition process than those in earlier centuries. One such friar is Johannes Sintram, a Franciscan preacher and lector from Würzburg. In two sermons, Sintram preaches about Mary by using the imagery of the book, the hymn, and the letter, common methods of communication in the fifteenth century, which would have had perhaps special resonance to a scribe who transcribed copies of everything that came into his grasp and to his German contemporaries. Though none of the approaches is unique to Sintram, the careful way that he lays out his sermon-composition process is especially clear and will be examined here.

Sintram incorporates the communication imagery into two of his sermons and *praedicabilia* on Mary, one contained in Princeton University Library, Garrett 90 [PrinG 90] and the other in Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection, cod. 102 [Leeds ULB 102]. Both manuscripts contain the lyrics of the Latin hymn *Gaude virgo stella maris*, two slightly different German translations of the hymn (one of which Sintram claims as his own), marginal notations about the hymn, and two sermons on Mary arising from her comparison to the *liber generationis*.<sup>2</sup> The material demonstrates how Sintram could use

1 As in the collection of essays edited by Roger Andersson, *Constructing the Medieval Sermon*, *Sermo: Studies on Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation Sermons and Preaching* 6 (Brepols, 2007).

2 Matt. 1:1: '*Liber generationis Jesu Christi filii David, filii Abraham*.' Mary has been a popular topic of scholarship, though there is room for more in the field of sermon studies. For general works on Mary, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2010); Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York, 2002); Hilda C. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols. (New York, 1963).



hymns, marginal notation, popular tropes about books and letters, and vernacular translation to create new sermons about Mary. His literary presence is felt through the marginal notations and explicit directions for composition in the texts, especially in PrinG 90.

Before examining Sintram's sermons, some background on the writer and his manuscripts is necessary. Johannes Sintram was born in Würzburg around 1380, the son of burgher parents, and entered the Franciscan order in his home city around 1400.<sup>3</sup> He studied at the schools of several Franciscan houses within the province of the Upper Rhine of the order, including Regensburg, Ulm, and Strasburg (the *studium generale* of the province). He was then at the Franciscan convent school in Oxford in 1412. From 1415 until at least 1428, he served as *lector* in a number of convents of his order, both within and outside his home province. He was guardian of the convent in Würzburg in 1437 and died there in 1450.<sup>4</sup>

We know about Sintram's activities because of a gift he made of sixty-one codices to the Würzburg convent library in 1444.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-two of them are extant and contain an assortment of texts, including sermons or hymns that Sintram authored and wrote down himself; texts by other authors that Sintram copied; and texts by other authors collected but not copied by Sintram.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the

3 Nigel F. Palmer, 'Sintram, Johannes OFM', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al, 2<sup>d</sup> ed., 14 vols. (Berlin etc., 1977–2008), vol. 8, cols. 1284–1287. Overviews of Sintram's career may also be found in the following works: Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction Before the Council of Trent*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 107 (Leiden etc., 2004), 104–106, 304; Dorothy K. Coveney, 'Johannes Sintram de Herbigoli', in *Speculum* 16 (1941), 336–39; Theodore C. Petersen, 'Johs. Sintram de Herbigoli in Two of his MSS', in *Speculum* 20 (1945), 73–83; P. Ludger Meier, O.F.M., 'Aufzeichnungen aus vernichteten Handschriften des Würzburger Minoritenklosters', in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 44 (1951), 191–209; *British Museum Quarterly* 10 (1935–36), 99–100; Alfred Brotherton Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*. (Oxford, 1957–59), vol. 3, 1703. See also Kimberly A. Rivers, 'Writing the Memory of the Virtues and Vices in Johannes Sintram's (d. 1450) Preaching Aids', in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Leiden etc., 2010), 31–48; Kimberly A. Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images, and Preaching in the Later Middle Ages*, Sermo 4 (Turnhout, 2010), Chapter 8.

4 Palmer, 'Sintram, Johannes OFM', 1284.

5 London, BL Addit. 30049, fol. 96v: 'Frater Johannes Sintram librum posuit hic ad librariam herbigolensem et cum hoc sexaginta volumina hic in quattuor pulpmetis conuenienter posita quod factum est anno 1444 post festum sancti Valentini.'

6 Manuscripts identified as Sintram's include Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, Fonds Lescalopier cod. 37 (1672, H); Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, mgq 559; cod. theol. lat. oct. 120b; Klosterneuburg, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 1165; Leeds, University Library, Brotherton Collection, cod. 102; London, British Library, Addit. 30049; 44055; London, University College Library, Lat. 4;

most distinctive aspect of his manuscripts are the several tables that he created for works he wrote and copied, as well as the many marginal notations, schematics, and personal comments found throughout his manuscripts. The combination of texts and notations provides a goldmine of information about Sintram's own career as a student, teacher, and preacher.<sup>7</sup>

Both PrinG 90 and Leeds ULB 102 are composite manuscripts made from paper and parchment. PrinG 90 is comprised of nine quires and was originally intended to follow Leeds ULB 102, which is why the foliation begins with 137; it contains several cross-references to the Leeds codex.<sup>8</sup> Most of the manuscript is devoted to sermons and sermon 'outlines,' that is, short sketches of sermons that are written out and indicate the main divisions but which lack their full development.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the outlines, there are also a few spiritual texts and some *praedicabilia*, such as part of the tract *De claustro anime* (fol. 221r), Sintram's Latin translation of a German *Fünf-Meister Traktat* (fol. 221v), a discussion of avarice (fol. 224r), and the hymn to be discussed momentarily.

fols. 137r–309v <sup>10</sup>	A sermon collection with a range of Johannes Sintram's own sermons
fols. 310r–312r	<i>Tabula sermonum de sanctis</i>
fols. 312v–315r	<i>Tabula de tempore</i>

The entire manuscript is written in Sintram's rather distinctive hand and contains the marginal notation that all of his researchers have remarked on, including references to the Leeds manuscript.

Leeds ULB 102 is comprised of eleven quires with most of the manuscript devoted to sermons and a few spiritual texts.

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London, Schøyen Collection, 1833; München, Staatsbibliothek, clm 28845, 28846, 28954; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, cod. M. 298; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 58; Princeton, N.J., University Library, Garret 90; Würzburg, Franziskanerkloster, cod. I 51; I 55; I 63 (burnt in 1945); I 85; I 86; I 87; I 89; I 120; I 139 (burnt in 1945).

7 I am working on a long-term project about Sintram's career.

8 PrinG 90 is also missing 2 quires between quires 8 and 9, as well as 6 individual folia scattered throughout the codex. A complete manuscript description can be found in Don C. Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Princeton University Library*, Publications of the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University (Princeton, 2013), 182–192 (at 190).

9 See Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2005), 12, for the distinction between a full sermon and an outline. Petersen, 'Johs. Sintram de Herbipoli,' also refers to the sermons as outlines.

10 The foliation begins with 137.

fols. 1r–6r	Hugh of St. Victor, <i>De vanitate mundi</i>
fols. 6v–76r	Sermons, mainly <i>temporale</i>
fols. 76v–82r	St. Bonaventure, <i>Itinerarium Mentis in Deum</i> (or <i>The Vision of the Poverello in the Desert of Mt. Alverna</i> )
fols. 82r–v	Excerpt from Peter Comestor's <i>Historia scolastica</i> with accompanying hand diagram, with texts beginning 'Meditare' on each finger and on the palm
fols. 83–140, 150–82	Sermons, mainly for saints' days
fols. 140–50	<i>Tractatus de homine spirituali</i>
fols. 183r–188r	Indices to the sermons

It is written in Sintram's hand and contains many of Sintram's characteristic notes and directives, such as a comment on fol. 126r: 'Sermo ad clerum in conceptione virginis quem predicavi Oxoniis M<sup>o</sup> cccc<sup>o</sup> xii<sup>o</sup> Iohannes Sintram/ A sermon to the clergy on the Conception of the Virgin which I preached in Oxford in 1412. Johannes Sintram.'<sup>11</sup> On the first page is a note that 'Librum istum scripsit Iohannes Sintram de Herbipoli/ Johannes Sintram of Würzburg wrote this book.'<sup>12</sup> The audience for both manuscripts is Sintram himself and the Franciscans in the lector program of the Franciscan order, who studied theology in order to preach to the laity and enhance their own spirituality.<sup>13</sup>

Sintram makes it easy to see how he composed his sermon outline on Mary in PrinG 90. The preaching material on Mary occupies just three folia. He begins with a copy he made of the Latin hymn *Gaude virgo stella maris*, which he calls 'verses' or 'measures' (*versus* or *metra*). He copied down each stanza of the hymn separately, first in Latin and then in a German translation. A note in the top margin of fol. 177r reveals when and where the material was composed:

Ego frater Johannes Sintram lector tunc hallensi versus seu metra de septem gaudiis hic scripta colonie reportavi sed wlgare de proprio capite composui anno m<sup>o</sup> ccccxv<sup>o</sup>.

11 For more examples, see N.R. Ker and A.J. Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* (Oxford, 1983), vol. 111, 64–65. Finally, Theodore Petersen long ago noted that Sintram had originally kept the quires of this manuscript together with those now bound in PrinG 90: Petersen, 'Johs. Sintram de Herbipoli', 74.

12 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 1.

13 See Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210–1517)* (Leiden etc., 2000); Roest, 'The Role of Lectors in the Religious Formation of Franciscan Friars, Nuns, and Tertiaries', in *Studio e studia: le scuole degli ordini mendicanti tra XIII e XIV secolo: atti del XXIX Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 11–13 ottobre 2001* (Spoleto [Perugia], 2002), 83–115; Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction Before the Council of Trent*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions CXVII (Leiden etc., 2004).

I, brother Johannes Sintram, lector then at Halle (Schwaben), copied down (*reportau*) verses or measures about the seven joys written here at Cologne, but I composed the ones in the vernacular from my own head in the year 1415.

Apparently Sintram copied down the Latin verses when he was a lector at Schwaben Halle on a visit to Cologne and composed the German translation in 1415. Because we know from other manuscript references that he was lector at Halle in 1215–16, all of this activity likely took place in 1215.<sup>14</sup>

The text of the Latin hymn is close, although not identical to, the one recorded by Franz Mone in *Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters*.<sup>15</sup> One can see why Sintram seems rather proud of his German translation, as he was able to make all of the lines rhyme. The first stanza provides a nice example of his method:

Gaude virgo stella Maris.  
sponsa Christi singularis.  
Iocundata nimium  
per salutis nuncium;  
a peccatis nos emunda.  
casta mater et fecunda,  
et superna gaudia,  
cordi nostri nuncia.

Ffrö dich iungfro dem merstern glich  
ein gemahel gotes sunderlich  
dich fröwt der engel ein michel teil  
der dir verkunt dem menschen heil.  
Mach vns von den sünden rein  
du küsche müter in demüt clein.  
Vnd verkind die obersten fröd  
vnsern herczen on alles läid.<sup>16</sup>

Rejoice, O Virgin, Star of the Sea,  
dearest Spouse of Christ!  
for the Angel of our salvation  
announced  
to you an exceeding great joy.  
Cleanse us from our sins,

Rejoice, Virgin like the Star of the Sea.  
Bride of God especially.  
The angel rejoices a great deal  
Who announces to you the people's  
salvation.  
Cleanse us from our sins,

14 Other manuscript notes indicate that Sintram was a lector at Reutlingen in 1415 and that he became lector at Halle at the provincial chapter meeting held in that year. For instance, a sermon for Corpus Christi in PrinG 90, fol. 174v, says that Sintram wrote it when he was in Reutlingen in 1415. See Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 184, and Coveney, 'Johannes Sintram', 337–38.

15 Franz Joseph Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters* (Aalen, 1964), vol. 2, hymn no. 453, 160–161.

16 Elizabeth Wade-Sirabian of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh provided invaluable aid in my transcriptions of the German verses.

O chaste and fruitful Mother!      You chaste mother in minor humility  
and speak to our heart of the joys      And proclaim the highest joy  
that never end.<sup>17</sup>      To our hearts without any sorrow.<sup>18</sup>

All seven stanzas are laid out in the same way: First comes the Latin version, then a German translation, with a corresponding number in the margin. There is no interpretation or discussion of the hymn in the text itself, though there is some marginal notation, as discussed below. As seen in Figure 15.1, a series of slanted, parallel lines in the margins marks the spot where each German stanza begins, rendering the translations easy to spot for the reader.

The hymn itself was seen in the Middle Ages as celebrating seven *gaudia* or 'joys' in Mary's life, that is, as marking seven significant moments in Mary's life, though the content of the list could vary.<sup>19</sup> It was a devotion especially important to the Franciscans.<sup>20</sup> Sintram has inscribed in the margins his understanding of the moment in Mary's life to which each stanza refers: The Annunciation, the Nativity, the Epiphany, the Presentation in the Temple, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. Sintram adds a second interpretation of the seven joys as a series of messengers that God has sent to all Christians in the marginal notation beneath each moment in Mary's life. The Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel to Mary is seen as an actual (*realis*) messenger, 'but the angel allotted to you ought to be a spiritual one.'<sup>21</sup> The second messenger is grace or the Holy Spirit 'which ought to keep company with you and the Virgin'; the third is the three powers of the soul.<sup>22</sup> The fourth is Simon, 'who is interpreted as hearing grief and to be reason.'<sup>23</sup> The fifth messenger,

17 English translation adapted from Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year: Paschal Time*, trans. by Laurence Shepherd (Dublin, 1871), vol. 3, 197–199.

18 The translation of the German verse was provided by David Wiczorek, student assistant.

19 Leslie Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* (Westport, Conn., 1996), s. v. 'Seven Joys of the Virgin', 226. The number of joys could vary from 7 to 15, depending on the context. See for instance, Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*, 1st ed. (New York etc., 1988), 103.

20 Rubin, *Mother of God*, 332–338. See also Ruth Ellis Messenger, *The Medieval Latin Hymn* (Washington, D.C., 1953), 55, on the importance of friars to diffusion of hymns and veneration of Mary.

21 Sintram forgot to add the interpretation of the first joy in the margin, so he added a sign directing the reader to the same sign in the bottom margin: 'primus nunccius racionalis fuit angelus gabriel sed angelus tuus tibi ad custodiam deputatus debet esse nunccius spiritualis.'

22 PrinG 90, fol. 176v, marginal notation: 'tertium de epiphanya. tercius nunccius 3 potencie anime.'

23 PrinG 90, fol. 176v, marginal notation: 'quartum, de presentata in templo. quartus symeon, qui interpretatur audiens merorem et debet esse racio.'

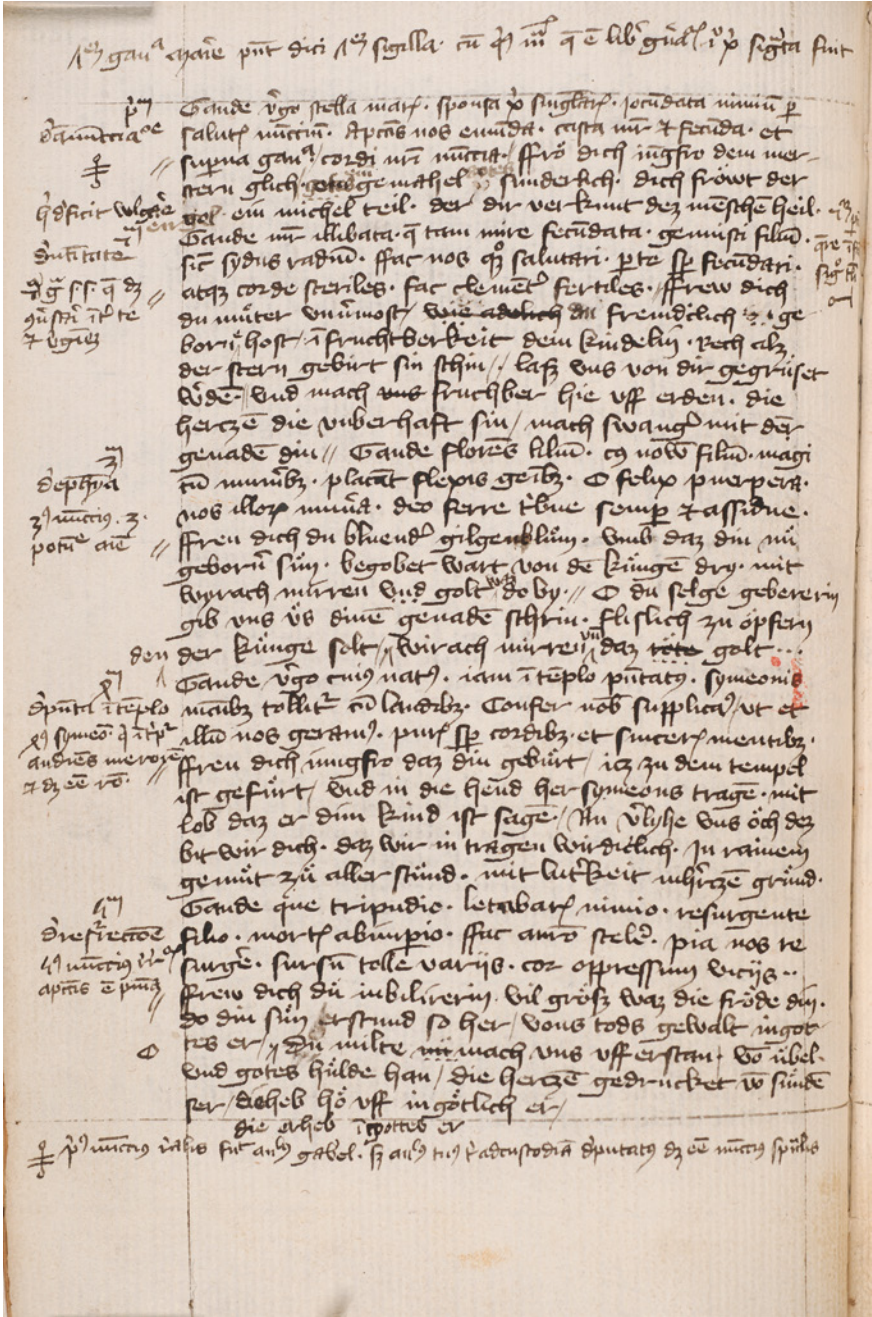


FIGURE 15.1 PrinG 90, fol. 176v. The Figure shows parallel lines in the left-hand margin of the folium, marking the start of the German verses, as well as Sintram's characteristic marginal notation. Johannes Sintram, Sermons, fol. 176v, Robert Garrett Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, No. 90, Manuscripts Division. REPRODUCED COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

of resurrection from sins, is penitence.<sup>24</sup> The sixth messenger, linked to the Ascension, is emotion (*affectus*), which ought to ascend to heaven from earthly things.<sup>25</sup> The seventh messenger, associated with the Assumption, is divine love, ‘which ought to raise you totally to heaven with the greater ones.’<sup>26</sup> Thus, the text of the hymn provides the framework for two different sets of marginal interpretations: The seven joys and the seven messengers.

Though Sintram has taken such care to copy down the hymn and compose his own translation, it is the marginal notation that he uses to construct the bulk of the sermon outline on Mary that follows the hymn in the manuscript. He titles the sermon *De beata virgine* and takes as his text *Uidi librum septem sigillis signatum*, Apoc 5<sup>o</sup> (Apoc. 5.1): ‘And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals.’<sup>27</sup> The quotation provides him the opportunity to compare the Virgin to a book and particularly to the Book of the Apocalypse sealed with seven seals: ‘And it must be known how God the Father sent seven messengers (*legates*), that is seven joys, for the purpose of ornamenting and sealing the *liber generacionis*, “book of his generation,” namely the Virgin Mary, and for disposing his seals and signs well.’<sup>28</sup>

Sintram begins by building on the common late medieval comparison of the Virgin to a book.<sup>29</sup> Because of the medieval trope that identified Mary as the *liber generacionis* of Matthew 1:1, medieval preachers and theologians came to associate Mary with the book. There were manifold ways that this association could be pursued. A common version is seen in medieval art in annunciation scenes. Up to the twelfth century, Mary is often depicted as holding both a spindle and a book when the angel Gabriel arrives.<sup>30</sup> From the late

24 PrinG 90, fol. 176v, marginal notation: ‘quintum de resurreccione. quintus nuntius resurrectionis a peccatis est penitencia.’

25 PrinG 90, fol. 177r, marginal notation: ‘sextum de ascensione. nuntius est affectus qui debet ascendere ad celum de terrennis.’

26 PrinG 90, fol. 177r, marginal notation: ‘septum de assumpcione. septimus amor diuinus qui debet te totaliter leuare in celum cum maiora.’

27 Apoc. 5:1: Douay-Rheims Bible, <http://www.drbo.org/chapter/73005.htm>. [Date accessed 7 May 2017].

28 PrinG 90, fol. 177r.

29 See Klaus Schreiner, “...wie Maria gleicht einem puch,” Beiträge zur Buchmetaphorik des hohen und späten Mittelalters, in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 11 (1971), 1437–1464, and ‘Marienverehrung, Lesekultur, Schriftlichkeit. Bildungs- und Frömmigkeits geschichtliche Studien zur Auslegung und Darstellung von “Mariä Verkündigung”’, in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 24 (1990), 314–68.

30 Laura Saetveit Miles, ‘The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary’s Book at the Annunciation’, in *Speculum* 89: 3 (2014), 632–69 (at 632).

eleventh century, Mary was usually depicted holding a book. Laura Saetveit Miles has seen this change as a way of signaling the virginity and inaccessibility of Mary, which eventually was linked to the idea of meditation, first for male clerics and later for female enclosed. The change came about as a result of the eleventh-century reform movement and then spread throughout medieval Europe. Winifred Frey has seen the depiction of Mary with a book as representation of the ideal reader and a promoter of literacy, especially for women.<sup>31</sup>

Another association of the book with Mary is the Book of Hours and the Little Office.<sup>32</sup> Sintram incorporates both approaches into this sermon outline. He begins by calling Mary the book of the Apocalypse, which he identifies as the *liber generacionis*, the 'book of the generation of Christ.' This book is sealed with the seven joys, which are also messengers, a comparison that then allows him to discuss the protocol of seals and letters, all common means of communication in the late Middle Ages. According to Sintram, the first messenger was the Angel Gabriel, who in his legation impressed and appended the first seal to this book when he announced the first joy, that she ought to be the mother of God and to conceive his son, by saying *Deus tecum*.<sup>33</sup> In the same way, we ought to send her spiritually seven embassies (*legaciones*) and messengers (*nunccios*) with sealed letters containing seven joys on a daily basis. Sintram says that we should follow customary letter-writing protocol, by including in the beginning of the letter the greeting, the subject, reverence, and obedience, then the supplications, petitions, and affections, and in the end to conclude with the goods received and the acceptance of thanks.<sup>34</sup> And in order that these things are

31 Winifred Frey, 'Maria Legens—Maria Legere: St. Mary as an ideal Reader and St. Mary as a Textbook', in *The Book and the Magic of Reading in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Garland Medieval Bibliographies (New York, 1999), 277–294 (at 279). See also, in the same collection of essays, David Linton, 'Reading the Virgin Reader', 253–274.

32 See Rubin, *Mother of God*, 221–24; David J. Rothenberg, 'Marian Devotion in the Fifteenth Century', in *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge, 2015), 528–544; Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*, 1st ed. (New York etc., 1988).

33 Luc. 1:28.

34 Sintram appears to be following the rules for letter writing worked out in the Middle Ages as the *ars dictaminis*. See the translation of an anonymous *ars* in James Jerome Murphy, ed., *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts* (Berkeley, 1971), 3–25. Murphy found the German tradition of the *ars* to be mostly an imitation of Italian models. James Clark notes that monks in the late medieval period were trained in the *ars dictaminis*: 'Monastic Education in Late Medieval England', in *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R.B. Dobson. Proceedings of the 1999 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford (Donington, Lincolnshire, 2002), 25–40 (at 36).



received and noticed, they should be sealed with one's own seal and not that of another (*alieno*).<sup>35</sup>

Sintram's sermon here obviously envisions an audience familiar enough with literate culture for a discussion of books, embassies, and the protocols of letter writing and seals to be relevant. In her work on late medieval English devotional practice, Margaret Aston astutely observed an 'acquaintance with letters that penetrated the whole of English society': 'It is a sign of this growing consciousness of letters as valuable tools, that the apparatus of literacy was itself turned into a religious metaphor. Things do not become metaphors until they have well and truly arrived.'<sup>36</sup> There is no reason to see Germany as different from England in this regard, especially in an urban milieu. In fact, several scholars have posited that just such an environment in late medieval Germany brought about a new attitude toward spirituality, one that did not accord with the old dichotomy of a clerical-lay split.<sup>37</sup> Friars preached to an increasingly well-educated German audience and to a substantial mercantile and artisan population. From this environment, according to scholars like Christoph Burger, Stephen Mossman, and Berndt Hamm, arose a *Frömmigkeitstheologie*, a 'theology of piety' that existed along a spectrum of religious experience from highly educated members of the clergy on the one end to almost complete indifference in the laity at the other. These scholars also play down differences among diverse religious groups according to whether or not they had a formal rule, with Burger seeing little difference in the spirituality of a beguine, a member of a tertiary order, and the like. These scholars also see a growing emphasis on the use of German in theological discussion, rendering the old distinction between a Latin, clerical audience, and a lay, vernacular one, null.<sup>38</sup>

Such insights help to elucidate the contents of Sintram's sermon on Mary. The specific audience for this sermon outline is not described: It begins with the common greeting '*Karissimi*,' which could refer to a clerical, lay, or even

35 PrinG 90, fol. 177r–177v.

36 Margaret Aston, 'Devotional Literacy', in *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London, 1984), 101–133 (at 103–104).

37 Stephen Mossman, *Marquard von Lindau and the Challenges of Religious Life in Late Medieval Germany: The Passion, the Eucharist, the Virgin Mary*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (New York, etc., 2010), 27. Berndt Hamm, 'The Urban Reformation in the Holy Roman Empire', in *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*, ed. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko Augustinus Oberman, and James D. Tracy (Leiden etc., 1994), 193–227.

38 Berndt Hamm, 'Was ist Frömmigkeitstheologie? Überlegungen zum 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert', in Hans-Jörg Niden and Marcel Niden (eds.), *Praxis Pietatis. Beiträge zu Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit. Wolfgang Sommer zum 60. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart etc., 1999), 9–45 (at 13–15). Mossman, *Marquard von Lindau*, 27.

a mixed audience.<sup>39</sup> Sintram occasionally indicates the audience for his sermons in the marginal notation but does not make it a common practice.<sup>40</sup> The audience for this piece could thus fit into the spectrum described above, from Franciscans in his own community, secular clergy, members of tertiary orders, to educated laypeople.<sup>41</sup> They may well be people versed in trade who had a need to send letters. That he does not envision an exclusively Latin audience can be seen in the last part of the sermon.

Sintram says that we ourselves should be sending Mary 'letters,' and that there are seven hours of the day when we ought to write and to say in the beginning reverence and greetings, that is, the seven joys. We ought to add to the greeting our supplications, and so seal the letter with our own seal, that is, with the heart and not just the mouth. The letters are received in the court of the queen, and they make amends with petitions (*petitionibus satisfaciunt*). Let us therefore send the first messenger, that is the good angel, for the sake of placing the first letter, so sounding *Gaude virgo stella maris*, etc. And if the letter has been well sealed, Mary will receive it and will give a gracious response (*ratio*) by hearing the petition, announcing the joy at the end of life.<sup>42</sup>

39 Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections*, 9.

40 In the sermon noted above that Sintram preached to the clergy in Oxford, he addresses the audiences as '*Reverendi*', as was commonly done (see Wenzel above). Leeds ULB 102, fol. 126r: 'Sermo ad clerum in concepcione virginis quem predicauī Oxoniis M<sup>o</sup> cccc<sup>o</sup> xii<sup>o</sup> Iohannes Sintram/ A sermon to the clergy on the Conception of the Virgin which I preached in Oxford in 1412. Johannes Sintram.'

41 Recent scholarship has documented the many educational opportunities available to Germans generally and to members of religious communities in the fifteenth century. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York, 2003), 32–33; Rainer C. Schwinges, 'On Recruitment in German Universities from the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries', in *University and Schooling in Medieval Society*, eds. William J. Courtenay, Jürgen Miethke and David B. Priest (Leiden etc., 2000), 32–48; and Andreas Rüther, 'Educational communities in German convents of the Franciscan and Dominican provinces before 1350', in *Medieval Education*, ed. Ronald B. Begley and S.J. Joseph W. Koterski (New York, 2005), 123–32.

42 I have not yet found any obvious sources of Sintram's sermons on Mary. Given that he is so specifically constructing the sermons from the text of the hymns, the lack of a source should perhaps not be surprising. He certainly copied other preachers' sermons. For instance, PrinG 90 contains Sintram's Latin translation of a German sermon on angels attributed to Marquard of Lindau (fols. 201r–202v), and a 'Sermo de exaltacione crucis' by Konrad von Sachsen (Conrad of Saxony, d. 1279), replete with German verses, likely by Sintram, in the inner margin; Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 183–184. Konrad could certainly have been an influence; Stephen Mossman has noted that Konrad wrote a *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis*, a kind of Marian summa structured as commentary on the Ave Maria, that now exists in more than 247 manuscripts, and that his sermons were also widely distributed: 'Preaching on St. Francis in Medieval Germany', in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning of the World Came about*

In this short text, Sintram finds a way to incorporate the office, letters, the intercession of Mary, and the singing of hymns. When he refers to the seven hours of the day as times to send greetings to Mary, Sintram assumes a familiarity with the seven hours of prayer, perhaps especially as envisioned in Books of Hours, which had special prayers and images in the Little Office devoted to the Virgin Mary.<sup>43</sup> By the fifteenth century, a wide swath of the population would likely be familiar with this practice. In his direction to his listeners to send 'letters' or prayers to Mary, he sees her as a kind of intercessor at court, receiving letters from petitioners, a common view.<sup>44</sup>

And finally, Sintram finds a way to insert the hymn into his sermon, and the need for his translation becomes clear. He adds a note in the sermon text to 'see ... the preceding folium,' just after he mentions the first line of the hymn, as a reminder of where to find the words. Here we can find a concrete example of a friar incorporating singing into his sermon. Peter Loewen has examined the theory of using music in preaching but had not found many examples of its actual use in sermons in Germany.<sup>45</sup> For him, it is clear that the early Franciscans 'were eager promoters of the principles of musical homiletics practiced and advocated by Francis of Assisi.' In Germany, Franciscans like Bartholomeus Anglicus taught their confrères about the utility of music in preaching and thought it was essential for understanding Scripture.<sup>46</sup> Roger Bacon also declared that preachers should incorporate 'a musical style of declamation' into

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*Through Words*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson, *The Medieval Franciscans* 7 (Leiden etc., 2012), 231–272 (at 235). Late medieval preachers in general often borrowed from each other's works: J.B. Schneyer, 'Winke für die Sichtung und Zuordnung spätmittelalterlicher Lateinischer Predigtreden', in *Scriptorium* 32 (1978), 231–48.

43 Ruth Ellis Messenger, 'Hymns in the Horae Eboracenses (With Special Reference to the Praise of the Virgin)', in *The Classical Weekly* 38:12 (1945), 90–95. See Rubin, *Mother of God*, 221–24; Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*, 1st ed. (New York etc., 1988).

44 This view of Mary appears to support Berndt Hamm's stress on Mary as a kind of intercessor in his article on 'Normative Centering' in the Late Middle Ages. See Rubin, *Mother of God*, 132; Berndt Hamm, 'Normative Centering in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Observations on Religiosity, Theology and Iconology', in *Journal of Early Modern History* 3 (1999), 307–54 (at 345–48). It is also analyzed by Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, in Chapter 5.

45 See Peter Victor Loewen, *Music in Early Franciscan Thought*, ed. Steven J. McMichael, *The Medieval Franciscans* 9 (Boston, 2013); 'Francis the Musician and the Mission of the *Joculatores Domini* in the Medieval German Lands', in *Franciscan Studies* 60 (2002), 251–90; 'The Conversion of Mary Magdalene and the Musical Legacy of Franciscan Piety in the Early German Passion Plays', in *Speculum Sermonis*, ed. Georgiana Donavin, Cary J. Nederman, and Richard Utz (Turnhout, 2004), 235–258.

46 Loewen, 'The Conversion of Mary Magdalene', 247–48.

their sermons, and that the only preacher he knew who was successful in this practice was Berthold of Regensburg. Despite this affirmation by Bacon, Loewen could not find many references to music in Berthold's actual sermons, other than a recommendation to sing the Kyrie in the morning and evening to ward off the devil.<sup>47</sup> Sintram's sermon, though much later, demonstrates how Franciscan preachers could use hymns in their sermons to make them relevant to their listeners.

The three folio sides in this manuscript thus give a clear indication of his method. He finds a hymn and translates it into the vernacular. What he calls 'verses' throughout his corpus seems to have been a minor obsession for Sintram. He often copies out Latin verses, adds vernacular verses, or substitutes German for another vernacular, as in the *Fasciculus morum*, when he inserted German verses for the Middle English ones in some of the *exempla*.<sup>48</sup> However, this is the first clear example that I have examined of how he used them in his own sermons, in which he explicitly says to sing the hymn as part of the sermon. By adding the hymn, he allows his audience to participate in an aspect of the Office, modeling the behavior he wants his listeners to achieve.

The sermon also demonstrates the significance of Sintram's marginal notation: It is not there merely as pedantry or for cross-reference. Rather, the notation indicates the accepted theological interpretation of the stanzas of the hymn, which Sintram explicitly says he is using to create the divisions of his sermon. Indeed, he makes reference to the hymn text and its marginal notation several times in the sermon itself. For instance, he says, 'As on the folio preceding in the margin, the letters are our prayers, and there ought to be seven hours in which we ought to write and to say in the beginning reverence and greetings, that is the seven joys.'<sup>49</sup> He also closes the sermon text with the words, 'And so apply the preceding material, and you will have a good sermon by applying each one to the seals.'<sup>50</sup> It is thus clear to the reader, either Sintram himself or one of his students and confrères, how to finish off the sermon.

Like other friars at the time, Sintram had at his disposal a ready supply of approaches to Marian sermons. The liturgical year provided a number of occasions on which a preacher might discuss the Virgin Mary, including the

47 Loewen, 'The Conversion of Mary Magdalene', 249.

48 See Kimberly A. Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images, and Preaching in the Later Middle Ages*, Sermon 4 (Turnhout, 2010), 302, n. 73.

49 PrinG 90, fol. 177v: 'Ut supra folio precenti in margine littere sunt oraciones nostre, et debet esse septem horas in quibus in principio scribere et dicere debemus reuerenciam et salutaciones, id est septem gaudia.'

50 PrinG 90, fol. 177v: 'Et sic applica materiam precentem, et habebis bonum sermonem applicando singula sigillis.'

Feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary (December 8), the Purification of the Virgin Mary (February 2), the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (March 25), the Assumption (August 15), and the Nativity of the Virgin Mary (September 8).<sup>51</sup> Sintram possessed a number of such sermons, but the one most relevant here is in the Leeds manuscript.<sup>52</sup> In the marginal notation at the beginning of the sermon outline in PrinG 90, Sintram directs the reader to another sermon on Mary in the Leeds manuscript: 'See about the interleaved book and seek out in the other book which is the second part of this one and begins *'O munde inmunde*, page 110.'<sup>53</sup>

If one looks at Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110, one finds a sermon on the Nativity of Mary. It is easy to see why Sintram makes the connection. Once again we find Mary compared to a book, but this time the pericope is *Liber generacionis Ihesu Christi* (Matt. 1:1). In the folia just before the sermon, one finds again the text of *Gaude virgo stella maris* laid out in a similar way as in the Princeton manuscript with some small differences. Though each Latin stanza is followed by one in German, Sintram has broken the stanzas in half, giving four lines of Latin and then four lines of German. In this version, Sintram makes the Latin easier to pick out than the vernacular by underlining the Latin text. Moreover, the translation, though similar, is not identical to the one in PrinG 90.

#### Leeds, ULB 102

#### PrinG 90

Gaude virgo stella Maris  
 sponsa Christi singularis,  
 iocundata nimium.  
 per salutis nuncium.

51 John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford, 1991), Appendix 1.2. See also Irénée Henri Dalmais, Pierre Jounel, and Aimé Georges Martimort, 'The Veneration of Mary', in *The Liturgy and Time*, The Church at Prayer 4 (Collegeville, Minn., 1986), 130–150.

52 In addition, there are at least six other sermons on Mary preserved in PrinG 90: fols. 236v–239r: Sermo communis de beata uirgine; fols. 239r–240r: in natiuitate beate uirginis. [Nahum 3:17]; fol. 241r: Quomodo beata uirgo perfecit opera misericordia; f. 241v–242v: De dedicacione et de beata uirgine. In templo eius omnes dicent gloriam; fols. 242v–243v: Sequitur de sancto templo de utero uirginis; fols. 244r–248r: De concepcione marie nota xii visiones de preseruacione uirginis ab original peccato.

53 PrinG 90, marginal notation at beginning of the sermon, fol. 177r: 'De beata uirgine: videre de multiplici libro et quere in alio libro que est secunda pars huius et incipit "O munde inmunde, folio 110."' The incipit of Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 1r, is indeed 'O munde inmunde.'

wulgariter:

Ffrëu dich iungfro dem merstern glich.	Ffrö dich iungfro dem merstern glich
Ein gemahel cristi sünderlich.	Ein gemahel gotes sunderlich
Du warst erfrewet eins grossem teils.	Dich fröwt der engel ein michel teil
Durch den boten alles heils.	Der dir verkunt dem menschen heil.

a peccatis nos emunda.  
 casta mater et fecunda  
 et superna gaudia  
 cordi nostri nunccia.

wlgare:

Mach vns von allem sünden lös	Mach vns von den sünden rein
Du küsche müter vnd berhafte rös	Du küsche müter in demüt klein.
Und verkünd die obersten fröd	Vnd verkind die obersten fröd
Vnsern herczen in alles leit. <sup>54</sup>	Vnsern herczen on alles läid.

The Princeton version may be the revised translation of the hymn, since Sintram specifically said he composed that translation himself, whereas there is no such comment in Leeds, ULB 102. The Princeton version also has a note directing the reader to the Leeds copy, which could indicate that it was written after the Leeds copy, though Sintram clearly came back to previously copied works to add notations frequently enough that one cannot be sure. Some of the differences between the two versions come down to spelling, as in the last two lines cited above.

A final difference between the two treatments of the hymn is that Sintram does comment briefly on the interpretation of each section of the stanza before moving on to the next one in Leeds, ULB 102. In reference to the Annunciation (*per salutis nunciium*) in the hymn, Sintram says that since mention has been made of the first joy, we should ask the Virgin Mary for participation in that joy and for the lifting and purgation of sins, by saying, 'Cleanse us from our sins,' i.e. leading into the words of the second part of the stanza.<sup>55</sup> His short commentary on the verses consistently includes a direction to say them aloud. That he sees this text as an exposition of the meaning of the hymn can be seen

54 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 109v.

55 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 109v: 'quod fuit angelus gabriel. Et mencione sibi facta de primo gaudio sibi facto, faciamus eciam mencionem pro nobis petendo ipsam pro illius gaudii participatione ac suscepcione peccatorumque purgacione, dicendo a peccatis nos emunda....'

at the end of the transcription. He goes as far as the fifth joy, the resurrection of Christ, declaring that we should always remember it, ‘and with that fifth joy let us be zealous to praise her [Mary], by saying so: “Rejoice, and, with all thy soul’s power,” *et cetera*. And so, proceed, if you like, and seek out these seven joys in Latin and translated into the vernacular.’<sup>56</sup> A later notation, written in red ink, adds ‘look in the book which begins “Zacheus, make haste and come down,” folio 176, in the red book similar to this one.’<sup>57</sup> The reference is to PrinG 90, which has the incipit, ‘*De dedicatione, Zachee festinans descende...*’ and has a reddish binding, as does the Leeds manuscript.<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Sintram did not feel it necessary to complete the transcription and translation of the hymn in this instance, though he did complete both in PrinG 90.

As in the other sermon, Sintram uses methods of communication to frame his sermon, which is fully developed. He focuses more on the idea of the book, but still leaves room for songs and seals. He takes as his protheme the notion that trying to learn without a book is like drawing water with a sieve, a proverb that he cites in both Latin and German:

*haurit aquam cribro, qui discere vlt sine libro.*<sup>59</sup>

*wlgare: der wasser schofpht mit crürem sib vil, der on bücher lernen wil.*<sup>60</sup>

56 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110r: ‘cum illo ipsam quinto laudare studeamus, dicendo sic, *Gaude que tripudio*, et cetera. Et taliter procede si placet et illa septem gaudia querere in latino et exposita in wlgari.’

57 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110r: ‘querere in libro qui incipit *Zachee festinans descende* (Luc 19.5), folio 176. in libro rubio huic simile.’ I assume that the notation was added later, because it is written in a different color ink and begins where the previous comment left off. The marginal notation in PrinG says he copied down (*reportauit*) the verses in Latin when he was in Cologne, but that he wrote the verses in German (*wulgari*) when he was in Halle in 1415. It seems likely that the section in Leeds was written before the one in PrinG 90.

58 Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 183.

59 This is a proverb and medieval school poem. Cited in Robert and Mary Collison, eds., *Dictionary of Foreign Quotations*, Macmillan Reference Books (London and Basingstoke, 1980), 33 [Google Books: 1 June 2017]: ‘He who would learn without a book is like a man who tries to draw water with a sieve.’ See also Hans Walther, *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi; Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters in alphabetischer Anordnung*, Carmina Medii Aevi posterioris Latina 2 (Göttingen, 1963–1986), Walther of Châtillon 10675.

60 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110v. Written in the margin and indicated with a sign: ‘die behebem beder seit nit vil.’ Samuel Singer and Ricarda Liver, *Thesaurus proverbiorum medii aevi, Bd. 2, Bisam – erbauen* = *Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalters* (Berlin and New York, 1996), p. 137, Proverb #3 under ‘Buch,’ examples 14–16: ‘Jeder, der ohne Buch studiert, schöpft Wasser mit einem Sieb. Der schöpft Wasser mit einem Sieb, welcher ohne Buch lernen will.’

Sintram then has to resolve the question of how a book can be so important in education, when the scientific thought of the time pronounced that hearing and the living voice (*viva vox*) were the vital elements for learning. Aristotle had noted that people blind from birth tended to learn more than those deaf and mute from birth.<sup>61</sup> Sintram resolves the issue by noting that memory is aided by putting words down on paper; though one receives more from hearing information, memory is fixed (*stabilitur*) in a book. Therefore, studying without books is not really possible. Humans can learn the teaching of God through the book that God has provided for them, which is Mary, the *liber generacionis*.<sup>62</sup> This idea that the old teachings about memory and books no longer fit the new realities of the fifteenth century was not unique to Sintram. A contemporary of Sintram teaching in Salamanca, Juan Alfonso de Benavente, urged his students to bring their books to class and to use writing as a memory aid.<sup>63</sup> However, for those who cannot read, Mary is herself a kind of book, worthy of study. According to Pseudo Albertus Magnus, Mary was the human on whom the letters of the Son had been inscribed for nine months.<sup>64</sup>

This material then leads Sintram back to the theme of the seven seals by which the book was sealed and the seven joys, beginning with the Annunciation. ‘Which greeting in our hearts, as the seal of grace we ought to imprint daily by making mention of this grace, by saying to oneself a certain devotional song of joy, “metrically composed” concerning the seven joys of Mary.’ Sintram refers the reader back to the preceding folio for the Latin.<sup>65</sup> He then divides his theme, *Liber generacionis Ihesu Christi*, into the idea that there are different kinds of books, i.e. the book of life, the book of conscience, the book of

61 See also Albert the Great’s commentary on Aristotle’s *De sensu et sensate*: B. Alberti Magni Ratisbonensis episcopi, ordinis praedicatorum, *Opera Omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris, 1891), vol. 9, Tract I, cap. 2, 5: ‘Nam licet in adquisicione sciencie per doctrinam auditus magistri proficiat quam visus, sicut “ceci a natiuitate sunt sapienciores quam surdi...”’

62 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110v: ‘Et ad huius doctrine conseruacionem Deus litteram procreauit seu prouidit librum scilicet virginis uterum in quo impressit verbum; quod erat in principio apud Deum, non in tablinis lapideis sed carnalibus et visceribus, scriptum digito Dei viui. Et ideo ipsa virgo ut liber nobis proponitur cum dicitur *liber generacionis Ihesu Christi*.’

63 Kimberly Rivers, ‘Learning and Remembering Canon Law in the Fifteenth Century: The *Ars et doctrina studendi et docendi* of Juan Alfonso de Benavente’, in *From Learning to Love: Schools, Law, and Pastoral Care in the Middle Ages. Essays in Honour of Joseph W. Goering*, ed. Tristan Sharp, et al. (Toronto, 2017), 266–290 (at 288).

64 Frey, ‘Maria Legens–Maria Legere’, 284.

65 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 110v: ‘Quam salutacionem cordibus nostris, ut sigillum gracia imprimere debemus coctidie istius gaudii mencionem faciendo, dicendo sibi quoddam deuotum leticie canticum. a deuoto doctrine “metrice composatum” de septem gaudiis Marie cuius prima pars pro primo gaudio factum, sic sonat in latino querere folio precenti.’



Scripture, the book of creation, and the book of singular grace. Each of these divisions is also fully developed with its own subdivisions. These subdivisions allow Sintram to discuss the seven liberal arts (which he sees as being contained in Scripture). Sintram also gives several suggestions about how to create other sermons or develop a member of this one differently. For instance, above the five different kinds of books, Sintram noted down an abbreviation for the first five books of the Old Testament, i.e. Genesis above the book of life, Exodus above the book of conscience, Leviticus above the book of scripture, etc.<sup>66</sup>

Thus from two scriptural pericopes and a popular hymn, Sintram has the materials for many potential sermons or subdivisions about Mary. Only one of the possible sermons was turned into a fully developed, written sermon (the Leeds version), but the preacher left plenty of instructions so that he, his students, and later readers could follow up. Though the themes and division of topics may have been familiar, Sintram still wanted to have the sermon or at least its outline written down for himself and likely the other friars whom he taught over his long career as a lector and with whom he worked. His personal manuscripts give us a glimpse into what he told them.

### Acknowledgement

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66 Leeds, ULB 102, fol. 111r.

## John of Capistrano and the Virgin Mary: Preliminary Research on the Marian Sermons

*Filippo Sedda*

It is certainly not a novelty that the friar John of Capistrano (1386–1456), just as the rest of the friars in the Franciscan tradition and especially the fifteenth-century Observant Movement, had a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>1</sup> What we are lacking is a systematic treatment of this aspect of his theology.<sup>2</sup> This contribution serves simply as a ‘trailblazer’—an introductory survey of some typological documentary studies—and in particular, an introduction to the preached and written sermons of the friar from Abruzzo.

We begin with a letter concerning the Franciscan Crown in Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On 15 November 1452, John wrote a letter from Lipsia (Leipzig) to Friar Alberto Puchelbach, the guardian of the community in Nuremberg. Among other practical matters that he wrote to the novices, there was a recommendation about the recitation of the Rosary.<sup>3</sup> We cite the passage that interests us here:

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- 1 Concerning Bernardino da Siena, see D. Solvi, ‘Bernardino da Siena: una santità mariana?’ in *Amicitiae sensibus. Giornata di studio in onore di don Mario Sensi* (Foligno, 2011), 371–390; D. Solvi, ‘Maria nel corpus agiografico francescano,’ in *Hagiologica. Studi per Réginald Grégoire*, I, (Fabriano, 2012), 521–535; for Giacomo della Marca, see C. Tamberlani, ‘San Giacomo della Marca in difesa dell’Immacolata,’ in *Mater Ecclesiae* 8/1 (1972), 31–35. This article was translated by Steven J. McMichael.
  - 2 For a biographical profile on John of Capistrano, see H. Angiolini, ‘Giovanni da Capestrano,’ in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 55, 744–759; and above all, see J. Hofer, *Johannes von Capestrano. Ein Leben in Kampf um die Reform der Kirche*, Innsbruck 1936; in Italian translation: J. Hofer, *Giovanni da Capestrano: una vita spesa nella lotta per la riforma della Chiesa*; in German translation by Giacomo di Fabio (L’Aquila, 1955), and with the last revised version of the book: J. Hofer *Johannes von Capestrano. Ein Leben in Kampf um die Reform der Kirche*, neue bearbeitete Ausgabe von O. Bonmann, 2 vol. (Heidelberg, 1964–1965) (from now on cited as Hofer-Bonmann).
  - 3 For a historical, but rather inadequate, treatment of the Franciscan Crown, see S. Cecchin, ‘Le corone dei sette gaudi e dei sette dolori: altre forme di preghiera del rosario,’ in *Il rosario tra devozione e riflessione. Teologia, storia, spiritualità*, ed. R. Basile, in *Sacra Doctrina (monografia)*, 54 (2009), 184–212.

Every day as we recite the Franciscan Crown dedicated to the Virgin Mary with the seven mediations, we observe that there are seven parts of this prayer, after each one we genuflect and say the name 'Jesus.' The first meditation is when the angel Gabriel greeted the Virgin Mary. The second is when Jesus was born. The third is when Jesus was presented in the Temple. The fourth is when he was separated from his mother and went to celebrate supper with his disciples. The fifth is when she cried over her son who is hanging on the cross. The sixth is when Jesus was buried in the tomb. The seventh is when he rose from the dead and appeared to his mother, as the doctors of the church believed. Nevertheless, in any of these meditations the mind is enraptured, remains firm, and does not proceed any further.<sup>4</sup>

We do not have the original letter that was sent by John, but its contents are reported in the *Chronicle* of the celebrated chronicler, Nicola Glassberger (d. 1508). He is originally from Moravia and lived in this convent of Nuremberg, where he finished writing his work on the occasion of the pre-vigil of Christmas in 1491. It is therefore presumed that he had direct access to the original letter. It was reprinted also in the second edition (sixteenth century) in the *Annales Minorum* of Luke Wadding<sup>5</sup> that recounts the origin of the Franciscan Crown around the year 1422, which is attested to in the *Cronache* of Marco of Lisbon, who cites, in turn, Mariano da Firenze.<sup>6</sup>

4 The Latin text reads: 'Item quod singulis diebus faciant coronam Virginis Mariae cum VII meditationibus, sicut VII sunt partes ipsius coronae, et cum genuflexione dum dicunt "Iesus." Prima meditatio est quando angelus Gabriel salutavit Virginem Mariam; secunda, quando Christus natus est; tertia, quando presentavit Virgo Maria eum in Templo; quarta, quando Christus discessit a Matre et accessit ad celebrandam coenam cum discipulis; quinta, quando Virgo Maria ploravit filium suum ante crucem; sexta, quando Christus fuit positus in sepulcro; septima, quando Christus surrexit a mortuis et apparuit Matri Suae, ut credunt doctores; ita tamen quod, in quacunq[ue] istarum meditatione mens rapitur, firma persistat et non ulterius procedat.' The Latin text is from the *Chronica* of Nicolaus Glassberger, found in *Franciscana sive chronica aliaque varia documenta ad historiam Fratrum Minorum spectantia*, vol. II (Quaracchi, 1887), 342.

5 The text of this letter of John of Capistrano is found in L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum a sancto Francisco institutorum*, editio tertia, accuratissima auctior et emendatior ad exemplar editionis Josephi Mariae Fonseca ab Eborā, Quaracchi (FI) 1931, XII, 183–185 (II ed., Rome, 1734), 157–159), where in reality one treats of the addition of the second edition of the *Annales* edited by Antonio Melissani de Macro. For the dating of the practice of the Crown, see *ibidem*, X, 61–62, § 8.

6 On this question, see C. Cannarozzi, 'La "Corona B. Mariae Virginis" e la "Corona Domini Nostri Iesu Christi" in due opere inedite di Fr. Mariano da Firenze,' in *Studi Francescani* 28 (1931), 14–32; 24–27.

Another sign of the devotion of the Abruzzese concerning the Virgin Mary we find in some incisions of the protective metal studs and the closure made for the cover of these manuscripts. In the diverse codices of the *Biblioteca di Capistrano* that John carried with him during his voyage in Northern Europe (May 1451–October 1456), we find a written incision in German or Latin with invocations to the Virgin. It is not about working or rough draft manuscripts, but of ‘official’ manuscripts; that is, they are in good shape, distinctively colored, usually in parchment, and bound with a covering of wood that has been covered over with animal skins with elements of metallic decorations.<sup>7</sup> Some examples are in the appendix to this article. Father Aniceto Chiappini, when he compiled his catalogue last century, established that the manuscript ACAP 2 contained the same angular borders, which unfortunately today are lost. So also ms. ACAP 12, now no longer in Capistrano, carries this engraving in the edges: ‘Mary, help us’ (*Maria hilf uns*).

## 1 Sermons

Another manifestation of the devotion of Capistrano, typical of the custom of the Observants of the fifteenth century, was to start a sermon with the recitation of the Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*), as we find in numerous sermons, even among those listed below. He was, in fact, one of the propagators of the Hail Mary prayer. Before addressing the issue of the Marian preaching of John of Capistrano it is necessary to state a premise. Indeed the preaching and the preaching cycles of the Observant friar are for the most part unedited.<sup>8</sup> However, Luciano

7 For a description of the manuscripts of the library of John of Capistrano, see A. Chiappini, *Reliquie letterarie capestranensi. Storia, codici, carte, documenti* (Aquila, 1927).

8 Among the published sermons are two held in Leipzig: *Sermones duo Lipsienses*, ed. Bernardinus de Marienmay, in *Vita Johannis Capistrani et sermones eiusdem*, Augustae Vindelicorum, (Miller, 1519). A larger collection of sermons is edited by Eugen Jacob: *Sermones duo Lipsienses*, in E. Jacob, *Johannes von Capistrano*, 11/2 (Breslau, 1907), 7–12, 21–23; *Sermones in Synodo Wratislaviensi anno 1453*, in Eugen Jacob, *Johannes von Capistrano*, 11/1, (Breslau, 1905), 412–444 and 11/3, (Breslau, 1911), 1–214. Another collection of the preaching cycle of Leipzig (*Sermones Octo Lipsienses*) is edited in G. Buchwald, ‘Johannes Capistranos Predigten in Leipzig 1452,’ in *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte* 26 (1912–13), 125–180; Then F. Doelle (ed.), ‘Sermo de S. Bernardino Senensi,’ in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 6 (1913), 76–90; and A. Chiappini (ed.), ‘Sermones duo ad studentes et epistula circularis (1444) de studio promovendo inter Observantes,’ in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 11 (1918) 97–131 (probably the second one is not by John). After Chiappini are edited only three sermons: K. Dola, ‘Św. Jan Kapistran a próby reformy życia kleru diecezji wrocławskiej w połowie xv wieku,’ in *Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego* 8 (1980), 199–218, where on pages 213–218 is published—with a Polish translation—the sermon *Ego vos eligi*, preached 24

Łuszczki has gathered together the manuscript testimonies and ordered them chronologically, based on the place where they were preached.<sup>9</sup> He has established in this way a repertoire of the sermons that even today is a fundamental reference point to move through the 'great sea' of John's preaching.<sup>10</sup>

One can indeed distinguish two periods of his preaching that also coincide with the two geographical areas and two typical forms of his sermons. The first phase is that of Italy (1418–1451) where most of his pastoral and institutional activity took place. Unfortunately, the major part of his Italian preaching has not been preserved, except for the manuscripts of his own library. These are mostly autographs, and they only give us more or less preparatory schemes and notes of his sermons.<sup>11</sup>

The second phase is that of Europe (1451–1456), when John travelled through central Europe, up to the end of his life at Ilok in modern day Croatia. Many more manuscript witnesses testify to his European preaching thanks to numerous *reportationes* that have been preserved.<sup>12</sup> We do not possess for

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April 1453 in Breslavia (Wrocław); D. Quaglioni, 'Un giurista sul pulpito. Giovanni da Capistrano predicatore e canonista,' in *San Giovanni da Capestrano nella Chiesa e nella società del suo tempo*. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale (Capestrano – L'Aquila 8–12 ottobre 1986), ed. E. Pásztor e L. Pásztor, (L'Aquila, 1989), 125–40, especially pages 137–39. There is a sermon *de principis iustitia*, extant in Capestrano, Biblioteca del Convento di S. Giovanni, X, fol. 165r–v; finally, F. Sedda, 'Renovavit sapientiam: un sermone inedito di Giovanni da Capestrano, summula della sua predicazione,' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 102 (2011), 65–105.

9 Luciano Łuszczki furnished a catalogue of 724 sermons, but one must render an account that the number is purely indicative, being the repertoire based on his manuscripts, so it happens that the same sermon can be found in different codes. See L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus sancti Ioannis a Capistrano. Studium historico-criticum* (Rome, 1961). For a more up-to-date manuscript witness report, see O. Bonmann, *Exkursus 21: Predigthandschriften Kapistrans aus der europäischen Zeit*, in Hofer-Bonmann, I, 430–456.

10 On the preaching of John of Capistrano, see in particular the contributions of R. Rusconi, 'Giovanni da Capestrano: iconografia di un predicatore nell'Europa del '400,' in *Predicazione francescana e società veneta nel Quattrocento: Committenza, ascolto, ricezione*. Atti del II Convegno internazionale di studi francescani, Padova, 26–28 marzo 1987, ed. Associazione Culturale francescana di Padova, (Padova, 1995), 25–53; D. Quaglioni, 'Un giurista sul pulpito,' 125–40; A. Forni and P. Vian, 'Per un'edizione delle opere di S. Giovanni da Capestrano: Il quaresimale Senese del 1424,' in *Santità e spiritualità francescana fra i secoli XV e XVII: Atti del Convegno storico internazionale, L'Aquila, 26–27 ottobre 1990*, ed. by Luigi Antenucci (L'Aquila, 1991), 127–62; Le. Pellegrini, 'Giovanni da Capestrano predicatore,' in *Giovanni da Capestrano e la riforma della Chiesa*. Atti del V Convegno storico di Greccio, Greccio, 4–5 maggio 2007, ed. Alvaro Cacciotti and Maria Melli (Milan, 2008), 77–94.

11 The one exception is the *reportatio* of the Paduan sermons of 1450 that the author of this article found. See F. Sedda, *Renovavit sapientiam*.

12 For the approach to the concept of the *reportatio*, see J. Hamesse, "'Reportatio" et transmission de textes,' in *The Editing of Theological and Philosophical Texts from the Middle*

John preaching cycles by the author or a collection of sermons that were compiled and controlled by the same preacher, as we have for Bernardino of Siena and James of the Marches. Indeed, as noted by Diego Quaglioni, the way to make fruitful use of the content of John's preaching was for him to write treatises (*trattati*) as a result of his preaching, which in turn attracted new cycles of his preaching. He, in fact, when writing his treatises 'merges, rather than overlaps, his doctrinal production with his homiletic production: From *tractatus* to *sermo*, from *sermo* to *tractatus*, in a continuous reciprocal feeding of the moment of theological-juridical reflection and that of pastoral activity.'<sup>13</sup>

Following the double form or character of John's sermons, highlighting the sermons of Friar Capestrano and using Łuszczki's repertoire (without entering into the content due to the lack of editions of these sermons), I will present an updated list of the Marian sermons known to date and I will present some preliminary considerations.

## 2 Preparatory Schemes of the Sermons

### 2.1 ACAP 30

The codex ACAP 30 is entirely an autograph, and apart from some that have a more juridical character, contains a 'forest' of sermons, some that are developed

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*Ages*. Acts of the Conference arranged by the Department of Classical Languages (University of Stockholm, 29–31 August 1984), ed. M. Asztalos, (Stockholm, 1986), 7–36. However, the manner in which *reportationes* are used remain indefinable according to a meeting organized by the Department of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance at the University of Florence: *Dal pulpito alla navata: la predicazione medievale nella sua recezione da parte degli ascoltatori (sec. XIII–XV)*. Atti del convegno (Firenze 6–7 giugno 1986), in *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 3 (1989). This conference can be considered the point of departure for future studies on this literary genre and its use as a historical source. Among the most significant contributions of this conference, I designate: R. Rusconi, 'Reportatio' (7–36); J.-G. Bougerol, 'Les trois états d'un sermon de saint Bonaventure' (37–49); J. Hamesse, 'La méthode de travail des reportateurs' (51–67); L.J. Bataillon, 'Sermons rédigés, sermons reportés (XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)' (69–86); N. Beriou, 'La reportation des sermons parisiens à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle' (87–123); M. B. Parkes, 'Tachygraphy in the middle ages. Writing Techniques employed for "Reportationes" of Lectures and Sermons' (159–69); but above all see C. Delcorno, 'La diffrazione del testo omiletico: osservazioni sulle doppie reportationes delle prediche bernardiniane' (241–60).

13 D. Quaglioni, 'Un giurista sul pulpito,' 126. The Italian text reads: 'fonde, più che sovrapporre, la sua produzione dottrinale alla sua produzione omiletica: dal *tractatus* al *sermo*, dal *sermo* al *tractatus*, in un continuo reciproco alimentarsi del momento della riflessione teologico—giuridica e di quello dell'attività pastorale.'

in a more schematic form.<sup>14</sup> Only in a few cases, according to Łuszczki, can one attribute this patrimony to John. The Marian sermons are gathered in one section with other sermons dedicated to the feast of various saints (Łu 116–134) and they are found after the Sunday sermons of Easter.<sup>15</sup> The Łu 126 is almost certainly preached in Rome because of the direct references to the city and its citizens.<sup>16</sup>

These are the sermons in this collection that refer to the Virgin Mary:

Łu 106: In visitatione beate Virginis.<sup>17</sup> *Exurgens Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione in civitate Iuda*, Luc 1. Ad commendationem Mariae adducas illud Apoc. 12: *Ecce mulier amicta sole*—cum omni gloriae plenitudine etc.

ACAP 30, ff. 78r–79r

Łu 121: In assumptione beatae Virginis. *In sole posuit tabernaculum suum*, Ps 18. Exemplariter videtur, quod venerandae reliquiae honorabiliter collocantur [...] in quibus quidem verbis tria breviter denotantur: primo enim denotatur fides coruscans, in qua Domina nostra spiritualiter delectatur, ibi: *in sole*; secundo denotatur Dei muneratio, a quo singulariter collocatur, ibi: *posuit*; tertio denotatur incarnati mysterii habitatio, ex quo mirabiliter sublimatur, ibi: tabernaculum suum—Eccli. 50: Quasi flos rosarum in diebus vernis etc.

ACAP 30, ff. 106r–107v

Łu 124: In Conceptione Virginis gloriosae. *Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum et excedit columnas septem*, Prov. 9. In quibus quidem verbis tria breviter denotantur: primo enim denotatur artificis eminentia, quia *sapientia aedificavit*; secundo denotatur opificis residentia, quia *sibi domum*;

14 For a description of ms. ACAP 30, see A. Chiappni, *Reliquie letterarie capestranensi*, 81; for the content of the sermons there, see L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus sancti Ioannis a Capistrano*, 11–29.

15 The indication (Łu) to these sermons refers to the progressive number in the manuscript repertoire of Łuszczki.

16 ‘Sed heu, pro dolor, hodiernis temporibus urbs Romana, olim caput mundi, hodie tamen utinam bona cauda acclamare potest et dicere cum Psalmista: *Non est sanitas in carne mea ... , quoniam inimici mei sunt super caput meum* etc. Declara per ordinem, et inter alia connumereres partialitates et discordias Romanorum, quia eo ipso quod supervenit discordia in populo, Urbs declinavit ad malum et iam submersa est in profundum ... Ergo praeclarissimi domini et cives egregii, si vultis a tantis periculis liberari, cum mansuetudine suscipite oblatum vobis hodie puerum Iesum in Ierusalem’: ACAP 30, ff. 117v–118r.

17 This is an addition by another hand that is not signaled by Łuszczki.

tertio denotatur operis excellentia, quia *excidit columnas septem*—Hab. Ultimo: super excelsa me deducet victor in psalmis canentem etc.

ACAP 30, ff. 112r–113v

Łu 126: In Purificatione Virginis gloriosae. *Tulerunt Iesum in Ierusalem*, Luc. 2. Pro introductione thematis nostri considerandum est quod quando aliquis pauper ... In quibus quidem verbis tria breviter denotantur: primo enim denotatur offerentium qualitas, donum susceptibile, ibi: tulerunt; secundo denotatur expetantium securitas, donum delectabile, ibi: Iesum; tertio denotatur indigentium anhelitas, ubi donum pertractabile, ibi: in Ierusalem—Ioan. 14: Pacem relinquo vobis ect.

ACAP 30, ff. 116r–118v

Łu 140: Iesus, Maria, Franciscus. *Flebat mater Iesu irremediabilibus lacrymis atque dicebat: Heu me, fili mi* etc., Tob 10. Naturale est quod quando res est carior, tanto eius presentia est delectabilior ... Multae igitur fuerunt quae repleverunt Dominam nostra absynthio amaritudinis et quae fecerunt eam amare flere; sed inter alia quae fecerunt eam amarissime flere, fuerunt quattuor: primum, quando audivit Filium suum captum proditorie, deductum irrisorie, derelictum solitarie, detestatum multifarie—attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus etc.

ACAP 30, ff. 146r–152v

Łu 146. (f. 165r): *Signum magnum apparuit in celo: mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim*, Ap. 12. Duodecim stelle, secundum Bernardum, sunt duodecim praerogative quae Domina habuit a caelo, carne et mente—in vestibus circumdata nobilissima varietate.

A first consideration, limiting ourselves to the *incipit* and *explicit* reported by Łuszczki, is primarily about the strict connection between preaching and liturgy. This connection can appear obvious, but because it can be passed over, it is better to bring it to our focused attention. The Marian feasts considered by John are the Visitation (July 2), the Assumption (August 15), the Conception (December 8), and the Purification (February 2).<sup>18</sup> We should observe that, among other issues, the *thema* (the main theme of the sermon) for the

18 For a panorama of the Marian feasts before the Council of Trent, see C. Maggioni, 'Culto e pietà mariana nel medioevo, sec. XI–XVI,' in *La Madre del Signore dal medioevo al rinascimento*, ed. Ermanno Maria Toniolo (Rome, 1998), 81–129.



Visitation is the same that we find also in the sermon cycle of Vienna and Ratisbonne. The major absence among the Marian feasts is the Feast of the Birth of Mary, which is celebrated on 8 September, also with the other remaining sermons of John.

The Feast of the Conception of Mary, which corresponds to our present Feast of the Immaculate Conception, had already entered into the full title in the liturgical calendar of the Friars Minor.<sup>19</sup> This feast properly entered into the Council of Basel with its decree of 17 September 1439, declaring that the Virgin Mary 'was always immune from all sin (original sin and actual sin)' and 'that the feast was to be celebrated with solemnity, on the 8th of December, in all secular churches, monasteries and convents of all Christian religions.'<sup>20</sup> Pope Sixtus IV, with the constitution entitled *Cum praecelsa* (27 February 1476), approved the Mass and the Office composed by Leonardo di Nogarole for the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin.<sup>21</sup>

Also of interest is the very brief *schema* of the sermon found at folio 165r, that I wanted to expand upon [found in the appendix]. It offers the possibility, above all, to see the modality of the work of Capistrano and to trace the evolution and the successive deepening of the schema of the taxonomy concerning the Virgin Mary. We observe that, in fact, the preacher, after first writing what occupied half the folio of the codex, adds the final part with a greener ink (in the copy in the Appendix it is in bold). He also intervenes to modify the biblical verse of Revelation 12:1 used as *thema*. This coincides with the *thema* of the cycle of Vienna and in the development of taxonomies it shows several points of contact, in particular at the beginning.

## 2.2 ACAP 31

The manuscript ACAP 31 also has an autograph and contains various materials that concern the Lenten preaching of John in Siena between March and April of 1424 (ff. 1r–117v).<sup>22</sup> The Feast of the Annunciation (25 March) that year fell

19 See T. Szabó, 'Le festività mariane nei Breviari manoscritti francescani,' in *De cultu mariano saeculis XII–XV*. Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani Internationalis Romae, anno 1975 celebrati, vol. II [*De quaestionibus particularibus cultum marianum attinentibus, de cultu mariano in Concilio Basileensi, in Liturgia et in Paraliturgia*] (Rome, 1981), 135–165.

20 See S. Meo, 'La dottrina e il culto dell'Immacolata Concezione nel decreto del Concilio di Basilea (1439),' *De cultu mariano saeculis XII–XV*, 98–119.

21 See C. Maggioni, 'Culto e pietà mariana nel medioevo,' 86–87.

22 For a description of the material of the codex, see A. Chiappini, *Reliquie letterarie capistranensi*, 82–83; for the sermons, see L. Łuszczki, 'De sermonibus sancti Ioannis a Capistrano,' 29–46; but also see A. Forni–P. Vian, 'Per un'edizione delle opere di san Giovanni da Capestrano. Il quaresimale Senese del 1424,' in *Santità e spiritualità fra i secoli XV e XVII*. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale (L'Aquila 26–27 ottobre 1990, Comitato per il

on Saturday, therefore the preacher dedicated his morning sermon to this Marian theme:

Lu n. 173. Sabbato. In festo Annunciationis in mane [25 March 1424 in Siena]. *Nome Virginis Maria*, Luc 1. Quia nomina imponuntur ut aliquid significant [...] sunt namque in hoc nomine quinque litterae, et quinque habent significationes: Maria amarum mare ..., Maria domina ..., Maria illuminata ..., Maria stella maris—pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol.

ACAP 31, 50r–v

In the final section of the codice (ff. 166–197) there are three sermons, one of which is dedicated again to the Feast of the Conception of Mary:

Lu n. 228. *Tota Pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te*, Cant. 4. Dicit beatus Augustinus xxii De civitate cap. 19: Omnis pulchritudo corporis est partium congruentia cum quadam coloris suavitate ... Ubi tria breviter sunt consideranda: primum est huius gloriosae Virginis formositas decorata, quia *tota pulchra*; secundum est eius gratiosae Virginis caritas inflammata, quia *amica mea*; tertium est eiusdem conceptionis integritas praeservata, quia macula non est in te ... Quoad tertium sex sunt breviter discutienda: primo, quot modis dici potest conceptio; secundo, quot modis dicitur peccatum originale; tertio, quomodo contrahitur originale; quarto, a quibus contrahitur originale; quinto, quot modis contrahitur originale; sexto, si beata Virgo fuit in originali concepta—Cui dubium etiam, quod maior est Christus Ioanne. Richardus idem tenet contrarium, et Alexander, et dominus Bonaventura similiter.

ACAP 31, 190r–193v

### 2.3 *A Treatise on the Immaculate Conception?*

There is another work that Luke Wadding has entitled *De conceptione beatissimae Mariae Virginis*<sup>23</sup> that was included by Giacinto Sbaraglia in his *Supplementum et castigatio ad scriptores trium Ordinum sancti Francisci a Waddingo*<sup>24</sup> and by Antonio Sessa in his *Collectio Aracoelitana* entitled *De utraque conceptione beatae Mariae Virginis*.<sup>25</sup> We find here, in reality, a Marian treatise

111 Centenario della Canonizzazione di S. Giovanni da Capistrano) ed. Luigi Antenucci (L'Aquila, 1991), 127–172.

23 L. Wadding, *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, 111 ed. (Rome, 1906), I, 134 (a reference to the first edition of 1650).

24 L. Wadding, *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, II, 49.

25 See *Opera omnia sancti Ioannis a Capistrano*, V/1, 5–87.

(pages 5–77) of an anonymous author, that Sessa rightly attributes to Capistrano because one finds it in ms. ACAP 61. There is one *questio* that Chiappini has entitled *An Beata virgo fuit concepta sine peccato originali* that we find in ACAP 3, ff. 17r–18v.<sup>26</sup> The same scholar,<sup>27</sup> however, points out that John himself refers to this work in *De auctoritate papae*, saying:

Albert the Great in the fourth book of his *Compendium of the Theological Truth*, dealing with the motherly sanctification said: There are three sanctifications of Mary. The first was a threefold sanctification in the womb, and these had three effects, namely, the removal of original sin; the infusion of grace; and such a restriction in her that it could not bring about any sin, she herself could remain according to essence and adhere, that according to the conception of the Blessed Virgin, I hold views contrary to the order of this as I have stated elsewhere, namely, in *Tractatu de conceptione beatae Virginis*.<sup>28</sup>

It would appear, therefore, that John has written a treatise on the Immaculate Conception that is now lost and that today only two folios of ms. ACAP 3 remain. In effect, more than one *quaestio*, as was sustained by Chiappini, the existing text here is rather a collection of a series of *auctoritates* on the subject of the Conception of the Virgin. This might represent the preparatory scheme of the treatise, as is sometimes the case in the manuscript library of Capistrano. In fact, in the last lines of this *elenco* he records in his own hand:

As can be seen easily from the above, I respond contrary to all things concerning the common law. We, however, are about privileges of the blessed and glorious Virgin Mother of God, therefore, etc. I counted forty privileges. Thanks to God.<sup>29</sup>

26 A. Chiappini, *La produzione letteraria*, 77–78.

27 A. Chiappini, *La produzione letteraria*, 18, note 3.

28 Iohannes de Capistrano, *De auctoritate Papae et Concilii vel Ecclesiae*, ed. A. Amici, (Venezia, 1580), 139–140. 'Albertus Magnus in quarto compendii theologiae veritatis, tractans de sanctificatione materna dicit: Sanctificatio triplex est. Et subedit quod tres fuerunt sanctificationes matris Dei. Prima fuit sanctificatio in utero matris et haec tres effectus habuit, scilicet originalis culpa expiationem et gratiae infusionem et fomitis tantam restrictionem quod non posset aliquod peccatum inducere, licet ipse fomes maneret secundum essentia et adhereo, licet de conceptione beatae Virginis ordo meus aliter sentiat. De quo passu alibi dixi, scilicet in *Tractatu de conceptione beatae Virginis*.'

29 'Ex predictis faciliter patere potest, respondeo ad contraria que omnia de communi lege locuntur. Nos autem de privilegiis beate et gloriosissime virginis Matris Dei, ergo etc. Et numeravi quadraginta privilegia. Deo gratias.'

#### 2.4 *The Collection of Antonio Sessa*

The '*Collectio Aracoelitana*'<sup>30</sup> is a collection of eighteen manuscript volumes compiled by Antonio Sessa of Palermo and his helpers at the end of the seventeenth century, properly after the canonization of John of Capistrano (1690). This collection contains a series of sermons,<sup>31</sup> some of which are a transcription of a codex that is unknown today.<sup>32</sup> Among the twenty-three sermons listed by Łuszczki, there is one dedicated to a Marian theme:

Łu n. 271. *Stabat iuxta crucem Iesu Mater eius et soror matris eius Maria Cleophe et Maria Magdalene*, Ioan. 19. Beatus Anselmus in quadam meditatione De planctu Virginis dicit: O Domina, Maria misericordissima ... Ubi tria notantur: primum est constantia insuperabilis firmitatis: *stabat*; secundum est inhaerentia inviolabilis sanctitatis: iuxta crucem; tertium est benevolentia incomparabilis caritatis: mater eius—et non est qui apprehendat manum eius ex omnibus filiis quos nutritiv.

SESSA, V/3, 342–344

This sermon seems to coincide with another liturgical feast, namely 'Our Lady of Sorrows' (*Mater Dolorosa* or *Addolorata*), which the Provincial Council of Cologne in 1423 instituted as a feast of 'commemorating the anguish and sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary' to be celebrated on Friday after the Third Sunday of Easter.<sup>33</sup> The celebration of this feast spread to various parts of Europe under different names and different dates of its celebration (from Easter to Passion Week).

30 See *Opera omnia sancti Ioannis a Capistrano*, reproduced in a facsimile of the 'Collectio aracoelitana' redacted by Antonio Sessa da Palermo (1700). Mss. in the archive of the Franciscan convent of Aracoeli-Rome, edited by G. Marinangeli, 19 vol., (L'Aquila, 1985).

31 There are several sermons found in the vol. XVIII (that is Tome v, vol. III of the original collection) at pages 1–53; the same sermons were subsequently edited by Aniceto Chiappini, 'Sermones duo ad studentes et epistula circularis (1444) de studio promovendo inter Observantes,' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 11 (1918), 97–131; at pages 289–395 there are another twenty three sermons that Łuszczki describes in detail (L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 54–59).

32 *Opera omnia sancti Ioannis a Capistrano*, XVIII, on page 288 one reads in the note: 'Sequitur quidam fragmenta praedicabilia quae nobis superperditavit archivium et reliquarium nostri conventus Capistrani, quibus utebatur autor pro temporis opportunitate.' This would mean that it is a codex preserved before 1700 in Capistrano.

33 See *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* [...], ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. XXVIII, (Venice, 1785), 1057.

### 3 Reported Sermons

#### 3.1 *Vienna*

The first sermon-cycle delivered by John of Capistrano once he passed the Alps took place in the imperial city of Vienna in June and July of 1451.<sup>34</sup> In a cycle that today numbers 45 or 46 sermons, according to the different outlines of the various codices, John dedicated more than one week of this preaching activity to the Virgin Mary.<sup>35</sup>

On July 2, 1451, the Feast of the Visitation of Mary, John started a Marian cycle that continued to July 10, when he preached on the theme of the Assumption of Mary. Of this sermon collection, Łuszczki knew of three manuscript testimonies, of which Ottokar Bonmann added another three. Unfortunately, none of these sermons have been edited, but by a review of my first personal transcription, it seems to me that, like the rest of the Viennese cycle, we here have a *summa* of John's Marian thought. For clarity, I present a summary table of the Marian cycle, which puts together the various manuscript witnesses (in the Appendix). The table follows the description of the sermons according to ms. Maria Saal, the most complete witness and one of the closest to the preaching event of 1460.

20b. Łu 342: *Exurgens Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione in civitatem Iuda etc.*, Luc. 1, et in evangelio hodierno. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae recurramus ad beatissimam Virginem, de qua hodie tamquam balbutiens locuturi sumus, offerentes ei mente pia, dicentes: Ave Maria. De Sacramento Eucharistiae Doctores dicunt in iv [Sent.]: Aliud est quod videtur, alius est quod creditur ... Nunc redeundo ad thema de beata Virgine: Surgens Maria. Quamquam si frondes arborum, pili herbarum, omnis hortus et omnia membra converterentur in linguas, non esset possibile exprimere humano colloquio laudes Virginis benedictae—in ipsam enim confidamus confidenter ut nostram advocatam, ut impetret nobis remissionem peccatorum et faciat nos participes regni caelestis. Amen.

21. Łu n. 343: *Exurgens Maria ...*, Luc. 1, et in evangelio hodierno. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae ... Verba coram vestris reverentiis proposita, sunt gloriosi Lucae evangelistae de Virgine Maria scripta cap 1. De

34 See L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 68–91; but also Hofer-Bonmann, I, 430–456.

35 See F. Sedda, *The Anti-Jewish Sermons of John of Capistrano: matters and context*, in *The Jewish – Christian Encounter in Medieval Preaching*, ed. J. Adams and J. Hanska, Routledge Research in Medieval Studies 6 (New York, 2015), 139–169.

qua gloriosissima Virgine, quamquam ut dicebam, omnes oratores qui fuerunt ab initio mundi, omnes poetae qui fuerunt eloquentissimi, deficerent in laude, tamen ego tantillus dicebam beatam Virginem sole vestitam, pro scabello lunam sub pedibus habere, coronam 12 stellarum in capite tenere—tamquam ad matrem pietatis et fontem plenitudinis, ut suas preces pro nobis dignetur effundere et intercedere et nobis impetrare benedictionem et gratiam in hac vita et in futuro participationem aeternae gloriae. Ad quam nos perducatur Dominus Iesus. Amen.

22. Łu 344: *Exurgens Maria ...*, Luc. 1. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae, dicamus Ave Maria. Surgens Maria, ubi supra. Audistis, rev. patres, de gloriosissima Virgine Maria, tamquam non sine defectu ... , dixi esse considerandas 12 praerogativas secundum beatum Bernardum: quattuor a caelo, quattuor a carne, quattuor a mente, ut supra. Quibus expeditis, sequitur agere de secundo statu, quasi de statu virginali ... ; ideo dicebam secundum Anselmum: Beata Virgo data fuit Filio Dei in habitaculum divinitatis—ad ipsam recurramus ut ad thronum matris, ut ipsa nobis dignetur impetrare gloriam post finem vitae nostrae. Ad quam nos perducere dignetur etc.

23. Łu n. 345: *Exurgens Maria...*, Luc. 1. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae ... Dixi, quamquam ipsa angelica natura nedum humana superata sit a laudibus exprimentis de beata Virgine ... Modo mansimus in secundo numero duodenario praerogativarum beatae Virginis, scilicet de duodecim scabellis. Dixi auctoritatem Anselmi, quamquam ipse ponat decem, cum ultima duo non dicit Anselmus—Si igitur Virgo benedicta nostra protectrix, adiutrix, advocata nostra, magistra nostra, patrona, ut intercedat pro nobis apud Filium suum et etiam tandem cum Filio suo habeamus gloriam in saecula.

24. Łu n. 346: *Exurgens Maria ...*, Luc. 1. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae ... Audivistis historiam Visitationis beatae Virginis, quamquam non dixerim: officium fuit ordinatum et festum 1286 [sic] per Urbanum VI in die Ioannis Baptistae, quando ego natus fui; erat schisma et disceptatio magna... Nam habemus prosequi, pro corona stellarum, tertium duodenarium, quo gloriosa Virgo bene meruit pro martyrio, dolore et angustia, tempore passionis Christi Iesu; ista est excelsior corona conclusa 12 stellis. Quarum prima est nobilitatio—Et si habuerimus eam matrem nostram, adiutricem nostram, defendentem nos a peccatis, ipsa tandem perducere nos facit in vitam aeternam. Ad quam perducatur nos etc.

25. Łu 347: *Exurgens Maria ...*, Luc. 1. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae ... Verba proposita sunt gloriosissimi evangelistae Lucae, scripta ad commendationem et laudem Virginis gloriosae ... Nunc sequitur tertia praerogativa sive stella, scilicet acquisitio. Agitur hic de merito beatae Virginis—quod ipsa est distributrix gratiarum et donorum Dei. Nos igitur ex suis precibus confidenter speremus remissionem peccatorum et in futuro gloriam. Ad quam nos perducatur qui sine fine vivit et regnat. Amen.

26. Łu 348: *Exurgens Maria ...*, Luc. 1. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae, dicamus Ave Maria. Exurgens Maria, ubi supra ... Audistis de gloriosa Virgine tres status esse considerandos ... Nunc nona stella dicitur perfectio—et nos sibi commendemus, ut dignetur sua misericordia et pietate nobis remissionem peccatorum impetrare, ut sic valeamus perducere ad vitam aeternam.

27. Łu 349: *Exurgens Maria* etc. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae ... Audistis de gloriosissima Virgine Maria considerandos esse tres status ... Sumus nunc igitur in tertio, videlicet in 12 stellis ... Remanserunt duae ultimae—supplicemus sibi ut dignetur pro nobis intercedere et nobis impetrare remissionem peccatorum et participationem aeternae gloriae. Quam nobis concedere dignetur, qui sine fine vivit et regnat in saecula.

28. Łu 350: *Quae est ista quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens, in nixa super dilectum suum?*, Cant. ultimo. Pro impetratione divinae gratiae dicamus Ave Maria ... Verba coram reverentiis proposita sunt Salomonis, scripta ubi supra. Satis condecencia et congrua gloriosae Virgini Mariae, Matri Dei Domini nostri Iesu Christi ... Dixi velle hodie, secundum possibilitatem mei ingenii, quamquam non sit determinatum a Romana Ecclesia, attamen pium est credere Virginem beatam esse glorificatam in anima et corpore, et pro illa pietate adducam 12 argumenta—tamquam mater nostra, advocata nostra, dignetur nobis impetrare remissionem peccatorum et facere participes gloriae aeternae. Ad quam nos perducatur Dominus Iesus. Amen.

Above all one must note that all these sermons are introduced with the Marian prayer, Hail Mary. In addition, the *thema* for the eight sermons devoted to the Feast of the Visitation is taken from Luke 1:39 which is the liturgical Gospel of the day, while the *thema* that treats of Mary's Assumption is drawn from the Song of Songs 8:5, 'Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?'

From a preliminary study of the Marian cycle, taxonomic scans can be highlighted, in which John organizes his discussion. He articulates the Viennese Marian material into a tripartite schema based on Revelation 12:1, 'A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head' (*Mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim*). Each of the three main sections is then broken down into twelve elements, thus obtaining an articulation in thirty six steps, which is summarized in the table in the Appendix.

Bonmann retains that the codex MS could be a testimony strictly tied in with the process of the canonization of John.<sup>36</sup> This would place the composition of our witness, Gabriele of Verona, in Vienna at the time he served as vicar of the province of Austria.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the writing is very cautious, almost scrupulous, and we also notice the exact distance of the lines, the exact justification of the margin on the single column, the equalization of the individual letters, the self-corrections. On the top edge of the first sheet, in addition to a 'Q' watermark, there is written by the same hand as the rest of the sermon: 'Here begins the sermons of friar Giovanni da Capistrano preached in Vienna' (*Incipiunt sermones fratris Iohannis de Capistrano [!] predicata [!] Wiennae*). The scribe himself eventually leaves his name and the date of the end of his this work: 'Praise be to God and to all his saints in him, amen. Written and finished by me, Giovanni Missniense, Saturday on the eve of San Fabiano and Sebastiano, of the year 1460.'<sup>38</sup> The date 19 January 1460 indicates that the codex was finished no more than four years after the death of John of Capistrano and nine years after he preached these sermons.<sup>39</sup>

36 On the long process of the canonization of John, see G. Marinangeli, *Per la storia del Processo di canonizzazione di Giovanni da Capestrano, in Santità e spiritualità fra i secoli xv e xvii*.

37 Guido de Blasi, 'Rangoni, Gabriele, detto Gabriele da Verona,' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma, 2016) (which can be found online at URL: [www.treccani.it](http://www.treccani.it)).

38 'Sit laus Deo et omnibus sanctis eius in eo Amen. / Scriptum et finitum per me Iohannem Mißniensem | sabbato in vigilia Fabiani et Sebastiani etc. / Anno etc. 1460.'

39 There is a Iohannes di Meißen who is known as the first commissioner of the new province of Boema, when the friars of Austria were divided into three provinces. He died on 21 December 1492 in Olmütz. On these details, see A. Hermann, *Capistranus triumphans*, 633, footnote 39, and *Martyrologium Franciscanum*, 118–119. Bonmann strongly doubts that the scribe can be identified as Meissen Iohannes because of the fact that the scribe reports this name suggests that he descended from the rank of followers of John of Capistrano, and his thorough work also suggests that he is a young age. These elements are judged by Bonmann as grounds for doubting this identification, but they can indeed be considered as arguments in favor of it.



In this Marian context, it is worth the effort to quickly look at another two manuscript testimonies that attest to an autonomous circulation of the tradition of this group of Marian sermons of Capistrano. Codex 301 of the University of Graz reproduces exactly and exclusively the cycle of the nine Marian sermons. Łuszczki argues that they correspond to 'verbotenus' at ms. MS, and that this cycle of sermons was with 'certain certainty' (*certo certius*) transcribed for private use, in which there are only a few corrections.<sup>40</sup>

For the Marian preaching held at Vienna, we find also the ms. Wien (Nationalbibliothek, lat. 3741), but these sermons are in random order. In fact, this large volume (293 x 210 mm) contains 304 folios and also a large collection of Marian teachings from the Council of Basel and various authors (Bernard of Clairvaux, Albertus Magnus, etc.). It seems that this witness comes from the Viennese production activity around the middle of the fifteenth century. Franz Unterkircher, at folio f. 71<sup>r</sup><sup>41</sup> between the end of the first column and the beginning of the second, has found an indication of the date and the author: 'Amen 1469 / Amen 1469 for the professed friar Christian in Tagersee whose soul rests in peace, amen. Hail Mary, full of grace, etc.'<sup>42</sup> It should be seen whether this indication refers only to Bernard's text contained in ff. 4v–7r or can be extended to the whole codex. Unfortunately, possessing only one copy of the manuscript and not being able to consult it personally, I cannot offer more detailed conclusions. The identification of these sermons of John is rendered possible thanks to the index: f. 303v reports four sermons on the Visitation of the Virgin Mary (*de visitatione beate Marie virginis*) and another sermon of his on the prayer that begins '*alius sermo eiusdem de oratione, qui incipit. 'Oratio fidei salvabit'*' is added in the margin by another hand.

### 3.2 *Ratisbon or Hamburg?*

Exactly a year after Vienna, always for the Feast of the Visitation of Mary (2 July 1452), according to the reconstruction of Łuszczki,<sup>43</sup> John is found in Hamburg in Germany, around sixty kilometers from Ratisbon, where he went for a Diet starting on 15 or 16 June. In reality, as observes Bonmann, the itinerary of the

40 L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 90s.

41 See F. Unterkircher, *Die datierten Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek von 1451 bis 1500*, 95 and 347.

42 'Amen 1469 / Amen 1469 per fraterculum Cristanum in Tegernsee professum cuius anima requiescat in pace amen. Ave Maria gratia plena etc.' There was a *scriptor* named Cristan von Tagersee, who was an abbot of Oberalteich during the years 1484–1502, cited also in ms. 3717, f. 309r.

43 L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 106; but also see Hofer, 453.

friar preacher in this juncture is by no means clear, and the two Marian *reportationes* of his preaching help to shed light on the matter.<sup>44</sup> For these sermons we also possess several manuscript witnesses:

1. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 5844, ff. 162va–165va:

Łu 389: Sermones quidam fratris Ioannis de Capistrano, viri devoti ac doctoris egregii Ordinis Minorum scripti sub ipso praedicante, Ratispanae, tempore congregationis dominorum pro unione facienda. Et primo De Beata Virgine benedicta ... De Virgine benedicta tres status considerantur. Primus status fuit ab eius conceptione usque ad conceptionem Filii Dei; secundus a conceptione Dei usque ad obitum Virginis; tertium ab eius obitu et assumptione per infinita saecula saeculorum, amen. Et in quolibet statu Virgo benedicta habet duodecim privilegia, et sic sunt triginta sex—Puritas Virginis excessit omnem puritatem creatam, nec potest esse umquam maior aut par.

2. Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, ms. o. 116, ff. 337r–348v:

Łu 398: Sequuntur sermones quidam excepti sub viva voce fratris Ioannis de Capistrano doctoris egregii et viri devotissimi Ordinis sancti Francisci. De beata Virgine. De Virgine benedicta tres status considerantur. Primus status fuit ab eius conceptione usque ad conceptionem Filii Dei—Puritas Virginis excessit omnem puritatem creatam, nec potest esse umquam maior aut par.

3. Wien, Nationalbibliothek, lat. 3693, ff. 126ra–128vb:

Łu 409: De beata Virgine. De Virgine benedicta tres status considerantur—non potest esse umquam maior aut par. Expliciunt sermones quidam scripti sub viva voce fratris Ioannis de Capistrano, doctoris egregii, viri devotissimi Ordinis sancti Francisci.

4. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 18626, ff. 169v–170r:

Łu 429: In festo Visitationis. Ut audivit salutationem Mariae Elisabeth, exaltavit infans in utero eius, Luc. 1. Cum enim ex evangelica salutatione beata Virgo expavesceret—et demonibus in obstaculum malignitatis.

44 O. Bonmann, 'Exkursus 21: Predigthandschriften Kapistrans aus der europäischen Zeit,' in Hofer-Bonmann, I, 444.

Only in this one codex, immediately after these sermons listed above, we find a second Marian sermon (ff. 170r–172v) on the feast of the Visitation:

Łu 430: In festo Visitationis. Pro tertio statu considerata sunt alia 12 privilegia, quae ita describuntur: primum nobilitatio, secundum praeservatio, tertium acquisitio, quartum iurisdictio, quintum exaltatio, sextum dominatio, septimum sublimatio ... , duodecimum incomprehensio—exultavit infans in utero eius, qua exultatione participes nos faciat qui in Trinitate perfecta vivit et regnat. Amen.

This seems to be a continuation or a resumption according to the taxonomic scheme already prepared and preached the previous year. In fact, even in the synthetic form of the repertoire, it is evident that the sermons have the same taxonomic structure and organization of the Vienna cycle.

Bonmann points out another witness, not known by Łuszczki, also considering the Visitation:

5. Admont, Benediktinerstift, 596<sup>45</sup>, ff. 105r–107v:

Sermo de visitatione Virginis benedictae, factus Ratisponae a Iohanne de Capistrano. *Audivit Elisabeth salutationem* ... —Cum enim virgo benedicta.

Returning to where these sermons were preached, according to Łuszczki, John finds himself at Hamburg on 2 July. This claim is based on the public letter published by Johannes Hofer, written at Ratisbon on 4 July 1452, by an anonymous person present at the Diet of Ratisbon that affirms:

While Friar John of Capistrano evangelized in the district and visited Nuremberg and Hamburg for the first time on Monday, and the nearby cities, he hoped to bring a good peace between the illustrious Prince Marquis Alberto and the Noribergensi, for the illustrious prince had put all his will in the disposition of the aforementioned father John of Capistrano.<sup>46</sup>

45 For a description of the codex, see the catalog online at URL: «[http://www.manuscripta.at/\\_scripts/php/msDescription.php?ID=26412](http://www.manuscripta.at/_scripts/php/msDescription.php?ID=26412)».

46 'Interea frater Iohannes de Capistrano evangelizabit in circuitu, visitabitque Nurembergam ac in primis Ambergam, feria secunda heri transacta, et vicinas civitates, sperans conficere bonam pacem inter illustrissimum principem Marchionem Abertum et Nurembergenses, cum ipse illustrissimus princeps posuerit in pectore predicti patris Iohannis de Capistrano omnem voluntatem suam.' J. Hofer, 'Die auf die Hussitenmission des Hl.

A Capistrano letter written in Hamburg on 4 July is also known.<sup>47</sup> From these dates, in addition to the fact that the manuscript tradition always states that the Marian sermons were held in Regensburg, I would conclude that John remained in Ratisbon until Sunday, 2 July, and on Monday, 3 July, he moved on to Hamburg.

### 3.3 Bamberg

In August 1452 John was in Bamberg, where he preached for the feast of the Assumption. Of this preaching activity there are six known *reportationes*, of which the first four are of a Marian theme. The manuscript witness that contains these sermons is the one just quoted (ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 18626), which—along with the preaching at Ratisbon and Nuremberg—has on ff. 182r–195r sermons preached in Bamberg from 15 August to 20 August.

In this case, the copyist scrupulously—and fortunately—declares the chronic and topical date of preaching.

15 August 1452:

Łu 468. In Bamberga. In festo Assumptionis. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. *In omnibus requiem quaesivi et in hereditate Domini morabor*, Eccli. 24, et in hodierna epistola. Rev. patres et domini, verba sunt ad laudem et gloriam beatae Virginis Mariae; sumpta verba in themate sunt revelata Iesu, filio Syrach—omnium iniquitatum suarum non recordabor amplius. (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 18626, ff. 182r–184r)

16 August 1452:

Łu 469. In crastino Assumptionis. *In omnibus requiem quaesivi ... Verba pro themate sumpta, primo divina revelatione revelata sunt Iesu, filio Syrach, ut dictum est hesternae die, et per totam istam octavam—Electi sunt et in corpore et in anima, in quibus summa est requies.* (*ibidem*, ff. 184r–186r)

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Johannes von Capistrano bezüglichlichen Briefe im Codex 598 der Innsbrucker Universitätsbibliothek,' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 16 (1923), 113–126, at 126.

47 Concerning John's letters, see G. Gal—J. M. Miskuly, 'A provisional Calendar of St. John Capistran's Correspondence,' in *Franciscan Studies* 49 (1989), 255–345; 50 (1990), 321–403; 52 (1992), 283–327. The letter that I refer to is n. 373, edited in F. Weber, *Des Franziskaners Johannes von Capistrano Mission unter den Hussiten, 1451–1452* (Leipzig, 1867), 60–61.

17 August 1452:

Łu 470. Feria 6 post festum Assumptionis, octavae sancti Laurentii. In nomine Patris ... *In omnibus requiem quaesivi* ... In quibus quidem verbis tria principaliter consideranda sunt, scilicet eius ingressum, progressum, egressum. De quibus dictum est prima die secundum Salomonem; hesternam die dictum est secundum Bernardum esse considerandam excellentiam sanctificationis, exaltationis, glorificationis quoque Virginis gloriosae, quod reperiendum est in 12 argumentis quae sunt: benedictio, praeceptum, derivatio, thronus, thesaurus, ministerium, aequatio, comparatio, retributio, confortatio, admiratio, veneratio. Audivistis enim qualiter duo prima argumenta deducta sunt, id est benedictio et praeceptum. Restat nunc consequenter dicere quantum possumus de aliis decem—et gloria animae non est ab aliquo, nisi a Deo, III Reg. 2, post obitum Bersabeae. (*ibidem*, ff. 186r–187r)

20 August 1452:

Łu 473. Dominica infra octavam Assumptionis. In nomine Patris ... Maria optimam partem elegit quae non auferetur ab ea (immo, numquam auferetur ab ea; igitur Gregorius addit: in aeternum), Luc. 10. Rev. Patres et domini, verba pro themate assumpta sunt ex evangelio Lucae summi cancellarii Virginis Mariae—cum venerunt ad capitula provincialia dixerunt: Non tenemur ad observantiam statutorum, dum praelati non consenserunt. (*ibidem* ff. 193r–195r)

According to the *thema* and a few details of the repertoire of the sermons, the discussion on the Assumption of Mary seems original, in the sense that the material of the sermon is not found in other sermons delivered by Friar John for this Marian feast.

### 3.4 *Bratislava (Wrocław)*

Another long cycle of sermons in which John also addressed Marian topics is found in Bratislava (modern day Wrocław in Poland), where he preached the Lenten sermons of 1453 from 14 February to 12 April. As usual, during this Lenten season, the Annunciation feast, which in that year coincided with Palm Sunday, was shifted to Saturday, 24 March.

This sermon is testified to by four manuscript witnesses, one of which is the basis for one of the rare editions of sermons edited by Eugen Jacob.

1. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc. Patr. 105 (olim B. VI. 4), ff. 155va–vb<sup>48</sup>:

Łu 619. In vigilia Palmarum. Sermo de annuntiatione Mariae. *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*, Luc. 1. Verba proposita sunt archangeli Gabrielis, in Annuntiatione Mariae Virginis lecta. Haec salutatio praesens includit omnes salutationes in Scriptura contentas et praesertim quattuor—Incarnatus est in eius utero Dei Filius et magnum donum hodie collatum humano generi (sermo non absolvitur).

2. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9608<sup>49</sup>, ff. 59vb–63ra:

Łu 658. Sabbato ante ramos Palmarum. In die Annuntiationis beatae Mariae. *Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus*. Verba haec sunt Archangeli Gabrielis ... Salutatio potest esse quadruplex, scilicet optativa, gratuita sive certificativa, beatificativa, commendativa—Qui Spiritus Sanctus eodem instanti omnia membra corporis Christi formavit non sicut in aliis conceptionibus hominum etc.

3. Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, I. F. 18:

Łu 715. De annuntiatione Mariae. *Ave, Maria, gratia plena ...* Verba quae sunt archangeli Gabrielis—Et labia nostra non sufficiunt minutissimam laudem tantae Virginis explicare. (ed. E. Jacob, *Johannes von Capistrano*, II/3, 162–170)

4. Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, I. Q. 363, ff. 270r–271r:

Łu 723: Collecta materia ex dictis venerabilis Patris Ioannis Capistrani. *Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*, Luc. 1. Verba proposita sunt archangeli Gabrielis, in Annuntiatione beatae Mariae lecta. Haec praesens salutatio includit omnes salutationes in Scriptura positas—Sic etiam in Maria comprehenditur bonitas et clementia: nam nullus peccator, qualiscumque magnus, etiam si velit effugere misericordiam Mariae, non potest, ut dicit Bernardus. Invocemus eam, ut ipsa sua clementia

48 For a description of the codex in the database *Manuscripta mediaevalia*, see: «<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/dokumente/html/sigrefsBamberg||StaatsbibliothekBamberg||Msc.Patr.105>».

49 Łuszczki's signature is wrong. Thanks goes to Laura Albiero who checked the signature sign at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

dignetur nobis impetrare perennia gaudia post hanc vitam. Quod nobis concedere dignetur Deus, qui vivit et regnat.

Another Marian sermon was preached on the Saturday after the Second Sunday of Easter (*in Albis*), the eighth day of Easter, or 14 April 1453, on the theme of the seven words of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is testified to by two manuscript witnesses, the second of which is based on the Jacob edition:

1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9608, ff. 81rb–84vb:

Łu 666. Sabbato post 'Quasi modo geniti.' *Favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua* etc., Cant. 4 . Prov. 16: *Favus mellis verba composita*. Cum bene revolvemus sacram Scripturam, septem vicibus legitur tantum Virginem benedictam fuisse locutam—cui Virgo benedicta non impetraverit gratiam et vitam aeternam. Ad quam vos et me perducatur qui est laudabilis per infinita saecula saeculorum.

2. Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, I. F. 18:

Łu 718 Sabbato post 'Quasi modo geniti.' *Favus distillans labia tua ...* , Cant. 4. Prov. 16: *Favus mellis verba composita*—et cui Virgo benedicta non impetravit gratiam et vitam aeternam? Ad quam vos et me perducatur qui est laudabilis per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen. (ed. E. Jacob, *Johannes von Capistrano*, 186–192).

In the first sermon, John gives his audience an explanation of the angel's greeting to Mary as found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, which in turn coincides with the first part of Hail Mary. Recalling, then, the passage of Revelation 12:1, he lists the twelve prerogatives of Mary, essentially re-using exactly the twelve taxonomies already expressed in the third member of the Vienna Marian cycle (nobility, preservation, acquisition, jurisdiction, exaltation, domination, lifting up [*sublimatio*], distribution, perfection, coronation, retribution, and ineffable).

The second Marian sermon, preached in Bratislava on the Saturday of the Easter Octave, appears entirely original, at least referring to the known repertoire of Friar John. He starts from the only seven words the Gospels testify to as spoken by Mary: Two concern the Annunciation (*Quomodo fiet istud?; Ecce ancilla Domini!*); two concerning the Visit to Elizabeth (*Et salutavit Elizabeth; Magnificat*); one on the journey to Jerusalem (*Fili, quid fecisti nobis*); and two at the wedding feast of Cana (*Vinum non habet; Quodcumque dixerit vobis, facite!*).

#### 4 Two Cases of Marian Sermons Attributed to John

Among the codex containing Marian sermons, Łuszczki designates also the ms. New York, Burke Library of Union Theological Seminary, 916, acephalous, that is ff. 38ra–55va, that contains a *collatio* and a sermon on the passage of Isaiah 7 (Łu 388).<sup>50</sup> This is what one reads in the *explicit*:

The explicit, collatio, and sermo of John of Capistrano, which are translated by John and Francis of Rocha, sacred doctors of theology, upon the text Isaiah 7:14, *Behold the Virgin shall conceive*. On the effect of that sermon the *collatio* is fortified with the years in which the sermon was delivered to the people of Vienne, Misna, and Saxony, etc.<sup>51</sup>

We may, therefore, be treating sermons preached in Saxony, but the Polish scholar believes that it is very unlikely that they are John's sermons. Ottakar Bonmann holds the same opinion.<sup>52</sup>

In an analogous way, Cesare Cenci reports that there is another sermon attributed to John from a copyist (ms. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V.F.18) that at f. 88r writes: 'Sermo de gloriosissima virgine Maria in sua assumptione, editus a reverendissimo p. fratre Ioanne de Capistrano, incipit feliciter: *Elevata est magnificentia ...* Ps. Magnificentia regis consistit in larga — (f. 90r) in decima mansione.'<sup>53</sup> However, in ms. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V.H.380, ai ff. 18v–23r, Cenci reports the same *incipit*,<sup>54</sup> attributing it rather to Francis of Meyronnes as we find in the repertoire of Schneyer.<sup>55</sup>

50 L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 94–99.

51 L. Łuszczki, *De sermonibus*, 95: 'Explicit collatio et sermo Ioannis de Capistrano. Qui translatus per Ioannem et Franciscum de Rocha, sacrae theologiae doctores super illud Is. 7: *Ecce virgo concipiet*. Super effectum illius sermonis collatio est convallata annis, quibus sermo fuit ad populum Wiennae, in Misna et Saxonia etc.'

52 O. Bonmann, 'Exkursus 21: Predigthandschriften Kapistrans aus der europäisichen,' in Hofer- Bonmann, I, 440–441.

53 C. Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, (Grottaferrata, 1971), I, 211.

54 'De ascensione (!) beate Virginis. *Elevata est magnificentia tua super celos* Ps. Magnificentia regis consistit in larga distributione. Sermo fr. Francisci de Mayronis.' C. Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, 296.

55 *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350 (Autoren E-H)*, Johannes Baptist Schneyer, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen, 43.2 (Münster, 1970), 75, note 132.



## 5 Conclusion

The discussion conducted up to here actually shows the work still to be done in order to be able to speak properly and consciously about the theme announced in the title of this paper. Concerning John of Capistrano, several Marian sermons are in existence, but for the most part are still unpublished, as are most of his sermons. Especially in the Vienna cycle, John devotes many days to illustrating his Marian topics, so it would be worth investing the time to do a critical edition of these preaching materials, which would allow a more detailed approach to its content. We hope that once a critical edition has been published, a more thorough study of the Mariology of John of Capistrano will be possible.

## Appendix



FIGURE 16.1 ACAP 1: «Ihesus und Maria hilf».



FIGURE 16.2 ACAP 4: «Ave Maria gratia plena».



FIGURE 16.3 ACAP 7: «Maria hilf uns» (Mary help us).



FIGURE 16.4 ACAP 13: «Ave», in the clasp

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Signū magnum apparuit in celo. Mulier  
 Erat mulier amicta sole & luna. In pedibus ei. Et in capite  
 eius corona duodecim stellarū. Duodecim. apoc. xij.  
 Duodecim stelle s; her. sūt duodecim preteritūe quas  
 dñs nostra hñt. A celo. carne. & matre. a celo hñt  
 i utero s; fiantes. Anglorū salutate. Sps s; sup  
 uetos. filij dei ceptos. A carne hñt. qz sūt  
 uirginitatis pmoctia. Sin corruptoe fecunda. S;  
 Sin grauatoe grauida. Sin dolore puepera. A  
 dmete hñt uoti stabilitates. humilitatis pfundita  
 tes. fidei magnitudies. Et cordis martireius. Erat  
 quale ornatus. Cuius audiuit unq; tale. Cuius  
 uidit unq; hñt. sile. ut sol uespere ei i celo. n  
 hñt qz ipa uespere soles uespere i celo. n  
 hñt ymago nobilissima  
 In capite coronata nobilissima dignitate  
 In orbe illustrata splendidissima claritate  
 In aureis decorata altissima simplicitate  
 In facie colorata p sanctissima pietate  
 In spe figurata p gratissima formositate  
 In labijs opulata altissima ueritate  
 In brachijs signata pmissa largitate  
 In tibijs roborata pabilissima firmitate  
 In collo inclinata pfundissima humilitate  
 In pectore pdotata largissima ueritate  
 In cordis psumata pmissa caritate  
 In pedibus erigata pmissa nobilitate  
 In moib; informata largissima libertate  
 In uespere occidua nobilissima ueritate

FIGURE 16.5 ACAP 30, f. 165r.

*Edition*

*Signum magnum apparuit in celo: mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim, Apoc. XII.*

Duodecim stelle, secundum Bernardum, sunt duodecim prerogative, quas Domina nostra habuit a celo, carne et mente.

A celo habuit: in utero sanctificationem, angelicam salutationem, Spiritus sancti superventionem, Filii Dey conceptionem.

A carne habuit: quare fuit virginitatis primoceria; sine corruptione fecunda; sine gravatione gravida; sine dolore puerpera.

A mente habuit: voti stabilitatem; humilitatis profunditatem; fidey magnitudinem et cordis martirium.

Ecce quale ornamentum: quis audivit umquam tale; quis vidit umquam huic simile, ut sol vestiret eam in celo, nec mirum, quia ipsa vestivit solem iustitie in terra.

Hec<sup>56</sup> ymago nobilissima:

- in capite coronata nobilissima dignitate;
- in oculis illustrata splendidissima claritate;
- in auribus decorata attentissima simplicitate;
- in facie colorata pro sanctissima sanctitate;
- in spe figurata gratissima formositate;
- in labiis compilata altissima veritate;
- in brachiis consignata amplissima largitate;
- in tibiis roborata stabilissima firmitate;
- in collo inclinata profundissima humilitate;
- in pectore predotata largissima ubertate;
- in cordis inflammata suavissima caritate;
- in pedibus radicata promptissima mobilitate;
- in moribus informata largissima libertate;
- in vestibus circumdata nobilissima varietate.

56 From here until the end, as it indicates the use of the darkest ink, this is an addition. The *thema* is also corrected by John with the same pen and ink: by «Ecce mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius. Et in capite eius corona duodecim stellarum» became «*Signum magnum apparuit in celo mulier: ecce mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus eius et in capite eius corona duodecim stellarum duodecim*», Apoc. XII (Italics indicate the darkest ink).

TABLE 16.1 Handwritten Witnesses of the Marian Sermons of Vienna

	Date	Feast Day	ŁU	ms. MS	ŁU	ms. M	ŁU	ms. G	ms. v	ms. S	ms. W	Topic
20a	01.7	Octava Corpus Domini	342	180v-82v	299	232ra- 33vb	368	156ra- 6ora		285r- 86v		de Sacramento
20b	02.7	Visitatio B. V.	342	180v.182v- 85r	310	272ra- 74va	368	idem	22v- 24v	286v- 89v	128ra- 30va	de B. V. M.
21	03.7		343	185r-89v	312	279ra- 83ra	369	160ra- 64ra	25r- 27v	294r- 99r	135va- 39vb	de B. V. M.
22	04.7		344	189v-93v	313	283ra- 86vb	370	164ra- 67va	27v- 30v	299r- 303v		de B. V. M.
23	05.7		345	193v-97v	314	286vb- 90ra	371	167va- 71vb	30v- 33r	303v- 08v		de B. V. M.
24	06.7		346	197v-200v	315	290ra- 93rb	372	171vb- 74vb	33r- 34v	308v- 12v	154va- 56ra ?	de B. V. M.
25	07.7		347	200v-05r	316	293rb- 95va	373	174vb- 79rb	35r- 37r	312v- 15v		de B. V. M.
26	08.7		348	205r-07v	317	296ra- 99ra	374	179va- 82ra	37r- 39r	315v- 19v		de B. V. M.
27	09.7		349	207v-10v	318	299ra- 01va	375	182ra- 85rb	39r- 41v	319v- 23r		de B. V. M.
28	10.7		350	210v-14r	319	301va- 04vb	376	185rb- 86vb	41v- 43v	323r- 27v		De Assumptione B. V. M.

## Notes

M = München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 16191, ff. 192ra-311va

MS = Maria Saal (Austria), Archiv des Collegiatstiftes, 6, ff. 122r-288v

V = Vorau, (Austria), Bibliothek der Augustiner-Chorherrenstifts, 133, ff. 1r-85v

S = Seitenstetten, Benediktinerstift, 241, ff. 231ra-406va

G = Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 301, ff. 156r-88v

W = Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. Lat. 3741, ff. 128ra-56ra

TABLE 16.2 Taxonomies of the Marian Sermons of Vienna

		sermo
<i>I. Mulier amicta sole</i>		
<p>Twelve Solar Rays [Duodecimim radii solares] Directed to the First Stage of the Journey of Faith, or Doctrine [PRO PRIMO STATU, PRO DOCTRINA] from the birth of Mary to the conception of Jesus [a nativitate Mariae usque conceptionem Christi]</p>	<p>4 concerning heaven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sanctification in the womb [in utero sanctificationem]</li> <li>– Angelic annunciation [angelicam nuntiationem]</li> <li>– Indwelling of the Holy Spirit [Spiritus sancti superventionem]</li> <li>– Conception of the Son of God [Filius Dei conceptionem]</li> </ul>	21
	<p>4 concerning the flesh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Primacy of Virginity [primiceria virginitatis]</li> <li>– Fecundity without corruption [sine corruptione foecunda]</li> <li>– Pregnant without being burdensome [sine gravatione gravida]</li> <li>– Giving birth without pain [sine dolore puerpera]</li> </ul>	
	<p>4 concerning the mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stability of will [voti stabilitatem]</li> <li>– Firmness of faith [fidei firmitatem]</li> <li>– Profound humility [humilitatis profunditatem]</li> <li>– Vulnerability of heart [cordis passibilitatem]</li> </ul>	
	<i>II. et luna sub pedibus eius</i>	
<p>twelve steps or grades [duodecim scabella seu gradus] For the Second Stage, the Religious [PRO SECUNDO STATU (PRO VIRGINITATE)] from the conception of Christ to the death of Mary [a conceptione Christi usque ad mor- tem Mariae]</p>	<p>The Blessed Virgin was given to the Son of God [Virgo benedic- ta fuit data Filio Dei]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In habitation of divinity [in habitaculum divinitatis]</li> <li>2. To the angels in the mirror of purity [angelis in speculum puritatis]</li> <li>3. To the patriarchs with an effusion of piety [patriarchis in irriguum pietatis]</li> <li>4. To the prophets in the ray of truth [prophetis in radium veritatis]</li> </ol>	22
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To the apostles in the majesty of humility [apostolis in magisterium humilitatis]</li> <li>6. To the evangelists in the magisterium of legality [evangelistis in magisterium legalitatis]</li> <li>7. To the martyrs in the rampart of stability [martyribus in propugnaculum stabilitatis]</li> <li>8. To the confessors in the spectacle of honesty [confessoribus in spectaculum honestatis]</li> </ol>	23

9. To the virgins in the sign of chastity [virginibus in signaculum castitatis]

10. To the just in the search of stability [iustis in ergastulum suavitatis]

11. To the sinners in the refuge of adversity [peccatoribus in refugium adversitatis]

12. To the demons in the obstacle of malice [daemonibus in obstaculum malignitatis]

III. *et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim*

Twelve stars [Duodecim stellae]	1. Nobility [noblitas]	24
	2. Preservation [praeservatio]	
For the Third Stage, for the Martyr	3. Acquisition [acquisitio]	24
	4. Jurisdiction [iurisdictio]	
[PRO TERTIO STATU (PRO MARTYRIO)]	5. Exaltation [exaltatio]	
	6. Domination [dominatio]	
In eternal glory [in aeterna gloria]	7. Sublimation [sublimatio]	
	8. Distribution [distributio]	
	9. Perfection [perfectio]	26
	10. Coronation [coronatio]	
	11. Retribution [retributio]	27
	12. Inexplication [inesplicatio]	





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