

# Unit Two, Module Two

## The Sources for the Life of St. Francis

- Lesson 1: Introduction
- Lesson 2: Modern Study of the Sources
- Lesson 3: Francis the Saint
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- Lesson 6: Francis the Prophet.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MODULE TWO

#### AIMS

The aims of this module are:

1. To introduce you to a range of sources in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volumes 1-3.
2. To enable you to read the sources more critically as you learn about why they were written, what sort of documents they are and more about authorship.
3. To provide a selection of sources for you to concentrate on for your assignments and, for those who are interested, to provide background information to help you to read other sources in these three volumes. You will find these in the additional material at the end of this module.

#### HOW TO APPROACH THE MATERIAL IN THIS MODULE:

You will find two separate sections - the work for the assignment and the additional material at the end of the book.

In the first section the information concerns the following documents - three official works by Thomas of Celano and one by Bonaventure, one Papal document, The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty (*The Sacrum Commercium*), the *Anonymous of Perugia*, *The Legend of the Three Companions* and one other source that is generally well-known - the *Fioretti*, prior to which we have also selected the *Deeds of Blessed Francis*.

The questions set in the assignments do not require you to have read all of these documents. The material is designed to help you to read the Franciscan sources with a better insight and to help you to be critical. You will become increasingly aware of why they remain a very important Franciscan resource. Some of the material may be familiar to you but it is hoped that this course will assist you to look at it with fresh eyes. It will enable you to appreciate some of the difficulties faced by anyone trying to get to know the true Francis if they depend solely on the texts that he inspired.

It is intended that you will make time to read the sources when you can and we have deliberately selected only a few of them because some of these are very long and you will hardly be able to do more than read quickly through these in the time allocated for your assignments. This applies particularly to Celano's books, the Major Life by Bonaventure (LMj) We suggest that you try to get a flavour of each of these while preparing your assignments.

These suggestions will help you:

1. Where there is a Prologue, read it carefully and ask yourself what it tells you about what the writer is seeking to achieve or why he/she has undertaken the work.
2. Note all the section headings provided in the text and devote time to a more thorough reading of those that appeal to you most.
3. For each new text you read, ask yourself whether there are any differences that emerge between texts and whether material in one book has been omitted from another. For example, the early life of Francis is portrayed differently in *The Life of Francis* by Celano and the book he later composed, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*. Think about why this might be. These two books are structured quite differently too - why is that? Does Celano seem to be presenting a different image of Francis in these two books?

The papal document and The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty should be read in full. They are not too long and they are probably newer to you. They are the result of the rapid expansion and the changes that the Order of Friars Minor was to experience in the period after the death of Francis. They are evidence of the resulting tension within the Order and the preoccupation that some friars certainly had with remaining true to their memory of Francis.

Bear in mind that this course is designed to assist your reading of the sources and to encourage you to read them, but more critically than when you were first inspired by Francis.

## LESSON ONE INTRODUCTION

Please note that this is a long lesson. Allocate more time for this than the other lessons in the module.

The aim of this lesson is to give you an overview of the contents and structure of the Three Volumes. It gives a summary of many of the texts that constitute the Francis of Assisi: Early Documents.

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE SOURCES?

The sources we are referring to are Franciscan sources. For the purposes of this module, a source is a book, or other text, that supplies information or evidence concerning Francis of Assisi and certain aspects of the tradition and legends that developed among Franciscan communities. Most of the sources we use are Franciscan in origin but we will include some other historical sources. The main reference for this module is *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volumes 1-3.

### A few hints on using the three volumes:

#### Fonts, Margins and Arrows<sup>1</sup>

You will notice that the *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volumes 1-3 use three fonts, plain, italic and bold. The bulk of text is plain font which means it is original to that text. Words and phrases in italics refer to scriptural citations, and the original scripture source is found in the outer margin. As you progress through the texts you note bold print – this means that the section in bold is identical to a section in one, or more, earlier sources – the inner margins refer you to the earlier texts where the material has previously appeared.

Where there are scriptural references in an outer margin but the text is not italicized, there is an allusion (rather than a direct citation) from scripture.

The use of arrows in the inner margins<sup>↑</sup> shows that a text is the same as text in a different source<sup>2</sup>. In volume 2, on page 118, *The Assisi Compilation [2]* you will find 2C 157 meaning that the text will be found again in 2C 157 (page 349, volume 2). [Note that the AC text you just looked up is repeated on page 349 is in bold print.]

You will also find an indication for parallel texts //<sup>3</sup>

Once you become familiar with these, you will realize how useful they can be.

You will notice the use of abbreviations in the margins. You already know the scriptural abbreviations. The abbreviations for Franciscan references are contained in each volume on a single page. In volume 1, for example, the abbreviations occur on page 32. You can look up the full titles until you gradually become familiar with them.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 25-26, Introduction, Volume 1, The Saint ;

<sup>2</sup> See pages 27-28, Editor's Notes, Volume 2, The Founder

<sup>3</sup> See footnote f, Volume 2, page 67

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOURCES

The Sources for the life of St. Francis, contained in the three volumes, embrace the first two centuries of Franciscan history, from the death of St. Francis in 1226 to roughly the last decades of the 14th century. They are fundamental to understanding not only the life of St. Francis, but also the movement of which he is the founder. Although secondary in importance to the writings of St. Francis, which remain the prime source for his life and ideals, the sources provide an indispensable aid in situating Francis within the historical context of medieval Italy and within the social, political and ecclesiastical framework in which he lived. The sources are primarily documents of spirituality, but they are also rich in historical content. Their aim is to be a mirror of the ideals and intentions which Francis lived and which he proposed to his followers. They also reflect those specific divergences concerning the interpretation and understanding the proposal of Francis for which we have manuscript tradition and/or external evidence.

A caveat: We are limited by the fact that we cannot possibly have copies of all the sources concerning Francis ever composed. Some has been preserved because the tradition it reflects played a prominent role in Franciscan history, some may have been conserved because the tradition they reflect has been protected and conserved by followers who did not want it to be lost. Many sources will never be discovered because they have disappeared from all records, or been lost through the passage of time, but there is always the prospect of material turning up, for example during restoration work (of a library or religious house) or because scholars, who have been carrying out research, have recovered texts that may have previously been overlooked.

The medieval lives of Francis which we shall be studying comprise a variety of documents and authors:

1. Legends (from the Latin *legendae*, or classical lives of the saints of patristic times), have the aim of being treatises of spirituality and mystical theology centred upon Francis of Assisi, regarded as uniquely Christ-like.
2. Compilations, or groupings of written testimonies about St. Francis and his movement.
3. Chronicles, or historical documents cantered upon a particular period of time or place.
4. Papal Documents

## LITERARY STYLE:

The style is dependent upon the source and purpose of the documentary material, which could be of an oral or written tradition. The literary style is appropriate for the purpose of the text, liturgical offices follow liturgical form, such as the inclusion of antiphons. Papal documents follow a specific format.

## THE AUTHORS:

The authors range from:

Friars who composed these biographies under the explicit command of the Pope or of the authorities of the Order.

The companions of St. Francis and their disciples.

Those who interpret Francis' intentions to the brothers but do not belong to the Order or come from the authority of the Pope himself.

Independent chroniclers whose interest in Francis and his followers was kindled by some association.

Points to note:

- To form a coherent image of Francis and his movement, which is as close as possible to historical truth, it is important to bear in mind the variety found within the Sources.
- One thing is certain: historical accuracy, as we understand it today, was not a priority for these medieval biographers. They were more interested in the charismatic figure of Francis and his ideals, as they were experiencing it in their own lives as followers of the Poverello within the unfolding developments of the Order and the Church in which they were living.

This approach to the Sources is essential to guarantee an unbiased and open approach to the figure of St. Francis who eludes all attempts to be typecast within any well-defined frame of mind or document of history.

As you begin to become familiar with the sources, for each source, remember to ask yourself the question - What image/images of Francis emerge from this source? Read about the composer of the source, where identified, and ask yourself why they might they have drawn this particular picture of Francis. You might want to record the source name and the image it portrays of Francis for future personal reference. It is useful to keep a note of well-known periscopes so you can easily find them in the future.

Try to learn the abbreviation and the title. If you are familiar with the Omnibus of Sources, it is important to recognise which titles and abbreviations have been changed and be able to locate the same source in any collection of sources. This may mean recognising Latin titles and their abbreviations for some texts, such as RNB (*Regula non bullata*, and the *Earlier Rule* [1223] refer to the same text, the Rule for the brothers, composed as a result of their experiences from 1210-1221, but that did not receive papal approval)

## DOCUMENTS IN FRANCIS OF ASSISI EARLY DOCUMENTS

### VOLUME 1: THE SAINT 1226-1239

The Saint contains documents from the early years of the Franciscan movement. To understand the title, this book is about Saint Francis of Assisi, the canonised individual. Francis was canonised very quickly. Canonisation brings an individual holy person to the attention of the whole of Christendom. Consequently Francis of Assisi was drawn into the realm of the wider Church. Francis' companions would have thought of him as “Brother Francis”, the thousands of ordinary people he inspired responded to the *poverello*, a little poor sort, who spoke to the heart from the soul. Canonisation brought “Saint” Francis to the whole Church and Thomas of Celano was commissioned to give an account of this individual's life that would explain why Francis was canonised as well as portraying him as a model for all Christians. Celano's text is called *The Life of Saint Francis*. It follows a literary tradition, hagiography, in which the lives of early saints are taken as exemplars, even to the inclusion of details that were recounted in the lives of these early saints and applied to the saint at the centre of the study. It is a “legend” which means that it was intended to be read aloud, within communities, to inspire and encourage listeners.

Volume 1 contains the Writings of Francis of Assisi, Celano's “Life” and other legends, The Life of Saint Francis by Julian of Speyer and The Versified Life of Saint Francis by Henri d' Avranches; early liturgical compositions (necessary for celebrations of the feast),

the fascinating text “The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty”, several papal documents and extracts from chronicles or letters from the period.

## LEGENDS

Many of the Franciscan sources are legends – that is the life story of a saint, but not like a biography today. Legends would be read to listeners in order to encourage and inspire them, for example, they were read to a community on the feast day, during the Octave of a Feast, or at mealtimes. The hero is a person who has been officially recognised as holy, and inevitably his/her holiness makes him/her seem removed or remote from everyday life. Knowing that saints started off like the rest of us can act as an encouragement to the listeners. The stories often copy details that appear in legends of earlier saints, with a little adaptation according to context (such as giving a costly garment to someone poor). They focus on the weakness of the individual prior to conversion. Once the saint has chosen to hear and respond to the calling of God, evidence of wondrous changes in their whole life are given, so the person is seen to have been transformed through the working of God’s grace. Often their early life is described as sinful, enabling the reader to see a stark contrast between early life and life after the conversion process has taken effect in their lives.

This change is the work of God and the legends are designed to move listeners to give praise and glory to God, through whose grace the saint became totally focused on following Christ and surrendering to the will of God. Saints are expected to work miracles, but more weight is given to those that occur after their death, often recorded around a shrine or at the tomb. This is because during their lifetime even holy people can be deceived. Miracles after death are authenticated until the Papacy is satisfied that they are in fact signs of the individual’s sanctity. Miracles are detailed in legends.

A saint’s holiness often prompts the *vox populi*, a call from the people, who knew or were inspired by his/her life, demanding that the individual be canonised. However, there has to be a canonisation process in which the Papacy follows certain procedures, part of which is appointing someone to examine the life of the person. Usually the Church has good reason for selecting particular people as saints – the example given by the person can be used to exhort others to try to imitate them. The Pope may instruct the hierarchy to communicate details of the saint’s life in the Church. Often the qualities emphasised by the Pope are not those emphasised by people who knew the saint in life. The saint is canonised for the Church and aspects of his/her life are selected because they show the saint as a good exemplar of qualities that the Church regards as inspirational for the needs of the wider Church at the time of canonisation. Hence, at the time of Francis of Assisi, preaching against heresy was a priority, so the Church placed greater emphasis on Francis’ skills as a preacher, rather than, say, his poverty.

Different images of the same person can emerge – from those who knew and/or lived with the saint; from the person commissioned to make enquiries to establish that there are reliable grounds for canonisation, based on interviews and available details or resources; and from the Church. You will see this when you study the sources we have for Francis. You will also realise that, over the years, when people seek guidance and inspiration from his life to help them in their own lives, the particular aspects focused upon might change. This can help us to learn something about the Franciscan tradition. So it can be the case that tradition influences how legends are told and received.

## OTHER SOURCES

There are liturgical texts - legends adapted for liturgical prayer during feast days and octaves.

*The Sacred exchange between St Francis and Lady Poverty* is a beautiful, interesting text. It is an allegory, not a legend.

The texts at the end of the book consist of Papal documents and extracts from chronicles about Francis or the early movement, writings from sources that are not Franciscan.

Maps, with very informative notes.

Throughout, editorial notes are very dense, meaning that a wealth of information is concisely contained, some of which may not mean too much to you at the beginning of your studies. You will find them increasingly useful as you study more. They summarise many of the scholarly conclusions, derived over time, concerning the texts.

## TWO PAPAL BULLS

### PROPOSED BUILDING OF A SPECIAL CHURCH, *RECOLENTES QUALITER*<sup>4</sup> AND THE CANONISATION BULL *MIRA CIRCA NOS*<sup>5</sup>

The first period we shall cover begins immediately after the death of Francis on 3rd October 1226. The Cardinal Protector of the Order, Hugolino, who was Francis' close friend and counsellor, became Pope Gregory IX on 19th March 1227. He immediately set himself the task of declaring Francis a saint, and proposed the building of a *specialis ecclesia* (special church) to enshrine his relics. On 16th July 1228 he declared Francis a saint in Assisi. For the canonisation the Pope published a Bull with the title *Mira circa nos* (19th July 1228), which is the first of a good number of Papal documents included in the Sources for the life of St. Francis.

### THE COMMISSIONING OF THE FIRST LIFE OF FRANCIS<sup>6</sup>

It was during the occasion of the canonisation that Gregory IX asked brother Thomas of Celano to compose a *Life of St. Francis* [hereafter 1C] on the model of the classical patristic Legends of the saints. This would be the official biography of the new saint. Celano presented his Life of St. Francis to the Pope, who approved it on 25th February 1229.

Thomas of Celano is also the author of a *Legend for Use in the Choir* [hereafter LCh], dated 1230-32.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 1 FA:ED, page 564-5

<sup>5</sup> FA: ED vol I pp. 565-569

<sup>6</sup> 1C, ED vol I pp. 171-310

<sup>7</sup> LCh, ED vol I pp. 319-326

**GENERAL CHAPTER, 1230:**

At the General Chapter of Assisi of 1230, when the relics of St. Francis were transported from the burial site at the church of San Giorgio to the new basilica built in his honour, the Order encountered its first difficulties regarding the correct interpretation of the *Later Rule*, or *Regula Bullata*, of 1223.<sup>8</sup> A group of friars sought the advice of Pope Gregory because he had known Francis and they believed that he would also know what Francis' intentions had been. The Pope responded with the Bull *Quo elongati* (28th September 1230),<sup>9</sup> which is the first of a succession of papal interpretations of the Franciscan Rule.

**LEGEND OF ST FRANCIS BY JULIAN OF SPEYER AND LIFE OF ST FRANCIS<sup>10</sup>**

During this period, another friar, Julian of Speyer, was working in Paris to compose a Legend of St. Francis, using Celano's biography. He wrote his *Life of St. Francis* [hereafter LJS] between 1232 and 1235. It is thought that he wrote the *Rhymed Office of St. Francis* [hereafter Off]<sup>11</sup> in 1230-32. This included hymns, antiphons and responsories for the liturgical celebration of the feastday of St. Francis, in which we also find compositions by other authors, including Gregory IX himself.

Another attempt to proclaim the greatness of the sanctity of St. Francis was made by a secular priest, Henri d'Avranches, author of the *Versified Life of St. Francis* [hereafter VL], a long epic poem written in 1232-34 and dedicated to Gregory IX.<sup>12</sup>

**THE SACRED EXCHANGE BETWEEN SAINT FRANCIS AND LADY POVERTY<sup>13</sup>**

To the same period belongs *The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty* (hereafter ScEx), a beautiful allegory which praises the lofty ideal of poverty upon which Francis built the first brotherhood. The author and date of composition are unknown, although scholars propose the years 1237-39 as the most probable date of composition.

Although there is evidence of tension among Francis' followers even from this early date, the focus of Volume One is Saint Francis, a canonised individual. The focus will change as followers began to look at Francis as a religious founder, hence the title of Volume 2.

**THE PERIOD FROM 1239  
UNTIL THE LAST DECADES OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY**

**(A) VOLUME 2: THE FOUNDER**

The second volume looks inward toward the internal life of the fraternity, not outward, Francis as a brother and founder of the Order rather than Francis as a saint for the wider church. This follows important historical events: the deposition of Minister General, Elias, and subsequent developments in the administration and ministry of the brothers. The fact that Franciscan brothers composed or compiled many of the writings in Volume Two inspired the title "The Founder."

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<sup>8</sup> LR, ED vol I pp. 99-106  
<sup>9</sup> --, ED vol I pp. 570-575  
<sup>10</sup> LJS, ED vol I pp. 363-422  
<sup>11</sup> Off, ED vol I pp. 327-345  
<sup>12</sup> VL, ED vol I pp. 423-520  
<sup>13</sup> ScEx, ED vol I pp. 523-554

Many of the sources in this volume focus on memories of Saint Francis, collected and gathered by close followers. "Different memories were brought forward by those with different personal experiences and with different perspectives on the nature of the life of the brotherhood." (page 22).

"The Anonymous of Perugia" (AP) and "The Legend of the Three Companions" (L3C) focus on the life of the fraternity as it was formed in Assisi. The other documents focus on Francis himself.

"The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul" (2C) and the "Treatise on Miracles" (3C) were written for the friars, unlike the "Life of Francis" in Volume 1, for the Church.

The "Major Life" by Bonaventure contributes a systematic, theological understanding of Francis' experience. Bonaventure was commissioned by a General Chapter to compose this work in order to bring about unity between the brothers.

As 2C evidences, writings aimed at renewal and reform in the lives of the brothers. Book 1 of 2C shows how examples from Francis' conversion bear on his relationships with the brothers<sup>14</sup>. In book 2, Francis is portrayed as a model for individual brothers to follow. So the two traditions, how Francis was collectively and individually connected to the brothers were drawn together.

Bonaventure adds the dimension of the grace of God appearing in his servant Francis. The Order of Friars Minor is a new Order of grace in the world that transforms an individual into the image of Christ crucified, so the brothers share in the mystery of Christ, exemplified in the example of Francis who continues to inspire them.

With the downfall of brother Elias of Cortona in 1239, the Order entered a new phase in its history. From 1240 onwards the Order became markedly more clericalised and more institutionalised. This was partly due to the great strides forward which the Order had made in the spheres of studies and apostolic preaching. The friars had established themselves in large conventual houses in the towns, besides holding on to their primitive hermitages. They were present and active in all the great European centres of learning, like Paris, Oxford and Bologna. This new image of the Order necessitated the emergence of a new image of Francis as the founder of such a great movement, which, together with the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), was a great bulwark of reform in the Church.

The interpretation of the Rule was further developed during this second period with the publication of the Bull of Innocent IV, *Ordinem vestrum* (14th November 1245), which favoured further relaxation of the Rule.

#### **ANONYMOUS OF PERUGIA:**

*The Beginning or the Founding of the Order and the Deeds of Those Friars Minor Who Were the First in Religion and the Companions of the Blessed Francis*, written by brother John of Perugia (4th March 1240 - 22nd August 1241), is also known by the name *Anonymous of Perugia* (hereafter AP).<sup>15</sup> It is a gem among the Franciscan Sources for its originality and concise presentation of the primitive Franciscan fraternity.

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<sup>14</sup> E.g. Chapter XVI relates the story of Francis as the little black hen with countless chickens, pages 260-1

<sup>15</sup> AP, ED vol II pp. 31-60

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT FRANCIS

The Minister General Crescentius of lesi, in 1244, requested the friars to send him all their written information about the life of St. Francis, which was not already included in the Legends of Thomas of Celano and Julian of Speyer. The response was generous and includes the letter, dated 11<sup>th</sup> August 1246, sent to the Minister General by a group of three brothers, Leo, Rufino and Angelo, from the hermitage of Greccio, together with a bundle of documentary information they gathered from their own memories and from those of many other brothers.

### LEGEND OF THE THREE COMPANIONS<sup>16</sup>

One of the results of this initiative of the companions of the saint is the well-known *Legend of the Three Companions* (hereafter L3C). This text gives much local information about Francis, adding new information about Francis and the beginning of the movement.

### THE ASSISI COMPILATION

Another result of the documentary material sent to Crescentius is the *Assisi Compilation*, also known as *Legend of Perugia* (hereafter AC), dated 1244-60. As its title says, it is **not a Legend but** a Compilation of episodes from the life of St. Francis, written by an anonymous group of friars who describe themselves as *nos, qui cum eo fuimus* ("We who were with him"). It is thus a bold affirmation of faithfulness to the original ideals of St. Francis which these same companions embraced. Included within the AC are two sections made up of brother Leo's scrolls, namely the *Verba Sancti Francisci* (*Words of St. Francis*) and the *Intentio Regulae* (*Intention of the Rule*).

### THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE DESIRE OF A SOUL BY CELANO<sup>17</sup>

The direct result of Crescentius' request to the brothers was, however, that Thomas of Celano was asked to compose a new Life of St. Francis, known as *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (hereafter 2C), written in 1246-47. The aim of this being to complete the initial work of Celano in 1229. The bulk of the biography is concerned not with a historical account of the life of Francis, but rather with a portrait of his virtues, which make Thomas say: "I consider blessed Francis the holiest mirror of the holiness of the Lord, the image of his perfection" (Introduction to Book 2).

### THIRST FOR MORE MATERIAL<sup>18</sup>

The brothers were still not content with the rich contributions of Thomas of Celano. In 1250, the new Minister General, John of Parma, asked him in 1250 to compose a *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis*, which Celano presented to the General Chapter of Metz for approval in 1254.

### BONAVENTURE

The turn of events in the Order during John of Parma's tenure of office (1247-1257) brought the Order to a time of crisis, when the Minister General was accused of harbouring sympathies towards the friars who were following the doctrines of Joachim of Fiore regarding the age of the Spirit and the *ecclesia spiritualis* (spiritual Church). John of Parma had to resign, but he was given the opportunity to designate his successor in the person of

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<sup>16</sup> L3C, ED vol II pp. 61-110

<sup>17</sup> 2C, ED vol II pp. 233-393

<sup>18</sup> --, ED vol II pp. 397-468

brother Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. The new Minister General, a doctor of theology in the University of Paris, set out to give a new direction to the Order. In 1260, during the General Chapter of Narbonne, the brothers issued the following decree: "We order that one good legend of blessed Francis be compiled from all those already in existence." In response to this Bonaventure started to compose the *Legenda Maior*, or *Major Legend of St. Francis* (hereafter LMj),<sup>19</sup> which he presented to the Chapter of Pisa in 1263, together with an abridged form for liturgical use, the *Legenda Minor*, or *Minor Legend* (hereafter LMn).<sup>20</sup> The life Bonaventure composed was taken essentially from Thomas of Celano in his own style, that of a theologian and mystic. The LMj bears a close resemblance to the mystical treatise of Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Soul into God* (*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*). Its prologue portrays Francis as the angel bearing the seal of the living God in his stigmata, and it depicts the spiritual journey of Francis according to the three ways of purification, illumination and union.

#### **THE DECREE TO REMOVE ALL OTHER LEGENDS:**

The General Chapter of Paris in 1266 decreed "that all the legends of the Blessed Francis that have been made should be removed (*deleantur*). Wherever they find these outside the Order, let the brothers strive to remove them. For this Legend made by the general minister has been compiled as he received it from the mouth of those who were always with the blessed Francis and had certain knowledge of everything, and proven facts have been diligently placed in it." The reasons for this startling decision are not clear and we cannot interpret them with our contemporary mentality. It is certainly true that Bonaventure, in order to bring unity to the Order, wanted to create an image of St. Francis which would be well-documented and appreciated by all the friars, that is, by the majority of the Order (the community) and by the rigorists (or *zelanti*). The result of such a decree was that, for many centuries, the Legends of Thomas of Celano were out of bounds for many friars, and it was only at the end of the 19th century that manuscripts containing the Legends of Celano were found in libraries outside Franciscan houses.

Another biography (found in volume 3) written during this period is known as *The Book of Praises of the Blessed Francis* (hereafter BPr).<sup>21</sup> Its author is Bonaventure's secretary, Bernard of Besse, who composed the work in 1277-83, within the context of his *Chronicle of the Fourteen or Fifteen Ministers General of the Order of Friars Minor*.

### **(B) VOLUME 3: FRANCIS THE PROPHET**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The contents of the last volume of the Franciscan Sources starts with the Chapter of Padova in 1276, when the Minister General Jerome of Ascoli Piceno asked those brothers who knew Francis and who were still alive to send their written memories to him. Many of the first brothers had, by now, died, except for brother Leo who died in 1278, but there were many of their disciples who remembered episodes which they heard directly from the companions of St. Francis.

Many of the texts in this volume reflect the thinking of a specific group of 14th century Italian brothers, some of the Spiritual Franciscans, whose influence was powerful. The notion of prophet presents Francis in eschatological terms, that is, in a biblical

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<sup>19</sup> LMj, ED vol II pp. 525-649

<sup>20</sup> LMn, ED vol II pp. 684-717

<sup>21</sup> BPr, ED vol III pp. 25-74

framework that is primarily apocalyptic. Francis was believed to be a spiritual leader as the world moved into the final age of salvation history. Gospel poverty was seen as the way to persevere through the final tribulation. The "angel of the sixth seal" was a title Bonaventure had already used of Francis. The brothers were to lead the conversion of the whole world. (See pages 31-33). The two editions of "The Mirror of Perfection" address the interpretation and implementation of the *Rule* as a prophetic text. Francis was seen as a prophet who exemplified purification both of world and of individual. One important recurrent theme is the repetition of expressions that were believed, by some, to record the true *intention* (intention) of Francis, identified with the will of Christ.

Also the texts introduce the notions of perfection and observance. Observance is extended to specify observance of the Gospel and the *Rule* and the *Testament*. True followers of Francis were those brothers who closely imitate him, faithful to his intention, exemplifying perfect observance. Francis is seen as already converted and perfected, rather than a model of conversion.

### TENSIONS WITHIN THE ORDER

This period of the history of the Order was quite turbulent. The Spiritual family in the Order was drifting apart from the Community, through rejection of the papal interpretations of the *Rule* and the application of the Trinitarian doctrine of Joachim of Fiore to the Franciscan Order. At the same time Pope Nicholas III gave the Order a new interpretation of the *Rule*, in the Bull *Exiit qui seminat* (14th August 1279),<sup>22</sup>. This was to be followed by another, the *Exivi de Paradiso*, of Pope Clement V (6th May 1312).<sup>23</sup> Ultimately there was a grave controversy over poverty between the Order and Pope John XXII during the first quarter of the 14th century, when the Spiritual family was formally condemned. This is the context in which a group of friars with Spiritual tendencies, portrayed Francis as the prophet announcing the end of time and the beginning of a new age of the Spirit.

### 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WRITINGS ABOUT FRANCIS

In 1318, *The Mirror of Perfection* appeared. Two editions of this Source have been made, one by Leonard Lemmens, *A Mirror of Perfection, Rule, Profession, Life and True Calling of a Lesser Brother* (hereafter 1MP),<sup>24</sup> and another one by Paul Sabatier, *The Beginning of A Mirror of Perfection of the Status of a Lesser Brother* (hereafter 2MP).<sup>25</sup> Sabatier was instrumental in attributing the 2MP to brother Leo, the close companion of Francis. Based on his discovery of the mis-copied date on the Mazzarino manuscript, he stated that it was dated 11th May 1228, that is, even before 1C. As more manuscripts were discovered, from a different manuscript tradition, it became clear that the date was 1318, not 1228<sup>26</sup>.

The circles of Spiritual friars produced various documents relating to the beginning of the Franciscan Order in the period we are examining. Their works are more of an eschatological and mystical rather than of a historical nature. However, they also provide some interesting insights into the state of the Order during the 14th century, as well as into the influence which the first companions of St. Francis still had upon the memories of the more zealous friars. We find documents like the *Legenda Yetus*, or *Old Legend*, the *Words of brother Conrad of*

<sup>22</sup> --, ED vol III pp. 737-764

<sup>23</sup> --, ED vol III pp. 767-783

<sup>24</sup> 1MP, ED vol III pp. 207-252

<sup>25</sup> 2MP, ED vol III pp. 253-377

<sup>26</sup> MCCXXVIII, is 1228 in Roman numerals, MCCCXVIII is 1328, hence the error on transcription leads to a completely different date. (See Volume 3, page 207)

*Offida*, and the *Words of St. Francis*,<sup>27</sup> attributed to brother Leo. Two writers from the Spiritual group are worthy of attention. Ubertino da Casale is author of *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* (*The Tree of the Crucified Life of Jesus*), dated 1305 (hereafter TL).<sup>28</sup> Angelo Clareno is author of the *Historia seu Chronicon septem tribulationum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (*The History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Friars Minor*),<sup>29</sup> composed in the period 1323-25 (hereafter HTrb).

#### THE CONFORMITY OF FRANCIS TO CHRIST

The 14th century also witnessed the full development of the oral tradition of the companions of St. Francis as it was handed down through generations of friars, with the aim of presenting the ideal and humble beginnings of the Franciscan Order. The *Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius* (*The Deeds of the Blessed Francis and His Companions*),<sup>30</sup> written by Hugolino of Monte Giorgio in 1328-1343 (hereafter ABF) seeks to do just this. Its translation into the Tuscan dialect by an unknown friar in the last decades of the 14th century produced the well-known *Fioretti*, or *Little Flowers of St. Francis* (hereafter LFI). The theme of the LFI is typical of all Franciscan Sources of the 14th century: "We must consider first of all how Saint Francis, in all the deeds of his life, conformed to the blessed Christ." In the tradition of the *Fioretti*, but coming as late as the 15th century, we find the *Franceschina* or *Specchio dell'Ordine dei minori*, by Giacomo Oddi.

The theme of conformity of Francis to Jesus Christ is present in the *De Cognatione Sancti Francisci* (*The Kinship of Saint Francis*),<sup>31</sup> written in 1365 by Arnald of Sarrant (hereafter KnSF), author of the *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Ministers General of the Order of Friars Minor*, as well as in the *Liber de Conformitate* (*The Book of Conformities of the Life of the Blessed Francis to the Life of the Lord Jesus*), a voluminous work by Bartholomew of Pisa, who began writing it in 1385 and presented it in 1399, at the very end of the period we are considering. This final text is not included in volume 3.

#### DOCUMENTS FROM OUTSIDE THE ORDER

Included within the Franciscan Sources are also various related documents coming from outside the Order. Here we shall only mention the writings of Jacques de Vitry regarding the Franciscan Order<sup>32</sup> (two letters, one from Genova in 1216 and one from Damietta in 1220, and chapter 32 of the *Historia Occidentalis*). Three other famous Chronicles come from within the Franciscan Order, namely the *Chronicle of Jordan of Giano* (hereafter ChrJG), regarding the Franciscan mission to Germany; the *Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston* (hereafter ChrTE), regarding the Franciscan mission to England, and the *Chronicle of Salimbene of Parma*. Francis is also the object of praise in literary sources, such as in *The Praises of Jacopone da Todi*<sup>33</sup> and in the famous *Canto XI of the Paradiso in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy*<sup>34</sup>. The first decades of the 14th century also saw the production of documentation defending the historic nature of the Portiuncula Indulgence, of which there is no trace in the Sources of the 13th century. Two documents are worthy of note, the *Diploma of Theobald, bishop of Assisi, on the Portiuncula Indulgence* (10th August 1310) and Francesco Bartholi's *Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariae de Portiuncule* (c.1340).

<sup>27</sup> --, ED vol III pp. 109-137

<sup>28</sup> TL, ED vol III pp. 141-203

<sup>29</sup> HTrb, ED vol III pp. 375-426

<sup>30</sup> ABF, ED vol III pp 429-565

<sup>31</sup> KnSF, ED vol III pp 673-733

<sup>32</sup> --, ED vol I pp 578-585

<sup>33</sup> 1-3JT, ED vol III pp 873-879

<sup>34</sup> Dcom, ED vol III pp 880-892

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## **LESSON TWO**

### **THE MODERN STUDY OF THE SOURCES**

#### **AIM**

The aim of this lesson is to provide a history of the recent study of the sources, highlighting key figures and developments in Franciscan Studies.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Students of Francis of Assisi are faced with at what first sight may seem an enviable situation: There are numerous medieval sources, accessible to the interested reader, translated into several languages. However, the enthusiast will soon become aware that existence of such a quantity of sources raises a number of questions. Many scholars have eagerly scrutinised the abundant material and produced an even more abundant supply of commentaries, reflections and hypotheses in response because the sources do not agree: The followers of Francis did not share agreement about the purpose of the Order of Friars Minor, the ideals of the founder, or even the fundamental characteristics pertaining to the Franciscan way of life. This is one reason for the existence of so much material. Scholars have taken different approaches to this wealth of material, resulting in a flourishing of theories and interpretation.

#### **FRANCIS OF ASSISI: EARLY DOCUMENTS**

We are fortunate to live in a period when the majority of the Sources for the life of St. Francis have been critically edited in the original Latin, and when many of them are also translated into modern languages. The most recent version in English of the Sources is now available and will constitute the basis of these study units: *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents, Vol. I: The Saint; Vol. II: The Founder; Vol. III: The Prophet; Index*, Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, 1999-2002.

The study of the Sources can now also be done following a chronological order:

1. The period between the death of St. Francis in 1226 and the end of the Generalate of brother Elias in 1239 when the sanctity of Francis is celebrated by biographers like Thomas of Celano and Julian of Speyer.
2. The period from the beginning of the Generalate of brother Haymo of Faversham in 1240 to the end of the Generalate of St. Bonaventure in 1274 which witnesses the institutionalisation of the Order and its representation as one of the great movements of reform in the Church. In this period Francis is portrayed as the founder of this great movement of evangelical reform.
3. The period from the Chapter of Padova in 1276 to the last decades of the 14th century. This period is one of the most interesting in Franciscan history, because it is closely linked with the Order's growing self-awareness of its eschatological mission. In this period Francis is shown to be a prophet who incarnates the values of the Gospel and announces them through his movement, which is seen as a harbinger of a new era of salvation.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF FRANCISCAN HAGIOGRAPHY

The modern approach to the study of Franciscan hagiography began with the Irish Franciscan Luke Wadding, who in 1623 published a critical edition of the Writings of St. Francis, *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis*, in Antwerp. In 1625 Wadding began the publication of the *Annales Minorum*, a chronological history of the Order of Friars Minor from the beginnings till the year 1540. Other chronicles of the Order had been published by Nicholas Glassberger in 1508, Mark of Lisbon in 1557, and Francesco Gonzaga in 1587, to mention the most important.

In 1671 the Jesuit scholar Daniel Papenbroch discovered a manuscript in Perugia, containing a life of St. Francis by brother John of Perugia. The manuscript was published again in the *Acta Sanctorum* by another Jesuit, Cornelius Suyskens, in 1768, as part of the monumental work of the Bollandists. It became known as the *Anonymous of Perugia*. Suyskens had also discovered the *First Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano.

In 1803 Stefano Rinaldi discovered the manuscript containing the second life of Francis by Thomas of Celano 1247, namely, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*. The discovery of these biographies prompted the scholar Niccolo Papini to publish two volumes entitled *La Storia di S. Francesco d'Assisi* (1825-27). In 1856 Stanislao Melchiorri published a compilation of the documentation which was discovered in his book *La Leggenda di San Francesco d'Assisi scritta dalli suoi compagni*.

The interest in St. Francis's early biographies grew in many countries. In Germany various volumes of research were published by Goerres, Karl von Hase (1856), Karl Muller (1885). The historical-critical approach to the Sources was also made by Henry Thode in 1885, when he published *Franz von Assisi and die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien*.

### PAUL SABATIER

Hase's work drew the attention of the French writer Ernest Renan, author of the *Vie de Jesus* in 1863. One of his disciples was Paul Sabatier, whom he entrusted with the writing of a critical biography of St. Francis of Assisi.

Born on 3rd August 1858 in France, at Saint-Michel-de-Chabrillanoux, to a Protestant family, Paul Sabatier studied medicine, and then literature and theology at the protestant faculty of Paris between 1880 and 1885. One of his teachers at the College de France was Ernest Renan who invited him to write a life of St. Francis in 1884. Upon the completion of his theological studies Sabatier became vicar at Strasbourg and Saint Cierge-la-Serre. He immediately started working on the life of St. Francis, by travelling to Italy and visiting many libraries and Franciscan sanctuaries. In 1894 Paul Sabatier published his famous *Vie de Saint Francois d'Assise*, in Paris. This biography has placed Sabatier as the pioneer of modern research in Franciscan Sources. The biography was a huge success.

There was a reaction against Sabatier among some Franciscan scholars that prompted a lively discussion. (See Appendix) Michele Faloci Pulignani began publishing his views on the review *Miscellanea Franciscana*, and in the beginning of the 20th century published *San Francesco d'Assisi secondo Paul Sabatier*. New critical editions of the Sources were also produced. In 1902 Francis van Ortroyp published a critical edition of the *Anonymous of Perugia*. In 1922 Ferdinand Delorme discovered an unpublished manuscript of the Biblioteca Augusta of Perugia, which he entitled *Legenda Antiqua S. Francisci* (also known as the *Legend of Perugia*, or *Assisi Compilation*), in a critical edition he published in 1926.

### QUARACCHI SCHOOL

A group of Franciscan scholars began working at the Collegio S. Bonaventura of Quaracchi, near Florence, to produce critical editions of the Franciscan Sources. These were collected in ten volumes of the *Analecta Franciscana*, published between 1926 and 1941. The tenth volume contains the official biographies of Thomas of Celano, Julian of Speyer, Henry d'Avranches and St. Bonaventure, together with the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacopo da Voragine and some monastic lives.

### FORTINI'S BIOGRAPHY

A great asset in the study of the old Franciscan Sources was the five volume biography by Arnaldo Fortini, a famous historian from Assisi who dedicated all his life to the analysis of the old archives at the cathedral and commune of Assisi. The work, entitled *Nova Vita di San Francesco* was published in 1959, and is indispensable as a historical background to the social, political and ecclesiastical context in which Francis was born and in which he founded his Order. An abridged English translation of this volume was made by Helen Moak, *Francis of Assisi*, New York (Crossroad) 1982, with many explanatory footnotes.

### TWENTIETH CENTURY SCHOLARS

The interest among scholars of Franciscan Sources grew during the last three decades of the 20th century. In 1972 Lorenzo di Fonzo published the most recent critical edition of the *Anonymous of Perugia*. In 1973 Franciscan scholars gathered in Assisi for the first of a series of international congresses organised by the International Society of Franciscan Studies. The congress theme was *La "questione francescana" dal Sabatier ad oggi (The "Franciscan Question" from Sabatier to Today)*. Theophile Desbonnets published a critical edition of *The Legend of the Three Companions*, in the prestigious Franciscan review *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67(1974) 38-114. In 1980 Raoul Manselli published *Nos Qui Cum Eo Fuimus: Contributo alla Questione Franciscana (We Who Were With Him: A Contribution to the Franciscan Question)*. This publication examined all the documentation of the companions of St. Francis present in the AC and also in 2C and the *Mirror of Perfection*.

The importance of the Sources received further relevance with the publication of the critical edition of the Writings of St. Francis by Kajetan Esser, *Die Opuscula des Heiligen Franziskus von Assisi: Neue Textkritische Edition (The Complete Works of St. Francis of Assisi: New Critical Edition)* in 1976, which was reprinted in a smaller volume in 1978 at the Collegio S. Bonaventura of Grottaferrata, where Esser had spent many years working together with other Franciscan scholars. The title of this critical edition in Latin is *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis*.

Another indispensable asset for a scientific study of the Sources was the publication of the *Corpus des Sources Franciscaines* by George Mailleux and Jean Francois Godet, at the Centre for the Electronic Treatment of Documents (CETEDOC) of the Catholic University of Louvain, (a concordance to the Franciscan Sources).

### OMNIBUS OF SOURCES

The Sources for the Life of St. Francis also began to be published in the translations of the major European languages. In the 1960's Engelbert Grau, Sophronius Clasen and Kajetan Esser took care of the publication of the *Franziskanische Quellenschriften*. Theophile Desbonnets and Damien Vorreux published the French edition in 1968, *Saint Francois d'Assise: Documents, Ecrits et premieres biographies*. The English edition, edited by Marion

Habig, appeared in 1973, *Saint Francis of Assisi. Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of Sources for the Life of Saint Francis*. The Italian edition of the Sources was published in 1977, with the title *Fonti Francescane. Scritti a biografie di san Francesco d'Assisi. Cronache e altre testimonianze del primo secolo francescano. Scritti a biografie di santa Chiara d'Assisi*. In 1978 Jose Antonio Guerra edited the Spanish edition of the Sources, *San Francisco de Asis: Escritos, Biografias, Documentos de la epoca*.

The most recent critical edition<sup>35</sup> in Latin of the principal Sources is *Fontes Franciscani*, edited by Enrico Menesto and Stefano Brufani, Edizioni Porziuncola, Assisi 1995. The three volumes FA:ED appeared at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Very recent scholars include Giovanni Miccoli who has contributed to looking beyond the Franciscan Question and to giving more priority to the Writings of Francis. He has removed the idea that there is either good or bad only and introduced a greater interest in the chronicles that refer to Francis and the Franciscans. The sources are to be seen as hagiographical by scholars. A new interest arose in the tradition that emerges through the sources and a desire to understand what caused different images to evolve. Non literary sources have also been given more attention, such as frescoes. Chiara Frugoni has studied various works of art, reaching interesting conclusions about the stigmata. Jacques Dalarun has written several books relating to the sources and the writings of Francis.

The study of Francis has been taken in fresh directions and it will take time for Franciscans to become fully aware of the significance of recent scholarship which is often undertaken outside the Franciscan family, with several lay scholars taking the lead. This in turn is leading Franciscans to retrieve the Franciscan tradition, think of the considerable work ongoing concerned with the intellectual tradition, the relatively new interest in Clare of Assisi and the many conferences focusing on Francis and Franciscanism.

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<sup>35</sup> Critical edition refers to the edition produced by scholars, that they believe to be the closest to the original composition. It is necessary because manuscripts can be altered or copying mistakes can be made. Manuscripts have been discovered in a number of locations. Scholars produce a critical edition after a detailed analysis and comparison of whatever manuscripts are available for their use.

## APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THE SOURCES

The study of the Franciscan Sources is not concerned with chronological precedence among them, or with the study of their interdependence. It goes deeper to the genuine intentions of Francis as they were transmitted by his companions and their disciples. How can we interpret the words of Francis in his Testament: "No one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel"? Do they simply mean that Francis's genuine intention was to found a movement of a charismatic nature without any dependence upon the interpretation of the Church? Was Francis simply one of the many evangelical visionaries of his age? Did the Church alter his original intentions?

*The Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano was written under the command of Pope Gregory IX and thus had to be an official biography to present Francis as a universal saint. Its relevance as a Franciscan Source is undisputed. After the end of generalate of brother Elias in 1239, however, the Order had changed so much that it became necessary to make a collection of documentary material. Sabatier regarded this new initiative as having produced the *Legend of the Three Companions*, which he saw as an incomplete document. The missing documentation was remedied by Thomas of Celano, when he wrote the *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* in 1246.

Paul Sabatier studied the primitive fraternity of Francis in the light of its lay spirit, not necessarily from the point of view that it was at variance with the official hierarchical structure of the Church. The orthodoxy of the first friars was certainly the key to the numerical expansion of the Order within the short lapse of time between 1210 and 1221. What Sabatier believed to be at stake was not necessarily the existence of the new movement in the Church, but what he saw as the saint's painful experience in presenting his evangelical vision to his friars and within the authority of the Church. One could speak of a psychological anguish of Francis without even the hint of any open rebellion against the establishment.

The *Major Legend* by St. Bonaventure became the determining factor in the development of the early Sources. Sabatier sees it as a political tool in the hands of the minister general Bonaventure, who was trying to pacify the conflicting factions in the Order by promoting Francis as a founder within the accepted canons of sainthood, making him more of a mystic and wonder worker than ordinary human being. Sabatier concluded that Bonaventure produced an official biography of St. Francis.

It was because of this critical approach that Sabatier preferred what he called the non official Sources. Among these the most important was the *Mirror of Perfection*. Sabatier published a critical edition of the MP from a codex in the Mazzarino library of Paris in 1898. He was certain that this was the missing section of the L3C, and considered brother Leo to be its author.

According to Sabatier, brother Leo writes the life of a man with whom he lived in close contact, sharing his experience of life, and to whom he was secretary, confessor and faithful friend. The documentation of Leo and the companions is in stark contrast with the tendency of the Church and the authority of the Order, who tried to organise Francis's charism in such a way to make of his movement a respectable religious Order. The role of cardinal Hugolino in this endeavour was fundamental.

This approach by Paul Sabatier is today largely corrected by modern scholars, who have

tended to reconcile the image of St. Francis as it is presented in the various Sources. Sabatier, however, will continue to be regarded as the one who launched a new era in the modern study of the Franciscan Sources.

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## LESSON THREE VOLUME 1 - FRANCIS, THE SAINT

### AIM

The aim of this lesson is to introduce specific texts selected for your study.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION - SELECTION OF TEXTS FOR ASSESSMENT

As there are so many documents in the three volumes, we have selected a few for you to study and work on for assessment. For those who are interested in the other texts that you have been introduced to in Lesson 1, we have provided additional material for you to study at a later date. We have chosen the official works by Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure, one Papal document, *The Sacrum Commercium*, the *Anonymous of Perugia*, *The Legend of the Three Companions* and one other source that is generally well-known - the *Fioretti*, prior to which we have also selected the *Deeds of Blessed Francis*.

Scholars have found it useful to divide the sources into two categories, official and unofficial. Official documents are those that have been commissioned either by the Papacy or at a Chapter of the Order, with a designated author or compiler. Unofficial documents have been written without being officially requested. As Engelbert Grau writes:

“The distinction between the two types was the consequence of the following consideration: official legends or collections are written upon request. In this situation the hagiographer reworks his own memories and observations, verbal descriptions of witnesses or written material placed at his disposal. The unofficial sources are materials in a preliminary state which may have either a long or short tradition behind them, but which have been neither developed nor reworked in the strict sense of the terms.”<sup>36</sup>

### VOLUME 1 - THE SAINT

The Sources which were written in the period immediately starting from the death of St. Francis to 1239 are mainly the product of the first generation of Francis's followers. They have the aim of presenting Francis as a new saint, who becomes an object of veneration for the whole Church. The Sources that you shall be considering as part of this module are the *Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano, the *Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty* and the Papal Bull *Quo elongati*. You will find further information about the *Liturgical Texts* and *Life of St. Francis* by Julian of Speyer, the *Versified Life of St. Francis* by Henry d'Avranches, and the Papal bull, *Mira circa nos*, in the appendix.

### THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS BY THOMAS OF CELANO

Thomas was born in Celano, in the Abruzzi region of central Italy, in 1185-1190. We do not know the exact date of his entry into the Franciscan Order, but in 1C 56-57, referring to events in 1214, Thomas writes: "The good God, out of pure kindness, was pleased to be mindful of me and many others. After he [Francis] reached Spain God withstood him to his face, striking him with illness, and called him back from the journey he had begun. Shortly afterwards, when Francis returned to the Church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, some literate men and nobles gladly joined him." Thomas may have been among these educated men who received the habit from Francis. During the Chapter of 1221 Thomas was chosen to

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<sup>36</sup> Engelbert Grau *Thomas of Celano: Life and Work* GR 8:2

accompany the missionary expedition to Germany, led by Caesar of Speyer. In Germany Thomas was elected custodian of the friars at Worms, Speyer and K61n, and became vicar of the German mission. He must have returned to Italy in 1224, but did not live with Francis during the last two years of the Saint's life. He was certainly present at the canonisation ceremony of St. Francis, which Gregory IX conducted in Assisi on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1228, because he gives a detailed eyewitness account of the celebration.

#### **POPE GREGORY IX COMMISSIONS THOMAS OF CELANO TO WRITE THE TEXT**

Pope Gregory IX wanted to glorify Francis personally. On 29th April 1228 he issued the Bull *Recolentes qualiter*, announcing that a "special church" (*specialis ecclesia*) was to be built to enshrine Francis's mortal remains on the *colle inferiore*, outside the Assisi walls. This building was to consist of a burial crypt and a monastic church, and brother Elias was entrusted with supervising the construction works. The second plan of the Pope was to present an official biography of *legenda* of St. Francis, which he entrusted to the expert pen of brother Thomas of Celano. Thomas immediately started working, and on 25th February 1229 Gregory IX approved the new Life as the official Legend of St. Francis.

In the prologue Thomas writes that he learned many things about Francis "from trustworthy and esteemed witnesses, just as the illustrious Lord Pope Gregory commanded." IC is planned to follow a chronological sequence. It is divided into three books. Book one deals with the Saint's life, from birth to the Christmas celebration at Greccio in 1223. It insists mainly on the events regarding the conversion of Francis and the foundation of the Order. Book two regards the last two years of the life of St. Francis, dealing with the events of the stigmatisation on La Verna and the death at the Portiuncula. Book three deals with the glorification of St. Francis, describing the ceremony of the canonisation, and also giving a list of miracles which were attributed to the Saint's intercession.

#### **THE SPECIFIC SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THIS COMMISSION:**

Thomas of Celano follows the rules of the *ars dictaminis*, that is, the particular polished style of writing Latin according to the rules of the *cursus*. This was the style which was adopted in the papal curia in Rome. Another important aspect is that IC abides by the conventional method of hagiography common in patristic and medieval times. The Legend had to resemble other classical Legends about saints. Thomas used as his patterns the famous lives of St. Martin of Tours by Sulpicius Severus, of Saint Benedict by Pope St. Gregory the Great, and of St. Bernard by William of St. Thierry. The case of St. Martin is particularly important, because Thomas often presents Francis as "the new soldier of Christ" (IC 9,36). The Legend is also rich in biblical images, as well as in references to classical literature from Augustine, Seneca and Virgil.

#### **PERSONAL OBSERVATION:**

This long text is detailed and worth reading when you have time. Book one has been an "old faithful", a good introduction to the life of Francis for many people as they become more interested in the saint as it provides a detailed account of the life of Francis, as Celano knew it at the time of writing. Later sources will modify, omit and add details and this module should guide you through significant changes. Although you may not have time to read it thoroughly now, the chapter headings give you some idea of the content and, to begin with, you may want to select sections you think will interest you personally for personal reading. One noticeable omission is that Celano does not cover the period when Francis ceased acting as general minister - although he skips to 1223 so that book one closes with the Greccio

episode, 1223, just before book two which deals with the end of Francis' life. This may be because Celano was writing a life aimed at the wider Church and the difficult years, 1220-1223, were of more significance for the brothers than other Christians. .

#### **THE STRUCTURE OF 1C:**

The plan of 1C is outlined in the prologue: "The first book follows an historical sequence and is devoted principally to the purity of his blessed way of life, to his virtuous conduct and his wholesome teaching ...The second book tells of his deeds from the next to last year of his life up to his happy death ...The third book contains many miracles which our most glorious Saint performed on earth while reigning with Christ in the heavens. Also recorded in this section are the veneration, honour, praise and glory paid to him by the blessed Pope Gregory IX, together with all the cardinals of the holy Roman Church, when they enrolled him in the catalogue of the saints."

The first book gives great importance to the conversion of Francis and to the foundation of the Order. Thomas of Celano gives a rather negative picture of the family background of Francis, which he then corrects in *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*. This section gives us the first insights into the youthful years of Francis, and his dreams to become a knight, the process of conversion and his act of renouncing his father's possessions in front of bishop Guido of Assisi, the first brothers and the first missions, the calling at the Portiuncula, the journey to Rome for the approval of the primitive way of Gospel life. The first book also speaks about some miracles which Francis performed while he was still alive, and gives great importance to his love for creatures. The episode of Greccio concludes this section. As the introduction to 1C in the new English edition of the Sources says, this section corresponds to the picture of the mystery of the Incarnation in the life of Francis, and finds in the Christmas experience its most clear expression. The first book does not include any reference to Francis giving up administrative responsibility for the Order, opting for a more pastoral role. It does not indicate that Francis underwent anxiety and tension, caused in part by the extraordinary growth of the Order and its increasingly clerical nature.

The second book begins with a clear reference to the date and time of Francis's death at the Portiuncula. It mentions the most important moments of the last two years of the saint's life, namely the vision of the crucified Seraph on La Verna in September 1224 and the stigmata event. This book has a noticeable change of tone. Francis is increasingly detached from the wider Order. This book provides a detailed description of the great physical suffering Francis experienced during this period. After the period at La Verna, a very frail Francis embarked on his final journeys. The episode of his "transitus" (his death and the hours immediately preceding it) at the Portiuncula is described with vivid detail. The funeral is also described in detail, especially the moment when the saint's body was taken to San Damiano to be seen for the last time by Clare and the Poor Ladies. The second book corresponds to the mystery of Christ's Redemption, and finds its expression in the body of St. Francis, who becomes a living icon of Christ Crucified.

The third book is concerned with the glorification of Francis after his death. The style shows a great rhetorical skill on the part of Thomas of Celano. It dwells mostly upon the ceremony of the saint's canonisation and the homily of Gregory IX. Thomas gives the theme of the Pope's homily, taken from Sirach 50: "Like the morning star in the midst of the clouds, like the full moon, like the shining sun, so in his days did he shine in the temple of God." The third book also contains many miracles which probably were presented during the same ceremony of canonisation, and corresponds to a Pentecost experience.

**SOMETHING NEW:**

1C is imbued with the notion of "Franciscan newness", seen in the use of such words as renewal, new spirit, new Order, new evangelist, and new miracle referred to the stigmata.

The theme of newness recurs when Celano describes Francis' vision just before receiving the stigmata "its newness very much pressed upon his heart"<sup>37</sup>. Later in Book Two, Celano describes the signs as "a new miracle"<sup>38</sup>. Celano refers to the uniqueness of this miracle and returns to the newness and wonderfulness of these signs<sup>39</sup>.

The third book, reminiscent of Christ's Resurrection, is concerned with the canonisation and a record of miracles. "With new light rising, the world is growing bright in these shining rays"<sup>40</sup>.

These few examples show that Celano recognised a novelty throughout the life of Francis, from the earliest missionary days. Within the tradition of hagiography, he was able to show that God renews, acts in new ways, through his chosen servants, to meet the needs of the times.

**SECOND SOURCE**

**THE SACRED EXCHANGE BETWEEN ST. FRANCIS AND LADY POVERTY**

**DATING THE COMPOSITION:**

The Latin name for this allegorical work is *Sacrum Commercium Sancti Francisci cum Domina Paupertate*. Various opinions have been raised regarding its authorship and date of composition. Authors like John Parenti, Minister General (1227-32) or John of Parma, Minister General (1247-57), as well as brother Leo (by Paul Sabatier), have been proposed. Desbonnets states that the ScEx is simply the work of an anonymous friar minor who wrote during the second half of the 13th century. Some scholars have also seen in the ScEx an echo of the poverty controversy between the mendicants and the secular masters of the University of Paris during the time of St. Bonaventure, while others have come up with the possibility that the author is Caesar of Speyer and that the allegory was written towards the end of the generalate of brother Elias, in 1237-39. For a full discussion of these opinions, consult the introduction to the ScEx in Vol. 1 of *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents*.

**POVERTY**

The ScEx has the aim of describing Franciscan poverty not simply as an ideal to be preached, but as a firm commitment to be embraced by all those who want to live the life of the Gospel. The theological character of the ScEx is found to be already present in the prologue, where Francis is led to search for Lady Poverty, because to her "the Lord had entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

**THE PLOT**

The allegory is based upon a dialogue between Francis and Lady Poverty, who lives all by herself on a mountain. Francis easily climbs this mountain, because he is devoid of any cumbersome possessions. He praises Lady Poverty, "since the Son of God, the Lord of virtue and the King of glory, fell in love with this virtue with a special affection. He sought, found,

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<sup>37</sup> 1 FA:ED p264

<sup>38</sup> 1 FA:ED 280

<sup>39</sup> 1 FA:ED 282

<sup>40</sup> 1FA:ED 289

and embraced it while achieving our salvation in the middle of the earth." Lady Poverty is described as a most faithful spouse, a sweet lover, and the queen of virtues.

Lady Poverty answers by giving an account of the whole history of salvation from Adam until Christ. Then she continues to analyse the history of the Church. From the period of the apostolic community of Jerusalem poverty passes over to the peace of Constantine, which marks the beginning of relaxation in the Church's commitment to poverty. The birth of monasticism is presented as a provident moment when Poverty was rediscovered in the Church. The monastic Orders, however, did not remain faithful to their commitment towards Poverty. This is where the Christian proposal of Francis of Assisi enters as an answer to Poverty's wishes. (Despite the fact that is an allegory, you will realise as you read it, that it can be read as a challenge to the brothers concerning their fidelity to this proposal and as a wake-up call to those who are failing.)

The ScEx concludes by describing a meal which Francis and the brothers prepare for Lady Poverty. This is the most beautiful part of the allegory, in which Lady Poverty rejoices at the extremely poor way of life which Francis and the brothers lead. After having a frugal meal and resting on a stone for a pillow, Lady Poverty asks the friars to show her their enclosure (the monastic claustrum). Francis and the brothers lead her upon a hill and shows her all the world, telling her: "This, Lady, is our enclosure."

### **THIRD SOURCE**

#### **THE BULL "*QUO ELONGATI*" OF POPE GREGORY IX**

##### **THE POPE'S RESPONSE TO PARTICULAR CONCERNS AND TENSIONS AMONG THE BROTHERS:**

##### **IS THE TESTAMENT OF FRANCIS (1226) BINDING ON THE FRIARS?**

The General Chapter of Pentecost held in Assisi in 1230 raised the question of the correct interpretation of the Later Rule of the Friars Minor, and asked whether the Testament of St. Francis could bind the friars in conscience to its observance. A group of friars, including John Parenti, Minister General, brother Anthony, Minister of Romagna (St. Anthony of Padova), brother Gerard Rusinoll, penitentiary to the Pope, brother Haymo of Faversham, brother Leo (not Francis's companion, but another Leo who became archbishop of Milan), brother Gerard of Modena, and brother Peter of Brescia, went to Pope Gregory IX, who answered them with the Bull *Quo*, on 28th September 1230. This Bull is the first of a series of official papal interpretations of the Rule of the Order of Friars Minor.

##### **THE RESPONSE OF GREGORY IX:**

In summary, the Bull first states that the Testament had no legal binding force on the brothers. Pope Gregory IX speaks as a jurist: "For without the consent of the brothers, and especially of the ministers, Francis could not make obligatory a matter that touches everyone. Nor could he in any way whatsoever bind his successor because an equal has no authority over his equal."

The Pope also gives an indication that he had helped Francis in drafting the Rule, when he was Cardinal Hugolino, Protector of the Order: "While we held a lesser rank, we stood by him both as he composed the aforesaid Rule and obtained its confirmation from the Apostolic See."

##### **SPECIFIC DETAILS ADDRESSED IN THE BULL**

The matters which the Bull addresses regard precepts in the Rule. These include the observance of the evangelical counsels, the prohibition to use money or to possess anything,

the recourse to the Ministers on the part of brothers who sinned publicly, the approval of preachers, the acceptance of new brothers in the Order, the participation of the custodians in the General Chapter, the entry into monasteries of nuns. The Bull applied the term "spiritual friend", to someone who was to administer the friars' alms on behalf of the almsgiver.

**AN INTERPRETATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUO ELONGATI:**

Rosalind Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government. Elias to Bonaventure*, Cambridge 1959, 133, has this to say regarding the Bull: "By obtaining the bulls *Quo elongati* and *Nimis iniqua* (regarding the nearly complete exemption from Episcopal jurisdiction), the brothers who were directing the development of the Order consciously repudiated much of their loyalty to the distinctive and original qualities that had characterised their institute. While John Parenti was Minister the greyfriars became less humble and less poor, and their way of life tended towards imitation of that of monks. Many left wandering preaching for a settled life of study within their convent walls, where they were freed from urgent care about material things by the *nuncii* and *spirituales amici* mentioned in *Quo elongati*." Cfr. M. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty. The Doctrine of the Absolute Poverty of Christ and the Apostles in the Franciscan Order 1210-1323*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY, 1988, 73-107.

**THE SOURCES IN VOLUME I**

The Franciscan sources in *The Saint* give prominence to Francis as the Saint. Thomas of Celano, Julian of Speyer, Henri d'Avranches, portrayed Francis as the new Saint while at the same time his tomb became a famous shrine upon which Gregory IX had constructed a magnificent basilica. The development of the liturgical cult towards Francis was the dominant feature of the first twenty or so years of the Order following the death of the founder in 1226.

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## LESSON FOUR

### VOLUME 2 – FRANCIS, THE FOUNDER - PART 1

#### INTRODUCTION:

From 1240 onwards, a new need was being felt in the Order, namely that of having a solid base from which to continue living the Gospel values of Francis of Assisi within the changing times and circumstances of the Order. The emphasis now began to shift to Francis as the Founder of his Order. In this period, the direct witness of the companions who lived with Francis, and who were soon going to die, was important to all the newcomers who had never known Francis personally. It was paramount to conserve the written memories of the companions as a direct link to St. Francis, since Thomas of Celano's *Life of St. Francis* was, after all, an incomplete work.

Within this period, which goes roughly from 1240 to 1276, you will be considering *The Anonymous of Perugia*, *The Legend of the Three Companions*, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* by Thomas of Celano, and the *Major Life of St. Francis* by St. Bonaventure.

You will find information about other texts in the appendix. Note that it would be worth considering these sources when you have the time to do so because of their importance for Franciscans.

#### THE ANONYMOUS OF PERUGIA

The Legend commonly known by the name *Anonymous of Perugia* (AP) has the title: "The Beginning or Founding of the Order and the Deeds of Those Friars Minor Who Were the First Companions of Blessed Francis in Religion." So this text is about the brothers, telling of the development from a fraternity of a few brothers to an Order. The figure of Francis does not predominate. The Legend is rather concerned with the group of the first friars in the typical Assisi surroundings. The conversion of Francis has the aim of pointing at the real motives of the author of the AP, namely, the development of the *Religio fratrum* (the group of the first brothers) into an established *Ordo fratrum* (religious Order of brothers).

As you read through this short text you will note that it describes the coming of the first brother companions in chapter two, talking about a "religion"; it uses the name "penitents of Assisi" (chapter five, page 410); it describes the papal approval of the oral rule (chapter six); the development of provinces (chapter nine); and chapter eleven you find the title "Order". It is because of this clear development that can be read in a relatively short text that this is worth reading through.

The text of the AP is a faithful reconstruction of the life of the primitive Franciscan fraternity. It stands out distinctly for the originality of its narrative details. Whereas the L3C gives a certain importance to the figure of Francis as the founder of the Order, the AP is more concerned with the role of the first brothers. The Legend concludes with the final approval of the Rule by Honorius III and the institution of the Cardinal Protector of the Order. There is a final chapter regarding the death, miracles and canonisation of St. Francis. The author is proud of the development and growth of the community with all the change that entailed.

Until the mid 19th century the AP was only to be found in a unique manuscript in the friary of San Francesco al Prato in Perugia. This manuscript was subsequently lost when the newly born state of Italy annexed many friaries. In 1381 there was, at the library of the Sacro Convento in Assisi, a manuscript which contained the title *De Inceptione Ordinis*. This could well have been the AP, which in Latin has the title: *De inceptione vel fundamento Ordinis et*

*actibus illorum Fratrum Minorum qui fuerunt primi in Religione et socii Beati Francisci.*

During the medieval period, and right up to the modern era, the AP was not very well known, and it remained a very "local" Legend, linked to the figure of brother Giles, who seems to have a certain prominence in the Legend. In fact, the codex of Perugia, in which the AP was found, contained other well-known texts referring to the life of brother Giles (*Vita ll Beati Aegidii, Dicta Beati Aegidii, Anonymus Perusinus, Miracula Beati Aegidii*).

The efforts of modern scholars to arrive at the composition of the text of the AP all point to the environment of Assisi where this Legend was soon welcomed in the codex of the library of the Sacro Convento, together with the *Life of Blessed Giles of Assisi*, and which was copied during the 15th century by a friar, in order to be kept at the friary of San Francesco al Prato in Perugia, the same place where the body of brother Giles was buried and venerated.

In 1671 the Bollandist<sup>41</sup> Daniel Van Papenbroch asked for a transcription of the codex of Perugia for the sake of presenting the sources relating to brother Giles. The reading of the manuscript proved difficult, since it was riddled with abbreviations. According to this scholar, the text could have been part of the Sources coming from brother Leo's pen. The first scholar to give the title *Anonymous of Perugia* was Suyskens, another Bollandist.

One of the problems which presented itself immediately to Suyskens was the very close parallelism between the AP and the *Legend of the Three Companions*. According to this scholar the AP does not necessarily depend upon the L3C, but rather on its direct sources, that is, the protagonists of the events which it narrates. The AP was destined to remain at the margins of the "Franciscan Question", since it was not given great importance until fairly recently. The AP was often studied in direct relation with, and in dependence upon, the L3C. A sign of the change in emphasis emerging more recently is to study AP for its own contribution and its pride in the way the order developed.

In 1902 the Bollandist Van Ortroij presented a critical edition of the AP. A more recent critical edition is that of Lorenzo Di Fonzo, "L'Anonimo Perugino tra le fonti francescane del secolo XIII. Rapporti letterari a testo critico," *Miscellanea Franciscana* 72 (1972) 117-483.

The author of the AP could have been a certain brother John of Perugia, who was a confessor and disciple of brother Giles. Some scholars had proposed brother Leo, because of what the prologue says: "I, who saw their deeds, listened to their words, and also became their disciple", with reference to Francis and the first brothers. Scholars like Pierre Beguin and Giovanni Miccoli place the composition of the AP between 4th March 1240 (date of the death of brother Sylvester, whom AP 13 mentions, (that is at the end of chapter two), and 22nd August 1241 (date of the death of Gregory IX) because AP reads as if it were written while Gregory was still alive. (The end of chapter eleven).

#### **THE LEGEND OF THE THREE COMPANIONS**

During the General Chapter of Genova, on 4th October 1244, the Minister General Crescentius of Iesi "directed to all the brothers to send him in writing whatever they could truly recall about the life, miracles, and prodigies of blessed Francis" (Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals, Analecta Franciscana* 111,262).

Among the companions of St. Francis who answered the Minister General's requests we find brothers Leo, Rufino and Angelo, who sent him a letter from the hermitage of Greccio,

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<sup>41</sup> The Bollandists worked on compiling lives of saints whose feasts the Church celebrates in the annual calendar. They used manuscripts to them as their sources.

dated 11th August 1246<sup>42</sup>, in which they stated that they were sending their written memories, as well as those of other companions of St. Francis, namely, brothers Filippo, Illuminato, Masseo, Giles, Bernard, and a certain brother John, companion of brother Giles. This Letter of Greccio, which has been transmitted in many manuscripts together with the L3C, is considered an authentic document which throws light upon the composition of many Franciscan Sources of the period. At the same time, its relation to the documentary material which the companions sent, and which is lost at least in its original form, has been the source of many problems and discussions linked to the "Franciscan Question."

Although Crescentius had asked for the writing of "the life, miracles, and prodigies of blessed Francis," brothers Leo, Rufino, and Angelo make the following statement: "We do not intend merely to relate miracles, which demonstrate, but do not cause sanctity. Our intention is to point out some striking aspects of his holy manner of life and the intention of his pious desires, for the praise and glory of almighty God and of the holy father Francis, and for the edification of those who desire to follow in his footsteps."

The companions also state that they did not intend to write a "Legend", since other Legends had already been written about St. Francis. They were rather sending a florilegium (field of flowers), in which they sent their memories not in a chronological sequence but as a selection of unconnected pericopes, and in which they omitted those facts which the official legends had already described in an accurate way. Their aim is clear in the words they address to Crescentius: "If you deem it expedient, you may insert these few things we have written into the other legends. For we believe that if these things had been known to the venerable men who wrote those legends, they would in no way have passed them by."

These expressions show that the companions knew about the official Legends of 1C, LJS, and VL. The Three Companions, therefore, had the intention of producing new material for the life of St. Francis. At the same time they did not intend to write a Legend. So, how come the Letter of Greccio is often found in conjunction with the L3C? The companions also state that they did not intend to follow a chronological sequence of events. But the L3C does follow a chronological sequence. Scholars have concluded that the letter describes a different text, possible that known as the Assisi Compilation (see appendix).

The L3C was studied for the first time by Luke Wadding and then by Suyskens in the mid-18th century, using a manuscript belonging to the Friars Minor Recollects of Louvain. Another manuscript was discovered in the Codex Vatican 7339. This manuscript does not contain the Letter of Greccio. Other manuscripts continued to come to light, among which the Codex of Sarnano, discovered by Giuseppe Abate in 1939. Two families of manuscripts emerged, the "traditional" and the "Sarnano."

In more recent times, Theophile Desbonnets studied the L3C and its variants with 1C in order to arrive at a critical edition of the Legend. The study of Desbonnets is the most recent critical edition of the L3C.<sup>43</sup> The plurality of the versions, their interdependence, the witness of the Sarnano Codex, all point to the year 1246 as the year in which the L3C began to be composed, in direct correspondence with the Letter of Greccio.

In his *Vie de Saint Francois d'Assise*, Paul Sabatier states this opinion: "The *Legend of the Three Companions* is the finest piece of Franciscan literature, and one of the most delightful productions of the Middle Ages ...As it has come down to us, this document is the only one worthy from the point of view of history to be placed beside *The Life of Saint Francis* by

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<sup>42</sup> This letter is in volume 2, pages 66-68, inserted near the beginning of L3C

<sup>43</sup> Theophile Desbonnets, "La Legende des trois compagnons. Nouvelles recherches sur la g6nealogie de biographies primitives de saint Francois," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 65 (1972) 66-106; "Legenda trium sociorum. Edition critique," *AFH* 67 (1974) 37-144.

Celano."

The L3C is a text with a great sense of religiosity. Besides the chronological and biographical nature of the text, its value lies in the fact that it represents the primitive Franciscan fraternity, led by the charismatic figure of Francis, within the environment of Assisi. The Legend is so interwoven with local traditions from the Assisi neighbourhood that Raoul Manselli has called it a "leggenda assisana." The local knowledge of the composers of this legend means that it gave fresh biographical information such as the fact Francis appeared initially before city magistrates who sent him to the Bishop (chapter 6, volume 2, page 79). It is in this text that we first learn that Francis heard a voice when he prayed before the San Damiano crucifix, telling him to rebuild the church (chapter 5).

It deals with the conformity of the Poverello with Christ, a theme already underlined by Thomas of Celano. The simplicity of the evangelical form of life of the first brothers, the gift of the stigmata, give this short Legend a distinctive uniqueness.

It is a short text and particularly valuable because Francis emerges as a local Umbrian hero. For this reason, it gives a slightly different details or emphasis to some well-known stories about Francis.

#### **THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE DESIRE OF A SOUL BY THOMAS OF CELANO**

Sometimes this text has been regarded as a second life of Francis, a replacement for the Life in volume 1. However, this was not Celano's intention, as you will discover from the prologue to *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2C), where Thomas of Celano states his principal motives: "In the first place, this work contains some marvellous deeds about the conversion of Saint Francis not included in the earlier legends written about him because they were never brought to the author's attention. Then we will attempt to express and carefully state the good, pleasing and perfect will of our most holy father. This concerns both himself and his followers, the exercise of heavenly discipline, and that striving for highest perfection which he always expressed in love for God and in living example for others" (Prol 2,1-2).

#### **SOURCES USED BY THOMAS OF CELANO**

The prologue speaks about legends in the plural from which we can assume that Thomas is not referring only to his *Life of St. Francis*, but also to the other legends which derive their information from it, namely the *Legend for the Use in the Choir, the US and the VL*. When Crescentius of Iesi, in 1244, asked the friars to submit to him in writing whatever they remembered about the life and prodigies of St. Francis, his aim was certainly that of completing the missing parts of 1C, which, as we have already noted, was an opus perfectibile (a document which had to be brought to completion). This is where the memories of the companions of St. Francis come in, to help Thomas of Celano draft an entirely new biography of St. Francis.

#### **THE COMMISSIONING BY THE MINISTER GENERAL OF THE ORDER**

Thomas undertook the task of composing a new legend in 1246. He presented the 2C to the General Chapter of Lyons in July 1247. 1C was commissioned directly by Gregory IX. 2C, on the other hand, was the result of the wishes of the authority of the Order, in the person of the Minister General Crescentius of Iesi. As a legend it is clear that it is the work of collaborators, even though the style of Thomas's pen is evident. Thomas had access to a bundle of documentary information, including the two sources you have just studied, which

could very well have been supplied by Crescentius from the memories which brothers Leo, Rufino, and Angelo had sent from Greccio in 1246, as well as other memories coming from other friars who had personally known Francis. Thomas himself was one of the companions who knew Francis. In fact, in the prologue, Thomas states: "We, more than others, learned these things through constant living together and mutual intimacy with him over a long time."

### **THE TITLE**

The title of 2C in Latin, *Memoriale in Desiderio Animae* (*The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*) is taken from Isaiah 26:8, nomen tuum et memoriale tuum in desiderio animae ("your name and your memory are the desire of the soul.") We come to know about the choice of this particular title to 2C from the Chronicle of Salimbene Adam of Parma, 166: "In the year of the Lord 1244, Brother Haymo of England, general minister of the Order of Friars Minor, died, and elected in his place was Brother Crescentius of the March of Ancona, who was an old man. Crescentius then commanded Brother Thomas of Celano, who had written the first Legend of Saint Francis, to write another book, because many things about Saint Francis had been discovered which had never been written. And so Thomas of Celano wrote a very beautiful book about the miracles, as well as the life of Saint Francis, which he entitled The Remembrance of the Blessed Francis in the Desire of the Soul."

### **THE AIM OF 2C**

Unlike 1C, commissioned by the Pope, depicting Francis as a saint for the whole Church, 2C is intended for the friar. It has the aim of portraying the sanctity of Francis's life, tempering the sinful life of the family of Francis, which 1C had insisted upon. It gives some new insights into the life of St. Francis, namely, the episode of the crucifix of San Damiano (from L3C) and of the dream which Innocent III has of the Lateran Basilica supported by Francis (2C 10,17). Thomas underlines the ecclesial nature of the vocation of the Friars Minor, as well as the importance of St. Francis as the Founder of one of the two great spiritual movements in the Church of the 13th century, that is, the Order of Minors; which was one of the great mendicant Orders, together with the Order of Preachers.

It is worth comparing the first chapters of 1C and 2C. You will see that Celano recalls John the Baptist when he is speaking about the birth of Francis, based on his baptismal name of "John" and the prophetic role he gives to Francis. You will see that whereas the beginning of 1C could be describing the early life of anyone, 2C is concerned with Francis cast in a particular role for the Order.

### **THE STRUCTURE**

2C is divided into two parts of divergent length. Book I includes additional facts of which Celano was not aware when he wrote 1C in many of its details, even though it has many new insights. It is composed of 17 chapters. Book II, on the other hand, is much longer. It has 166 chapters, which are not organised according to a chronological sequence, but rather recall many episodes arranged under particular virtues. It also refers to the will, sayings and deeds of Francis, all with the explicit aim of portraying an example of evangelical Franciscan life to all the brothers.

Book II has the aim of presenting Francis as "the holiest mirror of the holiness of the Lord, the image of his perfection." It speaks about the spirit of prophecy of Francis, his poverty, the use of money, almsgiving, his compassion towards the poor, his dedication to prayer, the Saint's understanding of Scripture, his virtue of chastity, the temptations he

endured, true and false joy, the hiding of the stigmata, his humility, his obedience, good and bad example, idleness, the ministers of God's Word, the contemplation of the Creator in creatures, the virtue of charity, the vice of slander, a description of the Minister General and of the other ministers of the Order, holy simplicity, Francis's special devotions, the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, the Rule of the brothers, the illnesses and sufferings which Francis endured, and his death, canonisation and transferral of his body.

As you look at an image, for example of the crucified Christ, you may find yourself contemplating a source of inspiration and, at the same time, being moved to contemplate your own weakness or sinfulness. When Celano, and other contemporaries, use the idea of a mirror it is to encourage listeners to consider their lives in front of one who inspires, thus being encouraged to try to be more like that person. Francis was to be a mirror for each brother because he led a life of virtue.

## CONCLUSION

*The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* is a piece of spiritual literature that illustrates the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi as understood by Celano, who seems to have grown in his admiration for and understanding of his “father” Francis. He seeks the intercession of Francis for the Order.

The technique of arranging material under the headings of different virtues in book 2, provides Celano with an effective basis for selecting from and/or adapting the various material available to him as he was composing the book. Remember that this process includes deciding to make certain omissions, for a variety of reasons known only by the compiler.

**LESSON FIVE**  
**VOLUME 2 – FRANCIS, THE FOUNDER - PART 2**

**THE MAJOR LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS BY ST. BONAVENTURE**

**INTRODUCTION**

The *Legenda Maior Sancti Francisci* (*Major Legend of St. Francis* = LMj), together with its abridged edition, the *Legenda minor Sancti Francisci* (*Minor Life of St. Francis* = LMn), by St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217-1274), written between the Chapter of Narbonne (1260) and the Chapter of Pisa (1263), constitutes probably the best-known Source for the life of St. Francis. For many centuries it was considered to be the only official life of St. Francis, composed as it was by a man of great stature and sanctity, a Minister General who gave **the Order** a clearer direction and who has often been regarded as the one who provided for it a solid structure which lasted for centuries. This was the common opinion of scholars as well as of many of the brothers, but it inevitably had to undergo the critical analysis of modern studies, which have "rediscovered" many of the "lost" Franciscan Sources of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS ABOUT BONAVENTURE**

A short biographical note on St. Bonaventure is necessary. Born in 1217 (or 1221, according to other scholars) at Civita di Bagnoregio, in the Lazio region of Italy, Giovanni Fidanza was cured, as a *puerulus* (small boy) from an illness through the intercession of St. Francis. As a young man he was sent for higher studies at the University of Paris, where he came to know the Franciscans, who had been present in their general house of studies since 1231. Bonaventure studied under four great Franciscan masters at the University, John de la Rochelle (+1245), Eudes Rigaud (+1275), William of Middleton (+1260) and Alexander of Hales (+1245). In 1243 Bonaventure himself entered the Order in Paris. He continued his studies by commenting on the Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard. He also commented on the Gospel of St. Luke. After writing a set of Disputed Questions on the Trinity, on the Knowledge of Christ and on Evangelical Perfection, Bonaventure also composed a compendium of theology, the *Breviloquium*, and was given a regent master's chair at the Franciscan school in 1254. This was a period of great dispute between the secular masters of the University, led by William of Saint-Amour, and the two great mendicant Orders, Minors and Preachers. The secular masters were challenging the validity of the evangelical poverty of the mendicants, and their rights to direct their own schools in the University. The problem was aggravated by the fact that the Franciscan Order was being suspected of harbouring sympathies for the apocalyptic ideals of the Cistercian abbot visionary Joachim of Fiore (1132c.-1202). In 1254, a Franciscan friar, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, published an *Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel*, which immediately drew criticism from the secular masters. A commission of cardinals in Anagni condemned the book in 1255. John of Parma, then Minister General, was also accused of protecting friars like Gerard, since he nurtured sympathies for the spiritualist doctrines of Joachim of Fiore. That is why John of Parma was asked by the Pope to step down during the General Chapter of Aracoeli, in Rome, on 2nd February 1257. He was given the option of naming his successor, and he chose brother Bonaventure, who at the time was in Paris.

## CHALLENGES THAT FACED BONAVENTURE WHEN HE BECAME MINISTER GENERAL

As Minister General, Bonaventure had a daunting task ahead of him. He had to reconcile the ever-widening divergent views of the friars, by presenting a moderate view of Franciscan life, which could safeguard its intrinsic values without making it appear unorthodox in the eyes of the Church. After a period of retreat on Mount La Verna in 1259, Bonaventure composed a mystical treatise, *The Soul's Journey into God*, which presents six stages of spiritual ascent into mystical union with God, symbolised by the six-winged seraph which appeared to St. Francis in 1224. In 1260, during the General Chapter of Narbonne, he published a new set of laws or constitutions of the Order. The same Chapter asked Bonaventure to compose a new Legend of St. Francis: "Likewise it is ordained concerning the legend of blessed Francis, that one good one be compiled from all the others." The new life of St. Francis was ready in 1263 and presented to the Chapter of Pisa, together with its abridged form, the *Legenda minor*. In the Chapter of Paris in 1266, the LMj was declared to be the official biography of St. Francis. All other biographies which existed before it had to be "erased" (*deleantur*), wherever they were found, including in places outside the friaries of the Order. The importance of this decree, unique in its nature, is evident. It meant that all manuscripts which contained the "trilogy" of Thomas of Celano, and the other legends of Julian of Speyer, had to disappear from all the friaries, so that the LMj would be the only "official" biography of St. Francis. In this way, Bonaventure hoped to present a balanced and moderate view of St. Francis, which could be accepted by all the brothers, in order to unify the Order. The "lost" legends were fortunately preserved in some rare cases. In 1768 1C was found, in 1806 2C and in 1899 3C.

Bonaventure also had to continue defending the rights of the mendicant Orders against the attacks of the secular masters of Paris. In 1270 he wrote the *Apologia Pauperum (Defense of the Mendicants)* against the attacks of Gerard of Abbeville. He also lectured on the *Collationes in Hexaemeron (Collations on the Six Days of Creation)*, a theological interpretation of salvation history. On 20th May 1273 Pope Gregory X made him Cardinal Bishop of Albano, to pave the way for the Council of Lyon. Bonaventure took part in the opening session of the Council, but died soon after, on 14th July 1274.

## THE MAJOR LIFE SOURCES

Returning to the LMj, Bonaventure made ample use of the Legends which were already in existence. We find many parallel texts between Thomas of Celano and LMj. It is evident that the LMj adds very little which is new to what had already been written. However, Bonaventure states that he also interviewed the few remaining companions of St. Francis who were still alive, such as brothers Giles and Illuminato. In this way, the LMj seems to be a compilation of documentary material which already existed, for the most part, in Thomas of Celano, together with some new elements taken directly by the author from the companions of St. Francis. The "new" biography is unique, since it makes use of all the documentary material in order to build a uniform picture of Francis and his charism which would be acceptable to all the friars. In this way, the LMj is much more than a Legend in the historical sense. It is a mystical treatise on the life and charism of St. Francis and his Order.

### Some Details on Sources:

1C, 2C, 3C, LJS ( in *Minor Legend*), L3C, AC and AP.

### **The Major Life**

The following indicates Bonaventure's use of existing sources:

Bonaventure omitted 250 episodes from a variety of sources:

- 60 from *1C*
- 27 from *L3C*
- 47 from *AC*
- 120 from *2C*

Omissions:

From *2C*

He omitted recent details, anything that was too historical, conflict with the Pope, the association of Francis with John the Baptist, any traces of Francis' imperfect nature, relations with women, difficulties within the Order, reference to Francis and books/study, poverty was regarded more as a virtue, rather than a lived state.

From *AC*

References to Francis as strange, foolish, simple, crazy, references to his illnesses, concerns that relate to the Order, Elias only appears in the context of the Rule and is not named.

From *L3C*

Hugolino, Francis' courtesy, details of the early fraternal life (eg manual work), death and canonisation, historical characters/details, youth and imperfections, Francis the "artist".

By such editing, Francis is removed from the human plane but that does not mean we cannot imitate him. Francis could be the subject of preaching. However, Bonaventure created a statuesque icon!

### **BONAVENTURE'S PRESENTATION OF FRANCIS IN THE PROLOGUE**

Bonaventure created a new framework for the documentary material he borrowed from the earlier sources.

The LMj begins with a prologue which is unique in style and content. "The grace of God our Saviour has appeared in these last days in his servant Francis." The opening words of the prologue strike us as a new presentation of the figure of St. Francis. Seen against the background of the events in the Order in the aftermath of John of Parma's generalate, these words immediately portray Francis in an apocalyptic light. In order words, Bonaventure did not think twice about placing Francis in an apocalyptic setting which would appeal to the "zelanti", and present him as a man of a new age. The prologue shows Francis as a new Elijah, a new John the Baptist, a "hierarchic man." He was "lifted up" to heaven and "prepared a way in the desert by preaching penance." Francis is shown as the angel of the seal of the living God (Apoc 7:2) who stamps the foreheads of the elect with the seal of salvation and marks them with the sign of the Tau, or penitential cross, and clothes them with the habit of penance in the form of a cross. Francis is therefore a living sign of conformity to Christ through his life and actions, and especially through the marks of the stigmata. The whole Legend also presents Francis in the setting of six visions of the cross, which culminate in the apparition of the crucified seraph on Mount La Verna.

### **FRANCIS, MODEL OF VIRTUE**

Bonaventure is also intent to portray Francis as a model of virtue, and as a Founder who would appeal to the moderate views of the majority of the community of the Order, to which Bonaventure himself belonged. The LMj is divided into fifteen chapters. The

first four chapters follow an historical sequence, and speak about Francis's manner of life before conversion, his conversion to God and the restoration of three churches, the foundation of **the Order** and the approval of the Rule, and the progress of the Order and confirmation of the Rule. Chapters 5 to 13 provide three stages of spiritual ascent in the life of St. Francis, modelled upon the triple way of purification, illumination and mystical union, each with a set of three chapters indicating corresponding virtues:

- Ch. 5: the austerity of his life and how creatures provided him comfort.
- Ch. 6: his humility and obedience and God's condescension to his slightest wish.
- Ch. 7: his love of poverty and the miraculous fulfilment of his needs.
- Ch. 8: his affectionate piety and how irrational creatures were affectionate towards him.
- Ch. 9: the fervour of his charity and his desire for martyrdom.
- Ch. 10: his zeal for prayer and the power of his prayer.
- Ch. 11: his understanding of Scripture and his spirit of prophecy.
- Ch. 12: the efficacy of his preaching and his grace of healing.
- Ch. 13: his sacred stigmata.
- Ch. 14: speaks about the patience of Francis in suffering and his death, while chapter 15 concludes the LMj with the account of the canonisation and transferral of the relics of St. Francis. An appendix with a list of miracles attributed to the Saint's intercession sums up Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF THE TEXT**

The value of the LMj lies in presenting a mystical picture of St. Francis as a *typus Christi*. The theme of Francis as an *alter Christus* begins to take shape in the LMj in such a way as to influence many of the subsequent compositions of poetry, art, and popular cult regarding St. Francis. Examples include the *lauds* of Jacopone da Todi, the frescoes of Giotto in the upper basilica of St. Francis, the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, and the *Actus-Fioretti*.

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## **LESSON SIX**

### **VOLUME 3 – FRANCIS, THE PROPHET**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this volume we find texts that look back to Francis as a prophet. The writings are from particular sources – one “branch” within the First Order, called the Spirituals and one area of Italy where the life of Francis was being told in such a way as to inspire both Franciscans and the local people. The sources were written because of different events that had happened within the Order that led some people to feel that the image of Francis had been betrayed. They wanted people to see him in a different light and they were seeking justification for their own beliefs and actions

#### **ANOTHER REQUEST FOR MEMORIES OF FRANCIS**

The General Chapter of Padova, in 1276, just ten years after the decree of the Chapter of Paris, again requested the brothers to forward their written memories of St. Francis to the Minister General Jerome of Ascoli Piceno:

"All [Provincial Ministers] are hereby charged to carry out diligently the provisions of the letter sent to the ministers assembled in chapter at Padova by the Reverend Father General Minister, entitled 'To the venerable brothers, beloved in Christ, etc.' The intent of this letter is to have them conduct an investigation into any additional information worthy of remembrance concerning the deeds of the blessed Francis and of other holy brothers, which may have occurred in their provinces. Such instances are to be reported to the General Minister in exact language and under the oath of witnesses."

#### **A PARTICULAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF FRANCIS IN SALVATION HISTORY**

The period starting from 1276 onwards presents St. Francis as the Prophet in an age when prophecy was very much in fashion. Let us remember that, already in the prologue to the LMj, Bonaventure had spoken of Francis in prophetic and apocalyptic terms. The Order, at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century, was very much influenced by the spiritualistic doctrines of Joachim of Fiore'. Bonaventure himself, in his *Collations on the Six Days of Creation*, advocated six ages of salvation history before Christ and six after Christ, with the last age, the seventh age of peace, being ushered in by the sixth age, symbolised by the angel rising from the east in the person of Francis of Assisi. This view of St. Francis was being shared more and more by the brothers, particularly the "zelanti" who, at this stage of history, became to be known as the Spirituals, some of whom entered into direct conflict with the institution of the Church and Order. Among the most famous Spiritual writers we find Peter of John Olivi (1248-1298), Ubertino da Casale (+1325) and Angelo Clareno (+1337).

#### **CONFLICT WITH THE PAPACY**

This was also the age of the first Franciscan Pope, Jerome of Ascoli Piceno, Minister General of the Order, who chose the name of Nicholas IV (1288-92). He was followed by the famous Pope Celestine V (1294), who for six months occupied the Holy See, and was benevolent towards the Spirituals, even allowing some of them to become a faction living outside communion with the Order. These "Fratricelli" were later persecuted by Boniface VIII (1294-1303), and after a short respite during the time of Clement V (1305-14), they were finally condemned by Pope John XXII in 1317. The turn of the century saw the Order at one of its greatest crises in history, at loggerheads with a Pope who did not want to accept the doctrine that Christ and the apostles possessed nothing of their own, and who therefore saw

no justification for Franciscan poverty. The 14th century was the time of the Avignon Papacy (1308-1373), the Black Death (1347-50) and the Hundred Years War (1338-1453). This is the historical background against which we shall consider the last group of Sources, which take us from 1276 on to 1318 and beyond, practically to the very last years of the 14th century. For reasons of space we can only consider some of them in some detail, and indicate the others for personal research and study.

#### **A BRIEF NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE SEVEN TRIBULATIONS BY ANGELO CLARENO**

This text is a revisionist history of the Order, seeing evil at work from the beginning of the Order. There is now an English translation of the full text of which volume 3 only contains an extract. It is worth casting your eye over the extracts to get a flavour of this interpretation of the history. Clarenò has been influential even in recent history and I believe that this is another reason for having some acquaintance with the sincerely held beliefs and understanding of this leader of the Spiritual faction.

#### **REDISCOVERING THE IDENTITY OF THE ORDER**

During this period the Order had also continued to develop along institutional lines, even regarding the observance of the Rule and poverty. On 14th November 1245 Pope Innocent IV had given the Church's second interpretation of the Rule, after *Quo elongati*, with his Bull *Ordinem vestrum*. The miraculous event of the stigmata of St. Francis was also being questioned in some quarters. That is why Gregory IX had already written three Papal documents in 1237 to prove the truth of Francis's stigmata. On 29th October 1255 Alexander IV addressed to bishops another declaration to this effect, namely, the *Benigna operatio*. The most important papal document concerning the Franciscan Rule and the observance of poverty was the Bull *Exiit qui seminavit* of Pope Nicholas III (14th August 1279), followed by the *Exiit de paradiso* of Clement V (6th May 1312). These papal interpretations are also important in the analysis of the Franciscan Sources of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, because they shed light on the state of the Order regarding the interpretation of the Rule, and hence, the intentions of St. Francis.

#### **THE DEEDS OF BLESSED FRANCIS**

The *Actus Beati Francisci* are a collection of *excerpta, flores*, that is, anecdotes, regarding the virtuous life of St. Francis and his first companions. It has four sections: the first speaks about Francis and some of the first companions; the second speaks about some of the companions (Bernard, Rufino, Leo, Masseo, Clare, Anthony, Conrad); the third concerns the friars from the Marche region, all of them coming from the family of the Spirituals (Conrad of Offida, John of La Verna); while the fourth section is a mixture of various anecdotes.

#### **AUTHORSHIP**

According to DBF, chapter *IX,71*, the author is a certain brother *Hugolinus de Monte Sancte Mariae*: "Brother James of Massa received this account from the mouth of Brother Leo, and Brother Ugolino of Monte Santa Maria had it from the mouth of this Brother James, and I, the writer, had it from the mouth of Brother Ugolino." This brother Hugolino was Ugolino Boniscambi di Monte Santa Maria (or Montegiorgio), a town in the Marches, within the province of Ascoli Piceno, who probably died in 1350. He is the compiler of DBF. It seems, however, that Hugolino was helped by collaborators who continued his work, among whom there could have been a friar from his same Province of the Marches, coming from the group of friars who were disciples of Angelo Clarenò. According to Cambell, the date of composition of the DBF is between 1331 and 1337. It seems that there is some link between

the DBF and the *Chronicle on the Seven Tribulations* by Angelo Clareno, written in 1323-25. The same friars of whom Angelo Clareno speaks are also present in the DBF (James of Massa, Conrad of Offida, Pietro of Monticello). The DBF could have been written in a friary in which the Spirituals and "Fratricelli" had some influence, particularly that of Sarnano, where the disciples of Pietro of Macerata and Angelo Clareno lived.

#### **OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE**

The DBF betray a preoccupation to conserve the observance of the Franciscan Rule "without gloss" (comment), as well as that of a way of life identical to the one which Francis portrays in his Testament. At the same time the DBF defend that evangelical freedom to which the Spirituals appealed in order not to be bound by the normative rules of the Community which, according to them, was not observing the evangelical life in its purity and simplicity.

The themes which are dear to the DBF are those which were at the forefront of the differences between Community and Spirituals, namely, ascetical life, evangelical perfection, the relationship between active and contemplative life, the discussions between Franciscans and Dominicans regarding poverty, the apostasy of brother Elias and his downfall, which Francis is supposed to have foretold (chapter 62).

#### **THE CONFORMITY OF FRANCIS TO THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST**

The DBF placed great importance upon the theme of the conformity of Francis to the life of Jesus Christ. In chapter VI, 1, the author writes: "Because Francis, that very real servant of Christ, was in some things another Christ given to the world, God the Father made this fortunate man conformed in many things to Christ, his Son, as was apparent in his venerable band of holy companions, in the wonderful mystery of the stigmata of the Cross, and the holy fast of forty continuous days." This same theme of conformity was already present in 2C 26,135,217,219, and LMj, Prologue, XIII,4, XIV,4. With the DBF and the *Fioretti*, the theme of conformity to Christ (*Franciscus fuit quasi alter Christus*) comes to the forefront and develops later on in Arnald of Sarrant's *The Kinship of St. Francis* (1365) and Bartholomew of Pisa's *Book of Conformities of the life of St. Francis with the life of Jesus Christ* (1399).

#### **THE FIORETTI**

The *Fioretti* are also a group of anecdotes regarding the relationship of Francis with some of his most intimate companions, such as Bernard, Elias, Giles, Leo, Maseo, Clare, Rufino, Sylvester. The LFI are based on themes which are very dear to the Franciscan charism, namely, perfect joy, poverty, love for creatures. In the LFI we come to know a Francis who preaches to the birds and who tames the wolf of Gubbio. The final chapters of the LFI contain stories coming from the environment of the Spirituals, especially those living in the Marches, particularly Conrad of Offida, John of Penna, John of La Verna, James of Massa. In the manuscript tradition, the 53 chapters of the LFI are often followed by the five *Considerations on the Stigmata of Saint Francis*, which are a rich source of information regarding the events which happened on La Verna in September 1224, and which reveal a strong link with the LMj of St. Bonaventure.

The fact that the *Fioretti* was written in Italian reflects its early popularity. The *Fioretti* has retained a unique place in the affection of readers attracted by Saint Francis. It is probably the first Franciscan source that many people encounter even today. It is important to be remember that it was not written until the fourteenth century. It draws on a wide range of material including the rich local oral tradition that developed away from the mainstream events affecting the first Order. It paints a picture of Francis that developed within an

atmosphere of great devotion to the saint. As a consequence, it is very far from being an authentic biography.

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## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON THE SOURCES

The following material refers to other sources that can be found in Francis of Assisi Early Documents. As there was too much material for you to cover in six lessons, we decided to provide this additional material for your own private reference.

The sources that have been selected for you to study for the Course are mainly official sources. The three books by Thomas of Celano were all commissioned - the Life of Francis was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX shortly after the death of Francis, the other two were commissioned within the Order of Friars Minor. The *Major Life* was also commissioned within the Order. It has particular importance because it was the standard life of Saint Francis for the Order.

The other official document that we selected was a particular Papal bull *Quo elongati*, an important landmark as the friars were beginning to find their identity after the death of Francis. It reflects the fact that there were tensions within the Order already in 1230 and the friars were divided as to whether they should be bound by Francis' *Testament* as well as by the *Later Rule* of 1223. They appealed to the Pope to help them clarify their position. This set a precedent and you will find that there are several Papal documents relating to the Order of Friars Minor in the Early Documents. These are important documents for anyone wanting to know more about the development of the First Order.

We included the *Sacred Exchange* because of its unique nature. It is an allegory that has been interpreted in a number of different ways and it is a very beautiful and powerful text. It was certainly written because some brothers were concerned that the Order had changed too much from the vision of Francis. It focuses on living poverty, something that has remained a contentious issue during the history of the movement as Franciscans have devoted much soul-searching to how to live evangelical poverty.

The *Anonymous of Perugia* and the *Legend of Three Companions* are examples of unofficial sources. They were included because the AP presents an early history of the development of the Order since it sets out to consider the Order, rather than the life of Francis. The L3C adds new details to the life of Francis and has the flavour of a local account of Brother Francis. These texts are short, easily read and accessible to readers today.

The *Deeds of Blessed Francis* and the *Little Flowers of Saint Francis* are documents from the third volume. They were included because they present a more popular approach in which Francis is clearly a wonderful source of inspiration for everyday life.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 1. PAUL SABATIER AND THE ORIGIN OF THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION

Between 1898 and 1909 Sabatier published seven volumes relating to Franciscan Sources in the *Collection de documents pour l'histoire religieuse et litteraire du Moyen Age*. Between 1903 and 1919 Sabatier also published the eighteen volumes of *Opuscules de critique historique*, and in 1902 he founded the International Society of Franciscan Studies. After his death, which occurred in 1931, his wife took care to publish the most updated edition of his *Vie de Saint Francois d'Assise*, and his lectures were published in the *Etudes inedites sur saint Francois d'Assise*.

### THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION

In 1898 Paul Sabatier had discovered *The Mirror of Perfection* in a codex of the Mazzarino library of Paris, and entitled it *Speculum perfectionis seu S. Francisci Assisiensis legenda antiquissima auctore fratre Leone*. This manuscript convinced Paul Sabatier that brother Leo was the prime Source for the life of St. Francis, because of his scrolls containing *The Words of St. Francis* and *The Intention of the Rule*, known to have been written by Leo. Also, there was a mistake in the dating of the manuscript, which indicated 11th May 1228 as the date of composition of the 2MP whereas later manuscripts had corrected the date to 1318. Sabatier was thus convinced that 2MP was even older than 1C, and it was his conviction that the Sources coming directly from the companions of St. Francis were more precious than the ones which were commissioned by the authority of the Church or the Order, which he called "official Sources." This

interpretation of the figure of St. Francis as discovered in the Sources and their interdependence gave rise to the so-called "Franciscan Question." Theophile Desbonnets defined the Franciscan Question as "the search for the link between the various documents that take us back to the original documents, and those that are dependent on them." (Cfr. Luigi Pellegrini, "A Century Reading the Sources for the Life of Saint Francis," *Greyfriars Review* 7 (1993) 323-346.

## 2. THE BULL OF CANONISATION OF ST. FRANCIS

On 16th July 1228, Pope Gregory IX, who was at the time staying in Assisi, presided over the canonisation celebration of St. Francis (cfr. 1C 119-126). The stay of the Pope in Assisi had been marked by tumultuous events for the papacy. The emperor Frederick II had invaded the Papal States, and the people of Rome had risen up against the Pope on Easter Monday 1228. The Pope had to flee Rome and take refuge in Rieti, Spoleto and Perugia. It was while he was in Perugia that Gregory IX convened a consistory of Cardinals to decide upon the canonisation process of Francis of Assisi. Three days after the canonisation, on 19th July, Gregory IX published the Bull of canonisation, *Mira circa nos*.

For a complete introduction to the Bull, cfr. R.J. Armstrong, "*Mira circa nos. Gregory IX's View of the Saint, Francis of Assisi*," *Greyfriars Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1990) 75-100.

## 3. THE LEGEND FOR THE USE IN THE CHOIR BY THOMAS OF CELANO

In 1230 also produced an abridged form of his *Life of St. Francis*, known as *It*. It consists of nine lessons for the readings of the breviary for the feast day of St. Francis. In the introduction, dedicated to a certain brother Benedict, Thomas of Celano states that he divides his legend into nine sections or lessons, to correspond to the liturgical structure of the Office of Matins. This division is not found in any manuscript of the legend, but is a proof that the document was meant to be a liturgical text. In this legend Thomas gives us the exact date and time of Francis's death: "Freed from the fetters of this mortal life, he blessedly departed to Christ in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1226, on the fourth day of the Nones of October, a Sunday; by then he had spent twenty years perfectly adhering to Christ."

## 4. THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS AND LITURGICAL TEXTS BY JULIAN OF SPEYER

Julian of Speyer is author of the *Life of St. Francis* and a liturgical text, the *Rhymed Office of St. Francis*. Julian came from Speyer, in the Rhine Palatinate of Germany. He was a *magister cantus* in the palace of the king of France. He became a Franciscan before 1227, and after the General Chapter of Assisi (30th May 1227) he went to Germany, with brother Simon the Englishman, Minister Provincial in Normandy, who was appointed Minister in Germany. Julian received the teaching post of *lector* of theology. In May 1230 he was back in Assisi for the translation of the relics of St. Francis to the new basilica. He then went to Paris and lectured at the General house of studies of the Order. There he wrote the liturgical offices for the feast of St. Francis and St. Anthony, as well as the *Life of St. Francis*. It seems that he died in 1250, according to the editors of *Analecta Franciscana* in their introduction to his works.

The date of composition of LJS is generally agreed as after 30th May 1232, Pentecost Sunday, when Gregory IX canonised St. Anthony of Padua. The reason for this is that Julian speaks of Anthony as being "a holy and glorious confessor of Christ." *The Rhymed Office of St. Francis* was in use certainly in 1235, because Thomas of Eccleston, in his Chronicle about the coming of the Friars Minor in England (*De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*) states that on that occasion, in the Pope's presence and in his honour, the friars sang the antiphon for the first vespers of the Office of Julian of Speyer, in which Gregory IX was mentioned.

The LJS is heavily dependent upon 1C. The concluding two numbers (75-76) provide a detailed account of the translation of the relics of Saint Francis to the new basilica on 25th May 1230. LJS was also, however, written in a different environment, namely that of the University of Paris, where the Friars Minor had a general house of studies, the "Grand Couvent des Cordeliers." Julian of Speyer differs from Celano in that he does not seem to have had many contacts with the companions of St. Francis living in Umbria.

The geographical difference between Paris and Assisi is important in the early history of the Order. The mendicant Orders of Preachers (Dominicans) and Minors (Franciscans) had already been present in Paris for some time. The Friars Minor arrived in Paris in 1217, during the first mission to France. They settled close to

the abbey of Saint Dennis. The friars who came during the second mission, in 1219, had letters of recommendation by Pope Honorius III. In 1225, when Francis was still alive, the friars attracted to their ranks some of the secular masters of the University of Paris, among them Haymo of Faversham. In 1229, through the help of King Louis IX, the friars transferred to new quarters given to them by the abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Près, and founded the "Grand Couvent des Cordeliers." In this place the Order established its General house of studies in the University. It was in 1236 that Alexander of Hales, one of the Masters, became a Franciscan and thus the friars' house had its first chair of theology. Julian's *Life of St. Francis* was written in this historical context.

The liturgical cult of St. Francis, who was canonised by Gregory IX on 16th July 1228, was enhanced by some renowned liturgical texts for the celebration of the Office and Mass on his feastday. The main texts of the liturgy, besides Thomas of Celano's *Legend for the Use in the Choir*, are the following:

Julian of Speyer, *Officium Rhythmicum Sancti Francisci* (Rhymed Office of St. Francis), dated before 1235.

Pope Gregory IX, Hymn for First Vespers *Proles de caelo prodiit* and Antiphons for the Octave of the feast of St. Francis. Cardinal Thomas of Capua (+1243), Hymns *In caelesti collegio; Decus morum*.

Cardinal Raniero Capocci of Viterbo (+1250), Hymn *Plaude turba paupercula*, Antiphon *Caelorum candor splenduit*.

The development of these liturgical texts, particularly those regarding the Divine Office, has to be studied in the context of the development of the Roman liturgy and its importance in the Franciscan Order. The Rule of 1223 stated that the brothers had to celebrate the Divine Office "according to the rite of the holy Roman Church." Under Innocent III, probably in 1215 in connection with the Fourth Lateran Council, an abridged, comprehensive book of the canonical hours was compiled in one volume, known as the breviary. With the final version of the Rule, the friars were committed once and for all to the *ordo*, or liturgical discipline, of the Roman Church, and accepted the breviary for praying the canonical hours of the Office. Thus, unlike the Dominicans, the Friars Minor did not develop an *ordo* of their own, but adopted that of the Roman Curia.

The *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Ministers Generals of the Order of Friars Minor* attributes to Julian of Speyer the paternity of a great part of the liturgical texts for the feast days of St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padova: "Brother Julian the German was the author of the largest sections of the life of saints Francis and Anthony in words and music" (*Analecta Franciscana* 111,381). The other parts of the Office were composed by persons who knew Francis very well, like Pope Gregory IX and Cardinal Raniero Capocci, a Cistercian monk who was very close to Francis in the Chapter of 1221.

The authorship of Julian of Speyer regarding the *Rhymed Office of St. Francis* is witnessed by the anonymous German Franciscan chronicler of the 10 century, who writes: "Brother Julian of Speyer composed the Office of saints Francis and Anthony in noble style and with a sweet melody." The same is said by Bernard of Besse, in *The Book of the Praises of St. Francis* and by Arnald of Sarrant in *The Kinship of St. Francis*.

The text of the *Rhymed Office* has been passed on in a rich manuscript tradition. The *Analecta Franciscana* edition states that 55 manuscripts have handed down to us the liturgical texts of Julian of Speyer, as well as 27 hymnals. Ten editions were printed and published, together with the musical notes which accompany the text. Although not all the liturgical texts of the *Rhymed Office* are the work of Julian, it is certain that he is the composer of the musical melody for all the texts, both his as well as those by Gregory IX, Thomas of Capua and Raniero Capocci.

## 5. THE VERSIFIED LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS BY HENRI D'AVRANCHES

The Versified Life is a long epic poem about St. Francis, written by Henri d'Avranches and dedicated to Pope Gregory IX. It is dated 1232-1239. Henri is supposed to have been born in Normandy in 1190-1200. In 1219 he went to England, where he became famous as a poet who wrote verse for eminent patrons. His thorough knowledge of Latin helped him in his endeavours. In medieval universities, students often memorised whole treatises in philosophy, law, medicine or theology, by reciting them in poetic verses. Henri was asked to write in verse the lives of English saints, such as St. Oswald (+641) and St. Thomas Becket

(+1170). In 1228 Henri moved to Rome, to the papal curia of Gregory IX. There he put into verse the famous *Decretum Gratiani* and the *Decretals* of Gregory IX, which are the first collections of ecclesiastical law. In 1234 he was canon at Avranches in Normandy, and in 1237 dean of the cathedral chapter of Maastricht. In 1239 he left Rome and travelled to the courts of Emperor Frederick II and King Louis IX of France. In 1245 he was back in England. He is usually considered to have died in 1272. He was the author of at least 162 poems.

The Versified Life, published first by A. Cristofani in 1882, from the Assisi Codex 338, was first attributed to John of Kent, an English Franciscan, who was familiar with the classical Greek and Roman poets. But the discovery of another manuscript of the VL in the Codex of Cambridge University Library uncovered who its author was, because it states: "The life of St. Francis in verse by master Henri d'Avranches, dedicated to Pope Gregory IX." The Cambridge manuscript gives the well-known division into 14 books. Each book begins with the first letter taken from the Latin name *Gregorius Nonus*, thus making it an acrostic poem. Another manuscript of the VL was found at the Versailles Municipal Library, with many modifications, and is probably an adaptation by a friar from Aquitaine, and follows the model of the *Major Life* by St. Bonaventure. The older manuscripts follow 1C and are therefore given more prominence as the ones coming directly from Henri's pen.

The Versified Life is full of references to classical poets and orators like Virgil, Ovidius, Horatius. Raoul Manselli has said that this work needs to be studied more profoundly, as a masterpiece of a *magister versificator* who does not belong to the Franciscan Order. The VL remains essentially a literary document, and has to be interpreted in this light.

The first eleven books follow the story of St. Francis as it is found in 1C. Large sections of them are digressions from the narrative, and express Henri's personal imagination regarding these events, taken mostly from parallel stories in classical writers. Books 12-14 are shorter and reflect the second and third sections of 1C, namely the event of the stigmatisation on La Verna, the death of St. Francis and his glorification by Pope Gregory IX, to whom Henri dedicates many words of praise.

The Versified Life is meant to be an epic celebrating the greatness of the new saint. The opening phrase summarises this concept: "Great feats of a godly captain are the theme of my song: / For mastery over monsters foremost was he and gave those / Called Minors the skill he required."

## ADDITIONAL TEXTS FROM VOLUME II - THE FOUNDER

### 3. THE ASSISI COMPILATION

The *Assisi Compilation from the Writings of Brother Leo and Companions (AC)*, known also as *The Legend of Perugia (LP)*, has been transmitted by the Manuscript 1046 of the Biblioteca Augusta of Perugia.

The manuscript was originally in the library of the Sacro Convento of Assisi, because it features in an inventory of 1381. It then passed on to the friary of Monteripido in Perugia, and after 1860, it was taken to the Commune library of the same town. The manuscript was produced in Assisi between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1310 and 31<sup>st</sup> May 1312 and contains, besides the AC, other important documents of Franciscan history, such as a collection of decrees given to the Franciscan Order, the Papal Bull *Supra montem* of Nicholas IV with the *Rule for the Order of Penitents* (1289), a group of privileges given to the Order, the *Major Life* and the *Epistola ad magistrum innominatum* of St. Bonaventure.

It was Ferdinand Delorme who first studied the AC in 1922. He gave it the title *Legenda Antiqua Sancti Francisci*. Delorme discovered that the AC had whole sections which were parallel to Thomas of Celano's *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2C), to brother Leo's *Verba Sancti Francisci (Words of St. Francis)* and *Intentio Regulae (Intention of the Rule)* and to Lemmens' edition of *The Mirror of Perfection* (we shall refer to these Sources later on).

In 1967 Jacques Cambell published a volume with the title *I Fiori dei tre compagni*. The author tried to decipher in the AC the text of the *florilegium* of 1246. In his study, *The Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (Manchester, 1940), J.R.H. Moorman came out with the proposition that it is possible to reconstruct the *florilegium* of Greccio on the basis of those texts which show that they depend upon it, namely 2C, the two *Mirrors of Perfection*, the *Words of St. Francis*, the *Intention of the Rule*, and the same AC. In 1970

Rosalind Brooke published *The Writings of Leo, Rufino, and Angelo, Companions of St. Francis*. Brooke was of the idea that the Letter of Greccio was linked more to the contents of the AC than to those of the L3C, and so she inserted the Letter before this Source. The most recent critical edition of AC was done in 1975 by Marino Bigaroni, who coined the name AC: "*Compilatio Assisiensis* " *dagli Scritti di frate Leone e Compagni su San Francesco d'Assisi*, Prima edizione integrale dal Ms. 1046 di Perugia con versione Italiana a fronte, introduzione a note, S. Maria degli Angeli, Assisi, 1975; second edition, Assisi, 1992.

Regarding the place where the AC was composed, Bigaroni is of the opinion that the documentary material of 1246 was conserved in the archives of the Sacro Convento of Assisi. Therefore it seems that the compiler who wrote AC could well have been a friar living in Assisi. The Sources is a "compilation", that is a grouping together of various anecdotes from the life of St. Francis and the first brothers, without any regard for chronological or logical order, but rather with the aim of gathering documentary material from various sources into distinct units with the aim of presenting a unified vision of Francis and the brothers. The AC is not concerned with the official picture of Francis as a Saint, but rather with the simple life of the first brothers in Assisi and in the remote hermitages. The fact that the compilation omits some of the sources relating to the youthful years of Francis of Assisi shows, according to Raoul Manselli, that the author was not interested in sources relating to the town he knew so well. Since a good portion of the material is also linked with the eye-witness accounts of the friars who say: *Nos, qui cum eo fuimus* ("We, who lived with him"), it is evident that these texts provide the key to understanding the importance of the AC as a Source coming directly from the companions of St. Francis.

When reading the AC one always has to bear in mind the strong resemblances resulting from the parallel texts which it has with 2C. A thorough study of these parallel texts, referring to the expression "we, who lived with him", has already been done by Raoul Manselli (see biographical indication in Lecture 1). It is also interesting to note the units reserved for the *Words of Saint Francis* (AC 15-20) and the *Intention of the Rule* (AC 101-106), sources which come from the pen of brother Leo.

Regarding the date of composition, various theories have been proposed. We know that the Codex 1046 of Perugia is dated 1311, but the documentary material it contains must come from the period immediately following Crescentius' invitation to the brother companions of Francis to send him their written memories in 1244. Modern scholars opt for the 1246-1260 as the period during which many of the units of the AC were composed.

#### 4. THE TREATISE ON THE MIRACLES OF ST. FRANCIS BY THOMAS OF CELANO

##### COMMISSIONING AND NATURE OF THIS WORK

Crescentius of lesi concluded his mandate as Minister General of the Order during the Chapter of Lyons in the summer of 1247. In his place the friars elected brother John Buralli of Parma (1247-57), a very humble and holy friar, who was inclined to be sympathetic towards the "zelanti". It was John of Parma who, some time before 1252, asked Thomas of Celano to complete his works regarding the life of St. Francis, this time by producing a *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis* (3C). This work of Thomas, who was by this time an old man, should be understood in the light of the medieval frame of mind which enhanced the role of miracles in the sanctity of an individual. Thomas had already inserted many miracles in the first part of 1C and as an appendix to this Legend, as well as having included many others in 2C. This time he intended to give an ordered and detailed account of the miracles, truly a *Tractatus Miraculorum*.

##### CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

3C deals with the miracles which happened through the intercession of St. Francis while he was still alive, with many others which occurred *post mortem*. The Treatise presents 198 paragraphs. It is interesting to note that the first two chapters deal with two miracles which are unique in their form and content, namely the miracle of the birth and development of the Order and the miracle of the stigmata. Another unique section is chapters 3-5, regarding the miraculous power which Francis had over creatures, and chapter 6, dealing with Lady Jacopa dei Settesoli, who hurried to the deathbed of St. Francis. In all Thomas of Celano presents 157 miracles. About one third of them are taken from sources which predate 3C, namely 1C, the *Legend for Use in the Choir*, and 2C. Other collections of miracles show striking resemblances to the AC and suggest a common source, while others probably originated from the miracles presented during Francis's

"process of canonisation", as they are also evident at the end of 1C.

#### **APPROVAL**

*The Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis* was presented to the Chapter of Metz for approval in 1254. The first printed edition of 3C appeared in 1899 when Francis van Ortrouy published it in the *Analecta Bollandiana*. It was subsequently published by Edouard d'Alenron in 1906, and by the Quaracchi editors of *Analecta Franciscana*.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE**

Although 3C completes what is known as Thomas of Celano's "trilogy" on St. Francis, it has received fairly limited attention by scholars (but see Jacque Dalarun's book, *The Misadventure of Francis of Assisi*). It is important to rediscover the value of this work as more than simply a list of miracles, but rather an account of the evangelical *novitas* (newness) of Francis of Assisi:

"Just then, suddenly, there leapt upon the earth, a new man: a new army quickly appeared; and the peoples marvelled at the signs of an apostolic newness." These words from chapter I of 3C explain the very nature of the Franciscan calling according to the form of life of the apostles (*apostolica vivendi forma*) as a new Order with a new vision for a new Church.

### **5. THE LEGENDA MINOR BY BONAVENTURE**

The Lewas composed to be used during the Divine Office of the Octave of the feast of St. Francis. It is a "new" contribution to the liturgical texts already composed by Thomas of Celano and Julian of Speyer. The LMn is best read as a celebrative text. Even though its contents are an abridged form of the LMj, it still produces some new insights, as for example, if one compares LMJ XIII,3 and LMn VI,3, regarding the description of the stigmata. The Legend is divided into eight chapters, each corresponding to a day within the Octave of the feast of St. Francis, and each having nine readings or lessons, as was the custom in the Office of Matins. The LMn had a major role in the diffusion of the cult of St. Francis.

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL IN VOLUME III**

### **BOOK OF PRAISES OF ST. FRANCIS BY BERNARD OF BESSE**

The first among the Sources of this period is the *Liber de Laudibus Sancti Francisci* (*Book of Praises of St. Francis* = BPr) by Bernard of Besse, secretary to St. Bonaventure, dated 1277-1283, that is, from the decree of the Chapter at Padova to the death of Bernard. Regarding the author, we know that he was born in the town of Besse, in south-west France, and that as a Franciscan he belonged to the Province of Aquitaine and to the Custody of Cahors (Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals*). Arnald of Sarrant also says that Bernard was the author of a life of Saint Francis, with many miracles, as well as of the *Chronicle of Fourteen or Fifteen Ministers General*.

The BPr provides little new material to what Thomas of Celano, Julian of Speyer, the Three Companions, or Bonaventure had already said in their biographies. It reechoes Bonaventure's opinion that Francis was "more to be praised and wondered at than imitated" (*Sermon on St. Francis* in 1255). The first and seventh chapters of BPr do, however, present some new insights. The first concerns Francis's companions, while the seventh deals with the growth of the three Orders. In the first chapter we encounter the names of brothers who we never meet in the other Sources: Soldanerio, John de Laudibus, Leo, archbishop of Milan, Simon, William of England, and Christopher.

For further reading, cfr. D. Amico, "Bernard of Bessa: Praises of Blessed Francis," *Franciscan Studies* 48 (1988) 213-288.

### **THE MIRROR OF PERFECTION**

Paul Sabatier published the first edition of the *Mirror of Perfection* in 1898, with the title *Speculum Perfectionis seu S. Francisci Assisiensis legenda antiquissima auctore fratre Leone*. He had studied the

Mazzarino Codex 1743 in Paris. As the title of the work shows, Sabatier was convinced that this was the oldest Legend of St. Francis and that, moreover, it came from the pen of brother Leo. In fact, the manuscript he edited, bore the date 11<sup>th</sup> May 1228 (MCCXXVIII). But other manuscripts which were discovered later, among which the one in Ognissanti friary in Florence, also discovered by Sabatier, had the date 11<sup>th</sup> May 1318 (MCCCXVIII). The Mazzarino text was a mistake on the part of the copyist. This naturally led Sabatier to reconsider his original thesis regarding the *Mirror of Perfection* as being even older than 1C. It was this detail regarding the *Mirror of Perfection* that started the "Franciscan Question." In 1904 Boehmer noted that the various groups of manuscripts differed widely, and tried to group them into two families, which he named the "group of the Portiuncula" and the "Avignon Compilation", one coming from central Italy, the other from northern Europe. Sabatier also noted another group of manuscripts coming from northern Europe (the KBI<sup>n</sup> Province) which were distinct from the "Avignon Compilation." We shall refer to Sabatier's edition of the *Mirror of Perfection* as 2MP.

In order to solve the questions regarding the *Mirror of Perfection*, it is important to clarify the problem of interdependence of the biographical Sources of Francis of Assisi, especially the relation between the *Mirror of Perfection* and *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*. The scholar Salvatore Minocchi concluded that 2C depends upon the *Mirror of Perfection*, since in the edition of 1246 it contains 80 chapters which he identified with the original texts in the *Speculum*. The other 44 chapters were added by the compiler of the 1318 manuscript, coming either from 2C or from the writings of brother Leo.

The work of trying to isolate the sources coming from Thomas of Celano and those coming from brother Leo was done by Leonard Lemmens. In 1901 he discovered a shorter edition of the *Mirror of Perfection* (which we shall refer to as 1 MP), based on the manuscript 1/73 of the friary library of St. Isidore's Irish College in Rome. The scholar distinguished at least 30 chapters of the *Mirror of Perfection* which depend upon 2C. The problem concerned the channels through which the documentary material passed from 2C into the *Mirror of Perfection*. Among the various opinions brought forward we find the theory of an oral tradition of the texts of Thomas of Celano, or that of a bundle of notes which were written down by brother Leo before 1227, which formed the basis of both 2C and the *Speculum*.

In the same manuscript, Lemmens also found what came to be known as *rotuli*, or scrolls of brother Leo, containing the *Verba Sancti Francisci* (*The Words of St. Francis*), and the *Intentio Regulae* (*The Intention of the Rule*). These texts are also present in the *Mirror of Perfection*, as well as in AC, and it is possible that they could have existed within these Sources rather than as distinct documents. What is relevant, however, is that there are distinct sections coming definitely from the pen of brother Leo himself, who was one of the last companions of St. Francis to die, in 1278. In the *Expositio super Regulam* of Peter of John Olivi, dated 1288, we find the following witness: "We read in the parchments of brother Leo, who as his unique companion, wrote whatever he saw and heard in the life of our father Francis." Ubertino da Casale and Angelo Clarenò, in their writings, also speak about *cedulae, dicta et scripta, verba, liber, rotuli* (parchments, sayings and writings, words, book) attributed to brother Leo.

When Ferdinand Delorme published the *Legend of Perugia* in 1922, the problem was further complicated by the attention to this new Source, which contained many parallel texts in the *Speculum*. Some even proposed the LP, or AC, as the direct source of the *Speculum*. Moorman, for example, thought that the *Mirror of Perfection* is a reorganisation of the material of the LP. According to him 23 chapters are identical to the LP and to 2C, thus indicating that the *Mirror of Perfection* took these texts from 2C through the mediation of the LP. Cambell and Brooke also opt for the superiority of the LP upon the *Speculum*. The problem regarding the interdependence of these Sources, is quite interesting, will probably never be solved.

The Lemmens edition, or 1 MP, contains 45 paragraphs. It is presented under the title "A Mirror of Perfection, Rule, Profession, Life and True Calling of a Lesser Brother." Except for paragraph 45, which gives Admonitions 11 and 21 of St. Francis, the whole text is present in the Sabatier edition, although the paragraphs are ordered in a different manner. The opening phrase, demonstrates the aim of the author: "In the name of the Lord begins the mirror of the perfection, Rule, profession, life and calling of a true Lesser Brother according to the will of Christ and the intention of blessed Francis."

The Sabatier edition, or 2MP, contains 124 paragraphs. Paul Sabatier studied no fewer than 45 manuscripts before completing the final critical edition which was published after his death on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1928. Sabatier was of the opinion that all the paragraphs came from the pen of brother Leo himself. Later

studies, especially after the edition of the Manuscript 1046 of Perugia, have led scholars to indicate various sources for 2MP. These would include the AC, *The Words of St. Francis*, 2C, *The Words of Conrad of Offida*, and even an instance of Francis' own writings. Paragraph 84 is original, and contains a poem in praise of the Portiuncula.

Although Sabatier concluded that it was Leo who wrote 2MP, a close look at the opening phrase in all the manuscripts gives no direct indication as to its specific author: "This work has been compiled in the form of a legend based on what the companions of blessed Francis had formerly written or caused to be written."

The title of 2MP is: "The Beginning of a Mirror of Perfection of the Status of a Lesser Brother." 2MP opens with a controversial episode about the loss and rewriting of the Later Rule at Fonte Colombo, and about the resistance posed by the ministers against the rigidity of the Rule. The episode clearly refers to *The Words of St. Francis*, whose author is brother Leo. It is followed by the twelve chapters of 2MP, which regard fundamental values of the Franciscan life. In 2MP 120 we find the complete *Canticle of Brother Sun*, written by St. Francis.

## Unit Two, Module Two

### Final Assignment

Write an essay answering one of the following:

1. The editors of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* chose the three titles of “The Saint”, “The Founder” and “The Prophet” for the volumes. Comment critically on the choice of these titles and their usefulness for students of the Franciscan sources.
2. Compare and contrast the image of Francis as found in *The Life of Francis (1C)* and *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul (2C)*.
3. The *Major Life* of Bonaventure was intended to be the sole legend of Francis, for universal use in the Order. Explain why the general chapter might have decided this was right at the time. Describe the structure and content of the legend and evaluate the significance of the text.