

vokativ darauf verwiesen, daß diese Ansätze – vergleichbar einer belletristischen Annäherung an Vermeers Kunst wie Tracy Chevaliers *Girl with a Pearl Earring* – nur Konstrukte liefern. Georges Didi-Hubermann entfaltet in einem weiteren Essay seine Theorie vom Anachronismus des Kunstwerks und plädiert für eine „Re-Lektüre“ der Texte von Aby Warburg, Carl Einstein und Walter Benjamin, deren „Konzepte“ seiner Ansicht nach von der Kunstwissenschaft der Emigranten zu Unrecht verdrängt worden seien.

Im dritten Teil ergänzen sich Horst Bredekamps Plädoyer für eine Bildwissenschaft und Michael F. Zimmermanns Darstellung einer Bildanthropologie, wie sie von Hans Belting gefordert wurde. Beide Ansätze existieren auch im englischsprachigen Raum. Die deutschsprachigen Debatten wurden dort aber bislang noch kaum als eigenständiger Beitrag zu einer *Picture Theory* (W. J. T. Mitchell) oder *Visual Culture* (Norman Bryson u. a.) erkannt.

Die beiden Bände ergänzen sich, ohne daß sie ihre jeweiligen Themenfelder erschöpfend beackern könnten. Mancher Beiträger erlaubt sich eine erfrischende Polemik gegen die Gepflogenheiten der Wissenschaft, worin man die kreative Atmosphäre der Symposien noch erahnen kann. Gerade im punktuellen und essayistischen Ansatz bieten die Beiträge Anregungen. Sie machen damit eine Fortsetzung des Austauschs wünschenswert; diese Art der Symposien scheint ergiebiger, weil anregender zu sein, als die üblichen nationalen Kongresse der Kunstwissenschaft, auf denen zu meist doch nur Spezialinteressen unverbunden nebeneinander stehen und die den Eindruck erwecken können, daß es noch viel mehr als nur zwei Kunstwissenschaften gibt, die nicht in der Lage sind, ein einheitliches Bild der Kunstgeschichte zu schaffen.

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**Justin E. A. Kroesen, Regnerus Steensma:** *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church/ Het Middeleeuwse Dorpskerkinterieur*; Louvain: Uitgeverij Peeters 2004; 430 pp. with ca. 600 illustrations in full colour; ISBN 90-429-1540-4; € (B) 90,00

The interiors of medieval village churches throughout Europe have often been preserved remarkably well, even though, like the cathedral, monastery churches and churches in towns and cities, they too have suffered from the vicissitudes of time and neglect. Whereas in northern and central Europe many church interiors were spoilt in the wake of the Reformation as a result of Iconoclasm, in southern Europe, where the catholic faith persisted, interiors were often modernized during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Not all Reformations were the same. The Reformation in England was rather stern on images and therefore very few statues, retables and altarpieces from the medieval period have survived here. Calvinism too did not agree with images and in Calvinist regions wall paintings were either destroyed or white-washed, and cult images destroyed. Lutheranism on the other hand saw no harm in

paintings and statues and, as a result, the best-preserved medieval village church interiors, with the objects of cult and worship still in their original locations, are to be found in Lutheran areas, especially when these regions went through a period of economic decline. As the authors of the present book state: „Poverty and recession after the Middle Ages appear to have worked in a conserving manner in many regions“.

In spite of this great wealth of artefacts and furnishings of the medieval period, village churches have not received the sort of attention in the literature that has befallen the cathedrals, monasteries and city parishes. Of course, the relatively simple village churches never stood in the forefront of architectural or artistic developments, and therefore are not described in general art histories, but they have other merits. Charming and colourful, they present us with the type of work that would have been familiar to the common man and therefore with a more genuine insight in medieval culture than the court and cathedral art that is usually found in art history books. They are important testimonies of a common European culture providing us with a remarkable insight into the how the Eucharist was celebrated throughout Europe in the medieval period.

One of the purposes of the present volume, written by Regnerus Steensma and Justin Kroesen of the Institute for Liturgical Research at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands), is to give an overview of the decoration and furnishings of medieval village churches throughout Western Europe, from England to Italy and from Sweden to Spain, while also paying attention to regional differences and changes over time. And one can see it all for one self, as the book is illustrated with hundreds of full-colour photographs which makes it a true feast for the eye. As most of the churches and artefacts presented in the book are unknown, hidden away as they are in obscure village churches, the book also shows the reader a new side of medieval art. Of course, not every church and every object have received mention, but what has been selected by the two authors does present the reader with a very representative corpus. Even so, one cannot help wondering about certain omissions. I, for one, missed a reference to the stone fonts from Tournai, the Meuse valley and northern France, whereas the stone fonts from England, Tuscany, Gotland, Bentheim, Westphalia, and even the lead fonts from England and France, are given full attention. But such comments are details that do not subtract from the book as a whole, which is a remarkable achievement.

The book has been systematically set up. It starts with a brief overview of the various types of village church. Then a brief chapter is devoted to the setting which formed the background for the furnishings; the wall paintings, painted ceilings and floors. The main subject of the book is however the liturgical furnishings and these are discussed in the order in which they appear in the church building, from east to west. Much attention is given to the altar, which was of course the main focus of the Eucharist, and its adornment, such as statues, antependia and retable or reredos. Following this the book focuses on the furnishing around the altar: the development of the tabernacle, piscina, sedilia, choir stalls and lectern. Next the authors deal with the area between choir and nave and so ample attention is given to the actual partitions

between choir and nave: screens, rood lofts and the like, as well as to the triumphal cross above them, the rood. The chapters dealing with the nave furnishings discuss the pulpit, benches, Easter Sepulchres, baptismal fonts and statuary. The book ends with a chapter on the vicissitudes of churches interiors following the medieval period, which provides the reader with a valuable insight into why in some regions there is more medieval material left than in others. I missed a similar overview at the beginning of the book; surely, in order to understand why so few artefacts found in parish churches predate the eleventh or twelfth centuries a brief history of the development of the parochial system would have been in order.

Each chapter starts with a brief entry on the type of furnishing being discussed, starting with its function in the liturgy, its appearance and its development in time. Following this attention is given to its variations in form across Europe.

On the whole the information given is excellent but I did wonder about a few of the entries. In the book the Lateran baptistery is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, whereas many authors now hold its origins to go back to the time of Constantine the Great. Also, I found the entry on the rood somewhat muddled. Cross and crucifix are treated together and it is said that from the earliest period of the Christian faith the cross was represented in all media: painting, mosaic, sculpture, stained glass. This suggests that there is such a thing as Early-Christian stained glass and that the crosses and crucifixes alike were always present in the church interior, which is not correct. Depictions of the Crucifixion are rare in Early Christian art, one of the earliest examples being that on the wooden doors of the church of Sta Sabina in Rome and here the iconography differs from that of later periods. Large triumphal crosses do not appear before the Carolingian period, the earliest examples to date being the triumphal cross in the Cathedral of Sansepolcro (Arezzo that has recently been dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of a carbon-14 dating).

To sum up, the book is a true compendium of the medieval church interior and gives a good impression of the various interiors across Western Europe. The individual entries on the church furnishings provide the sort of information that every student of medieval art history should be acquainted with and that one would like to use as a course book for first- or second-year students. It is therefore rather a shame that the book is so expensive. One of the reasons for this is that the text has been printed in both English and Dutch. As readers will read the text either in one language or the other, I do not understand this. Whoever purchases the book also buys the extra bulk, which not only renders the book needlessly voluminous but also expensive. Also, I am not very impressed by the quality of the English translation; in parts it reads as a word-by-word translation from Dutch to English done by a machine.

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