

committed Protestants; and they lent him money (despite the precariousness of new financial expedients) for that same reason.

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*Ceremonial splendor. Performing priesthood in early modern France.* By Joy Palacios. Pp. x + 271 incl. 11 ills. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022, £54.95. 978 1 5128 2278 6

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This is the published version of Joy Palacios's 2012 PhD dissertation. It is a study of priestly performance, and the relationship between secular Catholic priests and theatre performers, in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Paris. These topics are intertwined, to deconstruct Counter-Reformation clergy cultures and to explain contemporary clerical anti-theatricalism.

There are two main objectives of the work. The first is to examine the performance practice of secular parish clergy, to illuminate the broader range of performance innovations which, alongside the theatre, contributed to France's cultural dominance in the seventeenth century. To do this, Palacios describes the way seminary-trained churchmen learned and enacted the ceremonies of the sacraments, and the way they acquired modes of embodiment and self-presentation appropriate for their liturgical role. Post-Tridentine priestly functions were increasingly eucharistic, consciously separate from the laity, yet with emphasis on the parish as the primordial site of ministry. This visible liturgical role was reinforced by alterations to parish church fabric, especially the opening of chancels better to display the high altar. The priest's sacerdotal role was also conceived in performative terms as divine theatre. For this reason, priests had to become better performers, to safeguard the authority and perceived authenticity of liturgical ceremonies. Palacios argues that this led priests to be defensive against people and practices whose activities were feared as rivals, particularly actors and theatre-goers. To interrogate the nature of clerical performativity, Palacios deconstructs the concept of the *vray ecclésiastique* or true churchman, a priest who conscientiously copied ecclesiastical models while scrupulously serving as a model for other people; his skill derived from his efforts to achieve perfection (p. 3).

The second aim of the study is to explain the relationship between clergy and theatre, engaging with an historiography that sees the seventeenth-century Church as anti-theatrical, for example its condemnation of Molière's *Tartuffe*, which Palacios explores in the book. She argues that early modern priests believed the theatre to be dangerous to society and morality, because stage plays were a threat to the Church's ritual bonds and its vision of the social order. In her view, scholarship on French anti-theatricalism has overlooked the way the ceremonial aspects of priestly activity may have constituted a coherent response to the theatre's growing cultural influence. Thus, anti-theatrical sentiment must be studied through an analysis of the religious practices that gave rise to clerical identity – church rites and ceremonies – which were performances in their own right.

The monograph is not a survey of France as a whole, but a case study of the Parisian parish of Saint-Sulpice and its two seminaries, that of Saint-Sulpice founded by Jean-Jacques Olier, and Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. Palacios

argues that seminaries provided the French Church's primary vehicle for shaping the secular clergy's priestly identity, although they only trained a minority of clergy in the seventeenth century. The two Parisian seminaries also generated much documentation: seminary rules and manuals, liturgical handbooks, ecclesiastical pamphlets; and influenced episcopal conferences and edicts. The seminary curriculum was heavily weighted towards liturgical ceremonies, which were increasingly standardised through the use of the Roman liturgy, and priestly character formation, through the ethos of the *vray ecclésiastique*.

There are five chapters. Chapter i is on 'Clothing', the most visible marker of priestly identity and part of clerical professionalisation. The soutane, along with tonsure, made members of the secular clergy visible as a class, marking out the *vray ecclésiastique*. Palacios argues that robes did not just adorn a man's body, they shaped his person, encouraged personal reinvention and assisted the creation of a priestly selfhood. Chapter ii is on 'Gestures', which were increasingly codified between the 1640s and 1680s to produce clerical 'modesty', described in contemporary manuals as preaching without words. Seminary directors used the term 'modesty' to denote the overall effect of the outer movements and gestures essential to the ideal secular clergyman, whose comportment of the body and whose conversation were subject to self-control. The style of embodiment he adopted signified a clergyman's conformity to the ideals of the *vray ecclésiastique*. A seminarian learned modesty as a form of performance, through emulating models of saintly churchmen and through peer critique. Gesturally, sacred ceremonies blended into the modest comportment a priest was to observe. The blending of style in sacramental and non-sacramental settings reinforced clerical authority by constructing a priest's daily habitual activities as liturgical (p. 86).

Chapter iii is on 'Ceremonies'. The secular clergy's priestly identity found its fulfilment in the performance of the mass. Protestant criticisms stimulated efforts to enhance the mass's dignity and splendour, and to ensure that its ceremonies were enacted with skill. Seminary literature presented ceremonial competence as one of a priest's greatest responsibilities, and one of the chief ends of seminary training was what she calls *éclat* or 'ceremonial splendor', because it gave material expression to the doctrine of divine presence. *Éclat* necessitated a combination of beautiful material objects used for the mass, and the training of clergy and laity, along with internal changes to churches, to focus a worshipper's eye on the host. A priest engaged in liturgical action is interpreted as a node in a larger ceremonial body, his figure coordinating and connecting the clerical and lay bodies around him so that their collective action represented Christ's presence as king in the eucharistic wafer (p. 115). The priest's responsibility was to render Christ's presence and grace perceptible in the sacraments, which in turn hinged on the visual experience of *éclat*.

Chapter iv looks at 'Publics'. Olier emphasised the priest's status as a public person, which came from responsibility for the Church's pastoral and liturgical tasks conducted for others, a public. The public nature of priestly identity made essential the less visible features of priestly performance such as rehearsal, self-examination and submission to the hierarchical evaluation of ecclesiastical superiors. Without the constant work of training the clerical self, neither priestly identity nor liturgical *éclat* could be attained (p. 116). But a priest had to be careful, for

other public persons included sinners such as actors. A *vray ecclésiastique* delimited his contact with the laity and tried to order their behaviour through teaching, especially catechism to the young (p. 127). Clergy avoiding being with women alone during confession, and they regulated the state of parish morality through the keeping of records, from parish registers to 'state of souls' indices of parishioner. Seminary training aimed to teach gestural codes and discourses that influenced the way priests were seen, not as individuals but as the manifestation of a type (p. 135).

Chapter v examines 'Rivals' through a micro-history of the parish of Saint-Sulpice, where seminaries and theatres existed in proximity. Palacios argues that churchmen used liturgical ceremonies to contest the growing cultural pre-eminence enjoyed by the theatre. Liturgy had never been confined to church buildings; it also took place outside, in the streets and houses of the parish, extending the reach of the sacred into everyday spaces. As a result, a wide range of parishioner behaviour could be seen to be in competition to the mass, for example, when theatrical activity impinged on church property or the *viaticum* procession to a sick parishioner had to pass profane activities; priests tried to prohibit these activities. By the 1640s, Paris *curés* began to threaten to deny sacraments, especially the *étendu*. Because of this, the behaviour of parishioners revealed, and thus helped to constitute, a priest's ecclesiastical personhood, so the presence of brothels, bars and theatres reflected poorly. The *viaticum* and burial might be denied to stage players, unless they renounced the theatre and in March 1730 the *curé* of Saint-Sulpice refused burial to the actor Lecouvreur. But this was unusual. Seminary-trained priests tended to use last rites for absorption rather than exclusion, and thus performed a symbolic victory over the stage by transforming an actor's dying body into a central element of the Church's ritual display. Palacios argues that this attitude declined in the eighteenth century, when there was a shift in priestly identity away from *éclat* towards governance, as conformity to the priestly ideal hinged less on spatial markers and more on effective administration.

The conclusion offers a theorisation of the processes of priestly performativity and of clerical relationships with the theatre. Anti-theatrical sentiment intensified in the later seventeenth century with the professionalisation of both secular priests and actors. For priests, professionalisation entailed policing the boundaries between their own specialised performances and those of other groups, such as actors. Churchmen also used the Church's specialised modes of religious performance in the form of liturgical ceremonies and sacraments to refute the premises of theatrical performance, exert control over actors and promote liturgical practice as the kingdom's dominant representational paradigm. Religious spectacles dominated the cultural scene in early modern Paris. By focusing on the ways priests learned to conduct ceremonies and on how those ceremonies structured their modes of embodiment, professional self-representation, public status, and relationship to rivals, the author argues that anti-theatrical sentiment in early modern France has a performance history (p. 166).

Overall, the book is an interesting read. Its strength is its interdisciplinarity, which combines historical research methodologies and performance studies to understand clerical performativity. Its limitation is that entangling Counter-Reformation seminary and theatre histories does make it feel that at times we are running with too many

themes and theories. But clergy training and comportment is discussed with some fresh perspectives. There is also a useful bibliography of works cited.

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*From country house Catholicism to city Church. The registers of the Oxford Catholic Mission, 1700–1875.* Edited by Tony Hadland. (Oxfordshire Record Society, 75.) Pp. xiv + 222 incl. 12 figs and 2 maps. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer (for Oxfordshire Record Society), 2023. £35. 978 0 902509 77 1 *JEH* (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046924000526

Tony Hadland's book builds on the Catholic Record Society's 1909 work of untranslated Latin registers and emerges as an indispensable tool for exploring the religious and social tapestry of Oxford during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hadland's meticulous organisation and presentation of data from Catholic mission registers will prove useful for a diverse audience, from religious and social historians to genealogy seekers and local history *aficionados*. By rendering complex sacramental records into an accessible format he bridges the gap between historical records and contemporary study. The book is thoughtfully divided into two main parts: an extensive introduction that offers contextual background for the reader, followed by the diligently transcribed, translated and systematically arranged records. These records span baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths, burials and conversions in Oxford, covering the period from 1700 to 1875.

One of the strengths of this work is Hadland's reflection on societal change. Throughout various sections in the introduction he highlights specific human stories and uses the lives of the Catholics in Oxford as a lens through which to understand the wider experience of English Catholics during the era of persecution. Hadland sets out the primary legal changes affecting Catholics which provides clarity on why separate registers for Catholics in England were necessary. A fascinating part of this context is the analysis of the buildings and locations associated with the registers. Here the reader is led through the physical change of country house Catholicism to city church, from the manors of Holywell and Waterperry to the post-emancipation development of St Ignatius. The fact that Holywell Manor in Oxford operated as a manor house chapel – yet, being on the outskirts of the city also became an urban base – is a wonderful detail.

Hadland's commentary on the contents of the registers eases the reader into the data and picks out various important themes such as the recording of unmarried mothers, foreign immigration and Catholic conversions. The baptismal records show how Catholic society changed from the 1860s onwards, acknowledging births to single mothers including the christening of Isabel Smith, daughter of single mother Mary Smith in October 1861, and Charles Tarbuck, son of Catherine Tarbuck in November 1862. The records also make reference to children of single mothers who were inmates of Nazareth House, a Catholic home for orphans and the elderly run by the Sisters of Nazareth. The reference to Nazareth House, however, could have used further elaboration by the editor to