

**The *Libellus* of Jordan of Saxony:  
History and Hagiography**

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## Contents

Acknowledgments .....	4
Preface .....	5
The Dominican <i>Vita Apostolica</i> .....	11
Preacher's, Bishop's and Pontiff's Hierarchy .....	35
Miracles, Visions, and Dominican holiness .....	44
Dominic de Guzmán, the new St. Augustine of Hippo (?).....	55
Prayer, Martyrdom and Prophecy.....	66
Conclusion(s).....	72
Appendix: The Encyclical addendum to the <i>Libellus</i> .....	75
Bibliography.....	80

## Acknowledgments

This study, as do all studies, owes much to the giants of history whose works have shaped its outlook. Although they should take no pride in such a fact, the works of Peter Brown, R.I Moore, Raymond Van Dam, Lester Little, R. I. Moore, et al. have opened doors into history for me; John Wickstrom, too, has been a better mentor and guide than I deserve. This study should be dedicated as a testament to his influence on his students on the occasion of his retirement. To my mother and brother, too, I owe a great debt of support, both of my curiosity and imagination; to my step-mother, Anita, and to my father, I owe my thanks for my first exposure to Catholicism and the cult of the Saints. To my dear friends, my gratitude is limitless, their own curiosity and imagination has been a constant renewal of my energies and a rededication of my miniscule skill. “All the errors and infelicities are my own.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 2d edition, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2d edition 2007), x.

## Preface

Jordan of Saxony, sometime in 1232/1233, composed the *Libellus de Principiis Ordinis Praedicatorum*. As the successor to St. Dominic and the first Master General of the Order of Preachers, Jordan was a highly influential figure in the Dominican movement. His *Libellus* is definitively “the earliest historical text produced by the order.”<sup>2</sup> Jordan’s purpose is clear: the *Libellus* is the official record of the Preachers’ development in its formative period. The text paints a clear picture of the early Order on which later Preachers would be able to model themselves.

The *Libellus* was written as a history of the early Preachers, “so that the sons who are now to be born to the Order in the future will not be ignorant of how it began”.<sup>3</sup> The text simultaneously functions as a historical and a hagiographical account of the early Dominicans. Among its concerns are the traditional hagiographical tropes: miracles, displays of piety, and imitations of Christ. The *Libellus* also utilizes several novel literary themes, including strong evidence for the influence of St. Augustine on the “self-image” of the early Order. The text illustrates the importance of the Dominicans as an orthodox influence in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Curiously, Jordan’s *Libellus*, for all the value discussed below, has yet to be studied within hagiographical models. The work of the great scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shed light on many topics, but Jordan’s *Libellus* remains untouched by a study of its own. This study is an attempt to illustrate the important elements within the text. I would not deign to approach the depth of Van Dam’s studies of Gregory of Tours or the profundity

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<sup>2</sup> Jordan of Saxony, *On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers*, ed. and trans. Simon Tugwell, (Chicago: PARABLE, 1982), vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Libellus*, 3.

of Brown's biography of St. Augustine; Jordan's *Libellus*, despite being cited for generations by historians of the Albigensian Crusade and the Mendicant Revolution, has yet to be given its own due study.

Mendicant monasticism was revolutionary. The Dominicans represented radical "old time religion" while the Franciscans reinvented *paupertas*; the Franciscans were radical *pauperes* ("literally, the poor, but better translated as powerless"<sup>4</sup>). The Dominicans were unrelenting *Domini canes*. The Friars were a two-fold catholic reaction to the popular (often heretical) movements which pepper 12<sup>th</sup> century histories. The Dominican movement was just one incarnation of the orthodox reaction to the changes of the 12<sup>th</sup> century *renovatio*. The Dominicans were among the blessed saints as models of virtue. "By their actual lives and by the deeds attributed to them, the saints incarnated the moral ideals of their epoch. Thus their lives can serve as an attempt to reconstitute the ideal model of a given society."<sup>5</sup> The ideal of the 12<sup>th</sup> century is clearly infused by Jordan into the text.

It will be the argument of this study that the activity described in the *Libellus* constituted a Revolution of its own fashion. It seems clear to me that the early Dominicans were defined by a number of principles: they were primarily preachers; they were eventually, but not originally a mendicant movement; they returned to a strictly holy life, following the traditional apostolic model; they were subordinate to the established hierarchies of their period; and they were actively seeking imitation of the great figures of early Christianity. The Dominican Revolution was a radically conservative affirmation of

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<sup>4</sup> R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Josephy-Claude Poulin, quoted in "Saints, Scholars and Society: the Elusive Goal", in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, ed. and trans. Patrick Geary, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 14.

orthodox belief in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Because the movement grew much slower and more deliberately than its Franciscan counterpart, Dominican leaders were able to actively shape its growth along a desired track. The result is that the *Libellus* of Bl. Jordan represents the conscious efforts of the early Preachers' leadership to mold the growth of the Order along the same models by which it had originally emerged.

Among the varying themes in *Libellus*, “[the] primary impression produced...is that of a highly effective corps of clerics.”<sup>6</sup> The *Libellus* is an intimate snapshot of the early Preachers; it displays their common concerns and their unique solutions. The Dominicans made use of the intellectual materiel of their day to define their movement: they were revolutionary not (solely) because of their holiness but because of “their dual inheritance, from the apostolic vision of [bishop] Diego [of Osma] and the regular life of the canons”.<sup>7</sup> We can see their unique approach to *religio* in the *Libellus*: the early Preachers lived an apostolic life; embraced traditional feudal and ecclesiastical hierarchy; performed miracles and received divine guidance; were influenced by St. Augustine and his conception of a monastic ethic; and actively modeled themselves along traditional and conservative lines of prayer and mortification.

Effectively, the Dominican Revolution was a radically conservative one, but one bent on the success of its initial preaching vocation. It is clear paradox of terms, but one that is nonetheless fitting: Dominic's movement actively sought to embody traditional Christianity, but did so in ways new to the 12/13<sup>th</sup> century of which he was a part. The

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<sup>6</sup> John van Engen, “Dominic and the Brothers: *Vitae* as Life-forming *exempla* in the Order of Preachers”, in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: representations of Christ in the texts and images of the Order of Preachers*, ed. Kent Emery Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Simon Tugwell, “Friars and Canons: the Earliest Dominicans”, in *Monastic Studies II*, ed. Judith Loades, (Ipswich, Suffolk, UK: Headstart History, 1991), 207.

Dominican Revolution was a reaffirmation of Dominic's<sup>8</sup> intent to form a group of Preachers, uniquely qualified as mendicants and intellectuals. As such, Jordan of Saxony crafted the *Libellus* to highlight the very themes which made the Preachers prominent. This study is an investigation of those themes. At its conclusion, I hope to have made clear the hagiographical significance of the narrative; it will become clear that the Dominicans fused many elements (mendicancy, intellectualism, apostolic virtue, etc.) to form their unique approach to religious life in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The Dominican Revolution, as presented in the *Libellus*, is a movement of *sancti*, or at least *beati*; their Franciscan counterparts were led by a universally-known saint, but the literature about them rarely showed the early Friars Minor as being chock-full of saints. The Preachers, contrariwise, were populated by a cadre of holy men. The *Libellus* employs many hagiographical tropes to suggest that the early Dominican Revolution was wholly populated by saintly men. Hagiography was documentation of a life lived piously; a history making use of hagiographical language was a history of pious men. It is not surprising that, in an age where power-structures grew rapidly, the *Libellus* made use of every apparent hagiographical parallel to drive home the point of the Revolution's sanctity. The late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century was a period "imbued by the biblical concepts of the *novus homo* and *sanctitas nova*."<sup>9</sup> The new sanctity of the Dominican

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<sup>8</sup> It is my belief that Diego's voice is used for Dominic's activities in the early history of the Order. It is very likely that Diego's vision and Dominic's vision for the Order were highly similar (probably almost identical). However, it seems to me that Diego is used to make Dominic's actions more readily orthodox; Diego's stature as a bishop meant that the early Order was already a part of the catholic hierarchy. Diego's influence is discussed below, but I find it likely that Diego's legacy is the ethic which Dominic inherits and puts into practice in the early Order.

<sup>9</sup> Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25.

Revolution was typically old-fashioned: Blessed Jordan utilized every available hagiographical *topos* to suggest the traditionalism of the new and radical Dominicans.

Because this study is primarily concerned with the *Libellus* as a hagiographical text, a larger nuanced narrative of the 12<sup>th</sup> century's changes and the 13<sup>th</sup> century's reality will not be attempted. I am primarily concerned with the importance of the *Libellus* the Dominican Revolution itself. The task of describing such a momentous period of European history *in toto* is best left to the great masters. Joseph Strayer's *The Albigensian Crusade* is still the standard for the conflict which dominated Dominic's early preaching effort. William Hinnebusch's *The History of the Dominican Order* is the most exhaustive study of the Dominicans; Vicaire's *St. Dominic and his times* remains an exceptional biography. Lester Little's *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy* contextualizes the growth of Mendicant monasticism and his chapter on the Dominicans is excellent. Giles Constables' *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* provides good religious background. Michael Goodich's *Vita Perfecta* provides an invaluable deep analysis of the 13<sup>th</sup> century ideals of sainthood (as its subtitle suggests). Frances Andrews' *The Other Friars* helps to explain some of the more complicated implications of Augustinian monasticism; Andrew Jotischky's *The Carmelites and Antiquity* helps to extract vital themes from the emergence of mendicancy in the Latin West. R. I. Moore's *Origins of European Dissent* is still a vital source for understanding the political nature of religious dialogue in our period and offers an excellent interpretative framework.

Unless otherwise noted, English quotations from the *Libellus* are from Simon Tugwell's highly readable 1982 translation of the work; where the Latin is more instructive, the text is copied from H. C. Scheeben's 1935 edition of the extant MSS,

found in the *Monumenta Ordinis Praedicatorum Historica*, volume xvi. The version of the *Rule of St. Augustine* is the form used by the Dominicans and can be found on Fordham University's "Internet History Sourcebooks Project" edited by Paul Halsall, and the "Constitutions" and Letters of St. Dominic are the versions edited by Francis Lehner. I have made a conscious effort to limit citation of things accepted as fact by scholars, except where a deeper discussion can be found in secondary materials. Where possible, I defer to the insights of more accomplished scholars in the hope that I may add nuance to the understanding of the *Libellus* and help to "bring to [the early Preachers] their due measure of warm, red blood."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 447.

## The Dominican *Vita Apostolica*

The *vita apostolica* is a concept which carries demonstrable weight in Medieval Latin Christendom.<sup>11</sup> “The *vita apostolica* offered an exemplary way of life corresponding to the institutional model proposed by the *ecclesia primitiva*, and in the early Middle Ages it was based on the same texts in the book of Acts.”<sup>12</sup> It became the traditional claim of monastic establishments that theirs was the true *vita apostolica*. The supposedly static nature of that vocation’s definition stood in contrast to the redefinition which new modes of religiosity would assume in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Those apostolically-minded movements who were given ecclesiastical approval became the most successful of monastic orders; those movements which were not given approval (usually because of doctrinal or practical errors) were branded ‘heretical’. While few movements openly and officially proclaimed their members as living the “true” *vita apostolica*, the Latin monastic establishment consistently sought to embody the traditional precepts of the New Testament.<sup>14</sup>

The *vita apostolica* (in its most regular form) espoused poverty, charity, chastity, and faith: all of which were rooted in scripture, usually in particular, highly popular, passages of the Gospels or of the Epistles of Paul.<sup>15</sup> “It postulated reform and criticism in a restless age of expanding economic and geographical horizons, a more rational political system, an increasingly complex social organization, a multiplicity of divergent

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<sup>11</sup> Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 156-9.

<sup>12</sup> Giles Constable, “Renewal and Reform in Religious Life”, in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 53-54.

<sup>13</sup> M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 213-7.

<sup>14</sup> Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 17ff.

<sup>15</sup> Poverty and charity were often distilled from Matthew 19:21; chastity came from of 1 Corinthians 7 or from Matthew 19:12, and preaching drawn from 1 Corinthians 1:17-23. As a whole, the ideal of a Christian “common life” was often teased out of the life exhibited by early Christians in Acts 4.

intellectual currents, and corresponding new spiritual needs. Such a momentous evolution of society, challenging the *status quo* in all its parts, demanded a reappraisal of the resources and ends of the church, the most powerful and tenacious defender of tradition.”<sup>16</sup> The multiple components of the *vita apostolica* meant that revival of previous tradition was necessarily complex, attempted only by the most zealous of reformers.

“As the Gregorian revolution lost its zeal and began to come to terms with the world again, heresy reappeared with greater vigour[*sic*]... though very different from ones from before.”<sup>17</sup> Heresy, during the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance, manifested itself with increasingly political language, expressing in religious terminology a political or socio-economic discord. That language often rested in criticism of the increasingly political and hierarchically organized Curia, which itself often fomented an increased absorption of wealth. “[The heretics’] claim to be apostolic was founded on their total rejection, modeled on that of Christ and his disciples, of every form of wealth and property; even the common possession of the orthodox monks and canons seemed to them to violate this principle.”<sup>18</sup> Problematically, heretical ascetic movements were declared heretical not for their asceticism but for declaring that they were the “true Christians”. The heretics claim implicated that the Church was morally bankrupt. Similarly, the *vita apostolica* was appealing to the laity: it was “always spoken of as the model and standard for a true Christian life within the Church just as it was in many heretical sects.”<sup>19</sup> That the

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<sup>16</sup> Ernest W. McDonnell, “The Vita Apostolica: Diversity or Dissent”, *Church History*, 24, no. 1 (Mar., 1955), 15.

<sup>17</sup> R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 18.

<sup>18</sup> R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishings Ltd., 1985), 170.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: the Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the*

application and reinterpretation of age-old standards of “true piety” was a cornerstone of the Albigensian Crusade and the Catharist heresy is no accident: to be correct about one’s interpretation of the meaning of the *vita apostolica* was to be correct about the true nature of Jesus’ teachings and the Christian ethic writ large. The pontificates of the second half of the twelfth century (fundamentally those which would shape both St. Dominic and Bl. Jordan’s early lives) sought to control “the concept of the *vita apostolica* [which had taken] on a new sense: [became] ambiguous and disputed, people no longer [agreed] as to what it means or demands.”<sup>20</sup> Heretical groups pursuing the *vita apostolica*, or more broadly apostolic virtue, became increasingly common in the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries. Modern scholars have been successful in teasing out the virtue developments in such movements, as well as orthodox ones which existed in parallel to them. McDonnell, Moore, and others have attempted to document these returns, while showing where such movements dovetailed or diverged with the teachings expounded by the contemporaneous Church.

Heretical movements were characterized by Moore as being movements of dissent, centered around an essential critique of the Church. Coupled with their apostolically inspired ethic, that critique made such movements highly dangerous to the established Church. Additionally, it has been noted by subsequent scholarship that “the attitudes and opinions of western heresies were a gospel-based evangelicalism provoked by a reaction to the perceived worldliness and corruption of the Church... This generally took the form of a life lived by soliciting alms or by basic manual labour [*sic*]... It was a

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*Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans. Steven Rowan, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 220.

<sup>20</sup> Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Rowan, 221.

fundamentalist Christian impulse of the purest kind, *to return to the truth of the gospels, the lifestyle of the apostles, and the imitation of Christ.*”<sup>21</sup>

Bl. Jordan emphasizes elements in his *Libellus* which clearly indicate that St. Dominic’s orthodox application of the *vita apostolica* in its expanded 12<sup>th</sup> century context. He takes great effort to bring those elements of that religiosity to the fore.<sup>22</sup> He provides examples of early Dominicans engaging in apostolic activities: they live in poverty; they practice charity; their academic efforts made them better preachers; better preaching brought back more “prodigal sons”; and finally the Preachers worked within traditional hierarchical channels. Jordan utilizes the *vita apostolica* to illustrate the piety of the Dominican Revolution; the narrative itself uses hagiographical tropes to suggest that their piety was within recognizably orthodox channels.

We hear of Dominic being “a man of the gospel” from an early age.<sup>23</sup> We see in the text the considerable complexity of the Mendicant methodology. It is from the textual examples that Dominic’s model of apostolic virtue was crafted as an interdependent matrix of approaches. Jordan’s primary emphases circumscribe “apostolic” values: asceticism; poverty; charity; chastity; Christian study, and religiously reinforced communal cohesion. Such values are illustrated not in text groups (as earlier hagiography or historiography might do<sup>24</sup>), but in chronological (read: historical) order. Similarly,

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<sup>21</sup> Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, (New York: Routledge, 1991) 43, 43, 45.

The quote’s emphasis is my own.

<sup>22</sup> My understanding of what the term “*vita apostolica*” is influenced here by Chenu’s essay “Monks, Canons, and Laymen in Search of the Apostolic Life” as translated by Taylor and Little and also McDonnell’s article (cited above, n. 16); Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, 202-38.

<sup>23</sup> *Lib.*, 104.

<sup>24</sup> One example which comes to mind is the organization of St. Gregory of Tours hagiographical accounts of the *Miracles of Martin of Tours* and the *Passion and Miracles of Julian of Brioude*. Particularly in the latter text, Gregory adopts a “roughly chronological” (to borrow from Van Dam’s prefatory note to his translation of that text) structure, but within that structure, it becomes apparent that there are several

Jordan puts great emphasis on the diversity of persons involved, equating the value-system of the community of early Friars Preachers to the apostolic community (and by extension to its virtue).

Dominic's asceticism seems apparent from the earliest part of his life so much so that Jordan reports that he even abstained from "other children's games".<sup>25</sup> Additionally Jordan relates that Dominic's appearance "proclaimed him a child, but the maturity of his way...[was] more suggestive of old age."<sup>26</sup> This characteristic of a saint is classic; Dominic was yet another *senex puer*, a boy with the virtue of one much older. Having maturity beyond his years essentially signifies Dominic's future sanctity; Jordan connects such a destiny with Dominic's early habit by detailing the success and holiness of his Order. We receive further testimony of Dominic's rejection of worldly pursuits as Jordan tells us that, as a newly-enrolled canon, Dominic "[claimed] for himself the leisure of contemplation, he hardly ever showed himself outside the confines of the monastery [at Osma]."<sup>27</sup> Dominic's ascetic tendency is a clear instance of early apostolic behavior, augmenting the piety of the Revolution's founder.

Dominic's asceticism seems to have had particular importance for Don Diego de Acebo, Bishop of Osma. Diego intentionally made Dominic his sub-prior: Dominic's mannerisms enhanced the image of Diego's own piety. Dominic's conversion of a heretic during a stopover in Toulouse lends further evidence to Diego's well-placed confidence in his sub-prior. When Diego admonishes the Cistercian abbots and papal prelates at

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"blocks" of text, organized around a particular type or target of the miracles performed at the cult site. Cf. Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, (Trenton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Lib., 8.

<sup>26</sup> Lib., 8.

<sup>27</sup> Lib., 12.

Montpellier, he does so presumably with Dominic present as further proof of the bishop's ascetic behaviors and credentials.<sup>28</sup> Having sent most of his retinue back to Castile, Diego retains Dominic, and soon after the Cistercians "agreed to adopt a similar [ascetic] policy themselves."<sup>29</sup> The actions of Diego and Dominic suggest that they were following an ascetic policy within the confines of the apostolic life; it is similarly noteworthy that Diego says that the heretics follow methods "*pseudoapostolorum*" (of the false apostles).<sup>30</sup> This suggests that not only were the heretics viewed within Moore's framework (the heretical *vita apostolica*) but that Diego and Dominic embodied the "true" apostolic ethic. The confounding of heretics and strengthening of the Catholic cause is a common hagiographical trope and only bolsters the Preachers claims to piety.

Upon its establishment in 1214, Dominic chose the *Rule of St. Augustine* (discussed in more detail below) for the governing of his Order, but "adopted certain stricter observances in connection with diet, fasting, bedding and woolen clothing."<sup>31</sup> Dominic's restrictions were nothing different from earlier monastic revivals, returning to previous standards of excellence (and often augmenting those standards where possible) was commonplace: Cluniacs returned to strict observance of the Benedictine rule in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and Cistercians to a 'literal' (*ad litteram*) observance in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Dominic's restrictions and zeal for "white martyrdom" had a profound effect on his followers. Jordan relates that a certain "brother Bertrand...mortified his flesh

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<sup>28</sup> Little seems convinced that the later character of the early Order of Preachers suggests that Dominic had most certainly been present and taken Diego's message to heart. Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 153-4.

<sup>29</sup> Lib., 22.

<sup>30</sup> Lib., ed. Scheeben, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Lib., 47.

savagely...[following] the example of his master, Dominic”.<sup>32</sup> Jordan himself asked his college neighbor “what could be more meritorious...to win us a glorious crown, than for us...to spurn the whole world for love of [Christ]?”<sup>33</sup> This asceticism ostensibly brought the Preachers increased prestige and renown. We can see the importance of ascetic behavior to the Dominican Revolution: not only was the movement’s founder an ascetic, but so too was his mentor; even further, members of the Revolution eagerly took after Dominic. Desiring to be perfect (as Jesus advised in Matthew 19:21) was a typical element within hagiographical narrative; that Dominic’s followers followed his example with enthusiasm only heightened the ascetic tone of the *Libellus*.

Poverty became increasingly important for the religious landscape resulting from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Renaissance. Religious poverty brought benefices to the Friars: those who were already guilty of “financial sins” were able to feel some semblance of absolution by donating to the newly-formed Mendicant orders.<sup>34</sup> Dominic’s espousal of apostolic poverty is manifest early in the *Libellus*. It is often paired with Dominic’s conceptualization of “true charity, which would be effective in caring for and winning the salvation of men”.<sup>35</sup> Diego’s exhortation to the 12 Cistercians at Montpellier in 1205, suggests that the heretics modeled themselves on “evangelical austerity” and that this was something which Diego and Dominic were already doing.<sup>36</sup> “Diego’s suggestion does not seem very original...Yet such an awareness of history should not blind us to the genuine

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<sup>32</sup> Lib., 51.

<sup>33</sup> Lib., 71.

<sup>34</sup> Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, 53.

<sup>35</sup> Lib., 13.

<sup>36</sup> Lester K. Little and Barbara Rosenwein, “Social Meaning in the Monastic and Mendicant Spiritualities”, *Past and Present*, 63, (1974), 20.

It is important to note here that Diego’s speech to the Cistercians implies that Diego’s party and the heretics, not the Cistercians, were those practicing “evangelical austerity”.

sense of novelty and hence strangeness felt by those Cistercian legates.”<sup>37</sup> Diego and Dominic’s example stuck and the Cistercians conducted themselves as Diego and Dominic had been; that is, the orthodox presence in Languedoc went out “on foot and without provisions to proclaim the faith in voluntary poverty.”<sup>38</sup> Poverty was one of the cornerstones of the *vita apostolica* and a frequent feature in the lives of great monastic saints and founders. (It should be noted formally that the origin of mendicant monasticism lies with the Friars Minor; while I concede that the Dominicans did not begin the practice of mendicantism, they did embrace it. This illustrates the duplicity of the early Preachers: they were seeking evangelical and apostolic poverty, but doing so within a radically new framework.)

Dominic’s espousal of poverty was so severe that, when Diego left Dominic to return to Spain, Dominic refused to take charge of temporal (read: financial) affairs. As a result, a certain William Claret “was to give an account to brother Dominic of everything that he did.”<sup>39</sup> It is likely that both men were given charge of that which they were most familiar; we can see here the familiar “long 12<sup>th</sup> Century” *topos* of the un-cleanliness of money<sup>40</sup> and also that Dominic was separated from potential contamination. Jordan cleverly adds that when he died Diego won “a glorious reward for the good and hard work he had done, and [went] to his grave in prosperity to enter into ‘a wealthy rest’.”<sup>41</sup> Jordan’s juxtaposition of the Dominican aversion to wealth and the imagery of “treasure in heaven”<sup>42</sup> shows clearly that Dominic’s life was illustrative of apostolic poverty and

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<sup>37</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 153-4.

<sup>38</sup> Lib., 22.

<sup>39</sup> Lib., 29.

<sup>40</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 53.

<sup>41</sup> Lib., 30.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew 19:21

made him a true example<sup>43</sup> of the classic *pauperes Christi* motif. The emphasis on Dominic's voluntary poverty is both a check against the Franciscan movement's claim to *paupertas* and a common hagiographical trope. *Paupertas* was a key element of the *vita apostolica* and a typical quality of monastic revivals.

The Dominican movement originally accepted properties as endowments. Such a practice conflicts, at first glance, with Dominic's espousal of poverty. However, it seems that a politically expedient relationship may be to blame: the earliest endowments given to Dominic were by Simon de Montfort, the secular leader of the Albigensian Crusade, "who was particularly devoted to [Dominic]"<sup>44</sup>. Practicing poverty had won Dominic renown, but to ensure his movements survival it was necessary for him to cultivate a relationship with political and religious hierarchy (dealt with in greater detail below). Jordan excuses these potential lapses of poverty by noting that "[they were not] yet observing the constitution...about not accepting properties and not keeping properties which had been accepted previously"<sup>45</sup>. Dominic would later, upon choosing the *Rule of St. Augustine* and being approved by the Pontiff, "[decree] that they would not own properties but would only accept revenues with which to provide for the food they needed."<sup>46</sup> (Mendicant poverty would be paramount to the Preachers' success. Of course, it is rather likely that the Dominican Revolution co-opted Mendicant poverty (such as it became later in the 13th century) from the Franciscans. While this seems at first to indict

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<sup>43</sup> As opposed to the heretics who were often used these same references for their own type of poverty. Jordan goes so far as to claim that the ways of the heretics were ways "pseudoapostolorum", illustrating a resemblance to but not embodiment of apostolic poverty while maintaining false doctrine(s).

Lib., 20.; *Libellus*, ed. H.C. Scheeben, 20.

<sup>44</sup> Lib., 37.

<sup>45</sup> Lib., 37.

These constitutions, as well, are dealt with below.

<sup>46</sup> Lib., 42.

the Dominicans claims of evangelical poverty, it is likely reflective of the frank understanding of western monasticism already noticeable in the *Libellus*. Mendicant poverty was simply a new mechanism for which monastic life might be provided; the acceptance of a practice utilized by their Franciscan rivals suggests that the Mendicant mechanism was superior to the traditional modes of poverty espoused by earlier monastic movements.) Mendicancy would become a frequent motif in the hagiography of the “Friars” movements; likewise it would become a key element in the reinterpreted *vita apostolica*. The adoption of mendicancy meant that the Dominican Revolution was actively seeking the *vita apostolica*, by any effective means necessary.

Dominic’s insistence on poverty inspired the same in his followers. Jordan notes that in 1218 Dominic sent a group of brothers to Bologna and “during their time in Bologna [the brothers] endured the most appalling poverty.”<sup>47</sup> Brother Henry was driven to the Order “by a yearning for the perfection which he saw to belong to voluntary poverty”.<sup>48</sup> Later, Henry had a vision from which “he retained...a warning which made him all the more eager for the height of evangelical poverty”.<sup>49</sup> Brother Evard was a special case: “he had once been a famous man”<sup>50</sup> and was remarkable “by the example of

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<sup>47</sup> Lib., 55.

<sup>48</sup> Lib., 72.

It would be foolish not to point out the parallel vocabulary shared between this passage and Matthew 19:21, particularly evident in the Latin, but rendered well by Tugwell’s translation.

<sup>49</sup> Lib., 73.

I think it is clear that while the tendency of monastic groups to assert the basis of their method in older examples, there are obvious parallels between the “voluntary poverty” by Jordan and Henry and the apostolic example as found in Matthew: “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Matthew 19:21

<sup>50</sup> Lib., 90.

We can read with reasonable certainty that “famous” also probably meant wealthy. This is made more probable because Jordan notes “more people were inspired by the example of his adoption of poverty.” Quote from: Lib., 89.

his adoption of poverty.”<sup>51</sup> The First General Chapter in 1220 “decreed that [the Order] should no longer hold properties or revenues, and that they should give up those that they already held in the district round Toulouse.”<sup>52</sup> By eliminating the acceptance of properties and endowments, the Order of Preachers forced itself into mendicancy and abandoned any prospect of definite long-term financial security. Implicative of the perceived state of monastic tendencies, Jordan tells us that Dominic “was a true lover of poverty, and he always wore cheap clothes.”<sup>53</sup> The use of mendicancy helped to ensure true poverty<sup>54</sup> for the Preachers, a key component to the Dominican Revolution and of the *vita apostolica*.

The insistence on charity by Dominic seems, at first, diluted in the text. Coupled with poverty, the strength of the charity motif becomes formidable, and the two are linked to that effect in the text. Dominic exhibited extraordinary charity from his earliest youth; while “he was a student at Palencia, there was a severe famine...he sold the books which he possessed...and established an almonry where the poor could be fed.”<sup>55</sup> Fundamental to the preservation of poverty, charity served as an active reaffirmation of Apostolic poverty; giving away was not necessary to their survival meant that practicing Apostolic charity would permanently ensure their poverty by guaranteeing that they would not gradually accrue wealth. The practice of charity was a fundamental part of

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<sup>51</sup> Lib., 89.

<sup>52</sup> Lib., 87.

<sup>53</sup> Lib., 108.

<sup>54</sup> The difference, one could argue, is that mendicancy ensured that the Friars would not accrue properties through endowments. Cluny and Cîteaux had accumulated wealth through the donations of the faithful; while that wealth paralleled their rise, it would eventually prove the largest source of their criticism. The importance of the mendicant ethic was an “insurance policy” against the Revolution’s success. What made the Dominican acceptance of mendicancy so important was that it ensured the continuation of at least one aspect of the *vita apostolica*.

<sup>55</sup> Lib., 10.

western monasticism; examples of charity were common in *vita sancti* narratives; Dominic's charity was clearly demonstrated by Jordan in the *Libellus*.

Dominic's methodology was not simply limited to practicing charity in his daily life, but also expanded into his spiritual approach: "He had a special prayer which he often made to God, that God would grant him true charity, which would be effective in caring for and winning the salvation of men".<sup>56</sup> Dominic was not only prone to giving up worldly possessions or devoting prayer to the practice of charity. Jordan tells us that at one point Dominic was willing "to sell himself and relieve the poverty of this endangered soul [bound by clientage to the heretics] with the price of himself."<sup>57</sup> Brother Henry is similarly described as being "expansive in charity".<sup>58</sup> The confluence of both the examples of the brethren and Dominic's own manner suggest that charity and poverty, inherently intertwined in the Mendicant ethic, were powerful themes with which Jordan illustrated one of the many facets of the Dominican Revolution's *vita apostolica*. Here, I read the examples listed under the previous discussion of poverty as being equated (by Jordan) with charity. Poverty was the passive state of charity: in order to be exhibiting voluntary poverty, one had to be charitable to cause that poverty.<sup>59</sup>

Dominic's example was clearly an important element within the tradition. Dominic's focus on the sinful nature of human existence seems to have been crucial to the early awareness of the Dominican movement. The legend of Paul and Thecla shows that the idea of chastity and continence were linked in catholic minds since the legendary

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<sup>56</sup> Lib., 13.

<sup>57</sup> Lib., 35.

<sup>58</sup> Lib., 77.

<sup>59</sup> Jesus linked the two in the Gospel of Matthew (19:21): "go, sell all that you have, give to the poor...and follow me"; this emphasis created a cyclical reiteration of both charity and poverty and made it an important point of Jesus' teachings.

age of the apostles. “The integrity of the virgin state was the highest pinnacle of Christian virtue.”<sup>60</sup> We can see a parallel treatment of the body in Jordan’s *Libellus*.

Simultaneously, Dominic and his early followers exhibit chastity (some, like Dominic, explicitly maintaining perpetual virginity) and interact with female Christians on a spiritual level, implicitly renouncing any sexual activity while subjecting themselves to temptation. Bodily virginity was an important element within traditional hagiography, particularly in texts influenced by the *vita apostolica*.

The *Libellus* deals with the intricacies of gender dynamics in traditional hagiographical ways: it emphasizes chastity as one of the Preachers’ key virtues; it portrays some women as temptresses; and it portrays yet other women as close spiritual companions. Dominic, on his deathbed, remarks: “God’s mercy has preserved me to this day in bodily virginity, but I confess that I have not escaped from the imperfection of being more excited by the conversation of young women than by being talked at by old women.”<sup>61</sup> While Dominic’s confession would seem to indicate some degree of interest in young women (indicating how keen Dominic’s understanding of the abundance of temptation in 12/13<sup>th</sup> century Europe was), it is far more likely that Dominic was being entirely honest about the nature of his discussions with younger women. It seems that young women’s energy or interest in discourse made his role as a celibate academic more intellectually enjoyable and profitable. Dominic’s honesty in this passage tells us that he understood the gender boundaries drawn by the *vita apostolica* and that he stayed well within the acceptable boundaries.

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<sup>60</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 361.

<sup>61</sup> *Lib.*, 92.

We hear first of Dominic's chastity when Jordan tells us that Dominic "spurned the enticements of a dissolute world, to walk in the way of innocence."<sup>62</sup> While it was not uncommon for monastic reformers to claim that theirs was a greater claim to celibacy, the realization of such a claim was far rarer. Dominic's insistence on absolute chastity brought with it a number of signs so that "his innocence of life shone out like the morning star in the midst of the clouds, making everybody marvel at him".<sup>63</sup> That there was an insistence on the rarity of chastity such as Dominic's<sup>64</sup> indicates that such an adherence to chastity was irregular. This further suggests that the ideals of the Gregorian Reform movements were less than realized. Consequently, there is clear emphasis in the *Libellus* on the rarity of Dominic's adherence to his lifelong vow of chastity: "God's mercy has preserved me to this day in bodily virginity".<sup>65</sup> His chastity also has a clear intellectual flavor; having read the *Collationes patrum* by Cassian, "with the help of grace, this book brought him to the highest purity of conscience".<sup>66</sup> While purity of conscience is not directly equal to purity of body, the notion of intent being requisite for the commission of sin in the 12<sup>th</sup> century has been firmly established by modern scholarship: "Sin is neither the act nor the inclination to perform the act but the giving of consent to the inclination."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Lib., 8.

<sup>63</sup> Lib., 11.

<sup>64</sup> The speech which Dominic delivers from his deathbed (likely a recollection or approximation by Jordan) suggests that it was a remarkable feat during Dominic's age. That Jordan follows it with the caveat of Dominic's preference to discuss spiritual matters with younger women may either have mitigated or accentuated the impressiveness of Dominic's chastity.

<sup>65</sup> Lib., 92.

<sup>66</sup> Lib., 13.

<sup>67</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 188.

This trend, of course, was fundamental to Christendom, and traced (at the latest) back to St. Augustine. St. Anselm, too, made intent a key prerequisite to sin.

Another brother of the Order, also named Dominic, was once plotted against by “people who were perhaps resentful of him” by sending a prostitute “to him on the pretext of going to confession...trying to seduce the innocent man with cunning”.<sup>68</sup> The other Dominic, in a dramatic moment:

stretched himself out in between the two fires [which he had built in his room] and bid her come to him. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘Here is a suitable place for such a sin. Come and make love, if you want to.’... She screamed and fled, full of remorse. But he got up unharmed, triumphant over the material fire and the fire of lust.<sup>69</sup>

His miraculous survival of a self-imposed ordeal of fire makes clear that only by willfully maintaining his chastity was he able to survive the fires. The combination of “the material fire and the fire of lust” implies a two-fold trial-by-fire. To have a brother with the same name as the Master tested by a prostitute (a common hagiographical trope) is a boon to Jordan’s case for the chastity and apostolic validity of the Dominican Revolution. Surviving a temptation is an important hagiographic element. The chastity which the “other Dominic” demonstrates was an affirmation of the traditional manifestation of the *vita apostolica*.

It was the care of young women which seems to have been the earliest contribution of the Dominican Revolution to organized religious life. “At a place called Prouille, [a monastery was established] to receive certain noble women whose parents had been forced by poverty to entrust them to the heretics to be educated and brought up.”<sup>70</sup> Although under Diego’s purview as a bishop, the emphasis on the movement’s empowerment of young women brings to the Dominican Revolution a characteristic of

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<sup>68</sup> Lib., 50.

<sup>69</sup> Lib., 50.

<sup>70</sup> Lib., 27.

quasi-egalitarianism. The result of the nunnery was that “the handmaids of Christ there [offered] acceptable service to their Maker, leading vigorously holy lives, in outstanding innocence and purity”;<sup>71</sup> in Jordan’s description, the Prouille sisterhood was a particularly potent emphasis on the young women’s chastity, reinforcing chastity as a particular motif of importance to the Dominican Revolution. Strangely, Jordan does not express any apprehension in this passage: he seems neither troubled nor concerned about the establishment of the Prouille nunnery, but rather he celebrates it as persistent locus of orthodoxy in an otherwise tainted region, particularly since that house was populated by reformed Cathar women.<sup>72</sup> We can see a strong emphasis on chastity as an apostolic virtue and a further affirmation of hagiographic motifs.

While he was himself a key (perhaps sensitive) figure for Jordan, Brother Henry’s experience with an elder matron makes Jordan’s account of Henry into a buttress for the Dominican Revolutions claims of living properly within the *vita apostolica*. The account, to be brief, concerns a close relationship with “a venerable lady, who loved brother Henry during his lifetime with an extraordinary devotion”.<sup>73</sup> Such a relationship has the inherent

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<sup>71</sup> Lib., 27.

<sup>72</sup> Lib., 27 ; Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 155.

While the concept of an unsupervised nunnery in the heart of the Albigensian heresy’s homeland might seem mildly reckless, a sermon from Humbert of Romans gives insight as to the propriety of Dominic’s original aim for the nunnery. Additionally, the growth of nunneries within the Order was carefully controlled, most likely because the Preachers were otherwise occupied with their duties and were careful to keep the growth of the Sisters to a closely regulated and organized group:

“Being a man extremely zealous for souls, he was prompted to create this Order of sisters by the holy intention of saving souls. And this purpose was, in fact, twofold. One aim of his was to prevent people being contaminated by heresy. In the region of the Albigeois the impoverished nobility were entrusting their daughters to the heretics to be looked after and educated, and so they were becoming heretics too. So he founded a monastery at Prouille, where these noblemen could place their daughters. His other aim was to remedy impropriety. At that time there were various houses of nuns in Rome which were in a state of spiritual decay... There would have been many more [houses] if the Friars Preachers had been prepared to tolerate it.”

Humbert of Romans, “Sermon XLVIII: Sisters in the Care of the Preachers”, in *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*, ed. Simon Tugwell, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 328.

<sup>73</sup> Lib., 82.

potential to foment scandal, yet Jordan dispenses with such a notion by detailing Henry's role as the matron's guide in spiritual matters. By noting that the woman was comforted by Henry's *post mortem* appearance to another holy man, Jordan shows that while Henry's devotion was deeply spiritual. The separation (via Henry's appearing to an unnamed holy man rather than the matron) shows that Henry's devotion was in conformity with the New Testament concept of *ἀγάπη* rather than any sort of sinful relationship. Henry was maintaining a distance appropriate to a confessor/penitent relationship by appearing to the holy man rather than to the matron. We can see the importance of the Henry's relationship to the matron; it is clear that the necessity of conducting proper relationships with laywomen was on Jordan's mind when composing the *Libellus*. The *vita apostolica* and hagiographic narratives required abstinence of strict adherents; Jordan's narrative makes it clear that the Revolution lived by the precepts of the *vita apostolica*.

Henry's guidance of the matron also speaks volumes about the desire of many of the laity<sup>74</sup> to be guided by those with an advanced education and knowledge of theological matters. The Fourth Lateran Council similarly addressed the need for an educated and competent clergy:

Since the direction of souls is the art of arts, we strictly command that bishops, either themselves or through other qualified men, diligently prepare and

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<sup>74</sup> While modern scholarship has (more than) adequately addressed the increasing penetration of education into the lay-classes, the prevalence of an intricate theological understanding among the same group is still murky at best. It is clear that the success of Dominic's early opposition, the Albigensian Cathar, satisfied that void by incorporating a degree of Gnostic tendencies into their doctrine. To provide an intricate understanding (whether orthodox or otherwise) of theology had powerful ramifications: understanding the textual manifestations of Divine Will brought with it a potential to better adhere to it, perhaps ensuring (or at least cultivating) one's own membership amongst the "saved".

instruct those to be elevated to the priesthood in the divine offices and in the proper administration of the sacraments of the Church.<sup>75</sup>

Jordan echoes Innocent's III declaration in emphasizing the importance of education to the Dominican Revolution. Education was an important element of a qualified preacher; the apostles were originally sent out two-by-two to preach the gospel because they were qualified to do so. Imitating the apostles was the bedrock of the *vita apostolica*. Jordan's mental geography is peppered with locales famous for their education, pointing out particularly Paris, Bologna and Rome.

The virtues of the Dominican Revolution were tantamount to the pious nature of the Mendicant movement: without morally upright and scripturally conscious members, the Preachers could stake no claim to living *in vita apostolica, in imitatione Christi*. Their moral rigor was not, however, what predestined them to be the Inquisitors of the later 13<sup>th</sup> century; it was the rigorous education, particularly in philosophy and theology, which made the Dominican movement so potent a weapon for the later medieval Church. The trend to emphasize education can be readily found in the *Libellus*, particularly in Dominic himself. Education (particularly in theology) was a key element in the development of most saints, particularly monastic founders. The importance of education to the *vita apostolica* was that Jesus was a teacher, the apostles were teachers, and the great saints were frequently teachers.

Dominic's education occupies three and a half chapters— most of the fifth and the entirety of the sixth, seventh, and tenth chapters of the *Libellus*. While at first not

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<sup>75</sup>Fourth Lateran Council, "Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical: Lateran IV 1215.", ed. and trans. HJ Schroeder, Fordham University, 26 June 2009, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.html>. Canon 3.

wholly remarkable in a corpus of 109 chapters, out of these 109 chapters, 32 mention or education in some fashion (such as mental discipline, knowledge or contemplation).<sup>76</sup>

That nearly a third of the *Libellus* is colored with “erudition imagery” (for lack of a better term) is not surprising: the Order of Preachers has long been marked out as an intellectual’s brand of monasticism.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, an investigation of that same imagery proves fruitful in evaluating the *Libellus*. The items which are most evident from the text itself are: the emphasis on educated individuals as prominent among the early Dominican Revolution; the importance of texts and textual intelligence in the *Libellus*; and the emphasis on locations of educational importance.

Dominic’s education figures prominently in his early life. That his education is first concerned with the liberal arts is no surprise: a liberal arts education was the equivalent of an undergraduate degree and was necessary prior to his “sacred studies”. Dominic’s success in studying theology is a clear implication that his use of that subject is important to his later success as a preacher (an obvious, but necessary instance of foreshadowing). Dominic’s eagerness for the study of theology and his already demonstrable piety caused “the God of all knowledge [to give] him an increase of grace”<sup>78</sup> to allow a greater understanding of more intricate and arcane points of doctrine. The necessity of grace for Dominic is a common hagiographical element: the added gift of grace from God meant that the saint was a beacon of orthodoxy.

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<sup>76</sup> My reading of the text indicates these chapters to be the following: 3, 5-7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 22, 23, 25-8, 39, 49, 53, 54, 57, 58, 62, 68, 70, 71, 75, 77, 78, 92, 99, and 102-4. Most frequent are mentions of figures being “educated” or mental faculties being prominent among plot devices.

<sup>77</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 163-4.

<sup>78</sup> *Lib.*, 7.

Other figures in the *Libellus* also appear well educated: Diego “was renowned for his knowledge of the Bible”;<sup>79</sup> Brother Reginald was “the dean of St Aignan in Orleans”;<sup>80</sup> Jordan and Henry shared lodging at the University of Paris;<sup>81</sup> and the literary geography of the text includes Bologna, Cologne, Paris, Orleans, and Rome, all prominent “university towns”. That educational imagery figures so prominently is intentional: the Dominican’s rivalry with the Franciscans was a rivalry between the Preachers (read: *literati* or *clerici*) and the Friars Minor (read: *zealous pauperes*). As Little noted, “when [the Preachers] went to Paris and Bologna they took a firm hold and then concentrated on recruiting suitable candidates for their order.”<sup>82</sup> Dominic’s stratagem seems concentrated and assertive: “The search for recruits, especially in university towns, yielded success rapidly. Soon there were convents in Barcelona, Palencia, Limoges, Poitiers, Orleans, Rheims, Metz, Verona, Brescia, Asti and Faenza...[by] the high quality of their studies in theology and their practice of rhetoric, the Dominicans held a forward position in the defence of the church in the thirteenth century.”<sup>83</sup> Being defenders of the church was a frequent quality of great saints and an implicit quality of the *vita apostolica*; thus it is not surprising that the Dominican Revolution would require an advanced education.

Similarly, Dominic seems to have had a particularly affinity for the written word, as Jordan demonstrates with the anecdote at the end of chapter 13:

He read and loved a book entitled ‘Conferences of the Fathers’ [by John Cassian], which deals with the vices and with the whole matter of spiritual

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<sup>79</sup> Lib., 4.

<sup>80</sup> Lib., 56.

<sup>81</sup> Lib., 68.

<sup>82</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 160.

<sup>83</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 158.

perfection, and in this book he strove to explore the ways of salvation and to follow them with all the power of his mind. With the help of grace, this book brought him to the highest purity of conscience and to considerable enlightenment in contemplation and to a veritable peak of perfection.<sup>84</sup>

Studying texts intricately brought increased erudition and made the Preachers better preachers; this is in contrast to the early movement's population "for the most part [of] simple, uneducated men".<sup>85</sup> Dominic seems to have taken a personal hand in recruiting increasingly educated individuals, empowering his new (albeit transient) community with an intellectualism decidedly inconsistent early-on among the rival Franciscan movement. The increasing emphasis on the education of the Dominicans made the strength of the early Revolution grow along traditional lines. Dominic's love of a text beloved by traditional monks colors the *Libellus* with traditional hagiographic imagery and fits Dominic well within the *vita apostolica*.

(The passage concerning the *Collationes patrum* by Cassian has a curiously Gnostic tone to it: that Dominic could read a book, glean certain knowledge from it, and by his "knowingness" affect some degree of salvation via intellectual models is curious. The passage is exceptionally curious in that, while an important early Christian monastic figure, John Cassian was not one of the Doctors of the Church; he certainly was not Scripture and thus any exegesis of his work was not directly connected with any actual Gnostic method endorsed by the Church. Gnosticism, in its varying incarnations, was an invariably controversial topic; on the one hand, a certain degree of understanding was crucial to an accurate (read: orthodox) application of Scriptural teachings; on the other hand, excessive or misguided interpretations (literal or otherwise) brought with them the

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<sup>84</sup> Lib., 13.

<sup>85</sup> Lib., 62.

seeds of heresy. The Albigensian Cathar (against whom Dominic's most notable efforts were directed) endorsed a form of gnosis. Their particular persuasion has been identified as primarily being an extensive exegesis of the *Pater Noster*; while it was not such gnosis alone that made them dangerous, it was certainly a dangerous element which the Church nominally forbade. Dominic's quasi-Gnosticism seems to have been acceptable because he was already vigorously orthodox, and as such his "knowingness" enhanced his orthodoxy and gave nuance to his model for the conduct of monastic/Mendicant life. To this end, Dominic's Gnostic tendencies, in so far as they resulted in orthodoxy, were acceptable because of that orthodoxy. Had Dominic's Gnosticism not been so insistent on orthodoxy as a means of reform, he would not have been met with such enthusiasm from the erudite and orthodox clergymen/students who were his early recruits. That Gnosticism usually connoted an anti-intellectual bent and focused more on self-achieved "enlightenment" (to borrow the Buddhist term) made Dominic's manner all the more important as an orthodox co-opting of a heretical methodology.<sup>86)</sup>

Developing the Dominican community was a *sine qua non*, however it was complicated when Dominic "divided [the Brothers] up and scattered them throughout the church".<sup>87</sup> The difficulty is clear: dividing his flock made it likely that the Order would not survive. Modern scholarship, having examined much of the early epistles of the Masters General, suggests that the brothers were sent to those places in which they would

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<sup>86</sup> The canonical analysis of the Albigensian Catharist gnosis is still Madaule's: cf., Jacques Madaule, *The Albigensian Crusade, an historical essay*, trans. Barbara Wall, (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 36ff.

<sup>87</sup> Lib., 62.

Additionally, one may see Fichtenau's brief analysis, cf., Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000-1200*, trans. Denise A. Kaiser (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 160ff.

most likely to succeed.<sup>88</sup> The *Libellus* confirms this assertion, Dominic sent Spaniards to Spain,<sup>89</sup> Frenchmen to France,<sup>90</sup> and Germans to Germany,<sup>91</sup> all the while establishing an academic reputation and promoting the early prowess of the Preachers. Promoting a common type of individual within the Dominican Revolution created long-term success and ensured structural integrity via the use of sophisticated (yet, among the Order, commonly understood) models. It is further remarkable that the Preachers were sent two-by-two to their provinces, in clear imitation of the apostles. The division of the brothers is within the tenets of the *vita apostolica*. It is not, coincidentally, a traditional hagiographical trope.

The Dominican Revolution's re-interpretation of the *vita apostolica* promoted all of the usual *topoi*: Dominicans were ascetic, they were *pauperes Christi*, they were charitable, they maintained chaste and continent relationships with women within acceptable models, they were well educated, and they were orthodox. While the success of the Order is clearly due to the influence of its original Master, Dominic's reinterpretation of the *vita apostolica* gave voice to a social concern present in Latin Europe for more than a century, without exposing the Preachers to accusations of heresy. It is clear that Dominic's willingness to work within traditional methodologies gave him license to proceed in leading his young Revolution; Dominic was able to engage in activities which carried with them an implicit criticism of the Church entirely because he was working within the established hierarchal order of the Church: in short, he was able to critique the system because he was part of "the system".

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<sup>88</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 160.

<sup>89</sup> Lib., 49.

<sup>90</sup> Lib., 61.

<sup>91</sup> Lib., 71.

The Revolution was also clearly within the traditional hagiographical trends. The strength of the *Libellus* narrative was the dovetailing of the *vita apostolica* with traditional hagiographical tropes. It is clear that Jordan meant the *Libellus* to enhance the reputation of the Dominican Revolution within traditional hagiographic and apostolic modes. Without these two items being prominent within the text, Jordan's narrative relies on the prestige of Dominicans in the time of the reader; such a flaw would make the purpose of the text ("so that the sons who are now to be born to the Order in the future will not be ignorant of how it began"<sup>92</sup>) moot. Lacking such emphases, Jordan's text was simply a chronicle or history in the secular fashion.

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<sup>92</sup> Lib., 3.

## Preacher's, Bishop's and Pontiff's Hierarchy

“The achievements which made twelfth-century Europe that which we recognize as the mother of our own were predominantly those of organization and centralization”.<sup>93</sup>

Centralization and organization would permit a movement to expand beyond the first waves of its recruitment and enthusiasm; that same centralized organization would similarly permit the movement to continuously flourish. Religious movements in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century were required to straddle a thin line between populist heresy and charismatic orthodoxy; proper hierarchical organization (headed ultimately by the Curia) promoted both the growth of the movement and ensured its adherence to orthodox doctrine. It is not surprising, then, that the Dominican Revolution operated within the strict boundaries of permissible organization and legitimate orthodox hierarchy.

The “academic training and organizational ideas that characterized the Dominicans” became so essential to the growth of Mendicant monasticism that they were eventually adopted by the Friars Minor.<sup>94</sup> The Dominican schema brought a small movement to the forefront of Latin Christendom, with major monastic centers at the focal points of educational and ecclesiastical potency throughout Latin Christendom. That the Dominican's hierarchy was established long before the Franciscan's follows logically: Dominic was never a “rock-star-Saint”; the Preacher's recruitment needed to be methodical and well-defined.<sup>95</sup> Among the hierarchical motifs were the importance of Diego in a leadership role, the consistency of Papal oversight, the patronage of regional ecclesiastical and feudal officials, the establishment of the Order of Preachers one and

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<sup>93</sup> Moore, *Dissent*, 282.

<sup>94</sup> Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, 53.

<sup>95</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 161.

only abbot (an early and ephemeral institution), the sending of Preachers into the world, and the use of the General Chapter's *dicta* as a mechanism for intrinsic control.

Diego was the bishop of Osma; thus, he was the official head of the order of canons regular at Osma; Diego was therefore Dominic's monastic superior. It is reasonable, then, that Diego play a major role in the growth of the early Dominican Revolution. Diego had cultivated the group of canons regular at Osma and the Bishop exercised his influence in a manner consistent with his role as Dominic's superior. Diego's canons "appointed [Dominic] sub-prior" as result of Dominic's apparent holiness.<sup>96</sup> Dominic's activities as sub-prior are not mentioned in the *Libellus* except in that part where Jordan mentions his appointment and when it is used as Dominic's title. The titular use of sub-prior emphasizes the importance of hierarchical thinking in the post-Gregorian Reform period. Dominic's role as sub-prior is similarly consistent with the hierarchical thinking characteristic of the Dominican Revolution; Dominic's subordination to an experienced elder (here, and usually, his mother) is a common hagiographical trope and fits within normal monastic foundation models.

Dominic's relationship with the Curia made his piety a more potent motif within the *Libellus*; Innocent III met with Dominic personally;<sup>97</sup> Honorius III approved the Order of Preachers personally;<sup>98</sup> Gregory IX (though he was then "the venerable bishop of Ostia... [and] at that time the papal legate in Lombardy") presided over Dominic's funeral personally.<sup>99</sup> While curial issues received no special emphasis in the text, Jordan seems determined to point out that Dominic was a close ally of the Pope, checking the

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<sup>96</sup> Lib., 12.

<sup>97</sup> Lib., 41-2.

<sup>98</sup> Lib., 45.

<sup>99</sup> Lib., 96.

claim of their Franciscan rivals as the premier “defenders of the faith”.<sup>100</sup> The presence of papal legates is consistent in importance with the presence of the pontiffs themselves. A papal legate is present during (and, at least indirectly, targeted by) Diego’s rebuke in chapter 20, and the legate and abbots took the message to heart so greatly that the heretics “launched a counter-offensive of more insistent preaching.”<sup>101</sup> There is a clear cause-and-effect between Diego’s rebuke and the changes in the legate and the abbots’ policy in the Toulousain; this suggests a potentially founded relationship between the Dominican Revolution and the papal establishment. As Revolutionary figures, the Dominicans needed to maintain an appearance of conservatism; they accomplished this appearance by acting as papal agents.

Dominic himself seems to have been favored by local ecclesiastical and aristocratic officials in his early career.<sup>102</sup> “Dominic held the church of Fanjeaux and certain other properties”<sup>103</sup> which were given to him by Simon de Montfort, as well as the *castrum* of Cassenuil.<sup>104</sup> Jordan further tells us that Bishop Fulk of Toulouse “was very fond of Dominic...with the consent of his whole Chapter, he granted them a sixth of all

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<sup>100</sup> While not commissioned until the Renaissance, the frescoes in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi (particularly in the panel often called “Innocent’s Dream”) demonstrate the importance of this reputation to the Franciscans. Dominic’s movement seems determined to cultivate a similar reputation by implying a close relationship with the Curia, but this reputation was less well-known popularly and it would take the institution of the Inquisition to establish the Dominicans as firebrands of Orthodoxy. The Dominicans role in the Inquisition implies their closeness to the Curia and their role as trusted allies of the Papacy. Bisson has argued that Innocent’s acceptance of both orders of Friars was a virtual imperative, saying: “...recognition of the mendicant enterprises of Francis of Assisi and Dominic of Caleruega was thrust upon Innocent III by irresistible circumstances, a virtual cause he could only lead or lose.” Thomas Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century, Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 422.

<sup>101</sup> Lib., 22.

<sup>102</sup> Lib., 39.

<sup>103</sup> While it is, at first glance, remarkable that Jordan mentions Dominic personally held properties and that they were not held in common among the Order, it seems most likely that the “Order” in its later incarnation did not exist in a fashion sufficient to administrate those properties. Similarly, as has been argued above, it seems that the patronage of Count de Montfort and Bishop Fulk was personal: officials were *Dominic’s* patrons, rather than patrons of the *Dominicans*, at least at this juncture.

<sup>104</sup> Lib., 37.

the tithes of his diocese”.<sup>105</sup> “One-sixth meant one-half of one-third, which was the portion normally reserved for the poor.”<sup>106</sup> Additionally, Fulk “also assigned some churches to them: one within [Toulouse], one in Pamiers and a third between Soreze and Puylarens.”<sup>107</sup> Other donations came to them from “Master John, the dean of St. Quentin, and by the University of Paris, at the request of pope [sic] Honorius.”<sup>108</sup> The locations of these early donations are particularly important: either they are concentrated around the heart of Dominic’s early preaching efforts or near locations of educational importance. Perhaps one of the truly remarkable aspects of patronage to the Dominican Order is seen in the disparate realms from which their support was derived. Not only were donations to the Preachers centered on Toulouse, a hotbed for heresy, but many other donations came from near the university of Paris. The Dominican Revolution made its mark in regions where either heresy or education were entrenched; the Preachers were serving in regions where ecclesiastical oversight was diffuse: defense of the faith was a crucial hagiographical motif.

(The added strength of Dominic’s network of ecclesiastical and aristocratic patrons may have additional motivation: the preservation of the Preacher’s preaching franchise without encroaching upon the work of local parish priests and more traditional/conservative ecclesiastical officials. This is perhaps an argument *ex silentio* against the resentment felt by early Dominicans from ecclesiastical officials, showing the tension between more traditional pastoral figures and the emerging role of the Mendicant

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<sup>105</sup> Lib., 39.

Additionally, Bishop Fulk, in 1215, made a decree “instituting Dominic and his companions as preachers in our diocese to root out heresy, drive out vices, teach the rule of faith, and imbue people with right morals.” Van Engen, “Dominic and the Brothers”, in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, 9.

<sup>106</sup> Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 157.

<sup>107</sup> Lib., 43.

<sup>108</sup> Lib., 52.

Orders as purveyors of both sacraments (especially confession) and of preaching proper.<sup>109</sup> We can see the importance of the Dominicans as “doctors of souls” (as they would later act in the post-crusade Toulousain) already evident in the text; they are acting in many of the same capacities as parish priests but were doing so with papal, rather than local ecclesiastical, license.)

Dominic seems to have had a unique understanding of the Gregorian reform’s legacy: not only were his recruits well educated (to preach proper doctrine) but they were to be organized along rigid and traditional monastic tropes. The most curious facet of this organization rests in the forty-eighth chapter of the *Libellus*: “[Dominic] also gave it as his opinion that [the brothers] should elect one of the brethren as their abbot, to have authority to rule the others as their superior and head, though he retained to himself the right to discipline such an abbot.”<sup>110</sup> This practice seems to have been entirely short-lived “because afterwards, *as a mark of humility*, the brethren preferred to have their superior called ‘Master of the Order’, not ‘abbot’.”<sup>111</sup> (My emphasis.) Jordan’s explanation is betrayed by the history of western monasticism: the Cluniacs had one abbot for their entire monastic empire;<sup>112</sup> to have one abbot, by extension, was fit to the Cluniac model, which could easily have connoted the excesses created by Cluny’s success. While this alternative explanation may seem plausible, there may be yet another reason at the heart of Dominicans resistance to using the term ‘abbot’. Abbots were just as likely to engage in self-aggrandizement as any other ecclesiastical official and their wills were similarly

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<sup>109</sup> Frances Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages*, (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 86-7.

<sup>110</sup> Lib., 48.

<sup>111</sup> Lib., 48.

<sup>112</sup> Curiously, the Abbot of Cluny was directly responsible to the Pope, as the Master General (of the Preachers) and the Minister General (of the Franciscans) would be.

without major opposition, whereas the title “*magister ordinis*”<sup>113</sup> (as Jordan’s Latin reads) connotes a superior given charge from among a series of equals. This is probably because of superior academic qualifications or perhaps because of other monastically-centered qualifications. The Dominican Revolution’s emphasis on hierarchy was purposed to bring an emphasis on the Preachers’ humility, a motif common among major monastic figures.

Dominic’s hierarchical establishment of the Order paid dividends when he made the decision which astonished his contemporaries and confounds historians.<sup>114</sup> To send what few members the early Order had out into the world, by twos, without major provisions and without assurances of their absolute fidelity reflects how truly keen Dominic’s judgment must have been. Jordan calls this ability “one of the most remarkable things about [Dominic]”; “[it] was as if he knew exactly what was going to

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<sup>113</sup> Lib., ed. H.C. Scheeben, 48.

There is, of course, no other consistent translation for *magister* and few other titles would function without connoting some temporal excess; *dominus* was either sacrilegious (with respect to Christ) or papal-flavored and prone to connotations of ecclesiastical excess. Utilizing the term *magister* was both a politically sound maneuver and a deterrent to future excesses within the Order, a potential the history of which Dominic was certainly aware. Niermeyer’s lexicon prefers definitions connoting servitude, particularly prominent are those which suggest a serf-overseer quality with the understanding that the overseer in question was himself a serf; other definitions add the use of “magister” as an academic title. There is also a military connotation to the title, suggesting a leader of forces; this image may be particularly applicable given the long-established Cluniac conception of monks being engaged in spiritual warfare. This being said, it seems that if that were the definition which Jordan intended, it imbues the Dominican hierarchy with an increased sense of humility and colors Dominic’s role as having threefold worth: Dominic was a general in God’s army of Preachers; chief slave amongst the *servi Dei*; and a teacher providing an example of right-living amongst his pupils/followers.

Cf. *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, ed. Jan Niermeyer, ed. and trans. C. van de Kieft, J.W.J. Burgers, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., vol. 2, (Boston : Brill, 2002), 818-9.

<sup>114</sup> Even Dominican historians seem still today slightly puzzled as to how it was that Dominic reached such a risky conclusion. Vicaire’s narrative of this period struggles with the spiritual inspirations and discusses the concrete factors only as evidence of a shift in Dominic’s perception, equating the change with a larger spiritual reinterpretation of what “Christendom” meant. Hinnebusch similarly grapples with the problematic nature of Dominic’s dispersal of the brethren, although he comes closer to saying outright that Dominic’s awareness of the Order’s structural integrity was tantamount to his decision for dispersal. Little, though not a Dominican, called that occasion “the most revolutionary moment in the history of the order.” Cf., Marie-Humbert Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, trans. Kathleen Pond, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 219ff.; William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: origins and growth to 1500*, vol.1 (New York: Alba House, 1965), 49ff. ; Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 157-8.

happen”.<sup>115</sup> To further divide an Order which was already small and scatter its few members them to the wind was a major gamble: “he must have seemed to be destroying what he had begun rather than laying the foundation for something even greater.”<sup>116</sup> Hagiographically, Dominic’s foresight is commonplace, and Jordan offers the typical hagiographical explanation: it was “as if he had been given instructions by the Spirit in some revelations. And who would venture to say that it was not indeed so?”<sup>117</sup> The actual explanation is far more pragmatic: the Dominican corps of Preachers (reinforced by personal correspondence and careful selection of brothers and missions<sup>118</sup>) was capable of bearing the weight of an Order-stretched-thin.<sup>119</sup>

The General Chapters of the Dominican Order figure prominently in the *Libellus*. The first and second Chapters (in 1220 and 1221 respectively), along with occurring in the educationally significant city of Bologna, solidified the organization of the early Order of Preachers and established provincial priors.<sup>120</sup> The importance of establishing the internal regulations and hierarchy for the Order is clearly reflective of the chaotic

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<sup>115</sup> Lib., 62.

<sup>116</sup> Lib., 62.

<sup>117</sup> Lib., 62.

<sup>118</sup> The three surviving letters from St. Dominic’s own hand, although devoid of any intimate connection to their addressees, show that Dominic took particular care to personally shepherd the spiritual growth of the Order. Letter 1 gives clarification of previous instructions for a house of Sisters in Madrid; Letter 2 signals Dominic’s judgment of penance for a new enrollee recently converted from heresy; Letter 3 similarly shows Dominic’s personal connection with a new brother, also recently returned from the flock of the heretics.

“The Letters of St. Dominic”, ed. Francis C. Lehner, <http://www.domcentral.org/trad/domdocs/0002.htm> 19 November 2009.

<sup>119</sup> Cf., p. 16-7 of this text for a discussion of Dominic’s strategy in selecting those whom he sent to varying locations.

We have very few surviving letters from St. Dominic himself, but from Bl. Jordan’s correspondence it becomes clear that the custom of frequent correspondence between the brethren was commonplace by Jordan’s time, and being that his predecessor was Dominic himself, we can safely assume that this tradition has its roots in St. Dominic. Although only three such letters remain extant from Dominic, those which do suggest that maintaining the ties which bound the early Order together was one of Dominic’s primary objectives.

<sup>120</sup> Lib., 86-8.

growth of religious orders from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. This same uncontrolled growth is recognized by thirteenth canon of the Lateran IV prohibiting the creation of new monastic rules.<sup>121</sup> Having complex and centralized organization was something which Innocent III had championed, both as a mechanism of Papal oversight and as added insurance against the types of heretical movements which had plagued the late 11<sup>th</sup> and most of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, the second General Chapter the Order (with Dominic assuredly taking the lead) mandated that the Order “should thereafter no longer hold properties or revenue, and that they should give up those that they already had”; such a mandate reinforced the strict demands of poverty already required by the Dominican reinterpretation of the *vita apostolica* (as discussed above).<sup>123</sup>

Dominic’s keen understanding of the intellectual milieu created by the Gregorian reform and sustained by Innocent III became uniquely articulated in its hierarchy. Dominic’s organization was simultaneously flexible and rigid; it was flexible enough to handle a growing order, yet rigid enough to maintain the channels necessary to ensure the growth of orthodoxy within the Order. This “flexibly rigid” modeling reflects an early and acute understanding of the necessity of a sound structure by Dominic and an uneasiness to commit to a model which had not been “battle-tested”. The resultant Order became uniquely capable of growing despite the incredible pressures of the 13<sup>th</sup> century’s expanding political and religious consciousness, and further was bolstered by the awareness of its founder, reinforced by the narrative presented by Jordan in the *Libellus*.

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<sup>121</sup> Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 13.

<sup>122</sup> Ernest W. McDonnell, “The ‘Vita Apostolica’: Diversity or Dissent”, *Church History*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Mar., 1955), 22.

<sup>123</sup> *Lib.*, 87.

Again, while this magnitude of poverty was probably co-opted from the Franciscans, strict poverty was still a factor crucial to the success of the early Dominican Order.

By empowering the Dominican Revolution with an uniquely capable hierarchy, Dominic made his movement far more stable than the rival Friars Minor. It is clear that the humility and flexibility inherent in the Order was meant to be a bulwark of orthodoxy; the hagiographical importance was that Dominic and his followers were followers themselves. The Preachers were vassals of the Pope; they were beneficiaries of one of the most famous counts of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century; they were defenders of the faith; all of which were common hagiographical tropes, particularly common amongst major monastic founders or reformers.

## Miracles, Visions, and Dominican holiness

Jordan's text is filled with classic miracles: a miraculously jumping book, visions of important occurrences (often from great distances away), and even a resurrection. The miracles present in the *Libellus* have a broad array of implications, most of which seemed to argue that the divine favor granted to the Dominicans was equal to (they hoped "greater than") that of the Franciscans. "Miracles made the saints' interior, or spiritual, characters outwardly apparent."<sup>124</sup> Moreover, the retinue that Dominic attracted experienced similar miraculous occurrences, suggesting that not only was Dominic a paragon of holiness but that the Revolution itself existed similarly at the apex of human piety.

Often, the birth of a powerful saint (among whom Dominic would certainly be included) was foretold by a vision given to his mother:

Before he was conceived, his mother had a vision in which she saw herself carrying a puppy in her womb, with a blazing torch in its mouth; when it emerged from her womb, it seemed to set the whole world on fire, signifying that the son she was to conceive would be a famous preacher, who would wake up souls which had gone to sleep in their sins with the barking of his holy teaching and spread throughout the world the fire which the Lord Jesus came to cast upon the earth.<sup>125</sup>

We can see the importance of the vision which foretold the potency of Dominic's mission. The image of Dominic bringing a new light to the world reinforced the already powerful Christomimetic tendencies of the *Libellus*.

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<sup>124</sup> Thomas Head, *Hagiography & the Cult of Saints*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 103.

<sup>125</sup> Tugwell adds this in an endnote as being in nearly every manuscript.

Lib., n. 1.

Van Engen additionally notes that this "vision ascribed to Dominic's mother prior to his birth [is] a story taken verbatim from Bernard of Clairvaux's *vita*."

Van Engen, "Dominic and the Brothers", in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, 11.

In typical hagiographical form, Dominic began “walking in the ways of sanctity”, even before his acceptance of the habit of a canon regular; “[his] mother saw him in a vision, with the moon on his forehead, signifying that he would one day be given to the world as a light for the nations, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”<sup>126</sup> The importance of Dominic’s predestination for sainthood is a traditional hagiographical trope: the saint must be simultaneously tempted but also foreseen to be more than capable to pass such a test. Similar evidence of such a model is given by Jordan when he remarks that Dominic was “young and old at once”.<sup>127</sup> Additionally, there is a clear parallel to be drawn between Dominic’s predestination and the charismatic young-adulthood conversion of St. Francis; Jordan’s emphasis on Dominic’s early quasi-miraculous understanding of the nature of piety makes his a more traditional and complete sanctity. This is an important aspect for the Dominican Revolution because it signals an early insistence on sanctity: ostensibly, the piety of the Preachers was founded at the conception and/or the birth of its founder.

Dominic’s early success had been foretold by his mother’s vision and, with his piety having been expressed, he went to get an education. Dominic, having completed his education and enrolling as a canon regular at Osma, began to preach in the Toulousain with Diego; while there, Dominic engaged heretics in that region in debates. During a

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<sup>126</sup> Lib., 9.

The astrological significance of a moon evades me. There is, to me, no other apparent explanation for Jordan’s description than Dominic’s mother’s own recounting of the events as such. The significance of the *moon* is not important, the *vision* clearly is.

<sup>127</sup> Lib., 8.

“particular famous debate” in Fanjeaux,<sup>128</sup> Dominic was to perform the first active miracle in the *Libellus*.<sup>129</sup>

Several of the believers had composed tracts containing arguments and authorities to support the faith. When these were all examined, the one which was considered best and was most generally approved of was one by the blessed Dominic... The heretics too had written a tract was also to be submitted... A big fire was lit, and both the books were thrown in. The heretics' book burned up immediately, but the other one, the one written by the man of God, Dominic, not merely remained unharmed by the flames, it actually leaped a long way out of the fire in the sight of them all. They threw it in again, and it jumped out again. When the same thing happened a third time, this plainly proved both the truth of the faith and the holiness of the book's author.<sup>130</sup>

There are several strains evident in Dominic's first public miracle: the importance of textual exposition of doctrine; Dominic's extensive orthodox knowledge; the trial-by-fire as a means of legal decision-making; the miraculous “leaping” of the book and its being unharmed; and the triple-trial of the book itself. That a debate would be contested with texts tells us much about the cultural landscape of Languedoc in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is clear that there was a linguistic barrier, requiring texts to be composed and then

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<sup>128</sup> Problematically, the tradition surrounding the book-burning miracle and the debate itself has within it some discrepancies. Peter des Vaux-de-Cernay's *Historia Albigensis* records a nearly identical occurrence at Montreal. What increases the importance of that controversy is that nearly all other texts than Jordan's usually report (if they report the incident at all) as having taken place at Montreal rather than Fanjeaux. This, to me, seems a minor point: the location of the debate (so long as it is well within the lands dominated by the Cathar movement) is irrelevant and it is the miraculous resolution of a debate with heretics that made the incident important. Vicaire's discussion, though brief, is quite thorough and the meta-commentary in the endnotes are similarly rather informative.

Cf., Vicaire, *St. Dominic and his times*, ed. and trans. Pond, 104-5 & 472.

<sup>129</sup> Here it should be clear that while visions should be categorized as miracles, they are not “active” in the sense that they do not require human agency. Dominic's miracle during the debate at Fanjeaux required extensive agency by Dominic in the composition of text. The resultant miracle could not have occurred without that text, and therefore could not have occurred without Dominic's agency as a conduit for Divine power; thus, the miracle, as noted above, is by nature “active” in form, rather than “passive” as a miraculous vision might be.

<sup>130</sup> Lib., 24-5.

There is particular Biblical (both Old and New Testament) significance to this triple-testing of the book in the fire. That significance is noted below; suffice it here to note that the figures involved were no less than Jesus, Elijah and Peter.

(presumably) translated. Similarly informative is the notation that Dominic's doctrine "was considered best and was most generally approved",<sup>131</sup> ostensibly due to his extensive education. Thus the miracle reinforces the tendency in the text for the Dominican Revolution to be an intellectual one,<sup>132</sup> making the miracle not only confirm Dominic's sanctity (via the miracle) but also the quality of his education. The implication of the miracle seems to be that the text was so well written and so orthodox that failure of an ordeal of fire was impossible. The trial-by-fire itself is a well-known medieval juridical process: that this was applied not only to criminals but to doctrinal texts, however, is remarkable.<sup>133</sup> Additionally, it is clear that the punishment method for heretics plays a role in the miracle: the two texts themselves were thrown into the text; the orthodox text was saved by God, while the heretical one suffered the typical fate of heretics. Moreover, for the text to not only survive fire, but to actively "leap out" would have clearly connoted the text being "filled with the Spirit".<sup>134</sup> Repeating the trial to a

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<sup>131</sup> Lib., 24.

<sup>132</sup> The discussion of the importance of education to the *vita apostolica* will not be repeated here; additionally, the influence of St. Augustine, which will be discussed below, will not be given. In either case, one should refer to either section for additional commentary.

<sup>133</sup> It should also be noted that the ordeal method was falling out of favor in judicial practices in the period of Dominic's early activity. The insistence by the *clerici* against the trial-by-fire and trial-by-water seems to have been coupled with an increase in juridical processes. Dominic, however, was active in the Toulousain, a region where political and religious authority was notoriously diffuse. Thus, it seems possible that the trial-by-fire would still have been an acceptable method in the Toulousain. For more on the issue of the ordeal method and the rise of the *clerici*, cf. Moore, *The First European Revolution*, esp. 167-68.

<sup>134</sup> This is yet another curiously Gnostic moment in the text. For the text to not only be doctrinally orthodox, but to be so orthodox as to be actively holy presents serious theological concerns: if the text itself was holy, then the claims of Gnostic movements to any particular secret truth could be implicitly valid; to the same end, the neo-Platonism evident in early Christianity was similarly re-validated and the claims of the Church Father's authority would, therefore, rest on ground which was perilously close to the implication that they had access to a certain "secret knowledge" or at least a greater level of knowledge. To have such access through intense study brings the Dominicans close to the neo-Gnostic positions of the Cathar regarding the Lord's Prayer. It seems that at this point in the *Libellus* (at no point, in fact) Jordan is either not aware or not concerned about the preponderance of neo-Gnostic tendencies in the Order; this suggests one of two things: either (1) the Order of Preachers were not concerned with Gnosticism (suggesting an implicit cultural sanction) or (2) the Order's Gnosticism was accepting of a certain degree of Gnosticism due to their extensive education. In any case, this is yet another instance of quasi-Gnosticism in

third time had Biblical connotations: it was three times that Peter denied knowledge of Jesus,<sup>135</sup> and it was three times that the Israelites poured water over the wood of Elijah's altar.<sup>136</sup> While there certainly were other connotations, the Biblical concept of thrice-testing things seems most evident here. The miracle of the book has many issues wrapped up in it, but what is important is that it displays Dominic as an orthodox figure. Effectively, Dominic defends the faith, presents himself as saintly, displays his erudition and empowers his movement with an early and vital image of holiness...all at the same time. Jordan takes such careful note of it because he was aware that the inclusion of the miracle of the book was such a powerful image and would be crucial to the development of the Dominican Revolution in its later generations.

It is remarkable that Jordan records the second miracle in the *Libellus* as being performed by another of the brethren named Dominic. "This brother Dominic of whom we are speaking was a man of outstanding humility",<sup>137</sup> and it is clear that Jordan's emphasis is centered on that humility (his virtue is the obvious corollary). This other Dominic was the object of "a conspiracy against him...a prostitute, in short, was sent to him on the pretext of going to confession."<sup>138</sup> Here we have plainly a temptation at work, setting up a reveal of greater adherence (by an early Preacher) to the precepts of the *vita*

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the *Libellus*. I believe that the second option is more likely, and that Gnostic tendencies were accepted provided they did not interfere with doctrinal orthodoxy.

It should also be noted that while I see the debate's conclusion as being a quasi-trial-by-fire, it may in fact be in response to God's identity as "the Word". Because God, in both the Albigensian Cathar and Roman Catholic traditions, is immortal and unimpeachable and also "the Word", properly orthodox doctrinal texts would be analogous to the word and thus, when contested against those which were not orthodox, would prevail. As such, the survival of Dominic's text would seem to indicate that his was similarly filled with "the Word" and therefore the miraculous survival of the text itself would have been (by the Saint himself) expected.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew 26:34+75; Mark 13:30+72; Luke 22:34+61; John 13: 38

<sup>136</sup> 1 Kings 18:33-40.

<sup>137</sup> Lib., 49.

<sup>138</sup> Lib., 50.

*apostolica*. The prostitute claims to desire Dominic, who consents to meet her in secret: “[then] he went into his room and built two fires with only a narrow space between them. When the prostitute came in, he stretched himself out in between the two fires and bid her come to him... ‘Here is a suitable place for such a sin...he got up unharmed, triumphant over the material fire and the fire of lust.’”<sup>139</sup> The invocation of ordeal-by-fire imagery in two consecutive miracles is noteworthy; the importance of showing that the other Dominic was continent and pious was crucial. It was certainly important to Jordan that Dominic’s continence was reiterated and that his adherence to the Dominican *vita apostolic* reinforced. It is evident that Jordan is acutely aware that clerics, particularly during his day, were often not celibate as Pope St. Gregory I had originally required them to be. The problems of the contemporaneous clergy created a stereotype which needed active refutation; a purpose which the miracle of the “other Dominic” clearly serves. Thus, the story of the prostitute and the other Dominic reinforces the Dominican Revolution’s claim to piety and is still expressed in a traditional hagiographical manner.

Dominic seems to similarly have been blessed with visions at crucial junctures in the growth of the early Order. “He had a vision of a tall, beautiful tree, in whose branches a large number of birds were living. Then the tree was felled, and the birds which were sitting on it all took flight. Filled with the Spirit of God, brother Dominic realized that ...the Count de Montfort...was soon to meet his death.”<sup>140</sup> That Dominic was proven right in 1217 only added to his reputation for sanctity and improved the strength of his contacts within the established hierarchies at work early 12<sup>th</sup> century Languedoc. The use of visions by monastic founders is important to note; Dominic was not only a brilliant

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<sup>139</sup> Lib., 50.

<sup>140</sup> Lib., 46.

organizer but was empowered by the Holy Spirit. The corollary to the Holy Spirit's aiding Dominic was that God had clearly chosen the Dominicans as defenders of the faith and had predestined them for greatness among the holy orders.

In 1218, Dominic met with "Master Reginald, the dean of St. Aignan in Orleans", when Reginald had become "seriously ill".<sup>141</sup> Dominic was eager for the potential of recruiting such a prominent scholar for his Order and convinced Reginald "to enter the Order, so much so that he bound himself to it by vow."<sup>142</sup> Reginald received a feverish vision of the Virgin Mary, who "showed him the complete habit of the Order [of Preachers]".<sup>143</sup> After having that vision, Reginald "was cured immediately, and his whole body was restored to perfect health."<sup>144</sup> Reginald's recovery is remarkable, particularly given that the only prerequisite to the cure was his vow to enter the Order. This is made even more impressive because it was Dominic and the Virgin Mary<sup>145</sup> who were the two major lobbying forces for Reginald's health (and his subsequent admission into the Order). Reginald was not only allowed to enter the Order but blessed with so much success during his time of preaching in Bologna that "a new Elijah seemed to have arisen from among them."<sup>146</sup> For a new addition to the Order to have enjoyed such broad success required both a strict adherence to the *vita apostolica* and extensive knowledge from which to preach. Thus we see the virtue of the Order and their favor from God

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<sup>141</sup> Lib., 56.

<sup>142</sup> Lib., 56.

<sup>143</sup> Lib., 57.

<sup>144</sup> Lib., 57.

<sup>145</sup> It is particularly prudent to note here that both Dominic and Mary are often shown with lilies, and therefore were a sensible, if not incredible, combination of intercessors.

The Virgin Mary seems to have particular significance in the early Order, so much so that the tertiaries (having been organized in the 15<sup>th</sup> century) were dedicated to the Virgin. Jordan makes note of early Dominican devotion to the Virgin in the Encyclical (dealt with below).

<sup>146</sup> Lib., 58.

simultaneously presented in the *Libellus* by Jordan; both of these are crucial factors in the formation of a monastic institution and in traditional hagiography.

Bl. Jordan himself had a vision foretelling the death of Reginald.<sup>147</sup> This shows that the Order was not only blessed with one foundational figure (i.e. Dominic) but two (i.e. Jordan). It is clear that there was an important series of narrative elements within the *Libellus* which provided the early Order, small though it was, with guidance to further aid in its increase. Jordan's vision was further corroborated by a different vision by a person only mentioned as "somebody else".<sup>148</sup> By illustrating the piety of Dominic and the first Master General of his Order, Jordan made his *Libellus* an important display of holiness; giving Dominic a successor with comparable (although not necessarily equal) holiness was a common hagiographical trope and an important moment in the early history of the Dominican Revolution.<sup>149</sup>

Jordan's beloved college colleague Henry was blessed with a vision while he was still considering entering the Order. In that vision, he was presented at the judgment seat and was suddenly interrogated by an unknowable figure asking, "You there, tell us what you ever abandoned for the Lord?" Henry gleaned from that vision an acceptance of the necessity of evangelical poverty and austerity.<sup>150</sup> This vision seems to similarly reinforce the poverty, charity, and asceticism espoused by the early Order. Additionally, Henry's appearance to the "venerable lady" after his death makes the importance of the Order's members as spiritual guides very clear. That he prolonged this appearance and redirected

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<sup>147</sup> Lib., 65.

<sup>148</sup> Lib., 66.

<sup>149</sup> The legends of Sts. Maurus and Placid as successors to Benedict of Nursia suggest that the need of a monastic community to show continuity between its leadership. That Jordan shows such awareness tells us that he was familiar with, and prone to using, common hagiographical imagery.

<sup>150</sup> Lib., 73.

it was similarly crucial: the Order kept within strict and normal limitations on the interactions between members and those of the opposite sex. We can see the validity of that vision reinforced by the length of Jordan's retelling of the incident, comprising four chapters of the *Libellus*.<sup>151</sup> The potency of these several visions has been noted above, due to their importance to other facets of the *Libellus*' hagiographical motifs. The Dominican Revolution was affirming traditional piety, and a crucial element of that piety was an embodiment of the traditional gender dynamic.

Jordan reports no additional miracles in the *Libellus* prior to Dominic's death. Yet he does remark that "Master Dominic did on occasion perform dazzling miracles and acts of supernatural power."<sup>152</sup> This seems to be a contradictory statement when coupled with Jordan's "disclaimer statement" (quoted below) about Dominic's miracle-performing. The section which follows that statement details two miracles performed by Dominic; Jordan, prior to describing them, provides a disclaimer for the two miracles and makes it clear that he had researched Dominic's miracles and reported only the most credible ones. He says:

Many such have been reported to me, but I have not written them down because of discrepancies in the different accounts of them. If I were to give an uncertain account of what happened, it would only give the reader an unclear impression. However, I do want to mention some of these miracles, of which we have more definite knowledge.<sup>153</sup>

Jordan's criticism of the frequent misreporting (if not whole-cloth fabrication) of miracles is clear, and serves to add credibility (via his stated investigative method<sup>154</sup>) to the reports which follow, which, coincidentally, happen to be Dominic's most impressive

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<sup>151</sup> Lib., 82-85.

<sup>152</sup> Lib., 99.

<sup>153</sup> Lib., 99.

<sup>154</sup> Lib., 2.

miracles. Dominic proceeds to “reluctantly” raise the dead<sup>155</sup> nephew of a Cardinal, for which there were apparently many witnesses. On another occasion, Dominic and Brother Bertrand were traveling

when a great storm blew over their heads. The ground was already beginning to be flooded by the great downpour of rain, but Master Dominic drove back the waters before them by making the sign of the cross, so that, as they continued on their way...not a single drop of water touched them; not even the hem of their clothes got wet.<sup>156</sup>

That Dominic was not only protected from a flood, but was actually able (in a fashion reminiscent either of Jesus<sup>157</sup> or of Moses<sup>158</sup>) to drive back a storm suggests that his sanctity would act as the cornerstone of a new generation of religious establishment. The Dominican Revolution was not only founded around a reinvigorated *vita apostolica* but was also granted many miracles and other supernatural occurrences to affirm the Revolution's hagiographic normalcy.

The importance of the miraculous occurrences in the *Libellus* is that they serve to empower the subject with intense sanctity motifs. Jordan's purpose in recording the miracles was not to retell miracle stories to impress the reader but to impress upon his reader the character and sanctity of the early Order. As such, there is little in the miracles which Jordan ostensibly could not confirm with first-hand accounts. The holiness exhibited by the Order validated its privilege among religious orders and provided it with

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<sup>155</sup> Jordan qualifies the state of the boy as being “at best he was only half-alive, and perhaps he was already quite dead.” It is strange that Jordan would show skepticism as to whether the boy was dead or not, and this is perhaps evidence of a degree of popular skepticism. Nevertheless, the miracle is recorded in terms of resurrection and suggests Dominic's immense power and his closeness to God (particularly in that an resurrection miracle instantly connotes Christ's resurrection of Lazarus). It is additionally remarkable that, prior even to attempting to cure the young boy, Dominic must be coaxed to do so by one of the brothers. Lib., 100.

<sup>156</sup> Lib., 101.

<sup>157</sup> Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-5.

<sup>158</sup> Exodus 14:21-2.

a particular weapon to confound heretics; the miracles were an effective validation of the Preacher's mission and their progress in that mission. The sanctity exhibited by the early Order was consistent with hagiographical tradition; with the exception of the Burning Book miracle, most of the miraculous occurrences were fairly normal (although some were certainly instances of more uncommon miraculous phenomena). While the miracles may not have been particularly powerful, Jordan's approach to the *Libellus* as being a history of the early *ordo* makes their actual occurrence more likely, increasing the credibility of the historical account (to a medieval audience) and the texts value as a hagiographical narrative within its early 13<sup>th</sup> century context.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Goodich details the increased control and influence placed on Papal control of sanctity. Additionally, the role of Jordan's *Libellus* itself in the canonization effort made for Dominic seems to have been to bolster the Pope's efforts: "The pope's letter initiating proceedings suggested that Dominic's canonization was a foregone conclusion". Furthermore, Dominic's cult seems to have been quietly restrained by the early Order: "a Franciscan like Salimbene doubted the efficacy of miracles performed". Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: the Ideal of Sainthood in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1982), 29-47;147-55. Quotes from 148.

Dominic de Guzmán, the new St. Augustine of Hippo (?)

Hagiographical subjects' lives are modeled either on Jesus, or on previous saints (who themselves were usually modeled on the life of Jesus). To imitate Christ —*imitatio Christi*— was a frequent *topos*, reinforced with miracles, asceticism, knowledge of scripture, etc. It is clear that Christomimesis plays a vital role in the *Libellus*, both Dominic and the early brethren have moments reminiscent of the life of Christ; more interesting, however, is not the traditional application of the *imitatio* motifs, but of a new sort of *imitatio*, an *imitatio Sancti Augustini*. “But this erudite and bookish [realignment of scholarly communities] was itself born of and nourished by a whole view of the universe and of the evolution of society.”<sup>160</sup> The Dominican's utilization of extensive education coupled with the prowess and practice of preaching made them formidable allies of established ecclesiastical officials (and at times rivals due to their success), as discussed above.

Andrew Jotischky, in his study of the Carmelite Mendicant heritage, notes that “It is curious, perhaps that early Dominican writers did not make more of the Augustinian heritage; Dominic, after all, was a canon regular, and the relationship between the founder and his mentor, Diego of Osma, ought to have suggested rich echoes from the past.”<sup>161</sup> It seems clear to me that Jordan of Saxony *did* make a measured attempt to highlight moments from the Order's early history those moments that suggested the influence of Augustine on the Order and on Dominic in particular. That Dominic's particular brand of neo-orthodox Christian practice connoted the influence (this is perhaps the more precise term) of Augustine of Hippo is clear; both Dominic and

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<sup>160</sup> Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. Taylor and Little, 203.

<sup>161</sup> Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity, Mendicants and their Past in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 282.

Augustine were formidable preachers and intellectuals;<sup>162</sup> Dominic, as he is portrayed by Jordan, is actively molded on St. Augustine, infusing the bishop's qualities into the canon from Caleruega.<sup>163</sup> The *Libellus*' narrative on this motif is not only limited to Dominic's influence by St. Augustine but also describes this trend amongst the early brethren. Jordan's method in this regard is fairly limited: he describes Dominic's enthusiasm for education and for textual engagement; he details his debates; he marks Dominic's choice of the *Rule of St. Augustine* as being based on Augustine's own excellence rather than simply on the requirements of Lateran IV; and he emphasizes Dominic's preaching activities. For the brethren, Jordan is more subtle, presenting only one overt emphasis on Augustine: Jordan and Henry's conversion to the Order of Preachers. Additionally, there is substantial evidence of parallelism between the *Rule of St. Augustine*, in its Dominican incarnation, and the *Libellus*' examples of holiness within the Dominican Revolution.

Dominic's education (and its associated imagery) plays a vital role in the *Libellus*.<sup>164</sup> The importance of the imagery, as discussed above, is to inculcate the educational imagery as part of the important features of the early Dominican Revolution; Dominic's own education is clearly modeled on that of St. Augustine. Dominic's liberal arts education takes place at one of the thriving centers of learning in Spain, as Augustine

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<sup>162</sup> It would be an exercise in futility to catalogue the extensive literature concerning St. Augustine; Peter Brown's biography of Augustine of Hippo remains the standard for biographies of the bishop-saint. Cf. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, a biography*, (New York: Dorset Press, 1967).

<sup>163</sup> There are two possible explanations available: either, (1) Dominic already possessed such qualities and they were apparent to those with whom he had frequent interaction; or (2) having become aware of Augustine's example, Dominic actively molded himself to follow that example. It seems likely that there was a concerted effort by Jordan of Saxony to highlight those qualities which his audience would have recognized as being similar to those which Augustine had possessed and embodied.

On the influence of Augustine on the Canon Regular movement in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the importance of the *Rule* as a method of tapping Augustine's influence and claiming him as an ideological founder of the Order of Preachers, cf. Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, 281-3.

<sup>164</sup> A discussion of that motif will not be repeated here; analysis of the education *topos* can be found above, p. 26-31.

had done at North African Carthage,<sup>165</sup> at Palencia: “When he thought he had learned enough of the arts, he abandoned them and fled to the study of theology, as if he was afraid to waste his limited time on less fruitful study. He began to develop a passionate appetite for God’s words, finding them ‘sweeter than honey to his mouth’.”<sup>166</sup> While Augustine certainly did not embrace Christianity at the conclusion of his studies, he did search for a system of thought from which to derive meaning, most notably beginning his search for Wisdom. This is the point of parallel between Augustine and Dominic’s early life, Augustine’s youthful philandering notwithstanding. Similarly, Dominic’s conversion to more devout practice and increased study mirrors Augustine’s own conversion to the priesthood and subsequent appointment as bishop of Hippo.<sup>167</sup>

Augustine’s career as bishop was marked by his activities in defense of the established orthodoxy, and we similarly see Dominic contesting points of theology at many points in the *Libellus*. He debates a heretical hostel-keeper<sup>168</sup> and the Fanjeaux debate is a potent instance recalling the debates at the Council of Carthage where

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<sup>165</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick, “World’s Classics” paperback ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35-51.

While Augustine’s education at Carthage was not centered around theology, his search for wisdom at a high (what today would be considered post-graduate) level did explore topics of meaning similar to those which Dominic most certainly explored at Palencia. The importance of their higher education makes certain elements of the two men’s lives as highly educated individuals; Dominic’s education did not contain the “cauldron of illicit loves” which Augustine’s had, but the advanced nature of their studies (and the manner which their careers in their later years proceeded) made the two men similar within the literary community.

<sup>166</sup> Lib., 6.

Cf. Augustine’s appetite for learning as a young man, and his subsequent attraction to Manichaeism and to Philosophy as an intellectual exercise. Brown summarizes the young Augustine’s motivation in such pursuits aptly in his sections ‘Education’, “Wisdom”, and ‘Manichaeism’: Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, a biography*, (New York: University of California Press, 1967), 35-60.

<sup>167</sup> Compare the description of the *Libellus* and Diego’s search and seizure of promising young canons with Brown’s translation of Augustine’s sermon-based recounting of his experience of being pressed into service as a bishop. Lib., 4.; Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 138-9.

In both cases, it seems that the men were pressed into ecclesiastical service: Augustine was coaxed to become a bishop and Diego actively sought out Dominic’s inclusion into pastoral work.

<sup>168</sup> Lib., 15.

Augustine had likewise debated the most formidable heretics of his day.<sup>169</sup> That Dominic engaged in debates over theological matters is not surprising: the rising middle class was becoming increasingly aware of issues of doctrinal nuance and beginning to formulate their own opinions based upon their own readings of Scripture and the Fathers.<sup>170</sup> What is important with regard to the *Libellus* is that Dominic did not debate fellow students or churchmen but heretics. It is clear that Dominic took Augustine's experience at councils as the model for such *disputationes*.<sup>171</sup> Dominic composes tracts for the council and confronts the heretics on an intellectual, rather than polemical level. Thus, both Dominic and Augustine are easily defined as "defenders of orthodoxy" and as "persecutors of heresy", crucial elements to their respective reputations.

Perhaps more overt in its use of Augustinian imagery is Jordan's emphasis on the *Rule of St. Augustine*. The *Rule*'s importance to the Gregorian Revolution and the 12<sup>th</sup> century has been well documented.<sup>172</sup> Additionally, the use of the *Rule of St. Augustine* was innately tendentious: Dominic's assumption of the *Rule* was intended to utilize a

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<sup>169</sup> Lib., 24-5.; Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 233ff.

<sup>170</sup> "The early appearance of learned heresy has for us only one point to make, that the growth and advancement of Christianity, its continued ability to be adapted to new peoples and new times, involved as a necessary corollary the possibility of divergence of belief and practice within it."

Moore, *Origins of European Dissent*, 3.

It is important to note that these trends often occurred in places where ecclesiastical oversight was sorely lacking, e.g. the Langedoc.

<sup>171</sup> Compare, for example, Augustine's composition of the *City of God* to combat the Donatist heresy and Dominic's composition of the unnamed tract to combat the Cathar as mentioned in chapter 24 of the *Libellus*.

For the role of the *disputationes* as part of the religious landscape in the twelfth century, cf. Constable, *Reformation*, 128-9.

<sup>172</sup> A complete bibliography would serve little purpose. Little's discussion of the *Rule*'s use by the canon regular reform movement is excellent and is a great place to begin and the bibliography for that section is an excellent guide to further reading.

Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy*, 99ff.

Jotischky's discussion, too, is peppered with discussion of the *Rule*'s use in the "other Friars".

Jotischky, *The Other Friars*.

*Rule* which fit within Lateran IV's requirement for the use of an existing monastic rule<sup>173</sup> Similarly, his choice of the *Rule of St. Augustine* brought with it reform-minded habits with an Church Father for its author. It was not a difficult decision for Dominic. He had lived in accordance with the *Rule* since his days as a canon at Osma under Diego.<sup>174</sup> Dominic's additions to the *Rule* seem to augment modes of asceticism for that text<sup>175</sup> by adding the particularly stringent restrictions which Dominic had himself observed for the majority of his religious life: "in addition, [the Preachers] adopted certain stricter observances in connection with diet, fasting, bedding and woolen clothing."<sup>176</sup> The Dominican Revolution's adoption of Augustine as their model was obvious: "the preachers-to-be quickly chose the *Rule of St. Augustine*, who was himself an excellent preacher".<sup>177</sup>

Augustine's influence on Dominic was potent, a fact which Jordan was careful to inculcate into the *Libellus*. Dominic was well-educated as Augustine had been; he was fearlessly anti-heretical, which marked Augustine out from amongst his contemporaries. Jordan similarly mentions the *Rule of St. Augustine* explicitly and is sure to note its presence wheresoever it could easily be noted; additionally he points out Dominic's particular devotion to the task of preaching. The *Rule of St. Augustine* and the *Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers* played an additional role in influencing Jordan's *Libellus*; the *Rule*'s adoption by the Preachers made it necessary for Jordan to

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<sup>173</sup>"It was forbidden to create 'new orders'— more correctly, to 'invent' new forms of orders. Whoever wanted to become a monk (*ad religionem converti*) had to accept an approved rule, and whoever wanted to found a house had to place it under the rule and custom of one of the approved orders."

Grundmann, *Religious movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Rowan, 60.

<sup>174</sup> Lib., 4.

<sup>175</sup> See above for a more thorough discussion of that asceticism, p. 14-6.

<sup>176</sup> Lib., 42.

<sup>177</sup> Lib., 42.

provide that the movement be seen to be in strict adherence to its precepts. The ethic which inspired the *Constitutions* was clearly found in Augustine's *Rule*. The ideals of the *Constitutions* were likewise infused into the text of the *Libellus* where they were clearly seen in the early history of the Order.

The *Constitutions'* creation has been established as being dated from 1216, fully 17 years before the most likely dating for the *Libellus*. It is not surprising, then, that the influence of the *Constitutions* should be so consistent. Dominic's education (rather, Jordan's narration of it) is clearly influenced by the twenty-eighth through thirty-first constitutions. The *Constitutions* created a complex educational framework designed to replicate Dominic's intellectual rigor among members of the Order. Even the amount of time which Dominic spent at school studying theology ("he spent four years in these sacred studies"<sup>178</sup>) corresponds with the *Constitutions'* prohibition against Preachers becoming "a public doctor unless he has studied and heard lectures in theology for at least four years".<sup>179</sup> Jordan and Henry were similarly advanced students of theology prior to their enrollment in the Order.<sup>180</sup> The correlation between the educational requirements of the *Constitutions* and the *Libellus* is clearly purposed to make Dominic's model both the reality and the rule.

Dominic's manner of prayer also seems to have been directly inspired by Colossians 4:2 as quoted in the *Rule*. St. Paul writes, "Devote yourselves to prayer,

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<sup>178</sup> Lib., 7.

<sup>179</sup> "The Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers", in *Saint Dominic BIOGRAPHICAL DOCUMENTS*, ed. and trans. Francis C. Lehner, (Washington, DC: Thomist Press, 1964), <http://www.domcentral.org/trad/domdocs/0011.htm>, Part I, XXVIII-XXXI. 1 January 2010.

<sup>180</sup> Lib., 68.

keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.”<sup>181</sup> Paul was, in time, echoed by the opening of the second chapter of the *Rule of St. Augustine*: “Be assiduous in prayer, and at the hours and times appointed.”<sup>182</sup> Dominic’s manner of prayer is described in detail in chapter thirteen of the *Libellus* which iterates that Dominic followed St. Paul and the *Rule* both in the spirit of Paul’s teachings and literally as well. “[Dominic] bore [sinners’ and afflicted persons’] distress in the inmost shrine of his compassion, and the warm sympathy he felt for them in his heart spilled over in the tears which flowed from his eyes.”<sup>183</sup> This suggests that Jordan’s narrative was both based on Dominic’s actual tendency and the influences which certainly helped to form that tendency.

The prohibition against accepting “possessions or revenues” being not-yet-existent has a consistent place in the *Libellus*, providing an apologetic for Dominic’s early financial success. We read a particularly blunt version of that apologetic in chapter thirty-seven of the *Libellus*:

In addition, brother Dominic held the church of Fanjeaux and certain other properties, from which he could provide for the needs of himself and his associates... they yet observing the constitution that was later promulgated about not accepting properties and not keeping properties which had been accepted previously.<sup>184</sup>

That prohibition surfaces elsewhere in the *Libellus*, often in places where Dominic’s financial success are mentioned (notably with ecclesiastical and secular leaders as the

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<sup>181</sup> Colossians 4:2, NSRV.

<sup>182</sup> *Rule*, II.1.

<sup>183</sup> *Lib.*, 12.

<sup>184</sup> *Lib.*, 37.

benefactors).<sup>185</sup> The presence of the *Constitutions* makes the *Libellus*' narrative able to note the largesse of Dominic's benefactors without being ashamed of that success.

In the seventy-eighth chapter of the *Libellus*, Jordan details Brother Henry's virtues. Henry's virtues dovetail neatly with the ideals of the *Rule of St. Augustine* and the *Constitutions*. Henry "was prompt to obey, solidly patient, gentle and calm...expansive in charity";<sup>186</sup> obedience was explicitly commanded by the *Rule*.<sup>187</sup> Patience was of fundamental importance under the *Constitutions*.<sup>188</sup> Charity too was tantamount to the Mendicant ethic and similarly made a major prerequisite for preaching-candidates by the *Constitutions*.<sup>189</sup> Chastity was similarly a major component of Henry's sanctity; Preachers were forbidden to "fix [their] gaze upon any woman."<sup>190</sup> The description of Henry's "fitness" for the Order was clearly influenced by the *Rule* and the *Constitutions* and served to reinforce the magnitude of character found in the early history of the Order.

The eighty-sixth, eighty-seventh, and eighty-eighth chapters of the *Libellus* all described the General Chapters, placing the formative moments of the *Constitutions* within the *Libellus* and describing the most important issues. "The [first] Chapter decreed that [Preachers] should thereafter no longer hold properties or revenues, and that they should give up those that they already held in the district round Toulouse."<sup>191</sup> At the 1221

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<sup>185</sup> A discussion of patronage by the above-mentioned officials was discussed above from pages 23-30. That discussion will not be repeated here, but its importance with respect to this section can not be understated. The *Constitutions*' prohibitions are clearly evidenced in these apologetic phrases, without which the Preachers' claim to apostolic virtue and Mendicant monasticism would be null.

<sup>186</sup> Lib., 78.

<sup>187</sup> Rule, VII.1.

<sup>188</sup> "The Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers", I.22.iv.

<sup>189</sup> "The Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers", II.20.

<sup>190</sup> Rule, IV.4.

<sup>191</sup> Lib., 87.

Chapter in Bologna, Blessed Jordan himself was made “the first provincial [prior] of Lombardy, although [he] had only been in the Order one year”.<sup>192</sup> Jordan’s appointment is all the more interesting given that priors were required to have been in the Order for at least one year.<sup>193</sup> The use of the Chapters adds increasing historical credibility to the *Libellus* and empowers it with the early *Constitutions*, all of which were based on the ethic of the *Rule of St. Augustine*.

On preaching, we can see Jordan’s intention: Dominic’s preaching was reasoned, academic, *and* charismatic. We see concrete witness of Dominic’s eloquence in his conversion of the hostel-keeper in Toulouse where we hear that Dominic “argued powerfully and passionately ...and at last brought him back to the faith”.<sup>194</sup> We similarly hear of Dominic’s commitment to his pastoral work, a task at which Augustine was supposedly greatly adept;<sup>195</sup> “Dominic was already applying himself with all his might to the job of preaching...in this way, about ten years passed...and all this time brother Dominic remained more or less alone”.<sup>196</sup> Dominic’s devotion passes into a saintly realm in this regard: not only did he commit himself to constant preaching but he did so with very limited support mechanisms. The influence of the *Constitutions* is clear, they read on the issue of preaching: “[Preachers] shall neither receive nor carry with them any gold, silver, money or gifts, but only food, clothing, books, and other necessary objects.”<sup>197</sup> In that regard, we can see Jordan making parallel Dominic and Augustine’s preaching and

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<sup>192</sup> Lib., 88.

<sup>193</sup> “The Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers”, II. 24.

<sup>194</sup> Lib., 15.

<sup>195</sup> Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 138-45.

<sup>196</sup> Lib., 37.

<sup>197</sup> “The Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers”, II.32.

causing Dominic's preaching to be only further augmented by his solitude and lack of consistent, reliable support structures.

The influence of Augustine was not simply a model for the movement's founder but it is clear that his life was an important influence on the narrative concerning the early brethren as well. (In this regard, Jordan is more restrained, and so it seems that there is a measured attempt to provide only the most striking parallel.) Henry and Jordan's conversion is remarkably similar to the events preceding that famous scene near the end of book VII of Augustine's *Confessions*: two friends are proceeding in an academic lifestyle,<sup>198</sup> are met by an elder man of considerable theological training,<sup>199</sup> are stirred by the elder man to consider adopting a more religious life,<sup>200</sup> find direction in a text by randomly pointing to it,<sup>201</sup> and soon thereafter convert to a more religious life.<sup>202</sup> Henry and Jordan were theology students at the University of Paris, which echoed Augustine's activities at Milan. They were inspired by Reginald, in the same way as Augustine was stirred by Ponticianus. Henry opened Isaiah and pointed to a passage, as Augustine had pointed to Romans. After the episode, Henry and Jordan professed their intentions to convert to a more religious life as Augustine (and Alypius) had done to St. Monica. Summarily, it is clear that the conversion experience *narrative* of Jordan and Henry was modeled closely on the function of St. Augustine's conversion. (I am not so cynical as to suggest that the account was fabricated or in any major way altered by Jordan to suggest a more complete parallel to Augustine's account of his conversion. Rather, it seems likely

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<sup>198</sup> Lib., 67-8.; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Chadwick, 139-41.

<sup>199</sup> Lib., 69.; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Chadwick, 142-4.

<sup>200</sup> Lib., 70.; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Chadwick, 145-51.

<sup>201</sup> Lib., 70.; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Chadwick, 153.

For Jordan and Henry this text was Isaiah and for Augustine it was St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

<sup>202</sup> Lib., 75.; Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. Chadwick, 153-4ff.

that Jordan understood this parallel from his own reflection. He, therefore, endeavored to illustrate the parallels he saw as already being inherent in the experience of each of the events.)

It is quite clear that Jordan of Saxony was intent on marking Augustine's influence in the *Libellus* as often as would be both beneficial and verisimilar. Accordingly, Augustine's influence on Dominic and the early Order of Preachers seems profound: Dominic, on many instances, followed in Augustine's footsteps; he based his new *ordo* around the *Rule of St. Augustine*; Jordan and Henry had "reenacted" the which Augustine and Alypius had experienced in 386. The *Libellus* makes it clear that Augustine was a major source of inspiration for the Preachers, providing the movement with a renowned patron/mentor/model, simultaneously bolstering their claims to a new *vita apostolica* and a more orthodox lifestyle. The *Constitutions* were modeled on the ethic prescribed by the *Rule of St. Augustine*, the *Rule* was filled with Augustine's own ethic. The *Rule* and *Constitutions* served to color the *Libellus* with the Augustinian methodology, making Dominic into a figure strongly similar to St. Augustine. This importance of the *Libellus'* Augustinian influence is to suggest the piety of Dominic was comparable with St. Augustine and that the tradition which he founded was similarly important.

## Prayer, Martyrdom and Prophecy

Mendicant monasticism was a monasticism different in nuance: it was similar in its advocacy of orthodox belief, but operated under a new modality of religious vocation. It was fundamentally traditionalist in its expressions of piety. The most regular expressions of piety were prayer, prophecy and martyrdom. For the Preachers movement, the same expressions meant a demonstration of orthodoxy and as such it became crucial that Jordan's *Libellus* expressed the Dominicans adherence to traditional spiritual norms. The Dominican Revolution, as presented in the *Libellus*, was a reinvigorated form of traditional orthodoxy. It brought prayer, prophecy and martyrdom themes to the fore, reemphasizing the traditionalist character of the early movement.

Dominic's piety is expressed early in the *Libellus*; his piety is augmented by his manner of prayer: "It was his very frequent practice to spend the night at his prayers... During these prayers, he sometimes felt such groaning in his heart... even at a distance people could hear him roaring and crying."<sup>203</sup> While one might cynically read this passage as Dominic "wanting" to be heard and noticed praying, Jordan's intent is to show that Dominic's pious compassion and heartfelt prayer were so extraordinary that others could not help but take note. Jordan supplements his description of Dominic's early ways of prayer by noting that:

He had a special prayer which he often made to God, that God would grant him true charity, which would be effective in caring for and winning the salvation of men; he thought he would only really be a member of Christ's Body when he could spend himself utterly with all his strength in the winning of souls, just as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour [*sic*] of us all, gave himself up entirely for our salvation.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Lib., 13.

<sup>204</sup> Lib., 13.

We can conclude that for Dominic and his early followers, prayer was an important supplement to works and practice of charity.<sup>205</sup> That Dominic had a specific prayer for the practice of charity suggests that this was a virtue of paramount importance, a fact further evidenced by his acts of charity at Palencia.<sup>206</sup>

The growth of the Order, as Jordan narrates the Dominican dispersal of 1217, was directly a result of Dominic's planning. The dispersal of the Preachers was further made strong because Dominic "backed up everyone he sent out with his prayers".<sup>207</sup> This suggests that Dominic's interaction with the divine was potent; this fact is evidenced by the steady growth of the early Order. While Dominic's prayers may not themselves seem to display such power, Dominic's greatness was contextualized on his deathbed. Dominic "had no doubt that a crown of righteousness was stored up for him, whose possession would make him a far more powerful intercessor" on behalf of his Order.<sup>208</sup> Thus Dominic's prayers must have been potent for him to have rightly served as the Preacher's intercessor at Judgment seat. These prayers also clearly were powerful during his life "and the power of the Lord was with [the Preachers] to give them increase".<sup>209</sup> Thus for the Dominican Revolution prayer had been an essential ingredient in the Mendicant ethic

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<sup>205</sup> Jordan's mention of Dominic's "special prayer" seems to connect a desire to practice personal charity and a plea for divine mercy for the poor.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Lib., 10.

Dominic's renunciation of much of his property while he was "a student at Palencia" in order to feed the poor and starving ("there was a severe famine throughout almost the whole of Spain") of Palencia tells us that early in his life he practiced religious charity. As such, it makes his practice of prayer a reinforcing effort for his practice of charity, as argued above.

<sup>207</sup> Lib., 62.

<sup>208</sup> Lib., 93.

<sup>209</sup> Lib., 62.

as practiced by the Dominicans; this is particularly clear when the movement itself had been stretched thin while “[Dominic] sent the brethren hither and thither”.<sup>210</sup>

Dominic’s prayers in the *Libellus* are aimed at either the increase of his ability to render good works or for the increase of the Preachers (from whom Dominic expected such works). Brother Henry’s, on the other hand, seems to have been intended for reflection:

after he had gone to matins in the church of our Lady, he stayed there until dawn, praying and beseeching the Lord’s mother to obtain for him the conversion of his heart to this vocation. As far as he could see, he was getting nowhere by his prayer because he could feel his heart as hard as ever. So he began to feel sorry for himself and made ready to go away, saying in his mind, ‘Now, O blessed Virgin, I can feel that you reject me. I have no part in the company of Christ’s poor.’<sup>211</sup>

Henry would be proven wrong by the events which followed later, and was given an additional vision, as discussed above.<sup>212</sup> Yet the importance of his praying was that he was actively seeking that which, as Jordan relates, he was not yet ready to accept. Henry had yet to actively choose Christian poverty as a *modus operandi*. His praying is directly followed by the vision sequence, effectively revealing that his prayers would be answered by God. It was not long afterward before Henry and Jordan would become novices in the Order, completing the prayer-answer-fulfillment cycle popular in hagiographical narrative. The importance of the Henry episode is that it affirms the role of the traditional monastic practice of contemplative prayer in a way that enhances the apparent piety of the early Revolution. Accordingly, the brief description of Henry (whilst in prayer) is an

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<sup>210</sup> Lib., 62.

<sup>211</sup> Lib., 72.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. the discussion of the vision in p. 49-50 for its importance as a miraculous occurrence.

instance of traditional hagiographic models being employed by Jordan to illustrate the holiness of the Preachers movement.

After relating Dominic's death, Jordan summarizes the saint's character, making particular note (two whole chapters) of his fervent mode of prayer. Not only noting that "nobody was more thoroughly dedicated to keeping vigil and prayer" but that he wept greatly "by night especially when he kept watch in his uniquely unwearying vigils."<sup>213</sup> Further still, Dominic maintained a "very frequent habit to spend the whole night in church...He used to pray and keep vigil at night to the very limit of what he could force his frail body to endure."<sup>214</sup> Not only was Dominic making certain that his prayers were constant, but committing himself to a form of "white martyrdom" in the process.<sup>215</sup> Dominic's holiness, as evidenced by the frequency and zeal of his prayer, was unquestionable; beyond reproach.

Dominic's method of prayer embodied a degree of white martyrdom in the process. While this is the last evidence of martyrdom playing a role in the *Libellus*, the examples preceding Dominic's death were of great importance in the Mendicant movement. Whereas the Friars Minor had their charismatic founder (complete with Christ-like stigmata), Dominic's movement was more interested in embodying a vocation which was itself a form of martyrdom. Rather than display signs of holiness on the body,

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<sup>213</sup> Lib., 105.

<sup>214</sup> Lib., 106.

<sup>215</sup> Maureen A. Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), 467-479.; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 76-82.

Tilley's article focuses more on the creation of the martyr phenomenon and its changing in the early period of legalized Christianity. While it does not discuss in depth the importance of the "white martyr" phenomenon in the period in question, her analysis of the formation of the martyr's mindset and the modality created for white martyrs is exceptional. Brown's discussion gives the backdrop for the emergence of "white martyrdom" as a phenomenon in early Christianity which served to empower those concerned with an interaction with things holy.

the Dominican mission was to embody holiness; the *Libellus*' use of martyr-language bears witness to the Preacher's tendency toward white martyrdom and their acceptance of martyrdom as a worthy end to Christian life in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Dominic's harrying by heretics in the Toulousain provoked a response from the saint, particularly after they had threatened him with death:

[The heretics] were astonished by his imperturbable firmness and asked him, 'Do you have no fear of death? What would you have done if we had taken you prisoner?' He said, 'I should have asked you not to strike me down quickly...but to prolong my martyrdom...a slow martyrdom like that would win me a much finer crown.'<sup>216</sup>

The potency of Dominic's language in the situation serves to empower the saint with a traditional mode of sanctity; "red martyrdom" was comparatively less common (in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century) than its "white" counterpart and as such gave Dominic's approach an added hermeneutical complexity. It is fair to note that "white martyrdom" was not wholly limited to contemplative prayer but the interminability of Dominic's prayer made his vocation more evocative of martyr-imagery. Additionally, the behavior of Bertrand straddled the line between the two modes of martyrdom in that "he mortified his flesh savagely and had taken to heart in many ways the example of his master, Dominic".<sup>217</sup>

Similarly uncommon but nevertheless pronounced in the *Libellus* are images connoting prophecy and foresight. These images dovetail neatly into the thematic holiness common to hagiographical narrative. The imagery of prophecy creates a fundamental validation of holiness in the early Preachers. It is not surprising that the only explicit mention of prophecy regards Bishop Diego. As Dominic's mentor, Diego *must* (by hagiographical trope) have been holy to have brought about Dominic's conversion to

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<sup>216</sup> Lib., 34.

<sup>217</sup> Lib., 51.

monasticism and inspired him to follow a Mendicant ethic. Diego's prophecy ("that [the Albigensian heretics] would be punished by the full rigour of the secular arm"<sup>218</sup>) inculcates notions of holiness into the early history of the Preachers.

In sum, the motifs of prayer, martyrdom and prophecy, while not a major influence on the narrative of the *Libellus*, serve to enhance the reputation of holiness of the early Preachers movement. While they are minor motifs, the holiness of the Preachers movement is empowered by their presence; effectively, the movement is empowered by traditional examples of piety expressed in traditional modes. Summarily, prayer, martyrdom and prophecy tied the Preachers to the traditional examples of holiness common to the Christian tradition; the emphases on each factor can be found in the *Libellus*, suggesting that Bl. Jordan was well aware of the importance of hagiographical motifs and the Revolution's character.

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<sup>218</sup> Lib., 33.

## Conclusion(s)

As the first Master General of the Order of Friars Preachers and successor to St. Dominic, Bl. Jordan of Saxony was in a unique position to shape the more conservative wing of the Mendicant monastic movement. The Dominican Revolution positioned itself as the conservative wing of the Mendicant movement; the Mendicant Friars were themselves reformers. It is obvious in hindsight that the Dominicans would not become as widespread or as famous as the Franciscans, but the Preachers were empowered by their history. Its foundation(s), as recorded by the *Libellus*, served guide the Order as it grew. The *Libellus de Principiis Ordinis Praedicatorum* was the chronicling of that formative period; it represents a crystallization of the attitudes of the early Preachers. The Dominican Revolution, with Bl. Jordan at its helm, was to become increasingly intellectual wing of Catholicism; this tradition was to be distilled from Jordan's history of the early Preachers.

Fundamentally, all of the concerns of the Preachers, from their apostolically-minded vocation to their appreciation of the influence of St. Augustine, were intentionally dealt with by Jordan. What results in the *Libellus* is a fusion of historical fact and hagiographical literary tropes; this creates a unique confluence of traditions; we find the Dominican tradition poised to defend orthodoxy and infused with all of the academic piety and intellectual fervor which the Dominican Revolution would tap from the heart of the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance and carry through to the modern age.<sup>219</sup> The *Libellus*, as the history of that Revolution, tapped the heart of the Dominican ethic so that

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<sup>219</sup> Simon Tugwell, "The Dominicans", in *The Study in Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold, SJ, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 297-8.

later generations of the Dominicans would not experience the same ethical shift which had plagued Cluny and Cîteaux.

The *Libellus*, while certainly being worthy of its prominence as a source for the period, should be considered as a powerful source to further understanding of the early Order of Preachers. We can see the early Preachers were a movement in stark reaction to the conditions of its age. The potential for understanding hagiography carries with it an implicit understanding of values; “for every action there is an equal but opposite reaction”, for every St. Francis there is a St. Dominic.

The Friars, both Minor and Preachers, represented two approaches to the radically changing climate at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance and the 13<sup>th</sup> century’s renewed concern for orthodoxy. We see, at the heart of the *Libellus*, an intellectual and radically conservative response to the upheaval of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and its social reality. The *Libellus* confronts not only the Christian but also the social religion of the European establishment which fomented the composition of the text. Effectively the text lays bare the human condition as it stood at the crossroads of one of Europe’s “First Revolution”.<sup>220</sup> For the radically orthodox and conservatively-inclined religious establishment, the Dominican Revolution was an answer to the problems of societal growth tied to a religion innately formed in first-century Palestine. The crystallization of Dominic’s 13<sup>th</sup> century answers to first century questions can be found in the *Libellus*;

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<sup>220</sup> The term used is that of R. I. Moore. Moore’s study of the period from 970-1215 evaluates the “social religion” discussed above. It is clear to me that the period’s upheaval qualifies for such a term (Renaissance and Reformation have been used by other scholars to describe similar periodizations). Additionally, Moore’s analysis makes plain the all-encompassing nature of the changes which Europe underwent in the period. One would be remiss to note that Dominic died only 6 years after the end of Moore’s period. For more background, cf. R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, 790-1215*.

the text presents the reader—trained in history or otherwise — with the consciousness of a movement which held its fingers to the pulse of Christendom.

“In the solitude of their studies modern historians can perhaps imagine their relationship with their subject matter...they shape it and it animates them.”<sup>221</sup> To be animated by the 13<sup>th</sup> century experience of Dominic and his followers is to understand their concerns; it is to replicate mentally the conditions which betray those concerns, and to come to grips with the task which lay before them. A pre-Lutheran “reformation” of Christendom was not in the works for Dominic, but a revitalization, a revolutionary *renovatio* of the essential truth of the living Gospel was within the grasp of the canon from Caleruega. It is that *renovatio* which fomented the Preachers movement and in which the composition of the *Libellus* took place. The text crystallized the attitudes of its age, lest its lessons be forgotten and the worst fears of elder Preachers be realized. Much as it is a source for a monumental period, the *Libellus* of Bl. Jordan of Saxony is a source for understanding the fundamental assumptions which underscored the bedrock of the Christian ethic. If Mendicant monasticism at its outset was revolutionary, the history of its more conservative wing was certainly in and of itself a history of a Dominican Revolution.

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<sup>221</sup> Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, ix.

## Appendix: The Encyclical addendum to the *Libellus*

It is noteworthy that Jordan, after having published the *Libellus*, would add to an already substantial document. We know that the text dates from between the translation of Dominic's relics (3 July 1234) and the beginning of Jordan's fatal return ship-voyage from Palestine (before 13 February 1237). Tugwell, in his published translation, heads the Encyclical as the "Appendix". I find this to be an oversight. By not labeling the Encyclical as an Encyclical, Tugwell's edition does not convey the separateness of the Encyclical which inherently would have marked out the early history of the Preachers. The text of the letter concerns Jordan's activities as prior of Lombardy (from 1220 to 1222). The result is a letter in which Jordan recalls activities which shaped his early activity in the Order and probably marked him out as an uniquely capable prior. Thus we can see the importance of the letter as testimony of Jordan's own fitness to lead. The happenings described in the letter are meant to bolster Jordan's credibility. In enhancing Jordan's credibility, the encyclical addendum to the *Libellus* serves to shore up any doubts in the minds of the reader that the early Dominican Revolution was a collection of very holy men; each member of the Order (so it would seem) was pious and granted great abilities by God.

Jordan's addition to the *Libellus* is concerned primarily with a demonic possession of one of the early Preachers. Fundamentally, the Encyclical quenches a thirst for the supernatural and empowers Jordan himself with a greater reputation for sanctity. That reputation in turn gives the *Libellus* increased credibility because of the increased spiritual potency of its author. The modes embodied by the Encyclical provided a test for the early brethren; this test was simultaneously intellectually and theologically taxing for

the early brethren. Fundamentally, the Encyclical fits into the framework of Jordan's *Libellus* while empowering of the Preachers within a framework which would empower the first Master General with increased authority on matters supernatural.

In Lombardy, while Jordan was prior, one of the brethren "called Bernard, who was plagued by a most savage demon, to such an extent that he was driven day and night by horrible seizures of madness".<sup>222</sup> The logical corollary to a demonic possession usually explores previous misdeeds, yet the contrapositive is stated. The first chapter<sup>223</sup> of the Encyclical ends with the qualified statement: "No doubt God's merciful providence had sent them this trial to exercise his servants' patience."<sup>224</sup> What is notable about Bernard's conduct concerning the demon is that he sought the possession by the demon, about which Jordan notes:

he was so distressed by his sins that he often expressed a desire for the Lord to inflict some kind of purification on him. The thought frequently came to his mind to wonder whether he would be willing to accept the torment of demonic possession. His soul recoiled from this suggestion...on one occasion when he was particularly upset about his sins, he gave an interior assent to having his body given over to a demon for the sake of his own purification.<sup>225</sup>

The demonic possession, granted "by God's permission"<sup>226</sup>, was a thing contrary to the established order of monastic Orders; the opportunity created by the possession of Bernard was seized by Bl. Jordan himself when the possession had become well-known to the brethren of the province.

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<sup>222</sup> Lib., 110.

<sup>223</sup> As with the rest of the *Libellus*, the chapter/paragraph numberings of the Encyclical were formed by H.C. Scheeben. Thus, while it may be an arbitrary distinction, Jordan's sequencing makes the importance of his qualification all the more important.

<sup>224</sup> Lib., 111.

<sup>225</sup> Lib., 111.

<sup>226</sup> Lib., 111.

The demon possessed not only supernatural abilities but, reminiscent of the “learned heresies” which had flouted orthodoxy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, “uttered...the most profound opinions about the bible[sic], which would have been considered impressive even if they had been spoken by St. Augustine.”<sup>227</sup> This, for a Preacher, presented a real and consummate threat; the Friars Preachers were intellectuals and to be threatened with a member gifted with demonic (called, in no uncertain terms, “Augustinian”) eloquence and learning; Jordan isolates the demon as the source of these opinions, noting “the possessed friar was no theologian and was almost entirely ignorant about the Bible”.<sup>228</sup> The perversion of the Preacher-ethic was a major concern to Jordan. The even demon itself offered Jordan a deal: in exchange for Jordan to “[give] up preaching, [the Demon] would altogether stop tempting the brethren.”<sup>229</sup> Effectively, the demon was offering a reprieve from temptation for the removal of the Preacher’s authority figure in Lombardy. The demon’s proposal would have destroyed the ability of the Preachers to bring about greater orthodoxy in greater Lombardy.

Jordan’s reaction was a rebuke of the demon. “Whether you like it or not,” thundered Jordan, “your temptations will enable the brethren to make progress and will strengthen them in the life of grace, because the life of man on earth is precisely temptation.”<sup>230</sup> Jordan warned his fellow Preachers and reminded them that their mission was not solely against known agents of infernal potency, “not against flesh and blood but against principalities and the rulers of this present darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and they out to learn from unflagging persistence of their enemies never to

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<sup>227</sup> Lib., 112.

<sup>228</sup> Lib., 112.

<sup>229</sup> Lib., 113.

<sup>230</sup> Lib., 113.

allow their own fervor to diminish or to their spirits decline into weariness and unconcern.”<sup>231</sup> The importance of Jordan’s admonishment of the demon places (perhaps re-places) the very persons whose patronage the Preachers had initially cultivated.

Jordan’s reproach of the demon was complicated by the demon. The demon perverted usual tropes of holiness; of particular note was the perversion of the “odor of sanctity”<sup>232</sup> which Dominic himself had exhibited. “No sooner had [the demon] spoken [to Jordan] than he filled air with the stench of sulphur[*sic*], hoping that this succession of smells would obscure the falsity of the original fragrance.”<sup>233</sup> The demon “did the same thing [to Jordan]”.<sup>234</sup> Jordan suspected that the demon was the source and “prayed to the Lord to show [him][reprieve] by his grace...from then on I had no hesitation in recognizing the whole thing as nothing but a fraud of the enemy’s.”<sup>235</sup>

Jordan’s solvency on the subject of Bernard’s possession had been manifestly Dominican: there was an intellectual recognition, an appeal to God, and an invocation of the divine. The recognition of Bernard’s temptation would free him from the grip of the demon; so great was the impact of Bernard’s demonic possession that it “prompted [the Preachers] for the first time to sing the *Salve Regina* after Compline at Bologna...finally the same devout and beneficial practice was adopted throughout the whole Order.”<sup>236</sup>

The Mariological devotion which the Preachers adopted was therefore sourced to a formative moment in the history of the Order, giving the Mary-cult the power of

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<sup>231</sup> Lib., 114.

<sup>232</sup> Lib., 5.

<sup>233</sup> Lib., 116.

<sup>234</sup> Lib., 117.

<sup>235</sup> Lib., 118.

<sup>236</sup> Lib., 120.

precedent as traceable (albeit indirectly) to the *Libellus*.<sup>237</sup> Jordan, on the issue of the Mary-cult, noted in closing to the Encyclical: “The memory of [Bernard’s demonic possession] ought to be preserved, so that when the brethren read of it, they will be inspired to even greater devotion in their praises of the Virgin.”<sup>238</sup> This suggests the increased awareness of the growth of the cult of the Virgin Mary during the formative periods of the Order and that Jordan took pains to ensure that that growth was legitimated by previous practice and devout activities. The Encyclical’s importance, thus, is twofold: Jordan is given increased authority (having aided the expulsion of a demon) and the cult of the Virgin was given prominence within the early history of the Order. The Encyclical shows Jordan to be a traditional hagiographic figure by his contest against a demon. In this manner, Jordan reinforces the image of the Preachers as the conservative element of the Mendicant movement.

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<sup>237</sup> The Cistercians were also dedicated to the cult of the Virgin Mary. Jordan seems to use this episode to increase the validity of the Preachers devotion to the Virgin.

<sup>238</sup> Lib., 220.

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