FRANCESCO SANTI, *VOL. V: LA MISTICA. ANGELA DA FOLIGNO E RAIMONDO LULLO,* IN *LA LETTERATURA FRANCESCANA*, A CURA DI CLAUDIO LEONARDI CON LA COLLABORAZIONE DI DANIELE SOLVI, MILANO: FONDAZIONE LORENZO VALLA–MONDADORI, 2016, LII + 452 PP., ISBN 9788804657910

JORGE USCATESCU BARRÓN
UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG I. BR.

'Scrittori Greci et Latini' is a renown series published under the auspices of the Lorenzo Valla Foundation, mainly focused on Greek and Latin classical authors from Homer to Augustine, but medieval authors from the Latin West are increasingly being edited in the series since the last years. Two well-known medievalists around the SISMEL, Claudio Leonardi and since his death Francesco Santi alone, are running a six-volume collection of Franciscan medieval literature. In the first volumes important texts by Francis of Assisi and Saint Bonaventura have already being published.

The present volume, the fifth of the collection, assembles Franciscan medieval texts on mysticism. The book presents the Latin texts according to the best available editions, but without a critical apparatus, and an Italian version; it opens with a general introduction to the subject, within which Francesco Santi deals with the concept of 'Franciscan mysticism' as well (pp. XVII–LII). Each text is preceded by an introduction, which presents the author and outlines the content of each book (pp. 5–26 and 233–248). This is also the work of Francesco Santi. As an expert on both authors, he writes both introductions in a very understandable way, but in a learned way.

The translation of the *Memoriale* is also due to Santi, who renders the original Latin text very well, as far as I can judge. Although the text, which has been taken from the critical edition produced by Menestò (2013) is presented without critical apparatus, Santi has made some editorial choices indicated below the text. The corresponding commentary has been written by Daniele Solvi (pp. 368–436) with full command of the research on Angela da Foligno. This commentary is very detailed and helpful with plenty of internal references, which renders the commentary a useful research instrument.

The *Liber amici et amati* has been translated correctly into a very comprehensible Italian—not an easy task—by Barbara Scavizzi. The Lullian text is drawn from the only available critical edition (Lohr and Domínguez, 1988) with some corrections, perhaps with the aid of Lohr and Domínguez, 'Corrigenda', *Traditio* 45 (1988–1990), 435—Santi reads correctly 'dereliqui' in n. 53 instead of

'derelinqui' emended by Lohr and Domínguez. In her commentary (pp. 438–452) Coralba Colomba, herself an expert on Lullus and critical editor of two works by him (Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, 35), has checked the Catalan version and has indicated correspondingly the variant readings. The commentary itself is shorter than the former one, but it explains the main points which should be taken into account for understanding the text; it reflects the *status quaestionis* of the research on the book as well and gives a full account both of the internal and external references of the text. All this renders her commentary a good tool for a deeper comprehension of this important and beautiful text.

The first text is the *Memoriale*, a recollection of ecstatic experiences suffered by the probably unlettered woman, Angela da Foligno (1248–1309) and dictated by her to a conventual Franciscan friar who, besides serving as her confessor, translated her oral testimony from the Umbrian, an Italian dialect, into a medieval Latin, very close to the original language both in vocabulary and syntax. This fact adds veracity and immediacy of the experiences which took place between 1290/1291 and the spring of 1296. The unknown friar uses indiscriminately the first and the third person, but he has, however, organised the text in some way (p. 367), perhaps according to John Climacus's *Ladder of Perfection*.

Angela da Foligno entered the Third Order after her conversion (*c.* 1285) and remained attached to Franciscan spirituality until the end of her life. Accordingly, her visions have to be considered within the context of the spell of Francis's personality in the third generation of his followers. Her first experiences are directly related to the saint himself, who appeared to her firstly in a dream and then in the church dedicated to him in Assisi. In liturgical ceremonies or in other devotional acts, but also in daily circumstances, these experiences overwhelmed her.

The *Memoriale* begins with the elenchus of the first twenty basic experiences or *passus* succinctly exposed, which had already made her a leading religious personality in her region. The second chapter announces and explains again synthetically the following seven transformations or steps (*passus*), which are more profound and important experiences of ecstatic character. In the third chapter these experiences are described in detail.

The reader is offered a first-hand account of mystical experiences without much theological background or biblical interpretation. The *Memoriale* contains thirty steps arranged in a sort of ascendant scale which begins with the first twenty steps and culminates in the seventh supplementary step as the summit of her spiritual journey. In her last vision she plunges into the depths of the Trinitarian structure of God. For Bernard McGinn (*The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol. III: *The Flowering of Mysticism. Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200–1350)*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998, p.

145): 'The description of the supplementary stages constitutes one of the richest accounts of mystical union presented in autobiographical form in Christian history.'

The core experience of the *Memoriale* is the knowledge of herself being a poor human being. Poverty is apparently not only a well-known Franciscan topic, but also the fundamental issue in the Franciscan commitment to Christian faith. Angela da Foligno herself followed the Franciscan rules and renounced her wealth and possessions, but in her mystical visions she transforms evangelical poverty into a pivotal mystical experience expressing what is normally called in Spanish mystical language 'anonadamiento'. Becoming nothing is indeed at the core of the ecstatic experiences of Angela da Foligno. In the first supplementary step (*passus primus supplens*) she expresses her allegiance to Saint Francis by reinforcing her will of becoming an actual poor woman (n. 21, ll. 9–11, p. 64). Poverty is moreover the root of humility and of every good (n. 74, l. 10, p. 178) and a main trait of Jesus Christ as an incarnated God.

This experience of human poverty is deepened and expanded because of her conviction of being created as evil matter (n. 40). This doesn't amount exactly to declaring himself a sinner or to affirming the sinful character of human beings—this point is elsewhere stressed (for example in n. 34). According to the Bible and the Catholic Church the world and especially human beings are created good, but angels and human beings could sin and become evil, though not completely. In this and other passages a phrase from Exodus, 33:19 *omne bonum* is quoted. The whole sentence in the *Vulgata* runs as follow: *respondit: ego ostendam omne bonum tibi et vocabo in nomine domini coram te* (['The Lord] answered: I will all my splendour pass before you and in your presence I will proclaim my sacred name'). The sense is clear: the Lord will show him his own goodness.

The expression *omne bonum* occurs more than ten times in the text. Unfortunately, Santi offers four different versions of this expression ('tutto il bene', 'ogni bene', 'tutto bene', 'tutto di bene'). What is its meaning?

In some places (n. 53, n. 84, l. 14 ff., and n. 86, l. 12 ff.) it refers to God as a whole, which the soul sees in darkness (n. 84, l. 22 ff.) and in which it finds delight as well (n. 56, l. 2 ff., and n. 86, l. 12 ff.). In other places the expression is distinguished from *aliud bonum*. When Santi translates 'Sed est ibi illud "omne bonum" quia non est aliud bonum' (n. 100, l. 43, p. 220) in this fashion: 'Ma qui c'è quel tutto di bene, per cui altro bene non è', he might misunderstand the meaning of the phrase, which should be interpreted in this way 'But He is there the all Good, since it is not a particular good (*aliud bonum*)'. I think, Angela da Foligno is only stressing the Goodness of God as *bonum universale* and distinguishes it from any particular good.

The second text is Raimundus Lullus's book entitled *Liber amici et amati* (*The Book of the Lover and the Beloved*). Lullus is an independent figure of the Middle

Ages, a wealthy man who renounces his possessions. Like Angela da Foligno, who was also a well-off woman, he entered the Third Order of Saint Francis, but his relation to the Franciscan Movement is more loose and informal. Nevertheless, some characteristics of the *Liber amici et amati* bind him to the Franciscan Spirituality. This writing is not actually a book, but two chapters taken from the fifth book of his work *Blanquerna* (1276–1283). This work was written originally in the Catalan language, but the two chapters (99 and 100 from book VI) were originally a single independent text written in Latin. It was translated into Catalan by the author himself, added later to *Blanquerna* and divided into two chapters. The *Liber amici et amati* is considered in the Lullian research as a mystical text (e.g. by E. Allison Peers and Bernard McGinn). But very little mysticism or ecstatical experiences are referred to in the text. Some prefer to put the book under the heading 'imitation of Christ', but this does not match the point of the book either. For the Christian life is usually conceived as an imitation of Christ. Lullus refers occasionally to this issue in his book, but these references are no more than commitments to what is obvious for a Christian believer. Others point out the undoubtedly subsisting ideas on human love according to the troubadours, but the text is not a love song either. Others stress the Sufi influence on Lullus, but his references are all too vague. The Islamic trace is a common place in Lullian Research and offers room for wild speculations on direct Islamic influence supported, however, by the fact that Lullus himself confesses command of Arabic. But all the citations of Arabic texts in his works are either vague references or concrete citations always taken from texts already known to the public in a Latin version.

References to the *Song of the Songs* and to Saint Francis's preachings (the mention of the birds or of the ideal of poverty) are surely traceable, but this does not allow us to take these texts which are alluded to as models for the Lullian work under consideration.

Although Raimundus Lullus had a vision on Mount Randa in Mallorca (cf. Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, 8, p. 280), which led him ultimately to dedicating his life to preach and extend the Christian Faith especially among the non-believers, the Muslims, the *Liber amici et amati* is not a mystical text *sensu stricto* or even 'a collection of mystical utterances' (Lohr and Dominguez). The experience of becoming united to God in the sense of the 'anonadamiento' is neither alluded to nor is the 'spiritual touch' ever mentioned. Instead the work abounds rather in formal distinctions and enumerations of elements in the typical Lullian way. Nevertheless, the text is very interesting and deserves special attention outside the circle of Lullian research. The core of this writing is human love of God. Herein undoubtedly lies the alleged mysticism of Lullus.

Human love of God is not like love between the human soul understood as a female, and God, but between a friend or lover, a male, and the beloved God. This

element strips out the approach of almost all erotic connotations which are undeniable in other texts where love of God is interpreted in terms of human love between man and woman. Some researchers (González Palencia etc.) think here of a Sufi influence, because Sufi mystical authors like the Spanish Sufi poet Ibn Arabi spoke of human love of God in the same way as love between males. Anyway, human love of God here at issue is not like the Greek Eros. Moreover, human love for God in Lullian terms is a blend of pleasure and pains altogether. This point reminds us of the courtly love described and praised mainly by the troubadours. Reminiscences of them can be surely traced throughout Lullus's work. For it should not be forgotten that Lullus was before his conversion a poet as well. But the courtly love as far as it is reflected in the songs of the troubadours cannot be completely applied to the human love of God, at least because the beloved is not a lady.

We find here rather a truly theoretical treatise on human love of God written in a loose way, lacking the structure of a scholastic treatise. Lullus deals with all the matters concerning love in over 300 hundred small texts in which a story is told or a single thought is explained. Dialogue and concise expression are the literary components the text consists of. Four elements constitute human love of God: *amor*, *amare*, *amicus*, *amatus*—the thing itself, love, the act of loving, the lover or the friend and the object of love, the beloved. These four elements make up the quaternary or tertiary structure—sometimes Lullus refers only to three elements—of reality. From the point of view of the history of philosophy, this reflects, however, the scholastic approach to human potency *in actu primo* which could be led to the act (*actus secundus*), has an object (*obiectum*) and a subject which supports the act itself (*subiectum*).

Lullus analyses human love as far as it is rooted in a substance, namely in human being. So he distinguishes in a human being the heart as the site of the *cogitationes* ('thoughts', cf. nn. 182 and 243) and the human body as the site both of *suspirium* ('sigh', n. 93) and *lacrimae* ('tears', n. 144). Lullus also insists on the real dual structure of love in which on the one side there is a community of the beloved and the lover and on the other side these are separated from one another in their own individuality (n. 50).

The structure I have already explained briefly is not only exposed theoretically in some passages in the book, but it is also displayed without an explicit theoretical approach in many of the passages. Lullus explains the nature of human love of God in some remarkable circumstances: bed, solitude and the road. Lullus describes the circumstances that the lover or the beloved is waiting for the other one on the bed; this gives him room for displaying a metaphorical language of the bed itself, whose elements symbolize those of the human love of God (nn. 97 and 128). Love is especially displayed in the solitude of the lover, in which he encounters the beloved (n. 239). Other texts describe the encounter of

beloved and lover on the way to one another. The way is also a metaphor for the pilgrim in human life going to meet God.

Lullus arranges, for example, the dignities or principles of his *Ars* under two headings: diversity and concordance (nn. 256–257). The concepts are organised according to opposition (we call these binomies rather 'systochiae'). The first opposition is *amicus/amatus*. The structure of love is considered as *ascensus/descensus*, because the lover ascends to the beloved by loving him, and the beloved, God, condescends to the lover. In the middle, love itself (*amor*) stands (n. 251). Presence and absence of the beloved plays an important role not only in human love, but also in human love of God. For God is not conceived as *deus absconditus*, although the lover misses the beloved, and this produces sadness (*tristitia*) in him. Finally, we can consider cognition and oblivion. We should remember here the Augustinian issue of remembering God (*memoria Dei*), which also plays an important role in the Lullian account of God, Who is not only known and loved by the will, but also remembered by the memory. Recalling God causes pleasure, His oblivion, however, sadness. Another Augustinian issue is the concept of *pondus* ('weight'), which is echoed only once (n. 334).

This work blends a lot of elements drawn from the mystical tradition of love, the troubadours, Christian theology, but also upon other works by Lullus, as Colomba points out to in her commentary. We read our present work as the vulgarization of the main ideas that would be exposed later in his major work *Ars amativa* (1290), but this would be a very partial way of interpreting such a work which is full of literary ambitions. But it is not primarily a literary work, but a theological one with the goal of praising and glorifying God (nn. 288 and 311).

To sum up. The present volume assembles two important, but perhaps not very well-known texts from the Middle Ages in bilingual editions. Learned introductions and commentaries satisfy both the general reader and the specialist in a harmonious way.