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Eyolf Østrem, Jens Fleischer, Nils Holger Petersen (ed.), *The Arts and the Cultural Heritage of Martin Luther*. Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen 2003. Pp 208, ISBN 87-7289-843-7

This book contains a foreword, an introduction and nine essays collected under the title *The Arts and the Cultural Heritage of Martin Luther*. Four of the essays were presented in a preliminary version at a symposium in Copenhagen January 2002, marking the establishment of a temporary Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage from Medieval Rituals. The foreword also mentions a connection to the Tenth International Congress for Luther Research (Copenhagen 2002), but the nature of this connection did not become entirely clear to me.

In his introduction (pp.9-18) Nils Holger Petersen, who is also head of the Centre, sticks to a more modest aim than one might expect from the rather pretentious and wide-ranging title. This book does not primarily deal with Luther and “the arts”. It does not cover different attitudes to “the arts” in the Lutheran tradition either. However, it deals in a somewhat arbitrary manner with individual topics regarding “the arts” in the Lutheran tradition, without any attempt made to generate a more comprehensive overview. This may come as a disappointment to some, but taken separately all of these essays are worthwhile reading in their own right. Six of them are in the area of musicology, two deal with Church interior in Denmark and Finland after the reformation, and one centers on illustrated books of religious meditation from the seventeenth century.

A brief outline of Luther’s attitude to music is to be found in Petersen’s introduction. Petersen argues that Luther as a schoolboy participated in liturgical dramas, i.e. passion plays, and he states that Luther in his later years apparently endorsed the practice of biblical plays. Except for music Luther seems to have judged the use of “the arts” in religious service pragmatically. This use of “the arts” for edifying and educational purposes gained a prominent position in the Lutheran tradition, and Petersen is inclined to ascribe to this attitude a secularising influence on the cultural traditions of “the arts” in protestant Europe (p. 16). Petersen also suggests – without further arguments – some kind of connection between Luther’s special relationship to music and the development of “absolute music” and *Kunstreligion* in the nineteenth century (p.17).

In his essay about “Lutheran Tradition and the Medieval Latin Mass” (pp.35-49) Petersen points to the freedom Luther allows for in the ordering of the mass. Uncovering the theological foundation for Luther’s attitude Petersen – once again – is inclined to find a drive towards secularisation of sacred space,

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time and liturgy in Luther's thoughts (pp. 43-45). As an epilogue he argues with reference to a CD-version of Dieter Schnebel's *Missa* (1993) that Schnebel's project is a true child of Luther's in some way relativistic approach to religious rituals and their aesthetic values.

I have read Petersen's suggestive attempts to capture Luther's way of thinking with great interest. Petersen compares Luther both to medieval ideas and to modernity with considerable confidence. But his ideas are sketchy, and his sweeping use of the term "secularisation" paves the way for overly simplistic solutions. I do not dispute his observations, important as they are, but I am sceptical about his interpretation. Is the intimacy of religion, so typical of Luther, tantamount to an internalisation of the sacredness and consequently to be understood as a secularisation of external space and time? Personally, I am not convinced. What I find in Luther is not just an allocation of sacredness from the external to the internal. What I find is rather a new understanding of sacredness, paving the way for a different understanding of the sacred and the world. Petersen's thesis may apply more adequately to the pietistic movements, but even there I have my doubts. Is pietism only to be understood as a withdrawal of the sacred from the external world, or may it just as well be understood as a gigantic sanctification, in so far as every space and time has to be sanctified? Or, to put it differently: If pietism is both externalisation and internalisation, how does this affect our understanding of "secularisation"?

Carl Axel Aurelius writes about the hymns of Martin Luther; "*Quo verbum dei vel cantu inter populos maneat*" (pp.19-34). He takes his point of departure in the fact that Luther's hymns receive scarcely any comment in books about his theology. This is so, Aurelius says, because modern theology tends to separate what Luther kept together: theory and practice. His own aims are to explain why evangelic hymns were so important to Luther and why Luther chose the Psalter as the source for the hymns. In Luther's interpretation the Psalter develops a creative and salvific drama with a Trinitarian character (p.26). The same eastern pattern, Aurelius says, is to be found in Luther's own hymns. But the hymns are not just reiterations; they make present what they narrate (p.28). Consequently, singing the hymns is preaching the Gospel. No wonder then, that Luther mentions singing when he develops his thoughts on the true marks of the church (p.31). At the end Aurelius returns to his critique of modern theology and argues that all (good) theology should have a pastoral dimension. It would be unfair to expect Aurelius to explicate this idea here, but it certainly deserves to be followed up.

In one of his *Tischreden* Luther refers to Josquin Des Prez as an example of God preaching the Gospel also in music. "Des fincken gesang" on the other hand Luther takes as an example of the law. The quotation is well known, but what is its meaning? Eyolf Østrem in "Luther, Josquin and *des fincken gesang*" (pp.51-79) argues that there is no reference to birds in this quotation. It is the

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composer Heinrich Finck Luther is referring to. But what kind of musical difference between Josquin and Finck may explain Luther's comment? According to Østrem, Josquin and Finck follow different compositional principles. In his music Josquin develops a carefully planned harmonic progression, underlined by melody and rhythm (p.70), while Finck's composition is more oriented towards a varied accompaniment of a central voice (p74). Josquin's harmonic predilection is the reason why Luther found the freedom of the Gospel in his composition. I am not in the position to give an assessment of Østrem's arguments from a musicological point of view, but his conclusion seems fairly convincing.

In his article "Aspects of Musical Thought in the Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theological Tradition" (pp.151-169) Sven Rune Havsteen takes two music monographs as his point of departure, one written by Christopher Frick (1631), and the other written by Laurentz Schröder (1639). Focus is on the theme of praise, which is a main theme in both monographs. Not surprisingly, the writers emphasise the obligation to praise God. But this is just the first step in their musico-theology. Out of the praise of God, Havsteen says, follows an absorption in God that one could call a doxological cognition of God (p.159). And from the doxological cognition follows the inner rootedness of the praise of God as well as its ecstatic nature, i.e. its dependency on the work of the Holy Ghost (p.162). In short: due to the idea of divine presence, music comes very close to having a revelatory function (p.164). Regarding the background for this musico-theology, Havsteen finds dependency of Johann Arnd and his *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*. This is an interesting incentive for further investigations, and Havsteen is obviously in the process of finding exciting links between the century of reformation and modernity.

Likewise exciting is Bernhard F. Scholz's article "Religious Meditations on the Heart: Three Seventeenth Century Variants" (pp.99-135). Scholz compares three books treating the heart as object, image and concept in the context of religious meditation: Benedictus van Haeften's *Schola Cordis* (Antwerpen 1629: Roman Catholic), Christopher Harvey's *School of the Heart* (London 1647: a Protestant translation and adaptation of Van Haeften's) and Daniel Cramer's *Emblemata Sacra* (Frankfurt /M 1624: a Lutheran book of religious emblems). In Van Haeften's book the writer steps back and leaves the word to a selection of *auctores* who convey the true knowledge about the heart. Harvey's book on the other hand signifies the road to inwardness. We are not meeting with the teacher addressing and instructing another person, but with the confessing soul itself, inviting the reader to follow its example (p.107). External knowledge is muted for the benefit of what might be called internal knowledge (p.110), or perhaps even better: internal experience. Harvey's withdrawal from the world is however not to be found in Cramer's book. Here the world is the opponent against which the heart of man should be on guard

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(p.118). But more distinctive; Cramer's book is not held together by a speaking writer. It is to be opened at any page according to the presently felt need of the reader (p.122). These (and other) differences indicate further differences in the use of emblems. Van Haeften assigns a mnemonic function to his emblems, whereas the emblems in Harvey's book are metaphorical self-images (p.129). And in Cramer's book the pictorial images of the heart are signs for the speaking self in the act of *applicatio* (p.133).

Scholz uncovers elements of what may be called a theology of piety (*Frömmigkeitstheologie*). His aim is explicitly to display a surprising degree of homogeneity across denominational borders (p.99). His article may however just as well be cited in support of denominational differences in the treatment of a common theme. The article may be read both ways, thanks to a very careful and erudite presentation.

Hugo Johannsen, "The Writ on the Wall: Theological and Political Aspects of Biblical Text-Cycles in Evangelical Palace Chapels of the Renaissance" (pp.81-97) deals with a peculiar kind of tablets to be found in evangelical palace chapels in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. His main reference is the tablets in the palace church of Fredriksborg in Northern Zealand, but Johannsen traces the formal genesis of the tablets back to Saxony. The tablets convey quotations from the Bible and were of course meant to bear witness to a pious king. But according to Johannsen they may also be interpreted as parallels to the widespread Mirror of Princes literature, following in the wake of Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Education of a Christian Prince* (p.92).

"Changes in the Furnishing of the Finnish Parish Church from the Reformation to the End of the Caroline Period (1527-1718)" (pp.137-149) by Hanna Pirinen is based on the writer's doctoral dissertation, published in 1996. Since her dissertation was published in Finnish, this English summary of important findings is particularly welcome. According to Pirinen it was comparatively late, i.e. in the Caroline period (1654-1718), that Finnish churches were furnished in a characteristically Lutheran style (p.147). But by the end of the Caroline period the furnishing of the Lutheran parish church had matured into a rich synthesis combining the medieval heritage with influences from the Scandinavian and North European Lutheran cultural sphere (p.149).

Magnar Breivik in his instructive article about the "Context of Hindemith's *Frau Musica*" (pp. 171-185) takes as point of departure Paul Hindemith's cantata *Frau Musica*, based on a text by Luther. Focusing on the context in which Hindemith composed his cantata, Breivik draws our attention to the so-called *Jugendmusikbewegung*. At the end of First World War this movement attacked the commercialised, decadent, bourgeois concert going. The movement promoted musical events engaging ordinary people in different kinds of participation. The noble amateur, not the professional artist was the

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hero of the day. Hindemith joined the movement in the 1920s, believing that the only way to save modern music was to bridge the gap between music and people. Thus, *Frau Musica* was written as a piece of *Gebrauchsmusik* to be played by (skilful) amateurs. A feature of particular interest is the opening and concluding choral movements intended for *Allgemeiner Chor*, which means that everyone present is invited to join in. This reminds Breivik of Luther's *Deutsche Messe*, in which the participation of an entire congregation within a comparatively fixed framework is a fundamental objective (p.183).

Siglind Bruhn points to a similar feature in Kari Tikka's opera *Luther* (2000), in her article "Fear of Death in a Life Between God and Satan" (pp.187-2008). In Tikka's opera five hymns are included to form a bridge between the operatic performance and the involvement of the audience. In an opera about Luther this is well founded, but Bruhn finds two of the hymns somewhat at odds with the scenic action (p.198). This is however a minor point in her article, which as a whole gives a fascinating glimpse into an opera only a few have had the opportunity to hear and see. The opera is in fact a giant rondo, Bruhn argues, with the "Dance-of-Death" as an ever-recurring refrain (p.207). Death on the other hand is one of Satan's many guises, and Luther struggling with Satan in disguise is the opera's main theme. Bruhn is right in referring to modern research underpinning Tikka's portrait, but from a historic point of view more is obviously to be said.

As mentioned at the beginning, the editors have in no way attempted to cover everything concerning Luther and "the arts" in this book. To complain of something missing would be like smashing an open window. Nevertheless, what I would have appreciated is an investigation of Luther's dealing with "the arts" in the context of his theology of creation.

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