

## MEDIEVAL FRANCISCAN MANUSCRIPTS IN JERUSALEM

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The *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, in the Convent of the Flagellation on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, possesses not only an important archeological museum, but also a small hoard of valuable liturgical manuscripts dating from the 13th to the 17th century, many of them richly illuminated. This treasure, hitherto virtually unknown and unpublished has now been made accessible in a beautiful publication by Nicola Bux,<sup>1</sup> of the Institute of Ecumenical Theology at Bari.

The first part of this work presents the history of these 19 books, explains the nature of the Franciscan liturgy, and assigns them their place in the history of miniature painting. The second and major part of the work describes the MSS and provides rich illustration: 90 plates (not counting four of the bindings in the first section); The photographs, 107 in all, 47 in colour and mostly full-page, show every historiated initial, a good selection of the minor decoration and other points of interest. The photographs are excellent and they have been finely printed.

The text is in two languages, Italian and English, and is printed in parallel columns. Regrettably, however, Bux has been unfortunate in achieving a good English translation. Not only is the English often very unidiomatical ('seated to the throne', 'It's removed the initial miniated'), but there are also serious mistakes and evidence of a lack of comprehension: *scheda*, meaning 'description', is translated *index card*, *carta* = 'leaf': *card*, *fogli* = 'leaves': *papers* (all the MSS are, of course, on parchment), *(text) disposto a piena pagina* = 'written in a single column': *arranged on closely-written page* (this said of choir books with 5 lines on a 55 cm. page!), *(David) in preghiera* = 'praying': *preaching*. These errors are inadmissible. There are also countless spelling and printing mistakes. Readers should, when possible, stick to the Italian text.

The description of each MS begins with a very short 'codicological' section. But codicology is not the author's main interest; even the collation of

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1. Nicola Bux, *Codici Liturgici Latini di Terra Santa – Liturgical Latin Codices of the Holy Land*. Fasano (Brindisi), Schena editore, 1990, 30 × 21 cm, 147 pp., many illustrations (*Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum*, 8).

the quires remains to be done (note that by 'rigatura a secco' Bux appears to mean plummet ruling). After this section the decoration is indicated and the major initials (if any) are listed and described. Occasionally the reader may find room for a different interpretation. Fig. 26 is explained, on p. 68, as 'the emperor Heraclius, with crown in his hand, brings back the Cross, held by a cross-bearer (not, of course, a 'Crutched friar'!), to Jerusalem'; Rather, is not the large person, clad only in his shift and bearing the Cross, the emperor, who for this sacred task has handed his crown and his blue robe to members of his retinue? And the 'man' of Figs. 13 and 98 is surely a 'king', *i.e.* David. A brief description of the contents follows while historical and critical comments are mainly found in the notes.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Director of the Museum, Father Michele Piccirillo, I have been able to see all of the MSS briefly, because I wanted to include them in my *Illustrated Inventory of Medieval Manuscripts in Jerusalem* (IIMM-EP 4)<sup>2</sup>. I am also indebted to Prof. Richard H. Rouse, who was with me on that occasion. It may be of interest to give here some of our notes.

We looked only briefly at the 17th-century choir books, mainly to ascertain whether the 'leaves of other MSS' which Bux noted in several bindings might be from Medieval MSS (they were not; as far as I can judge, all appear to be from late books). Certainly these weighty tomes would repay closer study. Most of them are the work of Jacobus a Modoetia (= Monza) OFM Obs. It seems to be possible to arrange them in groups: the pair of Graduals 8 + 9, the Gradual 11 (with 6 instead of 5 staves on each page) and the Kyriale 12 have almost the same size and have closely related decoration; the decoration of the two Breviaries 14 and 15, the Psalterium 16, and the somewhat smaller Hymnary 13 marks them as forming a second group. All are written by James of Monza 'ex commissione P. Commissarii Terrae Sanctae Lombardiae Anno 1662'; but the execution of this commission must have taken a long time: MS 15, James's '47th work', is dated 1684, and I see no reason to doubt the authenticity of this date. Perhaps our two groups are to be interpreted as an 'early' and a 'late' group. I am not sure where MSS 17 and 18 should be placed. Note that some fragments of similar books (= those mentioned p. 106 n. 5?) are kept in a

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2. IIMM is a project for making quick and inexpensive but complete inventories of the medieval MSS of a collection. It is based on some characteristic principles: fragments are treated as manuscripts in their own right; the descriptions are very short on contents, but can afford to be relatively rich in codicological details; each description is accompanied by a small photograph (detail, natural size). For information on this project, and for ordering the available fascicles devoted to collections in Leiden, Amsterdam and Jerusalem): Dr. J. P. Gumbert, Fac. Letteren, Afd. Paleografie, Postbus 9515, NL-2300 RA Leiden.

separate folder; the two initials reproduced as Figs. 89 and 90 are also extant, even if the rest of that codex is lost. MS 10, on the other hand, is clearly not part of the Monza group: it is by a different hand, with different, not very competent decoration, and one can unhesitatingly believe the title page ascribing the work to Fr. Franciscus Castellarius in 1667.

Our attention was focused on the Medieval pieces of the collection. The two Missals, MSS 1 and 2, would appear to date from the first half of the 14th c. rather than the second half of the 13th. The painted decoration of MS 1 might well be a later addition in spaces originally left open. MS 2 was certainly written for (perhaps even by) Fr. Franciscus of Pavia, since the colophon saying that it is 'his' missal is in the hand of the scribe. The painted initials of this MS (all cut out) were by the same hand as those of MS 1; also some of the (almost contemporary) additions in both MSS are by the same hand.<sup>3</sup> This proves that the books were together since the 14th c.; and since MS 1 was in the 15th c. the property of the Franciscans of Mount Sion in Jerusalem, this must be true for MS 2 as well.<sup>4</sup> As to where these books came from, the additional quire at the end of MS 2 furnishes some clues: the prayer to St. Louis, f.VIIIv, does not only present an 'ultramontan' spelling (p. 47 n. 4), but is also written in a script that clearly belongs North of the Alps, while its penwork decoration seems to point to Provence (cf. Phot. 1); and on f.IIv we read a note<sup>5</sup> which also argues that these books were, for a period of time, not in Lombardy but in the South of France (there is no reason to speculate that they were 'a gift of King Robert', p. 20).

MS 3 might be slightly earlier than Bux proposes: around 1300. On MSS 4 and 19 we have no comments. But since the publication of Bux's book a new item, MS 20, was acquired by the Studium: 23 loose leaves (which had been used in the 18th c. as covers for a series of thin fascicles arranged according to the weeks of the liturgical year, probably containing sermons) of a New Testament (Pauline Epistles, Acts, Apocalypse), written in Italy around 1300 and still containing five historiated initials (see Phot. 2).

3. Compare MS 1 ff.2v, 70, 86v, 140v, 149 etc. with MS 2 ff.181v and II; also the *Missa devota ad recuperandam terram sanctam*, MS 1 f.180v, MS 2 f.II. The early foliation was also done by the same person in both MSS.

4. The note *eodem die obitus fratris stephani canonici sancti sepulchri qui legavit fratribus bonum legatum pro cuius anima debet dici missa ista die*, added to the calendar, at July 1, not after c. 1400, suggests that the books were on Mount Sion at least by that time.

5. *Petrus D'a(?)iarrochelli (?) presbiter rodensis diocesis (Rodez) / Gaufridus chesuelli presbiter andegnavencis diocesis (Angers) / Martinus O(?)riencii rodensis diocesis / fuerunt benefactores conventus nostri, habeantur recomendati in orationibus omnium fratrum.*

The jewel of the collection are the three Antiphonaries 5-7, not only for the quality of their script and their interesting historiated initials (of which 18 remain)<sup>6</sup>, but also for their historical association. On the opening page there is a note in a contemporary English hand, of which we can give a better transcription than that printed: *Orate pro anima illustrissimi principis domini johannis quondam ducis lancastrie / filii regis anglorum Edwardi tercii ac patris henrici quarti de cuius (abbreviated c<sup>s</sup>) elemosyna (abbreviated elema<sup>na</sup>, sic) / scriptus est liber iste ac plenarie factus pro consolacione fratrum sacri montis Syon*: ‘Pray for the soul of the noble prince Lord John (of Gaunt), late Duke of Lancaster, son of Edward the 3rd, King of England, and father of Henry the 4th, out of whose pious gift this book was written and completely made for the benefit of the brethren of the Holy Mount Sion (Phot. 4). The relation with John of Gaunt (who died in 1399), which remained somewhat unclear in the earlier reading (see p. 21), is now much clearer<sup>7</sup>. We can date the set ‘around 1400’; if the argument from dialect, based on marginal notes describing the subjects to be painted (pp. 21, 58) is valid, it was produced in Venice. Incidentally, these same notes show that the hypothesis discussed on p. 31, that the painter might have followed a model, must be discounted: if the head of the workshop writes ‘(paint) a mount with a castle and at its foot there is a prophet who preaches to the people,<sup>8</sup> then there was no model.

Father Bux has not written the last word on these MSS - he himself would be far from making such a claim. But he has competently unlocked a treasure, and given us a book which is not only very useful, but also lovely to look at.

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6. Of MS 5, Bux says that ‘many’ miniatures and initials were removed. In fact only five of the original leaves are missing; in the place of three of them (ff. 100, 163, 198) there are replacements, presumably done by Fr. Angelo Nizzola in 1769; Nizzola’s foliation takes account of all five, so ff. 3, 149, which are now missing, probably had also been replaced by him. Bux’s illustrations concentrate on the painted and historiated initials; but the penwork initials are quite good also; our Phot. 3 shows a specimen.

7. One would have hoped to find the bequest mentioned in the testament, which is printed in S. Armitage-Smith, *John of Gaunt*, 1904, p.420-436; but there one looks in vain for it. The ‘elemosyna’ must have been made at some earlier, unknown occasion; but by the time John had died there was still an Englishman present in Venice (see below), to write the note.

8. MS 5 f. 82; p. 58 n. 2; see Phot. 5; read *un monte connuna rocha e da pede ha (?) un profeta che predichi al popolo*. On pp. 52, 55 the subject is interpreted as *Christ* addressing a multitude.