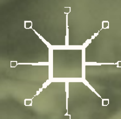
THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

THE FRANCISCAN INVENTION *of the* NEW WORLD

Julia McClure



The New Middle Ages

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Julia McClure

The Franciscan Invention of the New World

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Prologue, *The story*

In 1492 a model of the world was invented: from the city of Nuremberg Martin Behaim produced the first terrestrial globe, which he named the *Erdapfel*, or Earth Apple. As Behaim's associate, George Glockendon, painted the Atlantic on the surface of this globe, the Genoese navigator Christopher Columbus and the Spanish pilot Martín Alonso Pinzón were sailing across this space. Columbus' interpretation of this world was influenced by the same medieval intellectual cultures driving the construction in Nuremberg: classical authorities such as Ptolemy and medieval travelogues from explorers such as Marco Polo. Yet Columbus was also influenced by another powerhouse of medieval ideas: the Franciscan Order.

The Franciscans were a mendicant religious movement based on a unique doctrine of evangelical poverty that spilled out of Italy in the early thirteenth century. According to the hagiographical Franciscan legends, Francis had initiated the Franciscan movement when he theatrically renounced his possessions – discarding his money and belongings and stripping himself of the clothes on his back.[1] Francis saw himself as re–inventing Christ's command to the Apostles that they should leave their possessions and follow him. The Franciscans became an official Order when their Rule was finally approved by the papacy in 1223. This Rule bound the brothers to a life of poverty and journeying. It ordered that the brothers go "as pilgrims and strangers in this world."[2] It stipulated that "the brothers should not make anything their own, neither house, nor place, nor anything at all."[3] And so the Franciscans, recognisable by their coarse habits, crept around the world unburdened by the constraints of possessions. In the thirteenth century Franciscans proliferated throughout

the near East, Northern Africa, Eastern Europe and into Scandinavia and Russia.[4] Years before Maffeo Polo reached China (1266) or the famed travels of Marco Polo (1271),[5] the Franciscan Giovanni da Plano Carpini travelled to the Far East (1245), to the vicinity of Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire, and the Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruck spent time at the court of the Great Khan in Karakorum (1253–1254).[6] Later, in the early fourteenth century, the Franciscan Odorico da Pordenone (also known as Odorico Mattiuzzi) claimed to have travelled over fifty thousand kilometres throughout the Middle East, India, South East Asia, China, and Tibet. In the thirteenth century Franciscans became established in the Mediterranean world, and they joined the expedition of the Vivaldi brothers to the Canary Islands in 1291. There are many myths and legends surrounding the Franciscans' global knowledge, including the legend that Columbus knew about the Americas before his voyage thanks to Franciscans. Franciscans were well established on the Spanish Atlantic coast, and their convent[7] at La Rábida became a central coordinate in the story of the European 'discovery' of the New World. It was where Columbus found intellectual and practical support for his transatlantic endeavour. Columbus was influenced by the Franciscans and there is a legend that Columbus, who appeared dressed as a Franciscan on a number of occasions, may even have become a Franciscan tertiary. Columbus' ships carried Franciscans to the Americas on the second voyage and Franciscans became the first Christian group to establish their institution in the New World. These journeys do not represent neutral flows, but the invention of a Franciscan world; the Franciscans saw themselves as re-enacting the journey of Christ and the Apostles who were promised: "*Wherever the sole of your foot treads will be yours.*"[8]

The Franciscans were not just the first missionaries to travel to the Americas; they were the inventors of a 'New World'. During the course of the late Middle Ages the Franciscans had developed a rich intellectual tradition which was fed by their discourse of poverty, the circulation of travelogues mythologizing their global experiences, and their development of a unique paradigm of Franciscan history which was a mix of chronicles and histories with a distinct eschatological twist. The body of ideas which can be found in the diverse corpus of Franciscan sources contained a vision for a New World of Apostolic poverty, which the Franciscans sought to invent in the Americas.

This book endeavours to integrate intellectual, cultural, and political histories to provide fresh perspectives on the history of the transatlantic

world, colonialism and the Franciscan Order, and in so doing suggests an alternative approach to global history. It interprets global history as the latest phase of the spatial turn. Drawing upon the examples established by Foucault, it aims to explore the relationships between space, power, and knowledge. This approach is also guided by the work of the Latin American scholar Walter Mignolo, who has used the term the "geopolitics of knowledge" to describe the link between knowledge, space/place, and politics/colonial power.[9] Mignolo identified the need to begin the "excavation of the imperial/colonial foundation of the 'idea' of Latin America" as a way to "unravel the geo–politics of knowledge from the perspective of coloniality, the untold and unrecognized historical counterpoint of modernity."[10] Mignolo advocates what he calls a "Fanonian perspective on the 'discovery of America'", the importance of the perspective of non–Europeans, as he argues that different interpretations such as a Christian or Marxist analysis of the "discovery of America", ultimately only reproduce the perspective of modernity.[11] However, the idea that the history of Christianity can only reproduce the perspective of modernity is itself the product of the suppression of alternative narrative possibilities that were produced within Europe; I contend that uncovering the alternative narratives produced within Europe is as important as recovering lost narratives produced outside Europe.

The Middle Ages is a good place to start this endeavour. Medieval history offers ways of unthinking the 'Europeaness' of Europe. The practice of medieval history reveals the complexity and diversity of ideas of space and visions of the world available in the Middle Ages and this fragments the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the narrative that Europe spread around the world creating coloniality. Stephen Legg argued that "the colonisation of most of the free world between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries has brought not just territorial but also epistemic and historiographical violence and domination"[12]; however all these strategies do not begin in the sixteenth century but in the Middle Ages. This book reflects on the dynamic processes of knowledge, space, and power at work in Franciscan history, and uses this to rethink the history of 'coloniality' as an unfolding of Franciscan history.

Notes

1. This story is enshrined in the Legends of St Francis (VP and VS) written by Thomas of Celano.

2. *Regula bullata*, in Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., J. A. Wayne Hellman, O.F.M. Con., William J. Short, O.F.M., eds, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, 1, The Saint*, New York: New City Press, 1999, 99–106, 103.
3. *Regula bullata*, 103.
4. See H. Roelvink, *Franciscans in Sweden, Medieval Remnants of Franciscan Activities*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1998.
5. Marco Polo, *The travels of Marco Polo,* translated and introduced by Ronald Latham, London: Penguin, 1958.
6. Christopher Dawson ed., *The Mission to Asia: narratives and letters of the Franciscan missionaries in Mongolia and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries* London: Sheed and Ward, 1980.
7. The terms friary, monastery, and convent are used interchangeably throughout Franciscan sources and histories to describe the basic residential unit of the Franciscans. Unlike monastic orders the mendicant Franciscans were not bound to the enclosed space of the monastery and there is no consensus on which term is most suitable for describing these Franciscan spaces. For consistency I will use the term convent here, since it is used more commonly than friary and distinguishes the Franciscans from monastic institutions.
8. Ubertino da Casale, *The tree of the crucified Life of Jesus*, in Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., J. A. Wayne Hellman, O.F.M. Con., William J. Short, O.F.M. eds, *Francis of Assisi: early documents, 2, The Prophet*, New York: New City Press, 2001, 141–206, 161.
9. The geopolitics of knowledge is a leitmotif throughout Mignolo's work.
10. Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, xi.
11. Ibidem.
12. Stephen Legg, "Beyond the European Province: Foucault and Postcolonialism", in Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden eds, *Space, Knowledge and Power, Foucault and Geography*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2007, 265–289, 265.

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Abbreviations

ACA	Archivo de la Corona de Aragón
AF	Analecta Franciscana
AGI	Archivo General de Indias
AGOFM	Archivio Storico dei Francescani O.F.M
AHN	Archivo Nacional de España
AIA	Archivo Ibero-Americano
AM	Annales Minorum
BF	Bullarium Franciscanum
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España
JCB	John Carter Brown
OND	Opus nonaginta dierum
VP	Vita Prima
VS	Vita Secunda

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book tells the story of the Franciscan Order's entanglement with the colonisation of the Americas and their invention of a New World. The Franciscan Order, a mendicant religious movement that emerged in the troubled heart of the Italian peninsula in the thirteenth century, has a unique history which unlocks an alternative narrative of the unfolding of the early transatlantic world. In particular, they point to the importance of the Middle Ages for understanding not just the early transatlantic history of the Americas, but the history of European colonialism more generally. It makes a departure from traditional scholarship on the history of colonialism by thinking instead about 'coloniality', a term devised by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano to explain asymmetries of power produced beyond the visible processes of colonialism.[1] This is important since many of the structural inequalities that govern the world today have been the results of invisible processes. Exploring the history of the invention of the New World, a world which came to be characterised by asymmetries of power, from the perspective of the Franciscan Order, offers a way to reveal some of these invisible processes. The Franciscans played a prominent role in the history of the Americas, but the clue that their history gives us is to look to the Middle Ages.

The history of the Franciscan Order begins at the start of the thirteenth century when the cloth merchant Giovanni Bernardone was struck by moral anxiety about his wealthy material condition and the corruption of his economic context and decided to renounce his possessions to lead a life of voluntary poverty. This man would become St Francis, and his

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followers would become the Franciscan Order. They donned poor habits and moved about barefoot in order to perform their voluntary poverty. Barefootedness was the symbol of the theory and praxis of their poverty. Their rejection of property and performance of poverty subverted the familiar landscapes of identity and power. The travelogue of William of Rubruck, a Franciscan who journeyed through the Middle East across Central Asia in the thirteenth century, indicates that the Franciscans were conscious that their performance of poverty subverted these landscapes not only within Europe, but also globally. William Rubruck described how the people he encountered in distant lands gazed at him and his fellow Franciscans 'as if we were monsters, especially because we were barefoot'.[2] In this passage we catch a glimpse of the unique global perspective of the Franciscan Order, which was the product of the doctrine of poverty that they developed during the late Middle Ages.

Franciscans typically came from reasonably affluent backgrounds but voluntarily aligned themselves with the poor and marginalised. Referring to the Gospel, St Francis instructed the brothers that they must follow the example of the apostles, who 'must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside'.[3] This performed alliance made poverty, normally the condition of the silent majority, visible. The Franciscans occupied a deeply ambivalent position. Rather than wanting to eradicate poverty they valorised it. This ambivalence is at the heart of the Franciscan condition. In using Franciscan history to retell the story of the early transatlantic world, one could look at their importance in the history of Europe and of the Americas in the 'Middle Ages' and in 'modernity', and say that their perspective is unique because they had a [bare] foot in both worlds. Yet what Franciscan history offers is a way to historically represent an ambivalence which is also a mechanism for transcending a whole range of historicist binaries which have governed our conceptions of time, of space, and of power. Exploring the Franciscan invention of the New World is a way to narrate an alternative landscape, a landscape that is governed by powerful ambivalence.

The process of the 'invention' of the New World was first explored by the Mexican scholar Edmund O'Gorman, who, in the Mexico of the late 1950s, described a world 'forever in the making, always a new world'.[4] Decades later, in *The Burden of Modernity*, Carlos Alonso argued that concepts of futurity and novelty have led to the 'permanent exoticization of the New World', and that this constitutes an 'ideological façade sustaining old world

power'.[5] The history of the invention of the New World remains an important subject, and has been discussed in different ways by a range of scholars. It is a part of the history of colonialism; as Walter Mignolo observed, the invention of the New World was 'forged in the process of European colonial history and the consolidation and expansion of the Western world view and institutions'.[6] It can be seen as the product of European Renaissance; the term 'New World' (*Orbe Novo*) was first used by the Renaissance scholar Peter Martyr d'Anghiera in 1500 to describe the lands that Columbus had 'discovered'.[7] The 1492 'discovery' of the 'New World' has been seen as the 'birth of modernity',[8] and this connection was made because the 'discovery' was seen as a product of the European Renaissance. The link between the Renaissance, discovery, and modernity was theorised in particular in the nineteenth century by the Renaissance historian Jacob Burckhardt who wrote that the 'discovery' of the New World was the result of Renaissance culture and heralded the start of modernity.[9] Burckhardt wrote that discovery began with the Italians because they were 'freed from the countless bonds which elsewhere in Europe checked progresses' and were driven by a 'passionate desire to penetrate the future'.[10] Since the 'discovery' of the New World has been seen as a product of the Renaissance and tied to the invention of modernity,[11] the role of the Middle Ages in the invention of the New World has been underexplored—the exception perhaps being the Mexican historian Luis Weckmann, who claimed that 'the Middle Ages found their last expression on this [the American] side of the Atlantic'.[12]

The Franciscan Order, instrumental in the early history of the Americas, yet governed by the collective memories and discourses which had developed in the Middle Ages, could be seen to illustrate this continuity. Jacques Le Goff went further and described St Francis as the initiator of the Renaissance and the modern world.[13] Yet Franciscan history has its own sense of space and time that helps to question the categories that have governed the landscapes of history. The Franciscans were vehicles of their own historical and intellectual tradition,[14] and Franciscan history offers an alternative narrative of the invention of the New World, which facilitates a broader reflection on the history of space, projects of 'worldmaking' and the meaning of global history, and deepens our understanding of the history of colonialism.

The Franciscan invention of the New World can be seen as an example of 'worldmaking', symbolic construction, act of imagination, and attempt at universality.[15] Duncan Bell recently identified 'worldmaking' as a form of global history: '"global" is not a geographical designation of a synonym

for "non-Western" but instead denotes the perceptual scope of an argument or other act of imagination'.[16] It contributes to the kind of global history that sees the global turn as the latest phase of the spatial turn and aims to contribute to the deconstruction of pre-existing notions of space.[17] Bell defined 'worldmaking' as 'the way in which humans fabricated symbolic systems, how they constructed and reconstructed worlds, drawing on the existing resources available to them, worlds carved from the material of other worlds'.[18] 'Worldmaking' is a subject for intellectual history and the history of colonialism since it involves both a theorisation of how the world is, or should be, and an attempt to assert and control that vision of the world. As Bell summarised: 'speculative representations of the globe can be traced back to the dawn of Western intellectual history, and they have played a formative role in underpinning assorted spiritual, cosmological, and political projects, from ancient empire building to the contemporary environment'.[19] This parallels what Walter Mignolo identified as 'global designs': 'from the project of the *Orbis Universalis Christianum* [sic], through the standards of civilization at the turn of the twentieth century, to the current one of globalization (global market), global designs have been the hegemonic project for managing the planet'.[20] Mignolo argued that it was important to recognise 'global designs' as products of local histories in order to assist the postcolonial agenda identified by Dipesh Chakrabarty, who argued that Europe (and European epistemology in particular) must be provincialised 'so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous'.[21] Exploring the 'worldmaking' enterprise of the Franciscans at work in their invention of the New World assists this agenda in two ways. It acts as a reminder that there was a plurality of global visions present in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages, competing for the invention of the New World, and it offers insight into the complexity of the power dynamics at work in the 'worldmaking' projects that are part of the history of colonialism.

The Franciscans offer a unique history of the invention of the New World. Tentatively poised at the boundary between orthodoxy and heresy they offer a kind of double perspective. They emerged as a counter-community which criticised the greed and corruption of the social context of their time but were absorbed into the Roman Church when the Franciscan Rule (*Regula bullata*) was finally approved in 1223, after years of debate.[22] Rejecting the positions both of the secular clergy and the monastic orders, they became a self-regulating order, outside the clerical church but directly answerable to the papacy. Patricia Nettel Díaz

described the Franciscans as 'revolutionaries' with regard to their relationship to the traditional structures of the Church.[23] The Franciscans had a radical interpretation of poverty and a strained relationship with the Church, particularly its secular clergy, and controversies about this raged throughout the Middle Ages. Such debates not only addressed questions of Church power, but also had a profound impact on important concepts such as 'property' and 'rights'.[24] Not confined to the space of the church or monastery, through their discourse of poverty the Franciscans imagined another kind of space, free from property and rights. The radical implications of the Franciscans' ideas about poverty led to the condemnation, even execution, of some. Other Franciscans were more restrained, reigning in extremists of the Order and occupying high positions within the institutional Church. The Franciscans had emerged with a radical message, critiquing wealth and advocating poverty, but some of that radicalness was attenuated as they were accommodated within the Church. Franciscans existed both within and outside the Church, an interplay that enabled the Franciscan Order to survive and contain a history that represents radical voices and ambiguities. The ambivalence of the Franciscan position enables Franciscan history to offer insight into the history of marginalised identities, complex power dynamics, and ambiguities that emanated from Europe which have often been concealed by narrations of Europe and its interaction with the world.

The ambivalent position of the Franciscans shaped their ambivalent relationship with the history of 'coloniality'. As the theorist of the term explained, 'in the beginning colonialism was a product of systematic repression, not only of the specific beliefs, ideas, images, symbols of knowledge that were not useful to global colonial domination', and that 'the repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification'.[25] This book will show that the Franciscans both experienced these forms of repression and themselves became perpetrators, and that both of these processes contributed to the ambivalences underpinning the Franciscan invention of the New World.

The early transatlantic history of the Franciscans offers an alternative to the history of 'the discovery of the New World', which was often depicted, not only as a story of European power, but as part of the natural unfolding of the history of capitalism; for example, the Atlantic historian Pierre Chaunu posited that the Algarve was the essential base for 'discovery' because of 'its primitive capitalist trade, which orientated it towards

discovery and adventure overseas'.[26] However, the Franciscans, who were also poised on the edge of the Atlantic world in the fifteenth century, were driven by anxiety for poverty and not capital.

The Franciscan movement found its roots in the worries about transformations in the economic context of late medieval Europe, particularly the trend towards increased monetarisation which was seen as a challenge to the fabric of society.[27] According to Lester Little 'the friars were born from a spiritual crisis brought on by the spread of the cash nexus'.[28] Little reminds us that 'the money economy was altering some of the individual's relationships with nature, with work, with time, with human society and with his own deepest values and religious beliefs'.[29] The discourse of Franciscan poverty articulated the questions that these changes raised. The story of Giovanni Bernardone's (St Francis) renunciation of his parents' money was the foundation for the Franciscans' obsessive desire to be free from money.[30] Concern over the handling of money was repeatedly discussed in the Franciscan discourse of poverty. The Franciscan *Regula bullata* obligated the rejection of all property; yet it was money that was specified time and again. A story from the *Assisi Compilation* regarding a friar who was reproached for touching money summarises the Franciscans' discomfort: 'the saint rebuked him and reprimanded him severely for touching coins. He ordered him to pick up the money from the windowsill with his own mouth, take it outside the fence of that place, and with his mouth to put it on the donkey's manure pile'.[31] The *Regula bullata* forbade the Franciscans from handling money either directly or through an intermediary. Concerns over money also appeared repeatedly in the debates over Franciscan poverty that raged from the time of the papal approval of the compromised *Regula bullata* in 1223 and continued throughout the late Middle Ages. The concern with money articulated a larger anxiety about the relationship between man and the world. It was part of the way in which Francis interrogated the reality of the world; according to Giacomo Todeschini, Francis had denied 'that money made out of coins could credibly represent the reality of the natural and social world'.[32] The Franciscans envisaged an alternative to a world structured by the flow of money, a world that was made more real by the honesty of poverty, unpolluted by the greed, corruption, and confusion wrought by money; a world that was instead structured by the flow of spiritual poverty. Throughout the late Middle Ages, the Franciscans engineered their vision of a world based on evangelical poverty and, for them, the 'New World' created a space where this could be realised.

Franciscans came in all shapes and sizes, and the history of the Order has been characterised by disputes and rifts, and even the emergence of factions; yet they did have a collective identity, underpinned by their particular anxiety regarding poverty, which was conditioned by their Rule and by the regulated corpus of texts that contained the Franciscans' collective memory and welded them as an Order. The process of sublimating the Franciscans' doctrine of poverty into a textual and performed tradition for the Order began as early as the thirteenth century; Joseph Ratzinger argues that poverty became intrinsic to Franciscan identity thanks to Bonaventure, who was 'untiring in his efforts to inculcate poverty as the essential characteristic of the concrete Order of Franciscans'.[33] While the Franciscans were not the only group practising voluntary poverty in the Middle Ages they were distinct from their counterparts. Unlike the Waldensians they avoided charges of heresy by seeking papal approval and accepting the validity of clerically administered sacraments. Unlike the Dominicans they rejected both individual *and common* property and had a rule of their own. David Knowles summarised: 'though twins at birth, and joined in a somewhat uneasy family relationship through the ages, the institutes of Francis and Dominic had neither a common origin nor a common design'.[34] The Franciscan commitment to poverty and wayfaring was also stronger than the other mendicants, such as the Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians, and the monk-hermit Order of St Jerome (Jeronymites).[35] Further, they consistently had members in high-profile positions and were engaged in dialogue with the secular and religious leaders of Europe. They were particularly influential amongst the Spanish monarchs. Unlike the Jesuits who emerged much later, the Franciscans continued to be defined by a central anxiety over poverty, despite many battles and compromises regarding their doctrine. Luke Clossey admits that, although Jesuits take a vow of poverty, 'in practice scholars rarely apply the adjective "mendicant" to them, nor did their contemporaries, as the Society had a reputation for avarice'.[36] The rest of this book lays out why the Franciscan invention of the New World deserves its own story. This is predicated upon their particular doctrine of poverty, which was a specific philosophy and politics of space that drove the Franciscans' world-making enterprise which can be seen in the Franciscan invention of the New World.

Poverty led the Franciscans to theorise their relationship with, and movement through, space in an alternative way; as Angelo Clareno, a leader of the Spiritual faction of the Order, had stated: 'we have no profit

in crossing the sea. For the kingdom of the heavens are established in any earthly place'.[37] Material or imagined, this anxiety for poverty consistently linked the members of the Order across the centuries and led them to theorise their place in the world in a particular way. Their history indicates the power of imagining in the construction of the meaning of space.

Franciscan history is a spatial history; it adds an important dimension to the history of the invention of the New World, which is itself a significant chapter in the history of space. Franciscan history is a spatial history since they rejected property, which is one model of man's relationship to the spaces and materiality of the world, and tried to realise poverty, which, for the Franciscans, was an alternative model of man's relationship with the spaces and materiality of the world. For the Franciscans, poverty was both a material and spiritual (or ideological) condition. The intellectuals of the Order theorised the meaning and property condition of the space of poverty, while the members tried to achieve it by conditioning their relationship with different levels of space. The spatial-theorist Yi-Fu Tuan explained that 'man and world denote complex ideas', and so we need to think about body as 'lived body' and space as humanly constructed space.[38] The Franciscans performed an embodied poverty, and Franciscan history is a spatial history since it encapsulated a reflection upon humanly constructed space and control of the 'lived body'. The body, the materiality of its flesh and the way in which it was clothed, was the first site for the Franciscan's invention of poverty. The *Regula bullata*, which formalised and routinised the Franciscans' doctrine of poverty, conditioned it by structuring their spatial relationships. It ordered that the brothers have a modest diet and limit their consumption of food, and stipulated the way in which the body could be covered: 'let all the brothers wear poor clothes and they may mend them with pieces of sackcloth or other material with the blessing of God'.[39] The *Regula bullata* shaped the Franciscans' relationship with objects, stipulating that they should not interfere with 'temporal goods'.[40] It shaped their relationship with the place, ordering that the brothers 'should not make anything their own, neither house, nor place, nor anything at all'.[41]

The conditions of poverty de-territorialised the Franciscans and delinked them from the systems and concepts of ownership that elsewhere bound people to their material world. The Franciscans' poverty disrupted normative spatial relationships and invented an alternative relationship with the world; the *Regula bullata* ordered that the brothers should travel through the world 'as pilgrims and strangers'.[42] This delinking from the bonds of

ownership necessitated that continuous movement through space was an essential component of the Franciscan condition and Franciscan experiences. The spatial epistemology of the Franciscans is depicted in Thomas of Celano's description of how St Francis and the brothers had to leave the Spoleto valley where they had been staying 'so the continuity of a longer stay would not tie them even by appearance to some kind of ownership'.[43] Celano's work illustrates the sense of space that was peculiar to the Franciscans wherever they were: 'greatly consoled in their lack of all *things of the world*, they resolved to adhere to the way they were in that place always and everywhere'.[44] Celano's memorialisation (or romanticisation) of these early Franciscans indicated that Franciscans were committed to permanent movement in order to maintain their poverty. In Celano's *Vita Prima* the Franciscan journey is intrinsically linked to a particular relationship with time; he wrote: 'though frequently on hazardous journeys, they were not anxious about where they might stay the next day'.[45] The Franciscan journey through space was intensely physical and intensely spiritual. Later, in the fourteenth century, the intellectual Franciscan William of Ockham would repeatedly cite Christ's declaration 'my kingdom is not of this world' while defending the meaning of Franciscan poverty against the incursions of the papacy.[46] For the Franciscans, space and their movement through it was invested with meaning. Franciscan history offers insight into the Foucauldian project of understanding the relationship between space, power, and knowledge. Foucault wrote that 'once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power'.[47] The Franciscans contribute to our historic understanding of the relationship between space, knowledge, and power as they broaden our understanding of the diversity of spatial concepts, encouraging us to see that spaces—worlds, objects, imagined landscapes, and bodies—can be theorised in different ways.

This book concerns the Franciscan idea of poverty and their performance and the implications of this idea. The Franciscans' understanding of poverty has not been static and uniform but continuously debated. Franciscan poverty is an example of a living discourse.[48] There are many examples of Franciscans deviating from their doctrine of poverty and questioning the boundaries or cohesiveness of Franciscan identity, yet the collective identity has been bound together by anxiety for poverty; dissent and deviation forms part of the Franciscans' discourse of poverty. The Rule

of Poverty has linked members of the Franciscan Order for eight centuries, but this coherent group has also accommodated a wide range of different Franciscans.[49] The burden of the frequently untenable ideal of poverty led to the appearance of stress fractures resulting in internal discord, factions and splinter groups; in 1517, the papacy issued *Ite vos*, and confirmed the split between the Conventual Franciscans, who were *sub ministris* (under the Minister-General) and the more rigorist Observant Franciscans, who were '*sub vicariis*' (under the Vicar-General). The Observant family was also divided between the Cismontane and Ultramontane branches (northwest and southeast of the Alps), while the French and Spanish Observants tried to maintain governmental independence. The more radical branch of the Franciscans, the Spirituals, were suppressed in the fourteenth century, but their ideas remained influential and lived on with the more eremitic Franciscans, who had more extreme interpretations of poverty and were committed to both spiritual contemplation and rigorous discipline. Eremetic Franciscanism took root in Spain where 'houses of recollection' proliferated from 1502, and these Franciscans of the Spiritual tradition had a prominent role in the Americas.[50] The various reform movements were always centred on the discussion of poverty, and showed a desire to emulate the simple life of poverty described in the hagiographies of Francis. Despite these factions and splits, Franciscans have been linked by a strong and coherent collective identity driven by anxiety regarding poverty and maintained through the construction of a strong textual community and the performance of a routinised and ritualised identity.

The debates over the meaning of the Franciscans' poverty and the boundaries of the Order did not end in the Middle Ages, but played a role in the early history of the Americas. Nettel Díaz argued that tensions between the mendicants and the secular clergy that had characterised the thirteenth-century phase of the Franciscan poverty dispute—about founding a poor church, the legal framework of the church and troubled relations with the papacy—all characterised the Franciscan establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in the New World in the sixteenth century.[51]

The Franciscans were involved with the invention of the New World through the way in which they tried to spatialise their vision of the world in the Americas. John Phelan wrote that 'the friars were given a unique opportunity of creating, on the eve of the world, a terrestrial paradise where a whole race of men would be consecrated to evangelical poverty'.[52] However, this Franciscan vision of the New World did not begin in the Americas in the sixteenth century, but was the product of a long medieval

tradition of Franciscan thought and religious beliefs. Further, the few historians that have commented on the Franciscans' vision of the New World have described how the Franciscans were building a utopia,[53] and yet, as this book will show, the Franciscans also contributed to engineering the ultimate dystopia of coloniality.

Each chapter deals with the history of space in a different way to narrate the Franciscan invention of the New World, and to delve deeper into the mechanics of colonialism. It does not historicise the Franciscans chronologically or create a genealogical history of the Franciscan Order. Rather it seeks to apply a spatial hermeneutic to the Franciscans' narration of themselves.[54] Instead of representing a period of Franciscan history, each chapter explores a different genre and acts as a shard that refracts an image of the Franciscan invention of the New World.

Chapter 2, 'The Landscapes of Franciscan Poverty' introduces the way in which the Franciscans' doctrine of poverty was a particular spatial philosophy that imagined a world without property. It offers a brief retelling of the Franciscan poverty dispute which integrates the history of the New World and reflects upon the entanglement of their history with the history of property and rights, two concepts that have played an important role in the history of colonialism.

Chapter 3, 'Feeding the Imaginative Landscape of the Franciscan Order, The Franciscan Attempt to 'Know' the World', explores particular global knowledge of the Franciscan Order. It considers how the Franciscans' global knowledge was a complex genre, involving science, religion, mythology, and observations made by the pilgrims travelling throughout the world. It surveys the geometry of the Franciscans' global knowledge network and their entanglement with mythologies of pre-Columbian knowledge of the Americas. This chapter in particular interrogates the relationship between space, knowledge, and power and reflects on the way in which knowing space and owning space are related.

Chapter 4, 'The Franciscan Atlantic: Planting the Cross in the Atlantic World', explores the geopolitics of the 'networked space' of the Franciscans. It uses Franciscan history to draw an alternative map of the Atlantic world. The chapter integrates case studies on the Spanish Atlantic coast, the Canary Islands, Hispaniola, and the early years of mainland America. Franciscan history reveals an earlier sustained European presence in the Canary Islands than is usually narrated, and the history of their early years in Hispaniola and the Yucatán peninsula is also often overlooked. The Franciscan Atlantic draws our attention to continuities across the transatlantic world.