inconsistencies in Proverbs, indeed sometimes flat contradictions, but this is a typical feature of this kind of work, a cobbled-together miscellany of materials from a variety of sources, smaller and larger chunks of already-redacted tradition stitched together with little, if any, thematic or poetic coherence. In other words, the incompetent redactor so dear to the hearts of historical-critical scholarship. No, says Hatton: it is deliberate. In using self-referential verbal echoes and allusion to deny what it has previously stated, the Book of Proverbs intentionally causes its reader to blink, to stumble, to acknowledge the limits of humanly produced literature to capture the mysteries of the cosmos and man's place within it. Hatton appeals to Bakhtin's concept of a 'heteroglossalic text', a text that is dialogical not monological, so that 'the reader is goaded into a more mature and reflective wisdom . . . Proverbs, it transpires, is far from the settled, self-satisfied text that many scholars have taken it to be. In its own way, it is as challenging and provocative as Qohelet' (p. 116).

The idea that Qohelet is such a dialogical text is a fairly standard one, and of course in the case of Job it is explicit. To apply it to Proverbs is a new and exciting proposal. Moreover, Hatton goes further, and in two ways. In the first place, he goes on to argue that the pattern of self-contradiction occurs on more than one scale: sometimes two mutually contradictory verses are right next to one another, or one might find a single saying dropped into what seems an otherwise smooth-flowing and coherent passage. He gives the example of 10:15 within the chapter as a whole – the beginning of the 'proverbs of Solomon'. A second disturbing saying then occurs at 10:22, and Hatton suggests that such sayings 'are like stones dropped into a smoothly flowing stream; the ripples spread in several directions' (p. 93). But these ripples are also part of much larger patterns: he identifies another in which 'Proverbs 6:20–34 and 21:14 constitute a framework around a dialogue about the subject [of bribery]' (p. 137).

Just as importantly, Hatton insists that the dialogical or heteroglossalic nature of Proverbs is not something he has identified as part of a 'reader-response' hermeneutic, but is the deliberate creation of a highly-skilled author. Here he stands over against the many biblical scholars who, despairing of making coherent sense of a work as the unitary creation of an author, but unwilling to take upon themselves the task of unpicking supposed redactional seams in order to interpret some quite different text, prescind from the question of authorial intention entirely. Hatton suggests that this is indeed a counsel of despair, and an unnecessary one, and although one might have welcomed a more substantial statement of his hermeneutical presuppositions, he is nonetheless to be lauded for the attempt to ground his reading of Proverbs in historical reality.

Whether his particular historical reconstruction of the author and his intentions is wholly convincing is debatable; it is proposed almost as an afterthought, and much can be gained from this fascinating, lucid and cleverly argued book without accepting every last conclusion. It is long past time that the 'assured results' of historical-critical interpretation of the Book of Proverbs were seriously reconsidered, and I hope that this book will mark the turning of the tide.

RICHARD J OUNSWORTH OP

SACRED TIME IN EARLY CHRISTIAN IRELAND: THE MONKS OF THE *NAUIGATIO* AND THE CÉLI DÉ IN DIALOGUE TO EXPLORE THE THEOLOGIES OF TIME AND LITURGY IN PRE-VIKING IRELAND by Patricia M. Rumsey (*T. & T. Clark* London, 2007) Pp. xi + 258, £75 hbk

One of the most neglected sources for the study of the early medieval history of these islands is the material relating to the church's liturgy. There must have

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been liturgical manuscripts of some sort in all the thousands of churches and monasteries of early medieval Ireland and Britain, but only a tiny proportion of these works survives. From the Gaelic world, which is Rumsey's particular area of interest, an even smaller quantity survives. It is to her great credit that she has identified the potential of this material and explored not only the surviving liturgical texts but also, and in this book especially, other non-liturgical texts which shed light on the early medieval liturgy of Ireland. She eschews the easy generalisation that has tempted some scholars in the past, in which a snippet here or there is elevated into evidence for some 'Celtic' or 'Irish' rite, as if there were some kind of eighth-century publishing house pumping out a standard text for all the churches concerned. She is alert to the localism of liturgy, and to the constant reality of tensions between different church communities and schools of thought, different practices, theologies, ascetics and psychologies.

In particular Rumsey has produced a wonderful exploration of the famous *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani*, the eighth- or ninth-century tale of St Brendan's sea-voyage in quest for the *terra repromissionis sanctorum*. This text, though not a liturgical one, provides her with much material for a sympathetic exploration of the liturgy (and hence the theology) of the monastic community which was the presumed origin of the *Nauigatio* (I will refer to these monks hereafter as the 'Navigators'). The text provides Rumsey with insights into the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours by the Navigators, the particular form of the office which they celebrated, and its place in a wider history of liturgical development in Ireland and on the continent. This also provides the basis for a much wider exploration of their theology, their monastic discipline, the sense of the continuing presence of the Risen Lord in their community, the place of their liturgical time in the timeless liturgy of heaven, their view of the created order of things and their place in it, and their ability to find God there by their openness to his creation. All this arises from Rumsey's engagement with the *Nauigatio*, her subtle, sensitive and imaginative reading of the text, and her ability to relate it to a detailed grasp of patristic and early medieval views of the liturgy.

However, this is only half of the story that Rumsey tells. The other half is not about the Navigators and their liturgy, but about the Céli Dé (an Irish monastic movement appearing at the end of the eighth century, which also developed in Scotland) and theirs. It would certainly be very interesting to make a comparison between two liturgical traditions, two theological outlooks, two monastic disciplines, and this is what Rumsey attempts to do, but there are several difficulties with this proposal and with the way in which Rumsey approaches it. The first difficulty is the lack of source material. Rumsey is interested in the liturgy of the hours, and she paints a convincing picture of the liturgy of the Navigators based on the liturgical descriptions in the *Nauigatio*. But no such text survives to tell us in any useful detail about the liturgy of the Céli Dé. She turns instead to a handful of documents of Céli Dé origin which she hopes will reveal similar things about their outlook, but the sources she uses simply don't reveal this kind of information. Most of their references to the canonical hours are brief and tangential.

But the lack of source material is not the only difficulty. As problematic is Rumsey's own tendentious reading of the material that does survive, and her determination to present us with two sharply contrasting monastic traditions, and to paint one in the brightest hues of Christian authenticity, and to paint the other in the darkest and most colourless hues of ascetic elitism where 'joy was conspicuous by its absence' (11–12). There may very well be interesting things to say about the differences between the Navigators and the Céli Dé, but what might have been said has been rather lost under her polarisation of the two. So the Navigators are a real 'community', while the Céli Dé are a 'life-style enclave' (111). The Céli Dé are subject to 'fragmenting' and 'narcissistic' forces which lessen the influence

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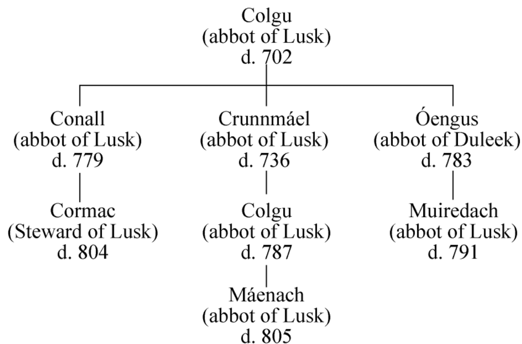
of the abbot (114), while the Navigators enjoy genuine fraternal affection (112). The Navigators' lives are marked by 'cheerful optimism', in contrast to 'the determination to pessimism probably originating in the joyless personality of Máel Rúain himself' (116). The Navigators show a child-like interest in Creation, and value courtesy towards strangers, and receptiveness towards strange new things, seeing creation itself as sacramental (26, 116–7), unlike the Céli Dé who have a 'negative attitude to strangers' (116) and to the created world which is a source of moral danger (20, 71).

From the beginning, Rumsey displays such hostility to the Céli Dé that she can only present them as the negation of all she admires in the Navigators. Where the *Nauigatio* tells us that Judas is relieved of his sufferings in hell on Sundays and Holy Days, this reflects the author's 'positive attitude to life and his non-judgemental theology' (9–10). But when the Céli Dé tell us that 'there is nothing that a man does on behalf of one that dies that does not help him' (*The Monastery of Tallaght*, hereafter *MT*), we are not invited to come to the same conclusion, though in fact the Céli Dé document envisages the permanent release from 'hell' of the dead soul, while the *Nauigatio* only offers Judas a temporary reprieve.

One underlying problem is Rumsey's rejection of the traditional scholarly notion that the Céli Dé was a reform movement. In this she follows the same line of thought as Westley Follett (*Céli Dé in Ireland*, Woodbridge 2006), where a movement only counts as a reform movement if (a) the existing church or monastic life was so bad as to need reforming, and (b) the 'reformers' were themselves looking back towards an idealised past which was in some way normative and to which they sought to conform their churches or monasteries now. In regard to (a), we should perhaps revise this to say that a reformer need only *perceive* his or her contemporary church or monastery to be in need of reform, not that this is objectively so, nor that the church or monastery is any more corrupt now than it was a century or two ago. Neither Rumsey nor Follett consider this, but it seems an important consideration. And in any case, was there not some need of reform in the eight-century Irish church? Look at the descendants of Colgu mac Máenaich who died as abbot of Lusk in 702. After him, two of his sons were abbots of Lusk, and another son abbot of Duleek. Two of his grandsons became abbots of Lusk, and finally his great-grandson inherited the office.



The descendants of Colgu in Irish Annals

I am not suggesting that anything particularly wicked was going on here, and it may well be that Colgu and his progeny were men of great devotion, committed

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to the nourishment of monastic life, liturgy and scholarship. But a monastery in this condition would have attracted the attention of reformers in any part of medieval Europe at any time when reform was being considered.

Whether under the control of secular families or not, churches and monasteries held large areas of land, which inevitably drew clergy and monks into disputes over land, resources, and so on. Again this is nothing unusual in medieval Europe, and ecclesiastical litigation was common (thank goodness, since it has left us a lot of interesting documentary evidence). But monks reflecting on the purpose of monastic life might think there was something regrettable about it, and might attempt to distance themselves from such perpetual legal wrangling, or from the violence which occurred when a legal solution didn't seem to be forthcoming. In 760 AD there was a battle between the monasteries of Clonmacnoise and Birr; four years later Clonmacnoise took to the battlefield against the monastery of Durrow, and two hundred men of the community of Durrow died. The men of Durrow are found fighting again in 776. As Enright describes the situation, 'monasteries had become well ordered theocratic states . . . and fielded their own armies of warrior clients (who were legally monks) to fight their enemies' (*Iona, Tara, Soissons* 1985, 63). If some monks decide that they would rather see monasteries free of this kind of dispute, then why should we not call them reformers? And this is surely precisely what the Céli Dé had in mind when they recalled the words of Máel Rúain, 'Abide always in the place where you are supposed to be. Meddle not with worldly disputes. Go not with any man to a law-court, nor to an assembly, to plead on account of any man, but continue in prayer and in pondering thy reading, and in teaching if there be any that desire to receive instruction from you' (*The Teaching of Máel Rúain* §12). This is withdrawal from 'the world' in the sense of property-disputes, monastic warfare, secular control of ecclesiastical benefices, and dynastic governance of monasteries; it is not withdrawal from 'the world' in the sense of God's wonderful creation, as Rumsey suggests (94, 115–6).

Not only is there evidence that the Céli Dé thought of themselves as monastic reformers in the sense of seeking to re-establish certain norms of monastic life (proper abbatial succession, constancy in prayer, stability, poverty and the common ownership of goods); they were concerned with wider church reform. The last paragraphs of the *Prose Rule of the Céli Dé* are concerned not with the monks' lives but with the organisation of pastoral care and sacramental administration. The status of the church is stated to depend on 'baptism, communion and singing the intercession, with students reading, with the offering of the body of Christ on every altar.' This is the opening brief statement of the church's place in society. It reflects the contemporary view that the church's place in society is dependent on its observance of a contract: the church will receive its rights from the *túath* or tribe in exchange for its fulfilment of certain obligations. Hence 'any man in orders who does not have the knowledge or skill to perform the duties of his order, so that he cannot celebrate or offer the sacrifice before kings and bishops, is not entitled to the freedom/privileges of a man in orders, in tribe or in church.' Bishops are required to ordain only men who are able to perform their duties as priests, (instruction, reading, soul-friendship, and 'the remedy for sins'), with heavy fines and penance for ordaining unworthy candidates. Lay people are encouraged to give their sons to the church, and whoever does so 'shall be as it were a restorer of the church in Ireland, and as bringing faith into it after it had vanished'. God's anger is threatened against anyone who despoils the church, 'for he who strips the church of God shall fall.' Finally there is a great diatribe against secular usurpations: 'It was through this that the power of princes died, and their sons and their lordships died after them. It was through this that the religion of the Lord perished among tribes and kindreds. It is through this that the doors of heaven are closed and the doors of hell opened wide, and the angels

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of God cease to watch the earth, except when they come to wreak vengeance on the human race.'

All these show that the author *was* concerned for church reform; they are exactly the issues that concerned church reformers, councils and synods throughout medieval Europe. I can think of no good reason for refusing to describe the Céli Dé as reformers. Also their concern for pastoral ministry in the church as a whole, as well as their constant concern to offer 'soul-friendship' to the laity, contradicts Rumsey's view that the 'elitist' Céli Dé sought to hold themselves aloof from other Christians.

Another central plank of Rumsey's argument is the assertion that the Céli Dé's extraordinary daily routine of reciting the whole psalter (the 'Three Fifties') and making countless prostrations, cross-vigils, devotions to saints, extra prayers and so on, all show that they had rather lost interest in the Liturgy of the Hours, distracted by this huge burden of non-liturgical piety. But she gives no evidence for such loss of interest. The lack of discussion of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Céli Dé texts she examines is not evidence that the Céli Dé were neglecting or despising the liturgy; they simply take it for granted, as suggested by the *Rule of Ailbe* (which has close affinities to Céli Dé texts) which requires the monks not only to recite the 'Three Fifties' and make a hundred genuflections, but also asserts that 'the assiduous observance of the canonical hours is regarded as primary'.

Rumsey describes the Céli Dé as an over-scrupulous, elitist, world-denying, miserable bunch of narcissists. Countless pieces of evidence are interpreted to fit this view, even when other interpretations are available. Certainly, the Céli Dé were weird in some ways, but the lack of empathy which Rumsey shows, her hostility to the strange (in spite of her commendation of the Navigators for their delight in the weird and wonderful things they saw), make her account of this movement unconvincing and prevents her from exploring some of the weirder things as fully as she might. What are we to make of the Céli Dé attitude to bodily fluids and bodily functions? What of the prohibition on drinking after urinating, and on bathing in semen or putting it on your head (why exactly were monks ever tempted to do this?) and the description of privy-houses as the abodes of demons and the prohibition on praying there except for saying *Deus in adiutorium meum intende*? All these warrant proper exploration, perhaps along the lines of Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*. But Rumsey's lack of sympathy makes this impossible for her to contemplate.

This book has opened up a wide new horizon of historical and liturgical scholarship, and sets high standards for a new kind of exploration and interpretation of early medieval Gaelic literature. Rumsey has opened many books for us to (re-)read in new and exciting ways. But she has also reminded us that without a certain degree of empathy, of hospitality to the strange, we can close those books again, and silence the interesting and strange voices of those who went before us.

GILBERT MÁRKUS

FROM A TOPICAL POINT OF VIEW: DIALECTIC IN ANSELM OF CANTERBURY'S DE GRAMMATICO by Peter Boschung (*Brill* Leiden/Boston 2006) Pp. 346 c.£80 hbk.

Anselm referred to *De Grammatico* as a 'not useless introduction to dialectic'. This is a view, it has to be said, that has not been shared by everyone who has read it. (Just how does one translate the title? 'On the paronym, grammatical'?!)

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