

The Organist Encounters the Hymnologist: J. S. Bach and J. C. Olearius in Arnstadt

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Apart from the various rebukes of the consistory in 1705–1706,¹ not a great deal is known about Bach's life in Arnstadt, yet these must have been formative years for the young musician. Between 1703 and 1707 he was organist of the rebuilt Bonifatiuskirche – then known as the Neue Kirche.² These were years when he was still in his early twenties. As a musician he was already extremely accomplished, but in other respects he was still a very young man gathering knowledge and experience.

Various generations of the Bach family continued to live and work in and around Arnstadt.³ The family connection was probably the main reason the young Bach, then only nineteen, was invited first to test the new organ built by Johann Friedrich Wender in 1703,⁴ and then to become the church's full-time organist later the same year.⁵

Another extended family was active in Arnstadt. The numerous Olearius family of pastors, theologians, professors and lawyers, with branches in Halle, Leipzig and Weissenfels, also had two members, father and son, who served the churches in Arnstadt. The father was Johann Gottfried Olearius (1635–1711),⁶ the superintendent and pastor of the Barfüsserkirche, and the son was Johann

¹ BDok II, nos. 14–17; NBR, nos. 19–21.

² Since 1935 called the 'Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Kirche'.

³ See Fritz Wiegand, 'Die Arnstädter Bache', in Karl Müller and Fritz Wiegand (eds.), *Arnstädter Bachbuch: Johann Sebastian Bach und seine Verwandten in Arnstadt* (2nd edn, Arnstadt: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Bachpflege im Kulturbund Arnstadt, 1957), pp. 23–57; Gisela Vogt, 'Die Musikerfamilie Bach in Thüringen', in Reinmar Emans (ed.), *Der junge Bach: weil er nicht aufzuhalten ... Begleitbuch* (Erfurt: Erste Thüringer Landesausstellung, 2000), pp. 108–110.

⁴ See Christoph Wolff and Markus Zepf, *The Organs of Johann Sebastian Bach: A Handbook*, trans. Lynn Edwards Butler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), pp. 9–11.

⁵ BDok II, nos. 8–10; NBR, no. 16; see Klaus Hofmann, 'Bach in Arnstadt', in Emans (ed.), *Der junge Bach*, pp. 239–55.

⁶ Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 68 vols. (Halle: Zedler, 1732–1754), xxv, cols. 1187–9; Martin Petzoldt, 'Bach in theologischer Interaktion. Persönlichkeiten in seinem beruflichen Umfeld', in Christoph Wolff (ed.), *Über Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke: Aspekte musikalischer Biographie Johann Sebastian Bach im Zentrum* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), p. 148.

Christoph Olearius (1668–1747),⁷ deacon and sometime interim pastor of the Neue Kirche.

The superintendent, Johann Gottfried Olearius, deserves to be investigated more thoroughly than has been the case in Bach studies to date, but that is another paper. However, it is important to record that he was an accomplished musician who had combined for several years the post of deacon with that of music director in Halle, where his father was superintendent.

Johann Christoph Olearius was born in Halle while his father was doing double-duty as deacon and director of music at the Marktkirche. It is likely that he was introduced to music by his father,⁸ but just how extensive his involvement with music was is unclear. The extent of his musical library is also uncertain, although he is known to have owned at least two Venice imprints of collected Latin motets, containing works by Italian composers including Claudio Monteverdi, Gasparo Casati, Francesco Cavalli, Nicolò Fontei, Giovanni Battista Treviso, Pietro Tamburini, and Gaspare Filippi.⁹ The provenance of these editions is attested by Johann Christoph Olearius' holograph monogram, which appears without his father's ownership mark, suggesting that he obtained rather than inherited them. He also owned a set of the partbooks of Johann Walter's *Wittenbergisch deudsch geistlich Gesangbüchlein mit 4 u. 5 Stimmen* (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1550–1551).¹⁰ While most of his many writings on the Lutheran chorale concern textual matters, Johann Christoph Olearius does not avoid passing judgment on associated melodies, such as in his published discussion of the music associated with the Passion hymn *Jesu, meines Lebens-Leben*, which includes the notation of two of the preferred melodies, given with their respective figured basses.¹¹ At the beginning of his preface to the *Arnstadtisches Gesangbuch*, dated 8 December 1700, Olearius states:

Hymns have their great usefulness as much for their beautiful melodies as for their pleasing poetry and edifying content. The melody, or art of song, is the power of music which has such an undeniable effect that even the devil himself must acknowledge.¹²

⁷ Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, xxv, cols. 1176–84; Martin Petzoldt, 'Bach in theologischer Interaktion', pp. 147–8.

⁸ Petzoldt, 'Bach in theologischer Interaktion', p. 147.

⁹ Both are in the Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Gotha: *Sacri Concerti A Voce Sola Di Gasparo Casati Maestro di Capella nel Duomo di Nouara* (Venice: Gardano, 1646), shelfmark Cant.spir 8° 00439; and *Motetti A Voce Sola De diuersi Eccellentissimi Autori: Libro Primo* (Venice: Gardano, 1645), shelfmark Mus 8° 00081e/02.

¹⁰ Johann Christoph Olearius, *Jubilirende Lieder-Freude / Bestehend in erster Auflage derer allerersten A.C. 1524. und 1525. in Druck gegangenen Lutherischen Gesängen zur Vermehrung schuldigster Devotion und Danckbarkeit, bey dem Andern von GOtt verliehenen Lutherischen Reformations-Jubilaeo, nebst einer Vorrede* (Arnstadt: Meurer, 1717), sig.)2^v –)3^r.

¹¹ Johann Christoph Olearius, *Betrachtung des bekannten Passion-Liedes / Jesu meines Lebens-Leben* (Jena: Bielcke, 1704), pp. 17–22.

¹² *Arnstadtisches Verbessertes Gesangbuch* (Arnstadt: Bachmann, 1705), sig. a 2^r: 'Lieder haben ihren grossen Nutzen | sowohl wegen der schönen Melodien | als auch angenehmen Poësie und erbaulichen Inhalts. Die Melodie oder Gesang-Art hat Krafft der Music eine solche unwidersprechliche Würckung | daß der Teufel selbst solche bezeugen muß...'

Johann Christoph Olearius studied a wide variety of subjects at the university of Jena (1687–1693), becoming something of a polymath. In later years this resulted in a substantial sequence of publications on local history, numismatics,¹³ antiquities, homiletics, bibliography, etc.¹⁴ However, a major part of his publishing output was devoted to the history and use of hymnody,¹⁵ which made him one of the pioneering Lutheran hymnologists of the early eighteenth century.¹⁶ He edited the *Neu-verbessertes Arnstädtisches Gesangbuch* (Arnstadt: Bachmann, [1701]; further editions in 1703 and 1705, which had a slightly different title).¹⁷

There is an interesting parallel between Johann Christoph Olearius and Johann Sebastian Bach. Between 1694 and 1695, that is, ten years or so before Bach visited Lübeck in 1705–1706, Olearius made a similar journey from Arnstadt to Hamburg, Lübeck and Travemünde. He was ordained in Arnstadt in 1694 and, like Bach later, set out to further his professional experience at this early stage of his career. His purpose, however, was to visit pastors and theologians, especially those with extensive libraries. Not only did he go to the same area as Bach, he also experienced a similar reaction from the superintendent, his father. When in the Hanseatic region, probably in Hamburg, Olearius the son proposed continuing on to Holland and England. Olearius the father, on hearing of this intent, insisted that his son was taking too much time and that instead he should return to Arnstadt.¹⁸ So the son made his way home in 1695 and took up his duties as deacon and librarian of the significant Arnstadt church library.¹⁹

The superintendent in Lübeck was Georg Heinrich Götze (1667–1728),²⁰ appointed in 1702. He already had an interest in hymnology and from 1703 produced a succession of hymnological publications, which eventually numbered

¹³ In 1693, on completing his studies at Jena, he became curator of the numismatic collection of Graf Anton Günther II of Schwarzburg-Sonderhausen in Arnstadt; see Peter Berghaus, 'Numismatiker im Porträt: 38. Johann Christoph Olearius, 17.9.1668 Halle - 31.3.1747 Arnstadt', *Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten*, 31 (1996), 276–285.

¹⁴ See *Catalogus Scriptorum, welchem, auf Begheren redlich gesinnter Freunde und besonderer Liebhaber der Hist. Literariae, zum Andencken seiner wenigen und geringen Schrifften, wie sie von A. C. 1690. bis A. C. 1727. in Druck gegangen, wohlmeynend communiciren wollen, Io. Christoph. Olearius* ([Arnstadt]: [s.n.], [1727]).

¹⁵ The pastors and theologians of the Olearius family made significant contributions to Lutheran hymnody; see Johann Bernhard Liebler, *Hymnopoeographia Oleariana, oder Olearische Lieder-Historie, darinnen unterschiedene Olearii, als berühmte Lieder-Dichter und Lieder-Freunde* (Naumburg: Boßögel, [1727]), pp. 11–12 (Johann Gottfried Olearius) and pp. 14–20 (Johann Christoph Olearius).

¹⁶ See Martin Rößler, 'Die Frühzeit hymnologischer Forschung', *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie*, 19 (1975), 123–86, esp. 134–7.

¹⁷ Liebler, *Hymnopoeographia Oleariana*, 15–16; Eduard Emil Koch, *Geschichte des Kirchenlieds und Kirchengesangs der christlichen, insbesondere der deutschen evangelischen Kirche*, 8 vols (Stuttgart: Chr. Belser, 1868), v, pp. 357–358.

¹⁸ Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, xxv, cols. 1177–8.

¹⁹ See Felicitas Marwinski and Konrad Marwinski, 'Die Kirchenbibliotheken in Arnstadt, Sondershausen und Schmalkalden', *Laudate Dominum: Achtzehn Beiträge zur thüringischen Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1976), pp. 161–4.

²⁰ Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, xi, cols. 87–89. Georg Heinrich Götze was apparently not related to Georg Götze, superintendent in Jena.

at least fifty titles. One of the first things he did on taking office was to supervise the creation of the first official hymnal for Lübeck and the surrounding area. It was published as *Lübeckisches Gesang-Buch* (Lübeck: Wiedemeyer, 1703).²¹ The *Gesangbuch* was introduced on the third Sunday in Advent (16 December 1703), when Buxtehude would have played the Marienkirche organ and Götze preached an appropriate sermon. The sermon was published the following year, and included an open letter addressed to Johann Christoph Olearius: *Christliche Lieder-Predigt* (Lübeck: Wiedemeyer, 1704).²² Given this connection between the superintendent in Lübeck and the Arnstadt deacon and librarian, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that Bach took with him to Lübeck a letter of introduction addressed to superintendent Götze from Johann Christoph Olearius.

Johann Christoph Olearius and Bach clearly shared an interest in the Lutheran chorale, both texts and music. Olearius, a leading hymnologist of the period, made sure that hymnological works were added to the Arnstadt church library as they were published. His own personal library contained many more works of hymnology, both manuscript and printed, as well as numerous hymnals.²³ He had already begun to edit, write and publish hymnological works before Bach arrived in Arnstadt. The first was *Kurtzer Entwurff einer nützlichen Lieder-Bibliothek* (Jena: Bielcke, 1702).²⁴ This was an overall plan, with specific examples, for the systematic study of the hymns of the Lutheran church, a task that was many-faceted and ongoing. It was, in a sense, a call for extensive hymnological research.

Congregational hymnody became a significant feature of the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was necessary to ensure that the many newly-written hymns were understood by those who sang them. The *Liedpredigt*, the hymn-sermon, which explored the biblical and theological meaning of a hymn, was specifically created to meet this need.²⁵ In the seventeenth century, when the Lutheran chorale had been firmly established, the didactic function of the *Liedpredigt* was intensified by an increased devotional content, especially when it was used as the homiletic form for funerals and memorial services. At the same time, there was the occasional use of a hymn as the principal element in the

²¹ The earliest known extant imprint dates from 1716.

²² See Martin Rößler, *Die Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt* (Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1976), p. 205; and Rößler, 'Die Frühzeit hymnologischer Forschung', 138–9; see also J. C. Olearius, *Betrachtung des bekannten Passion-Liedes/ Jesu meines Lebens-Leben*, sig. a1^v. The following year J. C. Olearius dedicated the first volume of his *Evangelische Leieder-Schatz* (see further below) to Götze.

²³ J. C. Olearius continued collecting such sources throughout his career, amassing a remarkable collection of rare and significant volumes. Many can be found in the Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Gotha, but individual books from his collection are also to be found in other libraries.

²⁴ For a summary of the contents, see Rößler, 'Die Frühzeit hymnologischer Forschung', 135–7.

²⁵ For the background, see Martin Rößler, *Die Liedpredigt: Geschichte einer Predigtgattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976). Johann Christoph Olearius edited and published a manuscript of a sequence of 54 *Liedpredigten* by Martin Crusius (1526–1598) dating from 1598: Johann Christoph Olearius (ed.), *Martini Crusii ... Homiliae hymnodicae, quinquaginta quatuor cantica ecclesiae Lutheranae, bene disposita, verbo Dei puro illustrantes: quas e Manuscripto usui dedit publico* (Arnstadt: Ehrt, 1705); see Rößler, *Die Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt*, pp. 127–8.

exordium of a regular Sunday sermon. Since a primary hymn, to be sung in between the epistle and gospel (*graduallied*),²⁶ was assigned to each day and to each celebration of the church year, it was not long before preachers saw the possibility of creating an *exordia-Jahrgang* based on these *graduallieder* throughout the church year. However, it is not clear who was the first to do this. According to Johann Christoph Olearius, his grandfather, Gottfried Olearius, preached such an annual cycle of *Lieder-exordia* in Halle in 1657,²⁷ but the 71 *dispositionen* (sermon outlines) were not published and no manuscript is apparently extant. In Leipzig some thirty years later, 1688–89, Johann Benedict Carpzov [II] (1639–1699), superintendent and pastor of the Thomaskirche, collaborated with the Thomascantor, Johann Schelle, who composed chorale cantatas on the *graduallieder* throughout the church year, with Carpzov creating *exordia* that were expositions of the same chorales. The 69 *dispositionen* of these sermons were published late in 1689,²⁸ apparently the first of the genre to appear in print.

Around the time that Bach arrived in Arnstadt, Olearius was at work on a much more ambitious project that combined the kind of hymnological information he had called for in his *Kurtzer Entwurff einer nützlichen Lieder-Bibliothek* (1703) and the *Liedpredigten* outlines of Carpzov. This was his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, published in Jena.²⁹ The title page gives the year of publication as 1707, although this is somewhat misleading, since the work was issued in four instalments, each with its own title page: I (1705), II (1705), III (1706), IV (1707). When the fourth part was issued, a new title page, preface to the total work, additions and corrections, were printed. Even before it was completed, Olearius' *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz* exerted a significant influence on the creation and dissemination of the genre of *Liedpredigten*. After the first two parts were published in 1705, there must have been some contact between Olearius and one of Carpzov's former students, Friedrich Simon Loeffler (1669–1748),³⁰ concerning Carpzov's *Liedpredigten* of 1688–89, which until then had only

²⁶ See Detlef Gojowy, 'Kirchenlieder im Umkreis von J. S. Bach', *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie*, 22 (1978), 79–123.

²⁷ This claim is made by J. C. Olearius in the preface to *Vollständiges Passion-Lied. Wir dancken dir Herrn Jesu Christ daß du für uns gestorben bist u.s.w. welches nebst einigen Anmerkungen zur Beförderung verständiger Lieder-Andacht folgender Gestaltt communiciret M. Joh. Christoph Olearius, Prediger in Arnstadt* (Jena: Bielcke, 1710); see Rößler, 'Die Frühzeit hymnologischer Forschung', 131, note 29.

²⁸ Johann Benedict Carpzov [II], *Kurtz Verzeichniß derer Anno 1689. von D. Johann Benedict Carpzov, in Leipzig gehaltenen Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten* (Leipzig: Grosse & Scholvien, 1689). The preface is dated 3 December 1689; see Rößler, *Die Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt*, p. 112. On the Carpzov/Schelle Jahrgang of chorale cantatas, see Markus Rathey, 'Schelle, Carpzov und die Tradition der Choralkantate in Leipzig', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, 2011 (2011), 185–210.

²⁹ See Rößler, *Die Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt*, pp. 132–4.

³⁰ Loeffler was pastor of Probstheida, Holtzhausen and Zuckelhausen, near Leipzig, son of Simon Löffler (1627–1674), Archdeacon of the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, nephew of the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and student of Johann Benedict Carpzov [II] at Leipzig university; see *Disputatio Theologica ex Rom. IX, vers. 5. De Divinitate Christi: Recentissimo Scriptori Anglo eam impugnanti potissimum opposita / ... In Academia Lipsiensi Sub Praesidio Magnifici Domini Rectoris Jo. Benedicti Carpzovi Doctoris & Professoris Theologi ... Solenni Theologorum Examine in Auditorio Principum maiori ad d. XVI. Novembr. MDCXCVII. P. P. a M.*

been published in outline form. The result was the publication of the complete texts of these sermons: Johann Benedict Carpzov [II], *Lehr- und Lieder-Predigten, von der zahl LXXIV. gehalten an Sonn- Fest- und Buß-Tagen Anno 1689* (Leipzig: Lanckisch, 1706),³¹ which must have appeared in the first few months of 1706.³² By this time Olearius had published the first two parts of his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*³³ and was at work on the third part. Significantly, parts three and four of Olearius' *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz* contain frequent references to Carpzov's *Lieder-Predigten*, published in full in 1706.

In his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, as well as background information on the hymn associated with each Sunday and celebration of the church year, Johann Christoph Olearius, like Carpzov, also included *dispositionen*. The *exordia* of these outlines focused on the primary hymn that was sung on each of the days in question, but the substance of the same hymn was frequently woven into the other sections and sub-sections of the *dispositio*. Many of these *dispositionen* were taken from the published outlines of others, but some were Olearius' own synopses, which he almost certainly preached in actual sermons. At the beginning of the first part of his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, Olearius gives specific dates when he had indeed preached some of these *dispositionen* in Arnstadt: nine of these outlines were preached in the Arnstadt churches between 1698 and 1704. Without going into the complexities of the preaching responsibilities of the Arnstadt clergy, one of these *dispositionen*—the outline of the Epiphany chorale, *Danksagen wir alle*—was preached by Johann Christoph Olearius in the Neue Kirche, at the early service on Thursday 10 January 1704, when Bach would have been on the organ bench.³⁴

It is only possible to identify one of Olearius' *dispositionen* in his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, which Bach must have heard preached in Arnstadt's Neue Kirche during the time he was the church organist. However, given the deacon's preoccupation with the origin, meaning and use of Lutheran hymns, Bach must have heard him preach numerous *Liedpredigten*. During Bach's tenure in Arnstadt, Olearius was writing and publishing his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, as well as editing other hymnological publications. The young Bach would have had an almost unparalleled opportunity to explore and understand the Lutheran chorale tradition in general, and individual hymns in particular. Bach's later use of classic Lutheran chorales in his organ and vocal compositions must have been

Friderico Simone Loefflero, SS. Theol. Baccalaureo & Pastore Ecclesiae Probstheidensis, Holtz- & Zuckelhusanae (Leipzig: Titius, 1697). Loeffler was a respected scholar who was much involved in church affairs in Saxony, such as editing the Saxon *Vollständiges Kirchen-Buch* (Leipzig: Lanckisch, 1707).

³¹ See Rößler, *Die Bibliographie der deutschen Liedpredigt*, pp. 128–30.

³² Olearius' first reference to Carpzov's sermons is *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, iii, p. 25. Since the date 27 April 1706 is mentioned on a later page in connection with Carpzov's *Liedpredigten* (*Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, 3: 52), the implication is that Carpzov's sermons were published early in 1706.

³³ The dedication of Part 2 is dated 28 September 1705; Olearius, *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, ii, sig. Aii^v. In his preface Loeffler draws attention to writers on hymnology, notably J. C. Olearius; see Carpzov, *Lieder-Predigten*, sig. a3^r-b1^r.

³⁴ Olearius, *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*, i, pp. 57–9.

strongly influenced by this experience of working with Johann Christoph Olearius in Arnstadt, and his early organ chorale preludes, especially those of the *Orgelbüchlein*, are evidence of this.³⁵ The actual or projected chorale preludes of Bach's early years reflect quite closely the selection of hymns found in Olearius' *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz*; this seems to suggest that the young composer was significantly influenced by his experience of working with Johann Christoph Olearius in Arnstadt between 1703 and 1707.

Bach's association with Johann Christoph Olearius can perhaps be further detected in the chorale cantatas that he composed mostly between 1724–1725 (Jahrgang II). There is no direct evidence as to why the decision was made to focus on *graduallieder* that year, but given that Leipzig had a propensity to celebrate important anniversaries, such as the tercentenary in 1709 of the founding of Leipzig University and the bicentenary in 1717 of the Lutheran Reformation, it seems most likely that the intention was to mark the bicentenary of the publication of the first Lutheran hymnals, which appeared in 1524–1525. Many of the chorales of Jahrgang II date from the earliest period of Lutheran hymn-writing, with a particular emphasis on the hymns of Luther. Perhaps the Leipzig clergy – Salomon Deyling (1677–1755), superintendent and pastor of the Nikolaikirche and Christian Weiss (1671–1737), pastor of the Thomaskirche – drew attention to the precedent of the Carpzov/Schelle collaboration and the publication of Carpzov's *dispositionen* in 1689 and Carpzov's complete *Lieder-Predigten* in 1706. The idea of focusing attention on *graduallieder* would not have been a novel concept for Bach, since he had been in Arnstadt when Olearius was not only at work on his *Evangelischer Lieder-Schatz* but was also promoting Carpzov's *Lieder-Predigten*. It is therefore possible that the sequence of chorale cantatas composed in 1724–1725 was a result of Bach's initiative, something that had been in his mind for some time and could be traced back to when he was working with the pioneer Lutheran hymnologist, Johann Christoph Olearius in Arnstadt. Indeed, it is likely that Olearius was promoting the bicentenary of the birth of the Lutheran chorale years before the significant anniversary. For the 1717 bicentenary of the Lutheran Reformation – a celebration that had been in preparation for more than twenty years – Olearius republished the contents of the earliest Lutheran hymnals, issued in 1524–1525.³⁶ In the preface to this volume, he observed that these hymns had been sung continuously in Lutheran churches and homes for 'almost two hundred years' (*fast auf 200. Jahr*).³⁷ Thus it is likely that he vigorously promoted the idea of celebrating the bicentenary of the creation of the Lutheran chorale. The sequence of specific chorales of Bach's Chorale Jahrgang 1724–1725 was probably the result of collaboration between the pastors of the two principal churches and the cantor, although, given Bach's position with regard to the choice of hymns at Vespers in 1728,³⁸ he would not simply have passively accepted the choices of these pastors.

³⁵ See my earlier discussion: Robin A. Leaver, 'Bach and Hymnody: The Evidence of the *Orgelbüchlein*', *Early Music*, 13 (1985), 227–36.

³⁶ See note 18 above.

³⁷ Olearius, *Jubilirende Lieder-Freude*, sig.)8^v.

³⁸ See BDok II, no. 246; BDok I, no. 19; NBR, nos. 139–40. See also NBR, no. 149.

Although Bach spent only a relatively short time in Arnstadt, he was there during his formative years as a professional musician. His experience as a colleague of Johann Christoph Olearius gave him a unique opportunity to explore the depth and detail of the Lutheran chorale tradition. Bach drew on this experience for the rest of his life, in both his composition and his teaching.