*Antonianum XCI (2016) 1063-1076*

# FRANCESCO D'ASSISI, "UN ASTRO INTRAMONTABILE CHE SORGE DA OCCIDENTE E GIUNGE FINO AD ORIENTE"

*Summary: Francis of Assisi, "a timeless star that rises from the West and reaches to the East", is a saint beloved even by non-Christians, who sometimes facilitated the understanding between the Orthodox spirituality and that of the Latin West. The Umbrian Saint is, in fact, a bridge between East and West. Moreover, Francis, a Western saint unknown to the Byzantine sanctoral, was "received" in Hellephonic Salento, as evidenced by the liturgical office in Greek composed in his honour in Greek in the fifteenth century, probably in an attempt at mediation between the Greek Church and the Franciscans, who were determinedly subverting the Byzantine liturgy. There is evidence, too, of the veneration of the Saint on the island of Crete at the time of the Venetian rule. Francis has also played a leading role in the spiritual journey of the famous Greek novelist Nikos Kazantzakis, author of "The Poor Man of God", who has the merit of having made the friar of Assisi known to the Greek Orthodox.*

*Resumen: Francisco de Asís, "un astro atemporal y que surge en occidente y llega hasta Oriente", es un santo amado incluso por los no cristianos, y a veces facilita el acuerdo entre la espiritualidad ortodoxa y la latina. El Santo de Umbría representa, de hecho, un puente entre Oriente y Occidente. Por otra parte Francisco, santo occidental desconocido en el santoral bizantino, fue "acogido" en el Salento helénico, como lo demuestra la función litúrgica en griego compuesta en su honor en el siglo XV, probablemente en un intento de mediar entre la Iglesia griega y los franciscanos, acérrimos subversores de la liturgia bizantina. No faltan testimonios del culto al santo también en la isla de Creta en el momento de la dominación veneciana. Francisco también ha jugado un papel destacado en el camino espiritual de la famosa novela del griego Nikos Kazantzakis, autor de El pobrecillo de Dios, que tiene el mérito de haber permitido a los griegos ortodoxos conocer al fraile de Asís.*

Nell'XI canto del *Paradiso* la presentazione della città di Assisi come luogo di nascita di Francesco si chiude con un paradosso: "non dica Ascesi, ché direbbe corto, ma Oriente, se proprio dir vuole"[1]. La città non dovrebbe chiamarsi Assisi, il cui toponimo nella grafia locale antica "Ascesi" viene preferito da Dante perché si ricollega all'etimologia

[1] *Pd*. XI, vv. 53-54.