

The Source for Bach's *Musical Offering*: The *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian

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THE EXTERNAL GENESIS of the *Musical Offering* is so familiar that only the briefest summary need be given here. From several early sources¹ we know that Bach, during his audience with Frederick the Great on May 7, 1747, improvised a three-part fugue on a theme given to him by the king (the so-called *thema regium*), much to the delight of all persons present. Bach scholars regard this fugue as the embryo of the *Musical Offering*, later notated as one of its two *ricercars*. The other *ricercar* of the completed work, in six parts, has also been associated with the Potsdam visit, for Bach had improvised a six-part fugue there as well, though on a theme of his own choosing. Soon after returning to Leipzig he must have begun work on what became a cycle of thirteen pieces—the two *ricercars*, a trio sonata, a canonic fugue, and nine canons—each based on a version of the *thema regium*. Within a few months he had completed his musical homage to the king, for a Leipzig newspaper announced on September 30 that it had just been published.²

The internal genesis and the state of the sources, on the other hand, are much more complicated. Here we are faced with one of “the most discussed and most difficult problems of Bach-philology,” as Christoph Wolff observed when he recently published a new edition in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*.³ Autograph manuscripts, except for the six-part *ricercar*, have not survived. We are thus almost entirely dependent upon the original edition, consisting of five printer’s units of bifolios and folios in differing formats. Since these were never all bound together, even such an essential question as the correct sequence of

¹ *Bach-Dokumente* (quoted hereafter as *Dok.*), ed. Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze (Kassel, 1963–72), II, pp. 434–5; III, pp. 666, 276. Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig, 1802), pp. 9–10. See also *Dok.* II, pp. 436–7, 454; I, pp. 241 ff., 117–18.

² *Dok.* III, p. 656 (see below, n. 18).

³ *J. S. Bach: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, Ser. VIII, Bd. 1: *Kanons, Musikalisches Opfer* (Kassel, 1974; hereafter NBA); *Kritischer Bericht* (Kassel, 1976; hereafter KB), p. 99.

movements has to this day remained without a convincing answer. To avoid further complications I shall retain Professor Wolff's letter designations for the printer's units,⁴ though I shall show that not his sequence, but that of Philipp Spitta and the old Bach-Gesellschaft edition is the correct one.⁵ (See Table 1.) The three nineteenth-century editions⁶ placed units A and B at the beginning, C at the end. Only for the intermediate units D and E was there disagreement. Spitta was the first to examine critically the original, if only the dedication copy and a few others. He followed A and B with the unit, D, which was appended to them in the dedication copy and elsewhere. According to his "instalment" theory, this complex ABD was sent to the king in July 1747. Since he regarded everything else as composed later but advocated no new position for C, only one place remained, between D and C, for unit E.

TABLE 1
PRINTER'S UNITS IN THE *Musical Offering*

Spitta and the Bach-Gesellschaft edition	Format of first edition	Wolff*
Title. Dedication. Ricercar a 3. Canon Perpetuus super Thema Regium.	Horizontal bifolio 3 horizontal folios	A } B } "Fasc. 1"
Five canons (numbered 1-5). Fuga Canonica. Ricercar a 6. Two enigmatic canons (a 2, a 4) (Engraver's signature.)	Vertical bifolio 4 horizontal folios	D } E } "Fasc. 3"
Trio Sonata. Canon Perpetuus.	(3 vertical parts:) bifolio cover and 3 bifolios	C "Fasc. 2"

* "New Research"; *KB*.

But Spitta had already characterized the *Musical Offering* as "not a finished unity" but a "curious conglomeration of pieces, lacking both outer typographical and inner musical coherence," from which "everyone copied for himself whatever and as much as he pleased, in

⁴ "New Research on Bach's *Musical Offering*," *The Musical Quarterly*, LVII (1971), pp. 382-3; *KB*, pp. 48-9. See also Wolff's facsimile of the original edition (Leipzig, 1977; hereafter Facs.), pp. 11-12, and my review, to be published in *Music & Letters*.

⁵ Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Leipzig, 1873-9), II, pp. 843-4. *Johann Sebastian Bach's Werke*, vol. XXXI, part 2, ed. Alfred Dörffel (Leipzig, 1885). This sequence was accepted also by Alfred Orel, "Johann Sebastian Bachs 'Musikalisches Opfer,'" *Die Musik*, XXX (1937), pp. 83-90, 165-71; Heinrich Husmann, "Die 'Kunst der Fuge' als Klavierwerk," *Bach-Jahrbuch*, XXXV (1937), pp. 53-60; Erich Schenk, "Das 'Musikalische Opfer' von Johann Sebastian Bach," *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Anzeiger*, XC (1953), pp. 51-66.

⁶ Breitkopf & Härtel, 1831 (ABEDC); Peters, 1867 (ABE²DE¹C); *Bach-Gesellschaft*, 1885 (ABDEC).

random arrangement."⁷ And since the 1920s, musicians have rearranged the order of the components according to their own notions, shifted pieces from one unit to another, disregarded also Bach's prescribed sequence of the five numbered canons, and in one case even inserted a canon between two movements of the sonata. Between 1831 and 1964 at least fourteen different "solutions" had been proposed by as many persons.⁸ Then, in a series of five publications between 1967 and 1976, Wolff alone presented some sixteen different arrangements, thereby increasing the grand total to well over two dozen.⁹

It is sufficient at this point to illustrate the "Neuordnungen" with just one of their criteria, that of "symmetry." At first sight it could appear convincing, and it has therefore found the most extensive application. David regarded it as the *summum bonum*, and was fascinated by an arrangement with the two ricercars at the beginning and end and the sonata in the middle, dividing the "ten" canons¹⁰ into two groups of five each, in spite of their very disparate lengths (4 to 78 mm.). Gerber, still more picturesquely, compared the sonata to the "richly adorned middle tract of a baroque palace" and arranged the canons in what he regarded as "mirror-like symmetry."¹¹ But all

⁷ II, p. 845. See Heinrich Husmann, "Die Form in Bachs Spätwerken," in *Bach-Gedenkschrift 1950* (Zürich, 1950), pp. 185-6: "not conceived as a unit," "senseless to look for a logical or artistic plan for the whole."

⁸ Hans Joachim Moser and Hermann Diener, "Bachs 'Musikalisches Opfer' und 'Kunst der Fuge'," *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Akademie für Kirchen- und Schulmusik Berlin*, II (1928/29), pp. 56-62; Hans Theodore David, *J. S. Bach's "Musical Offering"* (New York, 1945); Rudolf Gerber, "Sinn und Ordnung in Bachs 'Musikalischem Opfer,'" *Das Musikleben*, I (1948), pp. 65-72. To the ten arrangements tabulated by Wilhelm Pfannkuch, "J. S. Bachs 'Musikalisches Opfer': Bemerkungen zu den bisherigen Untersuchungen und Neuordnungsversuchen," *Die Musikforschung*, VII (1954), p. 445, may be added those of Breitkopf & Härtel 1831, Peters 1867, Pfannkuch himself (p. 453), and Joel Sheveloff, "Quaerendo invenietis," M.A. thesis, Brandeis University, 1964 (revised 1969), p. 17.

⁹ "Der Terminus 'Ricercar' in Bachs Musikalischem Opfer," *Bach-Jahrbuch*, LIII (1967), p. 72 (Spitta's correct sequence but untenable "instalment" theory, later rejected by Wolff); "Ordnungsprinzipien in den Originaldrucken Bachscher Werke," in *Bach-Interpretationen*, ed. Martin Geck (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 157-8 (3 versions); "New Research," p. 407; NBA, 1974; when the three different new arrangements of units D and E (*KB*, p. 125, nos. 1, 2, 4) are applied to his previous six for the work as a whole, about 16 possibilities emerge. Some of these are intended as a sequence of movements in performance, others merely as an arrangement of the original print or the new edition. It will be shown that such distinctions are unnecessary.

¹⁰ Actually, nine canons and the Fuga Canonica. Not only the unique title and length, but also Bach's [?] newspaper announcement (see below, n. 18), underline the independence of the fugue (*sic*: "canonica" is only an adjective). Since, as will be further shown, no grouping of 5 + 5 can any longer be upheld, we must reject also the assumption that Bach "symbolized" here the Ten Commandments—an assumption irrelevant to a secular work (Wolff, "New Research," p. 404; *KB*, p. 124).

¹¹ P. 68. Variants of this scheme were also provided by Pfannkuch, and Wolff,

acoustical systems, including musical, take their form and content from time, not place. Musical form, like that of a drama, sermon, or forensic speech, should therefore not be confused with optical categories.¹²

But Wolff also conducted extensive diplomatic studies. Could they perhaps remedy the subjective aesthetic speculation? His construction of three "fascicles" from the five printer's units, with the bifolios A and D serving as "covers" for B and E respectively (analogous to the first bifolio of C forming a cover for the rest of C), must be regarded as a bookbinder's nightmare, with (1) the title page (fol. 1^r of A) separated from the dedication (fol. 2^r, 2^v of A) by the insertion of B *before* the dedication; (2) a *vertical* bifolio D as a "cover" for the *horizontal* folios E; and (3) the Fuga Canonica (fol. 1^v-2^r of D) torn asunder by the insertion of E between fol. 1^v and 2^r of D.¹³ Wolff then interprets some conflicting evidence as "mutilation."¹⁴ From his investigation of the source he arrives at a negative judgment of the work as a whole, denying categorically that Bach himself conceived a cyclic order.¹⁵ "Considerations of printing technology" are given priority over any artistic purpose, the original position of the canons is explained by the availability of empty space, which might have been "wasted" if it were

"Ordnungsprinzipien," p. 158, by analogy to three other works of Bach, which, however, lack even an optical axis in the "middle." See Warren Kirkendale, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians on the Ricercar as Exordium, from Bembo to Bach," this JOURNAL, XXXII (1979), pp. 40-1.

¹² Cf. *Bach-Jahrbuch*, XXXVI (1939), p. 47. Even in the textbook example of "symmetrical" form, the da-capo aria, the two A sections are never mere satellites of the B section; on the contrary, the second A supplants B and confirms the supremacy of the main section at the end of the linear form.

¹³ See the diagrams, Wolff, "New Research," p. 395, and *KB*, pp. 48-9. If D served as cover for E, one might wonder why only seven extant copies have both units, while eight have only one of the two (*KB*, p. 96). Wolff must have realized that his "fascicle" structure could be used neither for binding nor for performance. According to my enquiries, none of the extant copies is bound in this manner. Only the units in horizontal format (A, B, E) are bound together (*KB*, p. 96); the fold along the top of A is, of course, cut open. Unit C could not be bound, but for a valid reason: it consisted of separate parts for three instruments. The unconventional pagination of its bifolios (4-1-2-3) was to allow 2 double pages of continuous music, separated by a single turn of the page. Pp. 2 and 4 therefore end with a completed movement, while music from pp. 1 to 2 and from pp. 3 to 4 is continuous.

¹⁴ "New Research," p. 390: in all but one copy, bifolio A was cut open, "thus destroying the original layout," and in some copies bifolio D "suffered the same mutilation."

¹⁵ "Ordnungsprinzipien," p. 160; "New Research," pp. 403-4, 407; *KB*, pp. 121-2, 125; Facs., p. 13. But at the same time he continues the aesthetic-speculative constructions which characterized the earlier subjective literature ("Ordnungsprinzipien," pp. 158-9; *KB*, p. 124).

not filled out with these shorter pieces.¹⁶ His edition then presents "a systematic sequence of movements . . . [which] implies no cyclic order of the work,"¹⁷ a sequence corresponding to a contemporary newspaper advertisement which merely summarized the components for brevity's sake and was never intended as a table of contents.¹⁸

But is it not more likely that a mature work of J. S. Bach, dedicated to a king and consisting of such carefully contrived components as the elaborate canons of the *Musical Offering*, would have been conceived also as a sophisticated and meaningful sequence? My study, unlike the previous ones, accepts the premise that the original edition presented the various movements in the order intended by the composer. Though this edition seems to have been produced hastily, Bach, after all, supervised it himself and made sure that errors were corrected by hand after printing. We see no justification for altering the position of pieces within the printer's units. Since units A and B obviously belong at the beginning and, as will be shown below, E and C must be in fourth and fifth position, respectively, D falls into place after AB: ABDEC.

The foregoing survey has revealed that even a thorough description of the source does not bring us very far toward a solution of the problems. Could this not suggest that we today sometimes adopt a too narrow conception of a composition's "source," limiting it to paper and ink,¹⁹ excluding any *thought* which may have been a source of inspiration for the work and thus might throw light on the composer's intentions? Is there not a danger that by capitulating to diplomatic method we may allow the mere means to become an end in itself, and the natural priority of mind over matter to be upset? In this article I

¹⁶ "Ordnungsprinzipien," p. 160; "New Research," pp. 407-8; *KB*, p. 106; Facs., p. 12. The notion is derived from David, pp. 93-4, where the wish that the "Neuorderer" could discover the optimal arrangement was father to the thought. Wolff is led by his "cover-fascicle" theory to assume that no canons were placed on the last page of D because music there might become soiled; but he does assign the dedication to such an exposed position, at the back of another "cover" (A).

¹⁷ *KB*, p. 45. Once the composer has been denied intentions, conception, and disposition, it is difficult to understand how "the NBA utilizes a maximum of the original intentions with regard to conception and disposition of the work" (*KB*, p. 126).

¹⁸ *Extract der eingelauffenen Nouvelles*, XXXIX (Leipzig, September 30, 1747), p. 156: "Die *Elaboration* bestehet 1.) in zweyen Fugen, eine mit 3, die andere mit 6 obligaten Stimmen; 2.) in einer *Sonata, a Traversa, Violino e Continuo*; 3.) in verschiedenen *Canonibus*, wobey eine *Fuga canonica* befindlich" (*Dok.*, III, p. 656; facsimile in *KB*, p. 46.)

¹⁹ Wolff designates his diplomatic investigations as an "autopsy" (Facs., p. 11). While I by no means deny the importance of diplomatic studies, I regard them as preliminary.

shall show concretely that the prime source of the *Musical Offering* lay in classical antiquity.²⁰

As is well known, Bach in his life's work never used the archaic designation "ricercar" except for the two pieces in the *Musical Offering*. Throughout the age of humanism, a large number of literary sources compare and indeed identify a specific section of the orator's speech, the exordium (proem) or introduction, with an equally specific part of a musical performance, the preludial ricercar.²¹ All of these can be traced back to a passage in the third book of Aristotle's *Ars rhetorica*, where the proem is compared to the freely improvised proaulion or prelude (translated invariably as "ricercar" by the sixteenth-century Italian humanists), consisting of whatever the performer can execute skillfully, and not connected with what follows. But even more influential in humanistic rhetoric was Cicero's reaction to this passage, demanding coherence with the rest of the speech, dignity and gravity rather than external brilliance. For he distinguished two types of exordia: one, the *principium*, is direct, plain, like an improvisation; the other, the *insinuatio* or "subtle approach," steals upon the listener's mind unobtrusively, by indirection, with all the resources of the orator's art, and is used to captivate a hostile audience.²² The all-powerful sixteenth-century movement of Ciceronianism did not remain without effect on music, especially in Venice, where major composers formed their preludial pieces according to Cicero's twofold distinction. Music theorists such as Dressler, Burmeister, Herbst, or Kircher also apply Cicero's categories, sometimes his very words, when they write about the musical "exordia." The dichotomy between the contradictory styles of the free and the ingeniously contrapuntal ricercar, which has hitherto eluded explanation in purely musical terms and now emerges as a rhetorical phenomenon, finds a late exemplification in the *Musical Offering*; for Bach here provides one essay in each of the two types. Their use and position in his work can be explained only by the theory and practice of dual exordia in classi-

²⁰ Some of the methods employed here were developed in my *Antonio Caldara: Sein Leben und seine venezianisch-römischen Oratorien* (Graz and Cologne, 1966). They are based on the fact that music, instrumental as well as vocal, was not an abstract pattern of sounds, but possessed content and conveyed meaning. Once the text has provided the clue for our understanding of musical formulations in the vocal repertoire, the same formulations can easily be recognized when they occur in instrumental music, with the same or similar meaning (e.g. Exx. 6 and 5 below).

²¹ Documentation for this and the following remarks on the ricercar is given in W. Kirkendale, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians." My article is, in many respects, a continuation of that study.

²² *De inventione*, I.xv-xviii.

cal rhetoric: the *principium* (here the three-part *ricercar*) occurs at the very beginning, the *insinuatio* (the six-part *ricercar*) marks the beginning of a major internal division, corresponding to the exordia which introduce the two main sections of the oration, the *narratio* and the *argumentatio*.²³ Since the *ricercar* was still understood both as an initial and internal prelude in the baroque era,²⁴ contemporary musicians would have realized that each of Bach's *ricercars* (in units B and E) would have to be followed by another unit of music, and that unit E therefore must have been the fourth one: ABDEC.²⁵

But music theorists from Gallus Dressler (1559/60) to Mattheson (1739) did not stop with comparing the opening of a musical performance with the exordium; they wanted the entire composition to correspond to an oration.²⁶ Mattheson even applies to the "Klang-Rede" all the divisions of classical rhetoric: *exordium*, *narratio*, *propositio*, *confirmatio*, *confutatio*, and *peroratio*. His use of the words *confirmatio* (proof) and *confutatio* (refutation) rather than *probatio* and *refutatio* for the two sections of the *argumentatio*²⁷ derives from the pseudo-Cicero-

²³ Multiple exordia were common in German baroque rhetoric, but adversely criticized by Gottsched and others—see Ursula Stötzer, *Deutsche Redekunst im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1962), pp. 152–3. Bach also employs internal exordia in the Goldberg Variations (var. 16 = "Ouvverture"), in the partitas of the *Klavierübung* I (bww 828, "Ouvverture"), and in the *Klavierübung* III (bww 681 = fughetta in French rhythm).

²⁴ Cf. W. Kirkendale, pp. 7–10, 42–4, *et passim*.

²⁵ The only other possibility, ABCED, will be eliminated below. An argument advanced for placing E at the end is that it concludes with the signature of the engraver Johann Georg Schübler (Wolff, "New Research," p. 407, and *KB*, p. 49, where it is incorrectly stated that the "fascicle" DED concludes with the signature, rather than with the Fuga Canonica). However, E cannot form the end of the *Musical Offering*, not only because it contains a prelude, but also because its last piece, the four-part enigmatic canon in G minor, is the only piece in a key other than C minor. Its key, chosen for notational reasons (see David, pp. 176–7), is not "an infallible sign that Bach cherished no cyclic intentions" (*KB*, p. 122) but, rather, it disqualifies this canon, and unit E, as the conclusion of an otherwise tonally unified cycle. Schübler placed his signature here probably because it was the last page of the horizontal units with score notation, subsequently bound together. Unit C, in vertical format, was not suitable for this purpose, since it consisted of separate parts for flute, violin, and continuo. Schübler would have been faced here with the uncomfortable alternative of having to sign his name either three times—which modesty or even the composer might have prevented—or else on only one third of the whole. Thus the name of the engraver does not mark the end of the work, but unit C can fulfil this function. Forkel, p. 52, realized this ("Endlich ist . . . ein Trio . . . beygefügt"), though he reversed the position of units D and E.

²⁶ See Hans-Heinrich Unger, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg, 1941), pp. 46–62, chap. IIIb, "Die musikalische Dispositio und Elaboratio."

²⁷ Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), reverses their positions in his discussion on p. 236, after listing them correctly on p. 235.

nian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*,²⁸ which, together with Cicero's *De inventione*, had been the standard rhetorical textbook ever since the Middle Ages. On the other hand, his inclusion of the *propositio*, which was generally regarded not as a separate section but as part of the *probatio*, is indebted to Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.²⁹ It is to this latter work that Bach owes his concept of the *Musical Offering*.

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus was born in Spain, taught rhetoric in Rome, and died about 96 A.D. His only extant work, the *Institutio oratoria* (c. 92-5 A.D.),³⁰ largely an enthusiastic elaboration of Cicero's teachings, is the most extensive ancient treatise on rhetoric. It comprises all aspects of literature (composition, style, criticism, poetics), also philosophy, pedagogy, etc., so that Ernst Robert Curtius could compare it with Castiglione's *Cortegiano* as a handbook for the education of an ideal gentleman.³¹ It had an immense influence in the Renaissance and Baroque, and went through a very large number of editions after its first printing in Rome, 1468 (over a hundred in the sixteenth century alone). As the model for his detailed discussion of the sections of the oration in his books IV, V, and VI, Quintilian chose the forensic speech. The other two rhetorical genera, the epideictic and the deliberative, he treats only briefly, in book III. Humanist orators, who had little occasion to practice any rhetorical genus other than the epideictic, took their topics and persons from this genus, but followed more or less the forensic model in constructing the speech. Bach does the same. His imitation of Quintilian is not limited to vague or chance elements; it is very concrete and systematic, extending even to smallest details.³² And, most astonishing, it is per-

Jacobus Kloppers, in his otherwise useful dissertation, *Die Interpretation und Wiedergabe der Orgelwerke Bachs* (Frankfurt, 1966), bases some of his conclusions on this error (pp. 63, 68, 74, 77, 84-90).

²⁸ I.iii.4.

²⁹ III.ix.1.

³⁰ An introduction to Quintilian is given by George A. Kennedy, *Quintilian* (New York, 1969). Claude Palisca finds that "there is hardly an author on music in the last half of the sixteenth century who does not dip into Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*"—"*Ut oratoria musica: The Rhetorical Basis of Musical Mannerism*," in *The Meaning of Mannerism*, ed. F. W. Robinson and S. G. Nichols (Hanover, N.H., 1972), p. 39. The translations from Quintilian in my article are literal, by Warren Kirkendale, based on the Latin text of the Loeb edition (London, 1933-6). For the edition undoubtedly used by Bach, see below, pp. 132-3.

³¹ *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948), p. 436. Martin Luther esteemed and recommended Quintilian very highly (*Briefe*, 1. Theil (Berlin, 1825), p. 385, letter of 1519).

³² One could rightly object that Quintilian's divisions of the oration were taught also by Cicero and other earlier rhetoricians. However, none of these provides the wealth of details corresponding so closely to Bach's work.

fectly integrated with his homage to the king's person. The enigma of the work is thus discovered: the various pieces represent the successive sections of an oration. Bach writes no fewer and no more than those described by Quintilian, and in the proper order. I shall now comment on them, always confronting the music with the relevant passages in Quintilian's text.

EXORDIUM I (PRINCIPIUM) = RICERCAR [A 3]

The opening piece is a fugue with extended, quasi-improvisatory episodes which altogether are about twice as long as the fugal sections. Wolff rightly relates this to one of the two types of ricercar described by Bach's friend and cousin Johann Gottfried Walther:³³ "eine *Praeludien-* oder *Fantasie-*Art. . . . Solches geschehe *ordinairement ex tempore* und ohne *praeparation*, und erfordere folglich einen starcken *habitus*."³⁴ These words, however, which merely translate Brossard,³⁵ are ultimately derived from Quintilian's description of an exordium which creates the effect of an "extemporalis oratio" because it has "nihil praeparati," yet "summae artis est" (IV.i.54, 57; see full quotation below).

The function of both types of exordium, as formulated by Cicero and repeated in virtually all later treatises on rhetoric, was to make the listener "benevolum, attentum, docilem" (Quintilian IV.i.5, from Cicero, *De inventione*, I.xv.20). With a fugue, traditionally exemplifying the "learned style,"³⁶ Bach fittingly expresses the idea of "instruction" contained in "docilis" (from *docere*). Quintilian advises, moreover, that in the exordium the orator should arouse the impression that he has "undertaken the case out of duty to kinship or friendship, or especially . . . to the state, or at least to some significant consideration" (IV.i.7). Bach, of course, took his subject dutifully from the head of state.

But the "instruction" must not be overdone: "We shall also find it useful for rousing the attention of the listeners if they discern that we shall not dawdle" (*nos necque diu moraturos. . . . Docilem . . . ; sed . . . breviter*—IV.i.34). "We shall derive some silent support if we say we

³³ "Der Terminus 'Ricercar'," p. 79.

³⁴ *Musicalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1732), p. 526.

³⁵ Sebastien de Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1703), s.v. "ricercar": "un'espece de prelude ou de fantaisie . . . ordinairement sur le champs & sans preparation, et par consequent cela demande beaucoup d'habilité."

³⁶ E.g., for a "philosopher" in an oratorio of Caldara (1708—cf. my *Antonio Caldara*, p. 258), or still for "Wissenschaft" in Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*. See also W. Kirkendale, p. 36.

are weak, unprepared, and no match for the talents of our opponents. . . . For there is a natural partiality to the underdog. . . . Hence the pretence of the ancients of concealing their eloquence" (IV.i.8-9). Bach, too, acts as if he were totally unprepared, still improvising in Potsdam. An exordium "also acquires conviction from the appearance of simple speech taken from common usage, so that, even if the rest has been written out and elaborated, the whole oration will generally appear improvised (*videatur tota extemporale oratio*), when its beginning clearly has no signs of preparation (*nihil praeparati*). . . . One must take care to avoid any display in the exordium, since any art of the speaker seems to be directed at the judge. But to avoid that itself requires consummate art" (*summae artis est*—IV.i.54-7). Here, too, Bach fulfills the requirements of the *principium*, adhering throughout the three-part *ricercar* to "simple speech" and "common usage," the Ovidian "*ars est celare artem*" as understood by Quintilian. Simple eighth notes, mostly in conjunct motion, pervade the entire piece, passing smoothly from one voice to another.

But what about the details? Spitta was at a loss to explain what he called the "strange episodes."³⁷ The first of these short passages interpolates triplet eighth notes, measures 38-41, 46-7, 87-90, 95-6, 124, 127-8 (Ex. 1). Quintilian admits, somewhat ruefully, that nowadays "the judges themselves demand rousing and careful speeches . . . and want not only to be instructed, but also to be charmed (*delectari*). It is difficult [to find] the happy mean here which can be so tempered that we seem to speak carefully but not cunningly" (IV.i.57-8). Since Bach's dedicatee was a judge of music, it is not surprising that the composer finds the "happy mean": here, as always in Bach's vocal music, the interpolation of triplet passages, usually rising, in a context of binary eighth notes, expresses joy³⁸ and produces pleasure.

Example 1

Bach, *Musical Offering*, *Ricercar a 3*, mm. 38-9



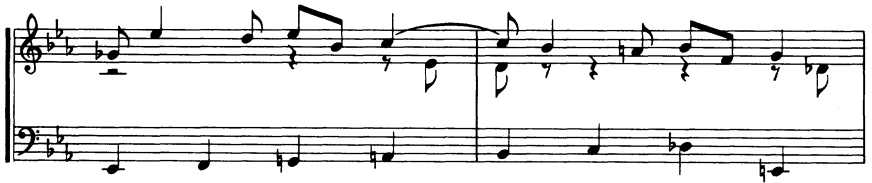
³⁷ Spitta, II, p. 673.


³⁸ E.g., the triplets in *BWV 30a/3*, "Willkommen im Heil, willkommen in Freuden"; *BWV 36/1*, "Schwingt freudig euch empor" (instruments); *BWV 36/5*, "Willkommen, werter Schatz" (instruments); *BWV 83/3*, "Eile, Herz, voll Freudigkeit"; *BWV*

Second, the triplet rhythm leads directly into alternating *alla zoppa* and Pyrrhichius rhythm, measures 42-5, 91-5 (Ex. 2): the

Example 2

Ricercar a 3, mm. 42-3



rhythm of each of these measures is perceived by the ear clearly as  notwithstanding Bach's use of complementary rhythm in adjacent parts to create the effect of a succession of eighth notes in the second half of each measure. Music theorists of Bach's time testify that the *alla zoppa* rhythm was then in high fashion,³⁹ and Spiess remarks, only two years before the *Musical Offering*, that it has an eager and driving effect ("was eifriges und treibendes an sich"). The Pyrrhichius, the warlike foot of ancient poetry, had been used by Monteverdi for the *stile concitato*;⁴⁰ in the heroic arias of Venetian opera and oratorio⁴¹ this rhythm, consisting solely of short notes, was much favored, "for the circumstances of war leave no place for inaction, either in fleeing or in pursuing the enemy."⁴² Again Bach is listening to Quintilian's words on the exordium, those saying that the mind of the judge "must be stirred (*agitandus est*) by hope, fear, admonition, entreaty" (IV.i.33). These measures could be understood also in the light of the dedication, which alludes to Frederick's knowledge of both military science and music, "whose greatness and strength, as in all the sciences of war and peace, so especially in music, everyone must admire and revere."⁴³

Third, the traditional "sighs," measures 107-18 (Ex. 3), which combine all means for expressing profound sorrow, pain: suspensions,

94/6, "Die Welt kann ihre Lust und Freud". Arias expressing joy in triple time are too numerous to require mention.

³⁹ Mattheson, p. 168; Meinrad Spiess, *Tractatus musicus compositorio-practicus* (Augsburg, 1745), p. 164; Franz Xaver Richter, "Harmonische Belehrungen," Brussels Bibliothèque royale, MS II.6292, pp. 189-90.

⁴⁰ Preface to *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (Venice, 1638).

⁴¹ U. Kirkendale, *Caldara*, pp. 311-12.

⁴² Mattheson, pp. 164-5. See also Spiess, p. 164: "tauglich zu flüchtigen und Kriegs-Wesen."

⁴³ "dessen Grösse und Stärke, gleich wie in allen Kriegs- und Friedens-Wissenschaften, also auch besonders in der Musik, jedermann bewundern und verehren muss."

Example 3

Ricercar a 3, mm. 107-11

Example 4

Ricercar a 3, mm. 117-21

rests on the downbeat (*suspiratio*, *tmeses*), stepwise, often chromatic descent—the latter, of course, already present in the second half of the *thema regium*, but not yet formulated with the pathos motives as a sigh. Here Bach applies the entire arsenal, even achieving a bold chromatic descent in parallel minor sixths (mm. 117-18). “For pity (*miseratio*) alone moves even an honest judge. However, it should be only tasted in the exordium, not worn out. The person of our opponent is usually attacked by nearly these same means, but inverted” (*e contrario ductis*—IV.i.14). Bach portrays the adversary relationship not only by using again the Pyrrhic rhythm, but also by opposing chromatic descent with chromatic ascent, i.e., “inverted” (mm. 115-23; Ex. 4).⁴⁴ “It is

⁴⁴ Cf. W. Kirkendale, pp. 31 and 38, on the relationship of melodic inversion to rhetoric.

useful to give the impression that, just as our fate will be deserving of pity if we lose, . . . our adversaries will be arrogant if they win" (IV.i.29). The rising chromatic line, expressing this insolence, collides with the falling one in a veritable Pyrrhic *combattimento*, until it finally succumbs, yielding to the "joy" of the returning triplets.

Once again, let us hear Quintilian on the exordium. His counsel to create the impression "that we shall not delay long" now explains one of the most puzzling features of the piece: the brevity of the passages for "docere," "delectare," and "movere" (*agitare, suspirare*). "We give briefly and lucidly a summary of the case . . ., which Homer and Virgil do at the beginning of their works" (IV.i.34). Bach has done just this, given a brief summary of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic devices all of which we shall find elaborated later, in the trio sonata.⁴⁵

NARRATIO BREVIS = CANON PERPETUUS SUPER THEMA REGIUM

Quintilian implied that the *narratio* or statement of facts—the section of the oration which follows the exordium—is either *brevis* or *longa* (IV.ii.40, 47), and that in some cases the two types might be used in succession, resulting in a *repetita narratio*: "There is a certain repeated *narratio* . . ., albeit belonging more to declamation than to forensic oratory, but invented (since the *narratio* should be brief) to enable the facts to be set forth at greater length and with more ornament" (IV.ii.128). Hence a modern author who has surveyed the entire field of rhetoric explains that "the requirements of brevity on the one hand and of ornament on the other led . . . to two styles of *narratio*, whereby the first *narratio* takes *brevitas* into consideration . . ., while the *repetita narratio* is more detailed and also brings the affects . . . into play."⁴⁶ We shall see that the Canon Perpetuus is a *narratio brevis*, while the five numbered canons which follow it are a *repetita narratio*.

First the Canon Perpetuus. Here the *thema regium*, in diminution, is placed between the two other voices, which form with each other a two-part perpetual canon at the lower double octave and at the distance of one measure. With the exception of the second of the five *canones diversi* (at the unison), this piece has the most literal imitation among the *narratio* canons; and except for the third, which likewise employs the *thema regium* in diminution, it is also the shortest (5 measures). The first half of the *thema regium* is separated from its contin-

⁴⁵ Spitta already noticed that the "strange episodes" discussed above return in the sonata (II, pp. 673, 676).

⁴⁶ Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich, 1960), I, p. 176.

uation by rests, which gives it the effect of a heading, like the *Dei* or motto in baroque arias. In measures 4–5 the theme becomes rhythmically very complex. The canonic voices pay tribute in their first measure to the royal theme with dotted rhythm descending stepwise. It is the “king”-topos, which Lully cultivated especially in his overtures as homage to the Sun King and which was imitated throughout Europe, particularly in Germany and England, not only in instrumental, but also in vocal music (by Bach of course in both repertoires), whenever the text speaks of royalty.⁴⁷ The second measure moves entirely in running sixteenth notes, the third and fourth introduce still another rhythm, in interpolated (not notated) $3/4$ time, and the fifth finally holds back the motion with the longest note in the canon ($2\frac{1}{2}$ beats). Thus rhythm, measure,⁴⁸ and harmonic rhythm are varied throughout.

“The *narratio* will be brief, . . . we must be content with giving the conclusions from which the rest can be understood.” But “our brevity must not be without elegance” (IV.ii.40, 41, 46). “The syntax should be unobtrusive, yet as attractive as possible; the figures must be neither poetical nor contrary to the usage of speech, even if retained by authority of antiquity (for our language must be as pure as possible), but should avoid tedium with variety and lift the spirit with alterations; nor should we cut up [the speech] into equal sections (*paes* . . . *tractus*) delivered with the same terminations and similar syntax” (IV.ii.117–18). “The more dignified and serious (*gravius ac sanctius*) [our style], the more weight it will lend . . . to our assertions” (IV.ii.125). From the “brevity” to the “elegance”, from the “dignified and serious style” (“king”-topos) to the rhythmic variety and unequal sections—all of this is realized in the Canon Perpetuus.

Characteristic of the *narratio* is *oratio perpetua*,⁴⁹ which, like Bach's infinite canon proceeds straight ahead, without an end in sight.⁵⁰ When Quintilian comes to deal with this in a later book, he finds that he can do no better than to bring an extensive quotation from Cicero: “In the *oratio perpetua* . . . there is often a rapid summary (*percursio*), suggesting more than you said, there is distinctly concise brevity and extenuation; and to this irony (*illusio*) is added” (Quintilian

⁴⁷ U. Kirkendale, “The King of Heaven and the King of France: History of a Musical Topos,” *Abstracts of Papers Read at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society* (Saint Louis, 1969), pp. 27–8 (full publication in preparation, with many examples, depicting “rex”).

⁴⁸ The metrical structure could be indicated as: $2 \times 4/4$, $2 \times 3/4$, $1 \times 2/4$, $1 \times 4/4$.

⁴⁹ Uninterrupted speech, as opposed to dialogue and dialectic debate; see Quintilian, II.xx.7, and below, n. 134, “perpetuo commentario.”

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica*, III.ix.2; Lausberg, I, p. 457.

IX.i.26 ff., from Cicero, *De oratore*, III. l.iii.201–liii.202). Cicero excelled in the use of such *percursiones* in the *narratio brevis*. They present a condensation of events, which touches briefly the most important points, like “headings of omitted chapters; essential for this figure is that much more could be said about each of these themes, but this is relinquished.”⁵¹ Bach consciously applies the *percursio* to the music, for just as the orator fills out the “headings of omitted chapters” in the *repetita narratio*, so Bach fully elaborates the characteristic features of the Canon Perpetuus later in the “Elaborationes Canonicae,” the five *canones diversi*. The French rhythm, used here in only one measure, will pervade the entire fourth canon; the running sixteenth notes, likewise in only one measure, will dominate the first canon (the doubling of note values of both the *thema regium* and the canonic parts is only visual, since the time signature is changed from C to C♯); the dactylic (♩♩♩) rhythms will return in the second half of the fifth canon; and the strict, literal imitation of the first canonic voice by the second (here at the double octave) will be used again for the second canon (there at the unison). Also the *thema regium* contributes rhythms to the canons of the *narratio longa*: its diminution form is taken over by the third canon, its paeon-rhythms in measures 4 and 5 contribute to the grand style of canons 4 and 5.

NARRATIO LONGA (REPETITA NARRATIO) =
THEMATIS REGII ELABORATIONES CANONICAE:
[5] CANONES DIVERSI SUPER THEMA REGIUM

The famous acrostic “**R**egis **I**ussu **C**antio **E**t **R**eliqua **C**anonica **A**rte **R**esoluta” was not included in the original printing phase of the *Musical Offering*, but added to it afterwards, in two ways: (1) in the dedication copy it is written by hand in large, calligraphic letters on fol. 1^r of unit B,⁵² i.e., directly before the three-part *ricercar*; (2) in the other copies it is printed on a strip of paper and pasted on fol. 1^r of unit D, preceding the *canones diversi*.⁵³ There can be little doubt that

⁵¹ Lausberg, I, p. 435.

⁵² Contrary to *KB*, p. 59, where the position of the two facsimiles is reversed—an error which, if undetected, could have had no little consequence for our conclusions.

⁵³ Whether or not one regards the acrostic as an afterthought (as Wolff did in “Terminus,” p. 77, and “Ordnungsprinzipien,” p. 159, but not in “New Research,” p. 394, and *KB*, p. 47), and whether or not one accepts the technological explanations in the latter two publications—these considerations do not affect our conclusions on the position and function of the acrostic. Wolff explains the position of the acrostic in the dedication copy by his “fascicle” theory (“New Research,” p. 395; *KB*, p. 60). But the caption is as suitable for “D plus E” as for “D covering E.”

the second arrangement represents Bach's definitive intention, since the dedication copy would be the first one released, and in any case the acrostic refers to the canons of unit D ("reliqua"). But why did Bach decide to place an acrostic here?

Whenever we have employed the exordium, whether we intend to proceed to the *narratio* or directly to the *probatio* [i.e., the first section of the *argumentatio*], it must end with something which can be easily joined to the beginning of the next section. In the schools there is indeed a frigid and childish affectation that the transition (*transitus*) itself at least forms some epigram (*sententiam*) as if one seeks approbation for this trick. Ovid often plays with this in his *Metamorphoses*, which, however, can be excused by the necessity of uniting the most heterogeneous elements (*res diversissimas*) to a sort of single body (IV.i.77).

Although Quintilian does not recommend the insertion of an epigram in forensic orations, he allows the possibility in cases, like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where diverse elements must be given unity. Bach thus follows the example of Ovid (via Quintilian) and places his epigram between the three-part *ricercar* (exordium) and the "canones diversi[ssimi]" (*narratio longa*). The acrostic recalls the former, by spelling out the word "ricercar," and anticipates the latter ("reliqua canonica arte resoluta"), thus forming the necessary *transitus*. The presence of the Canon Perpetuus between the three-part *ricercar* and the acrostic does not speak against this interpretation, for it will be remembered that the *narratio brevis* was also an alternative to the *narratio longa*. Bach was therefore quite justified in placing the acrostic before his *narratio* proper, as a heading for the new printer's unit containing even more "heterogeneous elements" than the single Canon Perpetuus. Only here are these elements fully elaborated, in keeping with the technique of the *narratio longa*. For this reason Bach had added to fol. 1^r of unit D in the dedication copy (i.e., where the printed acrostic appears in the other copies) the handwritten heading "Thematis Regii Elaborationes Canonicae." The term *elaboratio* is, of course, also taken from rhetoric.

Speaking of the normal, more detailed *narratio*, Quintilian says, "Division (*partitio*) relieves tedium" (IV.ii.49), then he proceeds to deal with five qualities (*virtutes*) of the *narratio longa*. Bach divides his *repetita narratio* into five canons which, as we shall see, correspond precisely to these five forensic qualities: naturalness, mimicry, simplicity, magnificence, and palpability. These are the only components of the *Musical Offering* which are numbered. We shall examine them separately, first for their style, then for their content.

A. Style (The Five Forensic Qualities)

1. *Canon a 2 [cancrizans]*

Like most crab canons, this one is for two voices, one reading the part forwards, the other starting at the end and reading it backwards. The first half combines the *thema regium* with a counterpoint in running eighth notes, the second presents this material in retrograde motion with the roles of the voices exchanged. As the first quality of the *narratio longa* Quintilian advises that "we say nothing contrary to nature" (*ne quid naturae dicamus adversum*—IV.ii.52).⁵⁴ Bach fulfills this brilliantly, for the crab is one of the very few *natural* phenomena which has a terminological and technical equivalent in music. That it walked backward was believed⁵⁵ to be part of its nature. The composer need "say nothing" which is "contrary" to this. All of the other *canones diversi* say more, by adding a second staff. (Those who are acquainted with Frederick's private life may find the words "contrary to nature" relevant.)⁵⁶

2. *Canon a 2 violini in unisono*

The two violins form a two-part canon at the unison at the distance of one measure over the *thema regium* [basso continuo]. The slow harmonic rhythm in C (rather than C♯) and the nonsequential transposition of short motives give this canon a modern, galant character. It is a typical three-part "duetto," as described by Mattheson:

[composed of] questions and . . . answers. . . . Steffani was incomparable at this. I myself have sung pieces of his in this style on the stage. . . . The two

⁵⁴ E.g. one should not use the figure of adynaton, illustrated by Curtius, pp. 102–6 ("verkehrte Welt").

⁵⁵ Not only by composers or astronomers, but in general. Nowadays zoologists will tell us that it walks sideways.

⁵⁶ Crab imagery is, of course, not limited to music. Some ancient coins combined on their two sides a crab and a sovereign: see below, n. 72. In astronomy and astrology cancer (♋) marks the solstice, the time of year (June 21) when the length of the days begins to move backward, becoming shorter. This is depicted musically in Gregor Joseph Werner's *Neuer und sehr curios-Musicalischer Instrumental-Kalender, Partbien-weiß mit 2 Violinen und Baso o Cembalo in die zwölf Jahrs-Monat eingetheilet* (Augsburg, 1748), where the length of the two sections of the [non-canonic] menuets is in proportion to the length of the days and nights. Baroque authors employed the *cancrizans* idea for emblems ("Simul retroque," "Orbis iter," etc.), poems (e.g. as an encomium which, read backwards, produced a libel), or retrograde "concerti" (such as a river flowing toward its source)—see Alfred Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemata* (Stuttgart, 1967), cols. 722–9; Giovanni da Locarno, *Saggio sullo stile dell'oratoria sacra nel seicento* (Rome, 1954), p. 172; Théophile de Viau, quoted in Curtius, p. 105. All such usages convey a positive and/or negative idea; also Bach does this, as will be seen.

vocal parts don't pay the least attention to the bass. Hence this genre bears the name of "duet," even though a three-part harmony is present: precisely as if the bass, because it is only played on an instrument, were there only as a number. . . . At some places it even makes a tenuta, sustains a note for some time and waits as it were for the voices, until they have leisurely untangled themselves.⁵⁷

In Bach's "duet" there is a characteristic question-and-answer play: the first three phrases "ask," ending with a rise by step to the second or fifth degree of the scale on a long note; the fourth phrase "answers." The two voices are replaced by violins. The exceptional employment of these instruments, rather than the keyboard, is doubtless determined not only by the "duet" genre, but also by the theatrical style of this piece. The rhythmic mobility and the large melodic leaps could be attributed partly to the violinistic idiom. The *thema regium* is not only placed in the lowest voice, it is also completely unadorned. The player need only sustain the minims (which make up most of the theme) and the two tied notes: "Here the bass should only proceed quite simply, yet nobly, and for the most part subordinate itself to the upper parts, as a companion and escort."⁵⁸

For this second canon Bach again took his cue from Quintilian's discussion of the *narratio longa*: "Secondly (*deinde*), . . . we make the roles agree with the facts we desire to be believed, . . . [and give] a certain air of credibility, as in comedies and pantomimes (*in comoediis etiam in mimis*). For some things follow naturally and are coherent, so that, if only your preceding remarks are made well, the judge himself will be eager to hear what you have to say next" (IV.ii.52-3). Thus, in keeping with Quintilian's second quality, Bach composes his "duet" in theatrical style, a pantomime in which, as will be shown, the violins represent persons.

The "comedies and pantomimes" account also for the particular genus used here by Bach, for comedy employed *ethos* (i.e., "gentle and calm" emotions, as opposed to *pathos*) and the *genus medium* (VI.ii.9, 19-20), the genus most suitable for fulfilling the rhetorical function of *delectare* (XII.x.59). Compared to the plain style (*genus subtile*), the *genus medium* "will have more frequent metaphors and more pleasant figures, . . . appropriate arrangement of words (*compositio*), and sweet phrases" (XII.x.60). Bach's canon indeed employs a wealth of figures: *mimesis* (strict imitation), *subjectio*⁵⁹ (question-answer), *catabasis* (long

⁵⁷ Pp. 348-51.

⁵⁸ Mattheson, p. 348.

⁵⁹ See Quintilian, V.xi.5, and Lausberg, I, p. 381.

descent, violin, m. 1), *circulus* (sine curve, mm. 6–7), and so on, each with a specific meaning to be explained below. And since *ethos* is “not only gentle and calm, but for the most part ingratiating and humane” (VI.ii. 13), this canon has more ingratiating music than any of the others.

3. *Canon a 2 per motum contrarium*

This piece uses only the upper ranges (soprano, alto, alto), presenting the unornamented, diminished version of the *thema regium* (quarter notes in C) in the upper voice, and below it a two-part canon by inversion at the distance of half a measure, moving simply in eighth and sixteenth notes, largely alternating in complementary rhythm. Quintilian’s third quality is “simplicitatis imitatio,” the illusion of simplicity, concealment of art:


The best kind of preparatory remarks will be those which are concealed. . . . [Cicero’s] most effective device is his very cunning feint of simplicity: “Milo, however, having been in the senate that day until it adjourned, went home, changed his shoes and clothes, and waited a short time, while his wife was getting ready, as happens.” How Milo’s action appears without haste or premeditation! The most eloquent man attains this not merely with the facts themselves, with which he depicts the delay and slow departure, but also with ordinary, everyday speech, concealing the art. . . . That sort of thing appears dull to most people, but by just this it is shown how he deceives the judge because he is scarcely detected [even] by a reader. It is these things which make the *narratio* credible (IV.ii. 57 ff., with quotation from Cicero, *Pro Milone*, X.28).

Bach conceals his art by writing this canon by contrary motion, so that the listener does not readily perceive the canonic imitation. And he again gives us a musical model of one of the three *genera dicendi*, now the *genus subtile* or plain style (not “subtle style”).⁶⁰ He characterizes it not only by simplicity, but also by “smallness”: the *thema regium* in diminution, the narrow combined range of the voices. The use of exclusively high ranges may represent also *acumen* (“peak,” hence “keenness”), which Quintilian mentions as necessary for *docere*, the function best fulfilled by the plain style (XII.x. 58–9).

4. *Canon a 2 per augmentationem, contrario motu*

A rhythmically ornamented version of the *thema regium* in the middle voice is framed (and sometimes crossed) by two canonic

⁶⁰ The Latin adjective “subtilis” as used in classical rhetoric means “plain,” “simple,” “unadorned”. The term “ars subtilior” for the highly sophisticated French

voices, the higher imitating the lower strictly in augmentation and contrary motion.⁶¹ All three voices have the majestic "French" rhythm (dotting, paean). "To these three qualities of the *narratio* [i.e., naturalness, mimicry, illusion of simplicity] some add magnificence, . . . which is not, however, consistent with all cases. For what place in most private suits . . . has language that rises above the ordinary manner?" (IV.ii.61). By saying that this is not appropriate for ordinary cases, involving loans, leases, hiring, etc., Quintilian implies that only the highest authorities—the emperor, his family, the senators—should have magnificence. Since the *Musical Offering* is dedicated to the king of Prussia, Bach can apply Quintilian's fourth quality to his fourth canon. Even without reading Quintilian, we could not fail to recognize the magnificent "royal" style of the first movement of the French overture. This style was, however, derived in part from meters of antiquity: the characteristic paean (— ∪ ∪ ∪ → ) was regarded as especially suitable for the beginning.⁶² "Lofty passages . . . are fond of the dactyl's and also the paean's amplitude" (IX.iv.136). This was doubtless understood by Lully and his German imitators, including Mattheson: "Paeon, . . . from *παιών*, hymnus, because it was dedicated to songs of praise. It serves us in overtures and entrées."⁶³

Bach pays further tribute to the king's magnificence with the two figures most characteristic of epideictic rhetoric and the *genus grande*: augmentation and hyperbole. Augmentation is used by panegyrists to praise their patrons' virtues. It "is most effective when even inferior things appear great" (VIII.iv.3).⁶⁴ Hyperbole, in rhetoric, is the intensification of augmentation beyond the limit of credibility (VIII.vi.67, XII.x.62). In music it is not necessarily related to the technique of augmentation, but designates, according to Burmeister, a voice rising above the upper limit of its ambitus. Burmeister's one

music of the late 14th century is probably derived from the alternate meaning: "finely woven," "slender."

⁶¹ See David, p. 98, on the errors of the resolution in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition.

⁶² IX.iv.96: "quem aptum initiis putant"; cf. Aristotle, III.viii.6.

⁶³ P. 168. See Spiess, p. 164: "zu Ouverturen und Entreen fleissig gebraucht."

⁶⁴ Unger, p. 78, and Martin Ruhnke, *Joachim Burmeister* (Kassel, 1955), p. 154, have observed that the definition of *auxesis* used by Burmeister in 1599 shared a common source with Gerardus Vossius. We can now identify this source as Quintilian's description of *augmentatio*, which continues with the words "uno gradu . . . pervenit . . . ad summam," repeated almost verbatim by the two later authors. Burmeister, however, no longer retains this formulation in his revised definition of *auxesis*, *Musica poetica* (Rostock, 1606), and he never associates this figure with increased note values.

example is, significantly, a setting by Lasso of the word "praise."⁶⁵ Bach places the hyperbole in the bass voice, with its range of a thirteenth, requiring ledger lines even in the original notation.⁶⁶

5. *Canon a 2 [per tonos]*

The *thema regium* now appears in the upper voice, again embellished at the beginning. The two lower voices form a canon at the upper fifth at the distance of one measure. After eight measures the whole canon repeats itself a tone higher—a procedure which could go on ad infinitum were it not for the limitations of human ears and instruments: c–d–e–f♯–g♯–a♯–b♯, etc. But since the *Musical Offering* was conceived for tempered keyboard instruments, this canon returns to its initial key (b♯ = c) after six modulations.

After *magnificentia*, Quintilian considers only two further qualities: *iucunditas* (attractiveness) and *evidentia* (palpability). The former he rejects as a typical quality of the *narratio*, for it is equally suitable for all parts of the oration (IV.ii.63). *Evidentia* is thus the last of the five qualities which Quintilian recommends here: "In the *narratio*, palpability . . . is indeed a great virtue, when some truth must not only be told, but also be displayed in a certain way" (IV.ii.64). Later on he elaborates on what he means by this: "Palpability is more . . . than clarity; the latter lies open, the former somehow thrusts itself upon one's attention. . . . [The facts are] to be expressed and displayed to the mind's eyes" (VIII.iii.61–2). Quintilian then adds examples from Cicero: vivid depiction of a luxurious banquet, the sacking of a city, etc. Could Bach have made the *evidentia* more palpable than he does in this canon? The *thema regium* rises from key to key like reliefs on a triumphal column which twist higher and higher and can be seen from all sides until their figures transcend the limits of human eyesight.⁶⁷ By the fourth repetition almost every note is chromatically altered, fitting perfectly Quintilian's statement that *evidentia* can be achieved "ex accidentibus" (VIII.iii.70). Since he associates *evidentia* with "magna virtus" (IV.ii.64, VIII.iii.62), Bach can continue to employ

⁶⁵ P. 64: "Hyperbole . . . est melodiae supra supremum ejus terminum superlatio. Exemplum est in Orlandi Benedictam ad textum: Semper laus ejus."

⁶⁶ NBA, p. XIV. The six-part *ricercar* (score) and the four-part canon (G minor) are deliberately notated in a manner to avoid ledger lines—see David, p. 177, and KB, p. 111.

⁶⁷ The relevance of *evidentia* for the visual arts did not escape humanist authors—cf. Pomponius Gauricus, *De sculptura* (Florence, 1505), ed. André Chastel and Robert Klein (Geneva, 1969), pp. 179, 197.

the *genus grande* of the preceding canon (dactylic⁶⁸ and paean rhythms).

With the disposition of the genera in the five canons he presents, then, a twofold intensification from a simpler to a higher style (1-2, 3-4/5), whereby the return to the *genus subtile* (3) after the contrasting second canon sets the following "royal" canon (4) into still higher relief (see Table 2). The distribution of the genera is, of course, implied by Quintilian's sequence of forensic qualities.

B. Content (The Five Epideictic Virtues)

As is well known, Bach added, in the dedication copy of the *Musical Offering*, the following handwritten inscriptions to the last two of the five canons:⁶⁹

Notulis crescen-
tibus crescat
Fortuna

Ascendenteque Modula-
tione ascendat
Gloria

Regis.

The first alludes to the device of augmentation in the fourth canon ("As the notes grow may the fortune of the king grow"), the second to the rising spiral of modulations in the canon *per tonos* ("As the modulation rises may the glory of the king rise"). Edward Lowinsky has rightly observed apropos these canons that augmentation occurs in some of the earliest "Fortuna" pieces and that "if descending modulation symbolizes the evil aspects of *Fortuna desperata*, ascending modulation may well be equated with Fortuna bringing glory."⁷⁰ Now Quintilian states that an epigram can be added to the close (*clausula*) of the *narratio* or *probatio* by way of climax; in this position it is called an *epiphonema* ("Est enim epiphonema rei narratae vel probatae summa acclamatio" — VIII.v.11). Unlike the *sententia infinita* or maxim, the *epiphonema* often is finite, i.e., alludes to a specific situation or person, and may illuminate, as Bach's do, a puzzling situation in a witty manner.⁷¹ Just as Bach unites the last two canons by the *genus grande* and

⁶⁸ IX.iv.88: "Herous, qui est idem dactylus."

⁶⁹ See facsimile in NBA, p. XIV.

⁷⁰ "Matthaeus Greiter's *Fortuna*: An Experiment in Chromaticism and in Musical Iconography, *The Musical Quarterly*, XLIII (1957), p. 77. He adds a footnote from H. R. Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 110, to the effect that Fortune and Glory "are at all times closely associated," especially in warfare.

⁷¹ Lausberg, I, pp. 433-4.

“royal” style, he combines his two epigrams to a twin “royal” *epiphonema* with “-que” and with the dependence of both on the single word “regis” (see above). The group of five canons could not, of course, close in any other style than the *genus grande*. With his optative *epiphonemata*, Bach’s praise of the king overflows into the margins of his composition, from notes into words, which, in turn, leave no doubt about the meaning of his music, as interpreted above.

Bach took not only the position, but also the content of the *epiphonemata* from Quintilian. When the Roman rhetorician discussed the epideictic oration, i. e., rhetoric dealing with praise or censure, he listed five virtues which may be praised in a man—beauty, strength, [overcoming] weakness, dignity, and glory:

Ipsius vero laus hominis ex animo et corpore et extra positus peti debet. . . . Nam et pulchritudinem interim roburque prosequimur honore verborum, ut Homerus in Agamemnone atque Achille, et interim confert admirationi multum etiam infirmitas, ut cum idem Tydea parvum sed bellatorem dicit fuisse. Fortuna vero tum dignitatem adfert, ut in regibus principibusque (namque est haec materia ostendendae virtutis uberior), tum quo minores opes fuerunt, maiorem bene factis gloriam parit (III. vii. 12–13).

The [topics for] praise of the individual himself must be sought in his mental and physical characteristics and in external circumstances. . . . For we sometimes accompany beauty and strength with laudatory words, as Homer does with Agamemnon and Achilles; sometimes even weakness may confer much admiration, as when Homer says that Tydeus was small but a courageous warrior. Sometimes fortune in fact produces dignity, as with kings and princes (for this subject is more fertile for the display of virtue); another time, where the resources are less, it brings forth greater glory with good deeds.

Bach not only chose from this passage the two key words of his epigrams, *fortuna* and *gloria*, with *regis* in between (Quintilian: *regibus*); he also put them in their proper places, fourth and fifth. If Quintilian had not added the words *dignitatem adfert* to *fortuna*, Bach might have less readily written both this epigram and the “royal” French style in his fourth canon, for *dignitas* (= *gravitas*) was the distinctive character of the French overture. Bach’s *abbreviatio* of the *thema regium* in the fifth canon, i. e., his omission (only here) of its last three measures, may be explained not merely by his need to modulate a step higher, but also by Quintilian’s association of “lesser resources” with *gloria*.

But what about Quintilian’s first three virtues? Can they be related to the canons 1–3? Yes, indeed. Quintilian mentions first “pulchri-

itudinem . . . roburque," illustrated by Agamemnon and Achilles. Here *pulchritudo* should be translated not simply as "beauty" (with its modern connotations of femininity), but as "manly excellence"; *robur* means both "hardwood," "oak," and (hence) "firmness," "strength." The relevant passages in Homer indicate that Bach rendered *robur*-Achilles with his first canon, *pulchritudo*-Agamemnon, with the second.

The first canon belongs, with the third, to the most rhythmically simple pieces in the *Musical Offering*, consisting of only half notes, quarters, tied quarters, and steadily running eighths; in other words, it is entirely free of effeminate embellishments. If Bach himself did not remember the following passage from the *Iliad*, a text studied by every schoolboy, a philologist colleague could have referred him to it: Homer tells how Achilles was the captain of fifty ships, but

there was no one who would lead the men into the ranks. For swift-footed, godly Achilles lay among the ships, angered on account of the fair-haired maiden Briseïs, whom he had taken out of Lyrnessus after great toil, when he had laid waste Lyrnessus and the walls of Thebe and struck down Mynes and Epistrophus, the spear-wielding sons of King Evenus. On her account he lay grieving, but soon he was to rise up (II.685-94).

The *thema regium* too is "idle," with the chromatic descent five times delayed by suspensions. But the second half of the canon (or the second voice in the first half) is just the opposite: with the steady eighth notes often found in Bach's vocal music to express walking or running, it is equivalent to the Homeric epithet for the "swift-footed" Achilles (II.688), who is now reactivated. We are reminded of the association of the crab with the butterfly in emblematic art, illustrating the slowness and speed, respectively, of the motto "festina lente."⁷² Since the eighth notes are grouped into fours by usually changing direction every half measure, they produce also the Pyrrhic effect for the warrior. The rise through the tonic chord in quarter notes at the beginning of the second voice is a typical heroic incipit: Achilles "rises,"⁷³ just as God does in Schütz's "Es steht Gott auf."⁷⁴

⁷² W. Deonna, "The Crab and the Butterfly: A Study in Animal Symbolism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XVII (1954), p. 47.

⁷³ Whether the figures following the initial anabasis are also "translated" from Homer I shall not determine, but it is not impossible that Bach meant to depict Achilles' famous shield with the circulus in mm. 1-2 and the motion of his arm (back-forward) hurling the spear with the large leaps in the first half of m. 3.

⁷⁴ *Symphoniarum Sacrarum Secunda Pars* (Bautzen, 1647); *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, vol. 16 (Kassel, 1965), p. 29. In his preface, Schütz acknowledges that he derived the *stile concitato* of this piece from Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*.

When Quintilian alluded to Homer's description of Agamemnon's *pulchritudo*, he surely had another memorable passage in mind:

And just as goatherds separate easily the wide-ranging flocks of goats, when they mingle in the pasture, so the leaders marshalled them [the troops] on this side and that to enter into battle, and among them mighty Agamemnon, his eyes and head like Jupiter who delights in thunder, his waist like Mars, and his chest like Neptune. He was like a bull pre-eminent by far over all the herd, since he was conspicuous among the gathering cattle. For such did Jupiter make the son of Atreus on that day, conspicuous among many and pre-eminent among heroes (*Iliad*, II.474-83).⁷⁵

Bach, too, must not only have read, but fully understood these lines.⁷⁶ In his second canon—the “duet”—the first “question” (Ex. 5, mm. 1-3) must refer to Jupiter. The high and powerful head motive,

Example 5

Canon a 2 violini in unisono

with the falling fifth in quarter notes, can be identified with the impressive “head” of the god, for immediately follows a long *catabasis*, first descending abruptly, then abating, as he hurls down his thunderbolt, the attribute which identified him since Homeric times. If a reader should doubt the objectivity of this interpretation, he need only look at Monteverdi's setting of Jupiter's thunderbolt (“Giove . . .

⁷⁵ I am grateful to Peter Burian of the Classics Department, Duke University, for his revision of the translations from Homer.

⁷⁶ He could have identified the passage with the help of a gloss in an edition of Quintilian, such as those of Lyons 1549, Geneva 1580, London 1641, or Paris 1736. The passage on Achilles, however, is given incorrectly in the latter edition and many of the following ones (consistently misprinted as “II, 180” instead of “II, 680 ff.”), up to and including Loeb, 1933.

Example 6

Monteverdi, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Act I

Ten-ga_e-gli_a vo-glia sua nel-la gran de-stra il ful - mi-ne

tenga . . . il fulmine”) in Act I of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1641), Ex. 6; Bach would not need to have known the work, for such imagery was universally understood.⁷⁷ The next “question” (mm. 3–4) can represent with its Pyrrhic rhythm the war god Mars. Its four-note motive is repeated at widely separated pitches, suggesting the words “separate easily the wide-ranging flocks” and “marshalled the troops on this side and that.” (Similar classical imagery is applied to Frederick the Great in letters by his contemporaries. Kammerdirektor Christoph Werner Hille wrote in 1731, “It is astonishing how much he [Frederick] resembles *Juppiter tonans*,” or Voltaire, in 1752, “. . . he would prefer to mount his horse and exercise the soldiers of Pyrrhus.”⁷⁸) The third “question,” with three *circulus* figures in succession (mm. 5–6), depicts with its wave-motion the sea god Neptune, while retaining the Pyrrhic rhythm, now pairing the eighth notes across the beat by alternating staccato and legato to emphasize the “rocking”—a rare instance of detailed articulation in this work. But what is the significance of the “answer,” the last two measures with their huge leaps, extending to two octaves? Surely they depict Agamemnon himself, like “a bull, . . . conspicuous among many and pre-eminent among heroes.” For this the Pyrrhic rhythm continues, and the canon closes with the same “heroic” rise through the tonic chord which introduced Achilles in the first canon. The questions and answer permit us to imagine an unspoken text, such as: “Who is like Jupiter? like Mars? like Neptune? It is I, Agamemnon.”

If Quintilian’s words “in comoediis etiam et in mimis” in his description of the qualities of the *narratio* explained the use of *stilus theatricalis* and *genus medium* in the second canon, then his allusion to Homer’s description of Agamemnon identifies the actors in this miniature operatic scene. The exceptional presence of violins is thus deter-

⁷⁷ See the study by Arnold Schmitz, *Die Bildlichkeit der wortgebundenen Musik Johann Sebastian Bachs* (Mainz, 1950). Another example of a rapid run to depict “hurling”, set off rhythmically from its context, is provided by Johann Kuhnau in his *Biblische Historien . . . auf dem Claviere zu spielen* (Leipzig, 1700), where David launches the stone at Goliath (*Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst*, IV (Leipzig, 1901), p. 129).

⁷⁸ *Friedrich der Grosse im Spiegel seiner Zeit*, ed. Gustav Berthold Volz, vol. I (Berlin, 1926), pp. 32, 249.

mined not merely by the operatic style, but also by the presence of three gods and a king, just as the return of this instrument in the trio sonata and the final Canon Perpetuus will be explained by King Frederick's participation as a performer. "Et in mimis" also provides the clue for the contrapuntal structure of the second canon. *Mimesis* is defined by Quintilian as "imitation of other persons' characteristics" (*imitatio morum alienorum*—IX.ii.58), and in music theory it designated canonic imitation.⁷⁹ In the canon, the gods, of course, enter first; the second voice, beginning one measure later, is their "imitation," Agamemnon, who then imitates himself at the end. We see now why Bach here writes a canon at the unison: this most literal form of imitation achieves most perfectly the effect of the hero "mimicking" the gods. Since *mimesis* "may be counted among the gentler affects" (IX.ii.58), it contributes to *ethos*, which Quintilian had associated with comedy. The entire canon is a courtly masquerade or "Wirthschaft," such as often included gods. Gottsched confirms that this genre was still fashionable at the courts.⁸⁰

And the remaining, third canon? Bach characterized it, as we have seen, by the *genus subtile*, *simplicitas*, and "smallness" (diminution of the *thema regium*, high, narrow range of voices, and a false relation in

TABLE 2
CANONES DIVERSI (NARRATIO LONGA)

Genus	Style and Content				
	<i>Canon 1</i>	<i>Canon 2</i>	<i>Canon 3</i>	<i>Canon 4</i>	<i>Canon 5</i>
<i>Grand</i>				<i>f</i> : Magnificence <i>e</i> : Fortune	<i>f</i> : Palpability <i>e</i> : Glory
<i>Medium</i>		<i>f</i> : Mimicry <i>e</i> : Excellence (Agamemnon)			
<i>Plain</i>	<i>f</i> : Naturalness <i>e</i> : Strength (Achilles)		<i>f</i> : Illusion of simplicity <i>e</i> : [Overcoming] weakness (Tydeus)		

f = forensic quality; *e* = epideictic virtue

⁷⁹ Cf. Johannes Frosch (1532) and Johannes Stomius (1537), quoted by W. Kirkendale, p. 30. Burmeister seems to have been unaware of this usage, for he uses "mimesis" to designate homophonic imitation: the repetition of a noema at a different pitch (p. 59).

⁸⁰ *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst* (Leipzig, 1751), pp. 756-71 ("Von Wirthschaften, Mummereyen, und Balletten").

measure 3 which reminds me of an unpolished performance by a boys' choir). Thus he willingly accepts Quintilian's third epideictic virtue, *infirmitas*: "Sometimes even weakness may confer much admiration, as when Homer [*Iliad*, V, 801] says that Tydeus was small but a courageous warrior." These words, moreover, fit Frederick perfectly, for his physical stature was unusually small for a king, so much so that all Europe knew it, and he sometimes compared himself to a monkey.⁸¹

It was easily possible for Bach to combine the five forensic qualities with the five epideictic virtues in a single series of five pieces, for, as shown in Table 2 and the Appendix, in each canon the two respective elements and their genus are closely related.

EGRESSUS = FUGA CANONICA IN EPIDIAPENTE

The *thema regium*, which hitherto has not participated in the canonic writing—except in the crab canon—now appears in the upper voices as a strict two-part canon at the upper fifth at the distance of ten measures.⁸² The second entry thus forms the *comes* of a fugue. Later, in measure 38, the first voice again presents the *thema regium*, this time in the subdominant, so that its imitation in the following voice results in an entry in the tonic. Finally, in measure 59, the otherwise free bass voice [continuo] also lets the *thema regium* be heard in the tonic. "We seem to hear a two-part accompanied fugue while the strict canon is at no place interrupted. The second group of entries is ingeniously extended by a third entrance, in the bass; thus the two-part canon seems to broaden into a three-part fugue."⁸³ A piece which is both a canon and a fugue is surely a very rare accomplishment; I know of no other example, and have not yet found the term "fuga canonica" used in this sense by theorists, not even in Mattheson's extended canon-battle with Bokemeyer⁸⁴ or in Marpur's thorough treatise.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Cf. Reinhold Koser, "Die Berichte der Zeitgenossen über die äussere Erscheinung Friedrichs des Grossen," *Hobenzollern-Jahrbuch*, I (1897), pp. 90-4, 103. Of over 900 portraits, only about half a dozen show him in the vicinity of other persons, none of these more "to scale" than "Die Wachtparade" by his engraver Chodowiecki.

⁸² ϕ , not e , as in NBA, p. 75.

⁸³ David, p. 28.

⁸⁴ See the "Canonische Anatomie" in his *Critica Musica* (Hamburg, Jan.-Apr. 1723), pp. 237-354, and Werner Braun, "Bachs Stellung im Kanonstreit," in *Bach-Interpretationen*, ed. M. Geck (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 106-11.

⁸⁵ Friedrich Wilhelm Marpur, *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (Berlin, 1753-4), I, pp. 10, 16, defines the *fuga canonica* simply as a strict canon (which earlier theorists such as Tinctoris designated as "fuga" and Walther calls "fuga in consequenza"), as opposed to the *fuga periodica* (fugue in the modern sense). He does not mention a canon such as Bach's which presents successive entries of a subject in the manner of a fugue. His

At the end of his discussion of the *narratio*, Quintilian speaks of the *egressus* (*excursus*; Cicero: *digressio*):

Most are accustomed to digress immediately after the *narratio* to some pleasant and praiseworthy topic, to obtain as much favor as they can. This originated in rhetorical ostentation and now has entered the courts, after it has been discovered how to conduct trials not for the benefit of the litigants, but for advocates to show off (*ad patronorum iactationem*). . . . I admit, however, that this kind of digression can be advantageously appended not only to the *narratio*, but also to the *argumentatio* . . . if the subject demands or at least permits; and that the speech can even be illuminated and adorned to the highest degree with it, but [only] if it is coherent and follows logically. . . . For there is no closer connection than between the *narratio* and the *probatio*, unless that digression is either a sort of end of the *narratio* or beginning of the *probatio*. There will therefore sometimes be room for it" (IV.iii.1-5).

Such an *egressus* "serves as a peroration" to the first main section of the speech (IV.iii. 11-12). It was, then, Quintilian who authorized Bach to insert at this point his contrapuntal tour de force, which shows all his artistry ("advocates show off") and "illuminates and adorns" the *Musical Offering*. The most astonishing achievement, however, is that this *iactatio*, in spite of its ingenuity, is very "pleasant"—much more so than the canons which preceded it. Not only is it smooth, elegant, almost galant; with its adherence to the ever-present *thema regium* it "is coherent and follows logically."

EXORDIUM II (INSINUATIO) = RICERCAR A 6

The six-part *ricercar* is a strict fugue with two complete entries of the *thema regium* in each voice. As stated above, it corresponds perfectly to the (optional) second exordium, which may be used to introduce the second and last main section of the oration, the *argumentatio* (IV.iii.9). Of the two types of exordium distinguished by Cicero—*principium* and *insinuatio*—it was the *insinuatio* which was employed in this place. Quintilian's description of the *insinuatio* is based on Cicero's: "Some therefore divide the exordium into two kinds, the *principium* and the *insinuatio*, so that there is in the former a direct appeal to goodwill and attention. Since this cannot be [used] in scandalous [or: difficult] cases, the *insinuatio* should creep upon the minds [of the listeners]" (IV.i.42). Quintilian uses the verb "surrepo" ("creep

example of a "canonische Doppelfuge," the G-minor fugue from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* II (vol. I, p. 140 and table XLI, 1), is canonic only in the exposition.

or crawl up to from below") more or less as Cicero used "dissimulo": to disguise one's argument by means of indirection.⁸⁶

Since the middle of the sixteenth century, the Ciceronian *insinuatio* had found its musical equivalent in the strictly imitative *ricercar*, in which the voices enter unobtrusively in succession.⁸⁷ The six-part *ricercar* is a model of such an *insinuatio*. Unlike the three-part *ricercar*, where the successive entries are separated (and thus marked) by short interludes, the first note of the *thema regium* is now sounded simultaneously with the last note of the preceding entry, so that the seam is concealed (mm. 5, 9, 13). New entries are further camouflaged by being placed in an inner voice (especially mm. 13, 58, 73) and by forming with their first note a unison with an adjacent part (mm. 19, 48, 73, 86). In measures 65–6, the note immediately preceding the new entry in the same range is closer to that voice (a melodic whole tone) than to its own notated continuation (minor third), so that the new entry is heard as the actual continuation, not as a new voice. The most thoroughly disguised entry occurs in measure 48, after a series of abbreviated three-note entries in measures 45–7, each of which, with its third note, forms a unison with the next fragmentary entry (Ex. 7). The full entry is thus smuggled in surreptitiously (see above, *surrepo*) in the second-lowest voice in what would initially be perceived as just another fragmentary entry in the sequence. A somewhat similar effect is created by the two tenors in measures 72–3. These features of the musical *insinuationes* (i. e., Italian *ricercars*) clearly contradict the north German, late baroque fugal theory, which recommends that subject entries be clearly marked by being placed in a new range after rests. It must be emphasized that, as Bach surely understood, the *insinuatio* techniques are fully effective only on a keyboard instrument, where the different voices are not distinguished by tone color. He used only two staves for the autograph notation of this *ricercar*; by deciding upon the less crowded score notation for the printed edition, he merely followed an Italian keyboard tradition (see below, Frescobaldi). The various attempts to "improve" this piece by "analytical instrumentation" for an ensemble⁸⁸ must be regarded as contrary both

⁸⁶ The words "Insinuation" and "insinuierten" in the most general sense were current in baroque German. Christian Weise's widely used etiquette book, *Politischer Redner* (Leipzig, 1681) has an entire chapter "Von der Insinuation" (pp. 182–205), and Bach himself writes in a letter of Aug. 18, 1736, "meine . . . gehorsamst insinuirte Beschwerden" (*Dok.*, I, p. 88).

⁸⁷ W. Kirkendale, pp. 27–8 *et passim*.

⁸⁸ David, p. 51, and those listed in Pfannkuch, p. 441, n. 6. See also Carl Dahlhaus, "Analytische Instrumentation: Bachs sechsstimmiges Ricercar in der Orchestrierung Anton Weberns," in *Bach-Interpretationen* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 197–206.

Example 7

Bach, *Musical Offering*, Ricercar a 6, mm. 45-8

The image displays a musical score for six voices, arranged in two systems of three staves each. The music is in G minor (three flats) and 6/8 time. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs. The first system covers measures 45-50, and the second system covers measures 51-56. The bottom staff of the second system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

to the tradition and to the composer's intention, and therefore misguided.

ARGUMENTATIO (PROBATIO + REFUTATIO) =
 CANON A 2 AND CANON A 4 (QUAERENDO INVENIETIS)

Like the other canons in the *Musical Offering*, these two indicate the number of parts in their titles, and the pitch and direction of imitation

by multiple clefs in the original notation: the two-part canon is by contrary motion (one clef inverted), the four-part one is at the double octave (and unison).⁸⁹ But they show neither by *signa congruentiae* nor by fermatas the time interval at which the imitation(s) must begin, unlike the other canons (except the crab canon, which of course needed no signum, and the second Canon Perpetuus, which is written out in parts). Bach's heading "quaerendo invenietis" ("by seeking you will find") applies to the pair, for both pieces are "riddle" canons.⁹⁰ Of the various solutions which have been attempted, only those at the distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 7 measures, respectively, are satisfactory.⁹¹

Why does Bach introduce riddle canons only at this point? Surely it is because the *argumentatio*, our next section of the oration, was designated in rhetorical terminology also by the alternate name of *quaestiones*.⁹² There are two canons because the *argumentatio* was always divided into two parts, the *probatio* and the *refutatio*. The heading "quaerendo invenietis," a "quaestio infinita,"⁹³ has its correspondence precisely in Quintilian's discussion of the *probatio*: "I urge that one search and I bear witness that discoveries can be made" (*hortor ad quaerendum et inveniri posse fateor* — V. xii. 1).⁹⁴

Quintilian distinguishes between the *probatio* and *refutatio* as follows:

The basis of the arguments in this section [*refutatio*] may not be sought in places other than the *probatio*, nor is the arrangement of the topics or thoughts or words and figures different. This section has for the most part milder emotions. . . . Yet defence has always been considered . . . more difficult than prosecution. In the first place accusation is simpler, for it is put forward in one manner, [but] refuted in many ways, since it is generally sufficient for

⁸⁹ NBA, p. 54.

⁹⁰ Cf. *KB*, pp. 131, 157.


⁹¹ *KB*, pp. 115-16. A computer solution of the first enigmatic canon with "next-to-maximal harmonicity[!]" resulted in unacceptable parallel fifths and octaves, overlooked by George W. Logemann, "The Canons in the Musical Offering of J. S. Bach," in *Elektronische Datenverarbeitung in der Musikwissenschaft*, ed. Harald Heckmann (Regensburg, 1967), p. 73.

⁹² Quintilian, IV.iii.4; Lausberg, I, p. 190.

⁹³ Quintilian, III.v.5; cf. above, p. 109, the "finite" *epiphonemata*.

⁹⁴ Wolff, *KB* p. 106, mentions the biblical "Quaerendo [*recte*: Quaerite et] invenietis" (Matthew 7:7), which should be regarded as just one version of a familiar ancient maxim. While it is likely that Bach knew both passages, the one from Quintilian is more relevant to his compositional plan. The *inventio* is, of course, the first of the five *partes artis*, the skills exercised by the orator. On the conceptual relationship of "seeking and finding" to the musical terms "ricercar" and "invention," cf. W. Kirkendale, pp. 35-6.

the accuser that his charge be true, [whereas] the defence attorney may deny, justify, object, excuse, deprecate, soften, extenuate, avert [the charges], express contempt or derision. Therefore the accusation is usually straightforward and . . . clamorous (*clamosa*); [but] the defence needs a thousand deviations and arts (V. xiii. 1-2).

Bach derives the thematic material of his *refutatio* (second canon) from "no places other than the *probatio*" (first canon), for, unlike the first Canon Perpetuus and numbers 2-5 of the *canones diversi*, these two canons both introduce the *thema regium* canonically, at the beginning of each voice; since there are no other voices, these two canons could be notated on one line (NBA, p. 54). Nor are their "words and figures different," for in each canon the *thema regium* begins with the same upbeat of two ascending eighth notes and fills out its rising thirds with stepwise motion (chromatic and diatonic, respectively). Since "accusation is simpler," the first canon has not only half as many voices but also less than half the length of the second. Because "defence needs a thousand deviations and arts," the second canon is not only the longest one in the *Musical Offering* (excluding the Fuga Canonica), but also the only one in four parts, and thus it also has the greatest variety of simultaneous rhythms and melodies. The imitation by contrary motion in the "accusation" canon may be intended to represent the adversary relationship ("Our opponent is usually attacked by nearly the same means, but inverted"—IV.i.14). The groups of three eighth notes (, , mm. 15-16, 18-19—"clamorous"?) were already included in the preliminary "summary of the case" given in the first *ricercar* (mm. 109-12). In order to refute the opponent's statements, the second canon translates the "deviations" (*flexus*) with winding figures (mm. 3-4) and expresses "negation" traditionally with the subdominant sequence,⁹⁵ used probably also to "soften, extenuate."

PERORATIO IN AFFECTIBUS =

SONATA SOPR'IL SOGGETTO REALE A TRAVERSA, VIOLINO E CONTINUO

The trio sonata and the final Canon Perpetuus remain. Up to this point, instruments had been specified only for the second of the *canones diversi*, where violins represented "gods in theatre style." It is generally agreed that the flute part in the sonata and final canon was

⁹⁵ U. Kirkendale, *Caldara*, pp. 183, 244.

intended for performance by the king himself; and we now see that this is planned as a fitting climax at the *end* of the work: "Finis coronat opus." Frederick appears, as is proper, with his entourage, with the richest instrumentarium in the *Musical Offering*: flute, violin, and basso continuo [clavier and 'cello].⁹⁶ Unlike the other pieces, these are both notated in separate parts.

Mattheson had required of the peroration, the "Ausgang oder Beschluss unserer Klang-Rede," that it "more than other pieces attempt a particularly emphatic motion," and he observed that "it has become custom that we close with those passages and sounds with which we have begun, which then after our exordium appear in place of the peroration."⁹⁷ Quintilian had already implied this with other words: the appeal to the emotions in the peroration is "similar to the exordium, but with greater freedom and fullness" (VI.i.9). "Certain things which needed only to be revealed there [in the exordium] must be treated fully in the peroration" (VI.i.12). Bach's idea for fuller instrumentation in his peroration thus was conditioned directly by Quintilian rather than by Mattheson. With the sonata he achieves "fuller treatment" also by the only multi-movement component of the *Musical Offering*.

But why would Bach write two pieces, sonata and canon, for the peroration? Quintilian explains that there are two kinds of peroration, "based either on facts or on emotions" (*Eius duplex ratio est posita aut in rebus aut in adfectibus*—VI.i.1). Since the two types are equated here with "aut . . . aut," Bach is free to determine the sequence of the two. Just as, with "German thoroughness," he included both types of *ricercar* (*principium* and *insinuatio*) and *narratio* (*brevis* and *longa*), here too he presents both alternatives, a *peroratio in adfectibus* (sonata) and a *peroratio in rebus* (the final Canon Perpetuus).

Quintilian repeatedly compares the peroration with the exordium and shows that in the latter the emotions should be expressed only "rather sparingly and modestly" (*parcius et modestius*), whereas in the former they may pour out freely (*liceat totos effundere adfectus*—IV.i.28). "Here [in the *peroratio in adfectibus*], if anywhere, one can open all the floodgates of eloquence" (*totos eloquentiae aperire fontes licet*—VI.i.51). He therefore continues with a discussion of *pathos* (Lat. *adfectus*) and *ethos*. "The more cautious writers . . . stated *pathos* to be the violent emotions and *ethos* the calm and gentle ones, . . . a dis-

⁹⁶ One arrangement favored by Wolff, with the sonata in the center for the sake of "axial symmetry," must thus give way to considerations not only of rhetoric, but also of court protocol: the royal ensemble assumes the place of honor as a grand finale.

⁹⁷ P. 236.

inction as sometimes [is found] in the perorations, for *ethos* generally calms the violent emotions aroused by *pathos*" (*quae πάθος concitavit, ἦθος solet mitigare*—VI.ii.9, 12). How could one better describe Bach's sonata, which has long been recognized as employing a much more affective style than the other components, as his single concession in the *Musical Offering* to the "modern" style of the Prussian court? Only here did the composer provide tempo indications. And only here is found deep, disturbing *pathos*,⁹⁸ which is then dispersed by *ethos* in the fourth movement. The requirements of a *peroratio in adfectibus* caused Bach to abandon, only in the sonata, the strict contrapuntal style of canon and *ricercar*, which does not lend itself easily to affective expression. Here, where there is "a particularly emphatic motion" (Mattheson) and *liceat totos effundere adfectus*, "it is this [rhetorical power] which dominates the courts of law, this eloquence reigns supreme" (*haec eloquentia regnat*—VI.ii.4). That Bach makes room not only for the musical eloquence which now "reigns" supreme, but also for a real king, a royal flautist (who, incidentally, often designated his own compositions "affettuoso")—all this climaxes the homage *ad personam*. Moreover, in all four movements the ambitus of the flute is very high (to *e b*^{'''}): "the eloquence should increase most [H. E. Butler translates, less literally, "be pitched higher"] in this section, since, if it does not add anything to what has preceded, it seems even to diminish" (VI.i.29).

The sonata, then, gives free rein to the emotions only hinted in the first *ricercar*. The sighing sixteenth notes in its first movement (*Largo*, e.g., in the violin, mm. 3, 6, Ex. 8) remind us of the "sospiri" motives

⁹⁸ Though musicologists have realized the importance of Kircher's formulation "musica pathetica" for the new baroque style, they have not traced it to antiquity (Rolf Dammann, *Der Musikbegriff im deutschen Barock* (Cologne, 1967), pp. 222 ff.; Ulf Scharlau, *Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680) als Musikschriststeller* [Marburg, 1969], pp. 234-8). Dammann, p. 223, calls it merely "eine latinisierte Wortschöpfung." Brosard includes the concept in his dictionary and applies it to the fugue (s.v. "Pathetico," "Fuga pathetica"), hence Walther, pp. 466, 267: "*Passiones erreget*," "Affekt exprimiren." The "fuga pathetica," associated erroneously by Walther with the "fuga gravis," is employed by Bach very rarely: the B-minor fugue in Book I of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and the 15th Goldberg variation (i.e., canon). These pieces are not only characterized by "die seufzenden Halbtonvorhalte und die übermäßigen bzw. verminderten Intervalle, durch den klagenden Ton" (Stefan Kunze, "Gattungen der Fuge in Bachs Wohltemperiertem Klavier," in *Bach-Interpretationen*, p. 77), but—and here too the resemblance to the trio sonata is significant—they are the only pieces in the collection with a tempo designation, and they both serve as a conclusion (Variation 15 to the first half, followed by an "overture" which opens the second half). Kunze, pp. 77 and 81, confuses *pathos* with *ethos*. His additional examples from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* qualify less as *fugae patheticae*, since they lack the sighs, tempo designation, etc.

Example 8

Sonata, first movement, mm. 1-4

Largo

The musical score consists of three staves: Traversa, Violino, and Continuo. The Traversa staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. It shows a trill in the second measure. The Violino staff is also in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a melodic line with a trill in the second measure. The Continuo staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, showing a steady eighth-note bass line with figured bass notation (6b, 6, 5b) and a wide intervallic gesture in the second measure.

there (mm. 113-18). The bass in the minor mode and with the harmonic rhythm of the sarabande, rising slowly in throbbing eighth notes derived from the opening of the *thema regium* (mm. 1-4) and the wide, pathetic gestures dramatically articulated in the upper parts are clearly in the style of the heroic lamentos of late baroque vocal music.⁹⁹ But why is it used here? Because the peroration was traditionally associated with weeping and lamenting. Here “pity prevails most of all” (VI.i.23). The orator may even “dress the characters with fictitious speeches and raise the dead [to life]” (IV.i.28), as the two declamatory upper voices (violin and flute) do with their lamento. The second movement (Allegro), a ternary fugue in which the *thema regium* eventually appears as a countersubject, takes its cue from the “agitare” sections of the first ricercar, for the peroration will excite even more the emotions (VI.i.11: “concitare adfectus”). The syncopations (close-

⁹⁹ Similar examples by Bach: “Und wenn der harte Todesschlag,” BWV 124/3; “Ich will auch mit gebroch’nen Augen,” BWV 125/2; Crucifixus, BWV 232/16. Only the stagnant bass: “Ich wünschte mir den Tod,” BWV 57/3; “Ich will leiden,” BWV 87/6; “Es ist vollbracht,” BWV 159/4; “Wenn der Ton zu mühsam klingt,” BWV 201/7; “Qui tollis,” BWV 232/8; “Erbarme dich,” BWV 244/47; “Wir sitzen mit Tränen nieder,” BWV 244/78; “Zerfließe, mein Herz,” BWV 245/63. Further contemporary examples in my *Antonio Caldara*, Exx. 140, 165, 224.

ly related to the *alla zoppa* rhythm) and the persistent Pyrrhic figures, especially when concertizing in the upper parts (e.g. mm. 77 ff.), all contribute to this effect. The warlike associations of the Pyrrhic meter are thus heightened by those of "konzertieren," with its still widely disseminated derivation from classical Latin "concertare" ("contend," rather than from Italian, "agree," "accord").¹⁰⁰ The third movement (Andante) is dominated throughout by sighs, no longer of a mourner, as in the first movement, but of a passionate lover, in the galant style, with major mode, slow harmonic rhythm, and echo dynamics. "Just as lovers cannot judge beauty because the mind instructs the eyesight, so the judge, overcome by emotions, abandons every plan to investigate the truth" (VI.ii.6). According to Mattheson's characterization, Bach's key, E flat, "hat viel *pathetisches* an sich."¹⁰¹ The movement ends suddenly, in keeping with Quintilian's advice to "break off at the height of emotion" (VI.i.29) and with Mattheson's *peroratio ex abrupto*.¹⁰² With the final movement, a free fugue (Allegro) in gigue meter, the "delectare" triplets which seemed strange in the first ricercar now fall into their natural place. The opening theme is, of course, derived from the *thema regium*, but some passages are closer to the triplets of the ricercar (e.g. bass, mm. 78-80). The piece fulfills the function of the peroration "not only to arouse pity, but also to disperse it . . . with wit" (*urbane dictis*—VI.i.46).¹⁰³ But wit produces laughter, which "often . . . convulses the whole body with its power" (VI.iii.9). This could explain the wild, breathless quality of the movement. As countless instrumental works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries testify, composers were well aware that in a finale "brevity in wit gives greater point and speed" (VI.iii.45), though few knew how ancient this tradition was.

PERORATIO IN REBUS = CANON PERPETUUS

The flute and violin, over a free figured bass, present an embellished version of the *thema regium* in a strict canon by inversion at the interval of two measures. The second half repeats exactly and in their entirety the canonic voices of the first half, but with the inversion now

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum*, tom. III (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), pp. 5, 126: "mit einander scharmintzeln," "untereinander . . . streiten."

¹⁰¹ *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (Hamburg, 1713), p. 249.

¹⁰² *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 237.

¹⁰³ Is it mere coincidence that Quintilian's two examples of such urbanities, "Date puero panem ne ploret" and "Quid faciam?", fit perfectly to the first thirteen notes (10 + 3) of the theme?

preceding rather than following the opening theme. The piece is thus a mirror canon, combining two different solutions to a single canon, without the slightest modification of the given melody. It is the most extraordinary contrapuntal coup in the *Musical Offering*, reserved by Bach for the other conclusion of his work, the only canon to be performed by the king. Yet, as in the *Fuga Canonica*, the difficulties of the strict procedure are concealed from the listener, and, in spite of them, the piece assumes a light, galant, "modern" style. Similarities between these two pieces were recognized correctly by David.¹⁰⁴ We now see that they are due in part to their analogous function as conclusions to the two halves of the musical oration.

The factual peroration (*peroratio in rebus*) is, then, quite different from the emotional one (*peroratio in adfectibus*):

The repetition and grouping of the facts (*rerum*), which . . . is called the enumeration by certain Latin [authors], both refreshes the memory of the judge and at the same time places the whole of the case before his eyes. . . . That which we repeat here must be said as briefly as possible, . . . for if we delay, no longer an enumeration would be made but a sort of second oration. However, anything to be enumerated must be said with some weight, enlivened with suitable thoughts and at least varied by figures. Otherwise there is nothing more odious than that straight repetition (*recta repetitio*). . . . But the most attractive [enumeration] is . . . when we have an opportunity of drawing some argument from our opponent (VI.i.1-4).

Bach accordingly formulates his alternative peroration as a *recapitulatio in rebus*, drawing upon the first canon of his *argumentatio*, since the *probatio* or *accusatio* is the most crucial section of an oration. Here, as there, imitation by contrary motion not only depicts the adversary relationship (*aliquod ex adversario ducere argumentum*), but also avoids "recta repetitio," for in the terminology of music theory "contrarius" ("inverted") is the opposite of "rectus." Bach thus recapitulates the two basic forms of the *thema regium*. But, as Quintilian suggested, he varies the theme by presenting it in still another embellished version (*figuris utique varianda*), thus avoiding "repetition" of the earlier canon. His return to *alla breve* time provides the "weight." Other "facts" of the *probatio* "enumerated" here include the chromatic quarter notes in measures 8 (flute) and 10 (violin), taken from the opening of the "accusatio" canon but now no longer forming part of the *thema regium*; and the six eighth notes moving scalewise and followed by a quarter note in measures 6-7 (flute) and 8-9 (violin), recalling measures 11-12 and 14-15 of the other canon.

¹⁰⁴ Pp. 36-7, used, however, to construct a "symmetrical frame."

Why does Bach entitle only the first and last canons "perpetuus," though all except the crab canon and the finite Fuga Canonica return to their point of departure (transposed only in the canon *per tonos*) and thus could be regarded as perpetual? In the case of the first canon, we suggested that this may be because he associates *oratio perpetua* with the *narratio*. Another clue, which would apply particularly to the concluding piece of the work, was observed by Erich Schenk¹⁰⁵ in another collection of canons composed as homage to a sovereign: Giovanni Battista Vivaldi's *Artificii musicali* (Modena, 1689). In the dedication to Francesco II d'Este, Vivaldi makes it clear that the infinity of his canons mirrors the infinity of the prince's virtues: "il tributo [cf. "Opfer"] di questi canoni musicali, la forma de quali nel proprio giro non havendo termine, ne nota finale, saranno in questo almeno proportionati al concerto di tante virtù, che nel petto di V. A. S. concordano così agguistatamente con l'eternità." Bach may well have known this work, which, like his, comprised a great variety of contrapuntal pieces and could have been known in Germany through the printed edition. With his first and last canon he thus could have paid his particular respects to the king, just as in courtly productions the operatic *licenza*—the homage to the patron—normally occurred at the beginning or end.

* * *

We have seen that Bach indicated specific instruments—violins and flute—for only three components of the *Musical Offering*: the "masquerade" canon, with three gods and a king, and the two peroration pieces, for King Frederick himself. I believe that he reserved these instruments for special effect here, and that they should therefore not be applied to the other canons.¹⁰⁶ No other canon contains the brilliant idiomatic writing for violin which we have in the large leaps at the end of the "Agamemnon" canon. In this piece the prescribed instruments serve also to differentiate the "duet" from the accompanying bass. The canon *per tonos*, on the other hand, should be performed on tempered keyboard instruments, so that it can return to its key of departure (b \sharp = c). Bach's music for keyboard instruments does not normally specify the instrument in the score (as opposed to the title). Thus he probably intended those canons of the *Musical Offering*

¹⁰⁵ "Das 'Musikalisches Opfer'," p. 60. Further parallels are observed by Schenk in "Das Problem der Invention bei Bach und Beethoven," Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, *Anzeiger*, CXIV (1977), pp. 91-2.

¹⁰⁶ Contrary to NBA, pp. 71-9, and KB, p. 119.

without designation of instruments to be played on the keyboard, like those of the Goldberg Variations, the Canonic Variations (BWV 769), or the *Art of Fugue*. With two instruments it would be possible not only to perform those passages which do not lie under two hands, but also to play easily from the original abbreviated notation.¹⁰⁷ The secular character of the work of course excludes the organ. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Johann Friedrich Agricola report in their necrology that Bach improvised the three-part *ricercar* on a "Pianoforte."¹⁰⁸ Since Bach was invited by Frederick "to try out his Silbermann forte-pianos, which stood in several rooms of the palace,"¹⁰⁹ it would seem likely that he conceived the *Musical Offering* with these instruments in mind.

Now for the title "Musicalisches Opfer." It is one of the last members of a large family of baroque titles which consist of the adjective "musical" plus a noun, and often form a rhetorical figure, a metaphor. We are reminded of Schein's *Banchetto musicale* (1617), Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali* (1635), Schütz's *Musicalische Exequien* (1636), Krieger's *Musicalische Ergetzlichkeit* (1684), Reinken's *Hortus Musicus* (1688), Vitali's *Artificii musicali* (1689), and particularly Muffat's synonymous *Armonico tributo* (1682). Bach certainly knew these collections of Frescobaldi (see below, p. 129) and Reinken,¹¹⁰ probably also Vitali's. Less obvious is the ancestry of his particular noun, but an additional clue is provided by the verb that accompanies it in the very first sentence of the dedication: "Ew. Majestät weyhe hiermit . . . ein Musicalisches Opfer" ("To Your Majesty I hereby consecrate a Musical Offering"). It is unlikely that a man of Bach's culture "in humanioribus" would, on such an occasion, have chosen his words without careful consideration of the literary and rhetorical traditions. It is equally unlikely that he would have taken as his model an author who published in German. For his subheadings and inscriptions he preferred Latin. Now the expression "to consecrate an offering" to a patron was not uncommon during the age of humanism, when even the church was not disturbed by such "pagan" formulations.¹¹¹ Thus Joachim du Bellay dedicated his *Defence et illustration de la langue francoyse*

¹⁰⁷ Only for the four-part enigmatic canon would each player have to write out his two parts in score.

¹⁰⁸ [Lorenz Mizler,] *Musikalische Bibliothek*, Bd. IV (Leipzig, 1754), p. 166.

¹⁰⁹ Forkel, p. 10. The king esteemed these instruments so highly that he eventually collected fifteen of them (*ibid.*, footnote).

¹¹⁰ Cf. the arrangements BWV 965-6.

¹¹¹ See Wolfgang Leiner, *Der Widmungsbrief in der französischen Literatur (1580-1715)* (Heidelberg, 1965), pp. 17 ff., 56 ff.

(Paris, 1549) as an offering to his uncle, the cardinal Jean du Bellay. Our humanists' sources flowed, of course, from classical antiquity. Though Curtius devotes only a few pages to "Exordialtopik," he provides valuable insight into the *topoi* of the dedication: "Statius sends his friend Gallicus a poem for his convalescence and compares his action to an offering to the gods (*Silvae*, I.iv. 31 ff.). Roman poets are accustomed to refer to the dedication as a 'consecration' ['Weihung'] (*dicare, dedicare, consecrare, vovere*). Christian authors like to consecrate their work to God."¹¹² Bach had himself composed a group of cantatas on texts from Georg Christian Lehms's *Gottgefälliges Kirchen-Opffer* (Darmstadt, 1711).¹¹³

To what ancient authority may Bach have turned for counsel other than to his proven friend Quintilian? The Latin concept of "offering" in an exordium is employed by Quintilian only once: in the proem (exordium) to the fourth book of his *Institutio oratoria*, precisely the one which we have most frequently quoted. It occurs, in fact, immediately before he states his program for the following part of his work: to explain the *ordo*, the five parts of the forensic speech (IV.Pr.6). His offering at this point is no mere formality, but rooted in a significant biographical event, as Bach's was to be: he has recently been honored by an appointment from Domitian as tutor to the grandsons of that emperor's sister. Now feeling particularly conscious of the need to fulfill great expectations, he hastens to do what he had overlooked at the beginning of his work, namely to invoke the help of the muses. This tardiness he excuses with the example of the greatest poets, who "invoked the muses not only at the beginning of their works, but even further on, when they had come to some important passage, they repeated their offerings (*repeterent vota*) and employed a new prayer," and he beseeches the muses and the emperor for help (IV.Pr.4). Such invocations were, of course, a normal component of internal exordia. Again there is an analogy to the *Musical Offering*, for Bach too had actually begun his work (with the three-part ricercar improvised in Potsdam) before he made his *votum* to the king: "I thereafter resolved," and then "This intention is now . . . fulfilled" ("Ich fassete demnach den Entschluss," "Dieser Vorsatz ist nunmehr . . . bewerkstelliget worden"). Quintilian then undertakes

¹¹² Curtius, p. 96. Such offerings were also classified as a species of *insinuatō*—C. Weise, p. 169: "Endlich ist ein sonderlichs Stücke der *Insinuation*, welche *Votum*, und *Servitorium oblationem* begreiff, darinnen man durch gute Wünsche und durch Darbietung aller willigen Dienste sich selbst angenehm machen wil."

¹¹³ Elisabeth Noack, "Georg Christian Lehms, ein Textdichter Johann Sebastian Bachs," *Bach-Jahrbuch*, LVI (1970), pp. 7-18.

to explain the order (*ordo*) of the forensic cases, which are extremely varied and manifold; [to set forth] what the function of the exordium is, the plan of the *narratio*, the credibility of the *argumentatio*—whether we prove what [we have] related or refute what has been said against [us]—[and] how much force is in the peroration—whether the memory of the judge must be refreshed by a brief repetition of the facts or (what is far more effective) whether his emotions must be stirred (IV.Pr.6).¹¹⁴

How could Bach's intention in the *Musical Offering* be better summarized than in these words? Surely we need no longer assume that "this time Bach relinquished a[ny] higher idea to join together all these ingenious single pictures to an artistic unity"¹¹⁵ or that "no model existed for [the] disposition."¹¹⁶

Bach had also musical precedents: a theoretical one in the passage from Mattheson cited above (p. 94), and a practical one in the organ masses of Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali*, particularly the first of the three.¹¹⁷ It is well known that Bach studied Frescobaldi's music,¹¹⁸ possessed a copy of this work,¹¹⁹ and followed the Italian composer's practice when he notated the six-part ricercar in score. But no further relationship has been observed between the organ masses and the *Musical Offering*. Nor has it been recognized until recently that, under the influence of Italian humanism, even the music of the Mass had become infiltrated with Ciceronian rhetoric.¹²⁰ Frescobaldi's "Toccatà avanti la missa" and "Ricercar dopo il Credo" at the beginning of the two main divisions of the mass (Mass of the Word and Mass of the

¹¹⁴ This is about as close as Quintilian comes to summarizing the components of the speech. Since all classical rhetoricians wrote continuous prose without headings and enumerations, one should not expect to find a neatly numbered system (e.g. for the five forensic qualities or the five epideictic virtues). Their works were, however, easily and frequently reduced by humanist authors to such systems in the form of entire books of tables or "alberi," with all concepts arranged in categories by headings, subheadings, and sub-subheadings.

¹¹⁵ Spitta, II, p. 676.

¹¹⁶ *KB*, p. 123. Harry L. Levy, Duke University, has demonstrated in an unpublished lecture that Rubens modelled his cycle of paintings on the life of Maria Medici after the sections of the classical epideictic oration: see *Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, CV (1975), p. 46. A similar influence could be traced to a greater or lesser extent in much triumphal and panegyric art of antiquity and the Renaissance.

¹¹⁷ Rome, 1635 (modern editions: New York, London, and Frankfurt [c. 1943] and Kassel, 1954).

¹¹⁸ See C. P. E. Bach's letter of January 13, 1775, to Forkel, *Dok.*, III, p. 288.

¹¹⁹ Spitta, I, p. 418.

¹²⁰ W. Kirkendale, *L'Aria di Fiorenza, id est Il Ballo del Gran Duca* (Florence, 1972), pp. 35-40. John O'Malley, S.J., *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome* (Durham, N.C., 1979) deals with classical rhetoric in the sermons at the papal court.

Eucharist, respectively)¹²¹ correspond to the Ciceronian *principium* and *insinuatio* which introduced the *narratio* and *argumentatio*, respectively, and thus to Bach's dual ricercars.¹²² On the other hand, the two canzonas "dopo l'epistola" and "post il Communio" serve as the last organ pieces of the two main mass sections and thus have the functions of the *egressus* or small internal peroration (IV.iii.11-12) and of the peroration proper, at the end of the *argumentatio*. Frescobaldi uses canzonas here because, as the most modern (with tempo designations!), subjective, and lively type of piece in the organ mass,¹²³ they are best suited to release the affects which were characteristic of the classical peroration. By Bach's time, of course, the canzona had developed into the sonata.¹²⁴ Frescobaldi's "toccata cromatica per l'elevazione," framed by the second ricercar and second canzona (*insinuatio* and *peroratio*) may be seen not only as an *argumentatio* but perhaps also as the inspiration for Bach's use of chromaticism in the theme of his first *argumentatio* canon; in any case, chromaticism and dissonance are hallmarks of both Elevation pieces and the *argumentatio in musica*. And, finally, Bach's decision to provide musical equivalents to Quintilian's alternate *narrationes* and *perorationes* could have been influenced by Frescobaldi's Kyries and canzonas "alio modo, si placet." With the Italian organ mass the cantor of St. Thomas's thus found a precedent for the realization of a large-scale, functional, rhetorico-musical cycle, including dual exordia, chromatic *argumentatio*, and modern, "affective" peroration. That this model for Bach's work has hitherto been overlooked may be attributed to the Lutheran orientation of much Bach research. But, as Erich Schenk has rightly

¹²¹ The first Mass consists of the following items:

[Liturgy of the Word:]

Toccata avanti la Messa

[Kyrie pieces]

Canzon dopo la Pistola

[Liturgy of the Eucharist:]

Recercar dopo il Credo

Alio modo, si placet

Toccata cromatica per la levatione

Canzon post il Comune

Alio modo, si placet

The second and third Masses deviate only slightly from this arrangement by adding a "Toccata avanti il ricercar" and, in the third Mass, by giving specific song titles (Bergamasca, Girolmeta) for the final pair of canzonas.

¹²² W. Kirkendale, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians", p. 41, with reference to the German ecclesiastical rhetorician J. C. Böhmer, 1713.

¹²³ See Praetorius, pp. 16 and 24 [recte: 22]: "recht weltlich," "frisch, frölich unnd geschwind."

¹²⁴ A few years after Bach's death, Christophe Moyreau published five lengthy suites beginning with an overture and concluding with a concerto (Nos. 1, 3), sonata (Nos. 2, 4), or both (No. 5), preceded by a second overture—cf. Pierre Guillot, "Les livres de clavecin de Christophe Moyreau," *Recherches sur la musique française classique*, XI (1971), pp. 189-93 (kindly brought to our attention by David Fuller).

stressed,¹²⁵ Bach's genius was not limited by narrow confessional horizons; his debt to the Italians (and, we should now add, to the ancient Romans) is far greater than generally realized.

From the historical and rhetorical perspective the central problem of the *Musical Offering* now appears in a different light. A thematically unified musical work of moderate length has no obstacle to cyclic performance¹²⁶ once the sequence of its components has been understood. When these components are functionally analogous to the parts of an oration, such performance is as desirable as is the uninterrupted delivery of a speech. According to my interpretation, one of the two *narrationes* or two *perorationes*, respectively, might be omitted ad libitum, in the manner of the optional components of the oration or of Frescobaldi's mass cycles.

Music of renaissance and baroque composers, who had been immersed in the study of Latin rhetoric while in school, cannot be adequately understood on the basis of our twentieth-century curricula, where rhetoric hardly exists any longer as an academic discipline and where instruction in music theory is too often limited to mere descriptive analysis of sounds in a vacuum.¹²⁷ Because of this, Bach's instrumental music has come to be regarded (and performed) as "abstract," its rhetorical basis and function no longer understood.¹²⁸ To comprehend earlier composers we must try to reconstruct *their* educational and intellectual environment, restore the priority of humanistic methods, and perhaps even systematically exclude narrow and anachronistic modern attitudes which were unknown to them.

* * *

Finally, let us turn to the biographical facts, where further evidence, of circumstantial nature, can easily be found. Bach had studied

¹²⁵ "Das 'Musikalische Opfer'," p. 66.

¹²⁶ David, pp. 40 ff., quoted a relevant passage from Forkel (p. 22), describing Bach's manner of improvising cycles of independent, contrasting pieces on a single theme.

¹²⁷ E.g., David's chapter "Analyses" (pp. 103-52).

¹²⁸ The most notable exception is Kloppers' rhetorical study of Bach's organ music (pp. 56-106). Cf. also Isolde Ahlgrimm and Erich Fiala, "Bach und Rhetorik," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, IX (1954), pp. 342-6, on the Inventions. Spitta, who began his career as a classical philologist, had already observed (I, p. 666) that Bach compared these contrapuntal keyboard pieces to speech [thus anticipating the *Musical Offering*]. Anton Webern's highest praise for the *Art of Fugue* as "ein Werk, das völlig ins Abstrakte führt" has been characterized by Hans Gunther Hoke as "nicht nur seine eigene, sondern auch die Auffassung breiter Kreise musikhistorisch halbgebildeter Intellektueller"—"Neue Studien zur 'Kunst der Fuge' BWV 1080," *Beiträge zur*

rhetoric, of course, not only for the *Musical Offering*, but since his earliest years. At the excellent lyceum in Ohrdruf he had learned more Latin and rhetoric than any other subjects, and at the school of St. Michael in Lüneburg he progressed to more advanced readings in Latin authors, including Cicero's letters, orations, and philosophical works.¹²⁹ At the beginning of his tenure at the school of St. Thomas in Leipzig he taught Latin himself, and throughout his life he seems to have explained the rules of composition from the theory of rhetoric.¹³⁰ In letters of recommendation for a student he emphasized the training "in humanioribus" imparted at St. Thomas's.¹³¹ Another cantor, Heinrich Bokemeyer at the ducal school in Wolfenbüttel, alludes in fact to the *stilus latinus* of the Ciceronians precisely when he defends canonic writing against Mattheson's attack.¹³² But how did Bach come upon the idea of imitating Quintilian in music? Undoubtedly from contacts with his philologist colleagues, particularly Johann Matthias Gesner, who had been appointed co-rector of the gymnasium in Weimar in 1715, two years before Bach left that city, and was to serve as Bach's rector at the Thomasschule in Leipzig from 1730 until he became professor at the University of Göttingen in 1734.¹³³ In 1738 the distinguished philologist published a monumental edition

Musikwissenschaft, XVII (1975), p. 101. Also Gerber, pp. 65-6, regarded Bach's late works as merely abstract and quadrivial. The writings of those authors who have recognized the importance of rhetoric for music deserve more attention from students of the Renaissance and Baroque. But it is necessary also to begin reading and quoting the ancient rhetoricians themselves, not merely the later music theorists, who are dependent upon them.

¹²⁹ Spitta, I, pp. 184 ff., 214.

¹³⁰ Spitta, II, pp. 6-7, 13; see also II, p. 64, and Forkel, pp. 17 and 24: "Under his hand every piece spoke like an oration," "He regarded music as a language, the composer as a poet."

¹³¹ *Dok.*, I, pp. 48 ff. Very high linguistic standards were set by Bach's direct predecessor as cantor at St. Thomas's, Johann Kuhnau. He read not only Latin and Greek, but also Hebrew, and applied this knowledge systematically to his musical compositions. See Othmar Wessely, "Zur ars inveniendi im Zeitalter des Barock," *Orbis musicae*, I (1972), pp. 113-40.

¹³² "Wendet man aber ein: Es sey mit den *Canonibus* gezwungen Werk, und sie contentirten ein galant-gewohntes Ohr nicht; so dienet zur Antwort: Ein *Stilus latinus*, so pur nach den gemeinen *regulis Syntacticis* eingerichtet ist, kömmt gleichfals gezwungen und läppisch heraus. Gleichwohl kann ein galanter Ciceronianer der Syntactischen Regeln nicht entbehren. Wer also das *Artis est, occultare artem* recht zu practisiren weiss und ein zur Music aufgelegtes Naturell dabey *adbibirt*, der wird schon ein *delicates* Gehör zu vergnügen *capable* seyn" (in Johann Mattheson, *Critica Musica* (Hamburg, 1723), IV, p. 249).

¹³³ On Gesner see *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, IX (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 97-103; Luigi Ansbacher, "Sulla cantata profana No. 209" [perhaps not by Bach], in *Bach-Gedenkschrift 1950* (Zürich, 1950), pp. 163-77; and Friedrich Smend, "Johann Sebastian Bach und Johann Matthias Gesner," *Gymnasium*, LVII (1950), pp. 295-8.

of Quintilian, including in it a lengthy footnote which was soon to become famous in Bach literature.¹³⁴ It is a commentary on a passage in which Quintilian illustrates the capacity of the human mind to perform more than one function simultaneously, referring to the cithara player who sings, plays, and beats time all at once (I.xii.2-3). In the footnote, Gesner informs Quintilian's shade that this is nothing compared to Bach's playing the organ with hands and feet while directing and correcting his musicians, singing their cues, and so on. Now Gesner's lavish praise of his former colleague may have been motivated in part by the censure of Bach published by Johann Scheibe on May 14, 1737.¹³⁵ However, Quintilian gave Gesner no pretext to counter Scheibe's strictures of Bach's "turgid" style, but only to praise him as a performing musician, as Scheibe himself had already done.¹³⁶ Much more adequate was the defence of Bach by the Leipzig university rhetorician Johann Abraham Birnbaum in 1738, surely in consultation with the composer. It immediately addresses the most insulting part of Scheibe's diatribe: the designation of Bach as a mere "Musikant."¹³⁷ As Birnbaum's second instalment (1739) reveals, Bach was not flattered by Scheibe's [or even Gesner's?] praise of his manual dexterity, but wished to appear as a master of musical rhetoric:

He has such perfect knowledge of the parts and merits which the working out of a musical piece has in common with rhetoric, that one not only listens to him with satiating pleasure when he focuses his conversations on the similarity and correspondences of both [music and rhetoric]; but one also admires their clever application in his works. His insight into poetry is as good as one can expect from a great composer.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ *M. Fabii Quintiliani De institutione oratoria libri duodecim . . . perpetuo commentario illustrati a Io. Matthia Gesnero* (Göttingen, 1738), p. 61. The references to it by Schmutzer 1772, Kirnberger-Schulz 1773, Hiller 1784 ("ein grosser Gelehrter, . . . der berühmte Hofrath Gesner"), and Gerber 1790 are quoted in *Dok.*, III, pp. 238, 260, 403, 468. The Latin footnote itself is reproduced with a German translation in *Dok.*, II, pp. 331 ff., and in English translation in *The Bach Reader*, ed. Hans T. David, tr. Arthur Mendel (New York, 1945), p. 231.

¹³⁵ *Critischer Musikus*, reprinted Leipzig, 1745, p. 62.

¹³⁶ Contrary to Smend, p. 298, Gesner's note did not reveal "inneres Verständnis für das geistige Wesen der Bachschen Kunst als einer Rede, als einer Sprache in Tönen."

¹³⁷ Birnbaum, reprinted in Scheibe, p. 841.

¹³⁸ "Die Theile und Vortheile, welche die Ausarbeitung eines musikalischen Stücks mit der Rednerkunst gemein hat, kennet er so vollkommen, dass man ihn nicht nur mit einem ersättigenden Vergnügen höret, wenn er seine gründlichen Unterredungen auf die Aehnlichkeit und Uebereinstimmung beyder lenket; sondern man bewundert auch die geschickte Anwendung derselben, in seinen Arbeiten. Seine Einsicht in die Dichtkunst ist so gut, als man sie nur von einem großen Componisten verlangen kann" (Birnbaum, in Scheibe, p. 997). Cf. Forkel, p. 69, who calls Bach

What better evidence could we wish for Bach's rhetorical concept of the *Musical Offering* than this first-hand testimony to his perfect understanding of the *partes orationis* in music as well as in speech and to his custom of conversing with rhetoricians on the relationships between rhetoric and music? Is it not time that we look for "their clever application in his works"? Significantly, the defence was written not by a musician, but by a rhetorician of the old school, a competent philologist for whom the musician Scheibe was no match. The issue of the Scheibe-Bach polemics was not merely a personal one, but possibly reflected an antagonism of two larger factions in Leipzig: on the one hand, the conservatives, Bach, Gesner, and Birnbaum;¹³⁹ on the other, the progressive group of Gottsched and his disciples, none of whom was more fanatic than Scheibe. Gottsched's brand of Ciceronianism was modern, vernacular, and Scheibe postulated the fashionable galant style. Bach may well have known that Gottsched had dedicated his *Ausführliche Redekunst* to the Prussian crown prince Frederick in 1736, and he certainly knew that in the 1740s the galant style flourished at the Prussian court,¹⁴⁰ where the sovereign and his musicians, including C.P.E. Bach, were a generation younger than he. When he came to present a work to the king, he chose, notwithstanding the one concession with the galant sonata, to state his position clearly as master of the old, rhetorical music, not as a mere "Musikant," and thus to dissociate himself from the new trend represented by Scheibe. He may well have regarded the *Musical Offering* partly as his own answer to the assailant, and it is very likely that he again consulted with Birnbaum (d. 1748) while planning the work.¹⁴¹

Yet Bach must have sought to satisfy his patron. Frederick the Great was one of the few elite who still prided themselves on being disciples of Cicero.¹⁴² Already in his youth, as he wrote to Voltaire, he chose Cicero as his "friend and consoler" while he was under arrest. During the Seven Years' War the king took Cicero's works with

"den größten musikalischen Dichter und den größten musikalischen Declamator, den es je gegeben hat."

¹³⁹ Birnbaum's style was characterized as "ciceronisch" in the *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen* (Leipzig, 1735), p. 603.

¹⁴⁰ Quantz's chapters on musical performance are much indebted to Gottsched's treatment of *elocutio*.

¹⁴¹ From Mizler, I/4 (1738), p. 62, we know that Birnbaum had "eine gute Einsicht in die Musik" and played "ein artiges Clavier."

¹⁴² Eduard Zeller, *Friedrich der Große als Philosoph* (Berlin, 1886), *passim* and especially n. 117, reluctantly quotes many remarks in which Frederick expressed his great love of Cicero, e.g. to Voltaire, 6 July, 1737: "J'aime infiniment Cicéron." See also T. Zielinski, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1908), p. 307.

him to the battlefield: the *Tusculanae disputationes*, *De natura deorum*, *De finibus*. And still in his old age (1779) he ordered his bureaucrats to have more ancient authors, including Cicero, translated into the vernacular.¹⁴³ There were few cities in Germany with a Cicero cult comparable to that of Potsdam. One of these was Leipzig, with its university and book publishers. Here Bach must have learned, at least from hearsay, of Frederick's partiality.

We need not be surprised that Bach did not reveal openly his grandiose rhetorico-musical plan, which now comes to light after so many years. Like the enigmatic canons and the Latin acrostic and epiphonemata, the entire work was a high play of wit, destined, perhaps as a reciprocating challenge, for an elevated personage who not only was a Ciceronian, but also had a more than ordinary understanding of music. If Bach had explained his secret to the king, he would have destroyed his compliment, or at least its subtlety; to have alluded to it in the newspaper announcement, directed at the "profanum vulgus," would have been no less than an insult. Artists, writers, composers in the humanistic tradition guarded jealously the secrets of their work from the unenlightened public.¹⁴⁴ Thus, when Dürer maintained silence on occult matters, he did so in order to add to his humanistic credentials.¹⁴⁵ Bach's intention could not have been otherwise. *Musica reservata* is only one manifestation of the humanistic concept of a high art, intelligible only to the elite, since its effect is based on understanding, not mere sensual pleasure. This tradition too was part of the revival of ancient rhetoric. Quintilian's words "docti rationem componendi intelligunt, etiam indocti voluptas" ("the learned understand the principle of artistic composition, yet the ignorant receive [only] pleasure"—IX.iv.116) echo a passage from Cicero quoted by Johann Joseph Fux in his *Gradus ad Parnassum*: "Listen to Cicero speaking on this matter: 'Others,' he says, 'when they read good orations or poems, commend the orators and poets, but do not understand what moves them to commendation, because they cannot know where, what, or how that is made which delights them most.'" ¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ As a child, Frederick learned Latin only until his eleventh year, secretly under the tutorship of his mother, against his father's will. Throughout his life he read the ancient authors in French translations.

¹⁴⁴ See Edward E. Lowinsky, *Secret Chromatic Art in the Netherlands Motet* (New York, 1946), *passim*.

¹⁴⁵ William S. Heckscher, "Melancholia (1541): An Essay in the Rhetoric of Description by Joachim Camerarius," in *Joachim Camerarius*, ed. Frank Baron (Munich, 1978), pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁶ Fux, *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Vienna, 1725), p. 240.

Bach's friend and pupil Lorenz Mizler, who published a German translation of Fux's *Gradus* in 1742, epitomized the *eruditio musica* with his Correspondirende Societät der musikalischen Wissenschaften in Deutschland, founded in 1738 "to bring to perfection the musical sciences, not merely what concerns history, but also what pertains to them in philosophy, mathematics, rhetoric, and poetry."¹⁴⁷ Members were admitted only by election; their number was limited to, but never quite reached, twenty, and included Christoph Gottlieb Schröter, Heinrich Bokemeyer (see above, p. 132), Telemann, Stölzel, Spiess, and Handel (honorary member).¹⁴⁸ "Mere practical musicians" could not be admitted, "because they are incapable of contributing anything to the reception and improvement of music."¹⁴⁹ Members agreed to defend any one of their number who was attacked in print,¹⁵⁰ as Bach was supported by Mizler and Schröter against Scheibe even before he joined the society¹⁵¹ in June, 1747, as the fourteenth member (B-a-c-h = 2 + 1 + 3 + 8 = 14).¹⁵² For this occasion he composed the Canonic Variations (BWV 769) and the six-part enigmatic canon BWV 1076, and had the required portrait¹⁵³ painted by E. G. Haussmann. Like the other members, he was now obliged to submit at least one work each year to the society.¹⁵⁴ Such works were circulated regularly by the secretary Mizler to the membership in the society's "Paket."¹⁵⁵ H. G.

¹⁴⁷ Mizler, I/4 (1738), p. 74. The society's statutes and other relevant information are given here, pp. 73-6, and, revised and expanded, in III/2 (1746), pp. 346-62.

¹⁴⁸ III/2, p. 357.

¹⁴⁹ I/4, p. 74; III/2, p. 349.

¹⁵⁰ III/2, p. 354.

¹⁵¹ I/4, pp. 62-73 (reprint of Birnbaum's first defence of Bach); II/1 (1740), pp. 146-8 (condemnation of Scheibe and mention of Birnbaum's second defence); III/1 (1746), pp. 203-5, 235.

¹⁵² *Dok.*, III, p. 78, and F. Smend, *Johann Sebastian Bach bei seinem Namen gerufen* (Kassel, 1950), p. 27. Bach's entry, like his compositions for the society (see below), was prepared well in advance—see Hoke, p. 98 and no. 52 (Haussmann and Mizler III/2, p. 357, both 1746). If Bach's initial conception of a complete musical oration dates back, as I suspect, to the year of Gesner's and Birnbaum's publications (1738), he may even have followed Horace's famous counsel not to publish a work until nine years have passed (1747), "nonumque prematur in annum" (*Ars poetica*, line 388, quoted by Quintilian in his dedication; the entire work was applied to music by Mizler, III/2, pp. 605-35, who used, on p. 607, the formulation "musikalisches Opfer" in the sense of "serenade"). Once Bach made the plan, he could execute it with any suitable theme.

¹⁵³ Mizler, III/2, p. 353.

¹⁵⁴ III/2, p. 350: "jährlich wenigstens eine Abhandlung." Though for most members this was a literary work, the wording "in der Ausübung nützlich" and "die practische Musik immer höher bringen[d]" left Bach free to write his "Abhandlung" in music.

¹⁵⁵ I/4, p. 74; III/2, p. 350.

Hoke recently identified the *Musical Offering* as Bach's contribution for 1748 and argued plausibly that Bach intended the *Art of Fugue* as his final magnificent fulfillment of this requirement in 1749, before he was dispensed by virtue of becoming sixty-five years of age.¹⁵⁶ These conclusions are based on a letter of September 1, 1747, to Spiess, in which Mizler mentions visiting Bach and being told of "his trip to Berlin and the story of the fugue that he played for the king, which very soon will be engraved in copper and included in the *Paket* of the Society."¹⁵⁷ With the *Musical Offering* Bach thus did his duty both to the king and to the society. Such an eventuality was already foreseen in the statutes: "When great amateurs and noble patrons of the musical sciences help to advance the intentions of the Society through their generosity . . . the Society will show its gratitude by preparing musical compositions dedicated to such persons."¹⁵⁸ We do not know, however, whether Frederick ever patronized this first "German Musiological Society," just as we do not know to what extent he appreciated the rhetoric of Bach's musical homage. But with the help of Quintilian, we now begin to understand it. Should not the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* reissue the work with its *disiecta membra* arranged in the manner that properly conveys the composer's brilliant ideas?¹⁵⁹

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I am most grateful to my husband for extensive assistance with this article, after my speech became impaired as a result of a stroke. It is my view (but not his) that his contribution—approximately one third of the ideas and formulations—would warrant publication under both our names. To Edward Lowinsky and Bonnie Blackburn I am deeply indebted for numerous suggestions. I also thank Gerhard Herz for reading the manuscript and advising me on certain Bach problems. Lectures based on this article were presented in 1979 by my husband in my name at the Universities of London (King's College) and Berlin, Cologne, Bonn, Basel, Zürich (E.T.H.), the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt (co-sponsored by the University), the

¹⁵⁶ Hoke, pp. 100–1; cf. Mizler, III/2, p. 355, on the dispensation. The title "Art of Fugue" connects with the classical tradition (*Ars rhetorica*, *Ars poetica*, *Ars amatoria*, etc.).

¹⁵⁷ *Dok.*, II, p. 557. Since the *Musical Offering* and the *Art of Fugue* are among the very few works of Bach printed during his lifetime, it is quite possible that these editions, like BWV 769 and 1076, have some connection with the plans of the society to publish works from the "Paket" (Mizler, III/2, p. 350), even though the editions seem to have been initiated by the composer.

¹⁵⁸ I/4, pp. 75–6; III/2, p. 354.

¹⁵⁹ The only satisfactory edition is still Ludwig Landshoff's "Urtext" (Peters, 1937). This article does not, of course, exhaust all the parallels between Quintilian's treatise and the *Musical Offering*: scholars will surely discover additional ones.

Osterreichische Gesellschaft für Musik in Vienna, Duke University, and the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in New York City.

APPENDIX: TABLE OF CONCORDANCES

QUINTILIAN

Proem to Book IV

vota [to the Muses and the Emperor]

Exordium I (Principium)

ductus officio reipublicae aut non
mediocris exempli
extemporalis oratio, celare artem

neque diu moraturos

docere
simplex, ex proximo sermo
delectare
agitare
miseratio
e contrario ductis, superbum
breviter, summa rei

Narratio brevis

percursorio

brevis
gravius ac sanctius
varietas, mutationes
ne pares tractus
oratio perpetua

*Narratio longa*¹⁶²

transitus efficiat sententiam
res diversissimas colligentem
partitio

BACH¹⁶⁰

Title/Dedication

“Ew. Mayestät weyhe . . . ein
Musicalisches Opfer”

Ricercar [a 3]

theme from head of state; audience
in Potsdam
improvisatory, free episodes
prominent
short episodes, frequent changes of
style
fugal elements, “learned” style
simple rhythms
triplet episodes
alla zoppa, Pyrrhic rhythm
sighs, chromatic melody
inversion of chromatic melody
summary of various devices to be
used later

Canon Perpetuus super Thema Regium

summary of motives to be elaborated
in the five *canones diversi*
only five measures long
“royal” style
variety of rhythmic motives
mixed meters¹⁶¹
perpetual canon

[5] *Canones Diversi*

acrostic
five *canones diversi* [ssimi]
division into five canons

¹⁶⁰ The five printer's units are separated by horizontal lines. The left column consists of key words, not complete quotations, from Quintilian; ellipses are therefore not indicated.

¹⁶¹ See n. 48.

¹⁶² *f* stands for the five forensic qualities, *e* for the five epideictic virtues.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. <i>f</i>: ne quid naturae adversum
<i>e</i>: robur
Homer: Achilles idle, then
rises, "swift-footed"</p> | <p>1. crab canon, one staff, <i>genus subtile</i>
simple rhythm
slow and fast (running) rhythms,
respectively; <i>anabasis</i> ("steht
auf")</p> |
| <p>2. <i>f</i>: qualis in comoediis etiam in
mimis
translationibus crebrior, figuris
iucundior
sententiis dulcis
mite ac placidum, blandum
et humanum
<i>e</i>: pulchritudo
Homer: three gods and a king
Jupiter's thunderbolt
Mars marshalling scattered
troops
Neptune

Agamemnon pre-eminent
"Such did Jupiter make
Agamemnon"</p> | <p>2. <i>genus medium</i>, <i>stilus theatralis</i>, <i>ethos</i>,
<i>mimesis</i>
<i>subjectio</i> [see also below, Homer:
<i>catabasis</i>, <i>circulus</i>, <i>mimesis</i>]
ingratiating music

richer instrumentation (violins)
richer instrumentation (violins)
<i>catabasis</i>
motives separated in pitch,
Pyrrhic rhythm
<i>circulus</i> (waves), "rocking,"
Pyrrhic rhythm
large leaps, Pyrrhic rhythm
<i>mimesis</i> (canon at the unison,
imitating the gods)</p> |
| <p>3. <i>f</i>: simplicitatis imitatio

acumen
<i>e</i>: infirmitas
Homer: Tydeus, bellator
parvus</p> | <p>3. canon by contrary motion, <i>genus</i>
<i>subtile</i>, diminution, narrow
range
high range
[as above, <i>simplicitas</i>]
[small stature of Frederick]</p> |
| <p>4. <i>f</i>: magnificentia
amplitudo paeanis
incrementum [augmentatio]
hyperbole
<i>e</i>: dignitas</p> | <p>4. <i>genus grande</i>, "royal" style
paean rhythm
augmentation
rise above ambitus
[as above, <i>magnificentia</i>]</p> |
| <p>4-5. epiphonema in clausula rei
narratae: Fortuna dignitatem
et gloriam parit</p> | <p>4-5. epigrams: <i>fortuna</i>, <i>gloria</i></p> |
| <p>5. <i>f</i>: evidentia

ex accidentibus
magna virtus

<i>e</i>: gloria</p> | <p>5. rising modulation <i>per tonos</i>,
leading to:
profusion of accidentals
<i>genus grande</i>: paean and dactylic
rhythm
[as above, <i>evidentia</i>]</p> |

Egressus

finis narrationis
in aliquam laetum locum
iactatio

Fuga Canonica

after five *canones diversi*
"pleasant" music
contrapuntal artistry

maxime ornare
cohaeret et sequitur

extended length
thematically related

Exordium II (Insinuatio)

Ricercar a 6

insinuatio surrepat animis

unobtrusive, disguised entries, no
differentiation of tone color
(keyboard)

[*Argumentatio*]

[*Two Enigmatic Canons*]


quaestiones
hortor ad quaerendum et inveniri
posse fateor

riddle canons
"quaerendo invenietis"

Probatio (accusatio)
simplicior [quam refutatio]

Canon a 2
only two voices, half as long as

e contrario ductis
clamosa

Canon a 4
contrary motion
 -motives, etc.

Refutatio
neque ex aliis locis quam in
[probatione]

Canon a 4
theme related to Canon a 2 (*thema
regium* with upbeat, conjunct
motion)

mille artes

four voices, twice as long as
previous canon (and:)

neget, molliat, minuat
avertat; flexus

descending subdominant sequence
winding figures

Peroratio in Affectibus

Sonata

liberior

no longer strict style of canon or
fugue

plenior

fuller instrumentation, four
movements

totos eloquentiae aperire fontes

affective style, pathos, tempo
indications

quae pathos concitavit, ethos mitigat

pathos dispersed by *ethos* of fourth
movement

eloquentia regnat
maxime debet crescere oratio
fictam orationem induere personis,
defunctos excitare
concitare adfectos

royal performer
highest pitch
Largo: declamatory sighs in upper
parts, lamento bass

sicut amantes

Allegro: syncopated and Pyrrhic
rhythm, concertizing

cum ad summam perduxerimus,
relinquamus

Andante: passionate sighs, echo
effects, Eb-pathos
abrupt ending

miserationem discutere urbane dictis
velocior

Allegro: ethos, triplets
fast, breathless, few rests

Peroratio in Rebus

rerum repetitio, enumeratio, figuris
varianda
cum pondere
[sine] recta repetitione

Canon Perpetuus

some thematic material from
probatio-canon, but varied
alla breve time
contrary motion