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## REVIEW

Cassian FOLSOM,  
The Liturgical Books of the Roman Rite.  
A Guide to the Study of their Typology and History,  
vol. 1: Books for the Mass  
(Ecclesia Orans. Studi e Ricerche 7), Napels 2023

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## *Reviewer*

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## *Reviewed Book*

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## Review

Cassian FOLSOM, *The Liturgical Books of the Roman Rite. A Guide to the Study of their Typology and History*, vol. 1: Books for the Mass (Ecclesia Orans. Studi e Ricerche 7), Napels 2023

**Martin BERGER**

“The purpose of these pages is to offer the reader a textbook for the study of the Liturgical Books of the Roman Rite; a textbook which takes into account the most recent scholarship in the field.” (p. 17). This is how Cassian Folsom describes the purpose of his handbook on the history of the liturgical books of the Roman rite. The present volume 1 deals with the books for the celebration of the Eucharist. A second volume, not yet published, will deal in the same way with the books of the Liturgy of the Hours. Although the book is designed as a broad overview, some limits had to be drawn. Thus, the author limits himself thematically by considering only the books of the Roman Rite in the narrower sense. Chronologically, however, all stages of historical development are treated, starting with the oldest surviving sources up to the documents of the last liturgical reform. In terms of content, the focus lies primarily on the typology and history of the respective books, from which conclusions can also be drawn about their handling, production and development. The thematic chapters are also structured in a corresponding stereotypical manner. A general introduction is followed by a section on typology and then a detailed overview of the history of the respective books from the early times to the present. With an interdisciplinary approach, not only illustrative additions are included, but also essential and new ways to understand liturgical books are integrated. Folsom’s declared purpose in presenting this handbook is to fill a gap in research literature and thus to offer students in particular a simplified and informative approach to liturgical history.

After an introduction (pp. 17–23), the first chapter deals with the codification processes of liturgical texts in the early period (pp. 25–33). The second chapter deals with the books for the orations (pp. 33–73). Chapter three is devoted to the books for the readings of the Mass (pp. 75–96) and chapter four to those for the chants (pp. 97–126). Chapter five takes a closer look at the so-called *full missal* (pp. 127–177). Chapter six, as the last chapter, presents additional elements to the Missal – calendars, rubrics etc. (pp. 179–231). An extensive thematically arranged bibliographical appendix (pp. 235–264) and indices (pp. 265–271) conclude the handbook.

In addition to methodological hints and some remarks on the state of research, the introduction also contains extremely interesting and helpful reflections on what a liturgical book actually is. In just a few pages Folsom shows that this *prima facie* unambiguous term – liturgical book – is much more; it includes not only books of different size, format and organisation. Moreover, liturgical books are also to be distinguished according to their types and genres, all of which, however, reach their limits in their terminology respectively (pp. 21–23).

In the first chapter, “From structured improvisation to fixed formulars”, Folsom traces the codification of liturgical texts in early Christian times. In doing so, he not only cites important textual witnesses, but also clarifies the background and processes that led to the writing of liturgical formulars, first as an aid, but soon as a norm.

Chapter two, “Books for the orations”, is devoted to the sacramentaries. After a typological introduction (pp. 3–36), there follows an overview of the history of sacramentaries in three stages: from the *Libelli* to *Libelli* collections (pp. 36–43) and finally to the full sacramentary. Afterwards Folsom focuses on the early Roman sacramentaries (pp. 44–58), explaining particularly clearly the various hypotheses on their early history. The following section then deals with the reception of the Roman liturgy in the Frankish Empire (pp. 58–73). Based on the broader known sacramentaries (*Gelasianum vetus*, *Gregorianum* etc.), the adaptation and integration of the Roman liturgy into the Frankish-Gallic liturgy and vice versa is traced (pp. 58–68). At the end of this chapter, the so-called mixed sacramentaries of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries are discussed (pp. 68–71). Unfortunately, there is no short summary of the chapter at the end.

Chapter three, “Books for the Readings”, deals with the various books and systems of readings for the celebration of the mass. Typologically, a distinction must first be made between full bibles, reading lists and lectionaries in the broadest sense (pp. 75–83). The history of the books of readings begins with the full bibles, in which the passages to be read were marked or written down in separate reading lists. From this, separate books for the epistle or the gospel readings developed; however, both could also be recorded together in one book. Folsom clearly traces this development and the different reading systems of the roman, Frankish and Romano-Frankish liturgies (pp. 84–91). In addition to the medieval evolutions, however, the books for the readings up to the post-Vatican II liturgical reform are also outlined (pp. 91–96). This chapter also lacks a concluding summary.

Chapter four, “Books for the chants”, deals with the different chant books and their intended use. The introduction here also includes brief preliminary remarks on the distribution of roles and the repertoire of the various mass chants (pp. 97–99). In the typology it was first necessary to clarify various terminologies and backgrounds of the mass chant (pp. 99–102). As diverse as the various chants and their role assignments were, so were the corresponding so called role books, hence an overview of the various genres and composite-genres, such as antiphonaries, graduals etc. (pp. 102–110). This is followed by an overview of the history of mass chant from the early days of the roman liturgy through the Gregorian, i. e. Roman-Frankish hybrid, to the post-Vatican II reforms in the mirror of the respective chant books (pp. 111–126).

In chapter five, “The full missal”, the genesis and background of this liturgical book, which still has a formative influence today, are presented. The so called *full missal* combines all the texts and forms necessary for the celebration of mass. The background of the origin of this type of book is still not fully understood and its prehistory as well as appearance is somewhat diverse, which Folsom explains in the section’s introduction (pp. 127–133) and typology (pp. 133–139). The history of the Roman full missal then follows (pp. 139–176). Important stages here are the first printed missals from 1472 onwards and the post-Tridentine authoritative *Missale Romanum* of 1570 (pp. 150–162). This is followed by an interesting history of the Roman missal from 1570 to 1962 with an overview of the

respective changes and their backgrounds as well as the first influences of the liturgical renewal of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is followed by an overview of the missal published by pope Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council up to the last edition of 2008, as well as the most recent developments around the so-called ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Roman liturgy (pp. 171–177). A concise summary recapitulates the chapter (p. 177).

Chapter six, “Auxiliary Components of the Missal”, deals with the helpful additions to the missal; but not in the usual analytical approach (introduction, typology and history). Calendar (pp. 179–194), *Ordo missae* (pp. 195–215) and rubrics (pp. 216–232) are each treated chronologically in a separate section. An overview is given of all stages of development and forms, from the earliest times and the first witnesses to the documents of the last reform of the Roman liturgy.

“The study of liturgical books for the mass is very complex: hence the value of a handbook to guide the uninitiated through the forest of details.” (p. 233) With this volume, Folsom offers a clear and up-to-date handbook on the history and typology of the liturgical books of the roman rite for the celebration of the Eucharist; a second volume on the books of the Liturgy of the Hours is to be expected. The volume contains substantial information and further references. In addition to the clear structure of the handbook, it is particularly impressive that recent research has been largely incorporated and highlighted. Discussions in research are described in a largely neutral manner and the respective arguments are outlined. Admittedly, the abundance of material to be presented makes it difficult to cover the topic in its entirety, but the author succeeded quite well. Cassian Folsom’s volume 1 of his handbook on the history of liturgical books is thus a substantial and orderly handbook providing initial information and an overview of a complex and widely ramified field of research.