
This is the first attempt to make a study of the ceremonies and chants of the liturgical processions in western Europe in the Middle Ages, and as such satisfies an important need in musical scholarship. Taken into account in the book are more than two hundred sources from all of the major European libraries, sources which represent the customs of churches from Sicily to Scotland. The method employed involves the reconstruction and analysis of a model liturgy – that of Salisbury Cathedral – and, subsequently, a study of the origin and development of the music and ceremonial in the wider European sphere.

The choice of the Sarum Rite for special consideration can be explained. The Middle Ages had no standard, official ritual and for the purposes of comparison it has been necessary to settle upon one of the local usages. The practice of Sarum is the best choice since, to begin with, it was the most widespread of any, with great authority and influence throughout the British Isles and even on the Continent. Moreover, the Salisbury Processional is fully rubricated – it is, in fact, the only complete medieval processional extant. There survives, in addition, a full complement of related Salisbury service books and documents covering the whole of the late medieval period. Finally, the Sarum service books were drawn up in such a way as to be suitable for churches other than the Cathedral; and this feature is of particular advantage for a study which treats the processions in a context larger than the local.

The book also includes:

- a translation of the complete Latin rubrics of the Sarum Processional, this material supplemented by information on vestments and ceremonial from other Sarum documents;
- an edition of all the special processional chants in use at Salisbury;
- charts which provide comparisons of the repertoires for the Rogation Days, Palm Sunday and Easter in European sources from the ninth to the eleventh centuries;
- reproductions of the woodcuts illustrating the processions which appeared in the 1502 (and following) editions of the *Processionale Sarum*. 