

"With the harmony of the heart alone" - The Emotionalization of Religion in Heinrich Bone's Preface to "Cantate!" (1847)

by Marie Louise Herzfeld-Schild

The anthology of church songs *Cantate! A Catholic Songbook with Prayers and Devotions for all Periods and Festivals of the Ecclesiastical Year* was published in 1847.[1] An impressive example of the genre, the work highlights the manner in which church songbooks are both canons of religious education and testaments to contemporary cultural practices. Such sources tell us a great deal about the repertoire of songs which are to be performed in various congregations, dioceses, and regional churches; in doing so, they shed light on the religious, musical, and emotional practices of the contexts in which they emerge.



Cantate! was the first songbook of its kind that was widely and concomitantly used in numerous German-speaking bishoprics. Reprinted seven times over the course of the 30 years following publication, the work was furnished with a supplementary melody book in 1852. It is important to note that the work fulfilled two purposes, serving a primarily practical purpose in church services while also playing a pedagogical role in supporting the upkeep of church song, a task commonly ascribed to teachers. The book was compiled by Heinrich Bone (1813-1893), a Catholic theologian trained in classical philology and philosophy. Bone, a gymnasium teacher since 1835, became the principal of a gymnasium in Recklinghausen in 1856; in 1859 he took up a comparable position in Mainz at the express wish of the city's bishop. The author of numerous school textbooks, Bone achieved wider recognition with his *German Reader for Institutions of Higher Learning*, a two volume work published in 1840 and 1853, widely used as a standard text in Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Luxemburg that was reprinted a total of 67 times.

Bone was not only acquainted with a large number of Catholic dignitaries but also corresponded with painters such as Friedrich Overbeck and Philipp Veit, members of the Nazarene movement, itself closely associated with Catholicism. A strident Catholic whose beliefs were reflected in his pedagogical practice, Bone became a target of liberals from the early 1870s onwards as the *Kulturkampf* in Germany began to take shape. In 1873 he was forced into early retirement on account of his ultramontanist[2] sympathies; the *German Reader for Institutions of Higher Learning* fell into disfavour shortly afterwards and was no longer approved for use by teachers after 1876.

By 1887, with the *Kulturkampf* still ongoing, Bone's *Cantate!* had also been banned. The book bears the imprint of a devout Catholic and ultramontanist while the inclusion of a plethora of pre-Enlightenment songs places the work within the fold of the late 19th century restoration movement. The incorporation of such material simultaneously places it in clear opposition to the flood of newly compiled songbooks produced by both Christian denominations since the late 18th century. The authors of these works had taken up the impetus of Enlightenment theology and attempted to bring church song into line with the primacy of reason, an undertaking that entailed editing and reorganising both the words and melody of songs.[5]). Such experiences were associated with mysticism, whose ultimate aim is the achievement of a union with the divine, a tendency also found in church songs containing lyrical expressions of religious love for Jesus or Maria. Enlightenment theologians similarly expressed misgivings concerning the singing of Latin texts: the religious meaning of such songs, it was argued, was rarely understood rationally by members of the congregatio.

Emotion was an important point of reference in debates concerning the meaning of the "head" and the "heart" in religious beliefs that comprised a large part of the theological and ecclesiopolitical tussles of the

19th century.[6] *Cantate!* is an ultramontanist testimony explicable precisely within the context of such disputes. And because Bone enters the fray with a near 40-page long preface concerned above all with the hearing and singing of church song as a form of emotional praxis, there is an especially strong case to be made for an analysis of the songbook through the lens of a history of emotions.

Bone's preface is a polemic in the tradition of the ultramontanist restoration. While situated within the context of an intraconfessional conflict, it is aimed not only at liberal Catholic theology but also nationalists and Protestants. Church song offered Bone a suitable platform for his argument because it touched upon the diverse musical and emotional practices of ultramontanists, liberals, nationalists, and Protestants. As such, he was able to develop an ecclesiopolitical position from within the subject itself.

The question of the extent of the suitability and meaningfulness of singing German or else Latin songs in Catholic churches is at the heart of Bone's discussion. The opposing sides in the debate were, as far as Bone was concerned, all open to criticism. Liberal theology, in line with the principles of the Enlightenment, argued that the entire congregation should participate and understand the content of the texts used in services, and consequently called for the restriction or even the withdrawal of Latin songs. Nationalists on the other hand ascribed an importance to the use of German songs that superseded theological and pastoral considerations. Protestants rooted in the tradition of Luther meanwhile followed his defence of the introduction of the German language as a means of fostering the participation of the congregation in church services. In his preface Bone joins this conflict-ridden debate with a series of arguments that rely heavily on the emotional effects of music.

Bone begins by positing the "true" understanding of Catholic churches as houses of God rather than simply places of congregation before falling back on the longstanding tradition which understands music as an imitation of nature. To that end he invokes the example of the tweeting of the lark, which Bone argues sings

neither for itself nor for humanity alone, but rather and above all for God, who made the lark for song — even if it sings its whole life long without once being heard by man and itself does not know the reason for its song. Thus the Church performed, and continues to perform in perpetuity, certain services and ceremonies without requiring that every word and movement be understood and weighed. How can the priest laboriously weigh each word of the Psalms that he is to pray each day? God understands and God weighs. The Church's intention and the anointment of the soul gives meaning and power.[7]

Bone draws a distinction between two different aspects of the church service[8]: 1) the "priestly" aspect justified in God comprising the Latin mass as well as the daily performance of "certain services and ceremonies" held for God alone; and 2) the "popular" (*volkstümlich*) aspect comprising the musical participation of the congregation by means of the singing of songs in both Latin and German. Decisive for both aspects of the service, however, is their conformity with the character of the Catholic Church", i.e., that they are "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic". Two attributes are particularly interesting in terms of the emotional-historical context: "one" and "universal".

The "priestly" aspect of the service achieves unity, Bone suggests, by means of Latin songs sung by priests and choirs: Catholics around the world are united in imagination through the act of hearing. Wherever the individual Catholic may come from, the words and melodies are the same. If "language and ceremony is consistent, uniform, holy, and eternal throughout the world", it follows that the Catholic will "hear everywhere from the mouth of the Catholic priest at the altar the Gloria or the Creed ascend through the air" and will "perceive everywhere the bliss of community and intimate acquaintance rather than the unfamiliar and novel".

It is clear from Bone's choice of words that he regards this proclaimed community as an "imagined" and *felt* community; a community, that is, that defines itself by its shared Catholic, social, and emotional values and practices. Bone's idea thus recalls Barbara Rosenwein's concept of "emotional communities", which she defines as "groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression, and value - or devalue - the same or related emotions".[9] The shared repertoire of emotions (as Rosenwein uses the concept) within the ultramontanist religious community was based for Bone on the sense of community felt by Catholics around the world and their common knowledge of the texts, melodies, and liturgical context of the songs as well as their feeling of belonging to the Catholic Church. Religious emotions such as "true" devotion and edification as manifested in specific practices are a natural corollary of such a sense of community.

Whether Bone's notion of such an imagined and felt community conformed to the realities of the Church or rather to an ultramontanist utopia is of course an open question. If one assumes that communal singing is a form of "symbolic action"[12]

Such an interpretation does not restrict itself to the extracts from the preface cited above. The extent to which Bone ascribes a fundamental significance to emotion in his wider ecclesiopolitical project becomes clear when he directly addresses the opponents of Latin as the language of the Church, whose reasoning Bone characterises as "quotidian" and reducible to "superficial patriotism or trivial misgivings regarding comprehensibility".[13]

The reasoning of those in favour of Latin's use in the Church is, by contrast, profound and emerges "from the

deep" because it is "rooted in the mind and soul and therefore comprehends man in his entirety". Mind and soul as a holistic basis of ultramontanist tenets demands nothing further from the "laity" than that it understands with "the harmony of the heart alone". Bone attributes little significance or meaning to the object (that is, the German words) to be "understood by means of the harmony of the heart". This becomes especially clear in Bone's argument that singing in the "holy language of the Church" provides the people (*Volk*) with "greater inner anointment than the often unmindful recitation of German words insofar as outward understanding does not provide true inner edification and devotion that is pleasing to God".[14] Bone thus expressly makes holistic emotional experience central to the creation of a "truly" religious - which for Bone also means a Catholic - sensibility.

German songs, by contrast, belong for Bone exclusively to the popular aspect of Church services. The problem, however, is that each and every small congregation has until now had its own songs. If the use of German songs is unavoidable, argues Bone, it nonetheless remains imperative that the feeling of community among Catholics be given precedence. Thus the same church songs should "resonate for the same occasions wherever the German tongue speaks so that the German inhabitant of the Rhineland may also feel himself at home in the temples of the Danube and join in with the songs that resound there with the same hope and belief".[16] for the sake of the sense of community among believers expresses his vehement opposition to the "mania for change" regarding songbooks Bone associated with the late Catholic Enlightenment and saw as leading to the loss of "all warmth of togetherness". Change, for Bone, does not "edify" but rather "serves only an obsession with novelty and spiritual unrest". It is, he continues,

an unfathomable illusion to hold that the attention that makes itself apparent in the reading of a new prayer or the singing of a new melody has anything to do with edification; on the contrary, it is rarely the great Lord that hearts turn in such moments, and only the mind is active in understanding the words; and it is only the words and tones to which tranquillity applies.

Change is detrimental to true religious feelings since it is only when "the lure of novelty has ceased that true love and the power of conviction prove themselves, and only then do the faithful ascend heavenwards on trusted wings".[20]

The connection between musical expectation and emotional reaction Bone describes here on the basis of his own personal experiences has been one of the starting points of investigations into the emotional effectivity of music undertaken by both psychologists[24] and which can be understood as belonging to the imagistic mode of religiosity are consequently not compatible with the character of the Catholic Church for Bone.

Bone's ultramontanist arguments concerning Catholic church services and the role of music in the formation of emotional communities laid out in the preface did not fall on deaf ears in Germany's Catholic communities. This is shown by the reception *Cantate!* found in the Catholic press, where it was described as "epoch-making" and "path-breaking"[26]

[1] Heinrich Bone, *Cantate! Katholisches Gesangbuch nebst Gebeten und Andachten für alle Zeiten und Feste des Kirchenjahres. Nach den alten, sonst allgemein gebräuchlichen Gesängen und Andachten, sowie nach dem lateinischen Kirchenritus bearbeitet von Heinrich Bone. Mit hoher geistlicher Genehmigung* (Mainz: Verlag von Kirchheim, Schott und Thielmann, 1847).

[2] Ultramontanism was a politically oriented movement with particularly strong loyalties to Rome within German-speaking Catholicism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[3] Hermann Kurzke, "Kirchenlied und Literaturgeschichte. Die Aufklärung und ihre Folgen," in *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* 35 (1994/95), 124-35.

[4] Hermann Uhlein, *Kirchenlied und Textgeschichte: literarische Traditionsbildung am Beispiel des deutschen Himmelfahrtsliedes von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1995), 82.

[5] Niklaus Lagier, "Medieval Mysticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, John Corrigan, ed. (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 367.

[6] See the differentiation in "head religion" and "heart religion" as in Andrew Tallon, "Christianity," in *ibid.*, 111-24.

[7] Bone, *Cantate!*, V.

[8] Following quotes see *ibid.*, VII.

[9] Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

[10] See Peter Horst Neumann, "Das Singen als symbolische Handlung," *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für*

europäisches Denken 383 (1980), 326-36.

[11] Ibid., 333.

[12] Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866. Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (München: C.H. Beck, 1983), 41.

[13] Here and following: Bone, *Cantate!*, VIII.

[14] Ibid., IX.

[15] Ibid., X.

[16] Here and following: Ibid., XI.

[17] Ibid., S. XII.

[18] Ibid., S. XV.

[19] As for instance in Ernst Anton Nicolai Büchlein *Die Verbindung der Musik mit der Artzneygelahrheit* (Halle, 1745).

[20] Bone, *Cantate!*, XII.

[21] See foundational Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956) or also David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation. Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Cambridge/London: The MIT Press, 2006).

[22] Foundational in Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970).

[23] Siehe Harvey Whitehouse, *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004).

[24] Pascal Eitler and Monique Scheer, „Emotionengeschichte als Körpergeschichte. Eine heuristische Perspektive auf religiöse Konversionen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009), 282-313.

[25] Quoted after Rebecca Schmidt, *Gegen den Reiz der Neuheit. Katholische Restauration im 19. Jahrhundert: Heinrich Bone, Joseph Mohr, Guido Maria Dreves* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2005), 22.

[26] See Marie Louise Herzfeld-Schild, "Das Gotteslob als emotional-musikalischer Erinnerungs(h)ort," in *Lied und populäre Kultur – Song and Popular Culture. Lieder/Songs als Medien des Erinnerns. Jahrbuch des Deutschen Volksliedarchivs Freiburg* 59, Michael Fischer and Tobias Widmaier, eds. (Münster: Waxmann, 2014), 73-91.

Citation

Marie Louise Herzfeld-Schild. "'With the harmony of the heart alone'. The Emotionalization of Religion in Heinrich Bone's Preface to 'Cantate!' (1847)", in *History of Emotions - Insights into Research*, April 2015, DOI: 10.14280/08241.38