1 Bonaventure, the Franciscans, and the Homiletic Revolution of the Thirteenth Century

It is unlikely that Bonaventure ever met St. Francis in person, but he attributed his recovery from a near-fatal illness when he was five to Francis's intervention, shortly after the saint's death on October 3, 1226. Francis was canonized a saint two years later, when Bonaventure was seven – though he was still, at this point, Giovanni di Fidanza, a young boy living in the small town of Bagnoregio in the Tuscany region of central Italy.[1]

Despite his long veneration for Francis, Bonaventure did not join the Franciscans right away when he came of age. Instead, he enrolled in 1235 as a layman in the Arts faculty at the University of Paris when he was fourteen years old. At Paris, he came in contact with the Franciscans, who had themselves arrived in the city only fifteen years before.

In 1219, Brother Pacificus, together with a small group of friars, journeyed to Paris and settled originally in a modest house near the church of Saint-Denis outside the city. As late as 1224, they had to go to a neighboring parish to celebrate their Divine Office, having no church of their own. Sometime later, they began the construction of a larger friary in Vauvert (*Vallis Viridis*), but it fell to the ground in 1229.

After this setback, the abbot of Saint-Germaine-des-Prés agreed to lend the brothers some houses belonging to the abbey for their use, but they were not permitted to enlarge them, nor to build a church of their own. But then, in 1234, the year before young Giovanni de Fidanza arrived in Paris, King Louis IX purchased the residences and gave them as a gift to the friars, together with a large additional piece of land. Pope Gregory IX confirmed this donation in 1236, and on December 8, 1239, the friars were granted permission for building. It was here that over the next twenty-three years the famous Franciscan "Convent of the Cordeliers" was built – "Cordeliers"

[1] I am following the carefully worked out chronology found in Jay Hammond, "Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master," *Franciscan Studies*, (2009): 179–226. Hammond dates Bonaventure's birth at 1221.

being the name given to the friars because of the knotted cord (in Old French, *cordelle*) they wore around their waist.

And it was here, in 1236 or 1237, even before the construction of the larger convent had begun, that Alexander of Hales, the man who had introduced the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as the basic textbook for the study of theology and who had, since his inception in 1220, been one of the most pre-eminent and influential regent masters at Paris, gave up all his worldly possessions and entered the Franciscan Order.

Born of a wealthy English family, Alexander had also been abundantly provided with benefices from having been canon of St. Paul's in London and a major archdeacon in Coventry. But he cast all this wealth and privilege aside to enter into the humble and simple life of poverty of the Order of the Friars Minor. When he entered the Order, he brought with him to the Franciscans his Chair as Regent Master of Theology.

By 1221, the year of Giovanni's birth, Francis's early group of eleven brothers had grown to some 3,000. That number would double again in the next twenty years. Clearly something dynamic was happening among the Franciscans and men and women were being drawn to the Order. And it was only within a year or two after young Giovanni had arrived in Paris to study Arts that Alexander of Hales joined the Franciscans and construction on the Convent of the Cordeliers had begun. Thus, by the time young Giovanni was completing his Master of Arts degree in 1243, Alexander of Hales had been a recognized Franciscan master of theology for seven or eight years, the bulk of the time Giovanni had been studying at Paris. And the construction of the new Convent of the Cordeliers would have been well under way. The Franciscans may have had poor beginnings in Paris, but they were clearly on their way up.

And so it was that, when Giovanni finished his Arts degree in 1243 or 1244, now roughly twenty-three years of age, he decided to join the Franciscans, taking "Bonaventure" as his religious name to celebrate his "good fortune" to be under the tutelage of both St. Francis and Alexander of Hales. Alexander, for his part, is reported to have held the young Giovanni in the highest regard, having reportedly said of him that "in him Adam seemed not to have sinned."[2]

The point of recounting this brief history is to show how much Bonaventure's entry into the Order and subsequent development was bound up with those heady early days of the Franciscans in Paris as they

[2] See Salimbene, *Catalogus generalium*, ed. Holder-Egger, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani), 32: 664.

grew from their simple beginnings in a small borrowed house outside the city and their faltering early projects to greater prominence, gaining the notice of even the great King Louis IX, culminating in the entry of Alexander of Hales to their ranks that secured for them a master's chair at the university and the beginning of construction on the Parisian convent that would become the home of so many great Franciscan students and masters in the coming years. Clearly something dynamic was happening among the Franciscans, and Bonaventure wanted to be part of it. Not only would he become a valued "part of it," but, in relatively short order, he would also become a leading intellectual and spiritual light of the Order, and shortly thereafter, its master general.

FROM STUDENT TO MASTER AND MASTER GENERAL

Early on, Giovanni, now Brother Bonaventure, was able to study with Alexander of Hales and John of LaRochelle, two men who worked on the seminal text that would become known as the *Summa fratris Alexandri* or sometimes the *Summa Halensis* for short, even though both men produced sections of it. Sadly, however, Bonaventure was able to study in person with both men for only one or two years, since both died in 1245. Afterwards, Bonaventure continued his studies with Odo of Rigaux and William of Middleton, the latter of whom was the man he would replace in the Franciscan Chair of Theology at Paris.

Bonaventure attended lectures and disputations as an *auditor theologiae* from his entry in the Franciscans in 1243 until 1248. He did his *cursory* lectures as a licensed *lector biblicus* and *baccalarius biblicus* from 1248 to 1251. In 1251, he was elevated to *baccalarius sententiarius* and commented on the *Sentences*, a course of study that culminated in 1253 in his being accepted as *baccalarius formatus*, a "formed bachelor" of Theology, able to perform the three duties of a master – lecturing on the Bible, engaging in disputations, and preaching – but not yet incepted officially as a master at the university.

When would this inception take place? The Franciscan Chair was already occupied by William of Middleton, so the question was, how long would he have to wait? And if he *was* incepted as a master, which was likely, would he be assigned to stay in Paris, lecturing only to the Franciscans at the Cordeliers since the only Franciscan Chair was already occupied, or would he be assigned elsewhere? At this point, events at the university conspired to change his prospects.

In 1253, the same year Bonaventure was made a "formed Bachelor" of Theology, all the masters and students of the University of Paris went on strike, except for the two Dominican masters and the Franciscan William of Middleton. They continued to teach and refused to take an oath of loyalty to the university corporation. For their refusal, all three were expelled from the "university of masters." In an attempt to heal the rift, the Franciscan minister general John of Parma intervened and was able to arrange a settlement, after agreeing to many of the demands of the university and the other masters. As part of that settlement, it was agreed that William of Middleton would relinquish his Chair of Theology to Bonaventure and henceforth teach the young friars at the convent rather than as a recognized master of the university, essentially switching roles with his former student. The Dominicans, for their part, stood firm and were not readmitted officially to the university until two years later, and even then, only after the intervention of the Pope.[3]

Bonaventure was incepted as master shortly before Easter, 1254, and assumed the Franciscan Chair in Theology as agreed. An early version of his work *Reduction of the Arts to Theology* was one of the two addresses he gave during his inception ceremonies.[4] And yet, even though he had been incepted as master, since the conflict between the mendicants and the secular masters at the university continued to rage, it is likely that Bonaventure was only allowed to teach at the Franciscan Convent of the Cordeliers for the next two years, still unrecognized officially by the corporation of masters.

In October of 1256, however, Pope Alexander IV ordered the secular masters at Paris to admit both Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas to their rightful places in the university. The secular masters delayed for as long as they dared, but finally, on August 12, 1257, both friars were officially admitted as masters of the university. Six months earlier, however,

[3] The Dominican side of the affair is described succinctly in J.-P. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2, *Spiritual Master*, trans. R. Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003). 50–1 and at more length in James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 79–83.

[4] For a description of the inception ceremony, see Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, 99–100. Weisheipl's description is based on the earliest account we have of the inception ceremony "secundum usum Parisienem," which is contained in a Bologna manuscript published in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle, OP, and E. Chatelian, vol. 2 (Parisiis, 1891), no. 1188, pp. 691–695. See esp. 693–694. For the evidence that an earlier version of *On Reducing the Arts to Theology* was Bonaventure's *resumptio* address at his inception as a master, see Joshua Benson, "Identifying the Literary Genre of *De reductione artium ad theologiam*: Bonaventure's inaugural lecture at Paris," *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009), 149–178, and by the same author, "Bonaventure's *De reductione artium ad theologiam* and Its Early Reception as an Inaugural Sermon," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 7–24.

Bonaventure had been appointed minister general of the Franciscans, replacing his predecessor, John of Parma, an appointment that took his life and work in a rather different direction than that of a standard academic master.

Bonaventure had not been dormant during the intervening years, however. Between 1254 and 1257, he revised his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* and composed commentaries on *Ecclesiastes* and the *Gospel of John*. He also held three sets of disputed questions. The questions *On the Knowledge of Christ*, which develop his illumination theory of knowledge, probably came out of his inception as master in 1254. Another set of disputed questions, *On Evangelical Perfection*, were composed during these years and consisted in a defense of the friar's way of life, which was under attack by non-mendicant masters led by William of Saint Amour. The questions *On the Mystery of the Trinity*, which elaborated his view of God, were likely the last ones he wrote before being elected master general of the Franciscans in February of 1257 at the still rather young age of thirty-five or thirty-six.

The following April of 1257, Bonaventure circulated an encyclical letter to all the friars admonishing them to recover the "somewhat tarnished luster of the Order." Between 1257 and 1259, he followed up his letter with three tracts for the spiritual edification of the friars: *A Soliloquy about Four Mental Exercises* (*Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibus exercitiis*), *The Tree of Life* (*Lignum vitae*), and *The Triple Way* (*De triplici via*). In addition to these and his other duties as master general, Bonaventure managed to find time to write the little *summa* of theology he called the *Breviloquium* and to revise his *Commentary on the Gospel of John.*

In the autumn of 1259, however, to prepare himself spiritually for the upcoming general chapter of the Franciscans to be held in Narbonne in southern France, Bonaventure took a spiritual retreat on Mt. Alverna, the site where St. Francis was reported to have had a vision of a six-winged Seraph angel with the figure of the crucified Christ at its center, and from which he reportedly received the stigmata. It was during this spiritual retreat that Bonaventure wrote what has been one of his most popular and influential works over the centuries, the *Itinerarium mentis in deum*, a Latin title translated variously in English, but which is most often found under the title *The Mind's Journey into God* or *The Soul's Journey into God*.[5]

[5] Although the Latin title has the word *mens*, which is usually translated as "mind," some translators feel that the more restricted connotations we currently attach to "mind," as a purely "thinking thing," does not really express the fullness of mind, heart, and spirit that Bonaventure intends. Some English versions of the title include *Journey Into God*, *The Journey of the Mind to*

BONAVENTURE AND THE SPIRITUALS

Thus far, I have sought to show why I believe it is important to understand Bonaventure's development as a person and as a scholar as profoundly tied to the early, rather remarkable rise of the Franciscan Order from humble beginnings in Paris to a major presence and intellectual force. Since the Order was officially granted recognition in 1210 and Bonaventure was born in 1217, the Order itself was only seven years older than Bonaventure. So when Bonaventure first met them in Paris, both parties were still relatively young. The year after Bonaventure arrived in Paris, the Franciscans were given land to build their convent and house of studies, and the year after that, Alexander of Hales joined the Order. Bonaventure entered the Order as an *auditor* in 1243, and by 1257, a mere fourteen years later, he was elected master general.

There have long been questions whether Bonaventure misunderstood the founding spirit of St. Francis and that, when he became minister general, he led the Franciscans off in the wrong direction. We will examine the claims of some of the well-known modern proponents of this view later. But let me first say something about why the debate is important for understanding the *Itinerarium*.

All those who claim that Bonaventure misunderstood the spirit of the Order must first, I believe, in all fairness, come to grips with the nature and character of the Franciscans as they were when Bonaventure first encountered them at Paris. Bonaventure was certainly more "bookish" than Francis had been. But so were most of the Franciscans Bonaventure met when he got to Paris as a student in the Arts. He didn't join the Franciscans because he mistook their character; he didn't enter and find them resisting the intellectual vocation and upon discovering this, pledged himself to

God, *The Mind's Journey to God*, *The Mind's Road to God*, and the *Soul's Journey into God*. Confusions over the title go further back in history. As Regis Armstrong points out, very few of the manuscripts of the work give it the Latin title by which it is now commonly known: *Itinerarium mentis in deum*. Some of the other titles by which it was known include "A Compendium of Burning Contemplation," "The Seven Steps in the Ascent into God," "The Six Wings of Contemplation," "The Itinerarium of an Itinerant," "The Itinerary of Eternity," "The Itinerary of a Good Mind," "Meditations," "The Work of Contemplation," "The Ladder of Contemplation," "The Seven Steps of Contemplation," "The Observances of Brother Bonaventure" (*Speculationes fratris Bonaventurae*), and "The Mirror of the Soul." For these and other alternative titles, see Regis Armstrong, *Into God:* Itinerarium Mentis in Deum *of Saint Bonaventure* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 151, n. 1. It is also possible that Bonaventure meant for the title to be the one found at the beginning of chapter 1: *Speculatio pauperis in deserto* ("The Vision [or Contemplation] of a Poor One in the Desert").

"reform" them. He was drawn to the Franciscans precisely because of the character he discerned in the friars he met at Paris. Its dynamic spirit of learning and poverty was what swept him up into the Order, the same spirit that had already inspired other gifted scholars such as Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle to join years before him. Thus, far from misunderstanding the spirit and direction of the Order when he became minister general, it would be more accurate to say that he led it in the direction the spirit had been taking it for some time.

And yet, the "spirit and direction" in which the Order was moving, especially in Paris, was one that was that caused consternation and contention among some in the Order, a group that has come to be known as "the Spirituals." Addressing this conflict between the "Spirituals" and others in the Order was one of the major issues with which Bonaventure had to contend at the upcoming general council in Narbonne, the place he was headed after making his retreat on Mt. Alverna. But this was only one of several challenges with which Bonaventure and the Franciscans were faced, all of which were likely weighing on his mind when he made his retreat at Mt. Alverna. Since they may have been on his mind when he wrote the *Itinerarium*, it will be worth reviewing several of those disputes, if only briefly.

As one of his first acts as the new minister general in April of 1257, Bonaventure wrote an encyclical letter to all his fellow Franciscan brothers admonishing them to help recover the "somewhat tarnished" image of their Order. Even during the lifetime of St. Francis, tensions had arisen in the Order between those who wanted to follow the ideals of Francis in stark simplicity and those who favored adaptation as the Order expanded. The tendency toward relaxation became more marked after the death of Francis and was encouraged by his successor, Brother Elias. Those who were zealous for strict observance of the rule became known alternatively as the *Zelanti* (the "Zelous"), the Observants, or, as they are more commonly referred to today, the Spirituals.[6] The brothers who argued for fidelity but openness to change and adaptation of the rule become known as the *fratres de communitate* or the Conventuals.

The divisions between the two groups became more complicated by two parallel and contrasting developments. The Spirituals began to interpret their position in the light of the eschatology of Joachim of Fiore (*c.*

[6] For an introduction, see David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015), esp. chs. 1–3.

1135–1202), who had prophesied that the age of the Holy Spirit, following upon what he saw as "the age of the Father" (Old Testament) and "the age of the Son" (New Testament), would begin in 1260 and last until the end of the world. Joachim further prophesied that this age would be ushered in by a new religious order of contemplative and spiritual men. The Spirituals saw the fulfillment of this prophecy in Francis and in themselves, not an entirely healthy disposition in a religious movement, especially one in a universal, "catholic" Church meant for all believers in all walks of life, nor one based on a sounder, more orthodox theological understanding of the Triune God.

John of Parma, minister general when Bonaventure entered the Order, seems to have harbored Joachimist tendencies, and was for this reason ordered by Pope Alexander IV to resign. It was at the general chapter held in Rome in 1257 subsequent to John of Parma's resignation that Bonaventure was elected minister general, a position he held for the next seventeen years. During that time, he made his headquarters in Paris rather than in Italy, a decision the Spirituals saw as further moving the Order in a direction they had hoped to resist and reverse.

The Spirituals, resentful of this new direction of the Order, were convinced that the Spirit was with them and that the example of the Franciscan life of simplicity and poverty would by itself bring the reforms needed in the Church. Giles of Assisi (d. 1263), one of the first companions of Francis of Assisi, became, within a few years of the death of Francis, a renowned hermit and mystic living at the hermitage of Monteripido outside the city of Perugia.[7] He gained a reputation for wisdom about the spiritual life and was so revered that some of his fellow friars began to gather into written collections some of his sayings or *dicta*.[8] One of the most famous of these

[7] For an overview of the life and career of Brother Giles, see S. da Campagnola, "La 'leggenda' di frate Egidio d'Assisi nei secoli XIII–XV," in *Francescanesimo e società cittadina: l'esempio di Perugia*, Centro per il Collegamento degli studi medievali e umanistici nell'Università di Perugia, 1 (Perugia, Italy: Cassa di Risparmio di Perugia, 1979), 113–143; S. Brufani, "Egidio d'Assisi: una santità feriale," in *I compagni di Francesco e la prima generazione minoritica: atti del XIX convegno internazionale*, Assisi, 17–19 October 1991, Atti dei Convegni della Società internazionale di studi francescani e del Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani, Nuova serie 2 (Spoleto, Italy, 1992), 285–311; and, more generally, on early Franciscan eremitism, see L. Pellegrini, "L'esperienza eremitica di Francesco e dei primi francescani," in *Francesco d'Assisi e francescanesimo dal 1216 al 1226: atti del II convegno internazionale*, Assisi, 16–18 October 1975, Società Internazionale di studi francescani, Convegni 4 (Assisi, 1977), 279–313.

[8] The critical edition of the sayings of Giles has been established by the Quaracchi Fathers: Dicta beati Aegidii Assisiensis sec. codices MSS. emendata et denuo edita P.P. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 2nd edn, Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi 3 (Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1939).

dicta seems to have been directed at his fellow friars pursuing advanced studies at the University of Paris. In it, Giles is said to have cried out: "Paris, Paris, you are destroying the order of Saint Francis!"[9] Giles himself may not have made the comment, but it was widely attributed to him, and the sentiment was echoed later in the century by the noted Spiritual Franciscan Jacapone da Todi (*c.* 1230–1306) who wrote: "Accursed Paris, which has destroyed our Assisi."[10]

To the Spirituals, it seemed that something important in the spirit of St. Francis had been lost between the time Brother Pacificus and his small group of friars journeyed to Paris to settle in that modest house near the church of Saint-Denis in 1219 and the great center of Franciscan study it had become by the 1250s when the construction on the great Convent of the Cordeliers was well underway. To the Spirituals, who preferred to keep alive the tradition of begging and walking from town to town or living in small hermitages, this building, something settled, something that required accepting larger donations of land and money, a place in which friars would be devoted to study, not out working and begging for their daily sustenance, seemed contrary to everything Francis had originally intended.

Bonaventure and the Conventuals believed, however, that, as their numbers increased, larger houses were necessary, and begging took time away from other aspects of their pastoral ministry. Living in a convent would, for example, allow space for books and liturgical items needed for

[9] 'Parisius, Parisius, ipse destruis ordinem sancti Francisci!', ibid., 91. This saying is listed in the addenda in the Quaracchi critical addition since it is not part of the original group of sayings. It is found in the codex Biblioteca del Collegio S. Isidoro, 1/73 (early fourteenth century). This means that the saying cannot be attributed to Giles himself but was drawn up and added in a different context when the effects of education upon the friars were being debated in the order. It does not appear in the new critical edition by S. Brufani, *Egidio d'Assisi, Dicta: edizione critica*, Edizione nazionale delle fonti francescane 1 (Spoleto, Italy: Fondazione CISAM, 2013). See the discussion in the Excursus following this article.

[10] This is how the quotation is often translated. The original, in *Laude XXXI* ("Como la curiosa scienzia e l'ambizione sono destruttive de la puritá") reads:

> Mal vedemmo Parisci – c'hane destrutto Ascisi;
> con la lor lettoría – messo l'ò en mala via.

This might also be translated as:

> Evil be of Paris said! By it is Assisi dead.
> They, with all their lettered skill, set us on the road to ill.

For this English translation, see Evelyn Underhill, *Jacopone da Todi, Poet and Mystic, 1228–1306: A Spiritual Biography with a Selection from the Spiritual Songs*, trans. T. Beck (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1919), 142. For the original Italian, see www.gutenberg.org/files/29977/29977-h/29977-h.htm#XXXI.

preaching and saying Mass. When they lived outside Paris, near Saint-Denis, the brothers distanced themselves physically and spiritually from the centers of the life of the city and further from the people. Remaining outside of town meant that people would need to come to them. Living in the heart of the city, in a place that at the time was far from being the "rich part of town," meant taking their ministry into the heart of things, where the people lived. The Franciscans had never been devoted to retreating from the secular world in the fashion of the Benedictines and Cistercians. Their mission had always been to the people in the towns and cities.

The danger, however, was that living in town and benefiting from an advanced education would make them proud of their intellectual achievements and more concerned with worldly comforts and the unavoidable political intrigues one finds in towns and cities. So too, for example, teaching at the University of Paris meant involving themselves in – or earning the opprobrium of their faculty colleagues for refusing to involve themselves in – the often-bitter disputes of the institution, both political and intellectual.

One obvious example would be the strike of the secular masters, in which the mendicants refused to participate. Another was the intellectual attack on the mendicants by William of St. Amour and the other secular clergy in Paris, whose previous monopoly on teaching positions at the university was threatened by the arrival of the mendicants, whom he accused of pride, boastfulness, and prospering from the labor of others while living in idleness.[11] A third would have been the controversies surrounding the reception of the newly translated works of Aristotle that led to condemnations and restrictions, most prominently in 1210 and again in 1270 and 1277. The challenges from the so-called Latin Averroists – readers of Aristotle who favored the interpretations of the Muslim philosopher Averroes – would not arise in force until some years later. Siger of Brabant arrived at the university in 1266, and Boethius of Dacia probably around the same time. But the intellectual challenge presented by Aristotelian thought was already being felt when Thomas and Bonaventure were bachelors at the university.

The challenges facing Bonaventure when he wrote the *Itinerarium*, therefore, were manifold. The Franciscans were building a convent, devoted to learning and study, in order to prepare the friars for the more sophisticated teaching and preaching called for in the burgeoning medieval towns. The challenge was how to do all this while retaining the humility and simplicity of St. Francis. How could one get the benefits of a university-level education and

[11] For a nice overview of the dispute, see Perm Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), esp. 11–17.

face the intellectual challenges of the day without losing the vision of Christian wisdom that says all learning should lead to God the Father, through the Son – incarnate, crucified, and risen – in the Holy Spirit? How, in other words, was he going to respond, when he got to the general council at Narbonne, to the legitimate concerns of the Spirituals while not compromising the legitimate needs of the Conventuals? These, I would suggest, were the concerns on his mind when he made his retreat to Mt. Alverna; they were the concerns he brought as well to his writing of the *Itinerarium*.

MODERN CRITICS OF BONAVENTURE'S FRANCISCAN VISION

As I mentioned previously, the controversies that roiled the Franciscans in Bonaventure's day over the character and direction of the Order have continued in one form or another to the present day. In one sense, these are perennial questions about the relationship between faith and reason and between the devotion to learned scholarship and the simplicity of the Christian life. But they also take the form of the particular question about what is sometimes called the "second founding" of the Franciscans under the guidance of Bonaventure and its fidelity to or departure from the original intentions of St. Francis himself. Why is this of concern to us? Chiefly because the position a particular scholar takes on this question often influences the way he or she reads and interprets the *Itinerarium*. This is as true for me as it is for any other commentator. I have attempted to make plain up front why I consider Bonaventure to have been faithful to the spirit of the Franciscans while also creatively guiding them in new directions in response to the changed conditions and fresh challenges that faced the Order. This is a theme that will run throughout my treatment of the *Itinerarium*. Other prominent scholars have disagreed, however, so it only seems fair to note their objections.

A prominent modern critic of Bonaventure's leadership was the French Protestant clergyman and historian Paul Sabatier (1858–1928). Nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature five times, Sabatier produced the first modern biography of St. Francis of Assisi, a book that happily provided an important stimulus to the study of medieval literary and religious documents, especially those connected with the Franciscan Order.[12] In a later

[12] Paul Sabatier, *La vie de S. François d'Assise* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1893); the 1918 *édition de guerre* can be found online at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9317602. The work was

work, however, on "some recent works on the Opuscules of Saint Francis," Sabatier would say of Bonaventure that "he did not understand the one of whom he believed and wanted to be the disciple." Taking himself to be "correcting" Francis, Bonaventure "believed he was rendering an immense service to the Order by transforming it." But what Bonaventure actually did for his spiritual father, in Sabatier's judgment, was akin to what the architects of the seventeenth century did to the old, medieval cathedrals when they renovated them: they tried "to make all traces of the barbarian Gothic disappear."[13]

Among more recent historians, there was the judgment of John Moorman, an Anglican curate, whose 1940 book *Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* and 1968's *A History of the Franciscan Order* became standard works for later scholars. In the former, echoing Sabatier's judgment, he proclaims that Bonaventure's ideal for the Order "was not the ideal for which Francis had lived and died."[14] Although attracted by the "vitality and freedom" of the Franciscans, says Moorman, "the fact remains that he never really understood the Franciscan ideal."[15] According to Moorman's account, Bonaventure's "natural home was Paris and its lecture rooms, not the forests of La Verna or the rocky caves of Greccio and Fonte

immediately translated and appeared the next year, 1894, in an English version from publishers in both London and New York. It is still available in print and in many places online. See Paul Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Louise Seymour Houghton (New York: Scribner, 1894).

[13] See Paul Sabatier, *Examen de quelque travaux récents sur les Opuscules de Saint François*, Opuscules de Critique Historique, fasc. X (Paris: Fischbacher, 1904), 160–161 n. 1. Sabatier was attempting to defend himself against a historian (Goetz) who had imputed to him the idea that Bonaventure "would have been the man of the party [the *relaxati*] that wished to weaken the ideal of the life of the saint [Francis]." His reply was that he was merely claiming that Pope Gregory IX supported the *relaxati* because he knew they "expected a lot from Rome," and that those privileges "would have to be paid for, and when they are free, they are paid in loyalty" (Sabatier was well known for his anti-papal sentiments). On the next page, Sabatier notes that, "As for Saint Bonaventure, Mr. Goetz's mistake is of the same order. To accuse him of having been the man of the *relaxati* party would be grotesque and unjust." But – and it is at this point that Sabatier makes his widely quoted comment: "Very probably, he [Bonaventure] would have been more ascetic than Saint Francis, but he did not understand the one of whom he believed and wanted to be the disciple." In the original French: "Très probablement il aura élé plus ascète que saint François mais il n a pas compris celui dont il a cru et voulu etre le disciple. Il l a corrigé, il a cru rendre à l ordre un immense service en le transformant. Il a fait pour son père spirituel ce que les architectes du XVII s. faisaient pour les vieilles cathédrales s'ingéniant à faire disparaître toutes les traces de gothique barbare."

[14] John Moorman, *Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1940), and by the same author, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). For his judgment on Bonaventure, see *Sources*, 141.

[15] Ibid.

Colombo," as had been the case with Francis and the early friars. Bonaventure was also, notes Moorman, "the first Minister General to make his headquarters outside Italy," and although an Italian himself, "he had made Paris his home and he continued to live there as much as possible."[16]

"To Francis," claims Moorman, "Poverty, Humility and Simplicity were ends in themselves, to be courted and wooed with the ardour of a lover; and to find some new method of self-abasement or self-denial was a source of unspeakable joy." Bonaventure, by contrast, "was also a lover of Poverty, Humility and Simplicity, but as means to an end: and that end was Truth." "In the Franciscan movement," says Moorman, Bonaventure "saw a way of life which, by its combination of self-humiliation and liberty, created the ideal atmosphere in which scholarship could flourish. The alliance of Poverty and Learning was the ideal for which he strove." "It was a lofty ideal," admits Moorman, "and one which probably safeguarded the future of the Order in those difficult years. But it was not the ideal for which Francis had lived and died; and we can understand Brother Giles's complaint: 'Paris, Paris, thou has destroyed Assisi!'"[17]

It's not clear that Brother Giles actually ever said that, as I mentioned earlier. But, whether he did or did not, it seems highly unlikely that Francis would have agreed that, for him, "Poverty, Humility and Simplicity were ends in themselves, to be courted and wooed with the ardour of a lover; and to find some new method of self-abasement or self-denial was a source of unspeakable joy."[18] It seems clear, rather, that for Francis, all such ascetical practices were to be considered means to the end of bringing oneself into greater union with the crucified and risen Christ and then inspiring others to do the same. Francis always had the vision that his "little brothers" would serve as an inspiration to bring others to Christ. Living a simple life without luxuries or the desire for position or prestige was meant to free up the "little brothers" for service to others. In the original rule written by Francis himself, the *Regula non Bullata*, Francis envisioned the brothers owning their own tools but then doing work in the towns for others simply for a place to sleep and eat. This sort of work was meant to serve as a witness to others, one within which conversations might happen where people would ask: "Why do you live this way? Why do you do this work without hope of pay or advancement? What animates this kind of life?" To which the answer would be: *Christ*.[19] To see Francis as some kind of

[16] Ibid., see n. 2. [17] Ibid. [18] Ibid.

[19] I am indebted to my colleague Ed Houser, with whom I had the privilege of team teaching the *Regula non Bullata* to students for many years.

self-regarding ascetic athlete relishing in each new self-abasement for its own sake as a kind of victory of the self is to miss the heart of Francis's commitment to Christ and to the Church that he thought himself called to rebuild.

Even someone more favorable to Bonaventure's development of Franciscan spirituality, such as the Franciscan Philotheus Boehner, when he asks whether Bonaventure had "abandoned" in his written works the simplicity and directness proposed by St. Francis, answers: "As to the letter, yes; as to the spirit, no." Saint Francis, he says, "did not need or want scientific culture for himself; the simple word of God and of nature provided his rich soul with all necessary spiritual food. Saint Bonaventure needed a scientific culture, but he transformed it in the spirit of Saint Francis."[20] And again, he says of Bonaventure's "philosophical and theological learning," that it is, "in comparison with Saint Francis' own richness . . . only a substitute. Saint Francis does not need to detour over intellectual ways with reasonings and cumbersome speculations; the Seraphic Doctor needs them."[21]

Whether or not Bonaventure "needed a scientific culture," he faced one – one that Francis did not face in the same way. The prevailing culture had changed in important ways, and Bonaventure may have recognized that refusing to change to face the new cultural and intellectual circumstances of the mid-thirteenth century would not preserve the founder's vision as much as simply burying it in amber.

To be fair to Brother Boehner, however, we should note that he writes not only approvingly but movingly of Bonaventure's fidelity to the Franciscan spirit. So, for example, he says of the *Itinerarium* that, "There are few writings of Saint Bonaventure so deeply impregnated with the spirit of Saint Francis," and concludes later that, "The *Itinerarium*, then, is an essentially Franciscan tract, guiding learned men and women in the spirit of Saint Francis to his mode of contemplative life." In fact, he writes of the *Itinerarium*:

> it is nothing else but an adaptation or interpretation of the great miracle of stigmatization wrought in the body of Saint Francis. One may even go so far as to say that Saint Bonaventure's mysticism is distinguished from all preceding by the place he assigns to the Crucified in the mystical union. In the mystical crucifixion of Saint Francis was reached the climax

[20] Philotheus Boehner, ed., "Introduction to Bonaventure," *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, trans. Zachary Hayes, Works of Saint Bonaventure, vol. 2 (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 18.

[21] Ibid., 15.

> of perfect contemplation. Saint Francis is the model thereof. The Seraphic Doctor, therefore, received his deepest mystical inspiration from Saint Francis, and not from Saint Bernard nor from Dionysius. From the latter he borrowed the language; from the former, many details; but from Saint Francis he learned that the mystical experience takes place with Christ on the Cross.[22]

By contrast, Brother Boehner also seems convinced that the virtue of the *Itinerarium* is that, in it, Bonaventure finally broke free of the "fetters" of his "scholastic" training. "In his great theological writings," writes Boehner, "the Seraphic Doctor is bound by the fetters of scholastic method and tradition. These allow little freedom to the Seraphic spirit which, though everywhere present in his writings, seldom makes its presence felt to one unfamiliar with it."[23] "His sermons, likewise," he writes, "are hampered by the highly artificial method of medieval preaching, a style far from the simplicity of Saint Francis' exhortations and admonitions." It is only when we open the *Itinerarium*, then, that "we discover a new Bonaventure, the true Franciscan, who has learned from Saint Francis not only the rules and form of life, but his whole outlook, his ideal."[24]

This negative attitude toward Bonaventure's "scholastic" training is not unique to Brother Boehner either, even among those devoted to his work. So, for example, it has been claimed that after his elevation to the position of minister general of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure developed a mode of expression "wholly alien to the language of the schools."[25] Noted Bonaventure scholar Jacques-Guy Bougerol, in his *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, still a standard reference work, declares that, after his elevation to the position of minister general, Bonaventure set himself "free from the patterns of the Schools, that is free to develop a form for his thought more concordant with his vision."[26] So although Bonaventure was the beneficiary of a first-rate education, the best formation possible in the thirteenth century, that education, it seems, even if it didn't corrupt his Franciscan spirit entirely, was a "fetter" from which he had to "free himself" before he could realize either (a) his own vision and/

[22] Ibid., 16. [23] Ibid., 9. [24] Ibid.

[25] Kent Emery, "Reading the World Rightly and Squarely: Bonaventure's Doctrine of the Cardinal Virtues," *Traditio* 39 (1983): 183–218. I think Prof. Emery is quite right about Bonaventure's doctrine of the cardinal virtues. Where I think he is mistaken is in this off-hand comment about Bonaventure developing a mode of expression "wholly alien to the language of the schools" – a comment that I take it has little or no bearing on the substance of the rest of his article.

[26] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964), 123. A revised French edition of the work (Paris: J. Vrin) appeared in 1988, but it was never translated into English.

or (b) recover the *true* spirit of St. Francis. The underlying presumption, as before, is that the *true* spirit of Francis and the kind of devoted study that characterized the schools were somehow mutually exclusive.

And yet, as Bert Roest argues in an article on "Francis and the Pursuit of Learning" in *The Cambridge Companion to Saint Francis of Assisi*, recent scholarship suggests that Francis was not as opposed to learning and study as he is sometimes portrayed.[27] Rather, as Prof. Roest points out, as Francis came to understand the nature of the mission of his "little brothers" to preach to the laity and to be able to debate with the Cathars and Muslims, he recognized the need for greater learning and instruction. Roest writes:

> Although early Franciscan preaching was above all a call to repentance without much doctrinal content, some guarantees of catholicity had to be met in order for the friars to evade accusations of heresy and to be capable of debate with the Cathars. That these were serious concerns is revealed at various junctures in the earliest Franciscan historical writings. From this perspective, the acceptance of a measure of instruction may have occurred rather early, and this created the preconditions that led to the first permanent "schools" in the early 1220s. By that time, Franciscan missionaries were meeting Muslims, and Franciscan preaching within the Christian commonwealth was moving beyond the call to repentance towards veritable preaching, or doctrinal preaching.[28]

To be effective in this mission, "Franciscan preachers and missionaries needed more efficacious theological training." Francis "was not fundamentally opposed" to this development, argues Roest, "even if he lamented the loss of initial minorite simplicity."[29]

Francis would not be the only religious reformer in history who, having begun with a simple plan in mind, subsequently recognized that the reform he envisioned would need to be more complex than he had originally assumed. New challenges bring with them new opportunities, but those new opportunities often bring with them their own challenges. Francis himself had responded to the new opportunities presented by the medieval towns and villages that were beginning to flourish in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. His wandering preachers were especially well suited to carry the Gospel to them in a way that the Benedictines, with their vows of stability to a particular monastery, were not.

But the intellectual and cultural conditions continued to change even more rapidly as the thirteenth century progressed. Among the new

[27] Bert Roest, "Francis and the Pursuit of Learning," in *The Cambridge Companion to Saint Francis of Assisi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 161–174.
[28] Ibid., 168. [29] Ibid.

opportunities Francis and his brothers would face in the coming years would be the emergence and flourishing of a new group of educational institutions, the medieval university, and the challenge of preaching to an increasingly educated lay population in the towns and villages. Bonaventure, I believe, strove to preserve the simplicity of the Order in the spirit of Francis while also providing the friars with the training they needed to preach to an increasingly educated laity in Europe's expanding towns and cities and deal effectively with the new intellectual challenges facing the Church. For this task, the Church needed preachers with the advanced training required to provide sermons that were both doctrinally orthodox and also rhetorically effective. More specifically, these aspiring preachers needed to be trained to deliver sermons in a new style that had become popular across Europe – a style that was actually called the "modern sermon" (*sermo modernus*) style to distinguish it from the earlier line-by-line commentaries (such as found at a very high level in Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*) that had characterized earlier preaching.

THE HOMILETIC REVOLUTION OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

This new form of preaching and the energy dedicated to it were the result of what has been called "the homiletic revolution" of the thirteenth century.[30] One key event that spurred this renewed interest in preaching, especially preaching to the laity, was the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, canon 10 of which lamented:

> It often happens that bishops, on account of their manifold duties or bodily infirmities, or because of hostile invasions or other reasons, to say nothing of lack of learning, which must be absolutely condemned in them and is not to be tolerated in the future, are themselves unable to minister the word of God to the people, especially in large and widespread dioceses.[31]

[30] Much of the material in this and the next three sections is covered at greater length in my book, *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture of Medieval Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). This is the description of the era given by James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 309.

[31] See *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, curantibus J. Alberigo et al., 3rd ed. (Bologna: Istituto per le scienze religiose, 1973), www.internetsv.info/Archive/CLateranense4.pdf and www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/01_10_1215–1215-_Concilium_Lateranum_IIII.html. An easily accessible English translation can also be found at: www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12–2.htm.

Declaring that "the food of the word of God is above all necessary, because as the body is nourished by material food, so is the soul nourished by spiritual food, since 'not by bread alone does man live but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt 4:4), the council decreed that bishops should henceforth provide men "suitable for carrying out fruitfully the office of sacred preaching" (*idoneos ad sanctae prædicationis officium salubritere exequendum*), commissioning them to visit the people diligently in place of the bishop to instruct them, by both word and example.[32] These designated preachers were to be "supplied appropriately with necessities" lest they be compelled to abandon their work for lack of them.[33] Lest anyone imagine these were mere suggestions or pious wishes, the council declared that, "If anyone neglect to comply with this, he shall be subject to severe punishment."[34]

It may seem odd to modern Catholics to imagine a time when preaching was not a regular occurrence at Mass. But such was often the case in the early Middle Ages. As Richard and Mary Rouse have pointed out:

> In the twelfth century much of the preaching was monastic, preached by monks to a monastic congregation. The homily, thoughtful, usually brief, and simple in organization, was the customary vehicle of monastic preaching. Sermons to the laity were not totally lacking, of course; in particular, preaching to the lay faithful was associated with the Crusades, and with wandering evangelists such as Robert d'Arbrissel. But the ordinary parish priest was not expected, and often not competent to prepare and deliver regular sermons. The task of routine preaching to the lay faithful was the responsibility of the bishops, who were required to preach once each Sunday. When this requirement was fulfilled, and it often was not, the result might be no more than one sermon per diocese per week.[35]

[32] Ibid., #10.

[33] Ibid.: "Quibus ipsi cum indiguerint congrue necessaria ministrent ne pro necessariorum defectu compellantur desistere ab incoepto."

[34] Ibid. On the influence of the tenth canon and the Lateran Council, see Richard Rouse and Mary Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the* Manipulus florum *of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 56–60.

[35] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 43. Compare this scarcity with the surfeit of sermons in the thirteenth century, about which Jean Leclercq points out, "Le sermon est sans doute le genre littéraire le plus *abondamment représenté dans la production du XIIIe siècle*." J. Leclercq, "Le magistère du prédicateur au XIIIe siècle," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 15 (1946): 105––147, esp. 143–144. For a different perspective, see D. W. Robertson, "Frequency of Preaching in Thirteenth-Century England," *Speculum* 24, no. 3 (July, 1949): 376–388.

It is notable also that Peter Cantor (also known as "Peter the Chanter"), who in the *Verbum abbreviatum* famously defined the three duties of the master as *lectio* (reading), *disputatio* (debate), and *praedicatio* (preaching), later in the same work spent an entire section inveighing against "the evil silence [*taciturnitatem*] especially of the *prelati*." One manifestation of this "evil silence," according to Peter, was their failure to preach: "Evilly they pass over in silence when preaching is to be done" (*Tacetur etiam male ad praedicandum*).[36]

Note that the council's intention was to encourage not only more preaching to the laity, but also more *learned* preaching. The concern was not only that many of the faithful were not hearing the Word of God preached to them, but also that when they did hear preaching, it was too often from preachers incompetently prepared, lacking either the rhetorical training or the theological resources, or both, to preach the faith of the Church accurately and reliably, or from wandering evangelists who, though they possessed rhetorical power, often preached a message at odds with the theology of the Church. The council's goal, therefore, was to encourage a new generation of preachers with the time and resources to gain the rhetorical skill and theological training to preach to a new population of educated laypeople.

Yet, since Peter Cantor died in 1197, and the *Verbum abbreviatum* was written before 1187, we can say that the concern over the lack, not only of good preaching, but also of any preaching at all, preceded the Fourth Lateran Council by several decades at least.[37] As David d'Avray has suggested:

> In a sense the decree on preaching of the Fourth Lateran Council is one chapter in a history which goes back to Caesarius of Arles in the sixth century. He presided over the Council of Vaison in 529, at which it was laid down that priests – "not only in cities but also in all parishes" – had the right to preach to the people. The implication is that preaching by the bishop alone was not enough. The same solution and much the same wording were adopted at the reform synod of Arles in 813. The other

[36] Peter Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum Petri Cantoris Parisiensis Verbum abbreviatum. Textus conflatus*, ed. Monique Boutry, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 196 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), par. 62.

[37] For a good treatment of Peter Cantor and his historical milieu, see J. W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). Richard and Mary Rouse suggest that, at this point in time, "the Church considered preaching largely as a missionary function, aimed at the conversion of non-believers"; for those who were Christians by birth and heritage, "the faith was transmitted principally through the sacraments." See Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 43–44.

> local reform synods of that year do not appear to go so far as Arles in extending the bishops' right and duty to preach to ordinary priests, but Charlemagne and his advisers clearly believed that preaching was a responsibility of priests as well as bishops. In declaring that the bishops needed help with preaching the Fourth Lateran Council was thus restating an idea that had been around for a very long time.[38]

Better preaching was one of the prime goals of Charlemagne's educational program and thus of what we today call the "Carolingian Renaissance." In his famous *Admonitio generalis* of 789, for example, Charlemagne associated the duty to preach with the first and most important commandment of the law:

> Before all else, that the catholic faith is to be diligently taught and preached to all the people by the bishops and priests, because this is the first commandment of the Lord God almighty in the law: "Hear, O Israel, that the Lord your God is one God. And that He is to be loved with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul and with all your strength."[39]

Yet, as noble as these earlier efforts at reform may have been, none appears to have been as successful as those in the thirteenth century. What explains the difference? Hume's famous warning about not mistaking causality with contiguity and coincidence is worth remembering. Whether the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 caused the "homiletic revolution" of the thirteenth century, or was one of its first major effects, or simply helped to amplify a movement that was already afoot, is not a question we can resolve here. What we can say with David d'Avray, however, is that the "decree marks, even if it did not cause, the beginning of a new age in the history of preaching."[40]

THE DEMAND FOR PREACHING AMONG MORE EDUCATED LAYMEN

If the dictates of the council alone are insufficient to explain the "homiletic revolution" of the thirteenth century, what other influences can we find

[38] D. L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 30.

[39] See P. D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Lambrigg, Cumbria: P. D. King, 1987), 214, section 61.

[40] d'Avray, *Preaching*, 16. The full quotation is: "Still, most scholars would agree that the decree marks, even if it did not cause, the beginning of a new age in the history of preaching, and that it calls attention to the gravity of the problem – too few popular sermons – which the friars in the event went far towards solving."

among contemporaneous events that might have led to their successful implementation? Another key factor was likely the increasing presence of a more literate and educated populace in the growing number of medieval towns in western Europe. "Cities," writes d'Avray, "provided an environment in which the relatively new classes of merchants and lay lawyers could flourish; for the latter literacy was indispensable and for the former a decided advantage."[41] The emergence and success of the University of Bologna, founded at nearly the same time as the University of Paris, specializing in the schooling of a literate class of academically trained lawyers rather than in the academic preparation of a literate class of preachers, as at Paris, suggests that the demand for people with such skills had increased dramatically since the twelfth century.

During the thirteenth century, confraternities, of which the first is often said to have been founded at Paris in 1208, also sprung up, sometimes by the dozen, in every city and town across Europe, to respond to the needs and desires of this new literate class of laymen.[42] Regarding one such group, the *humiliati*, which was especially popular and influential in Italy, Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240) comments in his *Historia occidentalis*, "The laity as well as the clerics do not omit to say all the canonical hours by day and by night; and nearly all of them are literate (*litterati*)." Notably, the author goes on some ten lines later to point out that "the brothers, both the clerics and the literate laymen," had authority given them by the pope himself to preach "not only in their own congregation, but in the streets and cities and in secular churches," as long as they had the permission of the local bishop.[43] "By the end of the thirteenth century," writes d'Avray, "the cultural gap between clergy and laity had been narrowed . . . Far from all of their lay public were simple and ignorant people."[44]

I am far from suggesting that everyone or even the majority of people in medieval society were literate. Clearly there were still large numbers who did not have the ability to read. Yet we should be careful of labelling them as "unliterary." Many cultures have existed throughout history, and exist

[41] d'Avray, *Preaching*, 30.

[42] G. G. Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis: confraternite e pietà dei laici nel Medioevo* (Rome: Herder, 1977).

[43] *The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. J. F. Hinnebusch, OP (Fribourg: University Press, 1972), ch. 28, pp. 144–145: "Omnes horas canonicas diebus et noctibus laici sicut et clerici non pretermittunt. Fere omnes litterati sunt . . . Fratres autem eorum tam clerici quam laici literati a summon pontifice, qui regulam eorum et canonica instituta confirmauit, auctoritatem habent predicandi, non solum in sua congregatione sed in plateis et ciuitatibus, in ecclesiis secularibus, requisite tamen consensus eorum qui present locis illis prelatorum."

[44] d'Avray, *Preaching*, 43.

still today, in which the common people are literary, though not literate. In such societies, their knowledge of great texts – whether the stories of Homer's *Iliad*, the Scottish Tam Lyn, or the Hebrew Psalms – comes from listening to them repeatedly spoken or sung. In this form they were passed down from generation to generation orally by memory.

We should not imagine, therefore, that the common folk in medieval towns and villages were entirely ignorant of the Scriptures, even if they could not read them. Many would have heard Bible verses spoken and sung constantly. It is likely that medieval preachers came to understand in such circumstances that a form of preaching and lecturing that would allow their points to be more easily recalled was crucial. The arts of memory and recollection in this setting would have been invaluable to students, masters, and preachers.[45]

The social milieu in which Thomas and Bonaventure studied and taught was a culture in transition between orality and literacy.[46] Books were becoming more common, and yet only the richest owned more than a few. Monks and friars who attended a university were required to read not only the Scriptures but also a host of other large, complicated books. It was not uncommon for students at Paris to have committed to memory not only all the Psalms but large portions of the rest of the Bible as well. Teaching was still done mostly orally, often with only the master possessing a written copy of the book he was commenting upon during his *lectio*. Many points had to be committed to memory.

So although there were still large portions of the population unable to read, the population as a whole, especially in the towns and cities, was becoming increasingly literate, or at least *literary*, and thus more eager for learned sermons. For similar reasons, people were less forgiving of illiterate, thoughtless ones. The problem facing the Church was not only how to provide preachers but also how to train preachers who could measure up to the rhetorical and intellectual expectations of the newly educated class of laypeople who knew more about secular matters but not always about matters pertaining to their Christian faith.

The late twelfth century also witnessed the rise of wandering preachers who, although not attached to a heretical sect, preached doctrines not to be

[45] On the importance of the arts of memory and recollection in the Middle Ages, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and her anthology with Jan M. Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

[46] On the differences between oral and literary cultures, see the classic work by Walter Ong, SJ, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982).

trusted. Their increased popularity suggested a new hunger among the laity for evangelical preaching. The tragedy from the institutional Church's point of view was that this hunger was not always being nourished with the solid food of the Gospel message.

Given these new challenges, the simple moral lessons or pious exhortations that might have been adequate in an earlier age would have ceased to be so any longer, and the allure of rhetorically sophisticated but doctrinally unorthodox preaching became all the harder to resist. "One is not certain," write Richard and Mary Rouse, "whether it was in reaction against these unorthodox preachers that the Church began to emphasize and encourage sermons by the orthodox; or whether, in effect, the Church began in earnest to emphasize the sermon as a vehicle for instruction simply because there was an audience receptive to preaching."[47] For our purposes, we needn't make this an either/or proposition. The Fourth Lateran Council intended to encourage not only more preaching to the laity, but also more *learned* preaching – preaching that would communicate more reliably the authentic faith of the Church. To meet these requirements, Francis's brothers would need education.

Training large numbers of such preachers who could sort through various "opinions" in order to discern the authentic truths of the faith and then preach these truths convincingly to a more literate, intellectually discriminating audience was a tall order. But this challenge was taken up by two distinctive, novel institutions founded early in the thirteenth century that, had history been different, might not have had much to do with one another, but whose fortunes in the thirteenth century became intimately intertwined. I am speaking of course of the universities and the friars.

THE FRIARS AND PREACHING

A key factor missing in attempts at the reform of preaching in the Church in previous centuries was the existence and widespread influence of a large number of highly educated members of religious orders specially trained for preaching and not bound by the vow of stability taken in Benedictine-type orders. By contrast, in the thirteenth century, the new orders of friars were able to travel widely across Europe preaching and teaching, but also carrying with them the model of a new style of preaching.

[47] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 44.

The year 1215, the date of the Fourth Lateran Council, was also the year that Dominic de Guzman, with six "brothers," established a new religious order in a house in Toulouse. Guzman attended the council with his diocesan bishop, Foulques of Toulouse, and little more than a year later, in January 1217, he obtained from the new pope, Honorius III, a mandate, *Gratiarum omnium*, that gave general approval to the work of preaching already begun at Toulouse.

Only six years before the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1209, Francis of Assisi had gained unofficial approval for an early rule for his new order from Pope Innocent III. One sometimes hears the phrase "Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words," attributed to St. Francis. The problem is that he did not say it, nor did he practice it. He preached with words ceaselessly. His first biographer, Thomas of Celano (*c.* 1185–*c.* 1265) in *The First Life of St. Francis* (the so-called *Vita Prima*), says of him that Francis "filled all the earth with Christ's Gospel, so that often in one day he would make the circuit of four or five villages or even towns preaching to everyone the Gospel of the Kingdom of God."[48] And later, Celano writes that, since the death of Francis, "he illumines the world by a multiplication of new miracles, even as he has wonderfully enlightened it hitherto by the doctrine of his holy preaching."[49]

It is true that Francis wanted the actions of his friars to proclaim the Gospel as much as their words. Thomas of Celano says of him, for example, that he edified his hearers "not less by his example than by his words," and in this way "he had made a tongue of his whole body."[50]

But there is no doubt that from the beginning, Francis saw preaching as an important part of the mission of his new Order. In chapter 16 of "The Earlier Rule," the *Regula non bullata* of 1221, he directs that there are two ways of engaging in mission among the Saracens and non-believers. The first is "not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake." The other way, however, "is to announce the Word of God, when they see that it pleases the Lord, in order that [non-believers] may believe in the all-powerful God, Father, and Son, and Holy

[48] Thomas of Celano, *The First Life of St. Francis*, part II, ch. 4, § 97. I have used the English translation available online at https://dmdhist.sitehost.iu.edu/francis.htm. This is a modified translation of the translation by A. G. Ferrera Howell in M. L. Cameron, ed., *The Inquiring Pilgrim's Guide to Assisi* (London: Methuen, 1926), 163–270.

[49] Ibid. [50] Ibid., part II, ch. 4, § 97.

Spirit, the Creator of all, the Son the Redeemer and Saviour."[51] In the next section of the Rule, he cautions:

> Let no brother preach contrary to the rite and practice of the Church or without the permission of his minister. Let the minister be careful of granting it without discernment to anyone. Let all the brothers, however, preach by their deeds. No minister or preacher may make a ministry of the brothers or the office of preaching his own, but, when he is told, let him set it aside without objection.[52]

But in this, he was merely echoing the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council in their attempt to restrict permission to preach to those who were qualified. Section 3 of the council directed: "Let therefore all those who have been forbidden or not sent to preach, and yet dare publicly or privately to usurp the office of preaching without having received the authority of the apostolic see or the catholic bishop of the place."[53] Francis goes on in his Rule to beg all his brothers – "those who preach, pray, or work, cleric or lay – to strive to humble themselves in everything, not to boast or delight in themselves or inwardly exalt themselves because of the good words and deeds or, for that matter, because of any good that God sometimes says or does or works in and through them."[54] But this passage was not meant to dissuade the brothers from preaching. Its admonition to humility applied to all the works of the brothers, whether words or deeds.

When the officially approved "Later Rule" of St. Francis came out in 1223 (the *regula bullata*), it notably contained an entire chapter on preaching (chapter 9), in which Francis directed:

> The brothers may not preach in the diocese of any bishop where he [the bishop] has opposed their doing so. And let none of the brothers dare to preach in any way to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the general minister of this fraternity, and the office of preacher has been conferred upon him. Moreover, I admonish and exhort those brothers that when they preach their language be well-considered and chaste for the benefit and edification of the people, announcing to

[51] "Earlier Rule," ch. 16 in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*, ed. R. Armstrong et al. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 75.

[52] Ibid., ch. 17.

[53] Copied from the English translation at the Vatican website: www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12–2.htm.

[54] "Earlier Rule," ed. Armstrong, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1.

> them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his word brief.[55]

Here he repeats the provision of the Fourth Lateran Council even more clearly that his brothers should not preach without the permission of the local bishop, a clear allusion to the problem of the wandering evangelists leading the people astray with unorthodox preaching. But as author Michael Blastic notes in an important article on "Preaching in the Early Franciscan Movement," when Francis admonishes and exhorts his brothers "that when they preach their language be well-considered and chaste [*examinata et casta*] for the benefit and edification of the people," he is likely echoing the another concern of the Fourth Lateran Council – namely, to give rise to preaching that would be both well-prepared and doctrinally sound, "in concord with Catholic teaching" and "without doctrinal error or lack of clarity."[56]

In 1227, a mere twelve years after the Fourth Lateran Council, the Council of Trier ordered that priests should instruct their parishioners on the articles of faith, the Ten Commandments, and the virtues and vices. "Ignorant and inexperienced priests" were not to presume to preach to their parishioners lest they become "teachers of error" (*magistros erroris*). They were, however, actively to encourage attendance when learned men came to preach, and most especially friars, both Dominican and Franciscan, who were to be "warmly received and treated with charity" (*benigne recipiatis et caritative pertractetis*) so the people might "hear the word of God from them."[57]

We also find an account in the early Assisi Compilation of stories about St. Francis, assembled roughly between 1244 and 1260, indicating that, after he had composed "The Canticle of Brother Sun," Francis sent for Brother Pacifico, saying that he wanted

> to give him a few good and spiritual brothers to go through the world preaching and praising God. He said that he wanted one of them who knew how to preach, first to preach to the people. After the sermon, they were to sing the Praises of the Lord [the Canticle of Brother Sun] as minstrels of the Lord. After the praises, he wanted the preacher to tell the

[55] Armstrong, ed., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, 104–105.

[56] Michael Blastic, "Preaching in the Early Franciscan Movement," in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning of the World Came about through Words*, ed. Timothy Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 32.

[57] Council of Trier, Statute 7 (*De decanis*); Mansi 23:31–32. Quoted from Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 59, n. 57.

> people: "We are minstrels of the Lord, and this is what we want as payment: that you live in true penance." He used to say: "What are the servants of God if not his minstrels, who must move people's hearts and lift them up to spiritual joy?" And he said this especially to the Lesser Brother, who had been given to the people for their salvation.[58]

Michael Blastic suggests that this admonition about finding someone who "knew how to preach" implies someone who had learned the more formal style of the *sermo modernus*, which he wanted the brothers to combine with the singing of the Canticle of the Sun so as to move the faithful in both mind and heart.[59] Whatever Francis's original intentions, it was not long before the Franciscans were, like the Dominicans, devoting themselves fully to the ministry of preaching verbally in the new style to the laity.[60]

One way scholars have gauged the increase in interest in preaching in the thirteenth century has been by the large number of treatises on preaching produced after the turn of the century. We find that by 1230 both the Dominicans and the Franciscans had produced several of their own treatises on preaching.[61] Among those by the Dominicans, there was Stephen of Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, Humbert of Romans's *De eruditione praedicatorum*, and Thomas of Waley's *Ars praedicandi*. Among those by the Franciscans, the *Ars concionandi* has sometimes been attributed to Bonaventure, although it was likely not written by him. Yet, given its manuscript history in Franciscan sources and its later association with Bonaventure, it likely derives from some Franciscan source, if not Bonaventure himself.[62] And if, as Timothy J. Johnson suggests in his introduction to *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, Bonaventure wrote and gathered a collection of sermons to

[58] The Assisi Compilation, 83, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder Saint*, ed. R. Armstrong et al. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 186.

[59] Blastic, "Preaching," 38.

[60] Francis's early reticence about verbal preaching, especially in long and complicated sermons, compared to what would eventually arise once the "lesser brothers" such as John of La Rochelle and Bonaventure entered the order, likely helps explain Richard and Mary Rouse's comment (*Preachers*, 59), "The Franciscans likewise, in a manner unforeseen by St. Francis, were quickly and inevitably drawn into a preaching ministry." On the early developments in this ministry among the Franciscans, see the article by Blastic, "Preaching" and the introduction by Timothy J. Johnson to *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson, Works of St. Bonaventure, 12 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008), esp. 22–31.

[61] Fr. Thomas Charland has compiled a list in *Artes Praedicandi: contribution à l' histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge*, Publications de l'Institut d'Etudes Medievales d'Ottawa 7 (Paris and Ottowa: J. Vrin/Institute of Medieval Studies, 1936), 17–106.

[62] On the complicated manuscript history, see Randall Smith, *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Press, 2016), 44 n. 30.

serve as a teaching guide for his Franciscan brothers, then this too would be another example of the contemporary interest in homiletics – and in particular, the *sermo modernus* style of preaching – among the Franciscans.[63]

Another bit of evidence can be found in several works by the English Franciscan Roger Bacon.[64] In the *Opus tertium*, written around 1268, for example, he declares that "the principle intention and ultimate goal of the Church is the work of preaching [*principalis intentio ecclesiae et ultimus finis est opus praedicationis*] so that those without faith may be converted to the faith and the faithful preserved in faith and morals."[65] Bacon's problem, however, is that he is unhappy with the state of Franciscan education. He thinks that they are wasting too much time in "infinite curiosity." And their sermons, "with their Porphyrian divisions, their unsuitable consonance of words and clauses, and their vocal concordances in which is found only empty verbosity, lack all rhetorical ornament and the power of persuading. And yet, it still consumes maximum amounts of time, because their authors labor tenfold more over the construction of this sort of "spider's web [of words]" than over the meaning of the sermon."[66] It is likely, as Timothy J. Johnson has argued, that the target of Bacon's criticism here were the *sermo modernus* style of sermons that Bonaventure and his Parisian confreres specialized in, preferring instead a simpler manner of preaching more suited he thought to the uneducated populace and more akin to the kind of preaching that made Francis so

[63] See *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, ed. Johnson, 31: "While the text of the *Sunday Sermons* provided others even outside the Order with a homiletic model for the entire liturgical year or specific Sundays as the manuscript tradition attests, the *Sunday Sermons* are best appreciated when considered as Bonaventure's institutional message to those who affirmed and embraced the second generation Minorite construction of the evangelical life *that emphasized preaching*" (emphasis added). Alexander of Hales had authored a *Disputed Question on Preaching* (*De officio praedicationis*) even before he became a friar. It can be found as q. 29 in the collection titled *Quaestiones disputatae antequam esset frater* (Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1990), 516–529. His concern in that text, however, had mostly to do with the holiness of the preacher, not the form of the preaching. For a nice overview, see Timothy J. Johnson, "*Fides ex auditu*: Alexander of Hales and the Franciscan School on the Ministry of Teaching," *Franciscan Studies* 78 (2020): 51–66.

[64] For a good overview, see Timothy J. Johnson, "Preaching Precedes Theology: Roger Bacon on the Failure of Mendicant Education," *Franciscan Studies* 68 (2010): 83–95. See also Timothy J. Johnson, "Roger Bacon's Critique of Franciscan Preaching," in *Institution und Charisma. Festschrift für Gert Melville zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Franz J. Feiten et al. (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), 541–548.

[65] See Roger Bacon, *Opus tertium*, in *Opera Quaedam Hacentus Inédita*, vol. 1, ed, J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, 1859), ch. 75, p. 303.

[66] Bacon, *Opus tertium*, ch. 75, pp. 303–304.

popular.[67] And he thought the friars should spend less time on rhetoric, logic, and Aristotle, and more time on more useful studies such as language acquisition, mathematics, optics, alchemy, and natural philosophy.[68] But even if Bacon was not happy with the *sermo modernus* style that had become popular in Paris and across Europe, it's clear he thought preaching was of primary importance and that the education of friars should be directed at preparing them suitably to be able to preach and teach the laity well.

Unlike the Benedictines and their various offshoots, the Dominicans and Franciscans had constitutions that allowed and even supported traveling peripatetic preachers. What they lacked, however, which many of their fellow religious had, were their own established educational programs. And so, early on, they needed the help of institutions founded and run by others to help educate their members. Such institutions needed to be sound in theological doctrine and sophisticated enough intellectually to help them refute the many errors being propounded in various parts of Europe, but they also had to be sufficiently literary to help train the preachers needed to address an increasingly literate society in a new style that took training to master. Several scholars have argued that the thirteenth-century preaching revival of the friars was as successful as it was in large part because the friars were uniquely able to educate their members to make effective use of the new preaching aids available.[69] It was not enough merely that such preaching aids were available; there had to be a population trained to use them as well.

[67] See Johnson, "Preaching Precedes," 86.

[68] For Bacon's plan for a reformed educational program, see Roger Bacon, *Compendium studii philosophiae*, in *Opera Quaedam Hacentus Inédita*, vol. 1, ed, J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, 1859), 391–519.

[69] See, e.g., d'Avray, *Preaching*, 21–22: "The thirteenth century marks a turning-point in the history of medieval preaching, not just because of the proliferation of preaching aids but because there were for the first time organizations – the mendicant orders – whose members were properly trained to make use of these tools." And in the same work, 203: "the preaching revival of the friars was more successful than the Carolingian one because they succeeded in closing the gap between preaching aids and their users. In this context the role of Paris is prominent. On the one hand, a large number of purpose-built preaching aids were available . . . On the other hand, the influential and fairly numerous minority of friars who were selected to study at Paris were particularly well equipped to handle these preaching aids confidently and effectively." See also the comment in Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 43: "The Church, in the thirteenth century, changed its view on the nature and importance of preaching, and increasingly recognized the sermon as a major instrument of the Church's ministry. As a natural concomitant, there was a marked increase in preaching, especially by preachers who were school-trained and, thus, more apt to use and to devise tools."

Monastic schools still existed, but they were increasingly superseded by new educational institutions springing up across Europe. Among them were the cathedral schools such as the famous one in Chartres, the schools of canons regular such as the Royal Abbey School of the Canons Regular of St. Victor in Paris, and the *studia generalia* associated with the priories of the new religious orders. The most influential of the new educational institutions, however, was the medieval university; and when it came to preaching, the most influential was the University of Paris.

PREACHING AND PARIS

Indeed, Paris had become a center of interest in preaching and its reform decades (at least) before the Fourth Lateran Council. "The most plentiful evidence of increased interest in preaching," write Richard and Mary Rouse, "comes from the Paris schools in the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries."[70] Maurice de Sully, bishop of Paris from 1160 until his death in 1196, urged his priests to preach every day, in contrast to the common practice of his day.[71] Moreover a good number of the masters of theology at Paris in the late twelfth century show greater interest than predecessors such as Abelard and Peter Lombard in preaching and the training of preachers. Masters such as Stephen Langton, Peter Cantor, Peter of Poitiers, Prepositinus, and Alan of Lille were not only celebrated preachers themselves, but also produced elaborate reference works directed at teaching others the skill.

The method and style of preaching that became popular during the thirteenth century – a style of preaching, as we have said, called at the time the "modern sermon" (*sermo modernus*) style – is something we will have more occasion to comment upon in future chapters. But in brief, three things were especially characteristic of thirteenth-century *sermo modernus*-style sermons: (1) the *thema*, a biblical verse, usually from the day's readings that the preacher would use to lend structure and order to the entire sermon; (2) the *divisio* of the *thema*; and (3) the *dilatatio* of each of the parts created by this opening *divisio*. But another important element found in many, but not all, *sermo modernus*-style sermons was what was called a *prothema*. That is say, before the division and dilation of the parts of the main *thema* verse in the body of the sermon, the preacher might

[70] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 48. [71] Ibid., 61.

begin with a short prologue that was made up of its own *prothema* verse with its own division and dilation. So, for example, in *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, one will find about half with a *prothema* and half without. These *prothemata* were always concluded with a prayer, usually asking God to provide the preacher and his listeners with wisdom and an attentive spirit.

This style of preaching by dividing and "dilating" a *thema* verse replaced the older style of preaching by means of a line-by-line exegesis of a biblical text. In a 1270 treatise "On the Art of Preaching" (*De arte praedicandi*), the Franciscan master John of Wales comments that the older *sermo antiquus* homily "did not sit particularly well with modern listeners, who liked to see the clear articulation of a sermon developed from a scriptural theme" (i.e., *thema*). So too, in 1290, the Italian Dominican Fra Giacomo da Fusignano, prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, wrote that the older style was suitable only for preaching to the ignorant. To other, more intelligent and literate listeners, this sort of exposition was, he thought, unnecessary. The sermon "more common to modern preachers" (*modernis praedicatoribus communior*), writes Fra Giacomo, was one in which a *thema* was divided into various parts.[72]

This new style of preaching presented challenges, however. It required fairly extensive education and training, especially to be able to do it well. Numerous reference works were composed during the thirteenth century to help preachers prepare these "modern"-style sermons. But it required training to be able to use them, supposing that one even had access to a good library stocked with the appropriate books. If the Friars Minor were to be part of this burgeoning movement, they were going to need more extensive education that was envisioned by Francis. The friars at Paris were getting precisely this sort of education, and among their number, Bonaventure was undoubtedly the most skilled at the use of the new style. His sermons were collected and used as a model for friars throughout the Order. Very few could match his verbal proficiency and imaginative genius, let alone his philosophical and theological expertise.[73]

[72] See Michèle Mulcahey, "*First the Bow is Bent in Study . . .*": *Dominican Education before 1350*, Studies and Texts, 132 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), n. 10: "Est autem hoc satis populo rudi utilis. Ceteris literatis et intelligentibus auditoribus populariis exposicio non est necessaria."

[73] In *Aquinas, Bonaventure*, I describe Bonaventure as "a scholastic with the heart of a poet" (231) as opposed to Thomas Aquinas, whom I describe as "the logician who learned to preach" (77). Bonaventure's fourteen years training at Paris made a big difference in his level of skill. Thomas came to the Parisian style of preaching later in his training, but he was a quick study. He was,

In 1227, a mere twelve years after the Fourth Lateran Council, the Council of Trier ordered that "Ignorant and inexperienced priests" were not to presume to preach to their parishioners lest they become "teachers of error" (*magistros erroris*). They were, however, actively to encourage attendance when learned men came to preach, and most especially friars, both Dominican and Franciscan, who were to be "warmly received and treated with charity" (*benigne recipiatis et caritative pertractetis*) so the people might "hear the word of God from them."[74]

Recent scholars have argued that the thirteenth-century preaching revival of the friars was as successful as it was in large part because the friars were uniquely able to educate their members to make effective use of the new preaching aids available. It was not enough merely that such preaching aids were available; there had to be a population trained to use them as well. So, for example, as medieval historian David d'Avray explains: "The thirteenth century marks a turning-point in the history of medieval preaching, not just because of the proliferation of preaching aids but because there were for the first-time organizations – the mendicant orders – whose members were properly trained to make use of these tools."[75] And later in the same work, we read:

> the preaching revival of the friars was more successful than the Carolingian one because they succeeded in closing the gap between preaching aids and their users. In this context the role of Paris is prominent. On the one hand, a large number of purpose-built preaching aids were available ... On the other hand, the influential and fairly numerous minority of friars who were selected to study at Paris were particularly well equipped to handle these preaching aids confidently and effectively.[76]

So too, in their important work on medieval preaching, Richard and Mary Rouse express similar judgments on the increased importance of preaching, preaching aids, and preachers educated to be able to use them.

> The Church, in the thirteenth century, changed its view on the nature and importance of preaching, and increasingly recognized the sermon as a major instrument of the Church's ministry. As a natural concomitant,

however, never quite as accomplished as Bonaventure in the art. Needless to say, he had other gifts.

[74] Council of Trier, Statute 7 (*De decanis*); Mansi 23:31–32. Quoted from Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 59, n. 57.

[75] d'Avray, *Preaching*, 21–22. [76] Ibid., 203.

> there was a marked increase in preaching, especially by preachers who were school-trained and, thus, more apt to use and to devise tools.[77]

This is not to deny the importance of logic and disputation, arts for which Paris had become renowned. But perhaps we should take as our guide Peter Cantor who, in the *Verbum abbreviatum*, after listing the three main duties of the master – *lectio*, *disputatio*, and *praedicatio* – immediately adds that "the privilege by merit goes to the science of preaching" (*merito predicationis scientiam optinet privilegium.*).[78] Later in the same text, Peter described the relationship between the three duties of the master to the three parts of a building:

> Reading is, as it were, the foundation and basement for what follows, for through it the rest is achieved. Disputation is the wall in the building of study for nothing is fully understood or faithfully preached, if it is not first chewed by the tooth of disputation. Preaching, which is supported by the former, is the roof, sheltering the faithful from the heat and wind of temptation. We should preach after, not before, the reading of Holy Scripture and the investigation of doubtful matters by disputation.[79]

BONAVENTURE, PREACHING, AND "THE SCHOLASTIC METHOD AND TRADITION"

We need not guess whether Bonaventure considered preaching crucial to the mission of the Franciscans or whether he was concerned to educate friars who could preach well. He tell us himself in a letter he wrote in 1254 or 1255 while he was regent master at Paris to an unknown master of arts in England who was considering joining the Franciscans.[80] This young master of arts – which some have claimed was Roger Bacon, others John Pecham, but whose identity in truth we do not know – wrote to Bonaventure because he was having "grave doubts" that the Franciscans had lost their way since the death of Francis. This young master seems to have had three chief concerns: first, that the Franciscans had compromised their vow of poverty by accepting money for houses and books; second, that they were no longer employed in manual trades; rather, third, they

[77] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, 43. [78] Peter Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum*, 1. [79] Ibid., 6.
[80] The full text in English translation can be found in Dominic Monti, trans., "A Letter in Response to an Unknown Master," in *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, Works of Saint Bonaventure, vol. 5 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 37–56. The Latin text is in the Quaracchi edition, vol. 8, 331–336. Citations will be given to the English translation, which uses the paragraph numbers in the Quaracchi edition.

were studying philosophy, avidly reading and writing, attacking, refuting, and constructing all kinds of doctrines, going so far as to allow themselves, contrary to the spirit of humility, to be called "master" (*magister*, or "teacher") even though the Lord Himself had forbidden this name to his disciples (Matt 23:10).

Bonaventure's reply was that they received alms to support their work, and it did not matter whether it was in the form of money or some other type of gift because either way, they owned nothing. No brother could point to anything and say, "This belongs to me," nor could anyone point to any brother and say, "This belongs to him."

What, then, was their work? Bonaventure's answer: preaching. And just as Francis had not forbidden his brothers to make use of the tools to pursue their craft or trade, so too the brothers had leave to make use of the tools they needed to engage in preaching, which were books. And there is no mistaking the fact that preaching has become his main concern.

"Hear me now on what I have to say about books and other tools," Bonaventure tells the young master.

> The Rule states in no uncertain terms that the brothers have the right and duty of preaching, something that, to my knowledge, is found in no other religious rule. Now, if they are not to preach fables but the divine Word, which they cannot know unless they read, nor read unless they have books, then it is perfectly clear that it is totally in harmony with the perfection of the Rule for them to have books, just as it is for them to preach. Furthermore, if it's not harmful to the poverty of the Order to have missals for celebrating Mass and breviaries for reciting the Hours, then it is not detrimental to have books and Bibles for preaching the divine Word. The brothers are therefore allowed to have books.[81]

But what about the study of philosophy and all the doctrines of theology? How could that be justified? Bonaventure's answer is that this too was necessary for good, solid, orthodox preaching. It was necessary for "winnowing the grain of truth from the chaff of mere verbiage."[82] In one of those great lines that should be put on a plaque at the entrance to every Catholic university, Bonaventure instructs his interlocutor: "For if someone were to study the opinions of heretics so that by avoiding their teachings he might better understand the truth, such a person would not be curious, nor a heretic, but a Catholic."[83] He continues: "And so, if the writings of the philosophers are sometimes of much value in understanding truth and

[81] "A Letter in Response," 6. [82] Ibid. [83] Ibid., 12.

refuting errors, we are not departing from the purity of faith if we at times study them, especially since there are many questions of faith which cannot be settled without recourse to them."[84] Bonaventure was perhaps recalling here Peter Cantor's famous warning that no one should preach unless the truth of Scripture had first been chewed by "the tooth of disputation."

Bonaventure notes that many of the saints devoted themselves to the study of philosophy, as for example the great St. Augustine:

> After all, no one describes the nature of time and of matter better than Augustine as he probes and discusses them in his *Confessions*; no one has explained the origins of forms and the development of things better than he in his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*; no one has better treated questions on the soul and on God than he in his book *On the Trinity*; and no one has better explained the nature of the angels and the creation of the world than he in *The City of God*.[85]

And as St. Augustine himself said, often the Sacred Scriptures "cannot be understood without familiarity with the other sciences."[86] Indeed, the goal of Bonaventure's *Reduction of the Arts to Theology* had been to show how all the sciences should be seen as propaedeutic for reading and understanding the Scriptures.

Employing an age-old, traditional image found frequently in the writings of the Fathers, Bonaventure tells his young interlocutor that when the doctors of theology make use of the teachings of philosophy, they are like the children of Israel who carried off the golden vessels of the Egyptians to use in the worship of God. "And so many things which we have not learned from the philosophers' own writings or even from the maxims of philosophy, we learn from the saints," writes Bonaventure. "You therefore should not be surprised if those who enter the Order with little education acquire much knowledge within it."[87] And this fact itself suggests something of the divine character of the order for Bonaventure. For although "in the beginning our brothers were simple and unlettered" whereas now many are highly educated, so too the apostles in the early church were simple and unlettered, and yet the Church quickly grew and developed highly educated and highly developed teachers of the faith:

> Let it not disturb you that in the beginning our brothers were simple and unlettered; rather, this very fact ought to strengthen your faith in the Order. For I confess before God that what made me love St. Francis's way of life so much was that it is exactly like the origin and the perfection of

[84] Ibid. [85] Ibid. [86] Ibid. [87] Ibid.

> the Church itself, which began first with simple fishermen and afterwards developed to include the most illustrious and learned doctors. You find the same thing in the Order of St. Francis; in this way God reveals that it did not come about through human calculations but through Christ.[88]

In this context, consider again the comments we read earlier about Bonaventure being "bound by the fetters of scholastic method and tradition," which allowed "little freedom to the seraphic spirit";[89] that after his elevation to the position of minister general of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure set himself "free from the patterns of the Schools" so that he might develop "a form for his thought more concordant with his vision"[90] – one "wholly alien to the language of the schools."[91]

From these comments, we get the sense that it was Bonaventure's "scholastic" training that was somehow restraining him, perhaps even corrupting him, drawing him away from the "authentic" Franciscan spirit, a prison of corruption from which he finally freed himself when he was elevated to the position of minister general. Or perhaps he did not free himself, as his harsher critics claim, and instead infected the entire Order with his "scholastic" corruption, destroying the authentic "spirit of the Poverello" once and for all.

We will have more to say about Bonaventure's attitude toward university education in due course, but for the moment, I wish to focus attention on the connotation people frequently associate with the word "scholastic." If we associate "scholasticism" solely with the art of *disputatio*, with writing "disputed questions" in something like a *summa*, then Bonaventure certainly did less of it when he became minister general. But if we realize that, at Paris (the "school" people are usually referring to when they speak of "scholasticism"), the goal of the education in theology was for aspiring masters to develop excellence in all three of the skills mentioned by Peter the Chanter: not only *disputatio*, but also *lectio* (reading and understanding the Scriptures) and *praedicatio* (preaching), and in the thirteenth century, that meant preaching in the *sermo modernus* style.

To preach in this style required training in the arts of preaching. And preaching, by this time in the thirteenth century, was not to be undertaken, as the Council of Trier had forbidden, by "ignorant and inexperienced priests" lest they become "teachers of error." So too, as Peter Cantor warned, "nothing is fully understood or faithfully preached if it not first chewed by the tooth of disputation." Hence, rather than opposing

[88] Ibid., 13. [89] Boehner, "Introduction to Bonaventure," in *Itinerarium*, 18.
[90] Bougerol, *Introduction*, 123. [91] Emery, "Reading the World," 183.

"scholasticism" and Bonaventure's "spiritual" work in a text like the *Itinerarium*, it would be more accurate to say that the style of the *Itinerarium* reflects the methods of the *sermo modernus*-style preaching Bonaventure learned at the University of Paris – something I hope to show in more detail in the chapters that follow. And, as I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the "homiletic revolution" in preaching of the thirteenth century and the refinement of the methods of *disputatio* we so often associate with "scholasticism" go hand in hand. The methods of *lectio* and *disputatio* students learned at Paris were meant to be in service, ultimately, to *praedicatio*.

I would be willing to grant that there can be differences of taste when it comes to the *sermo modernus*-style of preaching. As we saw earlier, even during Bonaventure's life, someone as prominent as Roger Bacon was not a fan. But I have to protest when someone, even someone as eminent as Philotheus Boehner, claims that Bonaventure's sermons "are hampered by the highly artificial method of medieval preaching, a style far from the simplicity of Saint Francis' exhortations and admonitions," and that it is only when we open the *Itinerarium* that "we discover a new Bonaventure, the true Franciscan, who has learned from Saint Francis not only the rules and form of life, but his whole outlook, his ideal."[92]

First, Bonaventure's sermons are masterful – complex yet focused; beautiful verbally, almost poetic, with creative imagery, but with a message that is simple and down-to-earth. It is for good reason that his sermons were taken as models during his life and for decades after his death. Neither his sermons nor Thomas Aquinas's garnered much attention among scholars devoted to the works of either man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries not because they're not interesting and beautiful, but simply because modern scholars were more interested in the "philosophy" as a distinct "science" of each man as a resource for battling Modernism than they were in their theology, especially their preaching. Bonaventure's sermons are very creative and interesting, but people interested solely in "doctrine" or "philosophy" don't read them or read them only with an eye to finding "arguments" that might bolster their theories about Bonaventure's philosophy or doctrine.

It is not my place, nor my wish, to say anything negative about the great St. Francis, but praises of "the simplicity of Saint Francis's exhortation and admonitions" are slightly odd when they come from academics who pride

[92] Boehner, "Introduction to Bonaventure," in *Itinerarium*, 18.

themselves on their intellectual perspicacity and who could hardly be expected in our own day to fall in love with the kind of simple and repeated exhortations to do *penance* that were the hallmark of St. Francis's preaching. He was far from the sweet and loving "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" character modern people often make him out to be. Francis himself was a powerful figure – as Thomas of Celano put it, "his whole body was a tongue" – but he called people to *repentance* and moral reform of their lives. People praised the power of his preaching, but for some reason, no one thought to preserve his sermons for posterity. This made it hard to teach young Franciscans how to preach the way he did.

I have emphasized the importance of preaching in the thirteenth century and Bonaventure's training in the *sermo modernus* style of preaching for several reasons. First, as I have argued, an important goal of education was training good preachers, who could preach clearly, effectively, and with doctrinal soundness.

Second, as I have argued, those skills, along with the skills of *lectio* and *disputatio*, are skills these masters took with them and applied in everything they wrote. If you only think of *disputatio*, then perhaps you may think Bonaventure "freed" himself from it. If you remember the arts of preaching, I argue that Bonaventure's style is not alien to the schools, but very much a creative application of his training at Paris. Indeed, one of the chief goals of this work is to show how the *Itinerarium* was precisely such a creative adaptation of the methods of *sermo modernus*-style preaching. Showing how the methods of *sermo modernus*-style preaching were foundational in Bonaventure's crafting of the *Itinerarium* is, however, a means to another, more important end; namely, helping readers to understand the text more fully and appreciate its power and beauty more completely.

I have no wish to overemphasize the role or importance of the preaching arts alone. Clearly there are other important influences as well, especially when it comes to the *content* of the *Itinerarium* as opposed to (what I am arguing for here) its *structure*. As I suggested earlier, Bonaventure would have been concerned about the challenges to the mendicants coming from William of St. Amour and the secular masters. There were also the controversies over the introduction and use of the new Aristotelian texts in the curriculum at Paris and the challenge within the Franciscans of the Spirituals, who felt that the Order was losing its original charism. In the *Itinerarium*, we continue to find echoes of all these concerns.

But there is another concern that Bonaventure inherited during his education at Paris, one that is in many ways inclusive of all the others and that infuses the whole of the *Itinerarium*, one that animated a good

number of thinkers at the time; namely, how to conceive of the order of learning and, in particular, how to show that all learning and knowledge can (and should) lead one to greater knowledge and love of God.

MYSTICISM AND THE HIERARCHY OF THE SCIENCES

The *Itinerarium* exhibits Bonaventure's continuing interest in the scholarly discussions about the hierarchy of the arts and sciences that had become a prominent topic in academic circles in and around Paris.[93] There is abundant evidence that the hierarchy of the sciences was much on the minds of masters at the time. Important treatises on the topic had been written by, among others, Clarenbaud of Arras (*c.* 1110–*c.* 1187), Gilbert de la Porrée (1085–1154), Thierry of Chartres (*c.* 1100–1150), Robert Grosseteste (*c.* 1175–1253), Robert Kilwardby (*c.* 1215–1275), Roger Bacon (*c.* 1220–1292), and Albert the Great (1193–1280). During his own inception ceremonies, Bonaventure broke from tradition and delivered as one of his two inception addresses the text we now know as the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology*.[94] After him, Guy of Aumône, the first Cistercian master of theology at Paris, who incepted in 1256, and Galdericus, the first

[93] For a good overview, see James A. Weisheipl, "Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought," *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965): 54–90.

[94] For the argument that an earlier version of the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology* was Bonaventure's *resumptio* address, see Benson, "Identifying the Literary Genre "and, by the same author, "Bonaventure's *De reductione artium ad theologiam*." For an alternative view suggesting that *Omnium artifex* is not Bonaventure's *principium in aula*, see Thomas Prügl, "A Lost Inaugural Lecture of Saint Bonaventure?" *Archa Verbi* 16 (2019): 75–116. Professor Prügl's argument comes down to this: he finds the text of *Omnium artifex* "common and middle-rate," compared with Bonaventure's other works. I will let the reader decide on that. However, his suggestion that "One can argue that" *Omnium artifex* "was compiled into a principium much later using *De reductione artium* [*sic*] along with a few Bonaventurian ideas" is a speculative hypothesis with no evidence. Another major difficulty with the hypothesis is that one would then need to argue that this same person used a redacted form of *De reductione* as his *resumptio*, because in the manuscript in which Professor Benson found *Omnium artifex*, the first paragraph of the earlier version of the *De reductione* clearly refers back to the *thema* verse used in *Omnium artifex*. Put simply, it is clear that the earlier version of *De reductione* was a *resumptio* that followed *Omnium artifex*. For a more detailed description, see Smith, *Aquinas, Bonaventure*, 251–257. By the same token, there is always judgment in such complicated textual matters, and it is admittedly possible that this text might not be Bonaventure's *principium* address. I have no desire to mislead anyone on his score. Absolutely conclusive proof is rarely available in manuscript studies, and it is not available here. At this point, however, the best evidence suggests that *Omnium artifex* was Bonaventure's *principium*. I will make this argument later in Chapter 7.

Cluniac master, who incepted in 1259, both devoted their inception addresses to the topic. And in one of his earliest treatises as a master, Thomas Aquinas attempted to set forth his own vision of the hierarchy of the sciences in his unfinished *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate* (1257–1258). The fact that all these highly regarded thinkers wrote important and widely circulated treatises on the divisions, methods, and hierarchy of the sciences is evidence that the topic was of great interest at the time and likely had generated no small amount of controversy in academic circles such as those at the University of Paris.

Early in his career, Bonaventure simply adopted Hugh of St. Victor's classification and hierarchy of the arts and sciences from the *Didascalicon* largely without modification, merely re-presenting it in the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology* by associating various parts of the hierarchy with each of the six days of creation.[95] In the *Itinerarium*, written some five years later, he incorporated a part of Hugh's hierarchy again, this time very differently, as part of the third stage of the six-stage ascent into God.[96] At the end of his career, shortly before his death, he would return to the question again and formulate his own, more distinctive hierarchy of the arts and sciences, in his *Collations on the Six Days of Creation*. His concern in all these works was the same: to show how all learning and academic study could and should work together organically to lead students to the knowledge and love of God.

And yet, the *Itinerarium* also clearly reflects Bonaventure's concern to show himself at home with the mystical tradition that had become influential among many Franciscans. As Bernard McGinn has written:

> Discussion of the various forms of mystical union and the proper way to understand its nature had become widespread by the thirteenth century . . . As befits the eminently practical character of even his deepest speculations about the journey into God, Bonaventure's primary intention was to encourage himself and his readers to follow Francis upward into the mystery of the cross.[97]

[95] For an overview and description, including a more detailed account of Bonaventure's use of Hugh's *Didascalicon*, see my discussion in *Aquinas, Bonaventure*, 251–288.

[96] At the third step in the *Itinerarium*, we find Bonaventure repeating Hugh's distinction between natural philosophy, rational philosophy, and moral philosophy, and within that threefold schema, Hugh's account of the place of the three arts of the trivium – grammar, rhetoric, and logic – and the hierarchical relationship between physics, mathematics, and metaphysics.

[97] Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350*, vol. 3, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroads, 1998), 112.

As many scholars have noted, Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* owes a great deal to Richard of St. Victor's *Mystical Ark*, especially in its six-step ascent to the mystical vision of God.

The *Itinerarium* provides us, therefore, with an interesting combination of the mysticism of Richard of St. Victor's *Mystical Ark* and the concern for the hierarchy of the sciences in Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*. This combination of interests and expertise – both "mystical" and "academic" – although not unique to Bonaventure, would not have been common in many places outside of Paris and would rarely have been exhibited in one and the same work.

Both as master at the University of Paris, and later, as master general of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure was eager to show both the young friars-in-formation at Paris and his confrères among the "Spiritual Franciscans" dedicated to a life of absolute poverty how higher academic studies could be an appropriate preparation for a Franciscan friar dedicated to a simple life of prayer and service to neighbors.

Bonaventure is often described as a great "mystic." If by "mystic" one means that an author's writings were purposely hidden in the mists of near incomprehensibility, then I would argue that this is simply to misunderstand Bonaventure's text and misconstrue his purpose in writing the *Itinerarium*. So too, if one were to claim Bonaventure as a "mystic" *in contrast to* other, more "scholastic" writers such as Aquinas, then here too, I wish to disagree. As I have argued elsewhere, Bonaventure's style was distinctly "scholastic" if we understand "scholastic" properly, as a pedagogy that included, in addition to the arts of disputation, skill in both *lectio* and *praedicatio*. Thus, although the style of the *Itinerarium* was very much a product of Bonaventure's own creative use of the skills and forms he was taught at Paris, it is also very much a product of the university culture in which he had been educated.

In this intellectual and cultural context, the question of whether academic learning and study could fit into the ladder of contemplative ascent to God was one that was a constant, present, and living concern. Bonaventure's answer in the *Itinerarium*, both to his brethren among the Spirituals and to the secular masters at Paris, was the same as the one he had given in his *resumptio* several years earlier and the same one he would give in his *Collations on the Hexaemeron* near the end of his life: an exuberant Franciscan yes.

If, with Francis, one were to see the natural world not as our enemy, not as something needing to be conquered, but as fellow creatures, our "family," who

proclaim God's glory and love to us, then the study of nature and "the Book of Nature" can and should lead us to the knowledge of God who is its Author. If, moreover, we were to understand, with Francis, the importance of reading the Scriptures as a means of personal transformation rather than as merely a sourcebook of mystical sayings or obscure facts about an ancient culture, then the study of the arts of language can and should lead us to a better understanding of God's Word in "the Book of Scripture." If, finally, with Francis, one were to accept the call to preach meaningfully to the common people about the love of God in Christ and the life to which we are called in the Spirit, then one might envision the sort of study that would make possible doctrinally faithful and rhetorically effective preaching as a crucial service to the Church.

My claim is not that understanding *sermo modernus*-style preaching will help unlock all the mysteries of the *Itinerarium*. Far from it. But understanding how Bonaventure used and adapted the arts of preaching in the *Itinerarium* will help us see and appreciate its structure. And this is not unimportant. Medieval writers understood the structure of the text and what we would call its "genre" in terms of the *form* within which the *matter* is expressed. Imagine trying to understand the sophisticated manner in which Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* intends to instruct its readers while remaining ignorant of the unique structure of a medieval *summa*.

Bonaventure clearly has other concerns on his mind than merely adapting the methods of preaching to new purposes. I that he likely thought no more about his use of them than Bach or Mozart consciously reflected on their own creative uses of the methods of musical composition they had been taught and mastered.

Thus claiming that Bonaventure's "scholastic" training was a "fetter" or a corruption of his Franciscan identity is, to my mind, like claiming that Bach's or Mozart's training in musical composition was a "fetter" to their creativity and a corruption of their Christian spirit. For all three men – Bach, Mozart, and Bonaventure – I would argue that their creative genius certainly took them beyond the mere obedience to rules, and yet their training did not stifle them. Their early training in the skills was one of the things that made their creative use of those skills possible. Bonaventure did not "free" himself from the "fetters" of his scholastic training. His scholastic training and his Franciscan formation made possible the unique combination of the deep mystical insight and the penetrating intellectual genius we find in the *Itinerarium*.[98]

[98] An anonymous reviewer asks this question: "The *Breviloquium* does not proceed by way of disputation, and it frequently seems to display the same technique of *divisio* that the author

If Franciscans were to be part of the evangelical movement of preaching in the thirteenth century, they needed to learn to preach in a new way. The culture of Europe was shifting, and the Franciscans were either going to change with it or be left increasingly voiceless and irrelevant to a new generation. Bonaventure charted a different route.[99] He attempted with all the resources at his disposal to retain the Franciscan spirit of simplicity and humility while training preachers who could preach solid doctrine with skill to an increasingly literate and sophisticated congregations. Hence, I believe we must reject the notion that Bonaventure's scholasticism was a "fetter" or that he "left behind the language of the schools" – at least, not entirely. Rather, he adapted it creatively.

The *Itinerarium* has its own echoes of scholasticism and Bonaventure's concern for the proper "order of learning" within the context of the Franciscan spirituality within which he himself had been formed. It is an order of learning that depends upon and looks to foster an order in the soul. It begins in humility and ends in even greater humility before the mystery of God's sacrificial love. Or to put this another way, it begins with the cross of Christ and ends with the cross of Christ, who is our Alpha and Omega. All learning comes from Him and leads to Him. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the Creator and the Savior, the Word who became flesh, died for us, and rose from the dead.

finds in the *Itinerarium*, but the *Breviloquium* is based on a series of deductive speculative arguments, as much as are the *Sentences* commentary or the various disputed questions. In short, I am left wondering if the author would claim that the *Breviloquium*, with its *divisiones*, should likewise be understood in light of *sermo modernus*." I would reply, first, that the character the *Breviloquium* described by my questioner shows that, in it, Bonaventure also did not feel it necessary to "escape" from the "fetters" of scholasticism. In fact, I would argue that an analysis of the *Breviloquium* would suggest something similar to what we find in the *Itinerarium*. Bonaventure is creatively adapting the methods he learned at the University of Paris. But I would also point out that the prologue to the *Breviloquium* is written, as all prologues were at the University of Paris, in the standard *sermo modernus* style. For a description and analysis of that prologue, see my *Aquinas, Bonaventure*, 344–362.

[99] The long popularity of the *Itinerarium* and the recognition that it is one of the great works of mysticism in the West suggests that perhaps Roger Bacon's criticisms of the sort of style Bonaventure had mastered were not entirely well founded.