

Introduction

Music has indeed ever been the most elegant amusement

“Music has indeed ever been the delight of accomplished princes, and the most elegant amusement of polite courts.... Add to this, that there is hardly a private family in a civilized nation without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord, or guitar: that it alleviates labour and mitigates pain; and is still a greater blessing to humanity, when it keeps us out of mischief, or blunts the edge of care.”¹

Charles Burney’s assessment was also true of the family of the Hanoverian cavalry captain Ernst von Grothaus and his wife Anna Friederike (née Baroness von Oldeshausen), who lived in Ledenburg Manor and Castle in the Principality of Osnabrück. The spirit of their house was informed by the visual arts, music, literature, and the sciences. Their daughter Eleonore von Grothaus, who was born on 10 April 1734, grew up in this atmosphere. “Among the rhetorical arts, music ranked first, and many handwritten pieces for keyboard, viola d’amour [recte: viola da gamba], flute, and voice belonged to the repertoire that was crowned by Handel and Telemann. The most recent arias were heard, and Eleonore wrote many a poem in this form or after the existing melodies.... Music and poetry were united in Eleonore.”²

In 1759 Eleonore married Baron Georg Hermann Heinrich von Münster, bailiff of the Iburg district. Her preserved manuscript poems in the spirit of the storm and stress period attracted interest only in 1928, and in 2000, together with music, drawings, and diverse archival documents of Ledenburg Manor, they were transferred as deposited holdings to the Lower-Saxony State Archive, Osnabrück. I owe a debt of gratitude to the French musicologist François-Pierre Goy, who called my attention to the music and encouraged a closer examination.

The private music library (which I refer to as the Ledenburg Collection), predominantly made up of copies, consists in its current form nearly exclusively of literature for viola da gamba, and apparently it was the poetess herself who was passionately attached to viol playing. Judging by the date of origin, the presumably earliest work in the collection is an exemplar of Georg Philipp Telemann’s *Fantasias for Viola da Gamba*,³

published by the composer himself in 1735, which was considered the lost “Amber Room” of solo viol music by generations of music aficionados. Of no less importance is the discovery in the collection of hitherto unknown viola da gamba works (sonatas and trios) by Carl Friedrich Abel. Sonatas, trios, and concertos – in some cases preserved anonymously, incompletely, or recognizable as transcriptions – characterize the picture of a private music library about whose source of supply we can currently only speculate. Noteworthy is the number of works by Italian composers in the collection.⁴

Thomas Fritzsch
Freyburg (Unstrut); February 2016

When the music historian Charles Burney wrote about the viola da gamba in 1789 that “it was played longer in Germany than elsewhere,”⁵ he had certainly observed correctly. Whereas in Italy the viol had fallen out of use in official musical life 150 years previously, whereas England had long since given up its independent viol culture, whereas in France only the small *pardessus de viole* still survived thanks to its role as a substitute for the violin, there were still players and aficionados at many ecclesiastical and secular courts and residences in the German empire even in the second half of the eighteenth century who revered the noble and mellow character of the viol. The glamour and glory that the viol enjoyed in the seventeenth and early decades of the eighteenth century had however long faded. The viola da gamba had entrenched itself in a few courts; hardly any composers still wrote for it; and the little that they wrote remained reserved for small circles. Dissemination by means of publication was no longer viable for such a niche product. And therefore it was not easy for the last aficionados of the viol to collect new playing material for their instrument. Those who were not able to afford their own court composer had only one way to replenish their repertoire: transcriptions. Preferred originals for these adaptations were violin sonatas, especially the works of Italian composers, thus works by composers who themselves had hardly had an opportunity to become acquainted with the viola da gamba. Among these were Arcangelo Corelli, Francesco Gasparini, Antonio Vivaldi, Francesco Antonio Montanari, and Baldassare Galuppi,⁶ to name just a few.

Thus it was very much a custom of the time that the violin sonatas of Giuseppe Tartini were played on the

¹ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), Introduction, pp. 5–6.

² Walter Schwarze, *Eleonore von Münster* (Osnabrück, 1929), p. 18f.

³ Georg Philipp Telemann, *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba solo, TWV 40:26–37* (Heidelberg, Güntersberg, 2016), G281.

⁴ See also Günter von Zadow, *Die Gambenwerke in der Ledenburg-Sammlung* (Heidelberg, 2016), www.guentersberg.de, forthcoming.

⁵ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London 1789), vol. 4, p. 679.

⁶ This might be a good opportunity to point out that Galuppi’s Sonata in G major, of which a version for viola da gamba and basso continuo was recently found [Baldassare Galuppi, *Suonata à Viola da Gamba* (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2015), G275], is listed in the Breitkopf catalogue of 1762 as a violin sonata. In this case, too, it is very likely a transcription of a violin piece for the viol.

viola da gamba even at the small court of Ledenburg, as evidenced by the manuscripts published here for the first time. The Sonata in G minor is incompletely preserved in the Ledenburg version: the scribe obviously broke off work on it after the first movement. Whoever follows the promising instruction “Volte Andante” (“turn the page to the Andante”) at the end of the Adagio finds only empty staves on the reverse side. However, we know the original version of this sonata for violin and a further version for “Flauto o Violino,” that is to say, for flute or violin.⁷ A comparison of the sources illuminates the high degree of reliability with which the Ledenburg version corresponds to the original; it is merely transposed an octave lower and deviates from the original only here and there in terms of things that were considered of minor importance at that time, such as ties, ornaments, and dotted notes. It is therefore an easy and authentic undertaking to complete the viola da gamba version by transposing the other two movements down an octave. On the other hand, we know the Sonata in B flat major only in the Ledenburg version. However, we can certainly assume that this sonata, too, was based on an original version for violin that was an octave higher. And indeed: the chords and arpeggios of this sonata’s second movement, which lie a bit awkward on the viol, are transformed in our hypothetical violin version into comfortable and normal fingering combinations. An important clue is the F major chord that concludes the first part of the movement: it avoids the fundamental tone that would have taken it below the compass of the violin.

The fact that the two transcriptions were really intended for viola da gamba, and not for another instrument, cannot be seen directly from the manuscripts. The viol is not expressly specified, and the transcriptions’ fidelity to the originals prohibits any conclusions based on idiomatic characteristics of the parts. Thus, for example, the final chord of the second movement of the B flat major sonata is rather awkward on the viol and could have been easily adapted to it through the simply addition of the *d*. For the sake of completeness, one should at least consider whether this verbatim octave transposition could have been intended for a stringed instrument that is tuned an octave lower than the violin, be it a tenor viola or a violoncello piccolo. But a comprehensive look at the Ledenburg Collection sufficiently clarifies the actual addressee of the manuscripts: whoever compiled this small music library had a clear predilection for the viola da gamba and for viola da gamba transcriptions.

Through the Ledenburg find, violinists have gained one, viola da gambists two valuable sonatas by an important composer of the Italian late Baroque. But even more: whoever wants to enrich the repertoire of the viola da gamba of these years is shown a historically legitimate path by these manuscripts.

Bettina Hoffmann
Florence, May 2016

Our Edition

Our edition is based on the following sources:

Sonata in B-flat major

Q1

D-OSa⁸ Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.6. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the heading *Sonata Solo dell Sigr: Tartini*. Four pages of music. Score with melody part in alto clef and unfigured bass. Scribe unknown. Brainard⁹ *deest*.

Sonata in G minor

Q2

D-OSa Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.9. Manuscript of an anonymous G minor movement in the Ledenburg Collection with the heading *Adagio*. Two pages of music. Score with melody part in alto clef and figured bass. Scribe unknown. This Adagio is the first movement of the Sonata in G minor by Giuseppe Tartini. Brainard g7.

Q3

I-Pca¹⁰ 1905 Nr. 58. Manuscript with the heading *Sonata a Violino è Basso Del Sige. Giuseppe Tartini*. Seven pages of music. Score with melody part in treble clef and figured bass. Scribe unknown. Brainard g7.

Q4

CH-BEb¹¹ Mss.h.h.IV.182 (27). Manuscript with the title *Flauto Solo et Basso Del Sig: Giuseppe Tartini*. Title page and six pages of music. Score with melody part in treble clef and figured bass. Scribe unknown. Brainard g7.

In the case of the Sonata in G minor, which is only partially preserved in the Ledenburg Collection, we assume that source Q2 represents the first movement for viola da gamba and bass. The Ledenburg Collection contains a

⁷ That the violin version, and not that for flute, corresponded to the composer’s intentions can be considered certain, not only in view of the composer’s instrumental specialization and the transmission of Q3 in the Biblioteca Antoniana in Padua, where Tartini was active for over forty years. The violin version Q3 contains several notes on the G-string that are avoided at all costs in version Q4, which was intended for the flute (second movement, m. 3, note 10; m. 22, note 10; third movement, m. 4, note 2; m. 12, note 2). It can

be seen in m. 65 that the original compositional idea of the third movement provided for the octave jump downward, since the jump to d², which is also attainable on the flute, is also retained in Q4.

⁸ Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Standort Osnabrück.

⁹ Paul Brainard, *Die Violinsonaten Giuseppe Tartinis* (Göttingen 1959).

¹⁰ Biblioteca Antoniana con Archivio Musicale, Padua.

¹¹ Bürgerbibliothek Bern.

number of sonatas in which the melody part was assigned to the viola da gamba so that it sounds an octave lower. In our edition, Q2 served as the primary source for the first movement, while for the two following movements we selected Q3 as the primary source. Q3 was written by a scribe from the Venetian territories, possibly even from Padua, and is therefore probably more authentic than Q4, about whose origin we know nothing. Moreover, only Q3 offers bass figures.

We have followed the sources as closely as possible. Editorial additions and changes are derived from parallel passages, or the musical context, and are indicated by square brackets (trills, appoggiaturas) and dashed lines (slurs/ties). Editorial accidentals are in parentheses. All

changes that could not be subsumed in this manner are listed in the Critical Report.

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Günter von Zadow
Heidelberg, October 2016
Translation: Howard Weiner



Giuseppe Tartini, Anfang der Sonata G-Moll, Ledenburg-Sammlung (Q2)
Giuseppe Tartini, beginning of the Sonata in G minor, Ledenburg Collection (Q2)