

The goal of this project is to study the set of documents created at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, usually referred to as the *Book of the blessed Angela of Foligno (Liber beatae Angelae)*. Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) was one of the greatest mystics of the Western Christianity, a Franciscan tertiary and ascetic, who lived in Umbria surrounded by a group of Franciscan friars, her disciples or “sons”. They collaborated with her in producing the *Book*, which describes her mystical experiences and spiritual teachings. The *Book* was surrounded by suspicions after its creation as well as her main protagonist and co-author, Angela herself. Most probably, it was due to the association with the two heterodox currents, developing within the Franciscan order at the time, the so called Free Spirit movement and the Spiritual Franciscans. Both those movements emphasized individual freedom, the radical experience of God and criticized the mediating authority of the hierarchy of the Church. The project will study the presence of the ideas of both the Free Spirit and the Spiritual Franciscans in Angela’s *Book* as well as the links between Angela and her circle and those two heterodox movements.

The research team will study the subject from different angles and with different methodological approaches. We plan to transcribe one of the oldest manuscripts of the *Arbor vitae*, the work of one of the most famous Spiritual Franciscans of the time, Ubertino of Casale, the friend and disciple of Angela, to study the connections of this work with the *Book* of Angela. We also intend to study her links to the existing groups of Franciscans in Umbria, both the Free Spirits and the Spirituals. We also plan to study the links of the *Book* with the Eastern monastic tradition, knowing that some of the important Spirituals traveled East and knew Greek. Another facet of the project will be a philosophical and a psychological study of the mystical experience described in the *Book*.

The reason for this project is the fact that the *Book* of Angela hasn’t been thoroughly studied in terms of its relationships with the Free Spirit and the Spiritual Franciscans, even though there has been an increasing interest in this work as well as in the Franciscan heterodox movements in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. The project will become a part of a larger research on this subject conducted in Europe, especially in France and Italy, in recent years. The publications which will result from it will contribute to a fuller understanding of both Angela of Foligno’s *Book* and of a larger Franciscan *milieu* of her time.