Stephen Murray, *A Gothic Sermon: Making a Contract with the Mother of God, Saint Mary of Amiens.* University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2004, 173 pages, 15 illustrations. $39.95 (cl). ISBN: 0520238478.

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Stephen Murray's *A Gothic Sermon* focuses on an instance where preaching and art, verbal and visual culture, can be linked at an identifiable place and time: mid- thirteenth-century Amiens where the magnificent cathedral of Notre-Dame was being completed. Murray highlights and compares the structure of the vernacular sermon, for which he provides a valuable edition and translation, with the sculptural program of the cathedral. An Introduction, four chapters ("Occasions and Audience," "Structure and Content," "Rhetorical Strategies: The Art of Persuasion," "Portals and Preaching: Image and Word"), a Conclusion, and fifteen plates precede the edition and translation of the sermon. An appendix of sources and notes to the chapters follow the sermon text.

Sermon and sculpture direct attention to the Virgin Mary: The three paths of salvation set out by the preacher--repentance and good works, the church through clergy and sacraments, and the Virgin Mary--correspond to the themes evoked in the three main portals of the cathedral's west façade. Through Murray's evocative prose, viewer and hearer alike are led through an entrance, verbal or visual, into the spirituality of the period. Murray connects the tools of rhetoric to those of carving, and in that regard, builds on but moves beyond the earlier textual studies of this sermon by A. Lecoy de la Marche and M. Zink[1] to consider the visual context of its preaching--the cathedral itself. Fifteen plates of the cathedral allow this volume's reader to follow Murray's argument and to make her own entrance into and comparisons between the vernacular sermon and the visual program of the sculpture. Murray appreciates the space of Notre-Dame d'Amiens as a church for preaching, testimony to the impact of the friars' mission on church architecture, for which Italian examples such as Santa Maria Novella in Florence are well known. Murray's welcome parallels between the verbal, performative world of the sermon and the visual program of the cathedral are set briefly in the context of thirteenth-century Picardy, and notably linked, as in earlier scholarship, to the 1240 fund-raising tour of the relics of bishop Honoratus of Amiens, which is portrayed in the tympanum of the south transept portal.

The strengths of Murray's book lie in the valuable edition and translation of the sermon, with a useful appendix of its sources, and in his imaginative effort to explore and reconstruct the link between the verbal and visual--an area where evidence tying sermons and art is lacking and where much more work needs to be done, if indeed evidence is to be found. However, Murray has overlooked or omitted scholarship in this area. Although a related article by J. Hamburger appeared recently, much material was available prior to its publication.[2]

The weakness of Murray's volume resides in the limited range of research represented. Such an interesting sermon edition and translation deserves a broader base in scholarship. Murray relies on the classic works about preaching by A. Lecoy de la Marche, J. Longère, and M. Zink,[3] and includes several more recent publications. Yet he omits *The Sermon* (B. M. Kienzle, dir.),[4] which was described recently by L. J. Bataillon as "sans doute la publication la plus importante dans ce domaine depuis le *Repertorium* de Schneyer."[5] Chapters in *The Sermon* by N. Bériou on Latin preaching after 1200, C. Delcorno on preaching in Italy and L. Taylor on French preaching (1235-1535) would have shed light on numerous aspects of Murray's work, such as the analysis of vernacular preaching, macaronic texts, or

the structure, theology and cultural background of scholastic sermons, and allowed for greater precision in his analysis. *The Sermon*'s extensive bibliography including other works in the Typologie des sources series: *L'exemplum* and *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular*, would have provided depth to Murray's treatment of *exempla* in medieval sermons and illuminated the rich tradition of preaching and writing on the virtues and vices.[6] Similarly, recent studies on the *artes praedicandi* and medieval rhetoric would lend precision to Murray's discussion of sermon form and enrich his analysis of the parallels between rhetoric and images.

The important volume, *The Sermon in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. A. Muessig, is also missing from Murray's bibliography. It includes significant articles on preaching and art by Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby and Miriam Gill. Debby, focusing on fifteenth-century Tuscany, grounds her essay with a valuable discussion on preachers' use of the arts, while Gill studies the association, relevant to Murray's sermon, between swearing, the dismemberment of Christ's body, and the Virgin's confrontation with swearers.[7]

Murray rightly signals topics of importance for the study of thirteenth-century preaching and its theological program, such as the insistence on confession and good works, the popularity of preaching on virtues and vices, methodological questions about macaronic sermons, the levels of sermon rhetoric, and so on, but they are not sufficiently contextualized in the history of thirteenth-century preaching, religious thought, and related scholarship. In brief, Murray's *A Gothic Sermon* deserves praise for exploring the link between the verbal and the visual, an under-explored and possibly evidenced area of research. Nonetheless, a reader desiring to be informed about thirteenth-century preaching and its cultural context would be well advised to consult the works cited above.

NOTES

[1] A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen âge* (rpt. Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1974), pp. 185-89 ; Michel Zink, *La prédication en langue romane avant 1300* (Paris, H. Champion, 1976), pp. 43-46, 240-243.

[2] See "The Various Writings of Humanity: A Sermon by Johannes Tauler on Hildegard of Bingen's Liber Scivias," in *The Voice of Silence. Women's Literacy in a Men's Church*, ed. T. de Hemptinne and E. Góngora (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 167-191.

[3] See note 1 above and Jean Longère, *La prédication médiévale* (Paris: Études augustiennes, 1983).

[4] *The Sermon*, B. M. Kienzle, dir., Typologie des sources du Moyen Age, fasc. 81-83, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

[5] L. J. Bataillon, "Chroniques de doctrines médiévales. Études récentes sur les sermons," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 88/4 (oct.-déc. 2004):789.

[6] C. Brémond, J. Le Goff, and J. C. Schmitt, *L'exemplum*, 2nd ed. (Brepols: Turnhout, 1996); R. Newhauser, *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular* (Brepols: Turnhout, 1993).

[7] *The Sermon in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. A. Muessig (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002): Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "The Preacher as Goldsmith: The Italian Preachers' Use of the Visual Arts," pp. 127-154, and Miriam Gill, "Preaching and Image: Sermons and Wall Paintings in Later Medieval England," pp. 155-180.

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