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Demonic Possession and the Practice of Exorcism: An exploration of the Franciscan legacy¹

Early 2018, while trying to address one of the many deficiencies in the Franciscan Authors internet catalogue,² my attention was drawn towards a peculiar English study and source translation of the *Flagellum daemonum*, a treatise written by the sixteenth-century Observant Franciscan Girolamo Menghi.³ Almost immediately afterwards, I came across a German translation of and commentary on both the *Flagellum daemonum* and the *Fustis daemonum* by the same author.⁴ According to the makers of these modern translations, they aim to make the works of one of Europe's most famous sixteenth-century exorcists and possibly the most successful writer of exorcism manuals who ever existed, available for a wider scholarly audience.

Looking for corroboration of this verdict in a number of modern studies on demonic possession and exorcism, it quickly became apparent that Girolamo Menghi figures prominently in the present-day scholarly discourse on the development of exorcism and demonology during the late medieval, renaissance and early modern period.⁵ Moreover, alongside

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Alison More, who has provided many insightful comments on an earlier version of this text.

² <http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/>

³ Girolamo Menghi, *The Devil's Scourge. Exorcism During the Italian Renaissance*, Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Gaetano Paxia (Boston-York Beach: Weiser Books, 2002).

⁴ *Besessenheit, Zauberei und ihre Heilmittel. Dokumentation und Untersuchung von Exorzismushandbüchern des Girolamo Menghi (1523-1609) und des Maximilian von Ey-natten (1574/75-1631)*, ed. & trans. Manfred Probst et al. (Münster: Aschendorff, 2008).

⁵ Cf. for instance Massimo Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia nell'Italia del cinquecento e del seicento* (Naples, Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1957); Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti, e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Mondadori, 1990); Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); G. Romeo, *Inquisitori, Esorcisti e Streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni, 2003); Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts. Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London: Routledge, 2004); Vincenzo Lavenia, "Tenere i malefici per cosa vera, Esorcismi e censura nell'Italia moderna," in *Dal torchio alle fiamme. Inquisizione e censura: nuovi contributi dalla più antica biblioteca provinciale d'Italia*, ed. V. Bonani et al. (Salerno: Biblioteca

of Menghi, in this discourse figure several other Franciscan demonologists and exorcists active in different periods, who together produced a significant body of texts devoted to exorcisms and related issues.

Trying to put these matters into perspective, I came across a recent doctoral thesis, which was issued as a book early 2018, namely Jean-Baptiste Golfier's *Tactiques du diable et délivrances. Dieu fait-il concourir les démons au salut des hommes?*⁶ This book seems to make a modern theological case for the presence of the devil as an instigator of evil, and for the creation of a diagnostic theology of diabolical action. Yet it also contains a historical analysis of theological demonological thought, as well as an evaluation of existing spiritual and ecclesiastical remedies against diabolical activities, with recourse to the Catholic theological tradition. Both the historical analysis and the evaluation of existing spiritual and ecclesiastical remedies concentrate heavily, as is so often the case, on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, which Golfier presents as the pinnacle of mature scholastic theological reflection on this particular topic, and uses as the background to his own theological demonological reflections. However, Golfier's book at the same time contains specific statements with regard to the role of Franciscan theological thought in the development of Catholic demonology and therewith in the transformation of the art of exorcism, and of the persecution of witchcraft as a form of alliance with diabolic power in the late medieval and early modern period.

Provinciale, 2005), 163-204; Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit. Possession, Mysticism and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Owen Davies, *Grimoires, A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Vincenzo Lavenia, "Possessione demoniaca, Inquisizione ed esorcismo in età moderna. Il caso italiano (secoli XVI-XVII)," in *Devozioni, pratiche e immaginario religioso. Espressioni del cattolicesimo tra 1400 e 1850*, ed. René Millar & Roberto Rusconi (Rome: Viella, 2011), 203-230; Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (Yale University Press, 2013); Elena Brambilla, "Manuali d'esorcismo, canoni di santità e nuova scienza," in *Rome et la science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. Antonella Romano, (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013), 555-593; Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* (New York-London: Palgrave Macmillan 2016). In addition, there exist several articles completely devoted to Menghi's texts and his background, such as Giancarlo Volpato, "Girolamo Menghi o l'arte esorcistica," *Lares* 57:3 (1991): 381-397; Guido Dall'Olio, "Alle origini della nuova esorcistica. I maestri bolognesi di Girolamo Menghi," in *Inquisizioni: percorsi di ricerca*, ed. G. Paolin (Trieste: EUT, 2001), 81-124; Davide Balzano, "Girolamo Menghi: Esorcista viadanese del cinquecento," *Viadana e il territorio Mantovano fra Oglio e Po. Bollettino della Società Storica Viadanese*, 4 (2009): 103-124.

⁶ Jean-Baptiste Golfier, *Tactiques du diable et délivrances. Dieu fait-il concourir les démons au salut des hommes?* (Paris: Éditions Lethielleux, 2018).

Following the lead of the French intellectual historian Alain Boureau,⁷ Golfier suggests that the 1277 condemnations of theological positions of Thomas Aquinas would in due course have meant a revival of Franciscan voluntarist theological thought, which curbed Aristotelian naturalism, and emphasized both God's freedom and the contingent status of creation. And in this process, the Thomist 'verrous spéculatifs' that would have bound demonic agency would have sprung, opening up pathways to a far more fear-ridden world view, in which the devil and his underlings were thought to have much more power to wreak havoc on mankind:

La paranoïa collective, que la chrétienté allait vivre peu après, n'aurait plus disposé du garde-fou thomasiens, équilibre manifestant la puissance du démon tout autant que sa place mineure et soumise dans le gouvernement divin.⁸

Hence, a less-reasonable and less-equilibrated scholastic demonology would have emerged as the long-term effect of Franciscan theological thought, connected with the opposition to Thomistic positions in the writings of Guillaume de la Mare, Pietro of Giovanni Olivi, Pierre d'Aureole, John Duns Scotus, Durand of Saint-Pourçain, William of Ockham and Enrico of Carretto (known for his advice to Pope John XXII with regard to inquisitorial jurisdiction in matters of sorcery). Over time, this would have bolstered the witch craze of the renaissance, the ubiquitous presence of the devil, demoniacs, and hence the concomitant need for exorcism, as well as an active persecution of witchcraft and sorcery. Both Golfier and Boureau, in particular, single out Olivi's nine questions on demons in his *Summa quaestionum in libros Sententiarum* as an important text in this regard, as it would have argued convincingly for the ontological existence of evil within a radical voluntarist and eschatological framework.⁹

This scholarly vision in one version or another apparently seems to hold some sway among scholars devoted to these topics.¹⁰ It might be

⁷ Alain Boureau, *Satan hérétique. Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident médiéval (1280-1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004). Cf also the review Martine Ostorero, "Alain Boureau, Satan hérétique. Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident médiéval (1280-1330)," *Médiévales* 48 (2005): 165-168.

⁸ Golfier, *Tactiques du diable*, 97.

⁹ Pierre de Jean Olivi, *Traité des démons. Summa, II Questions 40-48*, trans. Alain Boureau, Bibliothèque scolastique, 2 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 2011).

¹⁰ See for example Levack, *The Devil Within*, 63-64, who argues that Franciscan voluntarism and nominalism "...eroded or weakened the confidence of the older Thomistic tradition that the Devil's power in the world could be contained; an inscrutable, arbitrary God might give the Devil great latitude in the world for reasons unknown to humankind.

considered an irony of history that several such scholars point at possible Franciscan theological notions as being partially responsible for these developments, whereas according to these same authors most influential late medieval inquisitor manuals and other treatises that linked demonic possession and witchcraft, and for the first time made a strong case for the pact between witches and the devil were not of Franciscan origin. In fact, nearly all of them were Dominican productions by friars steeped in Thomistic thought, such as Johann Nider (known for his *Formicarius*), Nicolas Jacquier (who wrote *De calcatione demonum* and *Flagellum haereticorum fascinatorum*), and Heinrich Kramer (main author of *Malleus maleficarum* or *Hexenhammer*).¹¹

Evenso, it is rather difficult to evaluate this scholarly vision properly, as historians specialized in Franciscan thought and writing often do not focus on aspects of demonology, witchcraft and exorcism. The sole exceptions to this are a relatively small number of articles on Francis of Assisi's encounters with the devil, and his spectacular triumphs as a charismatic exorcist, and a similarly small number of contributions on the demonology of Bonaventure, as expressed in his *Sentences* commentary, his *Breviloquium* and, of course, in his *Legenda Major* devoted to Francis of Assisi.¹² Moreover, in these studies of Bonaventure, the emphasis seems to be at least in part on the basic similarity between Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas with regard to the nature and power of the devil.¹³

(...) The nominalist enhancement of demonic power and the erosion of confidence in the ability to resist him successfully coincided with the origin of witch-hunting in the early fifteenth century. It also coincided with a striking increase in the number of reported cases of possession."

¹¹ See the discussion in Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*, 197ff.

¹² I know of three significant articles by specialists in early Franciscan history that deal with Francis and the devil, and to some extent also touch on demonic possession and exorcism: Felice Accrocca, "Francesco e il demonio. La guarigione della Donna di Sangemini," *Il Santo* 39 (1999): 221-241; Jan Hoeberichts, "Francis and the Devil. About the Devil in Francis' Writings, in the Opus Celanense and in Franciscan Art," in *Verum, pulchrum et bonum. Miscellanea di studi offerti a Servus Gieben in occasione del suo 80° compleanno*, ed. Yoannes Teklemariam (Rome: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 2006), 97-153; Felice Moretti, "Francesco d'Assisi e il diavolo," *Il Santo* 55 (2015): 163-188. See also a more limited but at the same time more contextualized discussion of the early Franciscan hagiographical tradition in Florence Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés dans l'Église d'Occident (Xe-XIVe siècle)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 260f, 273-278, which discerns, for what it is worth, a certain reticence with regard to demonic possession within the Franciscan hagiographical tradition.

¹³ See the lemma E. Mangemot, "Démon d'après les Pères," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* IV, 339-384, which touches on the demonology of Bonaventure, as well as Gianfranco Morra, "La demonologia in S. Bonaventura," *Doctor Seraphicus* 31 (1984): 31-45, and Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "I Demoni e l'illusione dei sensi nel secolo XIII: Bonaventura e Tommaso d'Aquino," in *Jakobs Traum: Zur Bedeutung der Zwischenwelt in*

Likewise, specialists of the Franciscan cultural and intellectual world have not displayed much interest in Franciscan or alleged Franciscan involvement in forms of necromancy, magic and hermetic speculations. Other than passing references to the *Thesaurus necromantiae* once ascribed to Roger Bacon,¹⁴ most allusions to Franciscan or Capuchin necromancers such as Cesare Lanza,¹⁵ dabblers in hermeticism such as Hannibal Calaber,¹⁶ or writers concerned with disembodied spirits like Noël Taillepied,¹⁷ and other friars involved with forms of (illicit) magic can be found either in the more general studies on demonology referred to above, or in specialist research on grimoires and magical practices, but not in works by specialists of the Franciscan intellectual tradition.¹⁸ The

der Tradition des Platonismus, ed. Tiziana Suarez-Nani (St Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 2002), 77-94; Rainer Jehl, "Melancholie und Besessenheit im gelehrten Diskurs des Mittelalters," in *Dämonische Besessenheit: Zur Interpretation eines kulturhistorischen Phänomens*, ed. Hans de Waardt et al. (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2005), 63-72. Cf. also Golfier, *Tactiques du diable*, 111-112.

¹⁴ This work, edited as Roger Bacon, *De Nigromancia*, ed. & trans. Michael-Albion Macdonald (Gillette, NJ: Heptangle, 1988) is now considered to be spurious, also because all the manuscripts are from the 16th century or even younger. Cf. Davies, *Grimoires*, 37-38. Davies also mentions a group of Capuchin friars from Verona who engaged in magical readings and summonings in the late sixteenth century. Ibidem, 54.

¹⁵ Hence the sixteenth-century Franciscan theologian and necromancer Cesare Lanza is mentioned in Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. 211, 227, as well as in Davies, *Grimoires*, 54.

¹⁶ Hannibal Rosselli wrote a massive and important commentary on the *Pyramander* of Hermes Trismegistus: *Pyramander Mercurii Trismegisti, cum commento Fratris Hannibalidis Rosseli Calabri, Ordinis Minorum Regularis observantiae, Theologiae & Philosophiae, ad S. Barnardinum Cracouiae Professoris*, 6 (9?) Vols. (Cracow: In Officina Typographica Lazari, 1584-1590): which in its second book also deals with "De daemonibus secundum Philosophos," "De idolis & daemonum magia". To my knowledge, he does not figure at length in any study devoted to the Franciscan intellectual tradition.

¹⁷ See his *Psychologie, ou traité de l'apparition des esprits. A sçavoir, des ames séparées, fantômes, prodiges, et accidents merveilleux, qui précèdent quelquefois la mort des grands personnages, ou signifient changements de la chose publique* (Paris: Guillaume Bichon, 1588). It is dependent on *Trois livres des apparitions des esprits* by the Protestant publicist Louis Lavater. Within the world of Franciscan studies, the focus is normally on Taillepied's anti-Calvinist activities and polemic writings.

¹⁸ Hence, Tamar Herzig, "The Demons and the Friars: Illicit Magic and Mendicant Rivalry in Renaissance Bologna," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64 (2011): 1025-1058 deals with several cases of (Dominican) inquisitorial actions against magical practices by friars from other orders. She also discusses (pp. 1046ff) the accusations of the Dominican inquisitor Giovanni Cagnazzo against necromantic Franciscans and lay fellow travellers, including the lay female healer Gentile Cimitri, who was burned at the stake in 1498. The Franciscans who supposedly would have taught her apparently escaped this fate. This ties in with the normally much harsher treatment of lay women in such instances. Moreover,

main exception is, of course, the relatively recent upsurge in attention to the Franciscan contribution to alchemistic theory and practice, mainly because of its connection with, on the one hand, transformations of scientific thought and medicine and, on the other hand, its links to Joachimist types of prophecy.¹⁹

This paper is an attempt to look from a historical perspective at two closely related aspects of demonology within the wider Franciscan world during the later medieval and early modern period: namely demonic possession and the practice of exorcism to liberate suffering demoniacs. My aim is to provide a provisional evaluation of the way in which Franciscan writing on demonic possession and the practice of exorcism evolved over time, as a prelude to a possible book-length study on these matters. I also wish to present this as a potential building-block for a future in-depth assessment of the more fundamental question of whether Franciscan authors had a specific role to play in the emergence of a more invasive demonological outlook. This is, however, done with full recognition that addressing the possible impact of a Franciscan theological demonological vision needs much more expertise in Franciscan theology than I can probably bring to bear on this topic. This paper is therefore also

as Herzig indicates, it was much easier for Cagnazzo to have a lay woman executed than members of a rival mendicant order.

¹⁹ See for instance Faye Marie Getz, "To Prolong Life and Promote Health. Baconian Alchemy and Pharmacy in the English Learned Tradition," in *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall & David Klausner (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 1991), 135-144; Wilfrid Theissen, "The Attraction of Alchemy for Monks and Friars in the 13th-14th Centuries," *The American Benedictine Review* 46 (1995): 239-253; W.R. Newman, "An Overview of Roger Bacon's Alchemy," in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences. Commemorative Essays*, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 317-336; Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "Ruggero Bacone e l'alchimia di lunga vita. Riflessioni sui testi," in *Alchimia e medicina nel medioevo*, ed. C. Crisciani & A. Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), 33-54; Giancarlo Zanier, "Procedimenti farmacologici e pratiche chemioterapeutiche nel *De consideratione quintae essentiae*," in *Alchimia e medicina nel medioevo*, 161-176; Manola Carli, "Un'enciclopedia alchemica duecentesca: il 'Liber Compostille' di Bonaventura d'Iseo," in *Atti dell'VIII Convegno Nazionale di Storia e Fondamenti della Chimica*, ed. F. Abbri & M. Ciardi (Rome: Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL, 1999), 45-57; Michela Pereira, "I francescani e l'alchimia," *Convivium Assisiense* 10 (2008): 117-157; Michela Pereira, "Paolo di Taranto al crocevia dell'alchimia medievale," in *I Francescani e le scienze. Atti del XXXIX Convegno internazionale Assisi, 6-8 ottobre 2011* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2012), 141-185; Paolo Capitanucci, "Agli albori della cultura alchemica e farmaceutica francescana: il Liber Compostille di Bonaventura da Iseo," in *I francescani e le scienze*, 201-238; Chiara Crisciani, "Giovanni di Rupescissa: sapere, alchimia e profezia," in *I francescani e le scienze*, 240-279; Paolo Capitanucci, "Francescani e alchimia fra mito e realtà: la leggenda di Elia alchimista," in *Elia di Cortona tra realtà e mito: atti dell'Incontro di studio: Cortona, 12-13 luglio 2013* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2014), 161-180.

an invitation to specialists to reflect in a more comprehensive manner on demonological thought within the Franciscan intellectual tradition. This is necessary because assumptions concerning the long-term impact of supposedly 'Franciscan' ideas seem to have a certain currency among historians working on renaissance and early modern witchcraft and demonology.

Demonic possession and exorcism in early Franciscan literature and art

Manifestations of demonic possession and forms of exorcism came to the fore during the early years of the Franciscan order. This is evident when we look at the hagiographical texts on Francis, Antony of Padua and other early Franciscan models of evangelical perfection. In the hagiography on Francis, the order founder's prowess as a charismatic exorcist was bound up both with his specific *imitatio Christi*, and with his irrevocable saintly stature, in line with high medieval hagiographical representations of earlier saints. His success in confronting cases of demonic possession is exemplified both in the hagiographical and in the iconographical tradition. Quite famous, no doubt, is his exorcism of a female demoniac in San Gimignano, which is mentioned in Celano's *Vita prima*. This exorcism apparently worked so quickly that Francis was rather confused about his easy success, and quickly left town to avoid praise that could threaten his humility.²⁰

²⁰ Thomas of Celano, *Vita prima S. Francisci Assisiensis et eiusdem Legenda ad usum chori*, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventura (Ad Claras Aquas: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1926): 72-73 (Pars I, Caput XXV, no. 69): "Quadam die cum transiret beatissimus pater Franciscus per episcopatum Narniensem, devenit ad castrum quoddam, quod dicitur Sancti Gemini, et evangelizans ibi regnum Dei, a viro quodam timente atque colente Deum, satis bonae fama in terra illa, cum tribus fratribus hospitio est susceptus. Uxor autem eius a daemonio vexabatur, sicut notum erat omnibus inhabitantibus terram illam, rogavitque beatum Franciscum vir eius pro illa, confidens eam posse ipsius meritis liberari (...) Vocavit quoque tres fratres ad se, qui erant cum eo, et in singulis domus illius angulis singulum fratrem constituens, dixit eis: 'Oremus, fratres, ad Dominum pro muliere hac, ut iugum diaboli ab ea excutiat Deus, ad laudem et gloriam suam. Stemus separatim,' inquit, 'in angulis domus, ne spiritus iste malignus nos fugere aut decipere valeat, quaerens diverticula angulorum.' Completa quoque oratione, beatus Franciscus in virtute Spiritus accessit ad mulierem, quae miserabiliter torquebatur et horrendo clamabat, et ait: 'In nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi, per obedientiam praecipio tibi, daemon, ut ex eas ab ea, nec audeas ipsam [73] amplius impedire.' Vix verba compleverat, et tam velocissime cum furore atque stridore foras egressus est, quod, propter subitem sanitatem mulieris et tam citissimam obedientiam daemonis, sanctus pater sibi

The exorcism of three demons from a woman who had to be restrained by one or more men, due to the supernatural strength and lack of self-control of the demoniac, is frequently included in iconographic renderings of the saint's life. Versions of this episode were, for instance, included in the early altar piece on Francis by Bonaventura Berlinghieri for the church of San Francesco in Pescia in 1235. Even more famous from an iconographical point of view, is the liberation of the town of Arezzo from the presence of a large group of demons by Francis and Silvestro (who as an ordained priest could perform official exorcisms), thereby making it possible to pacify the town. Well-known versions of this episode are depicted in Giotto's cycle on the life of Francis in the upper basilica of Assisi, and in Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco's in the church of San Francesco in Montefalco.²¹

putaret fore illud. Statimque cum rubore de loco illo recessit, divina providential id gerente, ne posset in aliquo inaniter gloriari...."

²¹ Cf. *Seraphici doctoris S. Bonaventurae, Legendae duae de vita S. Francisci seraphici*, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 2nd Ed. (Ad Claras Aquas: Ex typografia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1923): 65 (Cap. VI, 9): "Contigit, ipsum aliquando Aretium devenire, cum tota civitas intestine bello quassata propinquum sui minabatur excidium. Hospitatus vero in suburbio, vidit supra civitatem exsultantes daemones ac perturbatos cives ad caedam mutuam succedentes. Ut autem seditiosas illas effugaret aëreas potestates, Fratrem Silvestrum, columbinæ simplicitatis virum, quasi praeconem praemisit, dicens: 'Vade ante portam civitatis et ex parte Dei omnipotentis daemonibus in virtute obedientiae praecepe, ut exeant festinanter.' Accelerat verus obediens Patris iussa perficere, et praeoccupans in laudibus faciem Domini, ante portam civitatis coepit clamare valenter: 'Ex parte omnipotentis Dei et iussu servi eius Francisci procul hinc discedite, daemones universi.' Redit ad pacem continuo civitas et civilitatis in se iura cives omnes cum magna tranquillitate reformant. Expulsa quippe daemonum furibunda superbia, quae civitatem illa velut obsidioue vallaverat, superveniens sapientia pauperis, videlicet Francisci humilitas, pacem reddidit urbemque salvavit." These and several other exorcism events, as related in the works of Celano, Bonaventure, and in works like the *Speculum Perfectionis*, the *Actus beati Francisci* etc, and as depicted in altar pieces and fresco cycles, are discussed more fully by the studies of Accrocca, Hoerberichts, Moretti and Chave-Mahir mentioned in note 12. See also the remarks in Jacques Dalarun, *François d'Assise, un passage. Femmes et féminité dans les écrits et légendes franciscaines* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1997), who comments on the progressive feminization of demoniacs in Franciscan hagiography. On the representation of the devil in Giotto's Assisi murals see also Chiara Frugoni, "Diavolo di un Giotto. Giocare con le nuvole," *San Francesco Patrono d'Italia* 12 (2011): 39-47 & Eadem, "Le ragioni del diavolo nella nuvola," *Frate Francesco* 2 (2012): 369-384.



Benozzo Gozzoli, *The Expulsion of the Devils from Arezzo* (1452), Montefalco, apsidal chapel in the church of San Francesco.

Alongside of Francis acting on behalf of demoniacs and possessed towns, the hagiographical tradition concerning him and his early companions puts much emphasis on their victories in the face of threatening and invasive forms of demonic harassment and attack.²² This seems even more the case in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century lives devoted to Anthony of Padua, which are rife with violent confrontations between the demons/the devil and the saint, possibly connected to his ferocious reputation as a 'hammer of heretics' and the typological assimilation of the demonological aspects of his *vitae* to those devoted to his namesake Anthony of Egypt.²³ Yet both in the context of such violent confronta-

²² Moretti, "Francesco d'Assisi e il diavolo," esp. 183-184.

²³ The first to signal this was Léon de Kerval, *L'évolution et le développement du merveilleux dans les légendes de S. Antoine de Padoue* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1906): 253f. One such incident concerned a violent attack by the devil, trying to strangle Anthony when he was sleeping, tired from his Lenten preaching: "Quum nocte quadam, in principio quadragesimalis quam praefati sumus occupationis, fatiscens artus somni beneficio recrearet, ecce diabolus guttur viri Dei ausus est violenter comprimere ac pressum nisus est suffocare. At ille, invocato gloriosae virginis nomine, fronti signum vivificae crucis impressit, fugatoque humani generis inimico, confestim levamen sensit. Quumque, fugientem cernere cupiens, oculos aperuisset, ecce tota in qua jacebat cella

tions and beyond, Anthony showed himself to be an efficacious agent in liberating others from diabolical harassment, even though these interventions cannot always be called exorcism in the proper sense of the word. Hence in additions to the *Legenda Prima* from the so-called Padua manuscript, we encounter an attack by demons that left a person bodily harmed and unable to speak. This individual then had to be liberated at the tomb of St. Anthony.²⁴ Later hagiographical texts also include an episode in which Anthony of Padua commanded a demon that forced a young man to consume his own excrement to leave. Exiting the body, the demon in question physically assaulted the friar. According to Levack, this is a rare example of such an interaction between a demon and an exorcist, and again an element commensurate with the habitual hagiographical depiction of violent confrontations between demons and Anthony.²⁵

More 'traditional', albeit sometimes dramatic exorcisms are included in the *Dialogus de vitis sanctorum Fratrum Minorum*, possibly the oldest

luce coelitus illustrate fulgebat..." Anthony of Padua, *Legenda Prima seu vita antiquissima*, edited in *Sancti Antonii de Padua vitae duae quarum altera hucusque inedita*, ed. Léon de Kerval (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1904): 46.

²⁴ *Legenda Prima seu vita antiquissima*, 139-140: "Anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo septuagesimo octavo, mense februarii, in dioecesi Vicentina, in villa quae dicitur Castelnero, in domo domini Johannis de Putheo, duo incantatores fecerunt incantationes pro inquisitione cuiusdam thesauri. Quo facto, quidam serviens dicti domini Johannis, nomine Martinus, post egressum incantatorum de domo, domam illam ingrediens ibidem reperit multitudinem animalium et volucrum. Et inter illa animalia erant tres equi cornutu ad modum hircorum, emittentes flammam ignis per os et secessum; super quos erant tres homines horribiles aspectu, magnos baculos tenentes in manibus, tenentes faciem ad caudam equorum. Quae videns dictus Martinus, nimio terrore perterritus, voluit sibi signum crucis imprimere; sed non potuit. Quaedam enim ilorum animalium deprimebant sibi manus, ita quod ad faciem eas levare non poterat ut sibi imprimeret signum [140] crucis. Ex tunc coepit se recommendare Deo et beatae Virgini et beato Antonio, ne tali morte periret; et egrediens coepit ire versus plateam communis. Multa autem illorum animalium et volucrum secuta sunt eum et in platea communis, illum verberantes, torquebant linguam ejus, ita quod loquelam amisit et, post hoc immediate, perdidit etiam visum. Et sic reductus ad domum domini sui, privatus loquela et visu, permansit sic infirmus usque ad feriam quartam ante Coenam Domini. Cui apparuit beatus Antonius, quamdam crucem lucidissimam tenens in manu, confortans eum et eidem suadens quod in Domini speraret, quia tali domino se recommendaverat qui bene eum a sua infirmitate curaret. Tunc, nutibus innuens quod duceretur ad arcam beati Antonii, ad eam super quamdam asinam delatus est et, feria quarta ante Coenam Domini, advenit illuc. Ibīdem autem reverenter oranti sub arca, et implorato auxilio beati Antonii, circa completorium, loquela sibi restituta est et, sequenti die, in Coena Domini, dum cantaretur missa conventus, visus ei restitutus est; et sanus et incolumis ad domum domini sui remeavit." A slightly different version of this miracle is included in the Life of Anthony by Jean Rigaud.

²⁵ Cf. Levack, *The Devil Within*, 95.

collective Franciscan hagiographical collection. Most successful exorcisms included in this collection concern the, at times, rather spectacular liberations of (female) demoniacs near the grave sites or with the help of relics of venerated friars, such as Benvenuto, Ambrosio of Massa, Matteo of Narni, Ruggero of Todi, and Adam Rufo.²⁶ In contrast, active exorcisms performed by friars during their lifetime receive less emphasis than in the hagiographical tradition connected to Francis and Anthony.²⁷ A comparable bias with regard to *post-mortem* exorcisms can be traced in the legends devoted to Louis of Toulouse, issued in and after 1317,²⁸ and in the hagiographical texts on Gerardo Cagnoli produced by Bartolomeo Albizi around 1347.²⁹

In contrast, the chronicle of Salimbene, compiled in the decades prior to his death in or shortly after 1288, contains quite a few stories about friars who either actively engaged aggressive demons, fell victim to their malice, or performed spectacular acts of exorcism. In Salimbene's narrative, these incidents both underscore the exceptional evangelical charism of some of the Franciscan friars in question, and provide his intended audience with suitable edificatory anecdotes about religious perseverance or the lack thereof.³⁰ In several of these stories, Salimbene made a point

²⁶ *Dialogus de vitis sanctorum Fratrum Minorum*, ed. Leonardus Lemmens (Rome: Typis Sallustianis, 1902), 37-38, 62, 77, 79, 96.

²⁷ The only exorcism performed *voce vivente* pertains to Ambrosio of Massa. *Dialogus*, 61.

²⁸ See *Processus Canonizationis et Legendae variae Sancti Ludovici O. F. M. Episcopi Tolosani*, Analecta Franciscana, VII (Florence: Ad Claras Aquas, 1951), esp. 214-217 (cap. CLV-CLXII): as well as the analysis of several such shrine exorcisms or liberations of demoniacs by invoking the help of the saint in Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "Diabolic Rage? Children, Violence, and Demonic Possession in the Late Middle Ages," *Journal of Family History* 41:3 (2016): 236-254. Not discussed here are the liberation of demoniacs by relics of the five Franciscan protomartyrs Accursio, Adiuto, Berardo, Ottone and Pietro.

²⁹ This is alluded to in F. Rotolo, "La leggenda del B. Gerardo Cagnoli, O.Min. (1257-1342) di Fra Bartolomeo Albizi O.Min. (d. 1351)," *Miscellanea Francescana* 57 (1951): 367-446, and Idem, "Il trattato dei miracoli del B. Gerardo Cagnoli, O.Min. (1257-1342) di Fra Bartolomeo Albizi, O.Min. (d. 1351)," *Miscellanea Francescana* 66 (1966): 128-192.

³⁰ See for instance Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia, 2 Vols. CCCM, 125 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998-1999), esp. 824-832; *Cronica Fratris Salimbene de Adam Ordinis Minorum*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores, XXXII (Hannover: Hahn, 1905-1013), 566-578, 620-621, 633, under the headings *De deceptione cuiusdam religiosi cui diabolus promittebat papatum; Quod diabolus voluit decipere quemdam iuvenem qui laborabat in extremis, ut eum faceret desperare, sed frater adiuvatus a fratre manus eius evasit; Quod diabolus comminatus est uni fratri quod extraheret eum de Ordine fratrum Minorum, et ita fuit completum; Quod diabolus decepit unum fratrem quem solitarius repperit, et fecit eum crucifigi; De fratre qui expulit demonem de muliere obsessa, cum*

to present some of his favorite friars as tricksters able to overcome the ruses of possessing demons. Hence friar Benintende tricked the demon possessing a woman to list the choirs of angels in heaven, and goading the demon into leaving his victim after it was unable to mention the names of the higher choirs, thereby revealing the demon's shame as a fallen angel, powerless in the face of divine wrath.³¹

All such anecdotes notwithstanding, it should be noted that in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Franciscan hagiographical texts such confrontations with the devil and with demons do not dominate among the miracles ascribed to the friars in question. In particular, the liberation of demoniacs through forms of charismatic exorcism or the exorcistic powers of Franciscan relics or tomb sites, pales in comparison with the frequency of other miracles, especially the miraculous healing of illnesses not caused by demonic influences. This seems consistent with hagiographic texts on non-Franciscan saints from this period.³²

It is difficult to assess the relative importance of the liberation of demoniacs by Franciscan saints, for instance in comparison with hagiog-

demone sapienter loquendo; De quodam alio qui confudit et vituperavit diabolum, sapienter cum eo loquendo; De alio fratre qui a demone fuit percussus et reprehensus, dum quadam nocte dormiret; De clerico de Berceto quem diabolus fecit interfici, et alium interfecit mutuo preliando; De diabolo qui duos scolares occidit et tertium male tractavit; De quodam Brixiensi, quem diabolus decepit et postmodum strangulavit; De humilitate cuiusdam sancti viri, qui a demoniac fuit in maxilla percussus, et propter hoc recessit confusus.

³¹ "Fuit quidam sanctus homo, frater Minor, de Imola oriundus, nomine Benintende, quem gradus sacerdotii sublimabat. Hic pluribus annis in conventu Ravennae habitavit mecum, et erat gratus in confessionibus audiendis, et trecentas genuflexiones faciebat qualibet nocte, et toto tempore vite sue ieiunabat qualibet die, tam diebus sollempnibus quam profestis. Ad istum fratrem perducta est quedam mulier quam diabolus subintraverat. Cumque ad fenestram mulier sederet cum fratre, dixit demoni frater: 'Dic michi, miser, scis tu quot sint ordines angelorum in celo?' Cui demon dixit: 'Scio et bene scio quia novem sunt.' Cui dixit frater: 'Specifica et dinumera eos michi.' Cumque dinumerasset eos usque ad tertiam ierarchiam, subtruncavit de aliis et ulterius non processit. Cum autem frater ab eo quereretur quare tres alios residuos ordines et sublimes nominare non poterat, respondit et dixit: 'Ex nimio dolore eos nominare non possum, et istam meretricem que me huc perduxit, ubi verecundiam pacior, hodie crudeliter verberabo.' Tunc respondit frater et demoni dixit: 'Perspicuum est quod tu ex ordinibus illis fuisti quos pro dolore nominare non prevales. Vide ergo ad quantam miseriam devenisti, ut, qui in celo habitare debebas, nunc in meretrice propter tuam superbiam habitaculum reperperisti. Quapropter precipio tibi, cum propter stultitiam tuam miserimus et vilissimus sis effectus, ut creaturam Dei bonam, mulierem scilicet istam, deseras, nec eam de cetero molestare presumas, presertim cum sis ex illis de quibus Dominus dixit in Marci ultimo: *In nomine meo demonia eicient*. Adiuro ergo te, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, ut recedas ab ea et amplius in eam intrandi non habeas facultatem.' Ad hanc igitur conurationem diabolus recessit confusus et eiulando delusus, et mulier gratias Deo agendo estitit plenarie liberata." *Cronica Fratris Salimbene*, ed. Holder-Egger, 570.

³² Cf. Katajala-Peltomaa, "Diabolic Rage?" 237.

raphic depictions in contemporary Dominican sources. Francis is quite frequently depicted as engaging in exorcistic activities within the Franciscan iconographical tradition. This is different from the depiction of Dominic within Dominican churches. In contrast, it has been argued that in Dominican hagiographical texts and related Dominican narrative sources confrontations with the devil and demons, including examples of exorcistic prowess, are actually more prominent than within their Franciscan counterparts. It is, however, unclear how many texts were consulted in coming to that conclusion.³³ After all, a full account of the place of exorcisms *voce vivente* and *post-mortem* exorcism miracles in the Franciscan hagiographical tradition beyond the most well-known texts still needs to be written.

The same holds true with regard to Franciscan preaching prior to the Observant period. A systematic study of demonic action in Franciscan preaching has, to my knowledge, never been done.³⁴ Francis himself preached about demons during a sermon held at Bologna on Assumption day of 1222.³⁵ A cursory glance at model sermons and *reportationes* from later date, such as the surviving sermons ascribed to Berthold of Regensburg, seems to indicate that the devil, demons, and demoniacs certainly do appear. Yet the devil and demons present in the texts as we have them act first and foremost as tempters and instigators of sinful behavior.³⁶ In a more refined manner, comparable themes seem to dominate in the *Sermones Dominicales* and the *Sermones de tempore* of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, which refer to the devil's pride, his *malignitas*, and failed attempts to corrupt Christ, his suggestive incitements to make humans sin, on the ways the devil holds power over humans because of their own concupiscence and pride, how humans need grace and the guidance of the holy ghost to triumph over demonic machinations, and especially how the might of the devil is nothing in comparison with the *immensitas divinae potentiae*.³⁷

³³ Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, 279.

³⁴ The discussion of demonic possession in mendicant preaching in Chave-Mahir *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, is based first and foremost on Dominican homiletic texts, confession manuals and exempla collections, and does not do justice to the Franciscan production of sermons and related pastoralia.

³⁵ According to an eye witness testimony of the future bishop Tommaso of Spalato, then student at Bologna, Francis preached that day on angels, men and demons. Moretti, "Francesco d'Assisi e il diavolo," 174.

³⁶ This, at least, is the impression one obtains by perusing Berthold of Regensburg, *Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer & Joseph Strobl, 2 Vols. (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1862-1880).

³⁷ An impression based on a perusal of Sancti Bonaventurae, *Sermones dominicales*, ed. J. G. Bougerol (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura-Padri Editori di Quaracchi,

It could be that instances of demonic possession and successes of Franciscan exorcistic activities should be sought in particular in exemplary stories used to enliven the sermon, which often did not end up in trimmed-down or polished model sermons for publication. Several of the exorcism stories related by Salimbene just mentioned were probably meant to function as powerful *exempla* in homiletic encounters.³⁸ This also holds true for the stories of demonic possession and the liberation of demoniacs in the *Liber exemplorum ad usum praedicantium*, which was probably completed in the later 1270s.³⁹ Several of the *exempla* included again focus on demonic actions that unwittingly or not establish or elucidate Christian truth, and on violent confrontations between demons and humans (both saints and others).⁴⁰ In between such episodes we also come across exorcism-related *exempla* derived from older, non-Franciscan hagiographical collections.⁴¹ In addition, it includes the peculiar *exem-*

1977): passim, and of Bonaventure, *Sermones de tempore. Reportations du manuscrit Milan Ambrosienne A 11 Sup*, ed. J. G. Bougerol (Paris: Éd. Franciscaines, 1990), esp. sermon 250 (281-282) & sermon 212 (291-292): both for the third Sunday of Lent, on the theme "Porro, si in digito Dei eiicio daemona, profecto pervenit in vos regnum Dei" (Luke 11:20).

³⁸ On the importance of preaching and the production of useful *exempla* in Salimbene's chronicle, see for instance, Carla Casagrande & Silvana Vecchio, "Cronaca, morale, predicazione: Salimbene da Parma e Jacopo da Varagine," *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, 30 (1989): 749-788; L. Lazzerini, "Fra Salimbene predicatore," in *Salimbeniana. Atti del convegno per il VII centenario di fra Salimbene, Parma, 1987-1989* (Bologna: Radio Tau, 1991), 133-143; M. Brossard-Dandré, "Le statut de l'exemplum dans la chronique de fra Salimbene," in *Les exempla médiévaux: Nouvelles perspectives*, ed. Jacques Berlioz et Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris-Genève: H. Champion & Slatkine, 1998), 83-104.

³⁹ *Liber exemplorum ad usum praedicantium saeculo XIII compositus a quodam fratre minore anglico de provincial hiberniae*, ed. A.G. Little (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1908). According to Little's introduction, the *Liber exemplorum* was meant as a preachers manual. It was produced by a friar from Warwickshire, who worked in the Dublin friary in the later 1250s, studied in Paris – where he met Roger Bacon, with whom he apparently took part in a magical séance – and, following his lectorate course, he became lector at the friary of Cork.

⁴⁰ *Liber exemplorum*, 9-10 (De demonio et Corpore Christi), 13-14 (De diabolo in effigie canis), 14 (De B. Edmundo et diabolo in effigie bestiae horribilis), 15 (De Iudaeo qui vidit concilium demonum), 16 (Quod Theodas magus misit demones ad Iosaphat), 30 (Qualiter B.V. effugavit demones), 33 (Qualiter abbas Moyses impregnabatur a spiritu fornicationis), 34 (Quidam senex vidit demones quasi ape), 67 (Qualiter diabolus scripsit peccata quae fiebant in ecclesia), 91 (Quid demon pateretur ut posset salvari), 96 (De diabolo et B. Machario), 104 (Quantum demones timent diem iudicii), 121 (De fratre Iordano et demone).

⁴¹ *Liber exemplorum*, 80, Quomodo B. Bernardus excommunicavit demonem: "... Fuit et mulier eiusdem, scil. Bernardi, tempore ad quam demon incubus consuetudinem habens quociens volebat sibi violenter invitam ad abusum supponebat. Que cum abbati, scil. Bernardo, adducta fuisset et res cognita, statim candelis accensis demonem excom-

plum of a man who because of his *luxuria* had outwardly transformed into a demon, was shunned by everyone, and needed to be spiritually cleansed in order to be returned into his normal shape.⁴² Yet again, these exemplary stories about demonic aggression, the liberation of demoniacs or those suffering from demonic action do not dominate within the varied edificatory landscape of medieval Franciscan *exempla*. This could give rise to a tentative conclusion that, at least during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries charismatic exorcism was a significant but not an overwhelmingly important identity marker within the Franciscan order.

During the same period, many Franciscan priests and pastoral workers probably did engage in more routine forms of liturgical exorcism that were not deemed worthy of commemoration in hagiographical or historical literature. Sometimes we do get glimpses of this within the Franciscan literary tradition. Hence, the cantankerous Franciscan theologian Alvarus Pelagius complained in his *De statu et planctu ecclesiae* (ca. 1330) that he encountered severe problems when trying to exorcise tertiary sisters in an Italian convent, for the women had become so habituated to the demons' presence that they no longer were afraid of them.⁴³ Remarks

municabat et omnem ei communionem cum illa Christiana ex parte Dei Christique Iesu efficaciter interdixit, et sic mulier a tanto incommode perpetuo curate recessit"; 96, De puella demoniata: "Aliud exemplum reperitur ad idem ibidem [i.e. in the *Vitae patrum*] in hunc modum. Dixit abbas Daniel quia erat in Babilonia filia cuiusdam primarii demonium habens. Cumque monachus sanctus domum primarii intraret, venit puella demoniata et dedit ei alapam, hoc est demonium manu puelle. Demon autem coactus cepit clamare: 'O violencia mandate Iesu Christi expellit me,' et statim curata est puella. Et dixerunt sancti senes hoc videntes vel audientes, quia situationes dyabolice humilitate mandatorum Iesu Christi corruere. Hoc est dictum: Non potuit dyabolus ulterius situari, i.e. manere in puella illa, propter humilitatem implentis mandatum Christi. Explicit exemplum."

⁴² *Liber exemplorum*, 121, De amatore qui tanquam demon videbatur: "Inter exemplum vero Deodati hoc etiam super hac materia reperi. Quidam iuvenis puellam nobilem amans illicite, cum quadam nocte venire ad cameram in qua iacebat, et ad eam intrare vellet more solito, ipsa videns eum clamavit: 'A A A! fuge, demon.' Siquidem videbatur ei quod demon erat. Ipse vero timore percussus recessit. Cumque venisset ad equum suum, fugit equus cursu rapido. Vocavit autem ad se quendam canem quem habebat, qui simili timore percussus et horror fugiebat ab eo impetuose. Tunc intelligens se non esse in statu bono, ad quendam se contulit heremitam, ut ostenderet ei quid ei acciderat. Quem cum vidisset heremita coniuravit eum tanquam demonem ut exiret. Qui noluit set rogavit eum ut etiam in ipsum oculos non dirigens audiret confessionem suam: quod et fecit. Confessione vero peracta cum respiceret ad illum heremita reperit ipsum in debita forma sua. Hoc pertinet ad luxuriosus, qui peccata sua confiteri differentes, similes demonibus efficiuntur. Hoc autem exemplum reliquit frater Wycumbe in sermonibus suis." See on these and comparable exempla in this collection also Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, 226

⁴³ The work of Alvarus has received a modern edition in *Scritti inediti di fra Alvaro Pais*, ed. Vittorino Meneghin (Lisbon: Instituto de Alta Cultura, Centro de Estudos de Psicologia e de Historia da Filosofia, 1969). I have used Alvari Pelagii, *De planctu ecclesie*

such as these might point at a far more habitual professional exorcism practice by Franciscan clerics in the context of their pastoral and *cura monialium* obligations.⁴⁴

Late medieval developments

With the exception of Levack, various modern scholars have assumed, predominantly on the basis of a 1980 article by André Goddu, that charismatic exorcism traceable in hagiographical texts was on the decline at the end of the middle ages. This would have happened right at the time that new types of exorcism literature, based in part on older rituals of liturgical pre-baptismal exorcism, came into being for this professional type of exorcism as a routine activity of clerics. Goddu developed his thesis on the decline of charismatic exorcism on the basis of the frequency of references to exorcisms in later medieval saints' lives within the October volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*. According to his analysis, exorcisms in miracle collections within or attached to saints' lives saw an increase through the thirteenth century, a relative decline in the fourteenth, and a massive decline in the fifteenth century.⁴⁵ This transformation, in which charismatic exorcism lost ground whereas professional exorcism based on procedures with a semi-sacramental status (efficacious not because of the evangelical prowess of the charismatic saint-exorcist but due to the power

desideratissimi libri duo (S.L.: Johannes Clein, 1517), which is accessible via the digital collections of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. See for the supposed incident Liber II, Art. 46, f. 149v-150r: "...sicut in quodam cenobio sanctimonialium eam demoniacam vexationem post multas penitencias et consimilia et predicationes non usquequaque de eis potui extirpare. Tantam enim familiaritatem cum quibusdam ex eis isti demones contraxerant, quod ad eorum aspectum non terrebantur, sed absque pavore cum eis loquebantur et contrectabantur, sicut ex earum iudiciali confessione habui. Vere spiritus immundus in immunditia delectatur."

⁴⁴ Not discussed here are the rituals to reconcile heretics with the Church, which due to the late medieval connection between heresy and demon worship have also been considered as types of ritual/sacramental liberation of the sinner from demonic power. Cf. Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, 303-312. The ritual similarities notwithstanding, I consider the two phenomena (exorcism and penitential *ordines* to reconcile repenting heretics) to be sufficiently distinct to refrain from including the latter in this exploratory survey.

⁴⁵ André Goddu, "The Failure of Exorcism in the Middle Ages," in *Soziale Ordnung im Selbstverständnis des Mittelalters*, ed. A. Zimmermann & G. Vuillemin-Diem (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 540-575. For Levack's criticism of Goddu's analysis and conclusions, see Levack, *Possession and Exorcism*, 121. Others have more or less accepted Goddu's source analysis without subscribing to all his conclusions. R. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 149.

of the rituals, prayers and Bible-based invocations) was on the rise, would have taken place in the context of a growing fear of the omnipresence of the devil and his minions. And it was concomitant with the growing conviction that heretics and practitioners of sorcery and witchcraft were in league with these forces of evil.

Looking at the Franciscan hagiographical evidence from the late medieval period, it might at a first glance seem that Goddu was correct. In the lengthy procedures surrounding the canonization of Bernardino of Siena, and particularly in the post-mortem miracles mentioned in these documents, charismatic exorcism is not a major topic of discussion. Yet the picture changes somewhat when one starts looking at hagiographical texts other than official canonization dossiers central to Goddu's argument. In the wider cloud of eulogist and hagiographical texts on the most celebrated preachers and leaders of the Franciscan regular Observance, these friars do appear quite prominently as efficacious and charismatic exorcists. This could suggest that the decline of charismatic exorcism in a specific subgenre of hagiographical writings might indicate that exorcistic successes were no longer considered central for investigators into legitimate proof of sanctity. This is possibly because of the upsurge of professional forms of exorcism based on procedures and texts with a semi-sacramental status. Yet charismatic exorcism remained a popular topic in other hagiographical texts, notably those written by fellow friars.

Hence in the hagiographical writings devoted to Giacomo della Marca, such as the *vita* written by Venanzio of Fabriano, post-mortem exorcisms are relatively rare, yet incidents of charismatic exorcism during Giovanni's lifetime receive considerable emphasis. These are normally described as the healing of men and especially women possessed by a malignant spirit ('donne spirite'). Moreover, there seems to be a clear link between Giovanni's prowess as a charismatic exorcist and his treatment of diabolic possession in his preaching. On the one hand, his preaching developed the idea that people and particularly women in a state of sin were vulnerable to demonic attack, and on the other hand elaborated almost the opposite idea, made earlier by Vicente Ferrer and Bernardino of Siena, that demons singled out friars and nuns of the mendicant orders for attack and possession precisely because they were the demons' staunchest foes.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ For cases of demonic attacks, possessions and exorcisms in the *vita* written by Venanzio, see *La Vita di S. Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476) secondo gli antichi codici di fr. Venanzio da Fabriano (1434-1506)*, ed. U. Picciafuoco (Monteprandone: Santuario S. Giacomo-Convento S. Maria Delle Grazie, 1977), 75-76, 82, 87-88, 92-95, 102-106, 111, 117, as well as the evaluation of several such cases in Marina Montesano, "I miracoli napoletani di Giacomo della Marca," in *Gemma Lucens. Giacomo della Marca tra*

The ongoing portrayal of charismatic exorcism in various hagiographical genres does not, as such, undermine the claim of modern scholars that there was a growing need for dependable methods of exorcism independent of saintly qualities of the performer within the changing demonological world of the fifteenth century. Without this growing need, one could hardly explain the emergence of the new genre of portable exorcism manuals in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.⁴⁷ Modern scholars have linked the emergence of these portable exorcism manuals in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century to the pastoral activities of Observant mendicant friars, notably Dominicans such as Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio and Alberto of Castello. As far as I know, almost none of the examples mentioned in their analyses can be traced back to a Franciscan origin.⁴⁸ The one fifteenth-century portable exorcism that Sluhovsky presents as Franciscan seems to be a case of erroneous ascription. This example is a *Liber exorcismorum*, now in the Dutch Royal Library, which according to Sluhovsky came from the Franciscan monastery of Eemstein near Dordrecht. Yet as far as I know Eemstein was not a Franciscan house but a foundation of regular canons connected with the Congregation of Windesheim.⁴⁹ Another small text with exorcism-like formula now in the British Library that probably has been traced correctly to a Franciscan friar, namely Wilhelm Turnout of Coblenz, is a text of private devotion that includes exorcism-like prayers to cast out temptations of the flesh and maintain mental and bodily purity. It has, in fact, nothing to do with exorcism properly speaking.⁵⁰

Although there is no fifteenth-century text of Franciscan provenance that can compare to the demonological message and impact of Nider's *Formicarius*, Jacquier's *De calcatione demonum*, or Kramer's *Malleus maleficarum*, Franciscan Observants did produce larger tracts in which demonic attacks and bodily possession became part and parcel of a more

devozione e santità, ed. Fulvia Serpico (Florence-Montepandone: SISMELE-Edizione del Galluzzo- Comune di Montepandone, 2013), 173-182.

⁴⁷ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 237-240; Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, 324ff.

⁴⁸ Although the *Benedictio Fratris Leonis/ Chartula Fr. Leonis* Data by Francis of Assisi, as well as the parchment with protective words received by a demoniac after Anthony of Padua appeared to him in a dream, have been interpreted as early exorcism amulets, and it has been argued that "De l'amulette au Rituel d'exorcisme du XVe siècle, il semble n'y avoir eu qu'un pas." Chave-Mahir, *L'Exorcisme des possédés*, 316.

⁴⁹ Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 66-68. Cf. also Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving. Holland 1500-1800* (Den Haag: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1991), 66-67. This *Liber exorcismorum* can be found in the Dutch Royal Library in The Hague, MS NL-DHK 74 F 25.

⁵⁰ This small work, now to be found in British Library, MS Royal 2 A II, f. 141, has been discussed in Young, *A History of Exorcism*, 79-80.

elaborate demonology. Hence, resistance to demonic attacks plays an important role in the writings of the Observant Clarissan nun Caterina Vigri, which were meant to bolster the spiritual resistance of novices and professed nuns. A proper analysis of works by Vigri, other Poor Clares and the sermons written by and for them might be very revealing with regard to the demonological world of religious women in this period.⁵¹

The most famous Observant Franciscan treatment of demonic warfare is probably Alonso d'Espina's *Fortalitium Fidei*, written in the early 1460s and printed for the first time in 1471.⁵² This aggressive and foreboding text lays out in five books which cohorts of mortal enemies are attacking the Church. The fifth cohort, discussed in the fifth and final book, consists of the devil and his army of demons. Alonso's text expounds at length on the origin, diversity, nature, knowledge, power and actions of demons throughout salvation history. In the later sections it also deals with men and especially women who give themselves willingly to the devil in the context of witchcraft and sorcery.⁵³ Such elements of Alonso's demonology would go far in subsequent works on witchcraft and sorcery, as is demonstrated by the almost literal translation of these and related passages in works like the infamous *Theatrum de Veneficis*.⁵⁴

Alonso's *Fortalitium Fidei* also mentions exorcism but does not engage in a lengthy analysis of exorcist practices. Instead, it discusses bodily possession as one of the ways in which demons attempt to wage war on Christianity.⁵⁵ This is followed up with a short discussion of two ways

⁵¹ For a first introduction to the works of Caterina Vigri, see *Dalla corte al chiostro. Santa Caterina Vigri e i suoi scritti*, ed. Clarisse di Ferrara, Pietro Messa & Filippo Sedda, Viator (Santa Maria degli Angeli-Assisi: Ed. Porziuncola, 2013). Much still needs to be done with regard to the cultural production of Clarissan nuns.

⁵² I have used the Guillaume Balsarin edition that is accessible via the digital collections of Ghent University library: Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortalitium fidei contra fidei christinae hostes* (Lyon: Guillaume Balsarin, 1487).

⁵³ "Decima differentia demonum est eorum qui decipiunt mulieres aliquas vetulas maledictas que xurgumine sive bruxe nuncupantur. Sciendum ergo est quod sunt quedam male gentes viri et mulieres apostate in fide et heretice creature et false qui seipsos dant voluntarie dyabolo et dyabolus recipit eos et dat eis quod per suas artes falsas eis appareat quod ambulant ducentes leucas et quod rediunt in spacium iiii vel quinque horarum..." Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortalitium fidei*, Liber Quintus f. Ziiirb.

⁵⁴ *Theatrum de Veneficis. Das ist von Teuffelsgespenst, Zauberern und und Giffbereitem, Schwartzkünstlern, Hexen und Unholden, vieler fürnemmen Historien und Exempel, bewärten, glaubwürdigen, Alten und Newen Scribenten* (...) (Frankfurt am Main: Nicolaus Basseus, 1586). The passage mentioned in the previous note can found in this work on p. 168a.

⁵⁵ With regard to this aspect of demonic warfare, the *Fortalitium fidei*, Liber Quintus, ff. Ziiivb states: "Secundus punctus est de subintratione demonum in corporibus obsessorum et de expulsion eorum. Circa hoc notandum est quod non est ponendum

of expelling demons, either through the use of the commanding name of Jesus, or through a lengthier procedure of prayers and fasting, with some additional remarks on ways to deal with minor forms of demonic vexation.⁵⁶

If Giacomo della Marca's sermons are anything to go by, the malicious actions of the devil held a prominent place within late medieval Observant Franciscan preaching. As stated above, mendicant Observant preachers liked to suggest that demons harassed the mendicant orders more than they did other human beings, precisely because the mendicants (and especially the Observants) considered themselves to be their real and maybe only efficacious opponents. From this viewpoint examples of physical demonic violence, attempts of demonic possession and successful instances of charismatic exorcism played a role in underlining the necessity and the triumphs of the Observant mendicant apostolate. Beyond such forms of self-aggrandizing posturing, the main emphasis in Observant preaching with regard to the devil and demonic activities might still have been less on actual demonic possession (except for dis-

in dubium quod sit obsessio corporum per demones cum evangelia hoc manifeste expriment in pluribus locis. (...) Respondetur quod demones per naturam subtilitatis sue et spiritualitatis possunt quocumque corpora penetrare et in eis sine obstaculo et impedimento subsistere. (...) Et si quaras quare hoc permittit deus, respondetur quod propter tria vel ad sue glorie ostensionem vel ad peccantis correctionem vel ad nostrum instructionem..."

⁵⁶ *Fortalitium fidei*, Liber Quintus, f. Zivra-b: "Nunc videndum est de eorum expulsionem. Circa quod notandum est quod demones non nisi virtute divina possunt a corporibus expelli immediate vel mediantibus angelis qui frequenter in casibus sunt executores divine voluntatis nec aliqua res sensibilis aut virtus corporalis potest in eis aliquid agere directe vel indirecte cum sint omnino spirituales substantie per quod possunt ad aliquid compelli, nec per consequens ab obsessis corporibus expelli. Verumtamen ex evangelio Christi duas doctrinas habemus ad demones expellendos. Prima est universalis, scilicet per nomen Jhesu, Matheus vli: 'In nomine meo demonia eijicient.' Alia est particularis quia est quoddam genus demoniorum quod non eijicitur nisi in oratione et ieiunio ut patet Matheus xvii. Unde sicut in diversis rebus corporalibus administrandis diversi angeli a deo preparantur et diversorum ordinum. Sic etiam in diversis temptationibus demones habent specialem affectum quia aliqui potentissime temptant de divitiis congregandis aliqui de honoribus appetendis [etc.] (...) Et si quaras an aliquo modo virtute herbarum vel armonie possint expelli demones? Respondetur quod ita parva posset esse illa vexatio quod penitus expelleretur quod facerent non agendo in demonem cum sit spiritus separatus sed agendo in ipsum vexatum a demonio. Vexat enim dyabolus secundum dispositionem majorem vel minorem melencolicam vel colericam etcetera. Herbe autem et armonie multum possunt immutare dispositionem corporis cum quedam inclinent ad leticiam quedam ad tristitiam quod etiam patet de armoniis ut patet .viii. pollitice ubi Aristoteles vult quod diverse armonie habent provocare diversas passiones in homine. Hoc etiam refert Boethius in musica sua et auctor de ortu scientiarum ubi loquens de utilitate musice dicit quod valet ad curandum vel alleviandum diversas infirmitates..."

cussions of possession caused by sorcery-based *maleficia*),⁵⁷ and more on the danger of giving in to devilish temptations that caused people to sin, or fall for demonic illusions and suggestions that led to conflicts and transgressions. Such temptations and illusions also enticed people to engage in malignant magical practices and this prepared the way for their own damnation.⁵⁸

Observant preachers likewise dwelt on the proper way for people to protect themselves against those temptations or illusions, propagating a form of active piety focused on the sacraments, Christocentric prayer, and – notably among Bernardino of Siena and his disciples – on the Holy Name of Jesus. Bernardino and Observant preachers after him often claimed that faith in the Holy Name of Jesus provided protection against demons, as well as thievery, illness, accidents and war related injuries.⁵⁹ And in this context liberation from demonic possession made an appearance. According to Bernardino of Fossa, Giovanni of Capestrano liberated several demoniacs due to the presentation of a tablet with the Holy Name of Jesus during a preaching session at L'Aquila. This episode subsequently became part of Giovanni's iconographical representation in the early modern period.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Although some Observant friars, such as Bernardino Busti and his Franciscan co-workers in Milan during the closing decades of the fifteenth century, would have displayed remarkable restraint with regard to demonological claims about the nature of witchcraft, unlike what we find among some of their Dominican colleagues, and also unlike the fierce anti-judaic accusations by these same Observant Franciscans, which built on concepts developed in works like the *Fortalitium fidei* just mentioned. See the recent studies of Fabrizio Conti, including his "Preachers and Confessors Against 'Superstitions': Bernardino Busti and Sermon 16 of his Rosarium Sermonum," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6 (2011): 62–91.

⁵⁸ See for instance Bernardino of Siena's sermons *Di sette battaglie che riceve l'uomo in questa vita dal demonio, dal mondo e dalla carne*, and *Della ignoranza della città del demonio e della sua rovina*, in *Le prediche volgari*, ed. C. Cannarozzi, 5 Vols. (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1934–1940) III, 134–153, IV, 91–114; Jacobus de Marchia, *Sermo de potentia demonum* (MS Vat.Lat. 7780 ff. 311r–315v). Cf. Dionysius Lasic, "Sermones S. Iacobi de Marchia in cod. Vat.Lat. 7780 et 7642 asservati," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 63 (1970): 476–565 (476–515).

⁵⁹ Cf. Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies. The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2013), 191–192 (also on the heresy charge leveled against Bernardino because of his strong promotion of this novel cult).

⁶⁰ See the painting *Giovanni da Capestrano, predica al-l'Aquila* ascribed to Anton Battista of Ciancia, now in the Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo in L'Aquila. For more information on the iconography devoted to Giovanni of Capestrano, see especially Luca Pezzuto, *Giovanni da Capestrano: iconografia di un predicatore osservante dalle origini alla canonizzazione (1456–1690)* (Rome: UniversItalia, 2016).

The 'golden age' of Franciscan exorcism manuals

It is only from the sixteenth century onwards that Franciscan friars from throughout the Franciscan order family began to produce large demonological treatises and exorcism manuals. This production was so substantial, that one can argue that, by then, the Franciscans were fully implicated in the early modern demonological tidal wave that enticed so many, clergymen and educated lay people alike, to express their concerns in writing. Later in the sixteenth century, this wave was strengthened by papal directives, such as the 1585 bull *Coeli et terrae* promulgated by the Franciscan pope Sixtus V, which called for an inquisitorial offensive against magic and witchcraft, and went hand in hand with a spectacular growth of cases of demonic possession. These touched first and foremost women, including many female religious.⁶¹ During the later sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century entire convents (including several Clarissan houses) fell victim to demonic attacks and bodily takeovers and hence were in need of exorcism.⁶² One such possession within a convent setting, namely the possession of female religious of the Sainte Elisabeth convent of Louviers in 1643, was described in detail by the Capuchin friar Esprit of Bosroger.⁶³ More than ever before, there was a need for adequate manuals to support priests and exorcists to confront these massive numbers of demoniacs. Alongside of many other members

⁶¹ The gender bias in cases of demonic possession has received attention in studies by Dyan Elliott, Miri Rubin and Nancy Caciola, among others.

⁶² Marisa Milani, *L'ossessione secolare di Suor Mansueta: un esorcismo a Venezia nel 1574* (Venice: Longo, 1988) (on the possessed Clarissan nun Mansueta in the Venetian Santa Croce monastery); Salvatore Mazzarella, *Diavoli a Caltanissetta: Il "caso memorabile" del 1671* (Caltanissetta-Rome: Salvatore Sciascia, 1990) (On the demonic possession of male Capuchin novices); G. Biondi, "Principesse, demoni ed esorcisti in convento. Il monastero di Santa Chiara di Carpi (1636-1639)," in *Il principato di Carpi in epoca estense. Istituzioni, economia, società e cultura*, ed. G. Zaché (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002), 273-283; Moshe Sluhovsky, "The Devil in the Convent," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 1379-1411; J. R. Watt, *The Scourge of Demons: Possession, Lust, and Witchcraft in a Seventeenth-Century Italian Convent* (Rochester: U. of Rochester Press, 2009); A. Sarrión Mora, *Beatas y endemoniadas. Mujeres heterodoxas ante la Inquisición, siglos XVI a XIX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2003): passim; Vincenzo Lavenia, "Possessione demoniaca, Inquisizione ed esorcismo in età moderna. Il caso italiano (secoli XVI-XVII)," in *Devozioni, pratiche e immaginario religioso. Espressioni del cattolicesimo tra 1400 e 1850*, ed. René Millar & Roberto Rusconi (Rome: Viella, 2011), 203-230.

⁶³ *La piété affligée ou discours historique & theologique de la possession des religieuses dites de Sainte Elisabeth de Louviers. Divisés en trois parties, Par le Reverend P. Esprit du Bosroger, Provincial des RR.PP. Capucins de la Province de Normandie* (Rouen: Jean de Boulenger, 1652).

of the regular and the secular clergy, the Franciscans now also answered to the call.

The exorcism manuals issued by Observant friar Girolamo Menghi mentioned at the very beginning are no doubt among the most famous and possibly among the most influential of these Franciscan texts. Menghi had entered the Observant branch of the Franciscan order in 1549, and was active in the Bologna region for most of his life. He was elected provincial definitore in 1587 and 1589, and in October 1598 he became provincial minister of the Bologna province when pope Clement VIII appointed him instead of the elected candidate Teodoro of Bologna. Alongside administrative functions, Menghi was a practicing exorcist from early on, and was regularly sought out to perform exorcisms in neighboring towns, such as Reggio. There he liberated no less than 20 demoniacs in 1574.

In the course of his career, Menghi produced five principal works on exorcism and demonology, most of which later received several imprints and revised editions.⁶⁴ The oldest of these is his *Aureus tractatus exorcismique pulcherrimi et efficacies in malignos spiritus effugandos de obsessis corporibus* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1573). This amounts to a reworking and augmentation of Silvestro Mazzolini OP's *Tractatulus quid a diabolo sciscitari et qualiter malignos spiritus possit quisque expellere* (Bologna: Caligola Bazakieri, 1502).⁶⁵

Three years later, Menghi published the large *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica*,⁶⁶ which he dedicated to the Cardinal-Protector of the Franciscan order, Giulio Feltri della Rovere. It is Menghi's most encompassing exorcist treatise, which deals at length with all aspects of demonological theology in relation to exorcism and witchcraft.⁶⁷ In its structure and

⁶⁴ A more detailed analysis of this production is offered in Volpato, "Girolamo Menghi," 381-397 and in Balzano, "Girolamo Menghi: Esorcista," 105-111.

⁶⁵ See on Menghi's dependency on Mazzolini also Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 79, as well as Guido Dall'Olio, "Alle origini della nuova essorcistica. I maestri bolognesi di Girolamo Menghi," in *Inquisizioni: percorsi di ricerca*, ed. Giovanna Paolin (Trieste: EUT, 2001): 81-124.

⁶⁶ *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica et possibilità delle mirabili et stupende operationi delli demoni et de'Malefici; Con li rimedij opportuni alle infirmità maleficiali* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1576). It was re-issued with additions in 1582 and 1601, and apparently appeared also without alterations in 1579.

⁶⁷ Sluhovsky maintains that Menghi's *Compendio* was intended as a learned refutation of skeptical voices claiming that diabolic possession was impossible and that witches did not inflict harm and were not in league with the devil: "Against such arrogant doubts, Menghi's encyclopedia combined all that was needed to prove the existence of demons, witches and maleficia. It also intended to prove that demons possessed human beings and animals and it argued that 'medicina celeste,' as it was practiced by ecclesiastical exorcists, was the only appropriate means to overcome diabolic power. While the major focus of

partly in its content, the *Compendio* is dependent upon the *Malleus Maleficarum* of Heinrich Kramer. That late fifteenth-century work had been divided in three parts: respectively discussing the real existence of witches and their collaboration with the devil; listing the remedies and precautions for those confronting these witches; and developing the methodology to hold proper witchcraft trials. In an analogous fashion, Menghi's *Compendio* is divided in three books, each dealing with a specific aspect of his demonology. The first book describes the origins of demons, their capabilities, how they trap human beings and interact with the world and their reasons for doing so. The second book deals according to its title with the marvels and incredible matters accomplished with diabolical help, but first and foremost discusses the figure of the witch or the *strigimaga*, the name for those people, especially women, who engage in a pact with the devil, or try to use the powers of demons to harm other people. The third book is devoted to useful remedies to counter the works of these *strigimaga*, and provides information to the priest/exorcist to liberate demoniacs suffering from possession and other forms of demonic vexation.⁶⁸

Almost a year after the first imprint of the *Compendium*, Menghi published with the same press his *Flagellum daemonum*, dedicated to Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, bishop of Bologna. In particular the first section of the work details the procedures by which exorcists can chase away malignant spirits from the bodies of demoniacs. It is aimed at an audience of priests, and focuses on their proper preparation and the way they can counter the deceptions demons apply to overcome the exorcist. The *Flagellum* fleshes out seven 'terrible and very powerful exorcisms',

the *Compendium* is, in fact, witchcraft and not diabolic possession, Menghi titled it *Encyclopedia of the Art of Exorcism*, and by doing so connected the two phenomena, arguing that exorcists were witch-finders par excellence, and that they, and only they, possessed the means to combat witchcraft." Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 79-80.

⁶⁸ According to John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), 95, Menghi, his negative depiction of witches and his belief in the witches sabbath and the pact with the devil notwithstanding, would deliberately have ignored the recommendations of Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* concerning the persecution and sentencing of witches. In this view, Menghi did not want to approach witchcraft judicially but would have seen it as a spiritual crisis: "It was a battle that would not be fought in the courts and the inquisitions; rather it was to be a battle carried out by exorcists, who would do all they could to counter the work of the Devil, wherever they might find it. Ultimately, then, the *Compendio*, while recognizing the horrific harm that witches were able to inflict on others, essentially decriminalized witchcraft." Attitudes such as these would have helped to curb in Italy the outbursts of witch hunts seen elsewhere in Europe.

or procedures to arrive at good results in every possible situation.⁶⁹ It is this work that receives most attention from modern scholars, and that also has been published in a modern English and a modern German translation.⁷⁰

In 1584 Menghi published the *Fustis daemonum*.⁷¹ This work was dedicated to Franciscan minister general Francesco Gonzaga, and likewise combines a theoretical introduction with a collection of authoritative exorcisms. Another edition of this work appeared around the same time in Venice, together with an updated version of the *Flagellum daemonum*.⁷² Four years later, in 1588, Menghi issued his *Eversio daemonum*,⁷³ which added to the exorcist procedures already expounded in previous works. Finally, in 1596 his *Fuga daemonum* appeared. This last work was again dedicated to Francesco Gonzaga, who by then had become bishop of Mantova.⁷⁴ The *Fuga daemonum* contains many materials already

⁶⁹ *Flagellum daemonum, seu exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi, efficaces. Remedia probatissima in malignos spiritus expellendos fatturasque et maleficia effuganda de obsessis corporibus. Cum suis benedictionibus et omnibus requisitis ad eorum expulsionem* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1577). Several Latin and vernacular editions would follow.

⁷⁰ See footnotes 3 and 4 of this article. Davies, *Grimoires*, 59-60, mentions that the *Flagellum daemonum* was used by a monk in 1643, not to banish demons, but obtain their help to win at gambling.

⁷¹ *Fustis daemonum, adiurationes formidabiles, potentissimas et efficaces in malignis spiritus fugandos de oppressis corporibus humanis. Ex sacrae Apocalypsis fonte variisque sanctorum Patrum fausta, complectens... Opus sane ad maximam Exorcisticarum commoditatem nunc in lucem editum* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1584).

⁷² *Flagellum daemonum, exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi, et efficaces. Remediaque probatissima, ac doctrinam singularem in malignos spiritus expellendos, fatturasque; et Maleficia fuganda de obsessis corporibus complectens; cum suis benedictionibus, et omnibus requisitis ad eorum expulsionem, accessit postremo Pars secunda, quae Fustis Daemonum inscribitur. Quibus novi Exorcismi, et alia nonnulla quae prius desiderabantur superaddicta Fuerunt* (Venice: Apud Dominicum Malduram, 1584).

⁷³ *Eversio daemonum e corporibus oppressis, cum divorum, tum aliorum auctorum potentissimos et efficaces in malignos spiritus propulsandos et maleficia ad energumenis pellenda, continens Exorcismos. Ab innumeris mendis, quibus tam temporum iniuria, quam hominum incuria scatebant expurgatos, variisque Documentis ac Rubricis, cum suis Benedictionibus exornatos... nunc primum in lucem edita* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1588).

⁷⁴ *Fuga daemonum, adiurationes potentissimas, et Exorcismos formidabiles, atque efficaces, in malignos spiritus propulsandos, et maleficia ab energumenis pellenda. Ex Sacris Cantorum Canticis variisque nostrae Fidei Mysteriorum, necnon ex Sanctorum Patrum auctoritatibus haustas pulcherrime continens (...)* Opus sane ad maximum Exorcistarum commoditatem oppressorumque utilitatem nuper in lucem editum. Cui etiam addita sunt eiusdem Auctoris Remedia in malignos spiritus expellendos (Venice: Eredi Giovanni Varisco, 1596). It was not really his last work on exorcism, as Menghi eventually also published a second, more autobiographical, volume of his *Compendio*, entitled *Parte seconda del Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* (Venezia: G. Varisco, 1601): in which he included a defense against the attacks

touched upon in other works, as well as new formulas based on different biblical texts. At the same time, it includes a wealth of practical and anecdotal information derived from Menghi's own decades-long career as a practicing exorcist.

Within the demonological landscape of the sixteenth century Menghi's treatises constitute a veritable mountain range, yet he was by no means the only early modern Franciscan author active on this terrain. More or less fifty years earlier, the Spanish Observant Franciscan Martín Castañeda, who had worked in the Basque region alongside of Francisco Zumárraga and other Observant preacher-missionaries, issued his *Tratado muy sutil y bien fundado de las supersticiones y hechizierías*.⁷⁵ Alongside diagnostic tools to discern effects of witchcraft and to combat what the author called superstition, Castañeda's final chapters include materials on successful exorcism practices by fellow friars, including a description of a Franciscan colleague who, as a practicing exorcist, used the whip ('una solemne disciplina de azotes') to heal (female) demoniacs.⁷⁶

Although Castañeda's *Tratado* for various reasons was not very successful in Spain, it did have a significant afterlife in the New World. This was largely thanks to the 1553 Náhuatl translation of the text by the Franciscan inquisitor Andrés de Olmos, to provide missionaries, inquisitors and literate converts alike with adequate demonological information in the struggle against Amerindian idolatric practices. Andrés, his colleague and friend Francisco Zumárraga (the first Franciscan Archbishop of Mexico), and many other Franciscan missionaries were convinced that they were engaged in a spiritual and physical war against the devil and his demonic minions, who wreaked havoc on the native American population. As front soldiers in this war, Franciscan missionaries performed hundreds of dramatic exorcisms, both in New Spain and in other regions in the Americas, and for this they needed recourse to dependable reference works and study texts.⁷⁷

of the medical doctor Scipione Mercurio (included in *Gli errori popolari d'Italia* [1599]): who argued for a medical approach towards cases of alleged demonic possession.

⁷⁵ *Tratado muy sutil y bien fundado de las supersticiones y hechizierías* (Logroño: Miguel de Eguia, 1529).

⁷⁶ Commented upon in Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 67. A modern edition has been issued as: *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, ed. Fabián Alejandro Campagne (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1997).

⁷⁷ *Tratado de hechierías y sortilegios de fray Andrés de Olmos, edition du texte nahuatl avec traduction et notes en français*, ed. & trans. Georges Baudot (Mexico: Mission Archéologique et Ethnologique Française au Mexique, 1979). See on the work by Andrés de Olmos now also Victoria Ríos Cataño, "El Tratado de Hechicerías y sortilegios (1553) que 'avisa y no emponzoña' de fray Adrés de Olmo," *1611 Revista de Historia de la Traducción – A Journal of Translation History – Revista de Història de la Traducció* 8 (2014)

In 1540 and 1545 the *Exorcismo mirabile da disfare ogni sorte de malefici, et da cacciare i Demoni probate* was issued. This manual, which was published again with emendations in 1567, probably should be attributed to the Conventual Franciscan Buonaventura Farinerio of Castelfranco, who had been provincial minister in the March of Treviso between 1547 and 1550 and subsequently, in the 1550s and 1560s, had been active as inquisitor in Treviso, Aquila and Verona.⁷⁸ It is a rather concise and down-to-earth exorcism manual. It first explains in nine short chapters how demons can enter the human body, what signs indicate bodily possession and the *maleficia* involved, and how the exorcist-priest has to prepare himself, both to be successful in his exorcisms and to protect himself against any demonic backlash. The second part of the work contains more elaborate exorcism formulas '... contra Demoniacos, & maleficiatos, & incantationes, & facturas, & domos a demonio vexatas,' and finally incantations against dangerous forms of inclement weather.⁷⁹

Contemporaneous with the publications of Menghi was the somewhat rhetorical yet again concise *Practica Exorcistarum*. This text was the product of the learned Paduan Conventual Franciscan theologian and professional exorcist Valerio Polidoro; a former pupil of Cesare Lanza, the Franciscan who in 1580 was condemned for his necromantic practices.⁸⁰ Polidoro's work details a substantial number of *praexorcizationes* as proper preparations to the exorcism properly speaking, to ensure the suc-

[https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/1611/1611_a2014n8/1611_a2014n8a8/1611_a2014n8a8.pdf]. The presence of the devil and the demonological concerns of mendicant missionaries and inquisitors are very prominent in the historiographical works of the sixteenth-century Franciscan missionary/historian Toribio Motolinia. See also: Pierre Ragon, "Démonologie et démonologie dans les recherches sur la civilisation mexicaine au XVI^e siècle," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine* 35:2 (1988): 163-181.

⁷⁸ In fact, Farinerio's name is only overtly linked to the edition of 1567: *Exorcismo, mirabile da disfare ogni sorte de malefici, et da cacciare i demoni, et è provato; et per il reverendo P. Frate Buonaventura Farinerio / Inquisitor revisto / et di nuovo con somma diligentia corretto, & ristampato* (Venice: Domenico de' Franceschi, 1567). It is a bit unclear as to whether he is also the author of the 1540 and 1545 editions; both of which are now accessible via Google Books, or that he just reworked and published a new version on the basis of a pre-existing work with the same title.

⁷⁹ I have used the anonymous unfoliated 1545 edition, which is accessible via Google Books: *Exorcismo, mirabile et bono da disfare ogni sorte de malefici, et per cacciare li Demoni da ogni persona indemoniata, con una bella Congiuratione contra alla tempesta, di novo aggiunta, approbato. Composto per un devoto Religioso, et novamente Stampato* (Brescia: Biblioteca Damiani de Turlinis, 1545).

⁸⁰ *Practica exorcistarum F. Valerii Polidori Patavini, Conventualis Francisc. Artium, & Sacrae Theologiae Doctoris, ad Daemones, et Maleficia de Christifidelibus expellendum* (Padua: Apud Paulum Meietum, 1585). On the connection between Polidoro and Lanza, see Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1990), 153.

cess of the procedure as a whole. On the basis of this, the work proceeds to offer a series of nine step-by-step exorcisms, each containing detailed instructions, including the proper gestures and the bodily postures to maintain, as well as the biblical readings, prayers, songs and incantations to be performed in proper order. A substantial part of the work is also devoted to the *postexorcizatio* – the aftermath of the exorcism properly speaking. This discussion aims to avoid recurrence of possession by the malignant spirit in question, force obstinate demons to depart for good with a variety of maledictions, and to strengthen body and soul of the victim of possession. Several years later, Polidoro issued a second volume of his *Practica*, subtitled *Dispersio demonum*, which includes a variety of recipes for charms and amulets against possession, and also lists numerous directions for the diet, herbs and medical compounds that can be used to facilitate the liberation of demoniacs.⁸¹

When the Cologne publisher Lazarus Zetzner produced a massive exorcism omnibus for the non-Italian market in 1608, the so-called *Thesaurus exorcismorum*, he included Valerio Polidoro's *Practica* and *Dispersio* as well as Menghi's *Flagellum* and *Fustis*, alongside of manuals by the Barnabite Zaccaria Visconti and the secular cleric Pier Antonio Stampa. Due to the success of this omnibus, which in 1626 was reprinted with an additional exorcism manual by Maximilian von Eynatten, the exorcism treatises of Menghi and Polidoro reached an even larger reading public during the seventeenth century, ensuring their impact on subsequent generations of exorcists and demonological authors alike.⁸²

Rising skepticism by medical doctors, natural philosophers, several high-ranking ecclesiastical figures and members of the central office of the Roman inquisition notwithstanding,⁸³ exorcism manuals continued to thrive, even after the publication of the 'official' *Rituale romanum* in 1614, based on a draft made by Cardinal Santori in the mid 1580s. This

⁸¹ *Diversio daemonum quae secunda pars est practice exorcistarum* (Padua: Apud Paulum Meietum, 1587).

⁸² I have consulted the 1608 edition: *Thesaurus exorcismorum atque conjurationum terribilium potentissimum, effacissimum, cum Practica probatissima* (...) *Ad maximam Exorcistarum commoditatem in lucem editus et recusus* (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1608). For a succinct analysis of the rhetorical aspects of these works, see: Hilaire Kallendorf, "The Rhetoric of Exorcism," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 23:3 (Summer 2005): 209-237. Menghi's *Flagellum daemonum* apparently was also included in the 1669 multi-volume *Malleus maleficarum* edition.

⁸³ Vincenzo Lavenia, "La medicina dei diavoli: Il caso italiano, secoli XVI-XVII," in *Medicine et religion. Collaborations, compétitions, conflits (XIIe-XXe siècle)*: éd. M.P. Donato et al. (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2013), 163-194; Brambilla, "Manuali d'esorcismo," 555-593; Domizia Weber, "Indemoniate, ossesse, folli. Esorcismi e medicina dopo il Concilio di Trento," *Zapruder* 41 (Sept.-Dec. 2016): 26-38.

Rituale was clearly the work of a careful post-Tridentine theologian not in favor of spectacular exorcisms. The exorcism procedures and liturgy laid out in the *Rituale* ignored much of the materials written during the sixteenth century, and provided a much more restrained approach to exorcism. Yet the Church did not make it compulsory for priests, bishops and members of the regular clergy to follow the *Rituale* in their exorcism practices. As a result, prior to the eighteenth century, and in some regions even later, the exorcism rituals of the 1614 *Rituale* had only a limited impact.⁸⁴

The ongoing fears about demonic possession, witchcraft and the impact of *maleficia*, fed by spectacular mass-posessions of villages and, more often, nunneries, ensured that the market for exorcism manuals continued to thrive. In this market new generations of Franciscan demonologists were active as well. An important figure in this regard is Jean Benedicti, a French Observant friar from the Tours region, who as secretary to the minister general Christopher of Cheffontaines accompanied him on his visitations. In subsequent years he performed visitations of French and Italian convents as commissary-general, and he also went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There he collected holy water from cult sites associated with the lives of Christ and especially the Virgin Mary, which he later would use in his own exorcism practices. Today, Benedicti is first and foremost known for his popular *Somme des péchés et le remède d'iceux comprenant tous les cas de conscience*, which remained in print throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸⁵ Yet he also wrote accounts of his exorcisms, performed in the Franciscan church of Lyon and elsewhere, in which he always called upon the Virgin Mary to assist him.⁸⁶

One product of this was *La triomphante victoire de la Sainte Vierge*, a modest size book of slightly over 100 pages published in 1611. This text details the long 1582 exorcism in the Franciscan church of Lyon of Perinette Pinay. She was an elderly female demoniac who had suffered from demonic possession by seven demons for twelve years. The text relates in addition the liberation of a young possessed girl during the same year.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ P. Dondelinger-Mandy, "Le rituel des exorcismes dans le Rituale Romanum de 1614," *Le Maison-Dieu* 183/184 (1990): 99-121; Young, *A History of Exorcism*, 116-121.

⁸⁵ Lucie Humeau, "Jean Benedicti et sa *Somme des pechez et le remede d'iceux* (1584): un franciscain dans son temps," *Études Franciscaines* n.s. 7:2 (2014).

⁸⁶ Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 58.

⁸⁷ *Triomphante victoire De la vierge Marie sur sept malins esprits finalement chassés du corps d'une femme dans l'église des Cordeliers de Lyon. Laquelle histoire est enrichie d'une belle doctrine pour ente[n]dre l'astuce des diables. A l'histoire est adiouté un petit discours d'un autre diable, possédant une ieune fille & aussi expulsé auparavant, orné de mesme doctrine. Sur la fin est inseré un excellent Exorcisme de mervueilleuse efficace pour coniurer & chasser*

Following the vivid accounts of these two successful exorcisms with the assistance of the Virgin, Benedicti included a model exorcism procedure for practicing exorcists, notably those engaged in liberating female demons. At closer look, Benedicti's model exorcism in the second half of the work seems little more than a Latin re-working of several exorcism procedures developed earlier in Menghi's *Flagellum Daemonum*. The popularity of Benedicti's work was probably not due to the inclusion of these latter model exorcisms. What might explain part of its enduring success in seventeenth and early eighteenth-century France, was the recourse to the Virgin Mary in Benedicti's exorcism stories, and his frequent derisory references to Huguenot and atheist skepticism throughout his two accounts. Together, these suggested that attacks on the cult of Mary were erroneous and confirmed the truth of Catholic faith, which unlike Protestantism would have a proper answer to demonic possession.⁸⁸

If we pass over Esprit of Bosroger's history of the possession of female religious at Louvier mentioned above,⁸⁹ which also contains information on the actual exorcism of the women in question, and if we discard exorcism manuals and treatises of conjuration falsely attributed to Franciscan and/or Capuchin friars,⁹⁰ the most important Franciscan exorcism manual brought out in the years after the appearance of Jean Benedicti's *La triomphante victoire de la Sainte Vierge* might have been the peculiar *Mal-*

les diables des corps humains. Le tout décrit à la pure et sincère vérité par le R. P. I. Benedicti de l'ordre des frères mineurs, lecteur de Théologie et Prédicateur en la Ville de Lyon (Lyon: Benoist Rigaud, 1583/Lyon, 1611).

⁸⁸ See also Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 59; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 85f: "The main function that Catholic exorcisms served during the Reformation era was to prove that Catholics, unlike Protestants, were able to cast out demons. Protestants claimed that Catholic exorcisms were magical and superstitious as well as ineffective (...) The Catholic response to this criticism was to demonstrate in a public, theatrical way that only the Catholic Church could cast out demons. As the one true Church established by Christ, it alone could perform miracles, the most spectacular being exorcism."

⁸⁹ *La piété affligée*, 340ff.

⁹⁰ Several modern scholars, including Brambilla and Young, mention the *Coniurationes potentissimae et efficaces ad expellendas et fugandas aereas tempestates a Daemonibus* of the Capuchin friar Pietro Locatelli, which first was issued in 1618 and went through several additional imprints in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century. To my knowledge, however, Locatelli was not a Capuchin friar. An older work not discussed here is the *Flagellum diaboli*, attributed to the Franciscan Observant Francisco de Osuna. This work is known to us thanks to a German translation from 1602: *Flagellum Diaboli: Oder deß Teufels Gaißel. Darin gar lustig und artlich gehandelt wirt: Von der macht und gewalt deß bösen Feindts: Von den effecten und Wirkungen der Zauberer Unholdter und Hexenmaister: Warum Gott bewillige das die Menschen von ihnen werden belaidigt am Leib und Gut: Und was für remedia und mittel darwider zugebrauchen (...)*; trans. Aegidius Albertinus (Munich: Adam Berg, 1602). To my knowledge the attribution of this text to Francisco de Osuna is incorrect.

leus daemonum of Alessandro Albertino, an Observant friar from Mantua. This treatise, first printed in 1620 and re-edited with additions in 1624, contains four 'experimentatissimi exorcismi' derived almost fully from the Gospel text.⁹¹ The author apparently wanted to stay close to the evangelical wellspring of divine power, and use formulas that were both very familiar and efficacious. Alessandro fiercely attacked medical doctors and natural philosophers who infringed on the terrain of exorcism with natural remedies, and who in his eyes were just blind to the truth and powerless in the face of demonic possession.⁹²

What distinguishes Alessandro's text from several other manuals is the fact that it includes at the end three additional exorcism-like formulas that uneducated people and women could fall back on if they did not have access to a priest. This can be read as a stance against the tendency to make exorcism a privileged activity of ordained clerics, and it has been interpreted as an indication that Alessandro did not yet see exorcism as a procedure of a near-sacramental status.⁹³ It can also be understood in a much more down-to-earth fashion as an acknowledgment that there was a demand among lay people for means to protect themselves against demonic intrusion. Rather than leaving such people fending for themselves and have them engage in all kinds of magical and even necromantic actions, Alessandro might have deemed it more expedient to provide them with Bible-based rituals and prayers that had the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities.⁹⁴

By far the most important seventeenth-century Franciscan exorcist treatises were those issued in the 1650s and early 1660s by the Italian friar Candido Brugnoli, who had a career in the Riformati branch of the Observant order family as lector, preacher, order administrator and inquisitor in the Bergamo and Padua regions, as well as in Rome. Based on his inquisitorial and pastoral experiences, he first composed a *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum* with support of his order superiors and the Roman inquisition.⁹⁵ The title indicates that it was aimed at prac-

⁹¹ *Malleus daemonum, sive, Quatuor experimentatissimi exorcismi, ex Evangelij collecti. In fine eru[n]t due Benedictiones, & una vulgaris deprecatio pro ignaris, & mulieribus, ut possunt semetipsos præsuerare, & liberare Deo auxiliante: si non habuerint sacerdotem* (Verona: Typis Bartolomaei Merli, 1620/Milan: Haeredes Pacifici Poncii & Ioan. Baptistam Piccaleum, impressores archiep., 1624).

⁹² *Malleus daemonum* (ed. 1624), 207-211.

⁹³ Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 69.

⁹⁴ Cf. the evaluation in Maria Sofia Messana, "I francescani di Noto e l'Inquisizione," in *Francescanesimo e cultura a Noto*, ed. Diego Ciccirelli & Simona Sarzana (Palermo: Bibliotheca Franciscana-Officina di Studi Medievali, 2005), 163-175: 173.

⁹⁵ *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum: Hoc est Tractatus de curatione et protectione divina, In quo, variis reprobatis erroribus, verus, certus, securus, catholicus, apostolicus, &*

ting exorcists and parish priests, yet the general introduction to the work explains that it was also meant to help medical doctors understand whether their patients were possessed or not, and to facilitate 'all other seekers of Christian truth.'⁹⁶ The work is divided in three parts, the first of which deals with the spiritual doctor, namely the exorcist or the pastor, his qualities and his tasks, as well as with the nature of demonic possession: how it afflicts people, how it can be discerned, and how it should be approached. The second part focuses on the afflicted person (*aegrotus obsessus*), who has to be prepared for treatment via prayers, fasting and other purifying actions. The third part is devoted to the remedies to force the demons out, in ordinary and also in abnormal and difficult cases.⁹⁷

Brugnoli's manual puts forward and resolves a large number of questions surrounding exorcism in a very scholastic fashion, including the attitude of the exorcists and the behavior of everybody involved. As the older classics of Menghi had become old-fashioned in tone and style, and included polemical passages that were no longer deemed relevant, there was a definite need for this manual. Moreover, Brugnoli catered to the more cautious stance of the Roman inquisition, which from the early seventeenth century onwards had insisted on calling in the assistance of medical doctors, to consult whether or not the affliction of the patient in question had natural (humoral) or supernatural (demonic) causes. The available studies on Brugnoli therefore emphasize his exorcismal prudence.⁹⁸ This prudence extended to condemning perceived abuses by overzealous and uncontrolled exorcists, including various forms of exaggerated bodily punishment of demoniacs to help drive out the demon, but also the inappropriate manual application of cleansing oils and waters on the private parts of female demoniacs. These were all dismissed

evangelicus ejiciendi daemones ab hominibus, & è rebus ad homines spectantibus; curandi informos; ab inimicis se tuendi; Deumque in cunctis necessitatibus propitium habendi modus traditur (...) (Bergamo: Marco Antonio Rubio, 1651). Additional editions appeared in any case in Lyon (1658) and Venice (1702 and 1714).

⁹⁶ *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum*, Ad lectorem, p. xx3r: "Opus hoc de Curatione Divina ex piorum Theologorum consilio pro Exorcistis, Parochis, ac Medicis, ac quibusquis Christianae veritatis professoribus (...)."

⁹⁷ *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum*, Ad lectorem, p. xx3v & Summaria brevia, pp. xx4r-6v.

⁹⁸ See Sluhovsky, *Believe not Every Spirit*, 49 and more in particular Ottavia Niccoli, "L'esorcista prudente. Il 'Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum' di fra Candido Brugnoli da Sarnico," in *Il piacere del testo. Saggi e studi per Albano Biondi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi et al., Europa delle corti. Centro studi sulle società di antico regime. Biblioteca del Cinquecento, 99, 2 Vols. (Rome: Bulzoni Editori, 2001) I, 193-215.

by Brugnoli as illicit and even sinful practices.⁹⁹ This more cautious approach to exorcism notwithstanding, his *Manuale* and other works could still function as central texts in the magical operations of the Brazilian Carmelite exorcist and necromancer Luis de Nazaré, who became subject to inquisitorial persecution during the 1740s.¹⁰⁰

Seventeen years after the publication of his *Manuale*, Brugnoli issued a massive two-volume theoretical work on *maleficia* and demonic possession for the use of exorcists, priests, confessors, medical doctors, theologians, preachers, inquisitors and judges. This so-called *Alexicacon* is a comprehensive theological summa organized in a disputation format, and with a much wider scope than his previous work, including the provision of materials for doctrinal and moral preaching on demonological issues.¹⁰¹ This would imply that such topics were still part of the homiletic message of Franciscan and non-Franciscan preachers, but this is something that needs further corroboration.¹⁰² Throughout the *Alexicacon* the authorial voice again presents itself as a cautious and equilibrated evaluator of demonic possession and exorcismal practices, emphasizing that exorcisms should only be performed after proper consultation of medical specialists and with due diligence with regard to the presence of clear indications that the patient is really a suffering demoniac. Yet like Brugnoli's earlier work, the *Alexicacon* is univocally clear about the possibility of physical demonic intrusion, and argues that medical doctors should not overstep their bounds in applying natural remedies against *maleficia* and other instruments of demonic possession.¹⁰³ This left Brugnoli ample

⁹⁹ Brugnoli discussed at length the virtues and proper comportment of the exorcist, to ensure that he did not commit any sins himself in the exorcism process, and that he had ascertained himself of the veracity and nature of the demonic possession prior to engaging in any further action. For his criticism of inappropriate manhandling and fondling of (female) demoniacs, see for instance *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum*, Pars I, Cap. III, Art. 5, Quaestio 21, p. 177-178: "An licitum sit Exorcista, energumenum vexare flagellis, et dehonestare opprobriis, aliave similia facere."

¹⁰⁰ Davies, *Grimoires*, 60.

¹⁰¹ *Alexicacon. Hoc est de Maleficiis, ac Morbis Maleficis duobus tomis distributum, quorum alter quatuor de eorum cognitione disputationes, alter totidem de eorum curatione continet (...)* ne dum Exorcistis, ac Medicis necessarium; sed Theologis, Philosophis, Concionatoribus, Confessariis, Parochis, Inquisitoribus, Iudicibus (...) utilissimum (...): 2 Vols. (Venice: Battista Catani, 1668/Second edition Venice: Niccolo Pezzana, 1714).

¹⁰² Earlier in this article I have made some remarks about the presence of the devil and demons in Franciscan preaching during the medieval period. It is not possible to even begin making statements on such issues with regard to Franciscan preaching after Trent. Except for specific themes and authors (such as Cornelio Musso): Franciscan preaching during the early modern period has not been studied adequately.

¹⁰³ See in particular *Alexicacon*, 233-282 (Disputatio IV: De rebus naturalibus, ut sunt causa maleficiorum): and the final conclusions of the first book: "Ad Theologum Ex-

space to expound on efficacious exorcism practices, on the qualities and virtues necessary for the exorcist to perform his tasks properly, and also to discuss all kind of illicit magical and diabolical cures at length in his second book.¹⁰⁴

After the works of Brugnoli, the Franciscan production of exorcism manuals and related demonological texts seemingly tapered off. This impression, however, needs additional confirmation, as our knowledge of the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literary production of friars remains rather deficient. It does appear that by the later seventeenth century the market for such texts became saturated. Another limiting factor might have been a rising cautionary attitude among higher ecclesiastical authorities, culminating in the decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, between 1704 and 1710, to ban the exorcism manuals of Menghi, Brugnoli and several of their non-Franciscan counterparts, alongside of a ban on magical books with maledictions and conjurations.¹⁰⁵

There is no evidence, however, that the opinion of many Franciscan friars on demonological matters changed radically in this period. At least, that is the impression gained from reading *L'incredulité scavante* of the French friar Jacques d'Autun (Jacques of Chevannes), which was issued in 1671.¹⁰⁶ Friar Jacques proposed an 'equilibrated approach' towards demonology, and endeavored to hold the virtuous middle ground between ignorant religious superstition and learned unbelief. From that vantage point, he defended a world view that still took magic, sorcery and demonic intervention in human affairs very seriously, including demonic possession of human beings.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, he was skeptical of the wild

orcistam, non ad medicum maleficiorum cognitionem pertinere" *Alexicacon*, 282 (Conclusio Generalis Tomi Primi, § I).

¹⁰⁴ See especially his long and systematic *Disputatio prima de curatione diabolica*, *Alexicacon* II, 1-312. Cf. also more in general on the *Alexicacon* as a whole: A. Biondi, "Tra corpo e anima: medicina ed esorcistica nel Seicento (l'*Alexicacon* di Candido Brugnoli)," in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo, disciplina della società*, ed. P. Prodi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 397-416.

¹⁰⁵ Vincenzo Lavenia, "Tenere i malefici per cosa vera? Esorcismi e censura nell'Italia moderna," in *Dal torchio alle fiamme. Inquisizione e censura*, ed. V. Bonani (Salerno: Biblioteca Provinciale di Salerno, 2005): 163-204; Elena Brambilla, "La fine dell'esorcismo: possessione, santità, isteria dall'età barocca all'Illuminismo," *Quaderni storici* 38 (2003): 117-163.

¹⁰⁶ *L'incredulité scavante et la credulité ignorante au Sujet des magiciens et des sorciers* (Lyon: Jean Molin, 1671).

¹⁰⁷ *L'incredulité scavante*, 100-101: "La difficulté est bien plus grande quand le Demon parle par la bouche d'un possédé, que lors qu'il se sert du gozier des animaux pour se faire entendre, d'autant que son artifice est plus caché; & il y a bien de la peine à découvrir si c'est le Demon qui parle, ou la creature: Ce n'est pas qu'il n'y ayt quelques regles à observer pour ne pas prendre le change; car si c'est un idiot qui parle des langues estrangères,

accusations of witchcraft by uneducated lay people, and of the possession of very young children. The latter would be too innocent in the eyes of God to allow them to be taken over by a malignant spirit.¹⁰⁸

A more radical demonological world view shines through in the deeds of near-contemporary Franciscan friars in Mexico, notably Franciscan missionaries *de propaganda fidei*. Their demonological views can be traced in Fray Isidro Félix de Espinosa's *Crónica apostólica y seráfica*,¹⁰⁹ and in additional letters by missionaries active in the field, such as friar Pablo Sarmiento, preacher and guardian of the Franciscan college of Querétaro in the 1690s.¹¹⁰ These sources indicate that, in line with their Franciscan missionary predecessors from the sixteenth century, these late seventeenth-century friars did not hesitate to persecute people for witchcraft and to advocate exorcisms of alleged demoniacs. According to them, many indigenous women within the region were being possessed by demons. In the face of skepticism expressed by members of other religious orders, the Franciscan missionaries of Querétaro engaged in invasive exorcism procedures. In these, they also used compounds mentioned in Menghi's *Flagellum demonum*. During these exorcisms they allegedly banished hundreds of devils from the women. In the process of these procedures many strange objects came out of the women's bodies. Eventually, when one of the female demoniacs became pregnant and the exorcists claimed that demons had caused this, the inquisition chose to intervene, reprimanding the friars and putting one of them (Matheo Bonilla) on trial for heresy.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, due to the factors mentioned earlier, in this period the Franciscan production of full-blown exorcist manuals might have been on the wane. To my knowledge, the only major independent Franciscan

lesquelles il n'a jamais apprises, comme la Grecque & l'Hebraïque, il est certain que c'est le Demon qui fait alors le discours; ou si l'on oyt un Rustique (dont l'esprit n'a jamais esté cultivé) parler des choses sublimes, & qui sont infiniment au dessus de sa capacité, quoy qu'il s'enonce en langage vulgaire, il n'est nul doute que le Demon est le harangueur..."

¹⁰⁸ See for instance *L'incredulité scavante*, 508, expressing skepticism about the alleged possession of a child since she was three years old.

¹⁰⁹ *Cronica apostolica y seraphica de todos los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de esta Nueva-España de misioneros Franciscanos Observantes (...): Prima Parte* (Mexico: Viuda de Don Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, 1746). For a modern edition of Isidro's text, see *Crónica apostólica y seráfica de todos los colegios de Propaganda Fide de esta Nueva España* (1746), ed. Lino G. Canedo (Washington D.C.: Washington, Academy of American Franciscan History, 1964).

¹¹⁰ For the archival collections containing these letters, see: Fernando Cervantes, "The Devils of Querétaro: Scepticism and Credulity in Late Seventeenth-Century Mexico," *Past and Present* 130 (1991): 51-69 (54f).

¹¹¹ Cervantes, "The Devils of Querétaro," *passim* provides a detailed analysis of this episode.

manual with a significant impact produced in subsequent decades was the *Armamentarium ecclesiasticum*, issued by the Freising Franciscan lector Ubaldus Stoiber in 1726.¹¹² Building on the Gospel, patristic authorities, canon law, the *Rituale Romanum*, and in particular the recently banned exorcist manuals of Brugnoli, this work again discusses all aspects of and questions pertaining to exorcism in six chapters (each of which are again subdivided in a number of specific questions in the scholastic fashion). The *Armamentarium* was designed to be an efficacious instrument in the hand of pastors, so that they had the means to liberate those suffering from attacks of and possession by demonic hosts, and to counter the arguments and accusations of heretics (i.e. Protestants, alleged atheists and other skeptical proponents of 'modern' natural and medical science).¹¹³

Following up on a discussion broached by earlier exorcism specialists, Stoiber claimed exorcism to be a near sacramental activity, only to be engaged in by ordained priests.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in his view, the exorcism rite itself obtained the status of a pseudo-sacrament that, if properly performed, worked *ex opere operato*. Charismatic exorcism *ex opere operantis* was thereby further marginalized.¹¹⁵ It remains unclear to what extent

¹¹² *Armamentarium ecclesiasticum complectens arma spiritualia, fortissima, ad insultus diabolicos elidendos, & feliciter superandos ad Utilitatem omnium animarum Pastorum, sedulo ex ipso S. Evangelii fonte, SS. Patribus, & probatissimis authoribus collecta a P. Fr. Ubaldo Stoiber, Ord. Min. S. Patris Reformat. p. t. SS. Theologiae Lectore Ordinario in Conventu & Studio Frisingensi* (Augsburg: Sumptibus Phil. Martini, & Joan. Veith Haeredum, 1726).

¹¹³ *Armamentarium*, 1v (Ad Lectorem): "...praesens Armamentarium Benevolo Lectori offerre volui, ut inde animum, et arma sumat, infernales coercendi hostes, oppressos liberandi, atque haereticis non solum subtilibus argumentorum rationibus sed et opere ipso demonstrandi nostram Fidem Catholicam supra firmam petram fundatam, adhuc consistere inconcussam."

¹¹⁴ *Armamentarium*, Caput I, Conclusio 1: "*Exorcistatus est Ordo, seu Sacramentum novae legis, quo traditur ordinato potestas daemones increpandi, illisque ab hominibus, et e rebus ad hominines spectantibus expellendi* (...) Dicitur tamen ordinato ad denotandum Laicis hanc non competere potestatem (...) Quare, etsi saepe Laici invocando SS. Nomen JESU daemones expulisse historiis fide dignis referantur, id tamen non potestate exorcistica, & speciali, sed propter fidem inhabitantem ex gratia gratis data, atque ex potestate generali fecerunt ob promissum divinum (...)"

¹¹⁵ *Armamentarium*, 6 (Caput I) "...non enim exorcismus ipse est merum aliquod Sacramentale ab Ecclesia institutum, neque est verum Sacramentum infallibiliter gratiam DEI, vel effectum ejus gratuitum significans, sed est aliquid in virtute Sacramenti ex institutione divina, atque ex opere operato infallibiliter illum produciens effectum, ad quem finaliter producendum est institutum Sacramentum exorcitatus; licet enim Ecclesia Exorcistis certos tradat Exorcismos in Ritualibus passim comprehensos; revera tamen formam essentialem in SS. Nomine JESU exorcizandi obsessos ex S. Evangelio, consequenter ut à Christo institutam desumit."; Ibidem, 26: "Exorcismi in Persona Christi facti ex opere operato suum produciunt effectum."

Stoiber's opinions on this were shared by other clergymen, as discussions about the sacramental status of exorcism rituals and formulas had never been fully resolved.¹¹⁶ The clerics righteously involved in exorcism were not only secular ordained exorcists and priests. According to Stoiber, this authority extended to members of the regular clergy, and hence also Franciscan friars had the authority to engage in exorcisms independent from episcopal approval.¹¹⁷

The production of large exorcism manuals might have lost some of its appeal during the eighteenth century, in the context of a growing circumspection with regard to the application of exorcisms. Nevertheless, more sober exorcism instructions continued to be included as significant chapters in Franciscan handbooks for the theological and liturgical formation of clerical friars and priests. A good example of this is *Enchiridium Quadripartitum*, published in Cologne by the Conventual friar Vincentius von Berg in 1743. The second section of this work is completely devoted to the exorcism of people and animals. The bases for this were no longer the more spectacular exorcism classics from the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, but the Gelasian liturgical formula also referred to in the *Rituale Romanum* and on more cautious recent exorcism manuals, such as in this case the works of the German theologian Maximilian von Eynatten.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Hence Jacques d'Autun had argued against this position, denying exorcism formulas the status of a sacrament. *L'incrédulité scavante*, 394: "...les paroles des Exorcismes n'ont pas une pareille vertu [as the words of the sacraments properly speaking], elles ne sont pas efficaces d'elles memes, pour contraindre les Démons de sortir du corps des possédez, mais absolument dependantes de la volonté de Dieu, qui n'a pas attaché sa puissance à ces signes Sacramentels..."

¹¹⁷ *Armamentarium*, 4 (Caput I, Inferes 2): "Regulares exemptos posse energumenos ad se adductos exorcizare etiam sine licentia ab Episcopo petita..."

¹¹⁸ *Enchiridium Quadripartitum P. Vincentii von Berg Franciscani Conventualis: Pars Prima Exhibet Varias, Selectas, Exquisitissimasque Benedictiones rerum omnigenarum Approbatas, & quibus Viri Sancti uti dicuntur. Pars Secunda Tractat de Regulis Artis Exorcisticae, cum suis Exorcismis, ac Remediis adversus quaevis maleficia, & id genus, afflictiones tam hominum, quam animalium. Pars Tertia Agit de Archi-Confraternitate S.P.N. Francisci, Chordigeris, Tertiariis, Novena S. Antonii, ejus Confraternitate, nec non Ordini nostro Affiliatis. Pars Quarta Praescribit modum Aegros, Agonizantesque Adjuvandi; agendi cum obstinatis. Haereticis convertendis, Sagis Examinandis, incarceratis invisendis, Reisque Educendis.* (...) (Cologne: Joannis Conradi Gussen, 1743). According to Juan de Soto, *Bibliotheca Universa Franciscana* (Madrid: M. de Agreda, 1732) I, 56, a certain Amandus N., OFM issued in 1724 a *Speculum Ordinandorum, de Energumenis exorcizandis, et de sanctissima Missa ritibus*, which might have been a comparable combinatory work, but I have not yet been able to find any copy of it.

Conclusion

Stoiber's case for the legitimacy of exorcism activities by members of the regular clergy indicates that, at least in the region where he was active, early eighteenth-century Franciscan friars still wished to have the liberty to act as independent exorcists, and that they did not want to be curbed in this by diocesan ecclesiastical authorities. Hence, precisely 500 years after the death of Francis who, as a celebrated charismatic exorcist, had inaugurated the Minorite tradition of exorcistic engagement, an established theologian could argue for the importance and the relevance of an autonomous exorcistic agency for members of the Franciscan order. What had changed was the nature of the exorcism in question. Building on a by then centuries-old tradition of manuals for professional exorcists, Stoiber and colleagues devoted much of their energy to proving that exorcism was based on proper procedures that should be applied by clerical professionals. Some, like Stoiber, even went as far as to state that exorcism functioned *ex opere operato*. The conclusion that charismatic exorcism was thereby definitively relegated to the realm of the mythical founders and early saints of the order is unwarranted, however, as seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hagiographical presentations of later Franciscan saints and *beati/beatae*, such as the large *Leggendario Franciscano* of Benedetto Mazzara, still invoke many instances of charismatic exorcism and heroic struggles with demons to highlight the saintly qualities of their heroes.¹¹⁹

Looking back on the trajectory sketched in this exploratory essay many questions remain. One of the major questions alluded to in the beginning, namely to what extent Franciscan theology and Franciscan anthropological thought was responsible for the rising fear of the devil and the witch craze of the renaissance, remains unanswered. I do believe that it is worth while to return to this issue, as the impact of Franciscan theological thought as a catalyst for demonological concerns has become somewhat of a topos in present-day historical and theological writing on late medieval and early modern demonology. Once established, such topoi have the tendency to gain a perpetual status.

¹¹⁹ Benedetto Mazzara, *Leggendario Franciscano. Nel quale secondo l'ordine de'Mesi si rapportano le Vite, e Morti de'Santi, Beati, ed altri Huomini Venerabili, & Illustri, Quali per le loro rare virtù, & eroiche azzioni si sono segnalati nella Santità ne'tre Ordini istituiti dal Serafico P.S. Francesco (...) Parte seconda divisa in due volume, Volume Primo* (Venice: Bartolomeo Tramontino, 1679). This volume abounds in cases of violent confrontations with demons, demonic temptations and of demoniacs liberated by saintly or venerated order members.

Based on the information I was able to collect, I would say that Franciscans were quick to claim feats of charismatic exorcism for their early *sancti* and *beati*, and did not refrain from exploiting demonological themes in their preaching and adjacent pastorally oriented texts, yet they were not in the vanguard with regard to the creation of substantial exorcism manuals. Nor were they the foremost trendsetters in the creation of demonological works that emphasized the diabolic nature of witchcraft, whatever the impact of Franciscan theology and Franciscan anthropological thought might have been in the theoretical facilitation of such convictions.

Once the Franciscan production of exorcism manuals and related demonological treatises gained momentum in the sixteenth century, it led to the production of a number of texts that would have a lasting impact. In that sense the Franciscans were important players in shaping the demonological outlook of early modern Europe. The works of Girolamo Menghi were of particular importance in this regard. Yet it also holds true to an extent for the manuals of Valerio Polidoro. Due to the inclusion of texts by Menghi and Polidoro in the early seventeenth-century *Thesaurus exorcismorum*, the demonological insights of these Italian friars reached a much larger European audience in the decades after their death. From the mid seventeenth-century onwards, the learned and carefully argued exorcism treatises by Candido Brugnoli also made a lasting mark which, looking at the sources used by Stoiber in 1726, overcame the prohibitions by the Sacred Congregation of the Index.

Scholars interested in the Franciscan order and the emergence of a Franciscan world view – in so far as such a concept has any validity in the context of a movement that was so large and diverse, and evolved in so many different directions over time – tend to focus on a relatively small number of texts that in their eyes constitute the privileged sources to unearth pivotal aspects of order identity and existential internal conflict. It is evident that many of the texts alluded to in this essay are not part of the source corpus most studied by specialists of Franciscan history. I believe that this omission is artificial and, from a historical point of view, unsatisfactory. Just like the many Franciscan texts on crusading, on Jews and other alleged enemies of Christian faith that only relatively recently are being given the attention they deserve,¹²⁰ demonological texts and the subgenre of exorcism manuals mentioned here are part of the religious and intellectual legacy of the order, which shaped many generations of Franciscan preachers, confessors, inquisitors, missionaries and, indeed,

¹²⁰ See, for instance, Bert Roest, "Giovanni of Capestrano's Anti-Judaism Within a Franciscan Context. An Evaluation Based on Recent Scholarship," *Franciscan Studies* 75 (2017): 117-143.

exorcists, and which also helped shape the religious mentality of many others during the renaissance and early modern period, and even creates echoes in present-day society.¹²¹

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¹²¹ In present-day Catholicism, fear for the power of the devil, and the need for instruments to counter demonic influence, including demonic possession, still give rise to the production of works that take part of their inspiration from the demonological legacy discussed in this article. Cases in point are *Conosci il tuo avversario* (2009) and *Manuale di demonologia* (2012) by Simone Iuliano. Each of these works according to their backcover text has been “maturato in ambiente francescano laico” and they can be ordered via the internet.