

*The death ritual at Cluny in the central Middle Ages. Le Rituel de la mort à Cluny au moyen âge central.* By Frederick S. Paxton (with Isabelle Cochelin). (*Disciplina Monastica*, 9.) Pp. 283 incl. 7 ills + 17 colour plates. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. €90 (paper). 978 2 503 55010 7  
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The Cluniac death ritual represented the culmination of many things: a rite of passage marking the end of a Cluniac monk's life on earth; the development of Benedictine spirituality and liturgy in the early and central Middle Ages; and the impact of monastic liturgy and ritual on wider conceptions and rites of death and dying, in which monastic prayers acted as, in Paxton's words, 'the gold standard of the economy of salvation' (p.17).

This edition is an innovative attempt to flesh out the bare bones of the ritual as found in one of the earliest customaries, that of Bernard of Cluny. Here, Paxton starts from scratch: the relevant folios of an early and authoritative version of Bernard's text (Paris, BNF, MS Latin 13875, fos 47v–55v) are reproduced here in a series of colour plates, and followed by a transcription and reconstruction of the Latin text, with facing translations in English and French prepared by Paxton and Cochelin.

This reconstruction of Bernard's text provides a platform from which to reconstitute the script of the ritual. Bernard's original text was written for insiders, and thus, following standard practice, he simply provides the incipit rather than writing out each prayer, Psalm or antiphon in full. Once these blanks are filled in, the ritual is made more accessible to the modern reader, particularly non-specialists who lack the liturgical toolkit possessed by a medieval Cluniac monk. Further assistance and orientation is provided in a detailed commentary which follows the text and translations, working through the ritual step-by-step in the context of van Gennep's analysis of the stages of the rites of passages (separation, liminality, transition, incorporation).

There is much here to interest those with specialist interests in monastic liturgy and liturgy, as well as those with interdisciplinary interests in ritual and rites of passage.

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*Durham Cathedral. History, fabric and culture.* Edited by David Brown. Pp. xiv + 602 incl. 4 colour frontispieces and 422 black-and-white and colour ills. New Haven–London: Yale University Press (for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art), 2015. £75. 978 0 300 20818 4  
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The long wait for Durham to join the list of English cathedrals afforded a modern and serious history is at last ended with the appearance of a typically handsome volume from Yale. No reviewer could or should fail to be impressed by and benefit from the lavish provision of high-quality illustrations on offer – both photographs of the cathedral building and associated material culture, and plans and reproductions of manuscripts and artworks. The volume is the size of a coffee-table book, and will certainly grace any coffee table sufficiently robust to bear its