

A Copyist of Bach and Zelenka: Identifying the Scribe of GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749*

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Residing in the music holdings of Oxford's Bodleian Library is a large group of manuscripts known as the Tenbury Collection. Formerly housed at St Michael's College in Tenbury, the collection was assimilated by Sir Frederick Ouseley (1825–1889) in the nineteenth century, and contains a great number of handwritten copies of works by several different composers.¹ One of these manuscripts, with the shelfmark MS Tenbury 749, is a beautiful score copy of *Missa Paschalis* (ZWV 7) by Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745), a contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach who worked at the court of Dresden. In the Critical Report for my edition of this work I commented that very little was known about the origins of this manuscript.² Scholars had postulated that it was probably copied some time in the eighteenth century,³ but several key questions remained unanswered. Who made this copy of *Missa Paschalis*, and exactly when? Was it made in England, or did it originate somewhere in Europe? And why does this most significant of the non-autograph sources for the *Missa Paschalis* contain significant differences to the autograph, most notably the fact that it is missing two entire movements? This paper attempts to answer those questions through the presentation of a comparative palaeographic study between the Tenbury

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¹ A complete catalogue of the Tenbury Collection was prepared by Edmund Fellowes in 1934, and subsequently revised by Watkins Shaw. It is now severely out of date and requires substantial revision. See Edmund H. Fellowes, *The Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of St. Michael's College, Tenbury*, 2nd ed., rev. & add. Watkins Shaw (Brighton: Harvester Microform, 1981).

² Andrew Frampton, 'A Critical Edition of Jan Dismas Zelenka's *Missa Paschalis*, ZWV 7' BMus dissertation, University of Melbourne (2013), Vol. II, 'Critical Report', 11.

³ Frampton, 'A Critical Edition', Vol. II, 11. See also Janice B. Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: A Bohemian Musician at the Court of Dresden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 287.

manuscript and selected manuscripts in the hand of one of J. S. Bach's most important copyists.

The starting point for this investigation came from the noticeable similarities between the title page of MS Tenbury 749 (Figure 1), and a title page of the only known source for an early version of the 'Credo in unum Deum' from Bach's *Mass in B minor* (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Mus. 2° 54c/3; see the facsimile in *NBA II/1a*).⁴ Several individual characteristics are particularly striking.

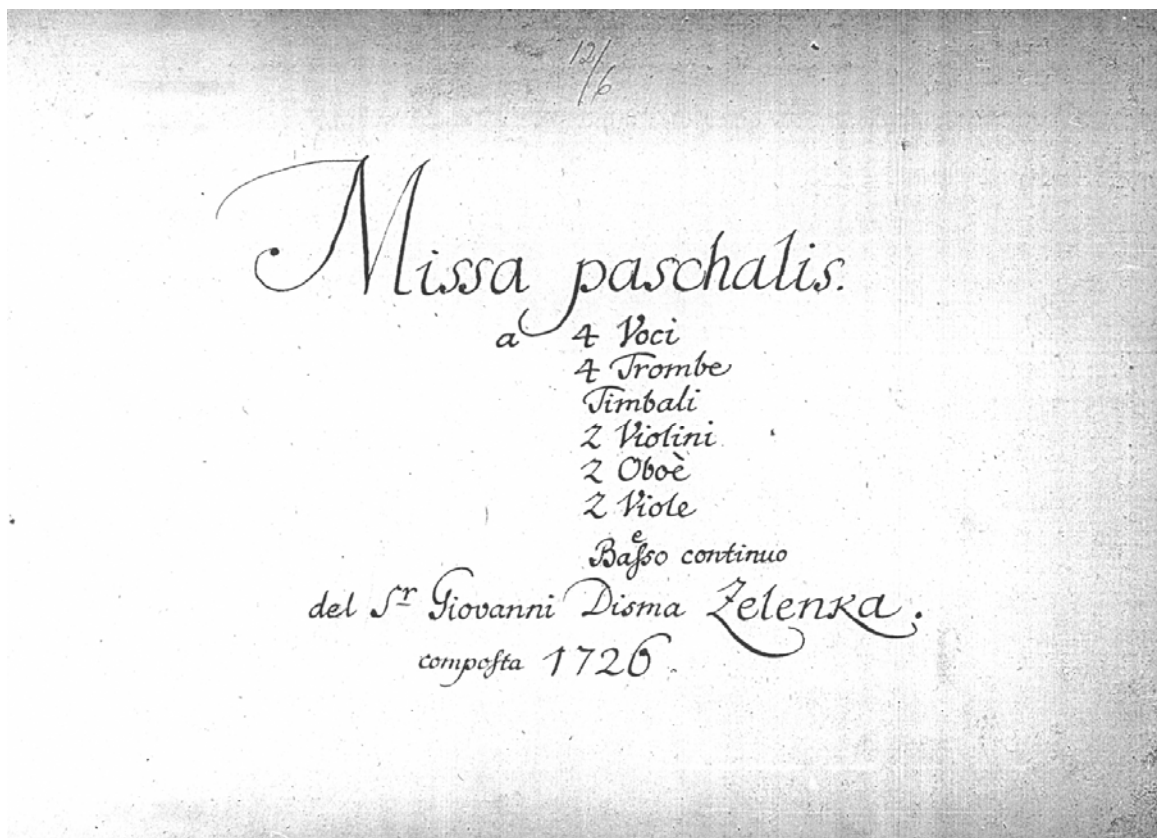


Figure 1: Title page, Jan Dismas Zelenka: *Missa Paschalis*, ZWV 7, MS full score copy (GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749)

In both title pages, the scribe uses the form 'Sr' ('Signor') for the composer's name, with a characteristic line underneath the small 'r'. The 'G' of 'Giovanni' is also remarkably similar, although the curve at the top is slightly more elongated in the Tenbury MS. In the list of instruments, the number '2', with its two angled straight lines at the top and characteristic wave at the bottom, is identical in each, as is 'e Basso continuo', particularly with the 'e' so closely positioned above the large old-form 's'. Other similarities include the 'V' of 'Voci', and the 'i' in each of the title headings.

Peter Wollny has identified the scribe of the early version of Bach's 'Credo' as Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720–1774).⁵ Agricola studied with Bach from 1738 to 1741, while he was at Leipzig University. He later collaborated with Carl Philipp

⁴ *NBA II/1a*, x.

⁵ Peter Wollny, 'Ein Quellenfund zur Entstehungsgeschichte der h-Moll-Messe', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 80 (1994), 163–9.

Emanuel Bach on the famous 1754 *Nekrolog* of Johann Sebastian,⁶ and also on the first edition of *The Art of Fugue*.⁷ After he finished his studies, he moved to Berlin and later became *Kammermusiker und Hofkomponist* at the Prussian court of Frederick the Great.⁸ As well as composing and performing his own works, he also copied out various pieces by numerous composers, including (among many others) Fux, Buxtehude, Caldara, Telemann, and, most importantly, J. S. Bach.⁹ But was he also a copyist of Zelenka?¹⁰

The following comparison of manuscript copies known to be in Agricola's hand with MS Tenbury 749 will seek to ascertain whether palaeographic similarities can be found in features of the actual notation. Considerable work has already been undertaken on identifying and dating the handwriting in Agricola's many copies of works by J. S. Bach, notably in Alfred Dürr's seminal 1970 study,¹¹ and so I have chosen to use selected examples from Agricola's Bach copies as a point of comparison to see whether a match can be found to MS Tenbury 749. The Bach scholars Rudolf Eller and Karl Heller have noted, 'The handwriting of Agricola is even, almost calligraphic, and consistently very readable'.¹² This is certainly an attribute of the Tenbury manuscript, but it is only by investigating consistencies and changes in the forms of identifying features – for example, how clefs and time signatures are written, the forms of noteheads and rests, and letters – that a positive identification can be made.

The first example comes from Agricola's manuscript copy of a violin part from BWV 210, *O Holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit*. It dates from between 1738 and 1741, when Agricola was studying with Bach,¹³ and a number of similarities and differences to the Tenbury manuscript are already apparent (Figure 2). The 'V' of 'Violino' is quite similar to that of 'Voci', with its characteristic thick rounded tip on the right-hand edge, and also the tip of the inward curve of the 'p' in 'primo', as in 'Paschalis'. However, the c time signature is straighter and tipped at the top with a short vertical line that is missing in the Tenbury MS. In addition, the line dividing the two numbers in the 3/8 time signature is absent in the Zelenka copy, and the top half of the '3' exhibits a straight edge, rather than one that is distinctly curved.

⁶ See *BDok* III, 80.

⁷ Christoph Wolff, 'The Compositional History of the Art of Fugue', in *Bach: Essays on his Life and Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 265, 356.

⁸ Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 330; Hans-Joachim Schulze, 'Johann Friedrich Agricola', *MGG* (Personen).

⁹ Schulze, 'Johann Friedrich Agricola'.

¹⁰ None of the published studies on Zelenka copyists mention Agricola. For a list of recognised Zelenka copyists, see Wolfgang Horn, 'Die wichtigsten Schreiber im Umkreis Jan Dismas Zelenkas: Überlegungen zur Methode ihrer Bestimmung und Entwurf einer Gruppierung der Quellen', in Thomas Kohlhase, (ed.), *Zelenka-Studien I* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1993), 141–70.

¹¹ Alfred Dürr, 'Zur Chronologie der Handschrift Johann Christoph Altnickols und Johann Friedrich Agricolas', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 56 (1970), 44–65.

¹² 'Die Handschrift Agricolas ist ebenmäßig, fast kalligraphisch, und durchweg sehr gut lesbar.' (my translation). See *NBA KB* VII/6, 11.

¹³ *NBA IX/3*, Abbildungsband, No. 216a. See also *NBA KB I/40*, 47–49, 54.

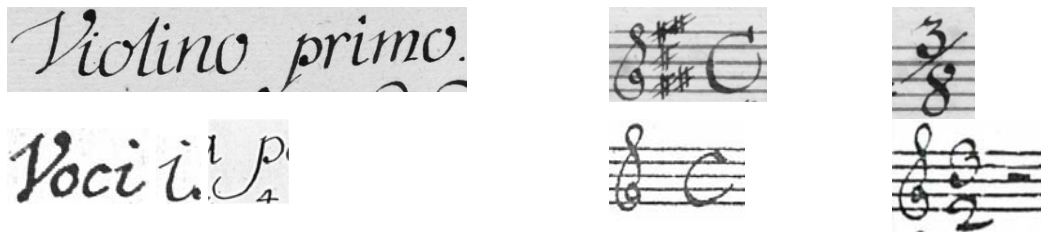


Figure 2: Comparison of handwriting features in the Agricola *Violino primo* MS of *O Holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit* (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach St 76) (top), and GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (bottom)

Agricola's copy of the Prelude and Fugue in B major, BWV 868, from Book 1 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (Figure 3), which dates from around 1740, displays a bass clef form with two vertical lines before the two dots. These are absent from the bass clef found in the Tenbury MS. Furthermore, the soprano clef is clearly a K-form, rather than 3-form, clef.

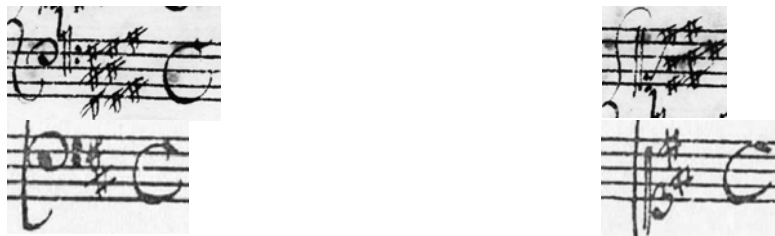


Figure 3: Comparisons of clef forms in Agricola's copy (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 202) of the Prelude and Fugue in B major, BWV 868, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* Book 1 (top) and GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (bottom)

The differences between the forms seen in these examples and those in the Tenbury MS can be seen in the handwriting profile given in Figure 4, as well as in Kobayashi and Beißwenger's handwriting profile of Agricola in the copyist catalogue of the *Neue Bach Ausgabe*.¹⁴ Here we find a treble clef similar to that in the profile of the Tenbury MS scribe, but a different bass clef and K-form C-clefs. However, the forms of the noteheads themselves are remarkably similar in both profiles.

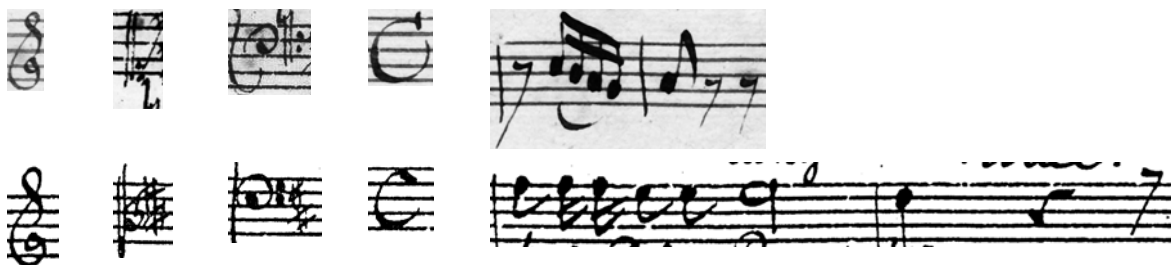


Figure 4: Handwriting profile for Johann Friedrich Agricola from 1738-1741 as seen from the copies of BWV 210 and BWV 868, showing clef and note forms (top); comparison to clef and notation forms in GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (bottom)

¹⁴ NBA IX/3, 164 (No. 216). This handwriting profile only covers the years that Agricola was studying with Bach, 1738-41, and thus does not reference notation forms found in his Bach copies after this date.

The next example comes from Agricola's copy (dating from the 1740s) of the Concerto for Three Harpsichords, BWV 1064 (Figure 5a). This time we see a bass clef form without the two lines in the middle. The *c* time signature here displays a transitional stage in Agricola's handwriting: on the Cembalo I staves, for example, the vertical line at the top of the 'C' has vanished and been replaced with a slightly thicker edge, much more like the form used in the Tenbury MS, but on the continuo stave the older form with the vertical line is still present. The visual similarities of the note forms between the BWV 1064 copy and the Tenbury MS are shown in Figure 5b.

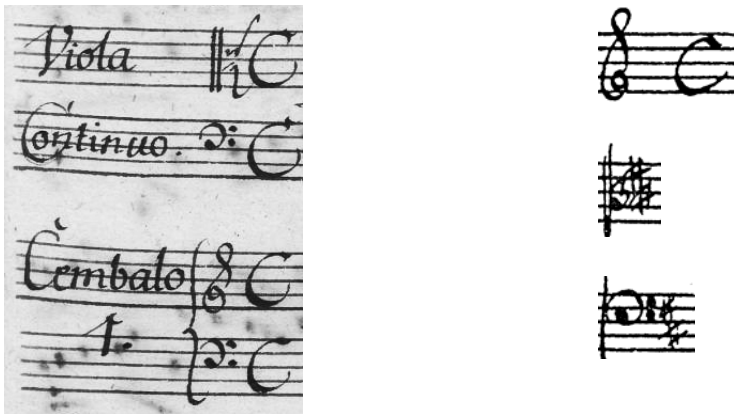


Figure 5a: Comparisons of clef and time signature forms in Agricola's copy (D-B, Am.B 68) of the Concerto for Three Harpsichords, BWV 1064 (left) and GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (right)

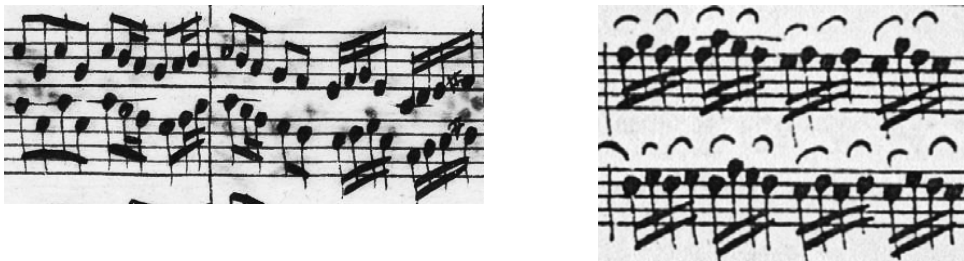


Figure 5b: Similarities of note forms in Agricola's copy of the Concerto for Three Harpsichords, BWV 1064 (left) and GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (right)

In an even later manuscript, a copy of the cantata BWV 146 dating from after 1750,¹⁵ these new features have been consolidated (Figure 6). The *c* time signature form is now completely of the new type, more slanted and with a distinctly thick, almost straight but angled edge, and at last we see a 3-form C-clef that matches the Tenbury manuscript.

Figure 7 shows a summary of Agricola's handwriting profile using these later examples, compared with the Tenbury scribe profile. The Agricola manuscripts now display a 3-form C-clef that is akin to that found in the Tenbury MS (compare particularly the alto clefs in each example). The bass clef and time signature forms are likewise extremely similar, as is the general appearance of the notation, particularly the shape of the noteheads, stems and rests.

¹⁵ NBA KB I/11.2, 68.

538
Kirchenmusikstück am 1ten Sonntag Trübilate.
vom Herrn
J. D. Bach.

1 Flöte
2 Flöte
Flöte
1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Gründbass
Orgel
mit 2moll
für 2 Handpoinnen

Figure 6: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen*, BWV 146, in the hand of Johann Friedrich Agricola (D-B, Am.B 538)

Figure 7: Handwriting profile for Johann Friedrich Agricola in the mid-late 1740s and 1750s, as seen from the copies of BWV 1064, BWV 1063 and BWV 146, showing clef and note forms (top); comparison to clef and notation forms in GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (bottom)

Perhaps the most striking resemblances are to be found in the final example, Agricola's copy of the Triple Concerto in A minor, BWV 1044 (Figure 8).¹⁶ All the main features of the Tenbury manuscript handwriting are here: matching forms of both the treble and bass clefs; the distinctive thick-edged C-form on the time signature; the identical treatment of *colla parte* doubling indications (note the distinctive '1mo V.no' form); elongated quaver rests; the V-forms and number forms in 'Violino 1' and 'Violino 2'; the identical form of the word 'Basso'; and even the title writing: we see here the use of 'del Signor', as observed on the title page of the Zelenka, and the rest of the writing is virtually identical to that found on the title page of the early version of the Bach *Credo*. In summary, it is difficult to imagine a better correlation between these manuscripts.

¹⁶ Both Dietrich Kilian and Alfred Dürr date the manuscript as coming from 'the middle of the eighteenth century'. The features of the notation suggest it most likely originates from the 1750s. See *NBA KB VII/3, 3*.

Figure 8: Johann Sebastian Bach, Concerto for Violin, Flute and Harpsichord ('Triple Concerto'), BWV 1044, in the hand of Agricola (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 249) (top left); example of 'col 1mo V.no' script from the opening of the 'Kyrie', GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (bottom left); instrumentation at the beginning of the 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' from GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 (right)

However, there is one difference that cannot be easily accounted for: the way the staves are braced. Agricola tends to use a brace that has one outward pointing apex, while in the Tenbury manuscript, the braces display multiple inward pointing apexes.¹⁷ Although this is certainly an important observation, I believe the other similarities between Agricola's handwriting and that of MS Tenbury 749 are so strong that, in the absence of other evidence to the contrary, Agricola should be considered the prime candidate for scribe.

One further piece of evidence in favour of this identification is another Zelenka mass copy that was recently recovered from the Ukraine as part of the Berlin Singakademie archive (now held in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz under the shelfmark SA 687). This manuscript, stated by the RISM database as being in the hand of Agricola, displays all the characteristic features

¹⁷ I am very grateful to Professor Yo Tomita for his advice on this matter. It has also been noted that another possible difference pertains to the way the stems of downward-pointing minims are written, as it is most common for Agricola to place stems on the left-hand side or under the middle of the notehead, rather than on the right, as in the Tenbury MS. However, Alfred Dürr notes that right-stemmed minims are occasionally found in Agricola's manuscripts. See Dürr, 'Zur Chronologie der Handschrift', 64.

discussed above.¹⁸ My own comparison of the two manuscripts suggests that they are of the same oblong paper type (although a detailed comparison of watermarks is yet to be undertaken). Thus, we have not one but two Zelenka manuscripts now confirmed to be in Agricola's hand. Together, these represent the first time that Agricola has been formally recognised as a Zelenka copyist.

The question of dating the Tenbury manuscript is closely linked to the history of Zelenka's own autograph. Most of the autograph of *Missa Paschalis* was written out in 1726, but approximately six years later Zelenka undertook some revisions to the work, incorporating a number of changes and additions to individual parts and, most significantly, inserting two whole movements—a 'Benedictus' and second 'Osanna'—that were not included in the original version.¹⁹ In the Tenbury copy, these two movements are missing, as are all of the revisions that can be dated to later than 1726. If Agricola (who was born in 1720 and thus only six years old when the mass was written) was indeed the copyist, it must therefore follow that he was copying not from the autograph but from another intermediate copy that was itself made prior to the 1732 revisions.

A possible candidate for this hypothetical intermediate copy is a new source that recently surfaced as part of the recovered Singakademie archive.²⁰ It records the state of the autograph in its original 1726 version, and includes an inscription on the last page that indicates how the sections of the mass were originally separated.²¹ The scribe is unidentified, but the inscription is the hand of Johann Georg Pisendel, who was at one time concertmaster of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* and worked closely with Zelenka. Agricola was certainly interested in the music of the Dresden court: while he was still studying in Leipzig, he went to Dresden and heard the music of Johann Adolf Hasse, and at the beginning of 1751 he undertook another trip to Dresden, where he made the acquaintance of Hasse, his wife Faustina, and Pisendel.²² No doubt he would have heard of Zelenka from his teacher J. S. Bach, who, as Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach noted, knew Zelenka personally and esteemed his music.²³ Did Pisendel show Agricola this manuscript of the *Missa Paschalis* and allow him to take a copy of it? This would explain why the Tenbury manuscript is lacking the 'Benedictus' and 'Osanna' and, moreover, why it displays all the features of Pisendel's copy, including the earlier versions of certain passages that were subsequently revised and corrected in the autograph.²⁴ The copy of *Missa Divi Xaverii* was probably made at the same time. A provisional dating of early 1750s also agrees with the date of the BWV 1044 copy and with Dürr's handwriting chronology.²⁵

¹⁸ Jan Dismas Zelenka, *Missa Divi Xaverii*, RISM, opac.rism.info/search?documentid=469068700 (accessed 19 November 2015). The database gives no reference for its identification.

¹⁹ Frampton, 'A Critical Edition', Vol. II, 5–6.

²⁰ Jan Dismas Zelenka, *Missa Paschalis*, RISM, opac.rism.info/search?documentid=469069000 (accessed 19 November 2015).

²¹ See Frampton, 'A Critical Edition', Vol. II, 15.

²² Schulze, 'Johann Friedrich Agricola'. See also Kai Köpp, *Johann Georg Pisendel (1687–1755) und die Anfänge der neuzeitlichen Orchesterleitung* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2005), 24.

²³ *BDok* III, 289.

²⁴ One notable example can be seen in bars 2–3 of the first movement, 'Kyrie eleison I', in Violins I & II. See the Specific Remarks in Frampton, 'A Critical Edition', Vol. II, 25.

²⁵ Dürr, 'Zur Chronologie der Handschrift', 57–61, 65.

I suggest that there is enough evidence to conclude beyond reasonable doubt that the copyist of GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 is Johann Friedrich Agricola. The copy was made in Germany, either in Dresden or Berlin, during the early 1750s (possibly in or very close to 1751). The work was not copied, as was previously thought, directly from the autograph, but rather from another manuscript. This may have been the copy in the possession of Pisendel, which itself was made from the autograph in 1726 and thus reflects the original version of this work; it is, of course, still possible that Agricola may have been working from another copy that is no longer extant.

Exactly where the copy was located before it was collected in the nineteenth century by Sir Frederick Ouseley and brought to England is not certain, for Agricola's manuscripts were split up after his death among a number of different collections.²⁶ However, it is intriguing to contemplate a possible performance of *Missa Paschalis* in Berlin, perhaps by the Singakademie. Agricola was acquainted with its first director, Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch (1736–1800), who himself had heard Zelenka's music in Dresden as a child and was deeply in awe of it.²⁷ Is it possible that Fasch, or his successor Zelter, performed Zelenka's music in Berlin? Certainly, performance markings found on other Zelenka manuscripts from the Singakademie collection suggest this may have been the case.²⁸

The identification of Johann Friedrich Agricola as the scribe of GB-Ob, MS Tenbury 749 represents a small case study of the copying activities of one of Bach's most important pupils. It shows us that, far from being unknown, Zelenka's music was transmitted northwards in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century via individuals such as Agricola. Furthermore, as a pupil of J. S. Bach, Agricola's copying of this music also perhaps reinforces again to us his teacher's own admiration of Zelenka, as indicated by C. P. E. Bach. By studying these copying and transmission patterns through the activities of musicians such as Agricola, we can develop a more comprehensive picture of the ways in which Saxon church music of the late Baroque was disseminated, and thereby appreciate the wider context in which the music of both Bach and Zelenka can be placed.²⁹

²⁶ Many of these collections today reside in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Preußischer Kulturbesitz, including the collection of the former Amalien-Bibliothek and the archive of the Berlin-Singakademie both of which contain large numbers of Agricola manuscripts. See Dürr, 'Zur Chronologie der Handschrift', 49–56. I am very grateful to Professor Peter Wollny for his advice on Agricola's handwriting and manuscripts.

²⁷ Schulze, 'Johann Friedrich Agricola'.

²⁸ Many of these markings are in the hand of Zelter, and strongly suggest that performances of Zelenka's works took place in Berlin in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, Zelenka's music was already known in Leipzig: watermark and handwriting evidence from a set of parts for the *Missa Sancti Spiritus*, ZWV 4, reveal that this work was copied and most probably performed in Leipzig in the early 1750s, under the direction of J. S. Bach's successor as *Thomaskantor*, Gottlob Harrer (1703–1755), who himself had been a student of Zelenka. See the discussion in Andrew Frampton, 'Jan Dismas Zelenka's *Missa Sancti Spiritus*, ZWV 4: A Critical Edition and Study of the Manuscript Sources', MMus dissertation, University of Melbourne (2015), 249–75.

²⁹ A comprehensive and detailed study of Johann Friedrich Agricola and his role as a copyist and transmitter of music will form the basis of the present author's forthcoming doctoral thesis.