

## Reseñas



Ishac, Ephrem A., Csanády, Thomas and Zammit Lupi, Theresa, eds. *Tracing Written Heritage in a Digital Age*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021.

*Tracing Written Heritage in a Digital Age* is an intellectual miscellany of 25 chapters, as well as an introduction and other messages and appendices, that highlight the continuity and change taking place in the field of Eastern Christian studies. The chapters are primarily in English and German (1 in French), covering Late Antiquity to the Early Modern era, and they address texts primarily written in Syriac and Glagolitic. Some factors help to intertwine these various chapters together, including their special concern for liturgical texts. Many of the contributors are specialists in manuscript studies, cataloging, and/or working with digital learning. Most importantly, the book is framed around the ways in which technological advancements in the digital age are shaping scholarly approaches to the past. The book is made up of seven sections related to this matter: 1) Text Editions; 2) Cataloguing Manuscripts; 3) Manuscript Studies; 4) Digital Humanities; 5) Various Studies; and 6) Individuals (and appendices).

“Manuscripts are more than words waiting to be typed.” Robert Kitchen opens his introduction to this edited volume by describing the material culture of manuscripts and how scholars in the volume explain the physical importance of manuscripts as they are preserved and studied online. In the first section on “Text Editions,” Andrea Schmidt examines East Syriac amulet manuscripts and scrolls. She includes editions, German translations, and an online concordance. Grigory Kessel examines Syriac palimpsests preserved in Sinai Arabic 514, made from 19 early manuscripts, of which he focuses on a colophon which dates a collection of the apostle Paul’s letters to the mid-sixth century. Claudia Sojer traces the history of contemporary manuscript fragments and their journey through time, focusing on a Glagolitic text and how it made its way from a 14<sup>th</sup>-century scribe to a manuscript (and now digital) collection at the Universitäts- un Landesbibliothek in Tyrol, Austria. Kristijan Kuhar provides a codicological and paleographic analysis of the same Glagolitic manuscript, which was taken from a liturgical book. Erich Renhart, for whom many of these chapters are dedicated, next provides a retrospective on his critical edition of the Syriac Orthodox Anaphora of St. Basil, which was published in German, for an English-speaking audience. He

discusses the series of studies dedicated to Syriac liturgical texts, the impact of his work on the recension of the anaphora, and its future in the digital realm.

In the second section on cataloguing manuscripts, Marijana Tomić and Mirna Willer review a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Glagolitic necrology from Zman, Croatia. They link its history with the importance of digitization, which must follow rules for description, have proper attributes and relationships for online accessibility, and a proper identification of sources to make it useful for future research. They helpfully get their readers to think not only of the static physical object, but the life cycle and multiple contexts of the manuscript for archival research. Ephrem Ishac examines the phenomenon of “hidden Syriac manuscripts,” which have been transferred throughout history. He was able to identify 7 manuscripts at Yale University that had not been fully catalogued, and he provides a detailed account of these texts, mostly East Syriac in origin. In another chapter by Erich Renhart, he discusses the process of cataloguing Syriac texts found in Yerevan, Armenia, including codices, fragments, and other preserved materials.

In section 3 on manuscript studies, Theresa Zammit Lupi analyzes the material aspects of books for the purpose of conservation and how human sensory experience is connected to research. She points out areas where digitization must be supported by physical books to carry out research, especially concerning handling manuscripts/books (texture), its soundscape, and smell. Robert Kitchen studies an ascetical Syriac manuscript from Mar Behnam Monastery near Mosul, which was destroyed in 2015 but had its collection of 532 manuscripts digitized by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) shortly before that destruction. He provides an overview of MBM 00364, which is an anthology of spiritual readings devoted to the monastic life. Margit Westermayer traces a 12<sup>th</sup> century Eucharistic miracle in Augsburg to liturgical missals and poetry for a sequence. Christine Jakobi-Mirwald, along with Astrid Breith and Thomas Csanády, look at the medieval process of parchment repair in central Europe and how stitching was integral to the preservation of manuscripts, including the style of stitch and color, which has implications for understanding the practices of certain monastic manuscript production centers and their lived experience. Romyana Decheva surveys some Greek manuscripts located in Sofia, Bulgaria, to illustrate how bookbinders’ designs and notes about their books provide crucial information regarding dating, location, and the working practices of the industry at the time in which a book was put together. Vilson de Marku makes a codicological study of a 6<sup>th</sup>-century Greek manuscript from Tirana, Albania, in order to illustrate how restoration techniques by preservationists have changed and improved over time and how they can better conserve a codex in comparison with past mistakes that have damaged manuscripts such as this one. András Mércz examines a Latin translation of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil (mentioned earlier). While the translation was judged a paraphrase by earlier scholars, Mércz endeavors to identify the possible sources used by the translator, who worked with a certain Moses of Mardin in Rome, and suggests that Vatican Borgia Syriac 159 may have been used. Jasmin Dum-Tragut studies manuscript production at three Armenian convents of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in order to

show their connections to other scriptoria and the social lives of these nuns who held these manuscripts.

In the fourth section on digital humanities, Thomas Klampfl outlines Representational State Transfer (REST) as a software architecture for the preservation of information on data, focusing on the back-end construction of websites for digital collections. Ephrem Ishac, in his second chapter in the book, discusses his plans for a comprehensive Syriac liturgical corpus (SLC), which would provide a searchable database as a starting point for research. This will require more data than is provided in many catalogues, funding for Syriac digital humanities, and pooling of data so that researchers can identify possible links and make the database not just a repository but a source for discovering links between sources. Thomas Klampfl writes on the same subject in the following chapter, addressing the technical challenges of digitizing Syriac.

Under various studies, Grigorios Larentzakis looks at Orthodox liturgical rites related to marriage, such as the crowning, and how the prayers can contain ecumenical or even interreligious theological implications. Roger-Youssef Akhrass discusses the city of Antioch as a center of diversity throughout history from the time of Peter, Paul, and Ignatius. Its significance as a center of diversity is indicated by its variety of Christian churches, languages, liturgies, theologies, and methods of exegesis. Peter Ebenbauer examines medieval and early modern Steyer (Styria), highlighting certain sacred liturgical chant on Mary and how it can reveal the cultural and aesthetic sensibilities of past Christian practices in singing and liturgy. Manfred Mayer outlines his work in mobile digitalization of medieval manuscripts and books at the Vestigia research center. He provides a helpful description of the process and how this technology can be used fruitfully to help researchers. The final section is a series of comments by Dietmar Winkler and others on the impact of Erich Renhart on the study of liturgical texts, Eastern Christian texts, and his contributions to advancing the digital humanities in the field. Overall, this collection has certain chapters that may be of interest to researchers in medieval Christianity, Syriac, Glagolitic, liturgical studies, theology, and digital humanities.

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