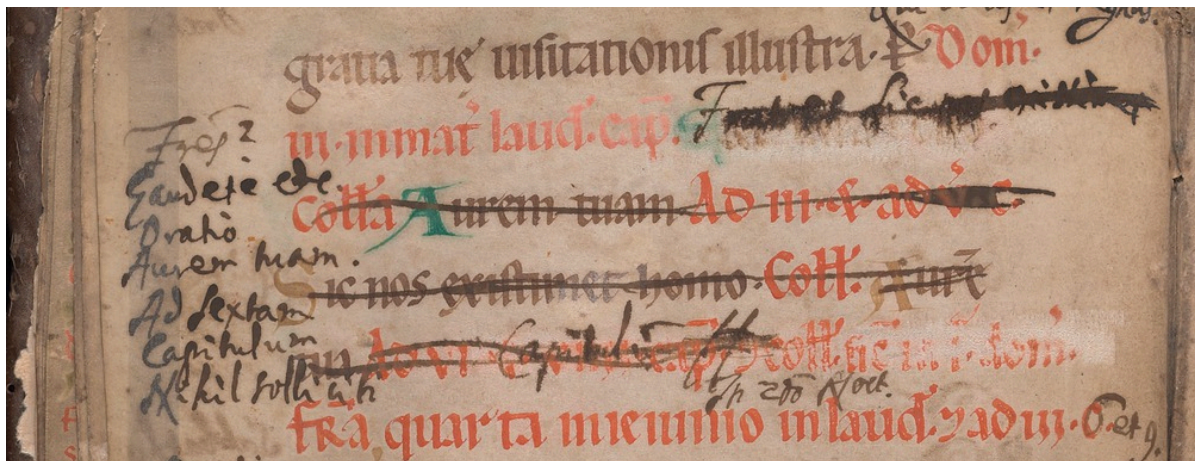


Call for Papers

Medieval Rites: Reading the Writing

Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

21-23 April 2017



To study the history of the Christian liturgy is usually to study texts. Though some texts survive even from the period of the early Church, it was mostly during the Middle Ages that thousands of texts – prayers, hymns, and lections – were compiled and organized into large and complex liturgical books. Some of these medieval liturgical books continued to be used by worshippers even into modern times, or served as models or anti-models for compilers of post-medieval liturgical books.

When we study these centuries-old documents, it is easy to assume that each text is a straightforward prescription of what was said and done. But liturgical books and texts have served many purposes; those who used them had many reasons. A ritual is, after all, an action or performance – the textual dimension is only one among many. Written texts could explain, record, order, and nuance; they could permit reflection, study, and emendation; they could give substance to otherwise intangible concepts, actions, and traditions, permitting the exchange and replication of practices; they could aid learning and memory; books could be physically carried and used within the rituals they describe; and they could communicate authority, correctness, entitlement, and power. Of course, medieval liturgical texts continued to be read in many ways long after the Middle Ages ended. We too, working in different modern fields, have a wide range of reasons for reading these texts.

Moving beyond the notion that writing was simply a means of coordinating ritual activity, or an alternative to oral transmission, *Medieval Rites: Reading the Writing* will explore the breadth of possible literate interactions with Christian liturgy during, before, and after the Middle Ages, in both Eastern and Western traditions. Confirmed speakers include:

Harald Buchinger, Theology, University of Regensburg
Juliette Day, Church History, University of Helsinki
Sarah Hamilton, History, University of Exeter
Peter Jeffery, Music History, University of Notre Dame
Rob Meens, History, Utrecht University
Gerard Rouwhorst, Church History, Tilburg University
Carol Symes, History, University of Illinois

Anyone interested in reading a 20-minute paper at the conference may send a 300-word abstract to ismevents@yale.edu, by 1 January 2017.

The following quotations point to some of the issues we have in mind, and serve as a starting point for our discussions:

1. psalmis et hymnis cum oratis deum, hoc uersetur in corde, quod profertur in uoce, et nolite cantare, nisi quod legitis esse cantandum; quod autem non ita scriptum est, ut cantetur, non cantetur.

When you pray God with psalms and hymns, let what is expressed with the voice be pondered in the heart, and do not sing anything except what you read is to be sung. But what is not written so that it may be sung, should not be sung.

Augustine of Hippo, *Epistola* 211 (CSEL 57: 361), quoted in some monastic rules; see P. Jeffery, "Monastic Reading and the Emerging Roman Chant Repertory," in *Western Plainchant in the First Millennium*, ed. S. Gallagher et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) pp. 79 and 102 n.196.

2. No others are to sing in church, besides the canonical cantors, who ascend the ambo and sing from the parchment.

Council of Laodicea, 4th century. James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) p. 118.

3. IN NOMINE DOMINI HIC SACRAMENTORUM DE CIRCULO ANNI EXPOSITO A SANCTO GREGORIO PAPA ROMANO EDITUM EX AUTHENTICO LIBRO BIBLIOTHECAE CUBICULI SCRIPTUM

In the name of the Lord, this [is the book] of the sacraments set forth according to the cycle of the year, published by St. Gregory the Roman pope, copied from the authentic book in the library of the palace.

Title of the "Gregorian" Sacramentary. Jean Deshusses, ed., *Le Sacramentaire grégorien* 1 (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1992) p. 85.

4. Admonendi etiam sunt sacerdotes, ut operam dent, quatenus missalem et lectionarium, psalterium sive alios libellos sibi necessarios bene correctos habeant, quia saepe dum bene aliquid deum rogare cupiunt, per inemendatos libros male rogant.

Priests are likewise reminded that they should make sure to possess a missal and lectionary, psalter or other necessary libelli, well corrected, because often when they desire to ask God something well, through uncorrected books they ask badly.

Capitulary of Radulf of Bourges, ch. 5 (after *Admonitio Generalis* of 789, ch. 72). MGH Capit. Episc. 1, p. 237.

5. Eorum [scil. Levitarum] vice cantor sine aliqua necessitate legendi tenet tabulas in manibus, ut figurant illud psalmistae: Laudent nomen eius in coro, et tympano et psalterio psallant ei.

In place of the [Levites], the cantor holds tablets in his hands, without any need to read them, so that they symbolize what the Psalmist said: "Praise his name in the choir, and psalm to him with tympanum and psaltery."

Amalarius, *Liber Officialis* III, 16, 1. *Amalarii Episcopi Opera Liturgica Omnia*, ed. J. M. Hanssens 2 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 1948) p. 303.

6. In the earlier Middle Ages much of the ritual music was sung from memory. At St. Alban's Abbey, for example, before Abbot John de Marinis (1302-8) ordered sconces to be placed in front of those who wished to sing the night office from books, . . . "non erat usitatum praeter Legendam et Collectarium; unde multi minus bene reddere servitium curaverunt, et minus sciverunt."

. . . No [book] was used except the Legendary and Collectar; whence many fewer [people] took care to render service well, and [even] fewer knew [what they were doing].

Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (New York: Praeger, 1958) 102 and n. 2.

7. In 1365, . . . a prisoner accused of murder insisted on his claim to clerical status. When given a psalter from which to read in order to prove his claim, the record states that "he could neither read nor syllabify in the book, except in certain places in which he had been instructed"; these passages he appeared to know "without the book through repetition." Probing further, the secular judge gave him the psalter to read from again, but this time upside down. When [the prisoner] simply continued to read the verses he had learned, oblivious to the book's orientation, the ecclesiastical Ordinary refused to claim him as clergy and he remained under secular jurisdiction, having been declared "a layman and not literate, knowing nothing of letters (*laicus et non literatus nec aliquoliter sciuit literaturam*)."

Katherine Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) 59-60.

8. Nam cum raro è libris in pulpito recitent Graeci, rariusque item musices notis exaratis cantum dirigant vel instruant; defectibus his consultum satis putauerunt, si minister quiuis voce, quae commode à reliquis audiretur, membratim per cola, huic & alteri choro è libro suggereret, quicquid occurreret canendum: dum interim cantus notitià & vsu magis insignes variis dextrae digitorumque motibus, contractione, inflexione, extensione, &c. . . . tanquam signis ad varias voces modulusque exprimendos vterentur.

For while it is rare that the Greeks recite from the books in the pulpit, it is again even more rare that they direct or teach the chant from written notes of music; without these things they have

concluded that it is enough if some minister, in a voice which is duly heard by the rest, supplies from the book, to one choir or the other, whatever is to be sung: meanwhile, the ones who are distinguished in their knowledge and experience of the chant employ various motions of the right hand and of the fingers – contracting, bending, extending, etc. . . . – as signs of the various pitches and melodies to be expressed.

Jacques Goar, *Eὐχολόγιον id est Rituale Graecorum* (Paris: S. Piget, 1647) p. 30 n. 20, quoted (with some errors that are corrected here) in Helmut Hucke, “Toward a New Historical View of Gregorian Chant,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 33 (1980) p. 448 n. 56.

9. At one point, Teresa included the recitation of the divine office in a list of monastic trials and tribulations (*Way of Perfection* 12:1). Her description of the problems with the recitation of the divine office in the convent in Villanueva de la Jara provides a good illustration of these trials: only one of the sisters was able to read well, and the sisters used different breviaries, including old Roman ones handed down to them from clergy. As Teresa put it: “God must have accepted their good intention and effort, for they must have said little that was correct” (*Book of the Foundations* 28:42).

Unpublished study of St. Teresa of Avila (1515-82).

10. Scribis ceremonialia et cantiones Ecclesiasticas nihil ad nos. Nos vero omnino cupimus ostendere non tantum qualis doctrina singulis seculis in Ecclesia fuerit sed etiam quales ceremonialia et cantiones, tametsi breviter, nam illa omnia inter sese coherent connexaque sunt. Quare ex istis omnibus nos aliqua sumere necesse erit, si vel nos scire vel aliis indicare qualis quoque tempore Ecclesiae status fuerit oportet. Optarim vero et ego esse qui ex professo historias Martyrum, item ceremonias ac cantiones Ecclesiasticas insertis etiam prolixè ipsis precibus cantilenis ac rubricis exponere vellent.

You write that ceremonials and ecclesiastical songs are nothing to us. But we desire wholly to show, not only what sort of doctrine existed in the church in individual centuries, but also – even if only briefly – what sorts of ceremonies and songs, for all these things cling together among themselves and are connected. For that reason it will be indispensable for us to take some out of all these things, if it is necessary either for us to know or to indicate to others what the condition of the church will have been and in what era. But I also would have preferred that those who professedly want to expound the histories of the martyrs [would expound] also the ceremonies and ecclesiastical songs, and even the chants and rubrics that are quoted at length within those same prayers.

Lutheran apologist and historian Matthias Flaccius Illyricus (1520-75) in a personal letter of 1555. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 9737b, ff. 14^v-15^r, published in Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 108 n. 71.

11. Dic nigra; fac rubra.

Say the black; do the red.

Slogan of certain 21st-century Catholics who oppose liturgical experimentation, and advocate strict adherence to the texts and rubrics of the official liturgical books.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H3MfdKkH0I>