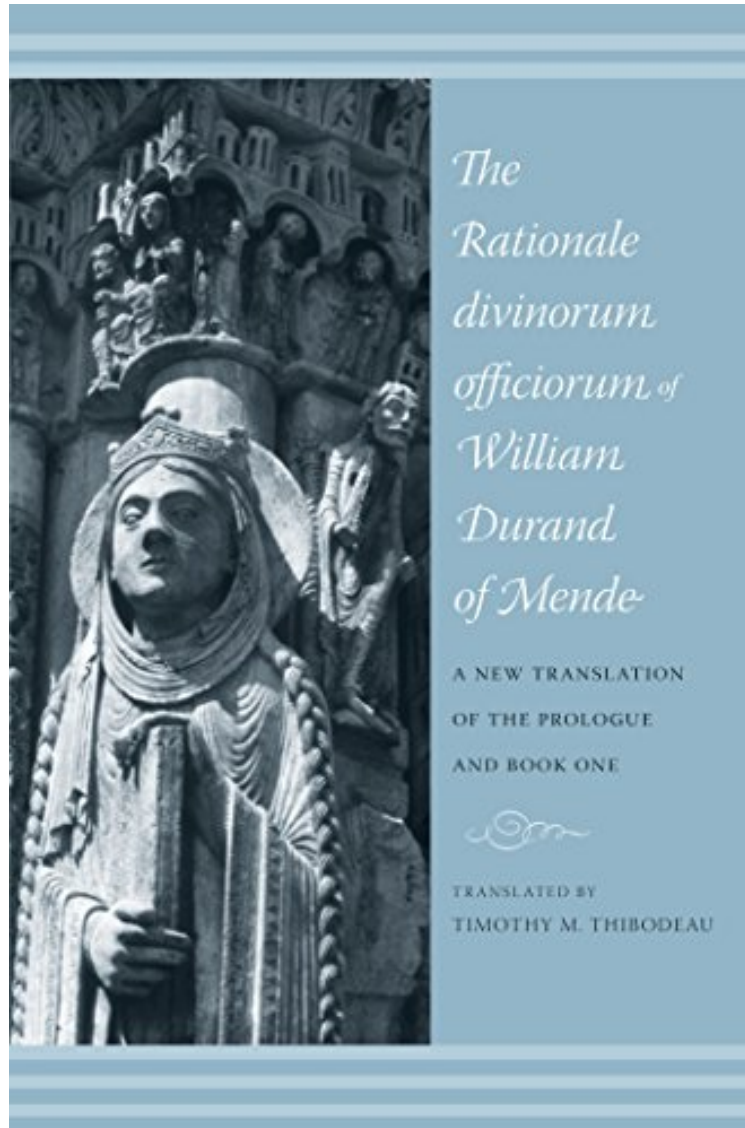


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The *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* is arguably the most important medieval treatise on the symbolism of church architecture and rituals of worship. Written by the French bishop William Durand of Mende (1230-1296), the treatise is ranked with the Bible as one of the most frequently copied and disseminated texts in all of medieval Christianity. It served as an encyclopedic compendium and textbook for liturgists and remains an indispensable guide for understanding the significance of medieval ecclesiastical art and worship ceremonies. This book marks the first English translation of the prologue and book one of the *Rationale* in almost two centuries. Timothy M. Thibodeau begins with a brief biography of William Durand and a discussion of the importance of the work during its time. Thibodeau compares previous translations of the *Rationale* in the medieval period and afterward. Then he presents his translation of the prologue and book one. The prologue discusses the principles of allegorical interpretation of the liturgy, while book one features detailed descriptions of the various parts of the church and its ecclesiastical ornaments. It also features extensive commentary on cemeteries, various rites of consecration and dedication, and a discussion of the sacraments. Thibodeau is a well-respected historian who has published extensively on the history of Christianity and the liturgy of the medieval Church. He is also coeditor of the critical edition of the *Rationale* in Latin. His translation is an indispensable guide for both scholars and general readers who hope to gain a richer understanding of medieval art, architecture, and culture.

We are indebted to Thibodeau for making this accessible to students and scholars, and the more general reader, for a long time to come. (Kenneth Stevenson *Journal of Theological Studies*) [Thibodeau's] long and close engagement with the text is... unrivalled in undertaking an English translation of the prologue and first book. (*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*)
About the Author
Timothy M. Thibodeau is professor of history at Nazareth College of Rochester, New York. He earned a B.A. in history from the University of Maine, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in medieval history from the University of Notre Dame.