



The Life and Miracles of Saint Margaret of Cortona

By *Fra Giunta Bevegnati, Fortunato Iozzelli*

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Saint Margaret of Cortona is the light of the Third Order of Francis. Such is the theme of the most extensive biography of any Franciscan Tertiary in the Middle Ages. Margaret's extraordinary career brings the historian closer to the early development of the Franciscans and the Order of Penance; it tells us much about how women saints were described, and about how civic cults of saints emerged. Another window, although a smaller one, opens to the tensions between the Franciscan Community and the Spiritual Franciscans before the split prior to Pope John XXII. Indeed it could be said that we know more about Margaret of Cortona than about any woman of thirteenth-century Italy, with the exception of Clare of Assisi and Clare of Montefalco. This edition is translated from the critical Latin edition by Fortunato Iozzelli, O.F.M. of *The Life of Saint Margaret of Cortona* by *Fra Giunta Bevegnati*. The original translation by Thomas Renna has been edited by Shannon Larson.

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Editorial Review

Review

The poignant life of Margaret of Cortona offers a profound avenue to explore the rich complexity of Franciscan spirituality with special focus on the Lay Franciscan experience and with insights into the Franciscan tradition as a whole. This accessible translation of the vita of Margaret of Cortona will be beneficial to both students and scholars interested in the Franciscan tradition, and to people with a devotional attraction to Franciscan spirituality. This volume will be indispensable reading in Franciscan studies for decades. --Darleen Pryds, Associate Professor of History and Spirituality, Franciscan School of Theology, Graduate Theological Union

Thomas Renna's English translation of Fra Giunta Bevegnati's 1308 Life of Saint Margaret of Cortona (1247-1293) is a treasure trove of early Franciscan history primarily drawing from her canonization proceedings, the penitential movement, popular legend, and the cult of women's saints. It is based on Fra Fortunato Iozzelli's 1997 critical Latin edition. Renna's translation preserves the colloquial flavor and emotional force of Margaret's dialogues as well as their historical accuracy. Renna is careful to point out that numerous mythical elements about Margaret's penitential practices eventually became integrated into her Legenda. Between 1272-1289 Margaret turned to the Friars Minor, including her biographer, Fra Giunta, for spiritual advice. Known for her severe penances, she became Cortona's most public citizen. She died in 1293 in the commune of Cortona which built a church for her remains that became a popular pilgrimage site. A rich oral tradition continued to surround Margaret until her canonization in 1728. Fra Giunta's life of Margaret is peppered with vignettes relevant to the development of the Third Order of Saint Francis. --Ingrid J. Peterson, O.S.F., Rochester, MN

About the Author

THOMAS RENNA, Professor of History at Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan, teaches history of the Middle Ages, Ancient Rome, Renaissance, France, and ancient and modern Middle East. He has an undergraduate degree in History from the University of Scranton, a masters of Medieval History from the University of Nebraska and a PhD in Medieval History from Brown University. Renna has published 3 books, including *Jerusalem in Medieval Thought 400-1300* (Mellen Pr 2002), 120 journal articles on medieval thought: political theory, church-state conflicts, Franciscan, Cistercian, Benedictine, biblical exegesis, hagiography, manuscript illumination, Petrarch, Augustine. He also has 160 paper presentations at conferences in US, Canada, Europe, and Middle East. Renna has received numerous awards and fellowships for scholarship and teaching.

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