Historiographical essay

Sermon, preacher and society in the middle ages

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Abstract

Over the past twenty-five years, studies produced on medieval preaching and sermons have grown so considerably that they now constitute a discipline known as sermon studies. The discipline incorporates various methodologies which include exegesis, liturgy, theology, social history, cultural history, literary criticism, textual criticism, and art history. Therefore, this essay can only be a sampling of some of the literature which has recently appeared. The essay is ordered under the headings: 'sermon', 'preacher', and 'society'. The section on sermons isolates methodological issues which form the basis of sermon studies. It outlines the criteria scholars have established to use medieval sermons as an historical tool. The second section investigates the diversity of preachers and considers their role as educators. The third section on society considers those studies which have examined sermons as sources which reflect as well as influence moral and intellectual tendencies in the Middle Ages. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Sermon; Preacher; Sermon studies; Society

The discipline of medieval sermon studies has often focused on the content of the sermon and the character of the preacher in order to learn something about the society in which the preacher pronounced his sermon. Indeed, one of the first magisterial works on preaching outlined its plan of research as follows: '*Notre travail sera devisé en trois grandes parties: Les prédicateurs. Les sermons. La société d'après les sermons.*'[1] Albert Lecoy de La Marche went a long way in highlighting how

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[1] A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen âge, spécialement au XIIIe siècle d'après les manuscrits contemporains* (Paris, 1886; 2nd edition), xi.

sermons could be used to uncover the social history of the Middle Ages. He demonstrated that the content of sermons could reveal details related to church reform, politics, trade, religious devotion, women and marriage. Lecoy de La Marche's book was one of several produced on the Continent in the nineteenth century which presented broad introductions to the history of medieval preaching.[2]

In England, sermon studies, however, was not as popular a topic. It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that G.R. Owst's fundamental introduction to preaching in medieval England appeared.[3] Owst disdainfully attributed the British disinterest in sermon studies to trends in English historical studies. He argued that these trends made historians preoccupied

> with the weightier material concerns of modern politics and industry. Hence, the whole round of medieval existence is compassed for them in the busy tale of buyings and sellings, the systems of the Courts, the endless reckoning of manor rolls and taxes. Such is the latest fashion in 'History' …[4]

Owst's work, as earlier works from the nineteenth century, shed light on the rich material contained in sermons by presenting numerous quotes from sermon literature on devotional practices and clerical behaviour.

The interest that Owst and his Continental predecessors had in sermons as a useful source for the study of medieval culture took time to catch on. But by the second half of the twentieth century, and especially in the last twenty years, medieval sermon studies has mushroomed into an active field of research. Following on from Lecoy de la Marche, this article will be broken up into three main areas: sermons, preachers, and society. Each section will highlight research which treats the topics of sermon, preacher and society, topics which in essence constitute the broader discipline of medieval sermon studies.[5]

1. Sermons

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians focused on what sermons revealed regarding social practices, religious behaviour, and the history of ideas.

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[2] See also L. Bourgain, *La chaire française au XIIe siècle d'après les manuscrits* (Paris, 1879); F.R. Albert, *Die Geschichte der Predigt in Deutschland bis Luther* (Gütersloh, 1892–96); R. Cruel, *Geschichte deutschen der Predigt im Mittelalter* (Detmold, 1879); A. Linsenmayer, *Geschichte der Predigt in Deutschland von Karl dem Grossen bis zum Ausgange des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1886).

[3] G.R. Owst, *Preaching in medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926). See also G.R. Owst, *Literature and pulpit in medieval England* (2nd edition, Oxford, 1961).

[4] *Preaching in medieval England*, ix.

[5] The amount of work produced in the field of sermon studies is impossible to catalogue thoroughly in an article. While references are made to books in French, German and Italian, the focus of the present article is on books in English. For recent overviews on medieval sermon studies see P. Roberts, 'Sermon studies scholarship: the last thirty-five years', *Medieval sermon studies*, 43 (1999), 9–18 and A. Thompson, 'From texts to preaching: retrieving the medieval sermon as an event' in: *Preacher, sermon and audience in the middle ages*, ed. C. Muessig (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 2001), forthcoming.

However, they had limited access to the vast number of extant sermons. Hence the works of such scholars as Lecoy de la Marche and Owst, although insightful and formative, were written in a blind spot which was due to a lack of resources. How large that blind spot was became clear in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Sermon studies can be divided into two broad periods; scholarship carried out before J.-B. Schneyer's *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350* and scholarship carried out after this publication.[6] Schneyer produced a number of publications on the history of preaching.[7] Although useful, it was not his narrative on preaching history which has left an indelible mark on medieval studies, rather it was and is his *magnum opus*, the *Repertorium*. The *Repertorium* catalogues over 100,000 Latin sermons by supplying the *incipits* and *explicits* of medieval Latin sermons along with lists of manuscripts and printed editions in which they are contained. As the title indicates, Schneyer covered sermons which were compiled between the period of 1150–1350. The *Repertorium's* arrangement allows scholars to pursue, for example, sermons written by particular authors, or sermons written for particular feast days; rarely, but nonetheless interestingly, the *Repertorium* also lists sermons preached for unusual reasons – for example to induce rain or ward off earthquakes.[8] This extensive list of sermons caused an explosion of research which took off in the 1970s. Schneyer's *Repertorium* enabled, and still enables, scholars to enter into the widely untapped world of sermon literature by providing them with a detailed road map.

In the 1970s historians of preaching, such as Louis-Jacques Bataillon, furthered Schneyer's work. Bataillon demonstrated that before employing sermons as an historical source, the scholar has to understand the collection in which the sermon is found; what function the sermon has in its particular collection; what, if any, is its liturgical role; and what is the relation between a sermon preserved in its written form and in its oral presentation.[9] Audience, authorship and date had to be considered and if possible firmly established before sermons could be used. With these and several other requirements, Bataillon laid the methodological foundation for the discipline of sermon studies.[10]

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[6] J.-B. Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, 11 vols (Beiträge zur Geschicte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Münster/Westphalia, 1969–1990).

[7] E.g., J.-B. Schneyer, *Die Unterweisung der Gemeinde über die Predigt bei scholastischen Predigern. Eine Homiletik aus scholastishcen Prothemen* (Munich/Padernborn/Vienna, 1968); and *Geschichte der katholischen Predigt* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1969).

[8] It should be noted that the *Repertorium*, although indispensible for researchers working on medieval Latin sermons, contains numerous errors. A list to correct those errors has been composed by L.-J. Bataillon, 'Compléments au *Repertorium* de Schneyer: I', *Medieval sermon studies*, 44 (2000), 15–36; A continuation of this article is forthcoming in *Medieval sermon studies*, 45 (2001). For a discussion of these unusual occasions see J. Hanska, 'Late medieval catastrophe sermons: vanishing tradition or common custom?', *Medieval sermon studies*, 45 (2001), forthcoming.

[9] L.-J. Bataillon, 'Approaches to the study of medieval sermons', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s, 11 (1980), 19–35, repr. in L.-J. Bataillon, *La prédication au XIIIe siècle en France et Italie* (Aldershot, 1993) essay 1.

[10] See Bataillon, *La prédication au XIIIe siècle en France et Italie*.

One response to Bataillon's careful establishment of how sermons can be used as an historical tool is the concern to clarify the genre of the sermon and the definition of preaching. At the fore of this research is Beverly Mayne Kienzle. Kienzle's *The sermon* in the *Typologie des sources* series is now the fundamental work for anyone wanting to come to grips with the deceptively easy question 'What is a sermon?'.[11] Kienzle argues that the sermon is an oral discourse based on sacred text spoken by a preacher to an audience; the sermon is meant to instruct the audience on faith and morals.[12] *The sermon* covers the period from the Carolingian reform to the sixteenth century. The contributors to this volume discuss a wide linguistic and geographical range: Jewish sermons, vernacular sermons in Old English, Norse–Icelandic, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, German, and Latin sermons. Some of the arguments raised within this volume demonstrate that the term 'sermon' is problematic for at least two reasons. From early on in the Christian tradition, and particularly with Augustine (d. 430), it had different meanings which were in some respects interchangeable with terms such as *tractatus* and *omelia*, terms which also had various meanings.[13] The word 'sermon' could mean among other things, discourse, conversation, language, or word.[14] 'Sermon' came to be used as the generic term when referring to *tractatus*, homily or sermon. Homily and sermon were the terms used most often during the medieval period. Whether a strict difference existed between these two terms has been debated. Some scholars such as Thomas N. Hall and J.E. Cross warn that to provide a narrow definition of 'sermon' or 'homily' is in one sense not representative of the medieval view, a view which did not trouble itself with rigid categories of what constituted a sermon, homily or *tractatus*.[15]

But this does not eclipse observations that medieval preachers did create different sorts of preaching material which were often categorised by the terms 'homily' and 'sermon'. In the volume *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale* the basic differences between the 'homily' and the 'sermon' are investigated.[16] The findings of this volume suggested that the terminology used in sermon studies was not representative of the range of meanings that such words as '*sermo*' implied in the original Latin. Nevertheless, sermonists mainly have come to the conclusion that general terminologies are needed for the advancement of research. The most

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[11] *The sermon*, ed. B.M. Kienzle (Typologie des sources des moyen âge occidental, fascicules, 81–83, Turnhout, 2000).

[12] B.M Kienzle, 'Introduction', in: *The sermon*, 151. This term is closely based on Alan of Lille's (d. 1203) definition from his *Summa de arte praedicationum*, Patrologia Latina 210, 111C: 'Praedicatio est manifesta et publica instruction morum et fidei, informationi hominum deserviens, ex rationum semita et auctoritatem fonte proveniens'.

[13] See T.N. Hall, 'The early medieval sermon', in: *The sermon*, 203–69 at 204. *Tractatus* could pertain to any learned commentary whether it was religious or non-religious, oral or written. The term homily could mean a colloquy, exposition, discourse, or sermon. See Hall, 204–5.

[14] Hall, 'The early medieval sermon', 203–4.

[15] See Hall, 'The early medieval sermon', 205; see also J.E. Cross, 'Vernacular sermons in Old English' in: *The sermon*, 561–96, 565.

[16] *De l'homélie au sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. J. Hamesse and X. Hermand (Textes, études, congrès, 4, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993).

concise definitions for the terms 'sermon' and 'homily' have been put forward by Hall:

> The most important such distinction in use today holds that a *sermon* is fundamentally a catechetical or admonitory discourse built upon a theme or topic not necessarily grounded in Scripture, whereas a *homily* is a systematic exposition of a pericope (a liturgically designated passage of Scripture, usually from a Gospel or Epistle) that proceeds according to a pattern of *lectio continua*, commenting on a given passage verse by verse or phrase by phrase.[17]

Regardless of these clear definitions, sermons come in a variety of shapes and sizes which are not completely classified by terminologies such as homily and sermon. For example, hermit saints and wandering preachers often were renowned not so much for what they preached but for how they lived their lives. This has led George Ferzoco to observe that hermits and holy men in general did not necessarily need a sermon in order to preach.[18] The transmission of a sermon, therefore, was not necessarily an aural event. This is witnessed in examples of German sermons from the later middle ages. Regina Schiewer has demonstrated that German sermons found in Dominican convents were sometimes read by nuns who contemplated upon them.[19] Michel Zink has famously termed this type of sermon reception as 'preaching in an armchair'.[20]

In addition to making the historian attuned to the genre of the sermon, Bataillon has also promoted the use of the medieval sermon as an effective historical tool. This is clearly seen in his influence on the works of D.L. d'Avray. Using Schneyer as a resource to extract a choice of sermons and relying on the methodology of Bataillon, d'Avray has brought many strands of sermon studies together in his influential work *The preaching of the friars*.[21] The book analyses the rise of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century and the centralisation of preaching in Paris. *The preaching of the friars* outlines the development of mendicant model sermons and the increase in preaching in the thirteenth century. These Latin sermon collections were copied in Paris and disseminated throughout western Europe to be used as guides for preaching. In essence they were model sermons to be used by preachers who lived far beyond Paris in the construction of their own sermons.

D'Avray keeps the reader mindful of the pitfalls of sermons as an historical source. He argues that there is a gap between the oral presentation of the sermon and the written record of the sermon. It is impossible to know exactly how the sermons in their written form were adapted to live preaching events. Nevertheless, the value of

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[17] Hall, 'The early medieval sermon', 205.

[18] G. Ferzoco, 'Preaching by thirteenth-century Italian hermits', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, ed. C. Muessig (Studies in Intellectual History, 90, Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998), 145–58, at 158.

[19] R. Schiewer, 'Sermons for nuns of the dominican observance movement', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, 75–92.

[20] M. Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (Paris, 1976), 478.

[21] D.L. d'Avray, *The preaching of the friars. Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985).

medieval sermons as an historical source is underlined. D'Avray maintains, regardless of their written form, sermons do tell us something about 'the underlying structure of thought in preaching'.[22] The subject matter of these widely diffused sermons emanating from Paris led d'Avray to conclude that sermons were a medieval form of mass communication.[23]

The reason these sermons were able to be diffused widely around western Europe was because they were recorded in Latin, the *lingua franca* of learned medieval clerics. But if they were written in Latin did it mean that they were spoken in Latin to the laity? The issue of what language was used in medieval preaching has been debated among sermon historians for over a hundred years. Most scholars accept the argument put forward by Lecoy de la Marche that sermons preached to a clerical audience were usually in Latin, while those preached to the laity were in the vernacular.[24] As d'Avray argues, it would not make sense to preach to people in a language that they did not understand.[25]

However, in the nineteenth century Jean Barthélémy Hauréau argued the opposite, putting forth that clerics preached to the laity in Latin.[26] In general, there was a trend among nineteenth-century Protestant historians to claim that Latin was the only language used by the Church throughout the middle ages. This claim was rejected by Anton Linsenmeyer and Rudolf Cruel.[27] Jean-Claude Schmitt has argued that preaching in the thirteenth century definitely occurred in the vernacular. Vernacular sermons, however, provided the laity with a rather simplistic doctrine which consisted of learning the articles of the *Credo* and learning prayers such as the *Pater Noster*. Schmitt suggests that while the Church, through sermons, vied to teach the laity these points of doctrine in order to protect them from heresy and superstition, it also attempted to preserve a clerical monopoly on learning.[28]

Two recent studies, however, suggest that the laity was exposed to more Latin than was previously believed. In 1994, Giles Constable argued that macaronic sermons, that is sermons written in a mixture of Latin and the vernacular, were actually preached bilingually.[29] In the same year, Siegfried Wenzel argued similarly in his study of Latin/English macaronic sermons contained in manuscripts dating from

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[22] D'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*, 104.

[23] D'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*, 3–4: '… they amount to something which can almost be called mass communication: the fanning out of ideas, aimed at and ultimately reaching a huge popular public from a single centre'.

[24] Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen âge*, 259–66. For examples of others who concur with this argument see, J. Longère, *La prédication médiévale* (Paris, 1983), 161–4, Kienzle, 'The twelfth-century monastic sermon', in: *The sermon*, 287; d'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*, 90–5.

[25] D'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*, 95.

[26] For a summary of this argument see d'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*, 93.

[27] E. McLaughlin, 'The word eclipsed? Preaching in the early middle ages', *Traditio*, 76 (1991), 77–122, at 78, note 6.

[28] J.-C. Schmitt, 'Du bon usage du "Credo"', in: *Faire croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle* (Collection de l'École française de Rome, 51, Rome 1981), 337–61.

[29] G. Constable, 'The language of preaching in the twelfth century', *Viator*, 25 (1994), 131–52.

1350–1480. Wenzel suggested that they were delivered as they were written, to a mixed audience of laity and clergy. However, his argument, which finds sympathy with Constable's, has been questioned. Leo Carruthers has argued:

> It would seem much more logical to suppose that the vernacular elements in Latin sermons point to an underlying vernacular oral delivery, real or intended, that such elements are embedded in a Latin framework simply because Latin was the official language of the Church and the learned medium of expression in the universities, and that their conservation may be explained as a mnemonic device, before or after the art of preaching.[30]

The argument that the vernacular was used in sermons to the laity is supported with evidence provided by *reportationes*, i.e., sermons which have been preserved by learned scribes who jotted them down simultaneously as they were preached. Roberto Rusconi provides examples of *reportationes* which although preached in Italian were taken down by the scribe in Latin.[31] Nicole Bériou has also demonstrated this in her magisterial study of *reportationes*.[32] In a *reportatio* recorded in Paris from the 1270s, it is noted that a sermon given by Gilles du Val-des-Écoliers on Good Friday was preached in French. The scribe, however, then proceeds to record it in Latin.[33] Bériou's findings are a warning that things are not always as they appear; *reportationes*, although closer to the preaching event than model sermons, are still removed from it.

Carlo Delcorno points out other areas of concern regarding *reportationes*: they seem to represent what was actually preached, but not necessarily. Different *reportationes* taken of Italian sermons indicate that each scribe could have his own points of interest which he saw fit to include while other scribes listening to the same sermon could leave these points out of their particular reports. Nonetheless, *reportationes* are an invaluable source for understanding the structure of medieval sermons and, perhaps more importantly, they provide excellent insight regarding audience reception. As Delcorno argues: 'The *reportatio* has the advantage of carrying us to the side of the nave, and of furnishing a series of extra-textual information which pertains to the condition of the listener, the reactions of the public, the gestures, the expression and the voice of the preacher himself.'[34]

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[30] L. Carruthers' review of S. Wenzel, *Macaronic sermons, bilingualism and preaching in late-medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1994) in: *Medieval sermon studies*, 39 (1997), 17–22 at 21.

[31] R. Rusconi, 'La predicazione. Parole in chiesa, parole in piazza', *Lo spazio letterario del medioevo I. Il medioevo latino*, ed. G. Cavallo, C. Leonardi, E. Menestò (Rome, 1992).

[32] N. Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres de la parole. La prédication à Paris au XIIIe siècle* (série moyen âge et temps modernes 31, Paris, 1998).

[33] Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres de la parole,* 231.

[34] C. Delcorno, 'Medieval preaching in Italy (1200–1500)', in: *The sermon* 449–559, at 499.

2. Preacher

In addition to the examination of the genre of the sermon and its language being the focus of the discipline of medieval sermon studies, the preacher is also a main area of investigation. While most would associate mendicant friars as representative of the medieval preacher, recent scholarship has thrown up a diversity of other examples, some of which are more surprising than others.

In the early church the preacher was most often a bishop. Although the bishop's function as preacher remained throughout the middle ages, the role of preacher was appropriated by different sorts of ecclesiastical figures. During the sixth and seventh centuries, monks such as Columbanus were active missionaries who evangelised large areas of western Europe.[35] Moreover, during the Carolingian Reform priests were called upon to become more involved in the ministry of the word. Rosamond McKitterick points out that the *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 stated that priests were to preach in various parishes to the people.[36] By the late eleventh and early twelfth century a debate arose concerning monastic preaching. Benedictine monk-priests like Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) argued that monks, as long as they were priests, could preach.[37] Priests, and in particular the canons regular in the twelfth century, argued that preaching was strictly a sacerdotal function.[38] This debate continued throughout the Middle Ages as the contributors to the volume *Medieval monastic preaching* have demonstrated.[39]

The debate between priests and monks concerning the right to preach was just the beginning of an eruption of conflicts regarding preaching authority. One area of major contention in the twelfth century was the issue of lay preaching as discussed by Rolf Zerfaß.[40] The rise in lay preaching was closely associated with the *vita apostolica* movement. Holy men who were also monks and/or priests, such as Robert of Arbrissel, represented a trend in medieval devotion which aimed to recapture the purity of the Gospel life, a life which consisted of voluntary poverty and a dedication to preach the Gospel.[41] Labelled by J. von Walter as the '*Wanderpridger*', these men captured the attention of large audiences throughout western France.[42] Jacques

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[35] C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval monasticism. Forms of religious life in western Europe in the middle ages* (London/New York, 1989; 2nd edition), 44–53.

[36] R. McKitterick, *The Frankish church and the Carolingian Reforms 789–895* (London, 1977), 81–2.

[37] J. Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1983) 328.

[38] For further discussion on the debate on monk-priests' right to preach see C. Muessig, 'Audience and preacher: *ad status* sermons and social classification', in: *Sermon, preacher and audience*, 255–76.

[39] *Medieval monastic preaching*, ed. C. Muessig (Studies in Intellectual History, 90, Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998).

[40] R. Zerfaß, *Der Streit um die Laienpredigt. Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zu seiner Entwicklung im 12 und 13 Jahrhundert* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1974). See also P. Buc, '*Vox clamantis in deserto*? Pierre le Chantre et la prédication laïque', *Revue Mabillon*, n.s. 4, 65 (1993), 5–48; J. Trout, 'Preaching by the laity in the twelfth century', *Studies in medieval culture*, 4 (1973), 92–108.

[41] C. Dereine, 'Les prédicateurs "apostoliques" dans les diocèses de Thérouanne, Tournai et Cambrai-Arras durant les anneés 1075–1125', *Analecta praemonstratensia*, 69 (1983), 171–89.

[42] J. von Walter, *Die ersten Wanderprediger Frankreichs* (Leipzig, 1903).

Dalarun sketches Robert of Arbrissel through an analysis of two *vitae* which depict his eccentric saintly appeal.[43] One of the *vita* contains the only record of a sermon by Robert.

The desire to preach the Gospel was not confined to monks and priests but was also adopted by the laity. Some clerics debated whether the laity should have the right to preach, or at least have the right to give moral exhortation.[44] These debates show that frequency of lay preaching was an anxiety for the Church. Lay preaching could be a diverse practice. In the twelfth century lay preachers embraced voluntary poverty following in the footsteps of itinerant preachers like Robert of Arbrissel. On the other hand, Darleen Pryds has highlighted the phenomenon of preaching by lawyers and kings. In the fourteenth century, Robert, king of Naples, preached about Angevin saints, such as Louis IX, which, no doubt, helped enhance the authority of Robert's Angevin lineage.[45] Preaching by secular leaders was not a common practice but nor was it unique. For example, Antonopoulou has shown that in the tenth century in Constantinople Emperor Leo VI preached on liturgical and theological topics.[46] Preaching by secular leaders occurred in the Kingdom of Aragon;[47] King Charles IV of Bohemia preached in 1328 and in 1347.[48]

In the fourteenth century, Robert de Basevorn debated if women had the right to preach and concluded: 'No lay person can preach without authorisation and no woman ever'.[49] A recent study by Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker shows that women, on rare occasions, were given the opportunity to preach.[50] Perhaps the most well-known example is of the Benedictine nun, Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) who carried out four separate preaching missions with papal permission.[51] Catherine M. Mooney and Pryds demonstrate that other women preached with ecclesiastical approval during the medieval period – such as Rose of Viterbo (d. 1252) and Humility of Faenza

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[43] Jacques Dalarun, *L'impossible sainteté. La vie retrouvée de Robert d'Arbrissel (v. 1045–1116), fondateur de Fontevraud* (Paris, 1985).

[44] Buc, '*Vox clamantis in deserto*?', 5–48; and B.M. Kienzle, 'Preaching as touchstone of orthodoxy and dissidence in the middle ages', *Medieval sermon studies*, 43 (1999), 19–54.

[45] D. Pryds, 'Monarchs, lawyers, and saints: juridical preaching on holiness', in: *Models of holiness in medieval sermons*, ed. B.M. Kienzle et al. (Textes et études du moyen âge, 5, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1996), 141–56.

[46] T. Antonopoulou, *The homilies of Leo VI* (Leiden, 1997); see also T. Antonopoulou, 'Homiletic activity in Constantinople around 900', in: *Preacher and audience: studies in early Christian and Byzantine homiletics*, ed. M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen (A new history of the sermon, 1, Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1998), 317–48.

[47] P. Cátedra, 'Acerca del sermón político', *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 40 (1985–86), 419–47; see also Pryds, 'Monarchs, lawyers, and saints', 151, note 47.

[48] Pryds, 'Monarchs, lawyers, and saints', 151, note 47.

[49] A. Blamires, 'Women and preaching in medieval orthodoxy, heresy and saints' lives', *Viator*, 26 (1995), 135–53, at 149.

[50] *Women, preachers, and prophets through two millennia of Christianity*, ed. B.M. Kienzle and P.J. Walker (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1998).

[51] For further discussion see B.M. Kienzle, 'Defending the Lord's vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's preaching against the Cathars', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, 163–81.

(d. 1310).[52] Humility of Faenza and Hildegard of Bingen are even more unusual than other medieval female preachers in that their sermons are extant.[53] It is interesting to note that women who were granted the right to preach often were involved in reform or preaching against heresy; Hildegard preached against the threat of the heresy of the Cathars and for ecclesiastical reform, while Rose of Viterbo preached against the 'heresy' of the papal enemy Frederick II. This has led Kienzle to question if 'their preaching was tolerated because of their sanctity or their proclamation of messages serving the hierarchy's interest'.[54]

Preaching by laymen and laywomen, however, more often met with disapproval than with approval. Perhaps, the most outstanding case is the Waldensians who were labelled as schismatics because they insisted on the right of the laity to preach even after the papacy denied them this practice. Preaching by dissident groups, such as the Waldensians and Cathars, has turned up some revealing practices among heretical preachers. John Arnold has demonstrated how the Cathars in the fourteenth century preached in intimate domestic settings.[55] Through a study of inquisition records of Bishop Jacques Fournier, he has pieced together some of the content of these Cathar sermons. One sermon addressed the Cathar doctrine of Satan's invasion of the spiritual Kingdom:

> … It is written [*invenire*] that the Holy Father was in the sky with the holy spirits in his Kingdom and his glory. Then Satan, the enemy of the Father, wishing to trouble the peace and Kingdom of the Holy Father, went to the door of the Kingdom of the Holy Father and stayed at the door for thirty-two years …. Finally, the guardians of that door … allowed him in. And when he was amongst the good spirits he stayed with them for one year, hidden amongst them …. And he began to solicit the good spirits, saying to them 'Do you have no other glory or attraction than which I see …?'[56]

Hudson argues that Lollard preachers expounded and disseminated Lollard doctrine simply by the style of the preacher's sermon. The Lollard preacher avoided the inclusion of stories and any extra-scriptural content to embellish his sermon. The aim of the preacher was to educate the laity using only scriptural texts and no

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[52] For information regarding Rose of Viterbo see, D. Pryds, 'Proclaiming sanctity through proscribed acts. The case of Rose of Viterbo', in: *Women, preachers, and prophets*, 159–72. For information on Humility of Faenza see C.M. Mooney, 'Authority and inspiration in the *vitae* and sermons of Humility of Faenza', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, 123–44.

[53] See *I sermoni di Umiltà da Faenza*, ed. A. Simonetti, (Spoleto, 1995). *Expositiones evangeliorum*, in: *Analecta sanctae Hildegardis, Analecta sacra*, ed. Pitra, vol. 8 (Paris, 1882), 245–327. B.M. Kienzle and C. Muessig are preparing a critical edition of Hildegard's homilies.

[54] B.M. Kienzle, 'Preaching as touchstone of orthodoxy and dissidence in the middle ages', *Medieval sermon studies*, 43 (1999), 19–54, at 37.

[55] J. Arnold, 'The preaching of the Cathars', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, 183–205.

[56] *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, évêque de Pamiers (1318–1325)*, ed. J. Duvernoy, vol. 2 (Bibliotheque meriodinale, 2. ser. 41, Toulouse, 1965), 33, as cited and translated in Arnold, 'The preaching of the Cathars', 198.

glosses.[57] Examples such as these demonstrate Sophia Menache's arguments about forms of communication in the middle ages and the dissemination of heresy: preaching was the main transmitter of heretical doctrine. Even in the face of persecution and, perhaps, especially because of it, heretical groups established methods of communication which enabled them to perpetuate their teachings. In the age before the printing press and a high rate of literacy, the spoken word was most influential in spreading ideas, and among heretical groups this took the form of preaching.[58]

Some historians have suggested that women were attracted to heresies because it allowed them more authority than the Catholic Church.[59] Anne Brenon concurs by proposing that Cathar nuns had more important roles – which included preaching – in their church than orthodox nuns had in the Catholic Church.[60] However, a closer look at who preached among heretics demonstrates other conclusions. Arnold's findings reveal that out of one hundred and fifteen *perfecti* named only two of them were women.[61] This supports Abels and Harrison's study of inquisition records which indicated that Cathar women did not preach very often.[62] Shannon McSheffrey's research on the Lollards points to similar findings. Generally, Lollard men had a greater role to play in their devotion than women. This was owing to the importance of literacy among the Lollards. Because Lollard men were more likely to be literate than women they had more access to the Lollard bible and by consequence a more central role to play in the relaying of Lollard doctrine.[63]

H.L. Spencer and Kienzle show that the relationship between orthodox preaching and heretical preaching was a symbiotic one, one form of preaching constantly responded to the other.[64] Hudson argues that the Lollard preacher's tendency to keep the bible text as his main focus, was in many ways a direct rejection of how the most renowned preachers of the middle ages – the mendicants and particularly the Dominicans and the Franciscans – preached. The Lollards were responding to the mendicants use of *exempla* collections, rhymes, songs, biblical commentaries, bestiaries and encyclopedias in sermon construction.[65]

While heretical groups reacted to orthodox preachers, orthodox preachers reacted

[57] A. Hudson, '"Springing cockel in our clene corn": Lollard preaching in England around 1400', in: *Christendom and its discontents. Exclusion, persecution, and rebellion, 1000–1500* (Cambridge, 1996), 132–47, at 142–5.

[58] S. Menache, *The vox dei. Communication in the middle ages* (New York/Oxford, 1990), 238–41.

[59] M. Lambert, *Popular movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford, 1992; 2nd edition), 114. Lambert suggests this in regard to the Cathar heresy. However, he also states that women could equally be repelled by the Cathar teaching on marriage and procreation.

[60] A. Brenon, 'The voice of the good women. An essay on the pastoral and sacerdotal role of women in the Cathar church', *Women, preachers, and prophets*, 114–33, at 129.

[61] Arnold, 'The preaching of the Cathars', 188.

[62] R. Abels and E. Harrison, 'The participation of women in Languedocian Catharism', *Mediaeval studies*, 41 (1979) 215–51.

[63] S. McSheffrey, *Gender and heresy. Women and men in Lollard communities, 1420–1530* (Philadelphia, 1995).

[64] H.L. Spencer, *English preaching in the late middle ages* (Oxford, 1993); Kienzle, 'Preaching as touchstone of orthodoxy and dissidence in the middle ages'.

[65] Hudson, '"Springing cockel in our clene corn"', 142–3.

to heretical preachers. The upsurge of lay preaching and heretical preaching which was inspired by the *vita apostolica* movement in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries made the Church uneasy. To allow people to preach indiscriminately could lead to serious errors in doctrine and a confusion regarding ecclesiastical authority. Within this concern, the mendicant orders grew at once out of the *vita apostolica* and also as a response to heretical preaching. M. Michèle Mulchahey has commented that the form of preaching adopted by the early Dominicans to combat heresy 'aimed to do what only bishops and legatine preachers had been allowed to do before: they would preach doctrine'.[66]

The majority of studies on preachers have focused on the Franciscans and Dominicans, founded respectively by Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and Dominic Guzmán (d. 1221). While the sermons of these two renowned preachers are not preserved their legacy is well documented. In fact, mendicant sermons are the most abundant and widely disseminated of medieval sermons. D'Avray has sketched how the evolution of the mendicant orders was greatly influenced by those friars who received their formation at the University of Paris. There mendicants developed a sense of identity as learned preachers and they also developed preaching tools to fulfill that identity.[67] Stephen C. Ferruolo and Jessalynn Bird have shown that twelfth-century preachers' and eventually the thirteenth-century mendicants' sense of identity was nurtured in an atmosphere of ecclesiastical reform at Paris.[68]

Hervé Martin, by relying on chronicles, municipal and parish accounts, university archives and friary archives as well as sermons, delivers a compelling and detailed account of the preacher's profession.[69] Martin can account for 2800 men who preached between 1350–1520; the majority of them were mendicants.[70] Their profession was shaped by the acquisition of knowledge, the use of preaching tools, and the application of oratorical techniques to preaching.[71] Unlike Schmitt, who found that thirteenth-century preachers gave simplistic sermons to the laity, Martin argues that sermons from the later middle ages suggests that the preacher did teach his audience the articles of the *Credo* but he also tackled difficult theological issues like the Trinity.[72]

Martin's use of sources which goes beyond a focus on sermon material has been used by a number of historians studying Italian mendicant preachers. In the last decade several monographs have been written on the role of Italian preachers as peacemakers in civic government. Augustine Thompson focused on thirteenth-cen-

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[66] M.M. Mulchahey, *'First the bow is bent in …'. Dominican education before 1350* (Studies and texts, 132, Toronto, 1998), 8.

[67] D'Avray, *The preaching of the friars*.

[68] S.C. Ferruolo, *The origins of the university. The schools of Paris and their critics 1100–1215* (Stanford, 1985; J. Bird, 'The religious's role in a post-Fourth-Lateran world: Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones ad status* and *Historia occidentalis*', in: *Medieval monastic preaching*, 209–29.

[69] H. Martin, *Le métier de prédicateur à la fin du moyen âge 1350–1520* (Paris, 1988).

[70] Martin, *Le métier de prédicateur*, 615.

[71] Martin, *Le métier de prédicateur*, 617.

[72] Martin, *Le métier de prédicateur*, 619.

tury revival preaching known as the 'Great Devotion'.[73] Rather than relying on ser-
mons, his sources consist of *vitae*, chronicles and communal statutes which give
insight into mendicants who preached the 'Ancient Way' – a term used by the Franci-
scan chronicler Salimbene of Adam (d. 1288) to describe those revivalist preachers
whose style of preaching involved miracle-working.[74] Thompson sources relay the
preachers' characters and emphasise how difficult the role of peacemaker could be.
If the preacher got too caught up in the political world of peace-making his authority
in the pulpit quickly slipped away.[75] Bernadette Paton has examined the way mendi-
cant orders in late medieval Siena positioned themselves to become the spiritual
'watch-dogs' of their community. Their role as mediators between heaven and hell
meant that they were the ideal candidates to shape civic ethics.[76] The spiritual superi-
ority of the friar allowed him a place in Italian society as the peacemaker. But he
had to remain a neutral figure or he would lose the confidence and trust of the
parties for whom he was trying to make peace.[77] Cynthia L. Polecritti shows how
the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena (d. 1444) maintained impartiality by establishing
authority based on his ascetic reputation and his zeal for reform.[78] Polecritti like
Thompson and Paton relays the image of the preacher in action.

   These studies indicate a trend in sermon studies which focuses on the actual per-
formance of the preacher.[79] For example, the image of the preacher as depicted in
art has been investigated by Rusconi.[80] Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby has considered late
medieval Italian preachers' attitude to art and has presented evidence of how they
actually employed art in their preaching.[81] Some sermonists have become interested
in the methodology of performance theory as articulated by Mary Suydam and
Joanna E. Zeigler.[82] Performance theory borrows from a number of disciplines using
the studies of such scholars as Victor and Edith Turner, Richard Schechner, Ronald
Grimes and Mircea Eliade, just to name a few. It appropriates some of the approaches
found in anthropology, ritual studies, theatre studies and feminist studies and reforms

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[73] A. Thompson, *Revival preachers and politics in thirteenth-century Italy. The Great Devotion of 1233*
(Oxford, 1992).

[74] Thompson, *Revival preachers and politics in thirteenth-century Italy*, 15–16.

[75] Thompson, *Revival preachers and politics in thirteenth-century Italy*, 207.

[76] B. Paton, *Preaching friars and the civic ethos. Siena, 1380–1480* (Westfield publications in medieval
studies, 7, London, 1992) 32–5.

[77] C.L. Polecritti, *Preaching peace in Renaissance Italy. Bernardino of Siena and his audience*
(Washington, D.C., 2000) 99–100.

[78] Polecritti, *Preaching peace in Renaissance Italy,* 101.

[79] For example related to heretical preaching see G. Cigman, 'The preacher as performer. Lollard ser-
mons as imaginative discourse', *Journal of literature and theology*, 2 (1988), 69–82.

[80] R. Rusconi, '"Trasse la storia per farne la tavola": Immagini di predicatori degli ordini mendicanti
nei secoli XIII e XIV,' in: *La predicazione dei frati dalla metà del'200 alla fine del 300. Atti del XXII
Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 13–15 ottobre 1994* (Spoleto, 1995), 407–50; and most recently R. Rus-
coni, 'The preacher saint in late medieval Italian art', in: *Preacher, sermon and audience*, 181–200.

[81] N. Debby, 'The preacher as goldsmith: The Italian preachers' use of the visual arts', in: *Preacher,
sermon and audience*, 127–53.

[82] *Performance and transformation. New approaches to late medieval spirituality*, ed. M.A. Suydam
and J.E. Zeigler (New York, 1999).

them to create a new approach, which attempts to unlock the performative dimension of medieval life. Suydam states that the aim of performance studies is 'to highlight action, space, emotion and sensory dimensions rather than intellectual content of the ritual text'.[83] Kienzle has applied this approach to preachers' performances. In order to reconstruct the preaching event, she first establishes what theories of performance are present in the medieval preaching tradition by looking at treatises which deal with issues of the preacher in action. These treatises include Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*, Guibert of Nogent's *Quo ordine sermo fieri debeat*, Alan of Lill's *Summa de arte praedicatoria*, Thomas of Chobham's *Summa de arte praedicandi*, Humbert of Romans' *De eruditione praedicatorum*, Thomas Waleys' *De modo componendi sermones*, Robert of Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*, and Francesc Eiximenis' *Ars praedicandi populo*.[84] In turn, the preaching of Bernard of Clairvaux, Bernardino of Siena, and Vincent of Ferrer as revealed in chronicles, hagiography, letters and other sources are compared to the performance theory extracted from the various treatises. This approach, like that of Martin, Thompson, Paton and Polecritti provides a three-dimensional representation of the preacher.

In as much as these studies spotlight the individual preacher, Larissa Taylor has made the useful reminder that, for the most part, those involved in pastoral care did not look upon the individualistic and unusual preacher as the ideal. The main concern was to relay Christian doctrine and through this concern preachers were to demonstrate collective aims and to preach common beliefs.[85] Delcorno echoes this in his observation that the preacher is part of a larger preaching mission, a mission whose content is largely repetitive because it is based on the liturgical cycle.[86] Moreover, medieval preaching theory argued that the message did not come from the preacher himself but had its authority as the *verbum Dei*;[87] and for orthodox preachers, especially the mendicants, the *verbum Dei* would be derived from biblical commentary and established methods of sermon formulation.

3. Society

Do sermons reflect society or shape it? Lecoy de la Marche suggested that they were like photographs from a bygone time.[88] D'Avray argues that a sermon which treats particular themes, for example marriage or death, must be analysed in relation

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[83] M.A. Suydam, 'Background: an introduction to performance studies', in: *Performance and transformation*, 2.

[84] B.M Kienzle, 'Medieval sermons and their performance: theory and record', in: *Preacher, sermon and audience*, 89–124.

[85] L. Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ. Preaching in late medieval and Reformation France* (New York/Oxford, 1992), 232.

[86] Delcorno, 'Medieval preaching in Italy (1200–1500)', 487.

[87] Delcorno, 'Medieval preaching in Italy (1200–1500)', 486–7.

[88] Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen age*, 342: 'Ils ressemblent à des photographies qui seraient exhumés, au bout de six cents ans, dans toute leur fraicheur'.

to other sermons which treat the same topics before any conclusions can be drawn. One ought not to assign broad generalisations of cause and effect to sermons. D'Avray proposes that: 'It is also sometimes useful to see preaching as a sort of distillation of some aspects of society, especially if one pictures society as saturated with thoughts and values.'[89] Alberto Ferreiro concurs arguing that homilies provide insight into the medieval mentalité in that they 'clearly reflect the values, aspirations, and concerns of an era'.[90] Moreover, preachers following the liturgical cycle would preach similar themes year after year, a method which d'Avray describes 'as the drip-drip method of inculcating beliefs'.[91]

Following the advice of d'Avray, Jussi Hanska has mined a number of thirteenth-century mendicant model sermons to see what they reveal about Franciscan and Dominican attitudes towards poverty. Focusing on sermons that have as their theme Luke 16, 19–31, which is the parable of Lazaraus and the Rich Man, Hanska attempts to uncover mendicant perceptions of wealth and poverty. Hanska looks at over thirty sermons which were preached during the thirteenth century.[92] The messages that the Franciscans and Dominicans put forward are similar. Poverty is something which should not be despised but respected. Although poverty is a difficult burden to bear, it must be tolerated in this life because in the next life the poor will attain their rewards and witness the punishment of the evil rich. In essence the mendicants argued that poverty is to be extolled above wealth, but no action should be undertaken in this life to act against the sinful rich. Hanska concludes:

> The ultimate audience of the model sermons were the people who consisted mostly of the poor, the sick and the workers. The joy over the punishments of rich sinners was a message directed to these people to keep them happy in this life waiting for retribution, and what is more their vengeance in the future.[93]

The perception of the sermon as a method whereby attitudes and assumptions are slowly instilled is often applied to the study of how sermons reflect religious devotion. In particular sermons on saints, *sermones de sanctis*, have become the focus of this sort of analysis. Kate Jansen has examined *de sanctis* sermons on Mary Magdalene by mendicant preachers to show how they disseminated a social meaning of the sacrament of penance.[94] Most recently she has examined the mendicant preaching on the Magdalene in the wider context of how saintly qualities affected the devotional

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[89] D.L d'Avray, 'Method in the study of medieval sermons', in: *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*, ed. N. Bériou and D.L. d'Avray (Spoleto, 1994), 3–29, at 7.

[90] A. Ferreiro '"*Frequenter legere*": the propagation of literacy, education, and divine wisdom in Caesarius of Arles', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), 5–15, at 5.

[91] D'Avray, 'Method in the study of medieval sermons', 9.

[92] J. Hanska, *'And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell.' The social ethos in mendicant sermons* (Bibliotheca Historica, 28, Helsinki, 1997).

[93] Hanska, *'And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell'*, 165.

[94] K.L. Jansen, 'Mary Magdalene and the mendicants: the preaching of penance in the late middle ages', *Journal of medieval history*, 21 (1995), 1–25.

practices of the listeners.[95] André Vauchez observed that sanctity as portrayed in hagiographical texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries presented accessible models of holiness that encouraged the listener to follow in the footsteps of the saint.[96] Generally, the evidence drawn from the essays in *Models of holiness in medieval sermons*, suggests a similar conclusion: *sermones de sanctis* often relayed a moral ideal which the audience was invited to imitate.[97] In a study of the difference between the genre of hagiography and *de sanctis* sermons, Ferzoco has argued: 'Whereas *legenda* tend to narrate the salient episodes of a saint's life as a frame for further discussion of that holy person's virtues, sermons … tend to centre more obviously on virtues, as a way of making the saints to be models of admirable, and above all, imitable holiness.'[98]

Sermons have been used to reveal societal attitudes towards women. Based on fifteenth-century German sermons on Katharine of Alexandria, d'Avray concludes that these sermons imply that in late medieval Germany a women could be perceived as an outstanding intellectual.[99] Regina Schiewer's findings of the high literacy levels and scribal ability among nuns in late medieval German convents corroborates this suggestion.[100] V.M. O'Mara's investigation of a late medieval English sermon to nuns suggests different conclusions. While nuns most likely had intellectual exchanges with other female religious houses, she finds little proof to show that nuns were actively involved in the copying and reading of manuscripts.[101] Other research has shown that terms such as 'misogynist' or 'pro-feminist' used to describe medieval sermons on women are too broad to relate the variety of female representations found in sermons. Carla Casagrande's and Carolyn Muessig's investigations of sermons about women contain a variety of images which at once are positive and negative.[102] Debby has demonstrated that Italian preachers could be supportive of their female audience when listing the hardships of motherhood, but critical of women, especially those who used the excuse of attending a sermon to dress up, meet their

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[95] K.L. Jansen, *The making of the Magdalene: preaching and popular devotion in the later middle ages* (Princeton, 2000).

[96] A. Vauchez, 'Saints admirables et saints imitables: les fonctions de l'hagiographie ont-elles changés aux derniers siècles du moyen âge?', in: *Les fonctions des saint dans le monde occidental (IIIe-XIIIe) siècle). Actes du colloque organisé par l'école française de Rome avec le concours de l'université de Rome 'la sapienza', Rome 27–29 octobre 1988* (Rome, 1991), 161–72.

[97] *Models of holiness in medieval sermons*, ed. Kienzle et al.

[98] G. Ferzoco, 'The context of medieval sermon collections of saints', in: *Preacher, sermon and audience*, 280–92, at 285.

[99] D'Avray, 'Katharine of Alexandria and mass communication in Germany: woman as intellectual', in: *Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity*.

[100] Schiewer, 'Sermons for nuns of the dominican observance movement', 75–92.

[101] *A study and edition of selected Middle English sermons. Richard Alkerton's Easter week sermon preached at St Mary Spital in 1406, a sermon on Sunday observance, and a nunnery sermon for the feast of the Assumption*, ed. V.M. O'Mara (Leeds text and monographs, n.s., 13, Leeds, 1994).

[102] *Prediche alle donne del secolo XIII: Testi di Umberto da Romans, Gilberto da Tournai, Stefano di Borbone*, ed. C. Casagrande (Milan, 1978); C. Muessig, *The faces of women in the sermons of Jacques de Vitry. Commentary, editions and translations* (Toronto, 1999).

friends and gossip.[103] Bériou has analysed a group of sermons preached in Paris to the beguines in 1272–1273; these sermons, preached by a number of preachers, reveal both approval and disapproval of the beguine way of life.[104]

Harkening back to d'Avray's observation that preaching was a form of mass communication, some scholars have looked at sermons to trace how ideas were circulated. Sermons sometimes catalogue the transmission of doctrine from one era to another. Thomas D. Hill suggests a link between the doctrines found in Old English anonymous homilies and the eschatological visions of Julian of Norwich and William Langland.[105] D'Avray's study of sermons preached on the death of potentates reveals much about medieval attitudes towards death. The content of the sermons, although aiming to idealise the image of the deceased ruler, also reinforce a traditional theology of death which was quite positive.[106] Alan E. Bernstein suggests that thirteenth-century sermons reveal an interaction among various participants of society which explains to some degree how medieval ideas were disseminated. He argues that preaching was one way learned preachers could disseminate to the laity papal attitudes on such doctrines as hell and confession.[107] Phyllis Roberts provides an inventory of Latin sermons preached on the feast day of Thomas Becket's martyrdom (29 December) and the translation of his relics (7 July). The sermons date from just after Becket's death (d. 1170) to c. 1400. The sermons, preached by a diversity of men in a variety of regions, demonstrate that the dissemination of Becket's cult throughout western Europe was very much a result of preaching.

The interaction between sermon and society has perhaps been best exploited in the field of crusades. Penny J. Cole's fundamental investigation to crusade preaching was based on her endeavour to discover if the First Crusade was indeed a direct reaction to the Clermont sermon.[108] Moving from the early crusade sermons to subsequent ones, Cole argues that for the later period the inability of preachers to incite men to go on crusade often had to do with men's hesitation to leave their families and homeland. On this point, crusade sermons divulge the preachers' attitudes to their audience. The sermons of the preachers such as Humbert of Romans (d. 1277) and Guibert of Tournai (d. 1284) reveal that these men did not acknowledge the successive failures in the Holy Land as the root cause of men's unwillingness to take the cross. These preachers' reaction to their audience show that they believed the problem to be grounded in man's wickedness. In regard to crusade preaching, Christoph T. Maier underlines the role of the Dominicans and Franciscans. Coming to similar conclusions as Bernstein regarding the dissemination of ideas, he demon-

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[103] N. Debby, 'The preacher as women's mentor', in *Preacher, sermon and audience*, 229–54.

[104] N. Bériou, 'La prédication au beguinage de Paris pendant l'année liturgique 1272–73', *Recherches augustiniennes* 13 (1978), 105–229.

[105] T.D. Hill, 'Delivering the damned in Old English anonymous homilies and Jón Arason's *Ljómur'*, *Medium Aevum*, 61 (1992), 75–82.

[106] D.L. d'Avray, *Death and the prince. Memorial preaching before 1350* (Oxford, 1994).

[107] A.E. Bernstein, 'The invocation of hell in thirteenth-century Paris', in: *Supplementum festivum. Studies in honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. J. Hankins, J. Monfasani, and F. Purnell (Medieval and Renaissance studies, 49, Binghamton, 1987), 13–54.

[108] P.J. Cole, *The preaching of the crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991).

strates how the mendicants were perfectly placed to transmit through their preaching papal propaganda regarding the crusades.[109] His edition and translations of the crusading sermons of James of Vitry, Eudes of Châteauroux, Gilbert of Tournai, and Humbert of Roman provides the content of this propaganda.[110]

Some scholars see sermons as having had a fairly strong impact on society. Franco Mormando, in his study of Bernardino of Siena, maintains that Bernardino's sermons not only represented the moral and intellectual tendencies that characterised fifteenth-century Italy, but more importantly actively shaped them, particularly with regard to his preaching against witchcraft and sodomy.[111] Mormando argues that Bernardino's preaching was a great impetus to the growing fear of witchcraft. He argues that '… historians charting the growth and development of the European witch craze all point to a dramatic rise in the anti-witch literature and prosecution beginning in the second quarter of the fifteenth century … precisely in those years in which Bernardino, at the height of his career, was preaching sermons …'.[112]

The numerous conclusions that these studies present stress the close relationship between the sermon and society. In many cases it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate one from the other. Whether the preacher repeated the same ideals of sanctity year in and year out to his audience, or made his audience anxious with the talk of new enemies such as witches, the preacher himself was still inextricably part of the larger fabric of his community; he was as traditional and as innovative as society allowed him to be.

4. Conclusion

The focus of this article has been on the recent trends in medieval sermon studies. Although critical editions of sermons are fundamental to the discipline of sermon studies and the contributors to the volume *The sermon* list a number of them, I did not include editions in the discussion of trends.[113] This is because, considering the sheer quantity of unedited sermons, critical editions are perhaps the slowest area of growth in the discipline of sermon studies. The unglamorous and time-consuming skill of editing is no doubt partially to blame. Moreover, the pressures 'of publish or perish' also have had a deleterious affect on the production of critical editions. Nevertheless, groundbreaking work on the production of critical editions and *repertoria* of sermons is being undertaken by various sermonists who belong to the International Medieval Sermon Studies Society. For example, Bériou and Berlioz have

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[109] C.T. Maier, *Preaching the crusades. Mendicant friars and the cross in the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1994).

[110] *Crusade, propaganda and ideology. Model sermons for the preaching of the cross*, ed. C.T. Maier, (Cambridge, 2000).

[111] F. Mormando, *The preacher's demons. Bernardino of Siena and the social underworld of early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago and London, 1999).

[112] Mormando, *The preacher's demons*, 108.

[113] See also *The sermon* in which each chapter contains a list of critical editions of sermons.

formed an international team of scholars working on the corpus of sermons by the prolific James of Voragine. V. Mertens and Hans-Jochen Schiewer in 1996 established the SERMO group, also made up of scholars from several countries, whose aim is to produce a list of vernacular sermons similar to Schneyer's *Repertorium*. In fact, Mertens and Schiewer have recently published a list of German sermons.[114] Regarding Schneyer's *Repertorium* there have been recent developments. More than twenty years after Schneyer's death, he continues to influence sermon studies. In addition to the 100,000 sermons listed in the *Repertorium*, Schneyer also gathered *incipits* and *explicits* for sermons from the period 1350–1500 which he recorded on index cards. With the support of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Ludwig Hödl and W. Knoch inputted this material and have just produced a CD-ROM which contains more than 10,000 entries.[115] The availability of this type of resource on CD-ROM will no doubt prove invaluable to the future of sermon studies.

The three strands of sermon studies highlighted in this article, that is, sermon, preacher and society, are only representative of the diverse aspects of the discipline. As the selected variety of studies presented here show, there is something in sermons for most medievalists. Indeed sermonists come from all sorts of disciplines. This is at once a weakness and a strength of the field. The weakness is the daunting technical demands that sermons make on the historian. James W. O'Malley observed that the sermonist 'must draw upon the findings and methodology of exegesis, liturgy, theology, social history, cultural history, literary criticism, textual criticism and many other disciplines'.[116] The strength derived from this situation is that scholars from across the disciplines have pulled together, as witnessed in the International Sermons Studies Society, to understand more fully sermons and preaching history. The number of studies and resources resulting from the collaboration between sermonists points to how this vast field is slowly but yet fruitfully being mastered.

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[114] H.-J. Schiewer and V. Mertens, *Repertorium der ungedruckten deutschsprachigen Predigten des Mittelalters*, Band I/1–2. *Die Handscriften aus dem Straßburger Dominikanerinnenkloster St Nikolaus in undis und benachbarte Provenienzen* (Tubingen, 2000).

[115] *Inventory of late medieval Latin sermons 1350–1500. From the unpublished papers of J.-B. Schneyer*, ed. L. Hödl and W. Knoch (Aschendorff, 2001).

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