

Missing Indications for Saints' Feast Days on Christmas Feast Days

Doug Cowling queried: "Does anyone know what Bach wrote on the wrapper of the parts for these eight cantatas?"

BWV 57 Selig ist der Mann (1725)

Autograph Score [no special folder/wrapper]

Title at top of first page: *J. J. | Feria 2da Nativitatis Christi. Concerto in Dialogo.*

Parts enclosed in a folder with the title written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau:

*Feria 2da Nativi- | tatis Christi | Seelig ist der Mann etc. | à 4 Voc: | 3 Hautbois | 2 Violini | Viola | é
| Continuo | di Sign: | J. S. Bach.*

Text/Libretto taken from Georg Christian Lehms' *Gottgefälliges Kirchen-Opffer* (Darmstadt, 1711) entitled: *Nachmittags-Andacht | Auf den andern Weynacht- | Feyertag. | Jesus | Seele.*
[*andern* {'other'} = 2nd]

The 1790 Estate of C. P. E. Bach listing simply has noted for the autograph score and doublets:
"Am 2 Weihnachtstage: Selig ist der Mann etc. Mit Hoboen. Partitur und einige Stimmen."
Georg Poelchau acquired it for his collection in 1805 and sold it to Abraham Mendelssohn in 1811. The latter gave it to the Berliner Singakademie whose librarian Dehn noted it as follows:
"Cantata feria 2. nat. Christi...."

The original parts appear to have been inherited by Johann Christian Bach who probably gave them to his half-brother C. P. E. Bach in 1755, when the former left Berlin to travel to Italy. C. P. E. Bach later sold them to Johann Friedrich Hering, a musician and musical manuscript dealer, who in turn sold them to the Voß family collection (probably after 1810, after Hering's death). In the Voß collection catalog it is still listed as: "Cantate tempore Festi nativitatis Chr.... In 1851 the score and original parts came into the possession of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin.

Another copy of the score (1836) came to the Staatsbibliothek Berlin from the Franz Hauser collection. Its title reads: "Feria 2^{da}. Nativitatis Christi – Concerto in Dialogo". It claims to have been made from the autograph score in the possession of Karl Friedrich Zelter, director of the Berliner Singakademie.

Alfred Dürr explains in his Bach cantatas book that this is actually less about Christmas than about St. Stephen and as such is Bach's 'Stephanus-Kantate' based upon the libretto which even names the saint: "Jesu, mache mir doch nur wie Stephano den Himmel offen!"

BWV 40 Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes (1723)

The autograph score has the following title at the top of the first page:

J. J. Concerto Feria 2. Nativ: Xsti. [Note the deliberate use of ‘X’ as in ‘Xmas’, although here with a much greater, deeper significance.]

This score was inherited by C. P. E. Bach and appeared in his estate listing [1790] as:

“Cantate feria II. nat. Christi. (Concerto “Ihr seid Gottes Kinder”[)]) Autogr. Partitur, u. Copie derselben. einige Stimmen von Zelters Hand.”

This was later acquired by the Berliner Singakademie [under Zelter’s direction]. In 1855 the Staatsbibliothek Berlin acquired it.

The original parts

The first evidence of their existence after 1750 is from a Poelchau Collection catalog. They were acquired by the BB [Staatsbibliothek Berlin] in 1841. The parts were still contained in the original folder. The title was written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau:

Feria 2 Nativit: Christi | Darzu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes | â | 4 Voc: | 2 Corni | 2 Hautbois | 2 Violini | Viola | con | Continuo | di Sign: | J S Bach.

Between the first and second lines [after ‘Christi’ and before ‘Darzu’], there is an autograph insertion – J. S. Bach personally writes as an addition: *1 Joan:* [an abbreviation involved here] *Vs. 8.*

^{KJV} **1 John 3:1-8** ¹Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. ² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. ⁴ Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. ⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. ⁶ Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. ⁷ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸ He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1Jo 3:1-8 KJV)

Thus there is here a clear indication of how Bach wanted to connect BWV 40 which came first in 1723 with BWV 64 “Sehet, welch eine Liebe hat uns der Vater erzeiget” which followed a day later on the next feast day [3rd Day of Christmas]. Thus the common origin of biblical text is a connection that Bach wanted to emphasize about this pair of cantatas BWV 40 and BWV 64.

BWV 64 Sehet, welch eine Liebe hat uns der Vater erzeiget (1723)

No autograph score still exists. Numerous copies are available for inspection with titles like: “Concerto Fer. 3. Nativit: Christi. di Joh. Seb. Bach.”

The original parts are still in their original folder the title of which was written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau:

Fer: 3 Nativit: Christi | Sehet, welch eine Liebe hat uns der etc. | â | 4 Voci | Cornetto | 3 Trombon: | Hautbois d’Amour | 2 Violini | Viola | con | Continuo | di Sign: | J. S. Bach.

Again J. S. Bach added between lines 1 and 2 [after ‘Christi’ and before ‘Sehet’]: *1. Joan: 3. v. 1.* [see Bible passage above].

This set of parts was inherited by C. P. E. Bach and was listed in his estate (1790) as: “Am 3 Weihnachtstage: Sehet, welch eine Liebe etc. Mit Cornett, Trompeten und Hoboen. In Stimmen.” The next owner that could be traced was the Berliner Singakademie [Zelter, director] which sold it to the BB in 1855.

BWV 121 Christum wir sollen loben schon (1724)

The autograph score has a title on the first page of the score:

J. J. Feria 2 Nativit: Xsti. Christum wir sollen loben schon.

[see note above about Bach’s use of ‘Xsti’ for ‘Christi’; throughout the text Bach consistently uses this form as for example: “Xstum wir sollen”]

This score was very likely inherited by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. The next owner was Johann Georg Nacke. His successor Johann Gottlob Schuster inherited it from the former. Schuster’s collection was purchased by Franz Hauser from whom the BB acquired the entire Hauser collection in 1904.

The original set of parts no longer has its original cover/folder. A different folder from the 18th century was substituted for it and the title written in an unknown hand is: “Fer. II. Nativit. Christi. 4 voci. Cornett. Hautb. d’amour. Hautb. da Caccia. 3 Tromb. | 2 Violini, Viola, Continuo e Organo. di Joh. Seb. Bach.”

The original parts were donated to the Thomasschule by Anna Magdalena Bach as part of an agreement. They are still in Leipzig in the Bach-Archiv. In the BB there are four of the original parts along with four new ones and four covers/folders. One of these is the original cover/folder written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau. It reads:

Fer 2 Nativit: Christi | Christum wir sollen loben schon p. | â | 4 Voci | Cornetto | 3 Trombon: | Hautbois | 2 Violini | Viola | con | Continuo | del Sign: | J S Bach.

BWV 133 Ich freue mich in dir (1724)

The autograph score has the following title at the top of the first page of the score in Bach's hand:
J. J. Feria 3 Nativit: Xsti Ich freüe mich in dir etc.

The autograph score along with doublets and the folder for the original set of parts with a title written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau were most likely inherited by W. F. Bach and then similar to a situation above came into the possession Johann Georg Nackle [the date 1759 written by Nackle appears to indicate the date of acquisition]. Nackle's successor Johann Gottlob Schuster 'inherited' them from Nackle. In 1833 Franz Hauser purchased them from Schuster. Hauser gave Felix Mendelssohn the autograph score as a present. After F. Mendelssohn's death it was passed on in the family to his younger brother, Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy and then to his nephew, Ernst von Mendelssohn Bartholdy. The latter then in 1908 donated it to the BB along with numerous other musical manuscripts where the score then was reunited with Hauser's other original parts that had already come to the BB in 1904.

Kuhnau's original folder for the entire set of parts now containing only the original doublets has the following title:

Fer: 3 Nativit: Christi | Ich freüe mich in dir, etc. | â | 4 Voci | 2 Hautb: d'Amour | 2 Violini | Viola | con | Continuo | del Sign: | J S Bach.

The original parts apparently were inherited by Anna Magdalena Bach and were presented by her to the Thomasschule in the fall of 1750. The cover/folder for the parts has a title possibly written by someone in the family or a relative:

„Fer. III. Nativit: Christi | Ich freue mich in dir etc. | a. 4. Voc: | 2. Hautb: d. Amour | 2 Violini | Viola | con | Continuo | d. Sig. Joh. Seb. Bach.”

BWV 151 Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kömmt (1725)

The autograph score has on the first page at the top Bach's own title:

J. J. Feria 3. Nativitatis Christi Concerto.

C P E Bach inherited the score and doublets and Johann Christian Bach inherited the original parts.

The original parts now in the BB. The title on the folder was written by Johann Andreas Kuhnau:
Feria 3 Nativi- | tatis Christi | Süßer Trost mein Jesus p. | â | 4 Voc: | Travers: | Hautbois d'Amour | 2 Violini | Viola | e | Continuo | di Sign | J S. Bach.

[Bach personally added 'd'Amour' after Hautbois].

The libretto is taken from Johann Oswald Knauer's *Gott-geheiligt Singen und Spielen des Friedensteinischen Zions* (Gotha, 1720). Under *Dritter Weyhnacht Feyer-Tag*, Knauer gives the biblical reference: 1. John. III. v. 1. [See above]

BWV 248/2 Weihnachts-Oratorium (1734-1735)

J. S. Bach personally wrote the title on the cover of the folder containing the parts:

*Pars 2 Oratorii. | Tempore Nativit: Xsti | Feria 2 | Und es waren Hirten in derselben etc. | à | 4 Voci.
| 2 Travers: | 2 Hautb. d'Amour | 2 Hautb. da Caccia. | 2 Violini. | Viola | e | Continuo | di | Joh:
Sebast: Bach.*

[Note again here and below that Bach insists on using ‚Xsti‘ instead of ‚Christi‘.]

BWV 248/3 Weihnachts-Oratorium (1734-1735)

J. S. Bach personally wrote the title on the cover of the folder containing the parts:

*Pars 3 Oratorii. | Tempore Nativitatis Xsti | Feria 3 | Herrscher des Himmels erhöre etc | à | 4 Voci.
| 3 Trombe | Tamburi | 2 Traversieri | 2 Hautbois | 2 Violini. | Viola | e | Continuo | di | Joh: Sebast:
Bach.*

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