

# Anna Magdalena as Bach's Copyist<sup>1</sup>

YO TOMITA

Among the wives of eighteenth-century composers, no one is perhaps more favourably and affectionately described than Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena (1701–1760). In the last ten years, she has been the subject of at least five romantic biographies,<sup>2</sup> and this is not just a recent phenomenon. In 1925 the English writer Esther Meynell captured the public imagination with a fictitious diary entitled *The Little Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, which was quickly translated into many languages; some of these versions are still in print.<sup>3</sup>

In her time Anna was reckoned as an extraordinary woman, remembered primarily as a gifted singer.<sup>4</sup> An encyclopaedia entry in Gerber's 1790 *Lexicon* pictures her, for instance, as an 'outstanding soprano' who sacrificed her professional career for the sake of her beloved husband:

- 1 This paper was originally presented at the 12th International Biennial Conference on Baroque Music in July 2006 at the University of Warsaw under the title 'Reconstructing Bach's conjugal conversation: Re-assessing the contribution and the musicological value of the work of Anna Magdalena Bach'. I acknowledge with gratitude the financial assistance received from the British Academy for my attending this conference.
- 2 Marianne Wintersteiner, *'Willst du dein Herz mir schenken.'* *Das Leben der Anna Magdalena Bach*. Biographischer Roman. 2 Aufl. (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 1999); Lisbeth Haase, *'Oh, wie liebten sie ihn und sein Spiel.'* *Ihr Leben an der Seite von Johann Sebastian Bach: Maria Barbara & Anna Magdalena Bach*. 2. Aufl. (Holzgerlingen: Hänssler Verlag, 2001); Eleonore Dehnerdt, *Anna Magdalena Bach* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Ausaat Verlag, 2001); Barbara Abend, *Das Herz kann nicht vergessen. Die fiktive Biografie der Anna Magdalena Bach* (Leipzig: Buchverlag für die Frau, 2004); and Irma Hildebrandt, 'Nachruf auf eine Almosenfrau. Die Sängerin Anna Magdalena Bach, 1701–1760.' In: *Provokationen zum Tee. 18 Leipziger Frauenporträts* (München: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1998), pp. 45–56. All these books are written for general readership.
- 3 When this book was first published in 1925, the publisher Chatto & Windus in London did not put the author's name on the title-page, deliberately confusing the reader and making it look as if this diary originated from the hand of Anna Magdalena. Only on the final page of the book does the publisher admit indirectly that 'those familiar with the known and authenticated facts of Bach's life will realise that certain episodes in this book are imaginary'.
- 4 Bach's modest description of her in a letter to Georg Erdmann dated 28 October 1730 (*Bach-Dokumente* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963, 1969, 1972, 1979), vol. I, 23; *The New Bach Reader*, ed. David and Mendel, rev. Wolff (New York: W W Norton, 1998), pp. 151–2) and her high salary at the Cöthen court (*Bach-Dokumente* II/86; *New Bach Reader*, pp.93–4) are the two most important sources to demonstrate how good a singer she was. For a most thorough, scholarly and up-to-date biographical account of Anna, see Maria Hübner, *Anna Magdalena Bach. Ein Leben in Dokumenten und Bildern* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004).

Bach (Anna Magdalena) geb. 1700 war eine vortref[f]liche Sopranistin, und die zweyte Gattin von Joh. Sebastian Bach. Sie starb im J. 1757 ohne jemals öffentlich von diesem ihrem vortref[f]lichem Talente Gebrauch gemacht zu haben.<sup>5</sup>

Anna gave birth to thirteen children (of whom only six outlived her) in the first twenty years of their marriage.<sup>6</sup> While this in itself is an impressive record for a mother of any historical era, her super-human image developed when musicologists realised that she was her husband's trusted assistant, copying his works in the most impressive manner and writing in handwriting which closely resembled her husband's beautiful calligraphy – an unambiguous message of her total devotion. No one appreciates her contributions more than today's musicologists, for her copies are usually 'neat and accurate',<sup>7</sup> and are often among the most important primary sources when Bach's autographs do not survive.

Occasionally, however, it is difficult to accommodate this patronising view of her role and its significance. It is well known, for instance, that her copy of Bach's *Cello Suites* (BWV 1007–1012) contains an unusually large number of inaccuracies and copying errors. One must ask how many of these blunders should be ascribed to her. It seems contradictory for some scholars to claim that Anna copied it from Bach's fair copy.<sup>8</sup> How would a 'neat and accurate' copyist produce such an error-ridden manuscript if she had made it from a fair copy? Does it not seem more sensible to suppose that Anna copied in a hurry, or perhaps from a less neatly-written score containing many revisions?

There are other interesting and attractive cases of Anna's copying. To me, the most intriguing are where the MSS contain the handwriting of both her and her husband, intertwined in such a manner that they must surely have discussed something about the copies they were making together. Similar to the case Peter Wollny recently found from a newly recovered source among the Sing-Akademie collection involving Bach and his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann,<sup>9</sup> it may be

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig: J. G. I. Breitkopf, 1790), vol.1, col.76. Note that the dates given by Gerber are incorrect. She was born on 22 September 1701 and died on 27 February 1760.

<sup>6</sup> For a list, see Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach. A Learned Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 397–8.

<sup>7</sup> In his article 'Bach, Anna Magdalena', *Oxford Composer Companions: J. S. Bach*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 29, Reginald L. Sanders writes that 'In Leipzig she was important as a neat and accurate copyist of her husband's music'.

<sup>8</sup> Bettina Schwemer and Douglas Woodfull-Harris, *J. S. Bach. 6 Suites a Violoncello Solo senza Basso, BWV 1007–1012. Text volume* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), p. 5, and Ulrich Leisinger, 'Commentary', in: *Johann Sebastian Bach, Suiten für Violoncello solo, BWV 1007–1012* (Vienna: Wiener Urtext Edition, Schott / Universal Edition, 2000), p. 15. Other recent editors avoid touching on this subject: *Neue Bach-Ausgabe Kritischer Bericht* (NBA KB) VI/2, p. 18; and Kirsten Beißwenger, 'Nachwort' pp. 64–5 and 'Afterword', p. 77, in: *Johann Sebastian Bach, Sechs Suiten für Violoncello solo BWV 1007–1012* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Peter Wollny, 'Ein Quellenfund in Kiew. Unbekannte Kontrapunktstudien von Johann Sebastian und Wilhelm Friedemann Bach', *Bach in Leipzig – Bach und Leipzig. Bericht über die Internationale Wissenschaftliche Konferenz Leipzig, 27. bis 29. Januar 2000*. ed. Ulrich Leisinger. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002), pp. 275–87.

possible to capture a picture of how two people discussed and worked together by carefully studying Anna's MSS. This may open a new window through which further details of the couple's working relationship can be learned: for example, the context in which the copies were required, and the stage of maturity the musical work had reached when Anna was called upon for help, to name but two. And when we come to evaluate all these copies as a whole, a broader, multi-dimensional picture of Anna as copyist may emerge.

In this paper, I shall first discuss our sources, Anna's copies of Bach's works, and see if any particular patterns or tendencies in her copying activities emerge when these are placed in this broader chronological context. In an attempt to evaluate her performance as a copyist, I shall look at typical situations in which she worked, while at the same time seeking to discover what additional values her copies may bring to our studies of Bach's life and works.

The extant scores of Bach's works in Anna's hand are listed and described briefly in Table 1; performance parts are listed separately in Table 2. They update the list compiled in 1957 by Georg von Dadelsen,<sup>10</sup> which is still widely referred to by scholars today.<sup>11</sup> In updating this list, I consulted more recent research by Alfred Dürr,<sup>12</sup> Yoshitake Kobayashi,<sup>13</sup> and the individual volumes of the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, *Bach Compendium* among others. To verify accepted conclusions, I also examined Anna's MSS from the facsimiles and photocopies of the original.<sup>14</sup> Where there are differences in scholars' views on Anna's copies, I have stated these in 'notes'.

## Scores

The eight MSS listed in the top half of Table 1 are the copies that Anna made for her husband, and are arranged in chronological order; the two in the bottom half of Table 1 are gifts from Bach to his wife, in which she copied some of her husband's compositions and others for her own purposes. Since this paper concerns her role as copyist *for* her husband, I shall not go into further details of these MSS here, with the exception of issues concerning Anna's pre-1725 handwriting.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Georg von Dadelsen, *Bemerkungen zur Handschrift Johann Sebastian Bachs, seiner Familie und seines Kreises. Tübinger Bach-Studien, I* (Trossingen: Hohner Verlag, 1957), pp. 34–7. This source is hereafter abbreviated as *TBSt* 1.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Oxford Composer Companion: J. S. Bach*, p. 30; Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Learned Musician*, p. 503n19. Maria Hübner's new list 'Verzeichnis der von Anna Magdalena Bach kopierten Musikalien' in *Anna Magdalena Bach: Ein Leben in Dokumenten und Bildern*, pp. 137–40, attempts to update Dadelsen's list: it adds to the list BWV 9, 26, 41, 62, and JLB9, but still makes no mention of BWV 6, 72, 124, 151, 195 and 210a.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred Dürr, *Zur Chronologie der Leipziger Vokalwerke J. S. Bachs*. 2 Aufl. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1976).

<sup>13</sup> Yoshitake Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs. Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 74 (1988), pp. 7–72.

<sup>14</sup> For this work, I wish to acknowledge the generous assistance received from the librarians of the Bach-Archiv Leipzig in May 2006.

<sup>15</sup> For the detailed discussion of contents and beyond on the latter, see Robert Marshall, 'The Notebooks for Wilhelm Friedemann and Anna Magdalena Bach: Some Biographical Lessons', *Essays in Musicology: A Tribute to Alvin Johnson*, eds. Lewis Lockwood and Edward Roesner (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1990), pp. 192–200, and David Yearsley, 'Death

Let us return to the eight copies Anna made for her husband. Although this is indeed a small list, Bach's works represented here merit some comments, for this is virtually a shortlist of the most important instrumental works by which Bach is remembered today. While we should also take into account other copies Anna had made that are now missing, the surviving portion of her copies nevertheless shows some identifiable shifts in the way she acted as copyist for her husband.

The first three items are works for strings. They were all made around the same time, between 1727 and 1732. Of these, BWV 1021 was produced jointly by the couple: Anna copied the music and Bach provided the title, movement headings and figures for continuo, while, presumably, he also proof-read Anna's portion at the same time.<sup>16</sup> We also know that all three copies were made for two former students, Schwanberg and Boineburg, who presumably purchased them. This was a period when Bach had stopped his weekly production of new church cantatas, and began flexing his compositional muscles on secular keyboard works. The *Six Partitas* (BWV 825–830) were the most important fruit of this period. He had them engraved and sold serially from 1726 to 1730, and then in 1731 put together and republished as his *Opus 1, Clavierübung I*. An extension of this project is Anna's copy of the C minor *overture*, an early version of the *French Overture in B minor*, BWV 831, which Bach published in 1735 together with the *Italian Concerto*, BWV 971 as *Clavierübung II*. In evaluating Anna's copies against this historical background, it would seem that her work was part of promoting Bach's virtuoso works to the world, a task which she must have found rewarding.

The next two items, the organ sonatas and the *WTC I*, probably served as a duplicate exemplar in Bach's household.<sup>17</sup> The idea seems to be that Anna's copy could be used for teaching and other practical purposes, while Bach's autographs could be set aside for his own reference purposes.<sup>18</sup> These two substantial collections of Bach's keyboard works originated from different periods: *WTC I* in 1722 in Cöthen and the organ sonatas in c.1730 in Leipzig. There are various hints that both were initially written for Wilhelm Friedemann, which may explain why he acquired both of them.<sup>19</sup>

Everyday: The Anna Magdalena Bach Book of 1725 and the Art of Dying', *Eighteenth-century Music*, 2/2 (2005), pp. 231–49.

- <sup>16</sup> See the facsimile edition: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Sonate G-Dur für Violine und Basso continuo (BWV 1021) und Präludium Cis-Dur (BWV 848/1)*. Mit einer Einführung von Hans-Joachim Schulze. *Faksimile-Reihe Bachscher Werke und Schriftstücke. Neue Folge 1* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters Musikverlag; Evangelische Verlagstalt, [2001]), p. 5. See also Hans-Joachim Schulze, *Studien zur Bach-Überlieferung im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1984) p. 17.
- <sup>17</sup> See Schulze, *Studien zur Bach-Überlieferung im 18. Jahrhundert*, p. 17.
- <sup>18</sup> Emery makes this conjectural observation on P 272. See Walter Emery, *Notes on Bach's Organ Works. A Companion to the Revised Novello Edition. Books IV-V: Six Sonatas for Two Manuals and Pedal* (London: Novello, 1957), p. 80. Jones makes a similar observation regarding how Bach treated his autograph of *WTC I*, P 415, through the pattern of Bach's revised readings in the copies. See J. S. Bach. *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Part I. BWV 846–869. Edited and annotated by Richard Jones. Commentaries by Donald Francis Tovey* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1994), p. 168.
- <sup>19</sup> Under Friedemann's care the physical shape of these MSS was drastically altered. There are

The remaining two items, the MSS containing movements from the *WTC II* copied at about the same time, c.1739–40, basically come from the same educational context. Add. MS 35021 in the British Library, the so-called 'London autograph of the 48' is the more important of the two. For this work, Anna was asked to assume a slightly different role as copyist. Her task was to make, with Bach, a reference fair copy of the collection. While Bach took those prelude-fugue pairs which, in his mind, still required some finishing touches, Anna simply made a straight fair copy of twelve pairs of movements, which, presumably, did not require further revision. This division of their labour offers us some vital information: we learn, for instance, when each movement matured as a composition in the composer's mind at the time of copy making; we also learn how much Bach trusted Anna, and we shall see more evidence of this below. P 226 is not insignificant either. In fact, it is a valuable source in our study for assessing Anna's character as copyist, for it contains a carelessly-made copy of the D-minor prelude and fugue from *WTC II*, the movements which she also copied for the 'London' set, most likely from the same model. Their implication and significance for our study will be examined shortly.

In those instances where both Bach's autograph and Anna's copy survive, scholars generally agree that Anna copied from Bach's extant autograph. Of these, the majority of pages in Bach's hand are almost flawless fair copies (e.g. most pages of BWV 846–869<sup>20</sup> and 1001–1006<sup>21</sup>); however, there are others that are less neat, containing corrections of a compositional nature (e.g. BWV 525–530<sup>22</sup>).

## Parts

Let us now briefly turn to Anna's copies of performance parts, which are listed in Table 2. These reveal a number of interesting facts about her involvement as one of Bach's copyists.

1. It is obvious that Anna's copies are few in number, when compared with those made by the regular copyists – including two of the Bach's eldest sons – who assisted Bach's cantata production.<sup>23</sup>
2. Many copies she made were doublets, the duplicates of the same parts already made by other copyists.
3. The first eight items show that Anna's participation was restricted to the winter months when Thomaner boys presumably fell ill in greater numbers than in other seasons.

All three observations indicate that Anna was not among Bach's main work-horse copyists, but was someone on whom Bach could rely in times of emergency. Her

few clues as to when they came into W. F. Bach's possession, whether during Bach's lifetime or after his death. For further details, see Emery, *Notes on Bach's Organ Works*, p. 17 f and NBA KB V/6.1, pp. 57–64.

<sup>20</sup> NBA KB V/6.1, p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> NBA KB VI/1, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Emery, *Notes on Bach's Organ Works*, pp. 44 and 80; NBA KB IV/7, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Previous scholars such as Spitta and Schwarz are responsible for claiming that there were many other MSS in Anna's hand. See NBA KB I/14, p. 84; I/15, pp. 9–10, I/21, pp. 64 and 69, for clarification.

usual role as ‘doublet maker’ does not necessarily mean that Anna was a less able copyist than most. There are many instances of Bach himself making doublets, and as we have already seen, Anna amply proved herself to be Bach’s dependable assistant, if not the most dependable, when it came to making fair copies of scores. By nature, doublets can only be made when at least one part is available for duplication. Would it be the case that Anna simply happened to be around in the late evening when younger assistants had to go to bed? Or did she not like to sit down with the Thomaner boys at the crowded table? Such fanciful imagination is not entirely groundless, for there are a number of cases where Anna took over and completed others’ unfinished tasks: e.g. BWV 26, 111, 72 (not quite finished), 226, 9. When looking at BWV 226 (see Example 1), one may even wonder if she was running out of time, as her calligraphy becomes increasingly rough towards the end of her task.<sup>24</sup> The frequent changes of hands often seen in Bach’s cantata parts, even within the movement of a single part, tells us of the enormous pressure everyone was under. Further detailed studies on ‘who was available when’ may reveal a fascinating picture of Bach and his helpers from a completely new perspective.



Example 1: BWV 226, the last page of the soprano part in Anna’s hand

(© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)

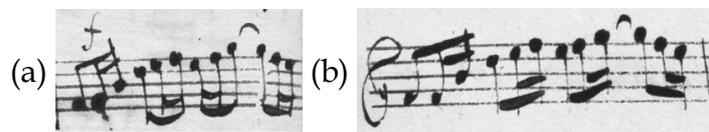
When we examine the musical text in Anna’s copies, we begin to see her negative side again. Her pages often show obvious traces of corrections, frequently involving the change of pitch. The Cello part she copied for the 1733 *Missa* is particularly full of errors, which were corrected by Bach.<sup>25</sup> In assessing her work in BWV 58, Alfred

<sup>24</sup> We may also need to consider that she was eight months pregnant with her seventh child, Christiana Benedicta (1 Jan. 1730–4 Jan. 1730) at the time.

<sup>25</sup> Anna must have been 6 months pregnant with her 10th child Johann August Abraham

Dürr describes the quality of Anna's work as 'quite unreliable, afflicted partially with serious errors in musical text (particularly the 5th movement)'.<sup>26</sup>

Naturally, one would expect Bach to go through parts to check the music and add performance-related marks such as articulations, cautionary accidentals and figures for continuo. It appears, however, that, apparently due to lack of time, Bach did not do what we would nowadays regard as 'essential' preparation.<sup>27</sup> Doublets, which were made after this process, are therefore even less likely to have been checked by Bach, leaving more room for serious errors to be introduced. For BWV 41, Anna copied the first movement of the Violin 1 part (doublet) from the same part copied by Johann Andreas Kuhnau, who copied the majority of the parts for this cantata. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that her mistakes, for example as shown in Example 2b, remained uncorrected:



Example 2: BWV 41/1, violin part, bar 14, copied by J. A. Kuhnau (a) and by Anna Magdalena (b)

(by permission of the Bach-Archiv Leipzig)

### Anna as Bach's copyist

When describing Anna as Bach's copyist, it is tempting to stress the two specific characteristics already mentioned: first, that her music calligraphy resembled that of her husband's; and secondly, that she made reliable copies. In their study of Bach's *Cello Suites*, for example, Schwemer and Woodfull-Harris describe her as a dependable assistant:

Anna Magdalena is generally considered a reliable copyist who followed her models in great detail and did not introduce arbitrary changes. It is therefore safe to assume that the handwriting, beaming, stemming, and page turns in the Anna Magdalena Bach MS fairly accurately reflect the writing in the autograph.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise Beißwenger makes a similar observation:

AMB was a conscientious copyist, who was faithful to the source in an extreme measure (even reproducing changes of pages and staves). What is problematic, however, is her transcription of the articulation

(5 Nov. 1733–6 Nov. 1733) when she made the copy, which may have affected her effectiveness as copyist.

<sup>26</sup> NBA KB I/4, p. 138: 'Anna Magdalenas Arbeit erweist sich hier übrigens als recht unzuverlässig und mit teilweise groben Notentextfehlern (besonders in Satz 5) behaftet'.

<sup>27</sup> See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach. With their Librettos in German-English Parallel Text*. Revised and translated by Richard Jones (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 48–9.

<sup>28</sup> Schwemer and Woodfull-Harris, *J. S. Bach. 6 Suites a Violoncello Solo*, p. 6.

marks, particularly of the slurring, which is characterised by negligence and prodigality. The relationship between the autograph of the cello suites and AMB's copy of them must be similar to that between the autograph of the violin soli and her transcription. Aside from a few copying errors, the musical text most likely reproduces the readings of the autograph quite faithfully.<sup>29</sup>

Yet as we have already seen, this description does not fit her on other occasions. Emery's discussion of the organ sonatas is a case in point, in which he scrupulously exposes anomalies in Anna's copying.<sup>30</sup> Broadly speaking, it seems more appropriate to acknowledge that the quality of Anna's copies varies. This perhaps depended on the circumstances of the original, such as the neatness of her source, the complexities of the tasks, and even her mood or how busy she was on the day. By carefully interpreting the evidence, especially the mistakes and deliberate alterations she made in her copies, it may still be possible to uncover some untold truths that challenged Anna. Only through successfully establishing a more accurate context for Anna's contributions can their significance be properly appreciated.

Before pursuing this question any further, let us reassess these general observations of Anna as Bach's copyist, for they seem to hold important clues to understanding her character as a copyist.

### i) Anna's calligraphy

How did Anna develop a music calligraphy that became so similar to Bach's? Did she acquire her calligraphy before marrying Bach? If not, did Bach ask her to adopt his style of writing, or was it her own choice to mimic her husband's handwriting?

It seems natural to suppose that Anna learned it from Bach by copying his music, imitating his style; she continued to do this for the first couple of years of her marriage, until she found her own shapes and styles.<sup>31</sup> There is specific source evidence to support this reading. The Menuet in C minor (BWV 813) found in her *Clavierbüchlein* of 1722 on f.23v-f.24r is currently regarded as the earliest sample of her handwriting, provided that it is indeed in her hand.<sup>32</sup> Her C-clef appears in the shape of '3' (see Example 3a), which is also one of Bach's C-clef forms used from 1714 to 1722. Bach's autograph of this movement does not survive, and so we cannot prove that Anna reproduced Bach's handwriting here. Yet since the great majority of Bach's C-clefs found in this manuscript are written in '3' form, e.g. the openings of the Sarabande and Gigue from the same suite (see Example 3b), it seems plausible that Bach also wrote the Menuet using this clef form.

There is another example of her copy of Bach's composition in this MS – the Menuet in G (BWV 841) found on f.25v. This time, Anna's soprano clef is shaped in

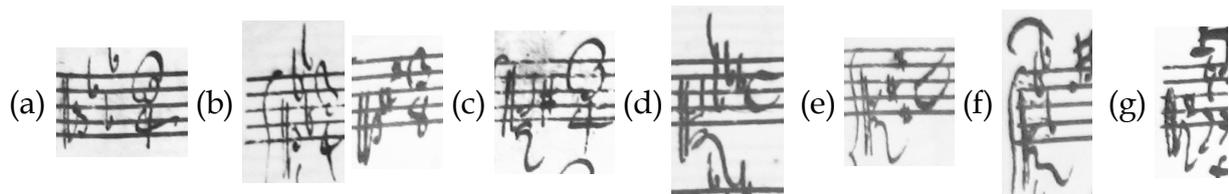
<sup>29</sup> Beißwenger, 'Afterword', p. 77.

<sup>30</sup> Emery, *Notes on Bach's Organ Works*, p. 44 f.

<sup>31</sup> In *TBS* 1, p. 31f, Dadelsen basically makes the same observation, whereas Martin Jarvis claims that Anna was Bach's pupil from 1713 in his article 'The Significance of Anna Magdalena Bach', *Musical Opinion*, 129/1447 (2005), pp. 36–8 at p. 36. The possibility that some of the close resemblance is also due either to sharing the same quill or Bach cutting the quill for her, requires separate investigation in a future study. I am grateful to Ruth Tatlow for this idea.

<sup>32</sup> In *NBA* KB V/4, p. 11, Dadelsen puts a question mark on his attribution to Anna.

'K' form (see Example 3c), which can be compared with Bach's sample found in the Allemande (BWV 815/1) at the start of the Suite in E-flat on f.8v (Example 3d), which is the neatest sample among his C-clefs of this type in this MS, which is rare in this copy. Examples 3e (taken from f.6r) and 3f (f.11r) are the less neat 'transitional' kinds that appear elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> The last sample shown in Example 3g is a new type that is found frequently from f.13v onwards in the MS, the type that Bach settled with by spring 1724.<sup>34</sup>



Example 3: Soprano clefs appearing in P 224 in the hands of Anna (? : a,c) and Bach (b,d-g)

(© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)

Notice that these clefs in Anna's hand were poorly written: the double-bar element of the soprano clef shown in Example 3a is not that of the soprano but of the alto clef; as for her 'K'-form clef shown in Example 3c, the double bar was still placed one space too high. This indicates that at this time, although she was a professional singer, Anna had not yet been taught how to write a soprano clef correctly. Did Bach give some instructions at some point? Such speculation makes sense, for this particular problem does not occur in her later copies. Anna subsequently adopted variants of 'K' form, which, as Martin Jarvis observes, appear to conform very closely to those in Bach's handwriting from the period 1722–24.<sup>35</sup> Still, it is possible to distinguish between them by looking closely at the double-bar: Anna's soprano clefs had shorter double bars (usually three spaces tall, which is too short; there are even shorter ones) than her husband's (mostly four spaces tall, which is correct; but he tended to write it taller).<sup>36</sup> Anna occasionally used the 'hook' form as well, especially when she appears to have been in a hurry (as shown in Examples 1 and 6a). But still, her double bars remained shorter than Bach's. Her C-clefs then developed into her own forms from 1725 onwards, as Dadelsen observes.<sup>37</sup> This series of observations appear to suggest that Anna was taught by Bach some time

<sup>33</sup> Kobayashi calls them 'Übergangsformen' in *NBA IX/2*, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> In *Bach tono Taiwa: Bach Kenkyu no Saizensen* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2002), p. 181, Kobayashi demonstrates that Bach's C-clef gradually changes its form from 1722, and by the spring of 1724, settles in a 'hook' form.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Jarvis, 'The Significance of Anna Magdalena Bach – Forensic Document Examination of the 1720 Notebook for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach', *Musical Opinion*, 129/1448 (2005), pp. 44–6 at p. 45. However, I do not agree with Jarvis' observation that many of the C-clefs appearing in the *Clavierbüchlein* for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (Yale University, no shelfmark) and the fair copy of *Well-Tempered Clavier* (P 415) are in Anna's handwriting, as my following observations show.

<sup>36</sup> In his article 'London autograph of the "The Forty-Eight"', *Music & Letters*, 34/2 (1953), pp. 106–23 at p. 116, Walter Emery makes the same observation, which I shall discuss below in greater detail.

<sup>37</sup> *TBSt* 1, p. 31.

between 1722 and 1724 how to write the soprano clefs correctly, specifically where the double bar should start on the staff, i.e. the third line, and not the fifth or the fourth. Although Bach's own double bar often starts much higher than the third line, the fact that Anna seldom exceeds the third line seems to bear out this hypothesis.

## ii) Anna's copying

When examining Anna's performance as a copyist, it is necessary to concentrate on the anomalies presented by her weaknesses, as well as the background to her decisions to position and shape the notes, stems and beams in different ways to Bach's. It is appropriate to refer here to the ground-breaking work of Walter Emery. In his 1953 article, he tells us how to distinguish Anna's handwriting from that of her husband by looking at the following five areas:<sup>38</sup>

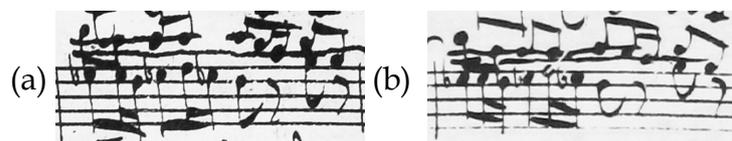
1. treatment of down-stems
2. density of writing
3. C clefs
4. time signatures
5. the treatment of the group of dotted-quaver-semiquaver.

In one particular leaf of the 'London autograph', Anna's handwriting is clearly exposed. In the F-major prelude, Walter Emery observes thus:

Anna began to copy this movement; but at the end of the first page she realised that in her writing the Prelude would occupy the remaining three pages of the sheet. She accordingly called in her husband, who compressed not only the rest of the Prelude, but also the whole of the Fugue, into the allotted space; though even he had to resort to marginal additions.<sup>39</sup>

Anna's spaced out handwriting (no. 2 on Emery's list), was to cause her husband disappointment on this occasion.

Another of Anna's weaknesses was her lack of knowledge about the vertical alignment of notes in polyphonic texture, or ranging (Emery's no. 5), examples of which can be found in almost every copy (unless it is a monophonic part). Even when Anna carefully follows Bach's handwriting, this problem comes through frequently in her manuscript, as seen in Example 4.



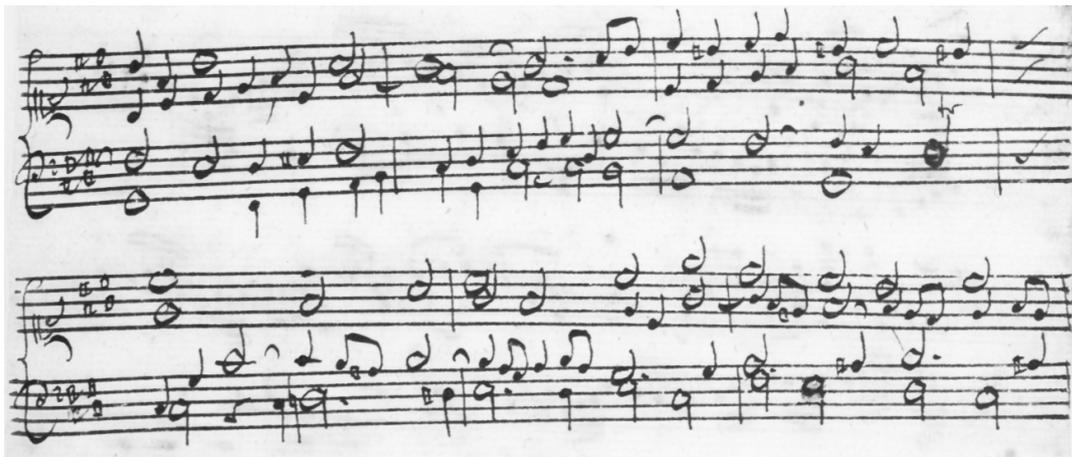
Example 4: BWV 1001/2, bar 16, copied by Bach (a) and by Anna (b)

(© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)

<sup>38</sup> Emery, 'London autograph of the "The Forty-Eight"', p. 115 f. Dadelsen confirms the validity of Emery's findings in *TBS* 1, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> Emery, 'London autograph of the "The Forty-Eight"', p. 119.

The problem becomes more serious when the notation does not involve beams, e.g. the E-major Fugue of *WTC II*, which is a 4-part fugue in *stile antico*. As you can see in Example 5, there are many places where the vertical alignment of notes is in disarray. On this copy, someone subsequently supplied the lines joining the notes between different parts, where this alignment problem apparently could not be left as it is. One may wonder if Anna ever attempted to play from her own scores, for, naturally, she should have realised how important it was to keep the vertical alignment sorted. Failing that, one must question Marshall's view that 'Anna was a competent player' of keyboard.<sup>40</sup>



Example 5: BWV 878/2, bars 13–18, copied by Anna

(© British Library Board. All Rights Reserved)

Emery did not point out one more area of Anna's weaknesses in his article: the positioning of slurs and ties, and occasionally ornaments. Anna has a tendency to shift these to the right, but there seems to be little consistency in her writing. Schwemer and Woodfull-Harris ascribe this inconsistency to Anna's lack of awareness of their meaning in the music.<sup>41</sup> It would seem that the reconstruction of her model is an almost impossible task.

We now return to examine two copies of the D-minor Prelude of *WTC II* that Anna apparently made from the same lost autograph. Example 6a shows Anna's copy of the prelude in a reference set of *WTC II*. This copy subsequently received numerous revisions, extending the piece from 53 to 61 bars;<sup>42</sup> Example 6b is Anna's other copy of the same piece for a keyboard miscellany (now part of P 226, consisting of BWV 872a/1, Fk 27, Fk 28, BWV 875 and Fk 26). Unlike her other copy, its musical text has not been altered. Kobayashi's study of paper indicates that they

<sup>40</sup> Marshall, 'The Notebooks for W. F. and A. M. Bach', p. 194.

<sup>41</sup> Schwemer and Woodfull-Harris, *J. S. Bach. 6 Suites a Violoncello Solo*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>42</sup> For further details of Bach's revisions, see Yo Tomita, *J. S. Bach's 'Das Wohltemperierte Clavier II': A Critical Commentary. Vol. I: Autograph Manuscripts* (Leeds: Household World, 1993), pp. 41–5.

can be dated in this order,<sup>43</sup> although this does not necessarily provide conclusive evidence for the dating of Anna's actual copying.

As would be expected, the copies exhibit a remarkable resemblance to each other. However, closer inspection reveals some differences, in the form of errors, variants and corrections. The next task is to ascertain how and when these differences originated. They must be the result of one of the following:

1. the model itself changed; one copy reflects the state of the model before, the other after, revision
2. the changes were made by the copyist, either accidentally or intentionally
3. the differences are the result of changes made later to one of the copies.

Other physical attributes could have contributed to the final appearance of these copies, such as size of paper (33.7 x 40.2 cm/33.0 x 40.4 cm), size of rastrum (9.75 mm/9.5 mm) and stave layout (14 systems per page), and should also be taken into account. However, the variations in these are so small that they are unlikely to have affected the way Anna worked. Of course, other factors may also have had an impact on Anna's work. In the following investigation, I shall first summarise the variations that were introduced by Anna while copying, and then consider the issues that may have affected the way Anna responded.<sup>44</sup>

1. **Page layout:** for a 53-bar piece to be copied in 14 systems, each system needs to accommodate 3.8 bars of music. See how in P 226 in Example 6b Anna could not finish copying the movement within the available space. (She had to copy the final four bars on the next page, which is not reproduced in Example 6b.) In fact, Anna started writing the piece more tightly here than in the other copy. But in the 4th system, she relaxed her spacing. By the 5th system, the format of the two became identical, and by the end of the 6th system, P 226 consumed more space than the other copy. From this point on, Anna seems to have given up any hope of meeting the target. Seen in this light, we can say that her copy for *WTC II* was the better.
2. **Positioning of notes between upper and lower staff:** only in P 226 do we find many notes which were positioned ambiguously between the staves (e.g. p.1, system 6, bar 1; p.2, system 2, last bar). Obviously P 226 was made with less care.
3. **Beaming and stemming anomalies:** although there are a few places where Anna apparently made different decisions when copying (e.g. bar 4, 3rd beat; the stemming of ♪ *d e* on p. 2, around the middle of the bottom system of P 226 (the penultimate system of *WTC II*), most of her writing in these two copies is identical. This shows that she was an accurate copyist in this respect.
4. **Accidentals:** *WTC II* has more accidentals on bar 1 of p. 2, and P 226 has two superfluous accidentals on p. 2, system 2, bar 2, and also in the last bar of p. 2, which Anna may have introduced erroneously.
5. **Anna's errors and her own corrections:** In *WTC II* copy, Anna's attention lapsed in the second half of the first page, viz. two clef errors in the left hand and a

<sup>43</sup> Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs', p. 46.

<sup>44</sup> All the errors, variants, and corrections are described fully in Yo Tomita, *J. S. Bach's 'Das Wohltemperierte Clavier II': A Critical Commentary. Vol. II. All the Extant Manuscripts* (Leeds: Household World, 1995), pp. 223–39.

ranging error, all located at the beginning of the system. In P 226, the errors are concentrated on the second page. This suggests that Anna's errors were not triggered by what her model looked like.

Considering that most of the physical conditions appear to have been the same, it seems significant that each of Anna's copies shows different and unpredictable problems in different aspects of notation. Were there any external factors such as specific instructions given by Bach, spelling out where to pay particular attention, or how important a particular copy would be? As far as the density of her writing is concerned, it is very likely that Bach gave specific instructions; for example, compared with her other copies in *WTC II*, Anna copied this movement at higher density.<sup>45</sup> Having seen how she produced two copies in this way, I find it difficult to accept that Anna was an experienced copyist, although she had worked for Bach for more than a decade by this time. If these copies are compared with the quality and consistency of the works of professional copyists such as Anon.402 and 403 who worked for Kirnberger in Berlin, Anna can hardly be classed in the same group of 'experienced' copyists.

So what did Bach think of Anna as a copyist? From the amount of copying she did for her husband, there is no doubt that he appreciated her work. However, it seems fair to suppose that Bach did not really expect a professional level of accuracy and consistency from her. As seen in some of our examples, Anna was Bach's collaborator in both the education of young students and the dissemination of his works. Bach must have had a good idea about how she would handle the tasks given to her. She was there when Bach urgently needed someone who could prepare parts for imminent performance. Although she made many mistakes, she must have been a better choice than many of the others that Bach could have chosen at the time.

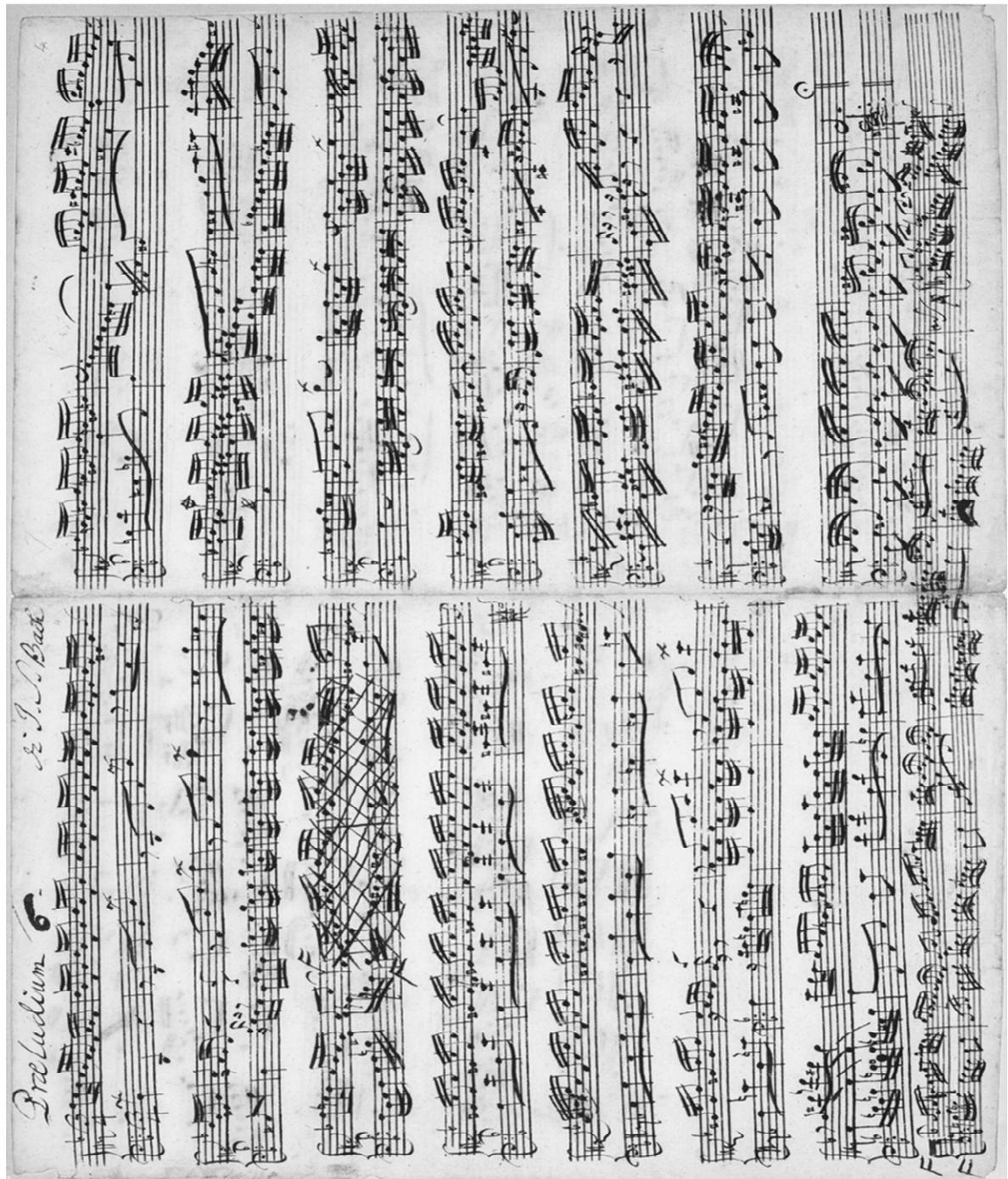
So far as we know, Anna's profile as 'dependable' copyist emerged well after 1727. The sales of Bach's masterpieces as his fame spread presented new opportunities for increased income; this was surely part of the context in which Anna gained her status as a dependable partner in their family workshop. We must not forget that before that time, Bach had several very reliable students who helped him to prepare performance parts, e.g. Johann Andreas Kuhnau, 1723–8, Christian Gottlob Meißner, 1723–9; Johann Heinrich Bach, 1724–8, to name but three; he also had a very able student Bernhard Christian Kayser (1705–58) in 1723–30, who made many more copies of Bach's organ and keyboard works than Anna; his handwriting was often indistinguishable from Bach's.<sup>46</sup> The departure of these capable copyists may have been a factor in raising Anna's profile as copyist.

This study has shown that when discussing each of Anna's copies, it is essential to consider both her role and why the copy was required. The *Cello Suites*, for example, was a sales copy, which should have been copied more reliably than many

<sup>45</sup> See Yo Tomita, 'J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II: A Study of its Aim, Historical Significance and Compiling Process', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Leeds, 1990), p. 235.

<sup>46</sup> He was previously known as Anonymous 5 until Talle traced his identity. See Andrew Talle, 'Nürnberg, Darmstadt, Köthen – Neuerkenntnisse zur Bach-Überlieferung in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 89 (2003), pp. 143–172 esp. pp. 155–67.

of the performance parts she had made. Still, one also needs to take into account the scale of the job involved: Anna also copied the *Violin Solos* for this commission, and as a mother who became pregnant almost every year in the first ten years of her marriage, as well as looking after children, one can imagine how difficult it would have been for her to maintain her focus for long periods of time. This aspect should not be forgotten when discussing her role as copyist.



Example 6a: Anna's copy of BWV 875/1 in GB Lbl, Add. MS. 35021, f.4r

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for Anna Magdalena's copy of BWV 875/1. The score is written on ten staves, arranged in two columns of five. The notation is dense and characteristic of the early 18th-century manuscript style. On the left side, there is a handwritten signature 'A. Magdalene' and the number '26'. On the right side, there is a handwritten number '27'. The music consists of a single melodic line with various rhythmic values and ornaments.

Example 6b: Anna's copy of BWV 875/1 in P 226, pp. 26-7

(© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv)

The great majority of Anna's copies discussed here have been known to scholars for over fifty years. Yet as I have demonstrated in this paper, they still have some very special tales to tell, and I for one believe that information remains to be extracted from these copies that may help us to understand Bach's life and works better. This information still remains 'encoded' in the guise of Anna's attractive and yet sometimes confusing music calligraphy. In Bach studies, there are still many outstanding questions. To begin with, the approximate dating of Anna's handwriting proposed by Dadelsen in 1957 needs to be revised.<sup>47</sup> With Kobayashi and Beißwenger's work on Bach's copyists about to be published,<sup>48</sup> scholars are anxious to see how many of the names of numerous anonymous copyists and their activities have been identified. There are also two new projects, using non-traditional methods, which attempt to identify Anna's handwriting in Bach MSS: Martin Jarvis is using forensic document analysis techniques; and Vitaly Feldman and Matthias Roeder are using neural network techniques.<sup>49</sup> Let us hope that, in the near future, their new information helps us to learn more about Anna and the role she played for Bach, his family circle, and his compositional output.

<sup>47</sup> *TBS* 1, p.31f.

<sup>48</sup> *Johann Sebastian Bachs Kopisten*. NBA IX/3 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, forthcoming)

<sup>49</sup> Feldman and Roeder have built an AI system designed to automate scribal identification of music copyists, using a sample of Bach and Anna's copies as a test bed. Their interim report, entitled 'Automated Identification of Scribes via Neural Networks', was presented at the Graduate Student Conference 'Music and its Media' at Harvard University in January 2004.

Table 1: Scores of Bach's works in Anna Magdalena's hand

Sources Sigla Shelfmark)	(Library and copied by Anna)	Bach's works	BWV	Approx. dating	Anna's model	Notes
D B, Mus. Bach P 268	ms.	Sonatas and Partitas for Violin solo	1001-1006	1727-31	D B, Mus. ms. Bach P 967	Prepared for G.H.L. Schwanberg
D B, Mus. Bach P 269	ms.	Suites for Violoncello solo	1007-1012	1727-31	lost autograph?	Prepared for G.H.L. Schwanberg
D LEB, Gorke S.3		Sonata for Violin in G	1021	1732	lost autograph?	Prepared for H. A. von Boineburg
D B, Mus. Bach P 226, fas.9	ms.	Overture in c	831a	earlier than middle of 1733	lost autograph?	Sold to H. A. von Boineburg?
D B, Mus. Bach P 272	ms.	Organ sonatas in e (from bar 16 onwards), C, and G	528, 529, 530	1732-35	D B, Mus. ms. Bach P 271	Prepared initially as a copy for teaching? AMB originally copied the entire collection, but the earlier part has been replaced by WFB.
D B, Mus. Bach P 202	ms.	Wohltemperierte Clavier, Part I, from Fg.c# (bar 50b) to Fg.a (bar 68)	849-865	1733-35	D B, Mus. ms. Bach P 415	Prepared initially as a copy for teaching? J. F. Agricola completed the copy around 1740. AMB originally copied BWV 846-865 (up to bar 50a) as well, which was later lost, and later supplemented by Müller.
GB Lbl, Add. 35021	Ms.	Wohltemperierte Clavier, Part II, PrFg.c, d, E (except the extra system in foot margin), G, and Pr.F (only 1st page)	871, 875, 878, 884, 880	1739-40	lost autograph?	Making a fair copy for Bach's compilation of this collection
D B, Mus. Bach P 226, fas.3	ms.	Wohltemperierte Clavier, Part II, Pr.C# (in C, early version), PrFg.d.	872a, 875	1740-41	lost autograph?	Making a fair copy of this keyboard miscellany for teaching purposes?
D B, Mus. Bach P 224	ms.	Clavierbüchlein for Anna Magdalena Bach, begun in 1722	813, 841	1722	lost autograph?	
D B, Mus. Bach P 225	ms.	Clavierbüchlein for Anna Magdalena Bach, begun in 1725	691, 515, 988/1, 846/1, 812, 813, 516, 514, 82, 452, 513	after 1725; BWV 988: not earlier than 1733-34, probably not earlier than 1740 (Emery/Wolff)	BWV 988: either original edition or lost autograph; BWV 846: autograph?	

<i>Source containing Anna's copy</i>	<i>Bach's works</i>	<i>BWV</i>	<i>Parts in Anna's hand</i>	<i>Date of performance</i>	<i>Copied from</i>	<i>Notes</i>
D LEb, Thom 26	Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig	26	soprano (mvts 2–5a); alto (mvts 4–6); tenor (mvts 3–6); bass (mvts 2 [a.corr], 3, 5–6)	11.11.1724	score	Not listed in TBSt1, Hübner
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 396, fas. 11	Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht	124	Violin 1 & 2 [both doublet]	7.1.1725	other violin parts	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 399	Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit	111	Violin 2 (from line 7 of p.2 to the end)	21.1.1725	score?	
D Cv, V. 1109,2, fas.2	Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kömmt	151	Violin 2 & Continuo [both doublet]	27.12.1725	other respective parts	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 67	Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen	32	Violin 1 [doublet]	13.1.1726	other violin part	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 69	Meine Seufzer, meine Tränen	13	Violin 1 & 2 [both doublet]	20.1.1726	other violin parts	
D Eib, A. A. 3	Alles nur nach Gottes Willen	72	Continuo [doublet] (from p.3 line 5 to p.4 line 12)	27.1.1726	other continuo part	Not listed in TBSt1, Hübner
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 314	Mache dich auf	JLB9	Violin 2 (mvts 2–3)	2.2.1726		
D B, Mus. ms. Bach P 111	Fragmental sketch of unidentified concerto in A	[49]	Cello [fragment]	n/a	n/a	Jotted down in MS of an unrelated composition.
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 121	Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf	226	Soprano 2 (from p.2 to the end)	20.10.1729	score?	
D DI, Mus. 2405 D 21, Aut. 2	Mass in B minor	232	Cello	earlier than 27.7.1733	continuo part	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 139	Concerto for two harpsichords in C	1061a	Harpsichord 1 & 2	1732–33	lost score?	
D LEb, Thom 58	Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid	58	Violin 1 [doublet?] (mvts 1 & 5 only)	1733–34	other violin 1 part (lost)?	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 398	Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit	14	Continuo [doublet]	30.1.1735	other continuo part?	
US NYpm, Cary Coll.	Es ist das Heil uns kommen her	9	Continuo [doublet] (mvts 4–7)	1732–35	other continuo part?	
D LEb, Thom 62	Nun komm der Heiden Heiland	62	Violone (mvts 3–6)	1732–35	continuo part?	Not listed in TBSt1
PL Kj, Mus. ms. Bach St 72	O angenehme Melodei! [incomplete]	210a	[not yet ascertained]	between autumn 1727 and spring 1732		Kobayashi dates Anna's hand as 1733–34
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 7	Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden	6	Violoncello piccolo	1733–34		Not listed in TBSt1, Hübner, NBA KB
D LEb, Thom 41	Jesu, nun sei gepreiset	41	Violin 1 [doublet] (mvts 1–3)	1732–35	other violin part	Not listed in TBSt1
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 110	St Matthew Passion	244	Violin 1 [doublet] (Chorus 1, except "Erbarne dich"); Continuo [doublet] (Chorus 1 & 2)	1736–38	other respective parts	
D B, Mus. ms. Bach St 12, fas.3	Dem Gerechten muss das Licht immer wieder aufgehen	195	[not yet ascertained]	1748–49		Not listed in TBSt1, Hübner

Table 2: Performance parts in Anna Magdalena's hand, arranged in chronological order