

Julia Exarchos, Liturgy, Society, and Politics. Liturgical Performance and Codification in the High Middle Ages, Husum (Matthiesen) 2021, 359 p. (Historische Studien, 516), ISBN 978-3-7868-15167, EUR 49,00.

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Cecilia Gaposchkin, Dartmouth

Ecclesiastical boundaries did not always respect political borders. The ecclesiastical bishopric of Cambrai-Arras belonged to the archdiocese of Reims, and, until 1093, covered territory that, in the 11th century, spanned the French Kingdom and the Empire, and also fell within the orbit of Flanders' influence. Even after division into two separate bishoprics, one centered in Cambrai and the other in Arras, the region remained something of a border land, or buffer zone, between political powers. The question Exarchos takes up in this book is whether the episcopal liturgy reflected these political and ecclesiastical divisions, or even helped reify them. To explore this question, she studies the surviving pontificals (liturgical volumes containing the rites and functions of a bishop) of the diocese(s) in the 11th and 12th century. And she argues that the liturgies contained therein reflect, and were sometimes even drivers of, political and social change.

The first chapter («Introduction») states the central problems and questions of the study, provides a brief discussion of the state of the research on pontificals, and outlines the task of each chapter. The aim of the book is to examine »the political and social significance of liturgy and the meaning of liturgical performances for the identities of communities« (p. 20). Subsidiary questions involve the process of codification (a concept never quite clearly articulated), and the social, ideological, and political goals and uses of pontificals (p. 21–22).

Chapter 2, »Liturgy and Medieval Society«, treats the ways liturgy intersected with different elements of society (clerics, laymen, elite, the non-Latinate, etc.). Drawing largely on secondary scholarship and theory, Exarchos examines how liturgy functioned ritually, memorially, and in social and ideological formation. In the third chapter, »The Social and Political Implications of Liturgical Performances: Case Studies«, the author looks at a number of examples when the liturgy – its use, implementation, and interpretation – intersected with the exercise of power, both ecclesiastical and secular (for example, Milan's commitment to the Ambrosian liturgy in its politics with the papacy).

The fourth chapter, »Liturgical Texts between Individuality and Uniformity: The Pontificals in the Church Provinces of Reims«, examines a series of social, geographical, and material forces that might shape the contents and use of any individual artefact.



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This chapter discusses the production and movement of liturgical volumes (with a focus on pontificals), the relationship between »model« uses (for instance, the rites codified by Michel Andrieu's work and Vogel and Elze's edition as the »Romano-Germanic Pontifical« [[»PRG«](#)]¹) and local practices, and the ways in which individual rites might be transferred from one place to another.

The fifth chapter, entitled »Regional Context: The Diocese of Cambrai and Arras in the Church Providence of Reims«, provides broad political, military, and institutional contexts for the Ecclesiastical Province of Reims, split between the French Kingdom and the Empire, in the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries. It was precisely during this period (ca. 950–1200) that the metropolitan city of Reims developed and solidified its claim to be the coronation church of the kings of France. But the diocese(s) of Cambrai-Arras, within the province, was contested and desired territory. The author explains how and why, during the period of Carolingian decline and subsequent political reconfiguration, the diocese was of importance to both the Empire and the French Kingdom. The region was also rich with intellectual resources, both in its monastic and its cathedral schools.

The sixth chapter (»Liturgical Codification and Society: The Episcopal Handbooks' Multiple Objectives«) examines closely a number of specific rites in the record (mostly, Boulogne-sur-Mer BM ms. 84 and Cologne Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek Ms. 141). This chapter constitutes the heart of this study, and, at seventy-six pages, it is also the longest in the book. Exarchos studies the inclusion of a number of individual liturgical rites (the introduction of the blessing of war banners, the inclusion of a particular version of an imperial coronation liturgy, the use of abbatial *promotiones* that underscored episcopal authority), examining the specific and novel uses in local tradition to parse out the ideological, political, and practical reasons for ritual inclusion and change. For example, she confronts a long-vexing question: Why did bishops who would never be in the position of performing a coronation ceremony have a coronation rite included in their personal volumes? And, in this instance, why did the bishop of Cambrai (probably either Gerard I or Lietbert, both bishops of Cambrai-Arras) have a unique imperial liturgy in his? Parsing out the various political tensions and social trends, Exarchos suggests that the inclusion »served to emphasize the imperial identity of the diocese of Cambrai« (p. 236). This is an interesting analysis, located squarely within a very specific context that gives this aspect of the pontifical meaning.

¹ Michel Andrieu (ed.), *Les ordines romani du haut Moyen Âge*, 5 vol., Louvain 1931–1961; Cyrille Vogel, Reinhard Elze (ed.), *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du 10e siècle*, 3 vol., Città del Vaticano 1963–1972; Reinhard Elze (ed.), *Die Ordines für die Weihe und Krönung des Kaisers und der Kaiserin*, Hannover 1960.



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This book is learned and exhaustively researched. The careful study of the pontificals from the diocese of Cambrai-Arras, the buffer diocese between political and ecclesiastical power centers, is an excellent problematic. The materials in chapter six are especially worthwhile. But the book also has too much information in it, and the core of the argument is often unclear. The central sources, the material and textual bases of the study, often get lost in the mass of broad and general context. Certain sections (as in, »where were pontificals stored?« p. 130–133) are broadly relevant to the topic of the history of pontificals, but not, so far as I can see, relevant to any actual argument, especially because the author does not even come to a definitive answer. Readers taking up this volume might consider starting with the »Conclusion«, which tightly summarizes the overall arguments of the book, then reading chapter 6, and then jumping into the other sections of the volume where needed.

Mittelalter – Moyen Âge (500–1500)

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