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**The Bernardian Roots of Bonaventure's *Lignum Vitae*: Visual Evidence from the Verger de Soulas
(Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 9220)**

The influence of the great Cistercian theologian St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the development of Franciscan spirituality is well known, yet his stance against the use of images in devotion often seems at odds with the Franciscan dependence on the real or imagined image in the Order's devotional practices. With this contradiction in mind, this paper takes as a point of departure a small detail in a fairly complicated illustrated copy of a diagram known as the *Lignum vitae* that directly addresses the role of Bernard's spirituality in Franciscan devotional practices. The diagram is a structured serial meditation on the life of Christ based on a treatise of the same name by St. Bonaventure. The diagram, from a Franciscan manuscript produced ca. 1290 known as the *Verger de soulas* (Paris, BNF fr. 9220), includes a "portrait" of St. Bernard praying at the base of the tree to which the body of Christ is affixed. Bernard's presence at the base of the *Lignum vitae* is unusual in the iconography of the diagram. Thus, his appearance raises two questions that will be examined here: why is this Cistercian saint featured in this Franciscan diagram, and what does it mean that the theologian who is famous for the rejection of images in devotion is shown worshipping an image of the Crucified Christ? It will be concluded here that Bernard's place in this miniature draws attention to the fact that Bonaventure directly borrowed the theme of the devotion to Christ's life from the Cistercian's 43rd Sermon on the Song of Songs and that this sermon helps to elucidate the role of the devotional image in Bernard's theology and Franciscan devotional practice.