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Hidden in a European Bestseller: The *Quadragesimale* of Gritsch/Grütsch and the Reception of Dante's *Commedia* in Sermons

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates the presence of Dante in a sermon of the *Quadragesimale* printed under the name of Johannes Gritsch, one of the main sermon bestsellers in late medieval Europe. Albeit quite in plain sight, this text that translates into Latin and comments extensively on *Paradiso* 33. 1–9 has been completely overlooked by sermon and Dante scholars. By analysing this Dantean passage and by contextualizing it within the *Quadragesimale*, the article underlines its relevance within the broader phenomenon of the use of the *Commedia* in late medieval preaching in and outside Italy. On this latter aspect, the sermon under investigation is a game changer. While a few German preachers who used sermons composed in Italy that included references to Dante were already known, this time we encounter a German Franciscan friar who, when composing sermons meant first and foremost for a German audience, engaged with a passage of the *Commedia*. He did so probably knowing nothing about Dante, perhaps not even his name. As a result, mediated by preachers and detached from its original cultural context, a fragment of the *Commedia* found its way on a prodigious journey across Europe.

KEYWORDS

Preaching; Dante; *Commedia*;
Lenten sermon collection;
Translation; Printed books;
Manuscripts; Germany

As I was sitting in the comfort of my armchair on a mid-summer day, the reading of the *Quadragesimale* printed under the name of 'friar Johannes Gritsch of the Order of Friars Minor' was testing the very conviction that lays at the heart of my current research project. Titled 'Lenten sermons bestsellers: Shaping society in late medieval Europe (1450–1520)', the project aims to investigate the most widespread Lenten sermon collections printed before the Reformation as a way to identify and analyse the conceptual and textual 'infrastructure' that supported Lenten preaching as a shared and influential socio-religious practice.¹ As part of this intellectual endeavour, I had no option but to climb the mountain represented by the *Quadragesimale* in question. Written by a German Franciscan friar around the mid-fifteenth century, perhaps Conrad Grütsch or someone with access to his sermons, after circulating in manuscript form for some decades, this sermon collection enjoyed an astonishing dissemination, with no less than 28 editions published between 1474 and 1512.² These were all printed under the name of friar Johannes Gritsch, a name probably originating in

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some confusion between Conrad, who was indeed a Franciscan, and his brother Johannes, who was not a friar but a jurist teaching at the University of Basel.³ With thousands of copies disseminated all over Europe (especially German lands, France, and Central Europe) the *Quadragesimale* was one of the most widespread preaching aids of the time, perfectly embodying the definition of an influential bestseller.⁴

Previous explorations of some of its sermons had already made me realize that the *Quadragesimale* is full of surprises. For instance, its abundant use of Ovidian myths and other classical tales.⁵ And yet, reading all of these long sermons one after the other was putting a strain on my own faith as a researcher. As I proceeded through countless columns of (a digital copy of) one of its in folio editions, packed with theological, legal, and moral discussions, exegesis in bits and pieces, patristic *auctoritates* and medieval *exempla*, my mind silently began to wrestle with an insidious question every scholar is quite familiar with: Is it worth it?

In this doubting spirit, I began reading the sermon composed for the Tuesday after the first Sunday of Lent (*feria secunda post Invocavit*), and the answer to my implicit question arrived soon after, when the preacher explains to his readers that the most amazing miracle in salvation history is the incarnation. Moving from the *thema* ‘When Jesus had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying: Who is this?’ (Matthew 21. 10), the sermon starts by recalling that Aristotle indicates wonder as the origin of philosophy.⁶ Wonder is also what the Jews experienced when they first saw the manna in the desert — its etymology allegedly means ‘What is this?’ (Exodus 16. 15) — and what the citizens of Jerusalem felt at the arrival of Jesus, as mentioned in the *thema*. The sermon therefore ponders what can be considered the ultimate marvel among the visible things done by God, and it offers three possible answers: the creation; the divine mercy towards sinners; the incarnation. The last option is clearly the one favoured by the preacher, and the way he supports his claim is where suddenly his discourse about wonder caused my own wonder.

Ista autem stupenda et miranda opera et nova declarantur in illis verbis que recitantur a quodam sapiente, sub hac forma dicente: Virgo et mater, filia tui filii, grandis, humilis, alta plusquam creatura ... (Appendix 1.2)

[These astonishing, admirable, and new works [of the incarnation] are manifested by the words that are pronounced by a certain wise man, who speaks in this way: Virgin and mother, daughter of your son, great, humble, and sublime more than any creature ...].

Although translated into Latin, the first words of this quotation are unmistakable for anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of Dante, as they are the famous incipit of the equally famous prayer to the Virgin in *Paradiso* 33, the canto that closes the *Commedia*. To rule out any doubt, the sermon goes on by presenting the first verses of this canto and, to add surprise to the surprise, by commenting on them in details, tercet by tercet, adopting a theological lens. As a result, we have here a German preacher who, while composing his sermons in the mid-fifteenth century, not only turned to Dante’s poem — or better, arguably a Latin translation of just a portion of it — but thought it fruitful to engage in the interpretation of the verses of this ‘wise man’ as a way to instruct his audience about the most sublime theological mystery, the incarnation. To add significance to this already interesting occurrence, the collection that included this sermon soon became one of the most widespread, late medieval sermon books, inviting thousands of preachers to use these verses in their own sermons. Detached from its original cultural and linguistic context, a fragment of the *Commedia* found a way to begin a prodigious journey across Europe.

The silent presence of Dante in this bestseller — albeit quite in plain sight — has been completely overlooked by scholars who have explored the history of the circulation and reception of the *Commedia* outside Italy and by the very few who have studied the sermons attributed to Gritsch/Grütsch. The following pages are dedicated to analysing this Dantean passage and contextualizing it within the sermon collection as well as to underlining its relevance within the broader phenomenon of the presence and use of the *Commedia* in late medieval preaching in and outside Italy. On this latter aspect, the sermon under investigation is a game changer. While we already know of (a few) German preachers who used Latin sermons composed in Italy that included passages by and

references to Dante, this time we encounter a German friar who, when composing sermons that were meant first and foremost for a German audience, engaged in depth with a passage of the *Commedia* and did so probably knowing virtually nothing about Dante, perhaps not even his name, since the sermon labels him only as ‘quidam sapiens’ and ‘poeta’.

1. A bestseller and its author: a complex history

Before immersing ourselves in the analysis of the Dantean passage contained in this sermon collection, we need to contextualize the latter. Although this was one of the most popular books of the late fifteenth century, the history of the *Quadragesimale* is still partially a mystery. It surely is more intricate than what is generally reported by the scholarship, which largely relies on a 1940 essay by André Murith.⁷ This is the only monograph devoted to these sermons, and it shows that the *Quadragesimale* printed under the name of Johannes Gritsch circulated earlier on in manuscript format as an adespota sermon collection, which Murith connects with the sermons of Conrad Grüttsch. While this reconstruction holds true, its conclusion that the *Quadragesimale* should be attributed to friar Conrad is far from irrefutable. Not only the authorship of the *Quadragesimale* remains a riddle, but also the relationship between manuscripts and printed editions is more complex than what Murith assumed. An in-depth reconsideration of the history of this sermon collection will be the object of a future contribution; here I present the key elements that help to outline the cultural context in which the sermon with the Dantean section was produced and to understand the dynamic of its circulation.

Conrad Grüttsch (d. before 1475) was a Conventual Franciscan preacher and theologian. His education brought him to the *studium* of Strasbourg (c. 1424–1429) and to the universities of Paris (between 1429 and 1435) and Vienna (1435–1437). Next, he served as lecturer in several convents of the province of Upper Germany (Zurich, Mulhouse, Bern, Freiburg), while in 1451 he was allowed to continue his studies in Heidelberg.⁸ Among his own manuscripts, the *explicit* of a Lenten sermon collection describes it as ‘opus collectum per me fratrem C. Grutschum dum temporis lectorem in Friburgo Ochlandie’, thus indicating that it was probably composed between 1458 and 1461, while he was in Freiburg im Breisgau.⁹ Murith suggests considering this collection as the basis — or even a draft — of the *Quadragesimale* that later was printed under the name of Johannes Gritsch.¹⁰ This position has been generally accepted by scholars, although it remains a hypothesis not without problems.¹¹ When one turns to the *Quadragesimale*, internal references suggest that its sermons (or at least part of them) were written between 1440 and 1444 (quite earlier than the manuscript surely written by Conrad).¹² If Conrad was their author, this would mean that (a portion of) the *Quadragesimale* was composed while he was at the Council of Basel, where he was registered as a member on 27 October 1441.¹³ What we know for sure is that by the early 1460s the *Quadragesimale* was circulating in manuscript format. The oldest surviving manuscript dates from 1462 and was copied by Leonhard Troubach (d. 1483), a secular priest of Mulhouse (one of the cities where Conrad had been active).¹⁴ In this and all the other surviving manuscripts, the sermons are presented without any attribution, even when the copyist was a Franciscan.¹⁵

Murith overstates the closeness between the *Quadragesimale* and the sermons that Conrad certainly wrote. When one considers the marked differences between the two collections — noted also by Murith himself — their relationship and especially the authorship of the *Quadragesimale* appear as issues that still need to be solved. There are indeed several other options besides the one suggested by Murith. Between 1458 and 1461, Conrad could have had access to a copy of the anonymous *Quadragesimale* (or parts of it) and used it for his own sermons. Or perhaps someone might have reworked the sermons by Conrad — something clearly possible considering that the manuscripts of the *Quadragesimale* show that several people worked on its text.¹⁶ In fact, these sermons circulated in two distinct manuscript versions. Murith correctly identifies them by labelling them as group A and group B, but he largely downplays their differences.¹⁷ Yet, at a closer look, they are substantial at times, with entire passages reworked and new sections inserted.¹⁸ Luckily for us,

the Dantean section is remarkably stable; however, understanding the textual dynamic of this sermon collection is essential to trace the agency of several actors in making it a bestseller.

The nine surviving manuscripts attest to the early circulation of the text, and yet it was its transition to print that radically changed the scale of its dissemination. Not after 1474, the sermons were printed in Nuremberg as *Quadragesimale fratris Iohannis Gritsch ordinis fratrum minorum*.¹⁹ The name probably derived from Conrad's younger brother, who died in 1470. He had been canon of St Peter in Basel and professor of canon law at the newly established university of the city.²⁰ He was not a Franciscan friar, so the printed edition technically referred to a non-existing person. Probably there was some confusion between the two brothers, who were merged into a single person. However, given their different training, it seems plausible to say that Johannes had little or no part in the composition of the sermons. In any case, the (fictional) name indicated in the *editio princeps* was replicated in all the following editions²¹ — and there were many.

The *Quadragesimale* soon became a striking bestseller, with 24 editions printed between 1474 and 1497, and at least another four in the early sixteenth century.²² Its success is even more striking considering its rather obscure authorship, which surely did not provide it with an immediate aura of authority.²³ We can safely assume that no less than 7,000 copies of this massive book were put into circulation as a tool adopted by generations of preachers who, evidently, found it particularly apt for their professional task. Among fifteenth-century sermon collections, the *Quadragesimale* stands out not only for its widespread dissemination but also for the richness of a quasi-encyclopaedic text that incorporates biblical exegesis, theological and juridical issues, lively examples, and allegorical images. Probably this overflowing richness — and its formidable table of contents that helped navigate such a teeming sea²⁴ — contributed significantly to making these sermons highly appealing to preachers.

Before moving to the Dantean section of our sermon, some issues connected with the textual transmission of the *Quadragesimale* need to be mentioned. Murith overrated the stability of the sermons. First, he did not fully realize the degree of difference among manuscripts. Second, he overlooked that the printed editions also contain significant variations, not only compared with manuscripts but also among themselves.²⁵

At the present state of the research, I have identified three printed editions that are significantly different.²⁶ The *editio princeps* (Nuremberg, not after 1474) was not followed blindly by the second edition (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1475). This edition definitely knew the *princeps* but, at least in some parts, it relied on a manuscript instead.²⁷ Zainer's edition dominated the early printed market and was followed by many later publishers. Yet, its text was not definitive either, not only for the inevitable minute differences between each edition, but also because the 1484 edition published in Strasbourg by the so-called 'Printer of the 1483 Vitas Patrum' silently changed several passages. The reworking is not advertised on the title page or elsewhere, and yet this edition imposed its text on the market, since it was followed by the vast majority of the later editions (all but one).²⁸ Although the 1484 edition surely knew and used some earlier printed edition, at times it relies instead on a manuscript, once again. In fact, the majority of its variations or additions are already present in manuscripts from the 1460s, although it is not possible to trace exactly which manuscript was available in Strasbourg.²⁹ This demonstrates that the transition from manuscripts to printed books was not done once and for all — at least not for this sermon collection, for which a complex interplay between manuscripts and incunabula can be traced.

A thorough consideration of the stability and instability of printed sermons will be the object of a future investigation.³⁰ For the purpose of this essay, this simplified description should suffice. In appendix 1, I present a critical edition of the Dantean passage based on four manuscripts (belonging to both group A and B) and the three key printed editions. It shows the remarkable stability of this section within the complex textual history of the *Quadragesimale*. In the remainder of the article, for the sake of simplicity, all other references to the *Quadragesimale* are based on Zainer's edition, which I take as an example of the *textus receptus*. Differences among manuscripts and printed editions are indicated in the footnotes.³¹

Finally, on the basis of the foregoing, an accurate definition of this sermon collection would be: the *Quadragesimale* composed by an anonymous German Franciscan preacher (perhaps Conrad Grütisch) and later printed under the name of Johannes Gritsch, wrongly labelled as a Franciscan. Undoubtedly too long. Therefore, I will indicate the author simply as an anonymous German Franciscan preacher and the text either as *Quadragesimale* or — when confusion with other collections may arise — as *Quadragesimale* attributed to Gritsch/Grütisch. And now, back to the *Commedia*.

2. Nine verses (more or less) by Dante

Let us have a closer look at the verses of the wise poet quoted in the introduction of the *Quadragesimale*'s sermon for the Tuesday after the first Sunday of Lent (Appendix 1.2).

Virgo et mater, filia tui filii,
grandis, humilis, alta plusquam creatura,
terminus iam fixus eterni concilii,
tu es per quam nostra sublimatur natura,
quam nobilitasti veniente factore,
qui est dignatus tua fieri factura.
In tuo ventre iam stetit plenus amore,
producens spiritum sanctum, mundum conservans,
dum de te fuit natus, sicut flos a flore.

[Virgin and mother, daughter of your Son,
great, humble, and sublime more than any creature,
goal already fixed of the eternal council,
you are the one by whom our nature is exalted,
which you ennobled for its coming Creator,
who deigned to make himself your creature.
In your womb He dwelled perfectly for love,
begetting the Holy Spirit, conserving the world,
until He was born from you, as a flower from a flower.³²]

The first six verses are quite a close translation into Latin of *Paradiso* 33. 1–6, with only small differences (see Dante's text in Appendix 2): the addition of the adjective *grandis* in the second verse; *concilium* (council) instead of Dante's *consilio* (counsel)³³; the *dignatus* (deigned) instead of the litotes used by Dante (*non disdegnò*, i.e. did not disdain); *tua* (your) instead of *sua* (its, referring to human nature), which gives even more prominence to the Virgin.

On the other hand, the last three verses have only a loose connection with those by Dante. The rhyme *amore/flore* echoes *amore/fiore* (*Paradiso* 33. 7–9), yet the idea expressed is different. While the *Commedia* says that — thanks to the incarnation — the love between God and humanity was rekindled within the Virgin's womb and by means of its heat the flower of paradise bloomed peacefully (famously, Dante depicts heaven as a rose), in the sermon the focus remains on the prodigy of the incarnation. It emphasizes the marvel of the Son of God who, while perfectly present in the Virgin's womb, continued to play an active role in both the trinitarian life and the government of the world, while the image of the flower is reduced to a less imaginative simile, arguably to explain how Mary generated Christ without any human intervention.³⁴

The preacher introduced the nine verses as a quotation, which suggests that he had found them already in this format, that is to say, in Latin and with the last verses as a modification of Dante's text. As far as we can see from his sermons, the friar — who often inserts German expressions into his sermons — did not have any specific connection to Italy. This would be even more so if he is to be identified as Conrad Grütisch, who apparently did not travel south of the Alps. The fact that the author of the poem is identified only as *sapiens* and *poeta* suggests that the preacher probably did not know who composed these verses and arguably had no idea that they were by Dante or part of a much larger text such as the *Commedia*, a name and a poem that however were not completely unknown among German (Franciscan) friars, as we will see.

Where did this translation come from, and who made it? The first candidate that comes to mind is the Franciscan Giovanni da Serravalle, bishop of Fermo, who translated the *Commedia* into Latin and commented on it while he was at the Council of Constance, between 1416 and 1417, exactly with the aim of giving the poem an international audience, considering it a valuable tool for the spiritual and pastoral reform of the Church.³⁵ Serravalle's project was ambitious, yet his text did not enjoy a significant circulation, certainly not in the German world.³⁶ Moreover, and more importantly for us, the verses in the *Quadragesimale* do not suggest any specific connection with Serravalle's version (Appendix 2).³⁷ Arguably, any similarities may depend on the original text they both translate. We shall also note that the two texts applied a different strategy: the *Quadragesimale* tries to replicate the rhyming of the tercets more than Serravalle's text. Even remoter is the possibility of an influence of the translation composed between 1427 and 1431 by the Benedictine Olivetan monk Matteo Ronto (d. 1442), which not only had little circulation (limited to Italy) but adopted Latin hexameters, resulting in something completely different from what we find in the sermon (Appendix 2).³⁸

The influence of the main Latin commentaries on the *Commedia*, such as those by Pietro Alighieri and Benvenuto da Imola, which could offer an entry point into the Italian poem for non-Italian readers, is equally to be excluded.³⁹ The sermon does not show any significant connection with them, not only for what concerns the verses but also, and more significantly, for what concerns their interpretation. For the moment, I leave open the issue of where and how this friar might have encountered this fragment of the *Commedia*, which — being part of one of the most successful cantos of the poem — could easily circulate independently from the poem. I will return to this point at the end of the article, while now — also to be able to evaluate it properly — we need to consider attentively the preacher's commentary on these verses and why it is so extraordinary. In fact, that a German friar engaged in the interpretation of Dante's verses is equally, if not more, important than their presence in a sermon composed outside Italy.

3. A German preacher interprets Dante

Once the sermon has presented the three options about the greatest marvel made by God, it states that — generally speaking — there is a consensus that the incarnation is the ultimate wonder that God 'did, does, will ever do'. Three arguments prove it. First, the descent into the womb of Mary without corrupting her virginity (here it anticipates a verse of Dante: 'ita fecit sibi unam matrem et filiam, humilimam et altissimam'; Appendix 1.1). Second, the union between divine and human nature, which humbled the divinity and exalted the humanity. Third, the fact that in his mother's womb the Son of God continued to perform what he was doing within the Trinity. The preacher claims to find these three key theological points also in the verses of the *Commedia*. The verses are not only quoted, but also commented on extensively in what can overall be depicted as a pocket-sized sermon within the sermon.

Remarkably, the preacher follows the rhythm of the tercets. He comments on three verses (*pedes*) at a time by highlighting one theological point for each tercet and by discussing it in three subpoints. This ternary system (three parts and nine subpoints) reflects a well-established format in constructing sermons, particularly popular among the Franciscans.⁴⁰

According to the preacher, the first three verses highlight how the Son of God descended into the womb of Mary without corrupting her virginity. This is explained first of all through three *exempla*. The first is a simile taken from the natural world. Christ is compared to a sun beam: as the sunlight passes through a transparent element without losing its heat and without corrupting or staining that material, so the Son of God descended in Mary without diminishing her virginity.⁴¹ The second *exemplum* is the theophany of the burning bush, which Moses saw burning without being consumed (Exodus 3). It symbolizes that 'Christ took his flesh from his mother who gave birth to him and yet her virginity was not lost' (Appendix 1.3). This biblical story was traditionally connected with the incarnation: the presence of God in the bush being analogous to his presence in the Virgin's womb, while the subsequent story of the Jews' liberation was seen as a prefiguration

of the humanity's redemption.⁴² The third *exemplum* is that of the three youths in the furnace, who were untouched by the fire (Daniel 3): 'in the same way the Virgin gave birth to God yet remained intact' (Appendix 1.3), a sentence that is literally taken from the Latin version of a homily of (Pseudo)Origen, where these two Biblical *exempla* (the bush and the furnace) serve to highlight the prodigy of the incarnation.⁴³ To rule out any doubt, the very same patristic text is explicitly quoted immediately afterwards by the preacher.

Before turning to this homily, the sermon recalls the initial verses of Dante, namely how marvellous and admirable it is that 'one single person was mother and virgin, most humble and most sublime' (Appendix 1.4). To emphasize the paradox embodied by Mary, who simultaneously was daughter and mother of God, the sermon first mentions the universal paternity of God, who according to Ephesians 4. 6 is 'father of all'; next, it underlines the reality of Mary's maternity by quoting from a sermon by (Pseudo)Augustine, albeit slightly adapting it.⁴⁴ At this point, the preacher explicitly quotes twice the Origenian homily from which he had already silently taken inspiration, which exalts Mary as 'immaculate mother, uncorrupted mother, intact mother' and as mother of God, again exalting this astonishing paradox (Appendix 1.4).⁴⁵ This passage refers to 'patristic' texts that we do not find in the main late medieval commentaries on the *Commedia*, thus showing us a certain autonomy of the sermon (or of its source) in the exegesis of this part of the poem and extending the spectrum of texts used by commentators to shed light on these verses.⁴⁶ The analysis of the first tercet ends by echoing once again the oxymoron of the Dantean definition of Mary as *altissima* and *humillima*, connecting the second term with her voluntary submission to the angel in the Annunciation, when she famously replied: 'Ecce ancilla domini'.⁴⁷

The second element of marvel in the incarnation that 'must move us to love' is the sublimation of human nature in its union with the divine nature, something that is perfectly said by the *poeta* in his 'following three verses', i.e. in *Paradiso* 33. 4–6, which are recalled by repeating the first verse: 'Tu es per quam sublimatur nostra natura' (Appendix 1.5). This theological point is highlighted by means of three wonders (*stupenda*). While the topic is closely related to Dante's verses, the focus shifts from the praise of the Virgin (as in Dante) to that of Christ. The first wonder is the extreme humility of God in assuming the human form (*habitum*). This admirable condescendence (*mira dignatio*) of the redeemer should provoke wonder for the contrast between the incommensurable power and richness of the 'king of kings and lord of lords' (Revelation 19. 16) and his decision to become poor (*pauper*) for us and to wander in this world as a needy person (*egenus*), as it is said echoing concepts particularly dear to Franciscan spirituality. The second marvel is the other side of the coin, namely the exaltation of human nature in this union, which is further accentuated by recalling that the human being occupies the lowest step among intelligent creatures (an implicit reference to the angelic hierarchies).⁴⁸ Still, it was dignified above all other creatures becoming equal to God, since Christ 'made both one' (Ephesians 2. 14) by joining divine and human nature. The third wonder is that the lord of all became serf of everyone by 'taking the form of a servant' (Philippians 2. 7).⁴⁹

Moving to the last tercet, the preacher says that the ultimate marvel of the incarnation are three wonders that Christ performed while inhabiting the womb of his mother. The discourse here is shorter, since they were already outlined in the verses. First, the full correspondence between being son of God and son of Mary. Second, while he was 'in the womb of the mother', the Son of God continued to beget the Holy Spirit without any interruption of the communication between the trinitarian persons. Finally, also within the Virgin's womb, he kept governing the creation, sharing the 'conserving power' (*vis conservativa*) with the Father and the Spirit.

The section closes by reasserting how these utmost marvels should prompt everyone to wonder and to be moved to love. Now one has to reply to the question posed in the *thema*, 'Who is this?', with the words of two biblical quotations used in explaining the verses of the poet: 'He is the king of kings and lord of lords (Revelation 19. 16) and the one who took the form of a servant (Philippians 2. 7) to save the servant from death' (Appendix 1.8).

Next, the preacher moves on to the main part of the sermon by introducing its main division. Without entering into too many details, by following this development we can situate correctly

this Dantean section within the sermon and have a concrete idea of the sources and issues one finds in the *Quadragesimale*.

4. The remainder of the sermon

Having finished this sumptuous introduction, the preacher states that the Gospel of the day is chosen by the Church chiefly to ‘rebuke the avarice of the greedy merchants’ (the pericope includes the expulsion of the money changers from the temple). However, the sermon encompasses a discussion much broader than just economic ethics, as its division immediately shows:

The Gospel has three parts: First, it shows how Christ came to save those who were lost, when it says: *This is Jesus*. Second, it shows how he reproached and drove out unjust and fraudulent business dealings, when it says: *And he found*. Third, it teaches to leave the bad things and to love the celestial, when it says: *And leaving them*.⁵⁰

The first part connects with the children who sing Hosanna at Jesus’s entrance in Jerusalem. With an inclusive first person plural, the preacher exhorts his listeners to address Jesus directly by acknowledging him as their saviour: ‘Hosanna! We implore you, Jesus! You are the saviour, save us, since you are: powerful in setting free; prompt in helping; merciful in being indulgent’.⁵¹ In a sophisticated way, the rhymed last part of the eulogy structures this section. The first subpart reasserts the doctrine of redemption (‘solus Iesus potuit’) by referring to Anselm’s *Cur Deus homo*. In a narrative way, the redemption is presented through the exemplary tale of the supreme sacrifice of Codrus, the mythical king of Athens. Discovering that only his death would save his people from their adversaries, Codrus dismissed his royal clothes, dressed like a poor man and, hiding his true identity in this way, went to provoke his enemies, who inadvertently killed the king without recognizing him. The allegorical interpretation perfectly highlights Christ’s voluntary incarnation and his self-sacrifice for the salvation of ‘the militant Church’.⁵² Offering an ideal basis for a Christological reading, the story was quite popular among preachers such as Jacobus de Voragine (d. 1298) and Meffret (fl. 1443) as well as being present in a bestseller such as the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (early fourteenth century).⁵³ In this case, the whole section of the *Quadragesimale*, from the quotation of Anselm to the interpretation of Codrus’s story, is taken silently but directly from the *Lectioes super librum Sapientiae* by Robert Holcot (d. 1349).⁵⁴ This shows both the extent to which the *Quadragesimale* relies on previous preaching aids and its penchant for the allegories of classical tales, a distinctive characteristic of this sermon collection.⁵⁵ The story of Codrus and its interpretation are not less relevant for being taken from an (undeclared) source, since by means of a sermon collection like the *Quadragesimale* this type of material was able to reach an incredibly vast number of preachers and, mediated by them, their own congregations of believers, who would have no other access to this type of source.⁵⁶ Moreover, it suggests that the preacher may have also taken the translation of the verses of Dante (and their interpretation) from an undeclared source, which remains for us impossible to identify.

Presenting Jesus as saviour, the second characteristic highlighted by the sermon is his readiness to help. However, this triggers the request to explain why his incarnation did not occur earlier. As we can see, the topic of the incarnation discussed in the introduction by means of Dante’s verses keeps its relevance within the body of the sermon. Next, the last point discussed in the first part of the sermon is the overabundant mercy of Christ, which brings the preacher to clarify what it means that ‘God wants all people to be saved’ (1 Timothy 2. 4). On the basis of Nicholas of Lyra’s exegesis (explicitly mentioned), the sermon argues for a (traditional) balance between mercy and justice. This leads to another *quaestio*, namely whether the damned are more numerous than the saved. The answer is built with a string of quotations, where beside Augustine and Anselm we find Franciscan theologians such as Bonaventure and François de Meyronnes. It also includes an important remark on the salvation of ‘many’ virtuous non-Christians, which is imagined as taking place by means of grace in the form of a sudden and complete repentance at the moment of death.⁵⁷

Yet, as if the preacher perceived the (pastoral) risk of presenting too optimistic a view, he ends by saying that, all in all, the damned outnumber the saved.

In its second main part, the sermon focuses on the expulsion of the merchants and money changers from the temple, which symbolizes the necessary expulsion of ‘the unjust and fraudulent merchants from the Church’ (‘iniquos et dolosos [...] negotiatores de ecclesia’). The discourse rapidly turns to actual merchants and their sins. It opens with a quite radical statement: ‘A merchant can never please God’. The sentence stems from Chrysostom and is taken from the *Decretum Gratiani*, yet the sermon presents it in a stricter version.⁵⁸ The reason for this harsh claim is that merchants are considered as ordinarily fraudulent in their work, particularly in three ways: ‘Mixing different products; rigging weights and measures; hiding defects and damages’.⁵⁹ The discourse exemplifies a series of situations and frauds common at the marketplace, including an interesting legitimization of alchemy as a licit art within the natural domain.⁶⁰ To describe some practice of wine adulteration the sermon employs a terminology in the German vernacular. Adding honey or *sinapium* to the wine to make it sweeter and to ‘sell it at a higher price’ is called *kisterig*, since it allegedly provokes phthisis, while the practice to add ashes to the wine to make it stronger, something that puts the health of the people at risk, is called *waydasch*.⁶¹ These glosses or technical terms in the vernacular show not only the linguistic context of the preacher but also what sort of audience he had in mind when preparing the sermons. He felt the need to provide his fellow readers (i.e. his pulpit colleagues) with the technical terms to address their listeners in the vernacular.⁶² For what concerns its sources, here the *Quadragesimale* recurs to quite old texts to discuss economic ethics. First, a long section is taken from Cicero’s *De officiis*, where it discusses whether the merchants must disclose the defects of their products.⁶³ Next, the sermon presents a passage of the *Visio Fursei* (taken from Bede). The seven-century monk Fursey sees three fires that inflame the whole world. An angel interprets them for him as the inextinguishable corruption prompted by merchants, namely their falsity, greed, and impiety.⁶⁴ The vision was centuries old, yet weaponizing it specifically against merchants seems to be a new fashion that, arguably via the *Quadragesimale*, we find also in later sermon collections, such as those by Bernardino Busti (d. 1513) and Jean Raulin (d. 1514).⁶⁵

In the third and last part of the sermon, the conclusion of the Biblical episode is interpreted symbolically. Jesus who distanced himself from the chief priests and scribes and went out of the city (Matthew 21. 17) indicates that believers must separate themselves from evil people. The Lord achieves it by means of three transitions: ‘from rebellion to reconciliation; from dissolution to religion; from peregrination to rest’.⁶⁶ The first transition is from sin to grace through penance, since Christ — in his mercy — welcomes into his kingdom those who come back after rebelling against him. The second is the entrance into the religious life, with its binding vows. This transition is reserved to the most promising people, as said using the image of the plants that are put in an orchard (*viridarium*) so that they can bear more fruit. The sermon expands on this simile to depict the religious life, yet underlining that the transition must be complete, i.e. the roots must not be left in the world/wood.⁶⁷ A brief *quaestio* about the superiority of religious over secular life again plays with the arboreal metaphor by pointing out the difference between giving a single fruit or the entire tree. The final transition is from this world to heaven. Yet, why does not God call people there while they are still innocent, i.e. as infants? The preacher states that it would not only cause practical problems (the extinction of humanity), but it would frustrate human liberty, by annihilating free will through which a person can merit glory. Hence, the sermon ends by hinting at the balance between free will and divine grace, by emphasising that God, in his mercy, is ready to kindle the fire of charity and penance, as said by Revelation 3. 20 (‘I stand at the door and knock ...’) and as shown by the conversion of Peter and of the good thief.⁶⁸

5. Why the Dantean passage matters

Reading the whole sermon makes us appreciate the richness of the *Quadragesimale* and shows that the Dantean passage — although one of its key structural elements (i.e. the backbone of an elaborate

and theologically profound introduction) — is actually only one of the many weapons in the wide cultural arsenal of this German preacher. Moreover, his silent borrowing from Holcot opens the possibility that, also for the verses of the *Commedia*, he did not only find them translated but also already accompanied by a nice theological comment, even more since this practice is visible elsewhere in the *Quadragesimale*, for instance where it uses an allegorical interpretation of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe taken (most probably) from the *Ovidius moralizatus* by Pierre Bersuire (d. 1362), yet referring only to Ovid as *auctoritas*.⁶⁹ At the present state of the research, we cannot rule out the possibility that something similar happened also for *Paradiso* 33. 1–9, one of the most popular passages of the *Commedia*.

However, since a clear source for this commentary is still eluding us and is not introduced in the sermon as a quotation, methodologically it is more prudent to consider it as the fruit of the preacher's own elaboration. Surely, it appears to be composed by a person very familiar with traditional elements of medieval sermons (symmetrical structure, enumerations, biblical and natural *exempla*, patristic *auctoritates*, exclamations, exhortations ...). If not written by the author of the *Quadragesimale*, it was arguably composed by someone well accustomed to the art of preaching. For this reason, I proposed to label it as a sermon within the sermon, in a technical sense.

Still, to fully understand the relevance of this Dantean passage, we need to contextualize it not only within the sermon but also within the multifaceted praxis of using the *Commedia* in preaching and, more specifically, in sermons circulating (also) outside Italy, particularly in the German-speaking area. On both levels, the *Quadragesimale* pushes our understanding of the use of Dante in preaching significantly further.

5.1. From quotations to commentary

Preachers active in Italy soon realized the potential of the *Commedia* and used some of its verses for their sermons, either for their stylistic effectiveness in conveying moral and theological ideas or (much more rarely) for the exemplary penitential itinerary of its protagonist.⁷⁰ The references to the *Commedia* are usually introduced as (optional) support for the homiletic argument. This type of occurrence dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century, with a few quotations introduced by the Franciscan Ruggero di Eraclea in his Latin Lenten sermons, probably dating to 1367–1368.⁷¹

The golden age for this practice is, however, the fifteenth century. Already in its first decades, Franciscan preachers such as Andrea Pace⁷² (d. 1410), Marco di Sommariva del Bosco⁷³ (fl. first half of the fifteenth century) and Bernardino da Siena⁷⁴ (d. 1444) used a few references to Dante — while, on the other hand, a Dominican preacher such as Vicent Ferrer (d. 1419) was familiar with this practice and strongly disapproved of it.⁷⁵ Still, the use of Dante's verses becomes much more frequent in the second half of the century, when some Italian preachers systematically quoted the *Commedia* in connection with virtually any moral or theological topic. The practice was so widespread that Lorenzo de' Medici (d. 1492) supported his own use of writing in the vernacular by recalling 'the frequent quotations of the *Commedia* that everyday holy and illustrious men make in their public preaching'.⁷⁶ And in the same cultural context of Florence, Girolamo Savonarola complained about preachers who talk about Dante (and other poets) in their sermons instead of focusing on Christ and the Bible.⁷⁷

Several sermons which quote the *Commedia* still need a proper evaluation, such as those by the Franciscans Michele Carcano (d. 1484), Francesco Vaccari (fl. late fifteenth century), and Bernardino Busti (d. 1513).⁷⁸ Yet, in recent years the scholarship has started to consider more carefully the implication of this practice, with attentive studies of the quotations of Dante in the Servite Paolo Attavanti (d. 1499) and the Dominican Gabriele da Barletta (fl. late fifteenth century).⁷⁹ Moreover, this phenomenon has been reconsidered also in light of the oral context of sermons, which were often written in Latin and yet oriented towards an oral performance in the vernacular before an

Italian audience⁸⁰, a communication context that would have exalted the Dantean verses within a cultural environment — that of the Italian cities — in which part of the audience was familiar (at least indirectly) with the poem.

Still, quoting Dante does not mean engaging with his text or giving it a prominent role in a sermon (as is instead the case in the sermon of Gritsch/Grütsch).⁸¹ This distinction was acutely noted by Oriana Visani, who points out that, also in Italian sermons, the *Commedia* was mainly approached as a *florilegium* of quotations to be presented to the audience without any comment on Dante's text or ideas. There is a crucial difference between introducing an ornamental quotation taken from the *Commedia* and engaging with it, making it a key element of the sermon.⁸² The second approach is decidedly the road less travelled. Until recently, the best examples known to scholars dated from the very end of the fifteenth century, when a few sermons were based on chapters of the *Commedia* or provided not only a quotation of Dante but also its allegorical or moral interpretation, such as the *Sermo de Virgine gloriosa secundum dicta Dantis* of the Franciscan Bernardino da Fossa (d. 1503)⁸³ and a penitential sermon based on the description of the entrance to purgatory (*Purgatorio* 9) preached in Milan in 1496 by an anonymous Franciscan friar.⁸⁴

Still, already at the beginning of the fifteenth century the preacher's engagement with the *Commedia* could be much more structural. This is shown by the recent discovery of two Lenten sermon collations: the *Quadragesimale peregrini cum angelo* and a so-called *Quadragesimale virgilianum*. Both were composed in Italy by anonymous Franciscan friars and structured as a semi-dramatic itinerary in the afterlife. The second presents an allegorical interpretation of the journey of Aeneas into the underworld (so, it might be labelled also as *Quadragesimale Aeneae*) and currently is known only in an incomplete form, thanks to a manuscript that conserves its first fifteen sermons, where — beside the constant reference to *Aeneid* VI — the *Commedia* is often used to introduce the main moral/theological themes.⁸⁵

More interesting for us is the *Quadragesimale peregrini*, which fully exploits the penitential value of the itinerary of the *Commedia* (ideal for the Lenten period) and, as we will see in the next section, had a significant circulation in the German area.⁸⁶ The *Quadragesimale peregrini* is a sermon collection composed before 1420 by an Italian Franciscan preacher, who organized the cycle as a semi-dramatic journey of a pilgrim and an angel in the realms of the afterlife. This innovative Lenten cycle is largely based on a free rewriting of the *Commedia*. In this case, large portions of the poem play a structural role in the sermons, in particular those about the punishments of hell and some section of purgatory. The preacher engages with the poem, not only quoting Dante's verses or summarizing them in Latin (particularly in the section about hell) but also commenting on them in a moral or allegorical way and embracing the core idea of an exemplary penitential itinerary in the afterlife.⁸⁷ At times, this is done by relying on the flourishing tradition of the comments on the poem (by then the object of public lectures not only in Florence but in several other Italian towns), even quoting a couple of passages taken from Mino di Vanni d'Arezzo's *Capitoli* on the *Commedia* (c. 1350).⁸⁸

The *Quadragesimale peregrini* remains the most astonishing case of use of Dante's poem in preaching. At first glance, the scale of its engagement with Dante clearly overshadows the Dantean section in the *Quadragesimale* of Gritsch/Grütsch, which presents only a small fragment of the poem detached from its broader context. And yet, in terms of quality, the evaluation needs more nuance. The section of the *Quadragesimale* that we examined matches the *Quadragesimale peregrini*'s engagement with the verses of Dante, which are quoted and commented on attentively. In that, the two sermon collections share the same approach to the poem as a text not only useful for embellishing a sermon but also deserving of attentive scrutiny, considering it suitable for the development of a theological/pastoral discourse.⁸⁹ Even more, the *Quadragesimale* looks more perceptive than the *Quadragesimale peregrini* in dealing with the verses on their own terms, i.e. by considering their poetic format. It proceeds by commenting on them tercet by tercet, showing a sensitivity to their rhythm absent in the *Quadragesimale peregrini*, where the attention is more on the allegorical potential of the inventive descriptions of Dante's poem and on the lively dialogues that it provides.⁹⁰

While greatly interested in the symbolism of Dante's afterlife, the *Quadragesimale peregrini* never discusses the organization in tercets or their concatenation. To measure better the difference between the two sermon collections, we can look at a passage in which the *Quadragesimale peregrini* encapsulates within a dialogue among its protagonists some verses of *Paradiso* 33, the same section that we encountered in Gritsch/Grütsch, although the verses are taken from another part of the prayer to the Virgin, namely *Paradiso* 33. 13–21 (the whole prayer occupies *Paradiso* 33. 1–39).⁹¹

Having completed his penitential itinerary, the pilgrim enters into a garden that has in its middle an immense tree, which represents divine grace. Under the tree, he sees a lady, who symbolizes the combination of the *vita activa* and *contemplativa*. The pilgrim is encouraged by the angel to ask her to take a twig from the tree, since no one can access God without the gift of preventive grace. The pilgrim kneels and addresses the lady with some verses of the last canto of *Paradiso* that is, the invocation to the Virgin (hinting at the identity of this mysterious woman). After this prayer, the lady replies with the words used by the Sybil to instruct Aeneas to pick up the golden bough (cf. *Aeneid* 6. 146–147).⁹² The whole scene is quite complex and extends over two sermons: the first focuses on the active and contemplative life; the second on grace. The point for us is to note that the verses of Dante are introduced as a prayer that the main protagonist performs. In this case, they do not need any interpretation or adaptation, since they were an invocation already in the poem.

Here the emphasis is on Mary as mediator of grace, while in the *Quadragesimale* of Gritsch/Grütsch, it is on the prodigy of the incarnation. Interestingly, also in the *Quadragesimale peregrini*, the quotation ends with the addition of a spurious verse: 'De questa gratia tua fami comuna' ('Share with me your grace'). Its origin is unclear, but it implies the same type of intervention that we found in the last tercet of the wise *poeta*, where the text was changed by keeping the rhyme, as it occurs here where *comuna* rhymes with the previous *aduna*.

Still, there is a crucial difference between the two occurrences of *Paradiso* 33: the *Quadragesimale peregrini* inserts the Italian verses into a Latin text, while the *Quadragesimale* presents them in translation, offering a text linguistically homogenous and fully suitable for an international readership, leaving to the preacher the task to mediate them to their listeners. This is a significant difference in terms of reception of these sermons (and Dante) outside Italy. In fact, the insertion of the vernacular verses in the *Quadragesimale peregrini* was clearly conceived as an element of strength in view of an oral performance in Italian. Yet, exactly those passages became highly problematic, almost incomprehensible, when the sermon collection started to circulate beyond the Alps.

5.2. Outside Italy: Becoming intelligible

Some Latin sermons composed in Italy that encapsulated (vernacular) verses of Dante found a way to cross the Alps. For instance, the *Quadragesimale scholarum* by Ruggero di Eraclea circulated also outside Italy: two of its manuscripts were copied in the German-speaking area in the fifteenth century and retain a couple of tercets of *Inferno* 1.⁹³ Still to be studied is what happens to Dantean quotations in a manuscript of the *Quadragesimale Rotimata* by the Dominican Girolamo di Giovanni (d. 1454) copied in 1456 by a certain friar Jori Westerstain and from 1484 to 1802 held by the Dominican convent of Gmünd (Swabia).⁹⁴

Later on, from the 1470s onwards, printed editions of sermons favoured the circulation of quotations taken from the *Commedia*. This type of book was not only exported from Italy to other parts of Europe, but several Latin sermon collections that were first printed in Italy enjoyed a large success abroad, with new editions. This posed to the editors the issue of what to do with the Italian quotations. For instance, the *Sermonarium de peccatis* by Michele Carcano was first published in Milan in 1476 and soon re-printed in Basel by Michael Wenssler in 1479. Its sermons at times quote Dante, such as when discussing bestiality (*bestialitas*), and the Italian verses are kept also in the Basel edition.⁹⁵ The same reference to Dante occurs in a sermon about lust by Bernardino Busti, a disciple of Carcano. His *Rosarium sermonum* was first published in Venice in 1498 and two years later re-printed in Hagenau, becoming one of the most popular sermon collections in

the early sixteenth century, reaching ten editions by 1525 (all but the first printed outside Italy). The Hagenau edition translated the quotations of Dante into Latin, and this translation passed to the editions printed in France.⁹⁶ Even more illustrative is the case of the late fifteenth-century Dominican Gabriele da Barletta, whose sermons — first printed in Brescia in 1497–98 — are characterized by a macaronic language and by a systematic use of vernacular poems ‘to support the rhetorical fabric of the sermons’.⁹⁷ Some of the editions printed abroad (France and Germany) even advertised on the title pages that ‘where poems by Petrarch and Dante were interspersed in their vernacular, they have now been translated into Latin by the venerable master Johannes Anthonii of the Franciscan Order’.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, nothing else is known about this translator (yet again a Franciscan, although the sermons are by a Dominican preacher). Still, evidently the publishers were aware that those bits in the vernacular constituted a problem for readers/preachers and that advertising the presence of Dante and Petrarch in translation could boost their sales.⁹⁹ Later on, Erasmus’s harsh complaints against preachers who used Dante and Petrarch in their sermons show that this practice had its admirers in the early sixteenth century.¹⁰⁰

This process of translation is part of the broader phenomenon of the adaptation of vernacular quotations in printed sermon collections, which includes also the adaptation of the German passages of the *Quadragesimale* of Gritsch/Grütsch in the editions printed in France and Italy. Overall, the complex dynamic between stability and instability in printed sermon collections still needs to be investigated in all its implications.

The printed sermon collections that I have just mentioned bring us to the decades 1470–1520, that is, well after the composition of the *Quadragesimale* attributed to Gritsch/Grütsch. Still, the challenge of dealing with Dante in sermons copied outside Italy was not entirely new at the time, as the circulation of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* in the German area reveals.¹⁰¹ What in the Italian context was meant to be an asset (the verses of Dante) became a problem not only for the oral performance of its sermons but also for their transcription. The Italian verses proved to be an obstacle for non-Italian preachers/copyists. The *Quadragesimale peregrini* is attested north of the Alps as early as 1420, when it was copied by a (Franciscan?) friar, Johannes Pruening von Augsburg, in what today is Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 8984. In this manuscript, the sermons kept several vernacular verses of the *Commedia*, which constituted the earliest known testimony of verses of Dante copied in the German-speaking world.¹⁰² Still, Johannes Pruening’s difficulties (or that of the copyist of the manuscript he followed) are clearly visible, not only for the frequent mistakes in the Italian quotations but also because, at several points, he gave up their transcription, either acknowledging his own limits (‘for this reason *Purgatorio* 9 says: — I omitted to write it since I do not understand it’) or camouflaging his embarrassment by saying that ‘for brevity’ he skipped a passage that was in Italian.¹⁰³ As discussed elsewhere, the ‘German’ manuscripts of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* display different solutions to deal with the presence (or absence) of Dante’s verses, with a spectrum of possibilities that includes preservation of the quotations, selection, abbreviation, (free) translation, substitution, and omission.¹⁰⁴

The passage of *Paradiso* 33 in the *Quadragesimale peregrini* allows us to see the difference between it and the presence of Dante’s verses in the sermon of Gritsch/Grütsch. While mistakes and nonsensical expressions in the manuscript by Johannes Pruening testify to the struggles to transcribe the Italian verses, in a later manuscript the prayer is largely transformed, although its final part is almost a literal translation of Dante’s verses.¹⁰⁵ In that last part, the Italian vernacular is so close to Latin that it did not present substantial problems to a copyist/preacher. Instead, more radical is the choice made by a third manuscript, where the prayer is completely omitted (Appendix 3).¹⁰⁶ Each manuscript’s choice is quite interesting. Overall, however, in the manuscripts of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* copied in the German area, the verses of Dante tend to disappear or to be conserved in a problematic and precarious format. Indeed, it was through the Latin part of those sermons that many elements taken from the *Commedia* found a way to reach a new readership of preachers and — mediated by them — a new audience outside Italy.

This helps us to measure the double degree of novelty represented by the passage of the *Quadragesimale* attributed to Gritsch/Grütsch. First, it is the first sermon dealing with Dante not imported from Italy but elaborated in the German world.¹⁰⁷ Second, it is the first sermon that presents some verse of the *Commedia* directly in Latin translation, bypassing the linguistic barrier of the Italian vernacular and thus offering them in a form suitable for professional preachers everywhere. This Dantean passage was fully equipped for a large circulation and — included in what soon became an authentic bestseller — it actually enjoyed it in a degree that its writer probably could not even imagine, being printed in thousands of copies and being at the disposal of thousands of preachers.

6. How did it happen?

In the previous pages, I outlined the key characteristics of this Dantean passage of the *Quadragesimale* and its relevance both for the history of Dante's reception in sermons and for the circulation (and in this specific case even elaboration) of this type of sermon outside Italy. It remains to answer the most difficult question: How did it happen? How did a German preacher happen to have at hand some verses by Dante, almost certainly already adapted and translated?

The straight and short answer is that we do not know (and probably never will). Yet, in light of the previous sections, I will advance some tentative hypotheses about the possible channels that brought these verses to the attention of a preacher active in German lands. In fact, we can imagine that either someone went to Italy and brought this rhymed prayer back to the German area (perhaps already detached from the name of Dante) or someone from Italy brought this text to an international meeting, such as a Council or the general chapter of a religious order.

Concerning the first possibility, the mobility of German students and friars is well attested. More specifically, we have traces of a specific interest in Dante by friars who came to Italy from abroad.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps, the most interesting case is that of Johann Walsze, a friar of the Franciscan province of Strasbourg, who copied the *Quadragesimale peregrini* in 1451, while he was in Marostica (40 km north of Padua). The manuscript remained in Italy, yet it shows the interest of a friar belonging to a German province in this Dantean sermon collection. It shows also his difficulties in copying the verses: they are written — probably by a different hand — with a different ink in the spaces left blank by Walsze for that purpose, as if he was not sufficiently skilled in (or comfortable with) writing the Italian vernacular.¹⁰⁹

Like-minded people, while in Italy, could find interesting and familiarize themselves with some excerpts of the *Commedia*. From its appearance, the circulation of excerpts of the poem is a well-known phenomenon. This applies particularly well to passages that could work as prayers, such as Dante's paraphrase of the *Pater noster* and, what is more relevant to us, the prayer to the Virgin.¹¹⁰ In some cases, this prayer circulated even without the name of Dante, as it happens for *Paradiso* 33.1–21 in a fifteenth-century prayer book, today held in Rome.¹¹¹ A similar fragment, perhaps already detached from the name of Dante, may be the basis of the translation that we find in the *Quadragesimale* (it would explain the absence of Dante's name).¹¹² A foreign friar in Italy could find the prayer interesting and either translate it by himself or ask someone to translate it for him.

Still, the extrapolation of this prayer from the *Commedia* and its translation could also be the result of the work done by some Italian who thought that Dante or some part of his poem was a theological/pastoral tool that deserved a wider circulation. Giovanni da Serravalle's grandiose project of internationalization of the *Commedia*, which took place during the Council of Constance, shows that this kind of reasoning was not alien to early fifteenth-century Italian prelates.¹¹³ On a smaller scale, some passage of the *Commedia* may have been part of the exchange of ideas and texts that took place in similar international assemblies. The date of the appearance of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* north of the Alps is very close to that of the Council of Constance, which might have provided the occasion for the first dissemination of these sermons in the German area. Even more relevant to us, internal references suggest that (part of) the *Quadragesimale*

attributed to Gritsch/Grütsch was written between 1440 and 1444.¹¹⁴ If Conrad Grütsch was in some way responsible for these sermons, we already mentioned that in those years he was at the Council of Basel, where he could easily exchange material with Italian colleagues.¹¹⁵ Even beyond the attribution to Conrad, this international meeting would represent an ideal playground for the circulation and translation of the prayer to the Virgin, also considering the conciliar exaltation of Mary with the proclamation of her immaculate conception, a theological idea particularly beloved by the Franciscans.

As I said, these are just hypotheses, yet they are useful for thinking about the possible ways our German preacher got hold of the verses of the *Commedia*. What is certain is that, with his decision to introduce and comment on these verses in one of his sermons, he (inadvertently) marked an important development in the use of the *Commedia* in preaching and in the history of its reception.

Conclusion

The sermon of the *Quadragesimale* printed under the name of Johannes Gritsch represents a striking novelty. It is the earliest known sermon composed in a German-speaking area that incorporates Dante's verses, being written probably around 1440–1445 and surely circulating by 1462. The Dantean section looks like a refined sermon within the sermon, with a sophisticated theological commentary on Dante's tercets. Its type of sensibility in dealing with the verses of the *Commedia* was quite rare in sermons, even in those composed in Italy. Indeed, the attention paid by this friar to the format in tercets does not find antecedents in preaching. Moreover, although some attempt to translate some verses by Dante into Latin is already traceable in the circulation of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* outside Italy, the *Quadragesimale* attributed to Gritsch/Grütsch represents a significant novelty also in this regard. The translation of the verses bypasses all the problems that non-Italian preachers faced when they encountered Italian vernacular verses in sermons. This strategy was later followed by some printed sermon collections, such as those by Bernardino Busti or Gabriele da Barletta. Yet, again, the *Quadragesimale* anticipates this phenomenon — and it does so in a sermon written in the German lands and targeting first of all a German audience, as the inclusion of terms in the local vernacular shows. While the dissemination of the *Quadragesimale peregrini* already proved that preachers active in fifteenth-century German lands could know and even use references to Dante and the *Commedia* (or rather, to fragments of it and ideas/images inspired by the poem), the discovery of this Dantean section extends the phenomenon into a completely new dimension. Detached from the name of Dante, relying only of their poetic beauty and theological soundness, these few verses of the *Commedia* and the commentary of an anonymous preacher entered into one of the most widespread sermon collections of the time. Once the *Quadragesimale* became a bestseller, this unknown Dante was able to reach an incredibly vast number of professional preachers and ultimately, thanks to their mediation, their audience. The exact form in which this mediation was done cannot be measured, although some books, such as the oldest manuscript, show signs of use exactly in this section as a confirmation that it attracted the attention of later readers/preachers.¹¹⁶

Overall, in different cultural and linguistic contexts, for many people — preachers and listeners alike — this sermon represented the first, yet unacknowledged, encounter with the poem of Dante. The trace of this remarkable encounter lies in plain sight on the pages of hundreds of incunabula and early-sixteenth century books, where the verses of an anonymous 'wise poet' and the commentary of a German friar have long remained silent, apparently invisible to modern scholars: 'Most discreet friend, the book replies only if requested. [...] Full of words, it waits in silence.'¹¹⁷ For me, as I was sitting in an armchair, harbouring doubts about my own work, the encounter with this remarkable passage was not just a relief but also an invitation to proceed further in the dark forest of late-medieval sermon collections. The forest is vast but rich in surprises. My hope is not to be alone in the journey.

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Notes

1. See Pietro Delcorno, ‘Quaresimali “visibili”: Il serafino, il guerriero, il pellegrino’, *Studi medievali*, 60 (2019), 645–88 and Id., “‘Hoc est tempus ascendendi’: Il quaresimale a stampa di Vicent Ferrer: note su un bestseller europeo’, *Arxiu de Textos Catalans Antics*, 33 (2020–2021), 167–201. On the origin and development of this genre, see Jussi Hanska, ‘Sermones quadragesimales: Birth and Development of a Genre’, *Il Santo*, 52 (2012), 107–27 and the essays in *I sermoni quaresimali: digiuno del corpo, banchetto dell’anima / Lenten Sermons: Fasting of the Body, Banquet of the Soul*, ed. by Pietro Delcorno, Eleonora Lombardo, Lorenza Tromboni, special issue of *Memorie Domenicane*, 48 (2017).
2. Data derived from *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC), *Gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke* (GW) and *Universal Short Title Catalogue* (USTC). A detailed description of the edition is available in <https://lentsersmons.cls.ru.nl/collection/view/1/> (last access: 1 August 2021).
3. André Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch de Bâle: Contribution à l’histoire de la prédication franciscaine au XVme siècle* (Fribourg, 1940).
4. On the key role of printed sermon collections, see the seminal work: Anne Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation* (Aldershot, 2002).
5. See 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 and Id., *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son: The Pastoral Uses of a Biblical Narrative (c. 1200–1550)* (Leiden, 2018), pp. 158–70. See also Nigel Palmer, ‘Bacchus und Venus’, in *Literatur und Wandmalerei 2: Konventionalität und Konversation*, ed. by Eckart Conrad Lutz, Johanna Thali, René Wetzel (Tübingen, 2005), pp. 189–235.
6. ‘Quare I Metaphisice dicitur: Quia homines propter admirari inceperunt philosophari; Johannes Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1475), 5T (alphabetical system: 5T indicates the letter T of the fifth alphabet). The quotation refers to Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 1.2, yet it could be easily mediated by some *florilegium*.
7. Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*.
8. On his life: Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 27–37.
9. Würtzburg, Library of the Franciscan Conventual Convent, MS Herb. I 38, fol. 238^v, quoted in the description of the manuscript provided in Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 68–71. Conrad is documented in Freiburg between 1458 and 1461, yet he may have remained in the city longer, since the next information available about him dates to 1467, when he was in Mulhouse. The manuscript, which at one point was recorded as lost during World War II, is currently (personal communication, October 2020) in a deposit waiting to be transferred to the Diözesanbibliothek of Würtzburg. For this reason and the limitations imposed by the current pandemic, it was not possible for me to consult it. I am grateful to Dr Katrin Janz-Wenig and friar Andreas Fieback, who helped me to trace the location of the manuscript.
10. See Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 84–91.
11. See Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction before the Council of Trent* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 109–10 and Delcorno, *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son*, p. 116.
12. On the probable dating of the sermons, see Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 66–67.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
14. ‘Finitumque hoc opus sermonum quadragesimalium per me Leonhardum Troubach, cappellanum cappelle beate virginis in Mülhusen, in vigilia Michahel archangeli, anno domini 1462, pontificatus sanctissimi Pii secundi et reverendi domini Johannis de Feningen, diocesis Basiliensis ecclesie, etc’; Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A V 7, fol. 317^r. Mulhouse belonged to the diocese of Basel, whose bishop was Johann von Venningen (d. 1478). In his testament, Leonhard left this manuscript to the Carthusians of Basel, as attested by a note of possession under the colophon. On this manuscript see Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 39–40.
15. Colmar, Les Dominicains Bibliothèque patrimoniale, CPC 1953 (previously: Bibliothèque du Consistoire, MS 1953), whose colophon reads: ‘Et sic est finis per me fratrem Iohannem Meinhart, ordinis fratrum minorum, in Ingolstat, anno domini 1467’ (fol. 294^v). The manuscript contains the sermons from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday; after it the copyist wrote what in other manuscripts is the first line of the table of contents (‘Aron virga floruit, 12S’), left empty the rest of the folio, and in the following folio began to copy the *Registrum* to use the sermon collection for the Sundays during the year (fols 276^r–77^r). The copyist died in 1499. At an unspecified date, the book entered in the library of the Franciscan convent of Colmar (according to Landmann, in 1477, yet he did not provide any evidence); Florent Landmann, ‘Die spätmittelalterliche Predigt der

- Franziskaner-Konventualen nach den Handschriften der Konsistorialbibliothek zu Colmar', *Archiv für elsässische Kirchengeschichte*, 5 (1930), 19–88: 71 (description of the manuscript at pp. 70–71). The identification of the author was made in Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grütisch*, pp. 42–43.
16. At the present state of the research, it is impossible to say whether the interventions were made to enrich the text by adding further details or instead to abbreviate it. Still, the differences are the result of a conscious intervention.
 17. Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grütisch*, pp. 48–53.
 18. See Pietro Delcorno, 'Classical Reception in Medieval Preaching: Pyramus and Thisbe in Three Fifteenth-Century Sermons', in *Framing Classical Reception Studies: Different Perspectives on a Developing Field*, ed. by Maarten De Pourcq, Nathalie de Haan, David Rijser (Leiden, 2020), pp. 97–123: 107 and Id., 'Emotions, Theology, and Society in a Blockbuster: Grütisch/Grütisch's Good Friday Sermon' (in preparation).
 19. Johannes Grütisch, *Quadragesimale* [Nürnberg: Johann Sensenschmidt and Andreas Frisner, n.a. 1474]. GW 11538.
 20. He served as rector in 1468. On his career, see Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grütisch*, pp. 8–17.
 21. Some later editions increased the confusion, such as the elaborate colophon of the incunabulum printed in Nuremberg by Anton Koberger in 1479 (GW 11545). It indicates the author as 'frater clarissimus ordinis sancti Francisci magister Iohannes Grütisch de Basilea professor sacre theologie eximius'; Conrad was a Franciscan magister in theology, while Johannes was a professor of Basel.
 22. In previous works, I wrongly indicated the existence of 'at least ten other [editions] at the beginning of the sixteenth century'; Delcorno, *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son*, p. 116. My mistake derives, it seems, from Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation*, pp. 17 and 36, which indicates 36 editions of the *Quadragesimale* between 1450 and 1520 (with 31 incunabula editions, something that does not find confirmation in ISTC and GW). Among Lenten sermon collections, only the *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* by Roberto Caracciolo (d. 1495) matched its dissemination, with 28 editions between 1472 and 1513; see Giacomo Mariani, 'Roberto Caracciolo's *Quadragesimale de poenitentia*: Compilation, Structure and Fortune of a Fifteenth-Century Best Seller', in *I sermoni quaresimali*, pp. 243–60.
 23. Comparable is the success of Herolt (d. 1468), who during his life had a limited fame; Ian Siggins, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching: The Sermon Books of Johannes Herolt, OP (Discipulus)* (Bloomington, 2009).
 24. On these key tools, see Letizia Pellegrini, 'Tabula super sermones. Gli indici dei sermonari domenicani nei codici centro-italiani (secc. XIII–XV)', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 64 (1994), 119–44.
 25. Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grütisch*, pp. 48–53. On the latter aspect, Murith claims that the entire *Quadragesimale* would have only 'trois principales variantes, du reste sans importance', saying that he compared the manuscript of Basel and the edition Nuremberg, Georg Stuchs, 1488 (GW 11553; this is the only edition printed after 1484 that still follows Zainer's). My studies on just two sermons — that of Passion Sunday and that of Good Friday — show that this assertion is wrong and misleading.
 26. I do not consider here changes due to the language (the sermon presents expressions or passages in the German vernacular that are changed in the editions printed in France and Italy).
 27. This is clearly visible in the introduction of sermon 6: the manuscripts and the 1475 edition have a passage that is absent in the *editio princeps* and that allows us to date the sermon to 1440. This dynamic is confirmed by some passage of the Passion sermon.
 28. Based on the allegorical interpretation of the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, which occurs in the sermon of Passion Sunday, the two groups are identified in Delcorno, 'Christ and the soul', p. 48. The three editions that I could not check at the time (see there note 67) belong to the '1484 Strasbourg group'.
 29. I did not realize it in Delcorno, 'Christ and the soul', p. 50. I partially corrected my position in Id., 'Classical Reception', p. 107. This dynamic is clearly visible in the interpretation of the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe and in the Good Friday sermon, as discussed elsewhere (see note 18).
 30. Preliminary consideration based on the printed sermons of Ferrer in Delcorno, 'Hoc est tempus ascendendi'. On the interplay between manuscript and printed sermons, see *Circulating the Word of God in Medieval and Early Modern Catholic Europe: Preaching and Preachers across Manuscript and Print (c. 1450 to c. 1550)*, ed. by Veronica O'Mara and Patricia Stoop (Turnhout, in preparation).
 31. Beside the manuscripts already mentioned, for group A (to which belongs also the Basel manuscript), I use Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 384. The manuscript was copied in 1466, most likely by a Cistercian monk, as the praise for the abbot of Eußerthal Abbey (near Heidelberg) in the colophon suggests: 'Scriptus anno domini 1466 in festo sanctorum martirum Primi et Feliciani feria secunda infra octavas corporis Christi sub prelatura domini Iohannis Selcz venerabilis abbatis Utrinevalis ac devocionis et vite laudabilis' (fol. 359^v). The colophons of other works in the same manuscript show that the copyist was in the female Cistercian monastery of Heilsbruck (near Nuremberg) in the following month (fols 492^v and 502^v). The reproduction of this manuscript is available online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.384 (last access: 18 May 2021). For group B, beside the manuscript held in Colmar, I use Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 379 Helm. The manuscript was copied in 1473 ('Explicit quadragesimale tripartium, rescriptum et terminatum anno domini MCCCCLXXXIII, secunda ante festum sancti Martini'; fol. 462^v), it belonged to

Symon Wisse (d. 1503), who was vicar in the Burgkappelle of Hanau since 1477 and who left it to the Benedictine abbey of St Blasius in Northem ('Librum presentem dominus Symon in castro Hanaw beate Marie virginis altarista legavit librarie in Northem. Oretur fideliter pro eo ad dominum deum nostrum. Amen'; back of front cover). A description of this manuscript is available online: <http://diglib.hab.de> (last access: 20 May 2021).

32. My translation is partially based on Allen Mandelbaum's translation of *Paradiso* 33. 1–6.
33. The sermon's variation may just be a scribal error for *consilium*, although it fits with the idea of the Trinity as a council where the incarnation was decreed from eternity.
34. Playing with the etymology of Nazareth as flower, the idea is expressed with similar words by the *Mariale* 'Super missus est', a thirteen-century text long circulating under the name of Albert the Great: 'Sicut enim divina generatio, ita et humana, generationi floris de flore assimilatur. Flos enim pullulat de uno germine in decore et odore cum spe utilitatis in fructu. Similiter Filius secundum divinam generationem procedit de uno qui est in coelis sine matre, et secundum humanam generationem de una in terris sine patre. Bene ergo in Nazareth conceptus fuit, quia sicut flos de flore sine virili commixtione de sua matre salvo virginitatis decore et matris utilitate processit'; quoted in Albert Fries, *Die unter dem Namen des Albertus Magnus überlieferten mariologischen Schriften* (Münster, 1954), p. 24.
35. See Gennaro Ferrante, 'Forme, funzioni e scopi del tradurre Dante: da Coluccio Salutati a Giovanni da Serravalle (con edizione delle dediche della *Traslatio Dantis*)', *Annali dell'Istituto Italiano per gli studi storici*, 25 (2010), 147–81; Andrea Robiglio, 'Dante al Concilio di Costanza', *Humanistica*, 8/1 (2013), 11–28.
36. See Gennaro Ferrante, 'Giovanni Bartoli da Serravalle', in *Censimento dei commenti danteschi. I: I commenti di tradizione manoscritta (fino al 1480)*, ed. by Enrico Malato and Andrea Mazzucchi (Rome, 2011), pp. 224–40 and Id., 'La ridestinazione del commento dantesco di Giovanni da Serravalle a Sigismondo di Lussemburgo: implicazioni testuali', *Rassegna di Studi Danteschi*, 8/1 (2008), 143–67. Some traces of its circulation are attested in Avignon (it was in Pope Benedict XIII's library) and in England; Nick Havely, *Dante's British Public: Readers and Texts, from Fourteenth Century to the Present* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 15–24 and 31–32.
37. I follow: Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Capponi 1, fol. 473^v (the commentary to the canto is at fols 355^v–60^f).
38. Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, MS A 411, fols 236^r–37^v. I am particularly grateful to Dr Maria Grazia Bollini and the staff of the Archiginnasio for providing me with reproductions of these folia. Ronto's text still lacks an edition. On this author and his text, see Gennaro Ferrante, 'Matteo Ronto', in *Censimento dei commenti danteschi*, pp. 333–39 (with bibliography).
39. Beside the *Censimento dei commenti danteschi* (see note 36), the key reference for the medieval commentaries to the *Commedia* is Stefano Bellomo, *Dizionario dei commentatori danteschi: L'esegesi della Commedia da Iacopo Alighieri a Nidobeato* (Florence, 2004). A useful English introduction to this field is Anna Pegoretti, 'Early Reception until 1481' in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante's Commedia*, ed. by Zygmunt Barański and Simon Gilson (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 245–58.
40. See Carlo Delcorno, 'L'ars praedicandi di Bernardino da Siena', *Lettere italiane*, 32 (1980), 441–75 (p. 463).
41. The metaphor of Christ as light is deeply rooted in the Bible (e.g. John 1), while the sunbeam as visualization of the incarnation occurs in many late-medieval images of the Annunciation.
42. A widespread late-medieval text such as the *Speculum humanae salvationis* develops this connection in a very effective way: 'Haec autem conceptio tam mirabilis et tam immensa | fuit Moysi in rubo ardente praeostensa. | Rubus sustinuit ignem et non perdidit viriditatem, | Maria concepit filium et non amisit virginitatem; | Dominus ipse habitavit in illo rubo ardente, | et idem Deus habitavit in Mariae gravidato ventre. | Descendit in rubum propter Iudaeorum liberationem; | descendit in Mariam propter nostram redemptionem. | Descendit in rubum, ut educeret Iudaeos de Aegypto, | descendit in Mariam ut eriperet nos de inferno'; *Speculum humanae salvationis*, ed. by Jules Lutz and Paul Perdrizet (Leipzig, 1909), cap. VII. 55–64.
43. 'Quis unquam ista audivit? quis vidit talia? quis hoc excogitare potuit, ut mater virgo esset et intacta generaret, quae et virgo permansit et genuit? Sicut enim quondam rubus comburi videbatur, et ignis eum non tangebatur [Exodus 3], et sicut tres pueri in camino inclusi habebantur, et tamen eos non laedebat incendium, nec odor fumus erat in eis [Daniel 3], vel quemadmodum fuit in Daniele, cui intra lacum leonum incluso, claustris non apertis, allatum est ei prandium ab Abacuc [Daniel 14]; ita et haec sancta virgo genuit Dominum, sed intacta permansit. Mater effecta est, sed virginitatem non amisit. Genuit infantem, et (ut dictum est) virgo permansit. Virgo ergo genuit, et virgo permansit. Mater filii facta est, et castitatis sigillum non perdidit'; Pseudo-Origen, *Homelia in vigilia nativitatis Domini*, PL 95, col. 1163 (italics mine, for the sentences that occur also in the sermon); Origenes Werke XII. *Origenes Matthäuserklärung 3.1*, ed. by Erich Klostermann and Ernst Benz (Leipzig, 1941), pp. 239–45.
44. The *Quadragesimale* reads: 'Demum ipsa fuit eius mater, quia ipsum quem genuit ablactavit, ut dicit Augustinus', while the text of Pseudo-Augustine plays on the contrast: 'ipsum quem genuit mox adoravit'; Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo*, sermo 20 (de nativitate Domini), PL 40, col. 1268. Although it might be a mistake for *adoravit*, the term *allactavit* is consistently used in the manuscripts and printed editions of the *Quadragesimale*. Immediately before, the Augustinian sermon presents the paradox of the Virgin with an

expression similar to those of the Origenian text used by the *Quadragesimale* (cf. next note): ‘Ipsa filia, ipsa est et mater; ipsa ancilla et domina; ipsa genitrix et genita; ipsa cum integritate peperit, cum virginitate concepit, et post partum, ut supra diximus, virgo permansit, ipsum quem genuit mox adoravit’. On this widespread late-medieval sermon collection, see Eric L. Saak, *Creating Augustine: Interpreting Augustine and Augustinianism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 82–138.

45. ‘Mater, inquit, ejus (Matthew 1. 18). *Mater immaculata, mater incorrupta, mater intacta. Mater ejus: cujus ejus? Mater Dei unigeniti, Domini et regis omnium, plasmatoris et creatoris cunctorum*: illius qui in coelis est sine matre, et in terris est sine patre; ipsius qui in coelis secundum deitatem in sinu est Patris, et in terris, secundum corporis susceptionem, in sinu est matris. O magnae admirationis gratia! o inenarrabilis suavitas! o ineffabile magnumque sacramentum! *Ipsa eademque virgo, ipsa et mater Domini, ipsa et genitrix, ipsa eius ancilla*, plasmatio eius ipsa quae genuit’; PL 95, col 1163. Italics mine to underline the passages used in the *Quadragesimale*. The first quotation occurs often in an abbreviated form, see Appendix 1.4.
46. For possible occurrences of these two texts in the commentaries to the *Commedia*, I consulted the database of the Dartmouth Dante Project: <https://dante.dartmouth.edu/> (last access 1 June 2021). As an example of the patristic references used in the early commentaries to *Paradiso* 33, see the texts by Pietro Alighieri, who refers to Augustine, Ambrose, and Bernard of Clairvaux.
47. Already the medieval commentators (e.g. Iacopo della Lana, Francesco Buti, Giovanni di Serravalle) noted that the antithesis ‘umile e alta più che creatura’ echoes the *Magnificat*.
48. The sermon quotes here a key concept expressed by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 2.98.11: ‘Intellectus autem noster [...] infimum gradum tenet in substantiis intellectualibus’. With just slightly different words, see also the famous passage where the human being is defined as the horizon between corporeal and incorporeal creatures (2.68.6).
49. The third point is missing in the manuscripts in Basel and Rome (both group A), arguably for a ‘saut du même au même’; see Appendix 1.6.
50. ‘Quantum nunc ad evangelium et continuacionem eius, heri ostendit ecclesia horrorem iudicii et penam damnatorum, hodie redarguit avaritiam cupidorum mercatorum. Et sunt tres partes evangelii: In prima parte ostenditur quomodo Christus venit ad salvandum perdita, ibi: *Hic est Iesus*. In secunda quomodo reprobatur et expellit iniusta et dolosa negotia, ibi: *Et invenit*. In tertia docet relinquere mala et amare celestia, ibi: *Et relictis*’; Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* (Ulm: Zainer, 1475), 5Z. No difference in Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 384, fol. 93^v; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 379 Helm, fol. 37^r; Johannes Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* (Strasbourg: 1484), 5Z. In the following footnotes, I mark these references as R, W, S. When nothing is said, there are no differences.
51. ‘Debemus ergo totaliter nos a mundanis separare ut simus sicut pueri innocentes et Ihesum invocare, qui est filius dei, et dicere: “Osanna, obsecramus te Ihesu, qui es salvator salva nos, quia: potens es ad liberandum; promptus es ad adiuvandum; clemens es ad indulgendum”’; *Ibid.*, 6A. The text exploits the link of both *Osanna* and *Jesus* with the semantic field of salvation.
52. ‘Rex est Christus qui est rex ecclesie militantis. Adversarii sunt civitates diaboli ex demonibus et malis hominibus congregatae, prophetatum enim fuit et a deo ordinatum quod ecclesia et electi humani generis aliter pacem habere non poterant nisi rex eorum interficeretur. Hoc considerans rex dei filius *cum in forma dei esset exinanivit semetipsum formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominem factus inventus, ut homo factus obediens usque ad mortem*, Gal. IV’; *Ibid.*, 6B. R, fol. 94^r does not indicate the biblical reference; S indicates it correctly as Philippians 2; W, fol. 37^r indicates Phil. 2, yet as a correction over a previous indication (perhaps Gal.).
53. Iacopo da Varazze, *Sermones quadragesimales*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence, 2005), p. 472 (feria IV post Palmarum, sermo II); Jacobus de Voragine used this tale also in his third sermon for the XXIII Sunday after Trinity. Meffret, *Sermones Meffreth alias Ortulus regine de tempore: Pars hyemalis* [Basel: Nicolaus Kesler, not after 1486], BK (Dominica I in Adventu, sermo III). Chapter 24 of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* presents this story as a *figura* of the Passion and, in particular, of the voluntary death of Jesus.
54. Robert Holcot, *Super sapientiam Salomonis* [Köln: Konrad Winters, not after 1476], l. 10. c. 129 (end of the chapter).
55. See Delcorno, ‘Classical Reception’, pp. 103–7 and *Id.*, *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son*, pp. 164–70. The *Quadragesimale* confirms the penchant of (some) fifteenth-century German preachers for this type of ‘classifying’ material; see Kimberly Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images, and Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 283–320.
56. A methodological reflection on this issue in Delcorno, ‘Classical Reception’.
57. ‘Volunt etiam multi doctores quod deus multis gentilibus virtutes excellentibus hanc faciat gratiam ut unum gemitum emittant et [R adds: requirant] malorum actuum recognitionem et quod sic eorum extremam penitentiam acceptet’; Gritsch, *Quadragesimale*, 6F.
58. ‘In signum huius Christus iniquos et dolosos eiecit negotiatores de ecclesia. Ostendendo omnes tales expellendos esse a comunione fidelium, quia ut dicit Crisostomus, LXXXVIII distinctio, cap. eijciens: Mercator nunquam potest placere deo’; *Ibid.*, 6GH. The reference is to the *Decretum*, where however it reads: ‘Eiciens

Dominus vendentes et ementes de templo, significavit, quia homo mercator vix aut numquam potest Deo placere. Et ideo nullus Christianus debet esse mercator, aut, si voluerit esse, proiciatur de ecclesia Dei', *Decretum*, dist. 78, c. 11. On the meaning of this sentence, see André Vauchez, "'Homo mercator vix aut numquam potest Deo placere". Quelques réflexions sur l'attitude des milieux ecclésiastiques face aux nouvelles formes de l'activité économique au XIIIe et au début du XIIIe siècle', in *Le marchand au Moyen Âge* (Reims, 1992), pp. 211–17 and, for a broader context, Giacomo Todeschini, *I mercanti e il tempio* (Bologna, 2002).

59. 'Cuius ratio est quia ut communiter sunt dolosi in negotio: species diversas miscendo; pondera et mensura variando; defectus et rerum fracturas celando'; Gritsch, *Quadragesimale*, 6H.
60. 'Si autem per alchimiam fieret verum aurum non esset illicitum illud vendere pro vero, quia nihil prohibet artem uti aliquibus naturalibus causis ad producendum naturales et veros effectus'; *Ibid.*, 6I.
61. 'Patet etiam illicitum esse vinum commiscere melle vel sinapio propter dulcedinem ut eo carius vendat, vel cinere clavilato propter fortitudinem vel saporem, quia quibusdam hominibus sunt nociva. Est enim cinis clavilatus, vulgariter *waydasch*, corrosivus viscerum, mel inflativum et sinapium generativum ptisis dicitur *kisterig*'; *Ibid.*, 6K. Variants: R: 'vulgariter *weidesch*, corrosivus viscerum, mel inflativum', it ends here; W: *weytesch* and then 'senapium ptisis *kister* (?) generativum'; S omits the vernacular terms. This passage already attracted attention in Christoph Friedrich Ammon, *Geschichte der praktischen Theologie [...] seit der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften. I: Geschichte der Homiletik* (Göttingen, 1804), p. 88.
62. On this type of vernacular glossa as a signal that the preacher thought of the future oral delivery, see Roger Andersson, 'Sermon Manuscripts of Different Kinds', *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 55 (2011), 31–44 (pp. 41–42). For a broader discussion of this phenomenon, see Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 13–30. On this topic, see now also *Multilingual Sermons*, ed. by Jan Odstrčilík, *Medieval Worlds*, 12 (2020), 140–253. In other parts, the *Quadragesimale* has longer vernacular insertions.
63. 'Unde Tullius l. 3, c. 12 *de officiis* querit an vir honestus debeat patefacere vitia rerum in venditionem an celare ...'; Gritsch, *Quadragesimale*, 6M.
64. 'Unde narrat Beda l. 3, c. 18 in gestis anglorum, de Forseo episcopo sancto. Cum enim ille a corpore fuisset raptus, meruit angelorum aspectus intueri et tunc iussus est ab angelo in mundum videre. Quod cum fecisset vidit vallem tenebrosam [W: tenebrarum] in ymo positam habentem tres ignes grandes accedentes vallem. Et cum angelum interrogasset quid hoc esset, respondet dicens: "Tres ignes sunt tria iniqua et dolosa, que negotiatores habent accedentes totum mundum et consumentes. Primus ignis est mendacium et periurium et frequenter [R: semper] committitur in venditione et emptione. Secundus est avaritia et cupiditas vendentium et etiam ementium. Tercium est impietas fraudis et doli"; *Ibid.*, 6K.
65. In the *Historia Anglorum* the fires are four and are connected with a broader spectrum of sins, since they symbolize: *mendax, cupiditas, dissensio, impietas* (linked with *fraus*); Beda, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, l. 3, c. 19, ed. by André Crépin (Paris, 2005), II, p. 106. The *Visio Fursei* is similar, with the difference that the fires represent the Christians' sins after baptism and that the fourth is labelled as *ignis immisericordiae* (related to *impietas* and *fraus*); see *Visio Fursei*, ed. in Claude Carozzi, *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'au-delà d'après la littérature latine (Ve s.–XIIIe s.)* (Rome, 1994), pp. 677–92 (pp. 682–83). It is difficult to say whether the author of the *Quadragesimale* found this passage already in this form; yet, later on — presumably mediated by this sermon — it occurs in Bernardino Busti, *Rosarium sermonum* (Venice: Giorgio Arrivabene, 1498), fol. 320^v (sermon 32) and Jean Raulin, *Opus sermonum quadragesimalium* (Paris: Jean Petit, 1515), I, fol. 255^v (sermon 92).
66. 'Moraliter est notandum quod quia conversatio malorum est periculosa, ideo exemplo Christi fugienda. [...] Ne igitur iusti ab iniustis inficiantur per eorum consortium transfert eos dominus: de rebellione ad reconciliationem; de dissolutione ad religionem; de peregrinatione ad quietationem'; Gritsch, *Quadragesimale*, 6N.
67. 'Arbor enim de silva ad ortum translata, numquam fructificat nec vegetatur nisi radix cum arbore transferatur'; *Ibid.*, 6O.
68. On the relationship between grace and free will in the *Quadragesimale*, see Delcorno, *In the Mirror of the Prodigal Son*, pp. 162–63 and 169.
69. Delcorno, 'Christ and the soul', pp. 45–46.
70. On these two different and sometimes overlapping approaches to the *Commedia*, see Nicolò Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori del Quattrocento', in *Theologus Dantes: Tematiche teologiche nelle opere e nei primi commenti*, ed. by Luca Lombardo, Diego Parisi and Anna Pegoretti (Venice, 2018), pp. 231–46. On the connection of the *Commedia* with the cultural horizon of preachers, see Carlo Delcorno, 'Dante e il linguaggio dei predicatori', *Lecture classensi*, 25 (1996), 51–74 and Nicolò Maldina, *In pro del mondo. Dante, la predicazione e i generi della letteratura religiosa medievale* (Roma, 2017). A useful introduction is George Ferzoco, 'Dante and the Context of Medieval Preaching', in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. by Claire Honess and Matthew Treherne (Oxford, 2013), II, pp. 187–210.
71. Cesare Cenci, 'Il Quaresimale delle scuole di Fr. Ruggero di Eraclea', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 88 (1995), 269–318. Describing the six manuscripts that transmit this sermon collection, Cenci convincingly argues that Dante's quotations are particularly numerous only in a manuscript (Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro

- Convento, MS 492) where, most probably, they were added to the original Ruggero sermons (perhaps by the copyist, friar Stefano di Atella). On the Dantean quotations in this interesting late-fourteenth- / early-fifteenth-century manuscript, see Giulio Palumbo, 'Il codice 492 della Biblioteca di S. Francesco nella Comunale di Assisi', in *Dante e l'Italia Meridionale* (Florence, 1966), pp. 463–478. Instead, Ruggero's sermons that circulated also outside Italy (see below, note 93) contain just a couple of reference to the *Commedia*. This invites some caution in mentioning Ruggero and his sermons as a possible vehicle of Dante abroad, as suggested in Havely, *Dante's British Public*, pp. 10–15, which however correctly recalls the presence of a *frater Rogerus de Sicilia* as lecturer at Cambridge during 1351–52, who may have been Ruggero da Eraclea.
72. In the *Sermones de tempore* by Andrea Pace, who was active mainly in Sicily, there is only one quotation of Dante, namely in a sermon for Christmas. When he comments on the 'way to prepare for the Lord' (Luke 3. 4), speaking of the way of vices, he introduces the incipit of the *Commedia* (*Inferno* 1. 1–7): 'Ista via [victorum] non debet dici via, sed potius devia vel *invia*, iuxta illud Psalmi 81 [62. 3]: *In terra deserta invia inaquosa*, quia talis via per quam in deserto huius mundi aliqui ambulant, est arida sine alicui humore divine gracie et deserta, obscura et tenebrosa, sine luce alicuius boni que parum distat a morte, iuxta illud poete vulgaris: *Nel mezo del camin di nostra vita me retrovai per una selva obscura che la drita via era smarrita*, scilicet virtutum. *Et quante adire qual'era eccosa dura, quella selva selvagia, aspara et forte che nel pinsar renova la paura, tant'è amara che poco è più morte*'; Viterbo, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS 22, fol. 10^v, ed. in Carolina Miceli, 'Il sermonario di Andrea de Pace' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Palermo, 2010), p. 29. The passage is interesting for three reasons: quoting the *Commedia* was still rare at the turn of the fifteenth century (once in the whole sermon collection); the name of Dante is not given; the verses are first paraphrased in Latin and then given in the vernacular.
 73. The sermons stem from his preaching during Lent in 1419, when he addressed Bona di Savoia, who had recently lost her husband, and her court. The preacher both paraphrases in Latin some passages of Dante (as *Inferno* 1) and quotes verses from *Inferno* 3, *Purgatorio* 9, and *Paradiso* 11: see Alessandro Vitale Brovarone, 'Per la fortuna di Dante in Piemonte. La testimonianza di Marco da Sommariva', *Studi Piemontesi*, 4 (1975), 322–24. Together with *Paradiso* 33, these are among the passages of the *Commedia* more frequently 'plundered' by preachers. On the cultural context of this sermon cycle, see Laura Gaffuri, 'Predicatori tra città e corte nel Piemonte sabauda del Quattrocento', in *Prêcher dans les espaces lotharingiens. XIIIe–XIXe siècles*, ed. by Stefano Simit (Paris, 2020), pp. 21–45.
 74. Santa Casciani, *Bernardino: Reader of Dante*, in *Dante and the Franciscans*, ed. Ead. (Leiden, 2003), pp. 85–112.
 75. Ferrer's references are usually connected by scholars with the sermons delivered by Felip de Malla (d. 1431) in Barcelona in 1411 and 1413 (the latter date refers to a discourse for a poetic contest), yet he may refer also to a broader use by Italian preachers that he encountered both in Italy and abroad; see Delcorno, 'Hoc est tempus ascendendi', 181–82. On the presence of the *Commedia* in Aragon see Francesc J. Gómez, 'Dante en la cultura catalana a l'entorn del Castel de Barcelona (1381–1410/12)', *Magnificat: Cultura i Literatura Meidevals*, 3 (2016), 161–98 and Id., 'Dante e Pietro Alighieri nell'opera teologia del minorita catalano Joan Pasqual', *Studi danteschi*, 80 (2015), 243–92.
 76. 'come mostra l'esempio per molti commenti fatti sopra sua *Commedia* da uomini dottissimi e famosissimi, e le frequenti allegazioni che da santi ed eccellenti uomini ogni dì si sentono nelle loro pubbliche predicazioni'; Lorenzo de' Medici, *Commento de' miei sonetti*, ed. by Tiziano Zanato (Florence, 1991), pp. 148–49. The phenomenon was not limited to Florence, although the preachers had an additional reason to mention Dante in his hometown.
 77. 'Tutto questo male era venuto dal malo reggimento dello Stato [...]. Da questo si conducevano in te mali pastori etiam nello spirituale, e così la città si ruina in tutto. Vengano di qui e mali predicatori e adulatori, che non vogliono dire la verità per non dispiacere a' capi del reggimento. E su' pergami non si predicava Cristo, ma eranvi introdotte le poesie e Dante e cose frivole: e la Scrittura sacra si restava là nella polvere: e li poeti andavano su per li pergami, e' quali poeti già condussono la idolatria ed el paganesimo per tutto el mondo'; Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, ed. by Luigi Firpo (Rome, 1965), p. 290. To contextualize this passage within Savonarola's contraposition between the Bible and the poets, see Cécile Terreaux-Scotto, "'Mon dire est un faire". L'art de persuader dans les sermons politiques de Savonarole', *Cahiers d'études italiennes*, 2 (2005), 89–117. By putting Dante on the same level as the pagan poets, Savonarola is remarkably close to Ferrer; yet the position of the Dominicans cannot be generalized, as Gabriele da Barletta's sermons show (see below).
 78. For an introduction to these preachers, see Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religion Instruction*, pp. 74–78 and 102–03. Rich in references to Dante (and to Petrarch) are three manuscripts (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS y F. I. 11–13) by the Conventual Franciscan friar Francesco Vaccari. They stem from his preaching in Ferrara and Venice between 1486–1487. For instance, on the love for the neighbour he quotes at length the episode of Ugolino (*Inferno* 33. 61–72) and on lust and sodomy several verses from *Inferno* 5; Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS y F. I. 11, fols 99^v, 313^{rv}, 320^r, 329^r.
 79. On these two preachers, see Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori'. Paolo Attavanti wrote the *Quadragesimale de redivo peccatoris ad Deum* (Milan: Leonardo Pachel and Ulderico Scinzenzeler, 1479).

80. Nicolò Maldina, 'Dantean Devotions: Gabriele Barletta's "Oral" *Commedia* in Context', in *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society*, ed. by Brian Richardson, Massimo Rospocher, Stefano Dall'Aglio (London, 2016), pp. 185–99.
81. Still, some of these short references show an interesting level of engagement with the text, either using its episodes as *exempla* or joining together different passages of the poem; see Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori', pp. 233–35 and 240–41.
82. Oriana Visani, 'Citazioni di poeti nei sermonari medievali', in *Letteratura in forma di sermone: I rapporti tra predicazione e letteratura nei secoli XIII–XVI*, ed. by Ginetta Auzzas, Giovanni Baffetti, Carlo Delcorno (Florence, 2003), pp. 123–46.
83. Bernardino da Fossa, *Super laude ad Beatam Virginem in trigesimotertio cantico Paradisi Dantis Alighieri* (Florence, 1896). Letizia Pellegrini has recently announced the publication of a comprehensive study of the life and works of this important Observant friar.
84. The secretary of Ludovico il Moro informed the Duke — who was not in the city — about this sermon with a very detailed letter, which testifies to the literate lay people's interest in this type of sermon; see Delcorno, 'Dante e il linguaggio dei predicatori', pp. 51–52.
85. See Pietro Delcorno, 'Enea, la Sibilla e Dante: Primi appunti su un quaresimale virgiliano', *Cahiers d'études italiennes*, 29 (2019) (online: DOI: 10.4000/cei.5706).
86. On this sermon collection, see Pietro Delcorno, "'Et ista sunt scripta Dantis": Predicare la *Commedia* in Quaresima', in *I sermoni quaresimali*, pp. 125–43; Id., 'Un pellegrinaggio nell'inferno dantesco: il *Quaresimale peregrini cum angelo*', in *Predicatori, mercanti, pellegrini. L'Occidente medievale e lo sguardo letterario sull'Altro*, ed. by Giovanni Strinna and Giuseppe Mascherpa (Mantua, 2018), pp. 219–50; Id., 'Preaching the *Commedia* in a German World', in *Preaching and New Worlds: Sermons as Mirrors of Realms Near and Far*, ed. by Timothy Johnson, Katherine Wisley Shelby, John D. Young (New York, 2018), pp. 163–84.
87. Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori', p. 242 recalls how this sermon collection is the best expression of this approach to the *Commedia* in sermons. On the didactic and allegorical itineraries in the afterlife as genre, see also Cesare Segre, 'Il viaggio allegorico didattico', in Id., *Fuori dal mondo: i modelli nella follia e nelle immagini dell'aldilà* (Turin, 1990), pp. 25–66.
88. In 228 tercets, Mino d'Arezzo offers a summary and an interpretation of the *Commedia*, focusing on the allegorical interpretation of selected key passages of the poem; see Bellomo, *Dizionario dei commentatori danteschi*, pp. 339–44 and *Censimento dei commenti danteschi*, pp. 354–64. On the use of the *Capitoli* in these sermons, see Delcorno, 'Et ista sunt scripta Dantis', pp. 131–35.
89. Attavanti's *Quaresimale* shows a similar awareness, albeit on a different level; Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori', pp. 242–43.
90. For the appropriation of Dante's images, previous studies (see note 86) exemplify how it presents the entrance of purgatory as a symbol of the penitential practice or Geryon as an embodiment of usurers.
91. Predictably, several preachers were attracted to this Marian invocation. Beside Bernardino da Fossa (see note 83), worth noting is the *reportatio* of a sermon preached by Bernardino da Feltre (d. 1494); *Sermoni del beato Bernardino Tomitano da Feltre*, ed. by Cesare Varischi (Milan, 1964), I, pp. 76–78 (yet, Bernardino at times contested Dante's position, such as on the donation of Constantine; *ivi*, pp. 64–65). The attention to *Paradiso* 33. 1–21 was not limited to preachers: some of its lines and phrases are appropriated in *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400), who knew 'a Dante of fragments'; Havely, *Dante's British Public*, pp. 8–9.
92. 'Postquam heri noster peregrinus fuit instructus de vita activa et contemplativa quibus modis recipitur gratia dei ab illa domina etc. hodie angelus vocans peregrinum dicit ei: "Pete humiliter ab illa domina ut aequaliter illam arborem inclinet ita ut valeas aliquem ramusculum recipere quo mediante optata consequi valeas. Quia sicut dicit Augustinus 12 de trinitate: Nemo ad deum vadit nisi quem gratia dei prevenit". Quibus dictis peregrinus statim ad pedes eius, id est illius domine genuflexit se dicens: "Donna, si tanto grande e tantu vali, | che chi vol grazia e a te non recorre, | sua dexianza vol volar senza ali. | La tua benignità non pur succore | a chi dimanda, ma multe fiate | liberamente al demandar precorre. | In te misericordia, in te pietà, | <in te magnificenzia, in te s'aduna> | qualunche è in creatura de bontade. | De questa gratia tua fammi comuna". Quibus auditis domina apprehendens arborem reclinavit eam quousquem peregrinus possit attingere et dixit ei: "Carpe manu — namque volens faciliter ipsa sequitur — si te fata vocant, aliter non viribus ullis vincere nec duro poteris convellere ferro". Elevans igitur manum peregrinus ad preceptum domine illius et apprehenso uno ramusculo sine aliqua difficultate recepit"; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS 805, fols 62^v–63^f. On the basis of other manuscripts, I complete the Dante's quotation with the missing line.
93. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. IV, 13, fols 1^r–124^v (N) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Magdeb. 221, fols 61^r–220^v (B). As Cenci shows, N derives from a version arguably copied in Friuli before 1406, and yet was most probably copied in Nuremberg; moreover, N served as a model for B; see Cenci, 'Il quaresimale delle scuole', pp. 288–90. The Dantean verses in B (Cenci could not check them) are the same of N: N, fols 95^v (*Inferno* 1. 1–3) and 121^r (*Inferno* 1. 115–17) correspond to B, fols 183^r and 216^r. Both manuscripts contain also the

- Quadragesimale peregrini* (both sermon collections are copied by the same hand in B, which used N as a model; in N the two collections are written by different hands); see Delcorno, 'Preaching Dante's *Commedia*', p. 183.
94. Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Mc 119. On this manuscript Hedwig Röcklein, *Die lateinischen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen. 1: Signaturen Mc 1 bis Mc 150* (Wiesbaden, 1991), pp. 246–47. Girolamo di Giovanni lectured on the *Commedia* in Florence several times between 1439 and 1451, in the Cathedral and at the *studium*. His Latin Lenten sermons contain numerous Dantean quotations (yet to be studied); Franco Pignatti, 'Girolamo di Giovanni', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma, 1969–...), LVI (2001) and Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis praedicatorum Medii Aevi* (Rome, 1970–1993), II (1975), pp. 248–49.
 95. Michele Carcano, *Sermonarium de peccatis per adventum et per duas quadragesimas* (Basel: Michael Wenssler, 1479), I, fols 122^v–123^r.
 96. Bernardino Busti, *Rosarium sermonum* (Hagenau: Heinrich Gran, 1500), fol. 135^v. Among the editions printed in France, I consulted Id., *Rosarium sermonum* (Lyon: Jean Clein, 1513), fol. 158^r. The translation of vernacular quotations of the *Rosarium* is briefly considered in Fabrizio Conti, 'Composing Sermons in the Age of Humanism: Considerations on Penitence and the *Memento Mori* according to Bernardino Busti of Milan', *Chronica* (Szeged), 15 (2017), 201–14; Conti assumes that the Latin translation derives from Giovanni da Serravalle. On the basis of the passages that I checked, this claim cannot be fully supported.
 97. Maldina, 'Dante tra i predicatori', p. 231.
 98. Gabriele da Barletta, *Sermones tam quadragesimales quam de sanctis, noviter impressi. Et ubi prius fuerunt interposita carmina Petrarche et Dantis in eodem vulgari, modo per venerabilem Magistrum Johannem Anthonii ordinis minorum sunt verbis latinis translata* (Lyon: Claude Davost apud Etienne Gueynard, 1504); *eodem* looks like a typo for *eorum*, judging from the later editions of the same publisher. On this title page, see Maldina, 'Dantean Devotions', p. 190. The reference to both Petrarch and Dante was not obvious in sermons: Id., 'Dante tra i predicatori', p. 231. Also editions printed in the German world also adopt the Latin translation; see Gabriele da Barletta, *Sermones* (Hagenau: Heinrich Gran, 1518).
 99. Also later editions printed in Italy also adopt the Latin translation of Dante's verses; see Gabriele da Barletta, *Sermones quadragesimales* (Venice: Camillo Franceschini, 1577), I, fol. 158^v.
 100. 'Nonnulla pars dabatur Danti aut Petrarchae, quorum rythmi voce canora plénique, ut aiunt, tibiis et insigni corporis gesticulatione pronunciabantur'; Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Ecclesiastes* [1535], III, in Id., *Opera omnia*, V.5 (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 14. On this passage, Maldina, 'Dantean Devotions', p. 187. Erasmus was familiar with the Italian context, yet this passage targets, it seems, a broader practice, probably referring to sermons such as those by Gabriele da Barletta.
 101. See Delcorno, 'Preaching the *Commedia* in the German World'. For what concerns the use of Dante in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Spain (where the proximity with the Italian vernacular was significant), see above note 75.
 102. The two manuscripts of Ruggero da Eraclea's sermons copied in the German world (see above, note 93) arguably date after 1420 (surely that in Berlin).
 103. 'quapropter dicit nono cantu purgatorii quam non intelligens obmisi scribendo'; 'cui anima respondit in italico quod iterum obmisi causa brevitatis'; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 8994, fols 103^r and 110^v.
 104. See Delcorno, 'Preaching the *Commedia* in the German World', pp. 171–75.
 105. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. IV,13, fols 127^r–73^v. The manuscript is described in Karin Schneider, *Die Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg 2.1: Teologische Handschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 245–48 (it wrongly refers to a printed edition of these sermons, confusing them with those by Peregrinus de Oppeln). This manuscript contains also Ruggero da Eraclea's *Quadragesimale* (see note 93).
 106. Eichstätt, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 220, fols 107^r–65^v. The manuscript was copied probably in Eichstätt between 1452–1455 and belonged to the local Dominican convent. It is described in Hardo Hilg, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt 1: Cod. 1–275* (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 156–58.
 107. Moreover, as far as I know, only the case of Felip de Malla (who paraphrased some verses by Dante in Catalan) attests to an earlier non-Italian preacher using the *Commedia* in his sermons; see Gómez, 'Dante en la cultura catalana', p. 171.
 108. For instance, a certain friar Tommaso Ungaro (arguably from Hungary) had a manuscript (Rieti, Biblioteca Paroniana, MS I 2,9) with some Dantean tercets, while he was in the Franciscan convent of Fontecolombo; see Marcella Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri. Die göttliche Komödie: vergleichende Bestandsaufnahme der Commedia-Handschriften* (Stuttgart, 1984), no. 624 (henceforth: Roddewig).
 109. Padua, Biblioteca civica, MS D 1722, fols 1^r–72^v. On this manuscript, Delcorno, 'Et ista sunt scripta Dantis', p. 129.
 110. One of the oldest attestations of the *Commedia* is its paraphrase of the *Pater noster* copied in 1327 in a *Memoriale* in Bologna (Roddewig no. 25). Equally interesting for us is the copy of this prayer made by a Franciscan

- friar, Monaldo da San Casciano (no. 423). For the attestations of the circulation of (pieces of) *Paradiso* 33, see Rodewig, no. 474, 715.
111. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 59, fol. 202^r (Rodewig, no. 715).
112. Also the sermon of Andrea Pace also quotes Dante without mentioning either the poet or the poem (see note 72).
113. Partly similar was the purpose of Matteo Ronto (see note 38).
114. Murith, *Jean et Conrad Grüttsch*, pp. 66–67.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
116. On the margins of Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A V 7, fol. 26^{rv}, a hand different from that of the copyist marks and counts the *tria maxima*, the *exempla*, and the *stupenda*.
117. ‘Amico discretissimo, il libro [...] risponde solo se richiesto, non urge oltre quando gli si chiede una sosta. Colmo di parole, tace’; Giovanni Pozzi, *Tacet* (Milan, 2001), p. 35.

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Appendix 1

Critical edition of the Dantean section

B = Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A V 7, fol. 26^{rv} (1462)

C = Colmar, Les Dominicains Bibliothèque patrimoniale, CPC 1953, MS 1953, fol. 23^{rv} (1467)

N = Johannes Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* [Nuremberg: Johann Sensenschmidt and Andreas Frisner, not after 1474], 5V–5Z

R = Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal Lat 384, fol. 93^{rv} (1466)

S = Johannes Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* ([Strasbourg: Printer of the 1483 *Vitas Patrum*], 1484), 5V–5Z

U = Johannes Gritsch, *Quadragesimale* (Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1475), 5V–5Z

W = Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 379 Helm, fols 36^r–37^r (1473)

- [1] Sed in fine communiter¹ concordant dicentes² quod hoc sit maximum opus dei quod unquam fecit, faciat vel facturus est³ inter opera visibilia, quod sancta trinitas humanitatem⁴ univit filio in persona, quod est maximum opus, quod patet per tria maxima. Primum est quod dei filius⁵ descendit et intravit matrem suam salva virginitate, et ita fecit sibi⁶ unam matrem et filiam humilimam et altissimam⁷. Secundum quod⁸ natura divina fuit simul iuncta⁹ cum natura humana et ita¹⁰ natura suprema summe fuit¹¹ humiliata et natura infima, scilicet humanitas in genere intellectualium¹² fuit summe¹³ exaltata. Tertium est quod Christus dei filius in utero matris faciebat quod facit in trinitate.
- [2] *Ista autem stupenda et miranda*¹⁴ opera et nova declarantur in illis verbis que recitantur a quodam sapiente sub hac forma dicente: Virgo et mater, filia tui filii, grandis, humilis, alta¹⁵ plusquam creatura, terminus iam fixus

¹ communiter] *om. C.*

² dicentes] doctores dicentes *C.*

³ est] *om. R.*

⁴ humanitatem] divinitatem *W.*

⁵ dei filius] filius dei *C, N, S, U.*

⁶ ita fecit sibi] sibi fecit *R.*

⁷ et altissimam] *om. B, R.*

⁸ quod] *om. C.*

⁹ iuncta] unita *B, R.*

¹⁰ ita] ista *R.*

¹¹ summe fuit] fuit summe *B, R.*

¹² in genere intellectualium] in genere intellectualiter *C; om. R.*

¹³ summe] summo *C.*

¹⁴ miranda] admiranda *C, N, S, U.*

¹⁵ alta] *om. C.*

eterni concilii, tu es per quam nostra¹⁶ sublimatur natura quam nobilitasti¹⁷ veniente¹⁸ factore¹⁹, qui est dignatus tua fieri factura. In tuo ventre iam stetit plenus²⁰ amore, producens spiritum sanctum, mundum conservans, dum de te fuit natus, sicut flos a²¹ flore.

- [3] In primis tribus²² pedibus²³ declaratur primum scilicet quod²⁴ Christus dei filius in suam descendit matrem, eius salva²⁵ virginitate, per tria exempla. Primum²⁶ est quod Christus venit in matrem virginem, sicut radius solis in corpus transparent, quia²⁷ sicut radius solis²⁸ emissus a sole et ultra progrediens retinet eius calorem²⁹ nec³⁰ corrumpendo nec maculando ipsum corpus transparent, sic³¹ verbum quod est dei filius in matrem virginem descendens eius non minuit virginitatem. Secundum exemplum est de rubo Moysi, Exodi 3, quia sicut rubus igne accendebatur³² et non comburebatur, ita Christus de matre assumpsit carnem de qua nascebatur et³³ tamen eius virginitas non perdebatur. Tercium exemplum de tribus pueris in camino ignis, Danielis 14³⁴, quia sicut ipsi in camino ignis³⁵ inclusi habebantur et eos ignis³⁶ non ledebat, ita hec virgo genuit deum³⁷ sed³⁸ intacta permansit.
- [4] Et ita una et eadem persona fuit mater et virgo, humilima³⁹ et altissima, quod⁴⁰ est bene admiratione dignum. Fuit inquam filia filii, eo quod ipsa deum⁴¹ habuit pro patre sicut⁴² nos, quia est pater omnium, ut dicitur ad Ephesios 4. Demum ipsa fuit eius mater, quia ipsum quem genuit ablactavit, ut dicit Augustinus. Et pro tanto dicit⁴³ Origenes super illo⁴⁴ verbo Matthei capitulo 1⁴⁵: *Cum esset desponsata*⁴⁶ mater Iesu⁴⁷. Mater inquit eius⁴⁸, mater⁴⁹ immaculata, mater incorrupta, mater intacta; cuius eius? Mater dei unigeniti⁵⁰. Et sequitur⁵¹ paulopost: ipsa eadem virgo, ipsa mater domini⁵², ipsa et genitrix, ipsa eius ancilla⁵³. Igitur bene fuit mater filii dei et filia filii dei⁵⁴, et virgo virginum⁵⁵, propter quod creaturarum fuit⁵⁶ altissima et similiter humilima subdens se angelo humiliter respondendo: *Ecce ancilla domini*⁵⁷; Luce 1.

¹⁶ nostra] natura W.

¹⁷ nobilitasti] nobili casti (sic) R; nobilitata C.

¹⁸ veniente] vemente N.

¹⁹ factore] salvatoris sive factoris C.

²⁰ plenus] planus U.

²¹ a] de W.

²² primis tribus] tribus primis N, C; tribus primo S.

²³ pedibus] om. C.

²⁴ scilicet quod] quod scilicet B.

²⁵ eius salva] salva eius W.

²⁶ Primum] Primum exemplum N, S, W.

²⁷ quia] om. S.

²⁸ in corpus [...] radius solis] om. C (arguably, for a 'saut du même au même' on the words *radius solis*).

²⁹ calorem] colorem S.

³⁰ nec] non B, C, R.

³¹ sic] sicut B.

³² accendebatur] attendebatur C.

³³ et] om. B.

³⁴ 14] 4 C; 3 S.

³⁵ Danielis [...] ignis] om. B (arguably, for a 'saut du même au même' on the word *comino igneis*).

³⁶ inclusi [...] ignis] om. C (arguably, for a 'saut du même au même' on the word *ignis*).

³⁷ genuit deum] deum genuit B, R.

³⁸ sed] et B; scilicet R, U.

³⁹ humilima] om. N.

⁴⁰ quod] quid B, W.

⁴¹ deum] dominum C.

⁴² sicut] sicut et N.

⁴³ et pro tanto dicit] item R.

⁴⁴ illo] isto B.

⁴⁵ verbo Matthei 1] om. C; verbo Matthei capitulo 1 B, N.

⁴⁶ esset desponsata] desponsata esset N, W.

⁴⁷ mater Iesu] mater Iesu Maria R, U.

⁴⁸ eius] Iesu, eius B.

⁴⁹ mater] om. C.

⁵⁰ cuius eius? Mater dei unigeniti] cuius? Mater dei unigeniti W; mater dei et plasmatoris omnium R; mater eius, cuius eius? Mater dei unigeniti domini et regis omnium plasmatoris et creatoris cunctorum S.

⁵¹ sequitur] om. R.

⁵² domini] dei B, R.

⁵³ ipsa eius ancilla] ipsa ancilla B, R; ipsa ancilla plasmatio eius S.

⁵⁴ et filia filii dei] om. B, R.

⁵⁵ virginum] virginis B, N, S, U.

⁵⁶ creaturarum fuit] fuit creaturarum R.

⁵⁷ domini] domini fiat etc. N.

- [5] Secundum mirabile quod nos debet commovere ad amorem quantum ad incarnationem fuit quod naturam humanam tam sublimiter nobilitavit, eo quod natura humana est coniuncta cum divina, ut dixit poeta⁵⁸ in illis⁵⁹ tribus pedibus: Tu es per quam sublimatur nostra natura. Quod etiam notatur per tria stupenda. Primum est quod natura⁶⁰ suprema fuit summe humilitatis, in hoc quod sumpsit⁶¹ habitum humanitatis. O quam mira dignatio est illa salvatoris, qui celorum continet regnum, quem totus non capit orbis, qui est rex regum et dominus dominantium, in quo sunt thesauri⁶² sapientie conditi, qui est divitiarum⁶³ altitudo pro nobis pauper nascitur et in terra ut egenus peregrinatur.
- [6] Secundum stupendum est quod natura infima fuit summe sublimata, quia humanitas que in genere intellectualium⁶⁴ tenet gradum infimum, taliter fuit ultra omnem creaturam nobilitata, ita⁶⁵ ut homo deo fieret equalis⁶⁶, quod certe modicum non existit, immo maximum, quia *fecit utraque unum*⁶⁷, ad Ephesios 2. Quando⁶⁸ scilicet divinitatem cum humanitate coniunxit in natura suppositi. Tertium stupendum est quod ille qui est dominus omnium factus est servus omnium, quia⁶⁹ *formam servi accipiens*; ad Philippenses 2.⁷⁰
- [7] Tertium mirabile et maximum⁷¹ est quod Christus in ventre matris tria fecit miranda, et hoc notatur cum⁷² dicit poeta in ultimis⁷³ tribus pedibus, scilicet: In tuo ventre iam stetit plenus amore. Primum est quod ipse filius in dando se matri ita sibi dedit perfectum filium⁷⁴ sicut habuit deus, quia⁷⁵ idem⁷⁶ filius fuit filius⁷⁷ dei patris et virginis matris. Secundum est quod iste⁷⁸ filius existens in utero matris producebat personam spiritus sancti, quem numquam desinit spirare. Tertium est quod ille⁷⁹ filius existens in utero virginis conservabat totum mundum, quia tunc habebat eandem vim conservativam cum patre et spiritu sancto.
- [8] De istis igitur⁸⁰ omnibus maximis et novis mirari oportet et commoveri⁸¹ ad amorem, quia cum queritur: *Quis est hic?*⁸² Respondetur Apocalypsis⁸³: *Est*⁸⁴ *rex regum et*⁸⁵ *dominus dominantium*, hic *formam servi* accepit ut servum a morte redimeret.

⁵⁸ poeta] beata C.

⁵⁹ illis] ultimis N, S; ulterioris U.

⁶⁰ natura] natura humana N.

⁶¹ sumpsit] assumpsit N.

⁶² thesauri] omnes thesauri S.

⁶³ divitiarum] divinarum W.

⁶⁴ intellectualium] intellectiva C.

⁶⁵ ita] *om.* R.

⁶⁶ equalis] equalis et quante (?) C.

⁶⁷ fecit [...] unum] utroque unum fecit B.

⁶⁸ Quando] Quare C.

⁶⁹ quia] qui U.

⁷⁰ Tertium [...] Philippenses 2] *om.* B, R (arguably, for a 'saut du même au même' on the word *tertium*).

⁷¹ maximum et mirabile] et maximum mirabile R; et maximum B.

⁷² cum] dum C, S, U.

⁷³ ultimis] illis ultimis N, S, U.

⁷⁴ filium] *om.* B.

⁷⁵ quia] quod C.

⁷⁶ idem] ipse N.

⁷⁷ filius] *om.* U.

⁷⁸ iste] ille B, C, W.

⁷⁹ ille] iste B, R.

⁸⁰ igitur] ergo W.

⁸¹ et commoveri] quia commovere C.

⁸² Quis est his?] *om.* R.

⁸³ Apoc.] Apoc. 19 C, S.

⁸⁴ est] *om.* B.

⁸⁵ et] *om.* B.

Appendix 2

Dante, *Paradiso* 33. 1–9 in Serravalle, Ronto, and the *Quadragesimale*

Dante (Petrocchi's edition)	Giovanni da Serravalle	<i>Quadragesimale</i> Gritsch/Grütsch	Matteo Ronto
Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio, umile e alta più che creatura, termine fisso d'eterno consiglio, tu se' colei che l'umana natura nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo fattore non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura. Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore, per lo cui caldo ne l'eterna pace così è germinato questo fiore.	Virgo mater, filia tui filii, humilis et alta plus quam creatura, terminus fixus eterni consilii, tu es illa que humanam naturam nobilitasti, ita quod suus factor non est dedignatus facere se suam facturam. In ventre tuo fuit reaccensus amor, propter cuius calorem in eterna pace sic est germinatus iste flos.	Virgo et mater, filia tui filii, grandis, humilis, alta plusquam creatura, terminus iam fixus eterni concilii, tu es per quam nostra sublimatur natura quam nobilitasti veniente factore, qui est dignatus tua fieri factura. In tuo ventre iam stetit plenus amore producens spiritum sanctum, mundum conservans, dum de te fuit natus, sicut flos a flore.	Virgo parens et nata tui prefulgida nati, virgo creaturas super omnes mitis et alta, consilii eterni stabilis que terminus extas. Illa manes hominum perquam natura decore nobilitata fuit tali factura quod actor iam suus indignus fieri sua noluit esse. Luciferente tuo ac in ventre recanduit ardor cuius in ecterna paradisi pace calore caliter iste rose flos iam progermine crevit.

Appendix 3

Paradiso 33. 13–21 in the manuscripts of the *Quadragesimale peregrini*

Dante, *Paradiso* 33. 13–21

Petrocchi's edition	Longfellow translation
Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali, che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre, sua disianza vuol volar sanz' ali. La tua benignità non pur soccorre chi domanda, ma molte fiata liberamente al dimandar precorre. In te misericordia, in te pietate, in te magnificenza, in te s'aduna quantunque in creatura è di bontate.	Lady thou art so great, and so prevailing, That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee His aspirations without wings would fly. Not only thy benignity gives succour To him who asketh it, but oftentimes Forerunneth of its own accord the asking In thee compassion is, in thee is pity, In thee magnificence, in thee unites Whate'er of goodness is in any creature.

Quotation in the *Quadragesimale peregrini*

Roma, Angelica, MS 805, f. 62v.	Munich, BSB, CLM 8984, f. 104v	Nuremberg, SB, Cent. IV,13, f. 140r	Eichstätt, UB Cod. st 220, f. 123v
<p>Quibus dictis peregrinus statim ad pedes eius, id est illius domine genuflexit se dicens:</p> <p>Donna si tanto grande e tantu vali che chi vol grazia e a te non recorre sua dexianza vol volar senza ali. La tua benignità non pur succore (!) a chi dimanda, ma multe fiate liberamente al demandar precorre. In te misericordia, in te pietà <in te magnificencia in te s'aduna > qualunche è in creatura de bontade. De questa gratia tua fammi comuna. Quibus auditis, domina apprehendens arborem reclinavit eam quousquem peregrinus possit attingere</p>	<p>Quibus dictis statim peregrinus ad pedes illius domine se genuflexit dicens:</p> <p><i>Dona, tanto se alta</i> e tanto vali che chi vuol <i>grazia</i> et a te non ricore sua disianza vuol volar senc' (!) ali <i>la tua benignità</i> non pur socore a chi domande ma molt fiate <i>liberamente</i> al demandar pregare (!). <i>In te misericordia, in te pietate in te magnificencia in te s'aduna</i> qualunche (!) <i>in creatura</i> di bontate di cesta (!) <i>gratia</i> tua fami comuna. Quibus dictis, domina apprehendens arborem reclinavit quousque peregrinus possit attingere ...</p>	<p>Quibus dictis statim peregrinus ad pedes illius domine se genuflexit dicens:</p> <p><i>Tanta alta domina dona</i> de tua <i>gratia</i> utinam possem habere ut ramusculum de tua arbore reciperem tunc etate non gravarent <i>tuam benignitatem</i>, super omnia exaltarer, <i>liberamente</i> omnia tua mandata explerem.</p> <p><i>In te misericordia, in te pietas, in te magnificencia, in te salus</i> infinita plusquam <i>in omni dei creatura</i> quia in te excellens <i>gratia</i>.</p> <p>Quibus dictis, domina apprehendens arborem reclinavit quousque peregrinus possit attingere ...</p>	<p>Quibus dictis statim peregrinus ad pedes illius domine se genuflexit.</p> <p>Quibus dictis, domina apprehendens arborem reclinavit quousque attingere potuit ...</p>