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What Has Magic to Do with Prayer? Unorthodox Minitexts in vade mecum *Prayerbooks for Priests*

Abstract
In recent years, a growing number of studies of smaller, simpler and much tattered liturgical manuscripts that were produced for the use of missionaries, priests of small churches and itinerant preachers, have contributed immensely to our understanding of early medieval liturgy, and of what pastoral care really consisted of in the early medieval West. Many of these *vade mecum* handbooks for priests also contain some small, unorthodox texts of magical nature. Notwithstanding the fact that throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages such texts and the worldview they represented were repeatedly questioned, denounced and condemned by Christian authorities and policy makers, they were copied into, or attached to, Christian handbooks for priests. This paper looks at a few examples of such texts, and attempts to explain their presence in liturgical codices by referring to the nature of magic and magical practices in the early medieval West.

Keywords
Magic; Liturgy; *Sortes sanctorum*; Charms; Fortune telling

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One of the most significant developments in liturgical studies during the past generation has been the ever-increasing role that small, tattered and unattractive manuscripts have come to play in understanding the nature of early medieval liturgy and the context in which it was produced[1]. In the past, whenever liturgists or historians wished to examine the liturgical developments and characteristics of a certain period or a certain region, they turned directly and without any qualm to lavishly produced liturgical manuscripts. This circumstantial anomaly created a misleading bias in liturgical studies, for it forced liturgists to concentrate on a select group of *de-luxe* or well-prepared volumes, which were produced, to a larger extent, for well-established ecclesiastical institutions, or for obscenely rich private patrons, but again with a central ecclesiastical institution in mind[2]. However, luxurious liturgical codices could not have been the bulk of the liturgical productivity of early medieval *scriptoria*. A huge number of liturgical manuscripts of a lesser artistic or codicological quality, but not necessarily of inferior liturgical importance, were also copied and distributed, despite the fact that very few of them survive intact.

In recent years, the burgeoning interest in smaller, simpler and much cheaper liturgical manuscripts that were produced for the use of missionaries, priests of small churches and itinerant preachers, have contributed much to our understanding not only of early medieval liturgy, but also of the nature and limitations of pastoral care in the early medieval West[3]. The so-called Bobbio Missal is one of the most illustrious examples of such a book[4]. Copied in south-eastern France in the last decades of Merovingian rule, the Bobbio Missal is, to cite Elias A. Lowe, 'the work of a private individual – a cleric who made a copy of the service book of which he stood in need, and which, to judge

1 Hen 2016a, especially pp. 77-79; Hen 2016b.

2 See, for example, the so-called Sacramentaries of Saint-Amand, discussed in Hen 2001a, pp. 138-146.

3 See, for example, Hen 1999; Hen 2001b; Hen (in press); Meeder 2005.

4 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13246. *CLLA*, n. 220. For its edition, see *The Bobbio Missal* 1920.

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from its size, he probably carried about with him in his travels'[5]. Thus, judging from the script, the manuscript layout, and its content, the Bobbio Missal can justifiably be described as a *vade mecum* of a Merovingian priest[6]. When compared with the splendid Merovingian sacramentaries of the late seventh and eighth century[7], the Bobbio Missal seems poor and unpretentious.

In an important paper titled 'Célébration épiscopale et célébration prebyterale: une essai de typologie', the liturgist Niels Rasmussen suggested a new way to arrange the typology of early medieval liturgical manuscripts. According to him both the material aspects and the layout of a manuscript, as well as its liturgical content can help us to determine the manuscript's destination and function. Sacramentaries, for example, were produced for monastic, episcopal and presbyterial use, and only by examining their external form and liturgical content can one determine to which of the above-mentioned categories a certain manuscript belongs[8]. A good example which elucidates Rasmussen's observations is a small liturgical manuscript from Brussels[9]. The modesty in the preparation of this volume (very much like the Bobbio Missal), its small and handy form (similar to a Penguin paperback), and the peculiar character of the short sacramentary which it accommodates, containing the prayers for only eleven major feasts of the liturgical year, all suggest that it was produced for a priest of some small church[10].

Following Rasmussen, I have suggested two more criteria that can be added to Rasmussen's double yardstick. First, the content of the entire manuscript and not just its liturgical section can disclose the manuscript's functional destination. Second, the combination of two or more types of liturgical books, together with some canonical material in one manuscript indicates a destination far from an ecclesiastical or a monastic centre. Indeed, both the Bobbio Missal and the Brussels manuscript illustrate this point, for their liturgical section is juxtaposed with a plethora of canonical and doctrinal material, which is usually absent from *de-luxe* liturgical manuscripts. The liturgical section of both handbooks is composed from a selection of different liturgical pieces, and con-

5 Lowe 1924, pp. 67-68.

6 See the various papers in *The Bobbio Missal* 2004.

7 On these manuscripts, see Vogel 1986. See also Bernard 1996; Hen 2001a; Smyth 2003, and see the references cited there.

8 Rasmussen 1987.

9 Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 10127-10144. *CLLA*, nn. 856 and 1320. The sacramentary of this manuscript was published as *Liber sacramentorum excarpsus*.

10 Hen (in press). See also Rasmussen 1998, pp. 436-439; Bullough 1999, pp. 48-49.

tains a unique combination of a sacramentary, a lectionary, and in the Brussels manuscript also an antiphonary, several *ordines* and various other ceremonial instructions. These peculiarities imply that such manuscripts were composed with a view to assisting a local priest of a small church or an itinerant priest, providing him with a selection of liturgical and doctrinal material he might need in order to execute his job[11].

Similar studies have yielded similar conclusions. For example, Helen Gittos' analysis of the so-called Red Book of Darley[12], and Victoria Thompson's discussion of a late Anglo-Saxon liturgical miscellany[13], clearly demonstrate that both eleventh-century books were compiled with a local priest in mind, and both were designed to assist this priest in executing his pastoral duties[14]. The Red Book of Darley, as pointed out by Gittos, 'seems to contain almost everything that the putative parish priest required'[15]. Whether these texts were selected and copied by the original owner of the book for his personal use, as suggested by Chistopher Hohler[16], or whether the compilation was prepared in a well-established centre for the use of local priests, is, unfortunately, impossible to gauge. Similarly, the carefully selected texts in Oxford miscellany suggest that it was designed to help the clergy in administering their ministry to the sick and dying[17].

The focus on modest liturgical manuscripts, rather than on *de-luxe* and lavishly produced ones, is proving to be seminal for our understanding of medieval liturgy and its religious as well as cultural significance[18]. The main principle that guided the production and compilation of such *vade mecum* prayer-books was functionality. They had to be handy, manageable, and contain a core of liturgical material that a local priest may need. Given the fact that each of these manuscripts is different, and no archetype (or archetypes) could be postulated, it would be safe to conclude that each and every *vade mecum* for priests was a unique individual compilation, designed and probably executed by its owner, or commissioned by him from a centre that produced such books.

11 Hen (in press); Hen 1999; Hen 2001b; Hen 2016b; Van Rhijn 2016; Van Rhijn 2022, pp. 52-83.

12 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422.

13 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud. Misc. 482.

14 See Gittos 2005; Thompson 2005. See also Pfaff 2009, pp. 94-96.

15 Gittos 2005, p. 69.

16 Hohler 1972.

17 Thompson 2005.

18 See also the comments in Palazzo 2009.

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Since these handbooks were intended for practical use, each of their owners could, and in many cases actually did, add some new material they deemed appropriate, and even insert some texts of their own if they were only capable of composing new ones. No wonder, then, that the vast majority of these booklets contain numerous minitexts, which were scribbled on the margins and empty leaves, or inserted into these codices as flyleaves and smaller scraps. These were living compendia, constantly updated and supplemented. What is noteworthy about these minitexts is not so much the fact that they were added to these manuscripts in the first place, but rather the fact that a high percentage of these addenda were scraps of unorthodox texts, of which the lion's share refers to magical lore and divination, practices that were denounced and condemned unequivocally by Christian authorities and secular legislation.

Let me give some examples. A short text on divination by thunder was added to an empty space in a liturgic-canonical handbook, that was copied in West Francia around the third quarter of the ninth century[19]. This manuscript was later deposited in the library of Fleury, from where part of it was stolen by Guglielmo Libri, and nowadays it is divided between Florence and Orléans[20]. In a similar compendium, this time from central Francia and dated by Bischoff to 813-815[21], a small section from the so-called *Sortes Sanctorum* was copied in between an explanation on the solstice and one on the new moon[22]. A charm for revealing the identity of a thief was added on a small scrap to Ælfwine's prayerbook[23]; several pagan chams in Old High German were copied, possibly in Fulda, on a blank page of a small liturgical handbook[24]; and, to give just one more example, at the end of the Irish Stowe Missal, someone added three spells in Old Irish – one for a bad eye, one for a thorn, and one for the disease of the urine[25].

These examples are only the tip of an iceberg, and they represent a widespread phenomenon that could also be found, although to a lesser extent, in lavish liturgical manuscripts from the early Middle Ages. The Gellone Sac-

19 Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashburnham 82, fols. 16v-17r.

20 See Hen 2001b.

21 Bischoff 1998-2017, III, p. 82. See also Mordek 1995, p. 430-432; Cartelle 2013, pp. 41-42.

22 Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS lat. 2796, fol. 107r. For its edition, see Cartelle 2013.

23 London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus D XXVII, fol. 79v.

24 Merseburg, Domstiftsbibliothek, Codex 136, fol. 85r.

25 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS D II 3, fol. 67v. *CLLA*, n. 101. For its edition, see *The Stowe Missal* 1915, p. 39, with an English translation on p. 42.

ramentary, for example, contains a list of Egyptian Days that was copied on a blank space, just before the beginning of the Martyrology[26]. This list of unlucky days was later incorporated into most of the calendars from the Carolingian period[27]. Similarly, a short text on bad days was inserted to a lavishly produced Anglo-Saxon Psalter[28], where one could also find a charm against the theft of bees.[29] Another charm, this time to pacify a swarm of bees was added to a splendid copy of the Apocalypse in ninth-century Lorsch[30].

The large number of references to magic and divination in liturgical books, and more so in *vade mecum* handbooks for priests, is puzzling. What immediately comes to mind is Tertullian's wonder – 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? The Academy with the Church? or Heretics with Christians?'[31] – which was echoed a few centuries later by Alcuin of York in a letter to Bishop Speratus – 'What has Ingeld to do with Christ?'[32] Following their footsteps, one should ask: 'what has magic to do with prayers?' and 'how could we explain the presence of magical lore in Christian prayerbooks? The widespread phenomenon of inserting magical minitexts into liturgical manuscripts merits some consideration.

If taken at face value, the references to various magical practices and divinations in liturgical manuscripts and prayerbooks for priests accord extremely well with Valerie Flint's observations on the rise of magic in western Europe during the early Middle Ages[33]. Adopting the paradigm of rise and fall, suggested by the title of Keith Thomas' seminal study of magic in early modern Europe[34], Valerie Flint has argued for the rise of magic in early medieval Europe, not as a mere revitalised 'pagan survival', but as Christianised pagan practices that were adopted by the Church and its representatives[35]. In her book, Flint maintains that the Church, after rejecting all forms of magic,

26 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 12048, fol. 261v. *CLLA*, n. 855.

27 See Borst 2001, *passim*.

28 London, British Library, MS Vitellius E XVIII, fol. 9r.

29 London, British Library, MS Vitellius E XVIII, fol. 15r.

30 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 226, fol. 58r. On the cultural context of these charms, see Jolly 1996.

31 Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, c. 7, p. 98.

32 Alcuin, *Epistolae*, n. 124, p. 183. For an English translation and discussion, see Bullough 1993.

33 See Flint 1991.

34 Thomas 1971.

35 See Flint 1991.

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realised how important it was for the people, and therefore 'rescued' it by incorporating some magical practices into Christianity's own world of beliefs, perceptions and attitudes[36].

This is not the place to discuss all the flaws in Flint's argument, but one has to be mentioned up front. Flint had adopted a baffling synoptic approach, making little allowance for chronological or geographical differences. Hence, for her, the problems that Roman magic raised for late antique bishops, such as Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo, were basically the same kind of problems that the so-called Germanic paganism raised for missionaries and churchmen in Carolingian Francia or late Anglo-Saxon England. The ways of coping with these practices, according to Flint, was different. Whereas the former merely condemned magical practices and classified them as pagan and diabolical, the latter 'rescued' these practices, Christianised them, and adopted them. In both cases magic was tolerated and allowed to be transported across centuries, in what seems like a continuous saturnalia of magical lore[37].

With all due respect, I beg to differ. The multiplying references to various magical practices and divination in the sources from the fifth to the tenth century, and foremost among them in *vade mecum* handbooks for priests, must not be taken to imply that magic was on the rise in western Europe during the early Middle Ages, nor that it was 'Christianised' in some sort of an official move. I would suggest that the study of magical practices and divination within the Christian society of the early medieval West, requires a preliminary mental readjustment. We must temporarily abandon familiar cultural territory and radically question received intellectual categories. Early medieval society was fundamentally different from our own, and the concepts that we employ to describe contemporary religious phenomena are necessarily ill adapted to the analysis of what medieval people regarded as the divine sphere.

In a superbly provocative paper, cheekily entitled 'Mandatory retirement: ideas in the study of Christian origins whose time has come to go', Paula Fredriksen throws into the dustbin of history four much-used terms that routinely appear in scholarship on early Christianity – conversion, nationalism, *religio licita*, and monotheism. These terms served scholars of ancient Christianity both as a kind of academic shorthand and as interpretative concepts, but they also import anachronism and distortion into historical descriptions of the cultural context of Christianity and its origins, ultimately obscuring precisely

36 See Flint 1991, especially pp. 59-84.

37 See Flint 1991, pp. 87-328.

the evidence that they are mobilized to illuminate[38]. I think it is about time to throw our modern concept of magic into that bin as well.

Let me demonstrate my point by recurring to one of the texts we have already encountered, the so-called *Sortes Sanctorum*. This practice of divination by casting lots (*sortes*), in both its pagan and Christian forms, was unequivocally condemned as superstitious by various Christian authors and policy-makers from the time of Augustine onwards[39]. For example, in the first council of Orléans, which was convened in 511 under the auspices of King Clovis[40], the Merovingian bishops resolved (among other things) that:

> If any cleric, monk or laymen shall think he should observe divination or auguries or casting the lots (*sortes*), which they say are 'of the saints' (*sanctorum*) to whomever they should believe they should make them known, they are to be expelled from the Church's communion with those who believe in them[41].

This canon is simple and straightforward. It rules against any form of divination or fortune telling, and it clearly associates the use of the *sortes* with unorthodox superstitious behaviour, a reminiscent survival of the pagan past. The fact that a peculiar practice called *sortes sanctorum* was listed in the very same canon along other forms of condemned divinations, must not be taken to imply that the *sortes* were somehow Christianised. The *Sortes Sanctorum* were also condemned in an uncompromised language, and this resolution was subsequently repeated by several regional and 'national' Church councils, numerous penitentials, and secular legislation[42].

Notwithstanding the 'official' ecclesiastical position, it should come as no surprise that *sortes* continued to be uses by all. In his *Ten Books of History*, Gregory of Tours relates how Merovech, King Chilperic's son, consulted the *sortes* to check whether he would inherit his father's kingdom as was predicted by a certain female soothsayer;[43] and in a different passage he relates how King Chlothar I consulted the *sortes*, this time in an attempt to reach a political de-

38 Fredriksen 2006.

39 On the *Sortes Sanctorum*, see Flint 1991, pp. 273-286; Klingshirn 2002; Cartelle 2013, pp. 9-40. Luijendijk and Klingshirn 2018. For an edition of the text, see Cartelle 2013, pp. 65-131.

40 On the first Church Council of Orléans, see Pontal 1989, pp. 47-58; Halfond 2010, p. 223 and *passim*.

41 *Concilium Aurelianenses I*, c. 30, vol. 1, p. 88. I cite the English translation from Hillgarth 1986, p. 103.

42 See Hen 2015, p. 195.

43 Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, V.14, pp. 271-271.

cision[44]. Whereas the former incident could be dismissed as a deviant aberration, brought about by Merovech's own distress and insecurity, the latter is much more compelling. It was the priests of Dijon's cathedral who consulted the *sortes*, ignoring the unambiguous conciliar decrees just mentioned, and Gregory found nothing wrong in it[45]. Could it be that Gregory, the ultra-conservative bishop of Tours, understood the use of the *sortes* as a harmless and non-threatening superstitious practice that has nothing to do with religious beliefs or pagan cults?

Condemned magical practices are one thing, and the persistent use of supposedly magical practices as part of society's cultural and social heritage is another thing. The difference between them is like the difference between a fictitious reality, created by means of Christian rhetoric, and the reality of everyday life. One should not confuse between the two, and any attempt to portray the everyday practices of a Christian society as the rise of magic in a Christianised form is idiosyncratic and anachronistic.

The case of the *Sortes Sanctorum* clearly highlights the inadequacy of modern terminology to describe and classify early medieval cultural-religious phenomena, and it emphasises how very fine, and often blurred, is the line that separates 'magic' from 'religion', *superstitio* from *religio licita*. The exchange between the anthropologist Hildred Geertz and the historian Keith Thomas, which appeared in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*,[46] are extremely enlightening in this respect.

In her review of *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Hildred Geertz has criticised Keith Thomas on account of the clear distinction he makes between 'religion' and 'magic', as two separable cultural complexes which can be in competition and whose fortunes may sometimes rise and fall separately[47]. Geertz challenged Thomas' conception that, 'religion is a term that covers the kind of beliefs and practices that are comprehensive, organized and concerned with providing general symbols of life', whereas 'magic' is a label used to denote 'those beliefs and practices which are specific, incoherent, and primarily oriented toward providing practical solutions to immediate problems and

44 Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, IV.16, pp. 212-213.

45 For a discussion of these passages, see Zeddies 1999, pp. 260-270; Hen 2015, pp. 193-198. One should stress the fact that Gregory does not mention the *sortes sanctorum* explicitly, but he undoubtedly refers to a similar practice of divination by casting lots.

46 Geertz 1975; Thomas 1975. I have discussed this debate more fully in Hen 2015.

47 Geertz 1975, p. 72.

not referable to any coherent scheme of ideas'[48]. Thomas responded to Geertz that it was the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers who first declared that 'magic is coercive and religion intercessory, and that magic was not a false religion, but a different sort of activity altogether'[49].

As far as the early Middle Ages are concerned, the early-modern categories of 'magic' and 'religion' are ill-suited to illuminate the complex reality of the Christianised West, not the least because the line between magic and religion is extremely frail and blurred, and therefore impossible to draw. Certain essential characteristics of early medieval Christianity, such as the cults of saints and relics, or even the sacraments themselves, would be viewed by Protestant reformers as magical, since they present a picture of incoherent, specific means of coercing supernatural power to achieve particular ends. A brief look at the so-called Old Gelasian Sacramentary (*Sacramentarium Gelasianum*) will clarify that point[50]. In the third book of the *Gelasianum*, which is dedicated to private and votive masses, one finds masses for those who embark on a journey[51], for the death of animals[52], for infertility[53], for all kinds of weather[54], for health[55], for trees[56], and for many other occasions. If looked at from a cynical point of view, this list of masses reads very much like a Christian replica of the eighth-century *Indiculus superstitionum and paganiarum*[57]. After all, what is the difference between the Old Gelasian's *Orationes pro mortalitate animalium* and the bee charms in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts? Whereas the former is an appeal to God to interfere and change the course of nature, the latter is an attempt to interfere with the course of nature by entreating unspecified supernatural powers. Obviously these two 'solutions' are on the same continuum,

48 Geertz 1975, p. 72.

49 Thomas 1975, p. 96.

50 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 316 + Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 7193. *CLLA*, n. 610. For its edition, see *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*.

51 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.xxiii.1308-xxiv.1320, pp. 191-193.

52 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.xlii.1393-1397, p. 202.

53 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.xliii.1398-1401 and liv.1461-1470, pp. 203 and 212-213 respectively.

54 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.xliv.1402-1406, xlv.1407-1412, and xlvii.1418-1421, pp. 203, 204 and 205 respectively.

55 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.lxx.1539-lxxi.1543, p. 222.

56 *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, III.xc.1606, p. 233.

57 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 577, fol. 7r-v. On this codex, see Mordek 1995, pp. 774-779. For a discussion of the *Indiculus*, see Hen 2015, and see there for further bibliography.

and they both entice extraordinary intervention in everyday life. The elusive criteria that differentiate between them, and subsequently classify the one as a legitimate Christian act, and the other as a condemned magical practice, is not so much in the nature of the act itself, but in the eyes of the beholder.

Let me give just one more example to elucidate my point. In a treatise entitled 'A Book against Irrational Belief of the People about Hail and Thunder' (*Liber in contra insulsam vulgi opinionem de grandine et tonitrius*), Agobard of Lyon goes out of his way to refute the popular belief that certain *tempestarii* have the power to cause thunder- and hailstorms[58]. The exact same practice is described by the addition to the Florence *vade mecum* adduced above[59]. Who these *temepstarii* are, is not at all clear. Agobard, one should stress, does not associate them with paganism, or portray them, like many earlier authors, as remnants of an old and pagan magical lore. They could have been local men and women dabbling with magic, as suggested by Monica Blöcker[60]; but, as suggested by Rob Meens, Agobard's *temperstarii* were more probably local clerics, who pretended to control the weather and who exacted a kind of payment in return for their services – an aberrant clerical behaviour in the eyes of the rigorous bishop of Lyon[61].

Agobard's treatise against the *tempestarii* is, perhaps, the most conspicuous evidence of our inability to differentiate between magic and religion in the early Middle Ages. Any attempt to do so and to set up clear-cut boundaries, or to describe various supposedly magical practices in terms of 'survival', 'rise', or 'Christianisation', would result in a drastic simplification, not to say a travesty, of a much more complicated and nuanced situation. In ninth-century Lyon, as we have just seen, the categories of magic and religion were so inextricably mixed and confused that the perplexed bishop of the city had to gather his actions, arm himself with all the venomous arsenal of Christian admonition, and attack a practice that was otherwise sanctioned by various prayers, which were added by Benedict of Aniane (d. 821) at about the same time to the standard sacramentary of the Frankish Church[62].

58 See Agobard of Lyons, *De grandine et tonitruis*; On this treatise, see Jolivet 2006; Meens 2013.

59 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashburnham 82, fols. 16v-17r. On similar texts, see Juste and Chiu 2013.

60 Blöcker 1981.

61 Meens 2013, especially pp. 160-166.

62 Benedict of Aniane, *Supplementum*, XCIII.1366-1369, p. 449. On the *Supplementum*, see Hen 2001a, pp. 76-78, and see there for further bibliography. For a more recent attribution of the

The so-called magical minitexts that were inserted on flyleaves or scribbled on the margins of liturgical and para-liturgical manuscripts, some of which were adduced above, demonstrate the sheer vitality and persistence of social practices among the Christian population of the early medieval West. Although the worldview these minitexts represent was often condemned as unorthodox or simply pagan, the practices they prescribed were social customs, detached from the pagan religious world from which they were originated. As historians of early medieval society and culture, our tendency to concentrate on canonical texts and de-luxe manuscripts, the vast majority of which were composed, produced or commissioned with orthodoxy in mind, will only yield a partial picture of the society we are looking at. It is only by adding the analysis of minitexts and tattered small manuscripts that a more accurate picture of the social, cultural and legal reality will emerge. Minitexts, more than anything else, bring us closer to the living reality of the society in question – it is as if they warn us that something very important, especially to the people who scribbled them, is missing from our vision.

To sum up, when considering the nature of magic and magical practices in the early medieval West, one has to keep in mind that magic was closely intertwined with the Christianised worldview of the post-Roman world. Reality was more complicated, nuanced and multi-layered than the dichotomy suggested in past scholarship, and the magical minitexts we find in *vade mecum* handbooks for priests are, perhaps, the most eloquent witness to the blurred boundaries between everyday practices and religious ideology.

Supplementum to Theodulf of Orléans, see Ruffiot 2021.

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