

The translations and the presentation of the apparatus are very user friendly. In addition to critical editions, the volume also includes a synopsis of all three versions in Syriac and English. This is an invaluable tool for comparing these different witnesses to a very early version of this text. The volume begins with a brief but adequate introduction to the history of scholarship on the Syriac version of this apocryphon. Following this is a thorough inventory of Syriac manuscripts transmitting the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. A surprise bonus in the edition, not signalled on the cover, is a new critical edition of the *Arabic Infancy Gospel* as well, along with an English translation, both done by Slavomír Čéplö. This addition greatly enhances the value of this volume for scholars who are studying the infancy gospels.

One should note, however, that the edition does not include readings from an important early manuscript, a fourth-century palimpsest at Mount Sinai: Sinai Arab. 588. Although it was known that this manuscript preserves an early version of the *Six Books Dormition Apocryphon*, it has recently come to light that the manuscript also preserves an early version of the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. This is not especially surprising since the *Six Books Dormition Apocryphon* is often transmitted with the *Infancy Gospel* in early manuscripts, where these two texts, along with the *Protevangeliium of James*, comprise a sort of proto-*Life* of the Virgin. The existence of this version was not yet known, it should be noted, at the time of this volume's publication, so its absence is no fault of Professor Burke, but it does mean that yet another witness to the Syriac tradition should soon appear.

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Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation.

Edited by HELEN GITTOS and SARAH HAMILTON. Pp. xvi + 332. London and New York: Routledge, 2016. ISBN 978 1 4094 5150 1, 3671 3579 9, and 3155 6298 8. Hardback £76; paper £31.19; e-book £25.34.

UNDERSTANDING MEDIEVAL LITURGY is a volume that I would like to have had at my disposal when as an undergraduate I first explored the intriguing and complex world of medieval liturgy. In the ten chapters collected by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton

the point of view of performance, applied to a diverse manuscript transmission, aims to replace the predominant focus on fixed text in modern editions. The aim of the volume is to examine concrete and situational rituals in their broader performative context, rather than abstracted texts. As such, the book is an invaluable contribution and will serve new generations of medievalists, who can now no longer claim that medieval liturgy is a technical and hermetic, let alone tedious, discipline. The many detailed and fresh explorations of various kinds of written evidence are immensely helpful also to understand other domains of medieval culture, in terms of contextualizing manuscript evidence and taking into account variance and diversity. In its entirety the volume is first and foremost an extended argument for what I propose to call 'performative philology': the craft of interpreting and presenting liturgical textual evidence as part and effectuation of a larger performative context and lived practice.

Going through each individual chapter it turns out that the titles of the four distinct parts of the volume represent the main aims of all contributions, namely to focus on rites rather than only texts; to engage critically with past generations of liturgists; to highlight variation rather than looking for a fixed origin or linear development; and, last but not least, to focus on the performative character of each rite when studying its textual, musical, and architectural expressions.

That said, the studies individually and together provide the reader with a variegated analysis of medieval expressions of worship, in which communities of different character (monastic, episcopal, urban, lay) participated each with their different roles. They also make the reader actively aware of the close but never simple relation between transmitted texts and once lived practices, as well as between architectural design, also of buildings now lost, and liturgical performance.

One of the central elements in the introduction by the editors, apart from setting out the volume's aims, is the overview of 'challenges' set by previous generations of scholars, followed by a brief survey of 'challenges' caused by the medieval material itself, in particular the written evidence. Hellen Gittos then opens the first part with a general chapter circling around the question of the relationship between the oral practice of medieval liturgy and written evidence, summarized in the basic but essential question 'Why were texts written down?' (p. 20), and how are those texts then to be read in order to understand the rites they represent? Gittos suggests diversity as the main interpretative tool. This diversity also concerns the wide variety of sources to be taken into

account when studying 'liturgy', as the subsequent chapters of the book then put into practice.

A first specific rite is the ritual encounter with death and the dying, set out by Frederick Paxton in his chapter reflecting his own intellectual history with the legacy of Cluny. The chapter underlines the role of the monks as 'almost the exclusive brokers of the economy of salvation . . . in which wealth was exchanged for prayers and other forms of intercession of the dead' (p. 55). Valuable and valid as this insight may be, it should not obfuscate at the same time the important quality of the (earlier medieval) cathedral mass, where both the prayers and the oblations of the faithful materialized this interceding role of the liturgical ritual between the living and the dead.

The *artes* and their relation to the liturgy are represented primarily in William Flynn's chapter on music. Sources representing this vital part of medieval worship are in his view the intermediate material in which representants of different disciplines meet. His contribution is an extensive plea for a historical and contextualized understanding of musicological sources, with a (more) open eye for both the rituals of which the music actually was part, and for the archival sources that yield information on methods and persons that facilitated these rituals. Here as well, a main focus is on diversity, with a detailed discussion of the question 'what constitutes a significant musical variant' (p. 61). This question asks for a deep consideration of the relation between word and music as two mutually enhancing rhetorical expressions of meaning. At the same time, this issue is complicated by related questions regarding the written evidence, which is never a one-on-one representation of how the musical ritual was enacted (p. 69). Well-grounded forms of re-enactment might be a useful tool to come to a better understanding (pp. 70–1).

The second part, 'Questioning Authority and Tradition', represents one of the main aims of the volume, namely to critique the search of (early) modern liturgical scholars for an authoritative archetype or *Urtext*, determining the editions they produced and that still dominate present-day perceptions of medieval worship. Central to this approach is Parkes's study of the twentieth-century edition of episcopal handbooks (p. 76) known as the 'Pontifical romano-germanique' (PRG). The value of this study, presenting in detail Vogel and Elze's approach as heirs of the prematurely deceased Andrieu, is obvious in its exposing of the sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit attempt of the editors at constructing a Mainz archetype. The chapter offers a number of

adequate tools and reflections to approach medieval manuscript sources that relate to the performance of worship. Apart from elaborating on the shortcomings of the twentieth-century approach Parkes offers some valuable ideas about a modern presentation of this body of texts on pp. 98–100. Less prominent is the reference to his own database (hidden in n. 84, p. 100), which deserves more attention as it offers a helpful guide (<http://database.prg.mus.cam.ac.uk/>, accessed 5 May 2020). The chapter as a whole is primarily a critique of the traditional, text-critical philological method and a plea for the programmatic aims of ‘New Philology’ (pp. 100–1).

Like Parkes’s chapter, the study of Matthew Cheung Salisbury (‘Rethinking the Uses of Sarum and York: A Historiographical Essay’) would just as easily fit into Part III, ‘Diversity’. The title of this contribution suggests a less narrow approach than the one that dominates the study, namely, the reconstruction of authoritative medieval liturgical uses in post-Reformation England to serve current needs. More than any of the volume’s chapters, Salisbury’s contribution is perhaps more about (early) modern liturgical studies as a profession than about medieval liturgy. Salisbury also chooses the perspective of liturgical books and the lens of print editions to discuss a specific approach to medieval liturgy, primarily interested in notions of authoritative traditions as foundation and apology for current practices and their confessional background. Salisbury defends the importance of a contextual approach to individual manuscripts as evidence of specific uses (plural) rather than reconstructing one ‘authoritative version’ (p. 105) that serves the reconstruction of a single Use. Salisbury is foremost interested in the diversity of smaller, local customs, and convincingly shows how these are obfuscated by modern, teleological editions.

Another chapter in which the bishop is central is Sarah Hamilton’s study of excommunication rites. Whereas the edition of the PRG as criticized by Parkes suggests a central place of this rite in the tenth- and eleventh-century pontificals, Hamilton shows how ‘peripheral’ this rite is in the actual manuscripts by zooming in on four examples within the German empire of the eleventh century, including the rites of both excommunication and reconciliation after penance. Hamilton’s main aim is to contrast ruling opinions on the fixed and general character of this pre-eminently episcopal rite. Even though the historiography representing this traditional view of ‘earlier generations of scholars’ (p. 156 and *passim*) is not presented *in extenso*, Hamilton

convincingly shows both the diversity and the complexity of these rites. She does so by highlighting the ‘tension’ between, on the one hand, the bishop as the central authority of the rite and, on the other, more local initiatives, as well as the intertwining of legal and liturgical elements. She also contrasts the use of Latin and the vernaculars in the public proclamation of excommunication and reconciliation. Hamilton repeatedly stresses the prescriptive, rather than descriptive, character of the manuscripts under discussion, which aim ‘to regulate rather than describe practice’ (p. 156), a point elaborated elsewhere in the volume (e.g. p. 183; ch. 10, *passim*). Whether studied from a legal, a liturgical, or a pastoral point of view, the diversity in form and content of the codified excommunication rites points to diversity in intention.

The rite of exorcism is studied from the double perspective of liturgical and hagiographical sources. Florence Chave-Mahir, like Hamilton, asks for special attention to the meaning and implications of the peripheral place the rite of exorcism takes in liturgical sources (p. 162, n. 9), reflecting perhaps the modest status of the exorcist among the ordained (p. 159). Her main question is whether the rites as codified in liturgical collections as well as individual saints’ *Lives* give evidence of an educational incentive through mimesis of the Gospels, or also of the actual performance of exorcisms in the twelfth century. This is one of the chapters in the volume where the liturgy of the mass comes to the fore as the central context for this kind of ritual (as, already in the fourth century, for the liberation of slaves), highlighting the central character of the eucharist as a (mimetic) act of liberation and the performative power of the Gospel book as an instrument of divine power. Precisely this latter aspect, exemplified on p. 168, presents the question whether the Bible should not have been spotlighted more expressly in Chave-Mahir’s analysis of the sources of inspiration of exorcism accounts in the *Lives*. While she focuses here primarily on liturgical formulae (pp. 170–4), the central role of biblical allusions and references remains underexposed.

The church building is central in two chapters, first in the study of church dedication by Mette Birkedal Bruun and Louis Hamilton, who approach this rite through the lens of sermons, and then in Carolyn Marino Malone’s study of two churches as the architectural setting of processional liturgy. In both chapters, the idea of the church building as a model of the heavenly Jerusalem (p. 177–8 in ch. 8; *passim* in ch. 9) and hence, more or less implicitly, of the ecclesiastical congregation as the citizens of this *civitas*, comes to the fore. In chapter 8, Louis Hamilton

stresses the importance of the topographical context of a given text (p. 183). This will nuance the interpretation of textual evidence and, again, further the approach to written sources as of prescriptive rather than, necessarily, descriptive quality. Modern geographic information systems techniques are brought in as a new and promising tool for liturgical studies (pp. 202–3). The biblical roots of dedication rites in the sermons that Birkedal Bruun introduces in the second part of this chapter (p. 187f.) give insight into the Bible as a shared source for both liturgy and ritual, hagiography, and sermons. In both approaches attention to the performative power of the ritual is central.

Malone's chapter on the processions for Candlemas and Palm Sunday further brings into focus the civic character of liturgy, also in a monastic setting (such as the Cluniac landscape central in this chapter). The church building, reflecting the heavenly Jerusalem, moulds the congregation into inhabitants of this model city. Of vital importance is the fact that the imagery of Jerusalem does not only anagogically refer to the heavenly city as the ultimate aim, to which the Christians need to *ascend*, but also phrases, for example in the central hymn for the dedication rite *Urbs beata Ierusalem*, the *descent* of the heavenly city (pp. 235–6), creating a congregation of citizens in the earthly realm of the monastery. In this light, it would be good to know more about the actual participants in the celebrations of Candlemas and Palm Sunday in St Bénigne's in Dijon (p. 225): were these only the inhabitants of the Benedictine monastery, or also citizens of Dijon?

In the closing chapter Carol Symes examines the relationship between textual sources and performative practice. The notion that liturgical texts are rarely the origin of liturgical customs but rather the written regulation of and reflection on (the authoritative character of) such customs is central, as well as the notion that codification serves purposes of correction and canonization, often resulting in the reduction of previously much richer oral performances (p. 243). At the same time, it must not be overlooked—thus Symes—that even scripted liturgies might have been performed with much more liberty, more improvisation, and a more diverse group of active participants than the written word suggests. To expand on the latter, the notion that the role of the laity remains implicit in codified liturgy (p. 263) needs some nuance. The active participation of lay people is not confined to drama nor exclusively expressed in the vernacular. It is also scripted in the most literal sense, as I argue for the late seventh-century *Missale Gothicum* (Vat. Reg. lat. 317, the more recent edition of which should be added to the

volume's bibliography). The cues for the people to perform not only the responsive *Amen* but also the *Sanctus* and *Pater noster* are highlighted throughout the manuscript by different font and deviant colours of ink (Els Rose, *The Gothic Missal: Introduction, Translation and Notes* [Corpus Christianorum in Translation, 27; Turnhout: Brepols, 2017], p. 68).

Finally, a note on the technical term 'liturgy', by which the book will be found and classified due to its title. The modern and in many ways misleading impact of this word on the study of medieval practices of worship is set out by Symes (pp. 239–41). Whether we continue to use the term or not, a conscious awareness of its largely post-medieval past enhances our understanding of medieval (textual, visual, material) sources of worship. It also invites us to realize the wider impact of practices of worship on more encompassing historical developments that more recent scholars have pointed out, such as the reorganization of cities through saints' feasts in the studies of Yossi Maurey (*Medieval Music, Legend, and the Cult of St Martin: The Local Foundations of a Universal Saint* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014]) and Catherine Saucier (*A Paradise of Priests: Singing the Civic and Episcopal Hagiography of Medieval Liège* [Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2014]), or through processions and penitential liturgies in studies such as Nathan Ristuccia's (*Christianization and Commonwealth in Early Medieval Europe: A Ritual Interpretation* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018]). The wider impact and central relevance of 'liturgy' is programmatically summarized by Symes at the end of her chapter: 'If we do not understand medieval liturgy, it is hard to imagine how we can understand any aspect of the Middle Ages' (p. 267).

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THE nuns' priests of Fiona J. Griffiths's new monograph are ideally figures who can come and go into the convents in their