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The Sapiential Hermeneutics of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio

Context and Development

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Abstract

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274) was a Franciscan scholastic at the University of Paris and an ecclesiastical administrator of the Order of Friars Minor in thirteenth century Latin West. This thesis explores the meaning and utility of Bonaventure's hermeneutics, not in monolithic terms, but as the product of an evolutionary process. A sequential study of Bonaventure's key texts demonstrates how his foci and methods of approaching his subject and sources changed in ways that would prove communicable in new settings and to new audiences. The setting and evolution of Bonaventure's sapiential hermeneutics provides a way of appreciating his synthetic originality as a concrete response to various conflicts. Within the Order, there was ongoing dispute between those clerically trained brothers advocating institutional norms and those *zelanti* endeavouring to literally observe the Spirit-led way of their founder, Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226), and inspired by the teaching of Joachim of Fiore (c.1135-1202). Outside the Order, Bonaventure countered secular criticism of the mendicant life and doctrinal confusion arising from a new movement toward an autonomous philosophy inspired from Aristotelian commentator Averroës (c.1126-1198).

From 1243 to 1253, Bonaventure studied Sacred Scripture and theology at the Franciscan school. From 1248, as a *baccalaureus*, he started to theorise an innovative, experientially oriented theological method drawing on the formality of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and the fourfold sense of Scripture. Bonaventure transformed the synthesis and sources of his illustrious master, Alexander of Hales (c.1185-1245). From 1254 to 1257, as a *magister*, Bonaventure enacted Alexander's project of teaching biblically *about* the causality of the human subject in its relation to God; nevertheless, Bonaventure registered this causality *through* lived experience of Christ. From 1257 to 1267, as Minister General of his Order, Bonaventure went beyond synthetic insight into the biblical text to performance of its psychological functions through which the reader is led back to its divine author. Bonaventure achieved this mystical enactment through a methodological re-envisioning of the five powers or stages of the soul espoused by the Pseudo-Augustinian *De spiritu et anima* within Pseudo-Dionysius' threefold practical program of spiritual growth, transfiguring the terms of Alexandrine metaphysics in an operative way. From 1267 to 1273, Bonaventure unified the fractious Order around a productive sapiential program. He responded with an integrative vision that unified textual understanding and mystical enactment of sapiential principles within the total experience of God in self and created order. Thus, Bonaventure developed the

communal dimensions of his synthesis within an ecclesial space. His methodological shifts illustrate the way in which forms of exegesis are constituted differently in different contexts to serve different ends and audiences, manifesting a different order of relation to the textual origin, Christ. Bonaventure's changing *sitz im leben* led him to develop a uniquely experiential way of understanding Scripture, with Christ as the embodiment of *sapientia* (wisdom).

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

(Jonathan Chung Yan LO)

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Introduction

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274) was a Franciscan scholastic and an ecclesiastical administrator in the thirteenth-century Latin West.[1] He is a subject of diverse interpretations by scholars. This multiplicity in interpretation is largely owing to the rich development of his synthesis in response to different contexts and audiences, within the Order of the Friars Minor and at the University of Paris. Its evolutionary dimension leads to a richness and multivalence that cannot be accounted for in purely monolithic terms. This thesis explores the originality of Bonaventure's synthesis from the standpoint of its development, taking into consideration the significance of context as a factor in interpretation. This thesis also shows how Bonaventure models a uniquely operational and contextually sensitive approach to understanding the *sapientia* (wisdom) of Scripture that is methodologically instructive. This is especially relevant when applied to our modern settings.

I. Discussing the originality of Bonaventure's synthesis

This thesis examines his hermeneutical development through intertextual and historical lenses. Although Christ would remain the subject of revelation, Bonaventure's foci and methods of approaching Christ would change in ways that would prove communicable in new settings and to new audiences. My study of the setting and evolution of Bonaventure's sapiential hermeneutics provides a way of appreciating his synthetic originality as a concrete response to conflicts within the Franciscan Order, between the Order and its critics at the University of Paris, and between the Order and Church.

Such a developmental perspective on Bonaventure's intellectual synthesis appears necessary if medieval intellectual history is to transcend the conceptual constraints placed upon it by modern neo-Kantianism. Emmanuel Kant's theorising in the eighteenth century of a wholly autonomous rationality reflected the growing abstraction of scientific reasoning from the dictates of faith in modern humanities studies.[2] Such historical studies tended to see medieval intellectual history in terms of a triumphalist progression from the age of faith to that of reason.

[1] The date of birth and other key events in Bonaventure's chronology have yet to be established. For the different authoritative perspectives, see Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 171-77; John F. Quinn, 'Chronology of St. Bonaventure (1217-1274),' *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 168-86; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress,' (2019). http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/. 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca. 1217-1274), sanctus'; Jay M. Hammond, 'Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master,' *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 179-226.

[2] Emmanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), preface, 99-154.

Within this narrative, traditionalists (mostly Augustinian) and progressives (mostly Aristotelian) jostled for power in the 'culture wars' of the thirteenth century. Scholars acknowledged the theological assimilation to Aristotelian science (*scientia*) as a seminal contribution within the history of scientific progress by Bonaventure's contemporary, Dominican Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). It has become customary among scholars such as Franz Ehrle and Maurice de Wulf to speak of Aquinas as the intellectual 'hero' setting the stage for deeper scientific breakthroughs and Bonaventure as the outmoded antithesis of scientific rigour.[3]

On his part, the liberal Protestant historian Paul Sabatier was eager to recast the genius of Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226, founder of the Franciscan Order) in light of the Protestant life of 'individual conscience'. Sabatier projected a negative view of Bonaventure as a conservative and political pragmatist who wrested the Franciscan *vita* into line with the institutional reform agenda of the clerically trained friars and Church.[4] More recently, Lydia Schumacher has assessed the originality of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, a massive doctrinal synthesis of Bonaventure's master Alexander of Hales and his leading disciples. It was 'one of the first and arguably the most significant theological synthesis to date…In many respects, therefore, the *Summa…*laid the groundwork for the further development of the Franciscan intellectual tradition as well as for the establishment of the burgeoning discipline of systematic theology.' According to Schumacher, even though the Franciscan school was formative in Bonaventure's intellectual development, Bonaventure's blend of neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism that progressed beyond the Augustinian system was unoriginal and essentially derivative of that of Alexander.[5] I contend that Bonaventure is considered worthy of critical attention – beyond

[3] Franz Ehrle, *Grundsätzliches zur Charakteristik der neueren und neuesten Scholastik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1918); Maurice de Wulf, *Medieval Philosophy: Illustrated from the System of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922); quoted in Lydia Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 10; Modern science is typically considered a development beyond Aristotelian science. See Thomas Goldstein, *Dawn of Modern Science: From the Ancient Greeks to the Renaissance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

[4] Paul M. Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. L.S. Houghton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913); Paul M. Sabatier, *Vie de S. Francois d' Assise* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1894); See also C.J.T. Talar, 'Saint of Authority and the Saint of the Spirit: Paul Sabatier's "Vie de S. François d'Assise,"' *The Catholic Historical Review* 82, 1 (1996): 23-39; Anthony Mockler, *Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), 13-15.

[5] Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation*, 1-2, 10-11, 117, 266; Lydia Schumacher, 'Bonaventure (ad 1221–74),' in *Divine Illumination:The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), 110-53; Schumacher's ground-breaking studies on early Franciscan theology have advanced the contemporary discussion beyond stereotypical depictions of both Bonaventure and Alexander as Augustinian and conservative. Lydia Schumacher, 'Bonaventure's Journey of the Mind into God: A Traditional Augustinian Ascent,' *Medioevo* 37 (2012): 201-29; Lydia Schumacher, 'The *Summa Halensis* and Augustine,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie

portraits of him as the outmoded anti-Thomist, conservative enforcer of the Order's uniformity, or unoriginal imitator of Alexander.

Indeed, a survey of Bonaventure's intellectual sources shows his wide range of interests spanning the traditional and contemporary, and an original intellectual fusion rooted in a developing *sitz im leben*. My study of his interpretive specificity within the contextual situation helps to clarify his synthetic transformations as a response to his developing historical situation and other prominent voices in the field of medieval intellectual culture. In this way, I establish the key originality and significance of his hermeneutics in ways that transcend the overly rigid dichotomies of Augustinian or Aristotelian, conservative or progressive. One can safely consider Bonaventure, not as a traditional Augustinian overshadowed by the allegedly more Aristotelian Aquinas, but as an innovator in his own right.

Bonaventure's synthetic originality is best appreciated in terms of his understanding of Scripture. Unlike Aquinas, for whom a philosophical vision of theology is reflected on the highest form of being, Bonaventure equates theology with Scripture.[6] In his prologue to the *Breviloquium* (1257), Bonaventure uses Ephesians 3:14-19 as an incipit to explain the heart of his theology: 'In these words, [Paul]…filled with the Holy Spirit as a chosen and sanctified instrument, discloses the source, procedure and purpose of Holy Scripture, which is called theology (*Sacra Scriptura quae theologia dicitur*).'[7] Bonaventure echoes Pseudo-Dionysius in locating the point of departure of theology in divine revelation, rather than human inquiry or tradition *per se*. Theology is about interpretation of God, or meaning of Scripture. Bonaventure's theological inquiry centres on issues of interpretation – why, what and how one reads in search of God. Holy Scripture, as the revoicing and exegesis of revelation, is identical with the practice of theology – which is likewise sourced, ordered and oriented in God.

(Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 33-53; Lydia Schumacher, 'Thinking Philosophically in the Middle Ages: The case of the early Franciscans,' in *Thinking: A Philosophical History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 205-18.

[6] Cousins' modern critical comparison of Bonaventure's and Aquinas' thought frames the distinction between them in terms of a faith-reason binary. Considering that both thinkers were highly trained and adept, this does not do justice to their core Christological concern, nor does it account for the ways in which both appropriate Aristotelian science for sapiential ends. Ewert Cousins, 'St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and the Movement of Thought in 13th Century,' in *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers*, ed. Robert W. Shahan and Francis Kovach (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 13.

[7] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, trans. Dominic Monti, Works of St. Bonaventure, vol.9, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), prologue, n.1, 1.

I therefore argue that the key originality of Bonaventure's thought is not centred in his theology or philosophy, but in his hermeneutics – his experiential understanding of Scripture underpinned by a sapiential framework. Bonaventure's unique reading of divine *sapientia* aligned him with a medieval focus on uplifting Scripture as a means of living ordered to the way things are in God. In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure defines *sapientia* as 'perfect wisdom' or the mystical knowledge of divine goodness, integrating both theological speculation and practical knowledge in light of their proper end, that is, conformity with Christ.[8] I claim that Bonaventure's Christological convergence of belief, thought and action evolved from his particular way of understanding divine *sapientia*. It was shaped by his response to the pressures he had to face as Minister General from 1257 onwards, particularly within the Order between the conservative clerically trained friars (who advocated institutional norms) and the purist *zelanti* (who literally modelled their lives upon Francis). Insofar as Bonaventure engaged in the task of meta-interpretation, his intellectual contribution is best seen in a hermeneutical light.

II. Scholarship on Bonaventure's thought

The long-time perception held by Franz Ehrle and Maurice de Wulf that Bonaventure was fundamentally an Augustinian thinker was promoted by Étienne Gilson. Gilson's seminal study was first published in 1924. He pronounced that Bonaventure, in his *Commentary on the Sentences* in the early 1250s established 'the totality of the philosophic and theological conceptions, Augustinian in inspiration, of which he was to remain thereafter the champion.'[9] Gilson asserted that God was the central focus of Bonaventure's 'sapiential science' but assumed that knowledge of things played a negligible role in his 'neo-Platonic' theological determination. *Contra* Aquinas' Aristotelian-inspired inductive reading of theological sources, Bonaventure's deductive approach was informed more by faith than science. He understood Bonaventure's theological method to be grounded in the discourse of tradition, and that he was anti-Aristotelian, Augustinian and conservative.[10] Conversely, Fernand van Steenberghen discerned in Bonaventure's thought a neo-Platonised appropriation of Aristotelianism. van Steenberghen suggested that Bonaventure was not against Aristotle's own thought, but against a form of Aristotelianism provided by Averroës who abstracted a true metaphysics of God from

[8] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.1, ch.2, n.1-5, 29-33.
[9] Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1940), 6.
[10] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, 96-97, 377-8.

the dictates of mystical experience.[11] John F. Quinn, surveying both sides of the debate, concluded that Bonaventure's synthesis was 'neither fundamentally Augustinian nor essentially a Neoplatonizing Aristotelianism'. Indeed, he was developing his unique '*Bonaventurean* form of wisdom'.[12] It is well known that Bonaventure applied an element of Aristotelian induction to the dictates of Christian experience, as seen throughout his *oeuvre*. Yet, it is debatable whether Bonaventure's synthesis can be reduced to a simple dialogue between reason and faith, as determined by modern neo-Kantianism.

First indications to Bonaventure's synthetic particularity were made by historical theologian Romano Guardini in his pioneering work done in the early 1920s.[13] Hans Urs von Balthasar, summarising Guardini's seminal work on Bonaventure's soteriology, identified three trends in Bonaventure's thought that aggregated over time: scientific, experiential and unitive. According to Guardini, Bonaventure counterbalanced the appropriation of scientific theology and experiential theology. This intersection was the required platform for the mysticism of Francis; restorative encounter with Christ was a 'supra-elevation' of conceptual thinking and experiential knowledge. The scientific was grounded in 'legal representation', and the mystical in 'physical influx of grace'. The pinnacle of this upward dialectics was friendship of the soul with God. Guardini describes friendship with God as the finality of Bonaventure's theological enterprise. Nonetheless, Guardini regarded Bonaventure as 'not really an original thinker, but rather a genial architect working with already existing material.'[14] While attentive to the 'big picture' of Bonaventure's synthesis, Guardini did not comprehensively address the nuances and shifts in synthesis and meaning within the historical situation. Guardini's breakthrough in rendering the specificity of Bonaventure's synthesis came during a time when the field of historical theology was dominated by Thomistic tradition on the one hand and framed by the modern faith-reason dichotomy on the other. Guardini's effort can be updated in light of new research into the formal and material sources of Bonaventure's theology.

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[11] Fernand van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism* trans. Leonard Johnston (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1955), 157-62.

[12]John F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, vol. 23, Studies and Texts, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 843-844, 873, 881-882, 895f.

[13] Guardini wrote his seminal treatise on Bonaventure's soteriology in German in 1921. Romano Guardini, *Die Lehre des Heiligen Bonaventura von der Erlösung* (Dusseldorf: Dusseldorf Schwann, 1921); cf.Romano Guardini, *Systembildende Elemente in der Theologie Bonaventuras* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

[14] Guardini, *Die Lehre des Heiligen Bonaventura von der Erlösung* 195; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Romano Guardini: Reform from the Source*, trans. D.C. Schindler Albert Wimmer, Communio, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 59-65; In another study, von Balthasar used a similar theological perspective with a 'bird's-eye' view of Bonaventure's synthesis as a 'convergence and confluence' of sources. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *La Gloire et la croix*, 8 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1965-1983), vol.2, 328.

In 1959, Joseph Ratzinger broke with conventional neo-Thomism in his developmental study that interpreted Bonaventure's theology as recognising the continuing self-revelation of the Holy Spirit through history.[15] Ratzinger, building beyond Gilson's view, noted that Bonaventure transcended 'Augustinianism' by integrating various sources in response to changing contexts. Ratzinger argued that Bonaventure acquired a progressive-historical vision of Scripture from Joachim of Fiore. Bonaventure's synthesis was echoed in part by the Joachite notion of spiritual understanding as a penetrative insight into the theological meaning of history, with each of the three ages of history corresponding to each person of the Trinity. Ratzinger also saw Bonaventure's synthesis as influenced by Pseudo-Dionysian insight into the theoric basis of historical understanding, and by Francis' example of mystical immediacy. Ratzinger presented that Bonaventure's earlier theorisation of the subject of theology later morphed into a more mystical engagement borne of personal contact with Joachite, Pseudo-Dionysian and Franciscan traditions.[16] Ratzinger, marking a supra-rational element in Bonaventure's synthesis, identified Bonaventure as an innovator in his own right beyond the dictates of the Thomistic paradigm. Ratzinger's key source was Bonaventure's *magnum opus,* the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273). Hence, Ratzinger did not fully appreciate the other registers and interests that shaped Bonaventure's synthetic development.

Modern thematic scholarship, typically centred around retrieval in modern apologetic settings, has further theorised Ratzinger's assertion of Bonaventure's supra-rationalism from various angles. Tracing a range of sources in Bonaventure's thought, John F. Quinn concluded that the supra-rationalist element disposed Bonaventure toward a more holistic view of *sapientia.* The incarnate Christ was Bonaventure's primary model for sapiential self-actualisation.[17] Bert Roest agrees with Quinn that 'Bonaventure eventually [leaned] towards a redefinition of

[15] Ratzinger's classic text, originally Part 3 of his habilitation thesis (*Habilitationschrift*), was published in German as *Die Geschichtstheologie des Heiligen Bonaventura* in 1959 and translated into English as *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* in 1971. His entire dissertation was only published in 2009 as Volume 2 of his *Gesammelte Schriften*, *Offenbarungsverständnis und die Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras.* See Joseph Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des Heiligen Bonaventura* (Munich: Schnell und Steiner, 1959); *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971); *Offenbarungsverständnis und die Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras* in: Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009).

[16] Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, xi-xiv, 6-9, 104-18, 19-63. Cf. Ratzinger's discussion on Bonaventure's exegetical debt to Joachim, Pseudo-Dionysius and Francis, see 62-63, 87-91, 80-83.

[17] Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, 790; John F. Quinn, 'Christology of St. Bonaventure 1217-1257,' *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 168-86.

theology as a form of wisdom beyond mere scientific reasoning.'[18] From a symbolical perspective, Ewert Cousins unified speculative and meditative poles of Bonaventure's theology by framing the metaphysics of being with a Christology of encounter. Cousins opined that the structural key of Bonaventure's synthesis is Christ as the 'coincidence of opposites' – of symbolic and scientific, sense and spirit, sign and reality.[19] Zachary Hayes privileged the symbolic notion of the Crucified Christ as the 'hidden centre' of Bonaventure's theological synthesis.[20] From a mystical standpoint, Ilia Delio similarly showed how the symbol of the Crucified Christ is simultaneously inscribed in Bonaventure's articulation of the Pseudo-Dionysian 'threefold way' of spiritual growth in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, of the metaphysical formula of 'emanation, exemplarity and consummation' in his later *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, and of the 'threefold Word' throughout his *oeuvre*.[21] Roger Davis adds that Bonaventure translates the Pseudo-Dionysian 'program of mystical ascent through unknowing…[into] an embodied example of ecstatic piety in imitation of Christ.[22] Jay M. Hammond's theological critique of Bonaventure's exegetical theory maps its Trinitarian substructure across the breadth of his *corpus*.[23] This apologetic drive to justify Bonaventure's thought in dialogue with modern systematic theological concerns informs the cutting-edge work of Christopher Cullen who offers a comprehensive view of Bonaventure as a great synthesiser of philosophy, theology and spirituality. In many ways, Cullen's work epitomises the scholarship found in Brill's *A Companion to Bonaventure.*[24] The thematic focus of these scholars generally disposes a view of Bonaventure's synthesis in terms of a monolithic whole, rather than in terms of an evolution encompassing significant shifts in register and meaning across the breadth of his *corpus*.

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[18] Bert Roest, *Franciscan Learning, Preaching and Mission c. 1220-1650: Cum Scientia sit donum Dei, Armatura ad Defendam Sanctam Fidem Catholicam…*, vol. 10, The Medieval Franciscans, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 91-95, esp. 92.

[19] Ewert Cousins, *The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol, vol. 4, S. Bonaventura 1274-1294: Theologica, (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), 153-76; Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites: The Theology of Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 164-66.

[20]Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, ed. Lawrence Boadt, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems, (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), 35.

[21] Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1998), 154-55.

[22] Roger Glenn Davis, *The Weight of Love: Affect, Ecstasy and Union in the Theology of Bonaventure* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 30.

[23] Jay M. Hammond, 'Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology and the Fourfold Exegesis of Scripture,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 79, no. 3-4 (2009): 490-91.

[24] Christopher M. Cullen, 'Bonaventure's Philosophical Method,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, vol. 48, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 121-63 esp. 123.

Lastly, there is a growing interest in medieval exegesis. Drawing upon a growing wealth of data, certain scholars have produced wide-scale syntheses of general exegetical history. Such accounts frame the development of exegesis in binary terms of spiritual or literal, experiential or textual, and there is a tendency to qualify Bonaventure and other examples that lie beyond the dictates of their arguments. Beryl Smalley interpreted the spiritual orientation in Bonaventure's synthesis as a conservative tendency. This was in line with her historical account of the triumph of the literal sense over the spiritual senses in the development of medieval literary culture.[25] By contrast, Henri de Lubac worked to retrieve the explanatory power of the four-sense model of spiritual exegesis (literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical) as developed by patristic exegete Origen of Alexandria. Lubac's trans-historical dialogue was uniquely exemplified by Bonaventure's synthesis of contemporaneity and tradition.[26] Alistair Minnis asserted that the thirteenth century marked a borderline between patristic spiritual and scholastic Aristotelian empirical exegesis, with Bonaventure emerging on the mystical-affective side of this divide.[27] Christopher Ocker read thirteenth-century hermeneutics as breaking with literal-allegorical tradition toward a more moral-intellectual approach ordered to the text. He understood Bonaventure as responding ambivalently to this new textual attitude. Ocker considered Bonaventure's exegesis as a conciliation of intra- and extra-textual dimensions.[28] Such a teleological approach tends, in some degree, to view Bonaventure in terms of a particular ideal of medieval exegetical history. Thus, there is a need for the particularity of Bonaventure's synthesis and situation to be more closely defined.

Other scholars have sought to fill this gap, clarifying the shape of Bonaventure's own synthetic development within various contexts. Dominic Monti, in his sequential study of Bonaventure's exegetical writings, detected a shift from literal to spiritual exegesis. Monti drew upon a key insight of Jacques-Guy Bougerol who understood Bonaventure as moving beyond positive theological science to a more apophatic awareness of God: 'From then on, the gift of wisdom introduces the believer to experimental knowledge of sapiential contemplation'. Bonaventure is the scholar-turned-mystic, pivoting on the spiritualising of the literal sense. Indeed, both

[25] Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 329, 370-73.
[26] Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Edward M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), vol.2, pt.2, 264-72; de Lubac first published his classic work on medieval exegesis in French in 1961. Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: Les Quatre sens de l' l'Écriture*, 3 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1961).
[27] Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1984), 127.
[28] Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics Before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42-43.

scholars saw the formative authority of Pseudo-Dionysius as corresponding with Bonaventure's own growing sense of mystical immediacy after his elevation to the generalate in 1257.[29] Notably, Bougerol, in a later article 'Bonaventure as Exegete', considered Bonaventure's scholastic exegesis as being informed by a range of medieval authors such as Peter Lombard. Each author espoused a variation on the basic technique Bonaventure employed in his studies.[30] Both Monti and Bougerol offered richer insights into Bonaventure's own intellectual journey. Yet, situating Bonaventure's thought more deeply within its historical context will help to offer a nuanced view of his development as a specifically hermeneutical one. It is a shift in relation to the subject matter, in response to the needs of changing contexts and audiences.

III. Methodology

The wide-ranging conclusions of these studies on Bonaventure's thought illustrate how a particular focal selectivity disposes the Bonaventure scholar toward either a speculative-rational or mystical-affective reading of his theology, or to a formal equivalence of both. Consequently, the claim to Bonaventure's synthetic originality has not been definitively proven through the ages. Conversely, I consider Bonaventure's mature synthesis as a product of a full development integrating objective and subjective, not only in a unitive but also an operational way. The starting point in my study of Bonaventure's hermeneutical formation is neither a particular theme nor a theory of history, but the interpretive specificity and historical setting of ideas both inside and outside the Franciscan Order. The meaning and practical utility of Bonaventure's unique synthesis can best be registered within concrete contexts of interpretation.

I examine the development of Bonaventure's scriptural vision in historical and intertextual contexts. My sequential study of his core texts will chart shifts in nuance, synthesis and meaning. This allows me to show how his changing relationship with tradition and deepening experiential focus was in response to changing milieux and expanding audiences. Subsequently, I address two intersecting levels of this development. On the intertextual level,

[29] Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works' (PhD University of Chicago, 1979); Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure,' in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, transl. Pascale Renaud (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 317.
[30] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'Bonaventure as Exegete,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 167-88.

Bonaventure's mediation of hermeneutical insights appears as an original synthesis of tradition:

- With respect to interlocutors within the Order, in what way is Bonaventure's distinctive hermeneutics shaped by Francis and Bonaventure's Franciscan antecedents, particularly Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle and Thomas of Celano?

- With respect to interlocutors outside the Order, what is the influence of other key exegetical traditions on Bonaventure's distinctive hermeneutics? I focus on the classical (Plato and Aristotle), medieval (Peter Lombard, Hugh of Saint Victor, Richard of Saint Victor, Thomas Gallus, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Joachim of Fiore, Avicenna and Averroës), and patristic (Augustine of Hippo and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite). I justify my selection as follows: Aristotle and Plato constituted the foundation of theological studies at the medieval university. Bonaventure's exegesis was significantly influenced by Joachim's work in light of the dispute between the radical *zelanti* and clerically trained friars. The exegetical influence of other medieval and patristic *auctores* is apparent from Bonaventure's enumeration of them in his own works.[31]

On the historical level, I situate Bonaventure's hermeneutics in relation to the changing socio-historical context:

- How was Bonaventure's exegetical approach shaping, and shaped by, the influences of his time? I compare his perspective with those of his key interlocutors such as Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, William of Saint Amour, Gerard of Abbeville and Siger of Brabant.

I map Bonaventure's hermeneutical evolution over three phases. From 1243 to 1257 as a scholastic (first as a student and then as a *magister*) at the Franciscan school, he undertook speculation of the sapiential principles embedded in the biblical text. From 1257 to 1267, during his first ten years as Minister General of the Friars Minor, he progressed beyond textual understanding with a focus on self-enactment of these principles in mystical experience. Finally, in the last six years of his generalate before he took up the cardinalate in 1273, he

[31] Bougerol has compiled a detailed list of Bonaventure's authorities and other intertexts. Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure,' 305-35.

integrated understanding and enactment of these principles within the total experience of God in self and created order. This integrative focus was the climax of his whole development, as enshrined in his final synthesis *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273). Henceforth, he developed three increments of relation to Scripture over the course of his varied intellectual career: textual understanding, mystical enactment and communal incarnation. Bonaventure's developing mediation of life, text and world appears as a composite address to meet the needs of his changing audiences – the textual concerns of his scholastic readers, the moralising interests of his secular disputants at the university, the pedagogical aims of the clerically trained Franciscans, and the mystical priorities of certain Franciscan *zelanti*.

IV. Introductory overview

In Chapter 1, I examine Bonaventure's time as a student in the Franciscan school from 1243 to 1253. From 1248 to 1253, as *baccalaureus*, he started to theorise his own, more personal approach to biblical *sapientia* that involved a fusion of speculative, theological and experiential modes of scriptural understanding. He drew upon various authorities proximately transmitted through the *Summa fratris Alexandri* and other works of his master Alexander of Hales and his disciples. Bonaventure's synthesis of sapiential and Christological themes was first theorised in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1250-1253). In Chapter 2, I further examine Bonaventure's scholastic career, including his three-year magisterial period prior to becoming Minister General in 1257. During this period at the Franciscan school, his synthesis structured an exegetical practice in his Gospel commentaries on John and Luke and the sapiential commentary on Ecclesiastes. Their form of textual analysis distilled sapiential principles governing Christ's experience incarnate in Scripture and creation. These scriptural commentaries manifested the beginnings of Bonaventure's divergence from the more mechanical exegesis of Alexander of Hales. In Chapter 3, I look more closely at the three years when Bonaventure was a *magister* and the first year of his generalate in 1257. In his *De Perfectione evangelica* (1255), Bonaventure responded to the challenges presented by the radical Joachite prophetic doctrines expounded by Franciscan Gerard of Borgo San Donnino and aspersions of institutional subversion and heresy by university secular *magister* William of Saint Amour. Bonaventure mediated between the foundationalism of the clerically trained brothers and interpretive excesses of the Joachite *zelanti* within the Order. Responding to their conflicting interpretations of the *vita*, he reframed the Franciscan reception of Joachite eschatology to affirm the institutional value and reformist potential of the Franciscan vocation

to his confreres as well as to the seculars and Church authorities. During this liminal phase, he continued to use his synthetic skills to refine a sure theological and methodological foundation for the Order in his *Breviloquium* (1257). In this doctrinal treatise, his hybrid exegesis integrated the dynamic and living character of Franciscan experience within the doctrinal structures of the scholastics who generally espoused the Alexandrine tradition. Bonaventure thus brought a logical penetration to the mystical experience of Christ in Scripture. In Chapter 4, I study Bonaventure's literary output focusing on the period from 1257 to 1268. As Minister General, he had to meet the spiritual, practical and intellectual needs of a rapidly growing Order. In order to fuse *zelanti* and clerical ideals within a productive vision of the *vita*, he augmented textual understanding with a focus on mystical enactment. This shift from reading Christ as object to Christ as primary subject of sapiential understanding is seen in his mystical works *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259), *De Triplici via* (1259) and the *Sermones dominicales* (c.1267-1268). In the *Legenda maior* (1261), Bonaventure uplifts Francis as a mystical-biblical model for his confreres to follow. In Chapter 5, I explore how Bonaventure extended his program of sapiential self-actualisation during this mature phase of his hermeneutical formation from 1267 to 1274. In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* (1268), he went beyond the speculative focus of the scholastics by indwelling and re-voicing the sapiential forms of Scripture. His more holistic, relational approach to biblical *sapientia* was an implicit critique of what he saw as the peril of the self-sufficient rationality of Averroistic philosophy promoted by the university *magistri artium* such as Siger of Brabant. In his *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem* (1269), Bonaventure also integrated elements of this more relational sapiential approach within his rebuttal of the doctrinal legalism of Gerard of Abbeville and other secular *magistri* within the context of the revived secular-mendicant conflict at Paris. In Chapter 6, I demonstrate how Bonaventure integrated his earlier emphases on sapiential actualisation through Scripture and the soul within a totalising synthesis of creation and history. This was in accordance with his goal to counterbalance, *inter alia*, the influence of Joachitism and Averroism. In his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273), Bonaventure's way of Scripture incarnate in community guided his confreres amid the ongoing controversies afflicting the Order and Church. This monumental work was left unfinished upon his election to the cardinalate and papal appointment to the preparatory work of the Second Council of Lyons in 1273 and his sudden death a year later. In Chapter 7, I show how Bonaventure's hermeneutical development models a contextually sensitive way of reading for modern readers.

I close this introduction with a historiographical observation resourced from Bonaventure's own sense of an interplay of inner and external history: 'Man is explicible by nothing less than all his history.'[32] This enigmatic quote from American Romanticist and essay writer Ralph Waldo Emerson perhaps best captures the challenge I have set myself in the quest to discern the mode and measure of Bonaventure's achievements. In seeking to understand just what made Bonaventure an 'original' thinker, I ought to see him not as a doer of great things alone, as 'Great Man' histories proclaim, nor as a product of circumstances alone, as social history teaches us – but as an individual formed by the interplay of disposition and context. Bonaventure was driven not only by the urgent demands of his office but also by a profound allegiance to Christ in the manner of Francis. Bonaventure, seen in the light of 'all his history', was not simply a man of his time, but a 'spiritual man', who, somewhat like the Francis about whom he wrote, was moved to offer himself to his Order as much by a sense of divinely held conviction as by the urgency of his historical moment.

[32] Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'History,' in *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Random House, 2009), 113-31, esp.113.

Chapter 1: Bonaventure and the Tradition of Alexander of Hales (1243-1253)

In 1243 to 1244, Bonaventure commenced studies in Sacred Scripture and theology at the Franciscan school at Paris. In the first two years of studies, he came under the tutelage of the influential *magister regens* (regent master), Alexander of Hales (c.1185-1245) and his disciple John of La Rochelle (c.1190-1245). In 1245, their inopportune deaths within six months of each other deprived Bonaventure of their weighty guidance. Their successors were to consolidate Alexander's achievement in systematic theology derived from the commentary system of Peter Lombard (c.1100-1160). Despite being constrained by this Alexandrine framework, Bonaventure began to develop his own distinctive approach to theology, particularly as a *baccalaureus* from 1248 to 1253.

I contend that Bonaventure was starting to theorise his more experiential approach to encountering Christ as the embodiment of *sapientia.* Bonaventure's approach involves a fusion of speculative, theological and experiential modes of scriptural understanding, drawing on an array of intertexts from classical, patristic, monastic and scholastic traditions proximately transmitted through the *Summa fratris Alexandri*. Bonaventure laid a theoretical foundation for this approach in his *Commentary on the Sentences.* Considered to be Bonaventure's earliest major theological work, it was developed between 1250 and 1253 from extensive readings of Lombard's *Sentences.*

I. Historiographical perspectives

Scholarship has differed over the actuality, extent and manner of Bonaventure's divergence from Alexander of Hales and the Alexandrine tradition. Étienne Gilson observed that Bonaventure 'explicitly calls himself the continuator of Alexander'.[1] Gilson's thesis of Bonaventure as 'the inheritor' of the Alexandrine tradition has been debated since it was first published in 1924. Gilson's view has been substantiated by Alistair Minnis in his 1984 monograph *Medieval Theory of Authorship* that 'Bonaventure's conception of the end and means of sacred Scripture is substantially in agreement with Alexander's'.[2] Similarly, in his

[1] Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1940), 3, 6.
[2] Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1984), 118-59, esp 127.

2001 essay, M.W.F. Stone deemed Bonaventure's synthesis as unoriginal and substantially equivalent to Alexander's.[3] Gilson's thesis has led Christopher Cullen to argue that Bonaventure's synthesis is just a mature articulation of that developed by Alexander of Hales and his disciples.[4] In recent times, Lydia Schumacher agrees that 'Bonaventure has come to be regarded as the chief representative of early Franciscan thought…' However, she considers such acclaim and attention to be unjustified, 'given the perceived unoriginality of [Bonaventure's] thought'. She claims that Bonaventure simply reiterates many Alexandrine innovations beyond the Augustinian system.[5] Conversely, other scholars note that there is more to Bonaventure's intellectual contribution that transcends the Alexandrine mould.

This sense of 'something more' in Bonaventure's synthesis has been variously defined from differing vantage points. Beryl Smalley observed that Bonaventure innovates by conveying the inherence of the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture, as opposed to what she called the 'mechanical allegories' of Alexander, John of La Rochelle and others.[6] Other scholars generally assumed that Bonaventure's distinctive contribution lies in his Christological mediation of sapiential understanding. Zachary Hayes systematically developed Bonaventure's notion of a way of life ordered to Scripture or Christ as Incarnate Wisdom.[7] Thomas Herbst argues that Bonaventure uplifts Christ as the underlying pattern of biblical *sapientia*. Just as Christ is to be experienced in a threefold manner by 'seeing', 'believing' and 'testifying,' so the categories of Alexandrine speculative theology are rooted in concrete experience of Christ. Diverging from Alexander's more cataphatic orientation, Bonaventure is forming a more mystical, apophatic vision of the divine mystery – centred in the practical articulation of Christ's mode of being as a mode of sapiential actualisation.[8] Inspired by Herbst and similarly shaped by a postmodern emphasis on affectivity, Aaron Gies distinguishes between

[3] M.W.F. Stone, 'Augustine and Medieval Philosophy,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 253-66.
[4] Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[5] Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 10-11, 266; Lydia Schumacher, 'The *Summa Halensis* and Augustine,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie (Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 34.
[6] Beryl Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, c.1100-c.1280*, vol. 41, History Series (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 201-05, and esp. 204.
[7] Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, ed. Lawrence Boadt, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems, (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981); Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction,' in *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), 36-39.
[8] Thomas Herbst, *The Road to Union: Johannine Dimensions of Bonaventure's Christology* (Rome: Frati Editori di Quaracchi, 2005), 367-80.

Alexander's cataphatic recapitulation of the divine names and Bonaventure's apophatic awareness of Christ.[9] Bonaventure's unique intellectual contribution resonates beyond the thirteenth century, with modern philosopher Emmanuel Falque and others appropriating Bonaventure's 'descriptive' and personal use of language and symbol for modern hermeneutical understanding.[10]

Building upon the hermeneutically oriented and text-based studies of Gies and Herbst, I contend that Bonaventure's originality does not lie purely in material divergence from the theological teaching of Alexander of Hales and his disciples. Rather, Bonaventure engages the sources in another way, developing a unique reading of these sources in unity and difference from the Alexandrine tradition. Situating Bonaventure's unique approach to the sources within its historical and intertextual contexts will help me to better specify the uses to which it has been put within the historical situation. This would provide me an inroad to a concrete appraisal of the meaning and utility of Bonaventure's approach *vis-à-vis* the Alexandrine approach during the period of his scholastic formation from 1243 to 1253.

II. Bonaventure's scholastic context

Bonaventure's scholastic journey commenced in 1236, as a student in the arts faculty at the University of Paris.[11] Bonaventure would be instructed, in theory, in the entire 'liberal arts' curriculum based around the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and logic or dialectic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, astronomy, music and geometry). He was also exposed to the Aristotelian philosophical disciplines such as ethics, physics, metaphysics and natural history. But it was logic or dialectics that was the dominant element in the curriculum, structuring his approach to the entire field of studies and thereafter to systematic theology as the crowning discipline.[12]

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[9] Aaron Gies, '*Primi duces hierarchiae nostrae*: Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales and Theological Exegesis in John's Gospel,' in *Saint Bonaventure - Friar, Teacher, Minister, Bishop: A Celebration of the Eighth Centenary of His Birth*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson, Katherine Wrisley-Shelby, and Marie Kolbe Zamora (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2020), 507-26.

[10] Emmanuel Falque, 'The Phenomenological Act of *Perscrutatio* in the *Proemium* of St Bonaventure's Commentary on the Sentences,' *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10, no. 1 (2001): 1-22; Emmanuel Falque, *Saint Bonaventure and the Entrance of God into Theology*, trans. Brian Lapsa and Sarah Horton (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018).

[11]Testimony of Francisco di Fabrian in Luke Wadding, *Annales minorum seu trium ordinum a. S. Francisco Institutorum*, 25 vols. (Rome: Rochi Bernabò, 1731-1886), vol.4, 5; Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 5, 172.

[12] John Van Engen, 'The Evolution of the *Trivium* in the University Teaching: The Example of the 'Topics,' in *Learning Institutionalized:Teaching in the Medieval University*, ed. John Van Egan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 43-67; Paul Abelson, *The Seven Liberal Arts: A Study in Mediaeval Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1906), 1-10.

During Bonaventure's time at Paris, the centralisation of learning around an ordered hierarchy of disciplines formalised learning and imposed a new disciplinary framework. While the eleventh and twelfth century monastics such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) were by-and-large concerned with the habitual assimilation of Scripture, the scholastics supplemented this scriptural focus with a drive towards a more systematic presentation of teaching in matters of Christian doctrine and in relation to the natural world.[13] In the Latin West, this movement towards synthesis was catalysed by a massive expansion in worldview, prompted by the rediscovery of Aristotelian philosophical writings through Islamic commentators such as Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroës (c.1126-1198).[14] The reception of Aristotle through Severinus Boethius (c.475-c.526) and other Latin interpreters helped to shape the application of logic and reason to biblical exposition by Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) and Peter Abelard (1079-1142).[15] Corollary to this systematising drive was the classification of knowledge and subdivision of disciplines, leading to a new level of specialisation and professionalisation among scholars.[16] Although divine and biblical authority remained the mode and measure of the new model of learning, the challenge soon became how to systematically relate all the varied forms of learning to the discipline of theology as their

[13] For the historical and hermeneutical relations between monastic and scholastic theological modes, see Jean Leclercq, 'The Renewal of Theology,' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 68-87; Burcht Pranger, 'Sic et non: Patristic Authority between Refusal and Acceptance: Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux,' in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 165-93.

[14] Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, Cambridge Library Collection - Medieval History, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 37-39; For the influence of Islamic scholarship on the Aristotelian heritage of the Latin West, see George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 224-70; Cristina D'Ancona, 'Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in Translation,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10-31.

[15] For Boethius's life and works, see Abelson, *The Seven Liberal Arts: A Study in Mediaeval Culture*, 75-76; N. Kaylor and P.E. Phillips, *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); M. Gibson, *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981); Olga Weijers, 'The Evolution of the *Trivium* in University Teaching: The Example of the Topics,' in *Learning Institutionalized: Teaching in the Medieval University*, ed. John Van Egen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 43-67; For Anselm, see G.R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 17-26; Abelard first used the Latin term *theologia*, which he derived from the Greek, in his foundational construct of 'theology' as a discipline. John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007); G.R. Evans, *Old Arts, New Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); D.E. Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[16] Mark D. Jordan, '*Philosophica disciplina*: Learning to Teach Philosophy in a University,' ed. John Van Egan, *Learning Institutionalized: Teaching in the Medieval University* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2000), 111-28; William J. Courtenay, 'The Institutionalization of Theology,' ed. John van Engen, *Learning Institutionalized: Teaching in the Medieval University*, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2000), 245-56.

centrifugal focus. Scholastics saw this development as a legitimate continuation of the Augustinian project of integrating classical forms of knowledge within the unity of Christian *sapientia*.[17] At the university, therefore, the study of theology had become enriched with all sorts of questions extrinsic to the matter of the scriptures.[18] The question of the nature, approach and status of theology *vis-à-vis* other disciplines became an important one for scholastics such as Bonaventure.[19]

Logic, metaphysics and dialectics were fundamental to the mode of expression of biblical exegesis at Paris. This mode was underpinned by the machinery of the *Glossa Ordinaria* with its explanations of whole scriptural passages with relevant quotations of the patristic and other authorities placed in the margins, and the *Glossa interlinearis* with its explanations of individual words interposed between the lines of biblical text. Both together made up the comprehensive reference tool begun by Anselm of Laon (c.1050-1117) and built upon by other scholars.[20] The *Glossa Ordinaria et interlinearis* was attached to the *Biblia de littera et apparatu parisiensi* that became the official version of the biblical text endorsed by the university in 1226.[21] The model for this systematic approach tying together the critical discussion of Anselm with Abelard's analytic focus was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard compiled between 1151 and 1158. His organised collection of *sententiae* (opinions) from foundational patristic and scriptural authorities was divided into four books following a logical and topical order.[22] Since the dialectical treatment of Lombard's *Sentences* was

[17] According to Parker, Augustine's appropriation of the pagan classical curriculum resulted in its incorporation into 'sound doctrine', mitigating centuries of Christian mistrust. H. Parker, 'The Seven Liberal Arts,' *The English Historical Review* 5, no. 19 (1890): 417-61.

[18] Joseph de Ghellinck, *Le Mouvement théologique du XII Siècle* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1948), 40; quoted in Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'Bonaventure as Exegete,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 168.

[19] Katherine H. Tachau, 'In the Ambit of Another Faculty: Parisian Theologians and the (Meta)physical Universe,' ed. John Van Egan, *Learning Institutionalized: Teaching in the Medieval University* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2000). 129-60.

[20] For its content, setting and development, see Beryl Smalley, 'La *Glossa Ordinaria*,' *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 9 (1937): 372-99; Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages*, 37-47; Lesley J. Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary*, ed. Grover A. Zinn and Michael A. Signer, vol. 3, Sacred Texts and their Commentaries: Jewish, Christian and Islamic, (Leiden: Brill, 2009); E. Ann Matter, 'The Church Fathers and the *Glossa Ordinaria*,' in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 83-111.

[21] Antonio Maria Iosa, *I Codici manuscritti della Biblioteca Antoniana di Pavova* (Padua, 1886), 48-49; Jean-Pierre-Paulin Martin, 'La Vulgate Latine au XIIIe siècle,' *Museon* 7 (1888): 83-169, 278-381; Jean-Pierre-Paulin Martin, 'Le Texte parisien de la Vulgate Latine,' *Museon* 8 (1889) and 9 (1890) (1889): 444 (vol.8), 55-301 (vol.9); quoted in Bougerol, 'Bonaventure as Exegete,' 171-72; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 46-66; 334-35, 366-67.

[22] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure,' in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus, transl. Pascale Renaud (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 113-64; Ignatius Brady, 'Pierre Lombard,' in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*

methodologically primary in the study of Scripture, this meant that preparatory studies in the 'liberal arts' were essentially weighted towards the logical arts. Budding scholastics such as Bonaventure, who had already been schooled in the 'liberal arts', were then taught to understand the scriptures through the prism of philosophy, formal logic and dialectics.[23] Bonaventure would go on to shape his own innovative response to the dialectics of faith and reason. His configuration of the hermeneutics of Scripture went beyond the academic way of the *Glossae* and *Lombard's Sentences*, and the commentaries based upon them.

Although the regulation and systematisation of learning at Paris imposed a unity on learning, scholarly experience and trajectory were by no means uniform. Within the general bounds of scholasticism, Bonaventure and other scholastics were able to express their relation to the sources of Scripture and tradition in idiosyncratic ways. The diversity of scholarly perspectives expressed a certain relativity and idiosyncrasy of engagement with master texts.[24] In this light, I shall examine Bonaventure's intellectual development and divergence from the tradition erected by Alexander of Hales in the Franciscan school.

III. Bonaventure's theological formation (1243-1253)

In 1242, Bonaventure graduated as a *baccalaureus artium.* He entered the Order of Friars Minor in Paris as a novice the following year. After formal profession within the Order, Bonaventure proceeded to pursue studies in Sacred Scripture and theology at the prestigious Convent of the Cordeliers over the next ten years.[25] In 1248, Bonaventure attained the level of

(Paris: G. Beaechesne, 1986), 1604-12; Olga Weijers, *A Scholar's Paradise: Teaching and Debating in Medieval Paris*, ed. Luca Bianchi, Jacques Verger, and Olga Weijers, vol. 2, Studies on the Faculty of Arts: History and Influence, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 70-71; Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, trans. Giulio Silano, 4 vols. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007-2010); For the Latin version, see Peter Lombard, *Sententarium libri quattuor*, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, (Rome: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1971-1981).

[23] P. Osmund Lewry, 'Rhetoric at Paris and Oxford in the Mid-Thirteenth Century,' *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 1, 1 (1983): 45-63.

[24] Lesley J. Smith, 'The Use of Scripture in Teaching at the Medieval University,' in *Learning Institutionalized: Teaching in the Medieval University*, ed. John Van Engen, Notre Dame Conference in Medieval Studies (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 229-44; Luca Bianchi, 'Aristotle Among Thirteenth-Century Franciscans: Some Preliminary Remarks,' in *Philosophy and Theology in the Studia of the Religious Orders and at Papal and Royal Courts*, ed. Kent Emery Jr., William J. Courtenay, and Stephen M. Metzger (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 237-59.

[25] Bonaventure was christened Giovanni di Fidanza after his father at baptism. According to a legend that developed over time, Francis personally cured an ailing young Giovanni and exclaimed, '*O, buona ventura!*' Henceforth, Giovanni took on the name 'Bonaventure'. However, at the time of Giovanni's healing, Francis would most likely have already died. More credibly, Giovanni chose the name 'Bonaventure' as a token of his 'good fortune' to be under Francis' Order and his master Alexander of Hales. Thomas Reist, *Saint Bonaventure as a Biblical Commentator: A Translation and Analysis of his Commentary on Luke, XVIII, 34-XIX, 42* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 2; R.E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, 'Introduction,' in *Commentary on the*

baccalaureus biblicus when he read Scripture *cursorie* without engaging in detailed doctrinal issues, and started his scriptural commentaries. This was followed by a deeper doctrinal reading of the scriptures as *lector biblicus.* From 1250 to 1252, Bonaventure read Lombard's *Sentences cursorie* as a *baccalaureus sententiarius.*[26] Bonaventure finished his *Commentary on the Sentences* as a *baccalaureus formatus* in 1253.[27] Previously, in the 1220s, secular *magister regens* Alexander of Hales had instituted Lombard's *Sentences* as a supplementary textbook to the Bible. This culminated in its inclusion as an assessment tool in the Franciscan theology curriculum after Alexander joined the Order in about 1236.[28] Alexander's *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi* was a compilation of his lectures on Lombard's *Sentences* delivered earlier between 1220 and 1227.[29] Systematic theology was regarded as the highest goal of theological learning; those *baccalaurei,* such as Bonaventure, aiming for the licentiate had to demonstrate their scholarly competence by responding to the questions (*quaestiones*) raised in Lombard's *Sentences.*[30]

Under the tutelage of Alexander of Hales from 1243 to 1245, Bonaventure imbibed his master's synthesis and sources. Alexander had left his native England to study arts at the University of

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Sentences: Philosophy of God, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2013), xiv; cf. Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Saint Bonaventure* (Paris: Editions franciscaines, 1966), 3.

[26] Some scholars suggest that a *baccalaureus sententiarius* might have read Lombard's *Sentences* in one year at the University of Paris, because studies have argued this to be the case after 1297. According to Duba and Schabel: 'Before that date, [they] have yet to see a convincing argument for a two-year lecture cycle.' William Duba and Chris Schabel, 'Remigio, Auriol, Scotus, and the Myth of the Two-year *Sentences* Lecture at Paris,' *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 84, 1 (2017): 143-179.

[27] Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca. 1217-1274), sanctus'; Also see Catherine A. Levri, '*Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia*: A Study of Bonaventure's Inaugural Sermon' (PhD Catholic University of America, 2015), 5-6.

[28] For Alexander's institution of Lombard's *Sentences* as a permanent feature of theological education since the 1220s, see Nancy Spatz, 'Approaches and Attitudes to a New Theological Textbook: The Sentences of Peter Lombard,' in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 27-52; Philipp W. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's Sentences*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton and John Shinners, vol. 2, Rethinking the Middle Ages, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007), 60-70; For the major thematic and structural currents underlying the development of the *Sentences Commentary* genre for Bonaventure and beyond, see Russell L. Friedman, 'The Sentences Commentary, 1250-1320: General Trends, The Impact of the Religious Orders, and the Test Case of Predestination,' in *Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard: Current Research*, ed. G.R. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 41-128.

[29] Victorin Doucet, '*Prolegomena*,' in *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi,* 4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951-1957), 5-75; For a history of the scholarship and dating of Alexander's *Glossa,* see Hubert Philipp Weber, 'The *Glossa in IV libros Sententiarum* by Alexander of Hales,' in *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, ed. Philipp W. Rosemann (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 85-90.

[30] Reist explains that these lectures on the *Sentences* 'were to present a thoroughly prepared exposition and personal reflection on the theological questions of the day which served as the work by which [a] young theologian was evaluated.' Thomas Reist, *Saint Bonaventure as a Biblical Commentator: A Translation and Analysis of his Commentary on Luke, XVIII, 34-XIX, 42* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 4; Courtenay, *The Institutionalization of Theology*, 250.

Paris in the early 1200s. After gaining his *magisterium in artibus* prior to 1210, he began teaching. Five years later, he started theological studies and became *magister regens* in theology by about 1220 or 1221. His theology teaching was disrupted in 1229, when he had to leave Paris due to bloody riots occasioned by the conflict between Bishop William of Auvergne (1190-1249) and the university. In 1232, Alexander resumed his magisterial post at Paris. Around four years later, possibly attracted by the growing intellectual prominence of the Franciscan Order and its school, he took Franciscan vows and consequently transferred his secular magisterial chair to the Order.[31] As its first *magister regens*, Alexander furnished his disciple Bonaventure with a model of the academic life definitively oriented in God.[32] Despite having joined the Order late in life aged around fifty-one, Alexander left behind a considerable legacy upon his death about nine years later in 1245. His major contribution was to initiate the monumental *Summa fratris Alexandri,* completed with the collaboration of John of La Rochelle and other leading disciples. Also known as *Summa theologica* or *Summa halensis*, this highly influential text became a standard pedagogical tool for theology students such as Bonaventure.[33]

Alexander's stellar contributions to the Franciscan school were recognised by the numerous prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries who, having convened with him at the First Council of Lyons a few months earlier, gathered to pay tribute to him at his funeral in Paris.[34] Even so, there were some contemporaries who acknowledged Alexander's doctrinal authority but failed to appreciate the merits of his scholastic system. English Franciscan Roger Bacon (1214-1292) opposed Alexander's use of Lombard's *Sentences* as a norm for theological teaching, because

[31] Hubert Philipp Weber, 'Alexander of Hales's Theology in His Authentic Texts (Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Various Disputed Questions),' in *The English Province of the Franciscans (1224-c1350)*, ed. Michael Robson, The Medieval Franciscans (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 273-75; James K. Farge, *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation Frances, The Faculty of Theology of Paris, 1500-1543*, vol. 32, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 16-26, 33-36.

[32]Sixtus IV, *Superna caelestis, Opera omnia*, 1:xv: '*Alexander de Ales, doctor clarissimus, cui se in disciplinam sanctus Bonaventura tradiderat, tantae innocentiae ac columbinae simplicitatis expertus est esse, ut dicere solitus fuerit, sibi videri, quod in eo Adam nunquam peccasset*.' This remark allegedly made by Alexander about Bonaventure's sanctity is recorded in the bull by Sixtus IV canonising Bonaventure in 1482. Bernard of Besse, Bonaventure's secretary and travelling companion during his generalate, also gave mention of this remark; *Catalogus XIV vel XV Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,* Analecta Franciscana, ed. a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae. vol. 3, (Florence: Quaracchi, 1897), 699.

[33] Christopher M. Cullen, 'Alexander of Hales,' in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 104-05.

[34] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Ex typis fratrum Delalain, 1889-1897), vol.1, 186-87; John of Garland, *Carmen de Misteriis Ecclesie*, ed. Peter Dinter and Ewald Könsgen (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 60; Kenan B. Osborne, 'Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology,' in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute 1994), 4-5.

this would detract from scriptural authority. According to Bacon, Alexander and his disciples had committed 'seven sins' of theological study, the first being that they did not exercise a proper or objective philosophical approach to theology. Bacon summed up his sentiments in his *Opus minus* (1266/1268): 'From [Alexander's] entry [into the Order] the brothers and others lifted him up to heaven, and gave him authority over the whole school, and ascribed to him that great *Summa* which is heavier than a horse, which he himself did not write but others did. And yet out of reverence they ascribed it to him, and called it the *Summa fratris Alexandri*. And even if he had written it or a great part of it, nevertheless he read neither natural philosophy nor metaphysics nor listened to it, since he did not write the principles of the books of these sciences, nor [did he] translate their commentaries when he reigned in the arts.'[35] Notably, over the course of his remaining eight years of scholastic training, Bonaventure himself would also have certain reservations about the Alexandrine analytic approach to theology.

Besides Alexander of Hales, who was honoured as the 'Irrefutable Teacher' (*Doctor Irrefragibilis*) and 'Teacher of Teachers' (*Doctor doctorum*), Bonaventure also came under the guidance of John of La Rochelle.[36] A Franciscan lector and already a prolific author with many works under his belt even before Alexander's assumption of the habit, John was installed by his master as *magister in actu* with the support of Bishop William of Auvergne in 1238.[37] John's death about six months before Alexander's death in August 1245 meant that

[35]Roger Bacon, 'Opus minus,' ed. J.S. Brewer, *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera quaedam hactenus inedita,* 313-89, esp.326: '*Ex suo ingressu fratres et alii exaltaverunt in coelum, et ei dederunt auctoritatem totius studii, et adscripserunt ei magnam Summam illam, quae est plusquam pondus unius equi, quam ipse non fecit sed alii. Et tamen propter reverentiam ascripta fuit, et vocatur Summa fratris Alexandri. Et si ipse eam fecisset vel magnam partem, tamen non legit naturalia nec metaphysica nec audivit ea, quia non fuerunt libri principales harum scientiarum nec commentarii translati quando rexit in artibus.*' Victorin Doucet, 'A New Source of the *Summa Fratris Alexandri:* The *Commentary on the Sentences* of Alexander of Hales,' Franciscan Studies 6 (1946): 405; Raphael M. Huber, 'Alexander of Hales, O.F.M. (ca.1170-1245): His Life and Influence on Medieval Scholasticism,' *Franciscan Studies* 5, 4 (1945): 360; Amanda Power, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 184-85; Also see Timothy J. Johnson, 'Preaching precedes Theology: Roger Bacon on the Failure of Mendicant Education,' *Franciscan Studies* 68 (2010): 83-95; Timothy J. Johnson, 'Franciscan Bodies and Souls: Bonaventure and Bacon on Scripture, Preaching and the *Cura Corporis/Cura Animae*,' in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning Came about through Words*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 73-89; Timothy J. Johnson, ''Wisdom Has Built Her House; She Has Set Up Seven Pillars': Roger Bacon, Franciscan Wisdom, and Conversion to the Sciences,' in *The English Province of the Franciscans (1224-c1350)*, ed. Michael Robson (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 299, 314.

[36] Robert Prentice, 'The *De Fontibus paradisi* of Alexander IV on the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales,' *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945): 348-49; Stephen F. Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies and Movements, (Lanham: Rowman and Littelfield, 2018), 51.

[37] Bert Roest, *Franciscan Learning, Preaching and Mission c. 1220-1650: Cum Scientia sit donum Dei, Armatura ad Defendam Sanctam Fidem Catholicam…*, vol. 10, The Medieval Franciscans, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 32; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c.1210-1517)*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 14.

Bonaventure's intellectual formation at the Franciscan school was to continue with their immediate successors Eudes Rigaud (c.1205-1275) and William of Middleton (died c.1260). In particular, certain of Eudes' insights greatly impacted Bonaventure.[38] The two friars 'maintained close ties' throughout their lives, with Eudes' death one year after Bonaventure's.[39] William ascended to the regency upon Eudes' appointment as Archbishop of Rouen in about 1248.[40] Also in the same year, Bonaventure was granted the license to teach as a *lector biblicus*.[41]

It is conceivable that the young scholar Bonaventure had to forge his own intellectual path and to prove himself, with political astuteness, to the wider university community and to his fellow Franciscan scholastics. With the conflict over Franciscan identity and vocation and troubles with the seculars at Paris brewing, Bonaventure would recognise the need to teach his confreres a more practical foundation for the spiritual life beyond that afforded by the strictly academic and philosophical approach of Alexander and his other disciples. Hence, Bonaventure had to evolve his own synthesis building upon, and diverging from, what he had learnt from his masters.[42]

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[38] Lottin postulates the heavy reliance on insights from Eudes' *Sentences* commentary in Bonaventure's own synthesis, especially on 'the nature of free will'. Odon Lottin, *Problèmes de psychologie*, vol. 1 of *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1942-1960), 173–74; Lottin, *Problèmes de morale*, vol. 3 of *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 592–94, 684–735; Also see Leonardo Sileo, "Rigaud," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 13 (1988): columns 670–73; quoted in Adam Jeffrey Davis, *The Holy Bureaucrat : Eudes Rigaud and Religious Reform in Thirteenth-Century Normandy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 16.

[39] Davis, *The Holy Bureaucrat: Eudes Rigaud and Religious Reform in Thirteenth-Century Normandy* 172-173; For the life and works of Eudes, also see Sophie Delmas, 'Odo Rigaldi, Alexander of Hales and the *Summa Halensis*,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie (Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 267-83; Nathalie Gorochov, 'Odo Rigaldus at the University of Paris (c.1220-48),' in *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie, vol.67 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 151-168; Richard W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 190-93; For critical editions of Eudes' extant manuscripts, see Leonardo Sileo, *Teoria della scienzia teologica: Quaestio de scientia theologiae di Odo Rigaldi e altri testi inediti (1230–1250)* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1984).

[40] Palémon, Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols, Études de philosophie médiévale (Paris: J Vrin, 1933), vol.1, 42-82; van der Heijden and Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress,' (2019). 'Odo Rigaldus (Eudes Rigaud/1205-1275)'; 'Guilelmus de Militona (gest. ca. 1257/1260)'; For editions of Eudes' and William's writings, see Basilius Pergamo, '*De Quaestionibus ineditis Fr. Odonis Rigaldi, Fr. Gulielmi de Miltona et codicis Vat. Lat. 782 circa naturam theologiae, deque earum relatione ad Summam theologicam Fr. Alexandiri Halensis*,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 29 (1936): 3-54, 308-64.

[41] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam* vol. 40, ed. Joseph Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, and John Robert Kane, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986), 299, 441.

[42] Some scholars hold the opinion that Eudes might have exerted a greater influence on Bonaventure than Alexander of Hales. Their conclusions are based largely on evidence from Eudes' writings, which are still mostly unedited and in original manuscript form. Also, in a recent article, Joshua Benson argues that English cardinal

Before I examine how Bonaventure drew upon the Alexandrine synthesis and sources as a basis for his own hermeneutical formulations, I shall show how the *Summa fratris Alexandri* hermeneutically engaged with its sources as a model for Bonaventure and other scholastics to follow.

IV. Hermeneutical reflection in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*

Scholarly consensus is that Alexander of Hales commenced working on the *Summa fratis Alexandri* shortly after his entry into the Franciscan Order in 1236. Lydia Schumacher notes that, though named after Alexander alone, 'its goals were far more ambitious than one or even two scholars – John [of La Rochelle] and Alexander – could fulfil on the basis of a lifetime's worth of work.' She thus agrees with Ignatius Brady and most scholars who followed Victorin Doucet's hypothesis of the *Summa's* multiple authorship.[43] In the Quaracchi critical edition of Volumes 1 to 3 (containing Books 1 and 2) prepared between 1924 and 1930, the editors had presumed Alexander to be the sole author of the first three books. Doucet and his team refuted this attribution in Volume 4 (containing Book 3), produced from 1931 to 1948. Bringing forward new evidence, Doucet asserted in his *Prolegomena* to Volume 4 completed in 1948, that the *Summa* was a collaborative effort between Alexander and John up to their death in 1245. Significant contributions were also made before or after 1245 by other Franciscans such as Eudes Rigaud, William of Middleton, Bonaventure and some unidentified disciples.[44] Further proof of its multiple authorship is found in the 1255 bull *De Fontibus paradisi* of Pope Alexander IV, who praised Alexander's efforts on the *Summa* and urged William of Middleton

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and theologian Stephen Langton (c.1150-1228) may have been a major source for Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273). However, it is beyond the ambit of this thesis, which focuses on published sources, to examine manuscript sources for these interesting intertextual relationships. Joshua C. Benson, 'Facing the 12th Century: The Spiritual Senses in Bonaventure's *Hexaemeron* and Langton's Lectures on Genesis,'in *'Non enim fuerat Evangelii surdus auditor…' (1 Celano 22): Essays in Honor of Michael W. Blastic, O.F.M. on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, ed. Michael Cusato and Steven J. McMichael, The Medieval Franciscans (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 396-415.

[43] Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation*, 5-9, 17, 38; Weber, 'Alexander of Hales's Theology in His Authentic Texts (*Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Various Disputed Questions),' 275; Ignatius Brady, 'The *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales: (1924-1948),' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 437-47.

[44] The first three Quaracchi volumes were entitled *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*. Doucet added the title *Summa fratris Alexandri* in Volume 4. Victorin Doucet, '*Prolegomena in librum III necnon in libros I et II* "*Summae fratris Alexandri*",' in *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica* (Quaracchi: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1948), vol.4, 306, 360-61, 367; Victorin Doucet, 'The History of the Problem of the Authenticity of the *Summa*,' *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947): 26-41, 274-312.

to complete it.[45] William's compilation of Book 4, likely left unfinished upon his death around 1260, has yet to be edited.[46]

According to Étienne Gilson, the 'coherent intellectual vision' of the *Summa* testified to a certain thematic cohesion despite the 'different intellectual abilities and emphases' of the various contributors. Schumacher adds that this training resource 'represents a concerted and collective effort to forge a distinct theological and philosophical identity, aligned with Franciscan principles and values.' Ignatius Brady aptly concludes: 'It may rightly be called the *Summa Minorum*, embodying the fundamental doctrines of the Franciscan school of the early thirteenth century.'[47] As an influential synthesis of patristic, monastic and scholastic-Aristotelian theological notions, the *Summa* provided Bonaventure and other advanced theology students 'with an up-to-date systematic theological encyclopaedia' of sources. These were derived mainly from Augustine and also from Scripture, the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and various other authorities such as Aristotle through Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius (5th and 6th centuries), Anselm of Canterbury and the Victorines.[48]

The *Summa fratris Alexandri* begins by theorising the mode of relation between philosophy and theology, reason and faith – particularly as it impinges upon the study of Scripture. Scripture, as the origin of both theology and metaphysics, provides an integrative understanding of things according to this twofold dimension of knowledge. The *Summa* identifies four causes of Sacred Scripture: Scripture's subject matter or material cause (*causa materialis*), mode of proceeding or formal cause (*causa formalis*), purpose or final cause (*causa finalis*), author or efficient cause (*causa efficiens*). The *Summa* uses these four causes to articulate the process through which the form of a biblical text is intended by its author to

[45] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.286, 328-29; The *CUP* dating of 1256 is incorrect. Prentice gives the correct dating as 1255. Prentice, 'The *De Fontibus paradisi* of Alexander IV on the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales,' 350-51.
[46] Weber, 'The *Glossa in IV libros Sententiarum* by Alexander of Hales,' 80-81, 84; Weber, 'Alexander of Hales's Theology in His Authentic Texts,' 289-93.
[47] Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 327-31; Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation*, 54; Ignatius Brady, 'Alexander of Hales (c.1185-1245)' in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Boston: Cengage, 2023). https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/alexander-hales-c 1185-1245; Ignatius Brady, 'The *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales: (1924-1948),' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 437-47.
[48] Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c.1210-1517)*, 126. Schumacher, 'The *Summa Halensis* and Augustine,' 33; Cullen, 'Alexander of Hales,' 105-08; Also see Eric Saak, 'Augustine and his Late Medieval Appropriations (1200-1500)' in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39-50.

achieve some purpose in its audience. Authorial intention, compositional technique, subject matter and audience all interrelate in determining textual meaning. This idea of causal interrelation is important – the way an author intends a work determines its form and henceforth the way it is to be received.

This fourfold causality of scriptural interpretation in the *Summa* drew upon 'liberal arts' teaching through the works of Boethius and other Aristotle's medieval interpreters. In his *De Topicis differentiis* (completed before 523), Boethius summarised Aristotle's original four causes (material, formal, final and efficient).[49] The *Summa* further applied the four Aristotelian causes to the four scriptural senses; one exterior literal or historical sense (relating to material cause) encompassing three interior or spiritual senses – allegorical (relating to formal cause), tropological (relating to final cause), and anagogical (relating to efficient cause). Alexander himself was inspired by the synthesis of Aristotelian causality and scriptural mechanics, a synthesis that had probably first emerged in the exegetical writings of his contemporary, Guerric of Saint Quentin (died 1245) who was Dominican *magister regens* from 1233 to 1242.[50] Not unique to Alexander, this Aristotelian way of conceptualising the mechanics of interpretation had already become standard procedure by the time of Bonaventure. Alexander developed it theologically in his *Quaestiones disputatae,* that was probably written between 1220-1221 (when he became secular *magister regens*) and 1236 (when he became Franciscan *magister regens*).[51] He developed it hermeneutically in *De Significationibus et expositione sacrum scripturarum* that was composed in the 1230s and prior to 1236.[52] But his notion of scriptural interpretive theory would reach its synthetic maturity in the multi-authored *Summa fratris Alexandri.*

[49] Severinus Boethius, *De Topicis differentiis*, ed. Eleonore Stump, vol. 2, Cornell Classics in Philosophy, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2004), 1188A-89B, 51-53.
[50] Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 28-29, 79; Beryl Smalley, 'A *Commentary on Isaias* by Guerric of St-Quentin O.P.,' *Studi e testi* cxxii (1946): 383-97; Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 296-98.
[51] Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones disputatae 'antequam esset frater'* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1960), vol.1, 97; In 1960, the Quaracchi editorial committee authenticated the authorship of this text and added 'Antequam esset frater' in the title to denote its situation within Alexander's chronology. Osborne, 'Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology,' 10-11.
[52] Aaron Gies, *Introduction, On the Significations and Exposition of the Holy Scriptures* (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), xii-xvi; For its dating and authenticity, see Victorin Doucet, 'Maîtres Franciscains de Paris: Supplément au "Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle",' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 27 (1934): 535; Aleksander Horowski, 'Introduction: *De Significationibus et expositione sacrarum Scripturarum,*' *Collectanea Franciscana* 79 (2009): 5-21.

The *Summa* uses Aristotelian causation as a framework for Trinitarian exegesis.[53] The *Summa* begins by expounding the subject matter or material cause of Scripture. Scripture is about the divine character and will disclosed through Christ in the 'works of redemption'. Three components pertain in this definition. The first refers to the 'divine substance' – namely, God's character and will. The second refers to that which God expresses in the incarnation, namely Christ as 'the power and wisdom of God'. The third refers to the divine acts by which such works are made – namely, the creative and redemptive activity of God in Christ.[54] The *Summa* thus clarifies a threefold subject of theology as science:

> …if we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of (1) 'operation', we can say that is the works of restoration of humankind. If, however, we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of (2) 'power', we shall say that it is Christ, who is 'God's power and God's wisdom' (1 Cor 1:24). If, finally, we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of (3) 'essence', we shall say that it is God, or the divine substance. Whence, according to this, theology is a science [*scientia*] about the divine substance which must be cognized through Christ in the work of restoration.[55]

'Operation', 'power' and 'essence' demarcate the causality of the first actual being – the Triune God himself who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[56] Following Hugh of Saint Victor (1096-1141) in his *De sacramentis*, the *Summa* concludes that God's character and will are manifest to man in the incarnation, particularly in the ways God works to create and redeem.[57]

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[53] Alexander's Trinitarian exegesis had precedent in the seminal works of Peter Abelard and William of Conches (1090-1154). Giulio D'Onofrio, *History of Theology: The Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, vol. 2, History of Theology, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 178-81, 205-08, 210-11, 310-12, 331.

[54] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, 4 vols, Books 1-3 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924-1948), vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.3, resp., (n.3), 6.

[55] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.3, resp, (n.3), 6: *Materia dupliciter accipitur in scientiis: 'de qua' et 'circa quam'. 'Materia de qua' potest assignari tripliciter, secundum illud B. Dionysii, in Hierarchia angelica: 'In tria dividuntur supermundana ratione omnes divini intellectus: in essentiam, virtutem et operationem'. Secundum hoc ergo, si assignemus materiam divinarum Scripturarum secundum rationem operationis, dicemus quod materia divinarum Scripturarum sunt opera reparationis humani generis. Si vero assignemus materiam divinarum Scripturarum secundum rationem virtutis, dicemus quod materia divinarum Scripturarum est Christus, qui est Dei virtus et Dei sapientia, I Cor. 1,24. Si vero assignemus materiam divinarum Scripturarum secundum rationem essentiae, dicemus quod materia divinarum Scripturarum est Deus sive divina substantia. Unde secundum hoc Theologia est scientia de substantia divina cognoscenda per Christum in opere reparationis.'* Translation by Boyd Taylor Coolman, 'Hugh of St Victor's Influence on the Halensian Definition of Theology,' *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 381-82.

[56] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, pt.1, in.1, tr.1, q.1, ch.1, (n.25), 41; Boyd Taylor Coolman, 'Hugh of St Victor's Influence on the *Summa Halensis*,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 209-10.

[57] Hugh of St Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis)* trans. Roy Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America Publications, 1951), bk.1, prologue, n.2, 3; pt.1, n.28, 26-27.

The *Summa* explicates its mode of reduction (*reductio*), by drawing upon *De coelesti hierachia* (*The Celestial Hierarchy*) of Pseudo-Dionysius who states: 'All understanding of the divine is divided by the heavenly intelligence into three: essence, power, and operation.'[58] In other words, things have a certain way of working, which reveals a certain disposition of power. One can observe how things work, and from these workings abstract a sense of the invisible powers that move and dispose them. Having established the causality of power and form in the determination of the created object, one can consider what these principles disclose about the nature and intentions of the divine author who determines them. In essence, the *Summa* draws its dialectics of contemplative encounter and speculative theology from Hugh of Saint Victor. Unlike Pseudo-Dionysius, for whom the total qualitative otherness of God from the created sign leaves a significative gap that must be filled in by the imagination, Hugh maintains the positive significative capacity of created things for knowing their Author. However, in the *Summa*, the intellect rather than the imagination has primacy in the penetration of the divine work and character.

Correspondingly, theology's formal cause involves making theological inferences about what is known through God's effects. The method of sacred Scripture is not 'of an art or science which operates by means of the comprehension of human [practical or speculative] reason; but rather this method proceeds through the ordering of the divine wisdom for the instruction of the soul in those matters which pertain to salvation.'[59] In other words, biblical truth transcends mere facticity as it is not pure causal insight. Neither does it offer step-by-step, practical guidance to living. Rather, it deploys both practical, as well as speculative, reason towards the goal of informing the soul towards its salvific end. In other words, what is practised and what is known about things are only a preliminary context for an ideal saving knowledge of the Absolute. Everything in creation has an enduring theological meaning which must be abstracted from its vicissitudes. This is the truth to which every form must be reduced. As Bonaventure later affirms in his treatment of Lombard's *Sentences,* Scripture operates in divine *sapientia*. *Sapientia* is more than practical facility with a task or philosophical acumen for understanding things. It is practical knowledge informed by affection for those things that

[58] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, ed. John Farina, The Classics of Western Spirituality, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), 175.
[59] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.4, a.1, resp., (n.4), 8; Alexander of Hales, 'Alexander's Sum of Theology,' in *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100-c.1375: the Commentary Tradition*, ed. A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 213.

incline the soul towards the Good. *Sapientia* is the reasoning based on the heart's own determination of what is supremely good, thereby involving 'knowledge and affection (*affectus*) together'.[60]

In the *Summa*, spiritual reality can be known by means of carnal signs in two ways. Firstly, one knows by seeing an element of resemblance to God in things (affirmation or cataphatic moment). Secondly, once one has applied the predication, one recognises the ultimate deficiency of this descriptor to capture the fullest, deepest reality of God as subject (negation or apophatic moment). Biblical similitudes are a means of conveying this divine truth. Following Pseudo-Dionysius' mode of reduction or *via negativa*, Scripture instructs man in the means, quality and end of his relation to God. Scripture does so indirectly through similitudes or 'likenesses', where everyday things convey by way of both affirmation and negation the very nature of God. These everyday things force us to see who God is, not just by what they are but also by what they are not. For example, fire conveys a sense of the all-consuming 'fire' of divine love. Nevertheless, earthly fire itself only serves to remind us of that inner experience of divine love. The experience of fire is an inadequate substitute for the originary experience of that love. So, we are compelled to look beyond that earthly experience to seek other images and other experiences that may better convey this ineffable sense of divine sweetness. Inevitably, we run short of images and come to rest in God himself.[61] For Pseudo-Dionysius, it is the experience of such mystical intensity that it renders one speechless and unknowing, a light so bright that it is like a darkness.[62] The *Summa*, moreover, perfects rather than surpasses the cataphatic; since the apex of the ascent is synonymous with ideal perfection. In the presence of glory, the divine identity and will can be comprehended in abstraction from the time-conditioned vicissitudes of everyday existence. The *Summa* utilises both attributive and participatory analogy. This means that relations of attribution or cause between things can be

[60] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, trans. R.E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, vol. 16, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2013), bk.1, prologue, q.3, response, 12; Also see Bonaventure, *Commentarius in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, ed. Editori di Quaracchi, 9 vols., vol. 7, *S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902), vol.3, bk.3, d.35, a.1, q.1, 772-74.

[61] In *De significationibus*, Alexander offers examples of such similitudes: '…fire – enkindling and assimilating to itself that on which it acts…[resembles] the enkindling of charity through which we are being most powerfully assimilated and incorporated or rather united to [Christ's] mystical body…water, fluid and difficult to restrain... [resembles] the anxiety and fluctuation of the active life.' Alexander of Hales, *On the Significations and Exposition of the Holy Scriptures*, trans. Aaron Gies (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), pt.1, n.12, n.14, 4.

[62] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 58-67, 139; See also Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1968), 25, 28.

discerned on the basis of their shared participation in God the First Principle, in whom these relations are exemplified. Scripture, as a repository of the divine ideas, expresses this order and proportion of relations in its literary structure.[63] Accordingly, metaphysics of the divine substance is 'a speculative similitude of knowable things.'[64] In his *Commentary on the Sentences,* Bonaventure would extend the *Summa's* notion of analogy from the formal to the universal, with created phenomena as concrete media of divine reality.

In the *Summa*, Scripture's purpose or final cause is an ideal knowledge of divine personhood in abstraction from the things of sense. This saving knowledge of God as the final cause of the reduction is inspired from the participatory analysis of the *Proslogion* of Anselm of Canterbury and *De trinitate* of Richard of Saint Victor (1110-1173). The *Summa* postulates that 'things that begin in time must have their being from another; since all created things draw their existence from something else, there must be an eternal being that has being (*esse*) from itself.' This argument that the divine substance can be posited based on the notion of causality is further elaborated in the *Summa's* doctrine of the Trinity.[65] Bonaventure would develop this speculative Trinitarian doctrine in a totalising way, with a renewed emphasis on Christ as 'centre' or radical point of convergence of divine and created life. Bonaventure's nascent synthesis in his *Sentences* commentary would reach its fullest methodological realisation in his *magnum opus*, the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* delivered twenty years later.[66]

Henceforth, the Alexandrine exegete can grasp the divine reality from the perspective of his manifold effects. In other words, to infer the character, will and mode of God is from the testimony of what is done in Scripture (*tropological sense*) and what is believed through

[63] According to the *Summa*, the figures of Scripture convey theological universals, which suggests that Scripture's mode of proceeding is not by hermeneutical indwelling but by mental abstraction: '*Introducitur ergo in historia sacrae Scripturae factum singulare ad significandum universale, et inde est quod eius est intellectus et scientia.*' *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int., q.1, ch.1.

[64] Philotheus Boehner, 'The System of Metaphysics of Alexander of Hales,' *Franciscan Studies* 5, n.4 (1945): 403.

[65] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, pt.1, in.1, tr.1, q.1 ch.1, n.25, 41; Aaron Canty, 'The Influence of Anselm of Canterbury on the *Summa Halensis*' Theology of the Divine Substance,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie (Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 174-75; Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, ed. Francis Salesius Schmitt, vol. 1, S. Anselmi *Opera omnia,* (Edinburgh Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946); Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 66; Richard of St Victor, *On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary*, trans. Ruben Angelici (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 1.2.12; Dale M. Coulter, *Per Visibilia ad Invisibilia: Theological Method in Richard of St Victor (d.1173)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation*, 123-27, 143-44, 154-82.

[66] Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, 61-63, 192-214.

Scripture (*allegorical sense*). These insights into the 'why', 'how' and 'what' of things are transferable by formal analogy to the intention, work and identity of God as First Cause (*anagogical sense*); the exegete cognises who God is in himself, as deduced from the 'how' and 'why' of God's relation to humanity through the works of creation and redemption.[67] The divine subject is an active agent in human flourishing, whose singular property can be deduced from the 'how' and 'why' of his relation to man.[68]

Psychological foundations of Alexandrine scriptural interpretation

The *Summa*'s focus on cognising the divine substance limits its study to the speculative level, whereby things are seen only in terms of their objective theological content. The *Summa* undertakes to clarify the psychological foundations of the exegetical process, that is, what happens in the soul of the author or efficient cause when it is lifted up from the sense-world to the world of the Spirit. How the *Summa* undertakes to resolve this question psychologically speaks to the converging in Franciscan interpretive psychology of three traditions – the Islamic neo-Platonising Aristotelian Avicenna, Aristotle through Boethius, and the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*. Notwithstanding its extensive use by Bonaventure and other scholastics, the authority of this moral-psychological twelfth-century treatise has been debated since the thirteenth century. Although traditionally believed to be by Augustine, this text was in fact of twelfth-century Cistercian origin.[69] In particular, *De Spiritu et anima* argues that there is an inbuilt condition in the human soul for readiness to know all things. This 'habit' is brought from potency to act by an infusion of grace from above, which deifies the soul and readies it to receive the divine illuminations. From this hypothesis, the *Summa* derives two conclusions. First, empirical knowledge exists not in itself but by the Divine Word. Knowledge of the sense-world is thereby a mediation of the Divine Word; the things of sense are always to be

[67] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.4, a.4, resp., (n.7), 11; Alexander of Hales, 'Alexander's Sum of Theology,' 221; Mark. F. Johnson, 'The Sapiential Character of *Sacra Doctrina* in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas: The Appropriation of Aristotle's Virtue of Wisdom' (PhD University of Toronto, 1990), 16-34.

[68] For the biblical-interpretive mechanism of the fourfold sense in the *Summa*, see R.S. Franks, 'The Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the Theological System of Alexander of Hales,' in *Amicitiae Corolla*: A Volume of Essays Presented to J.R.Harris on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday, edited by H.G. Wood (London: University of London Press, 1933), 83-95.

[69] Benjamin Clark and Bernard McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology*, trans. E. Leiva and B. Ward, ed. Bernard McGinn (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 65; For a detailed discussion on the authorship of *De Spiritu et anima*, see Constant J. Mews, 'The Diffusion of the *De Spiritu et anima* and Cistercian Reflection on the Soul,' *Viator* 49, 3 (2018): 297-330.

understood in light of the divine causality. Second, the mode of uplifting from sense to spirit is that of abstraction, which is appropriate to the soul's mode of cognition.[70]

The *Summa*'s mode of reduction by abstraction from things of sense was largely owing to the influence of John of La Rochelle. John's immense contribution to the *Summa* was evident, since Alexander did not mention Avicenna in his earlier *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*.[71] John integrated Avicennian discussion on the soul, doctrines he previously developed in his own *Summa de vitiis* (before 1233) and *Summa De Anima* (1235-1236).[72] His two major treatises utilised the schema mentioned in *De Anima* of Cistercian Isaac of Stella (1100-1169) and recapitulated in the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*.[73] The *De Spiritu et anima* adds a neo-Platonic focus on the transcendent cause of meaning and being, gained through Aristotelian abstraction of cause from effect.[74] The *Summa fratris Alexandri* follows Avicenna's teaching that divine knowledge is an ideal, essential knowledge abstracted from the concrete experience of things. Such penetrative insight into the divine causality resplendent in creaturely determinations gives a metaphysical depth to the reading of the Absolute.[75] Avicenna's theory of illumination provides an overarching epistemological framework for the fusion of Aristotelian-Boethian causal insight in things and Pseudo-Augustinian cognition of the divine essence. This fusion creates a context for the effective synthesis of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to theological knowledge. In due course, the soul is able to consider certain matters related to itself to the extent that it is separate from the body.[76] In contrast to

[70] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, pt.2, ch.4, resp., (n.17), 27-28; Hayes, 'Introduction,' *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ,* 37.
[71] This fact is evidenced through online search in the Brepols *Library of Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).
[72] Odon Lottin, 'Alexandre de Hales et la '*Summa de vitiis*' de Jean de la Rochelle,' *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 1 (1929): 240-43; John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol (Paris: Vrin, 1995); Victorin Doucet authenticated John's contribution in Doucet, *Prolegomena in librum III necnon in libros I et II "Summae fratris Alexandri",'* vol.4, 367; For the life and works of John of La Rochelle, see Ignatius Brady, 'Jean de La Rochelle,' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1974), 599-602.
[73] Isaac of Stella, *The Selected Works of Isaac of Stella: A Cistercian Voice from the Twelfth Century*, ed. D. Deme (London: Ashgate, 2007), 143-57.
[74] Pseudo-Augustine, *De Spiritu et anima*, vol. 40, Patrologia Latina, (Paris: Apud editorem, 1875-1890), 779-832; Clark and McGinn, *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology*, 177-282; Teresa Regan, 'A Study of the *Liber de spiritu et anima*: Its Doctrine, Sources and Historical Significance' (PhD University of Toronto, 1948).
[75] Rega Wood, 'The Subject of the Aristotelian Science of Metaphysics,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Christina van Dyke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 610-11; Amos Bertolacci, 'Reading Aristotle with Avicenna: On the Reception of the *Philosophia Prima* in the *Summa Halensis*,' in *The Summa Halensis*: *Sources and Context,* ed. Lydia Schumacher (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020), 135-154; Dag Nikolaus Hasse, Avicenna's *De anima* in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul 1160-1300 (London: Warburg Institute, 2000) 51-54.
[76] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, t.5, (n.163-67), 244-50; As Schumacher observes, the *Summa* distinguishes between 'higher' reason and 'lower' reason as inspired by Augustine. The first is 'reason as reason' [*ratio ut ratio*], or intellect insofar as as it is concerned with the divine intention. The second is 'reason as nature'

the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, in which understanding mounts upward to God beyond the realm of sense, Bonaventure leads back both sense and spirit to God. Bonaventure was responding to certain key interests of the *Summa* that were authorised by the commentary system; but the student was starting to depart from the narrowly academic approach of the Alexandrine tradition. This development is seen in Bonaventure's foundational theological work, the *Commentary on the Sentences*.

V. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*

Timothy Noone, R.E. Houser, Bert Roest and other scholars claimed that Bonaventure started his *Commentary on the Sentences* in 1250 to 1252 and completed the final revision in 1253.[77] Bonaventure followed the Lombardian structure of argumentation introduced by Alexander of Hales in his *Glossa in quatuor libros sententarium Petri Lombardi* and later developed in the multi-authored *Summa fratris Alexandri.*

The intramural composition of Bonaventure's exegetical synthesis is best seen in his treatment of theology's subject in the prologue to his *Sentences* commentary. Using *quaestiones,* Bonaventure follows the scholastic standard procedure first established by Alexander and shaped by the order of treatment of Lombard's *Sentences.* Bonaventure elaborates his own definition of theology underpinning all his subsequent mode of thought in every sphere of inquiry – spiritual, scriptural and philosophical. Developing the discourse in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, Bonaventure defines theology in terms of its four Aristotelian causes: the subject matter of theology (material cause), the mode of proceeding in theology (formal cause), the end or purpose of theology (final cause), and the author producing the theology (efficient cause). Bonaventure considers the epistemological problem inherited from Alexander, on how to include other matters together with God in theology. Bonaventure resolves that synthetic

[*ratio ut natura*], or the intellect so far as it is concerned with natural life. Yet, this distinction 'resembles much more closely Avicenna's doctrine of the 'two faces of the soul', or his distinction between the theoretical and the practical intellect, which respectively consider matters related to the soul insofar as it is separate from the body versus the soul insofar as it is related to the body.' Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation*, 59-64, 84-87, esp. 223; Also see Magdalena Bieniak, 'The Soul-Body Union in the Summa Halensis,' in *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought*, edited by Lydia Schumacher, Veröffentlichungen Des Grabmann-Institutes Zur Erforschung Der Mittelalterlichen Theologie Und Philosophie (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 37-48.

[77] Houser and Noone, 'Introduction,' *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, xv; van der Heijden and Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca.1217-1274)'

insight of reality ought to rest on, and proceed from, divine authority. This insight does not depend ultimately on dialectical arguments as the putative mode of proceeding.

On theology's subject or material cause, Bonaventure first balances what is known as the traditional Augustinian position against what is probably seen as the radical Aristotelian position of his day. Bonaventure reflects on Alexander through Hugh of Saint Victor in favour of a twofold subject: 'God and his works, such as creation and reparation'.[78] Bonaventure designates this twofold subject in Augustinian-Lombardian terms as 'things and signs'. Lower things are signs of higher things, and words are conventional signs that signify both things in the world and concepts of these things in the mind. The hermeneutical implication is that inner, outer and transcendent truth coincide through the intermediation of an inspired word.[79] Additionally, Bonaventure concedes with Albert the Great (c.1206-1280) that the subject of theology proper is God or the 'object of belief'.[80] However, certain problems exist in this twofold interpretation of the *scientia* of theology. For instance, Bonaventure references Aristotle's assertion that a science cannot treat both signs and things simultaneously. Since the spiritual object is essentially complete and ideal and the sense-object is always in motion and in process, the signification of spiritual things is different from that of creatures. The ontological separateness between God and things means that each must be approached in different ways and to different ends. This leads to the proliferation of different tools and methods: respectively, a science of virtue ordered to the language arts, and a science of things proceeding by rational investigation.[81]

Bonaventure overcomes this apparent fragmentation in knowledge by including every form of knowledge in the determination of theology's subject. This determination encompasses three overlapping wholes (*tota*) – God as 'root principle' of the whole, a completely 'integral' Christ, and the 'universal' relationship between signs and things:

> The subject to which everything is reduced as to a principle is God himself. The subject to which all the conclusions in this book are reduced as to an integral

[78] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.1, 1.
[79] Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, ed. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1873), 8-10; Lombard, *Sententarium libri quattuor*, bk.1, d.1, ch.1 ,1.
[80] Albert the Great, *Super Sententiis*, ed. A. Borgnet, 38 vols., vol. 25, *Opera omnia* (Paris: Vivès, 1893), bk.1, d.1, ch.2; cf. Lombard, *Sententarium libri quattuor*, bk.1, d.3, ch.10, 71.
[81] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, trans. E.S. Bouchier (London: Blackwell, 1901), bk.1, ch.7; bk.1, ch.10. https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/bouchier-posterior-analytics; Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.1, 1-6.

> whole is Christ, understood as including both divine and human nature, or the created and uncreated...the subject to which everything is reduced as to a universal whole we can describe using two terms conjunctively and disjunctively. In this way, the subject is things and signs, and here a sign is called a sacrament.[82]

These *tota* canvas the same theological reality in three different senses – in terms of the origin (God himself), in terms of what is manifest in the incarnation (Christ, head and members), and in terms of that which is believed and known in faith through Scripture and experience (its intelligible aspect). This elaboration of three overlapping *tota* allows Bonaventure to envisage the same reality in three ways – as spiritual, sensible and intelligible. It follows that the same subject is being treated in three different lights, employing three different methods and faculties of the soul. Firstly, following Pseudo-Dionysius, God can be read in terms of himself. This reading calls for mystical entry into the divine 'darkness' leaving behind all that the soul thinks it knows about God. But such an apophatic knowledge of God, without context or coordinates, lies hidden within the sensible phenomenon as the 'outer aspect' of the divine life. Thus, this knowledge can be registered on the perceptual level as well. Secondly, inspired by Hugh of Saint Victor, externalising this reading of God in terms of a transference of meaning and reality in things occurs on the level of symbolic theology.[83] Thirdly, inspired by Alexander and other scholastics, there is the level of speculative theology which clarifies the Christological principle of this nexus between inner divine life and external manifestation. In this way, Bonaventure concerns himself with how to read the divine subject in three convergent lights – in a personal and 'unitive' way that belies the purely abstractive movement of Alexander from operation to power and then to essence. Theological understanding arises from the soul's being-in-Christ, rather than in abstraction from it. Once Alexander has abstracted out the soteriological content from the particulars of human and creaturely existence, the particulars are not retained. For Bonaventure, however, the particulars are redeemed and not discarded.

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[82] Bonaventure, *Commentarius in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, *Opera omnia*, 1:7: '*Nam subiectum, ad quod omnia reducuntur ut ad principium, est ipse Deus. Subiectum quoque, ad quod omnia reducuntur, quae determinantur in hoc libro, ut ad totum integrum, est Christus, prout comprehendit naturam divinam et human sive creatum et increatum…Subiectum quoque, ad quod omnia reducuntur sicut ad totum univerale, possumus nominare per circumlocutionem sive sub distiunctione; et sic est res vel signum; et vocatur hic signum Sacramentum.*' Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.1, response, 3-4.

[83] Boyd Taylor Coolman, 'The Medieval Affective Dionysian Tradition,' in *Re-thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*, ed. Sarah Coakley Charles M. Stang (Hoboken: Wiley, 2011), 85-102.

Bonaventure explains that theology's formal cause or mode of proceeding is correspondingly threefold. God is read by the spirit in faith (denoting sublimity of the Trinitarian God), by the intellect through reason (denoting emptiness of created things), and by the body through deeds (denoting merit of the incarnation).[84] This moral-psychological schema draws upon the treatment of the *De Spiritu et anima* in the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, which features a similar triple hierarchy of the powers of the soul. This threefold mode of wisdom further leads to a threefold final cause or purpose. To dispose the soul in love through both loving action and pious speculation leads the soul to 'becoming good'.[85] This re-integration of a human personhood previously fractured by sin is the overarching goal of theology. In this way, true theology is the threefold articulation of right seeing, right thinking and right living – a state of restfulness and remediation in mind, soul and body that is only realisable in God himself. The biblical writer as instrumental or secondary efficient cause understands in, with and for God as author or primary efficient cause.[86] All reality is known and loved in the Word as its origin, mode and end. Thus, all forms of knowledge are ideally directed toward the same material object, God himself, who inhabits all. Bonaventure's key distinction in method, but not in subject, allows him to assert God's ubiquitous authority regarding all forms – whether sensible, intelligible or spiritual – while retaining the methodological specificity of each.[87]

Bonaventure emphasises that, in order to know God and the way he works, one must understand and experience Christ as the way, source and end of *sapientia*. A threefold activity is required. The first is a meditative focus on the meaning of Christ's life incarnate in Scripture. The second is the motivation to live and think this inner truth, striving for Christ's enactment in our words and deeds. The third is the faith to address and receive from God himself. It does not matter

[84] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.2, 6-10.
[85] 'If we consider the intellect in a way falling between these two [habits of practical and speculative], as it applies to our affections, it is perfected by a habit that lies between the purely speculative and the purely practical, but one that embraces both. This habit is called wisdom and it involves knowledge and affection together...Consequently, this habit is for the sake of contemplation and also for our becoming good, but principally for the sake of our becoming good.' Translation by R.E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.3, 10-13, esp. 11-12.
[86] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.4, 13-15; Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 81.
[87] Colman Majchrzak summarised as such: 'Because man is a creature of both the natural and supernatural order there can be no sharp distinction between philosophy and theology. At the same time, however, there can neither be an identity of the two nor even a thorough interpenetrating continuity. The Catholic philosopher, in practice, can at best form what Copleston calls a 'methodological' distinction between the two sciences. He means that a wholly satisfying system of philosophy must be positively guided by faith as a guardian against error. Strictly speaking, then, philosophy is not an autonomous science, but rather one subordinate to and having significance because of supernatural theology.' Colman J. Majchrzak, *A Brief History of Bonaventurianism* (Wisconsin: Franciscan Publishers, 1957), 7; Also see Andreas Speer, 'Bonaventure,' in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 233-38.

whether words presuppose deeds, or *vice versa,* since both figure in the dynamism of relating to Christ in the heart of things.[88] This synergy of mind and body in divine love is inspired from the moral teaching of Bernard of Clairvaux. In his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Bernard offers 'three loaves' of the biblical discourse on *sapientia*. The 'first loaf' – discursively embodied by Ecclesiastes – is 'self-control' which is an 'antidote' to 'misguided love of the world'. This is the beginning of *sapientia*. The 'second loaf' – discursively embodied by Proverbs – is 'enlightened reason' which is an 'antidote' to 'an excessive love of self'. This is the culmination of *sapientia*. The 'third loaf' – discursively embodied by the Song of Songs – is 'endless union with God'. Turning from 'human pursuits and worldly desires' demands self-control; and purification of the soul demands discernment between good and evil. Breakthrough to greater intimacy in God is the natural consequence of the previous two steps. With 'the flesh [having] been tamed and the spirit set free by zeal for truth', one arrives at delight in God for God himself. All three are intentional; the first being an act of the will, the second being an act of the mind and the third being an activity of the spirit. Bonaventure would go on to creatively transform this Bernardine doctrine in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) and other subsequent works.[89]

(a) Bonaventure on the relation of faith and reason

In Book 3, distinction 23 of his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure develops his notion of total adherence to divine authority as presupposing all knowledge and experience. Bonaventure clarifies that faith and reason offer different forms of certitude with respect to the knowledge of (divine) reality. The *Summa fratris Alexandri* posits its own distinction in the certitude, cognitive bases and methods of faith and reason. Drawing on a key neo-Platonic axiom, the *Summa* concludes that faith certified on the basis of mystical experience or tasting is more certain than reason certified by repeated induction from experience. Moreover, theological science proceeds by reflecting upon the truth of what is experienced in faith. In saying that faith is shown to be certain 'after the fact' and by the efficacy of its results, The *Summa* implies that intellection plays a second-order, explanatory role in making ontologically present to the

[88] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.4, 13-15.
[89] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Songs*, trans. Samuel J. Eales (London, 1895), homily 1, n.2-3, 7-8; For Bonaventure's moral-psychological notion in comparison to Bernard's, see Ilia Delio, 'Bonaventure and Bernard: On Human Image and Mystical Union,' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1999): 251-63; For Bonaventure's theological reliance on Bernard of Clairvaux, see Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure,' 326-29.

intellect what is already ontically manifest in faith.[90] Bonaventure progresses beyond the *Summa* in defining faith's certitude as arising not from tasting (or second-order reflection upon it), but from total adherence to the Word of God. For Bonaventure, a faith with 'certainty of adherence' (*certitudo adhaesionis*) is faith that stands firm in the Word of God. Not simply on account of its having been proven by experience or 'scientific knowledge', but because of the authority of the One speaking.[91] Regardless of whether or not the believer has witnessed the efficacy of his faith in human experience, God's Word is to be acted upon purely because of one's love and trust in the One who decrees it, and not for any reason extraneous to God himself. One can know the proven efficacy of God's Word from the testimony of experience and still choose not to believe it at a given moment. In so doing, Bonaventure places faith at the origin of all experience and knowledge. *Contra* the *Summa,* which starts from the experienced effects and reasons back to the singular property and intentions of a First Cause, Bonaventure begins by encountering God as the origin, mode and end of all things. Bonaventure thereby exegetes the quality, manner and end of God's relation to him through the medium of faith's phenomenon.

In Book 3, distinction 24, Bonaventure posits a corollary point about the shared object of faith and reason. Bonaventure asserts that the same object can be known by faith as well as reason, but in different senses. He begins by citing the reasons *ad oppositum*: *prima facie,* faith seems to be about that which is unseen and therefore cannot be known in a scientific way by the evidence of the senses. Furthermore, science depends on human reasoning while faith is directed toward the divine object. In this manner, faith always receives its certitude from its object, whereas science can receive its certitude from reasons developed independently of any authentic engagement with its object. On the other hand, Bonaventure does clarify a sense in which faith and reason can coincide. His formula, in keeping with Augustine and Richard of Saint Victor, is succinct: 'scientific knowledge under the guidance of reasoning can be had

[90] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.4, a.2, (n.5), 9-10: 'Is the method of sacred scripture certain?' 'Therefore, I say that the theological method is more certain by means of a certainty of experience, a certainty concerning affection, which is by way of taste, as in the Psalm [118:103]: 'How sweet are your words to my taste.' But the theological method is not more certain about the speculation of the intellect, which is by means of vision. And it is more certain for the spiritual person, but less certain for the natural person. 'For the natural man does not perceive those things that are the Spirit of God, but the spiritual man judges all things.' [1 Cor 2:14-15]. Faith makes theological knowledge superior to rational knowledge, because it brings a higher kind of certainty, that of religious 'experience' based on what Augustine called the 'affection' of the mind. But theological knowledge is in itself inferior to the certitude attained in the 'speculation' that comes from 'vision', that is, the beatific vision in heaven.' Translation by R.E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, 30, n.3.

[91] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.3, d.23, a.1, q.4, response, 25-27.

along with the habit of faith'.[92] Here, Bonaventure draws upon his master Eudes Rigaud's notion 'of the *habitus fidei*, which is neither faith nor demonstrative science, but understanding, perfecting the intellect with the sole intention of improving the *affectus*.'[93] Faith, therefore, is an innate habit or disposition that can be developed and reinforced on the level of both word and action. In this manner, scientific reasoning can be employed in the ordinary sense of evident comprehension of sensible phenomena, and in exegeting the very mode of divine self-manifestation in the act of its appearing. In such a way, reason and faith coincide in their shared object – God himself.

Bonaventure illustrates his exegetical principle with the testimony of the woman at the well in John 4:39-42. The newly converted Samaritans evangelised by the woman said, 'Now we believe, but not because of your word…' Instead, they believe because of Jesus' own word. Indeed, God is known not simply on account of the evident testimony about himself in common human experience, but because of himself (*propter se*) as 'principal cause' or origin. As such, knowledge of God, at its deepest level, is a knowledge that arises from and in God himself. [94] For instance, the believer can only appreciate the divine love in its fullness, not just because it is seen in the life of the Church, but because he has experienced the love of the One who accepts him despite his own sin and brokenness. Earlier in distinction 23, Bonaventure argues that it is on account of its existential weight and significance that such a personal theology is considered worth dying for. This theology is therefore reckoned superior to a knowledge of geometry or of any other *scientia* – for which no man in his right mind would dare to die.[95]

This being-in-God as a source of knowing him and others means that hermeneutics occurs in living relation to the divine subject, whose truth is alive and manifest in the way God responds to the believer. Hermeneutics is, in a foremost sense, the living exegesis of God, in and through the living worded *vestigia* of God himself in Scripture and creation. Here, Bonaventure embeds

[92] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.3, d.24, a.2, q.3, 33-40, esp. 36; Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, trans. Arthur West Hadden (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2019), bk.14, ch.3. https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1301.htm; Richard of St Victor, *On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary*, bk1, n.1-4, 73-76.

[93] According to Bougerol: 'In this matter of the character of theology, the influence of Eudes Rigaud on Bonaventure was unmistakable. Eudes was the first to note the importance of the *habitus fidei*...It was Eudes who definitely geared the Order of the Friars Minor in its approach to faith.' Kenan Osborne builds on Bougerol's observation in marking Eudes as a 'mediational' figure in Bonaventure's transformation of the Alexandrine synthesis. Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 17-18; Osborne, 'Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology,' 35-36.

[94] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, b.3, d.24, a.2, q.3, contra, 38.

[95] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.3, d.23, q.4, contra, resp., 25-26.

the seeds of a more relational, ecstatic approach more fully expressed in his later works. For example, his *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* (1254) attributes to the soul of Christ an ecstatic form of knowing – namely, the knowledge of the divine revelation or Word as a representation or an expression of its origin.[96] Bonaventure's emphasis on relationality as the foundation of exegesis distinguishes his synthesis from that of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, in which exegesis plays a second-order, explanatory role at a level distantiated from the experience of faith.

(b) Psychological foundations of Bonaventure's biblical interpretation

In Book 3, distinction 24 of his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure diverges from the Alexandrine *Summa* and develops his own notion of the right ordering of reason and faith on the psychological plane. Akin to Avicenna's 'two faces of the soul', the *Summa* asserts the existence of a twofold division of the upper mind, whereby passions suffered by the lower part of the mind are repurposed and re-ordered through a dual process of rationalisation and removal. The upper mind transmutes passions suffered by the lower mind into those which are productive for salvation. For instance, pain is turned into joy consistent with the repentant state of the individual.[97] Conversely, Bonaventure eschews all manner of a bifurcation of the upper mind. He theorises that there is no part of the self that is not *'in'* the object of belief. Human passions, such as suffering and joy, or even the dictates of natural reason are part and parcel of the truly human experience of God. Bonaventure expounds his unique mode of knowledge as follows:

> A *habitus* that ensures knowledge must be conformed to the object known when that *habitus* depends upon the concrete mode of existence of its object. When it does not depend upon the object itself it does not need to be conformed to its concrete existence, but to the existence of that object in the cause that makes it to be. Such is the knowledge of faith; it does not depend upon what is believed or what is revealed but upon the light that guides the knowledge of it.[98]

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[96] Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, trans. Zachary Hayes, vol. 4, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), q.7, concl., 186-94.

[97] Boyd Taylor Coolman, 'The Salvific Affectivity of Christ According to Alexander of Hales,' *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 1-38; Also see Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S.Bonaventurae, 1951-1957); bk 3, d.35, n.7-8, 438.

[98] Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, *Opera omnia,* (bk.3, d.24, a.1, q.1, ad.2), 3:509-510: '*...habitus cognoscendi debet conformari ipsi cognoscibili, dicendum, quod istud habet veritatem, quando habitus cognoscendi pendet ab ipso cognoscobili secundum existentiam in proprio genere, sicut est scientia acquisita secundum causas et rationes inferiores; sed de eo genere cognitionis, quod non pendet ab ipsa re*

To love and know God is to love and know in, by and with God. Both loving and knowing are co-mingled manifestations of the self in its union with the divine in the things God creates and redeems. Hermeneutically speaking, this means that the sensible manifestation of divine reality is included in the articulation of a speculative theology. Exegesis thus consists in participating in the divine self-manifestation in things from the interior of faith's phenomenon. Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of humanity's relation to God its origin, manifest in the sensible, and returned unto God in the fullness of a life lived in him.

Bonaventure on the mental process of *sapientia*

In Book 3, distinction 35, Bonaventure offers the important insight that knowledge informed by love is operative in the determination of *sapientia*. The divine gift of *sapientia* is begun in cognition and consummated in affection. *Sapientia* facilitates a more effective living in the world that God has made. *Sapientia* also consists in knowing the character and ways of the divine author. *Sapientia* operates under four aspects. First, *sapientia* involves reflection on how and why things in themselves are at the highest level of generality. This is wisdom in its most general aspect. For this task, the cognitive power is leading. This is the method of Aristotle through Boethius. Second, in its less general aspect, *sapientia* entails the cognition of eternal things or the highest causes, reasoned back from experienced effects. This is the method of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*. Drawing on Avicennian psychology, the *Summa* indicates that effects are most accurately understood with respect to God as their First Cause; since contemplative insight through general illumination is primary in the determination of *sapientia*.[99] Third, there is the special knowledge of an inner truth informed by piety. The soul's desire for ultimate ends and eternal goods disposes its entire way of thinking and being in the world. This is the meditative way of Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux. Finally, there is the more special dimension of divine wisdom arising through union with God-in-Christ:

> And since to the interior taste, in which there is delight, a necessary act of affection is required for the sake of being united, and an act of cognition for the sake of apprehending, according to that Philosopher [Aristotle], who says: delight is the union of coming together when the coming together exists with a

cognita, non est necesse, quod conformetur ipsi cognoscibili secundum existentiam sui in se, sed secundum existentiam sui in causa. Et talis est cognitio fidei...quae non pendet ab eo quod creditur vel quod revelatur, sed ab illo lumine, per quod ad hoc cognoscendum illuminatur.' Translation by George Tavard, *Transiency and Permanence: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure*, Theology series (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1954), 35.

[99] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.2, m.3, ch.4, ad objecta 3 (n.23), 35.

> certain sense; henceforth, that act of the gift of wisdom is partly cognitive, and partly affective, since it might be begun in cognition and consummated in affection...'[100]

This personal knowledge of God is the very root structure of all knowledge; this personal knowledge transmutes everything in its light. *Sapientia* thus ends in the affection of the Highest Good, in the contemplative fashion of Pseudo-Dionysius.[101]

Accordingly, Bonaventure distinguishes between a general wisdom on the part of cognition and a special wisdom on the part of affection. Understanding of Scripture is governed by this actual interplay of affection and intellection. With respect to general wisdom, cognition of the Word is essential; this involves speculation of Christ's form of being and conditions of enablement. For instance, the biblical injunction in the Sermon on the Mount to 'love your enemies' (Matthew 5:44) is a general principle with a determinable sense. This principle can be applied discriminatingly in different forms and situations according to a form of biblical-linguistic rationality.[102] Nevertheless, general wisdom turns into special wisdom when the soul, desiring God, conforms to God in union with Christ. Only experiencing God in the secret place can raise such understanding from the level of generality to the level of special or personal insight, in line with the soul's divinely exalted mode of being. Examples of such understanding particular to the self are: 'I am a son of my Father in heaven', or 'I am loved by God'. When love for God enters theology's determinations, it transposes all theology's truths onto an even higher level of cogency. The certitude of such personal theological truths forms the basis of an integrous Christian life, since these truths are not only understood with the mind but clung to with the heart. This interplay of theological science and mystical-ecstatic insight are the two poles of the sapiential process, generating a deeper knowledge and experience of God and his

[100] Bonaventure, *Commentarius in quatuor libros Sententiarum,* 3:774 (bk.3, d.35, a.1, q.1, concl.): '*Et quoniam ad gustum interiorem, in quo est delectatio, necessario requiritur actus affectionis ad coniungendum et actus cognitionis ad apprehendendum, secundum illud Philosophi, qui dicit, quod delectatio est coniunctio convenientis cum convenienti cum sensu eiusdem'; hinc est, quod actus doni sapientiae partim est cognitivus, et partim est affectivus: ita quod in cognitione inchoatur et in affectione consummatur...*' (Translation mine)

[101] For wisdom as the affective perfection of theological knowledge in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, see Gregory LaNave, 'Bonaventure's Theological Method,'in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann and Jared Goff. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 99-101; Christopher M. Cullen, 'Bonaventure's Philosophical Method' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, edited by Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 133-36.

[102] All biblical quotations in this thesis are sourced from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible. *Douay-Rheims Bible* (London: Baronius Press, 2017); *Douay-Rheims Bible*. https://vulgate.org/.

ways in and through the things he has created. As such, Bonaventure asserts the cooperation of both intellective and affective powers in a power transcending both – the divine love itself.

For Bonaventure, divine *sapientia* consists in a unity of the soul's powers. This unity originates in a desire so intense that it consumes the soul's earthly living, seeing and thinking with the rapture of heaven. It is this total embrace of the divine heart in the midst of the world that makes such envisioning infusive of every potentiality of the soul. Bonaventure must have in mind certain passages from Francis' Rule of 1221:

> With our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, with our whole strength and fortitude, with our whole understanding, with all our powers, with every effort, every affection, every feeling, every desire and wish, let us all love the Lord God. Who has given and gives to each one of us our whole body, our whole soul and our whole life...[103]

Inner simplicity or *simplicitas* is also implied as the precondition of *sapientia* in Francis' undated *A Salutation of the Virtues*: 'Hail, Queen Wisdom! May the Lord protect you, with Your Sister, holy pure Simplicity! ... Pure holy *Simplicity* confounds all the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the body.'[104] In Bonaventure's *Morning Sermon on Saint Francis,* likely delivered in 1255 shortly after his licensing as *magister*, he reiterates his concept of *simplicitas* that was perhaps Francis-inspired. The sense of inner simplicity as the total submission of thought, vision and life to the word of Christ in Scripture issues in an unbroken horizon of flourishing in the divine love. In setting forth the Order's founding father as the total imitator of Christ in desire, word and deed, Bonaventure marks Francis' epistemological strategy ultimately as divine revelation rather than naturally acquired knowledge.[105]

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[103] *Fontes Franciscani,* 210-211: '*Omnes diligamus ex toto corde ex tota anima ex tota mente ex tota virtute o et fortitudine, ex toto intellectu, ex omnibus viribus, toto nisu, toto affectu, totis visceribus, totis desideriis et voluntatibus Dominum Deum, qui totum corpus, totam animam et totam vitam dedit…*'Francis of Assisi, 'The Earlier Rule (1221),' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents 4 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, ch.23, n.8, 84.

[104] *Fontes Franciscani*, 223-224:*'Ave, regina sapientia! Dominus te salvet cum tua sorore sancta pura simplicitate…Pura sancta simplicitas confundit omnem sapientiam huius mundi et sapientiam corporis.'* Francis of Assisi, 'Salutation of the Virtues,' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, vv.1, 10, 164-65.

[105] Bonaventure preaches: 'First of all, he [Francis] taught what he himself had learned without error because of the truth of God's revelation...It is from having learned in this way that Saint Paul commends his teaching to the Galatians: For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached to me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.' Translation from 'The Morning Sermon on Saint Francis, 1255,' in *Such is the Power of Love: Francis of Assisi as seen by Bonaventure*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 2007), 26-34, esp. 29; For its dating, see Ignatius Brady, 'The Authenticity of Two Sermons of Saint Bonaventure,'

As I have shown, Bonaventure pursues a different order of hermeneutical questioning from the summists who ask in general what is involved in the practice of faith; Bonaventure asks in particular what *God* requires of *me* in practice. As such, God, or the object of belief, always enters into theology's determination as an authority and agent in the reader's quest for meaning. The summists' questioning of what how, and why of life in God is supplemented by Bonaventure's inquiry into what, how and why God himself wants *me* to be. The summists' way involves a general articulation of faith's praxis incarnate in Scripture. Bonaventure's way involves a concrete negotiation of faith's praxis in relation to God as a subject of encounter. It is attendant on an actual dialectics of apophatic and cataphatic modes of inquiry; for theological thoughts do not come ready-made but arise from and in relation to God himself. Bonaventure's dialectics essentially distinguishes his exegetical style from the summists' more cataphatic style. Their theological thinking is *about* this experience, an assessment 'after the fact' of its occurrence from the objectively distantiated standpoint of the analyst. On the other hand, Bonaventure's theological reasoning naturally arises *through* experience in God.

Accordingly, the peculiar strength of the Alexandrine formality lies in its capacity to clarify objective reasons about the relation of God and humanity. These reasons hold true across the full range of interpretive contexts. Bonaventure's contribution lies in making these reasons practical and personally relevant to the believer. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter 2 on their respective commentaries on the Gospel of John, Alexander simply lists the reasons how and why God manifests in a certain way, whereas Bonaventure labours to articulate the significance and reality of God's self-manifestation in relation to the individual believer. It is very much a difference in exegetical style as well as substance from that of his master. It is a different mode of expressing the same matter of faith through Scripture, and a focal shift from what is understood about faith to what is experienced in faith.

In his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure synthesises the Pseudo-Dionysian, Alexandrine and Hugonian modes of reduction according to his evolving hermeneutics of God through Scripture. For Pseudo-Dionysius, comparing everyday human experience against mystical experience shows forth the ultimate deficiency of the first kind of experience in articulating things divine. In the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, the process of 'reasoning back' from effects to

Franciscan Studies 28 (1968): 12; Ignatius Brady, 'Saint Bonaventure's Sermons on Saint Francis,' *Franziskanische Studien* 58 (1976): 139-40.

a divine cause helps to clarify the divine *quis* in abstraction from the things of sense. This mode of formal abstraction or 'reasoning back', as opposed to aesthetic reduction, is the decisive element in the Alexandrine theory of reduction inspired by Avicenna. Bonaventure, drawing together both the Alexandrine cataphatic and Pseudo-Dionysian apophatic moments, understands that the soul is led back in a total way to the inner life of God through a comprehensive reordering of thought and action in the divine love. Following Hugh of Saint Victor, Bonaventure directs his exegesis of divine reality outward towards the things of sense, as well as inward toward the things of soul and spirit.[106] This means that theology explains scriptural experience (Alexandrine *cataphasis*), as much as experience discloses theology (Pseudo-Dionysian/Hugonian *apophasis*). Bonaventure's sensitivity to theology as the inner revelation of the divine *sapientia* is significant, especially in light of Francis' practical embodiment of the Gospel. It is in being the very sacrament of God that the believer comes to know God and himself in full.

In sum, both Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary and the *Summa fratris Alexandri* express a threefold form of knowledge in God. The internal configuration of this threefold way differs between Bonaventure and the summists. The summists understand true wisdom to be in abstraction from the things of sense. This movement of abstraction is premised on a bifurcation of the upper mind giving rise to a dual process of rationalisation and removal. Bonaventure asserts the methodological truth that one's whole self ought first to enter into God if one wants to attain wisdom. Rather than abstractive as per the Alexandrine tradition, Bonaventure's form of knowing is, strictly speaking, unitive. For it involves addressing all the soul's powers to God through the created medium. This results in a more complete form of knowing – transcending and encompassing intellection and practice in the total experience of God. The consequences of this hermeneutical shift in Bonaventure's thinking on knowledge for the reading of Scripture are profound. One does not read by abstracting out certain speculative ideas from experience as the preliminary context. Instead, one reads in order to grasp – with all heart, and all sense, and all soul and mind – the total import of the scriptural figures. Christ's suffering on the Cross can be experienced in a certain sense; this act of vicarious experience initiates the whole self of the believer into Christ's reality. This is different from the act of drawing causal interconnections between Christ's suffering on the Cross and Christ's healing efficacy for the believer – a strategy deployed by the *Summa* in its speculation of sacramental experience.

[106] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, t.2, bk.1, d.3, pt.1, single article, q.2, n.4, 77.

Bonaventure is transfiguring the Alexandrine philosophical analysis of experience with a more personal experience of Scripture.[107] As such, Bonaventure was diverging on hermeneutical grounds from the Alexandrine position. His hermeneutical divergence, served by certain doctrinal reformulations, was prompted by his growing perception of the various challenges confronting the Order. He would go on to construct a more practical foundation of the spiritual life for his confreres in response to the internal conflict over Franciscan identity and vocation, as well as tensions with the seculars at the University of Paris.

VI. Bonaventure's divergence from the Alexandrine position

As early as the 1250s, a mere few years after the demise of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle, signs of Bonaventure's divergence from certain Alexandrine teachings had begun to surface. As I have demonstrated thus far, this is evident in his *Commentary on the Sentences* completed in 1253. Bonaventure rarely mentioned his former masters' names, as was the custom of the day.[108] However, Bonaventure's explicit use of Alexandrine terminology to set out his own position indicated certain reservations with Alexandrine doctrines. This led certain of his peers to accuse him of departing from the Alexandrine doctrinal fold to the point that Bonaventure had to defend himself and assure them of his orthodoxy. Between 1254 and 1256, he presented a *Praelocutio* (foreword) to Book 2 of his *Sentences* commentary.[109] In this short text, he maintained:

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[107] Interestingly, Bonaventure mentions *'experientia'* 92 times in his *Sentences* commentary, compared to Alexander's 18 times in his *Glossa* on Lombard's *Sentences*. The multi-authored *Summa fratris Alexandri* also treats *'experienti**' 98 times, but it is a much longer text compared to Bonaventure's commentary. These results show that Bonaventure places greater importance on the Aristotelian-inspired theme of experience-originated knowledge in his synthesis. I am indebted for these insights to my main supervisor, Professor Constant Mews. See Brepols. *Library of Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

[108] In the *Texts in Translation Series* by The Franciscan Institute of Saint Bonaventure University in the United States, the detailed indices of Bonaventure's sources indicate that he rarely cites his contemporaries such as Alexander of Hales. But he often uses aphorisms or conveys quotes in abbreviated or paraphrased form.

[109] Fedele da Fanna, *Ratio novae collectionis operum omnium S. Bonaventurae sive editorum sive anecdotorum* (Turin: Marietti, 1874); Quoted in Pietro Maranesi, 'The *Opera omnia* of Saint Bonaventure: History and Present Situation,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 66; Bonaventure's short text was discovered by Fedele da Fanna and his team of Quaracchi editors while consulting thousands of codices in more than five hundred libraries in Europe. In 1870, their Minister General had given them the task to compile a new edition of Bonaventure's *Opera omnia.* Four years later, da Fanna published his findings in which he designated the short text as a *Praelocutio* to Book 2 of the *Sentences* Commentary. But further research since then has led some scholars such as Brady to opine that Bonaventure's addition was identified incorrectly as a *Principium* of Book 2, as a *Praelocutio*, instead of an *Epilogus* to Book 1. This debate is still on-going. Ignatius Brady, 'The Edition of the *Opera omnia* of Saint Bonaventure (1882-1902),' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 367-70; Edward A. Synan, 'A Bonaventurian Enigma: "*praelocutio"* or "*epilogus"*? A Third Hypothesis,' in *Bonaventuriana. Miscellanea in onore di Jacques-Guy Bougerol*, ed. F. Chavero Blanco, Bibliotheca Pontificii Athenei Antoniani (Rome: Edizioni Antonianum, 1988), 493-505; Matthew T. Beckmann, 'Bonaventure and Alexander: Friend or Foe?,' in *'Non enim fuerat Evangelii surdus auditor…' (1 Celano 22): Essays in Honor of*

> And just as in the first book I adhered to the authoritative teachings (*sententiis*) of the Master of the *Sentences* [Lombard], the common opinions of the masters, and – above all – of *our father and teacher of good memory, Brother Alexander,* so in the following books I shall not depart from their footprints. For I do not strive to invent new opinions, but to weave the common and approved ones together anew. No one should consider that I wish to produce new writing; for I feel and confess that I am a poor and feeble *compiler*.[110] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure took due care to emphasise the continuity of the Franciscan school with the Alexandrine tradition by calling Alexander 'our father and teacher of good memory', before he proceeded to justify his own innovation beyond the Alexandrine tradition that had been based on Lombard's doctrine. Bonaventure identified eight points in Lombard's *Sentences* that diverged from commonly held opinion. The first concerned Lombard's definition of love (*caritas*) as 'something uncreated, just as the Holy Spirit is uncreated'.[111] Love, and the knowledge that arises through love, are purely a creation of the soul's contact with the divine independent of any empirical experience. This means that sense-experience does play a role in the Alexandrine synthesis, but as a preliminary context for an ideal theology achieved through a form of intellectual contemplation. Conversely, Bonaventure described love and knowledge as originating from a fusion of created and uncreated potentialities, with sense experience as a source of the divine ideas.

Bonaventure's divergence from the Alexandrine position was further evident in his intellectual differences with his master William of Middleton. Their differing methods, foci and modes of expression were manifest in their respective *Commentary on the Sentences* and *Quaestiones de theologia*. For Bonaventure, theology was a practical understanding arising from experience. On the other hand, William was more abiding of the traditional scholastic method adopted by his predecessors Alexander and John. For them, theology was a speculative understanding

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Michael W. Blastic, O.F.M. on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday, ed. Michael Cusato and Steven J. McMichael, The Medieval Franciscans (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 389-90.

[110] Bonaventure, *Praelocutio praemissa, Opera omnia*, 2:1-3, *'At quemadmodum in primo libro sententiis adhaesi et communibus opinionibus magistrorum, et potissime magistri et patris nostri bonae memoriae fratris Alexandri, sic in consequentibus libris ab eorum vestigiis non recedam. Non enim intendi novas opiniones adversare, sed communes et approbatas retexere. Nec quisquam aestimet, quod novi scripti velim esse fabricator; hoc enim sentio et fateor, quod sum pauper et tenuis compilator.'*

[111] Bonaventure, *Praelocutio praemissa*, *Opera omnia*, 2:2: '*In primo enim libro haec duo dicit Magister quae communiter non tenentur, videlicet quod caritas, quae est amor Dei et proximi, non sit quid creatum, sed increatum, ut Spiritus sanctus*.' Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's Sentences*, 70-79, esp.70-72.

about experience.[112] Not surprisingly, Bonaventure was not included in William's inner circle to continue work on the *Summa fratris Alexandri*. Allegedly, William had already been incorporating his *Quaestiones de theologia* into the *Summa* as early as 1248. He also 'literally borrowed from' Bonaventure's writings, such as the *De Perfectione evangelica* delivered around 1255.[113] As Scott Matthews affirms: 'Despite deeming himself a mere *"*compiler*"*, Bonaventure's treatment of natural knowledge of God already reveals that his approach to natural knowledge in general was to be somewhat more expansive than that of his predecessors – even if it was to employ the same sources and point to the same conclusions.'[114]

Bonaventure would continue to evolve his own synthesis in unity and difference from the Alexandrine heritage in response to his expanding audiences beyond the scholastic world. Bonaventure was starting to distinguish himself by his prolific literary output that continued even after he left academia. By 1257, as Minister General, he was at ease to openly express his own theological position as manifest in the *Breviloquium*. Despite being in abeyance of certain Alexandrine ideas, he did not continue to justify or defend himself as he had done in his earlier days.[115] As Jacques-Guy Bougerol attested, by the time of the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* in 1259, Bonaventure had transcended the scholastic method and had 'been able during these two years to develop and control even more fully the theological synthesis already elaborated, assimilating it both by reflection and by experience.'[116] Yet, we must surely acknowledge that the synthetic skills and sources that enabled him to evolve his own unique method were initially formed by his training in the Alexandrine tradition.

VII. Summary

Bonaventure's continuity and dissonance from the tradition of Alexander of Hales is manifest in his *Commentary on the Sentences* which builds upon the *Summa fratris Alexandri.* Both

[112] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, 30-33 (fn.8); William of Middleton, *Quaestiones de theologia*, q.7, 37; q.8, 326, ed. Basilius Pergamo, '*De Quaestionibus ineditis Fr. Odonis Rigaldi, Fr. Gulielmi de Miltona et codicis Vat. Lat. 782 circa naturam theologiae, deque earum relatione ad Summam theologicam Fr. Alexandiri Halensis*'.

[113] Pergamo, *'De Quaestionibus ineditis Fr. Odonis Rigaldi, Fr. Gulielmi de Miltona et codicis Vat. Lat. 782 circa naturam theologiae, deque earum relatione ad Summam theologicam Fr. Alexandiri Halensis*,' 46-54; Victorin Doucet, 'The History of the Problem of the Authenticity of the *Summa*,' *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947): 30.

[114] Matthews, *Reason, Community and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars*, 114.

[115] In comparing Bonaventure's position in his Sentences commentary with that of his *Breviloquium*, Beckmann observes that Bonaventure jettisoned the Alexandrine ' idea of a division of the upper mind into '*ratio ut ratio*' and '*ratio ut natura*'… in favour of a more conventional depiction of the mind of Christ.' Beckmann, 'Bonaventure and Alexander: Friend or Foe?,' 394.

[116] Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 123.

texts consider the scriptural basis of the nexus between reason and faith, but differently. Both focus on the Lombardian/Augustinian question of the precise order of relation between the carnal letter and spiritual understanding, along with its theological and philosophical rationale. But they differ markedly in their respective determinations concerning five different aspects of the relation between divine and human knowledge. The first aspect deals with the approach proper to the subject or matter of theology – an application of the classic Aristotelian problem. The second aspect concerns the relationship of reason and faith within this order of approach – the point of convergence of Aristotelian and neo-Platonic foci, modes and subjects. The third aspect regards the proper end-goal of theology. The fourth aspect regards the proper author or origin of theology. As such, both scholastics aim to develop a disciplinary paradigm ordered to the Aristotelian epistemological discourse of source, content, mode and end. The final aspect deals with the psychological level through Aristotle/Boethius and the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima,* in which the powers of the soul are accorded a relationship analogous to that which occurs on the epistemological plane. Bonaventure's approach belies the Alexandrine mode of understanding as a mental exercise of abstraction from experience. This Alexandrine mode is more philosophical and Avicennian in orientation as inspired by John of La Rochelle. Bonaventure imbues this metaphysical aspect with the aesthetic-symbolic awareness of Hugh of Saint Victor/Pseudo-Dionysius, and resolves that all reasoning, sensation and seeing are 'in' the object known. Bonaventure's unique synthesis leads to a more comprehensive re-ordering of the intellect and affections. This unity-in-difference between Bonaventure and the Alexandrine tradition demonstrates that the disciple had clearly learnt from his masters and started to formulate his more experiential exegesis to encountering Christ as *sapientia*. In the following chapter, I shall examine how Bonaventure enacts this method within concrete contexts of interpretation in his gospel and sapiential commentaries.

Chapter 2: Synthesising Exegesis of Christ and *Sapientia* (1248-1257)

Bonaventure's commentaries on John, Luke and Ecclesiastes are crucial for understanding the early development of his more experiential approach to understanding Christ as *sapientia*. These scriptural commentaries were likely composed between 1248 as *baccalaureus biblicus* and 1257 as *magister*, before leaving behind his scholastic career to become Minister General of the Friars Minor. Bonaventure was building on the more analytic and procedural Alexandrine exegesis based on the technique of the *Glossa Ordinaria* and the fourfold sense of Scripture. He formulated an exegetical theory and practice that applied the experience-oriented method first theorised in his *Commentary on the Sentences* completed in 1253. He distilled sapiential principles from what he read in Christ's experience incarnate in Scripture and creation. Notably, Bonaventure's choice to comment on the Gospels rather than the more doctrinal Pauline epistles, and the sapiential rather than the prophetic or historical books, marked his converging interests in the mystical experience of Christ and sapiential exegesis.

I contend that Bonaventure's real innovation lay on the level of hermeneutics rather than theology, with a strong emphasis on Christ as the origin and model of all thought about reality and God. Bonaventure's tonality of scholastic interpretation bore witness to his hermeneutical inclination. This operationalisation of Alexandrine exegesis was partly Bonaventure's response to the internal conflict over the dispensation of the Franciscan *vita* and the conflict with the secular masters at the University of Paris.

I. Bonaventure proving himself as an exegete

During his time as *magister* between 1254 and 1257, Bonaventure's academic career was in limbo because of the tense situation between the mendicants and seculars at the university. Conflict had arisen earlier when three out of twelve chairs in the faculty of theology were transferred from the seculars to the mendicants: Roland of Cremona (1178-1259) in 1229 and John of Saint Giles (1180-1259) in 1230 to the Dominicans, and Alexander of Hales to the Franciscans in 1236.[1] In February 1252, in another attempt to stifle the growing mendicant

[1] Roger Bacon, '*Opus minus*,' in *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. J.S. Brewer (London Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1859), 325-29; According to Traver, each magisterial chair 'belonged' to a designated *magister*, who was the official head of his respective *studium* (study house). Besides teaching, he had the right to appoint students and lectors to teach in the *studium*. He could also teach students from other *studia*,

influence, the university passed a statute decreeing that only one chair be held by a religious order at one time.[2] Owing to the mendicants' refusal to submit to this new ruling and to continue lecturing, university proctor William of Saint Amour (1200-1272) spearheaded the appeal to the papal curia under Innocent IV to expel all mendicant *magistri* from the university *consortium magistrorum.* Subsequently, in 1254, the *consortium* barred Bonaventure from being officially promoted as *magister regens*, even though he had received the *licentia docendi* and was incepted as a *magister in sacra pagina* in the Franciscan school.[3] Bertrand of Bayonne (died c.1256) had been occupying the sole Franciscan magisterial chair at the university since 1253, when he was officially appointed to take over the chair from William of Middleton.[4] This was because the appointment of *magister regens* was formally at the behest of the Franciscan General Chapter with the consultation of the outgoing *magister regens* and the Minister General. Nevertheless, Bonaventure was promoted as *magister regens in situ* at the Franciscan school by Minister General John of Parma (1209-1289) in 1255. As asserted by Michel-Marie Dufeil, the Franciscans likely maintained one official *magister regens* (Bertrand) and one unofficial *magister regens* (Bonaventure) during this period.[5] Innocent's successor, the pro-mendicant Alexander IV annulled the suspension of the mendicants from the university and restored their magisterial chairs in his bull *Quasi lignum vitae*.[6] However, due to the ongoing

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and rent his chair to licensed *magistri* not belonging to any school. Andrew Traver, 'The Identification of the "*Vita Apostolica*" with a life of Itinerant Preaching and Mendicancy: Its Origins, Adherents and Critics ca. 1050-1266' (PhD University of Toronto, 1996), 88-89; For the dispute over the magisterial chairs in the university, see Andrew Traver, 'Rewriting History? The Parisian Secular Masters' *Apologia* of 1254,' *History of Universities* 15 (1998): 9-45.

[2] The seculars' fear of the shifting balance of power in the *consortium* was not unfounded. By 1254, the Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Trinitarians and Augustinians occupied one magisterial chair each. Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.200, 226-27; n.203, 252-53; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c.1210-1517)*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 13-14.

[3] R.E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, 'Introduction,' in *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2013), xv-xvi; According to Schlosser: 'Theology was of course based on the sacred scriptures (*sacra scriptura, sacra pagina*). Therefore a professor of theology was officially known as *Magister in sacra pagina*.' Marianne Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 10.

[4] Palémon, Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols, Études de philosophie médiévale (Paris: J Vrin, 1933), vol.2, 17-18.

[5] There is historical uncertainty concerning the number of chairs in the Franciscan school. Although only one official *magister regens* was recognised by the university, more than one *magister* was likely appointed by the Order itself, as *magistri in actibus* (acting co-regent masters) to meet teaching demands. In addition, the dating of the appointment of the *magistri regens* and their actual number are still uncertain. Michel-Marie Dufeil, *Guillaume de Saint-Amour et la polémique universitaire parisienne (1250-1259)* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1972), 6-9.

[6] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.247, 279-85; Alexander IV, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. Ulrich Hüntemann, Pou y Martí, and José María, 3 vols., Nova Series, (Florence: Quaracchi, 1929-1949), vol.2, 244; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.'

antagonism at the university and despite Bertrand's death in 1256, Bonaventure was only officially incepted into the *consortium* in October of the following year.[7]

Consequently, Bonaventure's magisterial duties – engaging in disputations, lecturing on Scripture, preaching and finalising his scriptural commentaries – were conducted informally under the aegis of the Order rather than the university.[8] In light of the changes in intellectual leadership after the deaths of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle in 1245, it was all the more imperative for Bonaventure to prove himself and assert his own voice within the school. He discerned a need in the Order for vocational clarification in the face of the prevailing conflict with the seculars at Paris and the internal conflict over the Franciscan *vita*. Therefore, to justify the Franciscan way of life to his confreres and their antagonists, Bonaventure would develop a new approach to Franciscan identity and vocation modelled on biblical *sapientia*. Bonaventure found it necessary to come up with a more personal, practical mode of exegesis progressing beyond the traditional Alexandrine exegesis inclined to pure abstractive reasoning. Among those Franciscan *magistri* who considered themselves guardians of the consolidated intellectual vision inherited from Alexander was Bertrand of Bayonne.[9]

According to Joshua Benson, Bonaventure's biblical commentaries justified the Franciscan *vita* by expositing the evangelical life of poverty for his confreres and their opponents. Bonaventure's 'new development in Franciscan and mendicant exegesis' addressed 'the insufficiency of theological inquiry that sought merely answers and explication.' Thus, in building on the Alexandrine framework, Bonaventure taught them how to pursue wisdom exemplified by Christ through Francis. As Benson affirms: 'Wisdom thus lies at the heart of the friar minor's life; not a wisdom that is simply a speculative and intellectual knowledge but

[7] Palémon Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, vol.2, 17-18; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca.1217-1274)'; John F. Quinn, 'Chronology of St. Bonaventure (1217-1274),' *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972), 180, 186; Dufeil, *Guillaume de Saint-Amour et la polémique universitaire parisienne (1250-1259)*, 6-9; Jordan of Giano, 'The Chronicle of Brother Jordan of Giano,' in *13th Century Chronicles,* trans. Placid Hermann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961), 71; In his 2009 article, Hammond argued for a 1254 date. Jay M. Hammond, 'Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master,' *Franciscan studies* 67 (2009): 179-226.

[8] Ignatius Brady, *The Writings of Saint Bonaventure Regarding the Franciscan Order*, 3 vols., San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiana, (Rome: Pontificia Facolta Telogica San Bonaventura, 1975), 89-95; Brady, 'The Edition of the *Opera omnia* of Saint Bonaventure (1882-1902),'*Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 370.

[9] According to Bougerol, Bertrand and some other Franciscan *magistri* were 'faithful disciples of Alexander...in their teaching.' Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 18.

a knowledge that tastes and experiences.'[10] Bonaventure marked his synergy of scientific and experiential with a synthesis of Christ and *sapientia*. Perhaps these emerging interests led Bonaventure to comment on the Gospels of John and Luke instead of the more doctrinal Pauline epistles, and the sapiential book of Ecclesiastes instead of the prophetic (such as Daniel) or historical (such as Judges). Bonaventure's articulation of Christ as the model *par excellence* for how the friars ought to live and reason in the world was conducive for their spiritual formation and pastoral ministry, as well as for the healing of an Order and Church fractured by conflicts and challenges.

I shall now illustrate the difference in Bonaventure's mode of exegetical treatment and presuppositions compared to that of his master Alexander of Hales, even though their hermeneutical points-of-difference were concealed by a basic similarity in theological understanding. This shall be done through a comparative analysis of their prefaces to their commentaries on John.

II. Developing Alexandrine exegesis in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*

Most scholars attest that Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* is a composite of literal exegesis (with Bonaventure as a *baccalaureus biblicus* in 1248) and *quaestiones* and non-literal interpretations (as *magister* from 1254 to 1257). According to Robert Karris, it was Bonaventure's 'practice of adding non-literal interpretations after he had explored the literal sense of a biblical passage.' The presence of twenty-six non-literal interpretations and four-hundred-and-fourteen *quaestiones* within this commentary, as identified by Jacques-Guy Bougerol, led Karris to tentatively date its final redaction to be around 1256. Upon assuming the office of Minister General in 1257, Bonaventure would be busy finishing his *Breviloquium* and with pastoral and administrative matters. In his Johannine commentary, Bonaventure's speculative engagement with doctrinal issues and use of *quaestiones* suggest its use in the

[10] Joshua C. Benson, 'Re-interpretation through Recontextualization: A New Reading of Saint Bonaventure's *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*' (Saint Louis University, 2007), 128, 130, 133; Similarly, Smalley considered Bonaventure's biblical commentaries as 'treatises on gospel poverty in a lecture framework', particularly the Lukan commentary. Robert Karris indicated that these themes of evangelical poverty and perfection also appear in Bonaventure's Commentary on John. Beryl Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, c.1100-c.1280*, vol. 41, History Series (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 41, 212; Robert J. Karris, 'St. Bonaventure's Interpretation of the Evangelical Life in his Commentary on the Gospel of St. John,' *Franciscan Studies* 64 (2006): 319-35.

classroom. Its spiritual and practical orientation allowed it to function as a tool for preachers.[11] Bonaventure built his commentary upon the analytic treatment of the *Postil on the Gospel of John* (*Postilla in Iohannis Euangelium*) written by his former master Alexander of Hales.[12]

The dating of Alexander's postil is disputed. There are three main hypotheses. Firstly, Ignatius Brady suggested that Alexander commented on the synoptic Gospels before 1236.[13] Abigail Young inferred that Alexander might also have commented on John's Gospel during this period, because his *Praefatio* compares it with the synoptic Gospels that he had probably lectured on while a *secular magister* in theology.[14] Secondly, Smalley placed Alexander's postil after 1236, because a comparison of the postils of Hugh of Saint Cher (1200-1236) completed between 1230 and 1235 and Alexander's postils revealed the latter's heavy reliance upon the former. Thirdly, Smalley posed another hypothesis that Alexander wrote a nascent pre-1236 version that he expanded and revised after 1236; this explains the presence of both inter-Gospel references and Hugh's influence.[15] Young concluded that none of these hypotheses are indubitable, although she reasoned the third hypothesis to be the least problematic. I agree with Young's tentative dating of the postil to the late 1230s.[16] My following study of their respective commentaries will further elucidate the hermeneutical relationship between master and disciple.

(a) Alexander's and Bonaventure's prefaces and commentaries on John 1

In their respective prefaces to their commentaries on John's Gospel, Alexander and Bonaventure analyse the Johannine compositional process in terms of the four Aristotelian causes: the matter of Johannine text (material cause), the form (formal cause) intended by John the evangelist (efficient cause), and the purpose for which the text was intended or the way the

[11] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'Introduzione,' in *San Bonaventura, Commento al vangelo di san Giovanni* (Rome: Citta Nuova, 1990), 8, 11; quoted in Robert J. Karris, 'Introduction,' in *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2007), 1, 2, 12, 21.
[12] Aaron Gies, 'Alexander of Hales on the Gospel of John: An Epitome of *Sacra Doctrina*' (PhD Catholic University of America, 2017), 375-570; For the Latin text, see Aleksander Horowski, 'I prologhi delle 'Postillae' ai vangeli sinottice di Alessandro di Hales,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 77 (2007): 27-62; Abigail Ann Young, '*Accessus ad Alexandrum*: The "*Praefatio"* to the *Postilla in Iohannis Euangelium* of Alexander of Hales (1186?-1245),' *Mediaeval Studies* 52 (1990): 1-23 [17-23].
[13] Ignatius Brady, 'Sacred Scripture in the Early Franciscan School,' in *La Sacra Scrittura ei Francescani* (Rome: Ediciones Antonium, 1973), 70-71.
[14] Abigail Ann Young, 'Introduction: *Accessus ad Alexandrum*: The "*Praefatio"* to the *Postilla in Johannis Evangelium* of Alexander of Hales (1186?-1245),' *Mediaeval Studies* 52 (1990): 11.
[15] Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, c.1100-c.1280*, 41, 122-23.
[16] Young, 'Introduction: *Accessus ad Alexandrum*: The "*Praefatio"* to the *Postilla in Johannis Evangelium* of Alexander of Hales (1186?-1245),' 14.

text is to be received by the reader (final cause). It is a prevailing problem to articulate the compositional process of an author like John in Aristotelian naturalistic terms since this process is revelatory and in a foremost sense exceeds the natural.

As such, Alexander chooses to articulate the Johannine compositional process in terms of the speculative triad of Pseudo-Dionysius – whereupon essence, power and operation are functions of authorial potentiality. The incipit of Alexander's *Praefatio*, Micah 5:2-3, images the coming out of the Messiah from Ephraim in Judah as symbolic of the twofold procession and spiritual regeneration of things in Christ. This procession and corresponding regeneration of things in Christ is in effect the Pseudo-Dionysian circular movement of divine love and knowledge. This reality is inscribed as the very subject matter or material cause of John's Gospel. Next, Alexander treats the form or formal cause as textual division (*divisio textus*) in terms of a tripartite division into three sections: John 1:1-4 concerns the eternal procession of the Word from God the Father; John 1:5-14 concerns the redemptive operation of Christ the Son through the temporal generation of Christ the Word; and John 1:15 concerns the end of John's Gospel, namely the form of Christ's incarnation by which the Church is regenerated through Christ's redemptive work. In terms of the Pseudo-Dionysian triad, 'essence' and 'power' refer to the divine work through Christ in the eternal procession, and 'operation' refers to the temporal generation of Christ in his incarnation and insofar as it is extended to the Church as his body.[17]

The final cause or purpose of John's Gospel is the fostering of 'sonship' through participation in the Triune God, with the efficient cause or author as John himself. Alexander's description of the efficient cause marks the essence, power and operation of John by formal analogy to the bodily functions of the eagle. The eagle's capacity to 'consider the sun of righteousness with unflinching eyes' refers to the power of God the Father to elevate the soul's imagination in the divine vision. Likewise, the eagle is able to fortify its dwelling with a rock cut 'without human hands' to protect its eaglets from the serpent. This ability refers to Christ's power to imbue the mind with clear reason, 'removing the poison of heretical depravity'. Finally, the eagle's ability to fly 'on high with other birds' alludes to Holy Spirit's power to imbue the will with self-transcending love. Every domain – Scripture, world, soul – is ordered to this signature triple movement corresponding to the twofold procession and spiritual regeneration of the Church in

[17] Young, '*Accessus ad Alexandrum*: The "*Praefatio*" to the *Postilla in Iohannis Euangelium* of Alexander of Hales (1186?-1245),' n.1-10, 17-21.

Christ. Alexander maps the truth of John's Gospel in terms of a threefold nexus predicated to the Trinitarian mechanism and Aristotle's fourfold cause. This mechanism is taxonomised in terms of the Pseudo-Dionysian triad.[18]

Alexander's exposition of John 1:1 continues to disentangle the complexities of creation metaphysics. The spiritual character of the eternal procession of Christ the Son from God the Father is distinguished from the 'sensible' character of the creaturely processions. The ultimate contingency of creaturely processions implies the existence of an efficient cause (God) as the origin from which all creatures derive. But the eternal processions do not imply efficient causation, properly speaking. This is because the Father is not, properly speaking, the efficient cause of the Son. Alexander justifies this fact by appealing to John's deliberate choice of the term 'Word' to describe Christ as same and yet other to its progenitor. In so doing, John evades the sense of a 'diminution in substance' (*diminutione substantiae*) connoted by the designation of Christ as 'Son'. Another grammatical marker of the eternal co-substantiality of the Son with the Father relates to the preposition 'with' (*apud*). This preposition implies both personal differentiation (*distinctio personae*) and essential unity (*idemptitas in substantia*) – signifying that the Father and Son are same in one sense, but distinct in another. The semantic tension in the idea of 'similitude', as conveyed by the preposition 'with', is the logical-semantic foundation for the metaphysical distinction in Aristotle's *Metaphysica* between 'unity in essence' and difference in person. The scriptures explain the mystery of the Trinitarian workings in other senses as well: notionally, as the Father and Son are one beginning of the Holy Spirit, or *ad extra*, as in Genesis 1:1: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...'[19] Suffice to say, Alexander uses grammatical analysis of Scripture to show how textual workings underpin the working of spiritual things. Spiritual phenomena are translated in metaphysics and text, leading to a certain spatiality.

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[18] Young, '*Accessus ad Alexandrum*: The *"Praefatio"* to the *Postilla in Iohannis Euangelium* of Alexander of Hales (1186?-1245),' n.11-13, 21-22.

[19] '*Sicut uero dictum est, primo agitur de aeterna processione et temporali ipsius Christi usque ad illud: Iohannes testimonium etc. Et haec pars dividitur: primo agitur de aeterna, deinde de temporali ibi: et vita erat etc. Aeterna vero manifestatur dupliciter: tum in conparatione ad creaturas quod notatur ibi: omnia per ipsum etc., tum praeter conparationem ad creaturam cum dicitur: in principio erat etc. Quatuor uero in prima parte dicuntur quae ad aeternam processionem pertinent: aeternitas Verbi cum dicitur 'in principio' etc., distinctio Verbi a Patre dicente cum dicitur et Verbum erat etc., idemptitas Verbi cum Patre in substantia uel natura cum dicitur: Deus erat Verbum, inseparabilitas Verbi aeterni a Patre dicente cum dicitur: hoc erat in principio etc. Haec autem omnia ostenduntur ut ostendatur differens processio Filii a Patre ab aliis processionibus quae sunt creaturarum*.' Partial Latin edition by Aaron Gies, 'Alexander of Hales on the Gospel of John: An Epitome of *Sacra Doctrina*,' Appendix, n.2, 375-77.

Bonaventure's *Prooemium*, conversely, marks the subject matter or material cause of John's Gospel as the Word '*in se*', or Christ himself in his humanity and divinity. This tightly Christological focus shows the exegete that Christ himself is the subject of scriptural exegesis. The exegete relates to Scripture as he would to Christ himself; since for Bonaventure, Scripture is simply Christ writ textual. Manifestly, it is not so much the theological sense of John 1:1 that is the foundation for a logical faith structure, but the inner meaning of Christ himself disclosed through his personal address to humanity in words that have been re-voiced in John's Gospel. This inner meaning has both a sensible and a spiritual aspect. But the spiritual aspect is primary for John who discerns its truth in the self-disclosure of God. It follows, therefore, that John's formal cause or mode of proceeding is by 'certitude of authority', or hermeneutical involvement in the world of Christ leading to practical faith. This mode is distinguished from that of rational argumentation leading to causal insight. Separate from a knowledge proven by logical demonstration, divine revelation is certified on the authority of God who has revealed it. This mode is suited to its purpose or final cause, which is faith in the witness of Christ leading to eternal life. This witness must be rendered concretely rather than abstractly; narrative fosters hermeneutical involvement leading to practical faith in contrast to rational argumentation leading to abstraction. John's 'sublimity of investigation and speech' is manifested by a sublime spirit, which disposes John to understand and imitate the teachings of Christ on the deepest level compared to the other Gospel writers.[20]

When discussing the author or efficient cause, Bonaventure pursues a slightly different angle to Alexander. Instead of understanding the efficient cause in terms of speculative categories, Bonaventure innovates by using performative categories to indicate how these functions are manifest or enacted in the believer. He describes the practical conditions which allow a believer such as John to access the revelation of Christ in the realm of the spirit. In a profound sense, through his unique reading of the Johannine text that accents the theme of Christ the Word made flesh, Bonaventure considers Christ as a subject of contemplative encounter. Christ is not simply a function within a theological framework of cognitions to be instantiated in the believer. Bonaventure clarifies the three divine gifts of John himself: 'holiness of life', 'clarity of understanding' and 'excellence in teaching'. Holiness of life encompasses fidelity in service, divine office and divine graciousness. Clarity of understanding arises from the Holy Spirit's

[20] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. Robert J. Karris, vol. 11, Works of Saint Bonaventure, (New York: Franciscan Institute, 2007), *Prooemium*, 42-51, esp. 47-48.

anointing, angelic revelation and Christ's teaching. Through Holy Spirit's anointing, John understands 'useful matters' pertaining to Christian conduct; through 'angelic revelation', he understands 'hidden matters' pertaining to reality's depths; through Christ's teaching, he understands 'sublime matters' pertaining to the Triune God himself. Excellence in teaching stems from the divine gift of understanding, leading to 'triple dignity of instruction'. As 'preacher', exalted to a position of ecclesiastical authority, John instructed the Church in Christian practice with his three epistles (1-3 John). As 'prophet', John was granted insight into hidden and future things, transcribed in the book of Revelation. As 'author', John confers through his Gospel an 'exceedingly sublime' understanding of Christ's teaching relative to the other disciples – engendered by his special intimacy with Christ.[21]

In his exposition of John 1:1, Bonaventure follows the Trinitarian orthodoxy as mediated by Augustine and other patristics. This Trinitarian notion is also thematised in his *Commentary on the Sentences* completed about three years earlier. Bonaventure combines the inner sweetness and unction of the Victorines' personal revelation of the Trinity with the logical clarity of scholastic speculation on unity and plurality within the Godhead. Bonaventure designates attributes of the second person of the Godhead from the standpoint of what is connoted by Christ's metaphorisation as 'Word', 'Image' and 'Son'. Each designation illumines a different aspect of the second person of the Trinity. For instance, the concept 'son' denotes a relation of active imitation and subordination within the Trinity. Inspired from Richard of Saint Victor, Bonaventure's recourse to the 'Sonship' of Christ invests him with a fuller sense of Christ's own character and work with respect to the Godhead. Without excluding the Alexandrine emphasis on ideal knowledge, Bonaventure transposes inner-Trinitarian metaphysics onto the personal level. To cite another example, the exegete's prior experience of relating to God as Lord and Friend appears to be the inferential basis for the attribution of sufficiency, constancy and foreknowing to the Word as principle of creation.[22]

In sum, Alexander articulates the causal significance of the Trinity in terms of his essence, power and operation. This is a speculative Trinitarian mediation of experience. Bonaventure builds upon his master's synthesis and induces the attributes and relations of Christ's own being

[21] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, *Prooemium*, 33-37, esp. 36-37.
[22] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ch.1, pt.1, 57-67; Herbst, *The Road to Union: Johannine Dimensions of Bonaventure's Christology* (Rome: Frati Editiori di Quaracchi, 2005), 160-73; Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, ed. Lawrence Boadt, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems, (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), 57-59.

from the revelation of personal experience of God incarnate in Scripture and things. This affective experiential mediation of the Trinitarian speculation marks the beginning of Bonaventure's divergence from the Alexandrine tradition. Bonaventure transcends Alexandrine theological analysis of Trinitarian identity and intentionality to advance an experiential description of the Word *in se* as a foundation for Scripture's movement into theological exposition.[23]

(b) Alexander and Bonaventure on Augustine's reading of John 3:7-8

To further illustrate how Bonaventure progressed beyond Alexander's own mode of exegesis, I shall now compare Bonaventure's and Alexander's readings in dialogue with Augustine's own homiletic reading of John 3:7-8. In Bonaventure's time, theories of scriptural signification were devoted to explaining the analogical relation between signs and things – a framework originating from Augustine. In *De doctrina Christiana,* Augustine defines 'sign' as 'a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself…' He identifies two types. The first is called 'natural sign' because signifier and signified inhabit a nexus of natural causality. For instance, smoke signifies fire. The second is termed 'conventional sign' since it is determined by the linguistic community. Scripture is an instance of this latter type of sign because it is subject to a tradition. Moreover, Scripture has two levels of signification – literal and figural. For instance, 'ox', a conventional sign, designates the thing for which it is instituted. But 'ox' can also figuratively refer to a 'preacher of the Gospel'. As Augustine extrapolates from Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Timothy 5:18: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' In this case, the thing signified by the sign signifies something else.[24] The biblical sign has a twofold signification. On its own, the sign refers to a certain object; it also has a literary structure through which the believing imagination apprehends a deeper dimension of reality. 'There is a distinction made between things as they exist in nature, and how they are mentioned in Scripture, where they take on an added signification.'[25]

In his *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus,* Augustine shapes his reading of John 3:7-8 to the dictates of pure revelation. Consistent with his own divinely illuminated revelation about the

[23] Emmanuel Falque, *Saint Bonaventure and the Entrance of God into Theology*, trans. Brian Lapsa and Sarah Horton (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), 10-28.
[24] Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, bk.2, ch.1-2, 1-3; ch.10, 15.
[25] John Norris, 'Augustine and Sign in *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium*,' in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Joseph C. Schnaubelt Frederick Van Fleteren (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), 217-18.

nature and activity of the third person of the Trinity, Augustine interprets the mystery of the coming and going of '*spiritus*' as a reference to the Holy Spirit:

> 'The Spirit [*spiritus*] breathes where he will, and you hear his voice, and you are unaware of where he is coming from and where he is going…' [Christ] was talking about spiritual birth; for he went on to say, 'Such is everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Brothers and sisters, which of us does not see, for example, *Auster* [south wind] coming from the south toward *Aquilo* [north wind], or another wind coming from the east toward the west? So how is it that we do not know where it is coming from and where it is going?[26]

A sensible phenomenon like wind is an analogue of inner truth residing in the human mind. Since things in their complexity and multiplicity are separate from God in his simplicity and oneness, the relation between sign and thing is functional rather than ontological. Augustine gives an example of another Christ-statement which stimulates knowledge of inner truth not grasped through an external bodily sense:

> What, therefore, did [Christ] mean by 'a thing of earth' [John 3:12], which people were not believing? Could it be what he said about raising up the temple? For he had received his body from the earth; and he was getting ready to raise up that very earth which he received from an earthen body. They did not believe the one who was in fact going to raise up that earth. 'If I have spoken to you, he said, about things of earth and you do not believe, how will you believe if I speak about things of heaven?' that is, 'If you do not believe I can raise up the temple that you destroyed, how will you believe that human beings can be reborn through the Spirit?'[27]

Here, Augustine refers to John 2:19: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days [Christ] will raise it up.' Through this image, imaginative inference can be made from the physical reality of temple construction to the spiritual reality of Christ's redemptive work in uplifting the Church. However, the vagaries of temple construction are proportional rather than universally analogous to Christ's redemptive work. The correspondence is symbolic rather than actual;

[26] Augustine of Hippo, *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, trans. Edmund Hill, vol. 12, pt 3, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, (New York: New City Press, 2009), homily 12, n.7, 234.
[27] Augustine of Hippo, *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, homily 4, n.7, 234.

since the physical reality of temple construction is not included in the spiritual reality of Christ's work on the Cross. Thus, the spiritual understanding is frame-of-reference for the bodily sense. Bodily signs are metaphorically related to spiritual realities, without a corresponding transference of reality.

Alexander's cataphatic treatment of John 3:7-8 is contrary to Augustine's spiritual reading. Alexander adduces three theological facts from the interpenetrated witness of Scripture and experience: 'The first is that the Spirit breathes, the second is that man hears [the Spirit's] call, the third is that man knows not whence [the Spirit] comes or where he goes.' Alexander's first point, the allegorical, refers to the forms of things determined by Holy Spirit's power: the wind's power signifies the force of the Holy Spirit's inspiration in man. The second point, the tropological, marks what must occur dispositionally on man's part to receive the Holy Spirit's call: '…it concerns openness on the part of man…' Like human sensitivity to the wind's touch, spiritual sensitivity is conditional for spiritual encounter. The third point, the anagogical, refers to what is fundamental to the character and ways of the Holy Spirit: the wind's unpredictability denotes the inscrutability of the Holy Spirit's ways. This threefold insight is supported by inter-biblical witness. The power of divine 'breath' is asserted in Job 33:4: 'Your all-powerful breath brings me back to life.' Similarly, the necessity of spiritual receptivity is asserted in Wisdom 7:27: 'For [wisdom] crosses over into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets.' Finally, the manifestation of God to Elijah in the 'gentle whisper' rather than in the 'fire' and 'tempest' in 3 Kings 19:12 alludes to the mystery of the Holy Spirit's mode of manifestation.[28] The source, content and *modus* of 'wind' are mirrored in the power, content and *modus* of the Holy Spirit's work in the self and in the world. Alexander's mechanical comparison of creature, soul and God limits him to the speculative level. Alexander focuses on their objective

[28] *'Ne mireris. In hac tertia parte vult ostendere quod comprehensibilitas notitiae non est hominis a se in hac parte, sed a Spiritu, et hoc est quod sequitur, 'non mireris', et determinat tria circa Spiritum. Primum est quod Spiritus spirat, secundum est quod homo vocem eius audit, tertium quod homo nescit unde veniat aut quo vadat. Vult instruere secundum quamdam metaphoram: si enim homo non potest capere operationes spiritus flantis, quanto magis operationes Spiritus etc. Secundum est receptivitas ex parte hominis cum dicitur 'et vocem'. Terium est incomprehensibilitas ex parte principii et ex parte finis, et nescis. De primo dicitur potestas inspirantis pro voluntate sua et in quibus vult, de quo dicitur 33 Iob: spiraculum Omnipotentis vivificavit me, et 32: inspiration omnipotentis dat intelligentiam. Patet ergo quis est effectus caro vitam dare intelligentiam sed hos effectus vult 'per nationes' enim in animas sanctas se transferet amicos Dei et prophetas constituit, 8 Sapientiae. Et notandum quod iste Spiritu significator sibilum aurae tenuis, de quo III Regum 19: non in spiritu Dominus, non in commotione, non in igne, sed in sibilo aurae tenuis.'* Gies, 'Alexander of Hales on the Gospel of John: An Epitome of *Sacra Doctrina*,' 491-92. Alexander inadvertently referenced Wisdom 8 instead of Wisdom 7:27. (Translation mine)

theological meaning, rather than emphasising their personal meaning and relevance to the reader as Bonaventure does.

In his treatment of John 3:8, Bonaventure globalises Alexander's triple dimensionality in terms of a triple modality of belief, thought and action. With respect to belief, Bonaventure contravenes Augustine's understanding that experience of the Holy Spirit's visitation exceeds human description. Bonaventure also disagrees with the assertion of John Chrysostom (349-407) that such experience is directly analogical to the experience of wind.[29] Bonaventure decides the matter by affirming with Bernard of Clairvaux in Bernard's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, that the Holy Spirit's visitation is capable of human description because it is sensible to the soul. Bonaventure paraphrases Bernard as such: 'Every person has to recognize the time of spiritual visitation'.[30] With respect to thought, certain designations are extracted from this experience: namely, the Holy Spirit's ultimate independence of human volition and fervour of touch. With respect to action, the experience of divine-human encounter elicits a reverential response. Again, Bonaventure quotes Bernard: 'Fear…when [Holy Spirit] smiles on you. Fear, when [he] departs, and when [he] returns again.'[31] Henceforth, the truth of experience is an affective similitude to deeper mystical truth. The divine similitude occurs on the level of life rather than on the intellectual level. In contrast to Alexander's speculative Trinitarian mediation of exegesis, Bonaventure's experiential description grounds Scripture's movement into theological speculation and moral application.

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[29] Chrysostom states that 'the expression 'blows where it will' is that of one showing the impossibility of restraining the wind, and that it streams forth everywhere, and that there is no one who can prevent it from being carried here and there; but it is dispersed very freely, and no one is strong enough to turn aside its onset.' John Chrysostom, *Saint John Chrysostom Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, Homilies 1-47*, trans. Thomas Aquinas Goggin, vol. 33 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1957), homily 26, n.2, 254.

[30] Bernard enthuses: 'For here the question is not of those who are deservedly blamed by the Lord; who know not how to discern the face of the sky, nor know at all the time of His Coming (Matt.x.vi.3). For [the Bride] is so prudent and so full of foresight that she sees Him coming from afar, leaping, as it were, in His haste, and passing over the proud to draw near to her in her humility, humbling Himself to do so.' Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Songs,* trans. Samuel J. Eales (London, 1895), homily 57, n.2, 340.

[31] Bonaventure, *Commentarius in Evangelium Iohannis, Opera omnia,* 6:281: *'Quaest. IV. Quaeritur de quod dicit: Spiritus ubi vult spirat, et nescis, unde veniat. Contra: Bernardus in Canticis dicit, quod debet homo cognoscere tempus visitationis spiritualis. Chrysostomus respondet, quod hoc dixit de vento, quia homo non habet eius cognitionem, multo minus spiritualis nativitatis. Sed Augustinus istam expositionem respuit, quia bene scit homo, quod auster venit a meridie et tendit in septentrionem; ideo exponit de Spiritu sancto. Quod ergo dicitur: Nescis, unde veniat, facienda est vis in verbo. Non dicit: nescis, quando veniat, quia bene potest scire per fervorem et teporem, quando venit; sed nescis, unde veniat, utrum scilicet ad retribuendum in praesenti bona, quae homo gessit, vel ad augenda merita: nescis, quo vadat, utrum longe, nunquam reversurus, vel prope, illico rediturus. Ideo dicit Bernardus, quod semper timendum: Time, inquit, cum arriserit, time, cum abierit, et cum denuo revertetur.' Opera omnia*, 6:281. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ch.3, n.21, 186-87; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Songs,* homily 54, n.9, 330.

In sum, natural phenomena are to be hermeneutically indwelt by Bonaventure as reader. Whereas Alexander would seek to clarify the determination of creaturely and scriptural being as a mirror on the divine causality, Bonaventure understands these realities as originating from modes of relation to God. Bonaventure thereby frames his speculations with questionings of a more personal, sensate and subjective character. For example: 'Where and how is the wind in relation to the reader?' From these particulars, Bonaventure works back to a knowledge of the eternal reasons which describe the work of God, not in his timeless eternity but in his very act of appearing to the reader through the medium of the phenomenon. In this way, Bonaventure understands that all things must be read in the Word in order to register their sapiential content aright – a more sacramental and less speculative mode of engaging with the textual subject. The mode of Bonaventure's hermeneutics of Christological encounter that had built upon the Alexandrine approach in his commentary on John is developed further in his commentary on Luke.

III. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*

The Quaracchi editors of Bonaventure's *Opera omnia* (1882-1902) asserted that Bonaventure completed his final version of the *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* at a later stage of his career, having started it in 1248 as a *baccalaureus* based on the report of Franciscan chronicler Salimbene de Adam (1221-c.1290). They reasoned that Bonaventure would be too occupied commenting on the *Sentences* and other works in the early 1250s to complete such a mature and sizeable commentary.[32] Robert Karris agreed that, besides the absence of *quaestiones,* its 'plentiful scriptural quotations offer a variety of homiletic possibilities to preachers' instead of students in the classroom setting. Furthermore, Thomas Reist reasoned that the presence of spiritual interpretations meant that Bonaventure would have finished it as a *magister regens* (between 1254/1255 and 1257) with greater homiletic experience and responsibility. Reist gave a plausible date of around 1256, before Bonaventure became too occupied with his ministerial duties the following year.[33]

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[32] Bonaventure, *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Lucae*, ed. Editori di Quaracchi, 9 vols., vol. 7, *S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia*, (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902), *Prolegomena*, ch.1, viii-ix; Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam* vol. 40, ed. Joseph Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, and John Robert Kane, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986), 299.

[33] Robert J. Karris, 'Introduction,' in *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2001), viii, xviii-xix; Thomas Reist, *Saint Bonaventure as a Biblical Commentator: A Translation and Analysis of his Commentary on Luke, XVIII, 34-XIX, 42* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 67-70, 76.

In his Lukan commentary, Bonaventure utilised the authority of classical, patristic and medieval authors and the *Glossa Ordinaria*.[34] His most significant contemporary source was the *Postilla super totam Bibliam* (c.1231-1232 to 1236) composed by Hugh of Saint Cher during his time as Dominican *magister regens*. Bonaventure existentialised Hugh's interpretations that were also sourced originally from the *Glossa Ordinaria*.[35] Bonaventure induces the significance of Christ's life and ministry from the literal events of Luke's Gospel. Bonaventure adds spiritual readings to the intended meaning of biblical texts. The corresponding intentions of divine author and human writer call for a global sense that includes the literal. However, speculation functions alongside faith and experience in realising a deeper unity of what is known, believed and experienced. In an experience-led re-orientation of the scholastic method, Bonaventure does not employ purely rational criteria in his selection and use of source materials; rather he judges the veracity of things and the *Glossa Ordinaria* according to 'existential' criteria. He employs the *Glossa*, often anonymously, toward the explication of a certain 'existential' outlook. For instance, his commentary on the wronged widow's persistent plea to the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) illustrates the power of persistent prayer to move the divine heart with reference to the poet Ovid's parabolic image of a stone eroded by constant dripping of water.[36] Bonaventure's own existential determinations guide his interpretive selectivity with respect to the *Glossa*. In a globalisation of Augustine's interpretive self-understanding, Bonaventure's understanding of Scripture unfolds simultaneously within the triple horizon of tradition, knowledge and experience. These three are equally complementary sources of a biblical theology.

Similar to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the exposition of Luke 8:26-39 by Hugh of Saint Cher interleaves literal and non-literal interpretations without evincing the reason for their

[34] For instance, from Cicero's *Rhetorici libri duo qui vocantur De inventione,* Bonaventure sourced rhetorical features of a Lukan narrative fragment as a key to envisaging the narrative's contents. From Aristotle's *Categoriae*, Bonaventure leveraged a distinction to illuminate a universal principle of divine transfiguration as an effect of supernal power rather than a constitutive quality of the human being. Thus, Bonaventure inferred the doctrine of divine derivation from metaphysical reflection on the nature of human contingency. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, trans. Robert J. Karris, vol. 8, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2001), pt.1, ch.1, n.46, 63-64; pt.2, ch.9, n.51, 855-57.

[35] Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works' (PhD University of Chicago, 1979), 202; For an analysis of the content and setting of Hugh's postills, see Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, c.1100-c.1280*, 41, 118-43; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 273-274.

[36] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, pt.3, ch.18, n.1-12, 1701-116; Robert J. Karris, 'Bonaventure as Biblical Interpreter: His Methods, Wit and Wisdom,' *Franciscan Studies* 60 (2002): 166-67.

interconnectedness. As such, Hugh's non-literal interpretations sometimes transcend the limits of the literal sense. For instance, Hugh's exegesis commences with a moral interpretation of Christ's liberation of the demoniac as being the cure of the sin of pride by the virtue of humility. It is not clear from the foregoing discussion how these narrated events are related to Hugh's teaching on humility. By contrast, Bonaventure's own experience in Christ is a veritable context for grasping concretely and intellectually the truth of scriptural experience. One induces the significance of Christ's life from narrated deeds – his sovereign authority not only over the demons, but also over the beasts of the earth. Bonaventure cites another biblical verse, Psalm 49:10, in support of his assertion: 'All the beasts of the woods are mine...' Whereas Hugh describes faith's process from a standpoint outside the experience incarnate in the text, Bonaventure lives the reality of Christ and lets his understanding of Scripture unfold on the interior of this experience.[37] While biblical texts have definite meanings within the historical situation, they also support a more holistic interpretation that is oriented and ordered in Christ as *sapientia*.

In Bonaventure's exposition on the story about Christ calming the storm (Luke 8:22-25), he further demonstrates his own strategy of bringing faith principles already incarnate in the believer's life to conscious reflection by affective participation in Christ's literal experience. The disciples roused Christ from sleep while in the midst of the storm, 'not from a courageous spirit, but from sheer need…In this they set forth Christ's power and their own need.' Bonaventure's intuition that the soul naturally acknowledges Christ when pressed to its point of need testifies to a faith principle which is grasped concretely from the standpoint of experience and explained by Scripture. Bonaventure identifies other features of the disciples' narrated experience which are significant for the life of faith. The consequent benefit of Christ's calming the storm is 'the growth of our faith…specified in a twofold way, namely, with regard to acknowledgement in the heart and profession with the mouth'. Moreover, experiencing the miracle induces the disciples to 'leave their smallness behind and gaze upon the divine immensity'. Bonaventure adds a spiritual reading to the literal meaning. The experience of Christ's miracle in the storm is analogous to the experience of conversion through trial in the power of God. Christ's falling asleep signifies the fading of the love and memory of Christ in the heart. The force of the storm signifies the temptations of the soul, which occur as a

[37] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*,pt.1, ch.8, n.46-71, 697-722, esp. 708; Robert J. Karris, 'A Comparison of the "Glossa Ordinaria", Hugh of St. Cher and St. Bonaventure on Luke 8:26-39,' *Franciscan Studies* 58 (2000): 121-36.

consequence of having separated itself from Christ. The storm-tossed boat designates the 'perturbation of the soul' when danger is at hand. The disciples' cry for help signifies the act of prayer 'in rousing Christ from sleep', and Christ's calming of the waves designates the mind's restoration in Christ's peace.[38] These features of narrated mystical experience are recognised by those who have actually lived this experience. Thus, having been illumined, these features become the objects of theological speculation.

In his scriptural commentaries, Bonaventure enacts his experience-oriented approach already theorised in his *Commentary on the Sentences.* By reason of a threefold intelligence, Bonaventure posits Christ as a unity of cognition, affection and action that fulfils the whole potentiality of the individual. Speculation is an integrative aspect of a deeper movement towards Christ-likeness incorporating affective and active powers. The soul is ordered by Scripture unto salvation, by a movement of the will rather than by intellectual deliberation alone. Love forms a unity of memory, will and intellect in the soul.[39] This triple subject implies a threefold modality of reading: (i) *lectio spiritualis* or subjectivity, in which the soul discerns what is most relevant in the scriptures for its own practice of faith, (ii) *lectio divina* or reflexive reading, in which the soul reflects upon the scriptures in light of its own practice of faith to discern principles of Christian life and teaching, and (iii) *studium legendi* or speculation which is scientific exegesis of the scriptures. Speculation elucidates the inner truth that is both explained by the scriptural text and disclosed through the practice of the Christian life. As such, the soul oscillates between the insights of Scripture and experience of faith, with reason being used to clarify this inner truth.[40] As formally articulated in his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure's convergence of these three ways of reading parallels his synthesis of the speculative (per Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury), moral (per Bernard of Clairvaux) and theological (Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of Saint Victor). For Bonaventure, Christ is principle of this unitive knowing, rather than Christ as tradition (per Alexander of Hales) or as sum of being (per Albert the Great).[41] Bonaventure's sense of the Christological significance of divine *sapientia* would be deepened in his commentary on Ecclesiastes.

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[38] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, pt.1, ch.8, n.35-45, 687-97, esp. 690-92, 696.
[39] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, prologue, q.3, response, 12.
[40] For a fuller treatment of Bonaventure's threefold program of exegesis, see Jay M. Hammond, 'Contemplation and the Formation of the '*Vir Spiritualis*',' in *Franciscans at Prayer*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 140-52.
[41] For Albert's and Bonaventure's respective considerations of theology's subject, see Johnson, 'The Sapiential Character of *Sacra Doctrina* in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas: The Appropriation of Aristotle's Virtue of Wisdom,' 31-60.

IV. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes*

Robert Karris, Beryl Smalley and most scholars postulated with reasonable certainty that Bonaventure composed the *Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* during his magisterial period. This is owing to the large number of *quaestiones* in the textual format. It was very likely that he finished it before 1257, when he left behind his academic career to take up the generalate. Bonaventure's 'major acknowledged ecclesiastical sources' were the *Glossa Ordinaria et interlinearis,* Hugh of Saint Victor and patristic exegete Jerome of Stridon (c.347-c.420). These sources were largely mediated through the postil of Bonaventure's older contemporary Hugh of Saint Cher as the unnamed proximate source. Nonetheless, the originality of Bonaventure's commentary was evident even to his scholastic contemporaries, who readily received its fresh contribution to the study of Ecclesiastes. According to Smalley, he 'transformed the material which he borrowed from Hugh [of Saint Cher], making it his own and working out his own method of procedure.' Bonaventure's commentary 'had come to be regarded as an indispensable adjunct to the *Gloss,* as Hugh had intended it to be, in the eighteen years or so that separate the two regencies.'[42]

In his commentary, Bonaventure explores the sapiential depth of Christology manifest in creation through the lens of what is treated by the writer of Ecclesiastes. Bonaventure articulates the subject matter of Ecclesiastes in terms of a threefold truth, consistent with the threefold mode theorised in his earlier works such as the *Sentences* commentary. In accordance with his focus on the Christological relation between created and divine orders, Truth can be understood in three ways. Firstly, Truth can relate to what a thing is, namely being. Secondly, Truth can relate to 'why' and 'how' a thing is, namely function or purpose. Thirdly, Truth can also refer most fully to God himself – in whose power, wisdom and goodness the model of both ethical and ontological truth is found.[43] In other words, Christ as *sapientia* is equally incarnate in and transferable across ontological, ethical and theological spheres of biblical inquiry. This definition of *sapientia* is consistent with the formal cause or method of the Ecclesiastes as a dialogue of various perspectives. The three forms of inquiry intersect with a view to discerning the proportionality of their insights.

[42] Robert J. Karris, 'Introduction,' in *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), 7; Beryl Smalley, *Medieval Exegesis of Wisdom Literature: Essays by Beryl Smalley*, ed. Roland E. Murphy, Scholars Press Reprints and Translations, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 39-40.
[43] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Campion Murray Robert J. Karris, vol. 7, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), Intro, q.1, 81-82.

Bonaventure's sense of created reality as a source of Christian *sapientia* pertains to the purpose and *materia* of Ecclesiastes as he understands it. The traditional interpretation of Ecclesiastes, stemming from Jerome who in turn was greatly influenced by Origen of Alexandria (c.185-254), asserts that Ecclesiastes teaches contempt for the world. One can find interminable good only in the perfect and unchangeable source of good; everything else is changeable and perishable, and to delight in them is to grasp only the fleeting semblance of eternal good. However, Bonaventure finds this traditional argument somewhat disingenuous. As Bonaventure alludes with implicit reference to Sirach 9:24: 'To praise a work is to give praise to the worker, and so to despise a work reflects back on the worker. So the person who despises the world, despises God.'[44] *Contra* Jerome's patristic teaching that Ecclesiastes aims to foster absolute renunciation of the temporal in pursuit of God, Bonaventure asserts that the natural world is inherently good. On this premise, Bonaventure redefines the purpose of Ecclesiastes as teaching Christ's *sapientia* embedded in creation. By way of illustration, Bonaventure refers to Augustine and Hugh of Saint Victor to distinguish between 'chaste' and 'adulterous' love. Just as a bride treasures her wedding ring on account of her love for the one who gifted it to her, so the world is to be enjoyed as a memento of its Maker. Bonaventure considers this chaste love. Conversely, to love the gift more than the giver is to divest the beloved of her true source of delight – an adulterous love. Bonaventure affirms that the book of Ecclesiastes counsels us not to escape from enjoying things altogether, but to enjoy them on account of our love for their Maker.[45] Like Hugh before him, Bonaventure seeks to answer the confrontation posed by this book to the prospect of a natural theology; namely, how to find true meaning in earthly things if all these things are considered 'vanities'.[46] Scriptural *sapientia* is not about discerning the significance of things in themselves, but about discerning our God-ordained relationship and intention towards these things. In other words, things themselves are not corruptive, but only the particular ways in which they are used or enjoyed.

Hugh's attestation of a spiritual *ratio* for the natural vicissitudes of time differs from Jerome's conclusion that earthly things cannot embody true meaning on account of their inherent variability and perishability. In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, Jerome purports to read 'with

[44] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Intro, q.1, 77.
[45] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Intro, q.1, 77-88; Augustine of Hippo, *Sermons*, trans. Edmund Hill, pt. 3 vol. 10, ed. John E. Rotelle, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, (New York: New City Press, 1995), s.385, n.6, 389; Hugh of St Victor, *Soliloquy on the Earnest Money of the Soul*, trans. Kevin Herbert, Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956), 24-25.
[46] Smalley, *Medieval Exegesis of Wisdom Literature: Essays by Beryl Smalley*, 42-43.

the grain' of the text when he asserts that the ultimate contingency of life on this earth mitigates against finding truth and meaning in it. Jerome distinguishes sharply in the Augustinian fashion between a certitude founded in God and a passing knowledge of worldly things. The ethical implication, in the face of such scepticism, is to desire and strive only to acquire what is eternal – God himself. Jerome interprets the well-known passage in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 about the divine allotment of all things to their proper seasons in the following way:

> There is a time for all things, and a time for everything under the heaven. In what precedes, he has taught that the state of the human condition is uncertain and subject to fluctuation; what he now wishes to show is that everything in the universe is self-contradictory, and nothing stands for ever, at least of things beneath the sky and within time: the other, spiritual beings are not confined either by sky or time.[47]

Jerome affirms the integrity of divine providence, but this providence remains impenetrable to the human mind. Thus, dispensation of things and times and their meaning belongs with God alone. There is no outside perspective from which to interpret God's will, because one is situated within time's unfolding and answerable to the vicissitudes of that which one seeks to analyse.[48] In contrast, Hugh reads Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 as a text about historical determinacy:

> All things also have a fixed and determinate season: when they might begin and when they might end; or how long they might also subsist, and where each might subsist in order that nothing would exceed its cause; and like the sensible soul itself, both according to time, and according to temporality, [the soul] might study to be conformed…both to those things that are passing away, which in persisting [the soul] may not establish its faith, and to those things that are well-ordered, that [the soul] might not dare to murmur against the disposition of its Creator.[49] (Translation mine)

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[47] Jerome, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ed. Richard J. Goodrich and David J.D. Miller, Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, (New York: The Newman Press, 2012), v.1, 55.
[48] Jerome, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, 55-59.
[49] Hugh of St Victor, In *Salomonis Ecclesiasten Homiliae,* PL 75:220: *'Tempus etiam habent omnia certun et determinatum, quando incipient et quando finiantur; sive etiam quandiu subsistant, et quando subsistant singular ut nihil praeter rationem sit; et prudens animus sic se, et temporibus, et temporalibus aptare studeat ut et in iis quae transeunt quasi permanentibus fiduciam suam non constituat, et in iis quae bene ordinate sunt contra dispositionem Creatoris murmurare non praesumat.'*

The soul 'clothes itself' with the outward forms of creation, 'conforming' itself uncritically to the divine *ratio* incarnate in things. Brian Fitzgerald states: 'What Hugh is ultimately doing in these homilies on Ecclesiastes 3 is taking the *ratio* of nature, the archetype, and preparing it to be fitted to history.'[50] Hugh's sense of divine revelation depends upon the uncritical assimilation of nature to *historia*.

In the same passage of Ecclesiastes, Bonaventure adapts Hugh's sense by adding a ratiocinative element. This expanded sense is illustrated by Bonaventure's own intuition that silence and reception presuppose speaking and assertion. In this way, the eternal reasons are brought to conscious reflection through participation in the human experiences that embody them. Bonaventure justifies his method as follows. Despite Jerome's attestation that things are absolutely changeable, Bonaventure follows Hugh in seeing things as changeable 'in relation to their boundary and variety in time.'[51] Bonaventure does not go so far as to attest that everything is in permanent flux, but that each thing is allotted its own proper measure and place in keeping with the divine providence. Bonaventure is in accord with biblical and patristic tradition. Although God alone is considered the source of existential and intellectual certitude, Bonaventure also acknowledges a limited sense of historical determinacy and therefore, scientific and ethical potential, in created things. In so doing, Bonaventure justifies his central thesis that created things are divinely determinate and hence can be treated as analogues of inner spiritual truth. Citing Augustine, Bonaventure appropriates the whole human horizon to the divine globality: '…any change in the universe, when considered in itself, is an imperfection, but in the context of the whole universe the result is a perfect song.'[52]

In sum, Bonaventure's reading of Ecclesiastes involves a synthetic, Christological appropriation of ontological, ethical and theological truth. For instance, he envisions the spiritual meaning of created things through the lens of two images from Ecclesiastes 1:6-7. The first image concerns the natural phenomenon of the sun cycle that is compared to the dying and rising of Christ the Son. The literal referent is the sun cycle; the moral referent is the movement of sacrifice and reward that marks the paradoxical nature of love; and the anagogical referent

[50] Brian D. Fitzgerald, 'Time, History and Mutability in Hugh of St. Victor's *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* and *De vanitate mundi*,' *Viator* 43, no. 1 (2012): 231.
[51] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ch.3, 155.
[52] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ch.3, q.10, 170; See also Augustine of Hippo, 'On Music,' in *Saint Augustine, The Immortality of the Soul, the Magnitude of the Soul, On Music, The Advantage of Believing, On Faith in Things Unseen*, ed. Robert C. Taliaferro, The Fathers of the Church (New York: CIMA Publishing, 1947), vol 4, bk.6, ch.11, 355.

is Christ's journey of redemption: 'This sun rose in the nativity to enlighten…The sun set in the passion for our redemption…This sun returned to its place in the ascension.' Assimilation to the deiform through this threefold mediation of Scripture enacts a convergence of vision, thought and life in the deiform. The second image extrapolates the spiritual reality of the Holy Spirit from the sensible experience of 'the wind that goes forward surveying all the places round about' and then 'returns to its circuits'.[53] From his study of natural phenomena, Bonaventure infers a sense of the divine mystery of created existence. The ordered rhythms of growth and decay in created life are a sign and symptom of the movements of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate origin and motivation of all things in their manifold development. The causal truth of faith is led back from the historical truth of natural phenomena, mediated through the literary framework of Scripture.

To use another interpretive example, Bonaventure intriguingly reads the beatitudes of the 'Sermon on the Mount' in Luke's Gospel against the backdrop of the discourse on the 'vanity of changeable nature' in Ecclesiastes 3:1-15. In his commentary on the Lukan beatitudes, Bonaventure explains: 'Qoheleth (the author of Ecclesiastes) 3:4 states that "the time for weeping" is prior in time to "the time for laughing," which occurs afterwards in eternity...Therefore, it is the fools who laugh now, and the wise who weep, according to what Qoheleth 7:5 has: "The heart of the wise is where there is mourning."' As such, Bonaventure affirms Qoheleth's adage in 3:1: 'All things have their season…' ought ultimately to be applied to the right ordering of the two maximal seasons of life – earthly existence and eternal beatitude.[54] The general principle that 'weeping' and 'laughing' each have their divinely allotted seasons interprets a moral principle relating to the right dispensation of Christian life. This means that the harrowing of the Cross must always presuppose the joy of living in the resurrection. The principles of *sapientia* incarnate in creation also govern Christ's mystical life as experienced by the believer.

Significantly, Bonaventure distils general principles of sapiential actualisation which had also concerned him in his earlier scriptural commentaries. Such principles, extracted from the biblical text, reveal a certain sapiential focus and a sensitivity to the experiential cogency of this master text. These sapiential principles, deduced from the texts of Scripture and creation,

[53] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ch.1, 99-104.
[54] Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, ch.3, 155-77; ch.7, 259; Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 8, ch.6, n.60, 516-17.

evidence a certain speculative cast of mind. These features of sapiential theology can also be found in Bonaventure's *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti* (1268) and other later works, albeit transposed into a performative idiom beyond the Alexandrine framework.

V. Summary

Bonaventure had to prove his worth within the Franciscan school, given the changes in intellectual leadership upon the demise of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle in 1245. Bonaventure's biblical commentaries embodied part of his effort to crystallise a fresh hermeneutical approach to address the prevailing conflict over Franciscan identity and vocation. Bonaventure was transforming the more mechanical and speculative exegesis of Alexander with an experiential mode of understanding Christ in Scripture.

In his Gospel and sapiential commentaries, Bonaventure resonates with Alexander's search for who God is, as deduced from the how and why of God's relation to man. Alexander's approach to the exegesis of experience is philosophical and abstractive. It involves knowing God in himself as abstracted from God's self-expression in creation. In contrast, Bonaventure registers the divine identity and intention, not in abstraction from the things of sense, but in and through the things themselves in their givenness. Bonaventure's way of knowing Christ as *sapientia* is more involved and affective, where ideation enters into mystical experience rather than remaining apart from it. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, this was Bonaventure's way of meeting the spiritual and practical needs of his confreres in a religious world beset by doctrinal uncertainty. This uncertainty originated mainly from disputes between Parisian-trained Franciscan clerics and radical Joachite *zelanti* within the Order and between the Order and certain secular masters at the university.

Chapter 3: Responding to Critics and Reformers of the Franciscan Vocation (1254-1257)

Bonaventure found himself embroiled in two major conflicts from 1254 when he became *magister* to 1257 when he became Minister General of the Friars Minor. The internal conflict concerned the doctrines of the visionary abbot Joachim of Fiore (c.1135-1202) that had influenced certain echelons of the Order by the early 1240s. Gerard of Borgo San Donnino (died 1274) promoted certain Joachite doctrines to justify the Order's eschatological self-understanding as leaders of a wholly spiritual end-time Church. His radical vision resonated with the *zelanti* and their renunciation of worldly structures of authority. On the other hand, the clerically trained friars continued to erect authoritative norms of governance in the manner of an ecclesiastical institution. This aggravated the ongoing conflict over the right dispensation of the Franciscan *vita*. Furthermore, Gerard's radical Joachite doctrines provided ammunition for William of Saint Amour and certain secular masters at the University of Paris to accuse the mendicants of heresy and institutional subversion. Bonaventure found himself having to mediate in the Franciscan identity dispute within the Order and also to justify and defend the Franciscan position against the seculars and wider Church.

I argue that, within this context of intense dispute, Bonaventure was seeking new avenues to hermeneutically reconcile the various extremes of the Franciscan *vita*. His *De Perfectione evangelica* (1255) was a series of *quaestiones disputatae* responding to the polemics of Gerard and William. Through a re-reading of the *materia* of history, Bonaventure counterposed the open-ended nature of Joachite revelation history with its rootedness in Christian tradition. In his *Breviloquium* (1257), Bonaventure applied speculative reasoning to exposit the experience already incarnate in the biblical text. This liminal text utilised a hybrid exegesis to integrate Franciscan mystical experience within the doctrinal structures of the Alexandrine tradition.

I. Joachite influence within the Franciscan Order

In 1254, Bonaventure graduated as a *magister* to lecture at the Franciscan school, within an atmosphere of intense conflict both inside and outside the Order. Since the early 1240s, some echelons of the Order had become increasingly attracted by certain radical apocalyptic ideas. Prominent among these were the doctrines propagated by the disciples of prophet-exegete

Joachim of Fiore after his death in 1202.[1] Joachim had asserted that the biblical deeds, events and personages typologically prefigured in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New, could be typologically projected into the historical present. According to Joachim's original apocalyptic vision, the Church would be purged through persecutions by enemies such as the Muslims, pseudo-prophets and Antichrist. This would coincide with a new final age of spiritual renewal ushered in by a *pastor angelicus*. He was also identified as the Angel of the Sixth Seal of Apocalypse 7:2, who would lead an emergent end-time double order of contemplative *viri spirituales* to defeat the persecutors. Joachim believed the birthplace of the Antichrist to be within the Roman empire.[2] But Joachim did not specify the precise date of the Antichrist's coming nor of the final age.[3] However, between 1214 and 1248, his disciples produced a reformist vision widely promoted as their master's own. Their *Super Hieremiam*, a substantial commentary on Jeremiah, identified the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250) as the Antichrist who would lead the overthrow of the institutional Church from 1260.[4] The volatile situation reached a tipping point when Pope Innocent IV led the Church in deposing Frederick II *in absentia* at the First Council of Lyons in 1245.[5] However, Frederick II continued to

[1] In 1196, Joachim founded the new Fiorensian Order in the Italian town of Fiore. Disillusioned by the growing loss of austerity in the Cistercian Order, he had pursued a more rigorous observance of the monastic Benedictine Rule and had been expelled from the Order four years earlier. After his death in 1202, his disciples continued to propagate his visionary doctrines to the Franciscans and other religious orders. The ongoing impact among the Cistercians was so great that the Fiorensians rejoined the parent Order in 1631. Delno C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 1-9; Morton W. Bloomfield and Marjorie E. Reeves, 'The Penetration of Joachism into Northern Europe,' *Speculum* 29, no. 4 (1954): 772-93; Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim Of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 1-47; Bernard McGinn, 'Joachim of Fiore and the Twelfth-century Papacy,' in *Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration: Essays in Memory of Marjorie E. Reeves (1905-2003)*, ed. Julia Eva Wannenmacher, Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 15-34.

[2] McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim Of Fiore in the History of Western Thought*, 26, 112-13; Bernard McGinn, 'Apocalyptic Traditions and Spiritual Identity in Thirteenth-Century Religious Life,' in *The Spirituality of Western Christendom: The Roots of the Modern Christian Tradition, II*, ed. Ellen Rozanne Elder, Cistercian Studies Series (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 1-26.

[3] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam* vol. 40, ed. Joseph Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, and John Robert Kane, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986), 231.

[4] E. Randolph Daniel, 'Apocalyptic conversion: The Joachite alternative to the Crusades,' *Traditio* 25 (1969): 140; Penn R. Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 26-27; For the debate over authorship of *Super Hieremiam*, see Marjorie E. Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: SPCK, 1976), 30, 60-61; Morton W. Bloomfield, 'Joachim of Flora: A Critical Survey of his Canon, Teaching, Sources, Bibliography and Influence,' *Traditio* 13 (1957): 252; Morton W. Bloomfield, 'Recent Scholarship on Joachim of Fiore and His Influence,' in *Prophecy and Milleniarism: Essays in Honor of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams (London: Longman, 1980), 25; Robert Moynihan, 'The Development of the Pseudo-Joachim Commentary *"super Hieremiam"*: new manuscript evidence,' *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 98, no. 1 (1986): 109-42.

[5] See 'First Council of Lyons,' Legion of Mary Tidewater, 1245, accessed 22/06/2020, http://legionofmarytidewater.com/faith/ECUM13.HTM#101; Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 254.

undermine the sovereignty of the Church until his death in 1250.[6] The struggle for succession to the kingship fuelled social and political instability and accentuated eschatological hopes among the Franciscans, Dominicans and other mendicants.[7]

Christoph Hahn and other early modern historians, in studying extracts from major seventeenth-century Cistercian works, recognised that Joachite doctrines greatly influenced Francis and his followers. According to George La Piana, there was a growing awareness among historians of 'an unbroken continuity of spiritual influences, tendencies, and definite traditions from the doctrines and ideals' of Joachim to that of the Seraphic Founder, and then to the *zelanti* and the later Spirituals with their Joachite-inspired apocalyptic views and rigorous practice of Franciscan poverty.[8] Thirteenth-century Franciscan chronicler Salimbene gave a personal account of the growing Joachite influence among the Franciscans. Joining the Friars Minor in 1238, Salimbene was sent to the Pisa convent in Italy five years later. By this time, it was already a 'Joachite centre' under the auspices of Pope Gregory IX. Salimbene belonged to this first 'inner circle of Joachites'.[9] Shortly after, a certain Fiorensian abbot deposited his entire collection of Joachite manuscripts there. This was because of his belief in the Joachite prophecy about Emperor Frederick II as the arch-enemy who would destroy his monastery and the Church by 1260 – a mere seventeen years to come. The resident lector, Rudolph of Saxony, became a *magnus Joachita* by dedicating himself to studying these manuscripts. Sometime between 1247 and 1248 in Provence near Paris, Salimbene encountered the Franciscan Joachites Bartholomew Guiscolo (fl.1246-1248) and Gerard of Borgo San Donnino; they owned *Super Hieremiam* and other Joachite books. Salimbene extolled Bartholomew as 'a great Joachite and a fine orator' who later became companion to John of Parma during his

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[6] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 29, 167, 179-97, 201, 347-58; See also Brett Edward Whalen, *The Two Powers: The Papacy, the Empire, and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

[7] For a history of the Joachite movement in the thirteenth century, see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 108-47; E. Randolph Daniel, 'Medieval Apocalypticism, Millenialism and Violence,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. Special Issue on Millenial Violence: Past, Present and Future (2002): 275-99; E. Randolph Daniel, 'Reformist Apocalypticism and the Friars Minor,' in *That Others May Know and Love: Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and F. Edward Coughlin (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997), 250-53.

[8] Christoph Ulrich Hahn, *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter, besonders im 11., 12, und 13.*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, 1850); quoted in George la Piana, 'Joachim of Flora: A Critical Survey,' *Speculum* 7, 2 (1932): 258-60, 276; Marjorie E. Reeves, 'The Abbot Joachim's Disciples and the Cistercian Order,' *Sophia* 19 (1951): 355-71.

[9] T.L. Kington Oliphant, 'The Life of Fra Salimbene (1221-1290),' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1872): 250-78; Delno C. West, 'The Education of Fra Salimbene of Parma: The Joachite Influence,' in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams (Harlow: Longman, 1980), 191-215, esp. 200.

generalate from 1247 to 1257. Earlier, as a lector in Naples, John most probably first became aware of Joachim's teaching through fellow friars who had travelled to the Hyères convent to listen to the Joachite expositions of Hugh of Digne (died 1285). Hugh possessed all of Joachim's books and went on to become 'John's very close and great friend...and a great Joachite (*magnus Joachita*)'.[10]

These Pseudo-Joachite doctrines were also infiltrating the Franciscan convent in Paris. John of Parma had been assigned to Paris as a lector in about 1245, when Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle had already died.[11] In 1248, Gerard arrived at Paris for a four-year lectorate course and became a *socius* of John of Parma who had attained the generalate the previous year. Gerard would likely have been under Bonaventure's tutelage, since the latter had been appointed *lector biblicus* by none other than John of Parma.[12] In the same year, Salimbene visited Hugh who gave him a copy of Joachim's unfinished *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia* to transcribe for his Minister General.[13] These Joachite ideas continued to proliferate among Bonaventure and other friars at Paris, and even to Oxford and other provinces.[14] Gerard and some other Franciscans saw in Joachim's teaching a new justification for the Franciscan *simplicitas*. On the other hand, William of Middleton and other clerics, in the spirit of their former master Alexander of Hales, would have been less accepting of these doctrines. They

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[10] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 224, 228-29, 231-32, 560-61, esp.560; David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 1-21.

[11] *Salimbene de Adam, The Chronicle,* 297*;* Thomas of Eccleston, *The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston: 'De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam'*, trans. Father Cuthbert (Edinburgh/London: Sands and Co., 1909), 91; Thomas of Eccleston, 'Thomas of Eccleston: The Coming of the Friars Minor to England,' in *13th Century Chronicles,* trans. Placid Hermann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961), 160-61.

[12] Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, trans. David Burr and E. Randolph Daniel (New York: St. Bonaventure, 2005), 102; Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 229, 299, 309, 464.

[13] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 294; Evidence of Salimbene's sojourn in these Joachite centres can be found in the detailed summary of his travels put together by Scalia. Giuseppe Scalia, 'Introduction,' in *Salimbene de Adam: Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia, Corpus Christianorum. Continuata Mediaevalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), l-li; Foote has presented an excellent account of the life and times of Salimbene. David Foote, 'Mendicants and the Italian Communes in Salimbene's *Cronica*,' in *The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies*, ed. Donald S. Prudlo (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 197-238.

[14] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 225; By 1250, Joachite ideas had also spread to Oxford. Hugh was also a socius of Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253) and his student Adam Marsh (1200-1259). John of Parma, Hugh and Grosseteste, having been fellow delegates at the 1245 First Council of Lyons, were likely to share Joachite ideas and writings among themselves. In a letter to Grosseteste, Marsh passed on the request 'by a brother friar coming from beyond the Alps' seeking Grosseteste's esteemed opinion of certain works of Joachim. Adam Marsh, *The Letters of Adam Marsh*, trans. C.H. Lawrence, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 119-20; For Grosseteste's use of Joachite ideas, see Richard W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 183-86, 290; Neslihan Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 138; For a concise treatment of the early Franciscan Joachite movement, see E. Randolph Daniel, 'A Re-examination of the Origins of Franciscan Joachitism,' 671-76.

pursued what they deemed as a feasible way to resolve the tension between the idealisation of Francis' primitive *vita* and its practical realisation. John of Parma tried to moderate between both factions within an Order riven by this conflict over the dispensation of the *vita* and by the attacks of William of Saint Amour and other seculars on the mendicants. John was generally 'acceptable to most of the friars' and was also '*persona grata* at the [papal] Curia'.[15] Yet, it was apparent among the Friars Minor that their leader was a '*magnus Joachita*', as testified by Salimbene. Hence, John of Parma had his fair share of friends and foes.

As for Bonaventure, like other clericals, his initial response to the Joachite phenomenon appeared to be dictated by his adherence to the Alexandrine/Lombardian heritage. In his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1250-1253), Bonaventure labelled Joachim as being 'ignorant' and 'simple'.[16] Bonaventure advanced a standard scholastic perspective on what he perceived to be Joachim's misinterpretation of the Trinitarian theology of Peter Lombard.[17] Bonaventure apparently supported the verdict of the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council in which Joachim's Trinitarian theology was considered heretical and was duly condemned.[18] At the same time, the Council affirmed its declaration of orthodoxy in approving Lombard's doctrine.[19] In his *De Perfectione evangelica* delivered in 1255, Bonaventure appropriated the Joachite vision of history in his own justification of the Franciscan *vita.* This was catalysed by his role in two

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[15] Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 255; McGinn, 'Apocalyptic Traditions and Spiritual Identity in Thirteenth-Century Religious Life,' 9-10; Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 304.

[16] Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, *Opera omnia* (bk.1, d.5, a.2, q.2, dubia 4), 1:121: *'...ignoranter Joachim reprehendit Magistrum [Peter Lombard] et quia, cum esset simplex, non est reveritus Magistrum, ideo iusto Dei iudicio damnatus fuit libellus eius in Lateranensi concilio et positio Magistri approbata.'*

[17] Bernard McGinn, 'The Abbot and the Doctors: Scholastic Reactions to the Radical Eschatology of Joachim of Fiore,' *Church History* 40, no. 1 (1971): 41.

[18] Papal patronage of Joachim's visionary ideas continued even after his death in 1202, so much so that at the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innnocent III exempted Joachim himself from the posthumous charge of heresy. For a debate on the controversy surrounding the charge of heresy against Joachim, see Marjorie E. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 126-32; 'Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215,' Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University Press, 1215, accessed 15/07/2020, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/thanks.asp; Fiona Robb, 'The Fourth Lateran Council's Definition of Trinitarian Orthodoxy,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48 (1997): 22-43; Fiona Robb, 'Did Pope Innocent III Personally Condemn Joachim of Fiore?,' *Florensia* 7 (1993): 77-91.

[19] la Piana, 'Joachim of Flora: A Critical Survey,' 263-64, 275-76; Constant J. Mews, 'Joachim of Fiore and the Critique of Scholastic Theology,' in *Ordine e disordini in Gioacchino da Fiore* (Rome: Marco Rainini, 2021), 153-70; The Fourth Lateran Council was a 'watershed council' for the fate of Lombard's theology. Before its official confirmation in 1215, Lombard's teaching had already been under intense debate. The criticisms posed by Richard of Saint Victor, Joachim and other antagonists led the Third Lateran Council of 1179 under Pope Alexander III to propose condemnation of Lombard's *Sentences*. This effort failed on account of Lombard's disciples' firm defence. Constant J. Mews and Clare Monagle, 'Peter Lombard, Joachim of Fiore, and the Fourth Lateran Council,' *Medioevo, Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale* 35 (2010): 81-122; Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Ex typis fratrum Delalain, 1889-1897), vol.1, n.194, 220-21.

major disputes; the first over the right approach to the Franciscan *vita* and the second between the Order and its secular critics over the utility of Franciscan mendicancy in the Christian life. Bonaventure's appropriation of Joachite themes would have key consequences for his hermeneutics, particularly in his interpretation of history and the Order's role therein in his later texts such as the *Legenda maior* (1261).

II. Joachite polemics within the Franciscan Order

In 1253, William of Middleton and the two Dominican masters were expelled from the Paris *consortium magistrorum.* This was because of their refusal to obey the university's demand that all masters should swear an oath of allegiance to university statutes, in particular the suspension of classes in protest of violent attacks against certain students.[20] William's absence from Paris due to a magisterial post at Cambridge until 1256 gave further impetus to the radical Joachite faction within the Order.[21] Merely two years after his promotion to the lectorate in 1252, Gerard published his *Liber introductorius ad evangelium aeternum* (*Book of Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*.[22] His radical interpretation of Joachim's *Eternal Gospel* incited William of Saint Amour and other Parisian secular masters to intensify their attack against the mendicant orders. He discredited Gerard and the mendicants by portraying them as end-time allies of the Antichrist, intent on supplanting the Church through promulgation of false doctrine. William accused the mendicants of undermining the institutional authority of the Church and tarred them with aspersions of heresy. The key issue had to do with the actual substance of Gerard's claims regarding the Franciscans' role in eschaton. Clearly, the radical ideas attributed to Gerard were manifestly a modification and a 'Franciscanisation' of Joachim's original vision of history.

[20] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1; n.219, 242-44; n.230, 252-58; n.247, 280; Andrew Traver, 'Rewriting History? The Parisian Secular Masters' *Apologia* of 1254,' *History of Universities* 15 (1998): 13.
[21] Andrew Little, 'The Friars and the Foundation of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Cambridge,' *Mélanges Mandonnet: Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale du moyen âge* 2 (1930): 398-400; Andrew Little, *Franciscan Papers, Lists and Documents* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943), 133-134; John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 241-42; John Moorman, *The Greyfriars in Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 31, 144, 95; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress,' (2019). 'Guilelmus de Militona (gest. ca. 1257/1260)'.
[22] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 229, 464.

(a) Joachim's vision of history

Joachim's views history through two complementary patterns, the *prima diffinitio* and the *secunda diffinitio*. The *prima diffinitio* is a Hierarchy of three *status* or ages. Each age is centred in one of the Trinitarian Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Factual correspondences between Old and New Testaments can be detected on the plane of world history. Both Scripture and history receive their impetus and pattern from the movement of the Trinity. The first age, pervaded by an awareness of the Fatherhood of God, is characterised by the divine institution of the Old Testament enshrined in the familial order. The second age, marked by the revelation of Christ the Son through the New Testament, outworks in a tension between institution of law and dictates of the Spirit. This age is led by a dual order of clergy and contemplatives. The third or final age, from law to Spirit, is marked by the morphing of the clerical into the contemplative order. Each age draws its dispensation from the dictates of the former but occurs on a higher level.[23] In his *Liber de concordia,* Joachim describes these three orders 'as one body of believers made of flesh, blood and the breath of life… [evolving] until they become the image and likeness of the Trinity, so that at last all shall come together in the unity of the faith, into mature manhood according to the measure of the fullness of Christ.' Therefore, Joachim's 'single pattern of threes', or *prima diffinitio,* symbolises the cumulative realisation of the Trinitarian fullness in history. The revelation of the third age converges and fulfils the other two ages, giving rise to a confluence of the three orders and Trinitarian Persons to which they are appropriated. [24] In his *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia*, Joachim qualifies that the last two orders pursue their heavenward journey 'together under the one New Testament'; but the meaning of Christ's Gospel deepens with proximity and time in the Triune God. Therefore, in the third or final age, this Gospel in its fullness is incontrovertible and its signification is eternal. In his *Psalterium*, Joachim identifies this fulfilled Gospel as the *Eternal Gospel* (*Evangelium aeternum)* of Apocalypse 14:6.[25]

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[23] For the conceptual relation between history and Trinity in Joachim's prophetic system, see E. Randolph Daniel, 'The Double Procession of the Holy Spirit in Joachim of Fiore's Understanding of History,' *Speculum* 55 (1980): 469-83.

[24] Daniel, 'The Double Procession of the Holy Spirit in Joachim of Fiore's Understanding of History,' 478; Ilia Delio, 'From Prophecy to Mysticism: Bonaventure's Eschatology in Light of Joachim of Fiore,' *Traditio* 52 (1997): 157; For the Latin text, see Joachim of Fiore, *Liber de concordia novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, vol. 73, Transactions of the American Philsosophical Society, (Independence Square: The American Philosophical Society, 1983).

[25] McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim Of Fiore in the History of Western Thought*, 127-28, 140 (fn.40-41); For the Latin text, see Joachim of Fiore, *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia di Gioacchino da Fiore*, ed. Ernesto Buonaiuti (Rome, 1930).

To this schema, Joachim adds his second pattern of two *tempora,* the *secunda diffinitio,* to describe the interrelation of the Old and New Testaments. The seven periods of each testament correspond to the seven seals of the Apocalypse. Each period is characterised by a twofold order symbolising the twofold work of both testaments. At the junction of the two *tempora* is Christ, who is the termination of the Old Testament (from Adam to Christ) and the initiation of the New (from Christ to the end of history). The New Testament proceeds in a sixth period designated by the Angel of the Sixth Seal of Apocalypse 7:2. This final age is dictated through the double ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The corresponding double monastic order of spiritual men (*viri spirituales*) who advance spiritual understanding (*intellectus spiritualis*) embodies the fullness of God's self-revelation in the confluence of the Trinitarian Persons. The Trinitarian unity in the *secunda diffinitio* models the eternal basis of history, but this does not appear entirely analogous with the lineal progression of history in the *prima diffinitio*. Hence, the need to describe Joachim's apocalyptic vision using both the *prima diffinitio* and *secunda diffinitio*.[26]

(b) Franciscan modifications of Joachite apocalypticism

A comparison of Joachim's doctrines with Gerard's reveals the latter's radicalisation of the abbot's original vision. In contrast to Joachim's emphasis on the typological concords between the three ages of the Church, Gerard marked the relation between the ages in terms of decisive rupture, downplaying the element of progressive continuity. Gerard focused on the third and final age which would encompass the dictates of an *Eternal Gospel*. He urgently promoted that the Francis would be the Angel of the Sixth Seal to lead the *viri spirituales* and the Church through the persecutions of the Antichrist and his allies.[27] Furthermore, Gerard promoted the Joachite belief that the coming of the Antichrist and the advent of the final age would occur in 1260 – an apocalypse that would occur within the next six years and thus truly imminent.[28] This advent would coincide with a hermeneutical and doctrinal transformation from the dictates of Christ's Gospel to the freedom of a superior Third Testament. This *Eternal Gospel* of the

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[26] Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism*, 16-27; Daniel, 'The Double Procession of the Holy Spirit in Joachim of Fiore's Understanding of History,' 469-83; Delio, 'From Prophecy to Mysticism: Bonaventure's Eschatology in Light of Joachim of Fiore,' 157.

[27] According to Salimbene, 'I spoke with Brother Gerard...and questioned him about the Antichrist, and he told me that the Antichrist had already been born and was a grown man, and that he knew him well... through the Scripture.' Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 463-64.

[28] Joachim did not himself specify the year of the world's end, but he did commit to the number 1260. For the derivation and significance of '1260', see Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 504-05; Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism*, 48-54; Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 43, 54-55, 95.

Holy Spirit replacing the New Testament would be mediated by the new Franciscan and other religious orders practising 'apostolic poverty' and Spirit-centred love.[29] Gerard's idea of a wholly spiritual church transcending the institutional structures appealed to the *zelanti* and resonated with their own defence of the Franciscan *vita* as a complete renunciation of worldly structures of faith. On the contrary, Gerard's idea opposed the ideal of the Franciscan conservative clerics who aligned themselves to the letter of tradition.

These Joachite doctrines, brought to a vitriolic height in Gerard's *Liber introductorius*, were part of a Franciscan Joachite tradition that had started to develop since the early 1240s. Drawing inspiration from the Joachite *Super Hieremiam*, the Franciscans subsequently created their own adaptation – the *Expositio super Hieremiam.*[30] Their variations of Joachite apocalypticism crystallised around three main Joachite themes. Bernard McGinn asserted that John of Parma played an important role in propagating these themes. Firstly, the Franciscans, together with the Dominicans, adapted the Joachite prophetic vision to identify themselves as the two end-time orders of *viri spirituales.* John would promote this identification often in his official documents – such as the joint encyclical (*Salvator seculi*) with his Dominican counterpart, Humbert of Romans (1200-1277) in 1255.[31] Secondly, in contrast with Joachim's identification of contemplative ardour, the Franciscans designated poverty of life to be the distinctive of *viri spirituales.* John was enthusiastic in encouraging the apocalyptic interpretation and practice of poverty in the Friars Minor.[32] Thirdly, the Franciscans, especially John and Gerard, identified Francis with Joachim's Angel of the Sixth Seal, herald of the end-times. Franciscan Spiritual Ubertino of Casale (1259-1329) also reported that John was probably 'the first recorded witness' to hail Francis as the Apocalyptic Angel. Notably, Ubertino certainly had contact with John; in the prologue to his *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu*, Ubertino mentioned a visit to John's hermitage in Greccio in 1285.[33] Since John and Gerard were among those who championed these Franciscan Joachite apocalyptic ideas and sought to integrate them within the historical

[29] Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism*, 59-70, 187-90; Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, 15, 27-29.
[30] Daniel, 'Apocalyptic conversion: The Joachite alternative to the Crusades,' 128, 144-46; Moynihan, 'The Development of the Pseudo-Joachim Commentary "*super Hieremiam*": new manuscript evidence,' 137-38.
[31] Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism*, 146-47; The full text of the encyclical is available in Luke Wadding, *Annales minorum seu trium ordinum a. S. Francisco Institutorum*, 25 vols. (Rome: Rochi Bernabò, 1731-1886), 380-83.
[32] McGinn identifies one text, *Liber concordie,* f. 67r, in which Joachim mentions poverty as a distinguishing feature of the spiritual Church belonging to the third and final age. McGinn, 'Apocalyptic Traditions and Spiritual Identity in Thirteenth-Century Religious Life,' 296 (fn.41).
[33] Ubertino of Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu*, vol. V (Venice, 1485), folio 210v; quoted in Daniel, 'Medieval Apocalypticism, Millenialism and Violence,' 287.

self-understanding of the Order, it is conceivable that these ideas would not have failed to catch the attention and imagination of Bonaventure.[34] Besides McGinn, both E. Randolph Daniel and Neslihan Şenocak also asserted that Bonaventure adopted these Joachite themes and gave them major focus within his own modified vision of Franciscan eschatology in later years.[35] In 1273, his vision would reach its fullest realisation in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* eighteen years after he had treated it seminally in *De Perfectione evangelica*. This disputation was part of his justification for the mendicant life against secular criticism led by William of Saint Amour.

III. Bonaventure's *De Perfectione evangelica*

Ignatius Brady and other scholars dated *De Perfectione evangelica* to 1255. Bonaventure would have delivered this series of *quaestiones disputatae* in response to the *Liber introductorius* of Gerard of Borgo San Donnino and *Liber de Antichristo* and *quaestiones disputatae* of William of Saint Amour published in 1254, and before William published his second anti-fraternal polemic *De Periculis* in 1256. Further evidence is provided by Jacques-Guy Bougerol who argued that Bonaventure did not name the inter-polemics of William, Thomas Aquinas and Thomas of York, nor the condemnation of *De Periculis* by Alexander IV in 1256. This meant that Bonaventure would have finished *De Perfectione evangelica* before 1256.[36]

Bonaventure's 'eschatological polemic' was written to reconcile the various disputes regarding the Friars Minor.[37] Outside the Order, Bonaventure's justification of the Franciscans'

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[34] For the different perspectives on Franciscan eschatology, see E. Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

[35] McGinn, 'Apocalyptic Traditions and Spiritual Identity in Thirteenth-Century Religious Life,' 8-12; McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim Of Fiore in the History of Western Thought*, 213-14; Bernard McGinn, 'Apocalypticism and Church Reform: 1100-1500,' in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins and Stephen J. Stein Bernard J. McGinn (New York: Continuum, 2003), 284-85; E. Randolph Daniel, 'St Bonaventure's Debt to Joachim,' *Medievalia et Humanistica* 11 (1982): 61-3; E. Randolph Daniel, 'St. Bonaventure: A Faithful Disciple of St. Francis? A Re-examination of the Question,' in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974: Studia de vita, mente, fontibus et operibus sancti Bonaventurae* (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973), 170-87; Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310*, 139; For the Franciscan transformation of Joachitism, see Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent c.1250-c.1450*, vol. 1 (Manchester Manchester University Press, 1999), 51-83, 122-39, 153-66, 174-91.

[36] Ignatius Brady, *The Writings of Saint Bonaventure Regarding the Franciscan Order*, 3 vols., San Bonaventura Maestro di Vita Francescana e di Sapienza Cristiana, (Rome: Pontificia Facolta Telogica San Bonaventura, 1975), 91-93; Brady, 'The Edition of the *Opera omnia* of Saint Bonaventure (1882-1902),'*Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 370; Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 118.

[37] Robert J. Karris, 'Introduction,' in *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection,* vol.13 (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 14.

eschatological worth would form part of his defence of the mendicant orders against the seculars' attempts to discredit them before the Holy See. As later chronicles recorded, 'With God's help, Friar Bonaventure, Master of Theology, together with other mendicant friars, convicted the false wise men [seculars] by making the truth burst forth.'[38] Within the Order, he had to confront the heterodox claims of the Joachite *zelanti* that the Franciscans were harbingers of a new age and a new Gospel absolved of institutional structures. His allusion to the Gerardian understanding of the friars as end-time *viri spirituales*, without mentioning the alleged persecutions by the Antichrist or the 1260 apocalypse, was likely intended to tow a fine line by appeasing this recalcitrant wing of the Order without antagonising his fellow clerics. However, Bonaventure likely agreed with orthodox biblical teaching that the final age had already come and that the world's end – the second coming of Christ, the *Parousia* – could come at any time. Bonaventure simply focused on the historical meaning and utility of the Franciscan vocation within a context of eschatological urgency.[39]

In his disputation, Bonaventure's hermeneutic of history employs Joachite apocalyptic elements. He justifies how the Franciscans are divinely appointed to revive the end-time institutional Church from within:

> But the person, who places the burden of gainful and self-supporting work on all able-bodied men without exception, goes beyond the precept of the Apostle and increases the weight of the yoke of slavery on *Christ's servants* to an excessive degree and impedes *spiritual men* from spiritual occupations and labors to the detriment of the salvation of souls and at the same time makes them more solicitous about feeding their bodies which are going to die than in acquiring for the Lord the souls of their neighbors…Consequently, the body is preferred to the spirit, individual advantage to the common benefit, which especially consists in building up the people of Christ, *in almsgiving, in teaching and guidance of souls,* to which tasks God sent these newest Orders through the Supreme Pontiff and the prelates. Should anyone claim that they have not been sent to do these things, he is clearly mistaken, since the express witness to this

[38] Eleemosyna, *Chronica de fr. Eleemosyna,* lat.5006, fol.152v, Bibl. Nat. Paris, Paris; quoted in Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 118.
[39] In his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273), Bonaventure explicitly declared that the final age of the new order has already begun under Francis as the apocalyptic herald. Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, trans. J.M. Hammond, vol. 18, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), col.16, n.16, 285.

> is found both in the Rule [*Regula bullata*] and in the privileges and in the *institution and approbation of this double Order*.[40] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure implies that papal 'institution and approbation of the double Order' proves the Church's recognition of the role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in eschaton. He affirms that they are 'spiritual men' – *viri spirituales*. As 'Christ's servants', they must labour to bring men to God through renunciation, 'in almsgiving, in teaching and guidance of souls'. Referring to Franciscan eschatology, Bonaventure identifies the mendicant orders as institutionally and eschatologically necessary and divinely ordained to purge and prepare the institutional Church for Christ's second coming.

Contrary to Gerard's eschatological vision of a charismatic order supplanting the institutional Church, Bonaventure adds his own theology of history. Bonaventure explains how the Church is evolving towards the mystical body of Christ in the final age: 'For the Lord praises the friendship of spiritual men, a friendship arising from "the mammon of iniquity" [Luke 16:9]. And it pertains to the perfection of the mystical body of Christ that its members share with one another "in giving and receiving" [Philippians 4:15], so that they together might supply for one another's indigence'.[41] Akin to Gerard's vision of a continual deepening of total horizon in which all reality evolves into the *imago dei* with proximity and time in the Triune God, Bonaventure states that the vision of the Gospel life does not remain rooted in static tradition but must evolve to meet the needs of every new age. Bonaventure asserts:

> …according to the disposition of *divine wisdom* [*sapientia*] God disposes and orders all things in his own times. Thus, in the first *time* of the Church he introduced men powerful both in miracles and signs, as were the apostles and their disciples. And in the middle time he brought forth men who were *knowledgeable in the Scriptures* and had keen intellects. So in the last time he

[40] Bonaventure, *De Perfectione evangelica*, *Opera omnia,* 5:155: '*Qui autem universaliter omnibus validis onus imponit lucrative laboris, de quo debeant sustenari, praeceptum Apostoli nimis ampliat et iugum servitutis super Christi servos nimium aggravat et spirituales viros a spiritualibus occupationibus et laboribus retardant in periculum salutis animarum, dum magis facit eos sollicitos de suis morituris corporibus pascendis quam de proximorum animis Domino acquirendis…ac per hoc corpus spiritui praefertur, privatum commodum utilitati communi, quae specialiter consistit in aedificatione populi Christi, in eleemosynsis, in documentis et animarum consiliis, ad quae misit Deus istos ordines postremos per summum Pontificem et praelatos. Ad quae si quis dicat eos non missos, manifeste obviate veritati, cum expressa ad hoc testimonia habeantur tam in regula quam in privilegio et institutione et approbatione huius duplicis ordinis.'* Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, trans. Thomas Reist and Robert J. Karris, vol. 13, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008), q.2, a.2, 157-58.

[41] Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, q.2, a.2, 129.

> has introduced men who beg voluntarily and are poor in worldly things...But since poverty is the *foundation* of *evangelical perfection* and is, as it were, its *fulfillment*, it, therefore, *flourished in the primitive Church*, and it is fitting that it *flourish near* the *final state of the Church*.[42] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure relates that idolatry has been destroyed in the first 'time' or age, heresy in the second, and avarice in the third – in accord with the divine ordering of history. The mendicants belong to this third age.[43] There is clear symmetry between the poverty of those apostles such as Peter who initiated the Church and the *viri spirituales* living on the cusp of the *Parousia.*[44] Bonaventure justifies the eschatological necessity of the mendicant orders by virtue of their developmental symmetry with the primitive expression of the institutional Church. Bonaventure affirms that Christ's Gospel was foundational and enduring and would not be supplanted by a superior Gospel as per Gerard. But just as all things are coming from and returning to God, so the Franciscan Order is an expression of divine agency rooted in Church tradition and oriented towards the future of God. The mendicant orders are the next, eschatologically necessary stage in the historical evolution of tradition. In this way, Bonaventure fuses the imperatives of orthodoxy and reform by affirming that the Church, in being oriented toward the future, is in fact returning to the same origin in which it was initially rooted. This is the circular notion of *egressus-regressus* – all things are coming from (*egressus*) God as their source and returning to (*regressus*) the same God as their end.[45] Bonaventure's *via media* was to remain orthodox in his conclusions and faithful to the Alexandrine tradition, while honouring the radicals' prophetic challenge and summons to reform within the Order and the Church. This formed the 'skeleton' of Bonaventure's vision of the *vita*, merging institution

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[42] Bonaventure, *De Perfectione evangelica, Opera omnia,* 5:147-8: '*...quod secundum dispositionem divinae sapientiae Deus universa disponit et ordinat temporibus suis. Unde sicut in primo tempore Ecclesiae introduxit viros potentes et miraculis et signis, sicut fuerunt Apostoli et eorum discipuli; et medio tempore viros intelligentes in Scripturis et rationibus vivis: sic ultimo tempore introduxit viros voluntarie mendicantes et pauperes rebus mundanis...Nihilominus tamen, quia paupertas fundamentum est evangelicae perfectionis, et ipsa est quasi complementum eiusdem; ideo viguit in Ecclesiae primordio, et congruum est, ut vigeat circa Ecclesiae statum finalem.'* Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, q.2, a.2, 133.

[43] Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, q.2, a.2, 133.

[44] See Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 1-3 in *Douay-Rheims Bible*, (London: Baronius Press, 2017).

[45] Bonaventure structures this notion of history after the circular movement of reality rooted in neo-Platonic thought but later borne through the work of Pseudo-Dionysius and the Victorines. Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, ed. Lawrence Boadt, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems, (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), 159-60, 182; Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction and Commentary,' in *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 81-82 (fn.21); J.A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology* (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2001), 16-17.

and Spirit within the synergy of an evolving, living tradition centralised in Christ as its dynamic principle.

Bonaventure's *via media* was particularly essential in the midst of prevailing uncertainties created by the polemical attack of William of Saint Amour. Earlier in 1254, William and three other secular masters had presented to the *curia* a list of thirty-one errors extracted from Gerard's *Liber introductorius.* Their list incited Pope Innocent IV to revoke the mendicants' privileges.[46] However, after Innocent's untimely death in December of that year, his successor Pope Alexander IV suspended William from the *consortium magistrorum* and condemned Gerard's *Liber introductorius* as heretical upon the verdict of the Anagni Commissioners in 1255.[47] Perhaps this was Alexander's effort to preserve the Order's integrity against Joachite extremism and secular criticism, as he had been appointed the Franciscans' Cardinal Protector by his uncle Pope Gregory IX since 1227.[48] In March 1256, an unrepentant William initiated a fuller exposition of his anti-fraternal polemics in *De Periculis novissimorum temporum* (*On the Dangers of the Last Times*).[49]

IV. Counter-polemics in *De Periculis novissimorum temporum* of William of Saint Amour

In *De Periculis,* William wove a caricature of Franciscan Joachitism into an apocalyptic counter-narrative of secular struggle against end-time mendicant subversion. William etymologically referred to the three portents of *mane*, *thecel* and *phares* in Daniel 5:25-28. These had appeared to the Babylonian King Belshazzar as signs of the imminent destruction of his kingdom. William signified *mane* as 'God numbered your kingdom and concluded it', corresponding it to the Gerardian heresy concerning the end of the institutional Church in 1260.[50] *Thecel* signified that Belshazzar's reign had been 'suspended on the scales and was

[46] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.243, 272-76.
[47] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.257, 297; Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 462-64; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c.1210-1517)*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 56.
[48] Alexander IV, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vol.1, 350.
[49] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, n.238, 265; n.240, 267-70; William of Saint Amour, *Magistri Guillelmi de Sancto Amore Opera omnia*, ed. Joannes Alitophilius (Constance: Alithophilos, 1632), 41-73; Andrew Traver, *The Opuscula of William of Saint-Amour: The Minor Works of 1255-1256*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelaters, Neue Folge, (Munster: Aschendorff, 2003), 6-29; William of Saint Amour, *De Periculis novissimorum temporum: A critical edition, translation and introduction*, trans. Guy Geltner, vol. 8, Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations, (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 22-27.
[50] According to Traver, after 1257, while in exile, William published anonymously his *Liber de antichristo et eius ministris* 'to celebrate the fact that the year 1260 had passed without any of Gerard of Borgo San Donnino's

found wanting… according to which the Gospel of Christ is diminished before the [Gerardian] *Eternal Gospel'*. *Phares* signified that 'your kingdom is separated from you', corresponding to the division of the Church between followers of the *Eternal Gospel* and followers of Christ.[51] In a parody and reversal of Gerard's apocalyptic vision, William attested that the fraternal orders would indeed be instrumental as initiators of the end of the world, but only in their role as allies of the Antichrist – persecutor of the Church.[52]

William typified the friars as *antichristi* – 'agents of Antichrist, sent to undermine the Church from within in preparation for his coming.' In Matthew 24, William posited eight signs of the end-times. The first three signs envisaged the dangers posed by the Gerardian *Eternal Gospel*: transformation of Christ's Gospel into a false Gospel, disempowerment of the Church, and subversion of the Church. The fourth sign warned that the *antichristi* would vilify, persecute and even kill their correctors – presumably William himself and his fellow seculars. The following three signs warned that *antichristi* would take offence for being reproved, gain influence and following, and abate in their love for God. The last sign consummated the era: the true Gospel would 'be preached throughout the whole world'.[53]

William also portrayed the friars as 'false apostles' (*pseudoapostoli*) with apostolic pretensions. Drawing upon Matthew 24:11 and Romans 10:15, William argued that the *pseudoapostoli* were 'new apostles' not officially 'sent' by the Church. He based this on the premise that the Christian vocation was determined not by individual conscience or by charismatic leaders such as Francis, but by the constitutive authority of the Church.[54] Appealing to the authority of Pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, William argued for the legitimate existence of two traditional orders of clerics and monastics

prophecies having come to fruition.' Andrew Traver, 'The Forging of an Intellectual Defense of Mendicancy in the Medieval University,' in *The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies*, ed. Donald S. Prudlo, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 175-76; Andrew Traver, '*Liber de Antichristo* and the Failure of Joachite Expectations ' *Florensia* 15 (2001): 87-98; William of Saint Amour, *Magistri Guillelmi de Sancto Amore Opera omnia*, 17-40, 73-87.

[51] William of Saint Amour, *De Periculis novissimorum temporum: A critical edition, translation and introduction*, 78-79; Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, 28.

[52] Guy Geltner, 'William of Saint Amour's '*De Periculis novissimorum temporum*': A False Start to Medieval Antifraternalism?,' in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honour of John V. Fleming*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and Guy Geltner, The Medieval Franciscans (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 131.

[53] William of Saint Amour, *De Periculis novissimorum temporum: A critical edition, translation and introduction*, 76-85; Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, 24, 54-71.

[54] Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, 41-54.

– that is, the superior order and the inferior order which was perfected by the superior.[55] The order of divine grace was determined solely by the *ecclesia* as God's divinely instituted governing body. The mendicant orders, situated outside these divinely ordered compartments of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, were institutionally superfluous and thereby extrinsic to the actualisation of the Church's mission.

William condemned the friars as '*magistri mendaces*' who would introduce 'sects of perdition'.[56] Five months later, William intensified his attack by depicting them as pharisees. In his anti-mendicant sermon *De Pharisaeo et publicano* (*On the Pharisee and the Publican*), William wrested Christ's warning against the hypocritical Pharisees in Matthew 23:8 to his own polemical purpose. As William argued, just as these Pharisees yearned to be exalted by men as 'rabbi', so too did the friars desire to be called *magistri*. Just as the Pharisees desired the first seat in the synagogues, so did the friars desire the honours of serving in the pulpit. Also, as the Pharisees loved to be greeted in the marketplace, so did the friars 'arrange to be called to the consistories of princes and prelates…'[57] William's thematic wresting by refiguration and synthesis ordered the *corpus* to his polemical agenda – the heralding of the dangers of mendicant subversion and *ipso facto*, the abolition of the mendicant orders as an ecclesiastical entity.

William's attack on the mendicants was brought to an abrupt end when Pope Alexander IV condemned *De Periculis* in October 1256, based on the decision of the Anagni Commissioners. Alexander's decision was due in no small part to the cogent argumentation of mendicants such as Bonaventure and fellow Franciscan Thomas of York (c.1220-1260) and Dominican Thomas Aquinas.[58] Subsequently, without any firm leadership, the seculars yielded to papal intervention. Unwilling to reconcile, William was excommunicated in 1257.[59] William's exile

[55] William of Saint Amour, *De Periculis novissimorum temporum: A critical edition, translation and introduction*, 50-59; Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ch.3, n.2, 154; ch.6, n.1-6, 243-49.
[56] William of Saint Amour, *De Periculis novissimorum temporum: A critical edition, translation and introduction*, 124-25; Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*, 34-41, 61.
[57] William of Saint Amour, '*De Pharisaeo et publicano*,' in *The Opuscula of William of Saint-Amour: The Minor Works of 1255-1256* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2003), 191-205; Also see Jonathan Robinson, 'Qui praedicat periculum in illo peribit: William of St-Amour's Anti-Mendicant Sermons,' in *Weapons of Mass Instruction: Secular and Religious Institutions Teaching the World*, ed. Joseph Goering, Francesco Guardini, and Giulio Silano (Ottawa: Legas, 2008), 51-63.
[58] George Tavard, *Contemplative Church: Joachim and his Adversaries* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 77-90.
[59] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.288-89, 331-35; Lawrence C. Landini, 'The Causes of Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor: 1209-1260 in the Light of Early Franciscan Sources'

to his native Burgundy ushered in a period of relative calm, albeit with future reverberations.[60] The secular-mendicant conflict would be resurrected under William's disciple Gerard of Abbeville (1225-1272) ten years later.[61]

Alexander IV continued to act in favour of the mendicants and the Church. In October 1257, he thereby decreed the formal admission of Bonaventure and Aquinas to the *magistrorum consortium*.[62] However, Bonaventure had to renounce his magisterial position due to his appointment as successor to John of Parma earlier in February. According to Salimbene, who agreed with John's former *socius* Bartholomew, John 'believed so strongly the [Joachite] prophecies of fantastic men, he condemned himself and did great harm to his friends.'[63] In other words, John's blatant displays, as in *Salvator seculi*, of his Joachite convictions earned him animosity and his eventual deposition. Angelo Clareno specified that John's eventual fall from grace was mainly a result of his defence of Joachim's criticism of Lombard's Trinitarian theology.[64] The fact that Bonaventure was successfully elected to the generalate was in no small part due to his previous promotions by John; firstly in 1248, as a *lector biblicus* despite Bonaventure's young age and academic juniority, and secondly in 1255, as *magister regens in situ.*[65] Since 1253, the sole official magisterial chair had already been occupied by Bertrand of Bayonne who had more political experience as a former provincial minister of Aquitaine.[66]

(Chicago: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1968), 68-76; Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517*, 128-29.

[60] Decima L. Douie, 'St Bonaventura's Part in the Conflict between Seculars and Mendicants at Paris,' in *S Bonaventura 1274-1974: Studia de vita, mente, fontibus et operibus sancti Bonaventurae*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol, vol.2 (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973), 585-600; Andrew Traver, 'Secular and Mendicant Masters of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, 1505-1523,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 1 (1995): 137-55; Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), 34-51.

[61] For a detailed treatment of the secular-mendicant controversy, see Decima L. Douie. *The Conflict between the Seculars and the Mendicants at the University of Paris in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1954); Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, Cambridge Library Collection - Medieval History, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 344-97.

[62] For the role of Pope Alexander IV in this secular-mendicant conflict, see Andrew Traver, 'The Identification of the "*Vita Apostolica*" with a life of Itinerant Preaching and Mendicancy: Its Origins, Adherents and Critics ca. 1050-1266' (PhD University of Toronto, 1996), 135-62; P. McKeon, 'The Status of the University of Paris as *Parens scientarum*: An Episode in the Development of its Autonomy,' *Speculum* 39 (1964): 651-75.

[63] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 302, 309.

[64] Angelo Clareno, *Liber chronicarum sive tribulationem ordinis minorum*, trans. Marino Bigaroni (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncula, 1999), 354-88; David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (Pennyslvania: Pennyslvania State University Press, 2001), 29-30. Frances Andrews, 'The Influence of Joachim in the 13th Century,' in A Companion to Joachim of Fiore (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 240-241.

[65] Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 272.

[66] Wadding, *Annales Minorum,* vol.4, 25; vol.5, 120; vol.8, 46; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bertrandus Bellac (Bertrand de Bayonne/Strabo de Bayona, d. 1256)'; Palémon, Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols, Études de philosophie médiévale (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933), vol.2, 17-18.

There is no direct evidence as to why John chose Bonaventure as his successor. John must have been sufficiently impressed by the younger Franciscan's subtle treatment of the mendicancy question in his *De perfectione evangelica* delivered two years earlier. In his disputation, Bonaventure had used the main Joachite themes to argue very persuasively but without openly attacking those whom he considered in error. The fact that he did not openly denounce the Gerardians within the Order or even the secular opponents outside the Order must have led John to see the potential of political acumen in him. John would have been sufficiently confident in Bonaventure's ability to retain a moderating influence within the Order. This was crucial as there were still challenges posed by the radical Joachite *zelanti,* who would consider this turn of events as another setback for authentic Franciscanism.

As newly elected leader, Bonaventure continued to lay a firm theological and methodological foundation for the Franciscan *vita* and to clarify the contents of Franciscan belief for the friars. He would have foreseen the need to re-interpret the concept of Franciscan exegesis in a way that would prove communicable to both the lay and learned friars within the Order. His response was the *Breviloquium* (*Brief discourse*). This theological handbook incorporated, *inter alia*, a treatment of the methods required to exposit the meaning of Franciscan life and doctrine found in Scripture. His general method of presentation revealed a certain liminality in his thinking and habituation – a clear sign that he had one eye on what he could retrieve from his scholastic past and the other on what he could produce for the Order's future. This 'transitional' or 'borderline text' attests to its 'pivotal position' straddling Bonaventure's time as a scholastic before 1257 and his time as a pastoral and an administrative leader from 1257 onwards.[67] The 'hybrid genre' of the *Breviloquium* integrates the dynamic and living character of Franciscan mystical experience within the doctrinal structures of the Franciscan school steeped in the Alexandrine tradition.

V. Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*

Certain scholars such as Balduinus Distelbrink hypothesised that Bonaventure completed the *Breviloquium* before he became Minister General in 1257. Distelbrink observed that certain themes in this text were prefigured in Bonaventure's earlier scholastic works. For instance, the 'fullness of *sapientia* in Christ's intellect' had been treated in his earlier *Quaestiones disputatae*

[67] Emmanuel Falque, *Saint Bonaventure and the Entrance of God into Theology*, trans. Brian Lapsa and Sarah Horton (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), lviii; Dominic Monti, 'Introduction,' in *Breviloquium*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2005), xv.

de scientia Christi (1254), which was also a crucial development from his earlier *Commentary on the Sentences* (1253).[68] Marianne Schlosser concurs with this pre-1257 dating, consigning 'Bonaventure's masterpiece [to] his years as a *magister*'.[69] Conversely, Jay M. Hammond agrees with Camille Bérubé who drew upon 'internal textual evidence' to posit a post-1257 dating, probably after the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) or the General Chapter of Narbonne (1260).[70] Significantly, scholarly consensus held that the *Breviloquium* was completed in 1257. Jacques-Guy Bougerol claimed that it 'may be dated with certainty around the year 1257', taking into consideration the 'Troyes' manuscript that specified this precise date. Dominic Monti agreed that Bonaventure completed this text in 1257, after his election to the generalate.[71]

As Monti rightly asserts, the *Breviloquium* was 'the capstone' of Bonaventure's scholastic career at the university, but it was 'more than simply an academic contribution to theology'. Through years of teaching experience as a *magister*, Bonaventure had a conviction of the need for a condensed text for 'the education of young friars' in the Order.[72] Bonaventure himself clarified in the prologue:

> However, the teaching [God's plan of salvation] has been transmitted, both in the writings of the saints and in those of the doctors, in such a diffuse manner that those who come to learn about Sacred Scripture are not able to read or hear about it for a long time. In fact, beginning theologians often dread Sacred Scripture itself, feeling it to be as confusing, disordered, and uncharted as some impenetrable forest. That is why my colleagues have asked me, from my own modest knowledge, to draw up some concise summary of the truth of theology. Yielding to their requests, I have agreed to compose what might be called a brief discourse. In it I will summarize not all the truths of our faith, but some things that are more opportune [for such students] to hold. At the same time, I have

[68] Balduinus Distelbrink, *Bonaventurae Scripta: Authentica, Dubia vel spuria critice recensita* (Rome: Istituto Storico Cappuccini, 1975), 3-4, 10, 13.
[69] Marianne Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 24.
[70] Camille Bérubé, *De la philosophie a la sagesse chez Saint Bonaventure et Roger Bacon* (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1976), 117-18; quoted in Jay M. Hammond, 'The Textual Context,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 30-31, 45.
[71] Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 108; Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Manuscrits franciscains de la Bibliotheque de Troyes* (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1982), 262; quoted in Dominic Monti, 'Introduction,' *Breviloquium*, xiv-xvii, esp. xiv.
[72] Monti, 'Introduction,' *Breviloquium*, xv, xvii.

> added, under each topic treated, some explanations so that they might understand it.[73]

As Minister General writing for a wider audience within and beyond the university, Bonaventure was mindful of the pedagogical need among Franciscan teachers and students for a systematic overview of the whole of theology's contents. He was also attentive to the homiletic and spiritual needs of his itinerant friar-preachers. In the *Breviloquium*, to supply these various needs, Bonaventure deployed a hybrid exegesis. He surpassed the *quaestio* format of Lombard's *Sentences* in which the biblical text is a point of departure for the logical resolution of philosophical problems. Bonaventure proceeded from using experience to interpret the discourse about the biblical text to understanding the text of experience itself. Dispensing with the prolixity and technicality of the *Summa fratris Alexandri,* Bonaventure's concise but powerful handbook of Franciscan theology would be more useful in the field of Franciscan ministry than a series of disputations far removed from the realm of ordinary faith experience. Without complex scholastic apparatus such as glossing and dialectical treatment of ideas, it was easily copied; and its logical sequence fostered ease of reference. Therefore, it also doubled as a handy preaching resource as well as 'a meditative tool for personal spiritual formation' of the friars.[74]

The *Breviloquium* appears to be Bonaventure's only surviving text to incorporate an extended discourse on biblical exegesis.[75] Bonaventure uses the concept of *rationes necessariae* (necessary reasons) of Anselm of Canterbury to penetrate logically the matters of faith in Scripture.[76] For Bonaventure as for Anselm, the Divine Word as regulative idea gives the

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[73]Bonaventure*, Breviloquium, Opera omnia*, 6:208: *'Et quia haec doctrina tam in scriptis Sanctorum quam etiam doctorum sic diffuse tradita est, ut ab accedentibus ad Scripturam sacram audiendam non possit per longa tempora videri nec audiri - propter quod etiam novi theologi frequenter ipsam Scripturarm sacram exhorrent tanquam incertam et inordinatam et tanquam quandam silvam opacam -- rogatus a sociis, ut de paupercula scientiola nostra aliquid breve in summa dicerem de veritate theologiae, eorumque precibus devictus, assensi 'breviloquium' quoddam facere, in quo summatim non omnia, sed aliqua magis opportuna ad tenendum breviter tangerentur, addens simul cum hoc rationem aliquam ad intelligendum, secundum quod occurrebat pro tempore.'* Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.6, n.5, 22.

[74] Dominic Monti, 'Introduction,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 9.

[75] For the historical and pedagogical context of *Breviloquium*, see Michael Robson, 'A Mendicant Perspective: Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio,' in *Biblical Interpretation: The Meanings of Scripture Past and Present*, ed. John M. Court, Biblical Seminar Series (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 73-77; Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, VI, nos. 4-5, 22.

[76] In his epistemological treatise *De Veritate* (1080-1086), Anselm erects a theory of language according to a neo-Platonist order of questioning but informed by an Augustinian semiotic framework. For Plato, true statements about reality are possible insofar as the knower and known are both participants in the 'principle of Unity' or the 'Good itself'. Since the Good is the origin and basis of order, both in the natural world and in the human mind, and since the essence of the Good consists in unity itself, so words and things are both rightly forms of the Good

intrinsic connection between what is said and what is. The speaker can express the true forms of things if he is in the Word. Hence, statements are factually accurate if their meaning and usage are aligned with God's intention. In this manner, Bonaventure evinces the possibility of forming true statements about reality given that both thinking and reality are originated and rooted in the Divine Word, their exemplar.[77] Bonaventure does not use philosophical reasoning to establish the truth of articles of the faith by certain proofs or arguments, but simply to make intelligible what is disclosed in faith. However, Bonaventure transcends Anselm by reflecting not only the matters of the faith, but the mystery of God. Bonaventure does not simply undertake logical inference from the data of faith but reduces theological *topoi* to the origin**.**[78] All things are derived from their Trinitarian cause; thus, the origin, structure and end of reality can tell us something definite about the nature of the self-diffusive First Principle.[79]

The *Breviloquium* treats 'the Trinity of God', by drawing on the relational Trinitarian analogy of Richard of Saint Victor. Just as the Father and Son are connected in love by the Holy Spirit, so 'perfect wisdom' or *sapientia* – the mystical knowledge of divine goodness – integrates both theological speculation and practical knowledge in light of their proper end, that is, conformity with Christ. God can be spoken of in human terms because humanity bears in some imperfect way the traces of divine unity, truth and goodness. Because of the ontological unity-in-difference between the divine reality and objects of experience, human experience triggers but does not complete divine revelation. A deeper dimension of knowledge perdures over what a knowledge of human experience is able to afford. And this deeper dimension can only be

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they indwell. One understands being, therefore, not only by seeking to know things in themselves, but by participating in the Good who is 'Being itself'. Sigurd Baark, 'Anselm: Platonism, language and truth in *Proslogion*,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 4 (2010): 382-84; Hans Joachim Krämer, *Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 77, 98.

[77] Gregory LaNave. 'Bonaventure's Theological Method' in *A Companion to Bonaventure,* ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 116-17; Marcia L. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 112-13.

[78] Stephen F. Brown, 'The Theological Context: Reflections on the Method of Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 17-27, esp. 20; For Bonaventure's methodological reliance on Anselm, see Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure,' in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 319-22.

[79] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.1, ch.1, n.1-4, 27-29; Justin Coyle asserts that Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* innovates in two ways: firstly, by expanding 'the grammar of appropriation across the text both synchronically and diachronically', and secondly, by 'inscribing his treatise on the divine nature within his doctrine of appropriation'. Justin S. Coyle, 'Appropriating Apocalypse in Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*,' *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 110-12.

attained by abiding within God himself. God is the ultimate frame-of-reference for all knowledge, because God is First Principle of all that exists.[80]

Bonaventure rhetorically reconstructs the vision of the Divine Word – and by extension, all of reality – according to the order of *reductio.*[81] The structural exemplar of the *Breviloquium* is what Bonaventure calls the threefold Word – source (*ortus*), procedure (*progressus*) and purpose (*status*) – that governs the course of Scripture itself. Just as everything originates, proceeds and terminates in the Word, so also does divine revelation originate by a direct illumination of the Holy Spirit, find expression in the word of Scripture and practically manifest in the individual. This triple modality is simply the threefold Word at work in the human being.[82] This threefold process of revelation encompasses four domains of reality: metaphysical (creation) contributed by Alexander of Hales through Augustine and Aristotle, meditative (Scripture) contributed by Hugh of Saint Victor, theological (God) contributed by Richard of Saint Victor, and ascetical (soul) contributed by the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*. These four domains converge in the beatific vision occurring on the mystical level contributed by Pseudo-Dionysius.

The *Breviloquium* extracts an illuminative notion of revelation from Paul's experience incarnate in its incipit, Ephesians 3:14-15. One discovers the dimensions of theological understanding – namely 'breadth and length, height and depth' – by 'being rooted and grounded in love' or by 'an inflowing of the Most Blessed Trinity'. From this, one understands that

[80] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.1, ch.2, n.1-5, 29-33; Richard of St Victor, 'The Twelve Patriarchs,' in *The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three on the Trinity*, ed. Grover A. Zinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 375, 92.

[81] Bonaventure first elaborated the notion of *reductio* in his *Commentary on the Sentences.* He would continue to develop his own multivalent notion of *reductio* as a structuring principle of all his major works – theological, mystical, exegetical. Examining its etymology, Cullen defines Bonaventure's reduction as 'an ascent of the mind to God in the order of knowledge'. Referring to its Pseudo-Dionysian and Victorine inspiration, Rorem proposes that *re-ducere* is not simply leading backwards, but literally 'leading back up' to God in the uplifting sense of the anagogical'. Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 29-30; Christopher M. Cullen, 'Bonaventure's Philosophical Method,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 136-40; Paul Rorem, 'Dionysian Uplifting (Anagogy) in Bonaventure's Reductio,' *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 183-88; Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction,' in *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1996), 1; Emma Thérèse Healy, *Bonaventure's De reductione artium ad theologiam: A Commentary with an Introduction and Translation* (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1940), 157.

[82] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, n.1-6, 1-5; Catherine A. Levri, 'The Prologue to the *Breviloquium*,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 78-87; Joshua C. Benson, 'The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 247-87.

knowledge originates from a direct and interior illumination of the Holy Spirit, 'from the [Father], through his Son...' The 'manner of proceeding' is that of divine authority. The principal mode and measure of revelation is not understanding, but faith. One does not grasp the whole of divine truth by reasoning, defining or making distinctions. Instead, one does so by drawing near to God in truth, listening to his Word, and doing what he says. Rational understanding is confined to only one dimension of reality, but divinely illuminated revelation encompasses all of reality. Finally, the 'purpose or fruit of Sacred Scripture is…the fullness of everlasting happiness.' This occurs through the soul's uttermost conformity in the Triune God.[83] Hence, Bonaventure aims 'to derive each reason from the First Principle, in order to demonstrate that the truth of Sacred Scripture is from God, that it treats of God, is according to God, and has God as its end.' This circular *egressus-regressus* movement structures the topical sequence of the entire text, from parts 1 to 7.[84]

Firstly, expounding 'breadth' of Scripture, Bonaventure describes its generic subdivisions ordered to man's salvation. Scripture's division into the Old and New Testaments embodies the paradoxical nature of Franciscan knowledge. Just as love presupposes true knowledge of the subject matter, so theological insight does not proceed by a utilitarian appropriation of the divine subject for ulterior or human purposes, but by remaining open and attentive to God's heartbeat. In this way, theological insight is governed by a dialectics of love and knowledge, whereupon love actualises knowing, and knowing catalyses love. The interrelation of the two testaments shows that this epistemological structure governs the process of Scripture itself. Pertaining to the discourse of the letter are discourse forms such as legal, sapiential, prophetic and historical. Such generic diversity disposes man to salvation through divine precepts, teachings, and examples and promises, and finally by combining all three. Core to the New Testament's discourse of love are the Gospels, fusing all the discourse forms within the unity of the Christ-account.[85] The discourse of love subsumes and transfigures the discourse of the letter; so that the letter shines forth with new meaning as the habitual cornerstone for life in the Spirit.

[83] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, n.1-6, 1-5; s.5, n.1-4, 17-18.
[84] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.6, n.6, 23; Monti, 'Introduction,' *Breviloquium*, xlviii-l.
[85] According to Dominic Monti, 'there was no standard division of the Biblical canon among medieval theologians.' Consistent with the formal pedagogical aim of the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure might have been the first to divide the biblical writings into four distinct types: legal books, historical books, sapiential books and prophetic books. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.1, .n.1-4, 5-8.

Secondly, Scripture narrates the course of biblical history, or 'length'. Building upon Augustine and Hugh of Saint Victor, Bonaventure describes how biblical history proceeds in a triple way: from the dictates of nature to those of law, then to those of grace. In the time of Adam, God's character and intimacy were innately bestowed.[86] After the Fall, they needed to be externally imposed by the authority of a law-giver. In the time of Christ, law and nature converged in the embrace of love. In so doing, the development of Scripture embodies the trajectory of the soul and world in God – the history of salvation is the meaning of world history. This means that the meaning of Scripture deepens and recentralises within new life-contexts in an incremental process of revelation, parallel to the visionary formation of the exegete. The *sapientia* of Christ is therefore a spiritualising and deepening of the letter, perfecting the life of the Church in the final time.[87] Bonaventure's Trinitarian meaning and structure of salvation history is reminiscent of the Joachite model of revelation history, which features a similar kind of visionary deepening. [88]

Thirdly, the 'height' of Scripture constitutes the hierarchy of reality (creaturely, human and divine). Since the world was created incrementally, unfolding in a descending order from its origin, so the Hierarchy of creation is divided into three levels: a 'vestige', an 'image' and a 'likeness'. Inspired from Pseudo-Dionysius' notion of emanation from a source, these levels of being bear varying levels of exemplarity relative to their spiritual proximity to the First Principle. Relying on Alexander's biblical predication of Aristotle's categories, Bonaventure characterises each object in terms of a threefold dimension: content, mode and goal.[89] All creatures possess content (comprising truth and form), agent (comprising power and means), and *telos* (comprising goodness and order). Content (exemplary cause) refers to their natural intelligibility or wisdom. Agent (efficient cause) refers to acts of origination involving causality, which indicates power. The limits of the object are beneficial because they preserve the life of the object in view of its proper end (final cause), thus manifesting natural goodness

[86] Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, bk.4, ch.4, n.7; Hugh of St Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis)* trans. Roy Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America Publications, 1951), bk.1, pt.8, ch.3, 143.
[87] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.2, n.1-4, 8-11.
[88] In the *Breviloquium*, 'Bonaventure carries with him a bit of the Joachimist perspective...In this way, he sidesteps controversial claims about the end of the world and the apocalyptic significance of the Minorite order, even as he creates a rhetorical meeting space for Joachimism and mainstream Catholic eschatology.' Kevin L. Hughes and Benjamin Winter, 'Part VII: On the Repose of the Final Judgment,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 275; Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.7, ch.1-7, 265-301.
[89] Aristotle, *Metaphysics: Books Gamma, Delta and Epsilon*, trans. Christopher Kirwan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), bk.2, ch.2; Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ch.5, n.6, 149-150.

and order. Indeed, whereas created things convey in an imperfect or fragmentary way the power, truth and goodness of God, the human soul is the only thing on earth which is capable of mirroring in an intelligible way the divine unity of these attributes *in se*. This is the divine image imprinted upon the human person. The divine likeness, however, pertains only to Christ himself and amounts to complete exemplarity.[90] Accordingly, Bonaventure identifies three levels of scriptural reference – the first pertaining to the actual signification of the biblical words, the second to the spiritual signification of the deeds or phenomena these words signify, and the third to the spiritual signified.

In addition, Scripture reflects the mystery of being, virtue of right disposition, and morality of right living. Bonaventure extends this threefold understanding to his threefold order of being: purity of desire, humility of understanding, and commitment of the will. Adapting the anthropological insights of the Alexandrine *Summa* and its key source, the pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima,* Bonaventure attests that the soul is a threefold unity in God of 'memory, intellect, and will.'[91] Memory retains, synthesises and distinguishes; the intellect 'discerns truth through its rational faculty, rejects evil through the negative appetite [of the will], and desires good through its positive appetite.' Memory recalls what is known from the origin of all things, which is then compared against what the intellect understands about the world through the mediation of sensation. Desire for either what is good or evil impels the will to converge both intellect and memory in the total experience of its desired object. As such, the soul interprets and acts in wilful pursuit of its God. This triple synergy of memory, intellect and will exemplifies the Father's origination of the Son through the bond of the Holy Spirit. This triple integration of generating mind, word and love is the Trinitarian anthropological analogue of a global exegetical process co-relating mystical insight, speculation and praxis.[92]

Fourthly, the 'depth' or multi-level meaning of Scripture reveals a harmonious interplay of senses – literal, allegorical (regarding faith), moral or tropological (regarding love) and anagogical (regarding hope). Scripture's affective mode of proceeding is both one and multiple,

[90] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.3, n.1-3, 11-13; pt.2, ch.1, n.1-4, 59-62; ch.12, n.1-5, 96-98.
[91] The threefold nature of the soul is Platonic in inspiration and resourced in patristic tradition, notably in *De spiritu et anima*: 'The wise men of the world have handed on to us that there are in the human soul reason, positive appetite, and negative appetite'. Pseudo-Augustine, 'The Spirit and the Soul,' in *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology*, ed. Bernard McGinn (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 286.
[92] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.2, ch.9, n.1-8, 84-89, esp. 87; Bonaventure would further develop the threefold power of the soul as exemplary of the Trinity in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259). Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, trans. Ewert Cousins, The Classics of Western Spirituality, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), ch.1, no. 7-13, 62-64.

corresponding to the multiple disposition of humanity. Since Scripture hides several layers of meaning 'under a single text', one passage must be interpreted by another in order to register the inter-dimensionality of a particular theological reality.[93]

To illustrate Bonaventure's hybrid exegesis converging the texts of Scripture and experience, I cite an example of my own. A particular Christ-statement, 'I am the *way*…' (John 14:6) calls to mind certain correlative passages: 'I am the *door*. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved… and shall find pastures.' (John 10:9); 'Enter ye in at the narrow *gate*: for wide is the *gate*, and broad is the *way* that leadeth to destruction…' (Matthew 7:13). Each image differently nuances the matter at hand. While the general sense of John 14:6 is that Jesus is the only way to salvation, the evocation of Jesus as 'door' implies that Jesus is the entryway to 'pastures' in John 10:9. Further, the predicate 'narrow' implies that this way is more difficult than any other. This inter-resonance of senses conveys inter-dimensionality of the subject matter by statement, promise and admonition – in a manner intended to exercise the full range of human dispositions (encompassing Scripture's 'breadth'). The figuration of Christ as 'gate' stands in between the Old Testament figuration of the 'key of the house of David' (Isaiah 22:22) and the Apocalyptic figure of Christ as an opener of doors 'which no man can shut' (Apocalypse 3:8); this development of Christology through the typological mediation of the 'gate' figure covers Scripture's 'length'. The biblical sign of Christ as 'gate' has a multi-level signification: text – world – God (encompassing Scripture's 'height'). Lastly, through the medium of the biblical text, various features of the natural experience of 'gate' – its point of access to another place, exclusivity of access, and restricted aperture – are made to signify the promise, exclusivity and challenge of Christ's call on the spiritual level for the purpose of being enticed, enlightened and chastened unto Christ-likeness (covering Scripture's 'depth'). Thus, Bonaventure's fourfold sense is the unifying ground of a holistic exegesis encompassing 'breadth', 'length', 'height' and 'depth'.

Bonaventure's hybrid approach between experience and speculation can be explained in another way. The revelation incarnate in Scripture is a Christological unity of thought, life and vision. The divine words and deeds are manifestative; both the biblical figures, and the actions signified by these figures, have meanings.[94] The meanings signified by the divine words occur

[93] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, s.4, n.1-5, 13-16; s.6, n.1-2, 19-20.
[94] Levri, 'The Prologue to the *Breviloquium*,' 89.

on the level of thought; and the meanings signified by the divine actions occur on the level of praxis. When a reader apprehends these meanings on corresponding levels of praxis and thought, these revelations manifest in the reader an abundance of overflowing happiness. Scripture can lead the reader to God, through the affective integration of action and knowledge converging in the vision of God. To reiterate an example from Bonaventure's earlier Johannine commentary, there is a transference of meaning as well as a transference of reality between the 'wind' (*spiritus…spirat*) figured in John 3:7-8 and the experience of Holy Spirit's visitation. The 'wind' of the Holy Spirit is present to the reader's experience and understanding. This transference of both reality and meaning from carnal sign to spiritual object is reminiscent of Francis as exemplar. According to Bonaventure's style of Franciscan exegesis, just as Christ's *stigmata* were supernaturally imprinted upon Francis' hands, so things of this world bear traces of the Godhead. One can experience God mystically through the mediation of the bodily sign and build a concept of the divine nature upon this descriptive foundation.

VI. Summary

Between 1254 to 1257, Bonaventure had to engage in the Franciscan Order's internal dispute with Gerard of Borgo San Donnino and other radical Joachite *zelanti* and the external dispute with secular critic William of Saint Amour. These encounters would catalyse Bonaventure's engagement of Joachite doctrines, as seen in his *De Perfectione evangelica* delivered in 1255. This disputation embedded a balanced vision of the Order as a historical phenomenon rooted in Church tradition but also oriented to the eschatological future. This was his attempt to unify the conservative and radical standpoints within the Order. It was also his attempt to bridge Gerard's reformist vision at one extreme, and William's conservative standpoint at the other. Gerard's notion of a forward-driving growth through transpositional levels precluded any sense of a return to an origin. Conversely, William's vision of the continuity of material tradition justified the fear of radical change among the ecclesiastical authorities. To mediate between both models of historical development, Bonaventure sketched a circular hermeneutic of history rooted in its divine origin, yet open to the future of God. This movement of *egressus-regressus* also structured the topical sequence of the *Breviloquium*, completed just after Bonaventure became Minister General of the Friars Minor in 1257. Using a hybrid exegesis, this concise theological handbook synthesised Franciscan mystical experience within the doctrinal structures of the Alexandrine tradition. As newly elected leader, Bonaventure progressed beyond the scholastic framework of the *disputatio* to reinterpret the concept of Franciscan

exegesis in a way that addressed the spiritual and practical needs of his confreres. Over the next eleven years of his generalate, Bonaventure would continue to transform the scholastic paradigm by operationalising his own sapiential synthesis in his mystical treatises and other texts.

Chapter 4: Re-interpreter of Franciscan Tradition (1257-1268)

The elevation of Bonaventure as the Minister General of the Friars Minor in 1257 thrust him beyond the regulated world of the Franciscan school into the polarised environment of the Order. Besides ameliorating pressures from the Holy See to conform the Order to its agenda, he also had to address an intensifying internal conflict. The Order vacillated between two extreme interpretations of the *vita* – that of the clerically trained brothers and that of the *zelanti*, especially those radically inspired by Joachitism. As a means to unify the fractious Order, Bonaventure was to universalise the application of his *via media* as a clerically endorsed and formalised alternative to Francis' exegetical simplicity practised by the *zelanti*. Having written primarily for other scholastics, Bonaventure now wrote to include those friars less taken by the abstractions of speculative theology and more interested, by necessity, with the experience of faith. His *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) and *De Triplici via* (1259) set out a program of hermeneutical ascent inspired by Francis' mystical experience and the threefold way of spiritual growth of Pseudo-Dionysius. Bonaventure's mystical-performative approach was harnessed in his *Sermones dominicales* (c.1267-1268). These were intended as meditative and homiletic models for his confreres' religious formation. The *Legenda maior* (1261), Bonaventure's hagiography of Francis, drew on Franciscan Joachite symbolism and elevated Francis as a mystical-biblical exemplar to inculcate a more uniform pattern of the Franciscan life.

I argue that from 1257 onwards, Bonaventure augmented textual understanding with a focus on mystical enactment. His early thematisation of God as theological subject prefigured 'performative' readings that presumed a more personal assimilation to the subject during this period. On the formal level, Bonaventure moved beyond the objective understanding of *sapientia* to observing how *sapientia* might be actualised in the exegete. On the material level, his focus shifted beyond Christ in terms of *sapientia* as a speculative framework to Christ as personalised, concretised subject of mystical encounter. Bonaventure's shift in emphasis, rather than in structure, rendered his hermeneutics operational for Christian life.

I. Scholarly perspectives

Scholars have tended to consider the crisis over Franciscan self-understanding in either historiographical or hermeneutical terms. The historiographical approach, classically modelled by Paul Sabatier, cites the sources as an inferential basis for the causality of socio-political action within and outside the Order. According to Sabatier, Bonaventure, as Minister General, continued the clerical imperative of institutionalising the Order in disregard of Francis' primitive ideal. The principal motivation of Bonaventure and other clerically trained friars was for power and prestige, achieved under the aegis of the Church's pastoral reform mission. Sabatier's thesis, developed by historians such as Raphael Huber and Duncan Nimmo, has now lost some credence.[1] The hermeneutical approach, exemplified by scholars such as Étienne Gilson and Ewert Cousins, reads the sources of Franciscan heritage largely in abstraction from the historical conditions that shaped them. The writings of noteworthy Franciscans, such as Bonaventure, tend to be understood as a monolithic whole and with less of an interpretive specificity arising from the contextual situation.[2] David Burr and Neslihan Şenocak have offered a more nuanced approach, in which the hermeneutics of the Franciscan *vita* can be situated as a concrete response to the historical situation. The Order's crisis over identity was not just politically driven by a factional contest of wills and political expediency, but partly drew on the ambivalences already present at the root of Franciscan heritage – especially in Francis' 1223 Rule and 1226 *Testamentum*.[3]

In line with the contextual studies of Burr and Şenocak, I contend that studying Bonaventure's approach to legislation and learning and the Order's eschatological and ecclesiological function will offer a richer depiction of his hermeneutical strategy in reconciling the Order. The spiritual, relational mode of Francis' life was not reducible to any one human formality, but with room for many interpretations about how this mode might best be instituted temporally in the Order. This conflict of interpretations among Franciscan posterity was foundational to the

[1] Paul M. Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. L.S. Houghton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 236-51; Raphael M. Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order from the Birth of St. Francis to the Division of the Order 1182-1517* (Milwaukee: Nowiny Publishing Apostolate, 1944); Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order*, vol. 33, Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina (Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1995).

[2] Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1940); Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites: The Theology of Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978).

[3] David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (Pennyslvania: Pennyslvania State University Press, 2001); Neslihan Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012).

Franciscan identity crisis. Bonaventure's mediatory strategy involved his own re-interpretation of the Franciscan tradition in continuity with Francis' own ambivalent vision. Bonaventure accorded the Franciscan purism of the *zelanti* and the logical rigour of the clerically trained friars a relative status as expressions or temporal institutions of the true Franciscan ideal – namely the total, self-transcending worship of Christ through his Gospel.

II. Bonaventure's response to the Franciscan identity crisis

The Franciscan heritage which Bonaventure was encountering during this period was fraught, complex and wide-ranging. By about 1217, the small itinerant group under Francis had grown to several fraternities in different countries.[4] The General Chapter of Assisi thereby instituted the organisation of this religious movement into a formal Order of provinces.[5] In 1223, in his bull *Solet annuere*, Pope Honorius III formally approved Francis' *Regula bullata* which became the Order's official Rule.[6] With Francis' death in 1226, the friars turned to the *Regula bullata* to guide their vocation and remain true to his vision.[7] However, it was unrealistic to actualise this vision in its purity given the increasing organisational and educational needs of the rapidly expanding Order. Before his passing, Francis had reaffirmed in his *Testamentum* the evangelical ideals of the 1223 Rule: 'living in obedience, without anything of one's own (*sine proprio*), and in chastity.'[8] Unfortunately, the Seraphic Founder had also mandated that this Rule be obeyed in its entirety, *sine glossa* – without adding any new interpretation or gloss. The Order's core issue was how to interpret and practise Francis' vision of absolute poverty without compromising its essence.[9] To settle the dispute among the friars, the 1230 Franciscan General Chapter approached Pope Gregory IX. Previously as Francis' advisor and Cardinal Protector of the Order, he had helped Francis draft the 1223 Rule. By now, Gregory would

[4] See Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, Monastic Orders, (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 22-25.
[5] Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 198, 204, 52.
[6] Honorius III, '*Solet annuere*,' ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, 99-106.
[7] Francis left behind four major documents pertaining to the governance of the Order: The Proto-Rule was approved *viva voce* by Pope Innocent III c.1209/1210. The *Regula bullata* was confirmed by Pope Honorius III in his bull, *Solet annuere*, in 1223. This 1223 Rule became the official Rule of the Order; it was a final redaction of the 1221 *Regula non bullata*, also known as the *Regula prima*. For the historical context of these documents of Francis, see Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order from the Birth of St. Francis to the Division of the Order 1182-1517*, 73-103; David Flood and Thaddée Matura, *The Birth of a Movement: A study of the First Rule of St Francis*, trans. Paul LaChance and Paul Schwartz (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), 3-56.
[8] Francis of Assisi, 'The Testament (1247-1253),' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, n.35-39, 127; Francis of Assisi, 'The Later Rule (1223),' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, ch.1, n.1, 100.
[9] Francis of Assisi, 'The Later Rule (1223),' vol.1, ch.4, n.1, 100-02.

have recognised the impracticality of literal obedience of the Rule. His *Quo elongati* thus ruled that Francis' *Testamentum* was not legally binding since it had never been subjected to the Order's and papal approval. Making legal provisions for learning and institutionalisation, Gregory reinterpreted the *sine proprio* directive to decree that each province was allowed properties notably convents, *studia* (study houses) and books – provided they were legally owned by their benefactors and representatives.[10] While this bull was certainly more to the advantage of the clerically trained, the *zelanti* saw this as a corruption of their founding father's way of evangelical poverty.

The internal crisis deepened in 1240 when Englishman Haymo of Faversham (died 1244) became Minister General – the first non-Italian and scholastic to be elected.[11] A year later, Haymo called upon his fellow scholastics Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, Eudes Rigaud and Robert of Bascia (died c.1280) to comment on the 1223 Rule in answer to *dubia* requested from each province. Their *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super regulam fratrum minorum* glossed the 1223 Rule in accordance with a traditional form of religious rule.[12] At the 1242 Bologna General Chapter, the *Expositio* was ratified by Gregory IX and accepted by his ally Haymo. Haymo introduced more legislations and adapted the 1223 Rule in alignment with the papal agenda. The papacy recognised that the preaching, teaching and pastoral ministry of the Franciscans, kept in hand under sound clerical leadership, could play a powerful role in the evangelical revival of the Church.[13] To the further dismay of the *zelanti*, Haymo made

[10] John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 89-91; Moorman, *The Sources for the Life of St Francis of Assisi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1940), 84-85. Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*, 3-4, 14-15; Gregory IX, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. J.H. Sbaralea, 3 vols., Nova Series, (Florence: Quaracchi, 1759), 68-70; Gregory IX, '*Quo elongati*,' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, 570-75; For an excellent overview of the thirteenth-century mendicant uses of *sine proprio*, see Constant J. Mews, 'Apostolic Ideals in the Mendicant Transformation of the Thirteenth Century: from *sine proprio* to Holy Poverty,' in *Poverty and Devotion in Mendicant Cultures 1200-1450*, ed. Constant J. Mews and Anna Welch (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 13-31.

[11] Jordan of Giano, 'The Chronicle of Brother Jordan of Giano,' in *13th Century Chronicles,* trans. Placid Hermann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961), 68-69; Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam* vol. 40, ed. Joseph Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, and John Robert Kane, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986), 157.

[12] *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super regulam fratrum minorum (1241-1242): accedit eiusdem regulae textus cum fontibus et locis parallelis*, ed. Livarius Oliger (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura 1950), 55-86, 229-58; quoted in *Early Commentaries on the Rule of the Friars Minor: The 1242 Commentary, Hugh of Digne, David of Augsburg, John of Wales*, vol. I, ed. David Flood (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2014), 1-30; Also see Lawrence C. Landini, *The Causes of Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor: 1209-1260 in the Light of Early Franciscan Sources* (Chicago: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1968), 77-80.

[13] Flood and Matura, *The Birth of a Movement: A study of the First Rule of St Francis*, 6-8; Manselli infers: The more the new orders, especially the Franciscans, were seen as invaluable collaborators [of the clergy], the greater the pressure upon them to become clerics…The clericalization of the Friars Minor was an attempt [by the papacy]…to smooth over future difficulties with bishops and clerics. However, it was also an attempt to

legislative provision for a more stable administrative structure with clericalisation as an inevitable corollary.

Tensions within the Order worsened upon Haymo's death in 1244. His successor Crescentius of Iesi (died c.1263) continued his suppression of certain zealots that had begun during his previous tenure as Provincial Minister of the March of Ancona. Crescentius had confronted these Franciscans whom he called *'zelanti'* who had the audacity 'to claim the guidance of the Holy Spirit as an excuse for their insubordination…to the official authority in the Order'.[14] As Minister General, Crescentius must have recognised the need to reconcile the divided Order. He thereby sought thecontributions of all friars, including the *zelanti* and those who were spiritually inclined such as Francis' surviving first companions. Crescentius' 1244 directive decreed that all remaining undocumented 'life, miracles, and prodigies of blessed Francis' especially from surviving firsthand witnesses be written down so that they could be preserved for posterity.[15] In addition, Crescentius induced Pope Innocent IV to introduce further relaxations to the 1223 Rule as allowed by his predecessor's *Quo elongati*. In 1245, Innocent IV issued the *Ordinem vestrum* that gave the friars greater freedom in the pursuit of learning and the use of books, money and other commodities. More significantly, this bull furnished the Minister General with 'the power to expel friars from the Order.'[16] Crescentius' measures to reduce tensions in the Order, especially to restrain those *zelanti* and their sympathisers, were not effective.[17] Notably, the favours arising from *Quo elongati* had led to greater abuses and neglect of the ethos of Franciscan poverty among certain friars. John of Parma, becoming Crescentius' successor in 1247, initiated some legislation with the help of his *socius* Hugh of Digne at the 1254 General Chapter of Metz. The efforts of John and Hugh to suspend the decrees of Innocent IV and forbid their use in ways contrary to *Quo elongati* were met with

counterbalance the order against the bishops and clerics, as well as against any other power which might arise against the pope'. Raoul Manselli, 'St. Bonaventure and the Clericalization of the Friars Minor,' *Greyfriars Review* 4, no. 2 (1990): 83-98, esp. 88.

[14] Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 248; Salimbene de Adam. *The Chronicle*, 166; Jordan of Giano, 'The Chronicle of Brother Jordan of Giano,' 69; Thomas of Eccleston, 'Thomas of Eccleston: The Coming of the Friars Minor to England,' in *13th Century Chronicles,* trans. Placid Hermann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961),158-59; Thomas of Eccleston, *The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston: 'De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam'*, trans. Father Cuthbert (Edinburgh/London: Sands and Co., 1909), 89.

[15] Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, trans. Noel Muscat (Malta: Tau Franciscan Communications, 2013), 262.

[16] Innocent IV, '*Ordinem vestrum*,' ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.2, 774-79.

[17] Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 249-54; C. Colt Anderson, *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 2002), 7-8; Also see Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis*, 14-26.

little success, until Bonaventure took over the generalate three years later.[18] Even at the 1260 General Chapter of Narbonne, his first of regular triennial general chapters attended as Minister General, Bonaventure had already understood legislation to be instrumental to the life of poverty rather than being extrinsic to it.[19]

(a) Bonaventure's inculcation of legislation and learning

In April 1257, Bonaventure as Minister General issued his inaugural administrative writing to the entire Order. His *First Encylical Letter* combined devotion to Francis' 1223 Rule as well as traditional religious rule. On the one hand, Bonaventure addressed the moral-legal foundation of the Franciscan *vita* by denouncing several abuses, among them: misuse of money, pandering to 'bodily comforts', 'overly persistent begging', 'construction of buildings on a lavish and extravagant scale', and 'an increase in those familiarities with women forbidden by our Rule'. On the other hand, Bonaventure pointed out that such abuses manifested the friars' lack of deeper spiritual focus. He exhorted them to a deeper life of 'prayer and devotion'.[20] The 1260 Narbonne Chapter gave new legislative expression to his dialectical 'legal-spiritual' approach to the Franciscan *vita*. Eradicating those statutes open to abuse especially those decreed by *Ordinem vestrum*, and synthesising and amending all previous constitutions, Bonaventure helped to produce the *Constitutions of Narbonne*.[21] This edition was officially approved by the 1260 general chapter which also decreed that all earlier versions be destroyed, as was the Order's standard procedure. Every convent would be responsible for ensuring that its friars be familiarised with the two-hundred-and-fifty rules through compulsory monthly communal reading, especially to prevent any wrong behaviour committed out of

[18] Jordan of Giano, 'The Chronicle of Brother Jordan of Giano,' in *13th Century Chronicles,* trans. Placid Hermann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961), 71; Thomas of Eccleston, 'Thomas of Eccleston: The Coming of the Friars Minor to England,' 160; Thomas of Eccleston, *The Chronicle*, 91; Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 258-64.

[19] Bonaventure, 'Constitutions of Narbonne (1260),' in *St. Bonaventure's Writings concerning the Franciscan Order*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), r.3, 82-88; Bonaventure, 'Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Narbonne (1260),' in *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), n.13, 140; David Burr and David Flood, 'Peter Olivi: On Poverty and Revenue,' *Franciscan Studies* 40 (1980): 19-20.

[20] Bonaventure, 'First Encyclical Letter (1257),' 57-62 (esp. fn.2).

[21] The Narbonne Constitutions have twelve rubrics addressing 'entering the Order, the quality of dress, the observance of poverty, religious practices in our houses, the manner of going about in the world, the work of the brothers, the correction of delinquents, the visitation of the provinces, the election of the ministers, the provincial chapter, the general chapter, and the suffrages for the dead.' Bonaventure, 'Constitutions of Narbonne (1260),' 71-135.

ignorance. As Salimbene testified, Bonaventure thus helped to give 'form and order to the constitutions of the Order' amid its divisive situation regarding the *vita*.[22]

Bonaventure, besides providing a legislative framework for the friars' religious formation, also prioritised formal education as an essential pillar of the Franciscan *vita*.[23] Earlier in about 1224, Haymo, as lector, had established the first Franciscan *studium* at Paris. This eventually led to every province having its own *studium* by 1233. These *studia* offered the friars training in theology and preaching.[24] Under Haymo's intellectual leadership, the Franciscan school at Paris thrived so rapidly that it was officially recognised by the university around 1227 to 1228. Although administered by the Franciscan Minister Provincial, it was subject to university regulations.[25] Despite his short four-year generalate, Haymo thus inaugurated a new Franciscan identity marked not only by priesthood but also university education.[26] Neslihan Şenocak attests that his 'Franciscanism was that of respectable, well-educated priests worshipping God in perfect liturgical harmony, embracing a life of penitence in poverty.'[27] Bonaventure continued Haymo's legacy of learning and clericalisation. Building upon Haymo's *Pre-Narbonne Constitutions* of 1242, Bonaventure stipulated in the 1260 *Narbonne Constitutions* that 'no one may be received into our Order unless he is the kind of cleric who has received competent instruction in logic and grammar, or unless he is the sort of cleric or layman whose

[22] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 150-51; Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 210-85, esp. 274-79.
[23] Lothar Hardick, *He Came to You So that You Might Come to Him: The Life and Teaching of St. Anthony of Padua*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 53-57.
[24] These *studia provincialia* lacked a formal curriculum but relied on their lectors in providing some form of instruction. This was to equip their conferes for the ministry of preaching, as well as prepare those gifted ones chosen to pursue the lectorate or university degree. Michael Bihl, '*Statuta Generalia Ordinis edita in Capitulis Generalibus Celebratis Narbonnae an. 1260, Assisi an. 1279 atque Parisiis an. 1292. Editio critica et synoptica*,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 34 (1941): 16; George Marcil, 'The Franciscan School through the Centuries,' in *The History of the Franciscan Order*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 312-13.
[25] John C. Murphy, 'The Early Franciscan Studium at the University of Paris,' in *Studium Generale: Studies Offered to Astrik L. Gabriel*, ed. L.S. Domonkos and R.J. Schneider, Texts and Studies in the History of Mediaeval Education (Notre Dame: The Mediaeval Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1967), 159-204.
[26] For a detailed treatment of the origins of the Franciscan educational network, see John Moorman, *Medieval Franciscan Houses* (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1983); Neslihan Şenocak, 'The Franciscan Studium Generale: A New Interpretation,' in *Philosophy and Theology in the Studia of the Religious Orders and at Papal and Royal Courts*, ed. Kent Emery Jr., William J. Courtenay, and Stephen M. Metzger (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), 221-36.
[27] Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310*, 68-75, 143; For the life and works of Haymo, see Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure*, 195-209; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Haymo de Faversham († 1243/44, Anagni)'; Paul M. Sabatier, 'Examen de la vie de frère Elie,' *Opuscules de critique historique* 1 (1903): 127-311.

entrance would bring renown to the Order...'[28] According to Salimbene, the *zelanti* and other lay brothers were upset with these new rulings; since they reduced their influence and numbers.[29] In response, they criticised their clerical antagonists as being too possessive of worldly honours and power, and for their enjoyment of convents and book learning. Bonaventure's major concern as leader was to unify the Order through a *via media.* He did this by combining legislation and learning with Francis' rule of poverty.[30]

Bonaventure's simultaneous affirmation and development of Francis' primitive rule apparently revealed a certain ambivalence in his vision of the founder's ideal. Prior to his election to the generalate, as *magister* at the Franciscan school*,* Bonaventure was already coming up with his own justification for the place of learning in the Order. In his *A Letter in Response to Three Questions of an Unknown Master* (1254-1255), Bonaventure stressed that studies are not antithetical to Francis' own spirit and intentions: 'I maintain that the Rule does not forbid study to the literate, but to lay brothers and to those who are uneducated…St. Francis…though he was not very well educated as a youth, he later advanced in learning in the Order, not only by praying but also by reading. And that you might appreciate how much the study of Holy Scripture delighted him….'[31] Francis' qualified advocacy of learning drew Bonaventure and other Franciscans to a tension in Francis' vision – a tension that required interpretation. As early as 1223, Francis had sent Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) to formalise a study program in Bologna, Italy. Francis' directive was to 'teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you 'do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion' during study of this kind.'[32] Three years later, just before his death, Francis expressed in his *Testamentum* a veneration for God's written words and 'all theologians and those who minister

[28] For the 1242 Pre-Narbonne version of this law, see Cesare Cenci, 'De Fratrum Minorum constitutionibus praenarbonensibus,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 83 (1990): n.30, 75; quoted in Bonaventure, 'Constitutions of Narbonne (1260),' r.1, n.3, 76; Also see Bonaventure, 'First Encyclical Letter (1257),' n.4, 61.
[29] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 83.
[30] According to Moorman, the clericalising movement was likely already underway during Francis' lifetime, but without his approval. In 1220, Francis relinquished his administrative duties to Vicar General Elias of Cortona and Cardinal Protector of the Order Ugolino di Conti (later Pope Gregory IX) and brother Peter Caetani. These advisors had likely been involved in the task of revising the 1221 Rule to prepare the 1223 Rule. Without Francis' knowledge, they allegedly sought to make provision for the institutionalisation of the Order according to the flourishing Dominican model. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517*, 50; Also see Michael Blastic, 'Minorite Life in the Regula Bullata: A Comparison with the Regula non Bullata,' in *The Rule of the Friars Minor, 1209-2009*, ed. Michael Cusato (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), 99-120.
[31] Bonaventure, 'A Letter in Response to Three Questions of an Unknown Master (1254-55) ' 39-56, esp. 51.
[32] Francis of Assisi, 'A Letter to Brother Anthony of Padua (after 1223),' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, 107; Marcil, 'The Franciscan School through the Centuries,' 312; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c.1210-1517)*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 7-9, 258-79.

[them]…to us.'[33] Since he would have perceived Francis to endorse learning, Bonaventure made provision for it as a wholly legitimate and instrumental expression of the Franciscan vocation. Nonetheless, Bonaventure's policies would transform the Franciscan *vita* in a way that jarred with the primitive example of the *Poverello* as the 'Poor Man of Assisi' – an itinerant friar serving in poverty and the love of Christ without any need for formal education.[34]

It was generally acknowledged that the Seraphic Founder was the perfect model of the Franciscan vocation, who was not simply to be venerated but also to be followed. However, the friars differed in their views of how to actualise this calling. The *zelanti* had a rigorous vision of Francis as a literal exemplar for Gospel living. Conversely, the clerical elites were more pragmatic in their estimation of Francis; he was to be revered as an exceptional individual whose life paved the way for the Order's ministry and privileges. Bonaventure sought to find common ground behind both differing ideals that continued to complicate the Order's approach to the *vita*. His reconciliatory hermeneutics of the Franciscan *vita* was manifest in his moderate stance toward Joachitism within the Order.

(b) Bonaventure's moderating position on Joachitism

As leader of the Friars Minor, Bonaventure had to counter the prevailing divisive Joachite influence. He had to act firmly against John of Parma and Gerard of Borgo San Donnino for their refusal to renounce Joachite doctrines. In around 1261, John and Gerard were summoned to the Italian town of Città della Pieve for an investigation into their Joachite affiliations. Bonaventure chaired the investigation in the presence of John Gaetano Orsini, Cardinal Protector of the Order.[35] John, due to the intervention of his friend Cardinal Ottoboni (later

[33] 'Wherever I find our Lord's most holy names and written words in unbecoming places, I want to gather them up and I beg that they be gathered up and placed in a becoming place. And we must honor all theologians and those who minister the most holy divine words and respect them as those who minister to us spirit and life.' Francis of Assisi, 'The Testament (1247-1253),' vol.1, v.12-13, 125.

[34] André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, trans. Michael F. Cusato (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2013); According to Schumacher, Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) was written 'to affirm the place of studies in achieving Franciscan ends...the legitimacy of learning in relation to the Franciscan ideal of absolute poverty.' Schumacher, 'Bonaventure's Journey of the Mind into God: A Traditional Augustinian Ascent,' 201-29.

[35] Bughetti, in a 1910 article, suggested this investigation to be at or after 1261; since Orsini succeeded Pope Alexander IV as protector at the end of 1261 at the earliest. P. Benvenuto Bughetti, '*Bibliographia*,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 3, no. 3 (1910): 346-47; Giuseppe Abate, 'Per la storia e la cronologia di S. Bonaventura (c. 1216-1274),' *Miscellanea Francescana* 50 (1950): 114-15; quoted in Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 173.

Pope Hadrian V), was placed under obedience in the Italian hermitage at Greccio where he died in 1289. Gerard was excommunicated and detained in Paris until his death in 1274.[36]

Bonaventure's presence at the investigation implicated him as being anti-Joachite, although he was not actively involved in the official condemnation of both Joachite Franciscans. However, a case may be made for his moderate Joachite position. As Sylvain Piron observes, 'Bonaventure would represent a central and balanced attitude regarding Franciscan poverty…supposedly [making] a more detached use of Joachim of Fiore's works.'[37] Bonaventure's hermeneutical use of certain Joachite symbolism and themes in transforming the vision of the Franciscan *vita* and its eschatological justification is evident in his later work such as the *Legenda maior*, his hagiography of Francis finished in 1261. Bonaventure depicted Francis as the Apocalyptic Angel leading the Order and Church into a new historical age of evangelical renewal.[38] Bonaventure's public reiteration of the apocalyptic notion of Francis in the *Collationes de septem donis* delivered in the Grand Convent of the Cordeliers in 1268 was attested by Peter of John Olivi (c.1248-1298).[39] Bonaventure's Joachite-inspired ideas so influenced the younger friar that he became a foremost Franciscan exegete of Joachim's work.[40] Bonaventure's assimilation of certain Joachite doctrines within a reformed framework of Franciscan historical self-understanding was his way of resolving the Order's prevailing vocational tensions between the clerics and *zelanti*.[41]

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[36] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 229-30, 310, 558; Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, 123-26; Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, 350, 698-699; Also see John Thomas Marrone, 'The Ecclesiology of Parisian Secular Masters, 1250-1320' (PhD Cornell University, 1973), 56-57.

[37] Sylvain Piron, 'Olivi and Bonaventure: Paradoxes of Faithfulness,' *Franciscan Studies* 74 (2016): 1.

[38] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' Part 1, prologue, n.1, 45; ch.4, n.11, 77; ch.13, n.10, 156; Bonaventure, *Defense of the Mendicants*, trans. José de Vinck and Robert J. Karris, vol. 15, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), ch.3, n.10, 77.

[39] Peter of John Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalipsim*, ed. Warren Lewis (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2015), 308; David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 63-64

[40] Olivi's spiritual writings were formative for the 'spiritual' movement within the Order, but they were declared heretical by Pope Boniface VIII two years after his death. Nonetheless, Olivi's *magnum opus,* the *Lectura super Apocalypsim* (1297) remains to this day 'a powerful and influential synthesis of Franciscanism and Joachitism'. Peter of John Olivi, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, trans. Warren Lewis (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 229-30; E. Randolph Daniel, 'Medieval Apocalypticism, Millenialism and Violence,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. Special Issue on Millenial Violence: Past, Present and Future (2002): xiii, 287; David Burr, 'Franciscan Exegesis and Francis as Apocalyptic Figure,' in *Monks, Nuns and Friars in Medieval Society*, ed. Edward B. King, Jacqueline T. Schaefer, and William B. Wadley (Sewanee: University of the South Press, 1989), 59-62; Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order*, 169-90; For a comparison of the historical visions of Joachim, Bonaventure and Olivi, see the chart in Warren Lewis, 'Introduction,' in *Peter of John Olivi: Commentary on the Apocalypse* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), xviii-xxi; Kevin L. Hughes, 'Eschatological Union: The Mystical Dimension of History in Joachim of Fiore, Bonaventure, and Peter Olivi,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 72, no. 1 (2002): 105-43.

[41] For the Bonaventure-Joachite connexion, see E. Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975).

Bonaventure recognised that these vocational differences were not simply historic but drew in large measure from a bifurcation in scriptural method. While the z*elanti* chose to rely on the authority of Francis' Rule *sine glossa*, Bonaventure and the clerically trained elite had facility in a sophisticated array of logical and semantic tools with which to understand the scriptures. This exegetical sophistication was evident in his biblical commentaries during his time as *magister* (1254-1257) which translated theological discourse in metaphysics and text, leading to a certain interpretive fixity. Scholastic reading, focused on the explication of experience *qua* text, conformed to the order of that perceived and not to the Eternal Art. The eclipse of mediator (Christ) by the medium (the text) as ground of hermeneutical selfhood was a cause for alarm among some *zelanti*. While the clerical brothers were satisfied with doctrinal analysis of Scripture for the purposes of giving a more definite structure to the Franciscan life, the *zelanti* yearned for the simplicity of Francis' literal observance of the Word without recourse to an institutional intermediary. Such a hermeneutics of encounter proved challenging for the friars in their striving to emulate the 'perfect' devotion exemplified by their founding father. On the one hand, the clerical brothers feared that the hyper-spiritual beliefs and practices of the *zelanti* would create a space for the diffusion of tradition. On the other hand, the *zelanti* feared that the conservatives' authoritative determination of tradition outside the authority of Holy Spirit would de-animate theology.

As Minister General, Bonaventure's efforts to resolve this dilemma faced by the Order involved writing for a larger audience beyond the scholastic world, including those less invested in the abstractions of speculative theology and more invested in the experience of faith. In his writings, he applied a dialectical process of reasoning in which contradictory elements were either eliminated or qualified in the service of a coherent synthesis. The holistic reality of God meant that the Holy Spirit was present in the institutional life of believers and organisations. Conversely, although dead when observed perfunctorily, the literal sense could habitually ground the contemplative life when infused spiritually. Bonaventure acknowledged with the *zelanti* that Francis' indwelling of the Spirit was a necessary precondition for living the Gospel; he also agreed with his clerical brothers that the Spirit ought to be infused with the letter as its orientational lodestar. Thereby, Bonaventure fostered a workable unity of Spirit and letter on which basis the Order's unity would be achievable. Bonaventure uplifted the Seraphic Founder as the model and regulative principle of his performative-mystical approach to Christ or Scripture, as seen in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*The Soul's Journey into God*).

III. The *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* and mysticism of the Cross

The *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* was inspired by Bonaventure's re-living of Francis' visionary epiphany on Mount La Verna in Italy in 1224:

> It happened that about the time of the *thirty-third anniversary* of the Saint's death, under divine impulse, I withdrew to Mount La Verna, seeking a place of quiet and desiring to find there peace of spirit. While I was there reflecting on various ways by which the soul ascends into God, there came to mind, among other things, the miracle which had occurred to blessed Francis in this very place: the vision of a winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified. While reflecting on this, I saw at once that this vision represented our father's rapture in contemplation and the road by which this rapture is reached.[42] (Italics mine)

The 'thirty-third anniversary' of Francis' death in October 1226 corresponded to September or October 1259, about two-and-a-half years after Bonaventure's election to the generalate. Scholarly consensus is that Bonaventure completed the *Itinerarium* in 1259, after his autumnal pilgrimage to the same mountain.[43]

As the seventh Minister General, Bonaventure wrote this first major mystical text as a practical manual for his confreres. Conducting scriptural exegesis in the light of experience, he initiated them into the total desire and pursuit of Christ as the essence of Francis' life. Bonaventure modelled a living relationship with God as a basis for knowledge and action. Bonaventure's choice of words in its title reflected his emphasis on mystical enactment. It was a spiritual and interiorising journey of 'the mind (*mens*), which is the soul as far as it has the capacity for God.'[44] The Latin '*mens*' (nominative of '*mentis*') is etymologically related to the English word 'mind' which implies cognition. For Bonaventure and other medieval spiritual authors, '*mens*'

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[42]Bonaventure*, Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Opera omnia*, 5:295:'*...contigit ut nutu divino circa Beati ipsius transitum, anno trigesimo tertio ad montem Alvernae tanquam ad locum quietum amore quaerendi pacem spiritus declinarem, ibique existens, dum mente tractarem aliquas mentales ascensiones in Deum, inter alia occurrit illud miraculum, quod in praedicto loco contigit ipsi beato Francisco, de visione scilicet Seraph alati ad instar Crucifixi. In cuius consideratione statim visum est mihi, quod visio illa praetenderet ipsius patris suspensionem in contemplando et viam, per quam pervenitur ad eam.*' Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, prologue, n.2, 54.

[43] Ewert Cousins, 'Introduction,' in *The Soul's Journey into God*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), 18-19; Lydia Ducolomb, 'St. Bonaventure's Reputation as Reflected in the Dissemination of his Works,' in *A Pilgrimage through the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Josef Raischl Andre Cirino (Canterbury: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2008), 276, 287.

[44] Marianne Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 33.

incorporated the Augustinian notion of the 'soul as image of God' – a totality of the human being in memory, understanding and will. Therefore, the more comprehensive 'soul' more accurately rendered, in some contexts, Bonaventure's globalising notion of Christ than 'mind'. By using '*in Deum*' ('into God'), rather than '*ad Deum*' ('to God'), Bonaventure demonstrated an all-encompassing nature of reading in God. It was a holistic way that transformed and subsumed the Augustinian intellectualism of Alexander of Hales and other scholastic antecedents.[45] Bonaventure sourced his '*via contemplativa'* in Francis' visionary encounter when the latter received the divine gift of the *stigmata* atop the same mountain.[46]

Bonaventure's method of mystical enactment in the *Itinerarium* was the outcome of a process of intellectual ferment. This more performative process, superseding his abstractive process of reading Scripture in his *Commentary on* the *Sentences* (1253), was prefigured in his *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* (1254). Christ knew all things in two specific ways:

> Therefore, in its knowledge the soul of Christ is drawn toward the divine wisdom - taken in both senses -- but in different ways. In as far as [the divine wisdom] is the *creative exemplar*, the soul is drawn to it by *comprehensive knowledge*; for those things which are contained in and represented by the creative and disposing exemplar are finite. Therefore, they can be comprehended. But in as far as the *exemplar is expressive* and representative, the soul is drawn to it not by comprehension but by *ecstasy*, since in this exemplar an infinite number of things are represented. Therefore, these are incomprehensible for a finite substance.[47] (Italics mine)

Similarly, in the *Breviloquium* (1257):

> The first [way of knowing] was according to [Christ's] divine nature, by virtue of which he knew all things, whether actual or possible, finite and infinite, with

[45] Cousins, 'Introduction,' *The Soul's Journey*, 20-21, 61 (fn.7); See also Philotheus Boehner, 'Introduction, Notes and Commentary,' in *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Works of St.Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 143-53.
[46] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 186.
[47] Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, *Opera omnia,* 5:40: *'Anima igitur Christi utroque modo per cognitionem fertur in divinam sapientiam, sed differenter. In ipsam enim, secundum quod est exemplar factivum, fertur comprehendendo, quia illa quae in exemplari ut factivo et dispositivo continentur et repraesentantur finita sunt, ac per hoc et comprehensibilia. In exemplar vero, secundum quod est exemplar expressivum seu repraesentativum, fertur non comprehendendo, sed excedendo; quia, cum in ipso repraesententur infinita, incomprehensibilia sunt, scilicet a substantia finita.'* Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, q.7, resp., 187.

> an actual and *comprehensive knowledge*. The second was according to his glorified human nature, by virtue of which he knew all things actual and finite with an actual and *comprehensive knowledge*. However, the infinite he did not comprehend, except perhaps through an infused or *ecstatic knowledge*.[48] (Italics mine)

Both texts significantly distinguish between Christ's 'comprehensive knowledge' of God as 'creative exemplar', and Christ's 'ecstatic knowledge' of God as 'expressive exemplar'. Christ, as one with God the Father before the foundation of the world, knows all things in God in a comprehensive way; but Christ, as perfect expression of the Father incarnate in creation, reduces to a knowledge of God himself in an ecstatic way, that is, through direct awareness of God himself. In other words, Christ's full knowledge of reality is on account of his being fully God; it is a knowledge realised in and through encounter with Wisdom incarnate in creation on account of his being fully man. Christ embodies the polarity of expression and form. Two years later, in the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure moved beyond the notion of ecstatic awareness to its performance, beyond the conceptual confines of the letter and into the realm of holistic experience of God.[49] This conception of exegesis of experience, as sourced from a personal contact with God, catalysed a shift in Bonaventure's sapiential reading of Scripture.

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure distinguishes three modal dimensions within Francis' hermeneutical experience: material embodiment, interior realisation and ecstatic union in Christ. Bonaventure's threefold depiction arises from a dialogue of Francis' hermeneutic experience with his own scholastic synthesis. This was mediated through monastic *lectio divina* and Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism – especially the *triplex via* – through the Victorine Thomas Gallus (c.1200-1246). Gallus's faithful translation of Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism into scholastic terms facilitated the integration of Pseudo-Dionysius into the medieval *corpus*, influencing Parisian scholastics such as Bonaventure. Bonaventure's engagement with Gallus's

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[48] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, *Opera omnia,* 5:246: '*Primus est secundum divinam naturam; et hoc modo cognovit omnia actualia et possibilia, finita et infinita, cognitione actuali et comprehensiva. Secundus est per gloriam: et hoc modo cognovit omnia actualia et finita, cognitione actuali et comprehensiva; infinita vero non nisi forte cognitione habituali, vel excessiva.'* Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.4, ch.6, 150.

[49] According to Ratzinger, Bonaventure would have fostered, as early as 1254, an inchoative mystical disposition on account of his Franciscan worldview which was more inclined towards the *affectus* than *intellectus*. Bonaventure's *Commentary on John's Gospel* mentions a theology '*in caligine*' (in darkness) which approaches a 'sentire' (*experience*) instead of a 'cognoscere' (*inquiry*). Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 90; Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 11, ch.1, n.43, contrary 1, 91-92.

interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism tempered his own appropriation of scholastic sources such as Alexander's *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, the multi-authored *Summa fratris Alexandri* and pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*.

A key concept in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* is *synderesis*, first touched upon by Jerome of Stridon in his *Commentary on Ezekiel* to denote the 'spark of conscience' (*scintilla conscientiae*) or activator of recognition of the Good.[50] In his *Glossa*, Alexander systematically developed the notion of *synderesis* within a formal psychology of illumination. Alexander located *synderesis* as an innate habitual power of the soul that disposes the individual to choose the Good. Alexander had inserted his treatment of *synderesis* within the discussion of the five stages of knowing in the *De Spiritu et anima*. He ascribed *intelligentia* – intellectual contemplation of the divine substance – as the highest cognitive stage. However, Alexander did not really explain how *synderesis* fitted into the metaphysical schema of the soul outlined in the *De Spiritu et anima*.[51] In the *Summa fratris Alexandri,* John of La Rochelle incorporated material from his earlier *Summa de vitiis* to develop this notion of *synderesis.* In Book 1 of the Alexandrine *Summa*, John accounted for the relationship of *synderesis* to the mind within the confines of a broadly Avicennian theory of the psyche. In Book 3, John departed from this psychological position by locating *synderesis* in the will, rather than intellect.[52]

Bonaventure, in his *Commentary on the Sentences,* sees the formation of ethical principles as an implementation of the human being's affection for the Good. In line with the position of the Alexandrine *Summa*, *synderesis* operates to awaken the soul in seeking what the conscience dictates as good.[53] In the *Breviloquium*, on top of the five stages of knowing in the *De Spiritu*

[50] According to Jerome, 'Conscience is that which makes us...feel our sinfulness when we are overcome by evil desire or unbridled spirit...' Jerome adds his own note to the traditional allegorical reading of the theophany of the four creatures in Ezekiel 1:4-14 - human, lion, ox and eagle - in terms of the soul's fourfold power - reason, spirit, desire and *synderesis*. The final power, *synderesis*, by virtue of its role as the isthmus between the soul in its threefold function and God in his infinitude, is pictured as the eagle flying high above the other three. Scholarship has recently determined that the term *synderesis* is simply a latinised corruption of the Greek *syneidesis*. Timothy C. Potts, 'Commentary on Ezekiel 1.7,' in *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Timothy C. Potts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 19-80; Gustav Zamore, 'The Term *Synderesis* and its Transformations: A Conceptual History of *Synderesis*, ca. 1150-1450' (PhD University of Oxford, 2016), 40-56.

[51] Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951-1957); vol.2, d.40, q.2, 383; Also see Hubert Philipp Weber, 'Alexander of Hales's Theology in His Authentic Texts (*Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Various Disputed Questions),' 285-87.

[52] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.3, p.2, inq.2, q.2, 344-45

[53] Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.2., d.39, a.2, q.1-3, 945-51; Zamore, 'The Term *Synderesis* and its Transformations: A Conceptual History of *Synderesis*, ca. 1150-1450', 67-69, 71; According to Zamore, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure proposed a theory of *synderesis* 'as an affective power which compels the soul to seek the moral good (*bonum honestum*)…[rather than] a cognitive power of the soul….In the *Itinerarium*, *synderesis* appears to become "active" after having grasped God as the highest good

et anima, Bonaventure added a sixth stage – '*notitia excessiva*' (overflowing awareness).[54] In the *Itinerarium*, he developed this sixth stage as *synderesis*, meaning 'the summit of the mind (*apex mentis*) or the spark of conscience (*scintilla conscientiae*)'.[55] Bonaventure's description of the *apex mentis* is reminiscent of the revelatory experience of divine love in Gallus – an insight originating from Hugh of Saint Victor. Gustav Zamore agrees with Bernard McGinn and Declan Lawell that Bonaventure moved beyond the Alexandrine *Summa's* moral-psychological notion of *synderesis* to Gallus's mystical notion.[56] On the material level, Bonaventure transformed the Alexandrine account of *synderesis* as a wholly conceptual determination of experience to pose it as a function of mystical actualisation through Scripture in the manner of Gallus. On the formal level, Bonaventure moved beyond a textual to an experiential awareness of Christ as *sapientia* that subsumed and transformed the Augustinian intellectualism of his scholastic antecedents. [57]

In this mystical treatise, Bonaventure adapts the soul's ascent of awareness in God in six stages, symbolised by the 'six wings of the Seraph' of Francis' vision. Bonaventure enacts the process by which the soul embraces God in the midst of the world: 'Just as there are six stages in the ascent into God, there are six stages in the powers of the soul, through which we ascend from the lowest to the highest, from the exterior to the interior, from the temporal to the eternal.'[58] Bonaventure practically maps the mystical ascent using the five stages of cognition of the *De Spiritu et anima* – sense, imagination, reason, intellect and intelligence. As in *De Anima* of

(*summum bonum*).' Bonaventure, 'by shifting between the objects on this analogical scale, from the moral good to the highest good, has bridged the gap between moral psychology and mysticism.' Gustav Zamore, 'Bonaventure's Thought Experiment: The Use of *Synderesis* in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, the Ineffability *Topos*, and Francis's *Stigmata*,' in *Medieval Thought Experiments: Poetry, Hypothesis, and Experience in the European Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 177, 182; Douglas Langston, 'The Spark of Conscience: Bonaventure's View of Conscience and *Synderesis*,' *Franciscan Studies* 53 (1993): 79-95.

[54] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.2, ch.9, 84-89.

[55] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.6; 62; Constant J. Mews, 'Debating the Authority of Pseudo-Augustine's *De Spiritu et anima*,' *Prezgląd Tomistyczny* 24 (2018): 337-38.

[56] Zamore, 'Bonaventure's Thought Experiment: The Use of *Synderesis* in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, the Ineffability *Topos*, and Francis's *Stigmata*,' 177-88; Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)*, vol. 3, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, (New York: Crossroad 1998), 106; Declan Lawell, 'Ne de Ineffabili penitus taceamus: Aspects of the Specialised Vocabulary of the Writings of Thomas Gallus,' *Viator* 40 (2009): 169-70.

[57] According to Zamore, Bonaventure probably read Gallus's texts either in Paris where Gallus studied at the Abbey of Saint Victor, or in the Italian town of Vercelli where Gallus's texts were stored as he was abbot at Sant' Andrea till his death in 1246. Travelling between France and Italy six times from 1257 to 1260, Bonaventure would have most likely stayed at the Franciscan provinciate in Vercelli, as it was situated on a major thoroughfare linking France and Italy. Zamore, 'Bonaventure's Thought Experiment: The Use of *Synderesis* in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, the Ineffability *Topos*, and Francis's *Stigmata*,' 179.

[58] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, prologue, n.3, 54-55; ch.1, n.6, 62.

Cistercian Isaac of Stella, *De Spiritu et anima* expands the four stages of ascent theorised by Severinus Boethius by adding a fifth stage, 'intellect'.[59] By means of its cognitive power of sensibility, the soul perceives bodily things by way of the five bodily senses: touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. Through its spiritual power, likenesses of bodily things are apprehended through imagination. By means of its intellectual power, intelligible things are examined and judged by reason, incorporeal things are searched over by intellect, and divine things by the power of intelligence.[60] Bonaventure transcends the scholastic usage of the *De Spiritu et anima* as an encyclopaedic source of information about the soul. He seeks to enact these stages as practical functions of the soul's mode of being in Christ or Scripture. Bonaventure teaches that the aim of Scripture is to purify and remediate the human horizon through Christological enactment. Bonaventure gives the five stages of cognition a new ascetical depth by mapping them onto Pseudo-Dionysius' threefold way of spiritual growth – 'cleansed by justice [purgation], exercised by knowledge [illumination] and perfected by wisdom [perfection]'.[61]

In the first stage of sensible apprehension, the soul begins to know something of the divine nature and intentionality in and through God's traces in the created world. Accordingly, the spiritual journey begins with a call to purgative action. Holy living rectifies the soul in its exterior dimensions, while meditation on scriptural truth cleanses the soul inwardly. In so doing, the soul is sufficiently reoriented in the world of meaning so that it can see the divine power, wisdom and goodness in created things. Bonaventure expounds an innovative theory of reduction that converges the ethical-existential priority of *lectio divina* with the Alexandrine/Avicennian abstraction in the *Summa*. The soul first rationally investigates the formal attributes of things – primarily 'weight, number and measure'. By faith, the soul then abstracts an idea of their 'origin, process and end'; whereupon the ontological concept of (created) things becomes a mirror on the soul's self-understanding in God.[62] Henceforth, the soul understands the source, mode and content of things by analogy to its own origin, process and end. The nexus of human (and creaturely) action and intention is transposed onto that of divine causality through the medium of Scripture.

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[59] Severinus Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. V.E. Watts (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), b.5, pt.4, 155-61; Isaac of Stella, '*De Anima*,' in *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Apud editorem, 1875-1890), 263, 273; Also see Bernard McGinn, *The Golden Chain: A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Isaac of Stella* (Washington: Cistercian Publications, 1972), 136-57.
[60] Pseudo-Augustine, 'The Spirit and the Soul,' ch.15, 205-6.
[61] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.5-6, 61-62.
[62] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.7-15, 62-68, esp n.11-12, 64.

Having recognised the divine traces in created things, the soul proceeds to the second stage, that of imagination. From a basis in the sensible, the soul proceeds to grasp the truth of the psyche in God, and the fullness of God in the psyche. The soul rises to the imagination of the Trinity (*imago Trinitatis)* in the mirror of the sensory process. Profoundly, the soul's delight and appreciation at the proportions of harmony registered in its interaction with the external world exemplify and, in some measure, reflect God the Father's delight in his one and only Son. The reciprocal delight of creation in myriad dance mirrors the reciprocal relation of the Son through the bond of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity itself shines forth in the sensory process of the human soul. In this way, Bonaventure incorporates the interpretive axiom of the *De Spiritu et anima*, which is the intimate knowledge of God, world and soul by means of the soul itself. 'If therefore, all things that can be known generate a likeness of themselves, they manifestly proclaim that in them as in mirrors they can see the eternal generation of the Word, the Image and Son, eternally emanating from God the Father.'[63]

In the third stage, that of reason, the soul is discovered as a mirror of the being, truth and love of God. In reflecting upon its own threefold perceptual relation to the world, the soul begins to detect within itself certain abilities that model and mediate the powers of the divine exemplar. Through memory, the soul begins to recollect itself in God; through understanding, the soul scrutinises the formal lineaments of its own nature in God; and through will, the soul chooses both to recollect and to intellect in search of its sacred identity. On account of the soul's median position between the spirit world and flesh world, the sublime and the natural levels of truth can be grasped by means of the soul itself.[64]

The fourth stage treats the fulcrum of the ascent – the spiritual understanding of things through a converging of bodily and spiritual senses. The soul enters into Christ's life – living as he lives, thinking as he thinks, and loving what he loves. Rising now to the illumination of the intellect, the soul cognises the innermost nature of things and self in the mirror of Christ their exemplar. Scripture plays a key role in actualising this understanding:

> Through Scripture we are taught that we should be *purged, illumined and perfected* according to the threefold law handed down in it: the law of nature, of Scripture and of grace; or rather, according to its three principle parts: the law

[63] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.2, n.1-13, esp n.7, 73.
[64] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.3, n.1-7, 79-86.

> of Moses which *purifies*, prophetic revelation which *illumines*, and the Gospel teaching which *perfects*; or especially, according to its threefold spiritual meaning: the *tropological*, which *purifies* one for an upright life; the *allegorical*, which *illumines* one for clarity of understanding; and the *anagogical*, which *perfects* through spiritual ecstasies and sweet perceptions of wisdom.[65] (Italics mine)

The scriptural functions, as concrete articulations of human potentiality, are meant to be understood and lived in the fullest sense. The soul apprehends things in three senses by virtue of their profundity. Firstly, the soul seeks to live things on account of their origin. This is the tropological. Secondly, the soul seeks to be purged of all falsehood through a cleaving to the pure truth of the scriptures. This is the allegorical. Thirdly, the soul penetrates beyond all knowledge and experience to the heart of God himself. This is the anagogical, that overpowering sweetness surpassing understanding. In effect, Bonaventure's account of the three scriptural functions is derived from a threefold tradition. Francis enacts the truth of his relation to God, monastic *lectio divina* ponders this truth as a precursor to living it, and Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism penetrates beyond all knowledge and experience to the heart of God himself. For his part, Bonaventure interprets Christ the Word in three senses – Christ the 'Uncreated Word' as with God the Father, Christ the 'Inspired Word' as abiding within us, and Christ the 'Incarnate Word' as returning to God the Father.[66] In this way, the soul personally cleaves to Christ through a threefold action: ecstatic union – the soul insofar as it is united with Christ, faithful belief – what the soul understands to be true about itself in Christ, and loving deeds – what the soul does in returning with Christ to God the Father.[67] This is a personal assimilation to Christ – a mystical-experiential orientation – rather than an interpenetrated understanding in the mind. In addition, Alexandrine idealism penetrates beyond sense experience to ideal knowledge, and Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism penetrates beyond experience and knowledge in the divine love without context or coordinates. Bonaventure's synergistic process of exegesis entails the reduction of the whole world to God. Knowledge and action,

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[65] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Opera omnia*, 5:307: *...per [Scripture] docemur purgari, illuminari et perfici, et hoc secundum triplicem legem in ea traditam, scilicet naturae, Scripturae et gratiae; vel potius secundum triplicem eius partem principalem, legem scilicet Moysaicam purgantem, revelationem propheticam illustrantem et eruditionem evangelicam perficientem; vel potissimum secundum triplicem eius intelligentiam spiritualem: tropologicam quae purgat ad honestatem vitae; allegoricam, quae illuminat ad claritatem intelligentiae; anagogicam, quae perficit per excessus mentales et sapientiae perceptiones suavissimas...'* Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.4, n.6, 91.

[66] Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1998), 54.

[67] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.4, n.1-8, 87-93, esp. n.3-4, 89-91.

word and deed, sense and spirit, enter into one another as part of their total expressivity in Christ. This dynamic and evolutionary process transforms the static co-unity exhibited in Bonaventure's earlier scholastic writings such as his biblical commentaries.[68]

In the fifth stage, the soul's restored spiritual senses enable it to contemplate God's essential attributes such as power, wisdom and goodness. These attributes frame the immediate apprehension of God on the sixth stage, when the soul enters into mystical union with God. Unlike Augustine, who believes that intellectual understanding transcends the affect through an infusion of grace, Bonaventure follows *De Spiritu et anima* in asserting that *affectus* has power to incline the soul towards its object.[69] The mind can only penetrate beyond the corporeal to the incorporeal when it truly desires God who lies beyond its sight. This wilful yearning for the absolute induces a certain penetrative insight into the heart of things, centring and centralising the soul in the divine. *Affectus* informs the human horizon and constructs what the soul will know and experience about reality.[70]

In the sixth stage, through Gallus' influence, Bonaventure avers to 'a fourth element of the soul above and beyond reason, spirit and desire' – *synderesis* or *scintilla conscientiae.*[71] *Synderesis* refers to the transcendence of human knowing at the originary point of encounter between soul and God, culminating in the goal of contemplative rest for the soul. *Synderesis* therefore induces a deeper mystical contact with the divine Other by addressing all the soul's powers – knowledge, vision, and action – in grasping the Other. Shifting the entire nature and orientation of the psychological process as expressed in *De Spiritu et anima,* this *apex mentis* 'draws up

[68] For an incisive comparison between Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure's exegetical practice in their respective commentaries on John's Gospel, see Gies, '*Primi duces hierarchiae nostrae*: Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales and Theological Exegesis in John's Gospel,' 507-26.

[69] *De Spiritu et anima* defines *affectus* as 'a spontaneous and sweet turning of the soul toward God. Nothing so moves God to love and mercy as the pure desire of the mind.'Pseudo-Augustine, 'The Spirit and the Soul,' ch.50, 259.

[70] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.5, n.1-8, 94-101; According to Mews, Bernard of Clairvaux was the first Cistercian to equate affectivity with God, and this insight was developed psychologically and theologically in successive Cistercian treatises by Aelred of Rievaulx, Isaac of Stella and William of St Thierry. For an authoritative discussion on the relationship of *De spiritu et anima* to the affective tradition of the Cistercians, see Constant J. Mews, '*Affectus* in the *De Spiritu et anima* and Cistercian Writings of the Twelfth Century,' in *Before Emotion: The Language of Feeling, 400-1800*, ed. J.F. Champion Ruys, M.W. Essary, K. (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 86-96; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liber de consideratione*, ed. Jean Leclercq et al., 8 vols., vol. 3, Sancti Bernardi Opera, (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-1987), 480, 3; Aelred of Rievaulx, *De speculo caritatis*, vol. 1, ed. Anselm Hoste and C.H. Talbot, Aelredus Rievallensis, *Opera omnia*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 5-161; Isaac of Stella, '*De Anima*.'; William of Saint Thierry, *De natura et dignitate amoris*, vol. 3, ed. Paul Verdeyen, Guillelmus a Sancto Theodorico, *Opera omnia*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

[71] Charles Curran, 'Conscience,' in *Themes in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 194-95.

into itself all the preparatory cognitive operations…at the moment that it leaps beyond them'. Bernard McGinn observes that Bonaventure's identification of the role played by human knowledge in spiritual knowledge aligns him with twelfth-century mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux. Bonaventure 'insists that in the beatific vision, the highest state of immediate contact with God, we will both love and know him.'[72] This distinction *in materia* also implies a crucial distinction in method – one knows God, not principally in the assent to a *datum*, but by relating to the divine heart:

> …when our mind contemplates in Christ the Son of God, who is the image of the invisible God by nature, our humanity so wonderfully exalted, so ineffably united, when at the same time it sees united the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, the Alpha and the Omega, the caused and the cause, the Creator and the creature, that is, *the book written within and without,* it now reaches something perfect. It reaches the perfection of its illuminations on the sixth stage, as if with God on the sixth day of creation; nor does anything more remain except the day of rest on which through mystical ecstasy the mind's discernment comes to rest *from all the work which* it *has done*.[73]

Finally, this perfective end finds expression in the shift from scholastic precision to mystical ambiguity, where words themselves no longer adequately convey the reality of the experience of divine love. Bonaventure deliberately re-voices the opening verses of Pseudo-Dionysius' *De mystica theologia* to convey 'the paradoxical nature of the mystical experience.'[74] No longer speaking *about* the experience of God but *through* the experience of God, Bonaventure voices the very words of Scripture itself to foster affective entry into the divine mystery:

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[72] McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)*, 111.

[73] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Opera omnia,* 5:312: *'...dum mens nostra contemplatur in Christo Filio Dei, qui est imago Dei invisibilis per naturam, humanitatem nostram tam mirabiliter exaltatam, tam ineffabiliter unitam, videndo simul in num primum et ultimum, summum et imum, circumferentiam et centrum, alpha et omega, causatum et causam, Creatorem et creaturam, librum scilicet scriptum intus et extra; iam pervenit ad quandam rem perfectam, ut cum Deo ad perfectionem suarum illuminationum in sexto gradu quasi in sexta die perveniat; nec aliquid iam amplius restet nisi dies requiei, in qua per mentis excessum requiescat humanae mentis perspicacitas ab omni opere, quod patrarat.'* Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.6, n.1-7, 102-109; esp. n.7, 108-09.

[74] John Scotus Eriugena, *Sancti Dionysii Areopagitae liber quartus de mystica theologia*, 221 vols., Patrologia cursus completus: series latina, (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1865), vol.122, cols 1171-76; quoted in Zamore, 'Bonaventure's Thought Experiment: The Use of *Synderesis* in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum,* the Ineffability *Topos*, and Francis's *Stigmata*,' 185.

> Let us, then, die and enter into the darkness; let us impose silence upon our cares, our desires and our imaginings. With Christ crucified let us pass out of this world to the Father so that when the Father is shown to us, we may say with Philip: It is enough for us. Let us hear with Paul: My grace is sufficient for you. Let us rejoice with David saying: My flesh and my heart have grown faint; You are the God of my heart, and God that is my portion forever. Blessed be the Lord forever and all the people will say: Let it be; let it be. Amen.[75]

Bonaventure penetrates beyond a merely theoretical understanding founded on the necessary reasons, to an inner familiarity with the Divine Word realised through mystical contact. Finally, this ascent climaxes in the goal of loving union with God. Bonaventure looks along the perspective of Scripture toward the reality to which Scripture points. The basic aim of Scripture remains the same – to foster an inner sapiential realisation of the way things are as an entryway to the contemplative life. Bonaventure achieves this sapiential goal rather differently from that of his scholastic texts. The exegete is no longer ordered to the texts of Scripture and experience, but to God himself. God becomes the primary subject, rather than the object, of human thoughts and actions. Meditation upon and literal assumption of the Word achieves a synergy of thought and action that drives the soul upward into God. Thus, both senses of 'Word' are paramount – the sensible (outer) Word, and the spiritual (inner) Word. Christ the Word encompasses both. The outer Word, the material sense of Scripture, is merely an outward husk that the exegete must penetrate in a spiritualising movement to get at the inner Word, the spiritual kernel. It is Bonaventure's basic axiom that Christ is the one embodiment of both word and deed, giving rise to a more interiorising movement in God than was the case with Francis. In this respect, Bonaventure's Christ is proximate to Aristotle's divinity as 'pure act' – the ultimate source of Being and Goodness, of objects of understanding and the will. When the mind grasps an outward sign with the senses, the mind proceeds to 'see beyond' the appearance of the sign. From the sensible form, one reduces to the spiritual content; this is only possible because content is expressed through form in the very act of being. As it is on the ontological level, so

[75] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Opera omnia*, 5:313: *'Moriamur igitur et ingrediamur in caliginem, imponamus silentium sollicitudinibus, conscupiscentiis et phantasmatibus: transeamus cum Christo crucifixo ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, ut ostenso nobis Patre, dicamus cum Philippo: Sufficit nobis; audiamus cum Paulo: Sufficit tibi gratis mea; exultemus cum David dicentes: Defecit curo mea et cor meum, Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in aeternum. Benedictus Dominus in aeternum, et dicet omnis populus: Fiat, fiat. Amen.'* Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.7, n.1-6, 110-116; esp. n.6, 116.

it is on the theological; the Word expresses God the Father through the bond of the Holy Spirit in the very act of creation.[76]

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure sets forth an ecstatic intuition of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sensible, letting the Spirit's thoughts exude within. This is contrary to Bonaventure's earlier biblical commentaries where doctrinal expositions of mystical experience are controlled by the text. This immediate contact with the Divine Word incarnate in creation is reminiscent of the 'theophanic nature mysticism' of Francis.[77] Profoundly, Bonaventure evokes an experiential source for theology in reflection upon Francis' mystical experience: 'There is no other path but through the burning love of the Crucified…This love also so absorbed the soul of Francis that his spirit shone through his flesh when for two years before his death he carried in his body the sacred stigmata of the passion.'[78] In addition, Bonaventure's describes how the soul's ascent into God is driven and fulfilled by divine love as its Alpha and Omega. This description derives its basic orientation from Gallus' theology of love. Gallus was in fact building upon a basic intuition of Hugh of Saint Victor about the Pseudo-Dionysian primacy of love beyond knowledge and experience. Gallus' theological ascent transcends creaturely knowledge and culminates in silence and unknowing.[79] On the contrary, Bonaventure's theological journey begins from a superabundance of vision leading to a comprehensive reordering of the intellect and affections. For Bonaventure as for Francis, awareness of God begins with sense experience, but it is an experience paradoxically infused with an unseen light. Scripture is paradigm and medium of this sapiential vision.[80] Bonaventure's relational reading of Christ as *sapientia*, necessitating a certain shift from an abstractive order of inquiry to a more personal one, is also exhibited in the contemporaneous *De Triplici via* (*The Threefold Way*).

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[76] For Balthasar's exposition and retrieval of Bonaventure's Trinitarian hermeneutics, see Peter J. Caseralla, 'The Expression and Form of the Word: Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Sacramentality of Language in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology,' *Renascence* 48, no. 2 (1996): 111-35.

[77] McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)*, 55-56; Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, 1-24.

[78] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, prologue, n.3, 54-55.

[79] For the mystical method of Thomas Gallus, widely considered the purest medieval representative of the thought of Pseudo-Dionysius, see Thomas Gallus, 'Extraction of the Celestial Hierarchy: Chapters I, II, XV,' in *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100-c.1375: the Commentary-Tradition*, ed. A.B Scot, A.J Minnis and David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 173-92; According to Coolman: 'Gallus has extended Hugh of St. Victor's basic intuition -- that Dionysius himself had taught the superiority of love over knowledge in the divine-human encounter -- by doing what Hugh (nor apparently anyone else) had never done: interpolating love into the very text of The Mystical Theology.' Coolman, 'The Medieval Affective Dionysian Tradition,' 85-102.

[80] For a general study of the origins of Christian mysticism, see Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 128-53.

IV. *De Triplici via* and relational theology

The exact dating of is still not established, but the most probable date is 1259. Ephrem Longpré, Jacques-Guy Bougerol and most scholars postulated that *De Triplici via* was completed immediately after the *Itinerarium* in 1259. Peter Fehlner adds that this 'ascetical-mystical treatise' was an extended commentary on the fourth chapter of the *Itinerarium*.[81] The core thematic and methodological parallels and common source material between both ascetical-mystical works indicate a certain degree of historical and thematic continuity.

F. Edward Coughlin infers that Bonaventure had written *De Triplici Via* for an anonymous individual.[82] *Inter alia*, Bonaventure listed 'the desire for women' among the desires to be avoided implying that he was addressing an unidentified male religious. Bonaventure's counsel that 'God gave sacerdotal grace whereby [some are made] a dispenser of doctrine, a dispenser of indulgence[s], and a dispenser of the Eucharist' – further indicates that he was writing to a priest.[83] Bonaventure's 'compendium of mystical-ascetical theology' imbibed the style of patristic and monastic programs of mystical ascent as defined within the parameters of his own unique synthesis of Franciscan theology. His concise practical mapping of the spiritual life initiated the reader into a mystical experience rather than in theological abstraction.[84] This would prove useful, especially to the itinerant friars in their application of biblical *sapientia* for effective ministry.

Eventually gaining a greater readership and influence even outside the Order, *De Triplici via* showed the friars how to perform the mystical journey into God and thus prove themselves faithful disciples of Christ through Francis. Bonaventure refigured the Alexandrine framework of mystical ascent based on the Pseudo-Dionysian-inspired *triplex via* of the soul's spiritual growth – purgation, illumination and perfection. Instead of the more traditional term,

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[81] E. Longpré, 'Bonaventure,' *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 9 (1937): 781; quoted in Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 156; Peter Damian M. Fehlner, 'Introduction,' in *The Triple Way or The Kindling of Love* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012), 3-8.

[82] F. Edward Coughlin, 'Introduction to the Text,' in *The Threefold Way: De Triplici via*, Works of St. Bonaventure, vol.10 (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2006), 83; The readership of this text is still undetermined. Fehlner offers another perspective: it was written for multiple readers – 'First Order Franciscans…priests…friars in general; and priests in particular, or those preparing for ordination to the priesthood.' Fehlner, 'Introduction,' *The Triple Way*, 9.

[83] Bonaventure, 'The Threefold Way: On Enkindling Love,' in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2006), ch.1, n.5, 95; n.12, 100; See the Latin edition: Bonaventure, *De Triplici via*, ed. Editori di Quaracchi, 9 vols., vol. 8, *S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia*, (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902), 3-27.

[84] Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' 34-36.

'perfective way', Bonaventure named the final stage of his *triplex via* as the 'unitive way'. Hence, he fused the ascetical discipline of the clerically trained friars and mystical freedoms of the *zelanti* within a unitive system of the *vita.* The primary mode of this ascent was similar to that of the *Itinerarium,* that is, from the exterior to the interior, and thereafter to the superior. Bonaventure's rhetorical fusion of Pseudo-Dionysian and monastic structures of ascent inflected the whole with new meaning, giving the Pseudo-Dionysian concept of hierarchisation an ascetical depth.

According to Pseudo-Dionysius in his *Celestial Hierarchy*, 'hierarchy is a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine. And it is uplifted to the imitation of God in proportion to the enlightenments divinely given to it.'[85] In other words, hierarchy describes a journey into the more of God, from action to intellection, and henceforth to contemplation. Roger Davis summarises Bonaventure's understanding of *synderesis* as an affective capacity of the soul impelled by divine love like the 'weight of the will [*pondus voluntatis*]' pulling the understanding and memory more closely into the divine ambit.[86] This hierarchisation of the soul is structurally analogous to the threefold process by which the Church, and creation, becomes assimilated to the deiform through an exchange of the riches of being from the highest to the lowest. Indeed, following Hugh of Saint Victor who transposed the idea of hierarchy into that of the Trinity, Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences* exceeds Pseudo-Dionysian ineffability by referring the whole universe of hierarchies to the divine hierarchy. In *De Triplici via*, Bonaventure extends this conceptual definition and relation of the multiple hierarchies to pose its performative applications. Instead of merely recapitulating divine names, Bonaventure operationalises this triadic description of divine activity for Christian practice by setting it within a threefold description of mystical ascent. The three interior scriptural senses (tropological, allegorical, anagogical) underpin the hierarchical acts of purgation, illumination and perfection.[87] Bonaventure focuses on the activity of hierarchy – how the human soul might assimilate to the deiform, not just in what it sees, but in how it lives. In the *Itinerarium,* Bonaventure outlines a chain of activities that match the stages of ascent into God. Although *De Triplici via* is not explicitly about

[85] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ch.3, n.1, 153.
[86] Roger Glenn Davis, *The Weight of Love: Affect, Ecstasy and Union in the Theology of Bonaventure* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 58; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.2, d.39, a.2, q.1, resp., 910.
[87] Gerald Cresta, 'From Dionysius' *thearchia* to Bonaventure's *hierarchia*: Assimilation and Evolution of the Concept,' *Studia Patristica* LXIX (2013): 326; Hugh of St Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam coelestem S. Dionysii*, vol. 175, Patrologia Latina cursus completus, (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1855), pt.1, bk.4, 993.

experiential perception of *sapientia* in the way of the *Itinerarium*, it still deals with the actualisation of exegesis in keeping with Francis' own axiom that material enactment presupposes spiritual understanding.

In *De Triplici* via, in the first purgative way, the soul is led through prayer, action and meditation to assimilate fully the tropological sense of Scripture. By acting upon Scripture, the soul cultivates a deepening inner realisation of biblical truth through outward embodiment. To cleanse itself from bodily sins and passions, the soul must meditate on '*human deeds* by thinking about what it might have done, and what it ought to do, and what its motives are'.[88] In the second illuminative way, the soul cultivates an inward disposition of truth outworked in a graced existence. By meditating upon Scripture's spiritual meaning, the soul is illumined to a knowledge of Christ and becomes more like him in thought and deed. The soul must meditate on '*divine acts*' or about God's sacrifice to humanity in the figure of the Cross, God's forgiveness and redemption, and truth of God's promises resplendent in nature. This interiorisation of an outward meaning gives the allegorical sense of Scripture. The dialectics of inner and outer man, action and contemplation, spirals inward and upward through the *animus* of divine love.[89] Finally, in the third perfective way, the contemplation of God through the mediation of Scripture induces a love for God by which union with him may be attained. The whole man is transformed through encounter with Christ, kindling God's love in the soul so that it may be reordered with respect to the whole – spirit, soul and body. At this deepest level, the soul meditates on the sources of human deeds and divine acts, namely God and the human being, and how they ought to be united in God. This enactment of the anagogical sense as the experience of encounter with God at the deepest level turns *anagogy* from a conceptualisation into an activity. From this highest rung on the pre-heavenly ladder, the soul descends again; for in gazing upon Christ, the soul learns to re-envisage and so transfigure its whole way of being in the world. Reading in Christ transforms the order of the soul's relationship towards the text in every dimension – practical, cognitive and spiritual.[90] Henceforth:

> …the soul arrives at the wisdom of Sacred Scripture by meditating along the *purgative, illuminative, and perfective* ways. Therefore, your reflections should not concentrate solely on the contents of Sacred Scripture...For every meditation

[88] Bonaventure, 'The Threefold Way: On Enkindling Love,' ch.1, n. 3-9, 91-98.
[89] Bonaventure, 'The Threefold Way: On Enkindling Love,' ch.1, n.10-14, 98-101.
[90] Bonaventure, 'The Threefold Way: On Enkindling Love,' ch.1, n.15-17, 101-03.

> of the wise soul focuses on: either human deeds… or divine acts…or regarding the sources of both, namely, God and the soul, and how they ought to be joined…it is the goal of all your knowledge and your deeds, and it is the true wisdom wherein there is knowledge coming *from true experience*. Our entire soul must concentrate on this sort of meditation, by using all its powers; namely, *reason, synderesis, conscience, and will*. In this sort of meditation, *reason* by gathering together forms the proposition; *synderesis* by sensing [correctly] offers the definition; *conscience* by witnessing draws the conclusion; the *will* by choosing provides the solution.[91] (Italics mine)

Meditation upon Scripture involves reason or conceptual definition of the heart issue (literal), *synderesis* or questioning of God's heart (anagogical), conscience or ethical determination of the issue in line with God's heart (allegorical) and will or commission of the deed (tropological). Bonaventure's distinctive contribution lies in his relational foundation for a personal framework of thought and action. *Sapientia* is thereby realised in everyday relation with the divine Other, bringing thoughts and deeds into alignment with the divine heart. By reflecting upon and enacting the truth of one's relation to the divine Other, the soul begins to know the meaning of reality. Bonaventure's emphasis on encounter with God as the wellspring of knowledge and action means that scriptural reading is relational before it is even textual and performative. The primordial experience of God is the origin of a biblical ethics and biblical theology. Bonaventure's synergy in the divine love of material embodiment (Franciscan exegesis), interior realisation (*lectio divina*) and ecstatic union in Christ (Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism) personalises sapiential reading to its very core and adduces a threefold context for relational theology.

In *De Triplici via* and the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure's scriptural exegesis is affective and relational rather than purely speculative and rational; unless accompanied by divine aid, textual meanings remain underdetermined. To use an example of my own, Hebrews 12:29: 'For our

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[91] Bonaventure, *De Triplici via, Opera omnia,* 8:7: *'Ex his igitur liquide patet, qualiter ad sapientiam sacrae Scripturae pervenitur meditando circa viam purgativam, illuminativam et perfectivam. Et non solum sacrae Scripturae continentia...Nam omnis meditatio sapientis aut est circa opera humana, cogitando scilicet, quid homo fecerit et quid debeat facere, et quae sit ratio movens; aut circa opera divina...aut circa utrorumque principia, quae sunt Deus et anima, qualiter sint invicem copulanda...quia hic est finis omnis cognitionis et operationis, et est sapientia vera, in qua est cognitio per veram experientiam. In huiusmodi autem meditatione tota anima debet esse intenta, et hoc secundum omnes vires suas, scilicet secundum rationem, synderesim, conscientiam et voluntatem. Nam in huiusmodi meditatione, ratio percunctando offert propositionem, synderesis sententiando profert definitionem, conscientia testificando infert conclusionem, voluntas praeeligendo defert solutionem.'* Bonaventure, 'The Threefold Way: On Enkindling Love,' n.18-19, 103-04.

God is a consuming fire.' Bonaventure's pre-1257 scholastic exegesis resorts to second-order explanation of the scriptural experience: 'The Holy Spirit is like a fire because…' The cogency of this earlier analysis is not the same as the cogency (of an infinitely higher order) of the signified experience. According to the exegetical method laid out in both later mystical texts, the exegete can only grasp the sense of God as fire in its deepest depths when he has had a prior experience of encounter with God himself. In other words, the exegete makes cognitive and imaginative extrapolation from the physical experience of fire to the spiritual reality of God's presence. The earthly experience of fire in its concreteness is a limited similitude to the experience of divine love; but the experience of this love transfigures the exegete's entire cognitive and affective relation to the represented object. Having determined the truth of the experience in question, the exegete now proceeds to register this truth within specific life-contexts by translating desire into thought and action. *Synderesis* senses, conscience determines, and the will commits, resulting in a holistic revelation engaging all the soul's powers – thought, vision and action. Consequently, the real experience of God (anagogical sense) inculcates worship and fear (tropological sense) and refigures the reader's entire relation to the represented object (allegorical sense). The functions in Bonaventure's system of sapiential self-actualisation now correspond to virtues enacted by the soul. As such, Bonaventure designates not simply what is in the soul, but what the soul ought to do to realise theology in itself.

Bonaventure applies the exegetical theories from the *Itinerarium* and *De Triplici via* to the practice of reading Scripture in his *Sermones dominicales* (*Sunday Sermons*). His blend of theological and mystical-ascetical content in these sermons illustrates the increasing mystical priority in his exegesis. For instance, Sermon 22 manifests the effusive mystical style of Chapter 7 in his earlier *Itinerarium*.

V. The *Sermones dominicales*

Jacques-Guy Bougerol and John F. Quinn were among those who advanced a dating between 1250 and 1257 for Bonaventure's *Sermones dominicales*.[92] Most scholars such as Timothy Johnson agreed with Bougerol's revised hypothesis in opting for post-1257, specifically

[92] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'Introduction,' in *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermones dominicales* (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1977), 15-17; John F. Quinn, 'Chronology of St. Bonaventure's Sermons,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67 (1974): 145-84; For the Latin edition, see Bonaventure, *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermones dominicales*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1977).

between April 1267 and May 1268. This period spanning the Sunday cycle of a liturgical year starting from Advent was 'circumscribed by the conclusion of Bonaventure's *Collations on the Ten Commandments* in mid-April 1267, and his Ascension sermon *coram universitate* on May 17, 1268.' Further evidence for the 1267 to 1268 dating is found in Bonaventure's autobiographical reference in Sermon 40 on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, in which he affirmed he 'composed this present collection of sermons.'[93]

Bonaventure's exercised his pastoral heart to intend these sermons as homiletic and meditative models for his confreres' inner formation. Their diffusion in number and distance compelled him to come up with an effective way to reach them. These sermons were relatively easy to transmit and understand and modelled to them a type of spiritual journey writ into the cycle of the liturgical year. Besides nine redacted sermons, Bonaventure included materials from monastic and patristic authorities and from his previous works, predominantly the *Commentaries on the Sentences* and Luke's Gospel.[94] Bonaventure chose the *sermo modernus* style, a topical approach that had emerged towards the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. It differed from the verbose patristic-monastic exegetical preaching style with its running commentary of entire biblical passages.[95] The *sermo modernus* started with a chosen biblical text as theme, which was then expounded with reference to its main parts and their subdivisions with proper explanatory and illustrative examples.[96] This more practical method allowed Bonaventure to systematically expound the personal significance of a theological idea without needing to conform it to a biblical thought-line. The meaning of a scriptural theme is not located in the individual verse itself, but in its conceptual relation to other texts and ideas in the scriptural canon. It appears that the self with its desires and needs is the centralising element in the exegetical process, with particular texts selected for their role

[93] Bougerol, 'Introduction,' *Sermones dominicales,* 27-29; quoted in Timothy J. Johnson, 'Introduction,' in *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 22-25.
[94] Johnson, 'Introduction,' *Sunday Sermons*, 14, 28-31; Bougerol, 'Introduction,' *Sermones dominicales,* 82, 281, 495, 499, 500.
[95] Marian Michele Mulchahey, *'First the Bow is Bent in Study….' Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 401-19; D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 193
[96] Johnson, 'Introduction,' *Sunday Sermons,* 15-22; Timothy J. Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 405-06, 417-21; Randall B. Smith, *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture of Medieval Paris: Preaching, Prologues and Biblical Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 328-43; For the audiences of Bonaventure's sermons, see Bonaventure, *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermones de tempore*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol (Paris: Les Éditions Franciscaines, 1990), 21-34; For the medieval Franciscan art of preaching, see Bert Roest, '*Ne effluat in multiloquium et habeatur honerosus:* The Art of Preaching in the Franciscan Tradition,' in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning came about through Words*, ed. Timothy L. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 383-412.

within a biblical faith matrix. In this way, individual texts are treated as 'living stones' in a biblical edifice that models and mediates the preacher's own edifice of faith. Bonaventure's homiletic purpose to foster Franciscan identity through 'a performative prayer and preaching of the Scriptures' will now be demonstrated through recourse to actual interpretive examples.[97]

In Sermon 16, for the second Sunday in Lent, Bonaventure personally appropriates the sensible signs of Scripture. Echoing the hermeneutical ascent of Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure corresponds the *triplex via* of purgation, illumination and perfection of the soul to the three arms of the Church – 'prelates', 'active ones' and 'contemplatives'. He also correlates these three modalities to the threefold virtue of the soul mentioned in Psalm 18:6 – 'goodness', 'discipline' and 'knowledge.' Three states of relation to God are also signified – gratuitous election, diligent redisposition and a self-transcending elevation in love. For exposition, Bonaventure subdivides the central verse, Matthew 17:1, into three smaller language units – each signifying a step in the threefold ascent of the soul and Church. 'Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John' recalls the threefold state of the Church and soul, each state corresponding to each disciple. Jesus 'led them up a high mountain' signifies the threefold preparation of the Church for mystical union with God. First, altitude signifies the elevation of the mind for illumination and is symbolised by the faithful 'prelate' Peter. Second, immovability of the mountain signifies the disposition of integrity that occurs through diligent purging of sin in the fashion of the 'active' James. Third, diffusion of communication between Jesus and his three disciples signifies the outflowing of divine revelation from the heights to the valleys. This final step in the mystical ascent is aptly symbolised by the 'contemplative' John. The structure of the biblical mountain metaphor models and mediates the causal structure of its ascetical referent.[98] The effort of climbing the mountain (moral sense), the sense of *gravitas* in experiencing the mountain's immovability (allegorical sense), and the joyous descent (anagogical sense) resemble the daily rhythms of grace outworked in liturgical harmony. It is the 'spiritual cartography' of the soul in ascent, fleshed out in multiple dimensions of living.[99]

[97] Timothy Johnson, 'The Prothemes of Bonaventure's *Sermones Dominicales* and Minorite Prayer,' in *Franciscans at Prayer*, ed. Steven J. McMichael, The Medieval Franciscans (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 101.
[98] Bonaventure, *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Timothy J. Johnson, vol. 12, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 207-19.
[99] Timothy J. Johnson, 'Prologue as Pilgrimage: Bonaventure as Spiritual Cartographer ' *Miscellanea Francescana* 106-107 (2006-2007): 445-64.

For Bonaventure, Scripture's inter-resonance keys the inter-dimensionality of theological reality; the reader plays this triple instrument to the edification of the whole human horizon – mind, soul and body; the horizontal structure of correspondences counterposes a vertical correspondence. The reader first enters into the scriptural phenomenon (moral sense), then penetrates to its heart to cognise its structure (allegorical sense) and intuit its spiritual meaning (anagogical sense). Bonaventure's mapping of the three interior scriptural senses onto the Pseudo-Dionysian *triplex via* of spiritual growth manifests in an ascending movement of sapiential reading. This puts an exegetical spin on a method commonly practised in twelfth-century ascetical tradition.

In Sermon 22, Bonaventure demonstrates an awareness of these tension between mystical and speculative reading of Scripture, gravitating from the scholastic toward a more performative mystical style. Composed for the Sunday in Octave of Easter, this sermon treats Isaiah 66:10 as a call to experience the 'divine sweetness':

> The one who wishes to arrive at ecstatic contemplation must first practice the weeping of penance in the active state, because the contemplative soul then nurses such sweet grace from the consoling breasts of the Holy Spirit that it is completely satiated, imbued, and raised beyond human matters into the heavens and suspended above itself on high. Beside itself, delighting and rejoicing with such interior gladness, it appears to be more intoxicated than sober. *Whence at times Sacred Scripture names that sweetness taste, and at times calls it intoxication.* O God, if a little *scintilla* from such a sweet torrent drops and falls upon the human mind, and perfectly intoxicates it, what will it be like when the soul is totally absorbed and intoxicated in the sea of infinite happiness![100]

The poetic register is distinctly suited to conveying this mystical interiority – a simple, inner familiarity with the Word of God. Here, Bonaventure moves from logical dissection to pure performance, evoking the truth of the divine love from the interior of the experience itself. In his early scholastic writings before 1257, a word (such as 'sweetness') recalls a designated experience that is then used as a frame-of-reference for understanding that word. Now, in his sermons, he lives this word in a way that leads him back to its Author. As in Chapter 7 of the *Itinerarium*, the primary focus of knowing is God himself, not on the religious phenomenon to which the spiritual expression belongs. Bonaventure's order of approach has shifted from

[100] Translation by Timothy Johnson, *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, s.22, n.13, 276-77.

wording the experience of reality to experiencing the reality of the Word.[101] His method of mystical enactment was already vividly conveyed in his earlier *Legenda maior* (*Major Legend*). In transposing his own interiorising journey into God onto the scene of Francis' personal history, Bonaventure depicted Francis as a model of biblical enactment for his confreres to follow.

VI. The *Legenda maior*

The 1261 dating of Bonaventure's completion of the *Legenda maior* is verified in two major Franciscan documents. *Catalogus XIV vel XV Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (c.1304) records that after the Chapter of Narbonne, Bonaventure 'wrote the life of Saint Francis.' The *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (c.1360) specifies that 'in the year of the Lord 1261 [Bonaventure] composed a life of Saint Francis in a very polished style.'[102] Jay M. Hammond points out that in the *Legenda maior*, Bonaventure extolled the virtues of Francis' personal disciple Giles but did not mention his death in 1262. Furthermore, Bonaventure did not respond to the Cistercians' request in 1260 for a *legenda* of Francis to 'celebrate the octave of his feast.' Hammond rightly infers that Bonaventure would have completed this hagiography in 1261.[103]

Bonaventure was commissioned by the Chapter of Narbonne to produce a *legenda* of their founding father.[104] As Bonaventure himself testified in its prologue:

> I feel that I am unworthy and unequal to the task of writing the life of a man so venerable and worthy of imitation. I would never have attempted it if the fervent desire of the brothers had not aroused me, and the unanimous urging of the

[101] For a detailed treatment of Bonaventure's mystical theology in his *Sermones dominicales,* see Nicholas W. Youmans, '*Haec Visio Rapit*: Mystic Love and the Erotic in Bonaventure's Sunday Sermons,' in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning Came about through Words*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 124-43.

[102]*Catalogus XIV vel XV Generalium Ministrorum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,* Analecta Franciscana*,* ed. a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae, vol. 3 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1897), 700; *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum,* Analecta Franciscana, ed. a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae, vol. 3 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1897), 328; Also see Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*.

[103] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.3, n.4, 62; Jay M. Hammond, 'Bonaventure's *Legenda Major*,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 455-56.

[104]Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, 'Introduction ' in *The Legends and Sermons about Saint Francis by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1255-1267)*, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.2, 495.

> General Chapter had not induced me, and the devotion which I am obliged to have towards our holy father had not compelled me.[105]

Bonaventure also stated a more personal reason for 'undertaking this task'. As a child, he had a miraculous healing by his mother's intercession through the beatified Francis:

> For when I was a boy, as I still vividly remember, I was snatched from the jaws of death by [Francis'] invocation and merits. So if I remained silent and did not sing his praises, I fear that I would be rightly accused of the crime of ingratitude.[106]

At the 1263 General Chapter of Pisa, Bonaventure presented his edition to each of the Order's provincials for review. Three years later, the Chapter of Paris adopted Bonaventure's hagiography as the Order's official version. Henceforth, it replaced all previous hagiographies of Francis, which were eventually destroyed. This included especially the official version by Thomas of Celano (1185-1260) – the prime redactor of his time and Francis' contemporary.[107] Bonaventure would certainly have used his theological and diplomatic skills to shape a more consistent and contemporary depiction of Francis in keeping with the Order's current needs. Also, Bonaventure would clarify Francis' image for posterity and shape a unified direction for the Order.[108] At the same time, the Order, having issues with liturgical regulation, also commissioned Bonaventure to write a liturgical *legenda.* His *Legenda minor* (*Minor Legend*), a condensed version of the *Maior*, was likewise officially approved by the Paris Chapter.[109]

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[105] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia*, 8:505: '*Ad huius tam venerabilis viri vitam omni imitatione dignissimam deseribendam indignum et insufficientem me sentiens, id nullatenus attentassem, nisi me fratrum fervens incitasset affectus, generalis quoque Capituli concors induxisset instantia, et ea quam ad sanctum patrem habere teneor devotio compulisset...*' Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, prologue, n.3, 46; Also see Bonaventure, 'The Minor Legend (1260-1263),' pt.2, ch.7, 8th lesson, 235.

[106] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia,* 8:505: '*...utpote qui per ipsius invocationem et merita in puerili aetate, sicut recenti memoria teneo, a mortis faucibus erutus, si praeconia laudis eius tacuero, timeo sceleris argui ut ingratus.*' Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, prologue, n.3, 46; Bonaventure, 'The Minor Legend (1260-1263),' pt.2, ch.7, 8th lesson, 235.

[107] Bonaventure, 'Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Paris (1266),' in *St. Bonaventure's Writings concerning the Franciscan Order* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), n.11, 202; Andrew Little, '*Definitiones capitulorum generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (1260-1282),' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 7 (1914): 678; Ducolomb, 'St. Bonaventure's Reputation as Reflected in the Dissemination of his Works,' 282-83, 285; For the political motives for the destruction of the earlier hagiographies, see Jacques Dalarun, *The Misadventure of Francis of Assisi* (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 221-58; Jacques Dalarun, *Francis of Assisi and the Feminine* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2006).

[108] Rosalind B. Brooke, 'St Bonaventure as Minister General,' in *S. Bonaventura francescano: atti del XIV Convegno stroico internazionale* Convegni Del Centro di Studi sulla spiritualita medievale vol.14 (Todi: Presso L'Accademia Tudertina, 1974), 88; cf. Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 394-96; Andrew Little, 'Guide to Franciscan Studies,' *Etudes Franciscaines* 41 (1929): 64-78; Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517*, 287.

[109] Bonaventure 'composed [for choir] a series of nine lessons for each day of the Octave of the Feast of Saint Francis.' Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, 328. For the

Bonaventure's pastoral concern for his confreres was also evident in this contemplative *Legenda minor,* which initiated them into prayerful reflection of Francis' own hermeneutical experience. Fervent prayer was an initiation into encountering the Crucified Christ expressed in the stigmatised body of their Seraphic Founder.[110]

In his redactional process, Bonaventure relied on official literary sources. Salimbene attested that Bonaventure 'wrote an excellent life of Francis, based on all these earlier works'.[111] Bonaventure's main sources were the three Celanese *vitae*. Celano's *Vita beati Francisci* (c.1229), also known as the *Vita prima*, was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX to justify Francis' canonisation in 1228. Gregory's official approval and dissemination upon its completion a year later granted it official ecclesial status.[112] Celano himself affirmed that he had received 'those things which [he] heard from [Francis'] own mouth or… learned from trustworthy and esteemed witnesses.'[113] Celano's *Memoriale in desiderio animae* (c.1245-1247) was a supplement commissioned by Crescentius of Iesi upon attaining his generalate in 1244. Celano's *Tractatus de miraculis beati Francisci* (c.1250-1252) was written at the behest of Crescentius' successor, John of Parma.[114] Another source that Bonaventure relied on was the *Vita sancti Francisci* (c.1232-1235) by Julian of Speyer (died c.1250) who based it on the first Celanese version.[115] Bonaventure might also have consulted the *Legenda Trium Sociorum* (c.1246) that had ensued from Crescentius' 1244 directive. In this *florilegium,* three of Francis' surviving closest companions – Rufino, Angelo and Leo (Francis' confessor) – emphasised: 'We who, though unworthy, lived for a long time in his company, thought it opportune to

Latin edition, see Bonaventure, *Legenda minor S. Francisci*, S. Bonaventurae *Opera omnia,* ed. Editori di Quaracchi, 9 vols vol. 8 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902), 565-579.

[110] Bonaventure, 'The Minor Legend (1260-1263),' 202-35; Hammond, 'Bonaventure's *Legenda Major*,' 455, 457; Johnson, 'The *Legenda minor*,' 435-51.

[111] Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle*, 166.

[112] Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, 'Introduction,' in *The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano*, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, 174-75.

[113] Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis,' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, prologue, n.1, 180.

[114] According to Salimbene, 'In the year of the Lord 1244...Crescentius then commanded Brother Thomas of Celano, who had written the first Legend of St. Francis, to write another book, because many things about St. Francis had been discovered which had never been written. And so Thomas of Celano wrote a very beautiful book about the miracles, as well as the life of Francis, which he entitled the *Memorial of the Blessed Francis in the Desire of the Soul.*' Salimbene de Adam, *The Chronicle,* 166; Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, 262, 276.

[115] See Engelbert Grau, 'Thomas of Celano: Life and Work,' *Greyfriars Review* 8, 2 (1994): 177-200; Jason Miskuly, 'Julian of Speyer: Life of St. Francis,' *Franciscan Studies* 49 (1989): 93-117; Nicholas W. Youmans, '*Virtus, Vita, Votum*: Early Minorite Conceptions of Obedience from Francis to Bonaventure,' (PhD Technischen Universität Dresden, 2015), 261-263.

recount truthfully to Your Holiness a few of his many deeds. We ourselves have seen or heard about them from other holy brothers…'[116]

Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* diverged from these earlier biographies that lowered the depiction of the *Poverello* to the level of human action and thereby historicised him in his humanity, servanthood and suffering. These biographies resonated with the experience of Francis' early companions who followed his exemplary conformity to Christ in serving the poor and suffering. As Ewert Cousins observes, 'the early biographies contained too much of the primitive spirit of Francis to be acceptable to Bonaventure's policies in shaping the Order along institutional lines…'[117] To serve his pastoral-political purpose, Bonaventure did not portray Francis in purely human terms but as a mystical exemplar for an integrated scriptural vision.[118] In accord with his urban Franciscan identity, Bonaventure came up with his own spiritualised, idealised version of Francis as *alter Christus*.[119] He qualified or omitted certain details from the earlier biographies and added new content to frame his depiction of Francis as a thematic whole. For instance, in Part 2, Bonaventure re-emphasised the singular nature of Francis' ministry, with respect to the many miracles performed through him and especially his reception of the *stigmata*. Bonaventure interspersed many 'miracle' episodes from the Celanese *Tractatus de miraculis beati Francisci* but added five mystically oriented episodes of his own.[120]

Bonaventure treated Francis' mode of scriptural understanding in conjunction with Francis' prophetic way of life.[121] Bonaventure profiled the Seraphic Founder as possessing the hallmarks of the ideal exegete:

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[116] Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, 262; Leo, Angelo, and Rufino of Assisi, 'The Legend of the Three Companions (1241-1247),' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), 67; See the Latin version: Théophile Desbonnets, '*Legenda Trium Sociorum*: Edition Critique,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67 (1974): 86-89; Rosalind B. Brooke, *Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli Sociorum S. Francisci: The Writings of Leo, Rufino and Angelo, Companions of St. Francis*, ed. and trans. Rosalind B. Brooke (1970); For the history of Francis' four surviving closest companions (Leo, Rufino, Angelo and Giles), see Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 324.

[117] Ewert Cousins, 'Introduction,' in *The Life of St. Francis*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), 38.

[118] Nimmo attested: 'From the vantage point of the 1260s, [Bonaventure's] Francis was indeed the greatest saint of 'modern times'; and he was in addition the founder of a mighty Order, the prophet summoning the whole Church to evangelical renewal, in the context of God's unfolding plan of salvation; the General's task was to do justice to him in these terms, rather than in what might be called 'merely human' ones.' Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order*, 77.

[119] Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, 154.

[120] Hammond, 'Bonaventure's *Legenda Major*,' 481-83.

[121] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.11, n.9, 136; According to Cousins, Bonaventure recorded Leo's testimony of Francis' prophetic insight and miraculous help in overcoming a serious

> For although [Francis] was unskilled in word, nevertheless, full of knowledge, he often untangled the ambiguities of questions and brought the hidden into light. Nor is it inconsistent! If the Holy man had received from God an *understanding of the Scriptures*, it is because through his *imitation of Christ* he carried in his activity the *perfect truth* described in them and, through a full anointing of the Holy Spirit, held their Teacher [Christ] *in his heart*.[122] (Italics mine)

In holistic 'imitation of Christ', Bonaventure's Francis treasures 'in his heart' the biblical revelation through both word and deed. Francis lives and thereby knows the perfect wisdom described in this revelation. Bonaventure's re-imagining of Francis' hermeneutical experience is a certain formalised extension of Francis' own exegetical process. According to Thaddée Matura, Francis pioneered certain innovative exegetical strategies in his scripturally informed writings. Firstly, Francis inflected his thoughts with scriptural words in an implicit manner, comprising a manifestation of Christ's thoughts in the believer. Secondly, Francis explicitly used scriptural quotations 'as a basis or point of departure for an attitude or action', and also to confirm, justify or conclude a line of thought. Thirdly, Francis meditated or contemplated on scriptural words or phrases – to evince a personal revelation of an inner disposition or a situation. Fourthly, Francis corresponded one biblical passage with another. Lastly, Francis juxtaposed diverse biblical fragments with a single theme in mind.[123] Francis' exegetical strategies were not synonymous with critical reflection on the meaning of a scriptural passage in itself (*speculatio*), nor did they resemble the purely relational exegesis of the monastics (*lectio divina*). Instead, the movement toward realisation, whether of an inner attitude or outward action, predominated in any particular instance of interpretation. Francis' own itinerant and involved lifestyle meant that scriptural revelations were often materially enacted without much recourse to interior reflection. For instance, in his *Expositio in Pater noster*,

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temptation through the *Blessing of Saint Francis* (based on Numbers 6:24-26) written in the founder's own hand. The original artefact handwritten by Francis and Leo still exists today in the Basilica of Saint Francis at Assisi. Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins, The Classics of Western Spirituality, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), 286-87 (esp. fn.16-18).

[122] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia,* 8:536: *'Licet enim esset imperitus sermone, scientia tamen plenus enodabat dubia questionum et abscondita producebat in lucem. Nec absonum, si vir sanctus Scripturarum a Deo intellectum acceperat, cum per imitationem Christi perfectam veritatem ipsarum descriptam gestaret in opere et per sancti Spiritus unctionem plenariam, doctorem earum apud se haberet in corde.'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.11, n.2, 131.

[123] Thaddée Matura, *Francis of Assisi: The Message in his Writings*, trans. Paul Barrett (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997), 17-21.

Francis taught his disciples how to expound on each verse of the *Lord's Prayer* [Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4]. He identified God by imagery and names of personal significance:

> Our Father [Matthew 6:9] most holy:
>
> Our Creator, Redeemer, Consoler, and Savior:
>
> Who are in heaven [Matthew 6:9]:
>
> In the angels and the saints,
>
> enlightening them to know, for You, Lord, are light [1 John 1:5]
>
> inflaming them to love, for You, Lord, are love;
>
> dwelling in them and filling them with happiness,
>
> for You, Lord, are Supreme Good, the Eternal Good,
>
> from Whom all good comes
>
> without Whom there is no good…
>
> Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
>
> As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.[124]

Francis' immediate revoicing and habitation of scriptural words is rich with performative vigour; he is styling himself in practical 'imitation of Christ'. Since Francis was composing his reflections after the fact of his dramatic conversion to Christ, material enactment presupposed a true understanding of the scriptures. Francis' words and deeds only had probative force because he had first lived them and made them his own.[125] Diverging from Francis, Bonaventure encouraged a level of traditional/monastic and contemplative form of religious formation among his confreres.[126] Whereas Francis' invitation was to holy living in the midst of the world so as to reform it from within, Bonaventure enjoined them to periodically

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[124] *Fontes Franciscani*, 115: *'O sanctissime Pater noster/creator, redemptor, consolator et salvator/Qui es in caelis/in angelis et in sanctis;/ illuminans eos ad cognitionem, quia tu, Domine, lux es; inflammans ad amorem, quia tu, Domine amor es;/ inhabitans et implens eos ad beatitudinem,/ quia tu, Domine, summum bonum es, aeternum,/ a quo omne bonum,/sine quo nullum bonum... Gloria Patri etc.*' Francis of Assisi, 'A Prayer Inspired by Our Father ', Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, n.1-2, 10; 158-60.

[125] According to Robinson, '...St. Francis' doctrine, which received, so to speak, the Divine *Imprimatur* upon the heights of La Verna two years before his death, is nothing more or less than a paraphrase of the Sermon on the Mount...' It is Francis' summary of the central elements of the gospel message. Francis of Assisi, *The Writings of Saint Francis of Assisi*, trans. Paschal Robinson (Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press, 1906), 64-74.

[126] In his religious manual *Instructions for Novices* (1260), Bonaventure followed the counsels of the monastics particularly Gregory the Great (c.504-604). Progressing beyond Francis who understood prayer as merely a holistic orientation of the soul in God, Bonaventure understood prayer to be an abstractive process, where fleshly desires and distractions were ruthlessly eliminated from the interior life: 'For if the invisible soul resembles the unseen God, then in prayer it should forget all visible things so that it may easily concentrate on the heavenly, without mingling earthly concerns with them.' Bonaventure, 'Instructions for Novices (c.1260),' ch.2, n.2, 152

withdraw from the world and its distractions to be properly purged, illumined and perfected for the spiritual life. The combined witness of Francis' writing and life revealed that material enactment presupposed knowledge; For the clerically trained Bonaventure, interior ordering presupposed outward manifestation, allowing for the cultivation of a more normative approach to Franciscan identity through learning. In a formalised extension of Francis' own embodied orientation, Bonaventure maintained a certain mystical synergy between interior reflection and material enactment. Scriptural meanings had to be ruminated over and interiorised in order that they would manifest with greater clarity in the friars. This unity within the exegete of the contemplative and the active dimensions makes room for the friars' interior formation prior to their commissioning for outward ministry.

Bonaventure not only thematises scriptural exegesis and its place within the life of Francis, but also incorporates and incarnates the very forms of scriptural discourse. Bonaventure's interweaving of scriptural quotations into the structure of his *Legenda maior* heralds Scripture's ubiquitous role in giving form, identity and a voice to Francis' own vocation. His multiple uses of the key terms '*caritas*' (love), '*intellectus*' (understanding) and '*scriptura*' (Scripture) indicates that he accords a prominence to love and scriptural understanding as the dual foundation for Franciscan vocation. Significantly, Bonaventure's interpenetration of ideas – both horizontally and vertically – poises his hagiography midway between the narrative and the thematic. Narratively, three major periods of Francis' life are presented in Part 1: sinful early life and conversion with the Order's founding and formation under papal approval (Chapters 1 to 4), cultivation of godly virtues and reception of the *stigmata* (Chapters 5 to 13), and death and canonisation (Chapters 14 to 15). Thematically, this triple arrangement corresponds to the threefold way of the *Itinerarium* and *De Triplici via* – purgation, illumination and perfection.[127]

In the *Legenda maior*, Bonaventure's Joachite appropriation of Scripture carries an echo of New Testament apocalyptic discourse. This discourse extends the typological projection of the scriptures into the historical present. Bonaventure figures Francis as a composite of Old and New Testament apocalyptic:

> …a practitioner, a leader, and a herald of Gospel perfection, that by bearing witness to the light [Francis] might prepare for the Lord a way of light and peace

[127] Hammond, 'Bonaventure's *Legenda Major*,' 482-84.

> to the hearts of his faithful… he was destined by God to prepare in the desert a way of the highest poverty and to preach repentance by word and example. First endowed with the gifts of divine grace, he was then enriched by the merit of unshakable virtue; and filled with the spirit of prophecy, he was also assigned an angelic ministry and was totally aflame with a Seraphic fire. Like a hierarchic man, lifted up on a fiery chariot, it may be reasonably accepted as true that he came in the spirit and power of Elijah...he is considered not without reason to be like the angel ascending from the rising of the sun bearing *the seal of the living God*. For 'at the opening of the sixth seal,' *John* says in the *Apocalypse*, 'I saw another *Angel* ascending from the rising of the sun, *having the sign of the living God*. If we consider the height of his extraordinary sanctity we can come to the conclusion, without any doubt, that this messenger of God, worthy of love by Christ, imitation by us, and admiration by the world – was God's servant, *Francis*.[128] (Italics mine)

As a contemporary John the Baptist 'preparing a path in the desert' for Christ's coming (Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23), as a second Elijah preparing the way for the double portion of Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-11) and as the Angel of the Sixth Seal heralding Christ's return (Apocalypse 7:2), Francis stands out as a composite figure, a mediation of typologies of the apocalyptic herald. As such, this signifies that Francis with his *stigmata* – 'the seal' or 'sign of the living God' (Apocalypse 7:2-3, 9:4) – would lead the Franciscans to their destiny as end-time *viri spirituales*. Bonaventure's depiction of Francis as a mystical figure, like 'a hierarchic man' of Pseudo-Dionysius' *via mystica*, resembles the Apostle John's spiritual portrayal of Christ in the book of Apocalypse.[129] Conversely, the Celanese and other earlier depictions of Francis as

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[128] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia*, 8:504: *'...verum etiam evangelicae perfectionis professorem, ducem atque praeconem effectum in lucem dedit credentium, ut testimonium perhibendo de lumine viam lucis et pacis ad corda fidelium Domino praepararet...Praecursoris destinatus a Deo, ut, viam parans in deserto altissimae paupertatis, tam exemplo quam verbo poenitentiam praedicaret. Primum supernae gratiae praeventus dominis, dehinc virtutis invictae adauctus meritis, prophetali quoque repletus spiritu nec non et angelico deputatus officio incendioque seraphico totus ignitus et ut vir hierarchicus curru igneo sursum vectus, sicut ex ipsius vitae decursu luculenter apparet, rationabiliter comprobatur venisse in spiritu et virtute Eliae...vaticinatione veridica sub similitudine Angeli ascendentis ab ortu solis signumque Dei vivi habentis astruitur non immerito designatus. Sub apertione namque sexti sigilli vidi, ait Ioannes in Apocalypsi, alterum Angelum ascendentem ab ortu solis, habentem signum Dei vivi...Hunc Dei nuntium amabilem Christo, imitabilem nobis et admirabilem mundo servum Dei fuisse Franciscum...'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, prologue, n.1, 44-45.

[129] McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)*, 93-100; 'After the manner of John the Evangelist, [Bonaventure] accentuates six manifestations or signs pointing to a seventh, that is, six apparitions of the cross, all of which are in the first four chapters, pointing to the reception of the *stigmata* in the thirteenth.' J.A. Wayne Hellmann and William J. Short Regis J. Armstrong, 'Introduction,' in *Such is the Power of Love: Francis of Assisi as Seen by Bonaventure*, ed. J.A. Wayne Hellmann Regis J. Armstrong, William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 2007), 19.

a suffering servant of Christ are comparable to the depictions by the Apostle Mark which rendered Christ in terms of concrete human action. Celano viscerally portrayed Francis' mortality with the 'signs of martyrdom' at his death, 'the middle of his hands and feet not just the holes of the nails, but the nails themselves formed by his own flesh…and his right side red with blood…' Celano visualised Francis as a suffering *alter Christus*: 'the One who poured out blood and water from his own side and reconciled the world to the Father.'[130]

Bonaventure's biography, as in the previous ones, treats Francis' rectification through his embrace of Gospel poverty. In Chapter 1 of Part 1, Bonaventure reports that the young Francis 'with God's protection, although he indulged himself in pleasures, even among wanton youths…did not give himself over to the drives of the flesh.'[131] Bonaventure situates his mystical Francis' doings within the horizon of divine providence, unlike Celano's more historicised narration. Celano casts Francis and other human characters as autonomous agents in the play of events; since the why of their actions and decisions are intrinsic to the genius of the personages themselves: 'From the earliest years of [Francis'] life his parents reared him to arrogance in accordance with the vanity of the age.' Celano neither downplays nor frames the reality of Francis' struggle with sin as a determination of divine providence. Rather, he depicts it in 'real-time' – subject to contingencies, complexities and contradictions of life in this present world.[132] Conversely, Bonaventure summarises Francis' pre-conversion phase of life as such: 'For this reason, drawn in several directions to the external by the demand of his father as well as forced down to the inferior by the corruption of his natural origin, he had not yet learned how to contemplate the celestial nor had he become accustomed to savor the divine.'[133] This exteriorised and inferiorised state of Francis' being is the inverse image of that presupposed by Bonaventure's threefold way of spiritual ascent mapped earlier in his *Itinerarium* and *De Triplici via.*

Bonaventure proceeds to describe the turning point in Francis' life. After Francis' early encounters with God, he regularly removes himself from the press of daily life, seeking God's

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[130] Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis,' 279-84, esp.80; Also see Julian of Speyer, 'The Life of Saint Francis,' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York New City Press, 1999), 412-18, esp.16; Leo, Angelo, and Assisi, 'The Legend of the Three Companions (1241-1247),' 74-75, 101-03.
[131] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.1, n.1, 48; Similarly, Armstrong observes: 'The result of [Bonaventure's] efforts, as it appears in the *Legenda maior*, is a portrait of the inner life of the *Poverello* rather than a mere external historical study.' Regis J. Armstrong, 'The Spiritual Theology of the *Legenda maior* of Saint Bonaventure' (PhD Fordham University, 1978), 4.
[132] Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis,' in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. William J. Short and Regis J. Armstrong J.A. Wayne Hellmann (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol.1, ch.1, n.1, 182.
[133]Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.1, n.2, 49.

will in solitary places. Despite his desire to obey and serve God, Francis is ignorant of how to achieve this. Francis henceforth commits himself to acts of charity and bold faith, 'resolving always to embark upon the greater'. Thus, he begins the process of purgation: 'attentively vigilant to mortifying this flesh so that he might carry externally in his body the Cross of Christ which he carried internally in his heart…'[134] Francis' purgative progress is marked by trials and struggles, which test and strengthen his faith. Refusing his father's remonstrations to commit to the family business and publicly renouncing all family ties, he pursues a life of penance.

Chapter 2 treats the threefold pattern of the Franciscan life, albeit through the lens of Franciscan symbolism:

> For at the bidding of divine providence which guided Christ's servant in everything, [Francis] built up *three material churches* before he preached the Gospel and began the Order not only to ascend in an orderly progression from the sensible to the intelligible, from the lesser to the greater, but also to *symbolize mystically in external actions perceived by the senses* what he would do in the future. For like the three buildings he built up, so the Church…was to be renewed in three ways under his leadership: by the *form, rule, and teaching of Christ* which he would provide.'[135] (Italics mine)

The material edification of the three churches signifies the triple edification of the human being: by the form of Christ or outward embodiment, by the rule or assimilation of inward thoughts, and by Christ's teaching or direct intimation of Christ's heart. The mystical symbolisation of Francis' future doings in carnal figures seen with the senses gives the formula of Bonaventurian exegesis – just as the literal is resumed to the spiritual, so the spiritual is discernible in and through the literal.

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[134]Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.1, n.3-6, 50-53.

[135] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia,* 8:509: '*Divinae namque providentiae nutu, qua Christi servus dirigebatur in omnibus, tres materiales erexit ecclesias, antequam, Ordinem inchoans, Evangelium praedicaret, ut non solum a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia, a minoribus ad maiora ordinato progressu conscenderet, verum etiam, ut, quid esset facturus in posterum, sensibili foris opere mysterialiter praesignaret. Nam instar reparatae triplicis fabricae ipsius sancti viri ducatu secundum datam ab eo formam, Regulam et doctrinam Christi triformiter renovanda erat Ecclesia trinaque triumphatura militia salvandorum, sicut et nunc cernimus esse completum*.' Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.2, n.8, 59.

Chapter 3 illustrates the place of Scripture in Francis' life in a more direct fashion. Bonaventure depicts how Francis founded his Order by an act of simple, literal obedience to the word of Christ:

> One day while he was devoutly hearing a Mass of the Apostles, the Gospel was read in which Christ sends out his disciples to preach and gives them the Gospel form of life, that they may not keep gold or silver or money in their belts, nor have a wallet for their journey, nor may they have two tunics, nor shoes, nor staff. *Hearing, understanding, and committing this to memory*, this friend of apostolic poverty was then overwhelmed with an indescribable joy. 'This is what I want,' he said, 'this is what I desire with all my heart!' Immediately, he took off the shoes from his feet, put down his staff, denounced his wallet and money, and, satisfied with one tunic, threw away his leather belt and put on a piece of rope for a belt. He directed all his heart's desire to carry out what he had heard and to conform in every way to the rule of right living given to the apostles.[136] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure's interiorising focus is consistent with a subtle shift in presentation, compared to previous biographies. Although Bonaventure retains the basic notion of Francis' exegesis – the material realisation of scriptural revelation – Bonaventure prefaces external embodiment with an inward and spiritual realisation. He figures Francis' affective motivation of assimilation to Christ's words and deeds as the primal power of purgation. Contrarily, in the Celanese portrait, Francis, 'overflowing with joy, hastened to implement the words of salvation, and did not delay before he devoutly began to put into effect what he heard.'[137] Bonaventure supplements Celano's historical portrait of Francis' exegetical immediacy with a psychological aside to the latter's interior process within the soul: 'Hearing, understanding, and committing this to memory…' This interiorising emphasis is consistent with Bonaventure's practical devotion to

[136] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia,* 8:510: *'Dum enim die quodam Missam de Apostolis devotus audiret, perlectum est Evangelium illud, in quo Christus discipulis ad praedicandum mittendis formam tribuit evangelicam in vivendo, ne videlicet possideant aurum vel argentum, nec in zonis pecuniam, nec peram in via, neque duas tunicas habeant, nec calceamenta deferant, neque virgam. 3Quod audiens et intelligens ac memoriae commendans, apostolicae paupertatis amicus indicibili mox perfusus laetitia: « Hoc est, inquit, quod cupio, hoc quod totis praecordiis concupisco ». 4Solvit proinde calceamenta de pedibus , deponit baculum, peram et pecuniam exsecratur, unaque contentus tunicula, reiecta corrigia, pro cingulo funem sumit, omnem sollicitudinem cordis apponens, qualiter audita perficiat et apostolicae rectitudinis regulae per omnia se coaptet.'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.3, n.1, 60.

[137] Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis,' ch.9, n.22, 202.

formal religious rule as a more formally applicable alternative to the exegetical simplicity of Francis.

Bonaventure goes on to illustrate Francis' progress from exterior purgation to interior illumination. Chapter 4 tells of Francis' exemplification of virtues through teaching and living among his disciples. Chapter 5 relates the many miracles of provision that occur through Francis' own invocations and merit. Francis' cultivation of Franciscan virtues is addressed: humility and obedience (Chapter 6), poverty (Chapter 7) and chastity (Chapter 8). Chapters 9 to 12 treat the interiorisation of these virtues in Francis: through charity (*caritas*) and his desire for martyrdom (Chapter 9), his passion and power in prayer (Chapter 10), his deeper insight into Scripture through enactment and reflection (Chapter 11) and his gifts of healing and preaching (Chapter 12).

Significantly, in Chapter 11, Bonaventure describes Francis' scriptural understanding as a penetration from the exterior to the interior, intermediated by the superior:

> Unflagging *zeal for prayer* with a continual *exercise of virtue* had led the man of God to such serenity of mind that, although he had no expertise in Sacred Scripture through learning, his *intellect, nevertheless enlightened by the splendor of eternal light*, probed the depths of Scripture with remarkable incisiveness. For his genius, pure and unstained, penetrated hidden mysteries, and where the knowledge of teachers stands outside, the passion of the lover entered. Whenever he read the Sacred Books, and something struck his mind he imprinted it tenaciously on his memory, because he did not grasp in vain what his attentive mind heard, for he would mull over it with affection and constant devotion.[138] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure's description of Francis' exegetical experience embeds the structure of the *triplex via* of purgation, illumination and perfection. As in the *Itinerarium*, passionate prayer is the

[138] Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia*, 8:535:'*Ad tantam autem mentis serenitatem indefessum orationis studium cum continua exercitatione virtutum virum Dei perduxerat, ut, quamvis non habuerit sacrarum litterarum peritiam per doctrinam, aeternae tamen lucis irradiatus fulgoribus, Scripturarum profunda miro intellectus scrutaretur acumine. Penetrabat enim ab omni labe purum ingenium mysteriorum abscondita, et ubi magistralis scientia foris stat, affectus introibat amantis. Legebat quandoque in libris sacris, et quod animo semel iniecerat, tenaciter imprimebat memoriae, quia non frustra mentalis attentionis percipiebat auditu quod continuae devotionis, ruminabat affectu.'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.11, n.1, 130.

'mother and source of the ascent', opening up new horizons of understanding and living.[139] The enlightenment of the intellect which is the contemplative, and the 'exercise of virtue' which is the active, drive Francis deeper into the divine ambit; so his mind, enlightened by divine grace and rehabilitated by virtue, is able to see God. For Bonaventure, such a spiritual synergy of scriptural word and deed results in a deeper revelation of God that exceeds a purely intellectual certitude. Nevertheless, Bonaventure's Francis qualifies that scriptural education should not be discarded provided that 'the learned men…study, not to know what they should say, but to practice what they have heard and, once they have put it into practice, propose it to others.' Bonaventure concludes with Francis' ambivalent statement about the interaction of learning and *simplicitas* within the Franciscan experience: 'I want my brothers…to progress in knowledge of the truth that they increase in pure simplicity without separating the simplicity of the dove from the wisdom of the serpent which our eminent Teacher [Christ] joined together in a statement from his own blessed lips.'[140] Bonaventure's combination of the authority of Scripture and that of Francis' scriptural experience gives a dual justification for Bonaventure's mediatory strategy of exegesis within the context of the Order's dispute over Franciscan identity.

Chapter 13 marks Francis' growing intimacy with God: 'on fire with an ever intense flame of heavenly desires, and…carried into the heights, not as a curious searcher of the supreme majesty crushed by its glory, but as a faithful and prudent servant, exploring God's good pleasure…'[141] Bonaventure fuses the image of the stigmatised Francis to the Joachite/Johannine prophetic image of the Apocalyptic Angel already figured in the prologue. Bonaventure shifts from the rhetoric of proclamation to that of direct address with the stigmatised Francis:

> Now the first vision you saw is truly fulfilled, that is, that you should be a future leader in the militia of Christ and bear heavenly arms emblazoned with the sign of the Cross…Now finally, near the end, you were shown at the same time the sublime similitude of the Seraph and the *humble likeness of the Crucified*, *inwardly inflaming you and outwardly signing* you as the other Angel ascending

[139] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.1, 60.
[140] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.11, n.1, 130-31.
[141] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.13, n.1, 149.

> from the rising of the sun, that you might have in you the sign of the living God…[142] (Italics mine)

The resulting dual image is further imbued with causal significance, since it expresses Francis' basic hermeneutical notion of revelation through embodiment. Just as the Angel's 'outwardly signing' expresses an 'inwardly inflaming', so Francis' sacred *stigmata* are expressive of an inner revelation of Christ. Furthermore, in Chapter 1 of Part 2, building on the Celanese account based on Leo's first-hand witness, Bonaventure expands the story of Francis' *stigmata*. Bonaventure narrates: 'the new man, Francis, became famous for a new and stupendous miracle. By a singular privilege, not granted in previous ages, he appeared marked, adorned with the *stigmata*, and conformed in this body of death to the body of the Crucified'. In Chapter 6 of Part 2, Bonaventure describes how 'the vision, which disappeared after a secret and intimate conversation, inflamed [Francis] interiorly with a seraphic ardor and marked his flesh exteriorly with a likeness conformed to the Crucified; it was as if the liquefying power of fire preceded the impression of the seal.'[143] In this way, 'what was true of [Francis] interiorly was now made manifest externally: his total conformity to Christ.'[144] Interiorisation precedes exterior manifestation; the inner man is conformed once more to the outer man. The journey has come full circle; the Holy Spirit, having resumed the flesh, shines once more within it. Bonaventure's spiritual symbolisation of history, epitomised in Francis' *stigmata* as spiritual symbol, enables his audience to engage the *Legenda maior* at both the symbolic and conceptual levels. Bonaventure's fusion of both discourse forms made his hagiography accessible and acceptable to both the clerically trained friars and *zelanti*, especially those heavily influenced by Joachitism.

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[142]Bonaventure, *Legenda maior*, *Opera omnia*, 8:545: *'Iam vere impleta est prima visio, quam vidisti, videlicet quod dux in militia Christi futurus, armis deberes caelestibus, signoque crucis insignibus decorari. Iam denique circa finem, quod simul tibi ostenditur et sublimis similitudo Seraph et humilis effigies Crucifixi, interius te incendens et exterius te consignans tamquam alterum Angelum ascendentem ab ortu solis, qui signum in te habeas Dei vivi...'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.13, n.10, 155-57.

[143] Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.2, ch.1, 168; ch.6, lesson 2, 228; The primitive tradition regarding Francis' reception of the *stigmata* was derived from his trusted companion and confessor, Brother Leo. C. Lyttle, 'The *Stigmata* of St. Francis Considered in Light of Possible Joachimite Influences upon Thomas of Celano' (Papers of the American Society of Church History, 1914), 77-85; In a sermon preached at Paris in 1262, Bonaventure evoked the image of Francis as a man 'imprinted' with 'the sign of the cross'. Bonaventure, 'The Evening Sermon on Saint Francis, 1262,' Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New York: New York City Press, 1999), vol.2, 730; cf. Noel Muscat, *The Life of Saint Francis in Light of Saint Bonaventure's Theology of the Verbum Crucifixum* (Malta: Edizzioni Tau, 1989).

[144] Eric Doyle, *The Disciple and the Master: St. Bonaventure's Sermons on St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Eric Doyle (Franciscan Herald Press: Chicago, 1983), 8.

Chapter 14 of Part 1 deals with Francis' death as the 'vindication of his entire life', his passing from this life to his final rest. Bonaventure's use of Francis as a model for mystical enactment is already apparent in Chapter 7 of his earlier *Itinerarium*. It recounts Francis' 'example of perfect contemplation as [Francis] had previously been of action, so that through him, more by example than by word, God might invite all truly spiritual men to this kind of passing over and spiritual ecstasy.'[145] Bonaventure's *legenda* recapitulates the importance of relating to God as the source and finality of the active life:

> It was a custom for the angelic man Francis never to rest from the good, rather, like the heavenly spirits on *Jacob's ladder*, he either ascended into God or descended to his neighbor. For he had so prudently learned to divide the time given to him for merit, that he spent some of it working for his neighbor's benefit and dedicated the rest to the tranquil excesses of contemplation. Therefore, when he emptied himself according to the demand of times and places to gain the salvation of another, leaving the restlessness of the crowds, he would seek the secrets of solitude and a place of quiet, where freeing himself more freely for the Lord, he would shake off the dust that might have clung to him from the time spent with the crowds.[146] (Italics mine)

This passage encapsulates the dual structure of Bonaventure's Franciscan *vita*. Francis was not simply God's obedient servant, but an intimate pursuer of God's presence. The mention of Jacob's ladder, as a standard medieval metaphor for the mystical ascent, accentuates the mystical as the origin and motivation of the active – reminiscent of the *triplex via* of Pseudo-Dionysius and the monastics. In contrast to the Celanese and other previous *vitae* where understanding presupposes outward embodiment, Bonaventure envisions a dialectics where contemplation originates, encloses and fulfils action. As Minister General, Bonaventure emphasised both the mystical origin and literal mediation of the exegetical process to secure a place for both learning of the letter and questioning of God's Spirit within the framework of the Franciscan *vita*. Consequently, Bonaventure's mystical mapping brought the visions of the

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[145] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.7, n.3, 112.

[146]Bonaventure, *Legenda maior, Opera omnia,* 8:542: *'Mos erat angelico viro Francisco numquam otiari a bono, quin potius instar spirituum supernorum in scala Iacob aut ascendebat in Deum, aut descendebat ad proximum. Nam tempus sibi concessum ad meritum dividere sic prudenter didicerat, ut aliud proximorum lucris laboriosis impenderet, aliud contemplationis tranquillis excessibus dedicaret. Unde cum secundum exigentiam locorum et temporum alienae condescendisset procurandae saluti, inquietationibus derelictis turbarum, solitudinis secreta petebat locumque quietis, quo liberius Domino vacans, extergeret, si quid pulveris sibi ex conversatione hominum adhaesisset.'* Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' pt.1, ch.13, n.1, 148.

zelanti and the clerically trained brothers into a more complete agreement than was the case with his predecessors.

In his *Legenda maior*, Bonaventure's fusing of scriptural, Franciscan and Joachite imagery shows not only his profound understanding and appropriation of the form and content of Scripture. It also illustrates, on both the formal and thematic levels, that the Franciscan vision is the scriptural vision inscribed on the scene of history. Bonaventure's theme of Francis as the incarnation of Scripture, or the total Christ both materially and spiritually, continues a theme already present in his earlier *Itinerarium* and *De Triplici via* – namely, the concept of exegesis as a synergy in the divine love of words and deeds. This is akin to Christ's total incarnation in the divine hypostasis. This material realisation of Francis' spiritual life completes his journey into God, whereupon his 'spirit shone through his flesh'.[147] This progress from the outer to the inner, intermediated by the superior, mirrors the interiorising process of Bonaventure's spiritual exegesis as a precursor to its externalisation in ministry contexts.

VII. Summary

As Minister General from 1257 onwards, Bonaventure infused his previous scholastic synthesis with a performative-mystical dimension to reach a wider community of Franciscans. Whereas his earlier biblical commentaries focus on a theoretical understanding of the divine *sapientia* founded on the necessary reasons, his mystical writings penetrate beyond the objective to the subjective by making God the primary subject of sapiential insight. The text of Scripture becomes less of a speculative sapiential framework and more of a medium of divine-human encounter, structuring transformations and setting experience in motion. Bonaventure's uniquely mystical transformation of the scholastic formality would register powerfully on both the practical and intellectual levels. In the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum,* sapiential perception of Christ in the heart of reality is the perceptual realisation of Bonaventure's scriptural vision. In *De Triplici via,* sapiential understanding is spiritually realised through the mechanism of scriptural exegesis. This performative scriptural exegesis is also practised in the *Sermones dominicales.* In the *Legenda maior,* Francis' personal history is portrayed as an embodiment of Bonaventure's exegetical ascent from the exterior to the interior, and thereafter to the superior. Bonaventure, pastorally intent on initiating his friars into Christ's exemplary experience, uplifted Francis as model of sapiential self-actualisation. Bonaventure's Joachite

[147] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, prologue, n.3, 55.

depiction of Francis as a mystical-biblical archetype incarnate in history is aligned with the former's notion of biblical exegesis as a penetrative insight into the spiritual meaning of the letter.

Bonaventure's developing hermeneutics of mystical enactment is accounted for intertextually, pastorally and historically. His engagement with sources of Franciscan heritage deepened his awareness of the methodological significance of personal assimilation to God; this methodological transformation was facilitated by skills and concepts mainly derived from Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism and pseudo-Augustinian psychology. Bonaventure made Francis the model and regulating principle for his hermeneutical synthesis. By interpreting the sensible phenomena of Scripture through the ecstatic experience of Christ, Bonaventure made the material sense a preliminary context for inner spiritual vision. Bonaventure's hermeneutical mediation brought both mystical symbolism and learning of the letter into irreducible co-unity in the very heart of Christ. Hence, Bonaventure accorded the *zelanti* a recognised role in the self-understanding of the Order without sacrificing the instrumentality of the clerically trained friars' religious life. In his distinctive hermeneutic of the Franciscan *vita*, Bonaventure synthesised scriptural, Franciscan and Joachite imagery to achieve an acceptable 'middle ground' in the factional conflict of interpretations over Francis' ideal. Bonaventure would continue to use this performative exegesis to instruct his confreres in the face of growing disputes within and outside the Order, particularly from Averroism and the resurgence of the secular-mendicant controversy.

Chapter 5: Forming an Experiential Hermeneutics (1267-1270)

During the period between completing the *Legendae maior et minor* in 1261 and returning to Paris to attend the Franciscan general chapter in 1266, Bonaventure had to immerse himself in numerous ministerial duties. These included systematising the constitutions and conducting visitations by foot to the various provinces of the Order. The Minister General's literary silence during this period is attested by the paucity of literary remains. Apart from a few epistolary writings and a smattering of sermons for special occasions, there were also newly codified versions of the Order's statutes submitted to the 1263 Pisa and 1266 Paris general chapters. Bonaventure's return to Paris in 1266 marked the beginning of an intellectual ferment. He delivered his masterful *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* merely a year after the *Collationes de decem praeceptis* in 1267. Building on the first, this second *Collationes* makes provision for the movement of the Holy Spirit in exegesis. During this phase of his hermeneutical development, Bonaventure transformed the speculative exegesis of his scholastic days. He indwelt and revoiced the sapiential forms of Scripture in a more personal manner that reflected a level of mystical self-realisation of biblical truth. His relational vision of Christ also formed the hermeneutical backdrop for his disputation *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem* (1269).

Bonaventure's new season of creativity coincided with a three-year period of *sede vacante* in the papacy, with no successor emerging to succeed Clement IV (died 29 November 1268) until the election of pro-mendicant Gregory X on 1 September 1271. This interregnum created further uncertainty and fluidity during a challenging period, when different groups within the Church sought to re-define orthodoxy and challenge the authority of the mendicant way of life. An Aristotelian-inspired philosophy, espoused by *magister artium* Siger of Brabant (c.1235-c.1284), sparked intense debate among the *intelligentsia* at Paris. Drawing upon the Aristotelian commentaries of Averroës, these doctrines were fiercely opposed by Stephen Tempier (1210-1279). As Chancellor of the University of Paris (1263-1268) and later as Bishop of Paris (1268-1279), Tempier had jurisdiction over the university. Tempier perceived this Averroist movement to be liberated from the influence of divine ideas and from the theological authority of the Church. This confusion over orthodoxy catalysed the resurgence in 1267 of the secular-mendicant conflict, led by secular *magister* in theology Gerard of Abbeville. Also taking advantage of the absence of papal authority, Gerard attacked the evangelical legitimacy

of mendicancy as the *raison d'être* of the mendicant orders. He thereby sought to discredit the theological and juridical basis for the existence of a religious vocation based on voluntary poverty. Crucially, the on-going internal conflict over the right interpretation of Franciscan *vita* also intensified. Certain Franciscans such as Peter of John Olivi were continuing to use Joachite prophetic interpretation of Scripture to justify the Franciscans' role and identity as leaders of a newly emergent spiritual Church. Amid the divisive perspectives of Averroist philosophy, secular theology and Joachite apocalypticism, Bonaventure was developing a more holistic, relational hermeneutic approach for his confreres to enact in the context of everyday life and ministry.

While Bonaventure is often presented as an Augustinian traditionalist or an Aristotelian-inspired speculative in responding to these controversies, I argue that this is inadequate as a summation of Bonaventure's performative approach. Instead, Bonaventure was seeking to instruct his confreres how to respond to these challenges from the perspective of biblical *sapientia.*

I. Historiographical perspectives

Scholarship on Bonaventure has traditionally viewed him as a strict Augustinian and resistant towards philosophy. Two views dominate the critical landscape. The first view, classically formulated by Étienne Gilson in the 1920s, proposed that Bonaventure's synthesis is purely an Augustinian rebuttal against a more radical Aristotelianism. Bonaventure, just like Alexander of Hales and other conservative theologians of that era, ordered all *scientia* to tradition *contra* Averroës' inductive analysis of the created world. Gilson went so far as to state: 'It was not St. Bonaventure who changed, but the world that changed about him'.[1] As Ephrem Longpré had indicated, Bonaventure refuted Averroism as early as 1253, in his *Commentary on the Sentences*.[2] Fernand van Steenberghen agreed that Bonaventure had a general intent to defuse the radical potential of an Averroist philosophical tradition but he highlighted a certain constructive capacity in Bonaventure's eclectic fusion of Augustinian, Neo-Platonist and

[1] Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1940), 28-29; Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 340-49, 411-313.

[2] E. Longpré, 'Bonaventure,' *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 9 (1937): 755; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.2, d.1, pt.1, a.1, q.2, resp; Also see Patrick Robert, 'St. Bonaventure: Defender of Christian Wisdom,' *Franciscan Studies* 3, 2 (1943): 159-79.

Aristotelian concepts as an 'Augustinizing Aristotelian'.[3] The second dominant view was put forward by Joseph Ratzinger in his research commencing in 1953. While acknowledging Bonaventure's anti-Aristotelianism as proposed by Gilson, Ratzinger presented Bonaventure as progressing beyond Augustinianism. Specifically, Ratzinger observed two ways in which Bonaventure responded to Averroism. From 1267 when Averroism was becoming a focus of controversy within the arts faculty at Paris, Bonaventure detected 'an eschatological phenomenon' in Averroist-Aristotelian philosophy. He considered Averroës' immanentist philosophy of God a threat to Christian orthodoxy. Bonaventure countered the Averroist challenge with an 'extra-philosophical anti-Aristotelianism' which transposed the speculative onto a higher mystical level.[4] Zachary Hayes and E. Randolph Daniel concurred with Ratzinger. Daniel posited that the philosophers 'were preparing the way for Antichrist… just as Francis had set the stage for Christ himself.' Averroist philosophy was 'an eschatological counterpart to the Franciscan eschatological role.'[5] In other words, Bonaventure was a progressive thinker injecting traditional spiritual exegesis with a new mystical-experiential element that transcended the dictates of both the scholastic tradition and Aristotle.

Such traditional scholarship generally tends to focus on Bonaventure's alignment with either philosophy or theology rather than his hermeneutic stance towards Scripture. However, more recent scholarship and textual evidence have challenged whether such neat opposition best served the complex reality of university politics and the intellectual world of thirteenth century Paris. Luca Bianchi, François-Xavier Putallaz and Bonnie Kent agreed with David Burr's pioneering work; they cautioned against a 'face value' reading of writings divorced from their intellectual and historical contexts – especially the writings of Peter of John Olivi and Bonaventure's personal disciples, notably John Pecham (c.1230-1292) and Matthew of Aquasparta (c.1237-1302).[6] To extend these historians' argument, the same caution can

[3] Fernand van Steenberghen, *La Philosophie au XIIIe siècle: Deuxième édition mise à jour* vol. 28, Philosophes médiévaux, (Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 1991), 434-39; quoted in Fernand van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism* trans. Leonard Johnston (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1955), 66-77, 147-62.
[4] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 148-63.
[5] Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction and Commentary,' in *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 17, 122; E. Randolph Daniel, 'St Bonaventure's Debt to Joachim,' *Medievalia et Humanistica* 11 (1982): 63; Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 134-63.
[6] See C. Colt Anderson, 'Franciscan Prophets and the Inquisition (1226–1326),' *Religions* 9, no. 4 (2018), https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/9/4/108; David Flood, 'The Theology of Peter John Olivi: A Search for a Theology and Anthropology of the Synoptic Gospels,' in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 127-84; G. Etzkorn, 'John Pecham,' in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 384-87.

reasonably be applied to the reading of Bonaventure's *Collationes*, especially his third and final *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273). They have argued that the evolving complex of Aristotle's theological views was neither uniform nor coherent, but rather a mirror on the diverse mentalities in operation among the Franciscans and others at Paris. Textual witness does not conclusively indicate a concerted reaction against Aristotle among Bonaventure and his contemporaries, although Stephen Tempier naturally sought to undermine what he saw as the ideological subversion of the class of men most responsible for papal administration and leadership. Indeed, the writings of Dominican Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and the secular *magister* Henry of Ghent (c.1217-1293) demonstrate a wider variety of forms of relation with Aristotle's philosophy than Gilson, Ratzinger and other traditional historians had deemed possible.[7] This is especially the case from the prolific work of Matthew of Aquasparta who vigorously defended and revised several Bonaventurian teachings.[8] This extreme relativity in the fusion and selection of sources among the Parisian intelligentsia suggests that Bonaventure's inclination to develop his own synthesis and source base was beyond the strictures of a definitive Franciscan school and well within the realm of scholarly practice of his day. Bonaventure's fusion of contemporaneity and tradition would most certainly have transcended neat categorisation into 'philosophical' or 'anti-philosophical', rational or faith-based.

Traditional scholars have tended to emphasise either the mystical or speculative dimensions of Bonaventure's synthesis. George Tavard argued that Bonaventure's dynamic fusion of the

[7] David Burr, 'Petrus Ioannis Olivi and the Philosophers,' *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971): 41-71; Luca Bianchi, *A Turning Point in Medieval Philosophy?*, ed. A. Aertsen Jan and Speer Andreas, Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? Qu'est-ce que la philosophie au moyen âge? What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?, (De Gruyter, 2012), 105-10. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110801453; Luca Bianchi, 'New Perspectives on the Condemnation of 1277 and its Aftermath,' *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 70, no. 1 (2003): 206-29; François-Xavier Putallaz, *Figures franciscaines de Bonaventure A Duns Scot* (Paris: Initiations au Moyen Âge, 1999), 9-78; quoted in Bianchi, 'Aristotle Among Thirteenth-Century Franciscans: Some Preliminary Remarks,' 237-39; Bonnie Dorrick Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 39-93.

[8] In his pivotal study of 1933, Grabmann opined that Matthew's writings 'are the purest and best expression of the philosophical-theological ideas of the Bonaventure school.' Grabmann argued for an 'intermediate Franciscan school' or 'Bonaventurian school' that is inspired by Bonaventure and his *corpus*. Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der katholischen Theologie seit dem Ausgang der Väterzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 69; quoted in Marianne Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 56; J.D. Dowd, 'Matthew of Aquasparta's *De productione rerum* and its Relation to St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure,' *Franciscan Studies* 34 (1974): 34-73; Steven P. Marrone, 'Matthew of Aquasparta, Henry of Ghent and Augustinian Epistemology after Bonaventure,' *Franziskanische Studien* 65 (1983): 252-90; P. Porro, 'Metaphysics and Theology in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century: Henry of Ghent Reconsidered,' in *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. J.A. Aertsen and A. Speer, Miscellanea Mediaevalia (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2000), 276-77.

objective/speculative and subjective/mystical elements of his theological approach was a progression beyond a scholastic framework to a more developmental and mystical model.[9] More recent historians have sought to determine the specificity of Bonaventure's synthesis from within its wider intellectual and historical contexts. Dominic Monti, penetrating the (inter-) textual scaffolding of the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, demonstrated Bonaventure's synthesis to be a mystically oriented, 'highly original blending of Augustine's allegorizing treatment of the Genesis account, the Neoplatonic symbolism of Pseudo-Dionysius, and the radical hermeneutical principles of Joachim, all united by Bonaventure's own deep conviction of the eschatological significance of Francis of Assisi.'[10] Jay M. Hammond, situating the *Hexaemeron* within the context of political and ideological struggle within the Order, university and Church of the thirteenth century, observes that Bonaventure defined Franciscan identity formation as interpretive performance. This was Bonaventure's distinctive response 'to the dual discourse of metaphysics and morals' cultivated by the Averroist philosophers and secular *magistri* who stood against the Franciscan way, and certain Franciscan Joachites who contributed to the tensions over the Order's eschatological role and identity.[11]

My brief survey indicates that scholarship has not agreed upon the exegetical key to Bonaventure's innovative synthesis. However, I contend that this key cannot be found with sole recourse to specific themes or contexts, but in respect to the interwoven thread of Sacred Scripture that binds the thoughts of his three *Collationes* together in unity. The message of Scripture – God the Holy Spirit – fosters the formation of an experiential Christology as a totalising solution to the fragmentation of the theological world of Bonaventure's time. Bonaventure's unique experiential understanding of Christ transcends and embraces the tension of 'philosophical' and 'anti-philosophical', and privileges Bonaventure's aim of sapiential instruction. As demonstrated in John F. Quinn's monumental study, Bonaventure developed a unique '*Bonaventurean* form of Christian wisdom'. Quinn specified that Bonaventure was not focally an Augustinian nor Aristotelian, but he was productively fusing elements from various authorities to construct a positive sapiential program.[12]

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[9] George Tavard, *Transiency and Permanence: The Nature of Theology according to St. Bonaventure*, Theology series (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1954), 255-58.
[10]Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works' (PhD University of Chicago, 1979), 239.
[11] Jay M. Hammond, 'Contemplation and the Formation of the '*Vir Spiritualis*',' in *Franciscans at Prayer*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 123-65.
[12] John F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, vol. 23, Studies and Texts, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 843-44, 873, 881-82, 895f.

I argue that *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* (*Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*) marks a key milestone in Bonaventure's hermeneutical development *en route* to the mature sapiential vision of his final *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (*Collations on the Six Days of Creation*). As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, hermeneutics offers a way to trace Bonaventure's intellectual formation, since the primary variable would be his integration of fresh methodological skills and sources in response to the changing situation within the Order and wider Church. As leader of his Order since 1257, Bonaventure taught his confreres how to respond to the intellectual, ethical and political disputes raging within the medieval world of his time. He did this with a hermeneutics of experience – an understanding of Christian life and doctrine based on his experience of Scripture, rather than in the construction of a doctrinal system. Transforming the horizon of Alexandrine scholasticism, Bonaventure's distinctive response to these disputes concerned *inter alia*, the problem of the methodological foundations of theological interpretation.

II. *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*

Most scholars, such as Zachary Hayes and Jacques-Guy Bougerol, agree with Palémon Glorieux concerning the dating of the *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti.* It was during Lent, from 25 February to 7 April 1268, that Bonaventure delivered his second *Collationes* at the Convent of the Cordeliers at Paris. He had delivered his *Collationes de decem praeceptis* (*Collations on the Ten Commandments*) during Lent the previous year at the same location.[13]

As with the other two *Collationes*, Bonaventure delivered his *Collationes de septem donis* with the aim to crystallise a right approach to sapiential self-realisation. This approach would help the friars to embody the healing wisdom of God toward the renewal of an intellectual and a religious world fractured with hostility and challenge posed by the Averroists and secular *magistri* in theology. The Minister General also aimed to extend his pedagogical and pastoral program mainly to those who would become future teachers and superiors in the Order. Since 1266, Bonaventure had undertaken a hiatus from his papal visits and visitations to various

[13] Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction,' in *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Zachary Hayes and Robert J. Karris (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2009), 9; Palémon Glorieux, 'La Date des collations de Saint Bonaventure,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 22 (1929): 257-72; quoted in Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 125-29, esp. 128.

provinces of the Order and settled down in his primary residence at the Mantes-sur-Seine friary outside Paris. As the Order's centre for teaching formation, Paris would have been the most suitable location for the Minister General to effectively carry out his program.[14] In addition, he had likely perceived that a change of leadership would naturally disrupt the expanding Order's administrative stability and continuity, and his reform agenda for the Franciscan community. For these reasons, he had declined a nomination by Pope Clement IV for the post of Archbishop of York a year earlier.[15]

Bonaventure's *Collationes* represented a specific form of preaching. The Latin term *collatio* accrued multiple meanings arising from its contextual diversity. Literally, it means 'bringing together'; but ecclesiastically, it defines 'a light informal meal permitted on days of fasting in addition to the full meal' or the monks' evening meal at the close of a workday. Traditionally practised by the monastics such as the Benedictines and Cistercians at an informal gathering preceding the evening meal, a *collatio* could be a passage drawn from Scripture, the Rule or a patristic author and exposited by a superior.[16] One of the key texts used was by monastic theologian and patristic father John Cassian (c.360-435) entitled the *Collationes patrum in scetica eremo* (c.426-429) – a series of his twenty-four dialogues with the Egyptian desert fathers on different aspects of the spiritual life and formation of the inner man. This practice dates back to the Rule of Saint Benedict of Nursia (c.480-540) in 516.[17] In approximately 1231, the Dominican Master General Jordan of Saxony (c.1190-1237) obtained permission from the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the preaching of *collationes* to students at their Paris convent of Saint Jacques. Conducted at vespers, these *collationes* recapitulated the theme of sermons preached in the Eucharistic liturgy that morning either on a Sunday or a feast day. The Franciscans adapted this practice, expounding a chosen theme in the style of the *sermo*

[14] Dominic Monti, 'Introduction,' in *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, ed. Dominic Monti, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 31-33.
[15] Bonaventure, *St. Bonaventure's Writings concerning the Franciscan Order*, trans. Dominic Monti, vol. 5, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 199; IV, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vol.3, 60ff; quoted in Jay M. Hammond, 'Introduction,' in *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church,* vol.18 (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2018), 21-25, esp. 21.
[16] Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. C. Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 167; L.E. Boyle, *Collatio*, New Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York, 1967), 995; Phyllis Roberts, 'Sermons and Preaching in/and the Medieval University,' in *Medieval Education*, ed. Ronald Begley and Joseph Koterski (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 83-85.
[17] John Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, Ancient Christian Writers, (Mahwah: The Newman Press, 1997); Maurice M. Hassett, 'John Cassian,' in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles Herbermann (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908); William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, vol. 57 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 123, 58; Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 27-29.

modernus.[18] As stipulated by the university regulations, these non-academic weekend *collationes* generally followed the format of a two-part sermon preached on a Sunday. The first part was devoted to the morning and the other to the evening.[19] This Franciscan 'double-sermon' practice is evident from Bonaventure's Sermons 10 and 57 of his *Sermons de diversis* delivered around 1267 to 1268.[20] Another form was the non-liturgical *collationes*. They were in the form of *disputatio*, as in the *Collationes* – also known as a *Dialogue between a Christian, a Philosopher and a Jew* (c.1130) – of scholastic Peter Abelard.[21] Commonly practised by Thomas Aquinas and other *magistri* and their students at the university, such *collationes* were conducted at any time or day of the week and sometimes inclusive of the wider public.[22]

In his *Collationes*, Bonaventure seemed to favour the form of the *sermo modernus* over the rigid form of the *disputatio.* With its subdivision and development of scriptural themes, the former is more practical, relatable and transmissible. His sermons harnessed Scripture as a mode of living, instead of focusing on the academically oriented *quaestio* often extrinsic to scriptural concerns. In fusing the *sermo modernus* technique with the monastic *lectio divina*, Bonaventure advances an entirely new relation with the matters of spiritual existence. Bonaventure would have chosen this practical-pedagogical genre to synthesise the disparate concerns affecting the Order within a holistic program of sapiential formation.

Collationes de septem donis was preserved in three *reportationes*. These nine sermons urged their audiences to respond to God's grace. According to Zachary Hayes, Bonaventure was emphasising that 'the proper response to God's grace…is to love God above all things, to love oneself, and to love one's fellow human beings, both one's friends and one's enemies.'[23] As a

[18] F. Quétif and J. Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris, 1719-1721), 97; Marian Michele Mulchahey, *'First the Bow is Bent in Study….' Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 194-203.
[19] For the use of the *collatio* as a homiletical tool, see Marshall Crossnoe, 'Education and the Care of Souls: Pope Gregory IX, the Order of St, Victor, and the University of Paris in 1237,' *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (1999): 137-72; J.W. Baldwin, 'Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle,' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R.L. Benson and G. Constable (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).
[20] Bonaventure, *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermons de diversis*, 2 vols., ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol (Paris: Les Éditions Franciscaines, 1993), s.10, 180-200; s.57, 749-71.
[21] Peter Abelard, *The Collationes*, trans. Giovanni Orlandi John Marenbon, Oxford Medieval Texts, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); Alex J. Novikoff, 'Peter Abelard and Disputation: A Re-examination,' *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 32, 4 (2014): 323-47.
[22] For Bonaventure's mode of delivery and format of his three *collationes*, see Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church,* 3-6 (esp. fn.19 and 20).
[23] Marc Ozilou, 'Saint Bonaventure in Paris,' in *A Pilgrimage through the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Josef Raischl Andre Cirino (Canterbury: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2008), 236-37; Hayes, 'Introduction,' *Collations on the Seven Gifts,* 18-19.

result, they would experience the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Isaiah 11:2-3: 'the fear of the Lord, piety, knowledge, fortitude, counsel, understanding and wisdom.'[24] In setting out what must be done to attain and retain *sapientia*, Bonaventure elaborated on the guiding principles of mystical relationship with Christ the centre. I shall now expound the three gifts that are hermeneutically significant – the third 'gift of knowledge', the sixth 'gift of understanding' and the final 'gift of wisdom'.

(a) The gift of knowledge

Bonaventure clarifies that this gift from the Holy Spirit is an authentic knowledge (*scientia*) of reality. Such knowledge always begins with an appeal to God as the 'original source' and 'great doctor of the sciences'. Bonaventure refers to Psalm 93:10 in which God 'teaches knowledge to human beings.' The encounter of reader and textual subject is poised on a radical alterity or back-and-forth between divine and human subjects about the text. Bonaventure reiterates this principle of Christ as the starting point of knowledge in his later *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, '…it should be noted that the beginning is from the center, who is Christ…Hence, it is necessary to begin from him if anyone wishes to reach Christian wisdom, as shown in Matthew [11:27]: "for no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him."'[25] Clearly in both *Collationes*, Bonaventure develops a personal angle on the hermeneutics of encounter based on the scriptural injunction to 'know' through relating, as Christ the Son relates with his Father.

Bonaventure emphasises the potential for direct questioning of the textual subject – a personal dialogic relation between human reader and divine subject through the medium of Scripture. Three elements of reading in God are implied: the author who is God, the human reader who receives the fullness of divine understanding with respect to the divine work or text, and the divine work or text through which God speaks and which the reader has proceeded to investigate. Conditional to this authentic encounter between reader and text is a sensitivity to the restorative intention of its divine author: 'To start, then, we must lift our souls and appeal to the Giver of gifts, since we are not asking for temporal goods, but for the welfare and salvation of our soul. And this is pleasing to God as it was in the case of Solomon, who asked

[24] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, vol. 14, ed. Robert J. Karris and Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2009), col.1, n.2-7, 29-35.
[25] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.4, n.1, 85; Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.10, 78.

the Lord for wisdom.'[26] Bonaventure's evocation of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:7-12 as an illustrative example is significant; Solomon's appeal to the Giver of the gift of wisdom was in view of his burden of responsibility as Israel's new king. As such, Bonaventure implies that the reader's petitioning of God arises from pure motives and for the sake of things in line with God's character and justice; this setting of right relationship with God ensures the power and efficacy of God's response.

Accordingly, there are four levels of knowledge. Firstly, on the philosophical level, the reader investigates the way things are. Secondly, on the theological level, philosophical knowledge is not the end, but points to the divine nature and purposes resplendent in creaturely determinations. But neither is theological knowledge the *terminus*. Thirdly, on the level of the 'knowledge of grace', theological knowledge is uplifted by the grace of the Holy Spirit and directed towards holy things to guide the reader's way in the actual. Fourthly, on the level of glory, this journey culminates in loving union with God to transfigure a triple integration of knowledge, belief and action. Bonaventure cites Bernard of Clairvaux in saying that the 'fruit' and 'value of knowledge' lies in the 'manner of knowing'. Bonaventure affirms that the soteriological purpose of all knowledge and action disposes the reader to desire, think and live in a manner that leads him to salvation. Bonaventure's program of exegesis is ordered from the top down. The reader learns what leads him more readily to salvation, applies himself more ardently to what draws him more strongly into God's love, and investigates 'not for the sake of vain glory or curiosity…but for [his] own edification and for that of [his] neighbor.'[27] Thus, Bonaventure describes in mystical-practical terms the conditions that enable one to judge rightly concerning matters of action and belief, ordered to the heart and justice of Christ. For Bonaventure, Christ as epistemic centre unites and organises these four levels of knowledge.

With respect to the second level of theological knowledge, Bonaventure expounds his theme of dynamism ordered by the interpretive 'dance' of reader, text and world. Bonaventure designates three dimensions in scriptural interpretation: the polyvalent depth of Scripture's mysteries like the 'waters of the sea', the multiplicity of Scripture's meanings like the 'diverse springs' that converge in the sea, and the integrity of Scripture's doctrine which confirms the

[26] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.4, n.1-2, 85-86.
[27] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.4, n.3-25, 87-106, esp.105; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Songs,* trans. Samuel J. Eales (London, 1895), homily 36, n.3, 235.

stability of the human and ecclesiastical orders. With respect to Scripture's inexhaustibility, the depths of Scripture's meaning can only be penetrated by the reader who seeks God. The reader will miss Scripture's true, intended meaning unless it signifies of its divine author. Therefore, both 'learning' and 'disposition' are required. With respect to 'diverse meanings', scriptural things can have different meanings according to the reader's differing modes of relation with the scriptural text itself and the objects represented therein. The reader multiplies insights owing to his effervescing relation to the scriptural text in Christ the centre. For example, the reader shaped by an experience of victorious living in Christ might read an ordinary gate more as an entryway into greener pastures, while a reader who has experienced the divine discipline might register its restrictive aperture. The shape and tonalities of reading are determined by readerly disposition on the one hand, and by the nature and properties of the represented object on the other. Therefore, the readerly disposition adduces the exegetical starting point, the represented object is the mirror on the reader's (self)understanding, and Christ is the medium of the reader's relation with the represented object. This interaction is microcosmic of Bonaventure's synthetic whole. This dynamic interplay of reader, text and world has its basis in the inter-relational 'dance' of the Trinity – Christ or Scripture that interprets, the reader who is interpreted and who interprets, and the represented object that is the mutual fusion of horizons poured out on another. Finally, with respect to the confirmation of stability of self and Church, deepening participation in scriptural experience conforms the reader more and more to the deiform. Such conformity occurs through a living relationship with Christ, and not simply through external embodiment of scriptural deeds nor intellectual study of scriptural thoughts. This relation induces right scriptural thoughts and actions, which in turn lead the reader deeper into Christ. Bonaventure's sense of interpretive dynamism marks his attempt to systematically account for the movement of the Holy Spirit in history and exegesis.[28]

It stands to reason that the capacities for God are innately held within the human person, because knowledge is a product of his *tete-a-tete* with God. Bonaventure develops the Aristotelian psychological implications of his theory of knowledge, as inspired by his reading of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:6:

> God, who told the light to *shine out of the darkness*, *has shone in our hearts* to give enlightenment concerning the knowledge of the splendor of God shining in

[28] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col. 4, n.13-18, 95-100.

> the face of Christ Jesus…Two things come before the gift of knowledge. One is like an *innate light*; the other is like an *infused light*. The innate light is the light of natural judgment or reason. The light infused over and above that is the light of faith.[29] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure proposes a dual dimension of knowledge – 'innate light' and 'infused light' – rooted in a twofold reality of the human soul. Firstly, the innate light corresponds to the human knowledge of the Creator that 'shines out of the darkness'. Innate knowledge is obtained through a natural process of reasoning, with the soul impressing upon itself the species abstracted from material things. This process, while natural, occurs within God, albeit in terms of a divine-human concurrence rather than a causal influx. Secondly, the infused light corresponds to the soul's knowledge of the Saviour that 'has shone in [its] heart'. This inspired knowledge of God himself comes through direct illumination from above. This illumination infuses the soul, making whole the soul's possible/potential and agent/active operations. In this way, both the innate 'light of natural judgment or reason' and the infused 'light of faith' converge in the act of reading.[30]

Further evidence of Bonaventure's conception of interpretive psychology can be found in his earlier scholastic works, albeit in a philosophical register. In Book 3 of his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1253), the division of human knowledge is fourfold: (i) A rational knowledge consisting in the intellect as pure speculation. Such knowledge is a foundation for the principles of reason as sourced from creatures. (ii) The science of Sacred Scripture, acquired by faith and moved by the *affect* (power of desire). This science is a foundation for the principles of faith. (iii) A knowledge of virtue moving the *affect*. This knowledge is a foundation for the principles of natural law. (iv) A knowledge of the gift of the Holy Spirit moving and being moved by the *affect*. Bonaventure concludes that this fourfold knowledge aligns the soul with scriptural deeds, with the principles of faith that ground the soul's determination, and with the humanity

[29]Bonaventure, *Collationes in septem donis Spiritus Sancti, Opera omnia,* 5:474: *'Deus, qui dixit de tenebris lucem splendescere etc...Donum scientiae duo antecedunt: unum est sicut lumen innatum est lumen naturalis iudicatorii sive rationis; lumen superinfusum est lumen fidei.'* Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.4, n.2, 86.

[30] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.4, n.1-12, 85-95; Also see Joseph Owens, 'Faith, ideas, illumination, and experience,' in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism (1100-1600)*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 450-51; Zdzislaw Kuksewicz, 'The potential and the agent intellect,' in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism (1100-1600)*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 601.

of Christ as the Exemplar of the determination.[31] Bonaventure's attempt to systematically exposit the fourfold mechanism of divine wisdom differs from his re-voicing and indwelling of Scripture in the later *Collationes de septem donis.*

(b) The gift of understanding

Bonaventure models his approach to understanding from what he sees as the perspective of Scripture. This gift of spiritual understanding (*intellectus*) from the Holy Spirit is actualised through 'the humble gratitude of the one receiving it, and from the lavish generosity of the one giving it.' On the other hand, the 'presumptuous' and 'proud' do not receive this gift. Bonaventure describes three dispositions that prepare the soul to receive this spiritual gift of insight into the heart of reality. The first disposition, 'holiness of life', consists in renouncing excessive devotion to 'bodily pleasures' such as 'drunkenness' and 'lust'. Bonaventure interprets this principle by 1 Corinthians 3:2 which emphasises the need to renounce the 'milk… of bodily pleasures [for] the solid food of life and understanding'. 'Meekness of mind' is the second disposition that attunes the soul to God. As noted in Sirach 5:13: 'Be meek in hearing the word, and you will understand.' This disposition is formed by intentionally rejecting ungodly dispositions such as rage and lust, which cloud judgment and cause the soul to defend or cling to what is false. Bonaventure refers to Aristotle and indicates: 'By remaining calm, the soul becomes prudent and knowing.'[32] The final disposition is the 'captivity of the intellect', where the soul determines to make its 'intellect captive in the service of Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:5) The soul recognises its own intellectual deficiency, 'especially in lofty matters that transcend [its] understanding'. The soul renounces its own self-understanding and self-sufficiency to lay hold of the thoughts of Christ. Wrong thinking, wrong desires and wrong actions lead away from this spiritual understanding and into lesser knowledge and 'serious errors'.[33]

Bonaventure goes on to explain how this gift of spiritual understanding must be retained. The wayfarer, who intentionally lives for his heavenly destiny, will naturally know to avoid whatever will keep him from attaining that destiny. He will also know to pursue whatever will bring him closer to its realisation. This moral intellect is 'the rule for judging on moral issues

[31] Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.3, a.1, q.3, 777-78.
[32] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, n.1, col.8, n.1-4, 163-67; Aristotle, *Physics*, vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes, The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), bk.7, c.3, vol.2, 247b, 122.
[33] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.1-6, 163-68.

together with the desire of the heart and with achievement in action, so that a person might consider what is to be avoided, what is to be done, and what is to be hoped for.'[34] Crucially, there is the need for the illumination of divine influence upon him, which disposes him to live and understand more deeply the scriptural truths. Daniel 2:21-22 is cited to this end: 'He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who understand learning. He reveals deep and hidden things, and knows those things which lie in darkness. And the light is with him.' The intellect clarifies an inner truth scripturally understood and manifested through Christian practice.[35]

(c) The gift of wisdom

According to Bonaventure, the gifts of knowledge and spiritual understanding are not sufficient in themselves for salvation. Instead, they converge, along with the other four gifts, in the final gift of wisdom (*sapientia*). Bonaventure teaches that the soul must choose divine 'wisdom that comes from above' over 'worldly wisdom'. Divine wisdom, epitomised by the Cross, is facility in 'heavenly and invisible things' of God leading to beatitude. Worldly wisdom is facility in the 'corruptible things of the earth.' One is eternal, the other temporal; one is beneficial, the other corruptive. Referring to Matthew 7:24 where the wise man built his house on rock, Bonaventure marks that divine wisdom 'builds up the Church and the soul to become the dwelling place of God…' This house of wisdom must have a sevenfold foundation, as described in Proverbs 9:1: 'Wisdom has built herself a house. She has carved out seven pillars.' As with James 3:17, Bonaventure names these as 'chastity of the body, innocence of the mind, moderation of speech, docility in affect, generosity in action, maturity in judgment, and simplicity in intention.'[36] In this way, Bonaventure teaches his confreres how to acquire divine wisdom, bringing forward practical steps to activate the sapiential principles embedded in the biblical text.

Bonaventure attempts to describe, from the standpoint of experience, how the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are appropriated. This mode of scriptural performance is a development from the earlier *Breviloquium* (1257), where these same gifts are situated as functions within a doctrinal system. In this early phase of his hermeneutical journey, Bonaventure simply matches objective reality with textual fact. His presentation of scriptural truths is on the level of logical

[34] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.7-11, 168-72.
[35] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.12-15, 172-78, esp. 175.
[36] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.9, n.1-7, 183-90, esp. 185, 190.

statements. He makes careful distinctions between the 'spiritual' and 'natural' gifts as the basis for an explanation of the relationship between the spiritual and the natural dimensions of the Christian life. The seven gifts are correlated to the intellective, affective and active capacities of the soul: understanding 'is directed to a consideration of the truth; through the gift of counsel, to choose the truth; and knowledge to carry out what has been chosen.'[37] Bonaventure's explanation of how the gifts function in the everyday life of the Christian is more in the order of an abstract taxonomy. This reflects Bonaventure's earlier scholastic mode of theological speculation.

This development in Bonaventure's exegesis from the speculative to the performative can be illustrated by means of an example. In the mode of scriptural performance, the Bonaventurian exegete reads of Christ going to the Cross and vicariously enters into Christ's own experience. The exegete existentially reflects Christ's own motives, way and self-understanding – both in himself, to others, and to God. The principles incarnate in Christ's experience are transferable to those of the exegete, with this experience reducing to the sapiential meaning of the Cross. However, in the mode of theological speculation, the exegete interprets the Christ-event from the standpoint of a purely mechanical efficacy. Christ is the object of a science; divine wisdom is reduced to an abstraction. The exegete will draw a causal relation between Christ's sacrificial act and its healing efficacy for believers on the testimony of the scriptures. But the exegete cannot fully understand nor appreciate Christ's perfect love, nor be persuaded to enter into this love for himself. For Bonaventure, this philosophical approach to theology is not sufficient in itself to foster a fuller understanding of the truth.

In sum, in his *Collationes de septem donis*, Bonaventure's creation of a greater space for the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit in history and consciousness is shaped by a backdrop of speculation among scholastics over the role of divine ideas in theological thinking. On his part, Bonaventure sees both knowledge and action as manifestations of a divine love. His divine sapiential approach qualifies and transcends the purely naturalistic, time-bound Averroist approach to knowledge. Although Bonaventure does not name Averroës or the Averroist adherents, his allusions to them and to their radical ideas in his three *Collationes* suggest a level of critical engagement. As I shall demonstrate, Bonaventure's scriptural qualifications of

[37] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.5, ch.5, n.4, 188.

Averroës' psychology were intended to restore philosophical cognition to his divine sapiential enterprise, in a way that accorded with scriptural experience.

III. Critique of Averroist philosophy in the *Collationes*

At the turn of the thirteenth century, a new form of Aristotelianism was gaining a following at Paris. As early as 1210, Pope Innocent III, with the support of King Philip Augustus of France, had banned certain works of Aristotle on natural philosophy and metaphysics at the newly established University of Paris.[38] Five years later**,** the papal legate Robert of Courson promulgated a series of university charters to uphold the ban.[39] However this ban was not totally enforced, especially outside the arts faculty. Since 1230, this burgeoning Aristotelianism had gained further impetus with the introduction into the Latin West of commentaries on Aristotle by Averroës. Born Ibn Rushd in Islamic Andalusia (present-day Spain) in 1126, Averroës was renowned for his influential writings, especially his thirty-eight Arabic commentaries on Aristotle that were translated into Latin in the early thirteenth century.[40] By this time, these Aristotelian commentaries had infiltrated the faculty of theology, so much so that certain theologians had begun to add certain Aristotelian philosophical doctrines to theological tradition while rejecting those doctrines they deemed erroneous. In 1231, possibly to regulate the increasing use of Aristotle, Pope Gregory IX decreed in his *Parens scientarum* that the ban on Aristotle's *Libri naturales* be lifted but on the condition that these books be vetted by a three-member committee under William of Auxerre (c.1150-1231). Despite the collaborative effort of Alexander of Hales (who had helped to draft the bull) and various other theologians who were more cautious in their reception of Averroës, Gregory's initiative never actually succeeded especially with William's sudden death at the end of the year.[41] The

[38] For the formation of the University of Paris since its beginnings in the early 1200s, see S. Ferruolo, '*Parisius Paradisus*: The City, its Schools and the Origin of the University of Paris,' in *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present*, ed. Thomas Bender (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 22-43; S. Ferruolo, 'The Paris Statutes of 1215 Reconsidered,' *History of Universities* 5 (1985): 1-14; Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 1, Universities in the Middle Ages, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[39] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Ex typis fratrum Delalain, 1889-1897), vol.1, n.20, 78-80.

[40] Most of Averroës' original Arabic treatises have been lost; but their Hebrew or Latin translations have survived. For the corpus of Averroës in Latin, see Averroës, *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Minerva, 1962); Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century* (Olms: Hildesheim, 2010); Bernard G. Dod, '*Aristoteles Latinus*,' in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45-79.

[41] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.59, 114-16; n.79, 136; n.87, 143-44; Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, ed. Austin P. Evans, Records of Civilization - Sources and Studies, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), n.20, 39-40; Spencer Young, *Scholarly Community*

explosion of Aristotelianism led the arts faculty to establish a new curriculum incorporating this new philosophy in 1255.[42] These university philosophers, led by Siger of Brabant, sparked intense debate among Bonaventure and other intellectuals at Paris.[43]

A prominent *magister artium*, Siger advanced certain radical philosophical ideas that aggravated issues of orthodoxy within the university, mendicant orders and Church.[44] A prominent adversary of Siger and other Averroist adherents was Stephen Tempier who considered them to be developing a philosophy that stood against the theological authority of the Church and bereft of the influence of the divine ideas.[45] Taking advantage of the absence of papal authority during the three-year *sede vacante*, Tempier shaped orthodoxy to his own doctrinal and political agenda. In 1270, Tempier censured thirteen 'heretical' Averroist

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at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215-1248, vol. 94, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 102-30; Kenan B. Osborne, 'Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology,' in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute 1994), 4.

[42] Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), 138-42; Edward Grant, 'The Reaction of the Universities and Theological Authorities to Aristotelian Science and Natural Philosophy,' in *Source Book in Medieval Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 43-44; Ian Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c.1100-1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 162; Olga Weijers, *A Scholar's Paradise: Teaching and Debating in Medieval Paris*, ed. Luca Bianchi, Jacques Verger, and Olga Weijers, vol. 2, Studies on the Faculty of Arts: History and Influence, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 35, 72-75.

[43] 'Heterodox Aristotelianism', 'Radical Aristotelianism' and 'Eclectic Aristotelianism' were the terms commonly used to differentiate the Sigerian philosophical movement from the 'Averroism' of Averroës' own Aristotelian philosophy. Nowadays, 'Averroism' is a common designator for both movements. Siger and those arts masters are known as 'Averroists' because of their fidelity to Averroës' doctrines. Fernand van Steenberghen, *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1955), 82-92, 357-62; Stephen F. Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, 'Averroism,' in *Historical Dictionary of Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Stephen F. Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies and Movements (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), 79-81; Also see Bianchi, *A Turning Point in Medieval Philosophy?*, 100-10; Bianchi, 'New Perspectives on the Condemnation of 1277 and its Aftermath,' 206-29.

[44] In 1266, Siger chose to remain in the faculty of arts instead of moving on to the 'higher' faculties of theology, medicine or law. Siger's career choice marked a new professional attitude among the *magistri artium*. One of these was Boethius of Dacia (c.1240-c.1277). His significant influence in the Averroist controversy was curtailed possibly because he relinquished his career and took on the Dominican habit sometime a year before his death in 1277. Nevertheless, a few of his major works have survived. John F. Wippel, 'The Parisian Condemnations of 1270-1277,' in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 66; B.C. Bazán, 'Siger of Brabant,' in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 632; For the life and works of Boethius, see Bazán, 'Boethius of Dacia,' 227-31; John F. Wippel and Allan B. Wolter, 'Boethius of Dacia,' in *Medieval Philosophy from St. Augustine to Nicholas of Cusa: Readings in the History of Philosophy*, ed. John F. Wippel and Allan B. Wolter (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 367-68; Sten Ebbesen, 'Boethius of Dacia,' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 812-16.

[45] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.409, 449-58; Pilar Herráiz Oliva, 'Towards a New Methodology for Natural Philosophy: Latin Averroism Revisited,' *Mediterranea: International Journal on the Transfer of Knowledge* 6 (2021): 138; Sten Ebbesen, 'The Paris Arts Faculty: Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Radulphus Brito,' in *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon, Routledge History of Philosophy (London: Routledge, 2004), 273.

propositions identified with the help of Peter of John Olivi and others.[46] Even before Tempier's public condemnation of Siger, Bonaventure was already playing a significant part. Contrary to Tempier, he merely alluded to his opponents and pointed out their 'errors' in his *Collationes* of 1267 and 1268. Bonaventure's effort reached its apex in his *Collationes in Hexameron* in 1273. John Pecham also continued to exert a strong influence in the Averroist debate after his master's death in 1274. Two years later, Siger was interned in the Italian town of Orvieto. Tempier, still considering the 'Sigerians' to pose a threat, branded Siger as a heretic and, pre-empting the directive of Pope John XXI, boldly condemned another two-hundred-and-nineteen heretical propositions. These were again identified under Tempier's directives by Olivi, secular *magister* Henry of Ghent and fourteen other theologians.[47] Olivi had apparently pursued, under Bonaventure's supervision, a study of 'Averroistic Aristotelianism' that contributed to Tempier's present and earlier condemnations.[48] Siger's death around 1284 did not dissipate this Averroist movement.[49] It eventually birthed new forms of relationship between philosophy and theology.[50]

Bonaventure's critique in his three *Collationes* of certain Averroist doctrinal 'errors', while polemical on occasion, was generally focused on interpreting these errors in light of scriptural truth. Bonaventure, as Minister General of the Order, was understandably keen to avoid direct confrontation with the university and ecclesiastical authorities. His *Collationes* were evidently fashioned toward discerning and defusing the spiritual and affective forces that lay beneath the

[46] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.432, 486-87; Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, n.38, 80-81; Stephen Tempier, 'The Parisian Condemnations of 1270,' in *Medieval Philosophy from St. Augustine to Nicholas of Cusa: Readings in the History of Philosophy*, ed. John F. Wippel and Allan B.Wolter (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 366.

[47] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.471, 541-42; n.473, 543-58; R. Wielockx, 'Henry of Ghent and the Events of 1277,' in *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, ed. G.A. Wilson, Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), 25-61; P. Mandonnet, *Philosophy in the West: Readings in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, ed. J. Katz and R. H. Weingarter (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World 1965), 532-42; John F. Wippel, 'The Condemnations of 1270 and 1277 at Paris,' *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1977): 169-201; Wippel, 'The Parisian Condemnations of 1270-1277,' 65-68; Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 337-54.

[48] Warren Lewis, 'Introduction,' in *Peter of John Olivi: Commentary on the Apocalypse* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), xxv.

[49] In 1284, John Pecham reported the circumstances of Siger's tragic death at the hands of his 'demented secretary' to be after 1282 in a letter addressed to the University of Oxford. Bazán, 'Siger of Brabant,' 633; Fernand van Steenberghen, *Maître Siger de Brabant* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1977), 405; For the life and works of Siger, see Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism* 209-29; Wippel and Wolter, 'Siger of Brabant,' 358-59; John F. Wippel, 'Siger of Brabant (c.1240-c.1284),' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Taylor and Francis, 1998).

[50] For the Averroist philosophical movement at the end of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, & Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 310-14.

surface of the conflict. Ignatius Brady affirmed that Bonaventure had a particular concern for 'the moral implications of such errors'. Bonaventure's aim was to proclaim the faith and defend Christian *sapientia* for the thousands of friars within the Order.[51]

According to Bonaventure, the Averroist challenge stemmed from the philosophers' different way of pursuing true knowledge of God. They rejected the influence of the divine ideas in favour of a purely naturalistic approach. In his *Sermon 2 on the Third Sunday of Advent* (1267), Bonaventure cautioned that any philosophy not disposed toward Sacred Scripture was 'truth mixed with error.'[52] In his *Collationes de decem praeceptis*, Bonaventure further cautioned his fellow friars against the Averroists whose 'insolent audacity of philosophical research' would ultimately lead them into 'error' and away from Christ as the only source of truth. He expressed his concerns as such:

> I heard, when I was a student, that Aristotle posited that the world was eternal; and when I heard the reasons and arguments which were made in this regard, my heart began to be disturbed and I began to think, how can this be?[53]

In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, Bonaventure stressed that to emulate the Averroists was to be separated from God as 'the cause of being', 'the ground of understanding' and 'the pattern for living'.[54] Later, in his *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure admonished 'the false positions' of the '*artistae*' (alluding to *magister artium* Siger of Brabant and other Averroist proponents) who, with their 'spirit of presumption and curiosity…attack[ed]…the doctrine of Christ'. Bonaventure castigated these 'philosophers' as 'curious' because they glorified themselves and the power of human knowledge rather than God and his revelation. They led the curious searcher to rely on his own intellectual powers in deciphering the truth of reality, rather than on what God had revealed.[55]

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[51] Ignatius Brady, 'Background to the Condemnation of 1270: Master William of Baglione, O.F.M.,' *Franciscan Studies* 30 (1970): 6.
[52] Bonaventure, 'Sermon II on the Third Sunday of Advent,' in *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 112.
[53] Bonaventure, *Collationes de decem praeceptis, Opera omnia,* 5:515: '*Audivi, cum fui scholaris, de Aristotele, quod posuit mundum aeternum; et cum audivi rationes et argumenta, quae fiebant ad hoc, incepit concuti cor meum et incepit cogitare, quomodo potest hoc esse?*' Bonaventure, *Collations on the Ten Commandments*, trans. Paul Spaeth, vol. 6, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1995), col.2, n.24-25, 40-41; n.28, 42.
[54] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, 14, col.8, n.15, 175-78.
[55] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.8-9, 77-78; Lydia Ducolomb, 'St. Bonaventure's Reputation as Reflected in the Dissemination of his Works,' in *A Pilgrimage through the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Josef Raischl Andre Cirino (Canterbury: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2008), 278-79.

Bonaventure counterposed what he saw as the natural source, order and end of Averroist philosophical interpretation against the scriptural notion of spiritual understanding as sourced, ordered and oriented in the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure did not undertake a systematic theology, nor was he strictly a philosopher. In response to the different ways of interpreting the Christian life, Bonaventure went back to the basics of faith to develop a life and a doctrine firmly based in the wisdom of Scripture as God's 'truth'. Bonaventure's use of Scripture as a source and measure of philosophical arguments was in pointed demonstration of the principle of subordination of philosophy to Scripture. It was Scripture itself that gave form, meaning and identity to philosophy by bringing speculations about things into alignment with the thoughts of God.

Bonaventure's contention about source and control of meaning is vividly illustrated through certain biblical images. For instance, in the *Hexaemeron*, he links 'the tree of life' (Genesis 2:9) and 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil' (Genesis 2:17) with the primordial decision of Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the second tree (Genesis 3:6). Bonaventure emphasises that Christ is the 'tree of life' – the true source and inner teacher of *sapientia*. Here, Bonaventure draws upon Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and *De Genesi ad litteram* which describe the paradoxical nature of interpretive volition. The reader's choice to interpret in search of either God or things determines, and is determined by, the reader's direction in the actual. More significantly, Bonaventure distinguishes between 'the tree of paradise' and 'the tree of curious knowledge (*scientia*)'. The former symbolises Christ the Divine Word as the fruit of true contemplation and piety; the latter symbolises the Averroist philosophers' experimental knowledge of things as the forbidden fruit of inquisitiveness. The philosophers, in their focus on natural means and goals of perception, become 'lucifers'. Like Lucifer, they claimed to be equal with God out of sinful pride in their own false knowledge (Isaiah 14:12-15).[56]

[56] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, 18, col.1, n.15-17, 81-83, esp.82; col.3, n.27, 123-24; col.4, n.1, 129-30; Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus C. Dods, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), bk.11, ch.7. https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm; Augustine of Hippo, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor, Ancient Christian Writers, (New York: Newman Press, 1982), bk.4, n.24.

Expounding 'three errors' of Averroist philosophy

Contra the Averroist position, Bonaventure constructs an argument for the spiritual resumption of natural cognition from the perspective of Scripture. He attests that three 'errors' contravene the unity of life, thought and vision in God. These 'errors' stem from the 'reckless presumption' of philosophical investigation as inspired by Aristotle and Averroës.[57] Such investigation wrongly focuses on understanding things in themselves, independently of a transcendent cause. The world is its own source of intelligibility and the human mind its own source of sufficiency. God and the world are one, and knowledge of the Real is an inference from what is known. In the *Collationes de decem praeceptis*, Bonaventure critiques two Averroist errors: 'the unity of the intellect' and 'the eternity of the world'. In the *Collationes de septem donis*, he critiques another error: 'the denial of divine providence'. Bonaventure cautions that these errors are 'to be avoided in the sciences…that do away totally with Sacred Scripture, with the Christian faith, and with every form of wisdom.'[58] Finally, in his *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure summarises this 'threefold error' as 'ignorance of exemplarism, of divine providence, and of the ends of the world'.[59] I shall now examine the hermeneutical implications of these three errors in the *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti.*

(i) The unity of the intellect

Bonaventure, along with many others at Paris, considered 'the unity of the intellect' to be the 'worst error'. First advanced by Averroës, it had already been refuted by Albert the Great in *De unitate intellectus contra Averroem* at the request of Pope Alexander IV as early as 1256.[60] In his *Long Commentary on De Anima* (*Talkhīs kitāb al-nafs li-Aristtū,* before 1186)*,* first

[57] For these three and other Averroist errors categorised in Tempier's 1277 list of condemnations, see Stephen F. Brown and Juan Flores Carlos, 'Condemnations of 1277,' in *Historical Dictionary of Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Stephen F. Brown and Juan Carlos Flores, Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies and Movements (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), 335-39.

[58] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Ten Commandments*, col.2, n. 25, 28; Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.16, 178-79; Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*; Also see Bonaventure, 'Sermon II on the Third Sunday of Advent,' 112-13.

[59] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.6, n.2-5, 160-61; col.7, n.1-2, 171-72.

[60] Albert the Great, *De Unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, 21 vols., ed. P. Jammy, *Opera omnia*, (Lyon, 1651), vol.9, 218-38; Albert the Great, *De Unitate intellectus contra Averroem*, 38 vols., ed. A. Borgnet, *Opera omnia*, (Paris: Vivès, 1890), vol.5, 437-76; Amos Bertolacci, 'The Reception of Avicenna's Philosophia Prima in Albert the Great's Commentary on the Metaphysics: The case of the doctrine of unity,' in *Albertus Magnus : Zum Gedenken nach 800 Jahren: Neue Zugänge, Aspeckte und Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Senner et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 67-78; Amos Bertolacci, 'A New Phase of the Reception of Aristotle in the Latin West: Albertus Magnus and his Use of Arabic Sources in the Commentaries on Aristotle,' in *Albertus Magnus und der Ursprung der Universitätsidee: Die Begegnung der Wissenschaftskulturen im 13. Jahrhundert und die Entdeckung des Konzepts der Bildung durch Wissenschaft*, ed. Ludger Honnefelder (Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2011), 259-76, 491-500.

translated into Latin around 1230, Averroës understood the 'possible intellect by which the soul thinks' to be a 'separate [incorporeal'] substance, a substance not joined to the human body as its "form"'.[61] Averroës' exposition of his radical theory of the 'unity of the intellect' was based on his studies of Aristotle's *De Anima*.[62] The possible or potential intellect is the passive receptacle of the mental image of an object impressed upon it through abstraction. This potential intellect is always conjoining with the active power of abstraction, which is the 'Agent Intellect'. Both potential and active intellects are eternal substances existing independently of the soul. This is contrary to Aristotle's proposition that both aspects of intellect are 'in' the soul.[63] Averroës' notion presupposes that all that is known intellectually belongs to a mind that is perfectly simple and one.[64]

The epistemological consequences of this Averroist doctrine of 'the unity of the intellect' can be seen from Siger's discourse in *Quaestiones in tertium De Anima* completed between 1269 and early 1270. He favours Aristotle's and Averroës' view that one 'human intellect [potential and active], not subject to enumeration, serves all mankind'. Siger fuses Averroës*'* notion of a single, incorporeal intellect for all men, and the Platonist notion of the intellect's total immateriality and accidental union with the human body. Siger asserts that the 'intellect perfects the body…through its [the intellect's] power' and not 'through its [the intellect's] substance'.[65] Building on the neo-Platonist insistence on the transcendent reality of a First Cause, Siger argues that the universal intellect stands over all bodies and regulates and informs them physically, without constituting their perfection or essence. Truth is not intrinsic to

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[61] Averroës, *Averroës (IBn Rushd) of Cordoba: Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Therese-Anne Druart (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), bk.3, comm.36, 386-88; For its dating, see Richard C. Taylor, 'Introduction,' in *Averroës (IBn Rushd) of Cordoba: Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Therese-Anne Druart, Yale Library of Medieval Philosophy Series (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), xvi; For the Latin version, see Averroës, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis de anima libros*, vol. 6, ed. F. Crawford (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1953); Also see A.L. Ivry, 'Averroës' Middle and Long Commentaries on *De Anima*,' *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 5 (1995): 75-92.

[62] Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, vol. 3, A History of Philosophy without any Gaps, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 187-93.

[63] Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, ed. R.D. Hicks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), bk.3, ch.5, 430a, 98-510.

[64] This concept of the unicity of the intellect is re-emphasised by Averroës, 'Great Commentary on the Metaphysics (Tafsīr mā ba'd aṭ-ṭabī'at),' in *Bibliotheca Arabica Scholasticorum*, ed. M. Bouyges, série arabe (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1948), 1705-08; Averroës, *Decisive Treatise, On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*, ed. and trans. George F. Hourani (London: Luzac, 1967), 72-75; Also see Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, & Theories of Human Intellect*, 258-300; Averroës, *Averroës' Commentary on the De Intellectu attributed to Alexander*, vol. 1, ed. Herbert A. Davidson, Shlomo Pines Jubilee, (Jerusalem, 1988), 205-17.

[65] Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, & Theories of Human Intellect*, 304; Steenberghen, *Maître Siger de Brabant*, 339-47.

individual bodies but belongs to the universal human intellect. Since human intellectual thought is one with that of the divine mind, human intellection is sufficient to grasp the universal truth of being. Siger does not suggest that divine revelation is an illegitimate route to knowledge, merely that revelation has no bearing on philosophy which should proceed purely in terms of itself.[66]

Bonaventure is *contra* the Sigerian notion of a sovereign philosophy premised on the essential oneness of human and divine intellectual thought. He thereby posits the individual human being as a composite of being and essence. Bonaventure's substantial unity of soul and body leads to a view of the human intellect as functionally separate from a superior light but also illumined by it. Just as the individual human intellect is essentially united with the body and receives its illumination from above, so the object of belief enters into the truth and method of *scientia*. This object transfigures the soul's knowledge in its light. For Bonaventure:

> Therefore, the human intellect is by nature capable of apprehending and of judging; that is, there is a possible and agent intellect. But the human intellect cannot be adequately illumined without the help of a superior and higher light…This third intellect…is the key to heavenly contemplations...[67]

Transcending yet enveloping the operations of both 'active/agent' and 'potential/possible' intellect, the Holy Spirit is qualitatively other than and beyond the human soul. Bonaventure's illumination theory is consistent with the teaching of his masters Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle who were inspired by sources on the soul such as the *De Spiritu et anima*. They premise the divine illuminative act on the interplay of intra- and extra-mental dimensions of the 'active intellect', thus making a further distinction in terms of argument. Conversely, Bonaventure is less interested in how and why philosophically God acts in the human knower than with how the human soul practises the presence of this light. Bonaventure concludes that the spiritual dimension of insight is accessed by faith, being wholly inaccessible to human cognitive effort by itself. Henceforth, natural cognition, although functionally autonomous, is

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[66] Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in tertium de anima; De Anima intellectiva; De Aeternitate mundi*, ed. B.C. Bazán, Philosophes médiévaux XIII, (Louvain/Paris: Publications universitaires/Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1972), *Quaestiones in tertium de anima:* 2, 3, 5-6, 17, 20-28, 30, 51-53, 70-74, 84.

[67] Bonaventure, *Collationes in septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, 5:498: *'Sic ergo intellectus humanus habet rationem apprehendentis et iudicantis, intellectum possibilem et agentem; nec potest iste intellectus sufficienter illuminari sine adminiculo superioris et altioris lucis...De tertio intellectu, scilicet qui est clavis contemplationum caelestium...'* Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.20, 181-82; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.2, d.24, pt.1, a.2, q.4, 567-71.

transfigured when it encounters the light of the Holy Spirit.[68] As Bonaventure affirms, God alone has effective power over the rational soul itself, since 'to create is the work of the all-powerful God and not of any created power'. Bonaventure shows how this principle is absolutely expressed in the scriptural medium in Acts 17:28: 'In him we live and move and have our being.'[69] As Zachary Hayes indicates, Bonaventure's privileging of faith 'as the only point of departure for rational reflection' evidences a greater interest in the 'moral dispositions' that shape one's thinking rather than in the substance of the cogitations themselves.[70]

(ii) The denial of divine providence

Siger treats this Averroist doctrine in his *De Aeternitate mundi* (c.1271-1272), where he implies that the order of things is determined by the movement of the heavenly spheres.[71] The Sigerian notion of a single material intellect as the universal subject of all human thought and volition means that human agency is essentially one with the divine will. There is no room for individual human volition since all human thoughts and actions are absolutely ordered and regulated by the one universal intellect. The ensuing incorporeality of the human intellect means that there is no afterlife particular to human individuals; since the only thing that will survive after death is the universal intellect.[72]

Bonaventure draws out the adverse spiritual implications of this Averroist cosmological claim which dispenses with 'free will' in the soul's interaction with higher spiritual realities.

> If a person is born under a particular constellation, that person will of necessity be a thief, a good person, or a bad person. This destroys free will, merit, and reward. For if it is true that whatever a person does is done out of necessity, then what meaning can free will have?[73]

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[68] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.16, 178-79; n.19-20, 180-82; cf. Ignatius Brady, 'Beatitude and Psychology: A Problem in the Philosophy of St. Bonaventure,' *Franciscan Studies* 2, 4 (1942): 418, n.35.

[69] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.1, 177.

[70] Hayes, 'Introduction and Commentary,' *Sermons on Christ*, 124.

[71] For the dating of Siger's *De Aeternitate mundi*, see St. Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, and St. Bonaventure, *On the Eternity of the World (De Aeternitate mundi)*, trans. Cyril Vollert, Lottie H. Kendzierski, and Paul M. Bryne, vol. 16, Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1984), 77. https://library.uoh.edu.iq/admin/ebooks/53089-st.-thomas-aquinas,-siger-of-brabant,-st.-bonaventure-on-the-eternity-of-the-world--de-aeternitate-mundi--(medieval-philosophical-texts-in-translation,-no.-16)-marquette-university-press-(1965).pdf.

[72] Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in tertium de anima; De Anima intellectiva; De Aeternitate mundi*, De Aeternitate mundi: 116-17.

[73] Bonaventure, *Collationes in septem donis Spiritus Sancti, Opera omnia,* 5:498: '*...si homo sit natus in tali constellatione, de necessitate erit latro, vel malus, vel bonus. Istud evacuat liberum arbitrium et meritum et*

The ignorance of the ends of the world naturally leads to the denial of personal rewards and punishments after death, and the concentration of all man's desire and love in the here and now. Such a recession of the spiritual from the human horizon blinds man to the eschatological reality of his destiny in God, holding him to account for all that is done in this life. In a foremost sense, man derives his 'divinity' from himself and has no criteria for judgment other than himself. Man derives his sense of authority from himself, so the function of the normative collapses in a morass of inertia.[74]

(iii) The eternity of the world

In *De Aeternitate mundi*, Siger treats another Averroist doctrine – the eternity of the universe and all species. Following Aristotle, Siger asks whether God is the total or essential cause of being, or whether being is merely the product of accidentally ordered causation. Historical experience appears to testify that all things are generated *per accidens* rather than *per se*. Things do not depend on God precisely in the act of causation. God is not required to cause the effect. Neither is there a higher cause; since all causation of the created world occurs on the level of accidentally ordered causes. This much is evident from what is observed with 'the eye of the flesh'.[75] This sense of the causal totality of the natural world implies that the study of causation must be limited to what is empirically observable and thereby to what is the focus of philosophical investigation.[76]

In his *Collationes*, Bonaventure pervades the philosopher's way of thinking with scriptural forms. The end goal of Bonaventure's project is indwelling Scripture, rather than reconstructing theological doctrine. For Bonaventure, the participatory method of the Gospel

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praemium: quia, is homo facit ex necessitate quod facit, quid valet libertas arbitrii?' Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.18, 180.

[74] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.16, 178-79; n.18, 180.

[75] Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in tertium de anima; De Anima intellectiva; De Aeternitate mundi*, *De aeternitate mundi*: 113-36; Robert J. Doyle, 'An Historico-doctrinal Exposition of the Doctrine of the Eternity of the World in Siger of Brabant ' (PhD University of Western Ontario 1950), 51-81; Richard C. Dales, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1990), 140-45.

[76] Most scholars agree that Siger revised his earlier radical ideas after 1270, due to the rising opposition from Tempier and the influence of Aquinas' theological appropriation of Averroist philosophy. Siger disagreed with the Averroist position on 'the unity of the intellect' by the time he completed the *Quaestiones super librum de causis* in 1276. Tony Dodd, *The Life and Thought of Siger of Brabant, Thirteenth-Century Parisian Philosopher: An Examination of his Views on the Relationship of Philosophy and Theology* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1998); Edward P. Mahoney, 'Sense, Intellect and Imagination in Albert, Thomas and Siger,' in *The Cambrige History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism (1100-1600)*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 616-21; Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, & Theories of Human Intellect*, 307-09.

writers and ultimately of Christ himself undergirds and informs that of metaphysics. Scripture is not just a context for philosophical inquiry, but a source of living and understanding in its own right. This material and methodological fusion of philosophy and theology/Scripture allows Bonaventure to accept the scriptural truth of creation *ex nihilo* on divine authority, as a first principle of divine metaphysics. The Averroist doctrine of the 'eternity of the world'

> …destroys the cause of being, for you consider God to be the cause of all things, either in part or totally. If in part, then you divest God of his primacy in causation. If totally, then God is the cause of everything other than the divine. Hence, God produces not out of the divinity itself, nor out of some other thing; for nothing else exists. Therefore, God produces from nothing. According to the error involved here, it would follow that the same object would have both being and non-being at the same time, and that it would have being before non-being, and many other inappropriate things. Consequently, it is certain that God has created all things.[77]

All further notions, *ad oppositum* the causal primacy of God, are revealed as theologically obfuscatory in the clear light of Scripture. Hence, the implication that there can be being before non-being, or a simultaneity of existence and non-existence, is dismissed as being incompatible with scriptural truth and the witness of human experience. Bonaventure appeals to the truths of faith in continuity with the witness of natural reason to refute this error. On the equal testimony of reason, nature and faith – from which the scriptural synthesis is drawn – God is beyond yet active in the world, rather than one with it.[78] Scripture's truths formally inhabit the truths of philosophy, instead of being abstracted from their native contexts in the service of philosophical argumentation.

In sum, Bonaventure's concern to shape a constructive, scripturally inspired alternative to what he perceived to be an Averroist worldview bespoke his intent to guide his friars in the way of divine wisdom. For Bonaventure, *sapientia* required that God be involved in every sphere of life: in the depths of philosophical thinking, in the life of intimate devotion, and particularly in

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[77] Bonaventure, *Collationes in septem donis Spiritus Sancti, Opera omnia* 5:498: *'...destruit causam essendi: quia tu sentis Deum esse causam omnium aut secundum partem, aut secundum totum. Si secundum partem, ergo ausers Deo suam principalitatem causandi. Si secundum totum: ergo cuiuscumque alterius Deus est causa: ergo producit illud non de se ipso, non de aliquo alio, quia nihil est: ergo de nihilo. Item, sequitur secundum istum errorem, quod res habuit simul esse et non-esse, et quod esse ante non-esse; et multa alia inconvenientia. Unde certum est, quod Deus omnia creavit.'* Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.17, 179-80.
[78] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.8, n.16-17, 178-80; Also see St. Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, and Bonaventure, *On the Eternity of the World (De Aeternitate mundi)*, 16.

the life of active ministry. There was no place or sphere of life where God could not dwell. Bonaventure understood that the separation of theology from philosophy did not merely concern the institutional demarcation of powers between the arts faculty and theology faculty at the University of Paris; neither was it a purely academic problem. Rather, the issue ultimately concerned the shutting out of God, the wilful disavowal of the Creator God at the point of origination of thought, desire and life. Nothing could be more unwise and more unscriptural than this wilful rejection of divine involvement in human affairs. Hence, Averroës' attestation of an autonomous philosophical enterprise appeared most perilous to the conduct of a Christian *sapientia*.[79] Bonaventure, far from being a reactionary, marked out a 'higher' way based on scriptural *sapientia* to guide his confreres in the conduct of the Franciscan life in a world beset by conflict and challenge. He neither openly explained away, nor ignored the challenges to, mendicant life and doctrine but uniquely demonstrated how these issues could be relativised in the light of Scripture. Indeed, Bonaventure affirmed that the pressing issues of life and doctrine should not define the friar. Rather, the Franciscan's response to these issues should always be determined by the Word of God and attain their true significance in the light of eternity.

Bonaventure taught the friars that the soul's mystical relationship with God is the basis for the soul's thought, vision and action. This principle was inspired by Scripture and marked Bonaventure's attempt to systematically account for the movement of the Holy Spirit in history and exegesis. Bonaventure was to re-deploy this dynamic vision of *sapientia* in his *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem* (*Defence of the Mendicants against its Adversaries*). This disputation, built upon his earlier *De Perfectione evangelica* (1255), was, *inter alia,* a direct response to the criticisms of Gerard of Abbeville and other secular *magistri* at Paris.[80]

[79] For the life and works of Averroës, see Majid Fakhry, *Averroës (Ibn Rushd): His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002); Dominique Urvoy, 'Ibn Rushd,' in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, Routledge History of World Philosophies (Routledge: New York, 1996), 330-45; Oliver Leaman, *Averroës and his Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); For the philosophical methodology of Averroës, see also Richard C. Taylor, 'Averroës: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 180-200; Avital Wohlman, *Al-Ghazali, Averroës and the Interpretation of the Qur'an: Common Sense and Philosophy in Islam*, trans. David Burrell, Culture and Civilization in the Middle East, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 14-20; Oliver Leaman, 'Ghazali and Averroës on Meaning,' *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 9, no. 1 (1996): 179-89; Peter Adamson, 'Averroës on Divine Causation,' in *Interpreting Averroës*, ed. Peter Adamson and Matteo Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 198-217; Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo, 'Philosophy and the Metaphorical Interpretation of Religious Texts in Averroës, Maimonides, and Aquinas,' *Muslim World* 109 (2019): 627-47.

[80] For the relationship between Bonaventure's two disputations, see Jan van den Eijnden, 'Bonaventure Twice on Evangelical Poverty: A Theologian with two Handwritings,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 70 (2000): 5-42.

IV. *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*

According to Robert Karris, Dominic Monti and Kevin Hughes, Bonaventure delivered the *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem* at the Convent of Cordeliers in Paris in autumn 1269. This was after Gerard of Abbeville had delivered his major polemical work *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae* (*Against the Adversary of Christian Perfection*) in summer of the same year.[81] It was written ten years earlier to defend the ideals of his former master William of Saint Amour against the criticisms of Thomas of York.[82] To avoid papal condemnation, Gerard had shrewdly waited to deliver it a year after the papal interregnum had started in 1268.[83]

The earlier secular-mendicant conflict had focused on the mendicants' role in the administration of the Church and university and was suppressed by the ecclesiastical authorities ten years earlier. William of Saint Amour, the former arch-antagonist of the mendicants, had been in exile since 1257. Not only did he manage to stay current with developments at Paris through Gerard of Abbeville, but he also remained polemically active. William continued to advance his views despite their earlier rebuttal, particularly by Bonaventure and Aquinas and condemnation by Pope Alexander IV. Upon the death of Alexander IV in 1266, William appealed to his successor Pope Clement V in the hope of being pardoned and winning episcopal support. A pro-mendicant, the new pope rejected William's justification of his anti-mendicant views.[84] Gerard took up his mentor's mantle and intensified the attack on the mendicants. Gerard had first brazenly stirred up polemical ire in a sermon preached at the Franciscan convent on 1 January 1269, followed by a series of Lenten quodlibets in response to the pro-mendicant disputation of Thomas Aquinas.[85] By this time, the main issue of contention between

[81] Robert J. Karris, 'Introduction,' in *Defense of the Mendicants*, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), 3-4; Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure as Minister General,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 572; Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum*, *Prolegomena*, lxvi.
[82] Andrew Traver, 'Thomas of York's Role in the Conflict between Mendicants and Seculars at Paris,' *Franciscan Studies* 57 (1999): 179-202.
[83] Kevin L. Hughes, 'Bonaventure's Defense of Mendicancy,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 526; Andrew Traver, 'The Forging of an Intellectual Defense of Mendicancy in the Medieval University,' in *The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies*, ed. Donald S. Prudlo, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 180; Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' 47.
[84] Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol.1, n.412, 459; Andrew Traver, 'The Place of William of Saint-Amour's *Collectiones Catholicae* in the Secular-Mendicant Conflict at Paris,' in *Learning to Love: A Tribute offered to Joseph Goering* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 179-202; James D. Dawson, 'William of Saint-Amour and the Apostolic Tradition,' *Mediaeval Studies* 40 (1978): 223-38.
[85] Gerard of Abbeville, 'Sermon of Gerard of Abbeville,' in *Defense of the Mendicants*, ed. José de Vinck and Robert Karris, Works of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), 368-86.

the mendicants and the seculars was the meaning and role of poverty in the evangelical life. Owing to the specific application of *Quo elongati,* not all friars were poor and itinerant; many were well-trained clerics and scholars residing in convents and other institutions and endowed with material goods. The friars' misuse and accumulation of these goods and growing engagement in studies and the *cura animarum* had prompted complaints from the seculars that the friars were usurping the traditional privileges and rights of the secular clergy.[86] In his *Apologia pauperum,* Bonaventure modelled to his friars a distinctive response to the seculars' criticisms with a sapiential approach to evangelical poverty. He drew on the experience of the Seraphic Founder as true exemplar of the Franciscan *vita*.[87] Bonaventure affirmed once again the exemplary role of Francis and the Franciscans as heralds in the final age of history. These Joachite resonances in Bonaventure's vivid portrayal seen earlier in the *Legenda maior* are fundamental to his own eschatological vision.

In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* delivered a year before the *Apologia pauperum*, Bonaventure had refuted Gerard's attempt to sow doubt among potential mendicant candidates. Bonaventure asserted: 'No matter how counterfeit and recent this Order may be, it is nonetheless good...You despise the counsel of God in relation to yourself and in relation to others. If you do not wish to enter a religious Order, do not forbid another.' As with the Averroists, Bonaventure merely alluded to these secular *magistri* at the university as 'lawyers [who] rejected the counsel of God'. Bonaventure warned his confreres to 'keep your soul from an evil counsellor.' Such counsellors change 'good into evil…have intended evils against you…devised counsels which they could not establish…[and turn] certainty into doubt.'[88]

I shall now compare Bonaventure's practical exposition of how the cognitive gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the Holy Spirit may be applied within contexts of everyday living (as shown earlier in *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*) with Gerard's more theoretical account. This provides a useful hermeneutical backdrop to their main dispute over the place of mendicancy in the evangelical life. As Stephen Metzger observes, Gerard unfolds a systematic approach confined by the generic parameters of the *quaestiones disputatae.* Gerard conceptually defines the nature and function of the seven gifts of the Holy

[86] Decima L. Douie, 'St Bonaventura's Part in the Conflict between Seculars and Mendicants at Paris,' in *S Bonaventura 1274-1974: Studia de vita, mente, fontibus et operibus sancti Bonaventurae*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol, vol.2 (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973), 601-9.
[87] Karris, 'Introduction,' *Defense of the Mendicants*, 1-2.
[88] Bonaventure, *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, col.7, n.17-19, 156-61.

Spirit based on Book 3 of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* that attends especially 'to the intellectual gifts of *scientia*, *intellectus* and *sapientia*.'[89] The divergences in genre and approach between Bonaventure and Gerard largely stem from a difference in context, audience and profession. As leader of the Franciscans, Bonaventure had a pastoral intention to instruct his wide-ranging audience of scholars, clerics and lay friars in the way of biblical *sapientia*, in contrast to Gerard's academic orientation.

Gerard's account of these spritual gifts distinguishes his approach to the spiritual life from Bonaventure's approach. Gerard insists that the gift of knowledge guides the soul in temporal matters, in the doctrines of faith, and in reflecting upon its own sin; but it cannot initiate the soul in the understanding of divine things. The gift of knowledge is different from the other two cognitive gifts of the Spirit, which are purely speculative and pertain to divine things. While Bonaventure allows the object of belief to enter into the truth and method of *scientia*, Gerard asserts that natural knowledge is wholly unconnected to the divine gift of understanding by reason of their divergent origins, modes, and ends. Divine truth is infused from above; natural knowledge is a product of human development of the intellectual power. Divine truth is for the dispensation of divine beatitude; natural knowledge is for the dispensation of temporal goods. However, speculative knowledge can concur with the divine gift of knowledge in the same subject, that is the knower. Gerard asserts that the relation between speculative knowledge and this divine gift is purely accidental, similar to the way two properties are united in the same subject. Gerard's dualistic way echoes that of Siger of Brabant. *Sapientia*, which is the cognition of the highest causes, is completely distinguished from and exceeds all human modes of knowledge. Gerard conceives the cognitive gifts of understanding and *sapientia* as purely speculative. These gifts actualise love in the soul by aligning the soul with the knowledge and conduct proper to God's love. The lower reaches of human knowledge are regulated by speculative *sapientia* and receive their clarification and organisation from the intellective power.[90] On the contrary, for Bonaventure, the sapiential forms of Scripture are to be personally assumed and re-voiced, rather than analysed from a critical distance.

[89] Stephen M. Metzger, *Gerard of Abbeville, Secular Master, on Knowledge, Wisdom and Contemplation*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 283-87.
[90] Metzger, *Gerard of Abbeville, Secular Master, on Knowledge, Wisdom and Contemplation*, 288-95.

(a) The issue of evangelical poverty

A central point in the dispute between Gerard and Bonaventure concerns how evangelical perfection ought to be understood and practised, and how and whether poverty plays a role in its dispensation. More importantly, it concerns the way in which Scripture ought to be used to validate the conduct of Christians. In his *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae*, Gerard equates perfection with universal conformity to the deeds of Christ. By extension, human perfection consists in obeying Christ *ad litteram*, and any deviations from that common rule are to be considered imperfections.

> Future perfection brings it about that we are entirely without sin. Perfection in this life consists not in being without sin, but in preventing its 'reign in our mortal body.' In this life none of the Saints could truly say that they were without sin...Therefore, according to this, perfection in this life is not to turn away from the rule of righteousness and the footprints of Christ in as far as this is possible in corruptible human flesh. But imperfection is to turn away from the rule and footprints of Christ in those instances where Christ could be imitated as far as this is possible in corruptible human flesh.[91]

In enforcing literal obedience to the letter of the Gospel, Gerard is conserving the existing legal and juridical fabric of Church life. The secular clergy are entitled to certain rights accorded to them by the established rules and structure of the Church. To defend the status of the seculars as rightful stewards and administrators of the Church's endowments, Gerard denies the poverty of Christ and his disciples 'since the scriptures proved that Christ and his apostles [has] owned property in common and used money.' Gerard asserts that it is illogical for the mendicants to assume that use does not imply ownership. Gerard concludes that the Church ought to be propertied, in order that it may continue to resource the community materially as well as spiritually.[92] In his *Apologia pauperum,* Bonaventure counters Gerard in saying that although Christ possessed a 'moneybag', what pertains to evangelical perfection is not whether one owns money but by what, how and to what end one uses it.[93] In effect, Bonaventure re-affirmed the

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[91]Gerard of Abbeville, '*Tractatus Gerardi de Abbatisville: Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae,*' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 31 (1939): 284-329; Translation by Robert Karris, *Defense of the Mendicants*, 50.

[92] Gerard of Abbeville, '*Tractatus Gerardi de Abbatisville: Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae*,' pt.1, 284-85.

[93] Bonaventure, *Defense of the Mendicants*, ch.7, 174-220; ch.10, n.1-5, 81-87, 92-93; For an excellent study of the role of money and possessions in the mendicant life, see Robert J. Karris, 'The Place of the Money Bag in the Secular-Mendicant Controversy at Paris,' *Franciscan Studies* 68 (2010): 21-38.

1230 interpretive ruling of Gregory IX in *Quo elongati* that evangelical poverty was attendant on the quality of relation to the affective object (*usus paupere*), rather than on the fact or reality of use or enjoyment in itself.[94] Bonaventure's notion of evangelical perfection, based on a definition of poverty stipulated from papal decree and enforced under his own leadership, was a shrewd means of aligning the fortunes of the Order once more with the papacy in abeyance of the 'upstart' secular cause. He would still make room in his system of evangelical governance for the moving of the Holy Spirit, inflecting the conservativism of the papal institution with a certain radical touch.

Bonaventure disputes Gerard's concept of evangelical poverty and its supporting hermeneutic of universal literal observance. Against Gerard's focus on the letter of the Gospel as the determination of the Christian life, Bonaventure draws upon previous insights regarding the relational basis of *scientia* and *intellectus,* as seen earlier in his *Collationes de septem donis.* Bonaventure, raising evangelical poverty onto the spiritual plane, counsels that evangelical deeds may be 'good' or 'evil', or 'perfect' or 'imperfect', in three senses. Deeds can be perfect: 'by nature' – such as renouncing 'all things or entering a religious life', 'by circumstances' – such as 'joyfully giving up one's wealth for the purpose of edifying one's neighbor', and in themselves – such as 'a movement of fervent and ecstatic love for God or of pure and total love for the enemy'. Also, deeds may be imperfect: 'by nature' – such as 'an easy action, one towards which human weakness inclines, such as fleeing from death', 'by circumstances' –such as giving away one's possessions under threat, and 'in itself' – such as forsaking poverty. In the same way, good deeds done by nature and also by circumstance can be perverted by a wrong disposition, as when 'one would give alms or fast or go to church in order to obtain human glory'. Finally, deeds that are good in themselves 'can never be turned into evil'; for instance, 'the act of virtue that proceeds from the root of love', being perfect in relation to Christ himself. All creatures live in Christ in different ways and different degrees according to their various natures, situations and dispositions.[95] The implication is that Christ is the ideal source (by whom), medium (how), and end (why) of the soul's relation to the affective object. Only when the soul loves Christ more than worldly goods can it be free to use them with, by and for the sake of Christ, regardless of any consequences to itself or to the affective object.

[94] Douie, 'St Bonaventura's Part in the Conflict between Seculars and Mendicants at Paris,' 608.
[95] Bonaventure, *Defense of the Mendicants*, ch.1, n.7-11, 42-47; Hughes, 'Bonaventure's Defense of Mendicancy,' 529-31.

Thus, the use of such goods is defined in relation to Christ.[96] Kevin Hughes summarises that the *Apologia pauperum* is Bonaventure's 'vision of evangelical poverty determined not by a fixed standard of [literal] observance, but applied in the exercise of practical [spiritual] wisdom to the particular circumstances in which the brothers may find themselves'.[97]

In his *Apologia pauperum*, Bonaventure's vision manifests a focus on the dynamic and historically relative character of all interpretation in Christ the centre. As in the earlier *Collationes de septem donis*, Bonaventure accords a greater space to the movement of the Holy Spirit in terms of an interpretive relativity stemming from the dynamic interaction of reader and textual subject. Bonaventure affirms that Christ can be encountered in multiple ways, relative to the reader's changing disposition in the actual. In this disputation, Bonaventure further sets out his Christological rationale for his economy of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure envisages:

> …from this single and undivided eternal Exemplar there flows such a variety of created natures and such a variety of perfections…according to the various distributions of the gifts and the various manners in which the Exemplar is to be imitated. To them the manifold perfection of Christ is distributed according to a multiform participation in such a way that it is found at the same time in all things. And yet it does not shine in any one of them in the fullness of its universal plenitude, but each state and degree, according to its measure, receives the influence from such exemplarity and moves forward to imitate it.[98]

This multiplicity of relations in Christ as exemplar guarantees a kind of unity-in-difference in the collective experience of the divine reality. Each creature is gifted with divine grace, holiness, and *sapientia* according to its capacity to receive God, giving rise to a kind of relativity in the communal experience of God. By extension, each individual's experience of God is not fixed but varies according to the manner, state and degree of participation in Christ.

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[96] Virpi Mäkinen, *Property Rights in the Late Medieval Discussion on Franciscan Poverty*, vol. 3, Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales: Bibliotheca, (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 55-94.
[97] Hughes, 'Bonaventure's Defense of Mendicancy,' 511-12.
[98] Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum, Opera omnia* 8:243: *'Et quemadmodum ab illo uno aeterno exemplari indiviso tam diversae manant creaturarum naturae et naturarum perfectiones...secundum variam distibutionem donorum et varium imitandi modum exemplariter derivantur, in quibus secundum multiformem participationem multimoda Christi perfectio sic distribuitur, ut simul reperiatur in omnibus, nec tamen in aliquo uno solo secundum omnimodae plenitudinis totalitatem refulgeat; sed quilibet gradus et status pro suae mensurae modulo secundum plus et minus istiusmodi exemplaris influentiam suscipit ed ad ipsius imitationem accedit.'* Bonaventure, *Defense of the Mendicants*, ch.2, n.12, 62.

In so doing, Bonaventure moves beyond a purely literal understanding premised on what one can see and touch to an infinite multiplicity of interpretation grounded in the effusive reality of one's relation to Christ the centre. Individual realities appear in different lights, depending on how one relates to the divine heart at any given moment in one's journey with God. This subsuming of the literal to the spiritual means that one's historical experience is shaped by interaction with deeper spiritual realities. Clearly, Bonaventure's vision of a multiform participation in Christ is intended to counter Gerard's conformity to the letter of the Gospel as a speculative principle to be instantiated in the soul rather than a living reality to be received.[99]

(b) Francis as exemplar of evangelical poverty

Bonaventure invokes Francis' experience as a justification for the latter's distinctive way of evangelical poverty. Bonaventure exhorts his brothers to strive to enter into the authentic mystical experience of Francis. In depicting Francis as the 'six-winged seraph' in Isaiah 6:2, Bonaventure re-emphasises the Franciscan Joachite portrayal of the stigmatised Francis as the Apocalyptic Angel in Apocalypse 7:2. Building upon his seraphic depiction of the *Poverello* in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) and *Legenda maior* (1261), Bonaventure depicts him as 'the exemplar of evangelical perfection' and of the union of exterior poverty and interior contemplation.[100] This resonates with Bonaventure's Franciscan Joachite identification of poverty as the habitual foundation for the contemplative life of the *viri spirituales* led by the seraphic Francis. Bonaventure goes on to establish that 'voluntary and penurious poverty' of spirit is 'the foundation of evangelical perfection'. He explains further:

> Now there are two aspects to the possession of temporal goods: ownership and use. Since the use of temporal goods is a necessary condition of the present life, *evangelical poverty* consists in renouncing the dominion and ownership of earthly things, but not their use which must be limited in accordance with what the Apostle said to Timothy: 'Having food and sufficient clothing, let us be content with these.[101] (Italics mine)

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[99] Aidan Carr, 'Poverty in Perfection According to St. Bonaventure,' *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947): 415-25; For the life and works of Gerard of Abbeville, see Chris Schabel, 'The Early Career of Gerard of Abbeville: With a Review of a Recent Book,' *Vivarium* 55, 4 (2017): 340-59.

[100] Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum*, n.3, ch.2-10, 69-77; E. Randolph Daniel, 'St. Bonaventure: Defender of Franciscan Eschatology,' in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974: Theologica* (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), 801-02.

[101] Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum, Opera omnia*, 8:273: *'Cum autem circa temporalium bonorum possessionem duo considerare contingat, dominium videlicet et usum, sitque usus necessario annexus vitae praesenti; evangelicae paupertatis est, possessiones terrenas quantum ad dominium et propreitatem relinquere*

Bonaventure bases his notion of evangelical perfection on Paul's advice to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:8) on the godly way one possesses and uses worldly goods. Since the enjoyment of worldly goods cannot be avoided, evangelical perfection pertains to the origin, way and end of their use. The highest form of use is the affective renunciation of these goods – a Francis-inspired state of evangelical poverty. In Francis as *alter Christus*, the Christological impulse of freely given love (*caritas*) and the mendicant imperative of material self-denial coincided. Bonaventure asserts that Francis has effectively inaugurated a new approach to the poverty of Christ issuing from an inner affect, rather than an external compulsion of the will as per the dictates of traditional religious rule. Bonaventure is to hold the tension between inner affect and outward performance, with Church and soul as the material embodiments of an inner truth ordered in love.[102] Bonaventure's emphasis on the affect as a driving force in political organisation led him to recognise Francis' chosen life of poverty to be a powerful way of rehabilitating the material structures of the Church from within. According to Kevin Hughes, Bonaventure further situated this way of life as eschatologically necessary in view of the coming temptations and trials of the here-and-now final age.[103] The Church needed to be especially vigilant. It must be affectively driven yet institutionally solid, to conquer heresy and subversion from within and persecution from without during this final time. At the same time, the Minister General sought to appease the secular antagonists outside the Order by assimilating the Franciscan *vita* to the legal and juridical governance of the institutional Church.

Despite Gerard's continual and concentrated rebuttal, Bonaventure eventually left the task of active debate to John Pecham and Thomas Aquinas.[104] One must not forget that the Minister General was preoccupied with administrative duties, writing and preaching, and teaching his confreres a scripturally centred response to the intellectual and pastoral challenges within and outside the Order. In addition, he had resumed his schedule of arduous visitations to the other Franciscan provinces by the spring of 1268.[105] With the death of Gerard and William of Saint

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usum vero non omnino reiicere, sed arctare, iuxta illud quod dicit Apostolus ad Timotheum: Habentes alimenta et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus.' Bonaventure, *Defense of the Mendicants*, ch.7, n.3, 178.

[102] For this argument, see Mews, 'Apostolic Ideals in the Mendicant Transformation of the Thirteenth Century: from sine proprio to Holy Poverty,' 15-23.

[103] Hughes, 'Bonaventure's Defense of Mendicancy,' 540-41.

[104] Traver, 'The Forging of an Intellectual Defense of Mendicancy in the Medieval University,' 157-95; For John Pecham's writings and his role in the secular-mendicant conflict, see John Pecham, *Tractatus Tres de paupertate*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, A.G. Little, and Felice Tocco (Farnborough: Gregg Press, 1966).

[105] Monti, 'Bonaventure as Minister General,' 565-67; See also Norbert Ohler, *The Medieval Traveler*, trans. Caroline Hillier (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1989).

Amour in 1272, the secular-mendicant dispute gradually subsided.[106] Bonaventure must have considered the lingering threat from the 'Geraldines' to be serious, because he again refuted their doctrinal errors in his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* a year later. In his final major work, Bonaventure would methodologically globalise his method of sapiential self-realisation to continue his program of pastoral renewal. Faced with the various challenges from inside and outside the Order, the Minister General persisted in exhorting his confreres to a scripturally inspired way of life and ministry based on the experience of Christ.

V. Summary

During this phase of his hermeneutical formation, Bonaventure developed a form of practical sapiential exegesis for his Order. In his *Collationes de septem donis,* Bonaventure inhabited and revoiced the scriptural forms as a means to fuller insight instead of analysing them purely for the sake of comprehension. He initiated his friars into Christ's experience, instead of explaining the vicissitudes of scriptural experience from the outside. Bonaventure's emphasis on a personal relation with the textual subject furnished a dynamic quality to his synthesis, coinciding with a provision for the movement of the Holy Spirit in exegesis. Bonaventure's nine sermons have a practical-pedagogical style and register. This contrasts with the 'high' philosophical register of his earlier texts which reflect his habituation in scholastic modes of presentation. His convergence of experience and understanding in such a performative medium gave a more integrative orientation to his exegesis imbuing the speculative with the mystical. Similarly, in the *Apologia pauperum*, Bonaventure uplifted Christ as the twofold principle of exemplarity – eternal and temporal. Bonaventure taught that the activities undertaken by the friars in the literal everyday were defined by their spiritual relation to the Source. Hence, with Francis as their exemplar of evangelical perfection, the friars were continually shaped by their interaction with deeper spiritual realities. This living resumption of the letter by the Holy Spirit was Bonaventure's key to resolving the spiritual and affective issues that lay at the root of the intellectual conflict over the place of mendicancy in the evangelical life.

Bonaventure continued to apply his practical hermeneutics of Scripture in his effort to resolve the prevailing issues afflicting the Friars Minor – the contention over Franciscan identity between the Joachite Franciscans and conservative clerics, the pedagogical relevance of Averroist philosophy, and the secular-mendicant conflict over the role of mendicancy in the

[106] Douie, 'St Bonaventura's Part in the Conflict between Seculars and Mendicants at Paris,' 610.

Gospel life. He demonstrated to his confreres how the revelation of scriptural *sapientia* held the key to remediating the fragmentation of the theological and religious world of thirteenth-century Paris. Within this tense environment, Bonaventure went on to shape an integrative sapiential vision fusing understanding and enactment within the total experience of God. Bonaventure's vision would attain its highest level of operationality in his final *Collationes in Hexaemeron* delivered in 1273.

Chapter 6: The *Collationes in Hexaemeron*: An Integrative Sapiential Vision (1273)

In 1273, Bonaventure delivered his *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. It seemed that he had planned to deliver his three *Collationes* during the Lenten season over three successive years between general chapters of the Franciscan Order. However, after delivering his first two *Collationes* in 1267 and 1268, he had become saddled with more pressing issues. In addition to teaching his confreres how to avoid the abstractions of the Averroist philosophers, the Minister General was also intent on countering the resurgence of the secular-mendicant conflict in 1267. In 1269, he convened the General Chapter of Assisi. Two years later, he hastened to the Italian town of Viterbo to help secure the election of a new pope. The death of Pope Clement IV in 1268 had created a papal *sede vacante,* leaving the Order and Church vulnerable to further challenges from the secular critics and adherents of Averroës. The cardinals' political dissension regarding a successor caused this papal interregnum to be the longest in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. The eventual election of pro-mendicant Gregory X was in no small measure a result of Bonaventure's persuasion.[1] In 1272, Bonaventure convened the General Chapter of Pisa. Consequently, he was only able to deliver his final series of *Collationes* a year later.

In his *Collationes in Hexaemeron,* Bonaventure frames an integrative journey of the soul and the world into God, mediated through the wisdom of Scripture. He uses the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis to envisage the operation of divine *sapientia* in creation. Unlike his earlier *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* which focuses on the actualisation of divine wisdom in the individual soul and mind, the expanded and cosmic scope of the *Hexaemeron* allows Bonaventure to unify within a total synthesis the exegesis of all things – Church, creation, soul, Scripture and history.

I contend that Bonaventure's *Hexaemeron* has a broader function beyond the polemical. This is evident from the paucity of citation of Averroist/Joachite texts and allusions to the Averroist philosophers, secular *magistri* at Paris and Joachite proponents. Rather than being an exercise in pure doctrine or dialectical argumentation, the *Hexaemeron* was an exercise in sapiential

[1] Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure as Minister General,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 572-73; Bartholomew of Pisa, '*Liber conformitatum*, 8.2,' *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 4 (1911): 345; quoted in Marianne Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 47.

self-realisation. Bonaventure's way of communal incarnation was the substance of his final synthesis before he died in 1274. This enabled him to answer the needs and interests of a larger and more varied audience – his fellow confreres and non-Franciscan scholastics and ecclesiasticals.

I. Historiographical perspectives

Scholars tend to limit the function of the *Hexaemeron* consistent with their own research horizon. Considering the diversity of vantage points – intellectual, historical, formal, pastoral – there is no consensus over its historical, thematic or intertextual significance. Étienne Gilson considered the *Hexaemeron* to be a strictly polemical tool in the intensifying disputes over mendicancy and the roles of Aristotle and Joachim of Fiore in theological studies.[2] Similarly, Jacques-Guy Bougerol claimed that 'Bonaventure's task was not only to define clearly the position of Franciscan Augustinianism, but even more imperatively, to defend the very orthodoxy of the theological studies in the university.' In addition, he was also defending the Order against the 'enemies of the Mendicant Orders' especially in his 'explicit attacks' against the position of Gerard of Abbeville.[3] Balduinus Distelbrink agreed with Gilson and Bougerol. Distelbrink postulated that the *Hexaemeron* 'does not contain a commentary on the first chapter of the book of Genesis, but is really a series of twenty-three doctrinal *collationes* or sermons of a polemical cast.'[4] Conversely, Joseph Ratzinger presented another polemical characterisation of the *Hexaemeron*. According to him, Bonaventure cast the Averroist movement as an eschatological phenomenon of an autonomous human philosophy that sought to disintegrate the intimate unity of divine *sapientia*. Ten years later, 'a transformed Bonaventure…did not return simply to take up a position within the inner-disciplinary debate. Rather, he came back as an outsider, to point out the limits of science [*scientia*] from the perspective of faith.' In shaping this vision of an eschatological struggle between Aristotelian philosophy and Christian *sapientia*, Bonaventure transformed certain Joachite prophetic forms and imagery on the spiritual meaning of history.[5] Ratzinger, in viewing the *Hexaemeron* as apocalyptic polemic, asserted Bonaventure's influence by Joachim of Fiore.

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[2] Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1940), 30-34.
[3] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 125-33.
[4] Distelbrink, *Bonaventurae Scripta: Authentica, Dubia vel spuria critice recensita*, 57.
[5] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 3-6, 48, 159-60.

A scholarly line, inspired by Ratzinger's thesis, has examined the *Hexaemeron* in light of Bonaventure's ambivalent engagement with Joachite exegesis. In discussing the text's polemical use of Joachite imagery and ideas, these scholars considered Bonaventure to have been either dogmatically opposed or mystically aligned, to Joachim's vision of the future. Gilson represented the traditional view that Bonaventure was 'strongly hostile to Joachim's doctrine'. Gilson affirmed that from the time of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure had been critical of Joachim's treatment of Lombard's Trinitarian theology.[6] Marjorie Reeves portrayed Bonaventure as a Joachite *malgré lui.* She concluded that Bonaventure 'seem[ed] to draw on the original thought of Joachim himself, while avoiding dangerous exaggerations.'[7] According to Bernard McGinn, Bonaventure was 'appropriating the force of the Joachite vision in the service of the Franciscan order without falling into the errors of the radical Joachites…'[8] Justin Coyle agrees with McGinn who further emphasised that Bonaventure was utilising a more 'mature reception of Joachim [and] was willing to go even further in adopting elements of Joachim of Fiore's trinitarian theology of history to help understand the course of history and his own times, without, however, explicitly endorsing the Calabrian's three status the ages of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.'[9] Similarly, E. Randolph Daniel asserted that Bonaventure used certain Joachite ideas to revise the Franciscan Joachite eschatology and defend the conservative Franciscan self-understanding against the Gerardians and their reception of Joachim's 'radical eschatology.' Daniel concluded that Bonaventure's mature hermeneutic of history in the *Hexaemeron* 'did not, in the last analysis, reject Joachim; he restudied him.'[10] David Burr, examining the studies of Ratzinger, Reeves and Daniel, identified a certain mode of scriptural commentary within the *Hexaemeron* that is apocalyptic and eschatological in thrust. His more recent study adds that Bonaventure employed the Joachite

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[6] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St Bonaventure*, 19-20; See Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.1, d.5, a.2, q.2, *dubia* 4, 121.

[7] Marjorie E. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 179-81; Marjorie E. Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: SPCK, 1976), 36-37.

[8] Bernard McGinn, 'The Abbot and the Doctors: Scholastic Reactions to the Radical Eschatology of Joachim of Fiore,' *Church History* 40, no. 1 (1971): 42; Bernard McGinn, 'The Dynamism of the Trinity in Bonaventure and Eckhart,' *Franciscan Studies* 65 (2007): 146.

[9] Coyle, 'Appropriating Apocalypse in Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*,' *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 99-136, esp. 132.

[10] E. Randolph Daniel, 'Reformist Apocalypticism and the Friars Minor,' in *That Others May Know and Love: Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and F. Edward Coughlin (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1997), 237-53, esp. 252-53; E. Randolph Daniel, 'St Bonaventure's Debt to Joachim,' *Medievalia et Humanistica* 11 (1982): 61-75.

strategy of using biblical figures to represent historical persons.[11] Christopher Anderson maintains that Bonaventure's polemical sermons use Joachite ideas and imagery 'to teach, to delight, and to persuade' in the mode of a 'symbolic argument.' Bonaventure exhorted his confreres to follow the 'Franciscan spirituality and way of life', in their quest for holiness amid the false teachings and accusations of the day. He also showed them how 'to reconcile the exegesis, preaching, and reform agenda with the central point of all wisdom and understanding, Jesus Christ' – as the source for reform and stability of the Order and wider Church.[12] Warren Lewis contends that Bonaventure turned out to be 'a moderate and closet Joachite', re-envisioning 'his own 'vertical' internal mystical teachings in a 'horizontal' historical fashion according to stages and times.' Also, he 'strictly avoided specifically Joachite terminology, such as *concordia;* he used English untranslatable terms such as *rationes seminales* and *theoriae*, instead, to justify his perception of the multiple meanings and historical parallels in Scripture: the seven Days of Creation, the seven stages of this world, ordered according to the Three World Ages.'[13] Such scholarly portrayals of the *Hexaemeron* as eschatological polemic do not often account for its wider ambit which transcends matters of Joachite eschatology.

Other scholars have pursued a more rounded approach to the *Hexaemeron*. Jay M. Hammond, in his historical-hermeneutical introduction to his recent translation of the *Hexaemeron,* transcends the polemical characterisation: 'Various conflicts certainly inform the *Hexaemeron*, but they are not the primary focus. Those who might persist in emphasizing the polemics must come to terms with the fact that if all the polemical passages in the *Hexaemeron* were removed…the text would remain largely intact.'[14] Dominic Monti similarly identifies the *Hexaemeron* as mystical interpretation inspired by the Victorine ascent from literal, to theological, to spiritual interpretation of Scripture and creation.[15] Building upon these studies, Kevin Hughes observes that Bonaventure employed the classical pedagogical genre of the

[11] David Burr, 'Franciscan Exegesis and Francis as Apocalyptic Figure,' in *Monks, Nuns and Friars in Medieval Society*, ed. Edward B. King, Jacqueline T. Schaefer, and William B. Wadley (Sewanee: University of the South Press, 1989), 51-52; David Burr, *The Book of Revelation*, The Bible in Medieval Tradition, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 230-55; David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 78; David Burr, 'Bonaventure, Olivi and Franciscan Eschatology,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 53 (1983): 23-40.

[12] C. Colt Anderson, *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 2002), xv-xix.

[13] Warren Lewis, 'Introduction,' in *Peter of John Olivi: Commentary on the Apocalypse* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), xiii, xxiii-xxiv.

[14] Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church,* 27, n.126.

[15] Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works' (PhD University of Chicago, 1979), 222-97.

protreptic as the formal key to the *Hexaemeron*, consistent with the text's performative function and sapiential intent. This scholastic mystagogical text did not intend 'so much to refute error, but to navigate a sound course through eddies and shoals of scholarly dispute to the love of Wisdom that Francis exemplified…the discourse engage[d] polemical interests but is not defined by or reduced to them.'[16] Timothy Johnson asserts that scholars' 'exclusive emphasis on the philosophical-doctrinal contents…risks obscuring their decidedly pastoral-spiritual hue. Since [Bonaventure's] election as minister general in 1257, the overarching, integrative impetus behind his writings was the spiritual welfare of his confreres.'[17] I agree with these scholars' concern to look beyond the polemical elements to the form and content of the *Hexaemeron* as a whole, by pursuing its key originality in its intellectual, historical and generic contexts and expanding insight into the text's meaning from multiple vantage points.

I shall show that in the *Hexaemeron*, as in the two earlier *Collationes*, Bonaventure developed a practical guide for his confreres to engage wisely with the challenges posed by Averroist philosophy, radical Joachite exegesis and secular criticism of Franciscanism at Paris. He taught his confreres the essence, mode and source of *sapientia* – Sacred Scripture itself, and the right relation between human knowledge (*scientia*) and spiritual understanding (*intellectus*). Kevin Hughes identifies four signs of *protreptic* discourse in the *Hexaemeron*: (i) intention to persuade a specific audience within a specific cultural context, (ii) '*synkrisis*, a point of contrast with other modes of discourse or ways of life', (iii) an existential, not merely cognitive, function – with a drive toward converting the audience to a higher way of life rather than demonstrating proof or employing rhetorical persuasion, and (iv) a persuasion and an invitation and initiation into the way of sapiential practice. Bonaventure did not merely clarify the logic of sapiential appropriation in the manner of traditional scholastic exegesis but developed a first-order mapping of the sapiential journey to initiate his confreres in the pursuit of *sapientia*.[18] Significantly, Bonaventure extended his program of pedagogical and pastoral renewal by augmenting understanding and enactment of the biblical text with experiencing its wisdom embedded in creation.

[16] Kevin L. Hughes, 'St. Bonaventure's Collationes in Hexaemeron: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse,' *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 108-09, 113-17, esp.115, 128-29.
[17] Timothy J. Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 423-24.
[18] Hughes, 'St. Bonaventure's Collationes in Hexaemeron: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse,' 109-10, 113-17, 128-29.

II. Occasion, audience and genre

Ferdinand Delorme, editor of the Latin edition of the *Hexaemeron*, affirmed that Bonaventure's oral delivery of this series of twenty-three sermons was transcribed by three unnamed scribes in 1274. Calling Bonaventure 'lord and master', the main scribe in the Epilogue of his *reportatio* recorded: 'This work was read and composed in Paris, the year of the Lord 1274, between Easter and Pentecost…' However, Jay M. Hammond noted that the 1274 dating was calculated 'according to the Pisan calendar; the Florentine calendar, which corresponds with our modern calendar, results in a 1273 dating.' Dominic Monti and other modern scholars also concurred with the 1273 dating of Palémon Glorieux, specifically from Easter 9 April to Pentecost 28 May.[19] At this juncture, Bonaventure had to leave for the papal court in Italy, because he had just been appointed Cardinal-bishop of Albano by Pope Gregory X.

The significance of the Minister General's preaching of the *Hexaemeron* is evident from its large and varied audience at the Convent of the Cordeliers. For one particular sermon, it was reported that one-hundred-and-sixty Franciscans, as well as non-Franciscans, were in attendance. Bonaventure clearly intended these sermons to be widely disseminated especially within the Order, to the next generation of Franciscan teachers and leaders.[20] His aim was not only to inspire a desire for wisdom in his listeners, but also to initiate them 'into an exemplary theological discourse, an intellectual itinerary ordered by Scripture to humanity's proper ultimate end, repose in the living God.'[21]

The *Hexaemeron* is an embodied allegory of the sapiential journey of soul, Church and world – imaged through the creation narrative in Genesis 1-2. It comprises a hermeneutical and rhetorical departure from the Hexameral genre traditionally practised by the patristic fathers, which was typically either in the order of 'a simple exegesis' or 'an allegorical version of the [same] Scriptural story'.[22] Patristic versions commonly see the biblical story as purely

[19] Bonaventure, 'S. Bonaventurae Collationes in Hexaemeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta,' in *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, ed. Ferdinand Delorme (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1934), 274-75; quoted in Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, 417-18; Glorieux, 'La Date des collations de Saint Bonaventure,' 257-72; quoted in Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works,' 223.
[20] Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, 24, 33.
[21] Hughes, 'St. Bonaventure's Collationes in Hexaemeron: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse,' 115.
[22] Frank E. Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature: A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), 1; Also see Leo Scheffczyk, *Creation and Providence*, trans. Richard Strachan, Herder History of Dogma, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 38-54; Andrew J. Brown, 'The Days of Creation in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance,' in *The Days of Creation: A History of Christian Interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 60-103.

representational and extrinsic to inner spiritual realities. For Bonaventure, the biblical figures themselves are inscribed with spiritual meaning and initiate readers into the realities they purport to describe. This distinction in the deployment of analogy enables Bonaventure to treat the sensible signs of the Genesis narrative – such as light, earth and firmament – as somehow intrinsic to the divine operation in creation. In so doing, Bonaventure is making a subtle theological point about the way in which all things rely on God for their being and truth. Sign and reality infuse within the divine horizon, such that language is inscribed with the reality it represents.

Bonaventure's vision in the *Hexaemeron* hermeneutically differs from his strictly literal reading of the Hexameral narrative of the six days of creation in his earlier scholastic works. In the *Commentary on the Sentences* (1253) and the *Breviloquium* (1257), framed by the categories of Aristotelian metaphysics, the divine creative process occurred in three stages: 'the creative act in a strict sense [*creatio ex nihilo*], the process of separating or distinguishing the physical elements, and the work of provisioning the formed universe.'[23] Bonaventure supersedes this literal exposition of the journey of creation with a more anagogical vision in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259). The personal, experiential journey in the *Itinerarium* in turn structures the narrative course of the *Hexaemeron*.[24]

III. Conditions, presupposition and end goal of scriptural exegesis

In Collation 1, Bonaventure describes the target audience of Scripture, as well as its presuppositions and sapiential goal: 'In these words the Holy Spirit instructs the prudent person, to whom one should address one's speech, where to begin it, and where to end it.' Bonaventure goes on to clarify:

> First, to whom one should speak, that is, to the Church; for the sacred should not be given to dogs, nor pearls thrown before swine [Matthew 7:6]. Second, it teaches where to begin, that is, from the centre (*medium*), which is Christ, because if that centre is neglected, nothing is obtained. Third, where to end, that

[23] Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works,' 231-32; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.2, d.12-16, 293-408; esp. d.12, a.1, q.1, 293-94; Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, ch.2, pt.2, 62-66.
[24] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.6, 62.

> is, in the fullness or completion of the spirit of wisdom [*sapientia*] and understanding (*intellectus*).[25]

Bonaventure speaks of the three essential qualities required of hearers of Scripture. Firstly, these hearers commit to observing the divine law, through virtuous action and spiritual enlightenment. With characteristic symbolical *nous*, Bonaventure uses the Pauline image of 'the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of truth' in 1 Timothy 3:14-15 to mediate the experience of constant virtue and inner truth as necessary supports for the religious life. Practically accepting and enacting God's law confers integrity on one's inner world, conforming oneself intentionally, actively and cognitively to the deiform. Secondly, hearers of Scripture maintain peace out of love for others. Bonaventure identifies the affective origin and end of such observance of the divine law. He cites 1 Timothy 1:5: 'The end of the [divine] command is love…' A true recognition of the dignity of the human individual presupposes fear of transgressing God's bounds and an unwillingness to extend the brokenness and dissension in the world. As in John 13:35: 'By this will all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' Obedience to God's revelation begins and ends in love for others and for God. Thirdly, hearers of Scripture observe God's law as a harmonious expression of divine praise. As in Psalm 21:26: 'Before you is my praise in a great church.' Each individual is ordered to the same end of glorifying God in his own way; yet these manifold approaches are united in both spirit and purpose despite their being manifold in their temporal expression or institution. In this manner, Bonaventure keeps the tension between historical relativity and spiritual unity, each voice intermingling with the others in a great symphony of praise. The Church is a spiritual institution realised equally in the individual self, among its many members and under one Head. Bonaventure asserts that the true identity of the *viri spirituales* is to be found within the Church (*ecclesia*) as 'people of the Church (*viri ecclesiastici*)'. As genuine hearers of Scripture, they can then ascend from worldly wisdom to divine *sapientia.* The 'ecclesial identity' of the *viri spirituales* presupposes a tension between institution and spirit that belies the radical Joachite connotation of a spiritualised Church. For Bonaventure, the

[25]Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron, Opera omnia,* 5:328: '*Primo, quibus debet loqui: quia Ecclesiae; non enim dandum est sanctum canibus, nec margaritae spargendae sunt ante porcos. Secundo docet, ubi debet incipere quia a medio, quod est Christus: quod medium si negligatur, nihil habetur. Tertio, ubi terminare: quia in plenitudine sive adimpletione spiritus sapientiae et intellectus.'* Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.1, 75.

strength of the Church or scriptural community does not lie in an ethereal spirituality of the future, but in the present divine institution of order.[26]

Bonaventure also describes the antithesis of the ideal hearers of Scripture. Their wrong view of Scripture stems from a wrong quality of heart – namely, hatred at the expense of love and peace, wrongly placed desire at the expense of desire for God, and curiosity at the expense of piety. The general sense is that total alignment to God's will is a firm foundation for knowledge and action. But pursuit of worldly wisdom or of the affective object apart from this basic orientation toward the Highest Good always ends in destruction. Bonaventure alludes to Gerard of Abbeville and those secular theologians who are 'snatched away by the spirit of carnality and cupidity…' They distort Christ's morals by understanding Christ and his will in a way that is defined by their own interests, rather than by Christ himself. Bonaventure also alludes to Siger of Brabant and other Averroist philosophers in cautioning against their 'attack on the doctrine of Christ by [their] false positions…' Bonaventure castigates them as 'presumptuous and curious', since they do not draw upon the divine source and divine *sapientia* but seek to grasp (ultimate) reality by their own power and on their own terms.[27] With keen discernment, Bonaventure saw beneath the surface of the political confrontations to the spiritual and affective forces driving them. His solution was a scriptural one – exposing the antagonists' pursuit of what was not Christ in the service of carnal ends within the world of thirteenth-century Paris. Bonaventure affirmed the scriptural truth that these affective objects could only be enjoyed when ordered in light of their divine end. Desiring earthly goods at the expense of others extended the brokenness and dissension in the world, whereas making God the end goal placed earthly goods at the service of others and God.

In keeping with his intention to guide his audience, Bonaventure identifies *sapientia* as the end goal of scriptural understanding. This wisdom is found in true relation to Christ, the Source and starting point of scriptural understanding. Since God is only knowable in Christ – 'the true Word' to humankind, it follows that the truth of reality can only be seen with significant reference to Christ as its exemplar and *medium*. Accordingly, Christ is the 'mediator' between God and humanity, occupying the central position in everything. To understand Scripture, and everything else under the sun, it is necessary to begin from Christ. This point of departure is

[26] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.2-5, 75-77; n.9, 77-78; Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 430; Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 429-30.
[27] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.6-9, 77-78.

articulated practically with an allusion to Matthew 11:27: 'for no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him.'[28] To know how things work, one simply asks Christ the centre, who will reveal it to us. This is the all-defining moment in the practice of revelation – God helps us in our finitude to determine the ultimate meaning of things. Manifestly, the one that envisions, thinks and acts in Christ receives fullness in him. This approach to exegesis of the highest things is transposed into the exegesis of worldly things. Bonaventure clearly understands that our relationship with Christ suffuses all realities – natural, epistemological, theological and spiritual. Wise living entails a conforming of vision, thought and action to the Divine Word; this threefold way configures the pattern of knowledge in every field of human endeavour.[29]

The mature synthesis of the *Hexaemeron* gives the Genesis narrative of the 'Six days of creation' in six visions: (i) understanding (*intelligentia*) according to *scientia* or 'implanted by nature' – corresponding to the divine distinction of the light from darkness (ii) understanding 'lifted up by faith' – corresponding to the divine distinction of the heavens from the earth, (iii) understanding 'taught by Scripture' – corresponding to the separation of the waters from dry land, (iv) understanding 'suspended by contemplation' – corresponding to divine adornment of the heavens with the stars and planetary spheres, (v) understanding 'enlightened…by prophecy' in the mystical encounter – corresponding to the filling of the universe with birds, fishes and other creatures, (vi) understanding 'absorbed into God by rapture' in the mystical union – this ultimate stage corresponding to the completion of God's creative work and its crowning with the creation of man. These six visions converge on a seventh 'vision' corresponding to the 'Sabbath rest'.[30]

Bonaventure's work on his masterpiece was interrupted when Pope Gregory X appointed him Cardinal-bishop of Albano on 28 May 1273. After his ordination in Lyons in November of the same year, Bonaventure began preparatory work for the Second Council of Lyons to be convened the following year. The necessary travel and duties and his unexpected death about

[28] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.10, 78.
[29] For expositions on Christ as the centre of Bonaventure's synthesis, see Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, ed. Lawrence Boadt, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems, (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), 51.
[30] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.24-31, 123-27.

two months into attending the Council meant that the final three of his seven visions in the *Hexaemeron* were left unfinished.[31] I shall now examine the first four visions.

IV. First vision: understanding according to *scientia*

Bonaventure treats understanding according to *scientia*. This vision is symbolically expressed by God creating light and separating it from darkness in day one of the Genesis story. Bonaventure understands God's creation of light as a symbol for the divine illumination of the human intellect in Christ the Word. Bonaventure juxtaposes Genesis 1:3-5 with Psalm 4:7: 'O Lord, the light of your countenance is signed upon us.' Just as light emanates from its Source, bringing visibility and form to formless matter, so does God bring spiritual understanding or the 'light of wisdom' to the human mind.[32] According to Bonaventure, 'in Christ are hidden all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge (*scientiae*)…' Christ is the centre or *medium* of seven sciences: 'namely: of essence, nature, distance, teaching, moderation, justice [and] concord. The first is the concern of the metaphysician, the second the physicist/physician (*physicus* concerned with physical nature), the third the mathematician (*mathematicus* concerned with scientific abstractions), the fourth the logician, the fifth the ethicist, the sixth the politician or jurist, and the seventh the theologian.'[33] Jay M. Hammond aptly summarised Bonaventure's program, as shown in this table.[34]

Subject	**Discipline**	**Profession**	**Christ as centre**
Essence	Metaphysics	Metaphysician	Eternal generation
Nature	Motion	Physicist/Physician	Incarnation
Distance	Measurements	Mathematician	Crucifixion
Doctrine	Reason	Logician	Resurrection
Moderation	Ethics	Ethicist	Ascension
Justice	Law	Lawyer/Politician	Final judgement
Concord	Theology	Theologian	Eternal beatitude

Figure 6.1: Bonaventure's organisation of the sciences in Christ the centre

[31] Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' 54-55; Ozilou, 'Saint Bonaventure in Paris,' 239-40.
[32] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.25, 123.
[33] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.11, 79; Here, Bonaventure refers to Colossians 2:3 and Augustine's *On the Trinity*. He rhetorically and methodologically builds upon the sevenfold program of sciences set out earlier in *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (1257). Unlike *De reductione*, this mature synthesis foregrounds the relationality of encounter with Christ the medium as pre-dispositional and foundational in the reduction from the arts to theology. Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, bk.13, ch.19 and 24; Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Emma Healy and Zachary Hayes, vol. 1, Works of St. Bonaventure, (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1996), 36-61.
[34] Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church,* 35; Also see Jay M. Hammond, 'Contemplation and the Formation of the '*Vir Spiritualis*',' in *Franciscans at Prayer*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 133-34.

The metaphysician studies the universal principles of being. These principles are reducible from the principles of those substances that are created and particular. The cause or origin, centre or *medium* and ultimate end of all things receive their theological foundation in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The metaphysical study of the eternal generation of the Word requires the correlation of physics, since this movement corresponds to the incarnation of created reality in the Word outworked through a concrete, visible process. Moreover, just as everything flows from its origin in God, all human reality is an inflowing from the spiritual head or Christ. So, the innermost structure of external reality discernible to the physicist mirrors the inner structure of human reality discernible to the physician. The mathematician measures the geometrical integrity of things reducible to the geometrical configuration of the Cross. The logician logically maps the interface of historical and spiritual realities, with the 'coincidence of opposites' in the metaphysical sphere assimilable to the symmetry of the literal and spiritual in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.[35] The Christ-event manifests the logic of love, the ideal inner structure of human and created being. The logic of the devil dictates that all things, including God, are an extension of the self. The devil's 'sophistic and destructive argument' manifests an inner contradiction in human experience. The assimilation of all things to the self only confines it to its own finite horizon of possibility. On the contrary, the logic of the Cross affirms that all things find their meaning, origin and purpose in God. 'Christ's argument is constructive and reparative' and is as follows: 'The major proposition was from eternity; and the [minor] assumption…is the Cross; and truly, the conclusion is the resurrection.'[36] As Zachary Hayes describes, Christ is the Eternal God ('major premise'); Christ descended to humanity in his incarnation ('minor proposition'); therefore, all things that desire to live in God must ascend with Christ ('middle term'). 'In his resurrection, Christ is the middle term [of the syllogism] that destroys the logic of the devil and manifests the divine logic.'[37] The ethicist considers the performative principle of this ideal pattern of human life co-extensive with the logic of Christ's ascension. The ideal origin, order and end of humanity in light of God's final judgment configure the right dispensation of law and justice; since the intents, ordering and enjoyments of human life configure political organisation and outcomes. God is the source of the political system, and the mode and measure of politics. A right perception and outworking of authority consist in knowing the hierarchical nature of the

[35] See Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites: The Theology of Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978).
[36] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.29, 87-88.
[37] Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure*, 201.

universe. It is to be accountable to the God one knows and not to transgress his bounds. The theologian considers the divine intentionality and identity resplendent in the determination of things. Since all effects attain their true meaning and integration in relation to God as their First Cause in eternal beatitude.[38] This sevenfold movement of *scientia* terminating in divine wisdom mirrors the threefold 'emanation and return' of Christ from the heart of God the Father into the world, downward in the depths of the crucifixion, and upward in the heights of beatitude.

These seven sciences study the world in a threefold way – with respect to 'essence', 'figure' and 'nature'. Duly, truth is present to the soul in three ways: firstly, truth completely transcends understanding and relates to the things to be contemplated (essence); secondly, truth of what is interpreted relates to 'the truth of words' (figure); and thirdly, truth of deeds or things is externalised by desire (nature). The whole world returns to the soul in an integrative process of interpretation.[39] Accordingly, the Bonaventurian reader asks three questions of created things. Firstly, from the point-of-view of metaphysics, or the general study of causes, the reader asks: From what does the creature derive its power? In other words, what causes this creature to exist? This way of knowing is realised by abstraction of the cause from effects. Secondly, from the point-of-view of physics, or the special study of natural things and processes, the reader asks: How does the creature develop? What is its habitual course as derived from empirical observation? Thirdly, from the point-of-view of geometry and logic, the reader asks: What is the logical terminus of the creature's development? This way of knowing involves logical mapping of the relations between source, way and end. From the point-of-view of ethics, the reader's purpose and use for the said creature, and the place it occupies within his world of utility, expresses his own source, direction and goal in life. Having extrapolated from the consideration of creaturely life to that of human life, the reader asks: What is the source of my life, or what gives me meaning, sustenance and joy? What is my life goal, or what do I desire most in life? What is my life-approach, or how do I go about attaining it?

All creatures in the sense world signify God's invisible attributes. God is the origin, mode and end of every creature. Hence by nature, every creature is a likeness of the eternal wisdom. This is because God in Christ originated, ordered and intended all things for himself. Bonaventure

[38] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.10-39, 78-91.
[39] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.4, n.4, 131; n.6, 131-32.

correlates this threefold inquiry to a threefold inner spiritual meaning – allegorical, tropological, anagogical – residing beneath the external, literal sense of Scripture. The allegorical studies the 'Incarnate Word' or continuity of divine and created nature. This relates to the physical within the metaphysical, as expressed by the multi-level meaning of Scripture. The tropological discloses the ethical dimension, where the reader contemplates the scriptural teachings in the 'Inspired Word'. These teachings concern the right conduct of Christ and humanity in light of their divine 'end'. The anagogical discloses the theological dimension. This is the divine origin or 'Uncreated Word' from the standpoint of 'essence' or 'origination'. This threefold questioning of things and self is finally transposed onto the theological level. Extrapolating from creaturely and self-understanding to divine revelation, the reader sees in things a resplendence of the Trinity: Father who originates, Son who models this threefold order of things, and Holy Spirit who directs all things in their ways and proper ends.[40] This layered interpretation of natural, moral and theological reflects the hierarchical structure of reality, with creation, soul and God as integrative aspects of the same logically interconnected unfolding of all things into God.

This is the living synthesis of world, soul and Scripture in Christ the centre. By this synthesis, Bonaventure proves that that the shape and tonalities of reading and the thematic and structural direction of the self-as-narrative are always determined by the soul's direction in God. Wisdom consists in registering the true source and end of our existence, by which all other things in our lives are relativised and reordered. Metaphysical inquiry participates in the hermeneutics of self and spirit – in a way that exceeds the wilful ignorance of the nature-bound philosopher unconcerned about how his ambitions are formalising the objects of his knowledge. Therefore, Bonaventure explores the metaphysical implications of the scriptural principle articulated in his earlier *Collationes de septem donis*; all knowledge is ordered to the object of belief, challenging the Averroist perspective of an autonomous wholly naturalistic philosophy.

[40] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.12, 79; col.2, n.12-19, 99-102; col 4-7, 129-81; Zachary Hayes, 'Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God,' in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 51-56, 72-79; Zachary Hayes, 'Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure,' *The Journal of Religion*, 58 (1978): S85-S104; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 10-13, 66-69; John F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, vol. 23, Studies and Texts (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 448-60, 735-39.

The fourfold approach to *sapientia*

Bonaventure elaborates how *sapientia* leads the soul to God. Firstly, the origin of *sapientia* is 'the Father of lights' (James 1:17) who suffuses the soul with divine ardour and light. This light floods the entire soul and makes its thoughts, intentions and imaginings beautiful. But this transformation cannot occur unless the soul sighs vehemently for it; nor does it occur without the justice that disposes the soul to possess this wisdom. The scholastic is disposed to seek God intellectually, whereas the monastic is disposed to live God actively. Both disciplines are indispensable in the realisation of wisdom. However, this dual mode of listening (*audiens*) and doing (*observens*) is incomplete without the desire of heart to animate them. Three criteria therefore have to be met in the soul: love for God, listening to his Word, and observing his Word in action. Love induces the soul to live and interpret in search of God, so that all knowledge and life is ordered to its object. This is the scriptural exegetical synthesis of Bonaventure in a nutshell – Pseudo-Dionysian anagogy of desire, monastic tropology of the Spirit, and scholastic allegory of the mind. To these three functions, all Scripture is reduced. In this manner, the soul is equally contemplative, active and intellective.[41]

Bonaventure further instructs the reader in a fourfold approach to *sapientia*. Every reader has an innate knowledge of reality (*sapientia uniformis*), but this truth must be illumined through scriptural words and deeds (*sapientia multiformis*) and through observing the divine signs in creation (*sapientia omniformis*). Analogous to the Pseudo-Dionysian terminus of the mystical ascent, these three lights spiral back to their divine Source. Here, experience reaches an ineffable height and intensity, and love outstrips knowledge (*sapientia nulliformis*). In this way, divine revelation is more than a scriptural proposition, a scriptural action or a literal phenomenon. Rather, these visible, cognisable, actionable revelations are merely manifestations of a deeper reality that is spiritually discerned.[42] As Dominic Monti affirms, 'one is not dealing here simply with a rational knowledge about God, but a transforming personal experience of God's self-revealing Word.'[43]

Bonaventure's practical program for sapiential realisation subsumes scientific endeavour into the unity of faith. Conformity to Christ in faith reveals the right facts about the nature of things to the intellect – that God is far above and expressive of the world, and that all things will one

[41] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.2, n.1-4, 93-95.
[42] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.2, n.8-34, 97-109.
[43] Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works,' 249.

day return to God and must stand before him to be judged. By contrast, Aristotle and other philosophers posited the oneness of God and the world. The world as God becomes the object of man's intellection and love, and a realisation of man's finite existence. Man derived his divinity from himself and had no criteria for judgment other than himself. Since God and the world were indistinguishable, man could pursue inner-worldly ends rather than God. In teaching others to know and live rightly, Bonaventure cites Augustine's *De civitate Dei* to affirm that the soul must 'direct the intention toward God the fountainhead, where [virtue] may rest in a certain eternity and perfect peace'.[44] Bonaventure commends the simplicity of resting in God himself rather than the complexity of frantically seeking to actualise (self-)truth apart from him. Practically, coming to God, and being so healed in heart and mind by his love, rectifies the entire being in the actual. 'Therefore it is necessary that love be healed, otherwise the entire affect is askew...' Having been transformed by faith, hope and love, the soul can now truly see Christ and receive from him temperance, prudence, justice and courage.[45] In other words, wisdom is not reducible to the soul's own best practice but derives from a higher source.

V. Second vision: understanding uplifted by faith

Bonaventure builds the theological level upon the scientific level of understanding elaborated earlier. Understanding elevated through faith corresponds to God's creation of a firmament separating the waters on the second day of creation (Genesis 1:6-8). This firmament is faith which comprises the source of all understanding – literal and spiritual. Faith has three characteristics of 'height', 'stability' and 'beauty'. Firstly, the heavens are known by their 'height', analogous to the knowledge of faith which is on a higher level than that of rational investigation. 'Height' discloses the twofold object of faith: 'sublimity' in which the height of God's mystery defies human expression, and 'profundity' in which the depths of created nature disclose the character of God in his Incarnation. Just as the heavens are above the earth, so the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation are confirmed only by faith. The resources of human reason only serve to make intelligible what has already been assented to in faith.[46] Secondly, the heavens are known for their 'stability' or 'firmness', referring to the mode and measure of faith in divine testimony. This refers to the way faith is manifested in Christ as 'Uncreated Word', 'Incarnate Word' and 'Inspired Word.' Only through a living relationship

[44] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.7, n.5, 173; Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, bk.19, ch.10, n.25; Also see Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, bk.14, ch.1, n.3.
[45] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.7, n.14, 177.
[46] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.26, 123; col.8, n.3-19, 185-92; Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, bk.12, ch.14, n.22.

with Christ – seeking his will, revering his words, and obeying his example – can the soul attain wisdom. Faith is the certitude that derives from trust in the character of the One speaking, and it rests on the sure foundation of experience.[47] Finally, the heavens are known for their 'beauty', referring to the content of faith. Incarnate in scriptural experience, the truths or speculations of faith are effervescing like the twelve pearls on the twelve gates of Apocalypse 21:10-12. Receiving divine power to govern life on earth, these speculations are also like twelve stars deriving their motive power from the sun. As such, faith is more than simply intellectual assent or deep conviction; it is the quality of heart that orders all knowledge and action to God and makes God's will resplendent in their determinations.[48]

Bonaventure goes on to justify the relational basis of his scriptural hermeneutics. Having dealt with God as the exemplar of all things, Bonaventure uplifts Scripture as the divine exemplar writ textual. Bonaventure explains the relationship between the Triune God, Scripture and its readers in terms of a literary metaphor: 'For all of Scripture is the heart of God, the mouth of God, the tongue of God, the pen of God...' In other words, God intends the words of Scripture, just as the heart of the writer determines the meaning of his text. The text is brought into speech by the 'tongue' of Christ who expresses the Father's intention; this expression is further recorded in sensible forms and recollected to the Father by the 'pen of the Holy Spirit'. To extend this metaphor, just as a writer and reader connect with each other through the mediation of a written word, so the Divine Word written by God can lead the reader back to God by recalling to the reader's mind the truth of their shared experience. Therefore, the reader enters the life of the divine author through the mediation of biblical revelation. But if shared experience presupposes the reader's connection with the divine author, the converse is also true. The words of the 'Love Letter' are meaningless to someone other than the beloved to whom these words are addressed. The 'words' of Scripture and creation are indecipherable to those who do not know the divine author. Just like the Israelites in Isaiah 30:1-2, they appealed to the worldly power of Egypt, that is the sciences, rather than to the revelatory authority of God enshrined in his Word.[49]

[47] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.9, n.1-29, 193-204.
[48] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.10-11, 205-26.
[49] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.12, n.17, 233-34.

VI. Third vision: understanding instructed by Scripture

Bonaventure describes three dimensions of scriptural interpretation: *spirituales intelligentiae* ('spiritual understandings'), *sacramentales figurae* ('sacramental figures') and *multiformes theoriae* ('multiform theories').[50] He infers these interpretive dimensions from the image of Genesis 1:9-13: On the third day, God gathered all the waters 'into one place' and created dry land which he called 'earth'. Then God commanded the earth to sprout vegetation containing seed for propagation and trees bearing fruit after their kind. The space of the symbol structures a threefold hermeneutical reality: the *spirituales intelligentiae* symbolised by 'the gathering of waters', the *sacramentales figurae* or multiplicity of things signified symbolised by 'the sprouting' of vegetation on the earth, and the *multiformes theoriae* or infinity of spiritual interpretations symbolised by 'seeds' propagated from this vegetation.[51]

The *spirituales intelligentiae* treat the four spiritual senses (*sensus*) of Scripture. These senses are compared to 'the gathering of waters' because of their scriptural source, their limitless 'depth of meaning' which must be survived by the 'wood' of the Cross, and an 'abundantly flowing multiformity' because of their multi-referential character. Each natural sign has a multi-level meaning – of the doing of things (literal), of things to be done (tropological), of things believed either in the past or in the present (allegorical), and of things hoped for in the future (anagogical). The *sacramentales figurae* treat the multiple referents of Scripture. God as First Cause can mean many different things by a single word, by virtue of the infinite potential and profundity of his Art.[52] The *multiformes theoriae* refer to the many seed-like, subjective interpretations generated by the dynamic interplay of text and life. The key term *theoriae* denotes the subjective consideration of Scripture and its referents, as distinguished from 'sensus' or the objective meaning of Scripture and its referents. Since individual things and scriptural words are finite, the *spirituales intelligentiae* and the *sacramentales figurae* are numerically delimited. But the *multiformes theoriae* are nearly infinite because they refer to the ever-expanding horizon of the reader in the infinite God.[53]

[50] I retain the Latin terms for Bonaventure's three unique exegetical concepts. Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, col. 13, n.2, 388.
[51] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.27, 123-24; col.13, n.1-2, 235-36.
[52] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.13, n.11-33, 240-48; col.14, 249-64; col.15, n.1-9, 267-69.
[53] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.15, n.10-28, 269-78.

Bonaventure defines the seminal character of the *theoriae*, as figured in Genesis 1:9-13:

> So just as by the gathering of waters is signified the multiformity of understandings and in the sprouting of earth the multiplicity of sacramental figures, so in the seeds [Scripture] reveals a certain infinity of heavenly theories, which are signified by the seeds.[54]

Bonaventure conveys the mechanism of spiritual exegesis through the similitude of God's creation of seed-bearing plants. Just as plants grow and generate seeds through their progenitive capability, the scriptures are the seedbed and source of an organic multiplicity of interpretations. Just as trees grow and develop the potential to reproduce their own kind, so the revelation of the scriptures 'grows' and generates new interpretations within the developing historical situation. The *rationes seminales*, drawn from Augustine, provide a key concept in the structural envisioning of this development. Thematised earlier in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, these 'seminal reasons' or causal 'seed-principles' are operationalised in the *Hexaemeron*. These dynamic seed-principles map the integrated unfolding of things in God and induce the understanding of the scriptures. Christ, the exemplar of all things, is one. Nonetheless, he stands in relation 'to… in… [and] beyond the many.' In other words, the first relation refers to the object insofar as it stands in potency, to be called forth by God *to* act. The second refers to individual things created, multiplied and governed by God, each bearing the imprint of the divine heart *in* whom it lives. The third is the reality of God himself, which is *beyond* the many and lies hidden within the Eternal Art. An analogous movement occurs on the epistemological level. God plants the *rationes seminales* of the Eternal Art in human beings from birth; these become the innate principles by which humans judge the truth of things and thereby return to God the First Principle. In the earlier scholastic synthesis of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, these are three separate modes operating synchronously; whereas here in the *Hexaemeron*, the three functions of 'emanation, exemplarity and consummation' represent different moments within a single 'continuum in which the supernatural shines through the natural and leads it back to its source, the Creative Word…'[55]

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[54] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron, Opera omnia,* 5:400: *'Sicut enim in congregatione aquarum significatur multiformitas intelligentiarum, et in germinatione terrae multiplicitas sacramentalium figurarum; sic in seminibus ostendit, se habere infinitatem quandam caelestium theoriarum, quae significantur per semina.'* Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.15, n.10, 269.

[55] José de Vinck, 'Two Aspects of the Theory of the "*Rationes seminales*" in the Writings of Bonaventure,' in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1294* (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973), 316; Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.1, n.17, 83; col.4, n.10, 133-34; col.15, n.12, 270-71; Bonaventure,

(a) Interplay of vertical and horizontal interpretation

Bonaventure systematically renders to his audience the infinitely generative capacity of scriptural wisdom. He does this in an open-ended way that exceeds the conceptual or methodological bounds imposed by the Averroists, certain seculars and Joachite Franciscans. This potential for a deepening relation to the actual underscores a certain interpretive dynamism necessitated by the temporalisation of the interpretive process. Bonaventure implies that scriptural interpretation proceeds along two axes – the vertical or hierarchical axis and the horizontal or temporal axis. When reading proceeds along the vertical axis, the meaning of a single word can disclose the analogy of anthropological, created and divine orders. For example, the image of an 'oak tree' (Isaiah 61:3) signifies both the steadfast soul and the Cross of Christ (Hebrews 12:29). The fourfold spiritual interpretation gives the multi-modality of the reader's engagement with the divine reality in and through the created medium. The same oak tree can refer, on the allegorical/moral level, to stability of action and depth of conviction; and on the anagogical level to the divine immensity that is beyond time. On the other hand, reading along the horizontal axis amounts to a temporalisation of the interpretive process, as when the sapiential content of the oak tree can be interpreted differently at different stages of its growth. Since all things are not static but in motion, it stands to reason that one's interpretive horizon deepens with the growth of everything into God. The world around us is evolving, becoming more God-like – so too is the individual reader. This dynamic interaction of text and life, like a germinating seed nourishing and being nourished in its environment, gives rise to an infinity of seed-like interpretations that have potential to mature and produce seeds of their own. The reader tends to conceptualise his relation to Christ the centre in different ways, depending on his situation in the world. The reader marshals a diverse and diversifying array of texts; and the relations of meaning construed in the service of interpretation are continually dispossessed and refigured as the reader turns his heart once more upon this centre at different junctures in his walk with God. As José de Vinck explains, both exegesis and creation compose integrative aspects of a single logical pattern of development of everything away from, and back toward, God. Hermeneutically speaking, the interpretation of Scripture, like the interpretation of extra-mental things, is never static but moving toward some yet-unrealised completion.[56]

The Soul's Journey into God, ch.4, n.6; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, vol.1, d.20, a.1, q.2, 370; vol.2, d.7, a.1, 197-99.

[56] de Vinck, 'Two Aspects of the Theory of the "*Rationes seminales*" in the Writings of Bonaventure', 307-16.

For Bonaventure, exegesis is a dynamic interconnected unfolding of understanding in the scriptures. This movement corresponds to the interconnected unfolding of everything into Christ, the 'tree of life.'[57] An analogous reading is contained in Bonaventure's *Lignum vitae* (1260), which has forty-eight meditations on the Gospel story. These meditations are rhetorically framed by the biblical image of the 'tree of life', or Christ as the exemplar of arboreal growth. In the prologue, Bonaventure metaphorises:

> I have endeavored to gather this bundle of myrrh from the forest of the holy Gospel, which treats at length the life, passion and glorification of Jesus Christ…Picture in your mind a tree whose roots are watered by an ever-flowing fountain…with its fruit that took its origin from the Virgin's womb and reached its savory maturity on the tree of the Cross under the midday heat of the Eternal Sun...[58]

The twelve fruits of this tree, nourished by the Source, express Christ's life and ministry. The topmost branches embody Christ's ascent in his resurrection and glorification, presupposed by the intimate depths of his root-system and the trunk of his integrity from life till death. This image of arboreal growth embodies and expresses the seed-principles of faith – love, constancy through struggle, loftiness through power, and life through death.[59] Just as Christ could not attain resurrection without the crucifixion, a tree cannot stand strong and tall without enduring through adverse conditions such as storms and scorching heat. Likewise, the soul cannot have the heights of glory without the growing pains of faith.

To illustrate how this exegetical method functions in practice, consider the example of a tree – not simply as fully developed but germinating from a tiny seed. The Bonaventurian reader naturally considers what it will take to bring this seed from potency to act. For instance, consider John 12:24-25: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal'. This

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[57] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, 18, col.1, n.17, 82-83; col.14, n.18, 259, n.30, 264; col.23, n.31, 415-16.

[58] Bonaventure, *Lignum vitae, Opera omnia,* 8:68-9: *'...ex sacri Evangelii silva, in qua de vita, passione et glorificatione Iesu Christi diffuse tractatur, colligere studui hunc myrrhae fasciculum...Describe igitur in spiritu mentis tuae arborem quandam, cuius radix irrigetur fonte scaturitionis perpetuae, qui etiam excrescat in fluvium...et hic quidem fructus est, qui de virginali utero traxit originem et in ligno crucis ad maturitatem saporosam per aeterni solis calorem meridianum...'* Bonaventure, *The Tree of Life*, prologue, n.2-3, 119-21.

[59] Bonaventure, *The Tree of Life*, 117-75.

biblical text conveys the planting of one and the propagation to many in the literal realm, analogous to the paradoxical relation of individual sacrifice and legacy to the many in the spiritual realm. In Matthew 17:19, the minuscule 'mustard seed' is likened to the inconsequential beginnings of a fully formed faith life. Also, Matthew 13:32 describes: 'Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof.' The one concept of 'seed' can refer to many different realities by virtue of its literary-contextual diversity (*sacramentales figurae*). Furthermore, each reality can be understood at various levels of comprehension (*spirituales intelligentiae*). But the temporal dimension of the interpretive process enables an evolution of this multiple exegesis in the centre (*multiformes theoriae*). This exegetical journey parallels the logically integrated development of the whole cosmos in God.

The Bonaventurian reader's malformed pre-understanding of the reality of 'seed' refines and deepens as he reflects and practises this seed-principle (*ratio seminalis*) in his own life. This knowledge has a basis in Christ as ultimate reality beyond mere facticity. The reader fails to grasp its true meaning if he makes abstraction from the principle. When he enters hermeneutically into the world of the biblical narrative, he experiences the seed-principle concretely. The above parables of Jesus speak powerfully to the reader. The reader begins to nurture an unspeakable affinity between the abject condition of the seed and the seminal condition of his own faith life. Alone in the dark and under the inexorable pressure of soil, the seedling grows steadily towards the light, pregnant with the hope and promise of a better future. The seedling's source-dependency and deepening of its root system speaks to the reader of being nourished in the Word and in God. Subsequently, the mature tree, analogous to the reader's matured faith, gives shade and comfort to others and produces fruit. Additionally, the typological mediation of the 'tree' figure underpins this development of a personal Christology. For instance, the revelation of the New Testament figure of the 'Cross of Christ' in the Gospels and of the 'tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God' in Apocalypse 2:7 transposes the revelation of the Old Testament figure of the 'tree of life…in the midst of paradise' (Genesis 2:9) onto a higher mystical level. This realises the deeper spiritual meaning of the physical tree-figure.

(b) Typological exegesis

Bonaventure goes on to define the typological function of the *multiformes theoriae*:

> Likewise, what arises is compared to that from which it arises, like a tree to the seed from which the [the tree] arises, and [a seed] to the tree, from which [the seed] arises. So is the New Testament compared to the Old, as a tree to a tree, as a letter to a letter, as a seed to a seed. And just as a tree is from a tree, and a seed from a seed, and a letter from a letter, so too a Testament from Testament.[60]

Bonaventure corresponds the cause, centre and end of creation in the threefold Word (Uncreated, Incarnate, Inspired) to the layered unfolding of Scripture from the Old Testament to the New Testament. A hermeneutically significant Joachite image, already deployed in earlier works such as the *Itinerarium,* is expressed in terms of Exodus 25:18-22: 'the two Cherubim…turned toward each other with their faces looking at the Mercy Seat...The two Cherubim are the two Testaments, which look upon Christ.'[61] Bonaventure is careful to qualify that the revelation of Scripture encompasses both letter and spirit, *contra* the radical Joachites' belief that the passage from letter to spirit is such that it precludes a return to the origin.[62] According to Christopher Anderson: 'Whereas Joachim of Fiore points to his novel exegetical method of *concordia* as the source for true understanding and church reform, Bonaventure argues Christ is the source of all *concordia* in the books of nature, of the soul, of scripture, and of history.'[63]

Bonaventure reshapes a key Joachite exegetical principle – the factual parallelism of Scripture, Trinity and history. In the *Liber concordiae*, Joachim develops a similar system of factual parallels in which he named three species of senses. Firstly, the *sensus litteralis* pertains to the concordance – 'equality, similarity and proportion' – of Old and New Testaments converging in a final dispensation. The analogous interrelation between Old and New of persons, deeds and events (*concordiae*) gives the external dimension of history. This means that the interplay

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[60] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron, Opera omnia,* 5:401: *'Item, comparatur quod oritur ad illud, de quo oritur, ut arbor ad semen, de quo oritur, et ad arborem, de qua semen oritur. Sic comparatur novum testamentum ad vetus, ut arbor ad arborem, ut littera ad litteram, ut semen ad semen, et sicut arbor est de arbore, et semen de semine, et littera de littera: sic testamentum de testamento.'* Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.15, n.22, 274.

[61] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.5, n.1, 94.

[62] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.11, 117; col.15, n.11-12, 270-71, n.20, 273; col.21, n.19-33, 369-77; col.22, n.6-42, 381-99; For the role of this image within the thought-world of Joachim, see also Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A study in Joachimism*, 16; Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.5-7, 94-116.

[63] Anderson, *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*, xviii.

of future, present and past events can be mapped with some accuracy from the biblical order of events. Secondly, the inner spiritual meaning of history, or *sensus allegoria*, occurs where the *concordiae* signify additional spiritual progressions of the individual and Church. For instance, the progression from the child born of the slave woman to the child born of the free woman is analogous to the passage from the dictates of the Old Covenant to the freedom of the New. Thirdly, the *sensus typicus* manifests the correspondence between historical interconnections and inner-Trinitarian relations. 'This final species has a function parallel to the anagogic division of the *sensus allegoria*, but with more historical and communal dimensions'. The *sensus typicus* does not pertain to the individual's ascent, 'but conjoins the celestial and terrestrial Churches through the power of the Trinity'.[64] The Joachite exegetical system is a means of predicting future events, as well as mapping the mystical evolution of communal and personal life.

In his *Hexaemeron,* Bonaventure outlines three parallel intertestamental series of seven *tempora* corresponding to the seven days of creation. Transforming the Joachite model, the two testaments represent degrees of revelation or transpositional levels through which the soul ascends toward the plenitude of the divine truth. On the first day, God formed nature together with light; this prefigures God forming the New Testament Church by a bestowal of grace. On the second day, God divided the waters, corresponding to cleansing the world of sin in Noah's ark; this prefigures the Church's baptism through 'blood, or water, or fire', that is, through persecutions. On the third day, the sprouting of seed-bearing vegetation corresponds to the multiplication of Israel, God's elect; this foreshadows the Church's 'norm of faith'. On the fourth day, the creation of stars and planetary spheres corresponds to the founding of God's Law for Israel; this prefigures the Church's universal 'norms of justice'. On the fifth day, the creation of 'mobile life' corresponds to the time of Israel's kings; this prefigures the time of the 'popes', 'kings' and their 'subjects', particularly the Roman throne. On the sixth day, with the creation of humanity, the voices of prophets in the wilderness prefigure the 'time of clear teaching, in which there would be the prophetic life'. A new 'order would come, namely a prophetic state, similar to the order of Jesus Christ, whose head would be an angel ascending from the rising sun having the sign of the living God, and conformed to Christ.' Here, Bonaventure is obviously referring to Francis, who had already heralded this new order. The

[64] Joachim of Fiore, *Liber de concordia novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, 73, bk.2, ch.1 n.2-3, 62; For an excellent discussion of Joachim's adaptation of the scriptural senses, see McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim Of Fiore in the History of Western Thought*, 129-38.

seventh day of 'Sabbath rest' corresponds to the 'intermediate rest' of a time of prophetic silence for Israel; this prefigures the 'final rest' for the Church where the 'all-powerful Word came down from heaven', leading the whole world into an age of 'greatest peace'.[65]

Bonaventure concludes with the central position of Scripture as the source of all other forms of knowledge:

> Therefore the [right] order is that a person should *first study sacred Scripture, with respect to the letter and the spirit*, then in the original [writings of the Saints], and subjecting them to sacred Scripture; similarly, [studying] the writings of the masters and the writings of the philosophers, but scanning and plundering [them], as though one should not linger there permanently.'[66]
> (Italics mine)

Bonaventure seeks a place for both the 'letter and the spirit' within the integrity of *sapientia*. He sees the scientific and symbolic as preparatory stages in the mystical appropriation of Scripture. For Bonaventure, Christ is the key of hermeneutical reconciliation between scholastic and spiritual perspectives on Scripture, between Aristotelian speculation and Joachite spirit-led exegesis. Bonaventure sourced this spirituality, neither in philosophical treatises nor in the *summae* of theology, but in Scripture as *sapientia*.

In the *Hexaemeron,* Bonaventure's sapiential synthesis unifies the journeys of soul, Scripture and external history within an integrative framework of 'emanation and return' of all things in God. Drawing together the scholastic, Joachite and Pseudo-Dionysian lines of his exegesis, Bonaventure identifies a certain dynamism stemming from the interplay of diachronic and synchronic dimensions of biblical interpretation. The eschatological character of his framework, that is neither closed nor static but open-ended and oriented towards the future of God, recalls Joachim's belief in the evolutionary character of biblical/world history rooted in the dynamic interrelation of the Trinity. Such a dynamic progression from natural to spiritual dimensions of form on the vertical axis, and primitive to eschatological dimensions of history on the horizontal axis, is manifested in the concord of the Old and New Testaments. This inter-

[65] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.16, n.11-31, 283-96.
[66] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron, Opera omnia,* 5:422: *'...est ergo ordo, ut prius studeat homo in sacra Scriptura quantum ad litteram et spiritum, post in originalibus, et illa subiiciat sacrae Scripturae; similiter in scriptis magistrorum et in scriptis philosophorum, sed transeundo et furando, quasi ibi non sit permanendum.' Opera omnia*, 5:422; Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.19, n.10-16, 332-35, esp. n.15, 335.

testamental concord is the scriptural embodiment of this unified upward movement, culminating in the beatific vision of Pseudo-Dionysian anagogy. The words of Scripture signify on natural, intellectual, moral and spiritual levels. Additionally, this fourfold system of meanings is not static but transformational, re-centralising as the represented object recovers its likeness to the Source with proximity and time. As Joseph Ratzinger has shown, Bonaventure makes Christ the centre of history and restructures the radical Joachite/Gerardian vision of the 'age of the Holy Spirit which destroyed the central position of Christ'. While the Joachite progression from sense to spirit precluded a return to the Source, Bonaventure emphasises the historical convergence of all things in Christ as the fullness of the ages.[67] The open-endedness of Bonaventure's unitive exegesis, combining both metaphysical deduction and mystical induction, creates a space for the leading of Holy Spirit. This leads to interpretations that deepen and transform with the evolving situation of his confreres— both the *zelanti* and clerically trained friars.

VII. Fourth vision: understanding suspended by contemplation

Bonaventure's fourth vision corresponds to God's creation of lights in day four of Genesis 1:14-19. Bonaventure traces the vertical dimension of the exegetical ascent; namely, the hierarchisation of world, Church and soul by analogy to the lights of 'the sun and moon and stars'. This interstellar image is juxtaposed with the Apocalypse 12:1 image of 'a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars...'[68] There are three levels of contemplation: 'super-celestial', 'sub-celestial' and 'celestial'. The super-celestial hierarchy is identified as the perfect contemplation of the Trinity. Figured as the sun that gives life, visibility and warmth to the formed universe, this divine hierarchy sources, structures and sustains the lower hierarchies. The sub-celestial hierarchy is the contemplation of the Church. Signified by the moon deriving its luminosity from the sun, the ecclesiastical hierarchy mediates divine illumination, receiving its dispensation and authority to rule from the super-celestial hierarchy. The celestial hierarchy is the contemplation of the hierarchical soul. Symbolised by the stars fixed and constant in their ordered ranks, the soul is ordered and strengthened by its contemplation of the Trinity.[69] The soul is celestial because it has 'levels

[67] Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 48, 109-18, esp. 17. For Ratzinger's discussion on Bonaventure's exegetical debt to Joachim and Pseudo-Dionysius, see 62-63, 87-91.
[68] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.3, n.28, 124; col.22, n.1-2, 379-80, n.39, 396-97, n.42, 398-99.
[69] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.20-21, 341-77; col.22, n.3-23, 380-89.

corresponding to the heavenly Jerusalem.' As in Genesis 28:12: 'And [Jacob] saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it.' In contemplating the 'ascent', 'descent' and 'return' of the heavenly Jerusalem into God, the soul becomes contemplative'.[70] The soul is only able to know scriptural reality and things in general if it has tasted of God. Thus, empowered by charity and stabilised by the virtues, the soul dares the ascent to God above. This tasting draws out the sense of what is real, to distinguish that reality from what is false in the world below.[71]

Reiterating *Apologia pauperum* in making poverty the foundation of contemplative ardour of the soul, Bonaventure declares: 'Contemplation cannot exist except in the highest simplicity, and the highest simplicity cannot exist except in the greatest poverty…The intention of blessed Francis was to exist in the highest poverty.'[72] Francis the Apocalyptic Angel and his Order of *viri spirituales* are the ultimate, eschatologically necessary stage in the development of Church life. As *viri ecclesiastici*, they are perfecting the orders of the soul and Church. Having attained perfect contemplation of the Trinity, Francis received the new spiritual understanding of Scripture that transformed the letter, opening the sixth seal to usher in the seventh age of Sabbath rest. This is 'the seventh day of nulliform wisdom' (*sapientia nulliformis*), of Francis' final *transitus* into God.[73] Bonaventure envisages this Sabbath rest as the convergence of the earlier six visions in a final seventh vision.

It is obvious that the *Hexaemeron* – the pinnacle of Bonaventure's life's work – fuses scholastic terminological precision with a rich mystical effusion. Even though he was unable to develop his final three visions, Hexameral themes were still foremost on his mind after 1273, when he left Paris for Lyons to assume the cardinalate. To realise his program of pedagogical and pastoral renewal for his Order beset by prevailing challenges posed by Averroism, secular theology and Joachitism, the Cardinal-bishop continued to preach at Lyons. The matter of some of these sermons indicated his ongoing immersion and delight in the biblical *sapientia* that he saw imaged in creation. One sermon, in particular, rehashed the theme of creation and its

[70] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.22, n.24, 389-90; col.23, n.2-9, 402-07; Also see Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 129-34, 54-56.
[71] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.23, n.31, 415-16.
[72] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.20, n.29-30, 356-57; Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend of Saint Francis (1260-1263),' prol.1, 7.1.
[73] Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.23, 401-18, esp n.26, 14; For a detailed treatment of Bonaventure's 'contemplative ecclesiology' in the Hexaemeron, see Anderson, *A Call to Piety: Saint Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days*, 155-88.

perfection in Christ as Son and Word. Another sermon resonated with Bonaventure's pervasive motif of illumination, with an exhortation for the friars to excel in holiness in the way light transcends all other substances in excellence. It has been established that Bonaventure preached fourteen sermons in 1273 and seven more before his inopportune death the following year, after having presided over the Order's general chapter and the third Council session.[74] Consequently, Bonaventure's sapiential program to educate his friars was brought to a sudden end in 1274. Nevertheless, Bonaventure left behind a great legacy. In 1482, Bonaventure's substantial contributions to the Church and to the Franciscan Order as its longest serving Minister General were recognised when he was canonised by Pope Sixtus IV.[75] Around 1588, Pope Sixtus V made Bonaventure a Doctor of the Church and gave him the title 'Seraphic Doctor' (*Doctor Seraphicus*), befitting the manner in which he lived out his life and vocation in the spirit of the Seraphic Founder.[76]

VIII. Summary

The *Hexaemeron w*as 'an unfinished last will and testament in which [Bonaventure] crystallised many of the ideas which had been gradually coming to expression over the course of his career.'[77] In this series of sermons, Bonaventure applied his integrative vision. He expanded the scope and application of his relational exegesis of Christ in Scripture. Bonaventure demonstrated how the Holy Spirit's operation, in a variety of domains ranging from the scientific, scriptural, anthropological and ecclesiological, sapientially informed the Franciscan world. Relativising everything in Christ ordered things to their sapiential end and imposed a dynamic unity on the world. Bonaventure taught his confreres the wisdom of holding Christ always at the centre of ministry and doctrine. Bonaventure demonstrated how to read the Scripture in a uniquely communal, sapiential and Spirit-led way. He also demonstrated how Scripture held the key to any political, ethical or scientific conundrum the world could throw

[74] Johnson, 'Bonaventure as Preacher,' 432-34; Bonaventure, *Sancti Bonaventurae Sermones de tempore*, s.186, 253-54; s.207, 284; Schlosser, 'Bonaventure: Life and Works,' 53-55.
[75] Sixtus IV, *Superna caelestis*, vol.1, xxxix-xliv; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca. 1217-1274), sanctus'; André Vauchez, 'Canonization of St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure: Why a Two-Century Gap between Them?,' *Greyfriars Review* 12, no. 2 (1998): 193-210.
[76] Sixtus V, *Triumphantis Hierusalem*, 9 vols., ed. Editori di Quaracchi, *S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia*, (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882), vol.1, xlv-lii; van der Heijden and Roest, 'Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress.' 'Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca. 1217-1274), sanctus'
[77] Dominic Monti, 'Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works' (PhD University of Chicago, 1979), 224.

at a simple friar. His pastoral concern to bring 'the minds and hearts of his fellow brothers to the understanding and love for Christ – the teacher of all *scientia*, all *sapientia*, and all *intellectus*' – was to reach its fullest realisation.[78]

Bonaventure did not simply seek to polemically reinforce the letter of tradition against the divisive perspectives of his day. He also initiated his audience into a living relationship with Christ the centre. The depths of this experience exceeded the conceptual or methodological bounds placed upon it by the naturalistic Averroists, the legalistic seculars or the radical Joachite Franciscans. Bonaventure broadened the horizon of his Order and the Church by instructing and initiating his audience in the experience of encounter with God present in the created world and mediated through Scripture. Bonaventure unified textual and mystical functions within a dynamic and progressive model of exegesis broadened to include the whole created order. His unique synthesis of history and creation systematically accounted for the transformational, living character of scriptural and natural revelation rooted in the fecundity of the Holy Spirit's expressivity. In rendering scriptural *sapientia* as the limitless horizon of God, Bonaventure underscored the un-encompassable and relational nature of this wisdom and its capacity to inspire his audience to greater depths of love and knowledge in God. This was the essence of Bonaventure's final synthesis – the Divine Word incarnate in community, unifying all creatures under one Head. Bonaventure's masterful effort at hermeneutical reconciliation was outworked with sapiential subtlety and methodological acumen. His legacy – a uniquely Bonaventurian wisdom – would set the friars on a path that would endure for generations to come.

[78] Hammond, 'Introduction,' *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, 65.

Chapter 7: Evolution of Bonaventurian Wisdom

Bonaventure's innovative sapiential hermeneutics was not monolithic but evolved in response to changing contexts over three phases. From 1243 to 1257 as a scholastic at the Convent of the Cordeliers, he conducted speculation of the sapiential principles embedded in the biblical text. From 1257 to 1267, as Minister General, he progressed beyond textual understanding with a focus on self-enactment of these principles in mystical experience. Lastly, from 1267 to 1273, in the final six years of his generalate, he fused understanding and enactment of these principles within the total experience of God incarnate in self and created order. All three modes and their foci – textual understanding, mystical enactment and communal incarnation – are legitimate angles on the experience of the Word at work in the world. Bonaventure's many methodological skills and registers that enrich and variegate the breadth of his *corpus* point to the significance of a more contextual approach to reading Scripture and other texts.

In my study of Bonaventure's hermeneutical development, I examined each phase through the lens of his engagement with certain key sources, both formal and material. I also looked at how his encounter with his sources shaped his mode of proceeding and influenced his hermeneutical results. Central to my argument was that these transformations were undertaken in response to the needs of specific contexts and audiences. Bonaventure's aggregation of academic and practical modes shows how the scriptural subject matter – Christ or *sapientia* – can be rendered in a fashion that communicates effectively across contextual boundaries. This development forges a virile connection between the theory and practice of research. Bonaventure's creative fusion of exegetical modes constitutes the substance of his originality.

I. Understanding the text through *quaestio*: *Sentences* and biblical commentaries (1243-1257)

During his first two years of studies at the Franciscan school, Bonaventure came under the tutelage of the celebrated *magister regens* Alexander of Hales. Alexander instituted Lombard's *Sentences* as a supplementary textbook to the Bible while a secular *magister* at the university, and later as an assessment tool at the Franciscan school after he took up the habit in 1236. Alexander's *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi* was composed earlier between 1220 and 1227. The monumental *Summa fratris Alexandri* consisted of the works of John of La Rochelle, Eudes Rigaud and other disciples of Alexander. Upon the passing of

Alexander and John in 1245 and with the urging of Pope Alexander IV in 1255, the compilation of this pre-eminent work was continued by William of Middleton up to his death around 1260. The *Summa* shaped an original synthesis, combining experiential reading of Scripture of the patristic fathers and twelfth-century monastics with the speculative rigour of Aristotle. By this time, in the Latin West, the use of Aristotelian science in theological method had been catalysed by the rediscovery of Aristotelian philosophical writings through Islamic commentators such as Avicenna and Averroës. The *Summa* demonstrated how the new Aristotelian learning could be used in conjunction with traditional exegetical methods to serve a positive theological end. Bonaventure and other Franciscan scholastics would harness its dialectical method in reshaping the doctrine of the Order and Church. The innovations of the Alexandrine tradition would prove to have a huge impact on Bonaventure. However, by the early 1250s, Bonaventure would have started to hone his own intellectual voice. He was beginning to develop a more personal and experiential approach to encountering Christ in Scripture that drew upon the academic approach of the Alexandrine tradition. Bonaventure had to prove his scholarly worth both within and outside the Order, given the changes in intellectual leadership caused by the deaths of Alexander and John.

(a) Bonaventure's development of the Alexandrine theory of exegesis

Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, written between 1250 and 1253, embedded a synthesis that would aim to express the spiritual and practical potential of scholastic learning in the Christian life. He was developing his nascent synthesis of Christ and *sapientia* as the basis for a practical approach to issues of Gospel living. Bonaventure's earliest major theological work was built upon the multi-authored *Summa fratris Alexandri*. Both texts consider the scriptural basis of the nexus between reason and faith. Both express five different aspects of theological knowledge. The first aspect addresses the proper subject (material cause) of theology, which is an application of the classic Aristotelian problem. The second aspect concerns the method (formal cause) proper to the multi-dimensional subject, as well as the relationship of philosophy to theology within this order of approach. This relationship marks the point of convergence of Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic foci, modes and subjects. The third aspect regards the purpose or end-goal (final cause) of theology. The fourth aspect regards the author or source (efficient cause) of theology. As such, both Bonaventure and the summists aim to develop a disciplinary paradigm ordered to the Aristotelian epistemological discourse of source, content, mode and end. The final aspect relates to the psychological dimension

through Aristotle/Boethius and the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*. Relying heavily on the classifications in this moral-psychological treatise, Bonaventure accords the powers of the soul a relationship analogous to that which occurs on the epistemological plane. Bonaventure proceeds to shape his own intellectual synthesis drawing upon four main traditions, transmitted through the Alexandrine *Summa* as proximate source: (i) Augustinian through Peter Lombard, (ii) Aristotelian through Boethius, (iii) Pseudo-Dionysian through Hugh of Saint Victor and (iv) Avicennian through John of La Rochelle.

Bonaventure differs subtly from the *Summa fratris Alexandri* in relation to their respective subjects, methods, foci and modes of expression. In the *Summa*, theology's subject or material cause is 'the divine 'substance' disclosed through Christ in the works of [creation and] redemption'.[1] Three parts pertain to this definition: (i) who God is (the divine essence or *quis*), (ii) manifest to humanity *through* Christ (iii) *in* his creative and redemptive activity (drawing on the formula of Hugh of Saint Victor in *De sacramentis*). Following the abstractive mode of reduction of John of La Rochelle through Avicenna, theology proceeds by the abstraction of divine identity and will from forms of biblical or literal experience. Following Anselm of Canterbury and Richard of Saint Victor, theology terminates in an ideal knowledge of the divine identity and work. Inspired from the top-down approach to knowledge of Augustine, the source or efficient cause is God himself or the first actual being whose illumination is directly in the knower independent of empirical experience. On the psychological level, inspired by *De Spiritu et anima*, passions suffered by the lower part of the mind are soteriologically repurposed and reordered in the twofold upper portion of the mind through a dual process of rationalisation and removal. This process is brought from potency to act by an infusion of grace from above, which deifies the soul and readies it to receive the divine illuminations. The moment of induction from sense experience is inspired from Aristotle, the moment of abstracting out accidental properties is inspired from Avicenna, and the element of penetrating beyond the sensible is Pseudo-Dionysian in inspiration.

In a rather different sense, Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences* understands theology's subject to be threefold: God (as root principle of the whole), a completely 'integral' Christ (in terms of all that is manifest in the incarnation), and the things of faith (or the subject's intelligible aspect). Correspondingly, there are three modes of relating to the one divine reality:

[1] *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, Tr Int, q.1, ch.3, n.3, resp., 6.

theological argumentation as modelled by Anselm of Canterbury and Augustine, moral teaching as extolled by Bernard of Clairvaux, and contemplative theology as taught by Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of Saint Victor. As Bonaventure tellingly affirms in his *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, Hugh of Saint Victor 'excels in all three' modes; this implies that Bonaventure's synthetic substructure would be Victorine.[2] Bonaventure thus converges rational knowing and practical experience towards the end of affective awareness in God. Theology ends in becoming good, or in the remediation of the individual soul. With respect to the efficient cause, the author is twofold: it is the theologian, living in, with, from and for God; it is also God, living in, with, and for the theologian. Christ is the medium of this divine-human communion.

In the Alexandrine *Summa*, the intellectual notion of God as abstracted from sense experience bespeaks a certain distantiated use of Scripture and other texts. What is operative about scriptural understanding is its formal theological content. One has a notion of divine identity and intentionality (anagogical sense) through experienced effects (tropological sense) about which one can make theological inferences (allegorical sense). By contrast, Bonaventure's experiential notion of God calls for a more relational approach to divine knowledge, understood from a perspective within the mystical experience of God himself. In this manner, firm belief (allegorical), contemplative knowing (anagogical) and practical determination (tropological) are three different ways of relating to God through Christ. In the *Summa*, theological thinking is *about* that experience, an assessment 'after the fact' of its occurrence from the objectively distantiated standpoint of the analyst. For Bonaventure, theology arises *through* living, knowing and seeing *in* God – encompassing the total experience of God in spirit, soul and body. The difference is between abstracting a notion of God in things (as through an intellectual medium) and apprehending God in reality (through the totality of an experience).

[2] There has been some uncertainty over the dating of this treatise. Benson and others have demonstrated that it forms part of Bonaventure's inaugural sermon (*principium*) during his inception ceremony as magister in 1254. (They based this date on Jay M. Hammond's chronology of Bonaventure.) The older view, as espoused by Bougerol, Hayes and others, postulates that its maturity suggests a dating even after the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* in 1273. Joshua C. Benson, 'Bonaventure's *De reductione artium ad theologiam* and its Early Reception as an Inaugural Sermon,' *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (2011): 7-24; Joshua C. Benson, 'Bonaventure's Inaugural Sermon at Paris: *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia*: Introduction and Text,' *Collectanea Franciscana* 82, 3-4 (2012): 537-62; Catherine A. Levri, 'A Structural Analysis of Bonaventure's *Omnium artifex docuit me sapientia*,' *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 67-98; Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 163; Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, ch.1, n.3, 44-45.

To use an example of my own, the text of Galatians 5:22: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace...', incarnates a form of mystical experience. For Alexander, Scripture and experience are the joint basis on which formal-theological inferences are made about the causal nexus of divine impartation and human fruit-bearing. The fecundity of God in Christ (anagogical sense) is causative of the fruit-bearing capacity of the individual soul (moral sense). These facts serve as the inferential basis for knowing theologically that God is love and this love is the 'fecundity' of himself in others (allegorical sense). Bonaventure, while he would not dispute these conclusions, affirms that such revelation is gained by experiential rather than purely formal inferences from the data of Scripture. For Bonaventure, the object of knowledge is the divine reality himself, with the earthly experience of fruit-cultivation and fruit-tasting as an imperfect intimation of that inner experience of fructification and unspeakable succour of God. This biblical text constitutes a revoicing and description of this reality of divine enrichment that the reader himself cannot, of his own accord, put into words. As such, Bonaventure's dialectics of inner and outer truth transcends the more abstractive Alexandrine exegesis that mounts upward beyond the realm of sense. The ensuing synthetic differences between Bonaventure and the Alexandrine *Summa* can be clearly seen in the following table:

Alexandrine *Summa*	Bonaventure
(1) Subject matter or Material cause	
Theology's subject is: (i) divine identity and intentionality (ii) cognised *through* Christ (iii) *in* works of creation and restoration (from Hugh of Saint Victor's *De sacramentis*) Or theology's subject comprises essence abstracted through power in Christ's redemptive and creative action (Pseudo-Dionysian speculative triad)	Theology's subject is: (i) God (root principle of the whole) (ii) completely 'integral' Christ (in terms of all that is manifest in incarnation) (iii) realities of faith (its intelligible aspect)
(2) Mode of proceeding or Formal cause	
Theology proceeds by: speculative notion of God's identity and intentionality (neo-Platonic theological science of First Cause) abstracted from biblical (Hugonian aesthetic-biblical theology) and literal experience (Aristotelian phenomenalism) *Note*: Mode of abstraction from Avicenna's theory of reduction through John of La Rochelle	Theology converges: (i) theological argumentation (theological speculation of Anselm of Canterbury and Augustine deriving from faith) (ii) moral teaching (Bernard of Clairvaux), in (iii) contemplative theology (knowledge of divine love of Richard of Saint Victor and Pseudo-Dionysius) *Note:* Convergence of speculation and practice towards the end of affective or ecstatic awareness of God
(3) Purpose or Final Cause	
Theology's purpose is ideal knowledge of divine personhood (as liberated from the time-conditioned vicissitudes of everyday existence) Focus is on who God is, as seen in the ways he manifests himself to humanity through his creative and redemptive activity	Theology's end is goodness or 'wholeness' realised in the individual soul
(4) Author or Efficient cause	
Theology is sourced from divine illumination independent of empirical experience (Augustinian top-down approach to knowledge) *Note:* Empirical experience is only a preliminary context for ideal theology achieved through a form of intellectual contemplation	Theology is sourced from divine-self-manifestation in creation, encompassing the total experience of God in spirit, soul and body (Hugonian aesthetic awareness of God in creation)
Cognition of God in the psyche	
Twofold division of the upper mind, whereby passions suffered by the lower part of the mind are re-purposed and re-ordered through a dual process of rationalisation and removal. (Abstractive mode of reduction of Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima*)	Memory, understanding and will converge in the divine love as their origin (inspired by unity of Francis' hermeneutical experience)

Figure 7.1: Schematic comparison of the hermeneutical syntheses of the Alexandrine *Summa* and Bonaventure

(b) Use of *quaestiones*

Bonaventure's order of exegetical inquiry is shaped by his use of *quaestiones*, which allows him to construct a system of understanding on the meta-level of doctrine. In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure follows the dialectical method modelled by Lombard's *Sentences* in using Scripture as a point-of-departure for the logical resolution of philosophical problems. Firstly, Bonaventure poses a philosophical question of Scripture: for instance, 'Is faith more certain than scientific knowledge?' He then lists the authorities' arguments both affirmative and negative, pitting each against the other in a logical fashion. These arguments consist of reasons leading to a conclusion, be it *for* or *against*. Bonaventure then sifts through the reasons and their conclusions, inserting carefully chosen distinctions to show how the reasons provided from either side can be brought to cohere in light of new insight. Nevertheless, these reasons are typically insufficient, fallacious or inconsistent in themselves. Bonaventure therefore affirms that faith is more certain than scientific knowledge, not absolutely as some authorities claim but only by virtue of divine authority. Scientific knowledge also admits a form of rational certitude. Bonaventure thereby reshapes theological discourse according to his own contemporary, philosophically informed insight in the tradition.[3] This scholastic method highlights an instrumental use of Scripture and other sources, with interpretive selectivity guided by the reader's own direction in the texts.

Bonaventure's dialectical mode of pitting one side of a theological contention against the other, and then demonstrating how the question can be logically resolved through the insertion of distinctions, infuses tradition with the horizon of the contemporary theologian. This 'inclusivist' approach synthesises each theological standpoint within a global framework on the meta-level. Such an all-inclusive meta-understanding regards the whole in relation to its parts, oscillating between an ideal of theological wholeness and the lived reality of fractured understanding. Critical adjustment of the overall framework is undertaken on the basis of its capacity to deal with anomalies and inconsistencies in interpretation, in order that the framework may more fittingly reflect the global reality of Scripture. However, such a meta-understanding constitutes only a re-synthesis of already existing theological perspectives according to a particular theological agenda. It does not differ from the standard order of

[3] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, 16, bk.3, d.23, a.1, q.4, 23-29.

theological approach as an ideologically pre-determined way – except perhaps being one step further removed from theological reality.[4]

(c) An interpretive example: 'Can God be known through creatures?'

Bonaventure poses in his *Sentences* commentary an epistemological question of contemporary interest, especially pertaining to the growing influence of Aristotle on theological method. Bonaventure's arguments *for* and *against* regarding the question: 'Can God be known through creatures?' are qualified by inserting carefully chosen distinctions. These distinctions refigure the terms of discourse according to what the exegete thinks Scripture has to say on the matter at hand. The arguments *ad negativam* – derived from Augustine and other authorities – furnish the various reasons how and why creatures are lacking in the fullness of divine truth. Each of the reasons is in turn pitted against its counterpart *ad oppositum*. For instance, Augustine's sense that creatures are devoid of divine truth on account of their inherent imperfection is pitted against an argument sourced from the Book of Wisdom, that creatures show forth the truth of their Maker in a limited way because of their divinely ordained goodness. Bonaventure resolves the question largely in the affirmative, using the conceptual resources of both Aristotle and neo-Platonism: God is knowable through creatures insofar as the knower does not stop at created beauty but 'passes beyond' that beauty to something else. As such, Bonaventure knows something of God's own nature, will and ways from the character, intentions and activities of creatures. Responding to the objection that God and creatures share nothing in common, Bonaventure offers another distinction: creatures are not identical to God in that they are not what he is, but they participate in the divine power, wisdom and goodness in the manner of a lower ontological level sharing in a higher. In other words, the prospect of knowing God through creatures is not absolutely determinable *for* or *against* but depends on certain conditions. Hence, the work of exegesis consists in clarifying the presuppositions appropriate to the theological or epistemological reality in question. This is done by assessing why, how, and to what extent a given theological prospect is actualisable based on what can be inferred from the witness of Scripture.[5]

[4] The validative strategy of this high medieval scholastic dialectical mode of exegesis is analogous to what Paul B. Armstrong in his own modern hermeneutical context calls the 'inclusiveness' model of interpretive validation. Paul B. Armstrong, *Conflicting Readings: Variety and Validity in Interpretation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Books, 2017), 4.

[5] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, d.3, pt.1, single article, q.2, 73-78; q.3., 79-80.

Accordingly, Bonaventure constructs a conceptual framework that enables him to clarify the essential mechanism of the reality under consideration. Bonaventure's conclusion requires a distinction between a knowledge of God *in* the creature and a knowledge of God *through* the creature. Knowing God *in* the creature means to know the truth of the divine character and work from the testimony of his self-manifestation in creatures. This level of knowing necessarily involves registering creaturely reality as an inroad to divine truth. Knowing God *through* creatures requires penetration beyond the 'special conditions' of creatures to the 'general conditions' resplendent in God their exemplar. This level of knowing shifts the focus onto God himself as resplendent in creaturely determinations. These 'special conditions', expounded in the Alexandrine *Summa* as 'transcendentals', are the universal attributes of divine identity and working such as 'unity, truth and goodness'. A creaturely determination can exemplify God's identity and work in three senses – by possessing an essential unity by virtue of its origination in a First Cause, by possessing truth according to its God-ordained integrity of form, and by possessing goodness according to its aptness in being as it was made to be. Furthermore, each reality can be known in three overlapping senses – practically as pertaining to their everyday use or enjoyment, conceptually as a mirror on the self-understanding, and spiritually as pertaining to God himself as revealed in creatures.[6]

Bonaventure's demonstrative, reason-based approach to scriptural exegesis made topical use of the comprehensive scholastic reference tool, the *Glossa Ordinaria et interlinearis.* The *Glossa interlinearis* facilitated the vertical arrangement of ideas by helping scholars to mark the meanings of individual words. These words were then related to other words and their meanings on the level of the biblical text. Such formal and grammatical analysis of scriptural words in their literary contexts furnished the textual interrelations that grounded the interrelation of natural phenomena. The literal sense of Scripture also had to be clarified through a process of inter-dialogue with the various authorities of the *Glossa Ordinaria.* These authorities' differing perspectives on scriptural matters ensured another layer of textual engagement – the critical evaluation, qualification and re-synthesis of differing biblical views.[7] By rejecting certain opinions and qualifying others in harmony with biblical revelation, a theologically coherent worldview could be put together. This scholastic tendency of reading

[6] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, bk.1, d.3, p.1, single article, q.2, 73-77; q.3, 79-80, esp. 75 and 77; *Alexandri de Hales Summa Theologica*, vol.1, tr.3, q.1, m.1, ch.2, resp. (n.73), 114-15.
[7] For the application of Aristotle's dialectical method to scholastic methodology, see Stephen Boulter, *Why Medieval Philosophy Matters*, Why Philosophy Matters, (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 69-81.

the biblical text according to *quaestiones* meant that the order of exegetical inquiry was shaped by the reader's direction in the tradition rather than by the biblical text itself.

(d) Exegetical practice in the biblical commentaries

Bonaventure would enact his exegetical theory in his biblical commentaries, which he completed before he had to leave behind his academic career upon assuming the Franciscan generalate in 1257. He chose to comment on the sapiential books such as Ecclesiastes rather than the prophetic or historical books, and the Gospels of John and Luke rather than the more speculative and doctrinal Pauline epistles. His choices marked his converging interests in sapiential theology and the person of Christ. The subtle distinction between Bonaventure and Alexander of Hales in foci and methods is manifest in their subtly divergent modes of proceeding in their respective biblical commentaries on John's Gospel. Both Franciscans were shaped by the scholastic tradition to determine the logical coherence of textual parts. Furthermore, both sought to supplement the analysis of textual workings with a conceptual grasp of the sapiential workings signified by the text. Finally, both brought biblical-experiential insights into critical dialogue with the tradition – qualifying, accepting and/or rejecting various opinions in order that the whole might more adequately reflect the global reality of Scripture. Thus, an integrative framework of understanding would be built up on the meta-level of doctrine.

For instance, Alexander and Bonaventure question in their respective expositions on John 3:7-8 the theological significance of the Holy Spirit's biblical signification as 'wind'. Both interrogate the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of this signification according to the witness of tradition. Alexander abstracts formal sapiential principles from the experience of the represented object; the Holy Spirit's power, essence and activity correspond to the power, essence and activity of wind. Conversely, Bonaventure's personal mode of relating with the Holy Spirit is exemplified and mediated through the sensible experience of wind. Bonaventure deliberates between Augustine and John Chrysostom over whether the 'wind' metaphor implies either the Holy Spirit's intangibility and transcendence or his manifest power. Bonaventure decides the matter by invoking Bernard of Clairvaux to affirm that the Holy Spirit is indeed sensible, because of 'fervor and tepidity' of touch.[8] For Alexander, predications are made of God based on formal-theological inferences from experienced effects. Conversely,

[8] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ch.3, n.21, 187; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum: Eighty-Six Sermons on the Song of Songs,* trans. Samuel J. Eales (London, 1895), homily 54, n.9, 330.

Bonaventure's mode is not abstractive but relational, a 'seeing-with' God in the midst of creation. Instead of knowing the principles of divine working in abstraction from the manifest experience in God, Bonaventure's sapiential theology proceeds 'in', 'with' and 'for' God. There is a dual pattern of origination in word and deed; the divine self-disclosure registers on the level of both Scripture and experience.

II. Understanding experience *qua* text: The *Breviloquium* (1257)

As *magister* at the Franciscan school from 1254 to 1257, Bonaventure defended the Franciscan Order in a series of *quaestiones disputatae* against the accusations of institutional subversion and heresy by secular antagonists. In particular, William of Saint Amour was incited by the radical Joachite ideas of Gerard of Borgo San Donnino. In his *Liber introductorius ad evangelium aeternum* published in 1254, Gerard promoted his radical doctrine that Francis and his Order of *viri spirituales* held a privileged role in heralding the transition from carnal to spiritual forms of Gospel living. The renunciation of existing institutional forms of the Church for a wholly spiritual end-time Church proved problematic for the Order's ongoing ministry collaboration with the papacy. A year later, Gerard's *Liber introductorius* was censured as heretical at the Anagni Commission under Pope Alexander IV. Alexander's condemnation of William's anti-mendicant *De Periculis novissimorum temporum* in 1256 and his excommunication a year later led the seculars to ease off their attack. At the 1257 Rome General Chapter, John of Parma was pressured to resign from the generalate because of his Joachite sympathies. As John's successor, Bonaventure was to address the intensifying conflict over the approach to the Franciscan *vita*. This conflict was between the clerically trained brothers and the *zelanti*, especially those radically inspired by Joachitism. Since the death of the Seraphic Founder in 1226, the Order's increasing engagement with scholastic learning at Paris had raised concern among some *zelanti* and other reformers. They believed that the Order was too oriented to institutions of worldly power to safeguard the Franciscan ideals of *humilitas* (humility) and *simplicitas*. This concern was powerfully evoked in the poetic 'catch-cry' of the *zelanto* Franciscan poet Jacopone da Todi (d.1306): *'In sorrow and grief I see Paris demolish Assisi, stone by stone./ With all their theology they've led the Order down a crooked path.*'[9]

[9] Jacopone da Todi, *Jacopone da Todi: The Lauds*, trans. Serge Hughes and Elizabeth Hughes, The Classics of Western Spirituality, (London: SPCK, 1982), 123; G.T. Peck, *The Fool of God: Jacopone da Todi* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 102; Michael F. Cusato, 'Who Destroyed Assisi?: The Lament of Jacopone da Todi,' in *The Franciscan Order in the Medieval English*, ed. Patrick Zutshi and Michael Robson, Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West (Amsterdam Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 229-54, esp. 245.

Within the context of the friars' dispute over identity, Bonaventure used his synthetic skills to refine a sure theological and methodological foundation for the Order. Perhaps given the uncertainties over the dispensation of the Franciscan life, it was becoming more apparent to Bonaventure that the theological and spiritual formation of the friars needed a more normative structure of implementation to reliably equip them for ministry. His *Breviloquium*, completed just after his election as leader of the Friars Minor in 1257, was written to fulfil this need. This concise but powerful handbook of Franciscan theology, without the prolix and technical idiom of the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, would prove to be more useful in the field of ministry than the *Summa's* series of disputations on philosophical topics. Bonaventure was now writing for a bigger audience within and beyond the university, and to satisfy the ministry needs of his itinerant friars as well as the pedagogical demands of the Franciscan teachers and students. Bonaventure would deploy a hybrid exegesis to integrate Franciscan mystical experience within the doctrinal structures of the Alexandrine tradition.

The *Breviloquium* represents a methodological advance on his earlier *Sentences* commentary and biblical commentaries. He proceeds beyond the alternation of premises and conclusions so typical of scholastic dialectical exegesis, to what Stephen Brown calls 'the permutation of semantic properties'.[10] Driven by a pedagogical need to summarise the synthesis of Franciscan theology, Bonaventure innovates hermeneutically to foster a deeper logical penetration of the form of scriptural or mystical experience. The formative authority in his exegetical reshaping is the twelfth-century dogmatic metaphysician Anselm of Canterbury, whose concept of the *rationes necessariae* (necessary reasons) enabled Bonaventure to penetrate logically the matters of faith in Scripture. Philosophical reasoning, far from being used to establish the truth of articles of the faith by certain proofs or arguments, is simply pressed into the service of making intelligible what is already disclosed in faith. In Part 1, Bonaventure thereby sums up his method: '[theology's subject]...is God; as that through which all things exist, Christ; as that for which all things are done, the work of restoration; as that by which all things are united...the body of faith as intelligible.'[11] Bonaventure clarifies this experiential notion of *sapientia* as the mystical knowledge of divine goodness, integrating speculation and practice towards the end of affective or ecstatic awareness of God.[12]

[10] Stephen F. Brown, 'The Intellectual Context of Later Medieval Philosophy: Universities, Aristotle, Arts, Theology,' in *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (London and New York Routledge, 1998), 133.
[11] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.1, ch.1, n.4, 29.
[12] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.1, ch.2, n.1-5, 29-33.

The *Breviloquium* is a doctrinal treatise that does not operate by rational demonstration of proof. 'It is based on Scripture, and Scripture is based on divine authority.'[13] In his earlier *Commentary on the Sentences,* the starting point of Bonaventure's exegesis is the *quaestio* which configures understanding on the meta-level. By always referring back to an ulterior discourse, Scripture becomes merely a proof-text for a reader's line of argumentation that is otherwise extrinsic to scriptural concerns. The scholastic does not find it necessary to know scriptural reality *per se,* but the ways in which scriptural reality can interpret, interrogate and inform its various significations in the tradition. Conversely, in his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure transcends from using experience to interpret the discourse about the biblical text to understanding the text of experience itself. It is a more direct assumption of mystical experience *qua* text that goes beyond the meta-understanding of the *quaestio*. Following Anselm, Bonaventure approaches the analysis of Scripture and the Triune God it mediates, in terms of 'the exact relation at a literal level between the word or expression and what it designates.'[14] Bonaventure employs a uniquely hybrid exegesis.

Bonaventure's developing focus and method are manifest from his treatment of the threefold way of being-in-God: 'All creatures…may be referred to their Creator in three ways: namely, as the principle who creates them, the end who motivates them, or the gift who dwells within them.' This 'triple vision' is the object of a threefold faculty of the human individual circumscribed by Hugh of Saint Victor. Hugh's notion of a 'triple eye' encompasses 'the eye of flesh, the eye of reason, and the eye of contemplation'.[15] Bonaventure extends Hugh's sacramental approach as follows:

> Now, *a creature cannot have God as its origin without being configured to that principle* in accordance with unity, truth, and goodness. Nor can it have God as its object if it does not grasp God through memory, understanding, and will. Finally, it *cannot possess God* within itself as an infused gift without being *conformed to God* through the three-fold dowry of faith, hope, and love. Since

[13] Stephen F. Brown, 'The Theological Context: Reflections on the Method of Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*,' in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 22.
[14] Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages*, 17-26, esp. 22.
[15] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.2, ch.12, n.2, 96-97, n.5, 98; Hugh of St Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis)* trans. Roy Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America Publications, 1951), bk.1, pt.10, ch.2, 167.

> the first conformity is remote, the second proximate, and the third most intimate, that is why the first is said to be a 'vestige' of the Trinity, the second an 'image', the third a 'likeness'.[16] (Italics mine)

What prevails is no longer the scriptural validation of theological arguments, but the experiential cogency of Scripture. Here, Bonaventure observes the special conditions or qualities of divine influence on the creature. He concludes that things caused by God are unified, whole and suitably purposed in him. How does Bonaventure derive this conclusion? He understands from Christian experience that the soul 'has' God when its intention, understanding and manner of operation are like those of Christ. Thereby, the soul focuses its whole vision, orders its whole understanding and conforms its whole way of being-in-the-world to Christ. This notion of an existential unity arising from single-minded devotion to a transcendent centre and source of meaning ensues in an integrated mode-of-being that is effectual in obtaining this centre. Having observed reflexively the intrinsic causal chain of spiritual origination, internal realisation and outward embodiment, Bonaventure is able to register this causal nexus on the speculative plane.

In the *Breviloquium*, the explanatory mode of Bonaventure's scriptural exegesis tends towards a certain spatiality. Scriptural reality is a 'machine' dissected rather than a living, breathing organism listened to, seen and touched. In being largely controlled by the text, Bonaventure's scholastic exegesis tends towards a certain interpretive fixity. Meaning is fixed and vested in text. In other words, what is being contemplated is not God himself manifest in his living address through the biblical medium, but the experience itself. Such interpretation focuses on conceptualising meaning-relations intrinsic to the texts of Scripture and experience, rather than on literally embodying the words or the realities these words signify. Yet, it appears that Bonaventure is raring to pass beyond this dry and rigid scholastic formality, insofar as his commitment to a symbolic level of theology invested his theological speculations with a certain descriptivity. Manifestly, it is a proposition *of* experience that is verified and registered at the level of experience, but proposition nonetheless. The hermeneutical implication is that the

[16] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium, Opera omnia,* 5:230: *'Et quoniam creatura habere non potest Deum sicut principium, quin configuretur ei secundum unitatem, veritatem et bonitatem; nec Deum sicut obiectum, quin eum capiat per memoriam, intelligentiam et voluntatem; nec Deum sicut donum infusum, quin configuretur ei per fidem, spem et caritatem, seu triplicitem dotem; et prima conformitas est longinqua, secunda propinqua et tertia proxima: hinc est, quod prima dicitur vestigium Trinitatis, secunda imago et tertia similitudo.' Opera omnia*, 5:230; Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, pt.2, ch.12, n.3, 97.

biblical experience *qua* text, rather than God himself, is the actual subject of Bonaventure's hybrid exegesis.

To mark the integral relations between readers and texts on the discursive plane is in some way to constrain the expressivity that occurs only in the event of deep encounter. There is a crucial difference between a hermeneutic that is organically related to a framework for living – a first-order map of the spiritual journey – and a specular and discursive mapping of the same experience from a standpoint outside it. For example, we can agree intellectually with Bonaventure's statement that one 'cannot possess God' unless he is 'conformed to God'. We can even understand how it fits into the wider discursive framework. All things have a measure of similitude to God in as much as they ontologically participate in God. But the terms Bonaventure uses are general and do not convey the specificity of the experience. When he says that 'a creature cannot have God as its origin' unless it is 'conformed to that principle', the cogency of this analysis is not the same as the cogency (of an infinitely higher order) of the experience to which it refers. The mystery of the unfolding experience is consistent with a hermeneutic of personal encounter that unfolds the truth in the act of living in it. As with Bonaventure's scholastic exegesis, the expressivity of the interplay between self and (Divine) Other is being constrained by its rule-governed determination on the discursive plane. This perceived gap between thinking *about* biblical wisdom and how this wisdom ought to be actualised in its hearers was to be more directly addressed in Bonaventure's later mystical texts.

The *Breviloquium* used experience merely to witness the necessary causal connection between things on the intellectual level without an eventual re-manifestation on the level of life. In 1257, transitioning from a purely academic environment to the wider world of the Order with its practical and pastoral needs, Bonaventure had begun to move beyond the literal understanding of scriptural experience to mystical enactment. His later writings brought out the performative-practical potential of his synthesis for the edification of the friar ministers in his Order. In his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* completed in 1259*,* Bonaventure used concrete, programmatic steps to demonstrate how this understanding can be practically manifested by the soul. This mystical treatise transposed the entire synthesis from the speculative onto the performative plane, with a deeper initiation in sacramental experience as the source, model and medium of the *sensus plenior.*

III. Beyond text to God: mystical enactment in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259)

As Minister General, Bonaventure had left the regulated world of the Franciscan school for a polarised environment. A thinker sensitive to this new environment, Bonaventure proceeded to envision a way forward for his Order. Before 1257, in writing for a primarily academic audience, Bonaventure was professionally bound to observe the *Sentences* formality, ensuing in a particular approach to reading Scripture. The scholastic approach involved the pursuit of formal correspondences between life and biblical text. By inferring causal relations from the meaning-relations between words on the textual level, a productive intellectual system could be built up using classifications extrinsic to the original subject of exegesis. Such alienating distantiation was not congenial to the demands of practical ministry. Friar ministers had to give urgent responses to the practical and spiritual needs of others, fostering a mystical immediacy foreign to the scholastic practice of abstractive contemplation. After 1257, as leader of an expanding Order, Bonaventure exerted his synthetic skills in shaping a productive approach to the *vita.* His approach would prove significant to those less concerned with scholastic abstractions and more interested, by necessity, with the everyday experience of faith. Bonaventure's mystical-experiential transformation of his scholastic synthesis was part of an effort to authoritatively re-interpret the Franciscan tradition and erect norms of spiritual life and interpretation. His effort would aid in the cohesion of an Order increasingly divided between those who wished for clericalisation and those who wished to observe Francis' Spirit-led way.

Bonaventure had to deal with a long-standing tension between the idealisation of Francis' spirit-led way of absolute poverty and its practical realisation. At one extreme were those friars who clung to Francis' simple literal obedience of the Gospel, independently of an institutional intermediary. Francis' own itinerant and involved lifestyle meant that scriptural revelations were often materially enacted without much recourse to interior reflection. At the other extreme were those friars of a more clerical cast who argued that the formation of novices demanded a more normative structure of implementation to better equip them for the tasks of ministry. Indeed, the Franciscan tradition over which Bonaventure had custody did not provide any clear direction on this issue. The mystical, relational way of life of the Seraphic Founder was not reducible to any one human formality, with room for many interpretations about how this way could best be instituted temporally within the Order. Bonaventure's strategy involved re-

interpreting the Franciscan tradition in continuity with the mystical vision of the Founder. In his attempt to bridge the opposing factions, Bonaventure accorded the primitive and clerical ideals a relative status as expressions or temporal institutions of the true Franciscan ideal – namely the total, self-transcending worship of Christ as *sapientia*.

In his *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure re-imagines the Franciscan experience in a formalised extension of Francis' own contemplative process. Bonaventure's re-synthesis converges insights and skills from Franciscan material exegesis, monastic moral psychology and Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism. Francis' priority of material enactment is counterposed with interior reflection in the manner of the Pseudo-Augustinian *De Spiritu et anima* and synergised in the divine love in the manner of Pseudo-Dionysius. For Bonaventure, this mystical synergy within the exegete of contemplative and active dimensions makes room for the interior formation of the friars as driving, and driven by, their commissioning for outward ministry.

Such interpretive dynamism generated through the relationality of encounter with the textual subject is an innovative feature of Bonaventure's post-1257 exegesis. In his 1923 classic treatise *I and Thou*, Jewish philosopher Martin Buber points out the importance of naming God as *'Thou'*; since an *'it'* cannot respond by itself to the reader's call for understanding. An *it* is a construction of the reader's agenda, not an actual subject of the reader's existence, nor an authority or an agent in the reader's quest for meaning. An *it* cannot divulge itself but only what the reader determines as worthwhile or useful for his own research ends.[17] In his *Itinerarium,* in the final stage of the mystical ascent into God, Bonaventure ceases to treat God the textual subject as an '*it*' – a 'something' to be understood or explained. Instead, Bonaventure begins to address God as a '*Thou*' – a 'Someone' to be experienced and answered. Bonaventure does not seek merely to explain the biblical text to others, but to truly know its divine author, registering the divine Spirit and intention through creaturely determinations. God's Word becomes no longer a mere object of understanding, but a mode of relating to its Author. As such, Bonaventure transcends the authority of the scholastic method and manifests something of the exemplary experience of Francis. For Bonaventure as for Francis, love for the divine author disposes the reader to understand and live the Author's words in ways that lead him back to this Author (love actualising knowledge). This was in divergence from the Alexandrine *Summa*, in which real experience of the Author prefaces a fuller analysis of his

[17] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2012).

works (faith seeking understanding). By this stage of his career, Bonaventure's exegesis focused on experiencing Christ as *sapientia* rather than understanding Christ in terms of a *datum* – a speculative principle. Bonaventure transcended from making connections on the purely intellectual level to responding to the words of Scripture with the body and the voice. This response oriented the soul in the world of meaning so that it could see God.

Far from marking the functions of mystical experience on the speculative plane, the *Itinerarium* uses embodied writing to initiate the reader in a 'threefold way' in God. The Victorine structuring notion of the three eyes of flesh, reason and contemplation', formative for Bonaventure's analogous discussion in his earlier *Breviloquium*, is now superseded by a more performative notion of the *triplex via* in the order of Bernard of Clairvaux or Thomas Gallus. Firstly, Bonaventure enjoins the reader to contemplate things in themselves. This is done, not by formalising the object in scientific fashion according to the dictates of a research agenda, but by receiving the objects' reality. By means of this passive reception, the reader begins to observe how certain things originate from other things and how some things effect the movement of others. Observing all the varied connections of cause-and-effect between things on the physical level enlightens the reader to the intelligible structure of reality. Secondly, the reader detects certain powers within himself that parallel those found in things. This causal synthesis is compared against the Divine Word as its paradigm. The words and meaning-relations of Scripture become paradigmatic of the relations observed on the physical and psychic levels. Thirdly, this conceptual understanding models what is seen on an even higher level, namely the spiritual intuition of the divine essence. The essential attributes of things such as unity, truth and goodness shine forth with especial clarity. The reader passes beyond this intuition to the encounter with God, who imparts himself to the reader in terms of deepest intimacy. Now the reader goes beyond what he can intellectually grasp with his mind to being grasped by God. In so doing, the reader must 'let go' of every pre-understanding, and rest in God alone. This '*itinerarium mentis in Deum*' (*Journey of the Mind into God*) is akin, in the symbolic-mystical fashion of Bernard or Gallus, to 'three days journey into the wilderness, and to the threefold intensity of light during a single day: The first is like evening, the second like morning, the third like noon.'[18] As such, signifier and signified fuse within the total horizon of God. There is no longer any outside perspective from which to view God – the human horizon becomes interior to God's own.

[18] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, ch.1, n.3, 61.

Hence, Bonaventure brings all of himself into the encounter with the scriptural subject. In this more dynamic and vital process of contemplation, phenomena in their state of effervescing and change come to mediate the exegete's inner life in God, or the self in its act of being or becoming. This spiritual meaning occurs on the interior of the experience, made intelligible by reason and disclosed by faith. To use an example of my own, a sapling freshly watered after rains mediates a sense of the soul's vital thirsting for the Light. The soul remains open and listens to the sapling's own mode of becoming, its stalk resplendent with a moisture continually nourishing its extremities; the soul is recalled to a living, 'here-and-now' awareness of its own inner process of becoming, resourced from the depths to the extremities. The soul is nourished by a living awareness of itself in union with its God. This experience is, in a foremost sense, scriptural, for it presumes a prior experiential insight of texts such as Psalm 1:1 and John 15:5. But this experience is also concrete, personal and spiritual – a living manifestation of the self in union with God. This manifestative dimension of the exegesis of scriptural being brings Bonaventure closest to the affective beatific vision of Pseudo-Dionysius, but the reverse sides of negating and fulfilling are appropriate to the sacramental theology of Hugh of Saint Victor. The moment of fulfilling pertains to the influence of Alexandrine metaphysics. But it is a metaphysics transfigured, in the moment of negation, by the apophatic experience of an unseen light.

IV. From God to world: Exegesis and creation in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273)

The years 1267 to 1274 marked the mature phase of Bonaventure's hermeneutical formation. Bonaventure returned to his *alma mater* to deliver his masterful series of three *Collationes,* to address the needs and interests of a wider and more varied audience both inside and outside his Order. With the benefit of many years of pastoral and life experience, Bonaventure creatively extended his program of pedagogical and pastoral renewal. This implied a new hermeneutic stance towards his sources and especially Scripture. Bonaventure was exhorting his confreres toward a scripturally inspired sapiential way of life and ministry based on the experience of Christ, in view of the hostility and challenge facing the Order. A new Aristotelian philosophical movement, inspired by Aristotelian commentator Averroës, was championed by *magister artium* Siger of Brabant but fiercely opposed by Bishop of Paris Stephen Tempier. The latter had opposed its apparent self-sufficiency from the theological authority of God and Church.

Furthermore, such confusion over orthodoxy gave impetus to secular theologian Gerard of Abbeville to revive the seculars' attack on the evangelical legitimacy of mendicancy. A former disciple of William of Saint Amour, Gerard sought to discredit the theological and juridical basis for the Franciscan Order's existence. Significantly, there was an intensification of the on-going internal conflict over the right interpretation of Franciscan *vita*, between some radical Joachite *zelanti* and certain conservatives.

In his early scholastic biblical commentaries, Bonaventure had sought to distil sapiential principles from the text of Scripture. In the later *Itinerarium* and other mystical texts, he proceeded to clarify not only the methodological conditions of *sapientia* but also their mode of actualisation in the human soul. Now, in his *Collationes*, Bonaventure synthesised an understanding of how *sapientia* came to be realised in all things through the intermediation of the deified soul. In response to the assertions of Siger and other Paris masters that the created world was the all-sufficient source of divine intelligibility, Bonaventure proceeded to clarify more fully the manner in which created knowledge and reality are originated in the divine. Over the course of Bonaventure's career, the exegetical skills and voices – the tools and rigours of intellection and strategies of enactment – that he had engaged, now converged in a symphony of engagement with the creation in its manifold depth and variety. In his *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti* (1268), Bonaventure attempted to systematically account for the movement of the Holy Spirit in history and exegesis. Bonaventure understood that the forms of creation, like the Holy Spirit as their origin, are dynamic and living. The Holy Spirit is not a static object or a function of ossified tradition. In Bonaventure's final *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273), the truth of Scripture enters into the moving forms of creation through the soul as medium. The entire created order becomes resplendent with the soul's own order of understanding in God. This mode of communal incarnation synthesises all the foci of Bonaventure's previous exegesis. Since Scripture expresses the mode of being of Christ as uncreated Wisdom incarnate in creation, then the scriptural principles of Christ's own mode of being model those of the divine will and working in all things. In short, Christ or Scripture is the methodological foundation, not just of individual selfhood but of all reality in its variety and depth. This methodologically expanded mode of exegesis requires the application of new methodological skills, especially those of natural philosophy. It is a penetration of the divine methodology with respect to things in the scriptural mirror – an approach combining both spiritual induction and metaphysical deduction.

In the *Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure's synthetic method in this phase of maturity appears as a productive refiguration of the Joachite and two other thirteenth-century methodological traditions of immense following: Joachitism envisions the total plan of salvation through the inner movement of the Trinity; 'Latin Averroism' teaches that the resources of human reason are sufficient to understand the created order in itself; and secular theology equates knowledge and institution. Bonaventure advances that each of these hermeneutical systems is incomplete in themselves. Joachitism undertakes an unscientific, direct prophetic visualisation of the heart of history circumventing the rigours of human logic or reasoning. Undertaking such special insight independent of the work of reason omits the processes of intellectual validation on which the certitude of authority is largely based. Averroism neglects the methodologically formative role of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure also warns that the seculars such as Gerard of Abbeville are privy to a scholastic culture that restricts the working of the Holy Spirit through the textual ossification of tradition.

Responding with a productive sapiential vision, Bonaventure extends the hierarchical orders of Church, creation and angelic beings both horizontally, that is temporally, and vertically in light of the divine in-breaking in the world. Bonaventure's dynamism of an 'intelligible Cross' on which all reality is suspended – a symbol structuring his earlier synthesis in the *Breviloquium* – methodologically unites both scientific deduction and spiritual induction. As with Joachim, Bonaventure's exegete must be ever receptive to how created forms evolve and deepen with proximity and time in the Triune God, and subsequently, to new horizons of theological understanding. Bonaventure's hermeneutics is neither time-bound as with Averroës, nor institution-bound as with Gerard of Abbeville, but ever open to the inductions of the Holy Spirit. The exegete ascends by degrees until he reaches the full perfection of divinity. Bonaventure's 'non-reductive' approach to scriptural reality opens up his understanding and experience of tradition to the infinite horizon of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the *Hexaemeron,* the Seraphic Doctor teaches on the 'understanding of faith'. He marks a correspondence between the eternal *modus operandi* of God and the mode of working of things in creation. Things ought not to be understood in themselves but with significant reference to the divine intelligence mediated through Scripture and experience. While objects' causality is fallible from the point of view of the creature, it is infallible with respect to God. So, it is always right to analyse things from God's perspective mediated through Scripture.

> Both reason and faith lead to these exemplary splendors. But beyond [these] there is a threefold help rising towards the [Eternal] Exemplary Reasons, namely: [the help] of the sensible creature, the spiritual creature, [and] sacramental Scripture, which contains mysteries. With regard to the first [the sensible creature], the whole world is a shadow, a way, a vestige, and it is a book written on the outside. For in whatever creature, there is a reflection of the Divine Exemplar, although mixed with darkness; hence it is like a certain opacity combined with *light*. Likewise [the sensible creature] is a way leading to the Exemplar. *Just as you see that a ray of light entering through a window is variously colored according to the different colors of the diverse parts; so the divine ray of light is diverse in individual creatures and it reflects in diverse properties; in Wisdom: [Wisdom] shows herself to them…in the ways.* Likewise [the sensible creature] is a vestige of the wisdom of God. Hence the creature is nothing other than a certain representation of the wisdom of God, like a type of figure. And for all of these reasons, it is a kind of book written without…To read this book *belongs* to the *highest of contemplatives*, not to the natural philosophers, because they only know the nature of things [in themselves], [and] not as a vestige.[19] (Italics mine)

Bonaventure reiterates his threefold level of being in God, albeit in a hybrid register merging the embodied and the conceptual. Scholastic terminological precision is tempered with a certain mystical effusion to produce a uniquely integrative mode of expression. Indeed, the space of the effervescing 'light' symbol structures the living, multi-splendoured hermeneutical reality of God in things. However, far from being a purely formal analogy of God's manner of working (Eternal Art), light itself, in being present to the exegete, mediates to the exegete that Art which it models. Inspired from Hugh of Saint Victor, Bonaventure's form of inquiry into the book of creation is premised not merely on the representational power of Scripture, but on its power of initiation into a deeper reality. In this foundational example of the Bible speaking of God

[19] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron, Opera omnia*, 5:386: *'Ad hos splendores exemplares ratio ducit et fides. Sed ulterius triplex est adiutorium ad surgendum ad exemplares rationes, creaturae scilicet sensibilis, creaturae spiritualis, Scripturae sacramentalis, quae continet mysteria. Quantum a primum totus mundus est umbra, via, vestigium et est liber scriptus forinsecus. In qualibet enim creatura est refulgentia divini exemplaris, sed cum tenebra permixta; unde est sicut quaedam opacitas admixta lumini. Item est via ducens in exemplar. Sicut tu vides, quod radius intrans per fenestram diversimode coloratur secundum colores diversos diversarum partium; sic radius divinus in singulis creaturis diversimode et in diversis proprietatibus refulget; in Sapientia: In viis suis ostendit se. Item, est vestigium sapientiae Dei. Unde creatura non est nisi sicut quoddam simulacrum sapientiae Dei et quoddam sculptile. Et ex his omnibus est quidam liber scriptus foris.'* Bonaventure, *Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: Illuminations of the Church*, col.12, n.14-15, 232-33.

creating light with a single word, the metaphysical and the experiential coincide. When the exegete sees the light refracted through a stained-glass window, he is in awe of the manifold ways in which it can appear. In like fashion, when the illumination of God comes through the soul, it cannot help but see and enjoy God's living reflection in every creature. Furthermore, when creatures move or express themselves in a certain way, the soul is bound to see glimmers of the heart and manner of the divine exemplar. This light that shines through and in every creature intensifies the more the soul gazes upon the Eternal Light – the Word of God incarnate in scriptural words and human experiences. The experience of divine origination in the soul and world in texts like John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1 is mediated through the experience of light, as the divine in-breaking on history manifest on the physical plane. Such knowledge 'belongs' not to the philosopher *per se* but to the 'highest of contemplatives', since it is open only to those who are looking for God – seeking the light shining through everything until everything is transparent with that light.

V. Importance of context in scriptural reading

This developmental study of Bonaventure's unique scriptural exegesis reveals three foundational truths of hermeneutic praxis. Firstly, meaning is determined, not simply by the needs of the audience nor by authorial intent alone, but by both interacting in the field of the text. The author, just like Bonaventure, has to negotiate new styles of exegesis in response to the needs of each specific audience. Secondly, understanding of the text is never static but continually re-shaped and deepened in response to changing contexts. A given insight into Scripture changes with proximity and time in the actual, giving rise to new forms of appropriation of the same text. Specific methodological skills are deployed to meet the demands of specific interpretive moments. Thirdly, this responsiveness to context in scriptural reading means that the *corpus* of Bonaventure, or of any other thinker, need not be treated simply as a single monolithic whole. In other words, the same ideas are not simply repeated at varying communicative cadences across the breadth of his *corpus*. Rather, methods and foci developed over time, presupposing a transformation in hermeneutical results. Throughout Bonaventure's career, rather than simply seeking to render the same forms in different words, he was intentionally reshaping his approach to the sources in response to changing audiences and contexts.

Bonaventure, transcending the abstract, philosophical and noetic notion of *theologia* promoted by Thomas Aquinas and certain other scholastics, refined an exegetical focus on the actual trace of God in history. The originality of Bonaventure's synthesis exceeds the stereotyped depictions of him as an outmoded anti-Thomist, a conservative enforcer of the Franciscan Order's uniformity, or staid imitator of Alexander of Hales. From Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure receives his revelation of the divine subject *in himself* as the source, mode and end of theology. As Bonaventure invokes in the *Breviloquium*, theology's method *is* that of Scripture (*Sacra Scriptura quae theologia dicitur*) – which likewise proceeds from an inflowing of the Holy Spirit.[20] Bonaventure's methodological reliance on God distinguishes his method as profoundly mystical, owing as much to a peculiarity of disposition as of context.

As I have demonstrated, the methodological development of Bonaventure shows the exceeding breadth, variety and subtlety of his synthetic transformations – that transcend the overly rigid dichotomies of Augustinian and Aristotelian, conservative and progressive. In other words, he is not to be reduced to any one of his many roles – theologian, administrator, preacher and mystic. Bonaventure's hermeneutical transformations demonstrate how a scholarly or mystical idiom can be productively reimagined to signify more vitally in respect to different readerships and contexts of interpretation.

Bonaventure's hermeneutical journey can be expressed, by analogy, to a series of concentric circles or ripples irradiating outwards from a dynamic centre. With textual understanding as the centre, Bonaventure progressed to mystical enactment, and finally to integration of understanding and enactment with a focus on communal incarnation. During his scholastic phase, he was professionally bound as a scholastic exegete to observe the rigid formality of Lombard's *Sentences*. Such explorations, marked by a conformity to the format of the *quaestio*, were primarily borne on the meta-level of doctrine: questions such as 'How do I reconcile the role of sense and spirit within the divine horizon?' or 'What is the epistemological relation between faith and reason?' Such questions are largely extrinsic to the reality they seek to define. After his assumption of the generalate and his liberation from the 'ivory tower', Bonaventure penetrated beyond the hermeneutics of text to consider the divine intentionality at its heart. He proceeded to ask questions arising directly from the context of everyday relation with the (divine) Other: 'How do I know God?' 'Who am I to God? And who is God to me?' Such

[20] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologue, n.1, 1.

questionings receive their pattern from the genesis of their meaning. Central to this hermeneutic mode is what Martin Buber called the *'I-thou'* relation of reader and textual subject. Buber says that the engagement or encounter with the personality behind the text precedes the determination of what is actually said. In other words, the actual is a person who can be known and encountered and who reveals himself through the medium of Scripture. This is the all-defining moment in exegetical method – that a reader knows the actual by responding to God directly with the body and voice, and not by ideal abstraction from the text.[21] This 'short route' to understanding enables the reader to circumvent the abstractive mode of explaining the experience using definitional terms extrinsic to it. He contemplates the object on the interior of the experience itself, in the sense that he simply receives the reality of the object and lets his understanding exude within himself. Simply being with God – loving, delighting and responding to him in the midst of the everyday – actualises the *sensus plenior* of God. In his final synthesis, Bonaventure presented Christ or Scripture as re-entering the forms of human knowledge and experience. Drawing on his own experience, Bonaventure questioned how one ought to respond and relate to God as an inroad to a more practical understanding. Questions such as: 'What should I do to bless God?' 'How can I receive and use God's gift?' can be outworked in concrete settings of living. Instead of abstracting out the context of lived reality, these questions imply acts of the will, mind or body. God's Word cannot be understood or performed in a 'vacuum' or in a context of ethereal, immaterial spirituality. Therefore, God's Word ought to be read in community with other creatures. In conforming to who and how God is in and through the things he has created, the individual reader begins to see in the living forms of things the truth of his own development in God. In this way, Bonaventure has come full circle. It is rather apt that Bonaventure's hermeneutical 'graduation' from textual understanding to mystical enactment and finally to communal incarnation is a mirror image of his own *Journey of the Mind into God*. This co-correspondence between life, text and world indicates that what Bonaventure taught about the living character of tradition was never for him simply a point of theory but to be enacted on the plane of history. In a fundamental sense, Bonaventure's hermeneutical journey exemplifies the soul's own spiritual journey in God which turns upon the discovery of the person of Christ as *Someone* to be encountered beyond a *datum* to be known. This revolution in exegetical method is the substance of Bonaventure's originality.

[21] This notion has received relevant contemporary expression in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama : theological dramatic theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

VI. Contemporary applications

Academic versus practical presentation of doctrine

Considering the cultural-temporal gap between Bonaventure's age and our own, this question must be posed: What do modern readers and authors stand to gain from understanding and enacting Bonaventure's scriptural exegesis? His innovations in exegetical method are applicable, not least, to our modern treatments of Scripture and other texts. The medievals retained a notion of an objective connection between sign and reality. There is a universal analogy of signs and things based on the ontological participation of things in their Creator. This notion of analogy relies on the premise that deeper identification and similitude of one in another is only possible in the event of a shared communion in a deeper reality that transcends and unites both. This notion of a shared resemblance between things based on their shared participation in God enables a convergence of three senses or levels of meaning. To know the text (literal) is manifestly to know oneself (tropological/allegorical), and such knowing is only possible in God (anagogical) in whom the knowledge of both self and other is presupposed.[22]

Bonaventure's Trinitarian context is for the most part missing in modern textual hermeneutics, which tends to downplay or reject the notion of an objective trace of reality in the text. The hermeneutic consequences of such a disavowal are significative arbitrariness and textual nihilism. Rather than being an objective marker of reality, the text has become what postcritical theorist Jean Baudrillard called '*simulacrum'*, a sign that seeks to capture the mobility of the 'now', irrespective of any grounding in a readily apparent real.[23] The structuralist theory of Ferdinand de Saussure was in many ways a reaction against what he understood as the fixity of the medieval system of classification.[24] Nevertheless, the recession of the intrinsically

[22] Bonaventure distinguishes particularised forms (i.e. seminal reasons) from the universal forms, a distinction that lies midway between the real and the conceptual. This distinction allows him to posit the existence of forms in matter, whilst also holding to their ontological dependence on the First Principle. In so doing, Bonaventure enables the study of divine truths that are resplendent in creaturely determinations, thus counterbalancing the universal and particular and resolving in his own way the dispute over the ontological (non-)objectivity of language. For an incisive treatment of Bonaventure's counterbalancing of the Aristotelian and Platonic theory of forms, see Franziska van Buren, 'Bonaventure, Aristotle, and the Being of Universal Forms,' *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 9 (2021): 187-221.

[23] Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 166-84.

[24] In his *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure does not see language as a trace of real presence, but as a function of the linguistic community. Saussure further explains: 'The language [one speaks] is at the same time a social product of the language faculty and an ensemble of necessary conventions, adopted by the social body in order to allow for the exercise of this faculty by each individual'. Pieter A.M. Seuren, 'Saussure and his Intellectual Environment,' *History of European Ideas* 42, 6 (2016): 824, 826 (fn.24); Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: Philosophical

spiritual from the modern foci of interpretation has meant that signification may have lost its transcendent dimension and become wholly immanent to the dictates of human culture. This erasure of the objective relationship between signifier and signified has deeply wounded the ontological study of symbol. Notwithstanding such radical shifts in intellectual context, modern hermeneutists can gain from being proximate in spirit and intention to Bonaventure – the medieval thinker and pedagogical reformer who transposed the *intelligible* into the *doable,* forging a more virile connection between the theory and practice of research.[25]

Bonaventure's formality is systematic; but it is of an order that is dynamic and living, and is constantly adjusted to the exegete's horizon. Accordingly, the framework of understanding arises from the exegete's experience of God his origin and being negotiated in relation to that origin, rather than being thought from a standpoint outside the experience itself. Hermeneutically, the questions that the exegete poses towards Scripture are the same questions that he asks of God. They are the fundamental questions of human existence: 'Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?' These are answerable only in God, whose words are manifest to the exegete directly in the words of Scripture. Scripture is, for Bonaventure, not simply a conceptual bank of faith principles to be instantiated in the exegete; rather, it is a living word addressed from God to his beloved, negotiated from within the context of the exegete's own relationship with God. The doctrinal query: 'How and why does God love the sinner?' is of a different order of inquiry to the question: 'How and why does God love *me*?' The latter question transposes the biblical truth of the self-giving love of God from the doctrinal to the personal level. Systematic insight is not renounced, but is simply actualised by the relationality of encounter with Christ the medium. Formal connections made on the doctrinal level only hold insofar as they have been manifested on the practical level, and thus have existential resonance for the believer.

For instance, the question of how and why God loves us can be answered on the doctrinal level. As readers, we can marshal an array of intra-texts to answer this inquiry, for instance, Ephesians

Library, 1959), courses 17, 25; Also see Virginie Greene, 'What Happened to Medievalists After the Death of the Author?,' in *The Medieval Author in French Literature*, ed. Virginie Greene (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 205-27; Bruce Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 152-94.

[25] Other theorists of the modern era, such as Martin Heidegger, Rudolf Bultmann, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur and William Dilthey have each espoused their own authoritative philosophies of reading. The pursuit of fruitful points of comparison with Bonaventure, requiring extensive trans-historical research, lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

2:8-9 and Luke 15:11-24. Each verse is studied within its literary context to ascertain intended meanings, with thematic resonances and continuities registered across the breadth of the sample. These thematic continuities become the building blocks of a theologically coherent answer to the question. According to Ephesians 2:8-9: 'For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory.' God loves us so much that he rescues us from our sinful nature; not because of anything we can and have accomplished, but it is a free gift from God. Luke 15:11-24 is Jesus' parable about a prodigal son being welcomed home by his father after having squandered his inheritance on wild living. 'And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck, and kissed him…Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.' The father reveals his unconditional love for his son even before his repentance: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son.' This passage indicates an even more fundamental reason why God loves us: as a loving Father, God cannot bear to see us estranged from himself, and his love is deeply evidenced in his joyous celebration at our homecoming. Each of these ideas – the drawing near of God, God's gracious restoration from sin, and the 'Father's heart' – are interwoven facets of a richer picture of what it means to be loved by God. These conclusions, although adequate fodder for a form of academic preaching, in themselves can make no difference to the way we live unless they are practically assumed by us as believers. Herein lies Bonaventure's contribution. These same verses, read within their originally intended relational context, potentially register on an infinitely higher level of cogency.

In John 3.16: 'For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.' If we interpret 'God' and 'world' to mean not God 'up there' or the world 'out there' but 'you' and 'I', they no longer represent functions in a system of cognitions. Instead, they become concrete articulations of divine and creaturely potentiality. The whole reason why I know God loves the world in the incarnation is because he loves me, because he has drawn near to me. The incarnation is not some hegemonic or tyrannical theological construct that must be foisted into the terms of my existence; but it is the actual drawing near of God, his constant presence with me even in my brokenness or sin. It ceases to become *the* incarnation in general and becomes *God's* incarnation *to me*. I now know on a deeper level the truth of John 3:16 through real experience than I could ever know through pure intellection. The point-of-entry for scriptural

understanding is lived experience realised through a relationship with God, not a purely cerebral knowledge realised through the hermeneutics of the text. In responding to Scripture, I begin to assimilate it both habitually and spiritually, living in ways that lead back to its Author.

In Bonaventure's eyes, Scripture is not a Book of dead letters, but the living voice of God. The words of Scripture not only lead to life but are life itself to me who receives them. Registering this Book on the level of life makes my theological understanding come alive, ever open to the inductions and re-figurings of the Holy Spirit who is simply 'God-in-life'. There is no one univocal sense of this text, but a deepening insight whose tonality shifts and re-centralises relative to my direction in the actual. I begin my hermeneutical journey by focusing on God's love to me. But I witness the death of a loved one. Suddenly, my reading is laden with a new set of values; the existential meaning and tonality of John 3:16 shifts to accommodate my changed situation. Now, my focus is also on God's intention and love for the world, for those who may reach the end of life without knowing his redeeming love. There is a shift in exegetical focus, from self-understanding of the text, to living this text in community. Therefore, reading Scripture is situational and non-reductive, a product of the Holy Spirit moving in the created order and in my own life. Interpretations can be remade, as life develops and renews. Bonaventure's innovation lies in understanding the true character of biblical wisdom – that it is situational, transformational, supra-dogmatic, but always ever centred in Christ as its orientational lodestar. Such notions of God and his ways, rooted in real experience, are the very anathema of abstraction. This is Bonaventure's signal innovation – the deepening revelation of biblical wisdom as the unifying principle of text, life, world and God.

Appendix: Chronology of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274)

c.1217 – Born Giovanni di Fidanza, son of a physician, in Bagnoregio, Italy[1]

c.1225-1235 – Receives early schooling at the Franciscan Convent of San Francesco in Bagnoregio[2]

c.1236 – Commences arts studies at University of Paris

c.1242 – Graduates from the arts faculty as *baccalaureus artium*

c.1243-1245 – Enters the Franciscan Order in Paris as a novice
– Assumes the name 'Bonaventure' upon profession within the Order
– Commences theological studies in the Franciscan school under regency of Alexander of Hales (c.1185-1245) and John of La Rochelle (c.1190-1245)

1245 – Continues theological studies under regency of Eudes Rigaud (c.1205-1275) and William of Middleton (died c.1260), after death of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle

1248-1250 – As *baccalaureus biblicus***,** reads Scripture *cursorie* and begins Commentaries on John, Luke and Ecclesiastes
– Licensed as *lector biblicus*

1250-1252 – As *baccalaureus sententarius***,** reads *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (c.1100-1160) *cursorie*

1253 – As *baccalaureus formatus,* completes *Commentary on the Sentences*

1254 – Granted *licentia docendi*, incepted as *magister in sacra pagina* in the Franciscan school

1255 – Promoted *magister regens in situ* by Minister General John of Parma (1209-1289), because Bertrand of Bayonne (died 1256) has been occupying sole Franciscan magisterial chair at University of Paris since 1253

– Delivers *Disputationes de Perfectione evangelica* in defence of Order *contra* secular antagonist William of Saint Amour (1200-1272) whose aspersions of heresy are incited by radical Joachite ideas of Franciscan lector Gerard of Borgo San Donnino (died 1274)

c.1256-1257 – Completes commentaries on John, Luke and Ecclesiastes

1257 – Elected Franciscan Minister General upon resignation of John of Parma due to his Joachite sympathies (February)

– Issues *First Encyclical Letter* outlining policy as Minister General (April)

– Completes *Breviloquium*

– Recognised as part of *consortium magistrorum* at University of Paris (August)

– Formalises inception as *magister regens*, resigns and then arranges for Gilbert of Tournai (c.1200-1284) as successor (October)

c.1259 – Completes *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* and *De Triplici via*

1260 – Helps to produce *Constitutions of Narbonne* at his first General Chapter attended as Minister General

c.1261 – Completes *Legenda maior,* as commissioned by 1260 General Chapter of Narbonne

– Chairs investigation of John of Parma and Gerard of Borgo San Donnino in presence of John Gaetano Orsini, Cardinal Protector of the Order

1266 – General Chapter of Paris adopts Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* as Order's official hagiography of Francis

1267/1268 – Delivers *Collationes de decem praeceptis* and *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, in response to challenges posed by Joachite extremism, Siger of Brabant (c.1235-1284) and other Averroist philosophers, and secular antagonists such as Gerard of Abbeville (1225-1272)
– Delivers *Sermones dominicales* (c.1267-1268)

1269 – Delivers *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem* against Gerard of Abbeville

1273 – Delivers totalising sapiential vision of *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (uncompleted due to his departure for Lyons)
– Resigns as Minister General upon election as Cardinal-bishop of Albano by Pope Gregory X
– Commences his duties to help prepare for 1274 Second Council of Lyons

1274 – Dies 15 July, just before fourth and final session of Second Council of Lyons (7 May – 17 July)

1482 – Canonised by Pope Sixtus IV

1588 – Made a Doctor of the Church under the title *Doctor Seraphicus*

Notes:

1. Certain key events marked *circa* in Bonaventure's chronology have not yet been established. For the different authoritative perspectives, see Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson: St Anthony's Guild, 1964), 171-77; John F. Quinn, 'Chronology of St. Bonaventure (1217-1274),' *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 168-86; Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest,

‘Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th Century: A Catalogue in Progress,’ (2019). http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/.‘Bonaventura de Bagnoreggio (Bonaventura da Bagnoregio/Johannes Fidanza/Giovanni Fidanza, ca. 1217-1274), sanctus’; Jay M. Hammond. ‘Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master.’ *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 179-226.

2. See letter of Sixtus IV (dated 4 October 1482) to the Franciscan friary at Bagnoregio. Sixtus IV, *Bullarium Franciscanum*, 3 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1949), vol.3 (1471-1484), 838; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10.

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