

Rituals of Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Edward Muir. Mark Jurdjevic and Rolf Strøm-Olsen, eds.

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The career of Edward Muir has spanned more than four decades, leaving a legacy of articles and books that have shaped the direction of Renaissance and early modern studies. Few scholars in the last half century can claim to have influenced the field so thoroughly, not only within Italian historiography, but also in European and world history. Perhaps only Carlo Ginzburg and Natalie Zemon Davis have had such an impact. Tellingly, each of these three scholars has practiced microhistory, the art of finding larger arguments based on the events and people often considered peripheral and insignificant. Muir, however, is best known for pointing his historian's magnifying glass at ritual moments, whether a civic procession, a provincial vendetta, or a night at the opera.

It is fitting, therefore, that Muir receive a collection in honor of his prodigious output and tremendous influence on the field. Mark Jurdjevic and Rolf Strøm-Olsen have responded to the challenge, selecting fifteen essays from a conference "Rethinking Early Modernity," held in his honor at Victoria College of the University of Toronto in June 2014. The conference specifically focused on early modern ritual; consequently, as the title of this collection suggests, the majority of these essays explore some aspect of ritual, although in many cases this is broadly defined. The essays, the work of Muir's students both new and established, as well as some of his more esteemed colleagues, cross interdisciplinary bridges, bringing together art historians, historians, and literary scholars.

Jurdjevic and Strøm-Olsen have organized one of the most coherent and stimulating Festschriften I have ever read. Space does not permit me to discuss the merits of each of

the fifteen essays, so I will focus attention on the essays that easily form around three core subjects: civic ritual, literature, and religious ritual. The first four essays of the volume relate well to Muir's work on civic ritual and republican government. Patricia Fortini Brown and Monique O'Connell both examine how Venice negotiated with the subjects of their empire through civic rituals, whether processions or orations given at initiation of territorial governorships. Michael Paul Martoccio and Brian Maxson move the discussion to Renaissance Florence: Martoccio examines how civic ritual was used to establish local identity in border towns between Florence and its rival Siena while Maxson argues that the poems on friendship read at the completion, the *Certame Coronario*, served as a performative ritual meant to heal factional wounds after a series of political events had Florence embroiled in civic tensions in 1441.

The next bundle of essays cohere around literature. Guido Ruggiero and Albert Russel Ascoli examine the classic novelle of the Trecento and Quattrocento. In his essay on Boccaccio's story about the lovesick painter, Calandrino, Ruggiero highlights class differences in Renaissance Italy through the twin lenses of *amore* and *virtú*. Meanwhile, Ascoli argues for the modernity of the novella *The Fat Woodcarver*, in which Filippo Brunelleschi convinces his dimwitted friend that he is another person. Ascoli asserts that we can learn much about self and the individual through the reading of this novella. Antonio Ricci furthers the exploration into theory and methodology, particularly of the different ways of doing book history, with his essay on the print history of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.

The last series of related essays highlight religion—a theme Muir has consistently addressed, particularly in his influential article “The Virgin on the Street Corner.” Celeste McNamara provides an excellent analysis of rural confraternities of the Veneto, and argues for their local vitality well into the seventeenth century in contrast to their urban counterparts. Susan Karant-Nunn makes connections between the history of emotion and ritual theory with her essay on the “emotion rituals” performed at the funeral processions of the Saxon elector Augustus I in 1586. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia's piece on the history of the Chinese goddess and patron of sailors, Mazu, is beautifully written and stimulating in its discussion of the Ming state's appropriation of her cult and its encounter with Christian missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most innovative of the essays belongs to Ethan Shagan, who uses the near contemporaries John of God and Michel Montaigne, starkly different in so many ways, to show how the Catholic Church, despite its insistence on obedience, allowed room for individuals to carve out their own notions of religious thought and belief.

Jurdjevic and Strøm-Olsen should be commended for presenting a collection that both celebrates Muir's contributions to the field and pushes his ideas into new territory. This Festschrift certainly won't be collecting dust—unused—on a library shelf.

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