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***A Martyrology in its context: Durham Cathedral Library, Ms. B. IV. 24***

End of IMEMS Library Fellowship Report

The Durham Cathedral Library Ms. B.IV.24, the so called “Durham Cantor’s Book”, is a codex containing several items: a Calendar, but without saints’ names; a Martyrology; a Lectionary of chapter gospels; Lanfranc’s *Constitutiones*; the *Regula* *Benedicti* both in Latin and in Anglo-Saxon. Namely it is a *Liber* *Capituli*, a collection of norms, liturgical readings and obituaries to be read daily by the chapter of a cathedral or an abbey. Almost certainly, in its core part, it is one of the books gifted by bishop William of St Calais to the monks established at Durham at the end of the 11th century.

During my stay in Durham in April 2018, the one-month IMEMS Library Fellowship allowed me to deepen the study of this manuscript, giving special attention to the proper Martyrology (Ms. B. IV. 24, ff. 12v-39r).

According to its main model - the mid-9th century Martyrology written by the Parisian monk Usuard - , it gives, day by day, some brief accounts for saints to be celebrated.

Durham’s copy, in its core part, is relatively poor in notices about the main saints of Northumberland. Anyway, soon after it arrived in Durham, it started to be amended, rewritten after erasures and, mostly, supplemented by marginalia. Part of these “alterations” added to the original copy some new accounts on saints. With few exceptions, these additions were written by *circa* 1130, and we can divide them in two main groups.

The first one reveals a special attention for the saints of Northumbria, above all for Cuthbert. On March 20th and on September 4th the original text was erased to add, or at least to rewrite in a more appropriate way, the notices of his death and his translation respectively. In these new notices the name of that saint was written in block capitals, to underlined the highest degree of his feasts. A marginalia to September 11th also celebrated the *Octava* of his translation. Other marginalia added accounts for John of Beverly (May 7th), Boisil of Melrose (July 7th), Oswald (August 5th) and Oswin (August 20th), Ebbes (August 25), Aidan of Lindisfarne (August 31th), Wilfrid of York (October 12th), Hilda (November 17th).

A second group deals with non-local and non-England saints. We can find an entry for Gregory the Great, celebrating the anniversary of his consecration as pope (September 3); some “French” saints, as the abbots Gilles (September 1st) and Leonard (November 6th), the bishops Julian of Le Mans (January 28th) and Roman of Rouen (October 23th); some notices on early centuries martyrs from Eastern-Mediterranean area, as Margaret of Antioch (July 20th), Catherine of Alexandria (November 25th) and Nicholas, this latter in the feast of his translation (May 9th).

Evidently, the first group - Cuthbert and other Northumbrian saints- aimed to strengthen the link between the Martyrology, Durham - were it was read - and its Bishopric. Besides, the second group - that of “foreign saints” - seems to reveal a closer attention to some trends in saints venerating of early-12th century continental Europe. Maybe this is a consequence of Durham being, at that time, part of the “Norman Empire” and of Benedictine network as well.

This situation changed dramatically from the early-13th century onwards, when the Martyrology was not updated any more. We do not find, for example, any additions or marginalia for late medieval saints, as Francis of Assisi and Dominic Guzman, formally canonised by the Pope. At this stage of my study it is difficult to explain why it happened. This would require an extension of the research and an extensive survey of the hagiographical as well as liturgical material from the ancient Priory Library, which I hope to be able to pursue in the near future.

Besides the result of my research I have just summarized above, I also would like to say that this fellowship offered me - currently an independent scholar without any affiliation - a unique possibility to continue my scholarly activity. It gave me the opportunity to have access to the impressive resources of Durham University Libraries, above all to the special collection shelved at Palace Green. In this respect, I must thank all the staff of this Library, as well as the staff and the members of IMEMS, all welcoming and really interested in my research. Above all I must thank the Director of IMEMS, Professor Stephen Taylor. During my stay in Durham, he met me several times to discuss my research, its ongoing achievements, its possible outcomes and, more in general, my scholarly interests.

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