1 Textual Witnesses to Insular Liturgies

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Locus iste: This place. So begins the well-known sung text, or plainchant, forming part of the religious dedication of a building or altar. It can be found in hundreds of musical sources across Europe, from the earliest complete surviving antiphonary to include neumes (probably copied at the Swiss Benedictine monastery of Einsiedeln by Abbot Gregor the Englishman in the years around 960–70) to the printed liturgical books that circulated in the early sixteenth century, and up to the present day.[1] The full gradual, *Locus iste a Deo factum est inestimabile sacramentum irreprehensibilis est* ('This place was made inestimably sacred by God; it is beyond reproach'), emphasises the permanence and enduring holiness of ceremonial spaces within the Christian church. Its presence served as a performative connection between widely distributed churches and chapels and Rome, the spiritual centre of the Christian West. Religious buildings were all individually designed and decorated, and the unique liturgical books held within each one bear testament to the diverse services that were held there throughout the church year, from daily Mass to occasional rites such as baptism.[2]

Textual witnesses – manuscripts throughout the pre-Reformation period and printed sources additionally in its final decades – help us to understand the relationships between what was held in common across Europe and what was found only in certain countries or regions, in the ceremonies of particular monastic groups, or what might have been highly localised, even individual practice. The music and liturgy of medieval Britain and Ireland are the focus of this book, with 'this place' chosen on account of both the diversity of its textual evidence and the lack of previous attention to the Insular region as a whole.

What are the defining features of the place at the heart of this book, and what are the reasons for describing its repertory of chant as Insular over, for example, English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh? The study of medieval liturgy

[1] Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 121 (1151); see http://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/source/666647.
[2] Occasional rites are represented in several essays in Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton (eds.), *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016).

(and music) has somewhat lagged behind in comparison with most other fields – archaeology, art history, palaeography, language and literature, and increasingly, social and political history – where an 'Insular' (and sometimes a north-west European, such as Viking Studies) context now prevails. But liturgy, and liturgical music in particular, is still more usually addressed in separate silos based on the modern nation-state and its subdivisions. By far the most work has been undertaken on English sources, which are not only the most numerous but have also enjoyed a greater record of research activity over a longer period of time. That important publications from the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries were dominated by sources relating to the Sarum and York Uses unduly emphasised the Englishness of those rituals and the places where such books were used, as well as the internal homogeneity of each Use, even though critical discussions have long considered questions such as the relative influence of, for example, Norman liturgical customs. Working in silos has not only held back debate but has contributed to a limited view of a much more comprehensive whole, one that has struggled to recognise local and regional variations. This is in contrast to German and Central European scholarship, where modern political boundaries may have played a less determining role.

In this book, we attempt, for the first time, inclusively to map out patterns of liturgical and musical culture on equal terms and across both islands (and their related clusters of offshore islands) – the 'Insular region' – with their shifting boundaries and plural identities over a 500-year period. It can only be as good as the sum of its parts, and so there will be many unavoidable lacunae where research is still lacking, but we hope to set down a marker for the present state of knowledge and encourage further exchange of ideas across the entire region into the future.

Why 'Britain and Ireland'? Issues of Nomenclature

The range of terminology we could use to define 'this place' is potentially complex and polarising, so we have chosen the simple, geographically determined nomenclature of Britain and Ireland, considered together as Insular. A lot of modern terms would be misleading if used to describe medieval polities and identities. We do not refer to the 'United Kingdom', or more properly the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', since it includes Northern Ireland, itself variously described as

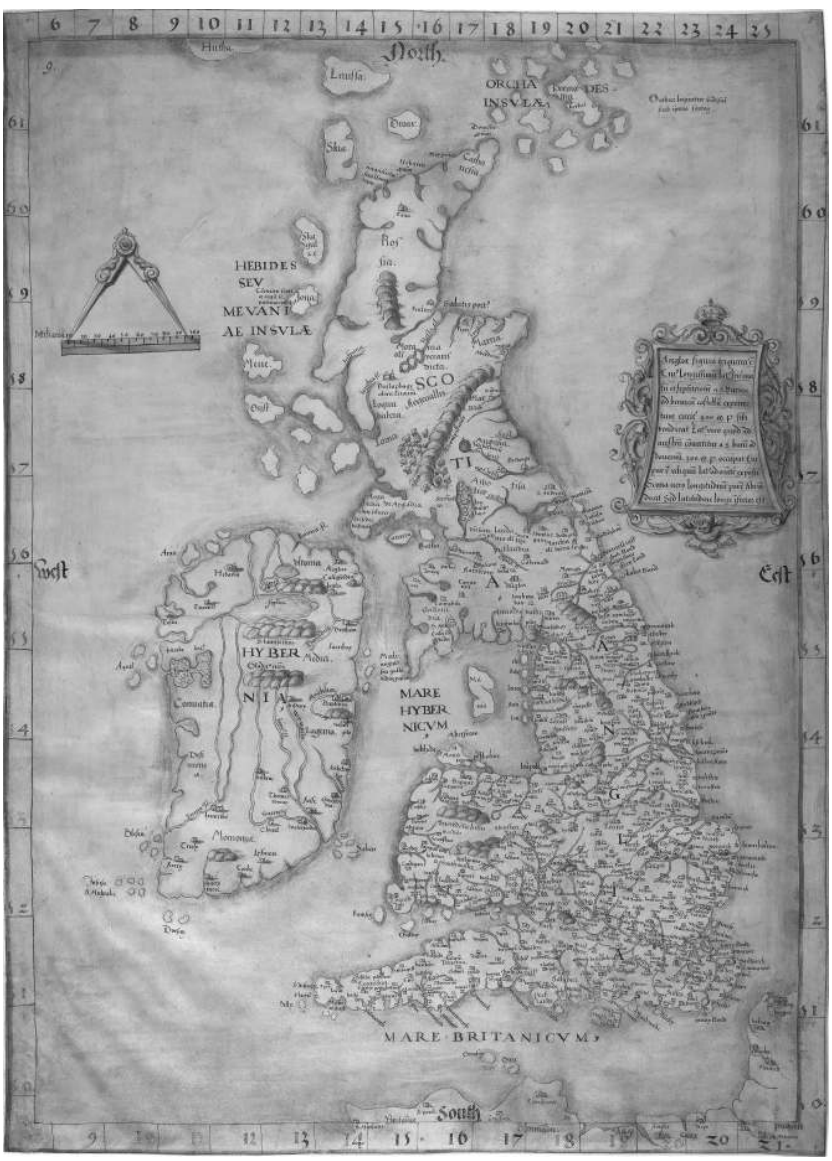

Figure 1.1 *A Coloured Map of Great Britain and Ireland* (1534–46), based on a map from around 1290, and possibly belonging to Henry VIII. Artist unknown. British Library MS Cotton Augustus I.i, f. 9. © The British Library Board.

a country, region, or province, and since 1921 partitioned from the rest of the island of Ireland.

'British', on its own as a catch-all, is also insufficient. Some important earlier studies of music and liturgy have elided Irish sources within 'British' ones, thus silently erasing the potential distinctions between the two main islands of the Insular region, or considering non-English knowledge as peripheral to the central English model.[3] For example, Andrew Hughes's catalogue of 'British' rhymed offices (selectively) included materials for saints central to Irish devotional liturgies, such as Brigit, Canice, Finnian, and Patrick, as well as including offices from Welsh and Scottish sources. In the same essay, Hughes notes that 'classical poetry, mostly in hexameters, by and large disappears after the twelfth century, except perhaps in offices *from more peripheral regions: some Irish offices* use hexameters prominently' (our emphasis).[4] Frank Harrison's *Music in Medieval Britain* took in the liturgical music of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, but gave greatest prominence to English institutions and their musical materials, in part because sources of English polyphony are significantly more abundant. As an introduction to the music fostered by secular, monastic, household, and collegiate foundations of Britain and Ireland, Harrison's book remains an important contribution.[5] The choice of terminology one might use to describe Insular sources themselves is also challenging, both in terms of its accuracy and in the weight of cultural value that particular words or phrases carry with them over time. 'England/English' is sometimes used, if incorrectly, as a shorthand in order to cover materials whose provenance might reflect a wider area, especially if sources conveyed texts that originated in England or employed the English language rather than one of the other vernaculars used in Britain and Ireland.[6]

[3] See this criticism as discussed by Isobel Woods Preece, *'Our awin Scottis use': Music in the Scottish Church up to 1603*, ed. Sally Harper (Glasgow: The Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, 2000), p. 13. On matters of English identity as they pertain to medieval music, see Lisa Colton, *Angel Song: Medieval English Music in History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 1–12.

[4] Andrew Hughes, 'British Rhymed Offices: A Catalogue and Commentary', in *Music in the Medieval English Liturgy. Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society Centennial Essays*, ed. Susan Rankin and David Hiley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 239–84 (p. 242).

[5] Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), especially pp. 1–45.

[6] This was an approach taken by John Caldwell, who acknowledged the difficulties of choosing the right word when Welsh and Scottish music was occasionally evidenced in his study of early English music; *The Oxford History of English Music*, I: *From the Beginnings to c. 1715* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. vii.

By the same token, for areas that lie adjacent to England, 'Celtic' (as in 'Celtic nations' or 'Celtic fringe') suggests marginality, separateness, and 'otherness', at times perhaps even political opposition and disaffection – thus it is a loaded term, even if it can also identify a sense of regional political and cultural identity (and depending on the context, may also include Cornwall and Brittany in the mix). But that too is problematic, because it excludes large swathes of the population who do not identify with it, again especially in a medieval rather than modern context. The 'Celtic revival' came much later, with political and cultural movements of the eighteenth and particularly the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; its promotion of Celtic languages and popular traditions provided fuel for the regional and nationalistic politics of the later twentieth century. Scholarship on the 'Celtic revival' itself has revealed a reliance on mythology, nostalgia, and folklore, in ways that discourage us from using the term in the historical study of Insular liturgies.[7] There was certainly nothing coherently 'Celtic' about the cultural traditions found across Wales, Ireland, and Scotland during our period. Although some elements of this mindset still have an influence in contemporary thinking, it is beginning to dissipate with the challenges of new research and more pluralistic, post-nationalist discourse.[8] That said, it is an absolutely valid pursuit as a scholarly enterprise to understand the history of these movements and what brought them into existence; nor is it unacceptable to use such terminology, except where it leads to false assumptions. As always,

[7] The literature on the Celtic revival is too substantial to reproduce here, but a useful critique can be found in John Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths and Inventions* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003). The general consensus among scholars nowadays is that the only historically valid use of the term 'Celtic' is a linguistic one, whereby the two main branches – Gaelic, known as 'Q-Celtic', which includes Irish Gaelic, Scots Gaelic, and Manx, and 'P-Celtic' or Brythonic, which includes Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. For a very insightful exploration of linguistic pluralism and how it was negotiated within and between medieval Britain and Ireland, see Julia Crick, '"The English" and "the Irish" from Cnut to John: Speculations on a Linguistic Interface', in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800–c. 1250*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 217–38.

[8] With reference to liturgical history in particular, it is equally relevant to be mindful of 19th-century Anglican clergymen such as F.E Warren who promoted the notion of a separate and distinct 'Celtic rite', in an ideological attempt to distance early (Insular/British) Christianity from the papacy and the impact of St Augustine's mission to Canterbury in the 6th/7th century. See, for example, Frederick E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford, 1881); Second Edition with a new introduction and Bibliography by Jane Stevenson, Studies in Celtic History, ix (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987); also Frederick E. Warren, The *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, with a new introduction by Neil Xavier O'Donoghue (Oxford, 1881, 3rd facsimile edn, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010).

our search is for the essential meaning of things to those for whom they were important.

We would emphasise that these observations on the terms used in previous scholarship are not intended as a criticism of any individual author, but more as an indication of how any type of generalised 'British' approach has occluded the diversity that we aim to address in the present book. Rather, we endeavour to examine all sources as equally valid and representative of their own time and place, and of those who used them. The present authors seek to avoid reinforcing a centre–periphery model by employing inclusive and multivalent perspectives and frameworks and, in particular, by close scrutiny of individual textual witnesses that represent practices across different parts of the Insular regions. We argue that the 'what?' and 'where?' of things are better understood through explorations of 'how?' and 'why?'

Having outlined our 'simple' nomenclature, it is necessary also to point to the fragility and mutability of the constituent islands, Britain and Ireland. The two main Insular regions were subject to frequent political change throughout the period 1050–1550, the approximate chronological limits represented in our contributing chapters. A few examples of these complexities – whilst far from presenting a political history of any one place – might illustrate the relative benefit of a collective term. The border between England and Scotland was redefined on several occasions, and the Scottish Marches were regularly contested. The town of Berwick-upon-Tweed has come to symbolise these changes, and its affiliation switched many times before 1482, when it became part of England. Ireland included the Lordship of Ireland, which was governed by Norman rulers; John, Lord of Ireland from 1177, became king of England (1199–1216) but was also responsible for the loss of Normandy and other French lands to Philip II of France. There were equivalent conflicts between all four countries, and between England and various parts of continental Europe, and many of these shifting allegiances had an impact on liturgy, not least in the adoption of certain figures of local veneration. Potential heirs to the English crown included the unsuccessful claim of Harald Sigurðarsson (Hardrada, d. 1066) of Norway, but William of Normandy's accession subsequently brought the church under Norman control through the strong reforms of Lanfranc, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070. During the absences of Henry I, his wife, Queen Matilda, who was the daughter of King Malcolm III of Scotland, reigned as regent. Welsh attempts at independence for their lands and for their church largely ended following the death of Prince of Wales Owain Glyndŵr

(d. *c.* 1414). The wars with France during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries ran in parallel with the historical intermarriage of English and French royal houses; at the close of our chronological frame, Henry VIII styled himself 'King of England and France and Lord of Ireland', though he changed the latter part of the title to 'King of Ireland' in 1541; he had succeeded to the title Prince of Wales in 1504. Henry's son, Edward VI, ruled as King of England and Ireland (though he retained his right of succession to the French crown) and was also Prince of Wales.

Maps, sometimes based on much earlier originals, help us to understand the ways in which those creating, revising, and disseminating liturgical material imagined their geographical place historically and in their own present (see Figure 1.1). By the same token, when viewed in relation to liturgical and other cultural networks, including those of material culture, the role of water as a connecting agency shows up the limitations of viewing geographical areas from a land-bound perspective. Travel by sea (and river) was a lot swifter, and in many cases the only means of getting about in medieval Europe, particularly in the case of island populations (though one might also consider the role of great waterways, such as the Rhine and the Danube, and larger lakes or inland seas as cultural and economic connectors of people). This is a critical factor in dissolving some of the mental boundaries that shape our way of thinking today, influenced in part by the modern nation-state construct, but also by the predominance of travel by road, rail, and air. For the purposes of this book, it has especial relevance for links between the north of Ireland[9] and western Scotland which, at its narrowest point, has a distance of a mere thirteen miles. Or indeed when considering the regular movement of people (whether for trade or for political motives) between Ireland and Wales or the west of England (for example, Bristol and Chester).[10]

[9] It should be noted that the present-day political entity of Northern Ireland does not include all of the northern part of the island of Ireland. Northern Ireland consists of six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster; the remaining three belong within the Irish state. In medieval Ireland, it was more usual to refer to regions based on the territories of ruling families and kin groups. These came to be grouped into the 'Northern' or Conn's Half (*Leath Cuinn*), representing Connacht, Ulster, and Meath, and the 'Southern' or Mugh's Half (*Leath Mogha*), covering Munster, Ossory, and Leinster, defined by a line running east–west roughly to the north of Dublin and Galway. This division into northern/southern halves was still relevant in the twelfth century, when it was used as basis for establishing the new dioceses at the Synod of Rath Breasail in 1111.

[10] For further reading, see, for example, Clare Downham, 'England and the Irish-Sea Zone in the Eleventh Century', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 26, Proceedings of the Battle Conference (2003), 55–73; and Fiona Edmonds, *Gaelic Influence in the Northumbrian Kingdom: The Golden Age and the Viking Age*, Studies in Celtic History (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), especially chapters 5, 'A Golden Age of Ecclesiastical Contacts', and 6, 'Saints and Seaways in the Viking Age', pp. 99–126, 127–54, respectively.

The dynamics of the many and frequently shifting political boundaries here serve to problematise distinctions between England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, while also justifying their consideration in the round, and in relation to continental Europe. For the authors of this book, the word 'Insular' offers an opportunity to question assumptions about the homogeneity of liturgical cultures within this group of politically, culturally, and geographically interrelated territories. It should be clear at this point that we view any claim to the separation of liturgical practice between areas based on modern national lines with utmost caution. We employ 'Insular' not to suggest that the liturgies of Britain and Ireland were cut off from Europe, but as a mechanism through which our authors can engage with religious culture without anachronistic notions of governing priority, not least that of England above its neighbours. This said, the terms England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are also used for convenience where their contextual meaning is unambiguous to the reader.

The focus of this book is, however, less about political entities and more about cultural interactions (albeit often politically motivated, whether through secular or ecclesiastical agency). Thus we refer to the two main islands (and their respective clusters of offshore islands) as our basic concept, while being aware of multiple local and regional identities and indeed shifting boundaries within the island of Britain, not least on the English–Welsh and English–Scottish borders, and in the relationships between peoples and communities over time and space. The liturgical music of Britain and Ireland was introduced, conceived, and developed through international migration in all directions, and such processes of change – which varied from local, popular innovations to formal directives in the official adoption of new feasts – added incrementally to create the richness found in the textual witnesses that have survived.

The Main Textual Witnesses to Insular Liturgies: Books for Mass and Office

A study of liturgical culture might draw on diverse forms of evidence, from archaeological remains of ancient monasteries to devotional poetry, and from medieval alabasters and household accounts to the embroidered textiles used in church vestments. For this book, the central evidence is textual: written documents – whether whole or fragmentary – that were created in order to define the liturgical customs of an individual religious institution and those closely connected with it. What remains of liturgical

books is a very small fraction of the tens of thousands of manuscripts and early printed sources circulating before the sixteenth century and belonging to every cathedral, church, and chapel, as well as to individuals. Many books were likely replaced when they became obsolete, in their outdated or incomplete liturgical content, or through the development of new musical notations and the gradual loss of skills in reading older textual or notational styles. Others were damaged by invasions, by the battles of feuding chieftains and their families, by Viking raids, and by the various reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries during which local and subsequently Norman rulers sought to replace the older monastic institutions with new Rome-centred orders and diocesan rule. Substantial damage to textual evidence through which liturgy might be better understood later occurred through the destructive events of the Reformation, the Great Fire of London, the English Civil War, the bombings of the Second World War, and, in the case of Ireland, the burning of the Public Records Office attached to the Four Courts, which was set on fire in Dublin in June 1922 during the Irish Civil War. What has survived is, nonetheless, substantial enough to show the importance of such books to the liturgy and to those who performed it across most areas of Britain and Ireland.

Medieval scribes recorded the presence of what we call liturgical books using terms that describe the sorts of services, activities, and text genres contained in them; this leads to a potentially baffling range of book types, for which modern authors use the word 'liturgical' as an umbrella. It is therefore worthwhile providing a brief overview of the various types of textual witnesses that inform the contributions to this book. Each of these types of source was used, ultimately, to ensure that services were properly conducted, with authoritative rituals, including appropriate prayers, readings, gesture, vestments, liturgical vessels and linens, furniture, and music.[11] Most liturgical books were therefore aimed at those whose professional role was to conduct or take part in services: priests, nuns, monks, and clerics more generally. The main books were the missal (for Mass) and breviary (for the Office or Canonical Hours) which between them contained all the primary written texts and rubrics that enabled the enactment of standard rituals; although some included music notation, occasionally extensively, the music was provided most fully in the gradual (for the Mass) and antiphonal (for the Office). Additionally, a church might possess

[11] See 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: Clarendon Press, 2001).

further books reserved for particular texts (the Bible of course, a lectionary containing only the Gospels, psalters containing the Psalms, books of sermons) or for particular celebrants (the pontifical for use by the bishop), and some of these additional books also commonly included music as well as text (processionals, for example). There was no requirement for churches to own books containing polyphonic music for the liturgy, and so there is no formal word to indicate such a book; items of polyphony were sometimes entered into blank spaces in other books or circulated on parchment rolls, and where books that contained polyphony were listed in an institutional inventory or library catalogue, they were sometimes distinguished by a generic phrase like 'a book of organum', a term that was and is easily confused with books containing music for organ.[12]

There was also a growing market for devotional books amongst the laity, including didactic texts explaining the nature and meaning of worship. As a consequence of their function and primary readership, most liturgical sources circulated only in Latin, but an increasing number incorporated vernacular languages, and this included texts accessed by groups for whom Latin was not routinely taught. The vernacular languages found in liturgical sources include Old English, Middle English, Anglo-French, Welsh and Irish; these languages are most strongly represented within texts that accompanied or complemented the Mass and Office, such as books of hours, saints' lives, moral exempla, and devotional lyrics.[13]

The most frequent public ritual of the Christian church was the Mass. In addition to High Mass, a number of votive masses might be celebrated, often involving prayers to protect the living and to commemorate the dead. As John Bossy has argued, 'the devotion, theology, liturgy, architecture, finances, social structure and institutions of late medieval Christianity are

[12] For some useful examples of how such books can be identified in medieval inventories, see Rebecca A. Baltzer, 'Notre Dame Manuscripts and Their Owners: Lost and Found', *The Journal of Musicology*, 5 (1987), 380–99, where one book from St Paul's Cathedral in London was so listed in the fourteenth century (p. 385).

[13] On Welsh-language devotion to St David, for example, see several contributions in J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan Wooding (eds.), *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007). There are also some early medieval Irish and Welsh vernacular hymns, for example a reference in the Life of St Patrick in the Book of Armagh (*c.* 807) stipulating the singing of a particular hymn in Irish at Mass on his feast day: *canticum eius scotticum semper canere*; see Ann Buckley, 'From Hymn to Historia', in *Music, Liturgy, and the Veneration of Saints of the Medieval Irish Church in a European Context*, ed. Ann Buckley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 161–83 (p. 162). Though not a liturgical service book, the Irish Liber Hymnorum contains vernacular as well as Latin hymns, e.g., for SS Brigit, Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, and others, which are also likely to have been used in a liturgical context. See Kathryn Alyssa Izzo, 'The Old Irish Hymns of the Liber Hymnorum: A Study of Vernacular Hymnody in Medieval Ireland' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2007).