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**Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce’s sermons as a source for
the history of religiosity and culture of late fifteenth-
century Italy**

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**Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce's sermons as a source for the history of religiosity
and culture of late fifteenth-century Italy**

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Bibliographical note

The primary sources of this dissertation have been Roberto Caracciolo's sermon collections, which I have quoted, throughout the dissertation, from the following editions:

Quadragesimale de poenitentia. Venice: Franz Renner, 1472 [GW 6062]

Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum. Naples: Arnaldus de Bruxelles, 1473 [GW 6109]

Sermones de Adventu. s.n.t. [Venice, Johan Helman and Johann Manthen, ca 1474] [GW 6045]

Quadragesimale de peccatis. Venice: Andrea Torresani di Asola, 1488 [GW 6080]

Sermones de laudibus sanctorum. Naples: Matthias Moravus, 1489 [GW 6051]

Specchio della fede. Venice: Giovanni di Lorenzo da Bergamo, 1495 [GW 6115]

I have used modern editions for the Lenten sermons preached in Padua (1451) and the *Quadragesimale volgare*:

Quaresimale padovano 1455, edizione critica, introduzione e note a cura di Oriana Visani. Padova: Messaggero, 1983

Opere in volgare, a cura di Enzo Esposito. Galatina: Congedo, 1993

Abbreviations:

AFH = *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*

DBI = *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*

DTC = *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*

GW = *Gesamstkatalog der Wiegendrucke*

LB = *La Bibliofilia*

Introduction

I have conducted this research with a twofold aim. The first objective was that of providing an up-to-date study of Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce's life and works. It has been known that the Franciscan – Observant at first and later Conventual – Roberto da Lecce (1425-1495) was one of the most appreciated and celebrated popular preachers of his time and I hope succeeded in making this even more evident with my attempt at a better reconstruction of his biography and fortune. Moreover, he was the most printed Italian author of sermon collections in the last decades of the fifteenth century, that is in the very first years of the printing press in Italy. If compared to the notoriety he enjoyed in his times and among his contemporaries, Roberto's place in modern-day scholarship is strikingly small. Many scholars do quote and have quoted him as an emblematic figure of his time's preaching activity, but much about his life has remained little known. The latest comprehensive and extensive biographical work dedicated to him is by now over seventy years old and, to the eyes of all critics, largely obsolete because of its author's often apologetic views and also because of a number of errors¹. Through the years, different scholars have made corrections to Bastanzio's works and have integrated previously unknown details, as well as contributing to a better understanding of specific aspects of Roberto's life, his preaching activity and some of his works. Yet, from Zelina Zafarana's precise biographical entry for the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (1976) to Oriana Visani's numerous and consistent studies – unfortunately, despite a project to do so, never put together in a monographic collection – a new extensive study has never been dedicated to this extremely relevant Franciscan preacher and animator of the social, political and cultural life of fifteenth-century Italy². Very recently (2017), a publication devoted to him has actually appeared in his hometown, Lecce. This work, however, besides the risk of remaining widely unknown because of its peripheral publishing and scarce distribution, only partially corrects and implements the previous ones, not being primarily devoted to the preacher's biography, but rather to the very specific aspect of the anti-ottoman themes contained in his sermons³. Thus, as

¹ Serafino Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce predicatore del secolo XV*. Isola del Liri: M. Pisani, 1947.

² Zelina Zafarana, 'Caracciolo, Roberto'. *DBI* 19 (1976): 446-452 (now also in Ead., *Da Gregorio VII a Bernardino da Siena: saggi di storia medievale*, edited by Ovidio Capitani, Claudio Leonardi, Enrico Menestò and Roberto Rusconi. Scandicci: La Nuova Italia, 1987: 403-409). For Oriana Visani's work, it will suffice to quote here one of her most recent and extensive publications, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari del secondo Quattrocento'. *Franciscana* 1 (1999): 275-317. Her other contributions will be quoted throughout the dissertation.

³ Salvatore Leaci, *Frate Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce e la predicazione anti-ottomana*. Lecce: Milella, 2017.

different scholars have often repeated through the years, a new attentive and complete study of Roberto's life and – especially, I would add – of his works is needed and, perhaps, even overdue.

Despite the relevance it has reached even independently – growing as the composition of the dissertation went on – its first part, specifically dedicated to Roberto's life and works, was initially meant as merely propaedeutic and auxiliary work to the second aim of this doctoral research. This was that of trying to show with a number of selected cases the importance of sermon literature in the reconstruction of intellectual, cultural and religious debates of late fifteenth-century Italy, focusing on a specific author, but considering fundamental the continuous reference and comparison to other works from contemporary literary works, originated from preaching or not. The reading and exploration of Roberto's works can only represent a small tile in the mosaic of extant sermon literature useful to gather information on the culture of the time. I will try to argue further on why my choice has fallen on this preacher and author in particular. In general, scholars are by now fully conscious of the crucial importance of preaching as a source for historical reconstruction. Throughout the centuries, the catechetical message of sermons – or homilies⁴ – was one of the places where higher and lower culture met, mingled and shaped one-another. Considering the scarcity of sources that can reveal us what “common people” thought and believed and how they behaved, sermons can represent a handy surrogate. Composed, prepared and delivered in order to meet the most urgent needs – in matters of faith, but also morals and, to use a general and particularly fortunate term, “disciplination” – of a society, sermons still preserve consistent traces of these intentions, which thus shed some light on minor, or sometimes even major, issues of that specific society. Of course, sermons belong to an extremely traditional literary genre, which has reused and repeated its contents for centuries. It is for this reason that the evaluation of the weight and trustworthiness of their hints at culture and religion that are contained in them have to be valued with great care. An evaluation that cannot avoid an attentive collation and comparison with other contemporary sources. Keeping this in mind, sermon collections can provide us with surprisingly important information on matters of religion and culture, as I will argue in more detail further on.

Speaking in particular of the French Franciscan preacher Michel Menot (1440ca-1518), already in the mid-1920s, a great expert of medieval philosophy such as Étienne Gilson suggested the relevance of his sermons in the context of intellectual history. Gilson invited historians and philosophers to uncover similar sources, which, he wrote, had for the most part been put aside, only remembered from time to time in the marginal annotations to some literary histories, mostly to

⁴ Throughout the dissertation, I will use the two terms, sermon and homily, as synonyms, anyway privileging the former over the latter. There appears to be no patent reason to distinguish between sermon and homily in the context of fifteenth-century popular preaching, a distinction that, on the other hand, assumes a certain importance, for instance, when speaking of early-Christian preaching or, later on, with the introduction of humanistic influences in sacred oratory.

condemn their garrulous scholastic style⁵. Through the following decades, some first incursions were made in attempting to exploit sermons in this sense and, specifically regarding Italy, Ida Magli's reading of the phenomenon under her sociological lens was particularly valuable⁶. Then, since the 1970s, the attention to this particular source, both from a theoretical point of view and from that of specific case studies, has been growing incessantly, giving birth to an articulated and deeply investigated field of studies, which I will briefly present later on. Still, I believe that there is a lack of an extensive exploitation of sermons as specific sources for intellectual, cultural and religious history of fifteenth-century Italy. I also believe that the progress in our knowledge of sermon collections and, in general, of the protagonists of the pulpit in Italy in that period have cleared the path to work more technically on such sources, opening the way to numerous possibilities of comparison and confrontation between a large number of collections in manuscript and print compiled by different authors. This dissertation would like to represent a first step towards a full reading of what sermons can tell us on their time's religious and cultural climate.

One general primary clarification is necessary before any further discussion of sermons and of their cultural context. I have spoken of "common people" and their culture and religiosity as the main object of my investigation, as the key sociological group on which the sermon literature I will be referring to can shed some new light. By "common people" – and the various alternatives I will be adopting throughout the dissertation – I mean urban middle and upper class men – to a lesser extent women – who represented the main audience of the popular preacher I have chosen as a primary source and, one could say, of the time's popular preaching in general. Thus, my attention has been particularly sensitive to what seemed to me manifestations of these people's culture, beliefs and behaviors. However, I have also spoken about intellectual debates. Indeed, being sermons, as said, a crucial meeting point between popular and higher culture, they offer the most tangible signs of what – and to what extent – from the high philosophical and theological debates of educated men leaked into the conversations and reasoning of less educated laymen. In a time when laymen's interest in religious matters grew stronger – in a process that we can measure progressively taking shape in Italy between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century – it will be

⁵ Étienne Gilson, 'Michel Menot et la technique du sermon médiéval'. *Revue d'histoire franciscaine* 2 (1925): 301-350 (now also in Id., *Les idées et les lettres*. Paris: Vrin, 1932: 93-154).

⁶ Ida Magli, 'Un linguaggio di massa del Medioevo: l'oratoria sacra'. *Rivista di sociologia* 1 (1963): 181-198 and in particular Ead., *Gli uomini della penitenza: lineamenti antropologici del medioevo italiano*. Bologna: Cappelli Editore, 1967. See also Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au 16^e siècle: La religion de Rabelais*. Paris: A. Michel, 1942 (now also translated into English *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982): 158-161 (*Rabelais et les prêcheurs*); Carlo Ginzburg, *I benandanti. Stregoneria e culti agrari tra Cinquecento e Seicento*. Turin: Einaudi, 1966 (now also translated as *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi. New York: Penguin Books, 1985): 68-69; Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. London: Temple Smith, 1978: 70-71.

particularly interesting to measure the heat of the debate through important and yet underexploited sources such as sermons, which combine different social perspectives.

The sources I have chosen as privileged viewpoint for my research have also dictated this work's chronological and geographical scopes, which, however, have not – and cannot – be intended as definite and precise. The places roughly coincide with the major Italian urban centers where Roberto delivered his sermons. Being most of his sermons preserved, as I will say, in collections prepared inside the convent and not in the version in which the preacher actually delivered them, a more precise collocation of their message in reference to a specific society or group of listeners is not possible. However, the cities, such as Milan, Padua or Naples, in which Roberto mainly carried out his activity, have enjoyed some privilege, even because of a more precise information on their cultural situation. The research's time scope derives from the fifty years-or-so that Roberto spent preaching, which go from his first public appearance in 1448 in Perugia, to his death in Lecce in 1495 and thus cover almost all of the second half of the fifteenth century. Thus, it will be useful to start my exposition by contextualizing the research inside this period's religious and intellectual climate.

1. *Culture and religion in fifteenth-century Italy*

It is not my intention here, nor is it in my competences, to give an extensive and exhaustive discussion of fifteenth-century Italian culture and religiosity. My aim is to provide a frame of reference, made up by both a general discussion and a number of exemplary cases, inside which it will be possible to introduce and contextualize my research. Far from wanting to engage in a precise definition of the Italian fifteenth-century Renaissance as the opening phase of modernity or rather the peak and conclusion of the Middle Ages⁷, it goes without doubt that this century was, from a cultural and religious point of view, an impetuous age of richness and vitality. The political, religious and even social instabilities that characterized the concluding phases of the fourteenth century led to the rise of religious and intellectual initiative, which grew their way into society throughout the following century, shaping its piety and culture. It was precisely this peculiar aspect of fifteenth-century Italian religiosity and religious culture, diffused and discussed even inside common people's houses and shops, which prepared the fertile ground that allowed the specific

⁷ For a recent discussion on a deep review of the Burckhardtian idea of the Italian Renaissance see at least John Monfasani, 'The Renaissance as the concluding phase of the Middle Ages'. *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 108 (2006): 165-185; Idem, 'The rise and fall of Renaissance Italy'. *Aevum* 89/3 (2015): 465-481. For an opposite position see Eugenio Garin, 'La crisi del pensiero medievale'. In Id., *Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Bari: Laterza, 1954: 13-45 (already published in Id., *Dal medioevo al Rinascimento: due saggi*. Florence: Sansoni, 1950). Also see Jacques Le Goff, *Faut-il vraiment découper l'histoire en tranches?*. Paris: Seuil, 2014.

Italian reception of and reaction to the Reformation⁸. Taking some cases of heresy accusations – though conscious of their extraordinariness and instability – as the peak of hazardous speculation in religious discourse, that is to say as the most vital signs of the intellectual and religious ferment I have been describing⁹, nonetheless this in-between period represented by the Quattrocento has remained and still remains much less known than what preceded and succeeded it. Those «possible underground links [...], in the form of the persistence throughout the Renaissance of a snoozing but not completely extinguished heterodox tradition», that connect the dots between late medieval heresy and sixteenth-century “Lutheranism” are still largely unknown¹⁰. Recently, Adriano Prosperi voiced his hope that «historians’ progresses may do justice for the extraordinary richness of ferments and realities of fifteenth-century Italy’s religious culture», pressed and obscured by the weight of Luther’s later success¹¹.

Though not giving a complete and even view on fifteenth-century Italian religious culture, the cases of heresy accusations can be taken as exemplary – in they will be taken as such in the pages that follow – of a peculiar religious and cultural situation. It is clearly true that a heresy accusation strictly depends on the person moving the accusation and on the limited context inside which it appears. It is however indoubtable that such an accusation can represent a sign of an ongoing fervent religious and cultural debate. Lacking the set and durable doctrinal and theological pronouncements that will only arrive with the Council of Trent, the religiosity of the Quattrocento was open to various, often borderline, experiences. I am speaking in particular of what some scholars have variably defined as “eresia d’opinione” or “popular unorthodoxy”, which pertains to those «observations and remarks which dispute some of the Christian faith’s fundamental assertions

⁸ Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*. Florence: Sansoni, 1939. See also Herbert B. Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation*, 2 vols. London: Charles H. Kelly, 1901-02: I, vii: «At what hour “dawn” begins is always a matter of dispute, and depends largely on local circumstances. But one thing is certain. A new day has begun long before the average worker has commenced his toil. So with the Reformation. The study of its causes cannot commence with Erasmus or Savonarola; its methods and results were to some extent settled for it in the century before Luther or Cranmer».

⁹ Not just as a label void of any content if not the one given to it by the ecclesiastical authority that uttered the accusation in the first place, cfr. Grado Giovanni Merlo, *Eretici del Medioevo. Temi e paradossi di storia e di storiografia*. Brescia: Morcelliana, 2011: 5-6; Mauro Pesce, ‘Perche i concetti di “eresia” e di “eretico” non sono concetti storiografici’. *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 31 (2014): 1-12 (now also Id., *L’eresia esiste nel cristianesimo?* Brescia: Morcelliana, 2017). See the position expressed in ; Lucio Biasiori, Daniele Conti, ‘Il secolo senza eresia? Caratteri originali dei nonconformismi religiosi quattrocenteschi’. In *Prima di Lutero: nonconformismi religiosi nel Quattrocento italiano*, edited by Lucio Biasiori e Daniele Conti. *Rivista storica italiana* 129/3 (2017): 799-818: 807.

¹⁰ Federico Chabod, ‘Per la storia religiosa della Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti’. In Id., *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell’epoca di Carlo V*. Turin: Einaudi, 1971: 314, n. 3: «È certo assai caratteristico che, ad eccezione di Milano, come focolai di “luteranesimo” riappaiano nel Cinquecento quelli stessi che già erano stati i centri degli “eretici” medievali: oltre a Cremona, Piacenza, Mantova, Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Treviso, Ferrara, Modena [...] E ne nasce il problema dei possibili vincoli sotterranei fra i due movimenti, sotto forma del persistere per tutto il Rinascimento di una tradizione eterodossa, sonnecchiante ma non spenta, che nei primi decenni del secolo XVI trova nuove forme e modi, incarnandosi questa volta nel “luteranesimo”: problema che è però completamente da studiare». Chabod’s intuition has recently found renewed interest among scholars, cfr. Adriano Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro grande: storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000: 33-34; Biasiori Conti, ‘Il secolo senza eresia?’.

¹¹ Adriano Prosperi, *Lutero. Gli anni della fede e della libertà*. Milan: Mondadori, 2017: 341-343.

and which are built on common sense and on the demand for a certain rationality», not necessarily and not in all cases ending in an explicit heresy accusation¹². I am also speaking of all those long-term cultural and intellectual developments that set the ground for a renewed view of religion and religious debate.

It will, however, be more useful for now to return to the broader and more general picture of Italian religiosity in the fifteenth century. The election of Martin V in Constance in 1417 had put an end to the Great Schism. Yet the Church still had to face various difficulties, from the conciliar party that found its see in Basel to the Bohemian Hussites, from the recovery of its secular possessions in Italy to the growing Ottoman threat in the East. News of the religious fights that took place abroad and decades of anticlerical feelings deriving from closer and more palpable situations shaped common opinions on the Church. Not even the growth and definitive affirmation of the Observances, inside religious orders, and the birth of new pious movements, such as the Jesuati or the Congregation of San Giorgio in Alga, were sufficient to hold back all the ill feelings among the intellectual class as well as among the populace.

The humanistic movement, that, from its fourteenth-century illustrious forerunners onwards, had set the line for a new intellectual and pedagogical model, was a major stimulating force. The renewed attention to the texts and cultures of Classical literature, both Pagan and Christian, created a standard for intellectuals; its capillary diffusion in the schools, sometimes open to the children of the middle and lower classes, gave way to a new and secularized process of acculturation that paired the religious one, represented primarily by preaching¹³. Laymen's deeply pious feelings led them to attend sermons frequently and to listen with extreme care to the preachers' words, making their own opinion on what was discussed in theology and doctrine, showing a real thirst for religious education¹⁴. We can read an excellent example of the value attributed to the teaching role of covered by preachers from a letter with which the townsmen of Pavia requested the Dominical General not to send the preacher Ludovico da Pisa elsewhere, since in town he was rendering «clear

¹² André Vauchez, *Les hérétiques au Moyen Âge: suppôts de Satan ou chrétiens dissidents?*, Paris, CNRS, 2014: 92. See also Eugenio Duprè Thesèider, 'L'eresia a Bologna nei tempi di Dante'. In *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe*, 2 vols. Florence: Sansoni, 1958: I, 383-444 (now also in Id., *Mondo cittadino e movimenti ereticali nel Medio Evo: saggi*. Bologna: Pàtron, 1978: 261-315); Alexander Murray, 'Religion among the Poors in Thirteenth-century France: The Testimony of Humbert de Romans'. *Traditio* 30 (1974): 285-324; Walter L. Wakefield, 'Some Unorthodox Popular Ideas of the Thirteenth Century'. *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., 4 (1973): 25-35.

¹³ Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning 1300-1600*. Baltimore-London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989; Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy. Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

¹⁴ See the case of the Florentine prelate Antonio degli Agli († 1477), who in his autobiography confessed having taken up his secular dress out for a very worldly reason (a large debt contracted by an uncle of his, for which he has signed as warrantor and which he had no way of paying back), but still remembered his youthful desired for religious, as well as literary, learning: cfr. Giacomo Mariani, Nelson H. Minnich, 'The autobiography of Antonio degli Agli (ca. 1400-1477): an introduction and transcription of the *Dialogus de vita eiusdem auctoris*'. *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 29 (2016): 415-487: 451.

and simple Thomas Aquinas' sentences to all the people»¹⁵. As Isabella Gagliardi has very clearly stated, the religious acculturation mainly produced by popular preachers:

had ended up also and primarily with raising the level of theological consciousness of the *populus christianus*. The polemics of the friars did not at all fall on the sterile land of pure ignorance. On the contrary, they reached an audience capable of understanding the greater part of the information they received in as much as they resulted, in parallel, instructed through a vast Christian educational system executed by the Church through the centuries, perhaps without a declared *esprit de systhème*, without an explicit program, but *de facto* and efficaciously. [...] Even thanks to all the polemics and public disputes between theologians and thanks to the theological knowledge (also considering all the possible and eventual torsions) induced by those same polemics and disputes, believers – or at least a part of them – were able to accuse the clergy of ignorance, on one hand, and to pose themselves relevant and significant theological question, on the other¹⁶.

The pairing of the critical tools furnished by the new humanistic education with, most importantly, the increasingly stronger religious education received from the pulpit, eventually led – with a gradual development that can be traced from the late fourteenth century throughout the fifteenth – to an increasing demand of complexity in the religious discourse and the request of independent participation in it. Indeed «all that debating, that captious reasoning, that dragging theology in public, feeding it confusedly to the *simplices*», by the early sixteenth century, ended up – in the eyes of the Camaldolese Pietro Querini (born Vincenzo, 1478/9-1514) and Paolo Giustiniani (born Tommaso, 1476-1528) – «with fostering uncertain devotion, with corroborating superstitions, with destabilizing believers»¹⁷. Even Roberto had clearly in mind the role played by preaching in the instruction of the masses and their growing request of more and more complicated and elaborated explanations, as it emerges from a fundamental passage in one of his sermons I will analyze further on.

After all, fifteenth-century Italy was the theater that primarily staged the culminating phase of what has been defined as a process of “secularization” of knowledge and culture or as a

¹⁵ Carlo Delcorno, ‘I “Sermones ad Iudeos” di Ludovico da Pisa o.p.’. *Studi medievali*, s. 3, 58/2 (2017): 771-811: 773: «Nostre urbis patres [...] recte eum existimaverunt, quod divi Thome Aquinatis sententias claras et apertas omni vulgo facit, quod denique veram philosophiam, quam sacram theologiam appellamus, insectetur».

¹⁶ Isabella Gagliardi, ‘Dibattiti teologici e acculturazione laicale nel tardo medioevo’. *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 39/1 (2003): 23-64: 29-30. On this issue also see Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction before the Council of Trent*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004; Pietro Delcorno, “‘Quomodo discent sine docente?’ Observant Efforts towards Education and Pastoral Care’. In *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, edited by James D. Mixson and Bert Roest. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2015: 147-184.

¹⁷ Gagliardi, ‘Dibattiti teologici e acculturazione laicale’: 28.

progressive «erosion of the rigid categories of *clericus* and *laicus*»¹⁸. The process is not exclusive to the fifteenth century, of course, but it is undeniable that it had a crucial development in this time. The renowned cases of the heresy accusations against Lorenzo Valla (1405/7-1457) and Giovanni Pico are just the peak episodes of the growingly active lay and humanist interferences in religious matters¹⁹. Some of these interventions had such consistence as to lead scholars to define a true “humanist theology”²⁰, or at least of humanists’ «contributions to the history of Christian thought»²¹.

The somehow seminal case, towards the end of the fourteenth century, of this progressive intromission of laymen in religious matters could be the famous advice on monastic life requested by the former man of arms and now Camaldolese monk Giovanni da San Miniato (1360-1428) from the Florentine Chancellor Coluccio Salutati (1332-1406), which is far too well known to be reconsidered here. It might be interesting, on the other hand, to list some examples from relatively less known episodes, which occurred in various areas of the Italy. Such was, for instance, the case of the first public *magister abaci* in Milan, Amedeo Landi (fl. 1430s-40s), who twice confronted Bernardino da Siena in trial, following the violent attacks the preacher had moved against him from the pulpit, since the teacher would not limit the lessons he gave to his young students to simple arithmetics, but would also instruct them on the Gospels and on Christian life²². Still in Milan, the

¹⁸ Riccardo Fubini, *Umanesimo e secolarizzazione da Petrarca a Valla*. Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1990 (Humanistica, 7); Cécile Caby, ‘Oltre l’“umanesimo religioso”: umanisti e Chiesa nel Quattrocento’. In *Cultura e desiderio di Dio. L’Umanesimo e le Clarisse dell’Osservanza. Atti della II giornata di studio sull’Osservanza Francescana al femminile, 10 novembre 2007, Monastero Clarisse S. Lucia, Foligno*, a cura di Pietro Messa, Angela Emmanuela Scandella, Mario Sensi. Assisi: Porziuncola, 2009: 15-33: 21-22.

¹⁹ On Valla see in particular Giuseppe Urbano, *Lorenzo Valla e fra Antonio da Bitonto. Bonaventura Zumbini*. Trani: V. Vecchi, tipografo-editore, 1898; Gianni Zippel, ‘L’Autodifesa di Lorenzo Valla per il processo dell’Inquisizione napoletana (1444)’. *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 13 (1970): 59-94; Salvatore I. Camporeale, *Lorenzo Valla: umanesimo e teologia*. Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1972: 270-273 and 431-434; Riccardo Fubini, ‘Lorenzo Valla tra il Concilio di Basilea e quello di Firenze, e il processo dell’Inquisizione’. In *Conciliarismo, stati nazionali, inizi dell’Umanesimo. Atti del XXV Convegno storico internazionale dell’Accademia Tudertina e del Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale, Todi, 9-12 ottobre 1988*. Spoleto: CISAM, 1990: 287-318 (now also in Id., *L’umanesimo italiano e i suoi storici. Origini rinascimentali – critica moderna*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2001: 136-162). On Pico see Eugenio Garin, *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: vita e dottrina*. Firenze: Le Monnier, 1937 (reprint Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura – Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 2011): 20-36; Giovanni Di Napoli, *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e la problematica dottrinale del suo tempo*. Roma: Desclée, 1965; Henri de Lubac, *Pico de la Mirandole: études et discussions*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1974; Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia: l’autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell’Inquisizione*, a cura di Paolo Edoardo Fornaciari. Firenze: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010.

²⁰ Camporeale, *Lorenzo Valla; Edelheit, Ficino, Pico and Savonarola*.

²¹ Charles Trinkaus, ‘The religious thought of the Italian humanists and the reformers: anticipation or autonomy?’. In *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, edited by Charles Trinkaus with Heiko A. Oberman. Leiden: Brill, 1974: 339-366: 340. See also Idem, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought*, 2 vols. London-Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970; Remo L. Guidi, *Aspetti religiosi nella letteratura del Quattrocento*, 5 vols. Vicenza: LIEF, 1973-1983.

²² Celestino Piana, ‘Un processo svolto a Milano nel 1441 a favore del mag. Amedeo de Landis e contro frate Bernardino da Siena’. In *Atti del simposio internazionale cateriniano-bernardiniano, Siena, 17-20 aprile 1980*, edited by Domenico Maffei e Paolo Nardi. Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982: 753-792; Marina Benedetti, “‘Per quisti ribaldi fray se disfa il mondo’”. Il contrasto tra Bernardino da Siena e Amedeo Landi’. In: *Francescani e politica nelle autonomie cittadine dell’Italia basso-medievale. Atti del convegno (Ascoli Piceno, Palazzo dei Capitani, 27-29*

court poet Gasparo Visconti (1461-99) expressed his curiosity in religious matters addressing, in verse, his doubts and questions on God's foreknowledge of men's afterlife destiny to the famous Augustinian preacher Mariano da Genazzano (1412-98)²³. In the 1450s, in Siena, the Jesuato Antonio Bettini (1396-1487) discussed on free will and predestination with the lay *magister artium* Pietro Rossi, who was also the author of an extensive allegorical comment to the Old Testament, «an ugly and intricate work», but still a clamorous testimony to the layman's involvement in religious discourse²⁴. In Ferrara, an interesting work composed in the vernacular by the Dominican friar Tommasino dai Liuti and dedicated to the lay courtman of the Duke Prisciano Prisciani – father of the more famous Pellegrino, astrologer and librarian – testifies to the latter's religious interests, since it is structured as a dialogue between the two on several theological and moral issues. This work, entitled *Declaratorio*, also testifies, more in general to the time's religious climate in Ferrara and of the public disputes that took place in the city²⁵. In Venice, the teaching of theology, introduced in the first public school of Rialto alongside logic, philosophy and mathematics by the cleric Paolo dalla Pergola († 1455), was entrusted, after his death, to lay representatives of the local patriciate, who in turn took over the teaching in the school²⁶. Finally, I cannot avoid mentioning the exceptional case of Florence, where religious issues were perhaps more debated among laymen than anywhere else. Here, Feo Belcari (1410-1484) expressed his doubts on the Immaculate Conception and Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-1498) and Donato Acciaiuoli (1429-1478), who had been discussing the Limbo and the afterlife destiny of unbaptized children, recurred to the authority of a third, older and wiser, layman, Giannozzo Manetti (1396-

novembre 2014), a cura di Isa Lori Sanfilippo e Roberto Lambertini. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2017: 299-312; Ead., 'Eresia e cultura. I processi contro Amedeo Landi, maestro d'abaco'. In *Prima di Lutero*: 819-841. A team led by Marina Benedetti is currently publishing the entire documentation relating to the trials that involved Amedeo Landi and Bernardino da Siena.

²³ Gasparo Visconti, *I canzonieri per Beatrice d'Este e per Bianca maria Sforza*, edizione critica a cura di Paolo Bongrani. Milano: Il saggiaiore, 1979: 18-19: «Ben che d'esser fidele i persupponga | e creda quel che vol la sancta Chiesa, | pur, non essendo temeraria impresa, | fà che d'un dubio in pace il mio cor ponga. | Oldito ho dir ch'el par che Dio disponga | non bene equal sua caritate accesa | circha l'humana prol, di cor suspesa | da lui creata, et vol d'arbitrio fonga. | Io parlo sol de quei disventurati | che prima assai de la sua creazione | epso conobbe ch'erano damnati; | or se questo è, la lor operazione | non poteva già far bugiardi i fati | ché mancherebbe Idio di perfezione: | adunca, in conclusione, | convien che quel che Lui prevede segua, | così l'arbitrio in fumo se dilegua», quoted in Eugenio Garin, 'La cultura milanese nella seconda metà del XV secolo'. In *Storia di Milano. VII: L'età Sforzesca*. Milano: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956: 539-597: 581, n. 2.

²⁴ Gianfranco Fioravanti, *Università e città: cultura umanistica e cultura scolastica a Siena nel '400*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1981 (previously published in two issues of *Rinascimento*. The quotation is from pp. 92-93); Gagliardi, 'Dibattiti teologici e acculturazione laicale'; Ead., *I pauperes yesuati: tra esperienze religiose e conflitti istituzionali*. Roma: Herder, 2004: 409-424.

²⁵ See Thomas Kaeppeli, 'Tommaso dai Liuti di Ferrara e il suo *Declaratorio*'. *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 20 (1950): 194-212. In turn, for Pellegrino Prisciani's interests in religion see Antonio Rotondò, 'Pellegrino Prisciani (1435ca.-1518)'. *Rinascimento* 11 (1960): 69-110.

²⁶ Bruno Nardi, 'Letteratura e cultura veneziana del Quattrocento'. In Id., *Saggi sulla cultura veneta del Quattro e Cinquecento*, edited by Paolo Mazzantini. Padua: Antenore, 1971: 3-43 (already published in *La civiltà veneziana del Quattrocento*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1957: 101-145): 34.

1459)²⁷. Still in Florence, it is also worth mentioning the numerous sermons delivered by laymen inside lay confraternities²⁸, but it is also worth recalling the cases of famous humanists who dedicated themselves to religious debates. Such was, for instance, Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494), who recalled in a letter of having been busy, during Lent, «exposing the sacred text to the people»²⁹ or who was pictured by Pietro Crinito (1475-1507) alongside his friend Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) discussing on heresy in the Dominican convent of San Marco³⁰. It will not be necessary to stress the latter's religious interests, which are abundantly known and which will come up further on in the dissertation.

Clearly, these better documented and known, at least in part, examples primarily refer to educated men of letters. The progressive demand for inclusion in the religious debate, however, also regarded a larger portion of society, simpler men, who more and more had the tools to build their own personal opinion in religious and cultural issues and wished to express it in public. It will be interesting here to recall the «acumen» that the Dutch Wessel Gansfort, one of the leading figures of the *Devotio Moderna*, noticed – and disliked – among the people of Florence when he visited the city in 1474³¹. Further on, common people's curiosity in religious matters kept growing and was surely fostered, in the second quarter of the sixteenth-century, by the diffusion of the Reformation, which not only converted prelates and men of culture, but also rooted among simpler men, bakers and workers. It is inside these kinds of shops that we know animated debates on various doctrinal matters took place, as inquisitorial trials from the mid sixteenth century testify abundantly. Finally,

²⁷ Respectively Celestino Piana, 'Una crisi spirituale in Feo Belcari per l'Immacolata Concezione e una lettera inedita di fr. Cherubino da Spoleto (1482)'. *AFH* 47 (1954): 450-456; Gagliardi, *I pauperes yesuati*: 150-153; Chiara Franceschini, 'Dibattiti sul peccato originale e sul Limbo a Firenze (1439-1450)'. In *Salvezza delle anime, disciplina dei corpi. Un seminario sulla storia del battesimo*, edited by Adriano Proserpi. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2006: 215-254; Ead., *Storia del limbo*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017: 156-159.

²⁸ On preaching in Florentine lay confraternities see Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Lay Religious Traditions and Florentine Platonism'. In *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*: I, 99-122; Cesare Vasoli, 'Giovanni Nesi tra Donato Acciaiuoli e Girolamo Savonarola'. In *Umanesimo e teologia fra Quattrocento e Cinquecento. Memorie Domenicane*, n.s., 4 (1973): 103-179 (now also in Id., *I miti e gli astri*, Naples: Guida, 1977: 51-128); John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 1994; Amos Edelheit, *Ficino, Pico and Savonarola: The Evolution of Humanist Theology, 1461/2-1498*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008: 171-203.

²⁹ Angelo Poliziano, *Opera*. Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1498 [GW M34727]: f. f2v (*Epistularum libri*, IV. Now see also Angelus Politianus, *Opera omnia*, a cura di Ida Maier. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1970: III: *Opera miscellanea et epistulae*).

³⁰ Pietro Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*, a cura di Carlo Angeleri. Roma: Fratelli Bocca editori, 1995: 117 (III, XV): «Sermo habitus est in Maricana bibliotheca a Pico Mirandula et Politiano de quibusdam haeticis, eorumque disciplinis atque opinionibus, tum de Augustini egregia et singulari doctrina in examinandis, refellendis atque eiiciendis illorum erroribus, qui Christianorum mentes, veluti proserpens hedera, facile implicant». In another point of his work Crinito actually speaks about a *tre Accademia Marciana*, where lay and religious men met and debated all sorts of issues (*Ivi*: 104; III, II). In the same sense, scholars have spoken about an "Academy" that, a first time at the beginning of the century and then in the late 1480s and early 1490s, assembled in the Florentine Camaldolese monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, cfr. Cécile Caby, *De l'érémisme rural au monachisme urbain. Les camaldulesen Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1999: 616-623; Dennis F. Lackner, 'The Camaldolese Academy: Ambrogio Traversari, Marsilio Ficino and the Christian Platonic Tradition'. In: *Marsilio Ficino: his Theology, his Philosophy, his Legacy*, edited by Michael J. B. Allen and Valery Rees with Martin Davies. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2002: 15-44.

³¹ Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the "Devotio Moderna"*. New York & London: The Century Co., 1925: 200; 409, n. 15. The passage is mentioned in Cantimori, *Eretici italiani*: 5.

the growing of this demand for inclusion in the religious debate received a sharp stop with the Council of Trent, when the attention turned against the many who were dealing with religious matters but were in no way entitled to do so.

Another clue of the secularization of the religious debate and, at the same time, of its public promotion can be found in the public theological discussions often organized in the late fifteenth-century for the amusement of lay rulers. The case of Lorenzo de' Medici's entourage is probably the most famous and well documented one, especially regarding the disputation between the Hungarian Dominican friar Niccolò de' Mirabili († 1495) and the Bosnian Franciscan Giorgio Benigno Salviati (born Juraj Dragišić, 1445-1520), which occurred in 1489, with the participation of celebrated humanists such as Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), Angelo Poliziano and Giovanni Pico³². Similarly, Ludovico il Moro would organize theological disputations at his court, one of which, between the Franciscan Giuliano da Muggia (1458ca-post 1509) and an unknown opponent, will be at the center of a later chapter. Again, in another Quattrocento court, Borso d'Este's in Ferrara, theological debates were orchestrated for the court's enjoyment, such as the one on the *anima separata* (and another, or possibly the same, on the beatific vision) which saw the Dominican theologian Giovanni Gatti (1420ca-1484) as one of the disputers³³. Still in Ferrara, it will be worth mentioning the public debates on the Immaculate Conception held in 1478 at the presence of the Duke³⁴. Probably on the model of Italian courts, finally, theological disputations were also organized in Hungary at the presence of king Mathias Corvinus³⁵. Even – or, perhaps, especially – where a lay court lacked, as in Rome, humanists showed their interest for scholastic debates³⁶.

³² On the disputation now see Amos Edelheit, 'On evil, God, and human freedom. A scholastic portrait of Florence, June 1489'. *Rinascimento*, s. 2, 51 (2011): 157-200; Id., *Scholastic Florence. Moral Psychology in the Quattrocento*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014: 13-81. The two disputers published respective accounts of the event soon after it occurred: Nicolaus de Mirabilibus, *Disputatio facta in domo Laurentii Medices*. Florence: Francesco di Dino, 1489 [GW M23658]; Georgius Benignus, *Mirabilia septem et septuaginta in opuscolo Nicolai de Mirabilibus*. s.n.t. [Florence: 1489] [GW 3842]. A modern edition of Niccolò de' Mirabili's account is to be found in Jenő Ábel, Vilmos Fraknói, *Irodalomtörténeti emlékek, I. Két magyarországi egyházi író a XV. századból*. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1886: 351-426.

³³ Kaeppli, 'Tommaso dai Liuti di Ferrara': 204-205; John Monfasani, 'Giovanni Gatti of Messina: a profile and an unedited text'. In *Filologia umanistica per Gianvito Resta*, edited by Vincenzo Fera and Giacomo Ferrà, 3 vols. Padua: Antenore, 1997: II, 1315-1338.

³⁴ Celestino Piana, 'Un saggio dell'attività francescana nella difesa e propagazione del culto alla Concezione Immacolata'. In: *Virgo Immacolata. Acta congressus mariologici-mariani Romae anno MCMLIV celebrati*, vol VII: *De Immacolata conceptione in ordine S. Francisci*, fasc. III: *De disputationibus publicis et cultu erga immaculatam conceptionem*. Romae: Academia mariana internationalis, 1957: 1-41.

³⁵ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Mathiae ad duces Iohannem eius filium liber*, edidit Ladislaus Juhász. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1934: 30-33 (§ 30); Tibor Kardos, 'Il simposio di Esztergom'. In Id., *Studi e ricerche umanistiche italo-ungheresi*, I. Debrecen: Kossuth Lajos Tudomány Egyetem, 1967: 63-79; Klara Pájin, 'La rinascita del simposio antico e la corte di Mattia Corvino'. In *Italia e Ungheria all'epoca dell'umanesimo corviniano*, edited by Sante Graciotti and Cesare Vasoli. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994: 179-228.

³⁶ John Monfasani, 'The humanist and the scholastic: Giovanni Andrea Bussi and Henricus de Zomerem'. *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 65 (2016): 29-38.

Humanism, however, was not the only driving force of the fifteenth-century Italian intellectual milieu. As important scholars have noted, philosophers of Italian late-medieval universities enjoyed a much greater freedom to debate than any other of their European counterparts did. Precociously stricken by religious condemnations (Étienne Tempier in Paris in 1270-1277 and Robert Kilwardby in Oxford in 1277), the philosophical schools more radically contrasting with Christian doctrine had soon disappeared from Northern universities. On the contrary, around the same time, they had found fertile ground in Italy³⁷. Bruno Nardi has repeatedly shown in his studies how Italian university commentators of Aristotle could publicly maintain Averroistic positions such as the unity of the intellect or the eternity of the world without risking – after an appropriate declaration of Christian faith and without the need of a “doctrine of double truth” – any unwanted attention from inquisitors³⁸. Yet, there was a chance that these arguments could leave the university classroom and lose their hypothetical nature: if any of it dripped to the populace, not ready to understand the difference with Christian faith, then the intervention of religious authorities was immediate. It was the case of Francesco Panzarasi, lecturer in logic at the University of Bologna, who in 1488 was questioned by the Dominican inquisitor Domenico Pirri da Gargnano (fl. 1485-1520) for having publicly asserted that the world and the skies were uncreated. Panzarasi’s fault was not so much that of having held such positions, which were legitimate after a profession of faith, but rather that of having expressed them in front of a public that was not sufficiently equipped to distinguish philosophical speculation from religious truth, to which the former always had to subdue. The philosopher’s fault was that of having exposed his theories in front of «persone ydiote»³⁹. Another example is represented by the disputations held by the Paduan university lecturers, among them the well-known philosopher Nicoletto Vernia (1420ca-1499), «who did not believe in anything above the ceiling», in the words of his student Pietro Pomponazzi (1462-1525)⁴⁰. On 6 May 1489, the zealous bishop Pietro Barozzi (1441-1507) and the Franciscan inquisitor Martino da Lendinara prohibited public philosophical disputations, especially regarding the unity of the intellect. Rumors about the university professors’ beliefs must have been circulating

³⁷ Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘The Curriculum of the Italian Universities from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance’. *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 9 (1984): 1-16 (now in Id., *Studies in the Italian Renaissance: IV*, 75-96); John Monfasani, ‘Aristotelians, Platonists, and the Missing Ockhamists: Philosophical Liberty in Pre-Reformation Italy’. *Renaissance Quarterly* 46/2 (1993): 247-276.

³⁸ Bruno Nardi, ‘La miscredenza e il carattere morale di Nicoletto Vernia’. In Idem, *Saggi sull’aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*. Florence: Sansoni, 1958: 95-114 (already in *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 30 (1951): 103-118): 96-97; Idem, ‘Letteratura e cultura veneziana del Quattrocento’: 36. For an updated and more general overview of this phenomenon in Italian universities in the preceding centuries see Gianfranco Fioravanti, ‘I filosofi e gli altri’. In *La filosofia in Italia al tempo di Dante*, edited by Carla Casagrande and Gianfranco Fioravanti. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016: 91-122.

³⁹ Riccardo Parmeggiani, ‘«Ad extirpandas sortilegiorum, divinatorum ac malleficorum iniquas operationes». Riflessi teorico-pratici della repressione nello specchio di un registro quattrocentesco dell’inquisizione bolognese’. In *Prima di Lutero*: 842-862: 848-849.

⁴⁰ From a *reportatio* of his lectures on *De caelo* in November 1519 in Bologna. Nardi, ‘La miscredenza e il carattere morale di Nicoletto Vernia’: 113: «Nicoletus, vir lepidus, qui non credebat, ut ita dicam, dal tecto in su».

in town, but more worrying than a bunch of scholars' intimate faith was the case if such speculations were to reach inexperienced ears.

Finally, to close this picture of the religious and intellectual climate of Quattrocento Italy, it is due to return, with a few words, on heresy, which represents an important part, no matter how limited, of religiosity. Fifteenth-century heresy in Italy is still a largely obscure topic. The period has suffered, just like most of the period before the reorganization of the Holy Office in 1542 and possibly even more than earlier centuries, from the scarcity of sources that could inform us on figures and events concerning religious dissent⁴¹. Some first steps are being taken, but there still seems to be a lot of work to do in order to get a clear image of the religious ferment at the borders of the still blurred orthodoxy of that time⁴². Clearly, inquisitors from North-Western Italy were always alert for the Waldensian threat. So much that they would even mistake other heretics for followers of the Poor of Lyon and burn them on the stake⁴³. Fraticelli, the most recent descendants of Franciscan Spirituals, were in turn considered another major threat, particularly in the hilly and mountainous regions of Central Italy, where the last members either joined the stricter Franciscan Observance or suffered violent persecution. Inquisitors burnt group stakes of Fraticelli in Fabriano in 1449 and in Rome in 1466⁴⁴.

These are, however, just the peaks of the best-known and more popular heretical movements. Other cases, which often involved even just single figures, testify to the time's true religious and intellectual upheavals and ferments, which sometimes crossed the borders of Christian doctrine as a whole. A few examples will suffice for this general picture. Surely eloquent, even for its notoriety in the following centuries, is the case of the canon from Bergamo Zanino da Solza, supporter of radical ideas such as the imposture of religions and Christ's illegitimate birth, who was condemned in 1459⁴⁵. Another puzzling example is the case of Iohannes of Frankfurt, a German

⁴¹ See Mariano d'Alatri, *Eretici e inquisitori in Italia. Studi e documenti*, 2 vols. Rome: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 1988-87: II: *Il Tre e Quattrocento*; Grado Giovanni Merlo, 'Problemi documentari dell'Inquisizione medievale in Italia'. In *Gli archivi dell'Inquisizione in Italia: problemi storiografici e descrittivi. Atti del seminario di studio, Roma, Archivio di Stato, 18 febbraio 2005*. *Cromohs* 11 (2006): www.cromohs.unifi.it; Id., 'Problemi documentari dell'Inquisizione medievale in Italia'. In *I tribunali della fede: continuità e discontinuità dal Medioevo all'età moderna. Atti del 45 Convegno di studi sulla Riforma e sui movimenti religiosi in Italia, Torre Pellice, 3-4 settembre 2005*, edited by Susanna Peyronel. Turin: Claudiana, 2007: 19-29.

⁴² See the collection of studies edited by Biasiori and Conti, *Prima di Lutero*, and especially the editors' introduction: 'Il secolo senza eresia?'

⁴³ See the most recent contributions: *Valdesi medievali: bilanci e prospettive di ricerca*, a cura di Marina Benedetti. Turin: Claudiana, 2009; Marina Benedetti, *I margini dell'eresia: indagine su un processo inquisitoriale (Oulx, 1492)*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2013 (Fonti e documenti dell'Inquisizione, 1); Ead., *La valle dei Valdesi: i processi contro Tommaso Guiot, sarto di Prigelato (Oulx, 1495)*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2013 (Fonti e documenti dell'Inquisizione, 2).

⁴⁴ See most recently Michele Lodone, 'Il sabba dei fraticelli. La demonizzazione degli eretici nel Quattrocento'. In *Prima di Lutero*: 887-907.

⁴⁵ Lucio Biasiori, '«Empietà e bestemmie anche alle orecchie dei saraceni infedeli»: la condanna di Zanino da Solza tra rafforzamento ecclesiastico e progetti di Crociata (1459)'. In *Prima di Lutero*: 863-886; Lucio Biasiori, Daniele Conti, 'Il "Tractatus catholice veritatis contra errores Zanini de Soltia" di Jaume Gil (1459): introduzione ed edizione'. *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 31 (2017): 155-191.

who had settled in Bologna and who was tried in the early 1470s for his seemingly Judaizing religious ideas contained in a vernacular work titled *Speculum Bononiense*, orally diffused among the people⁴⁶. It will also be the case to mention Galeotto Marzio (1427-1490) and his *De incognitis vulgo*. This work, even if it did not have almost any circulation among contemporary readers, managed anyway to raise a real turmoil inside the Venetian inquisition, which its author could only overcome thanks to the intervention of powerful friends, such as Matthias Corvinus and Lorenzo de' Medici⁴⁷. Not to speak, finally, of the traces of anti-Christian feelings detectable in the heart itself of Catholicism, Rome, among some members of Pomponio Leto's academy, as a representative of whom it will suffice to recall the name of Filippo Buonarroti, alias Callimachus Experiens (1437-1496)⁴⁸. This is just a cursory overview of some of the most notorious and clamorous cases: some others will emerge during the discussion of the dissertation's topics.

The setting of Roberto's sermon collections lies inside this tormented climate of religious and intellectual initiatives. Before going into the matter of his life and works and of the clues to the religious and cultural history of their time contained in them, it will be necessary to give a general picture of the studies on preaching and of the preaching activity in late fifteenth-century Italy, which have been fundamental in the study of his life and works and in the exploitation of his sermon collections and historical sources.

2. Sermons as historical sources

Because of their intrinsic ties with the communities they were prepared and composed for, sermons provide important information on the social, religious, cultural and intellectual status of contemporary society. However, especially as far as Italy (but the same could also be said for other linguistic areas) and the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries are concerned, when the vernacular language had taken shape and literary value, sermons have primarily remained an object of study

⁴⁶ Franco Bacchelli, 'Gli «Errores Iohannis de Franchphordia»'. In *La fede degli italiani. Per Adriano Prosperi*, edited by Guido Dall'Olio, Adelisa Malena, Pierroberto Scaramella. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011: 11-32.

⁴⁷ Cesare Vasoli, 'Note su Galeotto Marzio'. *Acta literaria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19 (1977): 51-69 (now also in Id., *La cultura delle corti*. Bologna: Cappelli, 1980: 38-63); Gabriella Miggiano, "'Etiam tacente Christo': l'eresia laica di Galeotto Marzio". In *A magyar művelődés és a kereszténység. A IV. Nemzetközi Hungarológiai Kongresszus előadásai. Róma-Nápoly, 1996. szeptember 9-14 – La civiltà ungherese e il cristianesimo. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Ungheresi, Roma-Napoli, 9-14 settembre 1996*, edited by di József Jankovics, István Monok, Judit Nyerges, Péter Sárközy. Budapest-Szeged: Nemzetközi Magyar Filológiai Társaság, 1998: 208-226; Enikő Békés, 'From King Matthias to Lorenzo de' Medici: Galeotto Marzio's Astrological Work and his Dedictees'. In *De Frédéric II à Rodolphe II. Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, edited by Jean-Patrice Boudet, Martine Ostorero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani. Florence: SISMELE – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017: 295-312.

⁴⁸ Daniele Conti, '«Initium abolendae fidei». Dagli accademici romani a Machiavelli: una nuova fonte per la storia dell'anticristianesimo quattrocentesco'. In *Prima di Lutero: 984-1021*. See also Cesare Vasoli, 'Il pensiero religioso di Callimaco Esperiente'. In *Callimaco Esperiente, poeta e politico del '400. Convegno internazionale di studi (San Gimignano, 18-20 ottobre 1985)*, edited by Gian Carlo Garfagnini. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1987: 3-23.

for literary historians⁴⁹. There has been, as said, a rising historiographic trend, originating in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, which has taken these sources more and more into account. In these decades, a rapidly growing international group of scholars started looking with renewed philological and historical interest at medieval sermons and at the context of the act of preaching⁵⁰. Since then, and especially during the last thirty years, medieval sermon studies have been proliferating, providing more reliable and up-to-date knowledge of texts and authors, as well as interesting insights into the techniques and practices of preaching⁵¹. Some specific fields have been particularly scrutinized, such as connections between preachers and political issues and institutions or preachers' views of "popular culture". On the other hand, more extensive and comparative studies of sermon collections and especially of the contribution these sources could give to our knowledge of the time's intellectual and religious climate are still in great part lacking. Current debates over Jürgen Habermas' negation of the existence of a public opinion in the Middle Ages are an invitation, in a certain sense, to explore the effects of public events such as the delivery of a sermon on contemporary society⁵².

Before giving a summary overview of the history of preaching and of recent scholarly work and historiography around it, it is due to make clear that the next few pages, with few exceptions, will be primarily devoted to the history of Italian preaching and particularly to the fifteenth-century. Moreover, a greater relevance and attention will be given to the extraordinary preaching of mendicant friars – especially Franciscan Observants – both in Latin and the vernacular. I am well aware this is a very partial picture, but functional to the discourse which will be developed in this dissertation.

⁴⁹ Corrie E. Norman, 'The social history of preaching: Italy'. In *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, edited by Larissa Taylor. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001: 125-191: 126.

⁵⁰ Augustine Thompson, 'From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event'. In: *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, edited by Carolyn Muessig. Leiden: Brill, 2002: 13-37.

⁵¹ It will suffice to quote just some of the main titles: Carlo Delcorno, *Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione in volgare*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1975; Michel Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300*. Paris: Éditions Champion, 1976; Hervé Martin, 'La prédication et les masses au XVe siècle: facteurs et limites d'une réussite'. In *Histoire vécue du peuple chrétien*, directed by Jean Delumeau, 2 vols. Toulouse: Privat, 1979: I, 9- 41; Jean Longère, *La prédication médiévale*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1983; David D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; Hervé Martin, *Le métier de prédicateur à la fin du Moyen Âge, 1350-1520*. Paris: Cerf, 1988; Louis Jacques Bataillon, *La predication au XIII siècle en France et Italie: études et documents*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1993; *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons. Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity*, edited by Nicole Bériou and David L. D'Avray. Spoleto: CISAM, 1994; Nicole Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres de la parole: la prédication à Paris au XIII siècle*. Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1998.

⁵² See in particular *L'espace public au Moyen Âge: débats autour de Jürgen Habermas*, sous la direction de Patrick Boucheron et Nicolas Offenstadt. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011; *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Massimo Rospocher. Bologna-Berlin: Il Mulino-Dunker & Humbolt, 2012. The reference to Habermas is, of course, to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989 (original German edition 1962).

Since the IV Lateran Council, the preaching of the newborn mendicant orders constituted a fundamental phenomenon in the *cura animarum* of Western urban populations, paralleling, sometimes overlapping and often substituting that of the secular clergy, of bishops in particular, which will regain its importance and centrality only after the Council of Trent⁵³. Numerous studies have been dedicated to the history of this phenomenon, which involved Italy as much as any other region⁵⁴. During the fifteenth century, however, the preaching of Franciscan Observants seems to have taken over, in fame and acceptance, that of all the other mendicant orders. From Bernardino da Siena's famous and widely celebrated preaching cycles in Central Italy in the 1420s until around the end of the century – and possibly to the first decades of the sixteenth, with the preaching of another Bernardino da Siena, the future Capuchin General and apostate Ochino⁵⁵ – Franciscan Observant preachers lived their golden century. The new model of preaching elaborated by Bernardino on the basis of the scholastic *sermo modernus* separated the mendicants' extraordinary sermon cycles (primarily Adventual and Lenten) from the ordinary sequence of liturgical readings and the friars began to choose the *themata* of their sermons in order to focus the contents of their preaching on doctrinally and socially relevant themes. Moreover, the new techniques of preaching also led popular preachers who followed Bernardino and his style towards more histrionic and emotionally stronger performances. Such a renewed way of preaching enjoyed outstanding fortune among popular preachers, not only strictly within Bernardino's "school", but was also copied by friars from other orders. It is true that Bernardino and his followers sometimes received some criticism, at times even violent, but their successes largely surpassed their failures⁵⁶.

⁵³ On shortcomings of fifteenth-century Italian secular clergy see the exceptional source of Ermolao Barbaro's pastoral visits in the diocese of Verona in the 1450s, Ermolao Barbaro, *Visitationum liber diocesis veronensis ab anno 1454 ad annum 1460*, a cura di Silvio Tonolli. Verona: Archivio Storico Curia Diocesana, 1998: esp. 47, 54. A number of Barbaro's own Lenten sermons have recently been published: *I "sermone de tempore di Ermolao Barbaro Vescovo di Verona (1453-1471)*, introduzione storica ed edizione del testo a cura di Don Guglielmo Bonfante. Verona: Archivio Storico Curia diocesana di Verona, 2018.

⁵⁴ For the general picture, it will suffice to quote Carlo Delcorno, 'Medieval preaching in Italy (1200-1500)'. In *The Sermon*, directed by Beverly Mayne Kienzle. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000 (Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, fasc. 81-83): 449-560. For a very recent overview of the shifts that occurred in Italian preaching during the sixteenth century see Giorgio Caravale, 'Predicatori, inquisitori e storici. Riflessioni storiografiche e metodologiche'. *Rivista storica italiana* 130/1 (2018): 236-271: 238-242.

⁵⁵ Michele Camaioni, *Il Vangelo e l'Anticristo: Bernardino Ochino tra francescanesimo ed eresia (1487-1547)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018.

⁵⁶ Alberto Ghinato, 'La predicazione francescana nella vita religiosa e sociale del Quattrocento'. *Picenum seraphicum* 10 (1973): 24-98; *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo. XVI Convegno internazionale di studi. Todi, Accademia Tudertina, 9-12 ottobre 1975*. Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1976 (Convegni del Centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, 16); Carlo Delcorno, 'L'ars praedicandi di Bernardino da Siena'. In *Atti del simposio internazionale cateriniano-bernardiniano*: 419-429; Id., 'L'osservanza francescana e il rinnovamento della predicazione'. In *I Frati osservanti e la società in Italia nel sec. XV*. XL Convegno internazionale di studi francescani, Assisi-Perugia, 11-13 ottobre 2012. Spoleto: CISAM, 2013: 3-53; Id., 'Apogeo e crisi della predicazione francescana tra Quattro e Cinquecento'. *Studi francescani* 112 (2015): 399-440.

As already said, sermons constituted a fundamental element of religious instruction for the popular masses, of urban centers in particular⁵⁷. The attention paid to the message communicated on the pulpit contributes to demonstrating the importance of the event of delivering the sermons. This is visible, on the one hand, in the recording of sermon texts, *reportationes*, which common laymen sometimes cherished for their private devotional use⁵⁸. It is also visible in the fiery polemics that these sermons could raise among expert scholastics. The most famous example is the controversy on the “Holy name” of Jesus, which saw Bernardino da Siena faced by a number of opponents, such as the Augustinian Andrea Biglia (1395ca-1435) and the Dominican Manfredi da Vercelli (second half of the XIV century-1431/47). The Franciscan preacher’s critics judged the devotion to the wooden tablet with the abbreviation “IHS” painted in gold on a blue background inside a circle of equally golden rays, which he promoted among his popular listeners, as idolatrous and even heretic⁵⁹. Less known, but not less telling, is the case occurred to the Franciscan Observant Antonio da Bitonto (1385-1465) in 1443, while preaching in Lecce. The local Dominicans attacked him for having expressed on the pulpit the opinion that it was not a mortal sin to take communion on each day of the Holy Week but not on Easter day⁶⁰. Again, Antonio da Bitonto also received Lorenzo Valla’s criticism for having asserted the apostolic origin of the *Creed* during his preaching in Naples⁶¹. Finally, a further example lies in the dispute over Christ’s blood and the value of relics containing it, which initially involved Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476) and the Dominican friars

⁵⁷ See Cinthia L. Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and his Audience*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000; Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers: Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001 (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 4); Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Pescatori di uomini. Predicatori e piazze alla fine del Medioevo*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005; Pietro Delcorno, *Lazzaro e il ricco epulone. Metamorfosi di una parabola fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014; Id., *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son. The Pastoral Uses of a Biblical Narrative (c. 1200-1550)*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018.

⁵⁸ See particularly Zelina Zafarana, ‘Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento’. *Studi medievali*, III s., 9 (1968): 1017-1113 (now also in Ead., *Da Gregorio VII a Bernardino da Siena: 279-377*); Rosa Maria Dessì, ‘«Quanto di poi abia a bastare il mondo...». Apocalittica e penitenza nelle *reportationes* dei sermoni di Michele Carcano da Milano (Firenze, 1461-1466)’. *Florensia* 3-4 (1989-90): 71-90; Ead., ‘Entre prédication et réception: les thèmes eschatologiques dans les «reportationes» des sermons de Michele Carcano de Milan (Florence, 1461-1466)’. *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Moyen-Âge, temps modernes* 102/2 (1990): 457-479. See also Bernadette Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos: Siena 1380-1480*. London: Centre for Medieval Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1992.

⁵⁹ Étienne Longpré, ‘S. Bernardin de Sienne et le Nom de Yesus’. *AFH* 28 (1935: 443-476; 29 (1936): 142-168, 443-477; 30 (1937): 170-192; Isabella Gagliardi, ‘Figura Nominis Jesu: in margine alla controversia *De Jesuitate* (1427-1431)’. *Bullettino dell’istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo* 113 (2011): 209-249.

⁶⁰ Giovanni da Capestrano defended his confrere from the Dominicans’ attacks, cfr. Zefirino Lazzeri, ‘De epistola quadam inedita s. Ioannis a Capestrano circa communionem paschalem (1445)’. *AFH* 21 (1928): 269-284. Cfr. also Felice Moretti, ‘Antonio da Bitonto OFMObs nella vita religiosa e sociale del Quattrocento’. *Il Santo* 48 (2008): 391-425: 405. Antonio’s accuser, alongside the Prior of the Dominican convent, has been identified in Nicola de Aymo in Rosario Coluccia, ‘Lingua e religione. Il ruolo della Chiesa e l’affermazione del volgare in Puglia’. In *Lingue, stili, traduzioni. Studi di linguistica e stilistica italiana offerti a Maria Luisa Altieri Biagi*, edited by Fabrizio Frasnè and Riccardo Tesi. Florence: F. Cesati, 2004: 71-95: 77.

⁶¹ Cfr. *supra* n. 19.

of Brescia who had heard him preach there, but which grew so much as to lead to a disputation in front of Pope Pius II⁶².

The preaching of the friars was not limited to religious instruction and evangelization only. Its moral and disciplining aspects were at least as important, as was its more political side. Popular preachers became fundamental resources for rulers and governing classes, who looked at the famous sacred orators and requested their “services” for social intervention concerning the people subject to them. Friars, of course, brought forward their own agenda, thus occasional conflicts with local authorities could occur. It is the case, for example, of Bernardino da Feltre’s (1439-1494) preaching against Jews and their money-lending activity in Florence. The Florentine authorities judged his ardor excessive and expelled the preacher from their territories⁶³. It is also the case, in the same town, though with much greater echo and consequences, of the prophetic and political preaching of Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), true religious spirit of the first years of the reborn Florentine republic, taking sides against the exiled Medici, but also ending with earning himself the Church’s fierce enmity⁶⁴. Anyway, this was not always the case and often the interests of preachers and local rulers coincided, as demonstrated by the numerous requests friars received for their preaching from various cities and towns or by their frequent and consistent role often mentioned in the reformation of town statutes. Thus, friars became important means of social control and political and legal reform, an aspect to which scholars have dedicated a certain attention⁶⁵. Even more, preachers could become true political advisors for rulers, as in the case of the Franciscan Observant Antonio da Vercelli (1408-1483), who composed a number of political treatises, mostly in the form of letters, for Lorenzo de’ Medici⁶⁶.

⁶² Carla Casagrande, ‘Giacomo della Marca, santo’. *DBI* 54 (2000): 214-220: 217. As far as I know, an extensive study of the controversy is still wanted. See at least the account of the dispute in Pious II *Commentarii*, book 11, § 7: Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, edited by Luigi Totaro, 2 vols. Milano: Adelphi, 1984: II, 2048-2131.

⁶³ Letizia Pellegrini, ‘Tra la piazza e il Palazzo. Predicazione e pratiche di governo nell’Italia del Quattrocento’. In *I frati osservanti e la società*: 109-133: 120-121.

⁶⁴ It will be sufficient to quote Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

⁶⁵ Roberto Rusconi, ‘«Predicò in piazza»: politica e predicazione nell’Umbria del ‘400’. In *Signorie in Umbria tra Medioevo e Rinascimento: l’esperienza dei Trinci (Foligno, 10-13 dicembre 1986)*. Perugia: Deputazione di Storia Patria per l’Umbria, 1989: 113-141; Remo L. Guidi, ‘Il pulpito e il palazzo. Temi e problemi nella predicazione dei Mendicanti nel 400’. *AFH* 89 (1996): 263-286; Francesco Bruni, *La città divisa: le parti e il bene comune da Dante a Guicciardini*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003; Letizia Pellegrini, ‘Prédication et politique dans la péninsule italienne au XV^e siècle’. In *Preaching and Political Society: From Late Antiquity to the End of the Middle Ages*, edited by Franco Morenzoni. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013: 311-329; Ead., ‘Tra la piazza e il Palazzo’.

⁶⁶ Benvenuto Bughetti, ‘Tre lettere di fr. Antonio da Vercelli, O.F.M., a Lorenzo il Magnifico (1478)’. *AFH* 10 (1917): 586-595; Ottokar Bonmann, ‘Memoriale Antonii de Vercellis ad Laurentium Magnificum de Medicis’. *AFH* 43 (1950): 361-410; Paolo Evangelisti, ‘Un non-umanista consigliere politico di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Etica politica ed “arte dello stato” nel Memoriale e nelle lettere di Antonio da Vercelli, osservante francescano (marzo-maggio 1478)’. In *Ovidio Capitani. Quaranta anni per la Storia medievale*, edited by Maria Consiglia De Matteis, 2 vols. Bologna: Pàtron, 2003: I, 167-187 (now in a larger version as ‘Etica politica e “arte dello stato”’. Antonio da Vercelli: un osservante francescano consigliere politico di Lorenzo il Magnifico’. *Bollettino telematico di Filosofia Politica dell’Università di Pisa*, <http://bfp.sp.unipi.it/riviste/evangelisti.html> [last visited 9 April 2018]).

Thus, it is inside this context of religious, cultural and political influences exercised by preachers on contemporary society that we should read also Roberto da Lecce's sermons. As suggested above, and as will be repeated later on, sermons recorded by listeners – especially if laymen – directly from the preacher's performance surely have a more direct and recognizable connection with the specific society and cultural level represented by the tachygrapher. However, also the sermon collection that were prepared – increasingly from the fifteenth century onwards and especially after the invention of the printing press – and that I will call “model sermon collections” (that is adaptable to different situations), which represent a large part of Roberto's numerous extant sermons, can say a lot on his time's cultural and religious debates. These collections, diffused in manuscript and print, represented both a tool for fellow preachers and a devotional reading for many laymen. It goes without a doubt that this kind of literature can be easily defined, using modern categories and terminology, as “popular” or “commercial”. As an attentive observer of his time's society such as Antonio Gramsci observed (*Quaderni dal carcere*, 5 (XI), § 54): «the success of a commercial literature book shows [...] which group of sentiments [and world conceptions] prevail inside the “silent” multitude». It is for this purpose, to uncover the thoughts and beliefs of the “silent multitude” – as well as, in specific cases, of higher culture – that we can use sermon collections as historical sources.

In the next paragraphs, I will try to summarize and schematize the work I have done in this dissertation, before beginning the true historical narration.

3. *Research outline*

Given the twofold aim of the research, I have divided the dissertation as well into two parts: a first one dealing with the reconstruction of Roberto's life and fame and a study of his works and their diffusion; the second part is dedicated to the contextualization and discussion of some of the information on contemporary society and culture gathered from his sermon collections. I have in turn divided the first of the two parts into two major chapters. The first provides a new reconstruction of Roberto's biography, divided into six subchapters, which relate to as many important phases of his life. This division into sections has also been due to the source material available for the biographical reconstruction, which is surprisingly – in part – much richer for his youth than for his later years. This new biography of Roberto was especially aimed at correcting previous ones through a comparison of extant studies. Moreover, I have availed myself of a number of source editions that were previously unavailable. The seventh section of this chapter contains an account of judgments on Roberto and his preaching collected from contemporary authors, in order to give a better idea of his fame among during his times and of his posthumous fortune. Five

appendixes, containing unedited texts – all in verse and all but one in Latin – about or dedicated to Roberto, finally, conclude the biographical chapter.

The second chapter of the dissertation's first part is centred on Roberto's works. After a first subchapter discussing theoretically the literary genre of sermon collections in general, a second one is dedicated to the editorial history of Roberto's works, considering all of his seven major printed collections and other minor ones. Indeed, Roberto was among the first and most fortunate authors of model sermon collections to be printed in the last decades of the fifteenth century. This section is closely related to the first of the two appendixes that follow chapter two, which provides an improved catalogue of the editions of Roberto's works. Since a text's or an author's fortune in the fifteenth century cannot exclusively be related only to print, the third section of the second chapter is dedicated to some hints – since it was not possible to consult all the copies – at the manuscript diffusion of Roberto's sermons. This section too is closely connected to an appendix, the second to this chapter, which contains a tentative (since it was made without any pretension of completeness) list of extant manuscripts containing some excerpts, single sermons or even whole collections from Roberto's *repertoire*. A tentative list which anyway already counts over one-hundred manuscripts.

I have divided the second part of the dissertations into three chapters, each dealing with a specific group of issues and debates addressed by Roberto in his sermons, opened by a general introduction and followed by an epilogue. The introduction is a thorough and detailed discussion of the reasons I believe should lead scholars to explore sermons as a source for religious and cultural debates and an explanation of the traces of these debates we can find in sermon collections. Following this, the first chapter is dedicated to the relationship between friars and learning, a seminal, almost stereotypical, topic of Renaissance historiography. In the three sections of this chapter, I have discussed Roberto's position in the debates (1) over pagan and profane literature, (2) over culture inside the Franciscan Order, and (3) over different ways to approach popular preaching. The following chapter, number two, possibly the most elaborate one, concerns ideas on Hell and damnation. It is well known how the concern for damnation raised, over the centuries, a number of consoling or threatening ideas. Here I have discussed some of the ideas that are documented as particularly diffused in Italy during the fifteenth century: (1) on the proportions between saved and damned souls, (2) on the injustice – and thus incompatibility with God's mercy – of an eternal punishment for a finite sin, (3) on the final salvation of all creatures, (4) on the inexistence of Hell, and, finally, (5) on the possibility for infidels to reach salvation. This chapter is followed by a brief appendix dedicated to a peculiar opinion on repentance that I have met while reading Roberto's sermons, unfortunately reduced to a small section because of the scarceness of sources: the idea, contrasted by Roberto, that penance for a sin could not be reiterated, so to say that anyone who

sinned again after a first absolution was irreversibly destined to damnation. The third and last chapter is dedicated to more “popular” issues, namely superstition, which includes a variety of suspicious beliefs and practices, the most worrying of which was surely constituted by magic and witchcraft, and the occurrence of false prophets and eschatological preachers. Scholars have already dedicated much attention to such issues, also as far as Roberto is concerned, but I believed it necessary to include a new discussion of it here because of some new sources that have emerged over the years and in order to have a full picture of them all. The first subchapter offers a detailed description of Roberto’s three extant sermons on superstition – one of which in manuscript and previously scarcely known – while the second subchapter deals with the contextualization and analysis of some specific cases. The chapter on superstition, then, also includes a third subchapter, the third, on false sainthood, only treated in a few instances by Roberto, but which I have included here because of its importance in the time’s intellectual debate and because of its connections with the general theme of the chapter. Finally, the epilogue collects all those hints and mentions of widespread ideas and debates – of very different nature – that I have collected from Roberto’s sermons, but that I have not developed specifically for various reasons. I have believed this useful in the perspective of further research, for further comparisons with similar and different sources and further elaboration.

PART I

ROBERTO'S LIFE AND HIS MODEL SERMON COLLECTIONS

For a new biography of Roberto da Lecce

Availing myself of previous work, only partially collected since the last major attempt at a complete and detailed reconstruction of Roberto's life (Bastanzio, 1947), but also on a fresh reading of primary sources and, to a lesser extent, on new archival research, my work attempts at a fuller and more correct narration of this famous preacher's biography. As already anticipated in the introduction, a monographic study on Roberto da Lecce, which could correct the eulogistic and at times quasi-hagiographic book by Bastanzio, was long wanted. I have tried to give as neutral a reconstruction as possible, perusing as many primary and secondary sources as I could get access to. The aim was that of providing a reference on this important figure, which could clearly document his fortune as a popular preacher, his luck in the lay and ecclesiastical courts of his times and his controversial fame inside the Franciscan Order. At times, when allowed to do so by the sources, I have also tried to penetrate more deeply into his personality and thought.

The structure and the division in subchapters has resulted from an attentive consideration of both the development of Roberto's life and of the available sources to illuminate it. Thus, the six (plus one) parts that follow cover periods of his life rather different in length and intensity. The first subchapter is dedicated to his early years, which are relatively obscure to us, until his first large preaching success in the city of Perugia (1448), which is, quite the opposite, one of the best-documented preaching cycles delivered by Roberto, thanks to the detailed accounts recorded in a well-known local chronicle. The second part is dedicated to the following years (1448-1452), during which the preacher experienced other astonishing as much as precocious successes on some of the main pulpits of Italy, such as Florence or Rome. Roberto's controversy with the Observant family and his final rupture with them occupies the third chapter. The fourth, on the other hand, focuses on Roberto's various offices in the preaching for the crusade, which roughly occupied the years from 1455 to 1458. Documents regarding him tend to get rarer as we proceed with his life, thus the fifth and sixth chapters cover a period of almost forty years, divided by the crucial event of the war against the Turks who had captured the city of Otranto (1480).

Finally, I have added a seventh section, dedicated to testimonies of Roberto's fame by contemporaries. I believe, in fact, that some samples of the preachers' fortune (and misfortune) among the people of his time was necessary to complete a full account of his life. Some unedited or

rare texts constitute an appendix that furnishes this reconstruction of Roberto's life with some first-hand documents regarding it.

1. *Youth and early preaching (1425-1448)*

Following Roberto's early years, his preaching apprenticeship and his precocious successes, it is possible to get a first idea of the fortune this preacher had among his contemporaries and of his preaching style. As we will see, he, although indirectly, learned to preach in the style of Bernardino da Siena and his followers. From his very first years, however, it is possible to note the continuous stressing of the performative aspect of Bernardino's oratory, with the use of impressive artifices to produce an emotional reaction in his audience, such as the display of a crucifix or the orchestrating of a *sacra rappresentazione*.

Roberto Caracciolo was born in Lecce in 1425. Four different sources, independent from each other, uncontroversibly confirm the year of Roberto's birth¹. What we know about Roberto's family and his first years is unfortunately very uncertain, especially because it comes from rather late or not entirely secure testimonies. The seventeenth-century Franciscan historian, Luke Wadding, asserted that Roberto was born in a noble but impoverished family, without however being able to name either of his parents or his lineage². A contemporary source, Stefano Caffari's Roman chronicle, in turn, gives us a possibly important information on his parents. He also stated that both of Roberto's parents were nobles adding that his father was a nobleman from Lecce, failing however to give his name, while the Caracciolo lineage would have come from the family of Roberto's mother, native from Naples³. Although we cannot be completely sure of Caffari's

¹ Cfr. 'Cronaca della città di Perugia dal 1309 al 1491 nota col nome di "Diario del Graziani"', edited by Francesco Bonaini, Ariodante Fabretti, Filippo-Luigi Polidori. *Archivio storico italiano* 16 (1850): 69-750: 597-598: «adi 5 de genajo 1448 venne in Peroscia uno Frate Roberto da Leccio de l'Ordine de l'Osservanza de Santo Francesco, et era de età de 22 anni»; 'Dai diari di Stefano Caffari', edited by Giuseppe Coletti. *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria* 8 (1885): 555-575: 575: «Die dominico XXIII mensis Novembris (1448) et in die sancti Grisogani a XV die mensis septembris proxime preteriti, quidam venerabilis frater Robertus Ordinis sancti Francisci de observantia [...] qui, ut ipse publice dixit in pulpito, non perfecerat XXIII annum, Rome fuit». Agostino Zanelli, 'Predicatori a Brescia nel Quattrocento'. *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 15 (1901): 83-144: 135: «fratri Roberto de... Ordinis Minorum de observantia, aetatis annorum XXVI vel circa [4 June 1451]»; Antonello Coniger, 'Cronache', con note di Gio. Bernardino Tafuri. In *Opere di Angelo, Stefano, Bartolomeo, Bonaventura, Gio. Bernardino e Tommaso Tafuri di Nardò*, edited by Michele Tafuri, 2 vols. Naples: Stamperia dell'Iride, 1848-51: II, 500: «Die 6 madii [1495], 13 indictionis, die mercurii ad hore tre di note in lo convento de Sancto Francisco de l'Ordine de Fratri Minori in la Città di Lecce fo morto lo reverendo fra' Roberto Caracciolo de Lecce [...] et era de anni settanta».

² Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum seu trium ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum* (in brackets I will quote volume and page numbers from the latest edition: Florence: Quaracchi, 1931-34): ad annum 1495, § 56 (XV, 133). His parents were noble, but also rich according to Francesco Antonio Benoffi, *Compendio di storia minoritica*. Pesaro: pei tipi di Annesio Nobili, 1829: 202-203.

³ 'Dai diari di Stefano Caffari': 575: «Robertus Ordinis sancti Francisci de observantia, qui, ut est fama, nobilis est ex parte matris de doma (sic!) Caracciola de Neapolim, ex parte vero patris etiam nobilis de Leccia».

assertions, the possibility for a noble lineage to take up the mother's family name instead of that of the father's is attested in Italy around this same period and also in more recent times⁴.

It is mainly from Wadding and other Franciscan sources that we are certain Roberto had at least one brother, a Franciscan friar himself, named Luca, the only brother of whom we also find mention in other contemporary sources. He too entered the Observant Franciscan family and later followed his brother to the Conventuals, since he is mentioned together with Roberto in the Order's internal struggles that occurred in the early 1450s, which will be dealt with in later paragraphs. This event would seem to contrast with the mentions of friar Luca in recent historiography and with the latest attempts to reconsider his life, which would make of him an Observant friar also in later years⁵. Yet, if we are to consider attentively the few contemporary sources concerning him, we see that this was not the case. In 1462, Luca's name appears in the list of payments made by the Conventual convent of San Francesco in Bologna, where he resided and preached⁶. Later, in 1474, his exemplary life would have inspired the townsmen of Martina, in the diocese of Taranto, to build the Franciscan (Conventual) convent of Santi Filippo and Giacomo⁷. Finally, in 1483 he is mentioned, by Wadding and in a Papal bull by Sixtus IV, as Conventual provincial minister of San Nicola, province of *Apulia*⁸. In any case, by the time of his death, which according to the chronicler Antonello Coniger occurred in Romagna later in 1483, he had grown a certain fame as *magister* and preacher⁹.

Another source bearing information on Roberto's family gives the names of two brothers of his, Filippo and Donato, and tells us he belonged to the Pisquizzi branch of the Caracciolo family in Brindisi. It is a sixteenth-century work on Neapolitan noble families by Scipione Ammirato – who also claimed his own mother descended from the same family – although the information on

⁴ Chronologically, the closest probably is the one of the Dominican Leonardo Mansueti, born in Perugia in 1414 from Antonio Sambuchelli and Adriana Mansueti, cfr. Luciano Cinelli, 'Mansueti, Leonardo'. *DBI* 69 (2007): 161-164. For other examples see Ferrante della Marra, *Discorsi delle famiglie estinte, forastiere, o non comprese ne' seggi di Napoli imparentate colla casa della Marra*. Napoli: appresso Ottavio Beltrano, 1641: 398: «E da questo istesso Matteo nipote o pronipote del Conte di Gioia [Niccolò Spinelli] nacque la madre di Marino protomedico del Regno e conte Palatino e signore di molti castelli, il quale essendo di casa Carosello, stimando più nobile il cognome della madre de' Spinelli prese a cognomarsi»; Biagio Aldimari, *Memorie storiche di diverse famiglie nobili così napoletane come forastiere*. Napoli: nella stamperia di Giacomo Raillard, 1691: 227: «li suoi figlioli [di Marino Boffa] furono anco signori d'Arienzo e, stimando più il cognome della madre che il proprio, si dissero non più Boffi ma Stendardi».

⁵ See in particular Benigno Francesco Perrone, *La regolare osservanza francescana nella Terra d'Otranto*, 2 vols. Galatina: Congedo, 1992-93: I: *Il divenire storico-legale, 1391-1898*, 36-37.

⁶ Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, cod. B 492, *Giornale di entrate e spese del convento di S. Francesco* (vol. III), f. 100.

⁷ *Bullarium franciscanum*, n. s., t. III: n. 540, 219-220; Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1474, § 23 (XIV, 128-129).

⁸ *Bullarium franciscanum*, n. s., t. III (1471-1484). Florentiae: Ad Claras Aquas, 1949: n. 1760, 883-884; Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1483, § 48 (XIV, 411).

⁹ Antonello Coniger, 'Cronache': 485: «in questo anno [1483] fo morto maestro Luca Caracciolo di Lecce in Romangha de l'Ordine de Fratri Minuri gran predicatore». Mariano da Firenze acknowledged him as one of the famous preachers of his times, cfr. 'Compendium Chronicarum FF. Minorum scriptum a p. Mariano de Florentia (Continuatio et finis)'. *AFH* 4 (1911): 122-137, 318-339, 559-587: 128.

Roberto merely appears in the second volume, published posthumously a century after the first one¹⁰. The fact that Ammirato makes no mention of Luca, the only one of Roberto's siblings we can be certain of, surely downplays the reliability of his assertions. Still, there are several mentions of a *doctor iuris* – a detail given by Ammirato too – named Donato Caracciolo, who was captain of the towns of Altomonte, San Donato (nowadays San Donato di Ninea) and Policastrello in 1489; *orator* of the town of Brindisi in 1497; and ducal captain in Bari in 1511¹¹. More recently – but without giving reference to contemporary sources – the other brother, Filippo, was said to have been galley general in Venice¹².

One of the most significant sources for Roberto's early years is the *Chronica fratrum minorum* written by the Observant friar Bernardino Aquilano (1421-1503). Despite its – relative – richness in details and, in general, information on some dark portions of Roberto's life, we cannot accept every aspect of this work's narrative. Indeed, the *Chronica* was prepared several years after the events (sometime between 1477 and 1486), to convey an ideological rethinking of the Observant family's history¹³. By that time, after the fierce contrasts in the 1450s and the later developments in his life, Roberto had become the stereotype of the observance's archenemy inside the Order. Bernardino mostly depicted him as such in his historiographical work. Contradictions and inconsistencies surface, at times, when we compare the account offered in the *Chronica* with what other sources testify. Thus, Bernardino Aquilano's version of facts should be questioned, when possible, notwithstanding his claims, specifically regarding the events concerning Roberto's life, of recalling first hand memories referred to him by the preacher himself or of having written nothing else but the truth¹⁴.

¹⁰ Scipione Ammirato, *Delle famiglie nobili napoletane parte seconda*. Firenze: per Amadore Massi da Furlì, 1651: 115: «I Caraccioli di Brindisi, nella cui famiglia si è conservato sempre il nome di Filippo, uno de quali Filippi, fratello di Ruberto sommo predicatore a' suoi tempi et vescovo d'Aquino, di Donato non ignobile dottor di leggi, suo figliuolo fu avolo di Caternella, di cui una figliuola detta Agnoella fu madre di chi ha raccolto queste memorie».

¹¹ *Regesto della cancelleria aragonese di Napoli*, edited by Jole Mazzoleni. Naples: L'arte Tipografica, 1951: 86; Giovanni Vitolo, «In palatio Communis». Nuovi e vecchi temi della storiografia sulle città del mezzogiorno medievale'. In *Città e territori nell'Italia del Medioevo. Studi in onore di Gabriella Rossetti*, edited by Giorgio Chittolini, Giovanna Petti Balbi, Giovanni Vitolo. Naples: Liguori Editore, 2007: 242-294: 260; Vito Antonio Melchiorre, *Storie baresi*. Bari: Levante, 2010: 158-159.

¹² Michele Vocino, 'Un predicatore del '400'. In Id., *A orza a poggia: curiosità di storia e di leggenda*. Rome: Editori fratelli Palombi, 1930: 243-258: 245.

¹³ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica fratrum minorum observantiae*, edited by Leonardus Lemmens. Rome: Typis Sallustianis, 1902. For an evaluation of this work, see at least Letizia Pellegrini, 'Preparando una edizione. Un primo saggio di lettura della *Chronica* di Bernardino da Fossa'. In *Beati Aquilani dell'Osservanza: Bernardino da Fossa, Vincenzo dell'Aquila, Timoteo da Monticchio*, edited by Alvaro Cacciotti e Maria Melli. Padua: Editrici Francescane, 2007: 59-82; Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'La cronaca di Bernardino Aquilano dai piccoli santi dell'Umbria alla grande Osservanza'. In *Amicitiae sensibus. Studi in onore di don Mario Sensi*, edited by Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli and Fortunato Frezza. Foligno: Accademia Fulginia, 2011: 91-124. On Bernardino Aquilano see Riccardo Pratesi, 'Amici, Giovanni'. *DBI* 2 (1960): 778-780.

¹⁴ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, 45: «secundum quod ipse [Robertus] mihi retulit»; 55-56: «Et quia de fratre Roberto plura scripsi, nemo ex iniquitate aut passione me contra ipsum loqui suspicetur. In veritate valde, dum bene se gessit, me illum dilexisse fateor; sed postquam contra familiam quasi se capitalis inimicus erexit, fervens caritas tepescere

According to Bernardino Aquilano, Roberto would have made his first studies with the Conventual Franciscans of Lecce. During the day, he would have stayed in the convent of San Francesco della Scarpa; at night, he would have returned home to his mother. Such would have been his life until the day when he was finally received by the other branch of the Order, the Observants, whose convent, Santa Maria del Tempio, had just recently been founded (1432) outside the city walls, with the patronage of Nuzzo Drimi baron of Corigliano d'Otranto¹⁵. Another testimony on Roberto's early studies comes from the physician and philosopher Antonio de Ferrariis (1444-1517) – born in Galatone, near Lecce, hence his scholarly alias of Galateo – who would become, in later years, good friends with Roberto. According to what he wrote in his description of the Land of Otranto (*De situ Iapygiae*), Roberto would have attended schools in nearby Nardò, just like the coeval Dominican friar Francesco da Nardò, who would have later become lecturer of philosophy in Padua¹⁶. Should this information be true, Bastanzio was probably right to place this stay in Nardò between Roberto's early studies with the Conventual Franciscans in Lecce and the later admission in the Observant family of the Order.

An ancient almost hagiographic narrative – already attested in Bernardino Aquilano's writing, who possibly could have heard of it from Roberto himself – tells how Roberto's mother would have consecrated her child to religious life during her pregnancy¹⁷. A larger story was later built up on this initial information, according to which, after giving birth to Roberto, his mother would have delayed the fulfillment of her vow, thus receiving a frightening reminder. One day, while the seven-years-old Roberto was playing with some other children in a field, a fierce bull attacked him. The animal charged him, knocking him over and then picking him up on its horns it carried Roberto to the nearby Franciscan convent, where it left him unharmed at the altar's feet. Shaken by the event, Roberto's mother would have then finally directed her son to the religious life she had vowed for him¹⁸.

coepit. Et nemo putet me mendacia scribere voluisse, imo de plurimis factis suis contra familiam pauca collegi. De ceteris factis suis, et quae audivi et quae novi, nihil dicere volui, sed tantum de aliquibus, quae contra familiam gessisse liquet».

¹⁵ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, p. 45. Cfr. Rosalba Di Meglio, 'Origini e caratteri dell'Osservanza francescana nel Mezzogiorno. Il regno e la capitale'. In *Fratres de familia. Gli insediamenti dell'Osservanza minoritica nella penisola italiana (sec. XIV-XV)*, edited by Letizia Pellegrini and Gian Maria Varanini. Caselle di Sommacampagna: Cierre edizioni, 2011: 295-338: 299-300.

¹⁶ Antonio Galateo, *Liber de situ Iapygiae*. Basileae: per Petrum Pernam, 1558 (anastatic reprint: Sala Bolognese: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1979): p. 123: «Temporis patris mei ab omnibus huius Regni procinciis ad accipiendum ingenii cultum Neritum confluebant. Omnis, si qua est in toto terrarum angulo disciplina, a Nerito ortum habuit. Hic literas didicere illa duo nostri seculi lumina, Robertus Lupiensis et Franciscus Neritinus, alter ecclesiasticarum declamatorum omnium qui fuerunt quique futuri sunt prestantissimus, alter Patavine academie pater». On Francesco da Nardò see Pamela Anastasio, 'Francesco da Nardò'. *DBI* 49 (1997): 811-812.

¹⁷ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, pp. 44-45: «In provincia Apuliae quaedam mulier gravida votum vovit Domino et beato Francisco, quod, si filium pareret, beato Francisco idest ordini suo traderet; parit filium, quem vocat Robertum».

¹⁸ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 11-12.

Be it by the means of the bull's miraculous intervention or the result of a more meditated choice of life, Roberto eventually joined the Franciscan Observant family, surely at a young age, albeit we do not know exactly when. There is no certain information on Roberto's first years of religious life, his novitiate and his early spiritual and theological training. From time to time, scholars have linked this period of his life to the figure of Matteo da Lecce († 1442), former companion of Bernardino da Siena and around that time guardian of Santa Maria del Tempio¹⁹. However, there are no documents to confirm the direct connection between the two friars. On the other hand, we can gather a piece of information – though small and dubious – on another possible teacher of Roberto's youth, Pirro Antonio Moricino, from the work of a sixteenth-century notary from Brindisi, Giovanni Battista Casmirio. In his *Epistola apologetica*, written in 1567 in defense of Brindisi against Quinto Mario Corrado, who maintained the preminence of the city and diocese of Oria over Brindisi, the notary made a list of eminent figures natives from his hometown. First among them was Moricino, whom he said had been a distinguished Franciscan theologian and who had been celebrated by Roberto, his former pupil, with a sermon delivered in front of the Pope. It will be worthwhile to quote the description of this oration as given by Casmirio:

Pirro Antonio Moricino, leading *doctor* in theology of the Franciscan order, appears to us [among illustrious men from Brindisi]. That same Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce – who is easily named prince of all preachers and was bishop of Aquino and a pupil of that same Pirro – uttered his praises in the presence of the Pope and in front of all the people of Rome with wonderful ability. While he was preaching in the presence of the Pope and of high class men and while the master of the Sacred Apostolic Palace was entering, Roberto, as if hit by an outstanding brightness, suddenly covering his head with his arms, laid on the ground for so long that the Pope sent someone to wake him up. Roberto, almost as if he had woken up from sleep, immediately questioned on what had occurred to him replied: “You want an explanation from me on the fact that I remained blinded and speechless, as if I had seen a wolf? Did you not see yourselves a man coming into the church? Here is the brightest light of the entire Christian religion, here are the wisest of all men, here is the undoubtably fairest vessel of all virtues, here, with his eloquence, erudition and integrity of customs, I conducted to the height of perfection orators, philosophers and theologians, unless I failed you, you who welcome me with such desire. If you do so much for the disciple, how much would you do for any greatly learned man, what would you have done if you had heard the teacher?” Having heard this, the Pope granted the Franciscan from Brindisi, greatly praised by his outstanding disciple and learned teacher himself, a place among men of the highest standing. And the disciple sent to the heavens those

¹⁹ *Ivi*: 12-13; Oriana Visani, ‘La predicazione di Roberto Caracciolo e la Puglia’. *Critica letteraria* 50 (1986): 125-141: 126; Leaci, *Frate Roberto Caracciolo*: 47-48.

praises of his teacher with great eloquence. The greatly learned *magister* beautifully preaching and subtly discussing and asserting the praises he told were true, completed the work²⁰.

It is quite clear that this reconstruction is an exaggerated and fictive one, especially given the fact that there are no other sources to substantiate such information. Moreover, the allegedly famous theologian Pirro Antonio Moricino is completely unknown outside this text. This, however, does not mean his figure was necessarily made up completely by Casmirio's imaginative writing and – although his fame as a theologian was probably much smaller than his eulogist would have us believe – we can still imagine he could have been teaching in Santa Maria del Tempio at the time of Roberto's youth. In any case, left aside the scanty information on Roberto's possible teacher in his youth, this testimony gives us one first glance of the preacher's penchant for surprising performances during the delivery of his sermons, a penchant which will be confirmed by several other testimonies throughout his life.

Bernardino Aquilano has transmitted another – more detailed, though no less dubious – piece of information regarding Roberto's preaching apprenticeship. Sometime around the mid-1440s – perhaps in 1444, if we want to give credit to what Roberto told his audience in Padua in 1451, that he had been preaching regularly for the previous seven years, thus maybe thinking of this event as the beginning of his own career²¹ – a Hungarian friar was preaching in the whereabouts of Lecce. Since the time of the earliest foundations in the late fourteenth-century, Observant Franciscans had assembled their convents in southern Italy in the *Custodia* of Santa Caterina, subject to the provincial vicar of Bosnia until 1446, when instead it merged with the Observant province of *Apulia*²². Similarly, also the Observant Franciscan convents of Hungary were subject to

²⁰ Iohannes Baptista Casmirius, *Epistola apologetica ad Quintum Marium Corradum*, preface by Domenico Defilippis, edited by Roberto Sernicola. Ferrara: Edisai, 2017: 69-70: «Pyrrus Antonius Moricinus, theologicae professionis doctor eminentissimus franciscanae familiae, nobis obviam oblati est, cuius laudes Robertus ille Carazolus Liciensis concionatorum omnium facile princeps et episcopus Aquinas, Pyrri huius discipulus, coram summo Pontifice ac toto populo Romano arte mirifica explicavit. Siquidem concionante discipulo coram summo Antiste ac summi ordinis viris magistroque templum ingrediente, Robertus, quasi summi luminis splendore percussus, capite inter brachia repente compresso, tamdiu accubuit, dum summus Pontifex eum iusserit excitari. Ille quasi somno experrectus et, instantissime interrogatus quidnam rei sibi accidisset, respondit: “Ut quid offensi luminis amissaeque, quasi lupo conspecto, vocis a me rationem exigitis? An non et vos hominem templum ingredientem vidistis? Hic totius christianae religionis lumen est splendidissimum, hic virorum omnium sapientissimus, hic virtutum omnium vas plane candidissimum, hic sua eloquentia, eruditione ac morum integritate quantusquantus sum ad perfectam oratores, philosophi ac theologi, nisi vos, qui me tanto desiderio suspicitis, fallimini, staturam perdux; quod si discipulum tanti facitis, quanti quemvis eruditissimum hominem, quid futurum si magistrum audissetis?” His auditis summus Antistes Franciscano homini Brundusino magna cum laude praecellentis discipuli summo ac sapientissimo magistro consessum inter summi ordinis viros praestitit; et quas discipulus magistri laudes summa eloquentia in coelum extulerat; magister sapientissimus, gratiosissime concionando et subtilissime disputando disserendoque veras esse sibi delatas laudes opere complevit. Ita ut ne minimam quidem partem laudum magistri discipulus enarrasse visus sit».

²¹ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*, edited by Oriana Visani. Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1983: 282: «Ego predicavi septem annis cottidie». Cfr. also Oriana Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 290.

²² Antonio Primaldo Coco, *Saggio di storia francescana di Calabria dalle origini al secolo XVII*. Taranto: Alberto Cressati, 1931: 49-58; Di Meglio, 'Origini e caratteri': 299-300.

the same vicary until 1448, when an independent Hungarian Province was created²³. Thus, finding a Hungarian friar preaching in the utmost southern regions of Italy does not come as a big surprise – though things generally tended to move the opposite way, with preachers trained in Italy who took up long preaching campaigns in Central Europe, most notably Giacomo della Marca and Giovanni da Capestrano. Yet, institutional connections could surely not overcome more practical obstacles and this Hungarian preacher needed an interpreter in order for his sermons to be understandable for locals. Among other friars, Roberto stood out as a «youth of sharp wit and good inclination», thus the choice fell on him to translate the Hungarian preacher’s Latin sermons into the vernacular. The Hungarian friar also trained Roberto – who «diligently took note of everything»²⁴ – in some of the typical rhetorical techniques of popular preaching, teaching him «to make corporal gestures and exclamations at the right moment» or telling him, from time to time, to: «cry out in a frightening way». These are some of the characteristic features often associated with Italian popular preaching and which were normally unappreciated or even mocked by foreign listeners or in those occasions when Italians went to preach abroad. In this case, however, we find a Hungarian friar teaching them to an Italian. Wanting to believe in Bernardino’s account, we might suppose that the anonymous Hungarian had either been trained himself by Italians or that these techniques could have also diffused among at least some Hungarian friars. It might also be the case that this story was yet another, more subtle and elaborate, attack moved by Bernardino Aquilano against Roberto, somehow belittling his preaching apprenticeship, in part defining it as different from the traditional Franciscan Observant *scuola bernardiniana* – of which, Roberto, in turn, claimed to be a member, as we will see. The text, however, does not seem to be written in a sufficiently critical tone as to imply this second reading clearly enough. In any case, to return to the story, educated in such a way the young Roberto would go around villages and towns performing the sermons he had learned by heart, repeating them even four times a day²⁵. This was also the occasion for his superiors in the convent of Santa Maria del Tempio to notice his remarkable disposition for preaching. It is most probably for this reason that he was soon sent to Umbria, still the beating heart of the Order, where he would surely have found the best way to enhance in his preaching abilities²⁶.

²³ Balázs Kertész, *A Magyarországi obszerváns ferencesek eredetiben fennmaradt iratai: 1448-1526* [The original surviving documents of the Hungarian Observant Franciscans: 1448-1526]. Budapest: Magyarok Nagyasszonya Ferences Rendtartomány, 2015. See also Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *Les franciscains observants hongrois de l’expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450 – vers 1540)*. Rome: Istituto storico dei cappuccini, 2008 (Bibliotheca seraphico-cappuccina, 83).

²⁴ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 45: «Quidam autem Ungarus frater et in theologia magister et praedicator et latinam linguam [i.e. vernacular] ignorans vidit hunc iuenculum acuti ingenii et bonae indolis, accepit illum in socium et, cum populo praedicare vellet, ipsum sibi interpretari constituit; et gestus corporales et exclamationes tempore debito facere docuit eumque aliquando confortans: “terribiliter exclama”, dicebat; ille vero cuncta diligenter notabat».

²⁵ *Ivi*: 45-46.

²⁶ *Ivi*: 46: «Fratres vero illius provinciae religiose incedentes et istius iuvenis aptitudinem notantes simpliciter sibi et toti familiae optime providere cupientes ad provinciam S. Francisci miserunt ad hoc, ut in provincia illa, quae cunctarum

Sometime at the beginning of the second half of the 1440s – around 1446, according to Bastanzio – Roberto arrived at the hermitage (Romita) of Cesi, near Terni. The friary, believed to have been founded by S. Francis in person, was an important site for Franciscan spirituality. His confreres there warmly welcomed Roberto: «he was dear to everyone and well accepted by all», finding him «pleasant in conversation and joyful»²⁷. It is most probably in Cesi that Roberto got acquainted with one of the inspirers of the Franciscan Observant movement, Francesco da Pavia, whom he later remembered a number of times in his sermons²⁸. Roberto's penchant for preaching was soon uncovered also to his new fellows when, visiting a nearby town in order to collect alms for the convent, he also preached to the people there. His words were of such effectiveness that after just one sermon the whole town – «men and women, laymen and clerics» – was set in a state of agitation and of frightful astonishment. The friars present at this event reported the fact, greatly praising Roberto's performance and his talent in preaching²⁹. Not only had Roberto profited of the advice received from the Hungarian friar, but his preaching apprenticeship had also gone through the study and reuse of Bernardino da Siena's sermons, as he himself stated³⁰.

After this first startling performance, Roberto's superiors set him with even more conviction on the path for a preaching career. Soon after, he was preaching all-over Central Italy, perhaps starting from the towns of Assisi and Gubbio, although no real information survives of his activity in these cities except fugacious mentions³¹. What is certain is that in early January 1448 Roberto

provinciarum familiae speculum esse dignoscitur, sanctis moribus et regularibus disciplinis perfecte imbutus quasi quidam lapis pretiosus super anulum in familia poneretur».

²⁷ *Ibidem*: «cunctis carus cunctisque fratribus acceptus erat; erat enim gratiae conversationis et laetus».

²⁸ Marino Bigaroni, 'B. Francesco Beccaria da Pavia e fr. Roberto Caracciolo: precisazioni cronologiche'. *AFH* 89 (1996): 251-262: 258-259. Cfr. Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 79, 85, 189. On Francesco da Pavia see also Paolo M. Sevesi, 'B. Francesco da Pavia O.F.M. († 1454)'. *L'Italia francescana* 16 (1941): 29-41; 'Beccaria, Antonio (Francesco da Pavia)' *DBI* 7 (1970): 449-450.

²⁹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 46: «Missus denique pro aelemosina ad castrum quoddam praedicavit ibidem et in una praedicatione tantae acceptationis fuisse ferebant, quod totum castrum miro modo commovit, ita quod masculi et feminae, saeculares et fratres omnes erant stupore perterriti. Laetantur fratres et gesta referunt; commendatur, laudatur, supramodum diligitur; praedicant virtutes ejus et gratiam et multis laudibus extollunt».

³⁰ Oriana Visani, 'Un imitatore di Bernardino da Siena: Roberto Caracciolo'. *Rinascimento* 21 (1981): 213-228: 215 [quoted from Roberto's *Sermo de sancto Bernardino* in Falconara Marittima (AN), Archivio Provinciale dei Frati Minori delle Marche, cod. 19, c. 232r]: «Ego multotiens suos predicavi sermones, semper audientibus placuerunt». See also what Roberto wrote about Bernardino's sermons in his other *Sermo de sancto Bernardino*, printed for the first time at the end of the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. Venetiis: per Andream de Torresanis de Asula, 1488 [GW 6080]: ff. 157r-v: «Ego etiam, qui de Bernardino etsi incomposite tamen non sine devotione precipua ista referro, omnem Italiam lustravi predicavique quadraginta annis evangelium Iesu Christi, Bernardinum habui in stilo pronunciandi necnon et scribendi patrem et preceptorem. Et licet illum non viderim, legi tamen sermones amenissimos quos compilavit. Predicavi et illos quandoque, licet postmodum alias ego confecerim». Already in 1450 Roberto had obtained a manuscript «in quo omnes sermones, quos [Bernardinus] fecit vulgari sermone, coscripti sunt», cfr. Oriana Visani, 'Giacomo della Marca e Roberto da Lecce: due grandi operatori culturali a confronto' *Picenum Seraphicum* 21 (2002): 33-47: 34-35, n. 5.

³¹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 46: «Non contenti fratres, quod tantum praedicaret in castris, ducunt ad civitates. Praedicat in civitate Assisii et fuit acceptus; praedicat in civitate Eugubii et miro modo fuit acceptus; praedicavit Florentiae et totam civitatem commovit; venit Aquilam et tanta fuit populus admiratione et consolatione repletus, quod facile extimari non posset». Possibly referring to this visit in Gubbio is the memory «de illo ceretano qui in Eugubio decepit fratrem Robertum», contained in a manuscript of Franciscan provenance now in Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale,

arrived in the town of Perugia, where he remained until the beginning of April, preaching and making a strong and lasting impression on the citizens³². The consistent and detailed account we possess of Roberto's preaching in Perugia shows him dealing with some of the main issues we know Observant Franciscan preacher had at heart in their campaigns throughout Italy. Roberto actively intervened in the pacification of the city's factions and he consistently promoted devotional practices such as processions. The most peculiar event, however, is the sacred representation Roberto organized for his preaching on the Passion, which shows him once again as particularly attentive to spectacular ways to surprise and move his public.

We know that the twenty-two-year-old Roberto entered the city of Perugia on 5 January 1448³³. Two days later, he began preaching in the Franciscan church of San Francesco al Prato and a number of people went to hear him, especially from the city's *élite*³⁴. On March 3rd, Roberto was forced to move outside the church, in the city's square, because an astonishing audience of 15000 people had gathered to hear him. Men and women had come, both from the city and from the countryside, and had been settling for a place since five in the morning. He preached for four hours, showing a crucifix that provoked the public's emotional reaction, and promoting the election of four citizens for each district of the city, with the intention of favouring appeasement between factions³⁵.

On March 22nd, Holy Friday, he was again preaching outside the church. It is on this occasion that Roberto organized a representation of the Passion in the city streets, rather well known among modern scholars for the lengthy description we have of it. The barber Eliseo di Cristofano – a curious and turbulent character, who later joined the Franciscan Observants, but just for a short time – played Christ's part, bearing a cross on his shoulders and a crown of thorns on his head. Accompanied by armed men, he walked throughout the city, from the cathedral of San Lorenzo, outside of which Roberto had been preaching, and back again. There, in the city's central square, the characters playing the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, Salome and the apostle John joined in. An image of the crucifix was then raised on the cross and these new characters began their lament, reciting aloud some verses of what the chronicler recorded as «lamento della Passione». We may well identify some of these verses with the ones that Roberto inserted in the sermon on the Passion

VII E 26, f. 64v, cfr. Cesare Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, 2 vols. Florence-Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 1971: I, 506. It is hard to judge when exactly Roberto preached in the first two towns, whereas, as we will see, we have more detailed accounts of the other two. Roberto should have preached in Assisi and Gubbio before preaching in Perugia in 1448. In any case, it was before 1449, when he preached in Florence.

³² 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 597-603.

³³ *Vide supra* n. 1.

³⁴ 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 598: «comenzò adì 7 de genajo a predicare in San Francesco grande, e andavace assai gente, cioè cittadini de maggiore qualità e delli altri».

³⁵ Ibidem: «Adì 3 de marzo, in domeneca, predicò frate Ruberto in piazza dove ce fuoro circa quindece milia persone fra cittadini e contadini: et li homini e le donne pigliavano el luoco alle 5 e alle 6 ore de notte; et teneva la predica circa 4 ore. Et fece la predica della santa pace, et poi mostrò alle gente uno crucifisso, de modo che fece piangere ogni persona e 'l gridare Iesu misericordia, et poi fe elegere 4 cittadini per porta per far fare la pace».

contained in his first printed sermon collection, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*³⁶. The chronicler also recorded the audience's emotional participation throughout the whole performance: «at all times, all the people cried and shouted asking for mercy»³⁷. Finally, two men playing Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea ended the representation by taking the body down from the cross and bringing it to its tomb³⁸. «And at all times everyone was crying aloud and many asserted that no devotional act had ever been performed in Perugia as beautiful and pious as this one». The impression on the public was such that on that same day six men entered the Franciscan Order, among whom was also Jacopo Oddi, later author of the Observant Franciscan chronicle known as *La Franceschina*³⁹.

In the following days, Roberto continued his successful preaching, inducing the citizens to remove family flags – symbols of the city's *partes* – from the churches, where they were normally placed on the burial place of notable citizens. From the church of San Francesco al Prato, where Roberto was preaching, he also made the citizens remove a statue representing the former lord of Perugia Biordo Michelotti (1352-1398) on horseback, which had been placed in his chapel and which was moved to the cemetery. The only flag the preacher failed to remove was the one of Braccio da Montone (1368-1424), himself former lord of the city, because of his sister's strain

³⁶ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. Venice: Franciscus Renner, 1472 [GW 6063]: ff. C5v-C6r: «secundum quemdam devotum, [Christus] tacitus in suo corde dicebat carmen illud vulgare:

“Matre mia benedeta
multo te vego aff<1>icta.
El tuo lacrimare è una sagitta
che el cuor mio ha passato.
Non piagnere o matre mia
el tuo lacrimare è pena mia
supporta fin ch'io sia
da morte resuscitato”».

The portion of text comes from a larger composition, made up of the Virgin's laments and Christ's response. It can be read in a fuller (if not complete) version in Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, ms. 111, foll. 61v-71r. Cfr. Giacomo Mariani, 'Roberto Caracciolo's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: Compilation, Structure and Fortune of a Fifteenth-Century Best Seller'. *I sermoni quaresimali: digiuno del corpo, banchetto dell'anima – Lenten Sermons: Fast of the Body, Banquet of the Soul*, edited by Pietro Delcorno, Eleonora Lombardo, Lorenza Tromboni. *Memorie Domenicane* 48 (2017): 243-260.

³⁷ 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 598-599: «Et sempre tutto el populo piangeva e gridando misericordia; e puoi puseno giù la dicta croce, e pusonce uno crucifisso che ce stava prima, e dirizaro su la ditta croce, et allora li stridi del populo fuoro assai maggiori».

³⁸. Cfr. Paola Ventrone, 'La sacra rappresentazione fiorentina, ovvero la predicazione in forma di teatro'. In *Letteratura in forma di sermone. I rapporti tra predicazione e letteratura nei secoli XIII-XVI. Atti del seminario di studi, Bologna 15-17 novembre 2001*, edited by Ginetta Auzzas, Giovanni Baffetti, Carlo Delcorno. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003: 255-280; Mara Nerbano, *Il teatro della devozione. Confraternite e spettacolo nell'Umbria medievale*. Perugia: Morlacchi editore, 2006: 78-82; Kathrine L. Jansen, 'Preaching as Playwriting: A Semi-Dramatic Sermon of the Fifteenth Century'. In *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, edited by Michael F. Cusato, Guy Geltner. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2009: 237-247. For comparisons with another, possibly autograph, sermon attributed to Roberto in which vernacular verses are extensively employed in treating the Passion see Cesare Cenci, 'Un codice di Rieti e fr. Roberto da Lecce'. *AFH* 59 (1966): 85-104; Daniela Degiovanni, 'Il sermo de acerbissima passione domini nostri Iesu Christi di Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce'. *Pluteus* 8-9 (1990-8): 255-385.

³⁹ 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 599. Others would be lead to enter the Franciscan order by Roberto's preaching in the following month, Ivi, p. 603. On Oddi see Letizia Pellegrini, 'Oddi, Jacopo'. *DBI* 79 (2013): 110-113.

resistance⁴⁰. On the same day that Roberto promoted the removal of flags from inside the city's churches and on the following days, his sermons were followed by processions, which some women joined dressed in white⁴¹. Meanwhile the plague was hitting on Perugia, but the fear of death only increased the people's devotion and their attendance to the processions⁴². During his stay in town, Roberto also joined the confraternity of San Girolamo (18 March), which had been founded not long before by his confrere Giacomo della Marca⁴³. On April 7th Roberto left Perugia, after having recapitulated all of his preaching in town for his audience and having delivered one last sermon on peace⁴⁴. The people were so enthusiastic about his preaching that they «followed him as if he were a saint». Despite Roberto made several attempts to turn the people away and back to their homes, many took the road with him to the nearby town of Deruta and some even all the way to Todi, over forty kilometres south of Perugia on the way heading to Rome⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 599-600.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*: «Adì ditto, cioè adì 27 de marzo, ditta che fu la predica, se fece la processione con tutti li religiosi de Peroscia, dove ce andò Monsignore e li Priori e tutti li gentilomini e le donne, e generalmente ogni persona fina alle rede, sempre cantando letanye et alcune laude et orazione; et alcune donne ce andaro vestite de bianco; et andarono a S. Pietro pregando Dio che cessi la peste. / Adì 28 de marzo, el giovedì, andò la processione a Santo Francesco e a Santo Andrea in P. S. Sanne. / Adì 29 del ditto andò la processione a D. Fiorenzo e a Santa Maria nuova in P. Soglie. / Adì 30 del ditto andò a Santa Maria dei Servi, a San Savino e a Santa Giuliana. / Adì 31 del ditto andò la processione a Santo Agustino e a Santo Agnolo».

⁴² *Ibidem*: «et sempre ce andò tutto el populo con molta devozione, però che ogni persona era spaventato e impaurito per amore della morya. Et tristo chi se amala, però che per paura el padre e la madre lassa li figlioli, e ogniuno fugge. Et continuo la morya va tocando, et è sgomento per ogni persona». Cfr. Ottó Gecser, 'Doctors and Preachers against the Plague: Attitudes toward Disease in Late Medieval Plague Tracts and Plague Sermons'. In *The Sacred and the Secular in Medieval Healing: Sites, Objects and Texts*, edited by Barbara S. Bowers, Linda Migl Keyser. London-New York: Routledge, 2016: 78-102: 89-90.

⁴³ Silvano Nessi, 'La Confraternita di S. Girolamo in Perugia'. *Miscellanea Francescana* 67 (1967): 78-115: 98. Not long after Roberto had left the town (9 July), the confraternity priors wrote him some letters regarding indulgences, requesting his expertise on the issue and expressing their wish to receive his teaching, if not through spoken work, at least through writing, *ibidem*: 112: «Nam posteaquam nobis sublatus est tecum loquendi modus propter intervalla locorum, curamus licteris conferre sermonem, ut te absentem tamquam presentem faciamus te certiolem. Est enim, optime pater, nobis animus et magna in hoc voluntas versatur si dubium illud de quo superioribus licteris ad te scripsimus referantur in lucem».

⁴⁴ 'Cronaca della città di Perugia': 601: «Adì 7 de aprile, in domeneca, frate Ruberto predicò al modo usato, et fece una predica della santa pace, confortando tutti li cittadini e contadini che stesseno in pace. Et così prese licenzia, lassando ogni persona con la pace, dicendo como Cristo disse agli Apostoli: "la pace sia con voi". Et fuoro tante devote le suoi parole, che ogni persona fece piangere; et prima aveva rememorate tutte le prediche che esso aveva fatte in Peroscia, cioè de que materia esso aveva predicato e de que di, tutti per ordine».

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*: «Et quando lui desciese dal pergolo, ogni persona glie andava de rieto como fusse un santo, per fina lì a San Francesco. Et come havve mangiato, se partì da Peroscia, et prese la via verso P. S. Pietro, dove molta gente lo seguitava: et quando lui fu lì a Santo Gostanzo, se voltò in derieto, et dette la benedictione a tutte le gente, et comandò ad ogni persona che retornassero in derieto, però che era tanta la gente che lo seguivano, et sì stretta la gente, che non se poteva andare inanze, benché ce erano parecchie soprastante con li bastoni in mano per fare far largo, ma non giovava niente. Et una parte de ditta multitude lo seguitaro et lo acompagniaro per fina a Deruta, et un'altra parte lo seguitarono per fina a Tode, homini e donne; et lì predicò parecchie di, dove molti delli nostri Peroscini stettero sempre in Tode alle suoi prediche per fina che discto frate Ruberto partì. Et chi glie poteva toccare la toneca o la mano, se teneva felice».

2. *The first outstanding preaching successes (1448-1452)*

After this first outstanding and well documented success in Perugia, Roberto's preaching career was rapidly boosted to uncommon and outstanding results. Despite, it is worth repeating it, his still very young age, in the following years, the preacher climbed some of the most important pulpits of Italy, from Rome to Florence, also meeting with his confreres' benevolence and favor. The most important events that testify to this success and favor were the sermons he delivered in Florence, for the closing of the Order's General Chapter in 1449, and Rome, for the canonization of the Observants' first saint, Saint Bernardino da Siena, in 1550. This subchapter will also include the years of Roberto's famous and long cycle he delivered to the people in Padua, from Advent 1450 to Easter 1451, the best documented live preaching of his, and will end at the peak of his fame, with the cities of Siena and Milan fighting over him for the preaching of the upcoming 1452 Lent.

Roberto was surely still in Todi on 9 May 1448, since on that day he fostered a plea directed by the citizens to the priors, asking them to assign the convent of Montesanto to the Observant Franciscan friars, whose convent of San Giacomo was already becoming too small for them⁴⁶. These were the years of the Franciscan Observance's astonishing expansion and Roberto, in this and other cases, contributed, like many other preachers, to the friars' success among the people, always ready to take the pious and charismatic friars' side and to foster their acceptance inside the cities' lives. The priors took the request at hand the following day, 10 May, and the result was highly favourable to the friars. Although Pope Nicholas V had also given his assent, the friars had to delay their relocation, since the Damianite nuns, legal possessors of Montesanto, claimed for a fair payment. Eventually, on 16 July, the matter was settled⁴⁷.

We do not know whether Roberto stayed in Todi throughout the controversy over the convent, nor do we know where he spent the following summer months. He probably made his way south, preaching in the towns and cities he visited, until he reached Rome in September. His preaching in the city lasted a little longer than two months, from 15 September to the feast day of Saint Chrysogonus, 24 November, during which time he delivered seventy-one sermons in and outside the Observant Franciscan church of Ara coeli and in the near square of Campidoglio. On the last day, as his habit was, he recapitulated all he had said in the previous ones and he welcomed nine new converts, or possibly more, in the Observant family⁴⁸. His visit to Rome coincided, just as

⁴⁶ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 1, p. 247 [Todi (PG), Archivio Comunale, Libro dei Decretali, ad annum 1448, f. 54].

⁴⁷ Todi (PG), Archivio vescovile, protocollo di Ser Palmiero di Ser Monaldo, ff. 5-10. Cfr. Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 2-6, pp. 248-254. See also *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. III: supplementum, n. 207, pp. 984-985; Marino Bigaroni, *Montesanto di Todi da monastero a rocca dell'Albornoz*. Assisi: Porziuncola, 1981: 55-59.

⁴⁸ 'Dai diari di Stefano Caffari': 575: «Die dominico XXIII novembris (1448) et in die sancti Grisogani a XV die mensis septembris proxime preteriti, quidam venerabilis frater Robertus Ordinis sancti Francisci de observantia [...] Rome fuit et predicavit publice extra ecclesiam Araceli versus laguglia et intra ecclesiam et in diversis locis etc. Qui ab

in Perugia, with the spreading of the plague and in connection to the disease, the preacher organized processions of flagellants. The local chronicler Stefano Infessura recorded the processions – and one of the manuscripts which contains his chronicle explicitly attributes their arrangement precisely to Roberto – of young naked flagellants from the convent of Ara coeli to Santa Maria Maggiore⁴⁹. It is probably in reference to this same episode that the humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi, alias Platina (1421-1482), in his *Lives of Popes*, recalled Roberto as the inspirator, with his preaching, of processions of young men and women praying for mercy⁵⁰. Then, probably towards the end of the year, Roberto fell severely ill: according to the account he personally gave in his sermon on Bernardino da Siena, his fellow friars thought he would not have survived the illness and it was only thanks to the miraculous intervention of the late celebrated preacher – whose canonization process was then being arranged – that he did. As soon as he had recovered from his sickness, Roberto moved to Florence, where he stayed for five months and where we effectively find him during Lent 1449⁵¹.

Roberto, in fact, preached that year's Lent in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, in Florence, attracting an incomparably large audience. In Tuscany, he also attended the Observant General Chapter at Bosco al Mugello, during which Giovanni da Capestrano (1386-1456) was elected Cismontane Vicar. At the same time, in Florence, the Conventuals were holding their

ipsa die XV septembris usque in presentem diem XXIII novembris, ut supra, fecit LXXI predicationes notabilissimas, quas omnes in ipsa ultima die dominica repilogavit. Qui alter Bernardinus videbatur in suis sermonibus, sanctissime vite, morum et honestatis et in omnibus. Qui ipsa die et ultima predicatione vestivit VIII iuvenes habitu beati Francisci et per alios dies multos alios. Taceo omnes alias suas virtutes, latius scribere de eo».

⁴⁹ Stefano Infessura, *Diario della città di Roma*, edited by Oreste Tommasini. Rome: Forzani e C., 1890 («Fonti per la Storia d'Italia» 5): 47-48: «Et depò del mese di settembre venne a Roma frate Roberto, et predicao nella piazza di Campituoglio, et fece fare de molte paci in Roma, et tutti strillavano misericordia per la grande moria ch'era in Roma [...] A dì 23 d'ottobre [one of the manuscripts bears the addition: ad istigazione di frate Roberto] andaro li garzoni nudi frustandose dall'Araceli per fino ad Santa Maria Maggiore, et gridando sempre misericordia per la grande moria ch'era»

⁵⁰ Bartolomeo Platina, *Liber de vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*, edited by Giacinto Gaida. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1932 (RIS, 3.1): 331: «Nam sequenti biennio adeo ubique fere peste laboratum est, ut pauci de multis superfuerint. Quod quidem malum et frequens terraemotus, et eclipsis solis indicare videbatur. Minabantur ii quos praedicatores vulgo appellant futuram calamitatem: maxime vero Robertus ordinis sancti Francisci professus predicator insignis, qui contionibus suis adeo populum Romanum movit, ut pueri passim feminaeque per urbem incederent misericordiam a Deo exposcentes. Et ne quid mali in Italia deesset, bella, quae ante incohata diximus, adeo invalescebant, ut sedari nullo modo posse viderentur». Connected to this outburst of plague in Rome is also the mention made of Roberto in Andrea Grazioli, *Discorso di peste*. In Vinegia: appresso Girolamo Polo, 1576: 128: «Le prediche anco di fra Roberto da Leccio dell'ordine di zoccoli, e molto in quell tempo celebre, ne havevano posta talmente in terrore la città, che si vedevano andare per tutte le chiese a schiere e i fanciulli et le donne scapigliate, per placarne con pietose voci e caldissimi prieghi il Signore»; cfr. Pietro Sisto, *Due medici, il principe di Taranto e la peste: i trattati di Niccolò da Ingegne e Saladino Ferro da Ascoli*. Napoli: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento Meridionale, 1986: 97, n. 1.

⁵¹ *Sermo in festo s. Bernardini*, quoted (from Falconara Marittima (AN), Archivio dei Frati Minori delle Marche, ms. 19: f. 224r-v) in Visani, 'Un imitatore di Bernardino da Siena': 214-215 and Ead., 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 289, n. 39: «Cum essem Rome iam duo anni sunt vel circa, quedam infirmitas me oppressit, ob quam ad una parte amissus remansi, nec ab illa parte oculus claudere, nec aperire poteram. Necessse erat ut manum apponerem si aperire vel claudere intendebam, non poteram in terram spuere, nec bolum ruminare ab illa parte nisi auxilium manus apposuissem. Sanctissimus Dominus noster propterea suvenit mihi medicis farinatisque habundanter, sed infirmitas mea nimis periculosa erat... Invoco novellum sanctum Bernardinum, ut suis me liberet meritis, dicens: "Tu Bernardine, qui Ihesus Christi tuba estitisti, ora pro me, quia, si ad pristinam rediero sanitatem, ad tuam laudem in quamcumque civitatem ivero unum sermonem agam". Interim medici de me desperaverunt, et hoc fuit uno die veneris, die dominico sequenti Rome predicavi [...] Demum Florentiam accessi et ibidem quinque continuis mensibus predicavi».

General Chapter in the convent of Santa Croce and, as an act of reconciliation, the Observants joined them for the ceremonial procession in the city. Moreover, as a sign of appeasement between the families, the most famous Observant preachers delivered sermons to the citizens during the Conventual Chapter: Giovanni da Capestrano preached for the opening service and Roberto – who at the time was barely twenty-four – preached on the day of Pentecost. He preached in Piazza della Signoria, after the solemn mass celebrated by the city’s archbishop, the famous Dominican Antonino Pierozzi (1389-1459), after the procession⁵². It surely was a considerable honour for such a young friar, especially considering that according to the *Regula* one had to be twenty-five before even beginning his preaching activity: a further clue of Roberto’s truly uncommon oratorical gifts and of the consideration he had gained himself among the Observants. It is unclear where Wadding got the opinion that Roberto, at that time, was already working against the Observant family⁵³. In any case, we can rule out this possibility, given the affectionate terms in which Roberto would speak of the Observant vicar Giovanni da Capestrano just a few months later⁵⁴.

In Florence, Roberto could attend the performances of some *sacre rappresentazioni*, which were surely an inspiration to him, given his histrionic style of preaching and the penchant he had himself for theatrical representations, such as in the case of the sermon on the Passion in Perugia. As he recalled in front of his popular audience in Padua, in 1451, in Florence «I saw Jesus Christ’s Ascension performed in such a way that there was no human heart that was not deeply moved by it; it was made with astonishing devotion. I remember that among some pious men a representation of Abraham’s obedience was performed, during which the people abundantly weeped»⁵⁵.

Contradicting evidence makes it hard to determine when and how Roberto’s stay in Florence ended. Preaching Lent to his audience in Padua in 1451, Roberto recalled how he had been expelled from Florence two years before⁵⁶. This would bring us to believe he had come into contrast with some notable townsmen or had raised delicate questions – as will be the case, some years later and in a very different political context, with Bernardino da Feltre⁵⁷ – which displeased the Signoria.

⁵² Filippo Rinuccini, *Ricordi storici*, edited by Giuseppe Aiazzi. Florence: Piatti, 1840: 73-74.

⁵³ Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1449, § 18 (XII, 34): «Adfuit [ad capitulum] etiam Robertus Caracciolus a Licio, maximus sui temporis praedicator [...] Hunc a rigore sui instituti paulatim ad molliora declinantem corripuit paterne Capistranus et futuri casus certo praemonuit». Cfr. also Ivi: § 23 (XII, 36).

⁵⁴ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 79: «Pur heri recepi litteras de fratre Iohanne de Capistrano, qui tot miracula fecit». Celestino Piana, ‘Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena ed altra corrispondenza per la storia del pulpito di S. Petronio a Bologna nel ‘400’. *AFH* 47 (1954): 54-87: 71: «Est utique hic populus paduanus in multo fervore et avide omnes audiunt verbum Dei. Placet ex hoc patri meo fr. Ioanni de Capistrano ligare usque ad Septuagesimam, ut a Padua non discederem».

⁵⁵ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 98: «vidi Assensionem Ihesu Christi fieri taliter, quod non reputatum fuisset cor humanum, quin se tenerime commovisset; profecto fuit stupenda devotio. Recordor quod inter quosdam devotos facta fuit representatio obedientie Abrae, ubi valde ploratum fuit». Cfr. Paola Ventrone, *Teatro civile e sacra rappresentazione a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Firenze: Le lettere, 2016: chap. III.

⁵⁶ Ivi: 200: «Hodie sunt duo anni in simile die quod a platea Florentie expulsi fuimus».

⁵⁷ Pellegrini, ‘Tra la piazza e il Palazzo’: 120-121.

Yet, this seems to be in contrast with the letter addressed on 19 April 1449 – Holy Thursday – by the Signoria to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, Paolo da Diacceto, requesting him to work in the Papal Curia so that Roberto might delay his departure from the city and stay to preach for the whole year⁵⁸. Did something actually occur that broke Roberto’s seemingly idyllic relationship with the city’s authorities or not⁵⁹, the preacher probably left Florence not long after Easter.

Indeed, from a letter addressed by Giovanni da Capestrano to the Duke of Andria, Francesco del Balzo (1410-1482), on 29 July, we learn that in the preceding days (or perhaps weeks) Roberto had been preaching in Andria, sent there by the Observant Cismontane General Vicar himself⁶⁰. This information is confirmed by Roberto in his already mentioned sermon in honour of Bernardino da Siena, in which he asserted that after preaching for five months in Florence he moved to the “kingdom” of Puglia and then back to Rome⁶¹. Making his way back North, Roberto preached in a town named Montefalco or Montefalcone, as he recalled in one of his sermons and which, at least in one occurrence, he defined as a town in Puglia⁶². Two modern-day toponyms would seem fitting: Montefalcone in Val Fortore – in today’s province of Benevento, administratively in Campania, but historically connected to the East, to the region of Puglia and especially the city of Foggia – or Montefalcone nel Sannio, now in Molise. It is difficult to say which of these two small towns could have hosted Roberto’s visit, but I would personally be rather inclined to say the former, which was a more important castle that, in 1439, also hosted the king Alfoso of Aragon.

It is possible to conjecture, since there are no mentions of Roberto until Lent 1450, that on his way back North towards Rome that summer the preacher stopped in some towns and cities of

⁵⁸ *Il carteggio della Signoria fiorentina all’epoca del cancellierato di Carlo Marsuppini (1444-1453)*, edited by Raffaella Maria Zaccaria. Rome: Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, 2015: 382, n. 130.

⁵⁹ Another possibility could be to conjecture that the brief assertion regarding the expulsion from Florence does not belong to the original text of Roberto’s sermon. However, there is no way to substantiate the possibility with any evidence.

⁶⁰ Ottokar Bonmann, ‘A Provisional Calendar of St. John Capistran’s Correspondence’, redacted by Gedeon Gál and Jason M. Miskuly. *Franciscan studies* 49 (1989): 255-345; 50 (1990), 323-403; 52 (1992), 283-327 [henceforth, when referring to Giovanni da Capestrano’s letters, I will just provide the letter number from this catalogue, preceded by the abbreviation GM]: n. 250. I quote the letter from Ottokar Bonmann’s transcription, now held at Saint Bonaventure University, NY, which I could read thanks to the reproductions kindly given to me by Letizia Pellegrini, whom I would like to thank: «Redeo ad litteras tuas, quibus summa mihi diligentia regratiaris de communis filii fratris Roberti ad te profecti. Rem magis iucundam quam necessariam facis: iucundam, inquam, quia gaudeo plurimum ac laetor, quod tuo desiderio satisfecerit et sua singulari virtute tuae morem gesserit voluntati».

⁶¹ Falconara Marittima (AN), Archivio dei Frati Minori delle Marche, ms. 19: f. 224v (quoted in Visani, ‘La predicazione di Roberto Caracciolo e la Puglia’: 129): «Demum Florentiam accessi et ibidem quinque continuis mensibus predicavi, deinde redii reamen Apulie ubi etiam predicavi, iterum Romam profectus sum».

⁶² Roberto surely preached in Montefalco before 1451, as he asserted himself in his Lenten preaching in Padua: Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 162: «In Montefalco quidam stipendiarius, qui ad meam fuerat predicationem». Also see the unedited sermon in Venezia, Biblioteca francescana di S. Michele in Isola, cod. IV,11, f. 188r, where Montefalco is said to be in Puglia (quoted in Visani, ‘La predicazione di Roberto Caracciolo e la Puglia: 138’): «In Montefalco reaminis Apulie erat quidam iudeus qui cottidie cum iuvenibus cristianis conversabatur, accedebatque ad predicationem meam cum aliis et de hac predicabam materiam [de morte] et me deridebat dicens: “Ha, paveo forte mortem, arbitror diutissime vivere”. Et eadem die sibi unam vestem incidere fecit. Mane vero sequenti mortuus est».

central-eastern Italy, possibly sometimes together with his older confrere Giacomo della Marca. Preaching in Padua in 1451, in fact, Roberto recalled an episode of Giacomo's life to which – he asserted – he had personally assisted:

I know friar Giacomo della Marca, with whom I was, and he was riding a horse because of his old age. And when we were on the road, he was approached by some men who had vowed to kill him and one of them took hold of the horse's bridle saying: "Where are the letters?" And friar Giacomo sensed what was going on, immediately got off the horse and, on bended knees and with his arms wide open in the sign of the cross, said: "Make of me whatever you wish". The men, seeing this, fled, leaving friar Giacomo unharmed⁶³.

Leaving aside the clearly hagiographic reconstruction of the event and the cryptical mention of some "letters" – possibly the nomination bull as inquisitor, since in 1449 Giacomo was *inquisitor hereticae pravitatis* – the narration is rather similar to one which was reported by Giacomo's biographer, Venanzio da Fabriano, who said it had occurred near the town of Matelica, in central Italy. The differences between the two narrations might be justified by the fact that Venanzio only became Giacomo's companion in much later years, thus recalling an event he had not personally experienced⁶⁴. Moreover, Roberto also told his audience in Padua that he had recently fallen sick in the town of Fabriano (not far from Matelica), surviving, again like in Rome, only thanks to Bernardino da Siena's miraculous intervention⁶⁵. It is possible that Roberto was with Giacomo della Marca in that town too. Indeed, Giacomo was there in 1450, when he had eleven *fraticelli de*

⁶³ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 195: *Cognosco fratrem Iacobum de Marchia, cum quo eram, ipse vero propter senectutem equitabat. Et dum essemus in via, agressus est ab aliquibus qui iuraverunt ipsum interficere illorumque unus capit frenum dicens: "Ubi sunt littere?" Et frater Iacobus agnovit factum, subito descendit ac, positus genibus flexis et brachiis in cruce apertis, ait: "Facite quid vultis de me". Quis, sic videntes, aufugerunt intacto dicto fratre Iacobo.*

⁶⁴ Visani, 'Giacomo della Marca e Roberto da Lecce': 35. Cfr. Teodosio Somigli, 'Vita di S. Giacomo della Marca scritta da fra Venanzio da Fabriano O.M.Obs'. *AFH* 17 (1924): 378-414: 406; Giacinto Pagnani, 'Alcuni codici della libreria di S. Giacomo della Marca scoperti recentemente (secondo gruppo)'. *AFH* 48 (1955): 131-146: 141; Umberto Picciafuoco, *La vita di S. Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476) secondo gli antichi codici di fr. Venanzio da Fabriano (1434-1506)*. Montepandone: Santuario "S. Giacomo" Convento "S. Maria della Grazie", 1977: 8, 32, 66.

⁶⁵ Paolo M. Sevesi, 'Un sermone inedito del b. Michele Carcano su s. Bernardino da Siena'. *Collectanea Franciscana* 3 (1932): 377-398: 396: «Quum Fabrianum proficiscens sensi pestem [ut] sagittam in tibia, ego pestem timere non solebam, quia ex charitate, diebus meis multos visitavi. Or Deus superbiam meam punire voluit, quia absque timore pergebam. Caput meum vacillare cepit. Socius me perquirat ac pestem repperit. Febres maxime supervenerunt, adeo quod vix in sero ad conventum applicari valui. Et maxima cum egritudine super stratum me proiicio, ac dolorem tibie, ubi sagitta erat. Eadem die et sequenti nocte socii me moriturum existimabant. Commendo me sancto Bernardino dicens: "Deprecare, pater beate Bernardine, si sum utilis populis Dei [roga] pro me Deum, ut mihi salubritatem restituat. Sin autem paratus sum. Et tibi spondeo quod primum sermonem quem faciam restituta mihi sanitate erit ad tuam laudem ac semper in quacumque civitate predicavero de te faciam unum sermonem splendide". Mirabile dictu! In mane me liberum repperi et totaliter liberatus. Tertio die unum sermonem de ipso predicavi, omnibus casum meum scientibus et admirantibus. Et hoc fuit sancti Bernardini intercessione». Sevesi, who first published the sermon from a manuscript held by the Biblioteca Comunale in Assisi (cod. 443), had attributed it to Michele Carcano. Pagnani later corrected him, attributing the sermon to Roberto after the comparison with another testimony in a manuscript in the Archivio Provinciale dei Frati Minori delle Marche in Falconara Marittima: Giacinto Pagnani, 'Un discorso in lode di s. Bernardino da Siena recitato da Roberto Caracciolo, falsamente attribuito al b. Michele Carcano da Milano'. *AFH* 47 (1954): 203-207. See also Visani, 'Un imitatore di Bernardino da Siena': 215.

opinionem burnt at the stake, an event that Roberto would later recall in his printed sermon collections⁶⁶. These personal connections between Roberto and Giacomo della Marca could possibly give further explanation as to why the older preacher was so interested in Roberto's sermons in later years⁶⁷.

In recounting the preacher's early preaching successes, Bernardino Aquilano listed a visit of Roberto's to the city of L'Aquila in-between his stays in Florence (Lent 1449) and Rome (Lent 1450). This first visit would have been largely positive, according to Bernardino: «he [Roberto] preached on the pulpit and the friars preached about him everywhere, nor could they get enough of praising him»⁶⁸. There is, however, nothing sure about this first visit to L'Aquila, given Bernardino's frequent inconsistencies in relating Roberto's stays there, though L'Aquila could well have been one of the cities the preacher visited when he ascended from Andria heading towards Rome. In any case, by the first months of 1450, for Lent, Roberto was in Rome, where he had been destined to preach by Giovanni da Capestrano⁶⁹. It is possibly in this occasion that the young noblewoman Teodora degli Annibaldi, hearing Roberto preach, made her choice of religious life, entering the Poor Clare's convent in Foligno⁷⁰.

Roberto was still in Rome in May, when the Order's General Chapter took place and when Bernardino da Siena's canonization ceremony occurred. Roberto, barely twenty-five years old, was chosen to preach in honour of the new Saint on that day, 24 May⁷¹. That year also coincided with the Universal Jubilee and devout pilgrims filled Rome, as Bernardino Aquilano recalled in his chronicle:

⁶⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 58r: «Anno vero Domini millesimo quadringentesimo quadragesimo nono, tempore Nicolai quinti, apud Fabrianum tresdecim ex illis combusti sunt et in pulverem redacti».

⁶⁷ Visani, 'Giacomo della Marca e Roberto da Lecce'.

⁶⁸ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 46: «ipse [Robertus] praedicabat in pulpito et fratres ipsum praedicabant ubique, nec poterant de ipsius commendatione satiari».

⁶⁹ Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1450, § 8 (XII, 72) claimed to have read that Roberto had been destined to preach in Rome for that Lent in Giovanni da Capestrano's diary, which is now considered lost.

⁷⁰ Lodovico Jacobilli, *Vite de' santi e beati di Foligno*. Foligno: appresso Agostino Alterii, 1628: 386.

⁷¹ Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1450, § 7 (XII, 71). Roberto himself recalled the event in his *Sermo de sancto Bernardino*, published at the end of several of his printed sermon collections: Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 158r: «In canonizatione istius [s. Bernardini] multa concurrerunt facientia ad gloriam eius, videlicet annus iubileus quo ex omnibus christianorum partibus multitudo maxima confluebat ad Urbem et dies Pentecostes, festum utique solemnissimum, et generale capitulum fratrum minorum, in quo convenerunt ultra quinque milia fratrum. Et ego de ipso post canonizationem sermonem ad populum habui in quo concurrerunt multa milia virorum ac mulierum». Relating on Roberto's sermon performed in Rome for Bernardino's canonization is also a letter, addressed by a certain Montagnana (perhaps the humanist Pietro da Montagnana, Eleonora Gamba, 'Pietro da Montagnana'. *DBI* 83 (2015): 521-524) to Antonio Galateo, which was published by Roberto's first biographer, Domenico De Angelis. There is no mention of the source and the document was not later included in the edition of Galateo's letters (Antonio De Ferrariis Galateo, *Epistole*, a cura di Antonio Altamura. Lecce: Centro di studi salentini, 1959); it will, however, be of some interest to repeat its text here: Domenico De Angelis, 'Vita di monsignor Roberto Caracciolo leccese'. In Id., *Le vite de' letterati salentini*, 2 vols. Florence-Naples: nella stamperia di Bernardo Raillard, 1710-13: I, 1-26: 24: «Fratris Roberti Caraccioli concivis tui eloquentiaeque ac sanctitatis nomine attracti homines, ad audiendum ejus sapientiam ab universo fere terrarum orbe confluebant, ut revera Romae accidit in Ecclesia divi Petri in Vaticano, dum ipse de laudibus divi Bernardini Senensis concionem faceret, praesertim in ejus canonizationis die, coram Summo Pontifice et cardinalibus: in qua tanta virorum atque mulierum et fratrum minorum multitudo confluit, ut Ecclesia eam minime caperet».

From my point of view, I can hardly remember to have had a day more tormenting than that in my whole life. We entered the church of Saint Peter, which was so full that, later, we were not able to come out. Italians, French, Catalans, Spanish, Hungarians, and Burgunds, laymen and friars, monks and hermits and all kinds of people, we were mingled and so closely pressed together, that nobody could move by himself, but we were all moved, now below, now above, in such a way that we thought we were going to die for our weariness. All houses and squares in front of Saint Peter's were so full, that a seed of millet thrown over the people could have only barely reached the ground⁷².

According to Bernardino Aquilano, on this occasion Roberto would have also received another, even greater, honour than that of preaching for Bernardino da Siena's canonization. Indeed, in his *Chronica* he stated that it was in 1450 that Nicholas V granted Roberto the privilege of freely preaching wherever he preferred without having to subdue to his direct superiors⁷³. Such a privilege was, if not unique, absolutely exceptional. Now, we know for sure that Roberto received such concessions from Nicholas V four years later, in May 1454, since the bull is preserved. By that time, Roberto's fight with his Observant superiors had reached its climax and the Papal privileges could possibly be read as the solution for the preacher's crossing from one family to the other inside the Order, which had otherwise been prohibited by Eugenius IV. Moreover, by the mid-1450s, Roberto had gained himself much more fame and power than the young friar who had been preaching – no matter how successfully – for less than two years that he was in 1450. Thus, if the concession of the privilege might be explainable in 1454, it does not seem to be so as early as 1450. No matter how talented and famous, Roberto still remained a twenty-five-year-old debuting preacher. Moreover, no frictions had yet emerged between him and his superiors, who appreciated and openly praised him still at least throughout the following year. After all, Bernardino Aquilano himself stated that Roberto «behaved well until the Chapter at San Giuliano», which took place in 1452 and which will be discussed in the next subchapter⁷⁴.

⁷² Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 38: « Pro parte mea vix angustiosiore[m] diem toto tempore vitae mea habuisse me recolo. Ecclesiam ingressi fuimus, nec postea exire valuimus, ita plena erat Sancti Petri ecclesia: Italici, Francigenae, Catalani, Hispani, Ungari et Burgundi, saeculares et fratres, monachi et eremitae et omne genus hominum eramus mixti et ita stricte coniuncti, quod nemo se solum movere poterat, sed omnes movebamur nunc infra, nunc supra, ita quod prae lassitudine iam spiritum exhalare videbamur. Omnes vero mansiones et planities ante ecclesiam Sancti Petri ita erant plene, quod granum milii supra populum jactatum vix in terram cadere potuisset». Several years later, Roberto himself remembered the impressive number of people in Rome for the Jubilee, with its terrible consequences. Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: h5r: «Tempore namque iubilei, anno Domini MCCCCL, regnante Nicolao quinto pontifice maximo, hora XXIII, cum ingens multitudo populi euntis et redeuntis congregata esset apud pontem sub castro Sancti Angeli, adeo intra sese exeuntes ibi compressi sunt ut illis exceptis qui in flumine cadentes submersi sunt ducentorum et septem hominum suffucatorum in ponte predicato corpora sunt inventa».

⁷³ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 46-47: «Demum praedicavit Romae et breve exemptionis accepit, de quo supra parumper, ut scilicet auctoritate summi pontificis ubique praedicare valeret et praelatis ordinis, in quantum vellet et non ultra obedire teneretur. Ista exceptio iudicio meo suae ruinae fuit occasio».

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*: «Tamen usque ad capitulum generale in sancto Juliano celebratum se bene gessit»

Roberto probably left Rome just after Bernardino's canonization and headed towards L'Aquila. On this occasion, Roberto might have travelled together with Giacomo della Marca, who also headed straight away to Bernardino's shrine after the canonization⁷⁵. We are sure of this visit in L'Aquila because of a manuscript *reportatio* of one of the sermons Roberto preached there «immediately after his [Bernardino's] canonization», transcribed, according to Cesare Cenci, by the Franciscan Observant Paolo da Teramo⁷⁶. We are not equally sure about how this preaching in town went, since it is during this visit, if anywhere, that we should probably place Roberto's interrupted preaching in L'Aquila as related by Bernardino Aquilano. According to this testimony, Roberto began preaching in the city in the late spring of 1450, promising the people that he would have stayed there for some time. However, to the surprise of his audience – and of Bernardino Aquilano himself – he abruptly decided to stop, persuaded by an unnamed companion of his. Bernardino would have reproached Roberto for this behaviour, but would have only received the answer that he was no longer bound to the obedience of the Observant Vicar, at the time Giovanni da Capestrano, who had instructed him to preach in L'Aquila⁷⁷. As discussed above, at this date, Roberto had probably not yet received the privilege of not having to respond to his Observant superior. Moreover, as we will see, Giovanni da Capestrano's opinion of Roberto seems to have remained positive up until his departure from Italy, in the spring of 1451. And finally, the dynamics of the events described here seem suspiciously similar to the ones that would have occurred two years later, still in L'Aquila, after the Chapter in San Giuliano.

Bernardino Aquilano's faithfulness in his account of these events – concerning Roberto's Papal privileges and his refusal to preach in L'Aquila – thus seems to be questionable. It seems plausible, although unverifiable in the absence of other sources, that the Observant polemist tangled together the events from Roberto's fights against the Observant family in the early 1450s with other previous events. Despite its apparent unreliability, however, the *Chronica* is the only source to give us some information on Roberto's activity in these months and consequently essential for our

⁷⁵ Umberto Picciafuoco, *S. Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476): uomo di cultura, apostolo, operatore sociale, taumaturgo del sec. XV*. Montepandone: Convento "S. Maria delle Grazie" Santuario "S. Giacomo", 1976: 138.

⁷⁶ Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani*: I, 515.

⁷⁷ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 40-41: «Frater Robertus antedictus, iam famosus praedicator, effectus Aquilam praedicaturus a patre fratre Iohanne de Capistrano vicario generali missus. Praedicare cum maxima acceptatione incepit et se parum vel multum staturum iuxta populi devotionem promisit; deinde ad suggestionem cuiusdam sui socii mutavit propositum. Ego vero, videns scandalum populi et suam confusionem et fratrum, dulciter illum confortabam allegans obedientiam quam promiserat. Respondit: "Ego patri vicario generali, nisi in quantum voluero, obedire non teneor; breve domini nostri hanc mihi gratiam facit". Haec omnia patri beato Iohanni adhuc vicario generali retuli; pater pius cum dolore cordis dixit: "Iste pauper iuvenis malum finem faciet". Iterum Aquilam praedicaturus advenit. Prima vice quinque vel sex praedicationes fecit et totum populum mirabiliter commovit et quasi scandalizatum, non servata promissione, reliquit; secunda vice aestivo tempore cum incredibili acceptatione praedicavit. Nam quidam civis dixit mihi: "Si frater Robertus ad praedicandum tempore quadragesimae ad hanc civitatem venisset, omnes cives cunctis relictis, cum cunabulis et uxoribus post eum fuisset egressi"».

reconstruction of them. We can only limit ourselves to signalling the inconsistencies and contradictions that appear when reading it critically.

Roberto almost surely left L'Aquila before the summer, or in its first weeks, making his way north. Indeed, in August he probably visited Spoleto, where he could see the body of Francesco da Pavia, deceased between July and October of that year (possibly on August 16th, according to a long tradition)⁷⁸. Still travelling north, later in 1450, Roberto was in Bologna, where he preached in San Petronio⁷⁹. Finally, towards the end of the year, he arrived in Padua where he remained for a long cycle of preaching from the Advent of 1450 to the Easter of 1451. An unknown listener recorded this preaching cycle in a Latin *reportatio*, which has been preserved in several manuscript copies and which has been partially edited by Oriana Visani⁸⁰. It is by far Roberto's live preaching that we are best informed on. Until some twenty years ago, scholars believed Roberto had preached most of these sermons in Padua for Lent 1455. In fact, the cycle's dating – or at least of its Lenten portion – had been based on the mention of Francesco da Pavia, who was believed to have died in August 1454. For this reason, Oriana Visani did not acknowledge all of the sermons transmitted in the manuscript testimonies in her edition: namely, she discarded the sermons related to the Advent – which she already dated to 1450 – and some others that did not seem to fit with other evidence from Roberto's biography. The result was the edition of 31 sermons. Marino Bigaroni's recalculation of the dating of Francesco da Pavia's death, which actually occurred in the summer of 1450, changed the whole chronology. Thus, now we know that Roberto preached in Padua from the Advent of 1450 to, at least, the Easter of 1451, for a total of around eighty sermons. Despite such a chronological shift and the increase of the number of sermons ascribable to the cycle, the diverse specific studies that have been dedicated to the themes and the public of Roberto's preaching in Padua remain valuable⁸¹.

⁷⁸ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 79: «Post mortem (fratris Francisci de Pavia) per tres dies ab eius corpore exivit sanguis vivus et ego vidi». See also Bigaroni, 'B. Francesco Beccaria da Pavia e fr. Roberto Caracciolo': 256-259. His visit in Spoleto is confirmed by an *exemplum* Roberto told his audience in Padua in his sermon on Bernardino da Siena: Sevesi, 'Un sermone inedito': 396: «in civitate Spoleto vidi quamdam dominam, Ceciliam nomine».

⁷⁹ Celestino Piana, 'San Bernardino da Siena a Bologna'. *Studi francescani*, s. III, 17 (1945): 213-261: 227-228; Id., 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69-72.

⁸⁰ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*. The most recent state of the research on this preaching cycle has been given in Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari' and will be partially discussed further on, in the chapter on the manuscript diffusion of Roberto's sermons.

⁸¹ Oriana Visani, 'Pubblico e temi del quaresimale padovano del 1455 di Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce'. *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 157 (1980): 541-556; Antonino Poppi, 'Vita familiare e civile nel "Quaresimale padovano" di Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce, O. min. (1455)'. In *I francescani e la politica (secc. XIII-XVII). Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio: Palermo, 3-7 dicembre 2002*, edited by Alessandro Musco. Palermo: Biblioteca francescana-Officina di studi medievali, 2007: 817-834.

Roberto began preaching in the Franciscan church of Sant'Antonio in late December, while in the meantime Giovanni da Capestrano was preaching in the cathedral⁸². He probably had been destined to preach in Padua just for the Advent, if the citizens requested his permanence there for a longer period with a plea dating 29 January 1451, which they addressed to the Pope by means of the Venetian authorities⁸³. Also Giovanni da Capestrano had received positive news of Roberto's preaching in Padua and pleased himself of the fact in a letter addressed to an unknown confrere on 15 January⁸⁴. The memories of this preaching cycle that have survived, preserved inside the reported sermons, substantiate the general idea of Roberto's histrionic oratory, made of theatrical and surprising acting. In a sermon on death, presumably preached in January 1451, for instance, Roberto showed his public a human skull as a *memento mori*, impersonating it and addressing the crowd: «Where are your riches? Where are your mansions? Where are the games? Where are the dances? ... Where are the eyes? Where is the nose? Where are the beautiful hair? Where are the ears? ... O youth! O old men! O shameless woman! O rouged woman! I too was like you: I lost my eyes, my hands, my tongue, my parents, my children, my friends, my belongings and houses and I left them behind; and soon you will be just as I am now»⁸⁵. Then, in one of the sermons preached during Lent 1451, just as he had done in Perugia, Roberto put Christ's passion on stage. Unlike Perugia, however, he did not have some townsmen play the parts of the evangelical characters. This time he was himself the protagonist of the set up, placing a crown of thorns over his head and showing his audience one by one all the instruments of the Passion: the cross, the sponge, the spear⁸⁶. The anonymous reportator of the sermons often noted the people's emotional reaction and participation in these and other rhetorical and scenic devices⁸⁷.

⁸² Donato Gallo, 'Predicatori francescani nella cattedrale di Padova durante il Quattrocento'. In *Predicazione francescana e società veneta nel Quattrocento: committenza, ascolto, ricezione*. Padova: Centro studi antoniani, 1995: 145-183: 164-165.

⁸³ Padua, Archivio di Stato, Atti del Consiglio, t. 6, f. 9r. Cfr. Oriana Visani, 'Testimonianze della predicazione di Roberto da Lecce a Padova'. *Le Venezie francescane*, n.s., 6 (1989): 201-238: 205, n. 15; Ead. 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 288.

⁸⁴ Bonmann, 'A Provisional Calendar of St. John Capistran's Correspondence': n. 272 [I quote from Bonmann's transcription, provided to me by Letizia Pellegrini]: «ibi [Paduae] noster frater Robertus nunc floret excellenter». This testimony almost surely rules out Francesco da Rimini's statement – in the anti-observant booklet attributed to him by Celestino Piana – that Roberto had been preaching in Padua disobeying Giovanni da Capestrano's will, Celestino Piana, 'Scritti polemici fra Conventuali ed Osservanti a metà del '400 con la partecipazione dei giuristi secolari'. *AFH* 71 (1978): 339-405; 72 (1979): 37-105: I, 364: «non ob alium tantum [Observantes] tribulant fr. Robertum de Licio, nisi quia praedicavit Paduae, oboediens generali contra voluntatem fr. Ioannis de Capistrano, qui contrarium praeceperat».

⁸⁵ Visani, 'Testimonianze della predicazione': 207 [quoted from Venice, Biblioteca francescana di S. Michele in Isola, cod. IV, 11, c. 169r]: «Ubi tue divitiae? Ubi pallatia? Ubi ludi? Ubi tripudia? ... Ubi oculi? Ubi nares? Ubi capilli pulcri? Ubi aures? ... O iuvenes! O veteres! O domina frontosa! O slisata! Ego sicut vos fui: ego oculos, manus, linguam, parentes, filios, amicos, possessiones et domos amisi et post me reliqui; et sicut ego sum in brevi spatio eritis!». It is worth noting that also Giovanni da Capestrano once preached with a skull in his hands, cfr. Johannes Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran: ein Leben im Kampfum die Reform der Kirche*, 2 vols. Heidelberg: F.H. Kerle verlag, 1964-65: II, 203.

⁸⁶ Caracciolo, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 266-267; Visani, 'Testimonianze della predicazione': 208.

⁸⁷ *Ivi*: 205-209.

Roberto's audience, it has been noted, was composed of men and women of different social status, mostly from the urban middle class. It is worth noting, however, how close the preacher managed to get, during his stay in Padua, with the local higher intellectual and social class. This is particularly highlighted by one event, involving the – financially and culturally – prominent figure of Palla Strozzi. An exile from Florence, the wealthy merchant had established himself in Padua, where he led his banking activity and where he also conducted considerable patronage for arts and letters. According to what Roberto in person recorded in his later *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, when Palla Strozzi's son, Lorenzo, was murdered in Gubbio in 1451, it had been the preacher to bring him the tragic news⁸⁸. It surely is a minor episode, but it shows how close the preacher had become with the city's social and intellectual élite.

Roberto probably left Padua a few weeks after Easter, by which time he had preached at least eighty sermons there⁸⁹. In late May, he was preaching in Brescia. A document from the city's priors, dated 4 July, provided Pietro Urceo, Franciscan tertiary, with a refund for the expenses he had taken on to host Roberto during the eight days the friar had preached in town. This document bears a detailed description of Roberto's eloquence too. There is a mention of his exceptional memory, thanks to which «in each one of his sermons he mentions and quotes 200 and more *auctoritates* and in such a way as if he was reading a book placed in front of him». Another feature of Roberto's preaching was given by his powerful voice, which «is heard further away than one mile» even though he «is preaching in such a gentle way as to bring people to tears». Finally, there is a memory of Roberto's theatrical acting, which – as we have seen – always had an enormous effect on the audience and played no minor role in his preaching style: «at times he is seen in ecstasy, as if he was dead or separated [from his body]; indeed he sometimes stays still for twenty

⁸⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. x9r: «In civitate Eugubii quidam iuvenis nomine Petrus impedire volens testamentum patris iam defuncti unum de executoribus, Laurentium scilicet de Strocii de Florentia, filium domini Pale, manu propria interfecit. Eram ego Padue ubi et dominus Palas supradictus etiam morabatur egoque sibi nuntiavi dolendum casum et inopinatum filii hortans illum plurimum ad patientiam. Sequenti vero quadragesima cum Senas accessissem reperi ibi homicidam illum qui sepius ad me veniens precabatur ut ab uxore interfecti que Florentie tunc erat per meas litteras sibi veniam impetrem. Quod cum obtinere non valuissem ille miser in civitate Senarum stare decrevit et dum habitaret in quodam hospicio venerunt duo ex Florentia pretio ducti qui hospitem pecunia corruptentes in eius cellario prefatum iuvenem occiderunt amputaveruntque digitum eius his qui illos miserant pro signo ferendum. Dum autem irent simul in itinere, duo illi ceperunt contendere unusque in socium irruens ipsum peremit. At et ille captus est et secundum iuris regulas vita privatus in partesque divisus tanquam duorum homicidiorum perditissimus reus». Cfr. Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*, edited by Aulo Greco, 2 vols. Florence: Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1970: II, 162 [*Life of Noferi Strozzi*], 490-491, 497 [*Life of Alessandra de' Bardi*].

⁸⁹ Oriana Visani, 'Un nuovo testimone del Quaresimale padovano del 1455 di Roberto da Lecce'. *Il Santo* 30 (1990): 157-179: 173 [quoted from Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana, cod. 436, f. 85v]: «O paduani [...] feci 80 sermones vobis». Cfr. also *Archivio Sartori: documenti di storia e arte francescana*, 4 vols, cura di Antonio Sartori. Padua: Biblioteca Antoniana-Basilica del Santo, 1983: I, 1000, n. 118; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 289, n. 38.

minutes, with his feet straight and his hands and arms outstretched like a crucifix, and then the listeners cry out: “Look, look, look the amazing God in his holy actions!”»⁹⁰.

The provisions of the priors of Brescia have preserved another curious story regarding Roberto’s preaching, pointing precisely at the fortune his sermons met among the time’s urban audiences. It can be read in a document dated 6 August 1451, with which the priors formalized their donation of ten *libras* in favour of the herbalist Antonio de Ferrantis as a compensation for the destruction of the house he owned in Piazza delle Carceri. The house had collapsed during Roberto’s preaching there, because of the weight of the people who had climbed on its roof to attend the sermon. Indeed, «in the day he [Roberto] was preaching in the Piazza delle Carceri, such a number of men climbed, to hear the sermon, on the roof of the house he [Antonio] owned in the square that, at the end of the sermon, immediately after the blessing, the house collapsed to the ground and was completely demolished»⁹¹. Despite the considerable damage to the house, everyone miraculously got out unharmed. To confirm the events, the city’s chancellor said he had witnessed everything, since he was present that day in Piazza delle Carceri writing down Roberto’s sermon⁹².

Roberto left Brescia after eight days of preaching to head towards Milan, where the Observant Cismontane General Vicar, Giovanni da Capestrano, had called him. Roberto should have taken his confrere’s place there, since Giovanni was about to cross the Alps for his apostolic mission in Central Europe⁹³. The priors of Brescia recorded that the Milanese people did not welcome Roberto, who for this reason would have soon made his way south through Pavia, crossing the river Po and ultimately arriving in Siena, where he had been called to preach. For the bad hospitality offered to the preacher, a severe pestilence would have then hit the Milanese people⁹⁴.

⁹⁰ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 7, 255; Zanelli, ‘Predicatori a Brescia nel Quattrocento’: 135: «predicator mirabili et incomparabili et sanctitate, elloquentia et inaudita memoria, nam in quacunque eius predicatione allegat et recitat CC auctoritates et ultra et ita est ut si librum legeret et ante oculos haberet et eius vox audita est longius quam sit miliare unum suavissime predicans, ita ut personas induceret ad fletum, omnibus et singulis diebus in platea magna carcerum predica et tota presens impletur; aliquando in extasi veluti mortuus sive abstractus concernitur; stat enim per spatium tertii unius horae quandoque rectus pedes et manibus et brachiis extensis veluti crucifixus, et tunc omnes auditores voce alta exclamant: “Mira, mira, mira, mirabilis Deus in sanctis factis eius!”».

⁹¹ Brescia, Archivio comunale, reg. 495, provvisione 6 agosto 1451. Cfr. Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 8, 256: «in die qua predicabat [reverendus dominus Robertus Ordinis Minorum de Observantia, mirabilis et incomparabilis predicator, *added in the margin*] super platea Carcerum, super tecto cuiusdam stationis quem [Antonius] habebat in platea, tot homines ascenderunt propter audire predicationem, quod in fine predicationis immediate post datam benedictionem, dicta domus funditus ruinavit usque ad solum et penitus est eversa».

⁹² *Ibidem*.

⁹³ We know this from a letter sent by Giovanni da Capestrano to Francesco Sforza (Milano, Archivio di Stato, *Sezione Beati e Santi*) published in Emilio Motta, ‘S. Giovanni da Capistrano a Milano’. *Miscellanea francescana* 5 (1890): 135-137: 136: «Antea nam quam Italiam exirem institui immo precepi, ut penitus acceptissimus Christi precor frater Robertus noster Liciensis deberet Mediolanum proficisci ad seminandum verbum Dei. Idque accurate fecisse non dubito. Ille autem magnificentissime pro me sarisfaciat quem ideo ad inclitam urbem direxi, sperans Illme D. V. rem gratissimam efficere [...] Ex Vienna VIII Iulius 1451». Cfr. Bonmann, ‘A Provisional Calendar of St. John Capistran’s Correspondence’: n. 305.

⁹⁴ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 7, 255; Zanelli, ‘Predicatori a Brescia nel Quattrocento’: 135: «nota quod ivit Mediolanum, quem Mediolanenses audire noluerunt, compescentes ne predicaret; et statim abiit versus Papiam et per

However, already Bastanzio had realized that things had not exactly occurred that way. Francesco Sforza had requested Roberto since April 1451, as we know from a letter that his ambassador in Rome, Nicodemo Tranchedini da Pontremoli wrote to him, saying the Pope had accepted the Duke's demand for two preachers, Roberto and the Regular Canon Timoteo Maffei⁹⁵. That of working to grant himself – and his territories – with the best available preachers was most probably part of Francesco Sforza's attempt to legitimize and stabilize his dominion over the Duchy, which he had taken over only in late March 1450. Thus, he surely valued the pacifying activity of preachers like Giovanni da Capestrano, Michele Carcano, Roberto and others as a help.

On 26 June, Roberto was still in Milan as attested by a letter written by Francesco Sforza to Pope Nicholas V with the request that Roberto may delay his journey to Siena in order to stay and preach in Milan, where he had just taken the place of another friar, Gabriele⁹⁶. Bastanzio has published several letters, which show that in the following months Siena and Milan fought over Roberto to have him preach for the following Lent of 1452⁹⁷. Eventually Siena prevailed, since we know Roberto was preaching Lent there when he met Lorenzo di Palla Strozzi's assassin, a year after the murder had occurred⁹⁸.

Actually, his stay in Milan seems to have been rather short, thus at least partly justifying the account of events given in Brescia. Yet, the route the citizens of Brescia said Roberto took – through Pavia towards Siena – seems to have been incorrect. On 29 July 1451, in fact, Roberto entered Ferrara, arriving from Cremona and then proceeding south again towards Romagna, but not

Paduum descendit ad partes inferiores usque ad civitatem Senarum, sicut preceptum habebat, ut dictum est, a Pontifice Maximo. Et ecce dicti mediolanenses statim post recessum percussi sunt terribili et perniciosissima peste ita, ut in die morirentur CCC et DC».

⁹⁵ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 10 [Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 40], 256-257. There is a problem with this letter, which is dated April 26th in the transcription and August 26th in Bastanzio's comment. Waiting for the possibility to see the original, I will take the date in the transcription as correct. On Timoteo Maffei, who became archbishop of Milan in 1454 (although he almost immediately resigned) after having declined the nomination in 1449, see Isabella Gagliardi, 'Maffei, Timoteo (al secolo Nicolò Giacomo)'. *DBI* 67 (2006): 263-266. On Nicodemo Tranchedini see Paola Sverzellati, 'Per la biografia di Nicodemo Tranchedini da Pontremoli, ambasciatore sforzesco'. *Aevum* 72/2 (1998): 485-557.

⁹⁶ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 9, 256-257. The letter was first published in Emilio Motta, 'Francesco Sforza, s. Giovanni da Capistrano e fra Roberto da Lecce'. *Miscellanea Francescana* 1 (1886): 182-185: 183. Motta identified friar Gabriele in Gabriele da Barlassina, Provincial minister in Lombardy in 1453. Cfr. Paolo M. Sevesi, 'I Ministri Provinciali dell'alma Provincia dei Frati Minori di Milano (continuazione)'. *Studi francescani*, n.s., 3 (1916): 41-71: 48. Another possibility could be Gabriele da Lecce, who became Provincial minister of Lombardy afterwards, from 1456 to 1464 and then again from 1467 to 1469. Cfr. Sevesi, 'I Ministri Provinciali': 49-50; Abele Calufetti, 'I superiori provinciali dei frati Minori in Lombardia dalle origini alla soppressione Napoleonica'. *AFH* 73 (1980): 226-256: 233. Gabriele Rangoni da Verona has to be ruled out, since he was by then already over the Alps with Giovanni da Capestrano, cfr. Guido De Blasi, 'Rangoni, Gabriele detto Gabriele da Verona'. *DBI* 86 (2016): 406-409.

⁹⁷ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 10-15, 258-260.

⁹⁸ *Vide supra*, n. 69. Roberto also mentioned his Siense preaching in his minor sermon collection *De virtutibus*. Here he testified once again of his habit of summarizing his entire preaching cycle during the last sermon he delivered: in this occasion he would have summarized the content of 85 sermons in one day, cfr. Laura Gasparri, 'Sulla tradizione manoscritta delle prediche di Roberto da Lecce (con due sermoni inediti)'. *AFH* 73 (1980): 173-225: 181-182, 217: «Senis 85 sermones quos predicaveram ibi una die sub compendio replicavi cum omnibus partibus, particulis, distincionibus, allegacionibus et capitulis, et notate fuerunt ultra quinque milia allegaciones quas feceram».

leaving before having preached several times to the people in the city⁹⁹. On August 24th Roberto arrived in Forlì, where he preached for a month or so. His preaching was positive at first, but Roberto lost the people's consensus due to the fiery attacks he directed against a local hermit, Pietro Bianco da Durazzo, who had established himself there about a year earlier, erecting a small sanctuary in the nearby Fornò. The sanctuary rose where a young peasant had witnessed an apparition of the Virgin, an event of which the preacher strongly doubted, as he would have written in his sermons and on which I will say something further on. Roberto attempted in all manners – also resorting to the Papal Legate in Bologna, at the time Cardinal Bessarion – to discourage the people's devotion for the Albanian hermit, but found little success¹⁰⁰.

Among the letters published by Bastanzio in his appendix, there is one addressed by Francesco Sforza to Roberto from Parma on November 13th, in which the Duke acknowledged Roberto's impossibility to reach Milan because of his brother's sickness¹⁰¹. Bastanzio conjectured this could have been Filippo, who – according to his reconstruction – would have been in Venice, thus the scholar also estimated Roberto's stay in that city for the last months of 1451¹⁰². There is no easy way to solve this issue, although Roberto's sick brother, I believe, could more probably have been friar Luca, whom we know on some occasions, especially in the following years, was with him in his entourage.

⁹⁹ Enrico Peverada, 'Reazioni alla crociata bandita da Callisto III'. In Id., *Appunti di storia ferrarese del Quattrocento*. Ferrara: s.n., 1982 («Quaderni del giornale filologico ferrarese», 8): 17, n. 30 [quoted from the *Liber deliberationum G* preserved in the Archivio Diocesano of Ferrara]: «Necnon deliberaverunt ut solvantur nautis qui conduxerunt religiosum virum fratrem Robertum ordinis S. Spiritus [the Franciscan church in Ferrara] a civitate Cremona ad civitatem Ferrarie, in qua plures et plures fecit predicationes magne utilitatis».

¹⁰⁰ Giovanni di M.^o Pedrino depintore, *Cronica del suo tempo*, a cura di Gino Borghezio e Marco Vattasso, 2 vols. Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1929-1934: II, 258-259. See also Bernardo Nobile, ««Romiti» e vita religiosa nella cronachistica italiana fra '400 e '500'. *Critica Storica* 5 (1984): 303-340: 308-9; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 276-277; Franco Zaghini, 'Pietro Bianco da Durazzo, eremita a Forlì nel secolo XV'. In *La Chiesa metropolitana ravennate e i suoi rapporti con la costa adriatica orientale*, a cura di Maurizio Tagliaferri, «Ravennatensia» XXI (2005): 223-240: 231; Mara Ioriatti, 'When Words Alone are Not Enough: A Franciscan Preacher Facing a Reluctant Audience in Fifteenth-Century Italy'. In *From Words to Deeds: The Effectiveness of Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, edited by Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014: 225-235: 230.

¹⁰¹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 15, 260: «da vuj havemu pur havuto adviso che veneriti et che se nol fusse l'infermitade de vostro fratello saresti già in cammino».

¹⁰² Ivi: 41-43.

3. *Controversy over the Observant reform (1452-1455)*¹⁰³

Having reached the peak of fame and acceptance in astonishingly little time, it was possibly Roberto's ambition that led him to rebel against the Franciscan Observant family that had embraced him. Although the reasons of his rebellion and of the fierce attacks he directed against his former confreres remain unclear, it seems sound to believe that the preacher's personal stubbornness and arrogance had some role in it, especially given the fact that, as we will see, such an opposition will almost suddenly disappear when Roberto will be acknowledged a special status inside his Order. In any case, the violent polemic against the Franciscan Observance, well inserted inside the broader polemic between Observants and Conventuals, characterized the years of Roberto's life that go from 1452 to 1455 and it was around this issue that most of his activity in these years referred to.

The strife between its two major families, the improperly named Conventuals – who would officially gain this name only in the early sixteenth century – and the supporters of a stricter adherence to the original *Regula* of Saint Francis, the Observants, particularly characterized the development of the Franciscan Order throughout the fifteenth century, up until the *Ite vos* Papal bull which decreed its division in 1517¹⁰⁴. In the 1450s Roberto played a preponderant role in the battles between the two families, earning himself a primary position in later recollections of the events. Originating from the first eremitic experiences on the inhospitable Appennines between modern-day Umbria and Marche, the Franciscan Observance had found its true consecration and implementation in the first decades of the fifteenth-century, thanks to the activity of (primarily, but not only) Bernardino da Siena. The peak of the Observants' fortune in these early decades of their history came under the pontificate of the "reformer" Eugene IV, also thanks to the incessant working of one of Bernardino's closest followers, Giovanni da Capestrano, who had earned a large influence inside the Papal Curia. First the failed attempt to have Alberto da Sarteano (1385-1450) nominated General Minister of the Order in 1442, *de facto* subduing the Conventuals to an Observant superior, then the papal bulls issued between 1443 and 1447, granting the Observants an

¹⁰³ The content of this chapter has been largely anticipated in my paper 'Controversy over the Observant reform: Roberto da Lecce's attacks and John Capistran's letters', presented at the conference on *The Mission of John Capistran in Central and Eastern Europe (1451-1456): The Transfer of Ideas and the Strategy of Communication in the Late Middle Ages*, Warsaw, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, 16-17 November 2017, and now In: *The Grand Tour of John of Capistrano in Central and Eastern Europe (1451-1456): the Transfer of Ideas and the Strategies of Communication in the Late Middle Ages*. Conference Proceedings, Warsaw, 16-17 November 2017, edited by Pawel Kras and James D. Mixson. Warsaw-Lublin: Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences & Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018: 37-54.

¹⁰⁴ See at least Heribert Holzapfel, *History of the Franciscan Order*. Digitized 2010 (first edition *Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanerordens*. Freiburg, 1909) http://i-tau.com/franstudies/texts/hol_hist_final.pdf; John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968: 441-500; Celestino Piana, 'Scritti polemici fra Conventuali ed Osservanti'; Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order: From Saint Francis to the Foundation of the Capuchins*. Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1987; *Identità francescane agli inizi del Cinquecento. Atti del XLV Convegno internazionale. Assisi, 19-21 ottobre 2017*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2018.

independent hierarchy, are sufficient to show the Pope's favourable eye for the reforming branch of the Order. His successor, Nicholas V, seemed at first to follow the way that had been set up, canonizing, in 1450, the very first Observant saint, Bernardino da Siena. However, not long after this resounding event, when also the other great figure of the Italian Observant reform, Giovanni da Capestrano, had left Italy, the Conventuals made their move, in the attempt to reverse the privileges issued by Eugene IV and to bring the Observants back under the obedience to the Order's hierarchy. A lot was at stake, which went well beyond the friars' style of life¹⁰⁵. Roberto was one of the main actors of these renewed attacks against the Observant families – or at least has remained stereotyped as such in a number of Observant narratives – alongside especially Giacomo Boscagliani da Mozzanica, Provincial Minister in Milan, General Vicar of the Order from 1453 and from the following year General Minister¹⁰⁶.

As said, the city of Siena managed to win over Francesco Sforza's insistence to have Roberto and the friar preached there for Lent 1452. No testimonies survive of this preaching cycle, left aside the small passage from Roberto's own printed sermons mentioned above. When he left the city, we know he travelled south-east, to reach L'Aquila, where Marco da Bologna – temporary Vicar of the Cismontane family since Giovanni da Capestrano had left Italy – had summoned a General Chapter in the convent of San Giuliano for Pentecost (May 28th). He had possibly arrived in L'Aquila some time before, since, as Bernardino Aquilano recorded, he had already been preaching there with success when the Chapter assembled¹⁰⁷. It is during this Chapter that Roberto manifested his first contrasts with his family's superiors. The most ancient Observant partisan narratives state that Roberto broke away from the family because of his dissatisfaction for not having received any offices. Already Bernardino Aquilano raised some doubts on the reliability of such an accusation, yet it rapidly made its way throughout the tradition. On the other hand, anti-Observant writers, such as the Conventual Francesco da Rimini, gave Roberto's zeal for the Order's unity as a reason for his rebellion¹⁰⁸. Roberto's fellow in this protest against the Observants was another famous preacher, Giovanni da Volterra¹⁰⁹. Again, as for earlier episodes, the main source to speak about this period of

¹⁰⁵ Letizia Pellegrini, 'Bernardino da Siena, il minoritismo e l'osservanza: ambiguità e ambivalenze. A partire da Monteripido'. In *Giacomo della Marca tra Monteprandone e Perugia. Lo Studium del Convento del Monte e la cultura dell'Osservanza francescana. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Monteripido, 5 novembre 2011*, edited by Fulvia Serpico and Luigi Giacometti. Perugia: Biblioteca Storica del Monte – Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012: 21-35.

¹⁰⁶ On Giacomo da Mozzanica see at least Anna Morisi Guerra, 'Boscagliani, Giacomo'. *DBI* 13 (1971): 166-167.

¹⁰⁷ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 39: «Frater Robertus antedictus, iam valde famosus praedicator, cum mira acceptatione in Aquilana civitate praedicaverat». See also, *ivi*: 40-41.

¹⁰⁸ Piana, 'Scritti polemici fra Conventuali ed Osservanti': I, 362.

¹⁰⁹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 39. See also 'Compendium Chronicarum FF. Minorum': 125: «Clarebat nunc in familia Observantie frater Robertus de Liccio, famosissimus predicator, qui alter Paulus vocabatur; sed quia non recte cum Deo ambulabat, inflatus per applausum et concurrentiam populorum, cum aliquibus suis complicitibus familiam egrediens, conventum petiit. Nam cum quesivisset honorem, dedecus et confusionem reportavit». Apparently, Giovanni da Volterra later attempted to return to the Observant family, receiving however Marco da Bologna's refusal, see

Roberto's life is Bernardino Aquilano, who surely cannot be considered an unbiased witness; still, we will have to rely mostly on his *Chronica* if we want an idea of Roberto's whereabouts in the following few years.

Despite it derives from partisan sources, the explanation of Roberto's rupture with the Observants that resorts to his dissatisfied ambition seems to be plausible, as I will emerge from the pages the narration of the events contained in the pages that follow: there apparently is not another sound reason why Roberto would have gone through so much trouble to fight his former confreres to then abruptly cease once he obtained the mentioned privileges in 1454. Moreover, this particular feature of Roberto's – that of trying to achieve influential and powerful positions – would seem to receive a confirmation by other later events of his life, as we will see. Thus, Roberto probably manifested his unhappiness to his Observant superiors during the General Chapter in L'Aquila. Then, just after the chapter had ended, their contrast loudly echoed also outside the Order and into the wider “public opinion”. The people of L'Aquila, who had heard Roberto preach in the days preceding the General Chapter, requested him for the following Lent. The news, however, did not please the Observant leaders, who, in light of the recent events, valued Roberto was not to be trusted and proposed Antonio da Bitonto instead. The citizens were not satisfied with the replacement and induced the Observants to appeal to Roberto, who asked him «that he may agree to do this grace to the Chapter for the satisfactions of the citizens of L'Aquila, from which they had received such and so many gifts». Roberto replied with a refusal, adducing he had already been destined elsewhere. Thus, abandoned by Roberto and refusing to hear Antonio, the people of L'Aquila remained with no Franciscan Observant preacher for the following year¹¹⁰.

Aniceto Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis (continuatio)'. *AFH* 21 (1928): 86-103, 285-303, 552-579: 102 [letter addressed by Marco da Bologna to Giovanni da Capestrano, 19 January 1455]: «Vulterranus vellet ad nos redire, sed ego nolo eum. Cum enim fuerit contra familiam, a familia suscipietur in capitulo generali. Nunquam tamen se mihi presentavit, nec illi credo, non conversionem veram spero». In the following years, Giovanni da Volterra will be again in L'Aquila to preach. Competing with the Observant Domenico da Leonessa, despite the malicious attempts to sabotage him, his preaching would result in an unsuccess, cfr. Aniceto Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae ad S. Ioannem de Capistrano (Accedit fr. Iacobi de Reate ad eundem epistola)'. *AFH* 15 (1922): 382-405: 393 and 399; Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 41-43. Wadding also added a third name to those of Roberto and Giovanni, that of Angelo da Rupe Marittima, who however died soon after the Chapter in L'Aquila, cfr. *Annales minorum*, XII, 146 (ad annum 1452, § 35).

¹¹⁰ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 39-40: «Completo vero capitulo, cives Aquilanos pro suo predicatore in futura quadragesima, quae proxima erat, fratrem Robertum instantissime postularunt. Fratres vero capituli, vicarius videlicet generalis et definitores, fratrem Robertum indignatum cernentes fratrem Antonium de Bitonto, qui absens erat et praedicator eximius, obtulerunt; cives vero instantes omnino fratrem Robertum habere voluerunt. Fratres rogant fratrem Robertum, ut capitulo velit hanc gratiam facere pro satisfactione Aquilanorum, a quibus tot et tanta dona receperant. Negat instantissime allegans quod R. P. generalis alibi se praedicatorum promiserat, et nullo modo nullaque ratione jam indignatus voluit obedire. Inde scandalum fuit exortum, quod cives Aquilani in illa quadragesima sine observantiae praedicator steterunt; et cum fratribus provinciae fuerunt non sine ratione conquesti». See also: Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1452, § 35 (XII, 169-170); § 40 (XII, 173); Felice Moretti, 'Antonio da Bitonto OFMObs'. Probably referring to these events are the vernacular verses dedicated to Roberto by Cola da Borbona, published in Carlo De Matteis, 'Poesie religiose e morali inedite del '400 aquilano'. In *Cultura umanistica nel Meridione e la*

This is at least Bernardino Aquilano's version, which is anyway confirmed by a later recollection of the events contained in a letter addressed by Giovanni da Capestrano to the people of L'Aquila from Krakow on 12 May 1454. The letter – which was publicly read in town by Giacomo della Marca¹¹¹ – was meant to revitalize the townsmen's devotion for Saint Bernardino, since news had come to Giovanni that the original plan to dedicate a newly erected Observant convent to the novel Franciscan saint had been replaced with a much more modest dedication of a chapel in the cathedral, where, furthermore, Conventuals were destined to office and not just Observant friars. Recalling the Franciscan preachers that the people of L'Aquila had heard in the past, Capestrano could not hold back his resentment towards Roberto – whom he had in previous occasions praised¹¹² – for the events which had occurred a couple of years earlier. Although this letter is well known by now, the clear image it gives, with its fervent and polemical tones, of Giovanni's idea of Roberto by 1454 justifies a long translated quotation from it:

Your excuse for not wanting to maintain your promise towards us [of building a convent in honour of Saint Bernardino] is not respectfully legitimated by the fact that we have not maintained ours towards you. You were not alone to be tricked, but it was primarily we that were tricked by that arrogant and hypocrite, that past idol of yours friar Roberto, who could God and the Virgin had wished had never passed from the Conventuals to us. You, as ancient and primary devotees of our habit and rule, should have rather been compassionate of our troubles, unjustly brought to us, of which no one has remained unpunished. You should have remembered to have had all of our excellent preachers: you could well have been patient for one year instead of being

stampa in Abruzzo: atti del Convegno, L'Aquila 12-13-14 novembre 1982. L'Aquila: Deputazione di storia patria negli Abruzzi, 1984: 309-345: 330-331:

«O fra' Roberto, toi conformitati
veracemente suo servo de Dio [sic];
o fra' Roberto mio,
perché s'è tosto tu s'è ci hai lassati!
O quante volte sete rechiamati,
o fra' Roberto, nella nostra terra;
questa è la pena che lu core aserra:
che de tal duno semo stati ingrati.
O quanti boni sempli tu ci hai dati
Colle devote tue predicaziuni,
o quante amuniziuni,
o quanti boni frutti qui hai piantati!
O quanti n'hai da lu inferno liberati,
o quante anime hai tratto del munno!
Servi li hai fatti del Padre iocunno
e sonno cavaleri innamorati.
Chiamemo tutti loro paternitati
De fra' Joanni e anche fra' Roberto,
frate Jacopo ch'è nostro patre certo,
che per nui denanti a Dio siano abocati».

¹¹¹ Alfonso Miola, 'Lettera di san Giacomo della Marca scritta a san Giovanni da Capestrano'. *Miscellanea francescana* 2 (1887): 77-79; Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis': 101.

¹¹² *Vide supra*, n. 74.

so fast in judging badly and wrongly of the special affection we have for the whole of your city! And, as if this were not enough, I hear you will have the Conventuals sing a mass every week in Saint Bernardino's chapel! And you called some preacher I do not know whilst you could have had friar Antonio da Bitonto – who could well be sufficient in place of any other Christian preacher – as if our preachers had not been worthy of preaching in your city because one year you were left with none, though not for our fault! You, who never had better consolation in our times than from our preachers! And when the stream will have dried, it will be necessary to go back to the spring. O men of L'Aquila, you really prove to have confused minds! You have heard Saint Bernardino preaching and friar Alberto da Sarteano, friar Giacomo della Marca and many others among our excellent preachers, yet you have never seen them dedicated to so many other hypocrisies that it is almost as if they were turned into monkeys! You have despised Antonio da Bitonto, excellent preacher, without reason and you have called I do not know who else [*marginal note*: i.e. the Conventual *magister* Sante della Penna in his place]. This fact entirely turns against me, who has magnified L'Aquila with words and facts more than anyone else; but now, you have given me such a good reward for my actions that you are making me think of never nominating L'Aquila ever again!¹¹³

The letter really speaks for itself and just very little comment is due. The fight Conventuals and Observants were preparing over the cult of the newly canonized Saint Bernardino is well visible from the letter, with the latter working for the construction of a new shrine and the formers claiming the Saint for the whole order and singing weekly masses in his chapel inside the city's cathedral.

¹¹³ The letter is preserved in at least three manuscript copies: L'Aquila, Biblioteca Tommasi, *Libro delle memorie per la costruzione del convento e chiesa di San Bernardino*, ms. S. 52, ff. 2 and 71; De Ritiis, ms. S. 78, ff. 441ss. The transcription was first published in Nunzio Federico Faraglia, *La chiesa primitiva e il monastero di San Bernardino nell'Aquila*. Trani, 1912: 23-32 and then reprinted as an independent booklet: San Giovanni da Capestrano, *Lettera agli Aquilani*, L'Aquila: Comune dell'Aquila, 1986 from which I quote it: «Non è, cum reverentia, legitima vostra scusa che però non volete osservare ad nui la vostra promessa [of edifying a convent in honour of Saint Bernardino], perché nui non habiamo observata la nostra ad vui, peroché non vui soli, ma nui principalmente semo stati inganati da quello superbissimo et ypocreta vostro condan ydolo fra' Roberto, lo quale volesse Dio et la gloriosa Vergine Maria che mai dalli Conventuali foxe ad nui venuto. Vui, como antiquissimi et princepali devoti dell'habito et della nostra religione, più tosto devevate avere compasione alle nostre tribulatiuni <in>justamente illate verso nui, delle quali uno non è andato impunito. Et recordavi avere havuti tutti li nostri eccellenti predicatori: ben possevate haver patientia uno anno et non giudicare sì presto male et sinistro del singolare amore portamo ad tuca vostra citade! Et senci mancasse altro, io intendo vui farite cantare una messa alli Conventuali nella cappella de Sancto Bernardino omne septimana; et habete facto venire non so chi predicatore possendo avere frate Antonio da Bitonto, el quale basteria dove foxeno tucti li predicaturi della christiana religione, quasi nostri predicaturi non siano stati degni ad predicare nella vostra citade, perché uno anno ne sete stati privati senza nostro defecto, li quali non haveste mai majore consolatione ad nostri tempi che da nostri predicaturi. Et quando serrà mancato el rivolo bisognerà tornare alla fonte. O signuri aquilani, ben dimostrarete avere li occhi obnubilati! Vui avete odito predicare sancto Bernardino, frate Alberto de Sarthiano, frate Jacobo della Marca et multi altri nostri eccellenti predicaturi, non però li avete veduti stare rapti et con tante altre ypocrisie che bastaria oramai che fuxeno doventate symie! Avete senza cascione desprezato fra' Antonio da Bitonto, nobilissimo predicatore, et avete chiamato non so chi altro [*marginal note*: idest magistrum Sances della Penna conventualem in suo loco]. El quale despeto tucto se verte verso de me, el quale ò magnificata L'Aquila con parole et facti più de tucti li altri; ma vui hora mende havete renduto sì bono premio che me facete venire voluntà may più non nominare L'Aquila!». On Sante della Penna, Conventual, then Observant and finally Conventual again since 1454, see: Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 58-60.

Roberto, from a young and promising preacher, honored by his confreres and appreciated by Giovanni da Capestrano himself, had become a sworn enemy of the Observants, involved in suspicious machinations against the family and entirely dedicated to his personal ambitions. The mention Giovanni da Capestrano made of Roberto's passing from the Conventuals to the Observants probably referred to the friars' early studies with the Conventual Franciscans in Lecce, before entering the Observant family in Santa Maria del Tempio, as noted also above. Moreover, Giovanni da Capestrano also hints at Roberto's exuberant and excessive preaching style, comparing him to a monkey.

Having anticipated this letter from 1454 because of its descriptions of the facts that immediately followed the General Chapter of 1452, it is due to take a step back and return to the chronological succession of events. After the turbulent discussions with the Observants and the refusal to preach in L'Aquila, Roberto must have left the city not too long after the General Chapter had ended. We do not know exactly where he headed, but it is probable that he immediately went north, preaching in the towns he visited. Indeed, on August 5th he was preaching in Foligno¹¹⁴.

At the beginning of the following year, 1453, Roberto was in Perugia, where he preached to the people¹¹⁵. It is improbable that he remained there until the General Chapter of the Order, held in town on May 20th, in which it is even uncertain Roberto took any part. More likely is to believe that he almost immediately headed towards Rome, which would have become the main venue of his activity for the immediately following years. In Rome, Roberto probably found a supporter of his anti-Observant stance in the General Minister Angelo Cristofori da Perugia¹¹⁶. The preacher immediately took advantage of his incredible oratorical abilities and began striving against his former confreres: «day and night, publicly and privately, he never ceased to fight against the Observant family»¹¹⁷. The image of Roberto as champion of the Conventuals comes from Observant accounts of the events or from contemporary authors, like Vespasiano da Bisticci, who

¹¹⁴ Mario Sensi, 'La predicazione itinerante a Foligno nel secolo XV'. *Picenum Seraphicum* 10 (1973): 139-195: 145 and ap. 10, 159-160.

¹¹⁵ Bastanzio published a document of the town's priors, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 17, 261 [Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale, *Annales Decimvirales* 1453, 27 January, f. 10r].

¹¹⁶ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 47. Some Observants claimed that Angelo da Perugia in his last days repented his opposition to their family. Cfr. Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis': 97 [letter addressed by Marco da Bologna to Giovanni da Capestrano, Venice 28 December 1453]: «Perusinus noster, cum vidisset quod prostratus ac victus esset, ne ipse tante sue stragi superesset, abscessit, vel potius sublatus est e vita: quod omnibus summo ac iustissimo Dei iudicio factum videtur». On the other hand, he did not leave a good memory of himself among Conventuals either, cfr. Riccardo Pratesi, 'Francesco Micheli del Padovano di Firenze, teologo ed umanista francescano del secolo XV'. *AFH* 47 (1954): 293-366; 48 (1955), 73-130: II, 80-81, 84. On Giovanni da Capestrano's relationship with Angelo da Perugia see his letter sent in March 1453 from Wroclaw, in which he threatens his return to Italy should the General Minister oppose the Observants in favour of the Conventuals, cfr. Aniceto Chiappini, *La produzione letteraria di s. Giovanni da Capestrano: trattati, lettere, sermoni*. Gubbio: Scuola Tipografica "Oderisi", 1927: 90, nn. 58-59; 95, n. 110; GM 403. In general on Angelo Cristofori del Toscano da Perugia see Antonio Fantozzi, 'De fr. Angelo Christophori Perusino ministro generali Ordinis. Documenta (1413-1453)'. *AFH* 11 (1918): 132-205.

¹¹⁷ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 52: «contra illam [familiam Observantiae] die noctuque pugnare publice et private nunquam cessabat».

showed particular sympathy for the Franciscan Observance¹¹⁸. Still, such an image does not seem to have been too far from truth. Roberto's activity, it has been noted, took a twofold shape: political – recurring to members of the papal curia who saw Conventuals in a positive light, but also to lay rulers and notable men – and popular, through his spectacular and well-accepted preaching¹¹⁹. Nothing surprising emerges from what we know of the arguments Roberto used against the Observants, which ultimately referred to two traditional accusations: that their refusal to obey the Provincial Ministers had led them to committing a mortal sin and that they had obtained the privileges granted to them by Pope Eugene IV with deceit. An accusation, this latter one, which personally embroiled Capistran more than anyone else¹²⁰. Roberto would have also shown around a list of 24 Franciscan preachers whom, he said, agreed with his opinion and asserted that several Provincial Vicars thought the same¹²¹.

Roberto's slandering was so worrying for the Observants that they eventually tried to soften him with a private and direct confrontation. A certain insolence from Roberto's side emerges from Bernardino Aquilano's account:

One day, when we were assembled, it was expressed to have him [Roberto] invited among us and to hear why he had raised such a quarrel against the [Observant] family. He was called and he came; questioned, he answered: "I said what I see, that the family should remain satisfied under the obedience to the ministers". It was said to him why it would be better to live under the simple obedience to the ministers rather than this way. He answered: "It seems to me this way and I told this to all who wished to hear it". Then *magister* Serafino da Gaeta said: "Do you want to debate on this issue?" He answered: "I did not come here to dispute, instead I was called by you to listen"¹²².

¹¹⁸ Roberto is perfectly recognizable in this passage of the *Life* of Bernardino da Siena, despite he is not explicitly named, Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*: I, 248: «Ora ognuno sa quanto [...] il diavolo avessi tentato uno di questi frati della Oservanza di volere ribellarsi dalla religione; andava al generale per una licentia, e di subito d'oservante diventava uno diavolo».

¹¹⁹ Pellegrini, 'Preparando una edizione', 75. Cfr. Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, 47: «totam contra familiam curiam commovit [...] et totam curiam mirabiliter intossicavit»; 53: «amplius se continere non valens processit ad publicum, confidens in acceptatione populi [...] in omnibus suis praedicationibus aliquid contra familiam evomebat, aut privatis cum curialibus et Romanis civibus».

¹²⁰ Cfr. Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, 53. On the latter accusation, moved particularly against Capistran, see for instance, Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena', 63.

¹²¹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 48.

¹²² Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 52: «Una dierum inter nos simul congregatos habita locutio fuit, ut coram nobis vocaretur audireturque, quare talem scandalum contra familiam excitavit. Vocatus fuit et venit; requisitus respondit: "Ego dixi videre meum, quod familia sub obedientia ministrorum deberet stare contenta". Dictum est ei, quare melius sub simplici obedientia ministrorum quam isto modo viveret. Respondit: "Mihi ita videtur et ita omnibus audire volentibus dixi". Tunc magister Seraphinus [de Gaieta] dixit: "Vultis hunc punctum disputare?" Respondit: "Non veni ad disputandum, sed vocatus a vobis ad audiendum"». On Serafino da Gaeta, supporter of studies among the Observants, see: Ivi: 43. Despite this clash with him, Roberto included Serafino in the list of the best Franciscan preachers of his time, contained in his *Sermo de Sancto Bernardino*, cfr. Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 157v.

Another episode narrated by Bernardino Aquilano is an excellent example of the people's reception of these disputes, which were too subtle and specific to be wholly understood, but which surely left an enormous stain, to their eyes, on the Franciscans' otherwise positive fame. On his way out of Rome, presumably heading home towards L'Aquila, Bernardino had the following talk:

While we were leaving the town of Tivoli, all of our jars were empty and a long trip was ahead of us, something bad could happen on the way. I went back inside the town, asking several women, who were threading in the street, for a little wine for charity. One of them took the jar to fill; another old woman, with bitterness in her heart, said: "My son, what is this we hear about you?" I answered that I ignored what she meant. She said: "We all had you as our light, yet this light is obscured and we are all half-dead already; indeed, so many bad things are said about you and your friar Roberto that we can barely listen to them. You are always in fights and disputes; and all the town of Rome is greatly shocked by you"¹²³

Despite laymen could not fully understand the prize at stake, the fight between Conventuals and Observants was so topical in Rome that people were taking sides also inside their own families¹²⁴. Yet, on the long run, Roberto's fortune among his listeners began to fade, since, apparently, the arguments and the personal example with which he backed his extraordinary preaching talent were not as strong, a first instance of his voluble character which will be a lasting feature of his fame. As some townsmen told an Observant friar once: «We follow friar Roberto for his eloquence, because he speaks so well, and not for his piety»¹²⁵

The clamour risen from Roberto's and others' attacks against the Observants were far from being confined to Rome alone or to the Franciscan milieu. Giovanni da Capestrano intervened as he could from his foreign mission and most of the letters he exchanged with Italy between 1453 and 1455 dealt precisely with this issue¹²⁶. Moreover, powerful and influential laymen were also getting involved. Francesco Sforza addressed letters to the members of the Curia to try and support the Observants, although his position towards the two families of the Order will be – to say the least – ambivalent over the following years, as we will see with Roberto's personal case¹²⁷. Giannozzo

¹²³ Ivi: 48: «Recedentibus vero nobis de civitate Tiburtina vascula nostra erant omnia vacua et iter longum pro nobis, in via malum contingere potuisset. Regressus fui intra civitatem parum vini pro eleemosyna quaerens a pluribus feminis, quae erant in strata filantes. Una vasculum implendum suscepit; altera vero vetula in amaritudine cordis dixit: "Quid est hoc, quod de vobis audimus, fili mi?" Respondi quid dicere velit ignoro. Dixit illa: "Omnes nos habebamus vos omnes pro luce nostra, et tamen lux ista est obscurata et iam omnes semimortui sumus; nam tot et tanta mala de vobis et isto fratre vestro Roberto dicuntur, quod vix audire possumus. Estis enim quotidie in rixis et contentionibus; et tota Romana civitas de vobis miro modo scandalizata est"».

¹²⁴ Ivi: 54-55.

¹²⁵ Ivi: 55: «Nos iam fratrem Robertum pro sua eloquentia, quia ita bene loquitur, et non pro sua devotione sectamur».

¹²⁶ I have discussed these letters in my 'Controversy over the Observant reform'.

¹²⁷ See Giancarlo Andenna, 'Gli ordini mendicanti, la comunità e la corte sforzesca'. In *Metamorfosi di un borgo Vigevano in età visconteo-sforzesca*, edited by Giorgio Chittolini. Milan: Franco Angeli, 1992: 145-191: 146; Sara Fasoli, 'Gli Ordini Mendicanti e il ducato di Milano al tempo di Niccolò V: lo sviluppo delle riforme osservanti'. In

Manetti, who had just taken up the position of Papal secretary, was able to avoid the issuing of a bull against the Observants that Nicholas V had been instigated to write by Roberto, as Vespasiano da Bisticci recalled in his *Life* of the famous humanist, yet another testimony of Roberto's influence inside the Curia¹²⁸.

It was probably around this time that Roberto also wrote a booklet (*libellus*) to support his campaign against the Observants. The aged Niccolò da Osimo (1379-1453) countered it with a writing of his own sometime by the end of 1453, just before passing away¹²⁹. The earliest mention of the two treatises is in a letter addressed to Giovanni da Capestrano by Marco da Bologna in late December 1453¹³⁰. The two writings seem to have been lost, although Ottokar Bonmann had anticipated their finding and a forthcoming work of his on them, yet nothing ever appeared about it, to my knowledge¹³¹. Almost two centuries after their composition, Luke Wadding provided the incipits of the two writings: Roberto's would have begun with the words «Placet magnopere in observantibus» and Niccolò's reply with «Quidam minus scrupulosus»¹³². We can now say that Wadding mistakenly attributed these incipits, since, although they do identify two polemical treatises – one against and the other in favour of the Franciscan Observants – these cannot be identified with the works of Roberto and Niccolò¹³³. These two texts, which were first collected in manuscript, together with other documents that favoured the Observants, by friar Nicholas of Leuven in 1497, were then printed, twice in Paris and once, possibly, in Deventer before the end of

Papato, stati regionali e Lunigiana nell'età di Niccolò V. Atti delle giornate di studio, La Spezia, Sarzana, Pontremoli, Bagnone 25-28 maggio 2000, edited by Eliana M. Vecchi. *Memorie della Accademia lunigianese di scienze «Giovanni Capellini»*, 73 (2003): 143-167: 146 (now also in Ead., *Perseveranti nella regolare osservanza*. Milan: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 2011: 1-28: 2).

¹²⁸ Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*: II, 601-602: «Cercando frate Ruberto, che era in questo tempo a Roma, di levare il Vicario generale degli Osservanti di San Francesco, che era istato ordinato da Santo Bernardino per conservare questi Osservanti. Aveva frate Ruberto facto tanto col Papa et co' Cardinali, che segretamente l'aveva ottenuto una bolla, none intendendo il Papa lo inconveniente che ne seguitava d'essere la distructione di quello ordine. Ora messer Giannozzo, essendone istato avisato da me, per ordine de detti frati, subito avuto la lettera, n'andò alla Santità di Nostro Signore a fare rivocare questa bolla. Giunto al Papa et narratogli tutto come sapeva, et mostratogli lo scandalo che ne seguitava all'ordine dell'Osservanza, il Papa, inteso questo, che aveva la bolla in camera, la fece arrecare. Non si partì messer Giannozzo dalla Sua Santità con le potenti ragioni aveva, che il Papa, che era religiosissimo, intesa la fallacia delle interpretatione, in sua presentia fece istracciare detta bolla per levar via tanto inconveniente». Cfr. also *Ivi*, 530-531. On Giannozzo Manetti see at least Simona Foà, 'Manetti, Giannozzo'. *DBI* 68 (2007): 613-617: 614.

¹²⁹ On Niccolò da Osimo see Umberto Picciafuoco, *Fr. Nicolò da Osimo: vita, opere, spiritualità*. Montepreandone: Officine Grafiche Anxanum, 1980; Letizia Pellegrini, 'Niccolò da Osimo'. *DBI* 78 (2013): 417-420.

¹³⁰ Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis': 96: «Libellus fr. Roberti ubi sit, nec quis habeat non invenio; cum Bononiam perrexero, nostras omnes excutiam sarcinulas, et inventum illico tibi transmittam. Huiusmodi nefandi libelli singulis cavillationibus respondit vir ille bone memorie beatus frater Nicolaus Ausimanus, eiusdem missi fr. Roberto».

¹³¹ Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*: II, 241, n. 290.

¹³² Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1453, § 18 (XII, 197): «Insuper libellum incipientem "Placet magnopere in observantibus", in huius instituti pernicem emisit, cui vir doctus et pius Nicolaus Auximanus religiose et solide respondit. Tractatulus incipit "Quidam minus scrupulosus". Deinde suae assertioni de periculoso et damnabili statu observantium maiorem fidem conciliari curavit per aliorum subscriptiones; subiunxitque aliquos ex ipsis provinciarum vicariis ita sentire et velle ad pristinam ministrorum obedientiam redire».

¹³³ The slight difference of one of the two incipits is easily justifiable from a paleographical point of view: «Quidam minus scrupulosus» (in Wadding) instead of «Quidam nimium scrupulosus».

the century, under the title *Minorica elucidativa rationabilis separationis fratrum Minorum de Observantia ab aliis fratribus eiusdem Ordinis*¹³⁴. In the sixteenth century, the work was printed again in Venice, together with a response to it prepared by the Conventual *magister* Pedro da Cruz, entitled *Antiminorica*, and then again inside various Franciscan Observant collections of sources¹³⁵. The two treatises that make up for the most part of the collection have been handed down anonymous, but patent chronological evidence – pope Innocent VIII is mentioned more than once – and the Ultramontane aspects that they discuss, rule out the possibility that they could be the mid-fifteenth-century works of the Italians Roberto and Niccolò¹³⁶. Wadding's mistake could be justified by the fact that the author of the anti-Observant text is said to be a bishop – although suffragan! – and to have passed from the Conventuals to the Observants and back again¹³⁷.

Inside the Papal Court, Roberto had apparently won the favour of at least three cardinals: Domenico Capranica – whose attitude, however, seems to have been at least ambivalent – protector of the Franciscan Order and Cardinal of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem; Pietro Barbo, Cardinal of San Marco and future Pope Paul II; and Juan Carvajal, cardinal of Sant'Angelo¹³⁸. Probably also by the means of these powerful supports, Roberto managed to have Nicholas V summon the Observant Cismontane Vicar, Marco da Bologna, and a number of friars in Rome to answer the Conventual's

¹³⁴ The colophon with Nicholas of Leuven's name, almost surely present in the manuscript copy the works were printed from, is present in the edition s.n.t. [possibly Deventer, Jacobus de Breda] digitized by Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, <https://archive.org/details/ned-kbn-all-00002141-001>, f. Fiiiir: «Iste tractatulus debet esse ad usum fratris Nycolai de Lovanio, qui eum combinavit, conscripsit ac cum magno labore in quantum potuit correxit». The three fifteenth-century issues of the collection are identified in GW as M23451, M23455 and M 23458.

¹³⁵ Venice: per Simonem de Luere pro domino Iordano de Dinslaken, 1505; Pedro da Cruz, *Preclarissimum opus antiminorica vocatum adversus Minoricam fratrum dictorum de observantia noviter editum*. Venice: per Simonem de Luere nomine domini Iordani de Dinslaken, 1505. The *Minorica* was printed again in *Monumenta Ordinis Minorum*, 2 vols. Salamanca: impensis honorabilis viri Ioannis de Porras, 1511: II, ff. 186v-204v (I could not verify the previous edition of 1506 in three volumes by the same printer); *Speculum minorum seu firmamentum trium ordinum*. Venice: per Lazarum de Soardis, 1513: tertia pars, ff. 245v-257r. Umberto Picciafuoco had read them in this last collection, cfr. Picciafuoco, *Fr. Niccolò da Osimo*: 136-137.

¹³⁶ The author of the anti-Observant treatise is identified in Libertus de Broekem (d. 1506, bishop of Beirut and suffragan bishop of Liège) by Oligier, while Piana tentatively also raised the name of the Florentine *magister* Girolamo or Giovanni Leonardi de Lenzi, but less convincingly, cfr. Livarius Oligier, 'De relatione inter observantium querimonias Constantienses (1415) et Ubertini Casalensis quoddam scriptum'. *AFH* 9 (1916): 3-41: 13-14; Celestino Piana, *La facoltà teologica dell'Università di Firenze nel quattro e cinquecento*. Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 1977: 107. Sbaraglia had already doubted the possibility for the Observant author to be Alessandro Ariosto, while he acknowledged the name of the French scotist theologian Étienne Pillet, better known as Brulefer, cfr. Iohannes Hyacinthus Sbaralea, *Supplementum et castigatio ad scriptores trium ordinum s. Francisci*, 3 vols. Rome, 1908-1936: I, 13-14; III, 110. Sbaraglia also ruled out other possible authors, *ivi*: I, 52, 319; II, 301.

¹³⁷ *Minorica elucidativa* [I quote from the Venetian 1505 edition], c. 2r: «Noverit quapropter huius libelli lector et inspector, quod in eo sint duo tractatus, quorum primum composuit quidam episcopus frater minorum, qui pridem aliquot annis coniunxit se fratribus de observantia, sed rediens ad suos fratres de comunitate, suffraganeus ordinatus, vitam et conversationem dictorum fratrum de observantia non tam subtiliter quam nequiter fraudulentem et malivole in hoc suo tractatu nititur impugnare, maculare pariter et damnare».

¹³⁸ Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Ricciis': 96 [letter addressed by Marco da Bologna to Giovanni da Capestrano from Venice on 28 December 1453]: «Habet enim et ipse fautores plurimos; etiam ex ipsis Cardinalibus, protectorem nostrum, S. Marci et S. Angeli».

accusations against their family¹³⁹. Meanwhile, a committee of thirty-five law experts (twenty-six of whom *in utriusque iuris periti*) examined the validity of the bulls issued by Eugene IV. On July 5th, at the presence of four cardinals – Guillaume d’Estouteville, another high prelate to whom Roberto was or would have been rather close, Guillaume-Hugues d’Estaing, Domenico Capranica and Juan Carvajal – the experts gave their judgment in favour of the Observants. Then the Pope convened a council to be held at his presence, during which the Conventual representants faced the Observants to find a possible appeacement. Nicholas V resolved in favor of what seemed a compromise between the two families, allowing the passage from the Observants to the Conventuals, imposing to the Conventuals to no longer attack the Eugenic bulls and requesting the Observants not to try and win over their confreres’ convents¹⁴⁰.

The peace would not have proven to be lasting, but it was probably after this intervention by the Pope that Roberto meditated on the possibility to return to the Observant family. We can read a letter addressed to him by Marco da Bologna from Spoleto in the summer of 1453, in which the Observant General Vicar rejoiced for Roberto’s «reditus» to his family:

In these days, excellent brother, your letters were returned to me and they cheered me up, since I had been for some time gloomy and sad, and made me cheerful as nothing dearer, nothing more pleasing, nor even anything more delightful could have done. This is the day that the Lord made, this is what we had long expected! Thus I rejoice with myself and congratulate with you for your return to us. Here I am, sweetest brother, I offer myself entirely to you, whatever you will ask of me I will grant it with glad and happy spirit. Remember what I told you when we were together in the convent of Ara coeli. You take up a piece of paper and I will hand you a feather: write as you wish; I ask you just one thing, God’s honour, the [Observant] family’s benefit and your well-being. I receive you as my greatly loved and honored brother. [...] I send you my benefits, that is those pertaining to my office, not because you are in need of them, but so that my desire, my love, my affection, my benevolence and my faith in you may be known to you. To use your words, believe me I have completely forgotten everything that has happened: trust that there will be no one that will make me raise against you, my greatly loved brother. As for your companions, do whatever suits you: receive your brother, and mine, Luca and that [friar] da

¹³⁹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 48-53; Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1453, §§ 18-21 (XII, 197-199); Nicolaus Glassberger, *Chronica*. Florentiae: Ad Claras Aquas, 1838 («Analecta Franciscana», II): 351.

¹⁴⁰ Wadding, *Annales minorum*, XII, 171 (ad annum 1453, § 21). Cfr. also Ivi, XII, 170-172 (ad annum 1453, §§ 18-22); Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*, 47-55; Glassberger, *Chronica*: 344; Chiappini, ‘De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis’, 99-100. The outcome of the experts’ analysis of the issue is also mentioned in the small pro-observant writing in Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, ms. α.F.2.38, f. 158r: «etiam et probantur predicta ex consiliis XXXV doctorum sigillatis, ex quibus sunt XXVI utriusque iuris famosi ex omni generali studio Ytalie, quibus omnibus diligenter consideratis constat quod prefatis bullis Eugenii nihil est detrahendum et multa necessario etiam secundum regulam sunt addenda». Cfr. Cesare Cenci, ‘Statuti, trattati ed opuscoli francescani in un codice dell’Estense di Modena’, *AFH* 57 (1964): 273-287: 281.

Cagli, as you will want. I restlessly wait to see you, with a brotherly desire to embrace you and kiss you for the fatherly affection of my office, for love of your filial virtue and also for the common habit. Finally, I happily heard of whatever has been done to you by several of my Roman friars. Take my heart, take my soul and myself, so that I may serve your purpose and as you wish¹⁴¹.

The truce, however, was not destined to last. Already in November, Roberto had again picked up his activity against the Observants. Object of the dispute, this time, was the passage of the notable preacher Giovanni da Ischia from the Observants to the Conventuals, which raised a certain commotion among the governing authorities of Osimo – where he was presumably preaching – and forced the intervention of the Pope himself¹⁴². As we learn from a letter addressed to Capistran by Marco da Bologna in late December, it had been Roberto to request the Pope's intervention¹⁴³. In his letter, the Cismontane General Vicar informed Capistran of Roberto's renewed hostility against

¹⁴¹ Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1453, § 36 (XII, 210); Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 18, 261-262: «Redditae sunt mihi litterae tuae, frater optime, his diebus, quae amarum et tristem iamdiu ita me laetificarunt gaudioque refecerunt, ut nihil gratius, nihil iucundius, nihil denique suavius intelligere potuerim. Haec est dies quam fecit Dominus, hoc est quod diu exspectavimus! Gaudeo igitur tecum tibi congratulor de reditu ad nos tuo. Ecce me, dulcissime frater, totum me tibi offero, quicquid abs me poposceris, laeto animo ac hilari illico concedam. Memento quod dixerim tibi cum coram essemus in conventu Aracoeli. Accipe tu cartulam et ego tibi calamum porrigam: scribe ut vis; unum tantum a te peto, honorem Dei, profectum familiae salutemque tuam. Accepto te in fratrem meum dilectissimum et honorandum. [...] Gratias autem meas seu officii mei ad te mitto, non quod illis egeas, sed ut desiderium meum, amorem, dilectionem, benevolentiam fidemque erga te meam cognoscas. Praetitorum omnium, ut verbis tuis utar, credas oblitum omnino: confide, quia nemo erit, qui me contra te fratrem meum amantissimum insurgere faciat. De sociis tuis, quicquid tibi expedit, facito: fratrem tuum et meum Lucam ac illum de Callio suscipiam, ut volueris: anxius expecto te videre, te amplecti et deosculari pro officio affectu paterno, pro tuae virtutis filiali dilectione, pro denique habitu communi, fraterno desiderio. Postremo quicquid actum est erga te a pluribus meis Romanis fratribus laetus audivi. Accipe cor meum, suscipe animam meam et me, ut finem faciam, tuo jure utere et ut vis». On the letter see the contrasting comments in Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 53-57 and Zafarana, 'Caracciolo, Roberto': 448. The «frater tuus et meus Lucas» named in the letter certainly is Roberto's brother Luca, while «ille de Callio» has been convincingly identified by Aniceto Chiappini as Giacomo da Cagli, whose passage to the Conventuals is mentioned in a letter by Giacomo di Ascoli to Giovanni da Capistrano, dated Bologna 25 May 1455, cfr. Aniceto Chiappini, *Reliquie letterarie capestranesi: storia, codici, carte documenti* (collection of extracts from the *Bullettino della R. Deputazione Abruzzese di Storia Patria*, s. III, 1918-1923). L'Aquila: Officine Grafiche Vecchioni, 1927: 206, n. 212. See also Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis Alexandri de Riciis': 102 [letter addressed by Marco da Bologna to Giovanni da Capistrano, 19 January 1455]: «Ille de Callio conventum Narniensem acceperat, sed, ut audivi, cum uno olim ex nostris, quem sine licentia susceperat, rixatus fuit, et accurrerunt seculares, scandalumque passi etc.»; Paolo M. Sevesi, 'Lettere autografe di Francesco della Rovere da Savona ministro generale (1464-1469) e cardinale (1467-1471) (poi Sisto IV, 1471-1484)'. *AFH* 28 (1935): 198-234: 206 [letter addressed by Francesco della Rovere to Galeazzo Sforza on 27 February 1467]: «Deputaveram ven. dum fratrem Iacobum de Chalio pro futura quadragesima in almo conventu nostro S. Crucis civitatis Florentie, ob singularem et egregiam ipsius predicandi virtutem». Roberto also mentioned Giacomo da Cagli among the best Franciscan preachers of his times, Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 157v. Finally, see also his relationship with the Venetian Doge Cristoforo Mauro, cfr. Giuseppe Colucci, *Delle antichità picene*, 31 vols. Fermo: dai torchi dell'autore, per Giuseppe Agostino Paccaroni, 1786-1797: XXV, 212.

¹⁴² *Supplementum ad bullarium franciscanum*, collegit et edidit Caesar Cenci, 2 vols. Grottaferrata: Ad Claras Aquas, 2002-2003: I, n. 1207.

¹⁴³ Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis': 96: «Robertus, Rome quasi hactenus residens, e nostris manibus, summa vi, brevibus apostolicis, obscenum illum ac flagitiosum fr. Iohannem Ischitanum abstraxit». The composed letters addressed by Giacomo da Mozzanica to Capistran from Assisi on 4th November 1453, containing also Roberto's greetings for Capistran [GM 424], and from Rome on 22nd August 1454 [GM 478], as well as Marco da Bologna's letter to Giacomo (sent from Ferrara on 10th December 1453) congratulating him on his nomination as General Vicar, should probably be considered as some sort of *pro forma*, cfr. Wadding, *Annales minorum*, XII, 174-175 (ad annum 1453, §§ 27-28).

the Observants, working just like he had been doing before both in the Curia and among the people of Rome.

In his letter, Marco also suggested that Roberto would have preached in Venice for the upcoming Lent¹⁴⁴. However, two mentions of him in the Papal registers, respectively in February and May, bring us to believe he actually spent the first months of that year in Rome¹⁴⁵. Besides, Roberto probably was in the city on May 30th, the date in which the bull promulgated by Nicholas V granted him – or perhaps confirmed, as discussed above – the privilege of preaching wherever without having to submit to any of his superiors except the General Minister of the Order¹⁴⁶. Maintaining our uncertainty on whether Roberto had already received these privileges in 1450, although it would seem sounder to state he had not, we can surely assert that they were undoubtedly official by mid-1454. It is, in fact, after the promulgation of this bull that we have the most relevant testimony of the effect of these privileges, in a letter addressed to Nicholas V by Marco da Bologna, in which he expressed his concerns regarding Roberto. The Pope, in turn, reassured the Observant Cismontane General Vicar as to Roberto's benevolence towards his family¹⁴⁷.

Later that year, the Observant friars of Bosnia nominated Roberto as their Vicar. Probably, no news of his fierce attacks against the family had reached them. Marco da Bologna, since the Bosnian friars were part of the Cismontane Province, had to write a letter – dated 16 January 1455 – to inform them that he no longer had any authority over the preacher and that the election had to be considered null¹⁴⁸. Just a few days later Marco wrote another letter, to Giovanni da Capestrano, informing him on Roberto's anti-Observant activity, saying how he was industriously working

¹⁴⁴ Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis fr. Alexandri de Riciis': 96: «Venetias hac proxima quadragesima predicaturus fertur adventare».

¹⁴⁵ Cesare Cenci, 'Documenta vaticana ad franciscuales spectantia ann. 1385-1492. Pars IV: documenta vaticana ann. 1447-1458'. *AFH* 93 (2000): 217-243: 242, nn. 157 and 242.

¹⁴⁶ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 19, 262-264; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. I (1431-1455). Florentiae: Ad Claras Aquas, 1929: n. 1755, 869-870; Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1454, § 24 (XII, 247). The privileges are to be noted in particular: «Auctoritate apostolica, tenore praesentium tibi ad quaecumque conventus, domos et loca dicti Ordinis et Regularis Observantiae, ubilibet consistentia, ad quae per Generalem Ministrum eiusdem Ordinis te transmitti contigerit, cum quatuor vel quinque fratribus dicto Ordinis et praedictae Observantiae, per te pro tempore eligendis, quos tu in socios tuos libere eligere et dimittere possis quando et quoties tibi videbitur, volumus, ac tibi harum serie concedimus accedendi, et inibi cum sociis huiusmodi pro tempore, de quo et quibus etiam tibi et praedicto Ministro videbitur, commorandi, ac alias [...] in ecclesiis seu locis vel plateis communivus clero et populo publice praedicandi et proponendi verbum Dei, aliorum quorumvis superiorum dicti Ordinis et regularis Observantiae licentia desuper minime requisita, plenam et liberam licentiam concedimus pariter et facultatem; teque et socios praedictos interim a quorumcumque inferiorum praedicto Generali Ministro superiorum ipsius Ordinis et regularis Observantiae obedientia ac superioritate et potestate eximimus penitus et liberamus».

¹⁴⁷ Aniceto Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 403: «[Nicolaus] ante obitum dixit [Marcum]: "Quid sibi timent fratres, quod ego revocabo aliqua privilegia? Dicas veritatem". Respondit quod id quidam dicit. "Non timeas amplius, esto bonus. Potius vellem addere quam diminuere. Serva illa diligenter". Et post multa dixit: "Quid credis? Si Conventuales ipsi possent, omnes vos suspenderent". Sicque familiariter aperuit oculum ex fratribus. Et tandem dicenti fr. Marco: "Quid faciemus de Roberto, qui digito suo dicit velle obedientiam in fratres protectus bulla quadam Sanctitatis vestre?". Respondit: "Robertus promisit mihi nolle illa uti, nihil pro se concessum est, quo possit uti"».

¹⁴⁸ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 20, 264-265. See also Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 398: «Illi de Bosnia elegerunt eum [Robertum] in vicarium, sed Philippus [Filippo da Massa] renuit»; Id., 'De vita et scriptis Alexandri de Riciis': 102 [letter addressed by Marco da Bologna to Giovanni da Capestrano, 19 January 1455].

against the family in Southern Italy, preaching in San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples and trying to win the convent of Gaeta over to the Conventuals¹⁴⁹. Also Niccolò da Fara narrated the events concerning this latter attempt in a letter dated 5 June 1455. There is no reason to doubt the account, since the writing had no propagandistic purpose, but was rather an update prepared for Capistran to know, among other things, that the king of Naples, though influenced by Roberto, was still open to the protection of the Observant family:

Roberto was in Rome for three days, but, since he was unpopular, he immediately left. [...] He visits Rome very cheerfully, I do not know what businesses he has here. Listen, please, to what he has done. He went, together with the General Minister, to the King [of Naples]. He demanded the convent of Gaeta. He sailed, together with the King, uncertain he would have obtained [the convent] without the King. God, who can no longer tolerate the iniquity of the man, immediately reacted and there came a layman, a rebel of our family, who, having learned about these things, went to a sister of his, that is of the Third Order, and told her with joy: “Now we want to sail to get our convent of Gaeta back from the hands of those beguards”. She immediately went running to the [Observant] friars and revealed everything. The friars immediately sent twelve of them to Gaeta. When those royal galleys, in which the General Minister and Roberto and their companions were, approached, not the convent, but the administrators, they immediately knew and told everything to all of the most powerful men of the town, who, coming all together to the King, said: “Serene King, so and so was revealed to us” and they briefly concluded: “If you want to destroy this town, then expell the Observant friars from the convent; if, instead, you wish to comfort us, we ask that you may not change anything for those poor friars”. He immediately replied: “It is not, nor it ever was, our desire to afflict or harass this town, but to comfort it in whatever is in our power”. And so Roberto remained completely abashed and began preaching in the convent: he just had four old ladies at his sermons. Since the whole town was filled with the news of the event, that miserable man left with his trumpet in his pocket¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁹ *Ivi*: 101-102: «Ut percipere potui et intellexi, Generalis est Neapolim et Robertus antedictus in conventu S. Laurentii. Et, ut aiunt, aliqui currunt ad Generalem ex nostris vel qui videbantur. Si quando conditionem illorum intelligere desideras et queris, dico: nullius. Utinam possem illos bono iure nedum de familia sed de Ordine expellere. Pridie iverunt Gaietam, ut inquirunt, prefati Generalis et Minister illius Provincie [Galasso da Napoli] et Robertus et nonnulli magistri, ut conventum a nobis auferrent. Sed populus turmatim post eos clamantes dixit: Nolumus vos, sed istos de observantia. Predicanteque in conventu fr. Roberto, preceptum acceperunt mulieres a viris, quod nullo pacto ad predicationem illius vel conventum, eo illic residente, accedere presumant; quod et factum est. Sicque abierunt non sine Generalis confusione».

¹⁵⁰ Chiappini, ‘Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae’: 398: «Robertus tribus diebus fuit Rome, sed cum non esset bene visus, statim recessit. [...] Valde libenter visitat Romam, nescio quas ibi habeat negotiationes. Audi, queso, quid fecit. Accessit una cum Generali ad Regem. Impetravit conventum Gagetanum. Navigavit una cum Rege, non confidens obtinere absente Rege. Deus autem, qui hominis iniquitates non potest tollerare diutius, statim occurrit et ecce unus laycus, clericatus nostri rebellis, sciens huiusmodi rem, accedensque ad quandam sororem suam, idest Tertii Ordinis, pre gaudio dixit ei: “Nunc volumus navigare ad recipiendum nostrum conventum Gagetanum de manibus ipsorum pigozororum [possibly to be corrected in: pizogorum / pizocorum]”. Illa autem statim currens, venit ad fratres

Roberto did not limit himself to fighting the Observants in the ecclesiastical and religious context: he also attempted to embroil influential laymen, such as, in this case, the powerful king of Naples. This was Roberto's first visit to Naples and the events in Gaeta are the first known contacts with the relatively new Aragonese court, with which Roberto will be, in later years and especially with Alfonso's illegitimate son and successor Ferdinand, in constant and close relationship¹⁵¹. Already in this occasion we see Roberto had been able to obtain the Neapolitan king's support – although this support toppled once the king saw his favor among the people of Gaeta diminished by Roberto's initiative – since he had persuaded the king to sail with himself and the General Minister to chase the Observants out of their convent. He had also attempted to win over to the Conventuals' cause some other noblemen of the Kingdom, such as Antonio Sanseverino¹⁵², duke of San Marco (nowadays San Marco Argentano). Roberto had written a number of letters to him in which he discredited the Observants and compared them to the *fraticelli de opinione*. The attempt, however, failed and the letters were handed over to the Observant Vicar of the Province of Calabria and then read out during the Observant General Chapter of 1455, in Bologna¹⁵³. By the time of that Chapter, Roberto was one of the main foes of the Observant family, so much that the friars publicly mocked

revelavitque singula. Fratres autem statim duodecim fratres miserunt Gagetam. Cum illis galeis regiis in quibus erat Generalis et Robertus et dependentes, non ad conventum, sed ad procuratores accesserunt, nuntiantes eis que agebantur clam etc., ipsi autem statim certiores reddiderunt omnes potentiores civitatis, qui venientes unanimiter ad Regem, dixerunt: "Serenissime Rex, sic et sic revelatum est nobis". Et breviter concluderunt: "Si vultis hanc civitatem destruere, expellatis fratres de Observantia de conventu; si autem vultis nos consolari, rogamus ut nullam novitatem erga illos pauperes faciatis". Ipse statim respondit: "Non est neque unquam fuit nostrum desiderium affligere neque molestare hanc civitatem, sed eam in omnibus nobis possibilibus consolari". Sicque Robertus remansit totus confusus et incipiens predicare in conventu: quatuor vetulas habebat in predicatione, cumque tota civitas plena esset huiusmodi rumore, ipse miser cum tubis in saccis abscessit». It should be noted that the town of Gaeta was particularly dear to king Alfonso, since from 1435 it had been the headquarter for where he led his battle to win over the crown of Naples (which he obtained in 1442), cfr. Ernesto Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante d'Aragona re di Napoli: studi e ricerche. Seconda edizione riveduta e accresciuta*. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1969: 28.

¹⁵¹ He will remember having then met the six-year-old Alfonso, omonymous grandson of the king, and later king himself after his father Ferrante's death, Roberto Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: «Sono passati già molti anni che ho cognosciuta la vostra illustrissima signoria e dal tempo di quella felice memoria de re Alphonso vostro avo, quando havevi circa sei anni».

¹⁵² The involvement of the Observant Vicar of Calabria makes the identification of the «*quidam Duci Sancti Marci*» mentioned in the letter with the Doge of Venice – as Chiappini did, p. 399, n. 1 – not too convincing. I find more convincing the identification with Antonio Sanseverino, second Duke of San Marco Argentano, town in the territory of that Province.

¹⁵³ Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 398-399: «Robertus infamatorias scripsit epistolas contra familiam cuidam Duci Sancti Marci, ubi appellat nos rebelles obedientie, similando nos fraticellis de la opinione, idque nititur per auctoritates probare. Littere autem ille lecte sunt coram omni multitudine capituli, propterea quia dux ille, qui est totus noster eas Vicario Calabriae consignavit, scandalizatus de Roberto. Si Nicolaus papa supervixisset, ve Roberto! Patriarcha eum defensabat, sed iam vertit sibi terga. Dominus Yndicus, magnus senescallus Regni, tantis contumeliis Robertum affecit ut nihil magis». Besides Antonio Sanseverino, Duke of San Marco (on whom see note above), the figures mentioned respectively are: the Vicar of Calabria (possibly Matteo da Reggio Calabria, cfr. Cocco, *Saggio di storia francescana di Calabria*, pp. 81-82); a patriarch (probably either Lorenzo Giustiniani, first patriarch of Venice, or Cardinal Bessarion, at that time patriarch of Jerusalem); Iñigo de Guevara, seneschal of the Kingdom of Naples (cfr. Alan Ryder, 'Guevara, Iñigo'. *DBI* 60 (2003): 696-699).

him and railed against him¹⁵⁴. Moreover, his resentment towards the family was also apparently combined with an undue ambition: despite his young age he was actively working to obtain high ecclesiastic offices¹⁵⁵.

In November 1455, the newly elected Pope Callixtus III summoned a General Chapter for the whole Franciscan Order in Assisi, with the participation of both Conventuals and Observants. He then entrusted Giacomo della Marca with the burden of writing up a compromise solution, which was then substantiated by the bull *Illius cuius* (or *Bulla Concordiae*), issued on 2 February 1456. As known, the solution actually left everyone unsatisfied and both conflicting sides had some resentments with the elderly Giacomo della Marca¹⁵⁶. Possibly, however, this was so with the exception of Roberto. There are no further traces, after this date, of his previously violent and restless battle against the Observants. Particularly telling is that, besides a couple of minor passages, there are no real attacks against the Observants in any of his numerous printed sermons. Probably he had reached his goal of a privileged position inside the Order, thus substantiating the insinuations made by his opponents. Possibly he had also found another means to enhance his ecclesiastical and preaching career, in which he still took advantage of his extraordinary oratorical gift, maybe in being entrusted with the preaching of the upcoming crusade and the collection of alms.

4. *Preaching the crusade in Rome and Northern Italy (1455-1458)*

Just as the battle against his former Observant confreres had characterized Roberto's life in the early 1450s, the years that immediately followed were specifically devoted by the preacher to the collection of alms in favor of the crusade. Moreover, we see growing in these years a feature that will become very peculiar of Roberto's activity, that of acting as a sort of courtly preacher for some of the most powerful rulers in Italy, to whom Roberto will tie himself through friendship and loyal service. Among these rulers, and most prominently in the late 1450s, was the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, who, as we will see, particularly cared for Roberto's pastoral action in his domains and for his personal help, which will also bring Roberto in contrast with papal authorities on the issue of the collection of alms.

¹⁵⁴ Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 399: «tantis usus fuit facetiis invehendo contra Robertum, Volterranum et illum de Yschia, ut omnes fecerit quodammodo iubilare». On Giovanni da Ischia see also Chiappini, 'De vita et scriptis Alexandri de Riciis': 96.

¹⁵⁵ Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 403: «Robertus è patio, querit et sperat patriarchatum multis abhinc annis». The sentence is philologically extremely corrupted, yet the sense seems to be clear.

¹⁵⁶ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 62-67; Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*: 483-486; Cfr. Celestino Piana, 'Silloge di documenti dell'antico archivio di S. Francesco di Bologna'. *AFH* 49 (1956): 17-76, 391-433: 61-76; Pacifico Sella, 'Tunc senex lacrimans... Giacomo della Marca tra Minori Osservanti e Minori Conventuali: i precari equilibri di un santo', *Studi francescani*, 109 (2012), 493-520.

Towards the end of May 1453, Constantinople had fallen to the Ottoman seige. The news, with the description of the gruesome cruelties which followed the conquest, had quickly ran to the West with a wave of panic and apprehension. It had been Roberto in person to certify the dreadful event to the terrified people of Rome during a sermon he held on 8 July¹⁵⁷. Pope Nicholas V had almost immediately taken up plans to proclaim a crusade in order to reconquer the Eastern capital, yet his death, occurred in March 1455, had soon put a momentary halt to the preparation. Just one month after the election, his successor Calixtus III resumed the preparation and announced the crusade on 15 May 1455. The Pope called the best preachers to gather alms in favour of the crusade and Roberto was among them¹⁵⁸. Whereas under Eugene IV the preaching of the crusade and the collection of alms had been primarily entrusted to Franciscan Observant preachers – a clear sign of the Pope’s benevolence towards the family – this time the choice fell also on clerics from other families and orders, notably also on Roberto and his great ally in the fight against the Observance: Giacomo da Mozzanica¹⁵⁹. With a bull dated 18 October, the Pope granted Roberto the faculty to accord a plenary indulgence to whoever in Rome donated at least three florens in favour of the crusade¹⁶⁰. Later that year, on 19 December, he was also nominated apostolic collector for the tithe imposed on Jews living in the city of Rome and in the southern provinces of the Papal territory (the *Provincia Patrimonii* and the *Provincia Campaniae et Maritimae*)¹⁶¹.

It is at least worth noting that these documents are the earliest in which Roberto is referred to as *professor* or *sacrae theologiae magister*. Bernardino Aquilano’s *Chronica* substantiates the fact that Roberto was licensed *magister* sometime around the mid-1450s, since the Observant historiographer stated that Roberto obtained such a title just after having ceased his personal war with the family¹⁶². Having rebuilt his movements up to now, it would seem sound to guess that

¹⁵⁷ Infessura, *Diario della città di Roma*: 57: «Dell’anno preditto 1453 del mese di iuglio a dì 8 venne la novella allo papa et ad Roma, come lo Gran Turco haveva pigliato Costantinopoli, et questo con grande occisione et crudeltate de’ Romani; et frate Roberto certificò allo popolo questa novella essere vera. Per la qual cosa lo papa, la corte et tutto lo popolo ne stettero mal contenti, attento che li ambasciatori dello imperatore di Costantinopoli erano stati qui allo papa per [58] aiuto et sussidio circa ad tre mesi, et mai havevano potuto avere espedimento».

¹⁵⁸ Cfr. Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat: 1453-1505*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013 (esp. Chapter 5, *Communication*: 135-173); Benjamin Weber, *Lutter contre les turcs: les formes nouvelles de la croisade pontificale au XV^e siècle*. Roma: École française de Rome, 2013. On Roberto’s crusade and anti-Turkish preaching, see Steven J. McMichael, ‘Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce and his sermons on Muhammad and the Muslims (c. 1480)’. In *Franciscans and Preaching. Every Miracle from the Beginning of the World Came about through Words*, edited by Timothy J. Johnson. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012: 327-352; Leaci, *Frate Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce*.

¹⁵⁹ Weber, *Lutter contre les turcs*: 353-358; Iulian Mihai Damian, ‘L’Osservanza francescana e le crociate contro i turchi: da Eugenio IV a Pio II’. In: *Franciscan Observance between Italy and Central Europe*: 45-60.

¹⁶⁰ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 21, 265-266; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, (1455-1471). Florentiae: Ad Claras Aquas, 1939, n. 91, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 22, 266-267; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, n. 105, p. 56.

¹⁶² Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 56: «Postquam vero a persecutione familiae cessavit, magister in sacra theologia factus est».

Roberto obtained the title in Rome, yet there is not enough evidence to support this or any other hypothesis¹⁶³.

Roberto must have spent the following months in Rome and its whereabouts, working to increase his influence inside the Papal Court. A little less than a year from his nomination as apostolic collector, in fact, Calixtus III with a *motu proprio* nominated him Papal Chaplain of the Holy See, a primarily honorific, yet relevant charge inside the Curia¹⁶⁴. During his Roman stay, Roberto bonded, among others, with the bishop of Brescia and renowned jurist Pietro del Monte (1390-1457). The information of Roberto's personal ties with Pietro dal Monte comes from an autograph manuscript annotation by another younger prelate and jurist, who would later become bishop of Lucca and posthumous editor of Pietro del Monte's works, Felino Sandei (1444-1503). Despite its gross and patent mistakes, this annotation, besides testifying for Roberto's relationship with the two prelates, also offers us a picture of the preacher's expertise in the Papal Curia's political and personal struggles and of his involvement in them. Namely, Sandei recorded how it had been Roberto that had related him about Pietro del Monte's strong disappointment for Pietro Barbo's election as a cardinal, a disappointment that had led him, within a few days, to death. Then, Sandei still wrote, after Pietro del Monte's death on 12 January 1457, it was Roberto that delivered a funeral oration in his honor, probably in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, where Pietro was buried and where Roberto preached in several occasions. As already discussed by Diego Quaglioni, the information contained in Sandei's annotation is rather incorrect: Pietro Barbo was nominated cardinal in 1440 by his uncle Eugene IV and Pietro dal Monte died seventeen years later; moreover, Pietro Barbo seems to have been rather close to the jurist, since he inherited his manuscript library after his death. Thus Sandei possibly confused the cardinals nominated by Eugene IV with those nominated by Callixtus III in mid-December 1456, less than a month before Pietro dal Monte's death, which included Enea Silvio Piccolomini, future Pius II¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶³ The only other information on Roberto's career in the Franciscan *studia* is contained in a seventeenth-century manuscript work of a local scholar, who claimed that Roberto would have been appointed for some time as lecturer in the *Studium* of Ferrara, cfr. Celestino Piana, 'Lo studio di S. Francesco a Ferrara nel Quattrocento. Documenti inediti'. *AFH* 61 (1968): 99-175: 99, n. 2 [the work he quotes from is A. Superbi, *Breve compendio dell'origine et accrescimento della chiesa e convento di Ferrara di S. Francesco*, Ferrara, Biblioteca Ariostea, cod. Cl. I. 164].

¹⁶⁴ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 23, 267; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, n. 209, p. 116.

¹⁶⁵ Diego Quaglioni, *Pietro del Monte a Roma: la tradizione del «Repertorium utriusque iuris» (c. 1453). Genesi e diffusione della letteratura giuridico-politica in età umanistica*. Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984 (Studi e Fonti per la storia dell'Università di Roma, 3): 193-196. The information is gained from a manuscript annotation written by the bishop of Lucca, and himself jurist, Felino Sandei (in Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare, cod. 224, c. 305v) who stated that it had been the «Pauliane tube celebratissimus representator frater Robertus» who had related him about Pietro del Monte's disappointment for Pietro Barbo's election as a cardinal. On Pietro dal Monte's relationship with Pietro Barbo see Roberto Ricciardi, 'Del Monte, Pietro'. *DBI* 38 (1990): 141-146. On Felino Sandei see Mario Montorzi, *Taccuino feliniano. Schede per lo studio della vita e dell'opera di Felino Sandei*. Pisa: Edistudio, 1984. For his use of the preachers' sermon collections, see the chapter dedicated to the readers of Roberto's works.

Roberto then surely left Rome in February 1457, when his nomination as Papal Legate in the Duchy of Milan and in Monferrato brought him to the North. Here he found again Giacomo da Mozzanica, who had already been preaching the crusade and the collection of alms and tithes¹⁶⁶. The bull bearing Roberto's nomination is dated 11 February and the friar must have immediately undertaken his journey North if he is mentioned on his way to Milan in a letter dating three days later addressed by the Pope to the Duke Francesco Sforza¹⁶⁷. The following day, the Pope also wrote to the Milanese archbishop, the Augustinian friar and Francesco's half-brother Gabriele Sforza, to request his active engagement on Roberto's side for the alms collection¹⁶⁸. Finally, a third letter addressed to the Duke by his ambassador in Rome Ottone del Carretto, on 16 February, announced Roberto's forthcoming arrival in the city, praising his preaching abilities and doctrine:

The renowned fame of the exceptional doctrine, the admirable eloquence and the saintly life of the pious herald of the Holy Spirit, friar Roberto; the shrewdness and the magnificence of your intelligence, which will make you enjoy with just little experience the skill of this excellent preacher, spare me from dwelling in my letters with reccomentations and praises of him [...] May your Excellency realize that this is no little demonstration of the peculiar benevolence that the Pope has for your Excellency, sending to you and to your people such a preacher and such a trumpet of God's word who seems to me capable, above anyone else in the world, not only of keeping one in the grace of God, but also of regaining this grace to anyone who has lost it¹⁶⁹.

Roberto arrived in Milan soon after this letter. Francesco Sforza gave the news in another letter, dating 23 March, addressed to Ottone del Carretto¹⁷⁰. The letter immediately pointed out the problems that had risen because of Roberto's office in the Duchy. The preacher and the Duke were having a hard time in convincing the local clergy to hand in their share of tithes, because they felt they had already been sufficiently burdened with previous collections, and since Roberto had set

¹⁶⁶ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 24, 267-268; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n. s., t. II, n. 249, p. 131. Giacomo da Mozzanica had been nominated Papal Legate for the same territories in July 1455: *Bullarium franciscanum*, n. s., t. II, n. 59a, p. 848. Cfr. Celestino Piana, 'Nunzi apostolici nella regione Emiliana per le Crociate del 1455 e 1481'. *AFH* 50 (1957): 195-211: 196-208.

¹⁶⁷ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 25, 269; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, n. 253, p. 133.

¹⁶⁸ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 26, 269-270 [Arch. Vat., Arm. 39, t. 7, f. 68v]. On Gabriele Sforza see at least Carlo Marcora, 'Frate Gabriele Sforza arcivescovo di Milano (1454-1457)'. *Memorie storiche della diocesi di Milano* 1 (1954): 236-331.

¹⁶⁹ Ivi, ap. 27, 270-271 [quoted from Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 45]: «La celebre fama de la singulare doctrina, mirabile facondia et sanctissima vita del religiosissimo interprete de Spiritu Sancto, frate Roberto, la perspicatia et sublimità del vostro ingegno, qual in breve experientia gusterà la incredibile prestantia de questo excellentissimo predicatore, mi fanno risparmiare de extendermi con mie lettere a le comendatione et laude sue [...] che Vostra Eccellentia intenda questa esser non pocha demonstrazione de singular benevolentia, quale a Vostra Eccellentia porta la Sanctità di Nostra Santità mandando ad essa et a suoy populi tal predicator et tal trumbeta de la parola de Dio qual non che a mantenervi la gratia de l'Altissimo, ma a farla acquistar a chiunchi perduta l'havesse, sopra ogni altro che al mundo cognosca, mi pare sufficiente». On Ottone del Carretto see Franca Petrucci, 'Del Carretto, Ottone'. *DBI* 36 (1988): 436-439.

¹⁷⁰ Laura Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare di Roberto da Lecce'. *Aevum* 66/2 (1992): 361-417: ap. I, 411-412.

foot in Milan «the whole clergy got stirred up»¹⁷¹. The Duke's aims, however, seem to have been quite different from the protestations of loyal submission to the Pope he seemed to express. In the letter to his Roman ambassador, Francesco Sforza also advanced the request that the tithes collected in the Duchy could be left at his disposal, to be used, of course, for the preparation of a crusade against the Turks¹⁷². Roberto himself was directly involved in this attempt, as we learn from the Pope's reply to the preacher's account of his mission in Milan, dating 19 April¹⁷³. The Pope, however, seemed inflexible in regards to the money deriving from the tithes¹⁷⁴. Not long after (3 June), there came the official request by Francesco Sforza to the Pope, asking him to lower the tithes for prelates in the Duchy¹⁷⁵, which, in the first days of July, was eventually accepted. Roberto was informed of the changes too¹⁷⁶, but the question of the tithes was destined to create more problems, as we will see.

Despite the tithe issues, Roberto had been preaching in Milan and several of the learned humanists living there had been attending at least some of his sermons. The attention humanists dedicated to Roberto and his preaching activity left a durable and influential mark – both in a negative and positive sense – on his fame among contemporaries and recent scholars. Francesco Filelfo, for instance, expressed his positive impression on Roberto's oratorical abilities in a letter addressed in March to his friend – and Roberto's confrere and compatriot – Gabriele da Lecce. He asserted he had very much enjoyed (*delectat me sane plurimum*) Roberto's sermons on Christian faith and doctrine; he praised Roberto's knowledge and his elaborated speech. The only fault the humanist could notice was, at times, the discrepancy between the preacher's voice and his gestures or his voice and the matter he was treating¹⁷⁷. Indeed, in the latest sermon Roberto had delivered to

¹⁷¹ *Ivi*, p. 411: «La Santità de nostro Signore intenderà da luy [Roberto] la risposta gli havimo facta, cioè de obedire sempre li comandamenti de soa Santità [...] Ma con che modo et via se possi persuadere ad questi del chiericato, li quali per doe proxime precedente decime scosse gli pare essere stati gravati pur troppo? Et dicono che, per essere stati obedienti, sonno tractati pegio che l'altri, pigliando exempio da l'altre Signorie vicine et lontane dove non se è imposto tale carico; et tali l'hanno scosse, che l'hanno poy retenute perse. Et con che facilità se possi scotire, esso fra Roberto che è sul facto el pò cognoscere meglio de nuy: ché in el vero el payse tutto è atenuato et in mala condicione per la sterilità et fame et mali tempi passati et presenti. Donde volimo che supplicate ad sua Santità che la se digni havere riguardo a questa patria, tanto più quanto che ha patito et sostenuto più carico che l'altre; et se possibile è, non dargli più fatica, avisandola che in questo principio se è intesa la cason dela venuta de fra Roberto: tutto questo clero sta sollevato et tutti ne hanno facto rechiedere».

¹⁷² *Ibidem*: «Nuy la fecimo pregare [soa Santità] et supplicarli per lo reverendo misser frate Giacomo da Mozanica, generale del ordine de' frati minori, et per misser Thomaso da Bologna et per misser Giacomo Calcaterra, che la se dignasse lassarci quilli denari, perché ne potessimo aiutare per fare l'impresa contra el Turco ogni volta che soa Santità deliberasse che per l'altre Signorie et potencie christiane se facesse».

¹⁷³ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 28, 271-272; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, n. 288, p. 151.

¹⁷⁴ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 271: «Recepimus tuas litteras et quae nobis significasti de devotione quam erga nos et Sedem Apostolicam habet dilectus filius nobilis vir dux Mediolani [...] De eo autem quod super facto decimae scripsisti, intentionis nostrae est ut decima ipsa omnino colligatur eo modo et per eos collectores quibus alia vice est collecta».

¹⁷⁵ *Ivi*: ap. 29, 272 [Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 45].

¹⁷⁶ *Ivi*: app. 30-31, 273-274; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. II, n. 339, p. 175

¹⁷⁷ Francesco Filelfo, *Collected Letters: «Epistolarum Libri» XLVIII*, edited by Jeroen De Keyser, 4 vols. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2015: II, 673-674 (13.47): «Nec est profecto quod in ea quicquam desyderandum esse videatur

the people, on the Last Judgment, when speaking of the eternal joys of the blessed, the preacher had used a feeble tone and a sad face, whereas his voice should have been rejoicing and his expression cheerful. And the same he said about the tone, expressions and gestures used when speaking of eternal salvation: they were sad and merciful, while they should have been menacing and terrifying¹⁷⁸.

This partly praising letter – but it was surely a hard job to satisfy Filelfo – was probably followed by Roberto's personal acquaintance with the humanist, who calls him a friend in another letter. However, this second letter, addressed again to Gabriele da Lecce on 19 June, was an irritated reaction, presumably to something Roberto had said on the pulpit. Filelfo lamented with Gabriele: «If this fellow citizen of yours, friar Roberto, vituperates a friend or without having been provoked, what would he do with an enemy?»¹⁷⁹. Friar Gabriele must have immediately mediated between the two, since he was also the addressee of another message, written later that same day by Filelfo, in which the humanist gladly accepted Roberto's excuses¹⁸⁰.

As precisely noted, the preachers' *fama* «was a constitutive element of their being recognized as elect or, at least, exceptional persons». The echo of their performances «became a preferred subject of conversation not only locally, but at longer distances as well, through private letters»¹⁸¹. This is the case of two letters addressed by Guarino's former pupil Giorgio Valagussa to his younger friend Leonardo Griffi (future Apostolic secretary under Sixtus IV), which have been dated by Gianvito Resta to February or March 1457¹⁸². Since his youth, Valagussa had always been particularly attracted by the oratory qualities of preachers, yet the letters he dedicated to the sermons delivered by Roberto that he had attended in Milan are filled with a particular enthusiasm¹⁸³. The first of the two letters referred to a friendly dispute (*quaedam generosa contentio*) he and Leonardo Griffi had had over who could be named the best preacher. Valagussa strongly supported Roberto, adducing his vast learnedness of theology and classics, the sweetness of his voice (*mellifluam conditam proferendi dulcedinem*) and his extraordinary mnemonic abilities (*omnem, ut sic loquar, theologiam memoriae, incredibile dictu, tenet*) as proof of his preeminence over all other

praeter id unum, quod ad actionem prononciationemque attinet. Est enim et vox et vultus et totius corporis gestus ad rem ipsam, qua de ratio habetur, accommodandus. Id autem Roberthus non omnino semper attendit». The addressee of this letter cannot be Gabriele Rangone, as interpreted by the recent editor of Filelfo's letters, since Roberto is said to be Gabriele's «socius concivisque».

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁹ Filelfo, *Collected Letters*: II, 679 (13.55): «Frater Roberthus, concivis iste tuus, si nulla provocatus iniuria vel amicum vituperat, quid faciat inimico?».

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem* (13.56).

¹⁸¹ Ottó Sándor Gecser, 'Preaching and Publicness: St. John of Capestrano and the Making of his Charisma North of the Alps'. In: *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200-1500*, ed. Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010: 145-159: quotations respectively 149 and 150.

¹⁸² Gianvito Resta, *Giorgio Valagussa umanista del Quattrocento*. Padova: Antenore, 1964. On Leonardo Griffi see Marcello Simonetta, 'Griffi, Leonardo'. *DBI* 59 (2002): 360-363.

¹⁸³ Resta, *Giorgio Valagussa*: 9

preachers¹⁸⁴. Coherently with his humanistic education, Valagussa compared Roberto to the mythical and proverbial orators of Antiquity – Amphion and Themistocles – but he also recognized the peculiarly divine inspiration of his gift: «Since it is extremely difficult to be absolutely perfect, hence I admire Roberto more and more as a divine gift fallen from heavens to instruct human minds»¹⁸⁵. In this letter, Valagussa also recalled that, when studying in the universities of Ferrara and Padua, he had been told about the many sermons Roberto had preached there in previous years and of the lasting impression they had left in the cities' audiences: yet another testimony, in the case of Padua, of the extraordinary success of Roberto's long preaching cycle from 1450-51¹⁸⁶.

In his second letter to Leonardo Griffio, Valagussa believed it useful and appropriate (*digna res visa fuit ut eam tibi describerem cum omnium utilitate*) to send his friend a summary and a description of one of the sermons Roberto had preached in Milan and to which Leonardo had not been able to attend¹⁸⁷. Valagussa's description precisely reflects the tripartite structure of Roberto's sermon, with a first chapter on God's precepts, the second on God's kindness towards men and finally a third one characteristically on the fear for God's inflexible judgment, softened by recalling also God's mercy and clemency¹⁸⁸. The humanist recalled and quoted several biblical quotations, which had clearly been used by Roberto. The sermon ended with the preacher's invitation to meditate on the lives of Christ and the saints, so as to have a model of exemplary life, and to frequently reconsider one's own sins, in order to gain God's forgiveness¹⁸⁹.

Scholars have also argued – with reason – that it was during this first visit of Roberto's in Milan that another humanist, Antonio Cornazzano, heard him deliver his sermons and was

¹⁸⁴ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare': ap. VII, 414-415: «frater Robertus [...] si non praeponendus, aequiparandus saltem cuilibet esse videretur, quippe qui hoc tempore sive dicendi copia, sive pronunciandi suavitate, sive antiquarum rerum cognitione, sive iuris divini peritiam tam humanarum quam divinarum rerum scientia plurimum fulgeret. Quis enim per Deum immortalem tam resonantissimus praedicator, tam disertus acutusque theologus his diebus consurgit, qui hunc Dei pugilem sese superare putet?».

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*: « Unde fit ut sit difficillimum perfectissimum esse. Qua ex re magis magisque fratrem Robertum admiror veluti divinum munus ad informandas hominum mentes e caelo delapsum ».

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*: «Quotiens egomet dum Ferrariae, dum Paduae gymnasiis operam navarem, dum ipse alias in regiones proficiscetur, accepi quamplures praedicationes ab illo uno spiritu esse repetitas, quas iam multos menses illic praedicaverat; ubi operae pretium fuit omnes fere auctoritates, exempla, praecepta, quaecunque ab illo dicta longo tempore fuere, una hora recenseri veluti ante oculos posita».

¹⁸⁷ Ivi: ap. VIII, 415-416: «Licet iam multas ac varias praedicationes hactenus a fratre Roberto habuimus, quae maximam utilitatem ac fructum poene divinum attulere. Inter quas, cum hesterno die quandam accepissem quae dane praeter caeteras quoniam mihi admodum grata accessit, digna res visa fuit ut eam tibi describerem cum omnium utilitate, tum quoniam non interfuisti».

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem*: «In primis igitur nos ad praecepta Dei crebro retractanda exhortatu [...] Secundo loco beneficia Dei consideranda praecipiebat. [...] Tertio loco, in medium afferebat iudicia Dei esse timenda [...] Sed, ne forte desperandum sit, simul et misericordiae ac clamentiae Dei reminiscendum erit».

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*: «Christi ac Sanctorum postea vitas inspicere iubebat ut, quo pacto ipsi vicerint, nos quoque mores nostros eorum exemplis componeremus. [...] Postremo loco peccata nostra recogitanda saepius praedicabat, quod et sacri saepius praecipunt sermones: "Recogitabo tibi omnes annos in amaritudine animae meae". Nam, quemadmodum Scotus caeterique theologi sentiunt, in ebdomade saltem tenemur omnes semel delictorum nostrorum maerorem concipere, ut facilius ab illo clamentissimo Deo nostri erroris veniam consequamur. Haec fuerunt quae ex illa hesterna praedicatione effluerunt: quam quidem rem ego breviter perstrinxi».

profoundly impressed by his preaching. Indeed, it has been asserted that it was precisely Roberto and his preaching that inspired the poet's literary and spiritual "conversion" – or, more simply, his adaptation to a certain taste of the time for religious topics of particular effect – turning from the profane topics to which he had previously dedicated his poetry to devout and pious subjects. Indeed, it was in the months following Roberto's preaching in Milan that Cornazzano composed his *Life of the Virgin*, dedicated to Francesco Sforza's daughter, Ippolita Maria, who in 1465 would have married Alfonso of Aragon Duke of Calabria¹⁹⁰. Several years later, in another poem of devout inspiration, his *Life of Christ*, Cornazzano explicitly acknowledged his personal debt to Roberto's preaching – and to the reading of Bernardino da Siena's sermons – which had brought about a deep stirring of his religious feeling:

I have already read with compassionate tears
The things that Bernardino wrote on the Passion,
He, who in all his actions was entirely saintly.
I have heard in his live voice what
Christ's trumpet, the great Roberto, said
When the Saviour was put on the cross.
And my heart was opened in such a way by both
Reading, hearing their penetrating words,
That I was no longer certain of remaining in this world.
Now, I do not know if my small verses
Will be able to say in such a way that may satisfy others
Just like he did to me. Lord, may you help me¹⁹¹.

Finally, during his stay in Milan, Roberto possibly also met Tommaso Morroni da Rieti, whose proverbial memory he recalled in the second sermon of his *De virtutibus*¹⁹².

¹⁹⁰ Paola Farenga, 'Cornazzano, Antonio'. *DBI* 29 (1983): 123-132: 126; Roberto L. Bruni, Roberto Zancani, 'Antonio Cornazzano: le opere a stampa'. *LB* 86 (1984): 1-61: 6; *ultra* n. 250.

¹⁹¹ Antonio Cornazzano, *La vita di Cristo*. s.n.t., 1472 [GW 7550]: l. II, c. I:

«Io ho già lecto con pietoso pianto
ciò che di Passion Bernardin scrisse,
ché in ciascuna opra sua fu tucto santo.
A voce viva udito ho ciò che disse
el trombetta di Christo, el gran Roberto
quando che in croce el Salvator si misse.
E già mi fu da entrambi el cor sì aperto
legendo, udendo sue parole acute,
che star più al mondo non mi rendea certo.
Hor non so se le rime mie minute
Sapran dir ch'ad altri i' satisfaccia
Com'egli a me. Signor fa che m'aiute».

¹⁹² Gasparri, 'Sulla tradizione manoscritta delle prediche di Roberto da Lecce': 217: «Fuit et miles et doctor insignis Tomas Reatinus, illustrissimi ducis Mediolanensis Francisci Forcie carissimus consiliarius, memorie munere non

In June 1457, the General Chapter of the Franciscan Order was celebrated in Milan. Roberto was already in the city and we can be certain he took part in it. We have a unique testimony of his participation to the Chapter in a rare printed edition – probably preserved in just one single copy – of Bonaventure’s *Vita minor* of Saint Francis translated into the vernacular¹⁹³. As a sort of appendix to this edition, the printer decided to add a few other texts that describe the visits made by Pope Nicholas V and Francesco Sforza to Saint Francis’ shrine in Assisi¹⁹⁴. According to the printed text, the latter would have narrated his visit – which he had made during his campaigns in Central Italy, before becoming lord of Milan – to some franciscan friars present with him and the General Minister Giacomo da Mozzanica in the latter’s cell in the convent of San Francesco. The friars were Gabriele da Lecce, Minister of the Lombard Province, Gabriele da Barlassina, Minister of the Holy Land and Francesco’s confessor, and Roberto¹⁹⁵. It is again a confirmation of Roberto’s – and these other friars’ – familiarity with the Milanese Duke, supporter in an ambiguous role-play of both Conventuals and Observants, in the probable attempt of trying to gather as much profit as possible from both families of the Order¹⁹⁶.

Surely, Roberto had gained an enormous ascendancy over Francesco Sforza in the few months he had spent in Milan. This is particularly visible from the Duke’s personal implications in the nomination of a Franciscan General Vicar, which became necessary after the death of the General Minister Giacomo da Mozzanica, occurred on 9 July 1457¹⁹⁷. Already on the following day Francesco Sforza was writing to his Roman ambassador, asking him to work inside the Roman

mediocri dotatus, qui et ipse quandoque septem diversis scribentibus metro, prosa, vulgari modulacione, currentibus versis de variis rebus sine errore aliquo loquebatur». On Tommaso da Rieti see Nadia Covini, ‘Morrioni, Tommaso (Tommaso da Rieti)’. *DBI* 77 (2012): 202-205.

¹⁹³ Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Inc. 125. The incunable [IGI 1895] bears no mention of printer, place or year of printing, but it was probably issued in Milan by Ulrich Scinzenzeler about 1487, as suggested by Giovanni Galbiati (‘Di alcuni incunaboli dell’Ambrosiana’, in *Studi e ricerche sulla storia della stampa del Quattrocento: omaggio dell’Italia a Giovanni Gutenberg nel V centenario della sua scoperta*. Milano: Hoepli, 1942: 145-49). In the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, this edition is identified with the one printed in Milan by Scinzenzeler in 1495 [IGI 4064].

¹⁹⁴ Cfr. Giuseppe Mazzatinti, ‘Sulla leggenda della visita fatta da Nicolò V al corpo di s. Francesco’. *Miscellanea francescana* 1 (1886): 18-21.

¹⁹⁵ Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Inc. 125: «Trovandosse quella felicissima memoria delo illustrissimo duca Francesco Sforza in quel monastero de Sancto Francesco in l’anno MCCCCLVII, adì cinque de Iunio, quando se celebrò el capitulo generale de essi frati, in la quale chiexa fu la indulgentia plenaria, regnando el reverendissimo patre generale maystro Iacobo de Mozanicha, presente l’infrascripti patri magistro Gabrielo de Letio, ministro dela provintia de Milano, frate Gabrielo de Barlasina, ministro de Terra Sancta, spirituale e confessore del soprascrito excelso duca, maistro Roberto de Letio, predicatore famosissimo, in la camera de l’ofitio del padre generale». For Giacomo da Mozzanica see Morisi Guerra, ‘Boscaglino, Giacomo’. For Gabriele da Lecce – beyond *supra* nn. 77 and 148 and what follows here – there are numerous letters that Bastanzio asserted to have found in Milanese archives (*Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 70, n. 38) and those published in Paolo M. Sevesi, ‘Lettere autografe di Francesco della Rovere’: 200-201, 228-229. Moreover, it is worth noting that Gabriele da Lecce had once obtained the privilege – although limited – from Francesco Sforza to visit his library in Pavia, cfr. Edoardo Fumagalli, ‘Appunti sulla biblioteca dei Visconti e degli Sforza nel castello di Pavia’. *Studi Petrarqueschi* 7 (1990): 93-211: 132. Finally, the informations are extremely scarce on Gabriele da Barlassina.

¹⁹⁶ On Francesco Sforza’s attitude towards Franciscans see at least Fasoli, *Perseveranti nella regolare osservanza*.

¹⁹⁷ Morisi Guerra, ‘Boscaglino, Giacomo’: 167.

Curia to foster Roberto's nomination as General Vicar¹⁹⁸. From another letter, written five days later, we learn that Roberto himself had requested the Duke's support; and that Gabriele da Lecce had done the same. Finding himself in a rather uncomfortable situation, squeezed between the two friars contending his support to their run at the head of the Order, Francesco Sforza made up his mind to accord a priority to Roberto's candidacy and communicated this in the second letter to Ottone del Carretto. Yet, continued the Duke, the ambassador should have been attentive to all possible solutions, eventually shifting his support to Gabriele, should Roberto's candidacy seem to fail. The Duke revealed here his shrewd nature and his interest in having a friend and ally in the Franciscan Order's possible future General Minister:

We are greatly requested by the reverend fathers, *magister* Roberto da Lecce and friar Gabriele da Lecce Minister of the Province of Milan, that having occurred the death of the reverend General of the Order we may plea in their favor in front of His Holiness to obtain this office. We are friends with both e would prefer not to meddle in this; yet we are compelled to do some requests. We are writing to you for friar Roberto, as you will see from the attached letter, that has been seen and read by friar Roberto. [...] We do not wish for you to say anything else in friar Gabriele's favour, except in one case, that is if some friar or other person should talk to you about it on his behalf, you should tell him that you are commissioned to work as you can in his favour. When you will have done your work in favour of friar Roberto, you will observe how the things regarding the vicariate evolve. Should we see the Pope and the others inclined in appointing Roberto in this office, that they have this as a sure thing, then you will help and favour him, so that he may believe he was helped and favoured by us. If, instead, we should see that the office would clearly go to friar Gabriele, we could then work for him, in a way that we could excuse ourselves with friar Roberto [...] but in a way that friar Roberto would understand that our interest and work was in his favour and not in that of others¹⁹⁹.

Unfortunately for his calculations and for the two friars' ambitions, Francesco Sforza's letters arrived in Milan only in the evening of 22 July, too late for Ottone del Carretto to do anything in the

¹⁹⁸ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 32-33, 274-275.

¹⁹⁹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 34, 275-276 [quoted from Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 45]: «Siamo cum instantia assai pregati da li Reverendi Patri Maestro Roberto da Leccio et da fra' Gabriello da Leccio, ministro de la Provincia de Milano, che, siando seguita la morte del Reverendissimo quondam Generale de l'Ordine, pregamo per loro appresso la Sanctità de Nostra Signoria per lo facto suo, per havire questo luoco. Nuy siamo amico de l'uno et de l'altro e non voressemo impazarsi de questa cosa; pur siamo constrecti ad far qualche preghiera. Ve scrivimo per fra' Roberto, come vedrito per la alligata, la quale ha veduta et lecta esso fra' Roberto. [...] Per fra' Gabriello non curamo dicati altro, salvo in lo caso infrascripto, dicando però, se alcuno frate o altri ve ne parlasse per soa parte, che havito comissione operare quello posseti per luy. Quando haveriti facto le ambasciate de fra' Roberto, poriti stare a vedere como passerà questa facenda de questo vicariato: se vedessemo ch'el Papa et li altri inclinassero et fosse per cadere questo luoco in fra' Roberto, che l'avesseno per certo, allora poretì adiuatar et favorire, perché luy se tenesse fossa servito et favorito da nuy. Si autem vedessemo certo che questa cosa andasse più tosto in fra' Gabriello, poredessemo allora fare opera per lui, per modo se potessemo salvare con fra' Roberto [...] Ma che esso fra' Roberto intendesse che lo interessamento et opera nostra fosse stata per lui e non per altri».

Curia, since the Spanish friar Jaime de Zarzuela had already been nominated General Vicar three days before²⁰⁰.

A few months later, with another letter addressed to the Pope, on 3 December 1457, Francesco Sforza requested for friar Roberto to remain in Milan to preach the following Lent, despite he had been assigned to preach in the town of Siena. Ottone del Carretto was again asked to foster the plea in the Papal Court²⁰¹. It seemed as if the scenario occurred in 1452, when the two cities had rivalled over the preacher, were to be repeated. Yet this time, unlike six years before, Francesco Sforza's request was accepted and Roberto effectively preached in Milan for Lent 1458²⁰².

Another interesting letter from these same months testifies for Roberto's – and that of his fellow countryman Gabriele – implications with Francesco Sforza's political machinations. In October 1457, the powerful Florentine canon (and future bishop of Terni) Francesco Coppini made his way to Milan for the first time. In later years, he was to become a close collaborator of the Duke Francesco Sforza, who also included him in his Secret Council from 1462, yet in this first visit he was acting as Papal revenue officer, checking on the collection of tithes²⁰³. Coppini probably discovered that the friars Roberto and Gabriele had made some undue agreement with Francesco Sforza to exploit, at least temporarily, the money collected with the tithes in his Duchy, as the Duke had previously requested from the Pope, though only receiving a refusal. Coppini reported the facts in Rome and the Duke tried to defend the two friars by writing to Ottone del Carretto:

Francesco Coppini has come here and has had some disagreement with the Minister friar Gabriele and with *magister* Roberto, who are not actually men who would raise a scandal, especially for things of little importance, in front of the Pope. And the [Papal] Court should keep them dearly, since in everything they do, they bring great benefit to God's Church. And, since we fear that the aforementioned Francesco, overcome by his passion, might write to His Holiness, informing him in such a way that would provoke his anger against the aforementioned friars and would be of detriment to their honour – a thing that would bring a great annoyance and inconvenience to us and numerous scandals everywhere – we wish that hurriedly and quickly you

²⁰⁰ Ivi, app. 35-36, 276-277.

²⁰¹ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare': ap. II, 412; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 37, 277 [Milan, Biblioteca Brera, ms. Marbio, n. 530].

²⁰² Ivi: app. 38-39, 277-278.

²⁰³ Anna Imelde Galletti, 'Coppini, Francesco'. *DBI* 28 (1983): 619-624; Veronica Vestri, 'Il pratese Francesco Coppini'. In *Prato umanistica*, a cura di Franco Cardini. Firenze: Polistampa, 2009: 49-65.

go to those cardinals you think best, recommending them, from our part, the honour of the aforementioned friars as strongly and effectively as possible²⁰⁴.

The Duke's fear that Francesco Coppini might have referred something to the Pope about his frictions with the two Franciscans materialized. We learn this from a letter written by Francesco Sforza to Callixtus III himself on 17 January. In this letter, Roberto – but there is no mention of Gabriele – was again defended from «some negative informations coming from here» against him²⁰⁵. The Pope had decided to summon Roberto to Rome, to hear him about his activity in Milan and to punish him for his misdeeds²⁰⁶. However, Francesco Sforza's diplomatic efforts were eventually successful and he was able to keep the preacher in Milan at least until the following Lent.

This period of time Roberto spent in Milan, particularly well documented thanks to the letters written and received by the Duke and to several other mentions deriving from the writings of intellectuals who resided in the city at that time, is further testified by a very peculiar collection of vernacular *reportationes*, datable to different moments of this relatively long stay of the preacher in Milan. The collection is made up of just nine sermons, chosen and transcribed by the courtman Francesco Baiaca – by any other means unknown – and dedicated to the Duchess Bianca Maria Sforza under the title *Amore di virtù*. Despite its small size, the collection is particularly valuable because it is the closest testimony of Roberto's vernacular preaching that we possess today²⁰⁷.

Roberto remained in Milan for some time after Easter, but then left the city before the summer. Towards the end of April Francesco Sforza announced his due arrival in Pavia, where he would have preached for some days²⁰⁸. Another letter addressed by Francesco Sforza to his Roman ambassador dating 14 June 1458 says Roberto had just left the city, heading towards Naples, and that from there he would have then returned north to Rome²⁰⁹. Francesco Sforza demanded the

²⁰⁴ Laura Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare': ap. III, 412: «È venuto qui misser Francesco Copino, quale ha havuto certa differencia con lo ministro frate Gabriele et con maistro Roberto, li quali nel vero non sonno homini da scandelizare, maxime per cosa de poca importancia, inanci el Papa. Et la corte li debbe havere cari, perché in ogni loco fanno grande fructo alla Chiesa de Dio. Et perché dubitamo ch'el prefato misser Francesco, vincto da passione, non scriva alla Santità de Nostro Signore, in tale modo informando quella, che se provocaria subito contra li predicti et faria alcuna cosa contro l'honore loro, de che ne seguiria grande displicencia a nuy et inconveniente et scandali assay da ogni parte, vogliamo che sollicitamente et presto siati con quilli cardinali parerà a vuy, a li qualli da nostra parte raccomandarete l'honore delli prefati tanto strictamente et efficacemente quanto se possa». Cfr. Andenna, 'Gli ordini mendicanti, la comunità e la corte sforzesca': 150-153.

²⁰⁵ *Ivi*: ap. IV, 413: «alcune sinistre informazioni dal canto de qua».

²⁰⁶ Two letters addressed by Francesco Sforza to Guillaume d'Estouteville (Cardinal of Rouen) and Ottone del Carretto, respectively on 17 and 18 January, tell us about this intention, *ivi*: app. V-VI, 413-414. See also Ottone del Carretto's letter to the Duke dated 1 February 1458, published in Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 38, 277-278 [Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 46].

²⁰⁷ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare'. For a further discussion of these sermons see the chapter on the manuscript diffusion of Roberto's works.

²⁰⁸ *Ivi*: 364; Andenna, 'Gli ordini mendicanti, la comunità e la corte sforzesca': 153.

²⁰⁹ Thus, Roberto did not attend the General Chapter which gathered in Rome that year, during Pentecost, and elected Jaime de Zarzuela General Minister.

utmost care for the preacher from Ottone del Carretto during his stay in the city²¹⁰. It is probably on his way South from Milan during this journey that Roberto visited Florence. Here he was received by Cosimo de' Medici – as Vespasiano da Bisticci has recorded in his *Life* of Cosimo – who had always admired the preacher. However, something in Roberto's habits had changed: he was wearing a mantle made of fine Flemish cloth that he had received as a present from Francesco Sforza. Cosimo was not pleased in seeing the Franciscan friar dressed in such a fashionable and vain way, hence his reproach against Roberto and his refusal to give the friar the 200 florens's alm he had requested²¹¹. In this narration we clearly see reflected Vespasiano's dislike for Roberto and the negative idea the book merchant had of the friar deriving from the latter's struggles with the Observants, which also emerges elsewhere in the *Vite*²¹². However, the story should probably not be entirely considered fictitious and it can possibly be taken as a sign of Roberto's changed lifestyle, testified in other aspects and moments of his life. His proximity to powerful men and prelates and his involvement in their political plans and manouvers surely must have influenced, if not his personal character, at least the common opinion diffused of him throughout Italy.

Francesco Sforza – who considered greatly Roberto's preaching, presumably also given the special favors the friar revered to the Duke – must have thought that Roberto's absence would have only been temporary, if to replace the preacher he called friar Genesisio di Lasemaria da Parma in Milan, telling him that «we do not intend to charge you with this burden of preaching if not for some days, after which friar Roberto, now absent from this city, will have returned»²¹³. However,

²¹⁰ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 40, 278-279 [Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Roma, cart. 47].

²¹¹ Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*: II, pp. 198-199: «Mentre che frate Ruberto istette nell'Oservanza et predicava con sì grande concorso, l'amò assai et fegli assai limosine, et mai gli denegò cosa che gli domandassi; et il simile faceva a tutti i buoni religiosi. Venendo frate Ruberto da Milano, dov'era istato alcuno tempo a predicare, il duca Francesco l'onorò assai, et donogli assai in modo che si mutò di vita et partissi dalla Oservanza, et venne a una vita più larga; et avendogli il duca donato panno fiandresco per una capa molto bello et di grande pregio, se ne fece una bella capa, partendosi da Milano, et venendo a Firenze molto bene a ordine d'ogni cosa temporale, et aveva ispenso lo spirituale et era tutto mutato di vita, di costumi, di presenza, perché così fa la mutatione in noi. Venne a vicitare Cosimo non conoscendo la sua natura, avendo inteso la sua mutatione, nollo aveva in quella riputatione che l'aveva avuto quando era a migliore vita. Giunto in camera sua, lo fece porre a sedere allato assé. Vedutolo sì pomposo, pigliò con mano la cappa, ch'era sì fine che pareva di seta, di poi gli disse: "Frate Ruberto, è questo panno sucinericcio?" Egli gli rispuose che gliel'aveva donato il duca Francesco. Cosimo gli disse: "Io non vi domando chi ve l'ha donata, ma domando sell'è sucinericcio". Frate Ruberto si ravilupò tutto quanto et non gli potè rispondere. Veduto dove egli entrava di riprenderlo onestamente di questa sua mutatione, sendo istato alquanto con Cosimo, se gli accostò agli orecchi, e richieselo gli prestassi dugento fiorini. Acostossi agli orecchi allui, et usogli certe parole assai oneste dove gli mostrò nollo volere fare et dispiaquegli assai la sua mutatione et se in prima gli aveva donato più volte, per via di limosina, questa volta a fine conoscessi il suo errore non glielle volle prestare, et tutto fece con grandissima onestà et con cautissimo modo che ignuno de' circostanti se n'aveide. Ma di poi che fu partito con oneste parole dimostrò essergli assai dispiaciuta la mutatione della vita sua». Another testimony of Roberto's taste for fashionable clothing can be found in the inventory of the vestments preserved in the convent of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, Paolo de Angelis, *Basilicae S. Mariae Maioris de Urbe a Liberio papa I usque ad Paulum V pontifices maximi descriptio et delineatio*. Romae: ex typographia Bartholomaei Zanetti, 1621: 142: «Unum doxale de velluto paonatio etc. quod portavit magister Rubertus predicator egregious de Ordine Minorum, cappellanus in dicto altari, nunc episcopus de Aquino, ex Venetiis altari Sancti Hyeronimi».

²¹² Cfr. *supra* n. 128.

²¹³ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 41, 279: «non intendimus tamen gravari vos hoc predicandi onere nisi per aliquot dies, intra quos dominus frater Robertus, nunc absens ab hac civitate, ad eam revertetur». Cfr. Fr. Grathey,

he soon had to face that Roberto would have been absent longer than expected. Still in the first days of December the preacher had not yet returned to Milan. Thus the Duke resorted to threats which might convince the preacher to maintain what he had promised, that is of preaching again and soon in Milan:

You know what you promised to us in leaving, that is of coming back here with us. [...] We are sure that you will not come short of your promises if we warn you that we have had one wall of our big hall whitewashed and we are going to have you painted there upside-down if you come short to your promises; and if you come we will have you painted with your head on top, as an honest man²¹⁴.

This threat was probably insufficient. Roberto's whereabouts in the following months are uncertain, still it doesn't seem he answered Francesco Sforza's requests. The Milanese Duke received a curious letter from his ambassador in Ferrara, Antonio da Balbiano, on 14 January 1459, from which we learn that the Duke Borso d'Este had invited Roberto there on the request of his courtman Carlo Sosenna. This rather obscure character, of which we have only very few information dating from the last two decades of the century, is primarily remembered for the daemon he had allegedly trapped in a bottle and from which he could obtain prophecies on the future²¹⁵. The daemon too (*l'amico suo*) is mentioned in the letter, referring to a prediction that Borso d'Este had requested regarding his possible trip to Milan. Finally, also the famous astrologer Pietro Buono Avogaro is mentioned in the letter, concerning his prophecy that the Pope would have died before the month of April that year²¹⁶. We do not know the reasons why the magician Carlo Sosenna might have wanted to talk with Roberto, nor do we know if the preacher ever accepted the request. This letter, however, seems to somehow involve Roberto, perhaps for his theological training, in some kinds of demonical and astrological activities, on which the preacher generally shared the position of severe condemnation that most of his confreres held.

Coming back to safer information, Roberto was certainly in Rome in mid-August 1459. Indeed, according to what Francesco Sforza wrote in a letter addressed to him, he was present at

'Francesco Sforza duca di Milano e i Frati Minori (documenti inediti)'. *Miscellanea Francescana* 14/4 (1913): 97-104: 101-102.

²¹⁴ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 42, 279-280: «Sapete quello che promettesti a nuy nel partire vestro de qua, del retornare qua da nuy. [...] siamo certi che non veneresti manco de le vostre promesse, avvisandove che nuy havemo facto imbiancare una fazata de la nostra sala grande, ove ve faremo depenzere con la testa in zoso, mancando vuy de le promesse, et venendo ve faremo depenzere con la testa in suso, forma de homo dabbene».

²¹⁵ Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Ancora per Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio'. *LB* 43 (1941): 23-28 (now in Id., *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, 4 vols. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984-1996: I, 249-257); Cesare Vasoli, 'Gli astri e la corte (l'astrologia a Ferrara nell'età ariostesca)'. In Id., *La cultura delle corti*: 129-158: 136 (first printed in Paolo Rossi (ed.), *Il Rinascimento nelle corti padane. Società e cultura*. Bari: Di Donato, 1977: 469-494); Franco Bacchelli, 'Magia e astrologia a Ferrara tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento'. In: *Storia di Ferrara*, 7 vols. Ferrara: G. Corbo, 1987-2004: VI (*Il Rinascimento: situazioni e personaggi*, 2000): 231-250.

²¹⁶ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare': ap. IX, 416-417. On Avogaro see Cesare Vasoli, 'Avogaro, Pietro Buono'. *DBI* 4 (1962): 709-710.

Sceva da Corte's death, occurred on 14 August²¹⁷. With this letter and with another one dating 7 April 1461 – which testifies Roberto's presence in Rome also at that time – the Milanese Duke requested Roberto's commitment in defending his former courtman's reputation, which was being posthumously attacked²¹⁸. Sceva da Corte had been a loyal diplomat to Francesco Sforza, whom he had served since his first arrival in Milan. After the election of Pius II, Sceva da Corte had been nominated Senator of Rome – the highest political charge in the city – dying, however, before he could conclude his term of office²¹⁹. It is not possible for now to determine precisely what the accusations against Sceva da Corte circulating in Rome concerned.

On 29 June 1461, Roberto was surely still in Rome, when he preached in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in the occasion of Catherine of Siena's canonization. The new Dominican saint canonized by Pope Pius II – who had also delivered a solemn sermon in the morning on the same day – surely had a number of perfectly recognizable saintly virtues, however, one of her characteristic features had been strongly contested by Franciscans since the early fifteenth century, when her disciple Tommaso Caffarini had began collecting material to serve her canonization. The bodily and yet invisible stigmata Catherine would have received were severely doubted by the Franciscans, who struggled to defend Saint Francis' prerogative in his assimilation to Christ and who finally partially won their battle in 1472, when the Franciscan Pope Sixtus IV forbid descriptions and visual representations of Catherine receiving bodily stigmata. We can be sure Roberto was in line with the positions held inside his Order and, although we cannot read the sermon he delivered on the feast-day of her canonization, in front of a learned and mostly Dominican audience, we learn his ideas on the issue from the sermon dedicated to Catherine that he included inside his *Sermones de sanctis*²²⁰. In this later sermons, Roberto greatly commended the new saint's virtues and the graces she received. However, when discussing the grace of her divine visions, doubt made its way inside the text and Roberto admitted that, despite he had read a lot about the presumed stigmata received by Catherine and he believed in the bodily pain suffered by the new Siennese saint, these stigmata did not have the same miraculous status as the ones received

²¹⁷ Franca Petrucci, 'Curte (Corte), Sceva de'. *DBI* 31 (1985): 475-478: 478.

²¹⁸ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare': app. X-XI, 417.

²¹⁹ Claudio De Dominicis, *Membri del Senato della Roma pontificia: Senatori, Conservatori, Caporioni e loro Priori e Lista d'oro delle famiglie dirigenti (sec X-XIX)*. Roma: Fondazione Marco Besso, 2009: 23.

²²⁰ On the dispute over Catherine's stigmata and on Roberto's sermon, see Gerardo Cappelluti, 'S. Caterina da Siena in alcuni «sermones» del secolo XV'. In *Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi cateriniani. Siena-Roma – 24-29 aprile 1980*. Roma: Cura generalizia O.P., 1981: 483-522: 504-507; Carolyn Muessig, 'Catherine of Siena in Late Medieval Sermons'. In *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, edited by Carolyn Muessig, George Ferzoco, Beverly Mayne Kienzle. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012: 203-226: 220-221; Carlo Delcorno, 'Santa Caterina nella predicazione degli ordini mendicanti'. In *Virgo digna coelo. Caterina e la sua eredità*, a cura di Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, Luciano Cinelli, Pierantonio Piatti. Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014: 329-360; Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'La disputa sulle stimmate'. *Ivi*: 407-440.

by Francis²²¹. To this, Roberto also added his request to both Dominicans and Franciscans not to scandalize popular audiences with disputes over this debated issue²²². Should this sermon effectively correspond to the one delivered on Catherine's canonization day in the Dominican convent in Rome, we can be sure Roberto's word lit up a fierce polemic. It would seem quite surprising to find a Franciscan preaching in a Dominican church for the canonization of a Dominican saint whose bodily stigmata were a matter of debate between the two orders. Yet, Roberto often preached in the Roman Dominican convent, testifying once more his fame and importance in the Roman milieu and in the Papal Curia.

5. *From the second visit to Padua (1463) to the nomination as bishop of Aquino (1475)*

Information tends to fade from these years in Roberto's life. Anyway we can follow his preaching activity through Italy highlighting the episodes we know, during which he visited towns and cities of Northern Italy, but during which he also consolidated his relationship with the city of Naples and its ruling family. We will see his position as "court preacher" for the Aragonese family grow in importance both for his personal agenda and for his involvement in the Neapolitan courtly and intellectual life. Finally, these years will be crowned with the election as bishop of Aquino in 1475, which testify both to his successful ecclesiastical career and his favor inside the Kingdom of Naples, in the territory of which his diocese was.

A rather wide blank follows in the sources useful to ascertain Roberto's activities in the following few years. Making an exception for the sparse and unclear news regarding his presence and activity in Rome in 1459 and April 1461, there is hardly any information about him until early 1463. It is perhaps in these years – or maybe in the second half of 1464, in any case surely before the death of the town's last lord, Malatesta Novello, in 1465 – that Roberto preached in Cesena, as testified by the excessively laudatory and lengthy metric epistle composed by the humanist

²²¹ Caracciolo, *Sermones de sanctis*: ff. Div-Diir: «Obmissis vero multis visionibus eius, eam unam refeream pro qua inter minores et predicatorum contentio videtur exorta. [...] Si hec facta sunt ut sic equiparetur beato Francisco, cui soli usque in presens singulari modo stigmata divinitus sunt impressa utique reprehensibile est [...] Ego peccator qui hunc sermonem confeci sanctam ipsam devotione qua possum et colo et veneror. Eramque Rome anno Domini MCCCCLXI, anno tertio Pii pontificis maximi, quando pontifex prefatus spiritu sancto volente sanctam Catherinam sollempni celebritate canonizavit. Nulla tunc a referentibus et vita et miracula Catherina de stigmatibus facta est mentio. Nulla pictura cum stigmatibus fuit delata. Nulla insuper in bulla quam superius frequenter allegavimus de stigmatibus mentio habita est. Ego insuper in die canonizationis sermonem ad populum habui post prandium in ecclesia Minerve ordinis predicatorum. Inspexi, legi et quidem sepius omnia que scripta erant de laudibus huius sancte, nil aliud invenire potui nisi quod superius expressum est de illo dolore que tulit absque signis in suo extatico raptu. Et si nomine stigmatum dolorem illum intelligi volumus, non tamen in illo continentur et includuntur conditione miraculose stigmatum beati Francisci».

²²² *Ivi*: f. Diir: «Oro tamen patres meos predicatorum et minores ne populos scandalizent, quibus tam multa mira de sanctis offerunt et precipue de Catherina, ut mendacia et propter se ipsa et propter veritatis habundantiam deserere et detestari cogantur».

Francesco Uberti for the occasion²²³. Around these same years, or possibly even earlier, Roberto was nominated chaplain of the Roman basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, where we will also find him preaching in later years. The Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville, archpriest of the church, had called him to preach there and the news of it is preserved in Gaspare da Verona's life of Paul II, which would lead us to believe this occurred after his election in 1464, but d'Estouteville had been in charge of the church since 1443²²⁴. Cardinal d'Estouteville, rich patron of artists and clerics, had been one of the judges of the controversy between Observant and Conventual Franciscan. Roberto's intimacy with him, which emerges from this nomination as chaplain of Santa Maria Maggiore, is somehow confirmed in a later episode of Roberto's life, when he will be mentioned together with the powerful cardinal as prominent members of Sixtus IV's papal court, as we will see. Beyond his preaching in the Roman basilica, Gaspare da Verona also testifies how Roberto was responsible for the church's new bells²²⁵.

The first certain information of Roberto's whereabouts since the traces of his presence in Rome in 1461 dates from 31 August 1463, when Cardinal Bessarion, Papal Legate in Veneto, nominated him for the preaching of the crusade in the cities of Treviso, Padua, Vicenza, Brescia, Bergamo and Cremona²²⁶. In the case of Padua, we can confirm his effective preaching there with documents from the cathedral²²⁷. Moreover, we can read manuscript copies of the *Sermo de flagellis Dei* he delivered at that time, although this text's tradition overlaps with those of other sermons on the same theme preached in Padua and L'Aquila in 1450-51. Probably dating to this period of stay

²²³ Appendix II. On Francesco Uberti see Luigi Piccioni, *Di Francesco Uberti umanista cesenate*. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1903.

²²⁴ *Le vite di Paolo II di Gaspare da Verona e Michele Canensi*, a cura di Giuseppe Zippel. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1904 (RIS, 16.3): 32: «Praedicatorum quoque non ignobiles [procuravit Guglielmus d'Estouteville, cardinalis Rothomagensis], praesertim fratrem Robertum Appulum ordinis Sancti Francisci, principem inter praedicatorum, necnon Alexandrum Bononiensem ordinis praedicatorum, dote una praeditum praeter omnes, quos vidimus, mortales: nam testamentum vetus cum novo adeo probe pulchreque componit atque connectit, ut nil supra». Cfr. also De Angelis, *Basilicae S. Mariae Maioris descriptio*: 142: «Rubertus predicator egregius de Ordine Minorum, cappellanus in dicto altari, nunc episcopus de Aquino». On Guillaume d'Estouteville's patronage over Santa Maria Maggiore see at least Meredith J. Gill, "Where the Danger Was Greatest": A Gallic Legacy in Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome'. *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59/4 (1996): 498-522. On the Dominican Alessandro da Bologna mentioned together with Roberto by Gaspare da Verona, cfr. Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, 4 vols. Romae: apud Sanctae Sabinae. Roma: Istituto storico domenicano, 1970-1993: I, 46-47.

²²⁵ *Le vite di Paolo II*: 32: «Hic [S. Mariae Maioris] campanas opera atque labore fratris Roberti sonoras, gratas, suaves confici iussit».

²²⁶ Cesare Cenci, 'Documenta vaticana ad franciscas spectantia ann. 1385-1492. Pars V: documenta vaticana ann. 1458-1471'. *AFH* 94 (2001): 85-145: 109: «1463, augusti 31, Bissarion, cardinalis legatus in territorio venetorum, committit praedicationem cruciatam: Brixiae mag. Alexandro de Fano, ord. Min.; ultra Tagliamentum sub venetis mag. Michaeli de Venafro et licentiatu fr. Paulo de Vellestro; Utini mag. Ioannetto veneto; in insula Creta fr. Ludovico Mauro (Obs.); Bergomi et in districtu fr. Seraphino Mediolanen., ord. Min. de Obs.; in civitate Vicentin. Et districtu fr. Onofrio (de Sulmona, Min.); in dioc. Tervisin extra civitatem mag. Francisco de Civitella, ord. S. Francisci; mg. Ruberto (de Licio), ord. Min., predicatori excellentissimo, cui commissa est cura predicandi Tarvisii, Padue, Vicentie, Brixie, Pergami et Cremonae». This confirms the document from Brescia, dating 28 February 1464, *ultra* n. 184. For Bessarion's activity in the organization of the crusade now see Salvatore Leaci, 'Il pericolo ottomano, Venezia e le strategie propagandistiche del cardinal Bessarione'. *Studi storici* 55/4 (2014): 917-935.

²²⁷ Donato Gallo, 'Predicatori francescani nella cattedrale di Padova durante il Quattrocento': 181.

in Northern Italy is also the mention made of Roberto in a vernacular version of the book of Genesis, prepared in Cremona in 1463 by the physician Pietro da Napoli, who asserted he had asked for Roberto's help in interpreting Jacob's prophecies (Gen. 49)²²⁸.

Among the towns to which he was assigned as preacher of the crusade, besides Padua, we are certain Roberto was in Brescia between February and March 1464. His presence and activity in the town and the surrounding area is documented by a letter through which he conceded a plenary indulgence to the townsmen of Bovegno and Irma for the donations they had made in favor of the crusade²²⁹. If the peasants' generosity had earned them a plenary indulgence, though, the townsmen of Brescia seem to have been more reluctant in paying their tithes. As the chronicler Cristoforo da Soldo reported, whereas the lower class people were easily induced to give what little they had as requested, the men who «possessed some culture» did not take the preachers' – Roberto's in particular and those of the preacher who arrived after him – threats of excommunication too seriously. «There were just few who payed – wrote Cristoforo – because those citizens believed it all to be a way to scrape up some money»²³⁰. The preacher would fix a deadline of fifteen days to pay one's contribution to the alm-collection, menacing excommunication in case of non-fulfilment. Once reached the deadline, however, he would extend it for another fifteen days, losing all his credibility²³¹.

Around mid-May 1464, Francesco Sforza sent Roberto a letter, requesting his preaching in Milan and other centres of his Duchy. The letter once again testifies for Roberto's familiarity with the Duke, who asserted to care about the firar's well-being as much as of his own («del bene della persona vostra prendemo quello piacere et leticia che prendemo del nostro ben proprio»). The Duke needed Roberto to spur his own people to pay the tithe in favor of the crusade, especially in the

²²⁸ Visani, 'Testimonianze della predicazione', p. 203, nn. 8-9; Ead., 'Per le fonti del quaresimale padovano del 1455 di Roberto da Lecce: correzioni e aggiunte'. *Il Santo* 24/3 (1984): 605-609: 605, n. 2 [quoted from Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, ms. It. 109, c. 117v]: «Venendo fra' Roberto in questa parte / io lo pregai me volesse insegnare. / Lui me respose 'Revolte le carte / de Origenes, se '1 voi trovare'».

²²⁹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 44, 280-281 (previously in Paolo Guerrini, 'Una lettera indulgenziale del Ven. Roberto da Lecce ai comuni di Bovegno e Irma in Valtrompia'. *Brixia Sacra* 4 (1913): 142-143; and then again in Eugenio Selvaggi, 'Una lettera indulgenziale di fra Roberto Caracciolo'. *Apulia* 5 (1914): 75-76).

²³⁰ Cristoforo da Soldo, *Cronaca*, a cura di Giuseppe Brizzolara (RIS, 21.3). Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1942: 143-144: «Poco valeva quelle predicationi in Bressa; non so altroe. Erano puochi chi pagasse, perché a quelli cittadini li pareva che tutto fosse una cattaia de dinari».

²³¹ *Ibidem*: «E non pagando quello si doveva pagare secondo li comandamenti, se cazano a scommunicare de scommunicazioni mazora tutti quelli non havesse pagato fra certo termino. E in cavo del ditto termene iterum lo prolungava a uno altro termino; li quali termini erano de 15 zorni in 15 zorni. Venne uno altro predicatore, il qual etiam lui predicando questa Cruciata com bone et dolce parolle si pagasse e, vedando lui le persone lente a pagare, assignò anchora lui uno termino de 15 zorni [...] E cossi, finito lo ditto termino a dì 17 marzo 1464, habiando pagado puoche persone, la dominica de Lazar, che fu a dì 18 marzo ditto, siando lui in pergolo predicando al Dommo, scommunicò e maledisse cadauna persona ostinata a non voler pagare e maladisse cadauno preito e fratri né absolvisse nessuno. Di la qual scommunicatione e maladittione pocho furno apprezzati dal populo di Bressa et maxime da le persone havevano qualche intelletto, perché sapevano bene che lui non haveva autoritate di far tal scommunicatione. Ma lo populo menuto, timendo e non havendo altro rispetto, molti de loro pagavano».

towns of Cremona and Casalmaggiore²³². The preacher answered positively, yet it seems that his activity did not meet with particular effect, just like previously in Brescia. In mid-June, Roberto was preaching in Milan and his threats of excommunication directed to those who refused to pay the tithe were of no effect on the townsmen. The Duke felt the need to intervene himself and to set a good example for others, he forced all of his court's employees to go and pay their part. The episode was recorded by Vincenzo della Scalona, Mantuan ambassador in Milan, in a letter directed to Ludovico Gonzaga²³³. Yet, not even this device seemed to be enough²³⁴. Roberto eventually left Milan in mid-July, directed towards Rome. Another letter by the Mantuan ambassador in Milan which gives us this piece of information also pictures us Roberto as well informed on the political maneuvers of his time. Vincenzo della Scalona wrote that Roberto had told a friend of his about Francesco Sforza's relations with the king of France, Louis XI, an issue on which the Duke had sent the archbishop of his city to Rome, to inform the Pope²³⁵.

Roberto probably did not remain in Rome for long and before the end of 1464, possibly between November and the beginning of December, he was back in Northern Italy, preaching in Venice²³⁶. Then, he preached in Bologna for the Advent of 1464²³⁷. It is probably during this stay of Roberto's in Bologna that Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti heard him preaching in front of San Petronio. According to Giovanni Sabadino's account, Roberto would have narrated his audience a licentious story, mocking Florentines and Observant Franciscans, which he then later included in his collection of short stories²³⁸. Roberto then preached the Lent of 1465 in Ferrara, having been

²³² Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 45, 281-282.

²³³ *Carteggio degli oratori mantovani alla corte sforzesca (1450-1500)*, VI: 1464-1465, a cura di Maria Nadia Covini. Roma: Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, 2001: n. 169, 325 [letter dated Milan 16 June 1464]: «Fra Ruberto haveva predicato della trigesima, cum protestare la excommunicatione passato el zorno de heri: non ha facto fructo. El signore questa matina ha mandato per tuti li magistrati et suoi sallariati della corte, molti di quali ancora non hano pagato, m'è dicto a fine de farli pagare per dare exempio alli altri et per vedere de pigliare partito che ciascuno paghi».

²³⁴ *Ivi*: n. 172, 332 [letter from Vincenzo della Scalona to Ludovico Gonzaga, dated Milan 18 June 1464]: «El termine della excommunicatione è prorogato per tuto el presente et fra' Ruberto se affatica in pergolo a confortare ciascuno che paghi, né voria havere honore se'l poterà. El signore altra che'l mandasse per tuti li magistrati et sallariati suoi, a chi el feci una arenga cum admonire quelli non havevano pagato a pagare, ma etiam a confortare li altri al pagamento, sento ha animo de mandare per cittadini et mercadanti a squadre per admonirli similiter».

²³⁵ *Ivi*: n. 199, 385 [letter addressed by Vincenzo della Scalona to Ludovico Gonzaga, Milano 13 luglio 1464]: «Fra' Ruberto, chi è per partirse verso lunedì de qua per essere a Roma, ha avuto a dire cum uno amico mio che'l sa che la maestà del re de Franza stringe el concilio et è reducto a termine che'l non pò mancare haverà loco in breve tempo et che siandone da sua maestà richiesto questo illustrissimo signore a consentirli, ha mandato lo arcivescovo alla santità de nostro signore per farli intendere il tuto prima che'l fatia risposta alcuna al re sopra de ciò, benché gli pare non ge poterò contradire et gli sarrà in excusatione che'l ne habia facto notitia alla santità prefata. Questo conferma assai che'l arcivescovo andasse cum la comissione de che advisai per altre vostra excellentia, alla gratia della quale continuo me recomando».

²³⁶ Marin Sanudo il Giovane, *Le vite dei dogi: 1423-1474*, a cura di Angela Caracciolo Aricò, 2 vols. Venezia: La Malcontenta, 1999-2004: II, p. 78.

²³⁷ Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 71.

²³⁸ Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, *Le porretane*, a cura di Bruno Basile. Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1981: 108-109: «Frate Roberto, de' predicatori glorioso principe, essendo in pulpito nel magnificentissimo delubro de Sam Petronio nostro, dove avea mirabile audienza, predicando della confessione a certo proposito recordò [il caso occorso a Bazzo de Piero Anselmuzzo]: dove li auditori a grandissime rise provocati furono». On Giovanni Sabadino see: Ghino Ghinassi, 'Arienti, Giovanni Sabadino degli'. *DBI* 4 (1962): 154-156.

destined there by the Pope and having received permission from the General Minister Francesco della Rovere²³⁹. It might have been during this visit to Ferrara that the humanist Ludovico Carbone heard Roberto preach, as he recalled in two of his works. Carbone also asserted he had kept in mind the arguments of some of the sermons delivered by Roberto and had later written versified versions of them²⁴⁰.

It is from around this same time that we know the name of one of Roberto's *socci*, the friars which – as from the 1454 bull – accompanied him in his preaching. It is his fellow townsman Francesco da Lecce, who was an ordained priest and who on 14 February 1464 received a licence in Rome²⁴¹.

While Roberto was preaching in Ferrara, he received a letter from Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples, who invited him to preach the following Lent there. Ferdinand had also sent letters to Francesco della Rovere and Pope Pius II to be sure of having the preacher assigned to his capital. Presumably, Lent 1466 was the first of the eight Roberto would preach in Naples²⁴², in close connection with the royal court and with the intellectuals active around it. As previously in the case of Francesco Sforza, it is possible to read in this invitation sent by Ferdinand to Roberto the wish of the new political ruler to draw a consolidating benefit for his power from the preaching activity of the friar. Ferdinand had just concluded his long and rough struggle, begun soon after his succession to his father, around 1560, against the rebel barons of his kingdom and his rival in claiming its crown, Giovanni d'Angiò, whom he finally managed to chase out of Ischia in 1465.

It was not quite at this date, however, that Roberto definitively settled in the Kingdom of Naples, which he probably left soon after his preaching cycle had ended. Already in early May 1466, he was heading towards Genua. The lord of Milan had just recently subjected the town to his domain and we can think he was keen to have Roberto preach there to overcome some of the locals' ill feelings. The Duke, Francesco Sforza, had died the previous year and his wife Bianca Maria Visconti had taken on the regency, since their son Galeazzo Maria was still too young to govern. Roberto's preaching in Genua met with such a success that the townsmen requested him to stay

²³⁹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 46, 282-283.

²⁴⁰ Alfonso Lazzari, 'Il "Barco" di Lodovico Carbone. *Atti e memorie della Deputazione ferrarese di storia patria* 24 (1919): 5-44: 24; Id., 'Un dialogo di Lodovico Carbone in lode del duca Borso'. *Atti e memorie della Deputazione ferrarese di storia patria* 27 (1929): 127-149: 139.

²⁴¹ *Regestum observantiae cismontanae (1464-1488)*. Grottaferrata: Editiones collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1983 (Analecta franciscana, 12): 84. It is probably the same Francesco da Lecce who in May 1490 was nominated head of the *Custodia* of Lecce and then guardian of the convent of Bitonto for the year 1491, cfr. *Regesta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Conventualium*, 1 (1488-1494), ed. Gustavo Parisiani. Padua, Centro studi antoniani, 1989: n. 1263, p. 150; n. 1278, p. 152.

²⁴² *Vide ultra* n. 243.

until the following Lent of 1467²⁴³. Bianca Maria sent on the city's request to the Franciscan General Minister, Francesco della Rovere. Michele Carcano had already been destined to preach in Genova for Lent 1467, so Francesco della Rovere answered that the only possibility to have Roberto was by resorting to the Order's protector, Cardinal Bessarion. Bianca Maria probably did ask Bessarion and, in fact, Michele Carcano preached the following Lent in Florence²⁴⁴. Besides, Roberto was still in Genua at the beginning of 1467. Indeed, on 11 January, he addressed a curious letter to Bianca Maria and to her son Galeazzo Sforza expressing his fears concerning alleged plans to harm him. It will be interesting to read the entire letter:

I am forced from a severe necessity to write this letter to Your Lordship because the devil has been greatly tempting me in these last days. My Lords, God knows with how much affection I have preached in the town of Genua as a slave, servant and partisan of Your Lordships; and anyone who has heard my sermons can testify how many times I have sincerely spoken well praising Your Lordships, which I intend to do here and everywhere else for as long as I live. However, it has occurred that, having the brother of the lord of Castelletto arrived from Milan, his Excellency the lord has warmly invited me several times to go dine with him. Which thing he might have done with a good purpose, yet I have begun doubting and suspecting that this might be some plot organized by my emulators, who deceiving Your Lordships would try to harm me. In any case, I have not wanted to reveal this to anyone in the world. For my own safety, however, I have decided to plea Your Lordships with this letter that you may have me recommended. Should I be harmed, it would be something belonging to you that is harmed, since in order to serve you I would really put my life at risk as though I was going to my own marriage. And especially because all our family of the Caracciolo is greatly loyal to his majesty king Ferdinand, of whom I am a subject. I am always prepared to obey all of Your Excellencies' orders. I pray you kneeling down on the ground that you may write some words to me so that I may abandon my suspicions, letting you know that I do not know which world I am living in²⁴⁵.

²⁴³ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 47-48, 283-284. The letters were already published in Paolo M. Sevesi, 'Lettere autografe di Francesco della Rovere da Savona': 202-204.

²⁴⁴ Paolo M. Sevesi, 'Il beato Michele Carcano da Milano O.f.m'. *AFH* 3 (1910): 448-463, 633-663: 657-658.

²⁴⁵ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 49, 284-285, but I quote from the original Milano, Archivio di Stato, Autografi, Predicatori, Roberto Caracciolo: «Sono constrecto da importante necessità scrivere la presente alle Signorie Vostre peroché in questi di prossimi el dimonio mi ha data et dona una gran temptatione. Signori miei, Dio del Cielo sa con quanta affectione ho predicato nella città di Genova sempre schiavo, servo e partisano dele Vostre Signorie; e ogni uno el quale ha udito le nostre prediche pò rendere testimonio quante volte con optimo cuore yo ho parlato in laude de le Vostre Signorie, intentendo fare cussì e qui e in ogni luogo mentre mi dura la vita. Puro è accascato che, siando venuto da Milano el fradello del Castellano de Castellecto, la Magnificentia del Castellano molto caldamente e più volte mi ha invitato voglia andare ad digenare seco; la qual cosa pò avere facta ad fin de bene, ma yo l'ò presa in dubio e suspecto che non fusse qualche trama di miei emuli, li quali con qualche inganno dele Vostre Signorie mi cercassino mancamento e danno. Puro yo non ho voluto di questo conferirne con persona al mondo, ma per mia chiarezza ho deliberato per quista letera supplicare alle Vostre Signorie vogliano havermi per raccomandato, perochè quando yo havesse male, haveria male una cosa vostra, ché in verità cussì mecteria in vostro servizio la vita mia ad ogni pericolo

By «castellano del Castelletto» Roberto surely meant the Milanese governor of Genua, who could at that time be identified with the loyal Sforza courtman Sagramoro Visconti²⁴⁶. There is absolutely no clue, however, on why the preacher could have been afraid of the governor of Genua or why he would think his brother could have wanted to harm him. On the other hand, however, the letter is particularly interesting for the fear Roberto expressed concerning his emulators, which gives us a hint also to the negative aspects of his preaching and operating, much less recorded – especially in this phase of his life – than his successes. Who these emulators could be, we can only suppose. Perhaps Roberto still had some fears his former Observant confreres could try and get back at him from his virulent attacks several years earlier. More probably, I would think, the political manoeuvres we have seen him involved in, though just in fugacious mentions, could have earned him dangerous enemies, as well as powerful friends. Finally, it is worth noting the mention Roberto made in this letter of the Caracciolo family – in general terms – as loyal servants of the king of Naples, perhaps another hint of Roberto’s noble origins, but surely a first clear clue of the preacher’s personal ties with the ruling family of Southern Italy.

Bianca Maria and Galeazzo swiftly replied to Roberto’s concerns, reassuring him on their own and the castellano’s affection towards him²⁴⁷. A second letter addressed from the Duchess and his son to Roberto on 21 February that year requested him to move his preaching from the cathedral of San Lorenzo to the church of San Severo²⁴⁸. It is probably during this stay in Genua that Roberto saw the gruesome scene of the witch-stake he later described in his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: a servant who had tried to harm her masters with some sort of diabolical spell had been

come andasse ad nocze; et precipue che tucta la casa nostra di Caraczoli è fidelissima dela maestà di re Fernando, de chi yo sono vassallo, e sono sempre promptissimo ad tucti comandamenti dele Vostre Excellentie, le quale prego inginocchiato in terra mi vogliano scrivere dui parolette per togliermi ogni suspecto, avidandone che yo non so in qual mondo mi sie».

²⁴⁶ Riccardo Musso, “‘El stato nostro de Zenoa”. Aspetti istituzionali della prima dominazione sforzesca su Genova (1464-78)’. *Serta antiqua et mediaevalia* 5 (2001), 199-236.

²⁴⁷ Milano, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Carteggio, Milano-città e ducato, b. 916: «Mediolani, 17 Ianuari 1467, Fratri Roberto ordinis minorum / Abbiamo ricevuta la lettera vestra et per quella bene intesa et compresa. El dubio vi va per niente, habiandovi convitato el castellano nostro li alcune volte ad mangiare seco in castello etc. Al che respondendo ve dicemo che in ciò voy non haveti ad prendere alcuna ombreza, né anche fare pensiero alcuno che li, né anche in qualche altro nostro loco vi fusti, de nostro consentimento ve avesse ad essere facta alcuna novità né lesione de la persona vestra o vero honore vestro, le quale may non mancaremo per le virtute sue haverli in quella protectione che le nostre proprie; et così ve dicemo che attendiati et staghati de bono animo et senza suspitione, como se convene al<ti>cha et moderna affectione vestra verso de noy et stato nostro, de la quale nequaquam indigemus probatione».

²⁴⁸ *Ibidem*: «Fratri Roberto Caracolo ordinis Minorum / Reverendo in Christo amice nostre carissime, placuit nobis quod servis ad nos litteris vestra significant reverentia fore, ut optimus evenire possint fructus ex predicationibus vestris maiorem in modum in ecclesia Sancti Severi quam in ecclesia Sancti Laurenti illius urbis nostre, contra nonnullorum sententiam qui proinde nobiscum verba fecerant. Quapropter aliorum omittentes relationes, in vestra quiescimus intelligentia et si facte fuisset certiores, non nisi illum predicationibus vestris locum statueri decrevissemus, quem vestra reverentia portionem et sibi gratiorem putasset. Pergatis igitur et incumbatis vestro predicandi officio qua soletis laude et doctrina. Et a nobis grata queque expecteritis obsequia omnibus in rebus quas vestra cepit reverentia. / Ex Mediolano, die XXI Februarii 1467».

tied to a pole and burnt alive²⁴⁹. Moreover, it was still in these months spent in Genua that Roberto possibly also visited the close-by Albenga, where he was present at the torturing of a witch²⁵⁰.

We do not know how much longer Roberto remained in Genua. Sources are unavailable regarding his activity in 1468 and 1469. After almost three years of silence on Roberto's whereabouts, we know that by the first months of 1470 he was in Naples. According to what he reported in the fourth sermon of his Latin collection *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* and in the vernacular collection *Specchio della fede* he was there during Lent. While he was preaching in the Royal Chapel in Naples, the news spread of a woman possessed by a demon, or – more precisely in the vernacular version – by the spirit of the *condottiere* Giacomo Piccinino. The Duke of Calabria visited her and so did Roberto. During his visit, however, the demon revolted against the presence of a cleric and revealed his true nature. Consequently, Roberto managed to exorcize the young girl²⁵¹.

It is possibly during this stay in the city – which might well have begun before Lent 1470 – that Roberto started to grow his friendships there. We have seen that in earlier years Roberto had been personally acquainted with Alfonso, the first Aragonese king of Naples. Now he was in very good terms with his illegitimate son and successor Ferdinand, whom had personally requested him in 1466 and would later be the dedicatee of his vernacular Lenten sermon collection, the *Quadragesimale volgare*. Moreover, Roberto also became closely acquainted with the younger generations of the royal family: Giovanni, prelate and from 1477 Cardinal, to whom Roberto dedicated his *Opus de timore divinorum iudiciorum* and his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*; and Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, dedicatee of the *Specchio della fede*. Finally, Alfonso also chose Roberto as his personal confessor.

Roberto did not only limit himself to relationships with the royal family and he also began to grow friendships with some important figures of the Neapolitan intellectual milieu. Such was an excentric figure as Giovan Francesco Caracciolo – who, despite bearing the same surname, was not

²⁴⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: ff. x7v-x8r: «Vidi ego Ianue conbustam et affixam palo quandam sclavam que suum dominum ac dominam cum his diabolicis superstitionibus interfecerat».

²⁵⁰ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 45r: «In civitate Albenge, ultra Ianuam, versus Massiliam, me presente vetula una torqueri fuit iussa que longo temporis spatio nullo videbatur dolore terri».

²⁵¹ Roberto Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*: f. c7v: «Diebus etiam meis aliquas mulieres demoniacas vidi et audivi illas loquentes talia que non nisi demones dicere potuerunt et virtute Ihesu Cristi liberate fuerunt. Inter cetera tamen una fuit Neapolis anno Domini MCCCCLXX de qua expertus sum que referam. Predicante me ibi tempore quadragesimali, sonabat undique rumor quod anime quorundam defunctorum intraverant corpus eius»; Id., *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 181r; Id., *Specchio della fede*: f. 85r-v: «Ma puro dirò quello che intravenne a Napoli, anno Domini MCCCCLXX, predicando in la Quaresima si dicia como una giovenetta chiamata Lianora, figliola de uno nominato Perico, balestriero della maiestà del re Ferdinando, era spiritata e havia in corpo l'anima del conte Iacomo Piccinino [...]E io iterum subiunxi: “Chi so io?” Rispuose: “Tu sei fra' Roberto, el quale per tutta Italia ce hai facta gran guerra e mo sei venuto a Napoli ello primo dì de Quaresima predicasti in capella della Maiestà del Re e ogi hai predicato lo evangelio della samaritana e hai facto piangere molta gente”». For a more specific discussion of this episode see the chapter dedicated to superstition.

related to him – whose admiration for Roberto is testified by one of his vernacular sonnets²⁵². Roberto also shared a good friendship with Masuccio Salernitano, who praisingly mentioned him in the comment to one of his short stories, in opposition to the negative figure of the main character of the story itself²⁵³.

Since 1465, Roberto's compatriot Antonio Galateo was living in Naples. Despite the difference of age – Galateo was some twenty years younger than the preacher – the two became good friends and the philosopher and physician has left several affectionate memories of Roberto. A first mention of Roberto is in a letter addressed by Galateo to Ermolao Barbaro, who had dedicated his translation of Themistius to him. In this letter, Galateo mentioned the members of the Neapolitan Academy whose company was particularly dear to him. Among them, he also acknowledged Roberto, depicting him in a particularly positive light: the best preacher of his age, of those past and of those to come («in arte quam dicunt praedicandi disertissimus omnium qui sunt qui fuerunt et quot erunt in annis»). Just like himself and Barbaro – Galateo went on – Roberto hated those “barbarians” and that corruption which had penetrated theology as well as philosophy and medicine²⁵⁴. Most of all, however, Galateo narrated how the frequent conversation with Roberto pleased him, at least as much as recalling the memory of the time spent with Barbaro²⁵⁵. A second mention of Roberto from Galateo's pen is in his desecrating Latin dialogue *Eremita*, composed between 1496 and 1498. The dialogue's main character, a hermit, is imagined at the moment right after his death, when his soul is fought over by two spirits: a good one, Calodemon, and an evil one, Cacodemon. Exasperated by his opponent's insistence, Calodemon lets go of the hermit's soul, which is consequently dragged down to Hell by the evil spirit. Making his last wish, however, the hermit convinces Cacodemon to bring him to see the gates of Heaven, where he will manage to slip out of his grip and attempt to enter Paradise, giving way to several dialogues with different saints,

²⁵² Marco Santagata, ‘Caracciolo, Giovan Francesco’. *DBI* 19 (1976): 375-377; Id., *La lirica aragonese: studi sulla poesia napoletana del secondo Quattrocento*. Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1979: 66. A transcription of the sonnet's text in Appendix I.

²⁵³ Masuccio Salernitano, *Il Novellino*, a cura di Salvatore S. Nigro. Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1979: 79-80. Roberto's exaltation is even more clearly underlined by Masuccio's general diffidence in regards to friars, which we gain from his reproach to Pontano for his excessive association with them, cfr. ivi: 30: «rimuovite, ti prego, da sì reprobato e dannabile camino, persuadendote massimamente a non sulo da tal pratiche al tutto retrarti, ma de tua casa, como fussero de la contagiosa peste ammorbati, con decreto eterno equalmente gli priva». There is no reason to give any credit to Salvatore Nigro's reading of this mention of Roberto as ironic and generally negative. Nigro proposed the identification of Roberto with the friar in the story himself, but the textual data is simply insufficient to support such a reading and it is probably safer to trust the narrator's wish, as it stands, to contrast the negative example narrated in the story with a positive one from his personal acquaintances. Moreover, Nigro's proposal to see a dispregiative and ironic shade in the use of the term *trombetta* rather than *tromba* is refutable, since the two terms were commonly used in the same sense. Cfr. Salvatore S. Nigro, *Le brache di San Griffone: novellistica e predicazione tra '400 e '500*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1983: 48-56; Maria Aurelia Mastronardi, ‘Nuovi studi sulla predicazione medievale e umanistica (1980-1986)’. *Quaderni medievali* 24 (1987): 174-195: 194-195. On Masuccio see Fabio De Propriis, ‘Guardati, Tommaso’. *DBI* 60 (2003): 279-286.

²⁵⁴ Antonio de Ferrariis Galateo, *Epistole*: 94: «Ut maximus vitiorum insectator, ita et hos barbaros et hanc corruptelam, quae non solum philosophiam et medicinam sed etiam theologiam ipsam inquinavit, et odit et detestatur».

²⁵⁵ Ibidem: «Huius frequens conversatio tantum dat mihi felicitatis, quantum tui suavissima recordatio».

in which the critique of the ecclesiastical corruption of Christian life is a fundamental base-line. However, it is before cutting loose from Cacodemon's guard that the hermit is able to see six souls entering Paradise: alongside three kings of Naples (Ferdinand, Alfonso II and Ferrandino), he sees Ermolao Barbaro, Paolo Attaldo and Roberto, glory of religious orators²⁵⁶. The most notable of Galateo's memories of Roberto, however, is the praiseful one contained in a work which expressed strong and fierce polemics against clergy and counterfeit catholic morals²⁵⁷. This third mention that Galateo has left of Caracciolo is in opposition to a rampant attack against badly living friars. In his *Esposizione del Pater noster*, a vernacular explanation of the Lord's prayer – which is still wanted in a modern critical edition – Galateo recalled Roberto among the «learned, just and experienced people», also saying something about their close friendship and then praising his Christian life as opposed to that of many other unlearned and lecherous friars²⁵⁸. Moreover, in this third mention of Roberto by Galateo, there is also an indirect testimony of Giovanni Pontano's opinion of the preacher. Apparently, Pontano – who will also be credited, probably incorrectly, with two of the epithaphs which were engraved on Roberto's tomb – would have often said: «when Roberto will die, the art of preaching will die too»²⁵⁹.

These are probably just a few of the friends Roberto had made in Naples and inside its intellectual world, where it is said he was welcomed and allegedly became a member of the Accademia pontaniana, the cultural circle that animated around Giovanni Pontano, who had succeeded Antonio Beccadelli in this role as focus of the Neapolitan intellectual life. Not long after Easter, however, Roberto must have once again left Naples, heading South-East, towards his hometown Lecce. The Milanese ambassador in Naples, Giovanni Andrea Cagnola, had received instructions from Galeazzo Maria Sforza – who had probably also obtained the Franciscan General's consent, since letters from him to Roberto were travelling together with the one from the Duke – to invite him to preach in Milan. Yet, in a letter dated February 1471, he could only refer to the Duke that the preacher had left the city heading to Lecce, having received this information from his brother, probably friar Luca²⁶⁰. Cagnola – in a message he had addressed to Roberto in Lecce to

²⁵⁶ Antonio Galateo, *Eremita*, a cura di Sebastiano Valerio. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009: 15: «Qui tam lento et gravi passu incedit, ille est ecclesiasticorum declamatorum gloria, Robertus Lupiensis, conterraneus meus».

²⁵⁷ Maria Aurelia Mastronardi, 'Retorica umanistica e modelli francescani nell'oratoria sacra di Roberto Caracciolo'. *Annali della facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli studi di Bari* 32 (1989): 305-325: 322.

²⁵⁸ Antonio de Ferrariis, 'Esposizione del Pater noster. Prima parte'. In *Del sito della Giapigia e varii opuscoli di Antonio De Ferrariis detto il Galateo* («Collana di Scrittori di Terra d'Otranto», IV). Lecce: Tipografia Garibaldi, 1868: 192-194.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*: «morto Roberto, morirà l'arte di lo predicar».

²⁶⁰ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 50, 285 [the letter is dated 13 February 1471; Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Napoli, cart. 221]: «Li frate Roberto da Leza, del quale me scrive vostra Ex.tia, non se ritrova qua al presente, ma è pur a Leza, secundo me ha dicto uno suo fratello, pur frate de sancto Francesco, dignissimo predicatore che se ritrova qua, el quale ha mandato via uno messo proprio che gli porta le lettere gli scrive V. Ex. Et quelle del generale suo incluse in una mia che gli scrivo confortandolo a volere venire da quella cum quello bon modo m'è parso. Cum scrivergli etiam che voglia venire qua et che poj vedere de trovare uno qualche navilio che lo porterà

accompany the Duke's invitation he was sending to him there – specified that Roberto could have easily travelled from Naples to Milan taking a boat to Genua, in order to avoid the Papal territories («uno qualche navilio che lo porterà fin a Zenoa per schivare le terre del papa»). It is unclear and actually mysterious why Roberto would have wished to avoid the Papal territories at that time. We might understand from this that his relationship with Paul II, who would have died in the following months, was not in the best of terms, also given that Roberto spent most of the time of his pontificate away from Rome, unlike, for instance, in the case of Nicholas V. However, on the other hand, we must recall how Observant sources acknowledged Paul II – at the time Cardinal Pietro Barbo – as one of Roberto's supporters inside the Roman Curia at the time of his struggle with the Observant family.

In any case, in November, Roberto was back in Naples and it is from this period that he began to receive some donations of around 20 to 30 ducats from king Ferdinand²⁶¹. Roberto was still in Naples and actively preaching to the people in the first months of 1472, as recorded by Angelo Catone, Beneventan philosopher and physician²⁶². Indeed, in the prefatory letter to his treatise on the comet of 1472, Catone recalled the threatening sermons Roberto was delivering at the time when the comet appeared, commenting the biblical verses of the Apocalypse, 14, 6-7²⁶³ and warning his listeners to beware for the Last Judgment²⁶⁴. Still in October that year Roberto was in Naples, where he again received another invitation to go preach in Milan from Galeazzo Maria Sforza²⁶⁵. In the meantime, after the death of Paul II, the former Franciscan General Minister

fin a Zenoa per schivare le terre del papa». On Giovanni Andrea Cagnola see Franca Petrucci, 'Cagnola, Giovanni Andrea'. *DBI* 16 (1973): 312-314.

²⁶¹ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 51, 286 [Naples, Archivio di Stato, Cedole di Tesoreria, vv. LVII (1471), LXIII (1473)]. These documents had previously been published in Erasmo Percopo, 'Nuovi documenti su gli scrittori e gli artisti dei tempi aragonesi'. *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 18 (1893): 527-537; 536-537; Alfredo Mauro, 'Per la storia della letteratura volgare napoletana del Quattrocento'. *Archivio storico per le province napoletane*, n.s., 10 (1924): 192-281; 192-200.

²⁶² On him see Bruno Figliuolo, 'Angelo Catone beneventano, filosofo e medico (1430 ca- - 1496)'. In Id., *La cultura a Napoli nel secondo Quattrocento*. Udine: Forum, 1997: 277-407.

²⁶³ «Et vidi alterum angelum volantem per medium caeli, habentem evangelium aeternum, ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram et super omnem gentem et tribum et linguam et populum dicens magna voce: "Timete Dominum et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iudicii eius. Et adorare eum, qui fecit caelum et terram, mare et fontes aquarum"».

²⁶⁴ Angelo Catone, *De cometa anni 1472*. Neapolis: Sixtus Riessinger, 1472 [GW 6385]: f. a1v-: «Quam sententiam [Ap. 16, 6-7] multos dies in hac urbe Neapoli, hac quadragesima publice predicans, populo proposuit vir divino prope ingenio et singulari memoria atque facundia et doctrina prestantissimus Robertus Liciensis ordinis minorum theologus nostra tempestate nominatissimus, qui recte considerans que in celo vidimus, omnes veluti presagens cupiensque, ut Deo per penitentiam reconciliari astrorum minis caveamus. "Timete – inquit – Deum et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iudicii eius". Ad tante igitur viri imitacionem, quociens ego cometis, qui visus est, vel magnitudinem vel colorem horrendum, vel varium cursum motumque considero». On Roberto's eschatological preaching see Ludovico Gatto, 'I temi escatologici nelle prediche di Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce'. In *L'attesa dell'età nuova nella spiritualità della fine del Medioevo. Convegni del centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, III, 16-19 ottobre 1960*. Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1962: 249-261; Oriana Visani, 'Il tema del Giudizio universale nella predicazione francescana del Quattrocento in Italia'. In Giuseppe Cassio, *San Francesco il santuario di Terni: visione incantevole di arte e di fede*. Perugia: Quattroemme, 2005: 345-365.

²⁶⁵ The letter should be in Milan, Archivio di Stato, Arch. Sforzesco, *Lettera Ducale 27 ottobre 1472* Napoli, cart. 222. Bastanzio signalled it but could not publish a transcription.

Francesco della Rovere was nominated pope, Sixtus IV. Roberto surely benefited from the new pope's ancient ties with the Order and his personal friendship with him, as we will see.

The oldest edition of one of Roberto's sermon collections, the Latin *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, is dated 1472. In less than one year, four different issues (one of which was probably also re-printed) appeared, three in Venice and one in Rome²⁶⁶. It is yet unclear what Roberto's role was in the printed edition of his works, but it seems he was not directly involved and his collections made their way to print following different paths. Almost immediately in the history of print, sermon collections proved to be excellent investments for printers and bookmerchants, since they always met with a large success among the public, also being able to count on the fertile market of religious readers. It is thus not forcedly through the direct intervention of the author that works of this sort were published. I will come back to this issue in the following part of the dissertation, specifically dedicated to Roberto's works.

During Lent 1473, Roberto was again preaching in Naples, as he himself informs us in one of his sermons, recalling the preaching of a false prophet in town at that time²⁶⁷. The first edition of his second Latin sermon collection, the *De timore divinorum iudiciorum*, appeared in July that year. This time the first edition was peculiarly printed in Naples, a somehow peripheral centre as far as the early printing press is concerned. The printer was Arnaldus of Bruxelles, man of Flemish origins who would have later obtained the Neapolitan citizenship and who had previously worked as a scribe for king Ferdinand and had only began his printing activity the previous year²⁶⁸. The work was dedicated to the young son of Ferdinand, Giovanni, young prelate and Apostolic Prothonotary since 1471, when he was aged fifteen²⁶⁹. According to what Roberto wrote in his prefatory letter, the printed collection contained the sermons that he had just been preaching in Naples and which he had put down in writing at Giovanni of Aragon's request, «ad utilitatem plurimorum»²⁷⁰. This time

²⁶⁶ Mariani, 'Roberto Caracciolo's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*'.

²⁶⁷ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: f. 40r: «Ancora io ho veduto alli di miei più persone ingannate dal dimonio le qual si hanno creduto, overo hanno fincto havere rivelationi e spirito di profecia. E le cose dicte da loro son state false, como fo di quello dompno Antonio, lo quale andava in uno habito apostolico, scalzo e con la barba, el quale predicando io a Napoli nel millesimo CCCCLXXIII allo arcivescovato, lui si condusse a predicare alla Annunciata e non una ma più volte con astuta maniera afirmando disse che in quello anno profundarie Napoli e sei altre città di Italia».

²⁶⁸ Paola Tentori, 'Arnaldo da Bruxelles'. *DBI* 4 (1962): 250-251.

²⁶⁹ Edith Pásztor, 'Aragona, Giovanni d'. *DBI* 3 (1961), pp. 697-698.

²⁷⁰ Roberto Caracciolo, *Opus de timore divinorum iudiciorum*: f. alr-v: «Reverendissimo patri et domino domino Iohanni de Aragonia, cristianissimi regis Ferdinandi filio, sedis aposolice dignissimo prothonotario, frater Robertus Caraczolus de Licio Ordinis Minorum, sacre theologie magister humiliter se comendat. Inter preclarissimas virtutes tuas ingentesque animi dotes, docilitas magnopere fulget. Qua fit ut animum semper promptum benivolumque exhibeas ad intelligendum doctrinam sapientum. Neque vero elegantissimo ingenio tuo satis esse possunt, que in palatio tue residentie singulis diebus ad eruditissimis viris audire contendis quinimo divinarum humanarumque rerum investigare ac scire rationem cupiens pia religionem frequentare soles templa sacra Dei, ut etiam ibi haurias quicquid ab his qui declamatorie, ut ad populum loqui solet, edocetur. Laudabilis profecto institutio ista, ne dum in adolescente vel iuvene verum etiam in quolibet annosissimo et sene, ex eo quod nullus tam sapiens qui tam doctus esse potest quin audiendo doctior fieri valeat. [...] Et licet dignata sit dominatio tua, dum Neapolis predicabam, quasi quotidie sermonibus meis adesse, hortari tandem me voluisti ut opus de timore iudiciorum Dei in scriptis redigerem illudque dominationi tue

Roberto could have seemed more involved in the printing enterprise, if it were not for the fears he expressed in his prefatory letter, in which he begged the dedicatee, Giovanni of Aragon, to avoid that his work could come to his detractors («invidi et malivoli [...] quos multos nosti») whom the preacher feared. It might be possible to link this to the similar fears Roberto expressed in Genua, but there currently is not enough material to speculate on²⁷¹.

Roberto must have then left Naples during the following summer, perhaps even before the publication of his collection. In fact, he was in Florence by the end of October, when king Ferdinand had 30 ducats deposited for him in the Medici bank²⁷². Particularly interesting in the testimony of this register entry is the fact that it says Roberto had been sent to preach in Florence by the king, as if the king had authority over his apostolic office. Then, sometime in the following year, Roberto preached in Rome, as he tells us in his printed sermons, narrating the story of the decapitation of a Jew²⁷³.

According to Raul Mordenti's analysis of Roberto's vernacular Lenten sermons, these would have originated from a preaching cycle delivered by him in North-Eastern Italy (Venice or Padua) in 1474 or 1475. Unfortunately, there is no further evidence that could confirm this hypothesis, thus we can only mention it as dubious²⁷⁴. Finally, we can close this subchapter with one precise date, 25 October 1475, when Pope Sixtus IV nominated his former confrere Roberto bishop of Aquino²⁷⁵. Unfortunately, almost nothing has survived to testify Roberto's activity in his bishopric: the diocesan archive of Aquino went completely lost due to bombings during World War II and it does no longer preserve any documents dating back to the fifteenth century²⁷⁶.

legendum transmitterem. Fecit libens quod iussisti et operam dedi ut morem tue gererem voluntati. Accedet hoc ad utilitatem plurimorum, quoniam que nova sunt allicere solent humanas mentes. [...] Scripsi igitur donante Deo non indoctis humane sapientie verbis quicquid legere aut invenire potui quod hominum corda ad timendum Deum gloriosum revocet et inducat. Accipe itaque pater colendissime libellum istum in quo siquid boni reppereris, proba, si quid vero aut superfluum aut minus rectum in illo deprehenderis, corrige. Oro tamen humanissimam dominationem tuam ne comunicet aut tradat illum invidis et malivolis meis, quod multos nosti [...] Bene vale speculum bonorum morum et memento mei dum bene tibi fuerit».

²⁷¹ Cfr. *ultra* ???.

²⁷² Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 51, 286 [Naples, Archivio di Stato, Cedole di Tesoreria, vv. LVII (1471), LXIII (1473)]: «Item a XXVI del dit e present mes de octubre [1473] de manament del Senyor Rey doni al mag. Enpere Bernat Regent la Regia Thesoreria trenta d. en lo banch de Lorenzo de Medicis per my a ell assignats per donar a frate Ruberto de Letce mestre en sacra theologia del orde de sant Francesch mon lo S. Re lo trameta en Florenca per pehicar»

²⁷³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 181r: «In Urbe predicante me ibi anno Domini MCCCCLXXIII decapitatus fuit quidam Iudeus».

²⁷⁴ Caracciolo, *Opere in volgare*: 16-19.

²⁷⁵ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 52-53, 287-290. Cfr. also *Bullarium franciscanum*, nova series, t. III, n. 801, pp. 390-391.

²⁷⁶ Bastanzio could recover just two Papal letters addressed to Roberto as bishop of Aquino, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: app. 54-55, 290-291. Cfr. also Cesare Cenci, 'Ad Bullarium Sixti IV Supplementum (II)'. *AFH* 84 (1991): 51-149: 117 and 128.

6. Facing the Turks in Otranto (1480) and the last years before death (1495)

In the sporadic, though precious and often detailed, information on the last years of Roberto's life we see him at work primarily inside the two courts where his fortune was largest, those of the Neapolitan King and of the Pope, especially after the election of the Conventual Franciscan Sixtus IV. His popular preaching had presumably reduced a lot and he preferred to deliver his sermons in front of noble families or high prelates.

We have to face another large blank in the documentation regarding Roberto's life. From his nomination as bishop of Aquino in 1475, we have almost no news of him until 1480. It is possible – albeit, as said, not verifiable – that Roberto spent these years in his new diocese. Then, by the beginning of 1480, Roberto was back in southern Italy, more precisely in his hometown of Lecce, where he received a letter from Sixtus IV calling him to preach the upcoming Lent in Rome²⁷⁷. The preacher's answer was, of course, positive and the sermons Roberto delivered on this occasion are the ones that he then turned into his second Latin Lenten collection, the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, completed in Lecce in 1483 and then printed for the first time in Venice in 1488. We can gain the cycle's dating from the work's dedication letter, in which Roberto also recalled the Papal invitation to preach in Rome. In fact, in dedicating the work to Cardinal Giovanni of Aragon, Roberto mentioned that the Cardinal had been, at the time he delivered those sermons in Rome, absent from the city, being engaged as Apostolic legate in Hungary²⁷⁸. Since we know that Giovanni of Aragon only stayed in Hungary from late 1479 to August 1480 – and then later, after the collection had already been completed – the only possible Lent to which Roberto could have referred to is that of 1480.

Roberto could not remain for long in Rome. Later that year, in fact, he had to return to Southern Italy, where the Turkish threat had materialized again and this time was more alarming than it had ever been. During the summer of 1480, the Turks had managed to disembark in the farthest southern tip of Italy, conquering the town of Otranto and slaughtering its inhabitants. The echo of the terrible massacre made in entering the city emphasized the threat and made the necessity

²⁷⁷ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 187r: «Cum sanctissimus in Christo pater et dominus noster clementissimus Xistus divina providentia papa quartus, ex pastoralis officii debito vigili cure percurreret ferarum incursibus, quibus Romanus grex, quem pre ceteris intrinseca charitate prosequitur, volens occurrere, post que restitutam illustratamque urbem ad reformanda ingenia adque illustrandas moribus hominum mentes sese convertens, Latio vocavit me suavissimis litteris suis de peccatorum gravitatibus quibus humana infirmitas premitur pro virium mearum facultate dicitur Romanumque populum ac omnes qui Romanam sequuntur curiam suis sceleribus arguturum».

²⁷⁸ Ibidem: «Glorioso igitur nomini tuo qui apud sororium Ungarie regem serenissimum apostolica legatione fungens, instituto huic meo interesse non potes, ipsos sermones meos ob debitam in te observantiam servitutemque iccirco ditavi, ut correcti et emendati ubi oportuerit sapientia tua litterarumque munimentis commendati non Romanus modo, sed omnibus Christi fidelibus et posteris quoque essent profuturi in quibus non eloquentie fuco verum sapientie documentis utendum censui quo plane omnes intelligerent que seipsa satis ornata est veritatem». On Giovanni d'Aragona's mission as Apostolic legate in Central Europe now see Antonin Kalous, *Late Medieval Papal Legation. Between the Councils and the Reformation*. Rome: Viella, 2017: ad indicem.

to repulse the invaders even more urgent. The king of Naples, Ferdinand, nominated his son Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, at the head of an army to put the town under siege. Together with him, as a contemporary chronicler registered, were several men of letters – including Galateo, Pontano and Sannazaro – and Alfonso’s confessor, Roberto²⁷⁹. As all triumphant narrations of the events recall, Alfonso’s expedition was a success and he eventually chased the Turks out of Otranto in September 1481.

Besides Roberto’s, the names of several Franciscans are remembered for their active participation in favor of the preparation of the army or even during the siege of Otranto. The Pope nominated Angelo da Chivasso, at the time General Vicar of the Cismontane Observants, Apostolic Herald for the collection of alms²⁸⁰. In turn, he probably named his confrere Domenico da Ponzone (or da Ponzo Spediano) alms collector for the crusade in Genua, whose activity is rather well documented²⁸¹. Gabriele da Verona, Cardinal since 1477, first went to the North as Papal legate, to organize the war, and then made his way to Otranto, where he gave his blessing to the soldiers²⁸². Finally Serafino da Squillace, bishop of Otranto since 20 October 1480, was also present with the Duke’s soldiers²⁸³.

Roberto, on his behalf, did not play such a heroic part. On the contrary, as a Milanese commissioner had to report, he fled the battlefield three times, being brought back each one of them. Eventually, on his fourth attempt, he managed to escape²⁸⁴. Clearly, the preacher did not mention any of these infamous events in his personal recollection of the conquest of Otranto, made primarily to flatter the hero of that expedition, Alfonso of Aragon, to whom the preacher dedicated his *Specchio della fede*²⁸⁵.

²⁷⁹ Giovanni Michele Marziano, ‘Successi dell’armata turchesca nella città d’Otranto nell’anno MCCCCLXXX’, a cura di Domenico Defilippis. In *Gli umanisti e la guerra otrantina, testi dei secoli XV e XVI*, a cura di Lucia Gualdo Rosa, Isabella Nuovo, Domenico Defilippis. Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1982: 103-210: 152.

²⁸⁰ Mario Viora, ‘Angelo Carletti da Chivasso e la Crociata contro i Turchi del 1480-81’. *Studi francescani* 22 (1925): 319-340, which also contains a transcription of the booklet Angelo diffused in this occasion: *Declaratio seu interpretatione super bullis Sixti IV.* s.n.t. [Florence: Nicolaus Laurentii, ca. 1481] [GW 1922]; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. III, n. 2367, p. 684; n. 1516, pp. 166-768. In general on Angelo see Sosio Pezzella, ‘Carletti, Angelo’. *DBI* 20 (1977): 136-138.

²⁸¹ Lidia Luisa Zanetti Domingues, ‘Ponzone, Domenico da’. *DBI* 85 (2016): 1-3.

²⁸² De Blasi ‘Rangoni, Gabriele’; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. III, n. 2367, p. 684; n. 1384, pp. 691-693.

²⁸³ *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. III, n. 1343, pp. 668-669.

²⁸⁴ Cesare Foucard, ‘Relazione della presa di Otranto, scritta dal commissario del Duca di Bari, al Duca stesso, Ludovico Sforza’. *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 6 (1881): 162-176.

²⁸⁵ *Speculum fidei*: f. aiv [from the dedication letter]: «Voi defensore strenuo della cristiana religione, accompagnato dal celeste aiuto, discacciasti la gente barbara crudele e ferocissima turchesca dalla città di Otranto con gran triumpho e immortale vostra gloria, ché si in vero non per la vostra virtù era in periculo tutta la Italia ancora la cristianità»; f. viiiv: «[Macometh] mandò uno suo Basàn per mare a campo ad Otranto, città del Reame di Napoli, dove poi brevi dì la prese. E quello crudele cane in sua presentia fe’ tagliare con grande effusione di sangue circa ottocento persone, chierici e laici, e ancora lo arcivescovo. Ma Dio volse poi temperare la ira sua con la misericordia, perché dede tanta virtù allo illustrissimo Duca di Calabria Alfonso de Aragona, che ricuperò la dicta città. E ho ardire di dire, lassando li passati, che nullo capitaneo della nostra età, che ce ne son stati famosissimi in la disciplina militare, haveria pigliato quella impresa dura e desperatissima con tanto animo, con tanto ingegno, con tanta sollicitudine, como fece Sua Illustrissima

The successful attempt to leave Otranto came, in any case, quite soon, since already in the first months of 1481 Roberto was in Florence, where he preached Lent in the church of Santa Liberata. Zelina Zafarana has studied the *reportationes* of some of the sermons Roberto held in this occasion, which were written down by a curious layman, who over several years collected notes from the preaching of different friars in Florentine churches²⁸⁶. The texts which are preserved are very dry summaries of the preacher's message, but they still preserve some significant traces of his arguments and, especially, of his very characteristic preaching style. One of these *reportationes* in particular bears trace of Roberto's penchant for dramatic representations during his preaching. During the sermon he delivered on 28 March, right in the middle of Lent, in fact, Roberto organized a dispute between a "poor man", a "rich man" and a (Observant?) Franciscan friar, over who had the most chances of obtaining salvation. A representation which clearly impressed the curious and devout layman²⁸⁷. It is surprising to read, in the layman's brief relation of the representation, that the Franciscan friar represented would have been «uno frate di San Francescho observante». We know well that Roberto, by that time, had long abandoned the Observant family. It may well have been an overinterpretation on the listener's side, though telling of the popular (or at least of this listener's) fondness towards Observants rather than Conventuals.

Later that year, around November, Roberto was in Rome, where Paride de' Grassi – prominent member of the Roman Curia and later, under Julius II and Leo X, Master of ceremonies – has pictured him in pleasant company of the six Abyssinian emissaries then visiting Sixtus IV's Court, discussing theological issues. The portrait gives us a picture of Roberto as key figure of the Roman curia presided by the Franciscan bishop Francesco della Rovere and as prominent theologian, as well as preacher. Moreover, also present at these encounters with the Abyssinians – who could communicate thanks to Giovanni Battista De' Brocchi's translations – was the powerful cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville, whom we have seen at various stages was close to Roberto²⁸⁸.

Signoria» See also the parallel passage from Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 47v: «Anno vero MCCCCLXXX venerunt [Mahumetani] cum potentissima classi ad regnum Neapolitanum et ceperunt civitatem Idrontinam. Quam tamen postea recuperavit Alphonsus illustrissimus dux Calabriae primogenitus regis Ferdinandi, qui incredibilia facta peregit utique admiranda in obsidione et expugnatione eius». On these mentions of the war of Otranto made by Roberto see Mario Marti, 'Un approccio di paragone sullo "Speculum Fidei" di frate Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce'. *Miscellanea franciscana salentina* 4/4 (1988): 3-36: 12-14.

²⁸⁶ Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento'.

²⁸⁷ *Ivi*: 1088: «Fecie fare [Ruberto] una quistione tra 'l povero e 'l riccho, alla presenza d'uno frate di San Francescho observante, che in tutto erano tre. E chominciò el frate di San Francischo, e disse che se noi non pigliavamo l'abito e vivavamo in ubbidientia, povertà e chastità chome lui, che nnoi non ci potavamo salvare. E anche el povero, cholla sua povertà chredeva potere meglio salvarsi ed essere più accetto a dDio ch'el riccho cholla sua roba: aleighando ciaschuno di questi molti testi della schrittura santa».

²⁸⁸ Philip Stenzig, *Botschafterzeremoniell am Papsthof der Renaissance: Der Tractatus de oratoribus des Paris de grassy – Edition und Kommentar*, 2 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013 (Tradition-Reform-Innovation. Studien zur Modernität des Mittelalters Herausgegeben von Nikolaus Staubach, band 17): I, 238: «Et aliquando [oratores a prete Iano ad papam missis] cum papa comederunt et disputationes cum aliquibus fratribus et presertim cum fratre Roberto, qui tunc habebatur summus doctor et princeps omnium predicatorum». The text had also been previously edited in Renato Lefevre, 'Ricerche sull'imoiese G. B. De Brocchi viaggiatore in Etiopia e curiale pontificio

Roberto probably stayed in Rome until Lent 1482. Despite we now know it was not this year that he preached the Lenten sermons he then turned into the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, we are sure he anyway preached in Rome also for Lent 1482. Indeed, on March 17th, the fourth Sunday of Lent, he preached about almsgiving in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, of which we know he had been chaplain. In that occasion, seven cardinals and Caterina Sforza – wife of Girolamo Riario, lord of Imola and Forlì – attended the sermon, together with such a huge crowd of people that the church was insufficient to fit them all²⁸⁹. For this reason, the following day, Roberto and his audience moved outside the church, in the square in front of it²⁹⁰. Then, in the morning of Holy Friday (5 April), Roberto preached in front of San Lorenzo in Damaso. During this sermon he – as he had done in other occasions – showed a crucifix, while tears moved up to his eyes: the scene had a deeply moving effect on his audience, which immediately burst into tears²⁹¹. Bernardino Guslino, Bernardino da Feltre’s biographer, also recalled this Lenten preaching cycle of Roberto’s in Rome. According to his account, Roberto was delivering his sermons in front of the Pantheon (thus not far from Santa Maria Maggiore) and the people would not stop to hear him, preferring to go and listen to Bernardino’s preaching in the convent in Ara coeli²⁹². Probably the Observants were reluctant to admit Roberto’s success, which is attested by more neutral sources.

During this stay in Rome, Roberto celebrated the canonization of the new Franciscan saint Bonaventura da Bagnoregio. Bonaventure’s canonization came over two centuries after the celebrated theologian’s death. It was only with due to the personal effort of the Franciscan pope Sixtus IV that the contrasting sentiments over his figure could be overcome, even the latest ones coming from Franciscan Observant oppositions to the canonization of a Conventual candidate. Two process were organized in Lyon – where Bonaventure’s body lies – to gather testimonies of his miracles: the first in the early 1470s and the latter which was concluded by 1480. Then, the Turkish

(sec. XV-XVI)’. *Archivio della società romana di storia patria* 12 (1958): 55-118: 108-109. Cfr. also *ibidem*: 75-77 and Benjamin Weber, ‘Gli Etiopi a Roma nel Quattrocento: ambasciatori politici, negozianti religiosi o pellegrini?’. *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 125/1 (2013): <http://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/1036> [last visited 13 March 2018]; Matteo Salvatore, Gianfranco Fiaccadori, ‘Brocchi, Giovanni Battista’. In: *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, edited by Siegbert Uhlig, 5 vols. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz: V, 284-286: 285.

²⁸⁹ Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra, *Diario romano*, edited by Enrico Carusi. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1904 (RIS, 23.3): 93: «Eodem die [XVII martii] in vesperis, Robertus Liciensis, ex Minorum ordine, Aquinas antistes, divini verbi nuntiator toto orbe celeberrimus, predicavit in basilica Marie Maioris. Eius sermoni sive predicationi (ut vulgo dicimus) cardinales VII interfuerunt et uxor Hyeronimi comitis. Populus vero tam frequens utriusque sexus et omnis conditionis ut locus illum capere non potuerit. Sermo de eleemosina fuit.».

²⁹⁰ *Ibidem*: «Eodem die [lune], tempore meridiano, in area Minerve predicavit Robertus, quem dixi; auditores fuere innumeri, cardinales vero V».

²⁹¹ *Ivi*, p. 94: «Mane vero diei huius [veneris sancta] Robertus Aquinas presul predictus in area Laurentii in Damaso inter predicandum extulit simulacrum crucifixi Salvatoris nostri, lacrimans ipse et plerisque lacrimas idemtidem excutiens».

²⁹² Bernardino Guslino, *La vita del beato Bernardino da Feltre*, edited by Ippolita Checchi. Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2008: 98: «[Bernardino] cominciò a predicar nella Settuagesima; et quando fu alla Quaresima s’amalò; pur continuava di predicare con grandissimo concorso; et venivan molti fin da San Pietro; et gran cosa è che passavan molti avanti la Ritonda, ove predicava il padre fra Roberto all’hora fatto vescovo, et venivan di longo in Araceli».

foray in Otranto, which we have just seen, was probably reason for further delay and the canonization was only successfully concluded in 1482²⁹³. According to the testimony of Bernardino Guslino, in the evening, at the end of the solemn canonization day, in front of the Pope Roberto would have delivered his sermon in honor of the new Franciscan saint²⁹⁴. Yet, when we read Roberto's later printed sermon on Bonaventure, we see that, although he confirmed being present in Rome at that time, he made no word of having delivered a sermon in honour of the new saint. Instead, Roberto asserted he was present at the sermon delivered by someone else, presumably the oration delivered by Ottaviano Martini da Sinuessa²⁹⁵.

We do not know much about Roberto's life in the following year 1483, except that he spent at least some time in Lecce, working at the re-elaboration of the sermons preached in Rome in 1480 for the publication of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. Some then state that, during 1484 or at another point during the pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-1484), Roberto was nominated Vicar of the Franciscan Neapolitan Province. Proof still needs finding to corroborate this, but it is at least possible, given the fact that the chronology of the Provincial Vicars has a gap for these years, between the vicariates of Giovanni da Saponara (elected in 1475) and Antonio da Cuccaro (1487)²⁹⁶. What is absolutely certain is that, at the beginning of 1484 (22 February), Sixtus IV's last honor in favour of Roberto was his nomination as bishop of Lecce²⁹⁷. Roberto must have surely received the news with joy, being nominated pastor of his hometown, a place he always loved and frequently visited. One month after the election he had already paid the usual 100 golden florens tax for the translation from his former see of Aquino to the new one in Lecce²⁹⁸. However, something got in the way. Sixtus IV, the Pope who had earlier named him bishop of Aquino and later of Lecce, who had been in excellent relationship with his fellow friar Roberto, died in August

²⁹³ Stanislao da Campagnola, 'Le vicende della canonizzazione di S. Bonaventura'. In: *San Bonaventura francescano. Convegni del Contro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, 14-17 ottobre 1973*. Todi: Accademia tudertina, 1974 211-255; Lorenzo Di Fonzo, 'Il processo di canonizzazione di S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, O. Min. (1474-82)'. *Miscellanea francescana* 75 (1975): 227-289; Ronald C. Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: The Last Medieval Saints, 1482-1523*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011: 33-70.

²⁹⁴ Bernardino Guslino, *La vita del beato Bernardino da Feltre*: 99: «Trattandosi di canonizar quattro santi huomini, il padre Roberto gli preconizò tutti quattro». Cfr. also Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1482, § 8 (XIV, 348); Di Fonzo, 'Il processo di canonizzazione': 264; Isidoro Liberale Gatti, 'Il palazzo della Rovere ed il convento dei Santi Apostoli in Roma attraverso i secoli'. *Miscellanea francescana* 79 (1979): 392-440: 421.

²⁹⁵ In his *Sermo de sancto Bonaventura*, printed at the end of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 153v: «Sanctissimus papa Sixtus Bonaventuram solemniter canonizavit Rome, anno Domini MCCCCLXXXII, mense aprilis. Gaudeo quia eram tunc in urbe predicans regnum Dei fuique cum ceteris prelatiis dum vota omnium exquisita fuere, fui dum solennis oratio habita est de laudibus huius sancti in publico concistorio, fui etiam dum pontifex in ecclesia Sancti Petri missam cantavit et sua divina voce dicere cepit: "Sancte Bonaventura ora pro nobis"». The description of the events listed by Roberto can be read in Gherardi, *Diario romano*: 95-97, who also does not recall Roberto's oration. Ottaviano Martini's sermon is edited in *Acta Sanctorum Iulii*, t. III, collecta, digesta commentariisque et observationibus illustrate a Ioanne Baptista Sollerio, Ioanne Pinio, Guilielmo Cupero. Antverpiae: apud Iacobum du Moulin, 1723: 824-830.

²⁹⁶ Alberto Imperato, 'Il francescanesimo nel territorio di Principato dal secolo XIII al secolo XVI'. *AFH* 64 (1971): 3-70. Cfr. Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa': 1037, n. 15.

²⁹⁷ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 56, 291-294; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s., t. III, n. 1820, pp. 916-917.

²⁹⁸ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 57, 294 [Arch. Vat., Obl. et Sol. 84 A, f. 188].

1484. Less than a year after Sixtus' death and the election of his successor Innocent VIII, Roberto swiftly resigned from his new see of Lecce, returning to his former charge in Aquino (July 1485). Probably his favors inside the Papal Curia had changed with the newly elected Innocent VIII, who nominated Antonio Tolomei in his place as bishop of Lecce²⁹⁹.

An interesting document from these few months in which Roberto held the episcopal see of Lecce is the letter that Galeazzo Marescotti de Calvis received in Bologna. The people of the town would have wanted Roberto to preach there. The friar, however, despite being resolute in not wanting to cease his preaching activity after the episcopal nomination and acknowledging the Bolognese people's love for him, had to decline, because of some immediate urgencies³⁰⁰.

By the beginning of June 1485 Roberto was again in Rome, as attested by the rare Milanese printed book in which Roberto is one of the witnesses of Francesco Sforza's narration of his visit to saint Francis' shrine. Indeed, this source tells us that Roberto was questioned on the event in Rome on 1 June 1485³⁰¹. Later that year, Roberto was back in his see of Aquino, since on November 12th he signed one of the rare surviving parchments of his activity there, now preserved in Montecassino³⁰². From around this period, at least two papal documents survive which name Roberto in his charge as bishop of Aquino, one dating from 30 May and the other from 15 November 1485³⁰³. More interesting is the bull that mentions Roberto dating 19 September 1486, concerning an illicit election to an ecclesiastical benefice the bishop had made. Roberto, indeed, had named Matteo Scardoni da Aquino dean of the church of Santa Maria di Castrocielo, in the hills just north of Aquino. Only the Pope, however, had the right to name the holder of such benefice and Innocent VIII, after having acknowledge such a right, confirmed Roberto's undue election³⁰⁴. Finally, in a letter written from Jesi by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, dated 25 May 1487 and preserved in ms. Lat. Cl. X. 175 (3622) of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, we read a curious story about Roberto. Around that time he would have approached the bishop of Nardò, Ludovico Giustini, brother of the famous man of arms Lorenzo da Città di Castello, asserting that it

²⁹⁹ *Ivi*: app. 59-60, 294-295. On these events see Antonio Catamo, 'Fra' Roberto Caracciolo vescovo di Aquino e di Lecce'. *Rassegna salentina* 1/2 (1978): 9-15.

³⁰⁰ Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 71.

³⁰¹ *Vide supra*, n. 156. Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Inc. 125: «MCCCCLXXXV el primo dì de Iunio. Siando lo famoso predicatore maystro Roberte de Letiio, episcopo d'Aquino, a Roma in la camera dela torra del palazzo o dicto la Lebigna, fora del'abitato de Roma, presente el reverendissimo cardinale de Sancta Praxeda, monsignore Iohanno Arziboldo, archiepiscopo de Milano, et altre persone de la famelia de la sua reverendissima signoria, fu interrogato per uno frate de l'ordine minore el soprascripto frate Roberto, episcopo d'Aquino, se luy si trovò presente quando quela mimoria del duca Francesco disse li soprascripte parole dela visitatione del corpo de sancto Francesco, MCCCCLVII adì cinque de Iunii».

³⁰² Archivio Benedettino di Montecassino, Caps. 63, fasc. I, n. 7.

³⁰³ *Bullarium franciscanum continens bullas, brevia, supplicationes tempore Romani Pontificis Innocentii VIII pro tribus ordinibus S. P. N. Francisci obtenta*, collegit et edidit Caesar Cenci, n.s., t. IV/1. Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1989: 209, n. 1; 322, n. 1.

³⁰⁴ *Ivi*: 511.

was the wish of the king of Naples that the two prelates swapped their bishoprics. The attempt, whether real, did not have any success, but it is an interesting attestation of at least three aspects of Roberto's life and figure. First, it testifies his continuous machinations for an ecclesiastical career; second it demonstrates his wish to return, in his old age, to his homeland; third it is a confirmation of the king's fundamental role in Roberto's movements and in his political maneuvers.

News on Roberto taper henceforth. We know from Giampiero Leostello that he was preaching in Lecce in the first days of January 1488, when the Duke of Calabria often attended his sermons³⁰⁵. Then, the people and the Duke of Ferrara would have wanted to hear Roberto preach in their own city for Lent 1489. The Duke had sent one of his courtmen, Ravanello, to Naples to try and convince the preacher. Despite the king of Naples himself had made an effort to satisfy his son in law – Ercole d'Este had in fact married Ferdinand's eldest daughter, Eleonora – however, Roberto refused to go, adducing the length of the trip as an excuse. Or at least this is what we read in a contemporary chronicler from the city³⁰⁶. Another chronicler, from nearby Romagna, on the other hand, asserted Roberto did eventually preach in Ferrara that year³⁰⁷. Between the two versions, the one coming from the city itself would seem more reliable. What is interesting is that, just as for Florence a few years before, the king of Naples seems to have been personally involved in Roberto's peregrinations, at least more than, at this time, the Pope or the Franciscan General Minister appear to have been. It looks like Roberto covered the role, in these late years of his life, of a sort of courtly preacher for the Neapolitan royal family.

Leostello again testifies for Roberto's preaching in Naples in the first months of 1490. He was preaching in the Cathedral, with an astonishing – and surely overestimated – audience of five or maybe six thousand people who gathered there to hear him³⁰⁸. Later in 1490, Roberto retired in

³⁰⁵ Ioampiero Leostello, *Effemeridi delle cose fatte per il Duca di Calabria*. Napoli: Tipografia dell'Accademia reale delle scienze, 1883 («Documenti per la storia, le arti e le industrie delle Province Napoletane», I): 143: «Die IIII Januarii [il Duca] arrivò a Lecci [...] et ibi aliquando verbum Dei intelligebat a Reverendissimo episcopo frate Roberto».

³⁰⁶ Girolamo Ferrarini, *Memoriale estense, 1476-1489*, a cura di Primo Griguolo. Rovigo: Minelliana, 2006: 315: «A dì zobia 9 aprile Ravanello, lo quale sta per famio di camera dil duca nostro, arivò a Ferrara et vene da Napoli; et fu mandato a Napoli dal re per lo duca nostro nanti la quaresema per molti e molti dì con dinari, e questo perché habesse a condurre frate Roberto, vescovo de l'ordine di santo Francesco, a predicare questa presente quaresema, in la qual semo, in questa città di Ferrara. Et benché lo re de Napoli molto se habia afatichato per mandarlo, nondimeno frate Roberto non ha voluto venire per la longeza dil camino, perché oltra Napoli è lontano alcune zornate. Et così è venuto senza lui, benché fusse expectato con gran desiderio dal populo di Ferrara. Lo re di Napoli per dicto Ravanello ha mandato a donare al duca nostro uno bello cavallo, qual io vidi».

³⁰⁷ Giuliano Fantaguzzi, *Caos*, edited by Michele Andrea Pistocchi, 2 vols. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2012: I, p. 69: «Fra' Ruberto da Lezo monarcha de predichaturi, vescovo d'Aquino, questo anno [1489] predicò a Ferara».

³⁰⁸ Leostello, *Effemeridi*: 308-9: «Die XXIII eisdem [sc. Februarii]. Satis bona hora surrexit [Dux] et cavalcò et andò ad piscopio et lì audio la predica che predicava frate Roberto, lo reverendissimo monsignor episcopo de Aquino, et tanto dignamente che a sua predicatione de continuo ce se trovavano in V et VI milia persone; et certe era lo Trombecta de predicatori [...] Die XXV Februarii. Per andare ad audire la predica del prefato frate Roberto bona hora surrexit et audita predicatione in episcopio audio ibi sua missa [...] Die XXVII eisdem. Solita hora iam erumpente sole cavalcò sua Illustre Signoria et andò ad piscopio. Li audio sua missa et la predica de frate Roberto».

his hometown, Lecce, where he worked at the correction of his second vernacular collection, known as *Specchio della fede*, which he then dedicated to the Duke of Calabria Alfonso of Aragon. In the dedication letter, the preacher recalled having delivered eight Lenten cycles in the city of Naples, to satisfy the requests of his dedicatees' father, king Ferdinand³⁰⁹. We do not know if Roberto ever visited Naples again. The Duke of Milan Gian Galeazzo Sforza addressed him some letters there in October 1492, to ask him to go preach in his city³¹⁰. Roberto was by then more than sixty-five, thus it might be plausible to think he had decided by then to retire definitively in Lecce. Here he died, on 6 May 1495, and he was buried in the Franciscan convent of San Francesco della Scarpa:

On 6 May, thirteenth indiction, a Wednesday, in the third hour of night, in the convent of San Francesco of the Friar Minors in the town of Lecce, the reverend friar Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce died. Prince of the preachers, a new Paul, bishop of Aquino, he was aged seventy. He preached for fifty-two years, without ever showing the slightest sign of fault. In his hometown of Lecce he preached for seventeen Lents. Every year, preaching, he would make some special grace, so to never bore his listeners: he could make people cry and laugh whenever he wished. And although he was unique and the bishop of Aquino, when he saw the friars in need in their convent, he took up his bag and went to beg for the love of God. And he <wrote> several works which are now printed all over the world. His holy body rests in Saint Francis and the townsmen, so as not to be ungrateful of all the good they had received from him, made him an honoured funeral and a beautiful mausoleum, which can still be seen in Lecce³¹¹.

A beautiful mausoleum was really built in honour of Roberto just a few years after his death in the chapel dedicated to Saint Bernardino, with statues of him in his episcopal robe and of Bernardino in the act of preaching and with three carved epitaphs. The mausoleum was then dismantled in the eighteenth century. The statues were saved and placed on the church walls, while two out of the three epitaphs were destroyed. These have been attributed, by a long tradition, to famous authors³¹².

³⁰⁹ Roberto Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: «Ho predicato io octo quadragesime per ordinatione del signore mio vostro padre alla città regia di Napoli, dove si è degnata vostra signoria comunemente spesso odire mi suo servo e seti comparso intra quella multitudine di huomini e donne, di dignori principi e baroni, di philosophi e doctores e maestri in theologia e di ogni altra gente come el sole tra le stelle».

³¹⁰ Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: ap. 61, 297 [Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Napoli, cart. 247].

³¹¹ Antonello Coniger, *Cronache*: 500-501: «Die 6 Madii, 13 indictionis, die mercurii, ad hore tre di notte, in lo convento de Sancto Francisco de l'Ordine de Fratri Minori in la città di Lecce, fo morto lo reverendo fra' Roberto Caracciolo de Lecce. Prencipe de' predicatori, Paolo novello, episcopo de Aquino; et era de anni settanta. Foi annunciatore de Verbo Divino anni cinquantadoi senza mai trovarseli minomo scripulo de fallancia, dove ne la cettà de Lecce sua patria predicò dicisette Quaresime. Omne anno pronunciando facia de gratia speciale, che mai a li audenti foi in fastidio: facia piangere et ridere quando lui volia et quantunque era unico al mondo et episcopo d'Aquino, quando vedea li fratri havere necessario in convento se metteva la tasca in spalla et giva mendicando per l'amore di Dio. Et più opere, quali vanno in stampa pe' tutto lo mundo. El beato so corpo dimora in Sancto Francisco de la huniversità, pe' non essere ingrato di tanto beneficio havuto de tale huomo le fé honorata esequie et magnifica Arca, come se po' vedere al presente in Lecce». See also Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum, 1495, § 54.

³¹² The most ancient attribution of the verses to these authors I have found is in Iacopo Antonio Ferrari, *Apologia paradossica divisata in tre libri. Nella quale si dimostra chiaramente la precedenza che dee avere l'antichissima e*

The author of one of the couplets would have been Ermolao Barbaro³¹³, while Giovanni Pontano would have been the author of the other two³¹⁴. There are however strong reasons to suspect these attributions. Apart from the compositions' questionable style, it is rather remarkable that Ermolao Barbaro died long before Roberto (1471) and that Pontano would have not included his verses in his collection of epitaphs, *De tumulis*³¹⁵. A much less known, but far more elegant, epitaph was dedicated to Roberto by an anonymous Latin poet and is preserved in one single manuscript copy, of which I have given a transcription in the appendix III.

7. A preacher's fame among contemporaries

It will be of some use to dedicate a few last words to Roberto's fame and fortune among his contemporaries. Since the primary target of this biographical reconstruction is that of contextualizing Roberto's works and their content in his time's cultural and intellectual milieu, a better idea of the rumors and opinions that circulated about this preacher can surely be of help in the evaluation of his preaching and writing's impact.

Roberto became at a very young age one of his time's most successful and famous preachers. We have seen the unfailing success of almost all of his preaching. His unruly attitude surely earned him some criticism among his Observant fellow friars and – for a moment – among popular listeners too. Yet, still in the years of his fiercest battles between against his former family, he remained the model of excellence to which they looked at when exalting their best orators, such as Michele Carcano, whose rising star in those same years consoled the Franciscan Observants from the loss of their most talented preacher³¹⁶. In any case, if his crossing over to the Conventuals led to

fedelissima città di Lecce. Lecce: dalla Stamp. del Mazzei, 1728 (anastatic reprint Cavallino: Capone, 1977): 433-435 (II, q. XII) This work was composed around 1576-1586. Iacopo Antonio Ferrari, however, seems to be rather unreliable – at least as far as Roberto is concerned – since, for example, he asserts Roberto preached in occasion of Isabella del Balzo's incoronation (*ibidem*: 52-53), which occurred in 1496, when Roberto was already dead (Isabella del Balzo was Federico d'Aragona's wife and was crowned in Lecce after Federico had been crowned in Naples). The attribution of the verses was then transmitted by historians, cfr. Wadding, *Annales minorum*: ad annum 1495, § 58; De Angelis, 'Vita di monsignor Roberto Caracciolo': 15; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 120-122 (where a photograph of the mausoleum is also published).

³¹³

«Ille Robertus hic est Christi quo praesule vatum
Nemo post Paulum clarior orbe fuit»

³¹⁴

«Maximus Ecclesiae, ceu Paulus, praeco Robertus
Quinquaginta annus concionatus, obiit.
Caracciolus fuerat Lyciensis, praesul Aquinas
Hoc tectus tumulo corpore, mente Polo».
«Nemo post Paulum Tarsensem melius Roberto
Lyciensi divina tractavit eloquia».

³¹⁵ Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, *De Tumulis*, edidit Liliana Monti Sabia. Napoli: Liguori, 1974.

³¹⁶ Chiappini, 'Fr. Nicolai de Fara epistolae duae': 394 [letter addressed by Niccolò da Fara to Giovanni da Capestrano, Bologna, 27 May 1455]: «Multi surgunt notabiles iuvenes predicatoros, inter quos numeratur quidam fr. Michael Mediolanensis, qui excedere videtur Robertum. Utinam et ipse perseveret»; 400-401 [From the same to the same, Venice, 5 June 1455]: «Multi pululant predicatoros, sed nullus inter plurimos acceptior fr. Michael de Mediolano. Sunt

a *damnatio memoriae* that in some cases also brought to partisan and imaginative reconstructions of his earlier feelings and actions, it did not however prevent his fortune within the Church's highest hierarchies and among the people to grow. Roberto kept preaching throughout the squares of some of the main cities of Italy, in almost all cases finding positive acceptance. He also not rarely preached in more solemn venues: for the Dukes of Milan, the Kings of Naples or the Pope and the Roman Curia³¹⁷. The enormity of the success he gained on the pulpit is incontrovertible.

Writers often mentioned his name as that of the most prominent example of preacher of his times. We have already seen the mentions made by authors such as Antonio Galateo, Masuccio Salernitano or Antonio Cornazzano. Roberto also appears in two epigrams by Janus Pannonius (1434-1472), in which – leaving aside the epicurean tone of the first and the ironically erotic theme of the second – the poet makes his name as that of the time's most celebrated preacher. In the first of the two compositions, the Hungarian prelate and humanist represented Roberto alongside Alberto da Sarteano as the emblematic figure to represent the celebrations for the 1450 Jubileum. Janus Pannonius mocked his friend Galeotto Marzio, who had resolved to go to Rome as a pilgrim, where – Janus ironically said – he could find some benefit by believing everything that father Alberto asserted on the pulpit with his hoarse voice or by listening to the garrulous Roberto, who took delight from moving old women to tears³¹⁸. This epigram would also lead us to believe that the two

qui dicunt maiorem habere vehementiam fratre Roberto. Ubique habetur acceptissimus. Utinam perseveret et non sequatur Roberti vestigia».

³¹⁷ None of Roberto's sermons *coram Papam* seem to have survived, thus correctly John W. O'Malley (*Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*. Durham: Duke University press, 1979) did not acknowledge him in his study of epideictic oratory in Renaissance Rome. There are, however, plenty of other testimonies certifying that Roberto often preached for the Pope and his court.

³¹⁸ Janus Pannonius, *Opera quae manserunt omnia, volumen I: Epigrammata*, edited by Iulius Mayer, Ladislaus Török. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2006: 130-131:

«Cur et tu, rogo, cur, poeta cum sis
Parnasi tamen arce derelicta
Cum capsula, Galeotte, cum bacillo
Romam peregrinus is in urbem?
Hoc plebs credula gentium exterarum,
hoc larvas solitum timere vulgus,
hoc turbae faciant hypocritarum.
Tu senti mihi, quod putavit olim
Vafri callidus Euthali magister,
aut divum Theodotus abnegator,
vel sectae pater ille delicatae,
summum qui statuit malum dolorem.
Sin devotio iam beata cordi est,
si torto iuvat ambulare collo
cuncta et credere quae dies per omnes
rauca predicat altus e cathedra
Albertus pater et loquax Rubertus
Gaudens lachrimulis anicularum,
dilectis, age, dic valere Musis
sacras rumpe fides et alma Phoebi
claudio carmina de fabro deorum:
nemo relligiosus et poeta est».

friends had heard Roberto preach before 1450, probably in Ferrara, where they both resided; or at least the preacher's fame had already grown so wide by 1450 that it had reached the city without him even preaching there. The second of Janus Pannonius' compositions featuring Roberto is addressed to another friend, a not better known Rinuccio, father of two girls, whom the poet advised should have been jealously kept at home and away from tempting and lascivious occasions. Among these were also the sermons during which father Roberto «crucifies himself on the pulpit»: it is not specified if for Roberto's otherwise attested penchant for women or for the promiscuity of the sermons' audiences³¹⁹.

Very positive is another praise of Roberto written in verse towards the end of the fifteenth century by the Dominican friar, scribe and preacher Filippo da Strada. The text – though never diffused and only preserved in a single manuscript copy from the few blank pages friar Filippo filled with writing inside an unsold manuscript missal that the Camaldulense monks of San Michele in Isola presumably refused after having commissioned it – is particularly interesting, since it preserves not Roberto's fame as a preacher, but rather as an author of sermons. Filippo da Strada, best known for his polemical writings against the new invention of the printing press, praised Roberto's moralizing and learned work of seventytwo sermons – probably the *Quadragesimale de*

Some verses of the poem were quoted in Cecília Radó, 'Roberto Caracciolo prédikációs működésének magyarországi vonatkozásai': http://sermones.elte.hu/page/369_tan_plaus_rcili.pdf; György János Galamb, 'Umanisti ed osservanti francescani in Ungheria'. In *Osservanza francescana e cultura tra Quattrocento e primo Cinquecento: Italia e Ungheria a confronto. Atti del convegno, Macerata-Sarnano, 6-7 dicembre 2013*, a cura di Francesca Bartolacci, Roberto Lambertini. Roma: Viella, 2014: 15-32.

³¹⁹ Ianus Pannonius, *Opera quae manserunt omnia*: 184:

«Sunt natae tibi nubiles, Rinuci,
Moratae satis et satis decentes.
Has tu tradere nuptui laboras,
ac toto generum foro requiris.
Sed sic aedibus intimis retrusas
custodis, uti Perseos parentem
Argivus socer aurei tonantis.
Non illas, miser, ad sacella sanctas,
non accedere praedicationes
permittis, quotiens pater Rubertus
rauca se crucifigit in cathedra.
Nedum visere festa vel choreas,
per convivia vel sinis vagari,
quot communivus interesse ludis.
Non est haec via filias locandi,
o vicine pater, meo nec umquam
hunc tu consilio modum sequeris,
sed venalia mercium tuarum
prima fronte locabis officinae,
imis nec penetralibus recondes,
tali tractus ut hospes illecebra
vel nolens emat, et nec autumanti
securum tibi promat arrabonem.
Omnis, iudicio meo, Rinuci,
maturae genitor viro puellae
mores debet habere curionis».

poenitentia – and especially commended his intellectual honesty of quoting his sources, among whom the Dominican Thomas Aquinas was, of course, one of the most prominent³²⁰.

In a mocking sense, which however highlights the preacher's fame and his success on the pulpit, Roberto figures in an episode of the «memorable events» collected by Battista Fregoso (1450-1505). A father from his hometown Lecce had asked Roberto to provide him with some of his best sermons for his son, who was a priest, so that he may learn something of his praised style. Hearing his son delivering the sermons, though, the father was greatly disappointed and he lamented about it with Roberto, believing he had not supplied his best texts. The preacher, however, proved him the contrary, delivering the sermons himself and obtaining his usual success³²¹. Long ranging works, read throughout Europe, such as the *Supplementum chronicarum* by the Augustinian hermit Giacomo Filippo Foresi (1434-1520) or Johannes Trithemius' *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* crystallized this positive fame of Roberto's preaching for centuries to come³²². Alongside these, we can add geographical and historical works, which never failed to mention Roberto when describing Lecce or Aquino, as for instance the Dominican Pietro Ranzano's *Annales omnium temporum* (though this work had no circulation whatsoever and is known from a single manuscript)³²³, and especially Leandro Alberti's *Descrittione di tutta Italia*³²⁴.

³²⁰ I have transcribed the text from the Venetian manuscript in appendix V. On Filippo da Strada see at least the latest *Stampa meretrix: scritti quattrocenteschi contro la stampa*, a cura di Franco Pierno, con la collaborazione di Gianluca Vandone. Venezia: Marsilio, 2011; Lorenzo Dall'Oso, 'Un domenicano contro la stampa. Nuove acquisizioni al corpus di Filippo da Strada'. *Tipofilologia. Rivista internazionale di studi filologici e linguistici sui testi a stampa* 7 (2014): 69-102, with further bibliographical references.

³²¹ Battista Fregoso, *De dictis factisque memorabilibus collectanea a Camillo Gilino latina facta*. Mediolani: apud Iacobus Ferrarius, 1508 (VIII, c. X): c. (kkviii)r: «Robertus Liciensis, qui Minorum ordinem profitebatur et qui sine controversia inter sacrarum rerum concionatores aetate sua principatum obtinebat, in patria sua aperte ostendit quantas in dicendo pronuntiatio vires haberet. Rogatus enim a concive, ut eius filio sacerdoti quosdam sermones ex iis quos eo anno ornatiores habuerat dare vellet, cum ei morem gessisset. Posteaquam pater filium eos recitantem audivit, arbitratus neque efficaces ad rem, neque ornatos esse. Cum Roberto graviter questus est se ab eo elusum, quod non eos sermones quos ipse antea ingenti laude sua singularique audientium attentione pronuntiaverat, sed alios deteriores dedisset, cui experimento intelligeret: sermones ipsos eosdem et in filio et in se semper fuisse, sed veluti in musicis idem carmen in diverso instrumento magistroque, sic eundem sermonem ab alio pronuntiatum varium etiam atque diversum videri. Leciensis igitur ille quod ex filio auditum vehementer damnarat, a Roberto cum denuo accepisset, mira delectatione affectus est».

³²² Jacobus Philippus Bergomensis, *Supplementum chronicarum*. Venetiae: Bernardinus de Benaliis, 1483 [GW M10969]: lib. XV, f. 175v: «Robertus de Licio, ordinis minorum professor et Aquile marsorum, seu Aprucii, urbis episcopus, in doctrinis sanctis doctissimus vir et notitie omnium ecclesiasticorum dogmatum sufficienter instructus et, ut absque invidia loquar, omnium predicatorum qui sunt aut unquam fuerunt magister. His temporibus ob eius clarissima et admirandam predicationis doctrinam ab omnibus Italis multo in precio habitus est, qui tantum in scripturarum studio laboravit ut ubique Roberti exemplaria nuncupentur, plurimos enim ad instructionem fidelium tractatus edidit qui ab omnibus presertim declamatoribus studiosissime leguntur»; Johannes Trithemius, *Liber de Scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*. Basileae: Johann Amerbach, 1494 [GW M47578]: f. 128v: «Rupertus de Licio, episcopus Aquilae marsorum, seu Aprucii, urbis, ordinis fratrum minorum, vir in divinis scripturis studiosus et eruditus et saecularis litteraturae non ignarus, ingenio excellens, eloquio dulcis et compositus, vita et conversatione praeclarus, declamator sermonum celeberrimus et universo christiano in orbe famosus, qui vero et exemplo multos ab iniquitate convertit. Scripsit ad aedificationem legentium et maxime praedicatorum verbi divini quaedam praeclara volumina».

³²³ Pietro Ranzano, *Descriptio totius Italiae (Annales, XIV-XV)*, a cura di Adele di Lorenzo, Bruno Figliuolo e Paolo Pontari. Firenze: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007: 228 [inside the description of the town of Lecce]: «Fert [Licio] mortales magna ex parte excellenti praestantes ingenio. In his aetate mea Robertus theologus nobilis, ordinis Minoris

Needless to say, Roberto's memory was dearly cherished by his compatriots, as is the case of the late-sixteenth-century *Apologia paradossica* for the city of Lecce written by Iacopo Antonio Ferrari (1507-1588)³²⁵. But his memory was strong also in other cities. Not long after Roberto's death, the Florentine anti-savonarolan Francesco Altoviti would take him as an example of a good and costumed preacher³²⁶. Then, some decades later, Roberto's name appeared in Teofilo Folengo's macaronic verses. One mention is in the fifth book of his *Baldus*, when the grotesque character Cingar improvises an oration and is paired by the author with Roberto's preaching due to the overwhelming display of scholastic, theological and giuridical knowledge³²⁷. The second mention is in the twenty-second book, where Boccalus names Roberto and another contemporary preacher, Gabriele Barletta, for their descriptions of Hell filled with caldrons of boiling oil, which Boccalus finds quite apt for frying frogs, while eels would have been better cooked on a skewer with the heat of the infernal flames³²⁸.

divini verbi praedicator, adeo doctus et eloquens ut toto christiano orbe nulli vel sit vel habeatur secundus. Reges et coeteri principes atque prelati ecclesiarum ipsique summi pontifices miro eum favore concionantem audiverunt. Coniectura itaque ex hoc assequi quisque potest quanto ardore ad ipsum audiendum Italiae populi concurrerint»; 285-286: [inside the description of the town of Aquino]: «Est hodie eius antistes Robertus ille Lyctiensis, cuius feci mentionem Calabryae describens civitates».

³²⁴ Leandro Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta Italia*. Bologna: per Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1550: 213: «Diede gran nome a questa patria [Lecce] ne' giorni nostri Roberto dell'Ordine dei Minori, vescovo di Acquino, uomo molto litterato et eloquente predicatore, qual lasciò dopo se alquanti volumi di prediche per le quali chiaramente si può conoscere di quanta dottrina fosse ornato».

³²⁵ Ferrari, *Apologia paradossica*: 433-435 (II, q. XII): «Fu di questo santo luogo [San Francesco della Scarpa] spiritual figluolo quel mirabile spirito fr. Roberto Caracciolo detto tra scrittori teologi Roberto Liciense, il quale essendo con i suoi lunghi studj fatto un massimo oratore, massimo canonista, massimo predicatore e vescovo di Aquino, meritò di essere in vita da' papi Pio II, Paolo II, Sisto IV, Innocenzo VIII ed Alessandro VI, e da tutti i principi stimato il primo predicatore che stato fusse dopo Paolo apostolo; e per tale essere stato celebrato da quel raro spirito Ermolao Barbaro, che altro non ebbe di barbaro che 'l solo cognome [...] Scrisse molte opere in teologia, sopra il Genesis, le sentenze e de peccato».

³²⁶ Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 'Polemiche politico-religiose nella Firenze del Savonarola. L'«Epistola responsiva» e la «Defensio» dell'Altoviti'. *Rinascimento*, s. II, 31 (1991): 93-130. (Now in Id., *Questa è la terra tua: Savonarola a Firenze*. Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000: 115-147).

³²⁷ Teofilo Folengo, *Baldus*, edited by Mario Chiesa, 2 vols. Torino: UTET, 1997: I, 424 [IX, vv. 242-249]:

«Durat grossam iam praedica Cingar horam
quem cuncti fratrem pensassent esse Rubertum:
allegabat enim Sextum, Decretalem, Decretum,
Angelicam, Glosam, Bibiam Sanctumque Thomasum.
Non fuit in fratrum studiis bacalarius unquam,
atque catedrantus scotistae doctior alter.
Totas utrorum voltat sotosora baianas,
argumenta facit; negat hinc, probat inde medemum».

Cfr. Massimo Scalabrini, 'Una predica macaronica tra folklore e agiografia (Baldus, IX 1-373)', in *Letteratura in forma di sermone*: 189-200.

³²⁸ Folengo, *Baldus*: II, 894 [XXIII, vv. 308-319]:

«At Boccalus: "Ego sensi credoque quod ipso
sub Phlegetonte bonas anguillas illa brigata
peschet et inflatas multa grassedine ranas.
Si tibi mancabunt illic, menchione, vivandae
dic: quid mangiabis? Qua guisa, quove modello
anguillis poteris, vel ranis tollere pellem?
En ad propositum nostrum squarcina trovatur,
quae cavet anguillis soccam ranisque camoram.

However, Roberto's fame was not positive in all cases. Still an anonymous reader of his sermons in the early sixteenth century felt it necessary to defend his beloved author from some malevolent detractors of his works and of his fame, composing a rather well balanced vernacular sonnet³²⁹. A number of salacious and mocking anecdotes concerning Roberto have made their way to us³³⁰. The best-known ones and most diffused in early-sixteenth-century Europe are those related by Erasmus in his *Ecclesiastes*³³¹. In the first of three stories, Roberto is depicted betting with an Observant Franciscan provincial Vicar on his ability to move his audience to tears with his preaching: Roberto would have managed in his purpose and won the bet, but would have then been severely reproached by the Observant friar for wasting his oratory talent in such frivolous matters. This story, besides being a literary depiction of Roberto's penchant for surprising oratoric techniques and of his tendency to abuse of them, it also is a reflection of his long contrast with the Observant family³³². The second anecdote narrated by Erasmus is probably the better known of the

Suntque illic oleo caldaria plena boiento,
ut Bariletta docet predichis fraterque Robertus;
frizere padellis quis ranas posse vetabit,
anguillasque illas ad arostum ponere speto?».

On Barletta see Antonio Alecci, 'Barletta, Gabriele'. *DBI* 6 (1964): 399-401; Niccolò Maldina, 'Dantean Devotions: Gabriele Barletta's "Oral" Commedia in Context'. In *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society*, edited by Stefano Dall'Aglio, Brian Richardson and Massimo Rospocher. London and New York: Routledge, 2017: 185-199.

³²⁹ The verses are annotated on a copy of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* now at the University Library in Bologna (AV KK IX 38), Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': p. 275:

«Roberto tu ribello al mondo sei,
ma di nova pietà ch'al cielo invia
sei pieno e a ditto monstri l'agnus Dei.
Di te rifrena ognun la lingua ria,
non giudichi il tuo dir e scritto
chi te non lege in casa e fuori e in via.
Tacete mostruosi infesti tanto
Mal di Roberto dire ch' gli è una fonte
Qual riga il Paradiso tuto quanto».

³³⁰ Some were first gathered by Vincenzo De Fabrizio, 'Alcuni curiosi aneddoti su fra Roberto da Lecce'. In *In onore del Prof. Vincenzo Tamburini*. Lecce: Giurdignano, 1905: 37-43.

³³¹ Cfr. Emile V. Telle, 'En marge de l'éloquence sacrée aux XV^e-XVI^e siècles: Erasme et Fra Roberto Caracciolo'. *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 43 (1981): 449-470. The three anecdotes were then inserted by Henri Estienne (1528ca-1598) in his *Apologia pro Herodoto*.

³³² Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, *Opera omnia*. Lugduni: Petrus Vander Aa, 1703-1706: V, 982A-982F: «Non alienum fuerit hic referre, quod de Roberto Liciensi narrant Itali, qui illum audierunt. De vita hominis nihil effutiam, tantum illud dicam quod ad hanc rem pertinet. Si vera sunt quae de illo rumore publico iactantur, nihil aliud erat quam homo miris naturae dotibus ad dicendum instructus. Ac primo fuerat de sodalitia eorum, qui se plausibili Observantium titulo secernunt a caeteris, quibuscum posteaquam illi parum conveniebat, demigravit ad eorum contubernium, qui vulgo dicuntur Conventuales, quod horum vita videretur esse liberior. Is quum convivio, in quo simul accumbebat Vicarius quidam de grege Observantium, vir eruditus, pius et gravis, iactaret se posse, quoties vellet, excutere lacrymas, ex eo refutare cupiens, quod alter obiecerat infrugiferas esse conciones illius, quod nec oratio ex animo proficisceretur, nec vita congrueret cum oratione: "Quibus – inquit Vicarius – tu excuteres lacrymas, nisi forte pueris, aut ineptis mulierculis?" Ad quae Robertus: "Tu igitur, vir tantus, cras adsis concioni meae, eo loco consistens quem tibi designabo, ut mihi sis in conspectu: si non excussero lacrymas, victus dabo lautam coenam, sin excussero, tu victus nobis eam parandam curabis". Nam illi generi contingere aes signatum religio est. Et commodum repertus est inter convivas Francisco bene volens, qui Vicarii nomine fide iuberet. Conventum est, adfuit Vicarius, stetit ubi iussus erat. Ibi Robertus quum multis modis amplificasset Dei erga homines caritatem ac beneficentiam, rursus hominum erga Deum ingratitude duritiemque, qui nullis invitamentis emolliri possent ad poenitentiam atque amorem mutuam, fecit apostrophen cor hominis Dei nomine: "O cor plusquam ferreum! O cor adamante durius! Ferrum igni liquescit, adamas sanguine hircino vincitur, ego quum nihil non faciam, non possum ex te vel unam extundere lacrymulam". Nec

three. Once, while preaching the crusade, Roberto would have delivered his sermon wearing an armour. Questioned how he had come up with such a histrionic staging, the preacher would have answered to have done it to impress a woman in the audience, who had told him during confession that she preferred a military garments over his monkish habit³³³. Both these narrations are visibly negative examples of oratory in Erasmus' eyes. The third story concerning Roberto is, on the other hand, more positive. In one occasion, being asked to preach for the Papal Court, Roberto would have come out with nothing but imprecations, later justifying himself by saying his behaviour had been caused by the sight of the splendour in which the Court lived³³⁴.

Also other authors recalled Roberto's penchant for women, remembered in one of Erasmus' anecdotes. The canon Raffaele Maffei da Volterra (1451-1522), in his famous *Commentaria urbani*, wrote that death found Roberto while he was «inter concubinas»³³⁵; and the cardinal Paolo Cortesi (1465-1510), in his portrait of the perfect cardinal, *De cardinalatu*, together with remembering the exceptional popular success of his Roman preaching, added the salacious detail of the fortune

desiit hac urgere apostrophen magnis clamoribus, donec Vicario erumperent lacrymae. Id simul, ut vidit Robertus, porrecta dextra, "Vici!" inquit. Hoc populus sub persona Dei dictum existimabat, quod aliquot essent in ea concione, qui lacrymas non tenerent. In convivio vero epinicio, quum Robertus iactaret suam victoriam, non inscite tergiversatus est Vicarius: "Non tua – inquit – facundia mihi excussit lacrymas, sed mea misericordia, reputanti quam indignum esset quod tam felix natura mundo serviret potius quam Christo». Francesco Torraca ('Fra Roberto da Lecce', in Id., *Studi di storia letteraria napoletana*. Livorno: Francesco Vigo, 1884: 165-203: 197) though that the novel XLIV of Gerolamo Morlini's *Novellae*, printed for the first time in Naples in 1520, as another version of this anecdote. The differences however seem to be too numerous to justify the matching of two stories which both share rather common anti-monkish feelings.

³³³ Erasmus, *Opera omnia*: V, 985F-986B: «Improbis est quod narrant de Roberto Liciensi, qui magna dictionis vehementia Principes ac populum adhortatus adversus Turcas aliosque Christiani nominis hostes, ubi ad summum impetum efferbuisset oratio, deplorare coepit quod nulli se ad rem tam piam duces offerrent: "Si istud – inquit – obstat, ecce me, qui nihil verebor hanc Francisci vestem abiicere et vel militem, vel ducem vobis exhibere". Simulque cum dicto, summam vestem abiecit, intus plane miles erat byssino sago, accinctus praelongo gladio. Hoc habitu dimidium horae sub persona ducis concionatus est. Accitus a Cardinalibus, quibuscum habebat familiaritatem, quid hoc esset novi exempli, respondit, id esse factum in gratiam amicae, quae familiariter fuerat confessa, nihil in Roberto displicere, praeter vestem fraternam. Tum ille: "In quo cultu sum tibi totus placiturus?" "In militari – inquit – cras igitur fac adsis in concione"».

³³⁴ Ivi: V, 986B-986D: «Simili novitate fertur Cardinalibus ac summo Pontifici exprobrasse fastum ac delitias. Erat apud illos dicturos, quos quum videret strepitu plus quam regio ingredi, denique et Pontificem gestari hexaphoro et omnibus adorari, ubi tandem consedissent, iamque exspectaretur vox hominis, is nihil aliud prolocutus: "Phy sanctum Petrum! Phy sanctum Paulum!", subinde cum execrantis voce expuens, nunc in dextrum, nunc in sinistrum, nec aliud addens, e medio proripuit sese, relinquens omnes attonitos, aliis suspicantibus eum esse versum in furorem, aliis dubitantibus num in haeresim quamquam aut iudaismum paganismumve prolapsus in eas balsphemias erupisset. Quumque ageretur de homine coniciendo in vincula Cardinalis quidam, qui proprius noverat eius ingenium atque etiam amabat, persuasit, ut prius ad Pontificem evocaretur, paucisque Cardinalibus testibus audiretur. Rogatus quomodo in tam horrendas blasphemias erupisset, respondit, sibi longe aliud argumentum fuisse praeparatum, et paucis summam orationis exposuit: "Caeterum, ubi spectarem – inquit – vos tanto strepitu tantisque in delitiis vivere, simulque reputarem quam humilem, laboriosam et amoenam vitam egerint Apostoli, quorum vices geritis, colligebam aut illos fuisse dementes, qui tam spinoso itinere contenderint in coelum, aut vos recta ad inferos proficisci. Sed de vobis, qui tenetis claves regni coelorum, nihil malae suspicionis in animum inducere potui. Supererat ut illorum stultitiam detestarer, qui, quum licuisset ad istum modum splendide suaviterque vivere, maluerunt per omnem vitam ieiuniis, vigiliis ac laboribus discrucari».

³³⁵ Raffaele Maffei, *Commentariorum urbanorum octo et triginta libri*. Lugduni: Sebastianus Gryphius, 1552: XXI, col. 632. On Raffaele Maffei see Stefano Benedetti, 'Maffei, Raffaele'. *DBI* 67 (2006): 252-256. Based on Maffei's account and, partially, also on Erasmus' anecdotes is the small paragraph dedicated to Roberto in Theophile Raynaud, *Dissertatio de sobria alterius sexus frequentatione per sacros et religiosos homines*. Lugduni: Michael Duhan, 1653: pp. 65-66.

Roberto especially had among women³³⁶. Much more specifically referred to a polemical detail of his works is, instead, Sigismondo Tizio's (1458-1528) attack against Roberto in his manuscript historiographical work on the city of Siena. The historiographer was worried about defending Lorenzo Valla from the accusations of heresy Roberto moved against him in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, which we will see in the second part of this dissertation³³⁷. Later than these, but possibly not less revealing, is cardinal Federico Borromeo's opinion on Roberto's preaching. In the first book of his *De sacris nostrorum temporum oratoribus*, printed posthumous, Borromeo grouped Roberto alongside other contemporary preachers as negative examples of preaching, who gave far too much importance to the artificial and exaggerate features of their oratory. The group is a rather interesting mix, almost entirely limited to the fifteenth century, and it includes the Dominicans Leonardo da Udine, Pietro Geremia and Gregorio Britannico (called Giorgio) and the Franciscan Observants Michele Carcano, Pierre d'Orbelles, Pelbart of Temesvár and Oswald Laskó, with the sole exception of who presumably should be recognized as the thirteenth-century Franciscan Gerard Odon. Opposed to these negative examples, Borromeo named three contemporary preachers who should have been admired: Jean Gerson, Lorenzo Giustiniani and Bernardino da Siena³³⁸.

Furthermore, stories about Roberto did not only circulate in high cultural circles. His name found its place – alongside those of other famous friars, but apparently with more frequency – in a number of witty episodes collected by the time's storytellers. According to these, during his preaching for the appeasement of the city of Perugia, Roberto would have instructed a local notorious fool named Marcone to answer “peace”, when asked, during the sermon, what he wished for the most. However, when the time came, Marcone, who was with other bystanders in front of the pulpit, was distracted by some attractive young women and, when he was questioned on what he

³³⁶ Paolo Cortesi, *De cardinalatu libri tres*. In Castro Cortesio: Nicolaus Nardus, 1510: ff. 103r-v. On Paolo Cortesi see Roberto Ricciardi, ‘Cortesi, Paolo’. *DBI* 29 (1983): 766-770.

³³⁷ Riccardo Fubini, ‘Una sconosciuta testimonianza manoscritta delle *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* del Valla’. In *Lorenzo Valla e l'umanesimo italiano. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi umanistici, Parma, 18-19 ottobre 1984*, a cura di Ottavio Besomi, Mariangela Regoliosi. Padova: Antenore, 1986: 179-196 (now also in Id., *L'umanesimo italiano e i suoi storici*: 169-183): 184.

³³⁸ Federicus Borromaeus, *De sacris nostrorum temporum oratoribus libri quinque*. Mediolani, 1632: 19: «Haec omnia [after having listed a number of scenic devices used in preaching] mea quidem sententia vitare oportebit, quia velut ineptiae sunt in suggestu. Et quamquam sunt in principio dicendi danda signa pietatis, ea tamen significatio debet esse quae ostendat populo sincere pium animum, non studium et industriam et in eo genere paratas artes. Errabant etiam in eo quod apparatu tanto tantaque meditati sermonis ostentatione non sentiebant quantum oneris imponerent sibi quantamque de se concitarent expectationem, cui, si satisfacere vellent, mirifica et inaudita quaedam essent dicenda, nec tamen ullo modo proferebantur. Horum in numero fuere Leonardus Utinensis, Petrus Ieremias, Odo Parisiensis, Robertus Caraciolus, Georgius Britannicus, Michael Carcanus, Pelbartus, Oswaldus, Petrus Dorbellus et alii, quod omnes haud fuerit facile recensere. Sed Ioannes Gerson et Laurentius Iustinianus et sancti nominis Bernardinus Senensis praecipuam in ea classe laudem invenerunt».

wished for, he would have answered by indecently unveiling the carnal desires that had taken over him³³⁹.

In his vernacular collection of *Facezie*, the humanist Ludovico Carbone, who also asserted to have versed some of Roberto's sermons he had memorized after having attended his preaching, recorded another anecdote regarding Roberto. According to his story, when the preacher had once been questioned which he thought was the best way to spend one's life at the service of the Church, if striving for martyrdom or preaching and confessing, Roberto would have answered: «As far as I'm concerned, I would rather choose to be a confessor than a martyr»³⁴⁰. After all, Roberto had demonstrated to be quite recalcitrant to the idea of martyrdom when he found himself facing the infidels at the time of the siege of Otranto in 1480³⁴¹.

³³⁹ *Facezie e motti dei secolo XV e XVI da un codice inedito Magliabechiano*. Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1874 (anastatic reprint, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1968): 58-59: «Fra Ruberto da Leccio, observante, per quello che i panno mostrano, dell'ordine di sancto Francescom et predicatore ne' suo tempi di grandissima fama et reputatione; predicando in Perugia de pace, hebbe a sé uno matto, chiamato Marcone, col quale, datogli certo prezo, si compose, che, quando lo dimandasse quello che vorrebbe, risponnessi: "Pace"; et circa a questo lo admaestrò quanto meglio seppe. Dipoi, montato in perghamo, et facto stare il decto Marcone a sé vicino, entrò nella sua predica circa alla pace; et doppo ch'ebbe narrato molte cose, per mostrare la necessità della pace, et quanto da ogni cosa ella fussi desiderata et chiesta; cominciò a dir: "Se tu dimandassi e cieli quello che vogliono, direbbono: pace. L'aria: pace. L'acqua: pace. La terra: pace. Li huomini: pace. I bruti: pace. Le piante: pace. Sino a' matti, direbbono: pace". Et che sia vero, voltatosi a Marcone sopra nominato, dixi: "Et tu Marcone, che vorresti?" Il quale, trovandosi quivi a rincontro d'alchune belle giovane, et essendo acceso di desideri carnali talmente, che qualche suo membro era in ordine per giostra; rispose con voce alta molto più che l'ordinario: "Vorrei f..." Fra Ruberto rimanendo beffato dixi: "Va, inpacciati con pazi"».

³⁴⁰ Ludovico Carbone, *Facezie e Dialogo de la partita soa*, a cura di Gino Ruozzi. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1989: 20, n. 27: «Frate Ruberto da Lezo, magnanimo e momoriosissimo predicatore, fu dimandato qual fosse mazor merito ne la Chiesa di Dio: o exponere la vita soa contra gli infideli per acquistar la corona del martirio, o starsene pur cussi quietamente e predicare e confessare avendo le buone spese de gli signori e communitade. Lui rispose: "Quanto a mi elezeria piuttosto d'esser confessore ca martire"».

³⁴¹ See above the beginning of subchapter 6.

Appendix I

Giovan Francesco Caracciolo's sonnet in honour of Roberto

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Barb. Lat. 4026, c. 98v:

[sonnet CCCXXV]

Sòle la fama minuir presencìa,
 quantunche fusse bella et elegante;
 in te, Ruberto, crescie, tali et tante
 son le tue dote in rara experiencìa.
 5 Natura mai, né arte, fe' eloquentia
 a la tua nova et singular sembiantè,
 che fa d'ogni altro schivo et de diamante
 chi le orecchie là porge et dà audientia.
 10 Un altro Apollo, Orpheo et Amphione,
 un altro Tulio viv' ad nostri tempi,
 un altro Paulo in carta et in sermone;
 dove non luci, specho fai li tempi,
 dove non riede, sterile sabione
 in omo et seccho fonte, ove no empi.

The meaning of the last three verses is rather cryptical, so it will be of some use to provide a translation of them here: «where you do not shine, you turn the times into a dark cave / where you do not return, you leave just sterile sand / in men and you leave an empty spring, where you do not replenish».

Appendix II

Francesco Uberti's metric epistle for Roberto's preaching in Cesena
 Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, cod. D.I.2, cc. 19r-20r

De adventu patris fratris Roberti Ordinis Minorum predicatoris celeberrimi gratulatio

Magnificus Princeps, nec non Regina Patresque
 adventu gaudent; praeco, Roberte Pater,
 praeco Dei, observande Pater semperque canende,
 o Deus, o fama temporis huius ave!
 5 Cesenae et venias quamvis nunc serus ad urbem,
 non minus es gratus semper ut esse soles.
 O cui divino concessum est munere cunctis,
 melliflua ut placeant quae tua lingua serit!
 Mirentur potius veniant quae ex ore rotundo,
 10 cum ingenii laxas flumina magna tui!
 Quis tibi facundum iactet nunc Nestora, cuius
 dulcia melle magis verba fuisse ferunt?
 Te patet in morem Demosthenis ac Ciceronis,
 in risum et lachrymas vertere posse viros.
 15 Quid loquor? O taceant veterum monumenta virorum,
 qui procul a Christi nempe fuere fide!
 Quid miseros iuvit multos studuisse per annos,
 si Iovis inferni regna inamoena colunt?
 At tu, magne Dei praeco, super astra polorum
 20 scandere qua liceat nos ratione doces,
 debeat utque hominum genus inferiora relinquens -
 haec bona vana quidem - regna superna sequi.
 Ecquem non moveant sanctorum exempla virorum,
 tu quibus innixus cuncta probare soles?
 25 Foelices qui te resonantem verba salutis
 audiuere - licet dicere - magne Pater!
 Nanque rudes refert populos quis corrigat auctor.
 Eloquii, o, quanta est gratia visque tui!
 Tu stimulos acres virtutum in pectora condis,
 30 ut mens auctorem quaerat ametque suum.
 Paulum ego crediderim caelestis amore calentem
 dixisse haec regni, quae facis ipse, Pater.
 O quantis meriti tolluntur in astra parentes,
 laudibus aeternum qui peperere decus!
 35 Amborum aethereis animas quis sidere laetas
 sedibus ac caeli regna tenere neget?
 Tu vero orandum est, superes ut Nestoris annos
 atque pio faveant numina sancta tibi,
 iusta nec omnipotens unquam tua vota moretur

- 40 conditor. - O tibi sint candida fata velim!
 Corporis atque animi dotes natura paravit
 larga tibi, quantas nullus habere queat.
 Quis, rogo, quis nostro vigeat nunc tempore, possit
 dicere qui tanta ac tot meminisse simul?
- 45 Haec est vel sola semper qua vivere dignus,
 nempe maronea est res memoranda tuba!
 Expertem nec te voluit fortuna bonorum
 esse, licet nunquam dixeris esse bona;
 quae, quamvis ita sint, non es contentus et altos
- 50 mente capis caelos, quis bene dignus eris.
 Hoc tibi deest unum, cum tu perferre labores
 non poteris, quot te rite tulisse probas.
 Praemia suscipias Dominus quae magna paravit
 fortibus et ducibus militibusque bonis.
- 55 Quid loquor? Ah maneat, maneat, Pater, omne per aevum
 et dentur vitae stamina quanta cupis.
 Dignus es ut toto fama celebreris in orbe
 nominis et vigeat candida fama tui.
 Haec tibi devotus tenui modulatus avena
 carmina sed laeta do tibi mente cliens.
- 60 Ne, rogo, ne placeat tibi despexisse parenti,
 qui tibi commendat seque suosque pio

Appendix III

Anonymous epitaph in honour of Roberto.

From a copy of the *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*. Venice: Giorgio Arrivabene, 1489, in a private collection³⁴², written by a late fifteenth-century or early sixteenth-century hand.

Fratris Roberti Carazoli Liciensis episcopi Aquinatis obitus defletio

Indue lugubres habitus, tua pectora plange,
 scinde comam et crudis unguibus ora seca,
 fletibus indulge largis, te percute, plora,
 Italia, heu tanto quae viduata viro es!
 5 Occidit ille sui Robertus gloria seculi,
 quem cui praeferres iam tibi nullus erat,
 qui per tot populos gentes atque exera regna
 nomen ab illustri voce perenne tenet,
 cui prior haud similes nec postera sentiet aetas:
 10 ille obiens secum substulit omne decus.
 Quo tot thesauris sophyae radiante magistro
 optassem prisci Socratis aula frui.
 Non alius carthas qui doctius explicet almas
 sanctorumve patrum dogmata pandat erit.
 15 Omnia templorum certatim pulpita plorant,
 altisona cecinit in quibus ille tuba.
 Heu quanta extincta est divini buccina verbi!
 Heu duce catholica est quo spoliata fides!
 Sed placuit regi post talia facta superno
 20 emeritum hunc superis aenumerare choris.
 Hic sibi longaevi merito sperata laboris
 foenore multiplici praemia digna capit.

Disticon

Ossa tegis tumulo veneranda Roberte sub isto
 tempore cui nullo partus abibit honos

³⁴² I wish to thank Antonio Verde of the antique bookshop “Quae exstant” in Bologna for kindly providing me with photographs and consenting to the publication of the text.

Appendix IV

Porcelio's epigram for Roberto

Porcelio Pandoni's epigrams are preserved in three manuscript collections: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, cod. Lat. qu. 390 (B), Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, cod. Conv. Soppr. J IX 10 (F), Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Urb. Lat. 708 (U). The epigram that the humanist dedicated to Roberto is in all three manuscripts (B, c. 46v; F, cc. 101v-102r; U, cc. 51r-v), but just in one of them it is actually dedicated to the preacher: B. In F the epigram – which, in that case also names the humanist Maffeo Vegio – is in fact dedicated «magistro Thome de Serzano», possibly Tommaso Parentucelli, later Pope Nicholas V, who was born in Sarzana and was *magister theologiae*, but more probably the *magister* Tommaso da Sarzana who gave up the chair of rhetorics at the university of Bologna in 1471 to pick up the Franciscan Observant habit³⁴³. U, on the other hand, has another friar as dedicatee, the *magister theologiae* Gioacchino, whom I have not been able to identify.

I have transcribed from B, adding variants from the other two manuscripts in the philological annotations that follow.

Fratri Roberto Licio predicatore prestantissimo de vera gloria

Scribere gesta ducum nocturna in luce parabam
aut Veneris saevas igne latente faces,
cum subiit Roberte pater tua dulcis imago,
cum subiit virtus eloquiumque tuum.
5 Sume igitur quae sit fallacis gloria mundi
et fiant homines qua ratione Dei.
Aurea marmoreis levat hic sua tecta columnis,
huius et arbitrio concumulantur opes,
illum fama levis extollit ad aethera, at illi
10 magnificat titulis nomina falsus honos,
ille mero somnoque gravis luxuque ciboque
perditus in castris mirtea sertae gerit.
Ipse nec invidio spiret modo sanctior ille
spiritus et lateri sit pia turba meo.
15 Vera ubi sit certe non norunt gloria porro,
non norunt ubi sit vita beata, pater.
Quam multos fortuna levat et rursus eosdem

³⁴³ Celestino Piana, 'L'evoluzione degli studi nell'Osservanza francescana nella prima metà del '400': 265-266.

Precipitat: ludo sic facit illa suo.
 O spes vana et honos et inanis gloria! Nullum,
 20 nullum habet ad caeli culmina fucus iter.
 Sit pietas, sit sancta fides virtusque pudorque:
 hic cumulus superis nos facit esse pares.
 Iamque vale, nostrarque pater ne despice musam,
 rauca sit et tanto si minus apta viro.

Philological annotations:

Title, Fratri...gloria] Magistro Thome de Serzano patri integerrimo de vita beata F; Patri Iohacchino sacrae theologiae magistro amplissimo U;

v. 3, Roberte] divine FU;

v. 4, follows "suaserat ac Vegius ante poeta meus" F, "he tua pura fides et amor pectusque pudicum / admonuit tanti scribere facta patris" U;

v. 12, mirtea] mycthea FU; v. 13, sanctior] delphicus F;

v. 21, pudorque] laborque F;

vv. 17-24, Quam...viro] "Percensere preces divini fontis alumni / an tuba nostra queat ire per ora virum / num mea picta ratis undosa per aequora possit / currere, num piceos temnere vela nothos. / Incipiam quam mox grandi cantare coturno / carmina Sforcigena principe digna duce / namque ubi divino mea musa afflata favore est / principis Anguigeri maxima facta canam; / dicam equidem quantum praestet pietate vel armis / utque sit iste deus Marte patre genitus, / quanta illi est probitas, quam candida fama fidesque, / quem vincit nemo liberiore manu. / Tandem carminibus crescent sua nomina quantum / populus in liquidis ardua crescit aquis" U.

Appendix V

Filippo da Strada's poem in honor of Thomas Aquinas and Roberto.

A number of Latin and vernacular compositions by the Dominican scribe Filippo da Strada are preserved in the first folios of Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. III 170 (2453), copied by friar Filippo for the Venetian Camaldulense monastery of San Michele in Isola, but probably never acquired by the monks. The poem in honor of Roberto is contained in f. 25r-v and was first signalled by Edoardo Barbieri³⁴⁴.

In laudem fratris Ruberti carmina pango.

Lucis et ingenii, morum pacisque salutis
 plantator, tibi, lector adest Rubertus in isto
 tractatu claro, veraci, sat bene fulto
 autorum dictis, sacrati precipueque
 5 Thomae, quo nitor, pascor, fruor, ut duce forti.
 Ordo meus minor ipse volo mihi parcat abunde,
 si lego de pratis flores prestantis odoris;
 incrementa, Deus, dum me pervideris, addet:
 plantantem nihil esse monet Paulus sine flante;
 10 ergo prima tui fiducia ducta sit, inde
 ut cuiusque boni sit gratia prevenienti
 ingenito patri, gnato simul hisque manenti.

Laudes egregie in famosum predicatorem ordinis minorum Robertum fratrem

Tempore vernali fundendos, morigerandis
 christicolis cunctis per scriptum, quam relegendum
 septuagintaduos sermones dat tibi frater
 Robertus. Minor ipse fuit, sed maior habendus
 5 doctrina, vita celebri fandique lepore.
 Est honor huic dandus merito, quia Thomas Aquinus
 pectora complevit solidis rationibus almīs:
 sepius in testem producit, ut decus ornans.
 Hinc cape quanta fuit doctoris gloria sancti,
 10 dum sua dicta fidem primam lucemque refundunt
 cuilibet ex omni Francisci vel Benedicti
 ordine, conflanti libros vel sacra docenti.
 Doctor discipulo nomen dedit hicque magistro
 nusquam degenerat, sed fontem rivus honorat.

³⁴⁴ Edoardo Barbieri, 'Morfologie del libro in un monastero camaldolese del Quattrocento: il caso di S. Mattia di Murano'. In Id., *Il libro nella storia: tre percorsi*. Milan: CUSL, 1999: 1-115: 20.

- 15 Extat apud Senecam dictum vulgo recitatum:
dum benefacta probat dantis, simul et capientis,
est nimis ingratus qui quod capit hoc aliunde
advenisse negat, propriis id viribus aptans.
Hoc tumor in multis operatur et invidia labes:
- 20 Thomam furantur, celant tamen et sua iactant,
quod capitur Thoma, Scoto dant sive Ricardo.
Non sic Robertus, quamvis minor, hunc tegit inflans,
sed prodit, laudat, precium sibi credit ab illo.
O bene celestis verbi sermone refertus,
- 25 discite me, generati, non alta sed ima tenere;
sive velis nolisque tuum non esse superbe
quod bene commoneas scitur, quia sunt nova nulla.
Est Salomon testis, sub sole nihil novitatis,
quod dicis primi dixerunt. Accipe causam:
- 30 omnis ab infusa sapientia nostra recepta est
luce Patris summi, quamvis non omnibus aequè
perque gradus plures, Dionisius ut bene fatur,
dona Dei veniunt, maioribus insita primo,
hique minora suis afflatibus ad meliora
- 35 corda virûm renovant, doctrinam contribuentes.
Sic fuit ab lapsis mundi propectibus ordo
in rebus positus: ne falso te super auge.

Sermon collections: editions and fortune

1. *Sermon collections in the fifteenth century: some specificities*

In order to appreciate the effect of Roberto's sermons if not on his direct audiences – of which we only have few and sparse news – at least on the public of readers of his time, it will be important to try and catch a glimpse of the success his written works had. As Kristeller once wrote, «not only can the indication of a manuscript or rare book announce the existence of a literary product, but also the list of copies, reprints and translations of an already known work can make us see its spiritual presence and its possible influence on all those who transcribed, published, translated, studied it»¹. We can trace this by attempting to follow the editorial history of Roberto's printed collections, surely by far the most successful of his writings, without however discarding the manuscript diffusion of these collections and of other sermons delivered or composed by him. Then – picking up again the thread from Kristeller's text, in which the scholar went on to say that «even the fact that a book or many books were in a certain place reveals a specific interest of who bought and preserved them» – it will be of some interest to try and investigate, though in a cursory and not systematic way, the presence of Roberto's collections in private and public libraries of his time.

Since Late Antiquity, listeners (either employed for this specific reason or not) had collected the sermons of famous and celebrated preachers in written form, in order to preserve and convey them for reuse or diffusion. Since then, the practice of the *reportatio* had always been one of the main tools of the sermons' transmission, be it with or without the author's revision and control². These collections were useful tools for the other preachers to use as models for their own oratory and for the fixation of the preacher's message for devout readers. To contrast the diffusion among unexpert readers of uncontrolled versions – as Berthold von Regensburg justified his written collection³ – it became more and more common to produce “official” collections, thought primarily,

¹ Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazzarelli. Contributo alla diffusione delle idee ermetiche nel Rinascimento'. *Annali della R. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Lettere, Storia e Filosofia*, s. II, 7 (1938): 237-62 (now in Id., *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*: I, 221-247: 221.

² See several contributions in *Dal pulpito alla navata*. Also see Jacqueline Hamesse, 'Reportatio et transmission de textes'. In: *The editing of theological and philosophical texts from the Middle Ages*. Acts of the conference arranged by the Department of classical languages, University of Stockholm, 29-31 August 1984, edited by Monika Asztalos. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986: 11-34; Ead., 'La technique de la reportation'. In: *L'enseignement des disciplines à la Faculté des arts (Paris et Oxford, XIIIe-XIVe siècle)*. Actes du colloque international, édités par Olga Weijers et Louis Holtz. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997: 405-421.

³ See the quotation in Roberto Rusconi, 'La predicazione: parole in chiesa, parole in piazza'. In *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*, 1: *Il Medioevo latino*, II: *La circolazione del testo*. Roma: Salerno editrice, 1994: 571-603: 574.

if not only, for written circulation and more or less dependant on the oral delivery. Such collections and re-elaborations of sermons were also an answer to the growing demand, from the laity, of devotional tools for their personal and practical religious needs, a demand for inclusion in religious debate which had began in the fourteenth century and which would have reached its peak in the late fifteenth⁴. Sermon collections of this sort diffused in larger and larger numbers from the thirteenth century onwards and, by the time of the fifteenth century, it had become a norm for all the best-known preachers to produce and circulate them⁵.

Reportationes, of course, were still being produced, both from the increasingly literate lay audiences and from the preacher's confreres and other religious listeners. The more complete and trustworthy authorial versions, however, the circulation and diffusion of which was boosted with the dawn of the printing press, probably favoured these latter texts over the reported sermons, often too personalized and specific. Thus, the diffusion of more elaborated sermon collections, written down once off the pulpit and detached from any kind of reference to an immediate public, became preponderant. The earliest and most significant examples for Italian preachers are the Dominicans Iacopo Passavanti and Domenico Cavalca, who, however, when preparing their works most closely related to preaching – such as especially the *Specchio di vera penitenza* and the *Frutti della lingua* – molded their material to such an extent that the sermon structure remained barely visible. Closer to our subject, the immediate aura of devotion that rose around Bernardino da Siena – not only after his death, with the rapid success to the canonization process, but already during his life – and the relatively late age in which he began composing his sermon collections in writing, probably contributed to preserving such a large number of *reportationes* of the sermons he had preached⁶. After him, preachers who recognized themselves as members of an ideal *scuola bernardiniana* – such as Roberto himself or Antonio da Bitonto and Bernardino Busti – have left model sermon collections or treatises in the form of sermon collections as the largely predominant, and sometimes only, testimony of their preaching⁷. Possibly Roberto is among the fifteenth-century preachers with the largest number of extant reported sermons, after Bernardino da Siena, Bernardino da Feltre – whose reported sermons, however, had very modest circulation and are now mainly known from just

⁴ Cfr. Ginetta Auzzas, 'Dalla predica al trattato: lo *Specchio della vera penitenza* di Iacopo Passavanti'. *Lettere italiane* 54/3 (2002): 325-342 (also printed in *Scrittura religiosa. Forme letterarie dal Trecento al Cinquecento*, a cura di Carlo Delcorno e Maria Luisa Doglio. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003: 37-58); Gagliardi, 'Dibattiti teologici e acculturazione laicale'.

⁵ Louis-Jacques Bataillon, 'Sermons rédigés, sermons réportés (XIIIe siècle)'. In *Dal pulpito alla navata*: 69-86 (now also in Id., *La prédication au XIIIe siècle en France et Italie*: 69-86); Auzzas, 'Dalla predica al trattato'.

⁶ Most of Bernardino da Siena's reported sermons have been edited, see the *Nota bibliografica* in Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena, 1427*, a cura di Carlo Delcorno, 2 vols. Milan: Rusconi, 1989: I, 59-60. To the editions mentioned there, we should add Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche della Settimana Santa: Firenze 1425*, a cura di Marco Bartoli. Milan: Paoline, 1995.

⁷ Carlo Delcorno, 'L'osservanza francescana e il rinnovamento della predicazione'; Idem, 'Apogeo e crisi della predicazione francescana'. Cfr. also Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction*: 52-78.

two manuscripts – and the extraordinary case of Girolamo Savonarola, whose *reportationes* taken by Lorenzo Violi also made it to print in the fifteenth century⁸. Still, considering Roberto's case more specifically, we know of eighty sermons, preserved in ten manuscript copies, which originated from his preaching in Padua in 1450-51⁹. Not much more than the nine sermons preached in Milan and preserved in a vernacular *reportatio* can be added to this number¹⁰, which sums up to a relatively small amount, especially if compared with the over 300 model sermons from his printed editions (plus a few model sermons which are preserved only in manuscript, as I will say).

In general, model sermon collections (or single sermons excerpted from them), sometimes produced for public diffusion, more often for private use, were frequently transmitted and transcribed among preachers and religious readers, always eager to collect material that could be useful for their own activity of pastoral care. This is almost surely the reason why, immediately after the invention of the printing press and its introduction in Italy, these bulky collections revealed themselves as luring investments for printers and new book merchants. «Printing was from the start a commercial enterprise and [...] there has never been a book that went to press unless the printer rightly or wrongly believed he could make a profit by printing it»¹¹. Therefore, the dozens of issues that appeared in hundreds of runs (sometimes thousands: and it was Roberto's case!) and the fact that the same collections were often printed repeatedly at short distance testify for these work's impact on the market.

With the revolution in the diffusion of books brought about by the printing press, sermon collections spread also outside their customary conventual circulation, becoming ever more desirable for lay readers too. As I will try to prove, Roberto's literary production can be taken as an excellent example of how these collections were read and even cherished among the laity. Moreover, it is at this time and precisely with Roberto's works (and a little later with Savonarola's) that model sermon collections, in some cases, abandoned their original primary purpose of providing working tools for fellow preachers, becoming true surrogates and substitutes of live

⁸ For centuries, just a bunch of sermons was thought to have survived of Bernardino da Feltre's preaching. In the 1940s, however, Carlo Varischi discovered two manuscripts preserving two cycles preached by Bernardino in Brescia and Pavia. His edition of the two manuscripts appeared twenty years later: *Sermoni del b. Bernardino da Feltre nella redazione di fr. Bernardino Bulgarino da Brescia*, a cura di Carlo Varischi, 3 vols. Milano: Cassa di risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde, Banca del Monte di Milano, 1964. For Savonarola, see at least: Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 'Ser Lorenzo Violi e le prediche del Savonarola'. In *Dal pulpito alla navata*: 261-285; Roberto Rusconi, 'Le prediche di fra Girolamo da Ferrara: dai manoscritti al pulpito alle stampe'. In *Una città e il suo profeta*, a cura di Gian Carlo Garfagnini. Firenze: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001: 201-234.

⁹ Thirty of these eighty sermons have had a modern edition: Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*. For a discussion of this edition and of the preaching cycle (from 1450-51 and not 1455 as previously believed), see further on.

¹⁰ Gaspari, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare di Roberto da Lecce'.

¹¹ Ernst Philip Goldschmidt, *Medieval Texts and their First Appearance in Print*. Oxford: University Press, 1943 (Supplement to the Bibliographical society's transactions, n. 16): 13. See also Rosa Salzberg, 'The word on the street: street performers and devotional texts in Italian Renaissance cities'. In: *Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy*: 336-348

preaching¹². Indeed, it is possible to see how some of Roberto's collections became, in the readers' eyes, more similar to reference works, useful to orient more or less expert readers inside the difficulties of Christian doctrine and moral theology, or even devotional readings for the laity¹³. It is the case of some Latin collections, which thoroughly discussed a number of aspects of Christian doctrine and theology in a straightforward, comprehensible and – most of all – non-controversial way, somehow appeasing the pugnacious scholastic tradition of Northern universities, and especially of his vernacular collections, visibly oriented to a popular diffusion. Roberto was, in fact, among the very first authors to commit himself to the composition of model sermon collections in the vernacular¹⁴. Of course, vernacular collections of sermons already widely circulated also among lay readers, as the celebrated case of Giordano da Pisa's *prediche* abundantly testifies¹⁵. Another thing were the meditated collections composed for written diffusion, for which Roberto and, not long later, Savonarola also employed the vernacular for the first time, destining them more to the devout readings of pious laymen than to the technical reuse of other friars.

Similar to Roberto's attempts could have been works such as Passavanti's *Specchio della fede* or, closer to his times, the reduction of preaching cycles into small vernacular treatises made by the Observant Franciscan Antonio da Vercelli, whose preaching in Sansepolcro in 1466 became a *Tractato utile e salutifero de li consigli de la salute del peccatore* and whose preaching in Volterra in 1478 became a *Trattatello de dodici frutti della confessione*¹⁶. Neither of these examples, however, truly reflect the structure of the preached *sermo modernus*, with all its *divisiones* and *distinctiones*, and its strict formal rules¹⁷. Moreover, the ascription to sermon literature of treatises and other writings could also be fictitious, as in the case of another Franciscan Observant, Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto, who asserted to have put in the vernacular his preaching on the Passion,

¹² Marti, 'Un approccio di paragone sullo "Speculum Fidei"': 7.

¹³ Roberto Rusconi, 'Coscienza e modelli alla vigilia della Riforma'. In Id., *L'ordine dei peccati. La confessione tra Medioevo ed età moderna*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002: 183-240: 193-194 (already printed as 'Dal pulpito alla confessione. Modelli di comportamento religioso in Italia tra 1470 circa e 1520 circa'. In *Strutture ecclesiastiche in Italia e in Germania prima della Riforma*, a cura di Paolo Prodi e Peter Johanek. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984 (Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico, Quaderno 16): 259-315)

¹⁴ On Roberto's primacy in this role, see Zafarana, 'Caracciolo, Roberto': 451 and Bruni, *La città divisa*: 180.

¹⁵ See at least Giordano da Pisa, *Quaresimale fiorentino 1305-1306*, edizione critica per cura di Carlo Delcorno. Firenze: Sansoni, 1974; Idem, *Avventuale fiorentino 1304*, edizione critica a cura di Silvia Serventi. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006. Another example of vernacular *reportationes* are the early fifteenth-century sermons by Giovanni Dominici, cfr. *Giovanni Dominici da Firenze: catalogo delle opere e dei manoscritti*, a cura di Marta M. M. Romano. Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2008: 15-17. On both these collections see Silvia Serventi, 'La parole des prédicateurs. Indices d'oralité dans les *reportationes* dominicaines (XIV^e-XV^e siècle)'. In: *Aspetti dell'oralità nella letteratura italiana medievale*, sous la direction d'Andrea Fassò. *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes – Journal of medieval and humanistic studies* 20 (2010): <https://journals.openedition.org/crm/12239> [last visited 28 November 2018].

¹⁶ Respectively s.n.t. [Italy], 1470 [GW 2256] and Parma: [Andreas Portilia], 1479 [GW 2258]. On Antonio da Vercelli see at least Riccardo Pratesi, 'Antonio da Vercelli'. *DBI* 3 (1961): 580-581.

¹⁷ On the structure of the *sermo modernus* see at least Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi: A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

while he had actually translated the pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditationes vitae Christi*¹⁸. In any case, pious middle to high class readers could combine – if not substitute – their hearing of sermons with such readings and these collections were diffused just like other “popular” devotional literature, as for instance confession manuals¹⁹. Retracing the editorial history of these collections will help us gain a clear and patent picture of their fortune and success among his contemporaries and thus to get a better assessment of their contents²⁰.

In the fifteenth century alone, eighty reprints of Roberto's seven main Latin and vernacular collections appeared. Another twenty issues of just his vernacular collections appeared in Italy between 1501 and 1555; and Jean Klein, in Lyon, printed for another three times his Latin *Opera* in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. He was by far the most printed preacher of his times, second only to Girolamo Savonarola, whose works, however, were the product of an extraordinary contingency and who, by the way, did not limit himself only to sermon collections as Roberto, on the other hand, did. Moreover, only three titles of single contemporary collections of sermons enjoyed a larger success than Roberto's “best sellers”. The *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* by the Dominican Johann Herolt (Discipulus), printed fifty-three times before the end of the fifteenth century²¹; the Franciscan Johann von Werden's *Sermones “Dormi secure”*, which appeared thirty-six times²²; and the Franciscan Konrad Grüttsch's *Quadragesimale*, that was printed twenty-four times under the name of his younger brother Johann²³. Restricting the comparison to Italy, the second most successful preacher in print – again, excluding Savonarola – was the Dominican Leonardo Mattei da Udine, whose Latin sermon collections, the *Sermones de tempore, quadragesimales* and *de sanctis* respectively had one, seven and sixteen editions before 1501 and which all appeared posthumous²⁴.

¹⁸ Cesare Cenci, ‘Fra Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto e la sua attività letteraria’. *AFH* 61 (1968): 289-344; 62 (1969): 115-195; II, 130.

¹⁹ Roberto Rusconi, ‘Manuali Milanesi di confessione editi tra il 1474 ed il 1523’. *AFH* 65 (1972): 107-156.

²⁰ Rudolf Hirsch, *Printing, Selling and Reading. 1450-1550*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967. For previous contributions regarding Roberto's collections' editorial fortune see in particular Anne T. Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*. Aldershot: Variorum, 2002. Cfr. also Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy*.

²¹ Cfr. Ian D. K. Siggins, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching. The Sermon Books of Johann Herolt O.P. (Discipulus)*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2009.

²² John W. Dahmus, ‘Dormi Secure: The Lazy Preacher's Model of Holiness for His Flock’. In *Models of Holiness in Medieval Sermons. Proceedings of the International Symposium, Kalamazoo, 4-7 May 1995*, edited by Beverly Mayne Kienzle. Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération internationale des instituts d'études médiévales, 1996: 301-316.

²³ André Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch de Bâle: Contribution à l'histoire de la prédication franciscaine au XV^{me} siècle*. Thèse présentée à la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Fribourg pour obtenir le grade de docteur. Fribourg: Imprimerie St-Paul, 1940; Pietro Delcorno, ‘“Christ and the soul are like Pyramus and Thisbe”: An Ovidian Story in Fifteenth-Century Sermons’. *Medieval Sermon Studies* 60 (2016): 37-61: 43-44.

²⁴ On Leonardo da Udine see at least Luciano Cinelli, ‘Mattei, Leonardo’. *DBI* 72 (2008): 163-166; Stefan Visnjevac, ‘«As We Sin in Forty Ways, so We Fast for Forty Days»: Sermons for a Confessor’. *I sermoni quaresimali: digiuno del corpo, banchetto dell'anima – Lenten Sermons: Fast of the Body, Banquet of the Soul*: 145-166.

For the fifteenth-century and the first decades of the printing press' history, however, the reconstruction of the editorial fortune of any writing is incomplete without looking at its manuscript diffusion:

In each phase of the history of early Italian print, the manuscript was present behind or beside the printed book: not only (and not even always!) as the source for its text, but mainly as a model for its external form. And moreover [...] until the beginning of the sixteenth century, the history of the manuscript book and the history of the printed book cannot and must not be considered as two separate phenomena, but rather as two different aspects of the same process of production and cultural diffusion, differentiated not so much in the technical proceedings involved (handwriting, woodcut printing, movable type printing), as in the kind of text that was reproduced and, thus, in the kind of public for which it was produced and to which it was addressed²⁵.

For this reason, both the history of printed collections and their manuscript diffusion will be addressed in this chapter, although separately. From the last quarter of the fifteenth century, works that had once circulated in manuscript form began to be printed. The printing press only offered a new – and, in time, cheaper – way of diffusing texts that had already been circulating, or would have anyway circulated, in manuscript. One must bear in mind that a large majority of the sermon collections printed during the first decades of the history of print were posthumous editions of text compiled years, if not centuries, before²⁶. It would be anachronistic to give entire credit to the idea that «pulpit oratory became increasingly affected by the new powers of the press» and that «the living word was threatened by some of these changes»²⁷.

A thorough study of the involvement that preachers (or “sermon collection authors”) had in the edition of their own (or others’) sermon collections might help in the evaluation of the weight the introduction of the printing press really had on their activity on the pulpit. Indeed, if for example there are ascertainable traces of a number of direct cooperations between friars from Milan or Mantua with printers such as Ulrich Scinzenzeler or Giorgio Arrivabene, this does not mean that it

²⁵ Armando Petrucci, ‘Alle origini del libro moderno. Libri da banco, libri da bisaccia, libretti da mano’. *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 12 (1969): 295-313: 303: «in ogni fase della storia della stampa primitiva italiana dietro e accanto al libro impresso era presente il manoscritto: non solo (e neppure sempre!) come fonte del testo, ma soprattutto come modello di forma esteriore. E inoltre [...] sino ai primi del Cinquecento storia del libro manoscritto e storia del libro a stampa non possono e non debbono essere considerate due fenomeni separati, ma piuttosto come diversi aspetti di un unico processo di produzione e di diffusione culturale, differenziato non tanto dai procedimenti tecnici adoperati (scrittura a mano, stampa silografica, stampa a caratteri mobili), quanto dal tipo di testo riprodotto e perciò stesso dal tipo di pubblico per il quale si produceva e a cui ci si rivolgeva».

²⁶ Cfr. Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Folklore, magia, religione’. In *Storia d’Italia, I: I caratteri originali*. Torino: Einaudi, 1972: 604-676: 636-637. It will be sufficient to mention the extraordinary success that Jacopo da Varazze’s sermons had in the fifteenth-century press.

²⁷ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The printing press as an agent of change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979: 315-316.

was a norm for printers to request input from religious men, nor for friars to edit their works or those composed by their confreres²⁸. Indeed, whereas Savonarola personally supervised the edition of his sermons, this does not seem to be the case for Roberto's *Specchio della fede*, apparently printed because of bookmenchants' personal enterprise, as we will see²⁹. It seems that still several decades would have had to pass for popular preaching to be deeply affected by print and for «gifted boys who might have become preachers» to «simply become publicists instead»³⁰.

2. The editorial history of Roberto's sermon collections

The complete loss of a consistent number of entire runs of editions is a fact that book historians are confronted with more often than one would think³¹. Fortunately, the specific case of Roberto's enormously successful sermon collections gives us a quite more positive picture. The probably high runs of the numerous editions of the vernacular – a vernacular, in Italy, it must be noted, that had already found its “national” literary language and thus a “national” audience of readers – collections, diffused all over Italy, have granted the survival of some copies for several of them. Still, the number of copies available today is relatively small if compared with that of the Latin collections: a clue which hints at the primarily popular and lay public of Roberto's vernacular books. Indeed, the production of the Latin collections, primarily aimed at a public of religious readers, led to the early inclusion of several copies of these works in libraries in which they could have a very high chance of survival, namely monastic and conventual libraries, possibly the most steadfast institutions of Western culture, which had already – and more remarkably – saved and cherished the Classical masterpieces that some of Roberto's contemporaries were bringing back to light. In many cases, these extraordinarily stable institutions have preserved their collections for centuries, without them being severely manipulated or damaged, especially in Italy, until relatively recent times³². This partly explains why so many – possibly even all – of the editions of Roberto's works survive, at least in some copies and often in relatively high numbers. Such positive

²⁸ Mirella Ferrari, 'Per una storia delle biblioteche francescane a Milano nel Medioevo e nell'Umanesimo'. *AFH* 72 (1979): 429-464: 456; Cenci, 'Fra Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto e la sua attività letteraria'.

²⁹ On Savonarola's printed sermons see at least Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 'Ser Lorenzo Violi e le prediche del Savonarola'; Rusconi, 'Le prediche di fra Girolamo da Ferrara'. For another interesting case of a “preacher”, or better a cleric, directly involved in the printing industry see Richard B. Marks, 'The significance of fifteenth-century hand corrections in the Düsseldorf exemplars of some of Therhoernen's editions of the works of Werner Rolevinck'. *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 15 (1977): 49-56.

³⁰ Eisenstein, *The printing press as an agent of change*: 316. Cfr. Carlo Delcorno, 'La predicazione'. In *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo, 2: Il Medioevo volgare, II: La circolazione del testo*. Roma: Salerno editrice, 2002: 405-431: 430-431

³¹ Neil Harris, 'La sopravvivenza del libro, ossia appunti per una lista della lavandaia'. *Ecdotica* 4 (2007): 24-65.

³² Such as the suppressions resulted from the French conquest of North-Central Italy in the late eighteenth century or those operated just after the unification of Italy (1866/67), which, however, conveniently brought large portions of collections, if not entire ones, among the holdings of public institutions.

circumstances allow us the possibility to gain a rather clear and reliable picture of their editorial history³³.

It is almost certain that Roberto's first printed sermon collection was his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, which first appeared in Venice in 1472³⁴. This Lenten collection consists of seventy-three sermons. From internal data, it is possible to speculate that Roberto worked at the compilation – or, accepting the idea it could have derived from a previously delivered sermon cycle, at the revision – of this collection at least from 1466, a date that is mentioned twice as if it were the running year³⁵. The *terminus ad quem* of the composition – or, again, revision – of the collection is the summer of 1471, a date which appears in the *colophon* of one of the earliest editions, which mentions the passage from Pope Paul II (died July 1471) and Sixtus IV (elected August of the same year)³⁶. The sermons ideally cover the liturgical period that goes from Septuagint Sunday to the Sunday *in Albis*. The relationship with the liturgical calendar, however, is a rather faint one, as was becoming more and more true for popular preaching in general, especially in Italy, where the “extraordinary” preaching, of the mendicants in particular, exceeded by far the “ordinary” preaching entrusted to secular clergy. The work is rather more aimed at covering a precise discourse on morals, pastoral and human salvation than in offering an exegesis stemming from the biblical reading of the liturgical calendar³⁷. As a whole, the sermons' content is rather balanced between those pointing at the horrible and terrifying punishments prepared for sinners and more positive ones that give listeners or readers a hope for eternal salvation.

In 1472, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* was actually issued almost contemporarily by three different printers based in Venice (Bartolomeo da Cremona, Franz Renner and Wendelin von Speyer), who were quickly followed – in mid-November – by the Rome-based printers Konrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz³⁸. The demand for the collection must have been really large,

³³ Paul Needham, ‘The Late Use of Incunables and the Paths of Book Survival’. *Wolfenbütteler Notizen zur Buchgeschichte* 29 (2004): 35-39.

³⁴ I have anticipated part of the following discussion on the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* in my essay: ‘Roberto Caracciolo's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*’. On the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*'s relevance in the contemporary print industry see also Amedeo Quondam, ‘La letteratura in tipografia’. In *Letteratura italiana*, diretto da Alberto Asor Rosa, II: *Produzione e consume*. Torino, Einaudi, 1983: 555-686: 593.

³⁵ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, f. u1v: «Secunda ratio que movit aliquos ut dicerent proximum iam fore Antichristi tempus est propter etatum annumerationem. Dicunt enim nos esse in sexta etate mundi, ex qua preterierunt MCCCCLXVI anni»; *ivi*, f. y6v: «Ex ista autem sexta etate [mundi] fluxerunt MCCCCLXVI». See also the mention of Pope Paul II as living, *ivi*, f. u1r: «Ipse [Ioachim] vero *Papalistan* depinxit, in quo multa future de statu Ecclesie prenunciavit, ibique point duos post istum, qui Paulus secundus vocatur, summos pontifices esse futuros».

³⁶ It is the colophon of Franz Renner's 1472 edition: «Robertus celebrer finxit non parva minorum / gloria me fratrum, Paulo regnante secundo / quarto sed Sixto veniens».

³⁷ Étienne Gilson, ‘Michel Menot et la technique du sermon médiéval’; Zafarana, ‘Bernardino nella storia della predicazione popolare’; Jussi Hanska, ‘Sermones quadragesimales’. Birth and development of a genre’. *Il Santo* 52 (2012): 107-127.

³⁸ On the printers, respectively see at least Vittorio Finzi, ‘Di Bartolomeo da Cremona tipografo cremonese del secolo XV. Notizie storico-bibliografiche’. *Bollettino storico cremonese*, s. II, 2 (1937): 123-134; Roberto Ridolfi, ‘Francesco della Fontana stampatore e libraio a Venezia in un documento del 1477’. In *Studi Bibliografici. Atti del convegno*

since Franz Renner even issued the collection a second time before the end of that same year. On his part, Wendelin von Speyer – brother of the late Johann, who had been the first to introduce the printing press in Venice in 1469 – attempted to distinguish his own edition by adding three other sermons to the seventy-three that originally composed the collection³⁹.

Printers had in mind a public of friars as buyers and readers of these editions of the Latin collection. In particular Franz Renner, whose production was primarily aimed at clerics. He was indeed rather specialized in religious books and among the forty-seven editions ascribed to him between 1471 and 1486, we can count eleven breviaries, five bibles, Thomas Aquinas' *Summae* (*theologiae* and *contra gentiles*) sermon collections by Roberto, Michele Carcano and Leonardo da Udine and, last but not least, six issues of Niccolò da Osimo's *Supplementum Summae Pisanellae*, the recent and successful adjournment of the famous fourteenth-century collection of moral cases. It is worth noting that Franciscans – and mendicants in general – were the preponderant authors among those printed by Renner. The printer's specific market-aims are also explicitly declared in a letter written from Venice by one of his workers, Simone di Bartolomeo, to accompany a set of books he was sending to his brother Bernardo, so that he may sell them in their hometown, Florence, where Bernardo still lived. Simone wrote to whom Bernardo should have offered the books, specifying:

That you should notify that you have these books to the mendicant friars with a list; and especially the Observant Franciscans and the Dominicans, that is those of the convent of San Marco, since most of these books are intended for them⁴⁰.

On the other hand, Wendelin von Speyer – behind whose activity we can already start seeing in these years the shadow of the powerful book merchant and later printer himself Johann Hellman, better known as Johannes de Colonia – was always attentive to possible lucrative investments, as sermon collections could often be. Leaving aside the little known Bartolomeo da Cremona, in fact, the other two early Venetian printers of Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* were among the most active in town – already by far the major center of the Italian print-market – in the production

dedicato alla storia del libro italiano nel V centenario dell'introduzione dell'arte tipografica in Italia. Bolzano, 7-8 ottobre 1965. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1967: 53-66; Marino Zorzi, 'Stampatori tedeschi a Venezia'. In *Venezia e la Germania. Arte, politica, commercio, due civiltà a confronto*. Milano: Electa, 1986: 115-140: 122-127; Maury D. Feld, 'Sweynheym and Pannartz, Cardinal Bessarion, Neoplatonism: Renaissance Humanism and Two Early Printers' Choice of Texts'. *Harvard Library Bulletin* 30 (1982): 282-335 (now also in Id., *Printing and Humanism in Renaissance Italy: Essays on the Revival of the Pagan Gods*, ed. and introd. by Cynthia M. Pyle, foreword by Marino Zorzi. Roma: Roma nel Rinascimento, 2015: 65-118); Massimo Miglio, 'Introduzione'. In Giovanni Andrea Bussi, *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheym e Pannartz prototipografi romani*, a cura di Massimo Miglio. Padova: Il Polifilo, 1978: xi-lxxi.

³⁹ The *Sermo in festo annuntiationis Virginis Marie*, the *Sermo de predestinato numero damnatorum* and the *Sermo de catenis peccatorum*.

⁴⁰ Ridolfi, 'Francesco della Fontana stampatore e libraio': 63: «Che tu facci asapere alle regole de' frati chon una listra (*sic*) chome abi e' tali libri; et massimamente a' frati di Sancto Francesco oservanti, et chosì a quegli di Sancto Domenicho, cioè quegli di Sancto Marco, ché 'l forte di questi libri sono per loro».

and commercialization of their own books, especially in connection with their German homelands⁴¹. Thus, it comes as no surprise that both their editions were quickly reproduced in Cologne: Franz Renner's by Ulrich Zel (January 1473) and Wendelin von Speyer's by Johann Koelhoff the Elder (before the end of the same year).

Possibly, around the same time – a manuscript annotation of the number 1473, presumably a date, in a copy held at the Bibliothèque Municipale of Colmar sets a possible *terminus ante quem*⁴² – the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* was printed once again outside of Italy, perhaps in Strasbourg. This new edition – if its dating is correct and it is not posterior to the one printed in Basel by Bernhard Richel and Michael Wenssler in 1475 – is the first one to add a printed index of subjects treated in the sermons to the collection. An index which was celebrated and publicized by the printers as a greatly useful addition for readers and users of the collection:

Here ends the index of this book's sermons and subjects, which has been collected briefly from these sermons, so that anyone could easily find some excellent statement or sermon to the people or to the clergy on the issue he wishes to read⁴³.

Given its primary use as a source for predicable topics, the most urgent need for a reader was that of gathering the arguments he needed in the quickest possible way⁴⁴. This index, like the ones added to the other sermon collections, always in their non-Italian editions, hints at the slightly different use that was made of the collections inside and outside of Italy. Italian readers were so familiar with the structure of these collections that they possibly did not need an index, or perhaps, their reading could also be done from cover to cover and not exclusively as reference works. On the other hand, "foreigners" needed a guide to use the collection at its best and often added it in handwriting when the edition did not already have one of its own⁴⁵. It is possible that the sermons of an Italian preacher were not immediately usable as such by his counterparts on the other side of the Alps: perhaps the texts needing readaptation, though their content remained a valuable reference.

⁴¹ See Zorzi, 'Stampatori tedeschi a Venezia'

⁴² I have to thank the librarian Fabienne Chagrot for providing me with a reproduction of Colmar, Bibliothèque Municipale, XI 9598, f. 1.

⁴³ I quote from the edition Basilea: Bernhardus Richel cum Michaele Wensel, 1475 [GW 6070]: «Explicit registrum in sermones et materias huius libri, quam breviter ex his sermonibus collectum, ut quisque id de quo legere intendit facile invenire poterit egregiam aliquam sententiam, sive sermonem ad populum, sive ad clerum». Cfr. Rudolf Hirsch, *Printing, selling and reading*: 73.

⁴⁴ On indexes to sermon collections see Letizia Pellegrini, 'Indici per predicare: le tavole nei manoscritti di sermoni fra XIII e XV secolo'. In *Fabula in tabula*, a cura di Claudio Leonardi. Spoleto: CISAM, 1995: 135-143; Rusconi, 'Coscienza e modelli alla vigilia della Riforma': 192-193.

⁴⁵ As for instance the copy of Roberto's *Opera*. Venetiis: Johannes et Gregorius de Gregoriis, 1490 [GW 6039] held in Budapest, Magyar Tudomány Akadémiai Könyvtár, Inc. 228; or that of his *Sermones de adventu*. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Martin Schott, ante 1484] [GW 6050], held at the Cambridge University Library, cfr. John Claud Trewinard Oates, *Catalogue of the Fifteenth-Century Printed Books in the University Library, Cambridge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954: n. 169.

Going back to the editions of the first *Quadragesimale*, their number and frequency are a sure sign of the collection's immediate fortune. Yet, looking more closely into the specific contexts of these editions, the size of such fortune seems to grow even more. It is in fact possible to suppose that, in some cases, Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* and his other works were considered as profitable investment that editors could make to relaunch and secure their activity in a period of crisis. This could be the case, for example, of Sweynheim and Pannartz's edition of the Lenten sermons. The two German typographers had, since the beginning of their printing career, almost exclusively issued new editions of Latin Christian and profane classics, surely influenced by their strong ecclesiastical and humanistic patronage. Yet in 1472, probably just after having lost their powerful support, an event that might have also led them to move their typographical activity from the golden reclusion of the benedictine convent of Subiaco to the livelier context of the city of Rome, the two printers faced hard times; and it was exactly then, in late 1472, that their edition of Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* was issued⁴⁶. Another example could be that of Wendelin von Speyer's re-issuing of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* in 1473. In that year, the Venetian printing market went through a severe crisis and Wendelin von Speyer's workshop was hit like all the others. Among the only six books that the company produced that year was also this second edition of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*⁴⁷.

In 1473, Roberto's second collection of Latin sermons was issued, the *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*, first printed in Naples by Arnaldo Steccati of Bruxelles. This printer, of Flemish origins, who would later obtain the Neapolitan citizenship, had previously worked (and would have kept working) as a scribe for the king Ferdinand and had probably only begun his printing activity the previous year⁴⁸. The printer's close relationship with the Neapolitan court and the fact that this collection had been composed by Roberto during one of his Neapolitan stays and in direct contact with members of the royal family could lead us to believe that the preacher might have had some involvement in its printing too. The work had been completed to please a request made by king Ferdinand's son and future Cardinal Giovanni of Aragon, who had spurred Roberto to put into writing the sermons he had heard him preach in Naples⁴⁹. Roberto's dedication letter seems

⁴⁶ Feld, 'Sweynheim and Pannartz'.

⁴⁷ Hirsch, *Printing, Selling and Reading*.

⁴⁸ Paola Tentori, 'Arnaldo da Bruxelles'. *DBI* 4 (1962): 250-251. See also Léopold Delisle, 'L'imprimeur napolitain Arnaud de Bruxelles'. *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 58 (1897): 741-743; William J. Wilson, 'An Alchemical Manuscript by Arnaldus de Bruxella'. *Osiris* 2 (1936): 220-405; Emmanuel Poulle, *La bibliothèque scientifique d'un imprimeur humaniste au 15 siècle: catalogue des manuscrits d'Arnaud de Bruxelles à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*. Genève: Droz, 1963.

⁴⁹ Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore*: f. a2v: «Licet dignata sit dominatio tua, dum Neapolis predicabam, quasi quotidie sermonibus meis adesse, hortari tandem me voluisti, ut opus de timore iudiciorum Dei in scriptis redigerem illudque dominationi tue legendum transmitterem. Feci libens quod iussisti et opera dedi, ut morem tue gererem voluntati. Accedet hoc ad utilitatem plurimorum quoniam que nova sunt allicere solent humanas mentes». See above subchapter 5 of Roberto's life.

to give us the idea that the work was not originally meant for diffusion, as the preacher asked his dedicatee not to circulate it, in order for it not to fall into the hands of his own detractors⁵⁰. Unfortunately, the mention of these «invidi et malivoli» is so brief that there is no space for speculation on it, as already noted above⁵¹. Yet it might contribute to deny Roberto's involvement in the publication of at least this collection. We might, on the other hand, suppose that someone inside the Neapolitan court, perhaps Giovanni of Aragon himself, could have had some role in its printing, since it is rather uncommon to find a book like this issued for the first time in a peripheral – as far as printing is concerned – area like Naples and, more convincingly, since Arnaldo's close relationship with the royal family.

The collection is composed of twenty sermons, entirely built on the biblical verses from the book of *Revelation* 14, 6-7⁵². As hinted in the title, the collection aims at inducing fear among the faithful for God's stern and inflexible justice. Thus, most of the sermons are dedicated to examples – mainly deriving from the biblical text – of this justice, starting from the Great Flood and passing on to the Egyptians, the Jews, King David, Sennacherib, Nabuchadnezzar and Antiochus. The positive light that at times illuminates the dim picture given in the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* is here absolutely absent and the only optimist turn taken by Roberto's argumentation is in the last three sermons, dedicated to the proper cult which is due to God and to patience.

We know that Arnaldo of Bruxells, besides his work as scribe and printer, was rather active in the commercialization of books in those years⁵³. It is possibly thanks to his initiatives in the book market that Roberto's latest collection, his *Sermones de timore*, quickly made its way to Venice, where it was reprinted already in 1475 by the Venetian company of Johann Hellman and Johann Manthen. The two German printers had been collaborating in Wendelin von Speyer's activity for some years and had taken over his workshop after his death (Hellman had also married Wendelin's

⁵⁰ Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore*: ff. a2v-a3r: «Accipe itaque tu, pater colendissime, libellum istum, in quo, si quid boni reppereris, proba, si quid vero aut superfluum aut minus rectum in illo deprehenderis, corrige. Oro tamen humanissimam dominationem tuam, ne comunicet aut tradat illum invidis et malivolis meis, quos multos nosti». The previous collection, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, does not hint at any such fear, probably because the work is missing a dedication letter.

⁵¹ See above subchapter 5 of Roberto's life.

⁵² «Et vidi alterum angelum volentem per medium caeli, habentem Evangelium aeternum, ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram, et super omnem gentem, et tribum, et linguam, et populum; dicens magna voce: «Timete Dominum et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iudicii eius; et adorare eum, qui fecit caelum et terram, mare et fontes aquarum». The sole exception is the last sermon, on patience, built on the verse Heb. 12,1: «Ideoque et nos tantam habentes impositam nubem testium, deponents omne pondus, et circumstans nos peccatum, per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen».

⁵³ Cfr. Carlo De Frede, 'Sul commercio dei libri a Napoli nella prima età della stampa'. *Bollettino dell'Istituto di patologia del libro* 14/1-2 (1955): 62-78: 69; Id., 'Notizie sul commercio librario a Napoli nella seconda metà del Quattrocento'. *Studi economici* 10/5-6 (1955): 546-553: 550; Id., *La "santa arte": gli umanisti e l'invenzione della stampa con notizie sul commercio librario e su biblioteche di giuristi, medici e signori napoletani del Quattrocento*. Napoli: Tip. A. De Frede, 2007: 80-81.

former sister-in-law, his late brother's wife, Paola)⁵⁴. Just as Wendelin von Speyer had done with the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, Hellman and Manthen worked to offer the market an enriched version of the collection and so they added another sermon to the *Sermones de timore*, the *sermo de morte*, a sermon which enjoyed a peculiar fortune in manuscript. It was this second edition and not the first Neapolitan one that then, in turn, made its way North outside of Italy and that by 1479 had been reprinted in Cologne, Nuremberg and probably Lyon. Surely the two German printers had more commercial contacts with their homelands than Arnaldo did. Meanwhile, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* was printed in Cologne (1473), Basel (twice in 1475 and once in 1479), Strasbourg (1479) and Lyon (1479). In Italy, Hellman and Manthen reprinted the *Quadragesimale* in Venice in 1476, adding another six sermons to the already implemented edition by Wendelin von Speyer. Finally, the *Quadragesimale* was also printed in Naples by Matthias Moravus of Olomouc in 1479⁵⁵.

Meanwhile, probably sometime around 1474, the first edition of Roberto's *Sermones de adventu* were printed. It is difficult to state when the collection was composed, since the only clue contained in it that could appear useful for a possible dating is misleading⁵⁶. The collection is made up of twenty-nine sermons, covering from the first to the fourth Sunday of Advent. The sermons strictly deal with Adventual themes, which had become "traditional" for Adventual preaching cycles in the course of the fifteenth century⁵⁷, from the Annunciation to the virtues of Christ. Roberto, however, also found a way, through these themes, to treat erroneous opinions regarding, for instance, Christ's humanity and divinity – not to say his incarnation as a whole, against the Jews⁵⁸ – and some eulogies for feast days, such as Saint Stephen (sermon XXIV), Saint John (XXV) and *Pro innocentibus* (XXVI).

Johann Hellman and Johann Manthen issued the first edition in Venice and, as their usual, they added an appendix of other sermons by Roberto and a treatise on the Conception of the Virgin

⁵⁴ Hellman had been cooperating with Wendelin von Speyer since 1471. Cfr. Martin Lowry, 'The social world of Nicholas Jenson and John of Cologne'. *LB* 83/3 (1981): 193-218. On Johann Hellman and his company see also: Daniela Fattori, 'Nuovi documenti sull'introduzione della stampa a Verona e sulla Compagnia di Giovanni da Colonia'. *LB* 106/2 (2004): 117-133; Cristina Dondi, 'Printers and Guilds in fifteenth-century Venice'. *Ibidem*/3: 245-251; Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013: 21-31.

⁵⁵ On Mathias Moravus see Piero Scapecechi, 'Mattia Moravo'. *DBI* 72 (2008): 284-285; Cristina Dondi, *Printed Books of Hours from Fifteenth-Century Italy. The Texts, the Books, and the Survival of a Long-Lasting Genre*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2016: 29-30 and nn. 106-107.

⁵⁶ Caracciolo, *Sermones de adventu*, sermo XII, where it is said that Jews have been exiles in the world for 1424 years. This would mean that 1424 years had passed since the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.), but in that case the current year would have been 1494, which is impossible.

⁵⁷ Rusconi, 'Coscienza e modelli alla vigilia della Riforma': 200-201.

⁵⁸ On this issue in particular see Heinz Schreckenber, 'Zum Gegenüber von Israel und Kirche in einer spätmittelalterlichen Adventspredigt: Roberto Caracciolo (1425-1495)'. In: *Israel als Gegenüber: Vom Alten Orient bis in die Gegenwart. Studien zur Geschichte eines wechselvollen Zusammenlebens*, herausgegeben von Folker Siegert. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000: 285-289.

composed by the Venetian layman Domenico Bollani around the same time⁵⁹. The addition of sermons attributed to Roberto was rather consistent, since it was made up of a sermon on Saint Joseph that Roberto had preached in Padua (presumably for Advent 1450), a «sermo de beatitudine» and two concise treatises written in the form of small sermon collections, respectively of seven and three sermons⁶⁰. The first of the two was the *Tractatus de divina charitate*, on the theme «Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et oneratis estis et ego reficiam vos» (Mt 11, 28), treating God's attitude towards sinners⁶¹. The latter was a briefer work on *De immortalitate anime*. A few years later, the same Venetian printers would have issued their edition of the Adventual collection a second time and another four editions would have then appeared in Northern Europe. The first "foreign" edition, which possibly appeared in Strasburg in 1475, also augmented the collection's index, adding the title for all the – usually three – chapters of each sermon to the bare sermon titles that had up to then circulated inside the Venetian editions.

Around the same time, what was destined to become the most successful of Roberto's works made its way to print. His collection of Lenten vernacular sermons was in fact probably first published in Verona in 1474. It is made up of forty-nine Lenten sermons and it was probably composed around 1473, since in one of the sermons the preacher noted how twenty years had passed since the terrifying earthquake of 1453⁶². Just like Roberto's Latin Lenten collection, its contents range over issues of moral theology, doctrine and pastoral education. The predominant topics regard questions on damnation and hell, but just like in the other collection they do not go separated from the more positive hope for eternal salvation. In the following years, up until 1500, the collection had twenty-three editions, issued by different printers in several towns of Northern Italy⁶³. Another thirteen editions followed in the sixteenth century. The collection's impact on the general public can be exemplified by the fact that a layman from Forlì, Giuliano Fantaguzzi, when noting in his chronicle the «innumerable commentaries of newly translated books and the numerous

⁵⁹ Cfr. 'Bollani, Domenico'. *DBI* 11 (1969), pp. 289-290.

⁶⁰ For Roberto's sermons on Saint Joseph in this and other collections see Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, 'Teología josefina en la predicación franciscana del siglo XV'. *Estudios josefinos* 39 (1975): 179-209: 191-95.

⁶¹ Caracciolo, *Sermones de adventu, Tractatus de divina charitate*: «Inextimabilem charitatem Dei, qua homines diligit, impugnat sepe numero hi qui a peccatis desistere nolunt. Ipsi nanque impio ac sacrilego ore suo asserunt optimum Deum fore causam damnationis eorum, quasi nec hominis merita in aliquo prosint, nec ipsis iniquis sua malicia valeat imputari. Hoc errore illus, plerique audaciam in malo perseverandi suscipiunt penitentiamque negligunt delictorum suorum. Nihil inquit interest qualiquisque sit, sive bonus, sive malus, cum Deus quosdam sic habeat odio, ut etiam post diuturnam in virtutibus permanentiam reprobet. Quosdam autem diligit ut frequentata impietate sua antiqua[ta]que malicia ipsos non prohibeat salvos fieri. Contra huius genus hominum acriter insistendum esse censui, ad quorum confessionem decrevi in presenti tractatu de charitate Dei ad homines tam bonos quam malos copiosius dicere».

⁶² Caracciolo, *Opere in volgare*: 162: «Nota uno terribile iudicio de Dio che fu nel MCCCCCLIII, sonno ora circa anni XX». Maria Aurelia Mastronardi, 'La predicazione volgare di Roberto Caracciolo. Questioni preliminari'. *Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Bari* 25-26 (1982-83): 291-321.

⁶³ Quondam, 'La letteratura in tipografia': 639; Anne Jacobson Schutte, 'Printing, Piety and the People: the First Thirty Years'. *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 71 (1980): 5-20: 18. Cfr. also Ead., *Printed Italian Vernacular Religious Books 1465-1550: a Finding List*. Genève: Droz, 1983: 112-115.

vernacular» works printed in 1494 in Venice, he only specifically recalled Roberto's vernacular sermons, which he described as stylistically «very refined» and «filled with sanctimony»⁶⁴. The importance of the collection is moreover attested by a partial translation in Slavic made by the priests Petr Jakovčić and Silvestr Bedričić, under the initiative of the latter, archdeacon of Senj, and printed in Glagolitic characters in Senj by Gregorius Senjanin on 17 November 1508⁶⁵.

The translation process surely helps to highlight the enormous success of Roberto's works, signifying its importance also for other communities. To pair the Slavic translation of his vernacular Lenten sermons, we can mention the Greek translation, for the use of the Greek-speaking community of Southern Italy, that the priest Giorgio da Corigliano d'Otranto made of Roberto's *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* sometime in the late fifteenth century. This time, however, the translation was not manifest: the translator took entire credit for the work's originality, even translating Roberto's dedication letter to Giovanni of Aragon and adapting it to his dedicatee, Antonio da Melpignano. The attribution of the *Περὶ φόβου θεῶν κριμάτων* was only recently re-assigned to Roberto⁶⁶.

No new works authored by Roberto were issued for quite some time. In 1479, the first edition of Roberto's *Opera* appeared. The voluminous collection gathered the author's three Latin works which had previously appeared in print, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, the *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* and the *Sermones de adventu*, including several of the numerous additions that were already circulating with these collections. The first to print this collection was Franz Renner, from whose selection all the following ones depend. In 1490, when Renner had possibly already died, the *Opera* was printed again by the brothers Giovanni and Gregorio de Gregori da Forlì, who also issued Roberto's *Quadragesimale de peccatis* later that year. It is worth noting that these printers were in personal relationship with Renner and possibly inherited part of

⁶⁴ Fantaguzzi, *Caos*: 100: «Le ornatissime predicha di fra' Roberto piene di santimonia in questo anno [1494] in Vinetia forono stampate et infiniti comenti de libri novamente tradutti et molti vulgarigiani e impressi».

⁶⁵ Petar Kolendić, 'Karaóolov «Quadragesimale» u srpskohrvatskom prevodu'. *Годишњак: скопског филозофског факултета*. [Annuaire de la faculté des lettres de Skoplje] (1930): 169-175; Tomislav Mrkonjić, 'Novija Literatura o Robertu Caracciolu O.F.M.Conv (c. 1425-1495)'. *Senjski glagoljaški krug 1248-1508. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenoga skupa održanoga u Zagrebu 21 I 22 studenog 1994 godine u povodu 500 obljetnice sanjskoga glagoljskoga misala iz 1494*. Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1998: 105-111. Cfr. Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*, pp. 143-144; Antonija Zaradija Kiš, 'Egzempli u *Senjskom korizmenjaku* iz 1508'. *Senjski zbornik* 33 (2006): 55-90 (which contains references to previous studies on the edition). The book was reprinted in anastatic edition *Korizmenjak*, urednici Anica Nazor, Branko Fučić. Senj: Senjsko muzejsko društvo, 1981. This edition was one of the seven religious books which we know about printed in Senj between the very last years of the fifteenth century and 1508, cfr. Aleksandar Stipčević, 'Le livre imprimé et le livre manuscrit dans la Croatie de la Renaissance'. In *Le Livre dans l'Europe de la Renaissance. Actes du XXVIII^e Colloque international d'Etudes humanistes de Tours*. Paris: Promodis, 1988: 106-111: 107. For connections between Franciscan preachers and Glagolitic script, it is worth recalling Sante Graciotti, 'I due frammenti cirillici della biblioteca di san Giacomo'. In: *San Giacomo della Marca nell'Europa del '400*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Monteprandone 7-10 settembre 1994), a cura di Silvano Bracci. Padova: Centro studi antoniani, 1997: 407-436.

⁶⁶ Francesco G. Giannachi, 'Giorgio da Corigliano traduttore dal latino'. *Medioevo greco* 11 (2011), pp. 49-61.

his work⁶⁷. Then, in 1496 Giorgio Arrivabene – Giovanni de Gregori’s former associate in Padua for the edition of Bartolo’s *Corpus iuris*⁶⁸ – released a new and augmented edition of the *Opera*, also adding several sermons from the *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*, which had appeared in the meantime and of which I will say later. No other editions would have been made in Venice or in Italy after that date, while at least three more will be issued in Lyon. Giorgio Arrivabene’s associate, the book merchant Bernardino Rasma, had obtained a privilege to print and commerce Roberto’s sermons in Venetian territories from the Republic’s *Collegio*⁶⁹. These privileges, requested by the printers or by their patrons and sponsors, were the first attempts at a legal assurance on their work, which was constantly threatened by unfair and aggressive competition from other professionals⁷⁰. Also Franz Renner’s legacy is once again visible in Giorgio Arrivabene’s edition of Roberto’s *Opera*. Benedetto Fontana, Renner’s son, probably financed the work, as the “sign of the Fountain” – the woodcut that identified his typographical ventures – which appears in the first pages of the book would seem to demonstrate⁷¹. Finally, the Franciscan friar Filippo di Rotingo had worked at the edition, amending errors and implementing Roberto’s theological references⁷².

For the edition of a brand new work by Roberto we have to wait until 1488, when his second Latin Lenten sermon collection was published in Venice by Andrea Torresani: the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. As the edition’s *colophon* informs us, Roberto had completed the work in his hometown, Lecce, by 9 October 1483⁷³. Moreover, we gain from the dedication letter addressed to Cardinal Giovanni of Aragon that the collection was a re-elaboration of the sermons Roberto had preached in Rome during Lent 1480, when Pope Sixtus IV in person had invited him to preach and when the young Cardinal had been absent from the city because of his apostolic mission in

⁶⁷ Gregorio de Gregori appears as a witness in Franz Renner’s will, cfr. Erika Squassina, ‘Renner, Franz’. *DBI* 86 (2016): 840-842.

⁶⁸ Tiziana Pesenti, ‘De Gregori, Giovanni e Gregorio’. *DBI* 36 (1988): 202-207.

⁶⁹ Caracciolo, *Opera* 1496 [from the dedication letter]: «Ut exinde obtentum fuerit privilegium ab excellentissimo et illustrissimo Dominio Venetorum, quod nullus existentium sub prefato Dominio valeat vel presumat ipsum imprimere vel imprimi facere aut alibi impressum vendere in terris eiusdem usque ad annos decem proxime futuros pena amissionis librorum et centum librarum pro qualibet vice contrafacientibus imminente et aliis quamplurimis prout in ipso privilegio latius continetur». The privilege was published in Rinaldo Fulin, ‘Documenti per servire alla storia della tipografia veneziana’. *Archivio veneto* 23 (1882): 84-212: 121, n. 44. Now also: http://emobooktrade.uniud.it/db/public/preview/privilege/idprivileges/166/returnPath/search_queryprivileges_page_1 [last visited 2 March 2018].

⁷⁰ On privileges in the early years of Venetian print see Erika Squassina, ‘Authors and the System of Publishers’ Privileges in Venice (1469-1545)’. *Gutenberg-jahrbuch* 91 (2016): 42-74.

⁷¹ Cfr. Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*: 75.

⁷² Caracciolo, *Opera* 1496, *colophon*: «Revisit et fideli studio purgavit ab erratis librariorum frater Philippus de Rotingo eiusdem seraphici ordinis Minorum Observantium, quotationes theologorum faciens ampliores ad solatium et utilitatem evangelizantium verbum Dei». For Filippo di Rotingo’s work in the printing industry see Cenci, ‘Fra’ Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto’: II, 122.

⁷³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, *colophon*: «Explicit quadragesimale de peccatis, ceptum in civitate Licii ibique completum [...] Finitum est anno Domini 1483, die nona mensis Octobris hora vespertina».

Hungary⁷⁴. The Lenten collection consists of fifty-four sermons, even though the work's index counts fifty-three, because number forty-two is counted twice: a mistake that was not corrected throughout the different re-issuings of the *Quadragesimale*. Ever since the first known issue of the collection, another seven sermons were added, which will always be re-printed with it. These include the well-known sermon *De sancto Bernardino* and the possibly even more famous *De sancto Bonaventura*. This last sermon will be printed several times also as an appendix to different editions of Bonaventure's works from 1495 to the second half of the seventeenth-century⁷⁵. As the title explicitly anticipates, most of the sermons are dedicated to sins. However, the space dedicated to each of the seven deadly sins is widely variable, with some treated in just one sermon – such as gluttony or envy, which does not even appear in any title – and others, to which the preacher dedicated much more space. Avarice, for instance, is treated in seven different sermons, hinting at the mendicant friars' – and Franciscans' in particular – attention to economic and social themes. As many as thirteen sermons are dedicated to pride, which also offered the preacher a way to treat other issues that were particularly important for him and for his pastoral message, such as superstitious beliefs or heresy. The collection was almost immediately reprinted inside (Venice 1490) and outside of Italy (twice in Lyon between 1488 and 1489 and then again possibly in Strassburg and Offenburg).

In 1489, the last of Roberto's Latin sermon collections appeared. It was the *De laudibus sanctorum*, first issued in January 1489 in Naples by the printer Matthias of Olomouc, driven by his learned associates Pedro Molinos and Giovan Marco Cinico⁷⁶. The latter wrote the dedication letter

⁷⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, f. 187r: «Sanctissimus in Christo pater et dominus noster clementissimus Xistus, divina providentia papa quartus [...] Lito vocavit me suavissimis litteris suis de peccatorum gravitatibus, quibus humana infirmitas premitur pro virium mearum facultate dicturum romanumque populum ac omnes qui romanam sequuntur Curiam suis sceleribus arguturum. Glorioso igitur nomini tuo, qui apud sororium Ungarie regem serenissimum apostolica legatione fungens, instituto huic meo interesse non potes, ipsos sermones meos, ob debitam in te observantiam servitutemque, iccirco ditavi, ut correcti et emendati ubi oportuerit sapientia tua litterarumque munimentis commendati non Romanus modo, sed omnibus Christi fidelibus et posteris quoque essent profuturi». Giovanni d'Aragona had left Hungary at the end of August 1479 and was back the year after, cfr. Pásztor, 'Aragona, Giovanni d': 697-698.

⁷⁵ Cfr. Di Fonzo, 'Il processo di canonizzazione di S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio': 264, n. 93. The other sermons added are: *In festo annunciationis Virginis gloriose*; *De angelis quorum solemnitas in Ecclesia celebratur propter miraculum quod apparuit in monte Gargano*; *De beatitudine sanctorum*; *De anime rationalis admirandis prerogativis et excellentiis quas unusquisque cognoscere debet*; *De Spiritu Sancto qui missus est apostolis in signo visibili ignearum linguarum*.

⁷⁶ In praise of the work, it is interesting to read the colophon of the issue printed in Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 1490: «Robertus de Licio, ordinis beati Francisci, sacre theologie professor, episcopus Aquinas, vir horum temporum doctrina et eruditione singulari, post multa que in sermonibus edidit et quadragesimalibus aliisque de tempore non minore immo vel maiore etiam ingenio et diligentia sermonum opus de sanctis, quod *De laudibus sanctorum* inscribitur, quodque hoc volumine diligenti opera impressum continetur composuit, quo et copiam multiplicitate inventionum et ingenium acumenque accuratis divisionibus ostendit utile profecto omnibus qui vel ad clerum vel populum sint dicturi; orditur facete, divit acute, probat vehementer, allegat copiam et similium et exemplorum ex sacris et gentilium litteris, ut cum multa dicat nihil superfluum dixisse videatur. Et cum proprium quid in unius sancti laude describit, eo tamen artificio id tradit, ut aliis quoque facili ingenio applicari possit, aut ex simili aut opposito aut antecedente aut consequente, quod in uno laudando explicuit. Adeo, ut si illi parum aliquid vehementie additum esset summis viris quod colit ecclesia nihilo eum inferiorem putares. Id quidem sermonum opus quod dico credo summo et usui et voluptati omnibus vobis futurum,

of the edition, addressed to the King of Naples' daughter Beatrix of Aragon, Matthias Corvinus' wife and thus queen of Hungary and Bohemia. In the letter it is said that the work had been published out of the editors' initiative – so probably with no direct involvement from Roberto, but perhaps, like in the previous case of a Neapolitan edition, in some connection with the royal court – who had decided to print the book because of the value of its contents. More important is, however, the annotation that Giovan Marco Cinico gave on the number of copies made of this first edition: two thousand, an undoubtably impressive number⁷⁷. Yet the number becomes even more impressive if one considers that, despite this abundant edition, there was still plenty of demand for the collection; and another eight issues of the work appeared in Italy and in Europe before the end of 1490. The edition that was reprinted all over Europe, however, was the one issued a few months after the Neapolitan one, in Venice, by Andrea Torresani, who added the *Sermo de sancto Bernardino* as an appendix to the collection.

The collection is composed of seventy sermons, organized in a rather balanced structure. The first twenty sermons are dedicated to the persons of the Trinity – God (I-II), Christ (III-XIX) and the Holy Ghost (XX) – among which Roberto put a strongly marked stress on the figure of Christ, in accordance with contemporary tendencies in theology and preaching. The following ten sermons are then respectively dedicated to: beatitude in general (XXI-XXIII), the Virgin (XXIV-XXIX) – whose importance for Franciscan Observant preaching is abundantly known⁷⁸ – and the angels (XXX). Each one of remaining forty sermons is then dedicated to a specific feast day celebrating a saint, with the exception of sermon sixty-eight: *De sancta amicitia*. The structure roughly identifies three homogeneously developed thematic cores: as it has been noted, around one third of the sermons is dedicated to the persons of the trinity, another one to apostles and angels and the remaining third to other saints, martyrs, doctors, etc.⁷⁹ Moreover, the true novelty of this collection is that its thematic order, which does not respect the liturgical calendar, «reflects the ideal

qui maxime vocatione divina ad predicationis officium acciti estis tum eruditionis tum fructus gratia, quando et ipsi per se docentur qui legent eos sermones et qui audient vehementissime erudientur et commovebuntur».

⁷⁷ Caracciolo, *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*, dedication letter: «cum nuper incidisset in manus divinum *Opus de sanctorum laudibus* ab insigni Roberto Carazolo ordinis minorum fratre, oratore vehementissimo et sine controversia theologorum principis Aquinatisque meritissimi antistitis, aeditum, admiratus eximium eius ornatum, salutare sententias, archanorum Dei cumulum et cum in eo sit quicquid littera sacra docet plane reconditum et per eum ocior pateat aditus ad caelum, via ad vitam quae Christus est sempiternam; decrevi cum praestanti tuo Moravo immo nostro et Petro hoc toti orbi in tui laudem commune facere et bis mille voluminibus impressis et tuo beatissimo nomini bene ac merito in scriptis primum horum istud celsitudini tuae transmittere».

⁷⁸ Daniele Solvi, 'Il culto dei santi nella proposta socio-religiosa dell'Osservanza'. In *I frati osservanti e la società*: 135-167: 157-59.

⁷⁹ Gábor Klaniczay, 'Osservanti francescani e il culto dei santi nel Quattrocento'. In: *Franciscan Observance between Italy and Central Europe*. Proceedings of International Conference, 4-6 December 2014. Franciscan Monastery of Szeged-Alsóváros (Hungary) – *L'Osservanza francescana fra Italia ed Europa Centrale*. Atti del Convegno internazionale, 4-6 dicembre 2014. Convento Francescano di Szeged-Alsóváros (Ungheria), edited by / a cura di György Galamb. *Chronica* 15 (2017): 231-245: 244-245.

articulation of the heavenly court»⁸⁰. This «proposal of a hierarchical arrangement [of the saints] [...] shows an original path in the context of late medieval preaching on the saints»⁸¹. Contemporaries were specifically sensitive to such novelties, and one of the German printers of the collection – the printer of the Augsburg edition [1490], Anton Sorg – stated, at the end of his new alphabetical *tabula sermonum*:

I do not want that this order of the sermons, put in this way, may disturb the pious reader. Indeed, it was the intention of that same famous bishop who is the author of this whole work that it be composed not in the order of the calendar, as most do, but actually and preferably according to the merits of the saints and to the level of their beatitude⁸².

In this sense, the collection implies a «rethinking of the sanctoral», according to the ideal proximity of the saints with Christ and his exemplary life and suggesting a strong catechetical and pastoral message⁸³. Thus, for instance, after the first sermon on Saint John the Baptist (XXXI) and a group of sermons on the apostles (XXXII-XLIII), there are two sermons on Saint Francis, highlighting the importance of the Franciscan founder. Outside this macro-structure of the collection, other small groups of sermons can be identified. The sermons dedicated to the Church Fathers Augustine, Jerome and Benedict are together (LV-LVII) and so are the ones dedicated to Dominican saints (LVIII-LX: Dominic, Vincent Ferrer and Peter Martyr) – who are given as much space as Franciscan ones – or to women (LXV-LXVII: Catherine of Alexandria, Cecil and Lucy). It is interesting to note that both the sermons dedicated to Saint Bernardino da Siena and Saint Bonaventure (which we know Roberto composed and even delivered for both canonizations, 1450 and 1482) are excluded from the original composition of the collection. As said, however, at least the sermon on the first Franciscan Observant saint was subsequently added to the end of all the editions following the first.

The set of Roberto's known printed works is completed by the posthumous edition of his second vernacular collection, the *Specchio della fede*, printed for the first time in Venice by Giovanni di Lorenzo da Bergamo. Roberto had completed and offered this collection to Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, in 1490. Apparently, Giovanni da Bergamo had somehow obtained the

⁸⁰ Solvi, 'Il culto dei santi nella proposta': 161.

⁸¹ Ivi: 163.

⁸² f. (x)v: «Nec moveat pium lectorem velim hunc ordinem sermonum isto modo positum, nam ipsius preclarissimi episcopi etc. huius totius operis autoris intentio ita fuit, non ut ordine kalendarii, ut plures autumant, sed vero et gratioso secundum merita sanctificationum et gradus beatitudinum componentur. Hunc ordinem observatum in omnibus sermonibus et clausulis singulis insertis si attendere velis clarissime videbis. Vale lector».

⁸³ Solvi, 'Il culto dei santi nella proposta': 162: «Nel complesso, il sermonario sembra il frutto di un ripensamento del santorale in chiave storica e teologica, secondo il criterio della maggiore o minore vicinanza del santo a Cristo. L'approccio è intrinsecamente catechetico: mostrare come la santità sia valida non in sé, ma in quanto resa possibile dall'Incarnazione e ad essa ordinata, cioè finalizzata a estendere gli effetti all'intera umanità, nelle forme di vita emerse via via in seno alla chiesa. Si potrebbe dire che l'agiologia viene ricondotta e subordinata alla cristologia».

sole (autograph) manuscript copy of the collection and had decided to print it, convinced it would have come to the spiritual profit of many and, probably, also sensing a good possible (economic) profit for himself⁸⁴. Moreover, Alfonso of Aragon himself stood behind the decision to print this work, as he himself stated in his reply to Roberto's dedication letter⁸⁵. The Franciscan Stefano da Capua was entrusted with its revision for print and the first copy appeared on 11 April 1495. The printer, who surely had made no little investment on the enterprise, made sure he was granted the exclusive rights to reproduce and trade the work in the Venetian dominions for the following ten years, obtaining the privilege from the *Collegio* on 17 November 1494⁸⁶. However, from Venetian records we know that he had not been the first to try to put his hands on the enterprise. Another privilege had been issued by the *Collegio*, prior to the one requested by Lorenzo da Bergamo, on 3 January 1494, in favor of the priest Pietro Benali⁸⁷. It is still uncertain why this earlier privilege did not lead to a publication of the work, whereas the other work for which Benali had been granted exclusive rights in that occasion, Antonio Cornazzano's *Dell'arte militare*, appeared in the following November⁸⁸.

The *Specchio della fede* is composed of forty-five lengthy sermons. Already from its title, the work appears to be on the border of the genre of sermon collections, closer to a «true and rigorous treatise (*Speculum*) on what are, and will have always been, the fundamental principles of the Christian and catholic beliefs»⁸⁹. Its content, as already hinted in his reply to Roberto's dedication letter by the Duke of Calabria, is rather devotional than theological. Thirty-nine out of its sermons are dedicated to events from the lives of Christ and the Virgin – a partial confirmation of

⁸⁴ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*, f. 164v [the edition's *colophon*]: «El ditto libro [*Specchio della fede*] fo compilato nel anno 1490 et fo presentato al ditto illustrissimo Duca [de Calabria] che visitava la provintia di Poggia. Per non se trovare altra copia che uno certo originale scripto de propria mano del ditto fra Roberto, ad utilità de molte persone è stato prodotto in luce per Zoanne di Lorenzo da Bergamo».

⁸⁵ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: «Unde iudico fra le altre vostre opere questa essere più utile, tanto più quanto è più commune. Parmi adunque cosa oportuna et necessaria quella fare imprimere, ad tale più facilmente si possa diffundere».

⁸⁶ The privilege was published in Rinaldo Fulin, 'Documenti per servire alla storia della tipografia veneziana': 116-117, n. 32. Now also: http://emobooktrade.uniud.it/db/public/preview/privilege/idprivileges/25/returnPath/search_queryprivileges_page_1 [last visited 2 March 2018]. The privilege is also rapidly hinted at in the edition's *colophon*, Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*, f. 164v: «Per essere opera utile e necessaria a tutti li fideli cristiani, el serenissimo Principe con la illustrissima Signoria di Venetia ame concesso gratia per anni dexe che nesuno altro non possa fare imprimere né fare stampare la ditta opera, né in Venetia né in alcuna altra terra né in logo alcuno della ditta Signoria; et se in terre aliene la fosse stampata, non possa vegnir ne esser condotta né se possa vendere né far vendere per via alcuna in le ditte terre della ditta illustrissima Signoria sotto pena de perdere le opere et di ducati vinticinque per chaduna opera, da essere applicada come parerà a la illustrissima Signoria nostra».

⁸⁷ The privilege has been published in Fulin, 'Documenti per servire alla storia della tipografia veneziana': 109-110, n. 19. Now also: http://emobooktrade.uniud.it/db/public/preview/privilege/idprivileges/19/returnPath/search_queryprivileges_page_1 [last visited 2 March 2018]

⁸⁸ Antonio Cornazzano, *Del'arte militare*. Venice: Chrostophorus de Pensis, [1494] [GW 7548]. See also Tiziana Plebani, 'Pensi, Cristoforo'. *DBI* 82 (2015): 235-237.

⁸⁹ Marti, 'Un approcio di paragone sullo "Speculum Fidei" di frate Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce': 8-9.

what has been noted for the *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum* – and topics regarding piety by far outnumber the more theological or philosophical ones⁹⁰.

It is particularly interesting to read the reasons Roberto adduced for having prepared this collection in the vernacular, which he explained in the letter of dedication to his work:

For this reason, having compiled the present work entitled *Speculum fidei*, that is Mirror of the faith, I resolved to address it primarily to your devout lordship, being sure you will please yourself with what is treated inside it [...] And even though you are greatly versed and learned in the liberal arts, I have anyway wanted to write the sermons in that style and order which I used in the sermons delivered to the people, that is in the vernacular, in my mothertongue, and also in Latin. And this I have done because, should they end up in the hands of someone else than your lordship, both the learned and the unlearned may participate to our work, especially the many religious men and women who cannot easily attend preaching, so that they may receive consolation from this work⁹¹

It is firstly worth noting how Roberto asserted of having compiled the collection in that same style in which he delivered his sermons to the people, that is both in Latin and in the vernacular. This, however, should not make us think about the macaronic sermons which have greatly occupied historians of the Italian language or scholars of Italian literature. What Roberto meant, and what is visible from the sermons of the *Specchio della fede*, is sermons entirely in the vernacular, with large portions of texts in Latin represented by quotations from the Bible, the Fathers and other ancient authors, which are also in all cases diligently translated. The second issue, probably more important, which is worth noting is Roberto's aim, with this precise collection, to provide a devotional tool for all – learned and unlearned – who could not easily attend his or others' sermons. In this text we see precisely declared the use made of this collection that we have hinted at in the opening of this chapter.

Finally, at least two confession manuals appeared in print with an attribution to Roberto. Both were printed without any typographical indications and have been dated to Venice post 1500 and Venice ca. 1510. Single copies of each booklet, *in octavo*, is respectively preserved in Naples,

⁹⁰ *Ivi*: 10-11.

⁹¹ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: «Per questa casone, havendo io compilata la presente opera intitulata *Speculum fidei*, cioè *Specchio della fede*, deliberai drizarla principalmente alla vostra religiosissima signoria, tenendo senza dubbio vi delectareti in quello che ce si tracta [...] E avenga che siate doctissimo et erudito nelle arte liberale, nondimeno ho voluto scrivere li sermoni con quello stile e ordine lo quale ho costumato nelle declamazioni ho facte al populo, cioè e vulgarmente, sermone materno, e ancora latinamente. E questo lo ho facto perché pervenendo alle mani de altri che vostra signoria possano essere partcipe delle nostre fatiche li docti e ancora li indocti, specialmente che molti religiosi masculi e donne e ancora laici e secolari non possendo odire comodamente le prediche piglieranno consolatione di questa opera».

Biblioteca Nazionale, inc. I.A.26 [GW VI Sp.141a] and Lucca, Biblioteca statale⁹². I have not been able to see the copy in Naples, but it could be possible that both pertain to the same edition. As for the attribution, it is difficult to tell if it can be judged trustworthy. In any case, considering the large amount of confession manuals indiscriminately attributed to all the most famous preachers of the time (Bernardino da Siena, Bernardino da Feltre, Michele Carcano and so on) there is a high chance these booklets (or this booklet?) had nothing to do with Roberto.

As said, Roberto's vernacular works were printed over and over again also throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. The change in the preaching style and method, let alone the overwhelming religious circumstances of the Reformation, are sufficient to explain the loss of interest in their production and acquisition after the 1550s⁹³. The printing of his Latin collections, on the other hand, had a much earlier and more abrupt end. Apart from three issues of his *Opera* in Lyon in the first two decades of the sixteenth century, the editorial history of Roberto's Latin sermons ends just a few years after their author's death, around the end of the century. It is a destiny these collections shared with other writings of the same kind. Leonardo da Udine's works, for instance, never made it to sixteenth-century print. Notable exceptions seem to have been Bernardino Busti's *Rosarium sermonum*, which was constantly reprinted, although not with great frequency, well into the seventeenth century, or Gabriele Barletta's sermons, which, after several re-editions, were even printed in eighteenth-century Benevento⁹⁴. It is possible that the largest market for these works, that is conventual libraries, had already saturated. Some partial confirmation, for instance, might be the several copies of Roberto's works that most of the convents throughout Italy possessed towards the end of the sixteenth-century⁹⁵. A more substantial clue of the market saturation might be the numerous unsold copies that Hieronima – daughter of Johann von Speyer and Johann Hellman's step-daughter – received in 1511, when leaving the company of «Johannes de Colonia, Nicolaus Jenson et socii», which had long outlived its founders in its bookselling activity. Part of

⁹² A third *confessionale* attributed to Roberto and printed in Venice by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore ca 1535 and held by the British Library is signalled in Jacobson Schutte, *Printed Italian Vernacular Religious Books*: 112

⁹³ Carlo Delcorno, 'Forme della predicazione cattolica fra Cinque e Seicento'. In: *Cultura d'élite e cultura popolare nell'arco alpino fra Cinque e Seicento*, a cura di Ottavio Besomi e Carlo Caruso. Basel etc.: Birkhauser, 1995: 275-301; Edoardo Barbieri, 'Fra tradizione e cambiamento: note sul libro spirituale del XVI secolo'. In *Libri, biblioteche e cultura nell'Italia del Cinque e Seicento*, a cura di Edoardo Barbieri e Danilo Zardin. Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2002: 3-61: 41; John M. Frymire, *The Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany*. Leiden: Brill, 2009; Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy*.

⁹⁴ Cfr. Fabrizio Conti, *Witchcraft, Superstition, and Observant Franciscan Preachers: Pastoral Approach and Intellectual Debate in Renaissance Milan*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015: 55, n. 7; Andrea Comboni, 'Citazioni acerbiane nei *Sermones* di Gabriele Barletta'. In *Letteratura e filologia fra Svizzera e Italia. Studi in onore di Guglielmo Gorni*, a cura di Maria Antonietta Terzoli, Alberto Asor Rosa, Giorgio Inglese, 3 vols. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010: II: *La tradizione letteraria dal duecento al settecento*, 157-176.

⁹⁵ See first and foremost the online edition of the inventories prepared for the Congregation of the Index now in the Vatican Library, RICI: <http://rici.vatlib.it/>. On the project see *Libri, biblioteche e cultura degli Ordini regolari nell'Italia moderna attraverso la documentazione della Congregazione dell'indice*, a cura di Roberto Rusconi e Marisa Borraccini Verducci. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2006.

her severance pay was in books, almost surely remainders from the company's activity, for an overall value of 660 ducats. Among the over 4000 books she received, there were sixty-four copies of Roberto's sermons⁹⁶. Considering that Hellman and his associate Manthen had printed the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* and other two of Roberto's collections only between 1474 and 1478, those books had possibly been in stock for over thirty years. And there might also have been more still stored.

3. *Outlines of the manuscript diffusion of Roberto's sermons*

As said, alongside their printed diffusion, Roberto's sermon collections – as well as single sermons extrapolated from them or which simply circulated alone – enjoyed a wide manuscript diffusion. Moreover, manuscripts also attest for other less known works by Roberto, or attributed to him, which did not make their way to a printer's workshop and which only diffused through the erratic manuscript tradition that typically characterized sermon literature up until the last decades of the fifteenth century. These texts were mainly copied and used, over and over again, by preachers, who were eager to collect them in function of their activity and who adapted them to their specific and immediate needs. There was nothing strange in taking another preacher's text and freely reusing its scheme or even large portions of its text, if not the whole of it. The real problem comes, for modern historians, when they are faced with the attempt – often vain – of identifying textual traditions and authors. It is always difficult to apply strict philological rules to sermons⁹⁷. More often than not, these sermons are in fact transmitted in miscellaneous collections of sermons by different authors, whose names are usually omitted, and vary in smaller or greater elements, which cannot always simply be attributed to textual transmission. This is the reason why the discussion that follows could only rely on what probably is just a small part of Roberto's surviving sermons diffused in manuscript, which surely remain concealed in large numbers in libraries' manuscript collections. This survey of his manuscript works, with the tentative catalogue that follows in the appendix, should be considered as a work in progress, open to incrementation with the identification of new manuscripts and – possibly – unknown sermons. Keeping in mind such difficulties, it will anyway be useful to get an idea of the manuscript diffusion that some of these sermons had from the copies we know, drawing a partial and episodic picture that relies on the relatively few data I have up to now been able to collect. This will help us get a rather clear picture of which of Roberto's works

⁹⁶ Gustavo Ludwig, 'Contratti fra lo stampador Zuan di Colonia ed i suoi socii e inventario di una parte del loro magazzino'. *Miscellanea di storia veneta. Reale deputazione veneta di storia patria* 8 (1902): 45-88: 82.

⁹⁷ See the preface to Thomas de Aquino, *Sermones*, edidit Louis-Jacques Bataillon. Paris: Cerf, 2014 (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia, 44.1) and Carlo Delcorno, 'La più antica predica di Giordano da Pisa'. *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 96/1 (2018): 9-47.

were the most appreciated and reused among fellow preachers and which enjoyed the greatest success and among whom.

The most important manuscript regarding Roberto's preaching activity and his figure in general could surely be the one preserved in Rieti, Biblioteca comunale Paroniana, cod. I.2.6, should the identification of the compiler with Roberto himself be substantiated⁹⁸. Such an attribution was first of all based on the fact that the author of one of the sermons ascribable to the compiler himself asserts being native to the city of Lecce. The most notable evidence, however, lies in the small portion of the manuscript written by a different hand, which contains a sermon on the Nativity by François de Meyronnes copied for and addressed to a certain friar "R.", which in all probability should be identified with our Roberto. Now, considering that the provenance of a miscellaneous manuscript should be «determined on the basis of the rarest texts it contains»⁹⁹ and considering that this sermon prepared for and sent to Roberto is certainly unique (not the text, of course, but the format it is transmitted in), we should believe the codex was compiled by someone close to Roberto, if not by the Roberto himself. Unfortunately, we know too little of Roberto's handwriting to definitively prove the attribution of the entire manuscript to his hand. The only example we have of it is the letter Roberto addressed to the Dukes of Milan in January 1467 from Genua¹⁰⁰. A comparison between the two, despite the style and dating are rather different, shows several similarities, although too little to allow us to give a certain attribution. Thus, it is for now only safe to say that there is at least a resemblance between Roberto's and the compiler's handwriting.

The manuscript is a typical Franciscan (but in general relating to any preacher) miscellaneous codex of small format (mm. 110x145), composed of ff. 354 with an ancient foliation¹⁰¹. The predominant compiling hand, tentatively identified with Roberto's, is responsible for most of the writing, with minor exceptions, and is also the hand that has filled the manuscript's margins with numerous annotations and postils. Besides a few texts of different style, the content of

⁹⁸ On the manuscript and its content see Angelo Sacchetti Sassetti, *Fra Roberto da Lecce al capitolo di Fontecolombo (1459)*, Rieti, F.lli Faraoni, 1965; Cesare Cenci, 'Un Codice di Rieti e fr. Roberto da Lecce'. *AFH* 59 (1966): 85-104; Degiovanni 'Il *Sermo de acerbissima passione domini nostri Iesu Christi*'; Giacomo Mariani, 'Roberto Caracciolo: *Sermo de superstitionibus* (manoscritto I.2.6 Biblioteca comunale Paroniana di Rieti)'. *Rivista di Studi sull'Oriente cristiano*, forthcoming; Marco Maggiore, 'Cinque scongiuri e altre novità dallo zibaldone reatino di Roberto da Lecce'. *Contributi di filologia dell'Italia mediana* forthcoming.

⁹⁹ Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'I codici umanistici posseduti dalle biblioteche dell'Italia meridionale e di Brindisi'. *Monumenta Apuliae et Japygiae* 2 (1982): 7-14 (now in Id., *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*: IV, 449-456).

¹⁰⁰ See above subchapter 5 of Roberto's life.

¹⁰¹ Cfr. Letizia Pellegrini, 'I predicatori e i loro manoscritti'. In *La predicazione dei frati. Dalla metà del '200 alla fine del '300. Atti del XXII Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 13-15 ottobre 1994*. Spoleto: CISAM, 1995: 113-139; Ead., *I manoscritti dei predicatori: i domenicani dell'Italia mediana e i codici della loro predicazione (sec. XII-XV)*. Roma: Istituto storico domenicano, 1999; Nicoletta Giovè Marchioli, 'Il codice francescano. L'invenzione di un'identità'. In *Libri, biblioteche e letture dei frati mendicanti (secoli XIII-XIV). Atti del XXXII convegno internazionale, Assisi, 7-9 ottobre 2004*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2004: 375-418.

the manuscript sums up to over one-hundred sermons on various topics, which have been collected through a probably long time, apparently without a specific order. In any case, some grouping is visible, as for instance of sermons on the Virgin, on Christ and on sins, in general and in particular. The sermons' authors are various too and some are explicitly mentioned: Bernardino da Siena, François de Meyronnes, Antonio (possibly da Bitonto), and "G." (maybe the Dominican Gabriele Barletta, but it would be hard to tell). Four sermons – not known from other sources – are overtly ascribed to Roberto with his initial "R." placed next to the title¹⁰², but perhaps even more could be his, especially if the manuscript were effectively an autograph. Cesare Cenci has correctly dated it to the 1450s and this would coincide with an early phase of Roberto's preaching, when we know he perused other preachers' sermons – especially Bernardino da Siena's, whose presence is predominant in the manuscript – and began writing some of his own. Particularly interesting in these sermons and others are small portions of vernacular texts which emerge from the midst of the main text's Latin. This vernacular – as Marco Maggiore, who is currently working on their linguistic analysis, graciously confirms – would seem to hint at the furthest Southern tip of Eastern Italy, i.e. Salento, thus perfectly coinciding with Roberto's origins¹⁰³. The only real obstacle in substantiating that this actually was Roberto's preaching tool could be one of the last sermons, an oration which should have been delivered for the election of a Provincial Vicar in Fonteceolombo, Franciscan Observant convent just outside Rieti. Since the Chapter in Fontecolombo was held in 1459, it would seem difficult that Roberto took part in it, having left the Observants definitively around 1454. In anycase, the mention made of Fontecolombo in the sermon's text is rather cryptic and not necessarily referring to the provincial chapter of 1459. Forcedly leaving these issues unsolved, the manuscript is anyway a rare testimony of some otherwise unknown sermons by Roberto and by other contemporary preachers.

Besides the peculiar case of this possibly autograph manuscript, the best known and the most fortunate among Roberto's sermons diffused only in manuscript surely are the ones that belong to the Latin *reportatio* of the long cycle he preached in Padua from Advent 1450 to Easter 1451. As anticipated in discussing Roberto's biography, Oriana Visani partially edited the Lenten sermons in 1985, following the general trend that considered the cycle preached in that city in 1455. The later re-dating of Francesco Beccaria's death to the summer of 1450 – and not 1454 as was once believed – has shifted the entire cycle backwards by five years, to Lent 1451. The manuscripts that preserve the edited Lenten sermons, moreover, also bear some Adventual sermons attributed to

¹⁰² These sermons are *De confessione* (ff. 54r-64v); *De superstitionibus* (96r-105v); *De sancta cruce* (110v-112v); *De matrimonio* (211v-220r).

¹⁰³ It would be a precious testimony of Roberto's spoken language, otherwise unknown, since his printed vernacular texts are heavily corrupted by the Northern dialects of the printers who brought them to light and by their normalizing trends, cfr. Rosario Coluccia, 'Lingua e cultura fino agli albori del Rinascimento'. In *Storia di Lecce*, 1: *Dai bizantini agli aragonesi*, a cura di Benedetto Vetere. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993: 487-571: 522-525; Id., 'Lingua e religione': 83.

Roberto and datable to 1450. Thus scholars acknowledged these sermons were all part of a longer cycle, which kept Roberto in Padua from late 1450 to Easter 1451. Oriana Visani did not cease her research on Roberto's Paduan sermons with her 1985 edition and, over the years, she visited European and American libraries in search of other testimonies, only partially publishing the results of her work¹⁰⁴.

In her most recent essay on the matter, Oriana Visani identified ten codices that bear – in various proportions – a total of around eighty sermons preached by Roberto in Padua. After all, Roberto himself had hinted at this number, in one of his Paduan sermons, as the number of sermons he had delivered there¹⁰⁵. These texts were perused by other preachers, who collected them, often alongside other sermons by Observant Franciscan authors – showing how Roberto's preaching style was never separated from the Observant Franciscan tradition in the preachers' eyes – especially by Bernardino da Siena and Michele Carcano, some other times by Antonio da Bitonto and Cherubino da Spoleto. Particularly relevant, in the textual tradition of these sermons, is Giacomo della Marca's interest for Roberto's preaching. Giacomo, in fact, owned one of the most consistent collections of these Paduan sermons – the manuscript now in Falconara, cod. 19 – and personally worked on it, correcting the scribe's typos, completing texts with the aid of another manuscript and abundantly annotating its margins¹⁰⁶.

However, the Paduan Adventual and Lenten sermons are not the only example of *reportationes* of Roberto's preaching. There are at least another two consistent testimonies of his live preaching, this time in Florence and in Milan. Unlike the Paduan sermons, these *reportationes*, in the vernacular, had no circulation whatsoever and have come down to us in single manuscript copies. The first example is a group of four sermons from Roberto's Lenten preaching in Santa Liberata, in Florence, in 1481¹⁰⁷. These are brief transcriptions, or better summaries, of his sermons and they are part of a collection composed by a layman, who put together sermons preached in the city by several mendicant friars over a number of years to form a small handbook of moral theology and Christian doctrine. The handbook is now preserved as ms. 1186 in the Biblioteca Riccardiana of Florence and was studied and edited by Zelina Zafarana¹⁰⁸. Roberto's sermons are from late March

¹⁰⁴ Her latest publications on the subject are Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari' and Ead., 'Il tema del giudizio universale nella predicazione francescana del Quattrocento in Italia'. In an act of uncommon generosity, Oriana Visani has decided to share all of her unpublished work on Roberto with me and I am enormously grateful to her for this. I actually owe her more generally my utmost gratitude for always acting as patient sounding board for my work on Roberto throughout these years.

¹⁰⁵ Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana, cod. 436, f. 85v (quoted in Visani, 'Un nuovo testimone del Quaresimale padovano del 1455 di Roberto da Lecce': 173): «O Paduani [...] feci 80 sermones vobis».

¹⁰⁶ Visani, 'Giacomo della Marca e Roberto da Lecce'.

¹⁰⁷ See above subchapter 6 of Roberto's life.

¹⁰⁸ Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento'.

– one, perhaps, from early April – 1481 and they deal with confession, penance, avarice and free will¹⁰⁹.

The other small group of vernacular *reportationes* is composed of nine sermons transcribed by the Milanese courtman Francesco Baiaca – otherwise unknown – «for the delight and the spiritual amusement» of the Duchess Bianca Maria Visconti¹¹⁰. The sermons were collected during Roberto's preaching for the Milanese court, at the presence of the Duke and the Duchess, and are almost surely datable to the time the preacher spent in Milan between 1457 and 1458. Francesco Baiaca did not arrange the nine sermons in the booklet following a chronological order, but rather grouped them according to a precise theoretical structure, which is no longer extant because of a mistake in the manuscript's binding, but which can be reconstructed. A sermon on the Virgin opened the collection, followed by a group of three sermons on the Antichrist and the end of the world. A sermon on the errors concerning communion then stood as the pivot, in the middle of the whole collection, which was completed by another group of three sermons on infernal pains and a sermon dedicated to John the Baptist¹¹¹.

Besides these *reportationes*, some other minor sermon collections compiled by Roberto have been preserved only in manuscript, never making it to print. It is the case of the two sermons that now compose the *Predicaciones de virtutibus*, currently preserved in the Archivio Capitolare of Lucca, cod. 167. The manuscript had been part of the rich library of the bishop of Lucca, the canon law *doctor* Felino Sandei, who also personally knew Roberto and perused his other collections¹¹². Laura Gasparri studied and edited the two sermons in 1980, dating the work's composition around the same time as the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (thus 1466-1471), as several cross references tend to prove. It is almost certain the collection is unfinished, since to the first sermon, dedicated to virtue in general, there follows just a second one on the specific virtue of prudence: probably others would have had to follow in the author's original plan. According to Gasparri, Roberto possibly abandoned the composition in favour of others, as could be partially proven by the reuse he made of portions of text and arguments in his later works. However, such evidence could also simply indicate the typical working habits of the time's preachers: the mentions Roberto made of the *De virtutibus*

¹⁰⁹ *Ivi*: 1037-1039: «Della chonfessione» [preached on 10 March 1481, corrected in 8 April by Zafarana]; 1047: «Disse fra Ruberto [...] predichando della penitenzia» [preached on 22 March 1481, 23 March according to Zafarana]; 1088-1089: «Della avaritia» [preached on 28 March 1481]; 1095-1097: «Per fra Ruberto [...] se ll'uomo poteva chol libero arbitro far bene sanza la gratia di Dio o no, e se e beni fatti in pecchato mortale si perdevano o potevano essere a mmerito e a ssalute» [preached on 30 March 1481, 31 March according to Zafarana].

¹¹⁰ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare di Roberto da Lecce': 362. See also Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*, 6 vols. London: The Warburg Institute – Leiden: Brill, 1963-1992: VI, 72-73. See above suchapter 4 of Roberto's life.

¹¹¹ Gasparri, 'Nove prediche inedite in volgare di Roberto da Lecce': 365-366.

¹¹² Giuseppe Ghilarducci, 'Il vescovo Felino Sandei e la Biblioteca Capitolare di Lucca'. *Actum Luce* 1 (1972): 159-183: 176. For Roberto's relationship with Felino and the latter's use of the preachers works see above subchapter 4 of Roberto's life and below the subchapter that follows.

in the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* would rather lead us to believe the collection had been completed and it is only partial as we know it today from this sole witness¹¹³.

Another small collection attributed to Roberto and again only partially preserved, although this time in at least two manuscript copies, is the *Opus de doctrina christiana*. The ms. Parm. 237 of the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma¹¹⁴ and the ms. lat. 24, Plut. XX of the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence¹¹⁵, both preserve just the initial part of the work. This collection must have been made up of nine sermons. The first two were then extrapolated to form an independent collection which was also printed several times with Roberto's other major works, the *Tractatus de divina caritate*. The rest of the *De doctrina christiana* consisted in seven sermons – it is explicitly stated in the preface that survives – which commented the biblical verse «Reddet unicuique secundum opera sua»¹¹⁶. The Florentine manuscript actually only attests for the work's incipit, since the transcription of the collection's text is then only limited to the two sermons from the *Tractatus de divina caritate*. On the other hand, the manuscript in Parma bears the whole *Tractatus de divina caritate* and the first three – although the third is not complete – out of the other seven sermons composing the *De doctrina christiana*.

Among single sermons diffused in manuscript and attributed to Roberto, the ones that have by far enjoyed the largest manuscript diffusion, both in Italy and abroad, are the sermons *De flagellis* and *De morte*, testifying for Roberto's particular success in these macabre and strong-impact themes. Oriana Visani has already thoroughly analysed these sermons' manuscript tradition, which is sufficiently testified here in the appendix that follows. These two sermons can be found in numerous sermonaries, coming from Italy and abroad, especially German lands, and in various versions, which all had their separate transmission. It will be worth noting the different versions of the *De flagellis* sermon attributed to Roberto that circulated and overlapped. Scholars have recognized at least three versions of this sermon: one preached in L'Aquila (presumably in the 1450s) and the other two in Padua (once probably in 1451 and another time in 1463)¹¹⁷.

Finally, as said in the opening part of this chapter, the sermon collections' printed editions did not entirely replace their manuscript diffusion and their handwritten circulation persisted also

¹¹³ Laura Gasparri, 'Sulla tradizione manoscritta delle prediche di Roberto da Lecce': 173-225.

¹¹⁴ Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 237, f. 311r: «In nomine Domini amen. Incipit opus de doctrina christiana secundum fratrem Robertum ordinis minorum, sacre theologie magistrum et verbi Domini predicatorem indignum. Et primo incipit tractatus de divina caritate in quo ostenditur cum omni veritate Sacre Scripture qualiter Deus benedictus quantum in se est omnibus peccatoribus offert indulgentiam et remissionem peccatorum, neminem excludens a salutis via».

¹¹⁵ Angelo Maria Bandini, *Catalogus codicum latinorum bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae*, 5 vols. Florentiae, 1774: I, 634-635.

¹¹⁶ Mt 16,27, but also Rm 2,6.

¹¹⁷ Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 291-296; Ead., 'Il tema del Giudizio universale nella predicazione francescana del Quattrocento in Italia'.

after several editions had been published. It would have only been in the sixteenth century that print would have been able to consistently take over manuscript transmission. Numerous excerpts from them are documented in several manuscript copies and surely many more still lie unknown in undescribed miscellaneous codices. What is more interesting, however, is that there are also a number of complete copies of entire collections. There is one extant manuscript copy of the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, although partially damaged by fire, in Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. H.III.40. There are four copies of Roberto's Adventual collection: in Innsbruck (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, cod. 592), Munich (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. 18319), Turin (Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. F.V.6) and possibly Cologne (Historisches Archiv der Stadt, GB 4° 117). However, it was Roberto's most diffused Latin printed collection to also be his most diffused collection in manuscript. Indeed, there are at least seven manuscript copies that contain the whole *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: in Berkeley, Bancroft Library, cod. UCB 89; in Foligno, Biblioteca Iacobilli, cod. C.VIII.16; in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cods. 13412, 18319, 23962 and Universitätsbibliothek, cod. 344; Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. U 806; and Paterson, Franciscan Convent of Saint Anthony, manuscript with no call number. Moreover, two or three other manuscripts bear large excerpts of it and, finally, several others contain one or more sermons extrapolated from it¹¹⁸. The manuscript diffusion of the *Quadragesimale* also tells us that this work started circulating quite some time before it was printed. This is particularly interesting, because it could contribute to proving that Roberto was not involved in the printing of his collections, which began circulating – or which he circulated – in manuscript (the relatively small number of manuscript copies could be easily explained with their dismissal following the acquisition of a printed copy) and which only later arrived to the print market. Printers evidently monitored the manuscript fortune of this kind of works and decided to acquire and print the ones they believed could provide them some profit: we must also always keep in mind authorial rights were far from being recognized. Going back to the manuscript diffusion of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* before its printing, a partial copy (sermons I to XIII) is preserved in Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, cod. 75, and it contains the compilation date of 1471. Other dated copies are the complete ones from Foligno and Munich (State Library, cod. 13412), both copied in 1473. A certain Ambrogio Ambrogi was the compiler of the copy now in Foligno and he finished transcribing it in Siena on 28 January 1473 for Paolo da Spoleto¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁸ See Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307-317 and the appendix *ultra*.

¹¹⁹ Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

4. *The readers of Roberto's sermon collections*

The renowned sixteenth-century Venetian author of the *Navigazioni et viaggi*, Giovan Battista Ramusio, was the son of Paolo, a judge who had moved to Northern Italy from his hometown Rimini, securing himself and his offspring relevant careers in Venetian public administration. Father and son shared the penchant for writing and, although incomparable with Giovan Battista's enormous and celebrated production, even some of Paolo's works have survived¹²⁰. Among them, there is one relating the imaginative description that Paolo had heard from an angel concerning the foundation of a new kind of female convent, entirely consecrated to beauty and abundance. One of the convent's elements described by the angel was its library, filled with all the – not necessarily pious – best works of Italian vernacular literature. Side by side with Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio there stood also Roberto's collections of sermons:

And may there be everywhere buildings and lodges, entirely made of fine alabaster, notable from everywhere for their lively and plain virtues; and in these lodges there will be vernacular books of admirable vein, style and praise, among which may the almighty providence allow there to be *Decameron*, *Filocolo*, *Fiammetta* and *Corbaccio*. And don't be surprised if these volumes are praised among us, since the fruit of their grand learning draws us closer to the heavens. And if their style is covered by some veil, for its favouring of vanity, this does not mean that honest women and men are not capable of picking the truly beautiful fruit that appear among the fronds. May there always be [in these lodges] Dante and Petrarca, the story of Lucia [possibly an hagiography of Saint Lucy] and friar Roberto's sermons¹²¹.

When this text was written (in 1484), Roberto's works were at the height of their fortune and the request for them was huge: every conventual library possessed some copy of his Latin or vernacular sermons and especially the latter were also among the choices of devout readings made by pious laymen. In considering the results of her investigation on Milanese libraries of the fifteenth-century, for example, Monica Pedralli could state that Roberto's sermon collections were, in its genre, only

¹²⁰ Massimo Donattini, 'Una famiglia riminese nella società e cultura veneziane: i Ramusio'. In *Ravenna in età veneziana*, a cura di Dante Bolognesi. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1986: 279-294; Id., 'Etica personale, promozione sociale e memorie di famiglia nella Venezia del Rinascimento. Note su Paolo Ramusio seniore (1443?-1506)'. In *Dai cantieri alla storia. Liber amicorum Paolo Prodi*, a cura di Gian Paolo Brizzi e Giuseppe Olmi. Bologna: Clueb, 2007: 317-330.

¹²¹ Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. *Nuovi Acquisti* 429, ff. 37v-38r: «E sie per ogni luogo palaci e logie, tutte di fin alabastro fabricate e distincte per tutto a ochii per virtù vivaci e chiari; e sarà in queste logie libri in vulgar di mirabil vena e stile e loda, tra quali consenta la summa providencia ch'el si atrovi *Decameron*, *Filocolo*, *Fiammeta*, *Corbazo*. Né ti maravigliar se apresso noi questi volumi son gratiosi, peroché 'l fior de la sua gran doctrina si acosta ai nostri cieli; e se per favorir le cose vane in quelli qualche velo ingombra il stile, non è però che apresso honeste donne e cavaglieri non si racogli il fructo che infra diversi fronde apar si bello. Dante e Petrarche quivi giamai non manchi, la historia de Lucia e le prediche di frate Roberto» cfr. Donattini, 'Una famiglia riminese', 288.

second to Jacopo da Varazze's *Sermones*, a true classic since the thirteenth century¹²². We still «know remarkably little about the people who bought Europe's first printed books, their favorite authors, and their preferred titles»¹²³. Yet, an exploration of these tastes and readings is the only possible way through which we can get a glimpse of the effect and the success printed books had on their readers¹²⁴. In the next few pages, I will attempt to give an account – based primarily on old private and public library catalogues and ancient *ex libris*, but not only limited to these – of the diffusion of Roberto's works among his contemporary readers. The final goal is that of trying to understand why these writings enjoyed the success they had and what brought people (laymen and clerics) to read them so eagerly.

As already said, Roberto's Latin collections were primarily addressed to religious readers and, among them, especially to popular preachers and their conventual libraries, since they were the ones who could make the best out of the model sermons, reusing them for their own activity on the pulpit. This assert can be easily confirmed leafing some extant copies of these collections, which often bear possession notes or postils written by friars or stating their belonging to conventual libraries. The database of *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (MEI, <http://data.cerl.org/mei/search?lang=it>) is a precious tool for the investigation of ancient possession notes in books printed before 1501. Although it is still a very partial survey of ancient books in European libraries, it can work as an exemplary sample. On the other hand, Roberto's vernacular collections were more oriented to a popular audience¹²⁵. The differences in preservation rates, as stated above, could be a hint in this sense – being religious institutions more stable and offering their book collections a wider chance of survival, especially in Italy – but so are the book formats (usually smaller for the vernacular collections), the presence of images (always missing in Latin collections, while sometimes present in the vernacular ones)¹²⁶ or the book prices on the time's market. It is possible, for instance, to look into this last element by comparing the prices of vernacular and Latin sermon collections in bookmerchants' inventories.

¹²² Monica Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato. Gli inventari di biblioteca e la cultura a Milano nel Quattrocento*. Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2002: 129.

¹²³ Michael Milway, 'Forgotten best-sellers from the dawn of the Reformation'. In *Continuity and Change. The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History. Essays presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday*, edited by Robert J. Bast and Andrew C. Gow. Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2000: 113-142.

¹²⁴ Roger Chartier, 'Popular Appropriation: The Readers and Their Books'. In Id., *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances and Audiences from Codex to Computer*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995: 83-97.

¹²⁵ On "popular" books in the early decades of print see Paul F. Grendler, 'Il libro popolare nel Cinquecento'. In *La stampa in Italia nel Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno, Roma, 17-21 ottobre 1989*, a cura di Marco Santoro, 2 vols. Roma: Bulzoni, 1992: I, 211-237; Lorenzo Baldacchini, *Alle origini dell'editoria in volgare: Niccolò Zoppino da Ferrara a Venezia: annali (1503-1544)*. Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2011.

¹²⁶ Max Sander, *Le livre a figures italien depuis 1467 jusqu'a 1530: essai de sa bibliographie et de son histoire*, 5 vols. Milano: U. Hoepli, 1942: nn. 1697-1711.

Roberto's works are frequent in ancient booksellers' catalogues. For example in Venice, in February 1480, Antonio Moreto left a consistent number of books to Domenico Gili (presumably Gigli) for him to sell them at a set price. The three copies he left of Roberto's vernacular sermons were valued 1 lira and 10 soldi, whereas Leonardo da Udine's Latin Lenten sermons were valued 1 ducato¹²⁷. A few years earlier, in 1477, when Franz Renner's Florentine employee Simone di Bartolomeo sent his brother some books to sell in their hometown, he also included four copies of Roberto's vernacular sermons, which probably Renner had not printed, so we would assume he was also commercializing someone else's work. These collections were valued 2 lire and 10 soldi, whereas Michele Carcano's Latin Lenten collection was valued 1 ducato and 4 lire¹²⁸. We can see here both the difference in price between Latin and vernacular collections and the general rapid price drop in the bookmarket.

In the summer of 1491, in Parma, the brothers Taddeo and Angelo Ugoletto – the former had been Mathias Corvinus' librarian in Buda, while the latter had begun a printing activity in their hometown – founded a bookselling society with Giacomo Burali. In the act they signed at that time, they also included a list of 241 titles (for a total of 2182 volumes) that constituted the society's initial stock. The only sermon collections were a copy of Leonardo da Udine's Latin Lenten sermons (estimated 1 lira and 10 soldi), seven copies of Roberto's vernacular Lenten sermons (from two different editions, since three were valued 10 soldi and another four 6 soldi) and two copies of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis* (1 lira)¹²⁹. Of course, these numbers cannot be compared with those of more wanted items, such as schoolbooks like Donatus' Latin grammar, of which the booksellers kept threehundred copies. Yet it is still noteworthy that Roberto's sermon collections were almost the only books of that genre to be kept in stock. And it is even more important that his more popular vernacular collection largely outnumbered the Latin ones: both a sign of the bookseller's orientation towards a precise readership and, possibly, of a larger success of these collections by this time in that specific region.

Another example, still from Parma, from a few years later is contained in the library catalogue of the bookseller Antonio Martinati, compiled in September 1497 after his death, in order to sell the whole lot. Within the 134 titles (for a total of 901 volumes) we find three copies of Roberto's vernacular Lenten sermons and two of his *Specchio della fede*, which had been published

¹²⁷ Riccardo Fulin, 'Documenti per servire alla storia della stampa': 395-399.

¹²⁸ Ridolfi, 'Francesco della Fontana stampatore e libraio a Venezia': 63.

¹²⁹ Margherita Martani, 'Librerie a Parma nella seconda metà del XV secolo'. *LB* 97/3 (1995): 211-244: 225. Cfr. also Gianluca Battioni, 'Per la storia della cultura Parmense in età sforzesca: l'inventario-catalogo di una libreria cittadina del 1491'. *Archivio storico per le province parmensi*, s. IV, 38 (1986): 453-468.

not long before in Venice and which was valued 1 soldo and 9 denari¹³⁰. Around the same time, in Bologna, the bookseller and printer Francesco “Platone” Benedetti (d. 1496) owned at least seven copies of Roberto’s works¹³¹; and also the Venetian bookseller Francesco de’ Madi sold some copies of these works between 1484 and 1488¹³². Finally, Roberto’s vernacular sermons, both the Lenten sermons and the *Specchio della fede*, were present in the catalogue of books – presumably compiled for commercial reasons – coming from Domenico Sivieri’s *bottega* in Ferrara, datable to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century¹³³.

Among religious readers, Roberto’s Franciscan confreres were, of course, the main “consumers” of his written production. It is clear that mendicant readers and reusers preferred authors from their own order, although they very often also looked at what other friars were producing. As said, despite Roberto’s early frictions with his Observant superiors, his reputation as a preacher and, later, as an author of model sermons was not at all compromised inside the Order, not even among Observants. Just as we have seen his sermons transcribed in manuscripts containing other sermons of the Observant Franciscan preaching tradition, some of which were surely transcribed and used by Observant Franciscan friars and preachers, we can find Roberto’s printed books in Observant Franciscan libraries and used by Observant Franciscan friars. A Venetian 1472 edition of Roberto’s *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, now inc. 418 of the Biblioteca Augusta in Perugia, for instance, was *ad usum* of the relatively well-known Observant preacher Mariano da Montesanto (nowadays Potenza Picena)¹³⁴. In wanting to supply the new Franciscan Observant convent of Santa Maria della pietà in Ugento (in Salento) with a donation of 12 books in his will dated 22 July 1478, the chaplain of Saint Gregory in Venice, Antonio di Sambrino, among which were Roberto’s Lenten sermons¹³⁵. Another example could be the inventory of the conventual library of Gemona, in Friuli, compiled towards the end of the fifteenth century, which included two copies of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*¹³⁶. Or the description of the library of San Paolo in

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*: 217. Cfr. also Alberto Del Prato, ‘Librai e biblioteche parmensi del secolo XV’. *Archivio storico per le province parmensi*, 4 (1904): 1-56: 24-35.

¹³¹ Albano Sorbelli, ‘La libreria di uno stampatore bibliofilo del Quattrocento’. In *Studi e ricerche sulla storia della stampa del Quattrocento: omaggio dell’Italia a Giovanni Gutenberg nel V centenario della sua scoperta*. Milano: Hoepli, 1942: 259-336: 320-321.

¹³² Angela Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara tra XV e XVI secolo. La bottega di Domenico Sivieri*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1998: 257 [quoted from Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ital. IX, 45 (7439)].

¹³³ *Ivi*: 244 and 257.

¹³⁴ Ugolino Nicolini, ‘I minori osservanti di Monteripido e lo “scriptorium” delle clarisse di Monteluca in Perugia nei secoli XV e XVI’. *Picenum seraphicum* 8 (1971): 100-130: 103, n. 13

¹³⁵ Susan Connell, ‘Books and their owners in Venice 1345-1480’. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 163-186: 182-183: «voio siano posti in qualche bancho a modo se teneno le librerie e siano inferati cum le catinele come se soleno far in le librerie, farse per sì facto modo che cadauno, sì preti come diaconi et altri che haverà piacer de studiar, li possano exercitar. E per niente voio siano in man de lo episcopo, sì presenti come successori, ma siano li in chiesa, como ho dicto, comuni a tuti, e siano fermi in quel luogo dove serà determinato [...], tra i quali: uno libro che è quadragesimale de frar Ruberto, sive modo de lege, coperto de pelle russa cum chioldi».

¹³⁶ Cesare Cenci, ‘Inventario della biblioteca esistente nel convento di S. Antonio in Gemona (1451-1490)’. *Picenum Seraphicum* 8 (1971): 131-158: 157, nn. 200, 204.

Monte, just outside Bologna, prepared by Fabio Vigili in the first years of the sixteenth century, in which Roberto's sermons stood side by side with collections of contemporary Franciscan observant authors (Antonio da Vercelli, Grütisch, Michele Carcano)¹³⁷. And, of course, we cannot forget that Giacomo della Marca himself possessed and cherished at least two copies of the Lenten sermons Roberto had preached in Padua¹³⁸. An indirect confirmation of the consistent use made by Observant Franciscans of Roberto's works can be found in the late sixteenth-century lists of conventual libraries, compiled throughout Italy for the Sacred Congregation of the Index. Roberto's works were present in large numbers in several libraries, but it is especially among the Franciscan Observants that he can be acknowledged among the «canonical» authors¹³⁹.

Remaining inside the Franciscan family, there is an example from the Milanese convent of Santa Maria della Pace, destined to host the new congregation of the Amadeiti founded by the Portuguese Amadeo de Menes Silva, the construction of which had begun in 1469¹⁴⁰. The work did not proceed smoothly and the convent had probably just been finished when the novice Pietro Filippo Sclafenati – who curiously enough picked the religious name of fra' Roberto – entered the order, writing his will on 8 February 1478. In this will he named the convent among his heirs, leaving the community with a house in Pavia and the revenues from a small piece of a land he possessed there. Moreover, the novice also provided that twenty-four books should be bought for the friars at Santa Maria della Pace, probably the ones he believed most important for an otherwise empty conventual library. Alongside the *Corpus iuris canonici*, the Bible with Nicolas de Lyre's *Postilla*, a few of the Church Fathers's writings, Bernard's *Super Cantica canticorum* and some scholastic works, he included three collections of sermons, by Leonardo da Udine and by Roberto¹⁴¹.

For the Franciscan Conventuals, a good example could be the ancient books catalogue of the Biblioteca Antoniana in Padua, which has maintained in great deal its holdings throughout the centuries, surviving suppressions and devolutions¹⁴². The library now holds five copies of Roberto's works: two issues of the *Opera* [Venice, Giorgio Arrivabene, 1496 and Venice, Gabriele Grassi, s.a.], one of the *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum* [Venice, Bernardino Benali, 1490], one of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* [Venice, Bartolomeo da Cremona 1472] and one of his vernacular

¹³⁷ Marie Hyacinte Laurent, *Fabio Vigili et les bibliothèques de Bologne au début du XVI^e siècle d'après le ms. Barb. Lat. 3185*. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1943: 148.

¹³⁸ Visani, 'Giacomo della Marca e Roberto da Lecce'.

¹³⁹ Giovanna Granata, 'Le biblioteche dei francescani osservanti alla fine del '500: un approccio bibliometrico'. In *Libri, biblioteche e cultura degli Ordini regolari*: 145-178.

¹⁴⁰ See Grado Giovanni Merlo, 'Menes Silva, Amadeo de'. *DBI* 73 (2009): 461-463.

¹⁴¹ Paolo M. Sevesi, *B. Amadeo Menez de Sylva dei frati minori fondatore degli amadeiti*. Firenze: Tipografia domenicana, 1912: 53-57; Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato*: 502.

¹⁴² Cesare Cenci, 'Manoscritti e frati studiosi nella Biblioteca Antoniana di Padova'. *AFH* 69 (1976): 496-520: 496.

Lenten sermons [Treviso, Michele Manzolo, 1480]¹⁴³. It is surprising to see that Fabio Vigili did not mention any of Roberto's works when describing the conventual library of San Francesco in Bologna. However, Vigili's description is probably only partial, since it adds up to 117 titles, a bit too few if compared to the earlier 1421 catalogue, which numbered 649 units in the library¹⁴⁴.

Franciscan preachers, however, were not the only readers of Roberto's works, which were widely and well accepted by all mendicant orders, variously entrusted with the apostolic office of preaching. Dominicans, the other great mendicant order that had preaching as one of its main offices – actually the “order of preachers” *par excellence* – were also eager to read Roberto's sermons and possessed numerous copies in their libraries. A good example can be found in the relatively rich (for a single friar) library catalogue of sixty-five entries compiled, before the end of the fifteenth century, by the Dominican friar Vincenzo Rubini, who after studying in Padua spent most of his life in Cyprus, in the Dominican convent of Nicosia, also becoming more than once Vicar and Provincial of Greece. In his library, which included some classics and some theological works, there was also a number of sermon collections: Roberto's two Latin *Quadragesimales*, Leonardo da Udine's *Quadragesimale* and his *Sermones de sanctis*, a collection of Lenten sermons and one of sermons on saints by an otherwise unknown Urbano da Brescia and three anonymous collections¹⁴⁵. Moreover, the library of the Dominican convent of Sant'Agostino in Padua possessed at least two collections of Roberto's sermons in 1498: a *Quadragesimale*, either one of his Latin collections or his more popular vernacular one, and a presumably manuscript collections which has yet to be identified¹⁴⁶; while the conventual library of San Domenico in Bologna owned a copy of one of Roberto's Lenten collections, according to the catalogue compiled by Fabio Vigili¹⁴⁷. Other examples, from different geographical areas, could be the copy of Roberto's *Opera* [Venice, Franz Renner, 1479] owned by the Dominican *lector* of the Neapolitan *studium* Ludovico de Natali «de Magaliano» – now in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples, inc. X C 31 – or Roberto's sermons copied by the Catalan friar Esteve Rottlà (Esteban Rollan) in a manuscript now in Barcelona University Library, cod. 1953¹⁴⁸.

The same can be said for Augustinians. The Observant Colombino da Brescia, from the convent of San Barnaba in Brescia, possessed a copy of Roberto's *Sermones de Adventu* [Venice,

¹⁴³ Maria Cristina Zanardi, *Catalogo degli incunaboli della Biblioteca Antoniana di Padova*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2012: 46-50, nn. 58-62

¹⁴⁴ Laurent, *Fabio Vigili et les bibliothèques de Bologne*: 108-121 and 236-265.

¹⁴⁵ Luciano Gargan, *Lo studio teologico e la biblioteca dei domenicani a Padova nel Tre e Quattrocento*. Padova: Antenore, 1971: 138-142

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*: 234, 261.

¹⁴⁷ Laurent, *Fabio Vigili et les bibliothèques de Bologne*: 99.

¹⁴⁸ Rottlà (ca. 1475-1530) was the author, around 1500, of some *Chronica regum Aragonum et comitum Barchinone*. On him see at least Maria Toldrà Sabaté, 'La història en el projecte enciclopèdic d'Esteve Rottlà, O.P. (c. 1475-1530)'. *Recerques* 40 (2000): 59-78, with further bibliographical references.

Johann Hellman and Johann Manthen, 1474] during Paolino da Milano's general vicariate in Lombardia (elected in 1476 and 1479; † 1481)¹⁴⁹. Around the same time, or possibly some years later, friar Arcangelo da Brescia, from the convent of San Paolo in Vernavola in Pavia, received *ad usum* a copy of Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* [Venice, Franz Renner, 1472] from the Lombard General Vicar Paolo Olmio da Bergamo (elected in 1475, 1480 and 1483; † 1494)¹⁵⁰. As for Servites, we can give the example of friar Martino da Civita Castellana, who had been rector of the church of Santi Giacomo e Cristoforo in Casaglia, near Ferrara, and who left his library in the church at the time of his death (6 April 1476). Martino owned, among other books, two copies of Roberto's sermons¹⁵¹. Moreover, another servite, Costantino da Racconigi, was the scribe who copied several of Roberto's sermons in Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, cod. D.291¹⁵². Finally, an example for the Carmelites could be friar Pietro Traversini, twice General Vicar of the Mantuan congregation of his order (1497-99 and 1505 to his death, occurred before 1507), owner of a copy of Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* printed in Venice by Franz Renner in 1472, now in Mantua, Biblioteca Teresiana, Inc. 892¹⁵³.

Even religious orders not primarily dedicated to preaching were interested in Roberto's works. Such were, for example the Benedictine Observants of Santa Giustina in Padua, who, in their late fifteenth-century library catalogue numbered three copies of collections by Roberto: his «Sermones de tempore» (possibly a copy of the *Opera*), his *Sermones de adventu* and his «Sermones predicabiles [...] in quadragesima et certis sollempnitatibus» (perhaps again the *Opera*)¹⁵⁴. And these collections' success continued for some time after their authors' death if newly founded orders like the Jesuits purchased them for their communities and colleges. Finally, although I have privileged examples from Italy, Roberto's sermons were soon diffused also in the rest of Europe, were numerous copies of his works are still scattered in libraries, often bearing possession notes from convents and monasteries.

¹⁴⁹ Cfr. Luigi Torelli, *Secoli agostiniani ovvero historia generale del sacro ordine eremitano*, 8 vols. Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1659-1686: VII, *ad indicem*. The copy is now in Bergamo, Biblioteca Angelo Mai.

¹⁵⁰ Cfr. Torelli, *Secoli agostiniani*: VII, *ad indicem*. The copy is now in Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, inc. B 44. Arcangelo da Brescia may be identified with the Arcangelo de Galerati who presided the provincial chapter of Lombardia in 1498, cfr. Torelli, *Secoli agostiniani*: VII, 509-510.

¹⁵¹ Enrico Peverada, 'Le chiese di Casaglia e Ravalle tra cura pastorale e presenza estense (sec. XV)'. In *L'aquila bianca: studi di storia estense per Luciano Chiappini*, a cura di Antonio Samaritani. *Atti e memorie. Deputazione provinciale ferrarese di storia patria*, s. IV, 17 (2000): 81-107: 95.

¹⁵² See the appendix that follows.

¹⁵³ MEI: <http://data.cerl.org/mei/00201971> [last visited 21 March 2018]. On Traversini see Carlo Vaghi, *Commentaria fratrum et sororum ordinis beatissimae Mariae virginis de Monte Carmelo congregationis Mantuanae*. Parmae: Typis Joseph Rosati, 1725: 110-113, 191; Giovanni Maria Pensa, *Teatro de gli huomini più illustri della famiglia carmelitana di Mantova*. Mantova: presso Aurelio e Lodovico Osanna fratelli stampatori ducali, 1628: 92-101.

¹⁵⁴ Giovanna Cantoni Alzati, *La biblioteca di S. Giustina di Padova. Libri e cultura presso i benedettini padovani in età umanistica*. Padova: Antenore, 1982: respectively 136, n. 648; 170, n. 1197; 173, n. 1231.

We can gain a further clue of these collections' fortune from the reuse religious readers made of them. It will suffice to mention a few cases. A first one, from Italy, is that of the abundant presence of references to Roberto's works in the "preaching diary" of a late-fifteenth-century friar, who, in preparing and delivering his sermons, abundantly drew material from his confrere. He then meticulously annotated all these details about his preaching in a booklet, which is extant in Foligno, Biblioteca Comunale, cod. C.85¹⁵⁵. The second case – or, better, group of cases – comes from Hungary, where thorough studies on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century preaching have highlighted the deep influence Roberto's works had on Hungarian preachers and authors, such as the Franciscan Perlbartus of Temesvár or the anonymous Carthusian compiler of the *Érdy-kódex*¹⁵⁶. The same could be said about the influence Roberto possibly played on French sacred orators, although specific studies are still lacking¹⁵⁷. Finally, we might add the example represented by Olomouc, Vědecká knihovna, cod. M I 155. The manuscript, which contains a complete copy of Roberto's Adventual sermons and some other texts, was *ad usum* of friar Baptist of Leipzig, who used it as a preaching tool during his peregrinations in Central Europe, annotating inside it the cities he visited and where he preached: Olomouc (1468/9), Breslau (1472), Graupen in North-West Bohemia (1474) and Grossglogau in Silesia (1479)¹⁵⁸.

Alongside friars, also secular clergy found the reading of Roberto's sermon collections useful for their preaching office. Besides the Venetian canon Antonio di Sambrino, mentioned above, we could name the bishop of Cassano, Giovan Francesco Brusati, native of Verona. Among the books he possessed, alongside several theological and moral works such as Antonino's *Summa* and alongside Leonardo da Udine's sermons, we find a copy of Roberto's Adventual sermons and

¹⁵⁵ Mario Sensi, 'La predicazione itinerante a Foligno nel sec. XV': 139-195; Roberto Rusconi, *Predicazione e vita religiosa nella società italiana*: 198-199; Yoko Kimura, 'Predicazione di routine di fine Quattrocento. Il diario di un anonimo predicatore francescano (Biblioteca Comunale di Foligno, ms. C 85)'. *AFH* 106 (2013): 585-598; Ead., 'The *Bildungsroman* of an Anonymous Franciscan Preacher in late Medieval Italy (Biblioteca Comunale di Foligno, ms. C 85)'. *Medieval Sermon Studies* 58 (2014): 47-64.

¹⁵⁶ I have to thank Zsófia Ágnes Bartók, Cecilia Radó and Eszter Laczkó for their help in surmounting the linguistic difficulties. Zsófia Ágnes Bartók, 'A karthauziak 15–16. századi könyvei és az Érdy-kódex forrásai'. http://sermones.elte.hu/doc/A_karthauziak_konyvei.pdf; Eszter Laczkó, *Prédikáció és liturgia – Liturgikus szövegek Temesvári Pelbárt prédikációiban*, Ph.D. dissertation discussed in 2013 at the Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest. Supervisors: Prof. Ildikó Bárczi and Prof. Levente Seláf; Ead., 'Három Pelbárt-beszéd liturgikus vonatkozásairól'. http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=354tan_plaus_leszter; Cecilia Radó, *Az itáliai prédikációirodalom hatásáról a magyar prédikációirodalomra*, Ph.D. dissertation discussed in 2013 at the Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Budapest. Supervisor: Prof. Edit Madas; Ead., 'Roberto Caracciolo Prédikációs működésének magyarországi vonatkozásai'; Dóra Rapavi, 'A karthauzi névtelen forráshasználatának sajátosságai – A Robertus Caracciolus szent Ferenc-napi beszédével való összevetés tanulságai', http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=355tan_plaus_rdora; Eszter Katalin Szép, 'Újabb Ferences Sermo-Gyűjtemény a karthauzi névtelen könyvespolcán'. http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=344tan_plaus_szepeszter.

¹⁵⁷ See, however, the remarks in Delcorno, 'Apogeo e crisi della predicazione': 421, n. 75.

¹⁵⁸ Petr Hlaváček, 'Die böhmischen Franziskaner-Observanten im ausgehenden Mittelalter und ihr Verhältnis zu Bildung und Büchern'. In: *Identités franciscaines à l'âge des réformes*: 335-362: 357.

presumably one of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*¹⁵⁹. the canon lawyer and member of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Padua, Francesco Malaffi, who died in 1484 and whose library was sold between 28 January 1485 and 20 December 1487. Malaffi owned a copy of Roberto's *Opera*, which was bought by the Venetian patrician, *doctor utriusque iuris*, Alvise Angelieri – who had also been responsible for the compilation of the library catalogue – for 1 lira and 16 soldi (the initial estimate had been of 1 lira and 11 soldi) on 3 February 1485¹⁶⁰. Similarly, the Florentine canon of San Lorenzo, Lorenzo del Forbiciaio – a scribe who also worked for Angelo Poliziano – owned a small copy (8^o) of Roberto's sermons, most probably his vernacular Lenten collection, together with a collection by Leonardo da Udine¹⁶¹. In Milan, Ambrogio Tradate named the chapter of Santa Maria della Scala heir of his theological library, inside which there also was a «Quadragesimale fratri Roberti de Litorio»¹⁶². Finally, in Monza, the canon Dionigi da Orsanigo left a copy of Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* he had bought in Venice on 3 April 1480 to the library of the Cathedral Chapter¹⁶³.

Still considering Roberto's religious readers, it will be particularly interesting to see the case of the bishop of Lucca and canon *doctor* Felino Sandei. As said above, Sandei was personally acquainted with Roberto, whom he probably met in Rome during one of his numerous visits. The bishop owned a rich library, which he left to the Cathedral of his diocese after his death, and which surely contained the only known copy of Roberto's *De virtutibus*¹⁶⁴. His collection must have also contained other works by Roberto, or at least his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, which he quoted as if it were a juridical source in one of his works. Indeed, in discussing indulgences in his commentaries on the *Decretals*, he referred to the fiftieth sermon of Roberto's Lenten collection¹⁶⁵. Thus, in this case, the idea that Roberto's – and other preachers' – works could be taken as reference books, for common topics in moral theology, doctrine or even canon law would seem confirmed. We will see at least another example of this sort further on.

As anticipated at the beginning of the chapter, friars and clerics were not the only readers of Roberto's works. If some laymen wished and could read sermon collections already before print,

¹⁵⁹ Elisabetta Lo Casio, 'Libri, guardaroba e suppellettili del veronese Giovanni Francesco Brusati, vescovo di Cassano'. *Aevum* 82/3 (2008): 659-681: 669 and 675.

¹⁶⁰ Don C. Skemer, 'Book Auctions and Prices in Quattrocento Padua: Selling the Library of Francesco Malaffi da Vicenza, 1484-1487'. *LB* 108/2 (2006): 113-158: 150, n. 31.

¹⁶¹ Stefano Caroti, 'I libri di un copista del Poliziano: Lorenzo del Forbiciaio'. *LB* 81 (1979): 205-222: 221.

¹⁶² Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato*: 390-394.

¹⁶³ The incunabulum is still in the Biblioteca Capitolare of Monza's Duomo, cfr. Lisa Longhi's online description of cod. d-16/132 of this same library, https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=50317 [last visited 20 March 2018].

¹⁶⁴ See above subchapter 4 of Roberto's life and the one on the manuscript diffusion of his works.

¹⁶⁵ Cfr. Felix Antonius Wilches, *De errore communi in iure romano et canonico*. Romae: apud pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1940: 125, n. 3. [Felinus Sandeus, *Comm. in direct.*, ad c. ad probandum, de sent. et re iud. (c. 24, X, 2, 27), n. 7, ed. Venetiis, 1584, III, col. 1143].

the increase in the production and the lowering of prices gradually introduced by its invention surely opened the doors to this kind of literature to a previously unthinkable audience. It is probable that there already was some tradition of reading sermon collections among noblemen and notable laymen in general. There existed, at least, a tradition among some friars to dedicate their collections to noblemen and we cannot believe these dedications were completely void of appreciation from their receivers. Antonio da Bitonto, for instance, had dedicated his *Sermones quadragesimales de vitiis* to Giudantonio da Montefeltro, count of Urbino and lord of Castel Durante (nowadays Urbania)¹⁶⁶. The friar had done more than just dedicate his work to his patron: he had actually built the sermon collection as a dialogue between the count and himself on issues of doctrine and theology. Moreover, Antonio da Bitonto had also dedicated another of his collections, the *Postilla omnium ferialium et dominicarum Epistolarum quadragesimalium*, to the lord of Andria Francesco dal Balzo, even if the dedication is missing from the printed text of this work¹⁶⁷.

As for Roberto, the dedication letters that were often printed with his works highlight his relationship with the Aragonese family of Naples¹⁶⁸. He dedicated his *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* and the *Quadragesimale de peccatis* to Giovanni of Aragon, his vernacular *Quadragesimale* to Ferdinand of Aragon and the *Specchio della fede* to Ferdinand's son and heir Alfonso, Duke of Calabria. Giovan Marco Cinico, Pedro Molino and Mathias Moravus, on the other hand, dedicated their edition of Roberto's *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum* to Beatrix of Aragon, Ferdinand's daughter and by the time of the edition (1489) wife of Mathias Corvinus and queen of Hungary. What really interests us here, however, is not so much noblemen and noblewomen as dedicatees of sermon collections, but as readers of them. A few cases will be sufficient to show how Roberto's works were often present in noble families' libraries and how these writings were looked upon as company and devotional readings.

Clearly, also given the numerous dedications, Roberto's works were present in the enormous Aragona library in Naples¹⁶⁹. The Milanese Duchess Bona di Savoia, wife of Gian Galeazzo Sforza,

¹⁶⁶ The collection, which we can date, from this dedication, between 1426-27 (when Guidantonio was nominated lord of Castel Durante and actually took hold of it) and 1443 (when the count died), was much later printed, long after its author's death: Antonio da Bitonto, *Sermones quadragesimales de vitiis per modum dyalogi ad illustrem et religiosissimum principem Guidantonium Urbini ac Durantis comitem precellentissimum*, Venice, Johann Hamman, 1499 [IGI 723; GW 2216].

¹⁶⁷ [GW 2215]. The dedication is extant in cod. lat. 3542 of the Bibliothèque National in Paris, cfr. Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 65, n. 2.

¹⁶⁸ See especially subchapters 5 and 6 of Roberto's life.

¹⁶⁹ Tammaro De Marinis, *La biblioteca dei re d'Aragona*, 4 vols. Milano: Hoepli, 1945-47; Santiago López-Ríos, 'A New Inventory of the Royal Aragonese Library of Naples'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 65 (2002): 201-243: nn. 31 and 113. Roberto's *Specchio della fede*, which eventually arrived in Ferrara with Isabella del Balzo, widow of the last Aragona king of Naples Federico, was then bought by the famous humanist Celio Calcagnini, cfr. Luca D'Ascia, 'La biblioteca di Celio Calcagnini umanista ferrarese'. In *Storia di Ferrara*: VI, 396-407; Id., 'Erasmismo e cultura scientifica nella biblioteca di Celio Calcagnini'. In *Biblioteche filosofiche private in età moderna e contemporanea*, a cura di Francesca Maria Crasta. Firenze: Le Lettere, 2010: 23-33.

possessed a collection of these sermons¹⁷⁰. And Gian Galeazzo, on his side, in 1469 donated to the library of Pavia, among other books, «a booklet of five sermons by friar Roberto»¹⁷¹. Still in Milan, the nobleman Renato Trivulzio, in turn, owned a copy of what were catalogued as “letters” of friar Roberto, but which might well be one of his numerous sermon collections¹⁷². Particularly noteworthy is the case of a Sicilian noblewoman, who kept a copy of Roberto’s sermons bound together with one of the *Guerin Meschino* in her country residence: delight for the spirit and the person together¹⁷³. Finally, manuscript evidence from the copy of Roberto’s *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* [Venice, Hellman and Manthen, 1475] now in Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Inc. V.0593, shows that it had belonged to Alfondo Castriota and to his son Antonio, last heir of the noble Venetian family of Albanian origins, murdered in Murano in 1549¹⁷⁴.

A rather peculiar case among Roberto’s noble readers is constituted by renowned humanist and wealthy nobleman Giovanni Pico, owner of at least two copies of the preacher’s sermons¹⁷⁵. Despite the contempt the Count of Mirandola showed for such works in his *Apologia* – written after his project of philosophical discussion for the Epiphany 1487 had rapidly precipitated into charges of a heresy moved against him – Pico knew far too well the weight they had on common people’s opinions in religious doctrine and theology. This is exactly what we gain from the episode Pico recalled in the *Apologia*, when someone trying to prove Origen’s eternal damnation had brought to the learned humanist’s attention Roberto’s *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: «Nonsense», Pico had replied, «far from me of having ever read anything of the sort»¹⁷⁶. Still, it was on such works that middle and even higher-class men built most of their doctrinal and theological knowledge; moreover, works like Roberto’s sermon collections mirrored the situation of Italian religious and philosophical knowledge, which tended to a simplification of the issues, rather far from the speculative theology which reigned in the universities on the other side of the Alps.

http://picus.unica.it/documenti/D_Ascia.pdf [last visited 13 March 2018]. Incomprehensibly, recent students of Calcagnini’s library have mistakenly taken Roberto’s *Specchio della fede* for Robert Cricklade’s *Speculum fidei*, a collection of biblical passages composed in the twelfth century: López-Ríos, ‘A New Inventory of the Royal Aragonese Library of Naples’; Antonella Ghignoli, «*Chartacea supellex*». *L’inventario dei libri di Celio Calcagnini*. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2016. But there cannot be any doubt from the catalogue entry, *ibidem*: 163, n. 314: «*Speculum fidei e sermoni di fra’ Roberto*».

¹⁷⁰ Cfr. Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato*: 129.

¹⁷¹ Élisabeth Pellegrin, *La bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza ducs de Milan au XV^e siècle*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1955: 340, n. 59: «librazolo de cinque prediche de frate Roberto».

¹⁷² Cfr. Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato*: 606.

¹⁷³ Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999: 149, who in turn quotes from Henri Bresc, *Livre et société en Sicile: 1299-1499*. Palermo: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici, 1971: doc. 239.

¹⁷⁴ MEI: <http://data.cerl.org/mei/00200350> [last visited 20 March 2018]

¹⁷⁵ Pearl Kibre, *The Library of Pico della Mirandola*. New York: AMS Press, 1966: nn. 47 and 518. For a discussion of Pico’s use of Roberto’s sermons in his *Apologia* see my essay ‘Giovanni Pico e Roberto da Lecce. Annotazioni su una ritrovata fonte dell’*Apologia* e l’origenismo quattrocentesco’. *Schifanoia* 46-47 (2014): 137-147.

¹⁷⁶ Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia*: 294-298.

Not just noblemen and higher class members read these sermons, especially the vernacular collections. Hence the diffusion of Roberto's works in more common libraries, such as the relatively rich one collected by the Roman tailor Giovanni Catinelli da Sclavo, who, among several devout readings recorded in his last will written in the Autumn of 1524, recorded two sermon collections. These were Gabriele Barletta's *Sermones*, printed for the first time posthumously in Brescia by Giacomo Britannico in 1497-98 [GW 3400] and then several times in the sixteenth century, and a big folio edition of Roberto's *Specchio della fede*¹⁷⁷. In Milan, the "Collegio dei giureconsulti" (College of jurists), according to their inventory dated May 1502, possessed, among various juridical texts, some of Roberto's sermons¹⁷⁸. The lay *doctor in artibus* Niccolò Manupello da Chieti – a relative of the far more famous Nicoletto Vernia – possessed a copy of Roberto's *Sermones de timore* [Naples, Arnaldus of Bruxelles, 1473], now in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, inc. XXXIII.H.29¹⁷⁹. Finally, we can get an idea of the presence of Roberto's works even in more popular libraries from the book inventories of the Florentine *Magistrato de' pupilli*, which was in charge of taking care of orphans' goods until they reached an adult age. These inventories have been published by Christian Bec and, later, in a more correct version, by Armando Verde. Despite just two mentions, Roberto is anyway the most diffused author of sermons in these popular libraries, rivaled only by Jacopo da Varazze¹⁸⁰.

To take a glance at the diffusion of these works also outside of Italy, I have picked some examples. The secretary and archivist of the Aragona kings of Barcelona, owner of an impressive library of classics and attentive admirer of contemporary humanists, Miquel Carbonell (1434-1517), was a curious reader of Roberto's sermons. As soon as the first edition of his collective works appeared in Venice in Franz Renner's bookshop, sometime in 1479, he bought a copy, as we know from his autograph possession note dated 13 November 1479, in the incunabulum now in Barcelona, Biblioteca Universitària, 07 Inc. 119.2¹⁸¹. Not only, he also transcribed Roberto's

¹⁷⁷ Alda Spotti Tantillo, 'Inventari inediti di interesse librario, tratti da protocolli notarili romani (1468-1523)'. *Archivio della società romana di Storia patria*, s. III, 98 (1975): 77-94: 92-94.

¹⁷⁸ Pedralli, *Novo, grande, coperto e ferrato*: 611-612; Arnaldo Ganda, 'Origini della Biblioteca dei Giureconsulti Milanesi (1486-1502)'. *LB* 84 (1982): 209-235: 233, nn. 111, 118

¹⁷⁹ Cfr. Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 829, n. 1. His name appears in a brief annotation, in which Manupello copied a miraculous event he had read about in the Virgin's sanctuary in Loreto and it is dated 1478 (second day of Pentecost). For some news on Niccolò Manupello see at least Bruno Nardi, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1958: 115-116, 162.

¹⁸⁰ Christian Bec, *Les livres des Florentins*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1984: 194 and 199; Armando F. Verde, 'Libri tra le pareti domestiche. Una necessaria appendice a *Lo Studio Fiorentino 1473-1503*'. *Memorie domenicane* 18 (1987): 1-225: 98 [inventory of the books owned by Ludovico di Matteo di Giovanni Corsini, dated 10 April 1483]: «1 libro di prediche di frate Roberto chovertato di chuoio rosso»; 116 [inventory of the books owned by Francesco di Niccolò di Panuzio, dated 29 April 1493]: «libro chovertato in asse a ½ chuoio, in forma, le prediche di fra' Ruberto da Napoli»; 118 [repetition of the previous one, dated 20 May 1493].

¹⁸¹ MEI: <http://data.cerl.org/mei/02008676> [last visited 21 March 2018]: «Prescriptos libellos ego, quidem Petrus Michael Carbonellus, illustrissimi domini regis Castellae et Aragonum scriba ac sui regii archive Barcinonae claves tenens, comparavi pretio exoluta, die videlicet festo divi Clementis, XXIII novembris anno a nativitate Domini MCCCCLXXIX, Ferdinando secondo foeliciter regnante». On Carbonell and his rich library see at least Jordi Rubió i

dedication letter of the *Sermones de timore*, addressed to Giovanni of Aragon, in a miscellaneous codex he owned, filled with numerous humanistic writings – several of which by the celebrated Catalan humanist Jeroni Pau (Hieronymus Paulus) – and a number of inscriptions Carbonell had collected¹⁸². In a completely different geographical area and intellectual milieu, the English landowner and lawyer sir Richard Elyot (ca.1450-1522) received as a gift from Robert Grotemore – on whom I have not been able to find any news – a copy of Roberto’s *Sermones de timore* [Basel, Ruppel, ante 1477], now in the Bodleian Library of Oxford, inc. Auct. 1Q 2.11 (2)¹⁸³. Finally, in far North Scandinavia, in the 1480s, the Dominican friar Clemens Rytingh, inside his well equipped library of sermon collections and theological readings, also acknowledged a copy of Roberto’s Lenten sermons¹⁸⁴.

To close this section dedicated to the fortune of Roberto’s works, we can say that they also rapidly made their way to the New World. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any direct mention of copies that might have ended up on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, though I am convinced this occurred rather early. However, Roberto was a reliable reference for numerous religious authors, especially Franciscans. Thus, we find his work extensively perused in the pastoral writings of some early missionaries in the New World, such as the Spanish Franciscan proto-bishop of Mexico Juan de Zumárraga (1468-1548), author of a *Regla cristiana breve* for the evangelization of the locals, in which Roberto consistently appears as a source¹⁸⁵. As shown up to now, it was not, however, only clerics that were familiar with Roberto’s works. The Spanish politician and scholar Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1476-1557), who had spent some time in Italy during his youth and who ended his days as *Alcalde* of Santo Domingo, new Roberto’s sermons very well and abundantly drew from them in his numerous works¹⁸⁶.

Balaguer, ‘Un bibliòfil català del segle XV: En Pere Miquel Carbonell’. *Revista de Catalunya* 4 (1926): 136-142; Id., ‘Els auctors clàssics a la biblioteca de Pere Miquel Carbonell, fins a l’any 1484’. *Miscel·lània Crexells*. Barcelona: Fundació Bernat Metge, 1929: 205-222; *Pere Miquel Carbonell i el seu temps (1434-1517)*, edited by Alejandra Guzmán Almagro, Xavier Espluga, Maria Ahn. Barcelona: Reial acadèmia de bones lletres, 2016.

¹⁸² Gerona, Arxiu Capitular, ms. 69, ff. 12r-13r. I would like to thank the archivist Joan Villar Torrent for kindly providing me with a preview of his unpublished description of the manuscript. On the manuscript see Joan Carbonell Manils, ‘Inscripciones inéditas del *Phyrgianum* y de las necropolis vaticanas (Girona, Arxiu de la Catedral, ms 69 de pere Miquel Carbonell)’. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 194 (2015): 259-270.

¹⁸³ MEI: <http://data.cerl.org/mei/00203308> [last visited 21 March 2018]. Grotemore also sent Elyot a copy of Paulus de Sancta Maria, *Scrutinium scripturarum*. Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1478 [GW M29976], MEI: <http://data.cerl.org/mei/00203312>. Cfr. Margaret Lane Ford, ‘Private Ownership of Printed Books’. In *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, III: 1400-1557*, edited by Lotte Hellings and J. B. Trapp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999: 205-228: 216. On Richard Elyot see at least Richard J. Schoeck, ‘Elyot, Sir Richard’. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 18 (2004): 381.

¹⁸⁴ Wolfgang Undorf, ‘Lost Books, Lost Libraries, Lost Everything? A Scandinavian Early Modern Perspective’. In *Lost Books: Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-Industrial Europe*, edited by Flavia Bruni and Andrew Pettegree. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016: 101-119: 112

¹⁸⁵ Carmen J. Alejos Grau, ‘Zumárraga, Erasmo y la Observancia Franciscana’. *Carthaginensia* 6 (1990): 283-292.

¹⁸⁶ E. Daymond Turner, ‘Los libros del alcaide: la biblioteca de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés’. *Revista de Indias* 31 (1971): 139-198: 153.

Appendix I

A catalogue of Roberto's printed sermon collections

This new catalogue of Roberto's printed works, albeit probably not yet exhaustive, makes another step forward from the last attempt to list these editions¹⁸⁷. The possibilities offered by modern tools of catalogation, which combine a previously unthinkable number of information without doubt allows to gain a more precise picture of the editorial history of each and every one of these works. I have especially perused the catalogue of incunabula produced by the British Library, *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* [ISTC, <http://data.cerl.org/istc/search>]; the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* [GW, <http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>]; the collective database of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions, *Universal Short Title Catalogue* [USTC, <http://ustc.ac.uk/>]; and the catalogue of Italian sixteenth-century editions, *Edit16* [<http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/>].

The incunabula editions are identified with the GW number, other with the USTC number.

Latin:

Quadragesimale de poenitentia (73 sermons):

1. [Venice], Wendelin von Speyer, 1472 July 20
additions: *sermo in festo annunciationis beate virginis Marie; sermo de predestinatorum numero et damnatorum; sermo de catenis*. 4° [GW 6061]
2. Venice, Franz Renner, 1472.
2° [GW 6062]¹⁸⁸
3. Venice, Franz Renner, 1472.
2° [GW 6063]
4. [Venice], Bartolomeo da Cremona, 1472.
4° [GW 6064]
5. Rome, Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, 1472 November 17.
2° [GW 6065]
6. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Georg Reyser, not after 1473]

¹⁸⁷ 'Nota bio-bibliografica'. In Caracciolo, *Opere in volgare*: 46-66: 53-73

¹⁸⁸ Curt F. Bühler, 'Chainlines versus Imposition in Incunabula'. *Studies in Bibliography* 23 (1970): 141-145.

- addition: *analytical index of matters*.
2° [GW 6066]
7. Köln, Ulrich Zel, 1473 January 17.
2° [GW 6067]
8. [Venice], Wendelin von Speyer, 1473 [before July 28]
additions as GW 6061.
4° [GW 6068].
9. Köln, Johann Koelhoff, 1473
additions as GW 6061.
2° [GW 6069]
10. Basel, Bernard Richel and Michael Wenssler, 1475 [before July 10]
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6070]
11. s.n.t. [Basel, Michael Wenssler or Bernhard Richel, not after 1475 October 28]
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6071].
12. Venice, Johann Helman and Johann Manthen, 1476
additions as GW 6061 and: *sermo de spe bona; sermo de miseria conditionis humane; sermo de elemosyna; sermo de honore sacerdotum; sermo de virginitate; sermo de iudicio pestilentie*.
4° [GW 6072]
13. s.n.t. [Basel, Berthold Ruppel and Michael Wenssler, not after 1479]
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6073].
14. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Georg Husner, about 1479]
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6074]
15. Lyon, Nicolas Philippe and Mark Reinhart, 1479
addition: *new and ameliorated analytical index of matters*.
2° [GW 6075]
16. Naples, Mathias Moravus, 1479 August 10.
2° [GW 6076]
17. s.n.t. [Basel, Berthold Ruppel, not after 1477]
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6077]

18. Strasbourg, [Martin Schott], 1485 Semptember 3
addition as GW 6066.
2° [GW 6078]
19. [Ulm, Conrad Dinkmut, 1486]
[GW 0607810N] Only fragments
20. Strasbourg, [Johann Grüninger], 1497 February 3.
4° [GW 6079]

Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum (20 sermons):

1. Naples, Arnaldus of Bruxelles, 1473 July 21.
2° [GW 6109]
2. Venice, Johann Helman and Johann Manthen, 1475
addition: *sermo de morte*.
4° [GW 6110]
3. Köln, [Petrus in Altis de Olpe], 1478
addition as GW 6110.
2° [GW 6111]
4. s.n.t. [Lyon, Nicolas Müller and Mark Reinhart, about 1479]
addition as GW 6110.
4° [GW 6112]
5. Nüeremberg, Friderich Kreussner, 1479
addition as GW 6110.
2° [GW 6113]
6. s.n.t. [Basel, Berthold Ruppel, not after 1477]
addition as GW 6110.
2° [GW 6114]
7. [Basel, Bernhard Richel, about 1481-82]
2°. Only one leaf from Freiburg University Library.

Sermones de adventu:

1. s.n.t. [Venice, Johan Helman and Johann Manthen, ca 1474]

additions: *Sermo de sancto Ioseph; sermo de beatitudine; sermones de divina caritate; sermones de immortalitate animae*; Dominicus Bollandus, *De conceptione beate virginis Marie*.

4° [GW 6045]

2. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Adolf Rusch, ante 1475]

additions as GW 6045.

2° [GW 6046]

3. s.n.t. [Venice, Johan Helman and Johann Manthen, ca 1477-78]

additions as GW 6045.

4° [GW 6047]

4. s.n.t. [Lyon, Nicolas Müller and Mark Reinhart, ca 1479]

additions as GW 6045.

2° [GW 6048]

5. s.n.t. [Basel, Berthold Ruppel, ca 1480]

additions as GW 6045.

2° [GW 6049]¹⁸⁹

6. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Martin Schott, ante 1484]

additions as GW 6045.

2° [GW 6050]

Quadragesimale de peccatis:

1. Venice, Andrea Torresani di Asola, 1488 September 27

additions: *Sermo de sancto Bonaventura; Sermo de sancto Bernardino; Sermo in festo annunciationis Virginis gloriose; Sermo de angelis (De laudibus sanctorum, sermo 30); Sermo de beatitudine sanctorum (De laudibus sanctorum, sermo 21); Sermo de anime rationalis admirandis prerogativis et excellentiis (De laudibus sanctorum, sermo 23); Sermo de Spiritu Sancto (De laudibus sanctorum, sermo 20)*.

4° [GW 6080]

2. Lyon, Mathias Huss for Ludovica da Venezia, 1488

additions as GW 6080.

8° [GW 6081]

3. Lyon, Jean Trechsel, 1488/89 February 9

¹⁸⁹ The digitized copy of Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, UBH Inc 759, bears two manuscript notes in the last folio with the date 1472.

additions as GW 6080.

8° [GW 6082]

4. Venice, Giovanni e Gregorio de Gregorii da Forlì, 1490 May 2

additions as GW 6080.

4° [GW 6083]

5. s.n.t. [Strasbourg, Johann Prüss], 1490 December 3

additions as GW 6080

8° [GW 6084]

6. Offenburg, [Kilian Fischer], 1496 January 5

additions as GW 6080

4° [GW 6085]

Sermones de laudibus sanctorum:

1. Naples: Mathias Moravus, 1489 January 31

4° [GW 6051]

2. Venice, Giorgio Arrivabene, 1489 July 7

addition: *Sermo de sancto Bernardino*

4° [GW 6052]

3. Augsburg, Erhard Ratdolt, 1489 October 27

addition as 6051

4° [GW 6053].

4. Speyer, Peter Drach, 1490

addition as 6051

2° [GW 6054]

5. Paris, Georg Wolf, for E.J. and G. de Manref, 1490 January 28.

addition as 6051

4° [GW 6055]

6. Augsburg, Anton Sorg, 1490 February 23

addition as 6051

2° [GW 6056]

7. Basel, Nicolaus Kesler, 1490 February 26

addition as 6051

2° [GW 6057]

8. Antwerp, Gerard Leeu, 1490 March 1

addition as 6051

4° [GW 6058]

9. Venice, Bernardino Benali, 1490 October 1

addition as 6051

4° [GW 6059]

10. s.n.t. [Reutlingen, Michael Greyff, post 1492 or ca 1495]

addition as 6051

4° [GW 6060]

Opera:

1. Venice, Franz Renner, 1479

contents: *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (adds: *Sermo in festo annuntiationis virginis Mariae*; *Sermo de praedestinatorum numero et damnatorum*; *Sermo de catenis peccatorum*; *Sermo de spe bona*; *Sermo de virginitate*; *Sermo de iudicio pestilentiae*); *Sermones de adventu* (adds: *Sermo de sancto Joseph*; *Sermo de beatitudine*; *Sermones de divina caritate*; *Sermones de immortalitate animae*); *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* (adds: *Sermo de morte*; Dominicus Bollandus, *De conceptione beate virginis Marie*).

4° [GW 6039]

2. Venice, Ottaviano Scoto, 1482 January 31

contents: as GW 6039.

4° [GW 6040]

3. Venice, Gabriele Grassi, s.a. [ante 1485]

contents: as GW 6039

4° [GW 6041].

4. Venice, Giovanni and Gregorio de Gregori, 1490 March 15

contents: as GW 6039.

4° [GW 6042]

5. Venice, Giorgio Arrivabene, 1496 May 16

contents: *Sermones de adventu*; *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*; *Sermo de ascensione Christi* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 19); *De spiritu sancto* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 20); *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*; *Sermones de divina caritate*; *De immortalitate animae*; *Sermo de beatitudine sanctorum* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 21); *De gaudiis beatorum* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 22); *De conceptione beate virginis Marie* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 24); *De nativitate* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo

25); *De annuntiatione beate virginis Marie*; *De visitatione beate virginis Marie* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 27); *De purificatione beate virginis Marie* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 28); *De assumptione beate virginis Marie* (*De laudibus sanctorum*, sermo 29); *De sancto Joseph*; *De spe bona*; *De virginitate*; *De patientia*; *De praedestinato numero damnatorum*; *De iudicio pestilentiae*; *De morte*.

4° and 8° [GW 6043]

6. Lyon, Jean Klein, 1500 Januray 11

contents as GW 6043.

4° [GW 6044]

7. Lyon, Jean Klein, 1503

contents as GW 6043.

8° [USTC 158641]

8. Lyon, Jean Klein, 1513

contents as GW 6043.

8° [USTC 144208]

The Médiathèque municipale “Elizabeth et Roger Vailland” of Bourg-en-Bresse, in France, also describes an edition of Roberto’s *Sermones* issued in Lyon by Jean Clein in 1505 [USTC 154955], which is however not present elsewhere. It may thus be possibly identifiable with another of the editions made around that year by the same printer. It may also well be yet another edition of the *Opera*.

Vernacular:

Quaresimale volgare:

1. s.n.t. [Verona, printer of Datus, *Elegantiole*, 1474].

4° [GW 6086]

2. s.n.t. [Mantua, Johannes Schallus, ca 1475]¹⁹⁰

4° [GW 6087]

3. s.n.t. [Venice, Thomas de Blavis de Alexandria] 1476 September 30.

2° [GW 6088]

4. s.n.t. [Milan, printer of Servius, *Commentarium in Virgilium*, 1475 (Dominicus de Vespolate), ca 1475]¹⁹¹.

¹⁹⁰ According to the incunabula catalogue of Cambridge Universty Library (John Claud Trewinard Oates, *Catalogue of the Fifteenth-Century Printed Books in the University Library, Cambridge*, I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954: 452) this edition is Modena, Balthasar de Struciis.

- 4° [GW 6089]
5. Milan, Leonardus Pachel and Uldericus Scinzenzeler, 1478 November 3
2° [GW 6090]
 6. Treviso, Michele Manzolo, 1478 March 18.
2° [GW 6091]
 7. Treviso, Michele Manzolo, 1480 March 1.
2° [GW 6092]
 8. Florence, Nicolaus Lorenz, 1480 April 1.
2° [GW 6093]
 9. Milano, Leonard Pachel and Ulrich Scinzenzeler, 1480 April 15
2° [GW 6094]
 10. Treviso, Michele Manzolo, 1480 December 16.
2° [GW 6095]
 11. Treviso, Michele Manzolo, 1482 February 28.
2° [GW 6096]
 12. Venice, Tommaso de' Blavi, 1482 October 31.
2° [GW 6097]
 13. [Milan], Antonio Zarotto, 1482 Novembre 21
8° [GW 6098]
 14. Venice, Tommaso de' Blavi, 1483 Agosto 13
2° [GW 6099]
 15. Venice, Tommaso de' Blavi, 1485 July 6
2° [GW 6100]
 16. [Milan], Antonio Zarotto, 1486 December 5.
4° [GW 6101]
 17. Venice, Bernardino Rizi, 1487 April 19.
4° [GW 6102]
 18. Venice, Giovanni Rosso, 1488 November 10.
4° [GW 6103]
 19. Milan, Ulrich Scinzenzeler, 1491 February 8
4° [GW 6104]
 20. Florence, Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri, 1491 October 1.
2° [GW 6105]

¹⁹¹ Arnaldo Ganda, 'Il «tipografo del Servius H 14708» ha un nome: Domenico Gilberti da Vespolate'. *LB* 87 (1985): 227-266.

21. Venice, Tommaso de' Piasi, 1493 August 13
4° [GW 6106]
22. Venice, Pietro da Pavia, 1500 September 5 ¹⁹²
4° [GW 6107]
23. Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1500 December 23
4° [GW 6108]
24. Venice, Cristoforo di Pensa, 1502
4° [USTC 818688]
25. Venice, Giovanni Tacuino, 1503
4° [USTC 818689]
26. Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1504 November 24
8° [USTC 818690]
27. Venice, Bernardino Vitali, 1508
4° [USTC 818691]
28. Senj, Gregorius Senjanin, 1508 November 18
29. Venice, Giovanni Rosso, 1509 August 11
4° [USTC 818692]
30. Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1509 November 29
4° [USTC 818681]
31. Venice, Agostino Zani, 1514
4° [USTC 818694]
32. Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1515 January 4¹⁹³
4° [USTC 818683]
33. Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1521 Aprile 23¹⁹⁴
4° [USTC 818686]
34. Venice, Giovanni Tacuino, 1524
4° [USTC 818695]
35. Venice, Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore, 1544
8° [USTC 818699]
36. Venice, Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore, 1554
8° [USTC 818700]

¹⁹² Cfr. Luigi Balsamo, *Giovann'Angelo Scinzenzeler tipografo in Milano (1500-1526)*. Firenze: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1959: 48, n. 7.

¹⁹³ *Ivi*: 148-149, n. 133.

¹⁹⁴ *Ivi*: 190, n. 170.

Specchio della fede:

1. Venice, Giovanni da Bergamo, 1495 April 11
2° [GW 6115]
2. Venice, Bartolomeo Zani, 1505 December 12
2° [USTC 818682]
3. Venice, Giorgio Rusconi, 1517 May 20
2° [USTC 818685]
4. Venice, Pietro Quareghi, 1517 September 30
2° [USTC 818684]
5. Venice, Bernardino Bindoni, 1537
4° [USTC 818687]
6. Venice, Bernardino Bindoni, 1537
4° [USTC 818696]
7. Venice, Bernardino Bindoni, 1537
4° [USTC 818697]
8. Venice, Bernardino Bindoni, 1537
4° [USTC 818698]
9. Venice, Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore, 1555
4° [USTC 818701]

Appendix II

A tentative catalogue of manuscripts containing Roberto's works.

In composing this catalogue of manuscripts containing Roberto's works, which is far from being complete, I have excluded all those works or sermons only tentatively attributed to Roberto or defined a reworking of Roberto's writings (a number of which can be found in Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani nella Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, ad indicem*). Many of the entries rely on second-hand descriptions and are thus forcedly generic. Marked with an asterisk are those manuscripts that I was able to see personally, either in whole or in part, in the original or in a copy.

1. Allegany, St. Bonaventure University Library, Holy name collection, ms. 57.

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: V, 387b.

2. L'Aquila, Archivio di Stato, cod. S 68

ff. 19r-20r: *De flagellis*; ff. 92r-95r: *De morte*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 10, n. 9.

3. * Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale, cod. lat. 443

Miscellaneous codex, part in parchment and part in paper, compiled by different fifteenth- and sixteenth-century hands with texts primarily related to preaching, sermons in particular. Some texts are ascribed to Cherubino da Spoleto, some to Michele Carcano

http://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3Awww.internetculturale.sbn.it%2FTeca%3A20%3ANT0000%3APG0213_ms.443 [last visited 28 November 2018]

f. 1v [I refer to the modern numeration of the folios]: «Roberti de Litorio sermones de sanctis, vide folio 235» [this reference is no longer valid, since the manuscript stops at f. 233]; ff. 58v-64v, 217v-220v: *Sermo sancti Bernardini Senensis per Robertum de Litorio*¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ The sermon is copied by a late sixteenth-century hand, possibly even later, f. 220v: «Havendo ritrovato diviso in due libri stampati, uno nel 1489 e l'altro senza l'anno della stampa perché smarrito, questo discorso di s. Bernardino da Siena composto da monsig. Roberto di Lezze dell'Ordine de' Minori, l'ho voluto fedelissimamente ricopiare in questo, acciò non andasse a male».

- Sevesi, 'Un sermone inedito del b. Michele Carcano'; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 220; Pagnani, 'Un discorso in lode di s. Bernardino da Siena'; G Rusconi, 'Cherubino da Spoleto': 446-453.

4. Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale, cod. lat. 581,

ff. 13r-16r: *De flagellis*; ff. 18r-20v: two sermons by Roberto on divine love.

- Cesare Cenci, *Bibliotheca manuscripta ad Sacrum Conventum Assisiensem*, 2 vols. Perugia: Regione dell'Umbria - Assisi: Sacro Convento di Assisi, 1981, I, 576; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 293, n. 51.

5. * Assisi, Biblioteca storico-francescana di Chiesa Nuova, ms. 30

Miscellaneous manuscript of religious content, the sermon attributed to Roberto has some vernacular parts.

ff. 144r-150v: *Sermo de paxione Domini editus a fratre Roberto*.

- Marino Bigaroni, 'Catalogo dei manoscritti della Biblioteca storico-francescana di Chiesa Nuova di Assisi'. *Atti Accademia Properziana del Subasio – Assisi*, s. VI, 1 (1978): 9-43: 29.

6. Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4° Cod. 10.

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: VI, 489b; www.manuscripts-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

7. Barcelona, Biblioteca de la Universitat, cod. 1953

Manuscript copied by the Catalan Dominican Esteve Rottlà (1475ca.-1530).

ff. 70-78: *Sermo de eximia nobilitate et prestancia anime rationalis tam corpori unite quam a corpore separate, Sermo de sancta nobili et digna nativitate Virginis gloriose, Sermo de laudibus altissimi Dei, cuius excellenciam nobis declarant precipue tria nomina quibus eum nominare solemus*.

- *Repertori de manuscrits catalans (1474-1620)*, direcció Eulàlia Duran, 4 voll., Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1998-2008. 2.2: *Barcelona: Biblioteca de la Universitat*, compilació a cura de Eulàlia Miralles, Maria Toldrà, 2001, p. 715.

8. Berkeley, University of California, Bancroft Library, cod. UCB 89:

The manuscript contains a transcription of the whole *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, made in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

- Dennis Dutschke, *Census of Petrarch Manuscripts in the United States*. Padova: Antenore, 1986: 64-65; Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: V, 215a; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

9. * Bologna, Archivio storico della Provincia di Cristo Re dei Frati Minori dell'Emilia Romagna, Sez. VII, codd. Piana, n. 7

Miscellaneous codex of religious content, described in detail by Armando Antonelli. ff. 38v-45r: *De contemptu mundi*: the third chapter of sermon LXII of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Giacomo Mariani, Armando Antonelli, 'Maledictiones hebreorum. Un quattrocentesco testimone emiliano' *Rivista di storia del cristianesimo* 14/2 (2017): 375-394: 389.

10. * Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. 1719

The manuscript was primarily compiled by the Augustinian Hermit Giovanni di Ripa, *lector* at the University of Bologna in the 1470s. An older, early fifteenth-century section was bound together with the rest. Roberto's text was copied by Giovanni di Ripa in Bologna on 14 February 1476.

ff. 94r-96v: *Sermo fratris Roberti de verbo Dei* [*Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, VIII]

- Celestino Piana, *Ricerche su le Università di Bologna e di Parma nel secolo XV*. Quaracchi, Florentiae: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1963: 265-266.

11. * Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. 1802

The manuscript contains Antonio da Bitonto's *Quadragesimale*, followed by a number of sermons by different authors.

ff. 127v-129r: *De annunciatione*; ff. 129r-133r: *Sermo de morte*.

- Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69, n. 1; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 291.

12. Cortona, Biblioteca del Comune e dell'Accademia Etrusca, cod. 207

The manuscript contains several Patristic and Classical texts, including Seneca, pseudo Seneca, pseudo Bernard and Jerome. Two out of the three sermons contained are by Roberto, preserved in the same order in Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII A A 30.

ff. 95r-114r: *Sermones de iudicio finali* (one anonymous sermons and *De poenitentia* XXV-XXVI)

- <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

13. Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf, ms. B 78

Miscellaneous manuscript of religious content, primarily sermons.

f. 125r-v: excerpts from Roberto's *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*

- www.manuscripts-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

14. Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf, ms. B 179

Miscellaneous manuscript containing religious and philosophical texts by different authors, mainly Aristotle and pseudo-Aristotle.

f. 195v: excerpt of the *Sermo feriae sextae post dominicam secundam Adventus* [possibly from the *Sermones de Adventu*].

- www.manuscripts-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

15. Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, 666 (1043).

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: V, 106b.

16. Falconara Marittima, Archivio provinciale dei frati minori, cod. 19

Sermons preached in Padua 1450-51. The manuscript also contains sermons by Bernardino da Siena and Michele Carcano.

- Cfr. Giacinto Pagnani, 'Alcuni codici della libreria di s. Giacomo della Marca scoperti recentemente (secondo gruppo)'. *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 48 (1955): 131-146: 138-143; Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 7-15; Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: V, 536b.

17. Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, cod. lat. 24 Plut. XX

ff. 253-279: *Opus de doctrina christiana*.

- Bandini, *Catalogus codicum latinorum*: I, 634-635; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 221.

18. Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Conv. Soppr. 282

The manuscript contains the pseudo-Isidore's *Cronica*.

ff. 41v-46r: *Sermo de morte*.

- Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69, n.1; Gabriella Pomaro, 'Censimento dei manoscritti della Biblioteca di S. Maria Novella. Parte II: secc. XV-XVI'. *Memorie Domenicane* 13 (1982): 203-353: 289; Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: V, 560a.

19. Firenze, Biblioteca provinciale dei Frati Minori, fondo Giaccherino, cod. I.G.6

Miscellaneous manuscript containing numerous sermons, several by Giacomo della Marca, together with Egidio Romano's *De erroribus philosophorum* and Pedro Ispanus' *Problemata*.

ff. 60v-63v and 224v-230v: *Sermo de morte*¹⁹⁶.

- 'Pistoia, Archivio del convento di Giaccherino', a cura di Stefano Zamponi. In *Catalogo di manoscritti filosofici nelle biblioteche italiane*, 11 vols. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1980-2003: VI, 169-182; *I manoscritti medievali della Provincia di Pistoia*, a cura di Giovanna Murano, Giancarlo Savino, Stefano Zamboni. Tavernuzze-Impruneta: SISMEI, 1998: 118-119, n. 259; <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

20. Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, cod. Ricc. 413 (S II X)

Miscellaneous codex with devotional, astrological and humanistic texts.

ff. 126r-135v: «Excerpta ex libro *de timore divinorum iudiciorum* magistri Roberti de Licio oratoris clarissimi».

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 221; https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=161106.

21. Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, cod. Ricc. 1186

Collection of *reportationes* of sermons delivered by different preachers in various churches in Florence compiled by an anonymous layman.

f. 14r-v: *Della chonfessione* (preached in Santa Liberata on 10 march 1481); f. 20v: *Della penitenzia* (22 march 1481); f. 66r: *Della avaritia* (28 march 1481); f. 76r-v: on free will (31 march 1481).

¹⁹⁶ The manuscript also contains several sermons by Giacomo della Marca, Egidio Romano's *De erroribus philosophorum* and Pedro Ispanus' *Problemata*.

- Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento': 1037-1039; 1047; 1088-1089; 1095-1907.

22. Foligno, Biblioteca Iacobilli, cod. lat. C.VIII.16

The manuscript contains the whole *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Albano Sorbelli, *Inventario dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia*, XLI: *Foligno*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1930: 175, n. 431; Bastanzio, *Roberto Caracciolo*: 222; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

23. Frankfurt am Main, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, ms. lact. oct. 117

Miscellaneous collection of sermons, including a *Sermo de antichristo* by Leonardo da Udine.

ff. 143r-ss: *De divina caritate*.

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

24. Gerona, Arxiu Capitular, cod. 69

Autograph manuscript by the Catalan humanist, secretary and archivist for the crown of Aragon, Pere Miquel Carbonell, who also owned at least one copy of Roberto's printed *Opera*, see above the subchapter on Roberto's readers. The archivist Joan Villar Torrent was kind enough to provide me with a preview of his new and yet unpublished description of the manuscript.

ff. 12r-13r: *Epistola Roberti Caraczoli de Licio ad Ioannem de Aragoniam*. [dedication letter of the *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*].

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: IV, 503°; Maria Antonia Adroher Ben, 'Estudios sobre el manuscrito Petri Michaelis Carbonelli Adversaria 1492 del Archivo Capitular de Gerona'. *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Gerundenses* 11 (1956-57): 109-162: 132-133; Carbonell Manils, 'Inscripciones inéditas del *Phyrgianum* y de las necropolis vaticanas'.

25. Gießen, Universitätsbibliothek, Hs 766, seit 1771

Collection of theological texts and sermons.

f. 265v: excerpt from sermon IX of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

26. Graz, Franciscan convent.

Contains a complete copy of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 278, n. 6.

27. Innsbruck, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, cod. 592

Sermones Roberti de Lici ab Adventu Domini usque ad Epiphaniam...item tractatus de divina charitate.

- Hofer, *Johannes von Kapistran*: I, 334, n. 93.

28. Kiel, Universitätsbibliothek, Bordesolmer Handschriften, Bord. 86 B

The manuscript also contains excerpts from Leonardo da Udine's Lenten sermons (ff. 97-117), *De particulari iudicio Dei* by Denis the Carthusian (ff. 176-242) and sermons by Bernardino da Siena (ff. 242-266).

ff. 120r-178r: excerpts from the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: III, 587a; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e I sermonari': 278, n. 6.

29. Köln, Historisches Archiv der Stadt, GB 4° 117

The manuscript also contains Henry of Gorkum's *Tractatus contra Hussitas* and Gerson's *De erroribus circa artem magicam et articulis reprobatis*.

ff. 38r-180r: *Sermones de Adventu Christi*.

- Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: VI, 522a; www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited on 21 November 2017].

30. Krakow, Biblioteka Jagellońska, cod. lat. 1386

ff. 233r-248v: *Sermones: De annuntiatione beate Virginis Marie, De predestinato numero damnatorum, De cathenis*.

- Maria Kowalczyk, Anna Kozłowska, Mieczislaus Markowski et alii, *Catalogus codicum manusccriptorum medii aevii latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur*, IX, Kraków, Bibliotheca Jagellonica, 2008, n. 316.

31. Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library (GBIB), Library of the Old Seminary of Mechelen, cod. 17

The manuscript is also known as "Adrianus codex", since it contains texts from the time when future pope Adrian VI was a theology professor in Leuven. I would like to thank Hans Storme for confirming the manuscript's current location.

f. 500r: excerpt from *sermo de resurrectione (Quadragesimale de peccatis, XLIX)*.

- Carlo De Clercq, *Catalogue des manuscrits du grand séminaire de Malines*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1937; Amedeus a Zedelgen, 'Manuscripta franciscana in bibliothecis belgicis'. *Collectanea Franciscana* 10 (1940): 239-255: 253; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 223

32. Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare, cod. 80

Autograph manuscript addition by Felino Sandei to the printed copies of Roberto's *De laudibus sanctorum* [GW 6052] and *Quadragesimale de peccatis* [GW 6080] bound together.

ff. 193r-197v: *Sermo de spe bona* (Sandeï's annotation on f. 193r: «Iste sermo era additus solus in impressione nova quadragesimali primi»); 197v-199v: *Sermo de virginitate*; 199v-203r: *Sermo de iudicio pestilentiae*.

- <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

33. Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare, cod. 167,

The manuscript contains texts by Pietro d'Ancharano and some other juridical texts, reflecting the interests of its previous owner: the jurist and bishop of Lucca Felino Sandei, personal friend of Roberto's.

ff. 249-254bis: *Predicaciones fratris Roberti de virtutibus*.

- Roberto's two sermons composing this work have been studied and edited in Gasparri, 'Sulla tradizione manoscritta delle prediche di Roberto da lecce'. Cfr. also Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 223.

34. Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. T 59 sup. 146

Roberto is the author of eleven sermons out of the thirty-five contained in the manuscript.

ff. 5-9: *Sermo de Maria Magdalena (Quadragesimale de poenitentia, XLIX)*; ff. 10ss: *Sermo de morte*; ff. 36ss: *Sermo de immortalitate*; ff. 56ss: *De divina caritate*; ff. 61ss: *De peccato in genere (Quadragesimale de poenitentia, XXXII)*; ff. 76ss: *De inflammato et ardentissimo amore* (ivi, VI); ff. 82ss: *Sermo de severitate divinae justitiae contra origenistas* (ivi, XI); ff. 87ss: *Sermo de gravitate pene damnatorum* (ivi, XII); ff. 94ss *Sermo de iudicio* (ivi, XXIV); ff. 103ss: *Sermo de sanctissima et utili confessione* (ivi XXIX).

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 224.

35. Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. V 27 sup.

The manuscript also contains parts of Bernardino da Siena's *De christiana religione* and *De evangelio aeterno*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 224; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 286.

36. Montepreandone, Archivio comunale, cod. 44

The manuscript contains several sermons from the cycle Roberto preached in Padua in 1450-51, mixed up with sermons by other authors, especially by Giacomo della Marca.

- Maria Grazia Bistoni Grilli Cicilioni, *Un libro da bisaccia: il codice 44 dell'Archivio comunale di Montepreandone*. Roma: Istituto storico dei cappuccini, 1996.

37. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. Clm 3709

Miscellaneous manuscript of Franciscan provenance (see the Franciscan privileges transcribed at ff. 154r-156v), containing several sermons alongside Roberto's, including Cherubino da Spoleto's *De virginibus* (ff. 100v-149r).

ff. 75r-100v: *Sermo de misericordia*; ff. 149r-153v: *Sermo de flagellis*; ff. 243r-250r *Sermo de flagellis* (identical to the preceding one); 280r-283v: *Sermo de spe*; possibly others.

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

38. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. Clm 28383

ff. 3r-44: *Sermone de contemptu mundi (De poenitentia, LXII)*.

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

39. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 3332

ff. 168-240: *Roberti de Lycio sermones de divina caritate et de immortalitate animae*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 225.

40. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 13412

The manuscript contains the transcription of the whole *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* and is dated 1473. It comes from the library of the Dominican convent of Saint Blaise near Regensburg.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 225; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

41. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 18319

ff. 1-109: *Sermones de Adventu et de festivitibus*; ff. 110-447: *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 226; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

42. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 23946

ff. 1-18: *Sermo de passione Dei (Quadragesimale de peccatis)*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 225.

43. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 23962,

ff. 23ss: *Sermo quadragesimalis LIX de passione (Quadragesimale de poenitentia, LIX)*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 225.

44. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 26834

ff. 1-70: *Opus seu sermones de vita Christi secundum magistrum Robertum de Lycio*.

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 225-226.

45. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. lat. 28383

excerpts from Roberto's printed sermons.

- Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 278, n. 6.

46. München, Universitätsbibliothek, cod. fol. 123: several sermons diffused both in manuscript and in print.

Miscellaneous manuscript primarily containing sermons, compiled in Italy, presumably in a Dominican context (see the last part with texts on Catherine of Siena). It may contain more sermons by Roberto, the ones that follow are just those explicitly attributed to him.

ff. 79r-82r: *Sermo de beatitudine*; ff. 84v-87r: *Sermo de spe bona*; f. 115r: *Tractatus de caritate*; ff. 126r-127v: *Sermo de iustitia*; f. 129v: *Sermo de catenis*; ff. 129v-130v: *Sermo de regimine principum*; ff. 131r-132r: *Sermo de adventu*

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 226; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 285; www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

47. München, Universitätsbibliothek, quart. Cod. ms. 128

Collection of sermons prepared in Germany containing works of different authors, including other Italian preachers such as Giacomo della Marca and Michele Carcano.

ff. 188v-193v: *Sermo de catherins daemonum*

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

48. München, Universitätsbibliothek, oct. Cod. ms. 58.

Collection of sermons composed in Germany, also containing sermons by Micheal de Hungaria.

ff. 1r-10v: extract from the *Sermones quadragesimales*

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

49. München, Universitätsbibliothek, oct. Cod. ms. 344

Miscellaneous manuscript prepared in Germany containing juridical and theological texts, including the sermons by Dimalduccio da Forlì, Bindo da Siena, Luca da Bitonto, François de Meyronnes and others

ff. 309r-311r: *Sermo de novem catenis daemonum*.

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].

50. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. V H 67

Miscellaneous manuscript containing sermons and other texts.

ff. 304r-307r: *Sermo de predestinato numero damnatorum*; ff. 309r-314v: *Sermo de cathenis*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 239.

51. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. V H 220

Miscellaneous manuscript containing numerous sermons and other texts.

ff. 196r-197v: first sermon of the *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 274

52. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. V H 378

Miscellaneous manuscript containing several sermons and other religious texts.

ff. 107r-112r: *Sermo de obedientia* [preached in Padua in early 1451]; ff. 157v-165v: *De morte*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 289

53. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. V H 382

Miscellaneous manuscript containing numerous sermons by different authors

ff. 79r-82v: *Sermo de quinque viis per quas Christus ambulavit* [possibly part of the Paduan cycle 1450-1451].

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 299

54. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VI D 68

Miscellaneous manuscript containing several sermons by different authors, in particular by Antonio da Bitonto.

ff. 269r-270v: *Sermo de flagellis*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 335-336

55. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VII D 22

Miscellaneous manuscript which also contains sermons by Bernardino da Siena and Michele Carcano, together with several sermons preached in Padua in 1450-51.

- Giacinto Pagnani, 'Alcuni codici della libreria di s. Giacomo della Marca': 141; Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 32-33; Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 446-463; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 280-281

56. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VII E 26

Miscellaneous manuscript primarily containing sermons without the indication of the author.

ff. 83v-84v: *Sermo de quinque viis per quas Christus ambulavit* [possibly part of the Paduan cycle 1450-1451].

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 507-508

57. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VII E 33

The manuscript contains a collection of sermons transcribed, according to Cesare Cenci, by the Franciscan Observant Paolo da Teramo. Should this be true, he should also be the one speaking in first person at the end of the sermon attributed to Roberto, asserting of having written it down during his preaching in L'Aquila.

ff. 45r-50v: *Sermo de flagellis*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 515

58. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VII F 1

Miscellaneous manuscript containing several sermons, most notably the Lenten sermons by Giovanni Machiavelli da Lugo.

ff. 65r-69t: *De ira Dei* [*Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, XXXVIII]; ff. 69r-72r: *De discordie vitio* [*Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, XXXIX]; ff. 80r-83r: *De religiosa votorum emissionem* [*Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, XLIII]; ff. 99r-101v: *De flagellis Dei* [*De timore*, II]; ff. 111r-113v: *De fructuoso et utili verbo Dei* [*De poenitentia*, VIII].

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: I, 530-532

59. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VII G 54

Miscellaneous manuscript of sermons, possibly compiled by Paolo da Teramo according to Cenci.

ff. 124v-131v: *Sermo de inferno*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 615

60. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VIII A 1

Miscellaneous manuscript containing sermons.

ff. 31v-33r: *Sermo de flagellis Dei*; ff. 233r-244r: *Sermo de inferno*; ff. 251r-253r: *Sermo de flagellis Dei*; ff. 271r-274r: *Sermo de inferno*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 628, 632-634

61. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VIII A 4.

The manuscript is a collection of sermons, containing most notably Bernardino da Siena's *Quadragesimale de christiana religione*.

ff. 32r-37v: *Sermo de cathenis*

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 636-637

62. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VIII A 7

The manuscript contains several sermons of different authors, including some by Cherubino da Spoleto.

ff. 50r: *Sermo de sancto Ioseph*; ff. 66v-67v: *Sermo in festo et sollempnitate sancti Stephani [De laudibus sanctorum]*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 641-642

63. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII A 12

The manuscript is a collection of numerous, mostly anonymous, sermons, partly compiled by Paolo da Teramo.

ff. 11v-14v: *Sermo de flagellis Dei*; ff. 25r-48v: several sermons from the *De laudibus sanctorum* and *De Adventu*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 676-678

64. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII A 17

Sermon collection, mostly by anonymous authors.

ff. 57r-66v: *Sermo de annuntiatione*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 686

65. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII A 21

Sermon collection by different Franciscan authors.

ff. 24v-28r: two sermons *De misericordia* preached in Padova in 1450; ff. 73r-75v: *Sermo de cathenis*; ff. 119v-120r: *Sermo de morte*; ff. 143v-146v: *Sermo de virtute*; ff. 148r-150r: *Sermo de spe*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 701-710

66. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII AA 20

Miscellaneous collection of sermons by different authors.

ff. 68v-95r: several sermons from the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 752-754

67. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII AA 30

The manuscript collects several sermons, including Domenico Bollani's sermon on the Immaculate Conception which was often printed together with Roberto's collections.

ff.108v-110v: *Sermo de timore Dei* (*De timore*, II); ff. 126r-127v: *Sermo de gratia*; ff. 132r-132v: *Sermo de timore* (cfr. Bastanzio, 233); ff. 210r-211r: *Sermo de iudicio finali* (*De penitentia*, XXV); ff. 211r-213r: *Sermo de iudicio finali* (*De penitentia*, XXVI).

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 774-783

68. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. VIII AA 31

Miscellaneous manuscript of religious content including a number of sermons or material useful for sermons, possibly compiled in part by the hand of Paolo da Teramo.

ff. 28r-30v: *Sermo de flagellis* (in the version preached in L'Aquila); ff. 118r-118v: *Sermo de morte*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 786-788

69. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. XII G 11

Miscellaneous manuscripts of sermons by different authors and of other religious texts.

ff. 276r-281r: *De signis celi*.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 925

70. Neustadt, monastero Cistercense Neukloster

- Hofer, *Johannes von Kapistran*: I, 334, n. 93.

71. Olomouc, Vědecká knihovna, cod. M I 155

Miscellaneous manuscript also containing Johannes Nider's *Praeceptorium divinae legis*, Bartolomeo da Pisa's *Quadragesimale* and other texts, including some sermons by Bernardino da Siena.

ff. 3a-119b: *Sermones de Adventu*

- Miroslav Boháček, František Čáda, *Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Wissenschaftlichen Staatsbibliothek von Olmütz*. Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994: 53-60; Hlaváček, 'Die böhmischen Franziskaner-Observanten': 357.

72. Oxford, Bodleian Library, cod. Canon. Misc. 34

The manuscript contains Roberto's *Sermo de morte* and perhaps other sermons.

- Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena', p. 69, n. 1

73. Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, cod. 393

ff. 37r-42v: *Sermo de morte*.

- Giuseppe Abate, Giovanni Luisetto, *Codici e manoscritti della Biblioteca Antoniana, col catalogo delle miniature a cura di François Avril, Francesca d'Arcais e Giordana Mariani Canova*, 2 vols. Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1975; Cesare Cenci, 'Manoscritti e frati studiosi nella biblioteca Antoniana di Padova'. *AFH* 69 (1976): 496-520: 504.

74. Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, cod. 436

The manuscript contains several sermons preached in Padua 1450-51.

- Abate, Luisetto, *Codici e manoscritti della Biblioteca Antoniana*; Cenci, 'Manoscritti e frati studiosi': 505; Visani, 'Un nuovo testimone del quaresimale padovano': 157-179.

75. Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. 806.

The manuscript contains a complete copy of the printed collection *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307.

76. Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. 1030.

The manuscript contains various texts, mostly of religious matter

ff. 54r-55r: *De resurrectione Domini*.

- Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69, n. 1; Martina Pantarotto, 'La biblioteca manoscritta del convento di San Francesco Grande di Padova'. *Il Santo* 43 (2003): 7-261: 138.

77. Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. 1792

The manuscript contains several sermons preached in Padua 1450-51 and some other sermons by Roberto, together with other sermons by Bernardino da Siena, Michele Carcano and one by Giovanni da Capestrano (ff. 230r-234r: *In festo sancti Ieronimi*).

ff. 10v-18r: *Sermo de cathenis*; ff. 131r-139r: *Sermo de annunciatione*.

- Oriana Visani, 'Un ritrovato codice di prediche di Bernardino da Siena e della sua scuola'. *Lettere italiane* 48/1 (1996): 44-62; Pantarotto, 'La biblioteca manoscritta del convento': 189.

78. Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. 1851.

Miscellaneous manuscript of sermons, some of which attributed to Giacomo della Marca

ff. 171r-176r: sermons

- Pantarotto 'La biblioteca manoscritta del convento': 191-192.

79. Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. 1917.

The manuscript contains Antonio da Bitonto's collection of sermons dedicated to Guidantonio Montefeltro.

ff. 188r-196v: *Sermo de catenis*

- Pantarotto 'La biblioteca manoscritta del convento': 195-196.

80. * Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 237

The beginning portion of Roberto's inedited work was transcribed at the end of a long anonymous sermon collection.

ff. 311r-337v: *Opus de doctrina christiana*.

81. Paterson, Library of the Franciscan Convent of S. Anthony, cod. lat. with no call number

The manuscript contains a complete copy of the printed *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Seymour De Ricci, William J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the United States and Canada*. New York: 1937: II, 1173; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 227; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 308.

82. Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. Aldini 408.

The *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* is not complete in this manuscript, which only contains the collection up to sermon XXXIX. The last part of the manuscript (ff. 235r-252r) contains three sermons of Michele Carcano's *Tractatus de inferno* (which is attributed to Roberto in Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. 460, ff. 87-100v:

Tractatus de inferno fratris Roberti de Lycio. Cfr. Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo: 227*; Luigi De Marchi, Giuseppe Bertolani, *Inventario dei manoscritti della Regia Biblioteca Universitaria di Pavia*. Milano: Hoepli, 1894: I, p. 267; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 295, n. 57). Marginal annotations in ff. 143v-144v bear some parts of a sermon preached in Padua in 1451.

ff. 1-231 *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- De Marchi, Bertolani, *Inventario dei manoscritti della Regia Biblioteca Universitaria di Pavia*: I, 230, n. 408; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo: 227*; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 286 and 308.

83. Perugia, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. F.66

The manuscript contains various sermons and other texts by different authors, including one or more sermons by Roberto

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*, p. 228. Bellucci Alessandro, *Inventario dei manoscritti della biblioteca di Perugia*, Forlì, 1895, V, p. 124, n. 7.

84. Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, cod. D.291

The manuscript also bears Pietro Geremia's *Sermones de oratione* (ff. 8r-94v) Hugue de Vinac's *Sermones super Pater noster* (ff. 94v-110v) and sermons by Bernardino da Siena, Antonio da Vercelli and François de Meyronnes. The scribe was the servite Costantino da Racconigi.

ff. 2v-7v: *De flagellis*; ff. 111r-117v: *De cathenis peccatorum*; ff. 186r-237r: sermons preached in Padua 1450-51, followed by other sermons attributed to Roberto (another *De flagellis* and three sermons from the *Sermones de adventu*).

- Visani, 'Testimonianze della predicazione di Roberto da Lecce a Padova'. In *Predicazione francescana e società veneta nel Quattrocento: committenza, ascolto, ricezione. Atti del II Convegno internazionale di studi francescani, Padova, 26-28 marzo 1987. Le venezie francescane* n.s., 6/1 (1989), pp. 201-238 (republished Padova: Centro studi Antoniani, 1995: 185-220): 214-216; Eadem, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 283-284; *I manoscritti medievali della Provincia di Pistoia*: 101, n. 211; https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=189987; <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

85. Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, cod. 217

f. 347r: «Sermo infrascriptus potest convenienter praedicari in festo S. Crucis et in nativitate Christi ac in die palmarum, fr. Roberti».

- Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69, n.1

86. * Rieti, Biblioteca comunale Paroniana, cod. I.2.6

The entire manuscript is tentatively attributed to the hand of Roberto. The attribution, though possible, would however need further testimonies of Roberto's handwriting for comparison to be confirmed. In any case, not all the sermons are the work of the manuscript's compiler. At least four of the ones contained in it are Roberto's, as would be proven by the "R." which follows their titles.

- Sacchetti Sasseti, *Fra Roberto da Lecce al capitolo di Fontecolombo*; Cesare Cenci, 'Un Codice di Rieti e fr. Roberto da Lecce'; Degiovanni 'Il *Sermo de acerbissima passione domini nostri Iesu Christi*'; Mariani, 'Roberto Caracciolo: *Sermo de superstitionibus*'; Maggiore, 'Cinque scongiuri e altre novità'.

87. Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, cod. 75

Miscellaneous manuscript of sermons and other religious texts.

ff. 53r-69r: *Sermo De flagellis*; ff. 93r-144v: *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (sermons I-XIII) and possibly other sermons attributable to Roberto

- *Catalogo dei manoscritti della Biblioteca Casanatense*, 7 vols. Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato – Libreria dello Stato; 1949-1995: I, 137-143; Zafarana, 'Caracciolo, Roberto': 452; Visani 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 292-293, n. 50.

88. Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, cod. 271

Miscellaneous collection of anonymous sermons

ff. 193v-196v: *Sermo de flagellis*.

- *Catalogo dei manoscritti della Biblioteca Casanatense*: III, 71-80; Visani 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 292-293, n. 50.

89. Roma, Biblioteca del Collegio Sant'Isidoro, cod. 1/13

The manuscript contains Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

- Ferdinand M. Delorme, 'Une esquisse primitive de la vie de s. Bernardin'. *Bollettino di studi bernardiniani* 1 (1935): 1-22; Gasparri, 'Tradizione

manoscritta delle prediche di Roberto da Lecce': 175-177;
https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=205270

90. Roma, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. gesuitico 453: *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*.

The manuscript contains a complete transcription of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. An inscription on f. 1r reads: «Istud quadragesimale est magistri Bernardini Florentini, quod primo predicavit in conventu Sancti Quinci 1472» and from another hand: «sed modo est ad usum fratris Bartholomey Iohannis de Florentia ordinis minorum 1472». The second hand also compiled a *tabula sermonum* (ff. 1v-2v) and annotated on f. 3v: «Iste est ad usum fratris Bartholomei Iohannis de Gottardis de Florentia ordinis minorum MCCCCLXXIII die X ianuari».

- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 228-229; Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 308

91. Roma, Curia Generale dei Frati Minori, unnumbered cod.

Manuscript which was *ad usum* of Cherubino da Spoleto and which contains sermons by several preachers from the time, including by Roberto.

- Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 640, n. 1.

92. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, cod. U III 4

Miscellaneous manuscript made up of three main sections and previously believed an autograph by Bernardino da Siena. The first part (which begins at f. 112) contains sermons 23-31 of Bernardino's *Quadragesimale de christiana religione*; the second part contains sermons 40-54 of the same collection. The third part, compiled by a later hand, is composed of six sermons, the last of which is incomplete and attributed to Giacomo della Marca.

ff. 234r-241v: three sermons from the *Sermones de divina charitate*.

- <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

93. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, cod. U III 9

Miscellaneous collection of sermons, with some additions concerning the privileges of the Friars Minor.

ff. 1v-8v: *Sermo de morte*; ff. 62r-72v: *Sermo de cathenis*

- <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

94. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, cod. U III 14

Miscellaneous collection of sermons, including some tentatively attributed to Roberto.

- <http://www406.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/codex> [visited on 12 December 2018]

95. St. Peter, Erzbischöfliches Priesterseminar St. Peter, Ink. 213

ff. 8v-21v: several sermons by Roberto, on the Virgin, on Christ, *de fide* and *de bonis operibus*

- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017]

96. * Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. lat. F.V.6, cart., sec. XV, 251 ff.

The manuscript contains a complete copy of the printed collection *Sermones de Adventu*.

- Bastanzio, p. 228. Mazzatinti, *Inventario dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia*, 1923, XXVIII, p. 94, n. 910.

97. * Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. lat. H.III.40, cart., sec. XV, 221 ff.

The manuscript contains a complete copy of the printed collection *Quadragesimale de peccatis*.

- Bastanzio, p. 228. Mazzatinti, p. 130, n. 1257.

98. Trento, Biblioteca comunale, cod. 2327.

Collection containing the work of several Franciscan Observant preachers, including Bernardino da Siena, Antonio da Bitonto and Giacomo della Marca.

ff. 1r-6v: *Sermo de flagellis*

- Martina Pantarotto, 'Nuovi manoscritti appartenuti al convento di San Francesco Grande di Padova'. *Il Santo* 45 (2005): 723-736: 730; *I manoscritti medievali della Biblioteca comunale di Trento*, a cura di Adriana Paolini. Con la collaborazione di Loredana Dal Poz, Leonardo Granata, Silvano Groff. Tavernuzze-Impruneta: SISMEL, 2006: 70-72, n. 108.

99. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Borg. lat. 394
- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 230-231; Oriana Visani, 'Il codice Borgiano latino 394 e una predica inedita di Roberto da Lecce'. *Lettere italiane* 29 (1977): 427-446; Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*: VI, 386b.
100. Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, cod. marc. lat. L.III.170
- ff. 1-26: sermon in praise of Saint Thomas (*De laudibus sanctorum XLVII*).
- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 231.
101. Venezia, Biblioteca francescana di S. Michele in Isola, cod. IV,11
- The manuscript contains several sermons preached in Padua 1450-51
- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 231-239; Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano 1455*: 16-32.
102. Washington, Biblioteca del Collegio The Holy Name, cod. lat. 57
- Sermons by Bernardino, Roberto and others, not seen personally by Serafino Bastanzio.
- Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 239.
103. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 4184
- Tractatus de imagine Dei et hominis seu collecta magistralia de formatione hominis moralis*: presumably a copy of Roberto's adventual sermons printed in Nuremberg in 1479.
- www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de [visited 6 December 2017].
104. Würzburg, Franciscan Library.
- Miscellaneous manuscript containing sermons, among others, attributed to Cherubino da Spoleto and Roberto.
- Visani, 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 278, n. 6.
105. Yale, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, cod. 783
- Miscellaneous collection of sermons of Italian provenance. A number of sermons should be attributable to Roberto, but the manuscript would need further study for more precise identifications.

- Description by Albert Derolez, <https://pre1600ms.beinecke.library.yale.edu/docs/MS783.pdf> [last visited 20 December 2018]

Addition:

- Firenze, Biblioteca “La Colombaria”, Cl. II, Sez. II, n. 1, cod. 14

This manuscript was destroyed during World War II. I have anyway chosen to include it here to signal the loss in respect to Bastanzio’s list and to Lazzeri’s previous description.

ff. 24r-35v: *Sermone dela virtù di Christo mostrata contro le iniquità de li demonia (Specchio della fede, XVIII)*; ff. 47v-58v: *De lo altissimo sacramento de la Heucaristia (Specchio della fede, XXII)*.

- Zefirino Lazzeri, ‘De epistola quadam inedita S. Ioannis a Capistrano circa communionem paschalem’. *AFH* 21 (1928): 269-284: 274; Bastanzio, *Fra Roberto Caracciolo*: 220-221.

PART II

ASPECTS OF ITALIAN CULTURE AND RELIGIOSITY THROUGH THE LENS OF
ROBERTO'S SERMONS

Introduction: fifteenth-century sermon collections and religious and intellectual history

I have already partly anticipated in my introduction the methodological discussion on the primary sources of this research, that is the sermon collections composed by Roberto da Lecce and widely diffused among his contemporaries especially through print. However, after a first part of the dissertation dedicated to the author of these sermon collections and to the collections themselves, to their contextualization in their time and among their readers and users, it will be of some use to expand a bit more on the theoretical idea which has lead this second part of the dissertation, devoted to the exploitation of the sources in a very specific way. The idea behind my research project was, in fact, that of perusing, at least in some specific cases, sermon collections as sources to explore cultural, religious and intellectual history of Renaissance Italy. I believe I have sufficiently demonstrated the uniqueness of the specific sermon collections I have chosen among many to do so; now it will be necessary to take a step back and discuss how these sermon collections and others can be important to read in this sense and what has to be kept in mind when reading them so¹.

Scholars have progressively more and more realized the importance of preaching and sermons as a source which could supplement for missing data on religious and intellectual history. Particularly for the history of religious dissent and debate, where inquisitorial data – clearly the privileged first-hand source – are not always available or extensive, historians have been pointing their attention to sermon collections². After all, as hinted several times up to now in this dissertation, preaching was a social phenomenon primarily oriented at the indoctrination and moral education of urban masses, to instruct the people living in cities on what to believe in and how to lead a pious Christian life. This work of indoctrination, which gained a more important role from the fourteenth century onwards in the popular preaching of the mendicant orders, came in direct contact with the problematic issues the preacher recognized in the society he was addressing. Thus sermons – and their written counterparts, which soon began to play the same role as the preacher's spoken word, at least for some specific cases and social classes – can often bear the traces of the struggles the preacher had to face in discussing morals and Christian doctrine.

¹ I have partly anticipated this theoretical discussion in several essays, especially in my 'Il nonconformismo religioso quattrocentesco al vaglio dei predicatori'. In: *Prima di Lutero*: 962-983.

² See at least the latest contributions by Giorgio Caravale, 'Le ambiguità della parola: eresia e ortodossia tra oralità e scrittura nella predicazione italiana del Cinquecento'. In: *Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy*: 478-492; Id., 'Predicatori, inquisitori e storici'.

It is true, as some argue, that sermons as a literary genre tend to be characteristically conservative, handing down topics and arguments generation after generation, with little alterations and critical reception of these arguments by the succeeding authors as to their relevance in a contemporary context. As true as this might be, the repetition of ancient schemes and theories cannot be sufficient to account for their lack of compliance with what happened and what was discussed around them in their time. We cannot believe that a literary genre which was also so intimately connected with current events could only be built on abstract and ahistorical ideas. And referring to those ancient schemes and theories does not necessarily go without their adaptation to contemporary events and doctrines. This is exactly why the accusation of “Pelagianism” could re-emerge during the Reformation or why medieval cathars could be defined “manicheans”. In the following few pages I will try to argue why and how I believe model sermon collections and preaching texts in general, although with their typical conservative nature, can be useful to shed light on contemporary religious and intellectual debates.

One of the preacher’s main features – in an hagiographical but also practical sense – was that of being able to catch and recognize the most urgent needs of the specific community he was about to address. In praising Bernardino da Siena’s oratory abilities, indeed, the humanist Maffeo Vegio (1407-1458) also recalled his prudence in recognizing the different needs of the people he addressed and their culture, thus adapting his sermons to their necessities³. Such adaptation of sermons to the audiences, made precisely this literary genre unique as to its relationship to a very specific place and time, disseminating the preserved texts with information on the religiosity, culture, social and material life of the larger and smaller, predominantly urban, communities of the time.

Among these texts, as Zelina Zafarana first highlighted, *reportationes* of popular preachers’ sermons, especially those collected by common laymen – which represent the closest text to the sacred orator’s effectively spoken work and which also bear signs of the listener’s reception – are particularly valuable to understand the effect of a sermon’s message on its audience⁴. However, the

³ Maphaeus Vegius, ‘Vita sancti Bernardini’. In Daniele Solvi, *L’agiografia su Bernardino santo (1450-1460)*. Florence: SISMELE – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014: 176-178. On the adaptation of the sermon to the public see at least Carlo Delcorno, ‘Società e pubblico nelle prediche di Giordano da Pisa’. In: Id., *Giordano da Pisa e l’antica predicazione volgare*: 29-80: 29-37; Maria Corti, ‘Ideologie e strutture semiotiche nei *Sermones ad status* del secolo XIII’. In: Ead., *Il viaggio testuale. Le ideologie e le strutture semiotiche*. Torino: Einaudi, 1978: 223-242. Despite the popular itinerant preachers’ ability to adapt to his audiences was a central theme and almost a *leitmotif* of preaching up until the fifteenth century, it later turned against it in the second half of the sixteenth century. By this time, the Council of Trent had strengthened the role of bishops inside their communities, here included their preaching activity to the people. In Gabriele Paleotti’s (1522-1597) words: «Col dimorarsi i predicatori in un luogo così poco non possono informarsi bene dei bisogni del popolo al quale predicano», quoted in Caravale, ‘Predicatori, inquisitori e storici’: 241.

⁴ Zafarana, ‘Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento’. On sermons’ *reportationes* see Roberto Rusconi, ‘Reportatio’. In *Dal pulpito alla navata. La predicazione medievale nella sua ricezione da parte degli ascoltatori (secc. XIII-XV)*. Convegno internazionale di storia religiosa in memoria di Zelina Zafarana, Firenze, 5-7 giugno 1986, edited

occurrences of “reported” sermons are relatively rare, especially if compared to model sermon collections, which the better known friars – but also minor ones – compiled and diffused as working tools for themselves, confreres and other preachers. Not only are *reportationes* a minority among the preserved sermon collections, in many cases model sermon collections are even the sole testimony of some friars’ entire activity. It is, for instance, the case of the Franciscan Observant Bernardino Busti (1450ca-1513), of whose activity from the pulpit nothing has survived, but who authored a large collection of sermons and a theological work on the Virgin which enjoyed wide success for several centuries after their first publication.

In the case of model sermon collections, the direct connection with a well recognizable audience in a distinct place is much fainter. Despite some fugacious mentions that would tempt the historian to link the collection to this or that group of listeners, these sermons are depersonalized to the point of voiding any direct confrontation with any possible audience⁵. Moreover, given their primary final means as reference books for others’ preaching activity, these collections tend to look like extensive theological and doctrinal treatises – though they maintain their strict sermon structure – in which the author minutely followed his argumentations and assembled an impressive number of quotations and *auctoritates* that make their reading burdensome⁶. Yet, this does not make such collections completely useless to modern historians. Quite the opposite, instead.

These model collections’ tendency to treat issues exhaustively and in depth, thus somehow conforming to *summae* on doctrine and moral theology, made of them reliable reference volumes on these matters, both for their clerical readers and for a lay public⁷. As I have discussed in the chapter above dedicated to the editorial history of Roberto’s collections, it was especially in the late fifteenth century, and thanks to the rising of a printed-book market, that model sermon collections consistently came out from their typically conventual and monastic milieu towards a larger lay readership. They discussed issues enough for readers – even the less educated in scholastic theology – to get a clear picture of some simple yet fundamental matters of morals and doctrine. Moreover, they reassuringly presented a picture of Christian doctrine and theology void of all the complications and debates that accompanied it inside the universities and the *studia*, especially in

by Gian Carlo Garfagnini. *Medioevo e rinascimento* 3 (1989): 7-36 (now also in Id., *Immagini dei predicatori e della predicazione in Italia alla fine del Medioevo*. Spoleto: Cisam, 2016: 33-62).

⁵ On sermon collections’ – but also *reportationes* – distance from the sermon effectively delivered see Norman, ‘The social history of preaching’: 135-136; Stefano Dall’Aglio, “‘Faithful to the spoken word’: sermons from orality to writing in early modern Italy’. In *Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy: Performance, Language, Religion*, edited by Stefano Dall’Aglio, Luca Degl’Innocenti, Brian Richardson, Massimo Rospocher, Chiara Sbordoni. *The Italianist* 34/3 (2014): 463-477.

⁶ Cfr. Roberto Rusconi, ‘Michele Carcano da Milano e le caratteristiche della sua predicazione’. *Picenum seraphicum* 10 (1973): 196-218; Id., ‘La predicazione francescana sulla penitenza alla fine del Quattrocento nel “Rosarium sermonum” di Bernardino Busti’. *Studia patavina* 22 (1975): 68-95.

⁷ For the reading, instead, of a *Summa* as a working tool for preachers see Peter F. Howard, *Beyond the Written Word: Preaching and Theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus, 1427-1459*. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1995.

those on the other side of the Alps. Inside these collections, decisions on doctrine and theology – with some minor exceptions – seemed pacific and Scotus could almost always safely stand side-by-side with Aquinas.

The characteristic attempt of these collections to discuss all matters and issues, still, did not go to the detriment of the central trait of sermon literature in general: its fundamental link to contemporary society and its most urgent issues. Model sermon collections were prepared to serve as guidelines for other preachers, to make them prepared to respond to every need of the communities among which they delivered their message. Consequently, their content had to be measured on effectively felt issues and problems and not on abstract and theoretical schemes. If model sermon collections do not reflect as much as *reportationes* a precisely and specifically recognizable audience in time and space, they do however refer to a clearly identifiable, even if broader, context. Although we cannot probably assert – as it has been attempted – that Roberto's first and most fortunate vernacular sermon collection was originally preached in North-Eastern Italy, possibly Padua⁸, we can be certain that it was compiled and prepared keeping in mind the audiences and the issues the preacher had met during his peregrinations in Italy. It is only in this sense that we can understand why the collections needed updating, as Roberto himself stated in a quasi-programmatic and well-known passage from his sermon on Saint Bernardino:

I also sometimes preached them [Bernardino's sermons], later on however I myself made up some others. This I did not do out of presumptuousness, but I decided to try moved by piety and the time's needs. Indeed, because of the *studia humanitatis*, of which Italy is at present entirely full, and because of the plenitude of learned men in whatever subject, and also because of the subtlety of the people, who by frequently attending sermons have been made curious, for all these reasons it seemed to me to be acting wisely in compiling those sermons⁹.

Roberto explicitly asserted of having compiled his own sermon collections to prepare new and up to date tools for himself and for other preachers, that could be considered appropriate for his own times, which had much changed from Bernardino's. When the sermon containing this passage was first published, a little over forty years had passed since Bernardino's death. Roberto, however, had by then been composing his own sermons for at least twenty years – if we consider his first printed model sermons – or even more than thirty – if we consider, for instance, his preaching in Padua in

⁸ See above the subchapter on the editorial history of Roberto's collections.

⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. Venetiis: Andrea Torresanis de Asula, 1488: f. 157v: «Predicavi et illos [sermones Bernardini] quandoque, licet postmodum alios ego confecerim. Quod utique non ex presumptione, sed charitate ac necessitate temporum volui temptare: nam et propter studia humanitatis, quibus iam completa est omnis Italia, et propter virorum doctissimorum in qualibet facultate copiam, ac etiam propter subtilitatem populorum, qui quodammodo propter multarum praedicationum frequentiam effecti sunt curiosi, consulte visum est mihi agere, ut sermones illos contexerem».

1450-1451 – beginning to work on his own material not long after a brief apprenticeship. We see here Roberto explicitly testifying to his sermons' tight nexus with his time's society. Moreover, it is interesting to note in this text how the preacher justified his break with the previous tradition. In the same sermon, Roberto had just written that, despite never having personally met Bernardino – who died when he was still in his teens – he had always felt himself part of his “school”¹⁰. However, the preacher was conscious that there were deep ongoing cultural and ideological changes in the Italian urban masses of his time. Bernardino's sermons had rapidly become obsolete even for middle and lower class urban popular listeners, who had been educated by the growing humanistic trend, resenting Classical and Patristic influence, and also by the always present preaching of mendicant friars that contributed to the rising demand for religious initiative among laymen¹¹. Roberto identified this initiative with a certain «subtlety of the people», which we can easily parallel with the «acumen» of the Florentines mentioned by the Dutch Wessel Gansfort, who visited the city in the 1470s¹². This, supported by the two kinds of religious and lay education, justified Roberto's enormous production of renewed sermons that could satisfy the new public that the younger preachers of the Observance's “second generation” had to face after the middle of the fifteenth century.

Having ascertained the tight bond that ties also model sermon collections with the contingent intellectual, cultural and religious context brings us to the next point worth dealing with on sermon literature in general, which can help us justify why we believe model sermon collections do not only contain the repetition of ancient models, but actually refer to contemporary and lively issues, at least as far as the late fifteenth-century collections I have focused on are concerned. An

¹⁰ The passage is well known and often quoted in studies on fifteenth-century preaching, *ibidem*, f. 157r-v: «Quinimmo et si qui post ipsum [Bernardinum] in officio predicandi clari sunt habiti, ut fratres Ioannes de Capistrano, Iacobus de Marchia, Matheus de Sicilia, Antonius de Botonto, Andreas de Sancto Geminio, Ioannes de Prato, Iacobus de Donzellis de Bononia, Herculanus de Perusio, Franciscus de Trevio, Silvester de Senis, Antonius de Arimino, Michael de Mediolano, Bartholomeus de Ayano, Antonius de Vercellis, Seraphinus de Gaieta, Cherubinus de Spoleto, Franciscus de Spoleto, Hieronymus de Florentia, Dominicus de Gonessa, Iacobus de Gallio, omnes fratres minores in hoc genere dicendi famosissimi et quicumque alii etiam de aliis ordinibus mendicantium pro maiori parte conati sunt imitari modum et regulam atque stilum ipsius sancti Bernardini. Adhuc et multi ex hiis sermones illius populis pronunciarunt, qui fructus uberrimos producerunt. Ego etiam, qui de Bernardino et si incomposite tamen non sine devotione precipua ista referro, omnem Italiam lustravi predicavique quadraginta annis evangelium Iesu Christi, Bernardinum habui in stilo pronunciandi necnon et scribendi patrem et preceptorem. Et licet illum non viderim legi tamen sermones amenissimos quos compilavit».

¹¹ A religious acculturation through preaching which I have discussed in my introduction. Bernardino himself, earlier, had been a careful observer of these trends, as correctly highlighted in Celestino Piana, ‘L'evoluzione degli studi nell'Osservanza francescana nella prima metà del '400 e la polemica tra Guarino da Verona e fra Giovanni da Prato a Ferrara (1450)’. *Analecta pomposiana* 7 (1982): 249-289: 259: «Nel XV secolo la Chiesa non deplorava, almeno in Italia, preoccupanti movimenti ereticali. Pullulava, sì, qualche errore qua e là, qualche altro tentava una ricomparsa, proposta dai “quidam minus eruditi in sacra theologia, de materiis theologicis dialectice negotiantes”, come scrisse S. Bernardino [*De christiana religione*, sermo LV, III pars princ., a. 3, c. 3. *Opera omnia* II, 291], il quale anche nelle controversie fra le scuole teologiche, come sulla concezione immacolata della Vergine, preferì trattare l'argomento “dimissis...scholasticis bellis” [*De Evangelio aeterno*, sermo LI, a. 1, c. 1. *Opera omnia*, IV, 538]»

¹² See above in the first section of my introduction. See also Francesco Bruni, ‘Semantica della sottigliezza. Note sulla distribuzione della cultura nel Basso Medioevo’. *Studi medievali* 19 (1978): 1-36 (now also in Id., *Testi e chierici del medioevo*. Genoa: Marietti, 1991: 91-134).

ancient precept instructed preachers, as we can read already in Guibert de Nogent (1055-1124ca), to be careful as to what they shared with their listeners from the pulpit. It was never a good idea to stimulate the audiences' minds, especially the less educated ones, with debated and uncertain issues, which could lead to doctrinal and theological errors or could have even more worrying consequences on morality and social stability. Thus, preachers should have rather limited their sermons to vices and virtues, avoiding doctrinal discussions that could have led to big risks¹³. On the same line Domenico Cavalca warned those preachers who would «put aside preaching on the necessary and useful things, to preach on subtleties, novelties and some theories of their own, which not only are unnecessary to listeners, but they also lead them to doubts and errors»¹⁴. Closer to our time-span, Bernardino da Siena asserted that preachers should publicly correct errors only speaking in general and, if there were a doubted issue, they should prefer not to make word of it¹⁵. Similarly, also recalling the issue of the preacher's attention to his audience's capabilities and necessities, the Dominican Pietro Geremia (1399-1452), former student of Antonino Pierozzi in Florence, opened his collections of sermons on the *Pater noster* warning that the topics that followed were to be preached according to the public's abilities¹⁶. Thus, also in a period when the common people's religious education and consciousness had sensibly grown, preachers still – or perhaps even more so! – had to weight their words with extreme care.

Moreover, not only preachers and clerics were worried with the issue. Even attentive laymen perceived the risk connected to revealing too complex or unknown issues in front of an uneducated and inexperienced public. Surely the most famous warning came from Dante, in the twenty-ninth Canto of his Paradise:

¹³ Cfr. Zelina Zafarana, 'Bernardino nella storia della predicazione popolare'. In *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo*: 39-70: 59-60 (now also in Ead. *Da Gregorio VII a Bernardino da Siena*: 249-278).

¹⁴ Domenico Cavalca, *Disciplina degli spirituali col trattato delle trenta stoltizie*, Roma, nella stamperia di Niccolò e Marco Pagliarini, 1767, p. 53: «Quelli che si gloriano di essere tenuti e reputati, spesse volte lasciano di predicare le cose utili e necessarie e vanno predicando sottigliezze, novitadi e loro filosofie, le quali non solamente non giovano agli uditori, ma piuttosto gli mettono in questione e in errore».

¹⁵ Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, ms. 302 [containing Bernardino's preaching cycle in 1443 in Padua]: «Predicadores debent publice corrigere peccata in generali loquendo. Sed si esset opinio aliqua inter doctores super aliquo articulo dubio, sicut est de conceptione Virginis Marie, generaretur scandalum in populo; et in similibus melius est tacere quam de talibus predicare [...] Et ideo in multis casibus [...] potius debet tacere quam tenere illam suam opinionem, licet sciat veram, sicut conceptione Virginis et similibus», quoted in Rosa Maria Dessi, 'La controversia sull'Immacolata Concezione e la «propaganda» per il culto in Italia nel XV secolo'. *Cristianesimo nella storia* 12 (1991): 265-93: 277. The theme comes up also later, as in Cardinal Marcello Cervini's (future Pope Marcellus II) *Instructio ad praedicatores*, cfr. Emily Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy*, Cambridge (MA) - London, Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 203, n. 94.

¹⁶ Pietro Geremia, *Sermones super expositio orationis Dominice*, in Id., *Sermones in aduentum Domini, sermones de peccato, sermones de fide, sermones de penitentia, sermones de oratione, sermones dominicales per totum annum, sermones de sanctis*: Brescia: diligenti cura Iacobi Britannici, 1502: f. Iir: «Infrascriptis sermonibus multa ponuntur. Pro materie declaratione, que tamen in predicatione utrum sint recitanda predicatoris arbitrio reliquitur, qui considerate audientium capacitate et temporis commoditate, an sint referenda vel obmittenda poterit ponderare». On his life see: Silvano Giordano, 'Geremia, Pietro'. *DBI* 53 (2000): 407-410; *Il domenicano palermitano Pietro Geremia (1399-1452) nello sviluppo della cultura europea del XV secolo. Nel 550° anniversario della morte*, a cura di Vincenzo Romano. Palermo: Biblioteca dei Domenicani di Palermo, 2002; *La memoria ritrovata: Pietro Geremia e le carte della storia*, a cura di Francesco Migliorino e Lisania Giordano. Catania: G. Maimone, 2006.

Each strives to gain attention by inventing new ideas,
expounded by the preachers at some length
but the Gospel remains silent.

[...]

Florence has not as many named Lapo and Bindo
as it has tales like these that are proclaimed
from the pulpit, here and there, throughout the year,

so that the ignorant flocks return from feeding
fed on wind. And that they fail
to see their loss does not excuse them¹⁷.

Closer to our times, we might mention Pietro Crinito, who dedicated a small paragraph of his *De honesta disciplina* to the concept that «difficult issues in religion should not be diffused among the people»¹⁸, or more eloquently Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), who in his *Ricordi* lamented that: «They seem crazy to me, these friars who preach on predestination and on difficult issues of faith. It is better not to give reason to the people to think about things they would hardly understand than to arouse doubts in their minds and then to keep them quiet by saying: this is what our faith says and this is what you have to believe»¹⁹. Roberto too clearly had the issue in mind and he himself recommended great caution²⁰. For this, there is little reason to believe that most of the issues discussed in his sermons barely derived from a tradition that only reused, repeatedly and acritically, the same topics and arguments: there would have been little sense in debating issues that had grown old and had lost interest. Only those topics which effectively benefited arguing among present-day listeners should have been tackled and this is why model sermon collections

¹⁷ English translation by Robert and Jean Hollander is quoted from *Princeton Dante Project*, <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante>. Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, Par. 29, 94-108:

Per apparer ciascun s'ingegna e face
sue invenzioni; e quelle son trascorse
da' predicanti e 'l Vangelo si tace.

[...]

Non ha Fiorenza tanti Lapi e Bindi
quante s'è fatte favole per anno
in pergamo si gridan quinci e quindi:
sì che le pecorelle, che non sanno,
tornan del pasco pasciute di vento,
e non le scusa non veder lo danno.

¹⁸ Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*: 163-164 (VI, III): «Non esse populo invulganda quae arcana in sacris sunt».

¹⁹ Francesco Guicciardini, *Opere*, edited by Vittorio de Caprariis. Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1953: 148: «Mi paiono pazzi questi frati che prèdicano la predestinazione e gli articoli difficili della fede: perché meglio è non dare a' populi di pensare alle cose di che difficilmente si fanno capaci, che destare loro nella mente dubitazione, per aversi a ridurre a fargli acquietare con dire: così dice la fede nostra, così bisogna credere»

²⁰ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 156v: «Si autem [quidam predicator] audit alium predicatorem dicere aliqua que non sunt reprobata ne contra fidem vel bonos mores, sed dubia quamvis ipse non sit illius opinionis, sufficit sibi dicere opinionem suam cum suis rationibus et non impugnet alium odiose, quia hoc est intrare contentiones et scandalizare populos. Si etiam audit predicatorem alium dixisse contra fidem et bonos mores vel determinata per Ecclesiam non credat faciliter nisi audiat a fidedignis, et tunc corrigat eum fraternaliter ut retractet. Quod si ille noluerit facere, tunc publice predicandum contra ipsum».

needed updating. The matters Roberto discussed often were, rather more probably, “hot topics” from his time’s religious and cultural debate.

I believe it useful to conclude this theoretical discussion with two more concrete examples, the second, more interesting, of which coming precisely from Roberto’s sermons. Two examples of the most explicit traces of contemporary religiosity and culture that can emerge from sermon collections, which are not however the only data that we can collect from these sources.

The first example comes from the printed sermon collection of the Dominican Tommaso (or Tommasino) dei Liuti da Ferrara, fifteenth-century preacher particularly close to the Duke of Ferrara Borso d’Este, whose only known sermon collection was printed, probably after his death, in Cologne in 1474, but already circulated in manuscript in the 1460s²¹. Among the most notable contents of this collections, Thomas Kaeppli, in an article published in 1950 on the *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, signalled and transcribed a long passage in which the Dominican preacher pointed out a whole series of deviant devotions which had to be condemned, but which were evidently diffused among the faithful of his time. From this passage we learn about those that friar Tommasino called the «basatera», who praied with their heads to the ground and kissing the floor, or the «balla in Christo», who after lavish meals showed their devotions by singing and dancing, or those who wend around in public squares wearing chains, the «beati in piazza»²². Not all the entries in this rather long list are surprising, but the whole picture surely gives us a unique example of an

²¹ Cfr. Kaeppli, ‘Tommaso dai Liuti di Ferrara’; Tommasino da Ferrara, *Sermones quadragesimales*. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, 1474 [GW M46960].

²² *Ivi*: 198-199: «Et sicut modis simulat sanctitatem, sic dyabolus multos advenit in ypocrisi stipendiarios; diversa enim insignia deferunt stipendiarii principum: sic et stipendiarii dyaboli infernalis. Quidam enim “angelici” vocantur, qui simulant angelicam vitam ducere, non amare nisi celestia et illa semper desiderare, cum tamen sola terrena diligant. Alii “apostolici” appellantur, de quibus 24 q. 3 ca.: “Quidam autem heretici qui tamquam heretici ab Ecclesia sunt condempnati, simulantes vitam apostolicam ducere in maxima paupertate ostendunt vivere, cum tamen semper ad luctrum habeant oculum. Alii “basatera” vocantur, qui inclinati et ad terram prosternati longas faciunt, id est fingunt, orationes, terram osculantur. Alii “laudato Christo” appellantur, cum enim aliquem vocant, proprium dimittunt nomen et dicunt “laudato Christo” et in occulto pessime blasphemant. Alii “taciturni” nominatur, qui scapulas stringunt quando loquentes audiunt, scapulis respondent. Alii “balla in Christo”, qui post lautos cibos et optima convivia cum cantilenis spiritualibus ballant in Christo. Alii dicuntur “anime simplices”, quia omnia que faciunt fingunt facere ex simplicitate, sicut illi adaminiani de quibus 24 q. 3 cap.: “Quidam autem heretici”. Isti nudi cum mulieribus stabant ut ostenderent simplicitatem et statum innocentie et sub hoc faciunt multa inhonesta, ut alias visum est experientia. Alii dicuntur “capuzati”. Isti sunt qui breve capucium indumentaue stricta deferunt. Alii “capitorti” dicuntur, qui omne studium adhibent ad portandum caput tortum. Alii “spiritelli” appellantur, fingentes non velle amare nec audire nisi celestia verba tristarique videntur si quandoque audiunt aliquos loquentes verba mundana aut aliquod iocosum. Alii dicuntur “magnasanti”, qui vadunt osculando sanctos per ecclesias ut videantur devoti. Alii “abstracti” nominantur, qui in missa in communionem videntur a sensibus alienati, sicut faciebat illa bona domina de Cremona que cotidie communicabat et post communionem per horam stabat elevata in contemplatione; tandem ex fornicatione concepit plures filios. Hoc temporibus meis fuit. Alii “dulcorati” dicuntur, qui quandam spiritualem dulcedinem ostendunt in divinis sermonibus suspiria emittunt ut audiantur. Alii “barbati” nominantur, qui barbam prolixam nutriunt ut mundum videantur vilipendere. Alii “zarathani” dicuntur, qui cum mendaciis et fictionibus predicant bullas et quedam sigilla secum deferunt. Nam quidam sancti Bobi, quidam sancti Peregrini, quidam sancte Marie de Roncivalle, quidam sancti Iacobi de Alto Passu, quidam pro captivorum redemptione et plurimi alii, qui omnes fures et latrones sunt. Alii vocantur “beati in piazza”, qui in plateis et per civitates se verberant cum cathenis. Alii “afflicti” nominantur, qui sophistice afflictam faciem ostendunt. Isti sub specie boni mala faciunt», cfr. Tommasino da Ferrara, *Sermones quadragesimales*: f. a4r-v

attempt to classify and define a number of the time's excesses in devotion, which has left valuable information on some of them.

The second – longer and possibly more meaningful as to the connection of these sources with contemporary religiosity – example, which comes from Roberto's sermons, regards heresy; precisely what the preacher recognized as the five most diffused heresies in Italy in his times. In a rather well-known text from the second chapter of the nineteenth sermon (*De superbia hereticorum*) of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, Roberto gave a list of the five most dangerous heresies of his day, which is particularly striking for its independence from any other contemporary document and seems to bring some very rare information on the issue²³. The chapter opens with a repetition of the catalogue of heresies contained in the *Decretum Gratiani*, which is "updated" with some more recent figures, such as the anti-Pope Nicholas V (Pietro da Corbara), the cathar heresy (*heresis Manicheorum*) diffused in Florence and Lombardy, hussites (characteristically described as followers of some Englishman named «Ioannes Us», thus already confusing Hus with Wycliff) and beguards²⁴. However, the preacher asserted, leaving aside all the listed heresies, there were another five that could be found in Italy in his times.

The first was the heresy of the *Vallistae*, that is of the followers of Lorenzo Valla, which, despite not having corrupted many people, is however considered very dangerous. These men's doctrinal error would have been the condemnation of religious vows, thus in direct connection with Valla's *De professione religiosorum*, a copy of which would have been handed to Roberto in person by one of the humanist's followers in Naples. Although the preacher played his part in asserting of not wanting to believe such a learned man could have written an infamous booklet of that sort, there was also enough room in the sermon for another accusation against Valla and his group. This regarded the despise and irreverence they demonstrated for religious *auctoritates*. This time the accusation was also backed by what Poggio Bracciolini had written against Valla and Roberto could

²³ Friedrich Engel-Jánosi, 'Die soziale Haltung der italienischen Häretiker im Zeitalter der Renaissance'. *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 24 (1931): 385-409: 390, n. 2; Laurentius Valla, *De professione religiosorum*, edidit Mariarosa Cortesi. Padova: Antenore, 1986: XLI-XLIV; Mastronardi, 'Retorica umanistica e modelli francescani': 317-320; Remo L. Guidi, "Laudatio". I francescani del Quattrocento, protagonismo e contestazione'. *Antonianum* 2 (2007): 377-388; Giacomo Mariani, 'Il nonconformismo religioso quattrocentesco al vaglio dei predicatori'. In *Prima di Lutero*: 962-983: 977-982.

²⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 57r-v: «Multe quippe a principio nascentis Ecclesie usque in presentem diem invente sunt hereticorum secte fidem orthodoxam suis erroribus conantes evertere. Omnes tamen faciente Deo tandem delete sunt, paucis illis dumtaxat exceptis, que adhuc diebus nostris involvunt aliquorum miserabiles animas. Isidorum 8 *Ethicorum* (sic!) libro et 24 q. 3, capitulo ultimo [*Decretum Gratiani*: causa XXIV, q. III, §. XXXIX], nominat hereses quos professi sunt infrascripti [...] In extravaganti Ioannis 22, que incipit *Dudum ad audientiam*, reprobantur errores Petri de Corbaria, ordinis minorum, qui pertinaciter asserebat quod Petrus apostolus non fuit magis caput Ecclesie quam quilibet apostolorum et quod Christus nullum vicarium in Ecclesia dereliquit et quod papa non habet corrigere et punire, instituere et destituere imperatorem [...] Circa annos Domini mille ducentos quinquaginta, in Lombardia et Florentia repullulavit heresis Manicheorum, contra quos sanctus Petrus martyr factus inquisitor ab Innocentio quarto, a tali heresi Florentiam purgavit et alias partes Lombardie. Circa annos Domini MCCCCXX exorta est heresis usitarum in Boemia, cuius inventor fuit quidam anglicus Ioannes Us nominatus. In clementina ad numerum *De hereticis* fit mentio de heresi bergadorum».

even add a personal memory of having heard Valla in the library of Santa Maria sopra Minerva speak badly of Saint Augustine²⁵.

The second heresy described by Roberto is that of the *Amodeitarum*, an heresy born in Lombardy from a certain Amedeo *grammaticus*. Although he actually was a *magister abaci*, there is no doubt that Roberto was referring to Amedeo Landi, the schoolteacher who had quarreled with Bernardino da Siena, ending up in court in 1437 and then obtaining a second trial in 1441²⁶. There are other, though very sparse, hints of the effective existence of a *secta Amodeitarum* and of the attacks Bernardino's followers brought to Amedeo in person²⁷. What is more interesting, however, are the ideas attributed by Roberto to the *magister abaci*, whom we know had a penchant for reading the Bible to his students and for giving them advise on their religious life. Should even the information of a true heretical sect be false, Roberto anyway gives us an interesting profile of a layman curious about theology, who wanted his say in religious debates. The doctrinal errors imputed to him were the his misbelief in the devotion to saints and his claim for the superfluity of confession, ideas that also find confirmation in the acts of the trials against Bernardino that are now being published²⁸.

Neophytes, that is newly converted Jews, constitute the third heresy in Roberto's list. It is an heretical category, unlike most of the others in this list, which already existed since the thirteenth century, but with the precise characterization given of it here assumes a specific meaning²⁹. The accusation against them is clearly that of maintaining their ancient beliefs and practices, although hidden behind a masked conversion to Christianity and protected by their wealthy possessions.

²⁵ *Ivi*: ff. 57v-58r: «Prima species heresis seu hereticorum secta est vallistarum. Hec licet non multos corruperit, tamen periculosissima est. Damnat enim vota et iuramenta asseritque religiosos votos se ad continentiam obligantes vilem gestare mentem corque satis debile, cum maioris virtutis secundum eum sit vivere caste sine vinculo voti quam cum eius obligatione. Vidi super hoc et aliis quibusdam erroribus Neapoli libellum quendam quem unus prefatam heresim sapiens semel tantum mihi ostendere voluit. Ascribatur autem libellus ille Laurentio Valle, qui nostro tempore vir clarus est habitus. Nescio an forte aliqui sic voluerint eius nomen ingloriosum facere [...] Legi ego invectivam quandam Pogii Florentini, qui de Laurentio Valla sic ait: [...] Huiusque Poggius quem puto verba dixisse quoniam ego audivi eum Laurentium semel in bibliotheca Minerve Rome proferentem cum quodam viro docto. Et dum ille in quodam suo proposito allegasset Augustinum, indignanter respondit et temerarie Augustinum non fuisse ne docte nec recte locutum». Cfr. Poggius Florentinus, *Invectiva in Laurentium Vallam prima*. In Id., *Opera*. Basileae: apud Henricum Petrum, 1538: 189. See also the sixteenth-century reaction to Roberto's accusation against Valla in Sigismondo Tizio's historiographical work on Siena, above in the subchapter dedicated to Roberto's fame among contemporaries.

²⁶ See above in my introduction, n. 22. See also Marina Gazzini, 'Scuola, libri e cultura nelle confraternite milanesi fra tardo Medioevo e prima età moderna'. *LB* 103/3 (2001): 215-261: 219, n. 11.

²⁷ See Cesare Cenci, 'Fra Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto': I, 139, n. 1; Letizia Pellegrini, *Il processo di canonizzazione di Bernardino da Siena. Studio ed edizione*. Roma: Aracne, 2004: 102-103 [but now see *Il processo di canonizzazione di Bernardino da Siena (1445-1450)*, introduzione ed edizione a cura di Letizia Pellegrini. Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 2009 (Analecta Franciscana XVI)].

²⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 58r: «Secunda species hereticorum seu secta est amodeitarum, a quodam Amodeo grammatico in partibus Lombardie exorta. Hic docebat errare eos qui dicunt "sancte Petre" vel "sancte Paule" et sic de aliis, quia Deus est solus sanctus. Sed vere ignave ineptique motus est et theologiam ignorans etiam et philosophiam [...] Prefatus adhuc Amodeus ignarus et iniquus superfluum dicebat confessionem sacramentalem fiendam sacerdoti, quoniam de illa apostoli nihil reliquerunt in scriptis. Quem errorem plerique susceperunt».

²⁹ For the heretical accusations against neophytes see Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Roberto asserted that a great number of these neophytes resided in the Kingdom of Naples³⁰. It is interesting to note that, not too long before, Nicholas V had nominated Roberto's confrere, the Franciscan Observant Matteo Saraceni da Reggio Calabria, inquisitor in several towns of Southern Italy against the *Christiani novelli* (new Christians) with a bull dated 31 August 1449³¹. Still from Southern Italy, some years later, would come a document in defense of Jews and neophytes, from the penn of Antonio Galateo, author of a letter in defense of the choice made by Belisario d'Aquaviva, lord of Nardò, to consent with his son's marriage with a young Jewish woman³².

Fourth on the list is the well-known heresy of the *fraticelli*, heirs of the Franciscan spiritual dissidents and supporters of the doctrine of Christ's and the apostles' poverty. Despite John XXII's condemnation, they would have continued to survive in the mountainous regions of Central Italy and Roberto recalled the stake on which thirteen fraticelli had been burnt in Fabriano in 1449³³.

Finally, the fifth and last heresy was directly connected to Pliny the Elder. Under the name of *Plinistae* it grouped all those readers of the *Naturalis historia* and of other classical texts who would have been brought, by their readings, to believe in the eternity of the world, in the mortality of the soul, and in the inexistence of afterlife, mocking and despising saints' lives and miracles and even the Scriptures, not to speak about popular preachers. Though not expressing these ideas in public, these men would have shared them in secret and private gatherings³⁴. The picture thus delineated by Roberto possibly seems to recall both university groups of radical Aristotelians or avverroistic commentators and allegedly "epicurean" humanistic circles, such as even the Accademia pomponiana.

The characteristics of model sermon collections I have been trying to point out show, to my belief, their importance in revealing information about their time's intellectual and religious

³⁰ *Ibidem*: «Tertia est heresis neofitorum, qui in plerique Regni Neapolitani civitatibus commorantur. Hii, post susceptum baptisma, iudeorum sectantur vestigia, sabbatum custodiunt, azima comedunt, festa christianorum violant et alia impie faciunt, propter que non est dubitandum quod corde, ore et opere male sentiunt de fide. Et licet contra eos foret procedendum tanquam contra hereticos [...] tamen pecunia sua superant omnem iusticiam».

³¹ Wadding, *Annales minorum*: XII, §§ 13-14; *Bullarium franciscanum*, n.s.: I, n. 1310.

³² See Benedetto Croce, 'Un'epistola del Galateo in difesa degli ebrei'. *La Critica* 36 (1938): 71-76 (now also in Id., *Aneddoti di varia letteratura*, 3 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1953: I, 132-140); Vittorio Zacchino, 'Uno scritto di Antonio de Ferrariis Galateo in difesa degli ebrei: De neophitis'. *Sefer Yuhasin* 13 (1997): 23-34.

³³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 58r: «Quarta est heresis fraticellorum de opinione, qui dicebant Christum nil habuisse cum apostolis proprium, nec in particulari nec in communi etiam rerum mobilium, sed solum nudum usum facti eorum quibus utebatur sibi concessis per elemosynam vel per alium modum. [...] Illi nihilominus fraticelli quamvis discurrant per orbem, tamen non audent in publicum prodire, sed latenter et mutato habitu incedentes cum suis complicibus laicis conveniunt in antris et cavernis multa prophana sub devotionis specie exercentes. Anno vero Domini MCCCC quadragesimo nono, tempore Nicolai quinti, apud Fabrianum tresdecim ex illis combusti sunt et in pulverem redacti».

³⁴ *Ibidem*: «Quinta est heresis plinistarum. Quidam enim lectione Plinii et aliorum gentilium illecti mundum ab eterno fuisse fatentur, animas mortales affirmant, futuram gloriam et damnatorum penas negant, sanctorum vitas laude dignas et miraculosa irrident, scripturas divinas vilipendunt atque predicatorum evangelii audire recusant. Et quamvis publice hec et similia docere timeant vel erubescant, tamen dum illis facultas se offert, inter suos consocios de fidei mysteriis et christiane religionis doctrina impudenter et infideliter fabulantur».

climate. The fact of containing thorough discussions of numerous theological and doctrinal issues, but still limited to the most urgent needs of contemporary society – and thus not constructed on some ideal and timeless agenda – makes of them partisan writings in an age of debate. Of course, their full exploitation cannot be made without a deep and extensive work of comparison between different sermon collections and with other sources. Still, the work of recognition had to be started from a group of collections and Roberto's seemed to be the most indicated because of their author's fame and of their indisputable success among contemporary readers and users. The chapters that follow attempt at least a part of such a comparison work on Roberto's and others' sermons, trying to exploit the sources as I have been describing. Only some specific issues have been selected from the ones which appear in Roberto's sermons, namely the broad cultural and literary debate, discussion on Hell and the duration of infernal pains and the development and characterization of superstition in the fifteenth century.

Attitudes towards culture and literature

The historiographical opposition that ideally counters fifteenth-century friars and humanists as emblematic representatives of opposing intellectual and practical models has become in many ways paradigmatic of much scholarly work on Renaissance Italy. It will not be necessary to repeat here the turns such an opposition has had from the Burckhardtian picture of paganizing humanists intent in fighting the reactionary medieval scholastic culture incarnated by friars to more recent trends, careful in correcting and shading such a simplified initial picture with much greater detail, which have already found a number of thorough overall expositions¹. A distinction, the one between the two opposite categories of friars (or clerics) and humanists, scholasticism and humanism, which has become so characteristic of modern readings of the Renaissance that it is even consistently present in those reconstructions of it that have attempted to soften such a sharp distinction². Recent readings, however, suggest greater caution, sensibly proposing case-by-case evaluation of the events³. A discussion of Roberto's specific attitude towards culture and learning and its contextualization inside his time's intellectual climate will help, on the one hand, to discuss an aspect of his figure that has not yet been satisfyingly accounted for. On the other hand, it will give some contribution to the general picture of this emblematic opposition of friars and humanists in the Italian Renaissance.

The category of “friars” is a relatively easy one to define, grouping all members of mendicant religious orders – and sometimes, in a generalized use, monks too. We could say the same, although borders start to blur a bit more, for the categories of “scholastics” or “clerics”. Much looser and much more abused by modern-day historiography, on the other hand, is the category that groups the “humanists”: «a group characterized by common cultural practices (graphic, rhetorical, etc.) more than by an institutional statute»⁴, the definition and naming of which only emerged in a

¹ Such are, for instance, Charles Trinkaus, ‘Humanism, Religion, Society: Concepts and Motivations of Some Recent Studies’. *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 /4 (1976): 676-713; Patrick Gilli, ‘Humanisme et Église: les raisons d’un malentendu’. In *Humanisme et Église en Italie et en France méridionale*: 1-15; Cécile Caby, ‘Oltre l’“umanesimo religioso”’: 15-33.

² See in particular Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘The Contribution of Religious Orders to Renaissance Thought and Learning’. In *American Benedictine Review* 21 (1970): 1-55 (now also in Id., *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning. Three Essays*, edited by Edward P. Mahoney. Durham: Duke University Press, 1974: 95-158).

³ Caby, ‘Oltre l’“umanesimo religioso”’: 30.

⁴ Ivi: 19. Cfr. also Michele Lodone, ‘*Renovatio, solitudo, paupertas*. Intorno a Umanesimo e minoritismo nel Quattrocento’. In *Gli studi francescani: prospettive di ricerca. Atti dell’Incontro di studio in occasione del 30° anniversario dei Seminari di formazione. Assisi, 4-5 luglio 2015*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2017: 235-251.

late phase of the evolution of this “group”⁵. The two categories’ lack in effectiveness, however, does not primarily reside in their problematic definition. The real trouble comes from their fundamentally different frames of reference – the choice of religious life for one group, a series of cultural practices for the other – which can often lead to the emerging of uncountable crossings between the two when one goes into detail in analysing specific lives and works. The lay humanists’ religious interests and knowledge, their first-person intervention in Ecclesiastical and even doctrinal and theological issues – also given their frequent occupation inside the Curia – are far too renowned to be recalled in detail. On the other hand, single friars’ humanistic inclinations contribute to proving the inconsistency, at least in some cases, of the opposition. The Camaldulose Ambrogio Traversari or Girolamo Aliotti or the Augustinian regular canon Timoteo Maffei are well-documented cases⁶. Less known, perhaps, is the Carmelite Giovanni Battista Panetti, translator into the vernacular of Josephus Flavius’ *Jewish Antiquities* for Ercole I d’Este, who «had some notoriety» inside the «small intellectual society with a taste for classical antiquity that was taking shape in Ferrara» and who left his convent heir of a very rich library he had collected during his life⁷. Closer to our topic could be the examples of the Franciscans Antonio da Rho and Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni, lecturers of rhetoric in Italian universities and, the latter, even in Cambridge and Vienna⁸. The influence of humanistic discourse on the religious milieu is, moreover, clearly visible during the pontificate of Nicholas V, whose papal court was the one Roberto possibly frequented the most, when the debate over *sancta rusticitas* came to the fore. Besides the *In sanctam rusticitatem litteras impugnantem* by the already mentioned Timoteo Maffei, Nicholas V was addressed a *De non negligendo vel etiam abdicando litterarum studio* by the Franciscan

⁵ Augusto Campana, ‘The Origin of the word “Humanist”’. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 9 (1946): 60-73 (now also in Id., *Scritti*, a cura di Rino Avesani, Michele Feo, Enzo Pruccoli, 3 vols. Roma: Edizioni di storia e Letteratura, 2008-2016: I, 263-282); Paul O. Kristeller, ‘Humanism and Scholasticism in Renaissance Italy’. In *Renaissance thought and letters*: I, 85-105.

⁶ On Traversari see Charles L. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977; *Ambrogio Traversari nel VI centenario della nascita. Convegno internazionale di studi: Camaldoli-Firenze, 15-18 settembre 1986*, a cura di Gian Carlo Garfagnini. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1988; Marzia Pontone, *Ambrogio Traversari monaco e umanista: fra scrittura latina e scrittura greca*. Torino: Nino Aragno Editore – Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 2010. On Girolamo Aliotti see the works by Cécile Caby, now especially *Autoportrait d’un moine en humaniste. Réseaux sociaux, pratiques discursives et réforme religieuse dans l’Italie du XVe siècle autour de l’itinéraire de Girolamo Aliotti*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2017. On Timoteo Maffei see the edition of his *In sanctam rusticitatem litteras impugnantem*, introduzione, edizione critica e commento a cura di Patrizia Sonia De Corso. Verona: Archivio storico Curia diocesana, 2000 and Isabella Gagliardi, ‘Maffei, Timoteo’.

⁷ Antonio Rotondò, ‘Pellegrino Prisciani’: 73; Alessandra Chiappini, ‘Fermenti umanistici e a stampa in una biblioteca ferrarese del secolo XV’. In *Libri manoscritti e a stampa da Pomposa all’Umanesimo. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi. Ferrara, 24-26 giugno 1982*, a cura di Luigi Balsamo. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1985: 199-220; Claudia Andreasi, ‘La biblioteca di frate Giovanni Battista Panetti carmelitano’. *Medioevo e rinascimento* 14 (2000): 183-231.

⁸ On Antonio da Rho see David Rutherford, *Early Renaissance Invective and the Controversies of Antonio da Rho*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2005. On Traversagni see José Ruyschaert, ‘Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni de Savone (1425-1503), un humaniste franciscain oublié’. *AFH* 46 (1953): 195-210; Giovanni Farris, *Umanesimo e religione in Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni, 1425-1505*. Milano: Marzorati, 1972.

Francesco Micheli and a *De consonantia naturae et gratiae* by the Dominican Raffaele da Pornassio, a comment of biblical passages built on quotations from the classics⁹.

1. Friars against poets and classics

A milestone in the clash between humanists and friars was the discussion over the reading of classics and especially poetry that opposed the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati and the Dominican Giovanni di Domenico Banchini, better known as Giovanni Dominici, author of the *Lucula noctis*¹⁰. The debate was, of course, much older and finds its first expressions combined with the origins of Italian humanism, in the works of its predecessors Albertino Mussato, Petrarch and Boccaccio, but with a much longer history deeply rooted in both Latin (Jerome) and Greek (Basil) Patristics¹¹. And, of course, the debate was destined to continue well into the fifteenth century – when we can also see Roberto take his side inside it – and further.

Religious men's fears were not, in all cases, generalized and were often specifically addressed to the examples of immorality conveyed in some of the more lascivious texts of classical literature, but also to their intrinsic pagan nature, void of any Christian content. Giovanni Dominici well expressed this fear, more than in the *Lucula noctis*, in his vernacular treatise on the care of the family, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*. It will be useful to read a consistent passage from this work, describing the corrupt and corrupting education he saw diffused among his contemporaries, in order to introduce the whole debate:

I feel that the ancients were enlightened when they indoctrinated the youth and that the moderns have become blind, growing their children outside faith. The first things they used to teach were the Psalter and the sacred doctrine; and if they sent them any further, they had Cato's morality,

⁹ Cesare Vasoli, 'Profilo di un papa umanista: Tommaso Parentucelli'. In Id., *Studi sulla cultura del Rinascimento*. Manduria: Lacaita, 1968: 69-121; Concetta Bianca, 'La curia come *domicilium sapientiae* e la *sancta rusticitas*'. In *Humanisme et Église en Italie et en France méridionale*: 97-113: 109-113. On Maffei, besides the edition of his work quoted above, see Patrizia De Corso, 'Niccolò V «litterarum et religiosorum parens» nell'opera di Timoteo Maffei'. In *Niccolò V nel sesto centenario della nascita. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Sarzana, 8-10 ottobre 1998*, a cura di Franco Bonatti e Antonio Manfredi. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2000 (Studi e testi, 397): 351-366. On Francesco Micheli see Pratesi, 'Francesco Micheli del Padovano di Firenze'; Id., 'Discorsi e nuove lettere di Francesco Micheli del Padovano teologo e umanista del secolo XV'. *AFH* 49 (1956): 83-105. On Raffaele da Pornassio: Raymond Creyten, 'Raphael de Pornassio O. P. († 1467). Vie et oeuvres'. *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* 49 (1979): 145-192.

¹⁰ Claudio Mésoniat, *Poetica theologia: la Lucula noctis di Giovanni Dominici e le dispute letterarie tra '300 e '400*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 1984.

¹¹ See at least Alfredo Galletti, 'La ragione poetica di Albertino Mussato e i poeti teologi'. In: *Scritti vari di erudizione e di critica in onore di Rodolfo Renier*. Torino: Bocca, 1912: 331-359; Ernst Robert Curtius, 'Theologische Poetik im italienischen Trecento'. *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 9 (1940): 1-15; Giuseppe Billanovich, 'Pietro Piccolo da Monteforte tra il Petrarca e il Boccaccio'. In: *Medioevo e Rinascimento. Studi in onore di Bruno Nardi*, 2 vols. Firenze: Sansoni, 1955: I, 3-76; *Il pensiero pedagogico dello Umanesimo*, a cura di Eugenio Garin. Firenze: Giuntine-Sansoni, 1958 (I classici della pedagogia italiana, 2); Gilles Gerard Meersseman, 'In libris gentilium non studeant. L'étude des classiques interdite aux clercs au moyen âge?'. *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 1 (1958): 1-13.

Aesop's tales, Boethius' doctrine, Prosper of Aquitaine's good science drawn from Augustine, and the philosophy of *Eva columba* or *Tres leo naturas*, with a bit of versified Scriptures in the *Aethiopum terras*. With such books [they educated children], of which none taught to behave badly. Now children are grown, and consequently their renegade nature grows, in the infidels' lap, in the midst of dishonest acts that urge their still impotent nature to sin, and teaching them all the shameful evil that could be thought, studying the "major" Ovid, his epistles, *De arte amandi*, and his most meretricious works and lustful writings. Thus, they go on to Vergil, to tragedies and other readings that better teach lustful love than any good behavior. And what is worse is that the tender mind is filled with the way sacrifices to the false gods are made and the great reverences made to them, hearing about their false miracles and vain metamorphoses; becoming pagans before being Christians and naming god Jupiter, Saturn, Venus or Cybele rather than highest Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Hence, the true faith is despised, God is not worshipped, the truth is unknown, and sin is established. Even among the secular and falsely regular clergy, the study of pagans surmounts that of the Christians; and this is well demonstrated to you by those who are called preachers, who show the treasure they cherish in their heart. Philosophers, poets and fables step out from their tongue and no truth with knowledge of the Sacred Scripture is attached to that¹².

As this passage shows well, Dominici did not only direct his concerns and attacks against lay humanists only, but also against preachers, who represented the primary means of the people's Christian education. Preachers, their passion for classical literature and their histrionic pretensions, represented the most severe risk for the corruption of Christian faith through the means of lascivious and pagan literature, which, through their sermons, trickled onto the ingenuous listeners. However, lay humanists and their schools – built upon the reading of pagan classics – remained the core focus of Dominici's polemics, who dealt with the issue, besides the *Lucula noctis*, also in other

¹² Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, testo di lingua dato in luce e illustrato con note dal prof. Donato Salvi. Firenze: presso Angiolo Garinei libraio, 1860: 134-135: «Intendo i nostri antichi viddono lume dottrinando la puerizia, e i moderni fatti son ciechi, fuor della fede crescendo lor figliuoli. La prima cosa insegnavano era il saltero e dottrina sacra; e se gli mandavano più oltre, avevano moralità di Catone, finzioni d'Esopo, dottrina di Boezio, buona scienza di Prospero tratta di santo Agostino, e filosofia d' *Eva columba*, o *Tres leo naturas*, con un poco di poetizzata Scrittura santa nello *Aethiopum terras*; con simili libri, de' quali nullo insegnava mal fare. Ora si crescono i moderni figliuoli, e così invecchia l'apostatrice natura, nel grembo degl'infedeli, nel mezzo degli atti disonesti sollicitanti la ancora impotente natura al peccato, ed insegnando tutti i vituperosi mali si possono pensare, nello studio d'Ovidio maggiore, delle pistole, *de arte amandi*, e più meretriciosi suoi libri e carnali scritture. Così si passa per Vergilio, tragedia e altri occupamenti, più insegnanti d'amare secondo carne che mostratori di buon costumi. E che peggio è, quella teneruccia mente si riempie del modo del sacrificio fatto agli falsi iddii, e riverenzie grandi, udendo di loro falsi miracoli e vane transmutazioni; prima diventando pagani che cristiani, e prima chiamando dio Iuppiter o Saturno, Venus o Cibeles, che il sommo Padre, Figliuolo e Spirito Santo: donde procede, la vera fede essere dispregiata, Dio non riverito, sconosciuto il vero, fondato il peccato. E più si studia ancora da' vecchi secolari, e falsi regolari, nel paganesimo che nel cristianesimo; e assai te lo dimostrano quegli che son chiamati predicatori, dando di quello tesoro hanno nel cuore. Nella lingua de' quali ballano filosofi, poeti con favole e non vi s'appicca verità con intelletto di Scrittura santa».

works and especially in his own popular preaching¹³. The attention, moreover, was not only limited to the pagan classics from antiquity. Rigorist reformers also pointed their finger against lascivious texts composed by more recent authors, both Latin and vernacular. Severely struck by such a polemic would have been, for instance, a work of largely discussed fame like Antonio Beccadelli's *Hermaphroditus* – moralizing in its author's intent, lascivious in many readers' opinion – which appeared some years after Dominici's death. The Dominican preacher, on the other hand, knew well Giovanni Boccaccio's vernacular production and he strongly advised against its reading¹⁴. This criticism against some early classics of Italian vernacular literature parallels the construction of its earliest canon of authors and texts, which were beginning in those same decades to be read, studied and commented even in university courses¹⁵.

The debate reappeared from time to time as a continuous refrain throughout the fifteenth century. Observant friars – and religious reformers in general¹⁶ – of both monastic and mendicant orders were the most attentive to the dangers of such literature and the most eager to counter its diffusion. The example we can read in a letter addressed to Pope Paul II by the Benedictine Observants of San Placido di Calonero, in Messina, is particularly telling. The friars had inherited a layman's library, among whose books were «several books of poetry and other matters, the possession of which is unprofitable for a monastery». Since it did not seem appropriate to the friars to preserve profane and especially verse literature, they thought it more useful «for the salvation of the souls of those same monks, to sell them and to use the income for the acquisition of other books of religious matter», even though this meant partially violating the donator's last will¹⁷.

Closer to Giovanni Dominici, since he had been his pupil in the Dominican convent in Florence, was Antonino Pierozzi, who was to become archbishop of the city. He inherited his

¹³ Peter Denley, 'Giovanni Dominici's Opposition to Humanism'. *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982): 103-114; Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*: 103-111.

¹⁴ Giovanni Dominici, *Libro d'amore di carità*, testo inedito di lingua pubblicato per cura del dott. Antonio Ceruti. Bologna: presso Romagnoli-Dall'Acqua, 1889: 141-142: «il troiano Astore ovvero de' Paladini, le Cento novelle, il Corbaccio e molti altri libri che sono o vulgarezati o fatti pure in volgare a dannazione di molte anime».

¹⁵ Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti, 'Da "volgari" a "classici": considerazioni sullo studio degli autori volgari prima del Bembo'. In *I classici e l'università umanistica. Atti del Convegno di Pavia, 22-24 novembre 2001*, a cura di Luciano Gargan e Maria Pia Mussini Sacchi. Messina, Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2006: 305-325.

¹⁶ See the example of the lay, illiterate, preacher Pietro Bernardino, leader of the sect of the "anointed" who was ultimately burned on the stake in Florence, and who, in his *Epistola ai fanciulli*, dated 11 June 1497 railed against the «diabolical vanities» contained in the works of Terence, Juvenal «and other similar vicious books». Cfr. Cesare Vasoli, 'Une secte hérétique florentine à la fin du XV^e siècle: les «Oints»'. In *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle. XI^e-XVIII^e siècles. Communications et débats du Colloque de Royaumont*, présentés par Jacques Le Goff. Paris-La Haye: Mouton, 1968: 259-271: 263.

¹⁷ The letter, preserved in the Secret Vatican Archive, is quoted in Remo L. Guidi, *Il dibattito sull'uomo nel Quattrocento*. Roma: Tiellemedia, 1999²: 78: «Inter libros predictos sunt nonnulli libri poetarum et aliorum facultatum, quo monasterio predicto, in quo viget regularis observantia dicti ordinis, et illius personis, sub regulari observantia huiusmodi inibi viventibus, habere non expedit, utilisque foret monasterio predictorum, pro monachorum illius animarum salute, illos vendere et pretium inde percipiendum in emptionem aliorum librorum sacre pagine convertere». Cesare Cenci had signalled the letter to Guidi.

masters' polemics against profane literature, both Latin and vernacular, recent as much as classical. For example, in introducing his famous confession manual *Curam illius habe*, he recommended its reading to common laymen, saying that «it will be more salutary than the reading of Dante, of Boccaccio's *Decameron* or *Corbaccio*, or of any sonnet or epic poem about paladins, or of the works by the heretic Cecco d'Ascoli». Moreover, the friar also recommended the reading of his confession manual to a more educated public: «to scholars and experts, if it will not bother them, this work will represent a much more pleasant and consistent meal in useful things for their salvation, especially regarding their souls, than Ovid, Terence and others of the like»¹⁸. Finally, on the same line of these Dominican preachers, we may mention Savonarola's frequent discrediting of classical literature and poetry, which has been attentively studied¹⁹.

Getting closer to our preacher, Roberto, we may quote some attacks to profane literature coming from Franciscan preachers. We will have to refer primarily to Bernardino da Siena. In 1425, in Perugia, the celebrated preacher encouraged his listeners to hand in some inconvenient books they might possess so that they could be burned on a stake: «Do you know the *Corbaccio* or the *Decameron* or other vanities written by Petrarch? Believe me that because of that *Corbaccio*, thousands have become sodomites. And Ovid's *De arte amandi* and Boccaccio's *Filostrato* etc. Send them all to me, so that we may make a sacrifice to God»²⁰. In another occasion, though not resorting to the stake, Bernardino gave similar instructions to his listeners, to keep away from certain readings:

Part yourself from Ovid's books e from the other books about love, which will keep you away from the true reading of the Scriptures. And part yourself from the poets' books, since that superficial cover of honey conceals poison [...] Part yourself from reading mischievous books,

¹⁸ I quote from Antoninus, *Confessionale curam illius habe*. Mantua: s.n.t., 1475 [GW 2077]: a5v: «Alli secolari non nocerà niente queste cose lezere, ma li serà più salufifero che a lezere Dante, o il Cento novelle et Corbaccio de miser Zoanino, o che sonete, o cantare de paladini, o libri de Cecho d'Ascoli heretico. Et a gramatici et auctoristi darà, se non lo haverano in fastidio, più suave e nutritivo pasto maxime a le anime loro che Ovidio, Terentio et simili in le cose utile a la salute». Cfr. Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa di Firenze nel Quattrocento': 1021; Comboni, 'Citazioni acerbiane nei Sermones di Gabriele Barletta': 167

¹⁹ Paolo Viti, 'Savonarola e i libri'. In *Una città e il suo profeta*: 159-182. See for instance Girolamo Savonarola, *Scritti filosofici*, a cura di Gian Carlo Garfagnini e Eugenio Garin, 2 vols. Roma: A. Belardetti, 1982-88 (Edizione nazionale delle opere di Girolamo Savonarola): 258-259: «Hoc propterea dico quod quosdam mihi praedicatores obiiciunt qui in publica concione versus tam vulgares quam latinos dimissis evangeliis populo praedicant, quos profecto defendere nec debeo nec possum. Non enim hos verbi Dei praecones, sed poetas vel gentilium oratores appellaverim, unde et tales etiam fructus faciunt qualia verba proferunt».

²⁰ Dionisio Pacetti, 'La predicazione di S. Bernardino da Siena a Perugia e ad Assisi nel 1425'. *Collectanea Franciscana* 10 (1940): 5-28, 161-188: «Vidistis Corbatium, librum de centu novelle et alias vanitates Petrarche? Credatis quia ex illo libro Corbatii miliones sunt effecti sogdomitte; et Ovidio *De arte amandi* et *Criseida* etc. Omnes mictatis mihi, quia facemus sacrificium Deo».

such as *Corbaccio* and others by Giovanni Boccaccio [...] Your poet Dante, Petrarch and Coluccio Salutati wrote very notable things and they should be greatly credited for them²¹.

As it is visible from this quotation, the attitude towards ancient and more recent classics was not unilateral and, alongside some condemned works, others were praised and recommended. Often, even among the works of one single author, as in the best-known cases of the “major” and “minor” Ovid or of the pious and frivolous Petrarch, there were distinctions to be made. Dante was, of course, among the most praised. And if Antonino discouraged from reading his works, Bernardino put him side-by-side with hagiographical and moral readings: «it is of great use to read Dante and other books about legends of saints, on Saint Gregory, Saint Jerome, taking pleasure of these moral things, note them and learn them by heart»²². Still, the fear for the threat on morality and social life represented by lascivious literature was anyway predominant, especially among Franciscan Observant preachers.

During his preaching in Ferrara for Lent 1450, the Franciscan Observant Giovanni da Prato violently criticized the use of lascivious classical literature that was being made in local schools, pointing his finger especially against the study of Terence’s comedies. Guarino, animator of the famous humanistic school in town, where some of the most celebrated scholars of the time had received their early education, replied and defended himself and his school²³. A polemic similar to the one that Giovanni da Prato publicly expressed from the pulpit in Ferrara, is discernable in one of Bernardino da Feltre’s sermons preached in Pavia:

Now go and read the lascivious pagan poets! A dirty Martial, who not even the pagans could stand. When I read in Plato’s *Republic* that he eliminated all poets, I deeply doubt if I find myself in a land of pagans or Christians. The Romans could not bear patience regarding the prudery of that licentious Ovid, whom they expelled from Rome after he had composed his *De arte amatoria*. And now? Christians publicly read it! The same did those Lacedaemonians who chased Archilochus and his poetry out of their town, and we Christians, worse than that, etc.

²¹ *Le prediche volgari. Quaresimale del 1425*, a cura di Ciro Cannarozzi, 3 vols. Firenze: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1940: I, 311-312: «ti separi da’ libri de Ovidio e dagli altri libri d’innamoramenti che ti trarranno dal vero studio delle Scritture sante. E de’ libri de’ poeti ti separa, che sotto quella coverta del mele v’è il veleno... ti levi da studio de’ libri disonesti, come il *Corbaccio* e altri libri fatti da messer Giovan Boccacci... Il vostro poeta Dante, messer Francesco Petrarca, messer Coluccio notabilissime cose feciono e da commendargli grandissimamente»

²² *Ivi*, I, 305: «Eziandino son di gran diletto il leggere il Danta ed altri libri di leggende di santi, di santo Gregorio, di santo Geronimo, diletartarti di queste cose morali e notare, e apparare a mente». Pacetti, ‘La predicazione di S. Bernardino da Siena’: 179. For these and other quotations of this sort see Carlo Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura*: 153-154, n. 30.

²³ Basilio Petrà, ‘Un predicatore del XV secolo: Giovanni da Prato’. *Prato, storia e arte* 34-5 (1972): 97-106; Piana, ‘L’evoluzione degli studi nell’Osservanza francescana’: 249-289; Franco Bacchelli, ‘Giovanni da Prato’. *DBI* 56 (2001): 185-187.

Women, do you know what these books are? Nothing else than nets to catch the phantasies inside the heads of your daughters and daughters in law²⁴.

In line with most Observant preachers of his time, Roberto too moved his attack against profane and lascivious literature, taking sides in the long lasting dispute. In his sermon *De superbia curiosorum* (*Quadragesimale de peccatis*, XI), Roberto attacked the habit of attending vain spectacles, as were Terence's comedies, filled «with foul and obscene gestures», as opposed to the pious sacred representations that we know he appreciated and personally promoted²⁵. Moreover, should the Rieti manuscript effectively be considered an autograph and should the *Sermo de morte* contained in it attributed to Roberto in person, then we could also add the extensive attack against profane and classical literature inside it to this list²⁶. Roberto's explicit attack against some ancient literature, namely Terence's comedies, but not only, is part of a more general condemnation of knowledge as *curiositas* driven by arrogance. The tenth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis* is, in fact, dedicated to the reasons why men are filled with arrogance (*De causis ex quibus homines inflantur superbia*) and one of its chapters is dedicated to the many who believe themselves to be learned and who become arrogant believing their intelligence to be superior, despising other men and forgetting about God²⁷. The eleventh sermon, in turn, where the mention against Terence is contained, is directed against those who demonstrate their arrogant curiosity in wanting to learn what they should not (which involves both human learning, but also demonic invocation, as we will

²⁴ *I sermoni del beato Bernardino da Feltre*: II, 180: «Va' mo, lege poetas pagani lascivi! Uno sporco Martiale, che pagani non poterant pati. Quando lego Platone *De republica*, quod eliminabant omnes poetas, dubito satis an sim in terra paganorum aut christianorum. Quelli romani non potuerunt habere patientiam de pudicitia illius ribaldi Ovidii, che postquam fecit *De arte* lo scaciorno fora de Roma in mal hora. Et nunc? Christiani legunt publice! Che te ne pare? Similiter illi Lacedemonii che Archilocom cum sua poesia fugarunt, et nos christiani peius etc. Donne, scitis quid sunt isti libri? Nihil aliud nisi rethia de far dar del capo dentro filias et nurus!». Of course, the concerns regarding readings are paired to those for other costumes: «Et si non pueros! Tu li fai capillos longos: fa' pur, s'el serà poi un giotonzel, tu es causa!». An almost identical passage is *ivi*: I, 257-258.

²⁵ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, f. 32r-v: «Consistit tandem curiositas in spectaculorum vanorum inspectione, ubi sciendum quod aliqua sunt spectacula representativa piarum rerum, ut nativitatibus, passionis et resurrectionis Iesu Christi et similibus, et inspectio talium de se oportuna est, optima est; quedam vero spectacula sunt representativa turpium rerum, in quibus quandoque recitantur comedie Terentii, cum turpibus et obscenis gestibus. Alia insuper fiunt cum habitu monachali vel religioso, quod prohibitum est». For Roberto's use of dramatic representations see the account of his life, especially subchapters 1 and 2.

²⁶ Rieti, Biblioteca Comunale Paroniana, ms. I.2.6, f. 152r: «Nam quicumque diligenter hunc librum [Sacre Scripture] legerit, a peccatis facilliter se custodiet et vita divine gratie vivet. Dicitur autem mandatorum Dei, quia legens frequenter hunc librum libenter iuxta potentiam sue fragilitatis observat cuncta Dei precepta et eterne beatitudinis felicem adipiscitur gloriam et sic manet in eternum, id est eternos facit illos qui in illo continuo student. O quot perfectam gramatice notitiam habuerunt et tamen nec in hac vita divinam gratiam optinuerunt et in futura a Paradisi gaudiis exularunt? Dic mihi: quid profuit Tullio, qui fuit fluvius eloquentie, rethoricum tam politus cultus et ornatum eloquium? Quid Virgilio, Omero et Ovidio notitia versuum? Quid Aristoteli et Platoni ethyca et physica? Hec autem non dico ut istas velim, quas sancti approbarunt, condemnare scientias, sed ut mei libri lectionum omnibus his ostendam scientiis proponendam. Omnes namque scientie moderno tempore sine huius libri frequenti et nota memoria taliter superbia inflant, quod Dei inimicum efficiunt ipsis imbutum. Qui autem huius libri continentiam discit, adeo efficitur humilis, quod Dei gratia humilitate previa dignus existit».

²⁷ *Ivi*: f. 29r: «Tertia causa quare multi elevantur in superbiam dicitur scientia animi. Consistit autem superbia hominum qui se doctos arbitrantur maxime in tribus: primo in sui intellectus extimatione, secundo in proximorum despectione, tertio in Dei oblivione».

see in the last chapter), those who give too much credit to style and, finally, those who satisfy their carnal desires watching lascivious spectacles²⁸.

Similarly connected to carnal desires and thoughts is another attack Roberto moved against lascivious readings. In the thirtieth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (*De fetidissimo ac perniciosissimo vicio luxurie*), the preacher criticized noble families of his time, among whom there had settled a use of giving Petrarch's sonnets as a reading for young girls. Nothing could have been worse – the preacher wrote – since the amorous theme of those poetical compositions prepared a setting for a ribald and a lustful education²⁹. This attack is a symptomatic sign of Petrarch's fortune in the fifteenth century, which wavered between the condemnation of his vernacular compositions and the exaltation of more pious works such as the *Triumphs*³⁰. A condemnation of his vernacular verses which was also shared, for instance, by Giovanni Pico, at least in his last years, filled with religious meditation and featured by Savonarola's rigorist inspiration³¹. We find a reaction to the preachers' polemics against Petrarch's verses from those same years, for example, in Antonio Cammelli, better known as Il Pistoia. In a sonnet he most probably composed after having personally attended a sermon in which a preacher had – possibly even physically – attacked those works, he accused the friar of having failed his purpose when he «tore apart Petrarch's mantle», since the only thing he had proven, the poet wrote, was his foolishness³².

What seems to have been Roberto's most violent attack against lascivious literature, however, is not contained in his extant sermons, but comes from an anecdote about his preaching.

²⁸ *Ivi*: ff. 30r-32r: «De curiositate eorum qui ob superbia querunt scire aut a quo non decet aut id quod sciri non debet aut non ad debitum finem [...] Quod curiosi ex superbia spernunt veritatem dum scribitur vel narratur absque lenocinio verborum et quod potest esse doctrina sine eloquentia licet eloquentia cum doctrina sit commendabilis [...] Quod curiosi ex superbia corporeos sensus ad vana dirigunt et illicita, et precipue in spectaculorum inspectione».

²⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, f. m2v: «Hoc autem tempore in domibus nobilium et dominorum magnorum, ad instructionem ribaldam ut sic dicam et meretricalem nobilium filiarum, habentur *Senetti* Petrarche». Someone added, in the margin of Berkeley, Bancroft Library ms. UCB 89: «Vel liber centum novellarum, vel liber tabule rotunde», cfr. Visani, 'Citazioni di poeti nei sermonari medievali'. In *Letteratura in forma di sermone*: 123-145: 127; Ead., 'Roberto Caracciolo e i sermonari': 307 and tav. V. See also *I sermoni del beato Bernardino da Feltre*: II, 402: «Va' pur, leze el Petrarca, quanti ne son che secuntur illum. Son pochi che scampa de questa bestia de carne!».

³⁰ Paola Vecchi Galli, 'I Triumphs. Aspetti della tradizione quattrocentesca'. In *I Triumphs di Francesco Petrarca. Gargnano del Garda, 1-3 ottobre 1998*, a cura di Claudia Berra. Milano: Cisalpino, 1999: 343-373.

³¹ Girolamo Benivieni remembered it in a letter addressed to Lorenzo Strozzi, edited in Caterina Re, *Girolamo Benivieni fiorentino: cenni sulla vita e sulle opere*. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1906: 323 (app. XIII): «E' mi ricorda, diletto mio Lorenzo, che ragionando, come si fa, un giorno con la felice memoria del Conte Giovanni de la Mirandola de' sonetti del Petrarca, che mi disse che credeva assolutamente che, se vivendo e' non aveva avuto quello dispiacere e fattane quella penitenza che si ricerca a purgare una tale colpa, colpa come esso per li effetti che gli avevano già operati in lui gravissima <...>, che la piangessi ora, per non poterla ma' più in eterno purgare».

³² *I sonetti faceti di Antonio Cammelli secondo l'autografo ambrosiano*, editi e illustrati da Erasmo Percopo. Napoli: Jovene, 1908: 96: «Predicator, tu hai troppo ignorato / a detrar de' poeti la doctrina, / ricco ornamento a la lingua latina, / tresor che non si vende in sul mercato. / Questo è un vaso de assai fior variato, / dove el più bel tu vedi, a quel te inchina: / piglia la rosa e lascia star la spina, / ch'ogni mel è più bon se gli è purgato. / Ma se i poeti non hanno cervello / domenica fallì la tua sentenza / quando stracciati al Petrarca il mantello. / Allor ti vidi senza conscientia. / Non si scrive il tacer, ch'era pur bello / a farti fare il fin cum più prudentia. / Cum manco riverentia / nascono a voi sul pulpito le frappe, / per mettervi de l'ocche ne le cappe». Cfr. Rocco Pallone, *Anticlericalismo e giustizia sociale nell'Italia del '400*. Roma: Trevi editore, 1975: 89-90.

In his fourth *Antidotum in Pogium*, one of the apologies against his opponent Poggio Bracciolini that he wrote in the early 1450s, Lorenzo Valla remembered that Roberto, like his ideal preaching model Bernardino da Siena, had burnt on the stake the collection of obscene epigrams composed by the humanist Antonio Beccadelli, better known as Panormita, from his hometown Palermo³³.

Where are those who frequently spread word to the people about even the slightest mischief and foolishness? Where are you, Antonio da Bitonto, who preached to the people against my opinions on dialectics? If you preach in favor of the Christian community, in favor of men's salvation, and to serve God, and not for glory, avarice and hostility, why do you not accuse Poggio's work? Why don't you preach against him? Why don't you summon the author and the book to the fire, imitating Bernardino and Roberto, who burnt Antonio Panormita's work during their preaching in Milan, Bologna and Ferrara?³⁴

At the time when Valla composed this work, Roberto had already imposed his fame, despite his young age. Thus, Celestino Piana tentatively dated this episode to Roberto's preaching in Bologna in 1450³⁵. However, it must be noted that the *Hermaphroditus* had began circulating in 1426, around the time Roberto was born, twenty-five years before the presumed episode of its burning on the stake would have occurred. Although the work had lifted a consistent clamor, its echo had probably reduced by the 1450s, if not almost completely disappeared, and by then it surely did not concern preachers enough to burn it on public stakes. Thus the episodes recalled by Valla should more probably be regarded as contemporary to the work's publication and presumably dated not much later than the late 1420s, as could also be suggested by the fact that Bernardino and Roberto – or possibly, at this point, someone else – are mentioned as past examples, who should be imitated by modern-day preachers. Moreover, another passage from Valla's fourth *Antidotum* dates the

³³ Obscene epigrams to which, however, the author wished to commit a highly moral message, comparing himself to a great contemporary preacher – behind the description of whom we would see Bernardino da Siena himself – who preached without veils about the corrupting and sinful behaviours of his time. Cfr. Ettore Li Gotti, 'Il Beccadelli e l'*Hermaphroditus*'. *Archivio storico per la Sicilia* 6 (1940): 253-264; Gianvito Resta, 'Beccadelli, Antonio'. *DBI* 7 (1965): 400-406; Mario Fois, *Il pensiero cristiano di Lorenzo Valla nel quadro storico-culturale del suo ambiente*. Roma: Libreria editrice dell'Università Gregoriana, 1969: 27; Remo L. Guidi, *Frati e umanisti nel Quattrocento*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2013: 257-316.

³⁴ Laurentius Valla, *Opera*. Basileae: apud Henricum Petrum, 1540 (anastatic reprint Laurentius Valla, *Opera omnia*, con una premessa di Eugenio Garin, 2 vols. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1962): 364: «Ubi sunt qui ad populum frequenter de minimis flagitiis nugisque vociferantur? Ubi tu es Antoni Bitontine, qui in meas de *Dialectica* opiniones ad populum perorasti? Si pro republica Christiana, si pro hominum salute, si ut Deo inserviat, concionamini et non aut gloriae aut avaritiae aut inimicitiae gratia, cur Podianum opus non accusatis? Cur non in illud peroratis? Cur non autorem librumque ad ignem vocatis, imitantes Bernardinum et Robertum, qui opus Antonii Panormitae in concione Mediolani, Bononiae ac Ferrariae concremarunt?».

³⁵ Piana, 'Lettera inedita di S. Bernardino da Siena': 69-72.

stakes of Beccadelli's work, the poet's «paper image», to Eugenius IV's pontificate (1431-1447), when Roberto had yet to begin his successful preaching³⁶.

The text we read today of Valla's *Antidota* is the one that was first published in Basel almost a century after the work's composition, thus we can conjecture a corruption of the original name of the preacher who had actually burnt the *Hermaphroditus*. The mistake in favor of Roberto when speaking of a famous popular preacher in Basel around the 1550 – but also elsewhere from the late fifteenth century onwards – could be explainable both with the distance – geographical and chronological – from the events and with the prevailing fame Roberto still enjoyed above almost all his contemporaries. The recent American editor of the *Hermaphroditus* already noted such a possibility and suggested a misreading of the name Alberto, graphically and phonetically rather similar to Roberto³⁷. This would thus probably involve in the events another well-known Franciscan Observant preacher, Alberto da Sarteano. However, against this reading, it must be noted that we know Alberto was much less firm than many of his confreres in condemning Beccadelli's work, which he too judged a «sceleratissimus libellus», but against which he warmly recommended to avoid the use of violence³⁸. A violent opponent of Beccadelli's work and a Franciscan friar himself, on the other hand, was Antonio da Rho, whose latinized name Raudensis could possibly have been mistaken for Roberto³⁹. One last option could be that Valla was speaking of another preacher named Roberto, but I could not think of another preacher by that name as famous as we would expect to be quoted in this way. Not being, for now, able to identify Beccadelli's persecutor, I believe it anyway sensible to rule out Roberto: he was far too young when the debate over the work took place and there seems to be no patent reason why he would have brought it up again decades later during his own preaching.

The preachers' condemnation of profane and classical literature discussed up to now, however, was not unilateral. In some cases, the reading and studying of Classics could be considered licit. Indeed, we can read also in Roberto's sermons how, based on the traditional debate regarding the issue, the preacher thought that a Christian and orthodox use of the classics was possible, when it was made entirely in function of the glory of God⁴⁰. The first chapter of the first

³⁶ Valla, *Opera*: 341: «[Antonius Panormita] sub Eugenio et Bernardino per imaginem chartaceam concrematus est». Cfr. Giovanni Di Napoli, *Lorenzo Valla. Filosofia e religione nell'umanesimo italiano*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1971: 51.

³⁷ Antonio Beccadelli, *The Hermaphrodite*, edited and translated by Holt Parker. Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2010: xxxiii. For the mistake that can lead to mix up the names Alberto and Roberto see for instance Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*: II, 633.

³⁸ Enrico Cerulli, 'Berdini, Alberto'. *DBI* 8 (1966): 800-804.

³⁹ Riccardo Fubini, 'Antonio da Rho'. *DBI* 3 (1961): 574-577.

⁴⁰ Even the profoundly polemic Giovanni Dominici contemplated this possibility (Mésoniat, *Poetica theologia*: 102), although he would seem to express the opposite in one of his sermons, Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*: 108, n. 50: «La natura nostra desidera di sapere e mai non si può saziare di sapere.

sermon of Roberto's *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum* is dedicated to demonstrating the excellence of the Sacred Scripture. The first reason mentioned is, of course, the subject treated in them, which is much more relevant – regarding the almighty God himself – than any profane writing:

Indeed, from the beginning to the end, the Scripture narrates the miracles worked by God. Hence, there is no way those could be compared with anything that has been written by literates, rhetoricians, dialectics, philosophers, geometricians, musicians, doctors, astrologers, poets and jurists. All these works are about lower and mortal topics, vile and earthly. Fittingly, the queen of all sciences raises men's minds to know and love God and it does not narrate about Aeneas' arrival in Italy, as Virgil did, who said: "Arms and the man I sing, who first made the way etc.", nor does it invite to deplore civil wars, as did Lucan, who said: "Cordoba gave birth to me, Nero snatched me away, I told of battles / in which peers fought each other, a father-in-law on this side, a son-in-law on that. / Wars worse than civil on the Emathian plains, / and crime let loose we sing: how Rome's high race / Plunged in her vitals her victorious sword" and so on⁴¹.

It is the second argument, concerning the Sacred Scripture's excellence, however, that really takes us inside the debate we have been following. This concerns the truthfulness of its content, which, as opposed to any other writing, cannot possibly contain anything false: «how many lies – on the other hand – are to be found in the works of philosophers and poets?», leading to the question whether it is licit to read pagan classics. This time, Roberto answered with a distinction: if our reading of the classics leads us to despise the Sacred Scripture and to admit the errors of the pagans, then it is not permissible and morally wrong. And this is also supported with juridical quotations. If, instead, one reads classics in order to refute their falsities, to counter their reproachful morality or to see if they

Or non ti dare a ssapere né Virgilio né altri poeti, bugiardi, temporali e mondani; fonda questa tua volontà di sapere [...] fondala in Dio, ne' santi Vangeli, nela Sancta Scriptura».

⁴¹ Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore*: ff. a3v-a4r: «Primo siquidem intelligere possumus sublimitatem et excellentiam Scripture Sancte ex eius dignitate. Est enim incomparabiliter dignior omnibus scienciis et scripturis, eo quod est de digniore subiecto, scilicet altissimo Deo. [...] Ipsa igitur scriptura a principio usque ad finem predicat mirabilia facta Dei. Ex quo illi comparari non valent cuncta que a grammaticis, rhetoribus, dialecticis, philosophis, geometris, musicis, medicis, astrologis, poetis et iurisconsultibus fuere conscripta. Versantur omnia illa circa infima hec et mortalia vilia atque terrena, hec decenter omnium scientiarum regina, mentem hominis ad Deum cognoscendum diligendumque subleuat, neque de adventu Enee in Italiam canit, ut Virgilius, qui dicit: «Arma virumque cano Troye qui primus ab oris etc.», nec bella civilia invitat deploranda, sicut et Lucanus, qui ait: «Corduba me genuit, rapuit Nero, prelia dixi, / que gessere pares hinc socer inde gener. / Bella per Emachios (sic) plus quam civilia campos / iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem / in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra» et reliqua. Non de his minimis Scriptura curat, sed de Deo creatore celi et terre disserit, de illius providentia bonitateque, iusticia ceterisque perfectionibus divinis claro sermone loquitur». Almost a translation in Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: f. 14r: «Quella [la Scrittura] da principio insino a la fine parla delle cose grande di Dio e però non si li possono apparecchiare tutte le cose scritte da philosophi, da poeti, historiographi, da oratori e da tutti periti nelle naturale scientie. Non canta la venuta d'Enea in Italia como fa Virgilio, lo quale nel primo delle Eneide incomencia "Arma virumque cano Troye qui prius ab oris", né incomenza a piangere le guerre civili come fece Lucano, lo quale disse nel principio: "Corduba me genuit, rapuit Nero, prelia dixi, / quae gessere pares hinc socer, inde gener". Non se impaza de cose sì basse la Scriptura, ma parla principalmente de Dio»

conceal any truth, then that is permitted and even positive. The Church Fathers' example, moreover, confirmed this latter use of the classics, which remain anyway the work of men and should in any case be held in minor consideration than the Sacred Scripture⁴².

Roberto related more abundantly on the reasons why the reading of profane literature could be admissible for Christian believers in his vernacular collection *Specchio della fede*. Here, in the third chapter of the second sermon – dedicated to the demonstration of the truth of Christian faith because of its magnificence in science, authority and miracles – Roberto included an *excursus* on the possibility of using profane literature in profit of the Christian faith. Having discussed the superiority of Christian writings over classics and especially the more negative aspects of the latter, he however added that these «can be used and read positively and licitly for three reasons». The first reason is that even profane writings contain some truth adaptable to Christianity. The second positive aspect of profane literature are the moral examples it bears. The third is its use to demonstrate predictions and prophecies about the Christian faith. Each of these reasons is accompanied by abundant quotations from the Bible and the Fathers⁴³.

After all, as I anticipated in the opening of this chapter, not all of Roberto's confreres were so eager in condemning the reading of classics. We might quote the well-known example of Antonio da Rho, who gave a detailed description of his education in an *Apologia* composed in the late 1420s to defend himself from the accusations of "ignorance". Here he gave a long list of his readings, which included a number of ancient and modern day poets (even Panormita himself), whom Antonio defended based on the use made of them by the Church Fathers⁴⁴. Another example could be Traversagni, who in 1452, when he was in Vienna, bought a manuscript with Terence's comedies, against which we have seen preachers were particularly violent⁴⁵. Still, as said, these two

⁴² Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore*: f. a5r-v: «Secundo comprehendimus excellentiam Scripture Sancte ex eius veritate, quia in ipsa sola nichil continetur falsum, in aliis vero tam philosophorum quam poetarum aliorumque litteris quanta inveniuntur mendacia? Dicant hii qui studiosissime legere illas. Sed ob causam istam dubitari solet utrum liceat legere libros gentilium illorumque dicta assumere in rebus nostris. Ad quod respondemus quod si id fiat Scriptura Sacra contemta et ut erroribus gentilium assenciat, iniquum est et illicitum [...] Sed si quis gentilium scripturas perscrutetur vel ut eorum cognoscat et confutet ineptias, vel ut per illas in quibusdam sentiis moralibus arguat criminosos, vel ut ex illis capiat siquid veri repperit, utique bene facit [...] Et, ne multa dicamus, tam Hieronimus quam Augustinus reliquique Greci et Latini doctores in suis dictis persepe ad suum propositum gentilium sententias trahunt. Tamen, ut prediximus, sola scriptura Dei est que ab omni falso et mendatio immunis existit et quicquid loquitur verissimum est, eo quod verax est Deus qui nobis illam dignatus est revelare»

⁴³ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: ff. 15v-16r: «Se possono dall'altra parte usare e legere le lettere seculare bonamente e licitamente per tre rasoni: la prima per la verità, la seconda per la moralità, la terza per la necessità. La prima rasone è per la verità, perché in quelle lettere si trova alcuna verità ancora conforme alla nostra fede. [...] La seconda rasone perché si possono legere e usare le lettere secolari è per la moralità: li pagani e gentili scrissero molte cose le quale spectano alli bon costumi e loro exempli si possono indure a confusione di cristiani li quali vivono male. [...] La terza rasone perché si possono legere et usare le lettere seculare licitamente e per necessità quando è necessario provare quello che predissero li profeti essere adimpito, como si vede in molte istorie scritte dapo la profecia».

⁴⁴ The *Apologia* is edited and translated into English in Rutherford, *Early Renaissance Invective*: 196-240. See also Antonio da Rho, *Apologia – Orazioni*, introduzione edizione e traduzione a cura di Giuseppe Lombardi. Roma: Centro internazionale di studi umanistici, 1982: 50-115.

⁴⁵ Ruysschaert, 'Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni': 204.

friars are rather more the exception of two learned humanists who happened to dress the Franciscan habit. We should probably also consider a peculiar exception the use that Pietro Arrivabene made of Petrarch's sonnets, transforming them in a devout way and associating the profane praises addressed by the poet to his muse Laura to the Virgin⁴⁶. More telling, I believe, is the distinction of a good canon of classical readings from a bad one contained in an anonymous sermon from the late fifteenth century, almost surely written by a Franciscan Observant author, dedicated to the demonstration of the fact that God has worked all he can for men's salvation:

God has wanted that also pagans could have written books helpful for our salvation: Persius' satires, Juvenal, Horace, Ovid – I'm not saying his major works *De arte amandi*, or *De remedio amoris*: even roses grow among thorns –, Seneca, Cicero's *De officiis*, *De amicitia*, *De senectute* and others, these are good books⁴⁷.

A distinction that is moreover verifiable in other preachers' works and that, more importantly, seems to be reflected in the friars' libraries⁴⁸.

2. Observants and learning

During the fifteenth century, the question of learning was not only a matter of discussion in which religious topics were opposed to the growing interest for classical antiquity and the renewed profane literary tradition; not only a debate in which "friars" faced "humanists". It was also an issue that concerned religious orders from the inside, the Franciscan one in particular, especially as far as the Observants were concerned. This involved a much more general picture, starting from the value of learning itself, and not just the reading of profane and classical literature, but it contextualized this issue too. Despite Saint Francis' early claims for intellectual – as much as material – poverty, the history of Franciscan friars' relationship to learning went through a complex and ambivalent development since its very first steps. Already around the mid-thirteenth century, the Friars Minor were lecturing at Paris University and had built a dense network of schools and *studia* all over Europe addressed to different levels of education of their brethren. Immediately, it became clear that it was fundamental for friars to undergo thorough education to cope with their main offices,

⁴⁶ Visani, 'Citazioni di poeti nei sermonari medievali': 135. Cfr. also Cenci, 'Fra Pietro Arrivabene da Canneto'.

⁴⁷ Bologna, Archivio storico della Provincia Minoritica di Cristo Re, Sez. VII, mss. XV-XVI, n. 17: «Voluit Deus quod etiam pagani habiano facti libri pro salute nostra: Persius satyricus, Iuvenalis, Oratius, Ovidius – non dico de le opere superche *De arte amandi*, licet *De remedio amoris*: anche le rose stanno fra le spine –, Seneca, Tullio *De officiis*, *De amicitia*, *De senectute* et altri son bon libri». For a description of this manuscript see my 'Due raccolte di sermoni quattrocenteschi dell'Archivio storico della Provincia di Cristo Re dei Frati Minori dell'Emilia Romagna in Bologna'. *Documenta* 1 (2018): 85-116.

⁴⁸ Gian Carlo Alessio, 'Manoscritti di autori classici nelle biblioteche dell'osservanza'. In *Il b. Pietro da Mogliano e l'osservanza francescana (1435-1490)*, a cura di Giuseppe Avarucci. Roma: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 1993: 333-351: 338-339. See also Rino Avesani, 'Il beato Pietro e la letteratura profana'. *Ivi*: 353-368.

preaching in particular. Thus, on the model of the Dominicans, Franciscans made their arrangements for basic as well as for university training⁴⁹. Inevitably, however, the issue of despising culture, rooted in Francis' heritage, always resurfaced with every attempt to reform the Order to its authentic life, from the fourteenth-century Spirituals to the Capuchin reform in the sixteenth.

This was also the case of the Observant movement in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century: the choice of eremitical life and of the flight from all worldly goods implied it⁵⁰. Yet, the Italian Observant movement too soon found itself embracing learning. The activity of Bernardino da Siena, especially during his General Vicariate in the late 1430s, and that of his close fellow and collaborator Giovanni da Capestrano, most notably resulted in the founding of the first Observant *studium* in the convent of Monteripido in Perugia. This event signalled the fundamental turn, although it was far from being peacefully accepted and widely shared. The disputes over learning regarded the *studia humanitatis* in particular, as, for instance, Bernardino Aquilano recorded in his *Chronica* about the contrast between himself and Serafino da Gaeta. During the General Chapter in L'Aquila in 1452, the latter had advanced the possibility for friars to enhance their literary culture, which, according to him, was the only quality in which the friars came short. Bernardino Aquilano, and many others, according to his proud reconstruction, successfully opposed this proposal⁵¹. Despite the study of humanities remained debated, it was the choice of learning that transformed the Observants, from the marginal ascetic movement it had originally been, into a valid and strong competitor of the "official" – i.e. Conventual – Order⁵².

⁴⁹ Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210-1517)*. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2000; Neslihan Senocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209-1310*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2012.

⁵⁰ Mario Sensi, *Le osservanze francescane nell'Italia centrale (secoli XIV-XV)*. Roma: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 1985; Id., *Dal movimento eremitico alla regolare osservanza: l'opera di fra Paoluccio Trinci*. Assisi: Porziuncola, 1992; Id., 'Movimenti di osservanza e ricerca della solitudine: focolai eremitici tra Umbria e Marche nel XV secolo'. In *Identités franciscaines à l'âge des réformes*: 101-141.

⁵¹ Bernardino Aquilano, *Chronica*: 43-44: «In iste capitulo [Aquilae, 1452] congregati simul magister Seraphinus de Gaeta, vir utique valens et bonus, frater Barnabas de Interamnes, et plerique alii fuimus. Et magister Seraphinus ait in communi sermone respondens: "Vere puto quod ordo minorum nunquam in tanta fuit reputatione constitutus". Hoc verbum fuit magnum et praesumptuosum, quia tempore beati Francisci et sociorum quaedam videbatur esse schola sanctorum. Tamen in maxima tunc erat reputatione: hinc miracula sancti Bernardini, illinc praedicatorum acceptationes, ex alio latere exemplaris vita fratrum, ita quod totius Ecclesiae videbatur exemplar. Et adiecit magister Seraphinus: "Unum deest nostrae familiae, scilicet studium litterarum", cui contradiximus omens. Ego vero ceteris praesumptuosior dixi: "Cum sencundum te ordo minorum nunquam apud saeculum in tanta reputatione fuerit, et constat, quod hactenus in familia studia minime fuerunt, ergo clarum est melius esse studia non habere"».

⁵² Nicolini, 'I minori osservanti di Monteripido'; Mario Fois, 'La questione degli studi nell'Osservanza e la soluzione di S. Bernardino da Siena'. In *Atti del simposio internazionale cateriniano-bernardiniano*: 477-497; Letizia Pellegrini, 'Bernardino da Siena, il minoritismo e l'Osservanza'; Ead., 'Cultura del libro e pratiche dei libri nell'Osservanza italiana (XV secolo)'. In *Entre stabilité et itinérance. Livres et culture des ordres mendiants, XIII^e-XV^e siècle*, sous la direction de Nicole Bériou, Martin Morard et Donatella Nebbiai. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014: 189-201; Ead., 'Tra *sancta rusticitas* e *humanae litterae*. La formazione culturale dei frati nell'Osservanza italiana del Quattrocento'. In *Osservanza francescana e cultura tra Quattrocento e primo Cinquecento: Italia e Ungheria a confronto. Atti del Convegno (Macerata-Sarnano, 6-7 dicembre 2013)*, a cura di Francesca Bartolacci e Roberto Lambertini. Roma: Viella,

At the time when Roberto made his first steps inside the Franciscan Observant family's ranks, Bernardino da Siena's ideas had become reality. As a novice, Roberto underwent a rather precise course of studies. After learning the rudiments of reading and writing as a child with the Conventual friars of Lecce, as recalled by Bernardino Aquilano, whom there is little reason to doubt in this case, Roberto had possibly continued his apprenticeship in the schools of Nardò, as reported by Antonio Galateo⁵³. Then, he had went on with his training again in his hometown, this time with the Observants, possibly under the supervision of Bernardino's former fellow Matteo da Lecce or, perhaps, of the less-known theologian Pirro Antonio Moricino da Brindisi⁵⁴. Only after this period of education, followed by several months – which are difficult to quantify – spent in the Observant convent in Cesi, thus in the heart of the Order, did Roberto finally begin his preaching activity, although at a very young age⁵⁵. Furthermore, some years later Roberto also acquired the title of *magister*, possibly in one of the Order's *studia*⁵⁶.

On the basis of his sermons, it is possible to locate Roberto inside this debate, which animated the Observant family – and the entire Order – for several decades. He expressed his position on the issue of learning in a sermon dedicated to Saint John that he preached in Padua in December 1450 and which has come down to us in a *reportatio* by Marco Canazia, confessor in the church of Saint Anthony's. The stylistic device used to speak about the issue was that of answering a rhetorical question asking why the preacher reproached unlearned sacred orators (*rudes predicatores*), while there were authorities who countered this position, such as Augustine, who had testified for the Apostles' ignorance in every discipline, and Jacopone da Todi, in his famous verses condemned learning. The preacher's answer mentioned the apostles' inspiration through the Holy Ghost, also claiming as proof for his own argument that Francis himself had been learned and had known a good Latin, as is visible – he said – from his writings:

You do not understand Augustine if you simply read him literally. Indeed, the apostles were excellently effective not in virtue of their studies and of the learning they had acquired, but for the grace of the Holy Ghost. [...] Thus I conclude that the preacher of the Divine word has to be

2014: 53-71; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education*; Id., 'Sub humilitatis titulo sacram scientiam abhorrentes: Franciscan Observants and the Quest for Education'. In *Rules and Observance: Devising Forms of Communal Life*, edited by Mirko Breitenstein, Julia Burkhardt, Stefan Burkhardt, Jens Röhrkasten. Berlin-Münster-Wien-Zürich-London: Lit Verlag, 2014: 79-106; Stefano Brufani, 'Perugia e Monteripido laboratorio dell'Osservanza'. *Franciscana* 16 (2014): 195-228.

⁵³ See above subchapter 1 of Roberto's life.

⁵⁴ As above.

⁵⁵ As above.

⁵⁶ See above subchapter 3 of Roberto's life.

learned. “O, Saint Francis was unlearned! Why do you reproach ignorants?” He composed letters, and you would not even read a bad Latin in them⁵⁷.

As it has already been noted, this passage parallels another, much later, one from the eighth sermon of Roberto’s *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, in which the preacher scorned those who despised learning and did not believe it necessary for the preacher’s office:

Many inexperienced, illiterate and unlearned, inflated with the air of presumption, condemn learning, despise the study of the Sacred Scripture, and actually praise ignorance and ruggedness. Indeed, they say that Christ sent out to preach very humble fishermen, that is the Apostles [...] Thus, if the Apostles, completely ignorant, were chosen for the preaching of the Gospels, it does not seem correct to say that learning is necessary to preachers⁵⁸.

For Roberto, learning was indeed fundamental in the day-to-day commitment to preaching, in the work that preachers performed in keeping «God’s vineyard» clean from heresies and errors. Franciscan preachers, and mendicants in general, had to tire themselves in their studies in order to carry out their office of evangelization⁵⁹. Opposite views existed inside the Franciscan order of the time. Just like the example of Bernardino Aquilano’s opposition to Serafino da Gaeta’s request for an increase in the attention towards *studia humanitatis*, we may quote the position on preaching expressed by Giovanni Bonvisi da Lucca, active in the convent of Monteripido in the latter half of the century. In praising Giacomo della Marca’s preaching, Giovanni recognized its most positive character – though it does not necessarily appear true to us – in the bareness and un-learnedness of its style⁶⁰.

It is also possible to assess Roberto’s position inside the debate on learning by attempting a general survey of his own literary and theological culture, as it appears in his sermons. Roberto’s

⁵⁷ Visani, ‘Il codice BORGIANO latino 394’: 439-440: «Nonne habemus Agustinum XXII libro *De civitate Dei*, quinto capitulo dicentem de apostolis et ineruditis liberalibus disciplinis ac etiam quantum ad philosophie scientiam theologiamque? Et si rudes erant, quare ergo reprehendis, frater Roberte, rudes predicatorum, cum non oporteat eos tantam habere scientiam ut predicatis? Et Iacopenus: “Scientia acquisita / darà mortal ferita / se la non sia condita / de core humilitato / de humilità non sia vestita”. Respondeo quod non intelligis Agustinum si ad litteram simpliciter intelligis; nam apostoli fuerunt valentissimi et non per studium humanum scientiamque acquisitam, sed per gratiam Sancti Spiritus. [...] Concludo ergo quod sciens esse debet predicator divini verbi. O, Sanctus Franciscus erat ideota, quare reprehendis ignorantes? Composuit epistulas, nec in eis reperitur unum malum latinum». Cfr. also Maria Aurelia Mastronardi, ‘Retorica umanistica e modelli francescani’: 312.

⁵⁸ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, c. d6r: «Nonnulli imperiti, illitterati et idiote, presumptionis vento tumefacti, scientiam damnant, studia litterarum sacrarum vituperant, laudant vero ignorantiam et rusticitatem. Asserunt enim Christum humilimos piscatores, scilicet Apostolos, ad predicandum misisse [...] Si igitur Apostoli omnino rudes ad predicationem evangelii sunt electi, non videtur rationi consonum dicere scientiam fore predicantibus necessaria». Cfr. also Mastronardi, ‘Retorica umanistica e modelli francescani’: 316.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*: «Arbitror autem et ego dispositione Spiritus Sancti actum esse ut prefata licentia predicandi minoribus et predicatoribus impartiretur, quoniam nisi ipsi ceterique mendicanti excolerent vineam Domini sabbaoth urticae vepres et spine iam implerent illam cunctaque erroribus multiplicibus et heresibus essent maculata. Hi pauperes fratres desudant studiis litterarum ut predicationum suarum fulgore orbem illuminent»

⁶⁰ Nicolini, ‘Lo scriptorium di Monteluce’: 105: «Frate Iacopo della Marcha faciva fructo perché faciva el peggio che podiva per confondere la ponna del dire».

personal culture and erudition have often been valued, as is often the case with similar authors, primarily on the basis of the sources mentioned and quoted in his works. These, however, can lead to largely misleading information. Roberto and other authors of sermon collections – both from his time and from previous and later centuries – composed their works relying on extant collections of sermons or, more generally, collections of sources and quotations. Numerous *florilegia* and other kinds of working materials were available by that time, composed throughout the central and late middle ages, from where it was easy to pick useful arguments and quotations. John of Wales' *Communiloquium*, mentioned in several occasions by Roberto is just an example of one of the most fortunate of these collections, which thus earned its right to be mentioned as a source by the preacher. Many others, on the other hand, were or remained anonymous, thus leading to think the preacher had had direct access to all the classical, patristic, juridical texts and others from which he quoted passages or chapters. Direct quotations, on the contrary, were much rarer than it would seem.

Keeping this in mind as a general warning, it was anyway possible, in some cases, for the author to make a choice and, when visible, these choices are particularly valuable to interpret the author's learnedness and his cultural orientations. Thus, there are some aspects of the sources Roberto quoted that deserve to be discussed. The first and most visible one – for a popular preacher of the time – is Roberto's seemingly little interest in vernacular poetry. His printed Latin collections are almost completely void of vernacular – and Latin, as a matter of fact, with some minor exceptions – verses, and so are in great part his vernacular collections too, whereas his contemporaries often recurred to verses, especially by Dante and Jacopone da Todi, which only rarely (the latter) or never (the former) appear in Roberto's sermons. Quotations of poets tend to increase, on the other hand, in his reported sermons, so the issue could depend on the transmission of the text and on the nature of the collections. An isolated case, should it effectively be attributed to Roberto as it has been tentatively done, would be the *sermo de passione Domini* contained in ms. I.2.6 of the Biblioteca Paroniana of Rieti, the allegedly autograph manuscript compiled by Roberto. The sermon, which Daniela Degiovanni has recently edited, is literally filled with vernacular verse quotations. Moreover, chroniclers attest to Roberto's penchant for poetry and theatrical representations in occasion of his preaching on the Passion⁶¹.

As far as theological literature is concerned, alongside frequent quotations from the Church Fathers – among whom Augustine and Jerome surely play a major role – Roberto accorded his preference to thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century authors, namely – above all – the Franciscans Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Robert of Middleton and Duns Scotus, and the Dominicans

⁶¹ Degiovanni, 'Il *Sermo de acerbissima passione Domini*' and also see above, Roberto's life, especially subchapter 1.

Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Unlike some other contemporary preachers, Roberto did not seem to pay any attention to more recent theological production, not even to the Franciscan tradition of Scotist commentators – such as Guillaume de Vaurouillon or Étienne Brulefer – who were instead often quoted, for instance, in Bernardino da Feltre’s sermons⁶². Considering the frequency of juridical quotations in Roberto’s sermons, and comparing it to that in Bernardino da Feltre’s and Giovanni da Capestrano’s, it does not seem like the former excelled for his knowledge of this kind of learning, whereas the two latter Franciscan preachers were true experts. His resorts to such literature is almost exclusively limited to the *Decretum Gratiani* and there is no news of him receiving any specifically juridical training. However, as we have seen earlier, at least Felino Sandei – whose juridical expertise, on the other hand, is well attested – read and used his sermons also as a juridical source for such issues⁶³.

Finally, there seems to be nothing notable about Roberto’s literary references, which he mostly drew from classics that were commonly read in schools and that had been read for centuries throughout the Middle Ages: from Valerius Maximus to Boetius, from the moral Seneca to Cicero. It could be of some interest to note the consistent use Roberto made of a more recent classic in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: Riccobaldo da Ferrara’s *Chronicle*, which represented a consistent repository of amusing *exempla*. In the complex, however, there does not seem to be anything distinguishing in the set of sources employed by Roberto in his sermons, nothing that would distinguish him particularly from his contemporaries or that would demonstrate a peculiar independence from the common working tools authors of sermons like him would commonly exploit.

However, there is at least one episode that testifies to his attention towards his sources. In the second chapter of sermon XVII of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, discussing Lenten fasting, Roberto reported a story from Isidore’s *Ethymologies*, a brief account of the second century Quartodeciman controversy. Introducing the narration, Roberto also felt obliged to warn his readers that the story he quoted was not common to all versions of the work he had read it in:

If someone asked how it is possible to prove that the time in which Adam sinned was real, I would answer that it can be deduced from a story that I remember I read in Rome, in the end of an exemplar of book eight of Isidore’s *Ethymologies* in the library of Ara coeli. I say this because I did not see it in other books of the same Isidore⁶⁴.

⁶² *I sermoni del beato Bernardino Tomitano*, ad indicem.

⁶³ See above the subchapter on Roberto’s readers.

⁶⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: c. g5v: «Et si diceretur unde probari posset quod tempus veris fuit illud in quo peccavit Adam, ego respondeo quod hoc colligi potest ex quadam historia quam memini me legisse Rome in

The portion of text was absent from other exemplars of the work because it is not part of it and was possibly added in manuscript by some reader⁶⁵.

Roberto also showed attention towards his readings in another occasion, recorded in a passage of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. In the first chapter of sermon LII, he recalled having read in the town of Pavia – perhaps in the celebrated Sforza library, which we know in some extraordinary cases would occasionally be opened for friars who were close to the Milanese ruling family⁶⁶ – the text of the Delphic Sybil’s prophecies, in which Christ’s double nature, human and godly, would have been anticipated. Unfortunately, however, his erudite quotation was mistakenly attributed and the text he quoted is from the Erythraean Sybil⁶⁷.

3. *The debate over preaching*

One last topic, I believe, completes the picture of Roberto’s attitude towards culture and learning. It is related to his position inside the contemporary, at times fierce, debate over the practice of preaching and the different styles for delivering a sermon. It is more than well known how lay humanists, educated in Ciceronian or better Quintilianean rhetoric, severely criticized popular preachers. Despite their notoriety among scholar, it will be useful to repeat Coluccio Salutati’s words in commenting the activity of his time’s preachers, which are particularly eloquent, as well as typical of a specific view that will be common to most humanists up until Erasmus:

There is present (when bishops have neglected to admonish the people or to exhort them through their priests to enter on the path of virtue), there is present, I say, one or another religious man, high in the pulpit, after the angelic salutation of Mary has been introduced with jovial preamble of his sermon in his own character, who takes up again some passage of the divine scriptures,

quodam Isidori *Ethymologiarum* libro VIII exeunti, in bibliotheca Ara celi; quod ideo dico quia in aliis libris eiusdem Isidori hoc non viderim».

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*: «Dicitur ergo ibi quod post ascensionem domini Salvatoris, apostoli occupati in predicatione evangelii nihil de observantia Pasce, qua scilicet die celebrari deberet, tradere potuerunt. Cum vero ipsi ex hoc mundo transissent per universum orbem diversa introducta fuere ieiunia et omnis Gallia unum diem anni, id est octavo kalendis aprilis, Pasca tenebant; Orientales vero, sicut *Historia* Eusebii Cesariensis narrat, quocumque die mensis martii luna XIII venisset Pasca celebrabant. In Italia autem alii plenos quadraginta dies ieiunabant, alii XX, alii dicebant octo dies in quibus mundus concluditur sibi sufficere ieiunare, alii quia Dominus quadraginta dies ieiunasset, alii quadraginta horas abstinere deberent. Cum he tales observationes per singulas provincias tenerentur, Rome meror erat sacerdotibus, ut ubi erat una fides dissonarent ieiunia. Tunc papa Victor, Romane urbis episcopus, direxit ut daret auctoritatem ad Theophilum Cesaree Palestine episcopum, quia tunc in Ierosolima ecclesia metropolis decebatur, ut in pascalis ordinatio proveniret ubi Christo in carne fuisset versatus».

⁶⁶ Such as Gabriele da Lecce (cfr. above n. 195 of Roberto’s life), but possibly also Roberto.

⁶⁷ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. t7r: «Memini etiam me legisse et vidisse in castro Papiensi prophetiam Sybille Delphyce que de Christo sic continebat: “In ultima etate humiliabitur Deus et humiliabitur proles divina iungetur humanitati deitas et puellari officio educabitur Deus et homo». Cfr. Oswald Holder-Egger, ‘Italienische Prophetieen des 13. Jahrhunderts. I’. In *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters*. Hannover: Hahn’sche Buchhandlung, 1890: 143-178: 161

rips the very beautiful whole apart into its (not to call them vile) members, and soothes the ears of the crowd with simple hymns of equal syllables composed with puerile labor. Maintaining the same harmony, he subdivides the members and adorns the subdivided parts. Devoid of material and empty of thought he frisks about, cramming in as many words as possible. Now he excites his audience with the thunderclap of a high-pitched voice, using all the strength of his lungs; now he speaks out, deeply resounding in a lowered tone; now he takes out a white handkerchief, wipes his brow, mops his face, rubs his eyes, blows his nose, and affects such great delicacy that he seems to be not a man, not a religious person, but a woman of Cyprus⁶⁸.

The issue was not only limited to traditional anti-clerical feelings, nor was it simply a matter of style. It involved a much broader struggle over the social and political role played by preachers and particularly the hegemonic control and influence friars had managed to gain on contemporary popular masses. This has been noted, for instance, in the case of two celebrated enemies of regular orders and their eloquence, Leonardo Bruni and, especially, Poggio Bracciolini⁶⁹.

In the same way as we have seen for the debate over profane and classical literature discussed above, not all friars – or, better, not from all religious orders – held the same positions on the style of preaching. On the contrary, the supporters of different oratorical schools confronted each other, openly criticizing opponents. Despite never having personally met Bernardino, Roberto considered himself and was one of his most loyal followers as for the preaching style. Like some others of his confreres from the so-called “second generation” of the *scuola bernardiniana*, Roberto seems to have exaggerated some of the characteristics of his model’s preaching, such as histrionics and spectacular and emotionally moving *coups de theatre*. It will be sufficient to recall the sacred representations he orchestrated for his preaching on the Passion or the processions of *battuti* he organized in Rome and Perugia when the plague was hitting the cities, but the examples in his biography are numerous. Bernardino’s preaching style, an evolution of the university *sermo*

⁶⁸ Coluccio Salutati, *De seculo et religione*, ex codicibus manuscriptis primum edidit B. L. Ullman. Florentiae: in aedibus Leonis S. Olschki, 1957: 45-46 (I, 21): «Adest, postquam omiserunt episcopi monere populus aut per suos presbiteros ad virtutis tramitem exhortari, adest, inquam, religiosus quispiam et sublimis in pulpito. Post angelicam Marie salutationem iocundo quodam sermocinationis prelude suis moribus introductam, aliquod divinarum scripturarum oraculum reassumens pulcherrimum totum in sua, ne dicam turpia, membra discerpit, et equisillabis canticis puerili labore compositis auriculas vulgi permulcet, et eodem observato concentu membra subdividit, subdivisa distinguit, et rebus inops ac sententiis inanibus maxima verborum inculcatione lascivit, nunquam acutissime vocis tonitruo totis viribus laterum excitat audientes, nunc graviter insonando submissiore voce proloquitur, nunc candidissimo deprompto sudario frontem tergit, faciem purgat, oculos fricat, nares emungit, tantamque mundiciam delicatus affectat ut non vir, non religiosus, sed potius Ciprica mulier videatur». English translation quoted from Coluccio Salutati, *On the World and Religious Life*, translated by Tina Marshall, introduction by Ronald G. Witt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014: 103-105. On this passage see Eugenio Garin, ‘Desideri di riforma nell’oratoria del Quattrocento’. In Id., *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1961: 166-182: 170.

⁶⁹ Cfr. respectively Lucia Gualdo Rosa, ‘Leonardo Bruni, l’*Oratio in hypocritas* e i suoi difficili rapporti con Ambrogio Traversari’. In *Ambrogio Traversari camaldolese nel VI centenario della nascita, 1386-1986*. Camaldoli, 1987: 89-111; Riccardo Fubini, *Umanesimo e secolarizzazione*: 183-219. See also the recent edition Poggio Bracciolini, *Contra hypocritas*, a cura di Davide Canfora. Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008 (Edizione nazionale dei testi umanistici, 9).

modernus, developed on a rigorous structure of *divisiones* and *dilatationes*, meant to build the moral and social message from the chosen biblical *thema*, often subjecting and bending the *thema* itself to the purpose of the sermon's message. As for the language, Bernardino's own famous formula of speaking «chiarozzo chiarozzo», in an extremely simple and intelligible way, is far too eloquent to need any comment⁷⁰. No matter how diffused, celebrated and imitated, his preaching style was not the only one, and even if it did become predominant in Italian preaching – suffice it to recall the critique that Giovanni da Capestrano encountered in Northern Europe, where his preaching was negatively considered as the typical “Italian style” – there always remained some opponents⁷¹.

One group of critics of Bernardino's preaching were the supporters of the “older” style, the *sermo historialis*, more strictly related to the liturgical reading⁷². This preaching style gave large space to the explanation and comment of the day's biblical reading, both the evangelical passage and the one from the epistles, much more than this part of the traditional sermon found in the renewed preaching style. Thus, contrarily to Bernardino's habits and indications, this type of preaching remained much more anchored to the liturgical functions and its daily calendar, being thought to provide listeners with thorough explanations of New Testament episodes. In this sense, it was much closer to the ancient homiletics of the Church Fathers, but conveyed in a language poor and simple in style, in one word “popular”. That this kind of preaching was still extant also among Franciscan Observants at least in the early fifteenth century is demonstrated, for instance, by the collection composed in 1427 by the Franciscan Observant Barnaba da Parma, now preserved in the Convent of Sant'Antonio in Bologna⁷³. Completed in Cremona in September 1427, when the town was threatened by the battles between Milan and Venice, the manuscript contains two collections of sermons: a first one of seventy-eight Pentecostal sermons and a second one of sermons on specific topics. It is the first group that exhibits the characteristics of the *sermo historialis*, containing sermons both on the Sunday evangelical reading and on the one from the epistles. Bernardino's new style of preaching, of course, struggled to impose itself immediately. His early preaching, with only meagre successes, testify to this. However, the issue was not yet settled even in the mid and late fifteenth century. Giacomo della Marca, in his Sunday sermons, lamented that his detractors and gossipers (*detractorum et sussurronum*) would have wished he payed more attention to the

⁷⁰ On all these issues of Bernardino's preaching style, see above in my introduction.

⁷¹ See Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*: II, 179.

⁷² On the relationship between preaching and liturgy see *Prédication et liturgie au Moyen Âge*, études réunies par Nicole Bériou et Franco Mormando. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, especially Carlo Delcorno, ‘Liturgie et art de bien prêcher (XIII^e-XV^e siècle)’. *Ivi*: 201-223; Peter Howard, ‘Preaching and Liturgy in Renaissance Florence’. *Ivi*: 313-334.

⁷³ Bologna, Archivio storico della Provincia di Cristo Re dei Frati Minori dell'Emilia Romagna, Sez. VII, mss. XV-XVI, n. 36. Cfr. my essay ‘Due raccolte di sermoni quattrocenteschi’.

evangelical text, explaining its difficulties⁷⁴. The same did Roberto, in his *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*, who remembered those preachers who outrage when the evangelical text was not preached⁷⁵.

Another group (or possibly another facet of the same group) of critics of Bernardino's preaching was composed by the supporters of the renewed, humanistically stimulated, taste for the Patristic preaching style accompanied by classical rhetoric. This was particularly the style of a number of preachers active at the Papal court, studied by John O'Malley, who has labelled their preaching as epideictic⁷⁶. It was also the preaching style particularly successful among Augustinian hermits, from Andrea Biglia – one of Bernardino's most stubborn rivals – in the early fifteenth century to Mariano da Genazzano, Egidio da Viterbo and their followers well into the sixteenth⁷⁷. Andrea Biglia, Augustinian Observant and one of Bernardino's most stubborn rivals, can surely be included among them. Clearly, this excessively refined style of preaching was not extremely favorable among the popular audiences. But it was not such even in more educated contexts, such as Martin V's court, as Biglia once lamented in a letter to Siccio Polenton⁷⁸. It is in the light of the contrast between these different preaching styles that we should read some of the fiercest critiques moved against Roberto's preaching in particular, as already proposed by Roberto Rusconi. Such is, for instance, Erasmus's view of Roberto's performances, included in his *Ecclesiastes*, where Roberto plays the role of most negative example of the popular preacher⁷⁹. Erasmus, on the other

⁷⁴ S. Iacobus de Marchia, *Sermones Dominicales*, introduzione, testo e note di Renato Lioi, 4 vols. Falconara M.ma: Biblioteca Franciscana, 1978-1982: I, 191: «Primo meorum detractorum et sussurronum respondeo tacite questioni quare ego non predico evangelium. Qui utinam celo evangelii moverentur et utinam eorumdem scelerata vita non destruerent. Sed, ut possint de proximo [de]trahere et infamare, inmicunt in auribus simplicium non predicare evangelium nos. Quos in caritate interrogare vellem: quid est evangelium; secundo, utrum Apostoli predicaverunt evangelium et Christus; tertio, quo tempore fuit evangelium ystoricum. Certe respondent quod evangelium est illud quod est scriptum. Quibus ego: si illud esset verum significatum evangelii, Christus et Apostoli quid predicaverunt in principio?».

⁷⁵ Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*: f. a8r: «Sunt et adhuc plerique predicatoribus insultantes dum evangelicum textum predicare obmittunt, quasi transgressores existant precepti dominici Marci ultimo capitulo, ubi dicitur: "Euntes in mundum universum predicate evangelium omni creature"».

⁷⁶ O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome*. See also the studies on humanistic oratory, especially John M. McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideas of Italian Humanism*. Chapel Hill-London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

⁷⁷ Cfr. Carlo Delcorno, 'La predicazione agostiniana (sec. XIII-XV)'. In: *Gli agostiniani a Venezia e la chiesa di S. Stefano. Atti della giornata di studio nel V centenario della dedizione della chiesa di Santo Stefano, Venezia 10 novembre 1995*. Venezia: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1997: 87-108; Nelson H. Minnich, 'An Early-Sixteenth Century Augustinian Manual on Preaching'. *Analecta Augustiniana*, forthcoming. I would like to express my gratitude to Nelson Minnich for having shared the results of his yet unpublished work.

⁷⁸ Cfr. Fioravanti, *Università e città*: 17. See also Caby, 'Oltre l'“umanesimo religioso”: umanisti e Chiesa nel Quattrocento': 21-23.

⁷⁹ See above the subchapter dedicated to Roberto's fame amongst contemporaries. Also see Roberto Rusconi, 'Coscienza e modelli alla vigilia della Riforma': 189-190.

hand, praised the preaching of the French Franciscan Observant Jean Vitrier, whose extant sermons, however, only partially justify the humanist's admiration⁸⁰.

Besides, Roberto was against the excessively artefact style of some preachers, whom he attacked in at least one of his sermons, criticizing those «numerous [preachers] who, when they want to speak Latin, look for unknown and uncommon words, in order to appear singular»⁸¹. Where Roberto really expressed his position on the theory and practice of preaching, however, is in the already mentioned eighth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. We have seen his ideas about the preachers' learning, the first of the five main «qualitates seu conditiones» a preacher must possess, the other four being: purity (*munditia*), wisdom, charity and patience. It is interesting to note Roberto's instructions as far as wisdom is concerned, where he stated that a preacher «must communicate the doctrine in a way that he does not always say everything and he does not always pass everything over in silence. Rather he must communicate according to what he sees is more convenient to the listeners' advantage, according to the place and time»⁸². It is the virtue of preachers to adapt their message to the specific audience, a virtue that, as I have said, was greatly praised, for instance, by Maffeo Vegio in his life of Bernardino da Siena⁸³. The issue also led to Roberto's ironic comments on those who did not observe such a precept:

However, we often see that ignorants do the opposite. There was one, in my day, who preached to seven or eight old women about the game of dice and the following week about the vice of sodomy. Another one, in the day of the Holy Spirit, in presence of a large number of learned men, related the praises of Saint Bernardino and other similar things⁸⁴.

⁸⁰ André Godin, *Spiritualité franciscaine en Flandre au XVI^e siècle. L'homiliaire de Jean Vitrier*. Genève: Droz, 1971; Id., 'Jean Vitrier et le «Cénacle» de Saint-Omer: Erasme et le modèle origénien de la prédication'. In *Colloquia Erasimiana Turonensia*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1972: 781-805; for a more recent and more balanced evaluation of Vitrier's homiliary see Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Preaching at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century: Contextualizing Jean Vitrier'. In: *From Learning to Love: Schools, Law, and Pastoral Care in the Middle Ages. Essays in Honour of Joseph W. Goering*, edited by Tristan Sharp. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2017: 515-529.

⁸¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 99v: «Nonnulli insuper dum latine loqui volunt exquirunt vocabula incognita et inusitata, ut sic videantur singulares». The position was common to other Observant preachers, such as Pietro da Mogliano (Ippolito Brandozzi, *Il beato Pietro da Mogliano, minore osservante, 1435c-1490*. Roma: Edizioni francescane, 1968: 135): «Sunt et alii qui, cum pomposis et faustis poetarum verbis compositisque sermonibus imbuti aliquando fuerint et a pueritia illorum mendatiis adherentes fabulis et ornatiis rethorum nullam prorsus simplicitati scripture et sermonibus divinis devotionem habent, neque sacris litteris nil preter polita exquirent aut curiosa et nova atque impertinentia».

⁸² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. d6v: «Debet namque prudenter [predicator] doctrinam communicare ita, ut non semper omnia dicat nec semper omnia taceat, sed pro loco et tempore, secundum quod viderit auditorum utilitati melius convenire».

⁸³ See above in my introduction.

⁸⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. d7r: «Verumtamen persepe contrarium fieri videmus ab insipientibus. Predicavit quidam tempore meo coram vetulas VII vel VIII de ludo alearum et ebdomada sequenti de vitio sodomie. Alter vero in die Spiritus Sancti coram ingenti multitudine doctorum virorum laudes narravit sancti Bernardini et similia».

The irony played, of course, on the inconsistency between the sermons' topics and the audience they were delivered to. However, some preachers' bad habit that Roberto wanted to reproach was slightly different:

What some who call themselves devout (*ferventes*), but could rather more truly be called crazy (*furentes*), glorify themselves about cannot be passed over in silence. Behind the excuse of detesting vices, they publicly say such sordid, obscene and filthy words that even any actor, satire jester or fetid pimp would blush in saying. From their incautious doctrine, many have learned about sins they ignored and they are tempted to perpetrate them. O blameworthy! O vicious! O, in short, wicked corruptors of vices! [...] Many glorify for having led people to laughter and jokes, against whom, Jerome to Nepotianus says: "The tears of the listeners be your praise". Such men should rather be called crooks than preachers, who with some gesticulating and deceiving aim to lead people to laughter⁸⁵.

Thus, Roberto seems to have criticized some of those same excesses that he was accused of by contemporaries. Moreover, his preaching was exalted and praised by other authors, who contraposed it to the preaching of corrupt and worthless friars. It is the case of Antonio Galateo or Masuccio Salernitano, who surely were not soft when it came to attacking corrupt clergy⁸⁶. It is probably reaching too far out to state that Roberto became an effective member of the Accademia pontaniana in Naples – a detail repeated ever since his most ancient biographers which, however, does not seem to be supported by consistent proof⁸⁷ – still, his preaching was appreciated, as was his company and conversation, by learned humanists. Ultimately, it was true what Roberto himself stated about his preaching office:

In truth, unless the preacher lives his life with patience, he would feel a lot of bitterness. When one praises him, the other vituperates him. The learned praise subtleties and the deep doubts of the scriptures, while the simple and ignorant people vituperate them. Some *exempla* or story win

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*: «Illud tamen silentio non est pretereundum, quod quidam qui ferventes, sed vere potius furentes vocari possunt, gloriantur. Sub specie detestationis vitiorum talia publice tamquam sordida et obscena spurcissimaque verba fantur, qualia minus quilibet histrio, ioculator satyra et fetidissimus leno loqui erubesceret. Ex quorum imprudenti doctrina quamplures nedum peccata quedam que ignorabant didicerunt, verum etiam et illa perpetrari conati sunt. O reprehensibiles! O vitiosi! O denique nefandi vitiorum corruptores! [...] Nonnulli gloriantur populum induxisse ad risum et ad truffas, contra quos Hieronymus ad Nepotianum ait: "Lacrime auditorium laudes tue sint", hec ille. Tales autem magis dicendi sunt truffatores quam predicatorum, qui quibusdam gesticulationibus et truffis conantur populum in risum vertere». The depiction of the preacher as a jester is a recurrent topos, cfr. Carlo Delcorno, 'Professionisti della parola: predicatori, giullari, concionatori'. In: Id., "*Quasi quidam cantus*". *Studi sulla predicazione medievale*, a cura di Giovanni Baffetti, Giorgio Forni, Silvia Serventi, Oriana Visani. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2009: 3-22: 12.

⁸⁶ See above subchapter 5 of Roberto's life.

⁸⁷ For instance, Antonio Galateo, who in several occasions acknowledged Roberto among his closest friends, did not put him in his list of members of the Accademia, cfr. Mario Santoro, 'Scienza e humanitas nell'opera del Galateo'. *La Zagaglia* 5 (1960): 25-41: 27-28.

back the ignorants and the simple women, while learned men who do not have devotion for them, pick up laughing⁸⁸.

To sum up this first chapter, it has been possible to give a more precise reading of Roberto's attitude towards culture and learning, an aspect which has received some attention from scholars, but which I believe deserved some further consideration. The preacher's humanistic contacts and friendship did not necessarily make a humanist of him and his approach to profane learning and to preaching in general certainly demonstrate the opposite. His position inside the debate that animated the Franciscan Order, and the Observant family in particular – of which, it will never be repeated enough, Roberto shared most of his preparation and culture – over learning saw him as a worthy heir of his ideal master Bernardino da Siena. The same, and possibly even more, did his attitude towards preaching.

⁸⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. d7r-v: «Et vere nisi predicator patiens extiterit, multam sentient amaritudinem. Quando quod unus laudat, alter vituperat. Laudant docti subtilitates et profunda dubia scripturarum, vituperant ista vulgares et ignorantes. Extollunt ignorantes et muliercule vulgaria quedam exempla sive parabolas et de illis viri periti qui non habent devotionem risum suscipiunt».

Debates on Hell, its eternity and the number of the damned souls

Across all of its ages, Christianity faced attempts to soften the common terrifying image of what sinners should expect in their afterlives. The sharp «conflict between human sensibility and the eternity of Hell's pains» has always troubled susceptible minds¹. It is hard to accept the perspective of one's fellows' (not to speak of one's own) irremediable and eternal damnation. What else was the "invention of Purgatory" if not a manner to open a way, at least for men guilty of minor sins, to hope, at some point, of being revoked by God to final and everlasting beatitude?² To demonstrate the persistence throughout Christian faith's history of debates regarding Hell and its punishments, it will suffice to mention a couple of examples. The first could be that of the different ideas that Augustine noticed and reprehended among his contemporaries. Achille Lehaut has attempted a reconstruction of the different shades of the milder fourth and fifth-century doctrines on damnation, which the Church Father condemned or contrasted in his writings³. Another much more recent case could be that of St. George Mivart's article *Happiness in Hell*, published in December 1892 in the English Catholic journal *Nineteenth century*. In this essay, the author, although not supporting an idea of any possible liberation of damned souls from Hell, held the possibility for them to experience some happiness; a theory which gave way to enormous international polemics and eventually, but not by itself, to Mivart's excommunication⁴. The eternity of Hell, the quantity of damned souls and the quality of their pains have never crystallized into dogmas, thus their discussion was, to a certain extent, licit and accepted – though not reaching as far as the limit of a complete denial of afterlife punishments and rewards. This is not to say, however, that anyone could believe whatever about these things, but rather that contradicting the traditional and predominant theological opinions concerning them did not lead automatically to heresy. Although not heretical, such opinions – which brought with them social and theoretical consequences that are easy to imagine – had to be opposed. And such oppositions constitute – as in the case of Saint Augustine's writings – the main traces we possess of them.

¹ Achille Lehaut, *L'éternité des peines e l'Enfer chez saint Augustin*. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne et C., 1912: 15: «un conflit très vif entre la sensibilité humaine et l'éternité des peines de l'Enfer».

² Reference is, clearly, to the celebrated Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1981.

³ Achille Lehaut, *L'éternité des peines e l'Enfer*.

⁴ St. George Mivart, 'Happiness in Hell'. *Nineteenth century* 32/2 (1892): 899-919. Cfr. Albert Michel, 'Mitigation des peines de la vie future'. In *DTC*: t. X, II, 1997-2009; Roberto J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987: 361-363.

The middle ages were no exception to this tendency. We know, for instance, of originally Jewish doctrines on the sabbatical rest periodically granted to the damned souls, which most probably were among the sources that fostered other, more Christian, ideas, such as those of the Paschal or Sunday rest of the damned, attested, for instance, in the *Visio Pauli* or in the legend of Saint Brendan⁵. More widespread was another idea, according to which damned souls could have had some relief from living men's prayers or good deeds. A belief which is attested by several testimonies from the West, as for example the *missa pro cuius anima dubitatur* or the *missa pro cuius anima desperatur* found in some missals, and which was contrasted by Thomas Aquinas in his comment on the *Sentences*⁶. This doctrine survived in the Eastern Church, whence it surely made its way back to Western Christianity, at the latest during the crucial debates of the Council of Ferrara-Firenze, in 1439, in some speeches by Mark of Ephesus⁷. In Italy, it was criticized in the Dominican Pietro Geremia's *Sermones de Adventu*, although with reference to «ancient theologians»⁸, and in a brief *questio* discussed by the prelate Domenico de' Dominici⁹. Moreover, the doctrine is attested once more, this time in a positive light, in the sermons delivered by an Augustinian friar, probably Mariano da Genazzano, preaching in Florence in the 1480s¹⁰. Finally, well-known stories, largely diffused among the people – both mentioned in Dante's *Divina Commedia*¹¹ –, such as those of Christ's descent to Hell to free the Patriarchs narrated in the apocriphal Gospel of Nicodemus¹² or Gregorius Magnus's intercession in favor of Trajan, recalled

⁵ Israel Lévi, 'Le repos sabbatique des ames damnées'. *Revue d'Études Juives* 25 (1892): 1-13; Arturo Graf, 'Il riposo dei dannati'. In Id., *Leggende e superstizioni del Medio Evo*, 2 vols. Torino: Loescher, 1892: I, 239-270.

⁶ *Ibidem*; André Cabassut, 'La mitigation des peines de l'enfer d'après les livres liturgiques'. *Revue d'histoire Écclésiastique* 23 (1927): 65-70; Michel, 'Mitigation des peines'; Thomas Aquinas, *In quartum sententiarum*, dist. XLV, q. II, a. 2.

⁷ Michel, 'Mitigation des peines'.

⁸ Geremia, *Sermones*: f. XLIIIr: «Hic extirpatur error aliquorum antiquorum theologorum et glosarum antiquorum iuristarum dicentium quod licet in inferno nulla sit redemptio, tamen est ibi penarum relevatio, et dant exemplum de illo qui portat magnum onus etc. Vide quod scripsi dominica prima post festum Trinitatis, unde illa glosa iuris canonici 13, q. 2 tempus non est tenenda. Nec obstat de Traiano imperatore, pro quo oravit Gregorius, quia illud est specialis, et ideo non est trahendum ad consequentiam quamvis bene fuerit de hoc punitus Gregorius, ut patet in legenda sua».

⁹ Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. 2369: ff. 48v-56v: «Questio est utrum suffragia que fiunt a fidelibus pro defunctis prosint dampnatis in inferno existentibus». On Domenico de' Domenichi, bishop of Torcello and Brescia, now see. Martin F. Ederer, *Humanism, Scholasticism, and the Theology and Preaching of Domenico de' Domenichi in the Italian Renaissance*. Lewiston-New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003; Cesare di Pietro, *Domenico de' Domenichi (1416-1478) vescovo riformatore*. Roma: Clv Edizioni Liturgiche, 2010.

¹⁰ Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa': 1085: «E anchora giova e ppuò giovare per dette indulgentia e bolle del papa chi e' fusse nelle pene dello 'nferno; cioè l'anime che sono nello 'nferno per dette indulgenzie e perdoni è alleggerito anche loro le pene». Another Augustinian friar Mariano, younger than Mariano da Genazzano, had contrasted this same idea in Florence the previous year, *ivi*: 1082: «Ed anchora chiarì chome e beni e suffragi di limosine, messe e ufici e discipline all'anime che sono prescritte e dannate allo 'nferno non giovano, né anchora non giovano a quelle che ssono salvate e sono in paradiso, cioè sono salve». Cfr. Mariani, 'Il nonconformismo religioso quattrocentesco al vaglio dei predicatori': 966.

¹¹ Respectively Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Inf. XII, 37-39 and Par. XX, 100-117.

¹² Cfr. *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus. Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, edited by Zbigniew Izydorczyk. Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997.

by the pope himself in his *Dialogues*¹³, could lead some believers to think that there were possibilities for infernal pains to be reduced, if not completely interrupted.

Carlo Ginzburg recognized such attempts to soften God's justice in the afterlife as a still little-known «popular tendency» which could be trailed by the scattered traces it had left in the sixteenth century¹⁴. We can now add some more traces from the preceding century, basing our initial investigation on Roberto's sermons, but subsequently broadening our survey to a larger scope of sources, both from preaching and from other literary genres.

1. *Proportions of saved and damned souls*

The first discussion I will be dealing with is the one regarding the relative – since only God can know the precise one! – number of the saved and damned souls. So to say, which, at the end of times, will be more numerous, the souls destined to eternal beatitude or those condemned to never-ending pains. The discussion of this theological question was an extremely long-lasting one, attested from the times of Clement of Alexandria until years very close to ourselves, especially since there never has been an official pronouncement by the Church about it¹⁵. The issue also emerged in Roberto's sermons, in particular in the first chapter of the first sermon of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. Here, the preacher attempted to demonstrate «that, because of their sins, many more men will be damned than saved and that, although the number of the saved will be big in absolute terms, however it will be small if considered relatively»¹⁶. According to the preacher, it was enough to prove such a statement to consider the enormous quantity of infidels, sinners and of people who, despite living a Christian and pious life, did not do so in honour of God, but seeking vainglory instead¹⁷. Furthermore, the renowned verses from the Gospel of Matthew –

¹³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. f4v: «Gravissima erit pena damnatorum eo quod erunt desperati nec suffragia Ecclesie possunt eis prodesse aut comunicari [...] Sed contra hanc opinionem inducunt aliqui exemplum Traiani».

¹⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500*. Torino: Einaudi, 1976 (English translation: *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi. Baltimore-London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982): 58. See also Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia: 1520-1580*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1987, pp. 143-167; Pasquale Terracciano, *Omnia in figura: l'impronta di Origene tra '400 e '500*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2012

¹⁵ Albert Michel, 'Élus (nombre des)'. In *DTC*: t. IV, II, 2350-2378. It is particularly interesting to add to the testimonies of the debate drawn by Michel the one expressed by Ramon Llull in his poem in catalan vernacular entitled *Desconhort*, a dialogue between the author and a hermit (*Ermitá*), in which this latter asserts (Raimondo Lullo, *Lo sconforto*, a cura di Mario Ruffini. Firenze: Edizioni Fussi, 1953: 70-72): «per que segur siats | que Deus ha a son poble tan alta caritats | que enquax tots los homens del mon seran salvats, | car, si mays no eren li salvats que-ls dampnats, | seria sa merce sense gran caritats; | per qu'en la gran merçe de Deu vos consolats» (for this be reassured, | that God has for his people such high charity | that almost all the men of the world will be saved, | since, if the saved were not to be more than the damned, | his mercy would be lacking a big charity; | thus God's mercy will comfort you).

¹⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 2r: «Quod multo plures ex hominibus erunt damnandi, quam salvandi propter illorum peccata et qualiter numerus electorum erit grandis absolute, sed exiguus et parvus respective».

¹⁷ *Ivi*, cc. 2v-3r: «Nam electorum numerus in se consideratus et absolute copiosissimus erit, in comparatione vero ad ipsos damnatos et respective satis exiguus. Hoc autem satis constare potest, quod plures homines erunt damnati quam

«Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go through it»¹⁸ and «Many are called but few chosen»¹⁹ – seemed to uncontroversibly corroborate it. «However – the preacher wrote – some people are surprised by what we are saying»²⁰, since they rely on the figurative interpretation of God’s promises to Abraham²¹, interpreted since Paul’s epistle to the Galatians and throughout Christian tradition as a type of the saved souls²², and on the apocalyptic vision of the «great multitude»²³. Faced with such interpretations, Roberto admitted that there seemed to be a contradiction between Christ’s words in the Gospel and John’s in the Apocalypse, between what the Church stated and what could be inferred by the figurative interpretation of the Old Testament²⁴. However, this contradiction could be easily solved if one only distinguished, when thinking about the number of the saved souls, between a relative and an absolute consideration of it. As anticipated right at the beginning of the sermon, Roberto’s solution was that «although the number of the saved will be big in absolute terms, however it will be small if considered relatively»²⁵. Having drawn his position on this argument, the preacher then went on in considering the three categories of damned mentioned above: infidels, sinners and pious but vainglorious men.

salvati, triplici ratione: [...] Primo ratione infidelitatis. Nullus quidem infidelis in sua infidelitate decedens potest ad vitam pervenire beatam; neque vera est, immo falsa et reprobissima, illorum opinio, qui dicunt unumquemque in sua secta et erronea religione salvari [...] Secundo constare potest quod plures homines damnabuntur quam salvabuntur ratione viciositatis. Christiani utique omnes viciis atque peccatis dediti in peccato mortali suam vitam finientes, quorum grandis est numerus, salvari minime poterunt. [...] Tertio constare potest quod plures homines damnabuntur quam salvabuntur ratione vanitatis. Sunt inter christianos quamplurimi qui vitam pudicam, rectam sanctamque pretendentes deficiunt a debito fine, scilicet ipso Deo, ad quem sunt omnia opera bona dirigenda».

¹⁸ Mt 7,13.

¹⁹ Mt 22,14 and in some cases Mt 20,16.

²⁰ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 2r: «Sed mirantur quidam de his que dicimus».

²¹ *Ibidem*: «Mystice et in figura multitudo salvandorum Abrahe patriarche promissa fuit et preostensa; unde Genesis, XIII cap. scribitur quod “dixit Dominus ad Abraham, postquam divisus est Loth ab eo: ‘Leva oculos tuos et vide a loco, in quo nunc es, ad aquilonem et ad meridiem, ad orientem et ad occidentem: omnem terram, quam conspicias, dabo tibi et semini tuo usque in sempiternum faciamque semen tuum sicut pulverem terre. Si quis potest hominum numerare pulverem, semen quoque tuum numerare poterit’” (Gen 13, 14-16); et Genesis, XV capitulo: “Dixit Deus ad Abraham: ‘Suspice celum et numera stellas si potes, sic erit semen tuum’” (Gen 15, 5); et Genesis, XXII capitulo: “Vocavit angelus domini Abraham de celo dicens: ‘Per memetipsum iuravi – dicit Dominus – quia fecisti rem hanc et non pepercisti filio tuo unigenito propter me, benedicam tibi et multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas celi et velut arenam, que est in littore maris’ (Gen 22, 16-17)”».

²² *Ibidem*: «In quibus promissionibus dicebatur Abrahe multiplicatio salvandorum fienda per Christum de eius genere descensum, unde Apostolus ad Gallathas, III capitulo ait: “Abrahe dicte sunt promissiones et semini eius. Non dicit: ‘et seminibus’ quasi in multis, sed quasi in uno: ‘et semini tuo’, qui est Christus”» Caracciolo quotes Gal 3,16, which is however incomplete without Gal 3,29: «Si autem vos Christi ergo Abrahe semen estis secundum promissionem heredes».

²³ Rev 7,9. Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 2r: «Erit ergo numerus electorum grandis secundum predicta. Johannes insuper Apocalypsis, VII cap. id confirmat: nam postquam descripsit numerum significatorum secundum spirituale significatum duodecim tribuum addidit: “Post hec vidi turbam magnam, quam dinumerare nemo poterat, ex omnibus gentibus, tribubus et linguis”».

²⁴ *Ivi*, f. 2r-v: «Qua re videtur esse quedam repugnantia inter verba Christi et Johannis, cum Christus asserat paucos fore salvandos et Johannes referat se vidisse turbam innumerabilem: qui autem recte intelligit nullam, inter Christum et Johannem ac Ecclesiam <et> Veteris Testamenti figuram, invenit [2v] contradictionem».

²⁵ Caracciolo – and also, even more clearly, Bernardino Busti – probably draw this argument from Thomas Aquinas’s *Catena aurea in quattuor Evangelia, in Lucam*, capitulum XIII, 5 (in Angelici Guarienti’s edition, Taurini-Romae: Marietti, 1953: 199-200).

We find the same issue discussed in another sermon by one of Roberto's confreres. It is the twenty-third sermon of the second part of Bernardino Busti's *Rosarium sermonum*, entirely dedicated to «the number of the saved in respect to that of the damned». According to its author, the sermon deals with an extremely beautiful (*pulcherrimam*) theological question: «whether all the men of the world will finally necessarily be saved and, given that they will not all be saved, whether more will be saved than damned»²⁶. The first part of the sermon – following the typically scholastic tripartite scheme: question, response and solution – gave an account of the arguments used by the supporters of the optimistic solution. These arguments, in turn, were divided into four groups. The first group of arguments concerned God's natural inclinations: since all creatures are inclined to act accordingly to their own nature and since God is greatly merciful and good, He will end up forgiving all sinners and saving all of humanity²⁷. The second group regarded God's will: since the Bible states that God wants all men to be saved, this must necessarily happen²⁸. Thirdly came arguments based on the figurative interpretation of the Bible: God's promises to Abraham and two passages from the Apocalypse, together with verses from Job and psalm 138²⁹. Finally, the fourth group collected the arguments supported by logical reasoning on predestination: if God did not destine all to damnation, as is demonstrated in the Bible, nor could he destine just a part, because this would mean favoring some men over others, then it must be concluded that all men are destined to beatitude³⁰. Other evidence of the great number of the saved, according to Bernardino, would be

²⁶ Bernardino Busti, *Rosarium sermonum*. Venetiae: Georgius Arrivabenus, 1498: f. 224r: «utrum omnes homines mundi finaliter debeant esse salvi et, dato quod non omnes, utrum plures erunt salvi quam damnati».

²⁷ *Ivi*: f. 224v: «Omnia que sunt inclinatur ad agendum secundum bonitatem sue nature, ut patet in creaturis etiam insensibilium: nam ignis cum sit calidus naturaliter semper emittit calorem, sol cum sit naturaliter lucidus semper emittit splendorem, mel cum sit naturaliter dulce semper reddit dulcedinem [...] Cum itaque natura divina sit naturaliter et essentialiter clemens et pia [...] videtur concludendum quod Deus inclinatus est ad miserandum omnibus secundum suam naturam [...] et consequenter quod omnes salvabit vel saltem quod plures salvabuntur quam damnabuntur per misericordiam divinam».

²⁸ *Ivi*: ff. 224v-225r: «Sciunt enim omnia quecumque Deus voluit fieri in preterito facta sunt [...] Cum igitur ita sit quod Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri ut dicit Paulus prime ad Thimoteum secundo, ergo omnes salvabuntur. Aliter videretur secundum opinionem istorum quod Deus non esset omnipotens volens salvare quod non posset». The biblical references are to 1Cor 9,22: «omnibus omnia factus sum, ut aliquos utique facerem salvos»; 1Tm 2,4: «qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire».

²⁹ *Ivi*: f. 225r: «Omnia enim in figuram contingebant in Veteri Testamento, ut ait Apostolus prima ad Corinthiis decimo. In divinis autem scripturis revellatum fuit quod innumerabiles homines quodammodo salvabuntur, quod sic patet: nam omnes electi significantur in promissionibus factis a Deo patri nostro Abrahe [...] Ideo Job 25 dicitur: “Nunquid numerus militum eius?”, quasi dicat non est. Et David psalmo 138 dicit de electis: “Dinumerabo eos et super arenam multiplicabuntur”. Similiter Apocalypsis 7 cap. dicit aquila volans: “Audivi numerum signatorum centum quadraginta quattuor milia signati ex omni tribu filiorum Israel” et in eodem capitulo dicit idem Apostolus: “Vidi turbam magnam quam dinumerare nemo poterat ex omnibus gentibus et tribubus et populis et linguis, stantes ante thronum in conspectu agni etc”». The biblical references are: Job 25, 3; Ps 138, 18; Rev 7, 4; Rev 7, 9. For God's promises to Abraham see *supra* n. 21.

³⁰ *Ivi*: f. 225v: «Necesse est dicere circa predestinationem divinam quod Deus aut nullum predestinavit, aut omnes homines, aut solum aliquam partem. Prima opinio est falsa. Ait enim Paulus ad Epheseos primo: “Qui predestinavit nos in adoptionem filiorum Dei”. Si vero dicis quod Deus omnes predestinavit ergo omnes salvabuntur, quia predestinatio est origo et fundamentum habens salutem [...] Si ergo Deus omnes predestinavit, ergo necessario concludendum est quod omnes debent salvati aliter Deus diceretur esse mutabilis et instabilis, quod non est dicendum [...] Si autem dicis quod non omnes predestinavit, sed tantum partem, ergo sequitur quod Deus est acceptator personarum, quod tamen negat Scriptura ad Romanos secundo et ad Ephesios ultimo».

the large amount of martyrs and saints, and – as mentioned in Peter Lombard’s *Sententiae* – the parallel with the number of the fallen angels, which the souls of the elect should substitute in Heaven and which are considered to be «*quasi infiniti*»³¹. To reply to these arguments in the second chapter of his sermon, Busti appealed to the same distinction already used by Caracciolo between the relative and the absolute number of the saved and damned souls.

Although it does not add any substantial arguments to the controversy, it will be useful to mention a third sermon collection that has, among other things, dealt with this issue. It is a manuscript prepared between the late fifteenth century and the early sixteenth by an anonymous compiler, coming from the Lombardian Franciscan, most probably observant, milieu, which was strongly influenced by the preaching of friars such as Bernardino Busti and Bernardino da Feltre. In this collection, in a sermon dealing with infernal pains, one of the chapters was dedicated to contrasting the «error of those who say that more are saved than those who are damned»³².

Aware of the tradition concerning this discussion, one would be driven to consider the mentions contained in these sermon collections as reminiscences of ancient discussions. This idea, however, can no longer be acceptable from the moment we come across consistent testimonies of an ongoing debate in the late fifteenth-century Milanese area and its whereabouts. As we will see, the discussion seems to have taken the shape of an internal fight between different orientations of the same religious order, the Franciscan, but also reached significantly outside the religious milieu, involving lay courtiers of the Milanese duke Ludovico il Moro.

Carlo Dionisotti had found some mention of the debate in the *De natura angelica*, printed in Florence in 1499 and composed some years earlier by the Franciscan Conventual Giorgio Benigno Salviati (Juraj Dragišić)³³. Here, in the fifth chapter of the first book, the friar wrote that he himself,

³¹ *Ivi*: f. 225r: «Dicit Hieronymus in prologo *Martyrologii* quod excepto uno die, scilicet calendarum Ianuarii, non est dies in toto anno in quo non possit Ecclesia celebrare festum quinque milium martyrum. Unde martyres sunt plusquam decem et octo centum milia. Quid de virginibus et aliis sanctis? Ecce ergo quanta est electorum multitudo! [...] Propterea doctores sancti in suis opinionibus, licet aliquantulum varientur, tamen ostendunt multos salvandos [...] Unde in distinctio nona eiusdem libri [secundi] allegat Gregorium dicentem: “Superna illa civitas ex angelis et hominibus constat, ad quam tantos humani generis ascendere credimus quantos illic contigit angelos remansisse. Sicut scriptum est Deuteronomii trigesimosecundo: ‘Constituisti terminos populorum iuxta numerum filiorum sive angelorum’”. Et hoc exponit idem magister dicens: “Non iuxta numerum eorum qui ceciderunt, sed eorum qui remanserunt. Et iuxta istam opinionem, cum sint angeli pene innumerabiles in celo, sequitur quod tot erunt homines qui salvabuntur”».

³² Bologna, Archivio Storico Convento dell’Antoniano dei Frati Minori della Provincia di Cristo Re, mss. XV-XVI, n. 17, c. 156v: «Tertia conclusio: maior sine comparatione est multitudo damnatorum quam salvandorum. Contra tertium errorem dicentium quod plures salventur quam damnentur».

³³ On him, among a vast bibliography, see: Carlo Dionisotti, ‘Umanisti dimenticati?’. *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 4 (1961): 287-321 (now also in Id., *Scritti di storia della letteratura italiana*, a cura di Tania Basile, Vincenzo Fera, Susanna Villari, 4 vols. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008-2016: I, 423-460); Cesare Vasoli, ‘A proposito di Gabriele Biondo, Francesco Giorgio Veneto e Giorgio Benigno Salviati’. *Rinascimento* 9 (1969): 327-328; Id., ‘Notizie su Giorgio Benigno Salviati (Juraj Dragišić)’. In *Studi storici in onore di Gabriele Pepe*. Bari: Dedalo libri, 1969: 429-498 (now in Id., *Profezia e ragione. Studi sulla cultura del Cinquecento e del Seicento*. Napoli: Morano, 1974: 15-127); Id., ‘Dall’«Apocalypsis nova» al «De harmonia mundi». Linee per una ricerca’. In *I frati minori tra ‘400 e ‘500. Atti del XII Convegno Internazionale, Assisi, 18-19-20 ottobre 1984*. Assisi: Centro di Studi Francescani, 1986: 259-291;

when preaching in Urbino, Florence and Ragusa (Dubrovnik), had defended the idea that the number of the saved souls is larger than that of the damned ones, which is very small, availing himself of what he called nine «rather evident» arguments³⁴. Benigno also wrote that a confrere of his, the Istrian Giuliano da Muggia – whom the Bosnian friar considered a close friend – had successfully defended the same position in Milan, at the presence of the city's duke Ludovico Sforza against an anonymous opponent³⁵.

In more recent years, Franco Bacchelli, in his biographical entry on Giuliano da Muggia for the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, signaled, alongside a verse composition in defense of Giuliano in occasion of the trial that was set against him in Milan, another sonnet, by Giacomo Alfieri, which mentioned the discussion of the number of the saved and damned souls³⁶. Alfieri had been secretary of the previous Milanese Duke, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, and had then probably passed on to Ludovico's service³⁷. This sonnet, which is nowadays preserved in two manuscript copies, shows rather eloquently how, in late fifteenth-century Milan, also a layman could take sides in such

Id., 'Giorgio Benigno Salviati e la tensione profetica di fine '400'. *Rinascimento*, s. II, 29 (1989): 53-78; Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 'Giorgio Benigno Salviati e Girolamo Savonarola: note per una lettura delle *Propheticae solutiones*'. *Ivi*: 81-123; Germana Ernst, Paola Zambelli, 'Dragišić, Juraj'. *DBI* 41 (1992): 644-651. See also Anna Morisi, *Apocalypsis Nova. Ricerche sull'origine e la formazione del testo dello pseudo-Amadeo*. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1970: 37-46; Edelheit, *Scholastic Florence*.

³⁴ I quote Salviati's text from Dionisotti, 'Umanisti dimenticati?': 309: «Praedicaveram Urbini atque Florentiae, et nuper hic in civitate nostra (Ragusa), et novem satis evidentes rationes induxeram de ingenti numero salvandorum et paucissimo damnandorum». Cfr. Giorgio Benigno Salviati, *De natura angelica*. Florence: s.n.t., 1499 [GW 3843].

³⁵ Ibidem: «Ob quam rem frater Iulianus Hystriensis, orator verbi divini in tota (nostra) religione mea precipuus, et opinionis a me acceptae defensor acerrimus, sacrarum litterarum doctor eximius, contra quemdam alium declamatorem Mediolani apud cautissimum Ludovicum Ducem fertur triumphum reportasse». Salviati mentioned again Giuliano and his preaching in Milan on this topic in chapter fourteen of book six of his *De natura angelica*. Ibid: «Enimvero, quia homo iudicatur in extremo hyatu, quis noscere poterit iudicium Dei? Quisquis etenim tum bonus et penitens, is semper foelix atque laetus erit. Qui ergo multos plures hominum damnant, hi ad vitam ipsorum, non ad exitum aspiciunt. Qui vero ambigunt, aut oppositum dicunt, ut nos quandoque primi, censeo, dicere incepimus, hi ad exitum, saltem christianorum (quicquid de infidelibus dicatur), rationem dirigunt. Quam opinionem postmodum Iulianus Mugliensis, egregius nostri ordini predicator nobisque amicissimus, in ampla Mediolanensium urbe contra nonnullos magnis lateribus defensavit».

³⁶ Giuliano was arrested and tried in May 1492 for having severely criticized the Roman curia from the pulpit and for having, more insidiously, hinted at the possible (and favorable) independence of the Milanese Church from the «Ecclesia babilonica Romana». Cfr. Pietro Ghinzoni, 'Un prodromo della Riforma in Milano (1492)'. *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 13 (1886): 59-90; Dionisotti, 'Umanisti dimenticati?': 310; Franco Bacchelli, 'Giuliano da Muggia'. *DBI* 56 (2001): 762-764. For other information on Giuliano's life in the order, including his nominations as Lenten preacher in Capodistria (Koper, 1489), Milan (1492) and Brescia (1494), cfr. *Regesta ordinis fratrum minorum conventualium: ad indicem*.

³⁷ It is almost certainly a mistake to distinguish Iacopo Alfei – vernacular poet, a couple of whose sonnets were included in the printed collection of Bernardo Bellincioni's verse compositions (cfr. ultra n.47) – from Iacopo Alfieri, secretary of the Milanese dukes and author of two lost historiographical works (*Diarium memorabilium et rerum gestarum Mediolani ab anno 1454 ad annum 1486* and *Collectio ordinum decretalium ducalium status Mediolani ab anno 1387 ad annum 1476*). The mistake – which is attested since Giovanni Maria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia*, 6 vols. Brescia: presso Giambatista Bossini, 1753-1763: I, I, 475 and 478; all the way down to the *Biographical Index of the Middle Ages*, compiled by Berend Wispelwey, 2 vols. München: K. G. Saur, 2008: I, 43 – is almost surely due to the alternative transliterations of the Latin "Alpheus", which can be rendered in Italian with both Alfei and Alfieri, but also with Alferi (cfr. Alfonso Dragonetti, *Le vite degli illustri aquilani*. Aquila: Francesco Perchiazzi Editore, 1847: 33-34, in which we can read the life of Iacopo Alferi). It is possible to find some scarce news on his account in: *Carteggi diplomatici fra Milano sforzesca e la Borgogna*, a cura di Ernesto Sestan, 2 vols. Roma: Istituto storico per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1985-87: *ad indicem* [Alfieri Giacomo/Iacopo]; Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan under Galeazzo Maria Sforza*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1994: *ad indicem*.

a debate and how well informed of theological matters Alfieri was, probably instructed by Giuliano da Muggia's own preaching:

If the damned are more than the saved,
To make it that not only few are elected to glory,
How can it be that the Bible figuratively
Says that the number of the saved is uncountable?

If they will be multiplied like the sand
And as the stars, and God promises this,
How can the ways to go there be narrow?
How, then, will the damned be more numerous?

You know that only one during the banquet
Was expelled for not wearing a nuptial garment,
But all the rest were good, elect and saintly,

And you know that not all at the same time
The workers were conducted in the vineyard
To be given all the equal pay agreed at first.

So don't be crazy,
God comes to call the sinners
And not the just. Leave aside now thy errors,

Oh, be thy fervours
Filled only with love, so they will be more welcome:
Indeed many are called and many elected³⁸

In favour of his idea, that the number of the saved souls must necessarily be conceived as being much larger than that of the damned ones, Alfieri mentioned the figurative interpretation of several biblical verses. First, he quoted the promises made by God to Abraham in *Genesis*, already

³⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Fonds Ital. 1543, c. 122v; Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. *Magliab.* II.II.75, c. 90r:

«Se li dannati son più che li salvati,
perché non sian rari et pochi a gloria eletti,
come sta<n> dunque figurati detti,
che'l numero è infinito ultra i signati?
Se come arene fian moltiplicati,
et como stelle, et Dio ciò ne prometti,
como d'andar la sù le vie son stretti?
Como dunque saranno più i dannati?
Tu sai che nel convito un sol fra tanti
per non haver la nuptial fu extracto,
ma li altri furno boni, eletti et santi,
et sai ch'in diverse hore et no ad un tracto
condusse su la vigna li operanti
per darli equal mercede al primo pacto.
Però non esser matto,
che vene Dio a chiamar li peccatori
et non li iusti. Hor lassa hormai li errori,
deh, sian vostri fervori
sol d'amor pieni, ché seran più accetti:
nam multi sunt vocati et multi eletti».

discussed by Roberto³⁹. Traditional biblical hermeneutics has often acknowledged Abraham's descent, which God promised would have been as numerous as «the stars in the sky and the grains of sand in the seashore», as the Old Testament type for the elect, the saved souls, thus also their number would have had to be enormous. This however contrasted, continued Alfieri in the second quatrain of his sonnet, with the «narrow way» mentioned in Matthew's Gospel⁴⁰: if the number of the saved is so big, how can the Gospel say that the damned souls will be more numerous⁴¹? Alfieri then quoted two other figurative interpretations, this time of two of Jesus' parables, both in the version retained by the Gospel of Matthew. The first one is the parable of marriage banquet for the king's son, to which all common people were invited and from which only one was thrown out for not wearing appropriate garments⁴². The second is the parable of the workers in the vineyard, who were all paid the same amount despite having been called to work at different hours of the day⁴³. Indeed, the interpretation of both these parables, in which Christ's own words refer explicitly to the «regnum caelorum», easily leads to believe that the number of the saved must be much larger than that of the damned. However, Alfieri did not note that the first of these two parables – and in some versions of the Vulgata both of them – is followed by the well-known verse «Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi»⁴⁴. One final biblical quotation completed Alfieri's argument, taken again from Christ's words in Matthew's Gospel. Here it is predicted that on Judgment day «the angels

³⁹ *Supra* n. 21.

⁴⁰ Mt 7,13-14: «Intrate per angustam portam, quia lata porta et spatiosa via, quae ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt, qui intrant per eam. Quam angusta porta et arcta via, quae ducit ad vitam, et pauci sunt, qui inveniunt eam!».

⁴¹ Mt 22, 14: «Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi».

⁴² Mt 22,1-13: «Et respondens Iesus dixit iterum in parabolis eis dicens: “Simile factum est regnum caelorum homini regi, qui fecit nuptias filio suo et misit servos suos vocare invitatos ad nuptias, et nolebant venire. Iterum misit alios servos dicens: ‘Dicite invitatis: Ecce prandium meum paravi, tauri mei et altilia occisa, et omnia parata; venite ad nuptias’. Illi autem neglexerunt et abierunt, alius in villam suam, alius vero ad negotiationem suam; reliqui vero tenuerunt servos eius et contumelia affectos occiderunt. Rex autem iratus est et, missis exercitibus suis, perdidit homicidas illos et civitatem illorum succendit. Tunc ait servis suis: ‘Nuptiae quidem paratae sunt, sed qui invitati erant, non fuerunt digni; ite ergo ad exitus viarum, et quoscumque inveneritis, vocate ad nuptias’. Et egressi servi illi in vias, congregaverunt omnes, quos invenerunt, malos et bonos; et impletae sunt nuptiae discumbentium. Intravit autem rex, ut videret discumbentes, et vidit ibi hominem non vestitum veste nuptiali et ait illi: ‘Amice, quomodo huc intrasti, non habens vestem nuptialem?’. At ille obmutuit. Tunc dixit rex ministris: ‘Ligate pedes eius et manus et mittite eum in tenebras exteriores: ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium’”».

⁴³ Mt 20, 1-16: «“Simile est enim regnum caelorum homini patri familias, qui exiit primo mane conducere operarios in vineam suam; conventionem autem facta cum operariis ex denario diurno, misit eos in vineam suam. Et egressus circa horam tertiam vidit alios stantes in foro otiosos et illis dixit: ‘Ite et vos in vineam; et, quod iustum fuerit, dabo vobis’. Illi autem abierunt. Iterum autem exiit circa sextam et nonam horam et fecit similiter. Circa undecimam vero exiit et invenit alios stantes et dicit illis: ‘Quid hic statis tota die otiosi?’. Dicunt ei: ‘Quia nemo nos conduit’. Dicit illis: ‘Ite et vos in vineam’. Cum sero autem factum esset, dicit dominus vineae procuratori suo: ‘Voca operarios et redde illis mercedem incipiens a novissimis usque ad primos’. Et cum venissent, qui circa undecimam horam venerant, acceperunt singuli denarium. Venientes autem primi arbitrati sunt quod plus essent accepturi; acceperunt autem et ipsi singuli denarium. Accipientes autem murmurabant adversus patrem familias dicentes: ‘Hi novissimi una hora fecerunt, et pares illos nobis fecisti, qui portavimus pondus diei et aestum!’. At ille respondens uni eorum dixit: ‘Amice, non facio tibi iniuriam; nonne ex denario convenisti mecum? Tolle, quod tuum est, et vade; volo autem et huic novissimo dare sicut et tibi. Aut non licet mihi, quod volo, facere de meis? An oculus tuus nequam est, quia ego bonus sum?’. Sic erunt novissimi primi, et primi novissimi”».

⁴⁴ Cfr. *supra* n. 19.

shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just»⁴⁵: this would seem to imply that the good will necessarily be more numerous than the wicked, otherwise Christ would have more logically said that the good were to be separated from among the wicked. Hence, Alfieri could conclude his sonnet changing the above-mentioned verse from Matthew's Gospel to state that «indeed many are called and many elected».

Alfieri shows, in this sonnet, a fairly good knowledge of the Bible and of its traditional interpretations, possibly gained from having attended Giuliano da Muggia's public debate and some of his sermons. What is most striking, however, is that Alfieri's arguments seem to correspond to some of the ones mentioned in the model sermons by Bernardino Busti and Roberto, written to contrast exactly this optimistic idea of damnation. This surely leads us to believe that all these different texts originated from and referred to one single debate, which found a more immediate depiction in the courtman's sonnet and which left its trace in the written production of the two famous sermon authors.

It is now possible to add yet another voice to this debate. It is that of the vernacular poet Bernardo Bellincioni in a sarcastic sonnet he addressed against preachers. Bellincioni, Florentine by birth, had travelled through several cities of northern Italy before settling at the service of the Milanese dukes in 1485⁴⁶. In this sonnet, in which the anti-clerical theme is certainly predominant, Bellincioni also left a picture of some debates which in his times were – wrongly, to his mind – brought up on the pulpit by popular preachers, but which were also considered, by earnest laymen like himself, as dangerous topics to be tackled in front of an uneducated audience. The first two of these discussed issues, namely the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary and the status of relics containing some of Christ's blood, are rather well known also to modern scholars and were fiercely debated in the late fifteenth century, especially between Dominican and Franciscan friars. The third one, is less known, but leads right to the topic we are dealing with here:

This is addressed to you, preachers,
You should only preach about three things:
First of all the Gospel, then the virtues,
And finally of reproaching the vices of sinners.

But you make a noise on the Conception,
And on discussing if Christ left blood here on earth;
And on interpreting things your way
Which is nothing else than sowing errors.

On this I find an appropriate verse in Dante:
“Thus the sheep who do not know
Return home fed with air”.

⁴⁵ Mt 13,49.

⁴⁶ Riccardo Scrivano, 'Bellincioni, Bernardo'. *DBI* 7 (1970): 687-689.

If a lot or a few will be found in Heaven
 Dispute it among thee in the convent during the day
 So as to flee idleness, from which bad things come.

We truly believe they will be
 Few, as it is said about the saved:
 But we get this should only be referred to friars⁴⁷.

Thus, Bellincioni confirmed that friars preaching in and around Milan were arguing on the conflicting views of a large or small number of saved souls. However, the final and incontrovertible testimony that the opinion of the saved souls prevailing over the damned ones was widely diffused among popular audiences of Lombardy comes, once again, from a sermon.

Indeed, in the *reportatio* of one of the sermons preached by Bernardino da Feltre in Pavia in 1493 this opinion is mentioned with a certain concern by the preacher. In this case, we know of a specific place and time in which these sermons were delivered and, even more importantly, of a specific audience, the urban people of Pavia, to whom it was delivered. As typical of his style, Bernardino staged a fictitious dialogue with a hypothetical listener, who claimed he had heard from another preacher that «he believed that the majority of men will go to Heaven». Bernardino's reply cut the dialogue short, to move on to another subject, but it strikingly grasped the heart of the matter: «Someone comes about and widens [the way to salvation] and [people] immediately believe him. If someone else comes and tries to tighten the belt a little, you won't believe him! He wants to lead you on the way to God, you don't believe him and instead you reply: "I'd like you to prove it"»⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ Bernardo Bellincioni, *Rime*. Mediolani: per Maestro Philipo di Mantegazi dicto el Cassano, 1493 [GW 3806]: f. f3r-v:

«Questo appartiene a voi, predicatori,
 sol di tre cose in pulpito trattare:
 el Vangel prima, e le virtù mostrare,
 e riprender de' vizj e peccatori.

Ma voi di Concezion fate rumori,
 e se Cristo qui sangue ebbe a lassare;
 e cose a vostro modo interpretare
 che altro non è che seminare errori.

Or qui da Dante un gentil motto sento:
 "Così le pecorelle che non sanno
 tornano a casa pasciute di vento" .

Se molti o pochi in ciel si troveranno
 disputatel fra voi il giorno in convento,
 per fuggir l'ozio, padre d'ogni danno.

Credian ben che saranno
 i pochi, como è detto de' salvati;
 ma questo passo noi intendiam de' Frati».

⁴⁸ *I sermoni del beato Bernardino Tomitano da Feltre*: II, 88: «Dicit ille: "Unus predicator dixit quod credit che la mazora parte andarà in Paradiso". Sì, in quel de li asini etc. Venit unus che slarga etc. a la prima parola creditur ei. Si venit unus che volia strenzer la cintura un passetto, tu non vis! Vult te menare per viam Dei, non credis, sed dicis: "Voria che probares hoc"».

I feel these few sentences, actually delivered on a pulpit, together with all the other contemporary testimonies, make us certain in asserting that this idea, that the number of the saved souls had to be much larger than that of the damned ones, was making its way through the popular audiences of northern Italy, more specifically of the Duchy of Milan⁴⁹. Even the three sermon collections I have quoted can all be, for different reasons, traced somehow back to Milan too. Internal elements of the manuscript sermon collection clearly attest that its origin – or at least its strongest influences – came from the Lombardian province of the Franciscan Observants. Bernardino Busti, in turn, spent his whole life between Legnano and Milan. Finally, we know that Roberto had been very close to the Sforzas and their court in the 1450s and probably remained very attentive to the Milanese religious situation in later years as well, as for instance suggested by his insterting Amedeo Landi's heresy among the five most diffused ones of his times⁵⁰. Moreover, two sides of the discussion seem to delineate: on one side the Observants Bernardino Busti, Bernardino da Feltre and (although he had formally passed to the Conventuals) Roberto; on the other the Conventuals – and possibly close to the milieu of the blessed Amedeo – Giuliano da Muggia and Giorgio Benigno.

What is absolutely clear, and especially reflected in Bernardino da Feltre's words, is the “pessimistic” preachers' concern for the grasp the more optimistic idea could have on common people, consoling and perhaps even diverting them from their fear of eternal damnation. Dionisotti, who did not know the passage from Bernardino's sermon, only published some years later, had already hinted how this represented «one of those crucial cards in a game which was not only directed to habits and to the political and social system, but which also touched the audience's individual conscience, their faith, their hope for life and their fear of death»⁵¹.

Before moving on to the second group of ideas considered here, it will be worth mentioning one last – though fable and quite puzzling – testimony of the debate, which can be found in the

⁴⁹ Further examples, moreover, demonstrate the use commonly made of these themes in vernacular poetry. An example can be found in one of Gasparo Visconti's poems, quoted in n. 23 of the introduction, which partially seems an expression of what Roberto himself mentioned in his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. c6v: «Qui non recte de Deo sentiunt de eius beneficiis ingratis conueruntur. Dicunt etenim: quod, licet magnum bonum sit esse, quod per creationem peccatores acceperunt a Deo, tamen cum Deus prescierit eos futuros malos atque damnandos, cur illos creavit?». To this, it is also possible to add the evidence of a quasi-proverbial diffusion of the biblical quotation «*multi enim sunt salvati, pauci autem electi*» among vernacular poets of the time, such as Antonio Cammelli, known as “il Pistoia”, who quoted it in a sarcastic and obscene sonnet against an anonymous foe, and Niccolò da Correggio, although referring it to love. Cfr. *I sonetti faceti di Antonio Cammelli*: 163: «Molti sono i vocati, | e pauci vero eletti a far passaggio, | maccaronazzo mio senza formaggio»; Niccolò da Correggio, *Opere: Cefalo, Psiche, Silva, Rime*, a cura di Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti. Bari: Laterza, 1969: 274: «Molti sono chiamati e pochi ellecti | a coglier fructi in el giardin d'Amore».

⁵⁰ See above the introduction to this second part of the dissertation.

⁵¹ Dionisotti, “Umanisti dimenticati?»: 310: «una di queste carte decisive, di un gioco che faceva presa non soltanto sul costume e sull'ordinamento politico e sociale, ma sulla coscienza individuale, sulla fede, sulla speranza di vita e sullo sgomento di morte degli ascoltanti». And he also added, a few lines below: «Superfluo sottolineare la presa che poteva avere una tesi come quella del numero ingente dei salvi e “paucissimo” dei dannati».

«ponderous encyclopedia of philosophical and theological curiosities» that is the *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*, compiled by the Dominican friar Bartolomeo Sibilla⁵². As we will see, Bartolomeo Sibilla supported, in other occasions, the more pessimist views on damnation and Hell. However, in this case, he seemed to have been among the optimists: «the number of the good, which will be saved after the general resurrection, will not eventually be smaller (but even eventually larger, as will be discussed elsewhere) than the crowd of damned men and daemons»⁵³. It is not at all clear, however, if the «elsewhere» by which he anticipates his discussion of the question refers to this same writing or to another. It has not yet been possible to identify the place he means to refer to, thus the mention remains for now, to paraphrase its author's name, quite sibylline.

2. *Misericordism: God wants all men to be saved and He cannot punish a finished sin with an eternal punishment*

I have grouped a second set of ideas concerning salvation under the term Misericordism, used by Augustine to describe the supporters of such ideas in his times⁵⁴. It has resulted in a quite variegated, yet, I believe, homogeneous group. It comprehends all ideas and arguments regarding the possibility for all men to be saved, be that because Hell cannot be considered eternal or because God's mercy or His will would not let Him accept such a terrible punishment for men. I will start by considering a logical argumentation, which probably had its original roots in anti-Christian pagan polemics and which surely had a tradition in scholastic discussion, as we will see, but which found a particular and wider diffusion in late fifteenth-century Italy⁵⁵. The question is whether it is fair – and thus convenient to a God who is infinitely fair – to give eternal pain as punishment for a sin

⁵² Mauro De Nichilo, 'Fra Bartolomeo Sibilla oratore: l'orazione in morte di Ippolita Sforza'. In *Monopoli nell'età del Rinascimento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio, 22-23-24 marzo 1985*, a cura di Domenico Cofano, 3 vols. Monopoli: Città di Monopoli, 1988: II, 681-730: 692, n. 35: «ponderosa enciclopedia di curiosità filosofico-teologiche». The few known biographical data on Bartolomeo Sibilla are collected in Mauro De Nichilo's essay and in Giovanni Desantis, 'Bartolomeo Sibilla oratore: l'orazione in morte di Francesco, Federico e Nicola Antonio Del Balzo'. *Ivi*: II, 731-754.

⁵³ Bartolomeo Sibilla, *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*. Romae: per Eucharium Silber, 1493 [GW 3459]: f. LXVII: [the discussion is here over which of the afterlife spaces – Hell or Paradise – is bigger] «Numerus salvandorum bonorum post generalem resurrectionem non erit forte minor (immo forte maior, ut alibi disputabitur) quam multitudo damnatorum hominum et demonum».

⁵⁴ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXI, XVII (PL XLI, 731): «Nunc iam cum misericordibus nostris agendum esse video».

⁵⁵ In Augustine's hundred-second letter, which is a «solutionem quaestionum sex propositarum a pagano quodam, quas Augustino exsolvendis transmiserat», the *quaestio quarta* is dedicated to a response to the question if sins can be punished eternally if it is stated in Mt 7,2 that «in qua mensural mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis». Augustinus, *Epistolae*, CII (PL XXX, 379): «Iam nunc deinde videamus quale sit quod de mensura peccati atque supplicii proposuit, sic Evangelio calumniatus: "Minatur – inquit – Christus sibi non credentibus aeterna supplicia; et alibi ait: 'in qua mensural mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis'. Satis – inquit – ridicule atque contrarie: nam si ad mensuram redditurus est poenam, et omnis mensura circumscripta est sine tempore, quid sibi volunt minae infiniti supplicii?"».

(any mortal sin) committed by a man, which thus is, no matter how protracted it may have been, in any case limited in time.

The events concerning Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *conclusiones* and the following accusations of heresy against him are well known⁵⁶. On 7 December 1486, the young Giovanni Pico had a list of nine-hundred theses on theology and philosophy printed in Rome⁵⁷, planning to discuss them in the eternal city one month later, on Epiphany 1487, together with the major theologians and philosophers of the time – invited at his own expense – and at the presence of Pope Innocent VIII. The project, however, was nipped in the bud: suspended at first and later put into the hands of a theological commission, which was designated to evaluate the orthodoxy of the theses⁵⁸. From the trial that set off on 1 March 1487 – which Pico only initially attended – thirteen of the nine-hundred theses resulted being either scandalous, erroneous or suspected of heresy. Later that year, the *conclusiones* were altogether condemned and Pico saw himself forced to flee to France, where he found the protection of Charles VIII. He could only return to Italy thanks to Lorenzo de' Medici's mediation and support, and it was the Florentine ruler who eventually fostered his reconciliation with the Church, for which however Pico had to wait until 18 June 1493.

What mostly interests us here are the thirteen condemned theses and their defense, entrusted by Pico to an *Apologia*, which he quickly composed – Pico said in twenty nights – and then printed in Naples on 20 May 1487⁵⁹. Among the theses analyzed by the papal commission in the first days of the trial, we find the twentieth *conclusio* of the theological series⁶⁰: «for a mortal sin of a finite

⁵⁶ See Stephen Alan Farmer, *Syncretism in the West, Pico's 900 Theses (1486): The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems*. Tempe: Medieval & Renaissance texts & studies, 1998; Pier Cesare Bori, *Pluralità delle vie, alle origini del Discorso sulla dignità umana di Pico della Mirandola*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000; Amos Edelheit, *Ficino, Pico and Savonarola*. See also the introductions to the editions of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones sive Theses DCCCC anno 1486 publice disputandae sed non admissae*, texte établi [...], avec l'introduction et les annotations critiques par Bohdan Kieszkowski. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1973; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae. Le novecento tesi dell'anno 1486*, a cura di Albano Biondi. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1995; Id., *Apologia*.

⁵⁷ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones DCCCC publice disputandae*. Romae: Eucharius Silber, 1486 [GW M33295].

⁵⁸ With the papal brief *Cum ex iniuncto nobis* dated February 20th 1487.

⁵⁹ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*. Neapolis: Francesco del Tuppo, 1487 [GW M33291].

⁶⁰ Pico had divided his nine-hundred theses into two main groups: the first regarding questions deduced from traditional sources or from new Arab and Hebrew sources (400 theses), the second regarding questions «secundum opinionem propriam» (500). Pico then had subdivided the first group according to his sources: Latin philosophers and theologians (94), Arab philosophers (82), Greek peripatetic philosophers (29), philosophers who define themselves as platonic (99), Pythagoras's mathematics (15), Chaldean philosophers (6), the doctrine of Hermes Trismegistus (10), Kabbalah (47). Pico then organized his own theses according to the subject: paradoxical conclusions to conciliate the words of Aristotle, Plato and others (17), philosophical theses in contrast with common philosophy (80), paradoxical conclusions which introduce new philosophical opinions (71), theological conclusions in disagreement with theological tradition (29), conclusions on the platonic doctrine (62), conclusions on the doctrine of Abucaten Avenan (10), mathematical conclusions (85), conclusions on the words of Zoroaster (15), magical conclusions (26), conclusions on the magical interpretation of Orpheus's hymns (31), Kabbalistic conclusions (71).

time an infinite temporal penalty is not due, but only a finite penalty»⁶¹. In the context of the *Conclusiones*, this thesis was closely linked to the preceding one, which concerned the temporal extension of the act of sin⁶². Both had been prudently introduced by Pico, who declared that these theses could have been supported «if sayings of the saints did not exist whose words seemed to clearly state the opposite» and that he was only advancing such ideas because «they are probable and can be defended rationally»⁶³. Opposite to what had been Pico's hope in writing it, his censors exploited even this introduction to emphasize the unorthodoxy of the second of the two theses⁶⁴.

I will leave out Pico's detailed argumentation in defense of this *conclusio*, contained in the second *quaestio* of his *Apologia*, since it would bring us too far away from our central concern of reconstructing the diffusion of this precise debate, to concentrate on his final statements. Pico claimed he had never wanted to deny the eternity of infernal pains. On the contrary, he asserted that it was clear how the impenitence of a mortal sinner turned the act of whichever sin from finite to infinite, because of its relation to intention. Thus, it is only in the case when the sinner repented and gained the remission of his sin that it would be possible to speak about the just correspondence of a limited punishment for a sin committed in a limited amount of time⁶⁵. However, Pico's opponents did not seem to be convinced. According to one of his main detractors, the bishop of Ales Pedro Garcia, there were some men (*quidam*) who «are surprised by the amount of the punishment and who grumble on the fact that a greatly merciful God can damn in eternity for just one fault which

⁶¹ I have used the English translation in Farmer, *Syncretism in the West*: 430-431: «Peccato mortali finiti temporis, non debetur poena infinita secundum tempus, sed finita tantum».

⁶² *Ibidem*: «quod peccatum mortale in se est malum finitum».

⁶³ *Ibidem*: «Nisi essent dicta sanctorum, quae in manifesto sui sermonis videntur dicere oppositum, firmiter assererem hanc, et sequentem conclusionem. Assero tamen eas probabiles esse et defendi posse rationabiliter».

⁶⁴ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia*: 106: «quidam magister, de hac mecum conclusione habens disputationem: “Quid – inquit ipse – aliud quaerimus testimonium quod tua conclusio sit haeretica, cum tu ipsmet manifeste dicas eam esse contra dicta sanctorum? Valet enim consequentia: est contra dicta sanctorum, ergo est haeretica”»

⁶⁵ *Ivi*: 112: «Ex praedictis patet quod ipsa conclusio mea habet sensum catholicum etiam secundum usitatum modum loquendi catholicorum doctorum, nec fuit damnanda pro haeretica falsa et erronea cum oppositum eius potius falsum sit et erroneum. Ruditatis autem maximae erat credere quod ex praedicta conclusione ego intendebam negare poenam aeternam damnatorum. Quin immo ex conclusione mea habetur perscrutatio causae qua damnati in aeternum puniuntur, quam causam ego dixi esse perpetuationem reatus in anima peccatoris, per finalem eius impenitentiam et perpetuam obmissionem ingemiscendi de suo peccato quae opinio non solum videtur non esse haeretica, sed ita catholica ut nemo eam si sit catholicus et in Sacris litteris exercitatus recte et rationabiliter negare possit». *Ivi*: 116: «Finaliter etiam ultra praedicta addidi quod quilibet decedens in peccato mortali ex reatu ponitur in aeternum quia ex hoc quod decedit in isto reatu istius peccati, ideo punitur in aeternum quia ex hoc quod decedit in isto reatu ponitur in tali statu quod necessitatur ad peccandum in aeternum, peccato saltem perpetuae obmissionis paenitendi et se disponendi ad gratiam». *Ivi*: 116-118: «Breviter autem recapitulando, id quod intendo in hac conclusione est hoc quod verum est, quidem quod peccatum finiti temporis est dignum poena aeterna et ei debetur, et etiam aliquando persolvitur poena aeterna si non fuerit dimissum ante mortem. Tamen si peccatum mortale est finitum secundum tempus, non solum quantum ad entitatem intrinsecam positivam actus prohibiti a Deo vel privativam obmissionis actus a Deo praecepti, sed etiam quantum ad imputationem vel deacceptationem, reatum quoque et maculam quae in multis locis Scripturae et in communi modo loquendi doctorum saepe dicitur peccatum, et quae sic est de ratione peccati aeternaliter puniendi, quod si non maneat dicta imputatio, vel macula, nunquam peccato debetur et aliquando persolvitur poena aeterna. [...] Dico propterea quod in omni isto qui damnatur est unum peccatum infiniti temporis tam loquendo de tempore viae quam termini, scilicet obmissio paenitendi, quae in damnato nunquam habet finem, et ita patet quod infinitas durationis peccati istius qui damnatur infinitas dico quantum ad imputationis reatum vel maculam et impenitentiam vel obmissionem paenitendi de ist est causa quod ei debetur et aliquando persolvitur poena aeterna».

was not removed through penance». Garcia mainly relied on Augustine's refutation of such ideas in *De civitate Dei*, however the use of the present tense in initially referring to the supporters of such an idea suggests he might have been thinking about some contemporaries⁶⁶.

That such an idea was commonly diffused in late fifteenth-century Italy is also suggested by the numerous mentions we find of it inside the sermon collections of popular preachers⁶⁷. First of all in Roberto's model sermon collections. The Franciscan preacher tackled the question in the twelfth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, in which he stated he would have demonstrated that «God rationally punishes the damned to an eternal and infinite pain even though the act of sin is by itself finite and limited in time»⁶⁸. Roberto had also preached on this topic some years earlier, as testified by one of the nine reported sermons delivered in Milan and preserved in the vernacular *reportatio* dated to 1457-58⁶⁹. Finally, the issue also appears in another collection attributed to Roberto, *De doctrina christiana*, preserved only in part in two manuscript copies in Parma and Florence⁷⁰. A chapter of one of these sermons is dedicated to countering precisely this idea⁷¹.

⁶⁶ Pedro Garcia, *Determinationes magistrales contra conclusiones apologeticas Ioannis Pici Mirandulani*. Romae: apud Eucharium Silber, 1489 [GW 10549]: 14r: «De quantitate vero pene mirantur quidam et murmurant cur Deus misericordissimus pro unius transgressione mandati per penitentiam non deleta perpetua puniat damnatione, cum tamen quedam peccata in via brevi tempore perpetrentur. Hanc questionem movet Augustinus, XXI *De civitate Dei*, cap. XI: "Iniustum – inquit – putatur, ut pro peccatis quantumlibet magnis, parvo scilicet tempore perpetratis, pena quisque damnatur eterna" [Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXI, XI. PL 41, 725]. Quomodo verum est, inquiunt, quod ait Christus vester, "in qua mensura mensi fueritis, in ea remetietur vobis", si temporale peccatum supplicio punitur eterno? Ad quam Augustinus, recitatis octo generibus penarum que Tullius in legibus scribit, per hec verba respondet: "Nec quisquam extitit legislatorum, qui censeret tam cito nocentium finienda esse tormenta, quam cito factum est vel homicidium, vel adulterium, vel sacrilegium, vel quodlibet aliud scelus. Non enim temporis longitudine, sed iniquitatis et impietatis magnitudine peccatum est metiendum. Qui vero pro aliquo grandi crimine morte mulctatur, numquid mora qua occiditur, que perbrevis est, eius supplicium leges existimant et non quod eum in sempiternum auferunt de societate viventium? Quod est autem de ista civitate mortali homines supplicio prime mortis, hoc est de illa civitate immortalis homines supplicio secunde mortis auferre. Sicut enim non efficiunt leges huius civitatis et in eam quisque revocetur occisus, sic nec illius leges civitatis admittunt, ut ad beatitudinem revocetur eterna secunda morte damnatus" [Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXI, XI. PL 41, 726]. Ex quo patet secundum Augustinum quod ratio quare peccato mortali debeatur pena eterna secundum tempus est propria et intrinseca magnitudo impietatis et iniquitatis peccati et non eius duratio longa vel brevis». On the re-evaluation of Pedro Garcia's work, the importance of which had been condemned by the negative opinion expressed in works as those by Henri Crouzel and Pierre de Lubac, see Luca Bianchi, 'Pierre Garsias adversaire de Jean Pic de la Mirandole, entre nominalisme et via communis'. *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 74 (2007): 85-108.

⁶⁷ We might also want to mention the brief *questio* composed by Domenico de' Domenichi, although it only regarded a limited and precisely identified group of sinners, who had already been punished in life and whose infernal punishment could have thus been justly relieved or limited in time, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, cod. lat. 2369, ff. 38r-41v: «Questio utrum per penam temporalem mortis quam passi sunt homines in diluvio, sodomite in incendio ignis et sulphuris, egipcii in submersione in mari rubro, filii Israel in prostratione in deserto, ablata fuerit ab eis pena eterna post mortem vel saltem diminuta sive alleviata».

⁶⁸ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* cit., sermo XII, c. f1r: «Quod rationabiliter punit Deus damnatos pena eterna seu infinita per durationem, licet actus peccati secundum se sit finitus et temporalis».

⁶⁹ See above subchapter 4 of Roberto's life and the subchapter on the manuscript diffusion of his works.

⁷⁰ See above the subchapter on the manuscript diffusion of Roberto's works.

⁷¹ Ivi, c. 330r: «Quomodo Deus iustus post hanc vitam damnat eos qui in peccatis moriuntur, nunquam eos recipiens ad regnum sue glorie, volens ipsos penas eternas subire. Pro cuius declaratione tres conclusiones sunt notande: prima conclusio dicitur iustificationis; secunda reprobationis; tertia durationis. Erunt enim hec tres conditiones contra tres errores qui habitare solent in mentibus aliquorum: primus error est eorum qui dicunt quod nullus post hanc vitam

Another Franciscan Observant preacher, Antonio da Bitonto, developed arguments against this idea in his own sermon collections, all published in the 1490s. Their author had by then been long dead (1465) and thus the references testify to a significantly earlier diffusion of the opinion. In his *Sermones dominicales*, composed in 1436, for instance, Antonio gave arguments in favor of the eternity of Hell, since someone could have doubted of it because of what is stated in Deuteronomy 25,2: «According to the measure of the sin will correspond that of the pains»⁷². Again, in his *Sermones quadragesimales de vitiis*, composed between the late 1420s and the early 1440s, this opinion was opposed once more⁷³; and so it was in his third collection, the dating of which is much more uncertain⁷⁴.

Furthermore, we know that also Dominican preachers argued against this same opinion regarding the eternity of Hell. In his sermon on infernal pains, Gabriele Barletta discussed the «cruciatio eternitatis». There are, the preacher wrote, two reasons to believe that infernal pains will not be eternal. The first was to take the example of Trajan's deliverance from Hell by the means of Gregorius Magnus' prayers⁷⁵. The second reason availed itself of several scriptural quotations and of the argument that «if the sinner's fault in this life was limited in time, lasting for ten or twenty years, then it must be punished in a limited amount of time»⁷⁶. Another Dominican who mentioned this question in his sermon collection was Pietro Geremia, Sicilian friar who had studied in Fiesole and Florence with Antonino Pierozzi. In the nineteenth sermon of his *Sermones de peccato*, printed alongside other collections of his some fifty years after his death (1452), before demonstrating the

habebit bonum nec malum, vel omnes similiter habebunt bonum; secundum error est eorum qui asserunt quod, licet Deus dampnet iniquos, verumtamen in ultimo quando sibi videbitur omnibus miserebitur et omnes salvabit; tertius error est illorum qui asserunt penam non debere esse eternam que ad culpam sequitur temporalem».

⁷² Antonio da Bitonto, *Sermones dominicales per totum annum*. Venetiae: Bonetus Locatellus, 1492 [GW 2210]: f. 117v: «Sed aliquis posset hic obiicere [to the fact that sin should be purged through penance] dicendo quod peccato mortali non debetur eterna pena quia quantitas pene debet respondere quantitati culpe secundum quod dictum est superius, Deuteronomii 25: "Pro mensura peccati erit et plagarum modus". Sed actio et culpa mortalis peccatis est temporalis ergo pro actione temporali non debent eterna pena iuste». For the collection's dating see Pratesi, 'Antonio da Bitonto'.

⁷³ Antonio da Bitonto, *Sermones Quadragesimales de vitiis [...] per modum dyalogi ad illustrem et religiosissimum principem Guidantonium Urbini ac Durantis comitem precellentissimum*. Venetiae: Iohannis Hertzog, 1499 [GW 2216]: f. 40r: «Uti beatorum gloria finem nesciet, ita et damnatorum pena in perpetuum se extendet. Qua ex re mirari non desino, cum ipse Deus, teste propheta, iustus sit et rectum iudicium suum penaque iam, nisi pro culpe mensura, dari non debeat, cur pena pravorum eternalis est, cum et eorum culpa temporaliter commissa sit? Sed hec questio citius solvitur, si divine iusticie ratio equo animo pensatur».

⁷⁴ Antonio da Bitonto, *Sermones [...] super epistolas dominicales per totum annum et super epistolas quadragesimales*. Venetiae: per Ioannem Hertzog, 1496 [GW 2215]: f. 81v: «Pro exordio huius sermonis queritur an peccatum mortale temporaliter commissum puniri debeat pena eterna. Ad quod dubium doctores dicunt quod sic».

⁷⁵ See the opening of this chapter.

⁷⁶ Gabriele Barletta, *Sermones dominicales et de sanctis*. Brixiae: Iacobi Britannici, 1497 [GW 3400]: f. 78v: «queritur dubium utrum pena inferni sit eterna. Ad hoc due sunt opiniones: prima quod non, alia sic. Prima probat intentum suum duplici medio: primo auctoritate, Deuteronomio 25: "Secundum mensuram delicti sic erit et plagarum modus"; et 16, quest. 1, cap. *Si quis*: "Secundum mensuram delicti imponenda est penitentia"; et cap. *De penis, Nequis*: "Unusquisque pro crimine quo fuerit deprehensus modum congrue severitatis excipiet". Ille. Ad propositum: culpa peccatoris in presenti seculo temporalis fuit, per X aut XX annos, ideo puniri debet temporaliter et finite, ut pena respondeat culpe: et per consequens pena inferni non erit eterna, sed momentanea et temporalis. Secundo probatur exemplo de Traiano imperatore qui, precibus Gregorii, ab inferis fuit liberatus: et per consequens pena erit temporalis».

eternity of infernal pains he mentioned two common reasons in favour of the view that punishment in Hell is limited in time. The first one regarded divine law, according to which the punishment has to be proportionate to the magnitude of the fault; the second was bound to human law, which states that a punishment cannot last longer than the crime itself⁷⁷.

All these testimonies – and probably some more could be added continuing the survey – show how diffused such an argument was. The question, after all, had been largely debated inside the Thomistic tradition, up to its fifteenth-century commentators: we read about it in Thomas's commentary on the *Sentences* and in its continuation by his closest followers, but also in the fifteenth-century *princeps thomistarum* Jean Cabrol (Capreolus) and in Antonino's *Summa theologiae*⁷⁸. Thus it is also probably due to reconsider Giovanni Pico's novelty in proposing such a thesis, rather relegating it to his "medieval sources" and tracing it back to a scholastic debate which had lasted for centuries⁷⁹. What, however, its diffusion among the sermon collections of popular preachers seems to suggest is that around the first decades of the fifteenth-century, the debate had leaked out of the *studia*, where it had been primarily discussed up to then, to be collected and diffused also among urban, more or less educated, popular masses. Its arguments could indeed comfortably find their place among the various theories on the softening of infernal pains of which we preserve several other testimonies.

For instance, in the *Città di vita*, a vernacular poem, primarily inspired by Dante's *Divina commedia*, in which the Florentine statesman and scholar Matteo Palmieri narrated his own ultramundane journey. The poem has gone down in history labelled as Origenistic ever since the fifteenth century, but Fabrizio Crasta's recent and greatly praiseworthy study and edition of the poem and of its Latin commentary – produced by the bishop of Massa Marittima, Leonardo Dati, in concert with the poem's author – has finally unveiled such a label's lack of foundation⁸⁰. I will be

⁷⁷ Pietro Geremia, *Sermones*: f. XLV: «Pro introductione materie notandum quod est conclusio vera in theologia per fidem catholicam approbata quod pena Inferni est eterna [...] Sed hic est questo quam sepe multi faciunt et est magna questio in theologia, scilicet quod videtur quod pena Inferni non debet esse eterna. Quod probatur primo de iure divino, secundo de iure humano. Et primo de iure divino quia pena debet commensurari culpe in quantitate, iuxta illud Deuteronomi 25: "Pro mensura peccati erit et plagarum modus"; item Apocalypsis 18: "Quantum glorificavit se et in delitiis fuerit tantum date illi tormentum et lue". Secundo probatur de iure humano. Nam canoniste dicunt quod pena non est ulterius protrahenda quam delictum fuerit in excedente repertum [...] Cum ergo culpa fuerit hec finita, puta luxurie, blasfemie, homicidium, usure etc, quare pena est infinita?».

⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sententiis*, IV, d. 46; Id., *Summa theologiae*, Suppl., q. 99; Jean Cabrol, *In quarto libro sententiarum amplissimae quaestiones pro tutela doctrinae S. Thomae ad scholasticum certamen egregie disputatae. Nuper castigatae et corroboratae [...], auctore F. Matthia Aquario dominicano*. Venetiis: apud Hieronymi Scoti, 1589: d. XXI, q. I, art. I; Antonino Pierozzi, *Summa theologica*. Veronae: apud Augustinum Carattonium, 1740, IV, tit. XIV, cap. V, § VI (col. 782).

⁷⁹ Stefano Caroti, 'Note sulle fonti medievali di Pico della Mirandola'. *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 84 (2005): 60-92.

⁸⁰ Fabrizio Crasta, *La Città di vita di Matteo Palmieri con le Expositiones in Civitatem vitae di Leonardo Dati: studio ed edizione del ms. Laur. Plut. XL 53*. Tesi di Dottorato internazionale in "Civiltà dell'Umanesimo e del Rinascimento", Università di Firenze, 2014. Tutor: Prof.ssa Donatella Coppini. Now see Id., 'Matteo Palmieri, Leonardo Dati e il problema dell'eresia nella *Città di vita*'. In *Prima di Lutero*: 908-928.

saying something more about the alleged Origenism of this writing in the following section, but let us now turn to some other contents of the *Città di vita*.

The first book of the poem deals with men's incarnation and the soul's descent from its original residence in Heaven to earth, receiving its unique and personal character on its way there from the influences exercised by the different planets it crosses while descending. The second book, instead, narrates the author's and his guide's, the Sibyl's, descent to Hell, from which both re-emerge in book three, ascending to Paradise. In chapter V of book III, just before Matteo begins his climb of the mount of virtues, at the peak of which souls can reach eternal life, he hears a conversation between some souls, which he reports in his poem:

Once we got on the straight road
Among the souls raised to climb in Heaven,
I saw to my left a slippery staircase:

On its peak, I saw, were gathered
Several souls, and they stayed there hanging,
And others had fallen downhill.

The ones which had not fallen were debating,
Saying to each other: "It cannot be denied
That all souls are awaited in heaven".

And to show how the argument goes on,
I heard one of them which asked:
"Does God want to save all souls?"

Another replied to reveal the truth:
"It cannot be denied that God's will
Would like for everyone to be saved in heaven".

The one who had first spoken added:
"If this is what God almighty wants,
Why is it that his desire is not completely satisfied?"

"The soul's bad intention clashes
– replied the other – with God's will,
And causes this wish not to be accomplished".

The first soul, that among the other seemed to have
More power, continued by saying:
"I do not know if we are going on the right way:

The eternal grace, which is in the supreme Lord,
Here is surely missing, and seems to have a limit
If it is not possible to rejoice as He would wish;

And if God's grace is a prize
And it is given to those who deserved it, it is not a gift,
But a reward to those who behaved well.

Thus it does not seem possible that such a goodness,
Without which the soul cannot be saved,
Does not save all the souls which are alive;

And if this depended on God,
We would not understand to which goal
Both his will and his power are moved.

It should not be feared that God has such a defect:
We think He wants but we do not see the effect,
And such a contrast strains our understanding”.

In such a way, trying to make their journey pleasant,
These souls go reflecting among them
On that truth which is searched by the intellect⁸¹.

The one entrusted to the dialogue of a group of souls by Matteo Palmieri actually was a discussion over biblical and theological interpretation that was widely attested and diffused in his times. We find it mentioned in some of the sermons quoted above, alongside the arguments on the temporality

⁸¹ *Città di vita*, III, V, vv. 1-42. Fabrizio Crasta, *La Città di vita di Matteo Palmieri* cit., pp. 434-435:

Poi fumo entrati per la ricta strada
tra l’anime ad salire in ciel levate,
vidi ad sinistra sdruciolente grada:
al sommo d’essa vidi ragunate
anime molte, et quivi star sospese,
et altre per la grada rovinate.

Le non cadute stavano in contese,
tra lor dicendo: “E’ non si può negare
l’anime tutte sono in cielo attese”.

Et per voler che questo sia mostrare,
una n’udi che domandando dixè:
“Vuole Idio tutte anime salvare?”.

Rispose un’altra perché el ver s’aprisse:
“Neghar non puossi che ’l voler di Dio
vorre’ che salvo in ciel ciascun venisse”.

Soggiunxe quella fece el parlar prio:
“Se questo vuole Idio che tutto puote,
onde è non segue a pieno el suo disio?”.

“El mal voler dell’anima percuote
– l’altra rispose – in quel voler divino,
et fa sue voglie d’essa voglia vote”.

La prima, che fra l’altre più domino
haver mostrava, seguitò col dire:
“Non so se sì si va per buon cammino:

la gratia eterna, che è nel sommo Sire,
qui certo manca, et vedesi haver fine
se come E’ vuole non si può gioire;
et se son premio le gratie divine
et dansi ad chi le merta, non son dono,
ma debito del ben si fe’ più fine.

Però non par dover che tanto bono,
sanza lo qual salvar l’anima non puossi,
non salvi tutte quelle in vita sono;
et se questo da chi puote et vuol fossi,
el suo voler col suo potere insieme,
non giugneremo al fin perché son mossi.

In Dio esto difecto non si teme,
credesi voglia né veggian l’effecto,
et tal contrario nostro intender preme”.

Così, cercando per la via dilecto,
tra lor vanno queste anime pensando
retro ad quel ver che cerca l’intellecto.

or eternity of infernal pains, as, for instance, in the first chapter of Roberto's *De divina charitate*⁸². Again, Roberto probably also opposed some of these ideas in the second chapter of the first sermon of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, of which I will be saying something more in the following section, since it was mainly and explicitly aimed against Origenists. Finally, it is probably thinking about these theories that Roberto wrote about those many people (*plurimi*) «who, hearing someone talk about the fear of God, not only are not frightened and afraid, but even laugh about what they are being told. In fact they say that God is clement and merciful by nature, thus nothing bad can come from him»⁸³.

Besides, Palmieri's own, rather complicated, theory of human salvation is evidently deriving from thorough reflections on these problems. According to what he wrote in the *Città di vita*, at the moment of Lucifer's rebellion to God, the angels were divided in three equal parties: one third rebelled with Lucifer, another third remained loyal to God and one last third was neutral. This last group would have then been sent on earth to incarnate – hence the creation of men – and to make a choice between good and evil through their worldly experiences⁸⁴. Biblical quotations and the authority of the Church Fathers then suggested that the saved men should have been in an equal number to that of the seats left vacant in Heaven by the rebellious angels⁸⁵: if men are the incarnation of one third of the angels, it must follow that they all should be saved. However, Matteo's guide in his other-worldly journey, the Sibyl, dissuaded him from going further into such speculations⁸⁶. It is clearly an attempt to hint at the possibility that all men would be destined to Heaven – an idea that will be supported, some decades later, by someone like Francesco da

⁸² Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 237, c. 330r: «primus error est eorum qui dicunt quod nullus post hanc vitam habebit bonum nec malum, vel omnes similiter habebunt bonum».

⁸³ Roberto Caracciolo, *De timore divinatorum iudiciorum*: a10r: «quod rationabile est timere Deum. Sunt plurimi qui de timore Dei audientes loqui non solum non formidant et pavent, quinimo in derisum habent que dicuntur. Aiunt enim clementem esse Deum et natura misericordem, a quo nullum malum provenire potest».

⁸⁴ *Città di vita*, I, V, vv. 85-151. For a complete discussion of this complex picture, cfr. Fabrizio Crasta, 'Matteo Palmieri, Leonardo Dati e il problema dell'eresia'.

⁸⁵ Suffice it to quote a part of Leonardo Dati's comment. Fabrizio Crasta, *La Città di vita di Matteo Palmieri* cit., pp. 357-358: «si tertia pars caelestium spirituum cecidit cum dracone, ut habetur in Apocalypsi et supra iam dictum est, et tertia pars remansit in caelo iuxta illud Gregorii dicentis in Omelia dominicae III post penthecostem: "Tot enim homines credimus ascensuros in caelum quot ibi angelos remansere, iuxta illud: 'Statuit Deus terminos gentium secundum numerum angelorum eius'"», saequitur quod alia tertia pars neque remansit incaelo neque cecidit, et est quaedam alia pars quae corpori iungitur, ut praedictum est scriptum esse in II Sent. quo in loco hanc partem 'animas' vocat. Vere ergo dicitur quod haec tertia pars quae animas facit neque remansit neque cecidit, et Plato, ut mostravimus, dicit quod animae reservantur in Elysiis campis qui sunt sub stellato caelo supra planetas; bene igitur colligitur quod animae sunt e tertia parte caelestium spirituum, et est illa tertia pars quae reservatur in campis Elysiis, qui positi sunt inter caelum firmamenti et planetas. Dantes vero noster hunc tertium angelorum chorum intellexit, licet alio modo, unde in III cap. suae primae Comediae dicit: "Mischiare sono ad quel cattivo choro | degli angeli che non furon rubelli | ne fur fedeli ad Dio ma per se foro"».

⁸⁶ *Città di vita*, I, X, vv. 52-102. Fabrizio Crasta, *La Città di vita di Matteo Palmieri* cit., pp. 65-67.

Meleto⁸⁷ – which should not however, strictly speaking, be included in the category of Origenism, to which I will be now moving on.

3. Origenism: God will in the end revoke all sinners, including the fallen angels

Closely related to the idea that all men should eventually be saved is the third group of ideas I will be analyzing here, which has generally gone down in history under the name of Origenism. The name clearly refers to its ascendance – much more alleged than directly ascertained or ascertainable for our period – to the Greek Church Father Origen of Alexandria. Indeed, the idea of apocatastasis, that is the final return of all things to their primary state, expressed in his *Peri Archon (De principiis)*, is the principle of a doctrine professing an eventual “emptying” of Hell, prospecting the salvation not only of all men, but even of the worst sinners, that is of the rebel angels and of Lucifer himself. The tradition most closely connected to Origen himself, was definitively defeated and condemned by the fifteen anathemas decreed at the ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553. However, the memory of the initiator (or the one believed such) of the doctrine, although it assumed different shades, was not to cease as soon, especially among the persecutors of religious dissent.

I have mentioned how a long scholarly tradition has believed Matteo Palmieri's *Città di vita* to be a work primarily inspired by Origen's writings and their legacy⁸⁸. However, Fabrizio Crasta's recent studies have incontrovertibly demonstrated how actually little Origen's direct influence on the Florentine poet was. The only writing attributed to Origen mentioned in Leonardo Dati's comment on the *Città di vita* actually turned out to be Scotus Eriugena's homily on the Gospel of John, which went under the name of the Greek Church Father throughout the middle ages⁸⁹. Something very similar had occurred to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's fame. The condemned *conclusio* analyzed above, together with another condemned and much better known one, concerning the salvation or damnation of Origen's souls, had pushed scholars to label him too as an Origenist⁹⁰. In this case, just as in Palmieri's, theories looking to soften infernal pains had been too easily connected to the Alexandrian Church Father's name. As becomes clear when considering the mentions of Origenism in the sermon collections of the period, only those theories seeking the

⁸⁷ In his *Quadrivium temporum prophetarum*, s.n.t., printed around mid-1510s. Cfr. Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*: 16, nn. 3-4; Vanna Arrighi, 'Francesco da Meleto'. *DBI* 49 (1997): 804-807.

⁸⁸ Giuseppe Boffito, 'L'eresia di Matteo Palmieri "cittadin fiorentino"'. *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 37 (1901): 1-69; Edgar Wind, 'The Revival of Origen'. *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle da Costa Greene*, edited by Dorothy Miner. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954: 412-424 (now also in Id., *The Eloquence of Symbols*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Alessandra Mita Ferraro, *Matteo Palmieri: una biografia intellettuale*. Genova: Name, 2005; Terracciano, *Omnia in figura*.

⁸⁹ Fabrizio Crasta, 'Matteo Palmieri, Leonardo Dati e il problema dell'eresia'.

⁹⁰ Cfr. Wind, *The Revival of Origen*; de Lubac, *Pic de la Mirandole*; Henri Crouzel, *Une controverse sur Origène a la Renaissance: Jean Pic de la Mirandole et Pierre Garcia*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1977; Terracciano, *Omnia in figura*.

salvation of all creatures – Satan and daemons included – were traced back to Origen in the disciplining eyes of friars. The argument of the lack of correspondence between fault and punishment used to negate the eternity of infernal pains, instead, appears almost everywhere distinguished from associations to Origen's name.

The most eloquent mention of Origenism among fifteenth-century preachers almost certainly is the one in Roberto's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. In this collection, the eleventh sermon goes under the title: «De divina iusticia contra origenistas»⁹¹. The Origenists – Roberto wrote – are those who «say that in the end all daemons and men will be saved». The preacher then added that these men «pertinaciously assert that in the end God will pardon the fallen angels and the damned, that He will revoke the infidels to Heaven and that all Christians will be in Heaven, since God's mercy will surpass any strictness of his justice»⁹². Roberto actually dedicated only the first chapter of this sermon specifically to the Origenists, first and mainly discussing if Origen himself had actually maintained such an idea⁹³. It is in this part of the sermon that the preacher also included a rather long *excursus* regarding Origen's life, drawn from Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome⁹⁴. This part of the sermon in particular almost immediately became an outright *auctoritas* for contemporaries on the Church Father's life and on his doctrine, as we see Pico quoted it in his *Apologia*, recalling how it had been brought up against him as proof when discussing the salvation

⁹¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. e1r. I have partially anticipated the results of this part of the research in my essay «Origenistas, qui dicunt in fine omnes diabolos ac homines fore salvandos»: considerazioni sull'origenismo quattrocentesco dai sermoni di Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce'. *Adamantius* 21 (2015): 353-372.

⁹² *Ibidem*: «dicunt in fine omnes diabolos ac homines fore salvandos [...] sunt tamen Origeniste quidam pertinaciter asserentes quod in fine Deus lapsis angelis et damnatis veniam dabit quodque infedele omnes revocabuntur ad celum et quod Christiani quilibet habitabunt in Paradiso, ita quod Dei misericordia superabit omnem rigiditatem iustitie eius»

⁹³ *Ivi*: f. e1r-v: «Primum utrum Origenis opinio fuit quod mali angeli salvabuntur [...] Circa primum dubium est triplex modus dicendi. Primus est quorundam, qui Origenem excusare volunt. Dicunt numquam eum falsa aut reprehensione digna non solum scripsisse nec docere potuisse, sed invidie quorundam attribuunt omnia, que de Origene erronea et heretica predicantur: invidi autem talia Origeni, ut illum criminarentur, imposuerunt. Moventur autem isti defensores Origenis ad sic tenendum tum propter eius sanctimoniam, tum propter profundam scientiam, tum propter ferventissimum zelum. [...] Secundus modus dicendi de Origene est aliorum, qui tenent ipsum errasse, sed post errorem ad penitentiam venisse. [...] Tertius modus dicendi de Origene est quod in veritate erraverit».

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*: «Ut colligitur ex dictis Eusebii in *Historia Ecclesiastica* et Hieronymi in libro *De viris illustribus*, Origenes habuit patrem Leonidam, christianum et martyrem, post cuius martyrium, cum rebus patrimonialibus ob confessionem nominis Christi esset privatus, cum matre vidua et sex fratribus pauper derelictus, habens annos circiter XVII etatis, studio litterarum intentus, se, matrem et fratres, de eo quod docens lucrari poterat, sustentabat. Et sepius martir migrasset ad dominum, nisi mater eius, pia fraude, nocte vestes eius subripuisset. Consecutus tandem est a Deo scientie gratiam eratque potentissimus in grammatica et omnibus secularibus litteris, in omni quoque philosophia et naturali eruditione perfectus, sed instructus maxime in lectione et doctrina divinorum voluminum; unde pro incredibili scientie sue prerogativa doctor ecclesie Alexandrine a Demetrio, ipsius loci episcopo institutus est cathedramque doctoris post Pantenus et Clementem tertius obtinuit; cuius scilicet Clementis et ipse auditor extiterat. Ubi, dum verbum Domini doceret, palam tam viros quam feminas instruxit; et ut omnis maledicti turpis occasionem infidelibus tolleret, quoddam minus perfecti sensus, sed ferventis fidei castitatis opus exercuit: nam illud evangelicum attendens «Sunt eunuchi qui se castraverunt propter regnum celorum», mox illud in se complevit tuncque nulla adversariis detrahendi occasione relicta vigilanter doctrine et predicationi vacavit in abstinentia plurima, in ieiuniis, in vigiliis. Ex eius vero auditoribus multi martyres sunt effecti. Et nunquam permisit ea, que in ecclesiis disserebat, a notatoribus excipi, nisi quando, sexagesimum etatis sue annum agens, multo usu et labore plurimum in verbo Dei fuditie acceperat». This part of the sermon is also translated with small additions in Roberto Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: ff. 18v-19r.

of Origen's soul⁹⁵. Despite such an exemplary life, though, and despite the tradition according to which Origen might have had second thoughts on his heterodox teachings, adducing the *Planctus Origenis* as a testimony – which however had already been declared an apocryphal writing – Roberto had no doubts in concluding that the Alexandrian Father had indeed erred on the fate of damned souls. The authorities of Augustine and Jerome concurred with his thought in this⁹⁶. The second and third part of the chapter are dedicated to defining the *aer caliginosus* in which the fallen angels are – separate from Hell – and to demonstrating how infernal pains are actually said to be eternal in the Sacred Scriptures, thus denying the beliefs of the Origenists. Then, the following two chapters of the sermon concern the afterlife destiny of unbaptized children, infidels and false Christians, who will all be – although with different intensity – damned for eternity. Also Roberto's following mention of Origenists, in his *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*, will send readers back to this sermon, only adding an argument against them, which is taken from Thomas Aquinas: if God considers the fallen angels' will in condemning them, then their eternal damnation is just, since their will is obstinate in evil⁹⁷.

Roberto once again wrote extensively against Origenists some years later, in his other Latin collection of Lenten sermons, the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. In the second chapter of the first sermon of this collection – already mentioned above – he attempted to demonstrate how «the damnation of reprobates does not go against the goodness, the charity and the will of God almighty»⁹⁸. In doing this, he asserted he was replying to «several people [...] who, against this truth, wrongly maintain and assert with Origen that not only the damned will not be numerous, but even that no one will be damned in eternity»⁹⁹. Origenists, according to Roberto, based their statement on three arguments. The first concerned God's goodness: «nothing can be maintained or said that can counter divine goodness [...] but the damnation of so many thousands and thousands of men contrasts with divine goodness, because the punishment of damnation is bad and terrible,

⁹⁵ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Apologia*, pp. 294-298. See above the subchapter dedicated to Roberto's readers.

⁹⁶ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXI, cap. XVII (PL 41, 731); Hieronymus, *Epistola LXXXIV*, Ad Pammachium et Oceanum, § 3. (PL 22, 746); Id., *De duodecim doctoribus ad Desiderium*, § 3. (PL 23, 766); Id., *Epistola LXI*, Ad Vigilantium, § 1-2. (PL 22, 602-603). The structure of this part of the sermon is also mirrored in the second chapter of the text in the Palatina library manuscript, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 237, c. 331r-v: «secunda conclusio vocatur reprobationis, in qua reprobatus est error Origenis et suorum sequacium [...] De ipso etenim Origene diversimode senserunt aliqui. Fuerunt namque nonnulli qui dixerunt eum non solum non errasse, sed errare etiam non potuisse [...] Aliqui autem dicunt quod Origenes de suis erroribus doluit eiusque doloris plantum et penitentiam libello quodam ostendit [...] Idcirco nos, inherentes veritati, Origenem errasse confitemus».

⁹⁷ Roberto Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*: c3r-v: «consideranda est pena demonum ratione termini, quia numquam finietur et quid super hoc dixit Origenes [...] ut dicit Thomas, I parte, q. LXIII, tenendum est firmiter quod voluntas bonorum angelorum confirmata est in bono et voluntas demonum obstinata est in malo [...] ad hec in quadragesimali diffusius est pertractandum quare ex dictis constat quod districtus iudex est deus qui propter unum peccatum angelis numquam pepercit»

⁹⁸ Roberto Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 3r: «quod damnatio reprobatorum non repugnat bonitati, nec caritati neque voluntati summi Dei, sicut quidam falsi conati sunt persuadere».

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*: «nonnulli [...] qui contrarium veritatis iam dicte improbe tenent asseruntque cum Origene, quod non solum non damnabuntur multi, imo quod nullus erit perpetuo damnandus».

thus God will not damn anyone, and will instead grant everyone eternal beatitude»¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, Origenists also argued that «it seems unfair that different things are given to equals: all men are equal both according to nature and to the original sin, thus God’s goodness cannot destine some to salvation and some to damnation»¹⁰¹. Roberto replied with long quotations from Thomas Aquinas, who asserted that God shows his goodness in saving some men and his justice in condemning others and that damnation, although being bad *secundum quid*, is actually good *simpliciter*¹⁰². The preacher then also mentioned passages from Augustine and Gregorius Magnus to demonstrate that God justly damned sinners¹⁰³. The second of the Origenists’ arguments rested on God’s charity: because of this charity, God sent his own son Jesus Christ on earth, so that men could be saved with his sacrifice on the cross¹⁰⁴. However, as Franciscan theologians clearly stated, Christ’s sacrifice had freed men from the pain *sufficienter* and not *efficienter*¹⁰⁵. Finally, the Origenists’ third argument claimed that God could not damn anyone, since this would have contradicted his will to save all men, as stated in the book of Ezechiel (18,32 and 18,23), in Paul’s first letter to Timothy (2,4) and in Peter’s second letter (3,9)¹⁰⁶. It is the same idea we have seen above, expressed by one of the souls during Matteo Palmieri’s ultramundane journey – not, thus, the poem’s general idea¹⁰⁷. Roberto, however, was able to solve this contradiction as well, distinguishing God’s «unlimited and prior will» from his «resulting and conditioned will»: his desire to save all men belonged to his first category, but since not all men operate in a way that they can be saved, then things cannot follow according to his wish¹⁰⁸.

Roberto, however, was not alone in being worried about an Origenist insurgence. It is also possible to read a number of mentions of these unorthodox beliefs inside the sermon collection

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*: «arguunt quippe sic: nihil est aut tenendum vel asserendum, quod repugnet divine bonitati [...] sed damnation tot milium milium hominum repugnat divine bonitati, quoniam pena damnationis mala est et pessima; ergo Deus nullum damnabit, sed omnibus tribuet eternam salutem».

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*: «insuper arguunt predicti, quia iniquum videtur ut inequalia equalibus dentur: omnes autem homines equales sunt et secundum naturam et secundum peccatum originale, igitur bonitas Dei non debuit alios predestinare et alios reprobare».

¹⁰² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I,I, q. XXIII, a. 5; *ivi*, I,II, q. LXXIX, a. 4; *ivi*, II,II, q. XIX, a. 1.

¹⁰³ Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, XI, cap. XVII. (PL 41, 332); *Id.*, *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor*, XXVI, §2. (PL 35, 1607). Another quotation ascribed to Augustine actually comes from Fulgentius Ruspensis, *Ad Monimum*, I, cap. XXVI. (PL 65, 174) and Caracciolo probably owes his mistake to the *Decretum Gratiani*, secunda pars, causa XXIII, q. IV, cap. XXIII. Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium libri*, XXIX, XVIII (PL 76, 494-495).

¹⁰⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 3v: «aiunt enim quod Deus ex charitate “misit in mundum Filium suum unigenitum non ut iudicet mundum, sed ut salvetur mundus per ipsum».

¹⁰⁵ Bonaventura, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, III, dist. XIX, a. I, q. II, co. § 2.

¹⁰⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 4r: «Tertia ratio eorum qui tenent quod nullus erit perpetuo damnandus, sed quod omnes homines erunt salvi, dicitur voluntatis. Damnatio - inquit - reproborum est contra Dei voluntatem, ergo nullus damnabitur [...] quia Ezechielis, XVIII capitulo “Dixit Deus: nolo mortem peccatoris” et iterum ibi “Non voluntatis mee est mors impii”; et Paulus, I ad Timotheum, II cap. ait: “Vult Deus omnes homines salvos fieri”; et Petrus prima sua canonica, II capitulo: “Deus patienter agit propter nos nolens aliquem perire».

¹⁰⁷ See the subchapter above.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*: «His respondet Damascenus, quod Deus vult omnes homines salvos esse voluntate absoluta et antecedente, non autem voluntate consequente et conditionata [...] Quod utique nil aliud est nisi quia Deus disposuit ita omnes, quod, si volunt, salvari possunt; et quia non omnes salvari volunt, ideo non omnes Deus salvabit».

compiled by another Franciscan preacher, Antonio da Vercelli. In his list of forty different kinds of idolatry contained in sermons 43 through 45 of his Lenten collection, the Franciscan Observant preacher recalls as number sixteen the opinion of those who believe that «in the end of times all men will be saved because of God's superabundant mercy and of the saints' intercession». This, he added, had been Origen's opinion¹⁰⁹. Dominican preachers also paid attention to the issue. One of them was Gabriele Barletta, in his posthumous collection, which contains, in the already mentioned twenty-second sermon dealing with infernal pains, an extemporaneous and isolated notation that reads: «the opinion of Origen is that all will be saved»¹¹⁰. The notation is in no other way explained or amplified and this possibly depends on the fact that the edition of Gabriele's sermons was made with reference to some personal notes. The text's characteristics – starting from its bilingual feature, alternating Italian vernacular and Latin – demonstrate this rather clearly. A final refinement lacked to the publication of these sermons¹¹¹. Thus the preacher surely new what he was hinting to, but the annotation does not really say much to today's inexpert reader.

Dominican scholars' and preachers' attention towards Origenistic beliefs is moreover confirmed, for instance, by the mentions we can read in Antonino Pierozzi's *Summa theologica*¹¹². However, it seems rather clear that Antonino primarily referred to what Church Fathers, namely Augustine, had written about it. There is no clear reference to contemporary supporters of Origenistic doctrines, as instead seems to be the case of Roberto's sermons against them. At least in part depending on Antonino's *Summa* is also the mention we find in Pietro Geremia's sermons, since the Sicilian friar had been, in his youth, Antonino's disciple in Fiesole and Florence¹¹³.

¹⁰⁹ Antonio da Vercelli, *Sermones quadragesimales de XII mirabilibus*. Venetiis: per Ioannem et Gregorium de Gregoriis, 1492 [GW 2260]: sermo 43: «omnes illi credentes animas fore immortales tandemque in fine seculi credunt omnes homines per superabundantem Dei misericordiam et aliorum sanctorum preces fore salvandos. Cuius opinionis fuit Origenes».

¹¹⁰ Gabriele Barletta, *Sermones quadragesimales*: f. 78v: «opinio Origenis quod omnes salvabuntur».

¹¹¹ On Gabriele Barletta's sermons see at least Comboni, 'Citazioni acerbiane nei *Sermones* di Gabriele Barletta'; Lucia Lazzerini, '«Per latinos grossos...». Studio sui sermoni mescolati'. *Studi di filologia italiana* 29 (1971): 219-339.

¹¹² Antonino, *Summa theologica*: I, tit. IX, cap. III, § IV (coll. 580-seg): «Sciendum ulterius, quod animae damnatorum ad infernum finaliter deputatae, quod est in omnibus secundum legem communem, de poenis inferni liberari non possunt [...] Contrarium credere est haeresis Origenis, qui dicit eos damnatos liberandos, ut refert Augustinus, 21 *De civitate Dei*»; Ivi, IV, tit. XIV, cap. V, § VI (col. 777-seg): «Sed notandum, quod circa huiusmodi diuturnitate poenarum et malorum in alio seculo fuerunt diversae opiniones [...] Alii ex christicolis dixerunt, omnes malos post poenas infernales toleratas certo tempore demum misericordia Dei liberandos ex illis poenis et ut dicit B. Augustinus: "In hac re misericordior fuit Origenes, qui et ipsum diabolium et angelos eius post graviora pro meritis et diuturniora supplicia ex illis cruciatibus eruendos et sociandos sanctis angelis credidit. Sed illud et propter hoc, et propter alia nonnulla, et maxime propter alternantes sine cessatione beatitudines et miserias, et statutis seculorum intervallis ab illis ad istas, itus et reditus interminabiles, non immerito reprobavit Ecclesia. Qui et hoc, quod misericors videbatur, amisit, faciendo sanctis veras miserias, quibus poenas luerent, et falsas beatitudines, in quibus verum ac securum, hoc est sine timore certum sempiterni boni gaudium non haberet". Haec Augustinus. Et aperte reprobat talis falsitas ex verbis illis "Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius, et ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum etc».

¹¹³ Pietro Geremia, *Sermones*: f. XLV-XLII: «Notare hic potes errorem Origenis qui, ut referunt Glo. et 4 q. 2 in fine, dixit omnem hominem esse salvandum per illud: "Nihil odisti eorum que fecisti", Sap. XI. Item psalmus 76: "Nunquid obliviscetur misereri Deus? Aut continebit in ira sua misericordias suas?" Per hec etiam adducebat Origenes illud Isa.

Nevertheless, one last testimony from a Dominican friar, the much less known Bartolomeo Sibilla, author of the already mentioned *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*, seems to confirm the idea that there actually were, in late fifteenth-century Italy, some supporters of the Origenistic doctrines. In the third chapter of the first *decades*, the *quaestincula* I of *quaestio* III is dedicated to demonstrating if Hell actually exists¹¹⁴. Introducing his demonstration of the existence of Hell, Sibilla initially argued against what he called the “ideas of Plato and Origen”, taking the thinkers’ legacy in historical perspective. There is no mention of contemporaries in this section. When, however, the friar moved on to demonstrate the existence of Hell, he declared he did so «because there are some carnal men, intoxicated with the goods of this world who follow Plato’s and Origen’s wrong opinions so that they may live more licentiously, gloriously and voluptuously»¹¹⁵. A statement that strikingly resembles the one made by Roberto in another occasion and which probably referred to similar things. In his sermon on lust and incest, the Franciscan wrote that «many are corrupted and made abominable in their studies since they do not fully believe what Christ has taught on on the Kingdom of Heaven, thus made carnal, they look for ways to satisfy any sensuality to delight the body»¹¹⁶.

From these testimonies and from the previous ones from Roberto’s sermons it seems plausible to think that these authors had in mind specific and contemporary supporters of the idea according to which Hell would have eventually remained an empty space, since all creatures, including fallen angels, would have been re-embraced by God into general and everlasting beatitude. A further testimony comes from a few decades later, from the *Flagellum pseudoprophetarum* by Cosimo Favilla, a Florentine Servite friar. This work was written against seven “false prophets” of his time – Girolamo Savonarola, Pietro Bernardino, don Teodoro, Francesco da Meleto, Bernardino d’Arezzo, Pietro Pomponazzi and Martin Luther – and presented to Clement VII in 1526. Most of the names of his enemies are more or less known and are in great part connected – except Pomponazzi and Luther, clearly – to Savonarola’s Florentine legacy. The

24, ubi loquens de damnatis subdit dicens: “Post multos dies visitabuntur et erubescet luna et confundetur sol scilicet propter claritatem Christi etc.”. Sed dic quod visitatio illa intelligitur in malum, quia resumptis corporibus cruciabuntur eternaliter et ita dum volebat asserere Deum misericordem dixit non iustum. Item dicebat Christum passurum iterum in aere pro diabolis salvandis, quod est contra auctoritatem Scripture, Mathei 25 ut supra dicitur [“Ite maledicti in ignem eternum qui paratus est etc.”]. Ideo fuit Origenes tanquam hereticus ab Ecclesia condemnatus post mortem, ut refert Gratianus ubi supra et Augustinus etiam 21 *De civitate Dei* c. 12».

¹¹⁴ Bartolomeo Sibilla, *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*: f. LIVv: «Tertia question sub hoc tertio capite prime decadis est de secundo receptaculo animarum separatarum, scilicet de Inferno, sub qua tresdecim questiuuncule solventur, quarum quelibet infra suo ordine declarabitur. Prima questiuuncula est si infernus post mortem reperitur secundum veritatem».

¹¹⁵ *Ivi*: f. LVir: «Sed quomodo hanc Platonis et Origenis erroneam opinionem quidam carnales homines, bonis huius seculi inebriati, ut licentius, gloriosius et voluptuosius vivere possint, sequuntur; idcirco probabo breviter quinque rationibus et auctoritatibus et exemplis esse Infernum ante et post iudicium».

¹¹⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 85v: «Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti plerique in studiis suis quoniam non plene credunt que docuit Christus de regno celorum, quapropter carnales effecti omnem libidinem pro solatio corporis student explere».

less known of these characters surely is the priest Bernardino da Arezzo, of whose name, apart from this mention, historiography is completely unaware. Cosimo Favilla asserted of having personally heard him preaching – he described him going around cities barefoot carrying a big wooden cross with him – and of having debated against him¹¹⁷.

The doctrine Cosimo Favilla primarily ascribed to Bernardino da Arezzo is the one according to which the prayers of the living could mitigate the pains of damned souls. An idea that I have already mentioned and that we know had been expressed from the pulpit in Florence, probably by Mariano da Genazzano¹¹⁸. In reproaching this belief, Favilla mentioned the fact that God's mercy had no role after the damnation of sinners. Maintaining the opposite idea would have lead, Favilla wrote, to the Origenist heresy: «that God, after Judgment day wants to save men and creatures and even the damned and the daemons»¹¹⁹.

It is clear, by now, that, as I have anticipated at the beginning of this section, the name of Origen and its connection to doctrines that professed the final salvation of all creatures had remained alive in the minds of theologians and especially of persecutors of heterodoxy, first of all inquisitors. One final example of the name of Origen coming up in association with ideas on the salvation of all creatures can be taken from a completely different writing, the treatise against the Albigensians by the early thirteenth-century bishop of Tui (in Northern Spain) Lucas. This writing was preserved in manuscript until the Jesuit Juan de Miranda fostered its publication in 1612, thus it was almost surely unknown to all the authors mentioned up to now¹²⁰. Among the various doctrines ascribed to the Albigensians that are contrasted in this treaties, a chapter of the first book is dedicated to responding to «those who, following Origen, assert that the souls of the wicked will

¹¹⁷ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 3636, cc. 41r-v: «Error in nonnullos plebeos a quodam Arretino praesbytero diffusus nomine Bernardino, qui ligneam crucem nudis pedibus et capite per civitates deferebat, paenitentiam praedicans. Hunc nostris oculis vidimus, et disputatione secum praelibatum errorem saepe disseruimus». The writing was presented to Clement VII in 1526. I have to thank Michele Lodone for signaling this writing and providing me with an initial transcription of some excerpts. On this treaty see Lorenzo Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence 1494-1545*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, pp. 332-333; Stefano Dall'Aglio, 'Il *Flagellum pseudoprophetarum* di Cosimo Favilla. Nota su un'opera antisavonaroliana del primo Cinquecento'. *Memorie domenicane*, n.s., 29 (1998): 441-451; Eva Del Soldato, 'Immagini di Pomponazzi e Lutero'. In *Pietro Pomponazzi. Tradizione e dissenso*, a cura di Marco Sgarbi. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2010: 365-384.

¹¹⁸ See the opening to this chapter.

¹¹⁹ Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 3636, c. 73r: «Ex illa siquidem positione pullularet Origeniana heresis (si Origenis fuerit, nam iuxta divum Eusaebium Caesariensem eius aemuli importarunt multa in eundem heretica figmenta), quod scilicet Deus post universale iudicium homines et iumenta s. [*sive?*] damnatos et daemones salvare velle».

¹²⁰ Lucas de Tui, *De altera vita fideique controversiis adversus Albigensium errores libri III*, nunc primum in lucem prolati noisque illustrati a P. Joanne Mariana. Ingolstadt: Andreas Angemarius, 1612. It has been argued if the doctrines discussed were actually spread in the Spanish region of León or rather a memory from Lucas's journey through southern France and northern Italy On this work see Julio Pérez Llamazares, 'Los albigenses y la teología española en los albores del siglo XIII'. *Revista Eclesiastica* 2 (1930): 385-403 Francisco Javier Fernandez Conde, 'Albigenses en León y Castilla a comienzos del siglo XIII'. In *León Medieval. Doce Estudios. XXXII Congreso de la Asociación Luso-Española para el progreso de las ciencias. León 28 marzo 1 abril, 1977*. León: Colegio Universitario de León, 1978: 97-114; Id., 'Un noyau actif d'Albigéois en León au commencement du XIIIe siècle? Approche critique d'une oeuvre de Luc de Tuy écrite entre 1230 et 1240'. *Herisis* 17 (1991): 35-50.

not be punished in eternity, but that God's mercy will save them from punishment, free them from Hell and glorify them in eternity with the blessed»¹²¹.

One last testimony, although slightly different from the others, about Origen's negative fortune in the fifteenth century can be found again in one of Roberto's sermons. In the second chapter of his *Sermo de anime rationalis admirandis prerogativis et excellentiis quas unusquisque cognoscere debet* – first published in the appendix of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis* (1488) – Roberto recalled the opinion of those who believed that all souls had been simultaneously created, together with the angels. This was an idea that Roberto traced back to Plato. Its most deviant result, however, was Origen's, who had believed that men's souls were those souls who had followed Lucifer's rebellion against God and, in punishment for this, had been incarnated, to atone for their faults through earthly life and to finally return to Heavens, with the exclusion of none¹²².

4. Incredulous deniers of Hell

Going back for a moment to Bartolomeo Sibilla's *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*, in justifying why he had to demonstrate the existence of Hell, the author mentioned the existence of beliefs which asserted that the punishments of afterlife were «fictitious, made up to terrorize laymen and to extort worldly goods from them»¹²³. The ideas I will be analyzing in this fourth group are the ones supported by the incredulous and absolute deniers of the existence of Hell, either a consequence of the belief in the mortality of the soul or of more practical arguments that considered the threat of infernal pains and religion in general as a mere means for social and political control.

There are several mentions of such ideas in Roberto's sermon collections. In the tenth sermon of the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, for instance, he described the strictness of divine justice, in order to induce to penance those sinners who «enjoy themselves in their own sins and do not even think of repenting for them, since they do not believe that God punishes them. Thus they falsely coax and persuade themselves that after this life no punishment has been prospected for the

¹²¹ *Ivi*: 9: «Caput VI: Contra illos qui Origenem sequentes dicunt animas impiorum perpetuo non puniri, sed misericordia Dei aliquando a poena salvari et eas cum sanctis inferni resolutis doloribus perenniter gloriari».

¹²² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 175v: «Tertium dubium fuit utrum omnes anime fuerunt simul create. Et philosophi quidam, cum Platone asserentes quod anime intellective accidat uniri corpori, ponentes eam esse eiusdem conditionis, cum substantiis spiritualibus que corpori non uniuntur, tenuerunt omnes animas hominum simul a principio cum angelis fuisse creatas. Quam opinionem sequens Origenes dixit quod omnes anime fuerunt cum angelis create et ad suggestionem Dei tenebrarum rebellaverunt Deo, quare datum est illis corpus, loco carceris, ut ibi puniantur; post separationem vero ab illo sic purgate ad celos redeunt. Sed profecto ex omni parte impia est atque falsissima opinio ista».

¹²³ Bartolomeo Sibilla, *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*: f. LIVv: «Si infernus post mortem reperiatur secundum veritatem an sit in fictione ad terrendum laicos et temporalia bona ab eis extorquendum».

obstinately wicked by the just Judge», since «after this life no one can feel pain any more»¹²⁴. Again, in the twelfth sermon of this same collection, which was written «against those who assert that the one that scares the damned is only a light pain»¹²⁵, the first chapter is dedicated to the demonstration of the condition of the damned. Roberto wrote that some could be persuaded to believe that Hell was a fiction made up by wise men to scare the other unlearned men. Such an idea had been expressed by Cicero, in his fourth oration against Catilina, in which the Roman orator asserted that «in order to leave some fear among the bad <in this world>, the ancients decided to place some pains for the wicked in the afterlife»¹²⁶. Furthermore, in this same sermon, when demonstrating through the example of the Sacred Scriptures that Hell existed, the preacher told of some «incredulous men who immediately reply sneeringly that saints [meaning the authors of the various books of the Bible] talked in such a way of Hell so that men could be terrorized by it»¹²⁷.

Also in his later *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, Roberto returned again on the topic. In the fifty-seventh sermon of this collection, in which he described the «beatitude of the saints», he also confuted – strongly expressing this intention even in the sermon’s title – «the foolishness of mundane men who do not believe anything about future life»¹²⁸. These men, according to the preacher, believed that none of the goods conceded by God to men in this life would be present in the next. For this reason, they would not hope anything from afterlife and would also «declare that whatever is said to be true about the beatitude of the saints they actually believe to be a dream or even a fictitious story»¹²⁹.

One of the reasons for this belief, according to the preacher in the thirtieth sermon of this same collection, would have been the people’s attraction to lustful and carnal sins, which would have led them to believe in the inexistence of afterlife rather than interrupt their sinful activity or

¹²⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. d10v: «Letantur plurimi in malis suis neque de illis penitentiam agere ullo pacto proponunt, quoniam non arbitrantur Deum peccatorum suorum ultorem. Quinimo falso sibi blandiuntur et persuadent nullam post hanc vitam obstinatis peccatoribus penitentiam a iusto iudice fore parata [...] qualiter Deus punit malos post hanc vitam si se non correxerint, contra eos qui dicunt non esse aliud malum neque bonum quam illud quod experimur in presenti [...] In quo declaranda est falsa et erronea sententia et opinio eorum qui dicunt non expedire peccatoribus ad penitentiam reverti, quia post hanc vitam nullum amplius sentietur malum».

¹²⁵ *Ivi*: f. e8v: «De gravitate pene damnatorum contra illos qui dicunt levi cruciatu terri damnatos».

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*: «Est Infernus locus vilissimus in centro terre velut carcer damnatorum a Deo sapientissimo ordinatus. Neque fictio est, sicut Tullius, *Invectivarum in Catilinam* libro III, videtur asserere: “Ut – inquit – aliqua formido improbis esset posita apud inferos antiqui supplitia impiis constituta esse voluerunt”. In quibus verbis quasi videtur innuere quod ad terrorem impiorum sapientes fide de Inferis sunt locuti». Cfr. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Orationes in Catilinam*, IV, § 8.

¹²⁷ *Ivi*: f. d9r: «Sed increduli quidam statim subridendo respondent sanctos de inferis ita fuisse locutos ut homines terrentur».

¹²⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 167v sermo LVII: «De beatitudine sanctorum in quo confutantur fatuitas hominum mundanorum qui non credunt aliquid de vita futura».

¹²⁹ *Ivi*: ff. 167v-168r: «Tanta est quorundam stulticia ut arbitrentur nulla esse bona preter ea que in presenti vita a piissimo Deo usibus humani conceduntur. Nil credunt, nil cogitant, nihil denique sperant de futura celestis regni hereditate. Somnum putant immo fictionem et fabulam quicquid secundum omnem veritatem de sanctorum beatitudine proclamatur».

despair for a certain damnation¹³⁰. Still in the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, in the fifty-eighth sermon, there is another mention of people who, not believing anything about afterlife, indulge in the pleasures – and firstly immoral pleasures – of this world, not expecting any punishment¹³¹. This passage, however, also mentions another issue: the attempts to deny the immortality of the soul, a few examples of which can be found in late fifteenth-century Italy¹³².

In order not to leave the testimonies disclosed in sermon collections isolated and thus to prove their effective correlation to a contemporary ongoing debate, it is possible to compare them with the testimony of someone who would not be convinced of the existence of Hell. It comes from a letter written by the Florentine humanist Bartolomeo Della Fonte (Fontius) to his youth friend Pietro Fannio. Here, describing the work he had dedicated to the issue of penance – the dialogue *Donatus sive de poenitentia*, published alongside his orations in 1488¹³³ – he wrote about men who believed that what is said about infernal pains is only meant in a fictitious way (*fabulose*)¹³⁴. The idea would also resurface some decades later. In the late sixteenth-century, during Menocchio's questioning by the inquisitors, the miller would assert that he had believed that «there is neither hell nor purgatory; they were invented by priests and monks for the sake of money». He would also add that «preaching about hell, Paul says one thing, Peter another, so that I think it is a business, an invention of men who know more than others»¹³⁵.

5. Can anyone be saved in his own religion or faith?

¹³⁰ *Ivi*: f. 85v: «Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti plerique in studiis suis quoniam non plene credunt que docuit Christus de regno celorum. Quapropter carnales effecti omnem libidinem pro solatio corporis student explere».

¹³¹ *Ivi*: ff. 171v-172r: «Dolendum profecto de multitudine hominum perentium qui concupiscentias pravas insequentes virtutibus ieiunii, omni viciorum turpitudini sese dederunt. Hii equidem obliti excellentie ac dignitatis animarum suarum deluunt luxuria et delicate atque molliter vivunt abhorrentque parcitatem continentiam sobrietatem et quicquid est quod viros bonos doceat. Fidei vero documenta irrident, doctrinam evangelicam spernunt, de regno celorum desperant, negant atque penas inferni. Talibus autem erroribus involvuntur quoniam de anima rationali minus bene sentiunt quandoque affirmantes animas non reperiri, aliquando et illas non multe nobilitatis fore sudentes, interdum vero et eas cum suis corporibus improbe satis contententes corrumpi».

¹³² See the last chapter of this part of the dissertation.

¹³³ Bartolomeo Fonzi, *Orationes*. Florentiae: Bartolommeo di Libri, 1488 [GW 10171]. On him see Raffaella Zaccaria, *Della Fonte, Bartolomeo*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXXVI (1988).

¹³⁴ Bartholomaei Fontii, *Epistolarum libri I*, a cura di Alessandro Daneloni. Messina: Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Umanistici, 2008: 42: «Cum peccatum animae mortem inferre in *Paenitentia* mea scripserim, sed non eam quae interitus est et finis, cum eius anima sit immunis, quaesivisti hesternis litteris et quid anima ipsa sit et qua ratione immortalem existimem et si eam peccatis honestam putem in tartareos fluctus demergi ac perpetuo supplicio cruciari, quando quae de inferis scripta sunt ad nostram emendationem, ne cupiditatibus moveremur, fabulose dicta non nulli putent». Cfr. Bartholomaeus Fontius, *Epistolarum libri III*, edidit Ladislaus Juhász. Budapest: Királyi magyar egyetemi nyomda, 1931: 18. See also Bartolomeo Della Fonte, *Letters to Friends*, eds. Alessandro Daneloni and Martin Davies, Cambridge-London, Harvard University Press, 2011. The content of this letter by Della Fonte was signalled in Guidi, *Frati e umanisti nel Quattrocento*: 60.

¹³⁵ Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi*: 137: «Che non vi fusse inferno né purgatorio, e che erano inventione de preti e frati per guadagnare»; 90: «Il predicar che li homini vivano in pace mi piace, ma il predicar dell'inferno, Paulo dice così, Pietro dice de là, credo che sia marcantia, inventione de homini che sano più delli altri». The English texts are from John and Anne Tedeschi's translation.

The last portion of this chapter regards the discussion over the possibility for infidels to reach salvation, the diffusion of which is widely attested between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in Italy. The doctrine discussed is the one that supports the idea that pious men may aspire to salvation albeit their non-Christian beliefs. Thus, it was a doctrine applied to the salvation of contemporary infidels, namely Jews and Muslims, but also concerned the salvation of pious men from antiquity. The issue, then, found particular fortune when, after 1492, the question presented itself as to what destiny would await those mysterious “savages” who populated the New World and who had never heard a word about Jesus Christ or Christian religion¹³⁶. The debate, however, at least in some scholastic circles and with an Eastern, Muslim, origin, was much older, as I will say¹³⁷.

Among fifteenth-century Italian preachers, we can trace the issue back to at least to the thirty-third sermon of Bernardino da Siena’s collection *De evangelio aeterno*¹³⁸. As the Quaracchi editors rightly noted, Bernardino owed his arguments to William of Auvergne’s *De legibus* and the origin of such a doctrine was connected to the Coran. Moreover, the question had already entered the Franciscan tradition in the thirteenth century with Matteo d’Aquasparta, who attributed it to the emperor Frederick II, commonly accused of heterodox ideas¹³⁹. We also know of at least one other testimony that emphasized the koranic origin of this idea. Such was the letter written by Pope Pious II to Mohammad II, in which the Pope, reminding the Sultan the errors of his faith, recalled that

¹³⁶ See Louis Capéran, *Le problème du salut des infidèles*, 2 vols. Paris: Beauchesne, 1912; Lucio Biasiori, ‘L’eretico e i selvaggi. Celio Secondo Curione, le «amplissime regioni del mondo appena scoperto» e l’«ampiezza del regno di Dio»’. *Bruniana e Campanelliana* 16/2 (2010): 372-388; Diego Pirillo, ‘Eretici italiani’ e ‘selvaggi americani’: il nuovo mondo nella coscienza protestante italiana del Cinquecento’. *Rinascimento*, II s., 50 (2010): 377-397; Lucio Biasiori, *L’eresia di un umanista. Celio Secondo Curione nell’Europa del Cinquecento*. Roma: Carocci, 2015; Daniele Conti, ‘Religione naturale e salvezza universale. Appunti sulla fortuna di Ficino e una nota su Agrippa e Camillo Renato’. *Rinascimento*, II s., 57 (2017): 231-285.

¹³⁷ See at least Christophe Grellard, ‘«L’erreur de Frédéric». La relativité des religions au Moyen Âge’. In: *Soujet libre. Pour Alain de Libera*, dir. Jean-Baptiste Brenet et Laurent Cesalli. Paris: Vrin, 2018: 163-168. We might also want to recall Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Par. XIX, 70-78:

«ché tu dicevi: “Un uom nasce a la riva
de l’Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni
di Cristo né chi legga né chi scriva;
e tutti suoi voleri e atti buoni
sono, quanto ragione umana vede,
senza peccato in vita o in sermoni.
Muore non battezzato e senza fede:
ov’è questa giustizia che’l condanna?
Ov’è la colpa sua, se ei non crede?».

¹³⁸ Bernardino da Siena, *Opera omnia*, iussu et auctoritate R.mi P. Pacifici Perantoni, studio et cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 9 vols. Ad Claras Aquas-Florentiae: ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1950-1965: t. III (*Quadragesimale de evangelio aeterno. Sermones I-XXVI*, 1956): 380-381: «Sunt nempe plerique erronei a sua caecitate decepti, qui, “occasione diversarum legum atque sectarum, sive ex verbis Mahumet, aut aliorum errantium, credunt unumquemque in sua fide seu secta salvari, dummodo credat eam esse bonam et a Deo utique datam ipsique placere quod facit. Mirantur tales quod hi debeant damnari, qui pro Deo faciunt quidquid faciunt, arbitantes in his se obsequium praestare Deo; et licet male, tamen ignoranter agunt”».

¹³⁹ Cfr. Mario Esposito, ‘Una manifestazione d’incredulità religiosa nel medioevo: il detto dei “Tre Impostori” e la sua trasmissione da Federico II a Pomponazzi’. *Archivio Storico Italiano*, VII s., 16 (1931): 3-48.

Islam accepted the idea of the salvation of all men in their own faith with the exception of those who converted from Islam to another belief¹⁴⁰.

It can be argued that the long tradition of Franciscan Observant preachers (in which, as repeated several times, Roberto should be included too), who mentioned and countered this doctrine, entirely relied on Bernardino da Siena's legacy, which we know was strong and lasting both inside and outside the order. Giovanni da Capestrano, for instance, preached against the doctrine of the salvation of infidels during his stay in Nuremberg, possibly attributing the opinion to the town's Jews¹⁴¹. Antonio da Vercelli mentioned it in several of his Latin Lenten sermons. In the twelfth sermon of the collection, Antonio discussed the necessity of Christian faith for salvation and consequently demonstrated that «it is always impossible for anyone to be saved without it», since without Christian faith all good actions are worthless, all religious rites are sinful and, finally, anyone is excluded from salvation¹⁴². The issue resurfaced in the sixty-seventh sermon of the collection, in discussing the certainty of the damnation of every infidel. In this and in the following sermons, Antonio declared to contrast the idea that was diffused among some men, according to whom whoever lived a pious life, convinced in the goodness of his faith, though not a Christian, could hope in salvation. It struck these men's intellect how an infidel or, even more, a heretic could suffer terrible torments and agonies in the name of his faith and not be rewarded in any way for it. Antonio connected the opinion once again to the Coran¹⁴³.

Roberto himself addressed the issue in several occasions. In the second chapter of the eleventh sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* – the sermon dedicated to countering the

¹⁴⁰ Luca D'Ascia, *Il Corano e la tiara. L'Epistola a Maometto II di Enea Silvio Piccolomini (papa Pio II)*. Bologna: Pendragon, 2001: 169.

¹⁴¹ Johann Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran: II*, 155, n. 30.

¹⁴² Antonio da Vercelli, *Sermones*: f. 47r-v: «Secunda igitur excellentia sanctissime fidei in ordine declaranda dicitur excellentia necessitatis. In hac igitur excellentia habemus videre qualiter fides de qua loquimur est omnibus rationalibus creaturis sive in habitu sive in actu necessaria ad salutem et quomodo impossibile est aliquem salvari unquam sine ipsa [...] Ex predictis auctoritatibus patet qualiter necesse est ut quisque per fidem credat ipsi Deo seu Christo filio suo, necnon et verbis suis, sine qua credulitate et fide impossibile est unquam salvari»; f. 49r: «Quod presupposito, certum est quod qui supradictam fidem non habet, statim incidit in tria maxima inconvenientia, videlicet in inconueniens vite eterne, a qua excluditur, et inconueniens omnium operum suorum, que sine fide invalida sunt ad salutem, et deinde in inconueniens multiplicationis mirabilium peccatorum, quia ut in sequentibus dicitur: omnis actus elicitor in sacrificium alterius fidei quam christiane, semper peccatum est». The issue of the *necessitas fidei* is also discussed in the following sermons.

¹⁴³ *Ivi*: 250r: «De duodecima excellentia sacratissime fidei seu de certitudine damnationis omnium infidelium [...] Habeo presenti die et in sequentibus singulariter declarare duodecimam et ultimam excellentiam de ipsa sacratissima fide, que dicitur excellentia damnabilitatis, in qua precipue ostendere habeo quomodo certitudinaliter omnes inimici christiane fidei, utputa Iudei, Teucrici, Sarraceni atque heretici in eternum damnabuntur. Hoc ideo dico ad removendum diversos errores etiam a mentibus ipsorum fidelium. Nam sunt plerique erronei et a sua cecitate decepti, qui occasione diversarum legum atque sectarum, sive ex verbis Macometi aut aliorum errantium, quasi firmiter credunt et opinantur unumquemque in sua fide seu secta et lege posse salvari, dummodo credat eam esse bonam et iustam. Mirantur enim tales quod hi debeant damnari qui pro Deo faciunt quicquid faciunt, arbitantes in his se obsequium prestare Deo sive propter Deum suppliciorum genus omne tam patienter quam gaudenter sustinent quod damnari debeant, sicut de multi hereticis patet, qui ignem et alia tormenta magis pro defendenda sua heresi quam propter Deum libentius sustinuerunt et sustinent tota die. Contra tales igitur sic credentes seu dubitantes et opinantes erit hodiernus sermo cum sequentibus».

Origenist ideas of Hell – Roberto listed three kinds of infidelities, in his attempt to demonstrate the consistent number of the damned. The unbaptized children constituted the first group, moral philosophers the second and malicious men the third. This last group included also Jews, Muslims and other infidels (*contradicientes Christiane fidei*). God’s justice, declared Roberto, condemned them all to damnation, even in the case they had committed any sin. For this reason, he pointed at the belief of those who believed that anyone could reach salvation in his own religion as an unfounded idea¹⁴⁴. Roberto even defined such a doctrine heretical in his *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*¹⁴⁵. The preacher then dealt with the issue again in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, when in the first sermon of the collection he wanted to demonstrate that infidels who die in their false beliefs are all destined to damnation¹⁴⁶. Finally, the issue also found some space in Roberto’s larger vernacular sermon collection, his *Specchio della fede*. In the second sermon of the collection, dedicated to the demonstration of the Christian faith’s truth, Roberto described those who attacked Christian belief considering it false and, even once convinced of the contrary, still fall into another error, believing that anyone, living piously in his own religion could reach salvation¹⁴⁷.

Furthermore, it is possible to read about the salvation of all men in their own religion in some later sermon collections. Such is, for instance, Bernardino Busti’s *Rosarium sermonum*, where the doctrine was defined the «greatly false opinion of some heretics» (*quorundam hereticorum falsissima opinio*) in the context of a sermon (the fourteenth of the collection) dedicated to the refutation of what the preacher called the “sects” of pagans, Jews and Muslims¹⁴⁸. Similar is the mention we read in a sermon, entirely dedicated to the issue, in one of the three large extant sermon collections by the Franciscan Observant Francesco Vaccari da Argenta, active between Bologna,

¹⁴⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. e7v: «Tertia est infidelitas malitiosorum [...] et in hoc proprie perficitur ratio infidelitatis, que peccatum est mortale. Et in hac implicit sunt Iudei idolatre, Machometani et alii contradicientes christiane fidei, quorum prohdolor grandis est numerus omnesque Dei iustitia damnabit ad inferos etiam si alia peccata non haberent. Nec valet opinio illorum qui dicunt unumquemque in sua fide vel lege ex quo credit eam bonam posse salvari»

¹⁴⁵ Caracciolo, *Sermones de timore divinorum iudiciorum*: f. e3v: «Omnes quippe infideles in sua infidelitate morientes eternaliter damnati punientur in Inferno, nec vera, nec tenenda, imo velut heretica reicienda est opinio eorum qui dicunt unumquemque in sua fide salvari»

¹⁴⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 2v: «Nullus quidem infidelis in sua infidelitate decedens potest ad vitam pervenire beata, neque vera est, imo falsa et reprobata illorum opinio qui dicunt unumquemque in sua secta et erronea religione salvari [...] Quis enumeret infidelium tot varietates tantamque multitudinem idolatrarum, videlicet colentium ethera, colentium elementa, colentium homines, colentium statuas, colentium bestias et serpentes. Iudeorum Christum eis promissum et ad eos venientem persequentium usque in diem hodie. Saracenorum et aliarum gentium ac populorum sequentium spurcitiā Mahumethi. Hereticorum qui contra fidem tot perniciosos excogitarunt errores. Hii ones quotquot fuerunt a principio mundi usque nunc et quoquot sequentur condemnabuntur a iusto Deo, ut in eternum habitent in Inferno».

¹⁴⁷ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: f. viii v: «Impugnano li infideli excecati la cristiana fede dicendo che è una cosa finta e piena di falsità. E quando si convincono, dimonstrandoli el vero chiaramente, e loro cascano in uno altro errore afirmando che ogniuno in qualunque fede si sia, vivendo bene e costumatamente pò essere salvo».

¹⁴⁸ Bernardino Busti, *Rosarium sermonum*: f. 93v: «Fuit quorundam haereticorum falsissima opinio dicentium, quod quilibet potest salvari in sua lege et fide. Quam erroenam opinionem reprobant omnes theologi».

Ferrara and Venice in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century¹⁴⁹. A larger and possibly more interesting discussion of the issue we find in the curious *Tractatus de fide* composed by another Franciscan Observant friar and preacher – also known for his interest in Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, which he abundantly quotes in this writing too – Bartolomeo da Colle Val d’Elsa¹⁵⁰. Among the many topics he discussed in his thorough working tool, precisely meant for preachers¹⁵¹, Bartolomeo engaged in the question of the necessity of faith (*fidei necessitas*), asking the rhetorical question: «let us say there someone who, born among infidels, dies filled with all virtues except for the faith in Christ, of whom he has never heard about [...] so, will this man be damned for this only lack in virtue, that is because he did not believe in Christ, of whose work he never heard?». Bartolomeo says there have been heretics, and that there still are in his day, who assert that anyone can be saved in his own religion¹⁵².

Yet the idea that all these Franciscan Observant preachers simply inherited their argumentations and the topic itself from Bernardino da Siena’s sermon collection should at least be questioned when we find that same idea gaining a certain attention among some of their contemporaries. Marsilio Ficino in his *De christiana religione*, Luigi Pulci in the *Morgante*, Galeotto Marzio in the *De incognitis vulgo*, but also the prelates Battista Mantovano and even Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Pope Pius II, all mention the doctrine of the salvation of all pious men in whichever faith they live in¹⁵³. Moreover the same doctrine was opposed also by religious men of other orders. To find it negated in the work of another popular preacher, though Dominican and not Franciscan, Pietro Geremia, does not surprise us too much¹⁵⁴. More surprising, instead, is to read a

¹⁴⁹ Much less known than the others mentioned, he has however left three consistent and dated volumes of manuscript sermons (the first composed in Ferrara in 1466 – however Bert Roest signals 1486 in the online catalogue: *Franciscan Authors, 13th – 18th century: a catalogue in progress* – and preached in Venezia and Ferrara; the second composed in Ferrara in 1487 after having preached in Venezia in the observant convent and in San Marco; the third completed on 23 November 1506), today preserved in Modena, Biblioteca Estense, mss. Campori F 1 11-13. The ninth sermon of the third volume is dedicate to «quomodo quilibet in sua fide haud salvari potest nisi in fide christiana et quia».

¹⁵⁰ On Bartolomeo, his life and works see Adriana Terzi, ‘Lippi, Bartolomeo’. *DBI* 65 (2005): 186-189; Marco Arosio, *Bartolomeo da Colle di Val d’Elsa predicatore dell’osservanza francescana. Uno studio storico-filosofico*, a cura di Andrea Nannini, prefazione di Irene Zavattero. Roma: Aracne, 2017.

¹⁵¹ It is particularly interesting to read the work’s *incipit*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. lat. 7618, f. 1r: «Cupiens labori pariter et curiositati nostri temporis providere ac multorum librorum a me abdicare sarcinulas, quedam utilia magis ac necessaria ad rudium neophytorum quam predicatorum instantiam ex diversis collecta diversorum sermonibus et operibus a fidei articulis fundamenta preiaciens, divina gratia assistente, hic inferius annotabo».

¹⁵² *Ivi*: f. 13r: «Ponamus enim quod est unus, qui inter infideles ortus, preter Christi fidem quam numquam audivit omnibus virtutibus aliis plenus emoritur. Iustus, castus, temperatus, patiens, liberalis etc. numquid iste damnabitur propter solam huius virtutis carentiam, puta quia in Christo non credidit, cuius gesta numquam audivit? Fuerunt enim qui dicerent heretici et hodie sunt omnes in sua fide salvari et iudeos et saracenos et christianos et omnes dummodo bona operentur».

¹⁵³ For all these testimonies see Conti, ‘Religione naturale e salvezza universale’: 240-247.

¹⁵⁴ Pietro Geremia, *Sermones: Sermones de fide*: f. VIIr: «Cum ergo sit una fides et videamus diversas credentium hominum opinions sive credulitates, quia una contrariatur alteri, oportet quod omnes sint false preter unam, nec salvatur quilibet in credulitate sua, sicut falso opinantur Machometi<s>te sive Saraceni, quia cum sit una vera tamen ista sola est causa salutis, relique autem cum sint false non possunt salvare aliquem, quia false cum sint male non possunt esse causa salutis».

whole *quaestio*, although rather brief, composed by the Florentine Camaldulense monk, who spent most of his life in the monastery of San Michele in Venice, Mauro Lapi. Lapi wrote his arguments against the *herronei* – which became *heretici* if they did not repent before death – who considered it possible to be saved outside the Christian faith and also connected this belief with the one we have seen earlier ascribed to Origen¹⁵⁵. Thus it seems at least possible that the frequency with which we see this doctrine criticised among popular preachers was due to the growing fortune of such ideas among their contemporaries.

¹⁵⁵ Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, Marc. Lat. XIV 295 (4348): f. 10r-v. On Mauro Lapi and this manuscript containing his works see Barbieri, 'Morfologie del libro in un monastero camaldolese'

Appendix

Threats of damnation for repeated sins

Together with preaching, confession represented the disciplining tool exercised by the Church on society from the late Middle Ages. Introduced with the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the obligation for yearly auricular confession became a fundamental event in the faithful's calendar and a powerful means of control¹⁵⁶. Mendicant friars, above all, since the thirteenth century were entrusted, alongside their preaching office, with confession. The proliferation of confession manuals composed by or attributed to mendicants is just one piece of evidence of the importance the friars had in this respect. The yearly confession and the correct ways to prepare for it and to carry it out satisfyingly were a central issue also in the friars' preaching, where classifying grids with reference to the seven deadly sins or to the ten commandments were offered to believers for their own introspection¹⁵⁷.

Wrong opinions about confession had to be criticised from the pulpit, starting with some erroneous ideas about the sins that needed to be confessed and those that it was not necessary to reveal. Such, for example, was the idea according to which not all seven deadly sins had an equal value. In the third sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, Roberto recalled the opinion of some men who believed that only two out of the seven mortal sins were actually severely prohibited, namely lust and avarice. This idea resulted from a comparison of the seven deadly sins with the decalogue, which apparently prohibited only these two sins, but made no mention of the rest¹⁵⁸. Quite the opposite was the idea according to which, instead, all sins had equal value, *more stoicorum*, according to Roberto in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, in which he dedicated an entire

¹⁵⁶ See at least: Cyrille Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitence au Moyen-Âge*. Paris: cerf, 1969; Nicole Bériou, 'Autour de Latran IV (1215): la naissance de la confession moderne et sa diffusion'. In Groupe de la Bussière, *Pratiques de la confession: des Pères du désert à Vatican II*. Paris : cerf, 1983: 73-93; Rusconi, *L'ordine dei peccati*; Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari*. Torino: Einaudi, 1996.

¹⁵⁷ See at least John Bossy, 'Moral arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments'. In *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Edmund Leites. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press – Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1988: 214-234; Carla Casagrande, Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali: storia dei peccati nel Medioevo*. Torino: Einaudi, 2000.

¹⁵⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. b6v: «Et sic patet sufficientia mandatorum [decalogi]. Sed statim est qui obiciat et dicat quod cum septem sint capitalia peccata et non nisi de duobus fiat prohibitio, scilicet luxuria et avaritia, nihilque dicatur de superbia, de accidia, de gula, de invidia et de iracundia, aut ergo ista non sunt peccata, aut regula preceptorum deficiet, quia illa non prohibet. Respondet dominus Bonaventura quod omnia hec peccata prohibentur in preceptis decalogi implicite».

sermon (the seventh) to refuting this opinion¹⁵⁹. Still regarding sins was the idea according to which there was no such thing as interior sins and any sin had to have an exterior accomplishment for it to be considered such. Roberto preached against this opinion in his sermon on avoiding evil and mischievous thoughts (*De cogitationibus malis et viciosis vitandis*), the forty-second of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*¹⁶⁰. The most common and dangerous among the erroneous opinion about confession in the eyes of preachers, was obviously the complete negation of its value, which will be notably important in the following century, with the coming of the Reformation. We have already seen in a chapter above how this issue had a particular relevance among the doctrines reproached by Roberto in Amedeo Landi's teaching in Milan¹⁶¹. The issue had already surfaced in a previous collection, the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, in the twenty-seventh sermon, where the preacher demonstrated the importance of confession¹⁶².

However, I would just like to focus on a very specific opinion here, which, due to its implications concerning damnation, constitutes a coherent appendix to the chapter above. An opinion which was deeply rooted into the most ancient traditions of Christianity, and of which we can now detect an upsurge, at least in some Franciscan groups, during the fifteenth century. The idea is the one concerning the impossibility for believers to reiterate penance and confession, meaning that there was no remedy for anyone who were to fall a second time in sin after having received absolution. The opinion had been present and even dominant in early Christianity. The first mention of the possibility to reiterate the confession can be found in John Chrysostom. This later opinion, however, had definitively supplanted the earlier one by the time of the fourth Lateran Council¹⁶³. Roberto discussed such ideas, which he said were held by men whom he defined heretics, in the fourth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. The second chapter of the sermon was dedicated to God's mercy, which forgives any sin, despite its gravity, reiteration and duration in time. It is, of course, the second issue, reiteration, which interests us here. No matter

¹⁵⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 17v: «Sicut vehementia venti impediuntur discipuli domini Iesu Christi, ne prospera navigatione ad portum tutum possent attingere, ita mortales miseri peccatorum turbe retardantur, ne valeant ad regnum properare celorum. Et licet plerique propter ea que dicta sunt in precedentibus iam acceptent mortalia peccata damnosa fore, verumtamen in hoc errore devenire solent, ut omnia peccata, stoicorum more, paria esse confirmant, sic et futuras inferni penas equales peccantibus omnibus preparatas»

¹⁶⁰ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. q6v: «Extat apud nonnullos opinio quidem satis falsa et periculosa, quoniam non arbitrantur esse peccata que per opera extrinseca non perpetrantur, cum tamen secundum rei veritatem multo plura sint mala que latent in corde in die iudicii manifesta fienda quam ea que nunc apparent forinsecus. Et videntur hoc autem evidenter satis aperuit omnium doctor Iesus Christus Dei filius in lectione sancti evangelii, qua propter, ut qui veram poenitentiam agere volunt, totaliter mudentur et quelibet expellantur facinora, in presenti sermone de cogitationibus disseremus».

¹⁶¹ See the introduction to this second part of the dissertation.

¹⁶² *Ivi*: f. 4kr: «Quoniam vero apud nonnullos curiosos extat opinio quedam falsa que asserunt non fore oportunitatem imo superfluum et inane sacerdotibus confiteri peccata, idcirco in presenti sermone de necessitate confessionis tractare curabimus».

¹⁶³ Elphège Vacandard, 'Confession du I^{er} au XIII^e siècle'. In *DTC*: III, I, 838-894: 859-861; Paul Bernard, 'Confession (Du Concile de Latran au Concile de Trente)'. *Ivi*: III, I, 894-926: 911.

how many times a sinner falls into his sin, God is always ready to forgive him, asserted Roberto. However, there were numerous heretics (*nonnulli heretici*) who boldly maintained two erroneous opinions. The first opinion was that if someone failed his penance, it followed that his repentance had not been genuine from the start. Roberto answered following Alexander of Hales' distinction of the reality of penance, from which, according to the Franciscan *doctor*, it was actually possible to fall. However, the preacher continued, these heretics supported their idea with the authorities of Church Fathers such as Ambrose or Gregory the Great, or even Augustine. Roberto found his answer in the *Decretum*, in which it was highlighted that the *auctoritates* reproached the falling into sin during penance, while the heretics the preacher contrasted claimed to refer them also to the reiteration of sin after repentance¹⁶⁴. The second opinion against the reiterability of penance and confession stressed the similarity of this sacrament with baptism. Just like baptism could not be reiterated, neither could confession: God forgives sins just once, asserted the heretics. The reply to these assertions, however, had already been formulated by Bonaventure in his comment to the *Sentences*¹⁶⁵.

The opponents Roberto contrasted in this sermons would be extremely difficult to identify, if the preacher himself did not give us one name for the supporters of the first of the two ideas exposed in the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. In his *Tractatus de divina caritate*, first published in the appendix of his *Sermones de Adventu*, thus not long after the Lenten collection, Roberto returned to the issue. In the first chapter of the fourth sermon, he contrasted «the error of those who

¹⁶⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. c2r-v: «Sed nonnulli heretici temere asseruerunt duo falsa et merito reprobanda. Primum quod si homo cadat a penitentia quod non vere penituit. Contra quod dictum, Alexander de Ales in IIII volumine *Summe* adducit distinctionem de veritate penitentiae, dicens quod dupliciter potest sumo: uno modo ut penitentia vera dicatur que verum habet virtutis actum, qui est detestari malum commussum et pro illo tempore nullum committere et proponere non committere de futuro, in quo statu si quis decederet salvus esset. Er ab hac potest homo cadere et in peccata labi. Alio modo ut dicatur de penitentia vera que perducit in finem ut finalis et continuata et ab hac non est cadere. Sed ad huc heretici ad sui erroris robur auctoritates et dicta sanctorum adducunt. Et primo illud Ambrosi in sermone quadragesime, dicens: “Penitentia est mala preterita plangere et plangenda iterum non committere; ergo qui iterum peccat veram penitentiam non fecit”. Secundo ad idem allegant Gergorus, sic dicens: “Qui ita alia peccata deplorat, ut tamen alia committat, ad huc penitentiam agere aut ignorat aut dissimulat”. Insuper ad hoc propositum habent Isidorum, in libro *De summo bono*, sic loquentem: “Irrisor est non penitens qui adhuc agis quod penitet nec videtur Deum poscere subditis, sed subsanare superbus”. Et his concordat Augustinus in libro *Soliloquium*, quando dicit: “Inanis est penitentia quam sequens culpa inquinat”. Que auctoritates et alie similes habentur in decretis *De pe. Di. III*, de quibus pro solutione Gratianus ibidem in § *Sed verba* ait: “Quo dilla verba auctoritatum non ad diversa tempora, sed ad idem tempus referuntur, ut scilicet eo tempore quo quis deflet mala que commisit et penitentiam facit non peccet et scelera non committat”. Quod autem in diversis temporibus possit quis facere penitentiam veram et post illam iterum possit peccare probatur ratione eo quod penitentia habet esse in libero arbitrio, sed statum vie quod vertibile est et potest a bono in malum et a malo in bonum sepius exire».

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*: «Secundum falsum quod ipsi predicant est quod Deus non nisi semel peccata dimittit. Quibus et si obstant auctoritates allegatae in principio huius secunde particule, tamen ipsi curiose suum errorem confirmare conantur dicuntque quod si baptismus non iteratur ergo nec penitentia. Ad quod dominus Bonaventura in IIII di. XIII sic respondet, dicens quod penitentia potest iterari, baptisus autem non. Primo quia in baptismo imprimatur character, qui est indelebilis, in penitentia non. Secundo quia baptismus est contra morbum non iterabilem, qualis est morbus originalis, sed penitentia contra morbum iterabilem, qualis est morbus peccati actualis. Et medicina debet aptari morbo. Et ideo baptismus non iteratur, penitentia vero iteratur, sed quod voluntas nostra convertitur et revertitur. Concludimus ergo quod Deus benedictus misericorditer subvenit nostre fragilitati».

assert that penance was not true if a man falls into sin or reiterates his sin after penance». The *auctoritates* quoted in support of this opinions are the same quoted in the other sermon. This time, however, Roberto added that: «This was the ancient error of the Manicheans, which today is publicly dogmatized in the words and writings of hypocrite, ignorant and presumptuous religious men». Among them, Roberto named one: his former confrere Niccolò da Osimo, greatly scrupulous man, the preacher said, but who in his *Quadriga spirituale*, in treating confession, had asserted that those who only remained in their good life for a little time after confession and penance had not truly been repentant¹⁶⁶.

I have already spoken about Niccolò da Osimo, Franciscan Observant theologian and preacher, who had been particularly involved, despite his old age, at the time of Roberto's rebellion against the family. It had been him, according to Marco da Bologna's testimony, who had replied to Roberto's infamous *libellum* in which he attacked the Observant family, shortly before death took him in late 1453. In this occasion, many years after his polemic against his former confreres, Roberto criticized Niccolò for a work he had composed several decades earlier, but which was only about to find a posthumous printed edition in its vernacular form¹⁶⁷. Unfortunately, however, the problem of Roberto's attack against the *Quadriga spirituale* has to remain, at least for now, unsolved, since it has not been yet possible to find the passage to which Roberto made his precise reference among the printed versions of the *Quadriga*. While waiting to attempt a solution to this issue, it will be worth noting that the *Quadriga* had already been abundantly criticized ever since its first appearance. A letter written by Giovanni da Capestrano in 1440, as a response to a superior – Umberto Picciafuoco tentatively suggested Bernardino da Siena – who requested a revision of the work from Giovanni, mentions some errors he had noticed in the work, when it had been read to him in Bologna, Ferrara and Milan¹⁶⁸. In the first occasion, Giovanni had complained directly with Niccolò that he had not sufficiently developed and explained the passage concerning *De scientia articulorum fidei* and that his words could have easily been misunderstood or distorted¹⁶⁹. In

¹⁶⁶ Caracciolo, *Sermones de Adventu*: sermo IV, I: «Homo post penitentiam potest iterum cadere in peccatum et indigere misericordia Dei. Sed contra hoc arguunt nonnulli, dicentes quod si homo cadat a penitentia, vel ut clarius dicam, si homo post penitentiam peccat, quo dilla non fuit vera penitentia [...] Fuit hic antiquus error impij Manichei, quem hodierna die plerique hypocrite ignorantes et presumptuosi religiosi publice i verbis et scripturis suis dogmatizant, dicentes quod si quis potest ingressum religionis post exempla virtutum rediisset ad vomitum, eum nunquam in veritate benefecisse. Insuper et frater Nicolaus de Ausmo dictus, ex provincia Marchie, homo scrupulosus valde, in suo libello quem *Quadriga* voluit nominari, in tractatu de confessione, dicit in sententia ista verba: “Apparet non eum esse vere contritum nec veram egisse penitentiam qui brevi spacio perseveraverit in bono et quasi recidiaverit”». The passage was quoted, but just for its positive mention of Niccolò, by Glassberger, *Chronica*: 310-311.

¹⁶⁷ The first edition presumably was Niccolò da Osimo, *Quadriga spirituale*. Iesi: Federicus de Comitibus Veronensis, 1475 [GW M26216]

¹⁶⁸ We can read an edition of the letter in Picciafuoco, *Fr. Niccolò da Osimo*: 178-179. Cfr. Bonmann, ‘A Provisional Calendar of St. John Capistran’s Correspondence’: I, 302 (nn. 144-145).

¹⁶⁹ Picciafuoco, *Fr. Niccolò da Osimo*: 178: «cum essem Bononiae audiui ad mensam legi passum illum “de scientia articulorum fidei”. Dixi tunc praedicto fratri Nicolao mihi videri passum illum non plene discussum et ideo verba sua facilliter captiosa».

Ferrara, Giovanni had advised Niccolò to revise his work, since he had heard it asserted that the feast days of the four Church fathers – Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory the Great – were universally celebrated by precept, which was incorrect¹⁷⁰. Finally, in Milan, he had found the mistake of considering simple night pollutions as a mortal sin. Giovanni da Capestrano considered himself not up to correcting the work, but he surely acknowledged a revision was due¹⁷¹. However, we cannot see anything even similar to the error Roberto reproached to his former confrere. Only further investigation of the *Quadriga*'s manuscript tradition – conjecturing that the error might have been contained in a version different from the one which was later printed – could give a more precise answer regarding this debate.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*: «Item Ferrariae cum legeretur ad mensam, audivi in dicto opere legi festa quatuor doctorum cadere sub praecepto universali celebrandi, etiam cum cessatione operis manualis. Dixi iterum sibi hoc in iure minime reperiri et quod bene faceret praedictum opus melius revidere et iterum dicere diligentia saniorum, ne forte aliqua forent ibi sub extremitate conclusa, quae multorum conscientias minime serenarent, sed potius obfuscarent et in tenebris relinquerent caecitatis».

¹⁷¹ *Ivi*: 178-179: «Veni Mediolanum, audivi etiam in dicto opere contineri: si quis pollutionem nocturnam passus fuerit, nulla alia praecedente culpa vel sequente, sed solummodo ob reverentiam sacramenti, si sine urgenti necessitate celebrare praesumpserit, illo mane mortaliter peccat. Dixi etiam hoc mihi videri satis extremum et ab aliorum dictis extraneum. Nec plura scrutatus sum de opere praelibato, ne forte visus fuerim me ingerere rei ad me non pertinenti».

Superstitions, popular religiosity and false prophets

The field of studies that encompasses the relationship between religion, popular culture and superstition – especially in the medieval and early modern period, but also in antiquity and in more recent times – has been one that has enjoyed a great fortune in historiography, especially in recent decades¹. The topic is extremely vast, embracing issues and problems of diverse nature and origin, which cannot be entirely accounted for here. Inheritances from pre-Christian pagan rites and spontaneous devotions and practices make up a complex picture, moreover differentiated geographically and chronologically. I will limit my discourse, as done up to now, to late fifteenth century Italy and to sermon literature. Even so, the attention scholars have paid to the topic in the mentioned time and space frame and, in this case, the use they have made of this particular source, still leave a wide range of bibliography and issues to cover. I will discuss on the matter in accordance with the way Roberto treated single issues in his sermons, first giving a general account of his extant sermons *De superstitionibus* and then focusing on specific points discussed in them or in other texts.

Another clarification needs to be made before beginning, which partially recalls what I have already stated in opening this second part of my dissertation. It concerns the source, sermon literature, and its characteristic feature of repeating centuries-long traditions, which results, especially for sermons on superstition, in the frequent iteration of topics, arguments and, most of all, *exempla*. This means that the same texts can be found in different sermon collections. Even more so when focusing on a narrow time scope or a precise preaching tradition. Moreover, the explosion in the production of Franciscan Observant sermons in the late fifteenth century makes the probability of finding repetitions and similarities even easier. I will single out all the issues debated in Roberto's sermons, although I will privilege those that bring new information on the preachers' conception of superstition and on their struggle against it.

In the historical period we are considering, superstition worked as an all-encompassing concept, that collected practices (mainly) and beliefs – from harmless peasant ideas to the more worrying activities of witchcraft and sorcery, which involved demonic intervention – which were

¹ See at least the rich and informing synthesis in Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Les «superstitions»'. In *Histoire de la France religieuse*, sous la direction de Jacques Le Goff et René Rémond, 4 vols. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988: I (*Des origines au XIV^e siècle*), 417-551. See also Franco Cardini, *Magia, stregoneria, superstizioni nell'Occidente medievale*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1979.

considered, if not entirely crossing the border of orthodoxy, at least not in complete harmony with it². The observations on the term *superstitio* made in a case-study on witchcraft persecution in fifteenth-century Siena may well be extended to a larger context, to embrace the entire peninsula – if not all Western Europe – in the late Middle Ages. Indeed, in the texts analyzed in the following paragraphs, *superstitio* seems exactly to be the «catch-all label» that «covered a variety of activities and beliefs» and that «in its broadest sense» represented «the failure of any individual to confine his belief in or use of the sacred to those doctrines and activities sanctioned by the Church»³. It does not seem necessary, at least in this context, to make a distinction between a “learned” type of magic and a more popular and folkloric set of beliefs, since none seems to have existed in the eyes of the preachers’ whose texts I will comment. Aspects of ceremonial (ritual), natural, black and white magic all seem to mingle together with agrarian rituals and reminiscences of ancient pre-Christian cults. Astrology too – the importance of which inside Renaissance culture would deserve a separate chapter⁴ – is included in the boiling cauldron of the superstitions condemned by preachers.

The last part of the chapter will be dedicated to false saints and false prophets, an issue that had particular importance at the time.

1. Roberto’s sermons on superstitions

As already stated several times, despite the events of his life brought Roberto to break with the Franciscan Observant family, there is no reason to consider his sermons outside the Franciscan Observant preaching tradition. As said, Roberto himself acknowledged being a member of Bernardino da Siena’s “preaching school” and shared with his former confreres style of preaching and content of sermons. It is a matter of models and sensibilities, which shaped and influenced Roberto’s sermons in a very similar way to those compiled and delivered by Giacomo della Marca, Michele Carcano or Bernardino Busti, just to mention some names which will also appear in the next few pages. This is why I believe – and so did Marina Montesano before me⁵ – that also

² Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

³ Bernadette Paton, “‘To the fire, to the fire! Let us burn a little incense to God’”: Bernardino, preaching friars and *maleficio* in late medieval Siena’. In *No Gods except Me. Orthodoxy and religious practice in Europe, 1200-1600*, edited by Charles Zika. Parkville: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1991: 7-36: 15. Cfr. also Michael D. Bailey, ‘Concern over Superstition in Late Medieval Europe’. In: *The Religion of Fools? Superstition Past and Present*, edited by Stephen A. Smith and Alan Knight. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008: 115-133

⁴ Eugenio Garin, *Lo zodiaco della vita: la polemica sull’astrologia dal Trecento al Cinquecento*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1976 (English translation: *Astrology in the Renaissance: the Zodiac of Life*, translated by Carolyn Jackson and June Allen. London: Routledge, 1983); Cesare Vasoli, *I miti e gli astri*; Monica Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Milan*, Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2013.

⁵ Marina Montesano, «*Supra aqua et supra ad vento*». “*Superstizioni*”, *maleficia e incantamenta nei predicatori francescani osservanti (Italia, sec. XV)*. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio evo, 1999.

Roberto's sermons on superstition, as all his other sermons, should be studied in close relation to other Franciscan Observant tradition on this same subject.

Among the topics most proper to fifteenth-century Franciscan Observant preaching activity, magic and superstition surely held a relevant position. Because of their relevance and because of scholars' growing interest in these issues, sermons on superstition and magic are in great deal known and have been studied in depth. In the 1990s, Marina Montesano dedicated a specific and focused investigation to the Italian Franciscan Observant preachers' attitudes towards *maleficia* and *incantamenta*. Alongside the sermon collections of Bernardino da Siena, Giovanni da Capestrano and Giacomo della Marca, Montesano also analyzed some of Roberto's sermons, although exploiting them in a rather cursory way, in the shadow of the other better-known authors. The result was a reliable sounding board for further investigations in the field, inside which a number of sources and discussions on the topic were collected and compared⁶. Her work continued the one that Franco Cardini had begun on fifteenth-century Franciscan preachers, especially in relation to witchcraft⁷, and some other previous attempts⁸. In the same years Montesano prepared her monograph, Franco Mormando was working on his own research on a similar topic. Mormando focused on the three categories of scapegoats he believed could be identified in a number of Bernardino da Siena's sermons: Jews, sodomites and witches⁹. The results of his work appeared in a debated, yet still widely considered, book, published in the same year as Montesano's, 1999. The attention to sermons on superstitions was also fostered by historians of folkloric and popular traditions, such as Giovanni Battista Bronzini¹⁰. More recently (2009), Mara Ioriatti has defended a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Trento on *Licit and illicit devotions in Giacomo della*

⁶ Marina Montesano, «*Supra aqua et supra ad vento*». By the same author see also: 'Roberto da Lecce nella cultura religiosa del Quattrocento'. *Studi bitontini* 53-54 (1992): 111-124; Ead., 'L'Osservanza francescana e la lotta contro le credenze "magico-superstiziose": vecchie e nuove prospettive di ricerca'. *Quaderni medievali* 41 (1996): 138-151.

⁷ Cardini, *Magia, stregoneria, superstizioni nell'Occidente medievale; Gostanza, la strega di San Miniato: processo a una guaritrice nella Toscana medicea*, a cura di Franco Cardini. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1989; Id., 'Giacomo della Marca e le streghe'. In *Santi, monaci, contadini: La Marca tra agiografia e folklore. Atti del Convegno di studio, Ascoli Piceno 21-23 giugno 1991*, a cura di Enrico Menestò. Spoleto: CISAM, 1992: 109-146; Id., 'Le streghe nella predicazione degli Osservanti Francescani'. In *Stregoneria e streghe nell'Europa moderna. Convegno internazionale di studi. Pisa, 24-26 marzo 1994*, a cura di Giovanni Bosco e Patrizia Castelli. Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1996: 125-131.

⁸ Thomas Zachariae, 'Abergläubische Meinungen und Gebräuche des Mittelalters in den Predigten Bernardinos von Siena'. *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 22 (1912): 113-134; Maria Raciti, 'Il «de idolatriae cultu» di san Bernardino da Siena'. In: *Ricerca scientifica e mondo popolare. Atti del Convegno di studi sul tema Aspetti e prospettive della ricerca demologica in Italia, promosso dall'Università degli studi di Messina, Facoltà di lettere e filologia moderna*. Palermo: Manfredi, 1973: 365-389; Paton, "'To the fire, to the fire!'".

⁹ Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino da Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999. On this book, see for instance the review by Remo L. Guidi, 'Vecchi e nuovi veleni contro s. Bernardino da Siena'. *AFH* 93 (2000): 261-339.

¹⁰ Giovanni Battista Bronzini, *Le prediche di Bernardino e le tradizioni popolari del suo tempo*. In: *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo*: 111-152. See also Febo Allevi, 'Costume, folklore, magia nell'Appennino umbro-marchigiano nella predicazione di S. Giacomo della Marca'. *Picenum seraphicum* 13 (1976): 233-307.

*Marca's preaching*¹¹. Similarly, also Fabrizio Conti dedicated himself to a Ph.D. research on superstition in the preaching of a Franciscan Observant, Bernardino Busti, the result of which has become a book¹².

All these scholars have believed sermons can be crucial sources for our knowledge of widespread contemporary practices and beliefs and also of the preachers' views on these practices and beliefs, in one word on superstition. Letizia Pellegrini, on the other hand, has recently been critical towards this approach, undermining the value of sermons as sources for witchcraft beliefs because of their reiteration of more ancient and traditional arguments and topics, a problem to which I have already hinted at the beginning of this section of the dissertation. However, although her cautions are, to a certain extent, acceptable, her interpretation of Bernardino da Siena's involvement in witch trials seems to emphasize excessively the political reading of events¹³. Bernardino da Siena's own words are clear in declaring the role the preacher had played in the condemnation of the witch Finicella in Rome in 1424¹⁴. As stated above, I believe that, keeping in mind the possibility for topics contained in sermons to have originated from other contexts and periods and to have remained more or less integral through centuries, these sources' value remains precious for our information on contemporary conceptions of superstition and on actual events and practices concerning these accusations – and the same can be said for other emerging issues. I cannot be convinced that such fine observers of their time's social and cultural upheavals could be so careless as to repeat undue or inessential arguments in the works they prepared as tools for the preaching office. As already said for all the other issues discussed in this dissertation, of course, the texts' analysis has to be conducted with great care a constant reference to other contemporary sources, but this does not entirely discredit the source. Moreover, the careful work of comparison with other sources can also result in the shading of different opinions and positions between single authors, who, though often repeating the same arguments – often even the same phrases – sometimes also maintain slightly different beliefs, which make these sources all the more interesting. For these reasons, I think it is worth collecting and cataloguing these ideas a preacher

¹¹ Mara Ioriatti, *Devozioni lecite ed illecite nella predicazione di Giacomo della Marca*. Tesi di dottorato in Studi storici, Università di Trento, 2009. Tutor: prof. Giovanni Ciappelli. See also Ead., 'Un predicatore del Quattrocento e una devozione rovesciata, ovvero l'*exemplum* del funerale dell'asino'. In *Agiografia e culture popolari – Hagiography and popular cultures. Atti del convegno internazionale di Verona, 28-30 ottobre 2010. In ricordo di Pietro Boglioni*, a cura di Paolo Golinelli. Bologna: Clueb, 2012: 241-256.

¹² Fabrizio Conti, *Witchcraft, Superstition and Observant Franciscan Preachers*. See also: Id., 'Preachers and Confessors against Superstitions: Bernardino Busti and Sermon 16 of His *Rosarium Sermonum*'. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6 (2011): 62-91; Id., 'Mulieres religiosae tra santità e stregoneria nella tarda osservanza francescana'. In *Agiografia e culture popolari – Hagiography and Popular Cultures*: 329-344.

¹³ Letizia Pellegrini, 'Predicazione osservante e propaganda politica: a partire da un caso di Todi'. In *La propaganda politica nel basso Medioevo. Atti del XXXVIII Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 14-17 ottobre 2001*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2002: 511-531.

¹⁴ Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena*: II, 1006-1008.

like Roberto had on superstition, in the context of contemporary preachers – Observant Franciscans and not – and in the perspective of a wider and more thorough comparison.

Roberto's oldest known sermon on superstition is the one he preached in Padua during Lent 1451, which Oriana Visani has published as number eighteen of her edition of the *Quadragesimale*. In this sermon, built on the evangelical verse «Erat Ihesus eiciens demonium et illud erat mutum» (Luke 11, 14), Roberto distinguished *superstitio* as a threefold *error*, concerning *divinatio*, *malignatio*, and *operatio*; the third of which, however, is not discussed (or, at least, the discussion is missing in all the manuscripts used for the edition). The first kind of superstition, divination, is – following the thirteenth-century Franciscan scholastics – the presumption and curiosity to foretell future events that are by nature unpredictable, namely the contingent futures¹⁵. Divination is not however a mortal sin *per se*, what makes it such is idolatry: since God is the only one who can predict any future event, believing it is possible to know them in some other way is assigning to a creature what is proper to the Creator alone¹⁶. In this sense, this kind of superstition is further divided into five groups, according to the means used to forecast the future: invocation of demons, observation of planets, interpretation of dreams, chance (*sors*), and the attention to signs, such as can be the chirping of birds. Recurring to traditional arguments, the preacher denies one by one the beliefs in these five supernatural ways to learn about future – or unknown, such as the author of a theft – events. Demons cannot know much more about the future than men can. Believing that the influence of stars and planets affects and compels all aspects of human life is a denial of free will. Interpretations of dreams are just imaginative conjectures («si quis fantastice coniceret, mortaliter peccat»). No kind of chance – such as can be the throwing of dice – can be useful to predict the future. Finally, there is no sense in believing that signs like the chirping of a crow, wearing the wrong shoe on the wrong foot, seeing a friar when opening the door, meeting a snake on one's path, or hearing ringing in one's ears can foretell positive or negative events. Nor is there any reason to believe in those who can tell the future by reading the palm of the hand.

Roberto divided the second kind of superstition, evil doing (*malignatio*), again into five sorts of mischievous actions: *illusio*, *veneratio*, *offensio*, *conculcatio*, *abominatio*; of which only the first three he described at length. Clearly, the chapter is devoted to witchcraft, although the preacher also mentioned other superstitions alongside it. Roberto dedicated the longest description to the deluded women – mostly *vetulae* – who believed they performed evil actions and turned into

¹⁵ Roberto's contextualization of the discussion relies on Alexander Halensis, *Summa*, t. II, III, VIII, I, q. I, m. I; Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, t. II, VII, II, art. I, q. III.

¹⁶ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 204: «Divinatio, que est peccatum mortale, est creature tribuere quod creatori tribui debet». On divination and this specific sermon, see the episode related in the copy in Venice, San Michele in Isola, cod. IV, 11, f. 163v: «Possunt esse anni quinque quod quedam ex civitate Gualdi divinabat. Sufficit quod combusta fuit: divinare tunc nescivit de se».

animals by the means of demonic intervention. Aligning to the tradition of Franciscan Observant preaching of his time, Roberto marked all the witches' accounts as delusionary and ultimately false, warning his listeners from trusting in these women's powers with a narration of an allegedly true *exemplum*, which he added to the more traditional ones he had already been narrating¹⁷. In discussing the second kind of mischievous action, which is the veneration of the Devil implied in superstitious beliefs, Roberto gave a rather rich account of what appear to be folkloric and traditional refrains and charms, although mostly hinted at with the first line only. I will come back to these further on, presenting them together with the others that I have found in his sermons. Alongside these invocations and spells, Roberto also denounced the wrong opinion of those who trusted magical healing over medicine. The figure of the witch reappeared in first person again in the third kind of mischievous action: harm. The cases of the witches Finicella and Santuccia – typical in the Observant Franciscan preaching tradition, since they had been condemned to be burnt on the stake respectively with the intervention of Bernardino da Siena and the approval of Giacomo della Marca respectively – are mentioned, however vaguely¹⁸. In this part, Roberto's belief in the evildoing of sorcerers seems to be truthful: «Husband, when you have sorceresses in your house, cast them away, do not trust in them»¹⁹. The last two kinds of evil actions (*conculcatio* and *abominatio*) are only rapidly touched on – speaking of the witches' trampling of the host and, possibly, of their recourse to dead bodies – alongside the traditional reprimand against the use of *brevi* and a quick critique of the devotion to the *mensura Christi*²⁰. It is probable that the last chapter of the sermon would have contained some curious descriptions, but we can only imagine them, since it was either never delivered or not written down by the tachygraph.

The second sermon, in chronological order, that Roberto dedicated to superstition is presumably the one contained in the Rieti manuscript (*De 12 erroribus christiane religionis sive sermo de superstitionibus*), believed, as repeated more than once, an autograph of the preacher and dated, according to Cesare Cenci, between 1450 and 1455²¹. Leaving aside for now the matter of

¹⁷ An episode from the life of Hilarion (*Vitae partum*, VIII, 19. PL 73, 1110-1111), one from Gregory the Great's *Moralia* (PL 66, 154) and the account of the Homeric episode of Circe given by Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, XVIII, 17-18; PL 41, 573-576).

¹⁸ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 211: «O venefici, o indivinatores, quot Rome pueri interfecti fuerunt? LX. Fuerunt Perusii quidem L^a pueros interfecti!».

¹⁹ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*, 211: «Marite, quando incantatrices in domo habes, expelle eas, non confidas in eis».

²⁰ Gustavo Uzielli, 'L'Orazione della misura di Cristo'. *Archivio storico italiano*, s. V, 27 (1901): 334-345; Gabriel Llompart Moragues, 'Longitudo Christi Salvatoris. Una aportación al conocimiento de la piedad popular catalana medieval'. *Analecta sacra Tarraconensia. Revista de ciencias histórico-elesiásticas* 40 (1967): 93-115; Curt F. Bühler, 'An Orazione della misura di Cristo'. *LB* 39 (1937): 430-433. For the leaflet of the *Orazione della misura di Cristo* printed in the Florentine convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli (which should correspond to the one described by Uzielli and, less surely, by Bühler), now see Melissa Conway, *The Diario of the Printing Press of San Jacopo di Ripoli 1476-1484: Commentary and Transcription*, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1999: 96 (f. 2v, n. 6), 102-103 (f. 5r, nn. 8, 10, 12; 5v, n. 1), 106 (f. 7r, n. 1), 290.

²¹ Cenci, 'Un codice di Rieti e fr. Roberto da Lecce'.

the effective identity of the manuscript's compiler, discussed earlier, the sermon on superstition in particular – alongside another three sermons – is certainly ascribable to Roberto as an author. Indeed, the sermon is one of the four texts that bear a small capital R alongside their title, which undoubtedly reveals to us their author's name. It will be worth to describe this sermon in particular more thoroughly, since it is the least known among the ones Roberto dedicated to the issue of superstition²². The sermon is built on the verse from psalm 81 «Nescierunt neque intellexerunt, in tenebris ambulant» (Ps 81, 5), which served the preacher to include in his reprimand against superstitions both ignorant men – i.e. those who do not know that their beliefs and actions lead to mortal sin – and men who recur to superstition consciously²³. Its arguments as a whole are set from the very first lines inside the frame of the Devil's influence in the world and his presence and activity inside men's lives:

If the evil Enemy never ceases to attack the sacred Christian religion, adorned of the true cult of God, finding himself cast away and expelled from the good, the glory and the beauty of Paradise, he greatly wishes, because of his pride, to be venerated by men and he tempts men with all his powers and, with sleepless habit, he works day and night so that he may lead men to his cult²⁴.

This is part of the more and more worried attention that, since the early fourteenth century, was being dedicated to the Devil's malignant influence on men and the world in general²⁵. An interest which was well received and displayed by Roberto and by many other contemporary preachers²⁶. In this sermon, Roberto divided superstition into twelve different categories of error, regarding: *adoratio*, *veneratio*, *honoratio*, *obsessio*, *divinatio*, *sompniatio*, *delusio*, *incantatio*, *invocatio*, *suspensio*, *influxio*, and *malefica operatio*. All but one, the last, are abundantly discussed, which results in a rather lengthy and dense sermon. The enumeration, especially if confronted with those of other sermons by Roberto or by other preachers, seems to be absolutely random, except for the

²² I have anticipated the description of this sermon in my 'Roberto Caracciolo: *Sermo de superstitionibus* (manoscritto I.2.6 Biblioteca comunale Paroniana di Rieti)'. *Rivista di Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 22/1 (2018): 105-123.

²³ Rieti, Biblioteca Comunale Paroniana, ms. I.2.6 (henceforth, in this whole chapter, just Rieti): f. 96r: «“Nescierunt”, scilicet aliqui ignorantes et ydiote, “neque intellexerunt”, scilicet illi qui et si sciant, tamen fingunt se longius ire quam periculosa miscent se superstitosum».

²⁴ *Ibidem*: «Si sacratissimam christianam religionem Dei veri cultu exornatam inpugnare nunquam desinit Hostis malignus, qui, cum se deiectum conspiciat expulsumque a bono, gloria et decore Paradisi, cupit summopere pro superbia sua ab hominibus venerari temptatque viribus quibus potest et, cum omni vigilantia consuetudine, die noctuque laborat, ut homines ad sui cultum perducatur».

²⁵ See primarily Alain Boureau, *Le pape et les sorcières: une consultation de Jean XXII sur la magie en 1320, manuscrit B.A.V. Borghese 348*. Rome: École Française de Rome, 2004; Id., *Satan hérétique. Naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident médiéval (1280-1330)*. Paris: O. Jacob, 2004 (English translation: *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). Cfr. also Bailey, 'Concern over Superstition in Late Medieval Europe': 125-126.

²⁶ It will suffice to compare this passage from Roberto's sermon with those by other Franciscan Observant preachers, such as Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul campo di Siena*: II, 1005: «Doh, accecati, o non avete voi mai inteso de li inganni suoi [del Diavolo], come elli sempre ci ha ingannati e sempre se n'è ingegnato?»; Id., *Quadragesimale de christiana religione*: I, 105; Iacobus de Marchia, *Sermones dominicales*: I, 419 and II, 476. Cfr. also the Carmelite Battista Panetti, *Sermones aurei*. Bologna: per Benedictum Hectoris, 1506: ff. 121v and 124r.

choice of a multiple number of the number three, due to mnemonic reasons, as typical in sermons. I have not been able to find any similar enumeration in other texts on the topic and there does not seem to be any specific pastoral discourse which encompassed and contextualized the whole treatment reserved to superstition, as is instead the case for sermons by other preachers of the time, who, for instance, often reunited – especially in the Observant Franciscan tradition – all kinds of superstition under one single group identifying in all of them different ways to violate the first commandment²⁷.

In his list in the Rieti manuscript, Roberto defined the first superstitious error as the mistake of those who unconsciously adored the Devil believing to be witnessing an apparition of Christ, of the Virgin or of some other saint, whilst actually being deceived by a demon who has taken up their appearance. It was a delusion in which primarily uneducated peasants (*rustici*) or women (*mulierculae*) could fall. Such a mistake could be excused if the believer adored *cum conditione* – when Christ (or the Virgin, or the saint) is venerated beyond the apparition – but not if he adored the apparition *per se*²⁸. In fact, Roberto listed some antidotes useful to avoid such an error: *auctoritates*, which warn us to be wary of divine apparitions; humility, which should lead us to believe ourselves unworthy of such apparitions; *exempla*, which prove how often these apparitions are diabolical delusions, like in the case of friar Rufino²⁹. Thus, men should mistrust the narrations of divine visions that they frequently occurred to hear. The preacher warned that most of the times visions were just pretexts to set up profitable profane businesses, as he had witnessed himself³⁰. Given the probable dating of the manuscript in which this sermons was copied to the first half of the 1450s, it might not be too hazardous to conjecture that Roberto had a precise episodes in mind when writing this. Indeed, in the summer of 1451 the preacher had stubbornly criticized the devotion which had grown, just outside Forlì, around the sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin that had been built

²⁷ Cfr. Bernardinus Senensis, *De christiana religione*: I, sermon 10; Michele Carcanus, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*. Venice: per Ioannem et Gregorium fratres de Gregoriis, 1492 [GW 6133]: sermon 21; Busti, *Rosarium sermonum*: sermon 16. Cfr. Conti, *Witchcraft, Superstition and Observant Franciscan Preachers*: 131-218. The same happens in Antonio da Vercelli's Lenten sermons, although he considers a much larger amount of violations of the first commandment, cfr. Antonio da Vercelli, *De xii mirabilibus*: sermons 43-45. We can read a division of superstition in twelve different kinds, but otherwise different from Roberto's in Giovanni dall'Aquila, *Sermones quadragesimales vitiorum lima nuncupati*. Brescia: Angelus Britannicus, 1497 [GW M12957]: ff. e8r-f2v.

²⁸ *Ibidem*: «Multi credentes adorare Christum vel beatam Virginem, multotiens adorant Dyabolum. Nam ipse, transfigurans se in angelum lucis, fingit se esse Christum vel beatam Virginem vel aliquem sanctorum sive sanctarum sicque apparens quibusdam ab ipsis adorantur, qui, si cum conditione adoraverunt ipsum, excusarentur a peccato, quia tunc non adorant ipsum, sed Christum [...] si autem singulis adoraverunt, non excusarentur propter ignorantiam». Roberto quotes Bonaventure in tertio, dis. 9.

²⁹ *Fioretti*, XXIX. Cfr. Cesare Segre, 'I «Fioretti di san Francesco» e la novellistica'. In: *Francescanesimo in volgare (secoli XIII-XIV)*. *Atti del XXIV Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 17-19 ottobre 1996*. Spoleto: Cisam, 1997: 337-352: 347.

³⁰ Rieti, f. 96v: «Ex hic percipere possumus quam reprehensibiles sive sepenumero rustici quidam et muliercule, qui referunt se multotiens Virginem benedictam aspicere, sicut ego reperi in plerisque locis in quibusdam plebicule facile crederat hiis delusionibus ad vanitates omnia sunt terminata et ad negotia secularia. Non est ergo ita levi credendum omnibus sic referentibus propter periculum deceptionis».

by the hermit Pietro Bianco da Durazzo on the spot where a countrygirl, whom the hermit had cured from a spell, had experienced a vision of the Virgin³¹.

The second superstitious mistake is related to images and to their veneration. Following Bonaventure's comment to the *Sentences*, Roberto acknowledged the usefulness of images, and repeating the Franciscan theologian's text, he discussed the undue veneration that some granted to them³². What is most interesting about the discussion on this point, which in great deal only repeats Bonaventure's arguments, is the final remark, regarding some excessive veneration made to images of the weeping Virgin which were to be found in cities like Viterbo or Lecce or in a place like the «monte Avarico». The presumed miracle made these statues venerated «tamquam deos» by the people³³. It is interesting to note how no mention is made, although it would have been pertinent, to the devotion to an image which had been diffused by Roberto's celebrated master, Bernardino da Siena. I'm speaking about the famous and debated devotion for the tablet with the name of Christ³⁴. Concerning the crying statue in Lecce, Roberto also mentioned it – and more extensively – in one of the sermons he preached in Padua between 1450 and 1451, revealing the accidental cause of the alleged miracle³⁵.

The third error listed by Roberto concerned the honour rendered to pretended or false relics. The recognition of a true relic was ultimately under the authority of the Church and so Roberto rapidly dealt with a number of peculiar relic-cults that he had met during his peregrinations throughout Italy, which are useful testimonies of the time's cults. I will come back to them together with the other relic-cults mentioned by Roberto. The fourth error in the list involved women and hysterics (*mulierculae* and *hystericici*), who believed, when suffering from some passion or sickness, to be possessed by demons or human spirits³⁶. Roberto conceded – following Bonaventure³⁷ – the possibility for demons to enter human bodies and also gave an effective remedy to get rid of them – «demonia eiciuntur in nomine Iesu» – but he also asserted that often those who claim of being

³¹ See above subchapter 2 of Roberto's life.

³² Bonaventure, in tertio, dis. 9.

³³ Rieti, f. 97v: «Nam tempore meo in plerisque locis artificiose factum est ut videretur quasi plorante ymago beate Virginis, sicut in civitate Viterbii, in monte Avarico, in civitate Licio et etiam alibi, ad quas novitates currentes populi ymagine huius venerabantur tamquam deos, ut sic dicam». For a similar episode around the same time see Giovanni Albino Lucano, 'La guerra otrantina condotta da Alfonso II duca di Calabria'. In *Gli umanisti e la guerra otrantina*: 56.

³⁴ See at least Gagliardi 'Figura Nominis Jesu'. In regards to the relationship between preaching and images we cannot avoid mentioning Lina Bolzoni, *La rete delle immagini: predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*. Torino: Einaudi, 2002 (English translation *The Web of Images: Vernacular Preaching from Its Origins to Saint Bernardino of Siena*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

³⁵ Falconara Marittima, Archivio provinciale dei frati minori, cod. 19, ff. 104v-105r: «Recordor in civitate ubi natus fui quod in domo cuiusdam erat ymago Virginis, que vernicem liquidam habebat. Ille homo unus doplerium accendit [...] propter calorem cerei lux liquidatur illeque clamare cepit misericordia. Episcopus [...] habita veritatem illum hominem poni fecit in carceribus». I must thank Oriana Visani for signalling this passage to me.

³⁶ *Ivi*, f. 98r: «Iste est error muliercularum et hist<er>icorum, dum crebro alias passiones naturales infirmitatesque substinent, dicunt se obsessos a spiritibus immundis, interdum etiam a spiritibus humanis, sic quod currunt ad veneficia et incantationes».

³⁷ Bonaventure, in secundo, dis. 8.

possessed are fakes. Further on, we will see some episodes of demonic possession Roberto acknowledged.

The fifth kind of superstition discussed in the Rieti manuscript sermon is closer to the ones dealt with in the previous Paduan text. Indeed, it concerns divination, meaning those who want to foretell future events that they are not able to know³⁸. Roberto repeated here the quotations from Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure he had used in his other sermon to contextualize the discourse on the illicit prediction of contingent futures. Then he introduced a set of Patristic (Augustine) and biblical quotations to highlight the prohibition of foretelling the future, finally adding some juridical quotations to confirm the prohibition of specifically one kind of divination, the one made by *sors*. The only, rather general, reference he made to the common use of this kind of superstition is to women who resorted to it in order to know what their future husbands would be like. The sixth error listed in the sermon is closely connected to the previous one, since it also deals with the prediction of future events, though this time through the interpretation of dreams³⁹. The argumentation is very similar to the one adopted in the Paduan sermon, with abundant reference to Bonaventure's distinctions of different kinds of dreams and also a long quotation from Astesano d'Asti's *Summa de casibus conscientiae*⁴⁰. The preacher's conclusion was that of not to trust any kind of interpretation of dreams.

The seventh error brings us straight into the discussion of the well-known *canon Episcopi* and the reality of (one kind of) witchcraft. As in the previous sermon, even from the name Roberto gave to this kind of superstition (*delusio*) we can hint his firm obedience to the tenth-century juridical text, common to most Franciscan Observant preachers, as said. Indeed, he wrote about «those who are deluded by demons, believing that human bodies can be transformed in other beings and that they wander during the night in fields and in other lands»⁴¹. Just like in his other sermon, Roberto discussed the possibility for demons to deceive men and then gave some biblical – i.e. Simon Magus, whose magical virtues appear especially in apocryphal gospels and the legends of the Saints Peter and Paul, the knowledge of which was widely diffused throughout the middle

³⁸ Rieti, f. 98v: «Hoc est illorum qui volunt futura prescire que non debent».

³⁹ Rieti, f. 99v: «Quidam solent aliqua ventura per sompnia interpretari».

⁴⁰ Bonaventura, *In secundum librum sententiarum*, d. VII, p. II, art. I, q. 3, *conclusio, ad tertium*; Astesanus, *Summa de casibus*, lib. I, tit. XIII (in the edition Venice, Johannis de Colonia sociisque eius Johannis Manthen, 1478 [GW 2754]: ff. x3r-x4r).

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, f. 100v: «Illi qui deluduntur a demonibus, credentes corpora humana posse transmutari in alia species et nocte circumvagare et girare campos et alia solia».

ages⁴² – and Patristic *exempla*, from Gregory the Great’s Dialogues, Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* and the legend of Saint Macarius⁴³.

The treatment of the eighth error, concerning spells and charms, is particularly valuable because it contains some mentions of what seem to be diffused popular refrains, which I will group with the ones from other sermons – sometimes repeated, but not always – further on in the chapter⁴⁴. The ninth error once again regards the foretelling of future events. It concerns those who attempt to know something about the future through the invocation of demons. Roberto clearly refuted the practice – since demons, just like all other creatures, could not know with certainty future events – and, in the closing of the paragraph, he recalled the figure of the already mentioned witch Santuccia: this time witches and their activity on earth in connection with demons were real. Object of the tenth chapter of the sermon were the *brevi*, that is small portions of parchment, containing brief writings, rolled or folded up and sealed following some specific rituals, which had to be worn or hanged to the neck: Roberto, as other preachers, defines it as *error suspensionis*⁴⁵. Such a practice was commonly condemned, following Aquinas and the *Decretum*⁴⁶. The examples narrated by Roberto in this occasion are common to a whole tradition of Franciscan Observant preachers, having Vincenzo da Siena – Bernardino’s loyal companion – and Giacomo della Marca as protagonists, and are thus of little interest⁴⁷. More interesting – and worth a mention – are some

⁴² Ronald B. Herzman, William R. Cook, ‘Simon the Magician and the Medieval Tradition’. *Journal of Magic History* 2/1 (1965): 28-43; Alberto Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in Patristic, Medieval and Early Modern Traditions*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

⁴³ Respectively Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum libri IV*, II, c. 10 (PL 66, 154); Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XVIII, §§ 17-18 (PL, 573-576) and cfr. Domenico Cavalca, *Vite dei santi padri*, edizione critica a cura di Carlo Delcorno, 2 vols. Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2009: I, 727-728.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 102v: «Provenit his qui, super infirmitates quasdam vel hominum vel animalium vel ad sedandus tempestates, carmibus quibusdam utuntur superstitiosis et vanis et, licet plerumque honeste rusticis videantur, quia non nisi precedente oratione Dominica et crucis signo interveniente dicantur, tamen ideo detestanda sunt, quia cum maiori periculo veris immiscentur falsa».

⁴⁵ Franco Cardini, ‘Il «breve» (secoli XIV-XV): tipologia e funzione’. *La ricerca folklorica* 5 (1982): 63-73 (now also in Id., *Le mura di Firenze inargentate: letture fiorentine*. Palermo: Sellerio, 1993: 177-199); Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

⁴⁶ *Decretum Gratiani*, secunda pars, c. XXVI, q. V, § 3 (Freiesleben I, 897).

⁴⁷ Rieti, f. 103v: «Repperit namque frater Vincentius, sotius sancti Bernardini, quendam hominem super se breve quedam quod vix ab eo obtinere potuit. Tandem illo aperto invenit ibi carmina in his verbis: “Dogliate el capo, che doler te sole, / dogliate ad te et ad chi ben te vole. / Dogliate l’ochi et dogliate li denti, / dogliate el corpo insiemi col ventre. / Vanne ad mare et facte incantare, / che ciento dyavoli te possan portare”. Similiter frater Iacobus de Marchia invenit quendam armigerum qui dixit ei: “O frater Iacobe, ego habeo super me quoddam breve quod talem habet veritatem quod si quis illud deferat non potest mala morte perire”. Cui frater Iacobus: “Unde illud habuisti?”, at ille ait: “Ego habebam quendam famulum qui fuit suspensus propter furtum, in cuius diploide fuit inventum dictum breve et ad meas manus pervenerit, quod penes me diligenter servo”, cui subridens frater Iacobus dixit: “O pauper homo! Si non profuit famulo tuo, quomodo proderat tibi?”, qui statim confusus laceravit illud». Cfr. also *ivi*: f. 93v; Carcano, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*: f. 60r-v; Busti, *Rosarium sermonum*: f. 129r; Iacobus de Marchia, *Sermones dominicales*: II, 481.

other examples of texts which were added in the margins of the manuscripts, which include an abracadabra that could be used against quartan fevers and some other more generic spells⁴⁸.

The eleventh and last error, since the twelfth was not discussed or has not been preserved in the text we can read today, regards astrologers (*mathematici*) and their ideas of astral influxes on all earthly events. Again, the problem came, according to Roberto, when such ideas were used in the attempt to foretell future events⁴⁹. The issue, however, was also the more common critique moved against astrologers: the negation of free will that was implicit in the assertion of human character as molded through astral influences at the moment of conception and birth or, especially, of the dependence of men's actions from the stars. Roberto treated the matter following Bonaventure's comment to the *Sentences* and then quoting large portions of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*⁵⁰.

The third sermon in chronological order that Roberto dedicated to superstition is the fifteenth sermon of his printed Latin collection *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, composed almost thirty years after the other two sermons. Despite the distance in time, themes and topics seem to be very close to the previous ones. If the first sermon was built on an evangelical verse and the second on a passage from the psalms, the *thema* of this third sermon is taken from Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians (4, 6): «Vindex est Dominus de hiis omnibus». This shows once more just how free the preachers' choice of the *thema* was. Again, Roberto set the entire sermon in a context of demonization of magic, underlining the demons' activity in the world⁵¹. According to Roberto in this text, superstition could be threefold, according to the kind of veneration rendered to the Devil: *divinatio*, *observatio*, and *confederatio*. Divination – the attempt to predict contingent futures as defined, again, by Bonaventure – was, in turn, divided into three sorts, in relation to the means used to foretell the future: interpretation of dreams, augury (which Roberto defined «*inventa mendacia*») and astrology. The argumentation against divination by means of dreams was exactly the same as the ones already related above, although with a more abundant set of sources and *exempla* (from the Bible and from Valerius Maximus). The second kind of divination concerned the observation of

⁴⁸ Rieti, f. 103v: «Breve pro quartana quod sic scriptum fuit cunctum, scilicet: “Abracoram, abracola, abracol, abracol, abracol, abracol, abra, ab, a”»; *ibidem*: «in quo totum scriptum fuit: “Deus, in nomine tuo – et postea – + croce sancta et degna, tu lo salva et tu llo insegna, per quello Dio che venne ad te, tu lo salva et benedi, fiat, fiat, fiat, virgo Maria, Iesus Naçarenus redemptor mundi”. Et similiter aliud ut uxor poneret in duobus diploidis et pro solutionem habuit 8 carllos a 7». For the first of the two, cfr. Skemer, *Binding Words*: 303.

⁴⁹ Rieti, f. 103v: «Decimus primus error dicitur influxionis, in quo versantur mathematici, qui referunt omnia provenire ex influenza astrorum, ex quorum consideratione futura contingentia sepe predicunt».

⁵⁰ Bonaventura, *In secundum librum sententiarum*, d. XIV, p. II, art. II, q. III, *conclusio*.

⁵¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, f. 41r: «Postquam diaboli eiecti fuerunt de celo empireo propter illorum superbiam, semper in voluntate maligna perdurant, ut hominibus preesse velint etiam in hac vita presenti. Quod ut facilius assequantur, permittente sic iusto Deo, maleficiis et artibus magicis se immiscunt, in quibus ad aliquos effectus naturales producendos cooperantur. Cum enim ipsi multa sciant et possint, que cognitionem nostram ac facultatem excedunt, scientia et vi nature sue hec inferiora iuvant ad accelerandam suam operationem. Qua de re plerique diabolo familiaritate ac quoddam commercio se coniungunt et artibus nefariis impliciti alios ad hoc inducunt, ut diabolos venerentur. In omnibus enim huiusmodi maleficiis adorationem suam diabolus vel implicate vel aperte procurat».

birds' or other animals' movements and calls, but also the prediction of the future by *sors*. Finally, divination by the means of astrology was – as Roberto immediately stated – a negation of free will and a foolish belief. Yet, Roberto continued, contemporary rulers were particularly credulous in regards to it⁵². It is not an attack moved against astrology as a whole, but just against its worthless attempts to foretell unpredictable future events⁵³. The preacher even related this particular aspect of astrology, following Augustine, to astrologers' commerce with demons, another fruitless way of predicting the future with any hope of certainty⁵⁴.

The second kind of superstition in this sermon was the “observation” of – meaning having faith in – spells or charms, *brevi* and specific times. Spells and charms particularly concerned illnesses and wounds, and their use was considered sinful by Roberto if one believed that their effect was not just limited to the spell's own natural powers, but rather depended on the external intervention of some creature⁵⁵. Roberto also recalled some practices that he had personally experienced. The discourse on *brevi* was very similar to the one contained in the Rieti manuscript, even narrating the same *exemplum* concerning friar Vincenzo da Siena, Bernardino da Siena's companion⁵⁶. Roberto opposed the *observantia temporum* – among which we might specifically recall the “Egyptian days”⁵⁷ – to the practices used by doctors, peasants or sailors to wait for particular conjunctures (of the day or of the year) to make their actions, which are positively valued. What instead the preacher condemned were the actions performed following peculiar rituals «ex falsa opinione», of which he gave some examples⁵⁸.

The third and final chapter of the sermon is dedicated to men's pact with the Devil, of which, Roberto asserted, there was the example of many, both men and women, in his times (*etiam hodierna die*) who openly allied with the Devil. These pacts with the Devil could be obtained by

⁵² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, f. 43r: «Ad hoc devenerunt quidam moderni domini, ut nec comedere audeant, nec pannos novos induere, nec equitare aut queque domestica negocia agere vel incipere absque vaticinio astronomorum, qui si dixerit prospera eventura que incipere volunt illa incipiunt, si vero contrarium, ab illis desistunt. O singularem stulticiam ducere vitam cum confidentia planetarum! [...] Astrorum noticia reperitur in valde paucis et qui causa profitentur non sunt, ut in pluribus in illa perfecti, sed sint sicut Ptholomeus vel Habi Ambragel aut Albumasar. Dicant mihi si humana vita regulanda est secundum cursum astrorum: quid facient populi? Quid artifices? Quid agricolae? Quid mercatores? Quid clerici? Quid religiosi? Quid in liberalibus artibus et theologia ac iure canonico et civili et tot eruditissimi homine, qui coniunctionem planetarum ignorant, qui signa adhuc zodiaci nesciunt? Nunquid in tenebris erunt omnia illorum opera?»

⁵³ *Ibidem*: «Iudicent astrologi de naturalibus effectibus a causa naturali provenientes: de eclipsi solis et lune, de imbribus, siccitatibus, ventis et similibus. Illa vero futura que vel a Dei vel ab hominis voluntate dependent relinquunt ipsi Deo, qui cuncta gubernat»

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, f. 43v. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, V, 7.

⁵⁵ Tommaso, *Secunda secundae*, 96.

⁵⁶ See above n. 47.

⁵⁷ Franca Brambilla Ageno, 'I «giorni egiziaci»'. *Lingua nostra* 13 (1952): 69-70 (now in Ead., *Studi lessicali*. Bologna: Clueb, 2000: 77).

⁵⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44v: «Si vero tempus observetur non ex aliqua causa corporali naturali, sed falsa opinione, ut cum quis putat aliquos dies fortunatos et aliquos infortunatos superstitiosum est et frivolum. Ut siquis utitur herbis collectis in mane ascensionis, vel balneat se in nocte sancti Ioannis Baptiste, vel in kalendis non vult aliquid dare et similia, que omnia vana sunt».

three means. The first was through the observation of stars, which had the power – according to John of Salisbury – to reveal secrets (*occulte veritatis manifestabit archana*), but which – commented Aquinas – could only do this thanks to the intervention of demons⁵⁹. It is again an attack moved against astrology, this time involving the demonic presence in this practice. The second way to get in contact with demons was that of trapping them in jars, obtaining responses from them by means of certain “arts”⁶⁰. Some, Roberto acknowledged, could wonder how it was possible to trap a powerful spirit like a demon in a bottle. The preacher gave his explanation – this was possible with the Devil’s consent – and did not rule out the possibility of this kind of commerce with demons as vain credulity. It might be interesting to connect this part of the text with an episode of Roberto’s biography, the call he received to visit Ferrara in the early 1480s by Carlo Sosenna, court magician of the Duke. It is known, especially from Ludovico Ariosto’s *Satire* that Sosenna had trapped a demon in a jar, from which he obtained responses and forecasts⁶¹. Did Roberto “see” the demon and had it in mind when writing this page? There is still no sufficient proof to demonstrate this, but it is certainly possible to conjecture it. The third and last kind of commerce with demons regarded the characteristic pact that in short time would have played a major part in the imagery of the witches’ Sabbath. To picture it, Roberto related an episode of the torturing and confession of a witch to which he had assisted in Albenga, near Genova, of which I will give the text further on.

2. Some specific cases of superstition

Having described in detail Roberto’s extant sermons dedicated to superstition, gaining in this way a general picture of the way the preacher treated this issue and its specific declinations, it will now be interesting to look into some peculiar cases, which can either give us new information on some practices and beliefs that could be found in late fifteenth-century Italy or uncover Roberto’s characteristic attitude towards these superstitions.

The first case regards the cult of relics, of which Roberto spoke in at least two occasions. In his sermon on superstitions preserved in the Rieti manuscript, the preacher warned believers about false relics and the lucrative cults that surrounded them. He recalled how he had seen himself dead bodies being venerated because they had been found uncorrupted, even if the man’s sanctity had not

⁵⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44v: «Unde enim inquit Ioannes Solobriensis in *Policratone*, libro 2: “As tantam quidam pervenerunt insaniam, ut ex diversis stellarum positionibus dicant imaginem ab homine posse formari, que, si per intervalla temporum et quadam ratione propositionum in constellatione servata formetur, stellarum nutu recipiet spiritum vite. Et consulentibus occulte veritatis manifestabit archana”. Sed Thoma, ubi supra, dicit quod tales imagines habent effectum non a corporibus celestibus, sed a diabolo».

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*: «Aliqui Diabolo confederantur per illius inclusionem, dum illum inclusum et restrictum detinent in ampullis et quibusdam artibus ab eo responsa suscipiunt».

⁶¹ Ludovico Ariosto, *Satire*, VII, vv. 94-108. See above n. 215 of Roberto’s life.

been ascertained. He also mentioned some jars he had seen, containing some white substance which was claimed to be the Virgin's milk, but which Roberto suspected to be either some sort of paint or flour mixed with water⁶². Finally, he also warned against those who claimed to possess miraculous bone relics, which often were not truly such⁶³. The concern for the cult of false bone relics also came up in another one of Roberto's sermons. Indeed, during his preaching in Padua, Roberto remembered visiting a town where people venerated the spoils of Saint Blaise. Roberto, who had become suspicious seeing some priests laughing among themselves on the saint's day, had been brought by them to see a bunch of bones, which the clerics showed in occasions to the people claiming they were Saint Blaise's relics, though they were aware it was not so. Questioned as to why they did so, they replied that it was the only way they had found to convince the locals to sustain them: «If we were not to do this – they had said – they would not give us food»⁶⁴. Finally, it will be worth recalling the list of relics containing blood of Christ that Roberto made in the seventy-first sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*⁶⁵.

The second aspect of superstition in Roberto's sermons that I believe deserves particular attention regards the charms and spells that the preacher mentioned, possibly collecting them from other texts, but also probably remembering them from his everyday experience⁶⁶. These apotropaic refrains, as especially historians of popular culture have highlighted⁶⁷, testify to the survival of ancient beliefs and to a mixture of magical, natural and religious influences that gave life to a set of ready-to-use formulas convenient for any occasion. For instance, in case of a sickness of the horse's throat, according to Roberto, who claimed of having heard the formula in first person, one would have to repeat: «I enchant you throat sickness (*strangoioni*), that you may let him swallow that macaroon»⁶⁸. If, instead, the horse were to have worms in the stomach, the formula would have

⁶² Cfr. Carcano, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*: f. 51r; and especially Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo*: I, 707: «Ooooh! Avete veduto del latte de la Vergine Maria, o donne? Le bufale di Lombardia non hanno tanto latte, quanto si dice che n'è per lo mondo. Sapiate ch'ella ebbe tanto latte, quanto bastava a la bocchina di Cristo Iesù, e non più; né crediate che ce ne sia»; II, 809: «Forse ella fu una vacca la Vergine Maria, che ella avesse lassato il latte suo come si lassa de le bestie, che si lassano mugniare?».

⁶³ Rieti: f. 98r: «Nam ego vidi oculis meis aliquos venerari quorundam corpora, eo quod illa viderunt integra et non totaliter corrupta. Vidi insuper in plerisque locis plenas ampullas, nescio aut colore aut farina inpastata, et incole talium patriarum dicebant esse lac beate Virginis. Multi etiam ficte ossa mortuorum pro reliquiis ostenderunt, ideo, ne qui decipiatur, quod supradictum est iuste ordinavit sacra mater Ecclesia».

⁶⁴ Falconara Marittima, Archivio provinciale dei frati minori, ms. 19: f. 105v: «Occurrit mihi semel dum essem in die sancti Blasii in quodam oppido [...] presbiteri non poterant risum continere. Ego sciscitans risum causam, dixerunt: "Accedas huc frater Roberte", ac me in quodam angulo conduxerunt, ubi multa ossa mortuorum aderant, dicentes se populo illa ostendere pro ossibus sancti Blasii. Ego tunc dixi: "Quafore ista facitis?" Responderunt: "Nisi sic ageremus non darent nobis edere».

⁶⁵ See in the epilogue to this part Roberto's mentions of the debate over devotion to relics with Christ's blood.

⁶⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Ego ista quandoque perquirens et incantatrices advocans charitative multas fatuitates inveni».

⁶⁷ See in particular Bronzini, 'Le prediche di San Bernardino e le tradizioni popolari'.

⁶⁸ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «Io te incanto strangoioni che tu gli lassi inglutire quello macharone». For the meaning of *strangoioni* as horse sickness to the throat see Gaspare Patriarchi, *Vocabolario*

been «If you heal you heal, otherwise the dogs will eat you»⁶⁹. The margins of the *sermo de sortilegiis* in the Rieti manuscript (which precedes the *sermo de superstitionibus* surely attributed to Roberto) contain two spells against snakes that seem to be particularly close to Roberto because of the linguistic features, characterized by typical traits from Salento⁷⁰. Then it is worth mentioning the invocations of natural elements such as the moon or a tree, which the preacher also judged idolatrous and dangerous signs of the pact with the Devil⁷¹. Other, apparently less worrying, spells were the ones that involved saints, such as the one addressed to Saint Blaise for sicknesses of the throat, which was only effective if uttered in one breath⁷². Better known are the charms against blood flows, involving Longinus⁷³, or the spell, sometimes recalled also by Bernardino da Siena,

veneziano e padovano co' termini e modi corrispondenti toscani, con un saggio introduttivo di Michele A. Cortellazzo. Padova: nella stamperia Conzatti, 1796 (now also in anastatic edition Sala Bolognese: Arnaldo Forni, 2010): 313.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*: «Si sani sani, se non te magni i cani»; Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Quedam vetula incantatrix occurrebat infirmitatibus animalium brutorum equorum, scilicet asinorum et similibus, que post *Pater noster* et *Ave Maria* dicebat in aure animalis secrete: “Si sani sani, si non te mangiano li cani”».

⁷⁰ Rieti: f. 89v: «Pro serpente: “Aspra, aspra, aspra, asprecta, aspra, asprone, io te comando per parte de sancto Iacobo barone, che apponti lu capu ione et non te parti mai piune”»; *ivi*: f. 90r: «Scogniuote serpente, per lu fele che tei in ventre, per la messa della Pasca, per le messe de Natale, che nanti non possi ire ne arretro retornare, ne ad homo ne affemina no possi fare male et io te promecto ce non te fare male». See also the spell to put animals to sleep, *ibidem*: «Incantu d'annoctare le bestie: Io comando ad quante anime sondo morte ad ferro, per parte de quanti diaboli stando in dello mundo, che no laxoro partire queste bestie de quello paiese che dice». Marco Maggiore is preparing a linguistic study of these texts, ‘Cinque scongiuri e altre novita dallo zibaldone reatino di Roberto da Lecce’, of which I could read a preview. I wish to thank Marco for his expertise on these texts and for providing early previews of his writing.

⁷¹ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «O, quot sunt qui diabolum adorant et quot philocapti sunt. Nam domina buffalla stelle salutationem adiscit ac postea dicit: “Dio te salve sancta luna” et hoc pacto diabolum in luna adorant»; Rieti: f. 89v: «Dio te salve sancta luna, de tre cose me asecura: de ira de populo, de mala compagnia et de falsa testimonia. Hoc dicitur dum viditur luna nova». Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Quedam vetula Fulginei succurrebat hoc modo mulieribus quibus lac pro filiis ablactandis deficiebat: in ortu solis illas versus solem iubebat hec verba dicere: “Dio te salve sancto arbore quale dal alto monte venite al moi pecto lacte adducite quanto basta non quanto poteti”».

⁷² Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «Et illa vetula dicit orationem sancti Blaxii, videlicet: “San Biaxio da le nove sore, da le nove ale otto, dale otto ale sette” et dicit quod talis oratio non valet nisi dicatur in un flato»; Rieti: f. 102v: «Pro infirmitate gule: “Miserere san Biasio dalle nove sore, da nove in octo, de octo in septe, da septe in sei, da sei in cinque, de cinque in quattro, da quattro in tre, da tre in doi, da doi in una: san Biascio vi guarde dal male della gola”». See also the more ambiguous charms involving saints in Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «O stulti! Et ille alius dicit: “Sam Piero sopra la preta marmorea etc.”»; Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Quedam alia Tuderti incipiebat suum carmen: “Al nome sia de Christo e de sancto Damiano e de san Benedicto che fo medico de Christo etc.”». For the diffusion of the spell concerning Saint Blaise, which has arrived to our day, cfr. Liliana Benatti Spennato, ‘Detti, proverbi e modi di dire dell’Alta Valle del Panaro’. In: *L’Alta Valle del Panaro. Atti e memorie del convegno tenuto a Zocca il 6-7 settembre 1980*, II: *L’ambiente – L’arte – Le tradizioni*. Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1981: 255-266: 264; Gian Paolo Borghi, ‘San Biagio tra devozione, folklore e cultura materiale’. In: *Da Gabellum a Gavello: storia di una chiesa e del suo territorio. Atti della Giornata di studio in occasione del 70° anniversario della ricostruzione della chiesa parrocchiale di Gavello, sabato 12 dicembre 1998*, a cura di Pierpaolo Bonacini e Gino Mantovani. Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 2002: 133-151: 142 (with further bibliography).

⁷³ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «Aliqui dicunt: “Vulnerato Longin feria de l’asta. A questo basta”»; Rieti: f. 102v: «“Longino ferì Christo dal lato dextro, sangue et aqua andò per l’asta, dixi Christo: “questo basta”, quod nullatenus repperitur quod Christus hoc dixerit». For the diffusion of this kind of spell cfr. Carcano, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*: f. 60r (who points out that Christ could not have said those words because he was already dead when Longinus pierced his chest); Francesco Novati, ‘Antichi scongiuri’. In: *Miscellanea Ceriani: raccolta di scritti originali per onorare la memoria di M.r Antonio Maria Ceriani*. Milano: U. Hoepli, 1910: 71-86: 82-83; Giovan Battista Palma, ‘Thesaurus pauperum di Arnaldo di Villanova in dialetto siciliano in un codice del sec. XIV’. *Aevum* 5/4 (1931): 401-478: 465; Giovanni Battista Bronzini, ‘La predicazione di Bernardino da Siena fra scrittura e oralità’. *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 18 /2 (1982): 169-199; Skemer, *Binding Words*: 207, n. 77, 286, 297, 299 (England, mid-XIIIth century), 306 (France, early XVth century).

about the “three good friars” (*tri boni fratri*)⁷⁴. What most worried the preacher, however, was the mixture that these spells made of sacred and profane (worse useless) words. Roberto said that orations like the *Pater noster* or the *Ave Maria* were often used together with these profane refrains, but with a preeminence of the latter over the former, believing the curative (or other) power lying in the profane formulas rather than in the divine invocation⁷⁵. Finally, there was the case of women who made spells against men, to kill them through a slow consumption or to impede them from having sexual intercourse with their wives⁷⁶. We are already inside witchcraft beliefs, of which I will say something in a paragraph further on.

Another aspect of Roberto’s sermons against superstitions which deserves to be discussed in some more detail is the one regarding astrology. The main issue against astrology was its tendency to negate men’s free will, substituting the possibility to choose a way of conduct or an action with the constriction due to astral influences, on the character or even on the action itself. This issue emerged both when the preacher treated astrology inside the sermons on superstition listed above and, for instance, in the second chapter of the fifth sermon of Roberto’s *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*. Here, confuting some excuses adduced by sinners to lessen their faults, Roberto judged «irrational» the one according to which «men attribute their fault to the influence of stars, which cannot bind free will neither in good nor in bad»⁷⁷. Another issue that preachers like Roberto were particularly careful in contrasting was the idea that natural calamities were the result of influences from the stars and not, as they claimed, the manifestation of God’s rage for sin and immorality⁷⁸. The fright of natural calamities and extraordinary events in general were topics on which preachers easily leveraged to get a grip on their popular audiences. We have a testimony of this in the portrait of Roberto preaching on the comet as a prelude to terrible events that Angelo Catone has left us⁷⁹. Finally, there was the issue of divination by the means of astrology, which also leads to the following topic, which is divination by demonic intervention. Before moving on, though, it will be interesting to see how this issue was particularly apt in stimulating the preacher’s irony and in

⁷⁴ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 210: «Alius ait: “I tri boni fratri andava per la via etc.”»; Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Alii incantant percussos ferro et dicunt: “Tre boni fratri andavan per la via, trovaro Christo con sancta Maria” et sequitur postea nescio que verba falsa et ridiculosa». Cfr. Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari*, II, 162-163.

⁷⁵ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 44r: «Sunt consimilia carmina plena stulticiis, imo falsitatibus, quibus maior adhibetur fides quam orationi Dominice. Nam incantatores et incantatrices licet premittant *Pater noster* cum *Ave Maria*, quia venena non dantur nisi melle circumlita, tamen tenent et opinantur quod virtus sanitatem inducens sit in illis carminibus stultis».

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*: «Quedam alie incantationes fiunt ad nocumentum hominum et quod aliquis paulatim consumatur et quod quis non possit cognoscere uxorem et similia, que dicuntur maleficia».

⁷⁷ *Ivi*: f. 14r: «Quod irrationabilis est excusatio peccati cum hominum culpa refertur ad influentiam siderum, que liberum arbitrium astringere non possunt neque ad bonum neque ad malum».

⁷⁸ *Ivi*: f. 9r: «Quod pene temporales, scilicet pestilentie, guerre, fames, terremotus et similia immittuntur a iusto Deo propter iniquitates et scelera populorum [...] in quo confutanda est infidelis opinio illorum qui dicunt mala temporali non propter peccata, sed propter astrorum influentiam aut aliam aliquam latentem causam naturaliter evenire».

⁷⁹ See above n. 264 of Roberto’s life.

belittling the astrologers' work. To his listeners in Padua, Roberto narrated the story of an astrologer he had once met who had invested a large sum in a cargo, which had sunk with the ship that was carrying it. Convinced the ship could not have sunk because of his astrological predictions, there was no way of reassuring him that he had not been deceived and robbed⁸⁰. Close to this story, but significantly different, is the one Roberto narrated in his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (sermon XXII, chapter III). An astrologer from Camerino, in Central Italy, had invested his money in a load, which sunk just off the shores of Ancona: after the episode, he would have never wanted to believe in the stars again. Moreover, before this event, the same astrologer would have read the stars in order to have a happy and prosperous marriage. The result, however, would have been very different from his reading and after not even a week of arguing and fighting, his wife would have fallen sick and died⁸¹. Another anecdote is in the fifteenth sermon of the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, where Roberto recalled the prediction personally made to him by an expert astrologer (*in astrorum peritia non mediocriter eruditus*), who claimed that by the end of that year, Pope Sixtus IV would have died. Five years had passed since and the Pope was still alive⁸².

It was when commerce with demons was considered to appear on the scene, however, that the preachers' attention became more careful to superstitious beliefs and practices. Scholars have measured the increasingly worrying presence of the Devil in the natural world since the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century, with a progressive crescendo, which brought by the first fifteenth-century witch-hunts and then, from the sixteenth century, led to what has rightly come

⁸⁰ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 207: «Fui in una civitate, in qua quidam astrologus erat; quadam die ad me accessit dicens: “Frater Roberte, me tibi recomitto, nam proditus sum”. “Quomodo proditus?” At ille: “Posui VII ducatos in chroco et illud super una navi posui. Dicunt quod navis submersa est et scio quod verum non est, ego proditus sum”. “Quid ais me agere?” Et ille: “Vos oro ut velitis deprecari ne me decipiant!” Quesivi veritatem et habui quod vere navis submersa est. “O, hoc non est possibile – respondet astrologus – nam scio quid loquor”. Or numquam fuit remedium quod possem eum ad credendum reducere, pur dicebat quod possibile non erat quod deperdita esset. Demum quidam frater mihi dixit quo dille in illa fantasia manebat propter suam astrologiam, cum qua viderat quod predictum chroco deperdi non poterat».

⁸¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: ff. 12v-3r: «Nam ut ego ipse novi astrologum quendam in civitate Camerini, qui vix domum exire volebat absque annotatione cursus siderum et planetarum. Hic, ut a fide dignis in prefata civitate mihi relatum est, oblatas sibi uxores per plures annos, respuit quomodo secundum suam astrologiam non videbatur sibi tempus salubre. Tandem, ut ipse dicebat, secundum astrorum favorem unam accepit illamque duxit cum predicabat diu secum in letitia victurum. Sed vix per ebdomada steterunt similis et statim rixe discordieque pestilentissime exorte sunt inter ipsum et uxorem; et modico post tempore elapso uxor in infirmitatem cecidit et mortua est. Astrologo vero mendita est vis siderum. Idem etiam societatem quendam cum mercatoribus quibusdam fecit et septingentos florenos ad negotiandum pro parte sua deputavit. Emerunt autem mercatores maximam quantitatem croci, quod cum vellent Venetias destinare noluit astrologus onerare mulos, donec vidit per suam artem sibi astra blandiri fatebaturque copiosum lucrum ex croco illo sibi ac sociis proventurum. Verumtamen cum ex Ancona navis quedam croco predicto aliisque mercibus onusta discessisset, flantibus contrariis ventis tempestateque invalescente, naufragium passa est. Quod cum audisset, astrologus nunquam deinceps astris credere voluit». The story is rather similar to one narrated by Giacomo della Marca, *Sermones dominicales*: I, 442.

⁸² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 43r-v: «De Xisto quarto pontifice maximo multa prenunciata sunt ab astrologis falsa, etiam a primo anno sue sanctissime coronationis. Quidam vero in astrorum peritia non mediocriter eruditus, quintus iam elapsus annus quo mihi secum familiariter confabulanti affirmative referebat anno illo pontificem ipsum moriturum. Quid secutum est experientia docet».

down in history as a true “witch-craze”⁸³. The demonization of magic, with the stress on the patristic (Augustinian) issue of the pact with the devil, fostered the growing concern for the activity of mysterious and mischievous women, capable of doing harm through the help of demonic powers. The first step that pushed men or women to recur to demons’ power was the necessity or the curiosity to know future, unpredictable, events. Of course, demons’ powers were insufficient to foretell with any certainty contingent futures, knowledgeable to God alone. Still, some recurred anyway to their invocation. Roberto treated the issue, typical in all the popular preaching of his time, in his sermons on superstition, as we have seen, as well as in the first chapter of the eleventh sermon of his *Quadragesimale de peccatis*. The first part of this chapter, which is dedicated to the curiosity of those men who wish to know what they should not or cannot know, addressed the issue from the point of view of the source of such a knowledge of the future. The preacher wrote that men are confused (*inordinatur*) when they seek the knowledge of future events or of other secrets «from demons or from those who have familiarity and commerce with demons»⁸⁴.

The case in which the presence of demons or of the Devil himself was most visible surely was that of demonic possession, frequently described in contemporary literature. In the sermon on superstitions contained in the Rieti manuscript, Roberto expressed some distrust towards those who claimed being possessed, whom, he said, whilst being affected by some illness or pressed by lust, fake being tormented by the Devil. He also recalled the example of a young girl, who had been brought to him by her parents, believing she was possessed: the preacher’s cure had been that of taking her back home and educate her better⁸⁵. In later sermons, however, such as the fourth sermon of his *De timore divinorum iudiciorum*, Roberto appeared to have been more convinced of the reality of demonic possessions and represented himself in first line in the battle against this phenomenon. It is a confirmation of the picture of late medieval Franciscan (Observant) preaching on the issue recently drawn by Bert Roest, according to which mendicant preachers used the narration of events related to demonic possession in preaching or hagiography to support the idea of

⁸³ See above nn. 2 and 25 and at least *L’imaginaire du sabbat: édition critique des textes les plus anciens, 1430c.-1440c.*, réunis par Martine Ostorero, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Kathrin Utz Tremp en collaboration avec Catherine Chène. Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, Section d’histoire, Faculté des lettres, 1999; Martine Ostorero, *Le diable au sabbat: littérature démonologique et sorcellerie (1440-1460)*. Impruneta: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011.

⁸⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 30r: «Primo inordinatur homo cum querit adiscere ab illo a quo non debet, sicut cum perquireret cognoscere futura que sunt in Dei voluntate aut aliqua occulta a demonibus vel ab illis qui demonum utuntur familiaritate atque consortio».

⁸⁵ Rieti: ff. 98r-v: «Sunt equidem multi qui false fingunt se dyabolo vexari aut oppressi fatuitate aut aliqua concupiscentia vana, sicut ego clara luce conspexi Fulginei, utique a parentibus cum multa devotione puella quedam fuit mihi presentata, ut ei signum crucis facerem, eo quod credebant eam molestari ab aliquo dyabolo, statim parentibus imposui ut revertentur domum et moderate disciplinarent». Possibly referred to the same – or a similar – *exemplum* is this mention from Carcano, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*: f. 62r: «Refert enim quidam ex fratribus nostris, a parentibus sibi quandam puellam fuisse presentatam, ut eam signo crucis signarer, existimabant enim eam a demonio vexari, quam cum fuisset allocutus reperit eam philocaptam amore cuiusdam iuvenis».

themselves as most strenuous opponents of the Devil's activity in the world⁸⁶. In this occasion Roberto recalled an episode that he said had occurred in Naples in 1470, while he was preaching Lent in the town, in the king's palace. Rumor had it that the spirits of some dead had entered the body of a young woman: she could speak languages she did not know and could tell about events of which she should not have had any awareness. When Roberto paid his visit to the woman, together with Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, he uncovered the real demonic nature of the possession, since the demon could not resist his clerical status persisting in his lie of pretending to be some Sicilian mercenary named Stefano. In front of his great enemy, the demon – who defined Roberto «inimicissimus noster» especially because of his preaching office – had to surrender after a battle which has all the appearance of a true exorcism⁸⁷. Roberto also recalled this episode in his *Sermo de anime rationalis admirandis prerogativis*, where the souls of the dead man the demon had pretended to be became that of the soldier Giacomo Piccinino, together with some other occurrences of demonic possessions from his times. In the regions of Bari and Otranto, in the year 1440, there had been several cases of demonic possessions, with demons claiming to be souls of dead men. There had also been another case, in Rome, in 1474, when a Jew had been decapitated for having killed another Jew. The souls of the two men would have then entered the body of a young Jewish girl, speaking in turn and revealing secrets about their own families. The possession, however, would have been uncovered as demonic and the girl eventually freed from it⁸⁸. The

⁸⁶ Bert Roest, 'Demonic Possession and the Practice of Exorcism: An exploration of the Franciscan legacy'. *Franciscan Studies* 76 (2018): 301-340: 316-321.

⁸⁷ Caracciolo, *De timore divinorum iudiciorum*: ff. c7v-c8r: «Diebus etiam meis aliquas mulieres demoniacas vidi et audivi illas loquentes talia que non nisi demones dicere potuerunt et virtute Ihesu Cristi liberate fuerunt. Inter cetera tamen una fuit Neapolis anno Domini MCCCCLXX de qua expertus sum que referam. Predicante me ibi tempore quadragesimali, sonabat undique rumor quod anime quorundam defunctorum intraverant corpus eius, loquebatur illorum idioma, commemorabat gesta et que nunquam ipsa didicerat enarrabat. Accessit ad eam cum suis illustrissimus Calabrie dux regius primogenitus, duxit eum in admirationem non parvam dum secretissima illorum defunctorum aperiebat. Quadam vero die ego ipse ad eam videndam accessi et quam primum intravi cameram in quam multi aderant, ipsa vero iuvenula iacebat in lecto, cepit furere, oculos torquere vultumque minacem et tristem exhibere, tandem clamans aiebat: "Tu venisti huc? Tu? Ad quid? Ad quid?" Ego respondi: "Ut tecum prelier in nomine Ihesu gloriosi". At illa: "Quid vis?" "Volo – dixi – scire quisnam es". Illa respondit: "Ego sum Stephanus Siculo, quondam armiger stipendiarius". Ego subdidi: "Mentiris o fallax et immunde spiritus. Adiuro te per Ihesum, in cuius nomine omne genuflectitur celestium, terrestrium et infernorum ut veritate patefatis". Tunc cum grandi molestia illius corporis arroganter respondit: "Ego sum diabolus". At ego: "Quare dicebas quod eras anima Stephani Siculi?" Et illa: "Ut decipiam. Ad hoc enim intendimus, ut decipiamus, quia vellemus omnes homines fore damnatos sicut et nos sumus". Iterum ego interrogavi eam: "Et quare me non decepisti, sed mihi verum confessus es?" Ille addidit: "Propter officium tuum, quia tu predicas Evangelicam veritatem et es inimicissimus noster". Ego replicavi: "Quare?" "Quia – inquit – nos sollicitamus homines ut perdantur, tu vero trahis illos ut convertantur". Dixi ad hec ego: "Quis ego sum?" Respondit: "Tu es frater Robertus, qui per omnem Italiam pluribus annis fuisti contrarius operibus nostris et noviter venisti Neapolim et prima die quadragesime predicasti in castro coram rege Ferdinando". Ego petii ab illo: "Quare odio habetis Deum?" Respondit: "Quia eiecit nos a celo empireo et privavit nos dignitate nostra". Et ne immorer multis per longum spatium ad interrogata respondit, licet quandoque male, libenter et ita docte, ita efficaciter, ita etiam hostiliter veritatem exprimebat quod omnino et infallibiliter deprehendi ipsum diabolus esse. Cui cum precepissem ut in nomine Ihesu corpus illud exiret nec eum lederet post multas cavillationes faciente misericordia Dei abscessit. Remansit vero puella illa pallida et a me interrogata quid faceret respondit se a somno evigilasse cum omnium membrorum suorum collisione».

⁸⁸ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 181r: «Dum ipsi (demones) quorundam vivorum corpora obsidentes simulant se esse animas defunctorum. Fuerunt eiusmodi delusiones quamplurime diebus meis, sicut scripsi in libro *De*

episode of the Neapolitan girl possessed by the demon claiming to be Giacomo Piccinino in narrated in even greater detail by Roberto in his last collection, the vernacular *Specchio della fede*, where we know that the young girl's name had been Lianora (Eleonora) and where she was said to be the daughter of one of King Ferdinand's crossbowmen⁸⁹.

It is known, and clearly visible from the examples described up to now, how women in particular played a central role as suspects of superstitious practices and beliefs and, especially, of the most infamous accusation of commerce with demons, be it by means of involuntary possession or by the open mischief of witchcraft. Roberto openly expressed his spite towards women and his anti-feminist feelings in his Paduan sermons and, when speaking of the use of casting lots, he burst out:

timore iudiciorum Dei de illa que Neapoli obsessa fuit et quamplurimos in errorem ducebat sum diabolus qui loquebatur per eam fatebatur se esse animam comitis Iacobi Picinini. Anno insuper Domini MCCCXL, in partibus terre Idroni et terre Bari, multi sic obsessi aiebant se esse animas quorundam qui diebus illis ex hac vita migraverunt. In Urbe predicante me ibi anno domini 1474. Decapitatus fuit quidam iudeus eo quod alium de suo genere interfecerat. Post paucos vero dies puella quedam hebreica loqui cepit nunc in persona unius illorum, nunc in persona alterius. Et dum amborum parentes concurrerent ad novum spectaculum aperiebant multa secreta domus illorum respondebantque ad interrogata, sicut faciebant dum viverent, hortabantque suos ut se invicem pacificarent multa que confinxerunt salutem. Tandem demones illi reliquerunt puellam et sic cessavit rumor exortus in plebe».

⁸⁹ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*: f. 85r-v: «Ma puro dirò quello che intravenne a Napoli, anno Domini MCCCCLXX, predicando in la Quaresima si dicia como una giovenetta chiamata Lianora, figliola de uno nominato Perico balestriero della maiestà del re Ferdinando, era spiritata e havia in corpo l'anima del conte Iacomo Piccinino e parlava como fosse stato proprio esso e narrava le cose suoi e li facti delle arme passati. Andò a vederla lo illustrissimo Duca di Calabria e un gran spacio rasonando insieme paria che fosse proprio el conte Iacomo. El dì seguente ce andai io a vedere et intendere la fallacia delli demonii. E intrando in camera dove era el padre e altre persone, signandomi col signo della croce, possi mente al lecto dove quella giovenetta stava a sedere, la quale voltando gli occhi verso di me incomenzò a fare la faza turbulenta e dise con superba parola: "Tu sei venuto qua? A che? A che fare sei venuto?" E io animosamente li rispose: "Io son venuto a combattere teco in nome del glorioso Iesu" E quella rispose: "Che voi?" E io dissi: "Voglio sapere chi si tu?" Rispose: "Io son Stefano Ciciliano, fameglia di coraza del conte Iacomo" E io replicai: "Tu menti, o fallace spirito! Io ti adiuro per Iesu Christo figliolo di Dio, in lo nome del quale si inchina ogni ginocchio di tutte creature del cielo, della terra e dello Inferno, che dichi la verità". Allora, con gran molestia di quello corpo, arrogantemente con voce aspera rispuose: "Io so lo Diavolo". Io la domandai: "E perché dicivi che eri el conte Iacomo e mo dicivi che eri Stefano Siciliano?" E quella disse per ingannare: "Questo è lo officio nostro, perché voleriamo che ogni homo fosse damnato como semo noi". Un'altra volta io la domandai: "Perché non inganni me, ma mi hai dicto lo vero?" E quella rispose: "Per lo officio tuo, perché predichi lo evangelio e sei grande nostro inimico". E io iterum subiunxi: "Chi so io?" Rispuose: "Tu sei fra' Roberto, el quale per tutta Italia ce hai facta gran guerra e mo sei venuto a Napoli ello primo dì de Quaresima predicasti in capella della Maiestà del Re e oggi hai predicato lo evangelio della samaritana e hai facto piangere molta gente". Io la domandai: "Perché aveti in odio Dio?" Rispuose: "Perché ne discazò dal cielo empireo e tolsenì la nostra dignità". Foroce assai più rasonamenti per un gran spacio rispondendo ad ogni cosa con tanta superbia che in verità compresi io e tutti circumstanti che era el Diavolo. Ma intra le altre cose io la dimandai: "San Francesco ebe nulla pena in questo mondo?" A che fece gran resistentia a volere rispondere e io strengendola con lo nome di Iesu incomenzò a fare con le dete all'una mano e all'altra e poi dire gridando: "Le piaghe! Le piaghe di Christo!" E poi molte cose dicte da mi e da esso io li comandai in virtù di Iesu benedetto che si partisse da quello corpo e cossì sbattendosi tutta quella figliola el diavolo se partio e quella rimase pallida e tutta smarita. E dicendoli io: "O Lianora, come ti senti?", rispuose: "Tutta mi sento fatigata" e io la domandai: "Che hai facto insino a mo?" Ella rispuose: "Ho dormito". E cossì mediante l'adiutorio di Dio quella fo liberata». See also *ibidem*: «Nella parte di terra Otranto, anno Domini MCCCXL, inditione secunda [it should be third], si trovaro alcuni garzoneti et donne spiritate e alcuno dicia che era el conte Iacomo Caldora, alcuno che era lo gran Senescalco e cossì nominavano l'anime di morti, dicendo essere quelli, ma in verità erano diavoli. E simili cose sono intravenute alli dì mei in molti luochi de Italia, le quale io lasso per non essere molto longo. Solo io dico che quando accade che alcuno demoniaco dica essere l'anima de alcuno, benché per colorare la falsità ricerca, si dicano messe e fazasi altri beni».

If women are the ones that practice this more than men, o infernal woman! O incredulous woman! O coarse woman! O mundane woman! O superstitious woman! O ribald sow! O vain woman! You search through lot casting if you should take someone as your husband. Now, God makes his divine judgement that you should end up badly and find an adverse husband, who will beat you often. Do you think demonic lot casting can get you a good husband? Now wait for God's judgement!⁹⁰

This brings us to the last issue for this section, which is Roberto's position on witchcraft and the testimonies about it he included in his sermons. It is well known how the fifteenth century as a whole constituted a sort of incubator for the development of the witches' Sabbath stereotype and its crystallization, especially represented by the infamous *Malleus maleficarum*, which appeared in the last decades of the century. In an essay published a little more than ten years ago, Richard Kieckhefer rightly directed the attention of scholars to a reconsideration of the origin of the Sabbath narrative, generally accepted as the result of a unique and more or less homogeneous process originating in South-Western Europe (Italy, Spain, Southern France and Switzerland) around the middle of the fifteenth century. Kieckhefer highlighted how the comparison of contemporary trial records from French Switzerland and Central Italy showed that witchcraft accusations and narratives were far from being the same, identifying rather two models, which would only later have blended in the better-known complex of the unique Sabbath narrative. Kieckhefer also identified a third model, which he found in a number of trials held in Northern Italy and Italian Switzerland, which he described as a mingling of the two major ones, but which rather should be connected, I believe, to the revival of the beliefs already condemned in the well known *canon Episcopi*⁹¹. This distinction of the different origins of witchcraft stereotypes – already sensed by Marina Montesano⁹² – can explain the apparently contradictory attitude, which can be seen in the position held by the majority of Observant Franciscan preachers. There only apparently seems to be

⁹⁰ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 208: «Si femine sunt ille, que hec magis quam homines agunt, o femina infernalis, o femina incredula, o femine gaiofone, o femine mundane, o femine superstitiose, o sues ribalda, o femina vana, vos cum sortibus queritis si debetis talem in virum accipere. Or Deus divino iudicio faciet quod male finietis ac maritum contrarium reperietis, qui vobis multas bastonatas dabit. Tu credis faciam diabolica sorte habere bonum virum? Or expecta Dei iudicium!». For Roberto's position towards women in other contexts see below, the last chapter of this section.

⁹¹ Richard Kieckhefer, 'Mythologies of Witchcraft in the Fifteenth Century'. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1 (2006): 79-108. For the general overview, though dated, see Id., *European Witch Trials. Their Foundation in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300-1500*. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976. On the trials from the canton of Vaud see Martine Ostorero, 'Les chasses aux sorcières dans les Pays de Vaud (1430-1530): bilan des recherches'. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte – Revue suisse d'histoire – Rivista storica svizzera* 52 (2002): 109-114, which contains further references to text editions and studies. On the trials in Perugia see Ugolino Nicolini, 'La stregoneria a Perugia e in Umbria nel Medioevo: con i testi di sette processi a Perugia e uno a Bologna'. *Bollettino della Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria* 84 (1987): 5-87. On the trials from Northern Italy see Niklaus Schatzmann, 'Hexenprozesse in der Leventina und die Anfänge der Hexenverfolgung auf der Alpensüdseite (1431-1459)'. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte – Revue suisse d'histoire – Rivista storica svizzera* 52 (2002): 138-142.

⁹² Montesano, «*Supra acqua et supra ad vento*»: 107. Now also see Ead., *Classical Culture and Witchcraft in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018: 173-212.

a contradiction between the refusal of certain aspects of the Sabbath narrative as deceptions – as the *canon Episcopi* imposed – and the participation in the condemnation of witches to be burnt on the stake. Bernardino da Siena could take part in the burning of Matteuccia and Finicella and Giacomo della Marca could publicly preach about Santuccia the day after she had been executed, condemning them as witches, despite elsewhere they overtly claim the delusional nature of the beliefs listed in the *canon Episcopi*: the two issues were clearly separate in the preachers' minds⁹³. Franciscan Observants will remain faithful to the *canon Episcopi* for a very long time, clashing with the Dominicans who, after the merging of the different witchcraft stereotypes, were by the end of the century prone to believe as true the fantastic narrations of night rides in the train of Diana⁹⁴. On the other hand, Franciscan preachers also pointed to demonic presence in the mischievous activity of some allegedly dangerous woman, distinguished however from those described and negated in the early medieval canon. So much that their preaching has also been given a central role in the construction of the Sabbath narrative⁹⁵.

The number of well documented witch-trials from fifteenth-century Italy is not large, if not from the very last decades. It was secular authority that condemned the witch (or, less often the sorcerer), still there are a few well-known cases in which friars, and Observant Franciscan preachers in particular, played a role in the condemnation. There is no possible way of diminishing Bernardino da Siena's role in the condemnation of the witch Finicella in Rome in 1425, since the preacher himself gave testimony of the part he had played in her burning on the stake⁹⁶. In 1428, Bernardino was not personally involved in the condemnation of Matteuccia in Todi. Still, it was his

⁹³ *Ivi*: 132-152.

⁹⁴ We might quote Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo*: II, 1009; Id., *Quadragesimale de christiana religione*: I, 117; Iacobus de Marchia, *Sermones dominicales*: I, 423; Carcano, *Sermones quadragesimales de decem preceptis*: f. 60v; Antonio da Vercelli, *Sermones quadragesimales de xii mirabilibus*: f. 162r; Busti, *Rosarium sermonum*: f. 129r-v. Cfr. Conti, *Witchcraft, Superstition and Observant Franciscan Preaching*: 285-304. See also Matteo Duni, 'I dubbi sulle streghe'. In: *I vincoli della natura: magia e stregoneria nel Rinascimento*, a cura di Germana Ernst e Guido Giglioni. Roma: Carocci, 2012: 203-222. For the Dominican position we might quote Giovanni dall'Aquila, *Sermones quadragesimales vitiorum lima nuncupati*: f. f2r: «Duodecimus modus et ultimus qui reducitur ad superstitiosam divinationem dicitur strigativus, cum aliquis vir vel aliqua mulier vadunt in striazo cum Dyana vel Iobiana vel Herodiana et credunt se in cattas converti et ire ad pueros et huiusmodi. Sine dubio peccant mortaliter, quia hoc procedit a magna familiaritate quam habent cum demone, qui etiam immutat fantasiam multiplici illusionem. Aliquando etiam feminas et homines trasfert corporaliter de loco ad locum et eis abutitur». It must be noted that older Dominican collections supported the opposite position, faithful to the *canon Episcopi*, such as in Tommasino da Ferrara, *Sermones quadragesimales*: f. 168r; Leonardo da Udine, *Sermones quadragesimales de legibus*. Vicenza: Stephanus Koblinger, 1479 [GW M17926]: f. b6v.

⁹⁵ As, for instance, in Tamar Herzig, 'Witchcraft Prosecutions in Italy'. *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, edited by Brian P. Levack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013: 249-267. For an opposite position, claiming the exclusively political ends of Franciscan Observants' preaching on witchcraft, see Pellegrini, 'Predicazione osservante e propaganda politica'.

⁹⁶ Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena*: II, 1007-1009. Cfr. Paton, "'To the Fire! To the Fire!'"; Montesano, «*Supra aqua et supra ad vento*»; Mormando, *The Preachers' Demons*; Michael D. Bailey, 'Nocturnal Journeys and Ritual Dances in Bernardino of Siena'. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 8 (2013): 4-17.

rubric on witchcraft that gave way to her burning by the towns' authorities⁹⁷. Finally, the trial that condemned the witch Santuccia in Perugia in 1445 was ordained by the Papal Legate Domenico Capranica, who however called Giacomo della Marca to preach to the people against her the day after her execution⁹⁸. Anyway, more important than the preacher's direct implication in the trials is that the narration of the trials and the events that had led to them rapidly became central and characteristic topics in Franciscan Observant preaching, recalled as *exempla* and models of the witch condemnations that the friars promoted.

Roberto's preaching adds at least two other examples to the list, testifying to the occurrence of witch-trials that would otherwise be unknown. In the sixtieth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, in the second chapter, he recalled the burning on the stake he had witnessed in Genova of a servant, guilty of having harmed her masters with her *diabolicae superstitiones*⁹⁹. Much more consistent and interesting is, however, the long account Roberto gave in his sermon on superstitions, in the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, of a witch-trial he had attended again near Genova, in Albenga, which it will be useful to quote in full:

In the town of Albegna, beyond Genova on the way to Marseilles, when I was present, an old woman was taken to be tortured, who for a long time did not seem to feel any fear of the pain. Hanged on a rack with her arms and hands tied behind her back, she bravely almost laughed of the torture. When, however, holy water was sprinkled onto her and having placed a blessed stole on her neck, having been barely raised the height of two fingers, she begun yelling: "Heu! Heu! Hold me, put me back on the ground and I will confess the truth about what you are asking". Then, the bishop's vicar questioned her: "Do you have cursed commerce with the Devil?" To which she answered: "Certainly I do and he was with me just now and with his help your torments did not hurt me. But as soon as these sacred things were placed onto me he immediately left me". He then asked her how she had begun her commerce with the Devil. And she: "When I got married in my youth, I found in my husband's house his priest brother, rather annoying and always opposed to me in everything. One day, when I remained alone in the house, hurt by his words and shouting, pushed by my desperation I begun to cry: 'O Devil, come to me and bring me your aid! O Devil, where are you?' While I was saying these words he appeared in the shape of a young man, but with a horn in his forehead, and he said to me: 'What do you want and what are you asking?' I, in turn, replied: 'That you help me'. He answered: 'I will send you an old woman, if you do as she tells you, you will have good'. And having said this he disappeared.

⁹⁷ Domenico Mammoli, *Processo alla strega Matteuccia di Francesco: 20 marzo 1428*. Todi: Tip. Tiberina, 1977 (Res Tudertinae, 8); Marino Bigaroni, 'San Bernardino a Todi'. *Studi francescani* 73 (1976): 109-125.

⁹⁸ Cfr. 'Cronaca della città di Perugia dal 1309 al 1491': 565.

⁹⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: ff. x7v-x8r: «Vidi ego Ianue conbustam et affixam palo quandam sclavam que suum dominum ac dominam cum his diabolicis superstitionibus interfecerat».

Then, after a while, the old woman arrived, who, having drawn a cross on the ground, told me to put my right foot on it. Having done this, she said: ‘Say: From this moment I renounce Jesus Christ and his saints and I renounce the place in Paradise which had been promised to me in baptism and I place my body and soul under the power of the Devil’. When I said these words, the Devil that had appeared to me before came. He comforted me and had intercourse with me from behind, though in the appropriate orifice. He requested my promise that every week I hurt some man or woman and he had me given some powders, made up of children’s grinded hearts and testicles, with which I should have touched whomever I could. I touched many and they died. I often went to the *ludus* during the night, in which a great number of demons and men took part and the great majority was made of women. I tried harming that priest, but I could not, since he was performing a divine office. I had commerce with the Devil for many years and I never wanted to confess this sin”. I was there and having heard this I was horrified of the crime, but on the other hand I was pleased to hear such beautiful secrets certifying our faith. After her, a young girl was brought, who publicly confessed that convinced by her mother she had made the same profession as the old woman. Whether they really took part in the *ludus* during the night or if she was deceived by the Devil, I do not know what to say. Indeed, they said they were truly present at those spectacles, but we know Augustine attributes all these to demonic illusion¹⁰⁰.

The testimony is surely unique for its colorfulness and the richness in detail. From the resistance to torments by means of demonic intervention to the representation of the Devil as a young man with a

¹⁰⁰ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: 45r: «ut nova recitem que ego vidi et audivi, dicam in civitate Albenge, ultra Ianuam, versus Massiliam, me presente vetula una torqueri fuit iussa que longo temporis spatio nullo videbatur dolore terri. Suspensa quippe in eculo brachiis post terga vel manibus colligatis intrepida quasi deridebat tormenta. Facta autem aspersione aque benedictae super eam et stola benedicta imposita collo eius vix ad duos digitos elevata super terram clamare cepit: “Heu! Heu! Sustinete, deponite me in terram et dicam veritatem de quibus interrogabitis” Tunc vicarius episcopi interrogavit eam: “Habesne tu cum diabolo maledicto commercium?” Que respondit: “Utique habeo et ipse mecum erat paulo ante, cuius auxilio tormenta vestra non me ledebant. At ubi res iste sacre delate sunt mox me relicta discessit”. Interrogavit rursus eam quo modo sibi diabolum familiarem fecisset. At illa: “Dum ego in iuventute mea nupsissem inveni in domo viri mei fratrem eius sacerdotem mihi molestum satis et in omnibus semper contrarium. Quadam vero die dum verbis et clamoribus eius remansissem afflicta in domo et sola consisterem ducta desperatione clamare cepi: ‘O diabole, veni ad me et fer auxilium tuum! O diabole ubi es?’ Inter hec verba astitit ibi in specie iuvenis cum cornu tamen in fronte dixitque mihi: ‘Quid vis aut quid queris?’ Ego vero: ‘Ut mihi succurras’, respondi. Ille vero subdidit: ‘Mittam ad te vetulam unam, si quod illa suaserit facies bene tibi erit’. Et hiis dictis evanuit. Inde ad modicum supervenit vetula illa que cruce in terram signata suasit ut super illam ponerem dextrum pedem. Quo facto: ‘Dicas – inquit – Ego ex hac hora abrenuncio Iesu Christo et sanctis eius renuncioque parti paradisi quam mihi in baptismo pollicitus fuerat corpusque et animam meam sub diaboli potestate repono’. Hec cum dixissem diabolus ille qui mihi primo apparuerat affuit. Confortavit me et mecum concubuit ex parte posteriore in vase tamen debito. Requisivitque promissionem meam ut hebdomada qualibet aliquem virum aut mulierem offenderem fecitque mihi dare pulveres contritos ex cordibus et testiculis infantum cum quibus haberem tangere quoscumque possem. Tetigi multos et perierunt. Sepe ad ludum nocturno tempore accessi, in quo confuevit multitudo maxima demonum et hominum precipue et pro maiore parte mulierum convenire. Tentavi nocere illi sacerdoti nec potui, quia divinum exolvebat officium. Multis annis cum diabolo conversata sum et peccatum istud nunquam volui confiteri”. Hec dum audissem ego, qui aderam, exhorui facinus altera ex parte letatus sum sudire tam stupenda secreta fidem nostram certificantia. Post illam adducta fuit quedam puella que confessa est ibi publice quod a propria matre seducta eandem quam vetula fecerat professionem Utrum autem ad ludum nocturno tempore realiter accessissent aut a diabolo deludebantur. Nescio quid dicam. Nam fatebantur ille vere et realiter illis spectaculis affuisse, sed Augustinus videtur omnia ista imputare diabolice illusioni».

horn in its forehead, from the description of the sexual intercourse of the witch with the Devil to the mysterious harmful powder made out of children's organs, the passage contains a large number of the Sabbath narrative's central elements. What however, I believe, should most of all be stressed in Roberto's account of the events are the last sentences, in which the preacher expresses his doubt. The *ludus* clearly was the most important element, in Roberto's eyes, in the conflict between the condemnation of all the mischiefs the witch confessed, which deserved severe punishment, and the denial of the entire confession as a demonic illusion, as the text of the *canon Episcopi* demanded. From his words, we read the preacher's dilemma: wanting to remain loyal to canon law and patristic authorities (Augustine's), but still being rather convinced by the account the witch had given of her experience. It signals his having become more open towards the belief of the reality of some of these superstitions – as in the case of the demon trapped in a jar I mentioned above – which he had in previous occasions treated with much more superficiality, dismissing them with incredulity and a large dose of irony¹⁰¹.

3. False saints and false prophets

One last issue that should be addressed with the input from Roberto's sermons regards the falsification of prophecy and sainthood, already partially anticipated, but only in regard to the very peculiar case of the cult of false relics. At this point, it will be interesting to consider some mentions made by Roberto of those who pretended to live a saintly life or to have a prophetic spirit and inspiration. This includes a number of different problems that I have decided to put together – different between each other and within the general topic of superstition – because of their common

¹⁰¹ See for instance Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 204: «Possunt esse anni quinque quod quedam ex civitate Gualdi [he should be referring to Santuccia] divinabat; sufficit quod combusta fuit, divinare tunc nescivit de se. Novi nigromantem quod multa pronunciabat, tamen nescivit de se divinare»; 206-207: «Recordor etiam me ab una vetula audivisse quod quidam sibi dixerat quod unus filius suus, natus sub certo planeto, furari debebat et suspendi, et, illa credens, ut planeto satisfaceret, crescente aliquantulum puero, fecit furchas in domo et illum suspendit, et ille puer periit. Or aspice qualiter illa fatua crediderit! Semel quedam mulier, que ad maritum iverat, manebat prima nocte cum viro penes ignem et quedam vetula ipsam docuerat quod, si prima nocte ipsum superaret, quod semper ipsum postea superaret, et ipsa verberare volebat. Maritus vero, hoc videns, capit unum bonum bastonum et ipsam taliter verberavit quod dimisit quasi semimortuam. Illa, sic intuens, infra se dicit: “Maledicatur illa vetula, que me hanc rem docuit, nam maritum meum hac prima nocte vincere arbitrabar, et ipse me vicit ac male tractavit”. Et ait: “Marite mi, non plus, quia tua medicina melior mea fuit, que me ab illo appetitu liberavit. Numquam agam plus predicta”. Quo audito eam reliquit, abinde citra valde marito obediens et obsequiosa fuit»; 210: «Erat in quadam civitate una vetula rechagnata, que pergebat in cursu, et domine, que maritos procul habebant, ad eam proficiscebantur, vocabaturque domina Simia, ac ei dicebant, videlicet nunc una, modo altera: “Vellem scire quid viri sit”. At illa: “Me ac nocte in cursum oportet accedere, sciam in mane tibi dicere, sed feras mihi unam bonam gracillam magnam pinguem paduanam”. Illa pazarella eam ferebat. Vetulla vero rechagnata totam edebat, et aliquando ei optimum vinum ferebant, et ipsa, que bene ederat et biberat, etiam in nocte bene dormiebat, adeo quod, quando se excitabat, sol altus erat. Demum ille eam expectabant, ut ab ea aliquod responsum haberent, sed rechagnata, viciosa, seu maliciosa eis responsum dabat secundum quod per prius cogitaverat, et aliquando verum divinabat et aliquando non, et hoc pacto gracillas edebat».

origin, which lies in the highly debated matter of the *discretio spirituum*¹⁰². It was a delicate task that of discerning a divinely inspired prophet from one with demonic influences, but, as it is well known already from the most clamorous case of Jean of Arc, accusations and apologies could get tanned with political and partisan reasons. One of the clearest of examples could be the one involving the preachers Bernardino da Siena (Franciscan) and Manfredi da Vercelli (Dominican), who accused each other of heresy and fiercely fought each other's success. Even clearer, perhaps, is the debate that involved, again, Franciscans and Dominicans over Catherine of Siena's stigmata.

We have seen in the biographical account how Roberto possibly took an active part in this latter debate that saw the two mendicant orders face each other for almost a century and that was surely still unsolved by the time of the Dominican tertiary's canonization in 1461. The narrative of the invisible stigmata was relatively easy to discredit and the Franciscans surely did not want their founder's privilege of having been blessed with Christ's wounds on earth to be diminished by the multiplications of the miracle. Hence the stubborn opposition to accepting Catherine's stigmatization¹⁰³.

It comes as some surprise, then, to find Roberto preaching in the afternoon of Catherine's canonization day inside the Dominican convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, in Rome. It is true that Roberto preached in the Dominican convent quite often during his stays in Rome, but still, his listeners surely did not receive positively the discredit he probably put on the new saint's stigmata that day. The original sermon is not extant, but we can read a model sermon dedicated to Saint Catherine that Roberto inserted in his *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*¹⁰⁴. The first chapter of the sermon was dedicated to the demonstration that even a woman can receive all the blessings Catherine received, listing several examples of privileges women have received from God. The second chapter listed the seven virtues that characterized Catherine's life, namely virginity, generosity (*magnanimitas*), austerity, piety, patience, humility and perseverance. Particularly in

¹⁰² See especially Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2003. See also Roberto Rusconi, *L'attesa della fine: crisi della società, profezia ed Apocalisse in Italia al tempo del grande scisma d'Occidente (1378-1417)*. Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1979; André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1989; Gabriella Zari, *Le sante vive: profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*. Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990; *Funzione e santità tra Medioevo ed età moderna*, a cura di Gabriella Zari. Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1991; Gábor Klaniczay, 'Miraculum and Maleficium: Reflections Concerning Late Medieval Female Sainthood'. In: *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, edited by Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Robert W. Scribner. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997: 49-73; Roberto Rusconi, *Profezia e profeti alla fine del Medioevo*. Roma: Viella, 1999; Gábor Klaniczay, 'The Process of Trance, Heavenly and Diabolic Apparitions in Johannes Nider's *Formicarius*'. *Collegium Budapest discussion Paper Series* 65 (2003): <http://www.colbud.hu/main/PubArchive/DP/DP65-Klaniczay.pdf>.

¹⁰³ Besides the bibliography quoted above n. 220 of the chapter on Roberto's life, see the recent monographic issue *Discorsi sulle stimmate dal medioevo all'età contemporanea – Discours sur les stigmates du Moyen Âge à l'époque contemporaine*, edited by Gábor Klaniczay. *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 26 (2013).

¹⁰⁴ Caracciolo, *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*: ff. 210v-216r. See above the discussion at the end of subchapter 4 of Roberto's life.

treating Catherine's virtue in patience, we should note how no mention at all was made of her bearing the suffering of the stigmata, but instead Roberto stressed her voluntary penances and other physical sufferings from illness¹⁰⁵. The third and last chapter, then, illustrated the seven graces granted by God to Catherine: *mentalis illustratio* (meaning an uncommon knowledge), prophecy, supernatural visions, a sweet consolation from the Holy Communion, miracles, revelations and, finally, canonization. The event of the stigmatization was forecedly mentioned this time, in the paragraph dedicated to supernatural visions. Roberto gave a narration of Catherine's reception of the invisible stigmata and then he recalled how an iconographic model of hers had diffused, in which she was pictured receiving the stigmata from Christ¹⁰⁶. If this was made, the preacher wrote, to show what is invisible through something visible, then it might be acceptable, although it could mistakenly lead to believe that Catherine received visible stigmata. If, on the other hand, the representations were made to equiparate Catherine's stigmata to the ones that Saint Francis had received, then they were to be judged reprehensible. Then Roberto recalled his presence at the canonization in 1461, also recalling the sermon he delivered then. The Pope, he said, made no mention of her stigmatization, nor was there any picture representing it.

I gave a sermon to the people that day, in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. I studied and read everything that had been written, and some even more times, in praise of that saint. I could not find anything of what I said before about the pain without marks that she bore during her exctatic rapture. And even if we were to name that pain stigmata, the conditions of Saint Francis' miraculous stigmata would not be contained or included in it. [...] Catherine was, as it is clear from what I said and from what I am about to say, adorned with great privileges and graces, but she was not conceded the same stigmata as Francis¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ Caracciolo, *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum*: ff. 213v-214r: «Fuit patiens in passionibus sive in penitentiis voluntarie assumptis, sine infirmitatibus corpori suo supervenientibus. Teste enim Pio, ubi supra [bulle canonizationis] dolore capitis pene assidue torbebat, etuabat febribus nec illorum cruciatu carebat».

¹⁰⁶ For this same issue preached (in Florence, in April 1474) by another Franciscan, Bartolomeo da Colle, see Zafarana, 'Per la storia religiosa': 1067: «E qui anche disse chome le cichatricie e' l'à, e delle mani, de' piedi e del chostato, e che chon quelle apparirà al giudicio, ma a bbellezza e chiarità del corpo, e non a bbrutteça. E anche disse chome e' non si chredesse che in questo mondo fusse rinnovellato le stimate se non solo in san Francescho, benché si dica essersi dimostre in altre santi e ssante: e che e' non era vero nulla, e che e dipintori per tocchare danaro dipinghono e dipingnierebbono ongni chosa». The representation of Catherine «cum stigmatibus Christi [...] ad instar beati Fracisci» and even the mention of her receiving stigmata in sermons were prohibited by Sixtus IV with the bull *Spectat ad Romani* dated September 1472.

¹⁰⁷ *Ivi*: 214v-215r: «Cum Catherina esset in civitate Pisana et quodam mane in ecclesia Sancte Cristine communicasset ac iuxta altare rapta maneret in spiritum, postquam diu sic steterat, vidit Cristum cruci affixum magno super se cum lumine descendentem radiosque sanguineos ex suis quicque sacratissimis cicatricibus emittentem. Cumque tunc videntibus pluribus utriusque sexus ipsam expectantibus, virgo se erigeret et super genua sua stans facie rutilante brachia elevasse tac manus oraretque ne cicatrices in corpore suo apparerent exterius. Tunc ex radiis sanguibus in solareibus immutatis a cicatricibus crucifixi procedentibus et ad manus, pedes et ad cor illius provenientius, valde intrisecus dolor sensibilis in dictis partibus corporis est relictus. Ex quo, cum corpus eius diu six staret rigidum et oculis clausis, tandem cecidit ac si fuisset letaliter vulneratum. Post modicum ad se reducta, tanto dolore concutiebat, ut a cunctis putaretur in brevi moritura. Dominica vero sequenti ibi comunicans a dolore extitit liberata. Ex visione pretacta in plerisque locis nonnulli sanctam Catherinam susipientem stigmata a Christo depingi fecerunt, qui si ea intentione id

Thus, although Catherine's sainthood and prophetic spirit were not in discussion, and could, instead, even be exalted, the Franciscan preacher defended the privilege of the stigmata received by his order's founder. He had already done so in the sermon dedicated to Francis in the same collection of *Sermones de laudibus sanctorum* and he did so in other occasions as well. He had even called in a demon to testify for Francis' real reception of the stigmata, as in the version of the exorcism he performed in Naples given in his *Specchio della fede*. When he was questioning the possessed girl, «among other things I asked her: “Did Saint Francis suffer any pain in this world?”, to which she made a great resistance to answering, and because I menaced her with the name of Jesus, she begun pointing her fingers to one hand and then to the other and then she shouted: “The wounds! The wounds of Christ!”»¹⁰⁸. Despite the issue of her stigmata, however, Catherine remained a saint to whom Roberto professed his devotion. Her prophetic spirit had been, he wrote in the thirty-ninth sermon of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, a clear sign of which side to take during the great schism¹⁰⁹.

Prophecy was indeed a delicate issue. Scholars have stressed the prophetic and eschatological climate of the late Middle Ages¹¹⁰. As Roberto said about Catherine, prophecy was a divine gift granted by God to some particularly worthy men (or women, such as, besides Catherine, Bridget of Sweden)¹¹¹. In another occasion, however, Roberto showed himself more resentful in believing prophetically inspired predictions, asserting that he found the words of alleged prophets –

egerint, ut per visibilia invisibilia cognoscantur et per picturam illam visibilem dolor eius invisibilis licet sensibus designetur forte non obstante, errore inde sequente quo credi posset stigmata eam visibilia suscepisse tollerari utique possent. Sed si hec facta sunt ut sic equiparetur beato Francisco, cui soli usque in presens singulari modo stigmata divinitus sunt impressa, utique reprehensibile est. [...] Non derogent ista dignitati beate Catherine, nec alterius sancti. Ego peccator, qui hunc sermonem feci, sanctam ipsam devotione qua possum et colo et veneror. Eramque Rome anno Domini MCCCCLXI, anno tertio Pii pontificis maximi, quando pontifex prefatus, Spiritu Sancto volente, sanctam Catherinam sollemni celebriate canonizavit. Nulla tunc a referentibus et vita et miracula Catherine de stigmatibus facta est mentio, nulla pictura cum stigmatibus fuit delata, nulla insuper in bulla quam superius frequenter allegavimus de stigmatibus mentio habita est. Ego insuper ea die canonizationis sermonem ad populum habui post prandium in ecclesia Minerve ordinis predicatorum. Inspeci, legi et quidem sepius omnia que scripta erant de laudibus huius sancte nil aliud invenire potui, nisi quod superius expressum est de illo dolore quem tulit absque signis in suo extatico raptu. Et si nomine stimatum dolorem illum intelligi volumus, non tamen in illo continentur et includuntur conditiones miraculose stigmatum beati Francisci. Igitur cum Deus non egeat nostro mendacio, ea proferamus de sanctis que secundum rei veritatem non inventionem hominum illis possunt accomodari. Fuit Catherina, ut patet ex dictis et ex hiis que sequuntur, amplissimis privilegiis et gratiis decorata, sed stigmatum specie non fuit ut Franciscus insignita. Que si ad nos gloriosa rediret, dura increpatione feriret illos qui sub specie pietatis mendaciis vellent suam gloriam ampliare. Oro tamen patres meos predicatorum et minores ne populos scandalizent, quibus tam multa mira de sanctis se offerunt et precipue de Catherina, ut mendacia et propter se ipsa et propter veritatis habundantiam deserere et detestari cogantur».

¹⁰⁸ See above in the preceding subchapter.

¹⁰⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. p9r: «Nam sub Urbano et Bonifacio fuit sancta Brigida et sancta Katherina de Senis; sub Clemente et Benedicto ex alia parte fuit beatus Petrus de Luciburgo, clarus miraculus; sub Benedicto etiam fuit sanctus Vincentius de ordine predicatorum. Tandem congregatio concilio Constantie Gregorius prefatus sponte renunciavit per Carolum de Malatestis suum in hoc procuratorem, Iohannes XXIII fugam arripuit, sed captus per imperatorem rediit et tandem depositus fuit. Benedictus etiam qui nec venire nec mittere voluit, depositus fuit ubi creatus fuit dominus Oddo de Columna cardinalis, qui fuit Martinus papa V».

¹¹⁰ Besides the titles quoted above n. 102, see at least Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, edited by Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst, Andries Welkenhuysen. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988.

¹¹¹ Roberto discussed this in the first part of the third sermon of his *Sermones de Adventu*.

making the names of Gioacchino da Fiore, Bridget of Sweden, Methodius and Merlin – incomprehensible. He also gave the example of a preacher – perhaps Vincent Ferrer – who had been deceived in believing that the coming of the Antichrist was near¹¹².

Moreover, the risk was that anyone could claim of having received divine revelations. What particularly worried popular preachers was the diffusion of self-proclaimed prophets and apocalyptic preachers, which competed with their disciplining office among the people. The best known testimony given by Roberto of a *romito*, apocalyptic preachers who wandered Italy in his day often characterized by poor clothing and long beards, is the one he gave of Antonio. This wandering preacher would have arrived in Naples when Roberto was preaching in the cathedral in 1473 and would have begun spreading his eschatological fears among the people, claiming that by the end of the year Naples and other seven Italian cities would have been destroyed. Nothing such happened and the preacher, Roberto noted, suffered a violent death in Padua, after he had visited Sicily, where he had been beaten and had lost his sight¹¹³. To this *exemplum*, recalled both in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis* and in his *Specchio della fede*, he also added one regarding a Friar Minor, Valentino da Treviso, who had prophesied a series of events in Rome, of which none had turned out true¹¹⁴. In the *Quadragesimale de peccatis*, Valentino appeared alongside Bartolomeo da

¹¹² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. u1r-v: «Aiunt enim abbate Ioachim spiritu claruisse prophetico. Ipse vero *Papalistas* depinxit, in quo multa futura de statu Ecclesie prenunciavit ibique ponit duos post istum qui Paulus secundus vocatur summos pontifices esse futuros, post quos et tertius depingitur qui coronam exhibet Antichristo. Sed et ego dico quod licet multa predixerint, Ioachim, sancta Brygida, Methodius, Merlinus et ceteri qui spiritum habuerunt prophetie, tamen ut mihi videtur dicta eorum non intelliguntur. Nam de Nicolao, Calixto, Pio et Paulo pontificibus maximis nihil inventum est. Quod *Papalista* sonet secundum veritatem, quod si verum sit relinquo arbitrio sapientium dicendum. Et propterea reprehensibiles potius iudico quam laude dignos eos qui prophetias que in scriptura sacra non habentur nimis curiose legere et interpretari student, quam sepius inveniuntur decepti. Scio etenim etiam graves ac sanctos viros in hoc ipsa defecisse. Nam quidam egregius et sanctus predicator, diebus nostris catalogo sanctorum ascriptus, bono zelo ductus publice et sepiissime predicavit immo super inde tractatum copiosissime scripsit, quod suo tempore natus erat Antichristus. Habebat ipse quasdam prophetias aliquasque rationes quibus inducebatur, ut ita crederet et predicaret. Sed revera evidentia facti declarat ipsum fuisse deceptum. Et sic non audeo per aliquam prophetiam quam non intelligo temere diffinire quod tempus iam immineat Antichristi».

¹¹³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: ff. 47v-48r: «Dum in civitate Neapolitana predicabam Evangelium Christi supervenit ibi quidam sacerdos novo modo indutus, longam habens barbam et nudis pedibus incedens fingensque simulatam austeritatem vite, qui in suis predicationibus affirmabat tanquam propheta quod anno illo certissime septem Italie civitates erant submergende aliaque de statu Ecclesie predicebat. Ita quod nisi ego me sibi opposuissem generasset scandala plurima, quid plura nihil evenit ex hiis que predixit, qui pergens Siciliam nescio quam ob rem fuerit graviter vulneratus et eius oculi totaliter ex vulneribus et percussionibus excecati»; Id., *Specchio della fede*: f. 40r: «Ancora io ho veduto alli di miei più persone ingannate dal dimonio le qual si hanno creduto, overo hanno fincto havere rivelationi e spirito di profecia. E le cose dicte da loro son state false, como fo di quello dompno Antonio, lo quale andava in uno habito apostolico, scalzo e con la barba, el quale predicando io a Napoli nel millesimo CCCCLXXIII allo arcivescovato, lui si condusse a predicare alla Annunciata e non una ma più volte con astuta maniera afirmando disse che in quello anno profundarie Napoli e siei altre cità di Italia. Napoli e quelle cità non profundaro e lui fece non troppo bona morte in Padova, dove era ritornato poi che in Sicilia li foro cavali li occhi».

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*: «Fo uno altro fra Valentino di Treviso, ordinis minorum, lo quale mandò al tempo di Calisto uno suo compagno a Roma, el quale congregò una gran moltitudine di gente e annunciò certe profecie di quello fra Valentino e non fo cosa nulla di quante ne disse».

Savona and one Mariano, active in Naples¹¹⁵. One other *exemplum*, but this time more simply evoking a mischievous preacher, Roberto gave in his sermon dedicated to Saint Bernardino¹¹⁶.

Although the testimony does not directly come from Roberto's sermons, I would like to close this chapter recalling two prophetic preachers who somehow link with the Franciscan's activity. The first one is Mercurio da Correggio. His wondering and propheticizing are known to us especially from the later writings by Ludovico Lazzarelli. It is probable that Roberto attended some of his spectacular appearances, dressed up, riding a donkey or wearing a crown of thorns, either in Rome, or, more probably in Florence, where Mercurio was also arrested and questioned by the Franciscan inquisitor during Lent 1486, when we know Roberto was preaching in town. Still, no testimony has unfortunately remained of this curious figure in Roberto's sermons. The last event that I would like to recall is an unknown account of the activity of a pseudo-prophet (named «de Monte sancto») in Puglia in the early fifteenth century, which is preserved in one of the sermons, not still entirely ascribable to Roberto with certainty, but containing references and linguistic traces to Roberto's native area, in the Rieti manuscript. In the sermon *De sortilegiis* – which precedes Roberto's sermon on superstition – the story is told of the alleged incarnation of the Holy Spirit, who wandered the Southern region accompanied by a crowd of followers. When he reached a town, he would set camp inside the largest church, providing to sleep with young virgin, brought to him by their devout mothers, who rarely failed to remain impregnated by the Holy Ghost. Failing his success with his failure to accomplish the miracles he had promised, he was eventually captured and burnt¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁵ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 47v: «Fuit quidam frater Valentinus de Trevisio et alius frater Batholomeus de Savona et unus frater Marianus, qui morabatur in Sancta Maria delle Gratie Neapoli tempore regis Alphonsi, quod ego omnes novi et per ipsos prophetice preannuntiata non evenisse conspexi».

¹¹⁶ Ivi: f. 156v: «Tempore meo inventi sunt aliqui fingentes et predicantes miracula falsa, visiones excogitatas, prophetias determinatas secundum suum sensum et alia huiusmodi, qui tamen evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis. Nonnulli vero ut ignorantibus sapientes apparerent falsas allegationes ad suum propositum induxerunt, unde dum quidam amicus meus predicaret Neapoli, inducere voluit ad robur et confirmationem cuiusdam sui dicti sententiam commentatoris, qui tamen forte nec in aliquo commento dictum illud tangebatur et dum falso allegasset commentatorem primo de anima, tertio de anima, secundo phisicorum, tertio methaphisice et huiusmodi. Tandem multiplicando verba dixit: “Et hoc idem confirmat commentator primo ethicorum, tertio ethicorum, 7 ethicorum”, qui tamen de ethicis non se intromisit. Ille idem fecerat sibi quandam catenam doctorum et falso illos inducebat dicens: “Et hoc refert Augustinus libro 2 *De civitate Dei* et 3 *De trinitate* et in *Encheridion* et huiusmodi” ita quod apud imperitos videbatur homo mirabilis, sed apud doctos ignarus et mendacis plenus».

¹¹⁷ Rieti: f. 92r: «Nota hic de illo perversissimo homine qui, dudum apparuisse dicitur in Apulie partibus tempore famis et guerre anno, ut arbitror, 1418, qui spiritum luciferi inflatus dicebat se Spiritum Sanctum, tertiam videlicet personam Trinitatis, qui erat acutissimus et doctissimus et suis falsis probationibus asserebat Spiritum Sanctum incarnatum, scilicet se ipsum, et Patrem deberet incarnari. Qui quidem sua arte magica faciebat per vias et plateas sterna mense plene omnibus cibis necessariis et vino, ut eum sequentes possent comedere et bene bibere; et alia signa perversa demonstrabat. Et adeo populi in eum ferebant devotionem, quod nemo ei contradicere presumebant, quia statim interficiebatur, ita quod etiam episcopi et clerici serviebant ei in missa qualibet cotidie celebrabat. Et hic nota qualiter in qualibet terra in ecclesia principali sterneretur lectus altus et magnus et ibi dormiebat cum virginibus, quas proprie matres ducebant, ut in nocte acciperent Spiritum Sanctum et ipsis vigilantibus, dum ille maledictus homo stubrabat (sic!) virgines et ille vociferabant tunc matres earum decepte dicebant modo accipit spiritum, scilicet: “Heu mihi, quia non sum digna etiam ego accipere”, quia ille volebat nisi virgines; et sic multas ingravidavit etc. Et nota etiam quando

comunicavit mos presbiteros cum sua urinam iam sancta in tintinabulo etc. Et in huius rei testimonio ego accepi ab uno fratre nostro devoto, digno fide, qui dixit quod quiddam suus consanguineus etiam de illa urina bibit. Frater postulavit: “Dic mihi, obsecro, quoniam sapiebat tibi ille presbiter”. Respondit: “Sicut erat, scilicet de urina, sed propter alios ego bibi etc. Sed tandem cum iste multa fecissem mala”. Aspiravit ad dominium et cum quibus eum sequebantur cepit unum castellum, unius cuius uxorem in publico comunicando eam osculatus est, sed quia ille dominus indigne hoc ferens, non concordabat secum amplius etc. Unde capto castello, arcem in qua dominus erat non potuit expugnare, licet per incantationem. Fecisset pluere lapides super arcem et non quoniam hora nona in loco ubi era tulle dominus. Volebat quod fieret laqus etc. sed cum non fecisset, sequentes eum reliquerunt et quoniam a sociis suis poscidavit librum, sed nutu dii perditus, sic fuit captus et rarus barba magna quam habebat etc. finaliter fuit combustus. Et vocabat se de Montesanto et non de ferita lateris etc. Et sic cum dyabolis ad inferna descendit, si non habuit contritionem etc.».

In place of an epilogue: shelved topics for future research

As anticipated in the general introduction of the dissertation and in the more specific introduction to this part, this project represents an initial step towards the exploitation of fifteenth-century sermon collections as sources for the historical reconstruction of the time's intellectual and religious debate. Having focused on a single author, despite one of the most famous and prolific, its results could not hope to be much more than a collection of initial "tiles", which, once put into dialogue with other similar and different sources, will show all their potential in rebuilding the "mosaic" of the culture and religiosity of fifteenth-century Italy, revealing little known or completely unknown aspects of them. For some of the hints to and mentions of such aspects, it has already been possible to offer a partial reconstruction of variable length and depth, which constitute the preceding chapters. For others, instead, I have not been able to give a full and convincing discussion yet, or I have considered it unnecessary in this context. It will be anyway useful to list these issues here, making all the results of my digging effort into the sources available for any possible future research.

There are different reasons why I have left aside some of the topics I have met in Roberto's sermons, despite their potential in the reconstruction of fifteenth-century intellectual and religious debates. One of these reasons is related to the fact that there are some well-documented and known issues to which the mentions present in Roberto's sermon collections do not offer consistent novelties. Such are, for instance, some typical topics of fifteenth-century popular preaching like the misogynous presentation of women or the beastly stereotypes regarding Jews. Roberto, like many other confreres, pictured women as mouthy, unreliable and frivolous beings, and attacked them especially for their excessively fancy garments and ornaments¹. However, this negative picture of

¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. p1r: «Sunt de huiusmodi genere mulieres garule, loquaces et litigiose. Vix una domus reperitur in qua non sit huiusmodi pestis macula. Contendit mulier nunc cum uno, nunc cum alio: nunc cum viro, nunc cum socru, nunc cum nuru, nunc cum vicina estque contentio illi velut cibus [...] Quisnam valet exprimere quot odia aut scandala exorta sunt et in dies oriri videntur inter patrem et filium, inter fratrem et fratrem, inter vicinum et vicinum propter contentiones mulierum? Sed audiant viri, qui sensu et ratione mulieres superare debent, salubre consilium quid illis damus: si in domo sunt duo germani simul cohabitantes et invenirent litigantes uxores, caveant, ne ipsi litigent, sed potius unusquisque advocet suam et verbis vel factis corrigat illam, prout necessitatibus viderit expedire. Sic faciant viri uxoribus, sic et paterfamilias subditis suis»; ff. q10v-r1r: «Mulieres magis ad vovendum prone sunt quam viri, nec reprehendimus eas quia vovent, sed quia indiscrete vota facere solent. Sunt et sepe inconsiderate ac leves et vota emittunt irrationabilia et stulta, pro quibus non expedit ut sacerdotem pro absolute requirent. Vir in hoc casu auctoritatem habet non ex vi clavium, que in ipso non est, sed auctoritate presidentie, quam in uxorem habet. Et cum uxor obedire nollet viro dicenti viro sibi nolle eam sua vota complere, potest verbis superaddere verbera, ita tamen ut in omnibus modestia gerant. Volui sic hec pauca dixisse quia novi mulierum importunitatem que viros quandoque affligunt et vexant ut sub votorum occasione licentiam eis largiantur vacandi, discurrendi ac expendendi pecunias domus cum damno et detrimento familie»; Id., *Sermones de timore divinatorum iudiciorum*: f. e8v «Propter mulierum condiciones noxias in grandia peccata sepenumero lapsi homines Deum irritant, ut sue iustitie in illos

the woman in general is countered by a more positive one of the housewife, the sole remedy – in the preachers' eyes – to the dissolution of morals and customs². As for Jews, Roberto, in line with his contemporaries, clearly opposed them and their religion, thus there is no surprise to find mention of them in his sermons “against infidels”, alongside Muslims. The arguments concerning these latter have already lured scholars' interest, especially regarding the mentions Roberto made of Muhammad's *mi'rāj*³. Some attention has been dedicated to Roberto's vision of Jews and particularly to the credit he gave to some circulating popular stereotypes regarding them, but it will be useful to repeat the lengthy quotation that concerns this issue. In his *Specchio della fede*, for example, Roberto recalled two episodes in which he would have personally experienced the Jews' typical foul odor:

I have experienced myself how much Jews smell in two occasions. The first case was when, in Lecce, a Jewish woman, the wife of the doctor Abraham, sent me some fat chicken as a gift, which I kept for a few days attending well to them and then wished to eat them. When they were put on the tale they made such a smell that I had to have them brought away. The second case was in Brindisi, where I arrived one summer and preached and, because of the sweating and cooling down, I felt some pain in my chest. And while I was in my room, a Jewish doctor came to visit me, although I had not called for him. As soon as he set foot in the room I felt such a nausea that I felt I was about to throw up everything I had in my body. That doctor begun saying: “Father, you have caught a cold” and the more he approached me, the more my stomach revolted. I told him: “Leave and do not disturb me any longer”. As soon as he had left, my stomachache ceased⁴.

furorem effundat et quamvis ita fore facile deprehendi possit, ex relatis in duobus precedentibus sermonibus, verumtamen videmus cotidie patrias flagellari, quod probi et sancti viri arbitrantur fieri, quia indignatur Deus propter inordinatos excessus ornatus mulierum et pompam immo inhonestatem vestimentorum». Cfr. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, “Contra munadanas vanitates et pompas”. *Aspetti della lotta contro i lussi nell'Italia del XV secolo*. *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 40/2 (1986): 371-390.

² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. m7r: «Considera namque mulieris bone in cunctis diligentem, solertiam: hec enim blada et frumenta ordinat et gubernat, tuetur oleum, salsas, carnes in domo esse procurat, pannos laneos ne a tineis corrodantur ventilat. Lineos quoque pro necessitate procurat et lavat, dissipata et quasi consueta resarcit, pervigiles oculos mentemque prudentem ad omnem substantiam domus habet. Columna viri et filiorum est. Si maritus languet cum infirmo infirmatur cibum per dolore non sumit somnia oblita quiescere nescit. Erudit filios et omnem familiam in timore Dei et bonis moribus instruit. Sed quid concubina facit? Verba certe loquitur blanda, sed venenosa fingit se plus amare quam amet. Nunc mesta facie, nunc leta. Aliquid semper querit. Si in domo eius uxore absente ingreditur, quicquid potest rapere rapit. Si sibi in amicitie et fidelitas signum aliquid adulter servandum tradiderit aut perdidisse, se mentietur aut procacissima importunitate verborum ad se arripit. Evacuat bursa, denigrat famam et ad peccatum ligat animam amatoris».

³ Angelo De Fabrizio, ‘Il *Mirag* di Maometto esposto da un frate salentino del secolo XV’. *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 49/2-3 (1907): 299-313; Giorgio Levi Della Vida, ‘Dante e l’Islam secondo nuovi documenti’. In Id., *Aneddoti e svaghi arabi e non arabi*. Milano-Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1959: 149-161: 157; McMichael, ‘Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce and his sermons on Muhammad and the Muslims’: 344-347.

⁴ Caracciolo, *Specchio della fede*, ff. 48-49: «Ho provato io peccatore quanto puzano gli Iudei in dui exempli. E lo primo exemplo fu, trovandomi in Lezze, una donna Iudea moglie di maestro Habraam medico, mi mandò a donare certe galline ben grasse, le quale io feci stare alcuni giorni e governarle bene, poi le volse mangiare. Quando furono

The Jewish doctor Abraham from Lecce has justly been identified with the celebrated physician Abraham de Balmes, who in the 1450s was the personal doctor of the Prince Giovanni Antonio del Balzo Orsini, lord of Taranto and Lecce⁵.

Another preaching theme of which I have found some references in Roberto's sermons and which his confreres largely shared with him is the one against games and the negative effects they had on society⁶. It is well known how preachers consistently worked in favor of stricter laws against gambling and games in general and how they even often physically included games in their bonfires of vanities⁷. Their concern was due to the moral decay that gambling brought with itself. Roberto dedicated an entire sermon to the «avarice of players» in his *Quadragesimale de peccatis* (XLIII). In the first chapter of the sermon, Roberto distinguished three kinds of games: devotional games, such as attending sacred plays; permissible recreational games, like chess; and, finally, games that displease God. Obscene representations, games that put health at risk, like tournaments and fighting games, and especially games of dice are representative of this latter category⁸. Perhaps even more

poste in tavola a mi venne tanto fetore che bisognò che le facesse portare via. El secondo exemplo fu in Brindisi, dove arrivato io una estate e predicando, per lo sudare e rafredare mi vene un poco di dolore di pecto. E dimorando in camera vene là uno medico Iudeo non già chiamato da me. Subito che lui intrò mi vene tanta nausea che paria che volesse gittare per bocca tutto quello che io haveva in corpo. E quello Iudeo medico incomenzò a dire: “O padre, voi haveti preso gran freddo” e faciamisi apresso e a mi tanto più si conturbava lo stomaco. Io gli dissi: “Vatene via, non mi dare più molestia” Subito partito che fu el Iudeo medico cessò a me quella turbatione di stomaco». Cfr. Marcello Semeraro, ‘Fra Roberto Caracciolo e gli ebrei’. In *Studi storici*, a cura di Cesare Colafemmina. Bari: Ed. Ecumenica, 1974: 43-60; Visani, ‘La predicazione di Roberto Caracciolo e la Puglia’: 139-140; Carmela Massaro, ‘Ebrei e città nel Mezzogiorno tardomedievale: il caso di Lecce’. *Itinerari di ricerca storica* 5 (1991): 9-50; Michael Hohlstein, *Soziale Ausgrenzung im Medium der Predigt. Der franziskanische Antijudaismus im spätmittelalterlichen Italien*. Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2012: *ad indicem*. For general overviews of these stereotypes see Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1943; Léon Poliakov, *The history of Anti-Semitism*, 4 vols. London: Routledge & Kegan [then Oxford: Oxford University], 1966-1985: I: *From the Time of Christ to the Court Jews*. For the specific Italian case and for further bibliographical references: Armando Antonelli, Giacomo Mariani, ‘*Maledictiones hebreorum*. Un quattrocentesco testimone emiliano’. *Rivista di storia del cristianesimo* 14/2 (2017): 377-396.

⁵ Coluccia, ‘Lingua e cultura’: 492-493.

⁶ Claudia Cardinali, ‘Il santo e la norma. Bernardino da Siena e gli statuti perugini del 1425’. In *Gioco e giustizia nell’Italia di Comune*, a cura di Gherardo Ortalli. Roma: Viella – Treviso: Fondazione Benetton, 1993: 183-191; Alessandra Rizzi, ‘Il gioco fra norma laica e proibizione religiosa: l’azione dei predicatori fra Tre e Quattrocento’. *Ivi*: 149-182; Ead., *Ludus/ludere: giocare in Italia alla fine del Medio Evo*. Treviso: Fondazione Benetton – Roma: Viella, 1995; Ead., ‘Predicatori, confessori mendicanti e gioco alla fine del medioevo’. In *Religiosus Ludens. Das Spiel als kulturelles Phänomen in mittelalterlichen Klöstern und Orden*, herausgegeben von Jörg Sonntag. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2013: 97-113; Thierry Depaulis, “‘Breviari del diavolo so’ le carte e naibi”. How Bernardine of Siena and his Franciscan Followers Saw Playing Cards and Card Games’. *Ivi*: 115-134.

⁷ Cfr. Gábor Klaniczay, ‘The “Bonfires of the Vanities” and the Mendicants’. In: *Emotions and Material Culture. International Round Table Discussion Krems an Der Donau, October 7 and 8, 2002*, edited by Gerhard Jaritz. Wien: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003: 31-59.

⁸ Roberto, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: ff. 123r-124r: «Primus est ludus devotionis. Ad hunc invitat psalmus dicens “Omnes gentes plaudite manibus, iubilante Deo in voce exultationis”. Hunc ludum David exemplo suo facere docebat cum luderet ipse et omnis Israel coram archa Domini [...] Similes sunt ludo David ludi representationis nativitatis et resurrectionis Iesu Christi et huiusmodi, dum tamen devote fiant»; «Secundus ludus est ludus recreationis, cum quis utitur aliquibus verbis vel factis solatiosis ob recreationem sui et aliorum [...] aliqui ludi inventi sunt: ut pro pueris ludus pile, pro iuvenibus iactus pali, cursatio, pro viris ludus scaccorum, qui ne etiam clericis est prohibitus»; «Tertius est ludus offensionis, hic est cum in eo offenditur Deus, sicut fit in turpibus representationibus et periculosis ac nocivis exercitiis, in torneamentis palestra et precipue in ludo alee et huiusmodi [...] De ludo autem alee nullus dubitare debet quod sit peccatum cum prohibeatur per legem canonicam et civilem [...] Et secundum Guillelmus, ludus alee intelligitur

interesting than these distinctions between different kinds of games, however, is one of the fourteen negative consequences that came from illicit playing, which Roberto enumerated further on in this same sermon. Alongside the typical reasons of wasting time and money or of being induced to blasphemy because of the games, the preacher drew his listeners' attention to the corruption the desire to play can bring onto youngsters: «The fourteenth negative consequence is terrible sodomy. Indeed, poor adolescents agree to any obscenity for those who give them money so that they can play»⁹. It is a connection, this one made between poverty and male child prostitution, which also Bernardino da Siena had carefully considered¹⁰. Finally, Roberto's preaching on games is not only limited to his model sermon collection. He also preached on this topic to his audience in Padua in 1451. As Alessandra Rizzi already noted, this *reportatio* bears a less precise account of licit games, which probably depends on the different nature of the text, effectively pronounced to a live audience¹¹.

The issue of Christ's blood remained on earth and its worldly or divine nature is another topic that was discussed by Roberto's contemporaries, bursting out in a public and wide-spread debate between the major mendicant orders in the early 1460s, which forced Pope Pius II to summon a commission able to settle the doctrine. We find mention of it in Roberto's sermons, yet not consistently enough to give a real contribution in our knowledge of the controversy. Franciscans and Dominicans opposed each other so stubbornly on which type of veneration (*cultus latrariae* or more simply *hyperduliae*) believers should grant to relics containing Christ's blood: had the divine nature of this blood remained such also when separated from Christ's body or had it lost this property?¹². In the first chapter of the seventy-first sermon (on Resurrection) of his *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*, Roberto discussed how Christ, resurrecting, divinely reassumed all of his blood that had been dispersed outside the sepulcher where he lied. Against the authority of Aquinas, who argued that the blood revered in some churches as a relic cannot be the true blood of Christ, but rather blood miraculously poured from some image of him, Roberto quoted François de Meyronnes. The Franciscan scholastic, instead, explained the persistence of some of Christ's blood on earth by means of the different need of blood during mortal life and afterlife¹³. Then Roberto proceeded by

omnis ludus qui innititur fortune, ut ludus taxillorum, chartarum, naiborum, quamvis in ludo chartarum et naiborum sit aliquid industrie, huiusmodi ludus potest esse mortale peccatum si fiat ex cupiditate non recreatione».

⁹ *Ivi*: f. 124v: «Quartadecima malignitas est pessima sodomia. Adolescentuli enim miseri, ut habeant ad ludendum assentiunt omni turpitudini dantibus eis pecunias pro ludo».

¹⁰ Cfr. Amleto Spicciani, 'La povertà involontaria e le sue cause economiche nel pensiero e nella predicazione di Bernardino da Siena'. In *Atti del simposio internazionale cateriniano-bernardiniano*: 811-834.

¹¹ Roberto da Lecce, *Quaresimale padovano*: 97-105. Cfr. Rizzi, 'Predicatori, confessori mendicanti e gioco': 108-109.

¹² Cfr. at least Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007; see also above in the dissertation's introduction.

¹³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: ff. D1v-D2r: «Reassumpsit corpus Christi clausum existens in sepulchro sanguinem proprium, qui extra erat dispersus, quod non nisi per divinam virtutem fieri potuit. Ratio autem prefate reassumptionis sanguinis secundum Thomam in III parte q. LIII est quia "quicquid ad naturam corporis humani

giving a list of churches preserving relics with Christ's blood. The Royal Chapel in Paris possessed a thorn from Christ's crown colored by his blood. In the Dominican convent of Saint Maximin in Provence, alleged burial place of Mary Magdalen, a bowl containing Christ's blood used to be shown on the Saint's feast day. Other thorns from Christ's crown were held in the Dominican convent in Ascoli and in the Augustinian Hermits' convent in Recanati. In the church of Sant'Andrea in Mantua, there was a relic with Christ's blood allegedly brought by Longinus, who would have been buried there, while his spear would have been preserved in Nuremberg¹⁴. Roberto also entirely quoted Pius II's bull, dated 23 July 1461, over the issue of Christ's blood relics venerated in the church of Saint Mary in the diocese of Saintes, near Bordeaux in France¹⁵. Finally, Roberto acknowledged the Pope's decision, formalized with a bull in 1464, to interdict any discussion on the kind of adoration due to relics containing Christ's blood. Still, as a good Franciscan, the preacher aligned to the theory «of his doctor» (*doctori mei*) François de Meyronnes as to the most probable: that is that Christ's blood was separated from his body and, thus, from his divinity¹⁶.

Another topic that deserves to be rapidly mentioned, but which has not received a separate treatment, regards the doctrine of the eternity of the world. It is well known that such a theory circulated in the late Middle Ages, not just in Italy and especially in the university milieu connected

pertinet totum fuit in corpore Christi resurgentis" [...] Utrum autem totum sanguinem assumpserit, ita quod nulla particula sive guttula de illo in terra remanserit, due sunt opiniones. Prima est sancti Thome, qui ubi supra sr. III in responsione ad argumentum tertium dicit quod "totus sanguis qui de corpore Christi fluxit, cum ad veritatem humane nature pertineat, in Christi corpore resurrexit. Sanguis autem ille qui in quibusdam ecclesiis pro reliquiis conservatur, non fluxit de corpore Christi, sed miraculose dicitur effluxisse de quadam imagine Christi percussa". Alia opinio Francisci de Marones, qui ait: "Non est inconueniens dicere aliquid de sanguine Christi fuso dicatur esse in aliquibus ecclesiis, quia forte corpus in vita incorruptibili non indiget tanto sanguine sicut in vita mortali". Et licet utraque opinio sit sustentabilis, tamen secunda maiorem firmitatem videtur habere tum quia totus sanguis non pertinet ad veritatem humane nature». Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. LIV, ar. III, ad tertium; François de Meyronnes, *Sermones quadragesimales*, sermo LXXX; cfr. also the introduction to Iacobus de Marchia, *De sanguine Christi*, textus typis edendos recensuit Dionysius Lasic. Falconara Marittima: Biblioteca francescana, 1976.

¹⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. D2r: «In plerisque sollemnissimis locis ostenditur verus Christi sanguis. Nam in capella regis Francie est de sanguine Christi et de spinea corona sanguine tincta. In provinciali Provincie apud sanctum Maximinum, in conventu fratrum predicatorum, in festo sancte Marie Magdalene, ostenditur ampulla cum sanguine Christi. Apud Esculum, in conventu fratrum predicatorum est spina cum sanguine Christi. Alia insuper spina cum sanguine est Racaneti, in conventu fratrum heremitarum. In civitate vero Mantue, in abbacia sancti Benedicti, in ecclesia sancti Andree, est de sanguine Christi quem asportavit Longinus, cuius corpus requiescat ibidem. In Alemannia vero, in civitate Nurenberge est ferrum cum quo Longinnus lanceavit latus Christi sanguine respersum et sic in multis partibus Christianorum verus ostenditur sanguis Christi».

¹⁵ *Ivi*: f. D2r-v.

¹⁶ *Ivi*: f. D2v: «Utrum vero talis sanguis sit tanta veneratione dignus quanta sanguis qui est in eucharistia apud plerisque dubium est, quoniam si unitus est divinitati adorandus esset adoratione latrie, si vero non est unitus divinitati tunc honor latrie non debetur ei sanguini in eucharistia. Quid autem tenendum sit, an scilicet a sanguine fuso sit separata divinitas vel unita, non est diffinitum vel determinatum cum altera opinionum sustineri possit, ut patet per constitutionem novam factam a summo pontifice Pio secundo, qui perdisputatam materiam istam in sui presentia per doctissimos viros stauit et ordinavit quod nullus de cetero sub pena excommunicationis aueret demandare quacumque opinionem predictam cum utraque sustineri possit absque errore. Ego vero adhereo opinioni doctori mei Francisci, qui ait quod, licet anima Christi et caro nunquam fuerit a divinitate separate, sanguis tamen separatus a corpore ex consequenti erat separatus a divinitate. Cuius signum est quia licet dicamus filius Dei fuit sepultus et filius Dei descendit ad inferos, non tamen dicimus filius Dei fuit effusus super terram».

to Aristotelian commentators¹⁷. It is also known how the debate became worrying in late fifteenth-century Italy, or at least in Padua, where the bishop Pietro Barozzi and the inquisitor prohibited discussions on the topic in 1489¹⁸. Roberto referred twice to the issue in his sermons, connecting it to Aristotle's theories and, obviously, highlighting its opposition to the Christian theory of the world's creation by God¹⁹. The second of the passages in which Roberto countered this doctrine is particularly notable, in which he also rebukes those who claim that the world was actually created by God, but only for a limited time, in order from the mean and evil to incarnate, suffer on earth for their sins, which recalls some of the ideas on the non eternity – or non existence – of infernal pains.

Other issues emerge in Roberto's sermons, though in mentions so concised that it is difficult to make much out of them and, for this reason, I will only give a rapid list of them. Such is, for instance, the hint to the question of the beatific vision and of its delay until after Judgment day contained in the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (sermon XLVI, chapter II)²⁰. There are also hints to minor doctrinal errors, such as believing that baptism is not sufficient to prevent all afterlife pains²¹ or that fornication between two unmarried individuals is not sinful, a doctrine this latter one that

¹⁷ Griet Galle, *Peter of Auvergne's Question as to Whether or Not the Heaven is Generated and Perishable*, in Jan A. Aertsen – K. Emery, Jr. – Andreas Speer (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte / After the Condemnation of 1277. Philosophy and Theology at the University of Paris in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century. Studies and Texts*, Berlin – New York, 2001: pp. 535-576.

¹⁸ See above in the introduction.

¹⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. y4r: «Hic videndum est utrum mundus fuerit a Deo productus ex tempore aut ab eterno. Et quibusdam visum est Aristotilem tenuisse quod mundus fuerit ab eterno, propterea quia primo *Physicorum* dicit quod materia est ingenita et in primo *De celo et mundo* quod celum est ingenitum et nullum ingenitum incipit esse, ergo universitas rerum non incipit esse [...] Sed quicquid Aristoteles senserit et ceteri philosophi de eternitate mundi, a nobis parvificandum est, quoniam scriptura sacra testatur mundum non fuisse ab eterno». Id., *Sermones de Adventu*: f. a2r: «Philosophantium quorundam impugnandus est error, inter quod et si plerique varia dixerunt, vel de mundi eternitate, ut Aristoteles, vel de infinitate, ut Anasarcus et Democritus, qui prout Valerius commemorat de cupiditate glorie infinitos mundos fore dixerunt, vel de mundi novitate, ut quod alii. Et fuere tamen nonnulli qui professi sunt ex tempore a Deo mundum factum fuisse, homines vero iniqui per peccatum cecidisse, sed eos a principio generationis fuisse eiusdem conditionis, cuius sunt hoc tempore calamitatis et luctus, quod si verum esset facillime sequeretur ob nullam culpam necessarium erat ex parte hominis incarnari filium Dei».

²⁰ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. r4v: «Secundo dubitatur de festorum additione, cur vim superaddita sunt ultra diem dominicum alia festa? Et assignari potest triplex ratio: prima dicitur confutationis, secunda gratificationis, tertia imitationis. Prima ratio dicitur confutationis: superaddita sunt sanctorum festa un confutaretur error eorum qui dixerunt ante diem iudicii animas sanctorum non consendere celum. Ad ostendendum quod tales mentiuntur, statuit Ecclesia sanctorum suffragia et patrocinia in eorum solennitatibus implorari, predicans et contestans illos in celo regnare cum Christo». Pope John XXII had been strongly criticized for having supported such a position: Christian Trottman, *La vision béatifique: des disputes scolastiques à sa définition par Benoît XII*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1995.

²¹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. B3r: «Nonnulli arguunt ostendentes quod per baptismum non remittatur omnis pena. Primo, quia ut habetur *De conse di. IIII in c. Ne absit*: iudeis venientibus ad baptismum indicenda est poenitentia et abstinentia XL dierum. Secundo, quia videmus parvulos baptizatos qui nullum peccatum commiserunt post baptismum multis penalitatibus subiacerere et constat quod non iniuste, ergo baptismus non removet omnem penam. Inquit enim Augustinus XIII *De trinitate*, c. XVI: "Omnia huius seculi mala dolores laboresque hominum veniunt de peccatorum et maxime de peccati originalis meritis". Tertio arguunt, quia baptizatus ante Christi passionem adhuc paradysum non intrabat, sed clausura illa erat pena peccati, ergo per baptismum non remittitur illa pena». Roberto replied to these doubts quoting Bonaventure and Richard of Middleton.

had already been condemned in the late thirteenth century by the Parisian bishop Étienne Tempier²². This second idea brings to our mind the case of Zanino da Solza or the accusations moved against some members of the Bosnian clergy²³. Even more severe heretical doctrines are mentioned, from the negation of free will (accusing God for one's negative behavior) or divine providence²⁴, to a number of wrong opinions on the soul culminating in the statement even of its inexistence²⁵. The most interesting among these hints, however, is possibly the mention of some absolute deniers of God himself, who viewed the whole idea of religion as a true *istrumentum regni*²⁶. A position that has also emerged among the ideas of some deniers of infernal pains, but that even lead to some of the most radical anti-Christian beliefs of which we have some information from that time, as for instance those of the humanist Callimaco Esperiente²⁷.

Another group of texts deserving to be singled out, though not properly referring to any contemporary debate, is the one constituted by the *exempla* contained in Roberto's sermons, which

²² Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 83r: «Contendunt namque sepenumero fornicatores defendere et excusare peccatum suum tentantque probare fornicationem simplicem non esse peccatum triplici obiectione. Prima eorum obiectio est quia Deus non precipit aliquid quod sit mortale peccatum, sed Deus precepit Osee ut dicitur eiudem, primo c., quod sumeret uxorem mulierem fornicariam et faceret filios fornicationum [Os 1, 2: "Vade, sume tibi uxorem fornicationum et fac tibi filios fornicationum, quia fornicans fornicabitur terra a Domino"], ergo fornicatio non est peccatum. Secunda obiectio: omne peccatum mortale contrariatur charitati, sed fornicatio non contrariatur charitati nec Dei, cum non sit directe contra Deum nec proximi, quia per hoc nulli homini fit iniuria; ergo non est peccatum. Unde Ambrosius dicit: "Omnis summa christiane discipline in misericordia et pietate consistit, quam qui habet et si lubricum carnis patiatur vapulabit, sed non peribit". Tertia fornicatorum obiectio est quia Isidorus dicit, di. 34: "Christiano non dicam plurimas, sed duas habere simul licitum est, sed unam tantum, aut uxorem, aut si coniunx deest loco eius concubinam", sed in concubinato est fornicatio simplex; ergo non est peccatum»

²³ For Zanino da Solza see above in the introduction.

²⁴ Caracciolo, *Sermones de Adventu, Sermones de divina charitate*, sermo I: «Inextimabilem charitatem Dei, qua homines diligit, impugnant sepenumero hi qui a peccatis desistere nolunt. Ipsi nanque impio ac sacrilego ore suo asserunt optimum Deum fore causam damnationis eorum, quasi nec hominis merita in aliquo prosint, nec ipsis iniquis sua malicia valeat imputari. Hoc errore illusi, plerique audaciam in malo perseverandi suscipiunt penitentiamque negligunt delictorum suorum»; Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. h2r-v «Dicunt enim quod facta nostra et ista omnia inferiora non reguntur a providentia Dei et ex consequenti prospera et adversa, bona et mala, ab ipso non provenire [...] Primi dicunt quod omnia ista que in hoc mundo fiunt et que hominibus accidunt, veniunt a fato, nomine fati intelligendo influentia celi et planetarum [...] Secundi asserunt omnia ista inferiora moveri ad imperium fortune [...] Tertii contendunt providentiam Dei nullam esse circa ista inferiora et hominum facta, sed omnia currere sic sine ulla providentia regulante, qui error perniciosissimus est et damnatur tum rationem tum auctoritate».

²⁵ Roberto discusses different opinions on the soul in his *Tractatus de immortalitate anime*, printed several times in the appendix of his *Sermones de Adventu*. Negators of the soul's existence appear in Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 172r [in the *Sermo de anime rationalis admirandis prerogativis et excellentiis quas unusquisque cognoscere debet*, printed for the first time in the appendix to the *Quadragesimale de peccatis* in 1488]: «In primo dubio expugnanda est et omnino reprobanda pravissima opinio illorum qui tenent animam non esse, asserentes non nisi corpora aut corporales substantias reperiri».

²⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: ff. p1v-p2r: «Prima ratio quare a multis non timetur ira Dei dicitur stulte cogitationis, quomodo stulte cogitant Deum non esse. Pro quibus querimus utrum possit aliquis cogitare non esse Deum. Et videtur quod non, quia, ut ait Anslemus: "Deus secundum animi conceptionem est quo nihil melius nihilque maius excogitari potest", sed maius est quod non potest cogitari non esse quam quod potest; ergo cum Deo nihil maius possit cogitari Deum esse, ita est quod nullo modo potest cogitari non esse. Sed contra arguitur per textum Iohannis Damasceni. Dicit enim sic: "In tantum prevaluit perniciose malicia hominum, ut dicant non esse Deum". Et Tullius libro I *De natura deorum* ait: "Quidam dixerunt totam de diis immortalibus opinionem factam esse ab hominibus sapientibus reipublice causa, ut quos ratio non posset eos ad officium regum ducerent"».

²⁷ Patrick Gilli, 'Les formes de l'anticléricisme humaniste: Anti-monachisme, anti-fraternalisme ou anti-christianisme?'. In *Humanisme et Église en Italie et en France méridionale (XVe siècle – milieu du XVIe siècle)*, sous la direction de Patrick Gilli. Rome: École Française de Rome, 2004: 62-95: 87-91; Conti, '«Initium abolendae fidei»'.

refer to contemporary figures or episodes. The value of *exempla* – exemplary stories originated from both personal experiences and, more often, literature, used to convey moral and religious messages – is well ascertained by now²⁸. They can reveal important clues on the time's mentality and culture or, more simply, curious episodes and anecdotes on the time's life and on some more or less prominent figures. Such is, for instance, the portrait that Roberto has left of the miser canon of the Roman basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Giovanni Fosco:

I personally knew Giovanni Fosco, extremely rich canon of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, who had numerous benefices and a considerable fortune. He abounded in wine, wheat, herds and riches. He also inherited silver pots, clothes, sheets, books and other several goods from a brother of his, cardinal of Saint Mark [Angelotto Fosco]. He however lived poorly, more miserably than anybody else, won over by avarice he would more often than not feed on bread and water. In order not to pay a servant, he personally looked after the mule he rode. He went to bed without a light and he lied down on his neglected bed wearing his shoes. When he would get sick, he would only call a doctor after several days and when he was beginning to fear he would die. He wore old and ripped clothes and neither heat nor cold could keep him from his work. He choked poor men for just one denarius. He was always talking and always nervously going around and wanting to make money: mean towards others, even meaner towards himself and a great enemy to God²⁹.

Besides the portrait, it might be interesting to highlight Roberto's description of Giovanni Fosco's alimentary habits, which would have probably been regarded as positive by many of his confreres – worthless to mention the many hagiographical writings on Bernardino da Siena or Giovanni da Capestrano – but which Roberto acknowledged as inadequate. Another, more sketched, memory is that of a townsman from Lecce named Antonio, nicknamed Pedulus, who would have been hit by a

²⁸ Carlo Delcorno, *L'exemplum nella predicazione volgare di Giordano da Pisa*. Venezia: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere e arti, 1972; Id., *Exemplum e letteratura: tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989; Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Goff, Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L'exemplum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1996 (second augmented edition); *Les exempla médiévaux: nouvelles perspectives*, études réunies et présentées par Jacques Berlioz et Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998; *La Tonnerre des exemples: Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, sous la direction de Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, Pascal Colomb et Jacques Berlioz. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010.

²⁹ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. q2r: «Novi et ego Iohannem Fusco, venerabilis ecclesie Sancte Marie Maioris de Urbe canonicum ditissimum quamplura beneficia habentem; eratque ei substantia multa, abundabat vino, frumento, armentis et pecuniis. Remanserant etiam ei argentea vascula, indumenta, panni, libri et alia bona plurima quondam fratris eius cardinali sancti Marci. Ipse tamen miser et miserior ceteris, avaritia victus, panem et aquam sepius commedebat. Mulam cui insedebat, ne famulum pretio detineret, ipse solus gubernabat. Ad dormiendum sine lumine accedebat, calciatus incultum lectum intrabat. Dum infirmabatur vix post multos dies, cum mori iam timere inciperet, medicum advocabat. Vestes antiquas et laceratas deferebat, nec caloribus aut frigore a labore poterat detineri. Pro uno denario pauperes suffocabat. Semper discurrebat, semper circuibat anxius et sitibundus ad thesaurizandum. Crudelis aliis, crudelior sibi, inimicissimus Deo».

sudden death after having sworn on something false in God's name³⁰. We could also mention the story Roberto narrated in one of his sermons – although he had surely not been a direct witness – of the discovery of an unconsecrated host given for the Holy Communion by a lazy or mischievous priest. Protagonist of the story was Francesca “de Pontianis”, better known as Saint Francesca Romana, who unveiled the misdeed by means of the mystical sensations she habitually experienced when taking the communion and which were lacking due to the unconsecrated host³¹.

Roberto only rapidly hinted at a number of *exempla* in the first chapter of the *sermo de beatitudine*, first published in the appendix to his *Sermones de Adventu*. Here, wanting to show that men cannot possibly consider this life happy, the preacher mentioned the cases of the numerous innocent victims of killings that occurred in his day, of forced exiles, and the loss of the Sacred Land to the infidels. The preacher also mentioned some more specific events, possibly geographically more familiar to him and, maybe, to his listeners too. Roberto recalled a fire that had lit up in the lands of Taranto, the collapsing of a house, possibly in Bitetto (*civitatis Bictēi*) near Bari, another fire near Trani, the case of some men who had suffocated at sea in their boats, that of another man who had been eaten by fish and, finally, that of a man who had fell off his horse and had been run over by a cart outside the cathedral of Lecce³².

Most *exempla*, however, are much less precise about their characters and their setting and they just preserve amusing stories. It will anyway be interesting to repeat some here, which, although not testifying to some event or general habit of the time, however, testify to the preacher's efforts to keep his audience attentive and entertained. The first is the story of a woman from Assisi, who, together with her lover, had murdered her husband then spread the rumor that he had left for a pilgrimage to the Galician sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela, and later pretending that she had received news of his death on the route. Despite her well-thought plan, however, she was discovered and burnt on the stake. Her lover, who had at first managed to escape, was caught too

³⁰ *Ivi*: f. x3r: «In civitate vero Litii, fuit quidam Antonius, Pedulus dicebatur, quem ego cognovi. Hic dum coram officialibus iurasset falsum addidissetque: “Precor Deum celi, ut si mentior faciat me morte subita interire”, statim cecidit in eodem loco et miserrimus expiravit». Cfr. Visani, ‘La predicazione di Roberto Caracciolo e la Puglia’: 139.

³¹ *Ivi*: f. z2v: «Tempore namque Eugenii quarti, quedam notabilis et spiritualis domina divotissima Francisca nomine de Pontianis, singulis diebus festis sacramenti comunione de manu sacerdotis reverentissime suscipiebat sentiebatque delectationem admirabilem adeo ut sepius post comunione per magnum temporis spacium raperetur in extasim. Quodam vero die, dum in ecclesia Sancte Cecilie trans Tiberim expectaret accipere comunione, sacerdos ille qui celebrabat, aut levitate ductus, aut diabolica temptatione devictus, temptavit sibi dare hostiam non consecratam. Cumque ori eius appropinquasset, recusavit illum sumere dicens: “Parcat tibi Deus, o pater sacerdos, qui me non solum decipere credidisti, sed etiam idolatriam facere voluisti!” Quibus verbis commotus sacerdos veniam petiit et peccatum postea confessus rem aliis studuit renarrare».

³² Caracciolo, *De Adventu*: f. k3v: «Quare vita presens beata esse minime potest. Pro his omnibus et declaratione dicas exemplum de tot diebus nostris interfectis absque culpa, de expulsione a patria, de perditione terre sacte, de igne in terra Tarrentina, de ruina domus in civitate Bictēi, de igne prope Trantum, de suffocatis prope Brosti in quatuor galeis ventorum, de illo quem comedit piscis quando natabat in terra Idronti, de illo qui cecidit de equa sub rota currus prope ecclesiam cathedralem Licii».

and decapitated³³. Other curious and facetious stories are the ones concerning a blasphemous bishop and a friar, which, however, are again not much more than laughable episodes. The latter, having been caught by Roberto sleeping with some nuns, defended himself by declaring his passion for men. We should note how Roberto advised the reusers of this particular sermon not to refer such a story to the people³⁴. The bishop, on the other hand, was known for his blasphemy and, when once reproached for this by the local ruler (*dominus civitatis*) he expressed his surprise towards such accusations with a blasphemous exclamation³⁵. Finally, it will be worth recalling the mention, in one of Roberto's sermons, of an ancient Italian proverbial figure, that of Lippo Topo, who is also present in Bernardino da Siena's sermons and even in Boccaccio's *Decameron*³⁶.

³³ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. m7v: «Retulit mihi quidam frater fide dignus quod in civitate Asisii fuit quedam adultera, que, ut suum amatorem in virum posset habere, ordinavit cum eo ut maritum interficerent. Et sero quodam, cum vir istius domum ingrederetur, ab uxore sua statim capitur et stricte amplexans illum tamdiu tenuit donec adulter, qui latebat ibi, exiens cum securi percussit caput eius et occidit. Quo facto, clam sepelierunt corpus in domo quadam vetusta. Mane autem surgens, mulier visitavit ecclesias asserens virum suum nocte recessisse a domo, versus sanctum Iacobum de Galicia iter arripuisse. Mirabantur sui hoc audientes, tam mater quam reliqui quomodo nulli retulisset de peregrinatione sua. Elapsis autem quibusdam diebus mulier hec viricida in domo sua plorando eiulare cepit: "Heu vir mi dilecte! Heu me infelicem et miseram!" Ad quam pervenientes vicini, causam petierunt meroris sui. Que respondit quod vir suus mortuus erat in via, quia sic acceperat a quodam peregrino qui de sancto Iacobo revertebatur sibi tamen incognito. Quod cum pervenisset ad aures parentum viri, statim suspicari ceperunt de malicia mulieris, ad que etiam movebantur propter nimiam adulteri sui familiaritatem cum illa. Recurrentes autem ad officiales indicaverunt factum, qui ordinaverunt ut mulier illa maligna poneretur in torturam. Quod cum factum fuisset, veritatem confessa est. Qua de re territus, amicus eius fugam petiit extra civitatem. Et mane quodam, data sententia, mulier hec pessima igni adiudicata est. Et dum combureretur ille exeuns extra civitatem, super montem quendam unde videre poterat spectaculum, respiciebat et adeo in fatuitatem versus est, quod sponte sua rediit ad locum in quo sua fuerat dilecta combusta. Unde cum nollet discedere, etiam a multis monitus, captus est et die sequenti in eodem loco decapitatus».

³⁴ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de peccatis*: f. 85r: «Non est predicandum populis quod narro. Quidam frater carceratus fuit eo quod associaverat alium et ambo dormierant cum quibusdam monialibus in monasterio. Et cum sepe hoc facinus commisissent, res cum scandalo populi patefacta est et detecta. Dum ego perquisivissem a fratre prefato quare sic grave sacrilegium commisisset. Respondit se nunquam monialem aliquam tetigisse, quoniam in masculos tantum ardebat concupiscentiam eius. O vicium execrandum! O peccatum abhorrendum! O denique irrationabile et plusquam bestiale malum quo extinguitur amor ad mulieres et incenditur ardor contra omne debitum ad viros et masculos».

³⁵ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. x2r: «Scio in civitate quadam Italie episcopum quendam, qui nesciebat loqui nisi diceret "per corpus Christi" et "in nomine Diaboli". Cum vero nullus auderet illum corrigere, dominus civitatis, caritate motus, hoc officium in se suscepit. Qua re, invitavit episcopum ut secum pranderet et finito prandio dominus traxit episcopum ad partem satisque reverenter et honeste dixit ei: "Pater reverendissime, multi de te aiunt quod nescis verbum proferre sine iuramento et invocatione Diaboli". At episcopus in impatientiam versus respondit: "In nomine Diaboli et quid de me ita dicit? Per corpus Christi non est verum!" Cui dominus: "Iam a te ipso testimonium accepi". Sicque episcopus ille cum rubore discessit».

³⁶ Caracciolo, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: f. s3v: «Sicut dicitur de Lipethopo. Ipse enim cum in extremo vite venisset testamentum condidit in quo multa milia ducatorum in pios usus dimittebat. Cum vero circumstantes interrogarent quis esset executor tante pecunie distribuende, respondit truffatorie: "Hic est punctus". Unde tractum est vocabulum illud aut vulgare proverbium: qui sta el puncto disse Lipethopo». Cfr. Lucia Lazzarini, 'Lippo Topo'. *Lingua nostra* 32/2 (1971): 35-38.

Conclusions

As stated in the opening of the dissertation, I have conducted this work with a twofold objective. The first aim was that of providing a renewed and updated study of Roberto Caracciolo's life and works. Through the collation of the largest amount of sources I have been able to gather – though a methodical search of archival documentation has not been possible, given the preacher's continuous itineration throughout Italy, and whence I believe only minor contributions could be made to our knowledge of his life and figure – it has been possible to furnish a new and detailed account of the life and works of one of medieval Italy's most famous preachers. As said, the apologetic and by now dated work by Serafino Bastanzio was no longer satisfying or reliable. Several aspects of Roberto's biography needed more thorough and meditated discussion, especially in the light of recent progresses in historiography. His problematic relationship with the Franciscan order, his close relationship with some of the time's dominating families of the Italian peninsula, his strong position inside the Papal curia are just a few of the issues that needed further elaboration. Moreover, it was necessary to give a better picture of the reception of Roberto's figure among his contemporaries, given his extremely controversial and debated fame.

From this new reconstruction of his life, I believe Roberto's figure emerges even more strongly in all its peculiarities and importance. His prominent position inside the Franciscan Order at the moment of his clash with his Observant superiors shows us a young, ambitious friar, fighting to obtain a powerful position for himself and his closest followers. The new reconstruction also provides a better picture of the preacher's use of his influential friendships: from the Sforzas in Milan to the Aragonese in Naples, from Pope Nicholas V to Pope Sixtus IV. The account about his fortune draws his controversial figure: admired by many, but also at least as strongly criticized by others. In any case, his fame largely surpassed that of almost all his contemporaries.

The chapter dedicated to Roberto's works has provided a more thorough listing of his extant works and a comprehensive study of them, which was in great deal lacking. The catalogue of his printed works, for which I could exploit modern online databases that collect information that was unthinkable not too many years ago, testifies for the success his sermon collections had. The study I have attempted of their editorial history points out to some peculiar patterns inside the collections and in their diffusion throughout Europe. I have also attempted a catalogue of manuscripts containing Roberto's works. Having been mostly done on secondary sources, attempting to divine

in which libraries copies of his sermon collections could have been preserved or could have ended up, it is, of course, incomplete, and hopefully increasable in the near future. It anyway gives a new consistent starting point of over one-hundred manuscripts for further research into the manuscript tradition itself of his works, but also into his figure as an author. The last part of the chapter dedicated to Roberto's works was an attempt to value the diffusion and use of his sermon collections, which I believe was able to give at least some further idea of the importance these collections had among the preacher's contemporaries.

So much for the first part and first aim of the doctoral project. Its second objective was that of trying to show the importance of sermon collections in the reconstruction of religious and cultural debates of the time in which these collections were compiled and prepared. It is an assumption which has already had some answers in historiographical tradition, of which I have mentioned some examples in my introduction, but which I believe has not yet been exploited at its best. The intrinsically immediate nature of sermons, deeply connected with the time and place of their composition, makes of them bearers of crucial arguments and issues, which testify to otherwise little known or completely unknown matters. A due contextualization of its message can bring enormous contributions to our knowledge of the time's largely debated issues.

In evaluating different inputs from Roberto's sermon collections, I have focused on three groups of issues, namely culture and learning, theories on afterlife and Hell and, finally, superstition. New information on little-known or unknown issues or new details on celebrated debates of the Italian late fifteenth-century have come out from the contextualization of Roberto's sermons. The result is a further highlighting of the prominence of the religious and intellectual debate in Renaissance Italy, even among the popular masses to which Roberto's message was primarily directed, both orally and in writing. The result is also a partial confirmation of the idea according to which the intellectual and religious climate that characterized Italy in the Quattrocento were crucial in its peculiar reception, just a few decades later, of the Reformation.

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