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Prof. Edelgard E. DuBruck
29451 Halsted Road, Apt. 141
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⁶⁴ [signs of death {which} give indications of divine indignation.]

⁶⁵ All references are to Alain Chartier, *Le Livre de l'Espérance*, texte établi par François Rouy (Paris: Champion, 1989).

⁶⁶ [a man lost, his face blanched, his mind disturbed, and his blood pulsing through his body.]

⁶⁷ [the final blow of a mortal frenzy / in great hatred of my life and desire for death.]

⁶⁸ [When Nature . . . began to tremble / and bristle against the terrible fear of death . . . / that through her shaking and struggling / she woke up Understanding.]

⁶⁹ For a useful summary of this distinction and its grounding in scholastic theology, see Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968): 296–98.

⁷⁰ Attwood (note 4 above) stresses “the interplay between detachment and identification on the part of the narrator-figure and his counterpart, ‘*Entendement*,’” 213. She particularly emphasizes the drama of *Entendement*’s recognizing the suicidal behavior of the “je” narrator, enmeshed in melancholy. When *Entendement* finally takes responsibility for this marginal self, the “je” is “subsumed into the character of *Entendement*: 214.

⁷¹ [But in my greatest moment of need, your {Hope’s} power cannot but console my woe, as I have been, since your departure, as if in a grave; and by your approaching me, my sensibility resurges, *from the shadow of death into the clear light of life*. O you indeed appear to have been born in a gracious place, from a life-giving fountain! Because without you the life of man is like an image of death, and like a body without a soul, a life without living, and death without dying.]

⁷² [For I loyally affirm that the motivation of this work comes more from a compassion for public need than the presumption of understanding and for the profit of good exhortation rather than the reproof of another person.]

University of Montana

“*Nudus nudum Christum sequi*”: *The Franciscans and Differing Interpretations of Male Nakedness in Fifteenth-Century Italy*

Franco Mormando

In the year 1420, a small band of Franciscan friars was arrested in Venice by the *Signori di Notte* [Lords of the Night], one of the special magistracies responsible for policing and prosecuting serious crime. The four friars were charged with violation of the Most Serene Republic’s law against sodomy; what had they done to provoke such a charge? At the time of their arrest, the friars were parading naked through the streets, bearing crosses in their hands and leading a large procession of the faithful in a public exercise of pious devotion.¹ Since the grave charge of sodomy was involved, the case was transferred to a higher — in fact, the highest — judicial body, “the most powerful and feared” Council of Ten. This group was traditionally responsible for judging conspiracy and treason, but earlier in that century, had been given jurisdiction concerning sodomy prosecution as well.²

The Venetian government did not view the clerical status of the defendants as grounds for immediate suspension of doubt and examined the case with due attention: indeed, given the well-documented and vast amount of sodomitic activity among the local clergy, often hidden and protected by church authorities themselves, the judges knew better than automatically to assume innocence among such a population of males.³ In the end, however, the Franciscans won their reprieve from the Ten, who arrived at the conclusion that “the said friars are monks of good reputation and their deeds were not carried out with any evil intention” (*ibid.*, 5). However, to the superiors of these friars a stern warning was issued by the Council, who was “greatly displeased” by this naked procession: the unclothed gang of four, though acquitted, was to be given some form of in-house punishment as an object lesson to them and their fellow Franciscans.

This strange item from the chronicles of the Venetian republic raises important questions. First, what exactly were those friars doing parading around naked? What spiritual justification was there for such a bold display of human flesh? (The men involved were loyal, orthodox sons of the church, not crazed, antinomian rebels.) Secondly, how could the Republic of Venice construe these actions of pious sons of Saint Francis as representative of sodomy? It was Guido Ruggiero who discovered this criminal episode in the Venetian State Archives and cited the incident in his *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crimes and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* as further illustration of the crescendo of sodomy fear paranoia that had taken hold of the government of

Venice beginning sometime around the turn of the century. Ruggiero does not investigate the cause of this increase of homophobia (for the focus of his forensic study is, instead, on legal texts and criminal cases), nor does he explore the motivation of the Franciscan friar-felons. About the latter question of motivation, the brief surviving archival document says nothing.⁴ For his part, Ruggiero simply says, in passing, that the Franciscans' naked public display was done as a "demonstration of Franciscan poverty" in emulation of their founder's "moral display of shedding the world by his shedding his clothes" (140).

This 1420 Venetian incident merits our attention. The curious event causes us to reflect upon a heretofore misunderstood dimension of Franciscan spirituality and devotional practice: what inappropriate nakedness or disrobing suggest to the beholder within medieval culture. With respect to Francis of Assisi and his earliest followers, the idea of nakedness, whether manifested through actual public practice or conceived of as a spiritual metaphor, became regularly acknowledged in scholarly literature. Nudity became, in fact, a defining characteristic of Franciscanism, as established by St. Francis and promulgated through his first spiritual children.⁵ As we shall see, the public disrobing undertaken by the "Poverello" of Assisi and his company was probably meant to be a literal — that is, completely naked, or what contemporaries considered "naked" — enactment of the ancient Christian ascetic adage coined by Saint Jerome (c.347–419/20) that one should be "Naked to follow the naked Christ" (*Nudus nudum Christum sequi* [or *sequere*]). Thus far, there has been no sustained, thorough discussion of the phenomenon alluded to and no investigation of its having become a public practice beyond the first decades of the thirteenth century. In fact, until my scholarly probing into this 1420 Venetian case and that of another early fifteenth-c. episode to be described later in this article, there has been no evidence to document the practice's survival among orthodox Friars Minor or Third Order associates beyond the 1200s, this despite scholarly generalizations based upon the commonplace that "denudation" is "a typical trait of Franciscanism."⁶ This article will respond to this dearth of polemical discussion and pay heed to the problems of Franciscan male "nakedness" as practiced in the fifteenth century.

What the 1420 case would suggest is that the pious display of "nudity" continued beyond the early decades of the order into the 1400s yet was not practiced by spiritual eccentrics, but instead by rank-and-file friars with the accompaniment of the (clothed) laity as a pre-meditated exercise.⁷ In fact, the ill-fated experience of the Venetian friars reveals that in early fifteenth-c. Italy, a dramatic change had occurred in the hermeneutics of male nakedness so that, as Ruggiero remarks, an innocent (albeit out-of-the-ordinary) manifestation of piety came to be seen as an alarming civil felony.⁸ The result seems to have

been the extinction of that practice, for no further examples of its performance have thus far come to light. Although, to be sure, in medieval and later western society, public nakedness normally became a carefully guarded taboo, certain displays of male denuding could be and were tolerated under the rubric of piety and penitence. In fifteenth-c. Italy, the Venetian evidence would suggest that this tolerance seems to have come to an end.

The principal cause of this ambivalence toward male nakedness was homophobia, a marked rise in fearful awareness and ever more violent intolerance of sodomitic activity in Europe, as practiced during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, a phenomenon documented by the studies of John Boswell, Romano Canosa, David Greenberg, Guido Ruggiero, Michael Rocke, and the author of the present study.⁹ As the title of Canosa's study labels sodomy, this particular sexual behavior was perceived as *la grande paura*, "the great fear," of Quattrocento Italy, having become the dreaded occurrence of that time and place in history, attributable, in significant part, to preaching campaigns waged by members of the same Franciscan order whose influence, especially in Italy, on the public and private lives of the masses, had been enormous since the order's (of Friars Minor) founding in the early thirteenth century. The Franciscan popular preacher who was the most active, best documented, and most exemplary agent in the transformation of the public's perception of homosexual practices was the Observant reformer Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), the "voice most eagerly listened to" and "perhaps the most influential religious force" in early Quattrocento Italy, "the golden age of Franciscan preaching."¹⁰ Ironically, Bernardino, in his youth, had also been the prime mover behind the public display of Franciscan bodies mentioned earlier, an enactment motivated by the dictum that one should be "Naked to follow the naked Christ." However, before we turn to Bernardino and the 1400s, a brief survey of the history of this ascetic mandate, before and after the rise of the order of Francis of Assisi, is necessary.

The Origins and Early History of the Nakedness Adage

It is to the Latin Church Father Saint Jerome (331–420 A.D.) that we owe the origins and initial popularity of the adage *Nudus nudum Christum sequi*.¹¹ In four of his letters Jerome encourages his correspondents to lead a Christ-like life of poverty, humility, and renunciation of the unholy pursuits and distractions of the world and the ego, and, in illuminating this point, offers the provocative image of a man stripping himself naked to follow the "naked Christ" or the "naked cross."¹² The scriptural reference here evokes the image of the crucified Jesus who probably died completely naked on the cross, as was a Roman custom for such executions.¹³ Also expressly associated with the adage in Jerome and in subsequent ascetic literature are Jesus' words to the rich young man in Matthew 19: 21 (paralleled in the other synoptic Gospels): "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.”

Read for both spiritual content and rhetorical form, Jerome's letters had a wide and constant audience throughout the thousand-year span of the Middle Ages and beyond, as well as Jerome's adage *Nudus nudum Christum sequi*, which received the attention of Christian ascetics and other spiritual writers as an admonition exemplifying Christian life through the *imitatio Christi*.¹⁴ Although the adage makes appearances in earlier literature, the period of its true ascendancy coincides with the High Middle Ages. Beginning in the late eleventh century, we find the slogan increasingly appropriated — along with its almost inevitable companion title *pauperes Christi* — not only by somewhat marginalized evangelical laymen and women of both ortho- and heterodox tendency but also by monastic orders such as the Premonstratensians and the Cistercians. The famous *pauperes Christi* of the High Middle Ages were, of course, those of Lyon, Peter Valdes (or Waldo), and the Waldensians. The notoriety of the latter has led some scholars in the past to believe that the title *pauperes Christi* and Jerome's adage were the property, above all, of the suspect, marginalized elements of medieval society. However, the extensive “usage” inventories amassed over the past three decades by Bernards, Châtillon, Constable, and Grégoire now make it clear that this application is not the case: even the unquestionably orthodox Christians appropriated the adage, in ready and untroubled fashion, as a metaphor: their spiritual lives should be “pure” like bodily nakedness.¹⁵

Franciscan Spirituality and Nakedness

Until the early thirteenth century, whenever Jerome's adage was invoked, those implementing the dictum seemed content to use the image of nakedness as a metaphor, wherein nakedness (of even — or especially — the wealthy) is borne out through one's wearing rustic clothing and adopting a frugal lifestyle. The Waldensians, to cite just one example, are described by Walter Map in his *De nugis curialium* (c.1181–93) as follows: “These have nowhere a fixed abode but wander about by two and two, barefooted, clad in sheepskins, possessing nothing, ‘having all things in common’ like the apostles, naked following the naked Christ.”¹⁶ With the arrival of Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), the charismatic founder of the Order of Friars Minor, along with many other elements of Christian devotional life, Jerome's adage received new life and meaning during the rapid diffusion of Franciscan piety and asceticism in western Europe. Although Francis did not make the precept the slogan of his new order nor, it would seem, even quote it in his writings, he did much to revivify its popularity. He did so through displaying the attention-drawing example of his idiosyncratic behavior and by making radical poverty the prime requirement for salvation.

This revival of the adage *Nudus nudum Christum sequi* begins with one of the most memorable and often illustrated scenes of the “romance” of the life of the “Poverello di Assisi,” known as his *renunciation*. Francis's renunciation refers to that pivotal moment in his early life when, in the presence of the bishop of Assisi, a large group of townsfolk, and, most significantly, his father, the young Francis stripped himself completely naked, handing his clothes back to his father as a sign of his complete severance of all ties to his earthly family and the world. In St. Bonaventure's official biography of Francis, the *Legenda maior* [Major Legend], the Seraphic Doctor (1221–74) describes the scene:

[Francis's] carnal father attempted afterwards to induce that son of grace, by now stripped of all money, to appear before the bishop of the city in order to make him renounce, in the bishop's hands, all claim to his paternal inheritance and return all that he had received from his father. The true lover of poverty readily agreed to this proposal. Having arrived at the presence of the bishop, he wasted no time and showed no hesitation; neither waiting for nor uttering a word, he immediately took off all his clothes and gave them back to his father. It was discovered at that point that this man of God underneath his fine clothes had been wearing a hairshirt against his flesh. Then, inebriated with a marvelous fervor of spirit, he took off his underwear as well and stripped himself completely naked in the sight of all, saying to his father: “Until now I called you my father on earth; from now on, I can say with certainty: ‘Our Father who art in heaven.’”¹⁷

We have no indication from Francis himself as to which text or spiritual counsel specifically inspired this gesture of disrobing; perhaps one of the Gospel passages about renunciation and denial of self and family was the germinal idea for Francis's first Rule of 1221, the so-called *Regula non bullata*. One such text is Matthew 16: 24, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me,” which, according to Bonaventure's just-cited *Legenda maior* (ch. I, par. 5), figured prominently in Francis's own conversion. However, given the privileged status of Jerome's adage within the Christian ascetic tradition, it is inconceivable that this patristic counsel had not already been present (at least unconsciously) in Francis's psyche at the moment of his renunciation. Although nowhere in his extant writings does Francis allude to Jerome's phrase, nonetheless, as we shall see below, distinct echoes thereof appear many times in the large body of early Francis hagiography, often placed in the mouth of the saint himself. As for the symbolic import of the renunciation scene, it is Bonaventure — second founder of the Franciscan order and perhaps the most influential of Francis's biographers — who explicitly associates the Italian saint's gesture with Jerome's adage. The description of the renunciation we have just read,

concludes, in fact, with the comment: "Therefore [Francis] the servant of the most high King was left naked in order that he might follow his naked crucified Lord" (*Legenda maior*, ch. II, par. 4).¹⁸

Before turning to further episodes in Francis's life, we must pause to note that the recommended following of "the naked crucified Christ" was integral to the larger and quintessential characteristics of Franciscan spirituality: a heartfelt contemplation of the poor, and of the suffering humanity of Jesus.¹⁹ We find these features not only in Franciscan preaching, but also in secular poetry (e.g., Iacopone da Todi's *lauda*, "Donna de Paradiso"), in art (e.g., the poignant Gothic crucifixes adorning Franciscan churches),²⁰ and in new forms of popular devotions such as the Christmas *presepio* and the "Stations of the Cross," both of which became enduring Franciscan contributions to popular piety centering on a more humanized image of Jesus. At his birth and his death, Jesus was poor, humble, and suffering, and the symbol of this image was his nakedness. This is how we find him increasingly depicted — naked, with his genitals all but exposed under diaphanous loinclothes — in the Franciscan-inspired art of the later Middle Ages, as Leo Steinberg has observed:

The timing of these developments [i.e., the "move toward total nudity" in the depiction of Christ], beginning around 1260, suggests that they came in response to the spread of Franciscan piety, with its stress on Christ's human nature, its vow of poverty in imitation of Christ, and its slogan, "naked to follow the naked Christ" (*nudus sequi nudum Christum*).²¹

However, to return to Francis and the naked Christ, we discover in the founding father's biography many other episodes involving nakedness, either his own or that of others, brought about for greater mortification of the flesh and suppression of the ego, as well as to achieve a more intense *imitatio Christi*. Francis, for example, once fought off an attack of lust by running naked in the snow, and, on another occasion, he ordered one of his friars, who had spoken harshly to a poor person, to strip naked and lie prostrate before the injured party, begging the latter's forgiveness. In yet a different instance, according to Francis's other biographer Thomas of Celano, in his *Vita secunda* [Second Life of Francis], the "Poverello" is quoted as saying: "a man of great learning, wanting to enter the Order, must give up in a certain sense even his scholarship, in order to offer himself naked to the arms of the Crucified One."

In the very popular (if fanciful) *Fioretti di San Francesco*, of the late Trecento, nakedness is involved in another of Francis's punishments of a disobedient friar (chap. 30): at one point the introverted, taciturn Brother Ruffino is ordered to go to Assisi and preach to the people "according to however the Spirit moves him." Ruffino protests and in turn Francis replies: "Since you have not obeyed immediately, I order you out of holy obedience that, with just your underpants, you go to Assisi, naked just as you were

born, and enter any church and, naked, preach to the people." Reproaching himself for the harsh order given to Ruffino, Francis shortly thereafter unclothed himself and joined his confrere to preach a passionate message of repentance to the people of Assisi. The shocked townspeople at first believed the friars to have gone insane from too much penance, but are soon reduced to tears of conversion by the eloquence of the sermon. Finally, to cite one more (famous) example at the very end of his life, the emaciated, nearly blind Francis has all his clothes removed and his body placed on the ground in order that he might die "naked on the naked earth."²²

After Francis's death, the metaphor of nakedness came quickly to be seen as emblematic of the entire Franciscan institute and spiritual program. Jacques de Vitry, cardinal, chronicler, and Francis's contemporary (1180–1240), writes in his *Historia occidentalis*:

This is the order of the true poor men of the Crucified One, this order of preachers whom we call Friars Minor. Truly lesser and more humble than all present-day religious in the habit they wear, in their poverty and contempt for the world. . . . [T]hey devote all their energies to the practice of the Gospel, not only the commandments but also the evangelical counsels, thus imitating, step by step, the apostolic life. Renouncing all property, renouncing themselves, and taking up their cross, naked, they follow the naked Christ.²³

We have already mentioned Bonaventure (1221–74) and his crucial role in the portrayal and interpretation of Francis and Franciscanism before the eyes of the Church and the European world. Minister General of the Order (1257–74) and eminent University of Paris doctor of theology, Bonaventure made wide use of Jerome's adage in his own writings, especially those (such as the *Apologia pauperum*) composed in response to the bitter war against the Mendicants waged by William of Saint Amour (1202–72) and his colleagues among the secular clergy at the University of Paris. (One of the main points of contention, as we know, was the issue of poverty.) Like Francis with his concrete, real-life example, so also Bonaventure by his writings played a great role in the promulgation of the adage and the general message of the Order of Friars Minor. As Châtillon explains:

The Seraphic Father [Bonaventure] found [in this formula] . . . the means to define in four strikingly expressive words the true nature of this ideal of poverty which had been, since the very start, that of Francis of Assisi and his first companions, and whose ultimate justification had to be found in the contemplation and imitation of the Crucified Christ.²⁴

However, despite Francis's alacritous propensity for shedding his own clothes — one can hardly refrain from raising the question of exhibitionism — the founding father never made nakedness or stripping a constitu-

tional part of the spirituality of his order. As far as the manner of dress of the Friars Minor is concerned, Chapter two of Francis's definitive rule for the order, the *Regula bullata*, states:

The friars who have already vowed obedience may have one tunic with a hood and those who wish may have another without a hood. Those who are forced by necessity may wear shoes. All the friars are to wear poor clothes, and they can use pieces of sackcloth and other material to mend them, with God's blessing.²⁵

Although there is no word in the Franciscan rule about the shedding of clothes as a pious practice, shortly after the death of Francis (1226), we begin to find among the spiritual sons and daughters of Francis some evidence that the saint's example and Bonaventure's word did not go unheeded. Iacopone of Todi (c.1230–1306), Margaret of Cortona (1247–97), and Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) at one point or another in their lives were all seized by the desire to give manifest expression of their identification with the poverty, humility, suffering, and humiliation of the Crucified Christ by displaying their own nakedness publicly, although some instances of their behavior may also be construed as illustrative of the "Fool for Christ" ideal.²⁶ Despite the scant attention that the leitmotif of nakedness received in historical documents and modern textbooks, one must presume that the motif had become common and socially acceptable enough, so that by 1420 an assemblage of laywomen and laymen in Venice could join four naked friars in a pious display of public devotion, as we saw at the beginning of this study. At the same time, however, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century in Italy, the social tolerance of nakedness, specifically male denudation, was undergoing a transformation that would ultimately lead to the clash of different interpretations evident in the same Venetian chronicle item.

The Young "Naked" Bernardino of Siena

One of the great "Pillars of the Observance," Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) has also been called the "third founder of the Franciscan Order," after Francis and Bonaventure.²⁷ For the power, eloquence, and effectiveness of his preaching, Bernardino was frequently called a "second Paul" as well; yet, in his own vocation, he strove to be a "second Francis"; the latter, in turn, was deemed (to quote the well-known Franciscan commonplace) an *alter Christus*, a "second Christ."²⁸ This characterization means — to arrive quickly at our specific subject of concern — that Bernardino likewise endeavored throughout his own life "to follow naked the naked Christ," a spiritual goal known explicitly from one of the early anonymous *vitae* of Bernardino, written shortly after the Saint's death, evidently by a Franciscan companion of the friar. Summarizing Bernardino's heroically virtuous life, the anonymous

contemporary tells us that "Naked, [Bernardino] followed the naked son of the Virgin, Jesus Christ, and rendered himself obedient until death."²⁹ So successful was Bernardino in this *imitatio Christi* that he was canonized as saint of the universal church, amidst great acclamation, in 1450 (only six years after his death), a rare occurrence even in the pre-modern centuries of ecclesiastical history.

That Bernardino of Siena, first of all, knew of Jerome's precept, there is no doubt. Although Bernardino quoted the slogan only twice in his Latin treatises (the so-called *sermones latini*)³⁰ and not at all, it would seem, in the *reportationes* of his vernacular sermons, Jerome was one of the preacher's most beloved and consulted *auctoritates*: Bernardino himself confessed in a public sermon that the elegantly written letters of Jerome first introduced him, as a youth, to the delights of sacred reading, weaning him away from the worldly "cheap thrills" provided by the secular poets. Bernardino repeatedly and enthusiastically recommended that his listeners read and study Jerome's letters to gain both spiritual edification and aesthetic pleasure.³¹

Second, as a Franciscan, Bernardino was, of course, thoroughly acquainted with the biography of his spiritual father Francis in all of its intimate and *naked* details, including the episode of the *renunciation* which Bernardino recounted to the people of Siena in the course of a 1427 sermon dedicated to "Saint Francis and his inflamed love and fervor."³² Furthermore, like Francis, Bernardino made contemplating the Crucified Christ a major component of his personal devotion. In fact, evocations of Christ naked on the cross became a commonplace image used in Bernardino's sermons, a circumstance to which biographies of the Sienese preacher attest. As one of the preacher's sermons made clear, Jesus died on the Cross "completely naked" [*totaliter nudus*], "naked as he came from the Virgin's womb" [*sicut nudus exiit de utero Virginis*], "without any covering at all" [*absque aliquo velamine*]. This nakedness, Bernardino explained, represented yet another element in the complete humiliation and unspeakable torment of Jesus' sacrificial death; the condition also is part of the pre-ordained symmetry of the Savior's life cycle, which opens in Bethlehem and closes on Golgotha not only in poverty but also in nakedness.³³

A true allegorical mind of the Middle Ages, Bernardino even supplies us with an explanation of the symbolic significance of Christ's nakedness on the cross. "Why was Jesus stripped naked as he approached death, what was there to see, what was being held out for our consideration?" Bernardino asks his audience. Jesus was stripped for three reasons, he replies: first, "in order that all might be [shown to have been] revealed to us, nothing concealed, except that which is beyond human understanding"; second, "that, just as he was shown to us naked in his body while he suffered, we might likewise contemplate him intuitively [*intuitive*] as the true God Himself in eternal glory, all veils having been removed"; and third, "that it might be

shown, furthermore, that no one arrives at a clear and naked vision of God in any other way than through the merit of [Jesus'] passion."³⁴

Given this theology and Bernardino's zealotry, it comes as no surprise to learn that one day in the early years of his vocation, the young friar's response to his contemplation of the naked Crucified Christ took on the form of a dramatic *imitatio Francisci*. That is to say, one day, after a session of prayer before the cross, Bernardino was seized with a desire to tear off his clothes and go marching off to the nearest town to edify and evangelize the populace, having persuaded some companions to join him in the nude ostentation of the naked Christ. The episode in question took place sometime between the years 1402 and 1405 while Bernardino was in residence at the Observant hermitage of *Il Colombaio* [The Dovecote] near Mount Amiata in Tuscany, where he had gone to live and study after his entrance into the order in nearby Siena. At the time, recognized for his outstanding piety and intelligence, the newly ordained Bernardino was, according to this hagiographer, already superior within his religious community:

Since Saint Bernardino was superior of this place he said to himself: "Oh, friar Bernardino, you are placed here to be an example to the others." Therefore, this soldier of Christ, who was by nature ruddy [*rubicondo*], handsome, and already greatly inflamed with the charity and passion of Christ, one day, rising from prayer during which he had thought again about that fact, burning with the love of the cross, one Friday morning, naked, he took a heavy cross and, carrying it on his shoulders, called twelve of the friars residing there, telling them: "Follow me, o dearest brothers."

All of them, in obedience, then stripped naked and followed him all the way to Seggiano [the nearest town] just outside the woods where the house of *Colombaio* is located. All inebriated with the spirit, they were shouting: "Mercy, mercy; penance, penance!" But the people of the town, seeing them, ran back to the city to report that the friars of *Il Colombaio* had all gone crazy. Then Saint Bernardino, with all the fervor of charity, began to preach about the mysteries of Christ's passion and the benefits of the Holy Cross, in such a way that the townspeople all were amazed and moved to tears, realizing that this act had come from the fervor of inflamed charity and not insanity. The friars returned to their convent, with the people all following behind in tears.³⁵

In this Bernardino account we can hear echoes of the already-examined episode from the life of his spiritual father, Francis, who, as we read in the *Fioretti* (ch. 30), one day, in a moment of evangelical fervor, burst into the town of Assisi, naked, to preach repentance to the population. After hearing the preaching of the friar, the town of Seggiano responded in the very same

way to Bernardino as did Assisi to Francis and his band: initial shock and pronouncements about the insanity of the friars gave way, amidst copious tears and shouts of praise, to pure spiritual edification and conversion. It is safe to assume that it was in fact this episode in the life of Francis that inspired Bernardino to "go and do likewise."³⁶ Thus, we have in the biography of the fifteenth-c. saint further attestation to a presumably enduring, but by scholars hitherto ignored, "tradition" within the Franciscan family of the literal enactment of Jerome's precept, a custom that, as we have seen, began dramatically with Francis of Assisi himself.

As a further (albeit unintended) gloss on his own youthful behavior here, the older Bernardino's commentary about the literal nakedness of another egregious ascetic saint, Mary Magdalene, is relevant and worth noting. In exile from the Holy Land after the death of Jesus, the Magdalene, according to medieval legend, lived her last thirty years in the solitary wilderness of southern France enduring the rigors of fasting and other penitential practices while in a complete state of what Bernardino calls *stupenda ebrietate*, intense spiritual intoxication. In this condition of what the preacher also describes as a "drunken oblivion," the Magdalene cared not the least for material comforts, including that of clothing. As Bernardino explains:

We all know that — since those who are completely intoxicated neither notice at all their pains and discomforts, nor know how to avoid or even pay attention to the dangers that surround them — [they] strip themselves naked with no sense of shame and sustain wounds without feeling any pain.³⁷

Presumably, at *Il Colombaio* that day of naked protestation, Bernardino had been, or believed himself to be, in a comparable state of "intoxication."

The Magdalene's life of mystical inebriation in southern France was a medieval fabrication; thus, we must question whether the Bernardinian experience of naked rapture at Seggiano was likewise the material of pure legend. Although the possibility cannot be ruled out entirely, the legendary connection is unlikely in this case. The Seggiano narrative quoted above in fact derived from the authoritative early sixteenth-c. chronicles of friar Dionisio Pulinari da Firenze, *Cronache dei Frati Minori della Provincia di Toscana*. The most elaborate version of the episode, Pulinari's account agrees in all important details with material offered in the earliest (though more laconic) sources of Bernardino's life. One of these is the *Vita edita per quemdam fratrem* (also known as the *Vita anonyma*) which Bollandist Van Ortrooy describes as a "personal work of a sincere contemporary and intimate friend of Bernardino's," who claims to have witnessed a substantial part of that about which he writes (although not the Seggiano episode).³⁸ The incident is also mentioned in a slightly later biographical sketch of the saint's life written at the end of the fifteenth century by another anonymous Sienese Franciscan, this

source called *Compendium vitae S. Bernardini auctore anonymo*.³⁹ Furthermore, the episode is included in Lucas Wadding's monumental, authoritative, and still indispensable *Annales Minorum*, a tapestry of Franciscan history written by the seventeenth-c. critical scholar and based largely on original sources.⁴⁰ Clearly, then — and that episode is the important point of this digressional review of the biographical sources — Bernardino's own confreres of the same era and those representing later generations had no difficulty believing in the veracity of such an incident and certainly showed no hesitation in celebrating the account as an expression of the young friar's Franciscan zeal for his apostolic mission.⁴¹

The Older Bernardino: A Change of Heart

The above-described scene at Seggiano, again, represents the young, melodramatic Bernardino at the very onset of his public life as a Franciscan; the episode was never repeated in the saint's subsequent years, nor does it find echo in any of his own sermons or writings either. (Nor have I thus far found analogous episodes in the lives of any other Franciscan after Bernardino.) Instead, the extant texts (dated 1424–44) on which we depend in order to know the preacher's mind on any topic and which all come from an older, more sober Bernardino, convey a different impression with regard to the subject of nakedness. While recommending to his listeners (or readers) the ardent practice of their faith, Bernardino never counsels actual disrobing in the manner of Francis's or his own; we never hear him advising his audience to effect a pious, symbolic display of public nakedness. As far as dress or undress is concerned, the only baring of the anatomy he explicitly recommends is that of the feet: one should go barefoot, not as an explicit *imitatio Christi*, but as an antidote to pride.

Not only does Bernardino not counsel that believers should undertake a literal imitation of the naked Christ, his every remark relating to the subject of nakedness in any form conveys a consistently negative, distrustful attitude toward the unclothed or even partially exposed human body. The inevitable cumulative effect of all these disparate public statements is to reinforce an association of nakedness with sin and evil. In this attitude, let us observe, Bernardino is in fact at one with earlier and contemporary moralists, for whom nakedness represented a fiercely maintained taboo — one, however, as we have seen, that could be breached with impunity in isolated pious cases, at least, that is, until 1420.⁴²

The specific “naked” dangers of which Bernardino speaks in his sermons and treatises are varied, centering around diverse topics, principally that of marriage; heresy and its sub-species, witchcraft; and, above all, the sin of sodomy. It was Bernardino's and his preaching confreres' campaign against sodomy that we have identified as a major catalyst in the transformation of

the public's perception and tolerance of male nakedness, a change that eventually caused the Venetian band of disrobed friars to be imprisoned in 1420. Although the sin of sodomy was conventionally referred to as “the unmentionable vice,” this reticence in speaking about such sexual acts is decidedly not the case with Bernardino the popular preacher. Mention it he does, and with such frequency, in-depth analysis, and abundance of concrete detail that the saint's discourses have been described as “perhaps the most extensive and vivid commentary on sodomy in late medieval Italy . . . by a single contemporary.”⁴³ It is ironic that one of the indirect and surely unintended consequences of Bernardino's vociferous, incessant anti-sodomy campaign was the casting of a sordid and shameful light onto what was in fact an ancient spiritual leitmotif and practice (*Nudus nudum Christum sequi*) and, to be sure, an infrequently practiced but by no means unorthodox part of his own Franciscan heritage.

In my study *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (see note 9) the reader will find a complete summary of Bernardino's preaching and public campaign against sodomy, as well as of the concrete legal results of that activity in the cities and towns visited by him. One detail of this campaign only briefly mentioned in my work and which deserves elaboration here is the automatic connection Bernardino teaches his audience to make between the baring of male flesh and the naked person's sodomitic intentions. For example, in his sermon to the Florentines in 1424, the saint says that one of sodomy's causes is a father or mother who exploits their son for financial and social gain. Parents attract the attention of potentially rich “benefactors,” the friar suggests, by dressing up their sons in enticing, flesh-revealing, effeminate, or otherwise stylish clothing. According to Bernardino's understanding of what we would today call homosexuality, let us note here that the masculine donning of feminine clothing, even without the exhibitor's submitting to sodomitic advances, is sufficient to transform an impressionable young boy into a sodomite.

Never one for engaging in abstract discourse, Bernardino gives vivid, explicit descriptions of such dress: for instance, he considers the “doublet that reaches only the navel [and] stockings with a little piece in front and one in the back, so that these garments show a lot of flesh for the sodomites.”⁴⁴ Parents, he states, “send them [their sons] out wearing see-through shirts, with little doublets that don't cover half their bodies, with flamboyant clothes and stockings slit up the legs, with braids in their hair.”⁴⁵ The results of this practice of wearing feminized apparel are boys “who have become girls . . . all dolled up like young maidens” [*giovani figliuoli doventati fanciulle . . . allichisati come donzelle*, B: p. 35]. In sum, says Bernardino, these boys “skimp on the cloth to feast on the flesh!” [*Fa caro di panni per fare divizia di carne!*

E: p. 43]. As Brundage points out, according to medieval thinking as revealed through social, historical, and literary documents:

[b]y its nature, sex was a greedy pleasure: just as a tiny spark can ignite a pile of dry wood, so the slightest sexual tingle could set off a burst of insatiable passion. Sexual moderation, if not impossible, was at least highly improbable and therein lay the peril of exposing oneself to any sort of titillation — [such] as the sight of an even partially naked person.⁴⁶

Bernardino, in truth, does not spend long periods of sermon-time emphasizing the link between male naked flesh and sodomy, but his message — repeated by other preachers both before and after him — evidently hit home with his audience, especially those portions of his listeners responsible for drafting civil legislation. Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that in 1420 in Venice (where Bernardino, along with many other like-minded Franciscan confreres, preached several times and had a great following) the earlier referenced display of naked male flesh was interpreted by local authorities as an infraction of the anti-sodomy laws, even though the intended purpose of the nudity was for the friars to engage in a public procession, an *imitatio Christi*.⁴⁷

As mentioned, there are other rubrics under which the preacher reinforces (if only obliquely) the same connection between public nakedness and grave moral-social danger: these injunctions appear in his tracts discussing marriage, witchcraft, and heresy (of which witchcraft was considered a species). Bernardino lived during those still unsettled years after the traumatizing Avignon exile of the papacy, the Great Schism of the West, and the revolts of Hus and Wycliff;⁴⁸ not surprisingly, alarm over heresy and its anarchistic consequences loom large in the entire corpus of the friar's sermons and treatises. Together with his ecclesiastical contemporaries, Bernardino considered heresy not only a sin, but a social-political danger as well, one that threatened the very existence of the social order, the supposed *respublica christiana*. Like most of the grave moral dangers to Christian society at the time — to arrive quickly at our point — heresy likewise involved aberrant sexuality and its connection with the sinful aspects of nakedness. Although Bernardino does not dwell on this small detail (the connection between heresy and sexual license), he does acknowledge and publicize this matter, however casually or indirectly, on many occasions in his sermons. For example, to the Sieneese in 1427, the friar tells the story (confirmed by a chronicler) of a strange heretical band of ingenuous souls who were arrested in the Italian town of Fermo, in the Marches not far from the Adriatic coast, for public nudity: under the leadership of a self-appointed prophet who had convinced these disciples that the cataclysmic disasters of the Apocalypse were about to be unleashed upon the world, the poor souls were journeying to Jerusalem in search of refuge, on foot (for the waters would part miraculously for them) and stark naked. Once Louis, the

lord of Fermo, was apprised of their presence in his dominion, however, he put an immediate stop to their pilgrimage.⁴⁹

Bernardino's allusion to the "humanity of Christ" calls for a brief digression. Although the friar does not explain his vague remark, he is here probably referring not only to Jerome's motto about the naked innocence of Jesus, but most likely also to the then-current artistic theme of the so-called *ostentatio genitalium*, a parallel to the more conventional pictorial leitmotif, the *ostentatio vulnerum* [display of his wounds]. As Leo Steinberg has made us aware once again in his landmark study *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion*, the unclothed genitals of the child Jesus were expressly and boldly depicted in art as a realistic visual reminder that the Savior was not only "true God" but also "true human."⁵⁰ Bernardino's passing remark here lends support to Steinberg's thesis, which, although having gained steady support since 1983, has been criticized for its lack of textual corroboration; the Bernardino passage, as far as I can determine, is in fact the first and only such supportive text. Unlike Bridget of Sweden's reference to Christ's genitals in her *Revelations* (recounting that in Bethlehem the shepherds made a point of verifying the male gender of the new-born Savior by examining his genitalia),⁵¹ Bernardino here confirms that it was Jesus' humanity (and not specifically the gender-marked distinction of his maleness) that caused attention to be paid to his exposed genitals in the visual arts. The saint's allusion reminds us that in popular parlance and within the imaginative context of those times, human genitals, whether male or female, were seen, synecdochically, as representative of one's *humanity*.

Ironically, it was because of the starkly realistic representations of the "true humanity" of Christ popularized in art during the later Middle Ages that the ancient pious practice of contemplating Christ on the cross ultimately became tainted with concerns about grave sin. Given that artists vividly depicted the complete or partial nakedness of the crucified Jesus, Bernardino makes sure to include a blunt warning in his treatise on spiritual discernment, *De inspirationibus*, about the dangers of an exceedingly sensual meditation on the Crucifixion. This attitude also, says the friar, can be an occasion for sin because, as he states, "I know of a person, who, while contemplating the humanity of Christ on the cross (it is shameful to say and horrendous just to imagine), sensually and foully polluted and defiled himself."⁵²

To close our digression and return to the theme of heresy and heretics, Bernardino's own suspicions about the association of heresy with nakedness find justification, outside the pages of the friar's sermons, in the existence of other documented (albeit obscure and somewhat peripheral) spiritualities of the Middle Ages, mindsets that equated nakedness with purity and practiced the former to achieve the latter. We see this equation, for example, during the preacher's own lifetime in the case of the Adamites of Bohemia (second

decade of the fifteenth century), a group perhaps associated with the heresy of the Free Spirit, who “went naked in order to symbolize their equivalence to Adam in his antelapsarian innocence.”⁵³ The Turlupins of fourteenth-c. France are an earlier case to consider, although even less is known about their identity and spirituality; the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* tells us that “nudism [also?] appears in western history with the *Turlupins*, a beghard-type group,” condemned by University of Paris chancellor Jean Gerson in one of his sermons.⁵⁴ The Turlupins (according to Cohn, a name popularly applied to a group which called itself, “The Society of the Poor”) met the same fate as Bernardino’s “Naked Band of Fermo,” as they were arrested with their leader in Paris (1372).⁵⁵ Their leader, by the way, was (to aggravate their breach of orthodoxy) a woman named Jeanne Dabenton. To cite a further example, Malcolm Lambert reports that (as part of a pope’s concern with antinomian heresy) in 1296, “Boniface VIII issued a bull against a sect that prayed in the nude.”⁵⁶ However, it is not clear under what spiritual rubric this anonymous thirteenth-c. cult (or the Turlupins later) shed their clothes in prayer. One questions whether we have in these cases a further literal enactment of Jerome’s adage, an attempted return to Adamic innocence, or some other spiritual impulse being acted out.

As for Bernardino’s own reports about heretics, it is true that we may not find nakedness as an explicit detail or a distinct practice in his descriptions and condemnations of the *modus operandi* of heretics apart from the aforementioned “Naked Band of Fermo.” Yet, we do encounter in the friar’s narratives extensive references to aberrant sexual activity. For example, in one of the preacher’s *exempla*, he gives a graphic account of the deviant behavior of an unnamed northern Italian heretical sect; this group gathered regularly for nocturnal orgies which involved both heterosexual and homosexual activity (R: p. 793). It is reasonable to assume in this Italian case that where there is aberrant sexuality, there is also nakedness; and herein once again we find Bernardino reinforcing the link between the unclothed human body and heresy.

These contemporary licentious groups, the saint explains in the same sermon, are descendants of the “Nicolaitans” mentioned in the biblical book of Revelation (2: 6). The infamous *Nicolaitans* were a group organized by Nicolaus of Antioch (mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles 6: 5, or so says the friar, deriving his information or, rather, [mis]information, from the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* by Matthew of Sweden, confessor of the already-cited fourteenth-c. visionary, Saint Bridget [R, 792]). Bernardino goes on to describe in detail the behavior of the Nicolaitans, their principal activity being sexual, specifically, wife-swapping. The dissolution of the marriage bond through sexual licence and the fomenting of wifely insurrection is seen in another contemporary group, a band of penitential Third Order Dominicans organized by and herded from town to town by the apocalyptic Dominican

preacher Manfredi da VerCELLI.⁵⁷ In these cases the saint strongly intimates that where there is heterodoxy, there is most likely to be sexual deviance; and, again, where there is sexual deviance, nakedness results.

Nudity is similarly associated with witchcraft, which medieval theology categorized as a species of heresy and implies not only nakedness, but also sexual deviance.⁵⁸ Both in the treatises of the learned and in the imagination of the masses, the relationship between the devil and his witch-devotee was believed to involve supernatural favors given to the witch-person in exchange for both evil-doing and sexual disorder. A sexual union between the devil and his female slave became a standard belief of witch folklore, which was mentioned repeatedly in trial records and in such notable treatises as the *Malleus maleficarum* (c.1486). Bernardino of Siena does not explicitly discuss the sexual aspect of being a witch in his extensive anti-witchcraft writings, but this feature is nonetheless hinted at quite discreetly.⁵⁹ We see this theme represented clearly in the longest *exemplum* of the assumed Bernardino corpus, the tale of “the Godmother of Lucca,” a story which the preacher introduces as “a true, concrete episode” of recent occurrence.⁶⁰ In this story, the friar reminds his audience of the sexual nature of the relationship between witch and devil through providing two concrete details: when the woman sets out one night to conjure up the Devil, she does so, the friar specifies, with her hair immodestly unbound and, even more indecently, presents herself as completely undressed.⁶¹ The preacher does not comment on these details, but the effect on the audience was surely that of their deducing a further connection between nakedness and moral danger or heterodoxy.

The final topic under which many of Bernardino’s references to nakedness are found is that of marriage and sexual comportment therein. One prominent example may be located in Sermon 21 of the Siena 1427 cycle, in which Bernardino delivers this graphic admonition to the wives of his hometown:

Look at me: do you see this eye? It was not made for marriage. How does the eye make a mess of marriage? Every time [your husband] wants to see [your] shameful parts, it is a most grave and mortal sin. What you are permitted to touch, you are not permitted to see. . . . O woman, never consent [to your husband’s request to see you naked]: it is better to die than to let yourself be seen [naked].⁶²

Elsewhere, in the preacher’s advice to young widows we discover another statement against nakedness that reinforces the equation of undress with sin or an inducement toward sin. Young widows — who have tasted the pleasures of the flesh and now must do without — Bernardino says without qualifying, should sleep completely clothed; this state will prevent the onslaught of lust:

O young woman, how your blood boils: you’re so used to being with your husband, to eating well and to sleeping well. . . . I want

to teach you how to remove those things that will make you fall into sin. . . . Go to sleep with your clothes on. . . . If you were to accustom yourself to sleeping fully clothed, I promise you that this is the best mouthful you have ever tasted!⁶³

When we carefully consider the medieval belief about the irrationally insatiable, often uncontrollable, nature of sexual impulse and pleasure and its ready excitation in the presence of the merest titillation, we are not surprised by Bernardino's emphatic counsels against nakedness, though we might today deem some of the referenced behaviors innocuous. Added to Bernardino's advice was a disquieting notice about a growing threat to society: the sin of sodomy, a sin that, like many others, could be ignited by any male glancing at another man's naked flesh.⁶⁴ Hence, we discern the gravity of Bernardino's vociferous campaign against this sin and consequently the import of many new laws enacted by Venice as well as other cities and towns of fifteenth-c. Italy, inspired by him and his preaching confreres.⁶⁵ Therefore, we likewise contemplate the unfortunate end of those poor, naked, and unsuspecting Franciscans of Venice whose procession in 1420 led them to feel penance of a different sort through their consequential visit to the gloomy prisons of the Most Serene Republic under the charge of public sodomy. Times had indeed changed since the days of Francis of Assisi.

Notes

¹ See Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 141; I paraphrase here Ruggiero's summary of court documents in the Archivio di Stato di Venice. Regarding the precise nature of these men's nakedness, Ruggiero notes:

It has been suggested that references to nudity in such processions do not refer to total nudity, but rather men naked to the waist or covered by loinclothes. Significantly, in this case where any type of clothing would have made the matter less serious, the Ten [Council of Ten] referred to them simply as nude" (196, n. 136).

Indeed, in some of the evidences of "nakedness" cited below (such as that of friar Ruffino whom Francis of Assisi orders to preach, "naked, with just your underpants") the adjective *naked*, in medieval usage, sometimes simply means *barechested* (Richard C. Trexler, *Naked Before the Father: The Renunciation of Francis of Assisi* [New York and Bern: P. Lang, 1989]: 43, n. 78), or substantially undressed so as to constitute indecent exposure. However, this definition is not always true, and total nakedness is indeed intended, as Ruggiero suggests was the case in the Venetian episode he recounts. In the end, the occasional indeterminability of the adjectives *naked* or *nude* does not change the point I wish to make in this study: what is ultimately important is the fact that, clearly, in every case, even a partial uncovering of their bodies on the part of the individuals here involved represented a radical departure from the norm, an unusual, serious, and shocking breach of social mores, in the eyes of these transgressors' contemporaries.

² Ruggiero (n. 1 above): 5.

³ Ruggiero, 142–44.

⁴ In fact, all it does tell us is what I have recounted here, paraphrased from *Boundaries of Eros* (personal communication from Prof. Ruggiero).

⁵ See, for example, the most recent discussion of the topic with ample bibliography: Alessandro Vettori's *Poets of Divine Love: Franciscan Mystical Poetry of the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004): 3–13.

⁶ Vettori (n. 5 above: 12) expresses agreement with George T. Peck's generalization, *The Fool of God, Jacopone da Todi* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1980): 52.

⁷ The present study represents not only a footnote to the history of Franciscan spirituality but also to Margaret Miles's landmark study *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (New York: Vintage, 1989): on page 63, Miles reports that while one encounters many written texts testifying that, indeed, "[i]n ascetic practice, nakedness became a metaphor for divestment from the cares and entanglements of secular life"; however, "[a]ctual ascetic nakedness is more difficult to document . . . I have looked in vain for historical accounts of practices of nakedness and for descriptions of what nakedness was thought to achieve." In her search, Miles overlooked the various medieval heretical groups (mentioned later in my study) who practiced spiritual nakedness and, more importantly, among the orthodox, she ignored the Franciscans and this spiritual performance of the order.

⁸ Ruggiero, 140. With respect to terminology, I follow Kenneth Clark's useful distinction between the words nakedness and nudity, as does Miles in *Carnal Knowing*:

In short, "to be naked is to be deprived of our clothes and the word implies some of the embarrassment which most of us feel in that condition." The word "nude," on the other hand, connotes no such image of a "huddled, defenseless body, but of a balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body re-formed."

(Miles, *Carnal Knowing*, 13, quoting Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* [London: John Murray, 1956]: 1).

⁹ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Romano Canosa, *Storia di una grande paura: la sodomia a Firenze e a Venezia nel Quattrocento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991); David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros* (see note 1 above); Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

¹⁰ The three quotations are respectively from Ernest H. Wilkins, *A History of Italian Literature*, rev. by Thomas G. Bergin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974): 133; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. Frank L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983): 163; and Lazaro Iriarte, *Franciscan History: The Three Orders of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Patricia Ross (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982): 127. All citations from Bernardino's sermons and treatises are to the following editions with their respective abbreviations: OOH: *Opera omnia*, 3 vols., ed. Jean De la Haye (Venice: Poletti, 1745); cited by volume, page, and column: e.g., OOH, III: 217b; OOQ: *Opera omnia*, 9 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1950–65); A, B: *Le prediche volgari (Firenze 1424)*, 2

vols., ed. Ciro Cannarozzi (Pistoia: Pacinotti, 1934); C, D, E: *Le prediche volgari* (Firenze 1425), 3 vols., ed. Ciro Cannarozzi (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1940); F, G: *Le prediche volgari* (Siena 1425), 2 vols., ed. Ciro Cannarozzi (Florence: Rinaldi, 1958); R: *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, 2 vols., ed. Carlo Delcorno (Milano: Rusconi, 1989). All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ The two most thorough discussions of the adage's history are the articles of Jean Châtillon, "Nudum Christum Nudus Sequere," in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, 4 vols. (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), 4: 719-72; and Réginald Grégoire, "L'adage ascétique 'Nudus nudum Christum sequi,'" in *Studi storici in onore di Ottorino Bertolini*, 2 vols. (Pisa: Pacini, 1972), 1: 395-409.

¹² See Châtillon, "Nudum Christum": 721-24.

¹³ According to Raymond E. Brown (*The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 953):

[t]he normal Roman pattern would have been to crucify criminals naked, as attested by Artemidorus Daldianus (*Oneirokritika* 2.53). But did the Romans make a special concession to the Jewish horror of nudity (*Jubilees* 3: 30-31; 7: 20) and allow a loincloth to be used (*subligaculum*)? . . . I would judge that there is no way to settle the question even if the evidence favors complete despoliation.

As we will see below, Bernardino of Siena taught that Jesus was crucified completely naked.

¹⁴ As Miles (note 7 above): 142, points out, in ancient and medieval Christianity, various "theological meanings cluster around" nakedness, both male and female; Jerome's use of the image is just one example; that of the martyr-athlete preparing for spiritual battle is another.

¹⁵ Châtillon (n. 11 above): 733-35; Matthäus Bernards, "Nudus nudum Christum sequi," in *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 14 (1951): 148-51; Giles Constable, "'Nudus nudum Christum sequi' and Parallel Formulas in the Twelfth Century: A Supplementary Dossier," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, ed. F. Forrester Church and T. George (Leiden: Brill, 1979): 83-91; Réginald Grégoire (note 11 above).

¹⁶ Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, Book I, ch. 31, excerpted in Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980): 145.

¹⁷ Bonaventura, *Legenda maior*, ch. II, par. 4, in *Fonti francescane (Editio Minor)*, ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1986): 511-692, here 527-28. (Since Bonaventura's biography and the other early classic Franciscan sources cited below, the *Fioretti di San Francesco* and Thomas of Celano's *Vita secunda*, are widely available in many editions and translations, I omit the original texts.) This episode in Francis's life is examined in detail by Trexler, who, however, is concerned primarily with the legal-economic-social ramifications of Francis's renunciation, with the detail of the saint's nakedness mentioned only twice and parenthetically (Trexler, *Naked Before the Father* [n. 1 above]: 43, notes 78 and 85). Vettori (n. 5 above), instead, does take up the subject of Francis's public nakedness and its symbolic meaning but only as a prelude to a discussion of the critic's principal focus of attention, the poetry of Iacopone da Todi (note 6 above). For Vettori's discussion of the renunciation, see also note 18.

¹⁸ Vettori (n. 5 above: 8) in his discussion of Francis's naked renunciation sees the act as inspired directly by the image of the naked crucified Christ, overlooking the ancient spiritual motif of "Naked to follow the naked Christ" which had long been in circula-

tion and helped to prepare the way for the saint's audacious act. I would also take issue with Vettori's unsubstantiated, repeated claim that "[f]or the newly converted Francis, nudity signifies a return to the pure state of Eden" (*Poets of Divine Love*, p. 5; see also 6, 7, 8). Apart from the absence of any textual documentation to corroborate this interpretation, the assertion ignores the doctrine of original sin (certainly well known to Francis) and its chronically corrupting effect upon human behavior, which can only be overcome through God's grace as channeled through the sacraments (penance and Eucharist) when duly administered by the clergy. It is hard to imagine Francis's believing that the sole act of shedding one's clothing could "bring back the pre-Fall atmosphere of innocence and sinlessness" (Vettori, 7). In fact, as we shall see later, more than one group of laymen and laywomen practicing such a symbolic discarding of clothes in order to return to "the pure state of Eden" were condemned by the Church as abominably heretical.

¹⁹ See John V. Fleming, *An Introduction to the Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977): 186.

²⁰ For the Franciscan spirituality of poverty and the depiction of the "naked" Crucified Christ in medieval art, see Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 28-35 and 149-53. Regarding the now naked Christ of Brunelleschi's *Crucifix* in Santa Maria Novella (1412-13), mistakenly publicized as the first fully naked Christ in western art, see the corrective discussion by Philipp P. Fehl, "The Naked Christ in Santa Maria Novella in Florence: Reflections on an Exhibition and the Consequences," *Storia dell'arte* 45 (1982): 161-66. Also: Robert Mills, "For They Know Not What They Do": Violence in Medieval Passion Iconography," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 27 (2002): 200-216.

²¹ Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996; [revised ed. New York: Pantheon, c.1983]): 33. We will have occasion to return to Steinberg's work and his thesis when discussing a remark of Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) pertaining to the subject.

²² See Bonaventura, *Legenda maior*, ch. V, par. 4 (naked in the snow); ch. VII, par. 5 (the naked friar and the poor man); and ch. XIV, par. 3 (Francis's death), all in *Fonti francescane* (note 17 above), respectively 555, 584, and 638. However, the stripping at death is also symbolic of the athlete's preparation for combat, as Bonaventura says (Châtillon, "Nudum Christum" [n. 11 above]: 739). The quotation from Celano about "a great man of learning" is in his *Vita Secunda* [Second Life of Francis], 146, in *Fonti francescane*: 483; while the quotation from the *Fioretti*, ch. 30, about the disobedient friar may be found in the same *Fonti*, 933-34. As already mentioned, the Ruffino episode from the *Fioretti* (ch. 30) is an example of how the word *nudo* in medieval Italian did not necessarily mean completely naked, despite Francis's qualification "naked just as you were born"; he still means for Ruffino to wear his underwear. Many other references to nakedness, literal or allegorical, in the earliest literature on Francis and his first companions, can be found under the entry *nudo* in the *Indice Analitico-Tematico* of the just-cited exhaustive and well-indexed compilation of classic Franciscan sources, the *Fonti francescane* (note that the *Editio Minor* of this anthology is identical to the *Editio Maior*, except in page size).

²³ Quoted by Châtillon (n. 11 above): 739, and *Fonti francescane* (n. 22 above): 2216-18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 720.

²⁵ Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, 3rd rev. ed. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973): 58–59. For Francis and the earliest Franciscan mode of dress, see Servus Gieben, “Per la storia dell’abito francescano,” *Collectanea franciscana* 66 (1996): 431–78, here 432–37. Vettori (n. 5 above, 8) cites Thomas of Celano who described how Francis consciously designed the Franciscan habit in the form of a tunic “showing the image of the cross, so that in it he would drive off every fantasy of the demons.”

²⁶ I Cor 4: 10. Paul Lachance, ed., *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993): 126, 219, and 393–94, n. 2. For Angela, see also Vettori, 12; “Fous pour le Christ,” *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, ed. Marcel Viller et al., 19 vols. planned (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932–94). Here vol. 5: 752–70, esp. 764–65; and Muriel Laharie, *La folie au Moyen Age, XIe–XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Léopard d’Or, 1991): 87–113. However, Margaret of Cortona and Angela of Foligno, being women, did not and could not carry out their pious desire to emulate Francis of Assisi’s act of social misbehavior, or “liminality,” to use Victor Turner’s anthropological expression for the type of transgressive ritual represented by Francis’s *renunciation*, which he sees as characteristic of the “social drama of medieval saints.” As Caroline Walker Bynum observes in response to Turner: “Women could not take off all their clothes and walk away from their fathers and husbands, as did Francis. Simple social facts meant that most women’s dramas were incomplete” (Bynum, “Women’s Stories, Women’s Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner’s Theory of Liminality,” in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* [New York: Zone Books, 1991]: 27–51, here 43).

²⁷ See: Casimiro Centi, “Introduction,” *Enciclopedia bernardiniana*, 4 vols. planned. Volume I: *Bibliografia*, ed. Enrico D’Angelo et al. (L’Aquila: Centro Promotore Generale delle Celebrazioni del VI Centenario della Nascita di San Bernardino da Siena, 1980–81): v.

²⁸ Fleming (n. 19 above): 67. For Bernardino as second Paul, see, e.g., Catherine of Bologna, “The Admirable Instructions of Saint Catharine of Bologna which she gave unto her Sacred Virgins, composed by herself,” in *The Rule of the Holy Virgin S. Clare. Together with the Admirable Life of S. Catherine of Bologna*, ed. D. M. Rogers (London: Scholars Press, 1975): 193–394 (212).

²⁹ [Virginis nudum filium]hesum Christum nudus sequutus est obediens factus usque ad mortem] in Ferdinand Delorme, “Une esquisse primitive de la vie de S. Bernardin,” *Bullettino di studi bernardiniani* 1 (1935): 1–23 (here 12–13).

³⁰ The two citations of the adage are at OOQ, III, 429–30, and OOQ, VII, 323.

³¹ C, 305; see also C, 315 and F, 54 for other expressions of enthusiasm for Jerome; and Franco Mormando, *The Vernacular Sermons of San Bernardino da Siena, O.F.M., 1380–1444: A Literary Analysis* (Ph.D. thesis. Harvard University, 1983): 7 and 46–48. For Jerome’s popularity in the Renaissance, see Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) and Bernhard Ridderbos, *Saint and Symbol: Images of Saint Jerome in Early Italian Art* (Groningen: Bouma’s Boekhuis, 1984).

³² R, 1323. Bernardino includes the fact of Francis’s stripping naked at his renunciation but does not associate that gesture with Jerome’s adage, as does Bonaventure.

³³ The quotations come from OOQ, V, 104–105 (i.e., the so-called *sermones latini*, written as resources for fellow preachers); see also R, 1227 and 1361 for counterparts in the transcriptions of his actually preached public sermons in the vernacular.

³⁴ [Oh, quid erat tunc videre et quid etiam nostris considerationibus praebet, quod ad mortem subeundam exspoliatur Filius Dei Iesus? Ut nobis pateat totus, nihil operiens, nisi quod creatura suo captu non recipit; ut, sicut nudus corpore dum patitur revelatur, sic ipsum verum Deum, omni amoto velamine, intuitive in aeterna gloria contemplerur; et ut insuper ostendatur quod ad claram et nudam visionem Dei nemo potest aliter pervenire, nisi merito passionis eius — OOQ, II, 232].

Curiously, Bernardino makes no reference to poverty, Franciscan or otherwise, in his allegorical explanation of Christ’s nakedness.

³⁵ [Essendo S. Bernardino Guardiano di questo luoco, disse a se stesso: “O fra Bernardino, tu sei posto qui in esempio degli altri: fa dunque che tu prima cominci a fare, che tu comandi agli altri.” Onde, esso soldato di Cristo, il quale naturalmente era rubicondo e bello, e già grandemente acceso nella carità e passione di Cristo, un giorno levandosi dall’orazione, nella quale aveva ripensato a quelle cose, ardendo dell’amore della croce, in giorno di Venerdì da mattina, nudo prese una croce di gran peso, e portandola su le sue spalle, chiamò XII frati, i quali allora v’erano per stanza, dicendo loro: “Seguitatemi, o fratelli carissimi,” i quali tutti per l’obbedienza spogliati, nudi il seguitarono per insino alla terra di Seggiano, la quale è uscendo fuori del bosco del luoco di Colombaio, e tutti ebbri per spirito gridavano: “Misericordia, misericordia, penitenza, penitenza!” Ma gli uomini della terra, vedendoli, uscivano fuori, e vedendo questa novità, ricorrevano dentro a dire agli altri, che i frati di Colombaio erano tutti impazzati. Allora S. Bernardino con tanto ardore di carità incominciò a predicare dei misteri della passione di Cristo e de’ benefici della santa Croce, che tutti si stupivano ed erano provocati a piangere, giudicando quest’atto esser venuto da fervor d’infuocata carità, e non di pazzia, e tornando i frati al luoco, gli uomini tutti li seguirono piangendo]

in Dionisio Pulinari da Firenze, *Cronache dei Frati Minori della Provincia di Toscana*, ed. Saturnino Mencherini (Arezzo: Cooperativa Tipografica, 1913): 403–404; excerpted as well in Piero Misciatelli, ed., *Le più belle pagine di Bernardino da Siena* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1924): 281–82.

³⁶ Another echo of the *Fioretti* episode in the Bernardino account is the friar’s initial admonishment to himself: like Francis in the *Fioretti*, Bernardino here scolds himself (using very similar words) for not doing what he orders the friars under his rule to do.

³⁷ [Scimus autem omnes quoniam qui plene ebbri sunt irrisiones suas saepe nec quidem advertunt, atque pericula quae circumstant nec declinare nec etiam attendere norunt, se denudant sine pudore et sustinent plagas sine dolore — OOQ, IV, 436]. For the *legend of Mary Magdalene*, see, e.g., Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); for Bernardino and the Magdalene, see Franco Mormando, “Virtual Death in the Middle Ages: The Apotheosis of Mary Magdalene in Popular Preaching,” in *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*, ed. Edelgard DuBruck and Barbara I. Gusick (New York: Peter Lang, 1999): 257–74.

³⁸ [And one day, more passionately filled than usual with the ardor of fraternal charity and desire for salvation and zeal for the souls redeemed by the blood of Christ, with two other friars of the same

order, the good imitator and servant of Christ and authentic humble brother of the blessed Francis (the father who did not recoil from stripping himself naked for the Lord just as the Lord had done for us) rather quickly arrived naked (*corpore nudi*) at a certain nearby village, carrying one after the other on their own shoulders a wooden and rough cross of the Lord]

in Franciscus van Ortroij, ed., "Vie inédite de S. Bernardin de Sienna par un frère mineur, son contemporain," *Analecta bollandiana* 25 (1906): 304–38, here 310, par. 5; for the identity of the anonymous author, see 306.

³⁹ Delorme (n. 29 above): ch. 20, par. 18.

⁴⁰ Lucas Wadding, *Annales minorum*, 3rd ed., 32 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegio San Bonaventura, 1931–41); vol. IX, an. 1402, par. 9. Not understanding the significance of the friar's nakedness, Bernardino's modern biographer Iris Origo attributes it to the heat, although the source of the narrative mentions no such detail: "A few weeks later, on a hot summer's day, he cast off his habit, took up a heavy wooden cross upon his naked shoulders . . ." (Origo, *The World of San Bernardino* [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1962]: 23). At the end of his life, the dying Bernardino, in another attempt at an *imitatio Francisci*, signaled to his companions to strip him of all his clothes and place him "nudum in nuda terra," but those in attendance refused to carry out his request; see Vittorino Facchinetti, *S. Bernardino da Siena, mistico sole del secolo XV* (Milan: Casa Editrice Santa Lega Eucaristica, 1933): 500, n. 4. Saint James of the March, one of Bernardino's intimate companions and preaching disciples, underscores the fact that B. spent his last days in an extreme state of debilitation and suffering: "That saintly soul had lost all faculties and through this sign demonstrated that he wanted to die naked as he was born naked" (Carlo Delcorno, "Due prediche volgari di Jacopo della Marca recitate a Padova nel 1460," *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 128 [1969–70]: 135–205, here 257. As Delcorno points out in his note, "the detail is repeated by almost all of Bernardino's biographers"). James himself later expressed the same desire at his death to be "stripped naked and be placed on the earth without any clothes on [*sanza nulo panno*] because he wanted to die naked just as Jesus Christ died"; see Teodosio Somigli, "Vita di s. Giacomo della Marca scritta da fra Venanzio da Fabriano, O.M.OBS.," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 17 (1924): 378–415, here 412.

⁴¹ The quotations are from R 436 and R 893. It is appropriate to mention another one of Bernardino's impassioned moral campaigns, that against feminine vanity. The exorbitant costs of women's clothing and cosmetics, the friar claims, are bankrupting fathers and husbands, and indeed entire towns, as well as frightening away young men from marriage and hence driving them to sodomy (R 1088–1090, G 95). The naked or otherwise poorly clad Franciscans would have contrasted dramatically and pointedly with the richly dressed, coifed, and perfumed wives and daughters of Italy's rich merchants and patricians. On this plea for stricter sumptuary laws, see Thomas M. Izbicki, "Pyres of Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and Its Lay Audience," in *De Ore Domini: Preachers and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos et al. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989): 211–34; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, "Practical Problems in the Enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Law, 1200–1500," in *Crime, Society, and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 99–120; Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, "'Contra mundanas vanitates et pompas,' *Aspetti della lotta contro i lussi nell'Italia del XV secolo*," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 40 (1986): 371–90; and Ronald

Rainey, "Dressing Down the Dressed-Up: Repeating Feminine Attire in Renaissance Florence," in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, Jr.*, ed. John Monfasani and Ronald G. Musto (New York: Italica Press, 1991): 217–37.

⁴² See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 424–25. Hence, as Brundage, 425, remarks: "The contrast with the celebration of nudity in ancient art and its subsequent reappearance in renaissance art after 1400 is striking." Many church men of the fifteenth century and beyond were, of course, none too happy with nudity and nakedness even in art, sacred or secular; but this matter deserves another area of inquiry and analysis which we cannot pursue here. I will simply point out that, although his adult life coincided with the burgeoning of Renaissance art in Tuscany (showing many unclothed figures), Bernardino is silent on the subject.

⁴³ Michael J. Locke, "Sodomites in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany: The Views of Bernardino of Siena," in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989): 7–31, here 8.

⁴⁴ [(I) farsetto a bellico, i panni a gamba con una pezza dinanzi e una di dietro, acciochè mostrino assai carne pe' sodomiti — E 42–43]. I use Locke's translation (n. 43 above): 12.

⁴⁵ [(L) i mandano colle camicie ben sottile, con farsettini a mezzo el corpo, con vestimenti frappati e calze a gamba fessa, con cercini in capo — B 39, Locke translation, 12].

⁴⁶ Brundage (n. 42 above): 424.

⁴⁷ Yet, there was, as mentioned at the beginning of this study, much clerical involvement in the crime of sodomy; see again Ruggiero (n. 1 above), 141–42.

⁴⁸ See: Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378–1417* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ See Franco Mormando, "Signs of the Apocalypse in Late Medieval Italy: The Popular Preaching of Bernardino of Siena," in *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 24 (1997): 95–122, here 103–04.

⁵⁰ Delcorno's note 275 to Bernardino's text at R 794, citing Steinberg's *Sexuality of Christ* (n. 21 above). For an alternative (though not necessarily contradictory) reading of the same evidence examined by Steinberg, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 399–439; and for another, nevertheless more rare, metaphorical use of the nakedness of Christ in medieval art, see Susan L. Smith, "The Bride Stripped Bare: A Rare Type of the Disrobing of Christ," *Gesta* 34 (1995): 126–46. For commentary on Steinberg and Bynum in the context of Christian attitudes toward the body, see James F. Keenan, "Christian Perspectives on the Human Body," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 330–46, here 338–40.

⁵¹ For this episode in Bridget's *Revelations* and an analysis thereof, see Vida J. Hull, "The Sex of the Savior in Renaissance Art: The *Revelations* of Saint Bridget and the Nude Christ Child in Renaissance Art," *Studies in Iconography* 15 (1993): 77–112; however, contrary to Hull's suggestion, the passage in Bridget's *Revelations* that she examines cannot be used to support Steinberg's thesis, for the reasons I here explain, namely: Bridget's shepherds were concerned about verifying the fact of Jesus as a male, not solely as a human being.

⁵² [Novi personam, quae dum contemplabatur humanitatem Christi pendentis in cruce [pudet dicere et horrendum est etiam cogitare] sensualiter et turpiter polluebatur et foedabatur — OOO, VI, 259.]

⁵³ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972): 224–25; see also Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970): 219–21; *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. Robert Auty, 10 vols. (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1977–99), here vol. 1: 117; and Leonard George, *Crimes of Perception: An Encyclopedia of Heresies and Heretics* (New York: Paragon House, 1995): 6, s.v. “Adamites.” As George points out, “Adamites were first mentioned by Epiphanius, a fourth-c. orthodox Christian who compiled an encyclopedia of heresies. Augustine also refers to them in the following century.” For Augustine’s reference to the Adamites (or Adamians) see his *Heresies (De haeresibus)*, par. 31 (English translation in *Saint Augustine, Arianism and Other Heresies in The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-First Century*, Part I, vol. 18 [trans. Roland J. Teske, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990–?)]: 39). The total number of parts and vols. is not known as yet.

⁵⁴ *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 9: 508, s.v. “Nudité,” citing Gerson, *Sermo* 217 (“Considerate Lilia,” in festo S. Ludovici Regis) ed. Palémon Glorieux, *Oeuvres complètes*, 10 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73); vol. 5 (*L’Oeuvre oratoire*), 163. For the Turlupins, see also Cohn (n. 53 above), 169 and 180:

From the days of the early Church onwards such tales [of communal sexual orgies among heretics] have been told for the purpose of discrediting minority groups and there is nothing in the extant documents to suggest that even when told of adepts of the Free Spirit they were justified. On the other hand, the adepts did at times practice ritual nakedness, just as they did at times in sexual promiscuity; and there is no doubt that in both cases they were asserting — as one inquisitor put it — that they were restored to the state of innocence which had existed before the Fall. That acute commentator [Jean] Charlier de Gerson saw the connection perfectly clearly. He noted that the “Turlupins” were often naked together, saying that one ought not to blush at anything that was natural (180).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁶ Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 183; see also Lachance, ed., *Angela of Foligno* (n. 26 above): 367, n. 9. The papal bull in question is entitled *Saepe Sanctam Ecclesiam*. Antinomians are a sect believing that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary for salvation.

⁵⁷ For Manfredi, see Mormando, “Signs of the Apocalypse” (n. 49 above): 104–107.

⁵⁸ See Vern L. Bullough, “Postscript: Heresy, Witchcraft, and Sexuality,” in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982): 55–71.

⁵⁹ For Bernardino and witchcraft, see Mormando, *Preacher’s Demons* (n. 9 above): 52–108.

⁶⁰ C 209–12. In this tale, a young man loses a purse of gold coins; the Devil reveals its location to the man’s witch-godmother, after she agrees to spread scandal by telling her

godson that his wife is having an affair with the parish priest. For further discussion of the case, see Mormando, *ibid.*, 77–80.

⁶¹ Bernardino, C 210.

⁶² [Guarda me: vedi tu questo occhio? Non fu fatto per fare matrimonio. Che s’ha a impacciare l’occhio del matrimonio? Ogni volta che elli vorrà vedere le ribaldarie, è peccato mortale e gravissimo; imperò che tal cosa è lecita a toccare, che non è lecita a mirare. . . . Donna, non volere mai consentire: inanzi morire che lassarti vedere — R 617–18; see also OOO, I, 222].

⁶³ [O giovane, il tuo sangue bolle: tu se’ usata a stare col marito, a ben mangiare e a ben dormire. . . . Io ti voglio insegnare a levar via le cagioni che ti possono far cascare in peccato. . . . Va, dorme vesita. . . . Oh, se tu t’avvezzasse a dormire vestita, io ti prometto ch’egli è il miglior boccone che tu assaggiasse mai! — R 630].

⁶⁴ It could be ignited also by the sight of naked female flesh as Bernardino acknowledges (R 478–79; and Mormando, *Preacher’s Demons*, 118), for, of course, sodomy is a sin committed between females as well as between males and females (in the form of anal intercourse). However, in Bernardino’s own sermons and in all of the sodomy-related literature of his age, it is the male-male variety of the sin that received the greatest attention.

⁶⁵ For these new laws, see the relevant pages in Canosa (n. 9 above); Ruggiero (n. 1 above); Rocke (n. 9 above); and Mormando (*ibid.*): 155–63. There is no evidence, however, that Bernardino himself was responsible for the specific Venetian law that in 1420 landed his Franciscan confreres in jail. The earliest of the documented preaching missions to Venice by Bernardino dates to 1422; yet, it is likely that he made earlier visits as well to the city that eventually named him “co-patron of the Republic” (see *Titian, Prince of Painters*, exh. cat. [Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1990]: 170; and Rona Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice: Bellini, Titian, and the Franciscans* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986]: 158, n. 8).

Boston College