

The Role of the Senses in Medieval Liturgies and Rituals (Padua, 21–23 Sep 22)

Università degli Studi di Padova, Palazzo Bo, Aula Nievo, Sep 21–23, 2022

Valentina Baradel

The Role of the Senses in Medieval Liturgies and Rituals.

By the Late Middle Ages, the liturgy has become the most important and elaborate ceremonial of Christianity in an already highly ritualised society. Indeed, rituals dominated the everyday life of the faithful, from the Divine Office and the Mass to the individual reading of the Hours; and they accompanied the life of people from their birth to their last breath. Besides, liturgy called for collective involvement and aimed at engaging the faithful by stimulating their senses, in order to trigger emotional and spiritual responses.

Over the past century, much has been said about the liturgy in the Middle Ages. Starting from the historical contribution of Mario Righetti (1946), in the last decades scholars have explored fresh research paths, incorporating notions and tools established by diverse disciplines. Philippe Buc (1997) and Eric Palazzo (2000) have opened up new research opportunities by assimilating sociological concepts, exploring the role of rituals as agents in shaping society and fostering social cohesion. More recently, this field has been fuelled with contributions from numerous disciplines that have started to engage in the study of the past, including neurosciences, performance studies, anthropology (Bull & Mitchell, 2016) and sensory studies (Palazzo, 2014; Neri & Caseau, 2021).

The scientific relevance of these contributions in generating adventurous approaches and opening up new panoramas is unquestionable. Following these fresh pathways, the first conference of the series “Experiencing the Sacred”, established by the SenSArt ERC project, aims to develop the topic further by triangulating the liturgy (broadly intended), the experience of the faithful (understood both as an individual and as social groups) and the sensoria (i.e. the diverse sensory systems that existed in the Middle Ages). In so doing, it aims at showing that the experience of the sacred was not homogeneous and static. On the contrary, it was a multimodal and multisensorial activity, one that bore complex and overlapping layers of meaning, and which was perceived in different ways by the diverse groups and individuals involved.

In order to reach this objective, the conference will consider both the material and the immaterial aspects of the liturgy, and will emphasise the wide range of its sensorial appeal. Images, objects, odours, words, flavours, movement, and sounds all formed part of the liturgical performance that permeated the life of medieval people. And yet, they were exploited and perceived in different terms by the diverse groups involved, such as the religious and lay community, men and women, members of the aristocracy and of the lower social groups.

PROGRAMME

21 September 2022 - Padua, Palazzo Bo, Aula Nievo

9.00

Opening and Welcome: Jacopo Bonetto, Head of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Università di Padova

Introduction: Zuleika Murat, PI of the ERC SenSArt Project, Università di Padova

9.30 Session 1 (Chair: Zuleika Murat)

- Holly Flora, Tulane University, The "Meditationes Vitae Christi" and Sight and Sound in Female Religious Experiences

- Valentina Baradel, Università di Padova, "Un bien petit livret d'oroisons". Sight, Sound, and Touch in the "Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux"

- Martina Bordone, Università di Firenze, Through Body or Eyes: Experiencing Devotional Books in Late Medieval Italy

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

- Laura Slater, University of Cambridge, Liturgical Music and Lay Devotion: Stimulating the Spiritual Senses

- Leah R. Clark, University of Oxford, Sensing Devotion: Objects and their Sensorial Practices in the Collections of Eleonora d'Aragona, Duchess of Ferrara

12.30 Discussion

14.30 Session 2 (Chair: Valentina Baradel)

- Francesc Massip and Alba Knijff Massip, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Universitat de Barcelona, With the Five Senses: Spectacular Devices for Engaging the Audience in the Middle Ages

- Carla M. Bino, Università Cattolica di Milano, Moving Movements. The Relationship Between Animated Crucifixes and the Faithful in 14th Century Umbria

- Sara Carreño, Università di Padova, Bodily Interactions and Sensorial Engagement in the Performative Rites of Late-Medieval Santiago de Compostela

16.00-16:30 Coffee break

- Gillian Hurst, University of Bristol, The Sensorium at Syon Abbey as Explored through Five Processionals: Phenomenology and the Expansion of the Sensorial Canon

- Marta Simões and Joana Antunes, Universidade de Coimbra, Clad in Black / Bedecked with Flowers: Lent and Holy Week in Portuguese Medieval Churches

17.30 Discussion

22 September 2022 - Padua, Palazzo Bo, Aula Nievo

9.00 Session 3 (Chair: Salvador Ryan)

- Frederick Paxton, Connecticut College, Engaging the Senses in the Death Ritual at Cluny

- Florence Chave-Mahir, Independent Scholar, Exorcism in the Middle Ages: a Performance for All Senses

- Sarah Hamilton, University of Exeter, Rites for Travellers

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

- Micol Long, Università di Padova, Performances of Contrition and Compassion? An Inquiry Into the Development of a Medieval Ritual of Confession in the 13th Century

- Ninon Dubourg, Université de Liège, The "Blind", the "Deaf" and the "Dumb". Liturgical Practices of Sensory and Mentally Disabled People

- João Luís Inglês Fontes, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Liturgy and Religious Experience in Eremital Communities: The Testimony of Male and Female Communities of Poor Life (Portugal, 14th -16th Centuries)

12.00 Discussion

14.30 Session 4 (Chair: Micol Long)

- Zuleika Murat, Università di Padova, Children in Medieval Christianity: Embodiment and the Senses in Liturgies, Rituals, and Prayers

- Juliette Day, Helsingfors Universitet-University of Oxford, Blackfriars Hall, The Sensory Impoverishment of Chrismation in the Late Middle Ages

15.30-15.45 Coffee break

- Ariana Sider, University of Toronto, Materiality, Sensory Experience, and Community in Late-Medieval Tournaisien Wills

- Serena Franzon, Independent Scholar, Praying with the Senses: Sensory Engagement in Relation to Medieval Devotional Jewelry

16.45 Discussion

23 September 2022 - Padua, Palazzo Bo, Aula Nievo

9.00 Session 5 (Chair: João Luís Inglês Fontes)

- Brianne Dolce, University of Oxford, Listening and Understanding in the "Acta Synodi Atrebatensis"

- Eugeen Schreurs and Wendy Wauters, Koninklijk Conservatorium Antwerpen, KU Leuven, Experiencing and Interpreting the Soundscape of the Late Medieval Church of Our Lady in Antwerp

10.15-10.45 Coffee break

- Henry Parkes, University of Nottingham, Sound and Vision in the Fleury Night Office

- Giovanni Varelli, University of Oxford, Sonorities and Topographies of Medieval Liturgical Processions

- Matteo Cesarotto and Lorenzo Barletta E.C., Université de Tours / CESR, Eremo di Monte Rua (Padua), "Et nullam omnino operis Dei partem cantando persolvant": Music and the Camaldolese Hermits Liturgy

12.15 Discussion

14.30 Session 6 (Chair: Sara Carreño)

- Hólmfríður Sveinsdóttir, Universitetet i Oslo, Experiencing Miraculous Healing in Medieval Norway. Case Studies from the Museum of Cultural History

- Elliott Wise, Brigham Young University, Epiphanies of Flesh and Light: Framing the Elevation with the Chasuble of the Golden Fleece

- Katalin Suba, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, The Crucifixion Scene on the Hungarian Coronation Mantle and its Liturgical Allusions

16.00 Discussion

16.45 Conclusions

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ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Zuleika Murat, Università di Padova
Valentina Baradel, Università di Padova
Sara Carreño, Università di Padova

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Valentina Baradel, Università di Padova
Sara Carreño, Università di Padova
Matteo Cesarotto, Université de Tours / Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR)
João Luís Inglês Fontes, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa
Zuleika Murat, Università di Padova
Salvador Ryan, St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

The conference will be held in a hybrid format. Registration is required to attend online.
Please register at <https://forms.gle/S6tMjNQnCxoXWpHc6> by 20 September 2022.

For all inquiries regarding the conference please contact: zuleika.murat@unipd.it;
valentina.baradel@unipd.it; sara.carreno@unipd.it

Reference:

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