

convergence and overlap in epigraphic traditions, and allows the reader to identify similarities and differences between periods and cultures.

A number of highlights emerge from such a wide coverage with the most revealing concerning the long-lasting legacy of the Greco-Roman epigraphic habits, the multitude of cross-cultural influences, and much deeper insights into the questions of multi-lingual epigraphs and the hierarchy of languages. The editor's initial premise that 'the inscriptions are not just disembodied words that can be studied in isolation' (2) fully justifies the decision to focus on nonverbal evidence embedded in inscribed texts. This approach establishes a more balanced view, and it serves as a strong reminder that in order for any reading of inscribed texts to be sound and accurate, it must take into consideration inscriptions as physical objects whose materiality carries meaning in its own right.

Ida Toth
University of Oxford

Claudia Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 368.
DOI: [10.1017/byz.2017.7](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2017.7)

Liturgical books are the largest group of Greek textual sources for the Byzantine period. Other types of extant Byzantine manuscripts, such as novels, poetry, or law, largely represent the patrimony of educated families and economically stable monastic communities. On the other hand, every Byzantine church, from a wealthy chapel in the capital to a humble village monastery, required liturgical books in order to carry out the Christian rituals of Byzantine religion. These sources therefore provide an unparalleled insight into Byzantine thought and practice at all social strata. Nevertheless, these manuscripts have primarily remained the scholarly domain of liturgiologists and musicologists, and while their relevance for Byzantine social history has been upheld by leading scholars in these fields, such as Robert F. Taft, seldom have Byzantinists uninitiated into the field of *Liturgiewissenschaft* ventured to tread the vast terrain of unpublished Byzantine liturgical manuscripts.

With the present volume, Claudia Rapp has done just that. Not only does she bring liturgical manuscripts to the forefront of her discussion of Byzantine social history, she does this in order to unravel what remains one of the most elusive rituals of Byzantine prayer books, namely, the rite for *adelphopoiesis* or "brother-making." In many ways, her study represents the culmination of scholarly inquiry into ritual brotherhood that has ensued since the publication of the 1994 monograph by the late Yale professor John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*. There, Boswell articulated his theory that *adelphopoiesis* represented a sort of medieval, ecclesiastically-sponsored same-sex marriage ceremony. In accordance with other scholars who have written on the topic, Rapp rejects Boswell's claim. Instead, she brings together a wealth of sources from the late antique and medieval Eastern Mediterranean world in order to situate the origins and practice of *adelphopoiesis* within the context of ascetic spirituality and monastic living. More than a story about the development of one liturgical rite over time, Rapp's engagement with multiple source types from different regions and time periods contributes a great deal to our knowledge about the history of monasticism and kinship networks in the Byzantine world.

At the centre of Rapp's book is the Byzantine liturgical ritual of *adelphopoiesis*. She provides what is now the most comprehensive review of the manuscript evidence for this rite (Chapter Two). She also supplements her study with appendices dedicated to the textual evidence offered by these manuscripts, including translations of prayers said by Byzantine priests when forming brotherhood between two (or in very rare cases, more) individuals. Rapp frames this original manuscript work through chapters exploring the context of the origins and practice of ritual brotherhood from late antiquity to the post-Byzantine period. Chapter One, for example, examines the ways in which brotherhood language functioned as part of Byzantine social fabric, where kinship bonds were particularly important (esp. p. 9–40). In Chapter Three, Rapp argues

convincingly that adelphopoiesis did not originate in late antiquity as a mechanism for extending familial bonds, even if the ritual would serve this function in later centuries. Instead, she points to early and medieval monastic sources that frequently attest to the pairing of monks, whether as elder-disciple or brother-brother. According to Rapp, adelphopoiesis originates from the monastic desire to bless paired monks in their mutually-lived journey toward spiritual progress.

At the same time, Rapp does not allow the complex history of “brother-making” to be reduced to a monastic ritual. As she points out in Chapter Four, Byzantine monastic leaders like Theodore the Studite (†826) already witness ritual brotherhood extending beyond the monastery walls as a relationship between a monk and non-monastic, and many Middle Byzantine sources reveal that the ritual could be performed between two non-monastics, including among members of the imperial court. As with any ritual that establishes new kinship bonds, adelphopoiesis raised practical questions that required ecclesiastical and civil responses, which insisted that the bond of ritual brotherhood did not incur any impediment of spiritual consanguinity, like the bonds established through baptismal sponsorship (Chapter Five). In the concluding Chapter Six, Rapp shows how adelphopoiesis survived in Orthodox thought, as well as in limited practice, into the modern era.

Rapp’s study will doubtless go down as an important reference for scholars and students engaged in a host of topics related to late antique and medieval culture. It is at the same time rigorous in historical method, rich in its use of original sources and secondary studies, and written in a way that makes the subject accessible to a wide audience, including those less familiar with Byzantine history. The study also breathes the maturity of someone who has mulled over this topic for several years, and represents an excellent argument for scholars to reevaluate the publishing trends of today’s academy, much in need as it is of a Carlo Petrini.

While Rapp confidently spells out what the ritual of brother-making was for the Byzantines, her methodological approach to a topic so imbued with social relevance in recent scholarship will doubtless leave some readers unsatisfied. She seems to anticipate this in her introduction, which states that she will “make no apologies” for her book treating adelphopoiesis “within a particular explanatory context” (p. 5). By this expression, we are led to understand that her methods do not seek to interpret adelphopoiesis in a vacuum; rather, the narrative she wishes to construct is that offered by reading the ritual texts alongside the available data of other source types, from hagiography to Byzantine civil and canon law. Rapp understands that in this post-linguistic-turn era, some would have approached her texts of adelphopoiesis differently. However, as someone sympathetic to Rapp’s scholarly methods—asserting that history is always *our* reflection about the past without rejecting our ability to get close to the past’s context through available sources—my criticisms of the book do not lie in its methods, but only with shortcomings in Rapp’s implementation of the methods she does adopt.

One of Rapp’s goals is to give a thorough response to Boswell, without turning her book fundamentally into a refutation of a single scholar’s work. Rapp succeeds in this by writing a new and innovative study that excels beyond simply rejecting Boswell’s theory. At the same time, parts of the book still resonate as a reaction to Boswell, sometimes with implications that awkwardly undermine her own work. Thus, for example, Rapp criticizes Boswell for suggesting that “a study of [adelphopoiesis] prayers requires privileged access” to sources (p. 58), while her very book affirms the necessity of her own extensive on-site manuscript research in various hard-to-access monastic library collections.

Rapp argues against Boswell by adopting some of his flawed conceptions about the mechanics of ritual and its polyvalence. Since Boswell controversially suggested that similarities between the marriage ceremony and adelphopoiesis necessarily imply that adelphopoiesis represented a sexual relationship, Rapp seeks to disassociate any ritual overlap between these two ceremonies in order to support her thesis that adelphopoiesis was not composed as a Byzantine gay marriage service. Rapp is certainly correct that Boswell exaggerated the ritual relationship between these two ceremonies. However, she drifts close to the opposite extreme by highlighting the ritual dissimilarity to the point of playing down some of the common features (p. 72–76). For example, to refute Boswell’s claims, Rapp points out that a ritual handclasp—a central gesture of the wedding ceremony—only appears in the rite of adelphopoiesis in two, late manuscripts. Yet elsewhere in her book, Rapp cites early literary sources that likewise allude to a handclasp as part of monastic pairing ritual (p. 129: “gave each other their right hands”; p. 172: “From tenth-century Athos, we have confirmation of a ritual gesture of joined hands for two monks...”; cf. p. 130, 133, 166). In a similar way, language used to describe a pair of spiritual brothers in non-liturgical texts, such as the reference to them as a yoked partnership (*syzygos*, p. 173), has a similar ring to expressions

used to describe married couples in Byzantine texts, which Rapp does admit in a footnote (p. 182 n 3).

Instead of refuting ritual overlap between marriage and adelphopoiesis, Rapp could have made sounder arguments in favour of her own thesis by acknowledging another point, namely, that since both adelphopoiesis and marriage consist in ritually forming kinship between two unrelated adult individuals, the former could have attracted gestures from the latter without carrying over the same sexual definitions of the partnership. This is a phenomenon I have personally encountered among some contemporary Mexican American women in South Texas. I once met two heterosexual women who desired to form the bond of godparenthood with one another and become *comadres* (co-mothers). Since they were both past their childbearing years and could not baptize each other's children, they went to the local shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and performed their own sisterhood ritual, which consisted in lighting a single candle together, mimicking the "unity candle" gesture that is popular in weddings in the United States. This contemporary example underscores a methodological point about the study of human ritual in any society, including that of Byzantium: while the meaning of ritual gestures might vary according to context, the actual gesture could nevertheless be the same.

Rapp wisely cautions the reader to acknowledge that distinctions could exist between what was considered the Byzantine social "norm" and the subjective experiences of Byzantines. Certainly, an individual could be inclined toward or against sexual pairing in either marriage or adelphopoiesis partnerships, even if Byzantine moral teaching held only one of these relationships as a licit forum for physical sex. However, in her effort to show the lack of analogy between marriage and adelphopoiesis on the sexual level, Rapp misses a number of opportunities to probe deeper into how pairings of brotherhood were similar or not to marriage in Byzantine thought and practice. For example, is the licitness of sexual activity the only practical difference between these pairings? This question is particularly salient given that Rapp argues adelphopoiesis originated as a form of monastic cohabitation precisely at a time in which we also have many hagiographical examples of marriages left unconsummated for ascetic purposes. How was the bond of paired monastics different from the bond of two individuals engaged in a Josephite marriage? This issue deserves reflection.

The book's principal shortcoming lies in its comprehension of the sources of Byzantine liturgy. The author deserves to be commended for going to great lengths to engage the field of liturgiology, evident in her citing of numerous unpublished doctoral dissertations from the former center of Byzantine liturgical studies, the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, or other hard-to-access publications in the field. However, she excludes many important studies that are relevant to any examination of the Byzantine euchologion, the primary source for adelphopoiesis. Thus, relying on nineteenth-century catalogues by Gardthausen and Rocchi, Rapp gives dates for sources that more recent scholarship no longer accepts. Consultation of monographs dealing with various aspects of the euchologion, such as recent volumes of Taft or Stefano Parenti, could have helped the author avoid this problem, since these and related works provide useful appendices with relevant, updated bibliography on the individual euchologia.

Rapp's methodological reflections on the important Barberini Euchologion likewise yield an incorrect reading of the bibliography involved. She describes the *status quaestionis* of this manuscript as one in which the origin of its contents are debated by scholars (p. 65–66), when in fact, scholars who have written on this manuscript in the last twenty years have reached general consensus about its typology and the various methods for ascribing its contents to Constantinople or elsewhere. Similarly, while the author uses some studies of André Jacob, she does not follow him in dividing the South-Italian Byzantine liturgical heritage into the Siculo-Calabrian and Salentine traditions, a typological distinction accepted for nearly half a century in the field.

Some of Rapp's errors in describing liturgical manuscripts do not have significant bearing upon the specific uses she employs them for, and we should therefore not overemphasize her miscategorization of texts. The author can easily be forgiven for attributing the *Metochion tou Taphou* collection at Athens to a Jerusalem library (the original library of this collection is actually the Jerusalemite metochion that was located in Constantinople). However, even liturgiological studies directly relevant to adelphopoiesis are missing from Rapp's bibliography. Thus, Parenti's review of Boswell's book in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 89 (1996), pp. 448–449, was the first to argue against Boswell's theory on codicological grounds, through an analysis of adelphopoiesis in the manuscript Grottaferrata G.b.II. However, when Rapp herself turns to this manuscript, she does not cite Parenti. Another study that would have proven useful is the edition of the eleventh-century euchologion Grottaferrata Z.d.II, published in 2010 by Valerio Polidori (*Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, III s. 7, pp. 173–206). Neither the edition nor the

manuscript are cited in Rapp's book, even though this euchologion contains four prayers for adelphopoiesis, including the oldest exemplar of one text.

Rapp's engagement with Sinai sources, while extensive, lacks reference to one of the oldest Middle Eastern manuscripts with adelphopoiesis, namely, Sinai NF/ M10 from the eleventh century. Likewise, while she makes a reference to the manuscript Bodleian, Cromwell 11 as including a list of member names of what was potentially a thirteenth-century confraternity (p. 19), she seems unaware that this same manuscript also contains adelphopoiesis, since she excludes it from her list of sources for the ritual (p. 263–276). Consultation of Dorotei Getov's masterful catalogue of manuscripts at the Ivan Dujčev Centre in Sofia (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 279, Rome 2007) would have revealed three additional sources from the fourteenth century (Gr. 55, Gr. 236, Gr. 290). Other manuscripts with adelphopoiesis that could be added include the twelfth-century Paris, BnF Coislin 214 or the thirteenth-century manuscript Duke University, Gr. 19.

Rapp acknowledges that adelphopoiesis merits further liturgical study. The rich appendix of prayer texts offered by the author provides much for scholars to ponder in the future. The prayer of Grottaferrata G.b.VII for example (p. 294–296), could use an entire chapter-length study to deconstruct its rich imagery and literary context. An important question that liturgiologists must now face is how to situate the manuscript evidence of adelphopoiesis within the history of the development of the Byzantine liturgical rite. How do differences between the various prayers relate to the regional liturgical traditions from which they originated? While Rapp has given much for future generations to build upon, it is unfortunate that anyone desirous of probing these texts deeper will only get so far with Rapp's book. Nowhere in the monograph is a single prayer given in the original language of Greek, despite the fact that many of the texts she uses are either unedited, or, as the author points out, edited in century-old editions that are not always reliable (p. 263). The lack of original texts is especially problematic since Rapp herself notes that much of the scholarly interpretive play on meaning in adelphopoiesis has hinged on their English translation (p. 59).

The reader will catch a few blunders in the book which should not have escaped editorial review. For example, Mary was affirmed as Theotokos at the Council of Ephesus (431), not the Council of Chalcedon (451) as the author writes (p. 84). The title of one section, "Slavs and South Slavs" (p. 256), is confusing, since the latter are a subgroup of the former, and her synopsis of early Slavic religious history does not reflect current scholarship (p. 68–69). Otherwise, her discussion of Slavic adelphopoiesis does bring interesting practices to light, such as the use of blood-brother rituals among Serbs (p. 260). Here, however, she misses the opportunity to note a connection with marriage custom. As discussed by Slavic ethnographers and art historians, the fresco evidence at the monastery of Kalenić reveals that the ritual exchange of blood could also feature at Serbian weddings of the fifteenth century. Rapp's identification of brotherhood rituals between Slavic Catholics, Muslims, and Orthodox in the Balkans also offers fertile ground for further development on questions of ethnic history of the region and the politically opportune topic of Bosniak-Croat-Serb relations.

Although *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium* falls short in places, this should not detract from its enormous contribution. As part of the history of medieval monasticism, kinship networks and Byzantine religion, Rapp's book will remain an essential reference for many years to come. Furthermore, with this monograph, Rapp has helped to bridge her own discipline with that of liturgiology, tearing down disciplinary walls and thus representing a strong *apologia* for Byzantinists to engage further with liturgical sources in the writing of cultural history. For their part, liturgiologists should not focus on the drawbacks of Rapp's work, which are indeed minor in the grand scheme of our collective progress of knowledge on these issues. Instead, they should take Rapp's daring book as an invitation to likewise extend their work beyond the boundaries of their discipline and make their own research more accessible and relevant to broader scholarly questions about Byzantine and medieval cultural history. Indeed, one of the most significant contributions of Rapp's study is that it challenges liturgiology to reimagine its own contributions in new ways for the future.

Gabriel Radle
Princeton University