
Call for Papers

Unconventionally “Mendicant” Genesis and Phenomenology of a Name and a Reality between XIII and XIV Century

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It has been almost forty years since Franco Dal Pino was able to write: «The nature of the pauper-esque task and its defining character – along with apostolic work – of those religious orders designated by the common denominator of “mendicants” are canonically outlined for the first time, at the ecclesiastical level, by the Second Council of Lyon held in 1274» (F. Dal Pino, *L'evoluzione dell'idea di mendicizia nel Duecento*, in *Esperienze minoritiche nel Veneto del Due-Trecento*, in «Le Venezie francescane», n.s. 2, 1985, pp. 11-36, here 12-13). Canon 23, *Religionem diversitatem nimiam*, verifies sure enough that, in the period following the Fourth Council of the Lateran of 1215, despite the afforded provisions, there arose an *effrenata quasi multitudo* of *precipue mendicantium orders*, of whom some lacked pontifical approval. Thus the council's dictate imposes a ban on the founding of any future *novum ordinem aut religionem* and commands the suppression of those religions and mendicant orders that arose after the said council without receiving confirmation from the Apostolic See. The Council of Lyon also took drastic and definitive decisions for all the orders that, though confirmed by the Apostolic See, incorporated a prohibition on incomes or possessions in their religious vows or in their rules and maintained themselves by means of an *incerta mendicitas* practiced through the public collection of alms. The sole exceptions were the Friars Minor and Friars Preachers, on account of their “evident utility” to the Universal Church, and the Carmelites and the Hermits of Saint Augustine, who claimed to have been instituted before the Fourth Council of the Lateran; to these it was conceded that they could remain as they were until an alternative decision was made.

In brief, one may therefore emphasise that it was the canon of the Second Council of Lyon that definitively established – also in light of the ecclesiastical considerations that emerged in the context of the Parisian conflict – the so-called “mendicant paradigm”, overcoming the notion of *Ordines in paupertate fundati* used in the preceding years and providing a unitary and somewhat acceptable garb to the numerous experiences of mendicancy that, at least in their nascent phase, appeared in many substantially differing forms.

With this issue of «Quaderni di storia religiosa medievale» we propose:

- to reconsider the formation and development of the aforementioned “mendicant paradigm” embodied by the two orders of the Preachers and Minors; reconsider the effects that it had on religious experiences and groups contemporary with and following the Second Council of Lyon; and extend the chronological arc to the entire 14th century, though excluding the Observance movements which brought along with them a specific attitude regarding rule of poverty;
- to compare the numerous and diverse religious experiences – including those of orders excluded from the mendicant sphere – that maintained or acquired strong inclinations to urban dwelling; to an active apostolate; and to pauperism and organisational forms of *novitas* character, as opposed to traditional monasticism;
- to reflect on the dichotomy of monastic orders/mendicant orders within the wider tradition of the experience of the rule, throwing light on the existence of traditional monastic experiences/orders that, due to the choice of life practiced and their relationship to poverty, were perceived by contemporaries as analogous to mendicants, or which assimilated some of the latter’s elements by maintaining obedience to the rule of St. Benedict;
- to delve into, by means of investigating local circumstances, the role of religious, eremitical experience, both irregular and that embedded in the monastic tradition, which appear to be central – much like the communitarian forms of penitential semi-religiosity – to understanding the evolution of religious life between the 12th and 13th centuries;
- to reflect on the relationship between mendicant orders and women’s contemporary religious experiences in relation to the theme of mendicancy and of the aspiration to poverty;
- to present single and tangible religious experiences with the above characteristics.

Provided here below is an indicative list of religious orders, to be integrated eventually either with “minor” or exclusively local experiences, or with experiences – monastic or canonical – that possess novel aspects and connections to the mendicant model:

- groups prior to the self-avowal of the mendicant orders (Cross Bearers, Humiliati, Trinitarians, Canons Regular, Hospitallers...);
- secondary or “minor” mendicant experiences (Friars of the Sack, Servants of Mary, Servants of Mary Mother of Christ of Marseille or Pied Friars, Hermits who “escaped” to the *magna unio*...);
- formally monastic orders but with certain inclinations to poverty and aspects of *novitas* (Sylvestrines, Celestines, Olivetans...);
- 14th century congregations that arose from markedly lay-pauper experiences (Hieronymites, Jesuates, Hermits of Pietro Gambacorta...).

To reflect on such problems, we therefore propose a series of questions (to be addressed in an entirely free and unfettered way) regarding the influence of mendicant identity on groups that were not mendicant as such, but that we may define as “unconventionally mendicant”.

In this type of experience, from the point of view of its presence on the urban scene, certain features should be kept in mind:

- the typology of useful sources for reconstructing the forms of life, organisation and contexts of activity;
- the practice or otherwise of collecting alms (their forms and chronology);
- topothetic choices and forms of settlement: do these include urban, peri-urban, near minor centres, and properly rural-eremitic ones? is there testimony of conflicts regarding settlement in urban areas where mendicant settlements were already present?

- the presence and consistency of a patrimony (are they endowed with a patrimony? Is there a recognised property? What does it mean and what are the consequences of property? Is there only a convent seat and garden? Or a property on lease?);
- incomes (verification or otherwise of an annual income, above all from will executors);
- forms of government (how do they govern themselves? Definitions of structures and forms of authority; government of “experience”; relations between communities of different premises; a mandate for a superior or other position of annual duration, or for a fixed period, or for life);
- the “motivational” aspect: what determines the success, including from the point of view of the recruitment, of these mendicant experiences in comparison with those of superior mendicants in specific contexts?
- hagiographic cults and strategies: do they refer to specific cults or do they promote the memory of exemplary figures of founders or members who have undertaken the mendicant experience?
- the urban and social scene: what are the networks of local relations, in particular the relationship with the aristocracy? (Are there difference on this point with the superior mendicants?);
- the relationships with the papacy and local episcopacy/churches;
- which “identifying lexicon” is used for these mendicant experiences in the papal registers, including before 1274? Alternatively, with which terms do the citizen’s institutions, notaries and private documents use to identify them?
- what type of support do they receive from city institutions? In what do the favours expressed by communes and citizens distinguish and assimilate them to the mendicants, to monastic experiences, to the centuries-old churches?
- the “mendicant models”: these mendicant experiences look, consciously or not, to the “mendicant model,” positively or negatively, with the desire to distinguish themselves, whilst retaining their own proper characteristics;
- how do these mendicant experiences position themselves with respect to the inclusion of lay people? What bearing and weight does the laical component have within the group?

Deadlines and essay requirements

The QSRM issue dedicated to the *Unconventionally “Mendicant”* will be number 2, 2024. Due to the large number of proposals received, it will also be possible to extend the issue to 1, 2025.

In order for them to be subjected to revision, essays submission must be made by **October 2023** (a potential second issue would foresee submission by February 2024). The deadline for the admission of proposals to the project is on the **30th June 2022**. A proposal title with a brief research abstract must be submitted to the editorial team by this date.

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Other than Italian, the essays may be written in English, French or Spanish.

As a guideline, the essays (in the absence of other requirements) should be 60,000 characters (spaces and footnotes included) following the editorial norms of QSRM, which will be sent to all participants.

It will be possible to provide illustrations, pull-outs and graphics, in agreement with the editors. The editors will be available for further clarification.