

Brand, Benjamin: *Holy Treasure and Sacred Song. Relic Cults and Their Liturgies in Medieval Tuscany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014. ISBN: 978-0-19-935135-0; XXII, 296 S.

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„Holy Treasure and Sacred Song“ is an interdisciplinary monograph in which the author, Benjamin Brand, displays his profound knowledge of Medieval Tuscany in various fields of research (hagiography, liturgy, music, architecture, history). Such subject matters were deeply bound together in Medieval thought, though their commonalities are often difficult to perceive nowadays. The book manages to offer a wide-scope view using a robust methodological process, which sets an example for future research.

The volume's underlying theme, relic cults and their liturgies, allows us to indirectly follow the developments and shifts in the balance of powers which followed one another in Tuscan cathedrals between the 8th and 13th centuries, where the relations between bishops and cathedral chapters mirrored the rapport between the Papacy and the Empire, Church reform and the birth of the *comune*. In their liturgical-musical repertoire, the manuscripts studied by the author, silent witnesses of these circumstances, reflect a different attitude towards the celebration of saints, whose relics were jealously enshrined in cathedrals.

The book is made up of two parts with an introduction (chapter I) where the author reflects upon methodology, the aims of his research and the results he manages to accomplish. The first part, which is primarily historical, is centred upon the role of the bishop, and analyses continuity trends, changes and the decline of his role as the *dominus et constructor*. Each of the three chapters reviews a particular time frame by offering – at the same time – real examples that are supported by the study of hagiographical texts such as the *passiones*, saints' lives and relic translations. In „The Bishop's Relics, 759–899“, John I Bishop of Lucca (780–800) perfectly embodies the hegemonic characteristics of the *dominus et constructor*, in a sort of unbroken thread with Late Antique bishops in their role as *defen-*

sores civitatis. In the following two chapters, „The Bishop's Clergy (840–1039)“ and „The Bishop's Eclipse (1032–1118)“, the rise of new internal forces such as the strengthening of cathedral chapters and the subsequent birth of the *comune*, or the increase of external influences (reformed monastic movements supported by the papacy), break that balance.

The increasing importance of cathedral chapters during the Middle Ages is the fil rouge in the second part of the book („Ecclesia matrix“), in which the historical element is supported by the larger number of available liturgical manuscripts. Inspired by the analysis of *libri ordinarii*, Brand underlines how the cult and liturgy of relics really are an expression of this process, in which bishops are no longer the city's protectors; rather, their role is supplanted by the canons – the sole depositaries of the diocese's liturgy – with the intercession of patron saints.

Chapter 5 is a complex section of the book („The Cathedral Chapters, Their Churches and Their Liturgies). It introduces the reader to the manuscript source which the author makes the greatest use of: the ordinary of the mass. After a brief typological description, the author lists Tuscan *libri ordinarii*¹ and underlines their internal relations and possible external influxes (citations from Burchard of Worms, Amalarius of Metz, Honorius of Regensburg, John Beleth or Sicard of Cremona). Following is a description of the well-known phenomenon of the multiplication and privatization of altars and chapels within cathedrals.

In chapters 6 („Public Drama in the Mass“) and 7 („Sacred Narrative in the Divine Office“), the author deals with the analysis of the rites and chants for Mass and Office. Brand demonstrates how during the former, the participation of laymen and their oblations played a major role in the choice of readings and music. The chants had a markedly dramatizing intent, aimed at an increasing the assembly's involvement. In the first case, the mass for the dedication of a church to Saint Martin (mainly in Lucca and Pistoia) and Saint

¹ To be added to this list is München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 16104a, which was probably copied in the early 13th century for Saint Fridianus in Lucca and was then brought to Saint Nicholas in Passau.

Donatus, offer dramatization elements. In the last chapter, Brand concentrates on the analysis of the offices for saints Miniatus, Zenobius, Donatus, Fridianus and Regulus. The texts taken from their hagiographical legends are also analyzed from the point of view of musical composition. Brand convincingly demonstrates how these offices were created *ex novo* in a precise historical period, rather than during a long process in which pre-existing texts had been substituted.

The book ends with a rich analytical index and a list of chants coupled with their musical transcription.

I would like to conclude with a palaeographical/musical observation which does not invalidate the work's unquestionable overall value. While discussing an antiphon found in a Pontifical now preserved in Lucca (Biblioteca Capitolare, 607), Brand states that „a canon of St. Martin (one might reasonably speculate) added the notation to the Ordo“ (p. 94). However, the neumes „in campo aperto“ are clearly of a Germanic origin and contemporary to the text², as can be seen in picture 4.3. The script, too, seems to indicate that the manuscript was produced in Germany.

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² The fact that no space had been left to insert melismas is not a sufficient argument to demonstrate the fact that the notation is later than the text.