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Source: *Bach*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (SPRING-SUMMER 1994), pp. 11-27

Published by: Riemenschneider Bach Institute

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41640388>

Accessed: 28-08-2017 19:37 UTC

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MORE SOURCE-CRITICAL RESEARCH ON BACH'S *MUSICAL OFFERING*

Michael Marissen\*

The complicated transmission problems connected with the print of J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering*,<sup>1</sup> dedicated in 1747 to King Frederick II ("the Great") of Brandenburg-Prussia have occasioned an enormous amount of scholarly speculation about the way in which the collection was put together and the possible significance of its ordering. Substantial progress on the first question was made more than twenty years ago in research by Christoph Wolff,<sup>2</sup> who published new findings based on a close examination of the technical features in each of the (fragmentary) surviving exemplars of Bach's print. Wolff demonstrated that none of the previously suggested orderings for the *Musical Offering* could be supported by the early documents.<sup>3</sup> He went on to advance a new reconstruction for the ordering of Bach's print, but suggested that it probably had little if any significance for thinking about or performing the collection as a whole.

Wolff assumed that Bach's print had been produced entirely by Johann Georg Schübler. Because the signature "J. G. Schübler. sc. [*sculpsit* — engraved by]" is found at the end of the printing unit of the six-part fugue, it seemed reasonable to conclude that this marked the close of the collection. Wolff's reconstruction was consequently

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\* For encouragement and criticism in completing this essay, I would like to thank Gregory Butler, Robert Marshall, and Joshua Rifkin. Working from an entirely different angle, Rifkin, in his research in progress, has come to similar conclusions about the ordering of the *Musical Offering*.

<sup>1</sup>Facsimile — *Johann Sebastian Bach: Musicalisches Opfer BWV 1079*, ed. Christoph Wolff (Leipzig: Peters, 1977), hereafter "Peters-Facsimile."

<sup>2</sup>Wolff, "Der Terminus 'Ricerca' in Bachs Musikalischem Opfer," *Bach-Jahrbuch* 53 (1967): 70-81 (updated in Wolff, *Bach: Essays on his Life and Music* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991], Ch. 25); "New Research on Bach's *Musical Offering*," *Musical Quarterly* 57 (1971): 379-408 (updated in *Essays*, Ch. 18); Johann Sebastian Bach, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke (Neue Bach-Ausgabe, hereafter "NBA")* VIII/1, *Kritischer Bericht* (hereafter "KB") von Christoph Wolff (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1976); "Überlegungen zum 'Thema Regium,'" *Bach-Jahrbuch* 59 (1973): 33-38 (updated in *Essays*, Ch. 25).

<sup>3</sup>Many of these earlier reconstructions are summarized in Wilhelm Pfannkuch, "J. S. Bachs 'Musikalisches Opfer': Bemerkungen zu den bisherigen Untersuchungen und Neuordnungsversuchen," *Die Musikforschung* 7 (1954): 440-453.

called into question by Wolfgang Wiemer's discovery that two members of the Schübler family of Zella were responsible for preparing the print.<sup>4</sup> Taking Wiemer's work as a point of departure, I intend to show that further careful study of the original print, in connection with a close reading of the early documents, can yield a new historically plausible ordering for the collection.

#### EVIDENCE FROM A CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

One document that is of considerable interest and potential significance for the question of disposition is the advertisement appearing in the Leipzig newspapers on 30 September 1747 (a document that was unknown to scholars until the 1970s):

Since the Royal Prussian Fugue Theme, as announced on 11 May of the current year by the Leipzig, Berlin, Frankfort, and other gazettes, has now left the press, it shall be made known that the same may be obtained at the forthcoming St. Michael's Fair from the author, Capellmeister Bach, as well as from his two sons in Halle and Berlin, at the price of 1 imperial taler. The elaboration consists (1) in two fugues, one with three, the other with six obbligato parts; (2) in a sonata for transverse flute, violin, and continuo; (3) in diverse canons, among which [wobey] is a *fuga canonica*.<sup>5</sup>

Because he assumed that J. G. Schübler was responsible for all the engraving, Wolff had to conclude that the newspaper's listing of contents for the *Musical Offering* was merely a systematic one (i.e., a listing of genres) that did not correspond to the actual physical layout of the print.<sup>6</sup> More detailed study of the technical aspects of the engraving process and evidence from secondary manuscripts of the collection and contemporary letters describing it, suggest, however, that the layout of the complete print may in fact have essentially

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<sup>4</sup>Wiemer, *Die wiederhergestellte Ordnung in Johann Sebastian Bachs Kunst der Fuge* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1977), pp.40-43.

<sup>5</sup>Translated in Wolff, *Essays*, p. 252. For the German, see the facsimile in Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, p. 46; the advertisement is also printed in *Bach-Dokumente III: Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1750-1800* (hereafter "Dok III"), ed. Hans-Joachim Schulze (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972), p.656.

<sup>6</sup>Wolff, *Essays*, p.258.

corresponded to the description of the newspaper advertisement. (There is no reason to assume that the wording of the advertisement is not Bach's, but so far as I can tell, the present argument would not be affected by a discovery that someone else wrote or placed the advertisement.)

## EVIDENCE FROM SURVIVING PRINTS

Consider first the contents of the extant prints.<sup>7</sup> Only one exemplar (aside from Frederick's), owned in the eighteenth century by Giovanni Battista Martini, appears straightforwardly to contain all of the musical items in the collection. Before examining Martini's exemplar it is worth pointing out, however, that determining exactly which materials formed Frederick the Great's exemplar is much more difficult than scholars generally believe. Extraordinarily painstaking work (in progress) by Gregory Butler of the University of British Columbia suggests that its sections — some on deluxe, some on plain paper — have been variously dispersed into the call numbers Am.B.73 and Am.B.74 of the Berlin National Library. Butler has concluded that Bach probably sent Frederick the print in two installments whose contents did not exactly correspond to the present division by the two Berlin call numbers. That is, the sections on plain paper are most likely not substitutions by subsequent owners for materials on fancy paper that are now lost.

The one musically complete exemplar other than Frederick's, then, namely Martini's, appears to be the one that is the most useful for the present discussion. In Martini's copy only the bifolio containing the title and dedication is missing. The fact that Johannes Baptist Pauli (who sent the print to Martini) also sent Martini a letter explaining the background story of the *Musical Offering* in more or less the same way in which it is related in the printed dedication found for the most part in the surviving exemplars, would seem to indicate that the print was in this otherwise complete state when Martini obtained it in 1750.<sup>8</sup> In a letter of 9 March 1750, Pauli lists the contents of the large package of Bach's instrumental music that he sent to Martini. About halfway through his list he refers to a keyboard

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<sup>7</sup>Wolff provides tabular overviews of the seventeen exemplars in *NBA VIII/1, KB*, p.51; and in *Essays*, p.247. Wolff refers to an eighteenth (incomplete) exemplar in *NBA VIII/1, KB*, "Nachtrag", p.171.

<sup>8</sup>See *Dok III*, pp.4-5.

fugue on a theme by the King of Prussia, followed by a six-part fugue, a sonata (for violin, flute, and bass), and several canons.<sup>9</sup> Pauli is obviously referring to Bach's *Musical Offering*. Strikingly, he describes the collection in much the same way that Bach's newspaper advertisement did: two fugues (the second of them six-voiced), a sonata, and some canons. It is impossible to say for certain whether Martini kept the materials together in this manner, but it may be significant that the Bologna library also ended up cataloguing them in that order.<sup>10</sup>

An objection to arranging the collection in the way I have been describing might be brought up by citing an often-quoted letter of 1 March 1752 from Lorenz Christoph Mizler to Manfred Spieß. (Both men were, along with Bach, members of the *Leipzig Correspondirende Societät der musikalischen Wissenschaften*, founded by Mizler.) Mizler writes: "[The *Musical Offering*] is now engraved in copper and obtainable in Leipzig: it consists of three pieces. A trio, a ricercar, and a fugue..."<sup>11</sup> He evidently did not intend to describe Bach's entire print, but rather only three of the grand pieces (i.e., Mizler neglects to mention the nine shorter canons. Also, it is unclear whether by "fugue" he meant the *Fuga canonica* found at the end of the canons unit or the second Ricercar).<sup>12</sup> Presumably Mizler mentions the sonata first because this is the piece that had the greatest appeal for him as a performer. Although he played keyboard instruments (having had training in this with Bach), Mizler reportedly enjoyed transverse flute playing most of all.<sup>13</sup> He would evidently have been especially interested in works of such immense technical difficulty as the sonata from the *Musical Offering*. In a letter of 6 November 1736 from Mizler to Johann Gottfried Walther (the relative of Bach), Mizler writes: "If I might humbly ask for something from your august self, could you please send me a flute

<sup>9</sup>See *Bach-Dokumente II: Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs 1685-1750*, eds. Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969), pp.467 and 469.

<sup>10</sup>Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, pp.66-67. The two keyboard fugues have been preserved together as Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico, *Biblioteca Musicale G. B. Martini*, DD 73; the sonata as DD 75; and the canons as DD76.

<sup>11</sup>*Dok III*, p.13; translated in Wolff, *Essays*, p.258.

<sup>12</sup>Wolff, *Essays*, p.258.

<sup>13</sup>See Franz Wöhleke, *Lorenz Christoph Mizler: Ein Beitrag zur musikalischen Gelehrtengeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg-Aumühle: Triltsch, 1940), pp.7, 14, 18, 24, and 36.

concerto — one that is difficult to play. ... In the Weimar court orchestra there must surely be a virtuoso upon this instrument."<sup>14</sup>

## EVIDENCE FROM SURVIVING MANUSCRIPTS

If for the question of disposition there was not a great deal to go on from the surviving prints, there is at least some further support to be gathered from the surviving manuscripts. None of the manuscripts copied from the *Musical Offering* print is musically complete. There is one manuscript, however, that does draw on material from each of the printing units of the collection. A copy made by Johann Christoph Oley (Mus. ms. Bach P 1064, Berlin) contains everything but the sonata. Oley's contents are as follows: complete title and preface; three-part fugue with canon 7;<sup>15</sup> six-part fugue with canons 9 and 10; solutions for canons 7, 9, and 10; canon 8; canons 1-6; solutions for canons 1-5 (Oley's solution for canon 6, once part of what is now kept as Mus. ms. Bach P 1064, is catalogued as P 326; and his two-stave copy of the printed version of the six-part fugue, also once part of P 1064, is catalogued as P 947).<sup>16</sup> That is, the music moves from the three-part to the six-part fugue printing units, to the sonata unit (with Oley copying from it only the canon that appears at the end of the unit), to the canons unit. This means that Oley's printed exemplar was most probably organized in the same way that Martini's seems to have been. (Recall that, so far as the musical text is concerned, Martini's is the only obviously intact print surviving, and that the ordering of Martini's materials corresponds to the description of the Leipzig newspaper announcement.)

## EVIDENCE FROM BACH'S OBITUARY

For the last bit of evidence in support of the suggested ordering by genres we can turn to the obituary for Bach published in Lorenz Mizler's *Musikalische Bibliothek*, Vol. 4 (Leipzig, 1754).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Johann Gottfried Walther, *Briefe*, eds. Klaus Beckmann and Hans-Joachim Schulze (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1987), p.202.

<sup>15</sup>The numbering system employed in *NBA* VIII/1 for the canons has been adopted throughout this essay. Canons 1-5 are the numbered ones engraved in the canons printing unit; canon 6 is found directly after the numbered canons; canon 7, after the three-part fugue; canon 8 is found after the sonata; and canons 9-10, after the six-part fugue.

<sup>16</sup>Wolff, *NBA* VIII/1, *KB*, pp.75-76.

<sup>17</sup>*Dok* III, pp.80-92; Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, *The Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: Norton, 1945; rev. 1966) (hereafter "BR"), pp.215-224.

The seventh item in the obituary's list of Bach's printed works reads: "Two fugues, a trio, and several canons, on the above-mentioned theme given by His Majesty the King in Prussia; under the title *Musical Offering*."<sup>18</sup>

#### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINT AND BACH'S OWN MANUSCRIPTS

Another issue worth exploring concerns whether this reconstruction of the original print corresponds with whatever materials Bach sent to the Schübler workshop for engraving. Only small bits of evidence exist from which to construct an answer to this question. The upshot of all of this detailed source-critical information will be to argue for the possibility that in Bach's materials the canons formed a set of ten, which were then dispersed throughout the print.

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE PRINTED CANONS

The manuscripts Bach sent out to the Schübler workshop for engraving, subsequently lost, possibly featured the ten canons of the *Musical Offering* in a continuous series, rather than with six canons appearing together and the other four dispersed throughout the collection as they are in the completed print. The first thing to notice is that only canons 1-5 are numbered in Schübler's printing of six canons. The *Fuga canonica in Epiadiapente*, as it appears in the print, has plenty of space for the entry of a number "6," but, somewhat oddly, no number was engraved there.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this means that the *Fuga canonica* was not the sixth canon in a continuous series of canons in Bach's manuscript.

In this connection consider one of the other unnumbered canons in the print. There are some indications that the *Canon à 2 Quaerendo invenietis* (i.e., canon 9) may have been the seventh canon in Bach's series. Canons 1-5 read in the print "*Canon 1 a 2*," "*2.a.2...*," "*3.a.2...*," "*4.a.2...*," and "*5.a.2.*" The engraving for canon 9, which in the print appears immediately following the six-part fugue, reads "*Canon à Z [sic* — i.e., including the mirror-image diacritical

<sup>18</sup>*Dok III*, p.86; BR, p.221.

<sup>19</sup>Incidentally, this canon was numbered with a "6" in Oley's manuscript copy of the canons unit (Berlin, P 1064). It is readily apparent from looking at this manuscript in the original, however, that the "6" was entered after Oley had completed his copying from the printed exemplar. The number is in light brown ink, while the heading and the rest of Oley's work is in black ink.

mark].” There are a great many “2”s engraved throughout the various printing units (page numbers, basso-continuo figures), all of which are consistently characterized by a rounded upper-half of the number. For canon 9, therefore, it appears that Schübler, carelessly looking at the first numeral in an exemplar reading “7. a 2,” may have originally engraved a “7” directly following his newly added “Canon à” (compare, e.g., the “7” in the top corner of the page in question<sup>20</sup>). He may subsequently have corrected it to “à 2” by simply punching back down a bit of the bottom of the “7” and adding a straight-line base to it, a line in the same style as the top lines of his 7s.<sup>21</sup> In other words, he was possibly looking at a manuscript which read “7. a 2,” and in focusing on engraving the missing word “Canon” (a word which needed to be provided in the context of the six-part fugue, where the *Canon à 2 Quaerendo invenietis* is not part of an ongoing series of canons), he slipped and initially copied the “7” rather than the “2” from an exemplar reading “[Canon] 7.a 2.”

Another issue worth exploring concerns the methods employed in engraving the unit of six canons. The first thing to notice here is that the *Fuga canonica* does not look as if it were engraved as carefully as were canons 1-5. In the *Fuga canonica* the score alignment is less neat, and there is a higher incidence of copying errors. Furthermore, there are many initial scratches which the engraver abandoned and restarted (this is much more clearly evident from looking at an original print than from studying a reproduction). In canons 1-5, on the other hand, the score alignment is quite good, and there are relatively few copying errors. The fact that these errors do not involve positions of notes on the staves,<sup>22</sup> but rather things like

<sup>20</sup>See Peters-Facsimile; also illustrated in Hans T. David, *J. S. Bach's Musical Offering: History, Interpretation and Analysis* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1945), p.14; and Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, p.157.

<sup>21</sup>This punching in of the bottom of the 7 cannot be seen in reproductions, but traces of it are faintly visible in the exemplar of the original print housed in the Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA (M3.3 B2). In Schübler's engraving of Bach's *6 Choräle von verschiedener Art* (“Schübler Chorales”), *BWV 645-650*, all the 2s are also rounded at the top, except at p. 12 which, curiously, reads “1Z.”

<sup>22</sup>Many modern editors alter the rhythm notated in the print at m. 7 in order to accommodate a resolution featuring an augmentation of the entire bass line. For the same reason some editions also shift the last three notes of m. 8 and the first note of m. 9 down a third. Neither of these changes is necessary, however, if the augmented voice goes back to its beginning at the point where the original voice has gone once-through (as it does already in the surviving eighteenth-century solutions, Oley's in Berlin, P. 1064, and August Friedrich Christoph Kollmann's in *An Essay on Practical Musical Composition* [London, 1799; Facsimile, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973], Plate 37). This practice of augmenting only half of the original voice is also to be found in Bach's own notated solutions of



missing prolongation dots and slashes through Cs in time signatures, could be significant. It suggests that the engraver may have copied canons 1-5 by a tracing method, one in which we could get the configuration of desirable and undesirable printing characteristics described above. By contrast, the differing sorts of infelicities in the *Fuga canonica* suggest that it was copied by a method of direct engraving (see, e.g., awkward spacings in measures 4-5, 14, 26, 35, 47, 52-53; and uncorrected custodes in both clefs at the end of measure 26).<sup>23</sup> Wolff has described in detail how engraving by tracing works.<sup>24</sup> For purposes of the present discussion the important thing to know is that the tracing method involves oil-soaked pages with music written on only one side of each leaf. Should Schübler's exemplar for the canons have had only a small title indicated on its first page (as the prints do), it would have been possible to have torn the first leaf from the second, soaked it in oil, and traced the canons of the *verso* side onto the varnished copper plate. Notice, in this connection, the similarity in the style of the numbering for canons 1-5 (with rising diagonal dash above canon 1 and falling dashes above canons 2-5) and the style of Bach's numbering in the autograph of the fourteen canons, *BWV* 1087 (with rising diagonal dashes above), copied out not long before or after the *Musical Offering* was printed;<sup>25</sup> see also Bach's similar notation of the Arabic numerals in his *Christus Coronabit Crucigeros* canon, *BWV* 1077, copied out not long after the *Musical*

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augmentation canons in *Vom Himmel hoch*, *BWV* 769, and the *Art of Fugue*, *BWV* 1080 (see Wolff, *NBA* VIII/1, *KB*, p.114).

<sup>23</sup>Anatoly P. Milka, "Über den Autor der Umstellung der Kanons im Musikalischen Opfer Johann Sebastian Bachs," *Beiträge zur Bach-Forschung* 9-10 (1991): 129-137, has argued that all six canons of this unit were traced from a Bach autograph. Milka mentions (p.134) that his results were confirmed in handwriting analyses by experts in the Central Criminal-Justice and Scientific Research Laboratory of Leningrad. Although one certainly hesitates to question Soviet criminological authorities, it must be said that they have failed to notice or account for the differences between the engraving characteristics in the five numbered canons and the unnumbered *Fuga canonica*.

<sup>24</sup>Wolff, *NBA* VIII/1, *KB*, pp.52-53.

<sup>25</sup>Wolff, *Essays*, p.170 (an updated version of "Bach's *Handexemplar* of the Goldberg Variations: A New Source," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 29 [1976]: 224-241); Wolff provides facsimiles of the Fourteen Canons and the first page of the *Musical Offering* canons unit at pages 166 and 169. The autograph fair copy of the Fourteen Canons appears at the end of a print of the Goldberg Variations kept in Bach's personal library. Yoshitake Kobayashi dates the handwriting for these canons to 1747-1748; see "Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs. Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750," *Bach-Jahrbuch* 74 (1988): 7-72, at 60.

*Offering* (this canon bears the autograph designation "15 October 1747").<sup>26</sup>

The canons 1-5 may have been the only music from Bach's materials sent to Schübler for which tracing was even an option. Everywhere else in the print there are corrected and uncorrected mirror-image entries, suggesting that those pages were engraved directly (employing the tracing method precludes mirror-imaging). From the spacing of nearly all of these mirror-imaged entries it is clear that they were engraved in a continuous job with the surrounding text, not squeezed in by direct engravings that were added to the text of a previous tracing job. These involve, for the most part, reversed natural signs — see measures 48 and 49 of the three-part fugue; measures 4, 12, 28, 76, 88, 93, 96, and 101 of the six-part fugue; measure 11 of the second movement of the sonata (flute part); measure 24 of the first movement and measure 120 of the second movement of the sonata (continuo part); and measure 25 of the continuo part of canon 8.<sup>27</sup>

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE PRINTED SONATA AND FUGUES

The Sonata evidently reached the Schübler workshop in the form of separate performing parts with music on both sides of the leaves, thereby eliminating tracing as a possibility. Wolfgang Wiemer has recently pointed out that there are two different handwriting styles found within the violin part,<sup>28</sup> with pages 2 and 3 of the violin part having been copied by one engraver, while 1 and 4 were copied by another. This makes perfect sense if one assumes that Bach sent a manuscript violin part scribed on one bifolio, paginated 4-1-2-3 (as it is in the print). This would have allowed the engravers to tear the bifolio down the middle. One engraver would have taken the first leaf (*recto* is page 4, *verso* is page 1) while the other would have taken the second leaf (*recto* is page 2, *verso* is page 3).

<sup>26</sup>Facsimiles in Wolff, *Essays*, 171; *NBA VIII/1*, p. viii; BR, p.180.

<sup>27</sup>Mirror-image natural signs are found also in Schübler's engraving of Bach's *Wer nun den lieben Gott läßt walten*, BWV 647 (twice in m. 7 and once in m. 11), and *Meine Seele erhebet den Herren*, BWV 648 (in m. 18); see Johann Sebastian Bach, *Sechs Choräle von verschiedener Art: Faksimile-Ed. nach dem Exemplar des Originaldruckes*, ed. Hans Schmidt-Mannheim (Innsbruck: Helbling, 1985). There are no such mirror images in the print of Bach's *Art of Fugue* at pp. 48-50, which were traced from the corresponding one-sided pages kept as Beilage 1 zu Mus. ms. Bach P200, Berlin; See Johann Sebastian Bach, *Die Kunst der Fuge, BWV 1080: Autograph — Originaldruck Faksimileausgabe*, ed. Hans Guter Hoke (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1979).

Butler's research (in progress) on the *Musical Offering* print substantially refines Wiemer's findings on handwriting characteristics. It turns out there were three engravers working on the *Musical Offering* and that the flute part from the sonata was also divided between two engravers. Johann Georg Schübler was responsible for the fugues units, and for the continuo part and pages 2-3 of the violin part in the sonata unit. His younger brother, Johann Heinrich, was responsible for the canons unit, and for page 2 of the flute part in the sonata unit. The oldest brother, Johann Jacob Friedrich, engraved pages 1 and 3-4 of the flute part and pages 1 and 4 of the violin part in the sonata unit. Butler explains that Johann Heinrich's engraving looks remarkably similar to Johann Jacob Friedrich's because Johann Heinrich, as acknowledged in an autobiographical sketch from the turn of the nineteenth century, studied this craft with his oldest brother.<sup>29</sup>

As for the fugues, perhaps they could not be traced onto the oblong leaves of the print because the pieces reached Schübler's shop on upright sheets (and also because music was notated on both sides of these upright leaves). In any event it is clear from all the mirror-image entries listed above that, like the sonata, the fugues cannot have been traced.

#### AN ASIDE CONCERNING PRINTING TERMINOLOGY

For the sake of greater accuracy, I should perhaps mention that writers on music often use intaglio printing terminology incorrectly. There are three basic types of intaglio work on metal plates: drypoint, engraving, and etching; but for the present purposes, only the general practices of the last two methods are relevant.<sup>30</sup> In engraving, a graver or burin is run directly over the metal plate. In etching, the plate is covered with a grounding mixture consisting mainly of wax, onto which the etchers draw with some sort of point (usually directly, but sometimes tracing through thin or oil-soaked

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<sup>28</sup>Wiemer, *Die wiederhergestellte Ordnung*, pp.40-43.

<sup>29</sup>*Dok III*, p.196. What does distinguish the two is, e.g., that Johann Heinrich more often engraves the lower-case "g" with a loop at the bottom, and that at the ends of movements Johann Jacob Friedrich engraves flourishes with mirror-image, horizontally shifted S curves.

<sup>30</sup>For a clear and readable introduction to the various methods and terminology of print making from copper plates, see William M. Ivins, Jr., *How Prints Look*, revised and expanded by Marjorie B. Cohn (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), pp.44-102; my thanks to Prof. David Schulenberg, UNC at Chapel Hill, for this reference.

paper); they then apply to the surface an acid that dissolves away the bright metal appearing in the lines, but does not eat at the ground.

Technically, then, tracing is a possibility by etching, not engraving or drypoint. I nonetheless use only the word "engraving" throughout this essay, because it seemed cumbersome and irrelevant to the present purposes to have to determine which method had been used in the *Musical Offering* whenever tracing was not involved.<sup>31</sup>

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE AUTOGRAPH SIX-PART FUGUE

Scrutiny of the only surviving autograph material from the *Musical Offering* is also relevant to the question of whether, or to what extent, the Schübblers were able to prepare the print from a traceable engraving copy. This concerns an autograph fair copy of the six-part fugue (found within Mus. m. Bach P226, Berlin), notated on two staves, not featuring an autograph title, and encompassing the four pages of an originally unpaginated bifolio in upright format. Wolff was the first to evaluate this manuscript in full detail.<sup>32</sup> Though finding its small series of relatively insignificant variant readings curious and difficult to sort out chronologically with consistency, Wolff came to the conclusion that, contrary to the uncritical assumptions of previous scholarship, the autograph must represent an earlier version and the print a later version. Perhaps, though, the situation is a bit more complex. It seems more likely that both the surviving fair copy and the lost exemplar for the printed version were separately arranged from the hard to read (now lost) composing score. This would explain why in different instances there appear to be revised readings in each of the surviving sources (determining which readings are musically superior is not necessarily the same issue).<sup>33</sup> This scenario makes the most sense if we posit the composing score as having been notated on six staves, the way it is in the print, not on two.

<sup>31</sup>My suspicion is that all of J. H. Schübler's work was etched (canons 1-5 traced; canon 6 and flute part p. 2 etched directly) — consider, e.g., that the noteheads of his half notes are usually even in depth. The two brothers' work may have been engraved — consider, e.g., that the noteheads of their half notes are usually uneven in depth (the sort of thing that is more likely to happen with a burin). J. G.'s often modulate in blackness toward the left, while J. J. F.'s often do so toward the right.

<sup>32</sup>Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, pp.91-95.

<sup>33</sup>Consider especially mm. 76 and 79 in the print, whose readings are probably earlier than those of the fair copy; see Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, pp.94-95.

There is some evidence in the two-stave autograph which indicates that it was copied from a six-staved score, presumably the composing score:<sup>34</sup> (1) an erased *f<sup>m</sup>* in the treble clef at the second half-note pulse of measure 33, corresponding to the position of the note *g'* in the alto clef of line 3 in a six-staved score; (2) an immediate correction from the notehead *d* without flag to an *e* with flag and natural sign in the bass clef at the sixth quarter-note pulse of measure 43, corresponding to the position of the note *a-natural* in the tenor clef of line 5 in a six-staved score; (3) an erased *d* in the bass clef at the fourth quarter-note pulse of measure 53, corresponding to the position of the note *c'* in the alto clef of line 3 in a six-staved score; and (4) a number of corrections in the treble clef from the last half-note pulse of measure 82 to the first half-note pulse of measure 83, apparently occasioned by confusion stemming from the great number of ledger lines necessary in the alto clef between lines 2 and 3 in a six-staved score (cf. the print at this point). All of this would suggest that Bach composed the fugue on six staves and that in the process of making a neat copy on two staves to serve as Schübler's engraving exemplar, he inevitably made some minor revisions and did not in every instance enter them back into his composing score. Schübler may have had a good look at this fair copy and sent it back to Bach, reporting that to him it was too impractical for engraving purposes. Rather than taking the two-staved fair copy as the basis for preparing a six-staved fair copy, Bach would have taken the more sensible and expedient step of preparing for Schübler a neat copy on six staves from the six-staved composing score (this, incidentally, could account for Schübler's having engraved separate paginations for the two fugues). Here, again, Bach inevitably made some minor revisions in the process, not necessarily bothering to go back and enter them into his two-staved fair copy. (In other words, although the surviving two-stave autograph manuscript was most probably written out earlier than was the exemplar for Johann Georg Schübler's engraving, this does not necessarily mean that the autograph transmits an early version while the print transmits a revised version; rather, it is fair to assume that both the print and the fair copy transmit marginally different arrangements of Bach's lost composing score.)

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<sup>34</sup>It would make a great deal of sense for Bach to have drafted this fugue in a six-stave score format, since with normal keyboard notation he would have had to contend with working out three contrapuntal lines per staff. The *Fuga a 3 soggetti* from Bach's *Art of Fugue* (pp. 61-65) also survives in an autograph fair copy on only two staves; this work could much more

To come back to the question of engraving methods: the likelihood that canons 1-5 had been traced becomes even greater when another technical aspect of the print is considered. It turns out that the dimensions of the part of the copper plate that canons 1-5 occupy correspond to the dimensions of the parts of the pages in the two-stave autograph of the six-part fugue that are most fully notated with music.<sup>35</sup> That is, the exemplar from which J. H. Schübler evidently traced canons 1-5 was probably written on the same type of paper as the autograph six-part fugue.

There is a small, by no means conclusive, bit of evidence that the exemplar from which the Schüblers engraved the sonata parts might likewise have been written on this same smaller type of paper: pages 1-3 of the flute and violin parts from the sonata each employ fourteen staves, the same number of staves that are occupied by canons 1-5. Recall that the flute and violin parts are the ones that feature the handwritings of two engravers. Dividing up the work for these two parts by tearing the two bifolios down their seams implies that in each case the second page of engraved music had to start from the same measure in the second movement that the second pages of their exemplars did. The most sensible thing would have been to engrave fourteen staves more or less evenly through the height of the copper plates and then to copy, slightly blown up in size, each of the fourteen lines of music from the exemplars.

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE PRINTED CANON 8

Having already discussed technical evidence for the possibility that the *Fuga canonica* might not have appeared below canon 5 in Schübler's engraving exemplar and that canon 9 did not originally appear below the six-part fugue, it remains to be explored whether there is any source-critical basis for believing that canon 7 originally appeared below the three-part fugue and that canon 8 originally appeared with the sonata.

For canon 7 there does not appear to be any such evidence for rearrangement; however, there is some for canon 8. In the flute part of

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easily have been drafted in normal keyboard notation, since there are only two contrapuntal lines per staff.

<sup>35</sup>For the fugue, see the facsimile of Mus. ms. Bach P226, Berlin, 3-4, illustrated in *NBA* VIII/1, pp. XII-XIII (or David, *J. S. Bach's Musical Offering*, pp.86-87).

canon 8, J. J. F. Schübler seems to have been a bit confused as to how many measures needed to be copied: uncharacteristically, the bar line following his closing flourish after measure 30 was not erased. This suggests that his exemplar might have been a score, not the bifolio separate flute part from which he copied in engraving the sonata. (Incidentally, if this canon had been in score, it would not have required the engraver's solving it in order to place it in the separate parts of the sonata printing unit; the pivot of inversion shifts midway through this canon, making it impossible to present the piece in an abbreviated notation.) Because this is an accompanied canon at the interval of two measures, the first voice will start to repeat itself at measure 30, while the entire canon once-through will take 32 measures. Thus, the second voice and continuo line require 32 measures in a separate performing part, while the first voice would require only 30 measures. The fact that the engraver was evidently about to enter more than 30 measures in his flute part suggests that he may have been working from a score.

Apparently, in order to keep performers from considering canon 8 to be part of the sonata, the engraver of the flute and violin parts (identified by Butler as Johann Jacob Friedrich Schübler) indented the first line of the canon in both the violin and flute parts. The engraver also calls the piece *Canon perpetuus* in both parts. The continuo part, on the other hand, copied by Johann Georg Schübler, is not indented and labeled simply "*Canon*." In line with the already mentioned suggestions on the Schüblers' possible rearranging of placement for canons, perhaps the exemplar for canon 8 gave only a number for its heading. If the exemplar took the form of a fully notated score it would have been unnecessary, of course, to specify how many canonic voices there were. It would also have been unnecessary to specify the nature of the canon's solution, since, as mentioned above, it is impossible to present a canon of this sort in an abbreviated notation. Perhaps, in shifting the three individual lines into the printed sonata parts, the two Schübler brothers eliminated the exemplar's number and each engraver came up with his own title and formatting style for the first line.

There are several other small indications that the Schüblers' exemplar may have been a score. The figures in the continuo part may have been added by Johann Georg Schübler, who had, incidentally,

been one of J.S.Bach's students in Leipzig.<sup>36</sup> The spacing of the notes makes them comfortable to read, but in one instance it proved especially difficult to accommodate the basso-continuo figures above the notes. At measure 19 Johann Georg has added a small guiding line to ensure that the continuo player understands that the three figures apply to the dotted quarter-note. The spacing of the figures for the third note in measure 7 is also awkward. (The spacing of the notes throughout the sonata unproblematically accommodates continuo figures.)

Other indications that the exemplar for this canon may have been a score are found in the violin part. Hans T. David has suggested that the discrepancy between the density of articulation markings in the flute and violin parts could point to an earlier score in which the violin line (which has more markings) was at the top.<sup>37</sup> Since such a discrepancy is not found in the upper voices of the sonata (the exemplar of which — as Wiemer has shown — was a set of parts), it appears reasonable to assume that the discrepancy in the canon might point to a score as a direct engraving copy (in which case, incidentally, modern performers can feel especially free to change around the scoring for the upper two lines, or, for that matter, to go with another scoring altogether).

In sum, it appears likely from the piecing together of a long series of small bits of evidence that the Schüblers' arrangement of the printing units for the *Musical Offering* essentially corresponded to the listing by genres published in the Leipzig newspapers: three-part and six-part fugues (with canons) — a sonata (with canon) — canons (with canonic fugue). From further, more detailed evidence, it also appears possible that Bach's original materials had been arranged even more strictly by genre: three-part and six-part fugues — sonata — ten canons.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Dok III, p.196. For the purposes of the present discussion it is unnecessary to establish whether Bach or Schübler determined which harmonies were to be indicated by continuo figures in this canon. The point is that Schübler's exemplar might not have contained figures at the time he engraved the notes on the staff in the sonata printing unit, something that makes notational sense had his exemplar been a score.

<sup>37</sup>David, *J. S. Bach's Musical Offering*, p.172. Perhaps the fact that a fermata appears over the final bar line in only the violin part is also relevant.

<sup>38</sup>Butler argues compellingly in his forthcoming study that Bach sent the collection to Frederick in more than one installment. While this no doubt reflects the production schedule for the print, it does not necessarily tell us anything about the way the collection was



It might be objected that if this latter setup had been Bach's arrangement and one which he really cared about, he could either have insisted that the Schüblers follow it exactly or at that he could at least have indicated somehow in the print as it was formatted that the canons belonged together as a discrete group. Perhaps, however, Bach figured that this was not really necessary. Anyone who actually desired to perform the canons would go through the two steps of realizing them and then copying out separate performing parts. In this scenario the default situation would be for at least nine of the ten canons to appear together (i.e., the rest of the collection — the two fugues, the sonata and canon 8 — was printed already in the form of performance materials<sup>39</sup>). For such a series it would be reasonable, for example, to start with the numbered canons (canons 1-5) and then move through the rest of the print for the unnumbered canons (canons 7, 9-10, and 6).<sup>40</sup> While there is one surviving complete set of solutions (Oley's, referred to above), there are no surviving early manuscripts featuring separate performing parts for all the canons.<sup>41</sup>

While we may rightly wonder whether Bach's entire set of canons was ever actually performed in the eighteenth century (did Bach himself perform them in Leipzig?), there can really be no doubt that they were designed for performance. Friedrich Blume spoke for many (and influenced many others), when he suggested that Bach's late instrumental works were "pure showpieces," which had not been conceived for performance.<sup>42</sup> However, aside from the fact that these

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composed or how its trade copies were sold when production was completed. From the observations presented above, there is no reason to believe that Frederick's first installment (three-part fugue with unnumbered canon 7 and numbered canons 1-5 with unnumbered canon 6) constituted an initial conception of the work, later expanded into a larger version (adding six-part fugue with unnumbered canons 9-10 and sonata with unnumbered canon 8). According to the present study, only for the sonata is there no source-critical information suggesting Bach's compositional activity relatively early on with respect to the Schüblers' engraving schedule.

<sup>39</sup>Ursula Kirkendale, "The Source for Bach's *Musical Offering*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXIII (1980): 126-127, suggests that the canons with unspecified instrumentation were most likely intended for performance on one or two fortepianos. Her attendant claim that it would be possible "also to play easily [*sic*] from the original abbreviated notation... [Fn. 107:] Only for the four-part enigmatic canon [canon 10] would each player have to write out his two parts in score" strikes me as wildly implausible.

<sup>40</sup>This is the way Kollmann presented the series of canons (i.e., in the eighteenth century); see *An Essay*, Plates 35-39.

<sup>41</sup>Performance materials from Oley and C. P. E. Bach survive for canon 6. See Wolff, *NBA* VIII/1, *KB*, pp.76, 83.

<sup>42</sup>Blume, "J. S. Bach," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949-). Vol. 1: col. 994; quoted in Wolff, *NBA* VIII/1, *KB*, p.116.

pieces have turned out to work successfully in at least some concerts and recordings, it needs to be pointed out that for the *Musical Offering* canons there are clear performance indications in the print: canons 2 and 8 specify scorings; canons 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10 provide articulation markings; and canons 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 provide trill markings.<sup>43</sup>

Although others may wish to draw different conclusions from the various sorts of evidence presented here, I have suggested elsewhere that Bach's *Musical Offering*, in moving from particular genre to particular genre (*ricercar* — *sonata [da chiesa]* — canon), sends an increasingly intensified theological message.<sup>44</sup> It is my argument that in light of the strange language of the collection, its predominantly old-fashioned musical style, and its oftentimes almost funereal *Affect*, Bach's stated intention of glorifying Frederick the Great will appear incomprehensible if "glorification" is understood in the conventional manner. Bach's music seems to project rather different notions of glory. Far from elevating or shedding radiance and splendor on Frederick, the *Musical Offering* promotes (for Bach's dedicatee, his fellow German musicians, and for others as well) a Biblical understanding of "glory" — the idea of "glorification through abasement," something tied up with Luther's seeing the essence of true theology in the "theology of the cross" as opposed to the "theology of glory."

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<sup>43</sup>Wolff, *NBA VIII/1, KB*, p.118. Wolff goes on to show that the various contrapuntal lines in the canons with unspecified scorings correspond to normal eighteenth-century flute, violin, and keyboard ranges (pp.119-121).

<sup>44</sup>Marissen, "The Theological Character of J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering*," *Bach-Studies 2*, ed. Daniel Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).