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J. S. Bach's B-minor Flute Sonata (BWV 1030) and Johann Gottlieb Goldberg: The identification of his hand and its implications¹

Yo Tomita

The Sonata in B minor for flute and obligato harpsichord BWV 1030.2 survives in Bach's autograph score (D-B Mus. ms. Bach P 975, fas.1). According to Kobayashi, it can be dated reasonably firmly to around 1736/37.² Today the score is accompanied by a separate flute part that is not in Bach's own handwriting (D-B Mus. ms. Bach P 975, fas.2). This report attempts to reveal the name of this scribe, and argues that both fascicles constitute the original manuscript of the work.

The flute part, which appears to have been copied from this autograph score, was created some years after the score had been made. It is written on the paper bearing watermark Weiß 56—(a) Crowned eagle with letters FR; (b) Letters CGK—for which Kobayashi assigns later dates in somewhat wider range from 'after 31.5.1740 to around 1742'. While the *terminus post quem* is derived from letters FR (Fridericus Rex) in the watermark, which is the date of Frederick the Great's accession to the throne, the *terminus ante quem* of 'around 1742' is obtained from the analysis of Bach's calligraphic features in two other Bach manuscripts that use this paper: (1) the title-cover of D-B Mus. ms. Bach St 145 (BWV 1041) and (2) the first layer of D-LEb Breitkopf Mus. ms. 9 (BWV^{2a} Anh. 25 / BWV³ Suppl 2, p. 655).³ As it will be discussed below, it is more likely to be around 1745/46 on handwriting evidence.

As regards the scribe of our flute part, Kobayashi notes in his ground-breaking study of 1988 that it is a 'singular copyist',⁴ meaning that he was unable to find another source written by this scribe. Curiously, no reference to this flute part is made in his catalogue of Bach's copyists published in 2007. Going through this catalogue and checking against the handwriting characteristics of the flute part, there was one close match: Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1727–1756), who is listed as 'scribe 235' and linked to a single source: Bach's original set of performance parts of Goldberg's cantata *Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit* (D-B Mus. ms. 7918) BNB I/G/2 (BWV Suppl 2, S. 650), which he dates 'around 1745/46'.⁵ Unnoticed then by Kobayashi, Goldberg's handwriting in this source, for example in Oboe 1 part shows remarkable affinity with our flute part. Compare the shapes of treble clef, time-signature 'C', crotchet rests, capital letter 'A', the word '[D/d]olce', as well as slightly

¹ I wish to thank Nobuaki Ebata for his comments on my early draft which were invaluable.

² Yoshitake Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs. Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 74 (1988), pp. 12, 39–40.

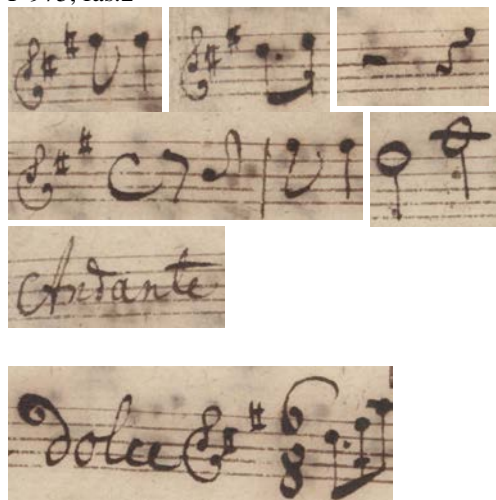
³ Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs', pp. 15 and 46.

⁴ Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs', p. 46.

⁵ Yoshitake Kobayashi and Kirsten Beißwenger, *Die Kopisten Johann Sebastian Bachs: Katalog und Dokumentation*. NBA IX/3 (2007), Textband, pp. 175–6.

slanting note-stems, the position of down-stem from note-heads, and style of writing numeric time-signature that appear in the two sources (see Figure 1).

P 975, fas.2



Mus. ms. 7918, Oboe 1 part



Figure 1: Samples of handwriting taken from the flute part of the Sonata in B minor (P 975, fas.2) and Oboe 1 part of Goldberg's cantata *Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit* (Mus. ms. 7918)

Apart from the cantata manuscripts, we know of no other samples of his handwriting from which one can learn how his script forms developed and changed over the years. Still it seems reasonable to infer from the very close handwriting as manifested in the two sources that the both were written around the same time, viz. around 1745/46.

The deviation from Kobayashi's *terminus ante quem* of Weiß 56—'around 1742'—can be explained thus: Bach had a left-over of a stock of paper from an earlier acquisition, of which he gave to his student to make use.

In his 1957 study, Alfred Dürr asserts that Goldberg's cantatas can be placed confidently at the time of his lessons with Bach.⁶ The set of performance parts of Goldberg's cantata *Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit* was surely used for performance in Leipzig, and remained in Bach's possession, as we have evidence of inheritance and its use by C. P. E. Bach.⁷ From this set of parts, one can also learn about the circumstances of its production. Johann Nataniel Bammler (1722–1784), scribe 234 in Kobayashi's copyists' catalogue, who had just begun to serve Bach,⁸ took the role of main copyist to start making the parts from Goldberg's score (D-B Mus.ms. autogr. Goldberg 1), the task which was eventually finished with the help of Bach himself, Goldberg, Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, and two other anonymous scribes whose handwriting is only known from this source.⁹ One can imagine how hectic but rewarding the time Goldberg had was with Bach in Leipzig, and appreciated the friendship he developed there with Bach's family and pupils. This may have been the background from

⁶ Alfred Dürr, 'Vorwort' in *Kirchenkantaten / Gottfried Kirchoff und Johann Gottlieb Goldberg*. Das Erbe deutscher Musik, 35: Abteilung Oratorium und Kantate, 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1957), p. vi.). See also Alfred Dürr, 'Johann Gottlieb Goldberg und die Triosonate BWV 1037', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 40 (1953), p.72.

⁷ Dürr, 'Kritischer Bericht' in *Kirchenkantaten / Gottfried Kirchoff und Johann Gottlieb Goldberg*, p. 128; see also Ulrich Leisinger, 'Die "Bachsche Auction" von 1789', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 77 (1991), pp. 97–126, esp. pp.109 and 117.

⁸ Peter Wollny, 'Neue Bach-Funde', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 83 (1997), pp. 7–50 esp. p. 47.

⁹ Dürr, 'Kritischer Bericht', in *Kirchenkantaten / Gottfried Kirchoff und Johann Gottlieb Goldberg*, p. 128. See also Yoshitake Kobayashi and Kirsten Beißwenger, *Die Kopisten Johann Sebastian Bachs: Katalog und Dokumentation*. NBA IX/3 (2007), Textband, pp. 175–6.

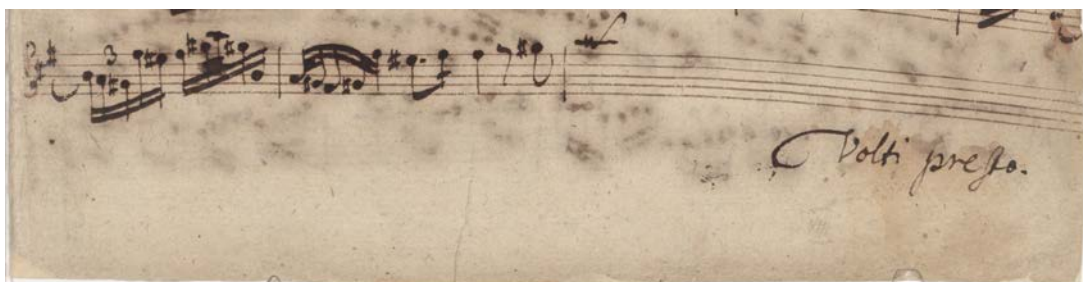
which to emerge the famous anecdote about him in connection with the last instalment of Bach's *Clavier-Übung* series published in autumn 1741. The discovery of his hand in this flute part of the Sonata in B minor has become another piece of jigsaw for reconstructing the image of this fascinating musician who died young in April 1756, a few weeks after his 29th birthday.

Let us now turn to examine the flute part more closely. It is a single bifolio, and staves are drawn in thinner ink on all four sides with a 7.6 mm rastrum (which is 2 mm narrower than the one used by Bach for the score), 15 on outer fold (pp. 13 and 16), and 16 on inner fold (pp. 14–15). Compared with the layout of the score, it looks more generously spaced out.

Page layout is beautifully executed. Page turns are particularly well looked after: first time after bar 58 of the first movement, just before the flautist plunging into the episodic runs in triplets, and the second time (Figure 2) coinciding with the pause between the fugue and the gigue. In general, musical notation is neat, and corrections are both few and insignificant.¹⁰

First
page
turn:

p.13
bottom



p.14
top



Second
page
turn:

p.15
bottom



p.16
top



Figure 2: the handling of page turns in the flute part (P 975, fas.2)

The accuracy of musical text in terms of both pitch and rhythm is remarkable. Even more impressive is the autonomy the scribe demonstrates in the area of notational choice.

¹⁰ Two corrections are found in the first movement: bar 50, last semiquaver $\sharp e'$ (\sharp amended, resulting in blobby shape); bar 73, 3rd semiquaver from the end $\sharp d''$ (\sharp corrected from $\sharp?$).

Frequently the direction of stems differs from Bach's score. Clearly Goldberg did not feel he should be obliged to mimic this area of notational features of his model. Extending our observation to the use of cautionary accidentals, Goldberg appears to employ them proactively to ensure that the player will not be caught in ambiguous situation (Figure 3).¹¹ On occasion, one may catch a glimpse of his musical insights from some of his cautionary accidentals, especially those #s supplied on the supertonic, reminding the performer of the intense colour of supertonic, and not the warm Neapolitan.



Figure 3: Additional cautionary accidentals employed in Goldberg's flute part

Deviation from Bach's score is also extended to the area of performance-related marks such as more fully provided ornaments,¹² phrasing and articulation marks,¹³ although they are not too numerous. There are also puzzling slur variants between the score and parts, which are located at an intense passage involving awkward leaps in augmented 2nd and diminished 4th approaching an important cadence. (Figure 4)



Figure 4: slur variants found between the score and the flute part

Bach often places slurs imprecisely. Here in bar 13 the first slur begins between the first two notes; the second slur was initially placed above 5th and 6th quavers, which was later amended to extend backwards to 4th quaver. The slurs in the flute part cover different notes, of which the second appears to have been added later. Later in the piece, this passage reappears in E minor in bars 95b–96a, and slurs do not match with those of the corresponding passage:

¹¹ The accidental for bar 21 (cf. bar 100) may require a further comment. Although the reading in Bach's score (without # on *g*'') looks wrong to us, it is not actually wrong in Bach's convention according to Dürr who explains that Bach occasionally omits the accidental in this specific melodic context, progressing from the leading-note to submediant in a minor mode: if Bach really meant this pitch to be *g*'', he would have provided a natural to clarify the augmented 2nd between *a*#'' and *g*#''. See NBA II/5 Kritischer Bericht, p. 162.

¹² The grace note at beat 2 in bar 112 of the first movement is only found in the flute part.

¹³ Slurs exclusively found in the flute part are: i: bar 17, 3rd beat $\underline{\underline{d''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}} \underline{\underline{b''}}$; bar 21, 1st beat $\underline{\underline{d''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}} \underline{\underline{b''}}$; bar 23, 3rd beat $\underline{\underline{d''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}} \underline{\underline{b''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}}$; bar 69, on $\underline{\underline{a''}} \underline{\underline{b''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}}$ twice; bar 78, 1st beat $\underline{\underline{f\#''}}$; bar 99, 3rd beat $\underline{\underline{b''}} \underline{\underline{a\#''}}$; ii: bar 9, 4th–5th notes $\underline{\underline{g''}} \underline{\underline{f\#''}}$; bar 11, 2nd constellation of notes: $\underline{\underline{a''}} \underline{\underline{b''}} \underline{\underline{c\#''}} \underline{\underline{d''}}$.

Unfortunately for Bach, there was no room above the flute part to write a slur properly, so he only wrote the first slur on the first three quavers in hesitant handwriting. The flute part, on the other hand, writes a long slur covering seven quavers in assured handwriting as if to capture the expression of moment as a performer himself, or to fulfil the intention of the composer on his behalf. But is it really what has happened? Is there any other explanation that is more plausible?

Having considered the positive features of Goldberg's musical text, one would naturally wonder whether they could be ascribed firmly to his maturity as musician. Goldberg was only 18 years old at the time. Would it be more natural to think that they are the evidence of him receiving specific instructions from his teacher? Is this not that the production of this flute part was one of assignments given to him by his teacher? The presence in the flute part of several proof-reading corrections also lends weight towards this theory.¹⁴ In fact, all these slurs unique to the flute part may have been added by Bach himself cannot be excluded either. Thus what may at first appear as a mistake in the time-signature for the gigue—12/8 (instead of 12/16) but not doubling the note-value of the musical text itself—must remain a puzzle.¹⁵

What has emerged from our examination of the flute part can be summarised thus: it is an integral part of Bach's original creation as it includes some important textual information that is not found in the score. The scribe was one of Bach's students who was studying hard at the time in Leipzig. With the production of the flute part, the work has become playable too: a harpsichordist using the score, while a flautist playing from a separate flute part.¹⁶

With the strength of evidence and argument presented herewith, Goldberg appears to have been an exceptionally gifted student. The flute part in his hand that has been neglected by scholars and editors for so long will now receive the attention it deserves.

¹⁴ The following accidentals appear to have been added in thinner ink: i: bar 44, 6th note ♯d''; bar 59, 17th note ♯g''; and bar 63, 11th note ♯c''. In addition, there is a natural which was subsequently added, appearing in the same colour of ink as the surrounding symbols, to both the score and the flute part: i: bar 83, 2nd beat, 2nd symbol: ♮a'.

¹⁵ One can only speculate but there may be connection with what Kirnberger, another of Bach's student in 1739–41, discussed the difference of characters between 12/16 and 12/8 in one of his books. Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*. Zweyter Theil, Erste Abtheilung (Berlin and Königsberg: Decker und Hartung, 1776), pp. 123–4.

¹⁶ One may be entertained by the conjecture that a flute part was produced shortly after the score was completed, but was not returned to Bach after a performance in Dresden. Thus Goldberg's task was a replacement of the lost (or never-returned) performance material.