

## REVIEWS

Daniela Mairhofer, *Medieval Manuscripts from Würzburg in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. A Descriptive Catalogue* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2014). 855 pp. ISBN 978-1-85124-419-5. £200.00.

This monumental catalogue describes fifty-four medieval manuscripts once housed in the libraries of the Franconian city of Würzburg, and now held in the Bodleian Library. By far the largest part was acquired for the library in the later 1630s by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, in somewhat murky circumstances occasioned by the Swedish invasion of southern Germany during the Thirty Years War. The larger part in turn of those Laudian manuscripts are Carolingian, and document in particular a flourishing culture of book production in the early to mid-ninth century associated with the canons of Würzburg Cathedral. The extraordinary detail in which the scripts are described and analysed in this catalogue means that it is perhaps better described as a substantial monographic contribution in catalogue form to the study of ninth-century palaeography and book production at a centre of European significance, at which the influence of Anglo-Saxon scribal practice is as readily to be traced and assessed as is the phenomenon of Old High German glossing. Images are included of almost all the manuscripts, although not of all the individual scribal hands.

These descriptions replace those which, for the Laudian manuscripts at least, were published by H. O. Coxe in 1858. They are quite the most exhaustive conceivable, hence the great length of this catalogue, and at times the detail threatens to overwhelm. This becomes an issue when reviewing the content of a given manuscript, with the exhaustive listing of textual editions for items that have received very many editions, and the decision to omit incipits for edited texts. The net effect can be to make it quite difficult to grasp readily the textual content of certain manuscripts. There is, in all cases, very thorough description of ruling and layout, to which many, even modern catalogues would normally only give cursory attention. The nature and quality of parchment receives careful and exceptionally detailed description, but paper is not so well treated at all, and the analysis of watermarks present in the paper stocks used for the isolated late medieval manuscripts is cursory. But each cataloguer has to make decisions about which features to privilege, and given the particular complexion of the collection under examination here, Daniela Mairhofer's decisions are probably

the right ones. One can read the entries in this catalogue with great intellectual engagement and enjoyment, as one reconstructs a given book in the mind's eye. The treatment of provenance, written in full sentences and with the evidence assessed and explained at each stage, should stand as a model for all manuscript catalogues. The perfunctory assertions and scraps of factual evidence listed without interpretation, which one is more usually accustomed to encounter even in very recent catalogues, are wholly inadequate. Mairhofer's concise statements of provenance have seminal value for cataloguing methodology.

The Würzburg manuscripts in the Bodleian Library include some precious gems. The 'Laudian Acts' (MS. Laud Gr. 35), a copy of the Acts of the Apostles in both Greek and Latin written around the year 600 either on Sardinia or in Rome, has long been known as the actual manuscript used in Northumbria in the early eighth century by Bede to write his commentary on Acts, and subsequently brought to the Abbey of Hornbach in the diocese of Metz later in that century by an English missionary, quite possibly St Boniface himself. (It is not known just when it came to Würzburg.) MS Laud Misc. 126 is the earliest extant copy of Augustine's *De trinitate*, copied around 750 in northern Francia either at the nunnery of Chelles or its mother house of Jouarre, and no later than a century afterwards part of the cathedral library in Würzburg. At the other end of the spectrum is a composite manuscript brought together from very many fascicules of sermons collected and annotated by the Franciscan Johannes Sintram (MS Douce 58). The manuscript still bears its chain from the Franciscan library in Würzburg, to which Sintram gave all his books in 1444 after a much-travelled career, which had even taken him to Oxford – albeit a little before the foundation of the Bodleian.

Manchester

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Ralph Hanna and David Rundle, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts, to c. 1600, in Christ Church, Oxford*, Oxford Bibliographical Society Publications, Special Series: Manuscript Catalogues, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2017). 476 pp. + 48 colour plates. ISBN 978-0-901420-61-9. £100.00.

The medieval and early modern Western manuscripts of Christ Church have attracted an unusually low degree of attention for an Oxford college. The survey of manuscripts in Oxford college libraries by Henry Coxe (1852) did not include these books, nor did Bernard's *Catalogi* (1697), meaning that researchers were sometimes unaware of relevant holdings. Though its 'Western' limitation omits the manuscripts written in Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, this catalogue mostly