

Bach's Organ Music in the Context of the Liturgy

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FOR GERMAN LUTHERANS IN THE seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the organ was more than just a musical instrument. First, it had a venerable history, rooted in the worship rites of the Hebrews. Thus in the three-volume Bible commentary that J.S. Bach owned,¹ the editor Abraham Calov, instead of commenting on those verses of Psalm 150 that refer to different instruments, simply cites Rabbi Arama: “the trumpet is used for the New Moon, the drum for days of penitence, the psaltery and zither for the tenth day of the tenth moon, the organ for the Feast of Tabernacles, [and] the cymbals for the great Hosanna.”²

Second, the organ was seen to have theological significance. In many editions of Johann Arndt's *Wahres Christenthum*, the chapters were embellished by a series of emblematic engravings that were also described in the text.³ Bach owned a copy of this work, although we cannot be sure that his was an edition that included engravings.⁴ If he did have such a copy then he would surely have noticed that in the second part of Book 4, chapter 36, there was a picture of an organ, with the following text given at the head of the chapter:

Here is portrayed an organ, whose pipes, great and small, produce a mellow harmony, by the fine interaction of the voices, which awakens no limited joy in people; thus when individuals are one with God, and love him sincerely, there

¹ See Robin A. Leaver, *Bachs theologische Bibliothek: Eine kritische Bibliographie. Beiträge zur theologischen Bachforschung* 1 (Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1983), 46–51.

² Abraham Calov, *Die heilige Bibel nach S. Herrn D. Martini Lutheri deutscher Dolmetschung und Erklärung vermöge des Heil. Geistes im Grund-Text ...* (Wittenberg: Schrödter, 1681–1682), 2, cols. 873–4: “das die Posaune zum Neumonden/ die Paucke zum Buß Tagen/ der Psalter und Cither zum zehenden Tag des zehenden Monden/ die Orgel zum Lauber-Hütten-fest/ dies cymbeln zum großen Hosianna gebraucht seyn.” Though Calov did not provide a source, he was clearly quoting Rabbi Isaac ben Moshe Arama (1420–94).

³ The *Wahres Christenthum* was first published in Braunschweig and Magdeburg between 1606 and 1609, with numerous reprints well into the nineteenth century.

⁴ Leaver, *Bachs theologische Bibliothek*, 184–7.

is a confirmation of such unity and harmony with God, a very great joy and a foretaste of eternal life, when love and joy are so loudly proclaimed.⁵

This argument parallels that of the early church fathers, who often suggested that the unity of the church was represented by the unison sound of the unaccompanied congregation, singing “with one voice.” In this case it is not the varied voices of the congregation that sound together, but rather the many different “voices” of the organ. Thus the euphony of the organ stops was emblematic of the union of each different individual with God: a loud harmony of rejoicing.⁶

Third, the organ was emblematic of worship, both on earth and in heaven. Another book that was almost certainly in Bach’s library was Heinrich Müller’s *Himmlicher Liebes-Kuß*.⁷ Müller’s work, like Arndt’s *Wahres Christenthum*, was expanded over the years, and it appeared with similar emblematic engravings.⁸ One of the engravings shows two organs and has the following text (see Figure 1):

From the heart I praise thee, that thou with thy goodness,
O great and wonderful God, makes my mind joyful.
Heaven praises thee, heaven and here on earth,
thus when I praise thee, so do the angels.⁹

Note again that organs are linked with promoting joy. The top of the engraving depicts the worship of heaven: floating on a cloud are winged angels singing and playing harps, encircling an organ. The center of the engraving portrays worship on earth, in a highly unusual setting; here, the organ is surrounded by instrumentalists and singers but, instead of being shown in a

⁵ Johann Arndt, *Vom Wahren Christenthum* (Frankfurt/Main: Möller, 1725), 1003; idem. (Reutlingen: Kurtz, 1833), 546: “Hier ist eine Orgel abgebildet, deren Pfeifen groß und klein eine liebliche Harmonie geben, weil sie fein einträchtig zusammen stimmen, und daher bey den Menschen eine nicht geringe Freude erwecken; also, wenn der Mensch mit Gott einig ist, daß er ihn herzlich liebet, so hat er auch solcher Einigkeit, da er mit Gott eines Sinnes ist und harmoniret, eine sehre große Freude und einen vorschmack des ewigen Lebens, als welches in lauter Liebe und Freude bestehen wird.”

⁶ Book 4/2, chapter 36, is headed: “Von der Frucht der Liebe Gottes, nemlich der Freude in Gott” (Of the Fruit of the Love of God, namely Joy in God).

⁷ *Himmlicher Liebes-Kuß* was first published in Frankfurt and Leipzig in 1659.

⁸ Leaver, *Bachs theologische Bibliothek*, 152-6.

⁹ “Von hertzen Lob ich dich weil du mit deinen Güte,/ O Wunder-grossen Gott! erfreuest mein Gemüthe./ Der Himmel lobet dich, den Himmel hier auf Erden,/ Dab ich wann ich dich Lob, so müß man Englisch werden.” Leaver, *Bachs theologische Bibliothek*, 156.



Figure 1 Heinrich Müller, *Himmlicher Liebes-Kuß* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1659), plate 26

church, with the accompanying musicians in various galleries as one sees in the famous woodcut title-pages of Michael Praetorius, the organ is placed in a cutaway section of what purports to be a human heart. This is another example of the development of a more subjective piety in the period following the Thirty Years War: a movement that, on such evidence, has been termed “Lutherische Orgelfrommigkeit” (Lutheran organ piety).¹⁰

¹⁰ See Christian Bunnars, “Der Orgelstreit in Otterndorf um 1660 und seine Folgen für die lutherische Orgelkultur,” *Männer vom Morgenstern Heimatbund an Elb- und Wesermündung Jahrbuch* 84 (2005): 25-48, esp. 37-43.

Fourth, the organ was fundamentally a liturgical instrument. In 1658 an inscription was placed on the organ in a church in Nordhausen:

Sound well all your pipes
To glorify God alone,
Fill, with your sounds,
The Church, the house of the Lord,
And also diligently rouse
The mouths and tongues of the people,
That they with understanding,
And from the depths of their hearts,
Sing the Psalms of David
And the spiritual songs
Of Dr. Luther's composition,
Simply and without ostentation.
From strange melody,
From all false doctrine,
From Calvinistic screaming,
Lord, preserve us evermore.¹¹

Here the liturgical role of the organ is clearly defined. Its primary task is to lead the people in public worship, and therefore it is closely, though not exclusively, linked with the Lutheran chorale: a genre that the Nordhausen organ inscription suggests is much more sophisticated than Calvinist psalmody! The various Lutheran chorale-based organ genres—preludes (short and long), accompaniments, partitas, variations, and so forth—therefore served to introduce, support, and expound the distinctive melodies associated with public worship.

From his earliest years, J.S. Bach was exposed to the many-faceted role of the organ in relation to the chorale within the Lutheran liturgy: in Eisenach, with his father's cousin Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703), organist of the Georgenkirche; in Ohrdruf, with his brother Johann Christoph (1671-1721), who had studied with Pachelbel; and in Lüneburg with Georg Böhm

¹¹ "Klingt wohl ihr Pfeiffen all,/ Doch Gott allein zu Ehren./ Erfüllt mit euren Schall/ Die Kirche, das Haus des Herrn,/ Ermuntert auch mit Fleiß/ Der Leute Mund und Zungen,/ Daß sie auf solche Weiß/ Von Grund des Hertzens singen/ Die Psalmen Davids schon./ Die geistlichen Gesänge,/ Nach Dr. Luthers-Ton/ Einfältig ohn Gepränge./ Für fremder Melodey,/ Für aller falschen Lehr,/ Für Calvini Geschrey/ Allzeit Herr uns bewahr." Johannes Schäfer, *Nordhäuser Orgelchronik: Geschichte der Orgelwerke in der tausendjährigen Stadt Nordhausen am Harz. Beiträge zur Musikforschung* 5 (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1939; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1971), 33.

(1661-1733), organist of the Johanniskirche. He also encountered the chorale compositions of earlier members of the Bach family and other north German composers, and the young Bach traveled great distances to hear such masters as Reincken in Hamburg and Buxtehude in Lübeck.

It is clear, however, that Bach did not confine his interests narrowly to Lutheran liturgical organ music: he also made early studies of Roman Catholic organ music, especially by French composers. This interest might be traced to his years in Lüneburg between 1700 and 1703, since many of the musicians at the court of Celle, some fifty miles south of Lüneburg, were French. Thus the young Bach may well have traveled to Celle, or alternatively, he could have had contact with these French musicians when they performed in one of the castles in or near Lüneburg belonging to the duke of Celle. Whatever the sources and influences, it is certain that there were several collections of liturgical organ music, specifically written for the Catholic Mass by French composers, that were known to Bach. In Weimar he made a hand-written copy of Nicolas de Grigny's *Première livre d'Orgue* (Paris, 1700),¹² and presumably around the same time he obtained or created a copy of Pierre du Mage's *Livre d'Orgue* (Paris, 1708-1712).¹³ Again, presumably in Weimar when both Bach and Johann Gottfried Walther were mutually sharing and copying works for organ by various composers, Walther made a manuscript copy of André Raison's *Première livre d'Orgue* (Paris, 1687):¹⁴ a work that Bach probably knew, since the first half of the theme of his great C minor Passacaglia (BWV 582) is identical with the ostinato of *Christe eleison – Trio en passacaille* in Raison's collection

¹² Kirsten Beißwenger, *Johann Sebastian Bachs Notenbibliothek* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), 287-9 [I/G/3]. Johann Gottfried Walther began to make a copy from Bach's manuscript; see facsimiles of the original print and the two manuscripts: Pierre Hardouin et al. eds., *Premier livre d'orgue, édition originale, 1699, copie manuscrite de J.S. Bach, copie manuscrite de J.G. Walther* (Courlay: Fuzeau, 2001).

¹³ In his defense of Bach against Scheibe's attack, Johann Abraham Birnbaum referred to the *Livres d'orgue* of both Nicolas de Grigny and Pierre du Mage, in connection with written-out ornamentation. The presumption is that Birnbaum consulted Bach in writing the defense, and since Bach is known to have owned a copy of de Grigny he must also have had a copy of du Mage, especially given the nature of the discussion of written-out ornamentation; Beißwenger, *Bachs Notenbibliothek*, 351-2 (II/D/1). See also Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze, eds., *Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs, 1685-1750: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1969), 304 (No. 409) (hereafter *Bach-Dokumente 2*); Hans T. David, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff, eds., *The New Bach Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 346 (No. 344).

¹⁴ Hermann Wilhelm Egel, *Johann Gottfried Walthers Leben und Werke. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der philosophischen Doktorwürde der Hohen Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904), 36-7.

HAUPTGOTTESDIENST		
<i>Kyrie</i>		
Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit	c - <i>cf soprano a 2 Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV669
Christe, aller Welt Trost	c - <i>cf tenor a 2 Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV670
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist	c - <i>cf bass a 2 Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV671
Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit	G - <i>Manualiter</i>	BWV672
Christe, aller Welt Trost	C - [<i>Manualiter</i>]	BWV673
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist	a - [<i>Manualiter</i>]	BWV674
<i>Gloria</i>		
Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr	F - [<i>Manualiter</i>] a 3 <i>cf in alto</i>	BWV675
Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr	G - a 2 <i>Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV676
Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr	f - <i>Fughetta super</i> [<i>Manualiter</i>] [a 3]	BWV677

Table 1 Liturgical Structure of Clavierübung III

of liturgical organ music.¹⁵ There is also the possibility that Bach became aware of the liturgical organ music composed for Catholic use by Louis Marchand, perhaps in the time preceding the aborted contest of Dresden in 1717. Adlung reported that Bach knew of Marchand's *Pièces de Clavecin*¹⁶ and it would seem unlikely that he did not also know some of Marchand's liturgical organ works. In addition to the French *Livres d'Orgue* Bach also made a manuscript copy of the Italian liturgical music of Girolamo Frescobaldi, the *Fiori musicali* (Venice, 1635); the manuscript, which is now no longer extant, bore the inscription "J. S. Bach 1714."¹⁷

These French and Italian collections contain mostly organ pieces intended to be played during Mass, often based on or connected to the chants of both

¹⁵ Beißwenger, *Bachs Notenbibliothek*, 369 (II/R/1); see also Peter Williams, *The Organ Works of J. S. Bach*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183; and Victoria Horn, "French Influence in Bach's Organ Works," in *J. S. Bach as Organist: His Instruments, Music, and Performance Practices*, ed. George Stauffer and Ernest May (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 259-60.

¹⁶ Jacob Adlung, *Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit* (Erfurt: Jungnicol, 1758), 711, 716; Hans-Joachim Schulze, ed., *Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs, 1750-1800* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972), 124-5 (No. 696) (hereafter *Bach-Dokumente* 3).

¹⁷ Beißwenger, *Bachs Notenbibliothek*, 284 (I/F/2).

VESPERGOTTESDIENST		
<i>Catechism Preludes</i>		
<i>Commandments</i>		
Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot	G - <i>cf in Canone a 2 Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV678
Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot	G - <i>Fughetta super Manualiter [a 3]</i>	BWV679
<i>Creed</i>		
Wir glauben all an einen Gott	d - <i>In organo pleno</i>	BWV680
Wir glauben all an einen Gott	e - <i>Fughetta super Manualiter</i>	BWV681
<i>Lord's Prayer</i>		
Vater unser Himmelreich	b - <i>cf in Canone a 2 Clav e Pedale</i>	BWV682
Vater unser im Himmelreich	d - <i>Manualiter</i>	BWV683
<i>Baptism</i>		
Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam	g - <i>2 Clav e cf in Pedale</i>	BWV684
Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam	d - <i>Manualiter</i>	BWV685
<i>Confession</i>		
Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir	e - <i>a 6. In organo pleno con Pedale doppio</i>	BWV686
Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir	f - <i>a 4 Manualiter</i>	BWV687
<i>Lord's Supper</i>		
Jesus Christus unser Heiland, der von	d - <i>2 Clav e cf in Pedale</i>	BWV688
Jesus Christus unser Heiland, der von	f - <i>Fuga super a 4 Manualiter</i>	BWV689

Table 1 Liturgical Structure of Clavierübung III (continued)

Ordinary and Propers, with a particular emphasis on the Offertory and Elevation. While parts of the Ordinary had a continued significance in Lutheran liturgy, in both Latin and German, the Offertory and Elevation had long been eliminated. But added to such Propers as Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and so on, was the distinctive Lutheran congregational Proper, that is, the *Graduallied*—the hymn of the day, the primary hymn of the Eucharistic main service, the *Hauptgottesdienst*. Around the same time that Bach encountered these collections of Catholic liturgical organ music, he began his projected collection of small-scale chorale preludes, mostly for the church year, thus providing for the Lutheran liturgy something akin to the *Livres d’Orgue* of Catholic composers. Even its title, “Orgelbüchlein,” seems to echo the French *Livre d’Orgue*.¹⁸ With the *Orgelbüchlein* Bach broke new ground. These chorale preludes are much more complex than the earlier models, and therefore parallel the compositions of his French and Italian Catholic counterparts while being based on chorales rather than Latin Mass chants. Like a major part of the *Orgelbüchlein*, the Catholic collections of liturgical organ music are connected to the church year, as in Frescobaldi’s *Fiori musicali* with its provisions for Sundays, Apostle days, and Marian Feasts. But most of the pieces in these collections are much more closely connected to specific liturgical texts and actions, especially in the Mass but also at Vespers. In this, Bach’s later collection of organ pieces, the *Clavierübung* III of 1739, approximates more closely to the Catholic models of collections of liturgical organ music than does the *Orgelbüchlein*, and thus can be seen as a Lutheran *Livre d’Orgue* (see Table 1), since most of its contents are closely related to the Lutheran Eucharistic *Hauptgottesdienst* and Catechetical *Vespergottesdienst*.¹⁹

Of course, Bach was never again an organist by profession following his departure from Weimar in 1717. Nevertheless he continued to play and compose for the organ, as well as act as organ consultant and recitalist: so much so that he was characterized as “the world-famous organist” in the first sentence of his obituary by C.P.E. Bach and Johann Friedrich Agricola.²⁰ Nonetheless, an examination of the use of the organ in the Leipzig churches may shed light on how organs were employed elsewhere in Lutheran Germany, and provide a framework for understanding how Bach’s organ music functioned liturgically.

¹⁸ The title was added some time after many of the preludes had been entered into the manuscript.

¹⁹ See Robin A. Leaver, “Bach’s *Clavierübung* III: Some Historical and Theological Considerations,” *The Organ Yearbook* (1975): 17-32.

²⁰ *Bach-Dokumente* 3, 80 (No. 666); *The New Bach Reader*, 297 (No. 306).

A fair amount of documentary evidence comes from Bach himself, and may supplement the information to be found in collections such as the *Clavierübung*. Sometime between 1723 and 1736, Bach inscribed the liturgical sequence for the First Sunday in Advent on the covers of the manuscript scores of both Cantatas 61 and 62, chorale cantatas on *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*. The lists are almost identical and both document the use of the organ. "Preluding" on the organ is required at the following junctures in the *Hauptgottesdienst*:²¹

Before the opening motet

Before the concerted Kyrie

Before the "Chorale," that is, before the *Graduallied* sung in between the Epistle and Gospel.

Before the "Haupt Music," that is the Cantata, or Part 1 of the Cantata.

Before Part 2 of the cantata, or a second cantata, sung during the distribution of Communion.

Following this cantata, or part of a cantata, the remainder of the time required for the distribution is taken up with alternating organ chorale preludes and congregational hymns.

Tables 2 and 3 are compiled from information found in Bach's own lists, notes from the St. Thomas sexton, Johann Thomas Rost, the Saxon *Agenda*, the *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten* of 1694 and the *Leipziger Kirchen Staat* of 1710.²²

The *Hauptgottesdienst* begins with organ "preluding" (Table 2.1): presumably an improvised lead-in to the Motet, Introit, or Latin hymn that followed. The placement of the E-flat prelude (BWV552/1) at the beginning of *Clavierübung* III suggests that it was intended as the prelude to either the *Hauptgottesdienst* or *Vespergottesdienst*, and conversely that the so-called "St. Anne" fugue (BWV 552/2) that appears at the end of *Clavierübung* III was intended as a postlude. This suggests, in turn, that others of Bach's large-scale preludes and fugues for

²¹ Werner Neumann, ed., *Schriftstücke von der Hand Johann Sebastian Bachs* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 248 and 251 (Nos. 178 and 181).

²² "Nachricht wie es in der Kirchen zu St. Thom: allhier, mit dem Gottesdienst, jährlichen sowohl an Hohen Festen, als andern Tagen, pfelet gehalten werden. Auffgezeichnet von Johann Christoph Rosten, Custode ad D. Thomae. Anno 1716," Ms., St. Thomas archive, without shelf-mark, with entries in later years and by other hands; *Agenda, das ist: Kirchen-Ordnung, Wie sich Pfarrherren und Seelsorger in ihren Aemtern und Diensten verhalten sollen ...* (Leipzig: Lanckisch, 1712), originally published 1539/40 and reprinted numerous times; *Leipziger Kirchen-Andachten, Darrinen Der Erste Theil Das Gebetbuch, Oder Die Ordnung des gantzen öffentlichen Gottes-Dienste ... Der Ander Theil Das Gesangbuch* (Leipzig: Wüdig, 1694); *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat, Das ist Deutlicher Unterricht vom Gottes-Dienst in Leipzig* (Leipzig: Groschuff, 1710).

- 1 Organ prelude**
- 2 Latin Motet or Introit or Hymn**
 Latin Motet = mostly in the Trinity season. Usually from Erhard Bodenschatz, *Florilegium selectissimarum cantionem* [= part I] (Leipzig 1603; 2nd enlarged ed. 1618). *Florilegium Portense* [= part II] (Leipzig 1621). 9 part books = 8 vocal parts + figured bass part, implying **continuo organ** and string bass.
 Introit = traditional chant form, only during Advent and Lent.
 Latin Hymn = only on high festivals: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity
- 3 Missa**
Kyrie Sung by the choir, either plainsong or, at high festivals, a concerted setting; **preceded by an organ prelude**
 OR: Congregational hymn: *Kyrie Gott Vater in ewigkeit*, **preceded by a chorale prelude**.
Gloria “Gloria in excelsis Deo” intoned by celebrant, followed by the choir singing “Et in terra pax,” sung in plainsong or concerted setting in the same way as the *Kyrie*. Followed by the congregational hymn: *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, **preceded by an organ prelude**
- 4 Salutation** (intoned), “Dominus vobiscum, &c.”
- 5 Verse and Collect** (intoned in German on Sundays; in Latin on festivals)
- 6 Epistle** (intoned in German on Sundays; in Latin on festivals)
- 7 Luther's German Litany** Only sung during Advent and Lent. Sung by two choirs: the first, in unison, singing the petitions; the second responding in 4-pt harmony-with unison congregation **and organ accompaniment**
- 8 Gradualled** [Detempore Lied/Hymn-of-the-Day], **preceded by an organ prelude**.
- 9 Gospel** (intoned in German on Sundays; in Latin on festivals)
- 10 Nicene Creed** Sung by choir in Latin, plainsong or, infrequently, concerted setting. Omitted on principal festivals (such as Advent 1, Christmas, Pentecost, Ascension), that is, when concerted settings of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* were included. If it was a concerted setting, it would be **preceded by an organ prelude**.
- 11 Cantata** [= “Stuck,” “Musik,” “Motetto,” or “Concerto.”] **Preceded by organ prelude**.
- 12 Credal Hymn** *Wir glauben all an einen Gott*. Preceded by organ prelude.
- 13 Pulpit Hymn** *Herr Jesu Christ dich zu uns wend*, or a seasonal hymn [usually only one stanza] **Preceded by organ chorale prelude (?)**
- 14 Sermon** Customarily lasted not less than one hour!
- 15 Intercessions** Preceded by Confession and Absolution; announcements follow lengthy intercessions; concludes with Pauline “grace.”
Nos. 16-18 only used on major festivals, that is, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity (but not First Sunday in Advent).
- 16 Hymn** Appropriate to the day or season, **preceded by an organ chorale prelude**.

Table 2 The Hauptgottesdienst Liturgy in Leipzig at the Time of J. S. Bach

- 17 Preface** (in Latin) Choir responds either in plainsong, or 4- or 6-part settings.
- 18 Sanctus** Sung by choir, either plainsong or concerted setting.
- 19 Verba Testamenti** (intoned in German)
- 20 Musica sub communionem** The second part of the cantata (if there was one), or a second cantata, or a section of a cantata; **preceded by an organ prelude.** Followed by the singing of communion hymns including the *German Agnus Dei, Christe, du Lamm Gottes with organ preludes in alternation*, until all have communicated. The Saxon *Agenda* (1539/40) also indicates that the Latin *Agnus Dei* can also be sung at the conclusion of the distribution.
- 21 Post-communion Collects** (intoned in German)
- 22 Benediction;** intoned from the altar. Congregational response, "Gott sei uns genädig..." (Psalm 67) sung to *Tonus peregrinus, with organ accompaniment.*
- 23 Hymn** Appropriate to the day or season, **preceded by an organ chorale prelude.**
- 24 Organ Postlude**

Table 2 The Hauptgottesdienst Liturgy in Leipzig at the Time of J. S. Bach (continued)

organ were likely to have been employed as preludes and postludes for services of worship and not necessarily played consecutively. On most Sundays of the church year the prelude was followed by a Latin Motet (Table 2.2), usually from one of the anthologies of Erhard Bodenschatz, in the part-books for which there was an additional part for figured bass that implies organ accompaniment.

If a concerted *Missa* (*Kyrie* and *Gloria*) was performed, then it was preceded by an organ prelude, an improvisation during which the string and wind instruments were tuned (Table 2.3). The same practice was followed whenever there was concerted music (see Table 2.10, 2.11, 2.20; Table 3.3, 3.8). If *Kyrie Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* was sung congregationally it would have been preceded by an organ prelude, but Bach's *Clavierübung* III suggests that each of the three stanzas of the hymnic version of the earlier *Kyrie fons bonitatis* was customarily preceded by its own organ prelude. Whether or not the *Gloria* was sung in Latin, the *Gloria Hymn Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* was always sung by the congregation, and was introduced by a suitable organ prelude on the melody. Here we have to raise the question about whether the organ accompanied hymn-singing in Leipzig during Bach's time. On the one hand, it is possible to argue that when Bach first arrived in Leipzig it appears that the congregation was still singing unaccompanied, the preceding organ chorale prelude reminding the congregation of the melody and establishing its pitch. But on the other hand, the Leipzig prohibition of the organ during Lent, together with the use of the organ (but no other instrumental music) during Advent, suggests that the congregation generally sang with organ

accompaniment but without accompaniment during Lent, and on special days of penitence. Whatever the uncertainties of the practice in Leipzig, organ chorale accompaniments were common elsewhere, and Bach produced such accompaniments for congregational singing: some with *Zwischenspiele*, linear interludes, a practice that seems to have become popular around the 1720s. One example is BWV 715, an accompaniment for *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, with *Zwischenspiele*, whose unexpected harmonic progressions call to mind the Arnstadt consistory's complaint that Bach's "curious *variationes* in the chorale mingled many strange tones," and confused the congregation.²³

The hymn sung in between the Epistle and Gospel, the *Graduallied* (Table 2.8), was the most important hymn of the service; its text was usually closely related to the substance of the two biblical readings. Other hymns sung elsewhere in the liturgy might be abbreviated, but it was customary for all the stanzas of the *Graduallied* to be sung; hence the need for short, concise preludes such as those of the *Orgelbüchlein*.

After the preacher had introduced his sermon at some length, the congregation was invited to pray a silent Lord's Prayer; then, before the substance of the sermon was given, they sang one stanza of a hymn, usually the first stanza of *Herr Jesu Christ dich zu uns wend* (Table 2.8). Since this hymn stanza was sung at every service on most occasions throughout the church year, it may not always have been preceded by an organ chorale prelude, but was most likely sung with organ accompaniment. One example is BWV 726, *Herr Jesu Christ dich zu uns wend*, which also contains *Zwischenspiele* and adventurous harmonies.

As Bach recorded in his outlines of the liturgical order for Advent Sunday, concerted music during the distribution of Communion was followed by the singing of hymns—either communion hymns or hymns of the season or celebration—with organ preludes in alternation (Table 2.20). There was much more time available here than elsewhere in the service, and therefore the organ chorale preludes could be significantly longer. Thus the so-called Leipzig Chorales (BWV 651-668), and the Chorale Partitas and Variations (BWV 766-770) were appropriate for such *musica sub communionem*. At the end of the service, following the chanted Aaronic benediction (Numbers 6: 24-26), the congregation sang the benediction response: verses from Psalm 67 to the tune of *Tonus peregrinus* (*Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*) with organ accompaniment (see BWV 323).

²³ *Bach-Dokumente* 2, 20 (No. 16); *The New Bach Reader*, 46 (No. 20).

- 1 Organ Prelude**
- 2 Motet** Usually from Bodenschatz; or a seasonal Latin hymn (see Table 2)
- 3 Psalmody, or cantata, preceded by organ prelude.**
- 4 Hymn** Appropriate to the day or season. **Preceded by organ chorale prelude**
- 5 Pulpit Hymn** Usually the first stanza of *Herr Jesu Christ dich zu uns wend*, **preceded by organ chorale prelude (?)**
- 6 Sermon** Like the morning sermon, lasted one hour!
- 7 Intercessions** As at the morning service, but with no Confession, Absolution, or extended announcements.
- 8 Magnificat** Ordinary Sundays sung congregationally in German to *Tonus peregrinus*, when it was **preceded by an organ chorale prelude on the melody**; on major festivals and special days sung by the choir in Latin, either plainsong or in a concerted setting; **if a concerted setting, then preceded by an organ prelude.**
- 9 Verse and Collect** (intoned in Latin)
- 10 Benediction.** Numbers 6; intoned from the altar. Congregational response, “Gott sei uns genädig...” (Psalm 67) sung to *Tonus peregrinus*.
- 11 Hymn** Appropriate to the day or season, **preceded by an organ chorale prelude.**
- 12 Organ Postlude**

Table 3 The Vespertagesdienst Liturgy in Leipzig at the Time of J. S. Bach

In terms of the organ, the afternoon service was very much the same as the morning: the organist played prelude and postlude, accompanying the motet, principal hymn of the day, pulpit hymn and benediction response (see Table 3.1, 3.12, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.10 respectively), as well as chorale preludes before other congregational hymnody. If there was a cantata in the afternoon service—which only occurred on special days—it would have been preceded by organ “preluding” during which the instruments would be tuned: a practice that would similarly occur before a concerted setting of the Latin *Magnificat* later in the service. At Vespers on most Sundays and other celebrations the motet would have been followed by Psalms sung to unaccompanied chant, probably introduced by a short improvised organ prelude. Following the sermon, on special occasions, the choir sang the Latin *Magnificat*, either to unaccompanied chant or in a concerted setting. However, on most Sundays the German *Magnificat*, *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, was sung by the whole congregation to the melody of *Tonus peregrinus*. Although strictly speaking a chant, *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* was nevertheless considered to be a chorale; therefore it was preceded by an organ chorale prelude and was probably accompanied (see BWV 324).

The organ in Leipzig, as elsewhere in Lutheran Germany, was an essential element in worship, providing preludes for a variety of forms (congregational hymns and concerted music), accompaniments (for congregational hymns, cantatas and other concerted music), as well as independent, larger-scale set-pieces at the beginning and end of the services. And even though such music was provided by the individually-appointed organists in each of the principal churches in Leipzig, they did so under the direction of Bach, whose organ music and organ playing were second to none.