Will Coster & Andrew Spicer (eds.): *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ISBN: 978-0-521-82487-3, 350 pp, $90

"Sacred Space" is a category which has been introduced and commonly used by phenomenologists of religion. For example, in his *The Sacred and Profane* (1956) Eliade maintains that all space is either sacred or profane. Eruptions of the sacred into the world—hierophanies *in illo tempore*—result in spatial distinctions, and human beings, at least the religious virtuosi, do not create but discover sacred sites. Even though Eliade's concept of sacred space has stimulated a huge body of literature, it is, as critics claim, ultimately a philosophical and theological concept, an unhistorical and empirically useless model.

In recent years the historiography of religious space has made considerable progress, not least due to the consequences of the 'spatial turn' for medieval and early modern studies. The Reformation as well as the Counter-Reformation, by which European territories, communities, identities as well as sacred and public spaces have been restructured, serve as promising fields to explore dimensions of sacred space. However, as the editors Will Coster and Andrew Spicer in their introductory remarks assess, "there has been no serious and sustained attempt to investigate this important facet of the period in the variety of contexts that prevailed across the continent of Europe" (p. 1).

The fifteen chapters of the volume are aimed at filling this gap. The religious, cultural, and territorial contexts, as well as the religions investigated, vary broadly: from Scotland to Spain, from Brittany to Moldavia, from Catholicism and Orthodox faith to Lutheranism and Calvinism.

Beat Kümin aims to reassess the relationship between the sacred and the profane in early modern communities by the example of the Zwinglian Swiss city of Bern. The geographical and topographical setting, contrasting forms of "sacred church"-"wordly tavern"-interactions are elaborated and a wider conceptual framework is developed by focusing on a "holistic" communal experience.

Official Lutheran teachings on sacred images and space differed from that of the Catholic Church. Protestant teachings, however, are not reflected one-to-one in spatial and ritual practices. In Nuremberg churches, as Bridget Heal shows, the interior, including altars, statues, paintings, and sometimes even saints remained intact and *in situ*. The "preserving power" of Lutheranism led to a gradual shift in perception, and fostered a mostly untroubled process of Lutheran assimilation of the sacred topography of Catholicism.

Christian Grosse examines the Reformed understanding of the 'sacred' in order to demonstrate that the liturgical conversion of churches by the Genevan Reformation "was not just a process of desacralization, but rather the response to a desire to rearrange the formal 'presence of the sacred in the world.'"

Andrew Spicer scrutinizes the changing perception of the sanctity of the church in post-Reformation Scotland as a contradictory process: "the Kirk attempted to deny the sanctity of a particular church and site, deeming such beliefs to be superstitious or idolatrous, but simultaneously strove to ensure that church buildings were dedicated solely for religious purposes and treated accordingly" (p. 102).

John Craig focuses on the changing soundscape of worship and how this new acoustic dimension affected early modern conceptions of the sacred. Three aspects of the worship soundscape are surveyed.

Within the parish church both sacred and secular space coexist and there were gradations of the sacred, as Will Coster argues, considering burial practices in the Holy Trinity parish of Chester. Behind burials politics of space utilization, patterns of sanctity and exclusion as well as competing principles of status, age, gender, place, and family can be detected.

In Moldavian churches of the early modern period special funerary rooms developed, which were a unique phenomenon in the Orthodox world. Maria Crăciun explores the reasons behind and the functions of these funerary rooms.

The Counter-Reformation, or better Catholic Renewal, entailed a fundamental change of the image of Rome: from an essentially static backdrop for nostalgic ruminations on past—*Roma antica*—to a dynamic model of Counter-Reformation "best practice" —*Roma moderna*. In the course of his research on the construction and perception of Rome as a sacred landscape Simon Ditchfield stresses that not only the meaning of "space" has to be considered, but also "what it does, how it works as cultural practice."

Trevor Johnson describes the spiritual colonization of the natural world by Spanish Discalced Carmelites, who started to establish *desiertos* (deserts) or *yermos* (wildernesses) in remote rural areas in the 1590s. Johnson discerns distinctive aspects of sacred space: the body of the hermit, sacralized through mortification, the cell, praised as God's tabernacle and functioning as a spiritual womb, the deserts, "a simulacrum of a lost paradise closed off against the prevailing proto-capitalistic secular values of production and commerce" (p. 210).

Hollywell, a famous pilgrimage site in Wales, survived the ruptures of Reformation and remained a focus for "penitential fervor, festive sociability, and medical expectations long after the theological and liturgical upheavals of the 1530s, 40s and 50s" (p. 212). Alexandra Walsham displays the cultural changes and the struggles over the redefinition of "the boundaries between the sacred and the profane."

The effects of the Catholic Reform in seventeenth-century Brittany are analyzed by Elisabeth Tingle. Among others, Jesuit Julien Maunoir (1606–1683) skillfully used landscapes of memory, particularly that of early saints, for his missionary strategy and thereby affirmed the local side of religion.

Confessional violence has been intimately linked to Reformation. Coexistence, however, was also part of the religious ecology. Amanda Eurich focuses on the principality of Orange (southern France) in order to explore "how Calvinists and Catholics contested the parameters of religious coexistence set in place by state and local authorities, and in the process, redefined the boundaries of the sacred" (pp. 260–261). Sacred space, as Amanda Eurich states, was both fixed and fluid.

Howard Louthan unfolds the complex confessional transformation caused by the Habsburgian campaign of re-Catholicization in Bohemia. The remaking of the Charles Bridge serves as example demonstrating how Catholics used religious art to create sacred space.

After the Thirty Years War (1648) religious conflicts became absorbed in prolonged legal disputes. Duane J. Corpis explores the religious geography of the city of Augsburg, which was not only bi-confessional but also implemented a policy of strict confessional parity. Religious authorities "inscribed abstract religious distinctions into the tangible, physical landscape" (p. 324). In everyday practice, however, space was contested and negotiated as Corpis shows by two cases of female conversion.

The contributions of the volume share some systematically important topics, partly more implicit than explicit: the dubious concept of 'popular' or 'folk' religion is variously reflected, the usefulness of the sacred-profane dichotomy is questioned, as well as the common notion of Protestantism as an iconoclast religion, which changed symbol- and image-rich churches into empty meeting places. Reformation, however, cannot be equated with a process of 'desacralization,' as all of the contributors clearly demonstrate. Instead, concepts of sanctity and the meaning of sacred space itself have to be reflected to reveal profound and meaningful spatial reconfigurations of sacred localities, places, and spaces. The meaning of sacred space is religiously and socially defined and depends on modes of representation, communication, communal consent, and power relations. Such an analytical focus has to take rituals, especially the politics of place making practices into consideration, which is convincingly proved throughout the volume.

The spatial approach in the historiography of Reformation and Counter-Reformation as presented in the volume is most welcome. *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* impressively demonstrates the fruitfulness of the analytical strategy of 'localizing religion' in the strict sense of the word, and, therefore, encourages further spatially oriented, comparative, and religio-historical research. More local histories of religions are in fact needed to recognize the shortcomings of commonly used notions and static categories such as 'desacralization,' 'secularization,' 'disenchantment,' Reformation, or Counter-Reformation.

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