

Book review | Sofija Lazić Pedersen

Hymnos yearbook – Friendly meetings at and crossing many different borders

Korkalainen, Samuli & Lampinen, Leena (2024) *Encounters at borders and across borders*. Hymnos 2024: Yearbook of the Finnish Society for Hymnology and Liturgy. Helsinki: The Finnish Society for Hymnology and Liturgy.
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The yearbook of the Finnish Society for Hymnology and Liturgy, Hymnos 2024, is entitled *Encounters at borders and across borders*. It was edited by Samuli Korkalainen and Leena Lampinen, and is the edited proceedings of the hymnology and liturgy conference held in Helsinki in May 2022. This conference was to take place in 2021 but was postponed by a year due to the pandemic, and the resulting restrictions for meetings and travel.

This yearbook consists of articles from the speakers at the conference, including monographic articles by Jochen Arnold, Elsabé Kloppers, Miikkael Halonen and Anna Pulli-Huomo, as well as two co-written articles compiled by four to five researchers. These articles were prepared in group sessions before the conference and completed in the post conference period.

Professor Jochen Arnold's article investigates differing ways of celebrating wholly digital or hybrid services with holy communion in Germany, including home communion, during the recent pandemic. The source data was found primarily from his own experiences in the Lutheran church, as well as in Roman Catholic practices. As we know from experiences in the Nordic countries, not all Lutheran churches and congregations – or even pastors within the same congregation – reacted to the pandemic restrictions in the same way. This diversity of response affected not only the practical theology as lived religion, but also the doctrinal theology of the Lord's supper. In Finland, Lutheran bishops ruled against communion in the home, while Orthodox congregations retained celebrations of

communion in church. I found that the most interesting part of this article is the described catechetical influences on children in preparing home communion.

Elsabé Kloppers, a hymnologist and professor extraordinarius at the University of South Africa, held an inspiring keynote presentation on hymns in public settings at the conference. Sadly, all I managed to jot down were the title of the hymns she mentioned. On reading her article, I recalled both her presentation and the position of these hymns. Particularly touching for me were the African hymns such as *Thuma mina, Nkosi Sikelil' iAfrika, Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho, Siyahamba* and the protest song *Senzeni Na* ('What have we done?'). The latter was sung by the University of Pretoria Camerata after the murder of a female student in September 2019. Kloppers also mentioned hymns quoted by Joe Biden (*On eagle's wings*) and Barack Obama himself singing *Amazing grace* during the eulogy of a pastor and Senator from the House of Representatives who, alongside eight others, was murdered during a service at his church in Charleston. Kloppers refers to the hermeneutics of suspicion in interpreting hymns sung in public and hence create new meanings, with facets of anamnesis, prolepsis and transformation.

In his article, Miikkael Halonen applies a musical philological method and presents Michael Praetorius as a mediator between the Renaissance and Baroque eras, as well as between Northern and Southern Europe, through personal encounters with Johann Walter, Paul Chemnitz (son of Martin Chemnitz), and Hans Leo Hassler. Praetorius is also interpreted as a bridge between classical literature, held in high esteem in his own time and place, and musical humanism, as he himself writes about music and education in his works *Syntagma musicum* and the preface to *Leiturgodia Soinia Latina*. Halonen argues that Praetorius's organ *ricercars* serve as a link between liturgical and rhetorical traditions in the Catholic and Lutheran traditions.

Anna Pulli-Huomo's article investigates French Roman Catholic organ music in a Finnish Lutheran liturgy using auto ethnography as an artistic research method. In so doing, she examines her own images, skills, experiences and activities, also linking them to what is stated about music in the present official Service book for the Lutheran church in Finland. As a visual person myself, I particularly appreciated the figuratively displayed model of her research method. In applying ideas of musical statements as bridges or dialogue possibilities between different parts of Mass, she shows how the organist may bring out interaction between people, music and the liturgy, in a collaborative creative process that enhances the involvement of those present.

This conference was my first hymnological conference abroad. During my stay, Sweden voted to apply for membership in the NATO-alliance. Finland, which itself shares a border with Russia, already at war in Ukraine, and borders with peaceful member states, stands between the so-called political east and west. Issues of nationalism within churches are also discussed in the preface of this journal, and there are also relevant language borders. These kinds of borders are discussed in the article by Samuli Korkalainen, Tuuli Lukkala, Kristel Neitsov-Mauer, Per Kristian Aschim and Jan Hellberg. Here, five different contexts are used as backgrounds. These are the language shift in Finnish-American hymnody, ethnographic research on the soundscapes of Orthodox Christian worship in Finland, linguistic boundaries in Estonian hymnody, multi-lingual and monolingual hymnals in Norway, and the multilingual work in the Lutheran churches in Namibia and Angola. Together, these writers explore the Tower of Babel in recent contexts, and also suggest possible directions for further research.

The Lutheran church and the Orthodox church are both state churches in Finland. Crossing borders through conversion is a path chosen by many, and is one of my vivid memories from the conference. The article by Leena Lampinen, Hilikka-Lisa Vuori Tuomas Meurman and Riikka Patrikainen explores ritual touching through collaborative autoethnography, and mental and bodily borders in both Lutheran and Orthodox worship. The authors also examine ways to cross these borders, proving that they are borders with crossings rather than fixed boundaries. I vividly recall the experience of meeting a stranger at the conference workshop; almost everyone was a stranger to me. The article resonates with Elin Lockneus' dissertation *Kyrkbänksteologi*, which examines the congregation's liturgical practices. A lasting post-pandemic influence is the reluctance to touch others during Eucharist. In Sweden, the congregational exchange of the peace greeting (*pax*), once commonly expressed as a handshake, is now more often simply a reciprocal nodding of the head with one hand over the heart.

One of my fondest memories from the conference was listening to Sirkku Rintamäki singing her 'wild hymns'. Although not included in the yearbook *Hymnos*, we hope to publish an article on these hymn forms in the forthcoming issue of *Hymnologi – Nordisk tidsskrift*. Another beautiful memory was the Orthodox vespers at the Uspenskij Cathedral; obviously, some memories from the conference cannot be written down and shared in the yearbook. This proves that we need both physical meetings as well as written articles in order to communicate fully across boundaries. This yearbook helped me to recollect and to see new things which I did not hear at the conference. It is therefore my hope that it will be interesting also for people who were unable to attend the conference.