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Medical knowledge in thirteenth-century preaching: the sermons of Luca da Bitonto

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors of physical health and illness occurred frequently in medieval exegesis, with diseased bodies providing figurative language that could be applied to sin and its effects upon the soul. The increasing availability of newly translated medical learning in Europe in the thirteenth century augmented and enriched this discourse in innovative ways. The present paper offers a close analysis of the systematic use of sophisticated medical knowledge in an unpublished collection of model sermons, written *c*.1240 by the Franciscan preacher Luca da Bitonto. Produced at least 50 years earlier than comparable sermons previously shown to contain advanced medical metaphor, Luca's sermons offer new evidence for the intellectual and theological contexts in which thirteenth-century preachers sought out detailed and accurate knowledge of the natural world, and for the ways in which new medical knowledge was disseminated and incorporated into medieval religious discourse.

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Introduction

Christ's healing of a paralysed man, a story related in Matthew 9:1–18, featured frequently in medieval exegesis as a well-established metaphor for the dangers of spiritual malaise and torpor. As the physical affliction prevented movement, so too did the spiritual condition of sinners prevent them from moving closer to Christ, unless and until they received the healing grace of the sacraments. What, though, was paralysis? And how should its metaphorical correspondence with sin be structured and explained? Medieval preachers seeking answers to these questions were able to draw on a range of authoritative resources to populate their sermons and to flesh out the relationship between the physical condition and its spiritual referent. And so, for instance, when the famous St Anthony of Padua (1195–1231) called paralysis a *dissolutio membrorum* arising from excessive cooling in the body, he was borrowing from St Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*; when he proceeded to explain that the biblical man lying paralysed in his bed was like the sinner lying dissolute in the flesh, he was

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tracking the *Glossa ordinaria*, the standard medieval running commentary on the entirety of Christian Scripture.[1]

By Anthony's time, however, there were other ways of talking about this condition which did not depend upon the conventional *auctoritates* found in established readings. In particular, the translations of Greek and Arabic works of medicine and natural philosophy, stimulating the development of medical study in Western Europe, were beginning to make it possible for preachers and theologians to frame conditions such as paralysis in strikingly different terms. Luca da Bitonto (also known as Lucas Apulus), was a Franciscan preacher active in the 1230s. In a sermon on Matthew 9, he described paralysis as damage that led to the loss or weakening of sense, movement, or both, that had universal and particular forms, and that had three main causes, occurring 'sometimes from the compression of coldness, sometimes from the stopping of the humours and sometimes from the cutting of the nerves'.[2]

Luca's description, although tending towards the same moral conclusions about sin and malaise as Anthony's, is clearly built using a very different register. His sermon draws not on the standard received resources, but rather on state-of-the-art medical knowledge, transmitted in practical handbooks that listed diseases and treatments from 'head to toe'. In the thirteenth century, one of the most popular medical handbooks was the *Practica* written at the school of Salerno in the twelfth century by a physician known only as Platearius.[3] This work provides a direct parallel to Luca's sermon, identifying paralysis as:

> damage to a part, and not any damage whatsoever to a part, but rather that which manifests with the loss or weakening of sense, or of movement, or of both. Sometimes it occurs from astringent coldness, other times from the blocking of a humour or from cuts … Note that paralysis is either universal, or is particular. The universal is that which occupies the central part of the body, the particular that which occupies a whole part, such as the hand, foot, eye, tongue and so on.[4]

[1] See the sermon on Matthew 9:1, for the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, in Beniamino Costa and others, eds., *S. Antonii Patauini Sermones dominicales et festiui*. 3 vols. (Padua: Centro Studi Antoniani, 1979), 2: 309–26, especially 316–17. For Anthony's key sources see, W.M. Lindsay, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), IV, 7, 25; and the interlinear gloss to Matthew in *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria* (Strassburg: Adolph Rusch, 1480–1) [ISTC ib00607000], reprinted as *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*, eds. with introduction, K. Froehlich and M.T. Gibson. 4 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), vol. 4, on Matthew 9:2. In the absence of a critical edition, I have used Rusch's text for all references to the *Glossa ordinaria* in this paper.

The following abbreviations are used in this paper: CCSL: Corpus Christianorum Series Latina; *Narraverunt*: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 15958; PL: Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina; Platearius, *Practica*: Victoria Recio Muñoz, *La Practica de Plateario* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2016).

Except where attributed otherwise, translations and transcriptions are my own.

[2] *Narraverunt*, ff. 192ra–va: 'Est autem paralysis lesio partis cum priuatione siue diminutione sensus uel motus uel utriusque. Quandoque enim mediam partem corporis occupat, et tunc uocatur uniuersalis. Quondoque unum membrum tamen et tunc uocatur particularis … Sit autem paralisis maxime tribus de causis. Quandoque ex frigiditate constringente, quandoque ex humore oppilante quandoque ex nerui incisione.'

[3] This text has been edited by Recio Muñoz, *La Practica de Plateario*. On the text and its author see the extensive introduction, especially 1–78. Recio Muñoz shows that while the work was certainly written by a Salernitan physician from the Platearius family, the traditional identification with the first name 'Johannes' is the result of later confusion and conflation.

[4] Platearius, *Practica*, XIII, 272–4: 'Paralisis est lesio partis, nec tamen quelibet lesio partis est paralisis, sed ea que fit cum privacione vel diminucione sensus vel motus vel utriusque. Fit autem quandoque ex frigiditate constringente, quandoque ex humore opilante et etiam ex incisione … Notandum quod paralisis alia universalis, alia particularis. Universalis est que recte mediam partem corporis occupat; particularis que partem unam tantum, ut manum, pedem, oculum, linguam et sic de ceteris.'

Luca did not identify his medical sources, and although this paper will argue that he was familiar with learning found in medical textbooks like *Practica*, and may even have had direct access to them, it is not immediately clear from where exactly he derived his medical knowledge. It is, however, certain that Luca consciously and intentionally broke with traditional exegetical practice, in order to incorporate into his sermons the most up-to-date medical and scientific material available to him.

Corporal metaphors form part of a long and complex history of Christian fascination with the human body. In medieval exegesis, the flesh simultaneously represented a vehicle for redemption through the death of Christ incarnate, a source of shame, sin and temptation, a platform for ascetic privation, a locus of miracle, and an almost limitless repository for metaphorical imagery which could be used to describe society as a whole, the Church, and the state of individual human souls.[5] Since the patristic period, this final application of bodily imagery as spiritual metaphor was a common feature in Christian interpretation of biblical passages dealing with physical disease and impairment. It enabled commentators and preachers to present scriptural instances of bodily illness and miraculous healing as universal and relatable moral metaphors for souls weakened, disfigured and corrupted through sin, yet redeemable through the intervention of grace, which could cleanse, purify and make whole. In short, biblical narratives of disease were presented to the faithful as templates that could enable them to recognise the state of their own soul whilst also directing them to an appropriate spiritual remedy.

Although ideas about physical health and illness appeared in Latin religious discourse in all periods, developments in the later Middle Ages created ever greater opportunity for the theological application of knowledge about disease. New possibilities emerged in the wake of the translation of Arabic and Greek medical, philosophical and anatomical texts into Latin from the late eleventh century onwards. In the thirteenth century, the rise of European universities, and the development of scholastic systems of learning, provided physical as well as intellectual spaces in which natural philosophy and the new sciences could serve theological enterprise. The process by which newly translated medical treatises began to have an impact on medieval religious discourse was necessarily a gradual one. From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, Latin medical theories based on Arabic traditions were beginning to influence elite theological debates in the major seats of European learning, through the interests of men such as Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Nicholas of Ockham and John of Naples.[6] By the end of the thirteenth century, these new forms of medical knowledge were also animating religious discourse outside of these elite contexts. The theological tracts of the physician Arnau of Vilanova (1240–1311), who wrote both in Latin and in the vernacular, constitute one such

[5] Literature on the body in medieval life and thought is almost endless; for an introduction to the key issues see Linda Kalof, *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); and Jacques Le Goff and Nicolas Truong, *Une histoire du corps au Moyen âge* (Paris: Levi, 2003).

[6] Peter Biller, 'Introduction: John of Naples, Quodlibets and Medieval Theological Concern with the Body', in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, eds. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press, 1997), 3–12; Joseph Ziegler, '"Ut dicunt medici": Medical Knowledge and Theological Debates in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 73 (1999): 208–37; idem, 'The Sciences of the Body around 1300 as a Locus of Theological and Spiritual Thought', in *The Medieval Paradigm*, ed. G. d'Onofrio (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 577– 91; Cecilia Panti, 'The Theological Use of Science in Robert Grosseteste and Adam Marsh According to Roger Bacon: The Case Study of the Rainbow', in *Robert Grosseteste and the Pursuit of Religious and Scientific Learning in the Middle Ages*, eds. Jack Cunningham and Mark Hocknull (Cham: Springer: 2016), 143–64.

example.[7] Preaching aids, encyclopaedias and other resources made it ever easier for fourteenth-century authors to incorporate medicine into their sermons, as demonstrated by the successful and systematic application of high-level medical metaphor by several prominent Dominican preachers of the later Middle Ages.[8]

And yet, such men were not the first to exploit newly available medical learning in their sermons. The present study offers a close analysis of medicine in the preaching of Luca da Bitonto. Written in the 1230s and 1240s, his model sermon collection provides important insight into the early transmission of new medical knowledge within religious discourse. For instance, the sermons considered here are around 60 years older than the *Liber de exemplis et similitudinibus rerum* of Giovanni di San Gimignano, and well over a century older than Vincent Ferrer's sermons, each of which has been noted for their use of sophisticated medicine. While the name of Luca da Bitonto is little known today, his sermon collection appears to have been extremely popular in the Middle Ages. The evidence presented here therefore indicates not only that medical learning was finding its way into sermons earlier than has previously been observed, but also that this was taking place in popular, Franciscan contexts, and was mediated at least in part by Salernitan handbooks of practical medicine. This paper will examine Luca's borrowing of medical knowledge, asking how and why he accessed this advanced learning, what influence it had on his interpretation of Scripture and in what ways this type of preaching might have been received. Through an examination of these sermons, this study identifies mid thirteenth-century Franciscan preaching as an important vehicle for the transmission and theological application of Arabic medical traditions, especially as transmitted through the school of Salerno, and argues that friars such as Luca played an important part in the process by which medicine was incorporated into the field of religious discourse.

Luca da Bitonto and *Narraverunt*

The material discussed in this paper appears in a large Franciscan collection of model sermons, written towards the middle of the thirteenth century. It contains several hundred sermons, at least two for every Sunday of the liturgical year, as well as certain other occasions.[9] The collection is known by the first word of its prologue, which opens with a quotation from Psalm 118: *Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes sed non ut lex tua, Domine*.[10] The apparent author of the *Narraverunt* sermons was an obscure thirteenth-century friar known as Luca da Bitonto. Existing studies indicate that this preacher could possibly have been the *magister Luca* named in papal letters of 1220 as provincial minister in the Holy Land, and that he may have had some kind of connection

[7] Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion c.1300: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[8] Carmel Ferragud, 'La enfermedad y la práctica médica en los sermones de Vicente Ferrer', *eHumanista* 39 (2018): 1–11; Carmel Ferragud and Ricardo M. Olmos de León, 'Galenisme i medicaments en els sermons de Sant Vicent Ferrer', *Specula* 1 (2021): 211–40; Joseph Ziegler, 'Medical Similes in Religious Discourse: The Case of Giovanni di San Gimignano OP (*ca.*1260–*ca.*1333)', *Science in Context* 8 (1995): 103–31.
[9] For a detailed list of the contents see Jean Désiré Rasolofoarimanana, 'La tradition manuscrite des sermons de Fr. Luca da Bitonto OMin' [in 2 parts], *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 97 (2004): 229–74, and 99 (2006): 33–131. See also Johann Baptist Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, vol. 4, *Autore L–P* (Münster: Aschendorffsche, 1972), 49–71.
[10] This is Psalm 118:85 in the Vulgate. In the Douay-Rheims version, used throughout this article for English quotations from Scripture, the verse reads: 'The wicked have told me fables: but not as thy law.'

with the University of Paris.[11] He was in all probability the same Luca who, as 'lector of the brothers in Apulia', enjoyed the briefest of cameos in a posthumous healing miracle credited to Benvenuto da Gubbio.[12] And, he was certainly the same person as the Lucas Apulus praised in Salimbene's *Cronica* as 'a scholastic and ecclesiastic and educated man, and an esteemed doctor of theology in Apulia'.[13] On the strength of Salimbene, who noted that Luca was still alive in the early 1240s, it is usually assumed that he died *c*.1245, though there is no direct evidence for this. Nor is it clear where Luca was born or educated. For the sake of convenience, I use here the traditional name Luca da Bitonto. Some historians, such as Felice Moretti, who was himself from Bitonto, have promoted the association of Luca with this small town near Bari, but there is no convincing medieval evidence connecting the author of *Narraverunt* to this or any other particular town.[14] Salimbene uses the toponym 'Apulus', but this too is ambiguous. In the rest of his *Cronica*, Salimbene uses the term not exclusively for the modern region of Puglia, nor only for the medieval Franciscan province of Apulia, but rather in a much broader, looser and varied sense, to refer to a catchment area often encompassing much of southern Italy, including Naples, Cosenza, Fiore and Melfi. All sources and traditions, however, do indicate a close association between Luca, author of *Narraverunt*, and the south of Italy.

Luca's sermons have been dated variously to between 1233 and 1245, and I accept the broad consensus placing them *c*.1240. Certainly, *Narraverunt* is in many respects typical of mendicant preaching from this period, adopting the highly structured style associated with the concept of the *sermo modernus*, and drawing on a wide range of patristic, early medieval and twelfth-century theological texts, as well as works of pagan antiquity, civil and canon law, and the liberal arts.[15] There may be a case for placing *Narraverunt* in the early 1240s, within the context of liturgical and other reforms which followed the deposition of the minister general, Elias of Cortona, in 1239, but further research is required to establish a more precise date.

Nor is the place of writing clear. Despite some tentative associations with Paris, there is no concrete evidence to demonstrate that Luca had studied at the famous university, or that he wrote his sermons there, and *Narraverunt* could easily have been produced elsewhere, for instance in southern Italy where Luca was apparently lector.[16] The sermons

[11] Felice Moretti, *Luca Apulus: un maestro francescano del sec. XIII* (Bitonto: Arti Grafiche, 1985); idem, 'I sermoni di Luca da Bitonto, francescano del Duecento', *Studi Bitontini* 68 (1999): 39–60; Jean Désiré Rasolofoarimanana, 'Luc de Bitonto, Omin, et ses sermons', in *Preaching and Society in the Middle Ages,* eds. Laura Gaffuri and Richard Quinto (Padua: Centro Studi Antoniani, 2002), 239–47. For a Brother Luca as a provincial minister in the Holy Land, see Honorius II's letter 'Constitutis in praesentia', in *Bullarium franciscanum romanorum pontificum, constitutiones, epistolas, ac diplomata continens*, ed. Giovanni Giacinto Sbaraglia. 4 vols. (Rome: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1759–68) 1: 6–8. See also Girolamo Golubovich, ed., *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, vol. 1 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1906), 97–9, 128–9, 135.

[12] Tommaso di Pavia, *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum*, ed. Ferdinand-Marie Delorme. Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi 5 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1923), 117 (lib. II, cap. 28).

[13] Salimbene de Adam di Parma, *Cronica*, vol. 1, ed. Giuseppe Scalia (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1966), 262–3: 'Et tunc vivebat frater Lucas Apulus ex ordine fratrum minorum, cuius est sermonum memoria, qui fuit scholasticus et ecclesiasticus et litteratus homo et in Apulia in theologia eximius doctor, nominatus, sollemnis atque famosus, cuius anima per misericordiam Dei requiescat in pace, amen.'

[14] Moretti, *Luca Apulus*, 18–19.

[15] Rasolofoarimanana, 'Luc de Bitonto', 246–7.

[16] A pair of manuscripts in Prague attribute *Narraverunt* to 'Luca Parisiensis', and some preaching compilations containing works of known Parisian masters also include sermons by Luca, for which see David D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 99.

are model texts, designed to be read, re-used and adapted by other preachers, and in its present form the text has probably been written up whilst the author had access to a library. There are no indications as to when and where, if at all, Luca himself preached these sermons, and nor is it necessarily entirely clear for whom they were written. The prologue, the content and form of the sermons, and the manuscript tradition do not necessarily point to the same conclusions in this regard. Certain characteristics of *Narraverunt* – such as the use of technical medical material discussed in this paper – could be taken as indication that they were prepared for an elite educated audience, and Luca's work could be studied profitably with reference to the phenomenon of the 'university sermon'.[17] On the other hand, the prologue to *Narraverunt* claims that the work has been written at the express urging of the membership and indeed leadership of the order of lesser brothers, as a resource that would be of particular benefit to under-educated friars undertaking preaching missions.[18] Whether or not these claims amount to anything other than literary convention, the manuscript tradition for *Narraverunt* does indicate a reception for the work that should be termed popular rather than elite. A book list of the library at the Franciscan mother house in Assisi, compiled in 1381, itemised no fewer than six copies, more than any other collection of sermons bar the famous *Quadragesimales* of Jacopo de Varazze (1228–98).[19] Moreover, Schneyer's survey of medieval preaching manuscripts identified over 100 complete and partial manuscript witnesses to *Narraverunt*, widely diffused across Europe.[20] In 1483, Luca's sermons were printed in Cologne by Johann Koelhoff.[21] Although it can be difficult to gauge the popularity of medieval sermon collections, 'major' works might be expected to exhibit several characteristics: evidence of copying and use during the Middle Ages, a large number of manuscripts dispersed over a broad geographical area and the existence of early printed editions attesting continued interest in the text.[22] In all of these respects, *Narraverunt* should be regarded as a successful, important and widely-used work of preaching, that could well have fulfilled the purpose Luca claimed for it in his prologue.

For the purposes of this paper, my analysis is based on the text of *Narraverunt* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 15958.[23] I focus on those sermons preached on a biblical *thema* which mentions Christ healing the sick. The *thema* is a useful but limited

[17] As suggested by Rasolofoarimanana, 'Luc de Bitonto', 241. On the 'university sermon', see Jacques-Guy Bougerol, 'Les sermons dans les "studia" des mendicants', in *Le scuole degli ordini mendicanti* (Todi: Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale, 1978), 249–80; D'Avray, *Preaching of the Friars*, 180–203.

[18] *Narraverunt*, f. 10vb: 'mandato superioris urgente nec non quorundam fratrum desiderio impellente opusculum sermonum dominicalium coactus sum annotare … rudibus et nondum exercitatis fratribus prodesse uolui beniuolum.'

[19] Leto Alessandri, *Inventario dell'antica biblioteca del S. Convento di S. Francesco in Assisi, compilato nel 1381* (Assisi: Metastasio, 1906), in the public library XXXIII (p. 10), CXXIX (p. 26); and in the private library cdxxxvi (p. 119), cdxxxvii (p. 119), cdxxxviii (p. 119), cdxxxix (p. 119).

[20] Schneyer, *Repertorium*, 4: 49–71; cf. Rasolofoarimanana, 'La tradition manuscrite', for descriptions of 29 complete copies of the text.

[21] *Sermones super epistolas et evangelia* (Cologne: [Johann Koelhoff the Elder], 1483). At least 17 copies survive, for which see the British Library's *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, where this work is no. il00314000.

[22] These criteria are proposed in Jussi Hanska, *"And the Rich Man Also Died; and He Was Buried in Hell": The Social Ethos in Mendicant Sermons* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1997), 22.

[23] On the manuscript tradition for *Narraverunt*, see the preliminary study by Rasolofoarimanana, 'La tradition manuscrite'. It is to be hoped that further study will clarify questions relating to the transmission of the text and the relationship between the many manuscript witnesses to these sermons. In the absence of a critical edition, I have opted to use BnF, MS lat. 15958, as the source of quotations in this article. The manuscript contains a complete cycle of Luca's sermons in a good thirteenth-century copy. I have checked quotations against the text in Vatican,

tool for research, and does not necessarily represent a clear or unambiguous label of the topics or subjects the preacher will address. In cycles of sermons like *Narraverunt*, the *thema* was typically not chosen freely or arbitrarily, but was instead extracted from the liturgical readings for the corresponding day. The biblical verse on which a sermon was preached represents the starting point for an analysis that is often meandering and can be difficult to predict or anticipate, though several studies have used the *thema* successfully to identify sermons likely to address particular predetermined concepts.[24] Within *Narraverunt*, Luca makes repeated use of the *Christus medicus* trope which framed Christ as a doctor of souls, and offers numerous references to medicine and disease whilst readily exploiting Aristotelian theories of, amongst other things, sight, voice, hair, conception and birth. Nevertheless, only in those sermons preached on a *thema* in which Christ is described as healing the sick does *Narraverunt* offer sustained use of medical theory to provide a foundation for spiritual metaphor. It follows that, in this instance, the *thema* can be used as a good predictor for the appearance of medical knowledge, and that systematic use of medical metaphor occurs primarily in those sermons with a biblical *thema* that invited Luca to focus on concepts of body, health and healing.

It follows that Luca's apparent interest in medicine and disease was filtered by the liturgy, and specifically by the Gospel readings. He engages most readily with those conditions mentioned in Scripture as being healed by Christ, rather than the conditions that were most visible, most feared or most lethal in his own society.[25] The order and arrangement of Luca's sermons on disease are also shaped by the liturgy, and the majority of his sustained use of medicine occurs in a cluster of sermons for the post-Pentecostal season. They are the sermons for the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (healing of deafness and muteness, Mark 7:31–7), the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (healing of leprosy, Luke 17:9–11), the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (healing of hydropsy, Luke 14:1–6), the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (healing of paralysis, Matthew 9:1–8), and the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (healing of fever, John 4:46–54). The result of this liturgical arrangement was a period of two months containing various Sunday Gospel passages susceptible to medical-metaphorical interpretation. As liturgical custom, rather than the preacher's own volition, dictated this intriguing concentration of material, I will not dwell on it further here, other than to observe that Luca enthusiastically took up the opportunity to create an informal post-Pentecostal series of sermons inflected with medical metaphor.[26] In addition to the brief technical description of paralysis already cited, this paper will explore the rest of these sermons in turn, analysing Luca's metaphorical readings of hydropsy, fever, leprosy, and deafness and muteness.

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 6010; Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, MS 529; and the Koelhoff incunable cited above, note 21.

[24] On this methodology, see Jussi Hanska, 'Reconstructing the Mental Calendar of Medieval Preaching: A Method and its Limits: An Analysis of Sunday Sermons', in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 293–315.

[25] For a similar observation pertaining to the late thirteenth-century Dominican Giovanni di San Gimignano, see Ziegler, 'Medical Similes', 112.

[26] Most medieval sermon collections follow a similar calendar of readings, so this combination is not uniquely Franciscan. See Maura O'Carroll, 'The Lectionary for the Proper of the Year in the Dominican and the Franciscan Rites of the Thirteenth Century', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 49 (1979): 79–103. Of course, this does not mean that all preachers responded to the material in the same way as Luca.

Hydropsy

The Latin term *hydropisis* is usually translated as 'dropsy', an archaic English term for oedema: abnormal swelling caused by fluid retention. According to Luke 14:1–6, Jesus miraculously healed a man suffering from hydropsy.[27] This narrative formed part of the Gospel for the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, and Luca's sermon for this day offered an extended spiritual analysis of the disease and its healing. As with paralysis, a well-established set of conventional exegetical texts guided much medieval interpretation of this passage. The *Glossa ordinaria* quoted Bede (*c.*673–735) on hydropsy, who borrowed an etymology from Isidore of Seville (*c.*560–636): the Latin *hydropisis* came from *hydro*, the Greek word for water.[28] Bede proceeded to explain that the disease was a defect of the bladder leading to excessive build-up of fluids, and he set out three particular symptoms which it caused: tumescence of bodily members, fetid breath and excessive thirst – indeed, the more those suffering from this disease drank, the more they thirsted. These characteristics suggested to Bede that the physical condition of hydropsy mentioned in Scripture was ideally situated to represent metaphorically the spiritual illness of avarice, a vice in which those who are already wealthy thirst for an ever greater abundance of riches and carnal delights.[29]

Transmitted through the *Glossa ordinaria*, Bede's interpretation became for centuries the standard spiritual reading of Luke 14:1–6. The received reading was clearly sufficient for the purposes of establishing a link between the physical disease and the sin it was understood to represent. For instance, Anthony of Padua's sermon on these verses explicitly quoted the gloss for an etymology, description and metaphorical interpretation of hydropsy, following Bede's prompt to use the physical disease as a framework for denouncing avarice.[30] Even at the end of the thirteenth century, the etymology and symptoms found in the gloss remained the prevailing framework for sermons based on this passage, and were used by the celebrated Dominican preacher Jacopo da Varazze (1228–98), who cited Bede explicitly, recycling his description of hydropsy and its effects to argue that the disease represented three forms of sin: tumescence of the stomach stood for the spiritual self-inflation of pride, burning thirst represented the unquenchable desire of avarice, while fetid and corrupt breath signalled *luxuria*, which stinks in the presence of God.[31] The Gospel narrative of healing at the hands of Christ made obvious the proposed solution for souls infected with these sins.

[27] As my interest here is medieval sermons and not clinical medicine, I have retained the Latin categories and terms found in the sources.
[28] For Isidore's etymology of hydropsy, see *Etymologiae*, IV, 7, 23: 'Hydropis nomen sumpsit ab aquoso humore cutis. Nam Graeci ydro aquam vocaverunt. Est enim humor subcutaneus cum inflatione turgente et anhelitu foetido.'
[29] Bede, *In Lucam*, in *Venerabilis Bedae, Anglo-Saxonis presbyteri, Opera omnia …* , vol. 3, ed. J.-P. Migne. PL 92 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1862), cols. 510D–511A (XIV): 'Hydropis morbus, ab aquoso humore vocabulum trahit. Graece enim "hydro" aqua vocatur. Est autem humor subcutaneus de vitio vesicae natus, cum inflatione turgente, et anhelitu fetido. Propriumque est hydropici, quanto magis abundat humore inordinato, tanto amplius sitire. Et ideo recte comparatur ei quem fluxus carnalium voluptatum exuberans aggravat. Comparatur diviti avaro, qui quanto est copiosior divitiis, quibus non bene utitur, tanto ardentius talia concupiscit.' Cf. *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria*, vol. 4, on Luke 14:2.
[30] Antonio di Padova, *Sermones*, 2: 280: 'Ibi dicit glossa: "Hydor graece, aqua latine, inde hydropisis morbus aquosus. Proprium est hydropici, quanto plus bibit tanto plus sitit et ide comparatur ei quem fluxus carnalium voluptatum exuberans aggravat. Comparatur etiam diviti avaro."'
[31] Jacopo da Varazze, *Sermones de tempore* (Cologne: Konrad Winters, *c.*1478) [ISTC-ij00193000], ff. 276r–277r.

In *Narraverunt*, Luca also used hydropsy to diagnose spiritual defects and propose a divine cure. However, departing from traditional exegetical presentation of the condition, he offered a striking and highly technical account of hydropsy. While Bede and the majority of preachers who were dependent on the *Glossa ordinaria* associated the condition with the bladder and an inability to expel matter, Luca proposed that hydropsy was a defect of the digestive system, arising in the liver and caused by the failure of the body to process food adequately. Luca here subscribes to the theory that digestion is a two stage process, taking place first in the stomach, where food that is consumed is separated into good and bad matter, and then secondly in the liver, from where the nutrients found in good matter are transmitted to the other members.[32] In Luca's reading, hydropsy occurs when the liver lacks natural heat, and as a result fails to process this matter correctly, instead transmitting undigested raw humours to the rest of the body, causing the inflation of bodily members. Luca suggests that the mechanics of the digestive process, and the occasional faults which he describes, mirror the workings of the soul. Spiritually, he asserts, the food of the soul is the word of God. It is 'digested' first in the agent intellect, which acts like the stomach by breaking down true from false, and then secondly in the affective intellect, which like the liver processes this matter and with it nourishes the other faculties of the soul. If the fervour of *caritas* is absent from the affective intellect, then the soul is fed on bad and disordered humours, generating a kind of spiritual hydropsy which manifests as inordinate desire.[33] It follows that the hydropsy mentioned in the Bible, healed by Christ, and described in technical detail by Luca, represents the excessive and insatiable desire of the spiritual disease of avarice, caused by the absence of Christian *caritas*.

Narraverunt sustained this metaphor, supplementing the general account of hydropsy with an enumeration of four specific forms of the disease. Luca listed the etymology and particular symptoms associated with each of *leucoflegmancia*, *yposarca*, *aschites* and *timpanites*, stressing that 'in the same way, there are four types of avarice' corresponding to these four forms of hydropsy.[34] Christ's act of healing demonstrated how, unless the soul is first imbued with divine grace, intemperate desire for temporal things cannot be cured. For Luca, then, the meaning of this biblical episode was obvious, and he summed up the passage by saying that 'in the first part of the Gospel the Lord argues against avarice'.[35]

[32] For later preachers using theories of digestion, see Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion*, 169.

[33] *Narraverunt*, f. 186vb: 'Est enim ydropisis defectus uirtutis digestiue in epate inflationem membrorum generans. Prima namque digestio fit in stomacho ubi separatur malum a bono. Secunda in epate et inde transmittitur nutrimentium ad alia membra. Spiritualiter cibus anime est uerbum dei unde dicitur Matthae quarto non in solo pane uiuit homo et cetera. Intellectus est quasi stomachus in quo primum uerbum dei recipitur et ibi separatur uerum a falso … Affectus uero est quasi epar nam sicut epar recipit a stomacho sic affectus recipit ab intellectu ut bene cognitum diligatur. Uires anime sunt quasi alia membra commode nutriuntur si digestio epatis fuerit bona id est si bonum dilectum transit in opera. Hoc autem fit cum calor naturalis id est feruor caritatis uiget indigetur in affectu, qui si defecerit crudi humores transmittuntur ad membra, quia mali et inordinati humores ad omnes sensus anime deriuentur et ita generatur in anima spiritualis ydropisis id est inordinanta concupiscentia.'

[34] *Narraverunt*, ff. 186vb–187ra: 'Sunt autem quatuor eius species. Prima species ydropisis est leucoflegmancia, que est totius corporis mollis inflatio, cedens digitorum impassioni, et dicitur sic ab albo colore et humore leucon enim album fleuma est humor. Secunda est yposarcha, ab ypos quod est sub et sarcos quod est caro, quasi sub carne, est enim consumptio carnium cum respiratione mali odoris. Tercia uocatur aschites ab ascos quod est uter eo quod uenter percussus sonat in modum utris semipleni. Quarta dicitur timpanites, quia uenter percussus resonat in modum tympani quod facit sicca uentositas in trinseca inclusa.'

[35] *Narraverunt*, f. 185vb: 'in prima parte euangelii disputat dominus contra auariciam … hic curat ydropicum, quia nisi prius anima suscitetur per graciam, impossibile est inordinatum appetitum ipsius in gestione rerum temporalium saturari.'

Although this essential metaphorical association between hydropsy and avarice was already embedded in traditional exegesis of this passage, as seen in the examples cited above, Luca elaborated a newer and fuller technical justification for the correspondence. His sermon in effect offered a detailed, non-theological, definition, description and classification of hydropsy, upon which he was able to build not only a theory of the sin of avarice in general terms as a spiritual and intellectual defect, but also a denunciation of four forms of behaviour in which that sin was made manifest.

Luca does not explicitly refer to a medical source or directly cite any medical texts, here or elsewhere. His account of the disease is simply asserted. However, Luca's material on hydropsy is profitably compared to that found within contemporary medical discourse. Once again, the popular *Practica* of Platearius provides a useful point of comparison. For Platearius, hydropsy is:

> a defect in the digestive function of the liver causing swelling up of the members, since when the digestive function in the liver becomes weak a great many superfluities are generated which, transmitted outwards by the force of the expulsive function [of the liver], cause the inflation of the members.[36]

Platearius goes on to list the same fourfold classification of hydropsy used by Luca.[37] Indeed, all of the claims *Narraverunt* makes about the physical disease, and each of its four types, can be corroborated in *Practica*. This is not to say that Luca must have had direct access to the text (though he would certainly have been able to find it in major libraries across Europe). The *Practica* was, along with the *Viaticum* of Constantinus Africanus (*c*.1020–87), one of several popular works of practical medicine frequently excerpted in florilegia, compendia and other collections of medical knowledge.[38] In the thirteenth century, preachers, animated by a desire to read and contemplate the 'book of nature', and motivated to find distinctions and classifications conducive to the systematic format of the *sermo modernus*, were also increasingly able to access medical and anatomical theory in the new genre of the encyclopaedia.[39]

Regardless of the actual source that was used, the close correspondence between *Narraverunt* and *Practica* indicates an intentional and concerted effort on the part of Luca to deploy technical and sophisticated medical knowledge in order to define, describe, and subdivide scriptural illnesses such as hydropsy, and to augment their standard metaphorical association with sins like avarice. It is important to stress at this point that, whatever the social consequences of these moral readings of scriptural disease, Luca was not attempting to make any observations whatsoever about the causation of physical hydropsy, or of any of the other conditions he mentions. His purpose was not to suggest that physical illness arises as a consequence of the sins discussed in his

[36] Platearius, *Practica*, XLVIII, 650: 'Ydropisis est error virtutis digestive epatis tumorem membrorum generans, dum enim virtus digestiva debilitatur in epate, superfluitates multe generantur que vigore virtuties expulsive exterius transmisse membrorum inflacionem generant.'
[37] Platearius, *Practica*, XLVIII, 652: 'secundum quadruplicem qualitatum coniunccionem fiunt IIII species ydropisis: leucoflemancia, id est, ab albo flemate facta, leucos enim album; yposarca vel anasarca, ex distemperancia frigiditatis et siccitatis; asclites, ex distemperancia caliditatis et humiditatis; timpanites, ex distemperancia caliditatis et siccitatis.'
[38] *Viaticum* was Constantinus' Latin paraphrase of the tenth-century Tunisian text *Zād al Musāfir*, attributed to Ibn Al-Jazzar (Latinised as Algizar). For the text, see *Opera omnia Ysaac* (Lyons: Barthélemy Trot, 1515), second foliation, ff. 144r–171r.
[39] On the development of encyclopaedias and interest in the properties of the natural world, see Benoît Beyer de Ryke, 'Le miroir du monde: un parcours dans l'encyclopédisme médiéval', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 81 (2003): 1243–75.

sermons (though like most other preachers of his day he believed that this was possible). On the contrary, Luca's critique is targeted at the whole of humanity – be they physically healthy or sick, the faithful should be prompted to scrutinise their own souls, and should be equipped, as they are in these sermons, with the resources required to identify spiritual disease, so that they can seek the expert help of their confessors. Evidently, Luca felt that up-to-date and technical accounts of those illnesses found in biblical narratives represented a useful tool for facilitating this process.

Fever

Luca's approach to paralysis and hydropsy represents a pattern of interpreting illness that is sustained throughout *Narraverunt*, and is particularly apparent in the cluster of sermons discussed here. Luca also used the technique in a sermon for the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, when the Gospel reading from John 4:46–54 described Christ healing a boy with fever. In this instance, the standard metaphorical association was between fever and *luxuria*, a pairing which can be traced back at least as far as Ambrose of Milan (*c*.339–97), who compared the heat of fever to the burning passions of lust. This association, along with an etymology from Isidore, appeared in the *Glossa ordinaria* and was adopted by most thirteenth-century exegetes, for whom the term 'fever' is derived from 'fervour', and represents lust.[40] Luca, by contrast, establishes the metaphorical association between fever and lust through a technical account of the nature and properties of the disease. He writes that the boy healed by Christ:

> was sick with fever, which is immoderate heat. Fever is unnatural heat going beyond the course of nature, proceeding from the heart to the arteries and causing harm by its effect, and it signifies the fervour of concupiscence which in truth is not natural but rather is a crime against nature, proceeding from the will to the sense and then to action, which is the damage and corruption of the soul.[41]

Luca neatly aligns this technical description of fever with his understanding of how concupiscence takes control of and damages the soul. He goes on to outline three different types of fever: *effimera*, *ethica* and *putrida*, describing the particular symptoms, aetiologies and etymologies for each variety, and explaining how they represented three distinct manifestations of *luxuria*.[42]

The medieval concept of fever entailed a broad and varied range of common conditions that attracted much attention from medieval physicians. Several of the claims made here by Luca were disputed in some contemporary texts. For instance, the question of whether or not fever was 'natural' heat was debated in the thirteenth century, and, although a threefold division may have been rhetorically convenient for preachers,

[40] Anthony of Padua, *Sermones*, 2: 371: '*Febris a fervore est dicta* et *significat carnis luxuriam*, cuius calore cor concutitur et caro corrumpitur.' The etymology is from Isidore, *Etymologiae*, IV, 6, 2, and the signification is borrowed from Ambrose, *Expositio in Lucam*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis episcopi, Opera omnia …* , ed. J.-P. Migne. PL 15 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1845), col. 1715 (IV. 63).

[41] *Narraverunt*, f. 198vb: 'Morbus quo infirmatur est febris scilicet calor immoderatus. Febris enim est calor innaturalis supergrediens cursum nature, procedens a corde in arterias suoque ledes affectu et signat fervorem concupiscencie que reuera non est natura sed uicium nature procedens a uoluntate ad sensum et inde in actum qui lesio et corruptio anime.'

[42] *Narraverunt*, f. 198vb: 'Sicut igitur sunt tres species febris scilicet effimera, ethica, putrida, ita et tres concupiscencie de quibus Iohannis: omne quod est in mundo aut est concupiscentia carnis aut cupiditas oculorum aut superbia uite.'

many of Luca's contemporaries preferred alternative and often far more complicated subclassifications of the condition.[43] Nevertheless, Luca is closely tracking medical knowledge here. His basic definition of fever appears to be a verbatim extract from *Isagoge*. Translated into Latin by Constantinus Africanus, this short Galenic tract was written in ninth-century Baghdad by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809–87), Latinised as 'Johannitus'.[44] *Isagoge* goes on to subdivide fever according to various classifications, the first of which is the same threefold scheme found in *Narraverunt*.

Was *Isagoge* a direct source for Luca? Maybe, but by no means necessarily. In the thirteenth century, *Isagoge* became one of the kernels of the *Articella*, a medical anthology used widely for study, teaching, and practice across Western Europe.[45] Johannitus' comments on fever were also copied into various encyclopaedias and collections of Salernitan medicine. The crucial lines on fever could be found, for instance, in the *Compendium medicinae* of Gilbertus Anglicus, probably compiled in Salerno in the 1230s.[46] Although this makes it difficult to establish the precise source Luca may have used, the wide availability of this material indicates that the kind of technical language used in *Narraverunt* already enjoyed a reasonably broad currency. In turn, this may help to explain why Luca, when presented with scriptural passages accenting illness and ailments, consistently turns away from the standard accounts transmitted in the gloss, ignores received definitions and distinctions from the usual theological authorities, and turns instead to medical sources that allow him to import systematic accounts of disease into his spiritual metaphors. While this pattern of interpretation is already clear, his application of it in a sermon on leprosy is particularly striking, for reasons to which I now turn.

Leprosy

Leprosy is uniquely significant amongst the conditions discussed in this article. A disease of persistent symbolic valency, mentioned in both the Old and New Testament, it would also have been a visible and concrete reality for most medieval preachers and their audiences.[47] For the purposes of my analysis, the most consequential characteristic of leprosy is that a detailed definition and classification of the disease is provided by Scripture itself, in the form of the ceremonial purity laws of Leviticus 13 and 14. The rich and authoritative biblical account was a potent and flexible source of figurative language for preachers and exegetes. In the patristic period, authors such as Augustine used Leviticus to read leprosy as a symbol for heresy, explaining the metaphor in terms of the most basic physical characteristics of the disease: leprosy caused variation in skin colour, reflecting the

[43] Numerous examples of both can be found in the conflicting authorities discussed at length by Gilbertus Anglicus, a physician writing in the Salernitan tradition in the 1230s. See his *Compendium medicinae* (Lyons: Vincent de Portonariis, 1510), where the discussion of fever comprises all of Book 1 and runs to 75 double-columned folios. See in particular ff. 1vb–3ra for the nature of fever's heat and ff. 3va–4vb for Gilbert's initial thoughts on classifications.
[44] For the text of *Isagoge*, see Gregor Maurach, ed., 'Johannicius: Isagoge ad Techne Galieni,' *Sudhoffs Archiv* 62 (1978), 148–74 (160, n. 42): 'Febris est calor innaturalis cursum supergrediens naturae, procedens a corde in arterias, suoque laedit effectu, cuius sunt tria genera: unum in animo et dicitur effimera; aliud de humoribus, qui putresecunt et putrida nuncupatur. Tertium solida laedit membra et ipsa est ethica.'
[45] On the *Articella* and *Isagoge*, see Cornelius O'Boyle, *The Art of Medicine: Medical Teaching at the University of Paris, 1250–1400* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 82–5.
[46] Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium medicinae*, ff. 1rb and 3va.
[47] For a recent collections of essays on leprosy in the Middle Ages, see François-Olivier Touati and Elma Brenner, eds., *Leprosy and Identity in the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

mingling of false and true doctrine in heretical teachings.[48] Isidore of Seville appears to have been responsible for popularising a more systematic approach to the symbolic potential of leprosy and its Levitical characteristics. In his *Quaestiones in vetus testamentum*, he extracted from the somewhat convoluted and repetitive text of Leviticus a coherent classification of leprosy and its symptoms:

> We find that the legislator set out six types of leprosy in humans: the first of head and beard, the second of baldness and bald patches, the third of flesh and skin, the fourth of skin and body and of white scars with red, the fifth of ulcers and scars, the sixth of burning … And furthermore he added colours of the leprosies, that is, pale, red, white, blue, black and blossoming.[49]

This enumeration of the forms and colours of leprosy provided two sets of six characteristics that could be used as the basis for further and more detailed metaphorical discussion of the disease. Taking his prompt from Augustine, Isidore himself linked each of these Levitical forms of leprosy to heretical beliefs and actions: 'leprosy of the head' denoted those heretics who failed to recognise Christ as the head of humanity, 'black leprosy' stood for the smoke of idolatrous sacrifices, and so on.[50] In addition to these two lists based on the type and the colour of leprosy, Isidore also enumerated the three types of inanimate object within which, according to Leviticus, leprosy could arise: the walls of houses, vessels and clothing. Each of these, too, represented a particular form of sinful behaviour.[51]

The ceremonial purity laws of Leviticus provided the immediate context in which most other biblical narratives of leprosy occur, and Isidore's neat classification of the disease became the default resource for preachers seeking authoritative scriptural material on the physical characteristics of leprosy. It was copied into the *Glossa ordinaria* on Leviticus 13, and in the 1230s was incorporated into the *Postillae* of the Parisian Dominican theologian Hugh of St Cher.[52] Not only was Hugh's work extremely influential, it was written in Luca's lifetime and it has been identified as a potential source for some of the other sermons in *Narraverunt*.[53] Despite the fact that the disease described in Leviticus was not the same as that present in medieval Europe, most of Luca's contemporaries therefore appear to have been satisfied adopting a broadly Levitical approach when preaching on passages such as Luke 17, in which Christ heals 10 *leprosi*.[54] Doing so provided preachers with ample opportunity to read leprosy as a moral lesson that

[48] Augustine, *Quaestiones Euangeliorum*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher. CCSL 44B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980), 98 (lib. II. cap. 40). Other early examples of leprosy as a symbol for sin are discussed in the otherwise outdated Saul Nathaniel Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 120–7.
[49] Isidore, *Quaestiones in vetus testamentum*, in *Sancti Isidori Hispalensis episcopi, Opera omnia*, vol. 5, ed. J.-P. Migne. PL 83 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1862), cols. 327D–329A (X, 3, 11): 'Hujus scilicet leprae invenimus legislatorem sex species in homine posuisse: primam capitis et barbae, secundam calvitii et recalvationis, tertiam carnis et cutis, quartam cutis et corporis, et cicatricis albae cum rubore, quintam ulceris et cicatricis, sextam ustionis … Sed adhuc adjecit colores leprarum, id est, pallidam, rubentem, albam, lividam, nigram, florescentem.'
[50] Isidore, *Quaestiones*, PL 83: cols. 328A–329B (X. 4–10, 12).
[51] Isidore, *Quaestiones*, PL 83: cols. 329D–330A (X. 17–18).
[52] Hugh of St Cher, *Postillae*, in *Opera omnia Hugonis de sancto Charo*. 8 vols. (Venice: Nicolò Pezzana, 1703), 1: f. 113vb, on Leviticus 13:28. Cf. *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria*, vol. 1, on Leviticus 13:29.
[53] As argued by Rasolofoarimanana, 'Luc de Bitonto', 246–7.
[54] On the terminology of leprosy and the nature of the disease discussed in the Bible, see Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 75. Contrary to popular assumptions, medieval authors did not always accept that the condition mentioned in Leviticus was the same as that encountered in medieval Europe. For an example of a dissenting voice, see William of Auvergne, *De legibus*, in *Guilielmi Alverni Opera omnia*. 2 vols. (Paris: apud J. Lacaille, 1674) 2: 42 (XI).

could be applied to the faithful. Anthony of Padua, for example, insisted that together the 10 *leprosi* represent 'all sinners', and, lightly editing Isidore's categories, he explained that 'five kinds of leprosy, and five places infected by it, are set out in Leviticus', with each kind and each place figuratively representing a particular sin – for instance, 'leprosy of the head is impure thought'.[55] Jacques de Vitry (1180–1240), similarly, took his cue from Isidore and Leviticus when in his own sermon on Luke 17 he described how 'the Lord ordered Moses to distinguish between different types of leprosy not only by variety of colour but also by diversity of location.'[56] Isidore's approach, which used Levitical characteristics of the disease as the foundation for a moral reading of leprosy, remained popular throughout the thirteenth century.

In this context, it is particularly striking that Luca da Bitonto's sermon for this same thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, preached on the same passage concerning the 10 men with leprosy healed by Christ, makes no reference to Leviticus and does not take up any of Isidore's classifications. Indeed, Luca makes absolutely no reference whatsoever to the physical symptoms and types of leprosy as they are set out in Scripture. Rather he proceeds with the same approach to medicine and metaphor already demonstrated in the examples above. Luca opens his discussion of the physical nature of the disease by declaring that:

> leprosy is a complete corruption or infection of the members from a putrefaction of the humours, and it signifies mortal sin that corrupts the entire person and makes them abominable to God.[57]

While the ultimate moral interpretation here is consistent with most contemporary exegesis, this technical definition is clearly far removed from Leviticus and Isidore. Once more, it closely echoes medical texts. Platearius, for instance, defined the disease as 'a corruption of the members produced from the putrefaction of the corresponding humours'.[58] Moreover, like the Arabic medical traditions which underpinned Latin knowledge in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *Narraverunt* subdivides leprosy into four distinct types, each associated with one of the Galenic humours, and each labelled with the name of an animal. In Luca's scheme, corruption of natural melancholy (or, black bile) resulted in *elefantia*, corruption of choler (or, yellow bile) would lead to *leonina*, corruption of the blood caused *alopicia*, also known as *vulpina*, and corruption of phlegm led to *tyria*, also known as *serpentina*.[59] Despite some variance in the precise labels, the underlying causes, and the order in

[55] Anthony of Padua, *Sermones*, 2: 206–9: 'isti decem leprosi omnes peccatores significant, qui quinque leprae generibus et in quinque locis resperguntur. In Levitico quinque genera leprae et quinque loca ipsa infecta ponuntur, scilicet lepra colores candidi, lucidi, … Lepra candida est hypocrisis et simulatio religionis; lucida, ambitio transitoriae dignitatis; obscura, immunditia fornicationis; rufa, rapina et usura; pallida, invidia alienae felicitatis. … Lepra in capite est immunditia in cogitatione. Lepra in barba est iniquitas in manifestatione. Lepra in cute est inhonestas in conversatione. Lepra in veste est dissensio in Christi fide, vel imprudentia in virtutum exsecutione. Lepra in domo est discordia in congregatione.'

[56] Jacques de Vitry, *Sermones in epistola et evangelia dominicalia totius anni* (Antwerp: Joannes Steelsius, 1575), 172: 'Non solum autem per varietatem colorum, sed etiam per diversitatem subiectorum distinguere iussit Dominus per Moysen diversitatem leprarum.'

[57] *Narraverunt*, f. 176va: 'lepra est uniuersalis corruptio uel infectio membrorum ex putrefactione humorum et significat mortale peccatum quod totam personam corrumpit et deo abhominabilem redit.'

[58] Platearius, *Practica*, LXIV, 776: 'lepra est corrupcio ex humoribus putrefacccioni habilibus effecta.'

[59] *Narraverunt*, f. 176vb.

which these types were discussed, this fourfold humoral model was well established in contemporary medical texts.[60]

Luca was aware not only of the etymology and aetiology of each type, but also of the specific physical symptoms with which they were associated. His intentional adoption of a medical register is evident if his own description of *alopicia* (or *vulpine* leprosy) is compared with that found in the *Practica* of Platearius. Luca writes that:

> The first [type of leprosy] is from corruption of the blood and is called *alopicia* from *alopex*, that is, the fox, since just as foxes have bald brows, so those who have this type suffer from depilation of the eyebrows and distortion of the eyes, and also faces inflamed and red noses corrupted and flows of blood. This type represents *luxuria*, the corruption of which is first manifest in the eyes since as Augustine says an unchaste eye is the messenger of an unchaste heart.[61]

Platearius, meanwhile, described this same form of leprosy as follows:

> In *allopicia* the eyebrow is completely depilated and the eyelid swells up and so it is called *allopicia*, since those who suffer from it, like the *allopex*, that is, the fox, lose their hair, their eyes are inflamed and reddened, red pustules emerge in the face and sometimes over the whole body, from which blood and pus flow out, the nose expands making it difficult to breathe and causing fetid breath, the cheeks swell up, and blood flows out from the gums.[62]

Luca is not quoting directly from *Practica* here, and there are some significant variations in wording. Nevertheless, his intentional echoing of medical language is clear. Luca must have been aware of the Levitical traditions he was bypassing, and he would also likely have been familiar with written descriptions of leprosy in other traditions, such as hagiography. Given that most Italian towns of the thirteenth century had established communal *leprosaria*, it seems a safe assumption that he had also seen victims of the disease in the flesh.[63] There are, therefore, many sources and resources that he could have drawn on to offer a compelling description of the disease. Casual observers may well have framed leprosy in terms of swollen faces, distorted features, a hoarse voice and a foul stench. That Luca chose to highlight a symptom such as 'depilation of the eyebrows' as a key characteristic of leprosy is a clear indication that he was turning consciously towards specialised technical material, such as the lists of *signa leprae* found in handbooks of practical medicine.

[60] Luke Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine: A Malady of the Whole Body* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 176–84.

[61] *Narraverunt*, f. 176vb: 'Prima ex corruptione sanguinis et dicitur alopitia ab allopidibus id est uulpibus quia sicut uulpes habent supercilia depilate ita et illi qui laborant hac specie patiuntur superciliorum depilationem et oculorum depriuationem, facies quoque inflatur et rubet, nares comprimuntur et sanguis educitur. Hec species designat luxuriam cuius corruptio primo manifestatur in oculis quia sicut ut beatus Augustinus: impudicus oculis impudici cordis est nuntius.'

[62] Platearius, *Practica*, LXIV, 778: 'In allopicia ex toto depilantur supercilia et cilia tument et inde allopicia dicitur, quia pacientes, ut allopes, id est vulpes, depilantur, oculi inflantur et vehementer rubent, pustule rubee in facie et quandoque in toto corpore oriuntur a quibus sanguis sanie emanat, nasus ingrossantur et difficultas fit odoratus et fetet anhelitus, gene tument, sanguis a gingivis effluit.'

[63] On *leprosaria* in Luca's native Italy, see Mario Sensi, 'Per la storia dei lebbrosi tra Umbria e Marche (secoli XII–XV)', in *Malsani: lebbra e lebbrosi nel medioevo*, eds. Giuseppina De Sandre Gasparini and Maria Clara Rossi (Verona: Cierre, 2012), 291–342; Giuliana Albini, 'Comunità di lebbrosi in Italia settentrionale (secoli XI–XIII)', in *Malsani*, eds. De Sandre Gasparini and Rossi, 147–74; and Giuseppina De Sandre Gasparini, 'Lebbrosi e lebbrosari tra misericordia e assistenza nei secoli XII–XIII', *in La conversione alla povertà nell'Italia dei secoli XII–XIV. Atti del XXVII Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 14–17 ottobre 1990* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1991), 239–68.

Luca's use of medical description raises questions about how these sermons might have been received and understood, and why Luca departed from received readings and scriptural traditions. After all, his purpose was to elicit a response, and to achieve this he opted to enumerate and describe the types and symptoms of disease in a systematic and engaging manner. Medical accounts of leprosy were certainly well suited to this kind of moral-metaphorical reading, and Luca used the technical account of *allopicia* quoted above to denounce lust (*luxuria*). He explained that, like *allopicia*, lust begins with the eyes. The eyebrows, which protect the physical eyes, represent reverence of God and fear of hell – their loss leaves an individual vulnerable to lust. The mind of the lecher is inflated in luxury, just as the face of one with leprosy swells due to *allopicia*; and just as the disease causes the face to grow red, so too does the mind of the lecher on account of their shameful deeds. *Allopicia* corrupts the nose, and the lecher cannot smell the stench of their own sin. Finally, leprosy causes flows of blood, just as *luxuria*, corrupting others, causes sin to flow and to cascade down onto others.[64] The physical characteristics of the disease symbolise and embody the spiritual causes and effects of lust, and technical medical language provides the foundation upon which Luca connects the leprosy of biblical narratives with the perceived moral failings of his contemporaries.

Luca repeats the entire interpretive process for the other three types of leprosy. *Leonina* is caused by the corruption of choler, and represents pride. Luca explains that it causes the splitting of lips (representing words of discord and disdain), dryness of the breast (a draining of good thoughts), contraction of the feet (which should take the sinner towards God) and splitting of the hands (through actions which harm the neighbour). *Elephantia* is caused by corruption of *melancholia*, and named after the elephant. Just as the elephant is the greatest of animals, *elephantia* is the worst and most difficult form of leprosy to treat. For Luca, it therefore stands for avarice, a sin which is particularly difficult to cure or correct. *Elephantia* causes the skin to appear an earthy colour (just as the avaricious desire earthly goods), and causes wounds in the nostrils, hands, feet and various other parts of the body (signifying the way an avaricious person is divided by their various desires). Finally, Luca outlines how *tyria* is caused by corruption of phlegm, and takes its name from a type of snake named *tyro*. Like the snake, people afflicted with this form of leprosy shed their skin, and so *tyria* represents the false appearances of hypocrisy. It causes excessive weeping (representing the simulated compunction of the hypocrite), and it causes scales and sores on the skin (which stand for a fraudulent simulation of penance). In addition, Luca goes on to list six generic symptoms of leprosy with their own figurative significance. Leprosy causes ulcers (symbolising neglected sins), a hoarse voice (rejection of divine praise), corrupt breath (false and twisted words), coldness and heat (excessive fear or love), thirst (an appetite for sin) and, finally, it spreads through all of the body (as sin spreads like a cancer through all of humanity).[65]

Luca concludes his description of the physical characteristics of leprosy by observing that the 'disease is incurable, and cannot be cured except through miracles, and nor can sin'.[66] The common consensus that confirmed leprosy was incurable is here used by Luca

[64] *Narraverunt*, f. 176vb.
[65] *Narraverunt*, ff. 176vb–177ra.
[66] *Narraverunt*, f. 177rb: 'lepre morbus est incurabile non enim curatur nisi per miraculum sic nec peccatum.'

to pivot towards a discussion of how all of the sins he has itemised can be cured.[67] Tracing the account in Luke 17, his point is that sinners – his audience – should follow the example of the *leprosi* by calling out to God and then by 'showing themselves' to the priests through confession and receiving the miracle of grace. Considering this point, it seems clear that Luca's rhetorical use of medicine is designed to provoke a response, encouraging people to recognise their sins by analogy to the physical disease, and prompting them to act accordingly and seek grace. Up-to-date medical learning is deployed as a tool to aid this process of spiritual diagnosis and facilitate sacramental treatment.

Although Luca's focus remains firmly on the task of guiding sinners towards spiritual remedies, the physical symptoms he itemises for each type of leprosy remain consistent with contemporary medicine. His account here is closest to the *Practica*, but he lists the four humoral forms of leprosy in the same order as they are found in the *Viaticum* and other texts within the Constantinian corpus, rather than in the order used by Platearius.[68] Most probably, Luca was not using any of these sources directly. Setting aside the moral readings, there is one small area – and only one – in which Luca's technical account of leprosy departs from the textbooks. While the humoral types of leprosy are associated with animals in most sources, the correspondence between these labels and the types of disease they describe is generally not explained or justified. In the *Practica*, *Viaticum* and other key texts the labels are simply asserted. As already demonstrated above, Luca's interpretation not only explains *why* each type is associated with each animal, but uses these explanations as a part of the moral interpretation. For instance, *tyria* or serpentine leprosy gets its name because, according to *Narraverunt*, those suffering from it start to shed their skin, resembling not only snakes, but also the sin of hypocrisy, which Luca finds represented in this type.

Narraverunt can be compared to two other works from the first half of the thirteenth century which offer explanation of these animal-based labels (without going on to provide specific spiritual interpretations). The first is a gloss on the *Viaticum*, written between 1220 and 1236 by the Parisian physician Gérard de Bourges, moved to write, he claims, to explain certain obscure aspects of the text to his bewildered colleagues.[69] His discussion of the labels bears some resemblance to Luca's. Though Gérard offers an alternative explanation of the label *elephantia*, he otherwise agrees with *Narraverunt*, pointing to the depilation of foxes, the ferocity of lions and the shedding of snakes' skin to explain the names of the corresponding humoral types.[70] These circumstances suggest that, wherever he got the information, Luca was engaging with issues and ideas that were of interest at relatively high levels of contemporary academic debate.

The second work which I have identified containing explanations of these labels is *De proprietatibus rerum*, an encyclopaedia of natural philosophy compiled by the Franciscan

[67] On prognosis and treatment of the disease in the Middle Ages, see Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine*, 244–9.
[68] In the corpus of works translated by Constantinus, and in Luca's *Narraverunt*, the types are listed as alopitia, leonina, elephantia and tyria. In the *Practica*, they are elephantia, leonina, alopecia and tyria.
[69] Cornelius O'Boyle, *Art of Medicine*, 122–3.
[70] Gérard de Bourges, *Glossae super Viaticum Constantini*: London, British Library, MS Harley 3719, ff. 33rb–33va: 'allopitia quia tales depilantur ut allopides id est uulpes; leonina quia terribiles fiunt et rapaces; elephantia ab elephante, quia tales rigidas habent iuncturas et graue a melancolia multa; tyria a tyro serpente propter pellis depone tyrus enim est species qui pelle sepe solet deponere.'

Bartholomew the Englishman (*c*.1200–72).[71] Luca and Bartholomew were direct contemporaries. Each served as a lector for the order in the 1230s, and each produced a major work which aided the task of preaching. The two may even have met, given Luca's tentative connections to Paris where Bartholomew, as a young master, joined the order in the 1220s. Bartholomew was subsequently appointed lector in Marburg, where he is presumed to have written *De proprietatibus rerum*, one of the most popular encyclopaedias of the Middle Ages.

Book VII of *De proprietatibus rerum* deals with human illnesses, systematically discussing all of the conditions mentioned in the present article. Bartholomew's preferred source for medicine was the *Viaticum* of Constantinus, but he also drew on Salernitan texts derived from it. Unlike the great Dominican encyclopaedists of the thirteenth century, he also used the *Practica* of Platearius – the apparent ultimate source of much of Luca's knowledge.[72] Bartholomew offers sophisticated and systematic technical medical descriptions of the human body and its diseases. In this encyclopaedic work, he does not provide moral interpretations of the knowledge he collects, but he evidently intended for his text to be used in support of such readings. I will return to this point below.

Despite evident and numerous similarities between *De proprietatibus* and *Narraverunt*, Bartholomew was not a major source for Luca. Ambiguities around the dating of both works notwithstanding, Luca and Bartholomew were probably writing at the same time, and in both a chronological and a geographical sense it is difficult to identify circumstances in which direct influence could have occurred. While there is good manuscript evidence to suggest that, from 1246 onwards Book VII of *De proprietatibus* circulated independently, and was often bound with other medical manuscripts, there is no clear evidence that, in part or in whole, Bartholomew's work had reached southern Italy before 1245, the presumed date of Luca's death.[73] In any case, a close analysis indicates that *De proprietatibus* cannot have been Luca's main source, as *Narraverunt* lists symptoms apparently unknown to Bartholomew.[74] I have not identified any single medical tract, compilation, or encyclopaedia that can account for all of the medical knowledge used by Luca.

Although Luca's proximate sources remain at present unidentified, these resonances provide important opportunities for reflecting on his intellectual context. They point towards a relatively sophisticated engagement with the very latest available material, and they may suggest that Luca, like Gérard and Bartholomew, had some connection with Paris, though this is far from certain. Indeed, while I return below to similarities between *De proprietatibus rerum* and *Narraverunt*, I first offer one final example of

[71] On his life and work, see Heinz Meyer, *Die Enzyklopädie des Bartholomäus Anglicus: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungs und Rezeptionsgeschichte von 'De proprietatibus rerum'*. Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 77 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2000), and Michael Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and his Encyclopaedia* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), 1–16. For the text, see Bartholomew the Englishman, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Frankfurt: Wolfgang Richter, 1601; repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964).

[72] Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 23–5 and 87–96. See also the comments of Victoria Recio Muñoz in the introduction to Platearius, *Practica*, 70–3.

[73] Meyer, *Die Enzyklopädie des Bartholomäus*, 266–71.

[74] For instance, Luca describes leprosy as sometimes causing dryness of breast and wounds he calls *scissurae* in the nose, hands, feet and other parts of the body. Neither symptom appears in *De proprietatibus rerum*, but both are present in Constantinus' translation of *Pantegni*, IV.2, for which see *Opera omnia Ysaac*, second foliation f. 93r.

Luca's medical knowledge, which may invite alternative assessments of his intellectual context and abilities.

Deafness and muteness

The examples above show Luca importing sophisticated and technical medical language into his sermons. However, in most instances Luca uses this newly available medical language to augment and reconstruct metaphorical correspondences that often already existed. In this sense, his use of medicine might be critically compared with that of some mid-century debates in which medical knowledge exerted a tangible influence on the contours of theological debate.[75] The final sermon considered here may also point towards the suggestion that there were clear limits to the nature of Luca's engagement with medicine. The sermon relates to deafness and muteness, healed by Christ according to Mark 7:31–6, on which Luca preached on the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

In this sermon, Luca suggests that there is a causal link between muteness and deafness, and that an inability to speak will inevitably lead to an inability to hear. This, he explains, is because of connections between the nerves serving the tongue and those serving the ears. Spiritually, however, Luca believes the causal relationship is inverted: those unable to hear the word of God cannot, or at least should not, presume to teach or to speak since they lack wisdom and authority.[76] Luca's inverted metaphor is almost certainly ultimately derived from Michael Scot's Latin translation of Aristotle's *De animalibus*.[77] Aristotle, in a discussion of the nature of rational voice, had argued that those unable to hear words would be unable to use language effectively.[78] Through carelessness, ignorance, confusion or error, Michael Scot's translation rendered this argument in a highly ambiguous fashion, giving the appearance that Aristotle's intention was to claim that muteness caused deafness.[79]

While Luca received this idea and 'corrected' the spiritual meaning using an inverse metaphor, some of his contemporaries and peers, including theologians and preachers, went further, challenging and clarifying the literal and physical meaning of the claim.[80] That he did not do so as well is revealing of Luca's interests, priorities and capabilities. He too recognised that acts of hearing held a logical priority over acts of speaking,

[75] See for instance, Biller, 'John of Naples, Quodlibets and Medieval Theological Concern with the Body', 3–12.
[76] *Narraverunt*, f. 169ra.
[77] The Latin text was a combination of three different tracts by Aristotle (*De partibus animalium, Historia animalium* and *De generatione animalium*) and was completed in Toledo before 1220. On Michael Scot, see Lynn Thorndike, *Michael Scot* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965). Volumes two and three of a three-volume critical edition of Michael's translation of *De animalibus* were published in 1998 and 1992 respectively, edited by Aafke M.I. van Oppenraay for Brill's series *Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus*. The first part of volume one, containing Books I–III of *Historia animalium,* appeared in 2020.
[78] See the Greek-English text of *Historia animalium*, ed. and trans. Arthur L Peck. Loeb Classical Library, 437–9. 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965–91), 2: 80–1 (IV. 9).
[79] The critical text of Book IV of Michael's translation has not yet been published, but the base text is Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi E. VIII. 251, on which see the introduction to A.M.I. van Oppenraay, ed., *Aristotle De animalibus. Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation*, vol. 1a: *Books I–III: History of Animals* (Leiden: Brill, 2020). In the Chigi manuscript, Aristotle's argument is rendered as follows (f. 19ra): 'Illi uero qui naturaliter similiter sunt muti et surdi sunt etiam et habent uocem et non habent sermonem distinctum omnino.'
[80] Theodor Köhler, *Homo animal nobilissimum: Konturen des spezifisch Menschlichen in der naturphilosophischen Aristoteleskommentierung des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*. 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2007–2014), 2: 445–53. I am currently preparing a separate study of the reception of Aristotelian anatomy within Luca's sermons.

but he was primarily interested in expressing this idea correctly in the spiritual domain, and appears to be unconcerned about or unaware of the potential problems posed by his source.

The Latin text of *De animalibus* was completed shortly before 1220, by which point it was being read and debated in Paris, becoming part of a wider controversy relating to Aristotle's *Libri naturales*. However, this is not to say that Luca must have been using the text directly, or could only have accessed it in Paris. Much of the discussion in *Narraverunt* is paralleled, for instance, in the *Compendium medicinae* of Gilbertus Anglicus.[81] And the work of translation itself took place in Toledo, which was by the thirteenth century the most important European centre of Arabic-Latin intellectual exchange. After completing the translation, Michael Scot spent the remaining years of his life at the court of Emperor Frederick II. Indeed, the oldest surviving manuscript of *De animalibus* was produced in southern Italy around 1230, possibly under Michael's direct supervision. It bears a flattering dedication to Frederick, and later passed into the possession of the Franciscan order.[82]

Michael's association with the court of Frederick is particularly suggestive for the present study in the light of an anecdote related by Salimbene which suggests that Luca, too, may have had some connection with the imperial court. In 1242, Henry (VII) of Germany, rebellious son of the emperor, died, an apparent suicide. Following a failed uprising in 1235, Henry had been living under house arrest, primarily in Apulia and Campania, and he was being moved between castles when his horse fell into a ravine.[83] The funeral mass took place at Cosenza, and, according to Salimbene, the preacher of the homily was none other than Luca da Bitonto. He is said to have preached on the text of Genesis 22:10: *Abraham took up his sword to kill his son*, and to have offered a peroration on justice.[84] The emperor was not present, but Salimbene remarks that the courtiers in attendance – he explicitly identifies princes, barons, judges, knights and *litterati* – assumed that Frederick would have Luca beheaded for impertinence. The sermon, however, with its commendation of *justitia*, was well received and the emperor, deeply moved, even wished to hear it for himself.

This account of the funeral occurs only in Salimbene, who was generally hostile towards Frederick, and whose anecdotes about the emperor cannot necessarily be trusted.[85] There is, however, no particular reason to doubt his identification of Luca as the preacher of this homily. While Salimbene and some recent commentators on Luca frame the sermon as courageous and defiant, a thinly veiled critique of the brutality of a tyrannical ruler, several biographers of Frederick (who have tended to accept the veracity of the anecdote) observe that this account of the sermon was very much in keeping

[81] Gilbertus, *Compendium medicinae*, f. 148rb.
[82] This manuscript is Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi E. VIII. 251, on which see the edition above and Erik Kwakkel, 'Behind the Scenes of a Revision: Michael Scot and the Oldest Manuscript of His "Abbreviatio Avicenne"', *Viator* 40 (2009): 107–132.
[83] On Henry's suicide and its politcal context, see Wolfgang Stürner, *Federico II e l'apogeo dell'impero* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2009), 648–736 and especially 695–9 for the death and funeral.
[84] Salimbene, *Cronica*, 1: 122–3: 'congregati sunt igitur principes et barones, milites et iudices, ut sepelirent eum, absente imperatore. Cum quibus etiam affuit frater Lucas Apulus ex ordine fratrum minorum, cuius est sermonum memoria, ut secundum consuetudinem Apulie predicaret ad funus. Et ex libro Geneseos XXII proposuit thema dicens: *Arripuit Abraham gladium, ut immolaret filium suum.* Et dixerunt iudices et litterati qui ibi erant: "Talia dicet hodie frater iste, quod imperator auferet ei caput."'
[85] Indeed, Salimbene relates these events *sub anno* 1233, nine years before Henry died.

with the party line.[86] Frederick himself used David and Absalom, another narrative of tragic, righteous, paternity from the Old Testament offering a more direct analogy to his position, to express his own grief. In combination with the emperor's well-known reverence of the ideal of *justitia*, it is a safe assumption that, as Salimbene claims, he would have been impressed by a sermon which, in praise of the value of justice, depicted him as the unfortunate but fundamentally faithful Abraham, sensible of his own duties and willing to sacrifice his own son in service of a higher cause.

Although the text of this oration does not survive, Salimbene's account is the only specific and direct evidence of Luca ever actually preaching a sermon. That he apparently delivered it at the funeral for the son of the most powerful man in Europe, in front of an audience of *litterati* and other dignitaries, and by invitation of the imperial court, is suggestive. If Salimbene's evidence is accepted, it might indicate that Luca had some association with Frederick's court. Not only was Luca nominated for this important task, but he was also able to deliver a sermon that was perfectly pitched to Frederick's temperament, suggesting that he may have had some knowledge or direct or indirect experience of the man. In this sense, the imperial court emerges as a potential point of contact between our preacher and the intellectual circles of Michael Scot. It is entirely possible that a learned and apparently famous friar active in southern Italy in the 1230s and 1240s could have had some contact with the court of Frederick, and therefore with a social and intellectual context in which both medical learning and new translations of Aristotle – with which Luca appears to have had some familiarity – were available and known.

The hypothesis that Luca was associated with the court would account not only for his apparent access to elite learning, but also for the relatively sophisticated register of his sermons. Educated courtiers would presumably have responded well to the systematic medicine in Luca's sermons, and while the medical school at Salerno was in decline by the time Luca was writing, his apparent use of Salernitan traditions invites the idea that he had some contact with masters there, or at the new University of Naples founded by Frederick in the 1220s.[87] These suggestions are, of course, highly speculative, and they gloss over both the question of the reliability of Salimbene and the notoriously fraught relationship between Frederick and the mendicant orders from 1239 onwards.[88] Nevertheless, it is clear that the imperial court *could* have represented a context for Luca's work, and in this sense the hypothesis above represents a useful corrective to the temptation to assume that Paris must have been the centre of Luca's intellectual world and the anchor of his medical interests.

Conclusion

The analysis above has identified correspondences and connections signifying several different types of source to which Luca could have had access, as well as several

[86] Thomas Curtis van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen: Immutator Mundi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 379.
[87] Fulvio Delle Donne, *La porta del sapere: cultura alla corte di Federico II di Svevia* (Rome: Carocci, 2019), 193–204; Stürner, *Federico*, 774–85; Michael McVaugh, 'Conoscenze mediche', in *Federico II e le scienze*, eds. Pierre Toubert and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Palermo: Sellerio, 1994), 109–21; Piero Morpurgo, 'La scuola di Salerno', in *Federico II e le Scienze*, eds. Toubert and Paravicini Bagliani, 410–23.
[88] Giulia Barone, 'Federico II di Svezia e gli Ordini Mendicanti', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Moyen-Âge, Temps Modernes* 90 (1978): 607–26; Grado Giovanni Merlo, 'Federico II, gli eretici, i frati', in *Federico II e le nuove culture* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1995), 45–67.

different intellectual contexts in which sermons such as those in *Narraverunt* could have been produced and received. Luca's preaching exhibits clear resonances with Salernitan traditions, translations made by Constantinus Africanus, and, to a lesser extent, Latin versions of Aristotle's *Libri naturales*. Parallels with these traditions, and with texts like *Compendium medicinae*, *Isagoge*, and by extension the *Articella*, could be used to locate Luca in a context in which medicine was taught, studied or practised. Likewise, resonances with Gérard de Bourges' gloss on the *Viaticum* and with texts like *De proprietatibus rerum* might point to northern Europe and to Paris in particular. At the same time, knowledge of Michael Scot's translations, along with Luca's own potential association with the imperial court, add weight to the suggestion that *Narraverunt* was written in southern Italy. It remains unclear exactly where the sermons were written, which sources were used in their production, and who exactly Luca expected to constitute his immediate audience.

Further research may yet offer answers to these unresolved questions, but at present several observations can already be made regarding Luca's intentions, his intellectual context, and the wider significance of his application of medical learning. Most immediately, it seems likely that despite his intellectual interests, Luca was not a practising physician. There is no reason to think that he must have studied medicine. Nor are there any indications that he had any particular or direct personal experience of illness beyond what might be expected for a typical thirteenth-century friar. On the contrary, his medical knowledge had clear limits. Despite the sophisticated technical language, Luca glosses over, or is unaware of, several areas of contemporary medical and anatomical debate.[89] *Narraverunt* also consistently fails to identify its medical sources. While theologians, philosophers and even some classical poets are explicitly cited by Luca as authorities, medical texts and authors are not. With the exception of the occasional reference to Aristotle, medical and anatomical writers remain unnamed. If Luca was using an anthology or *florilegium* of some kind, he may in any case have been unaware of the ultimate sources for the claims he made. Equally, Luca, could have intentionally omitted them. Half a century later, it was not uncommon for preachers to cite medical knowledge associated with named authorities, and Ziegler has proposed that the infiltration of medicine into theological contexts was a slow and gradual process that culminated at the close of the thirteenth century, reflecting the steady increase in the prestige of Latin medical traditions and the availability of encyclopaedias and similar resources.[90] Luca appears largely consistent with this timeline, showing that whilst medical knowledge was being applied in sermons at a significantly earlier date, it was not yet being presented in the same way as other authoritative sources associated with established disciplines.

Luca also shows very little interest in medical therapies, and he limits his discussion to definitions, descriptions and classifications of the diseases encountered in Gospel readings. His sermons reflect the simplicity of the miraculous cures found in these biblical narratives. For Luca, there was no need to explore how physical diseases were cured, since the miracles of Christ so obviously represented the universally healing effects of sacramentally mediated grace, which could cure all spiritual disease. However, by the

[89] In addition to the examples already cited, relating to the question of whether the heat of fever was 'natural', and whether muteness caused deafness or vice versa, Luca also, for instance, accepts the Aristotelian idea of a tripartite heart, an anatomical theory not widely accepted in the Middle Ages. See *Narraverunt*, f. 189v.
[90] Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion*, 199–203.

end of the thirteenth century, mendicant preachers were offering spiritual interpretation not only of the types and symptoms of different diseases, but also of specific medical treatments; by the end of the fourteenth century, Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419) took a systematic interest in the symbolic interpretation of contemporary therapeutic practices.[91] Luca's lack of interest in therapeutics, as opposed to the other elements of practical medicine, further distinguishes him from these later preachers.

It bears repeating that the purpose of *Narraverunt* is not to discuss the causes or cures of physical conditions, or the moral state of those suffering from physical disease. Rather, it is to exploit the language of illness and miracle as a platform for discussing spiritual maladies and their sacramental cures. The kind of medical knowledge used by Luca was particularly well suited to this task. The 'modern sermon' which had emerged earlier on in the thirteenth century was usually structured around a carefully coordinated series of definitions, distinctions and classifications.[92] Medical theory lent itself very well to this format, satisfying a scholastic impetus to produce organised lists and to build arguments and divisions in a systematic manner. The precise definition of the causes of disease and the careful enumeration and subdivision of symptoms represented, for Luca, an effective structure within which he could analyse and denounce general and specific forms of sin, and provide diagnostic criteria with which his audience could scrutinise their own souls.

Speculation about Luca's intellectual context leads to several more specific appraisals of his interest in medicine. *If* he was writing for a university elite in Paris, Naples, or elsewhere, or for educated courtiers, then the interests and capacities of his immediate audience might be understood to have dictated the register adopted here. On the other hand, it is by no means clear the sermons were not intended for a much wider use, as claimed by Luca in his prologue and as corroborated by the manuscript tradition. Nor is it clear that the efficacy of medical metaphor would have been limited to particularly elite contexts in which sophisticated theories of disease might already have been known. The rhetorical force of these sermons did not necessarily depend on thorough comprehension of the underlying technical knowledge, and, in any case, aspects of practical medicine may already have enjoyed a reasonably broad currency. Moreover, the language of disease is emotive and effective because it trades on shared aspects of human experience; illness and death are universal realities. The visceral detail of Luca's metaphors would have been universally relatable, and may also have been intended to shock and to scare, to provide a *memento mori* and to stress the frailty and mortality of human bodies, provoking the faithful into acknowledging the urgent need for spiritual healing. If Luca's figurative language was able to prompt his listeners to accept the metaphorical associations he proposed, then it did not necessarily matter whether his audience had detailed existing knowledge of medicine, or even whether the theories used by Luca were in fact accurate.[93] The success of his sermons suggests that Luca's application and exploitation of this kind of knowledge was effective.

Although the above discussion has argued that Luca's application of medicine is a striking aspect of his preaching, particularly when new traditions derived from Latin-

[91] On medical cures in sermons, see for instance Ferragud and Olmos de León, 'Galenisme i medicaments', 211–40.
[92] Nicole Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres de la parole: la prédication à Paris au XIIIe siècle*. 2 vols. (Paris: Institut des Études Augustinennes, 1998), 1: 133–214.
[93] On the validity of medical metaphor in medieval religious discourse, see Ziegler, 'Medical Similes', 105–6.

Arabic translations supplanted established exegetical authorities and even scriptural classifications of illness, the medical learning in *Narraverunt* should not be understood in isolation. Luca's interest in the metaphorical exploitation of scientific knowledge was not limited to medicine and anatomy, and *Narraverunt* drew on a very wide range of material from various disciplines. Where the Gospel text talked about illness, he turned to medicine, but Luca was no more an expert in diseases than he was in geography, botany, geology or astronomy. He drew on a broad selection of sources that could provide knowledge of the natural world upon which spiritual metaphors could be built. And so, although the sermons discussed here appear to closely reflect the Constantinian corpus, Salernitan traditions and aspects of Aristotle's *Libri naturales*, *Narraverunt* should perhaps not be linked to sources or contexts that specialised *only* in medicine. Indeed, as the discussion above has emphasised, the kind of theories being used by Luca were increasingly widely available in libraries across Europe, and circulated outside of medical contexts in florilegia, distinction lists and encyclopaedias. I have not linked Luca's medical knowledge to any single source. He may well have been using an unidentified encyclopaedic work or distinction list, or a small collection of anthologies, or he could have had direct access to a practical handbook of Salernitan medicine, such as the *Practica*. Although the wide array of sources potentially available to Luca frustrates the effort to identify his medical knowledge conclusively with any particular texts, it is also suggestive of a vibrant and stimulating context, in which medical ideas were becoming increasingly established outside of key centres of learning. Indeed, it is particularly significant that the closest parallels to Luca's material are found not in the Latin translations of and commentaries on Avicenna and Aristotle, nor in the great Dominican encyclopaedias, but rather in practical handbooks of Salernitan medicine.

Regardless of the source of Luca's medical knowledge, *Narraverunt* demonstrates a sweeping intellectual commitment to the idea that the characteristics of the entire natural and created order were a useful resource for theological inquiry, speculation and communication. For Luca, divine and spiritual realities were physically represented in minute detail in the behaviour of animals, the movement of the stars, the properties of stones, the nature of human bodies and indeed the symptoms of bodily illnesses. A thorough knowledge of these fields was therefore essential when interpreting Scripture, and uncovering the hidden meanings of the things mentioned therein. In the prologue to *Narraverunt*, Luca hints at the idea underpinning his interest in the natural world. Alluding to Romans 1:20, he writes that 'we clearly see the invisible things of God, understood by the things he has made'.[94] For Luca, the words of Scripture had a literal and historical meaning, but they also had a non-literal, figurative meaning.

Medieval exegetes often spoke of the four, or sometimes the three, senses of Scripture, and Luca's prologue lists the historical, allegorical, tropological and anagogical levels of meaning, demonstrating the depths of signification available to the careful reader of sacred texts. In practice, however, Luca's sermons generally do not explicitly distinguish between the three figurative senses, and appeal instead to the broad and simple division between the literal historical meaning, and the spiritual meaning. This basic distinction is also established by Luca in the prologue, through an unattributed quotation from Hugh of St Victor (*c*.1097–1141), who had argued that, while in all writings the words used were

[94] *Narraverunt*, f. 10vb: 'inuisibilia dei per ea que facta sunt intellecta conspicimus.'

capable of signifying things, in Scripture the things signified by words were themselves also capable of acting as signifiers.[95] For Hugh, and for Luca after him, the study of the liberal arts, and the close consideration of the properties of the material things mentioned in Scripture, were therefore essential for properly understanding divine discourse. This, already, clarifies the theological justification for Luca's use of profane medical traditions.

Hugh was also influential in renewing medieval interest in the anonymous sixth-century author now known as Pseudo-Dionysius, whose works advocated mystical and contemplative exploration of the order and hierarchies of Creation and Heaven. Dionysian texts were known and read in early Franciscan circles. Bartholomew the Englishman, for instance, explicitly quoted Pseudo-Dionysius in the prologue to *De proprietatibus*. Much like Luca, Bartholomew was animated by the belief that the comprehension of the spiritual meaning of Scripture depended upon the ability to inquire further into the characteristics and properties of the things mentioned in biblical narratives.[96] Bartholomew explained that he had written *De proprietatibus* to assist himself and others 'in understanding the hidden things of the Scriptures, which were given by the Holy Spirit in symbols and figures of the properties of natural things, as the blessed Dionysius showed in *Celestial Hierarchy*'.[97] Bartholomew proceeded to quote Pseudo-Dionysius on the impossibility of either comprehending the divine light except when it is veiled in anagogy, or of ascending spiritually to contemplate the celestial hierarchy unless first aided by consideration of material things. Bartholomew then offered his own paraphrase of Pseudo-Dionysius; drawing on the same crucial verse from Romans 1:20 used by Luca, he explained that:

> our soul cannot climb to the contemplation of invisible things, unless directed through consideration of visible things: *for the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things he has made*, as the Apostle says. And so, theology has prudently made use of sacred and poetic ideas, in order that through similitudes with visible things, allegorical discourses and mystical meanings can be formed as transumptions, and in this way the spiritual and the invisible can be joined with the carnal and the visible.[98]

The rhetorical device of *transumptio* to which Bartholomew refers was used increasingly in the thirteenth century to account for the workings of metaphorical and non-literal

[95] *Narraverunt*, f. 10vb: 'Nam in aliis scripturis sole uoces significant sed in hac non solum uoces sed etiam res inueniuntur significare.' The line appears to be taken from Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis christianae*, in *Hugonis de s. Victore, canonici regularis s. Victoris Parisienis, … , Opera omnia*, vol. 2, ed. J.-P. Migne. PL 176, new edn. (Paris: Apud Garnier fratres, editores et J.-P. Mgine successores, 1880), col. 185 (I prologue, cap. 5). Hugh made a similar argument in *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris*, in *Hugonis de s. Victore, canonici regularis s. Victoris Parisienis, … , Opera omnia*, vol. 1, ed. J.-P. Migne. PL 175, new edn. (Paris: Apud Garnier fratres, editores et J.-P. Migne successores, 1879), cols. 20D–21C (XIV). See Grover Zinn, 'Hugh of St. Victor's "De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris" as an "Accessus" Treatise for the Study of the Bible', *Traditio* 52 (1997): 129–31.

[96] Iolanda Ventura, 'Bartolomeo Anglico e la cultura filosofica e scientifica dei frati nel XIII secolo: aristotelismo e medicina nel proprietatibus rerum', in *I francescani e le scienze* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2012), 49–140.

[97] Bartholomew the Englishman, *De proprietatibus*, 1: 'ad intelligenda aenigmata scripturarum, quae sub symbolis et figuris proprietatum rerum naturalium et artificialium a Spiritu Sancto sunt traditae et velatae, quemadmodum ostendit beatus Dionysius in Hierarciha Angelica.'

[98] Bartholomew the Englishman, *De proprietatibus*, 1–2: 'Non potest animus noster ad inuisibilium contemplationem ascendere, nisi per visibilium considerationem dirigatur: Inuisibilia enim Dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur, vt dicit Apostolus. Et ideo theologia prouide sacris et poetis informationibus usa est, vt rerum visibilium similitudinibus allegoricae locutiones et mystici intellectus transumptiones formentur, et sic carnalibus et visibilibus spiritualia et inuisibilia coaptentur.'

language.[99] For Bartholomew, it serves as a theoretical framework for explaining how the properties of the physical things described in his book could be joined with spiritual truths, and so used to access and communicate mystical meanings. *De proprietatibus* does not itself set out completed 'transumptions', providing instead only the raw material that facilitated the identification and development of the underlying similitudes. In his epilogue, Bartholomew again expressed the hope that he might have provided a useful shortcut that would allow his readers to craft spiritual interpretations of Scripture even if they lacked the education or the resources necessary to trawl through the abundance of books by the saints and the philosophers, across which knowledge of the properties of things was dispersed.[100]

Luca, I have argued above, was most probably not one such reader of *De proprietatibus*, and yet *Narraverunt* evidently contains precisely the kind of exegesis that Bartholomew intended to promote. Viewed side by side, these major homiletic works by contemporaries who were both lectors suggest that a concerted Francsican interest in the natural world had been nurtured before the middle of the century. Bartholomew's Pseudo-Dionysian approach to the natural world has sometimes been situated within a rich seam of 'contemplative' practice running from the nature mysticism of St Francis to Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and beyond.[101] Works like *Narraverunt* confirm that the lesser brothers were, from a very early stage, also interested in the homiletic and didactic potential of new forms of scientific knowledge, and likely played a significant role in their dissemination and transmission.

Luca da Bitonto's use of medical learning should therefore be situated within a broader Franciscan pattern of investigating, listing and interpreting the properties of the natural world. His desire to use closely reasoned similitudes to connect biblical narratives with specific categories of sins led him to some of the most up-to-date medical knowledge of his time, derived from traditions of practical medicine shaped by Latin-Arabic translations. The sermons examined in this article demonstrate the assimilation of medical knowledge in mendicant preaching at an earlier stage than has previously been observed, and indicate that before the works of Aristotle and Avicenna came to dominate theological applications of medicine in the later thirteenth century and beyond, Salernitan texts were a prominent source for the incorporation of medical learning into religious discourse. *Narraverunt* therefore allows us to trace the systematic application of medical knowledge within medieval preaching and to witness this process taking place by the middle of the thirteenth century, driven by a broader Franciscan interest in the properties of the natural world, shaped above all by Salernitan handbooks of practical medicine, and likely disseminated to a wide audience beyond centres of academic medical learning and other elite contexts. It also points to the importance of figures like Luca, a man to whom scant scholarly attention has been paid, but nonetheless a preacher whose sermons give us an important new insight into the movement of ideas

[99] On medieval theories of *transumptio*, see Benoît Grévin, 'Métaphore et vérité: la transumptio, clé de voûte de la rhétorique au XIIIe siècle', in *La vérité: vérité et crédibilité: construire la vérité dans le système de communication de l'Occident (XIIIe–XVIIe siècle)*, ed. Jean-Philippe Genet (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2015), 149–82.
[100] Bartholomew the Englishman, *De proprietatibus*, 1261.
[101] Roger French and Andrew Cunningham, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 202–18.

in the Middle Ages and the reception and incorporation of these ideas to further his own theological and pastoral aims.

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