

A Polonaise Duet for a Professor, a King and a Merchant: on Cantatas BWV 205, 205a, 216 and 216a by Johann Sebastian Bach¹

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Bach's cantata *Zerreiet, zersprenget, zertrmmert die Gruft* (*Der zufriedengestellte Aeolus* or *Aeolus Pacified*, BWV 205) was composed in 1725 for the name-day of August Friedrich Mller, a professor of philosophy at the University of Leipzig.² Bach's Collegium Musicum performed the piece on the evening of 3 August 1725 in front of the professor's house at 2 Katharinenstrae in Leipzig. Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander) wrote the libretto³ with its allegorical allusions to the professor's philosophical ideas. The libretto has attracted its fair share of scholarly criticism, and indeed derision.⁴ However, the circumstances of its

- ¹ This article is part of Szymon Paczkowski's research project, 'The Polish Style in German Music of the Eighteenth Century: Functions and Meaning on the Example of the Work of Johann Sebastian Bach (2004–2007)', sponsored by the State Committee for Scientific Research of the Republic of Poland. It has been prepared for publication as part of a book entitled *Polish Studies on Baroque Music* (in preparation) which brings together the papers presented by Polish speakers at the 12th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music in Warsaw (26–30 July 2006), and appears in 'Understanding Bach' courtesy of the book's publishers, the Institute of Musicology at Warsaw University.
- ² Hans-Joachim Schulze, Christoph Wolff, *Bach-Compendium. Analytisch-bibliographisches Repertorium der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs, Vokalwerke: Teil IV* (further abbreviated to *Bach-Compendium IV*) (edn Peters, Leipzig: 1989), p. 1571; Werner Neumann, *Johann Sebastian Bach. Neue Ausgabe Smtlicher Werke, Serie I, Band 38 'Festmusiken zu Leipziger Universittsfeiern', Kritischer Bericht* (further abbreviated to NBA KB) (Leipzig: 1960), p. 37.
- ³ Christian Friedrich Henrici, *Picanders Ernst=Schertzhafte und Satyrische Gedichte* (Vol. 1, Leipzig: 1727), pp. 146–52 (*Auf Herr D.A.F.M. Nahmens- / Tag, In Leipzig den 3. Augusti / 1725. / Der zufrieden-gestellte Aeolus. / Drama per Musica.*)
- ⁴ Philipp Spitta, *Joh. Seb. Bach* (3rd edn, vol. 2, Leipzig: 1921) pp. 455–6; Ernst Otto Lindner,

composition are still imperfectly understood, and, as a result, the text's metaphors and allusions remain unappreciated, as does the cantata's musical code. If the message of *Aeolus Pacified* were understood, it would be possible to appreciate its subsequent transformation and Bach's re-use of its music elsewhere.

August Friedrich Müller and the concept of the enlightened monarch

Little is known today of August Müller, to whom *Aeolus Pacified* was dedicated. The most vexing issue for a musicologist is the absence of any serious study of Müller's philosophical thought, undoubtedly an important point of reference for the libretto of BWV 205. This gap was partly closed by Henry Fullenwider in his 1990 article 'Zur Bildlichkeit von Picanders Text zu Bachs weltlichen Kantaten BWV 205 und 205a'.⁵ In addition to the idea of mapping Picander's libretto against Müller's philosophy, this article offers a wealth of previously unknown information on the life and work of the Leipzig academic.⁶

In his time, August Müller (1684-1761) was one of the most popular professors at the University of Leipzig, where, as a successor to Christian Thomasius and his disciple, Andreas Rüdiger, he lectured on law and philosophy. Rüdiger supervised Müller's doctoral dissertation on philosophy, which he successfully defended on 25 August 1708. On 8 August 1714, Müller was awarded his second doctorate in natural law at the University of Erfurt. According to the sources,

Zur Tonkunst. Abhandlungen (Berlin: Guttentag, 1864), p. 129 (quoted in Spitta, p. 457, note 35); Arnold Schering, 'Über Bachs Parodieverfahren,' *Bach-Jahrbuch* 18 (1921), p. 70.

⁵ Henry F. Fullenwider, 'Zur Bildlichkeit von Picanders Text zu Bachs weltlichen Kantaten BWV 205 und 205a,' *Die Musikforschung* 43 (1990/1), pp. 30-40.

⁶ Two obituaries in honour of August Müller supplement the findings of Fullenwider: Johann August Ernest, *Memoriam / Viri / Consultissimi Atque Excelentissimi / Augusti Friderici / Mulleri / Philos. et I. V. Doctoris Organi Aristotelici / Professoris ord. Collegii Principalis Min. Sodalis / et Decemviri Coll. Paull. et Convictu Publico / Curando / Kal. Mai. A. [1761] / Placide Defuncti / Commendat / Rector Academiae Lipsiensis / Lipsiae / ex. Officina Langenhemia* (Leipzig: 1761) (Ernest published his obituary as the Rector of the University of Leipzig directly after Müller's death); Karl Christian Woog, *Memoriam / Viri / Consultissimi Atque Excelentissimi / Augusti Friderici / Mulleri / Philos. et I. V. Doctoris Organi Aristotelici / Professoris ord. Collegii Principalis Min. Sodalis / et Decemviri etc. / Kal. Maii a. [1762] / Oratione Anniversaria / pie Recolendam / indicit / Ordinis Philosophici / H. vol. / Decanus / Carolus Christianus Woog / Graec. et Lat. Ling. P. P. O. Collegi Princip. Maior. / Colle. et H. vol. Praepositus* (Leipzig: 1762) (Woog published his piece as the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy on the anniversary of Müller's death). To date, both prints have not been noticed by scholars. Other contemporary sources offering some basic information about Müller include: *Fortsetzung und Ergänzungen zu Christian Gottlieb Jöchers Allgemeinem Gelehrten-Lexiko*, Johann Christoph Adelung and Heinrich Wilhelm Rotermund [authors of supplementary additions] (vol. 5: undated), p. 26 (reprinted by Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim: 1988); Christoph Weidlich, *Geschichte der jetztlebenden Rechts-Gelehrten in Teutschland* (vol. 1, Merseburg: 1748), p. 123; Johann Georg Meusel, *Lexicon der vom Jahr 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen teutschen Schriftsteller* (vol. 9, Leipzig: 1809), pp. 377n.; Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universallexicon* (vol. 22, Leipzig and Halle, 1739), column 198.

Müller's lectures were crowd-pullers, as a result both of the lecturer's engaging personality and the clarity of his disquisitions.

Müller's popularity with the students did not always go hand-in-hand with the approval of his peers. A group of colleagues from the law faculty came into conflict with Müller when he started lecturing on natural law. They sought to check Müller's rising popularity by lodging a complaint with August II the Strong himself, which seems to indicate a considerable amount of ill-feeling. However, the king dismissed the complaint. Partly as a result of royal favour, the conflict was officially defused and honours and offices followed. In 1731 or 1732, Müller became an ordinary professor of philosophy in the Aristotelian Organon. In 1735, the new king, August III, gave him the vacant position in the so-called Fürsten-Collegium or Prince's College. In 1736, he was elected Deputy Chancellor and Dean of Philosophy, two offices which he successfully held again in 1740, 1744 and 1746.

Today, it is difficult to understand this early turbulence in August Müller's career. His offence may have been continuing the liberal thought of Thomasius: some years earlier, Thomasius had been forced to leave the University of Leipzig after postulating that state law should be separated from morality. Given the lack of other sources, we must turn to Müller's philosophical doctrine to look for the reasons behind his popularity with students and (more importantly) for the royal favour which induced two different monarchs to interfere with academic autonomy on his behalf. His two main works – a three-volume translation of and commentary on *Oráculo manual y arte de prudentia* by the Spanish Jesuit Baltasar Gracián, published as *Baltasar Gracians Oracul, das man mit sich führen und stets bey der Hand haben kan, das ist Kunst-Regeln der Klugheit*⁷ and his introduction to philosophy, *Einleitung in die philosophischen Wissenschaften*⁸ – offer a picture of Enlightenment ethics and social politics which might have been quite attractive to the ideologues of the Dresden court in the first half of the eighteenth century. Müller's commentaries were essentially an exercise aimed at adapting the concepts of what was known in the theory of affects as the 'science of wisdom' to contemporary Saxon realities.⁹ In other words, Müller treated ethics as a measure for making judgments in the process of discerning between good and evil. As such, ethics were to be guided primarily by reason, and their task was to define man's duty to himself. Politics and law, on the other hand, were meant to act as regulators of a decorous social life, and to shape man's good duties to others.¹⁰ Müller's theory of statecraft points to France as the example of a model structure for institutions of power. In this respect, Müller appears to have been a staunch

⁷ August Friedrich Müller, *Baltasar Gracians Oracul, das man mit sich führen und stets bey der Hand haben kan, das ist Kunst-Regeln der Klugheit* (Leipzig: 1715–1717, 2nd edn 1733).

⁸ August Friedrich Müller, *Einleitung in die philosophischen Wissenschaften* (3 vols., Leipzig: 1728–1733), in particular vol. 2, *Anderer Theil, welcher die Metaphysic, Ethic, und Politic in sich hält* (1733).

⁹ Fullenwider, 'Zur Bildlichkeit', p. 33.

¹⁰ Cf. Müller's commentary on Gracián's Maxim 101, *Baltasar Gracians Oracul*, vol. 2., p. 103; cf. also: Ute Frackowiak, *Der gute Geschmack. Studien zur Entwicklung des Geschmacksbegriffs* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994) (= Freiburger Schriften zur Romanischen Philologie 43), pp. 209–11.

adherent of enlightened absolutism. His view that natural law is a legal rather than a philosophical discipline also goes well with Enlightenment ideas. Presumably, Thomasius' philosophical ideas served as the basis for Müller's frequently formulated belief that the state should ensure the peace and welfare of its citizens, who must subordinate their natural liberty to a secular sovereign.¹¹ Could this philosophical perspective have led to Müller's trouble in academe? Possibly, but the essence of the conflict lay elsewhere. Müller was also wary of academic pedantry, which led him to criticise certain aspects of university life, and to reject blind faith in authority. Müller's doctrine as a follower of Thomasius must have been seen by the Dresden court as a potential justification for the absolutist leanings of August II. From a Dresden point of view, the most important elements in Müller's philosophy were those which represented the new-fangled ideology of enlightened absolutism. It is not known whether Dresden had inspired or encouraged the development of absolutist ideology, but it is likely that Müller's espousal of absolutism was the source of the special royal favour he enjoyed under two monarchs.

The libretto of *Aeolus Pacified* and the apotheosis of the wise ruler

There are many indications that Picander intended his libretto for *Der zufriedengestellte Aeolus* to refer to the philosophical doctrine of August Müller, and that allusions to this doctrine are hidden in the text's baroque rhetorical structure. Given the obvious limitations of musical and poetic form and the circumstances of performance, Müller's philosophy could only be shown in a simplified form. In brief, the story of the libretto of BVW 205 is as follows. Pallas wishes to organise celebrations on Mount Helicon in Müller's honour. However, it being the month of August, she fears that Aeolus, the god of the winds, might brew up a sudden storm. As it turns out, she is right to worry – the deity gloats over his plans to unleash a destructive tempest feared by all nature. Pomona (the goddess of fruit trees) and Zephyrus (the god of gentle summer breezes) sing beseeching arias as they implore Aeolus to refrain from violence. The danger is only averted when Pallas herself makes clear to Aeolus just how solemn and important this day is, it being the name-day of August Müller. This is the 'joy and bliss of the Pierides' ('der Pierinnen Freud und Lust'), and the professor's learned name is prophesied to last forever ('ihm die Ewigkeit sein weiser Name prophezeit') as he is Pallas' 'beloved son' ('geliebter Sohn'). Nothing should disrupt the festivities which the Muses have prepared for him on Helicon. Aeolus

¹¹ Emphasising the individual attitude to law on an earlier occasion, Thomasius defined law by postulating that state law is superior to natural law. Among others, cf. U. Frackowiak, *Der gute Geschmack*, pp. 208–9; Georg Steinberg, *Christian Thomasius als Naturrechtlehrer* (= Hallesche Schriften zum Recht 22) (Cologne, Berlin, Munich: Heymann, 2005), passim; Peter Schröder, *Naturrecht und absolutistisches Staatsrecht: eine vergleichende Studie zu Thomass Hobbes und Christian Thomasius* (= Schriften zur Rechtstheorie 195) (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2001), passim.

is persuaded. He commands the winds to die down, and assures Pallas that he will not disrupt the peace and quiet of summer. This change of heart is greeted with general jubilation, and Pallas invites everyone to the festivities. Pomona and Zephyrus approach August Müller with their gifts, and pay homage to him in a laudatory duet which Bach composed in a polonaise rhythm (No. 13). At the end, the chorus sings a jubilant 'Vivat August!'

Two movements in particular – the opening 'Chorus of the Winds' and the polonaise duet of Pomona and Zephyrus (No. 13) – are important when decoding the metaphorical references to Müller's doctrine in *Aeolus Pacified*. The 'Chorus of the Winds' is inspired by the familiar description of a tempest unleashed by Aeolus in the *Aeneid*, Book 1.¹² Bach managed to produce some highly poetic music to evoke the threat of a violent storm. This reference to Virgil's epic conceals the key to unlocking the meanings hidden in Picander's text. To help us decipher the allusions as the librettist intended, we can turn to a 1724 dictionary of mythology by Benjamin Hederich,¹³ which contains detailed commentaries on the classical *loci communi* that reflect eighteenth-century ways of thinking. The entry for *Aeolus* states that he was the god of the winds, which he kept locked in a huge cave in Thrace. Sometimes he would release one or another, as and when he saw fit.¹⁴ As the philosophical tradition identifies the winds with the four tempers and the four virtues, Hederich goes on to state in the same entry:

Some understood this figure [Aeolus] to be the wise man who can rein in his affects, particularly anger, which he allows some to see, and carefully hides from others. He can check himself before it is too late in the knowledge that his strength is limited, and eventually attain perfection. Therefore, he should realise that nothing happens without divine authority because the winds, which are weak and fleeting things, had to obey their god and leader.¹⁵

Aeolus is an embodiment of the virtuous ruler who holds his emotions and desires in check, and appears impassive even when greatly affected. This idea is particularly close to Müller's *Affektenlehre*.

The connection between the opening lines of the *Aeneid* and the libretto of *Aeolus Pacified* is also apparent in another context. Three German translations of Virgil's epic appeared in Saxony in the first half of the eighteenth century: one by Theodor Ludwig Lau (1725),¹⁶ one by Reichhelm (1725),¹⁷ and one by Christoph

¹² Cf. Alfred Dürr, *Kantaty Jana Sebastiana Bacha* (Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach), Polish translation by Andrzej A. Teske (Lublin: Polihymnia, 2004), p. 700.

¹³ Benjamin Hederich, *Gründliches Lexicon Mythologicum* (Leipzig: 1724). In confronting Picander's libretti with Hederich's *Lexicon* I follow the earlier example of Fullenwider, 'Zur Bildlichkeit', p. 34.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, col. 95, §. 1 'Er war der Gott der Winde, als die er in einer grossen Höle in Thracien eingesperrt hatte, und aus derselben dann und wann einen oder auch mehrere heraus ließ, nachdem er es für nöthig befand.'

¹⁵ *ibid.*, col. 97, §. 7. 'Einige bestreben unter ihm einen weisen Mann, der seine Affecten, insbesondere aber seinen Zorn, wohl zu moderiren, und mithin demselben bald mercken zu lassen, bald wieder zu verheelen, vornehmlich aber einzuhalten wisse, daß er nicht zu stark werde, und endlich ihn selbst bemeistere. So soll er auch bemercken, daß nichts ohne göttliche Regierung geschehe, weil auch die Winde, ein so leichtes und flüchtiges Wesen, ihren Gott und Vorsteher zu haben geglaubet worden.'

¹⁶ *Uebersetzung in deutscher Helden Poesie des Virgilianischen Lobes= und Lebenslauffs, des großen*

Schwarz (1742).¹⁸ These translations popularised the interpretation of the *Aeneid* as an apotheosis of the perfect ruler. As in antiquity, Virgil was seen to be endorsing monarchy in general, and Caesar Augustus' imperial ideas in particular. Commentaries pointed out such values as the monarch's power to introduce law and order, his leniency and wisdom, his courage and resolute decision-making in moments of crisis, and his care for the nation's welfare and prosperity. Johann Christoph Gottsched perpetuated this interpretation in his preface to the 1742 translation by Schwarz,¹⁹ where he comments on the connections between the *Aeneid* and the structure of the Roman empire in Augustus' reign. Gottsched saw Virgil's epic as an apotheosis as well as a work of instruction for the emperor. Augustus may have seized power by violence, and ruthlessly eliminated all political opponents, Gottsched explains, but he went on to found his policies on wise government combined with indulgence towards his subjects, leniency towards the defeated and a commitment to internal peace. Favoured by the gods, Augustus made sure that learning and the arts could flourish, and his sage leadership fostered loyalty and obedience in his subjects, who were happy to trade republican liberties for their newly gained prosperity.²⁰

The climax of *Aeolus Pacified* is the duet of Pomona and Zephyrus (No. 13), where both approach August Müller bearing their gifts. The scene is set to stately and dignified polonaise music. Pomona, the nymph of orchards and the Etruscan goddess of ripe apples, brings abundant fruit for the festivities. Zephyrus, the god of the mild west wind, offers gentle August breezes that bring rest and relief from summer's heat. In the mythological tradition, Pomona was the image of virginal virtue, the true maiden who resisted seductive blandishments and found delight in tending her fruit trees.²¹ In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the story of Pomona

Kriegeshelden Aeneas; mit kurzverfaßter Beyfügung: erforderlicher Anmerkungen, von Theodor Ludewig Lau, Hochfürstl. Curländischem Staatsrath, und Cabinet-Director. Elbing bey Samuel Preußen, 1725. in Quarto. Cf. Johann Christoph Gottsched, Vorrede zu Virgils Aeneis in der Übersetzung von Johann Christoph Schwarz 1742, in the same author's Ausgewählte Werke, vol. 10 'Kleinere Schriften,' ed. Philipp Marshall Mitchell (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), p. 223. First noted by Fullenwider, 'Zur Bildlichkeit', p. 35.

¹⁷ I have been unable to identify the translation's place of publication or Reichhelm's first name. He is mentioned by Gottsched, *Vorrede zu Virgilis Aeneis*, p. 22: 'Allein auch diese Jahrhundert ist unserm Virgil nicht zuwider gewesen. In den gelehrten Zeitungen des 1725 Jahres num. LXXX. auf der 720sten Seite steht eine Nachricht, daß der sel. Assessor Reichhelm in Halle, sich die Mühe nicht dauern lassen, die ganze Aeneis ins Deutsche zu bringen.'

¹⁸ Maro Publius Vergilius, *Aeneis, ein Heldengedicht*, German trans. by Johann Christoph Schwarz (2 vols., Regensburg, 1742–1744).

¹⁹ Gottsched, *Vorrede zu Virgilis Aeneis*, pp. 201–4.

²⁰ It seems that the beginning of the *Aeneid* had inspired Gottsched on an earlier occasion. In the poem written for the 58th birthday of August II (12 May 1728) ('Wettstreit der Tugenden um die hohe Person höchstgedachter Sr. Königl. Maj. als eines vollkommenen Regenten'), Gottsched employs the poetic convention of allegorical debate between virtues (identified with the winds) to portray August as a perfect ruler in an indirect allusion to Virgil's epic. The poem was not published in *Ausgewählte Werke*, but Christoph Ernst Sicul mentions it in his chronicle of the University of Leipzig; cf. *Christoph Ernst Sicul's / ANNALIUM LIPSIENSIIUM / Maxime ACADEMICORUM / Sectio XXX [...] Des Jahrs 1728*, p. 789. According to Sicul, the poem was published by Breitkopf.

²¹ Hederich, *Lexicon*, col. 1652: 'Pomona, eine Hamadryas, welche ihr Vergnügen

(XIV, 627-707) directly follows the episode in which Aeneas is made a god, thus placing her in the reign of the mythical king Procas, a descendant of Aeneas and great-grandfather to Romulus and Remus. This is a clear connection with Virgil's epic, which helps explain Pomona's appearance in Picander's libretto. Zephyrus was a subordinate of Aeolus, the messenger of spring and patron of sailors. The *Aeneid* includes one reference to Zephyrus, where an upset Neptune commands him to act as messenger and convey to Aeolus Neptune's demand to calm a raging storm.²²

However, neither Pomona nor Zephyrus achieves the happy conclusion of the events in *Aeolus Pacified*. This role is reserved for Pallas-Minerva, as Aeolus is finally dissuaded from his destructive plan by the goddess of wisdom, learning and the liberal arts.²³ In his dictionary, Hederich explains that Pallas' virginity emphasises the purity of virtue, which can be used as wisdom's weapon against all dangers because the gift of eloquent speech can change others. Pallas dwells in castles, explains Hederich, because wisdom is difficult to defeat, and with her learning, she can 'restrain the uncouth'.²⁴ In this role, Pallas was also seen as the patroness of Leipzig, a city of learning and commerce, a latter-day German Athens.²⁵ This is the real reason for Pallas' resolute intervention in the cantata to protect August Müller, her 'beloved son'. In the libretto, Pallas' wisdom represents Müller's philosophical doctrine, and it is her eloquence that saves the festivities prepared in honour of the respected professor and scheduled for the third day of August – a month dedicated to Caesar Augustus and (in eighteenth-century Saxony) to August II and III.

In other words, *Der zufriedengestellte Aeolus* is not merely a cheerful evening serenade with a banal libretto, as many would have it. As Fullenwider correctly points out, the tempest brewing in the text is not so much an actual spell of foul weather as the storm then raging on the university scene in Leipzig, complete with thunderbolts hurled from the heights of the Dresden court. Clearly, the point of the cantata's allegorical action is that philosophy, the science of wisdom as symbolised by Pallas and embodied by August Müller, is able to hold in check a rising storm of adverse events. As such, this is a humorous morality play on Müller's concept of the wise ruler (disguised as Aeolus in Bach's cantata), who is

am Garten-Bau, und Erziehung guter und fruchtbarer Bäume hatte, hiebey aber weder die Liebes-Händel noch sonst etwas achtete' (Pomona, a hamadryad who delighted in making gardens and tending good fruit-bearing trees but cared nothing for love's labours or anything else).

²² *ibid.*, col. 1968; Virgil, *The Aeneid* (Book I, ll. 130–41).

²³ Ovid, *Fasti* (III 816).

²⁴ Hederich, *Lexicon*, col. 1316: 'Ihre Jungfrauschaft soll die Reinigkeit der Tugend bemercken, ihre Waffen, daß die Klugheit sich für keiner Gefahr scheue ... weil die Beredsamkeit andere zu verändern gar fähig ist. Sie hat ihren Sitz in den Schlössern, weil die Klugheit schwerlich bezwungen werden kann. Sie that das meiste bey Überwindung derer Riesen, weil sie die ersten ungeschlachteten Menschen vermöge der Beredsamkeit zahm gemacht.'

²⁵ The term 'l'Athène d'Allemagne' was first used with reference to Leipzig by the French philosopher and writer Pierre Bayle (1647–1706). Author of the celebrated *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1696), Bayle was often dubbed 'the father of the Enlightenment'.

influenced by Pallas' eloquence and Müller's own philosophy to display fully his qualities as an enlightened ruler.

The polonaise duet 'Zweig und Äste'

The duet of Pomona and Zephyrus 'Zweig und Äste' (No. 13) is set to dance music and shows the key characteristics of a typical eighteenth-century German sung polonaise,²⁶ including the metre, rhythms and cadences described in detail by eighteenth-century German music theorists.²⁷ (See Example 1). However, the use of a polonaise at this point in the cantata also has a deeper allegorical meaning. To set to music a laudatory text in honour of August Müller, the composer chooses a dance which was very popular in Saxony at the time, not only for its intrinsic qualities, but because it referred symbolically to the royal crown and power.²⁸ The polonaise fulfils this function many times in the works of eighteenth-century composers, including Johann Sebastian Bach.²⁹ It would seem that Picander found the polonaise an apt choice for laudatory texts. In 1724, when writing the libretto for a *dramma per musica* in honour of the new governor of Leipzig, Joachim Friedrich von Flemming (*Erhabner Graf*), Picander inserted in his text a suggestion that the laudatory aria 'Grosser Flemming' should be set to

²⁶ The polonaise character of this duet was pointed out by Doris Finke-Hecklinger in her *Tanzcharaktere in Johann Sebastian Bachs Vokalmusik* (Trossingen: Hohner-Verlag, 1970), p. 57.

²⁷ Cf. Szymon Paczkowski, 'Über die Funktionen der Polonaise und des polnischen Stils am Beispiel der Arie 'Glück und Segen sind bereit' aus der Kantate 'Erwünschte Freudenlicht' BWV 184 von Johann Sebastian Bach,' in: *Johann Adolf Hasse in seiner Epoche und in der Gegenwart. Studien zur Stil- und Quellenproblematik* (= *Studia et Dissertationes Instituti Musicologiae Universitatis Varsoviensis* 12), Szymon Paczkowski and Alina Żórawska-Witkowska [eds.] (Warsaw: Instytut Muzykologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), pp. 207–24, esp. pp. 212–6; by the same author, 'Der polnische Stil und Bach 'Bauern-Kantate,' in: *Probleme der Migration von Musik und Musikern in Europa im Zeitalter des Barock* (= *Arolser Beiträge zur Musikforschung* 9), eds. Friedhelm Brusniak and Klaus-Peter Koch (Sinzig: Studio, 2002), pp. 181–94.

²⁸ Among others, cf. Ortrun Landmann, *Dresden* [entry], in Ludwig Finscher (ed.), *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe* (vol. 2, Sachteil, Bärenreiter, Kassel 1996), col. 1537.

²⁹ Cf. Szymon Paczkowski, 'O polonezowej arii "Lobe Zion, deinen Gott" z kantaty *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* BWV 190 Johanna Sebastian Bacha,' (On the polonaise aria 'Lobe Zion, deinen Gott' from Cantata BWV 190, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* by Johann Sebastian Bach) in Tomasz Jeż (ed.), *Complexus Effectuum Musicologiae. Studia Mirosłao Perz septuagenario dedicata* (= *Studia et Dissertationes Instituti Musicologiae Universitatis Varsoviensis* 13), (Cracow: Rabid, 2003), pp. 503–10; Paczkowski, 'Johann Sebastian Bachs "Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft" BWV 50. Form und Bedeutung,' in Danuta Szlagowska (ed.), *Musica Baltica. Im Umkreis des Wandels - von den cori spezzati zum konzertierenden Stil* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej w Gdańsku, 2004), pp. 224–36; Paczkowski, 'On the Problems of Parody and Style in the "Et resurrexit" from the Mass in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach,' in: *BACH: The Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* 37 (2006/2), 1–44.

meter

Flauto traverso I, II

Alto Pomona

Tenore Zephyrus

Continuo

polonaise rhythm

(12)

Zweig und Äste, Zweig und
 Schwarze Ra-ben, Ra-ben, schwarze Ra-ben

Ä - ste, Zweig und Ä - ste zol-len dir zu dei-nem
 Ra - ben, schwarze Ra-ben wer-den e - her Schwä-ne

polonaise cadence

Fe - ste ih - rer Ga - ben Ü - ber - fluß,
 ha - ben

Example 1: Opening bars of the duet 'Zweig und Äste' (BWV 205, No. 13), with the opening lines of the textual counterpart in BWV 205a ('Schwarze Raben werden eher Schwäne haben', No. 13) marked in italics. The distinctive qualities of the polonaise are highlighted in boxes.

music as an 'Aria tempo di Polonaise'.³⁰ Hence the natural use of polonaise symbolism in the duet from *Aeolus Pacified*. At the climax of the work (a laudatory aria in honour of the dedicatee August Müller), the Polish dance associated with royalty is used to emphasise the aspect of Müller's philosophy which formed a special link between the academic and the Dresden court – namely, his doctrine of wisdom relating to the concept of the ideal ruler. The motives that guided Bach's choice of the polonaise for the duet of Pomona and Zephyrus become clearer when tracing the subsequent history of this particular musical passage. Bach uses the duet again in other works. In BWV 216, the wedding cantata *Vergnügte Pleißenstadt*, it appears as the final duet of the Pleisse and the Neisse 'Heil und Segen müß euch, wertees Paar verpflegen' (No. 7). In Cantata BWV 216a, *Erwählte Pleißenstadt*, (composed for an unknown occasion), it emerges again as Apollo and Mercury's final duet 'Heil und Segen müß euch theure Schaar verpflegen' (No. 7). Finally, Cantata BWV 205a, *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde! Verstärket die Macht*, composed to celebrate the coronation of August III as king of Poland on 17 January 1734, uses the duet as 'Schwarze Raben werden eher Schwäne haben eh August die Rechte bricht' (No. 13).

Of the four pieces which all feature the same polonaise duet, only Cantata BWV 205 survives in its entirety (as the original manuscript score in Bach's hand).³¹ Of Cantata BWV 216, only the soprano and alto voices survive, copied by Christian Gottlob Meißner.³² In the case of BWV 216a we only have the libretto, recorded by Bach himself.³³ The sources for Cantata BWV 205a, *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde! Verstärket die Macht*, are also scant, but we know that it is a parody of *Aeolus Pacified* because Bach entered the first three and a half lines of the new text in his old manuscript score of BWV 205.³⁴ No other musical sources for BWV 205a exist. Luckily, we know the libretto, which was published by Breitkopf in January 1734, although the original print is lost.³⁵ After Bach's death, the score of BWV

³⁰ *Picanders Ernst=Schertzhafte und Satyrische Gedichte* (vol. I, Leipzig: 1727), pp. 28–32 (*Erhabner Graf*). Cf. Paczkowski's paper 'Bach and the Story of an "Aria tempo di Polonaise" for Joachim Friedrich Flemming' read on 12 May 2006 in Leipzig (Bach-Archiv) as part of the Biennial Meeting of the American Bach Society (Leipzig, 11–13 May 2006); an article version is in preparation.

³¹ Manuscript held at the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, pressmark Mus. ms. Bach P 173; cf. Johann Sebastian Bach, *Zerreißen, zersprengen, zertrümmert die Gruft. „Der zufrieden-gestellte Aeolus“*. *Dramma per Musica BWV 205*, facsimile edition by Werner Neumann (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1977).

³² The complicated history of the manuscript voice parts and their rediscovery in Japan in 2004 was described by Tadashi Ioyama in 'Wiederaufgefundene Originalstimmen zur Hochzeitskantate "Vergnügte Pleißenstadt" BWV 216,' in *Bach-Jahrbuch* (90) 2004, pp. 199–208.

³³ This is a manuscript sheet held by the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, pressmark Mus. ms. Bach P 613; cf. Werner Neumann, NBA KB 39 *Festmusiken für Leipziger Rats- und Schulfeiern. Huldigungsmusiken für Adlige und Bürger*, pp. 12–3.

³⁴ Cf. note 31.

³⁵ The only known copy of the libretto print for Cantata *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde!* was held at the Landesbibliothek in Dresden until World War II (pressmark Hist. Polon. 970, 10) but is now considered a war loss. The libretto was reprinted in Vol. 34 of the *Bach-Gesamtausgabe* (pp. LIII–LVII) and by Spitta, *Joh. Seb. Bach*, pp. 881–6. The facsimile of the title page for the libretto of BWV 205a was published in *Bach-Jahrbuch* (1913, p. 87) and reprinted in Werner Neumann

205a was recomposed by his son, Wilhelm Friedemann, who had his own amended version performed twice with a new religious text at Halle on 21 November and 18 December 1756.³⁶ Wilhelm Friedemann's parody of his father's secular cantata does not include the music of the polonaise duet 'Schwarze Raben werden eher Schwäne haben'.

Cantata BWV 205a, *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde!* *Verstärket die Macht*

The name-day cantata for August Müller is dignified and solemn in mood. This is apparent from the libretto's metaphorical overtones, its considerable size and its monumental cast, which seems surprising if we consider that the cantata was addressed to a mere university professor. But for the fact that Bach's output features other massive *drammi per musica* composed in honour of personages from the University of Leipzig,³⁷ it could be said that this particular piece goes overboard in its homage. The character of *Aeolus Pacified* would seem to suggest a different addressee named August, such as a member of the Wettin dynasty then ruling in Saxony and Poland; especially as the name-days of August II and August III were celebrated in Saxony on 3 August, with much pomp and circumstance. Perhaps one might venture to ask when it was that Bach first considered writing cantatas in honour of the royal-electoral family.³⁸

In this context, it is not surprising, that early in 1734, Bach decided to transform his *Aeolus Pacified* into a celebration piece for the city of Leipzig, to honour the coronation (17 January 1734) of the Saxon elector, Friedrich August II, who succeeded his father to the Polish throne as August III. This was the occasion for *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde! Verstärket die Macht* BWV 205a, a parody of *Aeolus Pacified*. As pointed out above, the music can only partly be reconstructed, based on Bach's entry of the new libretto in the old manuscript score of BWV 205.³⁹ It is not known who wrote the libretto for BWV 205a, but as it is an able adaptation of the August Müller cantata, it seems likely that Picander himself prepared the revised version. The title page of the libretto print of *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde!*

(ed.), *Bilddokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs* (= Bach-Dokumente IV) (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1979), p. 270.

³⁶ Cf. Hans-Joachim Schulze, 'Ein "Drama per Musica" als Kirchenmusik. Zu Wilhelm Friedemann Bachs Aufführungen der Huldigungskantate BWV 205a,' in *Bach-Jahrbuch* 1975 (61): 133–40. Cf. also *Bach-Compendium* IV, p. 1494.

³⁷ Such as Cantata BWV 207 *Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten* on the professorial nomination of Dr Gottlieb Korrte (11 December 1726), later reworked as the name-day cantata for August III (3 August 1735) *Auf, schmetternde Töne der muntren Trompeten* BWV 207a.

³⁸ Bach's first cantata in honour of August II was *Entfernet euch, ihr heitern Sterne* BWV Anh. 9, written for the king's 57th birthday on 12 May 1727. It was conducted by Bach himself in the king's presence when the monarch visited Leipzig for the spring trade fair, the Jubilate-Messe.

³⁹ Recently, Ton Koopman has attempted to reconstruct the cantata and make it part of the current concert repertoire. The reconstructed version of BWV 205a was performed by the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir under Koopman on 21 July 2006 in a concert given as part of the Festival International d'Opera Baroque de Beaune.

Verstärket die Macht states that the piece was performed in Leipzig in January 1734, to celebrate the day of the coronation of August III as king of Poland.⁴⁰ The performance is not mentioned elsewhere. As Werner Neumann points out,⁴¹ the small print-run of the libretto book, its modest appearance, and the absence of a representative of the Dresden court all indicate that this concert was only semi-official in nature. Two pieces of information contained in the sources add to the confusion. In the entry for 17 January 1734, Riemer's *Chronicle* mentions the magnificent lighting of Zimmermann's coffee house 'on the great coronation day of His Majesty King of Poland and His Highness Elector of Saxony, when the local [Bach's] Collegium Musicum made music on trumpets and kettledrums' (an dem Hohen Crönungs Tage Sr. Königlichen Majestät in Pohlen und Churfüstlichen Durchlaucht zu Sachßen bey dem daselbst gehaltenen Collegio Musico, so unter Trompeten und Paucken Schall gehalten wurde).⁴² Scholars have inclined to the belief that the actual performance of the piece did not take place until 19 February 1734, when the news confirming August III's successful accession reached Leipzig. Neumann cites the *Leipziger Zeitungen*, which recorded the following on 19 February:

As part of the festivities of the coronation of His Majesty King of Poland and His Highness Elector of Saxony, Bach's Collegium Musicum will perform solemn music today in the afternoon at Zimmermann's coffee house from 5 o'clock to 7 o'clock.

(Auf das hohe Crönungs-Fest Ihro Köngl. Majest. in Polen und Churfürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen, wird heute das Bachische Collegium Musicum, auf dem Zimmermannischen Coffé-Hause, eine solenne Music unterthänigst aufführen, von Nachmittag 5. bis 7. Uhr)⁴³

Apparently, Neumann concludes, the official celebrations of the coronation did not take place in Saxony until the second half of February 1734, and this presumed delay was connected with the uncertain political situation in Poland, as the outcome of the king's election remained in doubt until the very end of the coronation.⁴⁴ Neumann explains that because the good news from Cracow did not reach Dresden until 30 January,⁴⁵ the green light for the festivities was not

⁴⁰ Cf. Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze (eds.), *Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs 1685–1750* (= Bach Dokumente II) (Bärenreiter: Kassel 1969), Documents 345 and 346, p. 245.

⁴¹ Neumann, NBA KB 37 *Festmusiken für das Kurfürstlich-sächsisches Haus* (Leipzig: 1961), pp. 7–14.

⁴² Johann Salomon Riemer, *Andere Fortsetzung des Leipzigerischen Jahr-Buchs...*, vol. 1 (1714–1737), p. 350, cited in: Bach-Dokumente II, p. 245 (Document 346).

⁴³ Cf. Bach-Dokumente II, Document 348, p. 246.

⁴⁴ Pace Neumann, the climate of political uncertainty persisted in Poland until the session of the Pacification Diet in 1736.

⁴⁵ Neumann, NBA KB 37, p. 13. Neumann believes that the entry in Riemer's chronicle on the music for kettledrums and trumpets played by the Collegium Musicum on 17 January need not have related to a cantata performance but may have been some fanfare music performed as a private initiative at Zimmermann's coffee house. Neumann cites entries in the *Hof- und Staatskalender* (1735), supposedly suggesting that news of August III's successful election did not reach Dresden until 30 January 1734. A close reading of the *Calendar* fails to confirm the existence of such an entry, and the only record for 30 January 1734 is the death of Princess

given until early in February, although the preparations had been under way as early as 17 January. Hence the performance date of *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde* BWV 205a, as accepted in Bach scholarship, was 19 February 1734.⁴⁶

The programme of Cantata BWV 205a

As indicated above, the libretto of *Aeolus Pacified* was simply reworked to meet current requirements, i.e. August's coronation and its political circumstances. In order to re-use the existing music of BWV 205 in a work composed for the king, the new libretto had to be matched seamlessly with the existing score both in terms of metre and message, while preserving the affective match between the words and the music. Thus, the characters of *Aeolus Pacified* were simply relabelled as new allegorical figures. Aeolus became Valour (Tapferkeit), Zephyrus became Justice (Gerechtigkeit), and Pomona was now Grace (Gnade), with Minerva as the only survivor from the old libretto. Given this approach to adaptation, changes to the score could be cosmetic, although some corrections were necessary owing to differences in voice parts (tenor – Justice, alto – Grace). With the transposed vocal parts, Bach had to amend the instrumental cast as well. It is not possible to draw detailed conclusions from the existing differences as this duet is chronologically the fourth link in a longer series of transformations (BWV 205 No. 13, BWV 216 No. 7, BWV 216a No. 7, BWV 205a No. 13). Clearly, BWV 205a required new recitatives (Nos. 8, 12, 14 – owing to differences in the size of the poetic text) and minor changes to other recitatives which outwardly remain close to the original model.⁴⁷

As in *Aeolus Pacified*, the opening chorus 'Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde!' is set to tumultuous music. This same music no longer refers to a storm, but evidently suggests the political turbulence that accompanied August III's coronation in Poland.⁴⁸ The king is portrayed as a courageous and imperturbable hero, a valiant

Maria Margaretha. Cf. *Königl. Poln. und Churfürtl. Sächsischer / Hof- und Staats- / Calender / Auf das Jahr 1735* (p. 52) in the collection of the Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek. The Cracow coronation of August III on 17 January 1734 is described by Alina Żórawska-Witkowska in *Muzyka na dworze Augusta III Sasa w Warszawie* (Music in the Court of August III the Saxon in Warsaw – in preparation). I thank Prof. Żórawska-Witkowska for her kind help in making the relevant passages of her unpublished book available for consultation.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Bach-Compendium* IV, p. 1494. It seems important to emphasise that the coronation date had officially been announced as 17 January 1734 on 7 December 1733 (two days before the Saxon elector's departure from Dresden for his coronation in Cracow, as mentioned by the *Hof- und Staatskalender*: (p. 47): 'Es war einmahl der 17. Jan. 1734 zu dieser legitimen Crönungbestimmet, u. unter Trompeten und Paucken-Schall zu Cracau selbst den 7 Dec. voriges Jahres öffentlich ausgeruffen' (17 January 1734 was then set forth as the date of lawful coronation, which was announced in Cracow on 7 December of the previous year to the sound of trumpets and kettledrums.) This means that there was time to give notice of the fact to Leipzig. In this context it is not surprising that the printing of the libretto of Bach's *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde!* was recorded in Breitkopf's accounts as early as 16 January 1734. All these indications suggest that Bach's work may have been performed on the coronation day itself.

⁴⁷ Cf. Neumann, NBA KB 37, pp. 13–4.

⁴⁸ Despite the tense political situation in Poland, no violent military activity accompanied August

knight on his mount, just as his father August II is depicted in the famous statue, the Golden Rider at Dresden. Valour's recitative (No. 2) refers openly to events in Poland (Sarmatia), indicating the presumptuous and insolent foe ('jenen frechen Feind'), who has been ignominiously put to flight ('eh er selbst vermeint, mit Schande fort gejaget'). This was of course Stanisław Leszczyński, who in 1733 sought to thwart the Wettins' royal ambitions for the second time.⁴⁹ As Justice would have it, the kingly crown is eventually placed on the princely head of that worthiest of German heroes (dem Würdigsten der teutschen Helden die Crone auf sein Fürstlich Haupt). Valour's aria (No. 3) is a call to rejoice now that the magnanimous August has ascended the Polish throne. In her recitative (No. 4) and aria (No. 5), Justice enthuses about the elector's new status and hopes that he will follow her advice and maintain justice in the land. She sees the monarch as a just ruler and the protector of every subject. The king is referred to as a tutelary deity (Schutz-Gott). Valour sees August as the source of laws (recitative No. 6), while Grace sees him as the refuge and fortress of his loving subjects (aria No. 7).

Further passages in the libretto focus on the idea of the elector's promotion to royal dignity. In her recitative (No. 8), Grace mentions that August's exchange of his electoral hat for a royal crown has opened the way to greater happiness for Saxony. In the same recitative, Pallas - although she is a goddess - introduces herself as a happy subject approaching the royal throne to pay homage to the nation's father and ruler. In her aria (No. 9), she describes August as 'the great king of our time' (Großer König unsrer Zeit), and entreats him to extend his patronage to the Muses. In return she promises to stand by him in time of war. In a long dialogue with Pallas (recitative No. 10) Valour predicts that her appeals will be heard, and dubs August the 'joy and bliss of the Pierides' (the same as August Müller in *Aeolus Pacified*). Aria 11 calls the Muses to come to Leipzig for prosperous times. A reign of justice is foretold, along with acts of magnificent patronage for learning and the arts. The subjects will love and obey their king, worshipping him like a god (recitative No. 12). The polonaise duet of Justice and Grace (No. 13) confirms August's good qualities, his rectitude, leniency and moderation. The king is owed homage, for he is a true hero and wonder of the world. Finally (recitative No. 14), Pallas invites the Muses, promising that August, who is their son, will greet them with a thousand welcomes, and she commands the winds to carry to the king the news of his subjects' celebrations in Saxony. The piece ends with a 'Vivat' chorus for the king.

Scholarly literature has criticised the triteness of the libretto of *Blast Lärmen, ihr Feinde* BWV 205a. Derision has been heaped on the supposedly superficial way in which the text of *Aeolus Pacified* was adapted to meet the requirements of January 1734, and attention drawn to Bach's supposed haste in preparing this coronation cantata for August III.⁵⁰ Such dismissive criticism has not withstood the test of

III's coronation in Cracow. Instead, northern Italy and Sicily became the main theatre of war in the conflict of Polish succession; cf. Jacek Staszewski, *August III Sas* (August III the Saxon), (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im Ossolińskich, 1989), pp. 151-66.

⁴⁹ In the wake of the Northern War, Stanisław Leszczyński (supported by Charles XII of Sweden) removed August II from the Polish throne for three years (1706-1709).

⁵⁰ A. Schering, *Über Bachs Parodieverfahren*, p. 70.

time. As Fullenwider rightly pointed out, the connections between the Aeolus episode in the *Aeneid*, the reign of Emperor Augustus and the academic backbiting at Leipzig shown in *Aeolus Pacified*⁵¹ offer an excellent departure point for establishing the ideological assumptions of the coronation cantata. The new piece not only identifies all the qualities of the wise ruler in August III, it also expresses hope that the concept of the enlightened monarch (the vision allegorically outlined in BWV 205) might be embodied in his rule. In BWV 205a, the morality play that was the libretto of *Aeolus Pacified* seems to find its perfect addressee in the new king.

In this context, it becomes clear why Bach chose to set both duets, 'Schwartzte Raben werden eher Schwäne haben' and 'Zweig und Äste' – both of which form climactic moments in the respective pieces – as polonaises. Their laudatory nature as expressions of homage and the reference both make to the person of the ruler (in BWV 205, this is August Müller as a theorist of absolute rule) prompted the composer to employ a musical code unambiguously associated with royal power and majesty. This was the symbolic function of the polonaise in eighteenth-century Saxony, and it is not the first time Bach makes use of this convention.

Vergnügte Pleissenstadt BWV 216 and *Erwählte Pleißen Stadt* BWV 216a

Bach also used the polonaise duet from the cantata for August Müller in the conclusion of wedding Cantata BWV 216, *Vergnügte Pleissenstadt*, with a libretto by Picander.⁵² This piece was written for the wedding of Johann Heinrich Wolff, a Leipzig merchant, and Susanna Regina Hempel, daughter of an excise tax commissioner from Zittau, one Christian Andreas Hempel. The wedding took place on 5 February 1728, and the cantata was presumably performed at the Schellhafferischer Hause at Kloostergasse in Leipzig (known after 1767 as the Hôtel de Saxe). The house's grand hall was the venue of choice for all kinds of celebrations, and Johann Gottlieb Görner's Collegium Musicum (Bach's competition) regularly used it for concerts.⁵³ The surviving sources do not indicate any personal connection between Bach and the couple, hence Neumann's suggestion that the librettist, Picander, was the intermediary in the acquaintance.⁵⁴ As mentioned above, Cantata BWV 216 is incomplete, with only copies of the soprano and alto voices extant. Movements 3 and 7 of the piece were identified in 1921 by Arnold Schering as a parody.⁵⁵ Schering recognised the

⁵¹ Fullenwider, 'Zur Bildlichkeit', p. 39.

⁵² Picanders *Ernst=Schertzhafte und Satyrische Gedichte, Anderer Theil* (Leipzig: 1729), pp. 379–82.

⁵³ Werner Neumann, KB NBA 39 *Festmusiken für Leipziger Rats- und Schulfeiern. Huldigungsmusiken für Adlige und Bürger*, p. 37, *Bach-Compendium IV*, p. 1603.

⁵⁴ Neumann justifies his suggestion with the fact that in same volume of Picander's poetry the libretto of BWV 216 is followed by a poetic love scene containing allusions to the names of the newly-weds, 'Liebes=Congreß zwischen dem Kupido, Wolff und Hampelmann' (Picander, cited in note 52, pp. 382–89); cf. Neumann, KB NBA I/40, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Schering, *Über Bachs Parodieverfahren*, p. 93.

soprano aria 'Himmliche Vergnüsamkeit' from Cantata BWV 204 *Ich bin in mir vergnügt* (No. 8) as the original model for the soprano aria 'Angenehme Hempelin' (No. 3), and the duet 'Heil und Segen' (No. 7) was based on our duet 'Zweig und Äste' from Cantata BWV 205. The two duets (BWV 205, No. 13 and BWV 216, No. 7) generally match in terms of their main prosodic qualities, although some syllable shifts and minor melodic deviations can be found in BWV 216 compared with the original. Both movements share the same key of G major. The principal difference is the change of voice from the tenor (in the duet in BWV 205) to the soprano. As a result, the relationships between the vocal parts must have changed as well. However, as Neumann suggests, the instrumental cast of the duet in BWV 216 should not differ substantially from the cast of its counterpart in BWV 205 (traverso flute and basso continuo). As 'Heil und Segen' is the cantata's final movement, Neumann believes that strings tutti should additionally appear in the cast.

The text of BWV 216 is a dialogue between two rivers, the Neiße and the Pleisse⁵⁶ (the bride came from the town of Zittau on the Neiße, and the groom hailed from Leipzig on the river Pleisse). In the opening duet, the two rivers compliment each other's towns. The Neiße is reluctant to bid farewell to Miss Hempel, who was Zittau's ornament, and she wonders what might have attracted the girl to the banks of the Pleisse. The Pleisse invites Miss Hempel to Leipzig, where she promises to find her a fiancé worthy of her beauty (he was in fact rather an elderly widower by the standards of the day) and to take good care of her. In Recitative 6, the Pleisse assures Miss Hempel that she will be welcome in Leipzig, and promises that Wolff will be faithful and will accept her with her dowry. The Neiße accepts the Pleisse's assurances and offers her best wishes for the health, happiness and progeny of the married couple, sung by the two rivers in the duet 'Heil und Segen' (No. 7). This closing duet from Cantata BWV 216 uses the polonaise music of 'Zweig und Äste' from BWV 205. What were Bach's intentions in revisiting his old cantata for Professor Müller? Could Picander have suggested that the climactic point, where the two rivers offer their best wishes to the newly-weds, might be a good moment to re-use the music that in different circumstances had served its laudatory role so well?

⁵⁶ The Pleisse is a tributary of the Weiße Elster. It starts south west of Zwickau and flows into the Weiße Elster in Leipzig.

13 *tr* (74)
Heil und Segen je lieber ge-führt.

(84)

Example 2: Opening bars of the duet between Neisse (soprano) and the Pleisse (alto), 'Heil und Segen' (BWV 216, No. 7).

In trying to understand Bach's intentions, it helps to consider Cantata BWV 216a, *Erwählte Pleißen Stadt*, a dialogue between the mythological brothers Apollo and Mercury which has been stylised as an allegorical debate.⁵⁷ This is an apotheosis of the city of Leipzig, here dubbed the Athens on the Plesse, as a capital of learning and commerce.⁵⁸ Little is known today about the circumstances of the cantata's composition and performance.⁵⁹ Not a scrap of the score survives, and we only have the libretto recorded and corrected in Bach's hand with cast suggestions. But since the libretto text is an ideal match for BWV 216, both in terms of prosody and affect, we can confidently assume that Bach

⁵⁷ From the Homeric hymn to Hermes (Roman name Mercury) we know the story of his dispute with Apollo. As an infant, Hermes stole a herd of cattle from Apollo and cunningly covered its tracks. This angered his elder brother, but Apollo was appeased with the gift of a lyre, made out of a cow's intestines and tortoiseshell. In exchange, Mercury received a winged staff entwined with two serpents and known as the caduceus. A symbol of peace and commerce, the caduceus had the power to quell conflicts and quarrels. Hederich's *Lexicon*, cols. 1279–88, describes Mercury as the god of eloquence, trade, thieves and roads. In Cantata BWV 216 Mercury symbolised Leipzig as a city of peace and commerce. According to Hederich, col. 282, Apollo is the Sun, Musicus, and the god of physicians. In Bach's cantata, he personifies Leipzig as a city of learning and arts.

⁵⁸ Cf. note 25 above.

⁵⁹ Cf. Neumann, NBA KB 39, pp. 12–3.

intended to use (or actually used) the music from that wedding cantata. If that was the case, the piece ended with a polonaise duet with good wishes for Leipzig's city fathers: 'Heyl und segen müß euch theure Schaar verpflegen wie ein Fuß die Auen labt, und die Wonne, die hier habt soll und wird sich mitersprießen milder als ein Strohm ergießen...' (May health and happiness surround your dear hosts as the river irrigates meadows. And may the delights that you have be beneficial to you, pouring generously as the river's current. . .). In this hypothetical duet, Bach would have been using the dignified polonaise to pay musical homage to a powerful and proud royal city – which would have been apt, given the symbolic associations of the polonaise in eighteenth-century Saxony. Overall, Bach's use of this symbolic music seems to follow a logical pattern, as the same music is used on different occasions to honour the academic theorist of absolute rule, the king, and the royal city of Leipzig.