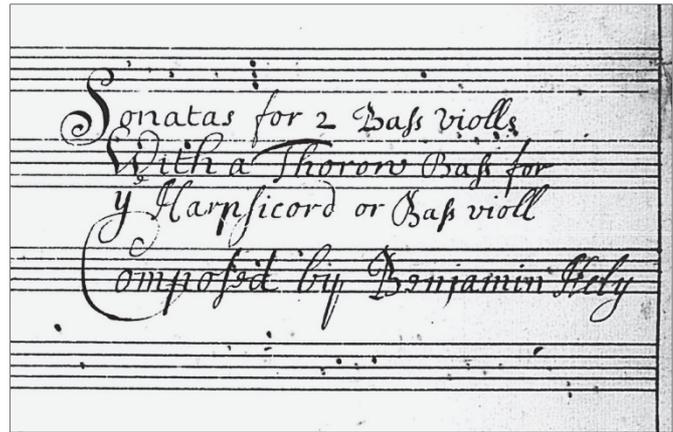


Peter Holman vergleicht die vorliegenden Sonaten Helys mit den Triosonaten Purcells, nur dass hier die Melodiestimmen eine Oktave tiefer liegen⁶. Alle Sonaten beginnen wie meist bei Purcell mit einem homophonen Grave im geraden Takt, das in ein kontrapunktisches fugenartiges Allegro übergeht. Es folgt dann mindestens ein Satz im Dreiertakt, entweder ein fließendes Largo in drei Halben oder ein Satz im 3/4-Takt. Hely schreibt idiomatisch für die Gambe, so dass durch die drei Bassgamben ein angenehmer, reicher und harmonischer Klang entsteht, wie wir ihn zum Beispiel von den Sonaten Michael Nicolais kennen.

Günter und Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, September 2017



Benjamin Hely, Titel der Quelle Q1, 1. Stimme
Benjamin Hely, title of the source Q1, 1st part

Introduction

Aside from the fact that Benjamin Hely was active in London during the 1680s and 90s, we know very little about his life. Many viol players are familiar with the viola da gamba method *The Compleat Violist*, which was printed in London in 1699 and includes Hely's two suites for viola da gamba solo.¹ On the title page of this collection, Hely is described as "y^e late famous master," from which we can deduce that he had been a professional musician. Hely died in London in 1699 as can be seen from the still extant list of his legacy of instruments and music.²

The three-part sonatas in the present edition are Hely's most important known compositions. There are two manuscript sources:

Q1

GB-Ob³ Mus. Sch. C.78 a–c

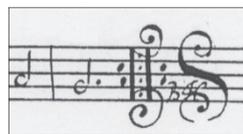
Sonatas for 2 Bass Violls With a Thorow Bass for y^e Harpsicord or Bass violl Composed by Benjamin Hely. The manuscript consists of three individual parts. The bass is figured. It contains seven sonatas,

the seventh of which is however not by Hely and not for two bass viols.⁴

Q2

GB-Ob Mus. Sch. E.428 a–b

Sonatas For two Bass Viols to a Thorough Basse. M^r Benjamin Hely. Of the manuscript, only the two viola parts have been preserved. The scribe was Francis Whity.⁵



Q1 served as the primary source for our edition. It is possibly an autograph, since the flourish following all the sonatas (except the seventh) displays the initials "BH" in all the parts. However, the fact that the first viol part in the Fifth Sonata in F Major erroneously has two flats in the key signature throughout speaks against this hypothesis. The composer surely would have noticed the scribal error.

⁶ Holman, S. 33

¹ *The Compleat Violist or An Introduction to y^e Art of Playing on y^e Viol* (London 1699), printed by J. Hare and B. Norman. The two suites by Hely are found in: Benjamin Hely, *A Set of Lessons, Ein- und zweistimmige Stücke für den Unterricht auf der Viola da Gamba*, edited by G. and L. von Zadow (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2017), G319.

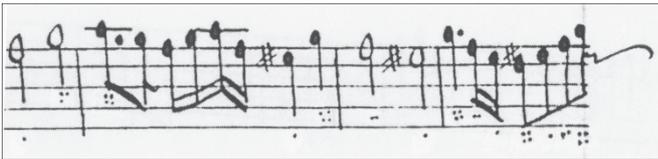
² Peter Holman, *Life after Death: The Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge 2010), p. 32.

³ University of Oxford, Bodleian Libraries.

⁴ The seventh sonata is by Dietrich Becker, see: Dietrich Becker, *Sonate A-Dur für Violine, Viola da Gamba und Basso continuo*, edited by G. and L. von Zadow (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2017), G320.

⁵ Peter Holman, *Life after Death*, p. 32.

Our edition follows source Q1 as closely as possible. However, several corrections were required, which are based on Q2. All modifications and additions with regard to Q1 are indicated by dashed lines or parentheses. All other divergences are listed in the Critical Report (see below). The bass figures have been adopted unchanged; where they are obviously incorrect, they have been amended and placed in parentheses. Apart from that, our basso continuo realization provides guidance in cases of questionable harmonies.



Q2 displays a distinctive feature in that two, three, or four dots, always in the same configuration, are found on the stem side of the notes. These are fingerings in a relatively rare notation. We have reproduced these dots, which appear only in the first part, since they represent something unusual and provide information about historical fingerings.

As the original title of Q1 indicates, these sonatas can be played by three viols alone. In the fifth and sixth sonatas, the bass part occasionally calls for a C, once even in conjunction with a D-flat. This indicates that the lowest string was tuned down to C, which was a fairly common practice in England. The bass part can also be supported by a harpsichord or other chordal instrument. Our score with basso continuo realizations can be of aid in this.

Peter Holman compares Hely's present sonatas with Purcell's trio sonatas, the only difference being that the melody parts are an octave lower here.⁶ As often the case in Purcell, all of Hely's sonatas begin with a homophonic Grave in duple time, which transitions into a contrapuntal, fugue-like Allegro. This is followed by at least one movement in triple time, either a flowing Largo in 3/2 or a movement in 3/4. Hely wrote idiomatically for the viola da gamba, so that with three bass viols a pleasant, rich, and harmonious sound results, such as that we know, for example, from the sonatas of Michael Nicolai.

Günter und Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, September 2017
Translation: Howard Weiner

Kritischer Bericht *Critical Report*

Wir vermerken die Schreibweise des Originals, wenn diese von unserer Edition abweicht. T1 = Takt 1, N1 = Note 1

We indicate the original reading, if it differs from our edition. T1 = bar 1, N1 = note 1

I Grave/Allegro Bc T13	
I Grave/Allegro Bc T41	
I Largo/Allegro... Bc T25	„Presto“
I Largo/Allegro... VdG2 T31 N4	
I Largo/Allegro... Bc T47	

I Largo/Allegro... Bc T54	
II Adagio Bc T12 N2–3	
II Allegro VdG2 T30 N2	
II Allegro VdG1 T33 N4–6	
II Allegro Bc T37	
III Allegro Bc T27	
III Aria VdG1 T8	
III Grave/Presto... Bc T21	

⁶ Holman, *Life after Death*, p. 33.