



Preliminary report of an Examiner on a candidate for a Research Degree

Form RD1

Each Examiner is required to make an independent preliminary report on the thesis **before** the *viva voce* (or alternative) examination is held. Both RD1 Forms should be jointly considered by the Internal and External Examiner prior to the *viva voce*.

Both RD1 forms should be returned to the Awards Office with Form RD2.
Please note that a copy of this form will be given to the candidate following the *viva voce*.

1. The Candidate

Name in full: RHIANYDD HALLAS

Bangor University's Student Identifier: 500273863

Degree (e.g. MRes, PhD, DHealthcare etc): PhD

Title of thesis: Two rhymed offices composed for the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: comparative study and critical edition

Date of submission: 31/01/2021 Is this a Resubmission? NO

Name of collaborating organisation, if any: Charles University, Prague; Czech Republic

2. External Examiner

Name: DR LISA COLTON

3. Report of the Examiner on the thesis and any published work submitted

The Examiner is requested to give an assessment of the candidate's performance with particular reference to current Regulations.

3.1 Does the thesis represent a significant contribution to knowledge of the subject by:

- (i) Its originality Yes.....
and/or
- (ii) the exercise of independent critical powers Yes

3.2 Is the thesis satisfactory as regards presentation, style and structure? Yes

3.3 Is the abstract of the thesis acceptable? Yes

3.4 In the case of a candidate whose research programme is part of a collaborative group project, does the thesis indicate clearly the individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration? n/a.....

3.5 Report

Note: A one-page report will suffice.

This is a strong, well-structured, detailed, and convincing doctoral dissertation. The central aims are to present a critical edition of two offices for the Visitation, and to contextualise them in the climate of late fourteenth-century devotion and politics; these aims are fully achieved.

The format of the dissertation allows a logical sequence of chapters that deal with contextual and biographical matters, before the edition proper. A catalogue of sources is provided, focusing in detail on those chosen as important reference points in the work, and alluding where possible to those not fully consulted at this time. There are occasional repetitions of factual or contextual material between (occasionally within) chapters, but not to an intrusive degree. The sequence of sources allows good description of each one, though does prevent the reader from knowing what is particularly typical or unusual about some of the variants between them. Tables, maps, and appendices are used highly effectively, and as a reader it was useful to make reference to all of them at relevant points, including the chronology.

The contextual chapters demonstrate a confident handling of religious, political, and textual matters relevant to late medieval music and liturgy, and are based on a thorough knowledge of the literature. In particular, it is both unusual but enlightening to have so much information available about the creation of these particular offices. Although not the focus of this work, I would be curious to know something (if anything is known) of the six further Visitation offices considered by the second panel; how might this help us to understand the contrasting approaches of Jenštejn and Easton, whose backgrounds, training, skills, and motivations were so different from one another.

The final conclusions draw together not only the most significant themes and findings of the work. Additionally, they note and account for differences in the offices of Easton and Jenštejn, and speculate reasonably about what remains to be understood about how and why Easton produced a competing office at all, and why it took such a different approach poetically and musically. Some fascinating further lines of enquiry are also flagged up, notably the apparently unique form of a Visitation Office in the Worcester Antiphoner, and the possibility of further work on Insular sources generally. Hallas also outlines the reasonable anticipation that her edition should be published online, which I would encourage.

In the viva, there will no doubt be questions relating to general and specific details, but I am confident that this is an excellent piece of doctoral-level work. There are a very small number of typographical errors, which I can provide details of in the final report.

Confirmation details required by Charles University, Prague

The work submitted meets the standard customarily required of a doctoral dissertation. I recommend the dissertation for a public defence. I propose that the dissertation is on a Pass standard

Signed: *Lisa Cotton*

Date: ...12 March 2021