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## *Editorial*

# CELEBRATING TO RENEW OUR VISION

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The coming years will be full of significant celebrations for us Franciscans. The final document of the General Chapter of July 2021 has presented a list of anniversaries that the Order is called to celebrate. These include the following events in the life of Saint Francis that occurred 800 years ago: in 1223 the confirmation of the *Regula Bullata* by Pope Honorius III (29 November) and the celebration of Christmas in Greccio; in 1224 the event of the stigmatisation of Saint Francis on La Verna; in 1225 the composition of the *Canticle of Brother Sun*; in 1226 the *Testament* and the death of Saint Francis at the Portiuncula. One can also continue to add other celebrations further ahead, namely the canonization of Saint Francis (16 July 1228) and the translation of his relics to the Basilica built by Brother Elias under the express command of Pope Gregory IX (25 May 1230).

The aim of these anniversaries will not be that of organising imposing celebrations, but rather of coming to terms with our present situation as a religious Order in the Church and the world in which we live. The Chapter has asked us friars to “renew our vision.” Therefore, these celebrations are aimed at being a moment of grace in which we can truly undertake a thorough renewal of our vision by being conscious of our identity as *fratres* and *minores*, and taking seriously our commitment to a life of conversion and penance in a spirit of joy and evangelical simplicity.

There are certainly many roads that we can follow in order to realise this project.

The Order itself will emark upon a courageous initiative aimed at the grass-roots in order to arrive at a Chapter of Mats in which this issue will truly feature as one that is close at heart to all the brothers.

One of the roads that the Order certainly needs to follow is that of learning from its own history. We Franciscans are lucky to have a long and eventful history, a history marked by glorious achievements in the areas of missionary evangelisation, in studies, in pastoral care of the people of God, in service to the Church, even in scientific research and expeditionary zeal. This rich tapestry of initiatives is a sign of the vitality of the Order, and of its ability to respond to the urgent needs of humanity and Christianity at large.

Our history also teaches us that we have gone through moments of decadence, through tensions and inner divisions, through problematic situations in which our “seraphic” quarrels might have scandalized those who regarded peaceful coexistence as a passive acceptance of a status quo. These moments also form part of our history. We have committed mistakes, notably by enforcing unifications that were not born and nurtured at grass-roots levels but were imposed from on high. Many of these mistakes left deep wounds in the Order.

And yet the Order thrived even in the midst of tension and problems. History has seen our numbers fluctuate, vocations dwindle to a trickle, provinces born anew after periods of extinction. All this should be a sign that we can truly renew our vision even in the face of the challenges that we face today.

Maybe the problem that faces the Order at this present moment regards our fear of taking calculated risks. I speak of calculated risks because I believe that, in order to be prophetic, one needs first to be a conservative. In other words, one needs to know and love one’s historical roots and legacy in order to be able to move forward with courage and take risky steps. Our fear to renew our vision is not a question of feeling helpless because our entities are

getting older in age and fewer in numbers. It is the fear of the past that haunts us and blocks our courage to move on, irrespective of our age or numbers. We need to overcome this fear.

During these last decades our respose to renewal has been largely one that has to do with structures of government and entities. This is certainly important. We need to come to terms with changing patterns, and our entities should seriously embark upon a wider vision of mutual collaboration that can generate a genuine unity that is not built upon forced unification. But structures are not enough. Indeed, they can also become an obstacle to genuine renewal, whenever they wipe out ways of life and communication among brothers who have known one another all their lives. We need to tread carefully upon this minefield. On the one hand, the brothers need to understand that many of our structures have to change, and that we need to change them before it is too late to bring about any sensible change. On the other hand, the organs of government of our Order have to be prophetic in the sense of coming to terms with the feelings of the brothers, of listening to the concerns and crises that they go through. Only then can they make the right choices, which include also a renewal of our structures, legislation, entities, conferences, etc.

It is said that, during the General Chapter of Metz in 1254 the holy Minister General Brother John of Parma told the brothers not to multiply constitutions, but to concentrate on observing those that they already had. I think that this practical example is still valid today. It is true that we live in an ever-changing world. However, to change does not mean to be unstable, to lose sight of your own identity and of your roots. The celebrations of the last years of the life of Saint Francis can truly be an occasion to renew our vision, if we are clear enough about the beauty and joy of drawing our inspiration from our origins, and then move on with courage.

Noel Muscat ofm

# EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS IN 1222 ACCORDING TO LUKE WADDING (I)

Noel Muscat OFM

The year 1221 marked some important events in the life of Saint Francis, particularly related to the full development of the Order. Among the most salient episodes that are normally attributed to this period we find the celebration of the Chapter of Mats at the Portiuncula on 30 May 1230, solemnity of Pentecost. Rosalind B. Brooke states: “I would venture to suggest that the Chapter of Mats was that of 1222.”<sup>1</sup> It was during this chapter that Francis designated Brother Elias as his Vicar, after the death of Peter Cattanio on 10 March 1221. The chapter also approved the text of the *Regula non bullata*. During the same chapter Brother Anthony of Lisbon arrived in Assisi, and was sent with Brother Graziano of Romagna to the hermitage of Monte Paolo. There he lived for some months in complete seclusion and without revealing his theological preparation, until the day when he was asked to preach in Forlì and inaugurated his life as the first lector of theology of the brothers in Bologna. In 1221 Cardinal Ugo of Ostia gave the first Rule to the Penitents, the *Memoriale Propositi*.

The other major events in the life of Francis unfolded from 1223 to 1226, and will be the object of celebrations in the coming years. They include the writing of the *Regula Bullata* and its confirmation by Pope Honorius III on 29 November 1223,

the celebration of Christmas in Greccio in the same year, the event of the stigmatisation of Francis in September 1224, the *Canticle of Brother Sun* in 1225, the *Testament* and *Transitus* of Francis on 3 October 1226. We can also continue with the celebration of the canonisation of Francis on 16 July 1228 and of the translation of his mortal remains to the new Basilica in Assisi on 25 May 1230, built on the command of Pope Gregory IX.

In between we have the year 1222, which seemingly does not point to any major event in the life of Saint Francis. The famous Irish Franciscan historian, Luke Wadding, who presents us with the monumental chronicle of the Order’s history in his volumes of the *Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum a Sancto Francisco Institutorum*, dedicates a section of the second volume of the series to the year 1222, and presents various episodes which are found in the Franciscan mediaeval Sources, but which are not normally dated in the same Sources.

Although the year 1222 does not offer major events, at least not among the most widely known episodes, relating to the life of Saint Francis, it is, nevertheless, an important moment in the life of the Saint and in the early history of the Order of friars Minor. Our aim is simply that of following the indications given to us by Wadding in the second tome of the *Annales Minorum*,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rosalind B. BROOKE, *Early Franciscan Government. Elias to Bonaventure*, Cambridge University Press 1959, Appendix I, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum. Auctore Luca Waddingo*

and where possible illustrating them with what the Franciscan Sources state regarding the same events.

In his *Vie de Saint François d'Assise*, Paul Sabatier writes: "What was Francis doing all this time? We have no knowledge, but the very absence of information, so abundant for the period that precedes as well as for that which follows, shows plainly enough that he has quitted Portiuncula, and gone to live in one of those Umbrian hermitages that had always had so strong an attachment for him."<sup>3</sup>

These words by Sabatier show the difficulty of documenting this particular year in the life of Saint Francis. Wadding can help us reconstruct many of the episodes that might have well occurred during this period. We will therefore try to follow Wadding, without pretending to solve the problem of the historical aspects of each and every episode that he narrates, while at the same time trusting in the expert pen of this Franciscan chronicler and historian, who was the first to compile a complete study of the documentary sources of early Franciscan history.

### **Francis in Toscanella and guest of Iacopa dei Settesoli in Rome**

Wadding states that in 1222 "Francis journeyed to the regions of Terra del Lavoro, Apulia and Calabria."<sup>4</sup>

In the town of Toscanella, nowadays Tuscania, in the province of Viterbo, in Lazio, Francis healed the son of a certain knight who could not walk. The episode is found in Celano, *Vita beati Francisci* 65 and other parallel texts in the *Tractatus miraculorum* 175 and Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* 12,9. Tuscania is found on the Via Cassia, the ancient Roman road that linked Rome to Tuscia, or Tuscany. Francis

must have taken this road while travelling south to Rome:

"Once when the holy man of God, Francis, was travelling far and wide through the land, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God, he came to a city called Toscanella. As he was sowing the seed of life as usual, a knight of that same city took him in as his guest. The man only had one son who was lame and had no bodily strength. Although the young boy was no longer being breast-fed, he was still sleeping in a cradle. The father of the boy, seeing the man of God was endowed with such holiness, humbly fell down at his feet, begging him for his son's health. For a long time the holy man Francis refused to comply, considering himself useless and unworthy of such power and grace. But at last, overcome by the persistence of the father's entreaties, Saint Francis prayed, laid hands on the boy and, blessing him, lifted him up. Immediately the boy, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, stood up healed and, with the onlookers rejoicing, began to walk all around the house."<sup>5</sup>

In Rome Francis found a staunch friend and benefactor in Donna Jacopa dei Sette Soli, a noble Roman lady, widow of Graziano Frangipane.<sup>6</sup> Wadding narrates an episode which is found in Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*:

"Once in Rome [Francis] had with him a little lamb out of reverence for the most gentle Lamb of God. At his departure he left it in the care of the noble matron, the Lady Jacopa of Settesoli. Now the lamb went with the lady to church, standing reverently by her side as her inseparable companion, as if it had been trained in spiritual matters by the saint. If the lady was late in rising in the morning, the lamb rose and nudged her with its horns and woke her with its bleating, urging her with its nods and gestures to hurry to the church. On

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Hiberno, Tomus Secundus, opera et studio Josephi Mariæ Fonseca ab Eboræ, Romæ 1732, 35-54.

<sup>3</sup> Paul SABATIER, *Life of Saint Francis of Assisi*. Translated by Louise Seymour Houghton, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1908, c. 16, p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> *Annales Minorum*, Tom. II, ad 1222, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> IC 65 (FAED I, 239-240).

<sup>6</sup> Alonso MARINI, *Settesoli Jacopa, beata*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 92 (2018).

account of this, the lamb, which was Francis' disciple and had now become a master of devotion, was held by the lady as an object of wonder and love."<sup>7</sup>

### **Francis in Subiaco**

Wadding then states that Francis wanted to journey to the Kingdom of Naples, but he first stopped in Subiaco, where there is the abbey dedicated to Saint Scholastica, the sister of Saint Benedict, who chose Subiaco as the first nucleus of his monastic community. Francis is said to have visited the *Sacro Speco*, or cave-church where Benedict retreated as a young man after he decided to consecrate his life to God. Wadding places the visit of Francis to this cave in 1222, and describes the fresco that one finds in the same cave-church, depicting Francis without his halo and without the stigmata. Francis' head is covered with the hood and in his left hand he holds a small parchment with the words *Pax huic domui* (Peace to this house). This fresco is considered by some to be the most ancient artistic representation of Saint Francis, since the saint appears to be a young man and he does not show the signs of his official declaration as a saint (halo and stigmata). We shall not delve into the question of the authenticity of this work of art as representing Saint Francis. Some critics have dismissed it as a manipulated image of another Benedictine saint, upon which the artist drew a cord instead of the belt, in order to change a monk into the image of Saint Francis. When Wadding was alive it was already quite evidently a figure of Saint Francis, and in fact the Franciscan historian rightly states that Francis passed through Subiaco on the occasion of his journey to southern Italy.

### **Francis in southern Italy**

The road leading from Rome to Naples passes along the ancient Roman road called the Via Appia. When it approaches the Tyrrhenian coast it passes close to the port of Gaeta. This is the town where Wadding places another episode of the life of Saint Francis, which is not found in Celano's biographies, but in Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*:

"Another time when God's servant was preaching on the seashore at Gaeta, out of devotion, crowds rushed upon him in order to touch him. Horrified at people's acclaim, the servant of Christ jumped alone into a small boat that was drawn up on the shore. The boat began to move, as if it had both intellect and motion of itself, and, without the help of any oars, glided away from the shore, to the wonderment of all who witnessed it. When it had gone out some distance into the deep water, it stood motionless among the waves, as long as the holy man preached to the attentive crowd on the shore. When, after hearing the sermon, seeing the miracle, and receiving his blessing, the crowd went away and would no longer trouble him, the boat returned to land on its own."<sup>8</sup>

Wadding also mentions a miracle that occurred through the intercession of Saint Francis in Gaeta, when a man called Bartolomeo fell down from a high place while trying to position one of the beams of a new church that was being built in honour of the Saint. The episode is found in Celano's *Tractatus miraculorum* 59.<sup>9</sup>

According to Wadding Francis stayed for some time in a hermitage in Gaeta. He then journeyed to the town of Carinola, some kilometres inland from Mondragone on the coast. Here he founded a friary originally dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, but later changed to the name of Saint Francis. Wadding mentions various other friaries founded by Francis in the regions of Campania, Salerno and

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<sup>7</sup> LMj 8,8 (FAED II, 591-592)

<sup>8</sup> LMj 12,6 (FAED II, 625).

<sup>9</sup> 3C, 59 (FAED II, 429).

Benevento, particularly the friary in Amalfi.

Of particular interest is Francis' visit to the region of Apulia. The *Legend of Three Companions* already speaks about the journey to Apulia which Francis had planned as a young man aspiring for knighthood.<sup>10</sup> In 1222 the Saint visited the city of Bari and Wadding refers to an episode which occurred close this Adriatic port, which is documented in the *Memoriale* of Thomas of Celano:

“Once travelling with a companion through Apulia near Bari, the man of God found a large bag lying on the road. It was the kind merchants call a *fonda* or sling, and it was bursting with coins. The saint's companion alerted him, and strongly urged him to pick the purse up from the ground and distribute the money to the poor. While he praised piety for the needy and extolled the mercy shown in giving them alms, the saint flatly refused to do it. He declared it was a trick of the devil. ‘My son,’ he said, ‘it is not right to take what belongs to someone else. Giving away some else's property deserves punishment as sin.’ They left that place and hurried to finish the journey they had begun. But that other brother, deluded by empty piety, was not yet at peace; he kept insisting on the misdeed. The saint agreed to return to the place, not to fulfill the brother's desire but to reveal divine mystery to the fool. He called over a young man who happened to be sitting on a wall along the road, so that by word of two or three witnesses the sacrament of the Trinity might be evident. When the three of them had returned to the *fonda*, they saw it was bursting with money, but the saint forbade either of them to approach it that by the power of prayer the devil's deceit might be revealed. He withdrew about a stone's throw from there, and concentrated on holy prayer. He returned from praying, and ordered that brother to pick up the bag, which, after his

prayer, now contained not money but a snake. The brother trembled. He was stunned. I don't know what he sensed, but something out of the ordinary was going through his mind. The fear of holy obedience made him cast all hesitation from his heart, and he grasped the bag in his hands. A large snake slid out of the bag, and showed him the diabolical deceit. Then the saint said to him: ‘Brother, to God's servants money is nothing but a devil and a poisonous snake.’”<sup>11</sup>

Wadding also describes a visit that Francis made to the famous shrine of Saint Michael the Archangel on the Monte Gargano.<sup>12</sup> There is no proof in the Sources that Francis ever visited this cave-church on the Monte Gargano. However, this place was one of the most revered shrines and pilgrimage sites in mediæval Italy. There is a tradition which states that Francis might have visited this shrine as early as 1216, although Wadding places the visit in 1222. The Saint felt unworthy to enter the cave-church and prayed outside by engraving a Tau-cross on a stone slab.

This large calcareous cave on the mountain in the peninsula of Gargano, jutting out into the southern Adriatic, was originally a place of pagan cult. The origins of the Christian shrine go back to Byzantine times, at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> or beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. The bishop of Siponto, Lorenzo Maiorano, in his *Liber de apparitione Sancti Michaelis in Monte Gargano*, narrates the events of the evangelisation of the pagan population and the transformation of the cave into a church dedicated to the Archangel Michael, after apparitions by the same Archangel on 8 May 940. The primitive shrine had already been attacked by Saracens in 869, but it was restored by the Normans who also built the town of Monte Sant'Angelo. During the Anjevin domination Charles I of Anjou rebuilt much of the mediæval church and the imposing bell tower in 1274.

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<sup>10</sup> L3C 5 (FAED II, 70).

<sup>11</sup> 2C 68 (FAED II, 292).

<sup>12</sup> WADDING, *Annales Minorum* II, 42-43.

Even though we are not sure whether Francis actually visited the cave-church of Saint Michael on Mount Gargano, we do know that he nurtured a great devotion to Saint Michael, which was a common feature of mediæval chivalric culture. In the *Memoriale* by Thomas of Celano we read: “He venerated the angels with the greatest affection, for they are with us in battle, and walk with us in the midst of the shadow of death. He said that such companions should be revered everywhere, and invoked as protectors. He taught that their gaze should not be offended, and no one should presume to do in their sight what he would not do in the sight of others. And since in choir one sings the psalms in the presence of the angels, he wanted all who were able to gather in the oratory and sing psalms wisely. He often said that Blessed Michael should be especially honoured because his duty is presenting souls to God. In honour of Saint Michael he would fast with great devotion for forty days between the feast of the Assumption and St. Michael’s feast day. For he used to say: ‘Each person should offer God some special praise or gift in honour of such a great prince.’”<sup>13</sup>

Francis also mentions Saint Michael in the *Exhortation to the Praise of God*, where he quotes the antiphon of Saint Michael: “Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.”<sup>14</sup> This Antiphon was sung in the liturgy on the two feasts of the Archangel, namely on 8 May and 29 September: *Sancte Michael Archangele, defende nos in prælio*.

Saint Francis also mentions the Archangel Saint Michael in the Antiphon to the Virgin Mary in the *Office of the Passion*: “Holy Virgin Mary [...] pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel, all the powers of heaven and all the saints, at the side of your most holy beloved Son, our Lord and Teacher.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Saint Francis in Gubbio**

Upon returning from southern Italy, according to Wadding’s account, Francis went to the town of Gubbio. He had already been there in the beginning of his conversion, after he had relinquished his father’s possessions in front of Bishop Guido I of Assisi, and in Gubbio he had received the generous gift of a tunic from his friend Federico Spadalunga.<sup>16</sup> There he had also stayed for a time in a leper hospice. This time Francis went to Gubbio along the same road he had followed way back in 1206. The road still passes close to the ancient Benedictine Monastery of San Verecondo, nowadays Vallingegno. This was the place where Francis asked for hospitality in 1206, and he was treated with contempt by the monks and sent to pay for lodging by working as a scullery boy in the kitchen. Thomas of Celano then states that the abbot of the monastery, when he later learned of Francis’ holiness, humbly begged him forgiveness.

This time in 1222 Francis was treated with more respect. In that same monastery Wadding recounts the story already narrated by Celano in his *Memoriale*: “One night, when the servant of the Most High was a guest at the monastery of San Verecondo in the diocese of Gubbio, a little sheep gave birth to a baby lamb. There was a cruel sow there, which did not spare the life of the innocent but killed it with a ravenous bite. In the morning, when the people were rising, they found the little lamb dead, and they knew surely that the sow was guilty of that viscious deed. When the pious father heard this, he was moved to remarkable compassion, and, remembering that other Lamb, lamented for the dead baby lamb, saying in front of everyone: ‘Alas, brother lamb, innocent animal, always displaying to people what is useful! Cursed be the pitiless one who killed you, and neither man nor beast shall eat of her!’ It is amazing to tell. Immediately the vicious sow began to get sick and after

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<sup>13</sup> 2C 197 (FAED II, 373-374).

<sup>14</sup> FAED I, 138.

<sup>15</sup> FAED I, 141.

<sup>16</sup> 1C 16 (FAED I, 195).

paying the punishment of torments for three days, finally suffered an avenging death. She was thrown in the monastery's ditch, and laying there for a long time, dried up like a board, and did not become food for any hungry creature."<sup>17</sup>

According to Wadding's account, it was also during that visit to Gubbio in 1222 that Francis tamed the wild wolf. We know the story from late sources, particularly the *Actus beati Francisci* and the *Fioretti*.<sup>18</sup>

Wadding mentions other episodes in Gubbio which are not registered in the early Sources, but in later chronicles. He refers to Brother Benvenuto of Gubbio, born in 1190, who in 1222 asked Francis to welcome him in the fraternity. Francis sent him to Apulia, from where he had just returned, in order to take care of lepers. Benvenuto lived in Corneto in Capitanata and died on 27 June 1232. His remains were enshrined, and he was declared Blessed by Pope Innocent XII in 1697. Wadding took this information from Tommaso da Pavia, *Dialogus* (1244) and from Mark of Lisbon. Another brother who lived in Gubbio was Bartolomeo Baro from Massa Trabaria. According to Wadding, who quotes Mariano da Firenze, he was a lawyer at the Roman Curia and became a Franciscan. Wadding mentions a long discussion between Lucifer and his council of demons in hell, that this Brother Bartolomeo heard during an ecstasy in which he reflected upon the holiness of Saint Francis. The account is found in the *Historia Septem Tribulationum* by Angelo Clareno.<sup>19</sup>

Wadding also quotes Mariano da Firenze, *Compendium Chronicarum Ordinis fratrum Minorum*, who states that Saint Francis met a certain Bartolomeo Baro, who had been a lawyer at the Roman Curia, but had retreated in a hermitage between Gubbio and Massa Trabaria.

Francis had given the habit of the Third Order of Penitents to Bartolomeo, whose life shone with holy examples.

During the year 1222 Pope Honorius III also continued to issue papal documents in favour of the friars Minor, just as he had done in 1219 and 1220 with the Bullae *Cum dilecti*, *Pro dilectis*, and *Cum secundum consilium*. The Bulla which bears the date 29 March 1222 is entitled *Devotionis vestrae*.<sup>20</sup> This Bulla gives permission to the friars Minor to be able to celebrate the divine office during times of interdict. The text of the Bulla states:

“Moved by your devout prayers, with our authority we concede this present indulgence, namely, that if you happen to live in places where there is a general interdict, you are free to celebrate the Divine Office in the Churches, but behind closed doors, excluding all those who are excommunicated or under interdict, and you are to pray in a low voice. No one therefore is permitted to go against this permission that we are giving you. If anyone will dare to do so, may he know that he will fall under the indignation of the Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter ad Paul. Give in Anagni, on the fourth day of the Kalend of April, in the sixth year of our Pontificate.”

This short papal document continues to prove that, even while Francis was still alive, the brothers were seeking exemptions from the papal curia in order to be able to carry out their mission without impediment. They received protection from local bishops in order to be able to preach, they also organised the year of probation, or novitiate, and they also gained the faculty to pray officially behind closed doors in the churches during periods of interdict. 1222 was witnessing a continued growth and progress in the Order's structures.

<sup>17</sup> 1C 16 (FAED I, 195).

<sup>18</sup> ABF 23 (FAED III, 482-485); *Fioretti* 21 (FAED III, 601-604).

<sup>19</sup> ANGELO CLARENO, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*. Translated from Latin by D. BURR and E.

RANDOLPH DANIEL, Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University, NY 2005, 47-49.

<sup>20</sup> *Bullarium Franciscanum*, studio et labore Fr. JOANNIS HYACINTHI SBARALEÆ, Tomus I, Romæ 1759, 9.

## BECOMING A PRAYER

Anthony M. Carrozzo OFM

There are many wonderful prayers composed by St. Francis of Assisi and prayed by us today. For me no one is more beautiful and wise than Chapter 23 of the *Earlier Rule*. Francis prays “We thank you for Yourself.” How profound, a prayer of thanksgiving and a prayer of generosity. Yet before we consider gratitude we must consider God’s generosity. And indeed Francis does. He tells the Father:

“You created everything spiritual and corporal and after making us in Your image and likeness, you placed us in Paradise.” Most assuredly this is a God Who is generous. Look at what He has given us: A relationship with Him, an identity with Christ, and Paradise, all given freely without any insistence on our part. After all we weren’t even there to ask. He did this “through Your holy love with which You loved us.” Then we acted foolishly. Paradise became a den of thieves so He sent His Son “to redeem us captives.” This is a God of love Who is generous to us even when we disappoint Him.

He certainly is disappointed in us. Francis tells us He will judge us but He will do so mercifully so that we hear these words echo through the years ‘Come, you beloved of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of this world.’ Like Father, like Son. Generous almost to a fault, if we dare to say that of God.

Such generosity from God does not stop there. He sends “the Paraclete, to give You thanks for everything as it pleases You and Him, Who always satisfies You in everything through Whom You have done so much for us.” Don’t miss what just happened here. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that through that Spirit we may give thanks. What an inspired slipping in of the

Spirit because we would not even be able to thank this generous God without the Spirit.

We have moved from the generosity of God to our responsibility to give thanks for such generosity. So now we understand the full measure of “We thank you for Yourself.”

With Mary we move from God’s generosity to our gratitude. She joins us with “all the saints who were, who will be and who are to come to give You thanks for all these things.”

Gratitude, for Francis, cannot be a simple heartfelt gesture. He challenges us to respond in gratitude with a life of service. Everyone is called to this life of service: “all peoples, races, tribes and tongues” and lest we miss his point, Francis names so many. Among them these stand out for me “all penitents and youth, the poor and the needy, kings and princes, workers and farmers...” You cannot be excluded whoever you are, wherever you are, however young or old you are, whether you have much or little. Francis knew about the inclusive nature of service born out of gratitude for he learned to work with his hands among others. Long before Vatican II spoke of the People of God, Francis called us to be just that.

So we are united: “let us all love the Lord God Who has given and gives to each one of us our whole body, our whole soul and our whole life. Who has created, redeemed and will save us by His mercy alone, Who did and does everything good for us.” Notice the tenses. God’s action continues into the present. It is ever present.

These thoughts of Francis could readily be called our Franciscan Creed, not a dreary doctrinal recitation of beliefs but the lived belief in a God who never stops loving us, embracing us, being generous to us. It is a

creed that we should pray daily until it becomes part of the fabric of our lives.

Do we understand all of this? Of course not. Nor will we ever. Rather we should “delight in the Lord” who has been so generous to us. Delight is such a wonderful word. Have you ever played with a child and watched his or her eyes twinkle while you play? The child does not care about your essence, only that you are playful. We should play with God. Francis surely did. If you join Francis, I suspect God will be relieved. You will have a grand time and will want to spend more time together. And God would not need to hear our constant nagging for inconsequential things. It is true that petitionary prayer is an aspect of Franciscan prayer but those petitions must be oriented toward deepening the reality of the Kingdom instead of our selfish needs. Self-centered prayer turns out to be praying to ourselves.

Francis concludes “Wherever we are, in every place, at every hour, and every time of the day, every day and communally, let all of us truly and humbly believe, holding

in our heart and love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and give thanks to the most high and supreme eternal God, Trinity and unity.” In this Francis is calling us not to be **AT** prayers but to be **A** prayer.

Michael Blastic, a friar scholar, in his survey of Franciscan prayer says of Chapter 23 that it is “ The experience of prayer and life without dichotomy and without separating out the realms of the sacred and secular, both in one world that is willed by God and it is blessed with the good things that God has given for all to share.” For Franciscans today it is important to integrate this perspective into our life of prayer. Prayer and life blend together in a unique fabric for us. Too many of us put down our prayer books to get on with life. That is to miss the profound message of Francis of Assisi. If we become a prayer, we are a prayer wherever we go and whatever we do. Isn’t it time to return to the beauty and wisdom of Francis as he expressed in Chapter 23?

# THE SCHOOL OF ARABIC IN THE FRIARY OF SANTA MARIJA TA' ĠESÙ, VALLETTA - MALTA

*English translation from:*

GORĠ AQUILINA, *Il-Franġiskani Maltin (Ta' Ġiezu) 1482c - 1965c*,  
Klabb Kotba Maltin, Malta 2011, 103-111

*The Barakat Trust Major Award has been assigned to the conservation of the Islamic Manuscript Collection at the Franciscan Provincial Archives in Malta. The Award is the result of the work of three Book Conservators. David Plummer is Conservator for the Archdiocese of Malta, while Maria Borg and Chanelle Briffa are book and paper conservators at the Notarial Archives of Malta. The following is a historical presentation of the School of Arabic and of the Islamic Manuscripts that were copied in the Friary of Santa Marija ta' Ġesù, in Valletta, Malta, by the late historian of the Franciscan Province, Fr. George Aquilina OFM († 29 September 2012).*

## **The Study of Arabic**

When one considers that our missionaries would often choose to go and minister in the Custody of the Holy Land, it is natural to assume that they would give importance to the study of Arabic, as well as to that of the languages spoken in the regions of this mission. On the part of our Order there were various initiatives to promote the teaching of Arabic. It was Saint Francis himself who, in his Rule, spoke about those brothers who would like to go among Saracens and other non-believers. The need to learn Arabic as a means of apostolate was one of the topics of writers

and General Chapters of the Order from the very beginning. Roger Bacon (1214-1294) wrote: *Pro conversione autem infidelium multum valet lingua Arabica*. In 1276 Pope John XXI established in Majorca a *studium* of Arabic in the friary of the Friars Minor,<sup>1</sup> and Blessed Ramon Llull (1232-1315) suggested to the Pope to establish a house where friars could learn languages of all those places where they were going to work as missionaries: *et inprimis linguam arabicam discernent*. In the General Chapters many suggestions and orders were given, but we do not know a lot about what was actually done. What we do know is that during the General Chapter of Toledo in 1633, it was ordered that missionaries should possess: *linguarum diversarum peritiam*, and ten years later the Congregation of Propaganda Fide insisted that they should learn Arabic. It continued to insist (20 January 1697) that no friars could be sent to Egypt if they did not know: *mediocriter saltem linguam arabicam*.<sup>2</sup>

After the establishment of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* (1622), the teaching of Arabic was more organised, so much so that during the same year a College was founded in Rome in our friary of San Pietro in Montorio. In 1625 another College was founded in the Ognissanti friary in Florence, which was confirmed in

<sup>1</sup> G. GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa*, Tomo II, Quracchi 1913, 423: *statuit et etiam ordinavit, ut in insula Majoricensi (...) monasterium construat, in quo tredicim fratres Ordinis Minorum*

*continuo in Arabico student, nunciat se hanc erectionem Collegii confirmasse.*

<sup>2</sup> N. DURINGON, *L'Istruzione dei Missionari nell'Ordine dei Frati Minori*, Cairo 1959, 100.

1627,<sup>3</sup> and in 1700 another College was established in the friary of San Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiberina, among many others.<sup>4</sup> We have mentioned these three friaries since Maltese Franciscan missionaries had many links with them. The College of S. Pietro in Montorio had as its first *Lector* of Arabic Fr. Tommaso Obicini da Novara,<sup>5</sup> and after him Fr. Ludovico da Malta (31 March 1626), who was already teaching the Discalced Carmelites in Rome. This friar also lectured in the Florence College.<sup>6</sup> Among the students who frequented the College of San Bartolomeo all'Isola we find Fr. Isidoro Cesare Rapa from Gozo (†1753). He had been approved and sent to the Holy Land on 22 April 1723. We also find Fr. Raimondo Borg (†1792), who was also approved to be sent to the Holy Land on 26 March 1739, as well as Fr. Evangelista Micallef, who was approved in December 1742 and sent to the Holy Land. In the *Breve* of Pope Clement XI, *Commissi nobis*, of 1710, this college became a 'Missionary College'. From a letter by the Minister General Fr. Raffaele da Lugagnano, dated 10 July 1747,<sup>7</sup> we see how our Order was anxious that all Provinces produce good and well-trained missionaries in these Colleges. He ordered the superiors to send all the best elements of their entities in these Colleges, with pain of excommunication if they would not make a good discernment process of the

candidates before sending them to Rome. We know that in San Bartolomeo lectured Fr. Filippo Moore (†1872), and among the friars who studied there were Fr. Bernardino Galea (†1875), Fr. Samuele Vassallo (†1905)<sup>8</sup> and Fr. Pietro Battista Galea (†1913). The Provinces of the Order also had their own Colleges for languages. Among these the foremost were the Colleges of Aleppo (Syria) and Harissa (Lebanon) in the Holy Land Custody. Many Maltese friars studied Arabic in these Colleges.

### **The Study of Arabic in our friaries**

Studies have already been published regarding the study of Arabic in Malta,<sup>9</sup> but it seems that the Historical Archives of *Propaganda Fide* have not been analysed thoroughly. There is priceless information that still awaits someone who can take over this study from scratch. Here we are interested in speaking about us Franciscans, and about our contribution in this field.

Ever since it was founded in 1622, the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* showed an interest in the organisation of *studia* and colleges of Arabic. The name of Malta was at the forefront in this endeavour. The Prefect, Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi (12 November 1622 - 18 November 1632), began early in his search (16 December 1623) regarding the possibility that the

<sup>3</sup> Propaganda Fide Secret Archives [ASPF], *Acta*, 1626-1627, vol. 5, f. 196, n. 17: *Confirmatio Studii Arabicae linguae in Convento Omnium Sanctorum Ordinis Minorum de Observantia, Florentiae*.

<sup>4</sup> The College of S. Bartolomeo was founded in 1696, but it had a short life, since it had to be refounded in 1707. On 20 January 1629 the Congregation praised the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Diego da S. Severino: *d'aver fatto promuovere gli studij della lingua Arabica nel convento di sua Religione in Nazaret (...) che questi siano principij de felici progressi (...)*; ASPF, *lettere* 1629, Vol. 8, ff. 8<sup>rv</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> L. WADDING, *Annales Minorum, ad annum 1625*, n. 43: After ten years of being a missionary in the East, where he was Custos of the Holy Land (1619-1620), in 1621 Fr. Tommaso resided in the friary of S. Pietro in Montorio: *experientia cognoscens quam necessaria esset linguae arabicae cognitione pro missionariis ad orientales regiones destinandis anno sequenti S. Congregationi de Propaganda Fide recens institute (...) seipsum exhibebat pro munere Lectoris*.

<sup>6</sup> In the College of Ognissanti in Florence, resided another Maltese Franciscan who had been missionary in Jerusalem, Fr. Raffaele Attard (1873-1943); G. GOLUBOVICH 1923, IV, 59, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Archivi Franciscan Province [APF], *LC*, 9 FF. 141<sup>rv</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> T. CANDUCCI, *Il Collegio Missionario di S. Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiberina*, Roma 1968, 92, 162, 167, 196; see *Breve, Ibid.*, doc. 8, 215-223.

<sup>9</sup> E. ROSSI, *Manoscritti e documenti orientali nelle biblioteche e negli archivi di Malta*, in *Archivio Storico di Malta* 2(1930), 1-10. He described our Mss, as did G. SCERRI, *Malta e i Luoghi Santi della Palestina*, Malta 1933; A. CREMONA, *L'antica fondazione della scuola di lingua araba in Malta*, in *Melita Historica* 1(1953); D.A. AGIUS, *Malta, Centru għat-Tagħlim tal-Gharbi fil-Mediterran*, Malta 1980, a work that we had to publish together. The result is an incomplete work which he published by himself. Regarding our case he only published the material that he possessed at the time.

study of Arabic could be done also in Malta. In the answer that the Inquisitor Monsignor Carlo Bovio, Isqof of Bagnorea (Bagnoregio) gave him (1623-1624), among other things, he informed him about: *il desiderio ch'ha' la Sacra Congregazione de propaganda fide, che qui in Malta fossero eretti studij da Regolari, o' secolari di lingua arabica*. The aim, as we have said, was that of the spreading of the Gospel. He also mentioned that it was not difficult for Maltese to learn Arabic, since Maltese resembles Arabic. He also stated that the preachers *sono soliti predicare in maltese, predicandosi continuamente per tutta l'Isola in lingua arabica, fuor che nella Chiesa di San Giovanni (...)*; however there was no one who was able to teach the language according to the rules of grammar. He suggested that a Maronite from Mount Lebanon could be sent over, or else, since in Malta there were Jesuits, Capuchins and Dominicans, their respective Generals could be asked to send somebody.<sup>10</sup> A similar attempt was made by the Inquisitor Onorato Visconti (1624-1627) but: *non si è potuto trovar soggetto a' proposito*, and therefore he also asked to bring over a Maronite.<sup>11</sup> These Maronite priests often came to Malta to collect alms, or Mass offerings. From a letter of Don Giovanni Aurano, Maronte (5 December 1642) we know that he was ready to request the vacant benefice after the death of Don Giovanni Habela, who was a teacher of Arabic, since, as he stated: *ho maggior cognitione della proprietà delli vocaboli, e di gramatica, che li Maltesi, come loro stessi confessano, quali parlano un certo Arabico Italianato, molto lontano del nostro (...)*.<sup>12</sup>

All Provinces were encouraged to establish language *studia* on the model of

the *Studium* of S. Pietro in Montorio.<sup>13</sup> The Inquisitor Visconti, on 9 June 1625, admitted that the Order of St. John at the time was not in a position: *ad abbracciare l'opera*, and he said that the Bishop was ready to pay fifty Italian *scudi* a year on condition: *che una volta la settimana dichiarari al Popolo della Città Notabile la Dottrina Cristiana*. He also added: *Però se fra Ludovico da Malta Minor osservante vorrà dar principio all'insegnar questa lingua havra la sudetta provisione annua purchè, come dico insegni anche per una volta la settimana la dottrina al Popolo di quella Città*.<sup>14</sup> Until 12 October 1625, Fr. Ludovico had not yet come to Malta, and the offer that the Bishop made, to which the Inquisitor also agreed, was still on the table.<sup>15</sup> As we have seen (31 March 1628) Fr. Ludovico was teaching Arabic in the College of S. Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rome. In 1628 it became a possibility that we Franciscans could found a *studium* of Arabic, and the friars asked for help from the Grand Master and the Bishop so that P. Francesco da Malta Minore Osservante could come over to found this *Studium*. We know this from a letter, dated 13 February 1628, of the Congregation to the Inquisitor in Malta.<sup>16</sup> The *Studium* had to be founded in the premises of our friars: *apud Minores de Observantia*. The Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* was insisting that all difficulties be solved: *difficultates praesentes removeri, ac erigi praesentem studium*. It also wanted that the General Commissary of the Order remove all difficulties in the endeavour.<sup>17</sup> The Congregation wrote to the Bishop and Inquisitor of Malta on 17 March 1629 so that they would help Fr. Francesco da Malta, who was working hard to establish a *Studium* of Arabic. The General

<sup>10</sup> ASPF, *SOCCG*, vol. 358, ff. 54<sup>r</sup>/57<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> ASPF, *SOCCG*, *Ibid.*, ff. 59/64<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> ASPF, *SOCCG*, vol. 167, ff. 418<sup>r</sup>/419<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> L. WADDING, *Annales, ad annum* 1625, n. 43

<sup>14</sup> ASPF, *SOCCG*, vol. 358, ff. 116<sup>r</sup>/123<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> ASPF, *SOCCG*, *Ibid.*, ff. 117/122<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Archives Inquisition Malta [AIM], *Corrispondenza* 1628-1726, 36, f. 1.

<sup>17</sup> ASPF, *Acta* 1629, f. 240. The difficulty probably regarded the fact that the Order already possessed the College of S. Pietro in Montorio, having the same aim. The General Commissaries of the Cismontane Franciscan family were Fr. Benigno da Genova (1625-28) and Fr. Antonio de Galbiato (1628-33). L. LEMMENS, *Acta S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide pro Terra Sancta*, in *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica*, I, 1921, 408.

Commissary of the Order promised his support, and said that he intended to raise the matter in front of the General Chapter of the Order. The Congregation was doing all it could to encourage Fr. Francesco to found this college.<sup>18</sup> But three years had to pass: *omnibus difficultatibus superatis, P. Franciscus Melitensis lectiones linguae arabicae inchoavit sub initio anni 1632*.<sup>19</sup>

In that same year Fr. Francesco showed the Congregation what kind of help he needed from it.<sup>20</sup> The Cardinals wrote letters and recommended this *Studium* of Arabic to the Inquisitor Alfieri (Martino: 1631-34) and to his successors. The letters state that in the same friary where the *Studium* of Arabic was established, another *Studium* would also be founded, since the friary did not have sufficient means. D. Pietro Chassar (Cassar?), a doctor in Laws and in Theology, offered to pay for the oil (of the lamps), for paper and other needs of the students. The General Commissary orally promised to offer his support. Finally the (Sicilian) Provincials of Val Mazzara, Val di Noto and Val Demone were obliged to send their students to this *studium*.<sup>21</sup>

This first *Studium* was established in the friary of Rabat. In a note that Fr. Ġoġ Scerri found in the archives of the Confraternity of Saint Joseph, founded in our church in Rabat, it mentions the place where lessons were held: *La detta Arciconfraternita hebbe un altro oratorio*

*vecchio, intra septa Conventus e quest'indicava grande antichità, che era tutto ornato e rabescato con lettere arabe, ed in esso si istruiva la lingua Araba*.<sup>22</sup> Fr. Francesco lectured until 1637, since in that year Fr. Domenico da Malta was appointed, precisely in *Conventu nostro Civitatis Notabilis Melitae*.<sup>23</sup>

One can ask what kind of programme was followed. We know about the one followed in San Pietro in Montorio, which at the time was the *studium* under the guidance of the same Fr. Ludovico da Malta.<sup>24</sup> In that *studium* some lessons were held after dinner in the evening: *Lectiones huiusmodi (grammaticales) atemeridianae post coenam repetitio instituenda erat*.<sup>25</sup> It could be that the same procedure was followed in Rabat, since we have seen that D. Pietro Cassar was ready to offer oil for the lamps.

We know the methodology and the books used, not only because the Congregation took care of these didactic means,<sup>26</sup> but also because the books and manuscripts still exist to this very day in our archives. In short, we know that the method was divided into two parts. The grammar consisted in the training of reading and writing in classical Arabic, *sine punctis*, and in the training of the rules of grammar. The printed books were those of the

<sup>18</sup> ASPF, *Lettere*, 17 March 1629, vol. 8, ff. 49<sup>v</sup>. V. Appendix A, doc. 33d.

<sup>19</sup> L. WADDING, *Annales, ad annum 1629*, 44.

<sup>20</sup> ASPF, vol. 392, f. 22, in L. Wadding, *Annales, ad annum 1629*, 44.

<sup>21</sup> During the same period, in 1632, Wadding mentions: *quidam Pater a Facciola Melitensi eiusque socii, linguae turcicae et arabicae periti*. These friars had in mind to go and proclaim the faith among the Tartars, but the Legate of France prohibited them from doing so. It could be that this Friar a Facciola was Fr. Girolamo Facciola, a Maltese Franciscan Conventual. Another Conventual, Fr. Bartolomeo Stellini, who was missionary in Mesopotamia, went through great suffering in his mission. On 9 July 1642, the Congregation ordered him to take with him: *per compagno uno del paese*. This companion had to know the languages used in the mission. Fr. Giovanni Pantallarese, another Franciscan Conventual, intended to leave and join him on the first occasion that presented itself; ASPF, *SOCE*, 167, f. 348. His Guardian, Fr.

Antonius Grech, testified (12 June 1643) that Fr. Giovanni possiede bene la lingua italiana ed arabica quanto comporta la lingua maltese, et alquanto la lingua turchesca. Fr. Joannes Antonius Mannarini told him that he parla bene turchesco et italiano et arabo quanto comporta la lingua maltese ch'è simile, eccetto pochi vocaboli ch'habbiamo perduti con conversare con altre nationi. Fr. Bernardus Pace stated regarding the same Fr. Giovanni, that he parla bene italiano, turcheno, et arabico per essere linguaggio simile al maltese; ASPF, *SOCE*, vol. 39, ff. 10<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> G. SCERRI, *Malta e i Luoghi Santi della Palestina* Malta 1933, 57.

<sup>23</sup> ASPF, *SOCE*, vol. 24, f. 332. V. Appendix A. doc. 34.

<sup>24</sup> AM, I, 72.

<sup>25</sup> A. KLIENHANS, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae et Collegi Missionum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum in Conventu ad S. Petrum in Monte Aureo Romae erecti*, in *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica*, XIII (1930), 13.

<sup>26</sup> ASPF, *Acta*, 1625, f. 215; 1642, f. 70.

grammar of Fr. Tommaso Obicini,<sup>27</sup> the Catechism of Christian faith of the Jesuit Cardinal Blessed (Saint) Robert Bellarmino,<sup>28</sup> the Book of Psalms<sup>29</sup> and the Gospels.<sup>30</sup> These were all books that were common and the students were familiar with them in their Italian and Latin versions. There was the book of grammar explained in Latin; the Catechism in two columns, in Arabic and in Latin; the Gospels with one verse in Arabic and underneath the same verse in Latin; a dictionary.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that these books have the stamps of the libraries of the friaries of Rabat and Valletta. This is another proof that the *studium* first existed in Rabat. In an inventory of the Library of the friary, compiled by Fr. Vincenzo Filippo Zammit in 1716, we also know the list of the manuscripts and published books that the library possessed,<sup>32</sup> the majority of which did not arrive to us. When the *Studium* was transferred to the Valletta friary, other books were added to these.<sup>33</sup> It is not certain whether these were used in the Valletta *Studium*. Some of them bear the name of Fr. Isidoro Cesare Rapa, who studied in Rome, and lectured in Italy. Others are printed and bear the stamp of the Holy Land. These were certainly books used by our friars in their missions.

Our manuscripts shed light also on the didactic system followed by Fr. Francesco.

He would follow the programme of studies of the College of San Pietro in Montorio, where maximum importance was given to the use of Catechism and the Sacred Scriptures. In order to reach his aim he used the words of the Bible in grammatical exercises, and in order to write his textbooks he made use of the help of an elderly slave scribe, who possessed an excellent calligraphy. The slave scribe was offered to him in service by the Order of St. John, and he copied the works of Fr. Francesco in an elegant style. His name was Ali ibn Yahya I-Zawawi Bu Yusuf.

D.A. Agius<sup>34</sup> writes: "There is no doubt that Zawawi was the only one, as far as we know, who as a slave succeeded in contributing works written in Arabic in our islands. According to the Manuscripts conerved in the library (archives) of the Franciscans, Zawawi was employed in the friary between 1629 and 1633. His calligraphy is clear and elegant. From the information that one gathers here and there in the Manuscripts written by this slave, one meets some important statements that give a hint to the reader as to who was this slave and what were his dealings with his master. We know, for example, that Zawawi was happy to be employed with Father Franceco and that he was treated well. The slave, who was an elderly man, called his master: 'A respected and intelligent man; a man who

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<sup>27</sup> T. OBICINI, *Grammatica Arabica Agrumia appellata cum versione Latina, ac dilucida expositione*. This grammar was used in the College of San Pietro in Montorio on command of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, and it was also printed.

<sup>28</sup> (R). BELLARMINO, *Dichiarazione più copiosa della Dottrina Christiana*. Its *ensor* was Fr. Tommaso da Novara, and it was published many times by the same Congregation.

<sup>29</sup> G. SIONITA - V. SCIALAC (trans.), *Liber Psalmorum Davidis Regis et Prophetarum. Ex Arabico Idiomate in Latinum translatus*.

<sup>30</sup> J.B. RAYMOND (trans.). The book begins without a title.

<sup>31</sup> D. G. DE SILESIA, *Fabrica ovvero Dittionario della lingua volgare Arabica, et Italiana*. The Apostolic Prefect of Tripoli, Fr. Mansueto da Castro Giovanni, in 1665 requested *Propaganda Fide* to send to him; *Annales Baronij Arabici 1 e 2 parte; Thomas de Cempis Arabice; 4 Evangelij Arabica con lingua latina; n° 4 Liber Psalmorum Arabicus, et Latinus; 4 Doctrine Cristiane,*

*Arabice n° 2° ditionario, Siro latino del P. Tomaso de Novara; 4 ditionario Arabico o fabrica del Padre Domenico Germano; 2 fabrica piccola del P. Domenico Germano; 4 ditionario Turchescho, Capuccino; 4 Elevatio mentis in Deum; ASPF, SOCG, 253, f. 110. The same Congregation in 1648 made an offer of books to the Discalced Carmelites, *Ibid.*, 359, f. 208. This request was registered in the Acts of Notary Pietro Buttigieg, on 4 August 1644.*

<sup>32</sup> APF, RD. E, 118: *Un volume dei quattro Vangeli; una grammatica; un vocabulario; in tutto 26 manoscritti arabi. Vengono poi: tre volumi dei Vangeli in arabo-italiano stampati; due salteri stampati in arabo-latino; quattro grammatiche di arabo, due in latino e due in italiano stampati; due volumi di logica in arabo latino stampati; Missale in arabo e latino stampati.*

<sup>33</sup> J. LUNA, *Annalium Sacrorum a Creatione Mundi ad Christi D.N. Incarnatione; Biblia Sacra Arabica*, Romae 1655.

<sup>34</sup> D.A. AGIUS, *Malta Ċentru għat-Tagħlim*, 1980, 28-29.

did good deeds among slaves.’ Regarding the quality of the work that he was doing, Zawawi did not feel competent enough to write all that Father Francesco asked of him, and thus he understood that his work was to serve for the good use of the students and their *Lector*.’”

Ever since its foundation the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* gave great attention to Malta. In the meeting of 12 December 1623 it wanted that the *Studium* be established by the Religious, with the aim of providing lecturers and missionaries.<sup>35</sup> The foundation was entrusted to the hands of the Inquisitor (Carlo Bovio) Bishop of Bagnoregio.<sup>36</sup> However, everything remained unrealised, so much so that the Congregation continued to insist, and added that it was easy for the Maltese to learn Arabic, because although they spoke this language in a corrupt manner, it seemed that they had already taken it from their mothers’ milk and from their own parents! Thus, on 17 July 1624, the Congregation insisted once again with the Bishop of Malta, Balthassar Cagliares (1615-33) and with the new Inquisitor Onorato Visconti (1624-27).<sup>37</sup> It is certain that, until 14 October 1629, the *Studium*, of which the Franciscan Commissary General was informed, had not yet been established, since it is said that some books were being sent over.<sup>38</sup> On 20 March 1632 the Congregation wrote a letter to Fr. Francesco, congratulating him that the *Studium* had started to function, and told him that it was going to send him four Psalters, two Gospels and six grammar

books by Fr. Tommaso Obicini, all of which were in Arabic.<sup>39</sup> In fact, on 25 November 1631, Fr. Francesco said that he had started lessons with four students from our Province of Val di Noto: *mandati dalla Sicilia*, and therefore he requested that the books would arrive as soon as possible, and also wanted that Fr. Tommaso Obicini be informed of these developments.<sup>40</sup> On 26 April 1632, in the Acts of the Congregation it is again said that it was decided to send to the students of Malta some copies of the Grammar of Fr. Tommaso Obicini.<sup>41</sup> The annalist of the Order Fr. Luke Wadding informs us that in 1630 this *Studium* was already functioning.<sup>42</sup> Three years later, during the General Chapter of Toledo in 1633,<sup>43</sup> the Order wanted to establish other four Colleges for the teaching of languages. The Congregation told the Inquisitor to send over Fr. Francesco to Rome: *per aggiustar lo Studio Arabico in quell’Isola (...). Responsum die 21 octobris 1632*.<sup>44</sup> All this shows us that the *Studium* was not planned as a transient reality. The *Studium* of San Bartolomeo all’Isola, although being open to all Franciscans, belonged to the Reformed Franciscans. These took advantage of the desire to found a *Studium* of Arabic to ask the Grand Master on 9 July 1622,<sup>45</sup> to let them establish a friary for themselves in Malta, in order to teach the language here as well, in order to go: *tra i Mori, in servizio della propagazione della nostra Santa Fede*. In Malta there was still no *Studium* for the Arabic language. We do not know whether they wanted to establish it themselves, or whether they believed that

<sup>35</sup> ASPF, *Acta*, 1622-1625, 12 Dec 1623, vol. 3, f. 74. V. Appendix A, doc. 33a.

<sup>36</sup> A. BONNICI, *Medieval and Roman Inquisition in Malta*, Malta 1998, 105, calls this Inquisitor Carlo Bovio (1623-24), Bishop of Bagnoregio: *An unsuccessful Bishop*. It is certain that he spent no energy to carry out the wishes of the Congregation.

<sup>37</sup> ASPF, *Acta*, 1622-1625, 17 July 1624, vol. 3, f. 115<sup>v</sup>. V. Appendix A, doc. 33b.

<sup>38</sup> ASPF, *Lettere*, 1629, 14 Oct 1629, vol. 8, f. 69. V. Appendix A, doc. 33e.

<sup>39</sup> ASPF, *Lettere*, 1632, vol. 12, ff. 31<sup>rv</sup>. V. Appendix A, doc. 33f.

<sup>40</sup> ASPF, *Lettere d’Italia e Malta*, 1632, ff. 245, 248<sup>v</sup>, 249<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> A. KLEINHANS, 1930, 14: *Tunc etiam studiis arabicis in conventu Omnium Sanctorum Florentiae et in Melita insula erectis iidem libri concessi sunt*. ASPF, *Lettere d’Italia e Malta*, ff. 245, 248<sup>v</sup>, 249<sup>v</sup>. Fr. Francesco was insisting to have books (25 Nov 1631). Vittorio di Fiore (15 March 1632) had to take care to send them over to Messina to Cassano Giustiniani, so that he would in turn send them to the Inquisitor.

<sup>42</sup> L. WADDING, *Annales, ad annum 1630*, n. 48: *hoc anno 1630 floruisse et alia alumnorum pro missionibus Collegia, nempe Florentiae ac Melitae*.

<sup>43</sup> *Codex Redactus*, 1796, 353, n. 18.

<sup>44</sup> ASPF, *Lettere d’Italia e Malta*, 1632, f. 249<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Archives Order of Malta [AOM], 1262, ff. 101/124<sup>v</sup>.

the Maltese spoke Arabic. The general idea was that the Maltese spoke a corrupt form of Arabic. In order to arrive at all costs to carry out their will to establish a *Studium*, the Reformed friars even accused the Commissaries of the Holy Land in front of Propaganda Fide, stating that they were: *mosse da odio et ambitione* towards them.<sup>46</sup>

The Ms. *Necrologio antico*, states: *16 Febraro: Nella Notabile 1633 il Padre Lettore Francesco Flieles del Rabato*. Here is the only place where the surname 'Flieles' (=Pullicino?) is mentioned. The year of death of this friar is erroneous, since it leads us to think that this *Studium* had a very short life, at least in Rabat. In 1637 we find the appointment of Fr. Domenico da Malta (Pace) as *Lector* of Arabic in Rabat. In 1652 we have some information regarding the *Studium* of Arabic in the Valletta friary, and that the *Lector* was still Fr. Domenico Pace from Qormi. This time, however, the *Studium* is mentioned as being under the patronage of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, which established it in 1637, with the work of the Inquisitor Fabio Chigi, who made use of the presence in Malta of the Maronite Giuseppe Fantino in order to establish the *Studium*. This time the Inquisitor had in mind to establish it in Birgu (Vittoriosa) *ove Monsignore procura sia la scuola*. The Apostolic Vicar Antonio da Virgoletta proposed to him both Don Francesco Azzopardi, and his uncle Fr. Domenico (Pace from Qormi), one in Birgu and the other one in Valletta, so that they could help one another, since Valletta and Birgu are separated only *da un braccio di mare più d'una scopetata*.<sup>47</sup> On 22

September 1637 the Congregation appointed as *Lector* also Don Francesco Azzopardi,<sup>48</sup> nephew of our Fr. Domenico, who had been appointed *Lector* that same year. This date should be considered as the date of the founding of this *Studium*. On 4 January 1638 the Apostolic Vicar Antonio da Virgoletta wrote to Monsignor Ingoli and told him that the Inquisitor was waiting: *con grandissimo desiderio per dar principio alla nuova scuola*.<sup>49</sup> On 30 July of that year Don Francesco praised the interest shown by the students, and said that it was: *profitto mirabile*, and added that: *uno di questi giovani (sta) per entrare nella Religione de' Padri Francescani*.<sup>50</sup> We add that Chigi was also convinced that the Maltese could easily learn the Arabic language: *poiché la Maltese è araba perfetta di pronunzia (...) mentre che ogni altra nazione richiede due volte impegno per apprenderla*.<sup>51</sup> The fact that this Inquisitor was very interested in the Arabic language is also seen from the fact that on 2 November he sent some Arabic books to Cardinal Barberini.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that our *Studium* soon lost its importance, since in the same year, 1637, a College of Arabic was founded: *in Conventu Sanctae Mariae Salutis Neapoli erecto pro Regnis Neapolis et Siciliae*.<sup>53</sup> Malta was part of this Kingdom. In a letter sent to the Congregation on 12 March 1638, Fr. Gerardo da Milano, a Reformed Franciscan, pleaded with the Inquisitor: *per amor di Dio facia uno Studio di lingua Arabica a Malta, nel Convento nostro*. He stated that the present *Lector* (Don Francesco Azzopardi) was teaching

<sup>46</sup> ASPF, SOCG, vol. 167, ff. 415/422<sup>v</sup>. V. *Ibid.*, ff. 416/421<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> T. SOMIGLI, *Etiopia Franciscana*, in *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica*, I, 1928, 63.

<sup>48</sup> ASPF, *Acta S. Cong.* 1636-1637, vol. 12, ff. 375<sup>v</sup>: *Sac. Cong. Instantiam praefati Reverendissimi Inquisitoris probans censuit scholam praedictam esse in dicta Insula erigendam, et lectorem deputandum et constituendum esse praefatum D. Franciscum (...)*.

<sup>49</sup> ASPF, SOCG, vol. 24, f. 322.

<sup>50</sup> ASPF, SOCG, vol. 24, f. 323.

<sup>51</sup> ASPF, *Lettere d'Italia*, vol. 19, *Corrispondenza* 1637, 188, in A. CREMONA, 1952, 91.

<sup>52</sup> V. BORG, *Fabio Chigi Apostolic Delegate in Malta (1634-1639)*, Città del Vaticano 1967, 420. It seems that this was not a rare occurrence. Don Francesco Azzopardi in a letter written on 30 July 1638 states that some Maltese galleys captured a Turkish war vessel *dove si trovarono molti libri arabi(e) Mons. Inquisitore li ha presi tutti*; ASPF, SOCG, vol. 24, f. 323, 324<sup>v</sup>. Don Francesco (18 March 1638) received from the hands of Fr. Arcangelo: *la balla di libri dalla Sacra Congregazione (...) li ha o già consegnata in proprij mano*; ASPF, SOCG, vol. 24, f. 335<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> ASPF, *Acta* 1637, ff. 71, n. 6; 152, n. 42; 278, n. 18; 352 n. 42; 430, nn. 1-3.

children, but that these were of no value to the Congregation: *ma homini litterati*, and that it was not a good thing that the friars had to go to the house of Don Francesco for lessons. He stated that the Valletta friary was big enough to accommodate ten students. He also suggested that the students and the *Lector* come from the Reformed family, and that in the Valletta friary: *s'introduce il vivere Riformato, tanto necessario, tanto bramato dal Illustrissimo Signor Vescovo di Malta (...) e da Sua Santità stessa*.<sup>54</sup>

From the Decree of the Congregation to the Inquisitor of Malta, dated 22 September 1637, we know that, although the same Congregation had appointed Don Francesco, who had been: *Collegii de Propaganda Fide alumno*, it was not showing its preoccupation regarding the payment that he should have received. Therefore it asked him to look for help<sup>55</sup> from the Grand Master and from the Bishop, otherwise *schola praedicta non poterit sibi conservari, nisi aliquot modo de stipendio lectori provideatur*. In fact, in 1643<sup>56</sup> a benefice was established, entitled: *tal escof* (of the Bishop) *nel Gozo nella contrada di Santa Cecilia*, which was formerly enjoyed by the Apostolic Protonotary and Canon Don Giovanni Habela. Don Azzopardi immediately asked to be given this benefice.<sup>57</sup> In the meantime the teaching in the friary continued on the part of Fr. Domenico Pace, who was also Commissary of the Holy Land, during the same time in which Don Azzopardi was teaching in the College of the Discalced

Carmelites in Bormla (Cospicua).<sup>58</sup> We do not have an inkling as to the length of time in which Fr. Domenico continued to teach. He died on 7 March 1663. However, in 1679 the Franciscan *Studium* in Malta was still mentioned.<sup>59</sup>

The benefice 'Tal-Isqof' was an incentive to encourage the interest of those who were ready to teach Arabic. When Don Francesco Azzopardi requested one of the benefices held by Canon Don Giovanni Habela: *perche legga et insegni la lingua Arabica*, the Inquisitor Gori Pannellini did not want the benefice to be: *perpetuo in vita*.<sup>60</sup> Thus, this benefice was understood to be of service to whoever was the lecturer. In the Historical Archives of the Congregation one finds loads of documents dealing with this issue, as well as the names of students and their progress in learning. To cut short here we mention a certain Don Salvatore Fenech (31 May 1644), who was not only ready to teach, but since he could not find a place where to hold his lessons on the Island he stated: *mi converrà pigliarlo a mie spese*.<sup>61</sup> Later on, the same Don Salvatore gives us information which was new to us. He admitted: *sino da quarant'anni fa in circa fu provveduto dall'Eccellenze Vostre della Cattedra di lingua Arabica nell'Isola di Gozo*. On the back of the same letter there is written: *L'Università e Studio dell'Isola del Gozo*. This is a new detail, and one would like to know exactly what this *Studium* truly was.<sup>62</sup>

It is certain that the Tribunal of the Inquisition felt the need to encourage the

<sup>54</sup> ASPF, SOCG, vol. 24, ff. 339-340<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> AIM, 1626-1726, Corr. t. 36, f. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Archives Cathedral Malta [AKM], *Documenta Series A*, tomo III, Ms 3, f. 414: *Erettione et institutione della lettera della lingua Arabica in Malta fatta dalla Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide con l'approvazione di Papa Urbano VIII, e con l'erezione de' benefici semplici taliscof per il lettore nel 1643*.

<sup>57</sup> AIM, 1628-1726, Corr. t. 36, f. 5, 18, 29.

<sup>58</sup> This friary was founded as a place where future missionaries would receive their training, and the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* tried its best to establish it. The same Congregation asked the Grand Master to realise this project. V. *Acta 1622-1625: Carmelitae Discalceati novum conventum erigunt in Insula Melitae*, 8 March 1625, f. 203<sup>v</sup>; n. 15; 22 August

1625, ff. 254<sup>v</sup>-255, n. 26; 19 September 1625, fol. 259<sup>v</sup>, n. 2. The Inquisitor Onorato Visconti informed the Congregation: *mi sono adoperato vivamente perche siano accettati in quest Isola i Padri Carmelitani Scalzi*; ASPF, SOCG, vol. 358, ff. 60/63<sup>v</sup>, and the Congregation wrote to the Grand Master asking him to let them come to Malta; *Ibid.*, ff. 118/121<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> L. LEMMENS 1921, I, 254: *ceteri (fratres) ex studio arabico in S. Petri in Monte Aureo de Urbe ut plurimum deprompti, et studia linguarum Romae, Damasci, Melitae, Aleppi et in Bethlehem actualiter sustineant*.

<sup>60</sup> ASPF, SOCG, vol. 167, f. 350.

<sup>61</sup> ASPF, SOCG, 123, f. 321.

<sup>62</sup> ASPF, *Scritti riferite nei Congressi. Affrica, Malta, dal 1670 - 1826*, ff. 7, 8<sup>v</sup>.

study of Arabic to continue, and with a certain insistence it stated (30 September 1724): *non solo è profittevole ma anzi è necessario specialmente per questa Sacra Inquisizione per non essere costretta nei casi rilevanti, che sogliono accadere a' servigi di schiavi infedeli e persone vili per interpreti (...) per l'istruzione che ne prendono i continui religiosi che passano in Levante per le Missioni, e per trattenersi ne' Luoghi di Terra Santa e come è seguito specialmente in più scolari del presente Lettore Canonico (Fabrizio) Bonnici, tra quali il P. Filippo Spagnuolo Minore Osservante, che mediante simile idioma e carattere si è reso assai singolare nelle parti d'Oriente (...).*<sup>63</sup> It seems that during this time the Dominicans also had their own *Studium* in Valletta where they taught Arabic. Fr. Paolo Muscat, who died in 1726, is mentioned. The Carmelite Friars around 1791 asked the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to establish a College of Arabic in their friary of the Annunciation in Mdina, in order to train those missionaries who wanted to go to minister to the Christian slaves in 'Algiers, Tripoli and Tunisia.'<sup>64</sup> We do not know where this College was established or not. It is a fact that the Congregation of Propaganda Fide often insisted on the teaching of languages. On 5 May 1774, for example, it insisted that: *Apostolici Missionarii officium suscepturi omni diligentia, et alacritate curarent locorum ad quae obligantur Idiomata addiscere, ne ob linguarum imperitiam in medio messis multae contra*

*S. Sedis expectationem otiosi ac inutiles remanerent.*<sup>65</sup> It also wanted that missionaries, during the first six months after their arrival in the mission, should not do anything else but learn the local language.<sup>66</sup> This fact helps us to understand the importance of these Colleges.

This was also the part played by the Maltese Franciscan religious in the teaching of such a necessary language to the missionaries who wanted to go and minister in the Holy Land. History does not stop here. The *Studium* passed through many ups and downs, and at the end found itself in the University. Here there was another Franciscan who was teaching, namely Fr. Anastasio from Rome, who on 17 April 1799, during the French blockade, received the appointment of professor of the chair of Arabic from the General Commissary of the Order. However, he had to wait, because Sir Alexander Ball, Rear Admiral and Civil Commissioner of Malta, in 1805 reserved the right to appoint him to teach classical Arabic. He remained in his chair only for two years: in fact, he died on 29 August 1807.<sup>67</sup>

The Arabic language remained important for Maltese Franciscans. The missionaries, who were not few, had to learn it, and some of them also taught it. In 1682, among the *Padres Professores linguae Arabicae in Terra Sancta de Familia degentes actualiter*, we find Fr. Arcangelus a Melita (Zammit),<sup>68</sup> who was an Arabist and who left us also some manuscripts.

<sup>63</sup> AIM, 1716-1737, *Corr.* 37, f. 318. In June 1729, after the death of canon Fabrizio Bonnici, a contest was held for a new *Lector* of Arabic with the right to enjoy the Ecclesiastical Benefice annexed to the same *Studium*. As was custom the notice was affixed to the door of the Inquisitor's Palace and to the doors of the churches of Saint Paul and Porto Salvo of Valletta, as well as to the door of the Mdina Cathedral. It is interesting to see the *Istruzione della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide dell'anno 1729*, given to Don Gregorio Carboni, regarding the place where he had to hold the lessons, the time-table, school days and holidays, and many other details. ASPF, *Scritti Riferiti nei Congressi: Affrica-Malta, dal 1670-1826*, vol. 1, ff. 63-67; *vide* also AIM,

*Lettere dalla S. Congr. De Prop. Fide, Corrispondenza* (6 August 1729) II, 37.

<sup>64</sup> S. ABELA, *Il-Karmelitani fl-Imdina*, Malta 1994, 138-139.

<sup>65</sup> APF, AO, XVIII, doc. 63.

<sup>66</sup> The missionaries would go to the same missions in order to learn the language. ATSM *Esito*, 1728-1740, f. 19<sup>v</sup>; *Ibid.*, *Esito*, 1726-1744, f. 27; *A di 23 ottobre 1731 gionsero in quest'Ospizio il P. Gioanne di S. Giacomo, et il P. Gio. Battista Polis spagnoli per essere in Costantinopoli ad impartarsi la lingua Turchesca.*

<sup>67</sup> APF, Misc. B, doc. 27; NProv.

<sup>68</sup> A. ARCE, *Miscelanea de Tierra Santa*, Jerusalem 1973, II, 286.

# THE CHRONICLE OF NICHOLAS GLASSBERGER

Noel Muscat OFM

This is a continuation of a partial translation of texts taken from the Chronicle of Nicholas Glassberger, with some explanatory notes, which can be found in the critical Latin edition: *Chronica Fratris Nicolai Glassberger Ordinis Minorum Observantium*, in *Analecta Franciscana sive Chronica aliaque varia documenta ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum spectantia*, edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventuræ, Tomus II, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi) prope Florentiam, ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventuræ 1887.

*Page numbers are indicated in square brackets.*

## **The blessed Transitus of our most holy Father Francis**

[42] In the year of the Lord 1226, during the month of April, the blessed Father who was in Siena became seriously ill, and since he felt that the end of his life was approaching, he asked to be transferred to Assisi, [43] where he remained ill for some time in the Bishop's palace. When the end of his life approached, he ordered [the brothers] to transport him to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, and while he was seeing that the future tribulations of the Order were approaching, his soul departed from his body and he passed from this world to the Father on the fourth day of the nones of October, at the end of the tenth year and the beginning of the eleventh year of the pontificate of the lord Pope Honorius the third, when he was forty-five years old,

twenty years after his conversion to God and the beginnings of his Order, that is, eighteen years from the time when he received the first brothers, and when Frederick II was emperor, on the seventh year of his reign. He was marked by the stigmata of Christ and was famous for the glory of his miracles. He lived in this state of perfection of the observance of the holy Religion for ten years under the lord Pope Innocent III, and for another ten years under the lord Pope Honorius III. He concluded his life in a praiseworthy manner, with the grace of the clemency of God.

After his joyful trasitus he was clearly seen to have the effigy of the wounds of Christ in the palms of his hands, on his feet and on his side, as if they had been stamped by the finger of the living God. Although the holy and blessed Father Francis had desired to be buried in the above-mentioned church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, the people and citizens of Assisi and its surroundings were afraid that, because of those signs that God had deigned to work in his body during life and in death, they wanted to hide him from the Perugians who would violently steal his bodily remains. Therefore they carried him to the church of Saint George within the city walls. This was the place where as a boy, he had learned how to read and write, and where he had first preached. So they carried him with great solemnity and buried him in that same place.

After blessed Francis had died, the Order was governed by brother Elias, who was his Vicar, until the election of a new General Minister. Elias sent a letter of consolation

to all the brothers in the whole world, declaring to each one individually and to all of them together - as the blessed Father Francis had commanded - that on the part of Saint Francis he blessed them and absolved them from all their sins. He also explained above all the stigmata and the other miracles that the Almighty worked through blessed Francis after his death, and commanding the Ministers and Custodians of the Order to gather later on in order to elect the Minister General.<sup>1</sup>

In the year of the Lord 1227, on the fourth day of the nones of February,<sup>2</sup> after the death of blessed Francis, brother Alberto da Pisa, Minister of Germany, who was leaving for the general chapter for the election of the future Minister General, gathered all the Custodians of Germany, together with the Guardians and preachers, and celebrated the chapter in Mainz. In that chapter brother Nicholas was relieved from the office of custos of Saxony, and was elected Vicar, and he was succeeded by brother [44] Leonardo the Lombard. After having ordered all these things together with the brothers that he chose, brother Alberto left for the general chapter.

In that same year the lord Pope Honorius III died during the month of March, and according to the prophecy of blessed Francis,<sup>3</sup> the lord Hugolino, Bishop of Ostia, protector of our Order, was elected to the papacy, and he chose the name of Gregory IX. This Pontiff hailed from Anagni and belonged to a family of knights, he was a nephew of Innocent III, and was elected Pontiff at the Septizonium.<sup>4</sup> He was Pope for fourteen years, five months and two days.<sup>5</sup> The lord Raynaldus, who succeeded him as Bishop of Ostia, became protector of the Order of Minors.

In that same year brother Elias, Vicar of the Order, gave permission to brothers Daniel who was before Minister of Calabria, Angelo, Samuel, Donnolo, Leo, Nicholas and Hugolino, who were inspired by the desire for martyrdom, to go to Morocco in the lands of the infidel and there to spread the seed of catholic truth. Since they hailed from the parts of Tuscany, they went to Spain and arrived in Septa, a city of Morocco, where they preached to the merchants outside the city walls for a number of days, since it was not permitted to Christians to enter the city. But afterwards, on a Sunday, full of zeal with the spirit of martyrdom, after having prepared themselves with the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, they secretly entered the city and began to preach Christ publicly to the Saracens. These were inflamed with anger, and after having insulted and captured the brothers in a shameful manner, they presented them to their king, who ordered them to be thrown into a dungeon, where they courageously endured many tribulations for eight days. On the following Sunday, the sixth day of the ides of October,<sup>6</sup> they were again brought before the king, and one by one they were interrogated by the council of the Saracens. They were told that if they would not retract what they had uttered against the law of Mohammed, and afterwards deny their faith in Christ and become Saracens, they would receive capital punishment [...] They, however, replied that they preferred death to the impious life of the Saracens, and they professed that Christ was the Son of God and true God, while Mohammed was a most cruel seducer, his law was to be condemned and despised, and it was upheld most steadfastly by the devil. At that point the king swung his sword in the air and

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to the *Encyclical Letter on the Passing of Saint Francis attributed to Brother Elias of Assisi* (1253). See text in FAED II, 483-491.

<sup>2</sup> 2 February.

<sup>3</sup> L3C 67 (FAED II, 107).

<sup>4</sup> The Septizonium (also called Septizodium) was an ancient Roman edifice built in 203 AD by Emperor

Septimius Severus. The original name referred to the seven planetary gods (Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus).

<sup>5</sup> Gregory IX was Pope from 19 March 1227 to 22 August 1241.

<sup>6</sup> 10 October.

attacked them, cutting off brother Daniel's head with great atrocity. Those Christian men continued to profess Christ unceasingly, in spite of all this, and after having pronounced the death sentence for them, [the Saracens] bound their hands behind their backs, and carried them outside their city, and when they arrived there they were stripped naked and their heads cut off, and thus rendered their immaculate souls to God. The heads and bodies of the venerable Saints [45] were hacked in pieces by the Saracens, and after having picked them up in the road the Genoese merchants gave them an honourable burial.

After the death of Saint Francis brother Elias began to build a great and very strong basilica outside the walls of Assisi, in a hollow that used to be called *the hill of hell*; however, ever since the lord Pope Gregory IX placed the first stone of its foundations, it was called *the hill of paradise*. In order to carry out this project brother Elias tried to extort money in all kinds of ways, and he also made a large marble money box in the form of a shell and ordered it to be placed in front of the building, so that all those who arrived there would throw money offerings in favour of the project. The brothers who had once been companions of Saint Francis, and especially brother Leo, were greatly saddened by this act of impurity, and asked brother Giles, who was at the time in Perugia, to give them counsel. When he saw the enormity of that building project, he answered: "Even if it were a building as large as the distance to Assisi, for me it is enough to have a tiny corner in which to live." When the same brothers asked him whether they should break that money box, Giles turned to brother Leo and told him: "If you want to die, go and break it. But if you want to live, desist from doing such a thing, since you will not be able to endure the great persecution on the part of Elias." When brother Leo and the brothers who were his companions heard these words, they nevertheless went and broke the money box to pieces. For this reason

brother Elias was very angry, and he ordered them to be flogged and banished with shame from Assisi. For this reason there was a great confusion among the brothers. When the brothers met for the general chapter, they decided to absolve brother Elias from the duties of his office and elect another brother to take his place, and this because of the excessive nature of what we have just narrated, as well as because they saw that he wanted to destroy the integrity of the religious form of life.

### **Brother John Parenti first General Minister after the death of St. Francis**

In that same year, namely 1227, the general chapter was assembled at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. Brother John of Parma was elected as Minister General. He was a just and pious man, and carried out the duties of his office spiritually. He had been Minister of Spain, and was the first one to hold this office of [Minister General] after the death of Saint Francis, by being elected in a general chapter. [46] He was a Roman citizen, and a doctor of law. When he was judge in the town of Castellana, he entered the Order while Saint Francis was still alive, and his entry happened in this manner. One day he was looking out of the window and saw a custodian of a herd of pigs at the entrance to the fortified village, who was trying to drive them into their pigsty, but he was pushing them to no avail because they did not want to go in. So that man, instructed by a companion, began to shout at the pigs and say: "Pigs, pigs, enter into the pigsty, just like the doctors of law and judges will enter into hell." As soon as he had uttered these words, that large number of pigs entered the pigsty without any more grunts. When [John Parenti] heard these words he was surprised that he, as a doctor of law and a judge would enter into hell, and thus he left the world and entered the Order, and lived in it a life of praiseworthy holiness.

This same brother John, when he was Minister of Spain and was celebrating the

chapter in Soria in the kingdom of Castille, the local people came to him, because of the danger of a great drought, and they begged him and the brothers to pray to the Lord for the gift of rain. Immediately after he and the brothers had prayed, God sent the gift of an abundant rainfall. The same General also possessed the gift of tears, and he was so strict with himself, that he visited a great part of the Order by walking barefoot.

When he became Minister General, during the general chapter, upon the counsel of the Minister of Provence, he absolved brother Albert of Pisa, Minister of Germany, from his office, and substituted him with brother Simon the Englishman, from the Custody of Normandy, who was a learned and great theologian. When brother Simon came to Germany with brother Julian of Speyer, who afterwards wrote the lives of blessed Francis and blessed Anthony in a noble style of beautiful melody, which we still sing, and also composed in an elegant and noble way the Legend of Saint Francis, which begins with the words: *Ad hoc quorundam*,<sup>7</sup> he immediately convened the provincial chapter in Cologne on the feastday of the Apostles Simon and Jude; but because of the following reason it was celebrated in the following year.

In the year of the Lord 1228, between Easter and Pentecost, brother Simon the Englishman, Minister of Germany, celebrated the provincial chapter in Cologne.

In that same year, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the calends of August,<sup>8</sup> the lord Pope Gregory IX came personally to Assisi, and with great solemnity placed Saint Francis in the catalogue of Saints. Brother Elias, Vicar of the Minister General,<sup>9</sup> was entrusted with the building of the basilica upon the general appeal of the citizens.

## Latin Abbreviations

### Writings of St. Francis

Adm	Admonitiones
CantAudPov	Canticum Audite Poverelle
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data
EpAnt	Epistola ad S. Antonium
EpClerI	Epistola ad Clericos
EpCust	Epistola ad Custodes
EpFid	Epistola ad Fideles
EpLeo	Epistola ad fratrem Leonem
EpMin	Epistola ad Ministrum
EpOrd	Epistola toti Ordini missa
EpRect	Epistola ad rectores
ExhLD	Exhortatio ad Laudem Dei
ExpPat	Expositio in Pater noster
FormViv	Forma vivendi S. Claræ
Fragm	Fragmenta alterius Regulæ
LaudHor	Laudes ad omnes horas
OffPass	Officium Passionis Domini
OrCruc	Oratio ante Crucifixum
RegB	Regula bullata
RegNB	Regula non bullata
RegEr	Regula pro eremotoriis
SalBVM	Salutatio Beatæ Mariæ Virg
SalVirt	Salutatio Virtutum
Test	Testamentum
UltVol	Ultima voluntas S. Claræ

### Sources for the Life of St. Francis

FAED I	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Saint</i>
FAED II	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Founder</i>
FAED III	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Prophet</i>
1C	Celano, <i>Vita beati Francisci</i>
LCh	Celano, <i>Legenda ad usum chori</i>
VB	Celano, <i>Vita brevior S. Francisci</i>
2C	Celano, <i>Memoriale in desiderio animæ</i>
3C	Celano, <i>Tractatus miraculorum</i>
LJS	Julian of Speyer, <i>Vita S. Francisci</i>
OR	<i>Officium Rhythmicum</i>
AP	<i>Anonymus Perusinus (De Inceptione)</i>
L3C	<i>Legenda trium sociorum</i>
CA	<i>Compilatio Assisiensis</i>
LMj	S. Bonaventura, <i>Legenda Maior</i>
LMn	S. Bonaventura, <i>Legenda Minor</i>
SPMaj	<i>Speculum Perfectionis (Sabatier)</i>
SPMin	<i>Speculum Perfectionis (Lemmens)</i>
ABF	<i>Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius</i>
Fior	<i>Fioretti di San Francesco</i>



Cover page: *Maestro delle Vele (Angiolello da Gubbio?): Allegory of Chastity (Basilica St. Francis)*

<sup>7</sup> A reference to the *Officium Rhythmicum S. Francisci* and *S. Antoni*, and to the *Vita S. Francisci*, composed by Julian of Speyer.

<sup>8</sup> 16 July 1228.

<sup>9</sup> Brother Elias was not Vicar to John Parenti.