Issues in Medieval Liturgy

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Convener: Susan Boynton (associate professor of historical musicology at Columbia University in New York City)

Seminar participants: Susan Boynton, James Donohue, Michael S. Driscoll, Raul Gomez, James Hentges, David Holton, Peter Jeffery, Don Lasalle, John Leonard, Gary Macy, Joanne Pierce, Mary Schaefer, Michael Witczak

Visitors: Margot Fassler, Gavin Ferriday, Jane Huber, Andrew Irving, Maureen Miller, Julia Schneider, Rembert Weakland

Brief description of work: The first day of our Seminar meeting was devoted to a stimulating group discussion about Mass ordinaries, commentaries on the Mass, and relationships between these two textual genres.

Peter Jeffery presented his translation of and commentary on Ordo Romanus I, discussing his approach to the Latin text, and the conventions for the presentation of text and translation. He demonstrated his method for tracing the history of Mass chants by comparing the evidence for their performance in several of the earlier ordinaries.

Gavin Ferriday presented work in progress regarding the early works of Amalarius of Metz (ca. 775-ca. 850). He based his work on a Zurich manuscript and newly identified fragments from a ducal library in Buedingen. He identified the fragments as previously unknown portions of the second expositio of the so-called Geminus Codex. These manuscripts reveal Amalarius as a daring, occasionally heterodox exegete of the liturgical "text" (both word and action).

Julia Schneider examined the role of his interlocutors and their allegorical interpretation of the liturgy in Albertus Magnus’s Mass commentary De mysterio missae. Looking at selections from the text showing his rejection of and use of allegory to explain the actions of the Mass, Schneider suggested that scholarly focus on Albertus’s rejection of allegorical interpretations has been misplaced and other avenues should be pursued instead.

Gary Macy discussed his 1997 article “Commentaries on the Mass During the Early Scholastic Period.” The presentation focused on devotional elements of eight commentaries from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Each of the commentaries advocated a deeper attachment to Christian life of active love. An analysis of the material suggested that the liturgy no longer carried this basic message since it needed to be explained even to a clerical audience.

Mary Schaefer led discussion of her 2006 article “In persona Christi: Cult of the Priest’s Person or Active Presence of Christ.” Her presentation was called “Case Study in Categories of Representation—or the Uses and Abuses of Medieval Latin Commentaries.”

Maureen C. Miller presented a working hypothesis on the origins of vesting prayers in Carolingian reform initiatives, positing a connection between the allegorical interpretations of vestments in liturgical commentaries and the prayers. She presented a specific example of a set of vesting prayers entered in the margins of Montecassino cod. 127 to explore the question of when the prayers became attached to the Ordo missae.

David Holton presented two fifteenth-century Utraquist Mass commentaries—both highly dependent on earlier commentaries—which represent the waning of this genre of liturgical excursus. Of some interest is the text Chorus significat virgines . . . dyacoum Mariam, which began as a sermon of the thirteenth-century Franciscan Berthold of Regensburg, was redacted into a Mass commentary by the fourteenth century, and further redacted a century later for Utraquist use.

On Saturday morning we continued the general discussion of Mass ordinaries and commentaries. On Saturday afternoon we discussed three precirculated papers.

Papers: Michael S. Driscoll presented a paper on church architecture and liturgy in the Carolingian era, dedicated to the reigns of Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious (770-840). Voices such as Bishop Theodulp of Orleans and Abbot Angilbert of Saint-Riquier were important in the shaping of ecclesiastical structures. Within monasticism Benedict of Aniane played an important role including physical monastic structures. Consequently Driscoll looked at representative church buildings in relationship to the liturgies that were celebrated within these structures.

Don Lasalle reviewed the development of a procession with a veiled cross as the Good Friday liturgy in the West. This procession has been described as a prelude to the veneration of the cross. An examination of chants and rubrics in liturgical sources, including the Ordines Romanici and medieval pontificals, reveals that this procession is not a prelude to but rather the introduction of a communal veneration of the cross.

Rembert Weakland spoke on the impact of the Carolingian reform on Milanese liturgy and chant. He began by tracing the history of twentieth-
century research on the Ambrosian chant, then described the “grafting” of elements from Gregorian chant in some Milanese melodies, and the particularities of the tonal construction of chants in the Milanese repertory.

Liturgical Hermeneutics

Convener: Richard E. McCarron (associate professor of liturgy at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago)

Seminar participants: Ron Anderson, Ed Foley, Larry Hoffman, Margaret Mary Kelleher, Richard McCarron, Gil Ostfeld, Mark Wedig, Melinda Quivik, Kathryn Rickert, David Stosur

Visitors: Walter Knowles, M. Kate Weber, Brian Anastasi Butcher, William Cieslak, Kyle Schiefelbein

Brief description of work: The Seminar’s work began with a discussion of Bruce Kapferer, “Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice: Beyond Representation and Meaning” (in Ritual in Its Own Right, ed. D. Handelman and G. Lindquist [New York: Berghahn Books, 2005], 35–54). In this essay Kapferer argues that a focus on the dynamics of ritual more than process "moves the understanding of ritual beyond an emphasis on symbolic meaning, reflexivity, and representation" to more attention to the "structuration of perception and of cognition in which particular human potentialities both of experience and of meaningful construction may be formed." Members of the Seminar engaged in a critical and constructive analysis of the author’s premises, his reading of V. Turner and S. Langer, and his use of the category of techne. Presentations by Seminar members then followed after this opening session. This work continued attention to semiotics, hermeneutics of imagination, and textual reasoning that have been ongoing areas of exploration.

Papers Melinda Quivik, “Life Passages for Faith: Through the Body Toward Belief.” Written for a festschrift honoring Richard Giles, Quivik’s essay explored the metaphor of space as presented in the Philadelphia Cathedral where Giles served as priest while working on the building’s renovation. The cathedral’s expansive worship environment gives prominence not only to the central things but to the fact and effect of spaciousness. Using the concept of “museum” developed by the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, the paper investigates the role of space in fostering what people