

Princes of War and Peace and their Most Humble, Most Obedient Court Composer

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J. S. Bach took many of his own vocal works conceived as tributes to earthly sovereigns and transformed them into glorifications of the heavenly King. Yet in contrast to the implications of some aspects of Luther's theology, these transformations leave undisturbed an underlying commitment to temporal authority and social obedience. Indeed, many of Bach's sacred works not only rely on rhetorical and musical topics associated with court life and the cultural of war, but exploit these images in order to dramatize their message more immediately in the imaginations of contemporary churchgoing listeners.

I. Between the Two Kingdoms

Christmas is a dangerous time, for it threatens social instability, political disorder, even revolution: at the culmination of the story kings kneel before a helpless baby; the powerful pay tribute to the seemingly powerless. In post-Reformation Germany one had only to recall Andreas Karlstadt shouting the words of institution in German and offering both the communion cup and the wafer to the trembling hands and lips of the unconfessed laity in Wittenberg on December 25, 1521 to understand the potency of Christmas.ⁱ Martin Luther's sermon on the Epiphany, for use by reform preachers on the last of Christmas's twelve days, was published in 1522 and can be read in part as belonging to his larger project to shore up the political order threatened by the radical tendencies represented by Karlstadt and others: in Luther's view the heavenly king newly come to earth in the form of a tiny baby had nothing to do with the prevailing political order, even though the tyrannical Herod and those invested in his authority misinterpreted the divine birth as a direct threat.ⁱⁱ Luther's account of the Epiphany relies on his Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, which posits one realm ruled by God and the other subservient to worldly regimes.ⁱⁱⁱ Accordingly, the hierarchies of the world can be recognized and left undisturbed, while in the realm of heaven equality will reign among the saved. Indeed, one might say that it is precisely because of this eschatological leveling, that inequality and injustice in the here-and-now could and should be endured. Still, it is clear from the Epiphany sermon that in Luther's mind civil rule could not assume immunity from the restive spirit of Christmas. Threatened by the newly born King, Herod himself "feared an insurrection ... [and] that he [would] be driven from his kingdom."^{iv} The great insurrection of the Reformation, the Peasants' War of 1524-5, was itself propelled by the centrifugal social forces Karlstadt had helped to set in motion; his radical rhetoric abetted the militants, in spite

of his issued denial against his own, even indirect, encouragement of the violence.^v One might even go so far as to suggest that Karlstadt recognized in the miracle of Christmas a permanent state of exception that ushered in individual control over belief and thus presented a fundamental challenge not only to theology but to the social order itself.

It matters little whether Bach knew of the critiques and suppressions of Karlstadt's books and thought by Luther and his followers nearly two centuries before, or whether Bach was aware of kindred attempts by later orthodox theologians to discredit the Pietist rehabilitation of Karlstadt in the 18th century.^{vi} The political resonance of Christmas was written into the gospel and into interpretations of the story by Luther and others; the implications for worldly rulers were glossed by Bach's librettists and figured musically, and duly dramatized by the composer himself. A devoted monarchist even while, or perhaps especially because, he spent the last three decades of his life laboring as a municipal employee in Leipzig where he bristled against the constraints of the Town Council's proto-democratic oversight of his activities, Bach wrote fiercely evangelical Christmas music full of violent imagery unsettling to the modern listener attentive to the often terrifying cooperation of text and music.^{vii} Uniting believers under the allegorical banner of war was just one way of containing dangers to the hierarchical order.

The elaborate music Bach produced for the Christmas season during his upwardly mobile career through the politically quietist landscape of central Germany in the first half of the 18th-century could not have been intended to make explicit the latent political dimensions of the Christmas story. Nevertheless, the potentially destabilizing implications of the story had to be dealt with, though indirectly, in the poetic and biblical texts Bach set in his Christmas cantatas. Indebted to Lutheran hermeneutics for his own interpretive methods, Bach was adept at writing music that seemed—and seems—to transcend earthly social differences and divisions in anticipation of the ultimate concord awaiting in heaven. On one level, Bach's music yearns for a paradise of social equality by praising a Savior-King, who has no regard for configurations of earthly might. Yet Bach depicts the political inversions literally embodied at Christmas with musical signs that derive their meanings—and power—from the very hierarchies they simultaneously claim to displace. Not merely in its style, but more fundamentally, in its mixture of courtly grace and saber-rattling fury, Bach's Christmas music is the music of absolutism *par excellence*. In his cantatas Bach foretells a utopian future beyond and above contemporary

power relations, even while articulating with his unique compositional voice the fineries and brutalities of 18th-century politics.

I will begin by confronting the bloodcurdling militancy of Bach's cantata for the second day of Christmas, *Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes* (BWV 40), before touching quickly on the magisterial coronation scene of his *Ascension Oratorio* (BWV 11); finally my discussion of these themes will turn to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* of 1734-5, BWV 248, which narrates and glosses the events of Christmas beginning with Christ's birth and closing with the feast of the Epiphany twelve days later. This series of six cantatas was itself drawn largely from works written originally to honor Bach's Saxon rulers. While Bach's opportunistic re-use of this material—a technique known in musicological circles as parody—is well known, though under-interpreted, my intent is not merely to dismantle the shaky, anachronistic barrier that divides the secular from the sacred. It is a given that generic motives of adulation and reverence could easily be adapted to temporal or religious purposes. The Breslau gymnasium teacher and musically progressive theorist Gottfried Scheibel was just one of many writers who sensibly argued in 1721 that “religious and secular music have no distinctions, as far as the movement of the affections is concerned.” The emotions are for Scheibel limited in number and psychologically determined, so that “the tone that gives me pleasure in an opera can also do the same in church, except that it has a different object.”^{viii}

Bach must have shared this attitude, for aside from its appeal to common sense, this view also afforded a rationale for finding multiple uses for commemorative pieces spawned by a single event: a birthday cantata for a prince could be reworked into a piece of church music which might be performed for several years on a given Sunday. Further, it is hardly surprising that courtly images would be evoked in musical texts during a period when monarchic rule and court culture were so central. Before his appointment in Leipzig Bach had spent a decade-and-a-half working at princely courts; his chief librettist, Christian Friedrich Henrici, aka Picander, was, like Bach, aligned with the monarchic faction in Leipzig politics and his poetry is filled with courtly motives. Political inclinations and assumptions informed the work of both poet and musician.

The relationship between political beliefs and musical expression is often a vexed one, more likely darkly opaque than glaringly obvious; the readings of Bach's vocal music presented in this essay can never do complete justice to the complexities of the interplay between

thought and act reflected, if often obscurely, in the cantatas. Bach's work embodies many of the complexities of Lutheran German life in a period of emerging modernity. Bach's Leipzig was itself a city of apparent contradictions. It was a major commercial and university center of crucial importance to the book trade; at the fairs, held three times a year, fire-and-brimstone theological tracts vied for the attention of the marketplace with the latest progressive literature from across Europe, from potentially subversive philosophical literature to decadent fiction. Leipzig was a city governed by holy law, yet in Bach's time was also home to a thriving coffee house culture where diverse conversations—not to mention wayward morals—were cultivated beyond the control of church and state. Bach's time was marked—or perhaps marred—by theocratic rear-guard actions against tentative ecumenical overtures as well as against overt initiatives for religious tolerance.^{ix} While the distinction between secular and sacred shaped composition and performance, in music as in civic and political life the divide was permeable. Alongside these oppressive maneuvers, a parallel contest between autocracy and democratic institutions of local self-government dominated political life and Bach's professional career in Leipzig.^x That a hermeneutics of Bach's music must confront these complex tensions running through Leipzig and the life of city's director of music should not deter the necessary project of interpreting the cantatas in light of Bach's activities as both a civic functionary and a musician selfishly and gloriously committed to his own unequalled ambitions in pursuit of musical perfection. While musical scholarship has traditionally and reflexively retreated to the safe haven of seeing his music as an expression of aesthetic autonomy or uncontaminated religious devotion, I maintain that the political is explicitly, even if sometimes ambiguously, signified in these works.

In all of this I want to move beyond heaping praise on the aesthetic marvels of Bach's music, and also beyond a discussion of affect, to suggest that, in accordance with important aspects of Lutheran theology, the meanings conveyed by Bach's Christmas music, itself often adapted from secular works, leave undisturbed an underlying commitment to temporal authority and social obedience. Many of Bach's sacred works not only rely on rhetorical and musical topics associated with court life and the culture of war, but they exploit these images in order to dramatize their message more immediately in the imagination of contemporary churchgoing listeners. In so doing they neutralize with unmatched musical brilliance the threat that Christmas poses.

2. Ceremonies of Heaven and Earth

Bach's cantata for the second day of Christmas, *Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes* (For this God's Son has appeared), BWV 40, first performed in Leipzig on December 26, 1723, represents political inversion explicitly in terms of the feudal order. The text is by an unknown poet, who, in the recitative that follows the rousing opening chorus, describes the incarnation as a kind of abdication, or an adventure among the subjects; the third and fourth lines adopt the graceful, formulaic language of courtly discourse to dramatize this striking "political" development.

*Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnt in der Welt,
Das Licht der Welt bestrahlt den Kreis der Erden,
Der große Gottessohn
Verläßt des Himmels Thron
Und seiner Majestät gefällt
Ein kleines Menschenkind zu werden*

The word was flesh and dwells in the world,
the world's true light shines throughout the earth now,
the great son of God
leaves the throne of heaven
and it pleases his Majesty
to become a small human child.^{xi}

The recitative then asks us to ponder this astonishing exchange of roles, one that cuts against the grain of normative social relations, before describing Christ's unlikely status in yet more explicitly feudal terms:

*Bedenkt doch diesen Tausch, wer nur gedenken kann;
Der König wird ein Untertan,
Der Herr erscheinet als ein Knecht*

*Und wird dem menschlichen Geschlecht
- O süßes Wort in aller Ohren! -
Zu Trost und Heil geboren.*

Consider this exchange, you who can think of it;
The King becomes a subject,
The Lord appears as a vassal
and is for the human race
—O sweet word in every ear—
born for our comfort and salvation.

Audio Example I: BWV 40/2: “*Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnt in der Welt*”: Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir, *J. S. Bach Complete Cantatas*, vol. 8; courtesy of Antoine Marchand Records

The descending arc of the vocal lines, punctuated by upward exclamatory leaps might be heard to convey the Godly movement from heaven to earth, that is, steeply down the ladder of power, from the throne and out into the world upside down. These lines are more than simply a gloss on St. Paul, who both cautioned Christians to obey temporal authority,^{xii} and repeatedly turned to the notion that Christ had been incarnated as a servant or vassal (Knecht).^{xiii} Bach’s poet is more explicit and concentrates on Christ’s assumption of a lowly position and in so doing translates it into an overt, and potentially destabilizing, inversion of the feudal hierarchy.

The metaphor of a royal personage serving as a vassal brought into relief the central paradox of monarchic rule in Bach’s Germany. Consider the article on “Court” (Hof) in Zedler’s *Universal-Lexicon*, that great encyclopedia project begun in Leipzig during Bach’s time there; this lengthy essay argues pointedly that princes cannot remain in power simply through their own merits, but must enjoy renown (*Ansehen*) at home and abroad. The prince must engineer his own prestige through “pomp and ceremony” (*äusserliches Gepränge*). “Without this, who would obey [the prince’s] orders?” asks the writer rhetorically.^{xiv} The prince needs ceremony, for his power is built on lavish display. “There is no shortage of examples,”

continues the article, “when the prince, moving alone among his subjects, has had no prestige (*Ansehen*), for he only comes across as quite different, when he is raised up to his appropriate station.”^{xv} The mysterious equity of princely power was nourished by display and ceremony, staged deeds and triumphal entries. As the author of the article carefully notes, it is a risky thing for earthly rulers to be deprived of the outward signs of their dominion, since that is all they have. Court society articulated and embraced its own hierarchical structure on which each individual was positioned with great specificity, and the court as a whole was then elevated above all those not belonging to it.^{xvi} The shining edifice of court culture, self-defining and self-perpetuating, was built on shaky foundations. The monarchic order survived through carefully managed enactments of power, profoundly unlike the informal adoration of the lowly babe in the manger.

The opening chorus of Bach’s cantata BWV 40 is hardly meek, however. It figures the Christ Child’s power in earthly terms, immediately forestalling any notion that this tiny baby would be defenseless, or at least indifferent to display. No, the babe is, or will be, a robust warrior for good:

*Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes,
dass er die Werke des Teufels zerstöre.*

For this the Son of God has appeared,
that he destroy all the works of the devil.

Audio Example 2: BWV 40/1: “*Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes*”; courtesy of Antoine Marchand Records

The martial affect of this movement makes clear that Christ came to earth to wage a bloody campaign against the devil’s influence. It is Bach’s music, which does the real work of conveying the militant vision of Christianity that is merely implicit in this opening motto taken from the John (3, 8).

Like any vassal worth his mettle this one will wield the implements of war, accompanied by a soundtrack of victory. The music charges into battle, leading the text out into the fray. If one were to look for earthly models for this contemporary music of conquest, one would likely

alight on that of the greatest of hunters and self-styled warriors, the Saxon Elector and Polish King, August the Strong, who himself maintained an octet of horns, oboes, and bassoons as his *Jagdmusik*—his hunt music. Bach greatly admired August’s musical establishment, one of the greatest in Europe, and repeatedly appealed to him, and then to his son, Friedrich August II, in his own ongoing conflicts with civic authority.^{xvii} The sound of the opening chorus of BWV 40 is vigorously spatial, the horns calling to the oboes and bassoons as if echoing through a wood or over a field, eager to join combat with the enemy.

After the recitative described above there follows an inward-turning chorale, which opposes the suffering of sin with the joy brought by Christ. This oscillation between bold, worldly music and the interior reflection of corporate singing is a key feature of Bach’s cantatas and also plays an important role in his works for Christmas. After the communal reflections of the chorale, a bass aria bursts forth onto the field of battle. With its galloping bass-line spurred on by jaunty unison violins and pointed appoggiaturas at phrase endings, the opening ritornello leads into the spirited bravery of the hero’s music:

*Höllische Schlange,
Wird dir nicht bange?
Der dir den Kopf als ein Sieger zerknickt
Ist nun geboren,
Und die verloren,
Werden mit ewigem Frieden beglückt.*

Serpent of hell,
are you not worried?
He who will snap your head off
has now been born,
and the lost
shall delight in eternity.

Audio Example 3: BWV 40/4: “*Höllische Schlange, wird dir nicht bange?*”; courtesy Antoine Marchand Records

In this bloodthirsty piece melodic fragments are cut short with angular eighth-note leaps, and finished off with cutting appoggiaturas that are all glinting steel rather than the soft silk of their more typically gallant and graceful manner. But it is Bach's brutally graphic treatment of the word *zerknicken*—to snap in two—that sends a chill down my spine, as it may have done to Bach's audiences as well. This is ghastly, no-holds-barred combat, exhilarating as it may be for those in the victorious host. The unassuming baby will grow up to be capable—at least on the allegorical level—of bloody, violent acts.

In the final aria of BWV 40 Bach enlists a smaller unit of the *Jagdmusik* to join in with a single voice; breathless and agitated, valiant and undaunted, they are eager to clash with the foe. But even in this melee, Jesus offers protection and comfort; the metaphor of chicks being taken in under the wing of their mother stands in extreme contrast to the grim combat depicted by the music. The music challenges the performers; for they too are locked in struggle with their instruments, Bach having put them to the test. This musical face is hot with bravery and flushed with the heat of hell:

*Christenkinder, freuet euch!
Wütet schon das Höllenreich,
Will euch Satans Grimm erschrecken:
Jesus, der erretten kann,
Nimmt sich seiner Küchlein an
Und will sie mit Flügeln decken.*

Christian children, be joyful,
though the kingdom of hell rages,
Satan's fury need not frighten you
Jesus will deliver you:
Will gather his chicks to himself
And enfold them with his wings.

Audio Example 4: BWV 40/7: “*Christenkinder, freuet euch!*” courtesy of Antoine Marchand Records

All this sallying forth evokes the popular literature of kings going out into the world, sometimes incognito but always in search of greatness, if not always goodness. Perhaps the most famous example from Bach’s time is Christian Friedrich Hunold’s hugely popular and oft-reprinted *Der Europæischen Höfe / Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte*,^{xviii} (Stories of Love and Heroism of the European Courts) which elaborates fancifully on the escapades of August the Strong on his European Cavalierstour begun in 1687. The opening chapter of the two volumes by this one-time Bach librettist,^{xix} who wrote under the pen name Menantes, finds the brave, if exceedingly fun-loving, future Elector in Vienna as vassal of the Emperor. Blessed with bravery and a penchant for fighting the Ottomans and wild animals, Augustus throws himself into the manly goings-on at court; out on the hunt one day he does single-handed combat with a raging bear. He lops off an ear and a piece of his head, but rather than killing the terrifying beast, he manages only to enrage it further, so that the bear “sprang with horrible bellowing at him, and was about to grab him, just as Gustavus (i.e., Augustus) turned again quickly and delivered such a powerful blow with his sharp saber to the base of the bear’s neck that the torso crumpled to its feet and the head fell bleeding next to it.”^{xx}

The first aria from BWV 40, “*Höllische Schlange*,” (Audio Example 3) would have been equally adaptable to this grisly scene; the daring music is as suited both to the metaphorical battle against sin and the devil as it is to romance and adventure. In this cantata for the second day of Christmas, a moment one might expect to be devoted to peace and joy instead of hand-to-hand combat, the clamor and clangor of Bach’s concerted music brings the warrior Christ to life. In Hunold’s novel noble deeds in the field accrue prestige and renown to our hero, just as they do to the sovereign of heaven in our cantata. The “Prince of Peace” must also be a “Prince of War,” a man of decisive action, against snakes and bears, Saracens and devils.

After waging this war in the world and suffering the degradation of his crucifixion, his abasement to temporal authorities, Jesus triumphs after Easter. When he ascends to the throne, as he does at the crux of Bach’s *Ascension Oratorio* (BWV 11), Jesus does so not to musical fanfare—that is, not to the military pomp of the opening chorus—but to one of Bach’s most spacious chorales, a setting of the melody *Du Lebensfürst, Herr Jesu Christ* (You Prince of

Life, Lord Jesus Christ) by the 17th-century north German clergyman and poet Johann Rist. Designating Christ as a “Fürst”—a prince—serves to align his ascension metaphorically with the coronation of the earthly ruler, a scene reinforced by the text of the strophe of the chorale presented in the *Ascension Oratorio*:

*Nun lieget alles unter dir,
dich selbst nur ausgenommen;
die Engel müssen für und für
dir aufzuwarten kommen.
Die Fürsten stehn auch auf der Bahn
und sind dir willig untertan;
Luft, Wasser, Feuer, Erden
muss dir zu Dienste werden.*

All is now subject to you,
apart from you yourself;
the angels themselves
must come to wait upon you.
Princes line the way and submit willingly to you;
air, water, fire, earth
must all place themselves at your disposal.

The image of great numbers of nobles bowed in submission to the exceptional ruler Christ would have been familiar throughout the period from Rist in the mid-17th century to Bach in the 18th; a typical example is to be seen in Gotthard Arthus’s commemorative depictions of the 1612 Coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Matthias II in Frankfurt.



Figure 1: MATTHIAS II, Coronation^{xxi}; permission of Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

Indeed, Rist describes Christ's return to his throne in terms borrowed from accounts of the triumphal entries of earthly princes. In, for example, a report of the arrival of Matthias II in Breslau, an event that took place before the coronation in Frankfurt seen in Figure 1, the Lords are described as lining the way for the Emperor-to-be's entry into the city, welcoming him with "reverent glorification" (*mit schuldiger Ehrerbietung*).^{xxii}

Yet the pomp—the *Gepränge*—so crucial to the maintenance of princely power stands in uneasy relationship to the music of *Du Lebens Fürst Herr Jesu Christ*, which withdraws to the unadorned and timeless chorale rather than calling again for the din of glorious trumpets, snorting horses, and rattling sabers. The chorale is devout, respectful and as uplifting as an Ascension melody should be. On heaven as on earth coronation is a solemn act not an explicitly martial one.

Audio Example 5: BWV 11/6: “*Nun lieget alles unter dir*,” John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists and Monteverdi Choir; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

The musical opposition of the extravagance of earthly pomp with the simplicity of divine solemnity so evident here sheds light on a similar musical juxtaposition that occurs at the end of the first of the six cantatas that make up the *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248. The cantata ends with a chorale, but immediately before this moment of communal singing and reflection, Bach stages an emphatic reminder of the irrelevance of the self-serving glories of earth in the brash bass aria *Grosser Herr, o starker König* (BWV 248/8):

*Großer Herr, o starker König,
 Liebster Heiland, o wie wenig
 Achtest du der Erden Pracht!
 Der die ganze Welt erhält,
 Ihre Pracht und Zier erschaffen,
 Muß in harten Krippen schlafen.*

Great Lord and mighty King,
 beloved Savior, oh how little
 do you regard earthly pomp!
 He who preserves the whole world,
 and created its glory and ornament,
 must sleep in a hard manger.

Audio Example 6: BWV 248/8: “*Großer Herr, o starker König*”; John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists and Monteverdi Choir; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

In spite of the text’s disclaimers regarding earthly extravagance, this very festive music was originally written precisely for such purposes, that is, to proclaim the earthly fame of the Saxon Electoral House.^{xxiii} The great 19th-century biographer of Bach, Philip Spitta, argued that only in its new, spiritual form, could this music find its true essence and lasting significance.^{xxiv} But if

Spitta is right—and few now would defend this aesthetic position—then *Grosser Herr, o starker König* would have to work against, or perhaps in counterpoint to, the text. This is a difficult assertion to maintain, however, not only because of the origins of the aria, but because the music unabashedly exudes pomp. Yes, Christ’s is a magnificence beyond earthly ritual display, but the only way this glory can be approximated through allegory is by using the forms of extravagance gainsaid by the text.

In the chorale that follows the bass aria, we hear that pomp transformed. This concerted setting of the familiar Christmas melody, “*Vom Himmel hoch kam ich daher*” (I came down from heaven), BWV 248I/9, intersperses the lines of the hymn with short interludes proclaimed by those markers of the regal, trumpets and drums. Usually associated with celebratory fanfare, their earthly brilliance has been transmuted into a restrained expression of divine omnipotence taken newborn human form. The text adopted by Bach for this melody comes from a later strophe of the chorale, a personal prayer to Jesus; but this humble, intimate request is parsed by the restrained but unambiguously sovereign music of enormous, even if implied, might.

*Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein,
Mach dir ein rein sanft Bettelein,
Zu ruhn in meines Herzens Schrein,
Dass ich nimmer vergesse dein!*

Oh, little Jesus, my heart’s love,
make Thyself a clean soft little bed,
in which to rest in my heart’s innermost shrine,
that I may never forget Thee.

Audio Example 7: BWV 248I/9: “*Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein*”; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

3. The Secular Bach and the Royal Kiss

Having defeated the Saxons in two Silesian Wars in the 1740s and a year shy of embarking on the Seven Years Wars, Frederick the Great was nonetheless in Dresden in 1755 for the premier of Johann Adolf Hasse's opera *Ezio*. However bloody the European pursuit of ritual warfare, it was a practice that fit into a larger network of ceremonial relations, political representations, and social displays, embodied most lavishly in the institution of Italian opera, where defeat and victory, love and death, statecraft and intrigue, goodness and treachery (to name but a few topics) were bloodlessly, if sometimes bankruptingly, staged.

Frederick had been pouring money into his own musical establishment and especially his opera during the fifteen years of his reign as Prussian King, but he would never equal the excessive splendor of Dresden's staged spectacles. Few would. Astounded by the performance of *Ezio*, Frederick dashed off a letter to one of his music-loving sisters, Wilhelmine: "Their extras consisted of 620 people, and at *Ezio*'s triumphant entry alone there were 20 companies of grenadiers from the Brühl Regiment with their officers in roman uniforms and two squadrons of cavalry, and (in the same act) were deployed from the Butowski Regiment, in addition to twenty camels, four mules and four chariots."^{xxv} The camels and their forebears had done solid service for the Dresden rulers from the House of Wettin; for Friedrich August II's visit to the Prussian City Danzig in 1698 soon after his election and subsequent coronation as King of Poland, the Saxon ruler had ordered some three dozen of his camels to trudge the nearly 700 kilometers from Dresden to magnify the grandeur of his triumphal entry.^{xxvi}

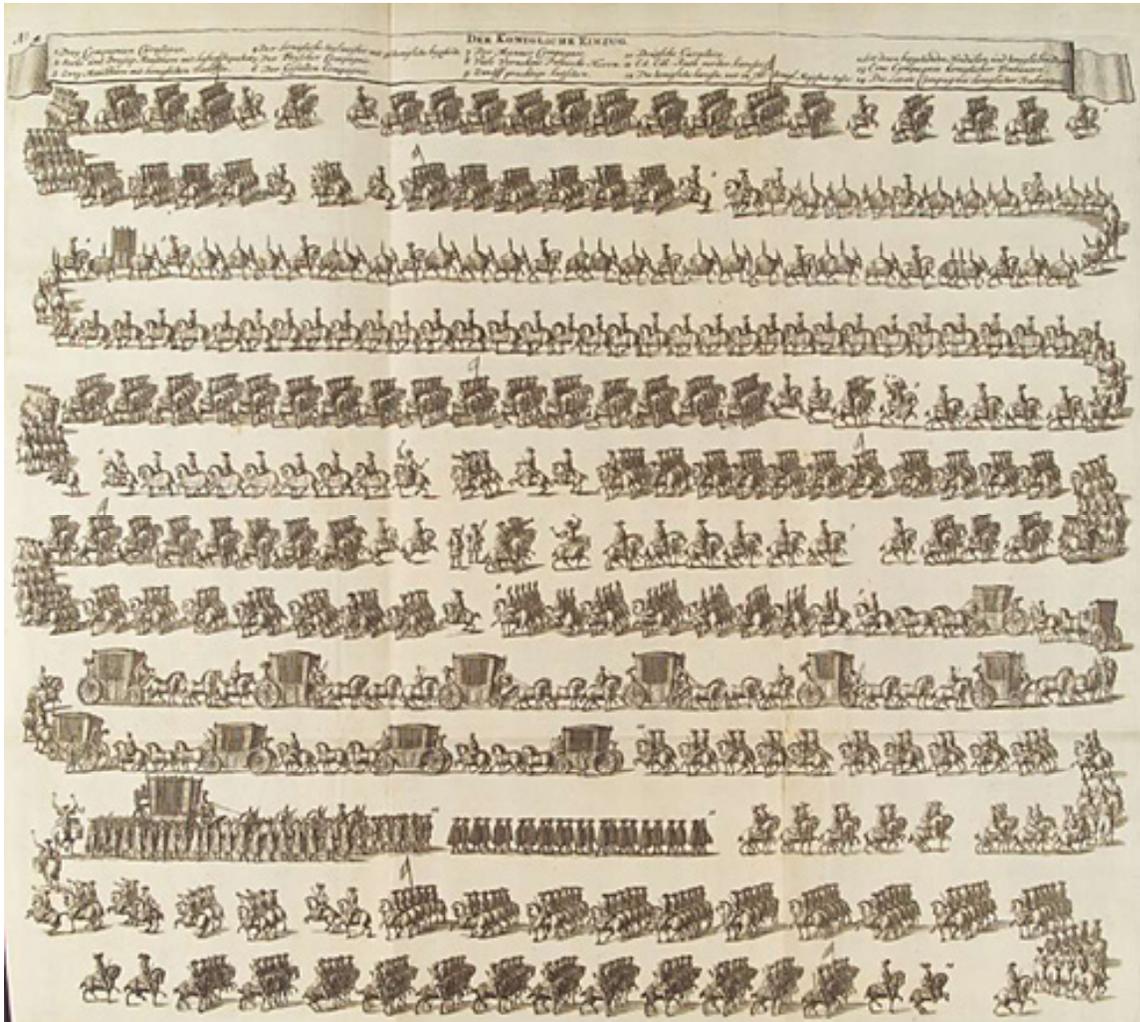


Figure 2: Friedrich August I's Triumphal Entry into Danzig, 1697. Permission of Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel

In the case of the camels in *Ezio*, it was the succeeding Saxon Elector, Friedrich August II, simultaneously reigning as the Polish King August III, who paid the money to have himself honored at the opera in incomparable style, even if it threatened him with financial ruin or meant diverting money from his military budget and thus risking another military defeat. In 1760 Frederick would besiege Dresden and lob bombs in the general direction of the opera house, where he had seen *Ezio* five years earlier. Frederick preferred to hit the churches instead.^{xxvii}

Leipzig, commercial center of Saxony and home to its venerable university, could never match the opulence of the Electorate's capital of Dresden in the realm of musical pomp. Envious of the financial security enjoyed by members of the elite Dresden musical establishment

and the level of technical accomplishment it nurtured in its musicians, Bach often visited the city not only to demonstrate his skill on its fine organs, but to enjoy, if condescendingly, the gallant music of the opera, and revel, one supposes, in its visual opulence. Even if Leipzig's budget and more modest cultural aspirations did not allow for such displays, the city did muster its own impressive musical tributes for the visiting Saxon monarchs. The most detailed account of one such event survives in the Leipzig town chronicle made by Salomon Riemer, describing the visit in early October of 1734 of members of the Royal Family.^{xxviii} It is a testament to the appeal and importance of Leipzig to the Saxon Electors that they would visit Leipzig on the one-year anniversary of Friedrich August the II's election as King of Poland.^{xxix}

Coincidentally, Bach had already planned a cantata performance by his *Collegium musicum* to commemorate the Elector's birthday on October 7th. But on October 2nd the royals arrived virtually unannounced in Leipzig for the Michaelismesse, one of the great commercial fairs that occurred in Leipzig three times a year, and from which the city derived no small part of the fame it was so proud of. At the behest of the entertainment- and adoration-addicted Elector, the University frantically set about devising an entertainment to fete the monarch and his wife. Having frequently collaborated with the University for important events, and as director of music in the city, Bach was called upon to produce the festive cantata with barely three days to devise a score which would extend to 40 pages.^{xxx} Faced with this unexpected and seemingly overwhelming duty, Bach turned to his own oeuvre for music to adapt to the new laudatory text; it is likely that all but the recitatives drew on pre-existent material.^{xxxi} In the event, Bach produced *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen* (Praise now thy blessings, fortunate Saxony), BWV 215, for the festivities, his music serving to amplify the congratulatory text. The opening chorus of BWV 40 resounds with adulation:

*Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen,
Weil Gott den Thron deines Königs erhält.
Fröhliches Land,
Danke dem Himmel und küsse die Hand,
Die deine Wohlfahrt noch täglich lässt wachsen
Und deine Bürger in Sicherheit stellt.*

Praise now thy blessings, O fortunate Saxon,

For God the throne of thy King hath upheld.
 O happy land,
 Thanks give to heaven and kiss now the hand
 Which makes thy fortune each day ever greater
 And all thy townsmen to safety hath brought.

That this large-scale work was to be heard by the royals themselves added immeasurably to the pressure, which must have been felt by Bach and his musicians and family. In the summer of 1733 Bach had submitted the *Missa*—the Kyrie and Gloria of what would become the work we now know as the B -Minor Mass, BWV 232—to this same Elector, then just ascended, in the hope of securing a court title to bolster his position in his own disputes in Leipzig. Having sworn his unceasing loyalty (*unauffhörliche Treue*) in the body of the dedication of the *Missa*, Bach had signed that petition in formulaic, feudal language: “Your Royal Highness’s most humble and most obedient servant.” (*Ew. Königlichen Hoheit / unterthänigst-gehorsamster Knecht*)^{xxxii} A Knecht is loyal to the person in whose household he lives and works and, as we’ve seen, the position Jesus assumed in the world. As Ulrich Siegele has demonstrated, Bach was aligned with the monarchic faction in Leipzig politics; he had nearly been removed from his job as Cantor at the Thomasschule four years earlier by those who opposed his affiliations with court political power in the city, and who objected to the musical manifestations of that orientation—Bach’s neglect of his teaching duties at the Thomasschule in favor of composing and performing operatic, court-style concerted music in church. In short, instead of the Cantor many members of the town council had wanted, they had gotten a Capellmeister.^{xxxiii} On so many levels, then, this was an event of great importance for a self-confident if embattled municipal musician with aspirations at court, especially when musical opportunities such as these were rare indeed during Bach’s tenure in Leipzig. With his petition pending, he urgently needed to please the Elector with a musical culmination for this vast public spectacle.

Although there are no surviving images of the royal festivities of October 1734, we can get an impression of the scale and staging of the event from an engraving of the mass loyalty oath sworn the previous year to the newly-crowned Friedrich August II in Leipzig. Men arrayed in careful formation are spread across the square, their positions determined by their social standing. Each holds his right-hand up as he swears the unison pledge of allegiance. It is not

known if music figured in any part of this ceremony, but the engraving does convey a vivid sense of the power of monarchic feeling among the populace and its role in Leipzig's cultural and political life. One can probably assume that Bach swore the pledge himself, though his placement either on the square or in a more marginal position on a side street can only be guessed at. That same month Bach would journey to the Saxon capital itself, to submit his *Missa* and his petition for a court appointment.



Figure 3: Loyalty Oath of the populace in the town square of Leipzig, July, 1733^{xxxiv}

With his petition still pending more than a year later, Bach would have his chance to lead a performance of own music before the monarch. In the October 1734 spectacle crowned by BWV 215 the chain of submission ran from the Elector to his proxies in Leipzig through to civic functionaries such as Bach and to those under his command— students and family; it was this loyal team Bach would command to copy out the twenty four performing parts and, as needed, to participate in the performance itself. Such was the dedication among Bach's group that the Town Musician Gottfried Reiche died soon after playing in the cantata overcome by the

demands of the trumpet part (see Figure 4) and the torch smoke. Bach survived the performance, and for his efforts received 50 Thaler a week after the performance (some 7% of his base yearly salary) from the University, the funds having been raised from a collection made by the students.

Handwritten musical score for Clarino I, BWV 215/I, showing the trumpet part. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is labeled "Coro." and "Clarino I mo." with a "4." below it. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "ff" and "f". Measure numbers 4, 21, 19, 3, 3, 47, and 47 are indicated. The piece concludes with "Da Capo" and "Recit et Aria tacet." written on the final staves.

Figure 4: Trumpet part, BWV 215/I, D-B Mus. ms. Bach St 77. Permission of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz mit Mendelssohn-Archiv

At seven in the evening, after the family had enjoyed a feast and been toasted by important citizens and visitors earlier that day, a canon was fired and the whole city was suddenly lit up. The tower of the Town Hall had been adorned with many lamps, and the towers of the two principal churches of St. Thomas and St. Nicholas were illuminated from their balconies to the belfries. In a custom that first became popular in Berlin at the coronation of Friedrich I as King in Prussia, verses mixing reverence and humor were hung from windows.^{xxxv} The chronicle goes on to say that at nine o'clock that night "a most submissive [*allerunterthänigst*] evening serenade [BWV 215] with trumpets and drums, [was] presented."^{xxxvi}

Six hundred university students holding candles were led through the streets by four Counts to the Elector's apartments on the town square. The trumpets and drums ascended to the nearby *Wage* (the weighing House), presumably to a balcony; thus the musical markers of royal festivity were elevated above the fray of gatherers and put on the plane of the Electoral family, whose members listened from their own balcony. Four Counts acted as Marshals and brought the cantata text up to the Elector, so that he and his consort could follow along the adoring words which would have swirled up through the smoky night air and, in the case of the euphoric choruses, would have been rendered often indistinct if not downright cacophonous by Bach's penchant for complicated polyphonic textures. Bach is not mentioned on the title page, only "an evening music" (*eine Abend-Music*) performed to demonstrate the city's "most submissive devotion" (*allerthänigste Devotion*).^{xxxvii} The chronicle concludes, "when the text was presented, the four Counts were permitted to kiss the Royal hands."^{xxxviii} "To let the hand be kissed," as the Zedler Lexicon entry on this act relates, "is a demonstration of blessing bestowed by a greater Lord on a lesser one."^{xxxix} This kissing of hands on the presentation of the textbook was a ritual replayed at each of the Saxon visits for which Bach composed the music. It is not known if Bach had any connection to the aristocratic presenters of the libretto of *Preise dein Glücke*, but he certainly associated with other nobles; whether the Marshals of the 1734 event could in some way have furthered Bach's case must be left to conjecture.

The ritual kiss is itself portrayed in the opening chorus in the line of text "*Danke dem Himmel und küsse die Hand*" (Thank heaven and kiss the hand; or "*Danke dem Himmel*"). The formulation neatly encapsulates Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms: the demonstration of fealty is made in accordance with the dictates of temporal power, which is both ordered by heaven and subservient to it. The chorus opens in a jubilant mood expressive of the citizenry's

adoration, and these high spirits spill over into the second (B) section of the movement; yet just at the moment when the hand of the worldly ruler is kissed the texture thins, and the subsequent ritornello lets off on the throttle and reduces the instrumental consort to courtly flutes as if to depict the bowing aristocrats as they submissively draw back from their lord. (The text *Danke dem Himmel* is set beginning at 3:10 of the example; the flutes emerge from the texture at 3:23)

Audio Example 8: BWV 215/1: “*Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen*”; Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir, *J. S. Bach Complete Cantatas*, vol. 4; courtesy of Antoine Marchand Records

The Leipzig chronicle concludes its account of the entire celebration by relating that after the Hand-Kissing ritual, “his Royal Majesty together with his royal consort and the royal princes did not leave the windows until the music was over, and listened most graciously and liked it well.”^{xl} The pleasure of the family was made clear by their apparently attentive listening to a piece nearly forty minutes long. Riemer claims that the royals conveyed a still deeper satisfaction beyond their attentive listening—“they liked it well”; the chronicler must have learned of this satisfaction somehow, and one suspects that down amongst his musicians Bach would also have sensed the sovereign’s approbation. We cannot know if the Elector might have nodded regally in the direction of the Director of Music whose petition sat piled in a Dresden administrative backlog, but such a visual transaction is an appealing prospect, the sort of nuanced but important moment that history can rarely capture but that means so much more than the rather wooden written descriptions we must rely on instead. In any case, Bach must have felt greatly buoyed by the apparent success of his humble tribute, if only because of the presence of the royal family during his entire performance.

The Elector’s position above the music and crowd accorded with his exalted status, just as the position of the Director of Music below reflected Bach’s own social standing. The author of the *Universal-Lexicon* article on “Court” (Hof) advised would-be courtiers (though musicians too would have been advised to heed the strategies and perils contained in it) to find a court that would recognize their talents. But those in the court establishment, noble or not, were cautioned to “remember, that between you and the Prince there yawns a great gap.”^{xli} Unlike

the Marshals, Bach never came close to the royal hand, but his own creation, his cantata, reached the ruler in a way only music could.

In 1736 Bach did at last receive the title “Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Court Composer”; he would use it in preference to his civic title of Director of Music in Leipzig for the rest of his life.^{xliii} Bach must have believed that his talent for music and his deference to authority had helped his cause with the Elector and against civic power in Leipzig. The orphan from Eisenach had achieved success at court.

4. Musical Enactments of Power

Within a few months of his civic triumph, Bach turned to his church duties for the Christmas celebrations of 1734-5, assembling a group of six cantatas into the *Christmas Oratorio* (BWV 248) for the six feast days on which concerted music was to be heard. Bach’s use of parody had made it possible for him to produce *Preise dein Glücke* in only three days; now Bach would draw on this and other secular cantatas of recent vintage written in praise of the Saxon Electors. Both the Saxon festive music and the *Christmas Oratorio* are filled with acknowledgments of glory and dominion: the first to Bach’s temporal rulers, the second—partly derivative of the first—offered to the Christ Child for the edification of Bach’s congregations. The *Christmas Oratorio* builds these postures of praise into a longer narrative relating the events of the Nativity, Herod’s attempts to find Jesus, and the Epiphany. In the *Christmas Oratorio* recitatives move the story forward, but, as I’ve already argued, they also comment on power relationships within the world of the Christmas story. The set-piece arias and choruses articulate this narrative with reflections on and tributes to the miraculous nature of Godly power. Given Bach’s utilitarian attitude towards his material, and the submission to power embodied in both secular and sacred works—the one gazing upward to the Electoral balcony in the Leipzig Town square, the other downward at the manger, while mindful of the unsurpassable heavenly might above and beyond earthly comprehension and human action—it is perhaps to be expected that Christ is made to adapt to earthly practices, that is, to a musical language saturated with references to monarchic rule. Yet it is nonetheless striking how in the *Christmas Oratorio* godly power is clothed in the latest fashion and executed with the brisk etiquette of worldly absolutism: secular imagery is not merely a convenient backdrop for a larger theological message, but actually constitutes religious experience.

The last cantata of the *Christmas Oratorio*, “*Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben*” (Lord, if proud enemies rage) was heard on the Feast of the Epiphany, that singular moment when temporal authority in the form of the three kings pays homage to the baby Jesus. Like the preceding five cantatas of the Oratorio, the sixth is at least in part assembled from previous compositions. The opening chorus might be parodied from a birthday cantata of 1731 for J. F. Flemming, who, as the commandant of the Leipzig garrison, was the symbol of monarchic military power in Leipzig and a man for whom Bach produced a number of tributes.^{xliii} The martial affect of the opening chorus resonates with this possible origin and is in any case well suited to the text, which evokes a military closing of ranks against the enemy.

*Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben,
So gib, dass wir im festen Glauben
Nach deiner Macht und Hülfe sehn!
Wir wollen dir allein vertrauen,
So können wir den scharfen Klauen
Des Feindes unversehrt entgehn.*

Lord, when our boastful foes blow fury,
Help us to keep our faith unshaken
And to thy might and help to look!
We would make thee our sole reliance
And thus unharmed the cutting talons
And clutches of the foe escape.

Audio Example 9: BWV 248VI/1: “*Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben*”; John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists and Monteverdi Choir; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

Two recitatives follow in which the evil king tries to enlist the services of the wise men as spies, hoping that they will inform him of Jesus’ whereabouts so that the rival to his temporal power can be eliminated. This has the ring of court intrigue: Herod calls the wise men to him in

secret and lies that he, too, simply wants “to come and worship” Jesus. Herod is a deceitful king trying to bend his courtiers to his evil purposes so as to lay another Lord low, as the text of the second recitative puts it against seething string accompaniment:

*Du Falscher, suche nur den Herrn zu fällen,
Nimm all falsche List,
Dem Heiland nachzustellen.*

You false man, seek only to bring down the Lord,
use every false artifice
to hunt down the Savior.

Audio Example 10: BWV 248IV/3: “*Du Falscher, suche nur den Herrn zu fällen*”; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

The preceding cantata of the *Christmas Oratorio* had ended with a recitative and chorale pair in which the Christian heart is depicted as the true throne of Jesus. The recitative (BWV 248V/9) grapples with the tension between the temporal and the religious. Jerusalem, and therefore the church, waits to receive Jesus, but the recitative assures us that he has already attained an incomparable power:

*Mein Liebster herrschet schon.
Ein Herz, das seine Herrschaft liebet,
Und sich ihm ganz zu eigen gibet,
Ist meines Jesu Thron.*

My most beloved already rules.
A heart that loves his rule,
and gives itself to him completely for his own,
is my Jesus' throne.

Herod and his subjects in Jerusalem may fret and worry, but Jesus already reigns in believing hearts, beyond the reach of earthly power. In a confirming gesture, the concluding chorale

(BWV 248V/6) of the fifth cantata explicitly renounces the pomp of the princely hall where earthly kings hold court in favor of the believing heart: “*Zwar ist solche Herzensstube / Wohl kein schöner Fürstensaal*” (Indeed this chamber of the heart, is certainly no finely-appointed hall of princes).

In the final cantata of the *Christmas Oratorio* it is not only that the narrative account of Herod’s intrigues returns us to the lavish chambers of earthly power, but also that the “theological” response to these schemings is dramatized in the very same hall of princes. Indeed, the first aria of the final cantata argues that omnipotent Jesus can quash all power, and he does so with that decisive gesture of absolute monarchic power: the wave of a hand.^{xliv}

*Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen
stürzt ohnmähct’ger Menschen Macht.
Hier wird alle Kraft verlacht!*

A mere wave of his hands
casts down the might of impotent man.
Here all power shall be derided!

Audio Example 11: BWV 248IV/4: “*Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen*”; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

Bach intensifies the librettist’s metaphor by setting the text as a refined court dance, a Gavotte, introducing two gestural rests that portray the enactment of royal will. Needless to say the aria is performed by a singer in church not an actor on the stage; but the image is no less vivid as it comes to life in the imagination of the composer and his audience, for Bach’s music doesn’t simply represent the performative gesture, the aria actually makes it. Further on we hear how courtiers’ connivings can be similarly undone with a decisive gesture, a minimum of movement conveying a maximum of power. Like the rests Bach uses to depict the wave of the hands, the ascending slide at the word “pride” (*Stolz*) instantly undoes the efforts of those seeking to topple Christ’s reign.

One is left to wonder what these images might have meant to those in Leipzig who resented monarchic incursion into civic governance and their obstinate Music Director who pursued his flamboyant, often operatic style in their midst. What might Bach's opponents in Leipzig politics, who were in the congregation for the first performance of the *Christmas Oratorio*, have thought of this audacious, even provocative, joining of text and music? A wave of the royal hand, a flourish of the royal pen, and Bach would be above the recriminations of his civic enemies.

While I would hesitate to draw too direct a connection between Bach's aspirations at the Dresden court, his monarchic affiliations in Leipzig civic affairs, and the music he produced for the city's churches, his music makes an unambiguously royalist turn here, enacting by fiat the godly will against the conniving evildoers embodied most malignly by Herod. Is the prayer to God to be understood as a royal petition? To approach the throne and wait for all to be put right by the wave is the monarchist's way, hoping for the wave of the hand that will duly reward complete obedience. Bach would never come close enough to the Saxon sovereign to kiss his hand, but he enters the throne room through his music. At a crucial moment in the *Christmas Oratorio*, a moment when the vanity of earthly power is undone, the exercise of power in its most refined courtly expression is unambiguously reinscribed in Bach's music. Protocols of deference become an act of faith.

5. Christ Carries the Day

I see nothing paradoxical or even surprising in Bach using his consummate musicianship in the service of Saxon absolutism in large-scale spectacles, while at the same time in his church music drawing on absolutist signs to praise the heavenly king. Traditions of depiction in poetry, the visual arts and music enthrone God with parallel languages of adoration, even when the same forms of glory are disclaimed for theological purposes.^{xiv} But this should not prevent us from trying to understand the ways in which Bach tames the possibly unsettling political implications of his texts by deftly drawing on monarchic imagery or by rallying the faithful under a common banner against a common enemy—the Devil. The latent political message can neither be fully suppressed by the vigor of Bach's musical invention nor transformed by a desire for transcendence, as many have attempted to do, both in musicological paeans to Bach's universalizing approach to composition and in ecumenical panegyrics to his work's alleged spirit

of peace and reconciliation.^{xlvi} While I certainly welcome such noble uses of Bach's music in my own activities as a performer, I have concentrated in this essay on the ways in which these Bach cantatas reflect a specific, monarchic political perspective; colored by prevailing attitudes about the relationship between temporal authority and religious belief, this music uses monarchic motives to temper the volatile potential of Christmas, while at the same presenting unforgettable musical images that dramatize for us, as they must have done even more vividly for Bach's own listeners, the very antithesis of peace.^{xlvii}

In the opening ritornello of the concluding chorus of the *Christmas Oratorio*, Bach is again riding forth into battle with trumpets blazing. Yet after the martial ritornello that opens the movement what the chorus sings is not the echoing polyphony of the instruments, but an unadorned chorale in rhythmically unified four-part harmony; that is, the choir's music is in the same style as what the voices sing in *Du Lebensfürst, Herr Jesu Christ* from the *Ascension Oratorio* (Audio Example 5) and *Vom Himmel hoch* from the first cantata of the *Christmas Oratorio* (Audio Example 6).

*Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen
An eurer Feinde Schar,
Denn Christus hat zerbrochen,
Was euch zuwider war.
Tod, Teufel, Sünd und Hölle
Sind ganz und gar geschwächt;
Bei Gott hat seine Stelle
Das menschliche Geschlecht.*

Now you are well avenged
Upon your hostile host,
For Christ has fully broken
All that which opposed you.
Death, devil, sin and hell
Are completely debilitated;
With God the human race

Now has its place.

However, the restrained, magisterial interludes introduced by Bach into *Vom Himmel hoch* become rollicking orchestral passages of far greater length and weight in *Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen*. Although the opening ritornello of this final chorus emphatically embraces its glorious D-major lineage, the melody is in the venerable Phrygian mode, and the bellicose trumpet cannot dissolve the affective associations this melody immediately summons in its listeners, for what we hear is the Passion chorale, most often associated with the apparent low point of Christ's power, his death on the cross. In dramatizing the Epiphany, when the tiny baby is adored by earthly kings, Bach enshrouds the scene with the crucifixion. Death hangs over the triumph of the chorus, but life, too. Indeed, the resurrection is only possible through the crucifixion, the sacrifice on which Luther's Theology of the Cross rests.

Example 12: BWV 248VI/11: “*Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen*”; courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

Finally, if one imagines that members of Bach's Leipzig congregation would have sung along even in this final chorus (aloud or in their heads, for how can one not sing along when the melody is so deeply ingrained in the heart and mind), then we have a vision of Bach the humble vassal momentarily elevated to field marshal leading the army of believers out into the fray.

There they are, the good people of Leipzig regimented into their careful social formations: the men above in the balconies, the women below; the rich forward, the less-well-to-do back, and those without pews, seats or boxes milling about at the rear of the church.^{xlviii} For these three minutes of concerted song concluding the two weeks of Christmas celebrations, the army of believers is united under the command of the Humble Court Composer, who serves his heavenly and earthly lords with all the forces at his disposal.

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ⁱ For the revolutionary importance of this first “evangelical” mass see Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß und gros Geschrei: Die reformatorischen Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1519* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987), 96. For a comprehensive account of this service and sermon, along with an overview of scholarly perspectives on Karlstadt,

see Neil R. Leroux *Karlstadt's christag predig: prophetic rhetoric in an 'Evangelical' mass*, *Church History* 72 (2003): 102-137.

ⁱⁱ Martin Luther, "Das Evangelium am tage der heyligen drey kuenige," in *Weihnachtspostille 1522* 112 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883-): 10, part 1, pp. 555-728. For Luther's discussion of Herod's fears of revolt as a result of Christ's birth, see pp. 574-5. The sermon is translated in *Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, 8 vols. (vols. 1-5 Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands, 1904-1907; vols. 6-8, Minneapolis: Luther Press, 1908-9; reprint of both Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988, 1988), 4: 319-455, at pp. 336-7. Similarly, Luther's Wittenberg sermons of March 1522 were given as a direct response to the Wittenberg movement; deeply critical of the ill-considered speed with which radical change was implemented, Luther asked "What becomes of order?" The Wittenberg Sermons are translated in *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate*, ed. Ronald J. Sider (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 16-35; for the quote about order, see p. 20.

ⁱⁱⁱ For a summary Luther's dispute with Karlstadt and for his Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, see Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. and ed., Roy A Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 151-159. For a more detailed account of this doctrine and its transformations and nuances, see also David Whitford, *Church History*, 73 (2004): 41-62.

^{iv} Luther, "Epiphany Sermon," trans. Lenker, p. 336.

^v Sigrid Looß, "Andreas Bodensteins von Karlstadt Haltung zum 'Aufruhr,'" in *Querdenker der Reformation: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt und seine frühe Wirkung*, ed. Ulrich Bubenheimer and Stefan Oehmig (Würzburg: Religion & Kultur Verlag, 2001): 265-276.

^{vi} Ulrich Bubenheimer, "Karlstadtrezeption von der Reformation bis zum Pietismus im Spiegel der Schriften Karlstadts zu Gelassenheit," in *Themata Leucoreana: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1686-1541), ein Theologe der frühen Reformation*, ed. Sigrid Looß and Markus Matthias (Hans Lufft: Lutherstadt Wittenberg, 1998): 25-71, esp. 46-50.

^{vii} Ulrich Siegele, "Bach and the Domestic Politics of Electoral Saxony," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17-34, at 17-22.

^{viii} G. E. Scheibel, *Zufällige Gedancken von der Kirchen-Music wie sie heutiges Tages beschaffen ist* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1721); translated as *Random Thoughts about Church Music*, trans. Joyce Irwin, in *Bach's Changing World*, ed., Carol K. Brown (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2006), 225-249, at p. 238.

^{ix} Many of these conflicts are laid out in Carol Baron, "Transitions, Transformations, Reversals: Rethinking Bach's World" and "Tumultuous Philosophers, Pious Rebels, Revolutionary Teachers, Pedantic Clerics, Vengeful Bureaucrats, Threatened Tyrants, Worldly Mystics," in *Bach's Changing World*, ed. Carol K. Baron (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006): 1-85.

^x Siegele, "Bach and the Domestic Politics of Electoral Saxony."

^{xi} The imagery of the Christians as a vassal or servant (Knecht) of the lord is, of course, common in the New Testament, especially in Luther's translations of Paul's letters, in which Paul often begins by announcing himself as a "ein knecht Gottis." (spelling follows Luther's *Deutsche Bibel*) See for example Paul's Letter to the Romans, 1:1. See *Luthers Werke Full-Text Database (Luthers Werke im WWW)*, 12 vols. (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 2002): 7: 28.

^{xii} See for example Paul's Letter to Titus, 3: 1. *Luthers Werke in WWW, Deutsche Bibel*, vol. 7, 290.

^{xiii} See Paul's Letter to the Phillippians, 2: 7. *Luthers Werke in WWW*, vol. 7, 217.

^{xiv} "Fehlet dieses, wer wird seinen Befehlen gehorchen?" "Hof" in Johann Heinrich Zedler, ed., *Grosses vollständiges Universal Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 64 vols. (Leipzig: J. H. Zedler, 1732-1750), 13: col. 405. Viewed on-line at *Johann Heinrich Zedlers grosses vollständiges Universalexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* through Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Digital Bibliothek: <http://mdz10.bib-bvb.de/~zedler/zedler2007/index.html>.

^{xv} Ibid. "Gleichwohl fehlet es nicht an Exempeln, da der Fürst, wenn er allein unter seinen Unterthanen herum gegangen, wenig und gar kein Ansehen gehabt, da man ihm hingegen gantz anders begegnet, wenn er seinem Stande gemäß aufgezogen."

^{xvi} Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 78-116, esp. p. 100. See also Hubert Christian Ehalt, "Zur Funktion des Zeremoniells im Absolutismus," in *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. August Buck, Georg Kauffmann, Lee Blake, Conrad Wiedemann, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981), 2: 411-420.

^{xvii} Siegele, "Bach and the Domestic Politics of Electoral Saxony," 17-22.

^{xviii} Christian Friedrich Hunold, *Der Europæischen Höfe / Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte* (Hamburg: Gottfried Liebernickel, 1705; reprint, Bern: Peter Lang, 1978), 2: 44-5.

^{xix} Bach set Hunold's the carefree *Ich bin in mir vergnügt* in BWV 204.

^{xx} “[Der Bär] sprang mit gräßlichen Brüllen auf ihn zu / um ihn zu umfassen / als eben Gustavus sich wieder hurtig wendete / und einen so gewaltsamen Hieb mit seinem scharffen Säbel auf des Bären Genick führete / dadurch der Rumpff zu seinen Füßen / und der Kopff darneben blutig hinfiel.” Hunold, *Der Europæischen Höfe / Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte*, 2: 45.

^{xxi} Gotthard Arthus, *Electio Et Coronatio Sereniss. Potentiss. Et. Invictiss* (Frankfurt, Main: Officina de Bry, 1612); shelf mark A: 36.11.1 Geom. 2^o (2). Can also be viewed at:

<http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=drucke/36-11-1-geom-2f-2> (Image 16)

^{xxii} Georg Reutter, *Klare und eigentliche Beschreibung deß Durchlächtigsten/ Groszmechtigsten Fürsten und Herrn/ Herrn Matthiae desz Andern ... Einzuges* (Breslau: Georg Baumann, [1611]), unpaginated (page 3 of text) <http://special-1.bl.uk/treasures/festivalbooks/pageview.aspx?strFest=0254&strPage=3>

^{xxiii} “Großer Herr, or starker König” is a parody of the aria “Krone und Preis gekrönter Damen.” The cantata from which it comes (BWV 214) was performed in 1733 for the birthday of the Saxon Electress (also the Queen of Poland).

^{xxiv} Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (two volumes originally published in German 1873-1880), English trans. Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland, 3 vols. (London: Novello, 1889; reprint New York: Dover, 1979), 2: 623. Albert Schweitzer, on the other hand, believed these parodied versions were tainted by their secular origins. See Albert Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach*, trans. Ernest Newman, 2 vols. (London: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911; reprint Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1962), 2: 304-5.

^{xxv} Quoted in Panja Mücke, “... man erzählt sich Wunderdinge von ihr”. *Oper und Repraesentatio Maiestatis im 18. Jahrhundert*,” in *Kunst und Repraesentation am Dresdner Hof*, ed. Barbara Marx (Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005), 217-227, at p. 217.

^{xxvi} Georg Reinhold Curick, *Freuden-Bezeugung der Stadt Dantzig über die Höchst-erwünschte Königliche Wahl und darauf Glücklich-erfolgte Krönung Des ... Herrn Augusti des Andern/ Königes in Pohlen/ ... Hertzogen zu Sachsen* (Danzig: Jansson von Waesberge, 1698), figure. 4. Shelf mark: Gm 4^o 256. Viewed at: <http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=drucke/gm-4f-256&image=0082>.

^{xxvii} Charles Burney, *The present state of music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., corrected. London: Becket, Robson, and Robinson, 1775; reprint New York: Broude Bros., 1969): 2, 32.

^{xxviii} See Gustav Wustmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte Leipzigs* 2 vols. (Leipzig: Bunker & Humboldt, 1889-95), 1: 193-456, at 259-60. See also *Bach-Dokumente*, 2: 25-252. English translation in *New Bach Reader*, ed. Christoph Wolff et al (New York: Norton, 1998), 164-167.

^{xxix} Leipzig held special significance for the Electors, as is made clearly, for example, by the popular account of August the Strong’s love-life, *La Saxe Galante* (Amsterdam: La Compagnie, 1736) by Karl Ludwig von Pöllnitz. In this trashy book the city is a refuge from the intrigues of court, and a great place to make the intimate acquaintance of burgers’ daughters. See the English translation (originally published c. 1750): *Love Life at the Saxon Court* (New York: Brentano’s Publishers, 1929), 184-190, 260-267.

^{xxx} Under the auspices of the University, Bach composed the *Trauerode* (BWV 198) for the 1727 funeral service of Christiane Eberhardine, estranged wife of August the Strong.

^{xxxi} For a detailed, and admittedly hypothetical, discussion of the works on which Bach may have drawn in assembling BWV 215 on such short notice, see Klaus Häfner, *Aspekte des Parodieverfahrens bei Johann Sebastian Bach* (Laaber: Laaber, 1987), 213-252.

^{xxxii} *Bach-Dokumente*, ed. Hans-Joachim Schulze et al, 5 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963-2007), 1: 74. See also, *New Bach Reader*, 226-228. For a description of the (post-)feudal relationship reflected by the term Knecht, see Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 8, column 1065ff.

^{xxxiii} Siegele, “Bach and the Domestic Politics of Electoral Saxony,” 17-27.

^{xxxiv} Image reprinted in Gustav Wustmann, *Bilderbuch aus der Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig für Alt und Jung* (Leipzig: Zieger, 1897; reprint, Leipzig: Reprintverlag Leipzig, 1990), 68

^{xxxv} Zedler, “Illumination,” *Universal-Lexicon*, 14: 549.

^{xxxvi} *Riemer-Chronik* in Wustmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte Leipzigs*, 1: 361; *New Bach Reader*, 166.

^{xxxvii} *Bach-Dokumente*, 2: 249; *New Bach Reader*, 164-5. For a facsimile reproduction of the title-page of the textbook of BWV 215 see *New Bach Reader*, 165.

^{xxxviii} *New Bach Reader*, 167.

^{xxxix} Zedler, *Universal Lexicon*, vol. 2, col. 438. “Hand-Kuß, zum Hand Hand-Kuß lassen, ist eine Gnaden-Bezeigung, so grosse Herren einem geringeren erweisen.”

^{xl} *Bach-Dokumente*, 2: 250; *New Bach Reader*, 167.

^{xli} Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, 13: col. 411. “Bedencke, daß zwischen dir und deinem Fürsten eine grosse Klufft befestiget.”

^{xlii} David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 134.

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- ^{xliii} Hans-Joachim Schulze, *Die Bach-Kantaten* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006), 648-651.
- ^{xliiv} Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, 13: col. 406. See also Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, "Winck,: 57: cols. 435-439
- ^{xlv} Antony Blunt, "God and Prince in Bach's Cantatas," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1938): 178-182.
- ^{xlvi} For the supra-national approach to musical styles, see the classic Robert Marshall, "On Bach's Universality," in *The Music of J. S. Bach* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 65-79. For the ways in which Bach's music has been seen—and used—to contribute to world peace, see the website of the Schweitzer/Bach Symposium held in 2000 at Vanderbilt University: <http://www.spaceformusic.com/symposium2000/page3.html>, viewed on November 20, 2007.
- ^{xlvii} For a bracing confrontation with the anti-Enlightenment in Bach's vocal works see, Richard Taruskin, "Bach's Dark Vision," in *Text and Act* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1995), as well as, more recently, and in expanded form, Taruskin's account of Bach in his *Oxford History of Music*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2: 340-390.
- ^{xlviii} For the placement and behavior of Bach's congregations see Tanya Kevorkian, "The Reception of the Cantata during Leipzig Church Services, 1700-1750: in *Bach's Changing World*: 174-189.