

A Report of Workshop I: STUDYING THE MANUSCRIPT HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL RITES

Fred Paxton

Mapping the Terrain between Manuscript and Performance in the Study of Medieval Latin Death Rituals

Fred gave a biographical overview of his own approach to liturgical studies, from the beginning of his postgraduate work on the death rites outlined in the twelfth-century Cluniac customaries of Bernard and Ulrich up to the present day and his 'reconstructive' edition of the Cluniac death ritual which is about to go to press. He thus pointed to the importance of paraliturgical books, such as monastic customaries, to the study of individual rites, as well as more main stream liturgical books. He also outlined the danger of focussing on the more interesting rites, such as those for the dying, at the expense of the more boring ones. He stressed the importance (and dangers) of using catalogues to date manuscripts, and thus trace the development of rites over time. He emphasised the enormous importance of editions of liturgical books, including those produced by the Henry Bradshaw Society, Cyrille Vogel and Reinhard Elze's edition of the Romano-German Pontifical, and Jean Deshusses edition of the Gregorian Sacramentary; had the independent and local traditions preserved in these editions given them authority in the middle ages, or rather had they acquired a spurious authority for modern scholars? He highlighted the importance of establishing difference when studying particular examples of a rite: why are some points of difference permissible within manuscripts of certain rites and other parts of the rite set in stone? He also outlined the benefits he had drawn from disciplines outside liturgical studies, namely social anthropology and archaeology. Van Gennep's thesis about rites of passage, had been enormously helpful in providing him with a framework to understand how a seemingly diffuse tradition merged into a single one, whilst he had drawn on the archaeological practice of thick description in his work on the re-enactment of the Cluniac death ritual.

Issues arising:

- Have modern editions of certain liturgical works, such as the Gregorian Sacramentary or the Romano-German Pontifical, given them a spurious authority in the research of modern scholars?
- What are the problems surrounding the dating of manuscripts?
- Why are some points of difference permissible within manuscripts of certain rites and other parts of the rite set in stone?
- What constitutes similarity in a rite? Is it similarity of content or similarity of intent e.g. to process on Palm Sunday

Helen Gittos,

Writing Rites: Problems in Researching the History of Medieval Rituals

Helen discussed the diversity of the evidence for occasional services provided by pontificals. She suggested that this diversity may be because pontificals were often personal books, linked to the individual for whom they were produced. She emphasised the problems arising from the fact that scholars tend to focus on single rites within a range of pontificals, rather than considering a single pontifical

manuscript as a whole. She outlined her own methodology for studying individual rites: to gather the manuscript examples of particular texts and establish (as far as is possible) when and where they were written; to summarize the rites; to try and identify particular families of rite; to consider the possibility of cross contamination between families; to consider the evidence of additions; to draw up a table to demonstrate what aspects of the rite are subject to change; and, if possible, to draw up a possible stemma for the development of the rite.

Issues arising

- Are pontificals always produced as personal books?
- What are the processes by which rites are revised? Do textual additions always constitute evidence of a later revision? Or do such additions represent a distancing between knowledge and experience of the rite and the record of the rite e.g. antiphons probably always sung, but only later added to the record of a rite.
- What are the purposes of the sorts of lengthy rubrics often found in pontificals? Are they stage directions, or are they included with an educational purpose?

Sarah Larratt Keefer

The Unexpectedly Familiar: Questions Raised by the Implications of Vernacular Texts in Anglo-Saxon Service-Books

Sarah focussed on the evidence for ordeals for the laity recorded in Latin, with Old English glosses, equivalent translations, and apparently-original cognate compositions translations, found in manuscripts from the late ninth to the eleventh century. She asked what can we ascertain about the understanding and indeed the agenda of those contemporary liturgists who directed the compilation of these books in two languages? What can we learn of their knowledge of the ways in which these ordeal rituals “worked” or were meant to “work,” and about the intentions discernible in such compilations? What are the implications, with respect to judicial ordeal rituals designed for the laity, of finding a Latin prayer either glossed by or followed by an Old English translation? (These two circumstances are by no means the product of the same cognitive processes or even the same intentions) And what are the implications of finding an Old English prayer that has **no** evident Latin original from which it was evidently taken?

Issues arising

- Why is the vernacular used to rubricate certain rites and not others? Is its purpose prescriptive or descriptive?
- Is a vernacular gloss an aid to contemplation or to translation?
- Ordeal rites are ‘notoriously unlike’, despite having a standard beginning: should we assume that all rites tend towards standardisation?

Tamsin Rowe

Interpreting Differences Between Manuscripts: Blessings for Nature in Three English Service Books

Tamsin focussed on the evidence for blessings for nature in English pontificals. She assessed the evidence of the copying of standardised formulae, and the nature of

variation within such books. She also looked at how such blessings were copied in other, more monastic contexts, and what this suggests about how such blessings were regarded and used.

Issues arising

- What can the evidence for seemingly conservative rites tell us about the mentalities of those who compiled liturgical codices?
- How far is it important to look outside a narrow genre of a particular liturgical book when investigating the history of particular rites?

Louis Hamilton

The Discordance of Concordant Liturgies: Ritual Variety in Italian Dedications (11th-12th c.)

Louis investigated the evidence for the rite for the dedication of churches found in seven manuscripts from central Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Although several of these manuscripts were used by Vogel and Elze in their edition of the Romano-German Pontifical what is remarkable is the level of diversity in this rite, a diversity which persisted into the twelfth century. He suggested that there might be several explanations for why such diversity persisted, ranging from the practical (certain actions were impossible in certain locations) to the ideological.

Issues arising

- Have modern editions of certain liturgical works, such as Gregorian Sacramentary or the Romano-German Pontifical, given them a spurious authority in the research of modern scholars?
- What is the significance of diversity in rites within a relatively concentrated area and within a specific time? Can diversity tell us anything about the context in which these rites were composed and performed?

Sarah Hamilton

Excommunication Rites in England and France, 900-1200

Sarah discussed rites for excommunication from these areas and raised a number of questions about the context in which the texts survive and the circumstances in which they were recorded. Often they survive not with other *ordines* as one might expect but as additions to a main text, often added on blank leaves, at the front of a manuscript, or on additional leaves. A good number of them survive in manuscripts containing legal texts rather than in liturgical books such as pontificals and sacramentaries. And there are instances where they appear to be the record of historical events, actual excommunications of sometimes named individuals.

Issues arising

- How should we interpret rituals that become static and do not vary hugely from manuscript to manuscript?
- What was the status of rituals that occupied a marginal position in relation to the majority of liturgical material? How should we explain this phenomenon?
- For what reasons were records of actual rites made?
- What were the relationships between liturgical and legal rituals?

Florence Chave-Mahir

Looking for Medieval Exorcism: Research on a Hidden Liturgy (10th-14th century)

Florence examined the evidence for exorcism from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, before it emerged as a specific rite in the later Middle Ages. She discussed the aids (e.g. V. Leroquais' catalogue of liturgical manuscripts) for tracing the evidence of liturgical formulae for exorcism in this period; the need to establish what sorts of liturgical books the formulae appeared in; and the degree of diversity in the texts of the formulae.

Issues arising

- How far is liturgical research circumscribed by the lack of detailed catalogues (outside modern France) of the contents of liturgical manuscripts?
- What is the significance of rites which are 'marginal' to the core rites of liturgical books?

David Ganz

An Early Sacramentary Fragment as a Liturgical Problem

David presented evidence of two fragments from an early witness to the Padua version of the Gregorian sacramentary, which he suggested was written in Raetia c. 800.

Issues arising

- The immense significance of fragmentary manuscript evidence for the liturgical historian
- The importance of on-line digital images such as those of fragments at Karlsruhe: http://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/virt_bib/fragmenta_augiensia/

Benjamin Brand

Piecing Together the Sources: Easter Mass at the Cathedral of Pistoia

Pistoria cathedral was destroyed in a fire in 1108, and its rebuilding was accompanied by a new campaign to copy liturgical manuscripts in the early twelfth century, including an ordinal, which was preserved when a new revised text was copied in the thirteenth century. The later ordinal gives a much more description of feasts than that given in the earlier one; he suggested that this expansion was due to the increased codification of text, rather than a change in the way the rite was performed.

Issues arising

- What are the processes by which rites are revised?
- Does expansion reflect a change in the way a rite was performed as well as one in the way it was recorded?

Éric Palazzo

Art, Liturgy and the Five Senses

Éric demonstrated how the liturgy was thought to reveal God through its appeal to the senses; he discussed liturgy's appeal to the five senses, and how it was understood by late antique and early medieval commentators, and in particular how theological debates influenced the construction of elaborately decorated liturgical books of the Carolingian period.

Issues arising

- What is the significance of performative context for understanding of the liturgy?
- What is the significance of decoration of liturgical books?
- The importance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the liturgy, taking into account historical context, art, music, performance, theology.

Overall issues arising (from overall feedback)

- Authority and diversity:
 - Those texts that are available in editions have a distorting effect on the historiography. Do some of them construct a norm which never existed e.g. should we speak of the Romano-German Pontificals rather than the Romano-German Pontifical?
 - Which liturgical texts were authoritative at any given time and place? Who accepted them as such and why? How did they gain that authority?
 - The need to consider the authority of individuals in the conduct of rites e.g. the influence of the cantor
 - The need to consider the way in which different groups interacted within the performance of a particular rite.
- The importance of considering the circumstances in which texts were composed.
 - Why were vernacular versions of Latin texts created and how?
 - Why were records of historical liturgical events sometimes made and how were they subsequently used?
 - What was the status of rites such as exorcism and excommunication that occupy a comparatively marginal relationship to 'standard' liturgical books of the time?
- The need to try and localise rites to a time and place: a worthwhile or pointless exercise?
- The importance of practical considerations
The need to consider the practical aspects of liturgical books in relation to issues concerning personnel. How often was a bishop present in a cathedral to conduct episcopal rites? Substantial changes in personnel may mean that it is necessary to commit traditions to writing.
- The responsibility of us as modern scholars to train our successors in the field.