

Equally impressive is Cohen's vivid and subtle approach to the interdependence of Jewish and Christian traditions. Although Christian borrowing from Judaism is well-known, Cohen also shows how Jewish authors and artists appropriated and modified Christian symbols and themes, most notably the crucifixion narrative, to portray and decry Jewish suffering at the hands of Christians.

There is an openly and deeply personal quality to this book. Yet Cohen's voice enhances his careful scholarship and compelling presentation. Despite his thorough research and well-crafted argument about biblical literature and interpretation, it still seems unlikely at present that most Christians would jettison a historical reading of the Gospels and the Passion. In fact, taking into account a late-first-century context for composition does not require one to read the Gospels as primarily prophetic imaginings and mythological truth telling. The imprint of historical events and voices is also likely present. More important, Cohen reminds the reader throughout his book of other ways to read Christian texts, of biblical, theological, and historical approaches that ultimately clear the Jewish people of the Christ-killer accusation. This multitude of voices, made audible by Cohen, is one great contribution of his work.

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***Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent.*** By **Bryan D. Spinks.**

Liturgy, Worship, and Society Series. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006. xiv + 192 pp. \$29.95 paper.

***Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices.*** By **Bryan D. Spinks.** Liturgy,

Worship, and Society Series. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006. xii + 257 pp. \$29.95 paper.

Bryan Spinks provides here an extremely well-written and carefully documented history and theology of Christian initiation rites from their beginnings all the way through the great diversity of modern liturgical practice. Spinks's erudite grasp of such a multiplicity of traditions and rites is impressive. It is no small feat to wade through so carefully and authoritatively the varieties of baptismal rites and interpretations, not only in

the early and medieval periods, but especially in the second volume, that is, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, a time period often ignored by scholars of liturgical history.

In particular, I appreciate the fact that in the first volume, Spinks dedicates two short chapters to the specific Eastern rites of baptism (chapter 4: Syrian; chapter 5: Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, and Ethiopic). For each of these rites he provides an outline and commentary on the various theologies presented by those rites. In an earlier chapter, I also find very helpful his approach to baptism among the Cappadocian Fathers, wherein, like Jean Daniélou and Georg Kretschmar, he deduces a ritual structure similar to that of early Syria, which would have included a *pre-baptismal* anointing but only the giving of a baptismal garment as a post-baptismal rite. And for early Syria and Egypt, he includes texts that very few others have included in their work, for example, *The Odes of Solomon*, *The Gospel of Phillip*, and various Egyptian Gnostic documents. Similarly, his comparative chart of various medieval Latin rituals (136–139) is very useful for seeing both the common core of the medieval Roman Rite and the distinct ways that Rite was used throughout Europe.

Having already noted favorably that Spinks treats the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in the second volume, let me add here my appreciation for his treatment of Luther's own baptismal theology (a "unilateral" rather than "bilateral" covenant, 7) and his summary of baptism in the various German Church Orders as well as in the Reformed and Anglican traditions. And, from Karl Barth on, Spinks presents a most helpful survey of baptismal rites, theologies, and ecumenical convergences up through the eve of newer baptismal rites appearing only in 2006 (for example, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*), as well as dealing with Free Church traditions, which is almost never done in books of this sort.

As indicated, there is a great deal I like about these two volumes. There are, however, several things to which I wish to draw critical attention. First, the potential reader needs to be aware that, while several quotations of the various rites do appear, the rites are dealt with more by way of outline and description than by providing actual texts. Hence, access to something like E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 3rd ed., revised and expanded by Maxwell E. Johnson (London: SPCK, 2003) for the first volume and J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: The Reformation Period* (London: SPCK, 1970), and Peter Jagger, *Christian Initiation 1552–1969* (London: SPCK, 1970), for the second remain desirable.

Second, in a study treating both rite and *theology*, I would expect a more detailed discussion of the development and meaning of the Western rite of *confirmation* in the first volume, aside from a few somewhat isolated references, especially when the integral Eastern rites necessitate dealing with

what have been called the “equivalent” post-baptismal rites. Even if it could be argued that Spinks’s intent was to treat only “baptism,” the fact that confirmation gets separated from baptism I believe warrants much more treatment in addition to the mere reference to it here and there (see especially chapter 7). The second volume does a much better job with this (see pp. 166–174 for Roman Catholic and Anglican rites).

Third, while it is largely unavoidable in a survey of liturgical history of this sort, I find that Spinks here is overly descriptive in his approach not only of the rites themselves but also with regard to scholarship on them. That is, one is left with little more than the impression that there certainly is a great deal of variety in the history of baptism and baptismal theology. But how we are to negotiate this variety is not clear to me. Does variety in a particular geographical region or church mean that a particular way of celebrating was not dominant? And, in dealing with scholarly disputes, I find him to be again uncharacteristically soft. I would have preferred him to take much firmer stands in various places (cf. 1:14–24). And further, what is his theology of baptism? I suspect it is closer to Luther’s “unilateral covenant” theology than to anything else, though one cannot really glean that from this study alone. Thus, I would have wanted less description and more staking out of a position.

Fourth, because this study tries to cover so much ground in less than 500 pages, it tends to proceed in too summary a fashion. For example, given the overall importance—wrongly or rightly—of the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* in the history of *modern* liturgical revision, I would have expected a much more detailed treatment of this rite than a mere three pages (1:28–31). Since Spinks makes the tantalizing suggestion here that the bishop’s post-baptismal rite of hand-laying and anointing in this document may have been the result of the “newly emerged monarchical bishop of Rome” showing his authority over the various house churches there (30), I would have liked to see this developed in some detail rather than merely suggested and then immediately dropped.

In spite of these minor criticisms, however, I certainly do recommend this study highly. Although in my own teaching of Christian initiation rites I will be inclined to use the second volume more than the first, students and teachers alike will find both volumes to be helpful introductions to baptismal rite and theology. And, while I do wish he would have stated his own positions more frequently, my favorite line in the study comes near the end of the second volume: “All the exotic liturgies in the world and all the fine words of theologians are useless if churches do not physically proclaim through their worship space and practice the importance of this ritual” (2:211). To that this reviewer can only respond: Amen.

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