Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The Codex Sancti Paschalis from the Thirteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries

This study has investigated the development and meaning of liturgy within the Order of Friars Minor through the case study of missals used by late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Umbrian communities of friars. It has been an exploration involving questions of interpretation as much as historical evidence, including a re-examination of the foundational work of Stephen J.P. van Dijk OFM, an assessment of the methodology employed by art historians who have discussed the Codex Sancti Paschalis and its related manuscripts, and the use of an holistic methodology for the study of such illuminated manuscripts. The starting point for the entire discussion has been the CSP, a missal now owned by the Australian Friars Minor. In these concluding remarks, the major theses from the preceding chapters will be drawn together to suggest a new reading of the function and meaning of liturgy for the Order of Friars Minor in its early centuries, which places the evidence drawn from the five selected missals into a broader context. This in turn will stimulate a summary of areas that would benefit from further research. The underlying theme throughout this study has been the concept of communal memory and the ritual activity that such memory stimulates. It is fitting, therefore, to offer some reflections on the changing role of the CSP as a site of communal cultural memory for the Order of Friars Minor across the centuries.

Liturgy's Role in the Construction of Communal Identity amongst the Medieval Order of Friars Minor

Previous scholarship to discuss the CSP and its cognate manuscripts has been primarily within the discipline of art history. Lack of conceptual clarity has affected much of this scholarship, which has concentrated on enlarging the list of manuscripts attributed to particular masters (such as the Maestro di Deruta-Salerno and Venturella di Pietro) at the expense of establishing firm criteria for the attribution of manuscripts to these masters and discussing the production networks and relationships which must necessarily have existed between such commercial artists and the Order of Friars Minor. Indeed, scholarly discussion of the Order's production of books has been limited; instead, much has been made of the Order's attitude to the ownership of books, and its organisational procedures for the housing and use of books. Some scholars, such as Cesare
Cenci, Bert Roest and Neslihan Senoçak, have discussed the Order’s production of theological texts within the context of the growing influence and importance of the friars in Europe’s major universities. In this context, there has been interesting research regarding the existence of friar-scribes, which is mirrored by the discussion of friar-artists by scholars such as Louise Bourdua. However, studies which have considered the scribal and artistic activity of the friars have largely ignored liturgical books, concentrating instead on theological and devotional texts. Scholars seeking to establish the Order’s formal procedures regarding the writing and decorating of books (and other artistic endeavours) are hampered by the almost total lack of documentary evidence from within the Order. While the absence of such material creates difficulties for the researcher, it is surprising that no substantial research to date considers the complete production process of liturgical books within the Order, given their ambiguous status for the friars as both necessary and expensive. The production of such books provokes questions which touch on central areas of interest to scholars of the medieval Order, particularly the issue of communal poverty.

An holistic examination of the production of liturgical books within the Order, as modelled by scholars such as Laura Light, Nigel Morgan, James Boyce and Els Rose, has been adopted here. Without being able to provide a definite structure for the relationships between the Order and commercial miniaturists, it has been possible to collect evidence for an informed understanding of the book production industry in Perugia and the Order’s theoretical framework regarding the production and use of books. While scribal and artistic work appear to fit into Francis’s conception of the permissible ‘godly work’ to be undertaken by friars, it is apparent that no centralised organisational framework existed within the Order to monitor and manage friars’ activity in this regard – hence the frequent examples of friars accepting money for their scribal work, as discussed in Chapter Three. There appears to have been some discrepancy between the Order’s ideal and the real practice of friars working as scribes and artists, which is hardly surprising in the context of the fragmentation of the Order throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, the absence of clear internal guidelines for book production must necessarily have affected the distribution of liturgical books within the Order, though this practical aspect was inadequately discussed by the major scholar to have undertaken research in the area, Stephen J.P. van Dijk.

Van Dijk’s thesis regarding the development of liturgy within the Order of Friars Minor has been subjected to a detailed examination. His basic conception of this development was linear in structure: he proposed the Order began with a unified liturgy (with the distribution of the Regula edition of missals