Sources Merician

Writings of Angela Merici

Angela Merici did not write, but dictated her works to Gabriele Cozzano, her faithful secretary and the clerk of the Company. Her three works are the Rule, the Counsels, and the Testament. Designed as rules of life for the Company of Saint Ursula, through the centuries they have also guided the spirituality and animated the pedagogy of the many branches of Ursulines (including nuns and congregations) spread all over the world.

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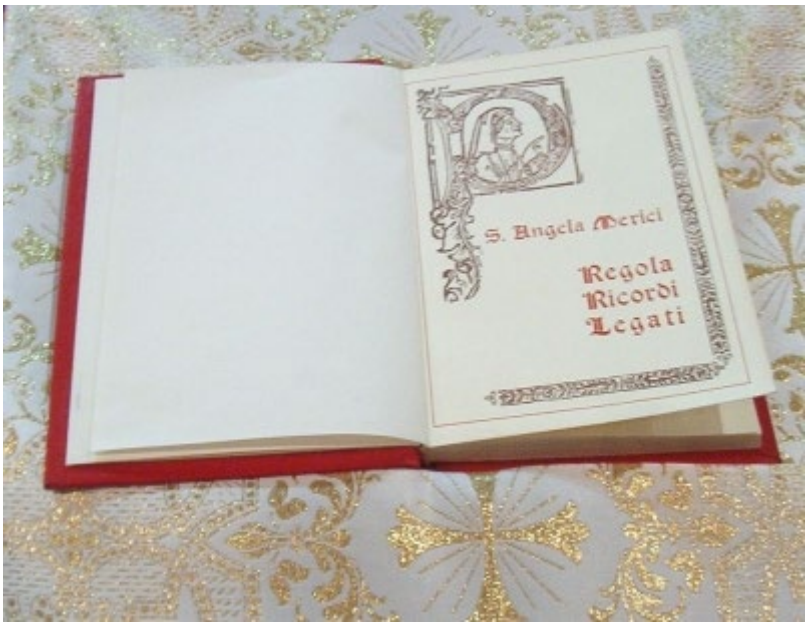

1. The Rule

The first text, in order of time, is surely the Rule, designed for all the members of the Company of Saint Ursula.

The search for the original manuscript, or for the manuscript approved by the diocesan authority, has been unsuccessful up till now. Traces of it must have been lost in the course of the Process of Canonization, that is, after 1770. In fact, Antonio Guelfi, a priest and «president of the Public Library» of Brescia, claimed during the Process examination that he had seen it,

The oldest version of the Rule is the manuscript of the Trivulsian Library of Milan, entitled:

- Regula della Compagnia de Santa Orsola.

“Paper manuscript with a parchment cover; 19.8 x 13.6 cm. Two blank folios plus 2 sections, each with 8 folios, thereby making a total of 36 pages. The first 4 pages and the sixth are blank. It is catalogued: codice 367, scaff.le n. 82, palch.to n.2.

“On page 5 is the title and on pp. 7-13 there is a dedication “al lettore”. The index (“Indice delli capittoli della regola”) is on p. 14. On p. 15 (that is, on the double p. 1 on the right hand side, according to the original numbering with the number put at the top of each right hand page, starting with the first page) is the beginning of the text of the Rule. The “ex libris” on the cover carries the

library coat-of-arms and the catalogue number. On the first blank sheet a small leaf r-v (15.7x9.3 cm) is attached with some notes of explanation, written in two different hands.

“This Regola is divided into a Prologue and 11 chapters.... [so was] the handwritten Rule which was sent to Rome for the Process of Canonization and which is described in the Summarium Additionale...”,

Because of some particulars of the codex, we can likely date this manuscript after December 11, 1545.

The first printed edition is:

-Regola della nova Compagnia di Santa Orsola di Brescia per la quale si vede come si habbiano a governar le vergini di detta Compagnia acciocchè vivendo christianamente possino doppo la lor morte fruir i beni di vita eterna. In Brescia, by Damiano Turlino, undated; 16 unnumbered folios, 21 x 15.3 cm.

This is the first edition to be printed. At least three copies of it are known: in the Queriniana Library of Brescia (colloc. EE: 1. m. 1); in the Vatican Library (colloc. Propaganda III. 262-int. 1); in the British Museum of London (collection 4061 e. 29/1). It can be dated as far back as 1569, according to the handwritten note at the bottom of the frontispiece of the London copy: «Nell’anno 1569, come consta dal Libro de’ Conti nell’Archivio di S. Orsola di Brescia, fol. 73 tergo»,

-Regola della nova compagnia di Santa Orsola di bressa per la quale si vede, come si habbiano a governar le vergini di detta compagnia, acciocche vivendo christianamente, possino doppo la lor morte fruir i beni di vita eterna.

This manuscript Rule is in the register introduced after October 28, 1572: Secondo Libro della Ven: Compagnia di S. Orsola di Brescia.

2. Counsels – Testament

These are the other two works, both very short, dictated by Angela to Gabriele Cozzano. As the originals no longer exist, we gather their description from the Acts of the Process of Canonization.

Arricordi che vanno alli Colonelli or, as they are usually called, the Counsels. They consist of a Prologue and 9 Counsels. A transcript of them can also be found in the Secondo Libro Generale, but with alterations and variations in linguistic quality, as the archaic writing, closer to Brescian speech, was often substituted here for more literary forms,

Testamento della Madre Suor Angela or, as it is sometimes called, Legacies. It consists of a Prologue and 11 Legacies,

The copy which is to be found in the Secondo Libro Generale is appreciably different and is closer to the first printed edition: Testamento della Reverenda Madre Suor Angela di Brescia, from the heirs of Damiano Turlino, Brescia 1574.

There is also a copy in the Vatican Library, but the text of this edition differs from the original, and – this time – not only from the point of view of linguistic style. Legacies 9, 10, and 11, in fact, have each been divided into two, so that the work ends up with a Prologue, 13 Legacies, and a conclusion; but at the same time, these divisions and the way they have been joined together have led to a change in the original thought.

The Counsels and the Testament were often placed in the Rule books of the Company and in those of the religious of the Order of Saint Ursula or added in the appendix.

WRITINGS OF ANGELA MERICI

Writings of Angela Merici[1]

Angela Merici did not write, but dictated her works to Gabriele Cozzano, her faithful secretary and the clerk of the Company. Her three works are the *Rule,* the *Counsels,* and the *Testament*. Designed as rules of life for the Company of Saint Ursula, through the centuries they have also guided the spirituality and animated the pedagogy of the many branches of Ursulines (including nuns and congregations) spread all over the world[2].

1. The Rule

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- *Regula della Compagnia de Santa Orsola*.
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"This *Regola* is divided into a Prologue and 11 chapters.... [so was] the handwritten Rule which was sent to Rome for the Process of Canonization and which is described in the *Summarium Additionale...*" [4].
Because of some particulars of the codex, we can likely date this manuscript after December 11, 1545.

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[1] Drawn from L. MARIANI - RI TAROLLI - ROLLEYNAEVE, *Angela Merici: Contribution towards a Biography*, trans. Sr. Ignatius Stone, OSU, Milan 1989.
[2] For the setting of the time when the first editions of the Rules were edited, see in G. BELOTTI, *La Compagnia di sant'Orsola dalla crisi al consolidamento (1540-1600)*, in G. BELOTTI- X. TOSCANI (eds), *La sponsalità dai monasteri al secolo. La diffusione del carisma di sant'Angela nel mondo*, Brescia 2009.
[3] Vatican Secret Archive (ASV), S. C. *Rituum, Processus*, 341, f. 710 r.
[4] MARIANI - RAROLLI - OEYNAEVE, pp. 19-22.

beni di vita eterna. In Brescia, by Damiano Turlino, undated; 16 unnumbered folios, 21 x 15.3 cm.
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Manuscript Rule of 1572
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[5] TERESA LEDÓCHOWSKA OSU, *La data esatta della prima Regola della Compagnia di S. Orsola pubblicata a Brescia presso Damiano Turlino*, in «Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia» 1971, pp. 131-135.
[6] State Archive of Brescia (ASBs), Fondo di Religione, Compagnia di S. Orsola, ff11v-18r. This Rule was published by P. GUERRINI, *S. Angela Merici e la Compagnia di S. Orsola,* in «Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Brescia», Brescia 1936, pp. 90-101.
[7] ASV, S. C. *Rituum, Processus*, 341, ff. 946v-953r.
[8] Ibid, ff. 953r-958v.
[9] Biblioteca Vaticana, Propaganda III. 262. int. 2.

The *Counsels* and the *Testament* were often placed in the Rule books of the Company and in those of the religious of the Order of Saint Ursula or added in the appendix.