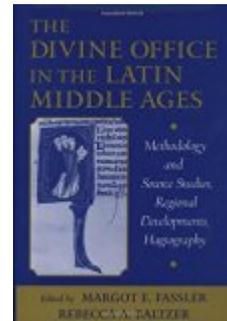


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Margot E. Fassler, Rebecca A. Baltzer, eds. *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. xxiv + 632 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-512453-8.

Reviewed by Brad Eden (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
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The centrality of the Divine Office to life and learning in the Middle Ages is central to any medieval academician's or liturgist's course of study. Despite the great explosion of scholarly work in medieval studies during the twentieth century, however, relatively little has been written or researched on the Office. Because of the interdisciplinary nature, diversity, and variety of the subject, the Office has not generated extensive research or interest among medieval scholars or liturgiologists. This volume is an attempt to begin to move into this vast unexplored terrain, to examine some of the tools and methods needed to chart it, and to share relevant and current research concerning the Divine Office currently underway.

The book is divided into a Preface, Prelude and six major subdivisions. The Prelude is a basic introduction to the Divine Office, as it was followed in the Middle Ages. The first section is a two-part introduction to the volume, and presents a case study on the development of the Advent Office in the Latin West, as well as a primer on how to read an Office book. The second section contains three chapters on the pre-Carolingian Office, discussing the origins of the Western Office, some observations on the Office in the Rule of the Master, and Eastern and Western elements in the Irish monastic tradition. Section Three is titled "Manuscript Studies," and contains four chapters that provide indepth examination of four office manuscripts. The fourth section contains six chapters that focus on regional developments from the Carolingian period to the later Middle Ages, including historical and musicological research on specific Offices, feasts, and Uses within the liturgical calendar. Section Five, "Hagiography," presents five chapters that emphasize the development of Office celebrations around St.

Olav, St. Augustine, St. Julian of Le Mans, and the Virgin Mary. Finally, the last section discusses current research and the use of computer technology in the study of the Office, including an update on the study of late medieval liturgical Offices by Andrew Hughes, and the important groundbreaking effort by Ruth Steiner in the development of the CANTUS database.

In fact, this book is a kind of Festschrift to Ruth Steiner and her pioneering efforts on the CANTUS project, as the title page contains the following statement: "written in honor of Professor Ruth Steiner." A bibliography of writings by Ruth Steiner at the end of the book confirms this assumption. It is well known among medieval musicologists and liturgiologists the unique contributions of Dr. Steiner and her CANTUS database, and this volume is a magnificent tribute to her vision and insight.

This book is not written for the average Catholic layperson or even the average religious cantor or musician whose interests lie in the Western Latin or Catholic musical tradition. This book is written mainly by medieval musicologists for medieval musicologists, with some regard for medieval liturgiologists and historians. It is academic research at its highest level, and without a working knowledge of the vocabulary and terminology used throughout the book, it is a daunting read. As a groundbreaking and essential resource on the study and development of medieval liturgy and sacred music in the Latin West, however, it is a long-awaited reference work for scholars in musicology, theology, medieval social history, medieval literature, religious studies, and art history.

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