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Review of *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*, by M. Bradford Bedingfield

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nourished above all by the images to be found in scripture and other sources of sacred reading.

Sixthly, what distinguishes Cistercian buildings above all is the presence of much light. Sunlight animates the buildings by day, outlining the nooks and crannies, highlighting all the architectural details. It is the silence of the abbeys which draws attention to the visual subtleties, for there are few distractions.

The handsome illustrations in the book, many by Kinder herself, effectively highlight her conclusions. It takes time to become steeped in the atmosphere of a Cistercian abbey because such an environment is so foreign to our fast-paced and noisy lifestyles. In the quiet of these peaceful and beautiful places, one can experience silence not as an emptiness but as a fulness in which God's presence can truly be found. Every serious theological library should have this book. If one is to purchase one book on early Cistercian life and architecture, this is certainly the book.

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R. Kevin Seasoltz O.S.B.

The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England. By M. Bradford Bedingfield. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press 2002. Pages, ix + 245. \$85.00. ISBN 0-8046-2778-1.

This book is a work of solid liturgical scholarship based on the intricate primary sources of English rites in the late tenth and eleventh centuries (970–1100). The languages of the sources for the investigation are both vernacular Anglo-Saxon and ecclesiastical Latin, reflecting a period when the dramatic character of the liturgy was borne as a fruit of both languages of the liturgy and preaching. Though taking up a period of liturgical and linguistic complexity, the author presents the material in a coherent format with lively writing style. He quotes all of the original texts in the body of the book, yet supplies good translations of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin originals in the notes so that a reader not equipped with both languages is not excised from understanding and appreciating this key period of liturgical history. This is a good method of editing so that the reader is both aware throughout of what are the languages from the hand of the writers in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon and in Latin yet also not prevented from comprehension.

In order the chapters are: 1. Introduction (with sections on ritual and representation, sources, continental influence and native practice, monastic vs. lay), 2. Christmas and Epiphany, 3. Candlemas, 4. Ash Wednesday and Lent, 5. Palm Sunday, 6. Holy Week and Easter (with sections on Maundy

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Thursday, Good Friday, the Harrowing of Hell and the Easter Vigil, Easter morning, and the Easter *Visitatio*), 7. Baptism in Anglo-Saxon England, 8. Rogationtide and the Ascension, 9. The End and the Beginning (including Pentecost and Advent).

The chapter on Candlemas is wonderful, and serves to remind readers of the erstwhile gravity of this feast, which has been deposed to a less than modest place in the liturgical calendar, a millennium after the period of which Bedingfield writes.

Though I did not comb through all the translations, they are generally strong. I raised questions about only two choices in translations from Latin texts, first, about translating *sumere carnem* as "to assume carnality" (p. 100), and about translating *christus ab inferis resurrexit* as "Christ rose from hell" (p. 144) instead of "Christ rose from the lower world" or "Christ rose from the dead."

The following contention is minor in a work so consistently engaging and well written, but I question the author's soteriological assumption that the narratives of the descent and of the resurrection were separate in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. At one point he resorts to a labyrinthine explanation of the paschal event: "The reference to Christ breaking the chains of death might refer to his own resurrection rather than to the freeing of those in hell, but that he, after breaking the bonds, rose up as victor from hell, seems to make it a reference to both events, as he both exits hell and rises from the dead on the same night." He attributes the complexity to "the inability of medieval Christians to pin down this chronology, [which] allows the conflation of commemoration both of the Harrowing and of the Resurrection at Vigils" (pp. 144-45). Though these two "events" in his imagination may have been so for most of the Latin liturgical tradition after the sixth century, this is not so for the Eastern traditions in which the descent is the resurrection.

The Anglo-Saxon tradition might have received the descent-as-resurrection narrative and the liturgical unity from the East. Perhaps some testimony in the author's sources and references would contradict this, but in the evidence he cites there is nothing to suggest that in the tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon tradition the descent and the resurrection were the two separate events he puts forth in interpreting the evidence. He cites contemporary literature on the Gospel of Nicodemus, in which there is no resurrection apart from the descent, so the onus would have been on him to support his hypothesis about "both events" at the Vigil.

The author's treatment of Anglo-Saxon baptism begins with the statement that "from the time of St Paul, Christian theologians have consciously interpreted baptism as a sort of reenactment of, primarily, the

death and resurrection of Christ" (p. 171). This is not true of the Syrian and Egyptian traditions in the early church period, of which the author would have been aware from the literature he cites in the footnotes, which included Maxwell Johnson's excellent study, *Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (The Liturgical Press, 1999).

In spite of these quibbles, the book makes a significant contribution to the study of Anglo-Saxon rites and to the dramatic character of worship traditions in England throughout the liturgical year in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

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Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching. By Craig Alan Satterlee. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press 2002. Pages, xxiv + 391. \$34.95. ISBN 2-401-03067-0.

Since the promulgation and implementation of the RCIA, one of the weakest spans in pastoral practice is the Fifty Days of the Easter season. Once the periods of inquiry, catechumenate, and enlightenment are over, who has the energy for mystagogy? When the Easter vigil is done, what parish minister wakes up on Easter Sunday as coffee is poured to exult in the start of the season of Fifty Days?

Craig Satterlee's book on Ambrose's method for mystagogical preaching demonstrates, with clear and engaging style, how cardinal this mystagogical period was in the last quarter of the fourth century not only for the neophytes but for the whole church in Milan and how it might again be so today. The author's recounting of the rites is engaging, even as he takes up in the notes the long line of scholarship (in many languages) on Ambrose, initiation, and preaching. Satterlee enlivens the rhetoric of Ambrose's preaching and — with the illustrative support of photographer Cathy Satterlee — brings to imaginative reconstruction the architectural context for the rites.

Focusing on mystagogy, the author naturally concentrated on the *De sacramentis* and the *De mysteriis*, but is obviously familiar with Ambrose's many theological treatises, moral exhortations, and scriptural commentaries, for he uses them all in demonstrating the method of the bishop's pastoral care and preaching in late fourth-century Milan. The book begins with a fine biography of Ambrose and continues by studying his pastoral responsibilities, his methods of interpreting the Bible, and, especially, his dedication to preaching and how this had an affect on the Milanese congregants.

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