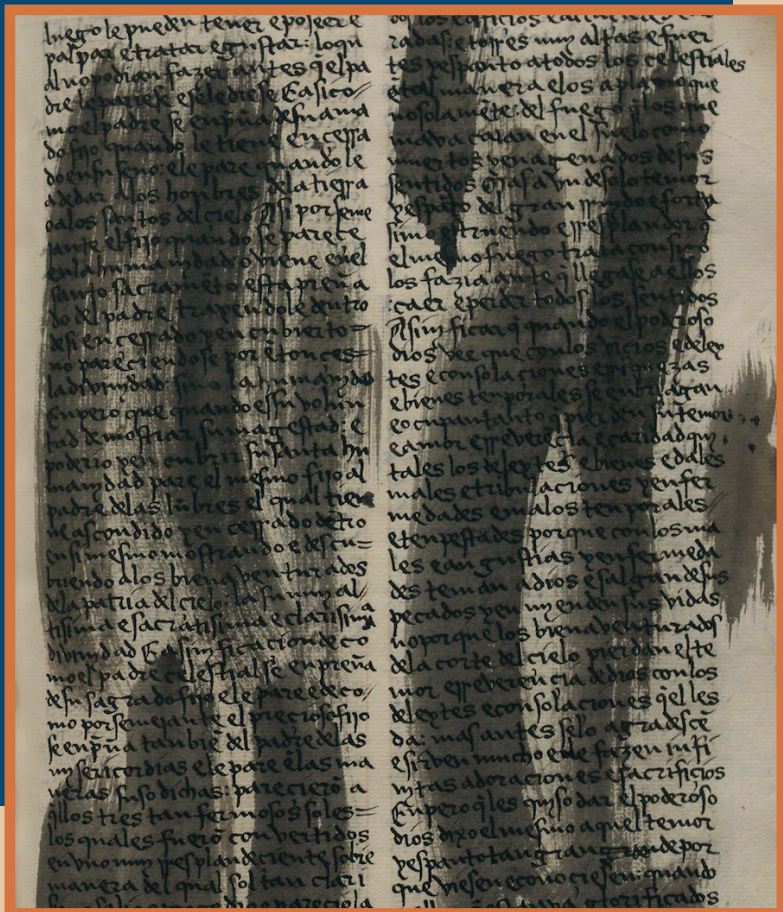


# The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)

*Ritual, Revelation,  
and Collective Writing*

Pablo Acosta-García



## The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)

# The Medieval Franciscans

*General Editor*

Steven J. McMichael

VOLUME 25

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/tmf*

# The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)

*Ritual, Revelation, and Collective Writing*

*By*

Pablo Acosta-García



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON





This is an open access title distributed under the terms of the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license, which permits any use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are credited. Further information and the complete license text can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The terms of the CC license apply only to the original material. The use of material from other sources (indicated by a reference) such as diagrams, illustrations, photos and text samples may require further permission from the respective copyright holder.



**Funded by the  
European Union**  
NextGenerationEU



Cover illustration: Censored folio of the 'Sermon on the Trinity'; *Libro del conorte*; Patrimonio Nacional, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-11-18, f. 212r (Image: ©Patrimonio Nacional, Source: [https://rbmecat.patrimonionacional.es/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=738&query\\_desc=conorte](https://rbmecat.patrimonionacional.es/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=738&query_desc=conorte)).

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <https://catalog.loc.gov>  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025006383>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](https://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 1572-6991

ISBN 978-90-04-51564-2 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-49594-4 (e-book)

DOI 10.1163/9789004495944

Copyright 2025 by Pablo Acosta-García. Published by Koninklijke Brill bv, Plantijnstraat 2, 2321 JC Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill bv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

Koninklijke Brill bv reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill bv via [brill.com](https://brill.com) or [copyright.com](https://copyright.com).

For more information: [info@brill.com](mailto:info@brill.com).

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*A mi madre, Lucy, que se reía de Juana.  
Aún estás aquí.*



# Contents

Funding IX

Foreword X

*Carolyn Muessig*

Acknowledgments XIX

List of Figures and Tables XXII

Abbreviations XXIII

Note on citing the manuscripts of the sermons of the *Conorte* XXV

Transcription principles for *Conorte* (and other manuscripts and printed matter cited) XXVI

Introduction 1

1 Pathways to Preaching 1

2 Pathways to Rapture 10

3 Conceptual Reflections 20

1 Material. The *Conorte* as a Textual Artefact 28

1 Introduction 28

2 The Codices of the *Conorte* and Juana de la Cruz's  
Canonization Process 29

3 The El Escorial Manuscript 42

4 The Vatican Manuscript 56

5 Juana's Preaching and the Date of Production of the Manuscripts 63

6 Conclusions 66

2 Textual. The Architecture of the Sermon Book 71

1 Performance, Memory, Text 71

2 Textualization Processes 80

3 Difference, Amplification, and Re-creation 94

4 Cyclicity and Amalgam 101

5 Conclusions 104

3 Intertextual. Towards a Genealogy of the Visionary Sermon 110

1 Introduction 110

2 Hildegard von Bingen and the Degrees of the Open Word 115

3 Elisabeth von Schönau and the Liturgical Vision 129

4 Mechthild von Hackeborn and Communal Writing 145

5 Domenica da Paradiso and the New Prophetic Preaching 163

6 Conclusions 178

<b>4 Hermeneutical. Liturgical Vision in the <i>Conorte</i></b>	<b>183</b>
1 Introduction: Liturgy and Exegesis	183
2 Liturgical Anchoring and Exegetic Commentary	184
3 Sermon Form	199
4 Case Analyses	202
4.1 <i>Septuagesima Sunday</i>	202
4.2 <i>In festo S. Laurentii Martyris</i>	210
4.3 <i>In Dominica Quadragesimae</i>	215
5 Conclusions	218
 <b>Conclusions</b>	 <b>221</b>
 <b>Bibliography</b>	 <b>227</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>245</b>

## Funding

This book has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 842094, and from the European Union's Next Generation EU funds through the María Zambrano Program, with the *Seminario de Estudios sobre el Renacimiento*, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (2021 SGR 00742, funded by the AGAUR, Generalitat de Catalunya), as the host group. It has also received funding from the projects of the Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AIE): “Catálogo de santas vivas (1400–1550): hacia un corpus completo de un modelo hagiográfico femenino” (PID2019-104237GB-I00, 2020-2024, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033), “Catálogo de santas vivas (fase final): hacia el primer modelo de santidad femenina de la Contrarreforma” (PID2023-146357NB-I00, funded by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER, EU), and “Herejía y heresiografía en la era de la confesionalización. Hacia una historia conceptual y una metaforología del disenso” (PGC2018-096610-B-I00).

## Foreword

I became captivated by the provocative and imaginative world of Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) when I first encountered Ronald E. Surtz's 1990 book, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)*.<sup>1</sup> Surtz's compelling and nuanced analysis of Juana reveals, among other things, a fascinating exploration of gender that begins in the womb. According to the earliest hagiographical source concerning Juana, *Vida y fin*, which recounts her life and spiritual journey, God transformed her sex from male to female in preparation for a future mission that would call upon her to lead and reform a community of holy women.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, the *Vida y fin* depicts Juana as an embodiment of Christ during moments of revelation, in which her speech is understood to be the actual voice of Jesus, creating a profound and striking impression of masculine and divine breath emerging from a female body.<sup>3</sup>

Pablo Acosta-García, in this scrupulously researched volume, advances Surtz's analysis of Juana de la Cruz and her world. *The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* is a superlative interrogation of the historical and textual complexities surrounding this compelling Franciscan abbess, visionary, and preacher. Among the many textual ambiguities related to the manuscript sources of Juana, he clarifies that the *Vida y fin* is not semi-autobiographical, as it was not written by Juana herself but composed by her convent sisters from their perspective of Observant reform.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the text highlights the enigmatic events surrounding Juana's life and death as understood by her monastic intimates. However, while the *Vida y fin* delivers essential details about Juana and the life of her convent sisters, it is her sermons that form the primary focus of Acosta-García's monograph. Juana's extraordinary visions feature vivid processions and dynamic dialogues with Christ and other holy figures. These

---

1 R. E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, 6–7.

2 *Vida y fin de la bien aventurada virgen Sancta Juana de la Cruz, monja que fue professa de quatro votos en la orden del señor sant Francisco en la qual vivió perfecta y sanctamente*, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS K-III-13, M. Luengo Balbás and F. Atencia Requena (eds.), published at: [http://catalogode santasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana\\_de\\_la\\_Cruz](http://catalogode santasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz).

3 See for example, Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 64.

4 P. Acosta-García, "Radical Succession: Hagiography, Reform, and Franciscan Identity in the Convent of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", *Religions*, 12 (2021), 223. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030223>.

infuse her sermons with profound theological depth and creativity, offering an equally captivating and informative perspective on her life.

Juana and her numerous sermons are preserved in *El libro del conorte* (*Book of Consolation*). By examining the only two known manuscripts containing *El libro del conorte*—the El Escorial and Vatican manuscripts—Acosta-García provides the most comprehensive compositional and editorial assessment of these sermons to date. His analysis reveals significant insights into where and when they were likely delivered.<sup>5</sup> He demonstrates that the less-studied Vatican manuscript holds significant clues pointing to its composition, most likely at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, where Juana was abbess. Acosta-García argues that the sermons in the Vatican manuscript were preserved through a combination of memory techniques, initial drafts, and subsequent editorial work by a small group of Juana's convent nuns. He shows that this manuscript contains unique content, such as previously unpublished verses, which deepen our understanding of how Juana's spoken words were "textualized" by her community. This is particularly significant because, until now, the El Escorial codex has traditionally been used to establish Juana's preaching voice. For example, the El Escorial manuscript forms the basis for Inocente García Andrés' critical edition of her sermons.<sup>6</sup> However, it lacks a clear connection to the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz—unlike the Vatican manuscript, which offers stronger indications of having originated from the convent itself.<sup>7</sup>

Acosta-García's examination of how Juana and her community of women composed *El libro del conorte* offers valuable insights into the study of collective authorship on a broader scale. This method of composition reflects the collaborative nature of medieval writing, where multiple contributors copied, shaped, preserved, and transmitted learning. It is a dynamic process, often rooted in female monastic communities but no means restricted to women, that highlights the interplay of individual inspiration and communal effort in sermon production. This challenges modern biases that prioritize single authorship as the standard for textual creation. Figures like Juana de la Cruz

---

5 San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, ms J-II-18; Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico, Congr. SS. Rituum Processus 3074.

6 I. García Andrés, *Juana de la Cruz, El Conhorte: Sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, 2 vols. Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1999.

7 P. Acosta-García, "Notas codicológicas a la colección de sermones visionarios de la abadesa Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534): el manuscrito Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial J-II-18", *Revista de literatura medieval*, 34 (2022), 231–248. <https://doi.org/10.37536/RLM.2022.34.1.94521>.

and her community illustrate how collective authorship enriched theological discourse, fostering a participatory approach to teaching and learning that unified diverse voices in delivering a single message. Accordingly, Acosta-García demonstrates that *El libro del conorte*, as preserved in the Vatican manuscript, is a product of collective production by Juana's nuns. This collaborative effort serves as a powerful testament to their abbess's ability to articulate profound theological depth through her unique, visionary experiences and her nuns' commitment to preserve them.

Acosta-García explains that the creation of *El libro del conorte* by Juana de la Cruz and her sisters underscores the central role of liturgy as the spark for her preaching. Rooted in the monastic hours of prayer and worship, these Christ-centered, rapturous sermons are deeply immersed in the rhythms of ritualistic life. Juana's preaching, therefore, aligns closely with the liturgical calendar, embedding her theological reflections and dialogues with Christ within the structure of ecclesiastical worship. This integration highlights the communal and performative dimensions of her preaching, as her visions often complement or expand on the themes of specific feast days and liturgical seasons. In doing so, Juana's mysticism and its theological depth become inseparable from the Church's ritual life and collective worship.

Anchored in the liturgy, Juana's revelations and visions inspired imaginative preaching that featured lengthy dialogues between her and the heavenly court. Her visionary sermons weave together mysticism, biblical exegesis, and liturgical context into a distinct form of spiritual communication. Delivered in states of ecstasy, these sermons feature Juana as a vessel for Christ's "husky" voice, interpreting Gospel passages and heavenly revelations during communal liturgical events. Transcribed by her convent sisters into *El libro del conorte*, these sermons reflect a unique combination of personal charisma and collective religious practice. They serve both as theological commentary and as a form of prophetic expression, situating Juana within the broader European tradition of female visionary preaching. Indeed, while Acosta-García's study makes a significant contribution to medieval scholarship on female learning, authorship, and monasticism, it goes even further. By placing Juana de la Cruz and her community at the center of questions about preaching and sermon construction, he illuminates a long-neglected area of pastoral history: female preaching.

The landscape of women and sermons can be easily overlooked when compared directly to male preachers and their sermons, as the contexts often differ significantly. Male preaching is typically associated with the public pulpit, while female preaching often occupies more ambiguous spaces that



nonetheless evoke a sense of intimacy. However, without diminishing the uniqueness of Juana de la Cruz's voice, Acosta-García clarifies this landscape, demonstrating that Juana was not alone in her role as a preacher.

Building on the paradigm-shifting work of Gabriella Zarri, Acosta-García further identifies and solidifies distinct patterns in female preaching, highlighting their unique contributions to the broader tradition of sermon production and delivery.<sup>8</sup> He demonstrates that Juana exemplifies a pattern where the nature of the authority of female preachers is a recurring theme. How women established such pastoral authority is culturally complex, as it does not always rely on a clearly defined role, office, or position. Abbesses and highly ranked nuns within monasteries, for example, could preach based on their formal status. Nevertheless, a significant aspect of how women established the authority to preach is frequently dependent on the idea of "prophecy," that is, a form of divine proclamation or exhortation found in the New Testament and linked to the act of preaching. Historically, preaching and prophesying were closely connected in the Christian tradition, with both regarded as vital forms of religious discourse. Drawing on biblical precedent (e.g., Deborah, Huldah, Anna), medieval women were permitted to engage in prophetic activities, enabling them to contribute to religious instruction and spiritual guidance without overtly infringing on the male-dominated office of preaching. Figures such as Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Elisabeth of Schönau (1126–1164) exemplify how women employed the prophetic role to teach, admonish, and lead within permissible ecclesiastical frameworks. In doing so, they challenged rigid canonical boundaries and asserted their pastoral authority. Thus, while a strict interpretation of sacerdotal preaching excluded women, prophecy—recognized as both an office and a duty—provided women with a legitimate avenue for engaging in religious discourse. Within this ecclesiastical and theological context, prophecy often functioned as a form of preaching, granting women a recognized and authoritative role in religious instruction.<sup>9</sup>

8 G. Zarri, "Places and Gestures of Women's Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy", in K. L. Jansen *et al.* (eds.), *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 177–193. See also P. Acosta-García, "Hacia una definición del sermón profético femenino: Liturgia y exégesis visionaria en la obra de Elisabeth von Schönau (1129–1164/5) y Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", *Hipogrifo. Revista de literatura y cultura del Siglo de Oro*, 11.1 (2023), 881–893.

9 For further discussion see C. Muessig, "Women and Preaching in Premodern Europe Part One: The Early Middle Ages to the Twelfth Century", *Medieval Sermon Studies* (November 2024), 1–27, doi: 10.1080/13660691.2024.2432708.

As Acosta-García clearly demonstrates, Juana's preaching—beyond her role as abbess, which granted her the right to preach to her sisters—was perceived as prophetic due to the belief that she had a direct connection to God. Juana's speech, seamlessly weaving together the human and the divine, as well as materiality and spiritual presence, becomes a vessel for miraculous, grace-filled teachings and revelations. In premodern Europe, while male preachers were often seen as representatives or stand-ins for Jesus, Juana, through her act of preaching, was perceived as embodying Jesus himself. Undeniably, the idea that prophecy underpinned female preaching was so predominant that even Hildegard of Bingen's homilies, the *Expositiones evangeliorum*—though more systematic than the sermons in *El libro del conorte*—were not regarded as deriving from scholarly authority. Instead, Hildegard's *Expositiones* drew their legitimacy from her perceived prophetic ability, aligning with monastic and exegetical traditions while paralleling Juana's reliance on visionary experiences as a source of spiritual and interpretive authority in her sermons. Thus, another significant function and vital contribution of *The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* is its demonstration that prophetic authority serves as the unifying thread of female preaching, distinguishing it clearly from male preaching.

Once we recognize this thread, we begin to see female preaching as a more widespread practice than previously assumed. For example, Juana's prophetic authority as a preacher aligns her with other prominent female religious teachers. The perceived authority of Angela of Foligno (mid-13th century–1309) and Catherine of Siena (1348–1380) similarly stemmed from their connection to divine revelation, often described as prophetic.<sup>10</sup> Continuing within this prophetic tradition, Domenica da Paradiso (1473–1553) likewise navigated ecclesiastical authority to assert her preaching voice in reform and spiritual renewal. This distinction enabled them to bypass the restrictions barring women from traditional preaching roles while fulfilling similar pastoral and instructive sacerdotal functions. Their contributions demonstrate how women, despite institutional barriers, actively shaped the religious discourse of their time, offering models of spiritual leadership that were both innovative and rooted in Christian tradition. Collectively, these women challenged the limits of traditional female roles within the Church, using their perceived prophetic abilities to inspire and lead their communities while creating enduring theological and devotional legacies. Thus, Juana

---

<sup>10</sup> For Angela of Foligno and Catherine of Siena's role as preachers see C. Muessig, "The 'historical' Angela - Angela as Teacher and Preacher", in *A Companion to Angela of Foligno*, Michael Hahn and Pablo Acosta-García (eds.), Brill, Leiden, forthcoming.

and her community thrived within a context that was both literary and performative—one they simultaneously imitated and innovated—positioning *El libro del conorte* as a vital link in the female prophetic and pastoral tradition.

*The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz* (1481–1534) also highlights instances where Juana's preaching bears a strong resemblance to that of Francis of Assisi (1181–1226)—and, for that matter, to hermits whose authority to preach stemmed from their perceived holiness and direct connection to the divine. This shared foundation of charismatic authority in male preaching provides a valuable framework for understanding female preaching within similar contexts. Like Francis of Assisi, Juana's spiritual authority was further affirmed through the phenomenon of the stigmata. She described how, in a vision, Christ impressed his wounds onto her body. Eyewitnesses confirmed that these visible marks lasted for three days before disappearing.<sup>11</sup> This account reflects an established tradition in which women were granted religious authority after being described as receiving stigmata—whether visible or invisible. Notable examples include Catherine of Siena, Domenica da Paradiso, and María de Santo Domingo (c. 1485–1524?). Their stigmata resonated with the imagery associated with priests and bishops, who were perceived to sacramentally receive the wounds of Christ upon their ordination.<sup>12</sup>

While Juana's prophetic authority aligns with a broader tradition of female preaching, her role also possessed distinct features. In fact, a defining characteristic of female preaching is its diversity—no two models are ever quite the same. For example, Juana, even apart from her prophetic and abbatial authority, was granted the *cura animarum* of the parish church attached to her convent. This right was bestowed by Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), the most powerful ecclesiastical figure in the Iberian Peninsula, who served as cardinal, grand inquisitor, and regent of Castile. Cardinal Cisneros, who revered holy women as visionary messengers of God's word, also

11 J. A. Boon, "Introduction," in J. A. Boon and R. E. Surtz (eds.), R. E. Surtz and N. Weinerth (trans.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*, Toronto/Tempe, Iter Academic Press/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006, 26. The description of Juana becoming a stigmatic, which Boon cites in the original and in translation, is found in *Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgin sancta Juana de la Cruz*, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, K-111-13, 39r that dates to the first half of the sixteenth century.

12 C. Muessig, "Hidden Marks of Leadership: Holy Women and Invisible Stigmata in the Late Middle Ages," in J. Arblaster and R. Faesen (eds.), *New Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Mystical Women: Beatrice of Nazareth Past and Present*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2025, 58–82.

translated into Spanish the works of Catherine of Siena and Angela of Foligno.<sup>13</sup> Cisneros, just as he understood these holy Italian women, perceived Juana as an agent of spiritual renewal. He granted her significant authority, elevating Juana to a quasi-priestly position. This authority was also integral to her status as a preacher and her influence within the community. Indeed, one of the key themes in *El libro del conorte* that Acosta-García identifies is how Juana's mystical encounters translated into public preaching that blurred the boundaries between priestly and prophetic functions. Her sermons often portrayed her as a medium for Christ, creating a profound connection between her body, her voice, and divine revelation. This dynamic is particularly striking in descriptions of her ecstasies where her voice channels celestial truths, engaging audiences ranging from laypeople to ecclesiastical elites.

Acosta-García examines the content of these sermons, emphasizing how Juana's theological perspectives were preserved and transmitted by her sisters. Her theology reflects a dynamic tension between orthodoxy and innovation. While Juana's sermons were firmly grounded in traditional belief and faith, they also reveal a remarkable originality in their interpretation of scripture and engagement with contemporary religious debates, such as the Immaculate Conception.<sup>14</sup> Acosta-García clarifies how Juana used her sermons to develop a unique exegesis, often presenting her own visionary experiences as evidence of her theological insights. In this regard, Juana's role as a preacher extended beyond merely transmitting religious knowledge to actively creating it. Her ability to adapt liturgical symbols and practices to articulate her visionary experiences underscores the role of creativity in the theological process of sermon construction.

The interplay between orthodoxy and innovation in Juana's sermons naturally broadens into an exploration of how female preaching engaged with devotional practices, revealing its performative and creative dimensions rooted in the shared liturgical experiences of religious communities. In this regard, *The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* highlights a

---

13 See P. Acosta-García, "Women Prophets for a New World: Angela of Foligno, 'Living Saints', and the Religious Reform Movement in Cardinal Cisneros's Castile", in *Gender and Exemplarity in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, M. Morrás, R. Sanmartín Bastida and Y. Kim (eds.), Brill, Leiden, 2020, 136–162; see also P. Acosta-García, "On Manuscripts, Prints and Blessed Transformations: Caterina da Siena's *Legenda maior* as a Model of Sainthood in Premodern Castile", *Religions*, 11.33 (2020), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010033>.

14 C. Muessig, "Women as Performers of the Bible: Female Preaching in Premodern Europe", in C. M. Bino and C. Ricasoli (eds.), *Performing the Sacred. Christian Representations of Art*, Leiden, Brill, 2023, 116–139 (126).

striking aspect of female preaching that warrants further analysis—the creative and performative nature of sermon construction as it emerges from a lived liturgical framework of devotion. This tendency is evident among numerous women who preached. Two examples will suffice. In a vivid New Year's Day sermon delivered at the convent of Bickenkloster in Villingen, the Clarissan abbess Ursula Haider (1413–1498) encouraged her strictly enclosed sisters to practice affective piety. She invited them to imagine, meditate on, and pray to the wounds of Christ, which she likened to five altars.<sup>15</sup> The Dominican preacher Tommasina Fieschi (1448–1534) employed gestures and narrative techniques to create an interactive form of preaching. Her performative acts often included dramatic renditions of biblical stories, blending doctrinal exposition with vivid storytelling. These methods invited her sisters in their strictly enclosed Genoese convent to participate in liturgical dramas, rendering complex theological concepts—such as the Incarnation—more accessible.<sup>16</sup>

Acosta-García's analysis of Juana de la Cruz stands out for its comprehensive scope. By integrating insights from liturgy, mysticism, sermon studies, Iberian religious history, and manuscript studies, he highlights the exceptional nature of Juana as a preacher. This interdisciplinary approach weaves together a vivid and detailed tapestry of her life and historical setting, deepening our understanding of the production, context, and theological richness of the sermons contained in *El libro del conorte*. In this way, *The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* is a critical resource for understanding Juana de la Cruz. It also represents a pioneering contribution to the broader study of female preaching in premodern Europe. By illuminating the performative, creative, and theological dimensions of Juana's sermons and their manuscript history, Acosta-García challenges long-standing assumptions about women's roles in religious leadership. His analysis of Juana as a preacher underscores the profound and enduring importance of women's voices within pastoral and intellectual traditions that have long excluded them. By foregrounding her pastoral role, *The Visionary Preaching of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* not only challenges these historical exclusions but also affirms the resilience and authority of female contributions to these discourses. Acosta-García's study invites us to reconsider the dynamics of gender, authority, and devotion, making this

15 *Chronik des Bickenklosters zu Villingen*, 1238 bis 1614, Karl Jordan Glatz (ed.), Tübingen, Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1881. See B. Roest, "Female Preaching in the Late Medieval Franciscan Tradition," *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004), 149–154.

16 See Muessig, "Women as Performers of the Bible".

volume an indispensable addition to the fields of religious history and sermon studies.

*Carolyn Muessig*, Chair of Christian Thought  
Department of Classics and Religion, University of Calgary  
15 December 2024

## Acknowledgments

Just like the *Conorte*, and probably like any other cultural endeavor, this is also a collective work. And perhaps, for once in the history of academic acknowledgments, this statement is not just a cliché. This book is primarily nourished by the ideas, discussions, and expertise of numerous people who have been by my side over the years and who have helped me, in one way or another, to bring this project to its conclusion.

The inception and development of this research took place within the framework of the Marie Curie Individual Fellowship that I held at Heinrich-Heine-Düsseldorf Universität (“Late Medieval Visionary Women’s Impact in Early Modern Castilian Spiritual Tradition [WIMPACT]”, Grant Agreement 842094), coordinated by Eva Schlotheuber. I am grateful to her and the constellation of scholars gathered around her for providing a solid foundation for this book. Among them, I must particularly thank Philipp Stenzig, who has greatly assisted me with the liturgical questions related to Juana’s sermons. The initial and final WIMPACT workshops, which brought together researchers such as Victoria Cirlot, Pietro Delcorno, Sylvie Duval, Caroline Emmelius, Veerle Fraeters, Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Sergi Sancho, and Steven Vanderputten, were especially important in shaping the reference points I address in this book.

I owe special thanks to the members of the *Seminario de estudios sobre el Renacimiento* of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (2021 SGR 00742, funded by the AGAUR, Generalitat de Catalunya), where I was able to discuss the materials that eventually became the core of this research and partially write this book. Thanks, in particular, to its director, María José Vega, for the support that enabled me benefit from a María Zambrano postdoctoral research contract for writing this book. Among the members of the Seminar, I am especially grateful to Marcela Londoño for some fascinating conversations about popular religiosity in 16th-century Castile.

I also would like to thank the members of the research group gathered around the “Catalog of Living Saints” (“Catálogo de santas vivas [1400–1550]: hacia un corpus completo de un modelo hagiográfico femenino” [PID2019-104237GB-I00, 2020-2024, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033], “Catálogo de santas vivas [fase final]: hacia el primer modelo de santidad femenina de la Contrarreforma” [PID2023-146357NB-I00, funded by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER, EU], for the exchange of ideas about the Spanish and Italian “sante vive”. In particular, I am grateful to its PI, Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, with whom I have had a continuous and deeply enriching intellectual exchange.

I owe a deep gratitude to the person who introduced me to the study of mystical literature and has given me support and insight through my career, Victoria Cirlot. Thanks, Victoria, for the inner vision. I presented an initial version of some ideas contained here to her study group (formed by Megumi Andrade, Jimena Castro, Laia Colell, Felipe Cussen, Marcela Labraña, Ada Naval, Daniela Picón, and Sergi Sancho). Thank you all for the feedback.

All my love goes to José Antonio Ramos Arteaga, who laid the first stone of my studies on the Middle Ages many years ago and has continued supporting me, drink in hand, ever since. I am also deeply grateful for the readings and comments on various drafts provided by Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, Jes Boon (who also kindly translated all the passages in Old Castilian in this book), Eduardo Carrero Santamaría, Victoria Cirlot, Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, and Juan Miguel Valero, as well as the two anonymous peer reviewers, whose comments were crucial to improve the final manuscript. To Paul Davies, thanks for the translation of the text, completed during difficult times, and to Julie Hotchin, for her painstaking copyediting of the English text.

There were numerous environments where the themes of this book could be discussed, among them, I owe special thanks to Carolyn Muessig for inviting me to participate in the *Women, Gender and Preaching in Medieval Europe Workshop*, organized by her at The Calgary Institute of the Humanities and the Department of Classics and Religion at the University of Calgary (1–3 May 2023), which kindly supported my travel to Canada. I thank her, too, for the wonderful foreword to this book. Participants in this workshop included Patricia Stoop (thanks for the insight in collective authorship in female religious houses, dear Patricia), Edward Sutcliffe, and unofficially, George Ferzoco. I also owe thanks to Delfi Nieto for inviting me to participate in the workshop *Blurring the Boundaries of Religious Dissent: A New Approach to Heresy in Premodern Europe*, through her “Blurred Boundaries Network” at Queen Mary University, London, 12–13 June 2023. Thanks to Isabelle Cochelin and the rest of the team from *The Other Sister: Non-Cloistered Women 1100–1800*, who gave me an opportunity to discuss specific elements on Iberian non-cloistered women at an early stage of my work (7 May 2021). I also thank Blanca Garí for inviting me to participate in the *Màster de Cultures Medievales* at the University of Barcelona on 18 May 2022 with a lecture on Juana and the *Conorte*. Furthermore, thanks to Sylvie Duval, Isabel Harvey, and Sergi Sancho for their wonderful meetings organized under the framework of the international project *Sorores: Non-Cloistered Nuns in Southern Europe, 12th-18th Centuries*, where I had several opportunities to present some aspects of this research. Last but not least, I thank Tess Knighton and my colleagues in the *SOUNDSCAPE project* (*How Processions Moved: Sound*



*and Space in the Performance of Urban Ritual, c.1400–c.1700*) for embracing the conclusion of this book, providing it with a new, fundamental perspective: the auditory one.

The staff of many libraries have been especially kind during these years of research. In particular, I owe special thanks to the librarians at the Royal Library of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, those in the Cervantes Room of the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid), at the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (Rome), and at the Biblioteca de Catalunya (Barcelona) for their help throughout all these years.

I also owe thanks to Vicenç Beltran for his help with paleography, textual criticism, and with the edition of Juana's *cancionero*. In the areas of palaeography and codicology, Ignasi Baigés, Carmen del Camino, Carme Muntaner, and María Elisa Varela Rodríguez, have also been tremendously helpful. For different reasons, thanks also go to Berta Blasi, David Castillo Rangel, Ana María Castillo Caballero, Laura Cayrol, María del Mar Cortés Timoner, Inocente García Andrés, María del Mar Graña Cid, Michael Hahn, Balázs Nemes, María Victoria Triviño, and Francesco Zambon.

Finally, the support of my family and friends have been fundamental over these years. Thanks to my family in Tenerife and Gurb, specially to Olga and little Marcel, for everything that is still to come.

# Figures and Tables

## Figures

- 1 *Vida y fin de la bien abenturada virgen Sancta Juana de la [cruz] monja que fue professa de quatro Botos en la orden del señor sant francisco en la qual viuió perfecta y sanctamente*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS K-III-13, f. 1r. 5
- 2 *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, f. 212r. 43
- 3 Annotation by Francisco de Torres (full folio and detail). *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, f. 298r and detail. 49
- 4 Annotation by “Padre Ortiz” and censorship (full folio and detail). *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, f. 317r. 52
- 5 *Libro del conorte*; Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, MS Congr. SS. Rituum Processus 3074, f. 1r. 59
- 6 *Libro de la Casa y Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz [...]*; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS-9661, ff. 61v-62r. 94
- 7 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 3r. 192
- 8 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206r (full folio and detail). 193
- 9 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206v (full folio and detail). 194

## Tables

- 1 Comparison of the “Sermon on the Nativity of John the Baptist” across the Vatican Codex, the El Escorial Codex, and the *LC*. 95

# Abbreviations

- Breviarium Toletanum* *Breviarium ad debite persolvendum divinum officium secundum regulam et consuetudinem sanctae ecclesiae Toletanae Hispaniarum metropolitanae*, Impressum Venetiis, per Joannem Hamman, 1492 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Inc/415).
- Conorte 1996 Inocente García Andrés, *El Conhorte: Sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana (1482–1534). Introducción, teología y espiritualidad*, PhD thesis, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1996, <https://summa.upsa.es/details.vm?q=id:0000030260&lang=en&view=main>.
- Conorte 1999 Inocente García Andrés, *Juana de la Cruz, El Conhorte: sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, 2 vols., Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1999.
- Daza 1611 Antonio Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen santa Juana de la Cruz, de la tercera Orden de nuestro Seráfico padre San Francisco. Compuesta por fray Antonio Daza, indigno fraile menor, definidor de la santa provincia de la Concepción y cronista general de la orden*, Valladolid, Juan Godínez de Millis, 1611.
- El Escorial manuscript/codex San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-11-18.
- Vatican manuscript/codex Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. SS. Rituum Processus 3074.
- Navarro 1622 Pedro Navarro, *Favores del rey del cielo hechos a su esposa, la santa Juana de la Cruz, religiosa de la Orden Tercera de Penitencia de N. P. S. Francisco. Con anotaciones theológicas y morales a la historia de su vida*, Madrid, Thomas Iunti, Impresor del Rey, 1622.
- LC “Libro de la Casa y Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz” (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS-9661. Edited by M. V. Curto at [http://catalogode.santasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana\\_de\\_la\\_Cruz#Vida\\_manuscrita\\_.282.29](http://catalogode.santasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz#Vida_manuscrita_.282.29)).
- Positio super dubio* (the specific summary will be specified in parentheses) *Sacra Rituum Congregatione Emmo. et Rvdmo. Domino Card. Gotti, Toletana beatificationis et canonizationis Ven. Servae Dei Joanne de Cruce, Monialis professe, et abbatisse Monasterii Sancta Mariae de Cruce prope Oppidum de Cubas, Tertii Ordinis S. Francisci. Positio super dubio “An stante repetitione assertorum opusculorum originalium, possit ad ulteriora in Causa procedi”*, Romae, Typis Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1731.

*Vida y fin* *Vida y fin de la bien abenturada virgen Sancta Juana de la [cruz] monja que fue professa de quatro Botos en la orden del señor sant francisco en la qual viuió perfecta y sanctamente* (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS K-III-13. Edited by María Luengo Balbás and Fructuoso Atencia Requena and published at: [http://catalogodesantasmvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana\\_de\\_la\\_Cruz](http://catalogodesantasmvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz), accessed: 12/07/2023).

## Note on citing the manuscripts of the sermons of the *Conorte*

The sermons of Juana de la Cruz are preserved in two manuscripts: San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, and Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. ss. Rituum Processus 3074.

The El Escorial manuscript has recently been digitized and can be consulted on the library's webpage. The edition by García Andrés (*Conorte* 1999) transcribes this codex, although it presents many textual problems, which discourages its use without a direct comparison of the primary source. Nevertheless, *Conorte* 1999 is the only available edition of the sermons, so I will refer to it in the notes to assist the reader in locating the texts with ease.

As I will make clear in this monograph, the most complete manuscript of the *Conorte* (from a point of view that considers the historical perception of the community of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, where it was most likely produced) is the Vatican manuscript. Currently, this codex can only be consulted *in situ* or through a digital reproduction purchased from the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano. Whenever possible, I will favour its readings for textual analysis and citation over those of the Escorial manuscript, although I will draw on the latter when there are gaps or where the Vatican manuscript is unreadable because of its poor state of preservation. These instances will be indicated clearly in the footnotes. As the number and the numbering of the sermons vary between the two versions and, moreover, contain multiple errors in each, I will adopt the numbering convention established by *Conorte* 1999 to avoid confusion.

## Transcription principles for *Conorte* (and other manuscripts and printed matter cited)

In all transcriptions, I have modernized the spelling, accentuation, and punctuation to facilitate the reading of the passages analysed. Similarly, I have expanded all the abbreviations and have reinstated missing vowels. The lacunae (which are very common, especially in the Vatican manuscript) are identified in square brackets ([...]) and the text is re-established between them, where possible, through logical deduction and/or comparison with the El Escorial text. Doubtful readings are followed by (?).

In the case of manuscripts other than those of the *Conorte* or early printed books for which there is a critical edition, I have retained the textual criteria set by their editors. Passages in Old Castilian are always followed by an English translation by Jes Boon when no translation by R. E. Surtz or N. Weinert is available. Biblical quotations in English are taken from the Rheims-Douay 1899 American Edition.

# Introduction

## 1 Pathways to Preaching

Pasados dos años que en esta bienabenturada se vido públicamente la graçia de elebarse, la qual tuvo muy continuamente toda su vida, plugo al muy poderoso Dios dotalla de otra muy copiosa graçia e don maravilloso: que, estando ella así elevada en aquel rato, enagenada de sus sentidos, hablava por su propia lengua el Spíritu Sancto cosas muy maravillosas, e altas e provechosas a las ánimas...<sup>1</sup>

[After two years had passed since this blessed one was given the grace of being elevated publicly (which she continued to experience throughout her life), it pleased the all-powerful God to endow her with another abundant grace and marvellous gift: that, being thus elevated in that rapture, entranced in her senses, the Holy Spirit spoke by means of her tongue very marvellous things that were superior and beneficial to souls...]<sup>2</sup>

In this passage, the tongue of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) represents, by transposition, her entire body: “the Holy Spirit spoke by means of her tongue very marvellous things”. That “tongue” here refers not to the Franciscan abbess’s speech but to the organ that allows it to be expressed is perhaps one of the greatest paradoxes that this book will explore: that of the holy voice produced by a body and converted, later, into a *corpus* of writing. Not by chance, Juana’s mouth represents a liminal cavity, where a mystical transmutation takes place: the tongue articulates not (only) her own words but (also) those the divinity wishes to speak. The transition of the action of the Holy Spirit (who inspires, justifies, and authorizes Juana) to the voice that later emerges from her, that of the Son, is veiled in the text. But, in effect, it is Christ’s voice that emanates from the abbess who—as well as urging, narrating, and singing songs with apocalyptic overtones—enters into dialogue with her. This primordial intersection between the third person of the Trinity and human flesh is formalised in the writings that surround Juana’s life in various ways.

One of these serves as a title for the book that launched modern studies of her sermons: using one of the descriptions in the *Libro del Conorte* [*Book of*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Vida y fin*, 27r.

<sup>2</sup> Modern English translations of old Castilian texts in this book are by Jes Boon, unless otherwise noted.

*Consolation*], Ronald Surtz visualized the abbess as a “guitar” played by God.<sup>3</sup> In effect, Juana is not only a vessel of revelation but also a prophet: an instrument through which the good news—the music that the guitar creates—is communicated to others. However, if we focus on the notion of the Holy Spirit as breath, rather than a guitar, a more apt image in the same text is that of the ear trumpet (*cerbatana*) through which the divine breath passes and vibrates the air as a voice: “*quando su Divina Magestad le dava el resuello de su Spíritu, se oya la voz por la persona della como se oye por una zerbatana quando vna persona habla a otra.*”<sup>4</sup> [when his Divine Majesty gave her the breath of his Spirit, the voice is heard through her person as one hears through an ear trumpet when one person talks to another.] The voice that emerges from the abbess’s mouth is the husky voice of Christ, and with this tone it crosses the space that mediates between Juana and her audience to reach the ears of those present. The passage chosen to begin this book is the germinal description of an ecstasy (“*elevada en aquel ra[p]to, enagenada de sus sentidos*” [elevated in that rapture, entranced in her senses]) that her audience always considered to be her preaching. The abbess of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, in the archdiocese of Toledo, was, above all, a preacher.<sup>5</sup>

3 R. E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God. Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990. In *Vida y fin*, 60r/v, Juana’s body is compared to a “vihuela” [an early form of the guitar] played by God.

4 *Vida y fin*, 28r. This figure also appears in the *Conorte* itself: *Conorte* 1999, 994–995, as has been noted both by Surtz, *The Guitar*, 63–54, and by M. V. Curto, “Juana de la Cruz y la música en la mística castellana bajomedieval”, *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, XXXIII (2020), 97–101. By *cerbatana* (“ear trumpet”) the narrator is referring here to an “*instrumento en forma de tubo que sirve para transmitir sonidos a cierta distancia, hablando alguien por un extremo y escuchando el receptor por el otro, o para amplificarlos*” [instrument in the form of a tube which serves to transmit sounds a certain distance, one person speaking at one end and the receiver listening at the other end, or to amplify them], a word whose use had already been documented in the first half of the sixteenth century (see *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española*, “cerbatana”, <https://www.rae.es/dhle/>, accessed: 30/05/2023.) As I will clarify later in this chapter, the image of “the Holy Spirit as breath” draws on the imagery of the Pentecost. I thank Victoria Cirlot for this suggestion.

5 From here on, I use the terms “convent” or “religious house” rather than monastery to refer to the house of tertiaries where Juana and her community lived because, as we shall see, its reform in 1509 did not involve its total monasticization. I thank Delfi Nieto for her advice on this point. For a discussion about this terminology in Spanish, see M. Pérez Vidal, *Arte y liturgia en los monasterios de dominicas en Castilla. De los orígenes hasta la reforma observante*, Gijón, Trea, 2021, 17–19. On the other hand, the denomination of Juana as “abbess” indicates the local use of this term in a convent of tertiaries in Toledo. This usage emphasises the hierarchy within the religious house, thus aligning it more closely to monastic communities such as the Poor Clares. For an introduction to the sermon in Iberia, see M. A. Sánchez Sánchez, “Vernacular Preaching in Spanish, Portuguese, and Catalan”, in



The source from which I have taken this quotation is the first hagiography of Juana, *Vida y fin*, which was produced as a collective chronicle of the convent.<sup>6</sup> The scene described, viewed from the perspective of the hagiographic third person, relates the strange effect of a masculine voice emerging from a woman's mouth. It is strange because, at least to the ears of those who heard it at the moment when the words of "the Lord" started to pervade the room, Juana incarnated Christ. Arising from her body in the form of words, was a manifestation of the divinity, as a new revelation in the form of *logos*. As a result, the body of the ecstatic appeared to become Christ-like in the eyes of the spectators. The prophet turns into an instrument (guitar, ear trumpet) at the expense of forming an *alter Christus* [another Christ] which, of course, is modelled upon Francesco d'Assisi and Caterina da Siena (and probably also certain contemporary Italian *sante vive* [living saints]), and reached its apex in stigmatization.<sup>7</sup>

This communicative scheme, which starts from human articulation, moves through the production of a voice *autre*, and reaches an audience that receives miraculous words, represents one of the hermeneutic keys of this book: Juana

---

B. M. Kienzle (ed.), *The Sermon*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 759–860. For the Spanish case, see also H. D. Smith, *Preaching in the Spanish Golden Age. A Study of Some Preachers of the Reign of Philip III*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978; A. Deyermund, "The Sermon and its Uses in Medieval Castilian Literature", *La Corónica*, 8/2 (1980), 127–145; P. M. Cátedra, *Dos estudios sobre el sermón en la España medieval*, Bellaterra, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1981; *Sermón, sociedad y literatura en la Edad Media. S. Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411–1412)*, s. l., Junta de Castilla y León, 1994; F. Herrero Salgado, *La oratoria sagrada en los siglos XVI y XVII*, 5 vols., Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1996–2006; R. Sanmartín Bastida, B. Taylor, and R. Vidal Doval, "Hacia una poética del sermón", *Revista de poética medieval*, 24 (2010), 11–15; F. J. Rojo Alique, "Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Preachers in Castile: The Example of Valladolid", in *Franciscans and Preaching*, T. J. Johnson (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2012, 353–382; E. Carrero Santamaría, "Levantaos a Juicio: topografía y escena de la predicación", in M. Gómez Muntané (ed.), *El Juicio Final. Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Escena*, Madrid, Alpuerto, 2017, 97–140; and P. Delcorno, "Catechesi e drammatizzazione: Lo Spirito Santo nei sermoni di Pentecoste di Vicent Ferrer", *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 49/1 (2019), 75–101.

6 See P. Acosta-García, "Radical Succession: Hagiography, Reform, and Franciscan Identity in the Convent of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", *Religions*, 12, 223, 2021.

7 On stigmatization in general, see C. Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Oxford, OUP, 2020 (for the history of female stigmatization see 91–188, for Caterina specifically see 138–188, and the mention of Juana de la Cruz briefly on 114), and A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO. Scrittura ed esperienza mistica tra medioevo et età moderna*, Spoleto, Centro italiano di studi sul basso medioevo/Accademia Tudertina, 2022, 431–435. On the specific case of stigmatization among the Castilian living saints, see P. Acosta-García, "En viva sangre bañadas: Caterina da Siena y las vidas de María de Ajofrín, Juana de la Cruz, María de Santo Domingo y otras santas vivas castellanas", *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà*, XXXIII (2021), 143–172.

de la Cruz's preaching is a way of transmitting a revealed knowledge through the presence of the body, but above all through an ambiguous element that we perceive between materiality and presence—the voice. This inspired and didactic function, through which grace would descend on the word of the speaker, is understood as part of the idiosyncrasy of the act of preaching.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, in Juana's case it is important to underline this, given that the ecstatic character of her sermons could be confused with a misunderstood improvisation, a discourse performed without any structure. As I will attempt to show in the following pages, the sermons that have come down to us are a dark mirror—to use a Biblical image—in which two sides coexist: on the near side is the *compositio* made by the preacher that is based, as I will show, on making a commentary on the liturgy of the day together with some of the texts that the community had read or sung during the ritual. On the other side, through or beyond the mirror, is the horizon of expectations of this discourse. This is then recomposed through the processes of collective creation that ultimately lead to the collection of sermons we know today as the *Conorte*.

It is clear that we should take the events narrated in the opening passage with a degree of caution, given the intentions underlying any hagiographic narrative.<sup>9</sup> *Vida y fin* constitutes the chronicle of a house of women religious whose writing must be situated after the house's reform and, probably, after Juana's death (Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> According to the convent's own tradition, this

8 C. Casagrande, "Le calame du Saint-Esprit-Grâce et rhétorique dans la prédication au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in R. M. Dessì and M. Lauwers, *La parole du prédicateur. ve-xve siècle*, Nice, Z'Éditions, 1997, 239. In the words of Vincent Ferrer: "*E sapiats que offici de preÿcar no és altra cosa sinó offici de testificar les veritats divinals al món, e axí los predicadors dretament són testimonis que Déus los tramet per verificar-los les veritats divinals*" [And you should know that the office of preaching is nothing other than the office of testifying to the divine truths to the world, and thus preachers are rightly witnesses whom God sends to verify the divine truths] (V. Ferrer, *Sermons*, X. Renedo and Ll. Cabré [eds.], Barcelona, Teide, 1993, 31). See, also C. Delcorno, "Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200–1500)", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 486, who talks about a "relationship and reciprocity between the Bible and preaching", in the sense that the preacher draws the sermon from the Bible while God moves the author to preach. On Francesco d'Assisi as an inspired preacher from the hagiographical perspective, see D. Boquet and P. Nagy, *Sensible Moyen Âge. Une histoire des émotions dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris, Seuil, 2015, 335.

9 I will also be cautious with the use of the data proposed by Daza 1611 (I cite this edition, which has almost exactly the same text as the first one of 1610. I thank Marta Amorós for her help in locating and introducing me to Daza's hagiography); Navarro 1622; and M.V. Triviños' bio-hagiography of Juana, M. V. Triviño, *Mujer, predicadora y párroco. La santa Juana (1481–1534)*, Madrid, BAC, 1999.

10 On the reform of this religious community, see V. M. M. Graña Cid, "Las profetisas ante el poder eclesiástico: denuncia y modelo místico de iglesia (Juana de la Cruz, siglo XVI)",

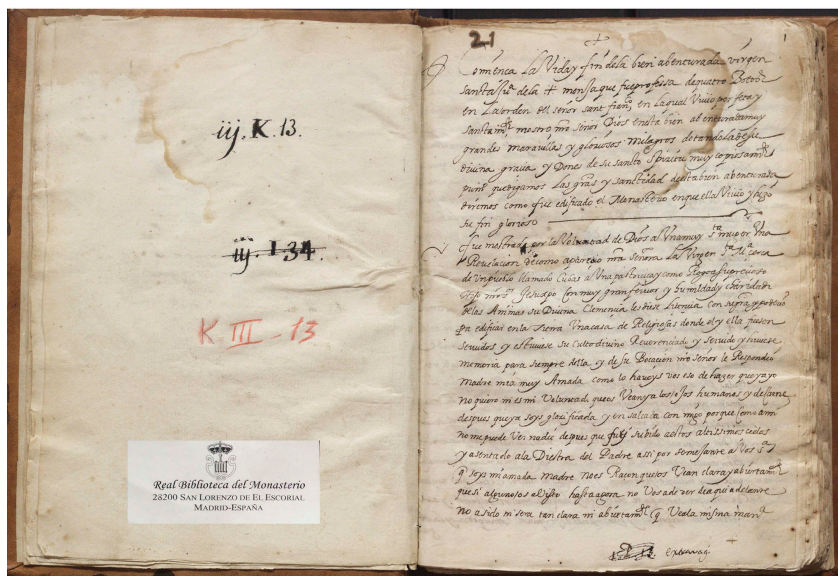


FIGURE 1 *Vida y fin de la bien abenturada virgen Sancta Juana de la [cruz] monja que fue professa de quatro Botos en la orden del señor sant francisco en la qual viuio perfecta y sanctamente*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS K-III-13, f. 1r

IMAGE: © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL. SOURCE: [HTTPS://RBMECAT.](https://rbmecat.patrimonionacional.es/cgi-bin/koah/opac-detail)

PATRIMONIONACIONAL.ES/CGI-BIN/KOHA/OPAC-DETAIL.

PL?BIBLIONUMBER=894&QUERY\_DESC=KW%2CWDRDL%3A%20VIDA%20Y%20FIN%20DE%20LA%20BIEN%20ABENTURADA

hagiography in effect constructs the account of a convent of Franciscan tertiaries through the pen of one of Juana's companions who miraculously learnt to write, María Evangelista.<sup>11</sup> *Vida y fin* vindicates the Observant reform that took place in 1509, placing at its centre its famous abbess as the promoter of the transformation of her community's practices.<sup>12</sup> Reform instituted a way of life

in J. L. Fontes, M. Filomena Andrade, and T. Pires Marques (eds.), *Género e interioridade na vida religiosa. Conceitos, contextos e práticas*, Lisboa, Centro de estudos de História Religiosa/Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2017, 15–44; and Acosta-García, "Radical Succession".

11 Daza 1611, 11r/v. Navarro 1622, 333.

12 To situate the house of tertiaries in which Juana and her fellow tertiaries lived in the context of the Peninsular reforms, see Á. Muñoz Fernández, *Santas y beatas neocastellanas: Ambivalencias de la religión y políticas correctoras del poder*, Madrid, Comunidad de Madrid/Dirección General de la Mujer, 1994 and "Iberian Women in Religion and Policies of Discipline Dissent in the Archbishopric of Toledo in the 15th to Early 16th centuries: The Heaven of Juana de la Cruz", in Fabrizio Titone (ed.), *Strategies of Non-Confrontational*

that, while respecting the pre-existing traditions based on voluntary poverty and penitence, imposed new customs including the collection of rents.<sup>13</sup> That Juana was assimilated as the leader of the reform is no doubt related to her fame beyond the convent's walls. The prelates gave special permission to be able attend the sessions in which she succumbed to *raptus*, so that the faithful public could gain access to the unspecified location where her ecstasies took place.<sup>14</sup> With the ecclesiastical superior's permission, the external audience entered a reformed religious house that conforms with what Raymond Creytens calls an "open monastery", at least until Juana's death in 1534.<sup>15</sup>

Starting from the group perspective of the community of tertiaries, the narrator reconstructs an exalted hierarchy, which includes a multitude of ecclesiastic positions and the higher ranks of the nobility:

Oýanla frayles de algunas órdenes, predicadores e letrados, e abades e canónigos, e obispos e arçobispos, y el cardenal de España don fray Francisco Ximénez, de gloriosa memoria, e los ynquisidores de la Sagrada Ynquisiçión, jueçes della, e condes, e duques e marqueses, e cavalleros

---

*Protest in Europe from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Rome, Viella, 2016, 195–217. For a summary of the Observant reform in the Iberian Peninsula focused on the Franciscan communities, see B. Roest, *Order and Disorder. The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, 202–208. See also, Pérez Vidal, *Arte y liturgia*, 70, on the traditional view of the conversion of houses of *beatas* into convents in relation to the Castilian context and the implications of female agency.

13 *Conorte* 1999, 55–66.

14 Most hagiographies are extremely evasive in indicating the place where the preaching took place, although if we note the references to the "bed", the most obvious place would seem to be the preacher's own cell, which Navarro 1622, 323, mentions explicitly. This was the place where, for example, Umiltà da Faenza preached to the visiting public (T. M. Baker and B. Kienzle, "Monastic Preaching and the Sermon in Medieval Latin Christendom to the 12th century", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monastic Preaching in the Latin West*, 722). Another possibility is that the bed could have been placed in the low choir, which could have granted the audience, located in the church nave, access to her preaching. See below, 173, n. 220.

15 R. Creytens, "La riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i decreti Tridentini", in *Il Concilio di Trento e la riforma tridentina. Atti del convegno storico internazionale. Trento, 2–6 settembre 1963*, Rome, Herder, 1965, Vol. I, 45–84, and 46–48, in particular. The claim that Juana's was not an enclosed monastery during her life can be found, for example, in Daza 1611, 72v, 100r/v. On the other hand, the monasticization of the lay communities of *beatas* and tertiaries at the end of the fifteenth century in Castile affected all the Castilian women's monasteries. These processes are varied, sometimes lengthy, and each one has its own peculiarities. On the communities of women religious in Castile before and after the reform, see L. Braguier, *Servantes de Dieu. Les beatas de la Couronne de Castile (1450–1600)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2019.

muy graciosos, e señores e todos otros estados, assí de hombres como de mujeres, que este misterio vieron e oyeron, y estuvieron en él presentes.<sup>16</sup>

[The friars of various orders, preachers and scholars, abbots and canons, bishops and archbishops, the cardinal of Spain, Friar Francisco Jiménez of glorious memory, the inquisitors of the Holy Inquisition (and) judges thereof, counts, dukes and marquises, very gracious knights, lords, and all other estates, both men and women, heard her (speak); they saw and heard this mystery and were present for it.]

On the one hand—and contrary to what the words “rapture” or “ecstasy” might make us think—the fact that the audience waited for the sermon speaks to a predictable moment that is formalized through ritual. On the other hand, this powerful audience is included here for a clear reason: to show that the abbess not only enjoyed popular fame but that she also had absolute official approval.<sup>17</sup> However, we would be wrong to think that this list of dignitaries was presented only for propaganda. It is clear that this account considers the

16 *Vida y fin*, 27v-28r.

17 Frequent allusions to this audience can be found in the tradition of the convent. For example, in the testimonies of the Apostolic Process, which reproduce the tradition of the convent, we read: “[E]t magno zelo animarum edocebat in multis sermonibus, quos praedicavit existens in dictis raptibus [...] ad quam audiendam accedebat magnus concursus principum, et praelatorum, et hominum doctorum, religiosorum, et saecularium de omnibus conditionibus, quia tunc non observabatur clausura in dicto monasterio, et omnes admirabantur de sermonibus, et doctrina a Deo magna, et ferventi, et cum tanto zelo et ardenti charitate et amore Dei et proximi. Et praesertim narrabant qualiter illam venerant auditum Imperator Carolus Quintus et Cardinalis Don frater Franciscus Ximenez Archiepiscopus Toletanus et dictus Magnus Capitaneus Gundisalvus Fernandez de Cordova qui, prout dictum est, construxerunt unum dormitorium in hoc dicto conventu” [(A)nd with great zeal for souls, she taught through many sermons, preached while in the said states of rapture (...) A great assembly of princes, prelates, learned men, religious and secular people of all conditions came to hear her, because at that time enclosure was not observed in the monastery, and everyone marvelled at her sermons and the great doctrine from God, which she delivered with such zeal, fervent charity, and love of God. They especially recounted how Emperor Charles V and Cardinal Francisco Ximénez, Archbishop of Toledo, and the great Captain Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, who, as we have said, built a dormitory in this said convent, came to hear her”. This information has been extracted from the summaries collected in: *Sacra Rituum Congregatione Emmo. et Rvdmo. Domino Card. Gotti, Toletana beatificationis et canonizationis Ven. Servae Dei Joanne de Cruce, Monialis professe, et abbatisse Monasterii Sancta Mariae de Cruce prope Oppidum de Cubas, Tertii Ordinis S. Francisci. Positio super dubio (“Summarium additionale”)*, Romae, Typis Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1731, 3–4. From here on, I use the abbreviation and specify in parenthesis the title of the specific summary. See also *Conorte* 1999, 136, and Navarro 1622, 325.

abbess's fame as a *santa* and was written with an eye to a possible process of canonization. In fact, such investigations started some eighty years after Juana's death, with this hagiography in the foreground of the examination.<sup>18</sup> But, on the other hand, beyond the text's evident hagiographic function, there is sufficient evidence to accept that these sessions took place in a similar manner to what is narrated here and to consider that this list of given participants is not spurious. In fact, the direct support of the convent by Cardenal Cisneros, who was at that time engaged in reforming women's religious communities under a commission from the Catholic Monarchs, and Juana's participation in the process is extensively documented. It was no accident that his name was the only proper name on the list of Juana's esteemed visitors. Juana played a pivotal role in the transformation of the convent into a house of regular tertiaries of the Observance in the same year that she became abbess (1509).<sup>19</sup> Cisneros awarded the community the ecclesiastical privilege through which

18 I will treat Juana's canonization process at length in the first chapter, but the two most important summaries of its stages are presented in J. Gómez López, "Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) 'La Santa Juana': vida, obra, santidad y causa", in F. J. Campos y Fernández de Sevilla (ed.), *La clausura femenina en España: actas del simposium: 1/4-IX-2004*, Madrid, Real Centro Universitario Escorial-María Cristina, 2004, vol. 2, 1223–1250, and *Conorte* 1999, 131–169.

19 On the expansion of Franciscan Order in Castile from a gender perspective, see M. M. Graña Cid, "Las primeras clarisas andaluzas. Franciscanismo femenino y reconquista en el siglo XIII", Supplement of *Archivo Ibero-Americano* LIV (1994), 661–704, and Roest, *Order and Disorder*, above all 88–104, 165–168, and 202–208. See also, A. Rucquoi, "Los franciscanos en el Reino de Castilla", J. I. de la Iglesia Duarte, F. J. García Turza, and J. Á. García de Cortázar (eds.), *VI Semana de Estudios Medievales: Nájera, 31 de julio al 4 de agosto de 1995*, Nájera, Instituto de estudios riojanos, 1996, 65–86. Specifically on the convents of regular tertiaries in Castile, see M. M. Graña Cid, *Espacios de vida espiritual de mujeres (Obispado de Córdoba, 1260–1550)*, PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2008, 410–422, some of whose points are summarized in "Berenguela I y Fernando III, promotores de las órdenes mendicantes en Castilla", in M. Peláez del Rosal (ed.), *El Franciscanismo: identidad y poder. Libro homenaje al P. Enrique Chacón Cabello*, Córdoba, Asociación Hispánica de Estudios Franciscanos/Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, 2016, 119–142. The traditional view of Spanish religious reform is found in M. Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, Mexico, FCE, 1950 [1937], 1–83, followed by J. García Oro, *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos*, Madrid, CSIC, 1971 (who mentions the Poor Clares on 239–269) and "Conventualismo y Observancia. La reforma de las órdenes religiosas en los siglos XV y XVI", in Ricardo García-Villoslada (dir.), *Historia de la Iglesia en España: vol. III, 1: La Iglesia en la España de los siglos XV y XVI*, Madrid 1980, 210–350. There is a summary of the process in Á. Muñoz Fernández, "Cisneros y las reformas religiosas de su tiempo", in *Arquetipo de virtudes, espejo de prelados, 1517–2017*, Toledo, Cabildo Primado Catedral de Toledo, 2017, 68–83. On 1493 as the date usually assigned by traditional historiography to the Catholic Monarchs' reform, see Pérez Vidal, *Arte y liturgia*, 77.



they annexed the parish church, and also granted powers that raised Juana to a quasi-priestly status that would authorise her role as a preacher.<sup>20</sup>

The book that collects Juana's preaching is the sermon collection titled *Libro del Conorte* or, simply *Conorte*.<sup>21</sup> This is the main source for studying the abbess's public discourses and, as such, it forms the basis of the central analysis in this monograph. Even though Juana was a *santa viva* (to use Gabriella Zarri's term), had a presence not only in the chronicles of the Franciscan orders but was also the protagonist of hagiographies and featured in collections of *lives* such as *Flos sanctorum* by Alfonso de Villegas, in-depth academic study of her sermons did not start until the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> With precedents in classic works such as that of Marcel Bataillon, which placed Juana in what he called the Castilian pre-reform, it was above all with the publication of Surtz's *The Guitar of God* in 1990 that interest returned to these visionary sermons.<sup>23</sup> From this point, the figure of Juana, her hagiographies, and the *Conorte* have been analysed from many varied perspectives and with different methodologies.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in parallel with academic study (and sometimes interwoven with it) reopening of the canonization process in the twentieth century meant that the postulators collected the documentation gathered and produced until the eighteenth century.<sup>25</sup> This served to relaunch the cause in the Vatican in the

20 *Conorte* 1999, 55–64. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 4–5.

21 The El Escorial manuscript includes an alternative title in a passage of its final sermon, *Libro de luz norte* [*Book of North Light*] (453r; *Conorte* 1999, 1475). *Vida y fin* (32r) gives *Conforte o Luz Norte* [*Consolation or North Light*], while the Vatican manuscript, 728v, maintains *Libro de conorte* [*Book of Consolation*]. See, Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 131. In *LC*, 20r there is a longer title. The book has been fully edited by García Andrés in the version given by the El Escorial manuscript (*Conorte* 1999) and has been partly translated to English in J. A. Boon and R. E. Surtz (eds.), R. E. Surtz and N. Weinerth (trans.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*. Toronto/Tempe, Iter Academic Press/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006.

22 G. Zarri, *Le Sante vive: profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*, Torino, Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990. M. M. Cortés Timoner, "La autoridad espiritual femenina en la Castilla bajomedieval y su reflejo en el *Flos sanctorum* de Alonso de Villegas", *Dicenda. Estudios de lengua y literatura españolas*, 39 (2021), 25–35.

23 Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, 68–70, which points to the El Escorial manuscript, explicitly for the first time in note 29. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*.

24 The work of the research project *Catálogo de santas vivas* (<http://visionarias.es/>), directed by Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, has been crucial to increase the accessibility to, and thus the impact of, works linked to Juana and her community, above all through the digital edition of *Vida y fin*, *LC*, and five print editions to date, which cover the period from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. See P. Acosta-García and R. Sanmartín, "Digital Visionary Women: Introducing the 'Catalogue of Living Saints'", *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 14,1 (2022), 55–68.

25 See the first chapter of this book.

twentieth century and also made available to scholars some valuable material that had previously been scattered across many repositories. In this respect, the motivations of Inocente García Andrés in his doctoral thesis, *Conorte 1996*, need to be seen as closely related to this revival of the canonization attempt.<sup>26</sup>

Before outlining the structure of my study and the aims of each chapter, I will comment on methodological questions raised by various passages of *Vida y fin*. As we have seen, these constitute early and first-hand material through which one observes Juana's preaching sessions from a third-person perspective. To this end, the glossing of some passages will allow me to add historical material to the portrait of the abbess represented in this text, before entering into the in-depth study of the sermons. As I will discuss later, the hagiographic third person is completely absent in the *Conorte*, whose text is interested only in representing the voice of Christ, but not the body that utters it.<sup>27</sup>

## 2 Pathways to Rapture

Véyan [los presentes] cómo estava esta bienabenturada bestida e tocada de religiosa como lo hera, y hechada sobre una cama de la manera que las religiosas la ponían, e sus braços puestos a manera de persona recogida, y el cuerpo como muerto y los ojos çerrados, y el gesto muy bien puesto e muy hermoso, resplandeciente a manera de lleno e redondo. Esto tenía quando la gracia del Spíritu Sancto hablava con ella, que de su natural le tenía aguileño.<sup>28</sup>

[The audience used to see how this blessed one was dressed and adorned as a nun, and spread out on a bed in the manner that the nuns would place her. Her arms were folded in the manner of a "recollected"<sup>29</sup> person

26 In fact, the introduction to the only available edition of *Conorte* (based on the El Escorial manuscript) consists in part of the materials of his doctoral thesis (*Conorte 1996*).

27 For a theoretical approach to this topic, see P. Dailey, *Promised Bodies: Time, Language, and Corporeality in Medieval Women's Mystical Texts*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013.

28 *Vida y fin*, 27v.

29 "Persona recogida" (= "recollected person") refers to the practitioner of a specific form of contemplative prayer practiced typically by reformed Franciscans of the 16th century Castile and their circles of influence. Bataillon (*Erasmus y España*, 167) describes it as "*Es un florecimiento del misticismo alentado por Cisneros, que encontrará su expresión más rica y matizada en el Tercer abecedario espiritual de Francisco de Osuna. Es un método por el cual el alma busca a Dios en su propio seno, en un desprendimiento tan total del mundo, que deja a un lado el pensamiento de toda cosa creada, y hasta todo pensamiento discursivo*"



and her body appeared lifeless with closed eyes and her countenance was very composed and beautiful, shining as if full and rounded. This happened when the grace of the Holy Spirit spoke to her, for she naturally had arched eyebrows.]

After listing the personalities among the audience, the text describes Juana's ecstatic state which she reaches after a preparatory, inductive phase. I consider that this second phase represents the climax of a process that the hagiographic narrative articulates in three movements (induction, prophetic preaching, closing formula). This state of well-being, which does not entail the total suspension of the senses, is the prelude to Juana's transmutation into a prophet: soon Christ himself will start to speak through her mouth, that is to say, the incarnated speech will shortly begin. This preaching, according to a testimony also from *Vida y fin*, could last from five to six hours and the process could be repeated over several days.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the hagiographer continued:

Duró esta graça de hablar el Spíritu Sancto en esta bienaventurada treze años, la qual le venía algunas vezes, entre día y noche, dos vezes, y esto no haviendo tornado en sus sentidos entre la una vez e la otra; e otras vezes a terçer día, e otras vezes a quatro días, e a ocho e quince, como hera la voluntad de Dios. Mas las elevaçiones e arrobamientos tenía siempre día y noche, e desde su niñez hasta que Dios la llevó desta presente vida.<sup>31</sup>

[This grace by which the Holy Spirit spoke through this blessed one lasted thirteen years. It came to her at various times between day and night, (sometimes) twice without her returning to her senses between the first time and the second. At other times (it came) after three days, at

---

[It is a flourishing of mysticism encouraged by Cisneros, which will find its richest and most nuanced expression in the *Tercer abecedario espiritual* by Francisco de Osuna. It is a method by which the soul seeks God within itself, in such a total detachment from the world that it sets aside the thought of all created things and even all discursive thought].

30 "Durava el habla del Spíritu Sancto çinco o seys oras, e si Este hera tan dulce que a todos los que la oýan, que aunque fuesen muy peccadores e yncrédulos desta sancta graça antes que lo oyesen e viesen, les parecía estuvieran tres días con sus noches oyéndola sin sentir ningún fastidio" [The speech of the Holy Spirit lasted five or six hours, and was so sweet that all who heard her, although they were very sinful and incredulous of this holy grace before they had seen and heard it, yet it seemed to them that they spent three days and nights listening to her without feeling any fatigue] (*Vida y fin*, 26r). Daza 1611, 371, affirms that Juana underwent these raptures from her childhood and that she experienced them daily from twenty-two years of age. He added that their duration increased as time went by.

31 *Vida y fin*, 30r.

others after four days or eight or fifteen days, according to the will of God. And she had the elevations and ecstasies both day and night, from her childhood until God took her away from this present life.]

Although the final phrase declares that she had raptures throughout her life, the thirteen years of her public preaching tend to be combined with other information gathered from various sources suggesting that the *Conorte* would have been “written” (that is to say, transcribed) in the last two years of her life.<sup>32</sup> I will discuss this timescale at the end of the first chapter. On the other hand, as the chronicle of the convent, this text proposes Juana’s becoming abbess (1509) as the inflection point in its history. In its classic definition, the Observance decreed the return to a *modus vivendi* more in keeping with the original intentions of the founder of the order, which in turn implied a return to obedience.<sup>33</sup> And it is precisely obedience that “the prelate” invokes when, according to the hagiographic account, on a certain occasion he prohibited the abbess’s public raptures.<sup>34</sup> Obedience took precedent, Juana silenced herself, but soon afterwards a miracle took place that likened her to St Francis and his preaching to the birds. According to the account she was found preaching in her cell to a flock of birds, which changed the opinion of the authorities.<sup>35</sup> Probably, in the context of the privilege given to the convent by Cisneros over the adjacent church, Juana’s preaching was perceived as one of the functions that she fulfilled in her parish church’s *cura animarum*.<sup>36</sup> This priestly self-perception,

32 Thirteen years of preaching appears in various sources: *Vida y fin*, 30v–31r, in various testimonies of the canonization process, such as that of the abbess Sor Ana de la Concepción: “[D]icta Serva Dei [...] loquutus fuit pro ea Spiritus Sanctus tresdecim annis” [(T)he said Servant of God (...) the Holy Spirit spoke through her for thirteen years] (*Conorte* 1999, 135–136) and *LC*, 19v: “Treze años predicó el Señor y de solos los dos postreros se escribió este santo libro” [The Lord preached for thirteen years, and this holy book was written only in the last two of them]. Daza 1611, 71v. Navarro 1622, 315, and 324.

33 Pérez Vidal, *Arte y liturgia*, 72. See, also, J. Mixon, “Observant Reform’s Conceptual Frameworks between Principle and Practice”, in J. D. Mixon and B. Roest (eds.), *A Companion to the Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, Leiden/London, Brill, 60–84, 78, and Alison More, “Dynamics of Regulation, Innovation and Invention”, in J. D. Mixon and B. Roest (eds.), *A Companion to the Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, Leiden/London, Brill, 88. In general, on the development of the Observant reform at the European level, see the essays collected in J. Mixon and Bert Roest (eds.), *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, Leiden-London, Brill, 2015.

34 *Vida y fin*, 30v.

35 *Vida y fin*, 31v–31r.

36 In fact, S. Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collection from Late Medieval England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 238, claims that preaching was seen in the medieval period as part of the pastoral care of the community by its parish priest.

which included public preaching, is very similar to the privileges enjoyed by certain medieval abbesses such as those of the Cistercian monastery of Las Huelgas.<sup>37</sup> From the perspective of the community, Juana held a quasi-priestly authority, authorised by the privilege received from Cisneros and confirmed by divine will.<sup>38</sup> We can discern this when reading between the lines, such as when the Holy Spirit tells her: “*Az lo que pudieres si tienes poder para ello; si me quieres conjurar, conjúrame, que yo te esperaré como espero al sacerdote en el altar*”<sup>39</sup> [Do what you can do if you have power to do it; if you want to invoke me, invoke me, and I will wait for you as I wait for the priest at the altar]. The parallel established in this phrase between the priestly role and ecstasy could have a more radical reading between transubstantiation and preaching. The bread is transformed into the Son in the Mass, just as the body of Juana is divinized during the preaching.

According to the hagiographic sources, therefore, Juana's performances were conducted as ceremonies in which we can perceive a pattern unfolding in three phases, which implies a certain progression expected by her audience.<sup>40</sup> I have already mentioned the second phase: the ecstatic climax leading to the voice of the Son being expressed through her. But before this occurs there is a prelude which the sources refer to as “elevation” to the bed:

E quando esta graça le dava el Señor, primero se elevava en el lugar que aquella graça le tomava, e las monjas la tomavan en los brazos e la ponían sobre una cama. E de ay un poco de interbalo, veýan en ella señales que veýa al Señor. Algunas veces le veýa como en la humanidad, quando andava por la Tierra, e como después de resuçitado e subido a los Çielos glorificado, e de todas las maneras que Dios hera servido de se le mostrar. E oyase cómo le llamava estando elevada, como haçe la persona que la ve otra de lejos quiriendo que se le llegue çerca, e oýrse la voz de esta bienabenturada quando estava elevada, e veýa al Señor e le llamava.

37 E. de Balaguer, *La abadesa de las Huelgas*, Madrid, Luz, 1944, 148–149. See also different European examples gathered in M. Pérez Vidal, “El espacio litúrgico en los monasterios de dominicas de Castilla (ss. XIII–XVI)”, in F. Rodilla León *et al.* (eds.), *Sonido y espacio: antiguas experiencias musicales ibéricas*, Madrid, Alpuerto, 2020, 84–85.

38 On the authority and authorship of female speech in similar (and later) contexts to that of Juana, see J. Lewandoska, *Escritoras monjas. Autoridad y autoría en la escritura conventual femenina de los Siglos de Oro*, Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2019.

39 *Vida y fin*, 28r.

40 See, as additional material to *Vida y fin*, the description in Navarro 1622, 321, most likely based on Daza 1611.

E ver los movimientos que hacía con los brazos, causava no estar desatada el ánima del cuerpo.<sup>41</sup>

[And when the Lord granted her this grace, she would first be elevated in the location where the grace took hold of her, and the nuns would hold her in their arms and place her on a bed. And after a short interval, they would see in her the signs that she was seeing the Lord. Sometimes she saw him in his humanity, when he walked the Earth or after being resurrected and ascending glorified to heaven, or in the many ways that God had used to show himself to her. And they would hear how she called out to him while she was in rapture, like a person calling out to another from afar, desiring to draw near. And the voice of this blessed one could be heard when she was lifted up, and she would see the Lord and call out to him. And the sight of the movements she made with her arms showed that her soul was not separated from her body.]

The inductive phase of this performance begins with a clear sign: Juana faints and is helped by her companions who bring her to the bed. The text highlights that this initial fainting does not at any point cause the soul to be separated from the body (“*no estar desatada el ánima del cuerpo*”), which is to say that it does not share in the loss of her senses as occurs in the following stage, the ecstasy.<sup>42</sup> Thanks to the body language, the movements she makes with her arms (“*los movimientos que hacía con los brazos*”) and her exhortations, this first phase is clearly distinguished from the following one (prophetic preaching), during which the suspension of the exterior senses is made evident.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, as I have

41 *Vida y fin*, 27v.

42 As will be made clear in the following pages, I share the idea of Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*, 450–551, of prophecy as performance, not only in the sense that I am analysing here (that is, as a communicative act that is centered on the body as a discourse), but also as an action in itself that provokes change in the other, as conversion. As the Italian scholar puts it: “*La profezia non describe uno stato delle cose, non espone dei fatti, fondamentalmente un’azione*” [The prophecy does not describe a state of things, does not present facts, fundamentally an action] (540). See, in turn, R. Sanmartín Bastida, “Sobre las categorías de santa, beata y visionaria: El género performativo”, *Cahiers d’études hispaniques médiévales*, 39, 2016, 183–203; “The Word and Theatre of Trance” in *Women’s Lives: Self Representation, Reception, and Appropriation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth Petroff*, N. Otaño Gracia and D. Armenti (eds.), Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2022, 102–137, and *Staging Authority: Spanish Visionary Women and Images (1450–1550)*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell’Orso, 2024.

43 On the relationship between performance, ritual, theatre, and sermon, see B. M. Kienzle, “Medieval Sermons and their Performance: Theory and Record”, in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 84–124.

already indicated, the place where the bed is located is not specified: we could hypothesise that these events occur in the abbess's own cell, which would have been sufficiently large to hold an ample audience that, according to one of the *Conorte* manuscripts, exceeded one hundred people.<sup>44</sup> A much more detailed description of this first corporeal, inductive, phase is given later:

Quando ella llamava al Señor, dava muy clamorosas he reñas voces, haziendo muy devotas e humildes suplicaçiones e ruegos, para que llegase çerca donde ella estava. E de rato en ratos llamava muy apriesa, con el brazo derecho; e quando çesavan las voces e llamamientos con el braço, quedava muy sosegada, e no solamente suplicava a Nuestro Señor Jesuchristo tuviese por bien de açercarse a ella, mas aun a los sagrados ángeles haçía muy grandes ruegos y plegarias.<sup>45</sup>

[When she called the Lord, she loudly and clamorously shouted very devout and humble supplications and requests for him to come near to her. And by and by she signalled rapidly with the right arm, but when the shouts and signals with the arm ceased, she was very quiet. She not only requested that Our Lord Jesus Christ deem it good to come near to her, but she also made great prayers and supplications to the holy angels.]

This passage underlines Juana's active role in the search for ecstasy. Once again it emphasizes both the voices she brought forth and her gestures, which both served to attract the second person of the Trinity towards her. Juana moves her arms, cries ("*dava muy clamorosas he reñas voces*" [she loudly and clamorously shouted]) and prays ("*haziendo muy devotas e humildes suplicaçiones para que [Cristo] llegase çerca donde ella estava*" [very devout and humble supplications and requests for him to come near to her]).<sup>46</sup> Juana ritually invokes the Son. She acts in this way because she perceives him among the celestial court, first at a distance and then closer and closer, so much so that she ends up attracting him towards her own interiority and, a while later, launches him into the world through her own mouth. In turn, the description shows us not only that the ecstatic continues to perceive through her interior *sensorium*, but that she is completely imbued in this other world. Her soul is, in contrast to an earlier

44 See P. Acosta-García, "El cancionero revelado de la abadesa franciscana Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534). Edición y comentario", *Studia aurea. Revista de Literatura Española y Teoría Literaria del Renacimiento y Siglo de Oro*, vol. 15 (2021), 509, where more than one hundred and fifty people in the audience are mentioned. A different possibility which would require further research, could be the grate. See below, 173, n. 220.

45 *Vida y fin*, 28r.

46 *Vida y fin*, 28 r/v.

expression in *Vida y fin*, “*desatada del cuerpo*” [separated from her body]. Through this, she perceives the celestial paradise, where not only the Trinity and the Virgin Mary reside, but also the saints, angels, and the blessed. This celestial dimension, which is essential in the sermons of the *Conorte*, implies the opening of the channel that places Juana at the intersection of two realities. It is here that she becomes instrument, medium, prophet.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, it is during the second phase of the performance in which the material substance of the preaching is produced. It was gathered initially in the memory of the tertiaries and then transcribed following processes that I seek to reconstruct in the second chapter. In these five or six hours (“*cinco o seys oras*”), Juana relates the celestial celebrations that she visualizes, always as a correlate of the terrestrial liturgy, which connects with the thematic core of this book.<sup>48</sup> Her ecstatic preaching is developed as a liturgical act, as part of a ritualized time that includes active participation by the community in the Mass and in the *officium divinum*. As stated in the *Conorte*, the daily chants of the devout ascend towards Paradise, where they are heard by the celestial beings, and resonate there, including a supernatural celebration that is expressed through visionary language. Before analysing these materials, we read a final passage that outlines the second phase after the invocation of Christ, the ecstasy itself. Here, the image of the “ear trumpet” becomes central once more:

Y estando en este estado, el mesmo Dios la soplava con el soplo de su sagrada boca, e con el ayre de su poderosa mano, e le dava e ynspirava el Spíritu Sancto, como haçia a sus sagrados apóstoles quando los embiava a predicar su sancta palabra. Quedava entonces en silencio, e postrava sobre su faz las manos puestas. Quando las religiosas veýan estas señales en ella, levantávanla, e poníanla vien en su cama donde ella estava, e nada desto no vía ni sentía, ni oýa ninguna cosa, ni savía las personas que allí estavan. Luego, a deshora, se oýan voçes muy altas que salían por la boca della aprisa e conçertadas. Hablava el Spíritu Sancto, en persona de Nuestro Redemtor Jesuchristo, oýanlo todos los que estavan presentes. Tomava la plática con ella mesma, diziéndole: “¿Qué hazes, Juanica? Dios te salve. Dios te salve. ¿Quién eres tú que me llamas? ¿No saves que no

47 “*Il visionario, come il profeta, parla in nome di Dio e a favore della comunità: è un inviato, e come tale deve essere riconosciuto*” [The visionary, like the prophet, speaks in the name of God and on behalf of the community: he is a messenger, and as such, he must be recognized] (G. Zari, “La scrittura monastica”, in *Letras en la celda. Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, N. Baranda Leturio and M. del C. Marín Pina. (eds.), Madrid/Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014, 49–64, 53).

48 See below, 208ff. See also, A. Muñoz Fernández, “Iberian Women”, 209–221.

es ninguna criatura dina de Dios, en especial los peccadores que viven en la tierra?”. E luego proseguía por otras muy dulçes palabras, hablando muchos e grandes e divinos secretos, e misterios çelestiales, e declarando los sagrados evangelios y scripturas, según heran las fiestas, e días e solemnidades, e según hera su voluntad de querer hablar.<sup>49</sup>

[And being in this state, God himself breathed into her with the breath of his sacred mouth and with the air of his mighty hand, and he gave her and breathed into her with the Holy Spirit, as he had with his holy apostles when he sent them to preach his holy word. She then stayed silent and prostrated herself with her face in her hands. When the nuns saw these signs in her, they raised her and placed her carefully in the bed where she was, but nothing of this was seen or felt or anything heard or even known by the people who were present. Then, immediately, very loud words were heard that came tumbling out of her mouth in an intense way. The Holy Spirit spoke, in the person of Our Redeemer Jesus Christ, and was heard by all those who were present. She (seemed to) talk to herself, saying: “What are you doing, little Juana? God save you. God save you. Who are you to call me? Do you not know that no creature is worthy of God, especially those sinners who live on the earth?” And she continued with other very sweet words, speaking many and great and divine secrets and celestial mysteries. When he wanted to, he pronounced the holy gospels and scriptures based on their feasts and (liturgical) days and solemnities.]

There are three aspects to highlight in this passage. The first is the far from innocent comparison between Juana’s preaching and that of the apostles (“*e le dava e ynspirava el Spíritu Sancto, como hacía a sus sagrados apóstoles quando los embiava a predicar su sancta palabra*” [and he gave her and breathed into her with the Holy Spirit, as he had with his holy apostles when he sent them to preach his holy word]), not only because it indirectly defines the public event with its audience, but also because we know that there was a tradition in the convent that compared Juana’s sermons with the word of Christ as transcribed by the evangelists.<sup>50</sup> In the background, the reference to “breath” and

49 *Vida y fin*, 29v–30r.

50 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 112. On the relationship between the model of the medieval visionary and John the Evangelist, see V. Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen y la tradición visionaria de Occidente*, Barcelona, Herder, 2005, 67–94.



the divine authorization of her public speech are modelled on the events of Pentecost which can surely be read between the lines of this passage.<sup>51</sup>

The second is the immediate ("*a deshora*") miracle of the word of Christ in the mouth of Juana. How this occurred is not mentioned, but suddenly a dialogue is established between Juana's voice ("*[t]omava la plática con ella mesma*") [She (seemed to) talk to herself]) and another voice. Without any doubt, we should imagine this as dialogue between two persons: Juana and Christ: "*¿Qué hazes, Juanica? Dios te salve. Dios te salve. ¿Quién eres tú que me llamas?*" [What are you doing, little Juana? God save you. God save you. Who are you to call me?] Here, it is Christ speaking, responding to Juana's previous call. This dialogic structure implies a modulation of the voices, familiar from the forms of the "semi-dramatic sermon."<sup>52</sup> Despite having incorporated Christ as a sudden and temporary incarnation, Juana is always present not only with her body but also through her own voice.

<sup>51</sup> I thank Victoria Cirlot for this reference.

<sup>52</sup> On the semi-dramatic sermon, see K. L. Jansen, "Preaching as Playwriting: a semi-dramatic Sermon of the Fifteenth Century", in M. F. Cussato and G. Geltner (eds.), *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life. Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, Leiden, Brill, 2009, 237–247. The tradition of the semi-dramatic sermon (which included dialogues, minstrel-like gestures, changes of register etc.), surely in the *Conorte* has a typically Franciscan root coming from the founder of the order, the *giuglare da Dio*. Celano had already claimed that St Francis was "*de toto corpore fecerat linguam*" [he made his whole body a tongue]. On this expression, see B. M. Kienzle, "Medieval Sermons and their Performance: Theory and Record", in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 107–109. This is developed in later generations by famous preachers such as Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) who also shared an apocalyptic rhetoric with Juana (see, L. Bolzoni, *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, 145–242, particularly on the apocalyptic imaginary, 148–149). In this sense, it is clear that Juana would be a kind of "electrifying revivalist" in contrast to preachers dedicated to "routine sermonizing" in the opposition described by A. Thompson, "From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event", in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 19. Undoubtedly, her performances should be classified as "affective preaching" rather than "monastic or university preaching" (Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collection*, 293), as many of her sermons use the expressive tradition of the *Meditationes vite Christi* to move the affects of the audience. C. Delcorno, "La predicazione", 414–415 proposes a good example of "*azione teatrale*" [theatrical action] during a performance where the preacher feminizes the tone of voice to moan through the mouth of Mary. On this tradition in Castile (which according to the author only became effective in this Kingdom after the translation of the *Meditationes vite Christi* after 1492), see C. Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2013, 254, and 373.



Third, I would like to dwell on the sentence: "... *declarando los sagrados evangelios y scripturas, según heran las fiestas, e días e solemnidades*" [he declared the holy gospels and scriptures based on their feasts and (liturgical) days and solemnities]. The verb *declarar* [to declare, to explain, to exegetically glose] is used in the *Conorte* to speak of the allegorical interpretation of a text or an image. "Declare a Gospel" means passing from the historical sense of the writing to the allegorical by means of a commentary.<sup>53</sup> That these "gospels and scriptures" depend on the "feasts, and days, and solemnities" tells us as much about the key correlation between Juana's preaching and the liturgical calendar as one of the main functions of these sermons: to proceed to a commentary on the Bible.<sup>54</sup>

The liturgy is the framework, the trigger, and the justification of the sermons in the *Conorte*. A framework, not only because Juana's preaching is a liturgical act in itself that emanates from her extraordinary status as a parish priest, but also because it enters into a cyclical ritual time that is experienced by the Franciscan tertiaries and is constructed in community.<sup>55</sup> In this respect, Juana is the one chosen to transmit the revelation, but she is also a *par inter pares*, because this takes place in a group context, in which the tertiaries participate in the entire process, both before and after receiving the revelation. Liturgy is a trigger because the elevation and the later ecstatic state are caused by certain

53 "... only two senses of Scripture recognized everywhere in the ancient tradition: the one, which consists in the history of the letter; the other, which is more generally named spiritual, or allegorical, or mystical" (H. de Lubac, *apud* B. M. Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen and her Gospel Homilies. Speaking New Mysteries*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2009, 93). See, in turn, his fundamental *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'écriture*, Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1959.

54 Among others, P. M. Cátedra, *Liturgia, poesía y teatro en la Edad Media. Estudios sobre prácticas culturales y literarias*, Madrid, Gredos, 2005, 126, highlights the relationship between the composition of the *Conorte* and the liturgical cycle. For an introduction to the use of the Bible by preachers, see S. Wenzel, "The use of the Bible in preaching", in R. Marsden and E. A. Matter (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 11: From 600 to 1450*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 680–692.

55 For the relationship with the conception of time and monastic life, see M. Fassler, "The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Medieval Representation of History", in *Representing History 900–1300: Music, Art, History*, R. A. Maxwell (ed.), Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2010, 149–172, and the chapters included in T. J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 2001, and, especially, S. Borgehammar, "A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year", 13–44.

liturgical texts, performed by the community on certain festivities.<sup>56</sup> Antiphons and responsories, Biblical imagery that is found in the gospels or the epistles of the day, or certain homilies read during the office can be identified as primary *pre-texts* of the sermon. It is a justification, finally, because if we do not reconstruct this liturgical background, the sermons of the *Conorte* lack the appropriate intertexts needed for a comprehensive hermeneutic analysis.

The third and final phase of this preaching represents the closure of the session, which takes the form of a blessing that Christ gives to his followers. This is found, for example, at the end of the copy of the sermon on the birth of John the Baptist in the *LC*: “*Fin del santo sermón, el qual acabó el Señor dando su bendición, diciendo: ‘La bendición del Padre e de mí, su Fijo, y del Spíritu Santo, que me voy, y no del corazón que me ama’*”<sup>57</sup> [End of the holy sermon, which ended with the Lord giving his blessing, saying: “The blessing of the father, and of me, his Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as I am leaving, but not from the heart that loves me.”] The use of such a formula suggest that the development of the performance is ritualized, unfolding in stages and concluding at this point. It is also a kind of adaptation of the final blessing of the Mass, which, in turn, confirms the quasi-priestly conception of Juana and the integration of her preaching into the liturgical field.

### 3 Conceptual Reflections

Before summarizing the content of each chapter, it is necessary to clarify some of the concepts used throughout the book. The first of these is the tripartite distinction that Gerrit Cornelis Zieleman makes between “predication” (*predicatie*), defined as “liturgical act” and “liturgical or para-liturgical address”; “sermon” (*preek*), “[a] written text that is in one way or another associated with predication” and “*predicationality*”, “used to refer to the characteristics that

56 For example, the report of her stigmatization found in *Vida y fin*, 38r–39v or in Daza 1611, 78v–81r, gives a good account of this.

57 *LC*, 66v–67r, although there is a longer variation in Daza 1611, 75v–76r. The so-called *LC* (usually named in this way because it contains in 1r a note of ownership in which can be read “This book is of the House and monastery of Our Lady of the Cross”, from which it can be inferred that it comes from the lost archive of the convent of which Juana was abbess) is a codex that contains a miscellany of compositions of a performative character (religious plays, sermons, *coplas*...) related to the figure of Juana. The BNE’s online catalogue dates its writing to the seventeenth century, but there is no in-depth codicological study of the manuscript.

connect predications and sermons”.<sup>58</sup> The pair predication/sermon places the emphasis on the basic problem of any text that tries to represent or at least convey a literary representation of factuality. For example, in the case of literature that we label today “mystical”, this tension arises between the divine, ineffable experience that the mystic has supposedly experienced and its impossible, finally paradoxical writing. As Angela da Foligno expressed to Brother A. in fourteenth century Umbria: “*Illud quod deterius est et quod nichil est scripsisti, sed de pretioso quod sentit anima nichil scripsisti*” [You have written about what is worse and what is nothing, but you have written nothing about the precious thing that the soul felt].<sup>59</sup> In contrast, in hagiographic literature this is a problem between, on the one hand, the representation of the *vita* of a holy person and, on the other hand, the *topoi*, the prevailing models of holiness, and the general intentionality of the hagiographer.

For this study, a clear separation between preaching-as-ritual (henceforth, preaching) and sermon-as-text (henceforth, sermon) is fundamental, recognizing their inherent synergies and interactions between the two (“predicationality”). It is the text that is the primary focus of analysis and from it an attempt is made to reconstruct certain contextual aspects of the historical performance. To do this, the sermon needs to be examined through a set of tools that includes not only literary analysis but also a variety of methodological perspectives (manuscript studies, gender studies, and sermon studies, among others), whose combination, I believe, is essential to approach a *corpus* such as that of the *Conorte*. To carry out this reconstruction, two literary genres depicting Juana’s preaching sessions have a crucial role: the hagiographical account and the sermon. The main difference between them is that the former, as I

58 These terminological distinctions were established by G. C. Zielemans in *Middel nederlandse epistle- en evangeliepreken*, Leiden, Brill, 1978 and “Prediking, predikatie, preek: Een begripsbepaling”, *Kerken Theologie* 30 (1979), 115–122. I have taken these definitions from Mertens, “The Middle Dutch Sermon”, 144, 207, 211, and 208, respectively. For a very comprehensive review of sermon studies that includes an abundant bibliography, see A. Thompson, “From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event”, in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 15–35.

59 A. da Foligno, *Memoriale*, E. Menestò (ed.), Firenze, SISMEL, 2013, 20: 159–160. C. T. Jones’ hermeneutical perspective in this context is both refreshing and compelling: “I approach this literature with the understanding that no texts exist, or ever existed, that record mystical experience as such. As Werner Williams Krapp has argued for Heinrich Seuse (Henry Suso) the texts that purport to record mystical experience are always already mystagogy. Their primary purpose is not to relate a past experience but to teach others how to achieve spiritual fulfillment” (*Ruling the Spirit. Women, Liturgy, and the Dominican Reform in Late Medieval Germany*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018, 3).

have just shown, describes the abbess in the third person, immersed in a specific context and involved in various communicative situations. In contrast, the *Conorte* is reduced to presenting the sermon as the simple textual codification of “aquella voz” [*that voice*], the voice of Christ, thereby complicating the interpretation of the elements which triggered and surrounded Juana’s preaching.

It is also important to dwell for a moment on the term also coined by Zieleman which points to the sermon as a literary genre, the *predikatiefictie* [*“predication fiction”*]. He defines it as “[the] use [of] predication characteristics to indicate or to suggest that they are the written rendering of a predication”.<sup>60</sup> Given the textual nature of the sermon, the characteristics that Zieleman alludes to are identified as markers of preaching that the writer/s of the sermon decide/s to include (or silence) in the textualization, seeking to generate particular effects in the reader. There are two elements evident in the *Conorte* that can be related to “*predication fiction*”: one of them is the aforementioned voice of Christ that articulates the written discourse. In this sense, the expression “*hablando el Señor en aquella voz*” [the Lord speaking with that voice] defines the source of the text (coming from the voice of Christ), proposes a context of frequency (that voice *used to* preach in this way), and neutralizes the intermediation of Juana or, at least, her visibility in the text. The other element is the allusions, particularly noticeable at the *incipit* of each piece, which indicate the liturgical context that underlies the sermon.

From my point of view, any analysis that seeks to establish a basis for a study of the *Conorte* must centre on the processes through which the preaching of an abbess comes to make up a collection of sermons that has survived in two different manuscripts. This emphasis on process requires the articulation of a methodology that interrogates the surviving materials in their context of production, at the same time as it contextualizes them both synchronically and diachronically. For this reason I propose a course that proceeds from the materiality of the codices (**Materiality**), continues with the probable processes of textualization (**Textuality**), then debates the characteristics of preaching in the context of medieval feminine revelatory literature (**Intertextuality**), to finally enter the analysis of the text (**Hermeneutics**). In this respect, my study of the sermons is firmly based on a primary scrutiny of the codices that seeks to settle the question of *what the Conorte is*.

**Materiality**, the first chapter, is an introduction to the perspective that runs throughout this monograph, which is to review what we know (or what we have traditionally believed) about the *Conorte* through a transdisciplinary lens.

---

60 Mertens, “The Middle Dutch Sermon”, 208.

This chapter has two main aims: to review the discourses linked to the process of Juana's canonization and their impact on our current conception of the *Conorte*, and to perform a codicological analysis that will enable us to gather as much information as possible about the genesis of this particular book of sermons. As will be noted, the two surviving manuscripts have never been subjected to a complete codicological analysis that supplies reliable data on, for example, the dating of its paper or its script. Treating these manuscripts as literary artefacts is a way not only of enriching and strengthening future studies on Juana's sermons through new information, but also of providing a holistic perspective that does not perceive them as mere containers of text. In principle, I will focus not only on revisiting and sometimes correcting or debating the claims that have been made about the manuscripts of the *Conorte*, but also on establishing new contexts (dating, chronologies, circulation, possible filiation) for them.

The two surviving manuscripts are understood then as textual artefacts that hold traces related to their production, composition, and use which are essential for the conception of the sermons they contain. For this purpose, it has been important to address the unresolved problem of the manuscript's filiation, at least, between the two different versions that are so mysteriously similar and yet so dissimilar. From the beginning, my focus is on the consideration given to the *Conorte* in studies that begin with García Andrés's foundational works on the El Escorial manuscript, in which this codex is seen as the container of a more primitive version of the sermons, and thus has been considered closer to Juana's discourse. As will become clear, it is particularly pressing to separate the role that the so-called *writings* of Juana (that is, the sermons and *Vida y fin*) have played in the different phases of the canonization process from a historical-philological perspective. In this way, I will start by examining the discussion about how the authenticity of the writings has shaped modern scholarly perceptions of the abbess's book of sermons. This influence subtly orients a supposedly critical discourse toward the needs of its postulators, aiming to re-open the process of Juana's canonization. As we shall see, the need to propose an alternative version of the sermons to that provided by the Vatican manuscript is the main reason why today scholars generally use the El Escorial manuscript (or, more specifically, *Conorte 1999*) in their investigations. To sum up, in my first chapter, I return to the materiality of the written supports of the *Conorte*, analysing them in depth to reinterpret them afresh. My main interest is to trace, as far as possible, the origins of the manuscripts, their migrations, and how they were considered differently in varying contexts. I will thus establish a renewed chronology at the same time as tracing circulation itineraries as clearly as possible.

In the second chapter, **Textuality**, I investigate what was the main impediment to Juana's canonization process from its second stage onwards: the textualization of her preaching. As noted earlier, the dichotomy outlined by Zielemann between preaching and sermon does no more than formalize one of the essential problems of sermon studies, which is the relationship between a preaching that (at least hypothetically) occurred historically and the text or body of texts that has come down to us *re-presenting* it. In the case of the *Conorte*, this process of textual transformation is determined by the collective character of its writing. From the origins of studies on Juana de la Cruz it is clear that the involvement of some tertiaries of the community was fundamental for the writing and compilation of this sermon collection. The text explicitly declares this multiple times through the first-person feminine plural narrator (*nosotras*), emphasizing the community and validating the convent's tradition, as seen in both the testimonies of the canonization process and the hagiographic accounts. These materials do not allude to a dictation or to the existence of a *reportatio*, but—and this is fundamental—to the memorization of the abbess's words by some of her companions.<sup>61</sup>

However, can writing textually codify an ecstatic sermon of some six hours' duration? In effect, in contrast to the methods perceived as reliable for transcribing the words of the servant of God according to the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti from Urban VIII's decree *Caelestis Hierusalem Cives* (a *reportatio* or a dictation), the tertiaries of Juana's community declare that they collected the sermons of the *Conorte* from memory.<sup>62</sup> This claim, which appears in various women's communities of the fifteenth century and was initially perceived by some sermon-studies scholars as a mere *topos*, implies the basis of a method of recalling and textually recreating a performance. As Patricia Stoop and Thomas Mertens have shown, this process involves "layered authorship", that is to say the pouring of experience into a text constructed in layers of writing by different scribes/writers/authors (or by the same scribe/writer/author at different times, or a combination of both possibilities). Besides being a common characteristic of medieval and early-modern text-production, "layered authorship" is especially relevant in the so-called "convent sermon" and it is typical of some fifteenth-century communities in the Low Countries.<sup>63</sup> As will

61 As an example of a *reportatio* of a woman religious, see the 1548 case in the convent of S. Giorgio de Lucca, identified by C. Delcorno, "La predicazione", in P. Boitani *et al.* (eds.), *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*, vol. 2: *Il Medioevo volgare*, Rome, Salerno, 423, in which a nun uses the preachers' own diagrams to support her own transcript.

62 This is also claimed by Daza 1611, 76v, focusing on María Evangelista.

63 See, for example, P. Stoop, "From Reading to Writing: The Multiple Levels of Literacy of the Sisters Scribes in the Brussels Convent of Jericho", in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval*

be shown, preaching aimed at women religious and collected by them over time embodies the concept of “layered authorship” as a fundamental aspect of collective authorship. It refers to a text created in various stages, likely involving multiple authors, and, most importantly, reflecting the collective will of an entire community.<sup>64</sup> As preservers and guardians of tradition, these texts—manifested in our case in manuscript form—become essential for constructing and maintaining the community’s identity.

In the case of the *Conorte*, the work of Stoop and Mertens enables my discussion on the reconstruction of the steps between memory and codex. Additionally, combined with Stoop’s conception of “layered authorship”, this approach offers a coherent way to examine the interpolations inserted throughout the Vatican manuscript. It is essential to understand these sermons not only as textual re-creations of preaching but also to place them in a system of work where certain versions are “in progress”, involving the use of materials added at different stages of the redaction or editing process. On the other hand, the division of authorial roles in terms of writing processes strengthens indications that suggest that there was a widely understood *scriptorium* in the convent.

In the third chapter, **Intertextuality**, I try to place Juana’s ecstatic preaching in a diachronic and transnational context. It is not a question of seeking direct relationships but rather of trying, through a comparative study, to understand the relationships between life in community, charismatic revelation, prophetic preaching, and liturgical exegesis. These elements will be studied to greater or lesser extent in the sermons and/or revelations of such diverse figures as Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179), her contemporary Elisabeth von Schönau (1129–1164/5), the milieu of Helfta personified by Mechthild von Hackeborn (1241–1298), and Domenica da Paradiso (1473–1553), the “*madre cicala*”, abbess of the Monastero della Santa Croce in Florence.<sup>65</sup> I am interested in exploring the dichotomy highlighted by Zarri in relation to women’s preaching, which

---

*Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, 44–54.

64 On “layered authorship” in the convent sermon, see P. Stoop, “Female Authorship in the Augustinian Convent of Jericho and the Translation of Conrad of Saxony’s *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* in Sermons by Maria van Pee and Janne Colijns”, *The Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 42/2 (2016), 248–268; P. Stoop, “From Reading to Writing”, 44–54; P. Stoop, “Nun’s Literacy in Sixteenth-Century Convent Sermons from the Cistercian Abbey of Ter Kameren”, in *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, 185–195.

65 Some of the figures treated here are brought together for the first time in the book edited by C. Mooney, *Gendered Voices: medieval saints and their interpreters*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.



she divides between *sacra conversatio* (or *ex officio* preaching) and prophetic preaching:

Female preaching was a characteristic aspect of the religious life of women in the Early Modern period. Abbesses preached inside the convent, by power of “ordinary charisma” of their office. Prophetic preaching was another type, which we may consider to be a manifestation of “extraordinary charisma” granted to a person specifically endowed with mystical gifts.<sup>66</sup>

As we shall see in the following, the posture regarding the prohibition of women speaking in public contrasts with the specific cases of women prophets who, in effect, had been preaching openly at least since the twelfth century. The porosity between preaching and teaching, and their development in the private and public arenas, is one of the fundamental questions of this chapter. I am particularly interested in elucidating whether the binaries preaching/teaching and public/private are met in all the case studies or whether there is room for ambiguity. The analysis of these opposing terms will be integrated into what I have called “degrees of open speech”, that is to say, in the various communicative modalities that regulate the transmission of individual revelation adopted by mystics and visionaries, which vary according to their audience.<sup>67</sup>

It will be particularly important in this section to explore the interaction between vision, revelation, and biblical exegesis, crystalizing in the concepts of *Liturgieexegese* and *liturgische Vision*. These terms were coined by Caroline

66 G. Zarri, “Places and Gestures of Women’s Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy”, in K. L. Jansen *et al.* (eds.), *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 177–193, 178. In this chapter, she expanded upon the arguments presented earlier in G. Zarri, “Predicatrici e madri spirituali. Il charisma, lo spazio, il pubblico”, in D. Corsi (ed.), *Done cristiane e sacerdozio: dale origini all’età contemporanea*, Roma, Viella, 2004, 159–177. The prohibition of women’s speaking in public tended to be based on the exegesis of 1 Cor. 14,34 and 1 Tim. 2,12. On Thomas Aquinas’s posture on the female possibility of using the “*gratia* of discourse” (“*de gratia quae consistit in sermone*”), see K. Kerby-Fulton, “When Women Preached: An Introduction to Female Homiletic, Sacramental, and Liturgical Roles in Later Middle Ages”, in L. Olson and Kerby-Fulton (eds.), *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, 31–55; and Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*, 444. On intraconventual preaching, see E. Schlotheuber, “Doctrina privata und doctrina publica – Überlegungen zu den mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern als Wissens – und Bildungsraum”, in G. Melville (ed.), *Die Wirkmacht klösterlichen Lebens im Mittelalter. Modelle – Ordnungen – Kompetenzen – Konzepte*, Regensburg, Pustet, 2019, 36–43.

67 This term is inspired by the degrees of the “*vision abierta*” [open vision] coined by V. Cirlot, *La visión abierta. Del mito del grail al surrealismo*, Madrid, Siruela, 2010.



Emmelius to define a similar phenomenon in Helfta, in particular in the revelations of Mechthild von Hackeborn's *Liber spetialis gratiae*, but are also applicable to Elisabeth von Schönau as a foundational figure and, by extension, to Juana de la Cruz.<sup>68</sup> In effect, the allegorical reading is fundamental in the *Conorte*, both in its interpretation of certain texts chanted in the divine office and the Mass (the gospels and epistles of the day, or certain homilies, for instance) and in the interpretation of the sermons. Finally, this chapter investigates the links between revelation and community writing that is conveyed precisely through ritual.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, **Hermeneutics**, I will apply the new perspectives opened in the previous discussion to the case analysis of four passages of the *Conorte*. In effect, if the liturgical cycle forms the backbone of the *Conorte*, ritual is its marrow. This is not only because the abbess's preaching formed part of the liturgical life of the community, but also because ritual justified and triggered her elevation, her ecstasy, and her subsequent revelations. Liturgy, therefore, will be at the heart of this commentary, but I will necessarily have to consider the textual shapes that derive from collective writing and the subsequent "layered authorship" (**Textuality**), and the tradition of visionary liturgical exegesis (**Intertextuality**). Following the order of the breviary, Juana's words are integrated by her fellow tertiaries into the ritual, commentating on it from a state of ecstasy.

Particularly important for my analysis are the links established between the vision and the commentary on the liturgical text. This illustrates the direct allusion to specific readings from the breviary (such as the gospel and epistle of the day, antiphons and responses, and certain *lectiones*) that align with the corresponding readings of the feast day in the preaching. A significant aspect of this final chapter involves revealing the source of some of the Biblical translations quoted in the *Conorte*. This discovery demonstrates the circulation and use by part of the community of a lectionary-homiliary in Castilian, pointing to the collective methods of transcription of the sermon book.

---

68 C. Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele. Struktur und Medialität der Liturgie in Visionen des 'Fließenden Lichts der Gottheit' und des 'Liber specialis gratiae'", in C. Emmelius, and B. Nemes (eds.), *Mechthild und das Fließende Licht der Gottheit im Kontext. Eine Spurensuche in religiösen Netzwerken und literarischen Diskursen im mitteldeutschen Raum des 13–15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, Erich Schmidt, 2019, 157–190.

## The *Conorte* as a Textual Artefact

“One lingering problem in research on Late Medieval devotion is that mysticism and material culture are rarely considered together—one deals with the supposedly immaterial, the other with physical reality.”

R. KIRAKOSIAN, *From the Material to the Mystical in Late Medieval Piety*,  
Cambridge/NewYork, Cambridge University Press, 2021, 213



### 1 Introduction

The collection of visionary sermons traditionally known as *Conorte* was gathered and produced by a community that wanted to safeguard the discourse revealed through its abbess.<sup>1</sup> If the sermons were intoned by the voice of the Lord, it was the tertiaries of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz who transmigrated not only the words but also the same voice that emerged from Juana to the pages. This transcription, little by little, would make up the *Conorte*. Its function was, at first, eminently internal, created by and for the women religious of Juana's community, and, according to the testimonies gathered in the seventeenth century, it was also considered to be a sacred object. Despite the evident human agency in its creation, the community's perception was that the presence of the divine voice in its pages sanctified both bodies—that of the abbess and that of the book—mimicking the paradox of the incarnation in both dimensions. In effect, both possessed a divine part and, as such, both were sacred.

This sacredness is central to reading the book in the communal context in which it was produced and to establishing a principle of contemporary

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term “visionary sermon” to define Juana's particular way of preaching. The term is developed with this sense in J. A. Boon, “Introduction”, in J. A. Boon and R. E. Surtz (eds.), R. E. Surtz and N. Weinerth (trans.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*. Toronto/Tempe, Iter Academic Press/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016, 30–33.

interpretation based on the materiality of the text. The *Conorte* is, above all, a work contained in two manuscripts now known as the Vatican manuscript and the El Escorial manuscript. The first, the Vatican, has had little or no impact in the studies of Juana's visionary sermons, apart from some remarkable exceptions, and neither of the two versions has been subjected to an in-depth study that takes into account what they can show us about the production, circulation, function, and reception of the texts they contain. In my opinion, to conceive the *Conorte* as an artefact is essential because it allows us to discuss the origins and transformations of a collection of sermons preserved in two distinct versions. The material study of the codices reveals processes of textualization that have remained unnoticed until now.

My theoretical perspective owes much to that proposed by the New Philology of the 1990s. I employ codicology together with the history of the book, palaeography, and the history of reading as interpretive tools that complement a merely textual analysis.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, I am not interested in performing an ordered material description of each of the codices (that is, making a codicological description that is justified *per se*), but rather in using the more enriching elements that an analysis of this type can provide to advance our knowledge about Juana's sermons. I will start, then, by outlining the state of the *status quaestionis*.

## 2 The Codices of the *Conorte* and Juana de la Cruz's Canonization Process

Juana's gift of ecstatic preaching gradually became problematic in hagiographies that appeared after the only account of the abbess's life produced in her own lifetime, *Vida y fin*. To provide a well-known example, during the Counter-Reformation and despite having overcome censorship, the *editio princeps* of the work of one of the main hagiographer's of the abbess, Antonio Daza (1610), was amended in later editions, in which the more delicate passages were suppressed and glossed.<sup>3</sup> As another of Juana's hagiographers, Pedro Navarro,

2 On the "New Philology", see B. Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1989; S. Nichols, "Philology in a Manuscript Culture", *Speculum* 65,1 (1990), 1–10, and S. Wenzel, "Reflections on (New) Philology", *Speculum* 65,1 (1990), 11–18. In this sense, I am in agreement with the theoretical approaches outlined in R. Kirakosian, *From the Material to the Mystical in Late Medieval Piety*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, 64.

3 M. Zugasti, "Santidad bajo sospecha: la vida de Sor Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) en florilegios de santos, crónicas y escenarios del Siglo de Oro", digital edition of the Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes, 2017, 1–35, (<https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcgb448>), accessed: 15/07/2023 [original chapter in L. González Fernández and T. Rodríguez (eds.), *Hommage à*

explained in 1622, the obstacles that hindered the account of the abbess's life were caused by

algunos indiscretamente escrupulosos, que han extrañado el lenguaje de decir que el Espíritu Santo habló por la boca de la bendita virgen cosas maravillosas por espacio de trece años, pareciéndoles que lo que se concedió a los autores de la Escritura Sagrada [...] no se ha de conceder a una mujer en particular.<sup>4</sup>

[some indiscreetly scrupulous people, who were surprised by the language of saying that the Holy Spirit spoke marvellous things through the mouth of the blessed virgin over the space of thirteen years, as it seemed to them that what was granted to the authors of Holy Scripture (...) was not granted to a particular woman.]

Thus, the fundamental trait of the abbess's leadership during the Cisnerian reform—her visionary charisma—came to be considered later as part of an inadequate model of sanctity, especially if we take into account the devotion and interest that Juana continued to arouse among a large public and that her sermons were written in the vernacular, that is to say in a language understandable by almost everyone.<sup>5</sup> The ecstatic preacher was thus, softened through the rewritings, references to authorities, and glosses made to her hagiographic accounts, whose main purpose was to promote Juana through her canonization process.

In *Conorte* 1999, García Andrés reconstructed the details of this process. He divided it into three “ancient” parts, to which a fourth, “modern” part should be added.<sup>6</sup> The cause was reopened in 1986, and García Andrés himself joined as vice-postulator, not by chance, in 1999.<sup>7</sup> Without a doubt, the extensive fame

---

André Gallego. *La transmissions de savoirs licites ou illicites dans le monde hispanique péninsulaire (XIIe au XVIIe siècles)*, Toulouse, CNRS/Université de Toulouse/Le Mirail, 2013, 314–323].

4 Navarro 1622, 315–316.

5 In the unpaginated foreword found in Pedro Navarro 1622, the author justified the new corrected edition of a hagiography that “suffered shipwreck” (*“padesció naufragio”*) through inquisitorial intervention. Something similar occurred to Daza with his 1610 publication, corrected and annotated in later editions (see Zugasti, “Santidad bajo sospecha”, 4–10). On the religious reform of the Catholic Monarchs, known as the Cisnerian reform after Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, one of its main instigators, See, 8 above.

6 *Conorte* 1999, 131–169.

7 J. Gómez López, “Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)”, 1250. It is important to contextualize the different stages in their political-legal framework: a good work of synthesis in this area is M. Gotor, *Chiesa e santità nell'Italia moderna*, Bari, Laterza, 2004. I think María Victoria Triviño for this information.

Juana enjoyed as a *santa viva* throughout her life was what triggered the early opening of the informative process in 1613, almost eighty years after her death.<sup>8</sup> In the first phase of the canonization process (1621–1630), Juana followed the established path towards beatification without too many difficulties: after the initial inquiries in Toledo, on 4 May 1630 her heroic virtues were declared.<sup>9</sup> However, in the second stage (1664–1679), the legislative framework of the canonization processes changed in the context of Urban VIII's reform of the beatification and canonization procedures. In particular, the promulgation of Urban VIII's apostolic constitution "*Caelestis Hierusalem Cives*" (1624–1642) required the review of the documents directly related to Juana's activities while alive, as part of the start of the "*per viam non cultus*" process.<sup>10</sup> It was precisely at this point when the possibilities of her beatification started to go awry. Under the new legislation the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti was obliged to require and examine not only the texts that were written *about the servant of God*, but also *her own writings*.<sup>11</sup> This was to be performed in a preliminary way, as a precaution, before beginning "*qualsiasi atto giudiziale del processo apostolico in genere*" [any judicial act of the apostolic process in general].<sup>12</sup> In Juana's case, as her heroic virtues had been declared according to previous legislation, the process was left in suspense until her own writings could be examined.

Before continuing, it is essential to explain to what kind of authorship (and, thus, to what kind of written documents) Pope Urban's decrees referred to, because this would determine how the process would unfold in the following decades and, in the end, how we understand the surviving manuscripts today. Evidently, a key concern for the examiners was to evaluate the texts written by the hand of the Servant of God (that is to say, her autograph work), but not this alone. They would also have to account for "*ciò che è stato scritto da altrui*,

8 *Conorte* 1996, 143.

9 *Conorte* 1999, 141.

10 *Conorte* 1999, 141. The arc of the dates of the decrees is outlined in a fundamental work for understanding the profound procedural changes implied by Pope Urban's decrees, particularly regarding the need to examine the writings of the individual to be canonized: F. Leone, *La prova documentale degli scritti nei processi di beatificazione e canonizzazione*, Roma, Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1989, 25–42, especially, 39–40. For the transformations under the mandate of Urban VIII, see Gotor, *Chiesa e santità*, 71–81.

11 Before this decree was promulgated, only the evaluation of hagiographic writings was mentioned, see Leone, *La prova documentale*, 27–29.

12 F. Leone, *La prova documentale*, 40 and 78 ("*la raccolta degli scritti, secondo la legislazione urbaniana, deve precedere qualsiasi atto giudiziale del processo apostolico in genere*" = "According to the legislation of Urban VIII, the collection of writings must precede any judicial act of the apostolic process in general").

*degni di fede, e sotto dettatura o riferendo fedelmente quanto ascoltato del servo da Dio.*" [what has been written by others, worthy of faith, and dictated or faithfully reporting what has been heard from the servant of God].<sup>13</sup> In Juana's case, famous for her ecstatic preaching, it was clear that the sermons of the *Conorte* would have to come either under this second category of dictation (the most secure form of collecting an oral testimony) or at least under that of having been heard and transcribed by someone trustworthy ("*degni di fede*"). At this time the fundamental problem that needed to be clarified was the authorship of the doctrine contained in the words transcribed, which, if judged according to Urban's decrees, needed to be identified unequivocally as Juana's. Unfortunately for the postulators, the compilation of sermons that would be found in her convent did not correspond to either of these two options.

Following orders from the Vatican, a local commission was arranged to investigate the archives of the Convento de Santa María de Cruz in search of the writings. The abbess at the time, María de San Gabriel, showed to the commission "*un armario di legno... situato presso il muro della porta della clausura à man sinistra*" [a wooden cabinet... located near the wall by the door of the enclosure on the left-hand] kept under lock and key.<sup>14</sup> Once she herself had opened it, they found the following: "*Come ancora giurano e dichiarano, che l'altri quattro libri, ò quinterni parimenti manoscritti, che sono copie sciolte d'alcuni, e diverse sermoni del detto libro, che chiamano Raccolto, sono li medesmi che custodiavano nel detto Archivio...*" [They also swear and declare that the other four books, or similarly hand-written quinternions, which are loose copies of some, and various sermons from the said book, which they call 'the collection' are the same ones they kept in the aforementioned Archive...].<sup>15</sup> I will return later to the unpublished content of this *armarium*, but for now will stay with just the two manuscripts that were chosen by the commission and sent to the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti: an *ingentem tomum* [a large volume] called

13 Leone, *La prova documentale*, 53.

14 *Positio super dubio* (*Summarium super dubio, ex relatione Rotali, art. secundus, de Sanctitate in genere*), 19. The name of the abbess is in the manuscript Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. ss. Rituum, Processus 3072, f. 45r.

15 *Positio super dubio* (*Summarium super dubio, ex relatione Rotali, art. secundus, de Sanctitate in genere*), 4. The original document, which I have not been able to locate, lists and describes the books found in the archive: "*Sequitur descriptio librorum*" (*Positio super dubio Summarium super dubio, ex relatione Rotali, art. secundus, de Sanctitate in genere*, 3). I thank Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli for her assistance with this translation.

the *Book of the Conorte* (the full collection or *raccolto* of Juana's sermons)<sup>16</sup> and a copy of her first hagiography *Vida y fin* in more recent handwriting.<sup>17</sup>

The *Conorte* that was found was described under oath by the abbess as the only complete copy existing in the convent, at least since 1618, the year in which she started to live there as a novice.<sup>18</sup> In turn, she clarified that this manuscript in particular was the one venerated by the community since time immemorial and, surely influenced by the language of the commission that was carrying out the interrogation, was considered by all of them to be the "authentic" one. As we shall see, it is this adjective, combined with "original", that contains the problem *in nuce* that would be developed when the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti examined these two manuscripts.

After the books arrived at the Vatican, two experts designated by cardinal Arrolini (the Cistercian Giovanni Bona, who would be named cardinal shortly afterwards, and the Jesuit Martín Esparza) examined the writings. Bona unambiguously censored *Vida y fin* and performed what seems to be a very superficial reading of the *Conorte*,<sup>19</sup> saying: "*Vidi etiam in quo continentur Sermones [...] Moniales vero ex ore ipsius exceptos scriptis consignaverunt. Nihil est solidum et supernaturalem, sed [...] multa muliercularum deliramenta.*" [I also saw a large volume in which are contained the sermons [...] The nuns indeed wrote down what they heard from her mouth. There is nothing solid and supernatural

16 "Vidi insuper ingentem tomum sermonum, ut fertur, eiusdem Servae Dei, eumque contuli cum tribus praecedentibus tomis, de quibus supra, nilque mihi occurrit specialiter notandum de novo, quia omnia haec scripta sunt eiusdem prorsus rationis" [I also saw a large volume of sermons, purportedly by the same Servant of God, and I compared it with the three preceding volumes mentioned above. Nothing new particularly struck me as noteworthy, because all these writings are of exactly the same kind] (*Conorte* 1999, 149). On the other hand, "[r]accolto" refers to "collection", which contrasts simple quires containing individual sermons to the *Conorte* as a sermon collection.

17 This *armarium* was typical of the organization of knowledge in medieval religious houses. See, also for its implications for the location of liturgical books, E. Schlotheuber and J. T. McQuillen, "Books and Libraries within Monasteries", in A. I. Beach and I. Cochelin (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 975–997.

18 Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. ss. Rituum, Processus 3072, 122r.

19 *Conorte* 1999, 150. For a summary of the points of *Vida y fin* censored by Bona, see Gómez López, "Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", 1223–1250, and I. García Andrés, *Sor Juana de la Cruz, mística e iluminista toledana*, Publicaciones del I.P.I.E.T., 1982, 36–37. The fact that a cardinal such as Bona, whose work shows his great interest in mysticism, dismissed the *Conorte* in this way is worthy of a separate study. See G. Bona, *Via Compedii ad Deum. Via breve a Dio* (1657), S. Stroppa (ed.), Firenze, Leo. S. Olschki, 2006.



in them, but [...] *many absurdities of simple women*].<sup>20</sup> Here, the plural used in the highlighted passage appears to be more than simply rhetorical, but the refusal by Bona, who would publish an influential manual about *discretio spirituum* a few years later, to carry out a detailed censorship of the sermons was declared to be motivated not only by the contents of the book but also by its collective and female authorship.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Martín Esparza did carry out an examination of the collection, but only partially, concerning very specific points diluted in the massive totality of the *Conorte*.<sup>22</sup> In his final reflection, he claims that Juana de la Cruz did not write either of the two books, so could benefit from the decrees of Urban VIII, “*como si no hubiesen sido escritos, como si nunca hubiesen existido*” [and it must be done as if they were never written, as if they did not exist].<sup>23</sup> This is the first time that the status of the writings collected in 1665 is questioned, and the discussion about the authenticity of the writings was hampered by the process of canonization until its reopening in the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, before the possible discussion of the doctrinal content of the document, doubts were raised that alluded directly to its *origin*: how and by whom was the supposedly revealed word converted into text? The response to this question would indicate the “authentic” (or otherwise) status of the sermons of the *Conorte*.<sup>25</sup> This is easily verified in the so-called *Brevis satisfactio* written by the Franciscan José Coppons in defence of Juana’s sanctity around 1672.<sup>26</sup> As well as tackling point by point the doctrinal reservations expressed by Bona and Esparza, Coppons supports the latter when he declares that the

20 *Positio super dubio* (“*an stante nos repperitione assertorum opusculorum originalium...*”), 10, my highlighting.

21 *Conorte* 1999, 149. The reasons for this decision are found in the need to examine the writings after *Caelestis Hierusalem Cives*, see Leone, *La prova documentale*, 55. The manual published by Bona is *De discretione spirituum liber unus*, published in Rome in 1671, see J. Pegon, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, M. Viller (ed.), Vol. 3. Paris, Beauchesne, 1937, s.v. “*discerniment des esprits*”, “*période moderne*”, 1275–1278.

22 *Conorte* 1999, 151–153. For a summary of the censored points, see, Gómez López, “Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)”, 1223–1250 and García Andrés, *Sor Juana de la Cruz*, 37.

23 *Conorte* 1999, 153.

24 *Conorte* 1999, 157–169.

25 In a recent chapter, “Towards a Critical Edition of the *Book of Consolation* of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)”, in B. Roest and P. Delcorno (eds.), *Observant Reforms and Cultural Production in Europe*, Nijmegen, Radboud University Press, 2023, 193, I define the exchange of arguments between postulators and promoters of the faith in this stage as a “true battle of dialectics, with both sides employing concepts and arguments more typical of literary scholars than theologians.”

26 *Conorte* 1999, 153–157. Zugasti, “Santidad bajo sospecha”, 9.



greatest stumbling block in the path of the servant of God towards saintliness were the writings. These were, however, not Juana's writings in general but unequivocally the two manuscripts that were collected in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz in 1665 and which had been analysed by Bona and Esparza.<sup>27</sup> *In rei veritate*, he says, they could be attributed to Juana, but *in rei esentia* they should be attributed to the tertiaries who wrote them.<sup>28</sup> Of course, like Esparza, Coppons had no doubts about the authorship of the transcription—as this is explicit in the *Conorte*—but he did admit doubts about the authorship of the doctrine.

Coppons' blurring of the focus on the question of authorship (coincidentally and surely inspired by the main conclusion of Esparza's examination)<sup>29</sup> is what led the postulators of the third phase of the canonization process (1702–1731) to try to convince the promoter of the faith that the writings, in their actual manuscript form, should be discarded as evidence to be able to continue with the process: "... [*Causa Postulatore*] *solum sustinere conantur praefatos libros neque scriptos neque dictatos fuisse a Serva Dei, proptereaue prosecutioni causa officere non posse Decreta Urbani Octavi*" [... (the Postulator of the Cause) only attempt to sustain that the aforementioned books were neither written nor dictated by the Servant of God, and therefore the Decrees of Urban VIII could not impede the continuation of the cause].<sup>30</sup> In effect, that the Vatican *Conorte* at least had been transcribed and compiled by certain religious women of her community is made explicit in the text on various occasions.<sup>31</sup> However, a contradiction arose from the information provided by the tradition of the convent, collected both in *Vida y fin* and in some of the testimonies of the diocesan process. Here, the name of a tertiary, María Evangelista, is reiterated as the main writer of the corpus.<sup>32</sup> She had miraculously learned to write and, according to Daza (one of the most significant of Juana's hagiographers) was helped by two other tertiaries to do it.<sup>33</sup> These

27 *Conorte* 1999, 148–153.

28 *Conorte* 1999, 156.

29 *Conorte* 1999, 160.

30 *Positio super dubio* ("An stante nos repperitione assertorum opusculorum originalium ..."), 13. See also *Conorte* 1999, 157–158.

31 This is stated, for example, by the promoter of the faith, *Positio super dubio* (*Responsio, facti et iuris*), 18–19.

32 The figure of María Evangelista is omnipresent in the documents related to Juana's convent: her authorship of the *Conorte* is clear in the convent's tradition (see the testimonies of the canonization process) and is described in the same way it appears in the *LC* (20r), in *Vida y fin*, and in the later hagiographical accounts.

33 Daza 1611, 76r.

facts shift the focus of authorship onto a specific person who must have personally transcribed the words of the abbess. The texts written by this tertiary would, therefore, have had to exist and these are certainly not the manuscripts collected in 1665.

This reverse for the postulators did not deter them from their somewhat desperate efforts to neutralize Juana's writings. They used three main arguments. First, if these works were not written by or carefully dictated by the abbess it is possible that doctrinal errors may be found that could be attributed not to the words that she spoke (which as revealed word could not have errors), but to the tertiaries. Second, the abbess who was active in 1665 at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, María de San Gabriel, stated that she did not know of documents other than those that were eventually sent, thus there are no so-called "originals" except, in the case of the *Conorte*, only the one found in the Vatican. If an earlier version had been lost, most probably it was transmitted through the tradition of the house and both the abbess and her sisters would know about it.<sup>34</sup> Third, it was not possible that the handwriting of the Vatican manuscript, old-fashioned but clean and professional, was that of María Evangelista, who had learned to write through a miracle and, in the end, they argued, was only a woman.<sup>35</sup>

This last argument, to which I will return later, was attacked by the promoter of the faith, archbishop Carlos Alberto Myrensis: why could this not be the handwriting of María Evangelista?<sup>36</sup> The entire rationale of the promoter of the faith in this final stage was based on trying to reveal the new strategy of the postulators, which he understood as a clumsy subterfuge caused by not having been able to find the originals.<sup>37</sup> The final petition of the postulators, which was not accepted, reads: "*Libros presentes in curia minime probari esse scriptos aut dictatos a serva Dei, aut esse originales Sor Maria Evangelistae vel copias ipsorum, immo totum oppositum evidenter demonstratum fuerit*" [The books present in court have clearly not been proven to have been written or dictated by the Servant of God, or to be originals of Sister Maria Evangelista or copies thereof, but rather the complete opposite has been clearly demonstrated].<sup>38</sup>

34 *Conorte* 1999, 160.

35 *Conorte* 1999, 160. See *Positio super dubio (Restrictus, facti et iuris y Animadversiones Rvdmi. Fidei Promotoris super dubio)*, 8–9 and 4, respectively. In both passages the writing of the Vatican manuscript is described as "*vulgo dicto stampatella*" [commonly called *stampatella*], as opposed to the "*carattere currenti*" [standard letters] in which the lost copy of *Vida y fin* was written.

36 *Conorte* 1999, 164.

37 *Conorte* 1999, 165.

38 *Conorte* 1999, 166.

The response of the promoter of the faith was clearly formalized in 1729: “*Non posse procedi ad ulteriora, nisi exhibeatur libri originales*” [It cannot be proceed further unless the *original* books are presented], that is the process could not be continued unless the *original* books were shown.<sup>39</sup> This result gave rise to the commissioning of new investigations in Toledo and Madrid. A commission was formed that returned to the archive of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz and which investigated in places as emblematic as the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes, the headquarters of the Observant Franciscans in the region, without finding a trace of the original *Conorte*.<sup>40</sup> This adjective (*original*) meant a requirement that somehow included a paradox that could not be resolved: to canonize Juana, a book would have to be found that contained her words just as she had pronounced them.<sup>41</sup>

To draw these threads together, the postulators did not accept the manuscripts collected in 1665 for two reasons. First, neither was written by a single hand, nor by Juana, nor by María Evangelista, the miraculous transcriber alone. Moreover, it was clear that they had not been dictated or obtained by a reliable means of transcription.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, as we shall see in the second chapter, the methods of memorization and transcription of the words of the abbess that were used by her tertiaries followed working procedures with a lengthy medieval tradition. In effect, through the transcription of the sermons of the *Conorte* there is, explicitly, an authorial community. As a passage present in both manuscripts declares, there were various tertiaries who, at the request of certain prelates, memorized and transcribed the words of their abbess.<sup>43</sup> And it is here that the problems of the Vatican manuscript arise: the official reason that led to the final blocking of Juana’s canonization is not the doctrine expressed in her sermons, but the way that they were transcribed and collected. In other words, the reliability of the Vatican manuscript was put into question.

As with the majority of medieval literary works, in the *Conorte* the concept of authorship is complex and should be considered from a perspective

39 *Conorte* 1999, 163. *Positio super dubio* (*Restrictus, factis et iuris super dubio “an stante nos repetitione assertorum opusculorum originalium...”*), 4, my highlight.

40 The list of places in which this second enquiry took place is in *Positio super dubio* (*Summarium super dubio, ex relatione Rotali, art. secundus, de Sanctitate in genere*), 6.

41 *Conorte* 1996, 172.

42 The difference between the two methods is underlined in *Positio super dubio* (*Restrictus, factis et iuris super dubio “an stante nos repetitione assertorum opusculorum originalium...”*), 11.

43 Vatican manuscript, 151r–151v; El Escorial manuscript, 452r. See also, Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 110.

that is not only hierarchical but also dynamic and porous.<sup>44</sup> In a hierarchy of voices typical of visionary performance, the main author of the revelations was the Trinity, from which Christ split off temporarily to use the body of the abbess and express himself through her lips. During the preaching, Juana thus becomes what can be named, after the archetypal experiences of Francesco d'Assisi and Caterina da Siena, an *alter Christus*, a state already announced bodily by her stigmata.<sup>45</sup> The strategy to authorise the preaching is clear here, as it was also in the case of so many prophetesses since the biblical period: the source that is made public is divine and thus, at the same time as its content is accepted as revelation, its orthodoxy is accepted as truth.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, descending a degree in the scale of authority and authorship, there is Juana herself, visible co-author of the sermons and subject, therefore, to the canonization process. Her authority stems fully from the Trinity, but at the same time her voice is so intimately intertwined with that of Christ that it is not possible to understand the text without its presence.<sup>47</sup> And this presence of the sacred voice is transplanted into the Vatican manuscript.

44 On the topics of authorship and authority in writings of women's religious houses of the Golden Age, see Lewandoska, *Escritoras monjas*.

45 Even so, as an ecstatic orator Juana follows more the model of Caterina da Siena than that of Francesco d'Assisi. In the case of Juana's community, the inspiration of the hagiography of the *giulare* is clear in the sermon that the abbess gives to the birds in her cell, narrated, for example, in *Vida y fin*, 31r, reiterated by Navarro 1622. For Juana's stigmatization, see *Vida y fin*, 38r–39v, an episode later rewritten by Daza 1611, 78v–81r. For the influence of Caterina on the Castilian living saints of this period, see the bibliography in P. Acosta-García, “‘En viva sangre bañadas’: Caterina da Siena y las vidas de María de Ajofrín, Juana de la Cruz, María de Santo Domingo y otras santas vivas castellanas”, *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà*, XXXIII, 2020, 143–172. See, also, T. Herzig, “Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs”, *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, XXVI (2013), 151–175.

46 On female charismatic authority, see C. Muessig, “Communities of Discourse: Religious Authority and the Role of Holy Women in the Later Middle Ages”, in A. B. Mulder-Bakker and L. Herbert McAvoy (eds.), *Women and Experience in Later Medieval Writing*, London, Palgrave-McMillan, 2009, 65–82. Monastic collaboration in written recollection between male and female members of the orders (in this particular context, between supposedly illiterate visionaries and other actors) was standard at the European level, at least since the twelfth century: see A. Beach, “Clastration and Collaboration between the Sexes in the Twelfth-Century Scriptorium”, in S. Farmer and B. H. Rosenwein (eds.), *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts. Religion in Medieval Society. Essays in Honor of Lester K. Little*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2000, 57–75.

47 According to J. A. Boon, “The Marian Apocalyptic of a Visionary Preacher: the *Conorte* of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)”, in E. Knibs, J. A. Boon, and E. Gelsner (eds.), *The End of the World in Medieval Thought and Spirituality*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 41–67.

The interdependence between material support, voice, and writing conveys not only the failure of the eighteenth-century canonization process, but also identifies the root cause of this failure in how the codex was conceived in the community. Even a cursory analysis of the sermons reveals a strategy of textual homogenization through which each of the elements contains variations of an incipit that alludes to whom is speaking (sometimes, the “Lord”, other times “Jesus Christ”, other times the “Spirit of the Lord”) in contrast to the evident presence of Juana in the background of the text. The fact that the body of the abbess becomes invisible in the textualization denotes a clear interest in underlining divine authorship through the transcription of the voice of Christ alone. This strengthens the original source of the revelation (the Trinity), through which the *Conorte* is promoted to the category of a container of the revealed word, a kind of new gospel. The book’s materiality acquires its quasi-relic status from this conception: once again, according to the tradition of the convent, the voice contained in it could cure the infirm through contact with it and keep storms away through its presence. All this is carried out, I would add, through a holy energy comparable to *virtus*.<sup>48</sup> To sum up, the *Conorte* was conceived, as Surtz claimed, as “a very physical object” because it possessed functions as an artefact that went beyond the understanding or the exegesis of the sermons.<sup>49</sup>

However, the Vatican manuscript was not the only *Conorte* in existence. As I have shown above, the investigations of 1665 into the *armarium* that comprised the archive of the convent have shown that there were copies of various sermons, also in quinternions. While at the time the abbess and the tertiaries claimed that the codex now in Vatican City is the one they venerated by her community, we also know about the circulation of other copies within the convent’s walls. For example, the *Conorte*’s powers to calm storms is articulated in a phrase of the *LC* which implies that there were various copies of the sermons within the walls: “*Y en las tempestades manda la prelada saquen el santo libro o sus traslados, y se ha visto cesar la tempestad muchas veces.*” [And during storms the abbess ordered that they bring out the holy book or its copies, and the storm was seen to cease many times.<sup>50</sup>] That the “*traslados*” [copies] of a supposed prototype also possessed power implies that it is the textual contents that encompassed the presence of the holy voice which can sanctify the material. In addition, there are two pieces of information that briefly describe manuscripts that are lost today. A copy “which was in the monastery of the Piedad

48 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 130.

49 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, XIII.

50 *LC*, 20v.

of Guadalajara”, demanded by the Inquisition in 1568.<sup>51</sup> Further, in the context of the Roman curia, there are reports of the copies that were made for examination by the censors, such as the copy in three volumes of the Vatican manuscript which Esparza examined and criticized.<sup>52</sup> These copies imply the transformation of a sacred object, venerated as such, into a mere collection of sermons evaluated by the ecclesiastical authorities. At the root of this transformation is the change in the audience: the book left the convent, where the words it contains had been spoken, to fall into the hands of the censors.

The canonization process blocked in the eighteenth century was not reopened until the end of the twentieth century when García Andrés declared that he had found a new manuscript of the *Conorte* in the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, which he called the El Escorial manuscript. In his doctoral thesis (*Conorte* 1996) and in the work that arose from that (essentially *Conorte* 1999), he claimed that the El Escorial manuscript was “*el primero y original que recogió los sermones de Juana de la Cruz*” [the first and original (manuscript) that collected the sermons of Juana de la Cruz], with arguments that I will summarize in the following section.<sup>53</sup> For the time being, I would like to claim that, in effect, the strange variation between the two versions is key to understanding them well, but that the argument of the “originality” of the El Escorial manuscript as formulated by García Andrés shifts towards the discussions of the canonization process, which he explicitly wished to revive.<sup>54</sup> I do not take up this question here because, in essence, it

---

51 The Monasterio de la Piedad in Guadalajara was a religious house of the Order of St Francis founded by Brianda de Mendoza de Luna (c. 1470–1534), which maintained a school for educating young members of the aristocracy: “*En 1524 obtenía licencia y breve de Clemente VII para la fundación del convento y del colegio de doncellas bajo la intitulación de Nuestra Señora de la Piedad, según la crónica de Salazar en recuerdo de su abuelo don Álvaro de Luna. La comunidad quedó instituida como casa de beatas sujetas a la regla de la tercera Orden de San Francisco y sometida a la obediencia del provincial de la Provincia Franciscana de Castilla, fray Diego de Cisneros*” [In 1524 it obtained a licence and brief from Clement VII for the foundation of the convent and the girls’ school under the title of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad, in memory of his grandfather Don Álvaro de Luna, according to Salazar’s chronicle. The community was instituted as a house of *beatas* subject to the rule of the Third Order of St Francis and submitted to obedience to the provincial of the Franciscan Province of Castile, Fray Diego de Cisneros] (M. del Prado Rodríguez Romero, “Nuestra Señora de la Piedad, Guadalajara”, in <http://www.ub.edu/claustra/eng/Monestirs/atles>, accessed: 17/06/2023).

52 *Conorte* 1999, 151.

53 *Conorte* 1999, 73.

54 See *Conorte* 1996, 8: “*Finalmente, el presente trabajo pretende servir para el desbloqueo del proceso de canonización de una mujer que, desde el instante de su muerte y de forma ininterrumpida, ha sido proclamada como Santa, ya que fueron los escritos la causa de que los*

deals with problems of textualization that are typical of the majority of medieval sermons, placing the emphasis on the fidelity of the transcription through a notion of authorship that privileges the writing of the author or secretarial work.<sup>55</sup> On the contrary, I will try to approach the manuscripts of the *Conorte* from the point of view of their collective production and the clues that their materiality can give us for a proper understanding of the text.

Given that the resurgence of interest in the *Conorte* owes much to *Conorte* 1999, together with Surtz's classic study of 1990, the general view that the El Escorial manuscript was the primary source prevailed in the first decades of work on the figure of Juana, with few exceptions.<sup>56</sup> Of course, the edition of the El Escorial codex was fundamental to reviving interest in Juana, to promoting access to a version of her visionary sermons and, finally, to putting into the hands of the academic public the titanic work of document gathering for the canonization process that had been performed up to that point. However, the problem of the two versions, that of the Vatican and that of El Escorial, has never been approached with the depth that it deserves, and nor has a codicological examination of the two manuscripts been performed from which one can extract reliable conclusions about their dating.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the primacy that has been given to the El Escorial manuscript has been to the detriment of the study of the Vatican manuscript which, as I have shown, came directly from the archive of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. In the following sections I will provide a material-interpretive analysis of the two surviving codices of the *Conorte* without, in principle, prioritizing one over the other. I will concentrate on answering two questions: first, what do we know

---

*procesos no llegaran a feliz término*" [Finally, the present work aims to unblock the canonization process of a woman who, from the moment of her death and continuously thereafter, has been proclaimed as a Saint, since it was the writings that prevented the processes from reaching a successful conclusion] and "*Los pasos siguientes serán: lograr la aprobación de los escritos, del Conorte, por parte de Roma; y después, preparada la correspondiente positio, alcanzar el reconocimiento del culto*" [The next steps will be: to obtain approval of the writings by the *Conorte* in Rome; and then, once the corresponding *positio* is ready, to achieve recognition of the cult] (*Conorte* 1996, 516).

55 An example of the first option is the manuscript of Teresa de Ávila's *Libro de la vida*, written by herself; an example of the second are the *Epistles* and the *Dialogue* of Caterina da Siena, who had professional secretaries for that task. For the case involving Caterina, see G. Cavallini, "Introduzione", in C. da Siena, *Il dialogo della divina provvidenza ovvero Libro de la divina dottrina*, G. Cavallini (ed.), Siena, Cantagalli, 1995, xxvii and *Obras de Santa Catalina de Siena. El diálogo*, Á. Morta (trans. and ed.), Madrid, BAC, 1955, 87–89. See also Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 6 and 109.

56 *Conorte* 1999 and Surtz, *The Guitar of God*.

57 *Conorte* 1996, 188–189.



today about the two surviving manuscripts, their production, circulation, and historical reception? And second, what new information can be provided by a material analysis of both documents?

### 3 The El Escorial Manuscript

The El Escorial manuscript is a medium-sized volume (the binding, in very worn black tanned leather, measures 305 × 205mm) and is quite long (454 pages of paper).<sup>58</sup> The composition of the ink with which it was copied, coupled with intensive use, has damaged parts of the codex, piercing it, and has even caused entire pages to split. It is written throughout in two columns with a rounded gothic script, which may display some humanistic influence, although it does not allow the date to be narrowed down beyond that supposed by García Andrés, which is to say the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>59</sup> An analysis of the writing shows that a single hand made the copy, while at certain points the hands of several possible scribes may be detected.<sup>60</sup> The corpus of the sermons is intensely annotated, interwoven with glosses by various authors, and also censored with different levels of hostility throughout almost its entire length (Figure 2). Analysis of the structure of the sermon collection reveals repeated errors in the correlation of the chapter numbers and an organization that differs slightly (but also significantly) from that of the Vatican manuscript.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, it includes one more sermon (72 compared with 71), recorded as number 57 in this manuscript, which develops an angelic subject in the infra-octave of the feast of the Archangel Michael.

From the beginning, it is fundamental to clarify that while the circulation of the El Escorial manuscript can be documented to earlier dates than those of its Vatican counterpart, its provenance is less clearly delineated. In fact, its movements through Castile can be traced back in time to a certain extent, and a material examination enables us to gather information relevant to our study, but we cannot ultimately know whether it was produced in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. The earliest surviving description is that of Zarco

58 For a detailed codicological analysis of this manuscript, see P. Acosta-García, “Notas codicológicas a la colección de sermones visionarios de la abadesa Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534): el manuscrito Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial J-II-18”, *Revista de literatura medieval*, 34 (2022), 231–248.

59 I thank Vicenç Beltrán for his help in describing the typology of the writing.

60 Mainly in the prologue, discussed below, and part of folio 61v.

61 See chapter 2.



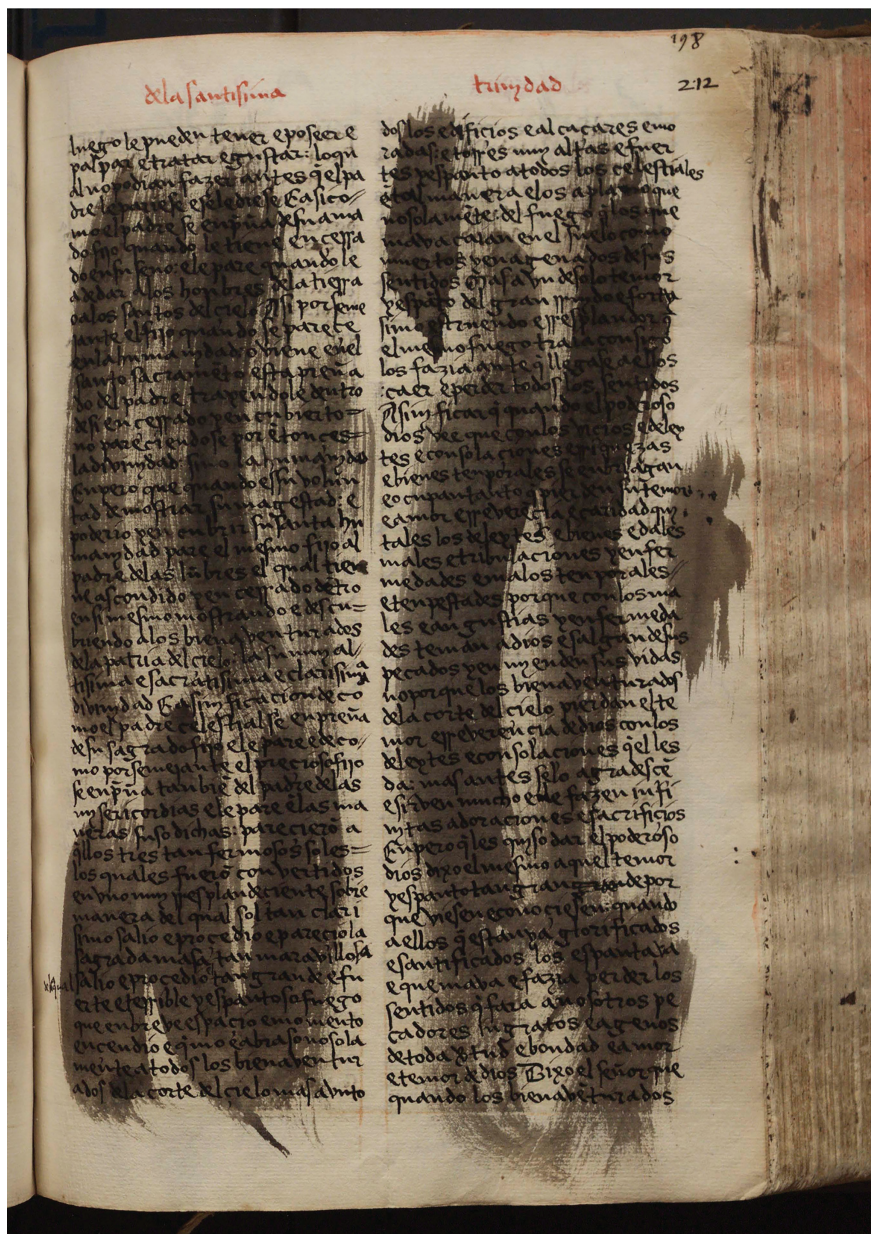


FIGURE 2 *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-11-18, f. 212r

IMAGE: ©PATRIMONIO NACIONAL, SOURCE: [HTTPS://RBMECAT](https://rbmecat)

.PATRIMONIONACIONAL.ES/CGI-BIN/KOHA/OPAC-DETAIL

.PL?BIBLIONUMBER=738&QUERY\_DESC=CONORTE

Cuevas in the second volume of his *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, which I summarize in the following points:<sup>62</sup>

1. The manuscript has 438 sheets of paper, of which “[h]an sido cortadas 6 hs. al princ. y otras 5, según creo, arrancadas” [6 sheets were cut at the start and another 5, as I believe, have been torn] or, in other words, the manuscript in its current state is acephalous.
2. The writing dates from 1509 (“*Letra de 1509*”), information that the author extracts from the colophon: “[E]scriviose este santo libro en el año de myll e quinientos y nueve años” [This holy book being written in the year one thousand, five hundred and nine].
3. “*Enc[uadernado] en tabla de badana negra*” [Bound with black tanned leather boards], which in fact implies a worn re-binding that it already had before its arrival at the Real Biblioteca.
4. A large number of marginal notes, among which only one author is distinguished: Fray Francisco de Torres, who declares his authorship on “f. 298[r]” (Figure 3).<sup>63</sup>

Additionally, the cataloguer lists the 72 sermons of the manuscript and connects them with various mentions of Juana in works of Franciscan authorship. Notable among these is the hagiography that Fray Pedro Navarro wrote about the visionary in 1622, which provides valuable information. This information does not, however, concern the El Escorial manuscript but rather the Vatican one, the codex kept in the convent when Navarro was working on his book.<sup>64</sup> This is the reason why the two excerpts of the sermons copied by Zarco Cuevas from Navarro’s hagiography proceeded also from the Vatican manuscript.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from the entry by Zarco Cuevas, no other study has undertaken a systematic material description of the El Escorial codex. In his edition of 1999, García Andrés made the case for his claim about the “originality” of the manuscript, alluding to some of its material aspects. Elsewhere, I have summarised

62 J. Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, Madrid, Imprenta Helénica, 1924, II, 99–105, 99.

63 Francisco de Torres is one of the main annotators of the El Escorial manuscript. This Franciscan friar was a royal preacher who enjoyed the fame of sanctity during his life, as a result of which an apostolic process of beatification was started which resulted in the declaration of his heroic virtues. At the time of writing his notes, as we shall see, he was imprisoned by Inquisitional order at the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes (see p. 50), where he lived, because of his critical preaching to the court. See *Conorte 1999*, 100–103.

64 *Conorte 1999*, 103–104.

65 *Conorte 1999*, 104–105.

the arguments he wields to make this declaration, which I will repeat here in four points<sup>66</sup>:

1. The first relates to the marginalia of the El Escorial manuscript, which García Andrés had transcribed in his doctoral thesis.<sup>67</sup> Zarco Cuevas identifies the number of authors in the marginalia, increasing their count to three: Fray Francisco Ortiz (1497–1545), Fray Francisco de Torres, and a censor (Figure 2), identified in one of the notes of the second as a “*pariente de la misma santa en carne*”, that is to say, a relative of Juana.<sup>68</sup> The identification of “Ortiz” or “Padre Ortiz” (writer of the notes in gothic script) as the famous Franciscan preacher who was tried for his defence of the *beata* Francisca Hernández, later led García Andrés to establish a year *ante quem* for his notes: these must have been written before the promulgation of the Edict of Toledo in 1525. This copy of the *Conorte* must have been produced, according to the scholar, during Juana’s lifetime.<sup>69</sup> I will discuss this claim later.
2. The second alludes to dating through the handwriting: “*En un estudio comparativo entre este manuscrito de [E]l Escorial y el del Vaticano, observamos: a) Que ambos son, ciertamente, muy antiguos, fechados en el año 1509 y escritos a dos columnas y con el mismo tipo de letra propia de la primera mitad del siglo XVI*” [In a comparative study between this manuscript of El Escorial and that of the Vatican, we observe that both are, certainly, very old, both of them dated in the year 1509, and written in two columns and with the same kind of handwriting that belongs to the first half of the sixteenth century.]
3. The third concerns its expression, which García Andrés describes as “*tosca, menos elaborada, de sintaxis menos cuidada*” [unpolished, less elaborated, and using a less careful syntax].<sup>70</sup> In fact, as he himself indicates later and I study in depth in the second chapter, the Vatican manuscript tends to contain not only syntactical alterations, but also lexical additions, whole sentences, interpolations, in what seems to be a stage of later drafting.<sup>71</sup>

66 *Conorte* 1996, 187–188 and 514–516.

67 *Conorte* 1996. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 8 also speaks of these annotations.

68 *Conorte* 1999, 92.

69 Zarco Cuevas’s identification of Ortiz is plausible, as the friar was living at the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes (where De Torres would read and gloss the manuscript) between *circa* 1521, when he was named preacher, and 1532, when he secluded himself in the Convento de Torrelaguna for the rest of his life. However, De Torres alludes only to an “Ortiz” or a “Padre Ortiz” (notes to ff. 69r, 317r, 324r, 345v, and 357r), without any supplementary context, which means that his identification is today probable but still hypothetical.

70 *Conorte* 1999, 71.

71 As I will show in the second chapter, Surtz has already mentioned “interpolations” in the text of the Vatican manuscript (and has used them in his interpretation of the text), Surtz,

4. The fourth indicates its order. Following the hint given by Surtz, García Andrés determines that these textual differences are not only perceptible in the grammar of the text but also affect the internal organization of the sermons in each of the codices. He claims that an “expert hand” is responsible for these changes, which implies, from his point of view, the intervention of a cleric (a man) in the work of the tertiaries.<sup>72</sup>

García Andrés’s arguments led him to the conclusion mentioned above: the *originality* of the El Escorial manuscript against the retouched Vatican one. As he himself claims at the end of his discussion:

[P]odemos concluir que el manuscrito de El Escorial es, realmente, el primero y original que recogió los sermones de Juana de la Cruz. Y que el manuscrito del Vaticano es una copia retocada por algún fraile, el cual hizo los retoques de orden literario y litúrgico, añadió algunas frases aclaratorias y omitió otras, probablemente pensando en una publicación que nunca se produjo.<sup>73</sup>

[It can be concluded that the El Escorial manuscript is indeed the original one in which the sermons of Juana de la Cruz were gathered. The Vatican manuscript, on the other hand, is a copy that was edited by a friar who made literary and liturgical adjustments, added some clarifying sentences, and omitted others, probably intending it for a publication that never happened.]

Given that the information shown in the electronic catalogue of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial is generally based on that of Zarco Cuevas, these two descriptions are all that are available for this

---

*The Guitar of God*, for example, 25, 60, n. 27, and 104, n. 7. *Conorte* 1999, 70–71, identifies some of them.

72 This perspective is rooted in a common assumption that impacts every area where feminine agency can be examined in historical studies: “... with the simple realisation that ‘anonymous equals male’ is a frequently unquestioned preconception in the way we comprehend, describe and construct the fabric of our world, recent advances in all scientific and scholarly disciplines have begun to focus on this obvious blind spot” (E. Grossman, “Introduction: Issues in the Study of Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures”, in E. Grossman [ed.], *Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2024, 1). As I argue in chapter 2, García Andrés’ assumption contradicts all surviving evidence.

73 *Conorte* 1999, 73.



codex. I will explain and discuss the facts that arise from a new direct examination below, contrasting them with information from previous studies.

There are many old call numbers on the El Escorial manuscript that have not been assigned in previous material descriptions.<sup>74</sup> They are found on the spine, on the back cover, and on the fore-edge. All these belong to the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial and inform us about the different locations in which the book has been since it entered the collection. García Andrés claims that both the *Conorte* and the copy of the first hagiography of Juana, *Vida y fin*, also now kept in El Escorial, must have arrived during the formation of the Real Biblioteca, which is to say after 1565.<sup>75</sup> Among the marks is a partly legible one found on the spine label, which reads “Ij. Proh.[...]”. This provides insight about the codex’s stay in the Real Biblioteca’s section of prohibited books, a material trace of the historical process through which Juana’s sanctity sounded stranger and stranger to post-Tridentine ears. According to Zarco Cuevas, the so-called “hell” of the monastery’s library was created in 1612 and, in effect, the *Conorte* is listed in a catalogue of the Real Biblioteca’s prohibited books in 1635.<sup>76</sup> This information provides a time span of 1565–1635 as the period in which this manuscript could have arrived at Real Monasterio. However, it is possible to gather more information about what happened during this period.

There are several reasons for the “*regular estado general de conservación*” [poor general state of conservation] of the El Escorial manuscript described by the Real Biblioteca’s online catalogue. The main one is the composition of the ink, which even today continues to damage the paper in many places. Further, the codex was very much used *before* its arrival at the Real Biblioteca. As I have just shown, according to the notes left in the margins, García Andrés identified three proactive readers of the manuscript, which an attentive examination increases to four.<sup>77</sup> The annotations of one of them, the Franciscan

74 Carmen del Camino informs me of an alternative reading (“ij-&-j-17”) of the crossed-out call number on the cover sheet (which in Acosta-García, “Notas codicológicas”, 236, is transcribed as “ij-&-j-11”).

75 *Conorte* 1999, 70. As stated by M. Fraile Miguélez, *Catálogo de los códices españoles de la Biblioteca del Escorial. Relaciones históricas*, I, Madrid, Imprenta Helénica, 1917–1925, ix. This information can also be found on the website of the Real Biblioteca of the Monastery <https://rbme.patrimonionacional.es/s/rbme/page/primeros-libros>, accessed: 24/08/2024.

76 Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*, I, I. I thank José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero for this information. The catalogue to which I refer is found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Inquisición. Leg. 4517, n° 1), with the *Conorte* listed on f. iiv, together with the hagiographies of the abbess.

77 A careful comparison of the annotations shows the existence of a fourth hand in some of them, see ff. 159v, 161r, 207v, 208v, 210r, 214r/v, 239v, 356v, 358v, 408r, 429r, 439r, 440v,

friar Francisco de Torres, provide the core of the marginalia from which we can extract information concerning the sequence in which these annotations were written and their approximate dating (Figure 3). Clearly, De Torres performed a systematic reading of the totality of the sermons in which he declares he will not fail to comment on each of the censor's "slashes" so that a future reader would not confuse his silence with his possible collusion.<sup>78</sup> Some of his additions allow us to establish quite a firm spatial and chronological context for this manuscript.

First of all, it is crucial to correct an error found in *Conorte 1999*, which complicates the history of the Inquisition's persecution of the sermons and involves De Torres in an examination of the book in which he probably did not participate.<sup>79</sup> There, García Andrés mistakenly confuses the year in which a document was issued in the Inquisition section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), intertwining two different orders to seize the *Conorte* and its copies issued by the Inquisition in two different campaigns. One of them dates back to 1559, while the other to 1568 (not 1558, as García Andrés asserts).

The first seizure order, dated 1559, is explicitly within the context of the promulgation of Valdés' *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* [*Index of Prohibited Books*]. We learn scant details about it from a proceeding of the General Council of the Inquisition dated 6 June 1559: "*Hase de pedir un libro que se llama Conorte del alma, hecho por Juana de la Cruz, monja que fue del monasterio de la Cruz, a la abadesa del dicho monasterio de la Cruz, que es junto a Cubas y Griñón. Trata el libro de ciertas revelaciones que tuvo la dicha Juana de la Cruz, el cual estuvo en el monasterio de la Piedad de Guadalajara*" [A book called *Conorte del alma*, authored by Juana de la Cruz, a former nun of the Monasterio de la Cruz, is to be requested from the abbess of the aforementioned Monasterio de la Cruz, located near Cubas and Griñón. The book deals with certain revelations experienced by the aforementioned Juana de la Cruz and circulated in the Monasterio de La Piedad in Guadalajara].<sup>80</sup> A brief description of this specific copy is provided: it is "*del tamaño de un flos sanctorum de los grandes, encuadernado en tablas y cuero negro y escrito de mano*" [the size of a large *flos sanctorum*, bound in boards and black leather and handwritten].<sup>81</sup>

---

443r, 446r, 454r, which also briefly glosses the text, and which is affected by censorship on several occasions.

78 "*Cuchillada*" is the word used by De Torres to refer to the lines drawn by the censor over the text (see, for example, 267v or 345v). See also, Figure 4.

79 *Conorte 1999*, 97–98.

80 Madrid, AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 3067, n° 124.

81 This brief description matches the current format and binding of the Escorial manuscript, but it could also match that of the Vatican manuscript, as we must bear in mind

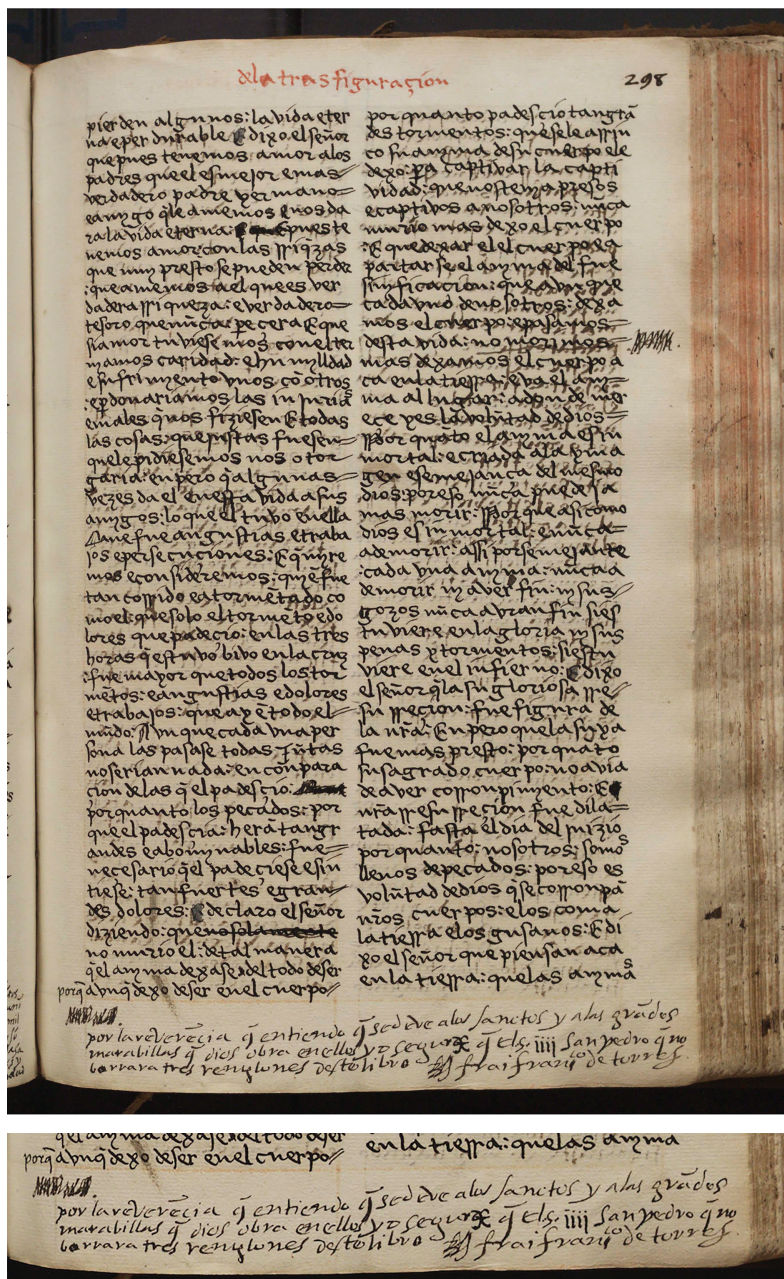


FIGURE 3 Annotation by Francisco de Torres. *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, f. 298r and detail  
IMAGE: ©PATRIMONIO NACIONAL, SOURCE: <https://rbmecat.patrimonionacional.es/cgi-bin/ko/OPAC-DETAIL.PL?BIBLIONUMBER=738&QUERYDESC=CONORTE>

The second seizure order is from 1568 and occurs within the context of the examination of Juana's writings proposed by the General Council of the Inquisition to the Franciscan friar Miguel de Medina, which will result in a new seizure order for the sermon collection and its copies.<sup>82</sup> In this case, De Torres is explicitly involved. I will examine these circumstances later. Let us return, for now, to the annotations of the Escorial manuscript, in an attempt to establish a chronology of its migrations.

De Torres' explicit criticism of the anonymous censor allows for a chronological ordering of the annotations and censorship to be identified: Ortiz-censor-De Torres. Secondly, there are three particularly interesting notes in terms of the dating. The first is in the margins of folio 297v–298r (Figure 3) which refers to the sermon on the liberation of Peter the Apostle (*"San Pedro ad vincula"*, celebrated on 1 August). There, De Torres identifies himself as the author of the comments, signing his name at the end of the note, and he also declares that he started to read the *Conorte* on the eve of this feast (that is to say, 31 July 1567).<sup>83</sup> To this, he adds a petition to Saint Peter in chains to free him from his prison, saying: *"Él sea mi/ intercesor pa/ra que yo sea/suelto de la/ mía"* [Let him be my intercessor so that I may be free of my own prison]. The year of this reading is later specified in the margin of f. 365v, at the start of the sermon dedicated to the feast of Francesco d'Assisi (4 October), in which the friar recalls the anniversary of receiving his habit, and he locates the codex at the time of making his annotation as being in *"el Convento del Señor San/ Juan de los/ Reyes"* [the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes], in Toledo.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the Franciscan wrote his commentary on

---

that the latter was rebound in the 20th century, and its original characteristics are, thus, unknown. Additionally, as both a specific book and its copies were requested, this seizure had to affect all manuscripts of the *Conorte*.

82 Madrid, AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 3069, n<sup>o</sup> 127, 134, and 136. See Zugasti, "Santidad bajo sospecha", 317–318.

83 *"Hoy, vigilia/desta fiesta/que en este/capítulo se/trata que lla/mamos Vin/cula sancti/ Petri, he co/mençado a/ leer en este/ libro"* [Today, on the vigil of this feast that is discussed in this chapter, which we call the *vincula Sancti Petri*, I have begun to read this book].

84 *"Que hoy domingo, un día después/de su mismo día, a cinco de octubre, hace justos/veinte y/ tres años/ que aunque indinísimo de [é]l me/ lo [el hábito franciscano] dieron en/ este mismo/ convento del Señor San/ Juan de los/ Reyes donde lo/ estoy escrivien/do. En el mismo/ convento, digo/ que me die/ron el hábito/ año del Se/ñor de mil/ y quinientos/ y quaren/ta y quatro./ Y cayó nuestro gloriosísimo/ San Francis/co sábado como ogaño, año de sesenta y siete,/ que en este mismo día domingo a cinco de octu/bre"* [Today, Sunday, a day after its actual day, on the fifth of October, it is exactly twenty-three years since, though most unworthy of it, I was given it (the Franciscan habit) in this same Convento de San Juan de los Reyes, where I am writing this. In the same convent, I say, I was given the habit in the year of our Lord fifteen forty-four. And our most glorious Saint Francis' day fell on a



the *Conorte* while deprived of liberty there.<sup>85</sup> De Torres wrote his note on Sunday, 5 October 1567. Finally, in the extensive closing annotation that he makes on the verso of the codex's final quire (f. 454v), he gives the date when he finished reading it. On the one hand, the friar claims to have completed his reading during the octave of the apostle Saint James the Great, namely, on 1 August, implying that it was a year after the previous note, i.e., 1568. On the other hand, he clarifies the question of the prison, making a reference to his comments on the sermon of St Peter *ad vincula*: he has been confined in the convent mentioned above at least since then. He was imprisoned for his preaching against libertinage in the court from the pulpit of the same Convento de San Juan de los Reyes, a fact that he does not mention in the manuscript, although he prays to the saints, to the Virgin, and to the Trinity to free him just as the angel freed Peter.

The dates of De Torres' annotation are thus clearly defined in the text. The problem, however, lies in the dating of the notes that De Torres himself attributes to an "Ortiz" or "Padre Ortiz" (Figure 4). In 1999, García Andrés identified this "Ortiz" as the Franciscan Francisco Ortiz, the famous royal preacher, dating the composition of the glosses to before 1525.<sup>86</sup> A review of the biography of this "king of preachers of his time" confirms the plausibility of this identification. The friar lived in the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes at least between 1524 and 1529, the year when he was imprisoned by the Inquisition, by which he was later tried and confined to the Convent of the Madre de Dios (Torrelaguna).<sup>87</sup>

---

Saturday, as it does this year, in the year sixty-seven, on this same day, Sunday, the fifth of October].

85 This convent, founded in 1470 by the Catholic Monarchs with the fundamental support of the Queen Isabel, came to replace the previous Convento de San Francisco (a house of conventual friars) as the new seat of Observant Franciscans in Toledo. In 1486, the first Observant friars moved in (see A. Abad Pérez, "San Juan de los Reyes en la Historia, la liturgia y el arte", *Anales toledanos* [1976], 1–61 and *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, Citta del Vaticano, Ente per l'Enciclopedia Catolica e per il Libro Cattolico, vol. XII, s. v. "Toledo"). Its significance in the history of the El Escorial manuscript is fundamental for the interest shown by the Observance (starting with Cisneros) for Juana's writings. See, also, Salazar, *Coronica y historia de la fundacion y progreso de la provincia de Castilla*, 139–149.

86 To begin to complicate this matter, De Torres assigns to Ortiz notes written by two different hands (for example, this is evident comparing the gloss of 69r with that of 317r). For his part, Messeguer Fernández, "Fray Francisco Ortiz en Torrelaguna", *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, 8 (1948), 480, mentions two other Franciscan writers active in Castile as those who could also be identified with "Padre Ortiz".

87 Francisco Ortiz was named royal preacher in 1526, although he had already been preaching since 1523 (Messeguer Fernández, "Fray Francisco Ortiz", 512). He was judged for defending the *beata* Francisca Hernández, with whom he had ties from 1523 and who had been held by the Inquisition. He preached furiously from the pulpit of the church of the



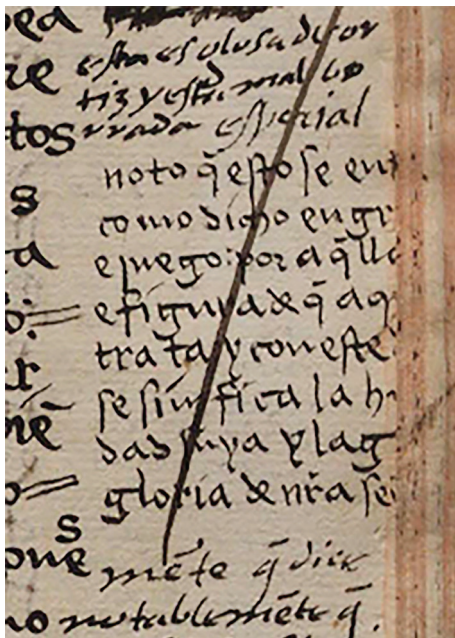


FIGURE 4

Annotation by "Padre Ortiz" and censorship. *Libro del conorte*; San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18, f. 317r and detail. (Cont.)

In addition, his office of preacher combined with his attraction to charismatic women as the *beata* Francisca Hernández, the person that he defended from the pulpit, could easily explain his positive evaluation of a collection of visionary sermons such as the *Conorte*.<sup>88</sup> Despite the coherence of this information, I have not been able to find any information to support the claim that Ortiz read the *Conorte* "en el contexto de revisión interna que hace la Orden franciscana en los años que precedieron al decreto contra los alumbrados de Toledo" [in the context of the internal review conducted by the Franciscan Order in the years preceding the decree against the Alumbrados of Toledo], that is to say before 1525.<sup>89</sup> Given the current state of research and by only cautiously accepting Francisco

Convento de San Juan de los Reyes on 7 April 1529, days after the detention of Francisca Hernández (see Messeguer Fernández, "Fray Francisco Ortiz", 481–482). On Ortiz and Francisca, see H. C. Lea, *Historia de la Inquisición española*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1983, III, 377–381; and, above all, A. Selke, *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición. Proceso de Fr. Francisco Ortiz (1529–1532)*, Madrid, Guadarrama, 1968.

88 Selke, *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición*, 70.

89 *Conorte* 1999, 93. "... fue llevado a Toledo y revisado por fray Francisco Ortiz, en los diversos procesos que acompañaron la condena de los alumbrados de Toledo, como nos consta por las notas escritas por el mismo Ortiz, en los márgenes del manuscrito" [... it was taken to Toledo and reviewed by Fray Francisco Ortiz, during the various processes that accompanied the



Ortiz as an annotator, we should date his reading of the El Escorial manuscript to an undefined time between 1524 and 1529.

Let's now return to what happened after De Torres' concluded his work on the margins of the codex on 1 August 1568. Is it possible to trace the vicissitudes that the manuscript of El Escorial underwent between this date and its appearance in the Real Biblioteca in the 17th century? At least partially, it is possible. The aforementioned documents from the Archivo Histórico Nacional's Inquisition section may help us trace its steps after De Torres' reading. In a communication dated 16 August 1568, between the Toledo Tribunal and the General Inquisition Council, it is reported that the Council had previously sent a book to a Franciscan friar residing in the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes, Miguel de Medina, for evaluation.<sup>90</sup> In a later communication (24 October 1568), this codex is described as "*scripto de mano compuesto por una monja*" [manuscript written by a nun] and adds that in a letter dated 14 August 1568, the General Inquisition Council had requested De Medina, who was absent from Toledo at that time, to send them the El Escorial manuscript together with his opinion of it. When the Franciscan friar returned to Toledo in October, he stated that Francisco de Torres had the book. At that point, the manuscript changed hands from De Torres to De Medina, who personally delivered it to the Tribunal of Toledo. He attached his negative evaluation along with other evaluations by anonymous theologians, likely including De Torres, Ortiz, and their praiseworthy assessments in the margins.<sup>91</sup> These divided opinions in the heart of the Observant Franciscans in Toledo, the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes, reveals a controversial atmosphere regarding the role of female prophecy within the Observance.

After delivering the manuscript to the Tribunal, it is logical to think that the examiners sent the El Escorial manuscript to the General Inquisition Council. In a communication of the 11 November 1568, new information about the *Conorte* emerged, which indicates that its detractors had the upper hand: as the Inquisition ordered the confiscation of all the copies of the book in existence, undoubtedly to remove it from circulation and prevent further readings of it: "... *rescebimos ayer 10 del presente la una de seis del mismo con el libro de mano que compuso Juana de la Cruz, monja, y luego se escribió al comiss[ario] general de la Orden de San Francisco para que haga recoger todos los traslados que oviere del dicho libro y los envíe a esta Inquisición...*" [... we received

---

condemnation of the Alumbrados of Toledo, as evidenced by the notes written by Ortiz himself in the margins of the manuscript]. See also *Conorte* 1996, 90.

90 Madrid, AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 3069, n° 127.

91 Madrid, AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 3069, n° 134.

yesterday, the 10th of this month, the one dated the 6th of the same month along with the handwritten book composed by Juana de la Cruz, a nun. We then wrote to the Commissary General of the Order of Saint Francis to collect all the copies that exist of the said book and send them to this Inquisition...]<sup>92</sup> After this date, we lose track of the Escorial manuscript until it reappears in the catalogue of prohibited books in the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial in 1635.

The El Escorial manuscript was rebound at least once before it arrived at the Real Biblioteca, most likely with the same boards covered with black tanned leather that it has today. This implies the use of a paper guillotine to standardise ff. 15–454 to specific measurements (305 × 205mm). The exception is folio 7 (295 × 204mm), which is visibly smaller and contains an unfinished prologue that does not exist in the Vatican manuscript. As I have shown in a recent article, none of this is accidental, although after a detailed analysis of the processes of collective authorship in the creation of the *Conorte*, the claim that the prologue should be rejected as spurious needs to be re-evaluated.<sup>93</sup> As explained in my codicological analysis of the sermon book, the differences between folio 7 and the rest are multiplied when we carry out a comparative analysis of the *mise en page* or of the handwriting of the text. The conclusion is evident: the prologue found today on folio 7 is a later addition to the copy, which attempted to imitate the formal characteristics of the rest of the codex. However, the reasons for this addendum are not crystal clear. If the El Escorial manuscript had been produced in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, this addition could be related to the processes of amalgamation and “layered authorship” that I describe in the second chapter, thus constituting a layer of writing later than the corpus of sermons, added by a tertiary, and not simply a “spurious prologue”.<sup>94</sup> This prologue, furthermore, is mysteriously truncated, as it does not continue on the verso of the page, which is left blank. Its location is related to two quires that were found at the front of the book, whose total and partial disappearance was reported by Zarco Cuevas.<sup>95</sup> These were respectively

92 Madrid, AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 3069, nº 136.

93 Acosta-García, “Notas codicológicas”, 231–248.

94 I thank Jes Boon for her comments on the conclusions of my codicological analysis, which have led me to refine my conclusions about the prologue. For her part, Carmen del Camino has proposed an alternative hypothesis in private correspondence, according to which the writing of this first folio could correspond to the same scribe as the rest of the manuscript, but was copied later, in different circumstances from the copy of the corpus. If this were the case, it would support, in a sense, the practices of addition and the amalgamation as fundamental processes of textual compilation for the *Conorte* (see chapter 2).

95 Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos*.

torn out and mutilated, leaving in the latter case the page on which this prologue was written.<sup>96</sup>

As I have indicated, the examination of this rebinding has repercussions for the hermeneutics of the *Conorte* as a literary object. To start with, the binding of the manuscript is fundamental as a starting point for discussing its current structure. Given that it is not a typical binding of the Real Biblioteca, its provenance needs to be placed to a period before its arrival there, which is to say before (at the very latest) 1567, the date when De Torres started to annotate the book. Attention returns, then, to the year that the volume supposedly passed the Toledo Convento de San Juan de los Reyes. As some of the annotations made by “Padre Ortiz” are partially cut where they approach the edges of the page, it appears that the quires must have been restitched and later guillotined, before being annotated between 1524 and 1529.<sup>97</sup> However, this must have taken place before De Torres made his glosses (1567–1568), as these clearly occupy the margins of the manuscript and are never cut, not even partially, despite their ubiquity and density. Assuming that Francisco Ortiz is the author of the first annotation of the manuscript, these indications point to a time span of between 1524 and 1568 for this guillotining and, subsequently, for the re-binding. Moreover, the examination of the watermarks as a potential dating indicator suggests the same chronology.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4 The Vatican Manuscript

The Vatican manuscript consists of two huge volumes in paper of medium dimensions, with the binding measuring 320 × 215 mm. It has correlative foliation (the first, ff. 1–453; the second, ff. 454–733) under the same call number, which classifies it as a document belonging to the process of Juana’s

96 For a rationale based on the material evidence provided by the codex, see Acosta-García, “Notas codicológicas”, 240–243.

97 For example, those of 89r and 129v.

98 There are two models in the manuscript that follow a homogeneous distribution: the first, occupying ff. 15–390, which represents a gloved hand with a six-petalled flower of 80 mm in height; the second, on ff. 391–454, a hand with a six-pointed star of some 70 mm in height. Both respond to the motif classified as B.02.02.03 in PFES (Papel y filigranas en España, <https://memoryofpaper.eu/pfes/pfes.php?ClaveFiligrana=000776>, consulted: 14/07/2023). There are four watermarks in this database of a size that coincides with that of the El Escorial manuscript, although only one of these maintains the characteristics of the sheet as we find it in the El Escorial manuscript and the other three, with slightly different sizes, were used in Castile in the final decade of the fifteenth century: number 376, used between 1489–1495 and numbers 410, 430, 454, used in Salamanca 1494, Burgos 1498, and Seville 1498, respectively.

canonization. As in the case of the El Escorial manuscript, the composition of the ink has damaged the paper, corroding holes in it, and rendering it illegible in many places. The instability of the support, coupled with the reopening of the canonization process in the 1980s, prompted intense restoration work, including strengthening the folios and a new binding. The manuscript is written in two columns with gothic script, which is squarer than that of the El Escorial manuscript and which, as in that case, it has not been possible to date more precisely than the start of the sixteenth century. Significantly, it was copied by a single hand.<sup>99</sup> There are numerous errors of foliation,<sup>100</sup> in the correlation of the chapter numbers,<sup>101</sup> and lacunae caused by the disappearance of folios, perhaps of entire quires. Furthermore, it contains one less sermon than the El Escorial manuscript, with a total of 71. In the following, I will carry out the first material analysis of this manuscript, attempting to gather information that will help us to date it and to understand some of the peculiarities of the sermons.

As explained in the first section, the Vatican manuscript is the only one of the two that can be confirmed to have come from the library of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, where it was handed over in 1665 by the then abbess to the commission that sent it to the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti. The first references to this manuscript are made by two of Juana's hagiographers, Daza and Navarro. Daza's hagiography, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada Sancta Juana de la Cruz* (1610) refers to "*un libro de mano muy antiguo que (dictándole la misma santa por mandado del ángel de su guarda) escribió una discípula suya llamada Soror María Evangelista, a quien milagrosamente para este efeto y escribir el libro de los sermones que la santa predicaba*"<sup>102</sup> [an ancient manuscript (dictated by the saint herself at the command of her guardian angel) that was written by one of her disciples named Soror María Evangelista, who miraculously wrote the book of sermons that the saint preached for this purpose.] In f. 76v of his work, where he speaks at length about Juana's preaching, Daza refers unequivocally to the manuscript of the *Conorte* with which he worked at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. This manuscript, he says, had 733 pages and contained 71 sermons, that are listed later. All this coincides with the Vatican manuscript. Additionally,

99 I thank Carmen del Camino for her help in the palaeographic analysis of the manuscript.

100 The f. 96 is repeated; f. 132 is numbered as 138; between ff. 235 and 236 there is an unnumbered folio; it passes from 489 to 500.

101 As I have already said, the Vatican manuscript contains 71 sermons, compared to the 72 of the El Escorial manuscript, lacking the one numbered 57 and titled "*Los ángeles fueron delante de Jesucristo*" [The angels went before Jesus Christ] in *Conorte* 1999. There are many errors in the numbering of the chapters throughout the manuscript.

102 Daza 1611, 11r.

he adds the following characteristics of conservation: “... *de letra muy legible y asentada, aunque ya el tiempo y la polilla le tienen muy maltratado*” [... in a very legible and neat handwriting, although time and moths have greatly damaged it.]<sup>103</sup> Given the complete coincidence of this brief description with the characteristics of the Vatican codex, it can be asserted that this manuscript was kept in the archive of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz not only in 1665 but before 1610, when Daza made his investigations of it. For his part, Navarro, in his later hagiography *Favores del rey del cielo* (1622), repeats the information related to the length of the codex and its number of sheets.<sup>104</sup> The fact that Navarro's hagiography draws so closely on Daza's best-seller could make one suspect that he had simply copied this fact. However, his edition of one of the sermons of the *Conorte* (numbered 66 in the El Escorial codex) suggests that he probably had folios 669v–679r of the Vatican manuscript in view, as his transcription follows its phrasing rather than that of the Escorial manuscript.<sup>105</sup>

As Daza and Navarro had already noted, the overall state of the Vatican manuscript was already very poor in the seventeenth century.<sup>106</sup> Some of this damage is still visible today despite the restoration that was carried out in the twentieth century: the paper is very affected by ink corrosion, which has largely punctured it, leaving it full of lacunae, or extending through from one side of the sheet to the other, sometimes making reading very difficult (Figure 5). While the interventions to restore it in the 1980s at the Vatican succeeded in stabilizing the support and slowing down the corrosive effect of the ink, they have also made it very difficult to perform certain kinds of analysis. For example, the collation of the quires cannot be investigated as one cannot establish the number of folios in each of them because there are many loose sheets that have been restored by adding them to one other.<sup>107</sup>

In fact, surely the fundamental problem is that it is not possible to know for certain whether the manuscript originally arrived in two volumes from the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz or whether it was divided in this way during the restoration. There are no written records of the Laboratorio di Conservazione del Archivio Apostolico Vaticano to guide us on the matter.<sup>108</sup> If we

103 Daza 1611, 76v, where, as well as the number of folios, Daza gives a number of sheets, “365” and, in folios 77r–78r, a list of sermons that coincides with the Vatican manuscript.

104 Navarro 1622, 334–335.

105 Navarro 1622, 335–337.

106 Daza 1611, 76v; Navarro 1622, 334.

107 In this case, then, we must make do with the information related to the missing pages and the subsequent textual lacunae added by the Vatican restorers. On a label stuck to the back-cover flyleaf we read: “*Carte mancanti*: 25, 42–72, 354, 368, 400–402, 490–499, 504–512”.

108 The current binding measures 320 × 215 mm, while the measurements of the sheets vary from a minimum of 285 × 180 mm (f. 1) to a maximum of 305 × 205 mm (f. 154). La *mise en page* is of two columns that contain between 32 (f. 1r) and 37 lines (f. 154r).



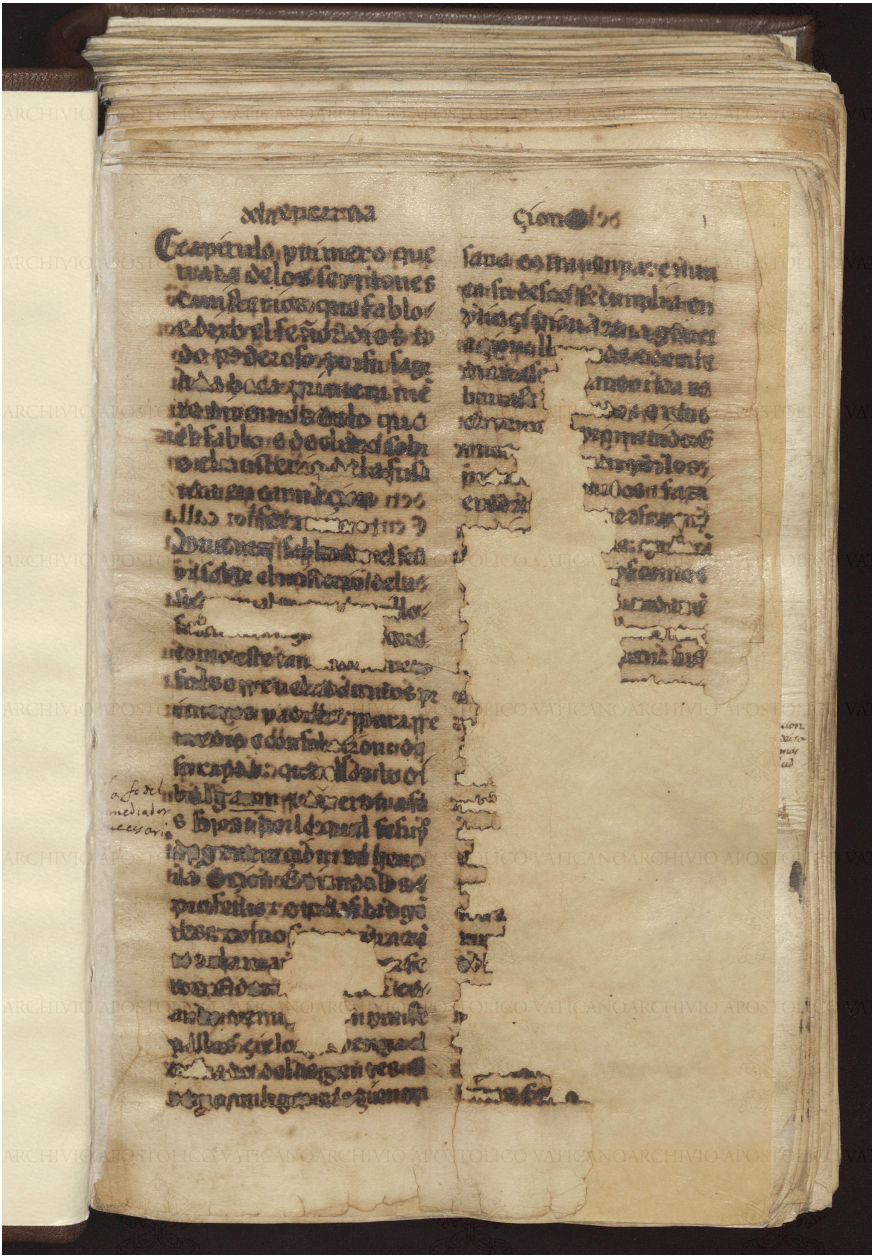


FIGURE 5 *Libro del conorte*; Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, MS Congr. ss. Rituum Processus 3074, f. 1r

go by the historical accounts, which speak only of two manuscripts collected from the library of Juana's convent (one of *Vida y fin*, now lost, and the other of the *Conorte*), then in all probability the Vatican manuscript would not have originally been divided and, thus, would have been a massive volume containing all the sermons.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, the analysis of the watermarks offers with information that could be useful for dating the paper.<sup>110</sup> To begin with, paper from five different mills is distributed throughout the codex, some of whose watermarks belong to types very common in the period—such as that of the encircled dove, which we find in diverse Castilian documents from 1499 to 1534 with a size very close to that of the Vatican manuscript.<sup>111</sup> However, there are two rarely used watermarks with similar dimensions found in the folios of two different documents used in Valladolid in 1522,<sup>112</sup> and the watermark composed of a hand with the letters “np” written in its centre with a five-petalled flower appears only once in the databases consulted, pointing to a paper of Castilian origin, also used in Valladolid, and also to the first quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>113</sup>

On the other hand, the marginalia in the codex also increase, but to a lesser extent and with more varied functions than the glosses by those annotate the El Escorial manuscript. As in that case, here I will only describe these annotations, aiming to extract information useful to this study, even though they deserve an in-depth examination in their own right in the near future. We can tentatively classify these marginalia in the following groups:

- 
- 109 This is supported by the foliation of the upper right corner, modern and continuous in the two volumes (although, as I have said above, containing errors in many cases).
  - 110 The distribution of the watermarks in the two volumes is arranged in almost parallel blocks. First volume: dove, 1–41; Hand and five-petalled flower plus “FM”, 74–294; Orb plus cross, 295–307; Hand and five-petalled flower plus “s”, 308–453. Second volume: Dove, 456–502; Hand and five-petalled flower plus “FM”, 513–664; Hand and five-petalled flower plus “s”, 666–732; idem plus “np”, 733. As it can be observed, the distribution of the type of paper is similar in each of the volumes. The only variation found was with the introduction of the paper with the “orb plus cross” watermark in the first volume.
  - 111 Dove, hand with the letters “FM” written in its centre and flower with five petals, hand with a small “s” inscribed and flower of five petals, orb with cross, and, finally, hand with the letters “np” in its centre and flower of five petals.
  - 112 Hand with the letters “FM” inscribed in its centre and flower of five petals, and hand with the letters “np” inscribed in its centre and flower of five petals. The position in relation to the laid lines is not possible to assess because of current state of the material support after the restoration.
  - 113 See the chronology that I insert later with the possible dates of production, 63ff. Of course, one needs to take into account the margin of fifteen years between manufacture and possible use that is given by C. M. Briquet, *Les filigranes. Dictionnaire Historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, Leipzig, Verlag von Karl W. Hiersemann, 1923, Tome Premier, xx–xxi.

- a Lexical addenda: Many of the notes, written by a different hand than the scribe of the manuscript but using a similar gothic pen (surely, then, from the second half of the sixteenth century), add synonyms of terms that appear in the sermons in the margin.<sup>114</sup>
- b Restoration of the main text: A series of marginalia written with a modern pen (seventeenth century) in cursive script which restores certain portions of the text that had previously been crossed out in the margins.<sup>115</sup>
- c *Notae bene*: Notes that call attention to the main text that they gloss. Various seventeenth-century hands can be made out, including a reader versed in theology who annotates with cursive script, in Latin and Castilian, making a reading of the entire codex.<sup>116</sup>
- d Amendments: The margins are also crossed by the repeated expression “*sacado está*” [this has been already copied] which indicates a functional annotation. These words are probably related to a copy that was made in the Vatican phase after 1665 or perhaps to the work of an earlier censor, whose resulting manuscript has not survived. The annotation in the lower margin at the end of the codex in the same hand “*Este libro está ya enmendado Fray Joan de [...]anio*” [This book has already been amended by Fray Joan de (...)anio] supports the hypothesis of censorship.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps these notes are related to the numerous crosses and xs that also populate the manuscript’s margins.<sup>118</sup>

114 For example: 90r: “*de rodillas*” (in the corpus “*de finojos*”); 223r: “*i llebar*”; 224: “*i rodillas*” (corpus: “*finojos*”); “*cara*” (corpus: “*faz*”); “*i puñadas*” (corpus: “*pungeses*”); 583v, interlinear: “*e amigos*” (corpus: “*e fijos e maridos e mujeres*”).

115 The clearest example is the restoration of the initial note of the revealed *cancionero* (songbook) edited in Acosta-García, “El *cancionero revelado*”, 501–531. See also the interlinear restoration of the text in 587v, 588, and 595r. Some compositions of the LC have been analysed by M. M. Cortés Timoner, “La mística nupcial en Sor Juana de la Cruz y San Juan de la Cruz”, in *Actes del X Congrés Internacional de l’Associació Hispànica de Literatura Medieval*, R. Alemany, J. Ll. Martos, and J. M. Manzanaro (eds.), Alicante, Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana, 2005, II, 611–623.

116 The first note appears in the margin of 3v, the last in that of 731v. The sources are those compared in the text of the *Conorte* (*Revelation*, Paul of Tarsus, Jerome, Dionysius, Bonaventure, and Francisco de Torres, who appears in 315v, 364r and 597v). Its annotation ranges from simple “*notae*” (for instance, 77r, 277v, and 604r), to assessments of its content, always positive (for example, 597r: “*notable*”) and to extensive glosses (for example, 365r). There is at least one other hand, which writes in a more primitive handwriting, making brief comments on the sermons (for example, 2r and 29r).

117 “Amendment” here can mean almost anything: from minor corrections, of purely verbal cleaning, to a deep and transforming intervention, which intervenes in the text, that is, an intense editorial task that is transferred to another manuscript, in this case unknown. I thank María José Vega for this insight.

118 The first “*sacado está*” appears at 99v and is repeated intermittently until the end in 712v. The crosses are more abundant, and sometimes their relationship with “*sacado está*”

As it has been shown, these marginalia present differences not only about chronology but also the purpose to which the annotator assigned them when they were made and which they continued to hold when they were read. The information in the annotations does not identify their authors; nevertheless, two types of reading can be described. One in which a likely Franciscan is in theological dialogue with the proposals of the *Conorte*, such as Francisco de Torres did in the El Escorial manuscript. And a second, which responds to a bureaucratic process of evaluation, copying, or censorship, probably carried out while the codex was in the Vatican. The latter may respond to a reading determined by the examinations of the manuscript during the canonization process.<sup>119</sup> This would be in concordance with the production of copies during the evaluation of the book at the Vatican, which includes the coexistence of an “*ingenten tomum*” examined by Giovanni Bona (that is, the Vatican manuscript before it was divided into two), alongside the “*trium codicum*” that the Jesuit Martín Esparza used to examine the *Conorte* in 1666:

Vidi etiam ingentem tomum in quo continentur Sermones eiusdem Religiosae Virginis Ioannae a Cruce, quos ut in prima pagina scriptum est, loquebatur Spiritus Sanctus per os eius, cum in extasim rapta esset. Moniales vero ex ore ipsius exceptos, scriptis consignarunt. Nihil in eis solidum et supernaturalem, sed multa loquacitas, plures ineptiae et chimericae narrationes, multa muliercularum deliramenta.<sup>120</sup>

[I also saw a large volume in which are contained the sermons of the religious virgin Juana de la Cruz, which, as written on the first page, the Holy Spirit spoke through her mouth when she was in ecstasy. The nuns indeed

---

seems clear (see, for example, 99v), although in most cases they are on their own. The number of hands and the meaning of these marks in relation to the orthodoxy of the text merits a separate study.

119 Maybe Cardinal Azzolino, who was commissioned to examine Juana's writings on 21 November 1665 (*Conorte* 1996, 151). Although one cannot eliminate the possibility that these annotations were made in one of the Inquisitorial examinations to which the book was subjected.

120 *Conorte* 1996, 159, my emphasis. On the opinions of Esparza and Bona, see *Conorte* 1999, 155–160. Esparza's mention of the “*trium codicum*”, where the sermons as distributed 1–20, 21–57, and 59–71, see *Conorte* 1996, 160. He also saw the massive volume, which must correspond with the Vatican manuscript (*Conorte* 1999, 163).

wrote down what they heard from his mouth. There is nothing substantial and supernatural, but much verbosity, many nonsensical statements, chimerical narrations, and many absurdities of simple women.]

Be that as it may, these annotations have a more “technical” function than the earlier ones: they do not correspond to a comprehensive reading, but result in a new copy, perhaps with modified contents.

## 5 Juana’s Preaching and the Date of Production of the Manuscripts

As data gathered in the material analysis shows, everything points towards the idea that both manuscripts were produced in Castile in the first half of the sixteenth century, very probably in the first quarter. This dating fits with the year that is given in the colophon of both codices, expressed in an almost identical fashion: “*escribiose este santo libro el año de mill y quinientos y nueve años*” (Vatican manuscript) compared with “*escribiose este santo libro en el año de myll e quinientos y nueve años*” (El Escorial manuscript) [this holy book was copied the year 1509]. However, accepting 1509 as the year of production is problematic for various reasons that have not escaped scholars interested in the *Conorte*, such as the promoters of the faith and the postulators of the third phase of the canonization process.<sup>121</sup>

To begin with, the vast majority of early sources—that is, *Vida y fin* and the convent’s own tradition as preserved in some of the testimonies of the diocesan and apostolic processes—agree that Juana’s visionary preaching lasted for thirteen years.<sup>122</sup> To this should be added other witnesses questioned during the process, who declared that the sermon collection corresponded to the transcription made by María Evangelista in the final year of the preaching (“*ultimo anno ex tresdecim*”),<sup>123</sup> a chronology that coincides with that given by the *LC* and hagiographies such as those by Daza and Navarro.<sup>124</sup> If we cross these data with the year 1509, found in the colophons of the Vatican and El

121 *Positio super dubio (Responsio, facti, et iuris ad novas animadversiones)*, 11.

122 *Vida y fin*, 30r, 31r; Daza 1611, 71v. The testimonies collected in 1619 in the convent coincide on this point, *Conorte* 1996, 145–148. See, for example the information given by the abbess Ana de la Concepción, *Conorte* 1999, 135–136.

123 *Conorte* 1996, 147–148.

124 *LC*, 20r. Daza 1611, 76v; Navarro, 324. See, also, J. A. Boon, “Introduction”, 1–33, 16, n. 59.



Escorial manuscripts, it can be concluded that Juana's preaching began in 1496 and continued until the year in which she was named abbess and helped in the reform of her religious house. Her preaching can then be contextualized within the convent of the third order that was yet to submit to enclosure, which would explain how people from outside the community attended the preaching. As the *Vida y fin* states: "*A esta sancta bendición toda la gente que allí estava hincava los hinojos, e los hombres, quitados los bonetes y abaxadas las caveças, la resçivían con mucha devoçión. E luego salían todos del monasterio. Y para la entrar a oyr, los prelados davan liçençia.*"<sup>125</sup> [At this holy blessing, all the people who were there bowed their knees and the men removed their caps and lowered their heads, receiving her with much devotion. And then everyone left the convent. And (afterwards) the prelates gave permission to enter and listen to her.]

However, dating the extant copy to 1509 raises doubts. Firstly, the colophon of the Vatican manuscript is written with a clearer ink, different from that used in the rest of the volume, so it is possible that it was added later. Additionally, Daza notes that Juana's preaching commenced in 1505, when she was 24 years old.<sup>126</sup> As a result, her final year of preaching would then be 1518.<sup>127</sup> It is also strange that the privilege granted by Cardinal Cisneros to the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz and its abbess to take charge of the parish church of Cubas is not related in one way or another to Juana's preaching, which would align with her role as parish priest. Finally, as García Andrés accurately points out,<sup>128</sup> it is probable that the text of the sermons is later than 1509 for an intra-textual reason: the sermon numbered 37 in the El Escorial manuscript alludes to two enslaved women whom Cisneros sent to the convent after the Castilian conquest of Orán.<sup>129</sup> Yet, this event did not conclude until May 1509. This is an undoubtedly late date for the composition of the sermons in their current state of redaction as well as for copies as clean as those presented in both manuscripts.<sup>130</sup> Additionally, various sources mention Carlos V as part of the public

125 *Vida y fin*, 30r.

126 Daza 1611, 38v.

127 *Positio super dubio (Responsio, facti, et iuris ad novas animadversiones)*, 11.

128 *Conorte* 1999, 78–80.

129 *Conorte* 1999, 995. This act is referred to in *Vida y fin*, 42v; Daza 1611, 73r y Navarro 1622, 332. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, speaks of the matter at 138, n. 1.

130 The capture of the city is dated to 8 May [P. M. Cátedra, F. Bautista, and J. M. Valero Moreno (eds.), "*Historias de la divinal victoria de Orán*" por Martín de Herrera. Edición en facsímile de la impresa en su taller de Logroño por Arnao Guillén de Brocar en 1510, publicada

at Juana's performances; the monarch set foot in Castile in 1517, so his presence in Cubas de la Sagra can be given as 1518 at the earliest. This year, therefore, continues to be the most likely for the end of her preaching.<sup>131</sup>

Furthermore, the main argument against 1509 as the date of composition is the evident amalgamation of materials. Despite following the liturgical cycle, the collection is not divided into sermons per feast day, but in many of them speeches heard in different acts of preaching are combined. The question of preaching-copying in one year (or, as Daza claims, in two consecutive years, 1508 and 1509) does not seem possible unless the tertiaries had already been taking notes in the initial years of Juana's preaching and these had been incorporated later into the bulk of the sermons.<sup>132</sup> Perhaps, as Triviño claims, 1509 is not the year of the copy but rather the year in which Cisneros ordered the transcription of Juana's revelations, which would also coincide with something as important as the year of the beginning of her career as abbess and the subsequent reform of the convent.<sup>133</sup>

This hypothesis, which sees 1509 as a symbolic year for the composition of the *Conorte* but not as the year of the copy itself, is consistent not only with the fact that both codices mention the same year in their colophons, but also with the amalgamation of materials and with the unusual cohesion that the *Conorte* displays as a unitary work. In effect, there are frequent cross-references that use formulas whose function is to standardise the sermons, converting them into a true collection and not merely fragments or loose pieces of a large period of preaching. In a compilation as extensive as the *Conorte*, this would imply a lengthy work process and a phased and layered approach to writing whose characteristics I will present in the next chapter. To sum up, if these manuscripts were produced in 1509, they would need to have been composed from earlier material that has not been preserved and which presented the sermons in a more primitive way—that is, without the editorial cohesion of the

---

*en conmemoración del quinto centenario de la conquista de Orán (1509)*, San Millán de la Cogolla, Instituto Biblioteca Hispánica/Instituto de historia del libro y de la lectura, 375], while Cisneros did not enter it triumphantly until the 20th day of the same month (*idem*, 185). The cardinal returned to Castile on the 24th (*idem*, 186). This gives us some seven months between the conquest of the city and the reception of the enslaved women at the monastery. This information is repeated in Daza 1611, 73r, and Navarro 1622, 332. See, in turn, M. V. Triviño, *Inspiración y ternura: Sermones marianos de la Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2006, XXI–XXII.

131 *Positio super dubio (Responsio, facti, et iuris ad novas animadversiones)*, 11.

132 I thank Pietro Delcorno for this indication.

133 Triviño, *Inspiración y ternura*, XXI.

surviving codices. Finally, certain passages refer to the “reception and rejection of the sermons”, which lead García Andrés to claim that they had been circulating for some time before the collection was composed.<sup>134</sup> The last option includes the recollection of Juana’s preaching (or parts of it) by the community or by the various audiences that she had during those thirteen years.

Accordingly, I am in agreement with García Andrés that the chronology of the preaching needs to be varied to make it coincide, at least partially, with Juana’s period as abbess.<sup>135</sup> No doubt drawing on Daza’s proposition that her gift of prophecy commenced when she was Twenty-two years old,<sup>136</sup> García Andrés proposes that the gift of preaching started to manifest itself in 1507 and that “with the permission of the prelates” in 1508 “she preaches to the Community and to the people”. It is from this date, then, that one starts to count her thirteen years of preaching alluded to in the sources.<sup>137</sup> In this scenario, the ecstatic preaching is one of the abbess’ attributes of power, which squares with the model of female leadership supported during the Cisneros reform. On the basis of these data and combining them with what has been provided by the material examination of the codices, both manuscripts were most likely produced in the 1520s.<sup>138</sup>

## 6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have taken up the analysis of the materiality of the Vatican and El Escorial codices from the point of view of their production and circulation. As I have shown, at least since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *Conorte* (specifically, the Vatican *Conorte*) was considered by the tertiaries, while it was in their care, as a kind of relic with apotropaic virtues: it cured illnesses, stopped storms, and was the centre of supernatural visions at the convent.<sup>139</sup> In being removed for examination by the Sacra

<sup>134</sup> *Conorte* 1999, 80–86.

<sup>135</sup> *Conorte* 1999, 64–65, although it also says: “1504: *Comienzan los éxtasis y los raptos*” [1504: The ecstasies and raptures begin].

<sup>136</sup> Daza 1611, 74r.

<sup>137</sup> *Conorte* 1999, 80.

<sup>138</sup> Graña Cid, “Las profetisas ante el poder eclesiástico”, 18.

<sup>139</sup> LC, 20v: “A persuasión del sancto ángel Laruel, púsole el Señor este título de *Conorte* y concediole el Señor muchas bendiciones y virtudes contra los demonios y tempestades, que mandó el santo ángel que quando alguna estubiesse en pasamiento le pusiessen algo de la lectura d’este libro para defensa del demonio. Y en las tempestades manda la prelada saquen el santo libro o sus traslados, y se ha visto cesar la tempestad muchas vezes. Y las quantas



Congregazione dei Riti, the object was uprooted from its cultic context and separated from a devout audience which perceived it as sacred, thereby losing its power. In effect, once in Rome, the *virtus* emanating from its physicality was neutralized in favour of the examination of its content, although this examination was performed only in a partial way, with the readings by Bona and Esparza, and the later defence by Coppons.<sup>140</sup> At least officially, it was not the declaration of a possible heterodoxy that slowed Juana's path towards beatification, but an authorial question, encapsulated in the search for the "original" writings of the "authentic" codex. In all this, the criteria of "authenticity" and "originality" are not valid from a philological point of view, nor do they help us to understand that processes that underlay the transformation of thirteen years of visionary performances into a collection of texts in the form of a codex.

These issues discussed about the sermons go beyond the contents of the texts to enter the thornier terrain of *how* they were transcribed. Put another way, it is in the passage from performance to text where the promoters of the faith located the problems of authorship that ended up preventing the cause for canonization in the eighteenth century. When it was reopened in 1986, the main novelty was proposed was also of a material nature: it was claimed that the original codex, which contained the early version of the *Conorte* (the El Escorial manuscript), which is to say, the one that had been transcribed by María Evangelista, had been found. The pre-eminence that has been given in studies on the *Conorte* to one codex over the other can be attributed to the instructions of the decree "*Caelestis Hierusalem Cives*" (1623–1634) and originates from the intentions of the new postulators to overcome the obstacle posed by the Vatican manuscript. For now, the only thing that can be claimed about the El Escorial manuscript is that it undoubtedly contains a redaction that is earlier than that of the Vatican manuscript. However we do not know

---

*que llaman del santo Conorte, que son unas pardas gordas, dixo el santo ángel, quando las truxo del Cielo: 'Estas traen las gracias del santo Conorte'.* [Due to the persuasiveness of the holy angel Laruel, the Lord gave her book the title of *Conorte*. The Lord granted her many blessings and virtues against demons and storms, and the holy angel commanded that when someone was in the throes of death they should be read some of this book as a defense against the devil. And during storms he orders that the prelate bring out this holy book or a copy of it, and as a result storms have been seen to cease many times. And they say the beads, which are big and brown, are from the holy *Conorte*, because the holy angel said when he brought them down from heaven: "These carry with them the grace of the holy *Conorte*". In general, liturgical books and the texts that they contain were considered sacred (Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life and Latin Learning*, 290).

140 *Conorte* 1999, 148–153.

its place of production and, moreover, its provenance is uncertain until it was annotated in the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes by Francisco de Torres in 1567, meaning that it probably has a direct link with the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. The reason for the diversity between the two redactions contained in the codices is also unknown. That the El Escorial one is earlier does not necessarily mean that it is the older manuscript, nor that it has a more direct relationship with the community of Santa María de la Cruz, taking into account that the only manuscript we can place in its library before 1610 (that is, before the *princeps* of the hagiography of Daza, who had it in front of his eyes) is the Vatican one.

What conclusions can be drawn from the new analysis of the two manuscripts that I have carried out? First, the comparison of the chapter structure together with the material examination of the binding of the El Escorial manuscript makes clear that the backbone of the *Conorte* is a collection of more than seventy sermons ordered according to the liturgical cycle and not preceded, in principle, by any kind of paratext. That is, although there is a different ordering and number of sermons in each of the codices, the macrostructure of the liturgical cycle is what underlies the *Conorte*-project, articulating it in the form of a book. On the other hand, the data derived from the various analyses that I have performed allow the fine-tuning of the chronology of the production, circulation, and writing of the El Escorial manuscript and to present the first attempt at a chronology of the Vatican manuscript. Some of these dates that remain uncertain, as they are based on hypotheses that I have explained in the preceding pages, and others that are apparently secure. All the data gathered points to a production in the first half of the sixteenth century, in all probability of having taken place in the 1520s.

On the circulation of the El Escorial manuscript, we can trace the following timeline:

1509: Codex copied according to the colophon.

1500–1525: Codex copied according to the codicological examination.

1524?–1529?: Date in which it could have been annotated by Francisco Ortiz (?).

[1524?–1529?]-31 July 1567: Censorship of the codex by a Franciscan friar, a relative of Juana, probably at the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes. The codex was rebound, which included the addition (or substitution) of the quire at the front, during this time span.

**6 June 1559:** The *Conorte* and its copies are ordered to be collected by the General Inquisition Council's directive at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz.

**31 July 1567–1 August 1568:** Reading and annotation of the codex by Fray Francisco de Torres at the Convento de San Juan de los Reyes.

**Before 16 August 1568:** The General Inquisition Council requests Miguel de Medina's evaluation of the El Escorial manuscript.

**24 October 1568:** Miguel de Medina declares that the book is in the hands of Francisco de Torres. He takes it to the Tribunal of Toledo, along with his negative evaluation and those of other theologians. The Tribunal of Toledo was directed to send it to the General Inquisition Council.

**11 November 1568:** The General Inquisition Council orders the seizure of the *Conorte* and all its copies.

**1612:** Creation of the section of forbidden books at the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

**1635:** Presence of the manuscript in the section of forbidden books of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

The Vatican manuscript has the following chronology:

**1509:** Codex copied according to the colophon.

**1500–1525:** Codex produced according to the codicological examination.

**6 June 1559:** The *Conorte* and its copies are ordered to be collected by the General Inquisition Council's directive at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz.

**Before 1610:** The manuscript is located in the archive of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, where it was examined by Daza.

**1665:** The codex is collected in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz at the petition of the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti and moved to the Vatican.

**After 1665:** Reading and copying processes at the Vatican.

**Circa 1985:** Restoration of the codex in the Laboratorio de Conservazione. Division in two volumes (?).

In both cases it is necessary to question the colophons that indicate 1509 as the date the copy was made (or completed).<sup>141</sup> The most likely process of production is that notes had been collected over years by the community and that the compilation of the sermons took place after the reform of the convent of the regular Franciscan tertiaries. I will expand on this topic in the following chapter

---

<sup>141</sup> Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 6, takes it for granted that Juana's preaching collected in the book is that of the years 1508–1509.

## The Architecture of the Sermon Book

“For medieval sermon studies, one of the primary problems for research, perhaps the primary problem, lies in determining whether there is any relationship between the text and an actual oral discourse, and if so, in determining the nature of that relationship.”

B. M. KIENZLE, “Introduction”, in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 170



### 1 Performance, Memory, Text

“Les traces écrites de la prédication effective nous préservent en revanche de la perte irrémédiable des paroles un jour prononcées mais bien souvent vouées à l’oubli” [The written traces of effective preaching, however, safeguard us from the irreversible loss of words once spoken, but often destined to be forgotten] (N. Bériou, “Avant-propos”, *En quête d’une parole vive: Traces écrites de la prédication (xe-xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle)* [online], Aubervilliers/Paris/Orléans, Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes, 2022).

If one thing is clear after reading the debates that took place about the *Conorte* during the canonization process, it is that the transformation of Juana’s performance into text was problematic from several points of view. This was primarily because the performance was perceived as a metamorphosis of the voice of Christ into writing:

Así como era en tener él por bien de descender y hablar por boca de esta bienaventurada sierva suya, así como en voz de trompeta muy sonante y provechosa para los de buena voluntad y con fe y amor y devoción del mismo Dios que hablaba por ella lo oían, y otras muchas gracias y revelaciones y maravillas que el Señor mostró por ella y por otras siervas suyas [note the use of the feminine], las cuales serían muy largas de contar.

[And so it was that it was pleasing for him to descend and speak through the mouth of this blessed servant of his, in a voice like a resounding trumpet (which was) beneficial for those of good will. They heard it—and many other graces and revelations and wonders that the lord demonstrated through her and others of his women servants which would be too lengthy to recount—with faith and love and devotion to the same God who was speaking through her.]<sup>1</sup>

This transformation, however, was never perceived as a problem in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, but only after her writings arrived at the Vatican. From this point doubt was cast on the origin of the discourse, questioning both the visionary experience and the authority it implied. Were these really the words spoken by Juana de la Cruz? Here one faces not only the interpretive difficulty posed by any mystical text revealed in a collective context (the gulf between words and experience, on the one hand, and between individual experience and collectivity, on the other), but also a characteristic that particularly affects the genre of the *sermon*, that is any preaching performance that, in one way or another, ends up being textualized.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the discussions of the canonization process about the “original” writings opened the enquiries into the authorship of the *Conorte*. The subtle arguments and counterarguments of the various postulators and promoters of the faith were, however, highly artificial because the textual authorship is explicit. The transcribers were certain tertiaries of the religious house, as is clearly stated, for example, in a sentence in *Vida y fin*: “*Scrivieron las religiosas de las palabras e misterios e secretos que el poderoso Dios habló por la boca desta sancta virgen un libro, llamado Conforte o Luz norte.*” [The nuns wrote the words and mysteries and secrets that almighty God spoke through the mouth of that holy virgin in a book, called *Comfort* or *North Light*].<sup>3</sup>

In fact, as has been observed, this was one of the main criticisms raised by one of the examiners at the Vatican, Martín Esparza, who suggested that

1 Vatican manuscript, 634r; *Conorte* 1999, 1288–1289. See, also, the passage that makes this idea explicit, unravelling the figures of the Father: *Conorte* 1999, 994–995.

2 This problem points, of course, to the difference outlined by Mertens between *predikatie* and *preek* (see p. 20). For a precedent of this analysis of the pieces of the *Conorte* from sermon studies and the arts of memory, see J. A. Boon, “The Glory of the Virgin: The Mariology of the Incarnation in Two Early Modern Castilian Mystical Sermons”, *La Corónica* (2012) 41.1, 35–60.

3 *Vida y fin*, 32r. As it has been defended elsewhere, *Vida y fin* is a collective chronicle of the convent that should be understood within the parameters of community writing and collective memory (Acosta-García, “Radical Succession”). However, the implications of the conclusions of my analysis of this chapter of the *Conorte* as a process of collective creation for the understanding of both this hagiography and *LC* remain to be studied. I thank Jes Boon for this point.

for this reason the *Conorte* should not be subject to the legislation promoted by the decrees of Urban VIII, especially because the sermonary was built by “*multa muliercularum deliramenta*” [many absurdities of simple women]. Despite the existence of this open secret, the name of one of Juana’s sisters, María Evangelista, is repeated in the sources, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the evaluators of the Sacra Congregazione dei Riti. According to the convent’s own tradition, this tertiary had learned to write miraculously, and she was the one who had taken notes of the abbess’s sermons during the final years of her preaching.<sup>4</sup>

In 1617, while Navarro was gathering materials in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz in order to write his famous hagiography, he was informed about María Evangelista by two elder nuns. They had met her in person and were witness to the process of writing the *Conorte* (and of *Vida y fin*):<sup>5</sup>

[Y] el año en que esto se escribe, que es de 1617, viven algunas religiosas ancianas en [el convento], que son las madres Ana de la Concepción y María de la Purificación, las cuales alcanzaron a la dicha sor María Evangelista, y de su boca oyeron muchas veces, que milagrosamente había alcanzado del Señor la tal gracia, para escribir la *Vida de la santa Juana de la Cruz*, que se guarda en un libro mediano y los sermones que predicó por discurso de un año, que se guardan en otro mayor de folio, intitulado *Libro del Conorte* [...] [María Evangelista tenía] tan fiel y tenaz memoria que en acabando de oír el sermón de la Santa Juana, iba y le escribía luego puntualmente, con ser todos de revelaciones muy oscuras y misteriosas, y algunos tan largos que tienen a ocho, y diez pliegos, llenos de Teología Escolástica y mística, y de muchas autoridades de la Escritura Sagrada.

[(A)nd the year in which this is written, 1617, there live some elderly religious women in (the convent), Mother Ana de la Concepción and Mother María de la Purificación, who knew the aforementioned Sister María Evangelista, and many times heard from her own mouth that she had miraculously received such grace from the Lord to write the *Life of Saint Juana de la Cruz*, which is kept in a medium-sized book, and the sermons that she preached over the course of a year, which are kept in another larger of folio size, titled *Libro del Conorte* (...) (María Evangelista had) such a faithful and tenacious memory that as soon as she finished hearing the sermon of Saint Juana, she would immediately go and write

4 LC, 20r and testimonies of the process.

5 Navarro 1622, 239–240.

it down precisely, despite all of them being very obscure and mysterious revelations, and some so long that they contain eight or ten sheets, filled with scholastic and mystical theology, and many authorities from Sacred Scripture.]

The most interesting part of this passage is the sentence related to how Juana's preaching was textualized: "[*María Evangelista tenía*] *tan fiel y tenaz memoria que en acabando de oír el sermón de la Santa Juana, iba y le escribía luego puntualmente*" [(*María Evangelista* had) such a faithful and tenacious memory that as soon as she finished hearing the sermon of Saint Juana]. Although this is a rough description, it confirms that memory was at the crux of the transcription process: it was considered to be the main instrument used by *María Evangelista* to transform the abbess' preaching sessions into written texts. Both women religious seem amazed by her capacity to transcribe extensive and complex sermons by heart, but the supernatural gift of writing justifies her deep knowledge of "*Teología Escolástica y mística, y de muchas autoridades de la Escritura Sagrada*" [scholastic and mystical theology, and many authorities from Sacred Scripture].

The miraculous literacy of a female scribe is a well-known phenomenon found in a multitude of conventual chronicles across Europe. According to Cyrus:

What the *topos* suggest is that women had choices in what ideas and causes they chose to further through scribal activities [...]. [T]hrough their contribution to the copying of sermon literature, the monastic scribes helped to shape the dialogue that built up over generations of preaching. They were not only listeners to the sermon, but shapers of the sermon tradition.<sup>6</sup>

Above all, in the German case these accounts appear in religious houses where groups of women sought to construct a collective memory that centred certain miraculous characters of the community.<sup>7</sup> In the Castile of the Catholic Monarchs and Cardinal Cisneros, this *topos* was inspired in particular by the miraculous learning of Caterina da Siena, exemplarily transferred in this case to *María Evangelista*, so that the abbess could continue to perform her role of an illiterate prophetess. This is just what Juana's Dominican counterpart, *María de*

6 C. J. Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany*, Toronto/Buffalo/London, University of Toronto Press, 116–117, n. 60.

7 Cyrus, *The Scribes*, 204–205, with specific examples.



Santo Domingo, did.<sup>8</sup> The divine validation of the transcription of the revelations is part of the the framework through which Juana's authority was strengthened. She is portrayed here as a mere instrument, through which the voice of Christ penetrates, passes through, and is intoned. That his holy voice was put into writing by a tertiary who miraculously learned to read and write implies a chain of associations: Juana is like Christ, María Evangelista is like the evangelists, and the *Conorte* is like the gospels, as Surtz and Graña have noted.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, beyond the strategy to authorize the word revealed through the body of a woman, María Evangelista does not seem to have worked alone. As Graña rightly observes, the *Conorte* has a markedly "*perfil comunitario*" [collective profile] and María Evangelista would seem to be simply "*la escriba más destacada del grupo*" [the most prominent women scribe of the community].<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the two surviving sources that most probably originated in the convent (*LC* and the Vatican manuscript) contain traces that attest to a high level of literacy that materialized in writing of verses, the copying documents, epistolary activity, and the divine request that Juana's words were to be transcribed by the tertiaries, which is consistent with a collective formalization of the sermons.<sup>11</sup> This also very significantly accords with the convent's own tradition,

- 
- 8 The contrast between Juana and María reveals numerous distinctive characteristics between the preaching (and transcription) of both them in the same historical context. María was accused of preaching two sermons by one of the witnesses interrogated in one of the four trials carried out by ecclesiastic tribunals in which she was involved between 1508 and 1510 (see R. Sanmartín Bastida, *La representación de las místicas. Sor María de Santo Domingo en su contexto europeo*, Santander, Real Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 2012, 309–310), see V. Beltrán de Heredia, *Historia de la reforma de la Provincia de España (1450–1550)*, Romae ad S. Sabinae, Institutum Historicum FF. Praedicatorum, 114. Perhaps the greatest contrast lies in the process of transcription of the public raptures of the *beata* of Piedrahíta, which seem to have been the result of a series of *reportationes* that in one case was printed (R. Sanmartín Bastida and M. V. Curto Hernández, *El Libro de la oración de María de Santo Domingo. Estudio y edición*, Madrid, Iberoamericana, 2019). On María de Santo Domingo, there is a very wide bibliography, at least since Bataillon (*Erasmus y España*, 63–69 y 170–179). A key study that relates María's spirituality with the earlier visionary tradition and which, furthermore, gathers the greater part of the prior bibliography is Sanmartín Bastida, *La representación*. See also, R. Sanmartín Bastida and M. Luengo Balbás, *Las Revelaciones de María de Santo Domingo*, London, Queen Mary University, 2014.
- 9 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 112 and M. M. Graña Cid, "Encarnar la palabra: oralidad, lectura y escritura en las profetisas castellanas del Renacimiento", *Estudios eclesiásticos* 91, 358 (2016), 596.
- 10 Graña Cid, "Encarnar la palabra", 516–517. The role of María Evangelista in the monastic memory could be assimilated to that of "Sister N." who is mentioned by Kirakosian, *From the Material to the Mystical*, 21, in the case of the *Legatus divinae pietatis*.
- 11 The passages identified by Graña Cid, "Encarnar la palabra", 581–617, in relation to the convent's literacy are fundamental evidence in support of a high level of reading and

collected by Daza, in which two other tertiaries who had helped her with the transcription (Catalina de San Francisco and Catalina de los Mártires), are named alongside María Evangelista.<sup>12</sup> In any case, as Surtz already argued,<sup>13</sup> the information relating to the shaping of the *Conorte* as a written compilation is found in the self-referential texts that both manuscripts place at the end.<sup>14</sup>

Let me start with the clearer of the two:

Y aun dijo y fue fecho así como prometió que daría lumbre e memoria para se retener y escribir, suplicádoselo nosotras por quanto fuimos mandadas de algunos perlados que escribiésemos lo que oíamos. Empero respondió su divina majestad que no era dino el mundo, conviene a saber, todos nosotros pecadores, los cuales somos cada uno de nosotros un mundo de pecados, de oír ni escribir ni leer tan altas palabras y secretos. Y confiando en su gran misericordia, empezamos a escribir algo de lo que oíamos.<sup>15</sup>

---

writing skills in the community: reading the *Floreto de San Francisco* (*Vida y fin*, 15r), copy of a document (*LC*, 60r, 14v, 58v–59v; *Vida y fin*, 32r); “lumbre y memoria para se retener y escribir” [light and memory to retain and write it] (El Escorial manuscript, f. 452r); Juana writes verses at the command of an angel (*LC*, 61v/r and 13v), and a religious who writes a letter (*LC*, 16v). She also highlights signs that point to Latin literacy in the convent, such as the abundant quotations in this language that are scattered throughout the *LC* and *Vida y fin* (see, for instance, 24r). On this topic, it is interesting to look at the different levels of “literacy” proposed by D. N. Bell, *What Nuns Read. Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1995, 59–96, to define those of Juana’s convent. It is known that there were nuns who had level 4 in Bell’s scale, the ability “... to compose and write of one’s own”, such as the miraculous María Evangelista and her two companions, but surely the majority of nuns would have been able to read the text of the breviary (perhaps without understanding it, level 1) or of reading and understanding a liturgical text in common use (level 2), 60. In general, on literacy in Castile in the time of Juana, see P. M. Cátedra and A. Rojo Alique, *Bibliotecas y lecturas de mujeres. Siglo xvi*, Salamanca, Instituto de la Historia del libro y de la lectura, 2004 and A. Jiménez Moreno, *La incorporación de la mujer a la cultura escrita en el siglo xv*, Salamanca, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2024. To contextualize the literacy of women religious in the medieval context at the European level, see the trilogy of edited books: *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015; *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017.

12 Daza 1611, 76r.

13 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 109–142.

14 The sermon on the creation is unbundled in the Vatican manuscript as part of the “Sermon on Advent”, although separated from it by a line. On their order, see Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 27, n. 1.

15 El Escorial manuscript, 452r. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 110. There is a passage that is parallel in some respects to this one, as it uses the communitarian “*nosotras*” (we women) to

[And he even said, and so it was done, since he promised that he “would give light and memory” to remember and to write, for we had asked it of him inasmuch as we were ordered by some prelates to write down what we heard. However, his divine majesty answered that the world, that is to say, all of us sinners, for each one of us is a world of sin, was not worthy of hearing or writing or reading such lofty words and secrets. And trusting his great mercy, “we began to write down something of what we heard.”]<sup>16</sup>

This quotation gives an account of the genesis of the *Conorte*, summed up in the final phrase. To the Trinitarian authority above is joined the earthly authority, represented by the prelates, who Graña identifies with the circle of Cardinal Cisneros. The most important part of this passage, however, is the use of *nosotras* [we women] so typical, according to Dinzelbacher, of the collective female self-consciousness that was present in certain conventual works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as exemplified in many *Schwesternbücher* [sisterbooks].<sup>17</sup> This feminine subject is unequivocal: they have indirectly received the revelation through their abbess, and as a community they are the depository of its contents. The women put it together in writing, because it has been produced within the bosom of the community through its leader, and the bosom of this house will preserve, venerate, and use the product that resulted from their labours. The in-house character of the collection is undeniable, and the primary textualization of “the voice of the Lord” in the form of sermons and books, respectively, influenced the construction of a collective identity via the women’s group memory.

This type of textual codification and subsequent preservation of collective memory occurred not only in the form of sermons or hagiographic narratives, but also justified the collection of performative, devotional, and para-liturgical traditions found in *LC* and the composition of a *cancionero* [song book] of verses sung in ecstasy by Juana, preserved in the final folios of the Vatican manuscript. This song collection is introduced with the following comment:

Síguense unos cantares que, según parecía, el mesmo Señor cantaba algunas veces e su sierva respondía. Y nosotras lo oíamos. Bien cuarenta

---

take on the role of Juana’s “public” and to explain how her ecstasies worked (Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 136).

16 The translation is, in this case, by Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 110. I have slightly modified it.

17 A. Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles. Women Writing About Women Reform in the Late Middle Ages*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2004, 68. For information on Dominican sisterbooks, with particular emphasis on the meaning of liturgy for the communities they represent, see Jones, *Ruling the Spirit*, 57–85.

personas y cincuenta hartas veces estaríamos. Y digo cincuenta porque continuo éramos tantas cerca de ellas. Y otras veces se llegaban más de otras ciento e cincuenta.<sup>18</sup>

[Some songs, seemingly sung by the Lord and being responded to by the abbess, follow. And we (*nosotras*) used to hear them. Around forty or fifty people were there many times. And I say fifty because frequently we were close to that number. And, other times, more than one hundred and fifty came.]

This anthology also aimed to establish a textual collective memory that was nurtured both by a series of events in which the members of the community participated and by narratives, words, and lyrical compositions that sometimes formed part of dramatic religious plays (*autos*), which were recorded and transmitted intergenerationally.<sup>19</sup> Thus the information that was communicated in the sessions of revealed preaching seems to belong to the collective and, because of this, the community sought to safeguard it as part of their heritage. More generally, the transcription and copying of sermons of figures authorized to preach in religious house (confessors or visitors) is a *modus operandi* common to women's Observant communities in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>20</sup> This can be observed, for example, in certain sermons by the Venetian Poor Clare Chiara Bugni or the Florentine Domenica da Paradiso.<sup>21</sup> As Thom Mertens observed for the Low Countries:

The tradition of convent sermons acquired a particular form in the fifteenth century, in the collections that originated in the circles of the *Devotio Moderna*. Listeners, usually sisters, would take notes during or after the predications of the confessors of their convents, and would often develop these into complete sermons, written in the first person of the preacher, and adorned with a variety of typical sermon characteristics

18 Acosta-García, "El cancionero revelado", 511.

19 According to Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 13, this was also the case with the Helfta mystical treatises.

20 Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 188–197.

21 For an introduction to the figure of Chiara Bugni, see G. Zarri, "Chiara Bugni e Francesco Zorzi suo biografo: Saggio introduttivo", in Reinhold C. Mueller and Gabriella Zarri (eds.), *La Vita e i Sermoni di Chiara Bugni, clarissa veneziana (1471–1514)*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011, pp. XI–XXXIX and "Predicazione e cura pastorale. I sermoni della clarissa veneziana Chiara Bugni (1471–1514)", *Anuario de estudios medievales* 42/1, 2012, 141–161. On the Observance and sermon writing, see Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 11.

such as references to the liturgy of “today” and to an audience of listening sisters. The majority of these collections were intended only for internal use within the respective convents and can be characterized as genuine domestic literature: they were made within the convent and destined for use within the convent.<sup>22</sup>

In the convent of Cubas de la Sagra, the building of the collective memory occurs through a largely invisible process whose first step involves individual memory, the capacity used by each tertiary involved in the process of record their abbess’ words. In fact, both the memorative capacity and the mnemonic processes used are essential in transferring what is heard to what is written.

The word *memoria* is used on at least two occasions in the *Conorte* in this specific sense. The first, which I mentioned above, places the term next to *lum-bre* [light], suggesting, alongside the faculty of memory, that of understanding, which, in turn, implies the first step from the material recalled towards exegesis. The second use of *memoria* is recorded in the Prologue of the sermon collection, which is found only in the El Escorial manuscript, and reads as follows:

Y si en este dicho libro o libros que de él se pueden hacer fuere alguna cosa que parezca no bien dicha, no se a de echar la culpa al mesmo sapientísimo Espíritu Santo, el cual dice y hace y enseña todas las cosas muy perfectamente, sino a quien lo escribió. Porque pudo la péndola errar o la memoria algo trascordarse.<sup>23</sup>

[And if in the aforesaid book, or copies that can be made from it, there is anything that does not seem to be well said, the blame should not be cast on this most wise Holy Spirit, who says and acts and teaches all things most perfectly, but on the one who writes it because the quill can err or the memory can forget about something.]

These phrases express a famous humility topic. They articulate two phases of the process of retention and copying as possible causes of a corrupted transmission of the abbess’s words. The first—memory—that is to say the interiorization of the heard discourse and its transmutation into mental material, relates to a subject that some sermon-studies scholars labelled “*gedächtnisstarke Nonnen*” or memorious nuns. Mertens’ review of this historiographic discussion makes clear that in rejecting the possibility of a purely mnemotechnical

22 Mertens, “The Middle Dutch Sermon”, 183.

23 *Conorte* 1999, 227. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 132.

transcription of lengthy preaching, these scholars have been biased by two assumptions.<sup>24</sup> The first is that of the primacy of direct transcription of the heard word (through *reportationes* involving the transcription on wax tablets, for example),<sup>25</sup> rather than methods of oral recomposition based on memorised apprehension and later recreation as a sermon.<sup>26</sup> The second, more deeply rooted, is that the genre “sermon” implies a purely masculine agency.<sup>27</sup> As Mertens concludes:

Modern research, then, considers it technically impossible for sisters to have written out complete sermons of their father confessor. This view makes the sermon an exclusively male literary genre. As such it fits well into the larger picture of the male exclusiveness of ecclesiastical orders, to which the right to deliver was limited.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, the possibility of the existence of a “copy from memory” is omitted from the picture rather than opening further investigation into how this might have been created and what that dynamic implies for the final textualization of the sermon. The work of Stoop and Mertens has fundamentally transformed our understanding of this phenomenon.

## 2 Textualization Processes

These scholars have demonstrated the active role that women religious played in the reconstruction of sermons based on memory aids. This is evident, for example, in the sixteenth-century female Cistercian monastery of Ter Kameren:

---

24 T. Mertens, “Ghostwriting Sisters: The Preservation of Dutch Sermons of Father Confessors in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century”, in A. B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *Seeing and Knowing: Women and Learning in Medieval Europe 1200–1600*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2004, 121–141. See, also, Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 190–193, which also reconstructs the controversy over the impossibility of transcribing sermons from memory.

25 C. Muessig, “Medieval *reportationes*: hearing and listening the sermons through the ages”, in C. Véronique, and A. Heneveld Amy (eds.), *L'Eloquence de la chair entre écriture et oralité*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2018, 77–90. See also, the case studied by Mertens in the Diepeveen convent, “Ghostwriting Sisters”, 123.

26 Stoop, “Female Authorship”, 253.

27 See Chapter 1, 46.

28 Mertens, “Ghostwriting Sisters”, 122.

The external data in the manuscripts suggest that the nuns were able to write down very lengthy sermons after hearing them once. How they did that exactly is not clear at the moment. Undoubtedly, they were able to use the memory techniques which were widespread in the Middle Ages. But did the women help each other? To some extent, the answer to this question must be positive as they seem to have divided the work among themselves. [...] In any case, the sermons show that at least some women in Ter Kameren were able not only to read and to write but, moreover, to recompose texts that they had heard only once.<sup>29</sup>

As Stoop claims, the material evidence to support the written testimonies about the work methods of the nuns at Ter Kameren is limited. It is even more so in the case of the *Conorte* because the convent's archive was destroyed in the twentieth century. However, this passage reveals two keys to understanding how discourses proclaimed during lengthy sermons (six hours in Juana's case) could be translated onto paper from memory. The first concerns the use, as Stoop rightly points out, of "memory techniques", the second relates to the division and specialization of the labours of transcription, copying, and ordering ("they seem to have divided the work among themselves").

The rhetorical creation and the use of images is one of the essential memory techniques that, in the case of the sermons, has a mirror structure.<sup>30</sup> From one side of the mirror, the images were used by preachers to order the discourse and, from the other side, their use implies a horizon of expectations in which a specific audience will receive that image and be able not only to remember it

29 Stoop, "Nun's Literacy", 195. Other examples of memorious nuns in religious houses: Stoop, "Female Authorship", 251.

30 On sermon and mnemonics, is particularly relevant to this study because of its focus on Franciscan environments, K. A. Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice. Memory, Preaching, and Images in the Late Middle Ages*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010. See, also, L.-J. Bataillon, "Les images dans les sermons du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in D. D'Avray and N. Bériou (eds.), *La prédication au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France et Italie*, Hampshire and Brookfield, Ashgate, 1993; Delcorno, "La predicazione", 415–416; Cátedra, *Sermón, sociedad y literatura*, 182, where he claims: "No sería mentecato afirmar que el tratamiento mnemónico del mensaje moral es el verdadero sustento material de buena parte del discurso homilético, como si de una estructura profunda se tratara" [It would not be foolish to affirm that the mnemonic treatment of the moral message is the true material support of a good part of the homiletic discourse, as if it were a deep structure]; Bolzoni, *La rete delle immagini*, 156–167. The creation of images with mnemonic implications for preaching is rooted in the wider context of the ancient and medieval art of memory, see F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, London, Routledge, 1966, 66–113, and M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.



but also to recreate it in their mind or through its later transcription: “Preachers often used images to structure their sermons and to make it easier for the listener to understand and remember the content [...] it would nevertheless have required a great deal of compositional work”.<sup>31</sup> As Boon has demonstrated in her examination of the works of Bernardino de Laredo, the use of these techniques is documented in different Castilian authors from the first half of the sixteenth century which is contemporaneous with Juana’s preaching.<sup>32</sup>

In the fourth chapter I will analyse some images of this type in detail. It is sufficient here to reproduce one whose *divisio* illustrates my argument. Its context is the sermon on the Baptism of Christ, which describes a vision of the kingdom of heaven in which the angels summon a group of “of blessed peoples and nations” to approach some splendid rivers, which they then do:

Y andando ellos así, al cabo de muchas leguas, vieron a deshora cómo del uno de aquellos preciosos ríos manaba muchedumbre de oro. El cual oro *significaba* la caridad muy profunda del Padre de las misericordias, con la cual caridad, tan pura e cendrada como el oro muy fino que tuvo y tiene hoy día con todo el humanal linaje, nos envió su unigénito hijo en el mundo a que padeciese por nos tantos tormentos como padeció derramando toda su preciosa sangre en el árbol de la cruz [...].

Y el otro río manaba piedras preciosas, muy hermosas y pintadas. Las cuales piedras preciosas *significaban* al Hijo e los méritos de su sagrada pasión, por cuanto el mismo Hijo Dios y salvador nuestro es piedra preciosa muy grande y fina, que por ningún precio se puede comprar. [...]

Y el otro río manaba aljófar y perlas muy finas y lindas de mirar. Los cuales granos de aljófar y perlas *significaban* el Espíritu Santo, el cual nunca hace otra cosa sino derramar en los corazones granos muy preciosos y finos de buenos propósitos y pensamientos y deseos para con Dios y para con nuestras ánimas y para con nuestros prójimos. [...] <sup>33</sup>

31 Mertens, “Ghostwriting Sisters”, 121–141. See, also, Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 125.

32 For the Castilian context referring to the use of the art of memory, see, above all, Boon, “Mnemotechnical Mysticism”, in J. Boon, *Mystical Science of the Soul. Medieval Cognition in Bernardino de Laredo’s Recollection Method*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012, 108–135, and, more in general, M. M. Hamilton, “The Art of Memory and Forgetting: The Judeo-Andalusi and Scholastic Traditions”, in *Beyond Faith: Belief, Morality and Memory in a Fifteenth-Century Judeo-Iberian Manuscript*, Leuven, Brill, 2014, 136–165, and I. J. Rivera, “Visualizing the Passion in Andrés de Li’s ‘Summa de paciencia’”, *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 67.1 (2014), 55–72.

33 “Sermon VII”, in the Vatican manuscript, “102r/v, my highlight”.

[And as they walked in this manner, after many leagues they suddenly saw how a great quantity of gold was flowing from one of those precious rivers. This gold *signified* the great depths of the Father of Mercy's charity, (and because of) this charity, as pure and clean as very fine gold, that he had and still has today towards all lineages of humans, he sent his only-begotten son to suffer for us as many torments as he had suffered shedding all his precious blood on the tree of the cross [...]

And the other river flowed with very beautiful and variegated precious stones. The precious stones *signified* the Son and the merits of his sacred passion, that is, the same Son of God, our Saviour, is a very large and fine precious stone which cannot be bought at any price [...]

And the other river flowed with seed pearls and pearls that were very fine and beautiful to behold. These grains of seed pearls and pearls *signified* the Holy Spirit, which never does anything other than pour out into (our) hearts very precious and fine grains of good resolutions and thoughts and desires for God and for our souls and for our kindred.]

It is evident that at this point of the sermon the vision is configured mnemonically by applying a *divisio* based on the images that are described in three parallel blocks. First, in each case, the three rivers are described through specific attributes (gold, precious stones, seed pearls, and pearls, respectively), which are later explained allegorically, through a quality represented by each member of Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, respectively).<sup>34</sup> For their part, the three "*significaba*" [signified] that I have highlighted is one way to indicate the the presence of a gloss.

I want to stress the importance of the micro-structuring role that these images play in the collection. When we open either of the two manuscripts of the *Conorte*, the sermons are arranged in chapters, numbered, and rubricated, which implies an internal division of the corpus, after which the text extends in two columns, for the most part without separation by paragraphs and continuous use of parataxis. The flow of the text is internally divided only by thematic and imaginal units (a textual image, an evangelical narrative as a form of commentary, or a description of a celebration in the heavenly paradise).<sup>35</sup> As with stories (which compose closed narrative structures), an image is a *place* (*locus*)

34 This mnemotechnical image of the river is also used by Bernardino de Laredo in his *Subida al Monte Sión*, see Boon, *Mystical Science of the Soul*, 118–119.

35 For example, *Conorte* 1999, 315 and 394.

defined by a specific rhetoric, which the tertiaries recognised in the preaching of their abbeß, memorized, and committed to paper. In this respect, the *alegoreßis* (that is, the allegorical exegesis) serves as a hinge throughout the *Conorte*.<sup>36</sup> This textual-spatial configuration is typical not only of mnemonic images but also of meditative ones, and constitutes a core of the preaching, easily assimilated by audiences, that Juana used as her main structuring principle.<sup>37</sup>

This does not exclude, but rather presupposes, an individual reception for each sermon that gave rise to variants and addenda recreated at the time they were transcribed. Thus, the images present in Juana's visionary tales structure the content of the vision. That is to say, the images provide a sensory structure for the exegesis of the visions and also the meanings that are attached or ascribed to the vision itself.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the arguments of Stoop and Mertens in their attempt to reconstruct the processes that led from memory to writing are based on common sense. According to the latter:

36 The language of this figurative reading is multiple. I examine how it functions in chapter four. Vocabulary involving allegorical exegesis in the *Conorte* is extremely rich, technical at times, but always transparent in its use, which is to explain the literal meaning: "declarar/declaración" [to explain/explanation; to exegetically gloss/exegetical gloss, see above, 19] (for example, in *Conorte* 1999, 233 and 1008–1013), "a significar" [meaning] (*Conorte* 1999, 248), "figura/figurar" [figure/to figure] (*Conorte* 1999, 248, 265, 270, 512), "glosar" [glose] (*Conorte* 1999, 298), "por semejante" [similarly] (*Conorte* 1999, 343, 314). For allegorical reading, see the classic study by H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*. For a brief history of allegoresis that includes analyses on its impact in some of the works of medieval romance literature, see F. Zambon, *Allegoria. Una breve storia dell'antichità a Dante*, Roma, Carocci, 2021.

37 On the structural resources of the sermons, see chapter four. There are numerous examples of images with a mnemotechnical basis in the *Conorte*, for example: the blessed offer to God first roses and flowers, then their clothing, and finally carved trees, an imaginal structure that is later glossed in a parallel and ordered way (*Conorte* 1999, 253–254); similarities ("por semejante", says the text) between Christ-unicorn and virgin-lady, in which the pain of the mother for the crucifixion is compared with virgin who is accidentally wounded when a unicorn is hunted (*Conorte* 1999, 255); the didactic Trinitarian images appear not only in the so-called "Sermon on the Trinity", but are also used at various times in the book, for example in *Conorte* 1999, 280 (one sun facing three suns) and 370 (gold, myrrh, frankincense) and could be comparable to the image (again "por semejante") of the presence of Christ in the host, like the chicken in the egg (*Conorte* 1999, 877–878); the star that guides the Wise Men to Bethlehem declared as the Catholic faith (*Conorte* 1999, 321–322); allegorical buildings (*Conorte* 1999, 411, 494 and 733, for example) or large spatial images in which what is first shown is a vast field and later the various trees that grow in it are explained (*Conorte* 1999, 514–522). This is only an illustration of an immense variety of rhetorical-visual images which, given their role in the shaping of the convent memory and their possible use in meditative contexts, merits a separate study.

38 In my opinion, there are two types of visionary development of the preaching in the *Conorte*. I will discuss them in the fourth chapter.

The conclusion must be that it was impossible to write complete predication down literally, and that they were written down only partially in the incomplete form of distinct points. Longer, coherent sermons that were written down by listeners must have been reconstructions based on abbreviated forms that were either recorded on wax tablets and/or from memory, and the image and the *divisio* must often have played an important role in this process. The memory not only functioned as a faculty of remembering and reproducing, but was also a faculty of recreation. Reconstruction and construction thus often became interwoven.<sup>39</sup>

It is useful to compare these reflections with a preaching context quite different from that of the convent: the university sermons of Ranulf of La Houblonnière at the University of Paris in the late 13th century. Nicole Bériou has examined the notes taken by some students at the University of Paris during the same preaching session on February 7, 1283, and her principal conclusion is quite similar to that of Mertens: "*L'étude comparée de ces trois témoignages montre clairement l'incapacité de chaque auditeur à tout retenir*" [A comparative study of these three accounts clearly shows each listener's inability to remember everything]. Additionally, in the surviving *reportationes*, the process of selecting which materials to preserve in the copy, followed by a certain level of re-creation, coexists with a clear selection of easily memorable scriptural passages and similes. This type of preaching, however, belongs to the *sermo modernus*: complex in its parts, but precisely for this reason, memorable through explicit structures recognizable by its audience. As in the *Conorte*, in the case of these sermons, individual memory and literary re-creation are essential for the partial survival of the experienced performance.<sup>40</sup>

In any case, what traces in the self-referential texts of the *Conorte* reveal the methods of transcription, copying, and compilation of the book? To start, there is an unpublished text in the Vatican manuscript which reads as follows:

Y como el Señor Dios todopoderoso por su infinita bondad tenía por bien de venir algunas veces y declarar y d[ec]i[r] algunos puntos maravillosos y excelentes acerca de algunos misterios o evangelios o figuras, venía también otras veces y sobre el punto o puntos que una vez avía dicho y declarado tornaba a hablar y declarar y decía otras infinitas cosas y declaraciones y puntos y misterios y secretos de diversas maneras

39 Mertens, "The Middle Dutch Sermon", 169.

40 Bériou, *En quête d'une parole vive*, 21–52.

y todas que se enderezaban al misterio o evangelio antedicho. E como nosotras le oímos tanto tiempo e tantas veces, escribíamos los puntos o declaraciones. Así por veces y de diversas maneras como la divina majestad lo decía porque (?) sobre todo un punto que hablaba una vez declaraba e decía otra vez mucho e más declarado la vez postrera que la primera. Declaró el Señor diciendo que esta santa escritura es tan grande y excelente y maravillosa.<sup>41</sup>

[And as Lord God Almighty in his infinite goodness several times wanted to come and declare and tell multiple marvellous and excellent points about certain mysteries or gospels or figures. He arrived other times, returning to recite and declare the point or points that he had already recited and declared, saying an infinite number of other things and declarations and points and mysteries and secrets of all kinds, all tied to the aforementioned mysteries or gospels. And as we (women) heard him so often and for so long, we wrote down these points and declarations just as the divine majesty said them at several times and in various ways. Above all, because (?) a point that he announced once he would then say much more about the next time than the first. The Lord declared that this holy writing was very great and excellent and marvellous.]

This auto-referential passage is one of the only texts in the whole *Conorte* which provides explicit information about the origin of its method of composition. The Franciscan tertiaries of Santa María de la Cruz attended the public preaching of their abbess for thirteen years, during which she developed her discourse using the same base texts and topics, determined by the liturgical calendar. This dynamic implied both repetition and variation, that is to say an exegetical discourse developed from the same aspects that somehow reiterates and, at the same time, adds new information.

The “*puntos* [...] *acerca de algunos misterios o evangelios o figuras*” [points about certain mysteries or gospels or figures] are a first step to approaching what occurred in Juana’s preaching sessions and how it affected the transcription of the sermons. “*Punto*” is a sort of technical term used by preachers to refer to a specific theological aspect from their commentary on the Scripture.<sup>42</sup>

41 Vatican manuscript, 150v-151r, c. 1, l. 12, which loosely corresponds to *Conorte* 1999, 1472. Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, “Note on the text”, also at 25.

42 For instance, in an example found in one of the *sermones quadregesimales* by Vicent Ferrer (1350–1419) “point” (“*punt*”, in Catalan) is used in that way: “Tot lo sant Evangeli de huy es huna devota oració que feu Jhesu Xrist davant los seus dexebles en la nit de la

In this passage “*punto*” denotes specific allegorical readings of the Bible that Juana revisited and developed in different sessions with different words over a period of years. She, therefore, repeatedly (“*algunas veces [...] otras veces*”) “*declara*” (explains, comments on, exegetically glosses) the same materials, something that was not unusual for preachers who went through the same cyclically recurrent texts, over and over again. In fact, as I have just shown with the analysis of the allegorical landscape of the three rivers (one of the “*figuras*”, figures, commented on by Juana), the articulation between the language that has to be unravelled (“*figura*”, “*semejanza*”, “*misterio*”) and its allegorical meaning (its “*declaration*”) is a key organisational element. This structure forms as the memory of the preaching’s content transitions into its textualization.<sup>43</sup> Among these, of course, are found both the images belonging to the vision that should be read allegorically (“*misterios o figuras*” [mysteries or figures]), and the gospels that make up the essential corpus on which Juana’s preaching is developed.

On the other hand, *nosotras* (we women) appears again, alluding to the community, a self-referential declaration that its members are the main witnesses to these repeated sessions and who are at the same time the authors of the transcriptions of the preaching (“*escribíamos los puntos o declaraciones*” [we wrote down these points and declarations]). The fragmentary process of transcribing the sermons was also identified by Surtz, who, when commenting on one of the self-referential texts being discussed in this chapter, observes: “Here the nuns who wrote out the manuscript reflect upon their task, using what are probably miscellaneous fragments of Mother Juana’s visions.”<sup>44</sup> Here, then, a unique indication of cyclicity is evident not only in the preaching but also in how the content of the preaching was collected, which crystallizes in one of the most characteristic textual phenomena of the *Conorte*: the amalgam. Juana’s thirteen years of public preaching generated an audience that comprised members of her community who memorized and later transcribed her

---

passió. *Ha-y tres punts*: disposició convenient; postulació sufficient, e, lo terç, alegació pericient. *Primo*, ordená lo seu cors que fos convenient ab la anima; 2.º demaná a Deu lo Pare; 3.º, allegá perfetament.” [The whole Holy Gospel of today is a devout prayer that Jesus Christ made before his disciples on the night of the Passion. *There are three points*: convenient disposition, sufficient supplication, and, thirdly, perfect pleading. *Firstly*, he ordered his body to be suitable for the soul; secondly, he asked God the Father; thirdly, he pleaded perfectly] (*Quaresma de Sant Vicent Ferrer, predicada a València l'any 1413*, J. Sanchís Sivera (ed.), Barcelona, Institució Patxot, 1927, 33, my highlight).

43 I will focus on these typical aspects of figurative language of the Biblical exegesis in my commentaries on the fourth chapter.

44 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 109.

preaching, resulting in an accumulation of memorized material and written texts based on the same “points”. These were later agglomerated with already existing texts, creating new redactions.<sup>45</sup> This is, I believe, a crucial aspect that explains the differences between the different redactions of the *Conorte* and hints at how the empty space between repeated performances and a transcription that extended over time can be articulated.

This process shares similarities with the concept of “layered authorship” that Stoop identified in the sermons transcribed and written by women religious of various orders in the Low Countries.<sup>46</sup> She identified three specialized roles:

1. *Auctor intellectualis*, who in the case of the conventual sermons examined by Stoop is most likely the confessor or other eminent men who preached to the community and whose words were gathered for in-house use, and which in our case includes divine intervention.<sup>47</sup>
2. *Redactors*, also called “transcribers” by Stoop, who are the women religious who transcribed the sermons “from their memories or based on written materials”. These first versions were, in principle, an exposition on points or a text that was only partly articulated and that will be recreated in later stages through additions, improvements in the syntax, etc.<sup>48</sup>
3. *Editors*, “[g]enerally anonymous sisters [...], who] made editorial adaptations such as titles, cross-references and sometimes even adjustments to the content after sermons had been selected and arranged in accordance with the ecclesiastical calendar.”<sup>49</sup>

45 A similar case of amalgamation is found in the vernacular versions of the *Legatus divinae pietatis*: “... the coexistence of alternative versions of the *LDP* may be understood as these processes of continuous rewriting, in which text material was not produced in a straightforward fashion, but rather constantly revised, edited, and rearranged. The *LDP* can be described as a ‘conglomeration of texts’” (Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 19).

46 In the context of the women’s communities that Stoop studies as sermon transcribers, Alijt Bake is presented as the only woman writer of sermons, see L. van Gemert and J. van Aelst, *Women’s Writing from the Low Countries, 200–1875. A Bilingual Anthology*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, 92–97.

47 As the authority of the abbess is ambiguously vicarious, stemming from the Trinity and materializing through the voice of the Son through her body, the “gendered roles” present in the cases examined by Stoop are not directly performed in Juana’s case.

48 As Kirakosian rightly indicated (*From the Material*, 7), in the case of the German vernacular versions of the *Legatus divinae pietatis* de Gertrud von Helfta, the presence of a redactor implies “collective redactional processes”.

49 Stoop, “From Reading”, 52. For the application of these “author roles” in a very specific case, see Stoop, “Female Authorship”, 248–268.



This classification of functional roles can help in understanding the composition of a compilation work that is as massive, but at the same time as homogeneous, as the *Conorte*. Although the attribution or existence of these roles may suggest an unverified hypothesis about how the tertiaries functioned, the traces they left in transferring the performance to written work fit within this framework.

The transition from the *auctor intellectualis* to the rest of the authorial roles in the *Conorte* also implies the transition from the preaching as a ritual and performative act to the different transformations, mental and later written, of the sermon. The only clue to the possible identity of the redactors-editors are the two names that Daza gives alongside that of María Evangelista, Catalina de San Francisco and Catalina de los Mártires. However, anonymity is one of the leading characteristics of collective authorship.<sup>50</sup> In this respect, the declarations made by *nosotras* (we women) concerning authorship implies an anonymity, as individual authorship is diluted in the activity carried out for and by the community, without the need to claim the work as anyone's own.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the *Conorte* is composed of the sermons by/of (*de*) Juana de la Cruz and by/of (*de*) the tertiaries of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz.

If we believe the word of the collective feminine narrator in the *Conorte*, the only step prior to textualization was memory.<sup>52</sup> The sources are silent about how material gathered in the memory was committed to paper for the first time, although the studies by Mertens and Stoop reflect on this absence, articulating a sequence of steps that help us to consider how the *Conorte* was constructed. This process starts with an initial draft that provides the "skeleton" of the text, that is, the fundamental points outlined in the sermon ("disconnected points"), on which any subsequent drafting would depend, in our case the "well ordered, redacted sermons" of the Vatican and El Escorial manuscripts. In this context, it is crucial to be aware that both versions present the sermons in advanced states of redaction, as shown by a multitude of details: how each piece begins is standardised, as well as their rubrication, and cross-references,<sup>53</sup>

50 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 7.

51 According to Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 19, referring to the case of the collective creation of the mystical works of Helfta, the category of "individual creator" applied to the production of medieval monastic works is "ahistorical".

52 As Juan Miguel Valero has indicated to me, although no allusion is made it is very probable that, during the thirteen years of Juana's teaching, the taking of notes by some nuns took place alongside the memorizing of the contents to which I refer here.

53 For example, cohesive resources that involve intense work in the preparation of the texts as a collection of sermons are: a) self-reference, that is to say the indication of the compilation itself as an object ("... todos los secretos y misterios contenidos en este santo

which presupposes that the entire collection has been meticulously ordered and interwoven. These features point to previous steps undertaken in the redaction.

After the disappearance of the convent's archive in the twentieth century, however, the materials that could have helped us establish dates and working methods were destroyed. Nevertheless, it is possible to investigate the convent archive through the brief description of it provided by the summary of the *Positio super dubio* of 1731. In summarising the documents located by the papal commission in their search for Juana's writings in 1665, the *Positio* records that when asked about the contents of the archive, the religious women reportedly "[g]iurono e dichiarono, che l'altri quattro libro ó quinterni parimenti manoscritti, che sono copie sciolte d'alcuni, e diverse sermoni del detto libro, che chiamano Raccolto, sono li medesmi, che custodiavano nel detto Archivio" [swear and declare that the other four books, or similarly hand-written quinternions, which are loose copies of some, and various sermons from the said book, which they call 'the collection' are the same ones they kept in the aforementioned Archive...].<sup>54</sup> This brief phrase reiterates something that is already known: that there were various copies of the sermons of the *Conorte* circulating in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz; it also adds two important details. The first is that the religious differentiate between the *Conorte* as a "sermon collection" (*raccolto*, refers unequivocally here to the Vatican manuscript) from a certain material that this defines only as loose copies ("copie sciolte") of sermons written in quinternions (*quinterni*).<sup>55</sup> This distinction implies the individual copying of some sermons, a fact that can be understood in two ways: either as copies from the *raccolto* (such as the copy of the sermon on the nativity of Saint John the Baptist in the *LC*, in a single quire) or, perhaps, as the previous notes made by the redactors, that is their first written versions after memorizing the oral performance, which would later constitute the textual base for the editor(s)

---

*libro*" or "Porque este auto y otros algunos que en este santo libro están escritos y mandados..." [... all the secrets and mysteries contained in this holy book" or "Because this play and others that are written and commanded in this holy book...], *Conorte* 1999, 429); b) Cross-references, which implies the assembly and knowledge of the earlier material, for example in this phrase which is combined with the previous resource: "Como más largamente está escrito en el capítulo que trata de la Santísima Trinidad, en este mismo libro" [As it is more extensively written in the chapter that deals with the Holy Trinity, in this same book] (*Conorte* 1999, 932).

54 *Positio super dubio* (*Summarium super dubio, ex relatione Rotali, art. secundus, de Sanctitate in genere*), 4.

55 See Cátedra and Rojo Alique, *Bibliotecas y lecturas de mujeres*, 115, which points to the circulation of "cuadernillos" of this type in convents as devotional reading of the religious, providing an exemplary testimony in a context in which the *Conorte* is also spoken about.

to compile the collection.<sup>56</sup> Although merely hypothetical, this second option helps clarify the processes of writing that needed to have taken place between the memorising and the *raccolto*, that is, between the reception of the preaching and its addition into a unitary and cohesive volume.

The existence of these quires recalls the so-called *substantie* that transcribe part of the preaching of the visionary abbess Domenica da Paradiso at the Monastero della Santa Croce (Florence).<sup>57</sup> The *substantie* were “*sintesi eseguite dalle consorelle dalla Narducci [Domenica da Paradiso] da alcuni sermoni da lei recitati negli anni 1532–1540*” [summaries made by the sisters of Narducci (Domenica da Paradiso) from some sermons she delivered between 1532 and 1540], and were preserved in a miscellaneous manuscript (Codice L, cart.), in the monastery’s archive. The *codex* compiles Domenica’s preaching using a great variety of forms: the ten sermons gathered at the order of her confessor, Francesco Onesti; three translations into Latin that he made of the same sermons; copies in the vernacular of some of those texts that were also made by Domenica’s sisters; a summary of others in Latin made by Francesco da Castiglione; and, finally, the *substantiae*, contemporaneous with the transcriptions made by the confessor. Materially, it is evident that the four quires that comprise the part containing the *substantie* once formed a previous unit (named “L2” by Librandi and Valerio) which was later bound with the first part of the manuscript (L1).<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the fact that a single hand is evident in L2, points to a different method of production than that evidenced by the fascicles that comprise the *substantie*. These unitary features also suggest that individual primary versions of Domenica’s sermons must have existed in the period 1532–1540. Although these rough versions have not been preserved, they would have been compiled in these four quires.

This theory, in which a conventual sermon collection originates from memory, evolves in transcriptions that have generally not been preserved, and continues mutating in written units of ever greater complexity until they are combined in the macro-unit of the compilation (*raccolto*), is a coherent way to explain the formation of such a structured collection as the *Conorte*. Although

56 The copy of this sermon is found in LC, 61v–67v.

57 Regarding Domenica da Paradiso, see Chapter 3, 163ff. See also, *Le “substantie” dei sermoni e delle visioni di Domenica da Paradiso*, R. Piro (ed.), Firenze, SISMEL, 2004, XVI, which includes the edition of these summaries, with a complete initial study.

58 The transcriptions of the sermons of Domenica by Francesco Onesti occupy the first part (L1, 1r–155v). The second contains nine *substantie* transcribed by a single hand (L2, 157r–215v). Or, to provide another example, a manuscript made up of summaries written by the nuns, which condense 39 sermons preached in Nuremberg, see Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 189.

the earlier versions have not been preserved, venturing a redaction of this type helps to identify these compilations as re-creations of preached texts that, above all, were built from a selection of elements that were transcribed (those that are preserved, those that were retained) rather than others that were discarded. In the context of the preaching by Juana and Domenica, clearly more elements were discarded than retained. The *substantiae*, for instance, records on various occasions that Domenica's performances could last for around three hours—in Juana's case for as many as six hours. A transcription based on memory, as Mertens said, implies selection. The same text continuously advises the reader of this summarizing activity by the transcribers: "*Questa e molte altre cose vidde e disse, le quali per la poca memoria e poco ingegno lascerò stare. Ma voglio dire um-poco della dichiarazione che ci fece sopra la detta visione.*" [This and many other things she saw and told us, which, due to my poor memory and little intelligence, I will leave aside. But I want to say a little about the declaration she gave us regarding the said vision].<sup>59</sup>

Apart from its significance in attempting to comprehend the underlying processes of memory and writing, a reading of the nine *substantie* while holding the *Conorte* in mind reveals numerous coincidences with some of the ideas that I have put forward. Perhaps the two most important are, firstly, collective authorship which implies the assumption that a text is recreated.<sup>60</sup> Second is the commentary on certain biblical passages that Domenica reiterates on different days with different content, and that the transcribers collected multiple times. For example, the *substantiae* indicate that on three different days the abbess commented on a particular "point" ("*Lo spirito è pronto ma la carne è inferma*" [the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak]), of which a transcriber claims that "*più volte l'haveva udito da-llei ne' sua sermoni*" [many times I had heard it from her in her sermons]. On all three occasions, the interpretations of this passage are refreshed.<sup>61</sup> The fundamental difference that is established

59 *Le "substantie"*, 5. Although see, also, 8 and 12. The same occurs in an extreme case with the *Conorte*, which on one occasion reduces what we might think were six acts of preaching given on six different days of the week. The redactor(s) were interested in the allegorical meanings that the abbess gave to each of the days, overlooking the rest of her preaching. In fact, the allegorical meaning of the names of the days must be one of those "points" that the abbess returned to, as shown by the various mentions in *Conorte* 1999, 1163–1165 and 1256.

60 *Le "substantie"*, 7, for example. The collective authorship is found marked by a *noi* [we] which on several occasions divides into a *io* [I] (as, logically, the transcription was made by a nun but with awareness that she was doing it for and with her community). On the re-creation, Piro says: "È evidente, in ogni caso, che il testo pronunziato da Domenica è stato rimaneggiato e che anche il ricorso al discorso diretto non assicura la aderenza totale alle parole riportate a quelle precedentemente udite" (*Le "substantie"*, LIX).

61 *Le "substantie"*, 7. This point is repeated, for instance, in *Le "substantie"*, 33.

here with similar cases in both sermon books is that in the *substantie* are ordered by chronology (the sermons refer to dated festivities, for which reason the three references are separated in three different sermons), whereas the *Conorte*'s cyclical structure imposes the amalgam as the method of preservation, which obscures the chronology of the sermons.

At the theoretical level, a process based on a certain specialization of labours of copying would not only explain the extreme homogeneity of the text of the *Conorte*, but also the existence of a "layered authorship", in Stoop's words, which supports the idea of collective authorship. And this occurs not only due to a sharing the roles in redacting, but because we would then have a true workshop that, in memorizing, transcribing, and editing, *re-creates* the words of the abbess and, along with them, their meaning.<sup>62</sup> In each movement towards the final redaction-compilation, layers are added by different authors, which tend to fill in and "confuse" the "authority vacuum between the spoken sermon [...] and the written text."<sup>63</sup> Logically, the religious were conscious not only of the "the status of the edited text", but that they were compliant agents in its development, because these textual transformations were conscious acts.<sup>64</sup> As Mertens expresses well in the case of the Augustine canonesses of the Convent of Jericho (Brussels):

All this means that although the "skeleton" of the sermon was the work of the preacher, the sisters who did the writing were to a large extent responsible for the "flesh" that brought these bones to life. The assimilation of the preacher's role extended not only to formulating and editing the sermon text but evidently also included some inroads into the area of the *inventio*.<sup>65</sup>

This indicates something that has already been sketched in this chapter: a process of textualization such as that which underlies the *Conorte* does not result in simple records of Juana's preaching, but in complex re-creations of it. As in the case of the Brussels convent:

The sisters were not simply recording but re-authoring these sermons, after interiorizing them to the point that they became part of their thinking and

62 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 7.

63 Stoop and Mertens, "Ghostwriting Sisters", 134.

64 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 57.

65 Mertens, "Ghostwriting Sisters", 132.

consciousness and with that, the boundaries between the priests' [or the abbess'] words and the nuns' absorption of them became indistinct.<sup>66</sup>

### 3 Difference, Amplification, and Re-creation

We have access to only a small number of materials related to Juana's sermons. This scarcity restricts the possibility to reliably reconstruct the layers of text that existed before the *Conorte* reached its current state. The *armarium* in which generations of religious kept copies of the sermons has disappeared and only one manuscript remains that was saved from the fire because it had been taken to the Vatican by the papal commission. In all likelihood, this manuscript is the *LC*, which bears an ownership mark declaring that it once formed part of the convent's archive (Figure 6). This miscellaneous codex contains a multitude of materials that tell us of the convent's para-liturgical traditions as well as just a single sermon by Juana. The "Sermon on the nativity of John the

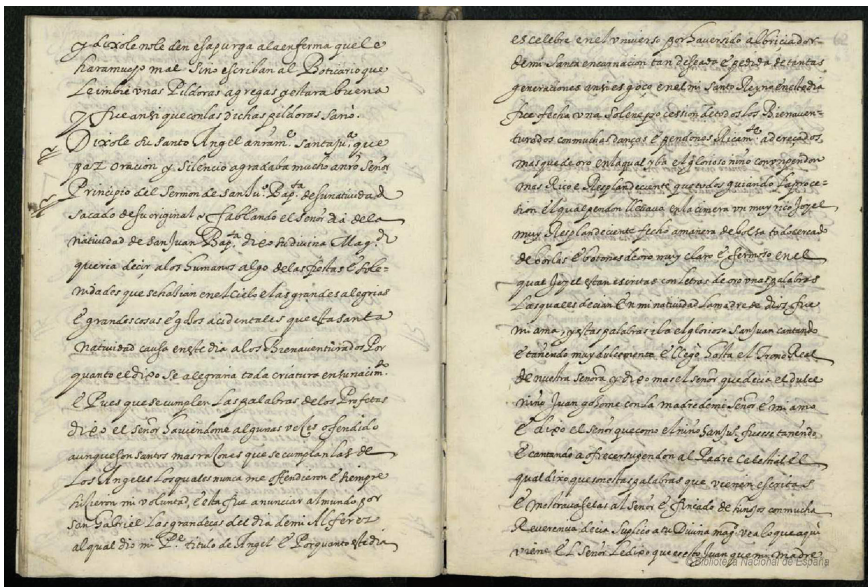


FIGURE 6 "Libro de la Casa y Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz..."; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS-9661, ff. 61v-62r  
SOURCE: BIBLIOTECADIGITALHISPÁNICA. IMAGEN PROCEDENTE DE LOS FONDOS DE LA BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

66 P. Stoop and L. Vroomen, "A Carthusian Nun's *Reportationes* of Henricus Cool's Sermons in the Low Countries", V. Blanton, V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.) *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2017, 105–120, 111.



Baptist” facilitates a unique three-way comparison and to reflect further on the process of textualization of the sermons. The following comparative excerpt serves as a sample:<sup>67</sup>

TABLE 1      Comparison of the “Sermon on the Nativity of John the Baptist” across the Vatican Codex, the El Escorial Codex, and the *LC*.

El Escorial Ms	Vatican Ms	LC
[f. 275v] Y dijo el Señor que después que se hubieron gozado mucho con él sus padres y parientes le tomó en sus preciosos braços, y le tornó a subir a su trono real, ofreciéndole al Padre celestial por todos sus devotos, diciendo: “Esta es la saeta con que yo tiré y herí a muchos malos. Ofrézcotela, [276r] Padre, y ruégote que otorgues por amor de él las peticiones justas que hoy me han demandado”. Y el Padre celestial respondió al Salvador. Dijo él mismo: “Hijo mío muy amado, yo recibo este niño y las peticiones que me pides que otorgue por él, si por ti no las otorgo no las otorgaré por él ni por otro ningún santo. Mas yo otorgaré lo que fuere	[f. 455r] [... fe]cho [...] se[...] con él sus padres e parientes y todos los santos. Y [e]l [455v] redentor le tomó en sus preciosos brazos y le tornó a subir a su trono real, ofreciéndole al Padre celestial por todos sus devotos, diciendo: “Esta es la [saeta] con que yo tiré a m[uchos] y herí a muchos malos. Y ofrézcotele, Padre mío, y ruégote que otorgues por amor de él las peticiones justas que hoy me han demandado”. Y el Padre celestial le respondió al Salvador, diciendo: “Hijo mío muy amado, yo recibo este niño y las peticiones [que] me pides que otorgue [por él], si por ti no las otorgo [no las] otorgaré por él ni por otro ningún	[f. 63v] Y, estando así fecho niño chiquito, gozábanse con él sus padres y parientes y todos los santos. Y el Redentor le tomó en sus preciosos brazos y le tornó a su trono real, ofreciéndole al Padre celestial por todos sus devotos, diciendo: “Esta es la saeta con que yo tiré a muchos y herí a muchos malos. Ofrézcotele, Padre mío, y ruégote que otorgues por ambos las peticiones justas que hoy me han demandado”. Y el Padre celestial le respondió a su hijo y salvador nuestro diziendo: “Fijo mío muy amado, yo recibo este niño y las peticiones que me pides que otorgue por él, porque ese niño es el

67      We should bear in mind that this is the only feast day represented by two sermons (with the strange insertion of the sermon on “San Llorente” in the middle), see 103, n. 86.



TABLE 1      Comparison of the “Sermon on the Nativity of John the Baptist” (*Cont.*)

El Escorial Ms	Vatican Ms	LC
mi voluntad por amor de ti, y también por amor del que dino es el que yo llamé ángel, que le otorgue lo que demandare siendo cosa justa”. Y dijo el Señor que por cuanto él santificó al glorioso San Juan antes que naciese quiso y fue su voluntad que naciese muy más limpio y más fermoso que otro ningún niño, porque avía de ser más santo e limpio que otro algún santo.”	santo. Mas yo [otor]garé lo que fuere mi voluntad por amor de ti, y también por [am]or del que digno es [el que] yo llamé ángel, [...]se quiso y fue su voluntad que naciese muy más limpio y más fermoso que otro ningún niño, porque avía de ser más santo y limpio que otro ningún santo.”	que yo llamé ‘ángel’, y por eso quise y fue mi santa voluntad que naciese más limpio y puro que otro ninguno, y más bermejo, porque había de ser más santo e limpio que otro ningún santo.”

A comparative study between the three passages shows the following:

- a First, that the greater part of the text coincides in the three versions.
- b Secondly, that the El Escorial and Vatican manuscripts share formulations (that is, lexical and or phraseological articulations of the discourse that sometimes fill entire paragraphs) which do not exist in the *LC* version.
- c Third, that the sermon in the Vatican manuscript and the *LC* share formulations (in particular, only one in the excerpt presented) that do not exist in the El Escorial manuscript. If we take into account that the heading of the sermon in the *LC* reads that it has been “taken from its original” (*sacado de su original*)<sup>68</sup> and this heading refers, as it would seem, to the Vatican manuscript, this seems to confirm that this was also the original or venerated copy in the period of the *LC* copy.
- d Finally, the three versions present unique variations in redaction that do not appear to be justified on the basis of diverse texts that are unknown today, but rather from creative copies made by anonymous editors who undertook the work of copying in the case of the Vatican and El Escorial manuscripts.

68 We find the term again here, but detached from the decrees of Urban VIII, signifying “the one that is considered original in the monastery, the one which is venerated”.

Regarding the first point, Surtz warned of the presence not only of lexical and syntactical changes between the texts, but also of interpolations in the Vatican manuscript that modified the El Escorial text.<sup>69</sup> That Surtz not only indicated the existence of these textual alterations, but also quoted them, sometimes transcribed them and, finally, used them explicitly in his study, indicates that he regarded them as authoritative expansions of the text. What does Surtz refer to as interpolations? Let us look at one that he transcribes:

E por tanto, dezía el poderoso Dios a Adán, quando le rogaua que le quitasse las baruas, que bien estaua assí, por quanto era su uoluntad que el hombre tuuiesse diferençia alguna de la muger quanto al cuerpo. Empero quanto al ánima entramos son yguales e compañeros. Porque si la muger tiene ánima, la qual se llama fembra, por semejante tiene también el hombre ánima y es llamada fembra, de manera aque todo hombre y muger se puede llamar fembra. E por el contrario puede ser dicho el hombre e la muger varón, porque si el hombre tiene espíritu biviente e perma[nesçien]te para siempre, por semejante tiene la muger espíritu biviente e perma[nesçien]te para siempre. Assí que [hombr]e e muger todo es una cossa e un espíritu e un ánima [...]to el hombre puede ser dicho muger e la muger puede ser dicha hombre, pues entramos tienen espíritu e ánima viviente.<sup>70</sup>

69 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 60, n. 27, indicates another interpolation in this codex in the "Sermón de San Francisco", 608v, and another in the "Sermón de Santa Clara", 104, n. 7 (Vatican manuscript, 522v-523r). To expand the number of these examples, I could cite the end of the sermon on the "evangelio que se canta el domingo antes de la ascensión" [Gospel that is sung the Sunday before Ascension] (numbered as 23 in *Conorte* 1999), which is expanded in the Vatican manuscript compared with that of El Escorial (349r); to the following words, unique in the Vatican version and which represent a discourse pronounced by the divinity, "*Yo soy vuestro Dios y creador y hacedor que os hice y crié...*" [I am your God and creator and maker who made you and raised you...], the following vulgarization of the scriptures is prefixed: "*Yo soy el que soy y el que es y el que será*" [I am who I am and who is and who will be] (Vatican manuscript, 588r). Also, the portrait of the demons who wait in Hell, in sermon 51 to the sinners (*Conorte* 1999, 1220), is amplified in the Vatican manuscript "*... por mortales e acusándonos así delante el Señor. E contino están esperando quando saldrán nuestras ánimas de nuestros cuerpos para tomarlas y arrebatárlas entre sus uñas y despedazarlas entre sus dientes y sorberlas y tragárselas si el Señor diese poder y lugar para ello.*" [... for mortals and accusing us like that in front of the Lord. And they continuously wait for the moment when our souls leave our bodies to take them and snatch them between their fingernails and tear them between their teeth and slurp them up and swallow them if the Lord gives them the power and location to do so] (Vatican manuscript, 597r-597v). On these *amplificaciones*, see, also, *Conorte* 1999, 71-73.

70 Here and in the following transcriptions, I respect the transcription criteria followed by Surtz, although I correct a few minor errors.

[And therefore, when Adam begged him take away the beard, almighty God said that he was just fine like that, inasmuch as it was his will that the man should be differentiated from woman with respect to his body; however, with respect to the soul, both are equal and compeers. Because if woman has a soul, which is by name female, likewise man too has a soul by name female, so that every man and woman can be called female. And, conversely, man and woman can be said (to be) male, because if the man has a living and everlasting spirit, likewise woman has a living and everlasting spirit. Thus, man and woman, are of one substance and spirit and soul inasmuch as man can be said (to be) woman and woman can be said (to be) man, for both have a spirit and a living soul.]<sup>71</sup>

This interpolation proposes a theological position that is not only not published in the El Escorial manuscript but is also significant at the doctrinal level. It promotes a reading of the vision of Adam's beard that equates the dignity of the soul of the woman with that of the man (*"Empero quanto al ánima entramos son yguales e compañeros"* [However, in terms of the soul we enter they are equal and companions]). The interpolation is completely integrated into the text of this extended version, making it virtually impossible to distinguish from the text that precedes it or follows without a comparison to the passage in the El Escorial manuscript. Considering the source of the Vatican codex and the agency of the tertiaries in its making, it can be reasonably deduced that the text was redacted by them and which, therefore, belongs in its own right to the *Conorte* as a project.

Another example from Surtz's work is the following from the "Sermon on Saint Clare":

De esto ganaron ellas no solamente por padesçer e trabajar e morir por amor de Dios, mas aún por desechar e desamparar e menospreçiar todas las rriquezas e honrras e pompas de este mundo. E por tanto poseen e tiene (sic) agora tan grandes consolaciones e deleytes e rriquezas e bienaventuranças e gloria en el rreyno de los çielos, porque todas las personas que por amor de Dios marean en las hondas de este mundo sin pecado y sin malisçia e sin engaño abrán en el çielo muy grandes consolaciones e premys e galardones e gozos açidentales según que los da a la gloriosa Santa Clara e a las otras santas vírgenes.<sup>72</sup>

71 Translation by Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 25. I have adapted it to my transcription and made minor changes.

72 Vatican manuscript, 522v-523r.

[They not only earned (virtue) from (guarding their virginity) due to suffering and working and dying for love of God, but even more for discarding and forsaking and despising all worldly riches and honours and ostentation. And for this reason they now possess and hold such great consolations and delights and riches and blessings and glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, because all the people who for the love of God get seasick in the deep waters of this world (because they are) without sin and without malice and without deceit will have in heaven very great consolations and prizes and rewards and accidental beatitudes, such as those given to the glorious Saint Clare and to the other holy virgins.]

Unlike the previous extract, this one does not involve a doctrinal explanation added to the narrative, but the pleonastic strengthening of an idea that expresses the rejection of the sinful life and its rewards for what will be granted to the blessed in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is another addition which once more would be indistinguishable in the textual body if it were not possible to compare the manuscripts.

In general, these “extended versions” of the Vatican manuscript are not as lengthy as those I have just shown, but almost any comparison of the two manuscripts adds further interpolated passages. In general, the text in this codex has been stylistically reformulated in certain segments,<sup>73</sup> by adding adjectives or articulating parts of the discourse more fluently than in the El Escorial codex.<sup>74</sup> For instance, verses of a song sung by Juana in the midst of her sermons have been added or another five ecstatic songs are copied and introduced in an independent way at the end of the manuscript.<sup>75</sup> A complete comparison of the “Sermon on the Creation” between the two codices makes this clear. In the Vatican manuscript four interpolations are introduced during the course of the sermon, while there is a final addendum to the redaction of the El Escorial manuscript.<sup>76</sup> Almost certainly, these

73 For example, *Conorte* 1999, 1216; El Escorial manuscript, “*que aunque Lúçifer era de los más altos príncipes*” [although Lucifer was one of the highest princes] compared to the Vatican manuscript, “*que aunque el traidor malaventurado de Lúçifer era de los más altos príncipes*” [although Lucifer, the ill-fated traitor, was one of the highest princes].

74 These features can be seen in a detailed comparison of the “Sermón de la creación”.

75 Acosta-García, “El cancionero revelado”, 505–506.

76 These are far less interesting in terms of content than the commentary on Adam’s beard, but they demonstrate a more advanced stage in the redaction and a greater complexity in the sermons that affects not only their syntax. For example, I transcribe what is found inserted in *Conorte* 1999, 1469, which continues with the phrase with which García Andrés closes the first paragraph (Vatican manuscript, 147r-147v): “... *su hondura no tiene cabo*”

addenda are related to the collective authorship and the processes that this implies, and in particular with two overlapping issues. The first of these is the repeated ecstatic commentary of the “points” referred above. Juana reiterated the commentary of certain passages (surely because the liturgical texts were repeated on specific feast days) and “declared” new things, that is to say, new exegetic-visionary information was added, which required the introduction of lengthy glosses. These, however, could also be the work the tertiaries who transcribed or edited the text. The second is the existence of various individual memories working at the same time. This diachronic material, compiled by different tertiaries at different times by drawing on their own memory tended to be added to the compilation once it was assembled according to the liturgical cycle.

In a context like this, then, the notion of “originality” as applied to the *Conorte* by García Andrés in keeping with the decrees of Urban VIII needs to

---

*ni suelo. Y subir con el Señor y con Nuestra Señora y con los ángeles todos los que estaban llorando y rogando y haciendo penitencias y poniendo sobre sus cabezas ceniza [...] su significación que todos cuantos a Dios llamaren a él Señor vinieren y le pidieren misericordia, ahora sea con necesidad ahora con temor ahora por otra [...] cosa que sea luego y los ayuda y los perdona y socorre y porque siempre está Dios esperando y mirando quién le lla[ma] a él para luego recibirle y perdonarle y hacerle la misericordia. Empero, mucho más agradece él a quien le ama y sirve y servían a él y le busca y le hace penitencia sin necesidad ni temor, sino por solo saber [...] Y casi todos aquellos que allí quedaron en aquel circuito o figura de la tierra en el lago [...] fue significación que todas las personas que son tan malas y endurecidas en pecados y obstinadas en maldades, que si por bien ni por mal, ni por amor ni temor, [147v] ni salud ni enfermedad, ni por tristeza ni placer, ni males corporales ni por buenos ni por otras no se quieren enmendar ni arrepentir, ni hacer buenas obras, ni servir ni amar a Dios, perecerán para siempre, irán al Infierno profundo donde nunca hará remedio, ni descanso, ni consolación, pues todo el tiempo de su vida expendieron en malas obras [...]. [... its depth has no end and no ground. And all those who were crying and praying and performing penance and putting ashes on their heads rose up with the Lord and with Our Lady and with the angels (...)] This signifies all those who call God the Lord and come to him and ask him for mercy, whether from need or from fear or for another (...) reason which will come to pass; he helps them and pardons them and saves them. God is always waiting and beholding the one who calls to him, in order to then receive him and forgive him and be merciful to him. However, much more pleasing to him is the one who loves him and serves him and seeks him out and makes penance without necessity or fear, but only in order to know him (...) And almost every one of them who remained in that itinerary or pageant of the world taking place in the lake (...) signified all the people who are so bad and hardened in sin and obstinate in wickedness, that neither by good nor by ill, nor by love nor by fear, (147v) nor by health nor by illness, nor by sadness nor by pleasure, nor by bodily ills nor bodily pleasures, nor by any other thing do they wish to amend or repent, or perform good works, or serve and love God. They will perish forever (and) they will go into the depths of Hell where there will be no remedy nor rest nor consolation, since all the time during their lives was spent in evil works (...)].*

be reconsidered. According to the sources, Juana neither wrote the sermons in her own handwriting nor dictated them: the processes, it would seem, were diverse, complex, and above all, recreated by what textual critics would call innovative copyists. In this sense, the syntax of the El Escorial manuscript (*"tosca, menos elaborada, de sintaxis menos cuidada"* [unpolished, less elaborated, and using a less careful syntax]) refers only to a phase of diverse development, and not to a chimerical "original text". In this regard, the El Escorial manuscript seems to be, simply, an earlier redaction (although preserved in a copy that is very close chronologically to the Vatican manuscript), which reflects its own homogeneity based on its coherence as a collection and on the fixed structure of the liturgical cycle.<sup>77</sup>

#### 4 Cyclicity and Amalgam

Juana's collected preaching is organized according to the liturgical cycle. This builds an organizational structure common to many sermon books, also shared with books tied to the celebration of liturgy such as the breviary and the missal.<sup>78</sup> The structure of this cycle was also chosen to configure certain texts of late-medieval women's mysticism, such as several of those produced in the *milieu* of Helfta.<sup>79</sup> This similarity is not accidental, and it points to a shared functional element between the liturgy and the sermons: the link between the original preaching and the ritual or, more specifically in the case of the sermons, with the mass;<sup>80</sup> and the continued use of the preaching in the

77 See the chapters included in T. J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 2001, especially S. Borgehamar, "A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year", 13–44.

78 "L'ordre qui s'impose le plus souvent est celui du temps liturgique (...) En règle générale, auteurs et compilateurs de sermons suivent la tradition des bréviaires et des missels, en distinguant les séries selon les catégories du temps" [The order that is most often followed is that of the liturgical time (...) As a general rule, authors and compilers of sermons follow the tradition of breviaries and missals, distinguishing series according to the categories of time] (N. Bériou, "Les sermons latins après 1200", in B. M. Kienzle (dir.), *The Sermon*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 387). See the reconstruction of the Toledo liturgical calendar, L. M. F. Bosch, *Art, Liturgy, and Legend in Renaissance Toledo. The Mendoza and the Iglesia Primada*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000, 225–235.

79 *The Legatus divinae pietatis*, for example (Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 20).

80 The position of the preaching is usually after the reading of the gospel, in the liturgy of the Word (Wenzel, *Latin Sermon*, 236). In the case of Juana's ecstatic preaching, however, it is not possible to be certain of what moment of the day it occurred, although the presence of an audience indicates a certain ritualized "control" over the timetable of the divine manifestation.

community once the text had been compiled. The arrangement of the *Conorte*, therefore, depends on its context, both in its production and in its intended reception, which always promotes a re-creative variance.<sup>81</sup>

What is clear, in any case, is the close link between Juana's preaching activity and the rituals of her convent. Her prophetism enabled the abbess to develop one of her roles as parish priest, that is, precisely, to preach.<sup>82</sup> But how should a cyclical structure which integrates the temporale and the sanctorale' days into the same course be understood? At the level of compilation, this structure allows the material that has been preached and memorized to be accumulated in an organic way, classifying it under labels that allude to the feast days that gave rise to the preaching. It is a kind of system of "empty boxes" that allows the editor(s) to combine materials (the memories of different women religious, preaching about the same text, topic, or image in different years), at the same time as they are standardised.

From this point of view, the *Conorte* has a kind of macrostructural chronological fiction, as liturgical topics that may have been preached in different years are now made to correspond or directly collide with earlier versions of the text.<sup>83</sup> In fact, the editor(s) of the collection took the necessary care to compile the text in a cohesive way such that one does not perceive the different sources from which it was drawn. In this respect, it is very complicated to present evidence (the religious did their work well), but not impossible to point to indications of how this happened. Perhaps the clearest of these are certain transitions commonly used in the book that imply a thematic-narrative rupture.<sup>84</sup> Such a rupture only becomes evident when elements appear that

---

81 In Thompson's words ("From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event", in C. Muessig [ed.], *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 27–28): "most medieval sermons had a ritual context [...] Liturgical sources had proved useful not only for establishing context, but also for explaining peculiarities in sermons themselves."

82 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 6.

83 This happens and is declared explicitly in one of the cycles studied by Mertens in the Brussels Jericho Convent: Mertens, "Ghostwriting Sisters", 128: "It should be known that in this book are forty-one sermons, beginning with the holy glorious virgin Saint Catherine and continuing through the (Church) year following the order of the days, but not according to the calendar year in which they were preached."

84 An example of a transition that implies rupture is found in *Conorte* 1999, 554: 15–16, where the commentary on the gospel of the day of the first Sunday of Lent concludes (see chapter four, 140) and a new development, detached from the previous one, is initiated through the formula "[d]ijo el Señor" [the Lord said]. Other cases, marked by new contextual information, are clearer about this, for example: *Conorte* 1999, 975, 14–15 ("Y declaró el Señor diciendo que *como en un día viernes en el cual nos habló y declaró los secretos siguientes, hablando con su gloriosa madre...*" [And the Lord declared, saying that *on a Friday in which*



separate the new material from that which was previously developed. On other occasions, the added material appears as a closure text detached from the previous content, but not from the liturgical celebration to which it relates.<sup>85</sup> But let us return to the ordering of the cyclical macrostructure.

To start with, the changes of the order of the sermons in the Vatican manuscript form part of a more advanced stage of editing than in of the El Escorial manuscript. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply male agency, as García Andrés proposed, but the intent of the tertiaries to improve the *Conorte*, who sought to remedy flaws in its textual content and its cyclical structure.<sup>86</sup> In this respect, the backbone of the book is the narration of the life of Christ starting with his Incarnation (25 March), followed by the cycles of Christmas and Easter, and ending (in the improved order of the Vatican manuscript) with Advent, which prepares a new Incarnation.<sup>87</sup> This sacred narrative, which prioritises the chronological presentation of the life of Christ, contrasts with the order of the breviary. The sermons that comment on festivities related to the saints are integrated into these schemes with minor incongruences for the sake of the organization of the cycle.<sup>88</sup>

---

he spoke to us and explained the following secrets, conversing with his glorious mother]) and 1191, 9–10 (which begins by affirming that the above “tuvo por bien su divina majestad de mostrar [...] la figura siguiente, en un día de domingo en el cual se cantaba y decía en la tierra este evangelio” [His divine majesty deigned to show (...) the following figure on a Sunday when the gospel was sung and proclaimed on earth]). Both highlighted phrases comprise formulas typical of the openings of many of the sermons of the *Conorte* and finding them in the middle of a sermon that has already been introduced and, furthermore, heading separate developments unrelated to what precedes them, very probably points to the insertion of material gathered on a different day. The same occurs in *Conorte* 1999, 622–623.

85 For example, the *autos* (theatrical stagings) at the end of sermons 61 and 42 (*Conorte* 1999, 1067 and 1101, respectively).

86 The general ordering of the cycle presents some sermons whose position does not seem to be justified either by the celebration it concerns (“San Llorente”) or by the text that they declare. For example, “*Algunas fiestas y solemnidades*” [Some feasts and solemnities], “*Para que aprendamos a servir y a amar a Dios*” [So that we may learn to serve and love God], and “*Acerca de la santa fe católica*” [On the Holy Catholic Faith], respectively. Given the Vatican manuscript’s tendency to improve the liturgical order, this perhaps occurs because it follows local characteristics of the liturgy of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz that are unknown to us today. This emphasises the idea that, since its creation, this compilation had an eminently in-house horizon of expectations, which makes it difficult to interpret some of its characteristics from today’s point of view.

87 On this point, the liturgical cycle proposed by the *Conorte* distances itself from the breviary and is consistent in this ordering with the *Liber specialis gratiae* of Mechthild von Hackeborn (see chapter three). I thank Philipp Stenzig for his points on this topic, and for his help in introducing me to the liturgy of the convent.

88 For example, the existence of two sermons dedicated to Saint Lawrence (“*Llorente*”, in the Vatican manuscript, which is celebrated on 10 August), one of which is placed in between

What advantages are provided by the liturgical order? It should always be remembered that the *Conorte* was a product primarily created for internal use. In a community such as that of the convent of Cubas, where the liturgical time marked the rhythm of the day-to-day life, the ordering of the sermons by feast days highlights the exegetic role that the visionary preaching assigned *to that feast day*. This performative exegesis would have had a multi-sensorial reception, as Boynton explains:

In the Latin liturgy, the interplay of words and music both new and old, and the interweaving of scriptural with non-scriptural texts created a mode of performative exegesis in which multilabelled readings of the Bible were articulated in real time and repeated over the course of a single service, day, season, and the church year as a whole. Typological, allegorical, and eschatological meanings were literally performed through the juxtaposition, entwining and expansion of scriptural texts.<sup>89</sup>

In fact, collecting the abbess's sermons also meant compiling exegetical knowledge. This knowledge was developed through the performative capacity of the liturgy which the tertiaries understood from their own education, based precisely on their active participation in the mass and in the chants of the office. This order (which corresponds to that of books such as the breviary and the missal, used daily) reintegrates Juana's sermons into the ritual temporality of her religious house, so they could be used as readings on specific festivities, read as treatises on meditation (in the case of copies of individual sermons), or as public reading in the refectory.<sup>90</sup>

## 5 Conclusions

"We cannot tell the woman scribe through her adoption of a typically female handwriting style" (C. J. Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents in*

---

the two sermons dedicated to the birth of Saint John the Baptist (24 June), unbalancing the chronology.

89 S. Boynton, "Religious soundscapes: liturgy and music", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. iv: *Christianism in Western Europe c. 1100–c. 1500*, 238–253.

90 B. M. Kienzle, "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report on Work in Progress", in J. Hamesse and X. Hermand (eds.), *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, Louvain la Neuve, Université Catholique de Louvain/Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, 1993, 91.

*Late Medieval Germany*, Toronto/Buffalo/London, University of Toronto Press, 45)<sup>91</sup>

The evidence I have adduced in the previous section indicates the very probable existence of various activities involved in producing texts akin to what we might associate with a *scriptorium*, a space inside the convent where a group of women scribes co-ordinated to create, at least, one codex, the Vatican manuscript.<sup>92</sup> The women involved in this chain of work would have been responsible not only for the transcription and redaction of the words of their abbess, but also for organising them as a coherent text collection.<sup>93</sup> In fact, the *Conorte* as we know it implies the pre-existence of memory processes and, probably, of initial abbreviated transcriptions, of first drafts, and of the final shaping into a

91 Cyrus previewed her argument at the start of the book: "Indeed, the woman scribe does not differ substantially from the male counterpart in her service as a scribe. She holds the quill with the same grip, mixes the ink following the same recipe, lines her page with the same kind of ruler, and, in some instances, even copies out the same treatise, poem, prayer or chant as her male contemporary", 44.

92 This broad definition of a *scriptorium* is partly inspired by the possibility of scriptural "informal spaces" within Italian convents, as suggested by M. Moreton ("Materials, Methods, and Motives: Female Scribal Agency in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italian Religious Houses", in E. Grossman (ed.), *Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2024, 175): "... a formal space set aside for writing with numerous writing desks, but likely also included more informal spaces at houses where book production was not a primary activity". For a comprehensive overview of women copyists in Italian religious houses, refer to her chapter. There are no systematic studies on women scribes in the Iberian Peninsula, likely due to the looting of manuscripts. This has led to fragmented libraries and codices that lack proper context. However, the research of Mercedes Pérez Vidal on the liturgy of Dominican nuns in the Iberian Peninsula often provides valuable insights and discoveries, uncovering connections between these Iberian scribes and the broader European context: see, for instance, "The art, Visual Culture and Liturgy of Dominican nuns in Late Medieval and Early Modern Castile", *Memorie Dominicane*, 46 (2015), 230–232. In the context of the Germanic monasteries of the twelfth century, see A. I. Beach, *Women as Scribes. Book Production and Monastic Reform in 12th century Bavaria*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 25, who affirms: "It is not until the beginning of the 12th century that evidence of female participation in monastic book production begins to mount". See, also, the examples provided by Cyrus, *The Scribes*; Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, 169ff, and the manuscripts produced by women scribes in the database *Donne e cultura scritta nel Medioevo* (<http://www.tramedivita.it/donne/index.html>, accessed: 01/10/2024). For the Portuguese female book production, see P. Cardoso, "Beyond the Colophon: Assessing Role in Manuscript Production and Acquisition in the Observant Dominican Nunneries of Early-Modern Portugal", *Pecia* (2017), 19, 59–86.

93 The order of this hypothetical "chain of work" which I present in the following lines does not presuppose an immovable succession of tasks, but a possible scheme subject to variations. I thank José Miguel Valero for this suggestion.

collection by one or more editors. The activity of this workshop may not have involved the entire community, but the level of literacy evident in various surviving traces does not exclude the possibility that a wider group participated in the making of the *Conorte*. Once the presence of these scribe-authors in an intensive labour of recollection, redaction, and textual edition, is acknowledged, the possibility that the Vatican manuscript was produced in the convent by the Franciscan tertiaries should be seriously considered. Although this cannot be proved materially, there is no compelling reason to contradict it but rather a multitude of indicators that point to it. The most compelling indicator is the coincidence between the convent's tradition about María Evangelista as scribe and the existence of a venerated manuscript in the convent written by a single hand and produced in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

The self-referential passages of the "Sermon of the Creation", in which a "*nosotras*" (we women) is highlighted as the agent of the textualization, encourage reflection on the activity that mediates between Juana's lost performances and the Vatican and El Escorial manuscripts (and, also, the one-off sermon of *LC*). The unpublished passage found in the Vatican manuscript which I have analysed here reinforce the presence of the individual memory of the religious as the first step towards textualization. Moreover, the burning of the conventual archive does not allow to determine precisely how many steps or how many specialised labours were involved in the processes of memorization and the completion of this existing copy of the collection. Nevertheless, the creation of the *Conorte* as a sermon book certainly had its reason for being in the "inherently collective nature of monastic text production", to which Kirakosian alluded when speaking of the "the Helfta Phenomenon" and, above all, of its mystical treatises in the vernacular.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, the coincidences between the production of the *Conorte* and the process of redacting conventual sermons in communities on the Italian peninsula or the Low Countries indicates a phenomenon that extended beyond the borders of Castile.

On the other hand, the description in 1665 of loose copies in quires in the convent archive and the comparative analysis between different versions of the sermons make clear that the multiple authors necessarily worked in stages. The resulting product is a text written in cohesive layers. In this respect, the survival of the *substantie* of the Monastero della Crocetta in Florence helps

---

94 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 12. Her position on a supposed gender orientation of this collective writing is clear, but debateable: she sees at the centre of this group activity simply the monastic communal life, not a trait of gender (*From the Material*, 26–27 and 31). See her discussion on the position of C. W. Bynum and "gendered mysticism", 28–32.

to imagine the gap between memory and *raccolto*. A simplified, ideal, hypothetical, ordering of the supposed steps and materials used to create the final product (the collection of sermons called the *Conorte*) could look like this: preaching (which almost certainly included some type of prior preparation, as I will discuss in the fourth chapter), memorization, collection of disjointed points on paper or any other writing surface, summaries/initial redactions, montage of the collection in a volume (as the El Escorial manuscript), and new additions of material and partial reordering of the sermons in the development of a new codex (Vatican manuscript).

So cohesive are the two *Conortes* that, without the possibility of comparing versions, distinguishing the text of a more “primitive” redaction from the “interpolations” individuated by Surtz would be impossible. In considering authorship, these processes of writing and copying imply a reconstruction of the lived preaching in which, as Stoop and Mertens says, the women religious have incorporated the content of the sermons in such a way that the final written form represents a re-creation. To sum up, the results of the process of homogenization are so well accomplished that each of the chapters of the *Conorte* gives the impression of comprising a single sermon, when at many points it is clear that this is not the case. This constitutes a final effort by the women religious, in that the “sermon fiction” imitates the form of a *single sermon* per chapter, avoiding any evidence of its fragmentary nature.

Additionally, the idea alluded to in the unpublished passage that comments again on certain “points” of the scriptures or certain images indicates how the preaching is liturgically anchored, which I will discuss in depth in the following chapter.<sup>95</sup> Ideas of multiple reception, of addenda and amalgamation revolve around the liturgical cycle. Closer investigation yields understanding of how the different texts were produced, for instance, the “Sermon on the nativity of Saint John the Baptist”. In this respect, a comparison between the Vatican and El Escorial manuscripts brings me to formulate several reflections.

In the first place, the textual transformations between the codices refer to two different and dependent redactions. They are dependent because, clearly, the redaction of the Vatican manuscript depends on the earlier the El Escorial manuscript. This does not mean, however, that the El Escorial manuscript is closer to an “original” in the sense of *Caelestis Hierusalem Cives* (that is, an autograph copy or one made through a dictation). In this case, the desire to seek a “controlled” or “primordial” text is misguided, because it emerges from

---

95 The concept of “liturgical anchorage” refers to the work of Cátedra, *Liturgia, poesía y teatro*.

the category of individual authorship. For all the above reasons, a search for an “original” is not justified in the case of the *Conorte*, as the only “originals” of Juana’s sermons were her performances as ephemeral texts of multisensorial reception (body/ies, space, voice, tone, music, gesture, audience...) that can only be reconstructed in a very partial way. Processes of collective creation, such as those that are implied by the *Conorte*, created from their own unique processes of work. “Redaction”, then, should be understood here to be accompanied by its medieval attributes of “improvement”, “interpretation”, and “innovation”.<sup>96</sup> The women religious *remake* the preaching, and the differences between these two codices are part of a *variance* that was well-known, agreed, and accepted in the community.

To honour the particularities of the *Conorte*, therefore, an interpretive perspective that is based on a historical perception of the manuscripts should be adopted. Accordingly, it is the Vatican manuscript that is the more complete testament of the intellectual processes that underly the textualization of the sermons. That is to say, this manuscript collects in the most complex and articulated way the tradition (the memory) of the performances of Juana de la Cruz, at least in the ideal form that the community, at a certain point, decided to venerate and accept as “authentic”. These reasons for this statement are clearly borne out:

1. The Vatican manuscript includes a reordering of the sermons to better adapt them to the liturgical calendar.
2. It contains multiple and significant interpolations that are not found in the El Escorial manuscript and which reflect an authorized layered addition of materials by the redactor(s).
3. It improves the syntax and the lexis, in what should be considered a more polished final version.
4. It adds Juana’s *cancionero* (song book), headed by a note which reiterates the authorial “*nosotras*” (we women).
5. It was the manuscript consulted by Daza (before 1610) and Navarro (before 1622) during the research for writing their hagiographies.<sup>97</sup>
6. It was considered as the “original” by the copyist of the “Sermon on the nativity of Saint John the Baptist” in the *LC*.

<sup>96</sup> Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 34.

<sup>97</sup> Although Daza is one of the essential sources of Navarro 1622 (and this could mean that the latter simply copied the information given by the former on the Vatican manuscript), the edition of one of the sermons on 339ff in the Vatican redaction, combined with the features that he describes about the codex indicates that he must have consulted it directly at the convent.

7. Finally, María de San Gabriel, abbess in 1665 of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, declared that it was the authentic manuscript, describing it as an object venerated in the community with thaumaturgic powers. Thus, from a historical-philological perspective (which takes into account the composition of the text, its vicissitudes, and the diachronic consideration from the cultural point of view), the redaction of the Vatican manuscript is more complete and its use should therefore be privileged above the El Escorial manuscript. However, from the point of view of the singularity of its redaction, the El Escorial manuscript has an undeniable value and will be fundamental to a future critical edition of the *Conorte*. In turn, as Surtz and others rightly pointed out, the legibility of the Vatican manuscript is very much hampered today because of the corrosion of the ink, which means that on most occasions one must compare the two versions to extract a reliable reading. Finally, the Vatican manuscript contains one sermon less than the El Escorial codex and has lost some sheets, leaving other sermons incomplete. The conclusion is that today both codices are essential for carrying out an enriching reading of the *Conorte*, although it must always be acknowledge that the Vatican manuscript still containss much unpublished material. Moreover, its authority is justified from the point of view of its production and veneration at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz.



## Towards a Genealogy of the Visionary Sermon

“The diverse sermon collections of the medieval and early modern period constitute something more than a clue and show some similarities that allow us to deduce a shared practice.”

GABRIELLA ZARRI, “Places and Gestures of Women’s Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy”, in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, K. L. Jansen et al. (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 186.



### 1 Introduction

“... *sia grave, tacito, fuggitivo, solitario, sospirator del cielo, ebro di amore, operario fervido, emulador de santi*” [... you be grave, silent, fleeting, solitary, sighing for heaven, drunk with love, fervent worker, emulator of saints] (Domenica da Paradiso advising a colleague preacher)<sup>1</sup>

Inquiring into the origin and the forms of Juana de la Cruz’s ecstatic preaching necessarily involves the mediation of the transcribed text and its transformations. More than being a methodological problem, mediation is a condition for the existence of so-called mystical literature that has several determining factors. In Juana’s case, the first is that we are faced with a communal work in which the text has been created through layers of redaction and the accumulation of materials. The second is that we constantly face what Zieleman called *predikatiefictie*, “*predication fiction*” or the literary codification of a live performance that seeks to simulate sessions of preaching—or segments of them—textually through narrative forms.<sup>2</sup> The textualization presented in the *Conorte*

1 Apud A. Valerio “Le prediche di Domenica da Paradiso tra esperienza mistica e riforma della chiesa”, in R. Librandi and A. Valerio (eds.), *I sermoni di Domenica da Paradiso. Studi e testo critico*, Firenze, SISMEL, 1999, XXVI.

2 “The term predicationality is used to refer to the elements that connect predications and sermons. Discussing predicationality in sermons, Zieleman rightly refers to *predication fiction*: the authors of sermons use predicationality characteristics to indicate or to suggest that they are the written rendering of a predication” (G. C. Zieleman, *Middel nederlandse epistel- en*

is, then, no more than a shadow or a dark mirror, to use biblical language, of thirteen years of revelations, in which the more purely dramatic elements are blurred or directly silenced. In the case of Juana, moreover, this implies that her body is neutralized through the text.

Despite these limitations, a complex approach to the *Conorte* requires not only the examination of the tension between the surviving textuality and the lost performances, but also to inquire into the genesis of Juana's ecstatic preaching. From my point of view, one should start to explore these origins through the study of prophetism and women's revelatory literature, whose forms can be traced to at least the twelfth century with the preaching of Hildegard von Bingen and Elisabeth von Schönau.<sup>3</sup> The main reason to highlight connections between periods, orders, and literatures is that it is clear that neither the staging that Juana deployed nor the process of literary codification that her sisters used were created *ex nihilo*. On the contrary, to be able to approach the specificity of the *Conorte*, the idea that Juana and her community learned their techniques from models that they imitated and upon which they innovated is crucial.<sup>4</sup> In fact, even though with all probability the mendicant semi-dramatic sermon must have played an essential role in the abbess's formation, its mimesis does not fully explain the peculiarities of her ecstatic sermons.<sup>5</sup> In this context, the examples that Juana may have drawn on in the literature available to her were just as valid as the preaching that she attended and from which she surely borrowed elements. This idea will be central to the following analysis of certain visionary antecedents with which I will establish in-depth comparisons that will help us to understand the *Conorte* as an essential link in the female prophetic tradition.<sup>6</sup>

---

*evangeliepreken*, Leiden, Brill, 1978, 9, and G. C. Zielemans, "Prediking, predikatie, preek. Een begripsbepaling", *Kerk en Theologie* 30 (1979), 115–122 *apud* T. Mertens, "The Middle Dutch Sermon. A Premature Synthesis", in J. Arblaster, P. Stoop, D. Ermens, V. Fraeters, and K. Schepers [eds.], *Spiritual Literature in the Low Countries: Essays by Thom Mertens*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 208).

3 From my point of view, the question of origins needs to be separated from that of "causes", thereby avoiding the investigation of the "medical-psychological causes" of Juana's raptures. As Bernard McGinn declared early in his fundamental *The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, I, *The Origins of Mysticism*, New York, Crossroads, 1998, xv, what should interest scholars of the mystical phenomenology is not a contemporary explanation of the ecstasies, but their cultural meaning in the Christian tradition.

4 I believe that, to a large extent, the learning of preaching such as that of Juana is done specifically "by imitation" (Wenzel, *Latin Sermon*, 291).

5 See above, 18.

6 The idea of the female prophetic tradition that I tackle in this chapter has precedents in the conceptions of B. M. Kienzle and P. J. Walker (eds.), *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998; V. Cirlot and B. Gari, *La mirada interior. Escritoras místicas y visionarias en la Edad Media*, Madrid,

It is worth stressing here that when I claim the need to situate Juana's texts in a performative-literary tradition I am not denying what Gérard Genette would call the "specificity" of the *Conorte*; I simply aim to interpret this sermon collection from a historical and transnational perspective.<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt that this compilation is an *extra-ordinary* work, but as it has received little critical attention beyond the study of Castilian literature, its European context remains obscure. Current research into the itineraries of transmission of a literary-phenomenological tradition such as the visionary sermon provides insights into which texts circulated more widely, especially within certain religious circles such as the mendicant orders. Earlier resonances in Juana's sermon collection multiply when we compare her revelations alongside the prophetism of Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) or Elisabeth von Schönau, the women active in the milieu of Helfta, or the contemporary Italian *sante vive* described by Zarri.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Juana's sermons only make full sense in the historical continuity marked by a *modus vivendi* that includes prayer, devotional practices, shared readings, and a communal model based on a female charismatic authority.<sup>9</sup>

Gerónimo Gracián, one of the confessors of Teresa de Ávila, makes the historical tradition that he perceives in the future saint explicit in his prologue to *Conceptos del amor de Dios* (1611), her commentary on the *Song of Songs*:

Por estas causas escribió la gloriosa Santa Hildegardis, Abadesa de un convento de Benitas de Alemania la Alta, muchos libros de sus conceptos y revelaciones. Y esta doctrina y libros aprueban los Papas Eugenio

---

Siruela, 2005; Sanmartín Bastida, *La representación de las místicas*, and Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*.

7 G. Genette, *Figuras III*, Barcelona, Lumen, 1989, 78–79. An early attempt to place Juana in a tradition of women preachers in B. Roest, "Female Preaching in the Late Medieval Franciscan Tradition", *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004), 149–154.

8 On the echoes of late-medieval European mysticism in the writings of Juana's convent, see M. M. Graña Cid, "¿Una memoria femenina de escritura espiritual? La recepción de las místicas medievales en el convento de Santa María de la Cruz de Cubas", in N. Baranda Leturio and M. del C. Marín Pina (eds.), *Letras en la celda. Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014, 99–114.

9 Of course, this has been possible to a large extent due to the impetus provided by the studies of female religiosity in the last forty years. The exploration of the "silenced tradition" (G. Epiney-Burgard and E. Zum Brunn, *Femmes troubadours de Dieu*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1988), or the refloating of those "arcipielaghi sommersi" in monastic archives of which E. Graziosi spoke in *Arcipelago sommerso*, in *I monasteri femminili*, has taken decades of effort and has been a titanic as well as a delicate task.

Tercero, Anastasio Cuarto y el glorioso San Bernardo, como se colige de sus epístolas escritas a la misma gloriosa santa. Y los papas Bonifacio Nono, Martino V, el Cardenal Turrecremata y otros gravísimos autores dicen lo mismo de lo que escribió S. Brígida, como se lee en las bulas de canonización, y en el Prólogo del libro de sus revelaciones. En tiempo del mismo Papa Eugenio en la Diócesis de Tréveris, en un Monasterio llamado Sconaugia, hubo una gran sierva de Dios llamada Isabel, que el año de 1152 le mandó su abad, llamado Hidelino, que dijese todas sus revelaciones, y los conceptos de su oración al abad Egberto, porque las escribiesse: el cual Egberto escribió dellas un libro muy provechoso para las almas, muy agradable al Papa y a toda la Iglesia [...] <sup>10</sup>

[For these reasons the glorious Saint Hildegard, abbess of a Benedictine convent in High Germany, wrote many books of her concepts and revelations. And this doctrine and these books were approved by the popes Eugene III, Anastasius IV, and by the glorious St Bernard, as can be seen from the letters written by him to the same glorious saint. And the popes Boniface IX and Martin V, Cardinal Turrecremata, and other most serious authors say the same of what was written by St. Bridget, as can be read in the bulls of canonization, and the Prologue of the book of her revelations. In the times of the same Pope Eugene in the Diocese of Trier, in a monastery called Schönaue, there was a great servant of God called Elisabeth who, in the year 1152, was instructed by her abbot, called Hildelin, that she speak all her revelations, and the concepts of her prayer to the abbot Eckbert, so that he could write them down: this Eckbert wrote them in a book that is very beneficial for souls, very agreeable to the Pope and to the whole Church.]

The evident purpose of this passage is to justify Teresa's revealed writing through certain women writers of the past. The textual strategy is clear: the visionary works of two saints (Hildegard and Bridget) and a "mere" visionary (Elisabeth) are surrounded by ecclesiastical figures, male and are thereby

10 Theresa de Iesus, *Conceptos del amor de Dios... sobre algunas palabras de los Cantares de Salomón. Con unas anotaciones del Padre M. Fr. Gerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios Carmelitano*, Brussels, Roger Velpio, and Huberto Antonio, Impresores jurados, cerca de Palacio, 1611, Prologue, unnumbered [facsimile: Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1981]. I have modernized the spelling and punctuation of this excerpt. I thank Victoria Cirlot who pointed out this text to me.

authorized to commission, support, and approve their revealed works for the Catholic hierarchy. By extension, this model of masculine endorsement is applied to Teresa's writings. However, what is most interesting in these lines is that Gracián consciously traces a female spiritual canon that updates the group of biblical prophetesses that tended to be used for these purposes, culminating in Teresa. Here lies an authentic visionary genealogy developed by a religious man who was writing some one hundred years after the reform of Juana's convent, a genealogy that was also adopted, with variations, by two of the abbess's main hagiographers, Daza and Navarro.<sup>11</sup> Hildegard holds first place in this visionary lineage, and I will also place her first in introducing female prophetic preaching. As Bartolomei Romagnoli has stated:

Bisogna infatti risalire al XII secolo, a Ildegarde di Bingen, per cogliere il primo costituirsi di una nuova formalità epistemologica, profetica appunto, che si ritaglia uno spazio proprio nell'area di differenziazione dei discorsi. Questo strano sapere segna l'irruzione di maniere nuove di parlare, che incrinano l'omogeneità di una tradizione.<sup>12</sup>

[Indeed, it is necessary to go back to the 12th century and Hildegard of Bingen to grasp the first emergence of a new epistemological form, specifically prophetic, which carves out its own space in the area of discursive differentiation. This strange knowledge marks the eruption of new ways of speaking, which disrupt the homogeneity of a tradition.]

I open my discussion of female prophetesses with Hildegard (3.2), and then compare her (3.3) with her contemporary visionary Elisabeth von Schönau. Elisabeth's revelations occurred within the context of the liturgy and were collected by her sisters in a way that shares similarities with the *Conorte*. In the following section (3.4), I will jump to the thirteenth century and the monastic milieu of Helfta. Here, I will treat another case of transcription, redaction, and group copying, that of Mechthild von Hackeborn and her *Liber specialis gratiae*, a work that was published by Cardinal Cisneros in 1505 (the Latin *editio princeps*), and which in all probability Juana and her fellow tertiaries knew and imitated in many respects.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in section 3.5 I will discuss the

11 Daza 1611, 3v. Navarro, 1622, 317–318, which has a special mention of Caterina da Siena's *Dialogue*.

12 Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*, 436.

13 In fact, the first Latin printing of the *Liber* is that of 1505, which had been preceded by a Flemish translation in 1504, see Mechthild von Hackeborn, *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac*

Italian preaching of the living saint Domenica da Paradiso, a contemporary of Juana and, like her, a follower of the model of sanctity established in the first hagiographies of Caterina da Siena. As this temporal arc covers at least four centuries, I will not treat it in an exhaustive way but examine the context of the revelations and their processes of textualization comparatively so as to cast as much light as possible on the concept of female prophetic-visionary preaching, applying it to the sermons of the *Conorte*.

Before embarking on this analysis, it is worthwhile to ask why Gracián did not name Juana de la Cruz or any other living saint—Castilian or Italian—as part of Teresa’s genealogy in the prologue to his *Conceptos*, although he did so on at least one other occasion.<sup>14</sup> In all probability, the answer must be traced back to the changes in the spiritual atmosphere following the death of Cardinal Cisneros (1517), which would crystalize in the Counter-Reformation. Among other things, this influenced the models of female sanctity promoted in Castile at the start of the sixteenth century. When Gracián wrote these lines, the freedom of speech of an ecstatic preacher such as Juana become far more restricted and her figure, in fact, was relegated to the “extravagants” by a later hagiographer such as Alonso de Villegas.<sup>15</sup> The model of the charismatic, literate religious woman represented by Teresa presented a stark contrast to the living saints of the previous generation, the prophetesses and illiterates who had been supported by Cisneros.

I will start by comparing how three visionaries, Hildegard, Elisabeth, and Juana, conceived of their prophetic calling. My analysis is structured on three attributes whose interactions I will analyse in depth in the three case studies: visionary prophecy, public speech, and scriptural exegesis.

## 2 Hildegard von Bingen and the Degrees of the Open Word

“... ac tercio etatis mee anno tantum lumen uidi, quod anima mea contremuit, sed pre infantia de his nichil proferre potui. In octauo autem

---

*Mechthildianae*, Paris, Henricum Oudin, 1877, xi. See also, P. Acosta-García, “Santas y marcadas: itinerarios de lectura modélicos en la obra de las místicas bajomedievales impresas por Cisneros”, *Hispania Sacra* LXXII (145), 2020, 67–80.

14 G. Gracián, “Diálogos sobre su espíritu”, in A. de San Bartolomé, *Obras completas*, J. Urkiza (ed.), Burgos, 1998, 317. I thank Rebeca Sanmartín for this reference.

15 A. de Villegas, *Adicción a la Tercera Parte del Flos sanctorum: en que se ponen vidas de varones illustres, los quales, aunque no estan canonizados, mas piadosamente se cree dellos que gozan de Dios por auer sido sus vidas famosas en virtudes...*, M. M. Cortés Timoner (ed.), Huesca, Iuan Perez de Valdiuielso, 1588.

anno meo in spiritualem conuersationem Deo oblata sum et usque in quintum decimum annum fui multa uidens et plura simpliciter loquens, ita quod et admirabantur, qui hec audierunt, unde uenirent et a quo essent.” (*Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, ed. Monica Klaes, Turnholt, Brepols, 1993, II, II, 22–23).<sup>16</sup>

Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) would become in the twentieth century the most famous European visionary of the Middle Ages. According to the *vita* written by Theoderic von Echternach she received the experience of God at a very early age in the form of contemplative light. For Hildegard, who is identified as the first person speaking in the quotation (the voice of Hildegard herself, Theoderic claims), her precocious visionary gift contrasted with a certain vacillation in how she communicated her visions that she would overcome only in her maturity. Hence her claims that “I could not utter a word” (“*nichil proferre potui*”) at three years of age or the “simple mode” (“*simpliciter*”) at eight years. During her childhood, Theoderich proposes, she already experienced the light of God, but it would not be until much later when she secured authorization to disseminate her visions and to record them extensively in her first book, *Scivias*.<sup>17</sup> This communicative act transformed Hildegard’s status, as she passed from *only* receiving the revelation to *also* communicating it, that is to say, to mediating between two worlds and declaring her status initiating her trajectory as a prophet. As Theoderic puts it in the *vita*: “... *et quecumque interius aspexisset, dictis ac scriptis, prout nouerat expediret, pandebat*.”<sup>18</sup>

It is precisely in this process of mediation articulated between two spaces, that of interiority (which receives and can keep silent) in contrast to that of other people (which requires linguistic codification), that holds my interest

16 *Jutta and Hildegard. The Biographical Sources*, A. Silvas (ed.), Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993, II: II, 158: “In my eighth year I was offered to God for a spiritual way of life, and until my fifteenth year I used to see many things and often spoke about them in my simplicity, so that those who heard them wondered where they might be coming from or from whom.”

17 Hildegardis Bingensis, *Scivias*, A. Führkörtter and A. Carlevaris (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 1978. Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 21–41, 13 and *Jutta and Hildegard*, 141.

18 *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, I: III, 14; *Jutta and Hildegard*, I: VIII, 149: “Whatever she saw interiorly, she spread abroad in speech and writing as far as she knew how to do so”. Other examples: “*Cumque in sacto proposito multis annis succrescens Deo soli complacere satageret, iamque tempus instaret, quod ad multorum profectum uita uita eius ac doctrina patesceret*” (*Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, I: III, 8); “When she had matured in her holy way of life for many years and all her concern was to please God alone, at last the time drew near for her life and teaching to be displayed for the benefit of many” (*Jutta and Hildegard*, I: III, 141).



in exploring the “sybil of the Rhine” as a starting point for the tradition of female prophetic preaching. Here I focus on the analysis of three interconnected facets of Hildegard’s biography: the visionary, the prophetess, and the preacher. These three undoubtedly imply the reception of wisdom through grace, but they also express different degrees of openness of knowledge that is transmitted to others. These mediating functions between the heavenly and the terrestrial worlds are central to my discussion of the words of Hildegard, which I will compare with certain aspects of Juana’s sermon book. I will examine three specific texts: first, the *Protestificatio* of *Scivias*, which will allow me to explore her prophetism; second the *Expositiones evangeliorum*, which represents her most purely pastoral role; and, finally, the scarce surviving materials of apocalyptic rhetoric related to her oratory in various German cities when she was already a recognized charismatic. This will allow me to discuss and establish certain fundamental differences between the trio of concepts (prophetism, exegesis, and preaching) indicated in relation to the *Conorte*. I will start with some biographical notes before moving on to a brief commentary on *Scivias*.

Hildegard was born in 1098 and at eight years of age was given as an oblate to the community of recluses led by Jutta von Sponheim, located beside the monastery of Disibodenberg.<sup>19</sup> There, she was educated not only in the ascetic life, but also in the singing of the divine office and in reading the Psalms.<sup>20</sup> In 1112, she took formal Benedictine vows in the same monastery, where in 1136 she succeeded Jutta as *magistra* after the latter’s death. In 1150, despite the opposition of the abbot and several monks in Disibodenberg, she succeeded in moving, together with eighteen nuns, to Rupertsberg, a monastery that she founded near the city of Bingen.<sup>21</sup> According to Franz Felten, this move inaugurated a new stage for her, as it allowed her to develop her own identity through which she influenced the life of her community, relax the penitential ideas of her years of training,<sup>22</sup> establish a wide letter-writing network with leading figures of her time such as Bernard of Clairvaux,<sup>23</sup> and to undertake

- 
- 19 F. J. Felten, “Jutta and Hildegard von Bingen at Disinbodenberg”, in B. M. Kienzle *et al.* (eds.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 15–38. On Hildegard’s childhood, see also C. J. Mews, “Hildegard von Bingen and the Hirsau Reform in Germany”, B. M. Kienzle *et al.* (eds.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 57–65.
- 20 On the ceremony of reclusion, Felten, “Jutta and Hildegard”, 16.
- 21 *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, I: V, 10–12; *Jutta and Hildegard*, I: V, 145–147.
- 22 Felten, “Jutta and Hildegard”, 32–36. See also Mews, “Hildegard von Bingen”, 79.
- 23 Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 43–65.

extensive, profound, and varied activity that was ultimately always founded on her prophetic aura.<sup>24</sup> In fact, it was between the death of Jutta and before the exodus to Rupertstberg when Hildegard decided to seek authorization to reveal her visions to others. Once she had achieved this, she then started the writing of *Scivias* in collaboration with her secretary Volmar.<sup>25</sup>

As Victoria Cirlot observes, the limited attention that Hildegard's *vita* gives to her early years of life is not accidental.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, one senses her rejection of the *modus vivendi* chosen by Jutta and, on the other, the hagiography seems to be less interested in her formative years than those in which Hildegard attained full authority through her prophetic maturity. In fact, it is not until she is forty-two years (and seven months) when we once again encounter a first-person voice identified with her in the *vita*. This occurs in the *Protestificatio* of *Scivias*, where she explains how the liquid fire that flowed into her brain in 1141 granted her the sudden understanding of biblical texts:

Et repente intellectum expositionis librorum, videlicet psalterii, evangelii et aliorum catholicorum tam veteris quam novi Testamenti voluminum sapiebam, non autem verborum interpretationem textus eorum, nec divisionem syllabarum, nec cognitionem casuum aut temporum habebam.

[And immediately I knew the meaning of the exposition of the Scriptures, namely the Psalter, the Gospel and the other catholic volumes of both the Old and the New Testaments, though I did not have the interpretation of the words of their texts or the division of the syllables or the knowledge of cases or tenses.]<sup>27</sup>

In this passage there is a clear opposition between two forms of interpreting the Bible: that which is given through an immediately acquired wisdom (reflected in the adverb *repente* in combination with the verb *sapiebam*) in contrast to scholarly techniques that concern textual hermeneutics undertaken through an exhaustive syntactical analysis (“... *divisionem syllabarum* [...] *cognitionem*

24 For a chronology of the life and work of Hildegard, see B. M. Kienzle et al., *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, xvii–xviii.

25 *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, II: I, 156; *Jutta and Hildegard*, II: I, 155; See Mews, “Hildegard von Bingen”, 66.

26 V. Cirlot, “Introducción”, in *Vida y visiones de Hildegard von Bingen*, V. Cirlot (ed.), Madrid, Siruela, 2009, 15.

27 Hildegardis Bingensis, *Scivias*, 4; Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, C. Hart and J. Bishop (trans.), New York/Mahwah, 1990, 59. For a more complete reading of this passage, see Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 23–26 and Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 8.

*casuum aut temporum*"). Years after the writing of this paratext (1146–1147), Hildegard conveyed the same idea in a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux, where she affirmed in parallel that, her soul having been aflame (*sicut flamma comburens*), she had received the understanding of the Scriptures.<sup>28</sup> Once again, here the *magistra* opposes the word-by-word textual analysis (*in abscisione textus*, that was taught in contemporary schools) with her "simple reading" (*in simplicitate legere*), which nonetheless involves the acquisition of "spiritual understanding" (*interiorem intelligentia*) from the marrow of the holy writ. The use here of the adverbial locution "*in simplicitate*" is not coincidental, nor is the fact the Hildegard reiterates to Bernard the idea that the main effect of her immediate contact with the divinity is the sudden understanding of biblical texts.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, it is no surprise that this declaration is found in two essential places in her writings: at the start of her first book of visions, which would bring her such fame, and in her communication with the influential Cistercian abbot. Ultimately, the letter to Bernard constitutes a declaration of Hildegard's inner experience, which seeks the approval of a male spiritual authority, while also marking a clear and long-standing distinction in European literature between women's revealed knowledge and the learned knowledge of men, thus returning us to the male authority that I noted in my brief commentary on Gracián's prologue to the work of Teresa.

As Beverly M. Kienzle and Travis A. Stevens have demonstrated, Hildegard consciously adopts the perception of prophecy given by Gregory the Great in his *Homiliae in Ezechielem*.<sup>30</sup> In this work the prophetic gift is understood in a wide sense, as a revelatory art of mysteries that could form part of the present, the past, or the future, in contrast to the more simplistic conception of prophecy as mere prediction of what is to come.<sup>31</sup> In effect, as Elizabeth Clark

28 On this opposition in the form of Biblical commentary, see Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 8: "Hildegard probably distinguished between exegetical training including syntactical analysis, which was acquired in the schools (*interpretationem uerborum textus*), and the spiritual understanding of Scripture (*interior intelligentia*) that came from her instant enkindling." On Hildegard and Bernard, see Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 43–66.

29 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 81–82, understands this dichotomy as the difference between allegoresis ("spiritual understanding") and "exegetical training", which would correspond with the "literal sense". On the other hand, we find here neatly formulated a key distinction for later mystical literature, especially addressed in the case of Teresa de Jesús: literate knowledge versus that inspired by the divinity.

30 Kienzle and Stevens, "Intertextuality in Hildegard's works: Ezekiel and the Claim of Prophetic Authority", B. M. Kienzle *et al.* (eds.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 137–138.

31 As rightly indicated by the editors of *Scivias* ("Einleitung", in Hildegardis Bingensis, *Scivias*, x-lx, xviii, in the section "*Der prophetische Charakter*"), the source that relates Hildegard

proposes, from the Gregorian-Hildegardian perspective, “prophecy is the bringing forth or making known of secrets (*“prodit occulta”*), and these secrets can be of the past, present or future. Thus the essence of prophecy is not the reference to the future, but the act of revealing things otherwise concealed.”<sup>32</sup> When this revelation of the mysteries refers to the interpretation of the profound meaning of the Holy Scriptures, vision (above all, in its glossed version) can be understood as a type of biblical exegesis tied to allegoresis.<sup>33</sup> However, the question is the following: is this inspired exegesis present in the sermons of the *prophetissa teutonica* that have survived? Is the sudden understanding of the Scriptures and the revelation of hidden meanings reflected in some way in what it is known of her preaching? Two works make it possible to approach Hildegard’s sermons: the fifty-eight *Expositiones evangeliorum*, which she preached to her community between 1163 and 1177,<sup>34</sup> and the materials that have come down to us through her letters, which reproduce some of the sermons from what certain scholars have called “preaching tours” (1158–1161), in which she travelled across Germany visiting cities including Cologne, Thier, Metz, Würzburg, and Bamberg.<sup>35</sup> I will start with the *Expositiones evangeliorum*.

---

with Gregory should be: “*Quo autem pacto prophetiae dicatur spiritus, qui nihil futurum indicat, sed praesens narrat? Qua in re animadvertendum est quod recte prophetia dicitur, non quia praedicit ventura, sed quia prodit occulta*” (*Homiliae in Ezechielem*, 1, 1). To contextualize Gregory the Great’s definition of prophecy in the Christian tradition and in relation to Hildegard, see Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*, 445–446. See, in turn, S. Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen. A Visionary Life*, London, Routledge, 1989, 218, n. 19; and Kienzle and Stevens, “Intertextuality in Hildegard’s works: Ezekiel and the Claim of Prophetic Authority”, B. M. Kienzle et al., *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 137–138.

32 A. L. Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau. A Twelfth-Century Visionary*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, 72.

33 Following the interpretation by Abelard, who understood prophecy as “the grace of interpreting” (Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 69). See also Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen*, 54. From here on, I follow Dinzelbacher’s conception of allegoresis: “the interplay between the perceived images and exegetical knowledge” (*apud* Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 61).

34 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 4.

35 On the construction of the idea of these “preaching tours” from the words of Theoderich combined with information from letters and their inexistence in medieval sources, see Kienzle: “There is no convincing reason to doubt Theoderic’s list of monasteries that Hildegard visited; however, there are not corroborating texts for all the sites, nor is there evidence for weaving all the visits together into four tours.” The idea of “tour” is used by a multitude of authors, including Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen*, 8–9 and 170, and by Kienzle herself, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 47–54, who discusses their origin on 55. On the apocalyptic sermons, 167–171, which translates into English some of the passages of

According to Kienzle, Hildegard's *expositiones* follow the formal model provided by certain fathers of the Church, with which Benedictine communities would have been familiar through during reading the divine office during the nocturnal matins, later in their public reading in the refectory, and even as part of their set of devotional readings for private meditation.<sup>36</sup> Although the terminology is somewhat fluid in the medieval context,<sup>37</sup> Kienzle identifies these *expositiones* as *homilies*, contrasting the meaning of this term with *sermon* through "methods of organization of development", that is to say the development of the method of biblical commentary.<sup>38</sup> The homily, she argues, traditionally comprises the "progressive exegesis of a complete pericope, phrase by phrase, and the focus on certain phrases, words or images to develop themes."<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, as James E. Cross claims, the homily is "explanatory" (compared with the "exhortatory" character of the sermon) and the textual commentary is clearly anchored in the monastic liturgy, as it is preached "for a feast-day within the liturgical year".<sup>40</sup> Kienzle proposes an example, the commentary on Matthew 2, 7:

*Tunc Herodes, diabolus, clam, scilicet in astutia sua, uocatis magis, inquisitoribus creaturarum, diligenter didicit ab eis, requirendo tempus, uidelicet gustum intellectus, stellae, id est donorum Dei, quae apparuit eis, scilicet qui eis ostensus est.*<sup>41</sup>

---

sermons taken from the *Epistolarium* (Hildegardis Bigensis, *Epistolarium*, L. van Acker [ed.], Turnhout, Brepols, 1991).

36 Hildegard von Bingen, *Homilies on the Gospel*, B. M. Kienzle (trans. and intr.), Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2011, 23.

37 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 66: "Terminology does not, however, reflect utter consistency in medieval usage."

38 B. M. Kienzle, "Introduction", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.). Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 161–166. In previous work, Kienzle defined this opposition as "problematic", see B. M. Kienzle, "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report of a Work in Progress", in J. Hamesse and X. Hermand (eds.), *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, Louvain-La-Neuve, Université Catholique de Louvain/Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, 1993, 83–101. For his part, Mews, "Hildegard von Bingen", 126, defines the horizon of the *Expositiones* as: "a work composed [...] for a monastic audience in response to scholastic exegesis."

39 Kienzle, "Introduction", 162, although see the context in which she develops it on 161–166. The terminological contrast is the same in Baker and Kienzle, "Monastic Preaching", 712.

40 J. E. Cross, "Vernacular Sermons in Old English", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 562–563.

41 Hildegard von Bingen, *Expositiones evangeliorum*, in Hildegardis Bingensis, *Opera minora*, B. M. Kienzle and C. Muessig (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 12, 221.

[Then Herod, the Devil, secretly, namely in his craftiness, having called together the kings, the questioners of the creatures, learned diligently from them, seeking the time, clearly the appetite for understanding, of the star, that is, for God's gifts, which appeared to them, namely which was shown to them.]

Kienzle has highlighted in italics the exegetic commentary that Hildegard carried out, to separate it from the text of the pericope. In addition, she has called this method "Hildegardian gloss" and describes it as "intertextual", that is to say, the glosses compose a commentary that is intercalated into the biblical text, constructing a double narrative that is developed in the same line of discourse. Her exegesis implies, then, "a continuous narrative" that "comments on the biblical passage progressively".<sup>42</sup> The systematic nature of this procedure is shown in Kienzle's analysis of the fifty-eight *expositiones* where she argues that their use has a clear rationale: to extract the allegorical significance of the passage while keeping to the letter of their meaning. She argues that these fifty-eight homilies "establish Hildegard as the only known systematic female exegete of the Middle Ages."<sup>43</sup>

This systematic approach is a long way from the biblical-visionary commentary that undoubtedly constructed most of the sermons of the *Conorte*. Even though, as I will show in the fourth chapter, Juana probably started from the pericope and also presented biblical allegoresis in her preaching, what prevails in her sermons is the visionary commentary of the Scriptures. And the model that Hildegard adopts from the homilies of the fathers of the Church also differs from the visions Juana presented during her ecstasies.

The question here is whether the systematic commentary of the *Expositiones* is based on prophetic authority and, if so, how it is done. The answer is affirmative: not only does the paratext that I have analysed from *Scivias* directly connect the vision to the understanding of the Scriptures (thus, with its possibility of exegesis), but this is also declared in the incipit of one of the manuscripts of the *Expositiones*.<sup>44</sup> In reality, as Kienzle once again rightly observes, probably the greater part of Hildegard's work is underpinned in one way or another by the knowledge obtained through her visions.<sup>45</sup> In any case,

42 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 2009, 113 and 115, respectively. Mews, "Hildegard von Bingen", 123–124, also terms them intertextual glosses.

43 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 2.

44 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 44.

45 "The visions that led to the writing of *Scivias* and the *Liber diuinorum operum* produced exegetical understanding that extended into the *Expositiones euangeliorum* and other works" (Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 19).

both the extremely systematic nature of the commentary and its distancing from the recognizably visionary language of *Scrivias* and the *Liber divinorum operum* make me wonder why Hildegard did not use a recognizably prophetic language in the *Expositiones*, beyond that of the “monastic and exegetical tradition” that allows her to convey it.<sup>46</sup>

There may be various reasons, but the most likely is due to the pastoral function of these homilies, that is to say, from the conditions imposed by their audience and their performative context, which is none other than the nuns of Rupertsberg. This phenomenology accords with the classification Zarri proposed in tracing a dichotomy in the possibility for medieval women to preach: “female preaching in Middle Ages [...] was limited to two specific phenomena: the monastic *sacra conversatio* and *prophesy*”.<sup>47</sup> I argue, in line with Zarri, that the *sacra conversatio* derived from the authority of the abbess, had a clear educative-pastoral character, and was limited to a very specific audience: the religious women of the community.<sup>48</sup> A medieval example of this type of preaching can be observed in one of the panels in the Uffizi, which depicts the Benedictine Umiltà da Faenza teaching her sisters due to her ordinary charisma.<sup>49</sup> Given that Hildegard’s sermons comment on the gospel of the day, and that they were probably delivered in the chapter house, they can safely be classified with the first of Zarri’s labels, as *ex officio* preaching, proper to an abbess’ pastoral duties.<sup>50</sup> A very different situation derives from the performance in

46 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 151. J. A. Stover, “Hildegard, the Schools, and their Critics”, B. M. Kienzle et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 109–135, 124 has highlighted the connection between Hildegard’s preaching and certain scholastic practices, such as the “continuative producta” gloss.

47 Zarri, “Places and Gestures”, 178. For a synthesis on the position of the institutional church in relation to public education performed by women religious, see Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life*, 52–55, which nuances this claim by Zarri.

48 In this respect, I agree with Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 6: “[Hildegard has] no need to justify her authority for the scriptural commentary that she delivered regularly within a monastic community”.

49 Zarri, “Places and Gestures”, 179. On Umiltà, see C. M. Mooney, “Authority and Inspiration in the vitae and sermons of Humility of Faenza”, in C. Muessig (ed.), *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, Leiden, Brill, 1998, 121–144.

50 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 2 and 64. Baker and Kienzle, “Monastic Preaching and the Sermon”, 722, claim that the sermons were collected by her sisters, a practice that coincides with the dynamics of the community writing discussed in the previous chapter. On the other hand, the chapter room was one of the common places where the abbesses would preach to their communities (J. G. Clark and K. E. Bush, “Monastic Preaching c. 1350–1545”, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monastic Preaching in the Latin West*, 1127, which mentions Juana on 113). The preaching inside the religious house should be understood within the *ex officio* attributions of the abbess, amply documented during the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the early modern period (Clark and Bush,



front of an audience from outside the religious house, which would represent the maximum extent of the open word. In this context would a female preacher claim authority to speak through her prophetic charisma, putting aside exceptional cases such as that of Isabel de Josa in the 16th century Barcelona, who obtained papal permission for her public exhortations.<sup>51</sup>

This is exactly the situation with Juana, her ecstasy, and her explicitly visionary language. Hildegard also approaches these attributes in her preaching in German lands, which some scholars have divided into four “tours”: the first in 1158–1161, the second in 1160, the third in 1161–1163, and the fourth in 1167–1170.<sup>52</sup> The lateness of these dates is not accidental, as it indicates that Hildegard started this activity when she was around sixty, at a point at which her fame as a prophetess was already well established.<sup>53</sup> The news of this preaching campaign is collected in some of the biographical texts. For example, as Theoderich puts it in his *vita*: “*Inter hec etiam illud de ipsa est notabile, quod Colonia, Treverim, Mettim, Herbipolim, Babenberch Spiritu diuino non modo acta sed coacta ueniens clero et populo que Deus uoluit annuntiauit.*”<sup>54</sup> The hybrid audience indicated by “*clero et populo*” determines the revelatory character of the sermons. Although the list of cities that the abbess visited is found in medieval sources, it is thanks to three letters (and to their replies) in which two clerics ask the abbess to send them a sermon that she had previously preached that we have three texts that allow us to enter Hildegard’s public preaching.<sup>55</sup>

---

“Monastic Preaching”, 1129–1134). For the case of the homilies preached by the sisters in the absence of the abbot in the Benedictine community of Admont, see Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 65–103.

51 On Isabel, preaching, and canon law, see M. Ángeles Sáez García, *Poder y autoridad femenina en el siglo XVI. Isabel de Josa (1490–1564)*, Madrid, CEPC, 2022, 197–204.

52 On these four “tours” see above, 120, n. 35.

53 Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen*, 172. Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 40.

54 *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, III: xvii, 54. Jutta and Hildegard, III, xvii, 191–192: “Amidst all this it is remarkable of her that she, not so much led as driven by the Divine Spirit, came to Cologne, Trier, Metz, Würzburg and Bamberg to announce to the clergy and the people what God wanted of them.” The idea of the divine source of the preaching is repeated in *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, II, x, 34, translated into English in *Jutta and Hildegard*, II: xi, 171: “While I was still labouring in these pains, I was warned in true vision to go to that place where I had been offered to God, and there announce the words which God would show me.”

55 The letters that contain material related to preaching are the following (those that are not followed by an *r* constitute the requests for the delivery of the sermon, those that are followed by an *r*, *responsiones*): xv, xvi, cxlix, cxlixr, ccxxiii y ccxxiir (Hildegardis Bigensis, *Epistolarium*, L. van Acker [ed.], Turnhout, Brepols, 1991), I, 33; I, 34–44; II, 332–333; II, 333–337; II, 489–490; II, 490–496, respectively. See, for example, the petition of the dean Philip of Heinsberg, who later (1167) became archbishop of Cologne, sent to her

Exhortatory in tone and employing visionary language, each of these sermons is easily relatable to the *Scivias* or the *Liber divinorum operum*, as all draw on a clearly apocalyptic inspiration.<sup>56</sup> As in these two treatises, it is John the Evangelist, also considered the author of the *Book of Revelation* in the twelfth century, who Hildegard adopts as her model. As Cirlot puts it:

Al identificarse con Juan, Hildegard sitúa su obra dentro de lo apocalíptico y con ello no solo se significa un género literario caracterizado por la temática tratada esencialmente escatológica, sino que se refiere también a la cualidad de las imágenes, aquellas pertenecientes al tercer tipo de visión de Ricardo de San Víctor.<sup>57</sup>

[By identifying with John, Hildegard places her work within the apocalyptic framework. In doing so, she not only aligns with a literary genre characterized by essentially eschatological themes but also refers to the quality of the images, those belonging to the third type of vision according to Richard of Saint Victor.]

Like John of Patmos, Hildegard sometimes expresses herself through a first person that identifies its voice with that of God. Cirlot's reference to Richard of Saint Victor's third type of vision refers to those images that "*proceden de la inspiración del Espíritu Santo donde las imágenes presentan semejanzas formales con las cosas terrenales.*" [proceed from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, where the images present formal resemblances to earthly things].<sup>58</sup> Indeed, if we consider that Hildegard's authority as orator comes, as is declared at various points in the three letters, from divine light, the images taken from the *Book of Revelation* represent logical forms of developing the sermon. In addition, the

---

c. 1150–1156: "[U]t ea que uiua uoce nobis prius dixistis, litteris quoque commendetis et nobis transmittatis" (Hildegardis Bigensis, *Epistolarium*, I, 33), in English translation: "We further request that you commit to writing and send us those things that you said to us earlier in person" (*The Letters of Hildegard von Bingen*, J. L. Baird and R. K. Ehrman [eds.], Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, 54). Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen*, 9 and 173–174 talks of these texts. See also Embach, "Hildegard of Bingen: A History of Reception", B. M. Kienzle et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 287–288.

56 As B. McGinn claims, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, New York-Ramsey-Toronto, Paulist Press, 1979, 4–5, the apocalyptic is a specific type of prophet who believes in "a particular form of eschatology, a species of broader genus that covers any type of belief that looks forward to the end of history as that which gives structure and meaning to the whole". For a definition of those terms that surround "apocalypticism", see McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 4–16.

57 Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 81.

58 Cirlot, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 75.

authority of this light that guides her preaching is transparent in the discourse, as the *ego* of the preaching tends to confuse itself with the divinity:

O filioli, qui greges meos pascitis de instanti instructione dominice uocis, quare non erubescitis, cum omnes creature precepta, que de magistro suo habent, non deserunt, sed perficiunt? Vos constitui sicut solem et cetera luminaria, et luceretis hominibus per ignem doctrine, in bono rumore fulgurantes et ardentia cordia parantes. Hoc in prima etate mundi feci. Abel enim elegi, Noe dilexi, Moysen ad institutionem legis imbui, prophetas etiam amantissimos amicos meos constitui.<sup>59</sup>

As we already know, this self-perception of the visionary as a channel, as a kind of medium between the designs of God and the audience, is also fundamental for understanding Juana's preaching. But there is another point in common between Hildegard and Juana: at the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, the sermons also sometimes took on apocalyptic tones. I am not referring here only to the two evident exhortations dedicated to the end of the world ("*Profecías y señales que anunciarán el Fin del mundo*" [Prophecies and Signs that will announce the End of the World] and "*Cómo se viene el Fin del Mundo. Aviso y reprehensión*" [How the End of the World is coming. Warning and Rebuke]), but also to those of some of the recently discovered songs that Juana sang in two voices—her own and that of Christ—in which the absolute power of the latter takes on the appearance of the Last Judgement.<sup>60</sup>

In an exemplary chapter, Boon studied the cultural environment in which the more purely apocalyptic rhetoric of Juana emerged, and analysed these two sermons in relation to the cult of the Virgin Mary in the convent. In effect, what Boon terms "the Marian Apocalyptic" is essential in the convent near Cubas de

59 Hildegardis Bigensis, *Epistolarium*, I, 35 (Epistola vxr). "O my children, you who feed my flocks as the Lord commanded, why do you not blush, since none of the creatures desert the precepts they received from the Master but, rather, bring them to perfection? I set you like the sun and the other luminaries so that you might bring light to people through the fire of doctrine, shining in good reputation and setting hearts ablaze with zeal. I did this in the first age of the world. For I chose Abel, I loved Noah, I instilled in Moses the precepts of the law, I established as prophets those who most loved me." (*The Letters of Hildegard von Bingen*, 55).

60 One of the annotators of the Vatican manuscript writes on various occasions in the margin about the use of apocalyptic language. For example, on the folios 59or/v. On the other hand, it should be taken into account that the apocalyptic forms which are sometimes adopted by Juana's discourses and those of other prophets discussed in this chapter are occasional rhetorical-visionary options. For a distinction between prophecy and the apocalyptic, see Bartolomei Romagnoli, *CORPO SACRO*, 451–452.

la Sagra, as this place was founded as a house of *beatas* after the appearance of the Virgin to a girl, Inés, as she was herding pigs.<sup>61</sup> Boon reconstructs the cultural context of Castilian millenarianism of the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. She not only identifies a series of literary sources about the end of the world that were present in Castile before Juana's preaching (of particular importance, the *Libro del Anticristo* by Martínez de Ampiés) and observes the precedent of Vicent Ferrer (1350–1419) as a visionary preacher,<sup>62</sup> but also places Juana in the “prophetic-apocalyptic mentality of the early Spanish empire”.<sup>63</sup> Given that, as Bernard McGinn claims, apocalyptic literature is also “a form of political rhetoric,” this also encompassed the propaganda of Fernando de Aragón and Carlos V that arose after the discovery of the new continent, which was conveyed through Franciscan millenarianism and crystalized in works such as the *Libro de las profecías* of Cristóbal Colón.<sup>64</sup>

Logically, the implications of the apocalyptic context differ from a historical perspective when comparing the two prophetesses. What does not seem to change is their political-exhortative function (which in Hildegard's case calls for the reform of the clergy and to fight against the Cathar threat), the underlying communicative mechanism (two abbesses legitimize their public preaching by means of prophecy), and the imaginary (which starts from the catalogue of *Revelation* and other prophetic biblical books). The latter aspect is found at the start of one of the apocalyptic sermons of the *Conorte*, which Boon describes as “apocalyptic amalgamation”:

Hablando el Señor de la venida del Antecristo y de la declaración del Evangelio que dice: *Dijo Jesús a sus discípulos serán señales en el sol y la luna y estrellas* (Lucas 21,25), dijo que estas cosas y señales que en todo este Evangelio se trata, y todas las cosas y secretos y profecías y figuras que en este mundo dijo y anunció, se cumplen y cumplirán de cada día con muchas y diversas maneras, las cuales nosotros pecadores, aunque las leemos y tratamos, no las sabemos entender ni conocer, según él las dijo y manifestó en su entendimiento y sabiduría. Y por tanto dijo que cielo puede ser llamado cada una de las personas fieles que a Dios aman

61 Boon, “The Marian Apocalyptic”, 41.

62 On De Ampiés, Ferrer, and millenarianism, see Boon, “The Marian Apocalyptic”, 43, 46, and 44–45, respectively. K. Brigham, *Cristóbal Colón. Su vida y descubrimiento a la luz de sus profecías*, Barcelona, Clie, 1990.

63 Boon, “The Marian Apocalyptic”, 66 also provides context.

64 McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 9.

y sirven y hacen su voluntad, recibiendo la gracia del Espíritu Santo y dando cabida a Dios dentro de su ánima...<sup>65</sup>

[The Lord speaking of the coming of the Antichrist and the declaration of the Gospel which says: *Jesus said to his disciples, And there will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars* (Luke 21,25), said that these things and signs that this whole Gospel is about, and all the things, secrets, prophecies, and figures that were declared and announced in this world, are being fulfilled and will be fulfilled each day in many and diverse ways, which we sinners, although we read and study them, we neither understand nor known them, as he said and manifested in his understanding and wisdom. And thus he said that heaven can be called every single faithful person who loves God and serves and does his will, receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit and giving space to God within his own soul...]

It is necessary to recall that this sermon (numbered 66 in the El Escorial manuscript) is placed towards the end of the two manuscripts of the *Conorte*, following its ordering based on the liturgical cycle.<sup>66</sup> This positioning is not surprising, taking into account what I developed in the second chapter about the structure of the collection, as the sermons concerning the end of the world are placed so as to announce or directly coincide with the celebration of Advent. Sermon 66 begins by following the method of biblical commentary that is habitual in Juana, which I will discuss in depth in the next chapter: the *magistra* comments on the first phrase of the gospel of the day, a reading (Luke 21,25) that allow to locate this sermon as preached on the first Sunday of Advent. The stars of the pericope quoted above and, in general, all the words of Christ, are treated as mysterious signs: “*cosas y secretos y profecías y figuras*” [the things, secrets, prophecies, and figures], whose meaning sinners can perceive but not understand according to their deep meaning: “... *aunque las leemos y tratamos, no las sabemos entender ni conocer*” [although we read and study them, we neither understand nor known them]. The understanding of

65 This passage is found in the Vatican manuscript, 669v, but it contains lacunae that complicate a clear reading. Here I use the reading of the El Escorial codex, 409v. For the term, Boon, “The Marian Apocalyptic”, 53. In general, for the analysis of this sermon, 53–55.

66 As an introduction to the concept of the liturgical cycle, see S. Borgehammar, “A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year” and J. Black, “The Divine Office and Private Devotion in the Latin West”, in Heffernan and Ann Matter (eds.), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, 13–44 and 45–72, respectively.

the allegorical meaning of the Scriptures is similar to that acquired by Hildegard at the age of forty-two, as I explained above.

Throughout the *Conorte*, Juana tends towards an exegesis based on the vision and its subsequent gloss, a turn that tends to take place through the expression “*a significar*” and which, in the extract quoted, corresponds to the gloss that is made about the “*cielo*”, understanding it as the true servants of God.<sup>67</sup> In effect, in being spoken by Christ himself, the words of Juana’s sermons possess the same status as the gospels, also revealed, and so they can be glossed. In this case, the interpretation has a markedly apocalyptic orientation, because the “*secretos y profecías y figuras*” that Christ spoke “*se cumplen y cumplirán*”. The *Conorte*, as Surtz claimed in one of his seminal works on the subject, contains “series of concrete predictions” which imply that the end of the world is near.<sup>68</sup> As Hildegard said centuries earlier in one of her sermons: “*Tempus loquendi modo non habemus, nec etiam nunc tempus est ut audiamur, sicut in prius tempus erat.*”<sup>69</sup>

### 3 Elisabeth von Schönau and the Liturgical Vision

At twenty-three years of age, Elisabeth von Schönau (1129–1164/5) started to receive divine visions, which were disseminated in manuscript form beyond the German-speaking regions extensively and from an early date.<sup>70</sup> Raised in the double Benedictine monastery of Schönau from the age of twelve, sometime

67 I do not have space here for a detailed analysis of this passage, but I would like to underline that the reference to “*cielo*” (heaven) glosses part of the Biblical context of Luke 21,10–25 (precisely, Luke 21,11). This is characteristic, as I will show in the next chapter, of the type of biblical comment that is made in the *Conorte*, relating passages at the same time as commenting on them.

68 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 134.

69 Hildegardis Bingensis, *Epistolarium*, I, 38 (Epistola vxr), in English translation: “But you say, we don’t have time now for talking, and there is not even time for us to be heard as there used to be” (*The Letters of Hildegard von Bingen*, 58).

70 For the date of her death, see *Die Werke der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönau*, P. Dinzelbacher (ed.), IX, n. 11. On her dissemination compared with that of Hildegard, F. Heinzer, “Unequal Twins: Visionary Attitude and Monastic Culture in Elisabeth of Schönau and Hildegard von Bingen”, in B. M. Kienzle et al. (ed.), *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 106. I draft a comparative analysis between Elisabeth and Juana’s texts in P. Acosta-García, “Hacia una definición del sermón profético femenino: Liturgia y exégesis visionaria en la obra de Elisabeth von Schönau (1129–1164/5) y Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)”, *Hipogriфо. Revista de literatura y cultura del Siglo de Oro*. 11.1 (2023), 881–893.

before 1156 she became the *magistra* of the community of nuns.<sup>71</sup> Her points of contact with Hildegard go beyond an obvious geographical closeness (Rupertsberg and Schönau are two days' walk from one another), as correspondence has been preserved that shows both women rejected what they understood as the Cathar threat.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, as Elisabeth declares in the *Liber viarum Dei*, Hildegard and she were enlightened by the same apocalyptic angel. In this sense, it is easy to confirm the influence of Hildegard's *Scivias* on the more prophetic work of Elisabeth, with which it shares imagery and intentions.<sup>73</sup> Despite this common background, an in-depth analysis of the work of both visionaries reveals profound differences, both in the events that prompted their visions and in their textualization. These divergences have led Felix Heinzer to call them "unequal twins" while, at the same time, it is these same divergences that underpin my comparison between Elisabeth's preaching and that of Juana.<sup>74</sup>

In this section, I will analyse various characteristics that highlight the parallels between Elisabeth and the sermons of the *Conorte*. First, I will review what we know about how Elisabeth's revelations were textualized. Recording her visions involved a dynamics of transcription in which various actors participated: the nuns who lived with Elisabeth and her own confessor, Eckbert. Then I will explore the liturgical context that frames the reception of her work: in the *Liber visionum* Elisabeth's experiences are structured as a kind of "diary" through the liturgical celebrations in which her experiences took shape.<sup>75</sup> The main objective of the following pages is to show how these two elements, which are absent in Hildegard's works, are configured and function in the recorded visions of both Elisabeth and Juana. This seems to indicate that Elisabeth's work constitutes the first trace of a specific tradition of which Juana forms a part, the liturgical vision. This specific type of vision is characterized by being produced in a collective ritual context, initiated by certain performed elements. Songs, images, and biblical passages read aloud induce a

71 On Eckbert's funeral lament, see A. L. Clark, "Introduction", in Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, A. L. Clark (trans.), New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2000, 5.

72 A perspective also present in the *Liber viarum dei*, see Clark, "Introduction", 6.

73 The mention of the angel "shared" with Hildegard is found in her *Liber viarum Dei*, see Clark, "Introduction", 7. Elisabeth also shares with Hildegard her thoughts about "the poisonous serpents about to come into the Church of God" (Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 142–143). On Hildegard and the Cathars, see Kienzle, "Crisis and Charismatic Authority in Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars", in M. Rubin and K. Jansen (eds.), *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1600*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 73–91, and *Speaking New Mysteries*, 245–88.

74 Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 85–108.

75 Clark, "Introduction", 13.



contemplative state in the visionary. As Caroline Emmelius stated in the case of Helfta, these visions represent a visionary commentary on the community's liturgical tradition.<sup>76</sup>

I will start by outlining the process through which the revelations of the *Liber visionum* were textualized. This enables us to observe how Elisabeth's mystical experience was fixed through a literary form that fictionalized the *magistra* in a very specific way. As stated above, to study the mediation of the *Liber visionum*, it is necessary to consider three main actors: first, Elisabeth herself, whose visionary activity started in 1152; second, the community of nuns at Schönaue, who early on received the revelations orally and transcribed them in the form of notes,<sup>77</sup> and third, Elisabeth's brother Eckbert, who returned to Schönaue to guide his sister in 1155 and played a principal role in the thorny history of the editorial evolution of the writings.<sup>78</sup> The existence of what we could call three instances of mediation between the revelation and the text is essential because it locates its production within a web of interests that shaped how Elisabeth was presented as a visionary.

The nuns' utmost attention to Elisabeth's revelation is related in the text of the first book of the *Liber visionum*, where they approach her after a rapture, urging her to tell that what she has seen:

In proxima dominica, videlicet in inventione sancti Stephani eodem modo infirmata sum, et vidi eandem visionem, sed eo amplius, quod tunc vidi ante thronum dei agnum stantem valde amabilem, et habentem crucem auream quasi dorso infixam. [...] Eram autem celans apud me huiuscemodi visiones amplius quam septem diebus. Cumque posuissem constanter in corde meo nemini eas revelare, gravissima cordis tortione arrepta sum, ita ut morituram me estimarem. Instabant itaque mihi sorores studiose flagitantes, ut, que videram, eis revelarem. Cunque extorsissent a me, statim a passione convalui.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> See below, 144.

<sup>77</sup> Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, 45–46.

<sup>78</sup> Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 88. The textualization of the revelations contained in the *Liber visionum* has been studied in depth by Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, especially 28–67 (on the role of Eckbert in the rewriting and expansion of already published materials, 47–51), and taken up later by Heinzer, "Unequal Twins". On Eckbert as interlocutor in the visions, Clark, "Introduction", 203.

<sup>79</sup> *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Äbte Eckbert und Emecho von Schönaue*, F. W. E. Roth (ed.), Brunn, Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercienser-Order, 1884, 12 (Visio 21).

[On the next Sunday, that is, on the feast of the Invention of Saint Stephen, I was weakened in the same way, and I saw the same vision but more fully, because now I saw standing before the throne of God a very lovely lamb, which looked like it had a golden cross fixed on its back. (...) However, for more than seven days, I kept these visions to myself. When I firmly fixed it in my heart that I would reveal them to no one, I was seized by a very harsh torment in my heart in such a way that I thought I was about to die. And so the sisters earnestly entreated and urged me to reveal to them what I had seen. When they had forced it out of me, I immediately recovered from my suffering.]<sup>80</sup>

This passage is located at the start of one of the sections of *Liber visionum* and follows a similar scheme to the rest of the revelations of the first book.<sup>81</sup> First, the feast in which the experience took place is mentioned (“*in inventione sancti Setephani*”), which gives context to the narration and orients the meaning of the revelation. Second, the appearance of a typically visionary “I saw the same vision” (“*vidi eandem visionem*”), which provides the basis for the development of the narrative, part of which I have omitted here. Then we come to a crucial passage in which Elisabeth’s decision not to describe her experience and the bodily pain are articulated textually, through a syntax that implies that her physical pain was a direct consequence of her withholding her vision (“*Cum-que posuissem constanter in corde meo nemini eas revelare, gravissima cordis tortione arrepta sum...*”). Silence, therefore, articulates the inner torment, which finds external relief in the community that obliges her to speak. The fact that the text declares that Elisabeth feels relieved of her suffering only when she finally expresses what she saw to others seems to indicate that opening her visionary knowledge to her community means the fulfilment of the divine will for the *magistra* and her sisters. Beyond this strategy (which primarily serves to authorize the dissemination of the revealed material), this scene hints at the involvement of the nuns in the recollection of the visions of their superior and the significance that, in the later redaction, they choose to give them. In addition, this dynamic represents a first step in opening of the mystery through a communal sharing of divine knowledge.

As well as this initial revealing of the vision, one has to take into account the monopoly that Eckbert acquired over the processes of compiling the oral tradition of the monastery. It is significant that, after his arrival at Schönaue, the role of the community as the sole recipient of Elisabeth’s revelatory knowledge

80 Elisabeth von Schönaue, *The Complete Works*, 56–57.

81 The scheme is highlighted by Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, 87.

blurs in the sources.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the role of the confessor in the construction of Elisabeth's textual authority is essential for understanding the form that the *Liber visionum* has today. He was the agent of the "editorial reshaping" of the second version of the *Liber primus* and of the form taken by the other parts of it, to such an extent that much of the analysis of Elisabeth's work has been dedicated to debating his role in the shaping of her textual authority.<sup>83</sup> As Heinzer hypothesizes, Eckbert's editorial decisions are probably focused on codifying Elisabeth's sanctity by creating a model of a visionary who was exemplary, orthodox, and Benedictine, whose revelations are given in strict compliance with her liturgical obligations.<sup>84</sup> This hagiographic orientation would surely help the wider acceptance of the work, as the extensive dissemination of the 145 surviving manuscripts attest.<sup>85</sup> Thus, in the transfer from the oral to the written word not only a transformative mediation of the text that helps to authorize it is found, but also a new opening of the visionary word that projects revelations at first intimately and then gradually to a wider audience beyond the convent, in this case through writing.

Elisabeth's word leapt into the public sphere through the copying and dissemination of the manuscripts that contained her visions. Moreover, certain traits in her visionary accounts suggest that it was certainly preached in her monastery. For example, Anne L. Clark identifies the "hortatory words", which the first book of the *Liber visionum* declares were spoken on a Saturday after the Assumption, as "her first experience of what can be called pastoral preaching".<sup>86</sup> The context of Elisabeth's merits closer examination. First, although the text does not make explicit either the location or the audience of this performance, the liturgical context of most of the visions locates it in the monastery, probably together with the mixed community of Schönaue. Second, although this preaching was felt within the scope of Elisabeth's pastoral obligation as *magistra* of the convent, the text declares that an inspired discourse pervaded her, which could be explained by the presence of the community of monks to whom she preached, including the abbot of Schönaue. Third, that the words she utters follow a prophetic-apocalyptic rhetoric, of the same mode of preaching

82 Clark, "Introduction", 8–13. Also, J. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2006, 25–44.

83 On "editorial reshaping", see Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 104–105 and Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, 31, which speaks of two phases of composition, "an original early version and a later expansion". See also, Clark, "Introduction", 7–20.

84 Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 104–105.

85 Clark, "Introduction", 133.

86 Clark, "Introduction", 14.

I defined in the case of Hildegard.<sup>87</sup> These characteristics go beyond the ordinary charisma of Elisabeth as *magistra*, placing her among the prophetesses whose word could be published. It is precisely this characteristic that enabled abbot Hildelin to preach Elisabeth's visions, just as she describes in her first letter to Hildegard.<sup>88</sup>

Additionally, in the prologue that opens the *Liber secundus*, Eckbert is obliged to justify Elisabeth's authority through her capacity to prophesy ("prophetarent"), later establishing a genealogy of biblical holy women ("mulieres sancte... *Olda, Debora, Judith, Jahel, er huiusmodi*") culminating with his sister.<sup>89</sup> This resource concentrates on a process of dissemination that moves from in-house writing to what can not be preached to an external audience. And this requires understanding the revelations within the female prophetic tradition and justifying their authority through grace. In fact, the *Liber viarum Dei* is constructed from a series of sermons transcribed by Eckbert (each of them marked in one of the manuscripts with the heading "*Predigt*"<sup>90</sup>) that were given by Elisabeth in different situations and spaces (in bed,<sup>91</sup> during the *officium divinum*,<sup>92</sup> during community prayer in the chapter house,<sup>93</sup> or during the Mass<sup>94</sup>). Somehow, this explicit form has its roots in the "homiletic disposition" of Hildegard's *Scivias* which, according to Kienzle, "resemble[s] the contemporary sermon in content as in form."<sup>95</sup> As we shall see, each of these preachings is consciously written as a possible and desired public reading to be performed by certain prelates outside the monastery. On the other hand, the text does not describe in detail the situation that generated the revelation but focuses on the words spoken by "the angel

87 Clark, "Introduction", 14–15, on the expansion of the *Liber primus* made by Eckbert in which he added the visions of Elisabeth up to 1154, where she also "describes her sense of prophetic commissioning".

88 Clark, "Introduction", 15.

89 *Die Visionen*, 40. *Die Werke der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönau*, P. Dinzelbacher (ed.), 11: 1, p. 48. Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 88, also indicates Eckbert in the mutation of Elisabeth's visionary role to an oracular one from 1155 and expresses it as a step in the "liturgy based vision" (that is to say, reducing it considerably, a vision triggered by a liturgical chant) towards Elisabeth as "prophet".

90 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vindob. Pal., Ms 488 (*apud* Clark, "Introduction", 37).

91 Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 167 and 203.

92 Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 172 and 205.

93 Clark, "Introduction", 187, 201 and 202.

94 Clark, "Introduction", 184, 195, and 200.

95 Kienzle, *Hildegard von Bingen*, 39–40.

of God" through Elisabeth's mouth. It is therefore not possible to confirm that all these pieces were performed in public.

Nonetheless, it be should assumed that her community was present during certain passages, at least in those in which an audience that asks her questions to convey to the angel who speaks through her mouth is mentioned. In all these cases, it is possible to detect an intra-conventual preaching, whose audience is made up of the monks and nuns of Schönau.<sup>96</sup> These ten sermons have a very similar prophetic tone, probably inspired by Hildegard, and also found in some of the letters written to her about the Cathar problem.<sup>97</sup> This "apocalypticism", as McGinn terms it, undoubtedly prepares the text of the sermons in the *Liber viarum Dei* to be received by an external audience, one that begins with the archbishops of Trier, Cologne, and Mainz, to whom the book was presented so that they could preach in the name of the prophetess of Schönau to the whole church.<sup>98</sup>

Beyond the always complicated conformation of revealed texts, there are various aspects in which the visions of Elisabeth and Hildegard diverge, and which help the understanding of the connection between the former and Juana. For my purpose here, one of the essential differences between these visionaries is the central role played by liturgical celebration in Elisabeth's visionary experience. As Heinzer states:

It is beyond doubt that the Hildegardian concepts of vision and liturgy are different from or even contrary to those of Elisabeth, for whom the traditional repertory, with its strongly biblically rooted texts, act as a canonically established, "objective" reference for Christologically oriented visions.<sup>99</sup>

Heinzer concludes this comparative reflection with a concise statement that encapsulates the differing relationship between revelation and liturgy of both visionary women: "in one case [Elisabeth], liturgy produces vision, and in the other [Hildegard] vision produces liturgy."<sup>100</sup> In effect, the innovative character of Hildegard identified by Heinzer contrasts with Elisabeth's more traditional approach of following the liturgy as specified in the Benedictine rule

96 This is seen clearly in Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 202.

97 See above, 130.

98 Clark, "Introduction", 16–17.

99 Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 104.

100 Ibidem. On an earlier page (97) he claimed: "it is all the more interesting to observe a complete lack of influence exerted by institutional liturgy on Hildegard's visionary experience, in contrast with Elisabeth."

as a source for her visions.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the function that the liturgy plays as a framework and inspiration for Elisabeth, together with the communal method of recording them in writing (surely two aspects of the same monastic reality), is a fundamental aspect of the line I seek to trace towards the Castile of the beginning of the sixteenth century.

It is easy to see that, with perhaps one exception,<sup>102</sup> there is no allusion in *Scivias* to a ritual framework surrounding the visions Hildegard received, something that is unthinkable in the case of Elisabeth or Juana. There are clear contextual reasons that explain this. In the performances of both Elisabeth and Juana, the causes of the vision are very specific elements of communal celebration (certain texts of the Mass or the *officium divinum*), which tend to be made explicit at the beginning of each of the visions. In the *Conorte*, in particular, the gospel or the epistle of the day read in the Mass constitutes the basis on which Juana develops her preaching. In this context, the celebration of the Mass and the office are central to understanding both the form and the content of the revelations of both religious, because they contain triggering elements for the vision and what is revealed in turn represents a gloss on the celebration itself.

The liturgical genesis of the vision is already evident in the structure of both treatises. It is not by chance that the *Liber visionum* (above all, its first book) and the *Conorte* are structured according to the feasts of the liturgical cycle, because the visions arise within this context and address themes that are based on liturgical content. The text of both works is segmented and framed by a specific timeline. These indications serve two functions: they are clear temporal markers and they perform the role of links between celebration and revelation. In Elisabeth's *Liber visionum*, the segmentation allows the collected visions to be dated exactly, in such a way that this work of Elisabeth can be read as a kind of "spiritual diary".<sup>103</sup>

101 This does not invalidate the hypothesis of Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 105, for whom the liturgical allusions found in the texts of the *Liber visionum* could have resulted from the interference of Eckbert who wanted to present the visions of Elizabeth as those of an exemplary Benedictine nun who lived in conformity with the tradition.

102 As Victoria Cirlot has pointed out to me, in the sixth vision of the second part of *Scivias* (Hildegardis Bingensis, *Scivias*, 229–306), Hildegard sees liturgical ritual, the eucharist, precisely in its invisibility. The vision refers to the foundation of the original Mass (*Urmesse*, that is to say, Ecclesia collecting the blood of Christ in the chalice) and how this is repeated in the Mass celebrated by the priest.

103 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 31. See also, *Die Visionen*, 1–87, and J. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators*, Columbia University Press, 2006, 14.

This characteristic dating can be extended to the rest of her work and differs from the structure of the texts produced at Cubas de la Sagra. As I demonstrated in the second chapter, the references to the feast days in the *Conorte* are not dated to a specific day or year. Rather the temporal information is used as part of a cyclical structure that allows the preaching of various years to be brought together and organized.<sup>104</sup> Various more-or-less-fragmentary sermons are fitted together and amalgamated in chapters dedicated to specific celebrations to form the final collection. This creates an order that allows the *Conorte* to be used later, on these feasts, perhaps in the form of devotional reading for the community (in the refectory, for instance) or as a text for private meditation. In this sense, the liturgy in the *Conorte* involves a textual organization, a macrostructure without specific spatial-temporal references, compared with the chronological-spiritual progression involved in the *Liber visionum*.

Despite these differences, the use of the liturgical cycle is fundamental in both books, as it not only structures the collection but also orients its interpretation. Take, for instance, the following case from the start of the *Liber visionum*, a section that, was written almost in its entirety by Eckbert. According to him, Elisabeth was accustomed to experience:

Frequenter enim et quasi ex consuetudine *in diebus dominicis aliisque festivitibus, circa horas in quibus maxime fidelium fervet devotio*, cecidit super eam passio quedam precordium, et anxiosa est vehementer, tendemque velut exanimis, ita et nullus aliquando in ea halitus aut vitalis motus sentiri potuisset.<sup>105</sup>

[Frequently and indeed as if by habit *on Sundays and other feast days, around the hours in which the devotion of the faithful was especially inflamed*, a certain affliction of the heart came over her and she was violently disturbed. Finally, she became as still as if she were dead. Sometimes this happened in such a way that no breath or vital movement could be detected in her.]<sup>106</sup>

It is no accident that Eckbert underlines here the “Sundays and other feast days” [*in diebus dominicis aliisque festivitibus*] as the usual context for Elisabeth’s raptures, as a few lines below he relates certain key moments in the

104 See above, 101ff.

105 *Die Visionen*, 2.

106 Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 41.



liturgical celebration with the beginning of the ecstasy, which made its presence felt through physical pain (in the earlier case “*super eam passio quedam precordium*”).<sup>107</sup> In fact, the liturgical anchoring of almost all of the visions of the three books begins by placing them in the context of a specific celebration describing, on occasions, Elisabeth as part of a group or performing some act of devotion within this context.<sup>108</sup> As Heinzer rightly expresses in the case of the *magistra* of Schönaue: “The matrix of this kind of visionary experience is constituted by monastic community life, and more particularly by monastic liturgy.”<sup>109</sup>

For example, the first vision of the *Liber visionum* opens: “*Factum est in die sancto Pentecosten, convenientibus ad dominicam cenam sororibus.*” [On the holy day of the Pentecost, when the sisters were gathering for the Eucharist].<sup>110</sup> These words make it possible to locate the occurrence of this vision to 18 May 1152 and, moreover, it presents the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire as a “figure” of the first of Elisabeth’s raptures narrated in the book. The participation in a key moment of the ritual (“*ad dominicam cenam*”, that is to say, during the Eucharist) suggests the vision is part of the collective (“*sororibus*”), identifying the trigger of the ecstasy and contextualising the content of the later vision. These elements underline the vision as it is shaped by a liturgical framework in which it arose, before we can carry out a correct hermeneutics of the text.

Similar processes of textualization can be inferred in Juana’s case. María Evangelista was likely the main person responsible for guiding the final redaction, playing a role similar to that of Eckbert. Furthermore, the specific liturgical context is found not only in various passages of *Vida y fin*,<sup>111</sup> but can also be gleaned from the text of certain sermons. For instance, the sermon on the Epiphany opens:

Hablando el Señor en aquella voz sobre la fiesta de la adoración que los tres reyes magos le hicieron, dijo que estando él encerrado en el seno del Padre, en este mismo día que él habló y declaró las cosas y misterios

107 *Die Visionen*, 5.

108 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, 54. For example, the vision of the first Book is located in the vigil of the feast of St. John the Baptist, where it is described amid the celebration of the divine office, while fifty psalms are repeated and “certain prayers in praise of that venerable precursor of the Lord” (Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönaue*, 50–51).

109 Heinzer, “Unequal Twins”, 89–90.

110 *Die Visionen*, 4; Elisabeth von Schönaue, *The Complete Works*, 44.

111 For example, 26r/v, where the context of the Mass and the hearing of the *Gloria* trigger the vision.

siguientes, oyó antes del día las voces de las tortolillas que subían delante su trono real, que son las voces de los que cantaban con limpieza de corazón los maitines antes del alba, diciendo y haciendo memoria de cómo aquellos Santos Reyes vinieron de tan luengas tierras a le adorar...<sup>112</sup>

[Speaking with that voice about the feast of the adoration that the three kings celebrated for him, the Lord said that while he was enclosed in the bosom of the Father on the same day that he spoke and declared the following things and mysteries, he had heard before daybreak the voices of the turtledoves that ascended in front of his royal throne. They were the voices of those who sang matins before dawn with purity of heart, saying and remembering how those Holy Kings came from such distant lands to adore and seek him out and to offer him their gifts...]

The context that underlies this incipit should be imagined in the following way: the voice of the narrator expresses the discourse that will be uttered on the Epiphany in the third person, speaking of “the Lord” (the second person of the Trinity, the Son), who “[h]ablando... *en aquella voz*”—that is, temporarily embodied in the abbess—comments on the Epiphany. However, before doing so, the voice declares that before dawn (“*antes del día... [durante] los maitines antes del alba*”), being “*en el seno del Padre*” (that is, Christ being one with the Trinity) he heard “*las voces de las tortolillas*” which ascended to him in the heavens. These songs of the turtledoves (that is, the Franciscan tertiaries of Santa María de Cubas) combined with the reference to the “*maitines del alba*” provide a clear allusion to the liturgy of the Epiphany and place the vision that is about to be narrated in the context of communal worship. Juana’s preaching is inspired by and channels the adoration of the Three Kings, as this is the liturgical celebration of the day.

As it can be observed at the start of the sermons dedicated to Holy Wednesday or that dedicated to the “gospel of the Good Shepherd”, the *Conorte* contains numerous similar examples.<sup>113</sup> The main element that lends homogeneity

112 The start of the sermon on the Epiphany is acephalous, as the Vatican manuscript has a lacuna of 42r–72v. I transcribe here the El Escorial manuscript (41r), which is edited in *Conorte* 1999, 313. This passage has been analysed in a similar sense by Curto, “Juana de la Cruz y la música”, 87–118, 97–98. For Epiphany in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, see *Vida y fin*, 110v–113v.

113 “*Que, como se celebre e cantase la Pasión, según cuenta el santo evangelista en este día del miércoles santo, las voces y cánticos de los que con devoción y compasión de lo que él padeció cantaban, subían delante del trono real de la Santísima Trinidad así como humo de incienso...*” [While the Pasion was celebrated and sung on this day, Holy Wednesday,

to the collection of sermons of Santa María de Cubas is the presentation of the narrative from the perspective of the “Señor”, which gives pre-eminence to his written voice and not to the causes of the rapture. This written scene-setting, narrated through the primacy of “*aquella voz*”, blurs the communitarian context that is more present in the case of Elisabeth. The following piece, dedicated to the Visitation, repeats the mention of the “*tortolillas*” (that is, the community that sings) and makes explicit that the “Señor” is commenting on a very specific text of the liturgy, the epistle of the day:

Y otra vez hablando el Señor sobre la fiesta de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora dijo, declarando algunos pasos y puntos de la epístola que se canta en este mismo día y fiestas, que aquellas palabras que dicen ahí: *¡Ahé! Este viene saltando por los montes y dando saltos por los collados* (CC 2,8), se entiende por nuestro redentor, el cual saltó y descendió del cielo y vino por los montes de este mundo y por los collados de las tribulaciones y persecuciones y trabajos [...]

Y dijo el Señor que como en este mismo día de la santa Visitación que él habló y declaró los misterios y secretos susodichos oyese en su santo reino las voces de las tortolillas que cantaban en la tierra, haciendo memoria de la humildad y mansedumbre de nuestra Señora, diciendo: *Levantóse María y fue con gran prisa a la montaña de Judea* (Lucas 1,39) a visitar a Santa Isabel, su prima.<sup>114</sup>

---

in the manner told by the holy Gospel, the voices and songs of all those who sang with devotion and compassion for what he suffered rose in front of the royal throne of the Holy Trinity like the smoke of incense...]. This image is found only in the El Escorial manuscript, 144r, which corresponds to *Conorte* 1999, 634, as the Vatican manuscript has another redaction, see 265v–266r. A different example: “*Y hablando el Señor otra vez sobre el Evangelio que cuenta el evangelista San Juan, el cual dice que el buen pastor conoce a sus ovejas y sus ovejas lo conocen a él* (= Jn 10,14, *Ego sum pastor bonus: et cognosco meas, et cognoscunt me meae*), *dijo que como este domingo cantasen en la tierra este santo evangelio, fueron oídas las voces de los que con devoción le cantaban y decían, en el reino celestial*” [And the Lord spoke another time about the Gospel as told by the evangelist Saint John which says I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me (= Jn 10,14, *Ego sum pastor bonus: et cognosco meas, et cognoscunt me meae*). He said how, on the Sunday on earth this holy Gospel was sung, the voices of those who with devotion sang and recited it were heard in the celestial kingdom], Vatican manuscript, 312v–313r; *Conorte* 1999, 720.

114 I present the start of the sermon followed by a text that reiterates the image that is found some lines later: see Vatican manuscript, 430v and 431r/v, which correspond to *Conorte* 1999, 936 and 940, respectively.

[And another time the Lord, speaking about the feast of the Visitation of Our Lady and declaring some of the epistle's passages and points that are sung during that day and feast, said that those words which are spoken here: *Behold, he cometh Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping over the hills* (Song of Sg. 2,8), refer to our Redeemer, who leapt and descended from heaven and arrived through the mountains of this world and through the hills of tribulations, persecutions, and labours (...)]

And the Lord said that on that same day of the holy Visitation that he spoke and declared the aforementioned mysteries and secrets, he heard in his holy kingdom the voices of the turtledoves that were singing on earth in memory of the humility and meekness of our Lady. They were saying: *And Mary rising up in those days, went to the hill country* (Luke 1,39) to visit Saint Elizabeth, her cousin.]

This passage is textualized through reported speech, which, in essence, prevents direct access to the specific “steps and points of the epistle” that the “Señor” was “explaining”. “Declarar” means according the *Tesoro* of Covarrubias: “*manifesta[ndo] lo que de suyo estaba oculto obscuro y no entendido*” [revealing what was by its nature hidden, obscure, and not understood].<sup>115</sup> In fact, the passage relates only to the epistle with “*¡Ahé! Este viene saltando por los montes y dando saltos por los collados*”, which is none other than a translation into Castilian of a verse taken from the Song of Songs (2,8: “*Ecce iste venit, saliens in montibus, transiliens colles*”). This, in turn, is the basis of a responsory that is sung that same day, which could also be the main intertext to which this passage refers.<sup>116</sup> Later, preceding the allusion to the “*tortolillas*” who sing it, a phrase is mentioned that could refer to an antiphon or a responsorial verse that is sung in the *Visitatio Mariae* that is based on Luke 1,39–40 (“*Levántose María y fue con gran prisa a la montaña de Judea a visitar a Santa Isabel, su prima*” = “*Exsurgens autem Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione in civitatem Juda et introivit in domum Zachariae et salutavit Elizabeth alleluia*”).<sup>117</sup> As I will show in the fourth chapter, the use of liturgical texts in the vernacular as commentary through the voice of Christ on the text read in the Mass or during

115 Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 300, s. v. “declarar”.

116 Cantus ID 600715, *Cantus: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant – Inventories of Chant Sources*. Directed by D. Lacoste (2011–), T. Bailey (1997–2010), and R. Steiner (1987–1996). Web developer, J. Koláček (2011–). Available from <<https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/>>. [Accessed: 14/07/2023].

117 *Breviarium toletanum*, 337v.

the office is a constant feature of the *Conorte*, and proof not only of a liturgical anchoring of the vision, but also that the vision and its development were caused and motivated by it.

Returning to the *Liber visionum* of Elisabeth, it is interesting to note that the allusions to the cause of the vision mentioned above are focused on elements she experienced during her participation in the communal chanting, without (at least in the text) “physical” supports for the meditation (in particular, images).<sup>118</sup> This is evident, for example, in a vision experienced on “Good Friday, during the divine office”, where in principle she saw only the crucified Christ, accompanied by his mother and John the Evangelist, until the following occurred:

Deinde post modicum tempus ceperunt fratres officium diei celebrare, e cum processissent usque ad lectionem passionis, cepi agonizare et artari supra omnem modum [...] Tandem autem in extasim veniens vidi iterum dominum in cruce...<sup>119</sup>

[Then, after a while, the brothers began to celebrate the office of the day, and when they had reached as far as the reading of the Passion, I began to suffer and be oppressed beyond all measure in such a way that I could not speak to anyone. (...) Finally, however, coming into ecstasy, I saw again the Lord on the cross...] <sup>120</sup>

The visionary ecstasy and later description of the suffering of the crucified Christ and his companions is given by the reading of the Gospel of the day (“*ad lectionem passionis*”). The textualization of the sermon, the “*predication fiction*” as Zieleman would call it, opts to develop a scene in which the monks of Elisabeth’s double monastery are described as celebrants of the office. In the case of Juana and the *Conorte* it is harder to distinguish a clear cause-and-effect between her direct participation in the liturgy and the onset of her ecstasy. This difficulty arises because all contextual description is neutralized in the text in favour of the establishment of the voice of Christ, as a result we are not given a clear liturgical context in which we can visualize Juana preaching in ecstasy. In fact, we do not even know at what time of day the preaching took place. Logically, we might think that the ecstasy occurred at some point during the liturgy of the word during the Mass and, perhaps, after the reading

<sup>118</sup> Heinzer, “Unequal Twins”, 89.

<sup>119</sup> *Die Visionen*, 24.

<sup>120</sup> Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, 74.

of the gospel, the abbess glossed through the voice of Christ. The gospel read on Septuagesima Sunday, the parable of the workers in the vineyard, illustrates this point:

Y otra vez hablando el Señor sobre el evangelio que se canta en el domingo de la Septuagésima, el cual dice *Semejante es el reino de los cielos al hombre padre de compañías que salió de madrugada [a] alquilar peones para que fuesen a cavar en su viña* (Mateo 20,1). Y por este padre de compañías se entiende el Padre celestial, Padre de las lumbres, Padre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Padre de los Ángeles, Padre de las gentes y de todas las cosas que hizo y ordenó.<sup>121</sup>

[And another time the Lord was speaking about the gospel that is sung on Septuagesima Sunday, which says *For the kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard* (Matthew 20,1). And for this *householder* one understands the Father in heaven, Father of Light, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of the Angels, Father of the nations and of all things that he made and ordained.]<sup>122</sup>

Here again the cause-and-effect (liturgy-rapture) is not evident in the text, but the presence of the liturgical commentary of the gospel “that is sung” on Septuagesima Sunday suggests a clear interdependence between the ritual and the contents of the ecstasy. As in the previous passage, Christ’s first words (“*por este padre de compañías se entiende...*”) about the biblical text imply an interpretation of it.

A second example in Elisabeth’s case, also from the first book of the *Liber visionum*, is once again illustrative in this respect and will allow me to connect the topic of visionary preaching with commentary on the Bible through the liturgy. During the first vespers on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, Elisabeth falls into ecstasy and watches them descend, filled with light and followed by the Virgin Mary. She welcomes each of them with a brief address. To Peter, she says: “*Tu es pastor ovium princeps apostolorum tibi traditae sunt claves regni caelorum*” (“You are the shepherd of the sheep, prince of the apostles, etc.”) and to Paul, in turn: “*Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi,*

121 Vatican manuscript, 152r; Conorte 1999, 444; *Breviarium toletanum*, 57r. S. Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collection from Late Medieval England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 236.

122 Elisabeth von Schönaue, *The Complete Works*, 74.

*fidem servavi*" ("I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith", 11 Tim 4,7). This episode (not the vision as presented in the book) ends with Elisabeth emerging from rapture: "*Cunque reversi essent in regionem luminis, ego ab extasi respiravi*" ("When they had turned back to the region of light, I recovered from ecstasy").<sup>123</sup> Neither phrase is accidental, as they both allude to texts of two antiphons that her community was singing or would have already sung during the liturgy of the day. Here, then, there is an interpenetration between the visionary world described in the *Liber* of Elisabeth and the liturgical uses of her community. The chants cause the vision, which is later narrated, thus codifying in a written form a kind of gloss on the liturgy of the day. As a textual community, the nuns of Schönau were undoubtedly capable of decoding correctly the words of their *magistra*. The textualized experience of both visionaries corresponds exactly to what Emmelius has called "*liturgische Vision*" (liturgical vision), in her study of the revelations of Mechthild von Hackeborn.<sup>124</sup>

What are the exegetical implications of the genesis of the liturgical vision? I think there are two very clear ones. First, in basing her visions on the traditional monastic liturgy (which, as Heinzer claims, has a repertoire that is "strongly biblically rooted"), Elisabeth makes an indirect biblical commentary. However, she distances herself from a scholastic methodology, which is replaced by a visionary performance. In fact, by explicitly situating her experiences in a specific feast and alluding, as Juana does, to verses,<sup>125</sup> psalms,<sup>126</sup> sequences,<sup>127</sup> antiphons,<sup>128</sup> and the readings of specific days,<sup>129</sup> she lays the foundations for the correct interpretation of her text. The second implication is the exegetic aspect of the visionary commentary united with the liturgical dimension that I have already indicated. This is the biggest difference between the works of Elisabeth (and, by extension, of Juana) and Hildegard. The liturgical anchoring of Elisabeth is omnipresent, as it is in the *Conorte*. This has a very specific scope, as the context in which the vision is produced is highlighted, underlining at the same time its exegetic status regarding certain passages.<sup>130</sup>

123 *Die Visionen*, 9; Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 52.

124 Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 167–169.

125 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 47.

126 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 44–45.

127 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 50.

128 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 52, 65.

129 Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 64, 100.

130 The gospel readings of the day, for example, Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 64 and 100.



In this respect, the liturgical vision is always exegesis and, as exegesis, is understood by a textual community that can easily be expanded to other monastic communities that understand the relations established between the ritual tradition and the new revelation. Thus, the material collected marks the genesis of the vision at a certain point of the liturgical cycle, not only because it arose during a specific celebration but also because it is commented upon and can be treasured by the community as part of its heritage, because it has been acquired through an act of collective worship.

#### 4 Mechthild von Hackeborn and Communal Writing

Actually, the use of official liturgy, especially chant texts, as a framework for personal meditation, and even mystical and visionary contemplation, is a tendency that can be observed frequently in the 13th and 14th centuries, especially in the milieu of Cistercian and Dominican nunneries. Although Elisabeth [von Schönau] thus seems to foreshadow mystics like Gertrude of Helfta, Mechthild of Hackeborn, or the protagonists of the Dominican *Schwesternbücher*, there is nonetheless a significant difference between the Schönau Benedictine and most other German mystics of subsequent generations: Elisabeth's complete silence about a possible mystical dialogue that her visionary encounters with Christ might have produced.<sup>131</sup>

Two informations from this passage by Heinzer are of particular interest for the comparative study of the *Conorte*. The first is that the tradition of the liturgical vision originates with a Benedictine monastic core, starting with Elisabeth von Schönau and crystallizing in the following century in various contexts, of which he indicates two: the monastery of Helfta and the so-called Dominican *Schwesternbücher*. In fact, as Barbara Newman claims building on the earlier work of Clark, there are surely material indications that make it possible to maintain that Elisabeth's work "provided an important generic model" for the Cistercian community of Helfta, some of whose nuns were involved in the creation of Mechthild's *Liber specialis gratiae*.<sup>132</sup> The second fact is that one of the main characteristics of the evolution of the liturgical

<sup>131</sup> Heinzer, "Unequal Twins", 107.

<sup>132</sup> B. Newman, "Introduction", in Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, B. Newman (trans.), New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2017, 10. On literacy at Helfta, see U. Wiethaus, "Collaborative Literacy and the Spiritual Education

vision is that, as it was represented by Helfta, the apocalyptic forms and subjects that were central of the preaching of Hildegard and Elisabeth have disappeared, and the vision assumes a Christocentrism that was fundamental to Catholic spirituality from the thirteenth century. Both transformations are essential for understanding the forms adopted by a sermon book as late as that of the *Conorte*.

Presenting the work of Mechthild in a few lines is a difficult task, as her *Liber specialis gratiae* is undoubtedly one of the most influential works in the European spiritual tradition, as reflected in the intense circulation of manuscripts (that still lack a critical edition).<sup>133</sup> The spiritual *milieu* of Helfta, where three of the great mystics of the thirteenth century lived together, Gertrude the Great, 1256–1301/1302, author of the *Legatus divinae pietatis*; Mechthild von Magdeburg, c. 1207–1282, a beguine turned nun and author of *Das fliessende Licht der Gottheit*, and Mechthild von Hackeborn, produced a series of visionary treatises whose complex interrelations at the level of genesis, influence, theology, and imagery continue to attract critical scholarly attention.<sup>134</sup> Despite

---

of Nuns at Helfta”, in *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O’Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, 27–46.

- 133 Mechthild von Hackeborn, *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechthildianae*, Paris, Henricum Oudin, 1877, VIII–XI. On the European dissemination, see R. Voaden, “Mechthild of Hackeborn”, in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition* (c. 1000–1500), A. Minnis and R. Voaden (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 442–445. On the manuscripts and vernacularization into Romance languages of the *Liber spiritualis gratiae*, see P. Bertini Malgarini and U. Vignuzzi, “Matilde a Helfta, Melchiade in Umbria (e oltre): un antico volgarizzamento umbro del *Liber specialis gratiae*”, in L. Leonardi and P. Trifone (eds.), *Dire l’ineffabile. Caterina da Siena e il linguaggio della mistica*, Firenze, Edizioni del Galuzzo/SISMEL, 291–307. At the Iberian level, see T. Martínez Romero, “*De les revelacions de Santa Melchides*, a Partial Translation of Mechthild von Hackeborn’s *Liber Specialis Gratiae*”, *Aevum* 91 (2), 2017, 585–610, who has discovered a partial Catalan translation of the *Liber*, titled *Les revelacions de Santa Melchides*. See also, E. Hellgart, “Latin and the vernacular: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Gertrude of Helfta”, in E. Andersen, H. Lähnemann and A. Simon (eds.), *A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 131–155.

- 134 The bibliography is extensive: for a concise exposition on the monastery of Helfta, see M. Schmidt, “Mechthild de Hackeborn”, in *Dictionnaire d’espiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, M. Villier (ed.), Vol. 10. Paris, Beauchesne, 1937. On the intellectual environment of the monastery with regard to the interreferentiality of the works that were written there, see E. Hellgart, “Latin and the vernacular: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Gertrude of Helfta”, in E. Andersen, H. Lähnemann and A. Simon (eds.), *A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 131–155. In particular, for the circulation of Gertrud of Helfta in the Iberian Peninsula, see J. A. Moleira de Freitas Carvalho, *Gertrudes de Helfta e Espanha*, Porto, Centro de Literatura da Universidade do Porto, 1981.

this prolific production, in this section I will focus only on Mechthild's *Liber* to study its relation with the *Conorte* in two very specific ways. First, the probable direct influence of her revelations both on Juana's preaching and on the methods of composition of her sermon book. In this respect, I am interested in exploring this possible connection as an evolutionary stage in the liturgical vision, which represents very similar topics and theologies (the intercommunication between celestial paradise and the terrestrial world through liturgy and revelation, the vision of the celebrations in heaven, and the fundamental role played by the body of Christ, to name just a few). Second, the transmission of the revealed word in the context of the reception of the community of Helfta, which transcribed Mechthild's liturgical visions, and how this is linked to their communitarian context.<sup>135</sup>

The *Liber specialis gratiae* arose within the distinctive milieu of the Saxon monastery of Helfta, officially Benedictine, but which always maintained links with Cistercian spirituality. In Mechthild's times the community comprised some sixty choir nuns, as well as service provided by *conversi* and *conversae*, as well as the intermittent presence of Dominican confessors and preachers. Both Mechthild and her sisters had a high level of literacy in Latin, fundamental for liturgical practice.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, Mechthild held the position of *cantrix* and was therefore responsible not only for the proper conduct of the rite, but also for other needs, such as the education of her sisters to perform the divine office.<sup>137</sup> The *Liber specialis gratiae* is a "collective project", which was initially intended to be used as monastic reading and in which Gertrude the Great and another, anonymous nun played a fundamental role as scribes.<sup>138</sup> The *Liber* was created

135 On the process of the redaction of the book by various nuns, see M. Hubrath, "The 'Liber specialis gratiae' as a Collective work of Several Nuns", *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 11, 1999.

136 For female monastic literacy, see Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 59–96.

137 The relationship between liturgy and vision in Mechthild's *Liber* has been widely treated. See, for example, Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 157–190 and the bibliography cited there. On liturgy in women's communities as an essential educational and living context, see Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life*, 34. For the role of the liturgy in women's convents in Castile, see Cátedra, *Liturgia, poesía y teatro*.

138 Newman, "Introduction", 1, where she calls it a "collective project". See, also, E. Hellgart, "Latin and the vernacular: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Gertrude of Helfta", in E. Andersen, H. Lähnemann and A. Simon (eds.), *A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, 141, that affirms that the *Liber* "... is structured for a contemporary monastic readership, primarily that of Helfta." The same *Liber* speaks of the two scribes, Mechthild of Hackeborn and the nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, B. Newman (trans.), New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2017, 245–246.

progressively between 1291, the year in which Mechthild became bedridden through illness, and 1298, when she died. It was at this point that the notes of the visions of their *cantrix* taken by the nuns were formalized in a book of five parts, the widely circulated *Redactio brevior*, and the Wolfenbüttel manuscript (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 1003 Helmst.), which is a *unicum* from the second half of the 14th century structured in seven parts.

To relate Mechthild's visions to those of Juana, it is necessary to leave the thirteenth century to focus again on the period of Cisneros's reform in the Kingdom of Castile.<sup>139</sup> This is where a fundamental event for the formation of the first generation of female visionaries known in the Iberian Peninsula took place: Cardinal Cisneros printed a group of books that constitute an important corpus of material, not only because he commissioned translations of essential texts by what McGinn described as the women of the "flowering of mysticism", but also because those texts coincided with the concerns of contemporary secular spiritual movements on the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>140</sup> A list of these publications, which includes only those linked with women religious, is as follows:<sup>141</sup>

1. *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino: in quo ostenditur nobis vera via qua possumus sequi vestigia nostri redemptoris*, Toleti, [successor of Pedro Hagenbach] iussu Francisci Ximenez archiepiscopi, 18 Aprilis "1055" [= 1505], which also includes Mechthild von Hackeborn, *Liber spiritualis gratiae* and Francesco d'Assisi, *Regula prima*.
2. *Libro dela bien aventurada sancta Angela de Fulgino: enel qual se nos muestra la verdadera carrera para seguir las pisadas de nuestro redemptor y maestro Jesu christo*, Toledo, [successor of Pedro Hagenbach] by order of Fray Francisco Ximenez, 24 May 1510, which also includes Chiara d'Assisi, *Prima Regula* and Vicent Ferrer, *Tratado de la vida e instrucción espiritual*.
3. Raimondo da Capua, *La vida de la bien aventurada sancta Caterina de Sena trasladada de latin en castellano. Y la vida dela bien aventurada soror*

139 On the relationship between Mechthild and Juana, see M. V. Curto, "Trompetas, órganos y vihuelas: Ecos de Helfta en la espiritualidad castellana de los siglos XV–XVI", in *eHumanista. Journal of Iberian Studies* 56 (2023), 94–110.

140 On Cisneros's publishing activity, see F. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos. El umbral de Renacimiento*, Madrid, Cátedra, 2012, 832–839.

141 This list is already found in Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, 57–58. Three interrelated articles study the different versions and the circulation of these books in Castile: Acosta-García, "Santas y marcadas"; "On Manuscripts, Prints and Blessed Transformations: Caterina da Siena's *Legenda maior* as a Model of Sainthood in Premodern Castile", *Religions* 11, 33, 2020, and "Women Prophets for a New World: Angela of Foligno, 'Living Saints', and the Religious Reform Movement in Cardinal Cisneros' Castile", in M. Morás, R. Sanmartín, and K. Yonsoo (eds.), *Exemplarity and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, Leiden, Brill, 2020, 136–162.

*Joana de orbieto: y de soror Margarita de castello*, trans. Antonio de la Peña, at the university of Alcalá de Henares, Arnao Guillen de Brocar by order of the Cardinal of Spain, 1511.

4. *Obra delas epistolas y oraciones de la bien aventurada virgen sancta catharina de sena de la orden delos predicadores: Las quales fueron traduzidas del toscano en nuestra lengua castellana por mandado del muy Illustre y Reverendissimo señor el Cardenal despaña Arçobispo dela sancta yglesia de Toledo*, Alcalá de Henares, Arna[o] Guillen de Brocar, 22 November 1512.

Among these texts, there is an essential volume for understanding the model of sanctity that made a mark on the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz from 1508: the Latin edition of 1505 that combined Angela de Foligno's *Liber*, the *Liber specialis gratiae* of Mechthild von Hackeborn in the previously mentioned *Redactio brevior*, and the *Regula prima* of Francesco d'Assisi, published in that order.

The compilation structure of this volume reveals the intentions of the "propagandistic" phrase of the reform of Cardinal Cisneros. This miscellany includes two texts linked to a very specific vision of Observant Franciscanism, between which the *Liber* of the nun of Helfta is placed. First, the *Liber Lelle*, that is, the *Book of Little Angela*, referring to Angela da Foligno, a quasi-spiritual Franciscan of the end of the thirteenth century who shared the penitential ideals of the third order with Juana's community. Second, the first attempt to formalize the Franciscan order through a rule, written by Francesco d'Assisi himself, the *Regula prima* or *Non bullata*. Both works point to the desire to return to the original purity of the order by reclaiming foundational texts of the first generations of Franciscans.

As I have studied elsewhere, the version of the *Liber Lelle* that Cisneros had printed in Latin and translated later into Castilian in 1510 is characteristic of his reformist use of these texts. It is a Latin version based on what Ludger Thier and Abele Calufetti classified as "third family", that is the third branch of manuscripts of Angela's book.<sup>142</sup> This manuscript transmission was produced and disseminated late in the north of Europe in communities influenced by the ideals of the *Devotio moderna*. They differ from the narrative framework of the "second family" in that the contents are reorganized as a book of meditations. This may appear to be a purely philological question, but it must be considered to take it into account in order to establish the model of reformed sanctity promoted by Cisneros in Juana's time.

<sup>142</sup> L. Thier and A. Calufetti, *Il Libro della Beata Angela da Foligno*, Roma, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata, 1985, 51–67.

The main manuscript tradition of the *Liber Lelle* (Thier and Calufetti's "second family"), presents Angela as a simple Franciscan tertiary who is beset by visions in her daily life, which were later collected by a Franciscan friar. In contrast, in Iberian lands it was the "third family" (defined by Romana Guarnieri "*la tradizione profetico-scatologica*", the prophetic-scatological tradition) circulated.<sup>143</sup> This transformation was effected through a "cleaning" of materials and a later reconfiguration of the text contained in the "second family", to organize the materials according to a series of "thematic clusters". In this, every chapter constitutes a revelation that can be used as reading or meditation. The "third family", then, removes work from its genesis in a pilgrimage of villagers from Foligno who went to worship at the tomb of Francesco, the later cry of Angela in front of a stained-glass window, and the intermittent dictation collected by "brother A", to organize it instead by groups of different numbers of revelations. Therefore, the *Liber Lelle* that was twice printed in Castile reflects, more than the primitive idiosyncrasy of Angela's book, the traits of a "closed" treatise of revelations such as the *Liber specialis gratiae*.

From the perspective of the promoters of the Castilian religious reform, the shift implied by moving from the *Liber* of Angela, a tertiary of the second Franciscan generation, to the *Liber* of Mechthild, a Benedictine nun, together in a single volume, could well imply a vindication of the most radical measure of the Cisneros reform: the transition from the tertiary state to monastic life. In other words, the book of 1505 is structured as a kind of invitation to religious reform, proposing a clear model of prophetic-visionary leadership. Having reached this point, the question arises: could there be bridges between the *Liber specialis gratiae* and the *Conorte* in relation to the liturgical vision? In the Fifth Book of Mechthild's *Liber*, in Newman's excellent translation, we read:

She poured forth teaching in such abundance that no one like her has ever arisen in our monastery, and alas! we fear that we will never see her like again. The sisters gathered around her from all sides to hear God's words as if she were a preacher [*velut praedicatorum*]. She was the refuge and comforter of all [...] Both religious and laypeople came to her from far away, saying they had never so much consolation from anyone else.<sup>144</sup>

143 R. Guarnieri, "Santa Angela? Angela, Ubertino e lo spiritualismo francescano. Prime ipotesi sulla 'Peroratio'", in *Angèle de Foligno. Le dossier*, G. Barone and J. Dalarun (eds.), Rome, École française de Rome, 1999, 224–225.

144 Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, 221. I propose the English translation here for reasons of reading agility, but I have always checked the

There are various elements in common with Juana's community that it would be worthwhile highlighting in this extract, but it is important to remain with two closely related points. First, the importance given to the teaching of the revealed knowledge through the world of Mechthild, because the text compares her with a kind of charismatic preacher ("*velut praedicatorem*") for her community. Second, the widening of her audience to people outside the monastery. This twin approach in communicating visionary knowledge shared within the walls, which is then extended to a wider public ("*religiosi e seculares*"), is a characteristic that derives from the prophetic charisma that I examined above. It is the inspired fame of the visionary that impels an audience to travel to the monastery. This movement of an external public *towards* the source of revealed knowledge contrasts, to a certain extent, with the public speech of both Hildegard and Elisabeth, whose revelations tended to be externalized within the monastic milieu, as apocalyptic sermons. In the cases of Elisabeth, Mechthild, and Juana, but, in principle, not for Hildegard, their experience takes place during the liturgy and is thus defined as group-based, typically communal. Moreover, in Juana's case the liturgy probably occurred in a place in the religious house that allowed the presence of an external audience. In any event, in each of these examples, an individual revelation is soon adopted by the community and, from there, extends beyond the walls of the monastery through the prophetic word.

In this respect, the collective is at the heart of the question of the transmission of revealed knowledge: "*in nostro cenobio ... ut timeamus surrectura erit*". In the second chapter I demonstrated how it is precisely the collective character of the conventual performance that leads to the ordering and the re-creation of Juana's preaching in written form as being a group process. The same occurs in the case of Mechthild and her community. As Margarete Hubrath showed years ago, it is necessary to read the *Liber specialis gratiae* through a kind of "collective turn".<sup>145</sup> This affects not only our understanding of the function of this work for the textual community of the monastery of Helfta, but also that of the collective authorship of these works. This is precisely what Kirakosian has recently termed "the Helfta phenomenon", placing emphasis on

---

version that was most likely read by Juana and her sisters, which is to say the Cisneros printing of 1505: *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulginio: in quo ostenditur nobis vera via qua possumus sequi vestigia nostri redemptoris*, Toleti, [successor of Pedro Hagenbach] iussu Francisci Ximenez archiepiscopi, 18 Aprilis "1055" [= 1505], CLVV–CLVI.

145 Hubrath, "The 'Liber specialis gratiae'", 233–244.



“the inherently collective nature of monastic text production”, which, at least in this case, is “intergenerational”.<sup>146</sup>

I believe that when we speak of the *Conorte* it is fundamental to pose the same question that Hubrath poses for Mechthild and her *Liber*: “Is it really Mechthild, an individual sister, who stands in the centre of this text, or is it rather the convent that deserves our attention?”<sup>147</sup> Whether intracommunity or audience, the reply is evident: the teachings of Mechthild (and, by extension, those of Juana) are given in a context in which they act as mediators between the divinity and this world. However, surrounding each of them and their revealed work, are their respective communities, which gather the discourse, transform it in various ways, and transfer it into written material, giving it its definitive form. Thus, when returning to reading the sermons of the *Conorte*, it is necessary to remember that, in terms of its “authorship”, we should also adhere to the title of the article by Hubrath that I have just cited, in which he defined the *Liber specialis gratiae* as a “collective work by several nuns”.<sup>148</sup> This anchoring suggests a particular viewpoint regarding how certain nun-transcribers, representing their community, craft their own “*predication fiction*”, in a specific form which could be coined as “*revelation fiction*”. This entails transforming firsthand ecstatic experiences into textual form, incorporating the contents of the revelation at its core. In this sense, Juana’s audience (or a core of it) has fixed the performance in a written way, and it is only through the text that we can access it today.

Nevertheless, I believe it is essential to widen the idea of the collective to analyse the *Libro* of Juana and thereby understand the similarities between two works so distant in time. The first step is to go beyond the simplification that is suggested by claiming that her visionary preaching and the sermons collected in the *Conorte* were shaped after one or more readings of Mechthild’s *Liber* and her subsequent imitation of it, which implies that similar practices were textualized in a similar way. In the first place, we should ask which is more important for our perception of the *Conorte*: that Juana had read the Latin *princeps* of the *Liber* (or received an indirect transmission of it) or that the sisters who took charge of the redaction of passages and the edition of the collection had knowledge of it. The first option would involve, at the very least, a thematic

146 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 12–13.

147 Hubrath, “The ‘*Liber specialis gratiae*’”, 243. These questions on the individual-community interaction in the Middle Ages are those articulated by Fulton and Holsinger, *History in the Comic Mode: Medieval Communities and the Matter of Person*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2007, a *Festschrift* for Carolyn Walker Bynum, which articulates these concepts drawing on her own thinking. See, in particular, 1–17.

148 Hubrath, “The ‘*Liber specialis gratiae*’”, 233–244.

inspiration that would not only affect the discourse reflected in the sermons but also the prior performance, how the abbess presented herself as she received the revelation. The second would affect both the redaction and the final edition of the collection structured around the liturgical cycle. In any event, even if the idea of the influence of the work coming from Helfta on the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz seems undeniable, the idea of imitation needs to be nuanced.

Moreover, if a tradition of the liturgical-visionary sermon can be traced, it should be accepted that mere literary influence is not sufficient to understand a phenomenon as complex in its breadth. In both books, an underlying series of practices and forms is evident, ultimately codified in different times and contexts. These two texts are developed from similar processes of communal writing that emerge in response to a ritual presided over by the rapture of a charismatic in the midst of the collective.<sup>149</sup> The notion of literary influence must be widened to certain common historical practices that could make it possible for the *Liber specialis gratiae* to fit into the practices of Juana's community. That is to say, for the effective imitation of a visionary model to occur that also involved the community of Cubas de la Sagra, pre-existing structures and dynamics that informed the development of this tradition would have to be present. The framework of the liturgy, then, provides this ritual, collective, and shared structure for both communities, thus enabling us to identify comparable elements between the texts of both visionaries.

Two of these elements, one internal to the texts and the other external to them, are fundamental to this framework. The external element coincides in both cases: the first part of the *Liber specialis gratiae* and the totality of the *Conorte* are ordered according to the sequence of the liturgical cycle.<sup>150</sup> As I showed in the previous chapter, in Juana's case this system of "empty boxes" enabled a compilation of sermons to be articulated based on the feasts on which they had been preached, even though these corresponded to different years. Examining how the sermon cycle is organized presents a first step towards considering the potential influence of Mechthild's *Liber* on Juana's *Conorte*. Unusually, both collections begin on the feast of the Annunciation (25 March), jump in the next chapter to the feast of the Nativity (25 December) and then run through the whole cycle once in an orderly way until Advent (unlike the structure of the "visionary diary" of Elisabeth von Schönau's *Liber*

149 Graña Cid has already addressed collective authorship in the *Conorte*, "Encarnar la palabra", 597.

150 An organizing structure that depends on the liturgical cycle features in most of the works produced in Helfta, for example, the *Legatus divinae pietatis* of Gertrud von Helfta (Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 20).

*visionum*).<sup>151</sup> Beginning both books with the feast of the Annunciation can be explained by the desire to structure the internal narrative by starting with the Incarnation of Christ in the womb of his mother which ended, cyclically, with his Advent. On the other hand, the fundamental point to note is that both collections adopt the cyclical potential of the liturgy to organize their revealed material.<sup>152</sup>

As scholars such as Anna Harrison, Clare Taylor Jones, and Emmelius have highlighted, the majority of the Helfta visions start from the framework of the prayer of the divine office or the Mass, which is to say, from the collective framework of liturgical celebration.<sup>153</sup> As Harrison claims of certain visions of Gertrude of Helfta in her *Exercitia spiritualia*: “The particular words the nuns heard or chanted during liturgical observances also triggered visions. Such revelations are sometimes vivid visual manifestations of the nuns’ verbal declamations of devotion, and they are illustrations (and confirmations) of the efficacy of communal song.”<sup>154</sup> Harrison supported this idea with the following examples:

As the sisters processed to chapel singing the responsory *Vidi Dominum facie ad faciem*, the Lord showed his face to Gertrude. When Mechthild sang the verse *Ora pro populo*, Mary got up from her throne, genuflected, and prayed for the congregation, and as the sisters made mention of each choir of saints, each did as Mary had done, offering on bended knee a prayer to Christ on behalf of the nuns. To the holiest sisters—as the *Herald* and the *Book of Special Grace* relate—the language of the liturgy was

151 *Breviarium Toletanum*, 11 begins, as would be expected, “In adventu Domini”.

152 This narrative is indicated by Newman, “Introduction”, 37.

153 Emmelius, “Mäntel der Seele”, 157–190. As Harrison has shown: “the relationship between the Helfta nuns’ sense of self in relation to God and their sense of community” is fundamental for understanding the dynamic of revelation and textualization found in Helfta. “I consider the nuns’ understanding of the relationship between an individual’s subjective religious experience and formal prescribed communal worship [...] My concern throughout is not, therefore, on the liturgy per se or liturgy as practice. It is, instead, about liturgy as context, as place and moment where experience occurs.” A. Harrison, “I am Wholly Your Own’: Liturgical Piety and Community among the Nuns of Helfta”, *Church History* 78, 3 (Sept. 2009), 551. For her part, C. T. Jones, “Hostia jubilationis: Psalm Citation, Eucharistic Prayer, and Mystical Union in Gertrude of Helfta’s *Exercitia spiritualia*”, *Speculum* 89, 4 (October 2014), 1012, claims in the context of Gertrude’s *Exercitia spiritualia*: “Liturgical singers became so familiar with the performance of the daily ritual that they could complete it correctly with only minimal attention. This is, of course, why Gertrude could meditate so elaborately during the offices without disrupting the flow of the service”. Beyond the Helfta context, see Jones, *Ruling the Spirit*, 76–85, with multiple examples.

154 Harrison, “I am Wholly Your Own’”, 561.

an object of limitless fascination and a regular source of thought about the saints, the self, and even the institutional history of religious orders and their place in salvation history.<sup>155</sup>

What implications does this perspective have for the *Liber specialis gratiae*? In principle, we could sum up the textual functioning of Mechthild's *Liber primus* in three steps. First, the feast on which the revelation occurred is chronologically located, sometimes in relation to the activity of the nuns of the monastery; second, it is in this framework that the vision is triggered by some element of the ritual; and third, the exegesis of the feast is made in visionary mode.<sup>156</sup> It is a movement which goes from the collective ritual (the liturgical chant) to the individual (the vision of the mediator of the group), to return again to the collective (the textualization of the vision by the community, including its exegesis).<sup>157</sup> This is no coincidence: in fact, it is very similar to what occurs in the *Conorte* and also concerns both the collective dimension of the labour of transcription and compilation of Juana's book and its main function, which is liturgical exegesis. Having reaffirmed the collective basis of both texts, the possible influence of the *Liber specialis gratiae* on that of Cubas de la Sagra, and the role played by the liturgy in each of them, I will now compare the works of both visionaries, so as to identify connections between the relationship between revelation and visionary preaching (understood in a wide sense) from a diachronic perspective. To do this, I will use the first sermon with which each collection opens, which, as I have said, shares the same topic: the Annunciation.

The 1877 edition of Mechthild's book by the monks of Solesmes opens with a brief hagiographic section that declares that God gave her "not only spiritual and gratuitous grace, but also natural gifts such as knowledge (*scientia*), understanding (*intellectu*), literary skill (*litteratura*), and a very musical voice

<sup>155</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>156</sup> For a detailed commentary on this exegetic function of the vision in Mechthild's *Liber*, see C. Emmelius, "Rhyming Prose – bridal songs of the soul – sound metaphors. Dimensions of musicality in Mechthild's 'Fließendes Licht der Gottheit'", in R. Wenzel, L. Wuidar and K. Wimmer (eds.), *Mystique, langage, musique: dire l'indicible au Moyen Âge*, Wiesbaden, Reichert Verlag, 2019, 195–217. On 201, Emmelius states: "Monastic visions often take place during and are triggered by the liturgy of the hours." In Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, 201–202 and 211–212 this function is easily detected.

<sup>157</sup> Kirakosian, *From the Material*, 3, understands it in this way in the context of Gertrude von Helfta's *Legatus divinae pietatis*.

(*vocis sonoritate*).<sup>158</sup> This list of Mechthild's qualities as *cantrix* is maintained in the Cisneros edition of 1505, apart from an omission caused by the *redactio brevior* on which the 1505 printing was based, which removed any reference to Mechthild's literacy (*litteratura*).<sup>159</sup> In the context of Cisneros's promotion of a model of female, prophetic, and illiterate leadership in support of religious reform, this omission places (or at least holds in an ambiguous terrain) the nun of Helfta alongside the models of sanctity disseminated about Angela (1505 and 1510) and Caterina da Siena (1511 and 1512).<sup>160</sup> In fact, the first revelation is then immediately introduced "*per circulum anni et sanctis quibusdam, et specialiter de virgine beata*" [throughout the circle of the year and on certain saints, and especially about the blessed virgin],<sup>161</sup> which corresponds, as I have said, with the day of the Annunciation:

Anuntiationis Dominice die, Christi ancilla posita in oratione, cum peccata sua in amaritudine anime recogitaret, vidit se vestita cinerino indumento. Incidit etiam menti eius verbum illud: "erit iustitia cingulum lumborum eius" (Isa 11,5). Cepitque cogitare quid factura esset cum Dominus majestatis, iustitia accinctus, veniret in potestate sue divine impotentie, eo per tam negligens fuisset; quia quanto homo sanctior est coram Deo, tanto se reputat inferiorem omnibus et vilior, et quo mundior est conscientia a peccato, eo plus timet et precauet ne Dei incurrat

158 M. von Hacketborn, *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechthildianae*, Paris, Henricum Oudin, 1877.

159 This is not a voluntary omission, but part of the manuscript tradition in which the printed versions are based, namely that of the *Redactio brevior*. In all the codices of this redaction this word is absent, compared with its appearance in the so-called "Wofenbüttel Manuscript" in 3v ("in litte[er]atu[r]a", see its digitalization at <https://diglib.hab.de/?d-b=mss&list=ms&id=1003-helmst>).

160 The question of Latin literacy in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz has been tackled by Graña Cid, "Encarnar la palabra", 581–617, who finds indications in the *Conorte*, the *LC*, and *Vida y fin* that could lead one to think of the handling of this language to various degrees, at least by various religious of the community (see 75, n. 11). On the other hand, the liturgy constituted one of the main forms of educating religious women in the Middle Ages: see E. Schlotheuber, "Doctrina privata", 31–48; S. Boynton, "Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education", in G. Ferzoco and C. Muessig (eds.), *Medieval Monastic Education*, London/New York, Leicester University Press, 2000, 7–21. For a state of the field survey centred on the education of medieval women religious (with a specific focus on Dominican religious), see Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life*, 43–55.

161 *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino*, LXXIIIr–LXXIIIv.

offensam. Cumque in tali persisteret contritione, vidit Dominum Iesum in solio sublimi sedentem.<sup>162</sup>

[On the Feast of the Annunciation, while Christ's virgin was praying and meditating on her sins in bitterness of soul, she saw herself clothed in an ashen garment. There came to her mind the verse: "And justice shall be a girdle for his loins" (Isa 11,5). She began to think what would become of her when the Lord of majesty, girded with justice, came in the power of his divine might, since she had been so negligent. For the holier a person is in God's eyes, the more she thinks herself inferior and worse than all; and the purer the conscience is from sin, the more it fears and guards against offending God. While she remained in this state of contrition, she saw the Lord Jesus sitting on a lofty throne.]<sup>163</sup>

This brief paragraph provides a concise example of the functioning of "*liturgische Vision*" in the context of Helfta, the first signs of which can be found in the *Liber visionum* of Elisabeth von Schönau.<sup>164</sup> In turn, the *Liber primus* of the *Liber specialis gratiae* can be taken as a prototypical beginning. It is characterized by certain elements that are found in most of the revelations in the book. First, the vision is situated liturgically ("On the feast of the Annunciation"), an element that serves not only to frame it, but, as I have already showed in the case of Elisabeth, implies its essential purpose: to perform an exegesis of the liturgy of the day as a commentary revealed by the divinity. Second, the activity of the visionary is carefully delineated as part of a mental process that includes prayer and meditation. This is articulated in a double and symmetrical way: at first it is declared that she "*posita in oratione*" on a particular matter ("*in amaritudine anime*"), which results in triggering a vision and Mechthild's unfolding in it ("*vidit se vestita cinerino indumento*", my emphasis). This manifestation implies the beginning of the narration of an interior process, which is related as a series of causes and effects. The contemplation of the ashen dress is followed by a consideration of a verse of Isaiah (11,5), which gives rise to an exegesis on the verse, culminating in the continuation of the vision ("*vidit dominum Iesum in solio sublimi sedentem*", my emphasis).

162 *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino*, LXXIIIIV. I transcribe the edition of 1505, comparing and following the punctuation of the Solesmes edition.

163 Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, B. Newman (trans.), New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2017, 37.

164 Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 167–169.

In any case, Emmelius adds that the celebration providing context to this passage is not only a frame that temporally locates the vision (which corresponds to a similar situation in the following chapters of the *Liber*), but also constitutes a first orientation on the relationship that the community is establishing between vision and liturgy.<sup>165</sup> That is to say, that the vision which starts from a meditation in a liturgical context, very often on a subject specific to the divine office or the Mass of the day, constitutes a commentary revealed by the divinity, an exegesis of the liturgy itself (*"Liturgieexegese"*),<sup>166</sup> reflecting how Mechthild's experiences passed through the filter of some of her sisters. As Emmelius argues:

Bezugnahmen auf den liturgischen Vollzug des officium divinum, insbesondere markierte intertextuelle Referenzen auf liturgische Gesänge haben im „*Liber specialis gratiae*“ eine explizite zeitliche Strukturierungsfunktion für die Auditionen und Visionen der anima. Dabei sind sie aber keineswegs semantisch entleert bzw. ein zur „formelhaften Exposition“ erstarrter Rahmen, der lediglich den Vollzugszeitpunkt der Offenbarungen angibt. Vielmehr haben Auditionen und Visionen umgekehrt die Funktion, die Liturgie in ihrer heilsgeschichtlichen und brautmystischen Bedeutung sowohl für die Einzelseele als auch für den Konvent zu veranschaulichen, zu konkretisieren und zu explizieren. Die liturgischen Visionen des „*Liber specialis gratiae*“ entstehen somit aus dem zeitlichen Vollzug der Liturgie und verstehen sich zugleich als Liturgieexegese.<sup>167</sup>

[References to the liturgical enactment of the Divine Office, particularly marked intertextual references to liturgical chants, serve an explicit temporal structuring function for the hearings and visions of the soul in the *Liber specialis gratiae*. However, they are by no means semantically

---

165 Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 169: "*Die Datierung im Festkreis bietet einen ersten zeitlichen Orientierungsrahmen für das visionäre Geschehen, das seinerseits noch einmal ganz konkret an die Tagezeiten- und Messliturgie, zumeist an einzelne Verse der liturgischen Gesänge, angebunden wird. Die Visionen des „Liber“ sind somit dem von Dünzelbacher beschriebenen Typ 11 der kontemplativen Vision zuzuordnen, der treffender als ‚liturgische Vision‘ zu bezeichnen wäre.*" [The dating within the liturgical calendar provides an initial temporal framework for the visionary events, which are further anchored quite specifically to the times of day and the liturgy of the Mass, mostly to individual verses of liturgical chants. The visions in the *Liber* can therefore be classified under the type 11 contemplative vision, as described by Dünzelbacher, which would be more accurately termed "liturgical vision."]

166 Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 172.

167 *Ibid.*



emptied or a framework frozen into “formulaic exposition” that merely indicates the time of the revelations. On the contrary, hearings and visions have the function of illustrating, concretizing, and explicating the liturgy in its salvific-historical and mystical significance for both the individual soul and the convent. The liturgical visions of the *Liber specialis gratiae* thus arise from the temporal enactment of the liturgy and simultaneously understand themselves as liturgical exegesis.]

In the case of the *Conorte*, the structure based on the liturgical cycle is essential for the purpose of the work. It is evident in the beginning of each sermon, underscoring the feast on which Juana was preaching. The start of her sermon on the Annunciation reads as follows:

Una vez hablando el Señor sobre el misterio de la su santa Encarnación, dijo que como este tan alto secreto fuese revelado a nuestros primeros padres para remedio y consolación de su caída, ellos lo divulgaron y dijeron a sus hijos, por lo cual se supo de generación en generación. Y viendo los profetas y todas las gentes cómo se tardaba tanto, clamaban los perfectos y decían: “Oh Señor, ¿cuándo vendrás? Rómpanse ya los cielos y venga el deseado de las gentes”. E como una generación se pasaba y otra venía y nunca su deseo se cumplía en principiaba una generación llorando y nunca venía el prometido.<sup>168</sup>

[Once when the Lord was speaking about the mystery of his holy Incarnation, he said that this secret so lofty was manifested to our first parents in order to comfort and console them for their fall, and they revealed it and told it to their children, whereby it was passed down from generation to generation. And seeing the prophets and all the people how long he was taking, the prophets cried out and said, “Oh Lord, when will you come? Let the heavens break open and let he whom the people desire come!”. And the generations came and went, and their desire was never fulfilled.]<sup>169</sup>

Firstly, this is the point at which the cyclical structure of the book is made explicit. While in the El Escorial manuscript the final sermon is dedicated to the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the Vatican manuscript the last

168 The Vatican manuscript is very damaged in its first folios, so I transcribe from the El Escorial codex, 15r (= *Conorte* 1999, 231).

169 Boon and Surtz (eds.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz*, 40.

sermon of the cycle coincides with Advent, in which waiting for the Redeemer is linked with his actual coming in the Annunciation. In this manner the *Conorte's* closes one cycle only to recommence the cyclical structure once again. As in the passage of the *Liber specialis gratiae* that I have just discussed, liturgical anchoring is established in Juana's sermons from the start of each, in particular from their headings. The functions of her sermons are similar to those of Mechthild: a shared exegesis is realized through the communal revelation. That is, that the exegesis comments on the celebration that is being commemorated through the texts heard or sung during the day, while this community at the same time participates in its written formalization. This undoubtedly involves establishing such teaching through selection, redaction, and addenda to the commentary.

On the other hand, the extracts from Juana and Mechthild differ in several important ways. The first is related to the form of presenting what it could be called "revelation fiction", varying Mertens' terminology.<sup>170</sup> In the *Liber specialis gratiae*, the nun of Helfta is portrayed in the third person, above all in certain hagiographic passages that depict Mechthild in rapture in the midst of the liturgical celebration.<sup>171</sup> The *Liber* tends, therefore, to show Mechthild as an external character to whom inner actions and reactions are ascribed, while in Juana's case only the Lord is explicit in the text. Moreover, his presence is manifested only through his voice. The body of the Franciscan abbess, in this respect, disappears in the text, leaving the entire space for the words of Christ and other celestial beings. This elision, where the voice of the Lord is the primary element, is clearly a strategy of authority, which helps to promote the book as revealed text while at the same time avoiding possible accusations of heresy. Or, on the contrary, the disappearance of Juana's body could be read as a radical identification of the abbess as a third *alter Christus*.

Second, it is essential to take into account the work of collective textualization that I have outlined in previous chapters. The compilation and the redaction of the *Conorte* are both marked by processes of group textualization that it could be imagined as complex and stratified. In fact, the textual form that survives can give only a relative account of the performance on which it was based. That is to say, the beginning of the first sermon is formalized in a specific manner, which includes an initial formula relating to the voice of the Lord that is standard in all the texts of the collection and developing, in turn, the exegesis through the glosses. However, this must have been because of a series of editorial (and thus authorial) decisions that prevent a more complex

<sup>170</sup> See above, 110.

<sup>171</sup> Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, 222.

comparison between the performative realities that may underlie the *Liber specialis gratiae* and the *Conorte*. Context and function are similar in both texts: the ritual communality of the liturgy and the commentary upon it, composed in turn by a group. Thus, framed in the celebration of the divine office or the Mass, Mechthild and Juana play the role of mediators between two planes, the celestial and the terrestrial. The revealed words that reach the earth generate a commentary on the liturgical texts through their revelation and, in the case of Juana's preaching, results in a gloss on the Bible. These contents are zealously transcribed by some of the religious of each community and, after a process of redaction, are compiled in a volume that is later venerated as a sacred object.

This mediating role between two planes, celestial and terrestrial, is also highlighted when we examine the imaginary of both visionaries, as both conceive of the celestial paradise as a place in which correspondences abound. It is in the interconnection between the earthly and that heavenly celebrations where a clearer similarity between the two visionaries emerges. In fact, the resonances between Mechthild and Juana are intense when viewed through this lens. To give just one example, in one of the visions of the day of the Annunciation we are told that:

Vidit etiam beatam Virginem dextro latere Filii sui zonam auream trahentem plenam cimbali aureis, per omnes ordines angelorum et choros Sanctorum. Qui angeli tangentes cimbala sonum reddebant mirificum, laudantes Dominum pro anima illa in omnibus donis et gratiis, quas large perfecerat in ipsa.<sup>172</sup>

[She also saw a the blessed Virgin to the right of her Son, carrying a golden girdle full of golden cymbals through all the ranks of angels and the choirs of saints. Touching the cymbals, each one produced a wonderful sound to praise God for that Soul in all the gifts and graces he had amply perfected in her.]<sup>173</sup>

As Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida and María Victoria Curto have highlighted,<sup>174</sup> the imaginary of the celestial celebration in which music, dance, and the banquets

<sup>172</sup> *Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino*, LXXV.

<sup>173</sup> Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, 38.

<sup>174</sup> Sanmartín Bastida, "Juana de la Cruz's Heavenly Banquet: A Utopian Way of Thinking about Food", in T. Botelho, M. Ramalhete Gomes, and J. E. Reis (eds.), *Utopian Foodways: Critical Essays*, Porto, Universidade do Porto, 2019, 221–239 and Curto, "Juana de la Cruz y la música", 87–118.

of saints, angels, and the blessed are centred in the description exploits the correspondence of the central act that causes the vision, which is none other than the celebration of the earthly liturgy. The nexus between the two realms is the visionary—Mechthild or Juana—who opens a way of communication between the microcosmos of the religious house and the celestial world. These representations, therefore, are directly related to the “liturgical vision” as they develop an imaginary which unfolds both during the singing of the divine office and during the mass (antiphons, responsories, sequences, and hymns, in the illustrative list given by Newman).<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that the intensity with which Juana describes the celebrations in Heaven is not comparable to that of Mechthild: in Juana’s sermons, the subject is so significant that it impregnates a large part of her writings, which unfold through detailed descriptions of paradisiacal processions, songs, and dialogues.

This interpretive approach, which views the liturgy as an implicit context, is increasingly being applied to authors of late-medieval European mysticism, even when their liturgical framework is less defined. For example, it is the interpretive key that Veerle Fraeters uses in reading of the ninth vision of Hadewijch van Brabant (ca. 1250), an author whose participation in liturgical ritual had been perhaps more difficult to perceive than the nuns of Helfta because she was traditionally considered to have been a beguine. To begin with, Fraeters’ understanding of the term “vision” within the compilation of Hadewijch is fundamental:

Medieval religious visions are not naïve renderings of spontaneous experiences. Like most thirteenth-century ecstatic visionaries, Hadewijch experienced her raptures within the sacral space of the church and “within” the words and rituals of the liturgy in which she participated with intense personal devotion. The textual articulation of her ecstatic experiences will therefore reflect this liturgical setting and the practice of meditation in which she was engaged.<sup>176</sup>

The structure that Hadewijch’s visions articulate, according to Fraeters, is similar to the routes I have traced in the cases of Elisabeth, Mechthild, and Juana: it involves a spatial-temporal description, followed by “[a]ttention is drawn inward... inner scenes of her soul”; third, “[w]hat she sees and hears”

<sup>175</sup> Newman, “Introduction”, 17.

<sup>176</sup> V. Fraeters, “Handing on Wisdom and Knowledge in Hadewijch of Brabant’s Book of Visions”, in A. B. Mulder Baker *et al.* (eds.), *Women and Experience in Later Medieval Writing*, Basingstoke, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2009, 154.

is described; and finally, “[s]he is asked by one of the inhabitants whom she has met to interpret... the vision,” which corresponds with the function of the gloss in the sermons of the *Conorte*.<sup>177</sup> The conclusions reached by Fraeters, therefore, are similar to those that Emmelius drew from the “*Liturgieexegese*” practiced at Helfta:

This vision is [...] an alternative form of experiential scriptural exegesis. The various elements comprising the visionary images and phrases point to texts and ideas that were triggered in Hadewijch’s memory and that were in one way or another connected in her mind to that literary text.<sup>178</sup>

Without using the term “liturgical vision”, Fraeters emphasizes here the mediating function between the visionary and her community and hits the nail on the head regarding the function of the text: the book of visions includes a series of liturgical exegeses based on the communal experience of the textualized revelation.<sup>179</sup> In this way, the liturgical vision, an inevitable interpretive key for understanding her revelations in context. The reading of the gospel or the epistle of the day provides Juana with the material for her visionary commentary. The continuous quotes from the Scriptures seem to either structure the discourse or show a network of images or passages interconnected in the liturgical life of the convent. Additionally, the role of Juana’s sisters is fundamental in the transcription and copying, that is, in the written re-creation of the sermon, which definitively points to the idea of multiple authorship.

## 5      **Domenica da Paradiso and the New Prophetic Preaching**

Juana de la Cruz was a *santa viva*. Her preaching, therefore, needs to be framed as a historical phenomenon that made a strong impact in Castile.<sup>180</sup> As Zarri’s terminology indicates, these women were venerated in their own lifetimes, and they also had a certain political influence through their close ties to the court. In general, their religious activity took place within the context of the Observant reform, thus assimilating these women into a movement that was

<sup>177</sup> Fraeters, “Handing on Wisdom”, 155.

<sup>178</sup> Fraeters, “Handing on Wisdom”, 161.

<sup>179</sup> The liturgical commentary was surely one of the main functions of the marginalia of the Dominican nuns that are found in the surviving liturgical books of Paradis bei Soest, see Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life*, 291.

<sup>180</sup> V. R. M. Dessi, “La prophétie, l’évangile et l’état. La predication en Italie au xv<sup>e</sup> et au début du xvi<sup>e</sup> siècle”, 395–444, especially 409ff.

championed by Cardinal Cisneros, among others, on the Iberian Peninsula. As I showed in the previous section, Cisneros promoted the printing of devotional and hagiographic works that contained the visions, revelations, and *vitae* of some of the great late-medieval European mystics until his death in 1517. Among the models of female sanctity advocated by proponents of religious reform was Caterina da Siena. In fact, in fifteenth-century Castile, at least three women stigmatic leaders were promoted: María de Ajofrín, María de Santo Domingo (the famous “*Beata de Piedrahíta*”), and Juana de la Cruz herself. The figure of Caterina is essential, not only for presenting a form of life that was itself an imitation based on the codification of her *legendae*, but also for the literary example her two dictated works, the *Epistolario* and the *Dialogo della divina provvidenza*, offered for later literature:

[The *Dialogo* is] un libro il quale è di volume di un messale, e questo fece tutto essendo ella (Caterina da Siena) in astrazione perdutti tutti i sentimenti salvo che la lingua. Dio parlava in lei ed ella medesima recitava le parole di Dio Padre dette a lei, en anco le sue medesime, che ella diceva e dimandava a lui.<sup>181</sup>

[(The *Dialogo* is) a book the size of a missal, and she (Caterina da Siena) made it all while being in abstraction, having lost all senses except for language. God spoke in her, and she herself recited the words of God the Father spoken to her, and also her own words, which she spoke and asked of him.]

This quote is taken from the testimony of the notary Cristofano Galgano Giudin. There he refers to dictation “*essendo ella in astrazione*” [being in ecstasy] which Caterina gave to three secretaries and which formed the basis of the *Dialogo*. This represents an example of the textual authority of revelation, through a method of transcription that is valid from the perspective that her revelations were transcribed faithfully, as three “professional” secretaries took down her words almost instantaneously. As can be appreciated, the portrait of Juana’s raptures found both in her first hagiography, *Vida y fin*, and in the attributes that can be extracted from the *Conorte*, suggests that she mediated the divine in a very similar manner by positioning her body between two worlds to channel the voice of the divinity. In contrast with the model provided by

181 Caterina da Siena, *Dialogo della divina provvidenza*, I. Taurisano (ed.), Rome, F. Ferrari, 1947, XIII.

Caterina da Siena, however, is the fact that the methods of transcribing Juana's sermons were considered unreliable by the ecclesiastical authorities.

In this section I will treat the relationship between Juana de la Cruz and one of the fifteen women that Zarri studied in the framework of this political-religious movement in the Italian Peninsula, the Dominican tertiary Domenica Narducci da Paradiso (1473–1573). There are many similarities between these two visionary preachers. Nevertheless, before starting a comparative analysis in depth, I will review the status of women's preaching in the context of the Italian *sante vive*. In doing so, I return to Zarri's distinction between *ex officio* preaching, emanating from the abbess' authority, and prophetic preaching.<sup>182</sup> The entirety of the sermons of the Poor Clares Chiara Bugni (1471–1514),<sup>183</sup> Caterina Vigri (1413–1463),<sup>184</sup> and to those of the Dominican Tommasina Fieschi (c. 1448–1534) can be regarded as addressing pastoral needs.<sup>185</sup> To illustrate one example of this type of preaching, Chiara Bugni, who had the thirteenth-century precedent of Umiltà da Faenza (1226–1310),<sup>186</sup> was one of the few convent preachers *strictu sensu* known in Italy. She shared some hagiographical attributes ascribed to with Juana, such as the source of the authority of her voice—Christ or the Holy Spirit<sup>187</sup>—and also with other texts that we have examined in these pages, such as Hildegard's *Scivias* and Elisabeth's *Liber viarum Dei*. As Catherine Mooney reports, “she fully expected her sermons to be read”, through which her potential and desired audience grew through her writing.<sup>188</sup> In contrast, as non-institutionalized preachers on the Italian Peninsula, we meet Rosa de Viterbo (1235–1252), whose sermons unfortunately have not been preserved,<sup>189</sup>

182 Zarri, “Places and Gestures”.

183 See *La vita e i sermoni di Chiara Bugni Clarissa veneziana (1471–1514)*, R. C. Müller and G. Zarri (eds.), Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011.

184 Caterina De' Vigri, *I Sermoni*, Bologna, Giorgio Barchigiani Editore, 1999; S. Serventi (ed.), *Caterina Vigri. Laudi, Trattati e Lettere*, Firenze, SISMEL, 2000. Her sermons have been studied by Kate E. Bush, *Sorelle mie: The Sermons of Caterina Vigri and Franciscan Observantist Reform*, PhD dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2016. See also K. G. Arthur, *Caterina Vigri and the Poor Clares in Early Modern Ferrara*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam UP, 2018.

185 S. Mostaccio, *Osservanza visuta, osservanza insegnata. La domenicana genovese Tommasina Fieschi e i suoi scritti (1448 ca.–1534)*, Firenze, Leo Olschki, 1999.

186 G. Pozzi and C. Leonardi, *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, Genova, Marietti, 1988, 94–108; C. M. Mooney, “Authority and Inspiration in the vitae and sermons of Humility of Faenza”, in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, 1998, 131, which indicates as antecedents the figures of Chiara da Montefalco (d. 1308) and Cristina da Lucca (d. 1310).

187 Mooney, “Authority and Inspiration”, 136.

188 Mooney, “Authority and Inspiration”, 141.

189 G. Zarri, “Chiara Bugni e Francesco Zorzi suo biografo: Saggio introduttivo”, in R. C. Müller and G. Zarri (eds.), *La Vita e i Sermoni di Chiara Bugni, clarissa veneziana (1471–1514)*,



and Angela da Foligno (1248–1309).<sup>190</sup> Beyond Italy, a similar case to Chiara is the Poor Clare abbess Ursula Haider (1413–1498), who led the community in Valduna and Villingen religious houses.<sup>191</sup>

Chiara's sermons offer a clear example of *ex officio* preaching: the abbess exhorts her community from her deathbed, teaching her sisters about obedience, charity, and humility, all essential topics for the Observant reform. According to Zarri, these words were spoken at a key moment "*in cui le costituzioni del monastero erano ancora in fase di elaborazione*" [in which the monastery's constitutions were still being developed], thus they acquired a quasi-legislative character. Their transcription and later conservation reflects a process of *scrittura comunitaria* that was also typical of the Observant monasteries of the period.<sup>192</sup> This process, which acknowledges the need to create a collective memory through the writing of chronicles and the compilation of the words of the most prominent figures of the community, had a clear resonance in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. However, in comparing Chiara's sermons with those of Juana, the contrast between a sermon collection that is exclusively pastoral in nature with a prophetic one spoken in public is evident. The differences in tone, imagery, and function denote not only different ways of preaching but also their orientation to diverse audiences. In the sermons of Domenica Narducci da Paradiso, who was active between 1500 and 1545, a blend of these two modes of preaching, the pastoral and the

---

Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011, XI–XXXIX. D. Pryds, "Proclaiming Sanctity through Proscribed Acts. The Case of Rose of Viterbo", in B. M. Kienzle and P. J. Walker (eds.), *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, UCP, 1989. See also C. Muessig, "Prophecy and Song Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women", in B. M. Kienzle and P. J. Walker (eds.), *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, London, University of California Press, 1998, 146–158.

190 Carolyn Muessig is studying the figure of the *folignate* as a teacher and a preacher in the context of medieval female preaching. I thank her for her insights in this area.

191 In 1449, Ursula Haider was elected abbess of the religious house that she helped to reform following the Observance. Some of her sermons (*Ansprachen*) are embedded in the monastery's chronicles. They concerned the teaching of a meditation in images to the community, tied to the liturgy. Once again, the fine line between teaching and preaching can be found here. As Roest declares ("Female Preaching", 149–154): "[Ursula] provided the novices and nuns under her care with extensive but concrete meditative exercises divided over the seven liturgical hours, so as to help these women to approach each element of the liturgical office with the right demeanor"

192 Zarri, "Chiara Bugni e Francesco Zorzi", xxxii. See also G. Zarri, "La scrittura monastica", in *Letras en la celda. Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, N. Baranda Leturio and M. del C. Marín Pina. (eds.), Madrid/Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014, 49–64.

public-prophetic, can be found.<sup>193</sup> I will begin by sharing some biographical notes that put her figure into context.<sup>194</sup>

Domenica was born in the Florentine neighbourhood popularly known as *Contrada del Paradiso*.<sup>195</sup> This location was significant for her religious formation as the main Bridgettine convent in Italy was founded there, with which Domenica had a close relationship between 1495 and 1497.<sup>196</sup> After spending a period in 1492 as a *servigiale* nun in the Augustinian monastery of Santa Maria dei Candeli, she returned to her family home where, according to Adriana Valerio, she followed the life of a *bizzoca*, that is to say a woman religious who was not formally attached to any order. In 1499, she was interrogated by the archbishop and some theologians about her stigmata (which she reduced to mere hearsay and warts), her ecstasy "*nelle pubbliche chiese*" [in the public churches], and a subject surely related to these and which appears here for the first time in the documentation—her sermons.<sup>197</sup> Domenica emerged unscathed from the interrogation process, but on various occasions between 1507 and 1542 her confessor had to defend her after she was accused of interpreting the Bible.<sup>198</sup>

From 1504 to 1507, she put herself under the direction of four Observant Dominican friars and on 17 April 1506 she took the habit of a tertiary. Later she founded the convent of "La Crocetta" in a country house outside the city walls which she purchased in 1511 together with some adjacent land.<sup>199</sup> It is

193 Domenica's years of preaching are given by Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxvii. The bibliography on this tertiary is extensive: see, for example, G. Pozzi and C. Leonardi, *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, Genova, Marietti, 1988, 338–345; A. Valerio, "L'altra rivelazione: l'esperienza profetica femminile nei ss. xiv–xvi", in A. Valerio (ed.), *Donna, potere e profezia*, Naples, D'Auria, 1995, 139–162; A. Valerio "Le prediche di Domenica da Paradiso tra esperienza mistica e riforma della chiesa", in R. Librandi and A. Valerio (eds.), *I sermoni di Domenica da Paradiso. Studi e testo critico*, Firenze, SISMEL, 1999, xv–LXXVIII; and I. Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio. La missione di Domenica da Paradiso nella Firenze del primo cinquecento*, Firenze, SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007.

194 For a more detailed biography of Domenica, reconstructed from conventual sources, see Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio*.

195 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xv. A. Valerio, "L'altra rivelazione: l'esperienza profetica femminile nei ss. xiv–xvi", in A. Valerio (ed.), *Donna, potere e profezia*, Naples, D'Auria, 1995, 142.

196 Valerio, "L'altra rivelazione", 139–162, 145–146, informs that Birgitta of Sweden and Caterina da Siena were the principal prophetic models adopted in Italy. She also provides a list of women who since the thirteenth century have prophesized in relation to the Papacy, 147.

197 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xviii–xix.

198 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxvii.

199 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xx–xxii.

here that the group of disciples that had formed around her in was established and, little by little, it grew into a community of tertiaries under archiepiscopal jurisdiction (1515). Her charisma had already attracted disciples during her *bizzoca* period (1492–1499),<sup>200</sup> but it was undoubtedly the stabilization and growth of this community that led to the emergence of a hybrid audience of “*figli spirituali*” [spiritual sons], mainly drawn from the higher ranks of Florentine society, who were attracted to her in search of spiritual advice and instruction.<sup>201</sup> The ten sermons edited by Librandi and Valerio come from this period.<sup>202</sup> To this point, the similarities between two contemporary figures, Domenica and Caterina da Siena, whose spirituality was associated with the mendicants, particularly the third orders, and more specifically, to the Observance from an early date, takes shape. The example of a supposedly ecstatic figure such as Caterina da Siena (and Bridget of Sweden) seems to influence the prophetic character of Domenica’s preaching while in ecstasy.

It is important to inquire into the compilation of Domenica’s sermons to try to understand their transcription and whether “*predication fiction*” played a role in their textualization. I will focus on the ten sermons that are preserved in a single manuscript (manuscript L, Archivio del Monastero della Santa Croce) which is dated to the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>203</sup> At the textual level, two elements are of particular interest here. First, the ordering of the initial fascicle (labelled by the editors as L1), which follows the chronology of the abbess’s preaching from 1515 to 1540.<sup>204</sup> The second (L2) is the accumulation and assembly of various materials into a single manuscript, which includes rewriting, additions, translation from Latin to the vernacular, and the copying of the *substantiae*, to which I referred in the previous chapter, and which also follows a chronological order.<sup>205</sup> Different fascicles survive, which were copied by various hands. The transcribers include Domenica’s confessor, Francesco Onesti, to whom we owe the transcription of the ten sermons of L1.<sup>206</sup> This manuscript is, in short, an artefact that was created at different times, by different people, and following different methods of copy and redaction. As such, it serves as a tangible example highlighting the need to shift the focus

200 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xvii.

201 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxii.

202 This is to say, the sermons from that preached on 29 July 1515 until that of 13 January 1534. On the other hand, the *substantie* have a temporal arc from 1 November 1532 to Good Friday 1540.

203 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, cliii–clvi.

204 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, cliv–clv.

205 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, clxii.

206 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, cli–clvi.

regarding authorship in this type of collective religious text, which is closely tied to performative experiences within religious communities. The surviving manuscripts reveal a complex, collaborative process of textual creation, and thus, the texts should be interpreted accordingly.<sup>207</sup>

As Librandi and Valerio posit, although the exact times of the day when Domenica preached cannot be confirmed, the context of her sermons is clearly a liturgical framework. In fact, on one occasion the tertiary had to replace her confessor in the homilies of *"tutte le feste comandate e le domeniche dell'Avvento e della Quaresima, dalla Settuagesima fino alla Pasqua."* [All the required feasts and Sundays of Advent and Lent, from Septuagesima until Easter.]<sup>208</sup> The liturgical root of the sermons is clear, above all in those that were preached on the gospel of the day, thus incorporating the performance into the daily liturgy, but also in those in which the sermon's topic was based on certain celebrations (Pentecost, Holy Thursday, Epiphany). Despite this, the ordering of the sermons in the extant manuscript is not rooted on an annual cycle, but is chronological, at least until fascicle XVIII.<sup>209</sup>

A tentative classification of these materials should be based, as the editors suggest, on Domenica's audience, as the process of their composition above all considered the recipients. In broad terms, in the ten sermons edited by Librandi and Valerio, distinguish two types of audience can be distinguished: sermons composed exclusively for her community and their confessor (I, II, III, IV, VI, VIII, and X) and sermons in which, together with the nuns, we can infer the presence of an external audience (V, VII, and IX). Among these two groups, one can discern, in turn, Zarri's two types of women's preaching: the pastoral and the prophetic.<sup>210</sup> Without doubt, at least the first four sermons and the tenth correspond to an *ex officio* preaching: they are based on the commentary on the gospel of the day, only the nuns and their confessor are present, and neither form nor content are visionary. Rather, they employ a certain method of composition and allegorical commentary on biblical discourse to convey pastoral aims. This does not reach the rigidity found in Hildegard's *Expositiones* nor, of course, that of scholastic sermons based on the rules proclaimed by

207 Kirakosian, *From the Material*, analyses the vernacular redactions of the *Legatus divinae pietatis* and provides an important discussion of this topic at the theoretical level, from the question of the collective authorship that I discuss in these pages, see 1–27.

208 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, XXXI.

209 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, CLIV–CLV.

210 On Domenica gift of prophecy, see Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio*, 21–23.

the medieval *artes praedicandi*.<sup>211</sup> However, it is true that a certain method in the structure of the commentary can be discerned.<sup>212</sup>

The commentary opens with the pericope (which is transcribed at the start of some of the sermons) and the discourse develops through an allegoresis that progresses step by step through the text and is centred on discovering the *mysterio*, that is to say the hidden meanings of the biblical text. A problem that emerges here is binary distinction of sermons types into pastoral or prophetic. In Domenica's case, the prophetic mode was used not only in front of external audiences but also, as the text declares, before her community. Moreover, there is an ambiguous delimitation between audiences in many instances. This imbalance can be attributed to Domenica's method of composing her sermons, which is tied to monastic meditation, the *lectio*. As Wenzel rightly claims, the difference between a deep understanding of the biblical text between a university student and a monk (in this case, a woman religious) is a question of method:

[T]he student and preacher approached a sacred text, not by meditatively "ruminating" on each word, but by dividing it and pursuing its parts. Both contemplative monks and university scholars pursued the ideal of reaching wisdom, *sapientia*, but—if a pun may be allowed—for monks that lay in savoring (*sapere*) divine truths, whereas the schoolmen fondly declared that "*sapientis est ordinare*" (the mark of a wise man is to put things in order). And the way in which a biblical scholar and *lector* opened up the sacred text was transferred to the work of preaching.<sup>213</sup>

This reference to *lectio* determines the difference between the *sermo modernus* and the preaching of Domenica and, thus, the visionary sermon that I treat in this book.<sup>214</sup> In fact, Valerio had already related the abbess's sapien-

211 On these manuals, see M. G. Briscoe and B. H. Jaye, *Artes praedicandi. Artes orandi*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1992. In a Franciscan context, B. Roest, "*Ne Effluat Multiloquium Et Habeatur Honerosus?*": The Art of Preaching in the Franciscan Tradition", in *Franciscans and Preaching*, T. J. Johnson (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2012, 383–412.

212 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, XL.

213 S. Wenzel, *Medieval Artes praedicandi. A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure*, Toronto/ Buffalo/London, The Medieval Academy of America, 2015, 114. See, in turn, "Domenica da Paradiso", in *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, 12.

214 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, XLVI. Against the detailed structuring of the scholastic sermon based on the *ordinatio* ("*sapientis est ordinare*") are presented the more labile forms of the *sermo monasticus*, an effect of *ruminatio*. Perhaps this grounding in a meditative method also determines the primacy of images in the second. In Cátedra's analysis of the rhetorical resources of Vicent Ferrer's Sermon 7 (published in Cátedra, *Sermón, sociedad y literatura*, 337–353), the structure of the preaching is made explicit from the start (that is, there is an invitation to use mnemonic techniques) and then this structure

tial preaching to the homilies of the origins of the early Church (the *sermon antiquus*), traced through their recuperation by humanists and reformers such as Savonarola as well as the mendicant orders, that sought new modes of interaction with their audiences.<sup>215</sup> The difference in how university students and male and female religious understand wisdom is crucial for this study. This distinction not only highlights two approaches to biblical commentary, which lead to different preaching styles, but also offers insight into one way prophetic sermons are composed. Domenica's example shows a clear process: the monastic practice of *lectio* inspires a vision, which becomes the topic of the sermon. After the sermon is delivered, members of the audience—such as women in the religious community and the abbess's confessor—may write it down. In this way, the case of Domenica can illuminate the textual silences concerning this method in the *Conorte*. In Valerio's words:

Era in qualche modo la ripresa dell'omiletica dei Padri che parlavano Spiritu Sancto edocti, o degli antichi sermoni spirituali, che nascevano dall'esperienza personale, interiore, mistica, lontana della speculazione intellettuale [...] ella, infatti, ritiene di offrire non tanto una conoscenza, quanto piuttosto una intelligenza della fede non fondata su astratte speculazioni, ma su un rapporto diretto con Dio [...] La sue prediche seguono probabilmente la consuetudine monastica della *lectio divina*: ascolto della Scrittura meditata nel suo significato profondo, oggetto di preghiera per giungere all'incontro contemplativo.<sup>216</sup>

[It was somehow a revival of the homiletics of the Fathers who, having been taught by the Holy Spirit, spoke, or of the ancient spiritual sermons, which arose from personal, inner, mystical experience, far from intellectual speculation. (...) Indeed, she believes to offer not so much knowledge, but rather an understanding of faith not based on abstract speculations,

---

is subdivided and expanded (*divisio* and *dilatatio*) through rhetorical resources. The *divisio* "is the unfolding of the true meaning [of the *thema*] through [complete] sentences" (Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi*, 65).

215 On Domenica's relationship with Savonarola and Savonarolan circles, see Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio*, 25–33. On Savonarola, humanistic preaching, and the apocalyptic language of Domenica, see Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxxv–xxxvi. For his influence in Castile, see the essays contained in D. Weinstein, J. Benavent and I. Rodríguez, *La figura de Jerónimo Savonarola y su influencia en España y Europa*, Firenze, SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2004 and J. Benavent, *Savonarola y España*, Madrid, UNED, 2003.

216 Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxxi. Domenica directly knew the homilies of some of the fathers of the Church which, together with the practice of *lectio*—according to Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxxi–xxxvi, made up part of the background to Domenica's preaching.

but on a direct relationship with God. (...) Her sermons probably follow the monastic custom of *lectio divina*: listening to the Scripture meditated upon in its profound meaning, the subject of prayer to reach a contemplative encounter.]

Like most public orators, Domenica must have prepared her discourse beforehand. According to her own preaching, she did this the previous night when meditating on the gospel that she would gloss the following day or on a topic determined by the circumstances. The difference between her and someone with scholastic training is that she meditated on the text or the topic in her cell, asking God to give her the necessary inspiration to develop her discourse: “*Domine, labia mea aperies; apri le labia mia, che annuntino e parlino del Messia el quale è incarnato per noi!*” [“*Domine, labia mea aperies*”—open my lips, that they may announce and speak of the Messiah who is incarnate for us!]<sup>217</sup> Domenica repeats this phrase at the start of most of her mediations, an exhortation for divine grace to descend upon her and *show her* what she should preach. The development of this *lectio* regularly causes a vision that conveys the sermon that she will give the following day. I would argue that the narration of this prior moment and of the vision are included as part of the sermon’s “*predication fiction*” or, in other words, the textualization of her preaching includes the account of the vision as the element that justifies the authority of the biblical-visionary commentary. An example of this type of textualized performance is found at the start of sermon V. Like the rest of the ten sermons edited by Librandi and Valerio, this starts with a paratext that gives the date and other data concerning the audience and the place of the preaching:

Sermone de la venerabile madre sora Domenica fundatrice del suo monasterio di Sancta Croce in Firenze [...] el quale a dì 25 di maggio 1523 fece in ditto monasterio a le sue monache, me Francesco da Castiglione canonico di San Lorenzo di Firenze, e padre spirituale di detta venerabile madre e suo collegio presente a la grate et audiente.<sup>218</sup>

[Sermon by the venerable Mother Sister Domenica, founder of her monastery of Santa Croce in Florence (...) which she delivered on the 25th of May 1523 in said monastery to her nuns, in the presence of me, Francesco da Castiglione, canon of San Lorenzo in Florence, and spiritual father of

<sup>217</sup> Psalms 50,17.

<sup>218</sup> Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 29.



said venerable mother, along with her community, present and attentive at the grate.]

This paratext highlights two essential elements for a comparison between Juana's and Domenica's sermons. The first concerns the testimonial, almost notarial, character of this text. It is contextualized in detail and passes through the masculine authority of the convent's confessor who, on other occasions, declared that he transmits word for word what he has heard from the mouth of the visionary. Moreover, some of the sermons are dictated to the confessor, echoing the role of dictation in Caterina da Siena's *Dialogo*, sometime after they had been performed (in particular, sermons VII, VIII, IX, and X).<sup>219</sup> This contrasts with the method of transcription of the sermons of the *Conorte* which was written by Juana's companions using primarily the words that had been committed to their memory. On the other hand, it is clear that this is a public sermon, as it is attended not only by the nuns and the confessor but also by "*suo collegio presente a la grate et audiente*", undoubtedly referring to the "*figli spirituali*" from outside the convent who came to listen to the preaching. The place in which this took place, very probably the "*grata*" or grille that separates the church from the lower choir, is ideal for contact in cloistered or semi-cloistered environments as it allows an external "listening" public to attend the preaching while the community is present.<sup>220</sup> On this occasion, Domenica delivered her in the church on the third day of the octave of Pentecost, if we pay attention to what is declared in the following passage:

Ultimamente in questa nocte, che è il sicondi dí de la Pentecoste, eromi levata a l'oratione. Chiedevo che mi fussi insegnato quel che io havessi hoggi a dirvi dello Spirito Sancto, e subito io sento fuori de l'uscio della cella murmurio e certi parlamenti; nientedimeno io seguito medesimamente

219 The only sermon provided by the editors that lacks any declaration on the authorship of its transcription is number IV.

220 The exact convent space where Domenica publicly preached remains somewhat unclear. See M. Callahan, "Preaching in a Poor Space: Savonarolan Influence at Sister Domenica's Convent of la Crocetta in Renaissance Florence", in K. A. McIver and C. Stollhans (eds.), *Patronage, Gender, and the Arts in Early Modern Italy. Essays in Honor of Carolyn Valone*, New York, Italica Press, 2015, 227–228. The term "*grata*" could refer either to the grille of the choir or to the parlour; however, a closer reading suggests that charismatic women like Domenica used the parlour for individual guidance, while the choir grate was used for public preaching. In Juana's case, the spatial distinctions made in *Vida y fin* seem to support this interpretation. I extend my thanks to Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli for her insights on this subject. See also Zarri, "Predicatrici e madri spirituali", 170–174 and Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio*, 19. See above, 15, n. 44.

l'oratione. Un'altra volta sento el medesimo: non mi movo. La terza volta io sento similmente murmuio di persone che favellano insieme. Vedendo che nessuno apre l'uscio, neanche picchia, intesi subito che quello era mysterio. Presto apro l'uscio [...] <sup>221</sup>

Recently, in this night, which is the second day of Pentecost, I rose for prayer. I asked to be taught what I should tell you today about the Holy Spirit, and immediately I heard murmuring and certain words outside the door of the cell; nevertheless, I continued with my prayer. Another time I heard the same thing: I didn't move. The third time, I similarly heard murmuring of people speaking together. Seeing that no one opens the door, nor even knocks, I immediately understood that it was a mystery. Quickly, I open the door (...)

Neither the topic of the preaching nor the date on which it was performed are coincidental. In this respect, Juana's visionary prophetism based on the liturgy finds a mirror image in Domenica. After reciting the already mentioned "Domine, labia mea aperies", the "*predication fiction*" takes us back to the previous night, where Domenica represented herself, as on other occasions, at night "*levata a l'oratione*", which is to say in a meditative context (at other times she speaks of "*considerare*" or of "*bella lectione*"<sup>222</sup>) and asking God to give her the grace of speech.

In the edition of the texts by Valerio and Librandi, the visionary sermons share their interpretive structure with those that present the Gospel in a more systematic manner. What is clear from these ten sermons is that Domenica's preaching varied in its "*modalità interpretativa*" over time. It started with a reading based on the four spiritual senses that is used in her first four sermons and, from the sermon preached on 25 May 1523, the visionary element first appears.<sup>223</sup> In any case, in this evolution the allegoresis is always the first priority. Not only are her visions shaped by allegorical characters but the reading that she makes of their actions and discourses is also based on the understanding that there is a literality in the revelation beneath which the deep meaning (which she calls the "*mysterio*"<sup>224</sup>) is hidden. For example, in the case of the vision that I have just cited, after the meditation "*tre bellissimi giovani et uno*

<sup>221</sup> Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 30.

<sup>222</sup> See Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 56.

<sup>223</sup> See Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, XLVI–XLIX for an examination of the use of the Bible in Domenica's preaching.

<sup>224</sup> See, Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 30.

*venerabile vecchio*" [three beautiful young men and one venerable old man] appeared in her cell, who were the three angels that accompanied Abraham. The latter urges Domenica to feed them and she, granting this request, places herself to pray at an altar in the cell. When she asks their names, the angels reply: "*Fede, Speranza e charità: tre vitù, come noi siamo tre angeli*" [Faith, Hope, and Charity: three virtues, as we are three angels] who declare about themselves that they "show mystery" and, later:

"Tu, adunque, o sposa, da che tu desideri fare el sermone de lo Spirito santo a le tue figliuole, et hai chiesto che ti sia insegnato quel che tu habbia a dire, o piglia la materia del sermone da quel che fece Abraham verso gli angeli e da quel che tu hai fatto verso di noi questa notte. Aprirai la bocca tua e dirai: 'Domine labia mea aperies [...]'. El signore adempirà quel che tu chiedi non dubitare: ti sarà dato abundantemente quel che tu habbia a dire". Dicto ch'egl'hebbono queste parole, la visione disparve dagli occhi miei.<sup>225</sup>

[So, my bride, since you desire to give a sermon on the Holy Spirit to your daughters and have asked to be taught what you should say, either take the material for the sermon from that of Abraham towards the angels and from that one that you have done towards us this night. You will open your mouth and say: 'Domine, labia mea aperies (...)'. The Lord will fulfil what you ask, do not doubt: you will be abundantly given what you have to say."] After they had spoken these words, the vision disappeared from my eyes.]

From this point, the sermon focuses precisely on interpreting the passage in Genesis 18 in which Abraham receives three figures outside his tent and invites them to eat. In Domenica's interpretation, these are three angels who end up provoking the miraculous pregnancy of Sarah, Abraham's wife, and whom she interprets through the three allegorical virtues mentioned above.

This sermon in particular is a good example to show us a typical structure in which three narrative levels are superimposed:<sup>226</sup>

1. Paratextual level (which in Genette's narratology corresponds to the extradiegetic level), in which the confessor-transcriber figures, who develops this part in the first person (*ego*) and uses it to highlight the

<sup>225</sup> See, Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 31.

<sup>226</sup> See, Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 45, where this structure is made explicit in the paratext. For these three narrative levels, see Genette, *Figuras III*.

text's fidelity to Domenica's words, the date, the audience before which it was spoken, and occasionally the *thema*. This level is situated at the time of the transcription, making explicit and hierarchizing the "*predication fiction*" that is articulated on two further levels.

2. Narrative level (in Genette's narratology, the intradiegetic level), in which the words of the abbess as actually spoken at the time of the reading are represented. The receivers of the sermon are codified as audience through the vocative and, in the case of sermon v, are the tertiaries themselves ("*Dilette figliole, io desideravo farvi un sermone*").
3. Metanarrative level, which is essential for the prophetic commentary on the biblical passage in which Domenica explains how the previous on night the gospel was read out (or perhaps she read it herself directly)<sup>227</sup> to prepare "*l'orazione e la meditazione*". This meditation, which the abbess used to invoke the divinity with "*Domine, labia mea...*", leads, as in the example quoted, to the appearance of characters in her cell who interact with each other and compose an allegorical message that the abbess comments on during her sermon the following day.

The textualization of Domenica's sermons and those of the *Conorte* are obviously different. In Domenica's case, her preaching is conveyed through a metatextual third person. She narrates herself going back to the origins of the revelation the night before and the biblical commentary is authorized through her visions. The discourse emanates from a meditation that leads to the grace. However, the main difference between Domenica and Juana is that Domenica does not portray herself as an ecstatic. Although her knowledge comes through revelation, she presents herself as calmly conversing with allegorical figures, avoiding the dramatic physical expressions of ecstasy in front of an audience. In Juana's case, although her ecstatic preaching draws on sources similar to those of the "semi-dramatic sermon", her physical presence is absent from the text, and its origins are left unmentioned. Instead, it conveys, with almost brutal immediacy, only the voice that emerged from Juana's mouth. The text itself becomes the vision. Many sermons in the *Conorte* begin with the phrase "*Hablando de nuevo con aquella voz*" [Speaking again with that voice], as the voice of prophecy demands an urgent, present tone. Thus, the textual strategies of authority differ between the two women: paradoxically, Juana's voice implies the presence of Christ within the book, an effect the *Conorte* seek to represent.

---

<sup>227</sup> Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, XLVI.

Returning to the liturgical genesis, it is undeniable that both visionaries were prompted by a very specific occasion that inspired them to articulate their preaching. Domenica is conscious of her obligations as a charismatic abbess, so that she “prepares” what she is going to preach the night before. The following day, she articulates this at an indeterminate moment during or after the divine office or the Mass, at least in those cases with an external audience where the preaching took place “at the grille”.

Two features of the biblical commentary made by both preachers deserve closer attention here. Firstly, Domenica’s preaching does not adopt the affective, evangelical style found in the *Conorte*. Domenica’s evangelical sermons compose a meditation that starts from the pericope and is developed in an organized way, interpreting the elements of the gospel account through the allegorical mode of reading. She herself declares this at the start of “Sermone 1”, of 29 July 1515:

Havendo io detto moltissime volte che tutte le parole del nostro Salvatore sono molto mirabili e molto misteriose dico que molte cose ha detto per parabola e per molte figure e similitudini, acciò che essendo noi agnellini non habbiamo poi alcuna scusa al dì del iudicio.<sup>228</sup>

[Having said many times that all the words of our Savior are very admirable and very mysterious, I say that he has said many things in parables and through many figures and similitudes, so that since we are little lambs, we will not have any excuse on the day of judgment.]

The biblical text is clearly mixed here with a certain eschatological-apocalyptic rhetoric, hence human beings are represented as *lambs* (“agnellini”) and the relationship that is established with the end of the world at the end of the sentence.<sup>229</sup> The biblical words of the gospel are not only *admirable* but also (above all) *mysterious*: parables, figures, likenesses, that is to say, language which should be interpreted through revealed knowledge. The type of affective, theatrical sermons that Juana developed established a clear link with the meditative tradition that came from the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, disseminated in the Iberian Peninsula, at least from 1492.<sup>230</sup> In any case, the method of

<sup>228</sup> See, Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, 3.

<sup>229</sup> For Domenica’s apocalyptic-tinged visions, see Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, xxxv–xxxvi y lv–lvi.

<sup>230</sup> Robinson, *Imagining the Passion*. In this respect, certain parallels are found in the figure and the work of Isabel de Villena that would, however, go beyond the limits of this chapter.

allegorical reading Domenica used in her evangelical sermons also functions for her purely prophetic-visionary sermons.<sup>231</sup> This form of commentary is an element of the liturgical vision. Here, the vision legitimizes the discourse and provides it with a style of commentary linked to allegorical interpretation. In this interpretive sense, the sermons of the *Conorte* and Domenica align: it is within the gloss on the received vision—within what signifies the mystery, the essence of prophecy—that their words find both meaning and purpose.

## 6 Conclusions

All revelation can potentially be communicated through various processes of linguistic codification, whereby effective choice and means of textualization addresses different audiences. With the work of Hildegard von Bingen, I started to explore the extent to which her revelatory speech reaches external audiences. In both the *Protestificatio* of the *Scivias* and in the famous letter to Bernard of Clairvaux, it can be perceived how the fiery light that the abbess received at the age of forty-two is linked from its source to an alternate form of knowledge, enabling the deciphering of the meaning of the Bible without the need to learn the scholastic method. The Holy Scriptures, in Hildegard's case, are interpreted from a wide conception of prophetism that is based in Gregory the Great and which is implicit in the text of the *Conorte*, as a gift that allows the decoding of the hidden meanings. On the other hand, Hildegard's public prophetism (that is to say, her preaching) is framed as "apocalypticism", a biblically inspired language to which the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz was no stranger.

In turn, in the first section, even in the twelfth century, we can observe the presence the dichotomy traced by Zarri, in which medieval women's preaching is divided into two categories: the pastoral, developed in the communal context of the religious house, where the abbess taught through her ordinary charisma, and the prophetic, the only possible avenue for making the abbess's word accessible to a wider audience. For Hildegard and Juana, the word of the preacher starts from the assumption that what is preached is inspired by the divinity.

Although certain basic structures of authority building coincide, it is not in Hildegard's surviving work, but rather in that of her contemporary Elisabeth von Schönau, where it is possible to mark the start of the tradition of the

---

231 On the use of allegory, Librandi and Valerio, *I sermoni*, LIV.

female prophetic sermon such as we find formalized in the *Conorte*, that is to say, in its prophetic-liturgical form. In effect, it is this ritualized and shared-in-community act in which the vision is triggered. This context has two very important implications for a full understanding of the phenomenon. Firstly, the prophet is perceived as a chosen one by the group to which she belongs, as the intimate contact with the divinity takes place in a communal context. Second, the revelation tends to return to the collective framework when it is communicated, memorized, transcribed, copied, and interpreted—that is to say, through intellectual and largely editorial processes, which tend to involve the joint work of various people in the community. This gradual formalization of revelation through collective writing hinders a literal description of the performances that underlie the text, but at the same time it verifies that the revealed material starts from the same root: what Emmelius termed “*liturgische Vision*” in the case of Mechthild von Hackeborn.

Some of the passages analysed in this chapter attest to how Elisabeth’s ecstasies during the liturgy were watched avidly by her sisters, and how is the text implied that it was God’s will that the visionary’s revelations were made known to her community. As occurred later at Helfta, Elisabeth’s words (at least at the start of the *Liber visionum*) primarily functioned as conventual literature. It is in the *Liber viarum Dei* where an apocalyptic prophetism akin to that of Hildegard von Bingen reappears, underscoring the primary purpose of these visions was to be read aloud in public by specific prelates. The main difference between Elisabeth and Hildegard is that which Heinzer pointed out: the liturgical framework is essential to the former because it triggers the vision, which a communal act from the outset. This interrelationship between liturgy and vision is made explicit at certain major feasts in *Vida y fin*:

E hera oír la missa de la yglesia víspera de la Sancta Rresureción, estando en su çelda, la qual estava apartada de la yglesia, quando tocaron las campanas que dezía la *Gloria in exelçis Deo*, hincándose ella de hinojos para dar graçias a Nuestro Señor e adorarle desde allí, oyó los cánticos e çeremonias que se haçían en la sancta Iglesia, e vido a Nuestro Señor Jesuchristo como quando salía del sepulchro, muy hermoso e alegre, e florido e resplandeçiente, e muchedumbre de ángeles çercados de su Real Magestad, que le adoravan e serbían de muchas maneras de servicios, e tañían y cantavan muy dulçemente.<sup>232</sup>

232 *Vida y fin*, 26r.



[And she wanted to hear the Mass in the church on the eve of the Holy Resurrection even though she was in her cell which was away from the church. When the bells that announce the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* sounded, she kneeled down to give thanks to Our Lord and worship him from there and she (could) hear the chants and ceremonies that were being performed in the holy church. She saw Our Lord Jesus Christ as he was when he came out of the sepulcher, very beautiful and joyful and flowery and resplendent, with a multitude of angels near his Royal Majesty who adored him and served him in many ways and played music and sang very sweetly.]

Liturgical practice provokes the ecstatic experience (such as the sight of the host, hearing a responsory, a hymn, or an antiphon), and is, in turn, the primary cause of what Emmelius calls "*Liturgieexegese*", an exegesis of the rite through the language of vision.<sup>233</sup> As can be seen in the brief examples that I have presented here, this method of exegesis is similar to what we find in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz in Juana's time and which, ultimately, involved the community that formalized the text as a result. Thus, the *Liber visionum*, the *Liber specialis gratiae*, the sermons of Domenica da Paradiso, and the *Conorte* were conceived as conventual literature for use in the daily life of the convent.

The *Liber specialis gratiae* is fundamental model for the configuration of the visionary sermon that arrived in Castile; the edition of 1505 (Latin *princeps*) was very probably known in the convent of Cubas de la Sagra. This presents a tangible link between Cardinal Cisneros's reform and the community that devised the *Conorte*. In effect, as abbess Juana seems to have adopted the model of the illiterate prophet that he disseminated for his Observant religious reform. The *Liber specialis gratiae* and the *Conorte* not only share a repetitive structure based on the liturgical cycle, aspects of their imaginary, and the methods of collective composition in which the nuns participated, but also in the form of visionary commentary developed in them. Moreover, the liturgical

233 Jones (*Ruling the Spirit*, 76–77) coins the term "liturgical intertext" in a manner akin to how I use "liturgical anchor" in these pages. Her perspective on liturgical visions in German sisterbooks can also be applied to interpreting the quoted text from *Vida y fin*: "On the one hand, passages from the Office either inspire or explain the sisters' visions. On the other, these texts never have only superficial significance, but rather remain embedded in or refer back to the feasts all come together in a complex interplay of meanings, which bears on points of theological significance or comments on the spiritual state of a given sister from which they are drawn. The feast or the liturgical season, the literal meaning of the quoted text, and the actions or images presented in the vision".

superstructure of both convents provided another probable literary influence that may have fostered the imitation of the model of Mechthild and the compilation of the subsequent visions. At Helfta, Mechthild's visionary charisma also attracted an external audience to the monastery to be in her presence.

Finally, the case of Domenica da Paradiso illustrates a contemporary of Juana who allows entry into the intimacy of her *cella* and the method of composition of her sermons. The textualization of Domenica's sermons was collective, with the nuns playing a fundamental role in it. Yet the process appears to have occurred in a manner more like that of Elisabeth von Schönaue, in which Eckbert, an authoritative masculine figure, plays a fundamental role as a transcriber, rather than to that of Mechthild von Hackeborn or Juana de la Cruz, where the work of their fellow women religious is crucial. In effect, in Juana's case it is various tertiaries of the community who develop the material over years, inserting the sermons that they have recalled from memory within the macrostructure of the liturgical cycle. Hence phenomena such as the amalgam (passages of sermons preached in different years but on the same celebration are fused together textually) define the *Conorte* in contrast to a transcription seemingly far more methodical, such as that of Domenica's confessor who, moreover, structured the transcribed sermons in an organized way. In essence, the primary function of both the manuscript that collates Domenica's sermons and the Vatican manuscript of Juana's sermons is communal, that is to say, to preserve the group identity through the transcription and use of the sermons of a foundational figure of the religious house.

Domenica's *quid* is the monastic practice of *lectio*, which allows her to meditate on the gospel of the following day. For Juana, this commentary on the Bible is justified through the vision and is carried out by glossing allegorically, using a method which brings the hidden meanings of the Scriptures to light. Also, it is possible to identify in Domenica's sermons the dichotomy between *ex officio* and prophetic preaching, which depends on the audience towards which it was directed. Additionally, the *scrittura comunitaria* is in itself a reality that can be verified in a material way in the manuscript edited by Librandi and Valerio, and which had an external audience eager to receive the preaching. These similarities highlight the need for women's Observant communities at the end of the fifteenth century to create a collective memory through writing, constructing their past and preserving the words of their leader. As the codex L, cart., of the archive of the Monastero della Santa Croce shows, the circulation of these transcriptions must also have been limited to within the convent.

To conclude, Domenica da Paradiso's method is based on a *lectio* that results in ecstasy and which serves as the basis for her speech/narration the following

morning. This strategy avoids her revealing herself when in rapture, in contrast to Juana who gesticulated and varied the voices that she adopted depending on what she saw in her vision or on what the various characters whom she encountered said. The presence of the audience in Juana's case indicates that the paradigm of sanctity adopted by the Castilian abbess remained essentially medieval: her ecstasy needs to be seen and consumed by an audience, something that altered with the arrival of the sixteenth century.<sup>234</sup> The specific characteristics of her performance affected how the sermons were textualized. In Domenica's case it is possible to detect how the sermons are constructed in narrative levels, in contrast to the apparent simplicity of "that voice", the voice of the Lord, which guides the sermons contained in the *Conorte*.

---

234 I thank Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli for this idea.

# Liturgical Vision in the *Conorte*

## 1 Introduction: Liturgy and exegesis

“Liturgy, as exegesis and theology, is a system which was designed to explain everything. That system, however, was and remains historically contingent, and to understand it, one must also stand outside it.” (J. F. Hamburger, “The Gradual *Dñ* and the Dominican Liturgy”)<sup>1</sup>

The liturgical life out of which Juana’s preaching emerged is not only the foundation of the *Conorte* but also runs through it. This collective act formed the basis of education for the women religious of her community and impregnated their everyday life, giving a rhythm to their days and imprinting a deep semantic density on their time in relation to the practice of their prayer.<sup>2</sup> As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Juana’s ecstatic preaching forms part of a monastic-conventual tradition that places ritual at its centre. Although it is evident that the texts and subjects of liturgical celebration are omnipresent in the *Conorte*, this context has scarcely been noticed in the interpretation of the sermon book until now. In this fourth and final chapter I will demonstrate the exegetic function that dominates in the sermons, through liturgical anchoring, allusions to images, and texts drawn from the liturgy, specifically drawing from the *Breviarium toletanum*.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the core of the abbess’s prophetic teaching is formed by the texts used in the liturgy, above all by those with biblical roots and others of a homiletic character. The Gospel and the epistle of the day or certain *lectiones*

1 In Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Liturgical Life*, 292.

2 On the perception of liturgical time, see M. Fassler, “The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Medieval Representation of History”, in R. A. Maxwell (ed.), *Representing History 900–1300: Music, Art, History*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2010, 149–172. On the liturgical rite as a context for teaching, see the seminal essay by E. Birge Vitz, “Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages”, in R. B. Begley and J. W. Koterski (eds.), *Medieval Education*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2005, 20–34.

3 For referencing I use the following incunable breviary of the Archdiocese of Toledo, printed at a time close to Juana’s preaching: *Breviarium ad debite persolvendum divinum officium secundum regulam et consuetudinem sanctae ecclesiae Toletanae Hispaniarum metropolitanae*, Impressum Venetiis, p[er] Joan[n]e[m] Ha[m]man, 1492;BNE, Inc/415), henceforth, *Breviarium toletanum*. I thank Eduardo Carrero Santamaría for his help in locating this breviary.

were often the basis of Juana's commentary on the sacred text which, passing through the filters of orality and writing, were fragmented and transmuted. This means that on many occasions it is possible only to partly access the *form* of an exegesis that originated in ecstasy, expressed through vision, and finally determined by the processes of memorization and collective copying that I have sought to reconstruct. The questions that I attempt to answer below include: what is the function of preaching in relation to the daily celebration? What role is played by the biblical texts in the vernacular inserted into each of the sermons? What, in the end, is the relationship between liturgical commentary, biblical exegesis, and prophetic preaching in the *Conorte*?

I will examine, in the first subsection, the interactions of the ritual function of the mass and divine office between the terrestrial and the heavenly realms. This is expressed numerous times in the *Conorte* through an image that by now should be familiar: the image of the voices of the *tortolillas* (turtledoves) whose singing ascends to the celestial realm. This singing provokes a reaction from heaven's inhabitants, whose celebration there mirrors—as a “remembrance” and through visionary forms—the same celebrations of the living. In the second section, I will briefly examine the difficulty that derives from the very *performative* nature of Juana's sermons when it comes to trying to analyse their form and how this affects their interpretation. Finally, I will examine the function of liturgical exegesis (*Liturgieexegese*) in the *Conorte* through three case studies. Nearly all the sermons situate the preaching in specific temporal coordinates, providing clues to their framework of interpretation. These temporal markers are rooted in ritual, thus indicating the liturgical texts that the community chanted and heard during the Mass as intertexts for the sermon, and for developing an imaginary and a specific doctrine. In other words, by situating the biblical-liturgical at the centre of this discourse, the preacher amplified its meaning, revealing its allegorical significations through visionary exegesis.

## 2 Liturgical Anchoring and Exegetic Commentary

Hablando el Señor en aquella voz sobre la fiesta de la adoración que los tres reyes magos le hicieron, dijo que estando él encerrado en el seno del Padre, en este mismo día que él habló y declaró las cosas y misterios siguientes, oyó antes del día las voces de las tortolillas que subían delante su trono real, que son las voces de los que cantaban con limpieza de corazón los maitines antes del alba, diciendo y haciendo memoria de

cómo aquellos Santos Reyes vinieron de tan luengas tierras a le adorar y buscar y ofrecer sus dones.<sup>4</sup>

[Speaking with that voice about the feast of the adoration that the three kings celebrated for him, the Lord said that while he was enclosed in the bosom of the Father on the same day that he spoke and declared the following things and mysteries, he had heard before daybreak the voices of the turtledoves that ascended in front of his royal throne. They were the voices of those who sang matins before dawn with purity of heart, saying and remembering how those Holy Kings came from such distant lands to adore and seek him out and to offer him their gifts.]

Recalling the essential elements of the sermon's opening and extrapolating them to other sections of the *Conorte*, it becomes evident that divine authority is emphasized in two ways. First, it is declared that the words that compose the sermon were spoken not (only) by Juana but by "*el Señor*". The appearance of the syntagm "*aquella voz*" presupposes a prior knowledge, a certain familiarity, with this speech that belongs not to the abbess, but is spoken through her body. In turn, adopting this opening for multiple sermons points to a homogenization of the "*predication fiction*", whereby the voice of Christ dominates over any other aspect of the performance. Secondly, the origin of that voice is explained. At that time, the three persons of the Trinity were together, which the *Conorte* expresses by locating Christ "*encerrado en el seno del Padre*" [enclosed in the bosom of the Father]. Thanks to the later separation, the Son can return to speak in the world, in turn making possible Juana's revelations. The *incipit* thus justifies the authority of the words it contains based on a hierarchical scheme that is established from the very first pages of the book.

At the visual level, the Trinity is represented through a kind of *maiestas domini* before which the earthly singing ascends.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the voice of the devout underpins the votive understanding that Juana and her community had of their role in the Mass and the *officium divinum*, as an open channel of intercommunication between earth and heaven, repeated constantly in the sermons.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as Curto has argued, the chanting in this world connects two

4 El Escorial manuscript, 41v; *Conorte* 1999, 313. See above, 138ff.

5 This visual representation coincides with the iconography contemporary with Juana's preaching. I thank Juan Miguel Valero for this note.

6 See, for example, *Conorte* 1999, 733: "*Y dijo su majestad que como en esta misma semana que se trataba en su santo reino, la fiesta y figuras del santo evangelio de cómo él era pastor bueno y de*

complementary realities, hierarchically separated but mirrored, leading to the festivities and banquets in the celestial realm. These were described aloud by Juana during the preaching, shaping one of the two fundamental blocks in which the sermons of the *Conorte* are usually divided. The external liturgy is thus developed with an interior dimension formalized as vision.<sup>7</sup>

In any case, “*las voces de las tortolillas*” [the voices of the turtledoves] refers not only to the tertiaries of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, but is also widened to the community of the faithful and the priest who officiates the Mass:

Y dijo el Señor que estando él en su trono real, muy triunfante, oyó la voz de la tortolilla que le llamaba en la tierra, conviene a saber, las personas que con amor y fervor y contrición le llaman, y los sacerdotes que le llaman en el sacramento con las palabras de la consagración, que así mismo son figurados por la tortolilla. Porque así como él viene y se está en el santísimo sacramento cada vez que es llamado por los sacerdotes cuando le celebran y consagran, así viene y está, por gracia, en los sus siervos que le llaman con humildad con voz humilde y devota como la de la tortolilla.<sup>8</sup>

---

*cómo había de dar tan grandes galardones a las ovejas de su corral, que acordaron todos los bienaventurados de hacerle muy grandes fiestas y solemnidades, pues él se las había hecho primero a ellos. Y empezaron todos a cantar muy dulces cánticos y melodías, gozándose y alegrándose mucho y dándole las gracias porque había querido y tenido por bien, su divina majestad, de morir y ser crucificado.* [And his majesty said that, in that same week in his holy kingdom, they put on the feast and pageants of the holy Gospel about how he was the good shepherd and how he needed to give such great rewards to the sheep of his fold. All the blessed agreed to put on very great feasts and solemnities for him, as he had first done for them. And they all began to sing very sweet songs and melodies, rejoicing greatly and giving him thanks because his divine majesty had desired and deemed it good to die and be crucified.]

- 7 Curto, “Juana de la Cruz y la música”, 87–118. Bridging the gap in this coexistence of exterior and interior liturgies, certain approaches to the ritual resonate as a form of union with the divinity, as found in the so-called *Arnhem Mystical Sermons*, copied between 1540 and 1570 in the monastery of the canonesses of St. Agnes (see I. Cornet, *The Arnhem Mystical Sermons. Preaching Liturgical Mysticism in the Context of Catholic Reform*, Leiden, Brill, 2018, above all 167–231). Of course, their perspectives on the *unio* are very different from those of the *Conorte*, whose allusion to a state of this type exists only in the suggestion of an “incarnation” of Christ in the body of Juana. As Cornet notes: “the genre of visionary literature is very different from the *Arnhem mystical sermons*, which is deeply rooted in the mystical exegesis of the Scriptures” (230).
- 8 The Vatican manuscript lacks a quire, resulting in a lacuna of the folios 490r–499v. As a result, the sermon on the transfiguration has not been preserved in this version. I therefore transcribe from the El Escorial codex, f. 301r; *Conorte* 1999, 1054. Similar explanations in *Conorte* 1999, 952 and 962.



[And the Lord said while he was triumphantly on his royal throne, he heard the voice of the turtledove that called out to him on the earth, namely, the people who with love and fervour and contrition call him, and the priests who call him in the sacrament with the words of consecration that are likewise figured by the turtledove. Because just as he comes and is present in the blessed sacrament every time that he is called by the priests when they celebrate and consecrate it, he comes and is, through grace, in his servants who call him with humility and with a humble and devout voice like that of the turtledove.]

The turtledove representing the faithful, whose devotion is equal to that of the priest who consecrates the host, also appears in sources similar to the *Conorte*, such as the *Liber specialis gratiae* of Mechthild von Hackeborn, and clearly comes from an interpretation of the image of the Song of Songs 2,12, which evokes the fervour of love expressed in song. It is precisely this verse that forms part of the initial passages that illustrate an example of biblical commentary through inspired preaching:

E otra vez hablando el Señor sobre la fiesta de la Visitación de nuestra Señora dijo, declarando algunos pasos y puntos de la epístola que se canta en este mismo día y fiesta, que aquellas palabras que dicen ¡Ahé! *Este viene saltando por los montes y dando saltos por los collados* (CC 2,8), se entiende por nuestro redentor, que descendió del cielo y vino por los montes de este mundo y por los collados de las tribulaciones y persecuciones y trabajos. Y, así como el que salta no está quedado en un lugar, mas anda a una parte y a otra, así por semejante, nuestro Señor Jesucristo nunca tuvo lugar ni casa propia, ni padeció en un solo lugar y miembro de su sagrado cuerpo, mas en todos los miembros y coyunturas sufrió y padeció infinitos dolores y tormentos y llagas y heridas.<sup>9</sup>

[And another time the Lord, speaking about the feast of the Visitation of Our Lady and explaining some of the epistle's passages and points that are sung during that day's festival, said that those words which are spoken here: *Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills* (Song of Sg. 2,8), refer to our Redeemer, who leapt and descended from heaven and arrived through the mountains of this world and through the hills of tribulations, persecutions, and labours. And just as he that leaps

9 Vatican manuscript, 429v; *Conorte*, 937.

does not stay in one place but walks from one part to another, so similarly, our Lord Jesus Christ never had his own place or house. He did not suffer in a single place and member of his holy body, but rather suffered in all his members and joints and endured infinite pains and torments and wounds and injuries.]

This verse from the *Song of Songs* links the sermon to the celebration of the *Visitatio Beatae Mariae Virginis*, as it is identified with the epistle read during the office of Lauds.<sup>10</sup> The sermon claims that Christ speaking through Juana is “*declarando*”. As I have pointed out on other occasions, the verb “*declarar*” implies an allegorical reading.<sup>11</sup> This step from the literal to the allegorical is one of the fundamental articulations of Juana’s preaching and also one of the main functions of her speech: to decipher through her prophetic charisma the mysterious words of the sacred Scriptures. In the case of the *Song of Songs* this type of exegesis has a very long tradition.<sup>12</sup>

In this context, the text of the sermon implies that the abbess set out to develop an allegorical exegesis during her preaching through “*de algunos pasos y puntos de la epístola*”. The term “*punto*” is also found in the unpublished text that I discussed in the second chapter, which referred to the numerous times that she returned to a specific aspect, passage, or image from the Sacred Scriptures.<sup>13</sup> Allegoresis of specific “points” forms the essential foundation not only of the commentary that Juana makes during her performance, but also of the

10 *Breviarium toletanum*, 337r. The insertion of this sermon dedicated to the *Visitatio* in the liturgical order of the *Conorte* is problematic, because in the Toledo liturgical calendar this feast was traditionally celebrated on 2 July and in the *Conorte* it is placed before the birth of St. John the Baptist, which is 24 June. It has been studied from a theological point of view in M. M. Graña Cid, “Fundamentando la autoría teológica femenina: sobre las hermenéuticas del profetismo en el *Conorte* (s. XVI)”, en *Saber y crear en femenino. Género, cultura y modernidad entre los siglos XVI y XX*, Granada, Comares, 2023, 1–20.

11 See the use of “*así por semejante*” to clarify *ex similitudine* one of the elements of the versicle. It is not for nothing that C. Delcorno (“Medieval Preaching in Italy, 1200–1500”, 476) claims: “All medieval preaching, at whatever level, is dominated by two passions: the passion for similitudes and for incessantly quoting the Bible.” See, also, Cátedra, *Sermón, sociedad y literatura*, 182 and, for the *similitudo*, 188.

12 See A. W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1990. On one hand, the allegorical reading inserted in the sermon without the appearance of having been a later interpretation is a textual trait shared with the *Liber visionum* of Elisabeth von Schönau: “The allegory is interwoven into the description of the vision, and is not presented as later rational reflection upon the vision” (Clark, *Elisabeth von Schönau*, 61). On the other hand, this conception of the deciphering role of the visionary sermon runs parallel to that of her contemporary Domenica da Paradiso, with whom she shared even the terminology related to their interpretive method (“*dichiarazione*”).

13 See 86ff.

memory of her tertiaries. The first thing that we should note in this passage is the opening statement of a “*punto*” (“¡*Ahé! Este viene saltando por los montes y dando saltos por los collados*” [Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills]), which would roughly correspond to the *thema* in a *sermo modernus*, a phrase extracted from the Bible which is analysed as the basis for the development of the sermon.<sup>14</sup> In this case, the “point” comes, from the second chapter of the *Song of Songs*. The phrase, furthermore, is in Castilian, as are all of the multiple biblical quotes that appear inserted in the sermons of the *Conorte*. After several lines that allude to Song of Sg 2,9–11, the text continues:

Que esto [lo declarado anteriormente] dice el Señor, aunque acá los letrados dan otros entendimientos y salidas (?) por el testamento viejo y por el testamento nuevo. Y, por tanto, dice: *Levántate y aquéjate mi amiga, paloma mía* (CC 2,10). Conviene a saber, levántate ánima cristiana y aquéjate a servirme y amarme y creerme y adorarme y a conocerme, y a obedecer y cumplir y guardar mis santos mandamientos. Ven ánima cristiana para el cielo, que *ya pasó el invierno* de las figuraciones y *la pluvia* (CC 2,11) de las semejanzas y venganzas de la ley vieja y ha venido el verano de la claridad que soy yo mismo [...] *Las flores han aparecido en nuestra tierra, el tiempo de podar es venido* (CC 2,12). Conviene a saber, ya he padecido yo la pasión y derramado mi sangre. Yo, que soy el árbol de la vida y de la salud, ya vos he dado y producido mis flores, conviene a saber, yo, que soy el Dios y el dador de la vida, ya he dado mi alma y mi cuerpo y mi corazón y mi sangre y mi vida y mi salud por mi vida y por mi amiga y paloma hermosa, conviene a saber, por cada ánima que yo crie a mi imagen y semejanza. Y, pues yo todo esto he dado y padecido por mi amiga [...] *Que la voz de la tórtola ha sido oída en nuestra tierra* (CC 2,12). Conviene a saber, yo oigo y recibo los clamores y gemidos y suspiros y lágrimas y oraciones y contrición de cualquiera que me llama y se convierte a mí de todo corazón. E no solamente espero y recibo y oigo a cualquier ánima contrita que se viene [...], mas aun yo mismo la llamo, dice el Señor, y le digo: *Levántate y aquéjate, amiga mía, garrida mía, y ven, paloma mía, en los agujeros de la piedra, en la cueva de mi tapia muéstrame tu rostro,*

14 As Wenzel has claimed, *Medieval Artes praedicandi*, 53, from the point of view of the *artes praedicandi* linked to the *sermo modernus*: “Generally, on Sundays and feast days the *thema* should be taken from either the gospel or epistle lection; some *artes* allow the use of material from a Mass text [...], while others speak against it [...]. On saints’ feasts, the *thema* may be taken from the gospel or epistle lection, or from anywhere in the Bible, as long as it fits the saint or feast celebrated. Thus, *Ave Maria* will serve well for the feast of the Annunciation but not for the Assumption of Mary, and St Stephen should be celebrated with a sermon that contains the word ‘stone.’”

*suene tu voz en mis oídos, ca tu voz dulce es y tu rostro gracioso* (CC 2,13–14). Conviene a saber, *levántate* de los pecados y *aquéjate* a bien obrar.<sup>15</sup>

[This is what the Lord had said, although here the learned give other understandings and solutions (?) from the Old Testament and the New Testament. And, therefore, he says: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, and come away* (Song of Sg. 2,10). That is, rise up, Christian soul, and come and serve me and love me and believe me and adore me and know me, and obey and fulfil and keep my holy commandments. Come, Christian soul, to heaven, for *the winter* of metaphors *is past, and the rain* (Song of Sg. 2,11) of similitudes and vendettas under the old law, and the summer of clarity has come, which is myself [...] *The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of the pruning is come* (Song of Sg. 2,12). That is to say, I have already suffered the Passion and shed my blood. I, who am the tree of life and of health, have already given you the flowers I produced, that is, I who am God and the giver of life have already given my soul and my body and my heart and my blood and my life and my health for my dear one and for my *friend and beautiful dove*, that is, for each soul that I create in my image and likeness. And, for all this I have given and suffered for my friend [...] *And the voice of the turtle Is heard in our land* (Song of Sg. 2,12). That is to say, I hear and receive the cries and groans and sighs and tears and prayers and the contrition of whoever calls me and turns to me wholeheartedly. And not only do I wait and receive and hear any contrite soul who comes [...] but I myself call her, says the Lord, and tell her: *Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come. My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears: for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely* (Song of Sg. 13–14). That is to say, *rise up* from sin and *make haste* to work well.]

Before commenting on the systematicity of this passage, that is, how the verses of the *Song* followed by their exegesis are correlated by the same introductory clause (“*conviene a saber*”), I would like to focus on the Castilian version of the biblical text that is given by the pericope. Surtz had already mused on the use of the Bible in the visionary preachers at the time of the Catholic Monarchs.<sup>16</sup> His reflections on Biblical language present in the *Conorte* are of particular interest here. Firstly, he questions the inaccuracy of certain quotes: “*cabe preguntarse*

15 Vatican manuscript, 429v–430r. It follows the commentary given in *Conorte* 1999, 937–938.

16 R. E. Surtz, “El uso de la biblia por las visionarias de la época del cardenal Cisneros”, in M. L. Giordano and A. Valerio (eds.), *Reformas y contrarreformas en la Europa católica*, Navarra, Verbo Divino, 2016, 77–88.

*si se trata de un lapso de la memoria, un conocimiento de segunda mano o un intento consciente de adaptar la cita a su contexto inmediato en un sermón determinado*" [It begs the question whether it is a lapse of memory, second-hand knowledge, or a conscious attempt to adapt the quote to its immediate context in a specific sermon].<sup>17</sup> Secondly, he claims that some of the supposedly biblical quotations are, in fact, hymns that are sung at certain feasts.<sup>18</sup> Thirdly, he notes the biblical contents have been modified in a way that may reflect an exegetic intentionality.<sup>19</sup> Finally, he indicates that some of these quotations could come from two readings that were circulating through the convent: the *Floretus* and the *Flos sanctorum*.<sup>20</sup>

While some of the doubts expressed by Surtz are yet to be fully answered, I can contribute by indicating the direct source of the Castilian version of the verses of the *Song of Songs* cited above. These come from the widely circulated *Epístolas y evangelios por todo el año*, revised by Ambrosio Montesino around 1512 at the request of Ferdinand the Catholic.<sup>21</sup> The translations found in this book provide the readings of the Roman Missal of the period as well as a series of sermons in Castilian translation. As María Matesanz del Barrio claims, this combination turns the work into a hybrid of a lectionary and a homiliary. Montesino's work was a revision of an earlier work of similar content (that is, a lectionary combined with a homiliary) and it saw more than twenty editions after its initial publication. Only one exemplar of this antecedent, printed in Seville in 1506, has survived (see Figure 7).<sup>22</sup> Comparative analysis reveals that the verses from

17 Surtz, "El uso de la biblia", 82.

18 Surtz, "El uso de la biblia", 84.

19 Surtz, "El uso de la biblia", 84–85.

20 Surtz, "El uso de la biblia", 87–88. For the *Floreto* and the *Flos sanctorum*, see *Vida y fin*, 15r and 82v, respectively.

21 As Montesino writes in the "*Epístola prohemial*" to Fernando, el Católico, this book is aimed "*a los que no saben latín*" [to those who do not know Latin]. The first edition of Montesino's revision that is preserved is a printing in Zaragoza of 1514 (although Montesino himself testifies in his "*nota proemial*" having finished it in 1512), which keeps the readings of its predecessor. From the Flemish editions of Juan Estelsio of 1549, the homilies were eliminated, leaving only the translations of the biblical passages. For these issues, see Matesanz del Barrio, "La difusión de la Biblia en romance y los primeros índices de libros prohibidos", *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 87, 295 (2007), 29–50, in particular 39–46. See also her previous work "*Epístolas y evangelios para todo el año. Una errónea atribución de autoría*", *Revista de Filología románica*, 3 (1996), 215–230.

22 *Epístolas y evangelios con sus sermones y doctrinas para todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cronenberger, 1506, henceforth *Epístolas y evangelios* 1506. For Montesino's revisión, I have used an edition of 1550: *Epístolas y Evangelios por todo el año con sus doctrinas y sermones según la reformation e interpretacion que desta obra hizo fray Ambrosio Montesino...*, Zaragoza, Pedro Bernuz, 1550 (henceforth, *Epístolas y evangelios* 1550). The text of the epistle is found on folio CCVIIIv and the Gospel of the *Visitatio* on CCIXr.



the epistle of the Visitation, at least, were taken from this earlier version (See Figures 8 and 9).<sup>23</sup>

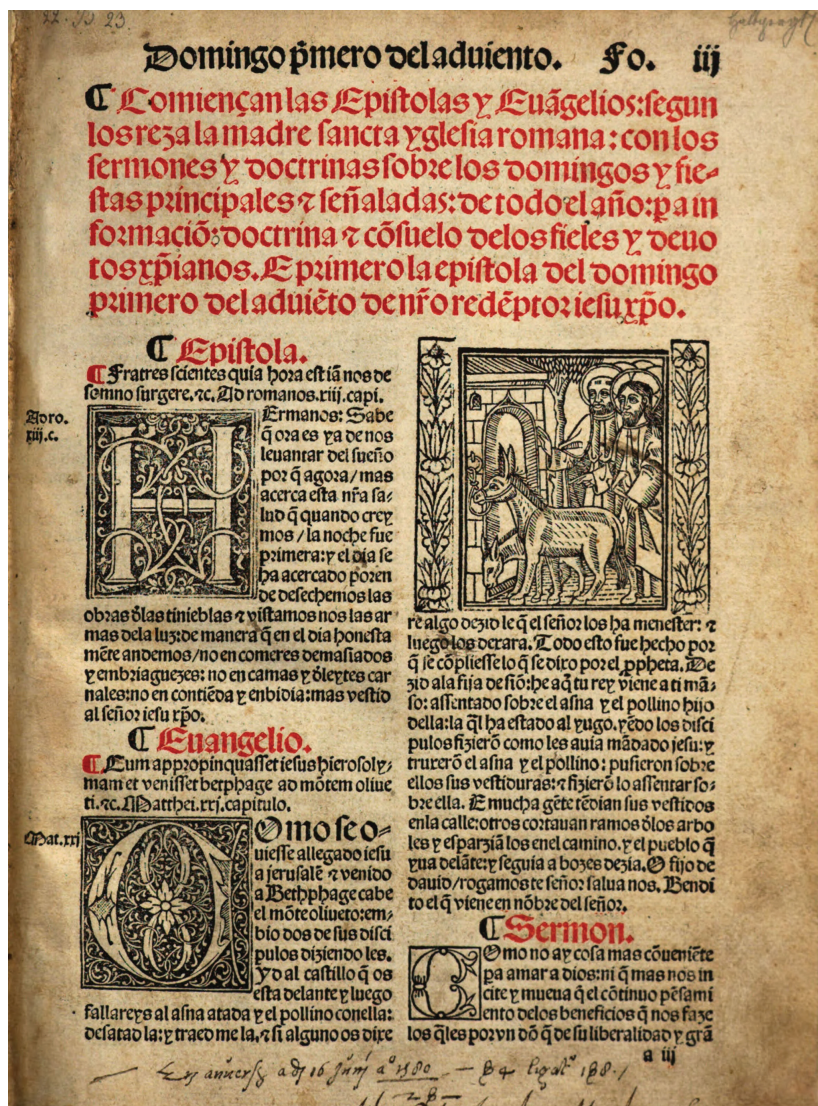


FIGURE 7 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 3r.  
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ÖSTERREICHISCHE NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK. SOURCE: [HTTPS://ONB.DIGITAL/RESULT/10885E56](https://onb.digital/result/10885E56)

23 *Epístolas y evangelios* 1506, 206r–206v.



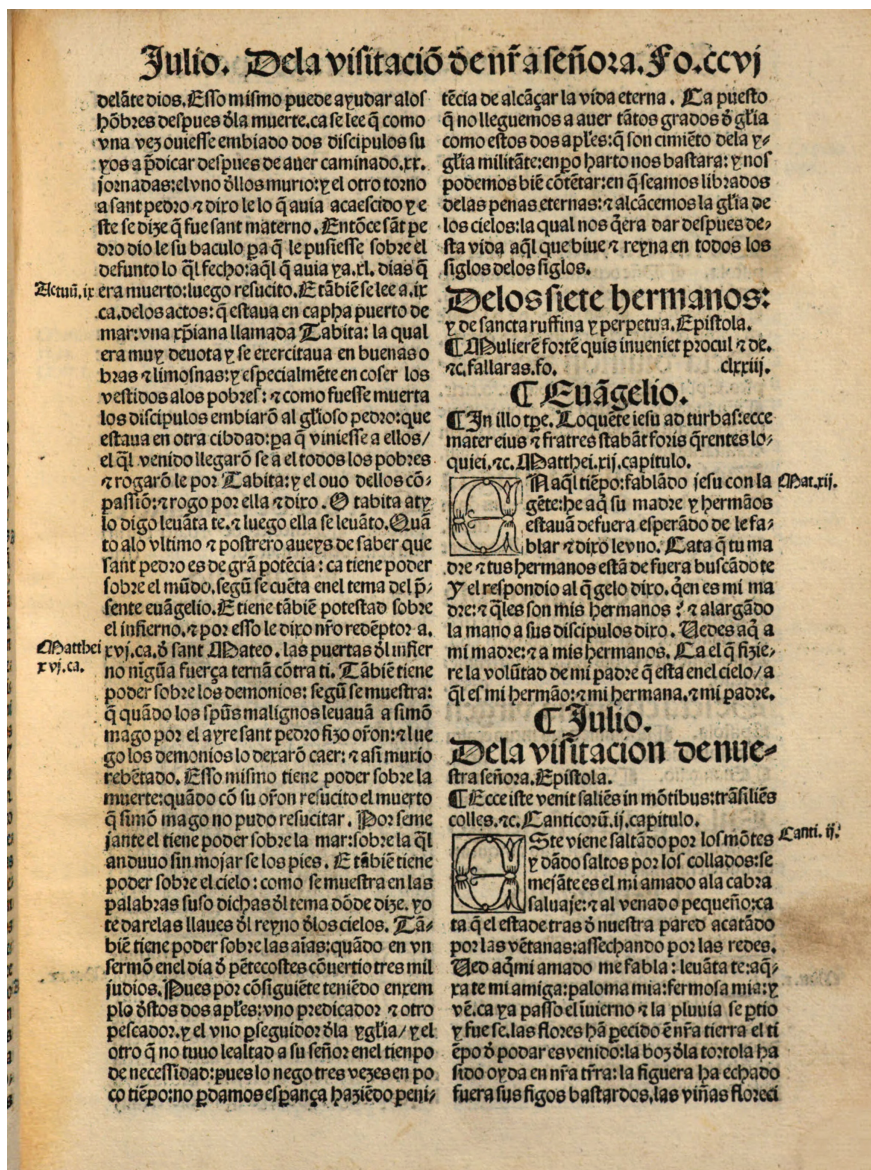


FIGURE 8 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año,* Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206r (full folio and detail).

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ÖSTERREICHISCHE NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK

SOURCE: [HTTPS://ONB.DIGITAL/RESULT/10885E56](https://onb.digital/result/10885E56)



## Julio. En la fiesta de santiago apostol.

dashan dado su olor. leuara te agra te amia mia/garrida mia: y ven paloma mia: en los agujeros bla piedra: en la cucua d mi ta pia: muestra me tu rostro: fuene tu boz e mis oydos: ca tu boz dulce es: y tu rostro gracioso

**Evangelio.** In illo tpe. Surgens autem maria abiit. *rc. fo. clx.*

**De sancta margarita epistola.** Dñe deus meus exaltasti sup terrā habitationē meā. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

**Evangelio.** In illo tpe. d. i. d. f. Sile est regnū celozū tpe lauro abicō. *fo. clxxij.*

**De la division delos apostols.** Epla. Corde eni credis. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

**Evangelio.** In illo tpe. Vocatis ie sus duodecim discipulis: dedit illis virtutem. *rc. fallaras. fo. clxxij.*

**De santa maria magdalena.** Epistola. Mulierē fortem q̄ in ueniet fallaras. *fo. clxxij.*

**Evangelio.** In illo tpe. Rogabat iesum q̄da de phariseis. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

**De sāt apollinario epla.** Beatus vir q̄ in sapiētia morabit. *fo. clxxij.*

**Evangelio.** In illo tpe. d. i. d. f. Almen amē dico vobis nisi granum frumēti. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

**De sctā christina virgen.** Epistola. Domine deus meus exalta sti. *rc. fallaras. fo. clxxij.*

**Evangelio.** Simile est regnum celozū decē virginibus. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

**En la vigilia d santiago apostol.** Epistola. Beatus vir qui in uentus est sine macula. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

### Evangelio.

In illo tempore. Misit iesus duodecim discipulos precipiens eis. *rc. Mathei. x. ca.*

**Mat. x.** In aq̄l tiēpo: embio iesu. xij. discipulos suyos: y mando les: q̄ dīro les. no vayays en la carrera d las gētes: y no entreys d las cibdades de los samaritanos. mas yd antes alas ouejas q̄ hā pecido d la casa d israel. E andādo pōicab: diziendo q̄ el regno d los cielos se a:

cercara. curad enfermos. resuscitad muertos alipiad leprosos. echad dmonios d los cuerpos. pues d balde auerē recebido la gra dad la de balde. No cureys d tener oro: ni plata: ni dinero en vras citas: ni lleueys en el camī no currō: ni tēgays dos ropas: ni lleueys gaparos: ni verga. ca el q̄ trabaja: digno es q̄ le dēde comer. Y en q̄quier cibdad: o casti: llo q̄ entrar dēs: p̄guntad quē es allí mas dīgnō: y posad allí fasta q̄ os vayays. E quādo entrar dēs en la casa: saludad la diziendo. paz a esta casa. E si aq̄lla casa fuere digna vernayra paz sōbre ella. y si no lo mereciere vra paz tornara a vosotros. y al q̄ no os recibiere ni opere vras razōes: ē saliendo fuera d su casa o dela cibdad: sacudid el polvo de vros pies. E a certifico vros: q̄ menos pena terna la tierra d los de fōdoma y gomozra: en el dia del iuzyo: que aq̄lla cibdad.

**En el dia de santiago epistola.** Benedict⁹ de⁹ y pater dñi nři iesu xpi: q̄ benedixit. *rc. fo. clxxij.*

### Evangelio.

In illo tpe: accessit ad iesum mater filiozū zebedei cū filiis suis. *Mathei. xx.*



**Mat. xx.** In aq̄l tiēpo llego a Jesu la madre d los hijos de zebedei: cō ellos. *Mat. xx.* por le adozar: y pedir algūa merced: el q̄ le dīro. q̄ dēres: y ella le respōdio. dī q̄ estos dos mis hijos se asietē: el vno ala tu dīestra: y el otro ala yzquierda en tu regno. Y respōdio le iesu. No sabēys lo q̄ os pidays. Pōdēys aq̄a beuer el caliz

FIGURE 9 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206v (full folio and detail).

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ÖSTERREICHISCHE NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK  
SOURCE: [HTTPS://ONB.DIGITAL/RESULT/10885E56](https://onb.digital/result/10885E56)



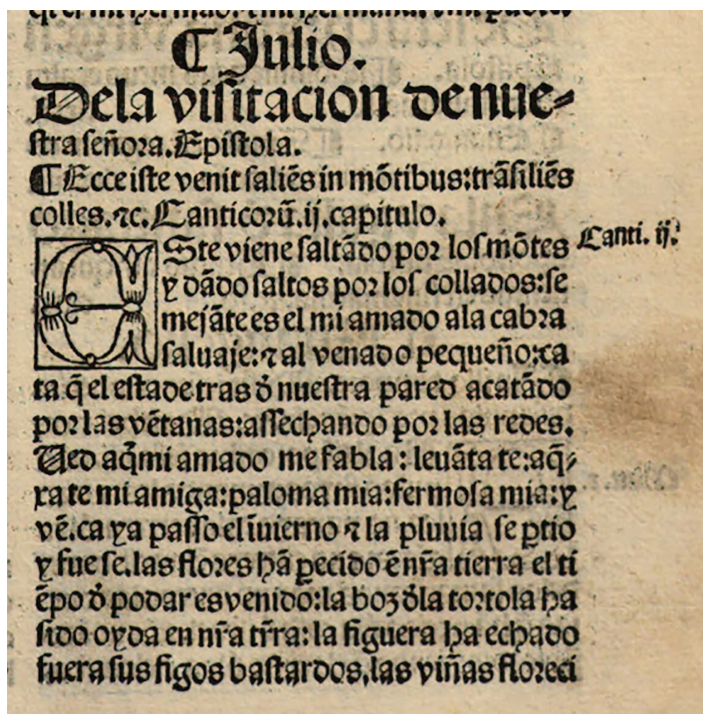


FIGURE 8 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206r (full folio and detail). (Cont.)

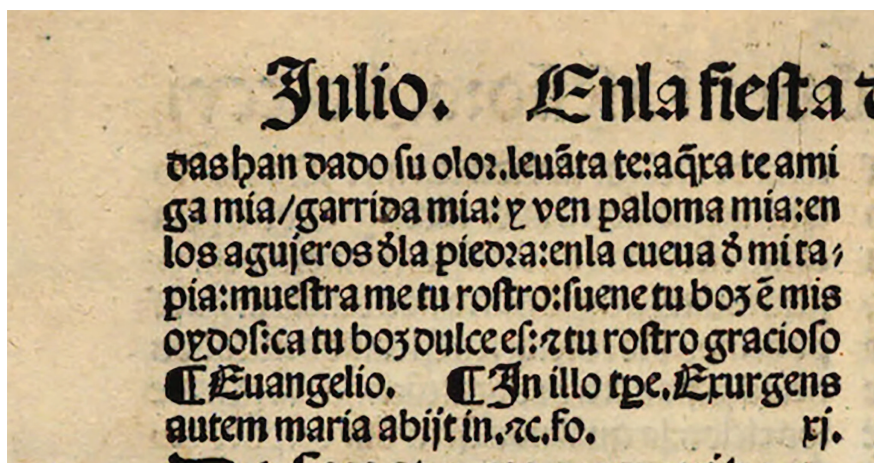


FIGURE 9 *Epístolas y evangelios con los sermones y doctrinas por todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cromberger, 1506; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23, f. 206v (full folio and detail). (Cont.)

As Matesanz del Barrio also points out, *Evangelios y epístolas* was understood early on as a devotional book: it is very likely that Juana's community had some degree of familiarity with it through private meditative reading or group listening.<sup>24</sup> In fact, community reading of the Gospel through translation was promoted in female religious houses during the Catholic Monarchs' reformation.<sup>25</sup> As Hernando de Talavera wrote for the nuns of the Monastery de San Bernardo in Ávila at the end of the 15th century: "*Sea siempre la lección en romance, porque la lección que no se entiende ni se lee ni se oye como deve, ni aprovecha mucho leerse. Sea la lección de los sanctos Evangelios y aun de todo el Testamento nuevo...*" [Let the reading always be in the romance language, because the reading that is not understood, neither read nor heard as it should be, does not benefit much from being read. Let the reading be from the holy Gospels and even from the entire New Testament...].<sup>26</sup>

The particular use of *Epístolas y evangelios* in the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz is an example of how one specific title was likely used in the *lectio*, but also served as a tool in transcribing the sermons. Its precise transcription in these examples surely speaks not so much of a literal quotation of the whole pericope during the preaching, but of a labour of textual reconstruction by the woman or women religious who edited the sermon. She or they would have had in front of them the *Epístolas y evangelios*, which she/they would have copied literally at the same time as adding the visionary exegesis. As evidence of our limited knowledge of the volumes that circulated in the convent, this use is deeply significant for two reasons. It implies that certain liturgical works were directly handled by at least the women involved in the redaction and editing of the *Conorte*, also supporting the hypothesis that this book played a crucial role in preparing Juana's preaching.<sup>27</sup>

24 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 87.

25 Pérez García, *Sociología y lectura*, 308–316.

26 C. Codet, "Edición de la *Suma y breve compilación de cómo han de vivir y conversar las religiosas de Sant Bernardo que biven en los monasterios de la cibdad de Ávila* de Hernando de Talavera (Biblioteca del Escorial, ms. a.IV-29)", *Memorabilia*, 14 (2012), 33.

27 In this case, the sermon/exposition derived from this epistle is not used to configure the contents of the preaching. For example, on commenting on the verse *Que la voz de la tórtola ha sido oída en nuestra tierra* (Song of Sg. 2,12), the exposition of the sermon contained in *Epístolas y evangelios* 1550 says: "(la voz de la tórtola) conviene a saber del Espíritu Santo (ha sido oída en nuestra tierra) es a saber en los corazones de los escogidos" [(The voice of the turtledove) corresponds, namely, to that of the Holy Spirit (it has been heard in our land), namely, in the hearts of the chosen ones] (*Epístolas y Evangelios*, CCIXr). This exegesis has an inverse meaning to that of the *Conorte* because, as I have already explained, in the cosmovision of the community the turtledoves are identified with the devout who perform the ritual celebration and "*nuestra tierra*" corresponds to

Returning to the systematicity of the commentary on the last passage quoted, it is clear that we are not dealing with a scholastic who adjusts herself to a greater or a lesser extent to the rules defined in the *artes predicandi*, but rather with a preacher who cites or alludes to biblical verses ("*puntos*") in a correlative way from her source, Song of Sg. 2,8 to 2,14.<sup>28</sup> Although the interpretation of the beloved as Christ is prototypical, the text echoes the fact that the development of the commentary on the following verses is in some ways at odds with the traditional forms of exegesis: "*Que esto dice el Señor, aunque acá los letrados dan otros entendimientos y salidas (?) por el testamento viejo y por el testamento nuevo*" [This is what the Lord had said, although here the learned give other understandings and solutions (?) from the Old Testament and the New Testament].<sup>29</sup> The awareness that exegesis based on prophetic understanding is renewing and that it could cause controversy with educated clerics is expressed through a very well-known topic that contrasts the learned knowledge of men with the revealed understanding of women, based on a new knowledge founded on the birth of Christ. It could be claimed, on the other hand, from the commentary on the verses Song of Sg. 2,13–14, that the exposition of this reading leaves behind the ordered, correlative gloss so that it can, in the second part of the declaration, return to certain points (in particular, Song of Sg. 2,14; 2,9; and once again, 2,14, in this order). It ends with a kind of summary of what has been declared, closing with an explicit phrase: "... *de esta manera declaró la epístola que se canta en esta santa fiesta de la Visitación de nuestra Señora la Virgen María*" [... in this way he declared the epistle that is sung on this holy feast of the Visitation of Our Lady the Virgin Mary].

This is one of the rare extracts of the *Conorte* in which a "controlled" exegesis whereby the passage-by-passage commentary of the text to be glossed is visible. This method of exposition encourages reflection on what occurs with

---

the celestial Paradise. Below I discuss an example in which the content of the exposition is used in Juana's sermon. It should be recalled, on the other hand, that at a similar date Domenica da Paradiso at night read the Gospel of the following day to be able to meditate on it and to preach the visions that arose from her experience.

28 See *Breviarium toletanum*, 337r. In this sense, the development at a formal level seems more like the "pericope sermons" than the "thematic sermons", as classified by Mertens, *The Middle Dutch Sermon*, 148–153. In any case, the relatively formal scholasticism, broken later by the mystical-visionary development, fits with what Boon has termed "mystical sermons", in the cases of Bernardino de Laredo and Juana herself. See Boon, "The Glory of the Virgin", 38.

29 Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, 87. On the use of the language of the *Song of Songs* in the loving language of the *Conorte*, see, also, Cortés Timoner, "La mística nupcial", 611–623.

most of the texts of the sermon book in its current state. I will discuss this question in the following section, although before doing so I will add a brief commentary on the extract that is inserted immediately after the gloss on the epistle. After explicitly closing the declaration, the preaching resumes in a familiar way:

Y dijo el señor que como este mismo día de la Santa Visitación que él habló y declaró los misterios y secretos susodichos oyese, en su santo reino, las voces de las tortolillas que cantaban en la tierra haciendo memoria de la humildad y mansedumbre de Nuestra Señora diciendo: *Levantóse María y fue con gran prisa a la montaña de Judea a visitar a santa Isabel* (Lucas 1,39–40), su prima. Y como estas voces de los contritos que con amor y devoción cantaban y rezaban en la tierra fuesen oídas delante de la divina Majestad, habló el poderoso Dios con Nuestra Señora la Virgen María diciéndole [...]<sup>30</sup>

And the Lord said that on that same day of the holy Visitation that he spoke and declared the aforementioned mysteries and secrets, he heard in his holy kingdom the voices of the turtledoves that were singing on earth in memory of the humility and meekness of our Lady. They were saying: *And Mary rising up in those days, went to the hill country with haste to visit Saint Elizabeth* (Luke 1,39–40), her cousin. And the voices of the contrite, who with love and devotion chanted and prayed on earth, were heard in front of the divine Majesty. And the almighty God spoke with Our Lady the Virgin Mary saying unto her [...]

Clearly, we are looking at a new section of commentary, marked by the end of the previous one and introduced through imagery typical of the *Conorte* (the song of the turtledoves being heard from Paradise). This new section represents the turning point towards a second part that is also typical of the sermons: the celebration of the feasts in heaven. These begin with the reception of the singing of the terrestrial liturgy by the second person of the Trinity, the Son. The “point” that the turtledoves sing on this occasion (“And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda”) can refer both to the start of the Gospel which is sung that day during the Mass (Lk

30 The explicit closure reads: “Y de esta manera declaró el poderoso Dios la epístola que se canta en esta santa fiesta de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora la Virgen María” [And in this way, the mighty God declared the epistle that is sung on this holy feast of the Visitation of Our Lady the Virgin Mary](Vatican manuscript, 431r; *Conorte* 1999, 940). The passage quoted continues in the Vatican manuscript, 431v.

1,39, inserted in *Epístolas y evangelios* after the epistle),<sup>31</sup> and to an antiphon of the office of the *Visitatio Beatae Mariae Virginis*. This quotation gives way, in this case, to the development of a heavenly scene that includes the dialogue of God with Mary urging her to remember the day of the visitation. This is narrated in the first person (thus forming a narrative-affective unit that can be remembered) and, later, a series of interactions follows, between Mary and Christ and then between them and the celestial court.

Having reached this point, it is important to emphasize the mediating role of liturgy in the transmission both of the biblical text in the community and of the meaning of the new gloss that Christ makes through abbess Juana at certain points of liturgical celebration. The act of collecting the visions arising from the daily readings or chants in the *Conorte* implies the intent to protect a newly revealed scriptural commentary, assimilating it into the community's collective knowledge. In this sense, as Emmelius identified at Helfta, vision *is* a form of exegesis, and Juana's companions understood it in this way.<sup>32</sup>

### 3 Sermon Form

As I have tried to show above, it is difficult to approach Juana's sermons from the perspective of form. My examination of the declaration of the "epistle" indicates that the ecstasy does not seem to affect the systematicity of the method of commentary, at least in certain cases. The text of the epistle is examined in an ordered and correlative way, and this same sequence is transmitted, first to memory and then to copying and editing. This implies that the women religious were familiar with these biblical texts in the vernacular, thus enabling them to relate the exegesis with its respective biblical passage, later, to memorize it or, perhaps, copy it. Nevertheless, the most reasonable hypothesis is to think that the systematicity codified in the sermon was indeed present in Juana's preaching.

According to Mertens, a method of classifying sermons that takes into account their form needs to distinguish two "important" types in the tradition of the European medieval sermon; the "thematic sermon" and the "pericope sermon":

The pericope sermon treats the complete pericope that was read at Mass during the liturgy of the word, either from the Epistles or the Gospels,

31 *Breviarium toletanum*, 336v. *Epístolas y Evangelios*, CCIXr.

32 Emmelius, "Mäntel der Seele", 157–190.



and it usually follows the development of the pericope in question quite closely. Thematic sermons are based on one sentence or one short passage from a pericope or another text.<sup>33</sup>

Mertens' later explanation of the pericope sermon can perhaps be applied to the method used by Juana in her commentary on the "epistle":

The sermon begins with a translation of the Epistle or Gospel pericope that was read during Mass. In principle, it is then discussed line by line in the sermon. Such sermons are therefore sometimes referred to as (*Epistles and*) *Gospels with a Gloss*. Given that these sermons consist of commentaries on the biblical text, they are associated with the *lectio* at universities and with biblical exegesis.<sup>34</sup>

The main problem with the sermons of the *Conorte* is that they do not employ any consistent method of exegesis. In this regard, commentaries such as the sermon dedicated to the *Visitatio Beatae Mariae Virginis* bring to mind, firstly the "pericope sermon" (in the commentary on the "epistle") and, secondly, the "thematic sermon" (in the commentary that follows immediately, based on the Gospel of the day, which cites only the *thema*). It is also possible to find, for example, sermons in the *Conorte* in which the direct quotation of the biblical-liturgical references does not occur. For example, the start of sermon 44 reads:

Y otra vez hablando el Señor sobre el evangelio que cuenta San Lucas, el cual trata de como el mismo Señor lloró sobre Jerusalén y de cómo entró en el templo y echó de él a los mercantes y vendientes. Y dijo que cuando él andaba por la tierra predicando y enseñando con el grande celo...<sup>35</sup>

[And another time the Lord was speaking about the Gospel narrated by Saint Luke, which is about how the Lord himself cried over Jerusalem and how he entered the temple and cast out the moneychangers and the vendors. And he said that when he walked on the earth preaching and teaching with great zeal ...]

There is no vernacular quotation here but rather a summary of the Gospel through reported biblical discourse (*"Hablando el Señor del evangelio [...]* el

33 Mertens, "The Middle Dutch Sermon", 149.

34 Mertens, "The Middle Dutch Sermon", 149.

35 Vatican manuscript, 518r. *Conorte* 1999, 1071.



*cual trata de...*”), such that the sermon starts *in medias res*. Is this a consequence of the processes of transcription or did Juana really open by alluding vaguely to the Gospel of the day (Lk 21,5–9)? Based on the surviving materials, this is a question that cannot be answered unequivocally. In any case, Juana’s preaching is justified by starting from a reference to a biblical text, anchoring the sermon to the feast on which it was preached. In fact, the main function of this is to comment on this text of the Gospels. However, the exegetical method can be veiled on many occasions, given the process of transforming the lived performance into writing. Thus, very few pieces can be defined as a “pericope sermon”, a few more examples of the “thematic sermon”, and, in general, a majority that do not fall into either category.

To understand why this occurs is relatively simple when the seventy-odd sermons that make up the collection are systematically reviewed. First of all, the sermons are multiform, even though the editorial work in the convent has sought to regularize them.<sup>36</sup> This arises from the procedures inherent to collective authorship, which relies on individual recollection methods that, by nature, always deal with incomplete materials. Moreover, from the outset of listening and memorization, the authors prioritized certain elements in their selection of liturgical texts, biblical scenes, and celestial dialogues for reasons that are now nuclear. As I have argued, the images, for example, do provide memorisable rhetorical structures and certain liturgical texts were undoubtedly recognized by the tertiaries as forming part of their daily repertoire. But why certain images and texts and not others were committed to writing represents a hermeneutical knot that cannot be untied. Adding to this is the fact that the amalgam was the main method used to gather sermons given at different times, which makes it clear that a classification based on form is not viable in the case of the *Conorte*.

It is possible, on the other hand, to indicate which sermons are present the translation of an explicit *thema* and which simply indicate or refer to a biblical *thema* and treat it as reported speech.<sup>37</sup> In fact, although the text does not make any explicit mention of a *thema* and most often follows a *divisio* and a *dilatatio*

36 Some sermons open by directly describing the events that occur in the celestial celebration (for example, sermon 9), when this is usually articulated in the *Conorte* in complementarity with the celebration on earth and, thus, with the texts that support it. In other cases, the sermon indicates simply the feast in which the preaching is embedded (for example, number 15 on Lent and number 18 on the Thursday of the Last Supper), which allows the development of the theme of the celestial celebrations or begins directly by describing a “figure” that will be glossed later (as, for example, in number 55).

37 Explicit *thema*: sermons 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 32, 40, 43, 52, 58, 62, 63, 66. Paraphrastic sermons: 1–8, 10–11, 13–15, 17–18, 20, 22, 24–31, 33–39, 41–42, 44–51, 53–57, 59–61, 64, 65, 67–72.

that, logically, do not agree with the core idea of “*praedicare est arborizare*”, biblical quotation in the vernacular alludes to elements sung or read on the day of the preaching on many occasions.<sup>38</sup> Although the liturgical anchoring is often isolated, and takes multiple forms, it does present a map that can guide us in the interpretation of the sermon.

## 4 Case Analyses

### 4.1 *Septuagesima Sunday*

A sermon that I have already discussed in these pages begins:

Y otra vez hablando el Señor sobre el evangelio que se canta en el domingo de la Septuagésima, el cual dice *Semejante es el reino de los cielos al hombre padre de compañías que salió de madrugada [a] alquilar peones para que fuesen a cavar en su viña* (Mateo 20,1). Y por este padre de compañías se entiende el padre celestial, padre de las lumbres, padre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, padre de los Ángeles, padre de las gentes y de todas las cosas que hizo y ordenó.<sup>39</sup>

[And another time the Lord was speaking about the gospel that is sung on Septuagesima Sunday, which says *For the kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard* (Matthew 20,1). And for this *householder* one understands the Father in heaven, Father of Light, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of the Angels, Father of the nations and of all things that he made and ordained.]

This piece starts by quoting a Castilian version of Matthew 20,1 (“*Simile est regnum caelorum homini patrifamilias, qui exiit primo mane conducere operarios in vineam suam*”), “the gospel sung on Septuagesima Sunday”, glossing it afterwards.<sup>40</sup> The Castilian version of some of the verses from Matthew given in the sermon are close to, but do not completely coincide with, that of *Epístolas*

38 There is an example in “Sermon I” of Bernardino da Siena (*Prediche della Settimana Santa Florence 1425*, M. Bartoli [ed.], Milan, Figlie di S. Paolo, 1995, 91–106).

39 Vatican manuscript, 152r; *Conorte* 1999, 444. See above, 143.

40 *Breviarium toletanum*, 57r.

*y evangelios*.<sup>41</sup> I will discuss the reasons behind this in my analysis of the third example, below.

As preaching that inaugurates the penitential period of Septuagesima, the sermon seeks to guide the faithful toward contrition in preparation for the still distant Easter, so it begins by recalling original sin. The essential novelty of Juana's exegesis is to tie the creation of the angels to matins and their fall to lauds, as this is the only point that is not found in the main source of this commentary, the texts sung and recited at matins found in the *breviarium*. Indeed, this theme belongs to the reading corresponding to matins of the first Sunday of Septuagesima, which speaks of the creation of the world.<sup>42</sup> There, the focus is on the story of the creation of humanity (and, thus, the possibility of original sin) to the detriment of that of the celestial intellectual beings. In the *Conorte's* commentary, the creation arising from the sixth day is moved to the first because Adam and Eve are a consequence of an absence: the fallen angels have left "*sillas*" [chairs], an empty position in Paradise that needs to be filled, a version whose theological consequences will have to be considered on another occasion.<sup>43</sup>

After this initial approach, the content of the sermon is structured according to the breviary, which, according to Vicent Ferrer, was one of the two essential books of the preacher together with the Bible.<sup>44</sup> These liturgical books provide its source, particularly the *Homilia in evangelia* 19 of Gregory the Great, in the form that is found in the *lectiones* of the third nocturne of matins.<sup>45</sup> This reference is not explicit in the text, although the reason for this is easily understood: both Juana's audience and the Franciscan tertiaries who collected the sermons had listened to this homily very recently, as they had participated in its reading on the same day as the preaching. There is no doubt that the *Homilia in evangelia* is the intertext of the start of this sermon, as this reading gives Juana the

41 *Epístolas y evangelios* 1506, XLI–XLV; *Epístolas y evangelios* 1550, 40r–40v.

42 *Breviarium toletanum*, 56r.

43 *Conorte* 1999, 444–445.

44 On Vicent Ferrer and the use of breviary for preaching: "*A tal donchs [lo religiós] axi o deu fer e portar son breviari e la biblia per preycar*" [In this way, the friar should do and carry his breviary and the Bible for preaching], *apud* Roque Chabás, "Estudio sobre los sermones valencianos de S. Vicente Ferrer", *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, VIII (1903), 114.

45 *Breviarium toletanum*, 57r. To approach the unresolved question of the time of day at which Juana preached it is important to note that the nocturnes of matins were precisely the time set aside for homiletic readings or for the preaching of the abbess. See J. Black, "The Divine Office" and T. J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (eds.), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, 88–89 and *The Limburg Sermons. Preaching in Medieval Countries and the Turn of the Fourteenth Century*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, 26.

keys that she needs to start to interpret the parable of the *pater familias*. The homily begins:

Hic itaque pater familias ad excolendam vineam suam mane, hora tertia, sexta, nona, et undecima operarios conducit, quia a mundi huius initio usque ad finem, ad erudiendam plebem fidelium, praedicatores congregare non desistit. Mane etenim mundi fuit ab Adam usque ad Noe, hora vero tertia a Noe usque ad Abraham, sexta quoque ab Abraham usque ad Moysen, nona autem a Moyse usque ad adventum Domini, undecima vero ab adventu Domini usque ad finem mundi.

[The householder hired workmen to cultivate his vineyard, in the morning, and at the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours, since preachers do not cease to preach for the instruction of the faithful from the beginning of this world up to its end. The morning indeed was from Adam to the time of Noah, the third hour from the time of Noah to the time of Abraham, the sixth from the time of Abraham to the time of Moses, the ninth from the time of Moses to the coming of the Lord; and the eleventh is from the coming of the Lord to the end of the world.]<sup>46</sup>

Assigning periods of the history of mankind to certain biblical characters leading to the coming of Christ is paralleled in Juana's sermon: first, Adam; third, Noah; sixth, Abraham; ninth, Moses; eleventh (Vespers, in the *Conorte*), Christ.<sup>47</sup> After this the sermon returns to the outstanding workers in the vineyard, that is to say, the chosen people sent by God who assume through their work in the world the vacant chairs which the angels left in heaven. The sermon continues:

Y, por semejante, *salió a hora de Vísperas* (Mateo 20,3) y vino alquilar peones él mismo, cuando ya se querían comenzar las Completas, es a saber, después de ser profetizadas todas las cosas que él había de padecer y hacer.

Y como él [Dios Padre] salió pasado ya gran parte del día, conviene a saber, pasadas algunas de las edades del mundo, y *vio que se andaban*

46 *Breviarium toletanum*, 57r. Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Lib. I, Homilia XIX, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, Tomus LXXVI, Sanctus Gregorius Magnus, Parisiis, Garnier Fratres Editores, 1902, c. 1554: 1510. For the English translation, see Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, David Hurst (ed.), Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1990, 78.

47 *Conorte* 1999, 445.

*algunos perdidos y hechos holgazanes, que los empezó a reprehender y decir: ¿qué hacéis vosotros aquí a tal hora, holgando y perdiendo el día? (Mateo 20,6) Andad acá conmigo, a mi viña, y trabajad en ella, que yo os pagaré lo que fuere justo (Mateo 20,4).*<sup>48</sup>

[And, likewise, *he went out at the hour of Vespers* (Matthew 20,3) and he himself came to hire some workers, just when they wanted to begin the (hour of) Compline, that is to say, after all the things that he had to suffer and do had been prophesized.

And he (God the Father) went out after the greater part of the day was over, that is to say, some of the ages of the world were over, and *he saw that some of them were lost and become lazy*. He began to reprehend them and said: *What are you doing here at this hour, lazy and wasting the day?* (Matthew 20,6) *Come here with me, to my vineyard, and work in it, and I will pay you what is just* (Matthew 20,4)]

This verse is the same one that concludes the extracts of the homily by Gregory the Great read in matins. In fact, after glossing this passage there is a translation of Matthew 20,7 (*"Dicunt ei, quia nemo nos conduxit. Dicit illis: Ite et vos in vineam meam"*), which has a similar commentary, following the thread of the allegorical reading:

*Señor, hasta ahora ninguno nos ha alquilado* (Mateo 20,7), empero, ahora que tú nos alquilas, plácenos de buena voluntad de ir contigo a cavar tu viña. Fueron los apóstoles y discípulos y todos los que creyeron y amaron y obedecieron en el tiempo que él predicaba y enseñaba en sinagogas y plazas.<sup>49</sup>

[*Lord, until now no one has hired us* (Matthew 20,7), but now that you have hired us, delight us with good will to go with you and hoe your vineyard. These were the apostles and disciples and those who believed and loved and obeyed in the time when he preached and taught in synagogues and squares.]

48 Given the poor preservation of the Vatican manuscript, 153r, I transcribe here the version given in the El Escorial manuscript, 80v; *Conorte* 1999, 445–446.

49 I return to the version of the Vatican manuscript, 153v.

It is evident that the exegesis in this first part of the sermon is based on the structure provided by Gregory the Great's homily. The idea of canonical hours as ages of the world marked by diverse *operarios* is justified through a clear liturgical anchoring that enables a homily already heard by the community to be adopted as an introduction to a visionary sermon. After a brief "*declaración*", this section ends by reiterating that Advent involves the coming of the redeemer and of the time to remedy original sin:

Y entonces salió Dios a hora de Completas e alquiló peones que fuesen a cavar su viña, cuando después que él cumplió todas las cosas que de él estaban profetizadas y escritas, [...] trujo y allegó así muchedumbre de mártires y vírgenes y confesores y doctores, porque desde los apóstoles hasta nosotros los que vivimos hoy día y hasta los que nacieren y vivieren de aquí al día del Juicio, todos andamos en las Completas. Y dicese andamos en las Completas porque todas las cosas profetizadas son ya cumplidas. Y los que venimos después del Señor subido a los cielos, puede ser dicho que venimos a hacienda hecha y mesa puesta.<sup>50</sup>

[And then God went out at the hour of Compline and hired workers who went to hoe his vineyard, after he fulfilled all the things that were prophesied and written of him, (...) Thus he brought and gathered a multitude of martyrs and virgins and confessors and doctors, since from (the time of) the apostles through those alive today and through until those that will be born and live here until the day of Judgment, we are all living in the hour of Compline. And he said we are in Compline because all the prophesied things have already been completed. And of those who came after the Lord and ascended to the heavens, it may be said that we arrive to the estate prepared for us and the table laid.]

In being based on the prior structure of Gregory's homily, the exegesis is quite methodical to this point, as the commentary advances through the Gospel of the day line by line. This form of systematicity is present in other passages of the collection, although it is not a dominant feature of the *Conorte*.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the continuation of the sermon attenuates the link to the Gospel text to some extent so as to return to certain "points" of the glosses that were made (such as those marked by the canonical hours) and to widen the doctrinal

50 Vatican manuscript, 153v.

51 *Conorte* 1999, 1327, where Matthew 5, 3–9 is commented on, line by line.

development.<sup>52</sup> The Gospel of the day and the echo of Gregory the Great's homily also underly, then, this second section of the sermon, which in turn is freer in its breadth and development. This occurs until the typical transition in which the earthly liturgy is described as activating its celestial counterpart. In this sermon, this textual point is clear, because there is a kind of closure of the Gospel commentary ("*Indeed, you did not give us the opportunity or time to serve you, nor the age in which we could be shown and taught.*")<sup>53</sup> [That is to say, you did not give us either place nor time to serve you, nor age in which to show it us and teach it to us]) after which one reads the following:

Y declaró el Señor diciendo que como en este mismo día de la Septuagésima fuese hecha memoria en la tierra de la pasión muy cruda y amarga que él padeció en el tiempo que él estaba en este destierro, y la memoria que hacían y hacen cada año era cerrar el *Aleluia* y cesar el *Te Deum laudamus* (sic) y la *Gloria* de la misa, y poner luto en los altares y en los ornamentos que se revisten los sacerdotes. Y viendo los santos ángeles y los gloriosos santos y santas cómo acá en la tierra se hacía esta memoria, fueron delante la divina majestad y dijeron: "Oh Señor Dios todopoderoso, danos licencia para que pongamos luto y hagamos alguna remembranza de la pasión tan amarga que tú padeciste..."<sup>54</sup>

[And the Lord proclaimed that on this very day of Septuagesima shall be remembered throughout the earth the very cruel and bitter Passion that he suffered in the time that he was in exile. The commemoration that has been and is made every year is by concluding the *Alleluia* and ceasing to (sing) the *Te Deum laudamus* (sic) and the *Gloria* during the Mass, and by putting mourning on the altars and on the vestments the priests wear. And the holy angels and the male and female saints in glory, seeing how here on earth this commemoration was made, went in front of the divine majesty and said: "Oh Lord God almighty, grant us leave that we may put on mourning and make some commemoration of the very bitter Passion that you suffered..."]

A rhetorical question posed later in this sermon, "*¿Qué otra cosa es este mundo sino un espejo del cielo?*"<sup>55</sup> [What is this world but a mirror of heaven?] is illus-

52 *Conorte* 1999, 446–449.

53 There are abundant cases: for example, a similar transition is found in *Conorte* 1999, 245.

54 Vatican manuscript, 156r/v.

55 Vatican manuscript, 166r; *Conorte* 1999, 463.



trated, above all, in the reflections of the earthly liturgy in the celestial realm (or vice versa). The allusion to hymns normally sung during the Mass (*Aleluya* and *Gloria*) and the Office (*Te Deum laudamus*), which are omitted on Septuagesima Sunday, and the liturgical uses of the same ritual (“*poner luto en los altares y en los ornamentos que se revisten los sacerdotes*” [by putting mourning on the altars and on the vestments the priests wear]) is a continuation of the commentary on the readings of the day.<sup>56</sup> It is the terrestrial liturgy that awakens the celebrations in the celestial paradise and, here, the heavenly beings propose to imitate the former, which the divinity rejects: “*No curéis, mis amigos, de poner ahora luto por mí, ni hacer llantos dolorosos como decís, porque ya estoy glorificado y alegre y consolado, y ya se acaba mi luto y mi pasión.*”<sup>57</sup> [Do not bother, my friends, to put on mourning for me now, nor make the doleful laments you mention, because I am already in glory and happy and consoled, and my mourning and my passion are over.] In fact, the images that the sermon depicts from this point configure the plane on which Juana’s visionary capacities are triggered, through a type of preaching that goes beyond the exegetic-systematic method that I discussed earlier. It would be excessive, given its length, to make a detailed commentary of the sermon here. One example will suffice.

In the scenes that follow, at the petition of the divinity, the angels and the blessed present a “*mayordomo que administrase su hacienda y tuviese cuidado de ella*”<sup>58</sup> [steward who administers his estate and takes care of it]. In fact, after rejecting the offers of the celestial beings to become the *mayordomo*, Christ makes an “*imagen y figura del mismo Dios*” [image and figure of God himself] out of ivory which “*será imagen y no cosa viviente*” [will be image and not a living thing], that will come alive through divine will.<sup>59</sup> When Christ orders it, this image is activated, taking the form of the Christ of the Passion, bleeding, showing his wounds, and exhorting the faithful with words such as these:

“¡Ahé! ¡ahé! ¡Que yo soy el mayordomo y procurador del poderoso Dios y vengo de su parte a alquilar peones que vengan a cavar en su viña! ¡Ea! ¿Quién quiere venir a cavar a la viña del Señor? ¡Ea! ¡Que traigo sus cartas y sus sellos! Y diciendo esta imagen estas palabras, a deshora apareció

56 This allusion to the *Alleluia*, *Te Deum laudamus* and *Gloria* in the sermon could be influenced by the words which are dedicated to them in the sermon included in *Epistolas*, xxxv, for the fact that they are not sung on this day.

57 Vatican manuscript, 156v.

58 Vatican manuscript, 157r.

59 Vatican manuscript, 158r and 158v, respectively; *Conorte* 1999, 452 and 453, *idem*.

con un libro en su mano, en el cual libro traía escritos, con letras de oro, todos los evangelios y ejemplos y palabras, que nuestro Señor Jesucristo habló y dijo por su sagrada boca. Y venía abriendo el libro y mostrando las señales de las llagas que traía en los pies y manos y costado y en todo el cuerpo. [...] “¡Ea! ¡Que la viña es la pasión y que las cartas son los santos evangelios y Escrituras que de él están escritas!” [...] Salían e parecían a deshora muchedumbre de gentes, unos en procesiones cantando y rezando oraciones y salmos, y otros de rodillas hiriéndose en los pechos, conociéndose por pecadores.<sup>60</sup>

[Look! Look! I am the steward and representative of Almighty God and I come on his behalf to hire workers to go and hoe his vineyard! Hey! Who wishes to come and dig in the vineyard of the Lord? Hey! I bring his missives and his seals! And as the figure spoke these words, he suddenly appeared with a book in his hand, in which book was written in letters of gold all the Gospels and parables and words that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke and said through his holy mouth. And opening the book and showing the signs of the wounds he had in his feet and hands and side and in all his body (...) (He said:) “Hey! The vine is the Passion and the missives are the holy Gospels and Scriptures that are written of Him!” (...) A multitude of people went out and appeared suddenly, some in processions singing and reciting prayers and psalms, and others on their knees beating themselves on their chests, knowing themselves to be sinners.]

As is clear, the connection with the Gospel of the day is maintained through the function of this “*mayordomo*” [steward], who here represents a kind of proxy of a landowner who through legally issued documents (“*cartas y... sellos*” [letters and... seals]) “[*viene a*] *alquilar peones que vayan a cavar en su viña*” [(comes to) hire workers to go and hoe his vineyard]. As I have said, the connection with the earlier Gospel commentary is clear; however, the method used here is quite different from the systematic nature of the exegesis at the start of the sermon. At this point, the visions themselves constitute the commentary. Comprehension, in this sense, is facilitated through the interpretive hinge provided by the glosses (that is to say, the explanations of the visionary material headed by “*a significar*”). In the final extract quoted, there is an example of how the same vision includes its correct interpretation. If the “*cartas y sus sellos*” materialize in the form of a book in the hands of the

60 Vatican manuscript, 160v-161r; *Conorte* 1999, 456.

steward, this will contain “*los evangelios y ejemplos y palabras, que nuestro Señor Jesucristo habló y dijo por su sagrada boca*” [the Gospels and parables and words that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke and said through his holy mouth], and the wounds of the Passion that are open in his body will be identified with the vine that needs workers. In fact, the text declares later the act of hoeing in the vineyard “*conviene a saber en mi pasión, que es la viña donde han de cavar todos los fieles cristianos*”<sup>61</sup> [namely, in my Passion, which is the vineyard where all faithful Christians must hoe].

#### 4.2 *In festo S. Laurentii Martyris*

The general structure of the sermon that I have examined, which opens with a commentary explicitly made on a main text linked to the liturgy of the day, and which later describes the celestial festivities, occurs infrequently in the *Conorte*. Nevertheless, few sermons have been preserved as completely as this one, which seems to present aspects of how the content is structured and the particular method of commentary, which might correspond to idiosyncratic characteristics of a preaching session by Juana. In what follows, I will briefly analyse another piece with similar features. This is the sermon numbered 43 in the El Escorial manuscript, one of the two that concerns Saint Lawrence, whose feast falls on 10 August. It opens:

Hablando el Señor un día del glorioso mártir san Lorente dijo que a la hora de los maitines oyó las voces de los que cantaban y decían aquellas palabras que dice el apóstol en su epístola, que *Quien siembra bendiciones, bendiciones recogerá* (2 Corintios 9,6) y quien siembra maldiciones, maldiciones cogerá. Y quien hiciere buenas obras y diere buenos ejemplos, el Señor le galardonará y quien hiciere malas obras y diere malos ejemplos, por semejante está la justicia de Dios aparejada para le ejecutar y castigar. [...]<sup>62</sup>

[The Lord speaking one day of the glorious martyr Saint Lawrence said that at the hour of Matins he heard the voices of those who were singing and saying those words spoken by the apostle in his epistle: that *he who soweth in blessings shall reap blessings* (2 Corinthians 9,6), and he who sows curses shall reap curses. And he who performs good deeds and

61 Vatican manuscript, 161r; *Conorte* 1999, 456–457.

62 There is a lacuna in the Vatican manuscript on the folios 503v–512v and the remaining folios are in a poor state of preservation, so I transcribe this sermon from the El Escorial manuscript, in this case 302v; *Conorte* 1999, 1061.

sets good examples, the Lord will reward him, and he who performs bad deeds and sets bad examples, then the justice of God is prepared to execute and punish him.]

And, after a brief commentary:

Y declaró el Señor diciendo que el evangelio que se canta en la fiesta de este glorioso mártir, el cual dice que *si el grano del trigo no fuere muerto no producirá fruto y si fuere muerto dará fruto de ciento por uno* [paráfrasis de Juan 12,24–25], porque el grano que está en tierra, si no es muerto, no puede echar fruto ni aprovechar sino a sí solo. Y, si fuere muerto, no solamente aprovechará a sí mismo, más aún producirá fruto con que muchos sean mantenidos. Y así hizo este glorioso mártir, que muriendo al mundo y a los vicios y deleites de él, y dando su cuerpo a muchos tormentos y martirios, murió su grano y dio fruto de ciento por uno, pues, por sus ejemplos y doctrinas, convirtió mucha gente viéndole a él cómo iba tan fuerte y alegre a padecer los martirios.<sup>63</sup>

[And the Lord proclaimed that the Gospel that is sung in the feast of this glorious martyr, which says that *if a grain of wheat does not die it will not bear fruit and if it dies it will produce fruit one hundred-fold* (paraphrase of John 12,24–25), because the grain that is in the earth, if it is not dead, cannot bear fruit for or give advantage to anyone except itself. And, if it were dead, not only does it give advantage to itself but it even will bear fruit that will support many people. And this what this glorious martyr did, who, in dying to the world and its vices and delights and giving up his body to much torment and martyrdom, his grain died and bore fruit one hundred-fold since by his examples and doctrines he converted many people who saw him so strong and taking joy in martyrdom.]

As is explicitly stated, the preacher quotes a Castilian version of the parable from the epistle read *In festo S. Laurentii Martyris* (2 Cor. 9,6)<sup>64</sup> and, later, part of the Gospel read on this feast (Jn 12,24–26).<sup>65</sup> Textually, the wording of the

63 El Escorial manuscript, 303v; *Conorte* 1999, 1062.

64 *Breviarium toletanum*, 367r. "Index epistolarum et evangeliorum", 630, c. 2. "[Q]ui parce seminat, parce et metet: et qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet".

65 *Breviarium toletanum*, 366v. "Index epistolarum et evangeliorum", 630, c. 2. "Amen, amen dico vobis, nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram, mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet: si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert. Qui amat animam suam, perdet eam; et qui odit animam suam in hoc mundo, in vitam aeternam custodit eam".

epistle in the version of the verses following 2 Cor. 9,6 is quite free and does not depend (at least not directly) on that of *Epístolas y evangelios*. As well as amplifying 2 Cor. 9,6 (with “*quien siembre maldiciones, maldiciones cogerá*” [whoever sows curses will reap curses]), the mention of the good works rewarded by God probably alludes to 2 Cor. 9,7 (“*hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus*”) while the allusion to the “*justicia de Dios*” is almost certainly anchored in 2 Cor. 9,8 (“*justitia ejus manet in saeculum saeculi*”).

Just after quoting from the epistle of the day followed by a brief exegesis, Juana continues with a commentary on Jn 12,24–26: “*Y de los que así mueren, dijo el Señor, de su grano es dicha aquella palabra del santo Evangelio que quien pierde su ánima la halla...*”<sup>66</sup> [And of those who die in this way, said the Lord, it is said in the Holy Gospel regarding their grain that whoever loses his soul shall find it...]. Let us not forget that the exegesis of this verse (Jn 12,25) is developed in the breviary in the *lectio VIII* of the feast of Saint Lawrence, in a passage of a homily by Saint Augustine, so both Juana and her community would have heard it.<sup>67</sup> This verse, in turn, is the basis of an antiphon of the *Commune unius Martyris*, which ought be sung on that day together with the New Testament texts quoted above.<sup>68</sup>

These interconnections to texts that are read, sung, and/or heard by the community are not for the sake of simply presenting a list of sources; rather, it is my attempt to approach the web of references that the women religious knew first hand, and from which they constructed the meaning of the sermon. In fact, this intertwining of liturgical texts often centers around an image that the abbess develops in a visionary manner. These texts create a cultural backdrop that is shared through the community’s performance of the divine office, facilitating an association of ideas conveyed through a verbal-musical emotional memory that largely eludes us today. Singing and reciting these liturgical texts not only involves the possibility of meditating on them, as Jones has shown in the case of Helfta, but also serves as the basis of a performative exegesis, which interrelates and expands the texts through an inspired discourse.<sup>69</sup>

66 El Escorial manuscript, 303v.

67 *Breviarium toletanum*, 366v.

68 See Cantus ID 004469, *Cantus: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant – Inventories of Chant Sources*. Directed by D. Lacoste (2011–), T. Bailey (1997–2010), and R. Steiner (1987–1996). Web developer, J. Koláček (2011–). Available from <<https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/>>. [Accessed, 14/07/2023], antiphon in the antiphonary of the Catedral de Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares, 44: “*Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam: qui autem perdiderit animam suam propter me, inveniet eam*”.

69 In fact, it functions in a similar way to the analysis made by Jones (“Hostia jubilationis”, 1013) in the context of Helfta: “Liturgical performances permeate Gertrud’s devotions,

The theme that dominates this sermon is the presentation of Lawrence and the other martyrs as exemplars to imitate, as expressed in the Gospel text of the day, in which they are portrayed as “*capitanes de toda la cristiandad*” [captains of all Christianity].<sup>70</sup> This image is realised through a visionary commentary that describes the celestial celebrations. In these, the martyr is presented “*muy arreado y vestido con vestiduras muy resplandecientes, labradas de diversidad de labores y colores, y puesta sobre su cabeza una corona aureola, y en un caballo muy lindo*” [very well arrayed and dressed in dazzling garments which were worked with a variety of embroideries and colours, and on his head there was a golden crown, and (he was) on a very beautiful horse]. The saint later performs actions that are based on an invitation by Christ, also mounted “*en un caballo muy arreado y apuesto y resplandeciente*” [on a very well-groomed and resplendent horse], to “*escaramuzar*” with him and the rest of the martyrs.<sup>71</sup> These fights on flying horses were explained as: “*no son de manera de las guerras y peleas que acá en la tierra hacen los hombres, [...] mas para honra y alabanza de Dios y consolación y gozo de los bienaventurados*”<sup>72</sup> [they are not of the manner of the wars and fights that men make here on earth, (...) but for the honour and praise of God and the consolation and joy of the blessed]. Later, during a banquet in the castle of Christ, the following scene takes place:

Y dijo el Señor que llamó él a san Lorente y le dijo: “Daca tu cetro”. Y así como él le tomó la mano, nació en él una espiga muy grande y muy hermosa y los granos de ella eran colorados como corales muy finos. Y luego dijo él a san Lorente: “Toma, siembra, sembrador”. Y el glorioso san Lorente cogió la espiga del cetro y desgranóla sobre los platos y cálices y tazas que estaban puestas en las mesas. Y luego a deshora nacieron, de aquellos granos que él sembró, muchas y muy hermosas y olorosas florestas. Y, a todos los que allí estaban mandó que cogiesen grandes manojos de aquellas hermosas y olorosas flores y se las llevasen a ofrecer a él. A significar que el glorioso san Lorente sembró bendiciones y, por semejante, nacieron florestas de rosas y flores y lirios de consolaciones y

---

most often as an organizational element [...] Psalm texts and musical lines provide structure and focus contemplation.”

70 El Escorial manuscript, 302v; *Conorte* 1999, 1061.

71 El Escorial manuscript, 304r; *Conorte* 1999, 1064. Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, s.v. “*escaramuza*”: “*es un cierto género de pelea entre los jinetes o cavallos ligeros, que van picando de rodeo: unas vezes acometiendo y otras huyendo con gran destreza y ligereza*” [is a certain typology of fighting between horsemen or light horses, “*picando de rodeo*”: sometimes attacking and other times fleeing with great skill and agility].

72 El Escorial manuscript, 304v; *Conorte* 1999, 1065.

bendiciones [...] Y dijo el Señor que la espiga que él hizo nacer del cetro del glorioso mártir significaba el mismo san Lorente, el cual fue grano muerto e hizo fruto de ciento por uno.<sup>73</sup>

[And the Lord spoke and called Saint Lawrence and told him: "Give me your sceptre". When (the Lord) took his hand, a very large and beautiful ear of wheat whose grains were coloured like very exquisite coral germinated in (Lawrence). And then he said to Saint Laurence: "Take (and) sow, sower". And the glorious Saint Laurence took the ear of wheat from the sceptre and shelled it over the plates and chalices and cups that were put on the tables. And then suddenly from those grains that he had sown germinated many very beautiful and fragrant glades. And he ordered all those who were there to gather great bundles of those beautiful and fragrant flowers and bring them as an offering to him. This signifies that the glorious Saint Laurence sowed blessings and, as a result, glades of roses and flowers and lilies (which give) consolation and blessing grew (...) And the Lord said that the ear of wheat that he caused to be born from the sceptre of the glorious martyr signified Saint Laurence himself, who was the dead grain (of wheat) and bore fruit a hundred-fold.]

Two aspects of this passage are of particular interest here. First, how it illustrates liturgical anchoring. It is clear that Christ's words to Lawrence before the ear of wheat germinates ("*siembra, sembrador*" [sow, sower]) takes up the agricultural image of the epistle and Gospel of the day (2 Cor. 6,10 and Jn, 12,24–26, respectively), given in Castilian at the start of the sermon.<sup>74</sup> Second, how the commentary developed here shifts from the regularity that we saw in the case of the *Visitatio Beata Maria Virginis*, by being made directly through the images that emerge in the vision. The liturgical exegesis is developed through the image of the ear of wheat that the saint shells and scatters and which blooms on the tableware. This figurative language echoes biblical parables such as that of the sower; the commentary and interpretation based on allegoresis is made explicit in the text through its gloss, headed by "*a significar*" [meaning]. Not by accident, parables were perceived in the Middle Ages as authentic preachings of Christ collected by the evangelists. The continuity traced with Juana's preaching is evident here.<sup>75</sup>

73 El Escorial manuscript, 305r; *Conorte* 1999, 1066.

74 *Breviarium toletanum*, 365v y 367r, respectively.

75 S. L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1987. I thank Pietro Delcorno for this idea.



### 4.3 *In Dominica Quadragesimae*

Finally, I would like to present another example of a sermon that makes a systematic commentary on the Gospel of the day, but through a re-creation of the Gospel narrative in a similar manner to the *Meditationes Vite Christi*.<sup>76</sup> It opens:

Y otra vez, hablando el Señor sobre el evangelio que dice *fue llevado Jesús por el Espíritu Santo al desierto* (Mateo 4,1) y dijo que cómo en el reino de los cielos hay tan gran muchedumbre de ángeles y de santos en cada una de las jerarquías les hacen sus oficios y fiestas de su manera. Y acordándose los santos ángeles de las tribulaciones que él padeció en este mundo, en especial de los cuarenta días que él estuvo ayunando en el desierto, acordaron, en la jerarquía de las Virtudes, de le hacer fiesta y memoria. Y dijeron: “Oh Señor Dios todopoderoso, ¿qué figura mandas que hagamos o a quién compararemos el mundo que tantas penas te dio, y harto frío y calor demasiado, y hambre y sed y cansancio padeciste en él?”<sup>77</sup>

[And another time, the Lord, speaking about the Gospel which says that *Jesus was led up by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness* (Matthew 4,1), said how in the Kingdom of Heaven there is a multitude of angels and of saints in each one of the (angelic) hierarchies and each celebrates their offices and feasts in their own manner. And the holy angels, remembering the tribulations that he suffered in this world and especially the forty days that he was fasting in the desert, came to an agreement that the (angelic) hierarchy of the Virtues would perform a feast and commemoration. And they said: “Oh Lord God Almighty, what pageant do you command us to perform or how shall we celebrate (a feast) comparable to the world that gave you so many pains and so much cold and too much heat, and the hunger and thirst and weariness that you suffered in it?”]

As in the previous examples, the passage corresponds to the Gospel of the day (Mt 4,1–11), which places this sermon in context.<sup>78</sup> The text that comments (the pericope, Mt 4,1) indicates what should be preached on the first Sunday of Lent. Undoubtedly, Juana's performance took place at some point following the reading of the Gospel, probably after the Mass had finished, when the

76 On the introduction of the *Meditationes Vite Christi* to Castile, see Robinson, *Imagining the Passion*.

77 Vatican manuscript, 221v; *Conorte* 1999, 547.

78 *Breviarium toletanum*, 67r. “Index epistolarum et evangeliorum”.

audience still had the text fresh in their minds. This would have strengthened the text's function as a form of biblical commentary through its liturgical use. The explicit vocabulary used in the question made by the "*santos ángeles*" [holy angels] ("*figura*", "*compararemos*" [figure, shall we compare]) implies an awareness that the content of the vision will build images with a figurative meaning, that is to say, that the vision is constructed through allegoresis. Thus, the biblical desert of the temptations of Jesus becomes a figurative desert that, as the sermon progresses, the same angels will convert into a "*huerto partido en dos partes*" [vegetable garden split into two parts], in which one part resembles an orchard and the other resembles Hell.<sup>79</sup> Of course, the meanings to be ascribed to this figurative language are detailed as the discourse is built up, through the typical "*a significar*" [meaning] or similar formulas.<sup>80</sup>

If the sermon began by citing and commenting on Mt 4,1 in a visionary way, it also does so later with the rest of the Gospel, in the following sequence: Mt 4,3 "*Si eres el Hijo de Dios, di a estas piedras que se tornen pan*" [If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread] (on two occasions); Mt 4,4 "*no d[e solo de pan vive el hombre]*"<sup>81</sup>, *mas de la palabra que procede de la boca de Dios*" [Man (shall not live by bread alone), but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God]; Mt 4,6 "*Derríbate de ahí abajo, que escrito es [que... man] dó Dios a sus ángeles de ti que te lleven en las manos porque no te hieras*" [Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, so that you shall not be injured]; Mt 4,7: "*No tentarás al Señor Dios tuyo*" [Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God]; and, finally, Mt 4,10: "*Al Señor, Dios tuyo, adorarás y a él solo servirás*" [Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve].<sup>82</sup>

This continuity is achieved in the same way as in the first sermon discussed above, through its inclusion within a wider narrative. The basis of the translation of these verses into Castilian is, once again, *Epístolas y evangelios*. However, unlike the text from the *Song of Songs* in relation to the *Visitatio Beatae Mariae Virginis*, as shown in the first example above, there are certain variants here.<sup>83</sup> Why does this occur? The most logical answer may be that these

79 Conorte 1999, 554.

80 For example, in Conorte 1999, 456.

81 The Vatican manuscript is punctured in certain places, creatig lacunae, but its text can be reconstructed using the rest of the surviving writing and the help of the El Escorial manuscript, which corresponds to it with minimal variations.

82 Vatican manuscript, 225r–226; Conorte 1999, 551–552; *Breviarium toletanum*, 67r.

83 *Epístolas y evangelios* 1506, 48r read: Mt 4, 3 "*Si eres el Hijo de Dios, di a estas piedras que se hagan panes*"; Mt 4, 4 "*No solo de pan vive el hombre, mas en toda la palabra de la boca de*

variants were produced when transcribing from memory. The structure and vocabulary of the base text would remain more or less the same as in *Epístolas y evangelios*, but the quotation during the preaching and/or during the transcription or the editing may have been altered.

In this case the quoted passages are articulated as part of a new Gospel narrative. In turn, this dramatization has a clear Franciscan roots, corresponding to the movement of the affects of the audience sought specially by the mendicant preachers. This approach is related to the forms adopted by the “semi-dramatic sermon” and, moreover, the chronology for the dissemination of affective devotion coincides with the standards that Robinson has proposed for Castile.<sup>84</sup> While this type of Gospel re-creation has an obvious spectacular component intended to “hook” its public, it should not be forgotten that what underlies this is the exegesis of the biblical passage through the vision of what occurs in heaven.<sup>85</sup> For example, after Satan has disappeared from the desert, a multitude of angels sent by God arrive there, which is interpreted as:

Esto a significar que cuando alguna persona ha sido tentada y combatida de los demonios y los ha vencido fuerte y esforzadamente, luego envía el poderoso Dios los ángeles que esfuercen y el Espíritu Santo que le alumbre y le enseñe todo lo que ha de hacer y creer y obrar.<sup>86</sup>

[This means that when some person has been tempted and fought against demons and has beaten them strongly and vigorously, then almighty God sends angels to reinforce him and the Holy Spirit to enlighten and teach him all that he is to do and believe and act.]

Once again, “*a significar*” [meaning] here marks the allegorical codification of the passage.

---

*Dios que procede*” (note also the slight change in the syntactic order); Mt 4, 6 “Si eres hijo de Dios, despéñate. Ca escrito es que mandó a sus ángeles de ti y en las manos te llevarán porque no te hieras...” [Epístolas y evangelios 1550: “Despéñate de aquí abajo, que escrito es que mandó Dios a sus ángeles de ti y en las manos te llevarán porque no te lastimes...”], although the word “*derribando*” appears a little later.

84 Robinson, *Imagining the Passion*, 254 and 373.

85 For an analysis of the “autos” present in the *Conorte*, see R. E. Surtz, *El libro del Conorte*, Barcelona, Puvill, 1982 and R. Sanmartín Bastida, “La puesta en escena de la historia sagrada a comienzos del siglo XVI: La batalla de los ángeles en la dramaturgia visionaria de Juana de la Cruz”, *Renaissanceforum*, XIII (2018), 185–210.

86 Vatican manuscript, 226v; *Conorte* 1999, 553.

## 5 Conclusions

“Liturgical sources have proved useful not merely on establishing context, but also for explaining peculiarities in sermons themselves.”  
(A. Thompson, “From Texts to Preaching”, in C. Muessig [ed.], 2002, 27–28)

Indeed, the liturgical celebration runs through the *Conorte*. The daily performance of the Mass and divine office by the community established an imaginary articulated in the specular reality of earth and heaven. These two spaces are connected in a precise way by the liturgical chant. I have shown how this *religatio* is presented in the text, through the images of the turtledoves, whose voices ascend to Heaven and are captured there by the celestial inhabitants, who replicate these celebrations in their own way. This liturgy in Paradise, which Juana narrates live during her ecstasy, composes a visionary commentary that presupposes the allegorical reading of the earthly celebration. This is what Emmelius termed *Liturgieexegese* in the context of Helfta.<sup>87</sup>

Additionally, I have proposed an example and three case studies that show how this liturgical-visionary exegesis is carried out through the texts of the Mass or the *officium divinum*.<sup>88</sup> The first example, based on the epistle of the *Visitatio Beatae Mariae Virginis*, confronts us with, on the one hand, the “*declaración*” (that is to say, the exposition of the allegorical reading) of a text sung during the Mass. Juana assumes here one of her roles as parish priest, preaching her commentary on the Bible through her liturgical mediation. The extracts that form the basis of this sermon were almost certainly read at an earlier point of the Mass and she takes them up again, giving them a new meaning that is transferred to the community and which, little by little, builds the *Conorte*.

As I have discussed in the second point, it is impossible to know the exact form that this preached commentary took, given the quantity of filters that mediate between its performance and its textualization in the surviving sermon. These filters, primarily articulated by the group of women religious who made up the scribal team, reinterpret and reauthor specific sections of the preaching they were able to attend. Many of the parts selected would have

87 Emmelius, “Mäntel der Seele”, 172.

88 This use of texts read or sung during the celebrations as the basis of the sermon is proven by a more “standard” (at least in the visionary-structural sense) preaching such as that of Vicent Ferrer who “*sigue la rigurosa secuencia evangélica; el uso del breviario y las antífonas en él incluidas*” [It follows the rigorous Gospel sequence; the use of the breviary and the antiphons included therein], Cátedra, *Sermón, sociedad y literatura*, 273.

been remembered through implicit mnemonic values, such as the images that are structured internally, the biblical scenes dramatized through affective details and how they were woven into a memorable narrative thread. However, the reason why the women religious chose to retain certain parts while discarding others is generally unclear. What is known is that many passages of the *Conorte* exhibit a systematic approach in their commentary, likely derived from Juana's original preaching. Thus, the apparent disorder in the sermons must be weighed against the discernible presence of a pre-existing exegetical method. This becomes evident through the analysis of the biblical-liturgical text (sometimes verse by verse) in the Castilian version of *Epístolas y evangelios*.

The circulation of this lectionary-homiliary within the walls of the convent speaks of the community's access to and management of a fragmented Bible in the vernacular, which reveals this religious house as a "knowledge space".<sup>89</sup> Even though the women's specific uses of this liturgical work in this context are hypothetical, it is clear that it involved in the redaction/editing of the sermons of the *Conorte*. *Epístolas y evangelios* was circulating, then, through the convent and was used by the women religious, who sometimes modified the Castilian version of the lectionary while working on the redaction of specific sermons. On the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine these Franciscan tertiaries making use of this book as private devotional reading or reading it aloud during meals in the refectory. In particular, the handling of the biblical texts by Juana may perhaps have involved meditation, contemplation and the use of the subsequent material in the preaching, in a way similar to that of Domenica da Paradiso during the same period in Florence. Improvisation involves, as tends to happen, prior preparation.

As well as the famous lectionary-devotional book, in my examination it is clear that part of the commentary is based on the *lectiones* of the *Breviarium romanum*, that is to say on the texts that the religious read and sang during the divine office. The liturgical references inserted into the text of the sermons not only prove that the basis of the exegetical commentary was the feast of the day, but some elements also function as memory triggers. Texts that are sung or that had been sung in the Mass or the divine office of that day are cited during the vision, forming part of its commentary, and at the same time maintaining a specific community knowledge that the religious acquired through the liturgy. The case analyses that I have developed here demonstrate that on occasions Juana and her sisters construct their discourse directly using these texts. This does not imply a mere resonance, but the justification of the development of

---

89 Hamburger, Schlotheuber, Marti, and Fassler, *Latin Learning*, 90.

the *Conorte* as a collection of the convent's liturgical wisdom. In one of the passages of the sermon on Septuagesima Sunday, allusions to specific practices (not singing the *Alleluia*, the *Te Deum laudamus*, and the *Gloria* on that specific day) once again present the sermons as commentaries on the ritual. To this should be added the presence in the *Conorte* of various *autos* or stagings determined by the feasts of the calendar, which should also be understood in the same way. Finally, a question that remains unanswered for the time being is whether this method can be extrapolated to the whole sermon book. Admittedly, I have analysed passages here where this interrelation is most clearly demonstrated. The *Conorte*, by contrast, is filled with sermons that may seem unresponsive to this method of interpretation; understanding them by applying this reading approach will form the foundation for future work.

In any case, the visionary imagination, which was the support for Juana's teaching, generates a commentary based on images, and in the construction of scenes, that is difficult to be confined to familiar and pre-controlled structures. While the systematicity of some passages is clear enough, the bulk of the sermons are composed of an imaginary flow that possesses its own internal logic and which soon overflows its background structures. The essence of the *Conorte's* liturgical exegesis is the flowering of images that comment on a specific scriptural passage, constructing a meaning based on allegoresis.

## Conclusions

I began this book by analysing the paradox of a new incarnation of Christ within the mysterious cavity of Juana's mouth. There, the flesh of the Son fused with the flesh of the abbess in the invisible articulations of her tongue, surviving in an ambiguous materiality—the materiality of the word. The word is first spoken aloud as prophetic preaching and then collectively transcribed into writing. This trinity of transformations (incarnation in the word, flesh in the voice, written voice in a codex) encapsulates the main theme of these pages: the construction of community memory by the Franciscan tertiaries of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz.

In the first chapter I approached the history of the *Conorte* through the critical reconstruction of the reception of the sermons. This is an urgent line of inquiry, as the study of Juana's life and work has been strongly influenced by the interests surrounding her canonization process. As I have demonstrated, the actions of various groups of the faithful committed to completing this process determined not only *how* we interpret certain texts but also *what* texts we read today. Only by examining this historical reception can one understand what role Juana's "writings" played in the canonization process, and how they determined the migration of one of the manuscripts of the *Conorte* to the Vatican in the 17th century, the cessation of the canonization process in the 18th century, and the publication of an edition of the El Escorial codex in the 20th century. The importance of establishing a clear overview of the vicissitudes surrounding the two surviving manuscripts of the *Conorte* is essential and lays the foundation for the rest of the book's analysis. Undoubtedly, the efforts toward the canonization of "la santa Juana" helped to revitalize her studies in the 20th century. However, this devotional perspective has blurred the *Conorte* as a cultural artifact primarily created by women. To this end, I have sought to emphasize that this sermonary is a unicum in Hispanic culture and, at the same time, one of the most extensive compilations of sermons by women in Western literature.

One of the issues most obscured by the centuries of discussion surrounding the authorship and validity of Juana's sermons is that of collective authorship. Although the name of María Evangelista is frequently mentioned in studies of the *Conorte*, the implications of her work, together with other tertiaries (cited in the documents of the canonization process, in the hagiographies and in the sermonary itself), are usually left aside or receive little critical attention. The existence of two proper names, Juana de la Cruz as author of the sermons, together with María Evangelista as their sole transcriber, takes us back to a



simple scheme of collaboration that avoids the complexity typical of a text that was a product of the particular cultural and spiritual milieu of the decades around 1500. In the case of Juana, a living saint famous since the 15th century, whose cult has survived into the 21st century, one can understand the reductionism: it is easier to point to a *Conorte by* Juana de la Cruz than to a *Conorte of* Juana de la Cruz, in which authorship and redactional processes are complex and entangled. Claiming that the work is *by* Juana apparently leaves the authorship relationship intact, endowing the text with a false aura of stability and completeness. This postpones or simply evades the interpretation of certain features that are constitutive of the text, such as the interactions between orality and writing, the elucidation of the methods of transcription and editing, the contrast between preaching and sermon, or the attempts to reconstruct the performances underlying the text.

All of these issues highlight the need for a confrontation with otherness, in contrast to interpretations that emphasize the prestige of individual authorship and the extraordinary subject, thereby overshadowing concepts such as group work, collective production, and variable text. While it is true that texts of Western mysticism are often attributed to the authorship of charismatic figures, the processes through which these works reach us as more or less “stable objects” (the text, the codex, the edition) involve the contributions of diverse individuals, communities, or groups, often disconnected in time and space. This complexity calls for nuanced interpretations that employ consistent, flexible, and interdisciplinary methodologies tailored to diverse interpretive needs. Perspectives of this kind should enhance the scholarly analysis of mysticism as a literary phenomenon in various contexts in the future.

In the second chapter, I address the problem of the composition of the book from a gender perspective. This is an issue that I have not wanted to separate from two lines of interpretation: first, the study of the collectivity behind the transition from performance to text; and second, the need for a transnational perspective. Juana de la Cruz, along with other key figures of Hispanic mysticism such as Teresa de Jesus and Juan de la Cruz, has often been examined within the narrow confines of a Hispanism in which they have been regarded as authors reflecting a particular national character. Contemporary geographical and ideological borders have thus defined specific literary boundaries. From my perspective, it is essential to broaden our focus and establish comparisons that transcend overly strict chronologies and geographies. The comparative method enables us to identify similarities and explore the differences in the discourse expressed by (groups of) women across various contexts and time periods. While it is evident that from a quantitative point of view mystic, visionary experiences are exceptional in the vibrant landscape of European

convents, nevertheless, prophetic discourse, as defined by Zarri, represents one of the two main avenues through which religious women in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period could engage with public speech. Comparing the surviving traces of female prophecy, therefore, is essential for deepening our understanding of the characteristics of these discourses through an enriched diachronic perspective.

In my research, I have prioritized comparison with the activities of other female communities where the collection of sermons was common, because examination of feminine environments unveils shared practices. In this context, the gathering of the words from a charismatic preaching *intra muros* is conceived as a way of safeguarding both the performances and the implicit knowledge addressed to the community, thereby shaping its collective memory. This reconstruction of group memory involves different dynamics and techniques of textualization, particularly the use of mnemotechnics, the practice of summarizing key aspects of preaching into brief, disjointed notes, and the amalgamation of different phases of writing. In the case of the *Conorte*, the final textual bricolage appears to result from the circulation of information within a closed circuit—the community—in which the sermonary was conceived as a “*raccolto*” [collection], meaning it served as the final repository for individually preserved elements of Juana’s preaching. Even if some of these characteristics can be found in the *reportationes* of extra-conventual preachers, it is the repeated commentary of the same texts arising from the liturgical calendar that gives specificity to these techniques and to the resulting textual products. The central role of liturgy as a key means of creating, transmitting, and preserving knowledge within feminine communities emerges as one of the main characteristics highlighted here, aligning with research that has demonstrated similar functions of the liturgy in other contexts.

The first step in establishing comparisons about the textualization of preaching in feminine religious houses was to conceive the *Conorte* as the outcome of processes that extend beyond the immediate experience of God by a female mystic, prophet, or visionary. This is not only about situating Juana within a transnational tradition, but also about the necessity of comparing the textual traces of the *Conorte*’s composition with those from other contemporary communities throughout Europe. In this way, the visionary preaching of an abbess is processed not only by the language/s that shape her public discourse, but also by the techniques through which her community represents their experience of her performance. In this sense, the use of artificial memory as a first step in the construction of collective memory, the transcription of fragments of the preaching, the organization of the materials, the layered

authorship or the different redactions, among others, crystallize in legible and tangible artifacts, the codices.

The relative invisibility of these processes beneath dense layers of text should not deter us from exploring them more deeply. As has been well examined in the field of sermon studies, the essential question is what is the relationship between the text and the (probable) performance, that is, how can we reveal the dynamics that lie between a communicative activity that is ephemeral by nature and the written representation that is made of it. In the case of the *Conorte*, the re-examination of the documents of the canonization process, the discovery of revealing passages regarding its writing, and the comparative gaze has allowed me to roughly outline the possible dynamics of this textualization. Given the scarce available materials in this case, I believe that a detailed reconstruction of these dynamics was less important than discussing the possible processes of redaction underlying the texts of the sermons. This approach provides a picture that, although hypothetical, remains consistent with the data collected and the comparisons made. From this perspective, the fabric of the text is revealed and allows us to understand it from the standpoint of its production.

In the third chapter, I aimed to place Juana within the medieval tradition of female revelatory literature, specifically to clarify the traits of feminine public speech in relation to prophecy and, once again, collectivity, this time through liturgy. Experiencing liturgy within a convent of reformed Franciscan tertiaries was an all-encompassing experience that must be taken seriously, both as a historical event and as a hermeneutic key. In religious communities like the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, feast days structured the rhythm of days and years, giving them profound meaning through the daily re-presentation of sacred time. Juana's case is extraordinary in this sense. Her visionary preaching over thirteen years goes beyond the typical liturgical life of thousands of communities of *mulieres religiosae* across the Iberian Peninsula and Europe. These trances, however, did not happen in isolation but within daily ritual practices, from which they arose and to which they were closely tied. This is precisely where liturgical ritual becomes a crucial context for interpreting the *Conorte* and other forms of revelatory literature.

Clearly, most contemporary readers and scholars of religious literature tend to overlook the profound impact of the liturgical life underlying these writings, particularly from a sensory perspective. For instance, from a modern regard, it is difficult to fully appreciate how the sound of bells announcing Christ's resurrection could be so overwhelming that it sent the abbess, listening from her cell, into ecstasy, as described in a passage from *Vida y fin*. Additionally, we may struggle to understand how this vision develops an exegetical commentary on

the rite performed that very day, conveying a message believed to be delivered by the divine to the specific community of the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz. The nuances of these experiences, their connections to the construction of collective memory, and their interactions with the context (architectural, symbolic, musical, performative, devotional) form a multifaceted landscape that merits further exploration. In other disciplines, particularly art history, this development has been underway for years, especially following the so-called “liturgical turn”. In the studies on Medieval and Early Modern religious literature, it is increasingly becoming an essential hermeneutic element that cannot be overlooked.

The challenge of any comparative study lies not only in the method we use for comparison, but also in choosing well which elements to compare. In the combination of female public speech/prophecy, liturgy emerges as the hermeneutic framework that enables us to establish a coherent tradition. For example, the *prophetissa teutonica*, Hildegard von Bingen, embodies a preacher who, on one hand, teaches her sisters within her monastery in her *Expositiones*, while also traveling to German cities to preach publicly using apocalyptic language. Her sermons during these so-called “preaching tours” do not seem to directly follow the liturgical calendar. Hildegard offers a contrast with her correspondent, Elisabeth von Schönau, as Heinzer has shown: Hildegard’s visions are not triggered by ritual, but instead create a new liturgy. As demonstrated through comparisons between the *Conorte* and certain passages by Elisabeth von Schönau, Mechthild von Hackeborn, Hadewijch van Brabant, or Domenica da Paradiso, the context in which the revelations are generated is their liturgical framework; it contains triggers for the visions, and often forms an integral part of the revelation itself. In fact, these revelations were directed toward the community and also influenced the shaping of the sermons and their arrangement within the codex. Thus, the *Conorte* follows the liturgical cycle in its organization in a way that is not incidental, but rather points to its genesis, composition, and likely subsequent use by the women religious by and for whom it was produced.

The use of the Gospels in the fragmented form of *Epístolas y evangelios para todo el año* must also be understood within the needs of the liturgical cycle. These readings were firmly set in the calendar, and those attending Juana’s ecstatic states were well aware of them on the day the abbess delivered her sermon. In this way, the connection between the Gospels and the sermons shows not only that the abbess’s performance was understood as that of a preacher constructing her sermon based on a reading from the Mass, but also that, in the later process of writing (whether of fragments or the “raccolto”), *Epístolas y evangelios* was used to copy passages the abbess had commented

on. This speaks of both literacy and liturgical knowledge within the Convento de Santa María de la Cruz, and opens the door to a better understanding of the agency of religious women's communities in transmitting and preserving their heritage within the walls of their convents.

Note-taking, transcription, initial drafting, bricolage, organization, reorganization, direct use of sources, and other terms lead to a clear conclusion: the collective effort at the Convent de Santa María de la Cruz, mainly represented today by the Vatican codex, points to a collaborative writing project aimed at preserving memory. In this endeavor, literacy, the specialization of copying tasks, and their coordination over an extended period by a group of women were essential. The times when the production of a codex, as it was carried out in *scriptoria*, was exclusively associated with male agency are becoming increasingly distant. Thanks to the Franciscan tertiaries behind the Vatican manuscript—among whom were María Evangelista, Catalina de San Francisco, and Catalina de los Mártires—the word of their abbess reaches us today through her written voice.

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources

### *Manuscripts*

- Madrid, ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO NACIONAL, Inquisición, Legajo 3067.  
Madrid, ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO NACIONAL, Inquisición, Legajo 3069.  
Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS-9661.  
Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. ss. Rituum, Processus 3072.  
Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Congr. ss. Rituum Processus 3074.  
San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS J-II-18.  
San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS K-III-13.

### *Printed Sources*

- Alonso de Villegas, *Adicción a la Tercera Parte del Flos sanctorum: en que se ponen vidas de varones illustres, los quales, aunque no estan canonizados, mas piadosamente se cree dellos que gozan de Dios por auer sido sus vidas famosas en virtudes...*, Huesca, Iuan Perez de Valdiuielso, 1588.  
Angela da Foligno, *Memoriale*, E. Menestò (ed.), Firenze, SISMEL, 2013.  
Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche della Settimana Santa Florence 1425*, M. Bartoli (ed.), Milan, Figlie di S. Paolo, 1995.  
Boon, J. A., and R. E. Surtz (eds.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*, R. E. Surtz and N. Weinert (trans.), Toronto/Tempe, Iter Academic Press/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006.  
*Breviarium ad debite persolvendum divinum officium secundum regulam et consuetudinem sanctae ecclesiae Toletanae Hispaniarum metropolitanae*, Impressum Venetiis per Joannem Hamman, 1492 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Inc/415).  
Catalina de Siena, *Obras de Santa Catalina de Siena. El diálogo*, Á. Morta (ed.), Madrid, BAC, 1955.  
Cátedra, P. M., F. Bautista, and J. M. Valero Moreno (eds.), *“Historias de la divinal victoria de Orán” por Martín de Herrera. Edición en facsímile de la impresa en su taller de Logroño por Arnao Guillén de Brocar en 1510, publicada en conmemoración del quinto centenario de la conquista de Orán (1509)*, San Millán de la Cogolla, Instituto Biblioteca Hispánica/Instituto de historia del libro y de la lectura, 2009.  
Caterina De' Vigri, *I Sermoni*, G. Sgarbi (ed.), Bologna, Giorgio Barchigiani Editore, 1999.

- Codet, C. (ed.), "Edición de la *Suma y breve compilación de cómo han de vivir y conversar las religiosas de Sant Bernardo que biven en los monasterios de la cibdad de Ávila* de Hernando de Talavera (Biblioteca del Escorial, ms. a.1v-29)", *Memorabilia*, 14 (2012), 1–57.
- Daza, A., *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen santa Juana de la Cruz, de la tercera Orden de nuestro Seráfico padre San Francisco. Compuesta por fray Antonio Daza, indigno fraile menor, definidor de la santa provincia de la Concepción y cronista general de la orden*, Valladolid, Juan Godínez de Millis, 1611.
- Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Schriften der Aebte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönaue*, F. W. E. Roth (ed.), Brünn, Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner- und Cistercienser Orden, 1884.
- Epístolas y evangelios con sus sermones y doctrinas para todo el año*, Sevilla, Jacobo Cronenberger, 1506 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 22.B.23).
- García Andrés, I. (ed.), *Juana de la Cruz, El Conhorte: sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, 2 vols., Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española/Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1999.
- Gracián, G., "Diálogos sobre su espíritu", in A. de San Bartolomé, *Obras completas*, ed. J. Urkiza, Burgos, Monte Carmelo, 1998, 265–323.
- Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Lib. I, Homilia XIX, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, Tomus LXXVI, Sanctus Gregorius Magnus, Parisiis, Garnier Fratres Editores, 1902.
- Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, D. Hurst (ed.), Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1990.
- Hildegard von Bingen, *Expositiones evangeliorum*, in Hildegardis Bingensis, *Opera minora*, B. M. Kienzle and C. Muessig (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2007, 185–333.
- Hildegard von Bingen, *Homilies on the Gospel*, B. M. Kienzle (ed. and trans.), Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2011.
- Hildegardis Bigensis, *Epistolarium*, 2 Vols., L. van Acker (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 1991.
- Hildegardis Bingensis, *Scivias*, A. Führkörtter and A. Carlevaris (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 1978.
- Jutta and Hildegard. The Biographical Sources*, A. Silvas (ed.), Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993.
- Le "substantie" dei sermoni e delle visioni di Domenica da Paradiso*, R. Piro (ed.), Firenze, SISMEL, 2004.
- Liber qui dicitur Angela de Fulgino: in quo ostenditur nobis vera via qua possumus sequi vestigia nostri redemptoris*, Toleti, [successor of Pedro Hagenbach] iussu Francisci Ximenez archiepiscopi, 18 Aprilis "1055" [= 1505].
- Mechthild von Hackeborn, *Revelationes Gertrudiana ac Mechthildiana*, Paris, Henricum Oudin, 1877.



- Montesino, A., *Epístolas y Evangelios por todo el año con sus doctrinas y sermones según la reformation e interpretación que desta obra hizo fray Ambrosio Montesino [...]*, Zaragoza, Pedro Bernuz, 1550.
- Müeller, R. C., and G. Zarri (eds.), *La vita e i sermoni di Chiara Bugni Clarissa veneziana (1471–1514)*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011.
- Navarro, P., *Favores del rey del cielo hechos a su esposa, la santa Juana de la Cruz, religiosa de la Orden Tercera de Penitencia de N. P. S. Francisco. Con anotaciones theológicas y morales a la historia de su vida*, Madrid, Thomas Iunti, Impresor del Rey, 1622.
- Pedro de Salazar, *Crónica y historia de la fundación y progreso de la provincia de Castilla de la Orden del bienaventurado Padre San Francisco*, Madrid, Imprenta Real, 1612.
- Sacra Rituum Congregatione Emmo. et Rydmo. Domino Card. Gotti, Toletana beatificationis et canonizationis Ven. Servae Dei Joanne de Cruce, Monialis professe, et abbatisse Monasterii Sancta Mariae de Cruce prope Oppidum de Cubas, Tertii Ordinis S. Francisci. Positio super dubio "An stante repetitione assertorum opusculorum originalium, possit ad ulteriora in Causa procedi"*, Romae, Typis Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1731.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., and M. Luengo Balbás (eds.), *Las Revelaciones de María de Santo Domingo*, London, Queen Mary University, 2014.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., and M. V. Curto Hernández (eds.), *El Libro de la oración de María de Santo Domingo. Estudio y edición*, Madrid, Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2019.
- Serventi, S. (ed.), *Caterina Vigri. Laudi, Trattati e Lettere*, Firenze, SISMEL, 2000.
- The Letters of Hildegard von Bingen*, 2 Vols., J. L. Baird and R. K. Ehrman (trans.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- The Limburg Sermons. Preaching in Medieval Countries and the Turn of the Fourteenth Century*, W. Scheepsmas (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2008.
- Theresa de Jesus, *Conceptos del amor de Dios [...] sobre algunas palabras de los Cantares de Salomón. Con unas anotaciones del Padre M. Fr. Gerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios Carmelitano*, Brussels, Roger Velpio and Huberto Antonio, Impressores jurados, cerca de Palacio, 1611 [facsimile: Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1981].
- Thier, L., and A. Calufetti (eds.), *Il Libro della Beata Angela da Foligno*, Roma, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata, 1985.
- Vicent Ferrer, *Sermons*, X. Renedo and Ll. Cabré (eds.), Barcelona, Teide, 1993.

### Digital Sources

- "Libro de la Casa y Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz" (= Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS-9661), M. V. Curto (ed.), online: [http://catalogodesantastvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana\\_de\\_la\\_Cruz#Vida\\_manuscrita\\_.282.29](http://catalogodesantastvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz#Vida_manuscrita_.282.29), accessed: 19/07/2023.
- Vida y fin de la bien abenturada virgen Sancta Juana de la [cruz] monja que fue professa de quatro Botos en la orden del señor sant francisco en la qual viuio perfecta y sanctamente*

(San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, ms K-III-13, M. Luengo Balbás, M., and F. Atencia Requena [eds.], online: [http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana\\_de\\_la\\_Cruz](http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/Juana_de_la_Cruz), accessed: 12/07/2023).

## Secondary Literature

- Acosta-García, P., "Hacia una definición del sermón profético femenino: Liturgia y exégesis visionaria en la obra de Elisabeth von Schönau (1129–1164/5) y Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", *Hipogrifo. Revista de literatura y cultura del Siglo de Oro*, 11.1 (2023), 881–893. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13035/H.2023.11.01.51>.
- Acosta-García, P., "Towards a Critical Edition of the *Book of Consolation* of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", in *Observant Reforms and Cultural Production in Europe*, B. Roest and P. Delcorno (eds.), Nijmegen, Radboud University Press, 2023, 185–203. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.54195/XFRB6134\\_CH09](https://doi.org/10.54195/XFRB6134_CH09).
- Acosta-García, P., "Notas codicológicas a la colección de sermones visionarios de la abadesa Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534): el manuscrito Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial J-II-18", *Revista de literatura medieval*, 34 (2022), 231–248. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37536/RLM.2022.34.1.94521>.
- Acosta-García, P., "‘En viva sangre bañadas’: Caterina da Siena y las vidas de María de Ajofrín, Juana de la Cruz, María de Santo Domingo y otras santas vivas castellanas", *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà*, XXXIII (2021), 143–172. DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.4580499](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4580499).
- Acosta-García, P., "Radical Succession: Hagiography, Reform, and Franciscan Identity in the Convent of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", *Religions*, 12 (2021), 223. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12030223>.
- Acosta-García, P., "El cancionero revelado de la abadesa franciscana Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534). Edición y comentario", *Studia aurea. Revista de Literatura Española y Teoría Literaria del Renacimiento y Siglo de Oro*, 15 (2021), 501–531. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/studiaaurea.452>.
- Acosta-García, P., "On Manuscripts, Prints and Blessed Transformations: Caterina da Siena's *Legenda maior* as a Model of Sainthood in Premodern Castile", *Religions* 11, 33, 2020. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010033>.
- Acosta-García, P., "Santas y marcadas: itinerarios de lectura modélicos en la obra de las místicas bajomedievales impresas por Cisneros", *Hispania Sacra* LXXII/145 (2020), 67–80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3989/hs.2020.011>.
- Acosta-García, P., "Women Prophets for a New World: Angela of Foligno, 'Living Saints', and the Religious Reform Movement in Cardinal Cisneros' Castile", in *Exemplarity and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, M. Morrás, R. Sanmartín, and K. Yonsoo (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2020, 136–162.

- Acosta-García, P., and R. Sanmartín, "Digital Visionary Women: Introducing the 'Catalogue of Living Saints'", *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 14/1 (2022), 55–68. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17546559.2021.1980897>
- Arthur, K. G., *Caterina Vigri and the Poor Clares in Early Modern Ferrara*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam UP, 2018.
- Astell, A. W., *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Baker, T. M. and B. M. Kienzle, "Monastic Preaching and the Sermon in Medieval Latin Christendom to the 12th century", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monastic Preaching in the Latin West*, Alison I. Beach and I. Cochelin (eds.), 710–728.
- Bartolomei Romagnoli, A., *CORPO SACRO. Scrittura ed esperienza mistica tra medioevo et età moderna*, Spoleto, Centro italiano di studi sul basso medioevo/Accademia Tudertina, 2022.
- Bataillon, L.-J., "Les images dans les sermons du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *La prédication au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France et Italie*, D. D'Avray and N. Bériou (eds.), Hampshire and Brookfield, Ashgate, 1993.
- Bataillon, M., *Erasmus y España*, Mexico, FCE, 1950 [1937].
- Beach, A. I., "Claustration and Collaboration between the Sexes in the Twelfth-Century Scriptorium", in S. Farmer and B. H. Rosenwein (eds.), *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts. Religion in Medieval Society. Essays in Honor of Lester K. Little*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2000, 57–75.
- Beach, A. I., *Women as Scribes. Book Production and Monastic Reform in 12th century Bavaria*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Bell, D. N., *What Nuns Read. Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1995.
- Beltrán de Heredia, V. *Historia de la reforma de la Provincia de España (1450–1550)*, Romae ad S. Sabinae, Institutum Historicum FF. Praedicatorum, 1939.
- Benavent, J., *Savonarola y España*, Madrid, UNED, 2003.
- Bériou, N., "Les sermons latins après 1200", in B. M. Kienzle (ed.), *The Sermon*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 363–447.
- Bertini Malgarini P. and U. Vignuzzi, "Matilde a Helfta, Melchiade in Umbria (e oltre): un antico volgarizzamento umbro del *Liber specialis gratiae*", in *Dire l'ineffabile. Caterina da Siena e il linguaggio della mistica*, L. Leonardi and P. Trifone (eds.), Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo/SISMEL, 291–307.
- Birge Vitz, E., "Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages", in *Medieval Education*, R. B. Begley and J. W. Koterski (eds.), New York, Fordham University Press, 2005, 20–34.
- Blanton, V., V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2018.
- Blanton, V., V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015.

- Blanton, V., V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013.
- Bolzoni, L., *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002.
- Bona, G., *Via Compedii ad Deum. Via breve a Dio (1657)*, S. Stroppa (ed.), Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 2006.
- Boon, J. A., "The Marian Apocalyptic of a Visionary Preacher: the *Conorte* of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)", in E. Knibs, J. A. Boon, and E. Gelser (eds.), *The End of the World in Medieval Thought and Spirituality*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 41–67.
- Boon, J. A., "Introduction", in J. A. Boon and R. E. Surtz (eds.), *Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534: Visionary Sermons*, Toronto/Tempe, Iter Academic Press/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016, 1–33.
- Boon, J. A., "The Glory of the Virgin: The Mariology of the Incarnation in Two Early Modern Castilian Mystical Sermons", *La Corónica* (2012) 41.1, 35–60.
- Boon, J. A., *Mystical Science of the Soul. Medieval Cognition in Bernardino de Laredo's Recollection Method*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Boquet, D., and P. Nagy. *Sensible Moyen Âge. Une histoire des émotions dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris, Seuil, 2015.
- Bosch, L. M. F., *Art, Liturgy, and Legend in Renaissance Toledo. The Mendoza and the Iglesia Primada*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Boynton, S., "Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education", in G. Ferzoco and C. Muessig (eds.), *Medieval Monastic Education*, London/New York, Leicester University Press, 2000, 7–21.
- Boyton, S., "Religious soundscapes: liturgy and music", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. IV: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100–c. 1500, 238–253.
- Braguier, L., *Servantes de Dieu. Les beatas de la Couronne de Castile (1450–1600)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2019.
- Brigham, K., *Cristóbal Colón. Su vida y descubrimiento a la luz de sus profecías*, Barcelona, Clie, 1990.
- Briquet, C. M., *Les filigranes. Dictionnaire Historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, Leipzig, Verlag von Karl W. Hiersemann, 1923.
- Briscoe, M. G., and B. H. Jaye, *Artes praedicandi. Artes orandi*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1992.
- Bush, K. E., *Sorelle mie: The Sermons of Catherina Vigri and Franciscan Observantist Reform*, PhD dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2016.
- Callahan, M., "Preaching in a Poor Space: Savonarolan Influence at Sister Domenica's Convent of la Crocetta in Renaissance Florence", in *Patronage, Gender, and the Arts in Early Modern Italy. Essays in Honor of Carolyn Valone*, K. A. McIver and C. Stollhans (eds.), New York, Italica Press, 2015, 211–230.

- Cardoso, P., "Beyond the Colophon: Assessing Role in Manuscript Production and Acquisition in the Observant Dominican Nunneries of Early-Modern Portugal", *Pecia* 19 (2017), 59–86.
- Carrero Santamaría, E., "Levantaos a Juicio: topografía y escena de la predicación", in *El Juicio Final. Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Escena*, M. Gómez Muntané (ed.), Madrid, Alpuerto, 2017, 97–140.
- Carruthers, M., *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Casagrande, C., "Le calame du Saint-Esprit-Grâce et rhétorique dans la prédication au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *La parole du prédicateur. ve–xve siècle*, R. M. Dessì and M. Lauwers (eds.), Nice, Z' editions, 1997, 235–254.
- Cátedra, P. M., *Liturgia, poesía y teatro en la Edad Media. Estudios sobre prácticas culturales y literarias*, Madrid, Gredos, 2005.
- Cátedra, P. M., and A. Rojo, *Bibliotecas y lecturas de mujeres. Siglo XVI*, Salamanca, Instituto de la Historia del libro y de la lectura, 2004.
- Cátedra, P. M., *Sermón, sociedad y literatura en la Edad Media. S. Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411–1412)*, Salamanca, Junta de Castilla y León, 1994.
- Cátedra, P. M., *Dos estudios sobre el sermón en la España medieval*, Bellaterra, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1981.
- Cavallini, G., "Introduzione", in C. da Siena, *Il dialogo della divina provvidenza ovvero Libro de la divina dottrina*, G. Cavallini (ed.), Siena, Cantagalli, 1995, i–xlvi.
- Cerquiglini, B., *Eloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1989.
- Chabás, R., "Estudio sobre los sermones valencianos de S. Vicente Ferrer", *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, VIII (1903).
- Cirlot, V., *La visión abierta. Del mito del grial al surrealismo*, Madrid, Siruela, 2010.
- Cirlot, V., *Hildegard von Bingen y la tradición visionaria de Occidente*, Barcelona, Herder, 2005.
- Cirlot V., and B. Garí, *La mirada interior. Escritoras místicas y visionarias en la Edad Media*, Madrid, Siruela, 2005.
- Clark J. G. and K. E. Bush, "Monastic Preaching c. 1350–1545", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monastic Preaching in the Latin West*, Alison I. Beach and I. Cochelin (eds.), 1125–1139.
- Clark, A. L., "Introduction", in Elisabeth von Schönau, *The Complete Works*, A. L. Clark (trans.), New York/Mahwah, 2000, 1–37.
- Clark, A. L., *Elisabeth von Schönau. A Twelfth-Century Visionary*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
- Coakley, J., *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2006.

- Cornet, I., *The Arnhem Mystical Sermons. Preaching Liturgical Mysticism in the Context of Catholic Reform*, Leiden, Brill, 2018.
- Cortés Timoner, M. M., "La autoridad espiritual femenina en la Castilla bajomedieval y su reflejo en el *Flos sanctorum* de Alonso de Villegas", *Dicenda. Estudios de lengua y literatura españolas*, 39 (2021), 25–35. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/dice.76403>.
- Cortés Timoner, M. M., "La mística nupcial en Sor Juana de la Cruz y San Juan de la Cruz", in *Actes del X Congrés Internacional de l'Associació Hispànica de Literatura Medieval*, 3 Vols., R. Alemany, J. L. Martos, and J. Miquel Manzanaro (eds.), Alicante, Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana, 2005, 611–623.
- Creytens, R., "La riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i decreti Tridentini", in *Il Concilio di Trento e la riforma tridentina. Atti del convegno storico internazionale. Trento, 2–6 settembre 1963*, Rome, Herder, 1965, 45–84.
- Cross, J. E., "Vernacular Sermons in Old English", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 561–596.
- Curto, M. V., "Trompetas, órganos y vihuelas: Ecos de Helfta en la espiritualidad castellana de los siglos xv–xvi", in *eHumanista. Journal of Iberian Studies* 56 (2023), 94–110.
- Curto, M. V., "Juana de la Cruz y la música en la mística castellana bajomedieval", *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, XXXIII (2020), 97–101.
- Cyrus, C. J., *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany*, Toronto/ Buffalo/London, University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Dailey, P., *Promised Bodies: Time, Language, and Corporeality in Medieval Women's Mystical Texts*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2013.
- De Balaguer, E., *La abadessa de las Huelgas*, Madrid, Luz, 1944.
- De Lubac, H., *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'écriture*, Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1959.
- Del Prado Rodríguez Romero, M., "Nuestra Señora de la Piedad, Guadalajara", in *CLAUSTRA. Atlas de espiritualidad femenina en los Reinos Peninsulares*, Institut de Recerca en Cultures Medievals IRCVM, Universitat de Barcelona. [17/06/2023]. URL: <http://www.ub.edu/claustra>.
- Delcorno, C., "La predicazione", in P. Boitani et al. (eds.), *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*, vol. 2: *Il Medioevo volgare*, Rome, Salerno, 2005.
- Delcorno, C., "Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200–1500)", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000.
- Delcorno, P., "Catechesi e drammatizzazione: Lo Spirito Santo nei sermoni di Pentecoste di Vicent Ferrer", *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 49/1 (2019), 75–101.
- Dessi, R. M., "La prophétie, l'évangile et l'état. La predication en Italie au xv<sup>e</sup> et au début du xvi<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *La Parole du prédicateur (ve–xve siècle)*, R. M. Dessè and M. Lauwers (eds.), Nice, Centre d'Études Médiévales de Nice, 1997, 395–444.

- Deyermond, A., "The Sermon and its Uses in Medieval Castilian Literature", *La Corónica*, 8/2 (1980), 127–145.
- Embach, M., "Hildegard of Bingen: A History of Reception", *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 1125–1139.
- Emmelius, C., "Mäntel der Seele. Struktur und Medialität der Liturgie in Visionen des 'Fließenden Lichts der Gottheit' un des 'Liber specialis gratiae'", in *Mechthild und das Fließende Licht der Gottheit im Kontext. Eine Spurensuche in religiösen Netzwerken und literarischen Diskursen im mitteldeutschen Raum des 13–15. Jahrhunderts*, C. Emmelius, and B. Nemes (eds.), Berlin, Erich Schmidt, 2019, 157–190.
- Emmelius, C., "Rhyming Prose – bridal songs of the soul – sound metaphors. Dimensions of musicality in Mechthild's 'Fließendes Licht der Gottheit'", in R. Wenzel, L. Wuidar and K. Wimmer (eds.), *Mystique, langage, musique: dire l'indicible au Moyen Âge*, Wiesbaden, Reichert Verlag, 2019, 195–217.
- Epiney-Burgard, G., and E. Zum Brunn, *Femmes troubadours de Dieu*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1988.
- Fassler, M., "The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Medieval Representation of History", in *Representing History 900–1300: Music, Art, History*, R. A. Maxwell (ed.), Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2010, 149–172.
- Felten, F. J., "What Do We Know About the Life of Jutta and Hildegard at Disibodenberg and Rupertsberg?", in *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 15–38.
- Flanagan, S., *Hildegard of Bingen. A Visionary Life*, London, Routledge, 1989.
- Fraeters, V., "Handing on Wisdom and Knowledge in Hadewijch of Brabant's *Book of Visions*", in *Women and Experience in Later Medieval Writing. Reading the Book of Life*, A. B. Mulder-Baker and L. H. McAvoy (eds.), Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, 149–168.
- Fraile Miguélez, M., *Catálogo de los códices españoles de la Biblioteca del Escorial. Relaciones históricas*, 2 Vols., Madrid, Imprenta Helénica, 1917–1925.
- Führkörtter, A. and A. Carlevaris, "Einleitung", in *Hildegardis Bingensis, Scivias*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1978, x–lx.
- Fulton, R., and B. W. Holsinger. *History in the Comic Mode: Medieval Communities and the Matter of Person*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Gagliardi, I., *Sola con Dio. La missione di Domenica da Paradiso nella Firenze del primo cinquecento*, Firenze, SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007.
- García Andrés, I., *El Conhorto: Sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana (1482–1534). Introducción, teología y espiritualidad*, PhD thesis, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1996. Online: <https://summa.upsa.es/details.vm?q=id:0000030260&lang=en&view=main>.



- García Andrés, I., *Sor Juana de la Cruz, mística e iluminista toledana*, s. l., Publicaciones del I.P.I.E.T., 1982.
- García Oro, J., "Conventualismo y Observancia. La reforma de las órdenes religiosas en los siglos xv y xvi", in R. García-Villoslada (dir.), *Historia de la Iglesia en España: vol. III, 1: La Iglesia en la España de los siglos xv y xvi*, Madrid, BAC, 1980, 210–350.
- García Oro, J., *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos*, Madrid, CSIC, 1971.
- Gemert, L. van, and J. van Aelst, *Women's Writing from the Low Countries, 1200–1875. A Bilingual Anthology*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2010.
- Genette, G., *Figuras III*, Barcelona, Lumen, 1989.
- Gómez López, J., "Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) 'La Santa Juana': vida, obra, santidad y causa", in *La clausura femenina en España: actas del simposium: 1/4-IX-2004*, 2 Vols., F. J. Campos y Fernández de Sevilla (ed.), Madrid, Real Centro Universitario Escorial-María Cristina, 2004, 1223–1250.
- Gómez Redondo, F., *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos. El umbral de Renacimiento*, Madrid, Cátedra, 2012.
- Gotor, M., *Chiesa e santità nell'Italia moderna*, Bari, Laterza, 2004.
- Graña Cid, M. M., "Berenguela I y Fernando III, promotores de las órdenes mendicantes en Castilla", in M. Peláez del Rosal (ed.), *El Franciscanismo: identidad y poder. Libro homenaje al P. Enrique Chacón Cabello*, Córdoba, Asociación Hispánica de Estudios Franciscanos and Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, 2016, 119–141.
- Graña Cid, M. M., "Encarnar la palabra: oralidad, lectura y escritura en las profetisas castellanas del Renacimiento", *Estudios eclesiásticos* 91, 358 (2016), 581–617. Online: <https://revistas.comillas.edu/index.php/estudioseclesiasticos/article/view/7547>.
- Graña Cid, M. M., "Las profetisas ante el poder eclesiástico: denuncia y modelo místico de iglesia (Juana de la Cruz, siglo xvi)", in *Género e interioridade na vida religiosa. Conceitos, contextos e práticas*, J. L. Fontes, M. Filomena Andrade, and T. Pires Marques (eds.), Lisboa, Centro de estudos de História Religiosa/Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2017, 15–44.
- Graña Cid, M. M., "¿Una memoria femenina de escritura espiritual? La recepción de las místicas medievales en el convento de Santa María de la Cruz de Cubas", in *Letras en la celda. Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, N. Baranda Leturio and M. del Carmen Marín Pina (eds.), Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014, 99–114.
- Graña Cid, M. M., *Espacios de vida espiritual de mujeres (Obispado de Córdoba, 1260–1550)*, PhD thesis, Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2008.
- Graña Cid, M. del M., "Las primeras clarisas andaluzas. Franciscanismo femenino y reconquista en el siglo XIII", Supplement of *Archivo Ibero-Americano* LIV (1994), 661–704.

- Graziosi, E., "Arcipelago sommerso: le rime delle monache tra obbedienza e trasgressione", in *I Monasteri femminili come centri di cultura fra Rinascimento e Barocco, Atti del Convegno storico internazionale*, G. Pomata and G. Zarri (eds.), Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2005, 145–173.
- Grossman, E., "Introduction: Issues in the Study of Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures", in E. Grossman (ed.), *Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2024, 1–18.
- Guarnieri, R., "Santa Angela? Angela, Ubertino e lo spiritualismo francescano. Prime ipotesi sulla 'Peroratio'", in *Angèle de Foligno. Le dossier*, G. Barone and J. Dalarun (eds.), Rome, École française de Rome, 1999, 203–265.
- Hamburger, J. F., E. Schlotheuber, S. Marti, and M. Fassler, *Liturgical Life and Latin Learning at Paradies bei Soest, 1300–1425: Inscription and Illumination in the Choir Books of a North German Dominican Convent*, 2 Vols., Münster, Aschendorff Verlag, 2016.
- Hamilton, M. M., "The Art of Memory and Forgetting: The Judeo-Andalusi and Scholastic Traditions", in *Beyond Faith: Belief, Morality and Memory in a Fifteenth-Century Judeo-Iberian Manuscript*, M. M. Hamilton (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 136–165.
- Harrison, A., "'I am Wholly Your Own': Liturgical Piety and Community among the Nuns of Helfta", *Church History*, 78/3 (Sept. 2009), 549–583.
- Heffernan, T. J. and E. A. Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 2001.
- Heinzer, F., "Unequal Twins: Visionary Attitude and Monastic Culture in Elisabeth of Schönau and Hildegard von Bingen", *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 85–108.
- Hellgart, E., "Latin and the vernacular: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Gertrude of Helfta", in *A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages*, E. Andersen, H. Lähnemann and A. Simon (eds.), Leiden/Boston, Brill, 131–155.
- Herrero Salgado, F., *La oratoria sagrada en los siglos XVI y XVII*, 5 Vols., Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1996–2006.
- Herzig, T., "Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs", *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, XXVI (2013), 151–175.
- Jansen, K. L., "Preaching as Playwriting: a semi-dramatic Sermon of the Fifteenth Century", in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life. Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, M. F. Cussato and G. Geltner (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2009, 237–247.
- Jiménez Moreno, A., *La incorporación de la mujer a la cultura escrita en el siglo xv*, Salamanca, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2024.
- Jones, C. T., *Ruling the Spirit. Women, Liturgy, and the Dominican Reform in Late Medieval Germany*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

- Jones, C. T., "Hostia jubilationis: Psalm Citation, Eucharistic Prayer, and Mystical Union in Gertrude of Helfta's *Exercitia spiritualia*", *Speculum* 89/4 (October 2014), 1005–1039.
- Kerby-Fulton, K., "When Women Preached: An Introduction to Female Homiletic, Sacramental, and Liturgical Roles in Later Middle Ages", in *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, L. Olson and K. Kerby-Fulton (eds.), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, 31–55.
- Kienzle, B. M., "Crisis and Charismatic Authority in Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars", in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1600*, M. Rubin and K. Jansen (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 73–91.
- Kienzle, B. M., *Hildegard von Bingen and her Gospel Homilies. Speaking New Mysteries*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2009.
- Kienzle, B. M., "Medieval Sermons and their Performance: Theory and Record", in C. Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2002, 84–124.
- Kienzle, B. M., "Introduction", in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 143–174.
- Kienzle, B. M., "The Typology of the Medieval Sermon and Its Development in the Middle Ages: Report on Work in Progress", in J. Hamesse and X. Hermand (eds.), *De l'homélie au sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, Louvain la Neuve, Université Catholique de Louvain/Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, 1993, 83–101.
- Kienzle, B. M., and T. A. Stevens, "Intertextuality in Hildegard's works: Ezekiel and the Claim of Prophetic Authority", *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 137–162.
- Kienzle, B. M., and P. J. Walker (eds.), *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.
- Kirakosian, R., *From the Material to the Mystical in Late Medieval Piety*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Lea, H. C., *Historia de la Inquisición española*, 3 Vols., Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1983.
- Lewandoska, J., *Escritoras monjas. Autoridad y autoría en la escritura conventual femenina de los Siglos de Oro*, Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2019.
- Martínez Romero, T., "De les revelacions de Santa Melchides, a Partial Translation of Mechthild von Hackeborn's *Liber Specialis Gratiae*", *Aevum* 91/2 (2017), 585–610.
- Matesanz del Barrio, M., "La difusión de la Biblia en romance y los primeros índices de libros prohibidos", *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* CCXCV/87 (2007), 29–50.
- Matesanz del Barrio, M., "Epístolas y evangelios para todo el año. Una errónea atribución de autoría", *Revista de Filología románica* 3 (1996), 215–230.

- McGinn, B., *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, New York-Ramsey-Toronto, Paulist Press, 1979.
- McGinn, B., *The Origins of Mysticism*, New York, Crossroads, 1998, Vol. 1 of McGinn, B., *The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, New York, Crossroads, 1998–2021.
- Mertens, T., “Ghostwriting Sisters: The Preservation of Dutch Sermons of Father Confessors in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century”, in *Seeing and Knowing: Women and Learning in Medieval Europe 1200–1600*, A. B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2004, 121–141.
- Mertens, T., “The Middle Dutch Sermon. A Premature Synthesis”, in *Spiritual Literature in the Low Countries: Essays by Thom Mertens*, J. Arblaster, P. Stoop, D. Ermens, V. Fraeters, and K. Schepers (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024, 143–211.
- Messeguer Fernández, J., “Fray Francisco Ortiz en Torrelaguna”, *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, 8 (1948), 479–529.
- Mews, C. J., “Hildegard von Bingen and the Hirsau Reform in Germany, 1080–1180”, *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 57–65.
- Mixon J. and B. Roest (eds.), *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, Leiden-London, Brill, 2015.
- Mixon, J., “Observant Reform’s Conceptual Frameworks between Principle and Practice”, in *A Companion to the Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, J. D. Mixon and B. Roest (eds.), Leiden/London, Brill, 60–84.
- Moleira de Freitas Carvalho, J. A., *Gertrudes de Helfta e Espanha*, Porto, Centro de Literatura da Universidade do Porto, 1981.
- Mooney, C. M., “Authority and Inspiration in the *Vitae* and sermons of Humility of Faenza”, in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, C. Muessig (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 1998, 121–144.
- Mooney, C., *Gendered Voices: medieval saints and their interpreters*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- More, A., “Dynamics of Regulation, Innovation and Invention”, in *A Companion to the Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, J. D. Mixon and B. Roest (eds.), Leiden/London, Brill, 60–84.
- Moreton, M., “Materials, Methods, and Motives: Female Scribal Agency in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italian Religious Houses”, in E. Grossman (ed.), *Female Agency in Manuscript Cultures*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2024, 171–207. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/978311382715-006>.
- Mostaccio, S., *Osservanza visuta, osservanza insegnata. La domenicana genovese Tommasina Fieschi e i suoi scritti (1448 ca. – 1534)*, Firenze, Leo Olschki, 1999.
- Muessig, C., “Communities of Discourse: Religious Authority and the Role of Holy Women in the Later Middle Ages”, in *Women and Experience in Later Medieval Writing*, A. B. Mulder-Bakker and L. Herbert McAvoy (eds.), London, Palgrave-McMillan, 2009, 65–82.

- Muessig, C., *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Muessig, C., "Medieval reportationes: hearing and listening the sermons through the ages", in *L'Eloquence de la chair entre écriture et oralité*, C. Véronique and A. Heneveld Amy (eds.), Paris, Honoré Champion, 2018, 77–90.
- Muessig, C., "Prophecy and Song Teaching and Preaching by Medieval Women", in *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, B. M. Kienzle and P. J. Walker (eds.), London, University of California Press, 1998, 146–158.
- Muñoz Fernández, Á., "Cisneros y las reformas religiosas de su tiempo", in *Arquetipo de virtudes, espejo de prelados, 1517–2017*, J. P. Sánchez Gamero (ed.), Toledo, Cabildo Primado Catedral de Toledo, 2017, 68–83.
- Muñoz Fernández, Á., "Iberian Women in Religion and Policies of Discipline Dissent in the Archbishopric of Toledo in the 15th to Early 16th centuries: The Heaven of Juana de la Cruz", in *Strategies of Non-Confrontational Protest in Europe from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, F. Titone (ed.), Rome, Viella, 2016, 195–217.
- Muñoz Fernández, Á., *Santas y beatas neocastellanas: Ambivalencias de la religión y políticas correctoras del poder*, Madrid, Comunidad de Madrid/Dirección General de la Mujer, 1994.
- Newman, B., "Introduction", in Mechthild of Hackeborn and the Nuns of Helfta, *The Book of Special Grace*, B. Newman (trans.), New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 2017, 1–34.
- Nichols, S., "Philology in a Manuscript Culture", *Speculum* 65/1 (1990), 1–10.
- Pegon, J., "*Discerniment des esprits (période moderne)*", in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, M. Viller (ed.), Paris, Beauchesne, 1937, Vol. 3, 1275–1278.
- Pérez Vidal, M., *Arte y liturgia en los monasterios de dominicas en Castilla. De los orígenes hasta la reforma observante*, Gijón, Trea, 2021.
- Pérez Vidal, M., "El espacio litúrgico en los monasterios de dominicas de Castilla (ss. XIII–XVI)", in F. Rodilla León *et al.* (eds.), *Sonido y espacio: antiguas experiencias musicales ibéricas*, Madrid, Alpuerto, 2020, 75–116.
- Pérez Vidal, M., "The Art, Visual Culture and Liturgy of Dominican Nuns in Late Medieval and Early Modern Castile", *Memorie Dominicane* 46 (2015), 223–240.
- Pozzi, G., and C. Leonardi, *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, Genova, Marietti, 1988.
- Pryds, D., "Proclaiming Sanctity through Proscribed Acts. The Case of Rose of Viterbo", in *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, B. M. Kienzle and P. J. Walker (eds.), London, University of California Press, 1998, 159–172.
- Rivera, I. J., "Visualizing the Passion in Andrés de Li's 'Summa de paciencia'", *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 67/1 (2014), 55–72.
- Rivers, K. A., *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice. Memory, Preaching, and Images in the Late Middle Ages*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010.

- Robinson, C., *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2013.
- Roest, B., *Order and Disorder. The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform*, Leiden, Brill, 2013.
- Roest, B., “*Ne Effluat Multiloquium Et Habeatur Honerosus?*”: The Art of Preaching in the Franciscan Tradition”, in *Franciscans and Preaching*, T. J. Johnson (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2012, 383–412.
- Roest, B., “Female Preaching in the Late Medieval Franciscan Tradition”, *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004), 149–154.
- Rojó Alique, F. J., “Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Preachers in Castile: The Example of Valladolid”, in *Franciscans and Preaching*, T. J. Johnson (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2012, 353–382.
- Rucquoi, A., “Los franciscanos en el Reino de Castilla”, in *VI Semana de Estudios Medievales: Nájera, 31 de julio al 4 de agosto de 1995*, J. I. de la Iglesia Duarte, F. J. García Turza, and J. Á. García (eds.), Nájera, Instituto de estudios riojanos, 1996, 65–86.
- Sáez García, M. Á., *Poder y autoridad femenina en el siglo XVI. Isabel de Josa (1490–1564)*, Madrid, CEPC, 2022.
- Sánchez Sánchez, M. A., “Vernacular Preaching in Spanish, Portuguese, and Catalan”, in *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, 759–860.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., “The Word and Theatre of Trance” in *Women’s Lives: Self Representation, Reception, and Appropriation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth Petroff*, N. Otaño Gracia and D. Armenti (eds.), Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2022, 102–137.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., “Juana de la Cruz’s Heavenly Banquet: A Utopian Way of Thinking about Food”, in *Utopian Foodways: Critical Essays*, T. Botelho, M. Ramalhete Gomes, and J. E. Reis (eds.), Porto, Universidade do Porto, 2019, 221–239.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., “Sobre las categorías de santa, beata y visionaria: El género formativo”, *Cahiers d’études hispaniques médiévales*, 39 (2016), 183–203.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., *La representación de las místicas. Sor María de Santo Domingo en su contexto europeo*, Santander, Real Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 2012.
- Sanmartín Bastida, R., B. Taylor, and R. Vidal Doval, “Hacia una poética del sermón”, *Revista de poética medieval*, 24 (2010), 11–15.
- Schlotheuber E., and J. T. McQuillen, “Books and Libraries within Monasteries”, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, A. I. Beach and I. Cochelin (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 975–997.
- Schlotheuber, E., “Doctrina privata und doctrina publica – Überlegungen zu den mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern als Wissens – und Bildungsraum”, in *Die Wirkmacht klösterlichen Lebens im Mittelalter. Modelle – Ordnungen – Kompetenzen – Konzepte*, Gert Melville (ed.), Regensburg, Pustet, 2019, 36–43.

- Schmidt, M., "Mechtilde de Hackeborn", in *Dictionnaire d'espiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, M. Viller (dir.), Paris, Beauchesne, 1937, Vol. 10, 873–877.
- Smith, H. D., *Preaching in the Spanish Golden Age. A Study of Some Preachers of the Reign of Philip III*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Stoop, P., "Female Authorship in the Augustinian Convent of Jericho and the Translation of Conrad of Saxony's *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* in Sermons by Maria van Pee and Janne Colijns", *The Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 42/2 (2016), 248–268.
- Stoop, P., "From Reading to Writing: The Multiple Levels of Literacy of the Sisters Scribes in the Brussels Convent of Jericho", in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, 44–54.
- Stoop, P., "Nun's Literacy in Sixteenth-Century Convent Sermons from the Cistercian Abbey of Ter Kameren", in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, 185–195.
- Stoop, P., and L. Vroomen, "A Carthusian Nun's *Reportationes* of Henricus Cool's Sermons in the Low Countries", *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, V. Blanton, V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017, 105–120.
- Stover, J. A., "Hildegard, the Schools, and their Critics", B. M. Kienzle et al., *A Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, D. Stoud, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), Leiden, Brill, 2014, 109–135.
- Surtz, R. E., "El uso de la biblia por las visionarias de la época del cardenal Cisneros", in M. L. Giordano and A. Valerio (eds.), *Reformas y contrarreformas en la Europa católica*, Navarra, Verbo Divino, 2016, 77–88.
- Surtz, R. E., *The Guitar of God. Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
- Thompson, A., "From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event", in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, C. Muessig (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2002, 11–37.
- Triviño, M. V., *Mujer, predicadora y párroco. La santa Juana (1481–1534)*, Madrid, BAC, 1999.
- Valerio, A., "Le prediche di Domenica da Paradiso tra esperienza mistica e riforma della chiesa", in I sermoni di *Domenica da Paradiso. Studi e testo critico*, R. Librandi and A. Valerio (eds.), Firenze, SISMEL, 1999, XIII–LXXVIII.
- Valerio, A., "L'altra rivelazione: l'esperienza profetica femminile nei ss. XIV–XVI", in *Donna, potere e profezia*, A. Valerio (ed.), Naples, D'Auria, 1995, 139–162.
- Voaden, R., "Mechthild of Hackeborn", in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition (c. 1000–1500)*, A. Minnis and R. Voaden (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 431–451.



- Wailles, S. L., *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1987.
- Weinstein, D. J., Benavent and I. Rodríguez (eds.), *La figura de Jerónimo Savonarola y su influencia en España y Europa*, Firenze, SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2004.
- Wenzel, S., *Medieval Artes praedicandi. A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure*, Toronto/Buffalo/London, The Medieval Academy of America, 2015.
- Wenzel, S., "The use of the Bible in preaching", in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. II: From 600 to 1450*, R. Marsden and E. A. Matter (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 680–692.
- Wenzel, S., *Latin Sermon Collection from Late Medieval England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Wenzel, S., "Reflections on (New) Philology", *Speculum* 65/1 (1990), 11–18.
- Wiethaus, U., "Collaborative Literacy and the Spiritual Education of Nuns at Helfta", in V. Blanton, V. O'Mara, and P. Stoop (eds.), *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, 27–46.
- Winston-Allen, A., *Convent Chronicles. Women Writing About Women Reform in the Late Middle Ages*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2004.
- Yates, F. A., *The Art of Memory*, London, Routledge, 1966.
- Zambon, F., *Allegoria. Una breve storia dell'antichità a Dante*, Roma, Carocci, 2021.
- Zarco Cuevas, J., *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, 2 Vols., Madrid, Imprenta Helénica, 1924.
- Zarri, G., "La scrittura monastica", in *Letras en la celda. Cultura escrita de los conventos femeninos en la España moderna*, N. Baranda Leturio and M. del C. Marín Pina (eds.), Madrid and Frankfurt am Main, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014, 49–64.
- Zarri, G., "Predicazione e cura pastorale. I sermoni della clarissa veneziana Chiara Bugni (1471–1514)", *Anuario de estudios medievales* 42/1 (2012), 141–161.
- Zarri, G., "Chiara Bugni e Francesco Zorzi suo biografo: Saggio introduttivo", in *La Vita e i Sermoni di Chiara Bugni, clarissa veneziana (1471–1514)*, R. C. Mueller and G. Zarri (eds.), Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011, XI–XXXIX.
- Zarri, G., "Places and Gestures of Women's Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy", in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, K. L. Jansen et al. (eds.), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, 177–193.
- Zarri, G., "Predicatrici e madri spirituali. Il charisma, lo spazio, il pubblico", in *Done cristiane e sacerdozio: dale origini all'età contemporanea*, D. Corsi (ed.), Roma, Viella, 2004, 159–177.
- Zarri, G., *Le Sante vive: profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500*, Torino, Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990.
- Zugasti, M., "Santidad bajo sospecha: la vida de Sor Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) en florilegios de santos, crónicas y escenarios del Siglo de Oro", digital edition of the

Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes, 2017, 1–35, Online: <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcgb448> [original chapter: L. González Fernández and T. Rodríguez (eds.), *Hommage à André Gallego. La transmissions de savoirs licites ou illicites dans le monde hispanique péninsulaire (XIIe au XVIIe siècles)*, Toulouse, CNRS-Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2013, 314–323].

### Electronic Resources

*Bernstein. The Memory of Paper*, <https://memoryofpaper.eu>.

*Cantus: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant – Inventories of Chant Sources*. Directed by Debra Lacoste (2011–), Terence Bailey (1997–2010), and Ruth Steiner (1987–1996).

Web developer, Jan Koláček (2011–). Available from <<https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/>>. *Catálogo de santas vivas*, [http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/P%C3%A1gina\\_principal](http://catalogodesantasvivas.visionarias.es/index.php/P%C3%A1gina_principal).

*Diccionario histórico de la lengua española*, <https://www.rae.es/dhle/>.

Donne e cultura scritta nel Medioevo – Database, [http://www.tramedivita.it/donne/arc\\_donne.html](http://www.tramedivita.it/donne/arc_donne.html).

# Index

- Alter Christus* 3, 38, 160
- Allegorical interpretation (allegoresis) 19,  
84, 119–122, 170–171, 174, 188–189, 214,  
216, 220
- Alonso de Villegas 9, 115
- Alumbrados* 33
- Amalgamation 55, 65, 88, 107, 223  
apocalyptic amalgamation 127
- Ambrosio Montesino 191
- Angela da Foligno 21, 148–150
- Apocalypticism 125–129, 133–135, 146,  
171n215, 177–179
- Apostles 17–18, 38, 143, 205
- Archive  
Convento de Santa María de la  
Cruz 20n57, 32, 37, 39, 58, 81, 90, 94,  
106  
*La Crocetta* 91–92, 181
- Artes praedicandi* 170, 189n14
- Audience  
Domenica da Paradiso's 168–172  
Elisabeth von Schönau's 135  
Hildegard von Bingen's 123–124  
Juana de la Cruz's 2–7, 10–11, 15, 81–82,  
85, 87, 178  
Mechthild von Hackeborn's 151–152
- Authorship  
collective 25, 55, 89, 92n60, 93, 201, 221  
layered 24–25, 65, 88, 93, 223  
re-authorship 93–94
- Autograph 31, 107
- Autos* (see “theater”)
- Bernardino de Laredo 82–83
- Body (Juana de la Cruz's) 2–4, 10, 13–14, 18,  
38–39, 111, 160, 185
- Bona (Giovanni, Cardinal) 33–35, 62
- Breviary 27, 76n11, 101, 103, 203, 212  
*Breviarium toletanum* 184n3
- Brevis satisfactio* (see José Coppons)
- Caelestis Hyerusalem Cives* 67, 107–108
- Cancionero* (see “song book”)
- Canonization process 8m18, 9–10, 23–24,  
29–42, 62, 72–73, 221
- Carlos V 64, 127
- Catalina de los mártires 76, 89, 226
- Catalina de San Francisco 76, 89, 226
- Caterina da Siena 3, 38, 41n55, 74, 115, 156,  
164–165, 168, 173
- Caterina Vigri (Caterina da Bologna) 165
- Cell (preaching space, see also “grate”) 6m14,  
12  
Domenica da Paradiso's 172–175, 181
- Censorship 29–30, 34, 43, 47n77, 50, 52–53,  
62
- Chiara Bugni (abbess) 78, 165–166
- Circulation (codices)  
El Escorial manuscript 42, 47–56  
other copies 39–40  
Vatican manuscript 57–63
- Cisneros, Cardinal 8, 10n29, 12–13, 30n5,  
64–66, 74, 77, 115, 148–150, 156,  
164, 180
- Collection (of sermons, *raccolto*) 9, 29,  
32–33, 65–68, 77, 89n53, 90–91, 101–  
102, 107, 137, 223
- Collective writing (see also “memory” and  
“transcription”) 72, 109, 221–224,  
106n94, 179
- Composition (see also “collective  
writing”) 85–107
- Conorte*  
alternative titles 9n21  
as a new Gospel 17–18, 39, 75  
copies of 39–40
- Convent of Jericho (Brussels) 93–94
- Convento de San Juan de los Reyes  
(Toledo) 37, 45n69, 50–52, 54
- Coppons (José) 34–35, 67
- Cristóbal Colón 127
- Cyclicality (see “Liturgical cycle”)
- Daza (Antonio) 4n9, 29–30, 30n5, 57–58,  
75–76, 89, 114
- Devotio moderna* 78, 149
- Dictation 24, 32, 107, 164, 173
- Divisio* (see also “composition” and  
“memory”) 82, 85, 170n214, 201
- Domenica da Paradiso 78, 91–93, 163–178,  
180–182, 188m12, 219, 225
- Draft (see also “point”) 89, 105, 226

- Ear Trumpet (*see* "instrument")  
 Ecstasy (*see* "rapture")  
 El Escorial manuscript 62  
     annotations 44n63, 45, 47–55  
     binding 42, 44, 48n81, 56  
     call numbers 47  
     colophon 63–65, 70  
     dating 63–66  
     general description 42–56  
     watermarks 56n98  
 Elisabeth von Schönaue 129–145  
     *Liber visionum* 131–133, 136–138, 142,  
         143–145, 156–157, 179–181  
     Eckbert (brother, editor) 113, 130–134,  
         136m101, 137–138, 181  
     *Liber viarum Dei* 130, 134–135, 165, 179  
 Enclosure (Convento de Santa María de la  
     Cruz) 6  
*Epístolas y evangelios para todo el año* (*see*  
     *also* "Ambrosio Montesino") 191–196,  
     212, 216–217, 219, 225–226  
 Esparza (Martín) 33–35, 40, 62, 67, 72–73  
 Exegesis (*see also* "allegorical interpretation"  
     and "liturgical vision") 26–27, 145,  
     183–184, 200  
     Hildegard von Bingen's 121–123  
     liturgical exegesis (= *Liturgieexegese*)  
         26–27, 155, 158, 160, 163, 180, 183–191,  
         214, 218, 220  
     performative 104, 212  
     visionary exegesis 84, 129, 145, 155, 163,  
         184, 196, 218, 220  
 Exegetical knowledge 104  
*Favores del rey del cielo* (*see* "Navarro, Pedro")  
 Fernando de Aragón 127  
*Flos sanctorum* (*see also* "Alonso de  
     Villegas") 191, 48  
 Francesco d'Assisi 3, 4n8, 38, 38n45, 50,  
     148–150  
 Francisca Hernández (*beata*, *see also*  
     "Francisco Ortiz") 45, 51n87, 53  
 Francisco de Torres (*fray*) 44n63, 50–54,  
     62, 68  
 Francisco Ortiz (*fray*) 45, 51–56  
*Gedächtnisstarke Nonnen* (= memorious  
     nuns) 79–80  
 Genette (Gérard) 112, 175–176  
 Gerónimo Gracián 112–114  
 Gloss (*see* "allegorical interpretation")  
 Grate (preaching space, *see also*  
     "cell") 15n44  
     Domenica da Paradiso 172–173, 173n220  
 Gregory the Great (on prophecy) 119n30  
 Guitar (of God, *see* "Instrument")  
 Hadewijch van Brabant 162–163  
 Hagiography (*see* Daza, *Flos sanctorum*,  
     Navarro, and *Vida y fin*)  
 Heaven (vision of) 139, 147, 161–162, 184–185,  
     198–199  
 Helfta (Monastery of, *see also* "Mechthild von  
     Hackeborn") 146–148  
 Hildegard von Bingen 115–129  
     apocalypticism 125–126  
     *Expositiones evangeliorum* 117, 120–123  
     "preaching tours" 120n35, 140  
     *Scivias* 116–119, 134, 136–137, 178  
     Theoderich von Echemach 116, 124  
 Homily 121  
 Illiteracy (*see* "literacy" and "María  
     Evangelista")  
 Image (*see* "memory")  
 Improvisation 4, 219  
 Incarnation 18, 28, 103, 154, 159, 186n7, 221  
*Index librorum prohibitorum* 48  
 Inquisition 7, 40, 48–55, 69  
 Innovative copyist 101, 111  
 Instrument (of God, prophetess) 2–3, 16, 75  
     Ear Trumpet 2–3, 16  
     Guitar (of God) 2–3, 9  
 Interpolations (Vatican manuscript) 25,  
     45–46, 97–101  
*Inventio* 93  
 Isabel de Josa (preacher, Barcelona) 124  
 Juan de la Cruz 222  
 Las Huelgas (abbess of) 13  
 Layered authorship (*see* "authorship")  
 Lawrence (Saint, feast) 95n67, 103n86,  
     103n88, 210–214  
*Lectio* 170–172, 181, 196, 200  
 Lectionary-homiliary (*See* "*Epístolas y*  
     *evangelios para todo el año*")  
 Lent Sunday 102n84, 215

- Liber specialis gratiae* (see "Mechthild von Hackeborn")
- Libro de la casa* 94–96, 106, 156m160
- Literacy  
     in Juana's community 75–76, 75n11, 105–106  
     miraculous (see also "María Evangelista") 5, 35–37, 57, 73–75
- Liturgical anchoring 138, 142, 144, 160, 183, 184–199, 214
- Liturgical cycle 19n54, 27, 65, 68, 101, 103n87, 107, 136–137, 153, 180–181, 225–226
- Liturgical exegesis (= *Liturgieexegese*) (see "exegesis")
- Liturgical vision (see "exegesis")
- Loci* (see also "memory") 83–84
- Manuscripts (see "Vatican manuscript" and "El Escorial manuscript")
- María de San Gabriel (abbess) 32, 26, 109
- María de Santo Domingo (*beata de Piedrahíta*) 74–75, 164
- María Evangelista (see also "Catalina de los mártires", "Catalina de San Francisco", and "literacy, miraculous") 73–76, 89, 106, 138, 221, 226
- Materiality (see also "voice") 28–29, 38, 40, 67, 161
- Mechthild von Hackeborn 145–163  
     *Liber specialis gratiae* 145–154  
     Castilian edition (1505) 180
- Meditationes vite Christi* 18n52, 215
- Memory  
     collective 72n3, 74, 77–79, 166, 181, 223, 225  
     image (textual, mental) 19, 81–85, 102, 188, 212  
     individual and collective 79, 106, 81–85, 100  
     re-creation from memory 85–94, 151, 163
- Miguel de Medina 50, 54, 69
- Monasterio de la piedad  
     (Guadalajara) 40n51, 48
- Monastero della Santa Croce (*La Crocetta*, Firenze) 25, 91, 168, 181
- Music (see also "Instrument") 2, 104, 161–162, 180, 212
- Myrensis (Carlos Alberto) 36
- Navarro (Pedro) 29, 44, 58
- New Philology 29
- Observance (see also "Convento de San Juan de los Reyes") 8, 78n21, 166m91, 168  
     Observant reform 5, 12n33, 163, 166
- Orán (conquest of) 64m30
- Order (see "Liturgical cycle")
- Original (manuscript) 33, 36–37, 40, 44, 46, 67, 72, 96, 100–101, 107–108
- Papal privilege 8, 12–13, 64
- Pentecost 2n4, 18, 138, 173–174
- Performance 10–20, 18n52, 38, 67, 71–80, 90–91, 108, 110–111, 133, 185, 215–216, 218, 222–225
- Pericope Sermon 197n28, 199–201
- Point 85, 85–89, 92–94, 100, 107, 141, 188–189, 197–199, 206
- Preaching  
     *ex officio* (*sacra conversatio*) 26, 123, 165–166, 169, 181  
     prophetic (see also "prophetism") 11, 14, 25, 26, 114, 117, 165, 181, 184, 221  
     versus "sermon" 20–22, 72n2
- Predication fiction (*predikatiefictie*) 22, 110, 142, 152, 168, 172, 176, 185
- Predicationality 20, 21, 110n2
- Prologue (El Escorial manuscript) 55–56, 79
- Raccolto* (see "collection")
- Rapture 1–2, 7, 10–20, 75n8, 111n3, 131–132, 143–144, 153, 162, 182
- Redaction (see "composition")
- Redactions (of the manuscripts) 68, 88, 107
- Reform (see "Observance")
- Relic (*Conorte* as a) 39, 66
- Reportatio* (see "transcription")
- Rosa de Viterbo 165
- Sacra conversatio* (see "preaching")
- Sante vive* (see also "Chiara Bugni", "Caterina Vigni", "Domenica da Paradiso", and "Tommasina Fieschi") 3, 112, 165
- Savonarola 171
- Schwesterbücher* 77, 145
- Scribe (female, see also "María Evangelista", "Catalina de los mártires", and "Catalina de San Francisco") 93, 104–106, 226

- Scriptorium* 25, 105  
 Semi-dramatic sermon 18, 111, 176, 217  
 Septuagesima Sunday 143, 202–210, 220  
*Sermo modernus* 85, 170, 189*n*14  
 Sermon (*see also* “pericope sermon” and “thematic sermon”) versus “preaching” 20–22, 72*n*2  
     visionary 28*n*1  
 Song book (*cancionero*) 15, 77, 99, 108  
 Stigmata (*see* “stigmatization”) Stigmatization 3*n*7, 20*n*56, 38*n*45, 164, 167  
 Structure (*see* “Liturgical cycle”) *Substantiae* (Domenica da Paradiso) 91–93, 168–169  
  
 Teresa de Ávila 41*n*55, 112  
 Ter Kameren (Cistercian Abbey, Brussels) 80–81  
 Textualization 24, 39, 41, 77, 80–109, 115, 138–142, 154*n*53, 155, 160–161, 168, 172, 176, 218–219, 223–224  
 Theater (*see* “autos”) 78, 103*n*85, 217, 220  
 Thematic Sermon 199–202  
 Tommasina Fieschi 165  
 Theoderic von Echternach (*see* “Hildegard von Bingen”) Tongue 1–2, 18*n*52, 138, 221  
  
 Umiltà da Faenza 6*n*14, 123, 165  
 Ursula Haider 166  
  
 Vatican manuscript annotations 61–62  
     binding 56–57  
     call number 56  
     colophon 63–65, 70  
     dating 63–66  
     general description 56–63  
     watermarks 60  
  
 Vicent Ferrer (preacher) 127, 148, 203, 218*n*88  
*Vida y fin* 3–6, 10–20, 29, 33, 35, 47, 60, 72, 138, 164, 179  
 Voice (transformation of, *see also* “Instrument”) 1–10, 13–14, 22, 28, 38–39, 126, 160, 181–182, 221, 226  
     materiality of 4, 38–39, 71, 75, 140  
     of the Lord 1–10, 22, 28, 38–39, 75, 77, 126, 139, 160, 165, 176, 182, 185, 187  
     of the turtledoves 141, 184–187, 190, 196*n*27, 198, 218  
  
 Zarco Cuevas 44–47, 55

Step into the world of 16th-century Castile, where a devout community of Franciscan women preserved the public preaching of their visionary abbess, Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), through writing. This groundbreaking book uncovers how Juana's sermons were recorded, explores the materiality of the surviving codices, and reveals their role in the blocking of the abbess's canonization. Tracing the rich tradition of the liturgical vision (12th–16th centuries), this book delves into female literacy and the creation of collective knowledge in female religious houses around Europe. Featuring rare insights and fresh evaluations of historical texts, this volume illuminates the intersection of female prophetic preaching, community, and the written word at the end of the Middle Ages.

Pablo Acosta-García, Ph.D. (2009), Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona), is currently Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). He has been a Marie Curie Fellow at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf (Germany) and a María Zambrano Postdoctoral Fellow at the UAB. His work includes edited books, and numerous articles and book chapters on medieval and early modern mystic women, including the first annotated translation of Angela da Foligno's *Memoriale* into Spanish (Madrid, 2014).

ISBN: 978-90-04-51564-2



9

789004

515642

THE MEDIEVAL FRANCISCANS 25

ISSN 1572-6991

[brill.com/tmf](http://brill.com/tmf)