

Bach and the Seventeenth Century

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This was originally a talk for the 2019 meeting of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music in Durham, North Carolina. This version incorporates additional matter that could not be included in the original talk. The presentation included recorded demonstrations of the music examples. At the end of this file is a list of the performers whose recordings were used (at the time, all were available on YouTube).

We don't usually think of Bach as a composer of the seventeenth century, although he spent his childhood in it. For much of the twentieth century, however, it was common to view Bach as a conservative composer who maintained the traditions of his predecessors. More recent views have emphasized Bach's modernity, as in his adoption of new types of instrumental concerto and church cantata. Among the innovations of these works is a drier, less arioso type of recitative and the extension of ritornello form not only to most arias but also to most concerto movements. More generally, the discursive structures typical of the seventeenth century are replaced by longer movements that modulate more widely yet are integrated by recurring melodic or motivic material.

Bach's early works, chiefly keyboard music but also a handful of vocal compositions, clearly belong to the older style. Models for these works have been seen in music by composers with whom the young Bach was in immediate contact: his older cousin Johann Christoph Bach, organist in his home town of Eisenach; Böhm and Reinken, during Bach's Lüneburg years; and Buxtehude, whom Bach visited in 1705. The "Bach timeline" below summarizes Bach's biography.

A Bach timeline

1685. Born at Eisenach (western Thuringia, in central Germany).

1695. Father dies; moves to nearby Ohrdruf, studies with older brother Johann Christoph.

1700. Enters St. Michael's School (choir school) in Lüneburg; studies there with Georg Böhm. 1703. Briefly hired as "lackey" at Weimar.

1703–7. Organist at Arnstadt (visits Lübeck, 1705–6).

1707–8. Organist at Mühlhausen.

1708–14. Organist at Weimar.

1714. Promoted to Concertmeister at Weimar.

1717–23. Capellmeister at Cöthen.

1723–50. Cantor at the St. Thomas School and director of church music, Leipzig.

My chief concern here is not with Bach's early exposure to seventeenth-century music. Rather I would like to explore what this older music meant to him later in life: which compositions seemed important to him, and how he and his contemporaries used them. Any such investigation must begin by considering what music Bach actually knew. Bach scholars have catalogued the music that he is known to have owned. They also have reconstructed inventories of lost music collections to which Bach might have had access at Lüneburg, Mühlhausen, and Leipzig.

At Weimar, where Bach lived briefly in 1703 and again from 1708 to 1717, he was in regular contact with his cousin Johann Gottfried Walther. Walther amassed an extensive collection of music, some of it quite old. This collection became the basis of his musical lexicon, published in 1732. The

book is a useful index for understanding what a well-informed German musician of the time knew about his predecessors and their music. The court at Weimar, where both Bach and Walther worked, also must have possessed an extensive music collection, but it was destroyed by fire in 1774 and no inventory survives.

Nevertheless Bach had numerous opportunities throughout his career to acquaint himself with older music. Hard evidence is limited to those compositions of which his own copies or arrangements are known to have existed. Even if we also consider copies by pupils and other members of his circle, we surely have uncovered only a fraction of what Bach actually knew and performed. Still, any list of such works forces us to examine our presumptions about what might have seemed, to a member of Bach's generation, important or useful in the compositions of his predecessors.

One important category of music that I will not be considering consists of pieces based on chorales. Bach wrote vocal and instrumental settings of chorales continuously, throughout his career. Precisely for that reason, they stand apart from the repertory that I wish to consider today. Most of the remaining music falls into two distinct categories, as shown in tables 1 and 2. The first group comprises contrapuntal keyboard pieces; the second, much larger group, consists of sacred vocal music with Latin texts.

Table 1. Seventeenth-century contrapuntal keyboard music with some connection to Bach

Frescobaldi	<i>Fiori musicali</i> (lost ms copy by Bach dated 1714) 10 ricercars in at least four Berlin mss
Froberger	at least 12 canzoni, capricci, fantasias, ricercars in ms copies by Bach pupils
Kerll	mentioned in the Obituary
Pachelbel	Fugue in B minor (early autograph copy ca. 1700)
Johann Krieger	pieces from <i>Anmuthige Clavier-Übung</i> (1699)

I will say more about each of these, but first let me mention two further groups of compositions that I've chosen not to consider. One group is comprised of Latin motets in four to eight voices that were published in an anthology by Erhard Bodenschatz in the early seventeenth century. His two volumes do not seem to have been reprinted after 1621, but more than a century later Bach was still acquiring copies for use in Sunday services at Leipzig. Selections from this anthology remain popular to this day with church choirs, as they set some of the most important traditional texts in a beautiful yet easy-to-sing manner. The majority of the contents are by sixteenth-century composers, such as Lassus and Andrea Gabrieli, or by members of the next generation, such as Seth Calvisius, Bach's predecessor as cantor at Leipzig. For this reason I have not included Bodenschatz in table 2.

Also not included in table 2 is the Altbachisches Archiv, a collection of motets, cantatas, and arias by older members of the family. All are settings of German texts, including chorales, and they are distinct in other ways as well from the repertory listed in table 2. This collection was once thought to be a repertory that Bach knew early in life. Perhaps it was, but Sebastian may not have acquired the collection before the mid-1730s. Moreover, it is unclear to what degree Bach kept this music for musical as opposed to personal or family reasons. He is known to have performed only a few of the contents, notably a funeral composition by the older Christoph Bach. Within the family, the music of this Johann Christoph Bach was considered specially expressive, to judge from a later comment by Emanuel Bach.

Table 2. Latin sacred works owned or performed by Bach

Not included here:

270 works in Erhard Bodenschatz, ed. *Florilegium musicum portensi* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1618–21)
 30+ German works in the “Alt-Bachisches Archiv” (Archive of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, various sigla)

<u>Composer</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>BWV</u>	<u>Source*</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Origin</u>
Anon.	<i>Missa</i> in C	Anh. 25	A	1740–42	unknown (sometimes attributed to J. L. Bach)
Anon.	<i>Missa</i> in C minor	Anh. 29	P	ca. 1714–17	unknown
Anon.	<i>Missa</i> in G (double chorus)	Anh. 167	A	ca. 1732–39	unknown
Anon.	Sanctus in B-flat	Anh. 28	P	ca. 1730–40	unknown
Anon.	Sanctus in G	240	A, P	1742	unknown
Johann Baal	Mass in A	—	A	ca. 1714–17	unknown
J. L. Bach	<i>Missa</i> in E minor	Anh. 166	P	ca. 1727	autograph score
G. B. Bassani	<i>Acroama missale</i>	—	A	ca. 1735	Augsburg, 1709 (6 masses)
Caldara	Magnificat	—	A	1740–42	two mss (one dated 1742)
Caldara	Sanctus in D minor	239	A, P	ca. 1738–41	Gloria, <i>Missa Providentiae</i>
Conti	Languet anima	—	A, P	1716, 1723–24	unknown
Durante	<i>Missa</i> in C minor	Anh. 26	A	1727–32	version of a work also found in a Prague ms
Gasparini	<i>Missa canonica</i>	—	P	ca. 1740	ms copy, 1705?
Kerll	Sanctus in D	241	A, P	ca. 1747–48	<i>Missa superba</i> (17th cent.)
Lotti	<i>Missa</i> in G minor	—	A	ca. 1732–35	ms copy by Zelenka (as <i>Missa Sapientiae</i>)
Palestrina	Masses, book 1	—	S	ca. 1700	Rome, 1554 (revised 1591)
Palestrina	<i>Missa Ecce sacerdos</i>	—	P	ca. 1745	from Masses, book 1
Palestrina	<i>Missa sine nomine</i> : Kyrie and Glora	—	P	ca. 1742	from Masses, book 1
Peranda	Kyrie in C	—	P	ca. 1709	ms copy
Peranda	Kyrie in A minor	—	P	1714–17	ms copy
Pez	<i>Missa</i> in A minor	Anh. 24	P	1715–17, 1724	<i>Missa Sancti Lamberti</i> (Augsburg, 1706)
Torri	Magnificat	Anh. 30	A, P	ca. 1742	ms copy from Walther?
Wilderer	<i>Missa</i> in G minor	—	A	1731	unknown

Titles describe works as found in Bach’s copy or copies; Latin *Missa* indicates a “short” or “Lutheran” mass (Kyrie-Gloria); “ms” = manuscript

*“Source” is extant material once owned by Bach:

A = manuscript score partly or entirely in Bach’s hand

P = manuscript performing parts in the hand of Bach or copyists working for him

S = manuscript score by another copyist, owned by Bach

Dates are those of Bach’s score or parts. “Origin” = likely exemplar for source listed in column 3

The contrapuntal keyboard pieces listed in table 1 must relate in some way to Bach's early training. A well-known anecdote about his early life concerns his surreptitious copying of a manuscript that contained pieces by the seventeenth-century composers Froberger, Kerll, and Pachelbel. Beyond that, we don't know the contents of the manuscript. But it is likely to have contained copies that Bach's older brother and teacher had made previously during his studies with Pachelbel.

We do have a manuscript of keyboard music copied by another Pachelbel student, the so-called Eckelt tablature. Its repertory of preludes, dances, and contrapuntal pieces for keyboard includes compositions by Froberger and Pachelbel. Thanks to the work of Akira Ishii, we also know that a selection of contrapuntal pieces by Frescobaldi and Froberger continued to circulate well into the later eighteenth century. These seem to represent a selection of older pieces that Sebastian might have studied in his youth. His own copies of this repertory do not survive, although Bach's nineteenth-century biographer Spitta reported a now-lost manuscript copy of Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali* that Bach made in 1714.

This repertory largely excludes the toccatas and suites by which Frescobaldi and Froberger are best known today. To Bach and his pupils, such music must have seemed dated, whereas the contrapuntal repertory remained timeless. Even if Bach undertook extensive study of this type of music early in life, for most of his career he wrote little that obviously reflects it. On the whole, his mature compositions are stylistically up-to-date, despite their contrapuntal character, which his contemporaries regarded as old-fashioned. Toward the end of his career Bach did emulate Frescobaldi and Froberger in the *Art of Fugue*, which he notated in open score just like their *ricercars* and other contrapuntal pieces (ex. 1).

The *Art of Fugue* was largely composed by the early 1740s, in the midst of a period when Bach was also cultivating Latin church music. Although he had largely abandoned the composition of sacred German cantatas by 1730, during his last two decades Bach was performing masses and other Latin works in the Leipzig churches with some regularity. These included arrangements or parodies of his own German works as well as music by other composers.

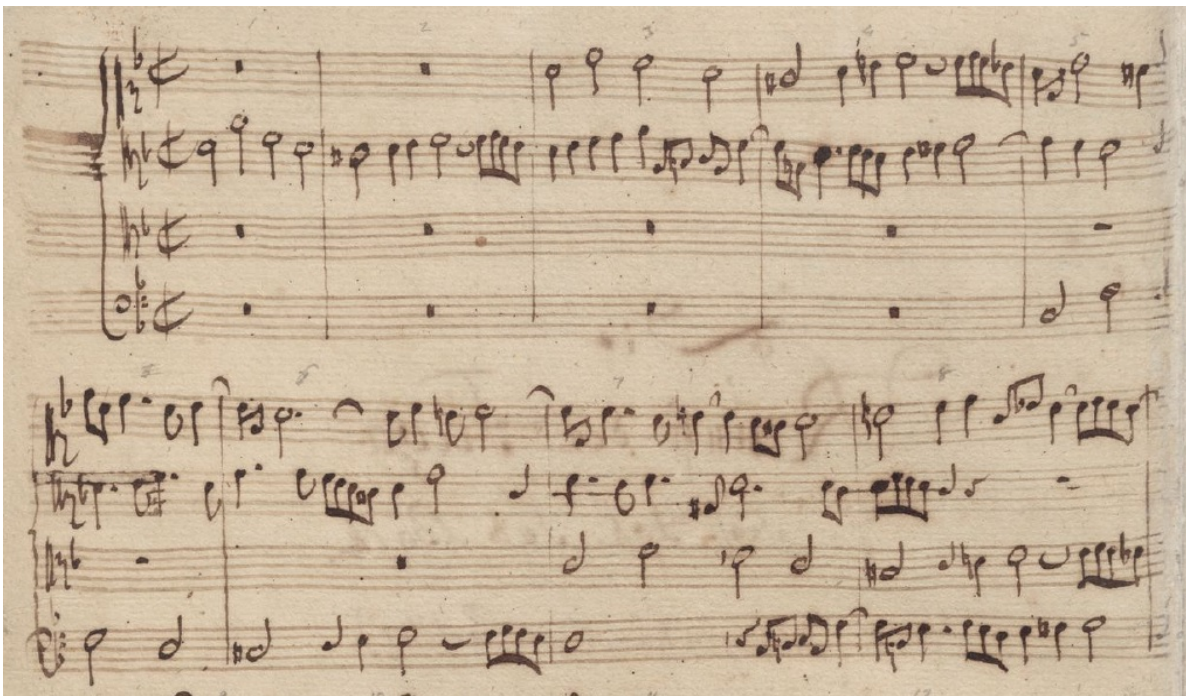
Bach's cultivation of Latin church music probably reflected more than a personal interest. The Bach scholar Robin Leaver has argued persuasively that, during this period, a combination of political and theological trends favored the performance of Latin church music in what we might call the high Lutheran churches of Leipzig. The wealthy bourgeoisie who attended services there were evidently eager to emulate their Catholic rulers in Dresden, one of Europe's great musical centers. They would not have opposed the cultivation of music that might rival and even surpass in magnificence that heard in the Saxon capital city.

I say "surpass" because at least one type of church music, the Latin Magnificat, was longer and more elaborate in Lutheran settings than in typical Catholic settings of the period. Indeed, the Magnificat settings by Bach and his son Carl Philipp Emanuel are among the longest by any eighteenth-century composer. Even the large double-chorus Magnificat by Pietro Torri, which Sebastian Bach copied out around 1742, is less than eighteen minutes long in a recording by Christoph Hammer. This is about half the duration of Sebastian's Magnificat.

Apart from the Magnificat, Bach's Latin church music consists above all of five so-called Lutheran masses, each comprising a multi-movement Kyrie and Gloria. Most of the music in these works was parodied from his German church cantatas and thus is largely up-to-date in style. The Latin works by other composers in his repertory, however, tended to be old-fashioned. Unlike the older contrapuntal keyboard music that Bach knew, they tend to be the work of composers who today look like minor figures. They also seem to be stylistically uninteresting if not compositionally weak.

Not all these works are in archaic contrapuntal style—the so-called *stile antico*. Bach's Latin repertory included mass movements in the rather sweet, homophonic style of Marco Gioseppe Peranda,

Example 1. (a) Johann Jacob Froberger (1616–67), *Fantasia 2* (one of the works copied in manuscripts from the Bach circle), from Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 18707 (autograph, *Libro 2*); (b) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), *Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080, *Contrapunctus 1*, from Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach P 200 (autograph)



Capellmeister at Dresden from 1663 until his death in 1675. To judge from the dates of copying, these were among a number of Latin mass movements that Bach already knew at Weimar, where, 1715 he composed his own F-major Kyrie. This Kyrie, which Bach later incorporated into the F-major Mass, combines traditional and idiosyncratic elements. The basic contrapuntal style is reminiscent of the Palestrina masses which he and Walther were collecting during the same period. But the work also incorporates a Lutheran chorale cantus firmus (ex. 2).

The F-major Kyrie is the only Latin work that Bach is known to have composed before coming to Leipzig in 1723. But it was part of a larger repertory of such pieces that may have had a regular place in the liturgy of the court church at Weimar. At the time, similar music was being performed not only at Dresden but also, apparently, at Weimar's sister court of Meiningen. The Capellmeister there from 1711 to 1731 was Johann Ludwig Bach, a distant cousin of Sebastian. Eight years older than Sebastian, Johann Ludwig wrote compositions that lie somewhere between older seventeenth-century types and the more modern style of younger contemporaries such as Telemann. Among the works by Johann Ludwig listed in table 2 is a mass which, like Sebastian's F-major Kyrie, combines old-fashioned counterpoint with a Lutheran chorale cantus firmus. Hence J. S. Bach, who owned a copy of this work, might have gotten the idea from his older cousin. On the other hand, it is possible that Sebastian chose to copy and perform this work simply because it shared elements with his music.

In any case, Sebastian's intensive cultivation of older music seems to date only from his last two decades at Leipzig years, beginning around 1730. Christoph Wolff has noted that it was during this period that Bach ordered new copies of Bodenschatz's anthology. Bach also had access to the library of the St. Thomas school, where he served as cantor. Yet there is no evidence that Bach used any of the school's holdings of older Italian and German music. The school library itself is lost, but the inventory was published by Arnold Schering in 1919, following a list prepared by Bach's predecessor Schelle (with additions by Kuhnau). From this we know that the collection included publications by Giovanni Gabrieli, Heinrich Schütz, and many other composers.

Bach's interests may have been more specialized, shaped partly by practical concerns for what was needed and performable in the Leipzig liturgy, also by an aesthetic shaped by lifelong familiarity with, and use of, Bodenschatz's anthology. That collection focuses on relatively conservative music by composers such as Andrea Gabrieli, Orlando di Lasso, and Jacob Gallus or Handl, as well as Seth Calvisius, who had been Bodenschatz's teacher. Most of this music is characterized less by imitative polyphony than by a focus on musical rhetoric and simple polychoral sonorities. Bodenschatz fitted a continuo part to the earlier pieces, which in his version—the version performed by Bach—would have sounded not unlike the later music with Latin texts that continued to be composed into the eighteenth century.

It is curious that there is no evidence from any point in Bach's life that he knew or performed music by Schütz. This is surprising, for Walther had a reasonably thorough knowledge of Schütz's biography and output, to judge from the entry for the composer in Walther's *Lexicon*. Nor does Bach's repertory seem to have included many contemporary works by Dresden composers, despite the apparent interest at Leipzig in emulating the music of the Dresden court. Zelenka is represented only by one or two arrangements that he made of music by others; Hasse, whose music Bach was reported to have admired, is absent, nor is there anything by Heinichen. Perhaps copies of their sacred works were inaccessible, although Bach must have heard them on visits to the Saxon capital, perhaps also at the Catholic chapel in Leipzig. Friedemann Bach, Sebastian's oldest son, might later have performed one of Zelenka's Magnificats at Halle; a copy of the score by Gottlob Harrer, with a violin part in Friedemann's hand, is in the Harvard College Library.

J. S. Bach did perform masses by Antonio Lotti and Antonio Caldara that he apparently obtained from the Dresden composer Zelenka; the scribe who made the calligraphic copy of Bach's

Example 2. J. S. Bach, Kyrie in F, BWV 233a (ed. Marianne Helms, from *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, vol. 2/2), opening

Canto I
Canto II
Alto Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son, e - le - i -
Tenore Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e -
Basso
Continuo

7
Chri - ste, du Lamm Got - tes,
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i -
son, e - le - i - son, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,
le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son,
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,

letter of application to the elector also worked for Zelenka, according to Hans-Joachim Schulze. But although both Lotti and Caldara lived well into the eighteenth century, the works copied by Bach belong stylistically to the late seventeenth century. Curiously, the mass by Lotti also survives in a copy by Handel. The attraction of this work for a German Lutheran musician appears to have lain precisely in its old-fashioned, relatively restrained musical style and earnestly rhetorical approach to the text, as in Lotti's treatment of the words *et in terra pax* in the Gloria (ex. 3).

Lotti would have been known to both Handel and Bach as the composer of the opera *Teofane*, which received a famously sumptuous performance at Dresden in 1719. His G-minor mass, however, lacks the obviously operatic elements of later eighteenth-century sacred music. Although not primarily in the *stile antico*, Lotti's mass follows tradition in the setting of the second Kyrie as a fugue (ex. 4).

Such music seems deliberately generic in style. Yet in older music it was this style that evidently appealed to Bach—not the more voluble early-Baroque manner of Monteverdi, nor the more tuneful and regularly structured music of Vivaldi. Similarly conservative are several anonymous works that Bach performed, as well as a Sanctus from a mass by Kerll and a Magnificat by Torri. Although he lived until 1737, Torri was born around 1650 and thus, like Kerll, represented the generation or two prior to Bach. Each served as Capellmeister at Munich; Torri's work is in the polychoral style that seems to have been favored especially at the Habsburg court in Vienna.

The same style pervades an anonymous double-choir mass for twelve singers, which Bach may have performed at Weimar before repeating it at Leipzig in the 1730s. The enormous score includes string and double-reed choirs, each in five parts. Bach copied it out during the 1730s together with a pupil; the project, begun during 1732–35, was not completed until 1738 or 1739. No performing parts survive, but it is unlikely that Bach wrote out such a huge score, including four completely notated ripieno vocal parts, if performance was not envisaged for some very special occasion. As in other such works, imitative passages inspired by Palestrina alternate with declamatory sections. The latter project their texts clearly and efficiently, rarely lingering on anything for illustrative or rhetorical purposes.

Despite their grand scoring and dimensions, both Torri's Magnificat and the anonymous mass seem neutral or undemonstrative from an expressive point of view. This makes it hard to understand Bach's interest them, although two chromatic passages in these works might have gained Bach's attention (exx. 5–6). Similar passages were surely among the attractions of the E-minor *Missa* by Johann Ludwig Bach. In this work the second Kyrie has a chromatic fugue subject, which is treated concisely in both original and inverted forms (ex. 7a). One hears echoes of this in the corresponding movement from the Sebastian's B-Minor Mass (ex. 7b). Even more noteworthy for Sebastian would have been the presence in the following movement of a cantus firmus; it is Luther's German version of the *Gloria in excelsis* (ex. 8).

To our ears this music pales beside that of both Bach himself and those of his seventeenth-century predecessors whom we treasure today. It is possible that some of the Latin works over which Bach labored proved disappointing to him as well, after parts were copied and tried out. His attention to now-obscure older contemporaries such as Johann Hugo von Wilderer might reflect the fact that only a limited range of such music was available to him. On the other hand, his selections could be products of the intentional collecting of works by composers who seemed important at the time. Wilderer, for instance, was Capellmeister at Düsseldorf, where he composed at least a dozen operas and oratorios. The Grove article by George Buelow describes these as resembling late seventeenth-century types. Here is the opening of the second Kyrie from Wilderer's G-minor mass, set as a four-part vocal fugue with two obbligato violin parts (ex. 9).

Bach, from his student days, must have known the thrilling effect of polychoral music, which today is associated with Giovanni Gabrieli and late-Renaissance Venice. Bach is more likely to have connected such compositions with the imperial cities of Rome and Vienna, which he never visited. He

Example 3. Antonio Lotti (1660–1740), *Missa sapientiae* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 13161),
Et in terra pax

This image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the section "Et in terra pax" from Antonio Lotti's *Missa sapientiae*. The score is written on ten staves, with the vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass) clearly distinguished. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings such as *forte*, *piano*, *loco*, and *piu* are present throughout the score. The text "Et in terra pax" is repeated in various parts of the score, with some instances including "pax hominibus" and "pax hominibus pax pax". The notation is in a historical style, with some ink bleed-through and signs of age on the paper.

Example 5. Anonymous, Mass in G, BWV Anh. 167, Qui tollis

mi-se-re-re

Chorus 1

Soprano

Alto

Chorus 2

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

b.c.

qui tol - - - lis pec-ca - ta pec-ca-ta mun - di, pec-ca - ta mun - di,

no - bis, mi-se - re-re no - - - bis,

Example 6. Pietro Torri (ca. 1650–1737), Magnificat (BWV Anh. 30), Et misericordia

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

b.c.

Et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e - - - - -

Et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e - - - - -

jus, et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a, et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e - - - - -

jus, et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e - - - - -

Et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e - - - - - jus, et mi-se-ri-cor-di-

Et mi-se-ri-cor-di-a e jus,

Example 7. (a) Johann Ludwig Bach (1677–1731), Mass in E minor (BWV Anh. 166), Kyrie 2; (b) J. S. Bach, Mass in B minor, BWV 232, Kyrie 2 (from Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach P 180, autograph)

Example 7(a) shows the beginning of the Kyrie 2 from Johann Ludwig Bach's Mass in E minor (BWV Anh. 166). The score includes parts for two violins (vn. 1, vn. 2), two violas (va. 1, va. 2), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and basso continuo (b.c.). The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, e - lei son, e -

Example 7(b) shows the beginning of the Kyrie 2 from J. S. Bach's Mass in B minor (BWV 232). The score includes parts for two violins (vn. 1, vn. 2), two violas (va. 1, va. 2), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and basso continuo (b.c.). The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Ky - ri - e e - lei - - - son, e - lei - - son, lei - - son, e - lei - - son, e - lei - son, Ky - -

This image shows a handwritten manuscript page for the Kyrie 2 from J. S. Bach's Mass in B minor (BWV 232). The page is titled "Allabreve" and "Aromenti in unisono". It features several staves of music, including vocal parts and basso continuo. The lyrics are: Kyrie elei - son elei son e - lei son Kyrie ele - ison e - leison elei son e

Example 8. Johann Ludwig Bach, Mass in E minor (BWV Anh. 166), Gloria in excelsis

vn. 1
 vn. 2
 va. 1
 va. 2
 Canto in ripieno
 S
 A
 T
 B
 b.c.

Al - - - lein Gott in der Höhl' sey Ehr,
 Glo-ri-a, glo-ri-a, glo-ri-a, in ex-cel-sis De - o, glo - - -

und
 ri - a,
 glo - ri - a,

Example 9. Johann Hugo von Wilderer (1670–1724), Mass in G minor, Kyrie 2 (from Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 23116/10, J. S. Bach autograph)

This image shows a page of handwritten musical notation from a manuscript. The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal lines and instrumental parts. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves and include the words "Kyrie eleison" repeated in various parts. The notation is in a historical style, characteristic of the Baroque period. The paper is aged and shows some staining. The key signature is G minor, and the time signature is 3/2. The score is a Kyrie 2, which is a variation of the Kyrie eleison text.

might, however, have heard similar music by Buxtehude and other older contemporaries at Lübeck and Hamburg during his early visits to those cities. Perhaps it was in an effort to recreate those experiences that, late in life, Bach took the trouble to rework a grand but short-winded Sanctus for double chorus by Kerll—whose keyboard music he had studied as a boy. Bach turned Kerll’s Sanctus into an even grander prelude and fugue, omitting a weak setting of “Pleni sunt coeli” and moving those words to the following fugue, to which he also added two lively violin parts. This fugue was originally the “Osanna,” which had used the same music as the opening Kyrie; in making this arrangement Bach was also studying Kerll’s parody technique, then applying it himself.

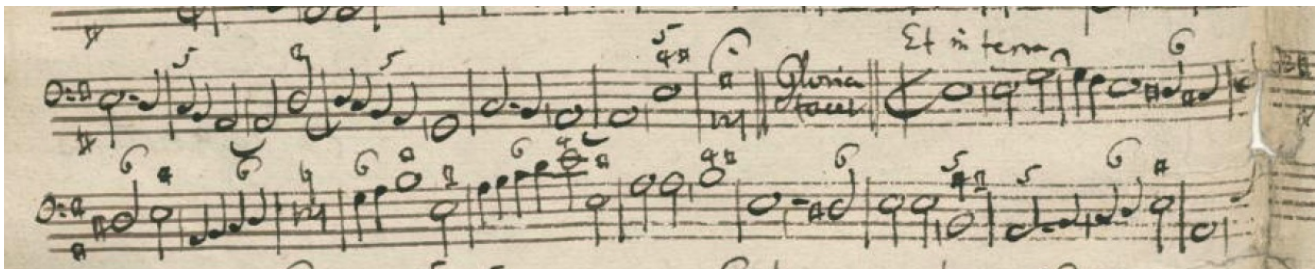
What might such music have meant for Bach and those around him? Heinrich Schütz, nearing the end of his life, asked his pupil Christoph Bernhard to write a motet for his burial service. It was based on a verse from Psalm 119, “my songs are your statues.” Johann Mattheson, who related this story, assures us that Schütz was so pleased by the music that he told his student not to change a single note. Mattheson described the music as being in the contrapuntal style of Palestrina (*pränestinischer Contrapunctstyl*); unfortunately, Bernhard’s composition is lost. This makes it difficult to know how, exactly, Schütz, Bernhard, Mattheson, or even Bach understood the “Palestrina style.”

Eight years earlier, however, Johann Gottfried Walther had explained in his *Lexicon* that the phrase *alla Palestrina* meant the same thing as *à Capella*. Presumably, then, this was an all-purpose term for the archaic type of vocal polyphony that we call the *stile antico*. Indeed, Mattheson claimed that Schütz had gained his “entire knowledge” (*hohe Wissenschaft*) of Italian music from the Venetian Gabrieli, not the Roman Palestrina. In fact, Schütz’s (and Bernhard’s) contrapuntal works are closer to those of Gabrieli than to Palestrina. For Mattheson, then, the “Palestrina style” must have included archaic counterpoint in general, not the music of the actual composer (whom Mattheson does not mention). Whether Bach was aware of the story of Bernhard and Schütz, which Mattheson published only in 1740, is unknown. Even if Bach knew none of Schütz’s music, he probably did come across compositions by Bernhard that he would have understood as being in Palestrina’s contrapuntal style. Among these are the invertible four-part cantus firmus settings that Bernhard published as funeral pieces, which Walther and, more recently, Kerry Snyder have described.

One would imagine that Bach could sense the stylistic distinction between the contrapuntal style of Palestrina and the more rhetorical type of music composed by Lassus and Gabrieli. Later German compositions, including those in the Bodenschatz anthology and the Old Bach Archive, tend toward the declamatory or rhetorical tradition represented by Gabrieli and his pupil Schütz. This music is often contrapuntal as well, but rarely to the extent seen in the Roman tradition of Palestrina and later in the learned keyboard pieces of Frescobaldi and Froberger. As much as Bach must have admired such music for study purposes, he is known to have performed only one or two of Palestrina’s masses. His performing material for the masses *Sine nomine* and *Ecce sacerdos magnus* includes instrumental parts, which might have obscured their stylistic differences from later compositions. Still, these masses are less rhetorical than the more recent music that Bach seems to have performed more often. Here, for instance, is the *Et in terra pax* from Palestrina’s *Missa sine nomine* (ex. 10).

The contrapuntal movements in Bach’s own Latin works are, of course, highly expressive while emulating the most rigorous polyphony of Palestrina himself. Yet the expressive element derives from Bach’s dissonant, chromatic harmony and his manipulation of large-scale form—not from declamatory rhetoric as in the Gabrieli tradition. Younger contemporaries such as Hasse and the Graun brothers also cultivated the “Palestrina style,” albeit in the expressively neutral manner characteristic of the Italianate Habsburg tradition. One finds only traces of this approach in a few works by Bach’s two oldest sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel. But the youngest son, Johann Christian, cultivated this style diligently in the Latin church music which he composed during seven years in Italy, from 1755 to 1762. The style of this music is fairly remote from that of J. S. Bach as well as from actual

Example 10. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/26–94), *Missa sine nomine*, Et in terra pax, (a) score owned by Bach (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 16695), (b) Bach’s autograph “Cembalo” part, from a set of vocal and instrumental performing parts (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 16714)



compositions by Palestrina. Yet J. C. Bach’s contrapuntal church music may owe its existence to the fact that the youngest Bach son grew up during the period of his father’s most intense engagement with archaic counterpoint. A passage from J. C. Bach’s Requiem comes closer to Palestrina than anything by his father, at least in its diatonic voice leading and seamless eight-part counterpoint (ex. 11).

Example 11. Johann Christian Bach (1735–82), *Requiem*, Kyrie (without doubling instrumental parts)

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri -

Chorus 1

S A

T B

e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son,

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,

Chorus 2

S A

T B

Detailed description: This block shows the vocal parts for Chorus 1 and Chorus 2, Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices. The music is in G minor and common time. Chorus 1's Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line for 'e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son,'. The Alto part follows with 'Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son,'. Chorus 2's parts are currently blank.

e - le - i - son, e - le - - - - - i - son,

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for the first system. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The right hand plays a complex, flowing melodic line, while the left hand provides a steady harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines.

e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - - le - - - - i - son,

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment for the second system. It continues the musical texture from the first system, with the right hand maintaining its melodic focus and the left hand providing harmonic support through chords and rhythmic patterns.

We cannot know how clearly any eighteenth-century composer, even J. S. Bach or his pupils, understood the stylistic distinctions between their compositions and those of the more or less recent past. They surely had little interest in how Palestrina's music, or any older music, originally sounded. Eighteenth-century understanding of music history was not our own, and the perceptions of older composers by musicians such as Mattheson and Bach could have been shaped only by what they knew. Monteverdi, today regarded as a central figure in music history, receives from Walther only a short paragraph that fails to mention his major works. Walther and Bach jointly copied not only music by Palestrina but a mass by the obscure Johann Baal. They might have discerned little distinction between the latter's modernized version of the *stile antico* and what we would consider the genuine Renaissance style of Palestrina.

Mattheson described the music of one of his predecessors at Hamburg, Heinrich Scheidemann, as possessing "loveliness" (*Liebligkeit*). This was by contrast to the music of Jacob Praetorius, whose more difficult compositions possessed greater seriousness or rigor (*Ernsthaftigkeit*). Mattheson evidently saw in Scheidemann's music something of the *galant* style of his own day, drawing an antithesis to older music which, in his view, was resolved in the compositions of Praetorius's pupil Weckmann. The same antithesis would be drawn between Bach and Handel in the eighteenth century, and although Bach's partisans disputed it, his sons might have seen themselves as reconciling the two contrasting stylistic impulses.

For the Bach sons, as for many of their contemporaries, the "Palestrina style" remained part of a living tradition. For them, Palestrina himself was not a "Renaissance" composer, and vocal polyphony in the so-called *stile antico*—a term not used by Walther—represented less a style of the distant past than one of several possible approaches to counterpoint still belonging to the present. In the entry for *stylus* in his *Lexicon*, Walther lists the ecclesiastical or church style alongside dance style and various national and regional styles—French, Italian, and more specifically Venetian, Roman, and so forth. Each constituted a musical language available to Walther's contemporaries.

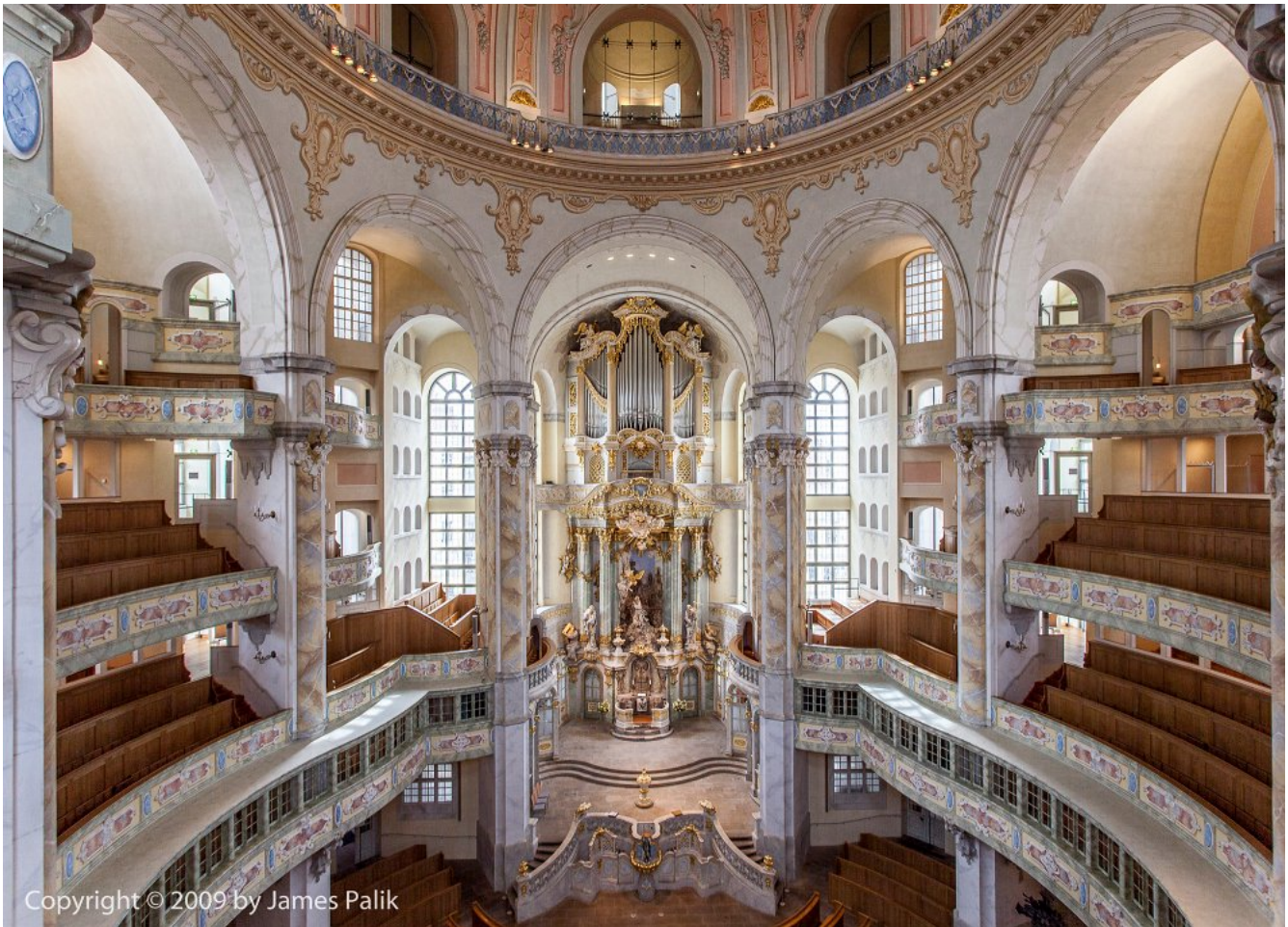
Before concluding, I would like to reconsider the modern supposition that music in the *stile antico* is emotionally neutral, as argued, for example, by Daniel Melamed. I have accepted this assumption in the preceding argument, but it may actually reflect an early Romantic view of Renaissance polyphony. Although it lacks signals that an eighteenth-century listener might have taken to be expressive—dissonant appoggiaturas, chromatic or dissonant progressions—antique polyphony might nevertheless have inspired in Bach and his contemporaries majestic, even sublime, feelings. This might have been particularly true of such grandly scored works as Torri's Magnificat and some of the masses performed by Bach. The unusually large forces which they require would have made them exceptional within the Leipzig repertory.

This music may lack the private or individualized type of emotion that was then being expressed in newer types of Lutheran church compositions. The latter constituted the main element in the output of Bach, Telemann, and other early eighteenth-century German composers. But they and their audiences cannot have been immune to the splendor of older Habsburg-style polyphony. Even a seemingly simplistic work like the anonymous twelve-voice mass performed by Bach, with its five echoing instrumental and vocal choruses, can sound splendid in a decent performance (ex. 12). Papal Rome and imperial pomp may have been anathema to a Lutheran like Bach. Yet a glance at the Baroque decoration of an eighteenth-century high Lutheran church shows to what degree its congregants shared a basic aesthetic with their Catholic contemporaries (ex. 13).

Example 12. Anonymous, Mass in G, BWV Anh. 167, Cum sancto spiritu (from Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. Bach P 659, part-autograph)

This image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the 'Cum sancto spiritu' section of the Mass in G, BWV Anh. 167. The score is written on aged, yellowed paper and consists of approximately 18 staves. The notation is in G major and 4/4 time. The upper staves feature complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. The lower staves contain vocal lines with Latin lyrics written in a cursive hand. The lyrics are: 'cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei Patris'. The manuscript shows signs of age, including some staining and a slightly irregular right edge.

Example 13. George Bähr (1666–1738), Frauenkirche Dresden (1726–43, reconstructed 1994–2005)



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Imagining how Bach heard seventeenth-century music, and *which* seventeenth-century composers he listened to, is not just an academic exercise. If the greatest musician who ever lived heard something in the music of a Torri or a Wilderer, we probably should give those compositions some consideration as well. Today we are encouraged to value seventeenth-century music as startling, virtuosic, and deliberately provocative. Music reflecting that view probably has led many of us to join this society and travel here today. Yet this view is a product of recent selections of repertory and approaches to performance. Bach valued something rather different. Understanding why may help us see things in compositions that have been overshadowed by flashier music from both earlier and later generations.

Recordings used:

J. C. Bach, Requiem (ex. 11): RIAS Kammerchor, dir. Hans-Christoph Rademann

J. L. Bach, Mass in E minor, BWV Anh. 166 (exx. 7a., 8): Ex Tempore, dir. Florian Heyerick

J. S. Bach, Kyrie in F, BWV 233a (ex. 2): Washington Bach Consort, dir. Gisele Becker

J. S. Bach, Mass in B minor, BWV 232 (ex. 7b): Taverner Consort, dir. Andrew Parrott

Lotti, *Missa sapientiae* (exx. 3, 4): Balthasar-Neumann-Chor, dir. Thomas Hengelbrock

Palestrina, *Missa sine nomine*, arr. by Bach (ex. 10): Concerto Palatino, dir. Bruce Dickey and Charles Toet

Torri, Magnificat (ex. 6): Neue Hofkapelle München, dir. Christoph Hammer

Wilderer, Mass in G minor (ex. 9): Norddeutscher Figuralchor, dir. Jörg Straube

Anonymous mass in G, BWV Anh. 167 (exx. 5, 12): Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam et al., dir. Wolfgang Helbich