

Remaining Silhouettes of Lost Bach Manuscripts? Re-evaluating J. P. Kellner's Copy of J. S. Bach's Solo String Compositions*

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Johann Peter Kellner (1705–1772) has long been recognised as one of the most prolific copyists of J. S. Bach's works. Most of his copies were of organ and clavier compositions by J. S. Bach, although there are some notable non-keyboard works among them. The best known of these are the two sets for solo string instruments, the six Cello Suites and the Violin Sonatas and Partitas. Both sets are part of one extensive miscellany and, according to studies on handwriting, paper and ink, stem from the same period.¹ Kellner's dependability as a copyist has often been questioned in the past because of his well-documented copying mistakes. However, a re-evaluation of the evidence shifts the focus from the problem of his copying errors to a number of issues of more fundamental consequence and ultimately, to the important question of the exemplars from which he was working. These exemplars appear to have been unavailable to or at least not used by any of the people who made the other surviving copies, and as neither of these exemplars has survived, this leaves Kellner's copies as our only, albeit circumstantial, evidence of their existence. Kellner's copies of the Violin Sonatas and Partitas and the Cello Suites are also interesting as they demonstrate strikingly different characteristics; their comparison reveals hitherto undervalued information regarding the genesis of these works. In light of this information, the significance of these copies may need to be reassessed.

Kellner was a professional musician first and a copyist second; yet in his twenties he seemed to develop an insatiable hunger to copy Bach's works. Copies

* This is a much revised and expanded version of the paper entitled 'An exceedingly careless scribe? J. P. Kellner's copy of the J. S. Bach solo string works' presented at the 16th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music (Salzburg, 9–13 July 2014). I am grateful to Ruth Tatlow for sharing with me a chapter from *Bach's Numbers* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming May 2015), and to Yo Tomita for valuable comments and suggestions on a wide range of issues covered in this paper.

¹ Bettina Schwemer and Douglas Woodfull-Harris (eds.), *6 suites a violoncello solo senza basso, BWV 1007-1012 / J. S. Bach* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000). Text volume, 4.

of at least forty-six Bach compositions in his hand have survived, and there may well have been others which are now lost. In several cases Kellner's copy is the earliest remaining source of a lost Bach work, and in some cases it is the only one.² Kellner's reasons for copying and collecting Bach's music remain unknown. He may simply have wanted to keep reference copies of those works and perhaps use the keyboard compositions as teaching and performing material for himself and his students. As an organist, he was able to use and enjoy these copies with immediate effect; however, copying the string compositions did not have similar benefits. There is no record of him teaching or performing on string instruments—indeed, four of his students learned keyboard from him but violin from others³—and no evidence of him composing solo works for strings. If he intended to make clavier arrangements of the string solos at a later stage, they have not survived. Nor is there any indication that he would have prepared these copies for financial gain.

Yet despite his extensive copying of Bach's compositions, Kellner (unlike for instance Johann Christoph Altnickol) was not acknowledged in a separate entry in the major nineteenth-century music dictionaries of Gerber⁴ or Fétis.⁵ His copies of the string solos were not referred to as sources until Alfred Dörffel discussed them in his edition for the Bach Gesellschaft published in 1879,⁶ and even thereafter, for another hundred years or so, they were seldom mentioned. As a rare exception, Andreas Moser, Joseph Joachim's co-editor on the *Violin Solos*, brought up Kellner's name, but only in the context of trying to explain the absence of certain movements in his copy.⁷ The festivities of the Johann-Peter-Kellner-Festwoche on the 250th anniversary of his birth⁸ were perhaps the first celebration of his accomplishments but there was no extensive evaluation of his work until 1985, when Helmut Braunlich's article drew attention to Kellner's copy of the *Violin Sonatas and Partitas* and suggested that they may have been based on an early draft by the composer.⁹ Writing in the same year, Russell Stinson came to different conclusions about Kellner's role in the transmission history of Bach's music,¹⁰ and elaborated on those findings in his influential book *The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle* (1990). Kellner's copying

² Russell Stinson, *The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle: A Case Study in Reception History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴ Erst Ludwig Gerber, *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler, welches Nachrichten von dem Leben und den Werken musikalischer Schriftsteller, berühmter Komponisten, Sänger ... enthält* (Leipzig: A. Kühnel, 1812–14).

⁵ François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Bruxelles: Leroux [et. al], 1835–44).

⁶ BGA XXVIII/1, xvi.

⁷ Andreas Moser, 'Zu Joh. Seb. Bachs Sonaten und Partiten für Violine allein', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 17 (1920), 35.

⁸ The celebrations took place in Gräfenroda 25 September–2 October 1955.

⁹ Helmut Braunlich, 'Johann Peter Kellner's Copy of the Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo by J. S. Bach', *Bach*, 12/2 (1981), 2–10.

¹⁰ Russell Stinson, 'The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle', PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1985; Russell Stinson, 'J. P. Kellner's Copy of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo', *Early Music*, 13/2 (1985), 199–211.

work has also been discussed in more recent German scholarship, notably in the critical reports of the *NBA* VI/1 and VI/2 and other critical editions.¹¹

Despite Braunlich's attempted reevaluation of Kellner's copy of the Violin Solos, scholarly opinion has generally been less than positive regarding the quality of his work. For example, the preface of the Bärenreiter Urtext edition of the Violin Solos simply referred to Stinson's writings in a footnote when curtly dismissing Kellner's copy: 'The source is thus irrelevant for the purposes of scholarly-critical edition.'¹² Stinson himself opined that 'as a copyist of Bach's music, he [Kellner] can hardly be taken as a model of dependability'.¹³

In a situation where a lost work is being copied by a young and relatively inexperienced disciple, the morally loaded word 'dependability' can have two conflicting meanings with subtle but significant differences. It can refer to the degree of care with which the copy was prepared, and thus to the level of concentration and neatness shown by the copyist while executing a delicate but fundamentally mechanical task. In a rather different context, the same word can also indicate the copyist's recognition that the task is to replicate an already composed work to the best of his or her abilities without changing its content. Making a copying error is a common phenomenon; deliberately altering the copy so that it is not the same as the original is completely different. Whereas the reasons for copying errors may have been as mundane as poor lighting, fatigue or a worn-out quill pen, premeditated alteration suggests an interventionist attitude.

Evidently Kellner's 'dependability' can be questioned in both regards,¹⁴ but the distinction between these categories has to be clear. His copying output therefore should be scrutinised on *both* levels: for signs of careless copying as well as intentional alterations of his exemplar.

Kellner's copy of the Cello Suites

There is no surviving autograph of the Cello Suites; their score has been transmitted to us by four different handmade copies, two from the first half of the eighteenth century and two from the second.¹⁵ None of these manuscripts is entirely satisfactory and they all differ from each other significantly. In fact, very little is known about the provenance of the exemplars from which each copyist made their copy. The genealogical relationship between them can, however, be clarified to some extent through the method that in classical philology is called the principle of common error. If the same error appears in more than one source, it is usually safe to assume either that they were copied from the same model or that one of them was copied from the other truthfully, including its discrepancies.¹⁶

¹¹ See particularly Günter Hausswald and Peter Wollny (eds.), *Drei Sonaten und drei Partiten für Violine solo, BWV 1001–1006 / J. S. Bach* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001).

¹² *Ibid.*, xi.

¹³ Stinson, *The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle*, 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 56–9.

¹⁵ Detailed physical description of these copies can be found in *NBA KB* VI/2, 11–17.

¹⁶ James Grier, *The Critical Editing of Music: History, Method, and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 65.

While there are numerous shared mistakes between sources A, C and D,¹⁷ suggesting a common model between them, the errors of the Kellner copy (source B) are unique (Table 1).¹⁸ His copy is also somewhat incomplete (although far less so than his copy of the Violin Solos): in the 5th Suite (BWV 1011), it does not include the Sarabande, and the Gigue ends after the first nine bars.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, Kellner's transmission provides in about a dozen cases what are likely to be the correct notes where sources A, C and D share the same errors.¹⁹ It is interesting that these notes have been silently taken over by virtually all later editors, despite their often stated disregard for the authority of Kellner's copy.²⁰

Table 1: Examples of probable shared mistakes in A, C and D

<i>BWV</i>	<i>Bar</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>Kellner (B)</i>	<i>A, C, D</i>
1008/1	19	3	<i>a</i>	<i>g</i>
1010/1	60	1	<i>B_b</i> in tenor	<i>d</i> instead <i>B_b</i> in tenor
1011/5	13	5	<i>d'</i>	<i>f'</i>
1012/1	91	12	<i>a'</i>	<i>g'</i>
1012/3	14	3	<i>e</i>	<i>f[#]</i>

There is also a similar number of examples where his script presents a plausible alternative musical text (Table 2).²¹ These alternatives typically follow musical sequences better and are often more complex than the versions given by A, C and D. As Eppstein argues, it is likely that the four eighteenth-century copies were made from at least two different authorial models.²² Thus, the versions given by the other three sources may well be authentic; however, Kellner's copy with its more interesting readings of the same passages might equally be authentic, mirroring a revised authorial script from a later date than the one at the disposal of his colleagues.²³

¹⁷ In scholarly writings, Anna Magdalena's copy (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 269) is usually referred to as source A, Kellner's (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 804, Faszikel 40) as source B. The late eighteenth century copies are respectively named sources C (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 289, Faszikel 10) and D (A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 5007 [S. m. 5007]).

¹⁸ Hans Eppstein effectively described the similarities and differences between the sources in *NBA KB VI/2*, 18–26.

¹⁹ For a detailed comparison of Kellner's copy with copies A, C and D, see my article 'Precarious Presumptions and the "Minority Report": Revisiting the Primary Sources of the Bach Cello Suites' in *Bach*, 45/2 (2014), 1–33.



²⁰ See, for example, Kirsten Beißwenger (ed.), *Sechs Suiten für Violoncello solo, BWV 1007–1012 / J. S. Bach* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000), 76.

²¹ My survey of the divergent notes and rhythms between the four manuscript copies (as part of my forthcoming PhD dissertation) shows over 600 discrepancies. For the purposes of clarity, the findings of this paper are therefore restricted to differences of pitch and duration only, without taking into account the added problems of articulation.

²² *NBA KB VI/2*, 18–26.





²³ Although the opposite is also not without precedent, Bach mostly added to and only very rarely simplified the musical text when revising an earlier work. I would like to thank Professor Christoph Wolff for sharing with me one of the rare instances when Bach's revisions involve subtractions rather than additions: the violin part in the ritornello of the 'Agnus Dei' of the B-minor Mass that smooths out the sharp rhythms of the aria BWV 11/4, on which it is based.

Table 2: Examples for plausible alternative readings in Kellner's version and A, C and D

BWV	Bar	Note	Kellner (B)	A, C, D
1008/2	9	7	Additional $\text{♩} a$	Single note $\text{♩} d\sharp$
1008/3	21	1	Double stop $\text{♩}/\text{♩} a/f$	Single note $\text{♩} a$
1008/5	6–8			
1009/1	30	6	B	d
1009/1	86	1	double tr	tr on upper note

These examples support the hypothesis that Kellner's script may be of more value than previously acknowledged. However, their value as evidence can only be regarded as circumstantial as a result of a documentary lacuna, as neither of the hypothesised autograph sources has survived. Fortunately, more tangible evidence is at hand in the form of a surviving autograph of the lute transcription of the 5th Suite,²⁴ penned sometime between 1727 and 1732,²⁵ around the time when Anna Magdalena prepared her script of all of the Suites. This transcription, BWV 995 transposed to G minor, helps to clarify the question of accuracy for Kellner's reading. The manuscript of the Lute Suite agrees with Kellner's copy on at least ten occasions²⁶ when they are different from the other three copies (Table 3). Although the notes and rhythms in A, C and D are plausible alternatives, they are different from those in Bach's autograph of BWV 995 and Kellner's copy.

Table 3: Examples of instances in which Kellner's copy of the 5th Suite (BWV 1011) is in agreement with Bach's autograph of BWV 995, and differs from A, C and D

Movement	Bar	Note(s)	Kellner & BWV 995	A, C, D
Prelude	193	3	A	G
Allemande	25	4–6		
Courante	3	1	E \flat	C
Courante	5	9	d'	e \flat '
Courante	11	6–7		

In the light of these agreements, the variant readings in Kellner's copy appear to be the result of authorial corrections, suggesting that Kellner may have used the same source as Bach, the one on which Bach himself based the Lute Suite. This effectively provides confirmation of a status that none of the other three manuscript copies have: Kellner's transmission of the 5th Suite appears to have originated at an autograph source and not the same exemplar that Anna Magdalena used when preparing her copy of the Suites.²⁷ It has been argued before that Anna Magdalena's copy, with its remarkably high number of

²⁴ B-Br, Ms. II 4085.

²⁵ Yoshitake Kobayashi, *Die Notenschrift Johann Sebastian Bachs: Dokumentation ihrer Entwicklung*, NBA IX/2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1989), 100–101, 209.

²⁶ Given the nature of comparing two manuscript copies, some further cases are ambiguous.

²⁷ NBA KB VI/2, 22–25.

inaccuracies, may have been copied from ‘a less neatly-written score containing many revisions’.²⁸ Kellner’s model in the case of the 5th Suite, on the other hand, seems to have been a revised autograph, and if that is true, then it follows that he would be likely to have worked from the same revised autograph for the whole cycle.²⁹

Kellner’s copy of the Violin Solos

Kellner’s copy of the Violin Sonatas and Partitas shows a very different picture from that of the Cello Suites. Not only are the works given in a different order from the sequence of Sonatas alternating with Partitas as manifested in Bach’s autograph fair copy, but more importantly, the set does not contain all of the movements found in the other sources. Kellner started with the three complete Sonatas in their familiar order and then continued with some, but not all, movements of the E major and D minor Partitas without stating the number in the title; finally, the B minor Partita is missing altogether (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of the order and contents of the Violin Solos as manifested in Bach’s autograph manuscript (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 967) and Kellner’s copy (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 804, Faszikel 22)

<i>J. S. Bach</i>	<i>BWV</i>	<i>J. P. Kellner</i>
Sonata I G minor	1001	Sonata I G minor
Partita I B minor	1002	Sonata II A minor
Sonata II A minor	1003	Sonata III C major
Partita II D minor	1004	Partita [III] E major (but without Loure, 2 nd Menuet, Bourrée and Gigue)
Sonata III C major	1005	Partita [II] D minor (but without Allemande and Courante)
Partita III E major	1006	[Partita I B minor is missing in entirety]

Three movements, the D minor Partita’s Chaconne and the Fugues of the G minor and C major Sonatas, are presented in versions substantially shorter than those in Bach’s autograph (Table 5).

Table 5: Sections missing in some movements of the Violin Solos in Kellner’s copy

<i>Movements</i>	<i>BWV</i>	<i>Sections missing in Kellner’s copy</i>
Fuga from Sonata I G minor	1001/2	Bars 35–41
Fuga from Sonata III C major	1005/2	Bars 188–200; 256–70; 277–86
Chaconne from Partita II D minor	1004/5	Bars 21–24; 89–120; 126–40; 177–216; 241–4

Significantly, a number of smaller sections in the Bach autograph are absent or slightly altered in Kellner’s copy. These intriguing sections could be explained in more than one way. Stinson’s suggestion that Kellner deliberately tampered with

²⁸ Yo Tomita, ‘Anna Magdalena as Bach’s Copyist’, *Understanding Bach*, 2 (2007), 60.

²⁹ According to the usual binding practice, the six Suites in the putative revised autograph were likely to have been bound in one volume.

the length and even the content of his exemplars during the copying process³⁰ may well be true in the case of works written for his own instruments, organ and clavier (alterations that he was able to try out and modify immediately); however, it seems less likely that he would have attempted to venture into re-composition while copying for violin or cello. Nevertheless, the differences between his copy and Bach's clear and beautifully penned autograph are undoubtedly substantial. In Kellner's version, incorrect notes and rhythms occur with some frequency; there are incomplete bars and, worse still, incomplete or missing movements. But the explanation offered for these variances is also not without its problems: Stinson proposes two considerably different explanations. While he acknowledges that Kellner's copy is 'the collection's second most important source evidently representing an authentic early version' of Bach's music,³¹ he also maintains that 'Kellner seems to wilfully deviate from his exemplar' as 'he appears to replace readings with material of his own composition'.³²

While these propositions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, should the first conjecture turn out to be correct, it would rather call into question the validity of the second. If Kellner's model were indeed an authentic first version of the cycle, that would increase the significance of his copy and it would automatically become the best available representation of an early draft, giving us a rare insight into Bach's compositional practice. In turn, that could provide a logical explanation for the different length and order of the movements, and even for some of the minor changes of harmonies or notes.

Certainly, the differences between Bach's known autograph and Kellner's copy of the Violin Solos are of such magnitude that they make it most improbable that Kellner's is a direct copy of this autograph. It seems more likely that Kellner modelled his script on a *different* authorial script, probably an earlier draft which itself could have undergone significant revisions by the composer at a later stage.³³ This draft may not have been fully composed (which is quite different from movements 'missing' or 'omitted') or, if written on single pages, some sheets may have been damaged or lost while passed back and forth between composer and copyist.

It is also worth noting that apart from the 'truncated' or 'missing' movements, Kellner seems to have done an easily readable, decent copying job, with some, but not many, clear copying errors, and that in the complete movements of the Violin Solos, there is no evidence whatever of him tampering with his exemplar. The consistent if not perfect copying standard in the completed movements suggests that Kellner copied these movements to the best of his abilities. It seems unlikely therefore that he would have applied radical cuts and other changes in only three movements and arbitrarily eradicated many more.

³⁰ Stinson, *The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle*, 65.

³¹ This appears to contradict Stinson's criticism of Braunlich for a similar suggestion. *Ibid.*, 56.

³² *Ibid.*, 57, 66.

³³ This concept has been flagged before (Braunlich, 'Johann Peter Kellner's Copy of the Sonatas and Partitas') but for a lack of enough supporting arguments, never gained recognition.

The Chaconne

Of all the movements of the Violin Solos, Kellner's copy of the Chaconne differs the most from the surviving autograph version of this crowning movement of the Partita in D minor. In Kellner's transmission, the Chaconne is ninety-six bars, or close to forty per cent shorter than its familiar version (Table 5). Finding an adequate explanation for these absent sections (particularly in the Chaconne but also in the other two fugues mentioned earlier) has been one of the most frequently debated subjects in the otherwise under-explored field of Kellner's copying activities. Andreas Moser postulated that the reason for the 'unauthorised excisions' was to make the 'Study' (as he called the Chaconne) technically easier to play on the violin:

This enforced process of crafting an easier version could hardly have taken place with Bach's agreement. It is much more likely to be the result of an arbitrary intervention by Kellner, for whom the piece in its original form evidently proved to be too difficult.³⁴

Another possibility proposed by Stinson is that the copy may have been intended to assist with the preparation of a keyboard transcription,³⁵ and when certain sections proved not to be easily adaptable they were arbitrarily removed by the copyist. Then, having explored and discarded this idea, Stinson found it more likely that Kellner's deliberate cuts to the Chaconne were simply due to its excessive length.³⁶ While all of these suggestions are possible in principle, they are not supported by any direct evidence.

Most of the research done on this area has approached the subject from the same direction: looking through the incomplete, broken-up prism of Kellner's copy, the well-known, final version of the Chaconne can only be recognised as its model if we accept that the copy was severely mutilated. Viewed this way, Kellner's copy became damaged goods, leading to the deduction that 'the source is thus irrelevant'. A different approach might lead us to a quite different conclusion, if we look at Kellner's script as an imperfect but essentially true copy of a putative (now lost) autograph. Is it possible that he did not seek to 'improve' Johann Sebastian's solo violin compositions by repeatedly cutting substantial chunks out of them, but rather that his source was a considerably shorter one, suggesting an earlier draft evidenced through Kellner's copy? Contemplating the problem from this angle, new questions have to be asked, most importantly: which variants in Kellner's copy are not merely mistakes, but could be considered as an earlier authorial alternative, discarded during a subsequent revision?

³⁴ 'Da es bei diesem Erleichterungsverfahren nicht ohne Gewaltigkeiten abging, ist kaum anzunehmen, daß Bach es gebilligt hat. Wir werden es vielmehr als eine Eigenmächtigkeit Kellners zu buchen haben, dem das Stück in seiner ungekürzten Fassung technisch wohl zu schwer gewesen ist.' Moser, 'Zu Joh. Seb. Bachs Sonaten und Partiten für Violine allein', 35 n.1.

³⁵ This challenge remained unfulfilled by Kellner but was taken up by a number of composers in the years to come, among them Brahms, Busoni and Joachim Raff.

³⁶ Stinson, *The Bach Manuscripts of Johann Peter Kellner and his Circle*, 65.

A small but characteristic example to illustrate the importance of this last question is the appearance of the French violin clef.³⁷ In the autograph of the Violin Solos, Bach always puts the French clef at the beginning of a bar, with the exception of one single case: in bar 85 of the Chaconne, the switch to the French clef takes place after the third quaver, not only mid-bar but not even before a full beat. If Kellner's copy represents an earlier version of the movement, it might offer an explanation for this anomaly. In Kellner's transmission, bars 81–84 (corresponding to bars 85–86 in Bach's autograph) are twice as slow as the familiar version (semiquavers instead of demi-semiquavers, following the pace of the previous bars), thus lasting for four full bars, and the French clef, being written at the identical place, is therefore positioned on a bar line (Figure 1). If Bach revised the Chaconne from Kellner's model, that is, his own earlier draft, he may have decided to write down the bars in question at double speed without bothering to change the position of the French clef, which, as a result of this revision, was repositioned to halfway through the bar.³⁸



Figure 1: Chaconne, bars 80–86 in Kellner's copy (7 ½ bars)

In all, there are almost forty differences between Kellner's copy and the autograph of the Chaconne; some small, affecting only one or two notes, some as extensive as the section between bars 177–216 (Table 6). Over half of these variances are probably the result of simple copying errors. However, the outstanding challenging and fascinating feature of Kellner's script is the relatively large number of plausible textual variants; harmonically adequate versions, which sound perfectly acceptable but different from the known version. If indeed authentic, they must have been revised thoroughly before the fine copy was written out.

While these alternatives of the musical text in a draft version are adequate, their later authorial revision is a possibility which cannot be lightly dismissed.

³⁷ When the notes remain high for a long period of time, Bach occasionally uses a treble clef starting on the first line of the staff (named 'French' as it was often used by French composers at the time). See Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12.

³⁸ The apparent change of the shade and perhaps even the colour of the ink from bar 84 (the second line in Figure 1) onward does not change the agreement between Kellner's and Bach's manuscripts regarding the appearance of the French clef.

Table 6: Textual variants in the Chaconne in Kellner's copy

Bar(s)	Note(s)	Textual variants in Kellner's copy
16	1	a / e' ♭ in chord (instead of ♭♭)
21–24		Missing
47	3–4	b, d' instead of $a b$
85–86		Written twice as slow
89–120		Missing
152	1	Chord missing (a / e')
152	7	a'' instead of g''
159	7–8	$f'' d''$ instead of $d'' f''$
169	8	a'' instead of f''
170	8	a'' instead of e''
177–216		Missing
228	8	♭♭ $g' a'$ (instead of ♭ g')
230	1	e' doubled (instead of e' / c')
241–244		Missing
256	3	<i>tr</i> (Bach omits this ornament)

Bar numbers according to Bach's copy

This hypothesis of an early draft version addresses most of the supposed 'cuts' as well. The extreme length of the Chaconne (with a duration of 13 to 15 minutes in most performances, one of the longest movements Bach ever wrote for a solo instrument) is out of proportion with the rest of the Partita, whereas in a shorter version it may have fitted more easily into the structure of the work.³⁹ The absence of four of the five 'cut' sections is hardly noticeable when Kellner's copy is played: helped by the stable D minor/major tonality, the transition is seamless. The fifth 'cut', however, cannot be explained as a valid alternative: with bars 126–140 not present, the listener misses out on one of the most extraordinary musical moments of the Chaconne, the cathartic transition from D minor to D major. Equally importantly, this is the only absent section that does not adhere to the movement's continuous chain of four-bar variations; bar 125 is the first bar of a variation which is implausibly followed in Kellner's script by bar 141, another 'first bar'. The hypothetical Bach autograph may have been incompletely, but surely not incompetently, written, suggesting that this represents a clear copying error on Kellner's part. Kellner may have accidentally skipped two musical lines but again, it is unlikely and without precedent elsewhere in this copy; it is conceivable, however, that spilled ink, a torn page or similar accidental damage may have prevented him from copying the missing fifteen bars. In any case, the clear structure of multiples of four bars in the other cases of missing bars makes an error of some sort more likely than deliberate alteration of the text. If the latter

³⁹ Philipp Spitta evidently felt that the length of the Chaconne needed some explanation when he wrote: '[The chaconne] is longer than all the rest of the suite put together, and must not be considered as the last movement of it, but as an appended piece; the suite proper concludes with the gigue.' Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685–1750*, trans. Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (London: Novello, 1884–5), vol. II, 95. See also Tatlow, *Bach's Numbers*, Chapter Five.

was the case, why would Kellner's cut be so clumsy, why would he excise the arrival to, in Spitta's hauntingly beautiful wording, '... the devotional beauty of D major where the evening sun sets in the peaceful valley'?⁴⁰

Even if in draft form, the Chaconne was conceived as an extraordinary movement right from the outset. That could also explain why in the order that appears in Kellner's transmission, the D minor Partita is the final piece of the whole set, with the unsurpassable Chaconne at the very end of the manuscript.⁴¹

Parallel traits between the two Kellner copies

Kellner's copies and their exemplars are well worth investigating as both their similarities and differences suggest some intriguing conclusions. In both cases, these revolutionary sets of six multi-movement solo string works were composed in or before 1720; in both cases, in or before 1726 a manuscript of these compositions was given to and copied by Kellner. Both original models appear to have been lost, leaving as our single source for each of them the only known copy prepared by the enthusiastic organist. Without the copies, we would not know that these models ever existed (although in both cases, it makes perfect sense that they did). In both cases we appear to be working with the remaining silhouettes of objects – probably authorial manuscripts – that disappeared a long time ago.⁴²

The extent to which these copies reflect authorial originals is potentially clouded by two factors:

1. Kellner's unintentional copying errors;
2. the supposition, often made in scholarly writings, that Kellner made intentional and arbitrary amendments to his model.

These two factors represent distinctly different professional or human behaviour, even if they may not always be distinguishable in practice.

The unintentional copying errors are frequent and plainly evident in both sets.⁴³ In most cases, they are easy to recognise as the notes or rhythms copied incorrectly are different from the version given in other known sources, and look or sound odd in the musical texture (for instance, they add an extra beat to the bar, break an existing musical sequence). However, in a number of cases, divergent notes or rhythms in Kellner's copies present a valid alternative which may reflect his original source.

The discrepancies between Kellner's version and the autograph of the Violin Sonatas and Partitas have generally been assumed to constitute evidence of deliberate corruption of the original. But significantly, there is practically no

⁴⁰ Ibid., 97.

⁴¹ Three decades later, Bach's second eldest son, Carl Philipp Emanuel concluded his *6 Keyboard Sonatas*, Wq 63 with another robustly unique and voluminous movement, the C-minor Fantasia – a remarkable parallel.

⁴² It is theoretically possible that either or both (lost) autographs had been copied by a third party and that Kellner had access only to those (similarly lost) copies. There is, however, no evidence to support this remote possibility.

⁴³ The work of Anna Magdalena is marred by similar errors.

evidence of him deliberately altering the musical text in his transmission of the Cello Suites (save where he added an extra note to the last tonic chord of three movements), thus it seems most unlikely that he would have changed his professional behaviour radically when copying similar works by the same composer at around the same time. We therefore have to consider the other alternative: that he copied, to the best of his ability, exactly what was in front of him. His model may well have been a different (and to us unknown) version, probably an earlier and incomplete draft. This would help to explain the previously listed differences between his copy and the surviving Bach autograph, which he may never have seen.

The degree to which Kellner's copy of the Violin Solos differs from other contemporary manuscript sources is incomparably greater than in the analogous case of the Cello Solos. It therefore seems plausible to conclude that there must have been significant differences between his exemplars. The chronological order of events may explain this seeming anomaly. At least two other persons copied the Violin Solos before Kellner obtained the score. First, a copyist in Cöthen made a manuscript copy in or around 1720 and BWV 1001–1005 was also copied by an unknown scribe, probably sometime between 1723 and 1726.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Kellner was the first, as far as we know, to gain access to the score of the Cello Suites in or around 1726, probably several years before Anna Magdalena copied A. It seems logical that in the case of the Violin Solos where he practically had to 'stand in line', he did not receive the fair copy autograph but an earlier, unrevised version, whereas the version of the Cello Suites that he had copied may have been the same, apparently revised, version of the Suites that Bach himself used during the compositional work of the Lute Suite, BWV 995.

In this scenario, the quandary of why Anna Magdalena appears to have made her copy from an inferior exemplar after Kellner had copied from a better one remains problematic; however, the uncorrected copying errors and consistently imprecise articulation of her copy could be explained if she was working from a hastily drafted working manuscript rather than a fair copy.⁴⁵ It is also conceivable that the autograph that Kellner was given had not been returned (for any number of reasons) to the Bach household in Leipzig by the time she started her work on making A.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence shown above, we have to consider the possibility of two Bach autographs of very different calibre at Kellner's disposal: in the case of the Violin Solos, a draft or an early version, and in the case of the Cello Suites, a revised copy. Kellner's copies of the string solos may reveal evidence of these important Bach autographs that have not survived and to which, to the best of

⁴⁴ Sources E (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 968) and C (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 267) respectively; see Hausswald and Wollny (eds.), *Drei Sonaten und drei Partiten für Violine solo*, xi and x respectively.

⁴⁵ It is plausible that during the extremely difficult period of 1727 to the early 1730s – marred by Bach's struggles with the authorities in Leipzig, their children being born (and some of them dying) in practically every year and so on – Bach simply did not have time and energy to check the model or the quality of her work.

our knowledge, no other later copyist had access. The concurrent examination of the two copies offers considerably more than recognising the hallmarks of an 'exceedingly careless scribe'.⁴⁶ While recognising that Kellner's copying was often imprecise, it is of crucial importance not to confuse the work of the inaccurately copying cantor with the exemplar that he used.

Thus we have to look at Kellner's reading of the Cello Suites with renewed interest, as it is likely to have been based on a more mature authorial version of the Suites than any to which the other copyists had access. If this is correct, it would throw a different light on other variations specific to Kellner's manuscript that have hitherto been customarily dismissed, but which may have mirrored the composer's later intentions. On the other hand, the Violin Solos in Kellner's copy may reflect an incomplete and unrevised early autograph, thus allowing a rare glimpse into the workings of the composer's mind. While some of its omissions are indeed due to copying errors, other differences between this copy and Bach's autograph might help to understand the composer's process of revising draft versions of his compositions.

⁴⁶ Stinson, 'J. P. Kellner's Copy of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo', 200.