

# Bernardino of Sienna and the Valois

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Fig. 1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 449, fol. 100.



Fig. 2. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 449, fol. 94.



Fig. 3. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 449, fol. 56v.

## Introduction

The sermon *Les douze périls d'enfer* highlights the fifteenth-century interest in the art of dying well. Drawing upon textual and visual evidence, this poster focuses on the origin of the sermon, specifically its connections with the Observant Franciscans and the Valois monarchy. The French text is demonstrated to be an augmented translation of a Latin sermon by Bernardino of Sienna, whose canonization in 1450 may have served as impetus for the translation. Commissioned by a Valois queen, the sermon exemplifies royal support of the Franciscans.

## Valois Queen in the Prologue

In a prologue, the compiler praises the virtues of his royal patron and states a French queen named Marie with a son named Charles commissioned the work. As Vallet de Viriville noted, only Marie d'Anjou (1404-63), wife of Charles VII (r. 1422-61), mother of Charles of France (1446-72) and Louis XI (r. 1461-83), meets the criteria. In one illuminated copy of the sermon, a queen wears a skirt decorated with Marie d'Anjou's coat of arms. The manuscript produced for Marie has not been identified, but all known French copies of the sermon were owned by female members of the Valois family or reputed Valois allies.

## Franciscans in the Illuminations

The four surviving copies of *Les douze périls d'enfer* fail to record the sermon's author or translator, but their programs of illumination strongly suggest a Franciscan origin. For example, a copy produced for Charlotte of Savoy contains miniatures of friars preaching before the king of France and caring for an individual on his deathbed (Figs. 1 and 2). Another miniature shows a Franciscan standing piously beside a stream (Fig. 3). Its border includes medallions depicting events from the life of Saint Francis: he gives away his clothes, seeks papal sanction for his order, and receives the stigmata. These visual narratives supplement the textual content of the sermon, which does not relate any of these events but rather only mentions Francis in passing: once with Saint Benedict as authors of religious rules, once with Saint Dominic as founders of mendicant orders, and lastly as a textual authority. The Franciscans in the sermon's decoration strongly suggests a Franciscan origin for the text.

## Bernardino of Sienna Provides the Outline

The sermon is an elaboration on a Latin sermon outlined by the Observant Franciscan Saint Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444). *Les douze périls* derives from his *De duodecim periculis quae insperato superveniunt peccatoribus in ultimo fine*. There is no question that the saint's text is the foundation for the sermon because the infernal perils outlined in the two works match point by point (see table below).

Bernardino experienced enormous popularity as an itinerant preacher. He joined the Observants in 1402, and in the mid-1430s he retired to compile sermons like *De duodecim periculis*, which he recommended for Wednesday after the First Sunday of Lent. The sermons were not intended expressly to be preached, but rather to serve as resources for other preachers and their sermons. This was the case with *De duodecim periculis*, since its translator-compiler added numerous exempla appropriate to his aristocratic French audience. He added the prologue, as well as an entire chapter between the tenth and eleventh perils that advises princes on their responsibilities. This addition follows the tradition of the *miroir des princes* and cautions rulers to maintain justice and peace by surveying their administrators for whose actions they will be held accountable in the next life. The translation, datable to around 1455, may have been inspired by Bernardino's canonization by Pope Nicolas V in 1450, just six years after the saint's death.

Peril	Bernardino's Latin Text	French Translation	English Translation
	<i>De duodecim periculis quae insperato superveniunt peccatoribus in ultimo fine</i>	<i>Les douze périls d'enfer</i>	<i>The Twelve Perils of Hell</i>
	Et de talibus ponamus quatuor pericula prima:	Prologue	
One	primum est passionum alteratio et terribilis vexatio;	Le premier alterations et vexacions des perilz.	1) change and vexation by the perils
Two	secundum est caritatis privatio;	Le second est privation de charite et dilection.	2) the lack of charity and love
Three	tertium, peccatorum habituatio;	Le tiers habituacion de pechez.	3) the habit of sin
Four	quartum, servilis conditio.	Le quart servile condition.	4) a servile condition
	Addantur alia quatuor pericula duriora:		
Five	primum est diaboli impugnatio;	Le quint impugnation du dyable.	5) attack by the devil
Six	secundum, temporalium intricatio sive occupatio;	Le sixte des choses temporelles.	6) entanglement in temporal things
Seven	tertium, naturalium gratiarum consumptio;	Le septiesme consumption de graces naturelles.	7) consumption of natural graces
Eight	quartum, a Deo elongatio.	Le viii. <sup>e</sup> estre par peche de dieu eslongne.	8) to be remote from God due to sin
	Superaddantur alia quatuor pericula gravissima;		
Nine	primum, virtutum et bonorum abominatio;	Le ix. <sup>e</sup> de biens et de vertus abominacion.	9) distaste of good works and virtue
Ten	secundum, mentis alienatio et alteratio;	Le x. <sup>e</sup> alienacion de pensee.	10) alienation of thought
		Princes qui auez l'administracion de la chose publicque	
Eleven	tertium, iusta a Deo et a mundo derelictio;	Le xi. <sup>e</sup> estre de dieu et du monde iustement delaissee.	11) to be justly deserted by God and the world
Twelve	quartum et ultimum, temporis ablatio et cessatio	Le xii. <sup>e</sup> que le temps de pouoir faire penitance est oste et y a cession.	12) the lapse of time available in which one can make penance.

Bernardini Senensis, *Opera Omnia*, 1: 141-2. Bernardino organized his perils in three groups of four as noted in the table. French translation from Paris, BN, ms. fr. 449, fol. 5v. Sections added by entirely by compiler/translator.

## French Support of the Franciscan Movement

The Franciscans were well established in France by the time of the sermon's translation. According to *The Golden Legend*, Saint Francis (d. 1226) miraculously received the ability to speak French as a gift from God and changed his name from Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone. An early version of the saint's life states that his father was a cloth merchant conducting business in France when the saint was born, and another source suggests Francis's mother, Pica, was of French origin.

The first Franciscan convent in France was founded at Vézelay in 1217. However, by the end of the fourteenth century the order was in principle divided: Observants, like Bernardino, strictly following the rule of Saint Francis and recognized as a distinct order by Pope Leo X in 1517; and the Conventuals, following a monastic way of life and found more commonly in Italy. The first house in France to adopt the Observant rule was Mirebeau (reformed about 1390) and 11 Observant houses were established 1400-1420s with many following throughout the century.

Marie d'Anjou supported the friars minor, undoubtedly influenced by her mother's devotion to the Franciscans. In 1429 Marie, the future queen, welcomed Brother Richard to Orléans, as he, like Bernardino, preached devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. In 1445 Marie, as queen, was granted permission to establish a friary of Observant Franciscans on Montmartre outside of Paris. By mid-century she heard Mass daily celebrated by the Franciscan chaplain Louis la Clere, and in 1455 the Franciscan Jehan Raoul was her confessor. It is not difficult to imagine her confessor or priest suggesting a sermon by the recently canonized Observant Bernardino of Sienna, a sermon that stresses penance and in its augmented translation elaborates upon the obligations of the ruling class.

Valois devotion to Saint Francis and the Observants was not limited to the queen. Her son Louis XI and Charlotte of Savoy named two sons François (b. 1466 and 1472), and in 1481 Louis XI provided a gilt silver shrine to house the body of Saint Bernardino in Aquila. The same year Pope Sixtus IV granted Louis permission to found an Observant house, Ste. Maria de Angelis in Toulouse, which housed 42 friars in 1495.

The evidence demonstrates the Franciscan origin of the sermon and supports its Valois patronage.

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