

There is a difference between denying that a universal culture could exist and arguing about what it should be. The development of the internet has allowed a continuous struggle between factions, with voices arousing counter voices, television can be make as many obscure references as the writer likes, but there will be someone to explain the reference in a blog. In this world high culture is intermixed with the low in a sort of dance. The recent BBC production of *Henry VI*, parts one and two, and *Richard III*, are marked by particularly lurid violence on the grounds that this is the style of *Game of Thrones*, books and a television series, set in a fictional mediaeval world, which could be described as pseudo-Shakespearian. So actual Shakespeare assimilates itself to pseudo Shakespeare. Yet this world cannot function without some people reading Shakespeare, and in fact the adaptations of Shakespeare, versions set in Californian schools, or used as plots for science fiction films, only work because some people read Shakespeare. We may not have a universal culture now, but we certainly have an interactive one, and in that culture, the great thoughts still have a place, even if it is a shared place.

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T&T COMPANION TO LITURGY edited by Alcuin Reid, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, London, pp. xix + 561, £100.00, hbk

What's in a name? This new volume belongs to a series from the publisher, all entitled 'T&T Clark Companion to . . .'; as such, perhaps, the name was beyond anyone's control. To the casual bookshop or Amazon 'browser', such a name probably conjures up the image of an encyclopaedic volume tracing the historical and theological development of Christian worship in all its forms, and possibly of its associated art and architectural setting. However, this is very far from being the case. Rather, as the editor clearly states in his introduction, it is intended as a 'companion to liturgical studies in the Western Catholic tradition at the beginning of the twenty-first century', a rather more restricted canvas than the volume's title would initially suggest. It seems a pity that some sort of subtitle was not allowed for the sake of clarity.

The result of the choice of focus on the modern Catholic tradition is a volume which is, almost inevitably, somewhat unbalanced, at least in terms of 'Liturgy' in the broad sense. The total absence of references to the Orthodox and other Eastern Christian liturgical traditions is a real loss in such a volume, and one not wholly countered by the single concluding contribution 'An Anglican Perspective' by Benjamin

Gordon-Taylor. More significantly, however, the majority of the contributors seem to belong to a single 'group' within current discussions of the Roman Rite and its reform during the twentieth century, that is, that group which argues that the current revised Rites are an inadequate implementation of the decisions of the Council Fathers and the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. This is a significant weakness, and one which is frankly addressed by the editor, again in his introduction, where he notes that a number of important scholars of differing viewpoints were approached but found themselves unable to contribute. One can only sympathise with the editor; it must have been a real frustration to be denied the chance to show the real breadth of current debate. There are two short chapters by the late Dom Ansgar Chapungco which do something to represent the more positive attitudes held by many scholars with respect to the reformed liturgy. Nonetheless, the volume feels overall like only one side of the argument.

Having made that criticism, it has to be acknowledged that there is some very fine and interesting material presented, no matter on which side of the debate one stands. Of the longer contributions, two of the editor's own chapters – In Pursuit of Participation (c.7) and The 20th Century Liturgical Movement (c.8) – are very stimulating and thought-provoking, the latter asking real questions of the often over-simplified 'narrative of continuity' between the aspirations of the Liturgical Movement and the eventual reform. Dom Ansgar Chapungco's two chapters are also well worth reading, the former stressing the positive growth which the reformed liturgy has encouraged and sustained, especially in 'younger' Churches, the latter a detailed study of the implementation of the vision of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Bruce Harbert gives a fascinating, detailed and realistic account of the difficulties and compromises needed in the task of translating liturgical texts, following on from an interesting chapter on Liturgy and Sacred Language by Uwe Michael Lang. Two shorter essays on liturgical music are also valuable. The first, on Gregorian Chant by Susan Treacy, is a very 'reader-friendly' but nevertheless scholarly account of the history of the chant. The second, by Timothy McDonnell, is a very thought-provoking account of the somewhat difficult history of liturgical music following Vatican II. Other contributors tackle a variety of topics, with a preponderance of theological and historical writing at the beginning, with more analytical and critical material following later in the volume. Perhaps one of the most attractive aspects of the book is the extensive bibliographical material and wealth of annotations submitted by each contributor. It may seem unusual to comment on the quality of a bibliography, but here the 'Companion' status of the volume really shines through. One may differ from the opinions of the authors and their conclusions, but in providing such a wealth of suggested further reading they are offering future students of the liturgy some real treasures, even if, like all bibliographies, they can 'age' quite quickly.

One recurrent theme which in some ways binds the volume together is that of liturgical formation. Again and again, contributors remind their readers that the Council called for a thorough formation in the liturgy, both for the clergy and the laity. Many of the contributors also point to this ideal as being part of the heritage of the Liturgical Movement and its early to mid twentieth-century proponents. In a sense, it is a shame that such an important topic – clearly still a pressing need in the Church of our time – does not receive fuller coverage as a chapter in its own right.

In the opening sentence of his introduction, Dom Alcuin, the editor, states: ‘In some ways this is a peculiar book’. In some senses, I admit I must agree with him. I suspect that few of its future readers will undergo the experience of having to read it cover to cover in a relatively short space of time, as this reviewer has; rather, I hope they will use it more as a repository within which they may seek and find interesting elements and challenging questions. Read *in toto*, it is peculiar – somewhat unbalanced, with a considerable amount of overlap between chapters, some elements rather strident and polemical, and other materials failing to reach the high standard of the best of the contributions. Nevertheless, there is some excellent material in this volume, no matter what one’s stance in the debate. If nothing else, it is to be hoped that such a book may encourage all who read it to work together for a liturgy which is firmly centred on the worship of God and not of man, a worship offered in spirit, in beauty and in truth.

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