

Identifying Borrowings in the Sacred Vocal Music of C. P. E. Bach

Many of the Passions and other sacred vocal works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, which originated during the last phase of his career (Hamburg, 1768–88), were not entirely original compositions. Rather, Bach frequently borrowed movements from himself and other composers to produce new works. This was already noticed in the early nineteenth century by musicians and collectors such as Georg Poelchau and Carl Friedrich Zelter. Bach's borrowings have also been discussed in dissertations by Heinrich Miesner (1929), Stephen Lewis Clark (1984), and Reginald LeMonte Sanders (2001). The presence of music by other composers in the vocal music of Bach has posed special challenges to scholars, both for the overall evaluation of the composer's output and for the study of individual works. Bach borrowed music most often from his contemporaries, especially Gottfried August Homilius, Georg Benda, and both Graun brothers (Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb). He also drew from works by older composers such as Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel and Christoph Förster. On a much more limited basis, Bach borrowed from his predecessor as the Hamburg music director, Georg Philipp Telemann. Bach also borrowed music from members of his family: his father, Johann Sebastian; his older brother Wilhelm Friedemann; his younger half-brother Johann Christoph Friedrich; and even his distant cousin Johann Christoph.

Identification of these borrowings and adaptations has been among the results of recent research on items from Bach's musical library and performance materials, especially those from the archive of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, recovered in Kiev in 1999 and returned to Berlin in 2001. My own identification of borrowings in Bach's vocal music over the past several years has been the result of my work with *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* (CPEB:CW). In some cases, I have recognized borrowed material due to increasing familiarity with the sources over time. In other cases, I have deliberately searched for the model for a given movement. Such searches have been prompted by the *Bach-Repertorium* works catalogue for C. P. E. Bach (BR-CPEB). The published catalogue remains indispensable as the most comprehensive, up-to-date repository of information about Bach's vocal music, including the borrowings. At times, for a movement that was recognized as a borrowing due to the source situation but whose model was unknown, a draft entry would read "Vorlage bislang nicht ermittelt" (model not yet determined). I often accepted this challenge and pored over manuscripts that Bach had in his library or thematic catalogues of works by other composers from whom Bach frequently borrowed to find the model. This article summarizes my identification of nine borrowed movements—five self-borrowings and four borrowings from other composers (two from works by Benda, and two from works by J. G. Graun)—and considers the importance of uncovering the borrowings for our understanding of Bach's Hamburg period.

Five Self-Borrowings

The oratorio *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* (Wq 240; published in CPEB:CW, IV/2) contains two movements that are self-borrowings from cantatas for the installation of Hamburg pastors. The

recurring chorus “Triumph!” (Wq 240, nos. 5, 16, and 19, all on different texts) was adapted from the opening chorus, “Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes,” of the *Einführungsmusik Hornbostel* (H 821e; published in CPEB: CW, V/3.2). My identification of this borrowing was the result of a series of fortunate circumstances. While preparing the edition of H 821e, I watched a video recording of Wq 240, and at chorus no. 5 I thought to myself, “I think this is from the Hornbostel cantata!” I checked the score of H 821e and confirmed the relationship. Later I realized that the aria “Ich folge dir, verklärter Held” (Wq 240, no. 11), with its prominent trumpet solo, was modeled on aria no. 9, “Dies ist mein Mut! Wohlan!,” of the *Einführungsmusik Klefeker* (H 821b; published in CPEB: CW, V/3.1). In both cases, Bach altered the opening measures of the model movements and made other revisions, rendering the adaptations difficult to identify.

Two of the self-borrowed movements that I have identified were based on the *Trauungs-Cantate* (H 824a; published in CPEB: CW, VI/4). One is the composite recitative–chorus no. 6, “Dein Ratschluss voller Huld,” from the Michaelmas cantata *Ich will den Namen des Herrn preisen* (Wq 245; published in CPEB: CW, V/2.4), adapted from H 824a, no. 5, “Es müsse dieser Wunsch.” The kinship between these two movements was not immediately apparent. Both begin with unrelated passages of recitative, with different music and text as well as different voice assignments (bass in H 824a, tenor in Wq 245). Then follow closely related passages of accompanied recitative, but with different text and minor revisions in the vocal part (still assigned to bass in H 824a and tenor in Wq 245). Next come, again, unrelated passages of recitative (assigned to bass in both works). Then both have related choruses on the same text (“O Herr, es ist kein Gott wie du!”), followed by a passage of recitative in H 824a, and by a short instrumental conclusion and a large-scale choral fugue in Wq 245. This is more than a simple borrowing; the model has been thoroughly recast while preserving the core of the composition.

My second identification of a self-borrowing from H 824a was facilitated by the database of CPEB: CW. While conducting a search for shared keys, meters, and tempo markings that might reveal previously unknown relationships between works, I discovered that aria no. 5, “Seht, ihr Hüter seiner Herde,” from the *Einführungsmusik Palm* (H 821a; published in CPEB: CW, V/3.1), was modeled on H 824a, no. 3, “So tretet herbei, verlobete Zwei.” While the scoring, meter, and tempo marking of the two arias are the same (soprano, strings, and continuo; $\frac{6}{8}$; Larghetto), there are some significant differences. First, the keys are different (original in E major, adaptation in F major). Second, the original is 72 measures long, while the adaptation is shorter by one measure. Furthermore, Bach has disguised the relationship between the two arias by changing the opening measures somewhat, but otherwise preserving the composition intact. The different head motives and keys probably account for the relationship going unnoticed during the earlier phases of identifications in BR-CPEB and CPEB: CW.

The last self-borrowing I identified was aria no. 4, “Ach, dass wir Erbarmung fünden,” from the 1779 St. Luke Passion (H 792; published in CPEB: CW, IV/6.3). Although no borrowing was indicated in the draft entry for BR-CPEB, I identified the aria as an adaptation of aria no. 5, “Liebste Hand, ich

küsse dich,” from the 1772 St. John Passion (H 785; published in CPEB: CW, IV/7.1), which in turn was borrowed from the passion oratorio *Sechs Geistliche Betrachtungen des leidenden und sterbenden Jesu* by Stölzel (II. Betrachtung, no. 3). Due to the source situation—namely, the survival of an annotated copy of the Stölzel Passion from Bach’s library—the original borrowing had long been recognized. No such annotations exist in the sole source for the 1779 Passion, so the identification depended entirely on my recognition of the opening measures of the aria. Fortunately, the two arias have the same scoring, key, and instrumental parts, so correlating the two arias was relatively simple. The vocal lines differ considerably, but revising the vocal line from the model for the adaptation was standard operating procedure for Bach.

Four Borrowings from Other Composers

As mentioned above, two borrowed movements originated in works by Benda. Continuing with the 1779 Passion, let us consider the last aria, no. 24, “Das Opfer stand auf Golgatha.” The draft entry for this movement in BR-CPEB initially read: “Vorlage bislang nicht ermittelt” (model not yet identified). The source itself does not suggest—via an annotation by Bach, for example—that the aria had been borrowed; but given the number of borrowings already identified in the Passions from this period of Bach’s Hamburg career, it was simply assumed that the arias were borrowed, not original, and that the models had not yet been discovered unless noted otherwise. I hypothesized that I would find the model among the works of a composer from whom Bach frequently borrowed (Homilius, Benda, or one of the Graun brothers), so I turned to the manuscripts of Benda cantatas in Bach’s library, and my search soon bore fruit. I identified the model as “Ich seh hinab ins traurige Gefilde,” no. 3 from Benda’s New Year’s Day cantata *Das Jahr stürzt hin ins Meer der Ewigkeiten* (L 515). With this identification, all of the models for the poetic movements (arias and choruses) in the 1779 St. Luke Passion have now been traced. The two arias have the same key, scoring, and instrumental parts, but the vocal lines are, as usual, different, sometimes beyond what was absolutely necessary to accommodate the original melody to a new text underlay.

The second movement borrowed from Benda is aria no. 12, “Die Unschuld wird verfolgt,” from the 1784 St. John Passion (H 797; published in CPEB: CW, IV/7.4). The autograph material for the 1784 Passion includes a written-out vocal line for no. 12 without the instrumental parts. This alone is evidence that the aria was borrowed from a preexisting model. Bach would have needed to write out the vocal line to accommodate the new text underlay, but the unchanged instrumental parts could simply be copied into the performance parts from another source. An additional autograph source for the 1784 Passion is a leaf with sketches for two movements, including no. 12. By itself, the sketch could suggest that no. 12 was an original composition by Bach. But in conjunction with the autograph vocal line, I suspected that I was about to catch Bach in an act of borrowing. I began my search by rounding up the usual suspects. After only a few minutes of browsing through Bach’s Benda scores, I identified H 797, no. 12 as an adaptation of the aria “Droht mir, ihr Gefahren,” no. 5 from Benda’s cantata *Ihr brausenden Wogen, bestürmet die Lüfte* (L 518). Bach transposed the model from A-flat major to G major and made other revisions, but

the relationship is unmistakable. This is the only known instance of borrowing in a vocal work by Bach where we have a related sketch in addition to a more worked-out draft.

The two movements borrowed from J. G. Graun are found in installation cantatas. One such borrowing is the duet no. 2, “Dich preise unser Lied,” from the *Einführungsmusik Winkler* (H 821f; published in CPEB:CW, V/3.3). Wolfram Enßlin, who edited this work for CPEB:CW, already questioned whether the duet originated with Bach, and suggested that even if it were composed by Bach, it likely came from an earlier work (see CPEB:CW, V/3.3, xx). In fact, the duet was Bach’s adaptation of “Traue du auf sein Versprechen,” no. 7 from the cantata *Herr, leite mich in deiner Wahrheit* (Graun WV Av:IX:3; attribution to J. G. Graun is tentative). Bach also modified this cantata for his own use in Hamburg, possibly for Christmas (BR-CPEB F 4), but the chronology is unclear in comparison to H 821f. While examining BR-CPEB F 4 for eventual publication in CPEB:CW, V/2.7, I recognized the duet as something I had seen recently and was lucky enough to match it with the adaptation in H 821f. I could see why it had eluded recognition until then, because Bach had modified his model significantly. Comparing the original and the adaptation, both have the same key and scoring, but the length is different (here counting only the A section, which was all that Bach used in the adaptation): the model has 159 measures; the adaptation, 163. Most of the time his borrowings necessitated only a vocal *particella* (only a few of these survive) to document his changes to the vocal line, while the instrumental lines could be copied from the source for the model movement. Not so here: Bach had modified the original so much that he needed to write out a new score.

The second borrowing from J. G. Graun in an installation cantata is aria no. 10, “Gerechte, freuet euch des Herrn!,” from the *Einführungsmusik Jänisch* (H 821k; published in CPEB:CW, V/3.4). It is modeled on Pietro’s aria “Nel duol beato sei,” no. 7 from Graun’s oratorio *La passione di Gesù Cristo* (Graun WV A:VII:1). The autograph score for H 821k indicates that no. 10 was a borrowing, since it has only the vocal line with text underlay. Additionally, Bach noted that this aria was scored for flutes and that only the first part was to be written out, suggesting that the model lacked flutes and that its B section was to be omitted. But both the score and the performance parts lack any annotation about the source of the borrowing. Once again, when the BR-CPEB entry read “Vorlage bislang nicht ermittelt” (model not yet identified), I accepted the challenge to solve this mystery. As I had for the Benda borrowings in the 1779 and 1784 Passions, I first went through the trove of Benda manuscripts from Bach’s library, but that well was dry. Then I started paging through the Graun thematic catalogue and found the matching incipit within a few minutes’ search. From there I examined a manuscript score for Graun’s *La passione* (D-B, SA 46) and confirmed its relationship to H 821k. The differences between the model and the adaptation are immediately apparent, including the key (the model is in E major and the borrowing in A major), the scoring (the original had oboes and horns, while the model omits horns and replaces oboes with flutes), and the length (Bach omitted the entire B section in his adaptation). Bach’s direct model—that is, the source he actually used for the borrowing—is unknown. There is no entry for the oratorio in BA 1789 or

NV 1790, which typically show us the scores that Bach owned and probably used as his direct models. We know Bach had access to vocal music attributed to both Graun brothers, but the aria used in H 821k is the only evidence that Bach had any knowledge of J. G. Graun's *La passione*. We simply do not know how he acquired it. At the time of the 1789 auction, there was one setting of *La passione* in Bach's library, but in BA 1789 it is attributed to Niccolò Jommelli. Perhaps this entry in fact refers to Graun's setting of *La passione*, but the parts in Bach's library contained a false attribution to Jommelli. Alternatively, Bach may have known Graun's setting from performances in Berlin, and Bach's copy of it was no longer in his library by the time his estate was auctioned.

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What can we learn from all of these borrowings? The works containing them are not "original" in the sense of being newly composed. Rather, they represent a mixture of new and borrowed music, subjected to a variety of procedures. The choice to consider such "mixed" works alongside the few works that can confidently be attributed wholly to Bach may prove beneficial. Rather than focusing on the amount of compositional input as the primary criterion of a work's value, we might instead take multiple factors into consideration and classify composition as merely one procedure among many—not necessarily the primary one—that Bach used to build his Hamburg repertoire. Bach's combination of borrowing and compositional input transformed his models into new entities to be evaluated on their own merits. Continuing to uncover new borrowings is central to understanding Bach's working procedures, the type of repertoire that he borrowed, how he altered that repertoire, and the importance of pastiche to the life of a professional musician in eighteenth-century Germany.

All of the models discussed here have been published in appendices to volumes in CPEB:CW or on the website (www.cpebach.org). The self-borrowings are not published separately, but are found in the main musical text of the respective works within CPEB:CW.

Jason B. Grant
Editor, *C. P. E. Bach: The Complete Works*

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