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The history of the Franciscans in the German lands has drawn serious attention since the late nineteenth century. Quite recently, Dieter Berg has edited at least fourteen volumes in the *Saxonia Franciscana* series. This is alongside of numerous additional articles and monographs, for instance by Kaspar Elm, John Freed, Volker Honemann, Hans Joachim Schmidt, Eva Schlottheuber, Bernd Schmies, and Petra Weigel. To this can be added a wealth of older literature. This collective volume therefore builds on an impressive scholarly legacy.

In the first essay (21-44), Bernd Schmies and Volker Honemann give a historical sketch of the Saxonia province, which around 1316 counted about 100 friaries divided over twelve custodies. The essay starts with a cautionary remark about the available source materials, notably the comparative lack of provincial statutes and related materials. This would explain why the development of the province never figured prominently in general studies on the institutional history of the order. The lack of institutional sources is partly offset by Giordano da Giano's *Chronica*, which is an eyewitness account by a key player in the early development of the Saxonia province. Not surprisingly, the authors make ample use of this source, and they apparently had access to sufficient additional sources and studies to sketch a convincing narrative concerning the expansion of the order from 1221 onwards.

This neat sketch devolves into shorter sections on the custodial structure, the frequency and the location of provincial chapters, visitation regimes and communication strategies used to manage the distances within the large Saxonia province. At the very end the authors also try to pinpoint the role of the Franciscans in the socio-religious environment of the towns, hinting at the collaboration between the friars and urban authorities in matters of hospital service and poor relief. And they indicate that, due to this collaboration and an increasing embeddedness, the order became more 'bourgeois' in character. Some of the topics discussed in passing could have benefited from a more in-depth treatment.

This overview is followed by Volker Honemann's study of the late medieval Observant reform movements (45-163), which is almost a small monograph. Honemann begins with an evaluation of the available source materials and secondary literature on the topic (section 1), with a portrayal of the accusations of the real and not so real grievances that might have 'necessitated' reforms (section 2), and with a survey of all major reform movements within the order prior to the first Observant reform within Saxony in 1428.

Thereafter, he provides in no less than 18 additional sections an account of the intricate processes of Observant reform within Saxony, explaining the impact of reform councils, papal policies, and the rivaling reform movements of the Martinians and the Observants *sub vicariis*.

Honemann deals with key players in the reform altercations, notably Matthias Döring, Nicholas of Cusa, and Giovanni da Capistrano, and he touches on nearly all major friaries, Clarissan houses, and penitential / Tertiary communities touched by Observant reforms. He dwells on the personalities and actions of all provincial ministers between Matthias Döring (who resigned in 1461) and Ludwig Henning (1507-1515), and he discusses the crucial early sixteenth-century decades, which saw the failure of the so-called Julian Statutes, and the final division of the order and the Saxony province between Observant and Conventual Franciscan branches after 1517. It provides an impressive clarification of reforms in individual houses and, building on the work of Petra Weigel, it identifies the forces that determined the way Observant reforms unfolded. At the same time, the contribution contains possibly too many digressions. Although Honemann acknowledges the important 2014 study of Viallet (*Le sens de l'observance*) in note 15, he does not really come to terms with Viallet's insights. It probably came too late to Honemann's attention.

It is commendable that this volume includes essays on economic aspects and on the tertiary system. These contributions explain how Franciscan convent life was organized from a material point of view, and how begging practices, commemoration funding and pastoral interaction with urban and rural populations went hand in hand. Hans-Joachim Schmidt's essay on convent economy (165-194) provides a nifty panorama of the gradual socio-economic embedding of friaries in their immediate urban context. It details how the friars secured material support and funding in a market-driven salvation economy, and how they squared this with the Franciscan poverty requirements. The last section provides a provisional periodization of medieval Franciscan economics and concludes with interesting statements concerning the intricate but productive relations of the Franciscans with the market economy. It is there that I would have expected a more in-depth engagement with recent Italian and Spanish works on (Observant) Franciscan economic thought.

Arend Mindermann sketches an insightful picture of the Franciscan tertiary system (195-263). It explains with many examples and clear graphics how terminaries for alms collecting developed, and how it created an infrastructure of *fautores* and *hospites*. Moreover, Mindermann elucidates the role of friars assigned to terminaries in wide-ranging territorial preaching and confession activities. These extended to religious communities without official connections to the Franciscan order. In addition, these same friars could play a role in the recruitment of new order members.

Near the end, Mindermann hints at the disappearance of terminaries due to urban regulations, new monastic settlements, the impact of Observant reforms, and later the repercussions of the Reformation. This is the only somewhat less-satisfactory part. Mindermann's assertion that Observant poverty practices did not leave much room for terminaries needs further corroboration. Whatever their qualms over the possession of tertiary houses, the importance of a tertiary-like infrastructure for pastoral purposes might have been of interest to Observants' homiletic practitioners.

Just as valuable is Reinhardt Butz's article on the friars' relationship with Poor Clares and Tertiaries (265-324). Butz shows the necessity to cut through longstanding assumptions about the order allegiance of Clarissan and so-called Tertiary houses and demonstrates that connections between friars and communities of religious women did not automatically imply institutional incorporation. Butz neatly displays how these houses had a very complex foundation history, bound up with the wishes of lay aristocratic and royal founder families, which determined how the houses were endowed and functioned.

My only significant point of criticism is that the author, like several others in this volume, does not really square his own findings with the latest insights in non-German studies on Poor Clares and other female religious. This shows both in his introduction, which erroneously claims a lack of 'eine zusammenfassende Abhandlung' of the history of the Clarissan order, and again in his final remarks. A conversation with recent non-German studies would have helped him to solidify his findings and would have made his own contribution even more relevant.

Disappointing, on the contrary, is Jana Bretschneider's short essay on preaching, education and provincial leadership (325-339). It is a reprint, without significant updates, of an article issued previously in "Für Gott und die Welt - Franziskaner in Thüringen" (2008). Already in 2008 it was not fully up-to-date. Its presence in a work issued in 2015 is a missed chance.

The theological content of works originating from Saxony is addressed separately by Johannes Schlageter (415-520). His article does not start promising. Due to time constraints, it alleges to be just a rehash of the findings of Ludger Meier (d. 1961). Moreover, it announces not to deal with Franciscan Observant theological work, as there would be insufficient specialist studies available to draw upon. Both of these assertions are puzzling. The footnotes show (again) a reluctance to take into account recent studies written by (non-Franciscan) non-German scholars.

In fact, the article offers more than it announces. It provides interesting analyses of the works of many Franciscan theologians from the Saxonia province. It discusses the sermons of Konrad von Sachsen, the *Denarius* of Helwich von Magdeburg, and the peculiar Apocalypse commentary of Alexander Minorita. It scrutinizes late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theologians and canonists, such as Johannes von Erfurt, Johannes von Minden, and Christian von Hiddesdorf. But that is just to set the stage for a detailed treatment of fifteenth-century theologians, including Matthias Döring, Johannes Bremer, Nikolaus Lakmann, Johannes Kannemann, Kilian Stetzing, and Hermann Etzen. Hence, Schlageter provides readers with much more than a simple rehash of the findings of Meier. It remains a pity that the period between 1480 and 1520 is dealt with much more summarily, also in view of the fact that Schlageter himself has done much to brake the ground on this in other works, and that the inclusion of some recent (non-Franciscan and non-German) scholarship on German Franciscan preaching after 1500 could have helped him to say more about the theological outlook of Observant and Conventual preachers during that period.

In between the articles of Bretschneider and Schlageter can be found the fascinating contribution of Leonhard Lehmann on liturgical matters (341-414). It is not completely focused on the Saxony province, even though it figures prominently, but gives the reader a good inkling of liturgical developments within the Franciscan order from the early thirteenth century onwards.

It deals with liturgical practices during and immediately after the lifetime of Francis of Assisi, the transformation of the breviary under Haymo of Faversham, and even touches upon liturgical revisions during the Early Modern period.

The volume ends with three large studies by Honemann, respectively on books and libraries (521-602), on the Franciscan literary production (603-730), and on Franciscan historiography (731-844). These three texts and his other contributions make that about 50% of the volume as a whole is due to Honemann alone.

Honemann's study of books and libraries in the Saxony province opens with a *status quaestionis*, followed by a treatment of early Franciscan attitudes towards books, and a survey of the regulations concerning books in Franciscan constitutions and statutes, complete with an evaluation of the manner in which previous scholars (Germans and non-Germans alike) have read these normative guidelines. Subsequent sections portray the lost or as yet not sufficiently researched Franciscan convent libraries (section 3), medieval and early modern book lists / catalogues (section 4), and deliver in-depth descriptions of the Franciscan libraries of Görlitz, Braunschweig, Altenburg, and Brandenburg (section 5). The article continues with a discussion of books and libraries of the Clarissan convents of Breslau, Weissenfels, Seussnitz, Eger, Hof, and Ribnitz (section 6), prior to concluding remarks that point the way to future research (section 7).

Honemann's contribution on the medieval Franciscan literary production is a journey through a plethora of literary genres, with information on many individual authors, manuscripts, and compilatory practices. The introductory section rightly points out that this production of 'Franciscan' texts is only half the story, stating correctly that '...es (...) eine geschlossene, auf Einwirkungen von Außen her verzichtende 'Ordensliteratur' nicht gegeben hat.' Luckily, this does not prevent Honemann from discussing numerous 'Franciscan' texts, starting with the writings of Francis and Clare and the early biographical / hagiographical tradition. Honemann's panorama moves ahead with compilations of *vitae* of Francis from outside the order (section 3), writings from Saxony on Clare and other Franciscan saints, as well as adjacent exempla- and miracle collections (sections 4 and 5), manuscripts and early imprints of rule and statutes (section 6), encyclopedic texts (section 7), juridical texts (section 8), exegetical texts and authors (section 9), catechetical texts (section 10), and preaching manuscripts and Franciscan preachers (section 11). It closes with a snapshot of Franciscan literature in use among the Franciscans and the Poor Clares of Eger around and after 1500 (section 12), and with a final evaluation (13), which also dwells on the problems surrounding the Franciscan literary production in relation to the rise of reformatory currents.

Just as rich is Honemann's essay on Saxonian Franciscan historical writing. His essay touches on most, if not all Franciscan and supposedly Franciscan historical texts from the *Sächsische Weltchronik* onwards. Honemann asks important questions about the "Sitz im Leben" of history writing within the context of Franciscan religious life, and about the (im)possibility to arrive at a proper generic stratification. He also shows that several annals associated with the Franciscans might not have a (strictly) Franciscan origin, and asks why after Giordano da Giano no friar ever tried to write a provincial order history properly speaking. In short, he nuances quite a number of scholarly assumptions.

The volume closes with a series of helpful lists and tables (845-864), a significant bibliography (872-941), a manuscript reference list (943-947), and detailed indices (949-978). These instruments, compiled with the assistance of Gunhild Roth, facilitate one of the ways in which this volume will be used by many: namely as a dependable reference work to find information about a host of different topics concerning the history and the literary culture of the Franciscan Saxony province.

But it would be a shame if this work will only be used like that. More stringent editorial intervention would have made several contributions easier to process. Likewise, a willingness by some authors to engage with the latest non-German scholarship would have made this work more relevant to those not working on the Saxony province properly speaking. The editor rightfully complains about the relative 'absence' of the Saxony province in general studies on the Franciscan order. If some of the contributors had more systematically used and confronted current non-German scholarship on order provinces and the order family in general, it might been even more impelling for others to deal with the important findings of this impressive, albeit lopsided monument of Franciscan studies.

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