

Kleinberg selects texts that are on the periphery, the most, to use one of his favorite words, liminal. A question worth posing is this: Do such liminal narratives provide the best representation of the history of martyrdom, of asceticism, of medieval popular culture? I think not.

Although I have been critical of certain aspects of this work, it is equally important to acknowledge that Kleinberg's real strengths are found in his interpretative readings of the texts he selects. His readings frequently provide deft insights into the texts. His bibliography is detailed, and, in particular, when it comes to his readings of the individual hagiographies, it covers most of the ground he addresses. In conclusion, Kleinberg's close reading of the texts is imaginative, often terribly insightful, and makes a contribution to the study of saints.

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SOFIA KOTZABASSI, NANCY PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, and DON SKEMER, *Greek Manuscripts at Princeton, Sixth to Nineteenth Century: A Descriptive Catalogue*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. Pp. xxix, 304; 279 color figs. \$195. ISBN: 9780691143873. doi:10.1017/S0038713412001443

A good manuscript catalogue is a scholarly tool that must perform a number of tasks and satisfy a range of users. It is both a historical guide to the books it catalogues and an "archaeological" guide to how these books were produced and what they contain. In exceptional catalogues, it is a guide to how we might better understand the role of the books themselves.

As a historical guide, the manuscript catalogue must trace the provenance and history of the codex, thereby providing those details that are helpful for manuscript scholars who are also interested in the intellectual history of books. It must supply full bibliographical data on the manuscript, both to aid in future research and to assist those interested in historiography.

As an archaeological guide, the manuscript catalogue must provide a detailed and accurate codicological and paleographical analysis of the manuscript, supplying details of how the book was physically made (its ruling patterns, quire structure, binding, and so forth) and how it was written (its scribal hand or hands, the ink color, the relationship between text and ruling, and so on). These details, often hard to discern in photographs, rely on close observation by the catalogue authors, and are invaluable for localizing and dating manuscripts and for allowing links to be made with other books. The catalogue must also describe and illustrate the decoration of the manuscript, from painted miniatures and illuminated initials to ink decoration added by the scribe(s). Illustrations are obviously critical for scholars pursuing comparative research, but so, too, is the cataloguer's description: a good report, written while looking at the manuscript, can enable the reader consulting the catalogue to see more than she or he would normally recognise in a flat photograph.

In this same vein, manuscript catalogues must accurately indicate the contents of the book—something that older catalogues often failed to do, a problem that has resulted in the regular (re)discovery of new texts that had been temporarily "lost" because inaccurately described—and note additions to the original text.

A manuscript catalogue is rarely intellectually exciting—the catalogue format works against the construction of sustained argument that gallops along under its own steam—but instead demands scrupulous attention to detail and an eye trained to isolate important points of comparison from generic similarities. For both of these reasons, it is hard to sustain the concentration that produces good catalogue copy. *Greek Manuscripts at*

*Princeton, Sixth to Nineteenth Century, a Descriptive Catalogue* gives ample evidence of Sofia Kotzabassi's and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko's close attention to detail, of their highly trained scholarly eyes, and of their apparently inexhaustible powers of concentration. They have fulfilled all of the criteria listed above: this is the best manuscript catalogue I have ever consulted.

*Greek Manuscripts at Princeton* is a beautifully produced, comprehensive catalogue of the extensive collection of Greek manuscripts (Byzantine and post-Byzantine) housed at Princeton University. These include forty-five manuscripts in the Princeton University Library, five in the Scheide Library, twelve (mostly single leaves or fragments) in the Princeton University Art Museum, and a lectionary in the Princeton Theological Seminary. The authors specify the standards that they follow in the opening "Guide to the Use of the Catalogue" (xxi–xxii), and they adhere to them scrupulously throughout the volume.

The catalogue entries themselves are arranged coherently, with a detailed description of the contents (including incipits) followed by sections on material and layout, collation, script, decoration (a stylistic analysis with some comments on iconography followed by detailed descriptions), binding, provenance, and a bibliography divided into descriptions (mostly catalogues and handbooks) and citations (discussions). Because most of these sections are predominantly descriptive (though of course it takes knowledge and skill to identify texts, ruling types, and quire formulations), the analytic remarks on each manuscript are the only parts of the catalogue where the authors are really able to display their deep knowledge of Byzantine and post-Byzantine manuscripts. These comments evidence thorough research and a critical and thoughtful approach to the secondary literature; they provide rigorous evaluations that are convincing and will provide a solid and intelligent base for future scholarship.

The appendix (277–78) details Byzantine documents and Greek ecclesiastical records held in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Princeton University Library. They include over 1,000 papyri, most of which were found in Egypt (though two come from Ravenna); these have been catalogued elsewhere and are simply noted here, with bibliography. Five additional documents are described in more detail: a charter (a genre rarely preserved from the Byzantine world outside of Mount Athos) dating from 947, during the reign of the emperor Constantine VII (912–59); a charter of Roger II, count of Calabria and Sicily (1101–54), dated 1119; a diploma of 1603 signed by Raphael II, patriarch of Constantinople (1603–7), complete with seal; letters and a *Tractatus* of Zosimas II (1686–1746), bishop of Siátista, Sisano, and Ochrid; and records of the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem ranging in date from c.1750 until the early decades of the twentieth century. The indices, rarely included in older manuscript catalogues, but of critical importance for scholarly research, are excellent. There are two special listings, one of "Incipits of Unpublished and Little-known Texts" (279–80), the other of "Index of Saints' Feasts and Other Commemorations" (281–89), followed by a detailed and clearly presented general index (289–304). The plates that close the volume, most of which are in color, are of high quality and are large enough for easy consultation. My only quibble is that there is no indication of scale aligned with the images, so it is difficult, flipping through the illustrations, to get a sense of the comparative size of the books included in the catalogue. The page measurements are, of course, given in the descriptions of the manuscripts themselves, and not even the most casual reader will think that all of the manuscripts are the same size. But I believe that scale, and its impact, is too little valued in Byzantine scholarship, and given the excellence of all facets of this catalogue, a sense of comparative scale would be a happy addition.

The readership for manuscript catalogues is never going to encompass the general public, and even among academics and professionals the manuscript catalogue is a niche genre.

*Greek Manuscripts at Princeton* is, however, such a model of this genre that it should find a place in all serious university libraries and a home with manuscript scholars of all stripes and Byzantinists across the subspecialties of the discipline.

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BENEDEK LÁNG, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. Pp. xiv, 334. \$37.95. ISBN: 9780271033778. doi:10.1017/S0038713412001455

There is certainly no dearth of scholarship surrounding the study and practice of magic in medieval and Renaissance Europe, though the majority of these seemingly-infinite discourses explore the textual traditions of such western European countries as France, Germany, and England. With its exclusive focus on Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia, Benedek Láng's *Unlocked Books* is an important addition to the literature on magical manuscripts, welcome not only for describing lesser-known codices, but also for evoking the cultural milieu of their authors, compilers, and collectors.

Láng opens with an intriguing question, elicited by early modern rumors of flourishing magic schools in fifteenth-century Poland: "Did Kraków really possess a particularly magical milieu?" (3). His study answers that question by comparing the textual production of a narrowly-defined "central" Europe (Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia) to the more familiar traditions of a broadly-defined "western" Europe (including France, Spain, Germany, Austria, and Italy) and speculating about how the magical texts may have functioned for their collectors. The book is divided into three main sections (with a short introduction and conclusion): "Magic" grounds the project with a clear set of definitions and a carefully limited scope; "Texts and Handbooks" provides descriptive analyses of Central European manuscripts with magical content, situating them within the context of magical discourses in western Europe; "Readers and Collectors" analyzes the circulation of magical manuscripts in three social environments (monasteries, royal courts, and universities).

Part one outlines a tripartite division of magic: "natural magic" manipulates the occult powers of natural items (e.g., animals, plants, gems, and stones) and exploits the principles of natural philosophy; "image magic" utilizes various talismans to invoke astrological and natural forces; "ritual magic" relies on explicit prayers, conjurations, and supplications to demonic or angelic spirits. To the three categories of magic, Láng adds the related fields of divination and alchemy, devoting a chapter to each in part two.

Part two argues that central European texts featuring natural magic, image magic, and alchemy are usually found in manuscripts also containing works of natural philosophy, medicine, or astrology, whereas ritual magic and divination texts sometimes appear discretely or with non-scientific texts. Láng finds evidence in central European texts of the wider trend towards the "positivization" of magical discourses in the fifteenth century, suggesting that central Europe provided a relatively tolerant space for the study of learned magic. Láng even proposes that some texts, like the Biblioteka Jagiellońska 793 and Władislas Warnencyk's prayer book, were likely handbooks of magical practitioners.

In part three, Láng finds that while clerical and courtly collections often reflect a clear interest in alchemy and divination, respectively, university libraries harbored the most works on natural, ritual, and image magic. He concludes that while central European libraries provide "fewer, but an equally rich variety of, magical texts" than Western European collections, they do house a few original literary contributions, including the royal prayer book of Władislas Warnencyk and Conrad Kyeser's *Bellifortis* (266). Despite evidence for clusters of respectable university masters and graduates fascinated with magic, this