

Harper, Sally; Barnwell, P. S.; Williamson, Magnus (Hrsg.): *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted. The Experience of Worship in Cathedral and Parish Church*. Farnham: Ashgate 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4724-4137-9; XXVI, 349 S.

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This volume is the result of a series of enactments of late medieval liturgies from 2008–2013 carried out as part of a collaborative AHRC and ESRC research project „The Experience of Worship in Late Medieval Cathedral and Parish Church“. The principle sites for the staging of the liturgies were Salisbury Cathedral and the small relocated medieval parish church of St Teilo in Wales. The volume, which focuses on English liturgy, and more specifically on the Sarum rite, is accompanied by a website with a variety of additional resources, including texts of the rite and rubrics used, and videos of the enactments.¹

The volume is divided into five parts. The first reflects on the experience of late medieval worship in medieval church buildings. The second addresses the dynamics of ‘recreating’ past material cultures, including a chapter on the process of relocating the parish Church of St Teilo to St Fagans Museum and a chapter by Sally Harper on the processes of making and using vestments, choir lectern, benches and stools, and liturgical utensils, including the pax-board – an object which engenders significant interest throughout the volume. The section concludes with a discussion of a new organ made for the church of St Teilo by Dominic Gwynne which will be of interest to historically-minded organ builders. Moving from the material to text and performance, the later contributions of this section include some of the most important reflections on the practicalities of the liturgy in the volume. Matthew Cheung Salisbury contributes a useful piece on establishing the liturgical text used in the reenactment, and Sally and John Harper collaborate to reflect on the ways the preparation of the rite for the enactment drew to the surface multiple questions of how standard rites were appropriated in local contexts. Magnus Williamson closes this section with

a survey of the significant and varied musical resources of the pre-Reformation parish – a welcome addition which could provide a frame for comparisons beyond the British context.

The third part is the most traditionally historical, encompassing three case studies devoted to the choir of Salisbury Cathedral (Roger Bowers), the practice of Tudor descanters (Jane Flynn), and the cult of the Holy Name of Jesus (Judith Aveling). Of particular interest here is the thesis developed by Bowers that the years before the Reformation were „perhaps the most eventful century“ in the history of the cathedral’s choir, seeing a significant reduction in adult voices, the increased importance of polyphony, and the institution of a mixed choir of boys and men. Flynn’s survey of the cult of the Holy Name of Jesus in Britain makes a number of important points, but like the other contributions in this section is only loosely connected to the aims of the volume. In the light of his study, there is significant scope for broader comparisons with a wider European culture of reverencing the Holy Name, especially given the importance of figures like Heinrich de Suso or Bernadino of Siena for understanding the devotional life of the fifteenth century.

The fourth section of the volume places the experience of the medieval liturgy in dialogue with the experiences of participants in the modern enactments. The final three chapters address in some further detail the theoretical questions raised by using experience as a category for approaching medieval liturgies in the present. The most productive contributions here, and throughout the volume, draw out the ways that scholarship on liturgy requires thinking carefully about the embodied experiences of ritual action. These reflections are stimulated throughout by the practical questions raised by attempting to perform liturgical scripts in very different spaces. P. S. Barnwell’s contributions on the late medieval Mass, for example, outline the problems with scholarship that sees the laity solely as „spectators“ to the liturgy, as well as thinking carefully about varieties of experience for other participants in liturgical action, be they assis-

¹ <http://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/> (19.07.2017).

tants, servers, priests, or choristers.

The most useful and direct theoretical engagement comes in Nils Holger Petersen's excellent reflections on the historical hermeneutics of performance, which do not quite harmonise with the remainder of the project. For Pietersen, who sees the questions raised by historical enactments as representative of wider questions of historical hermeneutics, „what is historical about the enactment is not the actual enactment, but the notion that the ceremonies in question were, historically, neither written material or a combination of a particular space and written material, but were indeed performative events themselves.“ Performance provides „participants and spectators with a framework within which the possibilities of various experiences can be discussed“, prompting a return to the historical liturgy with new questions. Petersen's arguments concerning the ways that enactment can prompt further historical reflection could be taken as programmatic for further research projects which might extend the insights of this project to continental Europe, or place the medieval liturgy in comparative perspective with ritual practices in other times and places.

As it is, the current volume reads very much like a progress report on a project which is not yet finished. One fascinating area which is not addressed sufficiently is the rich material generated by the reflective diaries of those who participated in the enactments. These are not sources that will in any simple way deepen our understanding of medieval subjectivities, but they do provide insights into the ways in which modern subjects situate themselves in relation to the medieval – a medievalist anthropological project is waiting to happen here. And hopefully subsequent work will widen the scope of inquiry to include dialogue with the rich scholarship in the history of emotions, for example, or, more recently, work in the anthropology and history of the senses, a site where liturgical practices have been at the forefront of scholarship (for example: Bissera Pentcheva's „The Sensual Icon“, Eric Palazzo's „L'invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Age“, and the work of the archeologist Yannis Hamilakis, where orthodox liturgy is explic-

itly evoked to develop a theory of sensoriality).

The reader who engages with *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted* will find considerable food for thought about how historical doing can contribute to historical knowing. But, as always, more remains to be both done and known.

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