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## REVIEW

Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS et al.,  
Wissenschaft der Liturgie. Begriff, Geschichte,  
Konzepte (Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der  
Liturgiewissenschaft 1/1), Regensburg 2022

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## *Reviewer*

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## *Reviewed Book*

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## Review

Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS – John F. BALDOVIN – Karl-Heinrich BIERITZ – Paul F. BRADSHAW – H       BRICOUT – Bruno B  RKI – Andrea GRILLO – Martin KL  CKENER – Benedikt KRANEMANN – Gordon LATHROP – Reinhard MESSNER – Michael MEYER-BLANCK – Augustinus SANDER – Mikhail ZHELTOV, *Wissenschaft der Liturgie. Begriff, Geschichte, Konzepte* (Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft 1/1), Regensburg 2022

### Daniel SEPER

In publishing the inaugural volume 5 in 1983, the original intent of the editors of the Handbook of Liturgical Studies "Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft" was to complete this series within a few years.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, this objective could not be realized. The subsequent years saw the successive loss of the original editorial board of the series, which in turn led to further postponements. The welcome reception and success of the 2008 publication of volume 2/2 encouraged the current editors Martin Kl  ckener and Reinhard Me   ner to continue the project. Now, the long-awaited publication of "Wissenschaft der Liturgie" (The Science of Liturgy<sup>2</sup>) as volume 1/1 has now come to fruition. While the initial publication timeline was not executed according to plan, one of the results of this delay was the expectation placed on the content of a subsequent volume in this handbook series, namely, to "cover the spectrum of Liturgical Studies that has not been presented anywhere else in this comprehensive form"<sup>3</sup> (13). The prolonged period of development and antici-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the complete list of volumes of the series published to date at the end of this review.

<sup>2</sup> The German terms "Wissenschaft der Liturgie" and also "Liturgiewissenschaft" are not always easy to render in other languages. In English, "Liturgiewissenschaft" is often translated interchangeably as "Liturgiologie", "Liturgical Studies", "Study of Liturgics" or even "Liturgics".

<sup>3</sup> This and the subsequent quotations are translated from the German original.

pation can also be seen in a positive light, as it has allowed the latest research to be taken into consideration and included in the present volume. However, a small fly in the ointment has exposed a regrettable detail: the delay had an impact on the external design of the new volume as well, whose red color differs increasingly, albeit slightly, from the hue of the earlier covers (starting already with volume 2,2). As the volumes in this series are placed side by side in most libraries, this change in color is rather noticeable and is at least an aesthetic shortcoming that could have been avoided.

This present volume (1/1) on the Study of Liturgy has a three-fold emphasis: First, the term “liturgy” itself is analyzed. Next, the profile of worship is detailed in four non-Catholic traditions, namely Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism, the Anglican Communion, and the Eastern Churches. Here the different use of the terms *Liturgiewissenschaft* (Liturgical Studies) and *Liturgik* (Liturgics) in German becomes apparent, especially in the comparison between Catholic and Protestant theology. Since the Catholic profile permeates the entire manual, an analogous contribution on Roman Catholic liturgy was omitted. Finally, liturgical scholarship is presented in a variety of denominational manifestations.

The contribution by *Reinhard Meßner* (Innsbruck) begins with a brief overview of the history of the term “liturgy” (69–103). He draws attention to the normative concept of liturgy in the Catholic Church and points to its *christologische Engführung* (Christological short-sightedness), which despite all the advancements in this area is still noticeable in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council. This is an observation he also points out for the understanding of the Paschal Mystery (*mysterium paschale*), since the Holy Spirit is missing there as well. In contrast, Meßner argues to reclaim older concepts such as that of “cult” (*cultus publicus*) and to provide them with a new meaning in a changed context.

Worship in Lutheranism is presented by the Catholic theologian *Augustinus Sander* (Rome) (110–147), who first offers basic information followed by several examples. In doing so, the article picks out an example (Wolfgang Musculus’ *Itinerary*) that is vivid and interesting but remains questionable as to how representative it is. *Bruno Bürki* (formerly Fribourg) discusses worship in the Reformed tradition (148–185), which has its ba-

sis in pre-Reformation religious practice and humanism. Not forgotten, of course, are the two great representatives Zwingli, who shaped the preaching service, and Calvin, who realized in his work “that Christian worship should be carried out by the entire congregation of faithful” (158). The chapter concludes by mentioning several contemporary challenges such as making a plea for women’s ordination that seems rather surprising at this point.

*Paul F. Bradshaw* (formerly Notre Dame/IN) was entrusted with two contributions, the first on liturgy in the Anglican Communion (186–205). For Anglicans, he argues, liturgical forms are the first norm of doctrine and therefore of the utmost importance. The development of Anglican liturgy is traced through the history of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which has been the central liturgical book from its first publication in England in 1549 to the present-day worldwide communion. It was supplemented with “modern liturgies” that emerged in the 20th century in response to then-recent research on early Christian origins of worship, to changing pastoral needs, as well as to the First World War. Missing, however, in this standard Catholic volume on Liturgical Studies is the recent reception of the Anglican liturgy within the Catholic Church by means of “Divine Worship” (formerly often called “Anglican Use”), the liturgical order of the three Personal Ordinariates for former Anglicans established under the auspices of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* (2009), which remains completely unmentioned except for a small indirect reference (192).

The article on the liturgies in the Eastern Churches (206–273) begins with a supposed Western prejudice against Eastern Christianity as something past, which, for example, the conference of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Liturgiewissenschaftler und Liturgiewissenschaftlerinnen im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Working Group of Catholic Liturgical Scholars in the German-speaking Countries) in 2018 in Vienna already refuted.<sup>4</sup> The partly apologetic style of the article also recalls that at the beginning of Christianity four of the five patriarchates were located in the East. After a brief introduction to the ancient liturgy in Jerusalem and in Palestine, of

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the proceedings in Hans-Jürgen FEULNER – Alexander ZERFASS (eds.), *Ex Oriente Lux? Ostkirchliche Liturgien und westliche Kultur* (Österreichische Studien zur Liturgiewissenschaft und Sakramententheologie/Austrian Studies of Liturgy and Sacramental Theology 13), Vienna 2020.

which traces can be found in other liturgies, there follows introductions and then illustrative discussions of the Eucharist and Baptism as well as of the liturgical year in the Byzantine, West Syrian, East Syrian, Maronite, Armenian, Coptic and Ethiopian Rite. The author, *Stefanos Alexopoulos* (Washington, DC), perceives that the Eastern liturgies today are exposed to multiple tensions: their practice in the diaspora in their encounter with foreign cultures as well as the lack of an Enlightenment or Reformation as in the West. This, he argues, has led to either extreme liberalism or conservatism. At the same time, he recognizes the opportunity for the Churches of the East to “contribute to the modern world” (213), bringing in their liturgical traditions as the most important resource. Whether one should speak of a “West Syrian Rite” or “East Syrian Rite” or whether it would not be better to speak, for example, of a West Syrian “group of rites” or “liturgical family” or a West Syrian “branch”, which then also includes the Maronite Rite (listed independently), may be left open.

The second major part of the volume deals with Liturgical Studies themselves, namely with their history, current status and tasks. *Benedikt Kranemann* (Erfurt) takes a very detailed look (277–468) at Catholic liturgical scholarship in the German-speaking countries, and his remarks constitute probably the heart of the book. For him, liturgical scholarship is a “vital corrective” (287) for the Church as it celebrates its faith and derives its importance not least from its participation in one of the three fundamental ecclesial dimensions *martyria*, *leiturgia* and *diakonia*. At the same time, as an academic discipline, it is relevant beyond Church and theology and also has to distinguish itself, for example, from Cultural Studies. Kranemann points out, for example, that the loss of religious practice has led to a loss of understanding of forms of worship, which must be re-transmitted as cultural and historical knowledge in the context of material culture of the liturgy (*Realienkunde*). The article first discusses the concept and subject of Liturgical Studies and clarifies its relationship to the other fields of the theological canon. The history of the terms “Liturgical Studies” and “Liturgics” already points to the change in scope and task. Ultimately, liturgical scholarship accounts for its “critical potential” (291) toward liturgical practice and theology as a whole. The history of the discipline and its various methods are explained on the basis of well-known representatives: for example, the mystagogical catecheses in the

Early Church would constitute the first beginnings of a liturgical scholarship, even if these had a different scope and did not attempt to analyze the rites but understood themselves as an introduction to the celebrated ritual. In answering liturgically controversial questions, it went beyond catechesis. According to Kranemann, the liturgical explanations – widespread in the Middle Ages – interpreted the forms of celebration that were no longer immediately comprehensible by applying allegorical scriptural explanation, and would not be viewed solely critically anymore. Further historic milestones of Liturgical Studies are humanism with its research of sources as well as *Rubricistik* (rubricism) with its strong emphasis on liturgical law, before liturgical scholarship was finally pursued primarily out of pastoral interest in the sense of critical accompaniment of liturgical practice. This led to the academic institutionalization and establishment of Liturgical Studies as a discipline in its own right, a development that is demonstrated by means of liturgical manuals from the 19th and 20th centuries. The Liturgical Movement did not only lead to an awakening and new interest in liturgy, but also at the same time to its necessary academic backing. Thus, the division into three important fields of work, which are still important today, become apparent: Liturgical Studies as Liturgical Theology, which represented a paradigm shift initiated by Romano Guardini; historical research, which provided important inputs for the development of the methodology of the subject (Anton Baumstark with his comparative approach, the historical-genetic method of Josef Andreas Jungmann, and the study of the intellectual-historical context according to Anton Ludwig Mayer); and Pastoral Liturgy. Even though the Second Vatican Council raised Liturgical Studies to a major course in seminaries as well as in theological faculties, this is still by far not self-evident today. In any case, the discipline, which was initially heavily involved in liturgical reform, developed its new profile. Characteristics of post-conciliar Liturgical Studies are theological and pastoral accompaniment as well as participation in the implementation of liturgical reform; furthermore, academic-theoretical reflection and discussion of methods; then, Liturgical Studies are challenged by social as well as ecclesiastical developments, which lead to ever new tasks and perspectives for today and tomorrow. These include questions of participation in worship and liturgical aesthetics, liturgy in the midst of social plurality, and the discussion of Ritual

Studies. In recent decades, Catholic Liturgical Studies has been particularly distinguished by its ecumenical character (394–401), both in the context of “Lesser” and “Greater” Ecumenism (399)<sup>5</sup>. Kranemann thus summarizes the Catholic profile of the discipline in question with the following words: “Liturgical studies considers the faith of the Church in all its diversity by means of the liturgy” (424), whereby the connection of liturgical texts, elements, and actions is specific for them. Liturgical studies has to see the “context of the celebrated ritual” (425) and is therefore contextual theology. Finally, the article lists important institutions of Catholic Liturgical Studies in the German-speaking countries and names places and address groups of liturgical formation today. Especially in this contribution, it is to be positively noted that not only are established authors referred to, but young scholars as well.

In addition to this detailed account of Catholic Liturgical Studies in the German-speaking world, the following contributions can offer only brief insights. For Catholic Liturgical Studies in the French-speaking milieu (473–510), this is done by *Hélène Bricout* (Paris). For her, the beginning of francophone Liturgical Studies is strongly connected with the beginning of the Liturgical Movement, which was initially characterized by specific representatives (Prosper Guéranger, who drafted outlines of a theology of liturgy, and Louis Duchesne, who laid the foundation for university-based Liturgical Studies) and centers (the Walloon-Belgian Benedictine *Abbey of Maredsous*, a German foundation of Beuron; *Farnborough Abbey*, a French foundation in England, with its *Dictionnaire d’Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*; and the Belgian *Abbey of Mont-César*). While there is renewed interest in the history of liturgy in the French region, the practice of the liturgy is at the same time challenged by individualism and communitarianism in French society. Bricout recognizes the need for a new orientation of people to the “profound nature of liturgy” (509).

For the English-speaking countries (511–521), *John F. Baldwin* (Boston) demonstrates the development of Catholic Liturgical Studies in four

<sup>5</sup> While “Small” or “Lesser” Ecumenism refers to the ecumenical relations and efforts between the Christian denominations (inter-Christian Ecumenism), “Greater” Ecumenism (“Große Ökumene”, a term coined by Karl Barth) describes primarily the relationship with Judaism and then also the interreligious/interfaith dialogue.



contexts and lists important representatives respectively. He begins with the history of liturgy (although it is probably better to speak here of a history of Liturgical Studies) and sees the beginning of liturgical scholarship in English-speaking Catholicism only commencing in the 20th century. As a second theme, he mentions liturgical theology, for which especially English-speaking Catholics have made “very important contributions” (517). He next recognizes the most important achievement of English-language Liturgical Studies, namely in “bringing ritual studies and other social sciences into dialogue with Liturgical Studies” (521). The fourth area, as in other language areas, is the work on liturgical reform. This chapter is surprisingly brief in the light of the importance of Catholic Liturgical Studies in the Anglo-Saxon world, especially after Vatican II.

*Andrea Grillo* (Rome/Padua) defends Italy (522–539) against the prejudice that it is only “a place of reception of the Liturgical Movement and Liturgical Studies from beyond the Alps” (523) and points to the specificity of Italy, that there the liturgical reform is more deeply rooted and therefore liturgical traditionalism is only a marginal phenomenon. In the overall style of apologetics, the author admits to a “subjective but justified selection” (527) of persons and places that are considered central. The ideal of Italian Liturgical Studies is simply seen as reflecting on the possibilities of the future of liturgy.

For Protestant Liturgical Studies, *Michael Meyer-Blanck* (Bonn) discusses – more comprehensively and almost as a counterpart to Kranemann’s contribution – the German-speaking milieu (546–640). He thus took over the task of *Karl-Heinrich Bieritz* (formerly Rostock), who died in 2011, and continued his contribution. Liturgical Studies are understood in the threefold tension between faith and culture, revelation and history, and understanding and shaping. The contribution answers similar fundamental questions as Kranemann’s, but from a genuinely Protestant perspective. It begins with Luther’s liturgy, even if it must be stated right away that “Luther was not a liturgist” (556). Already at the beginning, a problem is outlined, to which Protestant Liturgical Studies must devote itself until today: the “danger of a pedagogizing instrumentalization of the celebration of faith in the interest of faith formation” (559). Today, Liturgical Studies would take the same rank in Practical Theology that Homiletics previously used to have. For Protestant Liturgical Studies, which today works histor-

ically, systematically, phenomenologically, semiotically, aesthetically, empirically, and in terms of theatrical and cultural theory, questions currently arise such as worshipping in a multi-religious context, the pedagogical dimension of liturgy in relation to school as a place of liturgical experience, as well as the lectionary of the Protestant Church in Germany of 2018.

In the following two contributions, which are very short in comparison, *Bruno Bürki* (641–649) presents selected “masters of Liturgical Studies” and other Reformed theologians for Francophone Reformed Protestantism, and *Gordon Lathrop* (Philadelphia) presents English-language Protestant Liturgical Studies (650–663), which is shaped by a multi-denominational context.

This is followed by the second presentation by *Paul F. Bradshaw* on Anglican Liturgical Studies (665–688), who proceeds chronologically, beginning with the English Reformation – describing its leaders as the first Anglican liturgical scholars – when the traditional liturgy was reformed. The focus has always been on the *Book of Common Prayer*, to which a separate section above has already been devoted. In short chapters, by referring to theologians, historians, and pastoral scholars who contributed to the study of liturgical history, it is shown that it is precisely this area that has been the distinctive feature of Anglican Liturgical Studies to this day. At the same time the article laments the small number of Anglican liturgical scholars today and the few academic positions in this tradition of Liturgical Studies.

Orthodox Liturgical Studies are presented by *Mikhail Zheltov* (Moscow) (689–736). Because of the centrality of worship itself, Liturgical Studies represents “one of the most popular and demanding subjects” (736) in Orthodoxy today. Grounded in the writings of authors of the 14th and 15th centuries, the development of Orthodox sacramental doctrine is first presented against the background of disputes with other Christian denominations, but also within Orthodoxy itself; for example, between the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Greek tradition. The author then continues with the pinnacle of Russian liturgical studies around 1900, naming several important protagonists. While the Slavic region is treated in detail, Greek Liturgical Studies are mentioned only briefly.

Overall, thanks to the efforts of the editors, this volume presents a fairly unified image, even if, with fourteen authors from very different con-

texts, the attempt to maintain the coherence of the overall work is not always achieved. Thus, even some of the contributions included as translations remain stuck in the original language. Finally, the chronological bibliographical references for each chapter, which include not only publications by renowned scholars, make the volume an important reference work on the subject. The contributions are framed at the beginning by a detailed general list of abbreviations for the series (15–65), which brings together the most important publications on Liturgical Studies, and by an extensive and helpful index (737–781) of biblical passages, as well as to names, places, subjects, and *initia* at the end.

Thus, even if the completion of the entire project is not readily predictable, the remaining missing volumes with part 1/2, which is to contain a study of the sources of Liturgical Studies, part 2/1 on the theology and anthropology of liturgy and part 6/2 on the Liturgy of the Hours may still be expected. At the same time, volumes published earlier are probably in urgent need of updating by now.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Published to date in chronological order:

*Volume 5:* Hansjörg AUF DER MAUR, Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit I, Regensburg 1983;

*Volume 8:* Bruno KLEINHEYER – Emmanuel VON SEVERUS – Reiner KACZYNSKI, Sakramentliche Feiern II, Regensburg 1984;

*Volume 3:* Rupert BERGER et al., Gestalt des Gottesdienstes, Regensburg 1987/21990;

*Volume 7,1:* Bruno KLEINHEYER, Sakramentliche Feiern I. Die Feiern der Eingliederung in die Kirche, Regensburg 1989;

*Volume 4:* Hans B. MEYER, Eucharistie. Geschichte, Theologie, Pastoral, mit einem Beitrag von Irmgard PAHL, Regensburg 1989;

*Volume 7,2:* Reinhard MESSNER – Reiner KACZYNSKI, Sakramentliche Feiern I/2, mit einem Beitrag von Robert OBERFORCHER, Regensburg 1992;

*Volume 6,1:* Philipp HARNONCOURT – Hansjörg AUF DER MAUR, Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit II/1, Regensburg 1994;

*Registerband zu Teil 4:* Eucharistie. Geschichte, Theologie, Pastoral, erstellt von Franz BARTUNEK, Regensburg 1997;

*Register zu Teil 7,1:* Sakramentliche Feiern I, erstellt von Franz BARTUNEK, Regensburg 1999;

*Volume 2,2:* Karl-Heinrich BIERITZ et al., Theologie des Gottesdienstes II, Regensburg 2008;

*Volume 1:* Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS et al., Wissenschaft der Liturgie. Begriff, Geschichte, Konzepte, Regensburg 2022.

On the whole, the volume may be regarded as an extremely important standard work for Liturgical Studies, not only in the German-speaking world, which offers clear insights into the otherwise often complex world of Christian liturgies and their scholarly reflection from the pen of experts and also has its special value independently of the other volumes of the series.