

ITALIAN MENDICANT SERMONS ON THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE: OPPORTUNE OCCASIONS TO PREACH ON AVARICE, USURY, SIMONY, AND TRADE (13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES)¹

SERMÕES MENDICANTES ITALIANOS SOBRE A PURIFICAÇÃO DO TEMPLO: OCASIÕES OPORTUNAS PARA PREGAR SOBRE AVAREZA, USURA, SIMONIA E TROCA (SÉCULOS XIII E XIV)



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Abstract: This paper tests the hypothesis that the liturgical dates of Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent were opportune occasions for mendicant friars to produce sermons on avarice, usury, simony, and trade. Initially based on seven sermons by Giordano da Pisa and Jacopo da Varazze, this hypothesis is tested using 19 sermons from six other 13th- and 14th-century Italian friars. Sixteen of these sermons addressed the aforementioned subjects, identifying two strategic dates for scholars to access these specific themes in the discourse of the Italian friars.

Palavras-chaves: Sermon; Preaching; Mendicant Friars.

Resumo: Este artigo testa a hipótese de que as datas litúrgicas da Terça-feira da Primeira Semana da Quaresma e da Segunda-feira da Quarta Semana eram oportunidades para frades mendicantes produzirem sermões sobre avareza, usura, simonia e troca. Baseada em sete sermões de Giordano da Pisa e Iacopo da Varazze, a hipótese foi testada com 19 sermões de outros seis frades italianos dos séculos XIII e XIV. Dezesesseis sermões abordaram os temas mencionados, identificando duas datas estratégicas para acessar esses temas no discurso dos frades.

Keywords: Sermão; Pregação; Frades Mendicantes.

Introduction

In 2018, I published a paper entitled *Sermons, Preaching, and Liturgy: Practices, Research Methods, and the Case of Giordano da Pisa*.² In it, I confronted the historiography of the last forty years regarding the preaching of the Friar Preacher Giordano da Pisa (c.

¹ O presente trabalho foi realizado com apoio da Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP), Brasil. Processo nº 2024/134829-2.

² ALVES, Aléssio Alonso. Sermons, Preaching, and Liturgy: Practices, Research Methods, and the Case of Giordano da Pisa. In: *Medieval Sermon Studies*, v. 62, n. 1, p. 3-16, 2018.

1260-1311)³ in Florence and in his hometown in the early 14th century.⁴ While previous studies had repeatedly highlighted the strong influence of a mercantile public and a communal socioeconomic environment on his sermons – not only in their form and language, but especially in their content – I pointed to an observance of discursive and liturgical patterns by Giordano and argued that the subjects of some of his sermons and their arguments were in fact more conditioned by the evangelical reading assigned to specific liturgical dates and the exegetical tradition of these gospel passages.

This new historiographical perspective on Giordano's preaching, however, was only possible by using David d'Avray's comparative method for the study of sermons.⁵ Bearing in mind that the gospel passage from which a sermon was developed was suggested by a liturgy and that this relationship could lead to a repetition of *topoi* as it followed a liturgical calendar that was repeated year after year – both in the activity of a single preacher and across sermons by different authors –, the method prioritizes the comparison between sermons dedicated to the same liturgical date. By then, it had been successfully employed not only by the author himself,⁶ but also by other prominent scholars of the medieval sermon and preaching as regards different liturgical dates, such as Jussi Hanska, Holly Johnson, Eleonora Lombardo, and Pietro Delcorno.⁷ Nonetheless, it had never been applied to the preaching of Giordano da Pisa.

³ For biographical information, see DELCORNIO, Carlo. *Giordano da Pisa*. In: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2001, v. 55. Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giordano-da-pisa_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giordano-da-pisa_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Access: May 21st, 2025.

⁴ DELCORNIO, Carlo. *Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione volgare*. Florence: Biblioteca di Lettere Italiane vol. XIV, 1975; LESNICK, Daniel R. *Preaching in Medieval Florence*. The social world of Franciscan and Dominican spirituality. Athens (EUA): University of Georgia Press, 1989; MULCHAHEY, M. Michèle. *First the Bow is Bent in Study*: Dominican Education before 1350. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1998; IANNELLA, Cecilia. *Giordano da Pisa*. Ética Urbana e Forme della Società. Pisa: Edizione Ets, 1999; DAMERON, George W. *Florence and Its Church in the Age of Dante*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005; MUZZARELLI, Maria Giuseppina. *Pescatori di uomini*: Predicatori e piazze alle fine del Medioevo. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005.

⁵ D'AVRAY, David. *The Preaching of the Friars*: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 243, 248-50; D'AVRAY, David. Method in Study of Medieval Sermons. In: BÉRIOU, Nicole; D'AVRAY, David. *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermon*: essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity. Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994, p. 3-29.

⁶ D'AVRAY, *The Preaching*. Op. cit.; D'AVRAY, David. The Gospel of the Marriage Feast of Cana and Marriage Preaching in France. In: WALSH, Katherine; WOOD, Diana (eds.). *The Bible in the Medieval World*: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985, p. 207-224; D'AVRAY, David. *Medieval Marriage Sermons*: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; D'AVRAY, David. *Medieval Marriage*: Symbolism and Society. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

⁷ HANSKA, Jussi. *And the Rich Man also Died; and he was Buried in Hell*: the social ethos in mendicant sermons. Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1997; HANSKA, Jussi. Reconstructing the Mental Calendar of Medieval Preaching: A Method and Its Limitations in Analysis of Sunday Sermons. In: MUESSIG, Carolyn. *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 293-315; HANSKA, Jussi. Uidens Jesus Cuius fleuit super illam: The Lachrymae Christi Topos in Thirteenth-Century Sermon literature. In: ANDERSSON, Roger. *Constructing the Medieval Sermon*. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2008, p. 237-251; HANSKA, Jussi. Sermons on the Tenth Sunday after Holy Trinity: Another Occasion for Anti-Jewish Preaching. In: ADAMS, Jonathan; HANSKA, Jussi. *The Jewish-Christian Encounter in Medieval Preaching*. New York and London: Routledge, 2015, p. 195-212; JOHNSON, Holly. *The Grammar of Good Friday*: Macaronic Sermons of Late Medieval England. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012; LOMBARDO, Eleonora. Svutare la pancia per riempire lo spirito: digiuno e

In that paper, I observed that both the authors who had systematically studied Giordano's preaching⁸ and those who relied on brief observations about it to assert the commitment of the friars to economic issues⁹ based their assertions on the 1975 work of Carlo Delcorno, *Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione volgare*. Furthermore, I noticed that to identify the preacher's most likely audience, Delcorno used 13 passages from seven different sermons,¹⁰ three of which were on liturgical dates whose gospel readings dealt with the Cleansing of the Temple, the episode in which Christ expels the merchants and money changers from the temple in Jerusalem. Two sermons were preached on the liturgical date of Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent (both on March 14th, 1306, in Florence),¹¹ and one on Tuesday of the First Week of Lent (February 18th, 1309, in Pisa).¹² Moreover, I remarked that this episode of the Temple had since the patristic era been interpreted by a Christian theological tradition to disapprove of the actions of merchants and to condemn the sins of usury and simony. And, most importantly, I also observed that these three sermons dealt with the exact same subjects: simony, injustice of merchants, and usury.

Noticing all of this, I compared Giordano's two sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent with those of Friar Preacher Jacopo da Varazze (c. 1230-1298)¹³ on the same liturgical date – probably composed in the 1280s in Genoa. In doing so, I observed that while Jacopo's first sermon has nothing to say about these subjects – as it focuses on Christ's great zeal and constancy in punishing vices, the power he retained in his resurrected body, and his great wisdom in knowing secret things –, the second treated themes very similar to his confrere's 1306 sermons for this occasion: while the preacher from Pisa spoke about simony,

quaresima in alcuni sermoni per il Mercoledì delle Ceneri tra XII e XIII secolo. In: DELCORNIO, Pietro; LOMBARDO, Eleonora; TROMBONI, Lorenza. *I sermoni quaresimali*: Digiuno del corpo, banchetto dell'anima – Lenten Sermon: Fast of the Body, Banquet of the Soul. Firenze: Nerbini, 2017; DELCORNIO, Pietro. Lazzaro e il ricco Epulone: Metamorfosi di una parabola fra Quattro e Cinquecento. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014; DELCORNIO, Pietro. In the mirror of the Prodigal Son: the pastoral uses of a biblical narrative (c. 1200-1550). Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017.

⁸ LESNICK, Daniel. *Preaching in Medieval Florence*. Op. cit.; IANNELLA, Cecilia. *Giordano da Pisa*. Op. cit.

⁹ MULCHAHEY, M. Michèle. *First the Bow*. Op. cit.; DAMERON, George W. *Florence and its Church*. Op. cit.

¹⁰ DELCORNIO, Carlo. *Giordano da Pisa*. Op. cit., p. 43-67.

¹¹ GIORDANO DA PISA. *Quaresimale Fiorentino, 1305-1306*. Edizione critica per cura de Carlo Delcorno. C. G. Sansoni Editore: Firenze, 1974, p. 268-274. These two sermons can be understood as a single sermon, as Giordano announces a fourfold partition in the first preaching (simony; injustice in trade; irreverence in trade; and avarice), develops the first two of them in the morning sermon and then continues with the other two in his afternoon preaching.

¹² GIORDANO DA PISA. *Prediche Inedite* (dal. ms. Laurenziano, Acquisti e Doni 290). Acura di Cecilia Iannella. Edizione ETS: Pisa, 1997, p. 49-53. The sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent can be found in four manuscripts, and the one for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent in only one. See DELCORNIO, Carlo. *Giordano da Pisa*. Op. cit., p. 330, 335; and GIORDANO DA PISA, *Prediche*. Op. cit., p. VII, IX, 271-272.

¹³ On the preacher, see CASAGRANDE, Carla. Iacopo da Varazze. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2004, v. 62. Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-da-varazze_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-da-varazze_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Access: May 21st, 2025. His Lent sermons collection is preserved in impressive 321 manuscripts. See SCHNEYER, Johannes Baptist. *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350*. Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971, v. III, p. 244-246; and KAEPELLI, Thomas. *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*. Romae: Ad S. Sabinae, 1980, v. III, p. 364-367.

injustice of merchants and usury, Jacopo wrote about avarice, simony, and, contrariwise, the justice of merchants.¹⁴

As for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent, later in my research I realized that while Giordano again spoke about usury, unfair merchants, and simony on this occasion, in his first sermon for this date Jacopo associated the Temple with the heart and mind of the believers, the money changers with avarice, and the dove sellers with simony – and just like Christ expelled those men from the Temple, so should man expel avarice from his inner self.¹⁵ In the second sermon, Jacopo stated that the *ecclesia* was built both as a house of God and as a house of prayer; because of that, man should not ask for unworthy things in prayer. The *exemplum* given was that of King Midas, who died because of his avarice.¹⁶ Thus, although Jacopo did not focus exclusively on the subjects in question in these two sermons, he did not fail to make reference to avarice in both of them. Therefore, despite the differences between the approaches of both preachers, the investigation pointed to the fact that addressing the subjects of avarice, usury, simony, and trade in sermons dedicated to these two liturgical dates may have been suggested by an exegetical tradition applied to preaching and the practices of making a sermon at that time – and was not necessarily directly associated with a mercantile audience and its influence on preaching, as historians claim in the case of Giordano da Pisa.

Thus, recognizing this pattern and with d'Avray's method in mind, I formulated the hypothesis that these two liturgical dates, since they covered the episode of the Temple, offered opportune occasions for preachers to address issues related to avarice, usury, simony, and trade. Accordingly, on these dates it would be customary to deal with these issues through a tropological and/or allegorical interpretation of the gospels.

Hence, in order to systematically test this hypothesis, the documentary analysis in this paper will be extended to 19 sermons (nine for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent, and ten for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent) produced by six other Italian mendicant friars of the 13th and 14th centuries: Antonio Azaro da Parma, OP (1243-c. 1314)¹⁷; Hugo de Prato

¹⁴ IACOBI DE VORAGINE. *Sermones Quadragesimales*. Venetiis: ex officina Ioannis Baptistae Somaschi, 1582, p. 113v-119.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27-28v.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29-30v.

¹⁷ For biographic information, see REDIGONDA, Abele. Antonio d'Azario. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1961, v. 3. Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-d-azario_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-d-azario_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Access: May 21st, 2025. His lent sermons survived in 186 manuscripts. See KAEPELLI, Thomas. *Scriptores Ordinis*. *Op. cit.*, 1970, v. I, p. 100-103.

Florido, OP (c.1262-1322)¹⁸; Alberto da Padova, OESA (1269-c. 1323/28)¹⁹; Giovanni da San Gimignano, OP (c. 1260/1270-1333)²⁰; Filippo da Moncalieri, OFM (?-c. 1344)²¹; and Bartolomeo da Pisa, OFM (1338-1401)²². The selection of these preachers from four different mendicant orders followed a geographical and chronological logic according to the formulation of the hypothesis (Italian preachers from the 13th and 14th centuries, such as Iacopo and Giordano), whose sermons were readily available.

Sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent

According to the Dominican and Franciscan liturgy of the 13th and 14th centuries, the Gospel reading for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent was verses 10 to 17 of Matthew, chapter 21,²³ in which the following events are narrated: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday; the Cleansing of the Temple; the healing of the blind and the lame; the discussion with the priests; and his departure to Bethany. Among the nine sermons now under consideration, two of them are noteworthy: Bartolomeo da Pisa's text and Alberto da Padova's second sermon for the occasion. The sermon by Friar Minor Bartolomeo²⁴ – contained in a collection of Lent sermons on the “contempt for the world” preached in his hometown in 1397²⁵ – is entirely dedicated to avarice, the “motive that induces one to love the world”. According to the friar, “although it is evident by experience that all men suffer

¹⁸ See VECCHIO, Silvana. Le prediche e la istruzione religiosa. In: *La predicazione dei frati dalla metà del' 200 alla fine del' 300*. Atti dei Convegni della Società internazionale di studi francescani e del Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1995, p. 305; and HANSKA, Jussi. *Sermons. Op. cit.*, p. 211. There are eight manuscripts of his lent sermons. See KAEPELLI, Thomas. *Scriptores Ordinis. Op. cit.* 1975, p. 259-260).

¹⁹ See GIACOMINI, Agostini. Alberto da Padova. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960, vol. 1. Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alberto-da-padova_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alberto-da-padova_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Access: May 21st, 2025; BONATO, Arianna; BOTTIN, Francesco. Nuove ricerche per una biografia di Alberto da Padova. In: BOTTIN, Francesco. *Alberto da Padova e la cultura degli Agostiniani*. Padua: Padova University Press, 2014, p. 167-216. His lent sermons can be found in 13 manuscripts. See SCHNEYER, Johannes Baptist. *Repertorium. Op. cit.*, 1969, v. I, p. 146.

²⁰ See VECCHIO, Silvana. Giovanni da San Gimignano. In: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2001, v. 56. Available at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-da-san-gimignano_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-da-san-gimignano_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Access: May 21st, 2025. His lent sermons are preserved in 27 manuscripts. See KAEPELLI, Thomas. *Scriptores Ordinis. Op. cit.*, 1975, p. 540.

²¹ See FONTANA, Emanuele. *Formazione biblica e culturale dei “lectores” dell'ordine francescano: ricerche nell'ambito della provincia della Marca Trevigiana (secoli XIII-XIV)*. Thesis (PhD in History). Università degli studi di Padova, Padova, 2008, p. 142-169, 237-238. His lent sermons seem to exist in five manuscripts. See *Ibid.*, p. 142,169. Schneyer does not list the works of Filippo da Moncalieri in his *Repertorium*.

²² See HEIJDEN, Maarten van der; ROEST, Bert. *Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th century: a catalogue in progress*. 2025. Available at: <https://franciscanauthors.rich.ru.nl/index.html>. Access: May 21st, 2025. His collection of Lent sermons employed in this paper only survived in the incunabula edition of 1498. See ANALECTA FRANCISCANA. Florentia: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1912, v. V, 1912, p. CXIII-CXV.

²³ ORDO PRAEDICATORUM. *Missale sm consuetudinem fratrum predicatorum: cum omnibus additionibus tam ad conuentualem q ad priuatam missam pertinentibus*. Venedig: Andreas Torresanus, 1496, p. 23v-24.

²⁴ BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale de contemptu mundi*. Milano: Ulrich Scinzenzeler, 1498, p. 71-75.

²⁵ HEIJDEN, Maarten van der; ROEST, Bert. *Franciscan Authors. Op. cit.*

from this kind of disease for the most part, because all are inclined to avarice”²⁶, they are moved to desire riches because of a fourfold reason: divine permission for men to be rich in the Old Testament; its practical utility, since it can alleviate the needs and can provide for others; its potential for spiritual benefit, as the use of wealth for good deeds can lead to salvation; and, finally, its temporal pleasure, for riches bring joy and comfort.²⁷ However, although the preacher openly recognizes all this and even supports these reasons with biblical examples, he develops four counter-arguments encouraging contempt for the world and the rejection of material possessions. First, “riches themselves are temporally conducive to evils for those who love them”, since they require labor in acquisition; concern in procuring; fear in guarding; and pain in losing. Second, “riches are filled with sins” and its corrupting influence leads to strife, to evil counsel, to treachery, to the despising of divine commandments; they pervert just judgments, cast one down from dignity, induce to physical death, and ultimately separate men from all mercy. Third, riches “are not stable and do not remain long with those who love them”, offering no lasting security. And, finally, the imperative to consider the example of “upright men who have utterly despised riches”: Jesus, the apostles, early Christians, anchorites, martyrs, doctors of the church, and ancient philosophers.²⁸ Last but not least, the friar asserts that “the Lord does not love those who love riches, as the Lord shows when he casts out the sellers, buyers, and money changers from the temple. If riches were good, he would not have expelled those procuring riches for themselves from the temple”.²⁹

Finally, in the final part of the sermon, Bartolomeo directly addresses and refutes the four initial arguments in favor of wealth. He clarifies that while God gave wealth, he did it in order “(...) that the poor might be sustained by them (...)”; that material riches do not bring relief, because “the avaricious will not be filled with money, and he who loves riches will not have fruit, that is, ease, from them”;³⁰ that “(...) it is evident that by themselves they are not

²⁶ BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale. Op. cit.*, p. 71. “Motivo inducente ad mundum diligendum scilicet avaritia (...) pateat experientia homines omnes huiusmodi morbo (...)”. The underlined letters indicate abbreviations. All the translations in this article are my own.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72-75. “(...) divitie ipsas amantibus sunt malorum temporaliter inducti[a]e (...) divitie sunt peccatorum repletive (...) non sunt stabiles nec apud ipsas diligentes diu manent (...) proborum virorum qui totaliter divitias contempserunt (...)”. Each one of these arguments is supported by authorities (e.g., Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Juvenal, Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Boethius, and Isidore of Seville), biblical quotations and the examples of saints (e.g., Saint Anthony of Egypt, Lawrence of Rome, Hilarion of Gaza, Martin of Tours, Jerome of Stridon, and Francis of Assisi) and ancient philosophers (e.g., Bias of Priene, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Xenocrates of Chalcedon, Marcus Curius, and Cicero).

²⁹ BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale. Op. cit.*, p. 75. “Et sic esse videlicet dominum divitias amantes non diligere ostendit quando vendentes ementes et nummularios eiecit de templo. Ubi si divitiae essent bonae tales sibi divitias procurantes non expulisset de templo”.

³⁰ Eccles. 5, 9. See BIBLIA. *Biblia Sacra juxta vulgatam clementinam*. Editio electronica, Michael Tuveedale. Londini, 2005, p. 1210.

conducive to the kingdom of heaven, rather the opposite (...); and, lastly, that they do not bring joy, as “(...) Christ did not cast out those despising riches from the temple, but leads them there, namely the apostles and faithful following him, and thus to the temple of the heavenly city”.³¹ In brief, Bartolomeo’s sermon is a strong call to despise the world and its riches, urging one to follow the example of those who chose poverty, condemning avarice and the love of wealth as a dangerous pursuit prone to corruption and damnation.

In turn, Alberto da Padova’s second sermon for the occasion concentrates on Christ’s Cleansing of the Temple and is particularly concerned with avarice, usury and simony.³² In the second, last and overwhelmingly large part of the sermon, taking up almost its entirety, the expulsion of merchants and money changers from the temple is understood as an act of justice, for it is a strong condemnation of three sins: avarice, the monetary exploitation of those coming to offer sacrifices, as “(...) the priests thought to prey upon the people (...)”; usury, a grave sin, even if disguised as gifts that were handed to the priests; and the abuse of the House of God, used as a “den of thieves” in the tremendously rigorous words of Jesus. Finally, the friar clarifies that Christ cleansed the temple twice (the first one being mentioned only in John 2, 14-22 and the second, on Palm Sunday, narrated by the other three evangelists), from which should be understood a double temple: “the spiritual, that is, mystical, and the moral, from which earthly profits are to be cast out”.³³

Moreover, the Augustinian friar states that “from the assembly of the church are cast out merchants, usurers, and simoniacs”. However, regarding the first, Alberto establishes a distinction between lawful trade for necessity and unlawful trade for cupidity of avarice, emphasizing that selling and buying at fair prices are perfectly permitted “since man is a political or economic [animal]”, while greedy merchants that seek excessive profit are condemned.³⁴ More than that, the friar even assumes that it is possible to profit from trade, provided that it is conducted without avarice and there is a modest profit in view of one’s

³¹ BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale*. Op. cit., p. 75. “(...) In quo evangelio Christus soluit rationes divitum (...) quia deus dedit divitias admittatur. Sed quod ne non certe ut pauper ex eis alatur (...) de sublevatione indigentie, scriptura dicit oppositum. Avarus non implebitur pecunia et qui amat divitias fructum id est facietatem non capiet ex eis (...) patet quod per se non sunt regni celorum impetrativae immo oppositum est (...) ipsas divitias contempnentes Christus non eiecit de templo sed illuc perducit scilicet apostolos et fideles ipsum sequentes et sic ad templum deinde superne civitatis”.

³² ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones quadragesimales*. Venetiis: Marcum Antonium Zalterium et Michaellem Zanettum, 1584, v. 1, p. 96v-100.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 97-98. “(...) cogitaverunt ergo sacerdotes quoniam predam de populo facerent (...) dominus noster (...) dicens, quod domum orationis fecerunt speluncam latronum (...) duplex templum, spirituale, scilicet et mysticum, et morale. Ex quibus lucra terrena sunt eiicienda”.

³⁴ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. Op. cit. p. 98v. “(...) de cætu ecclesiae eiiciuntur negotiatores, usurarii, et symoniaci (...) licita est enim negotiatio necessitatis, illicita vero cupiditatis. Ubi advertendum, quod licet negotiatio sit commutatio emptionis et venditionis, non tamen omnis commutatio est negotiatio. Qui enim vendit et emit propter necessitatem vitae et status sui, ille polliticus vel Ichonomicus est. Qui vero vendit et emit propter lucrum: ille negociator est (...) exercere commutationem venalium propter lucrum tantum est vitium, quia deservit cupiditati (...)”.

own subsistence, that of one's family or that of the poor; that what is being sold has been improved by nature or art; or that the seller went through danger in transporting his goods from one place to another.³⁵ And he assures: "he is not the merchant who is cast out of the temple, because he is not greedy, but necessary, pious, and useful. But from the temple only the greedy merchant is cast out".³⁶ As for the usurers, Alberto affirms that Christians are worse than Jews, for the former "spare no one, neither Christian, nor friend, nor poor, nor clerics, nor religious, nor even their own relatives", while the latter act in this way only toward non-Jews. Additionally, the friar observes that "it should be considered that not only usury of contract, but also usury of mind is forbidden. For he who lends in the hope of gain, otherwise not intending to lend, sins. And if by chance anything beyond is received, it must be restored, even in the absence of a contract".³⁷ Last but not least, simoniacs are also condemned – those who sell or buy sacred things as gifts of the Holy Spirit, sacraments, dignities and benefices, represented by the dove sellers. This specific kind of avarice is seen especially as a corruption of the priesthood, because the order of priests exists by grace, not by nature or by agreement.³⁸ Thus, according to Matthew 10, 8: "Freely you have received, freely give".³⁹

Therefore, this sermon by Alberto is heavily focused on themes related to trade and its associated vices. Besides condemning the abuse of sacred spaces, drawing heavily on biblical examples it provides a detailed analysis of ethical conduct in trade, emphasizing the importance of fairness, moderation, and spiritual purity in all commercial transactions, distinguishing between trade for necessity, and trade for profit and out of avarice. It makes it very clear that those who commit these sins are excluded from the church.

As regards the other seven sermons for this liturgical date, none of them devotes this kind of attention to avarice, usury or simony or any other topic of interest in this paper as these two sermons do. While also treating other matters, four of them use the narrative of Christ's Cleansing of the Temple as a model for the purification of the soul and the church by direct references to the rejection of the sins of avarice, usury, and/or simony - among others. The other three only make indirect, very brief or oblique references to the topics considered here – or even none at all as in the case of one of them.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98v.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98v. "(...) ille non est negociator, qui de templo eiicitur, quia non est cupidus, sed necessarius, pius, et utilitatis. De templo autem cupidus solum negociator eiicitur".

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99v. "Christiani autem usurarii nemini parcunt, nec christiano, nec amico, nec pauperi, aut cleticis, aut religiosis, nec nec propriis consaguines. Et considerandum quod non solum usura pacti, sed etiam usura mentis prohibita est. Qui enim mutuatur spe fenoris, alias non mutuaturus peccat. Et si quid recipit ultra sortem, restituere tenetur quamquam non interuenerit pactum".

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 99v-100.

³⁹ "Quod gratis accepistis, gratis date". See BIBLIA. *Biblia. Op. cit.*, p. 2021.

Friar Preacher Antonio Azaro da Parma develops in his sermons the themes of purification; proper worship; the dangers of hypocrisy; and the importance of praise and penance. But he also warns against the menaces of usury.⁴⁰ The second part of his sermon, also the second in length, is centered on the episode of the Cleansing of the Temple as image for the correct use of the material temple as well as a tropological understanding of the human soul. In it he elucidates that although the selling of animals to serve as sacrifice was not a bad thing in itself, “this ought not to be done in the temple in any way”, because “many things that can be done lawfully outside churches cannot be done in church without sin”. As for usury, while first referring to the money changers simply as *laycos* when attesting their presence in the church, Antonio then refers to them precisely as *usurarius* when speaking about their expulsion, as if to leave no doubt about the sinful nature of their occupation - which justified Christ’s action.⁴¹ Moreover, the friar also states that the law forbade usury and that their expulsion from the temple stresses its condemnation as a mortal sin, since in this case “this was doubly evil: because to practice usury is a mortal sin, but to do this in the temple is worse”. The friar assures: “God will cause them to be hanged like thieves on the gallows of hell”.⁴²

Filippo da Moncalieri’s sermon for the date is divided into four markedly uneven parts.⁴³ The second one, being the largest, focuses on Jesus’ Cleansing of the Temple, interpreting it both literally and allegorically as a call for spiritual purification. The Friar Minor explains that the priests, driven by avarice, allowed undue trade within the temple, turning it into a marketplace and a den of thieves, which Jesus deemed inappropriate, because “the temple ought not to be a place of buying and selling, but of prayer and devotion”. This sets the stage for understanding Christ’s action as a righteous purification, where the temple is allegorically interpreted as the human soul, which should be a dwelling place for God. Within this understanding, the merchants signify the “sin of excessive temporal solicitude”, that is, avarice; while the money changers and the dove sellers are understood as the sin of simony, “which is a sin displeasing to God both on the part of the sellers and on the part of the buyers”. Filippo then asserts that “Christ expels all these from

⁴⁰ ANTONIUS DE PARMA. *Postilla super evangelia dominicalia per circulum anni cum quadragesimali*. Köln: Johann Koelhoff, 1482, p. 39v-41v.

⁴¹ This feature can also be observed in his sermon for Monday of the Last Week of Lent, revealing a linguistic pattern of the friar. It should be noted that the other friars usually refer to the money changers by the word *nummularius*- with the exception of Alberto da Padova in his second sermon for this occasion, who besides the words *nummularius* and *usurarius*, also employs the term *faenerator*. See ALBERTUS PATAVANI, *Sermones*. Op. cit., p. 98v, 99.

⁴² ANTONIUS DE PARMA. *Postilla*. Op. cit, p. 39v-40. “(...) in templo nullo modo fieri debebat (...) multa quae extra ecclesiarum licite fieri possunt in ecclesia sine peccato fieri non possunt (...) hoc erat duplex malorum, quia exercem usuras est mortale peccatum, sed hoc facere in templo est pessimum (...) Istos deus faciet suspendi sicut latrones ad furcas inferni”.

⁴³ PHILIPPUS DE MONTECALERIO. *Quadragesimale*. Mailand: Ulrich Scinzenzeler, 1498, p. 44-49.

the temple, by which it is given us to understand that we ourselves, who ought to be the temple of God, should expel all vices”.⁴⁴

Although it does not directly address the episode of the temple, the first sermon by Alberto da Padova for this liturgical date focuses on the tropological interpretation of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, signifying the cleansing of the heart from cupidity through repentance.⁴⁵ At the very beginning of the sermon, the friar affirms that “the first and greatest commandment is the love of God and neighbor” and that

Only cupidity differs from it. Hence Augustine: cupidity, he says, is the poison of charity. For as much as cupidity increases, so much does charity diminish. Because of this increase of cupidity, God abandons man (...) Therefore, our Savior today casts out from our hearts all transactions of cupidity. And as in yesterday's reading he condemned those who do not give generously of their own [possessions], so today he casts out from the temple those who desire the things of others (...).⁴⁶

Later, in the third and final part of the sermon, on the stirring that Christ's entry causes in the mind of the sinners, Alberto states that it causes trembling and fear, for they adore the works of the devil as idols, the first of which is Avarice - followed by Lust, Hatred, Envy, Pride, Drunkenness etc.⁴⁷ “However, by divine fear all these are stirred up when the severity of the future judgment is considered, the wrath of the judge, the confusion of evident crimes, eternal hell”.⁴⁸

Interpreting the acts and miracles of Christ literally and morally in his sermon for the occasion, Friar Preacher Hugo de Prato discusses Jesus' omnipotence and power, interpreting Jerusalem as material, allegorical (the Church), spiritual (the soul), and celestial (heaven); and showing Christ's power in stirring them all. He also addresses the importance of genuine faith, through disapproval of the priests' reaction to Jesus' behavior; and the condemnation of vices and spiritual purification from the episode of the Cleansing of the Temple and the healing of the blind and lame.⁴⁹ In the third part of his sermon, the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45-46. “(...) templum non debet esse locum emptionis nec venditionis sed orationis et devotionis (...) peccatum nimie solitudinis temporalis (...) istud est peccatum tam ex parte vendentium quam ex parte ementium displicibile Deo (...) Istos autem omnes expellit Christus de templo per quod datur nobis intelligere quod de nobis ipsis qui debemus esse templum Dei expellamus omnia vicia”.

⁴⁵ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones*. Op. cit., p. 94-96v.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94v. “(...) primum autem et maximum mandatum est charitas Deus et proximi (...) Sola vero cupiditas hoc mandatum deferit. Unde Augustinus: Venenum, inquit charitatis cupiditas est. Nam quantum crescit cupiditas, tamen diminuitur charitas. Propter cuius est cupiditatis augmentum hominem Deus deferit (...) Et sicut enim mansione hesterna damnavit eos, qui non largiuntur propria. Sic hodierna die eiicit de templo, qui cupiunt aliena (...)”.

⁴⁷ The capital letters are employed by Alberto.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94. “Sed timore divino haec omnia commoventur dum consideratur districtio futuri iudicii, ita iudicis, confusio evidentium scelerum, gehenna perpetua”.

⁴⁹ HUGO DE PRATO FLORIDO. *Sermones quadragesimales*. Venetia: Ioannem Variscum et socios, 1576, p. 92-103.

cleansing is allegorically interpreted as the purification of the Christian Church, especially regarding the clerics, for “the church of God is the congregation of the just, of which the more noble part consists of the clergy”. Three types of people are then expelled from it: hypocrites, symbolized by the merchants; “money changers, that is, the avaricious, who adore the cross of money, and for acquiring and retaining it sell their souls to the devil”; and “dove sellers, that is, the simoniacs, who sell the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sacraments of the church, and the churches themselves, which should not be done”.⁵⁰

The last three sermons for this liturgical date make very fleeting references to the topics considered - or even make none at all. Continuing the theme of Christ's actions in the temple, Alberto da Padova's third sermon for the date centers on mercy, highlighting Jesus' compassion for the suffering and the transformative power of his grace to heal corporeal and spiritual blindness and lameness.⁵¹ And while this sermon centers primarily on the spiritual interpretation of Christ's healing of the blind and lame, it does contain themes related to commerce. In its third part, regarding the commerce that was taking place in the temple, the friar uses the language of commercial transactions to describe the ways in which demons corrupt the human mind. First of all, Alberto affirms that “the robbers are demons that take away our merits (...) [and] these robbers make the temple of God a den of their habitation”, implying not only that the merchants of the passage acted like thieves, but that they should be understood as signifying demons. Moreover, the friar distinguishes three types of demonic commerce distinct from the ones that were taking place in the temple in Jerusalem:

The first commerce is selling. Man sells, the devil buys, and the thing sold and bought is the soul which the devil alone seeks, and to obtain it he grants the rest (...) For a small delight, a small profit and a vain desire foolish men sell their own souls to the devil (...) The second commerce is extortion: the devil is the money changer who gives money for usury. His money is the first sin which he persuaded man to commit: and he always demands tribute from it (...) from the one to whom he has given the pleasure of the flesh, he demands avarice (...) and finally after the money of guilt, he demands the usury of punishment (...) The third commerce is supplantation, in which, sitting in chairs, they sell doves (...) The chair, however, is the teaching of error, in which the devil sits (...) The devil therefore sells innocent life, when he deceives simple souls, teaching them to do evil, to avenge injuries, to take the things of others, not to give their own, to commit frauds.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101. “*Ecclesia vero Dei congregatio iustorum est, cuius nobilior pars clerus consistit (...) numelarios, idest avaros, qui adorant crucem nummi, et pro ipso acquirendo et retinendo vendunt animam suam diabolo (...) Tertio eiecit inde vendentes columbas idest Simoniacos qui vendunt dona spiritus sancti, et sacramenta ecclesiar, et ipsas ecclesias, quod non debet fieri*”.

⁵¹ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones. Op. cit.*, p. 100-100v.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 100v-101. “*Item latrones daemones sunt qui nostra merita tollunt (...) Isti latrones de templo Dei faciunt speluncam habitationis suae (...) Primum commercium est venditionis. Homo vendit, diabolus emit, res vendita et emptā, anima est quam solam querit diabolus, et pro ea habenda cetera concedit (...) Pro parva delectatione modico lucro et vano desiderio fatui homines animas proprias diabolo vendunt (...) Secundum commercium est exactionis: diabolus est*

Thus, the overall theme of demonic commerce implies avarice, usury, and even simony, as the devil's actions are driven by a desire to acquire and control souls as if they were material wealth, and it induces men to avarice and ever-increasing sins, even to sell their souls. In turn, Alberto's fourth and final sermon for this date, although it mentions the expulsion of merchants from the temple while addressing the reaction of the chief priests and scribes to Jesus' actions, has nothing to say about the subjects here in question.⁵³

Finally, Friar Preacher Giovanni da San Gimignano's sermon for the date uses the narrative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his actions in the temple as an allegorical framework to explain the process and effects of true penance. Divided into four parts, the first deals with contrition, represented by the stirring of the city on the occasion of Christ's entry; the second with confession, by means of the interpretation of the Cleansing of the Temple; the third with forgiveness, represented by the healing of the blind and lame; and, finally, the fourth with satisfaction as exemplified by his entry into Bethany.⁵⁴ While the majority of the sermon is centered on the reflection on contrition, there is a very brief reference to avarice, robbery, simony, and theft in its second part. The friar affirms "penance must cleanse the soul, just as Christ cleansed the temple, and this cleansing is done through confession, driving out with the whip of the tongue the money changers, that is, the sins of avarice such as usury, robbery, simony, and theft". Thus, "man must diligently cleanse the temple of the heart through confession".⁵⁵

Sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

The Gospel reading for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent was John, chapter 2, verses 13 to 25, which narrates Jesus' coming to Jerusalem; his Cleansing of the Temple by means of a whip; his discussion with the priests; and, finally, his distrust of those believing in him due to the signs he has given.⁵⁶ In this case, once again the sermons of Alberto da

nummularius qui nummum dat ad usuram. Eius nummus est primum peccatum quod persuasit homini: et semper ex eo tributum exigit (...) ut cui dedit voluptatem carnis, exigit ab eo avaritiam (...) et tandem post nummum culpa, exigit usuram poene (...) Tertium commercium est supplantationis, in quo sedentes in cathedris, columbas vendunt (...) Cathedra vero est magisterium erroris, in quo diabolus sedet (...) Innocentem ergo vitam vendit diabolus, quando simplices fallit animas, docendo prava agere, vindicare iniurias, aliena tollere, propria non largiri, fraudes committere".

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 101v-103.

⁵⁴ JOHANNES DE SANCTO GIMINIANO. *Opus aureum sermonum quadragesimalium*. Paris: Jean Petit, 1511, p. 67-70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69. "(...) poenitentia habet purgare animam sicut Christus purgavit templum et ista purgatio sit per confessionem eiciendo cum flagello lingue nummularios id est peccata avariciae ut usurae rapine symoniage furta". Despite using the image of the whip, its use by Christ is only attested in the Gospel of John 2,15, which narrates a prior cleansing of the temple.

⁵⁶ ORDO PRAEDICATORUM. *Missale*. *Op. cit.*, p. 42v-43.

Padova and Bartolomeo da Pisa stand out. But this time they are also accompanied by Giovanni da San Gimignano's.

Giovanni's sermon uses the biblical account of Jesus cleansing the temple as a framework to discuss the purging of corruption from the church and the soul.⁵⁷ The sermon begins by comparing Christ's action to a farmer cleansing a field and a doctor purging the body, establishing the idea of Jesus as a purifier, which is developed into three points according to the gospel episode: the sacrilegious abuse of selling in a sacred place; the correction by making a whip and casting merchants out of the temple; and the confusion of the priests caused by the expulsion. In the first part of the sermon, Giovanni affirms, "it is to be noted that these people were abusing a sacred place, namely the temple, conducting business in it that was not permitted, and in this they committed sacrilege". Moreover, the friar explains that there are four types of sacrilege: regarding sacred persons, things, times, and places. In this case, it was the last type that occurred, which happens "when illicit or shameful or secular things are done there" in a sacred place.⁵⁸ Furthermore, in the second and largest part of the sermon, on the correction, Giovanni asserts that Christ's use of violence happened because of his zeal for God; to "show that they were sinning grievously", as "their sin was aggravated by reason of the place, because they behaved irreverently in the church"; and because "their sin was aggravated by reason of the exercise they were doing in the church: because when they ought to have been making prayers there, they were conducting business there". The friar then develops his argument about the non-compliance of worldly trade with the sacred space of a church according to canon law, quoting that "it is fitting for the house of God, as it is said, that business be not carried out in churches, their cloisters, and cemeteries, and especially the tumult of the market days and the marketplace". And, to reinforce the point that the problem was not necessarily in trade in itself, but rather existed because of the place in which it took place, going back to the gospel passage he states that "trade is forbidden because of the place, since it should not be in the church. Where it is said: 'Do not make my Father's house a house of trade'".⁵⁹

Moreover, in this part of the sermon Giovanni also touches upon the issue of avarice, as he observes that

⁵⁷ JOHANNES DE SANCTO GIMINIANO. *Opus aureum. Op. cit.*, p. 204-208.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 204, 206. "(...) notandum quod isti abutebantur loco sacro scilicet templo facientes in eo huiusmodi negotiationes quae non licebant et in hoc sacrilegium committebant (...) cum fiunt illicita vel turpia vel secularia (...)".

⁵⁹ JOHANNES DE SANCTO GIMINIANO. *Opus aureum. Op. cit.*, p. 206, 207. "(...) ad ostendendum scilicet quod graviter preceabant. Aggravabatur quidam peccatum eorum ratione loci (...) aggravabatur peccatum istorum ratione exercitium quod in ecclesia faciebant: quia cum deberent ibi facere orationes faciebant ibi negotiationes (...) Deo decet domum Dei ut dicitur cessent in ecclesiis earum que claustris et cimiteriis negotiationes fieri et praecipue nundinarum et fori cuiuscuque tumultus (...) prohibetur negotiatio propter locum sicut quod non siat in ecclesia unde dicit infra. Nolite facere domum patris mei domum negotiationis".

it is not that trade is forbidden to clerics such that they cannot buy or sell what is necessary for their lives, but rather that they must not do business for profit or avarice, since clerics ought to be contemners of earthly things, both because of the frequent vices of traders, since it is difficult for a trader to be free from sins of the lips, as it is said in Ecclesiasticus 26,⁶⁰ and because trade excessively involves the mind in secular causes and draws it away from spiritual things (...).⁶¹

And on the avarice of the common traders, the preacher also states that when they conduct fraudulent buying and selling they also carry the mark of the beast, that is, “the deceit of words and the fraud of things, without which, as they say, they cannot trade or have any profit”. And this kind of trade is, of course, forbidden, which is symbolized by Christ scattering the riches of the greedy money changers.⁶²

Lastly, in the third and final part of the sermon Giovanni also touches upon the sin of simony. According to the friar, all of those expelled from the temple can be considered as sacrilegious, simoniacs, or foolish men. All of them, by different reasons, are to be expelled from the church of God. Specifically in the case of simony, the preacher affirms that according to canon law, if the person is a priest, “let him be alienated from the dignity which he has acquired by money. If anyone has been a mediator of the giver or the receiver, if he is a cleric, let him fall from his own degree; if he is a layman, let him be anathematized”.⁶³ In this way, in Giovanni’s sermon the Cleansing of the Temple is used as a powerful example of the need to purge the church and the soul of commercial corruption. Regarding the former, it emphasizes the importance of maintaining the sanctity of sacred spaces and avoiding the exploitation of spiritual goods. As to the latter, the sermon provides condemnation of avarice, greed, simony, and fraudulent business practices.

In turn, Alberto da Padova’s second sermon for the occasion is a continuation of the previous one, primarily centered on the righteous observance of the feast of Passover as an allegorical understanding of penance, the way to achieve inner and celestial peace, of which

⁶⁰ Ecclus. 26, 28: “Two kinds of things have seemed difficult and dangerous to me: a merchant will not be easily freed from his negligence, and a shopkeeper will not be justified by the sins of his lips” [*“Duae species difficiles et periculosae mihi apparuerunt difficile exiit negotians a neglegentia et non iustificabitur caupo a peccatis labiae”*]. See BIBLIA. *Biblia Sacra*. Op. cit., p. 1320.

⁶¹ JOHANNES DE SANCTO GIMINIANO. *Opus aureum*. Op. cit., p. 207. “*Unde non quod negotiatio prohibetur clericis non quidam ut non possint emere vel vendere qui sibi necessaria sunt ad vitam sed ut non negotientur ad lucrum vel cupiditatem cum clerici debeant esse terrenorum contemptores tum propter frequentia vicia negotiatorum quia difficiliter exiit negotiator a peccatis labiorum ut dicitur Ecclesiasticus 26. Tum quia negociationis nimis implicat animum secularibus causis et a spiritualibus retrahit (...)*”.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 207. “*(...) hic caracter est fallacia verborum et fraus rerum sine quibus ut dicunt non possunt negociari nec lucrari*”.

⁶³ JOHANNES DE SANCTO GIMINIANO. *Opus aureum*. Op. cit., p. 208. “*(...) ordinatus est sit alienus a dignitate quam pecuniis acquisiuit. Si quis autem mediator dantis vel accipientis fuerit. Si clericus fuerit a proprio gradu decedet. Si vero laicus anathematizetur*”.

Jerusalem functions as a symbol.⁶⁴ This formerly announced theme is developed in his second sermon by condemnation of avarice and other related sins; their correction by Christ, moved by his zeal towards the house of God, understood as the material temple and the soul; and the nature of Christ's zeal for the temple.⁶⁵ First of all, the friar's critiques are directed to the clergy. He affirms that "here is noted the cupidity of the priests in two respects, namely in commerce and in lending there". According to Alberto, "the priests ensured that the sacrificial victims should be sold in the temple, which was certainly the avarice of the priests". And he quotes Jerome to confirm this act as sinful, stating that "business in a cleric is the same as usury in a layman". Moreover, "the priests also provided that there should be those ready who would lend money under security and profit if money should be lacking to the buyers". The temple, however - be it the soul or the church on Earth - should be dedicated to prayer, as Christ's going to the temple indicates; and should be free from these sins, just as the church in transcendence is, for "in the heavenly temple there is no merchandise, but [only] in the temple of the church when these businesses are found". In addition, the friar also clarifies that the oxen represent preachers who sell their doctrine for temporal gain (implying simony); the sheep those who sell their good deeds for human praise; the doves those who sell the sacraments of the church; and, finally, the money changers signify those who openly pursue earthly possessions over heavenly things. And at the end of the first part of the sermon, Alberto asserts that "money is the occasion of sin, money changers are the evil spirits who provide occasions of sin, so that they may receive sin more readily".⁶⁶ In this way, the sermon condemns the clergy for its hypocrisy, but also for avarice, simony, and usury.

Besides directing his criticisms at the clergy, Alberto also makes general admonitions on trade in the second part of the sermon, on Christ's correction.⁶⁷ Firstly, he affirms that "secular trade is prohibited in the church" and, resuming his discussion of the meaning of the animals sold in the temple, that "the oxen and sheep are ejected, when it is shown that doctrine for gain and life for profit are reprehensible". Immediately after, the friar briefly states that the scattering of the money changers' coins signifies that "money not scattered about the poor is poured out to the robbers", indicating that one should not accumulate

⁶⁴ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones. Op. cit.*, p. 334-335.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 335v-339.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 336, 336v. "*Hic notatur cupiditas sacerdotum in duobus, scilicet in comercio, et mutuo (...) providerunt sacerdotes ut venderentur hostiae in templo, quod erat utique avaritia sacerdotum. Hieronymus. Idem est negotiatio in clerico, quod usura in layco. Nam et hoc providerant sacerdotes ut essent parati qui pecuniam darent mutuo sub cautione, et commodo, ne pecunia deesset emptoribus (...) Item in templo coelesti nullum sit mercimonium, sed in templo ecclesiae: quando ista inveniuntur negocia (...) Item nummus est peccati opportunitas, nummularii sunt maligni spiritus, qui occasiones peccandi praestant, ut peccatum ultra fortem recipiant*".

⁶⁷ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones. Op. cit.*, p. 336v-337.

riches for oneself, but only with the aim of helping the poor – otherwise he will act as a thief. And since avarice is an exceedingly grave sin, “at the end of times the things which the greedy have loved will be destroyed”, just as Christ overturned the tables of the money changers.⁶⁸ Additionally, the friar also condemns those who practice simony, which is described as a heresy, and, once again, business in the church – noticing that “the other evangelists say ‘a den of thieves’, whence it is clear that to do business in the church is robbery”. It should be noted, however, that in this part of the sermon Alberto once again conceives the possibility that business can be an honest activity.⁶⁹ Thus, the problem in selling oxen and sheep does not occur due to the activity of trade by itself, but due to the place where these animals were being sold. Outside of a church, commerce would not necessarily be a problem, let alone a sin.

While Bartolomeo da Pisa’s sermon for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent concentrates exclusively on avarice, on this occasion his text focuses on the spiritual benefits of renouncing the world.⁷⁰ The friar asserts that those who despise it – like Isaiah, Naaman, Judith, and Saint Francis – are cleansed by God from all mortal sins. The universality of sins is thus considered under four groups, which constitute the parts of the sermon: the threefold vice of anger, pride and lust; hypocrisy; simony; and avarice. Regarding simony, which constitutes the larger part of the text, the friar starts by citing the biblical examples of Gehazi, punished for his sin with leprosy; and Simon Magus, who wanted to buy the Holy Spirit.⁷¹ Subsequently, although he turns his criticisms primarily to the clergy, Bartolomeo also reprehends this sinful behavior of laymen, stating that

This vice, although it can be found among secular buyers, properly belongs to clerics rather than to those who despise the world. It belongs to those lovers of the world who, with all their heart, desire temporal things rather than spiritual ones (...) And those committing simony are not only excommunicated and deprived of every exercise of their orders, but also of every prelacy and benefice. Once these are thus obtained, the seekers are perpetually destined to eternal damnation (...) And how grave this sin is, is evident in canon law, which declares simoniacs to be ipso facto excommunicated heretics – as this was the first heresy – deprived of office, order, and benefice. And unless they repent, they are damned forever. Therefore, this vice – which today is considered almost nothing among many laypeople who seek to promote their sons through simony, and among clerics obtaining benefices – is nevertheless most grave.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 377. “(...) *secularia negocia prohibentur in ecclesia. Eiiciuntur etiam boves et oves, cum doctrinam pro quaestu, et vitam pro lucra reprobata esse ostenditur (...) nam pecunia non dispersa pauperibus, effunditur praedonibus (...) in fine temporum res quas dilexerunt cupidi destruentur*”.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 377v. “*Alii evangelistae dicunt speluncam latronum, unde patet, quia negotium agere in ecclesia latrocinium est*”.

⁷⁰ BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale*. *Op. cit.*, p. 182-186.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁷² BARTHOLOMAEUS PISANUS. *Quadragesimale*. *Op. cit.*, p. 184. “*Quod vitium et si posset esset secularium ementium tamen proprie est clericorum et non mundi contemptorum. Sed amatorum qui totis affectibus temporalia potius quam spiritualia*

Bartolomeo then emphasizes the gravity of simony narrating four *exempla*, one of which includes the ghost of an abbot suffering penalties for buying his nephew's appointment as his successor on his deathbed, and ends this part of the sermon affirming that "everyone must fear being numbered in hell and in the company of Judas, who sold Christ, and of Simon Magus for having committed such actions".⁷³

Bartolomeo's sermon also condemns avarice in the fourth and last part of the sermon.⁷⁴ Quoting biblical warnings against the love of money, the friar affirms that a greedy man is never satisfied and that there is nothing more wicked than an avaricious person. However, faithful to the main subject of the sermon, the spiritual benefits of renouncing the world, in this part of the sermon he highlights the examples of saints who, contrary to the sin of avarice, practiced generosity and almsgiving.⁷⁵ Thus, the friar counters this sin stating that "almsgiving frees from all sin and death and will not allow souls to go into darkness. Almsgiving will be of great assurance before the Highest God for all who practice it", for it fulfills the commandment of Christ to sell everything and give it to the poor and follow him.⁷⁶

Once again, the other seven sermons for this liturgical date do not confer this kind of attention to avarice, usury or simony or any other topic of interest in this paper as do these three sermons. Regarding these other texts, while extensively treating other subjects, three of them make direct references to the rejection of the sins of avarice, usury, and/or simony.

Filippo da Moncalieri's sermon starts by establishing four key qualities of an ideal ruler, of which Christ is the ultimate embodiment: justice, power, diligence, and prudence. These qualities are then used to frame the interpretation of the gospel, dividing the sermon according to them.⁷⁷ In the first part, the subject of justice is developed alongside that of the purification of the soul, using the narrative of the Cleansing of the Temple as a focal point. In it, justice is considered as retributive, in rendering what is due to each; and as punitive, in punishing those who offend, in order to correct wrongdoing and uphold righteousness. In this regard – besides first presenting Jesus' journey to Jerusalem for the Passover as an act

optant (...) Et committe[n]tes symoniam non solum sunt excommunicati a privati om[n]i ordinis executione sed om[n]i praelatione et beneficio. Sic obtento et ad dam[n]ationem eternam perpetuo deputantur (...) Et quam sit peccatum grave patet in iure canonico qui symoniacos ipso facto dicit excommunicatos hereticos quia ista fuit prima h[er]esis privatos officio et ordine et beneficio. Et nisi peniteant dam[n]ati perpetuo. Quare hoc vitium quod hodie apud multos seculares qui procurant filios suos promoveri symoniam committendo et clericos beneficia obtinendo quasi nihil reputatur tamen est gravissimum".

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 184. "Quilibet ergo debet timere ne talia perpetrando in inferno et consortium cum Iuda qui Christum vendidit".

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185-186.

⁷⁵ The saints mentioned as great almsgivers are: Saint Tobit, Cornelius the centurion, Eustace, Martin, Francis, Job.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185. "Quoniam elymosina ab om[n]i peccato et morte liberat et non patietur animas ire in tenebras. Fiducia magnam erit. Coram summo deo elymosina om[n]ibus facientibus eam (...)"

⁷⁷ PHILIPPUS DE MONTECALERIO. *Quadragesimale*. Op. cit., p. 154.

of retributive justice and obedience to divine law; and allegorically interpreting it as the soul's journey towards God⁷⁸ – the presence of merchants and animals in the temple is explicitly condemned as “undue occupation”, an unjust act that transformed a sacred space into a marketplace due to the priests’ “cupidity for pernicious profit”. The friar affirms: “as for the desire for pernicious gain (...) the priests of that time, led by cupidity, favored selling them in the temple and lending money there by money changers, so that no one could excuse himself from offering”.⁷⁹ And because of that,

the Lord, not wanting anything of earthly trade to be in his house, nor things that were thought dishonest, expels all the merchants and their goods (...) because by this an injury was done to his Father, while the temple, which had been dedicated to him and was a place of prayer, was there for the merchants.⁸⁰

Moreover, the biblical episode is also morally and allegorically interpreted, for God dwells in the material temple by grace; and just as it was cleansed, so should the soul of the believer be cleansed. In these cases, the money changers were twice understood as signifying avarice, which must be expelled from the physical temple in order for it to be the temple of God; and from the soul by the consideration of the expulsion from grace and of Christ's crucifixion (for he wanted to be stripped naked to freely give his precious blood).⁸¹ Therefore, although the three parts of Filippo's sermon do not resume these subjects, as they are concerned with more literal explanations of the gospel,⁸² this portion of the text partially focuses on the negative aspects of trade (that is, when it is conducted in improper places or for pernicious profit) and its potential to corrupt both physical and spiritual spaces when led by avarice.

Devoted to the themes of spiritual purification, using the Cleansing of the Temple as a metaphor not only to understand the correct use of the church, but also as an image of inner purging; Christ's redeeming power and resurrection; and the importance of genuine faith, Antonio Azaro da Parma's sermon for this liturgical date contains strong themes related to trade and its associated vices – although they are addressed only in the second of

⁷⁸ PHILIPPUS DE MONTECALERIO. *Quadragesimale. Op. cit.*, p. 154-155.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155, 156. “Occupationem indebitam (...) cupiditatem lucri perniciosi (...) Quantum ad cupiditatem lucri perniciosi (...) Sacerdotes autem illius temporis cupiditate ducti favebant ea vendi in templo et ibi numularios accomadare pecuniam ut de oblatione nullus possum excusare se hoc secundum Bedam (...)”.

⁸⁰ PHILIPPUS DE MONTECALERIO. *Quadragesimale. Op. cit.*, p. 157. “(...) dominus nolens aliquid in domum suam terrene esse negotiationis neque eius que inhonesta putarentur negotiatores vero omnes expellit foras et eorum res (...) quia per hoc fiebat iniuriam patri suo. Dum templum quod dedicatum sibi fuerat et orationis locus erat. erat mercatoribus (...)”.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156, 157.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 158-159.

four parts and occupy a small portion of the entire text.⁸³ It directly addresses the injustice of merchants and the incorrect use of the temple, avarice, and usury. As in his sermon for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent, Antonio again uses precisely the term *usurarius* to refer to the money changers, which leaves no doubt about the sinful nature of their occupation. The preacher affirms that “there were also some usurers of such presumption that they had placed tables there, covered with cloths and filled with money, not only to exchange silver, but to lend at usury”.⁸⁴ Moreover, the friar asserts that

the cause of all these evils was the avarice of the priests of the temple (...) And it is believed that the priests had their share in the animals and money of these men (...) They had made the church as it were a stable on account of the animals they kept there, and as it were a marketplace on account of the buying and selling that was done, and as it were an abomination on account of the usuries they practiced there.⁸⁵

And, just as Antonio had affirmed in his other sermon, again he elucidated that “truly those things that can be done lawfully outside the church, such as trade and the like, ought not to be done in the church”. However, “those things that are sins in themselves, wherever they are done, if they are done in the church, the sin is aggravated on account of the place”.⁸⁶ Thus, while trade in itself is not a sin, it has to be done under the right circumstances in order to be lawful: in a proper place and in the absence of avarice or usury. Finally, after these observations, Antonio resumes a subject that he had touched upon at the beginning of the sermon, namely that it “is read in today’s Gospel that the Lord of our salvation cleansed the temple from evil men and many impurities which he found there, indicating how much God loves the purity of the spiritual temple which is the soul”. Thus, from the ejection and Cleansing of the Temple, it should be learned “that we ought to keep the purity of our soul, which is the spiritual temple of God”.⁸⁷

⁸³ ANTONIUS DE PARMA. *Postilla. Op. cit.*, p. 80v-82.

⁸⁴ ANTONIUS DE PARMA. *Postilla. Op. cit.*, p. 81. “*Erant etiam aliqui usurarii tante praesum praetoriis quod posuerant ibi mensas paliis coopertas et pecuniis refertas. Non solum ad argentum permurandum sed ad usuras mutandum*”.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81, 81v. “*Et causa omni malorum istorum erat avaricia sacerdotum templi (...) Et creditur quod sacerdotes in homini animalibus et pecuniis habebant partem suam (...) Fecerant de ecclesia quasi stabulum propter animalia que ibi tenebant et quasi forum propter emptiones et venditores que fiebant et quasi abominabile propter usuras quas ibi exercebant*”.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80v. “*Et vere que extra ecclesiam licite fieri possunt sicut negotiationes et huiusmodi in ecclesia fieri non debent (...) ea que per se peccata sunt ubicumque fiant si in ecclesia fiant peccatum aggravatur propter locum*”.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81, 81v. “*(...) legitur in evangelio hodierno quod dominus nostrum templum salvationis purgavit malis hominibus et multiis immundiciis quas ibi invenit innuens quantum deus mundiciam templi spiritualis quod est anima diligit (...) quod animam nostram que est templum dei spirituale*”.

Hugo de Prato's sermon for the occasion revolves around a supposedly Augustinian idea that "all of Christ's actions are an instruction for us".⁸⁸ Thus, in this Gospel five examples are provided to be observed: the celebration of feasts; the Cleansing of the Temple, both material and spiritual; the demonstration of divine power as a model for suppressing sins; the fruitfulness of holy days; and how to act regarding false friends.⁸⁹ In the second part of the sermon, the animals expelled by Christ from the church represent a sin or vice that should be banished from the human soul: the oxen signify pride; the sheep, bestial impulses; the money changers, avarice; and the sellers of doves, hypocrisy. Among them, the expositions on pride and avarice are the ones that are most developed. Regarding avarice, the friar engages himself in exposing reasons why man must cast away this sin, stressing the harms that it produces. First, avarice is almost incurable, for it exists due to a desire for the world and for material things, which surpass men in both abundance and in durability. Hence, quoting Aristotle, Hugo affirms that while some sins are reduced with age, as with lust, avarice always increases. According to "Seneca: 'while all vices grow old, avarice always grows young'. And therefore, no other vice holds a man like avarice". Moreover, it "afflicts in acquiring, in preserving, and in losing" and is incompatible with God, since "two contrary effects cannot be in the same place". And furthermore, in spite of the fact that simony was not announced as one of the sins represented by the animals, when dealing with hypocrisy Hugo asserts that hypocrites "sell the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is signified by the dove" and notes "that three things ought to be given freely, namely, ecclesiastical goods, ecclesiastical sacraments, and the suffrages of prayers". Also, he quotes the apostles' reprimand to Simon Magus in Acts 8, 20, which states that he will perish with his money with which he thought he could buy the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰ This leaves no doubt that although Hugo did not use the word "simony", he was clearly referring to this sin.

Regarding the last four sermons, all of which are by Alberto da Padova, his first and fourth texts offer very brief considerations of commerce: the first only states that Christ "exercised justice repelling commerce from the temple",⁹¹ while the other sermon affirms that the priests "had destroyed the religion of the temple with trade" and that it was Christ's right "to repair the religion

⁸⁸ HUGO DE PRATO FLORIDO. *Sermones quadragesimales*. Op. cit., p. 362. "Sicut dicit Augustinus: 'Omnis Christi actio nostra est instruct (...)'".

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 362-375.

⁹⁰ HUGO DE PRATO FLORIDO. *Sermones quadragesimales*. Op. cit., p. 365-370. "Seneca: 'Cum omnia vitia senescant, avaritia, semper iuvenescit'. Et ideo nullum vitium sicut avaritia hominem tenet (...) Affligit enim avaritia multipliciter, et mirabiliter et in acquirendo, et in conservando, et in perdendo (...) duo effectus contrarii non possunt esti in eodem (...) vendunt dona spiritus sanctim qui per columbam designatur (...) quod tria gratis dari debent scilicet ecclesiastica bona, ecclesiastica sacramenta, et orationum suffragia".

⁹¹ ALBERTUS PATAVANI. *Sermones*. Op. cit., p. 334. "(...) iustitiam exercuit repellens de templo commercia (...)".

of the temple destroyed by business with chastisements”.⁹² The other two of his sermons, his third and fifth for the occasion, make no reference at all to trade or sins associated with it.⁹³

Discussion

The examination of the 19 sermons shows that all the friars considered in this paper, without exception, somehow engaged in a discourse on avarice, usury, simony, and/or trade when producing their texts for the two liturgical dates in question. And although not all preachers treated these subjects with equal emphasis or the same approach, the analysis of these sermons reveals a pattern, as 16 of them address at least one of these issues. Especially notable is Bartolomeo da Pisa’s sermon for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent, entirely on avarice. Also remarkable are Alberto da Padova’s second sermon for both occasions; and Giovanni da San Gimignano’s and Bartolomeo’s sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent, as they provide extensive treatment of transgressions regarding these subjects and even establish parameters for the correct conduct of trade. As regards the other sermons, six of them have at least one part dedicated to some of these subjects,⁹⁴ and five briefly address at least one of them.⁹⁵ Thus, this recurrence suggests not only individual concern but also a liturgically and exegetically conditioned trend.

The only sermons that did not address these themes at all were the three by Alberto da Padova – his fourth for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and his third and fifth for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent. However, among the preachers considered in this paper, he is the only one who has multiple sermons for these two liturgical dates. Thus, the fact that three of his nine sermons do not address the subjects in question demonstrates that even when liturgical dates offered opportune occasions to discuss them, the preachers maintained flexibility in their interpretive choices. Thus, Alberto’s approach shows that the same biblical passage could be employed for different theological and moral lessons across multiple sermons, highlighting the versatility of scriptural exegesis in the preaching of the friars. This confirms David d’Avray’s own observation regarding his method that “(...) the readings only provided a springboard. The preacher, or writer of model sermons (...) had a good deal of freedom in choosing where to jump (...) he could branch out in all sorts of directions, some or all of which might be unconnected with the special theme of the liturgy

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 341v. “(...) templi religionem negotiis solverant”.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 338v-340v; 343v-345v.

⁹⁴ Antonio Azaro da Parma’s; Hugo de Prato’s; and Filippo da Moncalieri’s sermons for both occasions.

⁹⁵ Sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent: Alberto da Padova’s first and third sermons for the occasion; and Giovanni da San Gimignano’s. Sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent: Alberto da Padova’s first and fourth sermons for the occasion.

of the day”.⁹⁶ In this sense, Pietro Delcorno affirms that, within the framework of the modern sermon, the biblical narrative functioned as a “flexible matrix” from which different meanings could be drawn.⁹⁷ Thus, while the

contents of sermons were often connected with specific liturgical days in a way that was to some extent predictable (...) still, there was not an automatic mechanism, because each page of the Gospel could suggest different topics, especially when a sermon was constructed according to the multiple possibilities offered by the so-called *sermo modernus*”.⁹⁸

Finally, it should also be added that these texts are model sermons, which may explain these variations. As a guide for other preachers who would take his work as a source material for their own preaching, Alberto perhaps intended to provide multiple possibilities in developing a sermon on these liturgical dates.⁹⁹

But this variation within a single preacher’s corpus actually strengthens rather than weakens the hypothesis. It shows that the subjects of avarice, usury, simony, and commerce were not simply a reflection of Alberto’s personal preoccupations or intellectual interests, but rather emerged from a deliberate engagement with specific aspects of the biblical text when he chose to emphasize them. The pattern also indicates a hierarchy of interpretive priorities. While these subjects were not obligatory topics when composing or preaching a sermon on these liturgical dates, they remained prominent enough that Alberto addressed them in six of his nine sermons for these occasions – a significant proportion, suggesting their importance within the interpretive tradition. Therefore, this variation within Alberto’s sermons provides a valuable methodological caution against overgeneralization while still supporting the broader pattern identified in this research. It enriches the understanding of the relationship between liturgical structure and sermon content, revealing both constraints and creative freedom within the friars’ preaching tradition.

Furthermore, it must also be noted that the allegorical comparison between the temple and the soul, understanding Christ’s cleansing of the material church as a model for purifying the soul from sins, was employed by almost all the preachers – Antonio, Giovanni and Filippo used it in both of their sermons for the occasions, and Alberto in the first one of each date. The only exception was Bartolomeo, who never employed it. In this sense, this

⁹⁶ D’AVRAY, David. *The Preaching of the Friars. Op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁹⁷ DELCORNO, Pietro. *In the Mirror. Op. cit.*, p. 3, 20.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101, 102.

⁹⁹ Regarding the use of model sermons, Jussi Hanska affirms that “model sermons were used by ordinary preachers to put together their Sunday sermon (...) they could have been used in numerous ways. Lazy preachers may have borrowed them in extenso, while others may have used them only selectively taking what they wanted and leaving out other parts”. See HANSKA, Jussi. *Reconstructing the Mental Calendar. Op. cit.*, p. 299.

comparison appeared in more than half of the sermons, as it was identified in 11 texts – six sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and five sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, something decidedly similar can be observed as regards the tropological interpretation of those expelled from the temple as representing specific sins (particularly avarice and simony) and the subject of the proper versus improper use of the temple. In the first case, the comparison appears in 10 sermons – six for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and four for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent – and was constantly employed by Hugo, Giovanni and Filippo.¹⁰¹ As for the latter, it was also identified in 10 texts – four for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and six for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent – and was regularly used by Antonio and Filippo.¹⁰² Some preachers – like Antonio in both his sermons; Alberto in his second texts for both dates; and Giovanni in his sermon for Monday – even emphasized that while trade activities might be legitimate in appropriate contexts, they constituted a desecration when conducted in sacred spaces, which must be reserved exclusively for prayer and spiritual activities. These specifics highlight the diversity within the sermon corpus while still supporting an overall pattern that most sermons did indeed employ both the temple-soul and merchants/animals-sins comparisons and address the proper temple usage, particularly as it related to trade and money lending.

Finally, other less frequent features emerged across the corpus. This includes the condemnation of the avaricious clergy, which, although employed by all the friars, occurred in only nine sermons;¹⁰³ and the distinction between necessary and/or legal trade and greedy profit-seeking, which was present in only five texts.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

The analysis of these 19 sermons substantially confirms the initial hypothesis that Tuesday of the First Week of Lent and Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent provided opportune

¹⁰⁰ This comparison does not happen in the following sermons: both of Bartolomeo's and Alberto's third and fourth sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent; and Hugo's and Alberto's third, fourth and fifth sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent.

¹⁰¹ This comparison does not happen in the following sermons: Antonio's and Alberto's first and four sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent; Antonio's, Alberto's first, third, fourth and fifth, and Bartolomeo's sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent. In this case, it should be noted the Antonio is the only preacher that never employs this comparison.

¹⁰² This theme does not appear in the following sermons: both of Hugo's and Bartolomeo's and; Alberto's first and fourth sermons for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent; and Alberto's third and fifth sermons for Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent.

¹⁰³ Hugo's, Alberto's second, and Filippo's sermon for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent; and Antonio's, Alberto's second and fourth, Giovanni's, Filippo's and Bartolomeo's sermons for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent. As can be observed, while both dates were opportune occasions to discuss ecclesiastical sins, in this case the later Lenten date sermons more frequently address this issue – which was connected to the themes of sacrilege and proper reverence for sacred spaces.

¹⁰⁴ Both of Antonio's sermons; Alberto's both second sermons for the occasions; and Giovanni's sermon for Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent.

occasions for preachers to engage in a discourse that addressed the subjects of avarice, usury, simony, and trade – at least among Italian preachers. While individual preachers approached the text differently and emphasized various aspects, the gospel readings for these dates consistently elicited ethical discussions of these subjects. The prevalence of these themes across diverse mendicant sermons spanning two centuries strongly suggests that the interpretation was guided more by liturgical context and exegetical tradition attached to them than by specific audiences or socioeconomic circumstances. Thus, these findings invite scholars to reconsider assumptions about the direct influence of mercantile audiences on sermon content, suggesting instead that the subjects of avarice, usury, simony, and trade in the preaching of the friars often emerged from established interpretive frameworks applied to specific liturgical occasions.

Finally, these findings provide valuable markers for scholars navigating the vast *corpus* of the friars' sermons and help transform the overwhelming volume of their surviving sermons from an obstacle into an opportunity for systematic comparative analysis across different orders, regions, and time periods. Rather than sifting through thousands of sermons, by identifying these specific liturgical dates as occasions when preachers consistently addressed these themes through interpretations of the Cleansing of the Temple episode, scholars interested in friars' sermons and preaching gain a strategic entry point into their ethical discourse on avarice, usury, simony, and trade and a research tool to trace the elaboration of their thought on these issues across centuries.

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