

J. S. Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* (BWV 10) in the Context of Other Uses of the Magnificat Text for the Feast of *Visitatio Mariae*

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The Magnificat had two important functions in early eighteenth-century Lutheran liturgies, both of which were continuations of pre-reformation practice. Most widely observed and frequent was the traditional place of the Canticle—in either Latin or a vernacular language—in the Office of Vespers. Secondly, although somewhat less widely observed and certainly less frequent, the Magnificat also had its place in the Gospel pericope for the *Visitatio Mariae*, or *Mariä Heimsuchung*. Throughout the seventeenth century, many Lutheran composers (Johannes Eccard, Christoph Demantius, Heinrich Schütz, Andreas Hammerschmidt, Carl Wolfgang Briegel, et al.) provided polyphonic music for this feast day, to texts which ranged from literal versions of the fixed readings to paraphrases and original poetry. The latter instances often provide a gloss on the Magnificat poetically and exegetically and establish connections between the different fixed readings allocated to the feast day. The observance of this Gospel pericope in the Mass of *Visitatio* day means that the Magnificat text figures in many eighteenth-century *Kirchenstücke*, or cantatas, for the feast day in question, among them Johann Sebastian Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* (BWV 10). In this chorale cantata from 1724 the *tonus peregrinus* (a psalm-tone used in Lutheran tradition for the Magnificat canticle, see Example 1) functions as a chorale equivalent in several movements. The anonymous librettist alludes to the Gospel text (Luke 1:39–56) and, as we shall see, to some other passages of scripture. A number of recent studies have considered this work in relation to its musical, liturgical, homiletical and exegetical contexts, but none has interpreted the cantata in the context of the very rich coeval repertoire of Magnificat paraphrases for the *Visitatio* Sunday, or in relation to the many different approaches to handling musically the Gospel pericope of that feast.¹

¹ See, for example, Mark Bangert, 'The Changing Fortunes of *Festum Visitationis* among Lutherans and Cantatas BWV 147 and BWV 10', in Renate Steiger (ed.), *Die Quellen Johann Sebastian Bachs: Bachs Musik im Gottesdienst* (Heidelberg: Manutius, 1998), pp. 401–16; Mattias Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus: The History of a Psalm-Tone and Its Use in Polyphonic Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 230–32, 253, 257–60; and Mark Peters, 'J. S. Bach's *Meine Seel*'

In this study, I shall focus on the relationship of this work to others for the *Visitatio Mariae*, as well as considering the possible relevance of general tendencies in paraphrases and glosses on the text to the choices made by Bach and his librettist. The context of other uses of the Magnificat text referred to in the title includes musical settings of this text for the *Visitatio Mariae*, paraphrases of the gospel passage, and homiletical texts treating the Magnificat and other fixed readings for this feast. Particular tendencies in this context may be indicated by assertions of intentionality on behalf of Bach and his anonymous librettist (what Ricoeur calls 'herméneutique de la foi').² There has traditionally been no shortage of such studies of Bach's sacred music, where intentions are 'traced' or 'uncovered'. Conversely, the intentionality may be downplayed and the musical and theological texts regarded as interpretational tendencies of which the two are not necessarily fully aware (in cases where this involves factors outside the musical and theological realms proper, this may even amount to Ricoeur's category 'herméneutique du soupçon').³ Rather than merely asserting intentionality proper on behalf of Bach and the anonymous librettist of BWV 10, I will discuss the theological implications of the Magnificat interpretations and paraphrases in the libretto from the perspective of what Thiselton has termed 'horizontal factors', one of six categories under which, according to Thiselton, interpreters may consciously or unconsciously infer meaning from a text.⁴ The qualifications of a 'horizon of expectation' are, he says, (i) 'a network of provisional working assumptions which are open to revision and change', and (ii) that 'the reader or interpreter may not be conscious of all that the horizon of expectation sets in motion, makes possible or excludes'.⁵ Both thus link up with Gadamer's notion of 'horizon' as a perspective with potentially clear limits of scope, but with possible hermeneutical expansion when shifting between positions in relation to the text.⁶

It has been noted that, in the early eighteenth century, the city of Leipzig demonstrated a stricter observance of the Marian feast days than was the case in many other Lutheran liturgical traditions. An interesting article by Mark Bangert interprets the *Visitatio* feast in Leipzig as a type of celebration of the Canticum of the Magnificat,⁷ that is in some respects again removed from the broader context of the full Gospel pericope and the other traditional readings for the *Visitatio*

erhebt den Herren (BWV 10) as Chorale Cantata and Magnificat Paraphrase', *Bach*, 43/1 (2012), 29–64.

² Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), pp. 36–9. See also Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 38.

³ Pertaining to the study of J. S. Bach these hermeneutical modes have been discussed by John Butt (*Bach's Dialogue with Modernity: Perspectives on the Passions*, Cambridge University Press, 2012), who also exemplifies them with two 'synthetic' examples by his own hand (pp. 146–60) and suggests that since both are literalistic and reductive, they are not essentially different (p. 191).

⁴ Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 7th rev. edn (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), p. 307.

⁷ Bangert, 'The Changing Fortunes', p. 416.

feast. This is in keeping with Luther's view that the importance of the Gospel passage alone suffices for retaining the *Visitatio* feast.⁸ However, I will argue that homiletical and hymnological texts disseminated in early eighteenth-century Lutheran traditions suggest a distinctive pattern of interpretation and an enriched horizon of expectation for the Gospel pericope of the feast, as opposed to the use of the Canticum alone, for example in the context of Vespers. Recently, the importance of such sources has been similarly addressed in a regional and historical context by, among others, Markus Rathey, calling on the relevance of a number of sermons by Carpzov for the chorale cantatas by Schelle.⁹

The liturgical history and context of Lutheran music for the *Visitatio Mariae*

The feast of *Visitatio Mariae* has a chequered and interesting history. Rather a late addition to western liturgy, not attested before the thirteenth century, it did not have a fixed date but was celebrated on different days, which varied within broader regional monastic and cathedral traditions. It was confirmed by Urbanus VI in 1386 and universally fixed to 2 July by the 1441 council of Basel. Theological commentaries after Urbanus gloss on the significance of unity in the meeting of Mary and Elisabeth in the one temple of Israel. This typological trope, invoked in many commentaries and sermons throughout the early modern period, was of equal interest to Lutheran (from both pietist and orthodox viewpoints) and Catholic theologians, although from different perspectives. Lutheran theologians were suspicious of the Catholic interpretation of the feast in relation to the Turkish onslaught throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, culminating in 1683.¹⁰ Those parts of the Gospel pericope for the day which precede the text of the Magnificat contained a number of points which were particularly significant for Lutherans, and were naturally quite distinct from the understanding of the Magnificat within Vespers. The movement of the unborn St John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth, for example, became a potent argument against Anabaptism, since it was regarded as indicating that an understanding and awareness of God already existed in infancy (Luke 1:41 describes the unborn St John making a leap in the womb of Elizabeth, who on hearing the salutation of Mary became filled with the Holy Spirit).¹¹ Lutheran contexts also replaced some established pre-reformation interpretations with a variety of Christocentric expositions.¹²

⁸ *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1904), vol. XXIX, p. 451: '...quod in vespera canitur, und billich et ut adhuc sinitur canticum bleiben in ecclesia et propter quod et hoc festum sol am meisten gehalten sein' ('...which is sung in vespers, and still suitably permitted in the church on this feast and therefore generally to be retained').

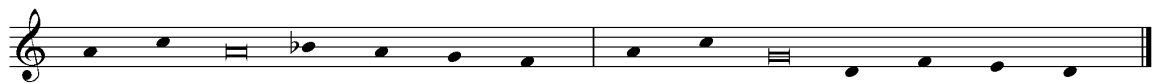
⁹ Markus Rathey, 'Schelle, Carpzov und die Tradition der Choralkantate in Leipzig', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung*, 2011 (2011), 185–210.

¹⁰ Beth Kreitzer, *Reforming Mary: Changing Images of the Virgin Mary in Lutheran Sermons of the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 47–8 and 170.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Kreitzer, *Reforming Mary*, pp. 47–63 gives a good overview of the aspects of humility and virtue in Luther's Magnificat commentaries and sermons as well as in a number of other early

Most north European Lutheran liturgies retained the feast. If Vopelius' *Neu Leipziger Gesangbuch*, Daniel Vetter's *Musicalische Kirch- und Hauss-Ergötzlichkeit*, *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat* and similar local sources are compared, it appears that this was also true of Leipzig in Bach's time.¹³ In fact, the *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat* differs from many similar documents elsewhere in that it exclusively prescribes the singing of *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* for the feast day, not *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr*, *Nun freut euch lieben Christen Gemein* or any of the other chorales commonly allocated to this feast in printed orders. The city churches of Leipzig traditionally still had a cantata on weekdays for the Marian feasts, but Bach and his librettist for the BWV 10 must be understood in the context of the wider region, where this was not always the case and the *Visitatio* was frequently moved to one of the Sundays closest to 2 July.¹⁴ It was, of course, only when the *Visitatio* fell on a Sunday that the Luke text was performed three times to the melody with which it was firmly associated, the *tonus peregrinus*, first in the *Hauptgottesdienst* (with the cantata), again in the Vespers (within the repeated cantata), and finally in its normal place within the Vespers.¹⁵ It should also be noted that the *Visitatio* was one of the feasts which in Leipzig observance had a solemn Vespers on the preceding day when it fell on a weekday. Consequently, a 'double narrative' of Mass and Vespers is presented melodically and scripturally here, just as was the case when the feast was on a weekday.¹⁶



Example 1: The *tonus peregrinus* in the choral dialect used in BWV 10

When 2 July did not coincide with a Sunday, it often fell between the fourth and fifth Sundays after Trinity, and this is where it is usually listed in printed and MS liturgical orders, since this situation was more common. Bach's only other cantata for the *Visitatio*, *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* (BWV 147) was first performed when the feast fell on a weekday (1723, although the cantata is a reworking of an earlier piece for another feast), and does not focus strongly on the Gospel pericope. After the feast of *Visitatio Mariae* had been fixed on 2 July, it fell on a Sunday only four times during Bach's period in Leipzig. The cantata *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* (BWV 10) was written for one of these, in 1724.

As far as scriptural readings were concerned, Lutheran practice varied throughout central and northern Europe, but typical readings for this feast were the following:

Lutheran sermons on this Gospel pericope, but do not cover the significant covenant exegesis (of which see more below) in this literature.

¹³ *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat: Das ist, Deutlicher Unterricht vom Gottes-Dienst in Leipzig* (Leipzig: Groschuff, 1710), pp. 121-2.

¹⁴ Bangert, 'The Changing Fortunes', p. 404.

¹⁵ See Peters, 'J. S. Bach's *Meine Seel' erhebt den Herren*', 64.

¹⁶ Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach und das Leipziger gottesdienstliche Leben seiner Zeit* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), p. 47.

- Epistle:** (i) Romans 12:9–16
and / or
(ii) Isaiah 11:1–5
and / or
(iii) Song of Solomon 2:8–14

Gospel: Luke 1:39–56: (incl. the Magnificat)

The Gospel reading includes the complete account of Mary's visit to the temple and the meeting with Elizabeth, setting it in a biblico-historical context, as opposed to the function in Vespers, where only the actual song of the Magnificat is rendered out of context, or rather interpreted in a typological context.¹⁷ A large number of cantatas for Lutheran services follow, by references in the libretti, one of the combinations possible from these readings. As well as Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, this is true of works by Georg Friedrich Kauffmann, Christoph Graupner, Georg Friedrich Telemann, Wilhelm Friedrich Zachow, and many more of Bach's contemporaries. To settings composed after 1750, Georg Friedrich Telemann's *Vater Gott von Ewigkeit* (for *Visitatio* Sunday of 1758), Gottfried Homilius' *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* (for *Visitatio* Sunday of 1780) may be added, as well as cantatas by Bach's successors in the Thomaskirche, Johann Friedrich Doles and Johann Adam Hiller. That the Song of Solomon 2:8–14 retained a strong place in Lutheran observance is shown by cantatas such as Zachow's *Stehe auf meine Freundin*, performed on many *Visitatio* feasts between 1698 and 1720.¹⁸

In Bach's time, the *proprium temporale* season from advent to Trinity Sunday amounted to a chronological summary of the life of Christ, whereas the Sundays of the second season of the year treated the Church's fundamental doctrines of faith.¹⁹ In extant musical sources, this scheme is evident not only in cantata cycles, but also for example in chorale collections, where there is a first half for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter etc. (the cycle of Christ), and a second half for catechism, Credo paraphrases, *Vater Unser*, Decalogue paraphrases and so on (the cycle of the Church). The *Visitatio*, together with a small number of other post-pentecostal Sundays, stood out from this scheme as it in fact related directly to the *proprium temporale*, albeit in the middle of summer. In addition to the wider context of the Magnificat text in the Gospel pericope for *Visitatio* (as opposed to the removed context in the Magnificat at Vespers), the Gospel passage is included in a larger narrative of the feasts of St John the Baptist and the *Visitatio*. These feasts normally fell within the same week, or in subsequent weeks. In printed

¹⁷ Menzel has summed up the tradition of symbolical interpretation linking the days of St John the Baptist and the *Visitatio Mariae*, through the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth: 'Ihrem Geiste werden plötzlich alle die alten verheissungen klar, die Gott den kindern Abrahams gegeben...'. ('Her soul suddenly realizes all the ancient promises which God has given the children of Abraham.'). See Wolfgang Menzel, *Christlichen Symbolik* (Regensburg: Manz, 1854), vol. I, pp. 380–2.

¹⁸ The earliest MS source of this work is preserved in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden (D-Dl: Mus.2-E-570).

¹⁹ See Eric Chafe, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 12–13.

collections of sermons, authors often proceed with exegetical themes from the Gospel of the day of St John the Baptist directly to the *Visitatio*, the central link of course being the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth and their unborn sons. Other readings, beside those listed above, occur more infrequently. Sometimes the music is compiled to centre predominantly or entirely on original poetry, as is the case of a cantata with texts by Johann Friedrich Armand von Uffenbach. Here music by Christoph Graupner, Georg Friedrich Händel and Gottfried Grünewald is collected. The poetic Magnificat paraphrase 'Meine Seele muß sich freuen Höchster und dein Lob', for example, has been set to the music of 'Alla fama dimmi il vero' (from Händel's opera *Ottone*), linked with movements from a cantata for the *Visitatio* of 1719 by Graupner.²⁰

BWV 10 is a 'monothematic' chorale cantata, insofar as it does not utilise any of the other chorales associated with the *Visitatio* feast. As has been mentioned, many church orders prescribe Nicolaus Decius' *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* as a *Gradual-Lied* for this Sunday. Several scholars have stressed that the *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat* of 1710 only lists *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* for the feast, and that this printed order was of great significance for liturgical practice in Leipzig. However, in his Weimar years, Bach included *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* and not *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* in his larger cyclical plan for the *Orgelbüchlein*, so local liturgical practice in Leipzig cannot solely be held to account for his choice of a 'monothematic' chorale cantata. Bach and his librettist must have been familiar with the widespread observance of *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* as a central hymn on the *Visitatio*, most definitely outside Leipzig, but possibly also within the city.²¹ To understand the unifying event of Bach's 'monothematic' chorale cantata, an awareness of how *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* was typically applied in chorale cantatas for the *Visitatio* feast is necessary. This practice is reflected in Georg Friedrich Kauffmann's *Nicht nur Herr* and Gottfried Homilius' *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, two cantatas for *Visitatio Mariae* which in many respects shed contextual light on Bach's choices for the BWV 10, in spite of the fact that Homilius' is a much later work. Concerning the liturgical allocation of *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr*, in relation to that of *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, Olearius says:

Most sing it as a proper Sunday chorale as we now wish to use it on the feast of Mary's visitation, since the Magnificat is not actually a song of the type where we have rhymes and is otherwise already sufficiently explained as a biblical text – from Luke 1:47 and the following – one cannot prove that Mary ever sung thus, notwithstanding how many who hold this or similar views, and that it reads: καὶ εἶπε Μαρία, that is *Et dixit Maria*.²²

²⁰ This source complex is preserved in the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen (D-Gs: 2:o Bibl. Uff. 562–563 Rara).

²¹ See Robin A. Leaver, 'Bach and Hymnody: The Evidence from the *Orgelbüchlein*', *Early Music* 13/2 (1985), pp. 227–36.

²² Johann Christoph Olearius, *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz* (Jena: Bielcke, 1706), vol. III, p. 85–6: 'Die meisten singen es als ein ordentliches Sonntags-Lied, voritzo wollen wir es auff's Fest **Mariä Heimsuchung** appliciren, weil das *Magnificat* nicht eigentlich ein solches Lied ist, wie wir Reimweise haben, und sonst gnugsam von andern, als ein Biblischer *Text*, ex. *Luc. I, 47 sqq*

It is vital to note here that *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* is a Gloria and Laudamus paraphrase, used accordingly in Lutheran tradition, as shown by Kauffman's and Homilius' *Visitatio* cantatas, where melody and text combine in a concluding thanksgiving for the wonders promised to Mary and humankind at the visitation. This matches Bach's use of the lesser doxology to the *tonus peregrinus* in the BWV 10 as the concluding movement of a chorale cantata (see Example 2), which fits well into unified forms in his second Leipzig cantata cycle but is really an idiom from the psalmody of Vespers, which featured *tonus peregrinus* more frequently, and not the Mass.²³

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The bottom staff is the basso continuo line. The lyrics are: 'Wie es war von An-fang jetzt und im-mer-dar; Und von E-wig-keit zu E-wig-keit. A-men.' The music is in G minor and 4/4 time. The vocal parts enter with a long note on 'E-wig-keit' and then sing the rest of the phrase. The basso continuo line provides a harmonic accompaniment.

Example 2: The closing quasi-chorale doxology in Bach's *Visitatio Mariae* cantata *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* BWV 10/7

erkläret worden, auch nicht zu erweisen daß *Maria* damahls gesungen, ungeachtet viele dergleichen Meynung gehabt, es heist: *καὶ εἶπε Μαριαμ, i.e. Et dixit Maria'*.

²³ Kauffmann's work is preserved in the Interim Leipziger Stadtbibliothek (D-LEm: Becker III.2.103). Homilius' is preserved in the library of the Augustinerkirche in Gotha (D-Goa: C.VII.16), as well as in later copies in the Stadtkirche St Nikolai, Kantoreibibliothek, Luckau (D-LUC: MS. 169); the Stadtkirche St Petri, Musiksammlung, Augustusburg (D-AG: Mus.H.6:72 and Mus.H.6:72a), as well as a number of nineteenth-century copies throughout Lutheran regions of northern Europe.

Al - lein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr, und
Da - rum dass nun und nim - mer - mehr uns

Al - lein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr, und
Da - rum dass nun und nim - mer - mehr uns

Al - lein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr, und
Da - rum dass nun und nim - mer - mehr uns

Al - lein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr, und
Da - rum dass nun und nim - mer - mehr uns

Dank für sei - ne Gna - de. Ein Wohl - ge -
rüh - ren kann_ kein Scha - de.

Dank für sei - ne Gna - de. Ein Wohl - ge -
rüh - ren kann_ kein Scha - de.

Dank für sei - ne Gna - de. Ein Wohl - ge -
rüh - ren kann_ kein Scha - de.

Dank für sei - ne Gna - de. Ein Wohl - ge -
rüh - ren kann_ kein Scha - de.

Example 3: The closing chorale ('Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr') in Kauffmann's *Visitatio Mariae cantata Nicht uns Herr sondern deinem Namen gib Ehre*. Leipziger Stadtbibliothek (D-LEm), Becker III.2.103

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves are for the keyboard (right and left hands). The bottom three staves are for the vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Bass). The lyrics for all parts are: "fall'n Gott an uns hat, nun ist gross' Fried ohn un - ter - lass,". The music is in a minor key with a common time signature.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves are for the keyboard. The bottom three staves are for the vocal parts. The lyrics for all parts are: "all' Fehd' hat nun_____ ein". The music continues in the same key and time signature as the first system.

Example 3 (cont.)

The image displays a musical score for Example 3 (cont.), consisting of seven staves. The top two staves are instrumental, likely for a lute or guitar, featuring a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The next three staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass), each with the lyrics "En - de." written below the notes. The bottom two staves are instrumental, likely for a lute or guitar, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is common time (C).

Example 3 (cont.)

Considering BWV 10 (and other cantatas finishing with the lesser doxology to the *tonus peregrinus*) as a chorale cantata, the *tonus peregrinus* replaces melodically two chorales, not one: the Magnificat paraphrase chorales (such as any of those discussed below) and, by virtue of the doxology, *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr.* Kauffmann has the latter as the concluding Gloria chorale (see Example 3). Homilius, by comparison, has *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* to the *tonus peregrinus* as the first choral movement, after the instrumental opening. After a series of arias and recitatives, he closes with a homorhythmic setting of the eighth verse of Johann Jakob Schütz's *Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut* ('Ihr die ihr Christi Namen nennt') but, significantly, to the melody of *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr.* This verse already relates topically to the doxology and the *Gloria* ('gebt unserm Gott die Ehr'), but the link is further strengthened by the melody used.

The association of the *tonus peregrinus* with the canticle text

The liturgical and musical connection between the Vespers and the Mass of *Visitatio Mariae* is highlighted by the common appearance of a musical item which was for Lutherans intrinsically linked to Luke 1: the *tonus peregrinus*. This deviant psalm-tone is, as has been said, the only pre-existent liturgical melody deployed in Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* cantata. It also appears in all his music with any relation to the Magnificat text – the large Latin setting, and the

organ settings. This tradition from the earliest time of the Lutheran reformation is still strong today.²⁴

Friedhelm Krummacher and others have noted that none of the Lutheran composers who were Bach's contemporaries held as rigidly to the chorale melodies as Bach does with his second Leipzig cantata cycle.²⁵ While this is clearly true in a general sense, the *tonus peregrinus* is something of a special case, since it was often employed in cantatas for the *Visitatio* by composers who rarely incorporated chorale melodies in their cantatas. This relates to the fact that the double liturgical function of the Magnificat is the same double function as that of the *tonus peregrinus*. It was for Lutherans simply 'Das Deutsche Magnificat', and thus it belongs both to the traditions of polyphonic chorale settings – such as the *aequaliter* settings by Johann Walther and others in Georg Rhau prints (the first printed collections of music specifically for the Lutheran service) – by the first generation of Lutherans, and with idioms such as Samuel Scheidt's *Concerta Sacra* and organ chorale settings. Later, it also belongs in *Kirchenstücke* such as those by Bach. Many of these settings have their function in the Vespers, appearing alongside chorale melodies in many hymnals; of course in unmeasured recitation, since the Magnificat is not a strophic song. Nevertheless, it often appears in these printed books among the chorales, as well as among the psalm-tones allocated to Psalms and Canticles; frequently it appears in both. In some ways this is unique – in Joseph Herl's statistical account of the most frequently occurring texts and melodies with attested functions that imply intended or actual congregational participation, *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* to the *tonus peregrinus* appears more often than some of the most widespread pre-eighteenth century original chorale melodies.²⁶ This appears to be the only example of an unmeasured melody being treated as a chorale melody, and even regarded as suitable for participation by the congregation.

If we look more closely at how the *tonus peregrinus* is employed in Bach's cantata, we find it in all tutti sections and in the alto and tenor duet that sets the verse 'Er denket der Barmherzigkeit'. Thus it appears in all sections which take their texts directly from Luke and in the lesser doxology which concludes the music (movement 4 is, in spite its first line of text, a paraphrase, containing also free text). The psalm-tone is absent from all texts which are not verbatim scriptural, but instead glosses on the Magnificat text. The inclusion of the doxology highlights the double liturgical function of the text and the *tonus peregrinus* – no other cantata ends with a doxology, so this is probably related to the more common Vespers function. Historically, the doxology has no proper place in this part of the Mass at all; its only occurrence in the Mass is if a Psalm introit is sung. Yet in the doxology, the *tonus peregrinus* is treated in the same way as chorale melodies in most cantatas of the second Leipzig cycle:

²⁴ See Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus*, chapters 9, 12 and 13.

²⁵ Friedhelm Krummacher, *Bachs Zyklus der Choralkantaten: Aufgaben und Lösungen* (Göttingen, 1995), pp. 7–8.

²⁶ Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation and Three Centuries of Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 64.

- I. *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren: tonus peregrinus* as cantus firmus, first in soprano, then in alto+trumpet (imitative fragments in choral parts)
- II. Aria: *Herr, du stark und mächtig bist*
- III. Recitative: *Des Höchsten Güt und Treu*
- IV. Aria: *Gewaltige stösst Gott vom Stuhl*
- V. Alto and tenor duet: *Er denket der Barmherzigkeit*, with *tonus peregrinus* in oboe/trumpet in *Pfundnoten*)
- VI. Recitative: *Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten*
- VII. Chorale: *Lob und Preis sei Gott dem Vater* (lesser doxology on the *tonus peregrinus*)

The question of the status of the *tonus peregrinus* as a chorale has been covered in detail elsewhere.²⁷ The unique problem in relation to congregational singing and instrumental accompaniment is of course its non-strophic free rhythm. One interesting fact which appears to have hitherto escaped the interest of musicologists and hymnologists, however, is that strophic texts are in fact occasionally allocated to the psalm-tone in 'cantasi come'. In several editions of Crüger's *Praxis pietatis melica*, Freylinghausen's and Francke's *Geistreiches Gesangbuch: Den Kern Alter und Neuer Lieder*, as well as in other hymnals, a number of strophic as well as non-strophic texts (Psalms, but also original hymnody) have the subheading 'Mel.: Meine Seel erhebt den Herren'.²⁸ Given the wide dissemination of these prints, this is certainly relevant to how the inclusion of the psalm-tone in Bach's chorale cantata cycle is interpreted.

We have seen that the link between the *tonus peregrinus* melody and the Gospel text, as received from well-established Lutheran tradition, is mirrored by Bach's use of the psalm-tone in different movements of this cantata. It has also been suggested that the use of the lesser doxology, seemingly out of place here in the Mass, may well relate to the prescribed use of the Gloria and Laudamus paraphrase *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr* as a conclusion of *Visitatio* cantatas, as exemplified here by the more typical cantatas of Georg Friedrich Kauffmann and Gottfried Homilius.

Tendencies of interpretation of the *Visitatio* gospel pericope in homiletical texts

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was common for Lutheran composers to set the Gospel for the *Visitatio* feast from Luke 1:39 onwards, like a reading of the pericope. The sections of these movements often coincide with

²⁷ Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus*, pp. 144–61.

²⁸ See 1693 edition of *Praxis pietatis melica* and the 1721 edition of *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*.

those of printed sermons, treating one topic of the text at a time – as was later the case with multi-sectional cantatas – although not necessarily one verse of the Magnificat at a time. There were also poetic and contextual paraphrases of different kinds. This tradition highlights the distinction between the presentation of the Magnificat in the Vespers and the full narrative of the Gospel pericope of *Visitatio Mariae*. Many of the seventeenth-century hymnodists wrote texts which were either allocated to the *Visitatio* by themselves or used thus in different contexts. Ludwig Helmbold, whose chorale texts J. S. Bach used in four cantatas, wrote *Über's gebirg Maria geht*, a text set at least twice by Johannes Eccard. Nobody listening to Vespers is likely to have included Mary's travels to Jerusalem in the fount of associations. This means that our hermeneutic mode must be rather different as regards the two liturgical occasions of, for example, Bach's large Magnificat and the cantata *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*.

It became common in the later part of the seventeenth century to separate two perceived layers of scripture, in homiletical literature as well as in musical settings such as those just mentioned. August Hermann Francke offers a good example in a printed sermon for the *Visitatio Mariae*, held in Könnern in the Duchy of Magdeburg Sachsen-Anhalt in 1726. Here he treats the subject of this Sunday under two headings of the theme 'Alles und in allen Christus' (Galatians 3:58) 'I: In der Heimsuchung / II: In dem Lobgesang Mariä' (almost like two separate sermons).²⁹ These two different layers need to be understood separately by readers of and listeners to Francke's sermon.

The same double-level typological reading can be found in a *Visitatio* sermon by Francke's son-in-law and successor, Johann Athanasius Freylinghausen.³⁰ The first section covers the verse from the lowly perspective of a servant and the second the incarnation of the root of Isiah, as embodied by Mary, thus linking the Gospel and Epistle texts of the feast. This is followed by a very long peroration, which forms the third section of the sermon. Bach owned a considerable collection of Bible commentaries of this type, and it has been suggested that he drew on such texts in the process of choosing and treating libretti for his *Kirchenstücke*.³¹ They clearly belong to the horizon of expectation in relation to BWV 10. Since the *tonus peregrinus* only appears with words of verbatim scripture, it marks out the border between the two types of layer identified in the sermons of Francke and Freylinghausen – it signals Mary speaking, as opposed to the narrative level of Mary's function in the covenant and the salvation of man. First is a portion of Gospel presented by the *tonus peregrinus*, which is then glossed upon by music with original melodic material. This is not unique to Bach but places him firmly in a Lutheran practical-exegetical tradition. Many earlier

²⁹ August Hermann Francke, *Sonn- und Fest-Tags-Predigten, welche Theils in Halle, theils an verschiedenen auswärtigen Oertern von wichtigen und auserlesenen Materien gehalten worden* (Weysenhaus, 1728), pp. 1164–82.

³⁰ Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen, *Predigten über alle Sonn- und Fest-Tags-Episteln* (Halle: Waysenhaus, 1707), pp. 919–37.

³¹ Robin A. Leaver, *Bachs theologische Bibliothek: Eine kritische Bibliographie* (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1983), p. 27. See also Robin A. Leaver, 'Bach's Understanding and Use of the Epistles and Gospels of the Church Year', *Bach*, 4/4 (1975), 4–13.

examples can be cited, such as a *Historia* setting by Rogier Michael, where the psalm-tone appears in the soprano voice on words uttered by Mary, to striking effect.

In *Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten*, the sixth movement of Bach's cantata, there are glosses on the verse from Luke 1:55: ('As he promised to our fathers, Abraham and his seed forever and ever'), drawing on Old Testament passages and projecting what seems to be a comparison between Sara in Genesis with Elizabeth in Luke, both being miraculously with child at a very great age. As well as invoking the corresponding Old Testament passages referred to in Luke, this rhymed verse connects the Magnificat to the visitation of the three men at Abraham's house in Hain Mamre. In the tradition of typological readings of the Old Testament, this passage has often been linked to the visitation of the temple by Mary and Elizabeth. Mary here represents Abraham, Elizabeth represents Sara. Abraham's dwellings in Hain Mamre in the Old Testament are first linked to the temple in the New Testament and then to the church of all true believers in Christ.

BWV 10

Sources of glossary

- | | |
|---|--|
| [1] Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten geredet und verheissen hat, erfüllt er auch im Werk und in der That. | Wie er geredet hat unsern Vätern, Abraham und seinem Samen ewiglich. (Luke 1:55) |
| [2] Was Gott dem Abraham, als er zu ihm in seine Hütten kam, versprochen und geschworen ist, da die Zeit erfüllet war, geschehen | Und der HERR erschien ihm im Hain Mamre, da saß er an der Tür seiner Hütte, da der Tag am heißesten war (Genesis 18:1) |
| [3] Sein Same musste sich so sehr wie Sand am Meer und Stern am Firmament ausbreiten, | Daß ich deinen Samen segnen und mehren will wie die Sterne am Himmel und wie den Sand am Ufer des Meeres; (Genesis 15:5) und dein Same soll besitzen die Tore seiner Feinde; und durch deinen Samen sollen alle Völker auf Erden gesegnet werden, darum daß du meiner Stimme gehorcht hast. (Genesis 22:17-18) |
| [4] Der Heiland ward geboren, das ew'ge Wort liess sich im Fleische sehen, | Und das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnte unter uns, und wir sahen seine Herrlichkeit. (John 1:14) |
| [5] Das menschliche Geschlecht von Tod und allem Bösen und von der Satans Slaverei aus lauter Liebe zu erlösen; d'rum bleibts darbei, das Gottes Wort voll Gnad und Wahrheit sei. | |

The concluding section, here labelled 5, is apparently the only one not taken from scripture. However, we shall see below that it appears to be linked to a specific established homiletic tradition.

Helene Werthemann described the recitative passage thus:

But with all promises of God to Abraham understood christologically in keeping with St Paul, the cantata librettist can connect the promise from Genesis 22:17–18 directly [...] with the visit of the three men in Mamre. It must, however, remain an open question why he includes precisely this story in his recitative. It may be that he considered the old link to Mary's annunciation, or a connection between the visit of the three men to Abraham and Mary's visit to Elizabeth.³²

Werthemann's interpretation in fact leads to a suggestion of a triple conceptual link on behalf of the cantata librettist: (i) the promise of *λόγος* becoming flesh, according to the covenant in the two instances of Sara and Mary; (ii) the visit of the three men of Hain Mamre and Mary's visit to Elizabeth (or alternatively the visit to the temple by both women); and (iii), relating to (i) above: the promise of giving birth at a great age, which was fulfilled in the two instances of Sara and Elizabeth. Werthemann ventures to suggest that Bach responded to what we have here termed conceptual link (i) by adding strings to what had previously been a *secco* recitative. It is true that this coincides with that passage of the text, but this type of intentionalistic interpretation is very hard to substantiate. The librettist's scriptural and narrative links seem plausible from horizontal factors, whereas the interpretation of Bach's instrumentation relies more on *herméneutique de la foi*.

Werthemann's interpretation has not, as far as I am aware, been discussed in recent scholarship concerning this movement of BWV 10. Later scholarship frequently states that the movement refers to the Magnificat verse in question (Luke 1:55),³³ but this is secondary and, as seen above, only true of the first strophe. Schulze interprets strophe 2 as referring to the 'Schöpfungs-geschichte', which can only be true if by that is meant either some sort of extended creation account (including the patriarchal accounts) or a topological reflection of the creation story through Abraham's promise and the Magnificat. If these are to be interpreted as deliberate allusions by the librettist, they are certainly less palpable than those suggested by Werthemann for *Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten*. Bangert suggests that this recitative refers to Genesis 12:2, which in Luther's Bible reads: 'Und ich will dich zum großen Volk machen und will dich segnen und dir einen großen Namen machen, und du sollst ein Segen sein', and Genesis 17:4, which reads: 'Siehe, ich habe meinen Bund mit dir, und du sollst ein Vater vieler Völker werden'. There is, however, no mention of blessing on the metalevel which these passages offer, and so it seems more likely that [3] above refers instead to Genesis 15:5 and 22:17–18, since in the latter instance, the blessing is mentioned.³⁴

³² Helene Werthemann, *Die Bedeutung der alttestamentlichen Historien in Johann Sebastian Bachs Kantaten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959), p. 75: 'Da aber alle Versprechen Gottes an Abraham im Anschluß an Paulus christologisch verstanden worden, kann der Kantatendichter ohne weiteres die Verheißung aus Gen. 22 17–18: [...] mit dem Besuch der drei Männer in Mamre verbinden. Dabei muß allerdings die Frage offenbleiben, warum er nun ausgerechnet diese Geschichte in sein Rezitativ aufgenommen hat. Es mag sein, daß er an die alte Beziehung zu Mariä Verkündigung oder an eine Verwandtschaft zwischen dem Besuch der drei Männer bei Abraham und dem Besuch der Maria bei Elisabeth gedacht hat [...]'.

³³ See, for example, Peters, 'J. S. Bach's *Meine Seel' erhebt den Herren*', p. 45.

³⁴ Bangert 'The Changing Fortunes' points also to Genesis 17:4, which also mentions the covenant: 'Siehe, ich habe meinen Bund mit dir, und du sollst ein Vater vieler Völker werden.'

The relationship between the treatment of the canticle in BWV 10 and chorale paraphrases of the gospel pericope

The interspersing of Gospel pericope verses and interpretational glosses in the libretto of BWV 10 can be, and largely has been, understood in relation to other such cantata libretti. In this particular case, however, a comparison with Lutheran Magnificat paraphrases may in some instances shed further light on what seem to be recurring topoi in the understanding of the *Visitatio* Gospel.

In a number of widely disseminated editions of his *Neu Leipziger Gesangbuch*, Vopelius prescribes, in addition to *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren, Jesu, meine Freude*, Johann Rist's *Mein Gott sei hochgepreiset* and *Mein Seel O Herr, muß loben dich* for the *Visitatio* feast.³⁵ The latter two hymns offer an insight into interpretations of the Magnificat projected through hymnody. The question is whether or not these could be referred to as paraphrases *tout court*, since they would more aptly be described as micro-sermons on the Luke passage, branching out to refer to other passages of scripture in a similar way to *Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten* in BWV 10. Vopelius also gives the Vulgate reading of the Cantic and, most significantly, the lesser doxology for both the Latin and German versions. Therefore it should not be surprising to find this doxology in BWV 10, albeit with conventions borrowed from psalmody – as it was indisputably part of the *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* as was the Gospel text, its inclusion, particularly in Bach's chorale cantata cycle, needs no explanation.³⁶ Moreover, the doxology is split into verses (verses 10 and 11 of the quasi-chorale). This sheds light on Bach's treatment of the text and the melody in the last movement of his cantata.³⁷ Consider the following comparison between a passage from BWV 10 and Johann Rist (1607):³⁸

| BWV 10 | Rist's <i>Mein Gott sei hochgepreiset</i> |
|---|---|
| Das menschliche Geschlecht von Tod und allem Bösen und von der Satans Slaverei aus lauter Liebe zu erlösen; d'rum bleibts darbei, das Gottes Wort voll Gnad und Wahrheit sei. | Obgleich der Feind sehr dräuet, Ja spritzt Feu'r und Flammen aus, auch Satan Unglück streuet, zu Stoßen um dein heiligs Haus; will ich doch nicht erschrecken, den Du bist unser Hort; dein Hand kan uns bedecken, so tröstet mich dein Wort. |

This was the only passage of *Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten* which could not be traced directly to the Magnificat or some other passage of scripture (see above).

(‘Behold, I have established my covenant with you, and you shall become a father of many peoples.’)

³⁵ See, for example, the 1752 edition by Vopelius and Hoffman: *Das Vollständige und vermehrte Leipziger Gesang-Buch* (Leipzig: Barnbeck, 1752), the ‘Zweytes Register’, and p. 170.

³⁶ The same is true of Schlüter's Hannover hymnal (1759, p. 7).

³⁷ Also many of the Magnificat paraphrase chorales have the doxology paraphrased and split in the same way.

³⁸ *Vollständiges Und Neu-eingerichtetes Marburger Gesangbuch* (Marburg: Stock, 1681), pp. 200–201. Reproduced in the widely available *Gesangbuch für Gemeinden des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Bekenntnisses*, 14th edn (Columbus: Lutherische Verlagshandlung, 1886), pp. 86–7.

The shared topos, the salvation of man from Satan by way of the power of truth in *λόγος*, may seem like a commonplace, but the Rist passage which follows in the final verse must also be considered:

Your word remains intact, I wish to see your truth; your mouth cannot lie in the vane manner of mankind, and we will not betray your holy presence. What is promised to us and our seed must pass in your name, Lord Jesus Christ.³⁹

Here the passage which resembles that in BWV 10 is linked to covenant theology, the seed of Abraham being those who live in the truth of the word. Just as we saw above, the covenant transforms from Abraham's house – the temple – the church of true believers in the word.

The ninth verse of the Magnificat paraphrase *Mein Herz und Seel den Herren hoch erhebet*, sung to the melody of *Herr unser Gott*, should also be considered:

The agreement which he has sworn in the new covenant, as well as in the old, he will also always keep. The Lord does not forsake us, his children, for in him is all our trust.⁴⁰

The Gospel passage speaks explicitly only of the old covenant, as a continuation of the preceding verse (Freylinghausen has 'eid' instead of 'treu'). The paraphrase offers a specific and explicit interpretation as to the meaning of 'seinem Samen ewiglich'. The librettist of BWV 10 does the same in the passage discussed, only more elaborately. What is added to these paraphrases, the glosses within the chorale texts, illustrate what the new covenant means for the individual, in keeping with Luther's distinction between 'Werk' (the salvaging power of God) and 'Werkstatt' (the possibilities for these powers to act in the humble heart).⁴¹ The chorale *Hochgepriesne Leibes-Frucht, Liebster Jesu* is particularly interesting, since it presents the loci paraphrased from the Magnificat in a centonised form, not in chronological order. This begins in verse 4 ('Meine Seel, erhebe du, Lob' und Preise Gottes Güte'), while verse 7 reads as follows:

Keep what you have promised to Abraham and his seed / to thee we will complain in our distress, your name come and protect: / for through nothing but by your hand, evil can be banished.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 200-1: 'dein Wort bleibt unzerbrochen, ich will auff deine Wahrheit sehn; dein Mund kan ja nicht lügen nach eitler Menschen Art, auch wird uns nicht betrügen dein hohe Gegenwart. Was uns und unser Saamen von dir verheissen ist, das muß in deinem Namen, Geschehn, Herr Jesu Christ!'

⁴⁰ Schlüter's Hannover hymnal, 1759, p. 8: 'Die treu, die er im neuen Bund und alten geredet hat, wird er auch ewig halten. Der Herr verläßt uns, seine kinder, nicht, Denn zu ihm steht all unsere zuversicht'. Freylinghausen in 1721 (p. 263).

⁴¹ See the *Christlichen Lehre auf alle Tage im Jahre* (1891), p. 406.

⁴² *Kern Geistlicher Lieblicher Lieder* (Nürnberg: Bieling, 1733) pp. 42-3: 'Halte / was du zugesagt, Abraham und seinem saamen / Dir sey unsre noth geklagt, Komm und schütze deinen namen: / Dan durch nichts, als deine hand, wird das übel abgewandt'.

Here we have the same plea for protection from sin as in the recitative in BWV 10—also linking the protection from evil and lies to ‘Er übet gewalt mit seinem Arm’. The one passage that appears not to paraphrase scripture thus seems to project an interpretation of what the covenant was supposed to signify to the early eighteenth-century Lutheran. The widened hermeneutical horizon puts the work of Bach’s librettist in a broader—and clearer and more distinct—context than would be possible if only the local Leipzig context were considered.

One Magnificat paraphrase makes direct reference to the Hain Mamre scene: Johann Heerman’s ‘Den Herren meine Seel erhebt’ appearing in Crüger’s *Praxis pietatis melica*:

Just as he has with Abraham, / to which he came to the hut / and to his
children’s children / through an oath he connected them / which will last
eternally. / He cannot be prohibited.⁴³

When considering Bach’s *Vorverständnis* and that of the librettist for BWV 10, dissemination of and familiarity with hymnological and theological items exceeding those published in Leipzig must be assumed. Many hymnals include extensive lists of chorales for the *Visitatio*. The second edition of the ample *Vermehrtes Hannoverisches Kirchen-Gesang-Buch* lists twenty-two (see Figure 1), separated according to the fixed texts: twelve for the Gospel (Luke 1:39–56) and ten for the epistle (Isaiah 11:1–5).⁴⁴ In the former group, several of the texts refer to, or paraphrase, the Gospel text.

The verse ‘Er denket der Barmherzigkeit’ is singled out in Freylinghausen’s sermon as constituting nothing other than the bond between God and his people, the covenant ‘By this mercy is understood the covenant, which God the Lord entered before with the people of Israel...’.⁴⁵ Bach’s entrance with the *tonus peregrinus* at exactly that point is certainly related to the way the psalm-tone is introduced in his large Latin Magnificat setting (BWV 243) to the verse ‘Suscepit Israel’.⁴⁶ This is certainly connected to the earlier function of the *tonus peregrinus* for Psalm 113: ‘In exitu Israel’, a liturgical use prolonged in the Lutheran tradition, albeit eclipsed by the newer use of the Magnificat.⁴⁷ It seems, however,

⁴³ *Praxis Pietatis Melica Das ist: Übung der Gottseligkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Wust, 1693), pp. 585–6: ‘Wie er dann hat mit Abraham / Zu dem er in die hütten kam / Und seinen Kindes kindern / durch einen eyd verbunden sich / Das wird er halten ewiglich / Er lässt sich nicht verhindern.’

⁴⁴ *Vermehrtes Hannoverisches Kirchen-Gesang-Buch* (Hannover: Schlüter, 1759): ‘Verzeichnis einiger Lieder auff die Sonn- und Festtage’ without pagination. Interestingly, the index is more generous than the headings within the volume, since some of the items listed there appear under different thematic or de tempore headings there.

⁴⁵ Freylinghausen, *Predigten*, p. 919. ‘Durch die Barmherzigkeit versteht sie den Bund, welche Gott den Herr ehemals mit dem Volck Israel gemacht...’

⁴⁶ See also Samuel Terrien, *The Magnificat: Musicians as Biblical Interpreters* (New York: Paulist, 1995), p. 72.

⁴⁷ Before the Lutheran reformation the association between Ps. 113 and the *tonus peregrinus* was all-pervading (some uses for the Benedicite and other canticles are important as regards local traditions, or limited to a shorter period of time, but so utterly dwarfed as regards polyphonic practice as to be negligible in this respect. See Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus*).

Am Tage der Heim-
suchung Maria.
Evang. Luc. 1. v. 39 = 56.
7. Meine seel erhebt den
8. Mein herz und seel den
H Erren
26. O meine seel, du sollt
225. O meine seel erhebe
230. Herr deine allmacht
240. Hochgepriesne leibes=
282. Nun freut euch liebe
340. O welchein ungemein.
358. Ich will frölich seyn in
361. Gib mir ein frölich h.
648. O du majestätisch w.
1000. Herr nichts kan auf
Epist. Jes. 11. v. 1 = 5
65. Gott lob die höchst-gew.
84. Du wesentliches wort
235. Weicht ihr berge
236. Der Herr hat nie sein.
289. Ich kann mein Jesu
294. Herr Christ der einge
295. Wie schön leucht uns
296. Ihr töchter zions
329. Wenn dein herzliebft.
355. Jesu meine freude

Figure 1: From the index of *Vermehrtes Hannoverisches Kirchen-Gesang-Buch*, 2nd edn (1759)

that it was the old and well-established hermeneutics of Psalm 113—with the passage through the Red Sea as the seal of the old covenant—which enabled Bach to use the psalm-tone to connect the two layers found in earlier settings of the Gospel pericope and in the sermons quoted previously: the psalm-tone in both the 'Er denket' and 'Suscepit Israel' movements lies, so to speak, beyond the world in which the music is taking place. It is not in the text, but above the text. It could be removed without disturbing the musical structure (which is not the case with many other Bach cantata movements where a chorale melody has been fully polyphonically integrated). This is a significant distinction. It is also important that the (would be-) syllables of the instrumental *tonus peregrinus* statement in *Er denket der Barmherzigket* match the text of the German Magnificat verse in question (see Example 4)—this holds true not only here, but also in the large organ setting on the *tonus peregrinus* tentatively attributed to Bach (BWV 733)—an interesting example of a text being transferred to the abstract level of instrumental music, which in my view tends to corroborate the hypothesis that Bach intended the psalm-tone statement as a hermeneutical link between the main pericope of *Visitatio* Sunday and the Old Testament texts referred to by the librettist. The covenant seal of salvation is promised to 'Israel puerum suum' ('Israel his

boy/boy slave') in the Latin BWV 243 and to 'seinem Diener Israel' ('his servant Israel') in the German BWV 10. Luther's apparent equation of the two is found within Bach's horizon of expectation, suggesting that this refers back to the 'ancillae suae' or 'seiner Magd' ('his handmaiden') in the second verse of the Magnificat.⁴⁸ Here lies the link between the covenant theology connections of Psalm 113, along with the *tonus peregrinus* and the new use of the psalm-tone with the Magnificat.

keit, der Barm- her - zig- keit, er den - ket der Barm - her - zig -
 der Barm- her - zig- keit er den - ket der Barm- her - zig - keit, er den - ket
 keit, er den - ket der Barm-her - zig- keit, er den - ket der Barm her - zig- keit, er den - ket
 der Barm her - zig- keit, er den - ket der Barm- her - zig

Example 4: 'Er denket der Barmherzigkeit', from Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, BWV 10/5, bars 8-28.

⁴⁸ Martin Luther, *Das Magnifikat verdeutscht und ausgelegt* [c.1521], *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1897), vol. VII, pp. 546-601: 'Und bekennet hie frey, das sie ein magd und dieneryn sey aller welt, in dem das sie das selb werck in yhr volnbracht, nit allein yhr, szondern dem gantzenn Israel zu gut geschehen sey bekennet' ('And here freely confesses that she is a maid and servant of all the world, by accomplishing this work, so that it should be acknowledged that good things happen not only to her, but to all of Israel.') (p. 595) and 'Das meynet nu die zartte mutter dieses samens, da sie spricht. Er hab Israel angenummen lauts seiner vorsprechung zu Abraham gethan, yhm und allen seinem samen. Da sah sie wol, das die zusagung in yhr erfullet war ...' ('This is what the tender mother of that seed means when she speaks. He has taken on Israel according to his promise to Abraham, him and all of his seed. Then she saw clearly that the promise was fulfilled in her ...'). (p. 599). The Greek Luke text has 'δοῦλη' about Mary in I: 48 and 'παιδὸς' about Israel in 1:54.

der Barm-her-zig-keit, er den-ket der Barm-her-zig-keit, er den-ket der Barm-her-zig-keit, er den-ket

keit, der Barm-her-zig-keit und hilft sei-nem
der Barm-her-zig-keit und hilft sei-nem Die-ner, hilft sei-nem Die-ner Is-ra-el

Die-ner, hilft sei-nem Die-ner Is-ra-auf, und hilft sei-nem Die-ner, hilft sei-nem
auf, hilft sei-nem Die-ner Is-ra-el auf, und hilft sei-nem

Example 4 (cont.)

Küster has called the treatment of the *tonus peregrinus* in the 'Er denket der Berherzigket' duet 'eine vorläufige Krönung der Choralkantat-Techniken', and Peters has linked it to the similar compositional strategy of Bach's Magnificat BWV 243/243a.⁴⁹ It is also worth noting that the two movements have a similar revision history: the choice between trumpet or oboes in the *tonus peregrinus* (both

⁴⁹ Konrad Küster (ed.) *Bach-Handbuch* (Kassel: Bärenreiter/Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), p. 256; Peters, 'J. S. Bach's *Meine Seel' erhebt den Herren*', p. 58.

works existing in several versions) further suggests that this is a deliberately common compositional *Gattung* in Bach's treatment of the psalm-tone.⁵⁰

The connection between the Gospel text and the *tonus peregrinus* is especially interesting in the case of Magnificat paraphrases 'cantasi come' *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*. There are also instances where other passages of Gospel are linked to the Magnificat by the use of the *tonus peregrinus* in the *Visitatio Mariae*. One such is *Gelobet sei der Herr, der Gott Israel* (not to be confused with Olearius' chorale *Gelobet sei der Herr, Mein Gott*, which Bach's librettist used in BWV 129). This covers the text of the *Benedictus*, or Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79). It stresses covenant and prophetic topoi throughout, which are in several respects in line with the link between the two canticles, the Magnificat implying the new covenant already in the verse 'von nun an werden mich selig preisen alle Kindes Kinder':

And the oath which he has sworn with our father Abraham given to us: 7. That we, redeemed from the hands of our enemies, should serve him well without fear for all our lives. 8. In the holiness and righteousness which pleases him. 9. And you, little child shall be called a prophet of the highest: you will go before the Lord as you makes way for him. 10. And give the knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission for their sins. 11. Through the tender mercy of our God, through whom he has visited us by coming down from the highest. 12. To give a light shining unto those who sit in the darkness and shadows of death, and guide our feet on the path of peace. Praise and glory to God.⁵¹

The connection between the psalm-tone, the two canticles, and the practice of exegetical glossing is strikingly different to Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* and other *Visitatio* cantatas, where the psalm-tone is used for the voice of Mary and appears more rarely. Its choice of melody is nevertheless significant: texts such as this one for lay worship were intended for free cantillation on the *tonus peregrinus*, a fact which is vital to understanding the strong associations this psalm-tone held not only for the Magnificat, but for the Magnificat as a musical (and for the more erudite, theological) twin to Psalm 113.⁵²

⁵⁰ Uwe Wolf holds that the oboes in this movement (playing only the *tonus peregrinus*) 'sollen sicher die Trompete nicht verstärken, sondern ersetzen.' ('should surely not merely strengthen [double] the trumpet, but supplant it'). *NBA KB I/28.2* (1995), p. 92.

⁵¹ *Geistliche und liebliche Lieder* (Berlin: Schatz, 1763), pp. 522-3: '6. Und an den Eyd, den Er geschworen hat unserm Vater Abraham uns zu geben: 7. Daß wir erlöset aus der Hand unserer Feinde, Ihm dieneten ohne Furcht unser Lebenlang. 8. In Heiligkeit und Gerechtigkeit, die Ihm gefällig ist. 9. Und Du, Kindlein wirst ein Prophet des höchsten heissen: Du wirst vor dem Herrn hergehen, daß Du seinen Weg bereitest. 10. Und Erkenntnis des Heils gebest seinem Volck, die da ist in Vergebung ihrer Sünde. 11. Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit unsers Gottes, durch welche uns besucht hat der Aufgang aus der Höhe. 12. Auf daß Er erscheine denen, die da sitzen in Finsterniß und Schatten des Todes, und richte unsere Füße auf den Weg des Friedes. Lob und Preis sey Gott [etc.]'

⁵² It is highly unlikely that this musical-cum-theological link would in any way be connected with the occasional use of the *tonus peregrinus* to the *Benedictus* in Anglican liturgies (see Lundberg, *Tonus Peregrinus*, pp. 169-71).

The Magnificat glosses, in addition to the conceptual links between the covenant and the salvation through faith in the true word quoted above, appear to constitute a discernible exegetical and homiletical tradition, which has significant consequences for understanding the musical settings of the texts in question. This tradition may possibly be traced to the interpretation of the Gospel passage in Luther's *Visitatio* sermon of 1523. However, Luther links not only these theological concepts but also the last two verses of the Magnificat and the Doxology, which are rendered musically by Bach as aria (duet) – recitative – chorale. The interpretation added by the librettist to the recitative has a similar linking function to that found in Luther:

Henceforth, 'He has thought of the mercy' which is the highest good. 'I carry the child that he has promised, and carry it not only for my own good, but also for the house of Israel and the seed of Abraham, that is all believers' and does so out of love'. Behold, what a fine song that is.⁵³

The additional text in the last recitative also relates to a trope of lay education. Under the brief entries for *Heimsuchung*, postilla and prayer literature frequently stress the earthly consequences of Mary's new covenant for the individual.⁵⁴ This appears to connect with the same exegetical lines found in the Magnificat paraphrases and glosses in hymnody, as discussed in this study.

⁵³ Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (1891), vol. XII, p. 616: 'Furtan "Er hat der barmherzigkeit gedacht", das ist das letzt gut. "Ich trag das kindt das er verhaissen hat, und trag das nit allain mir zu nütz, sunder auch dem hauß Israel und dem samem Abrahe, das ist allen glaubingen" das thut sy alles zu lieb. Secht wie ein fein gesang das ist'.

⁵⁴ See e.g. *Agendbüchlein für die Nürnbergischen Kirchendiener* (Nürnberg: Fleischmann, 1755), p. 28.