

KlavarScore

Aria in D minor BWV515

"Erbauliche Gedanken eines Tobackrauchers"
(Edifying thoughts of a Tobacco smoker)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
From the Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach (1725)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece 'Aria in D minor BWV 515'. Each system consists of two staves. The left system includes a diamond-shaped trill symbol at the top right and a trill symbol at the bottom right. The right system includes a trill symbol at the bottom right. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Trills are shown with a vertical line and a diamond symbol, with the first note of the trill being the main note and subsequent notes being smaller and stemless.

So oft ich meine Tobackspfeife Anon.

So oft ich meine Tabakspfeife,
Mit gutem Knaster angefüllt,
Zur Lust und Zeitvertreib ergreife,
So gibt sie mir ein Trauerbild -
Und füget diese Lehre bei,
Dass ich derselben ähnlich sei.

Die Pfeife stammt von Ton und Erde,
Auch ich bin gleichfalls draus gemacht.
Auch ich muss einst zur Erde werden -
Sie fällt und bricht, eh ihr's gedacht,
Mir oftmals in der Hand entzwei,
Mein Schicksal ist auch einerlei.

Die Pfeife pflegt man nicht zu färben,
Sie bleibt weiß. Also der Schluss,
Dass ich auch dermaleinst im Sterben
Dem Leibe nach erblassen muss.
Im Grabe wird der Körper auch
So schwarz wie sie nach langem Brauch.

Wenn nun die Pfeife angezündet,
So sieht man, wie im Augenblick
Der Rauch in freier Luft verschwindet,
Nichts als die Asche bleibt zurück.
So wird des Menschen Ruhm verzehrt
Und dessen Leib in Staub verkehrt.

Wie oft geschieht's nicht bei dem Rauchen,
Dass, wenn der Stopfer nicht zur Hand,
Man pflegt den Finger zu gebrauchen.
Dann denk ich, wenn ich mich verbrannt:
O, macht die Kohle solche Pein,
Wie heiß mag erst die Hölle sein?

Ich kann bei so gestalten Sachen
Mir bei dem Toback jederzeit
Erbauliche Gedanken machen.
Drum schmauch ich voll Zufriedenheit
Zu Land, zu Wasser und zu Haus
Mein Pfeifchen stets in Andacht aus.

Each time I take my pipe 'n tobacco English Translation © Z. Philip Ambrose

Each time I take my pipe 'n tobacco
With goodly wad filled to the brim
For fun and passing time with pleasure,
It brings to me a thought so grim
And adds as well this doctrine fair:
That I'm to it quite similar.

The pipe is born of clay terrestrial,
Of this I am as well conceived.
Ah, one day I'll become earth also -
It falls and breaks, before ye know't,
And often cracks within my hand:
My destiny is much the same.

The pipe our wont is not to color,
It's always white. And thus I think
That I as well one day while dying
In flesh at least shall grow as pale.
But in the tomb my body will
Be black like it when used at length.

When now the pipe is lit and burning,
We witness how within a trice
The smoke into thin air doth vanish,
Nought but the ashes then are left.
And thus is mankind's fame consumed,
Its body, too, in dust assumed.

How oft it happens when we're smoking
That, when the tamper's not at hand,
We use our finger for this service.
Me thinks, then, when I have been burned:
Oh, if these cinders cause such pain,
How hot indeed will hell yet be?

I can amidst such formulations
With my tobacco ev'rytime
Such practical ideas ponder.
I'll smoke therefore contentedly
On land, at sea and in my house
My little pipe adoringly.

English Translation BWV 515a
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<http://www.uvm.edu/~classics/faculty/bach>

**) In this piece, trills are just a suggestion as they are not shown in the original. Beginners need not feel obligated to play the alternating notes of the trills if it seems too challenging for them at this stage, however, when not playing trills, it is important to play the main note which is the lower note. Standard KlavarScore notation always shows the first note of the trill in standard size stemmed form whether or not it is considered to be the main note. Auxiliary notes which follow are shown stemless and smaller.*

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- Scrolling file of this piece with English lyrics
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