

Synopsis of the preface by Thomas Fritzsch

Conrad Höffler was born in Nuremberg in 1647. At an early age he enjoyed musical training in his home town with the viola da gambist and cornettist Gabriel Schütz, who also taught his contemporary Johann Philipp Krieger. Höffler received his first engagement as a musician at the court of Bayreuth. In 1673 he let himself be lured away, as “court musician and viola da gambist,” to Ansbach, where he was to stay for only three years. He subsequently found a position in the princely chapel at the court of Duke August of Saxony-Weissenfels in Halle an der Saale, where shortly thereafter Johann Philipp Krieger was to become vice-Kapellmeister. Also in the service of this chapel was Johann Beer, whose autobiography, written between 1679 and 1700 in the form of a chronicle, represents an invaluable source of information.¹⁶ For political reasons, the court, and with it the chapel, had to move to Weissenfels in 1680. In the years that followed, Krieger brought the Weissenfels court chapel to a high musical level, and the ensemble enjoyed an excellent reputation far beyond the borders of the duchy. Höffler died in Weissenfels in 1696.

With his *PRIMITIÆ CHELICÆ*, published in 1695, the gambist Conrad Höffler erected a memorial to himself. The frontispiece is by Christian Romstedt, a renowned illustrator and copperplate engraver (see the cover). The motto under the illustration of Johann Beer refers to Beer’s and Höffler’s music-aesthetical views. Höffler’s foreword “to the musical reader” also deals with these views and describes his rather casual approach to the rules of counterpoint and the fugue.

Our Edition

Our edition is based on the only completely preserved exemplar of the 1695 print, which is housed in the tradition-rich Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau (D-Z), under call number Mus. 29.1. The source is a very cleanly engraved score, although at times the notes are a bit squeezed together, yet entirely legible.

Our edition follows the model very closely. Accidentals are placed according to modern custom, that is to say, they are valid for the entire measure; necessary cancellations resulting from this are added without comment. Suggested accidentals at variance with the model are placed in parentheses. Instead of a critical report, we have annotated within our score the few altered or questionable passages. – We would like to thank the Ratsschulbibliothek for permission to reproduce three pages from the original in facsimile. Moreover, we thank Thomas Fritzsch for his insightful preface, and Howard Weiner for the English translation of the synopsis.

Günter and Leonore von Zadow
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Translation by Howard Weiner

Umseitig: Einführung und erste Notenseite aus dem Originaldruck der *Primitiae Chelicae* von 1695
Next page: Introduction and first music page from the original print of the *Primitiae Chelicae* of 1695.

¹⁶ Johann Beer, *Sein Leben von ihm selbst erzählt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).