

# Introduction

by Johannes Bartuschat, Elisa Brilli, Delphine Carron

This volume aims to foster the dialogue between two usually distinct scholarly traditions: on the one hand, the studies revolving around cultural and political activity, as well as the didactic, theological, religious and pastoral initiatives undertaken by the Dominican Order in the urban context; on the other hand, the scholarship on the history of Florence between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, seen as a case study representative of the evolutions of late medieval communal institutions in the Italian peninsula. The essays focus on the reciprocal interactions and influences between religious and political cultures, along with those between mendicant and lay contexts. This line of enquiry can be summarized in two major questions: what was the contribution of the Dominicans to the construction of a specifically cultural Florentine identity and, vice versa, in what way did the Florentine context contribute to shaping and precipitating unprecedented variations and characteristic features of an Order that was, by nature and by vocation, translocal?

Middle Ages; 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries; Dominican Order; Florence; Convent of Santa Maria Novella; Remigio de' Girolami; Ptolemy of Lucca; Political Thought; Exemplary Literature; Chronicles.

*...e de la fede son difenditori  
li bon' Predicatori:  
lor predicanza è nostra medicina.  
Guido Orlandi, S'avessi detto, amico, di Maria, vv. 20-22*

In the summer 1292 or shortly after, Guido Cavalcanti composes a somehow irreverent sonnet mocking both the new cult addressed to an image of the Virgin, posited in the loggia of Orsanmichele in Florence, and the concerns raised by Franciscan friars, who considered such popular piety as a form of worship – but only because, as Cavalcanti maliciously insinuates, the miraculous icon happens to be far from their convent. In his reply, Guido Orlandi reminds him of the basic principles of Christian doctrines in terms of Mariology. He also invites his fellow to keep in due respect the mendicant orders. Franciscans, of course, who know the divine scriptures, and even more so –add Orlandi– Dominicans who are «the defenders of our faith» and whose

«preaching is our medicine»<sup>1</sup>. Dominicans' mission as *defensores fidei* is a pervasive adage, well-spread in all Christian West. As this example shows, it is also an actual fact, which imbues city life and is worthwhile to be recalled, perhaps as a warning, to an excessively free-spirited love poet.

As is generally the case with mendicant friars, Preachers have been an object of interest for medievalists since the collective research that characterized the Sixties and Seventies. As a result of the eighth centenary of the foundation of the Dominican Order in 2016, numerous publications and academic conferences have enriched this tradition of study. In comparison with these contributions, which have been intended for academic and non-specialist readers alike<sup>2</sup>, this collection of essays is unique for its interdisciplinary approach as well as its specific focus, namely the city of Florence from the 1293 *Ordinamenti di giustizia* to the resistance against the siege of Henry VII in 1313. It results from the research project *Ambizione* initiated by Delphine Carron<sup>3</sup> and consolidated during the eponymous international conference at the Institute of Romance Studies and the Institute of Philosophy, University of Zurich (8-9 December 2016). Its first aim is to create a dialogue between two distinct scholarly traditions: on the one hand, studies on cultural and political activity, as well as the didactic, theological, religious and pastoral initiatives of the Dominican Order; and on the other hand, studies on the history of Florence between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Needless to say, Florence still dominates the historiography of central-northern Italy to the extent that it has progressively become the reference paradigm with which to explore other communal realities, especially Popular ones<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, the interaction between these diverse traditions and fields of inquiry –which has been proposed and reiterated by groundbreaking studies, such as those by Nicolai Rubinstein, Charles Till Davis, Emilio Pan-

<sup>1</sup> Both sonnets, Cavalcanti's *Una figura della Donna mia* and Orlandi's *S'avessi detto, amico, di Maria*, are edited in Cavalcanti, *Rime*, pp. 251-256. On this tenzone, see Martinez, *Guido Cavalcanti's "Una figura della donna mia"* (who is also the author of the translation quoted above, p. 314) and Alfie, *Politics, and Not Poetics*. The beginning of the cult and, therefore, of the *tenzone* are dated following Villani, *Nuova cronica*, VIII.155. On this cult, see Henderson, *Piety and Charity*, p. 89 and ff. This introduction has been translated from Italian by B. Lamanna and E. Plesnik. The preparation of the manuscript has benefited from M. Albertini's work.

<sup>2</sup> Recent publications include Coco, *La Biblioteca; I domenicani e la letteratura; Per una nuova edizione dell'epistolario; L'ordine dei predicatori*; Giannini, *I domenicani*; Gavrić, *Die Dominikaner*; the iconographical study conducted by Malquori-De Giorgi-Fenelli, *Atlante*, as well as the translation by Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne* and the issues of «Memorie Domenicane», including the volumes edited by Benedetti-Cinelli, *Niccolò da Prato*; Delcorno-Lombardo-Tromboni, *I sermoni quaresimali*, and Lambertini, *Università, teologia e studium*. Also noteworthy are the conferences *I Domenicani e i concili*, org. by L. Cinelli OP and P. Piatti (Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 23-24 June 2016), *I Domenicani nelle città dell'Italia centrale (secoli XIII-XIX)* org. by L. Cinelli OP and F. Franceschi (Florence, 28 September- 1 October 2016), «Contemplata aliis tradere». *Lo specchio letterario dei frati predicatori* org. by L. Cinelli OP and A. Bartolomei Romagnoli (Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 23-27 January 2017).

<sup>3</sup> PZ00P1154927 of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> For a stimulating reflection on both the merits and limitations of this model see Maire Vi-gueur, *Il problema storiografico*.

ella, and Carlo Delcorno— is still promising. Above all, these studies invite us to consider Florence, due to its both exemplary and unique nature, as the ideal place to develop a trial study of the reciprocal interactions and influences between religious and political cultures along with those between mendicant and lay contexts. We can summarize our enquiry in two main questions: what was the contribution of the Dominicans to the construction of a specifically Florentine cultural identity and, vice versa, in what way did the Florentine context shape and precipitate unprecedented variations of customs and characteristic features of an Order that was, by nature and by vocation, translocal?

The pertinence of these questions does not require much evidence. Since it is representative of both the Dominican Order and the Florentine oligarchy, the case of Remigio de' Girolami, referenced by Father Panella in his *Overture* and further discussed by three essays in this volume, is a perfect illustration of how dangerous it is to leave out one perspective in favour of the other. Nonetheless, the synergy that Remigio quite literally embodies all too often becomes blurred into specialized studies. It is therefore appropriate to evoke some other examples not discussed in this volume.

Putting aside Guido Orlandi's concerns or the well-known case of the «scuole de li religiosi e disputazioni de li filosofanti», where a young Dante learned the basics of theology and philosophy before entering politics with many others<sup>5</sup>, the permeability of spaces needs to be emphasized. The foundation of Santa Maria Novella was highly subsidized by the Commune and the convent constitutes one of the key features of the symbolic and political communal landscape no less than the lay buildings. In 1301, Charles of Valois refused to reside at the convent, preferring the houses of the Frescobaldi and thus breaking the city custom that required that eminent visitors be guests of the Preachers, as had been the case with Charles of Anjou<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, it was at Santa Maria Novella that Charles of Valois took the oath before the representatives of the Commune on November 5, 1301<sup>7</sup>. And there, in April 1304, the short-lived peace between the Black and the White Guelphs, much desired by Niccolò da Prato, was celebrated<sup>8</sup>, as it had been the one between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines by the Cardinal Latino Malabranca, himself a friar and preacher, in 1280. These few events exemplify the mediatory role that convent and Order regularly carried out.

Do we encounter something in other areas which is comparable to Santa Maria Novella's function as the meeting place between different worlds, including communal authorities and extra-civic authorities? A first example particularly meaningful to us is provided by Dominican thinkers like Remigio and Ptolemy of Lucca, who were the purveyors of the macro-themes of

<sup>5</sup> See Pegoretti, *Filosofanti*, with previous bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Compagni, *Cronica*, II.9.

<sup>7</sup> See Compagni, *Cronica*, II.13 and 17; Villani, *Nuova cronica*, VIII.49; Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, *Cronaca* IV.225.

<sup>8</sup> See Compagni, *Cronica*, III.4.

contemporary theological and political debate in the city context. It was not only specific themes (e.g., definitions of citizenship, the “common good,” the *dominium*) that took root in the Florentine soil, but every cultural and literary reference. Here these references found new adaptations, yoking themselves to other areas of interest in communal culture, *in primis* to civic ideology and the value of *romanitas*. In other words, without the activities of the Dominican Order (as well as the Franciscan and Augustinian orders), it would be impossible to imagine the «textual community» that linked the classrooms of the Sorbonne to the central-northern Italian *piazze*. This was a community to which Gilles of Rome and Dante equally belonged, and it could irreparably jeopardize our understanding of their texts if this is forgotten<sup>9</sup>.

A second example has been the subject of the most in-depth study and is still useful to illustrate the questions of cultural transmission, appropriation and remaking that inspire this volume. Literary scholars know the importance of exemplary literature to the development of the *novella* and the culture of *arguzia* and the witty expressions so typical of municipal culture<sup>10</sup>. This heritage spans multiple centuries, from the *Vitae Patrum* to the Cistercian parables; it was systematically organized by the Cistercians and mendicant orders; and its diffusion in peninsular contexts is primarily due to the Dominican Order. Yet, the links connecting this long chain of transmission have not all been equally studied, and in some instances fundamental ones are still to be explored. We need only mention the *Alphabetum narrationum* (c. 1297-1308) by the Dominican Arnoldus of Liège: with a manuscript tradition of approximately one hundred codices, the *Alphabetum* is the most extensive and widely diffused collection of *exempla* in the fourteenth century, and a detailed study of its reception in the peninsular context is still required<sup>11</sup>.

Exemplary literature follows a clear trajectory: narrative materials, which were initially collected in order to educate and caution, as well as to entertain, lent themselves to unpredictable uses and creative remaking in the hands of new cultural actors. The fact is that this trajectory does not only concern didactic-moral literature, the *Novellino* and its epigones, but the universe of

<sup>9</sup> See Bartuschat, “*Sarebbe peggio*”; Brilli, *I romani virtuosi*; Carron, *Ptolemy of Lucca*; Carron, *La République romaine*; Carron, “*Dominium*” (with previous bibliography). See also the new contributions provided by the commentary to Dante’s *Monarchia* by Tabarroni-Chiesa and by Quagliani; Lambertini, *Aristotele*, and Newman, “*De innumeris*”.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the previously cited Delcorno-Baioni, *I domenicani e la letteratura*, see Battaglia Ricci, *Dall’esempio alla novella*; Delcorno, *La predicazione*; Branca, *Studi sugli “exempla”*; Degani, *Riflessi*; Delcorno, *Studi sugli “exempla”*; Delcorno, “*Exemplum*” e letteratura; Baldi, *La retorica*; Battaglia Ricci, “*Una novella per esempio*”; *Letteratura in forma di sermone*. Fonio provides a useful overview in *Dalla legenda alla novella*. For a definition of the *exemplum* genre, see *L’“exemplum”*, and *Les “exempla” médiévaux*.

<sup>11</sup> The *Alphabetum* contains many of the exemplary stories that have been traced down to the *Decameron*, such as Arnoldus, *Alphabetum*, n. 170 (Boccaccio, *Decameron*, IV, prol.), 411 (ivi, IV, 2, a topic discussed by Toldo, *Dall’Alphabetum* (1906, pp. 293-297), 417 (ivi, X.1), 547 (ivi, VII.4), 629 (ivi, V.8, discussed by Perrus, *La nouvelle V*, 8), 636 (ivi, X.9), as well as Arnoldus, *Alphabetum*, n. 622 and 572-573, perhaps echoed ivi, VIII.9 (see Brilli, *The Three Faults*).

narrative and story-making more broadly. One needs only to consider the adjacent scaffolding in our disciplinary library, occupied by Dominican *summae* of universal history. A particularly interesting viewpoint is offered by the Florentine vicissitudes of the *Chronicon Summorum Pontificum Imperatorumque*, compiled by the Dominican Martin of Opava (d. 1278). This universal chronicle, spanning from the birth of Christ to 1247, experienced great success in the medieval West. Translated into the vernacular on an unknown date in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, the Tuscan Polono soon became the object of additions that altered its original structure to make room for information pertaining to local history<sup>12</sup>. This sort of palimpsest provided the foundation for the development of the so-called chronicle of Pseudo-Petrarch in the first years of the Trecento, and, following this, an outpouring of similar works by other minor Florentine compilers up to Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani, whose works still bear traces of this development to varying degrees<sup>13</sup>.

The rise of *narrationes breves*, on the one hand, and Florentine historiography, on the other, followed parallel paths which are similarly indebted to reference works produced by the Dominicans. In other words, Dominican conceptions of knowledge, as well as the modular and flexible encyclopedic instruments that the Order designed to ensure the organization and dissemination of this knowledge, once transplanted in the communal context, became fundamental tools to construct local memory and to interweave its stories with history. The note about the «nimistà» between Cerchi and Donati added to the biographical medallion of Boniface VIII in the Riccardiano 1938 (cc. 67r-v), a codex of the Pseudo-Petrarch mentioned above<sup>14</sup>, is little more than a tentative first step. Nonetheless, this note reveals not only the importance of these facts for the compiler, but also the ongoing dialogue between different cultural milieux and the contribution, here involuntary but fundamental, of the Order's cultural politics to the definition of Florentine cultural identity.

The contributions discuss the issues that we have briefly illustrated, focusing on some thought-provoking case studies. Without presuming to be exhaustive, these contributions restore the complexity of the relationship between the Dominicans and the city of Florence, as well as the communal society in the broadest sense of the term. Our introduction is followed by a new chronology of Santa Maria Novella and a list of friars active there between 1291 and 1319, compiled by Delphine Carron in collaboration with Iñigo Atu-

<sup>12</sup> See Santini, *Quesiti e ricerche*, pp. 27-35. A general study of the manuscript tradition of this work is still lacking; but see the essay edition (albeit a partial one) of one of most ancient witnesses (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashb. 552; from the first decades of the fourteenth century), in the undergraduate thesis of Dal Cengio, *Edizione*.

<sup>13</sup> See Santini, *Quesiti e ricerche*, while an overview is found in Brilli, *Firenze, 1300-1301. Le cronache antiche*. For additional information, see the essays featured in *Le cronache volgari*.

<sup>14</sup> Edited in Brilli, *Firenze, 1300-1301. Le cronache antiche*, pp. 118-119.

cha and Anna Pegoretti. By capitalizing on the most recent studies and documentary sources, the chronology differentiates between functions that are too often confused (principal lecturer, lecturer of Lombard's *Sententiae*, prior, theology students and other friars active within the convent). Its additional aim is to make us fully appreciate the breadth and mobility of the friars who were either resident or only occasionally present in Florence.

Our venture is inconceivable without Remigio de' Girolami. Delphine Caron examines five sermons on the topic of Florentine civil harmony and interprets them in relation to the events that shook Florence during these years. This study does not seek to minimize Remigio's thought by means of a so-called "spur of the moment" approach to Florentine historical facts. Instead, it invites us to reread Remigio's pastoral texts in dialogue with the context in which and for which they were written. In so doing, it enables us to fully appreciate the efforts made by the Dominican to express a doctrine capable of influencing behaviours and opposing a chaotic political reality by recalling the ethical and theological principles that should regulate civil life.

While Remigio is an original political thinker, his philosophical speculations are largely neglected, caught between the celebrity of his teacher Aquinas on the one hand, and, on the other, his (possible) student Dante. Ruedi Imbach discusses this critical approach in his contribution on the *De modis rerum*, a scholastic dissertation on metaphysics that Remigio conceives as ontology following Aquinas. Imbach demonstrates that the *De Modis* is a profoundly original work, namely because of its articulation of the relationship between thought, language, and reality. In fact, Remigio proposes a metaphysical line of inquiry that ultimately consists of an elucidation of the meanings of basic ontological definitions and notions.

The contribution of Blaise Dufal on Nicholas Trevet similarly addresses the relationship between scholastic culture and communal context. Dufal focuses on Trevet's stay in Florence, the dates of which are still under debate. Recalling Trevet's antiquarian interests, his essay underlines the importance of the Dominican's contributions to the development of a new mode of reading, commenting upon, and interpreting classical texts. It further challenges us to review the definition of Italian pre-humanism as the outcome of a process of acculturation.

Trevet unsurprisingly also permeates Anna Pegoretti's examination of the *studium* and the Santa Maria Novella library. As an important update to recent studies on the topic and as an excellent example of a historical-philological reconstruction, this essay is particularly sensitive to the didactic organization and tools available to friars to foster their doctrinal and pastoral activities.

The pastoral activity of Giordano da Pisa, and in particular the issue of his significance to civic life, are discussed by Cecilia Iannella. Her contribution highlights the link between the preacher and the urban public, as well as the revisions of the traditional repertoire promoted by the social, political, and economic characteristics of the latter.

Maria Conte's article addresses another example of the sophisticated cultural and theological work of the Dominicans, as well as their cultural politics toward urban lay audiences. Conte provides one of the first philological perusals of the translation of the *Documenta Antiquorum* into Florentine by Bartolomeo da San Concordio, and she explains it in light of its aims and the causes that promoted this unique self-translation.

The twin contributions of Roberto Lambertini and Andrea Tabarroni compare the Dominican case with the other mendicant Order and *studium* in Florence, the Franciscans in Santa Croce. Lambertini analyzes doctrines relevant to usury, a theme that is of preeminent importance to a mercantile city such as Florence, comparing the views of Remigio de' Girolami with those of Pietro de Trabibus. Tabarroni's essay focuses on the latter's *Quodlibeta*. The edition of the relevant extracts (from the manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. soppr., D 6.359) that appears in the appendix rounds out this significant contribution.

This volume finishes by taking into account those who are usually considered first. Literary authors –and *nominatim* Dante– have typically monopolized scholarly attention and relegated the vast universe which has just been reconstructed to the footnotes. Sonia Gentili's investigation of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Franciscan and Dominican libraries centres on the relationship between poetry and philosophy. Her reflection points out how the codices stored in these libraries could offer access to key authors of the classical tradition in an indirect manner, nourishing the innovations of Dante and others, particularly in respect to Greek literature.

The posthumous contribution of Thomas Ricklin focuses on Dante and his vision of the Dominican Order, re-examining the  *vexata quaestio* surrounding the inclusion of Siger of Brabant in paradise. Ricklin scrutinizes the grey areas of Dante's justice and the many questions raised by his conception of a Dominican celestial order that is quite distinct from the historical one.

Dante and, coming full circle, Remigio, are at the centre of the study that Francesco Bruni conducts. Starting from the *De Bono Comuni*, the linguistic and expressive originality of which is also highlighted, Bruni compares the political reflection of Remigio with that of Dante in a landscape that is no longer municipal but rather peninsular and marked by the influence of the Angevine dynasty.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Thomas Ricklin, a dear teacher and friend who passed away too early and will always be with us. We extend our most heartfelt thanks and friendship to Sandra Plastina-Ricklin, who enabled us to publish the text on which Thomas was working for our conference in a version revised by Delphine Carron.

Note to the text: given the multilingual nature of this volume, the following criteria apply. Each contribution and its list of works cited follow the typographical and bibliographical conventions of the language in which the contribution is written. Names of authors and places (cities, convents etc.) are

always mentioned in the original language. Biblical books are quoted according to the abbreviations of the *Biblia sacra iuxta uulgatam uersionem*, ed. by R. Weber, ed. quartam emendatam, Stuttgart 1994. Unless otherwise specified, classical authors and texts are quoted according to the abbreviations lists of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Other abbreviations, when employed, are provided at the beginning of each contribution.

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