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The digitisation of liturgical manuscripts has democratised access to knowledge but has also heightened the urgency of a fundamental debate concerning the typology of liturgical books. Acknowledging the need to establish consensus not only in terminology but also in the very definition of the various typologies of liturgical books, Harald Buchinger, Andrew J. M. Irving, and Reinhard Meßner convened the symposium *Zur Typologie liturgischer Bücher des westlichen Mittelalters: Interdisziplinäres Symposium*, held in July 2016 at the University of Regensburg. As a result, in 2023 Aschendorff Verlag published Volume 115 of the series *Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*—a 658-page volume edited by Irving and Buchinger. Following the preface and introduction, the main body comprises eighteen articles and concludes with a manuscript index. Written predominantly in German, with seven contributions in English and one in French, the volume is organised into five thematic sections: two devoted to the books of the Mass; a third focusing on rituals, including a study of the commentaries of Amalarius of Metz; a more extensive fourth section on books containing music; and a shorter fifth section, with two articles—one on the breviary and another on manuals and liturgical texts for priests from the ninth century.

In the preface, Buchinger offers an overview of liturgical research in Regensburg, highlighting the contribution of the *Institutum Liturgicum Ratisbonense*, affiliated with the *Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek*, with particular emphasis on the work of Klaus Gamber. He underscores the centrality of manuscript cataloguing to liturgical studies and points to the impracticality of continuing Gamber's catalogue in printed volumes, owing to their rapid obsolescence and limited functionality. As an alternative, he proposes the creation of an online database. Given the scale and complexity of the sources, Buchinger argues that the continuation of this work requires interdisciplinary and international collaboration—a task

that exceeds the capacity of any single researcher. It is in this spirit that the volume seeks to make its contribution.

In the introduction, Andrew J. M. Irving emphasises the significance of liturgical books for various fields of historical research, including music history, and draws attention to the complexity involved in their categorisation—shaped by diversity, a lack of standardisation, and methodological limitations. He calls for a critical reassessment of existing typologies and introduces more recent approaches that seek to reflect the multifaceted nature of these documents, such as those proposed by Giacomo Baroffio, Antonella Brita, and Janina Karolewski.

Irving observes that many liturgical manuscripts do not conform to established typologies, and that scholarly terminology is often inadequate. Among the underlying causes, he identifies the abundance and complexity of medieval Latin evidence, the inherent lack of standardisation in manuscript books, and—drawing on Liam Cole Young—the notion of the «cultural technique of making lists»: a twentieth-century practice which, while facilitating the study of manuscript cultures, also constrained their interpretation through the imposition of fixed categories. Framed by a perceptive engagement with the state of the art, Irving's methodological approach anticipates the rigour of the volume's subsequent contributions.

The first section, 'Mass Books: Presider's Texts and Composite Sources', opens with Christopher Lazowski's argument that the liturgical books of the early Middle Ages constituted a «living literature», characterised by continual growth and adaptation—an idea exemplified by manuscript MS Q 18 from Worcester Cathedral Library. In the following article, Andrew J. M. Irving examines the production and use of Mass books at the Abbey of Montecassino, with particular focus on the abbacy of Desiderius (1058–87). He highlights one of Desiderius's innovations: the requirement to separate readings, chants, and prayers into distinct liturgical books (sacramentaries, evangelaries, and epistolaries), in contrast to the plenary missal. In the final contribution to this section, Andreas Odenthal analyses the evolution of liturgical books in the context of the Lutheran Reformation, which he characterises as marked by a tension between innovation and continuity, rather than by a uniform rupture.

The second section, 'Books for Readings Used at Mass', comprises two articles contributions in German. In the first, Patrizia Carmassi questions the limitations of conventional typologies and proposes alternative approaches to understanding the nature of liturgical codices—approaches that factor in medieval perspectives rather than relying exclusively on modern terminology. In the second contribution, Christoph Winterer explores the conception of medieval epistolaries and evangeliaries as 'sibling books', intended for use together. He argues that future research should focus on manuscripts produced before 1300 and incorporate narrative sources such as the *Libri ordinarii* and library inventories, which may offer valuable insights into the relationship between these two types of books.

The third section includes two articles on the *ordines*. In the first, Peter Jeffery examines the *Ordines Romani* of the Mass from the eighth to the tenth centuries as forms

of 'living literature', subject to continual adaptation. In the second, Jürgen Bärsch analyses the development of the ritual on the basis of elements from the Good Friday liturgy, tracing the transition from the *Ordines* to the *Libri Ordinarii*. These are followed by two studies on the *pontifical*. Martin Klöckener reviews the historiography of this liturgical book, while Henry Parkes—responsible for the PRG Database¹—examines the compilation known as the *Roman-Germanic Pontifical*, questioning the definitions typically applied to this eleventh-century source. Concluding the section is the volume's only article in French, which analyses the liturgical commentaries of Amalarius. Hélène Bricout questions their reliability as faithful descriptions of liturgical practice.

The fourth section, 'Books Containing Music'—the most extensive in the volume—comprises six articles. Susan Rankin opens with a study of the antiphoner, tracing its history from the ninth century, when it existed as a book without musical notation, to the tenth century, when notation began to be incorporated. Her analysis begins with two codices without notation and continues with the identification of the users and owners—namely singers and priests—concluding with a reflection on the implications of the introduction of musical notation.

The following article is a natural extension of Daniel J. DiCenso's research, which began with his doctoral project under the supervision of Susan Rankin, focused on the Carolingian Sacramentary-Antiphoner. DiCenso reflects on the multiple meanings traditionally assigned to the terms used to describe the contents of Gregorian chant books for the Mass, highlighting their potential inadequacy for more precise description. He discusses the theory that MS 10127-44 of the Royal Library of Belgium was produced by and for a rural priest and argues that composite books—combining musical and non-musical content—played a crucial role in the preservation and transmission of Gregorian chant. He further suggests that the manuscript's categorisation should consider its *affordances*, that is, the multiple potential uses it offered.

Two studies examine processional chants and the books in which they were recorded. Starting from the premise that liturgical processions—a vital element of medieval practice—generated a wide variety of chants preserved in different types of liturgical books, Hanna Zühlke investigates how processional chants were recorded in tenth-century manuscripts, assessing whether they were 'attached, integrated, or separated' from other repertoires. Drawing on a broad study of various sources, she demonstrates that this was a period marked by experimentation and flexibility, with scribes adopting diverse solutions to adapt liturgical books to local contexts. Accordingly, she cautions against the anachronistic use of the term *Processionale* for manuscripts prior to the eleventh century, noting that the independent processional book only emerged in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. Building on Zühlke's observations, Harald Buchinger analyses the development of the processional and of the Sunday procession, focusing on sources from St Gall.

1 Available at <<https://henrybradshawsociety.org/prg-database/>> (accessed 24 June 2025).

In a case study of the book compiled by Notker Balbulus, Lori Kruckenberg challenges the traditional view of the *Liber ymnorum Notkeri* as a fixed sequence repertory, proposing instead that it should be seen as a dynamic collection.

Concluding the section, Andreas Pfisterer explores the nature and function of the *cantoral*, addressing the classification of this book, specific issues concerning its contents, and the historical terminology, which he argues is often ambiguous.

The final section, 'Composite Sources, Beyond those Used in the Mass', includes two contributions. Alexander Zerfaß examines the early development of breviaries as a composite genre associated with the Divine Office. Monika Wenz investigates the liturgical manuals intended for local priests in the ninth century, reflecting on their categorisation and the appropriate criteria for describing these heterogeneous sources.

Research on medieval liturgical manuscripts has made significant advances, driven by the need to refine their classification, deepen their description, and develop new analytical tools. The current state of the field is marked by increasingly sophisticated systems, complemented by digital and computational methods. These innovations are essential for managing and rapidly disseminating large volumes of data, also resulting from large-scale digitisation efforts. Such progress is crucial to a fuller understanding of the manuscripts and their liturgical, artistic, and historical contexts, while also making them more accessible for research. In this context, the present volume—both focused and well structured—makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing reflection on the description and typology of medieval liturgical books. Its aspirations are clearly reflected in both its title and the introduction, signalling an ambitious approach to a complex subject encompassing a wide variety of sources and an extensive chronological and geographical span. Irving draws attention to important developments in textual philology and manuscript categorisation, and highlights the advances made in musicology in the description of liturgical sources, with particular reference to scholars such as Laura Albiero, Eleonora Celora, David Hiley, Michel Huglo, Heinrich Husmann, Christian Meyer, and the *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales*. However, one notable omission is the lack of reference to research conducted in southern Europe, particularly in Spain and Portugal. Since the mid-twentieth century, these countries have made significant efforts in identifying and describing such sources—efforts which, in the twenty-first century, have become increasingly integrated into the dynamics of the digital humanities. In this regard, a recent article by Manuel Pedro Ferreira² is a clear example of the significant shift in the study of Iberian musical manuscripts and fragments since 2010. The historiographical analysis of source descriptions, particularly in the field of musicology, reveals that despite methodological advances, the contributions from the Iberian Peninsula remain insufficiently integrated. This omission from the volume here

2 Manuel Pedro Ferreira, «Digital Matters: Early Iberian Manuscripts from the Lisbon Vantage Point», *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 34/1 (2022), pp. 69-81. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17546559.2021.2019816>.

discussed reinforces the urgency of adopting a more inclusive approach in order to construct a typology that truly reflects the diversity of the Western medieval liturgical heritage.

On the Typology of Liturgical Books from the Western Middle Ages stands as a critical and timely intervention, effectively addressing how large-scale digitisation has spurred a necessary re-evaluation of typologies for medieval liturgical books, stressing the pressing need for harmonized nomenclature and definitions. Remarkable for its scope and editorial rigour, the work not only reflects the inherent complexities of this scholarly challenge but also establishes foundational insights for future research endeavors. The book is mainly addressed to scholars and students and it is an essential contribution of significant interest to the various fields related to the study of medieval books (music, liturgy, spirituality, etc.).

Zuelma Chaves is an FCT-funded doctoral candidate in Historical Musicology at NOVA University Lisbon (NOVA FCSH) and a researcher at CESEM, where she is a member of the Early Music group. Her doctoral research focuses on the typology, terminology, and description of plainchant manuscripts preserved in Portugal. Her wider interests include codicology, musical palaeography, organology, and documentation science applied to musical sources. Her master's dissertation examined the Office of the Dead in notated monodic sources in Portugal up to c. 1700. She develops and coordinates digital catalogues and databases for several major Portuguese musical archives and collections.

