

doi:10.1017/S000964071500102X

***Monastic Women and Religious Orders in Late Medieval Bologna.***

By **Sherri Franks Johnson**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xi + 262 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

The fortunes and opportunities of women religious in medieval Europe have recently been the subject of debate. The long prevailing view that clerical centralisation during the thirteenth century closed down paths of religious life previously open to women has been qualified. Looking in the gaps between the major institutions of the church, historians have been finding evidence of experimentation and local diversity in female religious communities extending to the end of the medieval period. Sherri Franks Johnson's study of holy women in Bologna adds significantly to this discussion. Of thirty-five female houses existing in the area by 1300, only half were closely linked to the major religious orders. The upheavals and warfare of the fourteenth century caused several groups of holy women to transfer within the city walls, precipitating amalgamation with other communities and occasional conflict. However, alongside some evidence of laxity in the fifteenth century Johnson emphasises continuing initiatives and "the range of choices nuns could exercise" (239). Because of the institutional character of the available sources, it is not easy to assess the degree of choice open to an individual woman entering one of these communities, nor the quality of their religious experience. Nonetheless the case for diversity and fluidity in the evolution of communities of religious women is well made. The creative energy of an individual such as Diana, the friend of St Dominic and founder of a community of men and women religious in the early thirteenth century, was evidently inspirational. At the end of the period no less an impact is recorded of the arrival in Bologna of the Observant Clares, whose monastery of Corpus Domini became one of the most prestigious houses in the city.

**Gervase Rosser**  
University of Oxford

doi:10.1017/S0009640715001031

***St. Anne in Renaissance Music: Devotion and Politics.*** By **Michael**

**Alan Anderson**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xvii + 345 pp. \$99.00 cloth.

In this monograph, Anderson has provided a collection of case studies, many evolved from the author's doctoral dissertation, designed to outline the

development through music of devotion to St. Anne, Mary's mother, during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. His thesis is that music and image became "emblematic of the feminine 'power' to produce flesh, potentially resonant with (female) sovereigns in their quests to sustain precious dynasties" (11). As Anderson explains, much of the music can be related to the political appropriation of St. Anne by the Habsburgs and other noble families to establish themselves as honorable descendants of Mary's mother, providing a useful addendum to Virginia Nixon's 2004 study of *Mary's Mother*.

The first study is focused on a rhymed office for St. Anne found in a late-medieval Cypriot manuscript (Torino, Biblioteca nazionale, MS J.II.9). Since there are few earlier liturgical sources for the veneration of St. Anne, Anderson's in-depth reading of the texts is very useful in understanding the rationale for her increased significance.

The core of his work is provided by his contextual study and analysis of the *Missa de Sancta Anna* composed in the late fifteenth century by Pierre de la Rue (c. 1452–1518). He demonstrates the Habsburg-Burgundian familial connections through Margaret of Austria's Mechelen court and the importance of the marriage between Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy that account for the preservation of this mass in a Burgundian manuscript that was part of the imperial music collection in Vienna. La Rue's mass is related both to the cult of St. Anne in Ghent and, as Anderson suggests, may also be related to the Burgundian succession crisis of 1477, when Charles the Bold died without a male heir. The mass is unusual in that a motet, *O salutaris hostia*, is substituted for the first "Osanna" in the *Sanctus* to accompany the elevation of the Host. Anderson also suggests that the likely musical source for the mass, whose tenor voice has the rubric "Felix Anna," is to be found in the Magnificat antiphon, "Felix Anna quaedam matrona."

The third study focuses on a group of manuscripts in Jena that originated in the Wittenberg court of Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, Wittenberg. One of these, traditionally labeled "JenaU 7," contains parts of La Rue's *Missa Sancta Anna* and was likely a gift from Maximilian I to the Elector. Other manuscripts from the same collection include a substantial number of compositions dedicated to St. Anne. Anderson emphasizes the relics and altar of St. Anne in the Castle Church (where Luther was to later nail his "Ninety-Five Theses") and examines these compositions as their musical counterparts. In particular, a set of Mass Propers for St. Anne was added to JenaU 34, and further works were also included in JenaU 30. Anderson also locates these works in the context of the debates concerning Mary's Immaculate Conception, a feast that had only been approved in 1477.

The fourth study is focused on a single motet by Jean Mouton, *Celeste beneficium*. A composer at the French court of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany, it appears that it was composed as a public petition to prevent a

succession crisis. The first part of the motet invokes the “mater matris,” St. Anne, as a petitioner to the Virgin Mary. The second part, however, is an explicit plea, first in the voice of Queen Anne (“Orat, plorat, et exorat Anna sibi”) and later in the voice of the King (“Lodovicus clamat ad te”) for a male heir, and even calls upon St. René. Mouton even provides a musical underlining for Louis’s petition by changing the style of music from independently-moving polyphonic voices to a hymn-like clarity so that the words are clearly heard. This motet became popular among other royal couples with problems conceiving sons. For example, in a set of part books prepared for Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, the names in the second part are altered to “Henricus rex” and “Katherina” and a reference to St. René is changed to St. George.

The final study is related to ecclesiastical reform in the early sixteenth century, the “Meaux Circle,” and biblical humanism, and finds its musical expression in a chant mass for St. Anne. The pamphlet war that evolved concerning Mary Magdalene and later St. Anne, opposed the critical humanism with the more traditional views that accepted the often apocryphal stories concerning these two saints. The little booklet that contains a French preface and the readings and chants comprising the Proper of the Mass of St. Anne (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fr. 1035) has been little studied, either by art historians or musicologists. Anderson further evidence that the supposed date for this manuscript, 1518, is supported by a complex of other theological and political allusions in the texts, and proposes that the author was the Franciscan friar. Jean Thenaud (c. 1480–1542).

Anderson throughout this work deftly weaves history, theology, art history, and musicology to present a multi-layered context for understanding the many musical works dedicated to St. Anne during to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. In only one instance I have found that Anderson did not follow his sources to a more fruitful conclusion. Among another group of manuscripts from the court of Frederick the Wise, previously in the collections of the Church of St. Anne in Annaberg, perhaps a gift for the inauguration of the church on 26 July 1519, are a further group of compositions dedicated to St. Anne. Among these is a polyphonic setting of verses from a sequence for St. Anne, *Luce lucens in aeterna*. The first verse found in the manuscript (Dresden, SLUB, Annaberg Mus 505) is “Felix Anna de caverna.” A closer study of this setting and the source chant, *Gaude Syon quod egressus*, demonstrates a much closer connection with the musical gestures in La Rue’s *Missa Sancta Anna*. This is, however, only one caveat; any scholar of religious life in this period will find much that is useful in Anderson’s study.

**Charles E. Brewer**  
Florida State University