1 Introduction

If a pictorial metaphor for the present book may be offered, it is that of a tapestry rather than a mosaic. A mosaic is characterized by clarity and coherence; if undamaged, it is a tidy whole. What we hope to trace here is never tidy, certainly never a static entity fixed in a framework: *the* medieval liturgy. There will always be loose threads and, all too often, faded patches, some of them scarcely recognizable. Indeed, we might best think of the picture we shall attempt to confect, of regular, formal public worship in England between about 600 and 1535, as a tapestry-in-progress. Because surprisingly little has been written towards the end here envisaged, of trying to get some idea of the history of the liturgy in medieval England as a whole, a bit of preliminary musing as to what can reasonably be expected from an attempt such as the present one – its shape and main emphases, along with its self-imposed limitations – may be helpful.

We know in a general way that Christian worship was carried on in England by those who professed that religion from the early seventh century on. Although we shall pay the most careful attention possible to that earliest period, our understanding of the details of worship during it will remain unavoidably exiguous for the early centuries, roughly up until the late tenth. From that time on, however, there survive considerable bodies of evidence, all of which need to be weighed and then balanced. Three such bodies are of the greatest importance, one of them indeed paramount.

The paramount evidence is that of the liturgical books themselves, in manuscript throughout our period, and exclusively so for all save the last sixty years or so (c. 1475–1535) when they are supplemented, and eventually supplanted, by printed books.[1] These service books, whether manuscript or printed, need to be studied the way other books are, mainly through such tools as palaeography, codicology, and scrutiny of

[1] The Latin service books printed c. 1554–57, during the reign of Mary Tudor, are not part of our concern.

medieval library lists. Also, as with most other medieval manuscripts, they have to be pondered with a continual awareness of how much has been lost. Tempting, and indeed necessary, as it will often be to regard a particular service book as in some way typical – that is, to extrapolate from it as representing wider usages of its genre, time, or place – we must try to keep in mind that our attempts to understand the extant books are inevitably incomplete because of other, lost, books which would have provided a broader context in which to regard them.[2]

The second major type of evidence can generally be called archaeological: the witness of the surviving places, whole or in ruins, where worship was carried on in medieval England. There are two challenges here, corresponding precisely to whether those places are currently whole (and, with a few exceptions, in use as churches) or ruinous.[3] With the latter the task is to try to build up, from whatever fragments survive and from literary and other types of indications, a tolerably complete picture of those places as they were used for worship during whatever span of years is under consideration. Sometimes this is relatively easy to do, as with Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire; at other times, as with Bury St Edmunds (not to mention totally lost or supplanted places like the late seventh-century Lindisfarne that produced the great Gospel book), it is extremely difficult. Equally obvious is the opposite challenge, to strip away the additions and alterations of four and a half centuries in an effort to try to understand, say, Salisbury cathedral as it was when completed in the mid-thirteenth century or the parish church at Tideswell in Derbyshire in the fourteenth or the minster church at Stow in Lincolnshire in the eleventh.

The third major category of evidence may be termed, collectively if a bit roughly, canonical – in, that is, its etymological meaning: having to do with rules. Among the "rules" to be noticed here are the enactments of synods (largely provincial but occasionally diocesan), instructions handed down by bishops, records of visitations, monastic rules and customaries, and the statutes of various collegiate churches and above all of the secular cathedrals.

There are of course other types of sources as well, among which the strictly literary (largely ignored here) may function as a kind of running

[2] An obvious instance is the magnificent Westminster missal (see chapter 6), which owing to its size may never have been used in public worship, but no other missals from that abbey survive.

[3] A few medieval churches are now used in other ways (notably several in Norwich, e.g., the Franciscan church, now an exhibition hall), and a handful are Roman Catholic, like St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, London; but the vast majority have for centuries been used for Anglican services.

sub-text. We shall also want to be aware of sources of biographical information; in some cases, like Hugh of Lincoln, we can have some idea of an historical figure as what may be called a liturgical person.[4] Narrative sources, like chronicles and histories, and some kinds of record evidence (notably, for the later period, wills) will have to be drawn on also. Modes of approaching these miscellaneous categories of sources need little in the way of detailed explanation, unlike the three main categories mentioned above, the study of each of which deserves somewhat more extensive, and individual, treatment. Such treatment is provided in the "Excursus on sources" at the end of this chapter; it can be skipped by readers already familiar with the information included there.

Some principles concerning evidence

In the light of what has been said above about the chief bodies of evidence, it seems natural that the main point of entrance will wherever possible be a service book or other manuscript (or early printed book) that bears primary witness to a liturgical observance. So it is important to stress here that evidence from such books is not to be used uncritically: the presence of a particular text or rubric or feast in a service book is not firm evidence for actual *use*, though of course we may infer a reasonable presumption. But liturgical texts may be written by enthusiasts trying to bring about a more elaborate worship than has been the case or to stress a particular cause, like a new feast, or approach, like greater reverence for the consecrated host. Or there may be service books which reflect the full practice of a great establishment but which have clearly been used in very modest circumstances at, say, small cells of religious houses or parish churches.

Given the caution required, therefore, it is necessary to establish some principles of understanding, or tests to be applied, if we are to have confidence as to what constitutes reliable evidence. These principles, applicable to particular features as well as to whole books, may be summarized as follows: (1) context; (2) likeliness of use; (3) uniqueness, as compared with widespread presence; (4) particular importance; (5) trouble, or how much work it costs a scribe to write whatever is under study.

1 "Context" is fairly obvious. Can a given liturgical book be set alongside others from the same scriptorium or intended for use in the

[4] See for example my "St Hugh as a Liturgical Person" (originally titled "The Liturgical Aspects"), in *De Cella in Saeculum*, ed. M. G. Sargent (Woodbridge 1989), pp. 17–27, repr. Pfaff, *LCSSME*.

same place? Are there meaningful points of comparison over a span of time? Are there other Premonstratensian books, for example, or other books from parish churches in the diocese of Worcester, or others written by the same identifiable scribe? The mutual reinforcing of books and texts in such ways adds greatly to what may be called the probability factor – how probable it is that a specific piece of putative evidence is really evidence for anything broader than itself.

2 "Likeliness of use" is also a self-explanatory criterion. How likely is it that a rite of infant baptism contained in the splendid massbook of a great monastery would ever be used? Or directions for a Rogation-tide perambulation to various churches in a village with only one? Or rubrics which presuppose a trained choir of boys as well as male clerks? Many, perhaps most, medieval liturgical books must have been used very selectively; part of our task is to try to recapture, by imagination, that selectivity.

3 "Uniqueness" refers to how rare a particular feature is in relation to other liturgical books besides the one we may be studying. An apparently unique text has to have been composed by someone, an apparently unique feast to have been established for some reason. The field of comparison, though not unlimited, is wide enough that – provided that we keep in mind the fortuitousness with which medieval manuscripts seem to have survived – something extremely unusual deserves to have attention paid to it for that very reason.

4 "Particular importance" is a different matter: particularly important to the scriptorium where the book is written or to the place of its intended or actual use. This criterion refers mainly to certain occasions within the liturgical year, not so much to its great days like Christmas and Easter as to those specific to individual places: feasts of dedication, feasts (especially translations of relics) of patron- or other closely possessed saints, and new feasts adopted with special enthusiasm, like Corpus Christi or the Name of Jesus.[5]

5 "Trouble" is the most pragmatic of these principles, but also the one that has to be applied with the greatest caution. In the abstract, it stands to reason that the more trouble a scribe goes to, especially in the matter of supplying music, the likelier it is that the feature

[5] As distinct from those which we may suspect were adopted chiefly out of obedience to canonical mandate, like the Transfiguration and Visitation or Winifred or Osmund; see pp. 539–42 and 437–41 below. M. Rubin's monograph, *Corpus Christi: the Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge 1991), deals with many aspects of what becomes a highly popular feast, but the liturgical is not specially emphasized and English matters form only a small part of her story.

in question is seriously intended for use. The copying of liturgical books must have been an intensively laborious task, and we may well balance our basic caution, that appearance of something in a liturgical book does not necessarily guarantee its use, by remembering that every feature a scribe includes adds to the labor of producing the book.

Some concrete application of these principles will be encountered as we proceed: for example, the question of the usefulness of psalters as liturgical sources. Other explanations as to method will be offered as occasion requires, especially in the "Excursus on method in the comparison of liturgical texts" following chapter 4, and that on "Ascription of liturgical books to individual churches" (with Bury St Edmunds as the test case) after chapter 5. Explanations as to basic liturgical terms and information are a different matter; we turn now to what can reasonably be expected of the reader in the way of antecedent knowledge.

What the reader is presumed to know

The present work does not purport to provide either an introduction to Christian liturgy in general or a lexicon of liturgical, ecclesiastical, or codicological terms. Several reference works can among them serve those functions admirably, most notably the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Such matters aside, it is difficult, indeed possibly absurd, to try to specify everything that will *not* be spelled out in a work as long as this one, and that therefore the reader ought ideally to know already. But it may be helpful to readers to have it made clear that the following modicum of general information will be regarded as understood, or at least will not be explained beyond these six preliminary summaries.

1 The basic structure of the liturgical year, Advent through the season after Pentecost (or after Trinity Sunday), and the interplay of two elements: the annual but not regular cycle (mainly of Sundays) that changes each year according to when Easter falls, and the cycle of feasts with fixed dates (saints' days, mostly, but also the great occasions of Christmas and Epiphany). It will also be helpful to have in mind the dates of the most important of these fixed feasts: Stephen-John Evangelist-Holy Innocents (26–28 December), Purification (alias Candlemas, 2 February), Annunciation (25 March), John the Baptist (24 June), Peter and Paul (29 June), Laurence (10 August), Assumption of the Virgin Mary (15 August), her Nativity (8 September), All Saints (1 November), Martin (11 November),

Andrew (30 November); these are here singled out not as most important in an abstractly hagiographical sense but because of the degree to which they bulk large in the liturgical year.

2 The distinction between the proper of time, or temporale, and proper of saints, or sanctorale, in liturgical nomenclature and in liturgical books structured according to these sections. In brief, the temporale includes the annual cycle of Sundays, usually beginning either with Advent or (as often in the earlier middle ages and in some monastic usage) Christmas. The sanctorale, by contrast, includes most of the fixed-day feasts – except for Christmas to Epiphany, which is why Stephen-John Evangelist-Innocents were hyphenated above; they almost always appear in the temporale, as does, after 1173, Thomas Becket (29 December). Again, the sanctorale generally starts with Andrew.

3 The rough outlines of the structure of the mass and daily office.[6] Only a few potential confusions or ambiguities of terms need to be straightened out here. Unless otherwise specified, the night office will be referred to by the term commonly used in the high and later middle ages, "matins" (comprising either one or three nocturns), and the office following it, "lauds." On Sundays and important occasions the fullest office of matins in monastic use contains twelve lessons (each with a subsequent responsory), hence the term "feast of twelve lessons"; the corresponding number for secular use (and also for regular canons and many other groups of religious) is nine. In the mass liturgy the opening chant will generally be called "introit," although many of the sources use *officium* (which can be confusing to the unwary, especially on a closely written manuscript page). Similarly, the theme-prayer at the beginning of the mass will generally be termed "mass-collect," or merely "collect," although *oratio* is encountered just about as often as *collecta* in our sources. (The matter is further complicated by the fact that the three mass prayers that comprise a set, collect, secret and postcommunion, are sometimes referred to in modern works collectively as "mass orations.")[7] Other points of confusing nomenclature may arise with the "secret" prayer being sometimes called *super oblata* and the "postcommunion" being

[6] Two useful guides in this respect are those of John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: a Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford 1991), especially its Glossary, pp. 286–319; and Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: a Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto 1982).

[7] As, most notably, in the ten-volume *Corpus Orationum*, ed. E. Moeller et al., CCSL 160/A-H, which covers all mass prayers (and no others).

termed *ad complendum*. Unless some significant point hinges on such distinction of nomenclature, the most familiar English terms – collect, secret, postcommunion – will be used.[8]

4 The names and definitions of the principal kinds of liturgical books, indicated below in small capitals. Those encountered most often for the mass fall into three groups. The prayers (both the fixed canon and the variable mass sets), proper prefaces, and mass-ordinary (the basic rite) are in the SACRAMENTARY; this comes to be supplanted by the MISSAL (or *missale plenum*), which contains the words of the chants and proper lessons as well. The chants themselves are mainly found in the GRADUAL (not to be confused with the service-element of that name, between the Epistle and Gospel), but elaborations of various kinds are sometimes encountered in a separate TROPER or SEQUENTIARY (rarely, PROSER). The lessons can be read from an EPISTLE BOOK and a GOSPEL BOOK (sometimes called EVANGELIARY) or GOSPEL LECTIONARY, the latter containing only the gospel pericopes, in liturgical order – or from the missal itself. (The selections of biblical lessons for a given occasion are collectively called "pericopes," things cut out [i.e., for reading at mass].)

5 Books for the daily office are somewhat more complicated. The most basic is the PSALTER, containing the totality of the psalms (in either biblical or liturgical order), the canticles used each day (the most important being the Benedictus at lauds and Magnificat at vespers, each with variable antiphons) or on specific days of the week, litany of saints, and sometimes a hymnal component. The officiant recites the collects, some variable and some fixed, at the different hours from the COLLECTAR, which contains also the variable short readings called *capitula*. The chants for the office, most notably antiphons for the psalms and canticles and the often long and complex responsories after each lesson at matins, are collected in the ANTIPHONAL. For the three main kinds of readings at matins several books can be used: a LECTIONARY for the biblical passages, HOMILIARY for the condensed sermons (mostly from the Fathers), and LEGENDARY or PASSIONAL for the excerpts from saints' lives; or all the readings may be contained in a single OFFICE LECTIONARY. The BREVIARY or PORTIFORIUM is the compendium of what is needed for all the daily offices for an entire year; it is often a fat book, and either extremely hard to read or divided into two seasonal halves (or both).

[8] In general, *secreta* and *postcommunio* is the usage of the Gelasian tradition, *super oblata* and *ad complendum* (or *completa*) that of the Gregorian. See further p. 56: "Excursus on the terms Gregorian and Gelasian as used here."

Occasionally the "day offices" – all those except matins, which is by far the longest – are collected into a DIURNAL.

6 Among the books for other kinds of services three are specially important. PROCESSIONALS are collections of the chants used at processions on important occasions, including the Rogation season just before Ascension Day. MANUALS are collections of rites such as baptism, marriage, visitation of the sick, and burial, all intended for pastoral use as needed (hence sometimes called "occasional offices"). Books distinctively for bishops are called PONTIFICALS (hence the name), and include such specifically episcopal services as confirmation, ordination, dedication of churches, coronation (but not always), and special blessings (those pronounced by the bishop after communion are sometimes collected into a separate volume called a BENEDICTIONAL). Despite the necessity of excluding systematic consideration of episcopal and pastoral rites, it will often be found necessary to refer to the books that contain them.

"Historiography": the previous study of the subject

In one of its meanings, "historiography" is too exalted a term for what we need to notice now: no grand theory of history will be enunciated, or even presupposed. But on a less exalted level, that of thinking about why particular students of history write what they write, there is one sizeable set of considerations to be kept in mind. Our subject is, to a degree, part of the larger history of religious thought and practice in England during the middle ages, and as such inevitably falls under the shadow of the religious controversies that have bulked large in historical writing about England since the sixteenth century. Happily, there has not been such a degree of *odium theologicum* involved in the study of English medieval liturgy as has characterized, say, the study of ecclesiology, but confessional considerations have played some part, and it would be naïve to pretend to be unaware of them – and in particular of the teleology implied by two events of the 1540s.

The first is the act of Convocation of Canterbury in 1543 mandating the Use of Sarum (specifically, the Sarum breviary), which had been employed increasingly throughout Britain during the later middle ages, as compulsory in the Southern Province: so that there was, albeit briefly, something very close to a uniform English "use" for the Latin liturgy within most of the realms then subject to the English monarch. The second is the emergence six years later of a different kind of single "use": of a liturgy, in English, ordered by Parliament in the (first) Act of Uniformity, which established the (1549) Book of Common Prayer

as the official, and required, liturgy for all public worship in parish churches and cathedrals throughout the whole of England. And it is not unimportant that the liturgical books envisaged in both 1543 and 1549 (and of course thereafter) were printed ones, with every copy of a single printing thought of as identical. This has given rise to the implied, if not necessarily logical, teleology just referred to: that the "true" end of the centuries of Latin worship in England was the purified catholicism of the Book of Common Prayer. This teleology is itself an historiographical artefact of considerable, and very wide-ranging, importance; but it is articulated here precisely so that it can be subsequently ignored. Rather, we have to pay concrete attention to the nature of a renewed interest in medieval liturgy in nineteenth-century England.

In the religious history of that time and place the intertwined stories of Roman Catholic revival and of Anglican Tractarianism/Ritualism/Anglo-Catholicism (and also the birth of Anglican religious orders), along with the emergence of medieval history as a subject of academic study at the universities, would provide enough material for a book on its own. This is not that book, but details that might form part of it will often appear in these pages. Indeed, one of the salient features of the present work is meant to be the attention paid to the historiographical (again, in the less grandiose sense of the word) context in which various cardinal pieces of liturgical scholarship have appeared. Several of the major sections will therefore include discussion of the way(s) the subject under consideration has been previously studied, and in these discussions a galaxy of scholars will be encountered: figures like Christopher Wordsworth, Dame Laurentia McLachlan, and Francis Wormald. For the moment, a mere sentence or two about each of a handful of the most eminent will suggest something of how personal considerations may be relevant to assessment of scholarly work in this field.

William Maskell (c. 1814–90), one of the first scholars of the nineteenth century to devote himself to serious liturgical study, published two pioneering works, *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England* and *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* in 1844 and 1846 respectively; in 1850 he converted to the Roman church, and (aside from an expanded edition of the *Monumenta Ritualia* in 1882) made no more contributions of the magnitude of his earlier work. A lay amateur little known but often referred to in these pages, Francis Henry Dickinson (1813–90), was a country gentleman, co-founder of Wells Theological College, and High Sheriff of Somerset. Having in 1850 published a careful *List of Printed Service Books according to the Ancient Use of the Church of England*, he then went on to produce the first modern edition of a medieval English service book: the *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclarae*

ecclesiae Sarum which appeared in fascicles between 1861 and 1883 (see further p. 416). In marked contrast stands Edmund BISHOP (1846–1917): an obscure clerk by occupation, he published relatively little (his highly influential collected essays, *Liturgica Historica*, appeared only the year after his death), never studied at the ancient universities or held an academic position, and as a Roman Catholic layman felt himself to some extent distanced from the predominantly Anglican group of liturgical students whose work was to crystallize around the Henry Bradshaw Society; but the quality of his work and his influence were such that he now casts as large a shadow as any liturgical scholar of the period.[9] Henry Austin WILSON (1854–1927) was again almost exactly Edmund Bishop's opposite: an Anglican clergyman (and son of a bishop), lifelong Oxford don, and immensely productive editor of important liturgical texts (e.g., Gelasian Sacramentary, Gregorian Sacramentary, Missal of Robert of Jumièges, Magdalen Pontifical, Calendar of St Willibrord), mostly under Henry Bradshaw Society auspices.[10] Walter Howard FRERE (1863–1938), another High Anglican (Superior of the Community of the Resurrection and eventually Bishop of Truro), was a notable student of medieval music, especially chant, as well as of the English medieval uses.[11] The name that will appear most often in the present work is that of J(ohn) Wickham LEGG (1843–1921), an Anglican layman who retired early from a career of some eminence as a surgeon and became pre-eminent as a student of liturgical texts, editing the Westminster missal and the Sarum missal (in its early manuscript forms; Dickinson's edition had been made from the early printings).[12]

Legg was instrumental in a central development in the study of our subject: the founding in 1890 of the Henry Bradshaw Society "… for the editing of Rare Liturgical Texts."[13] It took its name to honor

[9] Nigel Abercrombie, *Edmund Bishop* (London 1959); on the HBS, see below.

[10] Details about all these editions will be given at the appropriate places. There is a brief entry on Wilson by the present writer in *ODNB* 59.559.

[11] C. S. Phillips, *Walter Howard Frere, Bishop of Truro, a memoir* (London 1947).

[12] A preliminary treatment of Legg's achievement is A. Ward and C. Johnson, "John Wickham Legg …," *Eph. Liturg.* 97 (1983), 70–84; a full life is needed.

[13] The capitalization of the concluding words is still current on the front-title page of the Society's publications. The most complete information on what the Society has produced is Anthony Ward, *The Publications of the Henry Bradshaw Society: an Annotated Bibliography with Indexes*. Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae" Subsidia 67 (Rome 1992), following the article by Ward and C. Johnson, "The Henry Bradshaw Society: Its Birth and First Decade, 1890–1900," *Eph. Liturg.* 104 (1990), pp. 187–200. The 1992 publication, current through vol. 106 (1991), is specially useful for its index of the manuscripts used in any of the HBS editions. There are also thumbnail summaries of the biographical facts about most of the editors of the Society's publications and a "Select Repertory of Manuscript Collections." HBS publications of the decade 1991–2000 are surveyed by Ward in *Eph. Liturg.* 115 (2001), pp. 82–94.