sphere. Perhaps would-be Christian scholars need to take a page out of the feminist playbook and, to paraphrase Alice Echols, dare to be bad.

Christopher Shannon
Christendom College

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Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium. by **Derek Kreuger**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. xi + 311 pp. $75.00 cloth; $75.00 e-book.

Derek Krueger, the Joe Rosenthal Excellence Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, offers a pioneering contribution to the study and definition of Christian self-identity in the Byzantine world. *Liturgical Subjects* is pioneering because the author underlines the centrality and importance of the liturgical experience in our understanding of the Byzantine world and culture, and he masterfully highlights the formative power of liturgy. As a historian of Christian culture in Late Antiquity and Byzantium, not only does Krueger offer an engaging approach to the Byzantine self, but also points to a new direction in the field of Byzantine liturgical studies: the necessary philological (what are the texts) and comparative liturgical (what is the history of these texts) methodologies are beautifully complimented by Krueger's exploration of the formative power of liturgical texts on the Byzantine religious subject (what do the texts do).

Krueger presents his material in a very engaging way, providing the reader with a chronological sweep of the sixth to the eleventh centuries through a series of case studies, which make the book succinct, lucid, clear, convincing, and manageable, even for the uninitiated. After chapter one, which serves as an introduction to his methodology, chapter two looks at the work of Romanos the Melodist (sixth century) and the hymnological genre of the *kontakion* in which he composed; chapter three explores the Byzantine liturgical year and its major feasts through the *kontakia* of Romanos. Then, chapter four focuses on the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and particularly on the Anaphorae or the Eucharistic Prayers; chapter five takes us to the late seventh or early eighth century and the examination of the *Great Canon* composed by Andrew of Crete; chapter six focuses upon the Studite Lenten hymnography of the ninth century; chapter seven examines the preaching of Symeon the New Theologian at the turn of the first millennium. In putting

everything together in his conclusion, Krueger states: "Byzantine liturgists preferred performances of a *disordered* self, wracked with remorse, bewailing its past, overwrought with inwardly directed grief" (221).

While the use of case studies enables the author to cover a lot of ground chronologically and present a well-argued thesis, the choice of the case studies colors the conclusions. For example, hymns examined, particularly the Great Canon of Andrew of Crete and the hymns of the Triodion, do "teach penance" and "ritualize the worshipper's self-expression as penitent" (220), but they have to be seen in conjunction with the hymns of Easter and the period of Pentecost that affirm salvation, that speak of salvation as a given.

There might also be an alternative understanding of the role of the Eucharistic prayers in the Byzantine liturgical tradition (chapter four). Krueger makes mention of Justinian's *Neara* 137, which tried to enforce the audible recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer, and argues that "it was the recitation of salvation history in particular that Justinian's law expected would prompt compunction. . . . The law of 656 thus confirms the essentially penitential character of early Byzantine Eucharistic worship" (112). One could argue, however, that early Byzantine Eucharistic worship in particular is not penitential; on the contrary, it is celebratory. Byzantine Eucharistic prayers speak of salvation as a given (see the preface of the anaphora of Chrysostom); the detailed recitation of salvation history in the anaphora of Basil is an affirmation of salvation in Christ, the conquest and forgiveness of sin, and the faithful's participation in the Kingdom of God. *Neara* 137 is concerned with the formative power of the Eucharistic prayer and does speak of compunction, but compunction is not the sole purpose of the legislators: according to *Neara* 137, the audible recitation of the anaphora leads not only to κατάνυξις (compunction), but also to δοξολογία (doxology), οἰκοδομή (build-up, growth in spiritual life), πίστις ἐν καρδίᾳ εἰς δικαιοσύνην (faith in the heart unto justification) and ὁμολογία στόματι εἰς σωτηρίαν (confession/declaration with the mouth unto salvation).

But of course this formative role and celebratory character of liturgical prayer becomes mute when the anaphora is recited inaudibly. The texts of the anaphorae of CHR and BAS, so rich in theological meaning, summarizing the Gospel and defining how one is to understand and approach the Eucharist as a celebration of salvation, are not heard anymore. What is observed then is the loss of the *most* important formative text for the vast majority of believers. The *silent* recitation of the anaphora, together with shifts in the frequency of Eucharistic participation and penitential practices associated with, is it what leads to the formation of "introspective and penitential subjects" (108), *not* the anaphora and its content.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned thoughts, *Liturgical Subjects* is a great contribution to the field of Byzantine Studies and thus highly recommended, as

it pushes research towards new directions through its approach; for the historian of Late Antiquity and Byzantium, it highlights the significant place of liturgy in Byzantine life and culture and moves liturgy from the periphery of the discussion of things Byzantine to its very center; for the Byzantine liturgical historian, it is a call to move beyond the presentation and history of liturgical texts and rites to the deeper study of the effect and formative power of these texts on the Byzantine worshipper; for both, it is a call for an active dialogue among the various disciplines in Byzantine Studies.

Stefanos Alexopoulos
Catholic University of America

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John Moschos'* Spiritual Meadow: *Authority and Autonomy at the End of the Antique World. By **Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen**. Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2014. xv + 181 pp. $149.95 cloth.

In *John Moschos*' Spiritual Meadow: *Authority and Autonomy at the End of the Antique World*, Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen takes on the difficult and intriguing task of extracting social history from Moschos's famous collection of beneficial tales. The work in question was popular in its own day and remains a key literary source for Syrian and Judean monasticism in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. However, due to the challenges posed to scholars by the lack of a critical edition of the Greek text(s), Moschos's work has received less attention than it merits. Writing at length about the *Meadow* at all is therefore notable, but Ihssen's focus on the monks' humanity and social context is especially unusual, and she is successful in using the text to reflect on Christian society in the eastern Mediterranean circa 600 C.E.

Using literary analysis of the tales, Ihssen's "concern is how a particular edifying and beneficial tale reveals to us what mattered for the author and audience roughly contemporary with the text" (14). To do this, Ihssen unpacks several dozen tales over the course of this volume, often using other late antique texts as parallels. She also draws upon a wide variety of modern scholarship—including theory, history, theology, and medicine—to support her interpretations and to bring different, larger academic discussions into dialogue with one another.

After a brief personal preface (ix–x) and historical introduction (1–17), Ihssen structures her 144 pages of argument around four thematic threads that run throughout the beneficial tales: asceticism, money, illness, and