

Sant'Angelo Di Panzo Near Assisi

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"S. Angelo di Panzo presso Assisi"

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The Place Name

a) Panzo.

The place name *Panzo* can almost certainly be traced back to the Latin name *Pantius*. It is not attested in antiquity,¹ but is well-documented in the 12th and 13th centuries. Place names of similar origin are: *Panzano*, in the Assisian,² Tuscan,³ and Spanish⁴ territories, and *Pancy*, in the French area.⁵ The anthroponym *Panzo* is frequently mentioned in old Assisian documents, starting at least from the year 1106, when "Panzo and Guido, brothers, sons of the late Rainerio" are mentioned.⁶ There is also mention of a "Panzo di Rainerio" in an act of the abbey of Santa Croce di Sassovivo, in the territory of Foligno, dating from 1114.⁷ A parchment from the Cathedral of Assisi of 1187 mentions the "Sons of Panzo,"⁸ who are probably Matteo and Rufino di Panzo. They are recorded in other Assisian documents that date from 1228 to 1235.⁹ There is a record of a Panzo, son of Ugone, in another act of the cathedral of Assisi from the year 1151.¹⁰ There is ample witness to a number of people named *Pancius*, *Panzus*, *Panáus* and

¹Cf. Gerhard Rohlfs, *Studi e ricerche su lingua e dialetti d'Italia* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1972), p. 37.

²Cf. Arnaldo Fortini, *Nova vita di San Francesco* (Assisi: Tip. Porziuncola, 1959).

³Cf. Rohlfs, p. 37.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Archives of San Rufino, Asissi (= ASRA), fasc. II, n. 17; cf. Fortini, *Nuova vita*, II, p. 396.

⁷Cf. *Le carte dell'Abbazia di S. Croce di Sassovivo*, I (1023- 1115), edited by Giorgio Cencetti, (Perugia: Università degli Studi, 1976), p. 301.

⁸ASRA, fasc. II, n. 143; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 397.

⁹Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 397.

¹⁰ASRA, fasc. II, n. 104; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, III, p. 44.

their relatives in the papers of S. Croce di Sassovivo (still being edited), which extend from 1023 to 1231,¹¹ and in the income register of the same Benedictine abbey, beginning in 1155 and extending to 1230.¹² *There is also notice of a Panáus Rainerii* in the *Libro dei banditi* of Perugia for the year 1258.¹³

The medieval attestation to this anthroponym, in an area that extends from Foligno to Perugia with Assisi in its center, is more than sufficient to demonstrate that it is from this and not from a *Sanctus Angelus Pacis*, or "Holy angel of peace"—as an ancient legend had it¹⁴—that the name of the place in which we are interested was derived.

b) *Sant'Angelo*

The cult of St. Michael the Archangel or, more simply, of Sant'Angelo, is very old. In Umbria, it goes back especially to the fifth century and the time of the Lombard domination, following the conversion of this people to Catholicism.¹⁵

In the diocese of Assisi, according to the *Rationes decimarum Italiae* of 1333,¹⁶ there were 13 churches, monasteries and chapels named "Sant'Angelo," the same number as those named "San Giovanni" and surpassed only by the number called "Santa Maria."¹⁷ Fortini documented more than 20 of them.¹⁸

Based on what we have said about the anthroponym "Panzo," which is certainly of Latin stamp, and about the naming of churches "Sant'Angelo," probably of Lombard derivation, we can believe without doubt that the composite place name "Sant'Angelo di Panzo" goes back to a period before 1000, and its origin is probably to be sought in a place settled by members of

¹¹See the name indexes in the volumes edited by the Università degli Studi in Perugia with the cooperation of the Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria and published beginning in 1976, ed. by G. Cencetti (I), V. de Donato (II), R. Capasso (III), Attilio Bartoli Langeli (IV), R. Roselli (V), A. de Luca (VI), and G. Petronio Nicolai (VII).

¹²*Libro di censi del sec. XIII dell'abbazia de S. Croce di Sassovivo*, ed. by R. Capasso, (Perugia: Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria, 1967), pp. 18, 47, 85, 94, 96, 90, 100, 113, 126-27.

¹³Cf. Attilio Bartoli Langeli, M. P. Corbucci, "I 'libri dei banditi' del comune di Perugia (1246-1262)," in *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria*, (Perugia, 1978), pp. 123-380.

¹⁴Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 396-97.

¹⁵Cf. *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, (Rome: Pont. Univ. Lateranense, 1967), IX, col. 410-416.

¹⁶Cf. Alberto Grohmann, "Per una tipologia degli insediamenti umani nel contado di Assisi," in *Assisi al tempo di San Francesco: Atti del V Convegno della Società internazionale di Studi francescani*, Assisi, October 13-16, 1977, (Assisi: Tipografia Porziuncola, 1978), p. 109.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Fortini, *Nova vita*, IV (Indici), pp. 186-87.

the same family. After all, its position on the ridges of Mt. Subasio, its southern exposure, and its abundance of spring water fully justify the choice of this place for human settlement from ancient times on, as is indeed proved by some traces of Roman walls, probably the remains of a villa.

There are also some Latin inscriptions here, like this one, of the *gens Propertia*:

C. Propertius C. L.
epaenus
caetronia L
aur

found "in the foundations of the ruined church of S. Angelo not far from the summer house (of Panzo)."¹⁹

The Ancient Place Name "Panzo"

While the medieval anthroponym "Panzo," as we have seen, is quite widespread in a vast area, the same cannot be said for the place name derived from it, attested, in this part of Umbria (saving proof to the contrary) only in the territory of Assisi. There is mention of this place name from the first years of the 12th century. An act of 1110 mentions the sale of two pieces of land, "which are located in the area of Panze, in a place called Patuli."²⁰ In another act of 1119, there is notice of another piece of land, situated "in Panze, in a place named after the house of Giro"²¹ In 1127, among thirteen lots of land granted in perpetual lease by the Church of San Rufino of Assisi to Rainerio the son of Pietro. This *petia* of land was situated at Panze "above the house of the sons of Giovanni di Prodo...in a place which once belonged to Giro and next to the Rigo Secco."²² A piece of land in "the place called Panxe" and bordering on one side the "channel from which the water flows," is documented in 1129.²³

In 1131, a man named Berardo granted a vineyard and five lots of land to the hospital of San Rufino "as alms for the poor." They were located "in Panze in the place called Pratali, on the hill which once belonged to Giovanni Massaio."²⁴ An act of the following year mentions a piece of land located in the

¹⁹Cf. Evelyn Bormann, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, XI, p. 804, n. 5519.

²⁰ASRA, fasc. VIII, n. 66; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396.

²¹ASRA, fasc. II, n. 52; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396.

²²ASRA, fasc. II, n. 68, cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396.

²³ASRA, fasc. II, n. 72, cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 396.

²⁴ASRA, fasc. II, n. 73; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396 and III, p. 282.

same place called Panzo.²⁵ For other attestations to the place name in the 12th and 13th centuries, see Arnaldo Fortini.²⁶

The same place name is present, with other variants, in other expressions like: *molles Panái*, that is, "marsh land of Panzo,"²⁷ *fossa Panzi*²⁸ or *fovea Panái*,²⁹ (that is "the hollow of Panzo"), *fossatum Panzi* ("the ditch of Panzo"),³⁰ and *saxum cupum de Panzo*, ("dark rock of Panzo").³¹

The Bailia [District] Of Panzo

In the census of households of the bailie [districts] of the Comune of Assisi of 1232 the territory of Panzo turns out to have been part of the "district of San Savino."³² But in the Assisi statutes of 1469 (which at times attest to conditions even several centuries earlier), this territory, together with the territories of San Potente, San Martino di Argentana and Salceto, made up the "district of Panzo, S. Potente, San Martino and Salceto."³³ Its boundaries are indicated thus:

The said bailia [district] starts at the ditch of the Comune near the new gate of Santa Chiara. It goes along the road that leads to the villa of Spina up to the della Francesca triple crossroad near the property of Master Nicola di Lello di Freglio. It then goes along the same Francesca [road] up to the triple crossroad situated near the property of Cecce di d. Guidone, the prior of San Rufino, where there was once a tower. It then goes up by the same road up to the drainage ditch of the Camorata fountain, and by the same ditch along the road by which one goes from the city of Assisi as far as the castle of Spello at the bottom of the property of Master Ricardo di Master Toma and of Ciccolo di Piccardo. Then it goes by the same ditch up to the *chioca* by which one goes to the fountain of Santa Chiara and by the same *chioca* up to *rivo secco*, that is, to the small torrent that comes from the small torrent of Panzo, and issues at the foot of Mt. Subasio by the said "*pandine*" as far as the wall of the city of Assisi; and arrives at the new gate of Santa Chiara. On condition that the property of the people of the city of Assisi and its surrounding countryside and of the foreigners residing within the same confines

²⁵ ASRA, fasc. II, n. 80; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396 and III, p. 283.

²⁶ Fortini, *Nova vita* II, pp. 396-97.

²⁷ Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 396.

²⁸ Cf. *Magnifice Civitatis Assisii Statutorum*, (Perugia: H. F. B. de Cartulariis, 1543), lib. V, rub. 85.

²⁹ Archives of the Sacro Convento, Assisi (=ASCA), Str. VIII, n. 24; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 400.

³⁰ Cf. *Magnifice Civitatis Assisii Statutorum* lib. V, rub. 84.

³¹ Archivio Comunale, Assisi (=ACA), M. I; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, III, p. 149.

³² ACA N. *Dative*, n. I, C. II; cf. Grohmann, *Per una tipologia*, cit. pp. 230-31.

³³ Cf. *Magnifice Civitatis Assisii Statutorum* lib. V, rub. 84.

are in the said district, these districts from now on are joined to the *bailia* [district] of San Savino.³⁴

After 1469, then, the *bailia* [district] of Panzo once again became part of the *bailia* [district] of San Savino, as it had once been.

Some topographical facts about this locality emerge from the statutes. The first is that there is an abundance of water there, since the Camorata spring, the small torrent of the same name, the Rio Secco, the small torrent of Panzo and the Santa Chiara spring are located there. This last, according to Fortini, is none other than the Panzo spring, made famous by St. Clare's stay in the area.³⁵ Another observation is in regard to the presence of a *clocha*, which goes to the Santa Chiara spring: but this is not a road, set between two banks, as Fortini holds,³⁶ rather it is an aqueduct.³⁷

The Old Church of S. Angelo Di Panzo

Beyond the information contained in the *Legend of St. Clare*—which we will discuss later on, and which dates back to 1212—the oldest information about the church of S. Angelo di Panzo dates from 1217, the year in which Pope Honorius III, sanctioning and confirming the arbitration of Cardinals Ugolino and Cincio in the lawsuit between Guido, the bishop of Assisi, and the canons of San Rufino, listed the churches dependent on the cathedral, among them the church of Panzo.³⁸ In addition to this church, the nearby church of San Potente was also a dependency of San Rufino.³⁹

³⁴Ibid. cf. L. V. Patella, F. Rambotti, "Bailie e frazioni geografiche nel territorio di Assisi. Due diversi aspetti di partizione territoriale," in *Orientamenti di una regione attraverso i secoli: scambi, rapporti, influssi storici nella storia dell'Umbria*: Atti del X Convegno di Studi umbri, Gubbio, May 23-26, 1976, (Perugia: Università degli Studi, 1978), pp. 462-63.

³⁵Fortini, *Nova vita* I-I, p. 433, and II, p. 401.

³⁶Ibid., II, p. 402.

³⁷The *clocha* mentioned in the *Statuti*, lib. V, rub. 84 "as far as the *clocha* that goes to the fountain of St. Clare along the same *clocha* up to the Rivo Secco or ditch that goes to the ditch of Panzo," rather than indicating a "*cloaca*" (cf. U. du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis*, t. II, Venetiis, 1737, col. 656), or a "sewer" (C. Battisti, G. Alessio, *Dizionario Etimologica Italiano*, Firenze, Ed. G. Barbera, 1975, II, p. 904, s.v. *chioca*), should instead have the meaning of "water main" that is, "aqueduct." This is because a "*cloaca*" could not have gone from a lower point, like Assisi (445 m. above sea level) to a higher point—even if only slightly higher—like Panzo (456 m. above sea level), while an aqueduct can descend from the spring of Panzo toward the city.

³⁸ASRA, fasc. IX, n. 1; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 398, and III, pp. 594-96.

³⁹Ibid.

In 1346, the church of S. Angelo "of the hollow of Panzo" was enlarged.⁴⁰ In that year, in fact, a legacy was left to it and to the church of S. Angelo di Gabbiano for an enlargement: "for works and for the enlargement of the works."⁴¹ (The church of S. Angelo would be rebuilt, but at another time, in 1604, through the work of the Bonacquisti, the counts of Panzo).

A Benedictine monastery for women was said to have been built next to this church in ancient times;⁴² but we lack documents confirming that it belonged to this order.⁴³ Loccatelli,⁴⁴ Cristofani,⁴⁵ Fortini⁴⁶ and others believed that it was a Benedictine monastery. A legend even arose about the origin of a monastery in the palazzo of Panzo, which Angeli collected and tells as follows.

In olden times there was a palazzo on this site; the remains of this structure show that it was a magnificent one. Two brothers, citizens, blood brothers, dwelt there. On account of the division of their temporal goods, they seethed with hatred for each other, and at the instigation of an evil demon, one of them plotted against the other's life. One day both wearing arms, raging with anger, they began to fight. Immediately an angel sent by God shone between them. His appearance struck terror into the brothers, and they fell to the ground at his feet. After the heavenly messenger had lifted them up, sweetly admonished them, gently re-proved them, and brought them to fraternal peace, they knelt in his presence, embraced each other, and bound together by a brotherly kiss, they lived from then on in loving harmony. When their souls had been reconciled, in a breath? [flatim] the angel left them and vanished.⁴⁷

⁴⁰Cf. C. Cenci, *Documentazione di vita assisiana 1300-1530*. (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura), 1974, p. 99.

⁴¹ASCA, Str. VIII, n. 24; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita II*, p. 400. Only a few traces remain of the church of S. Angelo on the west side of the modern complex: two walls with apses (one apse is on the long side and one on the short side with the opening, which makes us think of two different successive layouts of the little church in the period after an enlargement was made to the church—was it the one recorded above, in 1346?—) and a little raised window surrounded by borders of travertine on the east side. This corresponds to a open space or corridor, which has been filled in for some time, which must once have functioned as a place set apart, from which the nuns took part in liturgical ceremonies.

⁴²Cf. V. Loccatelli, *Vita di S. Chiara di Assisi* [sic], (Assisi, Ed. tip. Sgariglia, 1854), p. 90; A. Cristofani, *Delle storie di Assisi, Libri sei*, (Assisi, Stab. Tip. Metastasio, 1902), p. 34.

⁴³Cf. M. Sensi, "Monasteri benedettini in Assisi. Insediamenti sul Subasio e abbazia di S. Pietro," in *Aspetti di vita benedettina nella storia di Assisi*: Atti del Convegno, 12-13 settembre 1980, (Assisi, Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 1981), pp. 48-49.

⁴⁴Loccatelli, *Vita di S. Chiara*, p. 41.

⁴⁵Cristofani, *Delle storie di Assisi*, p. 34.

⁴⁶Fortini, *Nova vita II*, p. 398.

⁴⁷F. M. Angeli, *Collis Paradisi amoenitas, seu Sacri Conventus, Assisiensis historiae*, (Montefalisco: Typ. Seminarii, 1704), p. 100.

Perhaps the two brothers of the legend recall none other than "Panzo and Guido, blood brothers, sons of the late Rainerio," mentioned in the act of 1106 cited above.

St. Clare at Sant'Angelo Di Panzo

The fame of S. Angelo di Panzo is linked to St. Clare of Assisi. The sources relate that Clare, after being vowed to God before the altar of the Portiuncula, with Francis present, retired to the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse near Bastia in an attempt to escape from her relatives, who did not approve of her drastic decision to leave the world. When they pursued her, she did not yield to their violence and proved to be firm and immovable in her resolve.

After staying for several days at San Paolo—*paucis interiectis diebus*⁴⁸—she moved "to the church of San Angelo di Panzo,"⁴⁹ located on the slopes of Mt. Subasio. St. Francis, Brother Philip and Brother Bernard conducted her there.⁵⁰ It was the end of March, 1212.⁵¹ The reasons for this transfer are not known; but it is possible that Clare wanted to lead a more retired life in a more solitary place.

Up until now, as has been said, all the historians of the Franciscan movement have written that S. Angelo di Panzo was at that time a Benedictine monastery for women. But neither the *Legend of St. Clare* nor her canonization process demonstrate this. They simply indicate it as the *ecclesia* [church] of Sant'Angelo di Panzo. San Paolo delle Abbadesse, on the other hand, is indicated in the *Legend* as a *locum* [place],⁵² a term which almost certainly indicates a monastery, even though we do not have any documents on its nature and the basis on which it was founded. The same thing must be said, moreover, for other so-called Benedictine monasteries in the countryside around Assisi, like Santa Croce al Ponte dei Galli and San Donato di Flebulle,

⁴⁸ *Legenda Sanctae Clarae Virginis*, ed. F. Pennacchi, (Assisi, Tip. Metastasio, 1910), p. 15. [English tr. in Regis Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1994), no. 10, p. 261].

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Cf. "Processo di canonizzazione di Santa Chiara," in *Fonti francescane*, Assisi: Movimento Francescano, 1977, II, p. 2365 [English tr. "The Process of Canonization" XII, 5 in Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, p. 174].

⁵¹ Cf. Thomas of Celano, *Vita di S. Francesco e S. Chiara d'Assisi. Trattato dei miracoli*, trans. by F. Casolini, 1976, p. 23 n.; D. Cresi, "Cronologia di S. Chiara," in *Studi francescani*, 25 (1953), pp. 260-67.

⁵² Cf. *Legenda Sanctae Clarae* ed. Pennacchi, p. 14.

where there were, it is true, female communities, but they were probably not part of any monastic order. That is, they were only made up of women penitents who lived together in places that in the more or less recent past could have also belonged to the Benedictine order.

This must also have been precisely the case with S. Angelo di Panzo. No document, in fact, tells us of a *monasterium* in regard to Sant'Angelo before Clare's arrival, much less is there documentation of a "Benedictine" monastery. Besides, if this had been the case, what reason would Francis have had for conducting Clare from one Benedictine monastery to another, which was, moreover, closer to the city, and therefore, more exposed to the anger of the young girl's family?

Arnaldo Fortini has written that Francis conducted Clare to Panzo because his family possessed some property in the neighborhood of the monastery, to be precise, a field "in the [asio] of San Martino di Argentana" and an enclosure [chiusura] located "at the Camorata fountain," both places situated in the *bailia* [district] of "Panzo, San Potente, San Martino and Salceto."⁵³ But this consideration seems to us to have little importance. On the other hand, we should bear in mind what Manselli writes:

Clare's various moves before the brothers settled at the Portiuncula are always determined, as seems to be apparent from the sources, by Francis, who moreover, as is clear from a notable number of indications and precise testimonies, was always near Clare with vigilant and loving attention, actually restraining her rigor and her commitment to severity as a penitent.⁵⁴

Returning to S. Angelo di Panzo's supposed nature as a Benedictine monastery, we are anxious to stress another fact: the dependency of this church on the Cathedral of San Rufino in 1217.⁵⁵ If it were a monastery, this dependency would not have existed. In fact, none of the other 49 chapels in the same list of dependencies of San Rufino seems to have been a Benedictine monastery. It is true that two bulls of Pope Nicholas II of May 2, 1278 are addressed "to the Abbess and nuns of the monastery of Panzo in Assisi, of the Order of St. Benedict."⁵⁶ It seems, however, that the specification *Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*

⁵³Arnaldo Fortini, "Documenti degli archivi assisani e alcuni punti controversi della vita di S. Francesco," in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 43 (1950), pp. 12-17.

⁵⁴R. Manselli, "La chiesa e il francescanesimo femminile," in *Movimento religioso femminile e francescanesimo nel sec. XIII: Atti del VII Convegno della Soc. internazionale di Studi francescani*, Assisi, September 11-13 1979, (Assisi, 1980), p. 246.

⁵⁵ASRA, fasc. IX n. 1; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* III, p. 596.

⁵⁶Cf. *Inventarium omnium documentorum quae in archivo Protomonasterii S. Clarae Assisiensis*

is an error.⁵⁷ Then what rule did the monastery obey, in so many acts documented beginning in 1232?⁵⁸ The question still awaits an answer based on the documents.

It is to be supposed, however, that Clare's first, very brief, experience at S. Angelo di Panzo must have actually been unusual: there are also, in fact, those who have spoken of her life as an *encarcerata*⁵⁹ and as a recluse⁶⁰ at Sant'Angelo di Panzo before living a cloistered life at San Damiano. But what were the motives that induced St. Clare to leave Sant'Angelo di Panzo and to move definitively to San Damiano? It does not seem possible to give an answer to this question either. The *Legend*, in fact, is somewhat vague on the subject, limiting itself to saying that Clare's mind "was not completely at peace" there,⁶¹ and so she left Sant'Angelo and "at the advice of St. Francis, she moved to the church of San Damiano."⁶²

However, there still remained a female community at Panzo, probably the same one that Clare found when she arrived there in 1212, and which later, through the influence of the nearby San Damiano, became a community of Poor Clares, who moved into the city at the end of the 13th century.

But, before concluding our remarks on the presence of St. Clare at S. Angelo di Panzo, it may be a good idea to recall an episode that took place

nunc asservantur," in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 1 (1908), I, p. 422.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, under note 2.

⁵⁸ Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 398.

⁵⁹ Cf. M. Sensi, "Incarcerate e penitenti a Foligno nella prima metà del Trecento," in *I frati penitenti di San Francesco nella società del Due e Trecento: Atti del 2 Convegno di Studi francescani*, Rome 1976, (Rome 1977), pp. 304-305. On this subject, Sensi writes: "In reality, Clare did not found the movement of the *incarcerate*, but she herself, perhaps, felt its fascination, that is, while she was at Panzo outside Assisi, at the foot of Mt. Subasio, after the Benedictine experience of San Paolo delle Abbadesse near Bastia."

And again, in regard to the little church of Panzo, Sensi states: "there is a lack of documents on the origins of this church, to which the women's foundation was joined. Certainly the statement, almost constantly repeated by Clare's historians, that when she took refuge in Panzo there was a monastery for women there, where the rule of St. Benedict was observed, is completely gratuitous. No document confirms the statement and the *Legend* itself speaks of *ecclesia* and not *monasterium*. It is likewise not documented that there were any cells for women at Panzo, but...one of the places that the cells were located was precisely next to rural churches..."

⁶⁰ Cf. R. Guarnieri, in *Movimento religioso femminile e francescanismo*, p. 16.

⁶¹ *Legenda Sanctae Clarae*, p. 15. [English tr: Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents* no. 10, p. 261].

⁶² *Ibid.*

there on April 2, 1212,⁶³ similar to the one that occurred to Clare herself at S. Paolo delle Abbadesse. The *Legend of St. Clare* says:

A defense—no less marvelous—followed this conversion. For while the joyous sisters were clinging to the footprints of Christ in the church of San Angelo in Panzo and she who had heard more from the Lord was teaching her novice-sister, new attacks by relatives were quickly flaring up against the young girls.

The next day, hearing that Agnes had gone off to Clare, twelve men, burning with anger and hiding outwardly their evil intent, ran to the place [and] pretended [to make] a peaceful entrance. Immediately they turned to Agnes—since they had long ago lost hope of Clare—and said: “Why have you come to this place? Get ready to return immediately with us!” When she responded that she did not want to leave her sister Clare, one of the knights in a fierce mood, ran toward her and, without sparing blows and kicks, tried to drag her away by her hair, while the others pushed her and lifted her in their arms. At this, as if she had been captured by lions and been torn from the hands of the Lord, the young girl cried out: “Dear sister, help me! Do not let me be taken from Christ the Lord!” While the violent robbers were dragging the young girl along the slope of the mountain, Clare prostrated herself in prayer with tears, begged that her sister would be given constancy of mind and that the strength of humans would be overcome by divine power.⁶⁴

In regard to this episode, it should be noted that the *rivolium*, beyond which Agnes could not be dragged, is perhaps the very same Rigo Secco, recorded in the old documents from 1127 on,⁶⁵ and—as we have seen—in the city statutes of 1469.⁶⁶

The Monastery of Sant'angelo Di Panzo Outside The Walls (13th Century)

The oldest documented notice that we have of the Poor Clare “monastery” of S. Angelo di Panzo is from 1232, the year in which an episode took place that in some way recalls the one in which Agnes, Clare’s sister, had played the leading role twenty years earlier. In that year, in fact, a “Gualiepuccio di Borgonone” was sentenced to pay a hundred pounds in *denari* because “along with Borgonone,” he had taken Madonna Alta from the monastery of

⁶³Cf. A. Vauchez, “L’idéal de sainteté dans le mouvement féminin franciscain aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles,” in *Movimento religioso femminile e francescanesimo*, p. 331.

⁶⁴*The Legend of St. Clare*, [no. 25, in Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents*, pp. 279-280].

⁶⁵Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita II*, pp. 396-99.

⁶⁶*Magnifice Civitatis Assisii Statutorum*, Lib. V, rub 84.

Panzo.⁶⁷ The monastery later figures in an act of 1233, when the comune of Assisi made some donations to the sisters of Panzo: "*sororibus de Panáo.*"⁶⁸

In 1238 Pope Gregory IX addressed a bull to the abbess and the convent of the Monastery of S. Angelo di Panzo "of the order of San Damiano in the diocese of Assisi," in which he confirmed the possessions and other goods of the monastery.⁶⁹ In 1259 Pope Alexander IV "conceded to the abbess and the nuns of the convent of the monastery of Panzo in Assisi the rule of the Poor Clares written by Ugolino, the bishop of Ostia and the protector of the Order of Friars Minor."⁷⁰ The *sorores* or *dominae de Panáo* also appear in a series of acts of the Sacro Convento of San Francesco, which date from 1257 to 1291.

There are legacies left in wills, in which the monastery of Panzo appears almost always next to Santa Chiara, Santa Caterina, de Picario, San Donato, Sant'Apollinare (all monasteries for women) and the convents of brothers of San Francesco and Santa Maria del Porziuncola: a sign that Sant'Angelo was among the most important religious institutions of the city and the entire diocese of Assisi.

The monastery of Panzo must have enjoyed a high reputation, judging from the numerous legacies left to it, especially in the 13th century. We should also recall that in the very long list of the gifts made by the Comune of Assisi at Christmas 1233, the *sorores de Panáo* are in fourth place, right after the Cathedral of San Rufino, the *opus* of San Francesco and that of San Damiano.⁷¹

Perhaps precisely because the monastery of Panzo was held in high regard by the whole city, the sentence inflicted in 1232 "on Gualiepuccio di Borbone for the accusation and declaration of the fact that he was with Borbone at the removal of Lady Alta from the monastery of Panáo,"⁷² is particularly severe: he actually had to pay a good hundred pounds, that is, half

⁶⁷ ACA, N. 1; cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 398 and III, p. 428.

⁶⁸ ACA, N. 1, cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, II, p. 398, and III, p. 429.

⁶⁹ Cf. A. Potthast, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, (Berolini: Tip. R. de Decker, 1874), p. 904. [For a translation of this papal document see *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, edited, revised and expanded by Regis J. Armstrong, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1994) pp. 374-375.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1440.

⁷¹ Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, III, p. 428-29.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 428.

the amount that a certain "Bonaventura the blacksmith" had to pay for committing homicide.⁷³

As we have said, the list of legacies in money and land to the monastery of Panzo in the second half of the 13th century is a long one. We will limit ourselves to recalling the names of a few of its benefactors.

In 1257 Altigrina, "daughter of the late Bernard," left 20 soldi.⁷⁴ In 1258 "Marsebilia, daughter of the late Iomuo," left 20 soldi.⁷⁵ In the same year, "Giovanna, daughter of the late Benvenuto di Bonaventura," also left 10 soldi.⁷⁶ In 1259 Angelo di Benciveni and his brother Domenico left 20 soldi.⁷⁷ In 1267 Beatrice, daughter of the late Oportolo Eldici, left 5 soldi.⁷⁸ In 1273 Marsebilia, daughter of the late Pravo assigned in her will "to the ladies of Panáo and their monastery" half of a piece of arable land located in the place named Valecchie on the condition that this piece of land would forever remain with the said monastery.⁷⁹

Other sums were left by: Leonardo Scesi in 1276,⁸⁰ "Benedetta, daughter of the late Forte" in 1277,⁸¹ Sibilia, daughter of the late Pietro Baruncelli in 1278,⁸² "Letitia, daughter of the late Albricio,"⁸³ "Chiara, daughter of the late Lord Paolo Ysipio,"⁸⁴ and Filippo di Morico⁸⁵ in the same year, Angelo di Giovanni di Vidone in 1281,⁸⁶ Bernardo di Ugolino di Contadino in 1282,⁸⁷ "Illuminata daughter of the late Michele" in 1283,⁸⁸ "Andreolo, son of the late

⁷³Ibid., p. 426.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 464.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 447.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 448.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 446.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 451.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 455.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 474.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 476.

⁸²Ibid., p. 477.

⁸³Ibid., p. 479.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 496.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 497.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 499.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 482.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 501.

lady Savia" in 1284 and Savia, the wife of the late Tommaso in the same year,⁸⁹ and "Alessio, son of the late Giovanni di Menadone" in 1291.⁹⁰

The monastery of Sant'Angelo also figures as a renter and seller of land, as in 1274, when Lady Lucia, the abbess of the monastery of Panzo confirmed the location of lots of land⁹¹ and in 1283, when "Criscarello di Granno, the agent for the monastery of Panzo," sold a piece of land located in Sant'Antonino.⁹²

Its legacies made the convent of Panzo rich, and it became the owner of a number of houses, as is attested by various documents. In an act of 1262, Pope Urban IV asked the *podestà* and the Comune of Assisi not to alienate the house that the late Filippo of Assisi, chaplain of the Apostolic See, had left to the abbess and the convent of the monastery of Panzo, of the order of San Damiano.⁹³ There is a notice of another house sold to the monastery of Panzo in a document from the year 1270, from the archives of Santa Chiara in Assisi, the substance of which is as follows.

On May 29 of that year, a certain "Lady Tenta, daughter of the late Benvegnato," in the presence of her husband Salvatico di Atto and her daughter Francesca and with their consent, before Ildebrandino di Porcaro, the captain of the comune and the people of Assisi, sold to brother Benvenuto, agent of the abbess and the nuns of the monastery of Panzo, a house located in the city of Assisi, in the parish of S. Stefano, the boundaries of which were: on the first side, the road, on the second the same monastery (more precisely, perhaps, a piece of property belonging to the monastery: probably the house mentioned in the bull of Urban IV of 1262), on the third the city wall, and on the fourth the property of the heirs of Vengolo and Scagno di Vengolo.⁹⁴

It is at this period, according to Fortini, that the monastery was moved from the locality of Panzo to this house within the city walls.⁹⁵ This place would later be the site of the diocesan seminary.⁹⁶ (But we would like to have

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 503-505, 505.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 491.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 404.

⁹²Ibid., p. 418.

⁹³Cf. Potthast, *Regesta*, II, p. 1490.

⁹⁴Cf. *Documenta inedita Archivi s. Clarae Assisii*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* V (1912), pp. 673-75.

⁹⁵Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita* II, . 399.

⁹⁶Ibid. On the monastery of Panzo, which was moved into the city, see also Cenci, *Documentazione*, III, (Indici), p. 300-301.

documents on this move and the year in which it took place). In 1284 Egidio, the son of this Scagno di Vengolo, now deceased, would sell a house located in Assisi, in the Porta San Francesco, to the monastery of Sant'Angelo di Panzo, having for boundaries the public road on two sides and on the other the property of the seller himself.⁹⁷ On March 12, 1292, Pope Nicholas IV addressed a bull to the abbess and the monastery of Panzo, in which he allowed the sisters "of the order of San Damiano to say the hours and hear Mass with closed doors, and without ringing the bells" at the time of an interdict.⁹⁸

On April 26, 1295, Andrea, son of master Riccardo, canon of the church of St. Maria Maggiore, was named arbiter to decide about the jurisdiction claimed by the bishop and the Cathedral Chapter on the monastery of S. Angelo di Panzo and stated that the sisters of the same "are in no way bound to obey or answer to the Lord Bishop and the Church of Assisi," even though the monastery, in exchange for this autonomy, would have to grant to the bishop a field he owned, located in Campana, "in the diocese of Assisi in the *contrada* of Spineto."⁹⁹

In proving that the nuns of Panzo moved into the city, it helps to recall that by the end of the 13th century the present arch of the Seminary would already be called "Portella di Panzo" because it was next to the monastery that had moved there.¹⁰⁰

The Palazzo of Panzo

The ancient legend, found by Angeli in the 18th century, according to which the two brothers living in Panzo engaged in a bitter struggle over the division of their property, mentions the fact that they lived in a palazzo, which is also mentioned in an act of 1437, regarding the sale to "Francesco Cincio, otherwise known as Sconfesse of Assisi, mercer," precisely of a "a palazzo or *casamentum* in the *bailia* [district] of St. Savino in the place called S. Angelo di Panzo."¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, III, p. 404.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 404-405.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 405.

¹⁰⁰Like S. Angelo di Panzo, other monasteries for women outside the city moved into Assisi, keeping their original names: S. Paolo delle Abbadesse, S. Apollinare, S. Quirico, S. Maria degli Episcopi, etc.

¹⁰¹Cenci, *Documentazione*, I, p. 533.

Angeli made it more clear: "In olden times there was a palace on this site; the remains of this structure show that it was a magnificent one."¹⁰² It was the same palazzo that the Bonacquisti had acquired and perhaps restored in the 17th century and that would be transformed into a villa in 1951 by the present proprietors, the Marconi.

The State of Abandonment of Sant'Angelo Di Panzo

From a summary made of the canonization process of St. Vitale we learn that in the 14th century there were a number of hermitages on Mt. Subasio, especially in the western, very woody part: "many hermits inhabited this mountain, for the pursuit of blessedness."¹⁰³ Among these were the hermitages of S. Angelo di Panzo, San Savino and San Potente de Caruncio, next to the hermitage of Santa Maria delle Viole, granted to San Vitale by the abbot of San Benedetto on Mt. Subasio.¹⁰⁴

The fact that it was used as a hermitage demonstrates that S. Angelo was almost abandoned in the middle of the fourteenth century, after the nuns moved into the city. This state of abandonment must have lasted through the whole of the 15th century. A document from 1423 confirms, in fact, that "an ancient road," located "in the *bailia* [district] of San Savino and the place named the hollow of Panáo" appeared to be no longer in use.¹⁰⁵ In a deed of sale from 1452 there is mention of "a piece of a deserted vineyard...near the hollow of Panáo"¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the ultimate demonstration of the state into which the zone of Panzo had fallen at the end of the 15th century is the fact that in 1471 permission was granted by the Comune of Assisi to make some lime pits "in the place called the hollow of Panzo."¹⁰⁷

Ancient Landowners in Panzo

The documents in the Assisi archives often carry the place name Panzo to indicate land and houses located in it that had been inherited, rented or sold.

¹⁰² Angeli, *Collis Paradisi*, p. 100.

¹⁰³ G. di Costanzo, *Disamina degli scrittori e dei monumenti riguardanti S. Rufino vescovo e martire di Assisi*, (Assisi: Tip. Sgarigliana, 1797), p. 432.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Cenci, *Documentazione* I, p. 429. In 1372 an inquiry was opened in regard to the officials in charge of the public works executed during the preceding years, among them the work on the road that goes "from the Maj spring to S. Angelo di Panzo" (*Ibid.*, I, p. 156).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 625.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 721.

The oldest of these acts are from the beginning of the 12th century. In 1119 Franco di Leo sold to the priest Franco, son of Asisio, a small piece of land located in Panzo, "in a place named after the house of Giro."¹⁰⁸ In 1127 the canons of San Rufino granted some pieces of land in perpetual lease to Rainerio, the son of Pietro, including one located in Panze, "above the house of the sons of Giovanni di Prodo."¹⁰⁹ In 1129 a certain Benedettone sold to the hospital of San Rufino, in the person of the priest Lord Franco, a piece of land located "in the place called Panxe" which was bordered on the first side by the "channel from which the water flows."¹¹⁰ In 1131 a certain Berardo gave "as alms to the poor" of the hospital of S. Rufino, in the person of the priest Franco and Benedetto, son of the late Martino, a vineyard and five small pieces of land located in the area called "Panxe in the place called Pratali, on the hill which once belonged to Giovanni Massario."¹¹¹ In 1132 Benedetto di Racza and Domenico di Benedetto sold to the same hospital, and through it to the same priest Franco, a piece of land located in Panzo.¹¹²

The chapel of S. Angelo di Panzo, as we have recalled above, was among the chapels belonging to the cathedral of San Rufino in Assisi and listed in a bull of Pope Honorius III.¹¹³ From a deed of November 27, 1253, in which Piccardo and Giovannetto, sons and heirs of Angelo di Pica, the brother of St. Francis, divided their property, we learn that the two brothers possessed a field "in the [asio] of San Martino di Argentana" and an enclosure at "the Camorata fountain," both places located in the *bailia* [district] of Panzo.¹¹⁴ In May 1395, a piece of land located in the *bailia* [district] of San Savino, "in the area called S. Angelo di Panzo," was acquired by a certain Lord Pietro di Maestro Pietro di Montegranaro.¹¹⁵ On January 14, 1423, Giovanna di Iacobuzio of Foligno, the wife of Lello di Nicoli Fiumi of Assisi, granted a piece of land to be worked in the *bailia* [district] of San Savino and in the area of the hollow of Panzo.¹¹⁶ In 1437 the same "Lady Giovanna, daughter of the late Iacobuzio di Martino di Foligno, sold to "Francesco Ciuccio, also known as Sconfesse, of Assisi,

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Fortini, *Nova vita*, III, p. 278.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 494-96.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 101-106.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Cenci, *Documentazione*, I, p. 242.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

mercer...a palazzo or *casamentum* in the *bailia* [district] S. Savino in the place called S. Angelo di Panzo" for 12 florins; but Francesco di Ciuccio immediately resold it at the same price to "Ubaldo di Giorgio Baldoli."¹¹⁷ From an act of 1452 it appears that the owner of a vineyard near the hollow of Panzo had been maestro Daniele di Venezia.¹¹⁸

From the beginning of the 17th century the old monastery seems to have belonged to the noble Bonacquisti family of Assisi,¹¹⁹ who acquired from their ownership of this property the title of "Counts of Panzo."¹²⁰ In fact, in 1604, Duke Ferrante Bonacquisti rebuilt the little church "with the same stones of the very old and very famous church of Sant'Angelo di Panzo," as is attested by this inscription still almost completely legible on the back wall of the 17th-century building:

D.O.M.
This church
named for St. Michael the Archangel
was erected from the foundation in this place
in the year 1604
by Duke Ferrante Bonacquisti
with stones from the very ancient and famous but ruined church
of Sant'Angelo di Panzo
moved from there
by commission

The Bonacquisti were tied to Panzo for more than two centuries, not only by reason of their ownership, but also by a visceral attachment to this place rich in history and enchantment, characterized by its spring waters, by its green and its silence, dominated by the overhanging Mt. Subasio and open to the Valley of Spoleto, about which Francis of Assisi could rightfully say that he had never seen "anything more beautiful."

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 533; Archivio Notarile Assisi, B 15, c. 96v and 97v.

¹¹⁸Cenci, *Documentazione*, II, p. 625.

¹¹⁹In Assisi, they lived on the south side of the Piazza del Comune, in the building in front of the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo, which took its name from them. On the architraves of the five windows on the first floor, an inscription is still visible, inspired by the family name, which reads: *Bona Acquisita / Mundana / Transitoria / Momentanea / vana* [worldly goods gained are transitory, fleeting, empty].

For information about the family, see: F. A. Frondini, *Famiglie di Assisi*, ms. Arch. della Cattedrale, Assisi: pp. 39-40.

¹²⁰Cf. G. Bensi, *Il castello di Casa Castalda e la sua Pieve*, (S. Maria degli Angeli: Tip. Porziuncola, 1974), p. 268.

The countesses of the house of Bonacquisti were an especially striking example of this attachment. In 1869, for example, Veronica, the daughter of Solone Campelli of Spoleto and "wife of the Lord Captain Ascanio Bonacquisti of Assisi of blessed memory," dictated her testament, in which she declared she wanted to be buried in the church of San Francesco in Assisi "in the same coffin where the body of the Lord Captain Ascanio of blessed memory was buried." Among the things she left "for charity to the church of Panzo," was "a dress of white brocade with gold trimming, that is, a dress and jacket." ('And this dress,' she declared, 'is my own, which my Lord Father of blessed memory made for me')...From this they are to make a drapery for the altar, and from the remaining part they are likewise to make the cushions for the service of the said altar," all at the expense of her heirs, "nor is it to be diverted to another use, for it is binding on the conscience" of the said heirs.¹²¹

The noble ladies of the Bonacquisti family always carefully looked after the little church of Panzo. This is demonstrated, for example, by the binding contract by which Don Gio. Panetta of Assisi was engaged on May 29, 1745 to serve as chaplain in the church of Panzo and to celebrate Mass there "on all holy days of obligation." In return, the countess Bonacquisti Cianconi committed herself "to give him annually at harvest time twelve fourths² of dressed² grain and little chestnuts?? [caldarelli], two and a half² of oil and everything else necessary to celebrate [Mass]"¹²²

From the *Campione delle terre* or "Daybook of lands" belonging to the Sacro Convento of San Francesco, drawn up and designed by G. A. Fontana in 1716-17, it seems that the Franciscans also possessed some pieces of land in the *bailia* [district] of S. Savino, near Panzo, in the place called Li Gorgghi and that they bordered on the property of none other than the noble "Bona Acquisti."¹²³

¹²¹ Archivio Vescovile di Assisi (=AVA), *Raccolta di Documenti, Decreti ed Atti*, AS n. XV, doc. n. 202, cc.n.n.

On the north side of the cloister of the dead, next to the basilica of S. Francesco, a gravestone in red stone of Assisi with two coats of arms (one with a plant and three stars, the other with two palms on three little mountains) carries the following epigraph: "de mitib.^s de bonaqs^{is} / a.d. m.d.c.x." and, on the four sides of the cornice: hic iacet ossa dni iosephi / de mitib.^s et dnae ricchae / de bonacq.^{is} uxoris fran.^s / filius faciedum curavit. [Here lie the bones of Lord Joseph, [de mitib.s] et lady? Ricca? de Bonacquisti, wife of Francesco? / her? son saw to having this made].

¹²² AVA, *Raccolta di Documenti, Decreti ed Atti circa la Giurisdizione Vescovile*, AS n. XXXI, c. 330r.

¹²³ ASCA, G. A. Fontana, *Campione delle terre del Sacro Convento della citta d'Assisi*, ms. 363, a. 1716-17, pp. 18-19.

In addition to the Bonacquisti, another noble family of Assisi, the Aluigi, also had property in Panzo. From a land register of the 18th century we learn, in fact, that Marcantonio Paoli, Francesco, Orazio and Muzio, the sons and heirs of Gio. Matteo Aluigi had a piece of densely wooded land in the *bailia* [district] of S. Savino, in the area called Panzo, bordering on the property of the church of San Rufino.¹²⁴

In 1933 the former monastery of Panzo became the property of the Brunelli family who acquired it from the SocietA Umbro- Marchigiana. Today it is the property of Doctor Ettore Marconi, a descendant of the Brunelli family.

The Aqueduct of Panzo

The pleasant location of Panzo is made even more pleasant by the presence of spring waters, which have been used since remote times. (Recently some scholars have advanced the hypothesis that the system of harnessing these springs might actually go back to the Etruscan period). It is certain that it was above all the presence of these waters that determined the construction of what was probably a Roman villa and later the medieval *palatium* and the monastery. For centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, Assisi has also supplied its own aqueducts with the springs of Panzo. For this reason, there were frequent repairs and restorations to them.

One example of these interventions—with a corresponding description of the aqueduct and the works—goes back to the first years of the 19th century, when Bernardino Barili, the Master mason hired as builder of the aqueduct" assumed "the undertaking by a public deed drawn up for the Acts of the Secretariat of the Comune on October 12, 1803. It was contracted and agreed that Barili was not only to restore the aqueduct of Panzo, or of San Rufino, but was also to carry out the work on the other aqueduct, called the Santa Chiara."¹²⁵

¹²⁴ACA, c. 11.

¹²⁵ACA, X 3, *Acquedotti*, p. 1.

The restoration of the aqueduct of Panzo was carried out during several periods: from 1803 to the first of December 1806,¹²⁶ and later from September 6, 1809 to October 30, 1810,¹²⁷ then again from October 30, 1810 to May 15, 1811¹²⁸ and then from May 15, 1811 to January 25, 1812.¹²⁹

The following description has been given of this structure:

The other Aqueduct, that is of Panzo, or San Rufino, also collects the water from several different springs a short distance from that place called Panzo, and in particular the springs that rise in the lands belonging to the Countess Francesca, the daughter of the late Ferrante Bonacquisti, are channeled into it. Although this Aqueduct receives the springs in the indicated beds, it has its beginning near the summer house of Panzo, belonging to the said Countess, where there is a Fountain belonging to her, which indicates that the waters contained in the Fountain once flowed in the said Aqueduct, to which they have been several times restored. That is, in a time of drought, when the said springs almost disappeared, it became necessary for the Counts of Bonaquisti to supply the waters from their Fountain, so that the various *contrade* of the City might not be deprived of them, because the said Aqueduct is accustomed to transmit the waters to them.¹³⁰

¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 30.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 52.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 54 (n.n).

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 5.