CHRISTENDOM AND BEYOND: the Development of the Franciscan Foreign Mission in the Thirteenth Century

by

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ABSTRACT

The Christian foreign mission, an inherent aspect of the Church, was recovered in the thirteenth century by the Order of Friars Minor, after several generations of relative obscurity. Historians have written little as yet about this area of Franciscan history; various documents, including the early lives of St Francis, missionary narratives, and legislation relative to the order, virtually constitute the sole source at the researcher's disposal. By examining these closely, the beginnings and the subsequent development of the Franciscan mission to the unbeliever may be established.

Early medieval missionary activity had essentially come to an end by the tenth century. The Church's energies turned to military expansion, internal consolidation, and reform; though pagans in newly-conquered territories were forced to accept baptism, little effort was made to achieve sincere conversions. It was through the Franciscan Order that the apostolic preaching mission was reintroduced to Christendom.

Francis himself, committed to a life modelled upon that of Christ and of the apostles, provided the vision, but apparently felt that his vocation lay elsewhere; after a few fruitless attempts to meet and convert the infidel, he passed the ideal on to his followers by means of several rather vague instructions. The early friars took up the challenge with great enthusiasm but little tact; their utter lack of experience and preparation frustrated missionary success, and many young missionaries died as martyrs. A missionary method had to be discovered anew, partly through hard practical experience, partly through thought and observation. A number of external factors were influential in shaping the mission. Joachimist prophecy strengthened the Franciscans' sense of divine calling and of the approaching end of time. The crusades and the Mongol invasions provided a mission field. Papal involvement proved to be of value, as it provided the organization and supervision which the friars lacked. As the order acquired experience and learning, the manner of the Franciscan mission changed from an approach characterized by an almost reckless enthusiasm to one marked by prudence. Accounts of missionaries such as Friar William of Rubruck, who set out to preach the Gospel to the Mongols in the 1250s, inspired pioneering attempts to formulate a missionary theory. The Franciscans Roger Bacon and Ramon Lull advocated that the missionaries prepare themselves thoroughly for their task by studying the language and religion of their prospective converts, that they might conduct profitable doctrinal discussions with the unbeliever. Although this advice,

sound enough in some respects, was not immediately taken, the missions of the late thirteenth century yet evince a strength and depth which the early endeavours had not possessed.

It is difficult to measure the success of the Franciscan mission in the thirteenth century. While accounts of the expeditions and particularly of the martyrdoms fascinated Europe, they did not give rise to an united missionary effort. Yet the Church was strengthened by the ministry of the friars, both within and without Christendom, and though the number of converts made in pagan and infidel lands seems to have been small, the friars' effectiveness may not be as readily apparent as it was real. If nothing else, the mendicant missionaries disclosed to the unbeliever a different sort of Christian than he had hitherto met: neither mercantile nor military, the Franciscan came in simplicity and peace, and with the sincere desire of serving God and man.

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We've a story to tell to the nations
That shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy,
A story of peace and light.

H. Ernest Nichol

PREAMBLE

Mission is an intrinsic aspect of the Christian Church. Based upon Christ's mandate to the disciples, it is concerned with the conversion and spiritual instruction of non-Christian peoples. Missionary activity has been sustained fairly steadily since the first apostolic journeys, yet there are gaps in the spectrum, stretches of time when the missionary outlook was supplanted temporarily by other concerns. The Franciscan mission marks the terminus of one such gap: following several generations of a general preoccupation with crusades and internal reform, the Franciscans recovered the missionary ideal and ushered in a new phase of proselytizing activity. The Franciscan foreign mission[1] is historically important in a number of ways: it furthered the West's interaction with other cultures, provided a different approach to the non-Christian, and advanced a fresh understanding of the Christian life within the Church. Before the effects of the Franciscans' work may be determined, however, its own nature and internal structure must be understood. It is the Franciscan mission itself, therefore, which must be examined first.

After an initial spell of substantial missionary work among the pagan tribes

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[1]The focus throughout will be on Christendom, and specifically the Latin West, the friars' home base, which provided the context, i.e. potential stimuli and influences, for the Franciscan mission, and which yields the documentary sources for the field. Thus, the foreign mission will be defined as any mission to the outsider from the Church's point of view, to the non-Christian, usually in regions beyond the bounds of Christendom.

of Europe in the early Middle Ages, missionary activity had begun to slow down, and by the tenth century it had essentially come to a halt. The Latin West was hemmed in by Islam in the south, a schismatic Church in the east, and an untraversed, as well as at this point, virtually insurmountable, expanse of water in the north and west.[2] Although this situation itself represented no encouragement, other factors must have contributed to the West's lack of interest in a foreign mission beyond the bounds of Christendom. The monastic ideal was isolation from the world, not mission, and while wandering preachers had arisen from time to time, these had aimed at the reformation of the Church rather than the conversion of the unbeliever.[3] Trade, science, and armed conflict with the crusaders constituted the sole points of interaction with the outside world; the question of faith was not broached. The coming of the mendicant friars, particularly of the Franciscans, changed this: seeking to live according to the Gospel model, the new order readily adopted the itinerant and missionary life.

Despite the fact that the essential records of the Franciscan mission are readily accessible in the early lives of St Francis, missionary narratives, and

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[2]Leonhard Lemmens, Die Heidenmissionen des Spätmittelalters (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919), p. 1. Hereafter: Heidenmissionen.

[3]Terminology will here conform largely to the sources' usage, unless a definition has become obsolete. The unbeliever is thus taken to signify any non-Christian, with the possible exception of the heretic and the Jew. Cf. note 7 of this study.

legislation relative to the order, few scholars have shown an interest in the field. General histories of the order, like Holzapfel's and Moorman's, mention Franciscan missionary activity briefly, while histories of Christian missions, such as Neill's and Schmidlin's, devote even less space to the thirteenth-century mendicants, focussing instead on the period following the discovery of the New World and the Reformation. Specific accounts of the Franciscan mission in the Middle Ages are scarce; the books by Lemmens and van der Vat, published in the early decades of the century, are still the basic texts. All of the works referred to are fundamentally narrative histories, and as such contain a minimum of interpretation and analysis. E.R. Daniel's The Franciscan Concept of Mission (1975), which links the Franciscan ideal of mission with that of the *imitatio Christi*, and presents it as a contrast to the "philosophical" and "apocalyptic" approaches of the Dominicans and the Joachimists, respectively, is at once the most recent and the most critical treatment of the field.

The present study is not an attempt to supersede the classical accounts of Lemmens and van der Vat, to which it is much indebted, nor is it designed as a belated reply to Dr Daniel, though it disagrees with them on some points, most notably St Francis' personal understanding of mission, and the question of whether there was a philosophical element in the Franciscans' approach. Rather, it seeks to introduce a fresh perspective, one which views the Franciscan mission not as a static entity, as previous works have tended to do, but which allows for change in the order's perception and manner of evangelization. The following pages are intended

to show both how the Franciscan mission came into being, and how it developed from its founder's time to the end of the century. It is hoped that this brief examination will stimulate an interest among scholars in this field of history, and lead to further study.

The term "mission" has been used in so many different contexts over time, that a precise definition may be necessary at this point. The Church's basis for missionary activity lies in two Gospel-passages, in which Christ bid the disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mk. 16:15) A missionary therefore, for the purposes of the present study, will be defined as one who sets out to observe this mandate, preaching the Gospel to the non-Christian verbally and through a life in accordance with the spirit of the Great Commission. Mission ideally includes not only the introduction of the Gospel, but also sustained teaching: "go and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey [Christ's commands]." (Mt. 28:19-20) This aspect of the Commission apparently was not much emphasized; it is only in one thirteenth-century Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino, that an attempt to consolidate his missionary work may be discerned. The work of consolidation was more usually left to the monasteries, which followed the initial preachers. This secondary stage in mission, secondary not in importance but in sequence, may be regarded as belonging largely to the area of pastoral care, and will therefore be treated only briefly in the following pages: the emphasis throughout will be on the initial presentation of the Gospel.

This apostolic definition of mission obviously excludes crusading activities and forced conversions. Crusaders were generally more concerned with the conquest and subjugation of the unbeliever than with his conversion, and in their course of action denied the very Gospel which they forced their vanquished foes to accept. This is not to say that a crusade made evangelical activity impossible: usually preachers accompanied or soon followed the crusades to consolidate areas annexed to the Latin West. However, their missionary status is dubious, as they would have been active in an area that was already nominally Christian, and would thus have had to reconcile, rather than introduce, their audience to the Church.

Numerically speaking, not many friars set out on missionary expeditions; the Franciscan Rule stressed that only those who felt inspired were to go. Yet the order was the first to adopt outreach beyond Christendom as an official ideal and goal to be pursued. Francis provided the ideal; it was his order that actually developed the mission in theory[4] and practice.

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[4]Missionary theory is taken to refer to any formulation of what the missionary's duty is, why, and how he is to pursue it.

CHAPTER 1

FRANCIS: THE BEGINNINGS OF A MISSION

Any examination of the Franciscan Order begins with its founder: the Little Poor Man of Assisi. Francis did not endow the Franciscan mission with its final form, but he provided its initial impetus. In the context of crusading Europe, St Francis and his order represented a return to the missionary zeal of the early Church, and a step away from contemporary militarism. Although the saint's impact on medieval spirituality is readily apparent in retrospect, it is doubtful whether he himself was conscious of his historical significance. He had set out to live according to the Gospels, in the imitation of Christ; his recovery of the Great Commission may be regarded as the natural result of this ambition, and does not necessarily imply a deliberate criticism of and break with the contemporary status quo.

Historians have tended to credit the Poverello with a fully-fledged mission theory. Thus, his decision to travel to Syria is attributed to three reasons: firstly, to the wish for a martyr's death, proving through martyrdom his love for God; secondly, to the desire of inspiring his young order to a like devotion; and thirdly, to the intention of propagating his faith.[5] In fact, Francis was hardly as articulate

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[5]Hildebrand De Roeck, De Normis Regulae O.F.M. circa Missiones inter Infideles ex Vita Primaeva Franciscana Profluentibus (Rome: Edizioni Francescane, 1961), pp. 70-71.

about his mission as such a statement would presuppose. He evinced neither fixed expectations nor strategy; his plan consisted of a vague intention to encounter and speak with the unbeliever upon foreign soil; his missionary attempts were marked by spontaneous enthusiasm, and were of a transient nature. It seems rather as though he was unsure of whether and how to proceed.

Francis undertook three missionary journeys; all of these were aimed at the Saracen,[6] the essential embodiment of the unbeliever in the Poverello's eyes.[7] The first two expeditions came to naught. Francis had boarded a ship bound for Syria, but contrary weather conditions forced the vessel off its course, and the saint found himself in Slavonia instead of in the Syrian harbour. It is uncertain whether or not he took the opportunity to preach to the inhabitants of this region; Thomas of Celano, the saint's earliest biographer, states only that "after a short period of time" he returned to Italy, as it was too late in the year for another vessel to set out for

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[6]The term "Saracen" will be used here, as in the documents, as a generic term to signify any Muslim or Arab.

[7]Odulphus van der Vat, Die Anfänge der Franziskanermissionen und ihre Weiterentwicklung im Nahen Orient und in den Mohammedanischen Ländern während des 13. Jahrhunderts (Werl: Franziskus-Druckerei, 1934), pp. 4-5. There were, of course, Jews and heretics, but while these were not part of the Church, they generally seem not to have been considered simple unbelievers, either. The heretic had once belonged to the Church, but had rebelled and left the Christian community. The Jew and the Christian also had a common spiritual heritage, in that both accepted the Old Testament and believed in its messianic prophecy. The Jew, however, had refused to take the further step of acknowledging the New Testament and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in Christ.

Syria.[8]

Celano attributes this first missionary journey to a desire for martyrdom on Francis' part. This longing for martyrdom, a characteristic frequently ascribed to medieval missionaries travelling to foreign lands, is a puzzling issue to the modern student. That contemporaries valued it highly cannot be doubted: it attested a missionary's sanctity and moved other Christians to greater devotion. St Anthony of Padua, for example, felt so inspired by the first Franciscan martyrs in Spain that he offered to join the Franciscan Order, on the express condition that he be sent immediately to the Saracens so as to share the martyrs' glory.[9] It should be noted that the phrase "longing for martyrdom" probably refers to a spiritual mindset, i.e. the willingness to surrender all, even life itself, to God, a wish to demonstrate love for God by the ultimate sacrifice of life, or even the longing for a mystical identification with Christ's Passion.[10] Martyrdom, in the monastic context at least,

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[8]Thomas of Celano, *First Life of St Francis*, chapter 20, in Marion A. Habig, ed., St Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), p. 275. Hereafter: Omnibus. Note that by 1274 Slavonia formed a Franciscan province; it is possible that Francis himself laid its foundations, but conclusive evidence for this is lacking.

[9]*Sancti Antonii Legenda Prima*, cc. 5-6, cited by De Roeck, pp. 78-79.

[10]E.R. Daniel has explored this idea in "The Desire for Martyrdom: A *Leitmotiv* of St. Bonaventure," Franciscan Studies, vol. 32 (1972), pp. 74-87. According to this article, the desire for martyrdom was a spiritual state attained through contemplation. It was expressed in the wish to share in the Passion of Christ; physical martyrdom did not

meant not so much physical death as death to sin and death to self. Ascetic practices and extreme self-abnegation were widely employed to confirm this martyrdom. What the wish for martyrdom almost certainly did not imply, either for the monks or for the Franciscan missionaries, was a deliberate quest for physical death, i.e. provoking persecution where none was to be had otherwise; that such behaviour would have been considered unethical is clear from contemporary sources.

Disappointed in his first missionary attempt, Francis soon decided to continue his interrupted journey, and left the peninsula again, this time directing his steps to Morocco. He was so eager, that despite his poor health he would occasionally run on ahead of his companion in his haste to arrive.[11] This second expedition, like the first, failed to materialize. According to Celano, ". . . God . . . *withstood him to his face* when he had traveled as far as Spain; and, that he might not go any farther, he recalled him from the journey he had begun by a prolonged illness."[12] St Bonaventure claimed that this incident made Francis realize "that his life was still

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necessarily follow. Dr Daniel sees in this mystical ideal the primary motivation for the Franciscan mission, yet the truth of this seems doubtful. The mission was not restricted to contemplatives and mystics; the second half of the century particularly is characterized by a predominantly pragmatic tone. The Rule of 1221, too, does not seem to imply a mystical aim: chapter 16 admonishes the prospective missionary to preach to, baptize, and convert, the infidel, and makes no reference to a contemplative ideal.

[11]Celano, *First Life*, c. 20, in Omnibus, p. 276. This expedition took place in 1213.

[12]Ibid. The scribal emphasis implies a scriptural citation, but the reference is unclear.

necessary for the family he had founded . . . and so he returned to tend the flock which had been committed to his care."[13]

If Francis achieved any such conviction at this point, it did not prevent him from trying once more: a few years later took place what might be called Francis' only successful venture abroad, successful in that he met the unbeliever on foreign soil at last. The Poverello had reached the crusaders' camp in Egypt without impediment, and thence walked to the enemies' encampment, together with his companion, Brother Illuminatus. On the way, Francis encouraged his fellow-friar to fear nothing, and to remember the divine mission upon which they had embarked: "Place all your trust in God, because the words of the Gospel will be fulfilled in us, 'Remember, I am sending you out to be like sheep among wolves'. (Mt. 10:16)"[14] When the two mendicants were met by Saracen soldiers, the Poverello asked them to take himself and his companion to the sultan. The danger inherent in this undertaking is apparent, considering the enmity between Christian and Muslim at this time. Bonaventure even goes so far as to state that the sultan had offered a reward to any man who brought a Christian's head to him.[15]

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[13]Bonaventure, *Legenda Major*, c. 9, in Omnibus, p. 702.

[14]Ibid., p. 703.

[15]Ibid., pp. 702-703.

Although the expedition took place during a temporary truce,[16] and they were thus not threatened by immediate execution, the two friars were roughly treated by the soldiers. Undaunted, the saint persevered in his request and finally gained admission to the Saracen leader, who, contrary to what might have been expected, received the missionaries cordially. Struck by Francis' appearance and manner, as well as his refusal to accept the gifts offered to him, the Saracen "was filled with the greatest admiration, and he looked upon him [Francis] as a man different from all others. He was deeply moved by his words and he listened to him very willingly."[17] Asked whence and why they came, Francis stated his divine mission: ". . . Francis replied intrepidly that they had been sent by God, not by man, to show him and his subjects the way of salvation and proclaim the truth of the Gospel message."[18]

An apparent interest in the saint's words and manner notwithstanding, the sultan did not commit himself in a response. To demonstrate the truth of his message, Francis proposed a test of fire, and when the Saracen priests proved reluctant to participate in such a radical measure, he offered to enter it alone, if

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[16]Francis went to the Saracens during the truce between August 29, 1219 and September 26 of the same year, from the camp of the crusaders at Damietta. Cf. Omnibus, note 190, p. 276. The Poverello may have chosen this opportunity of abated hostility purposely so as to reach the sultan with a better chance of succeeding in his missionary aim.

[17]Celano, *First Life*, c. 20, in Omnibus, pp. 276-277. The sultan in question was Melek-el-Khamil (1217-1238).

[18]Bonaventure, c. 9, in Omnibus, pp. 703-704.

only the sultan promised on behalf of himself and his people to convert to Christianity.[19] The sultan, however, foreseeing the uproar that such a test would provoke, refused to comply.[20] "He refused, or perhaps did not dare, to become a Christian. . . ." and Francis, since ". . . he could see no sign of a genuinely religious spirit in the sultan. . . ." returned disappointed to the Christian camp.[21] The

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[19]Ibid. This proposition probably derived from the medieval concept of judgement through ordeal. As a defendant in a medieval court of law could clear himself from a charge by emerging unscathed from some trial by fire, water, or the like, Francis may have hoped to prove his words in this manner, relying on divine intervention to corroborate the Gospel. Note, however, that officially, the practice of ordeals seems to have been frowned upon, if not outlawed, by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Francis thus may have based his suggestion upon a scriptural model, e.g. the three men in the fiery furnace (Daniel, chapter 3), rather than the legal concept.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid. The bishop and historian Jacques de Vitry, who met Francis in the crusaders' camp, left an account of the saint's mission which differs somewhat from the other narratives. It may represent the crusaders' point of view: "We have seen the founder and master of this Order [of Friars Minor], the one whom all the others obey as their superior general: he was a simple unlettered man, loved by God and men; he was called Brother Francis. Spiritual fervour and ecstasy moved him to such excesses that, having arrived at the army of the Christians before Damietta in Egypt, with no fear whatsoever, fortified solely with the "shield of faith," he set out for the camp of the sultan of Egypt. The Saracens arrested him on his way. "I am a Christian," he said; "bring me to your master!" And so they brought him to him. On seeing the man of God, the sultan, that cruel beast, became sweetness itself, kept him with him for a few days and with a great deal of attention listened to him preach the Faith of Christ to him and to his followers. But in the end he was afraid of seeing some of his soldiers whom the effective words of this man would have converted to the Lord go over to the army of the Christians. He, therefore, had Francis led back to our camp with many signs of honor and with security precautions, but not without saying to him: "Pray for me, that

Fioretti, a fourteenth-century hagiographical narrative of the life of Francis, claims that although the sultan would not convert, he gave Francis free permission to preach throughout his dominions, and delayed his own conversion only because he was daunted by the prospect of certain death at the hands of his scandalized subjects. Francis thereupon supposedly promised to send friars to baptize the sultan on his deathbed.[22] This account seems unfounded; it has a fantastic ring to it, likely to be the work of a later enthusiast rather than the strict truth, and probably represents one of the spectacular embellishments for which the *Fioretti* is noted.[23] Neither Bonaventure nor Celano corroborate the story; had it been in circulation at the time they composed their lives of St Francis, they would hardly have failed to mention it. Moreover, in Francis' eyes a secret conversion would have amounted almost to a tacit denial of faith while professing to accept it; therefore, rather than complying with the sultan's request, Francis would have urged the convert to acknowledge his decision and face whatever results it entailed. While there are thus several reasons for believing the account to be a later interpolation, it is nevertheless worthy of note that the sultan did provoke some criticism from

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God may reveal to me the law and the faith that is the more pleasing to him."" Cf. *History of the Orient*, c. 32, in Omnibus, p. 1612.

[22]*Fioretti*, c. 24, in Omnibus, pp. 1354-1355.

[23]Cf. Omnibus, pp. 1282-1283.

contemporaries for his lack of dedication to Islam.[24] Whether this can be attributed to the saint's influence is uncertain.

Francis was aware that missionary activity had a place in the Church, but he seems to have been unsure how to pursue it. His journeys were few and brief, and though he showed a missionary interest in the unbeliever, he did not attempt to sustain a stable mission in the Saracens' precincts. While not ignoring the outsider, Francis was more at ease within Christendom, where he trod the path of a reformer, albeit an exceptional one. His impact there was strong: "Men ran, and women too ran, clerics hurried, and religious hastened that they might see and hear the holy man of God who seemed to all to be a man from another world."[25] Celano's description of the saint's entrance into the city of Ascoli is vivid:

> There, when he preached the word of God very fervently, as was his custom, almost all the people were filled with such great grace and devotion . . . that they trampled on one another in their eagerness to hear and see him. For at that time thirty men, clerics and lay, received the habit of religion from him. . . . When he entered any city, the clergy rejoiced, the bells were rung, the men were filled with happiness, the women rejoiced together, the children clapped their hands; and often, taking branches from the trees, they went to meet him singing. The wickedness of heretics was confounded, the faith of the Church exalted; and while the faithful rejoiced, the heretics slipped secretly away.[26]

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[24]*Fioretti*, c. 24, in Omnibus, p. 1356, note 3.

[25]Celano, *First Life*, c. 15, in Omnibus, p. 259.

[26]Ibid., c. 22, in Omnibus, p. 281. Note the description's resemblance to the Entry into Jerusalem.

The saint's attraction must have been magnetic. Even during the short time he spent in the crusaders' camp in Egypt, before and after his interview with the sultan, his word and example proved so effective, that, according to the bishop and eyewitness Jacques de Vitry,

> Colin the Englishman, our clerk, joined [him], and two of our other companions, namely Master Michael and Dom Matthew, to whom I had entrusted the cure of the church of the Holy Cross; the chanter and Henry and others I am scarcely able to hold back.[27]

One might say that the Poverello's personal "mission" lay in a revival of the Church, rather than in the conversion of the unbeliever. Yet Francis had recovered the missionary ideal; his brief expeditions reflect a new view of the infidel, one which put the unbeliever in the place of a missionary object rather than an armed foe, a view which seems to have been preeminently the saint's own, and which spread gradually through his disciples to the crusading Latin West. Francis had taken the first step; it was left to his friars to develop the Franciscan mission fully.

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[27]"...tradidit se Colinus Anglicus, clericus noster, et alii duo de sociis nostris, scilicet magister Michael et domnus Matheus, cui curam ecclesie Sancte Crucis commiseram: cantorem et Henricum et alios quosdam vix retineo;" Jacques de Vitry, letter vi, in R.B.C. Huygens, ed., Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), pp. 132-133; translation mine.

CHAPTER 2

THE MODEL AND THE EARLY FRIARS

Francis left a number of general guidelines in the Rule and a few other writings; their simplicity stands in contrast to contemporary monastic rules and seems to reflect his distaste for methodical organization.[28] The friars were to go two by two into the world, to proclaim peace and repentance,[29] and exhort the people to praise and honour God. The *Letter to all the Superiors*, an early document generally thought to have been written by Francis himself, urges:

> When you are preaching . . . tell the people about the glory that is due to him [God], so that at every hour and when the bells are rung, praise and thanks may be offered to almighty God by everyone all over the world.[30]

The Rule of 1221 contains a similar message:

> Whenever they see fit my friars may exhort the people to praise God with words like these: Fear him and honour him, praise him and bless him, thank and adore him, the Lord almighty, in Trinity and Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator of all.[31]

Adapting their exhortations to the various situations they encountered, the friars

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[28]Excerpts from the Franciscan Rule of 1223 have been provided in Appendix A.

[29]Celano, *First Life*, c. 12, in Omnibus, p. 252.

[30]*Letter to all the Superiors of the Friars Minor*, in Omnibus, p. 113.

[31]*Rule of 1221*, c. 21, in Omnibus, pp. 46-47.

might also speak of forgiveness, confession of sins, and avoidance of evil.[32] In all things, the Franciscan was to depend and rely upon God. Both within Christendom and among the unbeliever, he was to distinguish himself through simplicity and humility, as well as through the quality of his life. The friars received few specific injunctions for foreign missions; in writing of the latter, Francis only repeated the words with which he himself had gone to the sultan: the missionaries were to go "like *sheep in the midst of wolves,*" and speak intrepidly,

> . . . calling on . . . [their] hearers to believe in God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, and in the Son, the Redeemer and Saviour, that they may be baptized. . . . They [the missionaries] may tell them all that and more, as God inspires them. . . . No matter where they are, the friars must always remember that they have given themselves up completely and handed over their whole selves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible or invisible, for love of him.[33]

The saint seems to have thought it unnecessary to give his order more explicit instructions than were contained in Scripture; perhaps he also felt that detailed regulations would impede the friars' mission by depriving them of the freedom to go wherever and whenever they believed themselves sent.

The actual number of Franciscan missionaries is not recorded; chroniclers such as Thomas of Eccleston mention a number of efforts in passing, but altogether,

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[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., c. 16, in Omnibus, pp. 43-44.

not more than a hundred individuals are named in the first century of the order's existence. Somewhat more confrontational than Francis, the friars were resolved to convince their largely Muslim audience of their prophet's error, and establish that only in the Gospels was truth to be found. These preaching tours often proved fatal for the missionaries. Young and inexperienced, they proceeded with more eagerness than tact.[34] Their effectiveness was inhibited further by Islamic law, which made a denunciation of Mohammed or a conversion away from Islam a capital offense, punishable immediately by the execution of both preacher and convert.[35]

The early missions were sent out by Francis, even while he himself was waiting for an opportunity to go to Egypt.[36] In 1219, the year in which Francis embarked on his journey to the sultan, Brother Vitalis and five other friars left for Morocco.[37] Vitalis himself was arrested on the way by illness; his companions, however, armed with a missionary license, reached their goal and began to preach.[38] Their vehement denunciation of Islam quickly brought them into conflict

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[34]Hilmar C. Krueger, "Reactions to the First Missionaries in Northwest Africa," The Catholic Historical Review (October 1946), pp. 278-279.

[35]Vat, p.7.

[36]Hilarin Felder, The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi (London: Burns, Oates, & Washbourne Ltd, 1925), p. 315.

[37]Krueger, p. 275.

[38]Chapter 16 of the Rule of 1221 made an official license from a superior prerequisite to any foreign mission. It seems that this license was not difficult to obtain, however; goodwill and the absence of any serious fault would probably

with the local authorities, and only the mediation of an influential benefactor saved them from immediate execution. The friars were locked into a tower, but, undaunted, continued to preach from this lofty pulpit "altissimis vocibus," labelling Mohammed a servant of evil. To prevent an uproar, the city's ruler had the troublesome visitors cast in a dungeon, from which they were, surprisingly, released after some time, and allowed to go free. The friars did not return to Italy, however, but went to Spain instead, where they soon found themselves standing before another Muslim tribunal. The sole defense they gave, according to the account that was subsequently circulated in the West, was a summary of the creed:

> This is the way of truth, that you believe that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are three persons and one God, and that you believe that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, born of the blessed Virgin Mary, [who] suffered, died, and was buried, has risen from the dead and has ascended into heaven, [and] at last will come to judge all men.[39]

The friars were flogged and required to apostasize, which they steadfastly refused to do. When they were threatened with death, they replied, "Wretch; our bodies are

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have been sufficient recommendation for a friar to obtain permission to go. Selection was therefore subject to the most elementary caution only, uninfluenced by considerations of the candidate's maturity or practical ability to communicate.

[39]"Hec est via veritatis, ut credatis patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum tres personas et unum Deum esse, et ut credatis Dei filium dominum nostrum Iesum Christum natum ex beata Maria virgine, passum, mortuum et sepultum, a mortuis resurrexisse et in celum ascendisse, qui tandem venturus est iudicare universos;" De Roeck, pp. 50-51; translation mine.

in your power, but our souls are fixed in the power of God."[40] This response so angered the Saracen who conducted their trial, that he had the friars executed immediately.

Other missionary endeavours likewise resulted in martyrdom. Brother Giles and Brother Electus turned towards Tunis in 1220. A crisis was forestalled by resident Christians, who feared that the Saracens would take violent action, and speedily ejected Giles from the city.[41] Brother Electus seems to have stayed behind, though, and is said to have been martyred some years later.[42]

A group of seven friars found death in Ceuta in 1227, after a preaching tour of a single day.[43] What they said is not known; their execution may have rested on the twin charges of having preached Christianity and having entered the city without an official permit. Such permits were prerequisite to the admission of any Christian and, while merchants could easily obtain them, clergy were granted

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[40]"Miser, carnes nostre in tua potestate sunt, anime vero in Dei potestate constituuntur;" ibid., p. 51; translation mine. It is doubtful how a knowledge of the mission's details reached the West. There may have been Christian eyewitnesses, perhaps merchants, who returned, carrying the report of the martyrdom with them. Imaginative elaboration on the part of the hagiographer is a possibility too; yet even if the details are simply embellishments, the account scarcely loses any value, as it reflects what contemporaries believed should have happened, when the missionaries did not return. Enthusiasm and firmness in the face of death thus were characteristics naturally associated with the friars.

[41]Krueger, pp. 279, 296.

[42]Ibid., pp. 276-277.

[43]Ibid., p. 277.

entrance only if they promised to confine their activities to the Latins who dwelt in the area.[44] Contact with the Muslim population was discouraged, and only once or twice could official concessions be won for Christian missionary activity. When Sultan Maamun had to leave Spain and retreat to Morocco in 1229, following a series of Christian military victories, Ferdinand of Castile arranged a treaty which gave Christians in Morocco permission to worship freely, build churches, as well as baptise any Saracens that might wish to convert.[45] Whether this agreement was actually kept is uncertain. Friar Salimbene di Adamo, the Franciscan chronicler, records a similar treaty between unnamed Saracens in Tunis and the crusaders some forty years later;[46] its effectiveness too remains obscure. Both the early martyrdoms and these concessions, however, go to show that official support was required in Saracen lands for the establishment of a durable and effective mission.[47]

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[44]Ibid., pp. 299-300.

[45]Leonhard Lemmens, Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1929), p. 10. Hereafter: Franziskanermissionen.

[46]Salimbene di Adamo, *Cronica*, in Joseph L. Baird, ed. The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986), p. 493.

[47]Franziskanermissionen, p. 11. There was also a Franciscan mission to the Holy Land, which differed from the other efforts primarily in its settled nature, but perhaps also in its aim, as it was designed primarily for the crusaders' and pilgrims' benefit, and for the care of the holy places. It was thus not a foreign mission *per se*. A first friary was established in Jerusalem in 1222 or 1230, a number of others were founded in the Crusader States. These

In 1231, two Franciscans, John of Perugia and Peter of Sassoferrato, left a flourishing ministry in Aragon to proselytize Valencia, which was at that time still occupied by Saracens. The two began to preach "fervently and fearlessly on the faith of Christ, [and] on the falseness of the Muslim law of the Saracens."[48] They were promptly imprisoned, and executed when they refused to apostasize.[49] Tragically, the very ruler who executed them converted to Christianity after the reconquest of Valencia in 1238, and, perhaps in an act of contrition, gave his palace

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establishments did not survive the political stability of the states; as the Christian armies had to retreat, the friaries were destroyed by the invaders. When Acre fell in 1291, all of the Poor Clares in the monastery there were killed. Cf. Vat, p. 60; Franziskanermissionen, p. 61; Vat, pp. 71-72, 76-77; Marion A. Habig, In Journeyings Often: Franciscan Pioneers in the Orient (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1953), pp. 184-185, 186. Hereafter: Journeyings. The Poor Clares, the Franciscan nuns, were not actively involved in foreign missions apart from their monastery. As they were expected to remain in strict claustration, their work was confined to the consolidating and indirectly supportive role of the monastic (cf. pp. 26-27 of this study). They will therefore not be further discussed here.

[48]Heribert Holzapfel, Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanerordens (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1909), p. 249; "de fide Christi, de falsitate legis Machometicae Saracenis ferventer et intrepide. . . . ;" *Chronica XXIV Generalium*, cited by De Roeck, p. 75; translation mine.

[49]Vat, pp. 194-195. It is interesting that the friars were given this choice between apostasy and death (cf. also the mission to Morocco). Though this may be poetic license on the part of the hagiographer, it probably concurs with fact. The Saracens were after all not adverse to winning converts, but rather encouraged or even enticed Christians, especially, one might think, if their converts were public figures in any way. The apostasy of a Franciscan would surely have been well publicized, considering the order's reputation for Christian fervour and devotion.

to the Franciscan Order.[50]

If the chronicles may be trusted, at least one early Franciscan mission departed from the norm described in its results: Benedict of Arezzo spent a number of years in the ultramarine province,[51] where

> . . . he baptized many unbelieving pagans and Saracens, and received them into the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and kept them always in the right path through his words, works, and example . . . he even received into the holy Order of our holy father Francis the emperor of Constantinople and the king of Jerusalem, and he secretly baptized a great warrior, a servant of the sultan of Egypt, Algazzel by name. . . .[52]

The silence of the records unfortunately precludes a comparison between Benedict and his contemporaries. It is thus not possible to determine whether there was a difference, either in the missionary's method or in the audience, which could account for the discrepancy. Benedict's case certainly is the exception to the rule. On the whole, the early friars' efforts ended in frustration and execution, both due to the asperity of the prospective converts, and the mendicants' rather rash procedure. The

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[50]Heidenmissionen, p. 95.

[51]This province essentially represented the regions beyond Christendom. Cf. pp. 36-40 of this study.

[52]". . . ultramare . . . multos paganos et Saracenos incredulos baptizavit, et in fidem Domini nostri Iesu Christi recepit, et verbis, et operibus, et exemplo semper in via recta conservavit . . . recepit etiam in sanctum Ordinem sancti Patris nostri Francisci Imperatorem Constantinopolitanum et Regem Ierusalem, et magnum Bellatorem, Egipti Soldani servum, nomine Algazzellem, secrete baptizavit . . . .;" *Vita et Miracula b. Benedicti Sinigardi de Aretio Ord. Min.*, cited by De Roeck, p. 81; translation mine.

early missionaries' impetuosity may simply be indicative of the order's youth and inexperience at this point. It was a passing phase which the order outgrew in time. Possibly the friars simply lacked an immediate model. They were pioneers in an area which, though it was far from new, had been neglected for a sufficiently long time to require fresh exploration.

Had the friars consciously sought a model, they might have found it in the missionary exploits of the early Middle Ages. Monks such as St Augustine of Canterbury provided an example of successful missionary activity. Commissioned by Pope Gregory I, Augustine had set out with a small band of followers and some Frankish interpreters to preach the Gospel to the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Arriving in England in 597, the missionaries began to preach with the king's permission, and achieved spectacular results, if the count of 10, 000 converts for the first year is reliable.[53] A second group of monks arrived in 601 to reinforce and consolidate the work.[54] Nor was this the sole instance to which the friars might have referred. Particularly the time from the sixth to the ninth centuries had seen sustained missionary endeavours by small groups of monks under a capable leader, who set out to preach the Gospel to the pagan tribes of Europe. The papacy frequently

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[53]Jeffrey Richards, Consul of God: the Life and Times of Gregory the Great (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 242-243. The source for this figure appears to be Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, but the reference could not be traced.

[54]Ibid.

played an important role in the mission, as successive popes were approached by the missionaries for an official blessing and sanction, letters of recommendation, and later, advice upon various doctrinal, moral, and other questions pertaining to the mission and the subsequent pastoral care of the converts.[55] Not every mission originated in Rome: St Augustine of Canterbury went to the Anglo-Saxons in obedience to the pope's commission, but St Anskar, a Frankish Benedictine, travelled to Scandinavia in response to the king of Denmark's request, while St Boniface seems to have embarked upon his missionary life solely by his own wish.[56]

Usually, the missionaries sought to obtain the favour of the local ruler upon entering pagan territory. Under a chieftain's protection, they could operate with a certain measure of safety and ease, even if they received no active support or overt acknowledgement: passive tolerance, even indifference, were enough. Where they found this, the missionaries stopped to work; where, however, resistance and hostility were too strong, they retreated and turned elsewhere to bide a more favourable time.[57] If the missionaries' efforts led to the conversion of the ruler, the clan,

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[55]St Augustine of Canterbury and St Boniface are perhaps the most prominent examples of this close cooperation with the papacy. Cf. John Godfrey, The Church in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 82-86, 235-236.

[56]Ibid., pp. 90-91, 350-351, 233. Note that the Danish king's request apparently stemmed from a need for an ally against rivals within his kingdom, rather than a spontaneous interest in Christianity.

[57]J. Schmidlin, Katholische Missionsgeschichte (Kaldenkirchen: Missionsdruckerei Steyl, 1924), pp. 133, 146.

trained in the Germanic ideal of absolute loyalty to the lord, was not slow to follow suit. One wonders whether Augustine and Boniface, confronted with an upsurge of candidates for baptism, traced their sudden success to this ideological root, and if so, whether they were concerned about the efficacy of this motivation.[58]

The simple preaching of the Gospel was the basic tool of the missionary, though rational argument, seeking to establish the truth of the message by means of logic, and occasionally, the destruction of idols and temples, also took place.[59] The latter was arguably regarded as a means of proving the powerlessness of pagan idols and the superiority of Christianity, but while such a demonstration may have impressed some pagans favourably, most tended to react with hostility, and thus a pacific and more accomodating method was generally preferred.[60] Boniface, when he felled the sacred oak in Hesse, incurred the reproof of his former patron, the Bishop of Winchester, who urged him to convert the pagans through preaching rather than provocative displays.[61]

The initial introduction of Christianity was followed by the work of consolidation. The missionary pioneers did not always take part in this; some remained to build churches and convents, and later presided over their former

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[58]Godfrey, pp. 75-76, 235.

[59]Schmidlin, pp. 148-149, 147.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Godfrey, pp. 235-236.

mission field as diocesans or metropolitans; others left to travel farther into the pagan heartland. A third group combined the functions of missionary and bishop: Boniface spent several years consolidating his work and reforming the Frankish Church, and was over seventy years old when he turned once more to the pagan Frisians, while St Willibrord, the first missionary to the Frisians, travelled widely afield as metropolitan.[62] The bulk of the secondary work, however, was left to the monasteries. Centres of learning and culture, these offered a literary and spiritual education as well as practical advice in matters of agriculture; they provided charity for the poor and the sick, and basic pastoral care for the converts, at least until the formation of a secular clergy.[63] Monastic activities such as the copying of books, moreover, were of value to the actual missionaries, who required Bibles for their task of preaching.[64]

To some extent, missions and territorial expansion went hand in hand. As one historian suggested, the acceptance of Christianity by the barbarian peoples of Europe signified their adoption of the late Roman Empire's civilization as well.[65] As the spiritual borders of Christendom moved farther out, so too did the Latin

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[62]Ibid., pp. 246, 226-227.

[63]Jean Leclercq and François Vandenbroucke, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), p. 58; Schmidlin, p. 151.

[64]Leclercq, p. 59.

[65]Richards, p. 241.

West grow in physical area. This peaceful conquest[66] of gradual assimilation, however, was replaced in the course of time by abrupt annexation. Motivated perhaps by religious fervour, perhaps by political considerations, invading Christian rulers or convert kings exercised physical force to bring whole peoples to baptism. That is not to say that a quasi-missionary element was wholly absent; in all or most cases, preachers were part of an armed expedition or followed shortly, to convince and instruct the conquered people. However, such a procedure seems rather like consolidation after the fact; the conquered were not invited, but made to convert, and the preacher, rather than preparing them for Christianity, would seem to have had to reconcile them to it. The efficacy of these mass baptisms may be imagined: Finland in particular learned to submit to the Church when faced with a crusade, and relapse into paganism as soon as the threat had passed.[67] There may have been an element of physical pressure in the earlier missions as well: certainly Charlemagne had not scrupled to use force against the Saxons, and Frisia had been subject to a military reprisal after St Boniface's martyrdom near the Zuyder Zee.[68] Yet it seems that force of arms acquired an importance after the ninth century which it had not had before. The first medieval missions had been undertaken by

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[66]One might be justified in calling this expansion a reconquest rather than a new conquest, as many of the lands thus gained had been at least nominally under Roman rule at some point before the breakdown of the empire.

[67]Godfrey, p. 360.

[68]Ibid., pp. 350, 248.

monks. The conversion of Scandinavia and the East European countries was taken in hand by warriors.[69]

Genuine missionary activity may not have been absent in the several generations preceding the coming of the friars, but it was scarce. The celebrated missionary saints of the fifth to ninth centuries, such as St Patrick, St Columba, and St Boniface, were succeeded by reformers, scholars, and mystics like St Peter Damian, St Anselm, and St Bernard of Clairvaux. It is worthy of note that Peter the Venerable, the twelfth-century abbot of Cluny, stood alone when he suggested that attempts be made to convert rather than crush the Saracens.[70] A change in the perception of the spiritual life may possibly be responsible in part: most early medieval missionaries can be traced back to the Irish monastic school, in which the ideal of the *peregrinatio*, the spiritual pilgrimage or voluntary exile from home held a prominent place.[71] The missionaries had thus set out to take an ultimate step in self-mortification, so as to attain to spiritual perfection. By the eleventh century, this interpretation of spirituality had given way to the ideal of rigorous claustration: not the most ardent wanderer, but the most stable monk, led the perfect life.[72] Successive monastic reforms aimed at greater asceticism and stricter solitude.

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[69]Schmidlin, pp. 156-158, 161-162, 165-166, 168.

[70]This will be further discussed at a later point.

[71]Leclercq, pp. 42-43.

[72]Ibid., p. 164.

Monasteries were, after all, designed as unworldly sanctuaries within the world. Involvement even with the Christian community was strictly limited. Some few foundations still took an active interest in the parish to which they belonged, and allowed their monks to visit the sick, bury the dead, and administer penance. Most houses, too, had some provisions in their rule for visitors that might wish to come to them; but on the whole, direct involvement with the outside world was discouraged.[73] The pastoral care of the parish was the province of the secular clergy; monks left the convent only in cases of manifest necessity, and even then rarely or never moved beyond the bounds of Christendom.

The Cistercian Order forms a partial exception to this rule, as its members were widely deployed across Europe. This, however, was not a matter of choice, but of papal decree: excellent organization and strict discipline made the order well suited in the eyes of the papacy for preaching crusades, fighting heresies, and occasionally even for converting the few pagan peoples which remained between the borders of the Latin West and the Greek East. While the order possessed a number of good preachers, such as Godfrey of Lekno and Bishop Christian, the "apostle of the Prussians" (1209-1245),[74] military means were freely employed to reinforce persuasion. Bishop Christian himself founded an order of knights, the

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[73]Rosalind B. Brooke, The Coming of the Friars (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1975), p. 52.

[74]Louis J. Lekai, The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1977), p. 61.

Knights of Dobrin, and organized an armed defense against his pagan subjects, who were obviously but reluctant converts.[75] It is doubtful whether the Cistercians held a missionary concept comparable to that of the Franciscans. Method aside, it is quite evident that the order as a whole did not appreciate papal interference with its well-regulated life. The Cistercian mother-house Cîteaux had been founded by Benedictines who sought greater solitude and a stricter observance of the Rule of St Benedict; the General Chapter did not lose sight of this ideal, and with great perseverance issued statutes to restrict "vagabond monks," releasing members only unwillingly when pressed by the pope.[76]

From none of the settled groups, i.e. monks, secular clergy, or canons associated with and bearing responsibility in, a cloister, a parish, or a cathedral, could a general missionary enthusiasm be expected. There was yet another class of religious, not committed to a stationary life: towards the close of the eleventh century, a large-scale eremitical movement had spread through the Latin West. The hermits usually had left a monastery at some point in search of a more austere life, and subsequently spent some time travelling through countryside and cities, preaching. They based their sermons and admonitions on the Bible, especially the

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[75]Ibid.

[76]*Exordium Parvum*, cited by Lekai, pp. 452, 460; Lekai, p. 62.

Gospels, but their teachings were often vague and at times plainly wrong.[77] Heresy was rife in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries;[78] a few, such as the Albigensian and Almarician heresies, had definite doctrinal implications, but most seem, like the Henricians and Waldensians, to have been condemned at least initially simply due to disobedience to the papal decrees which sought to curtail their unlicensed preaching activities. Indeed, many heretics started out simply as reformers who denounced abuses and vices, but who ultimately began to attack vociferously the Church, her traditions, and her very existence.[79] Peter of Bruis, to name but one example, had been a priest, but at some point took up the life of an itinerant preacher--not quite voluntarily perhaps: he had for unknown reasons been ejected from his living--and soon began to provoke the enmity of the Church. He attacked the validity of the sacraments, the monastic ideal, and the necessity for churches and the clergy; it seems, too, that he rejected the entire Old Testament and all or most of the New Testament, with the exception of the Gospels.[80]

The hermits who retained their orthodoxy usually appear to have terminated their itinerant life by establishing a new monastic foundation.[81] Vitalis of Savigny

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[77]Leclercq, p. 130.

[78]Ibid., pp. 264-265, 269-272.

[79]Brooke, p. 71.

[80]Ibid., pp. 64-66.

[81]Ibid., pp. 50, 55.

may illustrate this trend: seeking to lead an apostolic life according to the model of the Gospels, he travelled widely as an itinerant preacher.[82] After several years, however, he abandoned his preaching career and, together with his followers, founded a new house in Savigny. In 1147, scarcely half a century after its establishment, this foundation was annexed by the Cistercian Order.[83]

The preaching of the hermits, both orthodox and controversial, was confined to Christendom; few if any of them showed an interest in the conversion of the unbeliever. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, it seemed as though the Church lacked both missionary zeal and recruits. Monasticism had outlived its missionary phase, and there was no-one to take the monks' place. The coming of the mendicants was opportune; it offered a fresh form of religious life, and one which, in its statutory mobility and active devotion, was eminently suited to the missionary task. Replaced in the mission field by the friars, the monks' contribution to the foreign mission confined itself to offering prayers on the missionaries' behalf.[84]

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[82]Note that already by this time there are hints of a new interpretation of the apostolic life: rather than referring to the communal life of the early Church, which formed the model of the monasteries, hermits began to point to the itinerant, portionless, and preaching life of the disciples as being essentially apostolic. The mendicants were to develop and popularize this concept fully, and extend its effect to the unbeliever, rather than limiting it to Christendom.

[83]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[84]Lekai, p. 62.

It is tempting to regard the friars as the direct heirs of the early medieval missionaries. Especially the two late-century journeys by William of Rubruck and John of Monte Corvino closely resemble the European missions in method. Yet there is no indication that the Franciscans were familiar with this missionary tradition and consciously sought to imitate it. The work of Augustine, Anskar, Boniface and others may have been alive still in oral tradition or saints' lives, yet the links between the early missions and the friars are tenuous at best. Indeed, the first friars' expeditions are sufficiently idiosyncratic in their utter lack of preparation to make any deliberate endeavour in them to reconstruct or imitate the missionary saints of former times quite unlikely. What is known with certainty is the friars' strong emphasis upon the literal interpretation of Scripture. Tracing the order's missionary mainspring to the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the evangelical aspect of the apostolic life, then represents the most plausible step. Whether the friars maintained elements of the Irish ideal of *peregrinatio*, added a new undercurrent of mystical *imitatio Christi*,[85] perhaps felt a pastoral concern for the unbeliever, or simply upheld obedience to the divine command, cannot be determined at this stage.

Its discouraging beginnings notwithstanding, the Franciscan mission progressed. The friars' activity within Christendom was of great value to the order's

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[85]Cf. note 10 of this study.

development abroad; indeed, it is possible to think of Christendom as a sort of mendicant training-ground for future missionary activity. The training was limited to elementary practical experience, of course, and probably did not constitute a strategy on the part of the order itself. Yet both success and failure taught the Franciscans basic skills in encountering and communicating with a wide variety of people--an advantage which the first missionaries had not had. The friars embarking upon foreign missions in the second half of the thirteenth century had undergone this training and had proved themselves within the order for a number of years. John of Plano Carpine, for example, was active in Germany, Spain, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland before his famous journey to the Mongols.[86] He had held a position of responsibility, having been Minister of Germany, and had himself dispatched brothers to Scandinavia.[87] The first generation of friars had not had this practical advantage, or had not made extensive use of it. The next began to realize its value.

It is extremely difficult to establish any reliable statistics relative to the growth of the order; quantitative data has been transmitted too sporadically and too inaccurately. A rough estimate, however, shows the rapid spread of the Franciscans

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[86]Journeyings, pp. 12-14.

[87]Jordan of Giano, *Chronica*, c. 55, in Emma Gurney Salter, The Coming of the Friars Minor to England & Germany: Being the Chronicles of Brother Thomas of Eccleston and Brother Jordan of Giano (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1926), p. 176.

throughout Christendom, as opposed to the halting progress made outside. Francis had divided all of Christendom into a few large provinces as early as 1217, and had proceeded to send a few friars into each.[88] Not every one of the new provinces was immediately visited; there were delays, occasionally lasting even a number of years, before a Franciscan set foot in a given area.[89] By 1216, the order was diffused throughout Italy; in 1217 a group led by Brother Pacificus left for France. This initial journey ended in failure, as the order, then still relatively obscure, was suspected of heresy, but a second attempt two years later, undertaken with a papal letter of recommendation, met with better success. By 1221, the friars were in Germany, by 1224 in the British Isles.[90]

The dozen or so provinces designed by Francis were increased to seventy-two during Brother Elias' time as Minister General, as the latter wanted the number of provincials to correspond to the number of disciples mentioned in the Gospels.[91] When Elias vacated his office in 1239, however, this count was reduced to a more modest thirty-two, sixteen of which were in the ultramontane regions, and the papacy attempted to keep this number constant as far as possible by reserving veto-

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[88]Holzapfel, p. 157.

[89]Ibid., p. 158.

[90]Felder, pp. 309-310.

[91]Holzapfel, p. 158.

power over the foundation of new provinces.[92] By 1274, there were thirty-four provinces: Umbria, Rome, the Marches of Ancona, Tuscany, Bologna, Genoa, Milan, the Marches of Treviso, Pisa, Terra Labor and S. Angeli,[93] Apulia, Calabria, Sicily, Syria, Slavonia, Greece, Portugal, Castile, Aragon, France, Tours, Burgundy, Provence, Aquitaine, Cologne, Alemannia, Saxony, Dacia,[94] Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, England, and Ireland.[95] Available sources show the number of Franciscan establishments, both monasteries and hermits' cells, to have been as follows in 1282:

the British Isles:	England	58
	Ireland	57
the "Teutonic" region:	Cologne	80
	Alemannia	55
	Saxony	75

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[92]Ibid., p. 159.

[93]The location of these is uncertain.

[94]The province of Dacia incorporated Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

[95]This and the subsequent information is drawn from Holzapfel's tables on pp. 161, 163. At the time of Francis' death in 1226, the provinces had been Tuscany, the Marches, Lombardy, Terra Labor, Apulia, Calabria, the ultramarine region, Spain, France, Provence, the Teutonic region, and England.

	Rome	53
	Tuscany	48
	Marches of Ancona	85
	Pisa	49
	Terra Labor	41
	S. Angeli	54
	Apulia	59
southern Italy:	Sicily	55
	Calabria	15
the Spanish region:	Portugal	39
	Castile	49
	Aragon	36
the ultramarine areas:	Syria	8
	Slavonia	18

The number of friars in each house was subject to great variation, but assuming an average of twenty per establishment, there must have been between 30, 000 and 40, 000 Franciscans by the end of the century.[96]

Within Christendom, the Friars Minor could be found where others were reluctant to be: among prisoners, lepers, and plague-victims.[97] The order was particularly active in the cities, where the relatively high concentration of urban dwellers bred a proportionately high degree of disease and vice. That the friars were very popular is apparent not only from the number of new recruits, but also from the generous alms bestowed upon them, from requests for burial in Franciscan churches, and from the fact that the nobility took Franciscan confessors.[98]

As the Franciscans rarely encountered Muslims and pagans within Europe, they initially emphasized moral and spiritual exhortation rather than doctrinal instruction in their ministry. Any missionary efforts *per se* were confined to the Saracens who remained on Spanish Christian soil after the reconquest of a given region. While these were obliged to receive religious instruction from the friars,

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[96]Ibid., p. 164.

[97]Ibid., pp. 232-233.

[98]Ibid., p. 209.

however, they were not required to commit themselves in a response.[99] Franciscan activity among the Christian community expanded gradually, as the order began to appropriate pastoral functions, eventually acting almost as a sort of reformed secular clergy. This naturally led to some conflict, and various attempts were made to give the friars freedom of action without infringing upon the rights and the income of the actual ministers.[100] The mendicants, being reformed, zealous, and unhackneyed, were favoured by both the parishioners and the papacy, and received generous support from the former, and privileges from the latter.[101] It should be noted that even among the bishops, several, presumably the more reform-minded ones, actually encouraged the mendicants by employing them as episcopal helpers.[102]

Around the year 1224, the Franciscans began to take on the office of confessor; this and the fact that the Rule of 1223 required friars to undergo an examination before they received a preacher's license seems to indicate that sermons

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[99]Vat, pp. 198-199.

[100]Holzapfel, pp. 234-237.

[101]Ibid., p. 237.

[102]Ibid., p. 236. The fourth Lateran Council in 1215 had in fact ordered bishops who were too busy, ill, or ignorant to care adequately for the needs of their diocese to select suitable men who would preach in the various parishes under the bishops' jurisdiction and help out in other aspects of pastoral ministry, such as the hearing of confessions and the administration of penances. Cf. *The Councils of Lateran IV*, § 10, translated in Harry Rothwell, English Historical Documents 1189-1327 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1975).

were no longer the simple calls to penitence which Francis had advocated.[103] The order contained several notable and persuasive preachers. One often-cited incident involves Haymo of Faversham, a friar who at one Eastertime delivered an impromptu sermon at a parish church, so as to prevent thoughtless parishioners from partaking of communion whilst in a state of sin. He spoke so earnestly that he was afterwards detained for three days to hear confessions.[104]

The most amusing anecdotes testifying to the Franciscans' preaching skill are told of Brother Berthold of Regensburg, who regularly held large audiences spell-bound while expounding on moral and catechetical issues. It has been said that up to 40,000 persons at once came to listen to him.[105] He was esteemed even by the stern critic Roger Bacon,[106] and the expansive Friar Salimbene enthusiastically extolled the virtues of the German preacher:

> . . . Brother Bertold had the special grace of preaching from God. . . . A great multitude of men and women followed him, sometimes from as much as sixty or a hundred miles around, sometimes from a large number of cities, in order to hear the eloquent and saving words which came from . . . [his] mouth.[107]

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[103]Felder, pp. 330-331.

[104]Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, c. vi, in Salter, pp. 38-40.

[105]Holzapfel, p. 218.

[106]Felder, pp. 338-339.

[107]Salimbene, in Baird, p. 566.

The size of Berthold's audience made it difficult for everyone to hear the sermon clearly; and eventually an ingenious friar solved this problem by erecting a tower in the field where Berthold preached, to be used as a pulpit. A weather-vane fastened to the wooden construction showed the people where to sit in order to face the wind, which carried the words of the message to them. Berthold seems to have had an uncanny ability to captivate his listeners' attention; in his tribute to the preacher, Salimbene exclaimed: "And nobody got up and left until his sermons were ended."[108]

Even within Christendom, although strikingly successful on the whole, the order experienced some setbacks early in its career.[109] The first Franciscans in France, for instance, were asked whether they were Albigensians, i.e. heretics; the friars answered in the affirmative, not knowing who or what an Albigensian was.[110] It took a deal of explanation and the intervention of the local bishop before they were allowed to proceed. A similar mishap coloured the order's first expedition to Germany: the friars knew a single German word, that being "yes." They determined always to answer "ja" when asked something, as this simple statement, in response, presumably, to some offer of charity, had procured them food and shelter upon their

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[108]Ibid.

[109]Noe Simonut, Il Metodo d'Evangelizzazione dei Francescani tra Musulmani e Mongoli nei Secoli XIII-XIV (Milan: Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere, 1947), p. 16.

[110]Jordan, c. 4, in Salter, pp. 132-133. Jordan gives 1219 as the date of this expedition.

arrival in the country. For a while, this strategy served them well; eventually, however, a suspicious German asked the brothers whether they were heretics, and had come to corrupt Germany with their erroneous doctrine. Innocently, the friars replied "ja." The presumably spectacular reaction which this response elicited convinced the friars that Germany was unsafe ground for a Minorite: "From this experience, Germany was considered by the Brethren to be such a ferocious country that only those inspired by a longing for martyrdom would dare to return thither."[111] A second journey in 1221 met with a more cordial reception, for while the Franciscans still had not learned the language properly, the group's leader, Cesarius of Speyer, had sent ahead two friars who spoke German to prepare the way for the others.[112]

The absence of linguistic instruction in the order is conspicuous. The initial

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[111]"In Theutoniam vero missi sunt fratres . . . Johannes de Penna cum fratribus fere 60 vel pluribus. Hii cum partes Teutonie introissent et lingwam ignorantes interrogati, si vellent hospitari, comedere vel huiusmodi, responderunt "ia" et sic a quibusdam benigne sunt recepti. Et videntes quod per hoc verbum "ia" humane tractarentur, ad quelibet interrogata "ia" debere respondere decreverunt. Unde accidit, ut interrogati, si essent heretici et si ad hoc venissent ut Teutoniam inficerent sicut et Lombardiam pervertissent et respondissent "ia", quidam ex ipsis plagati, quidam incarcerati et quidam denudati nudi ad choream sunt ducti et spectaculum ludecre hominibus sunt effecti. Videntes ergo fratres, quod fructum in Theutonia facere non possent, in Ytaliam sunt reversi. Ex quo facto Theutonia a fratribus tam crudelis est reputata, ut ad ipsam nisi desiderio martirii inspirati redire non auderent;" ibid. c. 5, in H. Boehmer ed., Chronica Fratris Jordani (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1908); translation by Salter, pp. 133-134.

[112]Ibid. c. 19, pp. 149-150.

trip to Germany failed due to the friars' ignorance of the vernacular, and their inability or unwillingness to use Latin; the later Mongol mission of William of Rubruck was gravely hampered by a similar lack of preparation.[113] One wonders what reason to assign to this apparent failure in foresight. Considering the friars' strict and literal adherence to the Gospel, it may have been an uniquely Franciscan manifestation of taking no thought for the morrow. Extensive training may have seemed like reliance on human ingenuity and thus lack of trust in divine providence. The friars may even have hoped to receive the gift of tongues while on a preaching expedition.[114] It is interesting to note that the Dominicans did train their members in the requisite languages before sending them out, whether within Christendom or abroad; such foresight seems to have been peculiar to this order.[115]

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[113]Rubruck, apparently a trained theologian, did know Latin, but his Mongol audience did not. Whether a similar lack of Latinity in the German laity was the reason for the friars' failure to resort to this tongue, or whether the friars themselves could not speak it, is uncertain.

[114]Note that "new tongues" are one of the signs which, according to the Great Commission (Mk. 16:17), will accompany the believer and bear witness to the Gospel message.

[115]Dominican missionaries were occasionally found alongside the Franciscans in contacts with the unbeliever. Honorius III addressed both mendicant orders when he wrote in 1225: "Vos in regnum Miramolini Sedis Apostolicae transmittit auctoritas, ut evangelizantes illic Dominum Jesum Christum, quantum ipse dederit, convertatis incredulos, erigatis lapsos, sustentetis debiles, pusillanimes consolemini, et fortes nihilominus confortetis. Ut autem ministerium vestrum confidentius exequamini, concedimus, ut in praedicta dumtaxat regione vobis liceat praedicare, baptizare Saracenos ad fidem

The Franciscans' ambiguous attitude to missionary training notwithstanding, they must have benefited from the practical experience which they acquired within Christendom. The advantage was mutual, as the friars provided a pastoral care for the parishioners which was often greatly superior to that of the secular clergy. The new order, as it developed and matured, represented a hitherto undreamed-of force of potential missionaries.

Cardinal Hugolino, the Protector of the Franciscan Order and an early admirer of the Poverello, had at one point reproached the saint for sending the friars out to face hardship, opposition, and privation. Francis is supposed to have replied with a manifesto of the Franciscan mission: the brothers were sent into the whole world as messengers to infidel and faithful alike; God had sent them, and would meet their needs.[116] Hugolino's reaction to the saint's missionary conviction has not been recorded, but he must surely have been struck by it. In the

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noviter venientes, et reconciliare apostatas, injungere poenitentias, et excommunicatos illos absolvere, qui ad Sedem Apostolicam commode non possunt accedere. . . ." Cf. Luke Wadding ed. Annales Minorum, vol. II (Quaracchi, 1931), p. 140; note the stipulations for a foreign mission. Whether the Dominicans took advantage of this opportunity is not certain. There were a number of Dominican embassies to the Mongols, but they seem to have been diplomatic rather than strictly missionary in nature. A detailed examination cannot be attempted here, but it is to be noted that, though equally as mobile as the Franciscans, the Dominicans devoted themselves to the correction of the heretic, and became popularly associated with the Inquisition rather than with missionary endeavours.

[116]*Legend of Perugia*, c. 82, in Omnibus, pp. 1057-1058.

ecclesiastical hierarchy of the thirteenth century, the concern for Christendom always predominated and eclipsed any interest in the outsider. The Franciscan missionary statement represented a radical emancipation of the non-Christian.

CHAPTER 3

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON THE FRANCISCAN MISSION

No one factor in the physical, intellectual, or spiritual environment of the Latin West constitutes a satisfactory explanation for the Franciscan mission. How was it that an ideal which for several generations had been consigned to obscurity was recovered by the Order of Friars Minor? There were no obvious antecedents which might have inspired the Poverello, nor particular stimuli which may be said to have given rise to the missionary concept. Various influences developed, but they did not found, the Franciscan mission. The question must remain unanswered at present; little more may be done than to examine those of the influences which were at least linked, if not fundamental, to the mission. Three factors in particular served to strengthen the missionary ideal and shape the course of the mission's development: a vibrant apocalyptic tradition, Christendom's precarious situation, and papal guidance.[117]

Inherited from the early Church, apocalyptic thought had been sustained, fostered, and intermittently enlarged through apocryphal prophecies. The Latin West cherished a long-standing tradition of sibylline predictions which had been translated from the Greek originals, and were subsequently edited, often, one must suspect, to cater to the needs of the time. The prophecies essentially provided an

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[117]Two further factors, learning and the Dominican Order, will be considered in the last chapter.

outline of expected future events and trends,[118] and sometimes were surprisingly explicit and detailed. Thus, one sibyl was supposed to have foretold the rise of a last Roman emperor, who would conquer the pagan peoples, baptize them, and bring about the conversion of the Jews as well. His task complete, he was expected to relinquish his now entirely Christian empire to God; the final tribulations were to follow shortly thereafter.[119] Many such texts were composed and circulated, both in the East and the West, as the Arab invasions began.[120]

Not all apocalyptic prophecies came from the East; the Latin West had its own prophet, and was influenced by him to an extent achieved by few, if any, other contemporary writers. Joachim of Fiore (c. 1130-1202) was a Cistercian abbot from Calabria,[121] who claimed to have received a spiritual insight which enabled him to understand Scripture fully and clearly. The abbot delineated a plan of history, and set forth a detailed prophecy of things to come, taking the Book of Revelations

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[118]Paul J. Alexander, "The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism," ed. Ann Williams, Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves (Harlow: Longman Group Ltd, 1980), pp. 56-59.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Ibid., pp. 62, 83.

[121]Leclercq, pp. 266-267. The authoritative work on the subject of Joachim and Joachimism is probably Marjorie Reeves' The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), an in-depth study which includes a detailed examination of Joachimist influence upon the Franciscan Order.

as his basis. According to Joachim, Revelations provided a recapitulation of the entire process of history; its symbols concealed specific dates, events, and persons, and Joachim believed he had found the key to the book's figurative language.[122] His theory is extremely intricate; the part which is relevant to the Franciscan mission may be briefly summarized as follows: history is divided up into three stages, the *status* of the Father, associated by the abbot with Old Testament times, the *status* of the Son, the New Testament and present time, and the *status* of the Holy Spirit, the last age and end of time. These stages are further subdivided into seven *aetates*, or ages, symbolized in the Book of Revelations by the seven seals. Each is represented by an *ordo*, a certain group or class of persons, which is engaged in battle with an opposed group of assailants, which in turn is led or represented by a specific individual.[123] Five *aetates* had passed already, Joachim announced; the impending sixth age was to witness the coming of two new orders of spiritual men, who were to combat the beast of the Apocalypse and the seven-headed dragon, one of whose heads Joachim identified as Saladin.[124] In his *Liber de concordia utriusque testamenti*, Joachim stated: "There will be . . . two men . . . who stand for two orders, one Italian, and the other Spanish, and after these two orders will come

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[122]Bernard McGinn, The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1985), pp. 150-151.

[123]Ibid., pp. 151-152.

[124]Ibid., p. 149.

another order in sackcloth, at which time the son of iniquity, who is called Antichrist, will appear."[125] These orders, one of hermits, one of preachers, and one, presumably, of tertiaries,[126] were to usher in the third *status* and the seventh *aetas*, which the abbot referred to as the Sabbath. Following the thousand years of peace were the final conflict and the Last Judgement.[127]

Acceptance of Joachim's thought, in all its complexity and with all its implications, was far from unanimous; yet his writings raised widespread interest and must have had some impact upon the Franciscans' perception of their missionary activity. Much of the abbot's appeal lay in the elaborateness of his scheme; his

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[125]"Erunt . . . duo viri . . . qui duo Ordines interpretantur; unus Italus, et alter Hispanus, et post ipsos duos Ordines, veniet alter Ordo saccis vestitus, sub cujus tempore apparebit filius iniquitatis, qui dicitur Antichristus. . . . Brevissimum est tempus ipsius, scilicet tertii Ordinis, sicut brevissimi sunt dies Antichristi successoris sui. Ordo enim Minorum, usque ad novissima tempora duraturus, per mare Aquilonare transibit, aspera pascua gustabit. Regina Austri proteget et fovebit eum in amaritudine sua. Flumen Euphratem transibit, et undam et impetum ejus sua praedicatione mitigabit, aspera reducentur in planum sermone ejus. Terra salsuginis, idest Aegypti, ad Dominum convertetur per eum. In eadem terra secure Evangelium praedicabit; multae gentes per ipsum Ordinem ad Dominum convertentur. . . . Gaudebunt in canticis . . . idest, in praedicatione omnes tribus terrae, et gens immunda Mahometica, quae remanebit, et hi qui residui erunt, ad Dominum convertentur." Cf. Wadding, vol. I, pp. 16-17.

[126]Alexander, p. 86. The third order was generally thought to refer to the lay movement which early attached itself to the Dominicans and Franciscans. The reference to the sackcloth could be interpreted in association with their state of penitence.

[127]McGinn, p. 149.

credibility was enhanced by the fact that his prediction concerning the two new orders appeared to have been fulfilled in the mendicant friars, the Franciscans and the Dominicans.[128] Jacques de Vitry may have echoed the popular view when he wrote, in conclusion to a lengthy description of the Franciscan Order,

> Such is this holy Order of the Friars Minor; such is this religious life of apostolic men, an admirable life that should be imitated. These are the men whom, in our opinion, the Lord has raised up in these latter times to battle against the Antichrist, the son of perdition, and against his unbelieving henchmen. They are the . . . valiant men of Christ; they are the ones who have been designated defenders of the ramparts of Jerusalem, for day and night without interruption they devote themselves to praising God or to preaching. . . .[129]

The notion of the mendicants' divine calling was readily adopted, and soon came to be intertwined with the older sibyllic predictions. Thus, an anonymous Joachimist editor developed an entire programme for the mendicant mission shortly after Friar John of Plano Carpine's trip to the Mongols in 1245.[130] The two most notable features were perhaps the expected eradication of Islam and the establishment of temporal and spiritual Christian rule in Asia.[131] It must be stressed that the association between the friars and Joachimist prophecy was not made by Francis

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[128]Ibid., p. 86.

[129]Vitry, *History of the Orient*, c. 32, in Omnibus, p. 1613.

[130]Alexander, p. 92.

[131]Ibid.

himself, nor, apparently, by the first Franciscans. Rather, the link was forged in the course of the century, after the first expeditions had taken place.[132] Thus, the Franciscan mission does not seem to have begun in response to apocalypticism; but friars accepted and even endorsed the connection once it had been made. The apparent predestination of the order to fulfill a divinely-appointed task must have served to strengthen the Franciscan sense of mission: there was little time left; there was a plan to be fulfilled, a course to be run, and the men who were ordained for this purpose had come.

The precarious situation of Christendom, that is, the almost continual involvement in various wars, comprised a further stimulus to the Franciscan mission. The influence of the crusades upon Francis has been much discussed; initially attracted to arms and valour, he transformed the crusading ideal into something that was spiritual after his conversion. Loyalty, devoted service, and the lord-vassal relationship remained to be adapted to the saint's life of service to God. The actual militarism inherent in the crusades and in the knighthood for which he had longed, he seems to have abandoned after two decisive visions which began his life of penitence.

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[132]How Joachimism was introduced into the order is still a matter of debate. For some interesting suggestions, refer to E.R. Daniel's "A Re-examination of the Origins of Franciscan Joachitism," Speculum, vol. 43 (1968), pp. 671-676.

Celano relates how one night, Francis dreamed he was in a palace filled with arms and armour, and heard a voice which told him that this was what lay in store for him and his soldiers. Francis took this promise literally, and as he was eager to win knighthood and military glory, he rejoiced; but a second dream showed him a different interpretation. The voice asked him why he followed the servant instead of the Lord, and told him to await the spiritual fulfillment of the dream. Francis obeyed, and at that point, according to Celano, "Francis . . . changes his carnal weapons into spiritual ones and in place of military glory he receives the knighthood of God."[133] Whether he applied the vision to himself only, and remained sympathetic to the crusading effort as such, is uncertain. An anonymous chronicler claimed that Francis justified the crusade before the sultan of Egypt:

> . . . every man, however dear and close he is to us . . . must be repulsed, pulled out, expelled if he seeks to turn us aside from the faith and love of our God. That is why it is just that Christians invade the land you inhabit, for you blaspheme the name of Christ and alienate everyone you can from his worship. But if you were to recognize, confess, and adore the Creator and Redeemer, Christians would love you as themselves. . . .[134]

The official sources are silent as to the saint's opinion of the crusades after his conversion; maybe they were never expressed. The Poverello's known emphasis on

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[133]Celano, *First Life*, c. 2, in Omnibus, pp. 232-233; ibid., *Second Life of St Francis*, c. 2, in Omnibus, pp. 365-366.

[134]Omnibus, p. 1615.

peace, however, would seem to make his approval of warfare, even against the infidel, unlikely. It is evident, certainly, that Francis did not make a military crusade the aim of himself or of his friars. Francis' mission was to be through peaceful preaching, not war; in a way, therefore, the saint represented the antithesis of the crusader. Yet it was the crusades which supplied him with a chivalric ideal of loyal service and devotion, according to which he could fashion his spiritual life; and it may have been the crusader who showed him an opponent that might be won to the Church.

By the thirteenth century, the crusades had passed their meridian. Though still a formidable antagonist, the Saracen was eclipsed temporarily by a new, utterly unexpected foe: the Mongol. Francis himself died before alarm about the Mongol invasions became acute, but his order continued within an increasingly apprehensive Latin West. The first reports of a new barbarian race reached the Latins around the year 1222, when the Mongols moved briefly into Russia. The sudden raid came as a shock, and left an eerie silence in its wake. The *Chronicle of Novgorod* notes, "For our sins, unknown tribes came, none knows who they are or whence they came--nor what their language is, nor of what race they are nor what their faith is--God alone knows who they are and whence they came out."[135] It seems the chronicler

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[135]*Chronicle of Novgorod*, cited by Christopher Dawson ed. The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1955), p. xii.

himself could not quite believe what he had seen or heard. The long interval of peace which followed the initial attack must have strengthened this impression of unreality: if anything, the incident represented an isolated nightmare. Only after the death of Chingis Khan did the Mongols, now unified and set on their course of military conquest, move west again. This time, their armies came within sixty miles of Novgorod.[136] Another two years of silence followed, then in 1240, the Mongol forces returned, took Kiev, and passed on into Poland, while another branch of the army turned against Moravia and Hungary. Consolidation of conquered territories was for the Mongols equivalent to destruction, and the devastation which they left behind bore mute witness to their ferocious energy.[137]

Now Christendom awoke to the danger. An earlier appeal from the Assassins of Syria for a military alliance against the Mongols had been received coldly. If this plague had been sent to punish infidel and schismatic, it was argued, little could or even ought to be done.[138] As further reports came, this harshly indifferent attitude gave way to alarm. The divided state of Christendom itself at this point prevented immediate and effective military action; torn by the quarrel of Frederick II and the papacy, energy, time, and resources did not suffice for a repulsive effort against the invaders. Perhaps this was the reason why diplomacy

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[136]Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

[137]Ibid., p. xiii.

[138]Ibid., p. xiv.

was eventually resorted to instead. The Franciscan Order must have shared the West's anxious concern to some extent, despite its inherent otherworldly focus. Even if they were not strictly apprehensive, the friars now became aware of a new people,[139] the conversion of which would benefit both the Mongols themselves and Christendom. At least the papacy appears to have regarded the Franciscan mission in this light, and was not slow to employ the order in establishing diplomatic relations with the invaders.

The position of the Mongols vis-à-vis Christendom altered fairly soon, as the Tatars decided to carry out a sustained attack on Islam, if possible with the help of the Christians. This decision was apparently reached during the time of Friar William of Rubruck's missionary journey there. It may have been influenced by the Christians in the camp, particularly within the ruling family; one wonders, too, whether Rubruck himself also made an impression upon the seemingly impassive khan. However, the possibility of a ruse or temporary coalition of convenience may not be disregarded either. Whatever the reason, or the secret intentions of the

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[139]The Mongols had already encountered a form of Christianity through the Uighurs, Kerait, Naiman, and Ongut Turks, peoples with which they merged. Alliances between the ruling houses ensured that some Mongol khans, including Kubilai, and leading Mongol officials had Christian mothers, some of whom had considerable political influence. Missionaries to the Mongols took note of Christians they met in the camps. Unfortunately, however, the tribes whence the Mongols derived had been exposed to unorthodox doctrine, most notably the Manichaean and Nestorian heresies (cf. Dawson, pp. x-xi, xxiv-xxv), both of which had been condemned in early Church councils as erroneous. The Catholic Church was only scantily represented.

Mongols, the dreaded antagonist began to request an alliance with the Latin West against the common enemy of Islam. Mongol envoys came, and at one point, concrete plans were offered for a joint campaign. Nothing materialized in the end, as Christendom was still labouring in internal turmoil; the unaided efforts of Edward I proved insufficient both to achieve a reconciliation between pope and emperor, and to organize another crusade. The negotiations with the Mongols extended over a number of years, from approximately 1254 to 1291, when the fall of Acre and the death of the khan most eager for a western alliance rendered future plans of this sort futile. Although thus no longer a motive force in the missionary expedition of Friar John of Monte Corvino at the turn of the century, the Mongol threat may well have been a factor in the journeys preceding it.[140]

The papacy, the third major influence upon the Franciscan mission, had early shown a keen interest in the order's efforts. Successive popes equipped the friars liberally with recommendations and privileges, and even supervised the missions' organization. Thus, in 1226, the pope placed missionaries setting out for Morocco under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Toledo;[141] bishoprics and other administrative seats were established on site to facilitate the missionaries' task, both by centralizing their efforts and by stabilizing and systematizing the mission field

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[140]Dawson, pp. xiv, xxv-xxxi.

[141]Krueger, p. 281.

itself.[142] Whereas the order had from the beginning aimed at reaching the non-Christian, the papacy tended to be more concerned about the spiritual welfare of the Christians dwelling in pagan lands, and accordingly committed them to the particular care of the friars. Official recognition of the outsider's role in the foreign mission thus came only gradually; the bull *Cum hora undecima*, issued in 1291 by Nicholas IV, confirmed the Franciscan mission to all unbelievers, and may be indicative of a shift in attitude.[143]

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[142] Heidenmissionen, p. 3.

[143] Krueger, pp. 282-283. In 1233, Gregory IX wrote thus: "Animarum salutem desiderio ferventi quaerentes, auctoritate vobis praesentium indulgemus, ut cum in Saracenorum et Paganorum terra fueritis, liceat vobis Christianis ibidem morantibus, confessione peccatorum suorum audita, poenitentiam salutarem injungere, ac ipsis, si aliquibus excommunicationis sententiis sint astricti, juxta formam Ecclesiae, absolutionis beneficium exhibere." By the end of the century, this focus on the already-baptized had shifted to an universal concern. Nicholas IV, writing in 1291, addressed two friars as follows: "Dilectis filiis . . . ad Terras Tartarorum, Graecorum, Sarracenorum, Paganorum, Bulgarorum, Cumanorum, Yberorum, Alanorum, Gazarorum, Gotorum, Syrorum, Ruthenorum, Jacobitarum, Nubianorum, Nestorianorum, Georgianorum, Armenorum, Indorum, Mosselitorum, Ethiopum, Ungarorum majoris Ungariae, Christianorum captivatorum apud Tartaros, aliarumque nationum Orientis communionem Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae non habentium, seu quarumcumque aliarum partium proficiscentibus . . . Cum hora undecima sit diei hominibus, ut exeant ad opus usque ad Mundi vesperam deputati, & illud Apocalipsis elogium citò credatur cum Matris Ecclesiae consolatione complendum, videlicet oportere viros spiritualis vitae munditiam, & intelligentiae gratiam cum Johanne sortitos, populis, & gentibus, linguis, Regibusque multis denuo prophetare: Quia non sequitur reliquiarum Israel per Ysayam prophetata salvatio, nisi juxta Paulum Apostolum priùs introeat gentium plenitudo." Cf. Wadding, vol. II, p. 683; D. A. Rossi ed., Bullarium Franciscanum, vol. IV (Rome: Sacra Congregatione de Propaganda Fide, 1768), pp. 278-279. The fact that Nicholas IV was himself a Franciscan may be significant. Cf. note 126.

The papacy was not only the order's helper, but also its supervisor and, increasingly, its employer, in that it assigned numerous tasks to the Franciscans which had little to do with the order's original pastoral and missionary function. Friars were sent out as refutors of heresy[144] and ambassadors to the schismatic eastern Church;[145] they were chosen as councillors in doctrinal matters[146] and as political peacemakers.[147] Temporal and ecclesiastical nobility alike favoured mendicant envoys, chaplains, and confessors; on at least one occasion, the Franciscans were even delegated a public security office, in that they were made responsible for the extirpation of highway-robbery.[148] Although the foreign mission was thus in some respects a side-issue from the papal point of view, it was by no means disregarded, and by the second half of the century Rome essentially seems to have taken over its direction. Perhaps this papal initiative was necessary: organization had never been the Franciscans' strong point, and the Poverello's

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[144]Felder, pp. 336-337.

[145]Vat, pp. 161-176; Eccleston, c. vi, in Salter, p. 41.

[146]A number of Franciscan theologians, notably St Bonaventure, took part in the Council of Lyons, at which the Greek Church conceded the *filioque* issue and promised to reunite with Rome. This council was to prove of some importance for missions abroad, too: Mongol ambassadors present at Lyons were baptized and returned full of praises for the Catholic Church. Their enthusiastic approbation greatly facilitated the friars' mission in Tatary. Cf. Salimbene, p. 498; Franziskanermissionen, p. 55.

[147]Eccleston, c. xiv, in Salter, p. 91.

[148]Holzapfel, pp. 209, 210-211, 214.

informal and flexible association of mendicants might never have turned into an order at all without the pope's intervention.[149] Missionary efforts were, as has been seen, undertaken with much goodwill and no planning on the part of the friars. The administrative mind of the Roman curia, though it detracted from the order's spontaneity and original freshness, still represented a helpful, stabilizing influence upon the Franciscan foreign mission.

It is possible that the popes were themselves influenced by the prevalent apocalyptic atmosphere in their decision to take the young order in hand.[150] Of greater importance, however, were rumours of spectacular conversions among the pagans and Saracens, which were widely circulated in Christendom, and meant an inducement to establishing contact with the outside world. Instigated by oriental Christians or even pagans, who hoped for a closer link with the West or a political alliance, these reports usually proved to be false.[151] At one time, for instance, an

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[149]Francis' spontaneity and emphasis on simplicity is well-known; it was the influence of pope and episcopacy, and the influx of educated clergy, which determined the eventual shape and nature of the order. For discussions of this question, see for example Rosalind B. Brooke, Early Franciscan Government (Cambridge: 1959) and Lawrence Landini, The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of the Friars Minor, 1209-1260, in the Light of Early Franciscan Sources (Chicago: 1968).

[150]McGinn believes that many or most of the thirteenth-century popes were lawyers and administrators that remained untouched by the prevalent "visionary mutterings" (cf. McGinn, p. 207), but does not offer substantial proof for this generalization.

[151]Heidenmissionen, p. 29; Franziskanermissionen, p. 80.

envoy came to Alexander IV, claiming that Hulagu, the ilkhan of Persia, had sent him to ask the pope for learned and pious men to baptize him. The pope immediately wrote a letter in which he expressed his congratulations and joy; he exhorted Hulagu to remember the transience of earthly things and the approach of the Last Judgement. Made suspicious by the envoy's lack of covering letters, however, he also undertook to confirm the ilkhan's intentions. The outcome of this investigation has not been transmitted to the present day, but it is known that Hulagu, though he was kindly disposed towards Christians, never was baptized; the message thus presumably was forged.[152] Similarly, it was an account of Kubilai Khan's baptism which moved Nicholas III to send friars to China; before they had travelled half the way, the friars discovered that this report, too, was false, and thus stopped short of their destination.[153]

The papacy took what appears to have been a precedent-setting step in the thirteenth century by sending a vast number of letters to non-Christian kings and

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[152] Heidenmissionen, p. 32.

[153] Ibid., p. 66. The missions' dependence upon such outside stimuli almost makes it seem that the Latin West required repeated reminders of the outsider's existence. Embroiled in internal conflict, Christendom recognized the pagan only if he intruded in some way upon her notice. The follow-up was generally poor, even when the difficulties of the journey and the number of missionaries that were sent and never reached their destination are considered. Tenduk, a kingdom southwest of Peking, was successfully evangelized through Friar John of Monte Corvino; after the missionary's return to the capital and the convert king's death in 1298, the kingdom reverted to its former state as there was nobody to teach and strengthen them. Cf. Heidenmissionen, p. 67.

leaders, exhorting them to be baptized.[154] Gregory IX and Innocent IV expounded Christian doctrine at length to various sultans; however, their efforts met with scant attention and less compliance.[155] Nicholas IV presented Friar John of Monte Corvino, the first missionary to China, with more than twenty such letters in 1289; two years later, he sent out William of Chieri and Matthew of Chieti with 30 letters to the Orient.[156]

The friars, loyal and obedient to the Church, and known for their missionary zeal, represented the best means of contacting the peoples outside of Christendom. The papacy's commission did not constitute the missionary motivation of the friars,

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[154]Vat, p. 138. Two such papal letters addressed to a Mongol khan have been provided in Appendix B, along with the khan's ungracious answer. Note that a number of popes wrote to schismatic as well as pagan rulers, expounding debated points of doctrine and offering terms for a reunion. The bearers of these letters were usually friars. See Wadding, vol. III, pp. 144, 205-207 for examples.

[155]Franziskanermissionen, pp. 10-12.

[156]Heidenmissionen, p. 37. There were two mendicant popes in the thirteenth century: the Dominican Innocent V (January-June 1276) and the Franciscan Nicholas IV, who has already been mentioned. Innocent V had little time in which to develop a particularly mendicant or Dominican character during his five-and-a-half or so months in office. Yet while it is hardly permissible to draw general conclusions from an isolated case, Nicholas IV's missionary involvement may be significant. Though most popes favoured and supported the mendicant orders, few were as actively and sincerely interested in the Franciscan foreign mission as the Franciscan pope. Nicholas IV also made at least one crusading effort, however, after the fall of Acre; thus, if he indeed represents the order whence he stemmed, it seems that not all Franciscans eschewed militarism in the way their founder did. Cf. Oxford Dictionary of Popes, pp. 186-208.

yet it authorized the various missions, gave them official support, and perhaps even determined their geographical goal. It is worthy of note that, as crusading interest waned and the Mongol invasions inspired a growing amount of attention and fear, the mendicants' mission field shifted, apparently to accomodate the new priority. By 1278, missionaries generally directed their steps, or were directed, not to the Saracens, but to the Mongols.[157]

It should be noted that despite an apparently growing interest in missions, the papacy did not wholly eschew military action. Nor did it hesitate to commission friars to accompany a veritable crusade: in the years 1228-1278, several Franciscans were active in Prussia, accompanying the Teutonic Knights' crusade, and preaching whilst the knights conquered.[158] In 1241, Gregory IX charged the Franciscans,

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[157] Franziskanermissionen, p. 339. Missions directed at neither Saracen nor Mongol also took place, particularly under Nicholas IV (1288-1292), the first Franciscan pope, who sent friars to the Balkans and the Near East. Cf. J.N.D. Kelly, The Oxford Dictionary of Popes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 186-208. However, these missions were either on a small scale or considered unimportant by contemporary chroniclers, and therefore have remained in obscurity; no details have been transmitted.

[158] Heidenmissionen, p. 12. The Teutonic Knights of St Mary's Hospital at Jerusalem were established between 1198 and 1199 by merchants. The order was initially meant for the support and comfort of the sick and the wounded at the siege of Acre, but was soon drawn into military service by the Church. It is perhaps best known for its activity in Prussia: the Teutonic Knights were commissioned to conquer the region and provide religious instruction for the pagans living there; their reward was to consist of all the (pagan-owned) lands they managed to win. The order did not confine itself to instruction: the inhabitants of Prussia were forcefully baptized; if the unwilling "converts" apostasized later, they were sold into slavery. The order was generally accompanied

along with the Dominicans and Cistercians, to preach a crusade against the Mongols, who had just defeated Christian forces in battle. The crusade came to naught due to the pope's death; his successor Innocent IV favoured peaceful negotiations and missionary activity.[159]

While Rome gave structure, guidance, and extensive support to the Franciscan mission, the friars themselves were by no means apathetic, but displayed sincere interest as well as initiative. Missionaries mentioned by Eccleston sought a papal commission as if they considered it a benediction or simple protective measure, and Friar William of Rubruck travelled to the Mongols by his own wish, quite independently of the pope. External influences, be they prophecy, invasions, or the papacy, were significant in shaping missionary activity, but alone they would not have given rise to the mission itself: the internal impulse was essential.

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by the Dominican Order, but Franciscans may also on occasion be found in their wake. Cf. Stephen Neill, A History of Christian Missions (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1964), pp. 110-111. Note that while the papacy had no objection to the knights' militarism *per se*, it does not seem to have approved of forced conversions. Thus Alexander IV wrote in 1256: ". . . non obstante concessione, qua dicebatur prius ab Apostolica Sede fore concessum dilectis filiis Fratribus domus Teutonicorum partium earundem, ut quos de partibus illis Paganos possent sibi bello, et gladio subjugare, suo dominio applicarent. Verum quia gratuita debet esse conversio, non coacta, et ipse Deus coacta servitia non acceptat. . . ." Cf. Wadding, vol. IV, p. 46.

[159]Heidenmissionen, pp. 21-22.

CHAPTER 4

THE LATER MISSIONS: FRANCIS' SUCCESSORS

The second half of the thirteenth century witnessed three main Franciscan expeditions, very different in manner from their predecessors. Although willing to suffer privation and hardship, the new missionaries were characterized by perseverance and prudence rather than spontaneous enthusiasm. The target for these later efforts were the Mongols, who, while they lacked the Saracens' fanaticism, were still difficult missionary objects, precisely because of their universal religious tolerance. The first of the journeys was a mission only tangentially, as its motivating factor was the safety of Christendom, rather than any strictly missionary concern. The Tatar threat was real enough in the 1240s to excite alarm in the Roman curia; John XXI sent six Friars Minor to the Tatars, presumably to explore the situation. Though they "returned from the Tatars without any harm," they also evidently achieved little.[160] Alexander IV called the Synod of Ravenna to discuss the problem; according to Salimbene,

> This council was called for the good of the Christian people, so that . . . bishops could set their churches in readiness to move against the Tartars in defense of Christianity if the Pope so ordered, and so that they might pray God once again to remove the threat of all barbarian nations from them and the Christian people.[161]

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[160]Salimbene, p. 200.

[161]Ibid., p. 404.

It was with this attitude that Friar John of Plano Carpine left Italy to travel to the court of the great khan.

John of Plano Carpine cannot be regarded as a missionary, except in the etymological sense of the term. He went as the envoy of Pope Innocent IV, primarily to negotiate peace with the Mongols, although hopes for their conversion were expressed incidentally as well. The friar evinced concern for Christendom and readiness to obey the papacy's command, in that he agreed to undertake the difficult and dangerous journey despite his advanced age. Although he may thus be considered a good example of Franciscan obedience and the extent of papal influence over the order, Friar John did not show that apostolic zeal which generally characterized the Franciscan missionaries. As historians now name his journey among the great missions of the age, however, a brief account is rendered for completeness' sake.

Originally, the expedition was to be undertaken by Friar Lawrence of Portugal, but for some unknown reason he did not go; Plano Carpine was commissioned in his stead. The journey was well timed: the last great khan had died in 1241, bringing to an abrupt halt the invasion of Europe. During the five years which followed, the Mongols were preoccupied with the election of a new ruler; this interregnum represented an interval of comparative peace for the Latin

West.[162] Plano Carpine embarked upon his undertaking in April 1245; he returned in November 1247, having spent four months at the court of the great khan.[163] Learned and a skilled orator,[164] the friar set forth everything he had found out concerning the race of the Mongols in a book, the *Ystoria Mongalorum*, which he arranged to be read aloud to his fellow-friars upon his return, while he himself expounded it and answered any questions at length.[165] Nominally sent to the whole Orient, Plano Carpine decided to travel first to the Tatars, as from them he apprehended impending danger to the Church. Though fearing, as he said, maltreatment, trials, and death, he determined to learn the intentions of the Tatars and make them known, so that any attack from that quarter would not find Christendom unprepared.[166] In accordance with this aim, his book devotes much space to the Mongols' ways in war and peace; one chapter deals exclusively with the question of how best to fight them.[167]

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[162]Journeyings, p. 7.

[163]Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[164]Salimbene, p. 197.

[165]Ibid., pp. 197-198.

[166]John of Plano Carpine, *Ystoria Mongalorum*, prologue, in Dawson, p. 3.

[167]Ibid., c. viii, in Dawson, pp. 43-50; also cc. vi-vii, pp. 32-43. Plano Carpine claimed that the Mongols feared none but the Christians, and were thus preparing to fight with them, so as to remove the one obstacle which kept the Tatar race from world rule. The friar goes to some length to describe the arms which the Christians should use against the invader, and the way in which their armies should be

The message which Plano Carpine carried included an exposition of the Church's basic doctrine and a request for the cessation of armed conflict; the pope recommended the friar to the khan, apparently expecting that a doctrinal discussion of sorts would take place between them. According to the envoy,

> . . . the Pope urged them, both through us and by his letter, that they should become Christians and to receive the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for otherwise they could not be saved; moreover he told them that he was amazed at the great slaughter of men carried out by the Tatars . . . seeing that they had done the Tatars no harm nor even attempted to do so; and since the Lord God was grievously offended by this, he urged them to avoid such things for the future and to do penance for their past deeds.[168]

Having delivered the papal letter to Baatu, the first among the Mongol princes,[169] the friar and his companion and interpreter, Brother Benedict the Pole,[170] were sent on to Guyuk Khan, to whom they repeated the pope's

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organized--a strange preoccupation indeed for a Franciscan.

[168]". . . monebat eos, tam per nos quam per litteras suas, dominus Papa, quod christiani efficerentur et fidem reciperent domini nostri Iesu Christi, quia aliter salvari non possent; mandabat preterea quod mirabatur de tanta occisione hominum . . . que per Tartaros facta erat, cum eos in nullo lesissent nec ledere attemptassent; et quia Dominus Deus erat graviter offensus super hoc, monebat eos quod de cetero caverent a talibus et penitentiam agerent de commissis;" ibid., c. ix, in Anastasius van den Wyngaert, Sinica Franciscana, vol. I (Quaracchi-Firenze: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929), pp. 105-106; translation according to Dawson, pp. 53-54.

[169]Ibid., in Dawson, pp. 55-56.

[170]Ibid., prologue, in Dawson, p. 4.

message.[171] In the great khan's household were some Christians who, since the khan kept clerics and supplied them liberally with whatever they needed, believed in his imminent conversion.[172] The Franciscan remained sceptical about this, and his doubts were confirmed by Guyuk's cold reply to the pope's letter. Convinced that the world had been subjected to him by divine ordinance, the khan threatened further invasions, unless the pontiff came in person to pay homage.[173]

Plano Carpine undertook little or no missionary work among the Mongols; although of course the khan gave him little chance of conducting a doctrinal exposition, the overall tone of the *Ystoria* gives the impression that the friar had no personal sense of mission, and was glad to return to Europe upon the conclusion of his embassy. The first contact with the Mongols had been forbidding; yet hopes were sustained for more positive results. Several similar journeys followed that of Plano Carpine, undertaken by Dominican friars likewise in the service of the pope.[174] It was not until almost a decade later that a second Franciscan, William of Rubruck, set out for the Mongol camps.

Unlike his predecessor, William of Rubruck was a missionary, not an envoy.

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[171]Ibid., c. ix, in Dawson, p. 66. Guyuk, a grandson of Chingis and cousin to Baatu, held the office of great khan from 1240-1248. Cf. Dawson, p. xxxx.

[172]Ibid., p. 68.

[173]Ibid., pp. 75-76. The pope's letter and Guyuk's reply have been provided in Appendix B.

[174]Ibid., pp. xviii-xix.

The friar had long wanted to travel to the Mongols, and when news of Sartach Khan's recent baptism reached the West, he felt that his opportunity had come. It may be significant to note that the friar did not seek a papal commission, but was content with a letter written by St Louis, in which the king expressed his congratulations to Sartach Khan, and recommended the Franciscan and his companion as men worthy to instruct the Mongols in the Catholic faith. Rubruck's lack of other credentials hampered his mission in one sense, as he was treated with scant attention by the Tatars; yet on the other hand, it may have given him greater freedom of action, for he was not bound to a commission, but could speak of whatever he wished, provided he found any that would listen to him. His journey, lasting from April 1253 to August 1255, included a stay of seven months at the court of the great khan, and thus offered him ample time to become acquainted with the Mongols.[175] Rubruck went on his own accord for the purpose of evangelization; Louis of France supported the mission only in that he vouched for the friar and his companion, and requested Sartach to allow them to stay in his territory, to teach through their word and example.[176] Sent, as Plano Carpine before him, from camp to camp, the Franciscan instructed and comforted the Christians he met on

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[175] Journeyings, p. 47.

[176] William of Rubruck, *Itinerarium*, cc. ix, xxviii, in Dawson, pp. 106, 154-155.

the way,[177] and even attempted to expound the creed to the Mongols at various points on his journey, though apparently with little result.[178] One chief cause of his failures was his interpreter:

> But the thing which annoyed me above all else was that when I wished to speak to them some words of edification, my interpreter would say: "Don't make me preach for I don't know how to say such words." And he spoke the truth, for later when I began to understand the language somewhat, I realised that when I said one thing he would say something completely different, according to whatever came into his mind. Then, seeing the danger of speaking through him, I chose rather to keep silence.[179]

Despite this frustrating experience, Rubruck did not conclude that missionaries should receive linguistic training prior to setting out on a foreign mission. Instead, he simply recommended the inclusion of several reliable interpreters in future expeditions.[180]

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[177]Ibid., c. xi, in Dawson, p. 110.

[178]Ibid., c. x, in Dawson, p. 109.

[179]"Super omnia autem gravabat me quod, quando volebam eis dicere aliquod verbum edificationis, interpres meus dicebat: "Non faciatis me predicare, quia nescio talia verba dicere". Et verum dicebat. Ego enim percepi postea, quando incepi aliquantulum intelligere idioma, quod quando dicebam unum, ipse totum aliud dicebat secundum quod ei occurrebat. Tunc videns periculum loquendi per ipsum, elegi magis tacere;" ibid., c. xiii, in Wyngaert, p. 196; translation in Dawson, pp. 113-114.

[180]B. Altaner, "Sprachkenntnisse und Dolmetscherwesen im missionarischen und diplomatischen Verkehr zwischen Abendland und Orient im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert." Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, vol. 55 (1936), p. 126.

Sartach, apparently doubtful about his unusual guests, soon ordered Rubruck to travel on to Baatu Khan.[181] The Franciscan complied, and after an arduous journey, presented himself and his companion before that leader, in the mendicant's simple habit and with bare feet. For a time, the Mongols stared at the friars in silent amazement.[182] Ordered then to state his message, Rubruck began to feel his way courageously but cautiously:

> "My Lord, we pray God from Whom all good things do proceed and Who has given to you your earthly possessions, that after these he will give to you the gifts of heaven, for the former without these are vain." He listened attentively and I added, "Know for certain that you will not obtain the gifts of heaven unless you are a Christian. For God says: 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned [Mark 16:16].'" At this he smiled gently and the other Mongols began to clap their hands in derision; my interpreter was struck dumb and I had to encourage him not to be afraid.[183]

Neither Baatu nor his Mongol subjects showed much further interest in Rubruck,

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[181]Rubruck, c. xvi, in Dawson, pp. 119-120.

[182]Ibid., c. xix, in Wyngaert, pp. 213-124; translation in Dawson, p. 127.

[183]"Domine nos oramus Deum a quo cuncta bona procedunt, qui dedit vobis ista terrena, ut post hec det vobis celestia, quia hec sine illis vana sunt". Et ipse diligenter ascultavit, et subiunxi: "Noveritis pro certo quod celestia non habebitis nisi fueritis christianus. Dicit enim Deus: *Qui vero non crediderit baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit. Qui vero non crediderit condempnabitur* [Mark 16:16]. Ad istud verbum ipse modeste subrisit, et alii Moal inceperunt plaudere manus deridendo nos; et obstupuit interpres meus, quem oportuit me confortare ne timeret.....;" ibid., c. xix, in Wyngaert, pp. 214-215; translation in Dawson, p. 128.

though they permitted him to remain with them for a while. A few Hungarian Christians whom Rubruck met at the camp did what they could to support the friars out of their own poverty with food and drink. When asked for books, the Franciscan copied the Hours of the Blessed Virgin and the office for the dead a number of times, as he had nothing else to give his benefactors.[184] An attempt to speak with the pagan priests on theological matters came to naught, as the missionary was forced to silence by his incapable interpreter.[185]

Rubruck's respite was brief; soon Baatu directed him to carry his message to

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[184]Ibid., c. xx, in Dawson, pp. 129-130.

[185]Rubruck had tried to speak about the nature of God: "Cum ergo sedissem iuxta predictos sacerdotes, postquam ingressus fueram templum et videssem ydola eorum multa, parva et magna, quesivi ab eis quid ipsi crederent de Deo. Qui responderunt: "Non credimus nisi unum Deum". Et ego quesivi: "Creditis quod ipse sit spiritus vel aliquid corporale"? Dixerunt: "Credimus quod sit spiritus". Et ego: "Creditis quod unquam sumpserit humanam naturam"? Dixerunt: "Minime". Tunc ego: "Ex quo creditis quod non sit nisi unus et spiritus, quare facitis ei ymagines corporales et tot? Insuper ex quo non creditis quod factus est homo, quare facitis ei magis ymagines hominum quam alterius animalis"? Tunc responderunt: "Nos non figuramus istas ymagines Deo, sed quando aliquis dives moritur ex nostris vel filius eius vel uxor vel aliquis carus eius, facit fieri ymaginem defuncti et ponit eam hic, et nos veneramur eam ob memoriam eius". Quibus ego: "Tunc ergo non facitis ista nisi propter adulationem hominum". "Immo", dixerunt, "ad memoriam". Tunc quesiverunt a me, quasi deridendo: "Ubi est Deus"? Quibus ego: "Ubi est anima vestra"? Dixerunt:"In corpore nostro". Quibus ego: "Nonne ubique in corpore tuo, et totum regit, et tamen non videtur? Ita Deus ubique est, et omnia gubernat, invisibilis tamen quia intellectus et sapientia est". Tunc cum vellem plura ratiocinari cum illis, interpres meus fatigatus, non valens verba exprimere, fecit me tacere;" ibid., c. xxv, in Wyngaert, pp. 231-232.

Mangu, the great khan,[186] who would decide what to do with him. To reach this khan's court, the friars had to pass through a place which their Mongol guides fearfully described as haunted and a site fatal to many travellers. Undauntedly singing the *Credo*, the friars passed unharmed. This demonstration impressed the Mongols more than anything Rubruck could have said, and he was promptly assailed with requests to write this supposed charm down, that the guides might wear it for protection. Unable to give them religious instruction on account of his interpreter, the missionary wrote out the *Credo* and the *Pater noster*, telling the eager petitioners to believe the words, although quite unintelligible to them, and ask God to fulfill the prayer in them. Helplessly, Rubruck then added: "I could do no other, for to speak words of doctrine through such an interpreter was most dangerous; nay, it was impossible, for he did not know the words."[187]

Mangu received the weary travellers, but could not comprehend their mission: he was accustomed only to envoys that came to offer tribute or ask for peace.[188] Nevertheless, he permitted the friars to stay over the winter.[189] It was the khan's

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[186]Ibid., c. xix, in Dawson, p. 128. Mangu succeeded his cousin Guyuk as great khan in 1251; he ruled until 1259. Cf. Dawson, p. xxxxi.

[187]"Aliud non poteram facere, quia loqui verba doctrine per interpretem talem erat magnum periculum immo impossibile, quia ipse nesciebat;" ibid., c. xxvii, in Wyngaert, p. 240; translation in Dawson, pp. 146-147.

[188]Ibid., c. xxviii, in Dawson, p. 150.

[189]Ibid., p. 156.

custom to let Christians, Saracens, and pagans alike bless and prophesy good to him, allowing all to follow in his train and suppose themselves his particular favourites, without committing himself to a belief in any set of doctrines.[190] Rubruck was to some extent drawn into these ceremonies, but was not deceived by the khan's appearance of religiosity. In the company of a Nestorian monk, many of whose customs displeased him, but whom he tacitly tolerated "for the honour of the cross,"[191] Rubruck began a small ministry among the Christians living in and around the Mongol encampment, providing them with the opportunity to go to confession and counselling them.[192]

An attempt to preach the Gospel to the khan actually induced the latter to order a religious debate among resident Christians, i.e. mainly the strong Nestorian faction, Saracens, and pagans, in which Rubruck was commissioned to participate. Taking the creed as his basis, he oversaw the Nestorians' elaborate doctrinal preparation and corrected their errors where necessary. What the Nestorians thought of this interference is uncertain; at least they did not oppose him openly. It was agreed that Rubruck should speak first. Having been provided for the occasion with a better interpreter, a resident Christian, the Franciscan undertook to

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[190]Ibid., c. xxix, in Dawson, p. 160.

[191]Ibid., p. 169.

[192]Ibid., c. xxx, in Dawson, pp. 179-180.

mould the debate in the manner of the schools.[193] He managed to establish the omnipotence of one God to the satisfaction of most, but was then stopped by the Nestorian faction, which was impatiently awaiting its turn. The Saracens refused to argue, declaring that they believed everything the Gospels contained, and the Nestorians accordingly confined their persuasive endeavours to the pagans. While they were not flatly contradicted, they did not meet with straightforward assent, either,[194] and whatever the potential value of the debate might have been, nothing permanent seems to have precipitated. If the khan was moved to thought, he certainly did not show it.

A short time after the debate, Mangu summoned Rubruck for a last interview. He greeted the Franciscan rather pompously:

> And he stretched out towards me the staff on which he was leaning, saying "Fear not". I smiled and said quietly: "If I were afraid I would not have come here." He enquired of the interpreter what I had said and he repeated it to him.[195]

The khan proceeded to make a profession of his faith to the attentive friar; he

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[193]Rubruck's account of the debate has been provided in Appendix C.

[194]Ibid., c. xxxiii, in Dawson, pp. 188-194.

[195]"Et porrexit erga me baculum cui appodiabatur dicens: "*Nolite timere*". Et ego subridens, dixi tacite: "Si timerem non venissem huc". Et ipse quesivit ab interprete quid dixissem, et ille recitavit ei;" ibid., c. xxxiv, in Wyngaert, p. 298; translation in Dawson, p. 194.

believed, he said, in one God, who had given different ways to men. The Christians had Scripture, which, according to the khan, they did not keep; the Mongols had soothsayers.[196] Rubruck was given a letter to Louis, which again asserted the Mongols' world-rulership through divine ordinance,[197] and was told to go back to France; his request that he be allowed to return at least as a pastor to the Christians in the camp was not granted.[198] After this unceremonious dismissal, Rubruck found no further opportunity of expounding Christianity to the khan,[199] and saw no choice but to leave. The friar's companion, being unable to stand the hardships of travel, remained behind with Mangu's permission.[200] It is doubtful whether he was able to carry out a settled ministry in Rubruck's place, however, considering the passive role he had played during the whole of his companion's active mission. The friars' meek submission to the khan's orders, obviously not the result of fearfulness, serves to emphasize ". . . the utter lack of privilege of the Franciscan . . . who may not lay any claim or exercise any compulsion to be received or admitted anywhere, be it in the realm of the Christians or in the precinct of the

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[196]Ibid., in Dawson, p. 195.

[197]Ibid., c. xxxvi, in Dawson, pp. 202-204.

[198]Ibid., c. xxxiv, in Dawson, pp. 196-197.

[199]Ibid., p. 195.

[200]Ibid., c. xxxvi, in Dawson, pp. 204-205.

unbeliever."[201]

John of Monte Corvino, the third missionary to the Mongols, set out in 1289 with Nicholas IV's sanction, to deliver papal letters and missionary recruits to a number of oriental rulers. The friar's first stop was in lesser Armenia, where the two mendicant orders were actively involved in mediating between Catholic and Monophysite factions. Monte Corvino had been at the Armenian king's court before, and apparently made a deep impression: Haython II actually abdicated in 1294 to take the Franciscan habit.[202]

From Armenia, Monte Corvino moved on to China, as one of the letters entrusted to him was addressed to Kubilai Khan.[203] The journey led over India, where the Franciscan and his Dominican companion remained for a little over a year, baptizing approximately one hundred persons in different places according to Monte Corvino's estimate.[204] The Franciscan eventually reached China in 1293

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[201]" . . . die völlige Rechtlosigkeit des Franziskaners . . . der keinen Anspruch erheben noch irgendeinen Zwang ausüben darf, um irgendwo aufgenommen oder zugelassen zu werden, sei es im Gebiete der Christen oder im Lande der Ungläubigen;" Vat, p. 18; translation mine.

[202]Franziskanermissionen, p. 32.

[203]A.C. Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1930), pp. 168-169.

[204]Journeyings, pp. 58-60. This appears to be the only instance of Dominican participation in a thirteenth-century Franciscan foreign mission.

or 1294--alone, for his companion had died in India.[205]

Despite all the obstacles put in his way by Nestorians and pagans jealous of his growing influence at court, the Franciscan was able to build several churches and train a number of young boys of pagan family, whom he had bought, presumably at the slave-market, to sing masses in them.[206] Though the emperor showed himself generous towards the friar, he did not convert; according to the missionary, "he has grown old in idolatry."[207] Yet Monte Corvino received that official support from him which Rubruck had lacked. Perhaps because his mission was endorsed by the papacy, or perhaps simply on account of the changed political situation, Monte Corvino could carry out the extensive ministry which had been denied to Rubruck. As the years passed, the Franciscan felt the need for help more and more keenly, and thus sent a letter back to Italy, asking for some recruits as well as for books, notably the antiphonary, saints' lives, a noted psalter (*psalterio cum nota*) and a gradual as exemplars from which to make copies for the boys.[208] In a few words, he summed up his work:

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[205]Ibid., p. 61.

[206]John of Monte Corvino, *Epistola II*, in Dawson, pp. 224-225.

[207]"inveteratus est in ydolatria;" ibid., in Wyngaert, p. 346; translation in Dawson, p. 224.

[208]Ibid., in Dawson, pp. 226-227; cf. Wyngaert, p. 350. The noted psalter probably refers to a psalter with musical notation.

> I have already grown old, and my hair is white from labours and tribulations . . . . I have an adequate knowledge of the Tatar language and script . . . and now I have translated into that language and script the whole of the New Testament and the Psalter and have had it written in beautiful characters. And I bear witness to the Law of Christ and read and preach openly and in public. And I planned with the aforesaid King George, if he had lived, to translate the whole of the Latin Office so that it might be sung through the whole land under his dominion.[209]

The missionary's request was answered in 1307, when seven Franciscans were elevated to the rank of bishop by the pope, and sent to China to consecrate Monte Corvino Archbishop of Peking and Patriarch of the Orient. Only three of the friars actually arrived after a long and difficult journey to fulfill their commission: Gerard Albuini, Andrew of Perugia and Peregrine of Castello.[210]

The missions of William of Rubruck and John of Monte Corvino distinguish themselves among the thirteenth-century efforts by their manner and sheer stamina. Neither of the missionaries suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Mongols, and though this must have been due partly to the Tatars' religious tolerance, perhaps even indifference, it should be noted that the friars did not denounce the divinities

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[209]"Ego iam senui et canus factus sum . . . laboribus et tribulationibus. . . . Didici competenter linguam et licteram tartaricham . . . et iam transtuli in lingua illa et lictera totum novum Testamentum et psalterium, que feci scribi in pulcherrima lictera eorum. Et teneo et lego et predico in patenti et manifesto testimonium legis Christi. Et tractavi cum supradicto Rege Georgio, si vixisset, totum officium latinum transferre ut per totam terram cantaretur in dominio suo;" ibid., in Wyngaert, p. 350; translation in Dawson, p. 227. King George was the ruler of Tenduk, a kingdom southwest of Peking, whom Monte Corvino had baptized.

[210]Schmidlin, p. 187.

of their audience in the vehement way the early missionaries had attacked Mohammed. Rubruck and Monte Corvino sought to convince the unbeliever of error and demonstrate the truth of the Gospel message through word and example, but they proceeded with a patience and tact which their predecessors had not possessed. Although no definite conclusions may be established from two instances, the differences between the early and the late thirteenth-century missions is striking enough to warrant consideration. Formative years for the order, this first century also laid the foundations for the Franciscan mission: though reverting occasionally to the first friars' impetuosity, the future missions were to follow the example which Rubruck and John of Monte Corvino had set.

CHAPTER 5

THE ORDER AND MISSION THEORY

One last aspect of the Franciscan mission in the thirteenth century remains to be examined: the development of missionary theory. Mission theory was slow to unfold, not only since it represented a new field, but also because it meant, in a way, the denial of the Franciscan ideal of absolute simplicity. Francis had repeatedly emphasized that he wanted his friars to be *idiotae*, simple and unlettered men; it was only with the gradual modification of the Poverello's ideals that learning was introduced into the order. This particular relaxation, however much Francis may have disapproved it, nevertheless proved to be of value to the foreign mission. In the early days, as has been seen, the order had tended to suffer from a lack of co-ordination and preparation, which became particularly noticeable in efforts like the foreign mission. The intellectual organization of the order greatly facilitated the development of both a stable practical mission and a missionary theory, while the actual missions themselves, even in their failure, provided invaluable experiences upon which later missionaries and theorists could build.

The first theoretical formulations, coming roughly forty years after the first missionary endeavours, were quite simple. St Bonaventure (c. 1217-1274) stressed the divine vocation of the missionary: a sense of genuine mission, rather than rashness, impetuosity, or the desire to escape the strict discipline of the order, must motivate the friar to seek out pagans, schismatics, and heretics, and bring them into

the fold of the Church. The basic requirements of health, faith, and virtue must be met by any brother asking permission to go.[211] Friar John of Wales, discussing missionary qualities sometime before 1279, urged "Perfection of life, truthfulness in doctrine, maturity of conduct, rectitude and zeal for righteousness, experience in effort, solid patience and perseverance. . . ."[212]

The missionaries that set out in the second half of the century were learned, at least in philosophy and theology; they had also been active within the order long enough to have acquired a certain amount of practical experience. Yet still no efforts were made to secure linguistic training or other means of communication. It was only among the Dominicans that such missionary preparation was to be found. *Studia* in Spain offered the Friars Preachers training in the Arabic and Jewish philosophy and language, while as early as 1236, a Chapter General had ordered all Dominican friars to learn the languages spoken within their province.[213] The order even possessed a handbook, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, a summary of proofs for Catholic doctrine, which it could employ

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[211]Vat, p. 35.

[212]E. Randolph Daniel, The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), pp. 39-40.

[213]Ibid., pp. 9, 11. Whether this decree was effective is doubtful. Note that the Dominicans were not always well prepared: Rubruck mentioned a group of Dominicans setting out for the court of the great khan, who did not even have an interpreter with them. This, however, must have been quite an exceptional case. Cf. Rubruck, *Itinerarium*, c. xxxviii, in Dawson, p. 216.

in its work against the heretic as well as among unbelievers.[214] Although from this one would expect to find a strong Dominican component in the missions of the century, there is scant evidence for Friars Preachers in the mission field. Concentrating in Castile and Aragon, where religious debates with the Moors apparently constituted one of the friars' tasks, along with the instruction of the Christian population, the recovery of apostates, and the aid of Christian prisoners, the Dominicans rarely moved farther afield.[215] Outside of Spain, the order's work was largely among the heretic and the schismatic. Only rarely does a mission comparable to, and indeed perhaps inspired by, the Franciscans surface in the records. Thus, one William of Tripoli, writing to Pope Gregory X, claimed to have converted more than one thousand Saracens by the simple preaching of the Gospel.[216] Rubruck mentions meeting a group of five Dominicans on their way to the great khan. Discouraged by what the Franciscan told them about his

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[214]Heidenmissionen, pp. 96-97. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* bears considerable resemblance to his later *Summa Theologiae*, though it is on a smaller scale; it contains philosophical, theological, and biblical proofs of tenets ranging from the existence of God to the resurrection of the dead. The work as a whole constitutes a refutation of the various heresies which the Church had encountered from her beginnings to Aquinas' own day. Cf. P.A. Uccelli, ed. Divi Thomae Aquinatis Summae contra Gentiles Libri Quatuor (Paris: Garnier Bros, 1878). It reflects little knowledge of the details of Islam, although it was ostensibly designed to cover "the errors of the infidels" as well as those of the heretics. Cf. Concept of Mission, p. 10.

[215]Concept of Mission, p. 9.

[216]Ibid., p. 12.

reception, however, they do not appear to have realized their intentions.[217] Missionary enterprise was evidently not the Preachers' focus. Yet if the Dominicans seldom joined their fellow-mendicants in the mission field, they may have served as an intellectual inspiration at least to some members of the other order: the Dominican Master General Humbert of Romans (d. 1277), for instance, emphasized the essential importance of language-skills for the missionary. It is thus possible that later Franciscan missionary plans drew upon Dominican theory. Evidence for this is lacking, however;[218] the prevalent inclination for study and disciplined intellectual training would perhaps have been sufficient basis for Franciscan mission theory.

Peter the Venerable, the twelfth-century abbot of Cluny, has been briefly mentioned already; his attitude towards the Saracens, unusually mild for his time, may have constituted an influence upon the Franciscan outlook. Certainly his brief treatise, the *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum*, represents, along with the Dominicans, a potential source for Franciscan theory. Peter had urged the preaching of the Gospel as an intrinsic Christian task and, though he himself did not know Arabic, had sought to gain a sufficient knowledge of Islam to refute it by

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[217]Rubruck, *Itinerarium*, c. xxxviii, in Dawson, p. 216.

[218]Concept of Mission, pp. 10, 57.

semi-dialectic means.[219] The abbot argued that according to the Koran, Muslims must acknowledge the divine revelation of Scripture. If the Koran and Scripture disagreed on any point, the fault must therefore lie in the Koran. Thus attempting to gain the Saracens' attention, Peter hoped to facilitate the conversion of the Muslims.[220] His treatise addresses his religious adversaries directly. It seems that he wished the work to be translated into Arabic and circulated, but this did not come to pass; the *Liber* was not read widely even within Christendom.[221] Given the singularity of the abbot's thought from the contemporary point of view, this is hardly surprising. There is no overt connection between Peter the Venerable and the Franciscans, yet it is interesting to know that he existed and forms a potential predecessor, as well as, perhaps, a link between the early missions and the Friars Minor. It may be significant that the Cluniac pointed to the Anglo-Saxons' reception of St Augustine as a plea for the Saracens' attention.[222]

Only two individuals associated with the Franciscan Order expressed considerations similar to these potential influences, in that they pointed to the essential importance of language skills and a thorough knowledge of the prospective converts' culture, religion, and mentality. Both of these remained on the outskirts

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[219]James Kritzeck, Peter the Venerable and Islam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 21, 31.

[220]Ibid., pp. 195-196.

[221]Ibid., pp. 158, 198.

[222]Ibid., p. 173.

of the order and were regarded askance by the mainstream: Roger Bacon (c.1220-1292), the problematic philosopher and critic, and Ramon Lull (c.1235-1316), a rather eccentric member of the Third Order.[223]

Francis had admired the ideal of the crusade, while eschewing its militarism; Bacon appears to have had little sympathy for either. War, Bacon stated firmly, hardened the infidel in his error, rather than converting him to the Church. The pope would do well to redirect the crusade's resources into missionary endeavours.[224] In his *Opus Maius*, Bacon developed this idea; the extent to which a sense of mission is reflected in chapter 13 of the work is striking:

> . . . the knowledge of languages is necessary to the Latins for the conversion of unbelievers. For in the hands of the Latins rests the power to convert. And for this reason Jews without number perish among us because no one knows how to preach to them nor to interpret the Scriptures in their tongue . . . . O unspeakable loss of souls when with ease countless Jews might be converted! What makes the situation as bad as possible is the fact that the foundation of our faith began with them. . . . the Greeks and . . . many other schismatics likewise grow hardened in error because the truth is not preached to them in their tongue; and the Saracens likewise and the Pagans and the Tartars, and the other unbelievers throughout the whole world.[225]

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[223]The Third Order of St Francis was established for men and women unable or unwilling to become fully-fledged Friars Minor or Poor Clares. Its members are generally referred to as tertiaries; missionary endeavours on their part, with the exception of Lull's, are obscure.

[224]Concept of Mission, p. 62.

[225]Robert Bacon, *Opus Majus*, part 3, c. 13, translated by Robert B. Burke, The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon vol. I (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1962), pp. 110-112.

According to Bacon, not only the Franciscan Order, but all of Christendom had a mission, and by neglecting what was essentially a divinely ordained responsibility, guilt was incurred. The crusades did not offer a solution to the problem, but rather aggravated the situation, for

> . . . unbelievers [are not] converted in this way, but they are slain and sent to hell. The survivors of the wars and their sons are angered more and more against the Christian faith because of those wars, and are infinitely removed from the faith of Christ, and are inflamed to do Christians all possible evils . . . .[226]

The primary aggressors, Bacon continued, were the military orders. Though initially intended for peaceful and charitable services, the knights had all too soon degenerated into a merciless fighting force:

> . . . the Templars and Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights hinder greatly the conversion of unbelievers. . . . there is no doubt but that all nations of unbelievers beyond Germany would have been converted long since but for the violence of the Teutonic Knights, because the race of pagans was frequently ready to receive the faith in peace after preaching. But the Teutonic Knights are unwilling to keep peace, because they wish to subdue those peoples and reduce them to slavery. . . . [Yet] the faith did not enter into this world by force of arms but through the simplicity of preaching . . . .[227]

Whether the philosopher's optimism with regard to the pagans' easy conversion was justified, remains a matter of some doubt. Yet Bacon's criticism is well taken, as

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[226]Ibid.

[227]Ibid.

the forceful methods applied particularly by the Teutonic Knights must have brought the Church into disrepute.[228] The friar's conclusion is solemn:

> Oh, how we should consider this matter and fear lest God may hold the Latins responsible because . . . they neglect the preaching of the faith. For Christians are few, and the whole broad world is occupied by unbelievers; and there is no one to show them the truth.[229]

Two things should be noted incidentally at this point: firstly, despite his eloquence in favour of foreign mission, there is no indication that Bacon himself undertook any journey to the unbeliever. This does not invalidate his ideals, but leaves his reader to wonder about his personal readiness to serve in the manner he so freely advocated. He was involved in the teaching of languages at some point in his university career, but this may have been in connection with philosophical studies rather than missionary pursuits.[230]

Secondly, it is evident that Bacon was not a pacifist by modern standards; the Mongol invasions occupied his thoughts much, and the widespread concern for the safety of Christendom did not leave him untouched. It seems rather that force of arms appeared to him a senseless waste of life; if fighting did become necessary, the

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[228]Cf. note 158 on the Teutonic Knights.

[229]Bacon, part 3, c. 13, in Burke, vol. I, pp. 110-112.

[230]Ibid., p. 28.

Christian troops should employ instruments obtained through the use of science.[231] Bacon himself experimented with mirrors designed to achieve combustion at a certain distance.[232] While such means might ensure physical protection however, Bacon firmly asserted that they could never bring about the conversion of an unbeliever.

The friar advocated thorough preparation for the prospective missionary. Conversion was to be achieved by means of rational disputation, the prerequisites for which were a) the ability to communicate, and b) a common ground of knowledge for all parties involved, in philosophy, theology, and the like.[233] An awareness of the geography, climate, and religion or religions of the mission field was also thought necessary.[234]

Bacon's words clearly reflect his conviction that Saracen, Mongol, and pagan could be easily won, if Christian preachers would only take upon themselves the missionary task. Deluded through faulty authorities, through custom, prejudice, or conceit,[235] a rational demonstration of certain basic tenets would suffice to show

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[231]Ibid., part 5, c. 12, in Burke, vol. II, pp. 633-634.

[232]John H. Bridges, The Life and Work of Roger Bacon: an Introduction to the Opus Majus (New York: Richwood Publishing Co., 1976), p. 22. Hereafter: Life and Work.

[233]Concept of Mission, pp. 61, 55.

[234]Ibid., p. 64.

[235]Bacon, part 1, c. 1, in Burke, p. 4.

unbelievers their error and prepare them for the acceptance of revealed truths beyond the reach of philosophical proof.[236] The Saracen especially had made his natural inclination towards learning clear, and would thus, Bacon believed, receive the truth most readily.[237]

The *Opus Majus*, as appears from a reference in another of Bacon's works, the *Opus Tertium*, included a book on the *ars praedicandi*, in which the Franciscan outlined ways of presenting the truth in a manner which would convince and convert the audience.[238] This section has unfortunately been lost; it would have been extremely interesting to see the friar's high ideals thus elaborated. However, the work on moral philosophy which now concludes the *Opus Majus* gives a glimpse of his procedure. According to Bacon, an awareness of divinity is natural to man: every race worships one divine being or more.[239] Sin, however, has darkened man's understanding; natural knowledge must therefore be strengthened by logical argument and a reason made perfect through faith. The preacher-missionary must begin gradually to establish certain basics, including some divine attributes such as the omnipresence and omnipotence of God, which go beyond innate knowledge.

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[236]Ibid., part 2, c. 19, in Burke, p. 73.

[237]Ibid.

[238]Life and Work, p. 137.

[239]Bacon, part 7, section 4, c. 1, in Burke, p. 795. The following information derives from the chapter cited, in Burke, pp. 787-823.

The existence of a first cause is stipulated even by pagan philosophers: something must have been the means of generating the world, man, and everything else. This something must always have been in being itself, and it will always be, as it is "infinitely removed from non-existence."[240] The fact of its eternity proves its infinite power, as well as its infinite essence. Infinite goodness and infinite wisdom follow logically from this premise. Now, such infinity can belong only to one God; to stipulate a multiplicity of divinities is unnecessary if not absurd.[241] This, Bacon declared, makes pagans who worship natural objects and the elements, and idolaters who worship images, both contemptible and unreasonable: they bestow divinity upon the created thing, and upon a pantheon of objects at that. Referring to William of Rubruck's debate at the court of the great khan, Bacon confidently claimed that the arguments advanced by the friar at that time completely vanquished his opponents.[242] Stating that ". . . the Pagans and Idolaters. . . . are easily

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[240]"elongatum in infinitum a non esse;" ibid., in Burke, p. 797; cf. John Henry Bridges, ed. The 'Opus Majus' of Roger Bacon, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), p.377. Hereafter: Roger Bacon.

[241]This elimination of the superfluous seems to have been a common precept even before Ockham's celebrated razor.

[242]Ibid., in Burke, p. 796. Rubruck's account does not justify this conclusion; Bacon was somewhat too optimistic here: the pagans had been unable to defend their creed, but from this does not logically follow that they were convinced by the friar's arguments. No overt conversion took place during or after the debate.

convinced and clearly perceive their own ignorance. . . ,"[243] Bacon added severely,

> . . . they would become Christians very gladly if the Church were willing to permit them to retain their liberty and enjoy their possessions in peace. But the Christian princes who labor for their conversion, and especially the brothers of the Teutonic order, desire to reduce them to slavery. . . . For this reason they offer opposition: hence they are resisting oppression, not the arguments of a superior religion.[244]

Man, the friar continued, is bound to do the will of God, to Whom all reverence is due. As the will of God and all matters pertaining to Him cannot be fathomed by unaided reason, revelation has been given. Every race claims to have had some such revelation--but only one can be true. Reasoning from a premise of harmony and sufficiency, Bacon explained that there is one God and one human race that must be ruled in unison under one head and one law: ". . . God's wisdom [the revealed law] cannot be plural."[245] It is a question, then, of choosing among the proposed revelations the true one from among the false: two of the same would be superfluous, two contradictory ones impossible. The perfect religion must reveal

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[243]"pagani et idololatrae. . . . convincuntur de facili, et suam ignorantiam manifeste percipiunt. . . .;" ibid., in Burke, p. 796; cf. Roger Bacon, p. 376.

[244]". . . . libentissime volunt fieri Christiani, si Ecclesia vellet demittere eos in sua libertate et gaudere bonis suis in pace. Sed Christiani principes qui laborant ad eorum conversionem, et maxime fratres de domo Teutonica volunt eos reducere in servitutem. . . . Et ideo repugnant; unde contra violentiam resistunt, non rationi sectae melioris;" ibid., in Burke, p. 797; cf. Roger Bacon, pp. 376-377.

[245]"non est possibile sapientiam Dei multiplicem esse;" ibid., in Burke, p. 805; cf. Roger Bacon, p. 386.

all that it is necessary for man to know. As pagans and idolaters are eliminated from the list of candidates at once due to the shortcomings stated above, and the Tatars incline more into their direction than not, venerating elements as they do, the choice is only among the three "more rational" ones.[246] It is interesting to note that Bacon credited Mangu Khan with the confession of Christianity's superiority to any other creed, and moreover claimed that the Tatars instructed their children in the Gospels and the lives of the Church Fathers.[247]

Bacon proceeded to argue that philosophy and mathematics, as well as history and prophecy, support the Christian revelation but neither the Saracens' nor the Jews'. In fact, Saracen philosophers even predict the impending end of their own law.[248] The Christian law prescribes the most perfect life and has the highest standards; it comprises both natural and spiritual virtues, and divine truths. It is, finally, most credible according to philosophical criteria: Christian writers and prophets possess sanctity and wisdom, and miracles are worked through them; they

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[246]"magis rationabiles;" ibid., in Burke, pp. 806-807; cf. Roger Bacon, p. 389.

[247]Ibid., in Burke, p. 807. Again, it is uncertain whence Bacon derived this information; it is possible that he is referring to the multiplicity of rites and the general tolerance almost amounting to pantheism, which was commonly found among the Mongols.

[248]Ibid., p. 808. Bacon referred particularly to the ninth-century astrologer Albumazar, who, in Book I of the *Conjunctions,* argued that Islam would exist for no more than 693 years. Of this time, Bacon declared, 665 years had passed already; the religion's end was thus drawing near.

are steadfast even in the face of death, they speak in the same spirit, though unknown to each other, and, although for the most part simple, humble men, their words have prevailed over rulers and philosophers.[249]

Thus far Bacon. The friar was persuaded that the conversion of the unbeliever depended only upon the obedience of the Christian to his calling. Privileged to have and hold the truth, he was now responsible to share it with others. Bacon was among the first to develop missionary theory to this degree, and he may have exercised some influence over his near contemporary, Ramon Lull, the second Franciscan mission theorist of the century.

Lull, too, wanted a concrete programme of missions, though he had no particular objection to conquest through crusades. On occasion as confrontationalist a preacher as the order had ever sent out, he nevertheless valued religious education and persuasion as a means of achieving conversion.[250] Accordingly, he urged the establishment of missionary training colleges, and around the year 1276 even founded an oriental language school for Franciscan friars himself.[251] The tertiary

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[249]Ibid., pp. 812-813.

[250]John Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 230-231.

[251]Schmidlin, p. 183; Armand Llinares, Raymond Lulle, Philosophe de l'Action (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), pp. 95-96.

found no supporters. His school Miramar had ceased to exist by 1295;[252] it was not revived by subsequent Franciscans, and does not seem to have left any deep impression upon the order as a whole.[253] The language problem was dealt with through the inclusion in the various expeditions of multilingual friars, indigenous Christians or converts, or by learning the requisite language on site.[254]

Ramon Lull joined the Third Order of St Francis comparatively late in life,[255] but, perhaps influenced by the Franciscan missionary ideal, he had much earlier shown an interest in the foreign mission. Some of his views resemble Bacon's, but in most respects, the tertiary was undoubtedly unique. Lull was preoccupied with the conversion particularly of the Saracens, who dwelt in large numbers in Mallorca, his birth-place.[256] He wrote voluminously to this end; the works *Liber mirandarum demonstrationum*, *Tractatus de modo convertendi infideles*, *Liber in quo declaratur quod fides sancta catholica est magis probabilis quam improbabilis*, and *Liber de maiori fine intellectus, amoris et honoris*, to name but a

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[252]Vat, p. 180.

[253]Concept of Mission, pp. 71, 73.

[254]Ibid., p. 73.

[255]E. Allison Peers, Ramon Lull: a Biography (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), p. 268.

[256]Llinares, p. 178.

few,[257] all focus on the conversion of the infidel through rational proofs for the Catholic faith. Lull's most famous work, the *Ars Magna*, claimed to have developed a diagrammatic system able to answer all questions, even those relative to divine attributes.[258] What the unbeliever lacked was not so much faith as instruction, or, should instruction fail to convert him, reason itself.[259] This reliance on reason seems to exclude the necessity of faith, and though Lull never subscribed explicitly to such a view, his solution is rather awkward. He allowed certain things to be

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[257]The following list may give an indication of the extent to which Lull treated missionary matters: *Liber mirandarum demonstrationum*: a rational treatise for the conversion of the infidel; *Liber de gentilis et tribus sapientibus*: a fictitious theological discussion among a Jew, a Christian, and a Saracen in the presence of a pagan; *De adventu Messiae*: a controversy between a Jewish scholar and a Christian theologian; *Tractatus de modo convertendi infideles*; *Liber de quinque sapientibus*: a dispute among the author, a Greek, a Nestorian, a Jacobite, and a Saracen; *Liber de articulis fidei sacro sanctae et salutiferae legis christianae, sive Liber apostrophe*: towards the conversion of the infidel; *Liber de cognitione Dei*: an attempt to demonstrate the Trinity and the Incarnation by means of logic, for the benefit of Jews and Saracens; *Liber praedicationis contra Iudaeos*: a collection of 52 sermons addressing Jews as well as Saracens, and making use of reason, authoritative references, and biblical precepts; *Disputatio Raymundi Christiani et Hamar Sarraceni*: a dispute about the Trinity and the Incarnation; *Liber de quaestione valde alta et profunda*: a controversy between a Christian and an infidel about the proofs for Catholicism; *Liber in quo declaratur quod fides sancta catholica est magis probabilis quam improbabilis*: on the proofs of Christian doctrine; *Liber de maiori fine intellectus, amoris et honoris*: on the superiority of Christianity over Islam. For these and a complete list of works attributed to Lull, cf. Llinares, pp. 445-449; 282-283.

[258]Peers, pp. 110-111.

[259]Ibid., p. 70.

beyond comprehension,[260] but neglected to specify these further. Faith he defined as a sincere inclination of the will towards God, a willingness to understand; rational argument was necessary to enlighten this basic orientation and complete the conversion.[261] Faith and reason, according to Lull, were inseparable; both were a type of illumination, both sought the same object.[262] Operating in a relation of proportionality, great faith made possible deeper and better understanding.[263]

Feeling assured of his theory's soundness, Lull was eager to see it realized. Unlike Bacon, Lull was obviously aware that the mission might meet with a violent reaction at least initially; he had had some practical experience, and so suggested that those willing to suffer martyrdom should learn the language or languages of the prospective converts, as well as any other matters of importance, to commence rational disputations with the unbeliever.[264] In repeated letters to Philip the Fair, the king of France, and to the pope, he pleaded for the establishment of linguistic

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[260]Ibid.

[261]Mark D. Johnston, The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 118.

[262]Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[263]Ibid., p. 126. Lull's concept of the relationship between faith and reason seems to parallel St Anselm's dictum of "faith seeking understanding;" it has in fact been suggested that the tertiary was influenced by the saint. Cf. Llinares, pp. 258-259.

[264]Llinares, p. 350.

training schools.[265] The Franciscan considered theologians best suited for the purpose on account of their doctrinal and rhetorical training, but any others, laymen, monks, and even secular clergy might go too, even if in the latter's case, this meant a temporary shortage of parish clergy within Christendom.[266] The debates Lull envisioned were disciplined and scholarly: the parties should know each others' creeds well, agree on terminology, follow a common object, argue from general rather than specific principles, and behave courteously.[267] Sophisms, fallacies, misleading figurative language, and unnecessary verbosity were to be eschewed; the argument was to be subdivided into manageable sections and repeated until its import was thoroughly grasped by both the opponent and the audience.[268] The disputants were to begin by establishing the existence of God, then His perfection and completeness. From this basis the different creeds were to be examined; the doctrine which best suited these premises should be accepted as exclusively true.[269]

The tertiary's ideas found no echo. While pronounced *doctor illuminatus* by

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[265]Ibid., pp. 285, 445-449.

[266]Theodor Pindl-Büchel, Ramon Lull und die Erkenntnislehre Thomas le Myésiers (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), pp. 46-47; Llinares, p. 285; Peers, p. 75. Note that Lull wrote an actual handbook, *Quae lex sit melior, maior et verior* for the use of navigators and merchants able and willing to pursue apologetic ends in North Africa. Cf. Llinares, pp. 445-449.

[267]Johnston, pp. 141-142, 140.

[268]Ibid., pp. 137-139.

[269]Ibid., p. 143.

his later disciples, he was derided by critical contemporaries, or attacked for his apparent rationalism.[270] Particularly his desire to prove the Trinity and other doctrines generally accepted to be beyond the scope of human reason provoked theological controversy.[271] Public opinion did not deter Lull, however. He envisioned a human race united and led by the Christian Church,[272] and did all in his power to further this ideal. The means he advocated were not always peaceful: perhaps alarmed by the Mongol invasions, and later, the fall of Acre,[273] he made plans of war and urged the papacy to use the Church's tithes for the support of a new military order, which was to be formed from a coalition of the old ones, and employed in the conquest of Granada, North Africa, and the Holy Land.[274] *Quomodo Terra Sancta recuperari potest, Petitio Raymundi pro conversione*

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[270]Alois Madre, Die Theologische Polemik gegen Raimundus Lullus: eine Untersuchung zu den Elenchi Auctorum de Raimundo male Sentientium (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1973), p. 89; Pindl-Büchel, p. 21.

[271]Madre, p. 89.

[272]Pindl-Büchel, pp. 24-25. The Church's focal role as envisioned by Lull is expressed in his book *Blanquerna*: the protagonist Blanquerna preaches and disputes in the synagogue every Sabbath while holding the office of bishop. Upon his elevation to the papacy, he sends envoys to non-Christian lands and compels pagans and Saracens living within Christendom to learn Latin and study the Scriptures. Cf. Peers, pp. 174-175.

[273]Pindl-Büchel, pp. 24-25; note however, that at one point at least, Lull perceived the Tatar threat as an opportunity for missions, and urged the pope to take preparatory measures. Cf. Peers, pp. 332-333.

[274]Llinares, pp. 352, 285.

infidelium et recuperatione Terrae Sanctae, Liber de fine, and *Liber de acquisitione Terrae Sanctae*[275] are treatises which reflect this interest. If his military aims did not displace his missionary zeal, they were at least oddly intertwined with it.

Lull displayed some genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of the unbeliever. He held that many Jews and Saracens would convert if they were instructed and received into the Christian community upon their baptism.[276] According to Lull, unbelievers could not be expected to believe what they did not understand,[277] nor, apparently, to undertake the step of conversion if that was to mean their virtual isolation from both their former associates and the Church community.

The tertiary did not content himself with advising others how to proceed; he took an active part in the realization of his theories. His administrative efforts were scantily rewarded: his language school was discontinued, as has been stated, and there is no indication that any missionaries ever issued from it.[278] Yet if he could not persuade others to take his counsel and adopt his methods, he nevertheless could and did employ them himself. Lull had held disputations with heretics in Cyprus early on in his missionary career, and moreover undertook several missionary

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[275]Ibid., pp. 445-449.

[276]Peers, p. 74.

[277]Ibid., pp. 338-339.

[278]Ibid., p. 135.

value of a preacher skilled in the language of his prospective converts, and crafted a missionary method which, while, in the eyes of contemporaries, its confidence in the efficacy of logic and the dialectic of the schools may have seemed to border on rationalism, was yet a fully-fledged plan. The stabilizing influences of organization and disciplined intellectual and spiritual training, which had shaped the manner of the late-century missions, served to mould Franciscan mission theory as well. Theory also benefited explicitly from the practical experiences of mendicant missionaries. Bacon at least was inspired by Rubruck's journey to the Mongols, and, as has been noted, frequently referred to it. Rubruck had anticipated Bacon's advice to some extent, as he had prepared himself for his journey by consulting books and travellers who had any information to give about the Mongol territory and its people.[282] He may even have taken advantage of Plano Carpine's *Ystoria Mongalorum*--if so, the envoy's journey did prove to be of value to the Franciscan mission, albeit in a round-about way. Whether the mission theorists' counsel in turn affected later missions is a moot point. The remainder of the thirteenth century offers scant opportunity to observe such ideological changes; too little is known even about the mission of Monte Corvino to allow any definite statement to be made.[283] It took time for the philosophers' views to gain prevalence; perhaps the

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[282]Altaner, p. 122.

[283]Note that Lull's plea concerning the establishment of language schools was eventually heard at the Council of Vienne in 1311, at which the foundation of five colleges was agreed

journeys to the Saracens.[279] It is to be noted that the tertiary occasionally deviated from his own theory: while he had made a point of acquiring a working knowledge of Arabic, his two trips to Bugia (1306-1309 and c. 1316) were marked by an incautiousness reminiscent of the early Franciscan martyrs; in fact, his second journey there is believed to have led him to join their ranks.[280] The reason for this sudden change in manner is uncertain; it may have been a sudden burst of enthusiastic fervour, although his advanced age would seem to preclude such a possibility. However, Lull did find opportunities to preach and dispute with the learned in Tunis according to his plan: saying that he would convert to Islam if it could be proved superior to the law of the Christians, he managed to draw an audience with which he argued so successfully that one apprehensive listener denounced him to the caliph as a dangerously subversive preacher. The tertiary was thereupon exiled.[281]

It was perhaps only with the gradual organization and intellectual development of the Franciscan Order that a missionary theory became possible. Few writers spent any effort upon the formulation of a concrete concept in the thirteenth century. Bacon and Lull were pioneers in this respect; they realized the

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[279]Ibid., p. 305.

[280]Ibid., pp. 324-332, 368-371; Llinares, pp. 116, 124. Bugia is a region east of Algiers.

[281]Peers, pp. 242-243.

theories' strong emphasis on reason alienated potential supporters, perhaps Christendom was too divided within itself to heed a general call to missions. The personal notoriety of Bacon and Lull may have contributed to the rejection of their theories as well. Yet even though official recognition came slowly, the simple fact of the existence of a missionary theory marks the development of the missionary ideal: though not yet prominent, it was gaining strength.

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upon, each of which was to be associated with an university and provide instruction in Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Greek. Cf. Neill, p. 136.

CONCLUSION

Within Christendom, the coming of the friars marked a renewal and intensification of spirituality, both among the laity and the clergy.[284] One enthusiastic writer has claimed that the activity of the friars stood second in significance and in the extent to which it affected the people, only to the coming of Christianity itself.[285] Outside of Christendom, the order's impact seems to have been rather more limited. The Saracens repulsed the missionaries' efforts; and while the Mongols might listen quite readily to the friars' message, their polytheism or at least utter lack of exclusivism lent little credence to any conversion. Baptism rarely induced the so-called converts to alter their religious practices. Haython, the Christian king of Armenia, had visited the great khan in 1254, shortly after Rubruck's departure, to offer the following requests: that a permanent peace be established between Mongols and Christians, that the Mongols aid the conquest of the Holy Land and the overthrow of the caliph of Baghdad's rule, that the allies then restore to the Armenians the property seized by the Saracens, and that the great khan be baptized. These propositions were received cordially, and at least the last-mentioned was

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[284]Felder, pp. 70-71.

[285]"Nach dem Christentum hat die Wirksamkeit der Franziskaner die größte Bewegung des Volkes hervorgerufen, die die Geschichte kennt;" Renan, Nouvelles Études, cited in Holzapfel, p. 16.

carried out without delay: Mangu and his family, together with a number of other Mongols, were baptized by an Armenian bishop.[286] Now, this same khan had just rebuffed Rubruck, had stated his religio-political views, and had refused the friar permission to return to the Mongols. His sudden baptism was an inconsistency; as it apparently remained wholly without consequences, moreover, it was probably based upon expediency rather than conviction. A Christian alliance was of potential value in the conquest of a strong enemy, the Saracen; political reasons may thus account sufficiently for the khan's action. What would have happened to the Christian ally after victory is open to speculation.

The Mongols' stand vis-à-vis Christianity is difficult to define. Salimbene tells of Tatars undertaking battles "in the name of the Crucified,"[287] with crosses inscribed on their weapons: one such expedition, however, invaded Hungary and killed many of the Christians there, including the inmates of a Dominican convent. In a subsequent treaty with the king of Hungary, the Tatar leader boasted that his people were divinely ordained to rule the whole world--with the exception of France, whose king, so he claimed, had been revealed to him as a good Catholic. Thus strikingly setting himself up as a judge over Christendom, the invader continued "Our sword shall devour the enemies of the Crucified. . . . Yet because we are

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[286] Heidenmissionen, p. 31.

[287] Salimbene, p. 546.

travelling in the winter, our camels . . . are sluggish. . . ."[288] This impediment standing in the way of immediate conquest, the Tatar wished his enemies peace and demanded tribute, or at least provisions, as something due to "pilgrims in foreign lands, led by a star."[289] The incongruity of word and deed, and the whole tone of the treaty, with its eccentric use of Christian terminology, does not inspire confidence in the Tatars' understanding of the friars' message. Yet it is not simply by the number of ostensible converts that the impact of a mission may be determined. Who may say what the ultimate effect of the friars was: at the very least, they showed Christendom a new way of thinking about and encountering the outsider, and through word as well as deed presented the outsider with a radically new image of the Christian.

Francis and his friars recovered the Christian obligation to mission. Perhaps the ideal was never entirely lost sight of, even in the midst of European wars of conquest; certainly, however, practicing missionaries were rare or indeed entirely absent for several generations between the early medieval missions in Europe and the arrival of the friars. What the direct antecedents of the Franciscan mission may have been is as yet uncertain. The returning missionary impulse lay perhaps simply in Francis' desire to live according to the example given in the Gospels. The Franciscan mission began with Francis, yet it developed in ways not foreseen or

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[288]Ibid., p. 586.

[289]Ibid.

planned by him: experiment, external influences, and internal changes served to shape the founder's vague ideal gradually into a substantial and stable mission. It was in the sixteenth century that the Franciscan mission reached its zenith, eclipsing for a time even the work of the newly-founded Jesuit Order. Heirs to a long-standing tradition, the first friars also stood at the threshold of a new phase in the history of Christian missions.

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Rule of 1223, pp. 57-64

Letter to All Superiors of the Friars Minor, pp. 113-114 (date uncertain; but before 1226)

Thomas of Celano, *First Life of St Francis*, pp. 227-355 (c. 1228; approved 1229)

Thomas of Celano, *Second Life of St Francis*, pp. 359-543 (between 1246 and 1247)

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APPENDIX A: THE FRANCISCAN RULE

The Franciscan Rule represents a break with tradition in several ways. Not only is it both simpler and more general than the elaborate, detailed monastic rules; in not adopting the cloistered life, it also allows the mendicant great mobility. Not contemplation, but action was the friar's objective; both the Rule of 1221 and the later version of 1223 make explicit mention of the foreign mission, including it in the order's stipulations as an ideal and a definite aim. Excerpts from the Rule of 1223 have been provided below.

THE RULE OF 1223

(from Omnibus, pp. 57-64)

Chapter I. In the name of the Lord begins the life of the Friars Minor

The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to his holiness Pope Honorius and his lawfully elected successors and to the Church of Rome. The other friars are bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.

Chapter II. Of those who wish to take up this life and how they are to be received

If anyone wants to profess our Rule and comes to the friars, they must send him to their provincial minister, because he alone, to the exclusion of others, has permission to receive friars into the Order. The ministers must carefully examine all candidates on the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church. If they believe all that the Catholic faith teaches and are prepared to profess it loyally, holding by it steadfastly to the end of their lives, and if they are not married; or if they are married and their wives have already entered a convent or after taking a vow of chastity have by the authority of the bishop of the diocese been granted this permission; and the wives are of such an age that no suspicion can arise concerning them: let the ministers tell them what the holy Gospel says (Mt. 19:21), that they should go and sell all that belongs to them and endeavour to give it to the poor. If they cannot do this, their good will is sufficient.

The friars and their ministers must be careful not to become involved in the temporal affairs of newcomers to the Order, so that they may dispose of their goods

freely, as God inspires them. If they ask for advice, the ministers may refer them to some God-fearing persons who can advise them how to distribute their property to the poor.

When this has been done, the ministers should clothe the candidates with the habit of probation, namely, two tunics without a hood, a cord and trousers, and a caperon reaching to the cord, unless the ministers themselves at any time decide that something else is more suitable. After the year of the novitiate, they should be received to obedience, promising to live always according to this life and Rule. It is absolutely forbidden to leave the Order, as his holiness the Pope has laid down. For the Gospel tells us, *No one, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God* (Lk. 9:62). . . .

Chapter III. Of the Divine Office and fasting, and how the friars are to travel about the world

The clerics are to recite the Divine Office according to the rite of the Roman Curia, except the psalter; and so they may have breviaries. The lay brothers are to say twenty-four *Our Fathers* for Matins and five for Lauds; for Prime, Terce, Sext, and None, for each of these, they are to say seven; for Vespers twelve and for Compline seven. They should also say some prayers for the dead.

All the friars are to fast from the feast of All Saints until Christmas. Those who voluntarily fast for forty days after Epiphany have God's blessing, because this is the period our Lord sanctified by his holy fast. However, those who do not wish to do so, should not be forced to it. All the friars are bound to keep the Lenten fast before Easter, but they are not bound to fast at other times, except on Fridays. However, in case of manifest necessity, they are not obliged to corporal fasting.

And this is my advice, my counsel, and my earnest plea to my friars in our Lord Jesus Christ that, when they travel about the world, they should not be quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them. They are forbidden to ride on horseback, unless they are forced to it by manifest necessity or sickness. *Whatever house they enter, they should* first say, *"Peace to this house"* (Lk. 10:5), and in the words of the Gospel they *may eat what is set before* them (Lk. 10:8).

Chapter V. The manner of working

The friars to whom God has given the grace of working should work in a

spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which every temporal consideration must be subordinate. As wages for their labour they may accept anything necessary for their temporal needs, for themselves or their brethren, except money in any form. And they should accept it humbly as is expected of those who serve God and strive after the highest poverty.

Chapter VI. That the friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves; on seeking alms; and on the sick friars

The friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves, neither a house, nor a place, nor anything else. As *strangers and pilgrims* (1 Pet. 2:11) in this world, who serve God in poverty and humility, they should beg alms trustingly. And there is no reason why they should be ashamed, because God made himself poor for us in this world. This is the pinnacle of the most exalted poverty, and it is this, my dearest brothers, that has made you heirs and kings in the kingdom of heaven, poor in temporal things, but rich in virtue. This should be your portion, because it leads to the land of the living. And to this poverty, my beloved brothers, you must cling with all your heart, and wish never to have anything else under heaven, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family. And they should have no hesitation in making known their needs to one another. For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly. If a friar falls ill, the others are bound to look after him as they would like to be looked after themselves.

Chapter IX. Of preachers

The friars are forbidden to preach in any diocese, if the bishop objects to it. No friar should dare to preach to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the Minister General of the Order and has received from him the commission to preach.

Moreover, I advise and admonish the friars that in their preaching, their words should be examined and chaste. They should aim only at the advantage and spiritual good of their listeners, telling them briefly about vice and virtue, punishment and glory, because our Lord himself kept his words short on earth.

Chapter X. On admonishing and correcting the friars

The ministers, who are the servants of the other friars, must visit their subjects and admonish them, correcting them humbly and charitably, without commanding them anything that is against their conscience or our Rule. The subjects, however, should remember that they have renounced their own wills for God's sake. And so I strictly command them to obey their ministers in everything that they have promised God and is not against their conscience and our Rule. The friars who are convinced that they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, wherever they may be, can and must have recourse to their ministers. The ministers, for their part, are bound to receive them kindly and charitably, and be so sympathetic towards them that the friars can speak and deal with them as employers with their servants. That is the way it ought to be; the ministers should be the servants of all the friars.

With all my heart, I beg the friars in our Lord Jesus Christ to be on their guard against pride, boasting, envy, and greed, against the cares and anxieties of this world, against detraction and complaining. Those who are illiterate should not be anxious to study. They should realize instead that the only thing they should desire is to have the spirit of God at work within them, while they pray to him unceasingly with a heart free from self-interest. They must be humble, too, and patient in persecution or illness, loving those who persecute us by blaming us or bringing charges against us, as our Lord tells us, *Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you. Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He who has persevered to the end will be saved.*

Chapter XII. Of those who wish to go among the Saracens and other unbelievers

If any of the friars is inspired by God to go among the Saracens or other unbelievers, he must ask permission from his provincial minister. The ministers, for their part, are to give permission only to those whom they see are fit to be sent.

The ministers, too, are bound to ask the Pope for one of the cardinals of the holy Roman Church to be governor, protector, and corrector of this fraternity, so that we may be utterly subject and submissive to the Church. And so, firmly established in the Catholic faith, we may live always according to the poverty, and the humility, and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have solemnly promised.

APPENDIX B: MISSIONARY LETTERS

The following two epistles are fairly standard representatives of the numerous missionary letters which the papacy issued in the course of the thirteenth century. An ornately-worded doctrinal summary is followed by specific injunctions, and the mendicant messenger, to whom the letter has been entrusted, is recommended as a trustworthy spiritual adviser. These papal advances were seldom answered; only a few foreign rulers took the trouble, like the Mongol great khan, to send a reply.

LETTERS TO THE TATARS

(Dawson, pp. 73-76)

God the Father, of His graciousness regarding with unutterable loving-kindness the unhappy lot of the human race, brought low by the guilt of the first man, and desiring of His exceeding great charity mercifully to restore him whom the devil's envy overthrew by a crafty suggestion, sent from the lofty throne of heaven down to the lowly region of the world His only-begotten Son, con-substantial with Himself, who was conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a fore-chosen virgin and there clothed in the garb of human flesh, and afterwards proceeding thence by the closed door of His mother's virginity, He showed Himself in a form visible to all men. For human nature, being endowed with reason, was meet to be nourished on eternal truth as its choicest food, but, held in mortal chains as a punishment for sin, its powers were thus far reduced that it had to strive to understand the invisible things of reason's food by means of inferences drawn from visible things. The Creator of that creature became visible, clothed in our flesh, not without change in His nature, in order that, having become visible, He might call back to Himself, the Invisible, those pursuing after visible things, moulding men by His salutary instructions and pointing out to them by means of his teaching the way of perfection: following the pattern of His holy way of life and His words of evangelical instruction, He deigned to suffer death by the torture of the cruel cross, that, by a penal end to His present life, He might make an end of the penalty of eternal death, which the succeeding generations had incurred by the transgression of their first parent, and that man might drink of the sweetness of the life of eternity from the bitter chalice of His death in time. For it behoved the Mediator between us and God to possess both transient mortality and everlasting beatitude, in order that by means of the transient He might be like those doomed to die and might transfer us from among the dead to that which lasts for ever.

He therefore offered Himself as a victim for the redemption of mankind and,

overthrowing the enemy of its salvation, He snatched it from the shame of servitude to the glory of liberty, and unbarred for it the gate of the heavenly fatherland. Then, rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, He left His vicar on earth, and to him, after he had borne witness to the constancy of his love by the proof of a threefold profession, He committed the care of souls, that he should with watchfulness pay heed to and with heed watch over their salvation, for which he had humbled His high dignity; and He handed to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven by which he and, through him, his successors, were to possess the power of opening and of closing the gate of that kingdom to all. Wherefore we, though unworthy, having become, by the Lord's disposition, the successor of this vicar, do turn our keen attention, before all else incumbent on us in virtue of our office, to your salvation and that of other men, and on this matter especially do we fix our mind, sedulously keeping watch over it with diligent zeal and zealous diligence, so that we may be able, with the help of God's grace, to lead those in error into the way of truth and gain all men for Him. But since we are unable to be present in person in different places at one and the same time--for the nature of our human condition does not allow this--in order that we may not appear to neglect in any way those absent from us we send to them in our stead prudent and discreet men[290] by whose ministry we carry out the obligation of our apostolic mission to them. . . .

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Seeing that not only men but even irrational animals, nay, the very elements which go to make up the world machine, are united by a certain innnate law after the manner of the celestial spirits, all of which God the Creator has divided into choirs in the enduring stability of peaceful order, it is not without cause that we are driven to express in strong terms our amazement that you, as we have heard, have invaded many countries belonging both to Christians and to others and are laying them waste in a horrible desolation. . . . We, therefore, following the example of the King of Peace, and desiring that all men should live united in concord in the fear of God, do admonish, beg and earnestly beseech all of you that for the future you desist entirely from assaults of this kind and especially from the persecution of Christians, and that after so many and such grievous offences you conciliate by a fitting penance the wrath of Divine Majesty, which without doubt you have seriously aroused by such provocation. . . . On this account we have thought fit to send to

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[290]The reference is to Friar Lawrence of Portugal and his companion, who were supposed to deliver the letter to the Mongol khan. Friar Lawrence failed to embark upon the journey, and the epistle appears to have been given to Plano Carpine, together with a second covering note.

you our beloved son and his companions the bearers of this letter, men remarkable for their religious spirit, comely in their virtue and gifted with a knowledge of Holy Scripture; receive them kindly and treat them with honour out of reverence for God, indeed as if receiving us in their persons, and deal honestly with them in those matters of which they will speak to you on our behalf, and when you have had profitable discussions with them concerning the aforesaid affairs, especially those pertaining to peace, make fully known to us through these same friars what moved you to destroy other nations and what your intentions are for the future. . . .

GUYUK KHAN'S REPLY
(Dawson, pp. 85-86)

We, by the power of the eternal heaven, Khan of the great Ulus. . . . If he reaches [you] with his own report, Thou, who art the great Pope, together with all the Princes, come in person to serve us. At that time I shall make known all the commands of the *Yasa*.

You have also said that supplication and prayer have been offered by you, that I might find a good entry into baptism. This prayer of thine I have not understood. Other words which thou hast sent me: "I am surprised that thou hast seized all the lands of the Magyar and the Christians. Tell us what their fault is." These words of thine I have also not understood. The eternal God has slain and annihilated these lands and peoples, because they have neither adhered to Chingis Khan, nor to the Khagan, both of whom have been sent to make known God's command, nor to the command of God. Like thy words, they also were impudent, they were proud and they slew our messenger-emissaries. How could anybody seize or kill by his own power contrary to the command of God?

Though thou likewise sayest that I should become a trembling Nestorian Christian,[291] worship God and be an ascetic, how knowest thou whom God absolves, in truth to whom He shows mercy? How dost thou know that such words as thou speakest are with God's sanction? From the rising of the sun to its setting, all the lands have been made subject to me. Who could do this contrary to the command of God?

Now you should say with a sincere heart: "I will submit and serve you." Thou

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[291]The Mongols apparently drew no distinction between the Catholic Church and the various sects represented at the khan's court.

thyself, at the head of all the Princes, come at once to serve and wait upon us! At that time I shall recognize your submission.

If you do not observe God's command, and if you ignore my command, I shall know you as my enemy. Likewise I shall make you understand. If you do otherwise, God knows what I know. . . .

APPENDIX C: RUBRUCK AT THE KHAN'S COURT

Rubruck's debate with the Saracens and pagans at the court of the Mongol khan was perhaps the first of its kind. The friar's scholarly dialectic indicates that he had been well trained in the rhetorical art of his day. His willingness to participate in the debate is interesting, in that it reflects a genuine hope of converting the non-Christian by means of reason. The basic concept of an intellectual conversion may have derived from witnessing Dominican arguments with the heretic; it is also possible, however, that it was the natural result of extensive theological training. The following is the missionary's own account.

THE PENTECOST DEBATE

(Dawson, pp. 188-194)

. . . the Sunday before Pentecost . . . the chief scribes of the court came to me--one a Mongol, who is the Chan's cup-bearer, the others Saracens, and they enquired on behalf of the Chan the reason for my coming. Then I gave them an account in the words I have already given, how I had come to Sartach and from Sartach to Baatu and how Baatu had sent me here; after that I added: "I have nothing to say on behalf of any man. The Chan must know what Baatu has written to him; I have but the words of God to utter if he is prepared to hear them." They fastened on to this and enquired what were the words of God I wanted to say, for they imagined I would prophesy some good fortune as many others do.

I gave them answer: "If you wish me to speak the words of God, provide me with an interpreter." They said: "We have sent for him; however, do your best to speak through this one, we shall understand you well enough." And they put much pressure on me to speak. Then I said: "This is the Word of God--'To whom more is committed, from him more will be required'. Likewise in another place: 'He to whom more is given ought to love more. ' Starting with these words of God I say to Mangu that God has given him much. For the power and riches he possesses were not given to him by the idols of the *tuins* but by God Almighty, Who made heaven and earth and in Whose hand are all kingdoms, which He transfers from nation to nation on account of the sins of men. Wherefore if he love Him, all will go well with him; but if not, let him know that God will require of him an account of everything down to the last farthing."

Then one of the Saracens spoke: "Is there any man who does not love God?" I replied: "God says, 'If any one love Me, he will keep My commandments; and he that loveth Me not keepeth not My commandments.' Therefore he who does not

keep the commandments of God does not love God." Then said he: "Have you been in heaven that you know the commandments of God?" "No," I replied, "but He gave them from heaven to holy men and finally He Himself came dowm from heaven to teach us and we have them written down and we see by a man's works whether he keeps them or not." Then he said: "By this you mean that Mangu Chan does not observe God's commandments." To which I rejoined, "The interpreter will come, so you say, and I will recite the commandments of God in the presence of Mangu Chan, if he allow me, and then let him judge of his own case whether he observe them or not." At that point they retired and they told him I had said he was an idolater or *tuin* and that he did not keep the commandments of God.

The next day he sent his scribes to me, who said: "Our master sends us to you and he says: 'Here you are, Christians, Saracens and *tuins*, and each one of you declares that his law is the best and his literature, that is his books, the truest.' He therefore wishes you all to meet together and hold a conference and each one is to write down what he says so that he can know the truth." I answered: "Blessed be God Who has put this into the heart of the Chan. But it says in our Scriptures: 'The servant of God ought not to wrangle, but be mild towards all men', and so I am prepared to give an account, without strife and contention, of the faith and hope of Christians to all who ask." They wrote down what I said and took it to him. It was then enjoined on the Nestorians that they should provide their own representatives and write down what they wanted to say, likewise on the Saracens and even the *tuins* in the same way.

On the morrow he again sent the scribes, who said: "Mangu Chan wishes to know what is the reason of your coming to these parts." I answered them, "He must know this from Baatu's letter." Then they said: "Baatu's letter has been lost an he has forgotten what Baatu wrote to him, so he wants to know from you." Being thus reassured I said to them: "It is the duty of our religion to preach the Gospel to all men. Therefore when the fame of the Mongol race came to my ears, I was filled with the desire of coming to them; and while I was cherishing this desire I heard that Sartach was a Christian. I thereupon directed my course to him; and my Lord the King of the French sent a letter to him containing good words, and among other things he vouched for us to him, saying what kind of men we are, and asking him to allow us to pass some time among the Mongol people.[292] Then Sartach sent us to Baatu, and Baatu sent us to Mangu Chan; we have therefore asked him and

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[292]It is interesting that Rubruck delayed his journey until learning of the khan's supposed conversion. The order's previous missionary experiences may have alerted him to the advantages of official support; a convert ruler would certainly have been of considerable value in facilitating the proselytizing endeavours of the friars.

we still ask that he allow us to stay." They wrote down all this and took it to him. . . .

The Vigil of Pentecost arrived. The Nestorians wrote out a chronicle from the creation of the world up to the Passion of Christ; and passing over the Passion they touched on the Ascension, resurrection of the dead and the coming in Judgment; in the course of this there were some points on which they were at fault and I informed them about them. We,[293] on the other hand, simply wrote out the creed of the Mass--"*Credo in Unum Deum*."

I then enquired of them how they wanted to proceed. They said they would like first to have a debate with the Saracens. I pointed out that this was not a good idea, for the Saracens agree with us in that they say there is one God; they would therefore be on our side against the *tuins*. They assented. I then asked them if they knew how idolatry had come into being in the world, and they did not know. I thereupon gave them an account, and they said: "You will tell us these things and then let us do the talking, for it is difficult to speak with an interpreter." I answered: "Let us try how you will get on against them. I will take the part of the *tuins*, do you uphold the Christian side. Suppose I am a follower of their religion; they say there is no God, prove that God exists." (For there is one sect there which says that any soul and any power in anything is the god of that thing, and that otherwise there is no God.) The Nestorians did not know how to prove anything, they could only repeat what the Scriptures tell. I said: "These people do not believe in the Scriptures; if you tell them one story, they will tell you another." I thereupon advised them to let me have the first encounter with them, for if I were worsted, there would still be the opportunity for them to speak; if they were worsted, I would get no hearing afterwards. They agreed to this.

And so on the Vigil of Pentecost we assembled at our oratory, and Mangu Chan sent three scribes to act as judges--one a Christian, one a Saracen and one a *tuin*; and the proclamation was made: "This is the decree of Mangu and let none dare to say that the decree of God is otherwise. He decrees that no one shall dare to speak words of contention or abuse to another, and no one is to cause a disturbance such as would hinder these proceedings, on pain of death." Then all were silent. There were many people there, for each party had collected the wisest of its men, and many others had assembled.

The Christians then placed me in the middle, telling the *tuins* to discuss with me. The *tuins*, of whom there was a great gathering there, began to murmur against Mangu Chan, saying that never before had any Chan attempted to find out about their secrets. They then chose as an opponent one who had come from Cathay and

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[293] I.e., Rubruck and his companion.

he had an interpreter with him. I had Master William's son.[294] He opened by saying to me: "Friend, if you are brought to a standstill, seek one wiser than yourself." I held my peace. Next he asked what I wanted to discuss first, how the world had been made or what happens to souls after death. I replied: "Friend, that ought not to be the beginning of our disputation. All things are from God and He is the source and head of all things; therefore we ought first to speak of God, concerning Whom you have different beliefs from us and Mangu wishes to know whose are the best." The judges decided that this was right.

They wanted to begin with the points mentioned above, because they consider them the most important, for they are all followers of the Manichean heresy that half of creation is evil and the other half good, and that there are at least two principles; and concerning souls they believe that all migrate from one body to another. . . .

So I said to the *tuin*: "We firmly believe in our hearts and profess with our lips that God exists and that there is but one God and that He is one with a perfect unity. What do you believe?" He answered: "Fools say that there is but one God, but wise men say that there are many. In your country are there not mighty lords, and here is not the chief lord Mangu Chan? So it is with the gods; in the different regions there are different gods." To this I gave answer: "That is a bad illustration or simile you put forward, arguing from men to God; for, according to this, any powerful man could be called a god in his own territory."

When I wanted to refute the comparison, he prevented me by inquiring "What is your God like, of Whom you say there is but one?" I replied: "Our God, besides Whom there is none other, is omnipotent, and therefore He has no need of anyone's help, rather do we all need His help. It is not so with men. No man can do all things, consequently there have to be many lords on the earth, for no single man can bear everything. Also He knows everything, and therefore has no need of a councillor; but rather all wisdom is from Him. Again, He is the supreme good and has no need of our goods, but in Him we live and move and have our being. Such is our God and therefore no other ought to be considered." "It is not so," said he. "On the contrary there is one supreme god in heaven, of whose origin we are still ignorant, below him are ten, and under them is one lower. On earth there is an infinite number."

When he wanted to weave other fairy tales, I questioned him about this supreme god, whether he believed he was omnipotent or dependent on another god. He, fearing to reply, asked: "If your God is such as you say, why did He make half

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[294]The adopted son of William Buchier, a Parisian goldsmith living near the great khan's camp. Cf. Dawson, p. 157.

of creation evil?" "It is untrue," said I, "it is not God Who made evil; and all things that are, are good." All the *tuins* were astonished at this saying and put it down in writing as something untrue and impossible. Then he began to ask, "That being so, where does evil come from?" "You ask the wrong thing," I replied. "First you ought to ask what evil is, before asking where it comes from; but go back to the first question, whether you believe that any god is omnipotent, and afterwards I will answer all the questions you wish to put."

He sat for a long time unwilling to reply, so that the scribes who were listening on behalf of the Chan had to order him to give an answer. At length he said that no god was omnipotent. At that all the Saracens burst into loud laughter.

When there was silence again I said: "And so not one of your gods can save you in every danger, for a mishap may occur over which he has no power; moreover 'no man can serve two masters', how therefore can you serve so many gods in heaven and on earth?" The audience told him to reply, but he remained silent. When I wanted to put forward the arguments for the Unity of the divine essence and the Trinity in the hearing of all, the Nestorians belonging to the country told me I had said enough, for they wished to speak.[295]

I then gave place to them and when they wanted to dispute with the Saracens the latter replied: "We grant that your faith is true and that whatever is in the Gospel is true, therefore we do not wish to argue on any point with you." They admitted that in all their prayers they beseech God to grant that they may die a Christian death.[296]

There was an old man there, a priest of the sect of the Uigurs, who say that there is one God and yet make idols, and the Nestorians spoke a great deal with him, giving him an account of everything from the coming of Christ to the

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[295]The question of the Trinity is puzzling: did Rubruck intend only to explain this doctrine, in the manner of St Patrick, or did he actually hope to prove it logically? Lull was to meet with considerable hostility for a similar claim some forty years later, and nothing Rubruck otherwise says and does justifies the assumption that he was in any way controversial. If Rubruck did intend a rational demonstration, Lull's difficulties must lie in a changed intellectual climate, less tolerant to rational experimentation than the preceding generation had been, a change which may be attributable to the intellectual controversies of the late thirteenth century.

[296]The Saracens' claim to doctrinal agreement with the Christians is rather curious; Rubruck does not comment further upon the statement. Could it simply indicate an unwillingness to debate?

Judgment, and also by means of comparison explaining the Trinity to him and the Saracens. They all listened without a word of contradiction, yet not one of them said, "I believe, I wish to become a Christian."

When this was finished the Nestorians and Saracens alike sang loudly while the *tuins* kept silence, and afterwards they all drank their fill.

APPENDIX D: IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE FRANCISCAN MISSION

1181	Francis is born
1204	first vision begins Francis' conversion
1206	Francis takes the hermit's habit; conversion complete
1209	Innocent III authorizes the order; Francis has eleven followers
1211	Francis' attempt to travel to Syria fails
c. 1214	Francis' attempt to travel to Morocco fails
1219	Francis' missionary journey to the sultan of Egypt
1220	first Franciscans martyred in Spain
1222	first reports of the Mongols reach the Latin West
1223	Honorius III approves the Franciscans' final Rule
1226	Francis dies
1241-1254	Mongol threat acute
1245-1247	Innocent IV sends John of Plano Carpine to the Mongols
1253-1255	William of Rubruck's mission to the Mongols
1266-1267	Roger Bacon writes the *Opus Majus*
1288	Nicholas IV, the first Franciscan pope, is consecrated
1289	John of Monte Corvino leaves for China with a papal letter to Kubilai
c. 1287-1316	Lull active in promoting missionary activity

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