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Some Notes on Liturgical Printing

By Daniel Berkeley Updike

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The word "liturgy," from which comes the word "liturgical," is derived from the Greek λειτουργία, signifying public worship, but in English its primitive meaning was the service of the Holy Eucharist, sometimes called the Divine Liturgy, because it is a service instituted by Christ Himself. There was, too, a secondary meaning, which has now obscured the original idea; it signified the set formularies for the conduct of divine service in the Christian Church. Liturgiology is the science, if it may so be called, which pertains to liturgies, their construction, peculiarities, forms, and use; and liturgical printing is that branch of typography which has to do with the arrangement and printing of such forms.

To understand liturgical printing as it is now practiced, we must know something of its typographic history, for it has retained the marks of that history to the present day. The first liturgical books were, of course, manuscripts, and although in the earliest of these there appear to have been scanty directions for the performance of divine service, when fuller directions came into use the writers had in some fashion to differentiate the words to be said or sung from the accompanying directions as to where, when, and how to say or sing them. The easiest way to show this was to write the words to be said in one color and the directions in another, the latter sometimes in a smaller letter as well. The words to be said, being of major importance, were written in black, and red was adopted for the directions. These directions, being rubricated, were by a transference of meaning called "rubrics." Apparently the word "rubrics" first appeared as applied to a liturgical book in a Roman breviary printed at Venice in 1550; but it occurs in manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. "*Lege rubrum, si vis intelligere nigrum,*" says the adage: "Read the red, if you wish to understand the black."

As early printed books were nothing more than a mechanical imitation of manuscripts, when liturgies came to be printed they followed the arrangement of liturgical manuscripts, with text in black and rubrics in red. The materials used for manuscripts and books differed--manuscripts being usually on vellum, printed books on paper--though even in printed missals vellum was often used for the canon of the Mass, since the pages devoted to this were subject to wear by constant handling. [1] Both in manuscripts and in printed missals, the canon was arranged in considerably larger type than the rest of the book, and the old name given to a large size of blackletter type, "canon," is a reminder of this. A smaller size was called "brevier," which was sometimes used for breviaries. For a very long period blackletter type with rubrication was altogether used for all such books; [2] but later roman type was adopted, with, however, precisely the same rules as to rubrication. A good deal later italic type (invented by Aldus about 1501) was, for economic considerations, employed to represent rubrics, as this avoided the necessity of printing in two colors; and this plan was adopted for inexpensive editions of liturgical books, though sometimes a very small size of roman type was used instead. This, in brief, is the story of the development of liturgical

printing.

Indeed, rubrical directions exist in the Bible--for instance, in the Psalms the word *Selah*, which appears to be some sort of musical direction, meaning, probably, an interlude. Whether any difference was made in the characters used for *Selah* in Hebrew manuscripts, I do not know, but it is a fact that the differentiation in the use of type in liturgical printing was not confined to Christian liturgies. In Hebrew modern books of devotion one finds the same thing. Rubrical directions are indicated by the insertion of a Hebrew character in outline, or by the use of a small size of the normal Hebrew character. Furthermore, the important sentences or words in the service are indicated by very large type, precisely as in Roman Catholic missals, or by setting certain words in capitals, as in the American *Book of Common Prayer*.

The earliest Greek Orthodox liturgical book printed in Russia was *Chasovnik*, a book of hours, issued at Moscow in 1565--the second earliest dated volume printed in Russia, the first being an edition of *The Acts of the Apostles* printed in 1564. These books were printed in the Cyrillic character, a letter derived from late Greek capital letters. Liturgical books of the Greek Orthodox Church appeared prior to that date outside of Muscovy, the earliest ones having been printed at the end of the fifteenth century in Poland--at Cracow in 1491. These, too, were printed in "Church Slavonic," using the Cyrillic character. [3]

Two modern books printed at Moscow are good examples of comparatively recent Greek liturgical printing, for under the Soviet regime such books are no longer produced. The first book mentioned is a service book (*Sluzhebnik*) of 1894, and the second (*Trebnik*), of 1906, is of the same nature. Both the *Sluzhebnik* and the *Trebnik* came from the press of the Synod Printing Office (*Sinodalnaya Tipografia*) of Moscow. These books are printed in red and black, and an illustration of a page in the *Sluzhebnik* volume is reproduced. Before the Revolution, the Synod Printing Offices of Moscow and of St. Petersburg were the chief printers of Greek Orthodox liturgies and of devotional works generally. Although the Moscow establishment came under the jurisdiction of the Most Holy Synod only in 1721, its history goes back to 1563; as for the St. Petersburg Printing Office, it was active for over two centuries prior to the Revolution, with some intervals.

As far as I have been able to examine the eighteenth-century books used in the services of the Orthodox Church, they are roughly put together and are not very good pieces of typography. But the rubrication in all these books, whether old or new, appears to be governed by the usual rule that words to be said are printed in black, and directions for their use in red, as in Roman Catholic and Anglican rubricated prayer books. When only black is employed, the rubrics are printed in a smaller size of type.

These Greek Orthodox service books are so unfamiliar to most English-speaking people that they have little practical value for the reader, except as showing the universality of certain methods of printing liturgical books. [4]

For liturgical printing, as English-speaking people know it, we have two sources--Roman Catholic liturgical books and the liturgies in use in the Anglican Communion. These differ in some particulars.

The printing of the authorized Roman Catholic books is chiefly in the hands of three publishing houses, Desclée & Cie of Tournai (otherwise known as the Société de St. Jean l'Évangéliste), Pustet of Ratisbon, and the Vatican Press, at Rome, about each of which something should be said.

The brothers Henri and Jules Desclée, who had already built a monastery on their property at Maredsons, Province of Namur, Belgium, founded a printing press in 1882 at Tournai, and under the name Société de St. Jean l'Évangéliste published a series of admirable liturgical works, arranged according to the best liturgical traditions, harmoniously decorated, and technically excellent. They had a part in the musical printing required in the movement for the reestablishment of the liturgical chant, inaugurated largely through the influence of the Benedictines of Solesmes. Their editions served as the basis of the Vatican edition ordered for universal use by Pius X.

In the Desclées' books the principle that the directions are to be printed in red and all else in black is consistently followed, and headings such as "Introit," "Gradual," "Epistle," or "Gospel," are rubricated, as

these are in a sense directions. Moreover, references to passages in the Old and New Testaments are rubricated, for they are merely guides to the verses quoted and would not be said. For the same reason, apparently, the running headlines describing the contents of the page below appear in red, for they, too, are directions as to the day, hour, or occasion of the service. But for purpose of convenience the headings of each new section on the page are printed in bold black capitals--which, while not absolutely consistent, is convenient for purpose of speedy reference. In these books the "Amen" to prayers is treated as a response--as it actually is--and is preceded by **R** in red in rubricated editions, and the words of all versicles--short sentences said by the officiant--are preceded by **V**. In the matter of initials there appears to be no fixed rule, and prayers begin with rubricated initials or black initials, as taste directs. I think this is a mistake. Strictly speaking, prayers should have initials in black, for these initials are part of a word to be said, and, moreover, black initials have a better typographical effect. Rubrics in these books have initials in black, which I think also open to exception, for rubrics, except in rare instances, require no initials; but if used, such initials should be rubricated also. A more serious fault is the introduction of gothic initials in prayers printed in roman type. As a whole, however, these books are consistent and careful pieces of typography.

The Pustet family was of Bavarian origin. In the first quarter of the last century Friedrich Pustet, who had been a bookseller, started a printing house at Passau which four years later, in 1826, he transferred to its present location at Ratisbon. Enlarging the establishment and adding a paper mill to the plant, the firm began to print and issue liturgical books in 1845, and later added facilities for the printing of church music. In 1870 the Pustet house was given the style of *Typographus S. R. Congregationis*, and the Vatican authorities have placed in its hands the *editio typica* of all liturgical work. The best books issued by Pustet are excellent, but their product is uneven and they have been less fortunate in their decorations than the Desclées, whose books show a greater uniform excellence. A disagreeable feature is the use of colored lithographic frontispieces and pictures, and a later series of these, intended to be more modern in feeling than those they supersede, are no improvement on them. "In the latest Pustet Missal," writes a correspondent learned in these matters, [5] "the *incipit* letter of the text itself is often in color, usually red. Another characteristic is the introduction into the Canon of certain parts of the varying *Communicantes* and *Hancigitur* prayers, to obviate turning the page at that important moment of the service. In general, this new Pustet Missal pays attention to the pagination of the prayers."

The Vatican Press (*Tipografia Vaticana*), founded by Pope Sixtus V in 1587, was housed in the palace in the building known as the *Cortile della Stamperia* and an interesting "specimen" of its types and characters for musical notation--*Indice de Caratteri, . . . esistenti nella Stampa Vaticana, & Camerale*--was published in 1628. Shortly afterward, the Congregation of the Propaganda established a separate printing office for the needs of missions, in which connection it issued, during the seventeenth century, a series of grammar-specimens of its various exotic alphabets, the first of which, *Alphabetum Ibericum*, appeared in 1629. This press later developed into the *Tipografia Polyglotta*. In 1910, Pope Pius X effected an amalgamation of the two, under the name *Tipografia Polyglotta Vaticana*, and arranged a modern and finely equipped plant. The new office prints the usual output of the Curia, especially the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, as well as the special choral editions of the liturgical chant, and the typical editions of the missal, breviary, ritual, and other service books.

The Vatican editions of plain song printed in one color, italic being used for the rubrics, are practical, workmanlike, and handsome; they are well adapted for what they are meant for. "The typical editions of the Vatican Press have the custom of printing the top of the page in red for the title--for example, *Praefatio solemnis in festo Sancti Josephi*, but using black for this same title as a heading for the actual preface itself. Furthermore, in the actual directions, when a text is referred to by name, the text itself is printed in black. For example, 'Dicto Pater Noster et Credo,' the underlined words are in black, the others in red"--precisely the use in rubricated English prayer books. To persons wishing to consult authoritative Roman Catholic liturgical books, the Desclées' publications will serve the purpose best. The books to be looked at are the *Missal*, *Breviary* (in four volumes for the four seasons), *Rituale*, and *Officium Majoris Hebdomadae* (Offices for Holy Week).

For Anglican prayer books the three authorized houses are the University Press, Oxford, the University

Press, Cambridge, and the King's Printers. These have in the Anglican Communion much the same authority as the publications of Tournai, Ratisbon, and Rome in the Roman Catholic Church.

Solemnization of Matrimony

Yea, and thou shalt send thy children's children: and peace upon Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

¶ Or this Psalm.

Deus in
terram
sicut

DEUS be merciful unto us, and bless us: and show us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us.

That thy way may be known upon earth: thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad: for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

God shall bless us: and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

¶ The Psalm ended, and the Man and the Woman kneeling before the Lord's Table, the Priest standing at the Table, and turning his face towards them, shall say,

Lord, have mercy upon us

Answer. Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister. Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUT Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Minister. O Lord, save thy servant, and thy handmaid;

Answer. Who put their trust in thee.

Minister. O Lord, send them help from thy holy place;

Answer. And evermore defend them.

Minister. Be unto them a tower of strength;

Answer. From the face of their enemy.

Minister. O Lord, hear our prayer;

Answer. And let our cry come unto thee.

Et c. Minister.

The chief of these three houses is the Oxford University Press, [Fig. 3] which dates from about 1517, though there was a long interruption in its work and it was only in 1585 that it began its present function. Its chief promoters were Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester; Archbishop Laud, who secured for it a royal charter; Dr. John Fell, Dean of Christ Church, and later Bishop of Oxford; and Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon. The printing of Bibles and prayer books was secured to the University in 1675, largely through Fell's efforts. Its present equipment numbers some 550 fonts in 150 characters, a foundry, a bindery, a paper mill, etc. It is governed by a body styled "delegates," headed by the vice chancellor. In its prayer books "every attention has been paid to accuracy and excellence of printing and binding, to the provision of editions suited to every purpose and every eyesight, and to the efficient and economical distribution of the books all over the world at low prices. In all these respects a standard has been reached which is unknown in any other kind of printing and publishing, and which is only made possible by long experience, continuous production, and intensive specialization." [6] Of the hundred editions of the prayer book, the

Coronation prayer book of 1902 in octavo and the Fell prayer books are perhaps the best known, but the smaller editions are often exquisite though unobtrusive specimens of printing. Just as the Roman Catholic books of devotion continue to need constant additions through the canonization of new saints, so "the accession of a sovereign makes it necessary to print a large number of cancel sheets, which have to be substituted for the old sheets in all copies held in stock or in the hands of booksellers." [7]

The Cambridge University Press, now four hundred years old, has printed Bibles and prayer books since early in the seventeenth century. Baskerville produced for this press, in the eighteenth century, some prayer books, more remarkable because he printed them than for any merit of their own. Creditable as are the Cambridge books and those issued by the King's Printers, Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, I should recommend the consultation of the Oxford prayer books to students of English liturgical printing.

The Anglican use in printing these official prayer books differs from the Roman use only in minor details, the chief of which is its employment of italic for responses, eliminating the use of **R** before each response. Italic even in rubricated editions of a prayer book has in Anglican books come to signify something not readily signified otherwise, i.e., a response, as, for instance, the responses to the suffrages in the Litany, and to the versicles in Matins and Evensong, and "Amen" when said by the people. For the printing of Protestant orders of service this use of italic is desirable, for to the average congregation the **X** and **R** would be unknown, but when a response is printed in italic the **R** mark should be omitted. The rule that italic should never be rubricated still holds. In both Roman and Anglican uses, notes indicating references to the Bible which are not said are rubricated. In the folio Oxford prayer books the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel are printed in full measure and, as far as may be, on facing pages, enabling the book to be carried, open, from the "Epistle" to the "Gospel" side of the altar. The quarto prayer books are printed in the traditional double column, which in liturgical books saves space and avoids ragged pages. Both editions are printed from the celebrated types given to the University by Bishop Fell, and are duly rubricated, but are disfigured by the introduction of a ponderous series of seventeenth-century Dutch

"bloomers," as that kind of initial letter is called, mixed with free initials, both kinds being rubricated. A better piece of printing is the octavo Coronation prayer book, [8] also from Fell types, issued in 1902--though a bad fault is the rubrication of italic in the catechism. There are also a number of liturgical books issued by Anglican convents, private societies, or persons, which, while having no authority, are interesting pieces of typography.

So far our attention has been given to rituals of liturgical and historic churches. But modern Protestantism is more and more leaning to liturgical forms, either for constant use or for certain occasions. Protestant "orders of service" offer no great difference in typographic treatment from services in the *Book of Common Prayer*, except that they very often introduce the names of those taking part in them, composers of the music, the words of hymns, or anthems that are sung. [9] The prayers, being extempore, cannot be printed, and for that reason these "orders of service" lean toward the form of programs, and the endeavor should be to avoid this as much as possible. As far as feasible, everything that can be ascertained beforehand should be printed in full, and the names of those taking part in the service should be as inconspicuous as possible and grouped on a separate page. Decoration should be omitted, and, above all, the indiscriminate use of crosses avoided. Further than this it is not possible to give any very detailed directions, as each service is a problem in itself. In general, what is said should be made of the first, and who says it of secondary, importance.

A wise lady of my acquaintance once remarked that although moral laws were clear, simple, and explicit, the cases to which they could be applied in their entirety were few; and she added that this was because the circumstances or situations to which they were applicable were in themselves often confused and complex. I am reminded of this dictum in connection with our subject, for while it seems simple to say that all directions in a liturgy should be rubricated and all else printed in black, along with the understanding of a difference between liturgy and rubrics there must be some knowledge of the particular liturgy in question, *as it is used*. This knowledge demands some further acquaintance with the theological views implied or expressed therein, and I doubt whether a printer unfamiliar with the ritual of the historic communions could acceptably print services for them. Certain theological views lead to certain acts; and these acts have to be expressed by certain words used in certain ways, and these words and ways have to be fostered, or at least not impeded, by the typography that presents them. Nor are rules for rubrication, etc., simple from another point of view: they cannot always be pushed to an absolutely logical conclusion without doing violence to the appearance and convenience of the book when in use. So while such systems are of very general application, there are "exceptional exceptions," and one must know when these are allowable. The following axioms may be of practical use to persons to whose lot it falls to prepare for printing, or to print, liturgical work.

Concerning Type

1. Roman initial letters, either free or block, should be used with prayers set in roman; and gothic initials if prayers are set in blackletter.
2. Rubrics at the beginning of an office or service do not require initials, the initial occurring in the first prayer following the rubric. But, if used, the initials should be printed in red.
3. Paragraph marks before rubrics may be printed either in red or black, but when a number of rubrics follow each other, black paragraph marks separate them from one another more clearly. In some Roman Catholic books a black arabic figure is substituted for the paragraph mark, but then only when a considerable number of rubrics follow each other.
4. When it is intended to indicate a versicle and its response, *V* and *R* marks should be used in either red or black. But in Protestant services, as these marks are unfamiliar, the words *Minister*, *People*, etc., may be employed, printed in italic.
5. Italic, being a substitute for rubrication, should never be rubricated.
6. "Amen" when said by the people should be printed in italic in a service printed in one color, but when said by the clergy only should be printed in roman. Note that in Roman Catholic services the "Amen" is preceded by *R* in red or black when said by the people.
7. A Maltese cross ☩ is a sign of blessing and should never be used except to denote that the sign of

the cross is to be made. Almost the only exception is its use in the singing of the Passion in Holy Week, when it indicates the words of our Lord; or before the printed signature of a bishop.

8. Prayers, psalms, hymns, etc., must be set throughout in the same size of type and with the same leading; and rubrics must follow this rule and be uniform throughout the work.
9. While blackletter may be used for titles or display lines on title-pages, or for running titles, it should never be used for prayers in a liturgy to be publicly used.
10. The use of colored inks to indicate liturgical seasons (i.e., violet for Lent) is always to be avoided.

Concerning Arrangement

11. A rubric should be on the same page with the prayer, etc., to which it refers, and should be closer to the text following than to the matter preceding it.
12. The breaks caused by the turning of a leaf should occur, if possible, at the end of prayers that are followed by anthems or hymns.
13. "Turnovers" should be avoided during prayers, psalms, or lections. But turnovers during music are less objectionable than during portions of the service which are said or intoned.
14. A versicle should never have its response appear on another page.
15. In Anglican services the canon and the prayers following should always appear on pages facing each other, unless the Roman use is followed of a facing representation of the crucifixion.
16. The traditional form of service books was in double column, probably adopted by calligraphers to save space, and to avoid blanks by short lines on a wide page. For books of private devotion this is allowable. In books for public use, however, a full-page measure is preferable, since it is easier to follow. In the Roman Catholic missal, the canon is probably for this reason sometimes printed full measure, though the remainder of the service is set in double column. This also applies to the arrangement of plain song, which must be set in full measure for the same reason.

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Here these notes on liturgical printing end. So little of a practical nature has been written in English on the subject that they may be a slight contribution to a codification of the rules applying to it. In an age when there seem to be more questions than answers, it may be asked what need there is of such minute rules at all. But in this instance there is an answer. It was made by St. Paul when he said to the Church at Corinth, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

NOTES

[Please observe that it is possible to return to the footnote number in the text by clicking on the left-arrow button at the end of each note.]

1. "In modern times the sheets containing Matins, Evensong, the Litany and Psalter are issued separately for renewing the great and more costly editions of the Prayer Book used by the minister in English churches." Wordsworth and Littlehale, *Old Service Books of the English Church*, p. 268. 
2. *The Directorium Sacerdotum or Rules called the Pye*, printed in black-letter, unrubricated, was so called because it was all black and white--magpie colors, if black and white may be styled colors. 
3. For an account of the beginnings of Russian printing--chiefly confined to liturgical or religious books--see a paper in *The Library Quarterly*, Chicago, 1931, vol. 1, no. 3.

I am indebted to Mr. A. Yarmolinsky of the New York Public Library for this reference and for the titles of the two modern books referred to and information regarding them. 

4. Those interested in the subject should consult *The Greek Liturgies, chiefly from Original Authorities*. Edited by C. A. Swainson. Cambridge, 1884. See chap. i, "Printed Editions of the Greek Liturgies," and chap. ii, "Liturgical Manuscripts."

A very fine book of this sort containing the magnificent liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom, in Greek, with a Latin translation, was printed by Morel of Paris, in 1560, in one color, from the Royal Greek types, the rubrics in these Greek liturgies being distinguished by a small Greek character justified into the lines of text, and by a tiny italic in the Latin translation. A feature, also, of the Latin versions is the printing of the words *Sacerdos*, *Diaconus*, *Populus*, in spaced capitals, above the text, much as if they were speakers in a drama. 

5. The Rev. John E. Sexton, of St. John's Ecclesiastical Seminary, Brighton, Massachusetts, to whom I am indebted for this and much other information in reference to Roman Catholic Liturgical printing. 
6. *Some Account of the Oxford University Press*, Oxford, 1926, pp. 65 and 68. 
7. *Oxford University Press*, p. 68. 
8. So called because the form for the Coronation of Edward VII is added. 
9. An excellent example of simple liturgical printing for Protestant orders of service is published by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education (1932), entitled *The Book of Common Worship (revised) Approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. For Voluntary Use*. In arrangement it is much like the *Book of Common Prayer*, on which it is obviously modeled. 