Pope John XXII was both a lover and a critic of the Order of Friars Minor, and medieval Franciscan views of him were similarly ambivalent. The primary encounter friars had with this pope was in the (presumably positive) context of liturgical prayer: his canonization bull for Louis of Toulouse, Sol oriens, supplies the readings for the office on the saint’s feast found in all Franciscan breviaries after 1317; breviaries and missals often have material by or about this pope instituting the universal observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi and of Trinity Sunday; and numerous Franciscan liturgical books contain indulgenced prayers attributed to John XXII such as the Hours of the Cross or the Anima Christi. Beyond the realm of devotion, when the Franciscans were attacked over mendicant privileges in the fourteenth century, John XXII’s bull Vas electionis condemning the errors of the secular master Jean de Pouilly was a useful text to have to hand. And John’s bulls on poverty—however acerbic—were loyally copied out

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2 E.g. Rubrica corpus Christi. Iohannes episcopus…MS Naples BN VII. G. 66, fol. 74v; Cenci, Manoscritti francescani, 2: 624.

3 Scito autem quod anno Domini M CCC tricesimo primo, dominus Johannes XXIIus, de consilio fratrum suorum, ordinavit et statuit quod deinceps Romana et universalis ecclesia faceret festum solemnissimum de superbenedicta Trinitate divinarum personarum et divine essentie unitate in tribus divinis personis (MS Toulouse BM 343, fol. 132r).

4 E.g. Incipit officium de cruce domini nostri Iesu Christi compositum per d. Iohannem pappam MS Naples BN VI. F. 34, fol. 176v–177v; Cenci, Manoscritti francescani 1: 365.

5 E.g. Oratio pape Iohannis xxii. Anima Xristi sanctifica me…(MS Rome Biblioteca Angelica MS 2216, fol. 3r; described in C. Cenci, Bibliotheca manuscrita ad Sacrum Conventum Assisiensem (Assisi: Casa Editrice Francescana, 1981), 1: 246.

6 See, for example, the Franciscan miscellany in MS Dublin Trinity College 350 in Marvin L. Colker, Trinity College Library Dublin: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts, 2 vols. (Aldershot, UK: Published for Trinity College Library, Dublin by Scolar Press, 1991), 1: 743–46.
in *Bullarium* manuscripts alongside previous papal constitutions like Nicholas III’s *Exiit qui seminat* or Clement V’s *Exivi de Paradiso.* A systematic consideration of the circulation of texts attributed to John XXII in Franciscan manuscripts might offset the negative impression derived from the sources surrounding the poverty controversies of his reign which tend to cast him in the role of an “erring pope.” But, for better or for worse, it is the views of these contemporary sources that have exercised a determinative influence on John XXII’s reputation and on the assessment of his place in the history of the Order of Friars Minor. Such sources can be divided, *grosso modo*, into two groups which correspond to the two poverty controversies of the pontificate: the Spirituals and the Michaelists. What follows is a brief survey of the treatment of John XXII by each group and a consideration of their historical significance in light of recent scholarship.

Among the sources emanating from the ambit of the Franciscan Spirituals, the most important is surely Angelo Clareno’s *History of the Seven Tribulations of the Franciscan Order.* As an eyewitness to events in Avignon in 1317, Angelo paints a remarkably life-like portrait of Pope John XXII. The dynamic of his *History* also provides a clear contextual framework for understanding the “tribulation” shaking the Order at the beginning of the pontificate: the ancient factionalism of a rigorist minority victimized by lax superiors had become a full-blown schism in Southern France during the twenty-seven-month interregnum after the death Clement V in 1314. Unlike previous pontiffs who tended to be “at worst gullible and at best well-meaning but ineffectual,” John was (in Angelo’s eyes and in David Burr’s words) “nobody’s patsy”; he “was fully informed as to what was going on amongst the Franciscans” and “pursues an independent strategy of his own devising” which is to summon the Spirituals to a hearing but not to listen to what their leaders had to say. Angelo’s representation of John as an independent actor, however, tends to minimize the fact that the pope was actually

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7 E.g. MS Naples BN VII. G. 26; see Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani*, 2: 583.