

# “... und bißhero mein Glück in der Welt zu suchen ...” – Notes on the Biography of Jonas Friederich Boenicke<sup>1</sup>

---

RASHID-S. PEGAH

Researching and studying 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries musicians seems to be an easy task, especially when the individual in question was a member of a *Hofkapelle*. That is: when it is known at which court he (rather more seldom: she) belonged to the musical forces. The simplest way would be to go looking at the relevant archive for the accounts of the court and period of time and the relevant archival records of that *Hofkapelle*. In addition, one could look for the parish records to expand the picture with information from the family and social life of the musician. Yet, some of these musicians used to travel around extensively – even when they had a stable position in a court or civic musical ensemble. Thus, it can become a more difficult task to trace their whereabouts.

If account ledgers are extant, normally it seems to be sufficient to look up exclusively the *Hofkapelle* section or sections of each ledger. Although, increasingly, it seems to be reasonable to also examine other

---

1 For their generous help with my research and writing this article I am gratefully indebted to the following: the staffs of the Thüringisches Staatsarchiv Gotha (especially to Frau Archivamtsrätin Rosemarie Barthel who facilitated my studies most kindly) and of the Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abteilung Dessau; Herr Stadtarchivar Christoph Engelhard (Stadtarchiv und Wissenschaftliche Stadtbibliothek Memmingen); the staff of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin SPK. Brian Clark, M. A. (Arbroath, UK), kindly shaped my English. Dipl.-Desig. Rainer Nowak (Regensburg) visualized Boenickes travels and I am grateful for his efforts.

sections of courtly (or civic) account ledgers. More recent experiences have revealed the section “Auff Verehrungen und gnädigsten Befehl” (“for honorarium and on most gracious order”) as a frequently rewarding and interesting source. Whoever is searching for traveling or itinerant musicians might find traces of the individual in question in that very section. Also other itinerant individuals normally turn up there, as the rulers at Early Modern German courts commonly showed their grace and munificence by giving them some money to continue their travel or itinerary, if the ruler himself had no interest in employing the person offering his or her services. Currently, it seems that entries in this section for some musicians are the only documentation of their existence. One such example comes from the time of Johann Sebastian Bach’s (1685-1750) tenure as *Hofkapellmeister* to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen (1694-1728, since 1704 ruling under the regency of his mother, since 1713 independently). In the *Kammerrechnung* (chamber [of finances] accounts) Johannes 1718/19 it says:

“March 21, 1719

To the castrato Ginacini, on his departure, who sang here, too,

[receipt] nr. 320

20 Thaler.”<sup>2</sup>

As far as I have been able to discover, nothing else is known on the castrato Ginacini<sup>3</sup> so far.

- 2 “21 Mart[iis]: [1719]. Den *Castraten Ginacini* Zur Abfertigung[,], welcher sich alhier auch höhre[n] laßen., N. 320 – 20 [Thaler].” D-DElsa, Z 73 Kammer Köthen, Kammerrechnung Johannes 1718/19, fol. 43v [olim Ausgabe, pag. 35]; WÄSCHKE, 1907, p. 36; SMEND, [1951], p. 19, n. 29 (p. 153); HOPPE, 2000, p. 43; RICHTER, 2010 [2008], p. 58.
- 3 Rudolf Rasch suggested in the discussion which followed this paper to identify “Ginacini” with (Francesco Bernardi detto) Senesino. More likely seems his identity with Pietro Guaccini (Guazzini), probably born in or around Cremona. Guaccini came to London, in March 1713. In about 1718 he was as a virtuoso and chamber-musician at the ducal court of Wolfenbüttel. On November 14, 1718, he was praised in a poem for his performance in the opera *Teodosio* at Hamburg, yet he left soon after in disgust. During carnival 1726 he performed in two *drammi musicali* at Genoa (*Adelaide* by unknown authors, and *Partenope* with a libretto by Silvio Stampiglia and music by Pietro Vincenzo C[h]iocchetti); see BURROWS et al., 2013, p. 265; MERBACH, 1924, p. 355; MARX/SCHRÖDER, 1995, pp. 366f. and 446; SARTORI, 1990-1994, vol. 1, p. 26, no. 286; vol. 4, p. 359, no. 17831.

Köthen is also the place where the main subject of this brief contribution is clearly documented for the first time. And apart from an important note elsewhere – which I shall quote in the following chronological turn – Jonas Friederich Boenicke’s biography can mostly be reconstructed, thanks to diverse entries in the section “for honorarium and on most gracious order” and to recently discovered letters of recommendation. “Johann [erroneous for Jonas] Friedrich Bohnako who sang” (“Joh[ann]: Friedrich *Bohnako*, so sich *vocaliter* hören laßen“) received five thaler on his departure from Köthen on 8 August 1723.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes, instead of Jonas Boenicke, he is called Johann by the accountants and Bohnako may be a misspelling of his surname. During the second half of October 1727, Boenicke visited the court of Landgrave Friedrich III Jacob of Hesse-Homburg (1673-1746, ruling since 1708) and in early November the court of the duke of Saxe-Eisenach. The latter recommended him to Duke Friedrich II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1676-1732, ruling since 1691/93), describing the singer as “born at Halberstadt” (“von Halberstadt gebürtig”). By mid-November 1727, Duke Friedrich II gave Boenicke a letter of recommendation to Duke Christian of Saxe-Weißenfels (1682-1736, ruling since 1712).<sup>5</sup> Again at the princely court of Köthen, Boenicke can be found twice more. Both times, he appears under the section “expenditure, for the princely *Kapelle*” (“Außgabe Geld, Zur Fürst[lichen] Capelle”). “To a musician Bönigken of Halberstadt on departure” (“Einen *Musico* Bönigken Von Halberstadt Zur abf[ertigung]“) two thaler were paid on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1728.<sup>6</sup> As a letter of recommendation cited above states, he was born in (or in the vicinity of) Halberstadt.

- 4 D-DElsa, Z 73 Kammer Köthen, Kammerrechnung Johannis 1723/24, Ausgabe, p. 48, receipt no. 593; SMEND, [1951], p. 20, n. 30 (pp. 153-155, here p. 153), reads “Bohnanndo”; HOPPE 1998, p. 33, n. 78 (p. 47, corrects Smend and identifies “Bohnako” erroneously as the “schwarzburg-sondershäusischen Vocalisten Friedrich Johann Bonan”).
- 5 Duke Johann Wilhelm of Saxe-Eisenach to Duke Friedrich II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, *Datum* Eisenach den 5. *Novembr[is]* 1727. [only *courtoisie* and signature autograph] (D-GOTsa, Geheimes Archiv, AAA IV, nos. 36-39, no. 37, not foliated; on the lower end of the page, left, the note: “Jst den 15 9br(is) [1727] | nach Weißen-|felß *recom[m]en-|diret* worde[n].” (“Was recommended to Weißenfels, on November 15 [1727]”).
- 6 D-DElsa, Z 73 Kammer Köthen, Kammerrechnung Johannis 1727/28, p. 110, receipt no. 287; SMEND, [1951], p. 20, n. 30 (pp. 153-155, here 155).

More concrete information about his place of birth shall be discovered presently.

By the end of July 1728, he again visited the Weißenfels court from where Duke Christian sent him to Gotha, while Duke Friedrich II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg provided him with a recommendation to the younger ruling Duke Ernst August (I) of Saxe-Weimar (1688-1748, ruled as co-regent since 1707, independently since 1728).<sup>7</sup> Jonas Friederich Boenicke is recorded once more in Gotha between 12 May 1729 and 3 January 1730. The first date is that of the letter of recommendation given to him by Landgrave Friedrich III Jacob of Hesse-Homburg at Homburg vor der Höhe (near to Frankfurt am Main). This letter is one of the most interesting documents about the singer in question, due to the wealth of information included:

“The bearer of this [letter], a virtuoso, called Jonas Friederich Boenicke, born at Gröningen near Halberstadt, asked most subserviently to enter Our services. Yet, We presently don’t know how to employ him, even though he was found very able and skillful in musical matters when he performed more than once. Thus he asked Us most subserviently for a most gracious letter of recommendation to Your Dear Grace, which We didn’t want to deny him, none the less in view of his ability – rather We wanted to entreat Your Dear Grace hereby to assail the above mentioned Boenicke, if a vacant post is available, at Your *Kapelle* or elsewhere, as according to his own statement he his versed too in law studies. He will recognize the high grace shown herein with most subservient gratitude [...]”<sup>8</sup>

- 
- 7 Duke Christian of Saxe-Weißenfels to Duke Friedrich II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, *Datum* auf Unserm Schloße Neu Augustusburg zu Weißenfelß den 29. Jul[ii]: 1728. [only *courtoisie* and signature autograph] (D-GOtsa, Geheimes Archiv, AAA IV, nos. 36-39, no. 38, not foliated; a note: “An | den jüngern H[ern]. | hertzog Zu weimar.” (“To the younger Sir Duke at Weimar”).
- 8 Der “[...] überbringer Dießes[,] ein *Virtuosus*, Nahmens *Joh*: [recte: Jonas] *Friederich Boenicke*, aus Gröningen bey Halberstadt gelegen, gebürtig, [hat,] umb in Unßere Dienste zu gelangen, unterthänigste Ansuchung gethan; Wir aber selbigen, obwohlen er, in *Musicalibus*, bey mehrmahliher Ablegung seiner *Proben* sehr *habil* und geschickt befunde[n] worden, Dermahlen nicht gar wohl Zu *employren* wißen; So hat er bey Unß umb ein

The most important information included in this exceptionally detailed letter of recommendation is the name of Jonas Friederich Boenicke’s place of birth: Gröningen, situated immediately to the north-east of Halberstadt. Furthermore Boenicke mentioned during his sojourn at Homburg vor der Höhe his earlier law studies. This letter also reveals an impression of Boenicke’s vocal abilities for the first time. After the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg heard him sing several times – Boenicke had been there already in October 1727 (see above) – he found the singer “very able and skillful”. Surprisingly, it seems that Boenicke did not immediately travel to Gotha once he had received the letter of 12 May 1729, at Homburg vor der Höhe. Did he make detours on his way, or stay longer at other places in the meantime, or did he spend the following months up to the beginning of the new year at Friedenstern palace? From there, he was recommended just once more to the Köthen princely court, on 3 January 1730.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the third entry from the Köthen chamber accounts regarding Boenicke dates from 27 February 1730. On this day, the “Musicus Börnicke” received “on departure” four thaler.<sup>10</sup> This seems to have been Boenicke’s last musical visit to the princely court of Anhalt-Köthen.

At Weimar he receives “on departure” 4 fl 12 groschen, on 1 April 1730.<sup>11</sup>

---

Gnädigstes *Recom[m]endations*-Schreiben an Ew[er]: I[ie]bd[en]: unterthänigst angehalten, welches Wir ihm auch, in Ansehung Seiner Geschicklichkeit, umdowniger [lies: um desto weniger] abschlagen – Vielmehr Ew[er]: I[ie]bd[en]: hiedurch FreundVetter[ich]: ersuchen wollen, obgedachter *Boenicke*, wo anderst bey *Deroselben Capelle* oder sonsten, da er seinem Angeben nach *in Studio Juris* auch *versiret*, ein- oder ander *vacante* Stelle Vorhanden seÿn solte, mit denselben zu begnadigen. Er wird dieße ihm hierunter bezeügende hohe Gnade mit allem unterthänigsten Danck erkennen [...]. Friedrich III. Jacob L[andgraf] Z[u] Hessen[-Homburg] to Duke Friedrich II. of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, Dat[um]: *Homburg* Vor der höhe den 12.<sup>ten</sup> *May* 1729 [only *courtoisie* and signature autograph], D-GOtsa, Geheimes Archiv, AAA IV, no. 40, not foliated; on the first page a note: “an | AnhaltCöth[en] d[en] 3. Jan[uar]ii. 1730” (“to Anhalt-Köthen, January 3, 1730”).

9 See note 8.

10 D-DElsa, Z 73 Kammer Köthen, Kammerrechnung Johannis 1729/30, p. 118, receipt no. 433.

11 D-WRI, Rechnung Nr. 253, fol. 273r, no. 4204-5.

After that date, Jonas Friederich Boenicke once again pays repeated visits to the ducal court of Saxe-Gotha, at Friedenstein palace. His next documented appearance there dates from 8-12 November 1731. Boenicke introduced himself with a letter addressed to the ducal heir.<sup>12</sup> The ruling duke must have been either absent or already ill, as he died only four months later, in March 1732. In his letter, Boenicke refers to his earlier occupation at another Central German court. And he mentions being on his journey home, unfortunately without specifying the place where home is:

“[...] it has now been some years since I as a musician left the service of the prince [duke] of [Saxe-Merseburg-]Spremburg, and hitherto I was forced to try my luck in the world, and now I am intended to travel to my home. As, Most Serene Hereditary Prince, most gracious Prince and Sir, I lack the means necessary for it, I beg You most submissively, most humbly, to condescend most graciously by letting me have something to cover the traveling expenses, as a particular sign of Your Highness’s exceeding graciousness [...]”<sup>13</sup>

Jonas Friederich Boenicke dated his letter – currently the only one by him which is known – “Gotha, 8 November 1731”.<sup>14</sup> Four days later, he attested with his signature the receipt of three thaler. Where his home place was then (Gröningen or Halberstadt?) or how long Boenicke stayed there, is impossible to say. However, at the end of the following year, he was – perhaps albeit briefly – at the ducal court of Saxe-Hildburghausen.

---

12 This was not an unusual procedure as the example of Filippo Balatri shows. Cf. the article by Berthold Over in the present volume, pp. 109-133.

13 “[...] welchergestalt ich als ein *Music[us]* einige Jahr her außer Hochfürstl[ichen]: *Spremburgische[n]* Dienste[n] gewesen, und bißhero mein Glück in der Welt Zu suche[n], genöthiget worde[n], und nunmehr nacher meine Heÿmath Zu reise[n] willens bin; da nun[,] Durchlauchtigster Erb=Printz, gnädigster Fürst und Herr, mir die da zu gehörige[n] Mittel fehle[n]; Alß ergeheth an *Dieselbe[n]* mein unterthänigst demüthigstes bitte[n], *Dieselben* wolle[n] aus besondere[n] Hochfürstl[ichen]. hohe[n] Gnade[n] mir ein *Viaticum* | darreiche[n] Zu laße[n], gnädigst geruhe[n].”

14 D-GOTsa, Friedensteinische Kammerrechnungen, Belege, 1731/32, vol. V (Nr. 400 - 530b), no. 410. See also D-GOTsa, Friedensteinische Kammerrechnungen Vol. 94 Michaelis 1731/32, fol. 222r, receipt no. 410.

Indeed, another letter of recommendation for Jonas Friederich Boenicke from Hildburghausen was dated, 27 November 1732. From that letter, one learns more about his voice type and gets another impression of his skill in singing. The Duke of Saxe-Hildburghausen calls “Jonas Friedrich *Bænick* a tenor [who] knows his profession well” (“Jonas Friedrich *Bænick*, ein *Tenorist* [der] auch sein *metier* wohl versteht”).<sup>15</sup> Boenicke presented himself with this letter again to the Gotha Duke, now Friedrich III (i.e. the former princely heir who had shown his gracious benevolence to the singer one year before). Duke Friedrich III of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1699-1772, ruling since 1732) let Boenicke have a letter of recommendation to the Duke of Württemberg-Bernstadt-Oels (Oleśnica in Silesia, which is part of Poland today). Together with that letter, the “*Musicus* Jonas Friedrich Bönicke” received 4 florins (gulden) and 12 groschen “on his departure”, by “most gracious” order of the Gotha duke<sup>16</sup> on 2 January 1733. The 4 florins and 12 groschen were paid to Boenicke by Johann Valentin Schneider,<sup>17</sup> a trumpeter and ration non-commissioned officer (*fourier*) of the Gotha court, whose son, Ludwig Michael Schneider, painted the most appealing portrait of Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767).<sup>18</sup>

During winter 1733/34, Jonas Friederich Boenicke visited a court where a friend of Telemann acted as *Hofkapellmeister*.<sup>19</sup> From 1722 until

15 Duke Ernst Friedrich II of Saxe-Hildburghausen to Duke Friedrich III of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, *Dat[um]:* Hildburghauße[n], d[en]. 27: *Novembr[is]:* 1732; a note: “Ist de[n] 2. *Jan[uar]i:* nach Oelß *recom[m]endiret* word[en] [...]” (D-GOtsa, Geheimes Archiv, AAA IV, no. 43, not foliated).

16 D-GOtsa, Friedensteinsche Kammerrechnungen Vol. 95 Michaelis 1732/33, fol. 182v, receipt no. 215.

17 D-GOtsa, Friedensteinsche Kammerrechnungen, Belege, 1732/33, vol. II (Nr. 151 - 289), no. 215.

18 Cf. Portraits.

19 D-DElsa, Z 92 Kammer Zerst, Kammerrechnung 1733/34<sup>I</sup>, pag. 218, 1. no. 1788; Kammerrechnung 1733/34<sup>II</sup>, pag. 218, 1. Nr. 1788: “10. [Reichsthaler]. Einem Sänger Nahmens Böhnig, welcher sich unterschiedene mahlen hören laßen” (“a singer called Böhnig who sang at several times”) [undated entry (after December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1733)]; WÄSCHKE, 1906, p. 54: “Die Wintersaison 1733/34 brachte die Gastspiele des Sängers B ö h n i g, der wiederholt seine Kunst zu zeigen Gelegenheit erhielt [...]” (“The winter season 1733/34 brought guest performances of the singer B ö h n i g [Boenicke] who had repeated opportunities to display his artfulness [...]”).

his death, Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688-1758) directed the court music of the princes of Anhalt-Zerbst (Zerbst is situated midway between Magdeburg and Dessau, and southwest of Berlin).

While the documents quoted so far placed Jonas Friederich Boenicke exclusively in a Central German and Hessian context, a brief description of a concert appearance places him at a South German trading town and makes his inclusion in an article devoted to itinerant musicians crucial. But before considering that Bavarian source, some short remarks are necessary about its origin. It belongs to another category than the account entries so far quoted. The small town in South Germany where Boenicke is recorded is called Memmingen. Memmingen is situated midway between Ulm and Kempten, southwest of the better known city of Augsburg. Especially during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Memmingen was an important trading place, as it belonged to the Electorate of Bavaria since 1702, and the Elector bestowed the monopoly for the Bavarian salt trade on the municipality of Memmingen. As the town grew richer, the arts flourished. Yet, already by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, an art-loving medical doctor had initiated a *collegium musicum*.<sup>20</sup> It became a flourishing musical institution, and professional musicians or competent amateurs on their way to or from Italy sometimes took part in the concert assemblies of the Memmingen *collegium musicum*. The activities of this important civil musical circle were noted in minutes or records, of which two volumes are still extant – originally there were three. According to an entry in the second volume of the Memmingen minutes, the third assembly in the year 1735 was caused by the unexpected arrival of a musician not from this area of the Roman-German Empire. It sounds as if that foreign musician was in need of a performance occasion. Thus, the third assembly of the members of the Memmingen *collegium musicum* took place on 5 February 1735:

“[...] a most noble private council [...] had sent Herr organist Ellmer to my insignificant self, to arrange an extraordinary [assembly of the] *collegium musicum*, as a foreign musician was here, called Johann [Jonas] Friederich Boenicke from Merseburg in Saxony, who came

---

20 Cf. on musical life in Memmingen HOYER, 2001. My source studies in Memmingen took place in July 2007, as part of the research project “Expedition Bach”, organized by the Bach-Archiv Leipzig and sponsored by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation.

from Italy, along with his wife. And to the remarkable pleasure of the numerous assemblies of members [of the *collegium musicum*] he sang [with] a tenor voice in a fine manner. They were his own pieces, foreign Italian ones, and other agreeable fine pieces were performed too. Honorary guests paid their honor to the *collegium musicum* [...]. For the musicians who played on *corni da selva*, trumpets [and], oboes, an extra glass of wine was procured.”<sup>21</sup>

Most interesting is the first part of that description. Johann Conrad Ellmer the elder (1701-1779), the mentioned organist, belonged to a local dynasty of civic musicians who also had some connections to Central Germany, as one of Johann Conrad Ellmer’s sons studied at Leipzig university.<sup>22</sup> Jonas Friederich Boenicke was on his way back from Italy, in February 1735. Where exactly and since when he had been there remain open questions. There is virtually no documentation of German or other northern musicians in Italy itself other than later biographical or autobiographical accounts. More intriguing is the fact that Boenicke was married. Had he married his wife prior to traveling in Germany or did he come to know and marry her during his Italian sojourn? The listener who wrote down what happened in the extraordinary *collegium musicum* assembly of 5 February 1735 qualified Boenicke’s manner of singing as “fine”. When it comes to the content of the performance by Boenicke,

21 “[...] hath Ein hoch Edler Geheimbder Rath [...] H[err]<sup>en</sup> organist Ellmer Zu meiner wenigkeit gesant, um[m] Ein *Extra Colleg[ium]: Music[um]*: Zu halten, weilen Ein Frembder *Musicus* Sich allhier befand, Nahmens, Johan[n] [recte: Jonas] Friderich *BenicKe* von Mörßeburg in Saxen, welcher aus Welschland kam, nebst Seyner Frau, und Zu der in Zahl reicher h[er]<sup>ren</sup> *Collegiaten*, Ihrem sonderbahren vergnügen, Einen *Tenor* mitt Schöner *Manier* sang, Es waren Seyne Eygene Stück, Welsch, worbey noch andere angenehme Schöne Stück *Music[ire]*! wurden, Ehren Gäste beEhrtten das *Colleg[ium]: Music[um]*:, H[erre]<sup>n</sup> *Baron BucKhamer* Preußischer haubtma[n], Ihro wohlweish[ei]!, der Geheimbde H[er]<sup>f</sup> Schelhorn, und noch andere hießige h[er]<sup>ren</sup>. Denen h[er]<sup>ren</sup> *Musici*, so die Wald horn=*Trompeten*= *hopoy*, geblaßen, ist ein Glas Wein *Extra* angeschafft worden.“ *Pars II<sup>da</sup> | Continuatio | Des Protocolls von E[einem]. | Lo[e]bl[ichen]. Collegio Musico. | Von A[nn]o: 1731. Biß d[en] 23. August | 1763, p. 68 (D-MMa, A 396/4).*

22 Kirchenbuch St. Martin Memmingen, Beerdigungen, p. 107 (D-MMa, 156-37); HOYER, 2001, pp. 29f.

the pieces are described as “his own pieces, foreign Italian ones”. Were they his own compositions perhaps on (more recent) Italian poetry? Or did he simply just own them? And to what extent did Boenicke require the accompaniment of horns and trumpets and oboes? Or did they just contribute some purely instrumental interludes – early samples of *Harmoniemusik*? Boenicke’s presence at Memmingen called forth a second extraordinary assembly of the *collegium musicum* members:

“[...] on 8 February 1735, again an extraordinary *collegium* was held, before the departure of the above mentioned virtuoso Boenicke of Merseburg in Saxony, during which he sang fine and rare pieces again, but mostly foreign Italian ones. For the rest fine and agreeable music was performed. At the same time it was agreed to let circulate a plate at the table, on behalf of the aforementioned Boenicke. Then a sum of 6 florins and 15 kreutzer came together, to which 1 florin and 15 kreutzer were given from the cash-box, and a present of one doubloon which he accepted with great thanks. There were honorary guests present at this *collegium* [...] and the younger daughter of Herr mayor Herrman who sang a little song ‘Sometimes a little funny, sometimes a little thirsty’ etc., for the pleasure of all the gentlemen.”<sup>23</sup>

The two performances at the Memmingen *collegium musicum* seem to have been rewarding for the tenor virtuoso Jonas Friederich Boenicke, on his way back from Italy to Central Germany. He must have arrived in

23 “[...] den 8<sup>ten</sup> Febr[uarii]: [A(nno): 1735.] ist wiederum ein *Extra Colleg[ium]*: gehalten worden, vor der abReyße des obbemelten *virtuosen BenicKe* von Mörßeburg in Saxen, in welchem Er widerum Schöne u[nd]: *rare* Stuck gesungen, aber mehrenteils Welsche, ist auch übrigens Schöne u[nd]: angenehme *Music* gemacht worden, Zu gleich hath man[n] beliebt, einen Deller an der Tafel | herum gehen Zu laßen, p[ro] bemeltem *BenicKe*, da dan[n] fl 6 x 15. gefallen seyn, worauf noch fl 1 : 15. aus der *Cassa* gegeben worden, u[nd]: man[n] Ihme ein *präsent* von einer *Duplonen* gemacht, so Er mitt großem danck angenom[m]en. Ehren Gäst waren in dießem *Colleg[ium]*: herr *Consulent* Wegelin von Lindau, Geheimbder herr Schelhorn, und *Tit[ul]*: herr Burger Meister herrman jüngere J[un]gf[er]: Tochter[,] die Zu aller herren vergnüegen gesungen, ein Liedel, [‘]Alle weil ein wenig Lustig, alle weil ein wenig durstig[‘], et[cetera]:“. D-MMa, A 396/4 *Pars II<sup>da</sup>* | *Continuatio* | *Des Protocolls* von E[einem]. | Lo[e]bl[ichen]. *Collegio Musico*. | Von A[nn]o: 1731. Biß d[en] 23. August | 1763, pp. 68f.

Hesse at the latest during September of the same year of 1735 because the penultimate signs of his life date from about this time. In the end, they lead back to Gotha and to the by now well-known section “Auff Verehrungen ...”.

According to yet one more letter of recommendation to the Gotha court, Jonas Friederich Boenicke made an appearance before a Count of Stolberg-Gedern.<sup>24</sup> The small court of Gedern was situated approx. 50 km to the north-east of Frankfurt am Main. With a recommendation from the Count of Stolberg-Gedern, the singer presented himself to the Prince of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen who was then at Gehren, a small town where the Prince had a remarkable palace. At the end of September 1735, he sent Boenicke from Gehren to Gotha, several kilometers to the north-west. At the ducal Friedenstein palace, Jonas (erroneously: Johann) Friederich Boenicke received 4 thaler “on his departure”<sup>25</sup> on 8 October 1735. The last sign of life (presently known) of Jonas Friederich Boenicke also dates from Gotha; it is another receipt written in his hand:

“3 rl. that is three imperial thaler have been paid to me  
the undersigned, as a sum to cover traveling expenses, from  
the high princely chamber, with all thanks,  
Gotha,  
21 November 1737                      Jonas Friederich Bönicke  
musician.”<sup>26</sup>

The case of Jonas Friederich Boenicke shows the relevance of more detailed research of historical account ledgers and letters of recommenda-

- 
- 24 Prince Günther I (XLIII) of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen to Duke Friedrich III of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, Gehren den 30<sup>tes</sup>[m] Sept[embris]: 1735 [only *courtoisie* and signature autograph] (D-GOtsa, Geheimes Archiv, AAA IV, no. 45, not foliated).
- 25 D-GOtsa, Friedensteinische Kammerrechnungen Vol. 98 Michaelis 1735/36, fol. 129v, receipt no. 158.
- 26 “3 rl. sage dreÿ Reichs[thaler] sind mir Endes / unterschriebe[nem] Zu eine[m] Viatico aus / Hochfürstl[icher]. Cam[m]er mit allem Dancke / geZahlet worde[n], / Gotha / d[en] 21te[n] / *Novembr*[is] 1737: *Jonas Fried[erich]: Bönicke / Musicus*.” (D-GOtsa, Friedensteinische Kammerrechnungen, Belege, 1737/38, vol. II (Nr. 117 - 255b), no. 139; cf. D-GOtsa, Friedensteinische Kammerrechnungen Vol. 100 Michaelis 1737/38, fol. 120r, receipt no. 139.

tion from Central German courts for the reconstruction of the biography and itinerary of (traveling) musicians. The relevant entries are valuable sources for chronologies and to obtain an idea of the extent of the contribution of itinerant musicians and other artists or persons to 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century court culture. The letters of recommendation help to refine such chronologies; they sometimes contain important and vital further information which can be invaluable for the reconstruction of biographies. They also provide an idea of princely networks which enabled itinerant musicians to search for (and in some cases find) their individual happiness in Early Modern Europe.

Figure 1: Jonas Friederich Boenicke's itinerary (1727-1737)



## Literature

- BURROWS, DONALD et al., George Frideric Handel. Collected Documents, vol. 1: 1609-1725, Cambridge 2013.
- HOPPE, GÜNTHER, Zu musikalisch-kulturellen Befindlichkeiten des anhalt-köthnischen Hofes zwischen 1710 und 1730, in: Beiträge zum Kolloquium “Kammermusik und Orgel im höfischen Umkreis – Das Pedalcembalo” am 19. September 1997 im Johanngeorgsbau des Schlosses Köthen, ed. by ID. (Cöthener Bach-Hefte 8 / Veröffentlichungen der Bachgedenkstätte Schloß Köthen/Anhalt XXI), Köthen 1998, pp. 9-51.
- ID., Die Hofkapelle in Köthen, in: Bachs Orchestermusik. Entstehung – Klangwelt – Interpretation. Ein Handbuch, ed. by SIEGBERT RAMPE/DOMINIK SACKMANN, Kassel et al. 2000, pp. 39-46.
- HOYER, JOHANNES, “Wo man die Musik pflanzet”. Aus der Memminger Musikgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende der Reichsstadt (Materialien zur Memminger Stadtgeschichte, Reihe B: Forschungen, Heft 7), Memmingen 2001.
- RICHTER, MAIK, Die Hofmusik in Köthen. Von den Anfängen (um 1690) bis zum Tod Fürst Leopolds von Anhalt-Köthen (1728), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Saarbrücken 2010 [first published: 2008] (likewise: Halle, Univ., master thesis, 2007).
- MARX, HANS JOACHIM/SCHRÖDER, DOROTHEA, Die Hamburger Gänsemarkt-Oper. Katalog der Textbücher (1678-1748), Laaber 1995.
- MERBACH, PAUL ALFRED, Das Repertoire der Hamburger Oper von 1718 bis 1750, in: Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 6 (1924), pp. 354-372.
- Portraits von denen jetzt=lebenden Herren Capellmeistern, [Nuremberg] 1750.
- SARTORI, CLAUDIO, I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800. Catalogo analitico con 16 indici, 7 vols., Cuneo 1990-1994.
- SMEND, FRIEDRICH, Bach in Köthen, Berlin [1951].
- WÄSCHKE, [HERMANN], Die Zerbster Hofkapelle unter Fasch, in: Zerbster Jahrbuch 2 (1906), pp. 47-63.
- ID., Die Hofkapelle in Cöthen unter Joh. Seb. Bach, in: Zerbster Jahrbuch 3 (1907), pp. 31-40.

