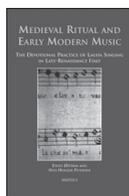


## Book Reviews



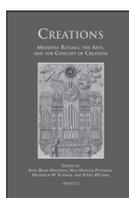
### RITUS ET ARTES: TRADITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

#### Vol. 1

Eyolf Østrem and Nils Holger Petersen, *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music. The Devotional Practice of Lauda Singing in Late-Renaissance Italy*

Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, viii + 348 pp., illus., music exx.

ISBN 978-2-503-52066-7, EUR 60



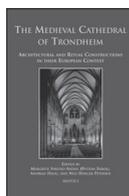
#### Vol. 2

Sven Rune Havsteen, Nils Holger Petersen, Heinrich W. Schwab, and Eyolf Østrem (eds.)

*Creations. Medieval Rituals, the Arts, and the Concept of Creation*

Turnhout: Brepols, 2007, x + 269 pp., illus.

ISBN 978-2-503-52295-1, EUR 60

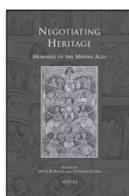


#### Vol. 3

Margrete Syrstad Andås, Øystein Ekroll, Andreas Haug, and Nils Holger Petersen (eds.), *The Medieval Cathedral of Trondheim. Architectural and Ritual Constructions in their European Context*

Turnhout: Brepols, 2007, xiv + 375 pp., illus.

ISBN 978-2-503-52301-9, EUR 60



#### Vol. 4

Mette B. Bruun and Stephanie Glaser (eds.)

*Negotiating Heritage. Memories of the Middle Ages*

Turnhout: Brepols, 2009, xii + 396 pp., illus.

ISBN 978-2-503-52794-9, EUR 90

'Ritus et Artes is an interdisciplinary research series which presents innovative research on religious and cultural practices of the European Middle Ages and their post-medieval manifestations. Elements of medieval religious rituals, embedded in various traditions, have passed through into Western cultural heritage, memory, and sensibilities, thereby informing the development of the arts in the West. The series is particularly concerned with literary, musical, artistic, and architectural aspects of liturgical and ritual practices in the Middle Ages as well as the survival, revival, and resignification of these practices in the arts and related areas up to the present time, offering theological, aesthetical, philosophical, and general historical perspectives on their reception' (Vol. 1, cover).

So far the programmatic declaration of the aims, approaches, and contents of the *Ritus et Artes* series of books, whose first four volumes were published under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals (University of Copenhagen) in 2007–9. While the first volume by Eyolf Østrem and Nils Holger Petersen offers an impressive in-depth study of the Italian lauda in the late Renaissance, volumes 2–4 are anthologies with essays collected under a specific thematic perspective: the concept of crea-

tion, the negotiation of heritage, and Trondheim Cathedral as a case for architectural and ritual construction in the Middle Ages. The programme has been quoted in its entirety, since it neatly sums up what the reader can expect of these volumes: they fully live up to the claims regarding innovativity of thought and approach, breadth and depth of diachronic study and synchronic reflection as well as interdisciplinarity.

Although only a few essays in volumes 2–4 actually refer to music, these books can be of great use to present-day musicology, since they demonstrate how well-founded source work on highest scholarly level should be combined with broader cultural-historical and anthropological perspectives, thus offering insights into the formation and identity of a present-day culture that, despite its essential otherness, still considerably draws on traditions from the Middle Ages and their transformation in later centuries.

The great profit of such an approach can be seen in vol. 1 that focuses on an intrinsically musicological subject. With thier book on the Italian lauda in the late Renaissance Østrem and Petersen take up a subject that has been treated in research, but regarded as negligible due to the general simplicity of the musical fabric – and its assumed insignificance in music history, as it is reflected in music historiography. It is these points that are at stake in Østrem and Petersen's thorough study. By carefully working out the cultural practices to which the lauda belonged, starting with a historical overview of this particular devotional genre from St Francis to Savonarola and then focusing on the confraternal contexts in late Renaissance Florence, the authors offer an alternative view on the musically decisive decades around 1600 in Northern Italy, a view that departs from the continually current, teleologically imbued narrative of the birth of opera as a secular phenomenon, created at a clearly definable point of time by a small insider group of select men.

The perspective is new in several ways, and the authors' in-depth source studies, including the music itself and ample documentation on confraternal life and musical practice, convincingly back up this change of viewpoint. The polyphonic lauda is, by exemplary analyses, presented as a genre that, albeit bound to the musico-ritual demand of simplicity, was flexible and open to the current compositional developments in other genres (Ch. 5). Recurring to records on the Florentine confraternities (here, the anthropological method of 'thick description' is employed), the authors are able to show that these influences on the genre and the concomitant increase in expressiveness were by no means felt as a process of 'secularization', but that the sensuous quality of music was theologically legitimated as enhancing devotion and thus desired as a quality of ritual efficaciousness.

This insight has consequences on our general perspective on the relation between secular and religious artistic expressions in the late Renaissance: the traditional polarization of functional simplicity (as ideally exemplified by the genre of the lauda) and aesthetic sophistication (as generally attributed to advanced secular genres) cannot be held up – instead, the religious and the aesthetic discourse appear to be completely integrated. This is again backed by historical evidence: the musicians belonging to the Florentine Camerata were active in the musically outstanding Confraternity of the Archangel Raphael at the same time, and there are numerous descriptions of performances in *stile rappresentativo* in this confraternity (Ch. 6). The historiography of opera therefore demands an alternative narrative that integrates the contemporary religious musical background – a background that, it has to be noted, had a much greater presence in the public awareness than the performances of the first secular operas before an exclusive and correspondingly small court audience (p. 250). The long-term perspective on opera, regarding the beginnings of the genre from the vantage point of its later development, is thus supplemented by a 'close-up of phenomena that may appear to be less significant when seen from a later perspective'

(p. 246) – but that, as becomes evident from the careful historiographical and ritual contextualization, were of high profile in their own time.

An additional bonus to this comprehensive study are the appendices that contain an edition of the three-part settings in Tarquinio Longo's *Lodi e canzonette spirituali* (1608) and of the mostly four-part songs in the late 17th-century laude collection Arch. mus. II, 55 from the archives of the Dome of Florence (including the complete texts of these laude). These editions offer valuable source material for further musicological study of the genre.

While the first volume of the series focuses on a musical genre and its relation to ritual, the third volume (2007) takes up a single case, the Trondheim Cathedral (Nidarosdomen), to exemplify the influence of ritual (here: liturgy) on artistic design. Articles using liturgical source material to interpret architecture and sacred space in medieval cathedrals are supplemented by methodological questions concerning the relationship between international traditions and local specificities of liturgical regulations. Music only indirectly receives attention in the essays by scholars of art history, medieval archaeology, and theology: it is referred to in the careful liturgical source study of the art historian Christopher Hohler, 'The Palm Sunday Procession and the West Front of Salisbury Cathedral' (pp. 285–90), and plays an important role in David Chadd's and Nils Holger Petersen's detailed articles on the *Ordo Nidrosiensis*, which, as liturgical studies, necessarily are also musicological, but do not go into the musical fabric of the chant itself. Considering the central importance music is accorded in the introduction ('Architectural remains as well as musical items preserved in medieval manuscripts must be understood in such a way but at the same time these elements can claim – and have actually gained – aesthetic presence and value for modern spectators and listeners', p. 3f.), this lack is regrettable, since music can in no way be extrapolated from the insoluble unity of liturgy and ritual in medieval culture as it is presented in this volume.

Nevertheless, also this volume offers a rich insight into various fields that are intricately linked to music. Liturgy is taken as basis for any understanding of medieval religious culture – an approach that corresponds to the evidence a broad spectrum of sources yields. Music as essential part of liturgy and religious ritual thus is present in numerous medieval sources.

As Margrete Syrstad Andås points out in her article on 'Art and Ritual in the Liminal Zone' in vol. 3, the concept of ritual is closely linked to memory and remembrance. Thus ritual can evoke 'associative clusters', i.e. strings of other (religious) memories that turn history into an immediate experience (p. 53). The concept of memory and its relation to ritual are taken up as a vital aspect in the fourth volume (2009) of the *Ritus et Artes* series. Subsumed under the title *Negotiating Heritage. Memories of the Middle Ages*, the collection of essays focuses on the European Middle Ages 'both as a period when ancient legacies were revived and adopted and as the locus of a culture whose heritage has been appropriated throughout centuries' (p. 2). Referring mainly to the cultural theories of David Lowenthal and Jan and Aleida Assmann and relating back to the pathbreaking concepts of Aby Warburg and Maurice Halbwachs, the editors Mette B. Bruun and Stephanie Glaser develop a concept of a 'negotiated' past with constructed lineages, manufactured coherence and the deliberate selection of events that is interwoven with collective memory. The seventeen essays in this collection, representing the disciplines of Medieval History, Theology, Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Latin, Romance Languages, Literary History, History of the Arts, and Musicology, apply varying methodologies and represent both diachronic and synchronic approaches to the Middle Ages and the negotiation of their heritage especially in the 20th century. Thus, a broad gamut of approaches to memory studies is presented, divided up into four perspectives: heritage as

instrument of investing authority; heritage as institutionalized and commemorated in ritual; the opposition of memory and oblivion; and the implementation of medieval concepts or artefacts in 20th-century artistic expression.

The musicological perspective is presented in the last of these four sections with two essays by Magnar Breivik and Nils Holger Petersen. Breivik examines *Die sieben Todsünden* (1933) by Kurt Weill and Bert Brecht as an example of how a medieval concept is alienated and eventually turned into its opposite in order to voice an incisive artistic criticism of contemporary society and its ethics. Petersen explores the concepts of truth and representation on the basis of Augustine's writings and applies them to the Adoratio Crucis in the Good Friday liturgy, with a final outlook on James Macmillan's cantata *Seven Last Words from the Cross* (1993). After the sophisticated discussion of the balance between ritual and representation in medieval liturgy, the conclusion that Macmillan uses the Latin medieval liturgical texts as a means of overcoming the subjective compositional tradition appears somewhat weak, though, just as the reference to Adorno's claim of 'truthfulness' in Schoenberg's music stands out as quite unrelated to the detailed examination of liturgical heritage and its negotiation in contemporary music. Nevertheless, the article highlights a vital point in contemporary perception of medieval heritage by ultimately raising the question of the relation between medieval ritual and art: 'Once a ritual has been received into art, it seems unavoidable that from then on it will be perceived aesthetically by the art consumers' (p. 369).

Vol. 2 (2007) of the series equally focuses on the relationship between medieval ritual and art, with a group of essays centred on the concept of creation. As in *Negotiating Heritage*, the basic interest lies in the transfer of medieval (liturgical) practice to the artistic production in the modern era. The choice of creation as focal term, though, supplies a highly fruitful tension between the medieval theological view of creation and the idea of human creativity: each of the eleven essays, covering music, literature, the visual arts, and theology, 'examines a particular topic, concerned with ritual or artistic beginnings, inventions, harmony and disharmony, or alternatively, with representations or celebrations of creation' (p. 2).

With three essays, music is granted a considerable space in this volume. While Heinrich W. Schwab contrasts the serene celebration of divine creation in Joseph Haydn's famous oratorio (1798) with the contemporaneous experiment of a new compositional creativity in the works of C.P.E. Bach and Beethoven, Claus Clüver defines a highly complex collage of musico-verbal citations in Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* as the decisive impetus of original creation. Magnar Breivik focuses on Arnold Schoenberg's compositional aesthetics under the keywords 'creation and construction' – it is here where Nils Holger Petersen's aforementioned allusion to Adorno's claim of truthfulness is fully explicated as a principle of almost religious adherence to the idea of creative truthfulness in composition.

This insightful link shows the close network of thematic and methodological interrelations between the essays in the various volumes of the series – *Ritus et artes* is a rich series of highest scholarly standard that offers excellent insights into medieval culture and thought, its lasting influence, and its resumption and transformation in the modern arts. The knowledgeable discussion of theological, liturgical, philosophical and artistic concepts of the Middle Ages and the presentation of their manifold traces in modern culture give a new understanding of cultural heritage and memory – the series' claim to present 'innovative research' on a thoroughly interdisciplinary, diachronic and synchronic level, is exemplarily met by the studies in these volumes.

Linda Maria Koldau