Alberte, Antonio. *Retórica medieval. Historia de las artes predicatorias*. Madrid: Centro de Lingüística Aplicada Atenea, 2003. 331 pages. ISBN 84-95855-12-7.

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Antonio Alberte's survey dealing with the medieval homily is anything but a cursory historical review of the aesthetic development of the predicatory art from Tertullian (155-220?) and Agustine (354-430) through the 15th century. His work details the fundamental approaches and changes enacted in the delivery of the Christian homily to the congregation of the faithful through a time frame, in the main, of four centuries, exemplified by the writings of superlative figures in the Catholic institution. The historical review, the main corpus of Alberte's book, divides into six chapters, preceded by a prologue.

The Prologue reveals that the present study constitutes a logical outcome of his previous scholarly works, works that studied the rhetorical foundations of the works of Cicero (*Cicero ante la retórica*, Valladolid 1987) and of Cicero's posterior influence in Latin antiquity (*Historia de retórica Latina. Evolución de los principios estético-literarios desde Cicerón hasta Agustín*, Amsterdam 1992). His new and erudite adventure, Alberte informs his reader, will consist in the analysis of "las novedades que la Retórica cristiana presenta frente a la Retórica clásica no sólo en la tardolatinidad sino y especialmente en la Edad Media latina, época en la que va a producirse una gran floración de Artes predicatorias" (5).

The General Introduction (Chapter 1) lists the names of scholars and the titles of their publications germane to his subject matter, succinctly noting the main contribution that each respectively made to it, and states the three objectives of his own study: 1) to render an historical outline of the Church's position "ante la Retórica a lo largo de la tardolatinidad y alta edad media..." (16), so as to clarify how the art of the delivery of sermons developed in said time frames; 2) to explain the art form of the sermon as well as its historical evolution from the 12th to the 15th centuries; and 3) to set a chronological sequence to all the treatises dealt with in his critical survey, a list of which, with the names of their respective authors, Alberte generously provides for his reader (16-17).

The subject matter of Chapter 2: "Antecedentes Históricos," delves into the antirhetorical classical tradition that Tertullian defiantly established by promulgating Paul's dictum in I Cor. 3:19: "For wisdom of this world is foolishness with God..." –Alberte, in passing, errs in assigning this passage to II Cor. 3:19. With Tertullian, then, the anticultural reaction to classical rhetorical posturing or exhibitionism marks the divorce between pagan artistic design from Christian predication in which the presence of the Holy Spirit more than suffices to render with simplicity the teachings of Christ. His followers –e.g., "Sulpicio Severo, Jerónimo, Gregorio de Tours"– continued Tertullian's stoic lead and avidly condemned "los recursos estético-litararios así como su lenguaje" (21) that would have accentuated the seductive power related to "la función del *delectare*" and the irrational pull related to that of "*movere animos*" (21). In short, those in the Tertullian camp vigorously rejected, with respect to the preaching of the Word of God to fellow Christians, "todo '*flos verborum*' ; (sic) toda '*phalera*' y '*cothurnus*'," insisting that the sermon, illustrating the principle and dominion of " '*vir bonus*' " and "*res*" (21) be both simple and brief ("*sermo simplex*" and "*brevis*" [24]). Other stands were those promulgated, for example, by Augustine and Gregory the Great. Augustine's antithetical position to Tertullian led him to Christianize classical rhetoric. Augustine recognized the value of classical culture in Book

Four of his *De doctrina Christiana* where, according to Alberte, he assigns a dual role to classical rhetoric, namely, that of "arte informadora de los recursos literarios, esto es, como preceptiva literaria y como arte productora de discursos" (29). Moreover, Augustine, underscoring that classical rhetorical figures and tropes populate, were commonplace in, the Bible, promotes the re-adoption of the aesthetic criteria found in Cicero's *Orator* and is partial to predicators who exhibit both knowledge and eloquence. For Augustine there exists no conflict between these two last aspects of sermon delivery. The orator of Christ, for Augustine, consequently, must fulfill the following three tasks simultaneously: i.e., that of teaching, that of pleasing, and that of moving the souls of the fellow members of the congregation. As Alberte clearly notes, Augustin "estaba diseñando con los criterios ciceronianos la imagen del *eloquens ecclestiasticus*" (31). However, the person who will have the most influential bearing on the Christian art of predication, in Alberte's estimation, will be Gregory the Great (540-604). The latter's position was dramatically the opposite of that sanctioned by Augustine in that he rejected outright the employment of classical references and rhetoric in favor of a homiletics that limited the content of the sermons to biblical sources –notwithstanding the fact (a fact Gregory the Great chose to willfully ignore) that the writings of the Apostle Paul are rhetorically highly charged. The predicator of sermons, for Gregory the Great, was to be guided by two directives: he was to live an exemplary life and he was to possess a profound knowledge of the Bible. Through his example, the predicator would preach, which now became the equivalent to lead, and by his knowledge of the Holy Book he would elevate the parishioners from their mundane state of being. This did not signify, however, that there was to be a sacrifice of the *modus dicendi* of the message. For Gregory the Great, the *quomodo*, as for Augustine, still held its importance, its place, in the delivery of a sermon. Instead of stressing Augustine's reliance on rhetorical recourses (i.e., on *invention*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria, actio)* and discourse organization (i.e., *exordio, narratio*, *divisio*, *argumentatio*, *confutatio*, *peroratio*), Gregory the Great underscored subject matter, the interlocutor's object of the sermon, the appropriate time and place and manner of the delivery of the homily, in short, "tópicos" that would be "repetidos por todos los tratadistas posteriores, como Fortunaciano, Sulpicio Víctor o Boecio dentro del apartado dedicado a la *inventio*. Ahora bien, tales principios no lo encadenan al mundo clásico: su mundo será exclusivamente bíblico y patrístico" (42). Hence, the preacher was to pay attention to the *quid* (the subject matter of the homily), the *cui* (to whom the predicator was directing his predication), the *quomodo* (the manner: tone / style, of delivery), and the *quantum* (the calculation of the extension of the homily so as to avoid tiring and boring his captive audience) (43-44).

In Chapter 3 the author moves fast forward to the close of the 12th century and, then, marches into that of the 13th century: according to Alberte, the earliest predicatory treatises following those discussed above do not appear on history's screen until approximately 1190. The most famous figures of this time, Peter Abelard, Robert of Deutz, and John of Salisbury, reintroduce rhetoric and classical dialectics and quotations from these sources flow freely in their works, especially those that have their origin in Cicero's *De Inventione* and (to his attributed) *Retorica ad Herennium*. Abelard, in particular, stresses the highly rhetorical style of the Bible, meant to inform, instruct, move the reader, and the need to acquire a knowledge of rhetoric as the "clave para poder descifrar los valores literarios de aquélla (the Bible)" (51). Deutz reads the Bible adopting a *Retorica ad Herennium* point of reference, underscoring the importance, above all, of *inventio*. And Salisbury, without hesitation and without any excuses whatsoever, follows Cicero in his *De Inventione*, emphasizing the points of *sapientia* and *eloquentia*. In the 13th

century the figures that prominently stand out are Gilbert of Novigento, Hugo of S. Victor, and Alan of Lille. Novigento extends the preaching of the sermon, until then a function reserved exclusively to bishops and abates, to any member of the clergy who could demonstrate a firm knowledge of the Sacred Text. Novigento's predicatory base reflects the principles set forth by Gregory the Great in that he also insists that the homily primarily be used to inform and instruct and raise the religious ardor among those of the congregation, but he, also, sides with Augustine in preferring the "predicador orgulloso que sólo busca su Gloria […] frente a aquel otro que se niega a predicar la palabra de Dios" (54). Novigento focuses on the congregation as his primary target and, here following Gregory the Great, insists on the need to limit the extension of the delivery of any and all sermons. In this same line of reasoning, Novigento distinguishes, among the receptive audiences, those who socially constitute the masses and those who are cultured. The delivery of a homily, in short, must be geared to the target audience, to the audience the predicator is addressing. The type of sermon, hence, one is to render most definitely depends, for Novigento, on whether the addressee is "'*simplex et idiota*'"or "'*doctus et litteratus*'" (55). As for how to go about explaining the biblical text, Novigento follows Gregory the Great's four principles of communication: the historical, that relates events as facts, the allegorical, that underscores the symbolic, underlining meaning of a given passage, the ethical consequences that point to a moral norm of conduct in one's social relationship with one's fellow neighbor, and the analogical or spiritual aspect that elevates man to the sphere of God in discoursing elevated and heavenly topics. As close as Novigento is to Gregory the Great, it should be noted that the latter hardly puts him at odds with figures or representatives of the classical world, for Novigento not only quotes frequently and at length Horace, but he, also, fully and readily accepts such classical "principios retóricos tales como la *perspicuitas*, el *reddere auditores magis attentos* y la *delectatio*" (56). In other words, whereas Gregory the Great was basically concerned in not boring his addressee, Novigento goes out of his way to underscore the need to delight, to bring enjoyment as well as instruction and enlightenment to the preacher's captive audience.

Víctor, in turn, goes a step or two further than Novigento in his sympathy for the pagan factor. Víctor's basic views, geared as they are toward the young monk or priest, encompass the following three precepts: that the sciences of learning constitute valid useable material –if appropriate– to the case in question ("'*Primum ut nullam scientiam, nullam scripturam vilem teneat*'"), that one must never forfeit the opportunity to obtain knowledge from whatever source ("'*anemine discere erubescat*'"), that is, even if it be not biblical, and that no occasion should be lost to impart, to instruct the knowledge one has acquired to others ("'*cum scientiam adeptus fuerit caeteros non spernat*'") (57). To this end, Víctor continues and incorporates into his vision of the function of the sermon the following three principles pertaining to classical art of rhetoric: "'*natura, exercitium* y *disciplina*'" (57). While, in this regard, it is obvious that Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* influences Víctor's rhetorical preferences, one needs to recognize that in other respects Gregory the Great's notions of *quid dicatur, cui dicatur, ubi dicatur, quando dicatur, quomodo dicatur* continue to still remain firmly in place for Víctor when it comes to the formulation of any and all sermons.

Following in the footsteps of Novigento and Víctor, Lille, in his *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria*, dares to conceive a predicatory art that switches the focus from that of the addresser to that of the message itself. In this respect, then, he differs from Gregory the Great, who had concentrated his attention, in the main, on the preacher himself. Lille's work, consequently, constitutes a thorough analysis of the sermon itself, from the use of language to the ideas expressed. Then, and only then, does Lille take up the question of who should be

allowed to assume the role of preacher and, thereby as well, the question regarding to whom one should preach. The theoretical precepts of his text, according to Alberte, are firmly grounded on the classical rhetorical arts, which Lille cites the Apostle Paul as his source of defense, of justification. In his treatise Lille highlights the importance, indeed, the significance of role that eloquence plays in one's expression and creation of affective effect, but with the proviso that the latter must be always carefully controlled or manipulated by the author of the homily. As for who should be entrusted to deliver the sermon, Lille follows Gregory the Great in that he, too, insists that the Church allow only those to preach whose lives are exemplary, that is, they must be men who have lived and continue to live their life in full accordance to Christian doctrine. Lastly, Lille insists that the sermon always fit the public addressed.

The content of Chapter 4 deals with an array of tendencies effecting the creation of the homily in the 13th century. Above all, this was the period of scholastic discourse, prominent in the classrooms of universities, and hybrid treatises with regard to the approach to the art of predication. Within the scholastic vein, Alberte discerns debate and theme as the two major contributions to the rhetorical evolution of the sermon. In other words, what took front stage was how one argued, how one structured the theme, that is, how one brought to bear pertinent distinctions in one's argument, which, in turn, passages taken from a text of a Doctor of the Church could substantiate, confirm. Such was the basis of Peter Lombardo's *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* and in the works of Simon of Tournai. Among the hybrid treatises, those of William of Auvernia, author of *Retorica Divina, De Faciebus Mundi* (an unpublished treatise) and *Arts Praedicandi*, the latter, Auvernia's most famous work, not only followed the Gregorian method as set forth previously by Novigento, Lille, and Ashby, but, also, offered, in addition, an "'abundancia de recursos'," twenty in all, useful to the composition of the homily whose roots lay in the methodology espoused by scholasticism. Another piece that followed both the Gregorian tradition as well as the scholastic line of fixing a theme, developing the latter by divisions and subdivisions, was Humbert of Romanis's *De Eruditione Praedicatorum*. This treatise, it should be pointed out, also incorporates into its precepts views expressed by classical writers such as Seneca and Horace. With regard to the hybrid group, the most significant treatise was that of Thomas of Chobham's *Summa de Arte Praedicandi*, a work that "mejor representa la integración de las novedades temáticas con la tradición clásico-gregoriana" (76). Chobham insists that a preacher not only immerse himself in classical rhetoric, but also openly acknowledge his sources –thus secularizing the art of predication beyond that which Augustine had advocated during his lifetime. Some other works that Alberte includes within this category of the art of predication are, for example, Richard of Thetford's *De Modis Dilatandi Sermonem* (in which Thetford stresses identification of theme, division, rational argumentation –developed syllogistically, inductively, by example, or by enthememe– the active formulation of biblical concordances, etcetera), the anonymous *Tractatus Utilis de Octo Modis Dilatandi Sermonem*, Hugo of Sneyth's *Modus Dilatandi*, both of which duplicate that of Thetford mentioned above. Works that, in turn, pay particular attention to theme and to the development of the latter include John of La Rochelle's *Processus Negociandi Themata Sermonum*, John de Gales's *Forma Predicandi*, Raimond Lulio's *Ars Abbreviata*, which comes out at the close of the 13th century. In short, according to Alberte, it is in the 13th century that all possible types of the predicatory arts flourished, came to light.

In Chapter 5 Alberte follows the theoretical treatises of the aesthetic construct of the homily in the 14th century, which, by and large, emphasize modes of amplification of the thematic component of the sermon and, fundamentally constitute an echo of the works produced in the

previous century. The salient feature of the treatises of this period is the fundamental importance that the authors place on the Aristotelian concept of causality –i.e., the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause– a natural consequence stemming from the all absorbing work produced by the scholastic theological philosophy of Thomas of Aquinas (1225-74). The most outstanding treatises in the 14th century are: Robert of Basevorn's *Forma Praedicandi*, R. Higden's *Ars Componendi Sermones*, James of Fusiñano's *Libellus Arts Predicatorie*, Francis Eiximenis's *Ars Praedicandi*, Henry of Hesse's *Tractatulus de Arte Praedicandi*, Thomas of Tuderto's *Ars Sermocinandi ac etiam Collationes Facendi*, and B. of Ubaldo's *Modus Faciendi Sermones*.

Chapter 6 deals with the predicatory arts in the 15th century, which, as Alberte is quick to underscore, stand out for their lack of critical innovation: "El siglo XV viene a ser una réplica de los anteriores, de manera que es muy difícil hallar novedades en este terreno" (161). The works that Alberte cites in this chapter are, for the most part, anonymous works –e.g., *Ad Noticiam Artis Predicandi*, *De Modo Predicandi*, *Ad Pertractandum Artem Predicandi*, *Opusculum de Modo Praedicandi*– to cite but just a few.

The above six chapters are followed by an extended synoptic conclusion (Chapter 7), a copious and much welcome anthology of Latin texts, which includes the works of such authors as Ashby, Thetford, Gales, Fusiñano, Tuderto, a comprehensive bibliography (Chapter 9) that includes scholarly works consulted, and an index of stylistic, technical terms (Chapter 10) used to characterize, to power the oratorical compositional delivery that transformed the predicated material into an art form.

If a fault or two I must find, it is that while Alberte for the most part offers translations to his Latin quotes, there are many, in fact too numerous, instances where he fails to do so or, tails to the heads of the coin, where he offers Spanish translations without their Latin counterpart.

In the last several years –since the pioneering work of James Murphy– the number of works dealing with medieval rhetoric has significantly widened, covering both the analysis of rhetorical theory during this period as well as the publication (complete or partial) of a gamut of rhetorical treatises or manuals (*rhetorica*, *ars praedicandi*, and *ars dictaminis*). Still, one must keep in mind that many rhetorical tracts of the period remain as yet unpublished or understudied and that the volume of the material yet subject to critical scrutiny is overwhelming at times. In this regard, then, Antonio Alberte's comprehensive synthesis and analytical survey of the *artes praedicandi* of the Medieval Ages is, indeed, extremely praiseworthy and his work will be a necessary reference for those interested in the study of Latin and vernacular literatures of the Middle Ages.