

Reviews

Jennifer Bain, *Hildegard of Bingen and Musical Reception: The Modern Revival of a Medieval Composer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xiii + 235pp. £64.99. ISBN 978 1 107 07666 2.

Hildegard of Bingen was not rescued from oblivion by New Agers and feminists. Jennifer Bain's book comprehensively debunks the persistent trope that the twelfth-century abbess acquired her present fame in the twentieth century. Instead, the volume traces the increasing awareness of Hildegard and the revival of her music over the course of the nineteenth century, using as its temporal framework the decision to close the Benedictine house at Eibingen in 1803 and its refoundation as the Abbey of St Hildegard (Abtei St Hildegard) in 1904. In this period, Hildegard drew attention from scholars of different backgrounds, with different motivations for constructing their very own image of her. Bain impressively unveils the complex historical contexts in which the nineteenth-century protagonists of Hildegard's reception were active.

The first figure to take centre stage in Bain's chronologically ordered study is Ludwig Schneider, whom she convincingly shows to have 'played a pivotal role; his dedication to, and perhaps obsession with Hildegard contributed to her intensified veneration, her broader reputation, and [...] the revival of her music' (p. 98). As parish priest in Eibingen, the home of Hildegard's second monastic foundation, Schneider's interest in Hildegard was instigated by a sense of her significance for the local area. Prompted by Bishop Peter Joseph Blum in 1851 to undertake the scholarly research needed to authenticate Hildegard's relics, Schneider not only produced a 400-page-long document on the matter (including seven paragraphs on Hildegard's music), but also 'sought out ways that he could bring his research to the people of Eibingen and beyond to establish a living veneration of Hildegard, and planned out a major feast-day celebration for September 17, 1857, a date that formally marks the beginning of the modern revival of Hildegard's music' (p. 82). For the occasion, the priest put together a devotional service which included a performance of the first four half-strophes of Hildegard's sequence 'O virga ac diadema'. In her introductory chapter, Bain makes clever use of the central role of this particular chant in the musical revival of Hildegard ('almost a musical emblem for Hildegard', p. 24), providing a helpful overview of her study's materials and key protagonists.

The renewed attention towards Hildegard was not, however, confined locally, as Bain illustrates (among other examples) with reference to the abbess's inclusion in the Walhalla memorial, completed in 1842. Schneider's successor as parish priest in Eibingen, Johannes Schmelzeis, cemented Hildegard's fame with his life-and-works study of 1879, which remains a seminal resource even today. This work, too, was commissioned by Bishop Blum, and Schmelzeis in turn commissioned a

discussion and edition of Hildegard's music from Raymund Schlecht. Schmelzeis's aim, Bain argues, was not (as it had been for Schneider) to anchor Hildegard in the local community, but to portray her as a saint relevant to all Germans, not just to Catholic Germans. As a result of the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* of 1803 and the burgeoning *Kulturkampf* in the early years of the German Empire under Wilhelm I and Otto von Bismarck (established after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871), Catholics lost much of their cultural influence. The independence and influence of the bishops was severely curtailed, and Catholics found themselves under the rule of Protestant leaders: 'within this environment, Schmelzeis and other German Catholics were keen to position themselves as Catholic Germans, patriotic and loyal citizens of the nation with a long history of German identity that preceded the Reformation' (p. 135). Strikingly, the first edition of Schmelzeis's life-and-works study linked Hildegard to the statue of Germania that had been begun in 1871 at Niederwald, near Bingen, and whose foundation stone had been laid by the Emperor himself. Bain's discussion of Hildegard's representation as a German would benefit from further nuanced assessment in light of the overarching nationalism of the period, not only from the perspective of the *Kulturkampf*; nevertheless, her claim that 'most German writers following Schmelzeis until World War II emphasise in some way Hildegard's identity as a *German* Catholic, still reacting to the biconfessional tension' (p. 160) underlines perceptively the wide reach of Schmelzeis's reception of Hildegard.

Cardinal Pitra, in contrast, saw in Hildegard first and foremost a Benedictine. For this reason, he requested of Dom Pothier, famous for his role in the revival of Gregorian chant at Solesmes, that he copy one of Hildegard's texts and prepare an edition of all of Hildegard's seventy chants from the so-called *Riesencodex* (D-WII MS 2). Pothier never completed this edition, but he did publish a series of six articles on individual chants by Hildegard, arguing that her pieces fitted well into the compositional practice of the twelfth century, whereas Schlecht had sought to emphasise Hildegard's musical idiosyncrasies. Pothier's transcription work is documented in a letter by his brother Adolphe, who had accompanied him to the library at Wiesbaden in 1878, and this letter calls attention to yet another protagonist in the propagation of Hildegard: as the protector of two of Hildegard's manuscripts, the librarian Antonius von der Linde opened his monograph on the library's manuscripts with a substantial bibliography documenting the state of research on Hildegard up to 1877. Just as importantly, von der Linde set up a glass cabinet in which to display Hildegard's manuscripts to the many tourists who came to the spa town of Wiesbaden. The public and scholarly interests in Hildegard intersect in the person of von der Linde, and he may act as a useful reminder to present-day scholars of the seminal role that librarians and curators can play in bridging the gap between scholarship and the public.

Bain concludes by setting off the importance of these nineteenth-century men against the reception, both scholarly and musical, of Hildegard in the twentieth century, which was dominated by women, in particular in the Anglophone world. This current predominance of scholarship by women, Bain proposes, results from the fact that Hildegard's Anglophone revival 'began with the feminist project of restoring women to the historical narrative' (p. 202), whereas the nineteenth-century interest

in her was led by priests and monks who were seeking to redefine their national and religious identities.

Given Bain's productive and discerning approach to the social circumstances of individual scholars (political, religious and personal), it is disappointing that she fails to provide any reference to the phenomenon of medievalism at large, elucidated most thoroughly in the rich *Studies in Medievalism* series (currently edited by Karl Fugelso). While Bain can, of course, not be criticised for sidestepping works that have appeared after the publication of her own study – among them, David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Cambridge, 2015) and Louise d'Arcens (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism* (Cambridge, 2016) – such overviews and companion studies provide a fecund discourse to which Bain's observations are pertinent. Annette Kreutziger-Herr's wide-ranging study of musical medievalism from the eighteenth century onwards (*Ein Traum vom Mittelalter: die Wiederentdeckung mittelalterlicher Musik in der Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2003), including a study of Hildegard's musical reception in the twentieth century, pp. 225–37), on the other hand, does constitute a lamentable absence from Bain's volume, all the more surprising given that she references some of Kreutziger-Herr's other work. While Bain's high-resolution focus on the reception of Hildegard brings to the fore many fascinating vignettes, readers might have wished for a more theorised approach that affords some categorical, abstracted reflection on the various kinds of reception at play here. In fact, Bain's comparison between Hildegard and the troubadours/trouvères as 'forgotten musically' (pp. 65–6) gives one such fruitful perspective to her findings, engaging critically with John Haines's *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music* (Cambridge, 2004). It is curious that Bain, a Machaut scholar herself, did not seize this opportunity to reflect on the distinct features of Hildegard's scholarly reception when compared with that of other medieval composers such as Guillaume de Machaut, as discussed recently by Elizabeth Eva Leach (*Guillaume de Machaut: Secretary, Poet, Musician* (Ithaca, NY, 2011), chapter 2: 'Resurrection: Dismembering Machaut'). Bernd A. Weil's study of the historiography of Minnesang would have provided another interesting comparative framework from the German-speaking world (*Die Rezeption des Minnesangs in Deutschland seit dem 15. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. M., 1991)).

Such comparisons may have afforded starting points for detailed considerations of individual examples. At times, the reader feels rushed along, skimming only the surface of the material. Bain's line of argument and prose is so clear that it could easily have borne the occasional digression into detail: her discussion of Ludwig Schneider's devotional service for Hildegard, for example, would have merited even closer inspection of its various sources and intertextualities. Likewise, a more detailed consideration of the role of institutions (in the widest sense) in the revival of Hildegard – the Bishop of Mainz, the Abbey of St Hildegard, or the Association of German Catholics – could have provided an interesting mirror-image to Bain's focus on individual actors.

My main concern, however, is that Bain's thoughtful, nuanced discussion of the German and French chant revivals in chapter 3 ('The German Revival of Chant') will be overlooked because it is tucked away in a book that is primarily

about Hildegard of Bingen. Arguably, this chapter encapsulates the volume's most immediate implications for scholarship beyond the circumscribed study of Hildegard reception, since it crystallises succinctly the differences between the two revivals: while the French resurgence of interest in chant was instigated from a religious vantage point, German scholars were interested primarily in the musical aspects of chant. The monks at Solesmes took as their yardstick the medieval sources of Gregorian chant while Germans such as Franz Xaver Haberl were guided by humanist reworkings, most prominently the Medicean *Graduale* of 1614. Readers with a general interest in the politics of nineteenth-century chant revivals may be tempted to put down Bain's book before they reach chapter 3; scholars with an interest in Hildegard, in turn, might be tempted to skip it. However, the chapter is worth close attention and is likely to encourage further, in-depth studies of the nineteenth-century reception of medieval music. Perhaps Bain would have been better served by placing this chapter earlier on in her study, for it undergirds much of her presentation of Hildegard-specific reception and it would be a pity for its insights to go unnoticed.

This minor quibble aside, Bain's study achieves its aim with admirable clarity: it demonstrates with flair that the revival of Hildegard and her music was not instigated in the twentieth century, but is rooted in the nineteenth century. Into the bargain, Bain offers readers rich insight into the cultural milieu in which such processes of reception and revival took place, encouraging further investigation.

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William Smith, *The Use of Hereford: The Sources of a Medieval English Diocesan Rite*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xxxi + 830pp. £150. ISBN 978 1 4724 1277 5.

There are at least three principal challenges which must be faced by the student of historical liturgical sources. The first of these is the need for exhaustive and multidisciplinary coverage of different aspects of the codex, so that important information and clues are not omitted from analysis. The second is the assumption that the texts and music of service books are so inflexible as to be receptive to traditional editorial projects (for which see the many reductive and yet unavoidable printed editions of English missals and breviaries produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). The third challenge is that a coherent, argumentative narrative must shoot through the entire project so that the non-specialist reader, typically burdened with the need to refer to liturgical material for some reason, may understand the specific points being made and, even more desirably, may come to believe that meaningful and wide-ranging observations *can* be made on the basis of exacting analysis of these most complex but ubiquitous sources. This volume by William Smith, which proposes to examine all the extant sources of 'a medieval English diocesan rite', does its best to deal with these ever-present challenges. In