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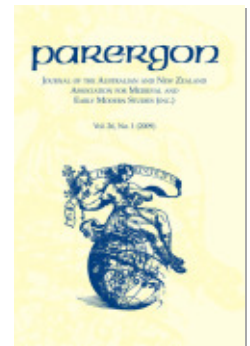
*The Feast of Corpus Christi* (review)

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successfully challenges notions that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed an evolution from 'medieval' to 'early modern' modes of socio-political relations among the nobility.

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**Walters**, Barbara R., Vincent Justus **Corrigan** and Peter T. **Ricketts**, *The Feast of Corpus Christi*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006; cloth; pp. xviii, 562; R.R.P. US\$77.00; ISBN 9780271029245.

A revival of interest in the liturgy and a recognition of the role feasts such as Corpus Christi and its associated processions, guilds and plays filled in community life across Europe in the later Middle Ages has been developing over the last two decades. Variation in the liturgical practices of different provinces and dioceses, however, means that the texts and the music for any feast differ from place to place. Corpus Christi, as the last major feast established in the Middle Ages, has fewer versions, but nonetheless a complex set of manuscript sources survive. Seven of these, 'generally regarded as the central musical sources for the Corpus Christi office' (p. 77), have now been fully transcribed and annotated.

Professor Walters, with the expert assistance of musicologist Professor Vincent Corrigan, and French professor Peter T. Ricketts, has produced an indispensable critical edition of these liturgical manuscripts and their music for the feast together with a translation of the texts into English and the chants into modern musical notation. To this is added a transcription and translation of the poems of the 'Mosan' Psalters. These are biblical poems included in Psalters that come from Liège in the thirteenth century and were produced by the Beguines under the influence of the Dominicans. There are short introductions to the context that produced the new feast, especially the life of Juliana of Cornillon, and to the manuscripts edited but, comparatively little on the wider liturgical scene.

This is a specialist work but it provides some insights for medieval scholars generally into the working of both religious and secular society, especially in and around Liège at the period when the principal promoter of the new feast, Juliana of Mont Cornillon, was living. Her role in the composition of an office for the new feast also casts light on the wide knowledge that a

woman might have of theological works. Since the nature of the Eucharist was one of the critical issues that divided Catholics and Protestants in the Reformation, historians of religion who read the twelfth century doctrinal texts included in her version of the office, may find that a feast which was performed annually was an important source that ordinary people could draw on for their understanding of the nature of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass.

The volume will be an essential source for musical and liturgical scholars, although it makes no reference to rubrics, illustrations or other indications of the 'mise en scène', and so casts little light on ritual movements or the procession that was commonly associated with the service in many places. It is tightly focussed on the plainchant and musical historians will not find any reference to polyphony, harmony, dissonance and other changes occurring round about the same time as the new feast.

The presentation makes it difficult for the non-specialist reader to appreciate the argument. The discussion of the theory of three offices would be clearer if 'the profound reorganizations of the lections' (p. 59) for the feast were spelled out as well as the role of musical items in confirming the hypothesis. There are eight tables that index and cross-reference the seven manuscripts in a variety of ways, giving the titles of the music, the service at which they were performed, the pitch (according to John R. Bryden and David Hughes' code), the mode and any concordances. Whether they will, as claimed, enable future scholars to 'navigate with ease' (p. 58) through the manuscripts may be doubtful, but the information is there.

The first major office presented is the one attributed to Juliana. *Animarum cibus* is identified as a secular office based on twelfth century doctrinal texts about the Eucharist, including those of Hugh of St Victor and Gratian, and set to music. The second office, *Sapiencia [a]edificavit sibi* [SAS], was for monastic use and based entirely on biblical texts. The third, *Sacerdos in [a]eternum* [SIA], which is attributed to Aquinas, was also a secular office and became the official Roman office. The various manuscripts in which these texts appear have been analysed by earlier scholars whose work the present authors recognize as a cornerstone of their own. Walters agrees that SAS and SIA have a close relationship but she thinks that there is evidence for 'some independence' (p. 67), which is illustrated in a long and exhaustive table.

Some questions remain in this reviewer's mind. The seven privileged manuscripts probably pre-date 1320 but there is no discussion of why some

other significant early manuscripts, especially the Poissy Antiphonal (now in Melbourne) written in 1335-45 for, and perhaps by, Dominican nuns, are omitted. It is also surprising in so substantial a volume that there is no introductory section that considers some of the surviving controversial aspects of converting the neumes of medieval plainchant into present day musical notation.

Professor Corrigan, in his detailed consideration of the seven central manuscripts makes passing reference to issues of transcription, especially in relation to Graz 134 where there are problems of notation, but he does not explain his regular practice. While some things are reasonably evident to anyone with some experience in singing plainchant (such as the absence of key or time signatures since the pitch of plainchant is relative) one might, nevertheless, expect some consideration of how rhythm and stress are included. For example, the significance of the occasional use of a b Flat (e.g. p. 183) if medieval practice is to be represented is unclear to me. Since there is no reproduction of an original page from any of the manuscripts the transcription must be taken on trust. It would also have been useful if Corrigan had set his practice in the context of recent debate and books omitted from the bibliography, such as those of Carl Parrish, on whose interpretations many still rely.

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