

A. Bruckner's Sketches and Drafts

A Comparative Study

Mario Aschauer

Recipient of a Max Kade Fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the Yale School of Music

"So eben ist die *achte Sinf.* fertig in der *Scitze* (leider.)"
Bruckner to Franz Schalk, 16 August 1885

Various libraries and music collections preserve fragments of manuscripts that Bruckner wrote during the process of composition and that therefore preceded the first completed scores of his works. These manuscripts may be grouped into three main categories: sketches and particell drafts, score drafts, and composition scores.

Sketches and Particell Drafts

Rather few surviving manuscripts by Bruckner can be deemed as sketches. They contain short musical passages such as fugal themes and explorations of their contrapuntal possibilities. Many more surviving manuscripts may best be described as drafts in short-score or particell notation. They contain longer passages and are notated in ink and/or pencil on two, three, or four staves.

Score Drafts

These manuscripts vary greatly in their degree of preparation. Some are prepared scores which include only the notes of leading voices (e.g. 1st violins and basses); others are almost finished and are furnished with dynamics and articulation markings. As a result of Bruckner's habit to discard and replace single bifolios from the score at different stages of the compositional process, for almost any of his larger works score draft fragments (bifolio outtakes) are extant.

Composition Scores

For a number of smaller vocal works and for some larger works from the pre-Linz period, there are manuscripts in full score that show numerous corrections, even cancellations of groups of staves. In addition, consecutive steps of the compositional process can often be identified as layers in different shades of ink in these manuscripts. These manuscripts were obviously not preceded by sketches and drafts and may thus be referred to as composition scores.



Score Draft for *Te Deum*. Benedictine Abbey Kremsmünster.

Today, a number of studies have been carried out on Bruckner's compositional procedures from the perspective of single works. However, the complete corpus of Bruckner's extant preliminary material has never been subject to in-depth investigation and still remains uncataloged. This project aims to satisfy this research lacuna in three steps.

Step 1: Catalog

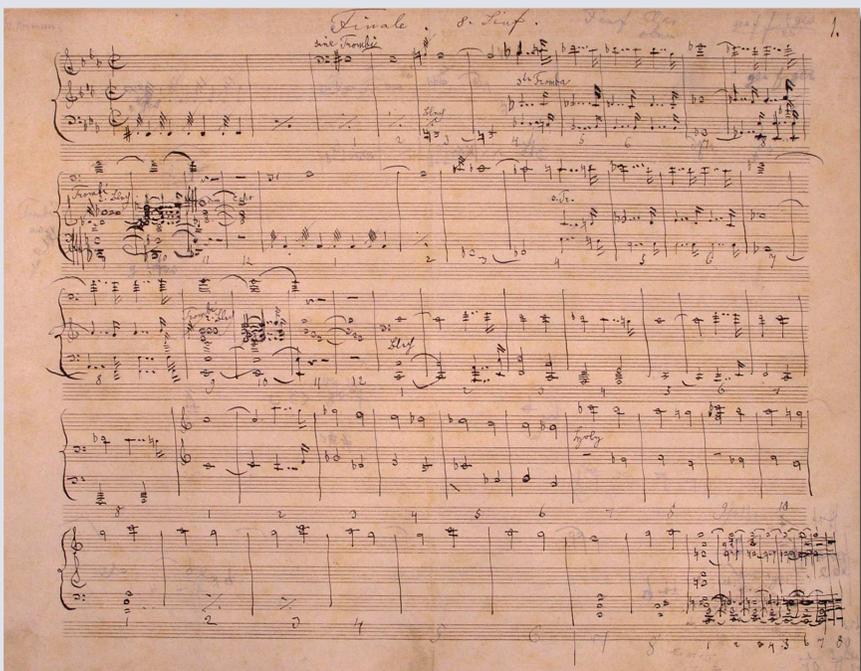
An extensive catalog of sources will list all extant sources, present their contents, and provide pertinent bibliographical information.

Step 2: Interpretation

The corpus of sources will be both philologically scrutinized and hermeneutically contextualized. Comparison will be the primary method employed in this process. Thus, preliminary manuscripts including sources for different genres and from all stages of Bruckner's development as a composer will be compared to each other and to similar material by other contemporary symphonic composers such as Schubert, Schumann, and Mahler. The analysis will focus on how the music was distributed on the paper (including changes of the writing ductus), how different writing implements were employed and, furthermore, how Bruckner made use of figured bass, metrical numbers, dynamics, articulation signs, tempo indications, lyrics, and other verbal comments and annotations in the process of sketching and drafting. Also, the way Bruckner was influenced by his teachers and the treatises he used will be subject of this investigation. The results will give us the hitherto most comprehensive picture of Bruckner's working procedures and their context.

Step 3: Edition

Most of Bruckner's sketches and drafts, except those for Symphony No. 9, remain available only in editions that do not meet modern philological standards, if they are published at all. Therefore, important examples from the material will be edited as step 3 of the project.



Particell Draft for Symphony No. 8 (Finale). Benedictine Abbey Kremsmünster.