

A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN SOURCE
FOR THE *ORGELBÜCHLEIN*:
YALE MISC. MS. 545

Emerson Morgan

The Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University acquired in May 2008 a manuscript, shelfmark Yale Misc. MS. 545, containing sixteen chorale preludes from the *Orgelbüchlein*, BWV 599–644, of Johann Sebastian Bach. The manuscript, which came to light at auction from an unidentified seller, represents a source previously unknown to scholars, recorded neither in Schmieder nor in the critical commentary to the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*. The date of 1747 on its title page places it within the company of a small number of extant sources of the *Orgelbüchlein* copied within the lifetime of the composer. This study asserts that the manuscript was copied not in direct proximity to J. S. Bach in time or place, but that an intervening exemplar was likely. The chronological layer represented by one chorale and the date inscription of the manuscript correspond to points in time about two decades apart. Within that interim the currently unidentified possessor of the manuscript almost certainly had a role in the copying of this source.

Description and Contents

The manuscript is bound as a single gathering of twelve folios, oblong quarto, 157 × 196 mm. The page material is paper, sturdy, light brown, slightly darkened and crumbling at edges, with a small tear at the fore edge of f. 6. The binding material consists of pasted *Buntpapier*, marbled in red, yellow, green, and purple. The pages and covering are bound with three stitches, knotted between ff. 6 and 7. No foliation is present. Ink, dark brown, appears consistent in color and quality throughout the text and musical notation. The edge of a watermark, almost completely cropped, is visible and flanked by chain lines at the upper edges of ff. 2 and 3.