

In the book's Conclusion, O'Hear argues very persuasively that the Book of Revelation's visionary character lends itself very well to visual exegesis and that these images can and indeed should contribute to Biblical studies. She also convincingly objects to the notion that Biblical interpretation can be seen as objective and scientific. Thus she affords room within Biblical hermeneutics for an understanding of the *Sache selbst* of the text to be explored through the visual, as opposed to the written, medium.

This book has much to commend it, and O'Hear can be proud of the amount of scholarly research that has gone into this work. Each image is well described, both physically and stylistically; she engages well both in the art-historical discourse, and with the theological discourse that each image (or series) calls up. O'Hear also has done well in her appraisal of the secondary literature and the scholarly debates are detailed and well-handled. However, this book does feel somewhat piecemeal. Each section is tackled perfectly adequately, but one struggles to find any connectivity between the chapters, other than the very loose question surrounding visual exegesis. There did not seem to be any particular rationale in her choice of images from the Book of Revelation. She was not strong on the history, and the few historical points she made were not set fully in context and were left somewhat free-floating. For instance, O'Hear notes that the iconography of the Angers tapestry demonstrated its strong connections to Louis I of Anjou; but, given the Book of Revelation's strong denunciations of temporal power, this unusual iconographic connection is neither fully explored nor fully explained. More generally, though the book has a theme, namely visual exegesis, there is no over-arching concept that adequately ties the disparate discussions together. The reader is left without any feeling of progress, coherence or trajectory; everything is explained piecemeal. I would have preferred O'Hear to have been bolder and more dynamic with her research, so that I was left feeling not merely informed but also enlivened by the book.

JENIFER M. DYE

THE FRIARS IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN: PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2007 HARLAXTON SYMPOSIUM edited by Nicholas Rogers, *Shaun Tyas*, Donington, 2010, pp. xii + 372, £49.50 hbk, and **MEDIEVAL IRISH DOMINICAN STUDIES** by Benedict O'Sullivan OP, edited by Hugh Fenning OP, *Four Courts Press*, Dublin, 2009, pp. 237, £50, hbk

Fewer histories have been written of the medieval friars in Britain and Ireland compared to those of the monks. Certainly some of this has to do with the relatively fewer material remains, which can be easily explained by the friars' poverty. Yet, it would also seem that some of it has to do with the rather different formation of friars, who tend to specialise in philosophy and theology rather than in history or liturgy. For this reason, and for many others, the medieval friars have received far less attention than their monastic counterparts.

A number of academics have helped to fill this gap through research shared at a recent Harlaxton Symposium, which has produced a substantial volume entitled simply *The Friars in Medieval Britain*. This collection of nineteen essays by twenty-one authors covers a wide range of topics under the following six subject headings: Preachers and Theologians, Relationships, Texts and Writers, Art and Iconography, The Image of the Friar and Local Studies. While one could quibble with the arrangement of essays, the variety of topics across a range of disciplines is astonishing. Some of the essays are of more than merely local interest. For example, William H. Campbell argues quite persuasively that English Franciscan preaching in the thirteenth century was quite innovative. Whereas the use of

exempla did not become widespread elsewhere until the fourteenth century, in England it can be found as early as the thirteenth, as can the use of the vernacular in preaching.

One of the strengths of this collection is that it shows how much can be learned about the medieval friars in England (Wales, Scotland and Ireland are not covered) despite the paucity of documentary and archaeological evidence. David King draws on fragments of stained glass surviving from East Anglian friaries to give some idea of the images portrayed and why, while Nicholas Rogers convincingly argues for the Norwich provenance of the Thornham Parva retable. Although no friary records from medieval Bristol are extant, some idea of the friars can be gleaned from the abundance of surviving parish records. Clive Burgess, in his 'Friars and the Parish in Late Medieval Bristol: Observations and Possibilities', argues for the complementarity of friars and parish clergy and for the continuing relevance of the former right up until the suppression of their houses. Besides the evidence of funerary bequests, he cites the prominent participation of the friars in liturgical celebrations alongside that of civic officials. Similarly, Joan Greatrex shows in her essay on monks and mendicants in English cathedral cities that, despite the endless litigation, monks often gave alms to the friars, invited them to preach in their pulpits, swapped books with them and were taught by them.

As with collections of this type, some readers will inevitably be wanting more, others less. After reading essays on 'The Franciscan Custody of York in the Thirteenth Century' and 'Friars and the Laity in the Franciscan Custody of Cambridge', this reader would have preferred more background information on custodies in England, viz. how was England divided into custodies and what their boundaries were. In direct contrast, Linda Voigts helpfully begins her essay on 'The Medical Astrology of Ralph Hoby, a Fifteenth-Century Franciscan' with a brief survey of the practice of astrology at that time. Yet, while she relates much of interest concerning the context of Hoby's 1437 treatise on medical astrology, she provides little analysis of its contents. One of the most disjointed essays in *The Friars in Medieval Britain* is that co-authored by Ralph Hanna and Sarah Wood. While Hanna's portion asks the very interesting question why friars should appear so prominently in *Piers Plowman*, he fails to follow up this line of argument, instead highlighting the poem's 'linguistic ethos'. Wood's portion is much lengthier, but better argued and, therefore, easier to follow. She puts *Piers Plowman* in the context of what she calls retinue politics.

Though covering a similar topic, *Medieval Irish Dominican Studies* is a far different volume. Published as a book for the first time, Benedict O'Sullivan's 27 articles were originally published in the now obscure Dominican journal *Irish Rosary* between 1948 and 1953. Hugh Fenning, a fellow Dominican, has now made these articles accessible, but also more useable by the addition of footnotes and bibliographical references. These not only alert the reader to the latest scholarship, but sometimes correct and/or confirm O'Sullivan's account.

The first half of *Medieval Irish Dominican Studies* makes for rather dull reading, as it chiefly consists of eight chapters giving a chronological history of medieval Irish Dominican foundations, from 1224–1507. Much of it takes the form of commentary on the *Hibernia Dominicana* (Cologne, 1762) of Thomas Burke, an earlier Irish Dominican antiquarian whom O'Sullivan typically refers to as de Burgo. A topic that resurfaces again and again in the volume is that of relations between the Anglo-Normans and the native Gaelic populace. O'Sullivan, for example, points out that of 39 Dominican foundations made in Ireland before the Reformation, the first 26 were founded by the Anglo-Normans (before 1356), while only two of the remaining 13 were, which leaves eleven Gaelic foundations.

Following the monotony of foundation narratives, O'Sullivan analyses the surviving names (mostly Anglo-Norman) of Irish Dominicans to discover the social

and ethnic make up of the Irish province. Four chapters on conventual buildings outline the early poverty of the Order in contrast to its later wealth (Athenry was the wealthiest). Five chapters on the mendicant economy show the source of the friars' income, such as land and property, fishing rights, Mass stipends and funerary bequests, begging and royal patronage. Interesting peripheral facts emerge when Fenning notes that certain customs mentioned by the author have since been discontinued, e.g. serving the prior last in the refectory, abstention from meat and the decrease in number of brothers necessary for the erection of a new house from twelve to six. Also, the author remarks on the uniqueness of the Irish friars' situation as against that of their English brethren who lived in a more hostile, anti-clerical and anti-mendicant environment, exemplified in the writings of Chaucer and Wycliffe. According to O'Sullivan, 'All this was generally speaking, foreign to the Irish religious and literary atmosphere' (p.166).

The final five chapters concern the relationship of the Irish Dominicans to that of the Order as a whole. Much of the discussion centres on the question of when the Irish houses ceased to be a vicariate within the English province and were finally constituted as an independent province of their own. Apart from the short-lived creation of an Irish province in 1378 and its violent aftermath in Dublin (the subject of a fascinating chapter), the Irish Dominicans did not gain their independence until the English Reformation, when a bull of Pope Paul III finally erected the Irish province in 1536. One issue that Fenning as editor never addresses is O'Sullivan's use of the term 'abbey' to describe some friaries. Does this reflect later Irish usage or some peculiarity of Irish ecclesiastical law? Or is simply the imprecise use of a term with more meaningful monastic connotations?

Both *The Friars in Medieval Britain* and *Medieval Irish Dominican Studies* make modern scholarship more widely available and correct persistent myths and falsifications of and about the surviving evidence. And while each is well-produced, both disappoint in terms of illustrations. *Medieval Irish Dominican Studies* contains absolutely none, making the inclusion of any illustrations a great improvement. Above all, this reader would have liked to see a map of Ireland showing the Dominican foundations along with Anglo-Norman and Gaelic spheres of influence. Also, the inclusion of photographs of surviving conventual buildings, artefacts and manuscripts, especially those of Athenry, would have been desirable. *The Friars in Medieval Britain*, on the contrary, contains some beautiful colour photographs and black and white illustrations, but these have been relegated to an appendix at the very back of the volume so that one has to flip back and forth between text and illustration when reading essays on medieval stained glass and the archaeology of London mendicant houses. Notwithstanding these criticisms, each volume make an interesting and insightful contribution to a growing, yet still sparsely researched, aspect of medieval Church history.

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CHARLES HODGE: GUARDIAN OF AMERICAN ORTHODOXY by Paul Gutjahr, *Oxford University Press, New York, 2011, pp. xxiii + 477, \$74, hbk*

One thing is clear: there will never be another Charles Hodge. Born in 1797, Hodge came of age and flourished in the critical, formative years of the American republic. Over the course of a remarkable career at Princeton Seminary that spanned five decades, Hodge became a towering figure on the American political and religious landscape. By the time he died in 1878, Hodge had created and defended—one is tempted to say 'single-handedly'—a distinctive, American path to modernity. Thanks to the excellent work of Paul Gutjahr, historians and theologians interested in American religious thought now have at their