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"Et incarnatus": An Afterthought? Against the "Revisionist" View of Bach's *B-Minor Mass*

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Although it is the current viewpoint among scholars that the separate choral "Et incarnatus" of Bach's *B-Minor Mass* was an afterthought, considerations of symmetry, tonal structure, and traditions of Roman Catholic mass composition suggest that Bach must have planned the independent "Et incarnatus" from the beginning. This conclusion is reinforced by a study of the autograph and by a musical analysis of the "Et in unum" duet and its parody. It would seem that Bach deliberately inserted the choral "Et incarnatus" in the autograph on an extractable leaf in order to provide his *missa tota* with alternative performing options, both Lutheran and Roman Catholic. A performance that avoids the structural and musical weaknesses of both these confessional alternatives is both possible and preferable, and would be fully in line with Bach's old-age universalist orientations. This calls for a change in the prevailing performance practice.

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental research on the music of Bach that has been undertaken during the last fifty years has done more to improve our understanding of his *Mass in B Minor* than of any of his other works. After being heralded in the early nineteenth century by its prospective editor, Nägeli as "the greatest musical artwork of all times and all peoples," its standing declined with Smend's edition[1] and Critical Report[2] in the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* in 1956 to an arbitrary anthology of unrelated Lutheran pieces, "almost fortuitously constituting a

1. Friedrich Smend, ed., *Neue Bach Ausgabe* [hereafter *NBA*] II/1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954).

2. Friedrich Smend, "Kritischer Bericht zur Ausgabe der h-moll-Messe," *NBA* II/1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1956).

Roman mass"[3] whose integral performance should be considered a "historical misunderstanding" and an "artistic blunder." Smend's edition and commentary—instead of being welcomed as definitive and authoritative sources—immediately aroused a hot debate, resulting eventually in John Butt's verdict over Smend's work as "one of the most striking disasters in modern musicology."[4] As early as 1959, Georg von Dadelsen convincingly rehabilitated the work's integrity on the basis of a meticulous study of the autograph,[5] while the new chronology of Bach's works that resulted from the pioneering handwriting research of Dadelsen and Alfred Dürr[6]—"the Crick & Watson of Bach research"[7]—ranked the *B-Minor Mass* among the great cyclical works of Bach's last creative period. Kobayashi finally identified Bach's *missa tota* as being compiled between August 1748 and October 1749[8]; as a consequence, the work has not only changed places with the *Kunst der Fuge* as Bach's *opus ultimum*, but must now be viewed as its vocal counterpart: an untitled and never-performed, nearly abstract and encyclopedic "specimen book,"[9] combining a broad spectrum of historical styles encompassing a period of one hundred and fifty years. Since "the golden age of Bach scholarship,"[10] the *B-Minor Mass* not only has enjoyed great popularity—the number of its recordings surpassing those of the *St. Matthew Passion*[11]—but also has become the subject of a number of monographs that have brought this new musicological

3. John Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

4. Ibid, vii.

5. Georg von Dadelsen, "Friedrich Smend's Edition of the B-Minor Mass by J. S. Bach," *Bach* 20/2 (1959), 49–74.

6. Georg von Dadelsen, *Beiträge zur Chronologie der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs*, Tübinger Bach-Studien, Vol.4/5 (Trossingen: Hohner Verlag, 1958); and Alfred Dürr, "Zur Chronologie der Leipziger Vokalwerke J.S.Bachs," *Bach Jahrbuch* 44 (1957), 5–162.

7. Robert Marshall, "Toward a Twenty-First-Century Bach Biography," *Musical Quarterly* 84/3 (2000), 497.

8. Yoshitake Kobayashi, "Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs: Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750," *Bach Jahrbuch* 74 (1988), 7–72.

9. Christoph Wolff, "Bach the Cantor, the Capellmeister, and the Musical Scholar: Aspects of the B-Minor Mass," *Bach* 20/1 (1989), 60.

10. Marshall, "Toward a Twenty-First-Century Bach Biography," 497.

11. As of September 2003, the *Mass in B Minor* has outsold the *St. Matthew Passion* in a ratio of 96 to 86, according to the recordings and discussions Web site http://www.bach-cantatas.com.

consensus to a broader public.[12] Even so, it was only in 1997 that Christoph Wolff edited the long-overdue new edition of the musical text for Edition Peters.[13]

For the practical performer and the careful listener, however, the new, broad musicological consensus still contains an irritating problem. Most editions publish two versions of the "Et in unum" duet, the second of which omits the words *et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est*; modern musicologists seem to be of one mind that this version is the one that should be performed. This advice—running contrary to that of Smend and the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* of 1954—is followed by the majority of performers,[14] at the cost of a far inferior text–music relationship in the duet, compared to that of the rejected "first" version. To put it bluntly: We consider performers well-advised by Smend—albeit on false grounds—and ill-advised by modern musicologists.

The reasons for the prevailing consensus regarding the "Et in unum" duet are given by what we will call the "revisionist" view, in which Bach, at some point after having finished his *missa solemnis*—or, at the earliest, after the completion of its *Symbolum Nicenum*—"was ultimately not quite satisfied with its carefully planned eight movement sequence"[15] and decided to revise it by making three changes to its original layout[16]:

1. He assigned the text *et incarnatus est* up to *et homo factus est*—previously included in the duet *Et in unum*—to a separate choral movement, and inserted it in the manuscript between the "Et in unum" duet and the "Crucifixus," thereby enlarging the *Symbolum*

12. Books about the Mass include Walter Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974); Helmut Rilling, *Johann Sebastian Bachs h-moll-Messe* (Stuttgart: Hänssler-Verlag, 1986); John Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*; George B. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor ("The Great Catholic Mass")* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997).

13. Christoph Wolff, ed., *Johann Sebastian Bach, Messe in H-moll (BWV 232)* (Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 1997).

14. According to Uri Golomb, it is heard in forty-five out of sixty-three recordings. Golomb, Cambridge University, personal communication.

15. Christoph Wolff, "'Et Incarnatus' and 'Crucifixus': The Earliest and Latest Settings of Bach's B-Minor Mass," in *Eighteenth-Century Music in Theory and Practice: Essays in Honor of Alfred Mann*, ed. Mary Ann Parker (New York: Pendragon Press 1994), 3.

16. Alfred Dürr, ed., *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll* (Kassel: Bärenreiter 1983), 12.

Nicenum from an eight- into a nine-movement section. This fundamental revision brought in its wake two further changes in the preceding and following movements.[17]

2. He extracted the *et incarnatus* text from the preceding "Et in unum" duet, stretching the remaining text over the entirety of the vocal lines, while keeping the original instrumental lines unaltered; he therefore had to write anew only the vocal lines, which he did at the end of the *Symbolum Nicenum*.

3. He added four introductory instrumental measures at the beginning of the "Crucifixus."

The assertion that Bach came back later to his manuscript, and that the independent choral "Et incarnatus" thus originated only as "an afterthought"[18] is—however much it is generally accepted—clearly an interpretation; it belongs to the "hypotheses which by decades long use ascended to the level of 'facts.'"[19] However, the observable facts that gave rise to this hypothesis leave room for different interpretations, and it therefore makes sense first to detach the relevant facts from their dominant interpretation.

The most important fact is the location of the chorus "Et incarnatus" in the autograph; it is written on both sides of a separate sheet of paper, even though all the other movements of the Mass are found, one after the other, on fascicles of two to four bifolios[20] (see Table 1). A later hand—not Bach's own—numbered the manuscript pages, assigning to the inserted "Et incarnatus" the numbers 111 and 112, with the words *Crucifixus sequitur* found on the bottom of page 112. The last page of the first version of the "Et in unum" duet—which includes the words *et incarnatus est, etc*.—is numbered 110, and the first full page of the ensuing "Crucifixus" is assigned the number 113. Despite this consecutive pagination, we do not in fact know

17. Robert L. Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sources, Style, Significance* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), 183.

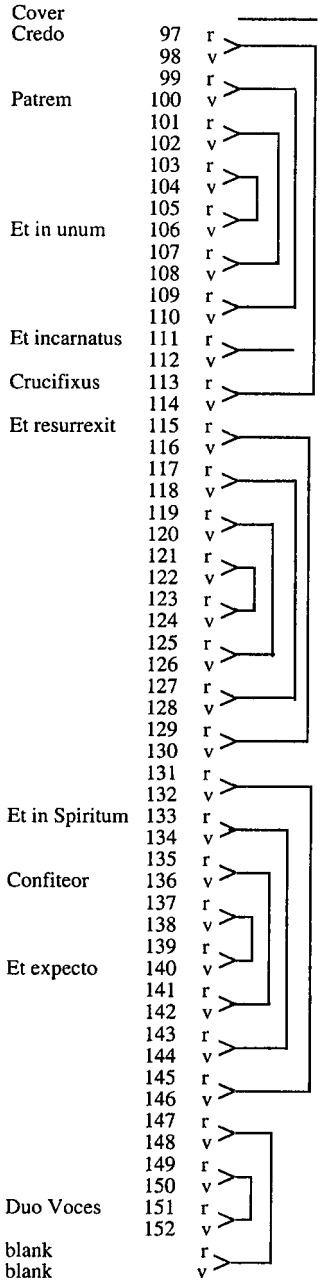
18. Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach*, 182; Christoph Wolff, *Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: Norton, 2000), 440.

19. "Hypothesen . . . die durch jahrzehntelangen Gebrauch in den Rang von 'Tatsachen' aufgestiegen wären." Dadelsen, *Beiträge*, 143.

20. This layout is given schematically at the end of the facsimile edition, Dürr, ed., *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll*.

Table 1

Bach, *B Minor Mass*: Layout of Autograph, Part II, *Symbolum Nicenum*. (r = recto, v = verso)

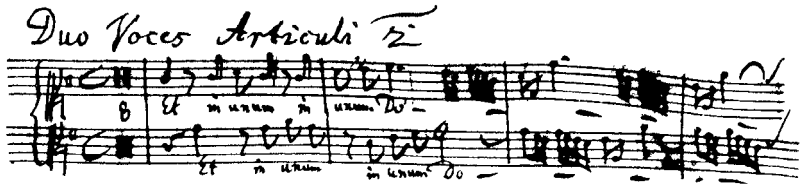


where Bach himself kept the "Et incarnatus" leaf[21]; it could just as easily have been placed originally at the end of the last fascicle of Part II, the *Symbolum Nicenum*, for example.

Another physical characteristic of the autograph to take into account in this context is the inclusion—on two pages (151–152) at the end of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, after the last page of the "Et expecto" chorus—of two staves with a second version of the vocal parts of the "Et in unum" duet, without the words *et incarnatus est, etc*. This "curtailed" version bears the extraordinary, explanatory heading *Duo Voces Articuli 2* (see Facsimile 1).

Finally, the first or "inclusive" "Et in unum" version[22]—written on systems of six staves—ends on the last system of autograph page 110, leaving only enough room for a crammed notation of the four instrumental introductory bars of the "Crucifixus." Beneath the double-bar line that separates the final measure of "Et in unum" and the opening bar of "Crucifixus" is found a reference mark with the words *Et incarnatus sequt*.

Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that the separate choral "Et incarnatus" and the second version of the duet vocal lines were the results of an afterthought—Bach revisiting the manuscript—this revision cannot have taken place very much later. Butt convincingly argues that Bach must have planned the addition before completing his *Symbolum Nicenum*[23]: even though he needed no more



Facsimile 1. Bach, *B-Minor Mass*: Heading of p. 151 of the autograph.

21. In the words of John Butt, "Perhaps then he did not originally intend the extra leaf for the Et incarnatus est to appear at this point at all." John Butt, "Bach's 'Mass in B Minor': Considerations of its Early Performance and Use," *Journal of Musicology* 9/1 (1991), 113.

22. We accept the designation of this version as "first" solely as an indication of order because the other version evidently was written down later. We reject, however, for the time being, its conventional connotations as rejected or superseded.

23. Butt, "Bach's 'Mass in B Minor': Considerations of its Early Performance and Use," 114; Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 15.

than four pages (147–150) (or one bifolium) for finishing the "Et expecto"—which he could very well have foreseen, as he was copying from the parody model *Jauchzet, ihr erfreuten Stimmen* (BWV 120/2)—he nevertheless prepared two bifolia (see Table 1), thus leaving enough paper for the alternative vocal parts to the "Et in unum" duet. A "later return" by Bach to his manuscript after a presumed performance, as Dürr has suggested, is therefore out of the question.[24]

Before questioning the plausibility of Bach's presumed revision, it should be noted that the insertion of a new movement in a manuscript in progress, without any intervening performance experience, represents—for Bach—a highly unusual *démarche*. Spitta observed as early as 1892 that "we know of only a few cases where the layout of a piece was rejected once it had been worked out,"[25] whereas Marshall notes that decisions concerning the distribution of text and the number, genre, tonalities, succession, and interconnection of movements belong to a work's prehistory—the precompositional stage of planning before the first notes were written down.[26] Belated corrections that bear on these fundamental matters are hardly ever encountered in earlier Bach manuscripts—and certainly not in such concentration.[27] A view that argues for an unprecedented departure from Bach's lifelong composing habits should therefore be supported by sound arguments. The "revisionist" view that interprets the relevant autograph characteristics in terms of an "afterthought," however seemingly obvious at first glance, does not, in our opinion, withstand critical scrutiny.[28]

Three arguments can be made to counter the view that Bach conceived his *Symbolum Nicenum* without the independent choral "Et incarnatus" movement. These arguments, which will be dealt with below, center around contemporary traditions of mass composition as well as matters of symmetry and tonality. We also will explore evidence that argues against the likelihood that Bach would have preferred the second version of the "Et in unum" duet, or that

24. Dürr, ed., *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll*, 12.

25. Philipp Spitta, *Zur Musik: sechzehn Aufsätze* (Berlin: Paetel, 1892), 181.

26. Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sources, Style, Significance*, 185.

27. Ibid., 181–185.

28. See also Kees Van Houten, *"propter magnam gloriam tuam": De Hohe Messe van J.S.Bach* (Boxtel, 2002). In German translation as *Die h-moll-Messe von Johann Sebastian Bach* (Schaffhausen: Novalis Verlag, 2004).

the "Crucifixus" movement may have originally existed without its four introductory measures. Furthermore, a study of the autograph suggests the possibility that the choral "Et incarnatus" could have been written earlier—rather than later—than the remaining movements of the *Symbolum Nicenum*. Finally, we will elaborate on the theological problem that may have induced Bach, the Lutheran, to equip his *missa tota* with alternative performing options regarding the text *et incarnatus est*.

TRADITIONS OF MASS COMPOSITION

Bach's *opus ultimum* did not appear out of the blue. Notwithstanding its unique position and qualities unprecedented in musical history, as well as its clear German–Lutheran traits (to which we will return), in many ways it stands clearly in the tradition of Dresden Catholic mass compositions in the then-fashionable Neapolitan *concertante* style, a style Bach knew extremely well. When, in July 1733, Bach offered his Kyrie-Gloria Mass (known as a *Missa*) to the newly appointed Saxon Elector and King of Poland in Dresden, he displayed a thorough familiarity with the Dresden style of Catholic church music. As Stauffer has pointed out, the movements of the Kyrie section, in particular, closely follow a number of features characteristic of masses in the Dresden style: The "Kyrie I" is in a concerted style, with a few slow introductory bars; the "Christe eleison" can be viewed as a fashionable duet; and the "Kyrie II" is written in an *a cappella* style that "was almost a Kyrie cliché in Dresden Masses."[29] Especially striking is Bach's use of two sopranos in the *Christe eleison*, a combination of voices in the same range that is unique in his *oeuvre* but was standard practice in Dresden.

After 1733, Bach's intimacy with the Dresden style and the tradition of Catholic mass composition in general can only have intensified through a number of close connections between the composer and the musical life of Dresden: Bach's more frequent visits to the city after Friedemann's election in 1733 as organist of Dresden's St. Sophia Church; Bach's own increasingly close association with the court after his appointment as Electoral Saxon and Royal Polish Court Composer in 1736; his close personal ties with members of the Dresden court *capelle* and with colleagues such as Hasse and his

29. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 13.

wife—the soprano Faustina Bordoni—and the Dresden church composer Zelenka; and not least by Bach's study, copying, and incidental performances in the late 1730s of Latin-texted church music by Catholic composers such as Palestrina, Bassani, Lotti, Caldara, and Durante. According to Stauffer, "The Hofkirche music served Bach as a reliable guide as he studied polyphonic Catholic Ordinary to familiarize himself with its conventions."[30] In his home city of Leipzig, Bach was viewed as well-informed about the musical happenings in Dresden.[31]

It is therefore difficult to believe that Bach, the "best-informed musician regarding the major repertories,"[32] would not have known, when he conceived his *Symbolum Nicenum* in 1748, that there was a strong inclination—if not an outright convention—among Catholic composers that a great mass had to include a separate setting of the "Et incarnatus." This convention has a liturgical basis with strong theological foundations that are relevant to this discussion, because they pertain to decisions Bach would have had to make regarding the "Et incarnatus."

During the large-scale miseries of the late middle ages (wars, famine, leprosy, epidemics of smallpox and plague), God's concern for human suffering through the incarnation of his son Jesus Christ became the focal point of Christian faith. The idea of the incarnation was radically materialized in the doctrine of transsubstantiation during the consecration, a doctrine Luther would later scorn. The Mass Ordinary emphasizes the incarnation in the Nicean Creed through the instruction for the priest and congregation to kneel at the words *et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est*. This tradition of genuflection goes back at least to the eleventh century[33] and is reflected musically in mass composition. According to Eugen Schmitz, the words *et incarnatus* up to *homo factus est* should appear as a closed unity, in order to provide a

30. Ibid., 20.

31. Hans-Joachim Schulze, "J. S. Bachs Missa h-Moll BWV 232-I. Die Dresdener Widmungsstimmen von 1733. Entstehung und Überlieferung," in *Johann Sebastian Bach: Messe H-Moll "Opus ultimum" BWV 232*, ed. Ulrich Prinz (Stuttgart: Schriftenreihe Bach Academie, 1990), 85.

32. Christoph Wolff, *Bach: Essays on His Life and Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 10.

33. Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (New York: Burns & Oates, 1959), 296.

well-defined framework for this part of the ceremony.[34] For that reason, a large number—if not the overwhelming majority—of mass compositions from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries show a special musical treatment of the *et incarnatus* text. This special treatment can take on a variety of forms: a preceding full cadence with a double barline, a new tonality, a different instrumentation or vocal cast, a *largo* or *adagio* tempo, a *grave* indication, a broadening of the music or a lofty style, a homophonous declamation of the text, an "unusual expressive idiom,"[35] or any other means to stress or set apart the words *et incarnatus est* (etc.).

Several authors acknowledge this tradition, but do not reflect on why Bach did not initially "bow to this contemporary convention."[36] Still, a convention is not a rule without exceptions.[37] The convention is nearly always followed in masses by Obrecht, Ockeghem, and Josquin, but by no means always in those by Palestrina. The tradition seems to be reinforced in high-Baroque "numbers masses": that is, those works that come nearest to Bach's own environment. All six masses of Bassani's *Acroama missale*—a copy of which was owned by Bach[38]—have in their Credo a division before *et incarnatus*, even when the entire Credo includes only one partition (as in Nr. 3). Of the masses by Bach's friend, the Dresden capellmeister and composer Johann Adolf Hasse, all make a new start with the words

34. "Die Worte 'Et incarnatus' bis 'homo factus est' [müssen] als geschlossenes Ganzes hervortreten, damit sie einen klar umrissenen Rahmen dieser Zeremonie bilden." Eugen Schmitz, "Bachs h-moll Messe und die Dresdner katholische Kirchenmusik," in *Bericht über die Wissenschaftliche Bachtagung der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung*, Walther Vetter, Ernst Hermann, H. H. Eggebrecht, eds. (Leipzig: Peters, 1950), 325.

35. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 4.

36. Schmitz, "Bachs h-moll Messe und die Dresdner katholische Kirchenmusik," 324; Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 73; Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 4, 119.

37. Although it is not possible to survey the complete body of mass compositions, we can consider the sample we were able to view in our libraries as representative with respect to the question at issue: Are the words *et incarnatus est* given a special emphasis or not? Some discrimination is often required to answer this question: For example, one cannot regard the requirements of special emphasis as being met *per definitionem* by *stile antico* compositions because of the simple fact that, in this style, any new sentence receives separate treatment. In cases such as this, one has to make practical judgments as to what constitutes "special emphasis."

38. Kirsten Beisswenger, *Johann Sebastian Bachs Notenbibliothek* (Kassel: Bärenreiter 1992), 272–274.

et incarnatus,[39] as do most of the masses of the court's church composer Jan Dismas Zelenka, also a Bach family friend. A separation before *et incarnatus* also occurs in all fourteen masses of Horatio Benevoli, and in the five masses by the Viennese composer Jacob Joachim Fux that we were able to examine: Both of these composers are represented in the inventory of masses that Zelenka made up for the Dresden chapel.[40]

Even if the subdivision before the text *et incarnatus est* is given no special emphasis in comparison to other divisions in the Credo of the masses by such composers as these, one never finds the music set to the text *et incarnatus est* continuing on, uninterrupted, with the same thematic material as the previous text, as is the case in first version of the *B-Minor Mass* duet "Et in unum." It is difficult to believe that Bach would not have known of this tradition, and even more difficult to believe that, by chance, "his attention was drawn to it by a Catholic colleague"[41] in the short period between the completion of the first "Et in unum" and the writing out of the "Et expecto" chorus—an implausible suggestion still offered in the year 2000.[42]

Nevertheless, we cannot dismiss out of hand the possibility that Bach knowingly decided *not* to follow this convention, and to include the *et incarnatus* text in the "Et in unum" duet for one reason or another. In that case, however, it remains incomprehensible what could have caused him to reconsider so quickly what must have been a deliberate decision to reject a widespread convention. From the viewpoint of the compositional tradition that Bach seems to have been determined to follow, it is highly unlikely that he neglected to set a separate choral "Et incarnatus" movement, either inadvertently or for unknown reasons that were quickly corrected.

39. Walther Müller, *Johann Adolf Hasse als Kirchenkomponist: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neapolitanischen Kirchenmusik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911), 54.

40. Wolfgang Horn, *Die Dresdner Hofkirchenmusik, 1720–1745: Studien zu ihren Voraussetzungen und ihrem Repertoire* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1987), 150 ff.

41. "Wahrscheinlich wurde er von einem katholischen Kollegen darauf aufmerksam gemacht": Schmitz, "Bachs h-moll Messe und die Dresdner katholische Kirchenmusik," 325.

42. Rob Van der Hilst, *1750, Het laatste jaar van Johann Sebastian Bach* (Baarn: Tirion, 2000), 68.

Table 2
Symmetrical Structure of the *Symbolum Nicenum*

1. Father	Credo in unum Deum	chorus	stile antico + greg. cantus firmus
	Patrem omnipotentem	chorus	concertato fugue
2. Son	Et in unum	solo	con due oboi
	Et incarnatus est	chorus	
	Crucifixus	chorus	
	Et resurrexit	chorus	
3. H.Ghost	Et in Spiritum sanctum	solo	con due oboi
	Confiteor	chorus	stile antico + greg. cantus firmus
	Et expecto	chorus	concertato fugue

SYMMETRY

Bach's *Symbolum Nicenum* has a splendid symmetrical structure (see Table 2): It begins and ends with pairs of choruses, each pair consisting of an *a cappella* movement in the *stile antico* based on a Gregorian plainsong melody, followed by an exuberant and festive Baroque movement. These outward "doctrinal pillars"[43] enclose three successive central choral movements—dealing with the three central Christological tenets of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection—that are flanked by the *Symbolum*'s only two arias. Both arias feature a pair of *oboi d'amore*, and each introduces the main portion of the texts of the second and third article of faith, Christ and the Holy Spirit, respectively.[44] These nine well-balanced parts, arranged in three groups of three movements, aptly symbolize the Holy Trinity as the nucleus of the Christian faith.

Butt[45] and Smend consider this careful symmetrical structure to be the decisive argument for Bach's setting apart the *et incarnatus* text from the preceding *et in unum* and assigning it to an independent movement. It shows, as Stauffer adds, that Bach was willing, in his last years, to sacrifice local pictorial detail (i.e., the quality of the text–music relationships in the first "Et in unum" duet) for larger, structural effects.[46] This is an odd argument, as the symmetric plan of the Credo

43. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 142.

44. Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 94–95; Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 53; Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 99.

45. Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 94.

46. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 114, 142, 252.

did not originate from the insertion of the separate "Et incarnatus"; the supposedly "original" eight-movement Credo would have had a "perfectly symmetric layout" as well.[47] We would do better to agree with Werner Breig's conclusion that the symmetrical design is "older" than the middle position of the "Crucifixus,"[48] all the more if we read "more fundamental" instead of "older." The paired opening and ending choruses, as well as the two solo movements, have clearly been planned—from the very beginning—for a symmetrically designed Credo.

That both the "original" eight-movement and the "later" nine-movement *Symbolum* are symmetrically structured, however, in no way implies that considerations of symmetry are irrelevant with regard to the incorporation of the "Et incarnatus." References to Classical and Baroque architecture—by which means scholars typically have explained the interest of Bach and his contemporaries in symmetrical structures[49]—are helpful in examining those considerations. A quick look at the facades of Baroque and Classical palaces, churches, residences, and other large, multisectional buildings, shows that these facades—and especially their central risalites, mostly crowned with a tympanum—almost always contain an odd number of sections (doors, windows, panels, etc.). It is, after all, the intention of symmetrical architecture to guide the eye and focus the attention to some central and most important point (entrance, porch, balcony, etc.). Symmetries offer "a vista upon a primordial value."[50] Symmetrical forms therefore practically always comprise an odd number of elements[51]: symmetry with a substantial center and not around an immaterial mirroring axis.[52]

We can find these characteristics confirmed in practically all of Bach's notable symmetrically structured, multimovement compositions,

47. Wolff, " 'Et Incarnatus' and 'Crucifixus': The Earliest and Latest Settings of Bach's B-Minor Mass," 3.

48. Werner Breig, "Bemerkungen zur zyklischen Symmetrie in Bachs Leipziger Kirchenmusik," *Musik und Kirche* 53 (1983), 178.

49. For example, see Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 142; and Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 59 ff.

50. "Durchblick auf einen höchsten Wert." Walter Blankenburg, "Die Symmetrieform in Bachs Werken und ihre Bedeutung," *Bach Jahrbuch* 38 (1949/1950), 36.

51. "Zur Symmetrieform gehört daher fast immer eine ungerade Zahl von Gliedern." Ibid., 28.

52. Ironically, Stauffer (*Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 143) illustrates his account with the facade of St. Thomas School in Leipzig, renovated in 1732 by the architect

which have a central, pivotal movement and therefore an odd number of relevant elements.[53] This can be seen in the following examples:

- the cantata BWV 140, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*: seven movements, with the chorale in numbers 1, 4, and 7;
- the motet BWV 227, *Jesu, meine Freude*: eleven movements around the central fugue "Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich";
- the Magnificat, BWV 243: eleven parts around the central chorus "Fecit potentiam";
- the "Cum Sancto Spiritu" in the *B-Minor Mass*: two fugues between three homophonic sections[54];
- the Christmas Oratorio BWV 248, with the chorale "Schaut hin, dort liegt in finstern Stall" as the centerpoint, both of the second part and of the first three parts, the Christmas cantatas *stricto sensu*[55];
- the first part of the St. Matthew Passion, with its two "O Haupt" chorales, highlighting Christ's central prediction of his triple renunciation by Peter.[56]

It is therefore quite unlikely that Bach originally drafted his symmetric *Symbolum Nicenum* with an even number of movements—that is, without a centerpiece and without the independent "Et incarnatus."

Georg Werner in late Baroque style (reproduced in Wolff, *Bach: The Learned Musician*, 403) and displaying ten (!) doors or windows along the horizontal axis, with a central, gable-crowned risalite that encompasses—inescapably—an even number of windows (four of them, to be precise). This apparent undermining of our argument can, however, quickly be neutralized by the consideration that the number of ten windows was predetermined by the existing old building (reproduced in Wolff, *Bach: The Learned Musician*, 241) and was not the choice of the renovation architect. When Werner had a free hand in constructing the Haus zum Goldenen Bären in Leipzig in 1736, his seventeen-window facade fully confirms our assertion. See George B. Stauffer, "The Thomasschule and the Haus 'zum Goldenen Bären': a Bach-Breitkopf Architectural Connection," in *Bach Perspectives II: Bach and the Breitkopfs*, ed. George B. Stauffer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

53. An unnamed reader of this article rightly reprimanded us for originally including the Goldberg Variations in this list of symmetrically structured pieces, following Stauffer (*Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 144); Stauffer's presumed middle piece, the French overture variation, is, however, only the first of the second group of fifteen variations.

54. Blankenburg, "Die Symmetrieform in Bachs Werken und ihre Bedeutung," 32–33.

55. Friedrich Smend, *Luther und Bach* (Berlin: Haus und Schule, 1947), 34.

56. Kees Van Houten, *De kruisvorm in de Matthäus-Passion* (Boxtel, 1998).

TONAL PLAN

The "Et incarnatus" is cast in B minor, the eponymous key of Bach's *opus ultimum*, which, however, is not its primary tonality. D major plays a more central role in Bach's *B-Minor Mass*: Required for the trumpets, it is used in about half of the movements. This tonality is also the focus of an unusually straightforward, "conservative"[57]—for such a large-scale work—key scheme, compared with the more evolutionary tonal plans of the Passions. In addition to D major, we find in the mass's tonal plan five principal closely related keys: the dominant and subdominant keys A major and G major, together with their respective parallel keys B, F#, and E minor. The exception to this tight scheme is the "Agnus Dei," the only movement in a flat key, G minor. All six prevailing keys are used in the nine movements of the *Symbolum Nicenum* and are nicely ordered in three groups of three: three times D major in the triumphant, trumpet-and-drums concerted movements that conclude each of the three articles of faith; three times the related major keys A and G; and three times the parallel keys. Blankenburg elaborates extensively on the logic of this group of six keys[58]: Their tonics together constitute the hexachord *ut re mi fa sol la* (D, E, F#, G, A, B) and can be grouped in two triads, the major triad *ut–mi–sol* and the minor triad *re–fa–la*. Bach's contemporary, the Erfurt organist Johann Heinrich Buttstedt (1666–1727),[59] considered the major triad as representative of Christ's divinity, whereas the minor triad stands for his humanity. The six keys used by Bach in his *Symbolum Nicenum* therefore represent, according to Blankenburg, a musically theoretical totality that symbolizes the divine totality. Blankenburg extensively praises the order in which these keys appear in the *Symbolum Nicenum*, with the minor parallel of the subdominant—the key of the "Crucifixus"—in the center, symbolizing the deepest humiliation of Christ. These meaningful symmetries and totalities would have had to originate only as an afterthought, if the "Et incarnatus" is viewed as a later addition.

57. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 253.

58. Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 54–58.

59. Johann Heinrich Buttstedt, *Ut mi sol re fa la, tota Musica et Harmonia Aeterna oder Neueröffnetes, altes, wahres, einziges und ewiges Fundamentum musices*, 173, (Erfurt: O.F.Werthern, 1717).

Furthermore, the "Et incarnatus" chorus is the only movement in B minor in the *Symbolum Nicenum*. Smend had noticed that, although what he viewed as the original eight-movement configuration includes the relative minor of the two dominants, this design lacks the relative minor of the actual tonic—D major.[60] He therefore viewed the inclusion of the "Et incarnatus" not only as a reinforcement of the tonal effects of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, but even as the reason for Bach's supposed revision.

These arguments, however, ultimately backfire: If the tonal layout was important for Bach—which seems clear—why was it not part of his original design? Are we to believe that he suddenly *became* interested in it, at the age of sixty-three, in the short period between the writing down of "Et in unum" and "Et expecto"?

Other arguments can be made. B minor is not just one of five indispensable closely related tonalities: It is the second most frequent key in Bach's great mass, employed in no less than five movements: "Kyrie" I, "Qui tollis," "Qui sedes," "Et incarnatus," and "Benedictus." In other words, the parallel of the primary key of D major is represented in each of the four parts of the mass, even in the three-part "Kyrie". It becomes even clearer how unlikely it is that Bach would have planned an eight-part *Symbolum Nicenum* without a movement in B minor when we consider Bach's composing habits in similar multipart compositions, his cantatas. Sixty of Bach's 220 cantatas comprise eight or more movements: Among these sixty, only one (BWV 119) is missing a movement in the parallel tonality of the central key.[61] In most cases, Bach uses at least five of the keys from the *ut mi sol re fa la* string; although the parallels of the dominant or subdominant are often lacking—and sometimes the dominant or subdominant itself—only in one instance out of sixty (an early Leipzig cantata for a markedly cheerful occasion) is there no movement in the parallel key of the principal tonality. From the viewpoint of tonalities, it seems unlikely that Bach would have planned a *Symbolum Nicenum* without including any movement in the parallel key of B minor.

60. Smend, *Kritischer Bericht zur Ausgabe der h-moll-Messe*, 155–156.

61. Werner Neumann, *Handbuch der Kantaten Johann Sebastian Bachs* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1971).

Example 1. "Et in unum," mm. 1–3: imitation in the head motive.

TEXT–MUSIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE TWO DUET VERSIONS

As described earlier, Bach wrote out a second version of the voice parts of the "Et in unum" duet at the end of the *Symbolum Nicenum* score—under the unusual explanatory heading *Duo Voces Articuli 2*—this time omitting the text fragment *et incarnatus est…homo factus est.* Because he left the instrumental parts unaltered, Bach had to spread out the text originally contained in three vocal passages in the first version over four passages in the later version (see Table 3). As a result, the main portion of the text in the second version is out of phase with the original music, thereby destroying much of the initial word–music relationships. Although nearly all authors take due note of the evident loss of correspondence between the text and the instrumental musical motives in the second setting of the "Et in unum" duet, opinions about the quality of this second-order parody vary,[62] primarily in correlation with the authors' opinions on whether or not the retexted version is Bach's final choice. One can hardly escape the impression that authors play down evident losses in the later version, or find them compensated by structural gains, because they feel obliged to find justification for Bach's supposed preference.

Ever since Spitta,[63] scholars have appreciated the detailed text-illustrating function of the head motives of the two oboe/violin pairs in the ritornello of this former love duet (see Example 1). The initial exact unison imitation is first broken up by a slight difference in articulation and followed by an imitation a fourth lower (and other

62. As is already known, the original "Et in unum" version is a parody of an unknown model. Dadelsen, *Beiträge*, 147.

63. Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach* [1873/1879], 3rd Ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1916), 531–532.

Table 3
Reapportioning of the Text in “Et in Unum”

Measures	First Version	Second Version (‘Duo Voces’)
9–28	Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.	Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum.
34–42	Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt.	et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
48–62	Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.	Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt.
64–76	Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto, ex Maria Virgine et homo factus est.	Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.

subsequent intervals), thus symbolizing both the original unity of the Father and the Son and the gradual distinction and differentiation of the second from the first within the Trinitarian unity.

Far less general appreciation is expressed of the word-painting and text-illustrating motives over the course of the movement. It can be argued that the decline in quality in the newly texted version makes it highly implausible that Bach would ever have preferred this version for performance. This argument can be summarized in the following four points, beginning with the remarks of Smend,[64] who dwelled extensively on the newer version's shortcomings because he was of the opinion—on grounds later found to be false[65]—that Bach had later retracted his revision. Smend's observations of a spoiled word–music relationship, however, remain valid and can even be reinforced.

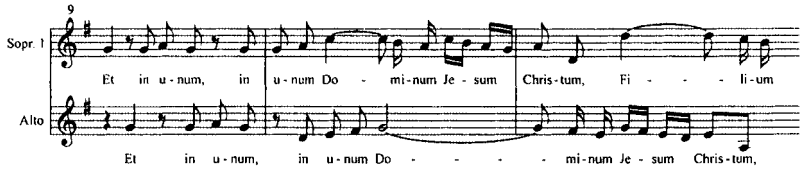
1. Smend first draws attention to a text–music correspondence on a structural level. The unabridged text of "Et in unum" clearly falls into two halves: the first continues to the words … *per quem omnia facta sunt*, which deal with the oneness of Father and Son; the second begins with the words *qui propter nos homines*, about the Son's specific earthly calling.[66] In the initial version of the duet, this textual divide corresponds with the musical center of the movement (m. 44), from which point the lower and more earthly voice in the canon consistently takes the initiative over the heavenly soprano. Furthermore, the imitative response is no longer at the unison but at the octave, symbolizing a greater separation of the Son from the Father. This structural congruence gets lost in the revised version, in which the large text block *Deum de Deo etc*. is shifted from the second to the third vocal section (see Example 2).

2. Smend points out how the conspicuous broken seventh chords, descending over three octaves in violins and continuo (mm. 59–60, see Example 3), illustrate the text *descendit de coelis* and relate this notion meaningfully with the words *ex Maria Virgine* by reappearing in measures 73–74. In the second version, however,

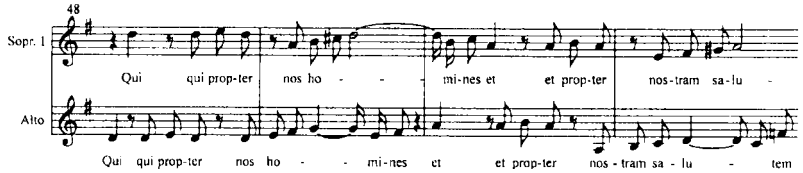
64. Smend, *Kritischer Bericht*, 147–148, 153–154.

65. Dadelsen, "Friedrich Smend's Edition of the B-minor Mass by J. S. Bach," 60.

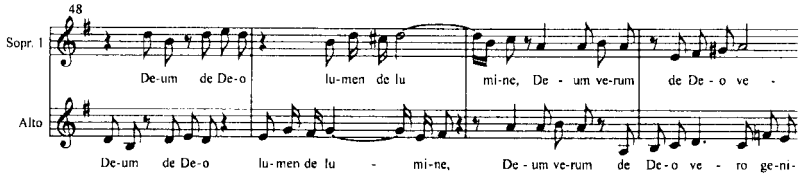
66. It is puzzling that Stauffer (*Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 114) calls this analysis "overly subjective."



Example 2a. "Et in unum," mm. 9–11: entry of voices.



Example 2b. "Et in unum," first version, mm. 48–51: entry of voices in the second half.

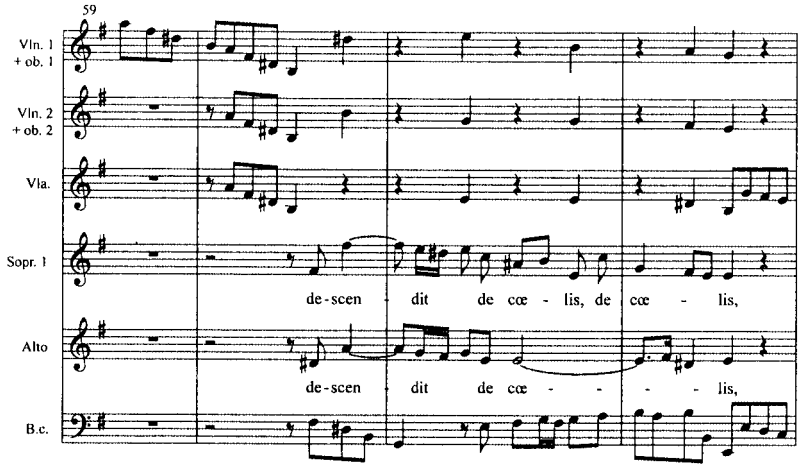


Example 2c. "Et in unum," second version, mm. 48–51: entry of voices in the second half.

> they precede and accompany the words *per quem omnia facta* and *et qui propter nostram salutem*, fulfilling no meaningful illustrative or referential function. Although it is true that, in the second version, these figures—and only at their second appearance—sound directly after the words *descendit de coelis* have been articulated several times, this cannot be viewed as acceptable compensation.[67]

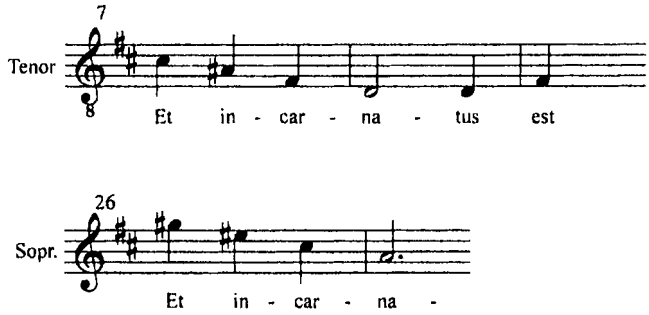
67. On the other hand, Blankenburg (*Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 72) considers this a meaningful illustration.

On the other hand, Smend's point can be elaborated further by noticing similar descending broken chords that show up as the main theme in the following movement "Et incarnatus" (see Example 4) and return in an upward direction in the mirror–symmetrical movement "Et resurrexit." If these possible thematic references between the duet's *descendit* motive and the "Et incarnatus" theme are regarded as a significant link, it seems more likely that Bach already had the "Et incarnatus" composition in hand when he choose a motive to illustrate the words *descendit de coelis*; this is all the more compelling if one agrees with Joshua Rifkin[68] that the faultless and clearly written manuscript of the "Et incarnatus" indicates that the movement was derived from an unidentified earlier composition, already present somewhere on Bach's bookshelves. Conversely, if the "Et in unum" had been composed prior to the "Et incarnatus," we have to make the less likely supposition that Bach—later contemplating a separate choral "Et incarnatus"—recognized in his freely chosen illustration of the *descendit* text a suitable theme for a five-part vocal composition.



Example 3. "Et in unum," mm. 59–62: descending broken seventh chords.

68. Joshua Rifkin, Notes to recording of Bach's *Mass in B Minor,* Nonesuch 79036 (1982).

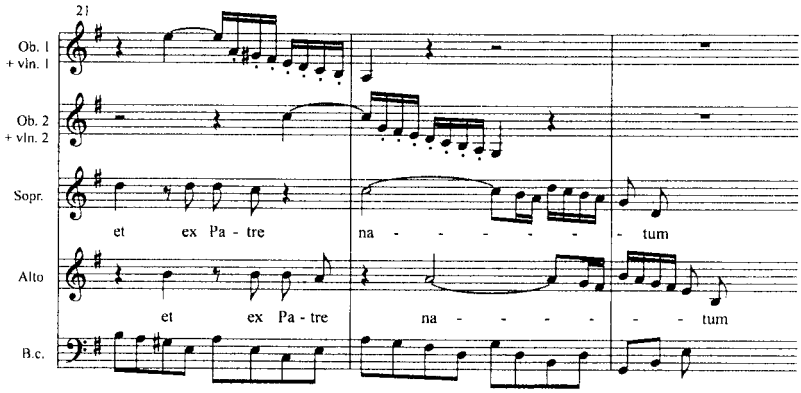


Example 4. "Et incarnatus," mm. 7 and 26: descending broken seventh chords in the theme.

3. Smend highlights the unusual modulation to such keys as E-flat major, C minor, and G minor (mm. 69 ff), the first of only a few appearances of flat keys in the entire Mass—the "Et expecto" bridge and the "Agnus Dei" being the others. Coinciding with the words *et homo factus est*, this modulation is the musical symbol for the mystery of the incarnation, the transition of God into an other state of being, the adoption of the human form. This word–music relationship gets lost in the parody, in which this passage occurs at the text *qui propter nostram salutem*.

4. Beyond Smend's remarks, we should also note the remarkable descending portamento figures in measures 21–22. They first appear with the words *et ex Patre natum* (see Example 5a) and reappear in measure 66 as part of the completely new musical thematic material at the text *et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto* (see Example 5b). Stauffer regards these falling figures, in this context, as senseless relics of an earlier version of the duet—now lost—where they probably would have fulfilled some text-illustrating function.[69] However, these downward semiquaver runs can be viewed as symbolizing the turning of the heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost toward the lower, earthly human

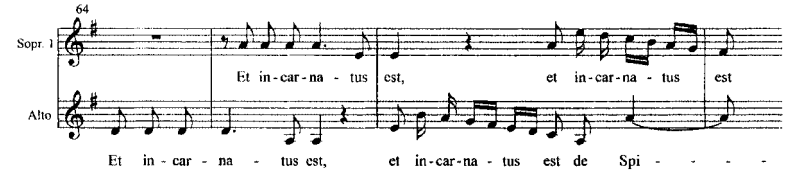
69. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 115. In any case, this suggestion is not confirmed by Häfner's conjecture of a parody model in the first movement of the *Tafelmusic* at the wedding of 18 September 1725; Klaus Häfner, *Aspekte des Parodieverfahrens bei Johann Sebastian Bach: Beiträge zur Wiederentdeckung verschollener Vokalwerke* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1987), 309.



Example 5a. "Et in unum," mm. 21–23: descending portamento passage, first occurrence.

sphere. In the retexted version, these figures correspond with the words *Jesum Christum* and *propter nostram salutem*, for which a relationship with a downward pointing gesture is much harder to construe.

According to Christoph Wolff's evaluation, Bach "carefully preserved, indeed emphasized the primary interpretive focus of the duet" in his revision: the canonical symbolism of the Son as at one with, although different from, the Father.[70] Wolff seems to reduce the musical content of the duet to the recurring imitative head-motive, thereby dismissing too lightly its successive development from a canon at the first, to a canon at the octave and the fifth, to a



Example 5b. "Et in unum," mm. 64–66: descending portamento passage, second occurrence.

70. Wolff, "'Et Incarnatus' and 'Crucifixus': The Earliest and Latest Settings of Bach's B-Minor Mass," 10.

full reversal of the canonical order. If the musical substance of the movement were, indeed, exhausted by the canonical motive, Bach might just as well have written a da-capo duet. Wolff views "all other seeming musical allusions as secondary and coincidental, if not irrelevant," but mentions only the passage *descendit de coelis* as an example.

Blankenburg finds the text–music relation in the second version hardly spoiled at all. He misses only the illustrative function of the first downward-moving broken chords.[71] Moreover, he considers the first version too overloaded with text and even judges the new text underlay of the words *qui propter nos* an improvement. To this John Butt adds that the word *Jesum* is given beautiful prominence by the high a" in the soprano (mm. 15–16).[72] Sporadic improvements of this type more appropriately deserve the appellation of—in Wolff's words—"secondary and coincidental, if not irrelevant."

Before accepting Bach's "almost coarse destruction of the text-music-relation"[73] as "sobering evidence for Bach's willingness to sacrifice local, pictorial details for longer, structural effects"[74] it is necessary to consider other possible motives that led Bach to write out an inferior parody at the end of his *Symbolum Nicenum*. This topic will be explored in further detail later.

ARGUMENTS FROM THE AUTOGRAPH

The manuscript of the *B-Minor Mass*[75] is—as is well known—in very bad condition and can for the time being no longer be consulted, even by experts. A facsimile edition is available, however, and the autograph can be viewed on the Internet.[76] An examination of the manuscript provides an argument, and a possibly interesting indication, for our case.

It is part of the received view that Bach, in his presumed revision of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, added not only the "Et incarnatus"

71. Blankenburg, *Einführung in Bachs h-Moll-Messe*, 71–73.

72. Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 53.

73 "mit geradezu rüder Hand vorgenommenhe Zerstöring der Text-Musik-Beziehung." Hafner, 69, n. 2.

74. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 114.

75. P. 180 in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

76. The facsimile edition is edited by Dürr, *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll*; the Web site with the autograph is http://www.bachdigital.org.

leaf and the new solo parts of the "Et in unum" duet, but also the four bars of instrumental introduction to the "Crucifixus," squeezed into a corner left over at the end of the full "Et in unum" score.[77] Marshall deems this addition necessary because of the insertion of the "Et incarnatus," which has no instrumental epilogue; Bach allegedly wished to reserve the "unusually daring and powerful dramatic formal gesture" of a direct juxtaposition of two radically contrasting choral statements—unmediated by an instrumental interlude—for the transition from the "Crucifixus" to the "Et resurrexit."[78] This argument is unconvincing, as instrumentally unmediated transitions between successive choral movements seem to be more the rule than the exception in the *B-Minor Mass*; in fact, wherever a choral movement is followed directly by another, the first ends and the second starts without any instrumental interlude: Credo/Patrem, Crucifixus/Et resurrexit, Pleni/Osanna, as well as the transitions between Gloria/Et in terra and Confiteor/Et expecto.

The belated addition of the four-measure instrumental introduction of the "Crucifixus"—a major change vis-à-vis the parody model *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*—is thought to be attested to by the presence of some erasure marks in the original first measure (now measure 5 of the "Crucifixus"), where the 3/2 time signatures apparently have been removed.[79] Although the existence of these erasure marks is undeniable, it is far from compelling to argue that this measure once served as the opening bar of the "Crucifixus." Were that the case, it would have been fitted with specifications of instruments and possibly the title "Crucifixus," indications now given with the "new" first bar at the end of "Et in unum"; no trace of such indications, however, can be found in the "original" location. It is true that Bach forgot to specify the instrumentation for the "Benedictus"[80] and that not all the movements of the *B-Minor Mass* have a heading, but it seems unlikely for all these coincidences to come together on this one delicate point. On the other hand, the possibility that Bach mistakenly repeated the time signature is very real and can be explained by the fact that from measure 5 on he was copying

77. Dürr, *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll*, 12.

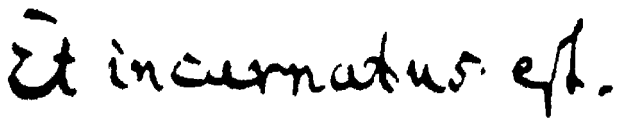
78. Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sources, Style, Significance*, 184.

79. Smend, *Kritischer Bericht zur Ausgabe der h-moll-Messe*, 338.

80. These circumstances are explained in Butt, "Bach's 'Mass in B Minor': Considerations of its Early Performance and Use," 116.

from his parody source *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*—pages that obviously opened with a 3/2 time signature; such mistakes occur often in the parodying process. It seems likely, therefore, that there was never a "Crucifixus" without its four instrumental opening bars. Furthermore, Dürr has acknowledged that "there is no evidence that the extension of the 'Crucifixus' was really carried out only when the 'Et incarnatus' was inserted,"[81] whereas Butt—more positively—concludes that "Bach wrote the extra bars of the 'Crucifixus' *before* adding the 'Et incarnatus est.'"[82] It should not be too surprising that Bach decided on such a crammed notation of the four opening bars, as we know of his general economy with paper. He typically began a new movement on a new page only if there was no space left at the end of the previous movement, as dramatically demonstrated by the "Benedictus," where he began its three staves on the half-column of twenty staves left over after the final chord of the "Osanna," adding a twenty-first to accommodate the new movement.

The autograph score reveals another interesting detail that deserves mention, even though it cannot be evaluated fully here. In his score, Bach wrote the ending of the word *incarnatus* in two different ways: The first is represented by the heading of the separate page of the "Et incarnatus" (p. 111, see Facsimile 2a), in which the last three letters are clearly discernible. The other is found next to the reference mark under the double bar line between the "Et in unum" and the "Crucifixus" (p. 110, see Facsimile 2b); here the last three letters are condensed into a still discernible *t* followed by a downward stroke in an abbreviation of the word *incarnatus*. In the twenty occurrences of the word *incarnatus* in the two pages of the choral movement, Bach used the abbreviated form of the word twice, and the full three letters of the word eighteen times: a ratio of 18:2 in favor of the full form of the word. Furthermore, the word



Facsimile 2a. Complete form of the word *incarnatus*.

81. Dürr, *Facsimile-Ausgabe*, 12.
82. Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 15.

Facsimile 2b. Abbreviated form of the word *incarnatus*.

factus occurs nine times in the chorus, only three of which are in an abbreviated form: a ratio of 6:3. However, in the other autograph parts that Bach wrote down in 1748–1749, these proportions appear to be completely reversed: In the "Et in unum," *incarnatus* and *factus* appear only in abbreviated form (0:13). Similarly, the words *locutus* in the "Et in Spiritum" and *benedictus* in the "Benedictus" movement appear only as abbreviations. In the "Sanctus," Bach had to write the word *sanctus* no less than 106 times, and only once does he use the ending in its full form (1:105). The "Crucifixus" scores a 3:17 for the word *sepultus*.

This notable characteristic of Bach's writing in the loose-sheet "Et incarnatus" may indicate that it was copied at an earlier date than the rest of the movements in Parts II through IV. Even though the writing of the *–tus* ending in the "Et incarnatus" seems to be more careful than in the other movements, there is no reason to identify these two different notation forms with the distinction Kobayashi makes between Bach's youthful, fluent, and vigorous script—as demonstrated in the much earlier *Missa*—and the unsteady, awkward, and stiff hand of his old age[83]; on the contrary, the "Et incarnatus" script exhibits a number of characteristic traits of Bach's late hand, while the abridged *–tus* ending also occurs in earlier manuscripts. More to the point seems to be Marshall's distinction between the hasty script of a composing score and the calligraphic hand of a fair copy,[84] as Marshall considers the *Symbolum Nicenum* on the whole a composing score, even though the staves are ruled according to calligraphic principles and most of the movements are parodies. The different,

83. Kobayashi, "Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs," (1988), 26.

84. Robert Marshall, *The Compositional Process of J.S. Bach* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 9.

more elegant writing of the text *et incarnatus* could be an indication of the writing down of the separate "Et incarnatus" leaf at a more relaxed time, outside the period of frenzied compiling activity suggested by Bach's hurried writing in the rest of the movements. Although it is possible, in principle, to envision a more relaxed moment happening after this period, Butt's observation that the writing down of the "Et incarnatus" must have occurred during—that is, before the completion of—the compilation of the *Symbolum Nicenum* indicates that the more calligraphic script of the choral "Et incarnatus" can only point to a moment before the start of Bach's compilation of his *missa tota*.[85]

A THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

If the tradition of mass composition, the tonality plan, and considerations of symmetry make it difficult to imagine that Bach ever contemplated a *Symbolum Nicenum* without a separate choral "Et incarnatus," the question remains: Why did he compose the "Et in unum" duet to include the text *et incarnatus est*, when that text was represented in a separate chorus? The reason for this, we contend, can be found in a specific precompositional problem that Bach had to solve.

Whereas we agree with Kobayashi and others that Bach's synthesis of Lutheran–Protestant and Catholic elements suggests a primary ecumenical, universal, or supra-denominational orientation in his vocal legacy,[86] we would in no way regard his *opus ultimum* as abstract, solely contemplative "music for the mind," without any prospect of practical performance. Although neither Catholic nor Lutheran services of his day provided the opportunity for an integral performance of the entire work, Bach's autograph nevertheless includes a number of entries aimed at performance (instrumentation details, figuring of bass, articulation, solo/tutti indications, and dynamic markings); he must have envisaged the possibility of a performance, be it of the entire Mass or of large parts of it. He must also have realised that, however supra-confessional his intentions, the work (or its parts) would always be performed in a less than

85. It may be that the "Et incarnatus" movement served as the starting point for the *missa tota*, and that Bach only began to hurry after, fearing that he would be unable to finish the project.

86. Kobayashi, Universality etc. see note 94; Stauffer, Bach: *The Mass in B Minor*, 261; Marshall, *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: Sources, Style, Significance, 65–83*.

supra-confessional environment, where it would have to meet various confessional sensitivities.

The "Et incarnatus" is a case in point. As already observed, a separate choral treatment of the "Et incarnatus" was a convention in Catholic mass composition, related to the ceremony of genuflection during these words of the Nicene creed, a ceremony with strong theological overtones. For Lutherans, this separation of the *Et incarnatus* from the preceding text *propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis*—text that gives the words *et incarnatus* a reason for being—may have acted as a touchy symbol for the late-mediaeval scholastic overvaluation of the incarnation. For Luther, the incarnation of the Son of God was no independent act of redemption; it could only be viewed in the perspective of the crucifixion as vicarious expiation—that is, as part of the doctrine of salvation. Not surprisingly, this intimate relation between incarnation, salvation, and crucifixion can be seen often in Bach's works. Examples can easily be found in the *St. Matthew Passion* (Nr. 29: *O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß. Darum Christus seins Vaters Schoß äußert und kam auf Erden*)[87] and in the Christmas Oratorio (Nr. I/7: *Er ist auf Erden kommen arm, dass er unser sich erbarm*).[88] The first and last chorales of the Christmas Oratorio (Nrs. 5 and 64) are sung to the melody of the mourning song *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* and the passion chorale *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*. We also find musical references to passion chorales in several organ chorales for Advent and Christmas: for example, in *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her, ich bring euch gute neue Mähr*[89] (BWV 606, from the *Orgelbüchlein*), where the *gute Mähr* is illustrated with a quotation from *Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund* (BWV 621).

It is therefore plausible that in Bach's orthodox Lutheran environment, oversensitive as it was for re-Catholicizing tendencies since the conversion of the Saxon Elector to the Roman Catholic church in 1697,[90] a separate *Et incarnatus* would have been experienced as an

87. "O man, lament thy heavy sin, for which Christ left his Father's lap and descended to earth."

88. "He is to earth now come so poor, that he us his mercy show."

89. "From heav'n on high I come to you, I bring to you glad tidings new."

90. Arnold Schering reports of an accelerated replacement of Latin by German religious songs and liturgical texts, the removal of any remaining crucifixes and Marian pictures, and a modest anti-papist movement: Arnold Schering, *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs, II.Teil, 1650–1723* (Leipzig: Kistner & Siegel, 1926), 37–39.

unequivocal, perhaps even offensive, Catholic trait, and that Bach took pains to meet these Christological sensitivities by offering the opportunity to perform the Credo of his great Mass in—for staunch Lutherans—an acceptable way, by means of a version that presents the *Et incarnatus* text directly connected to the preceding words: that is, the main, inclusive version of the duet *Et in unum*, in which the words *et incarnatus est* indeed follow the text *et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis* after an unusually condensed ritornello—two measures instead of the six that precede the two earlier sections. What formerly, in the "revisionist" view criticized here, has been called the "old" or "first" version—"the Et in unum duet" without a separate "Et incarnatus"—could thus more aptly be called the Lutheran version, whereas the allegedly revised version—a separate choral "Et incarnatus" preceded by the textually reduced "Et in unum" duet—could be considered the Roman Catholic version.

LUTHERAN, CATHOLIC, OR UNIVERSAL?

The confessional labeling of the two versions suggests a promising way out of our conundrum. At first, a comparison of these two versions—for the sake of argument, now viewed on an equal footing—shows an interesting symmetry: While the "Lutheran" version is musically more satisfactory, it is structurally inferior, whereas the "Catholic" version is structurally convincing but musically unsatisfactory.

But an obvious asymmetry also catches the eye: Although the Lutheran duet is incorporated into the main manuscript, the Catholic alternative is transmitted in a loose leaf, with alternative vocal parts entered at the rear of the last fascicle of the Credo. This fully conforms to Bach's overall Lutheran arrangement of the manuscript, which manifests itself—as has been observed often—in the gathering of "Kyrie" and "Gloria" under the title *Missa* and the separation of the "Osanna" from the "Sanctus."[91] Through his storage of compositional units in

91. For the irregular grouping of the Mass into four parts, the principle of "storage for Lutheran use" offers both the simpler and the more encompassing explanation than Schulze's approach (Hans Joachim Schulze, "Bachs Parodieverfahren," in *Die Welt der Bachkantaten*, vol. 2, ed. Christoph Wolff [Stuttgart: Metzler; 1997], 171); while Schulze disregards the—from a Roman Catholic perspective—unusual joining of Kyrie and Gloria and of Osanna up to Dona nobis, he explains the division between Sanctus and Osanna by way of the differing origins of their parody models and their changing performing forces, factors that elsewhere did not hinder the score's continuity.

separate folders with extractable and insertable parts, Bach shows himself—like his Dresden colleague Zelenka[92]—as a practically oriented composer.[93] Bach's decision to include the extended "Et in unum" in the main manuscript and to present the choral "Et incarnatus" on a removable leaf is thus a decision on the same level as his choice to order the manuscript in four folders. This observation reinforces our characterization of the inclusive duet as the Lutheran option.

Having identified the two alternative performing options as respectively Lutheran and Roman Catholic, and acknowledging the unsatisfying text–music relationships in the latter and the unsatisfactory structure of the former, it is but a small step to carry the Mass's ecumenical or supra-confessional character a little further than Kobayashi,[94] and suggest that the preferable performance of the *B-Minor Mass* should include both the first, inclusive version of the duet "Et in unum" and the choral "Et incarnatus." By doing so, the structurally unsatisfactory absence of a separate *Et incarnatus* is precluded, as well as the musically inferior, curtailed version of the duet; Lutherans can enjoy the incarnation integrated into the salvation message, while Catholics will find the familiar separate choral treatment of the "Et incarnatus."

The primary objection that the text *et incarnatus* up to *homo factus est* is set to music twice does not hold much water. The Credo also contains the recurrence of the text *credo in unum Deum*, as well as two settings of the text *et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*; a duplicate setting gives Bach the opportunity to successively highlight two aspects of the pertaining text. For the "Et expecto," these are, respectively, the suffering of those who wait—in an Adagio full of "unprecedented chromatic and enharmonic devices"[95]—and the exuberant rejoicing at its fulfillment. Similarly, the "Et in unum" duet expresses the gradual dissociation of the Son from his Father in the heavenly spheres (G major), while the choral version represents

92. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 22.

93. Recognizing the extractable character of the score design is obviously far from considering the *B-Minor Mass* as convoluted or as merely a "Sammelband," as Smend maintained.

94. Noted, among others, by Kobayashi, "Universality in Bach's B Minor Mass: A Portrait of Bach in His Final Years" (In Memoriam Dietrich Kilian), *Bach* 24 (1993), 2, 3–25.

95. Wolff, *Bach: The Learned Musician*, 440.

his entrance, with grieving descending triads, to a troubled, dissonant earthly realm (B minor).

Moreover, our hypothesis easily explains why Bach did not, as John Butt suggests, present the "Et incarnatus" and the newly texted vocal parts of "Et in unum" as a one-block appendix, accessible via a reference mark at the appropriate point in the main manuscript[96]: He did not consider them inseparable parts of an alternative, to be performed only in conjunction. The same applies for Dürr's wondering why Bach did not use the unused staves at the bottom of p. 112 of the manuscript for the insertion of the opening bars of the "Crucifixus"[97]: Bach evidently did not envisage the compulsory performance of a separate "Et incarnatus" before the "Crucifixus." To this we can add the observation that not one reference mark leading to the textually curtailed vocal parts occurs in the autograph. All this suggests that Bach may never have considered the perfunctory new text underlay a serious alternative. One can only speculate as to why he equipped this unfortunate parody with its highly unusual heading—*Duo Voces Articuli 2*—including a grammatical error as well.

It is only an ironic incidental circumstance that our hypothesis suggests a performing practice in line with Smend's controversial conclusion in 1956, albeit on different grounds. Smend, concluding from a false dating of his source *D* that Bach himself had already rejected the recast "Et in unum" version, consequently published it in an appendix to the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* II/1. Smend, by the way, fully accepted that the text *et incarnatus, etc.* accordingly appears twice: "It does justice to the incomparable meaning of Gods incarnation."[98]

Even if our solution of the "double-duet" riddle—that is, consciously planned and denominationally labeled alternative performing options—retains some speculative character, our more strongly grounded rejection of the revisionist position at least confronts musicology with an interesting unanswered question. Meanwhile, musicians should not hesitate to perform the most musically rewarding combination of elements: that is, the first "Et in unum" version together with the choral "Et incarnatus est"—the option potentially most in line both with Bach's compositional aspirations and his old-age universalist outlook.

96. Butt, "Bach's 'Mass in B Minor': Considerations of its Early Performance and Use," 113.

97. Dürr, *Facsimile-Ausgabe Messe H-moll*, 12.

98. Smend, "Kritischer Bericht," 162.