

A RECONSIDERATION OF BACH'S ROLE AS
TEXT REDACTOR
IN THE ZIEGLER CANTATAS

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At the end of his second year in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach composed nine sacred cantatas to texts by Leipzig poet Mariana von Ziegler (1695–1760).¹ Despite both their textual and musical interest, these works have received little attention in the Bach literature, often being relegated to a passing reference in the midst of a larger study.² While downplaying Ziegler's significant contribution to Bach's sacred cantata output, scholars have been quick to assert that Bach (or perhaps another librettist) altered Ziegler's texts for his settings. Since a number of differences exist between the cantata texts as set by Bach and as published by Ziegler, scholars have assumed that Ziegler's texts were revised for inclusion in the Leipzig liturgy.

The fact that Ziegler's texts set by Bach exist in two different versions is certainly a point of interest. We know surprisingly little about Bach's textual approach to cantata libretti, as the textual sources for most of Bach's almost 200 extant sacred cantatas are unknown. In a number of cantatas for which the librettist is known, Bach's setting is itself the only source for the text as no published version exists. Therefore, the nine Ziegler cantatas are among a

¹This essay is based on chapter two of my "Christiana Mariana von Ziegler's Sacred Cantata Texts and Their Settings by Johann Sebastian Bach" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2003). Thanks go to Don O. Franklin for his insightful comments on the text and to Martin Petzoldt, Han-Joachim Schulze, and Alfred Dürr for conversations about textual issues in the Ziegler cantatas.

²See, for example, Malcolm Boyd, *Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134–35, and Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 279.