Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*: the Genesis of the Symphony-Cantata and a Critical Edition of its Original Version

Vol. I

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Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 2, the *Lobgesang* Symphony, was first performed on 25 June 1840. However, he was not satisfied with the original composition and made significant alterations in the autograph manuscript before releasing it for publication. The symphony is known today in its 1841 second version. A critical edition, based on the copyist Eduard Henschke's copy of Mendelssohn's original score, has been prepared of the discarded, and for decades lost, original version. The edition and critical notes make up volume II. As background and preamble to the edition, a narrative in five broad sections, contained in volume I, puts the work into context.

Chapter 1 gives an account of the historical background to the symphony, the Gutenberg Festival, which brought about its composition, and early performances. The compositional development of the work is the subject of Chapter 2 focussing on the creation of a new genre - the symphony-cantata. This includes renewed speculation as to whether the symphony dates back to an otherwise lost symphony in B flat of 1838.

Chapter 3 provides an introduction to the sources - their whereabouts, physical appearance and importance - as a prelude to Chapter 4, a physical unravelling of Mendelssohn's autograph score with its layers of revisions, paste-overs, page insertions and deletions. A critical comparison of the two versions, made possible by the availability of the Henschke score, provides the first clear insight into the compositional process of the *Lobgesang*, and an opportunity to discuss the major

structural alterations made to the first version and why they were made.

Chapter 5 draws together conclusions from the earlier chapters focusing on the unusual nature of the musical form and textual content, and to what extent Mendelssohn achieved his aims, using his background as a point of reference in determining what some of those were. The thesis concludes that these aims were continually developing through each stage of the compositional process as he hit upon new ideas, seemingly by accident, until he finally created the symphony-cantata.

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Preface

The final version of Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* Symphony was first performed on 3 December 1840 at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. However, there were two earlier performances of the symphony in an earlier form in Leipzig and Birmingham on 25 June and 23 November 1840 respectively. Volume II of my thesis provides the first critical edition of the original version. The intention of the accompanying Volume I is to trace the origin of Mendelssohn's hybrid form, the symphony-cantata, using an introduction to available source materials, a comparison of the two versions of the *Lobgesang*, and historical and biographical information on the composer. This work must inevitably begin with a look into the background of how and why the *Lobgesang* was conceived and includes an assessment of what Mendelssohn aimed to achieve by writing it.

All musical examples are quoted directly, and without alteration, from the relevant source. Roger Fiske's 1980 edition of the *Lobgesang* has been used in examples as an authoritative representation of the second version.

I have Peter Ward Jones of the Bodleian Library to thank for introducing me to the score which inspired this work, Eduard Henschke's important copy of the original version, and for drawing my attention to the fact that this had not been looked at substantively before. I have similarly benefited from Peter Ward Jones' extensive knowledge of source materials and Mendelssohniana in general.

I am grateful to Dr Edward Olleson for his supervision, proof-reading and guidance in putting together a piece of work of this type, especially in the later stages. Furthermore, I acknowledge

that Dr Olleson's interpretation of Mendelssohn's handwriting is more accurate than mine and that he is much better acquainted with the *Liber Usualis* which is quoted in Volume I. I thank him and the Faculty of Music for their support and flexibility regarding my supervision by correspondence in the final stages.

Finally, my former tutor Dr John Milsom deserves a special acknowledgment for his continued interest and encouragement.

Chapter I

A short prehistory and history of the *Lobgesang* Symphony

The Gutenberg Festival

The *Lobgesang* Symphony received its first public performance at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig on 25 June 1840[1]. The work was commissioned by the Leipzig City Council for the Gutenberg Festival, a two-day celebration of the invention of the printing process some 400 years earlier by Johannes Gutenberg.

Gutenberg, born *c.* 1398, a member of the aristocratic Gensfleisch family in Mainz, perfected a system of printing from movable type which was to remain in use without significant alteration until the 20th century. The concept had been understood by the Chinese and Koreans centuries earlier - they even developed movable types using porcelain and metal - but the complex oriental orthography made it difficult for them to put the technique to practical use, and it was not fully developed. Gutenberg was the first to apply the technique successfully to the Western alphabet. This led to the production of fine books in Mainz and the flourishing of a prosperous book trade in the region. Significantly for those who wished in later centuries to celebrate the occasion, Gutenberg's printing masterpiece was the magnificent 42-line Bible of 1455, known today as the 'Mazarin' Bible or 'Gutenberg' Bible, of which just 47 exemplars survive.[2]

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[1] A complete list of early performances, and available details concerning these performances, is provided at the end of this chapter.

[2] For further information see Alan G. Thomas, *Great Books and Book Collectors* (London, 1988), 33-36.

Johannes Gutenberg made possible the greater production and wider dissemination of literature, and the production of the 'Gutenberg' Bible in particular was to be significant in the history of the Reformation. His work was crucial in the spread of education. He paved the way for Martin Luther, who was to produce his German translation of the New Testament in 1522, and for the Protestants who were soon to emerge and reorganise the church through their writings and publications. The small German towns of the Rhine Valley were especially indebted to Gutenberg: they owed their very existence and development to the subsequent explosion of the book trade. By the year 1500 there were more than 20 printing firms in Strasbourg, where Gutenberg supposedly made his discovery, and other German towns such as Mainz and Leipzig similarly benefited from their central location in the market. Four hundred years later, many of these towns were each to hold a Gutenberg festival, to honour the man who changed the lives of the people who lived there and to recognize the importance of printing to the economic and cultural development of their communities.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was an appropriate choice of composer and conductor for the Leipzig festival, being both socially and artistically a leading light in the city. Mendelssohn was the scion of a well-known, well-to-do family which had made its name in the region in banking, a commercial by-product of the prosperity through trade to which Gutenberg contributed. He was, or had been, acquainted with such contemporary German intellectuals as Goethe and Hegel, was familiar with their work and ideas, and was a grandson of the famous central European Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. He was therefore well established as a knowledgeable, well educated and cultured gentleman. Finally, he already had an established reputation as a musician, advanced enough to be familiar with contemporary composition, yet traditional enough to be popular with his contemporary audiences. He could be relied upon to

produce a work of high quality which would strike the right note. These considerations would imbue the symphony with a good deal of its individuality and meaning.

The Gutenberg Festival required the composition of a work of great ceremonial gravity. On a superficial level we have in the *Lobgesang* a work conceived in the grand manner, as would befit such an occasion. It is often suggested that Mendelssohn may have been thinking of Beethoven's 9th Symphony in composing a symphony in which the dramatic climax is a lengthy choral finale. In reality, of course, the Lobgesang's final movement, at around two thirds of the total length of the symphony, dominates the formal structure. It is nevertheless certain that Mendelssohn had Beethoven in mind while composing the *Lobgesang,* most notably in his attempt to achieve a balanced cyclic, and in the instrumental movements continuous, formal structure. Similarly, the baroque-style dotted rhythms, especially of the opening theme, which cyclically pervades the whole work, are reminiscent of a Handel oratorio, and imbue the symphony with a sense of ceremony and grandeur. Knowing that the symphony would be performed in the Thomaskirche, Mendelssohn included an organ part to add richness to the scoring of the finale.

On a deeper level, however, and equally inspired by the festival, the symphony had an extra-musical agenda. With such formal emphasis on the finale, to the extent that the three instrumental movements, although discrete, appear almost to constitute an introduction to it, there is great weight added to the text, which was selected by Mendelssohn from the Bible. The structure has been referred to as a symphony-cantata, not least by Mendelssohn himself. However, the presentation of static scenes, with quasi-characters and even the hint of a plot to illustrate the theme of darkness superseded by light and hence the dawning of knowledge, as discussed in Chapter 5, is reminiscent once again of the oratorio. Appropriate to the Gutenberg occasion, the

texts are filled with imagery and symbolism which would not be lost on either a predominantly Lutheran audience or one that appreciated the significance of the festival.

Mendelssohn seems to have entered into the spirit of the festival with great enthusiasm. There was scarcely a year between the date of the commission and the first performance, and yet he was able to produce a work with a high degree of ceremonial festivity and one which, given certain reservations, he described to his brother Paul in the following terms: 'I think that the recitative, and the middle of my "Hymn of Praise" are more fervent and spirited than anything I have yet written.'[3]

The *Lobgesang* Symphony was first performed on the first day of the two-day festival with Mendelssohn himself as conductor. On the same day he went on to perform as organist in Handel's 'Dettingen' Te Deum. The festival continued the following day with Weber's 'Jubel' Overture, again with Mendelssohn as conductor.

An early performance history of the *Lobgesang* Symphony

Mendelssohn began to receive correspondence pertaining to the commission for the Gutenberg Festival in July 1839 from Dr Raymund Härtel, the chairman of the Leipzig Council Festival Committee of 1840.[4] Raymund Härtel was also the chairman of the Leipzig-based publishing

[3]Letter to Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy of 13 February 1841: *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847*, ed. P. & C. Mendelssohn Bartholdy, trans. Lady Wallace (London, 1863), 243.

[4]Many of Mendelssohn's letters to Breitkopf & Härtel are collected in the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt, and in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the publisher's replies can be found in the Staatsarchiv, Leipzig.

house Breitkopf & Härtel and therefore a man who had as much cause to honour the invention of printing and the flourishing of the German book trade as any. Breitkopf & Härtel would eventually be the first publishing house to put the *Lobgesang* into print.

The symphony was well received at the first and subsequent performances. Mendelssohn's friend Elise Polko refers to the first performance in her memoirs and alludes to the '...gentle piety [which] pervades the whole work ... like incense in the house of God'. She praises the work further by saying: 'Texts from the Bible put together with exquisite taste, celebrate the triumph of heavenly light over darkness.'[5] Such a description, if a little unreliably exuberant, nevertheless gives an idea of how the work and indeed the festival would have been viewed by the 19th-century German Lutheran community. Indeed it indicates how a Lutheran composer, albeit an erstwhile Jewish one, with a classical upbringing and an intellectual background, might have viewed his work. It was a great Lutheran as well as a great civic occasion.

Other performances were quickly organized. The *Lobgesang* was performed in England as part of the Birmingham Festival on 23 September in the same year, this time in English with a translation provided by Alfred J. Novello. Again Mendelssohn conducted. He had already used the Birmingham Festival as an early testing ground for his works. *St Paul*, for example, was performed there in September 1837, and *Elijah* was to be first performed there in August 1846. Moscheles gives a good contemporary account of Mendelssohn's enduring popularity in Britain at that time.[6]

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[5]Elise Polko, *Reminiscences of Mendelssohn*, trans. Lady Wallace (London, 1869), 89-90. Although Polko refers to the *Lobgesang's* first performance of 1840, she includes in her account (published 1869) a description of the 'Watchman Scene' of the later published version, which was not present in the symphony's original form.

[6]Charlotte Moscheles, *Life of Moscheles*, trans. A.D. Coleridge (London, 1873), ii. 65.

However, the proceedings did not pass completely without hiccups. In a letter of 21 July 1840 to Karl Klingemann, Mendelssohn stated that an Englishman would provide the translation and that Klingemann himself should afterwards revise and approve it. Unfortunately Mendelssohn was ill for much of that summer, and in the ensuing confusion it seemed as if the translation would not be provided and the Birmingham performance would be cancelled. This induced Novello, the future publisher of the work in England, to hurry to Leipzig, obtain a copy of the score, and prepare his own translation for the occasion, apparently unsanctioned by the composer.[7] In the end, Mendelssohn recovered, and the performance went ahead as planned.

Thus far the symphony had not reached publication, and indeed it seems as if Mendelssohn regarded it as unfinished. By 27 November 1840 a number of substantial revisions had been made to the work. Previous speculation as to the extent of these revisions has been based largely on correspondence between Mendelssohn and Karl Klingemann. Douglass Seaton speculates further in the light of sketch source-material in Berlin.[8] It is now possible, in the light of an additional copy of the score used for the first performance, to address this question afresh.

The fact that the symphony supposedly took less than a year to write may explain the need for substantial revision soon after the second performance. As with his oratorio *Elijah*, prepared for the 1846 Birmingham Festival, in composing the *Lobgesang* Mendelssohn was working to commission and towards a set deadline. The ideas may have been well formulated in the

[7]The score produced by Mendelssohn's copyist Henschke, on which the accompanying critical edition is based, was missing for years in the Novello archives before being transferred to the British Library, and subsequently to the Bodleian Library.

[8]Staatabibliothek zu Berlin, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 19. See Stuart Douglass Seaton, 'A study of a collection of Mendelssohn's sketches and other autograph material' (diss., Columbia University, 1977).

composer's head, but the deadline could have led to hasty working-out. Mendelssohn is noted for the lightning speed and yet high quality of his work when inspired, and his manuscripts rarely reveal evidence of difficulties. The *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture, for example, is said to have been composed in under a month; *Elijah* was composed at a rapid rate during the spring and summer of 1846. However, in the cases of *Elijah* and the *Lobgesang* their respective first performances turned out, in hindsight, to be mere intermediate stages in the compositional process. In all probability Mendelssohn considered them in this light from the start. The first performance of the revised version of the *Lobgesang* took place in Leipzig on 3 December 1840, this time in the Gewandhaus with Mendelssohn as conductor.

A later performance at the Hanover Square Rooms in London on 15 March 1841 was the last performance of the original version. This took place, however, without Mendelssohn's sanction; it post-dated the first performance of the second version, and only came about because the revised version was then unobtainable in England: Mendelssohn's name was such a draw that the concert organisers felt that the performance should go ahead at all costs. Mendelssohn held the English publisher and impresario Novello responsible for this breach of trust, and the incident seriously damaged the relationship between the two of them.

The following is a more complete list of early performances with additional information where available:[9]

25.VI.40: Leipzig, Thomaskirche, first public performance

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[9] T. Müller-Reuter. *Lexikon der deutschen Konzertliteratur* (Leipzig. 1909; repr. New York. 1972). 100-2 except where otherwise stated.

First day of the Gutenberg Festival; Mendelssohn conducted, soloists unknown.

23.IX.40: **Birmingham, Town Hall, second public performance**

Second day of 20th Birmingham Festival, English translation by A. Novello; Mendelssohn conducted, soloists were Miss Birch (S), Mme. Caradori-Allen (S), Mrs Knyvett (S) and John Braham (T),[10] alto chorus sung by men.

3.XII.40: **Leipzig, Gewandhaus, first public performance of second version**

Mendelssohn conducted, soloists were Fr. Livia Frege (S), Frl. Sophie Schloss (A), Herr C.M. Schmidt (T).

16.XII.40: **Leipzig, Gewandhaus**

Ninth subscription concert; Mendelssohn conducted.

15.III.41: **London, Hanover Square Rooms, unsanctioned performance of first version**

Second concert of the Philharmonic Society; Charles Lucas conducted, soloists were Miss Rainforth (S), Miss Williams (S), Mr Pearsall (T).[11]

10.IV.41: **Leipzig, Gewandhaus orchestra**

Special private performance; Mendelssohn conducted.

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[10] A private rehearsal was held at Hanover Square, London before Mendelssohn arrived in England in September. Moscheles and Knyvett provided artistic direction. See Moscheles, ii. 65.

[11] 'Philharmonic Concert', *The Musical World*, xv(1841), 170. Müller-Reuter, however, states that the tenor soloist was John Braham.

10.IX.41: **Gloucester, Gloucester Cathedral**

Final day of the Gloucester Festival; soloists included Miss Birch (S), Miss Marshall (S).[12]

14.IX.41: **Naumberg, Church of St. Wenzel**

Performance to celebrate the birthday of the King of Prussia;

Otto Claudius conducted, soloists Mad. Bünau-Grabau (S), Herr Schmidt (T).

After an early attempt to bring the composition into print after the first performance of the original version,[13] the *Lobgesang* Symphony was published in its final form in full score in September 1841. The instrumental, solo and chorus parts, and piano-vocal score were published earlier, in June 1841.

Correspondence between composer and publisher reveals how meticulous Mendelssohn was in his proof-reading and how particular he was that every little detail should be represented correctly.[14] He often made minor last-minute compositional alterations to the score. The correspondence reveals equally how careless nineteenth-century publishers were, and what little notice they took of composers' wishes as a rule. Time and again Mendelssohn would point out the same errors to the publishers, not without a certain amount of irritation. An amusing detail is contained in a letter from Mendelssohn to his publishers of 9 April 1841,[15] in which he

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[12] *The Musical World*, xvi (1841), 85, 157, 178.

[13] See Roger Fiske (ed.), 'Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 2', Edition Eulenburg (London, 1980), p. IV.

[14] *Briefe an deutsche Verleger*, ed. R. Elvers (Berlin, 1968), 108 ff.

[15] Ibid., 114.

complains that the thinness of the proofing paper caused his instrumentalists difficulties during rehearsals for the special private performance the following day.

Chapter II

Compositional history of the *Lobgesang* Symphony and the birth of the Symphony-Cantata

Origins as a lost symphony in B flat?

The compositional history of the *Lobgesang* Symphony cannot be determined in every detail. The first communication on the subject of the Gutenberg Festival and Mendelssohn's commission, dating from July 1839, indicates that it must have taken just short of one year to conceive, plan, and compose the symphony. However, Mendelssohn's correspondence of 1838-9 reveals that he was working on a symphony in B flat which he described as being almost finished and due for imminent completion as soon as he found time.[16] In addition to such references to a symphony in B flat found in Mendelssohn's published correspondence, there may be many more among the host of unpublished letters thought to survive from the same period. Were these readily available, we might be able to learn a great deal more about the relationship between the symphony in B flat and the *Lobgesang*, and with greater certainty.

The fact that there is neither a known trace of a separate symphony in B flat, nor any identifiable separate sources, has led some writers to assert that the two symphonies are essentially one and the same. This would suggest that the *Lobgesang* section has been superimposed upon the earlier symphonic work by the same composer, and that the compositional history of the *Lobgesang* began in the late 1830s. After a hundred and fifty years of speculation this is still a matter of

[16] *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles*, ed./trans. Felix Moscheles (London, 1888; repr.; New York, 1970), 167, 172, 191, 205; Ferdinand Hiller, *Mendelssohn, Letters and Recollections*, 2nd edn., trans. M.E. von Glehn (London, 1874), 132.

controversy, but a complete overview of the *Lobgesang*'s compositional history must begin at this point for the sake of chronology. A good deal of what there is to say about the earlier symphony in B flat and any links with the *Lobgesang* will inevitably remain speculative.

The lost symphony in B flat is never said to have been completed, according to available correspondence. The Gutenberg Festival commission came, and, with the festival under a year away, there would have been little time to put the symphony into final form as an independent piece and produce a new one. It is tempting to imagine that the pressure of a deadline to compose a work of appropriate magnitude for the festival occasion induced Mendelssohn to use a substantial amount of material already adumbrated in the incomplete symphony. It is known, also from correspondence of this period, that Mendelssohn was feeling the pressure of other commitments.[17] If he did re-use earlier material in this way, however, it was presumably because he found its character well-suited for adaptation to the festival occasion in any case. The fact that the *Lobgesang* is of an unusual hybrid form, and of ungainly proportions in the opinion of most critics, excites further speculation.

If the *Lobgesang* Symphony began as a purely instrumental symphony in B flat, then the choral movement was certainly an afterthought. Robert Schumann was the first person to suggest this - a plausible explanation for the awkwardness of the hybrid form - in his review of the first performance; and this without any background knowledge of the work.[18]

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[17] A letter to Hiller of 17 April 1838 gives an insight into the pattern of Mendelssohn's working life at around this time: see Hiller, 132.

[18] *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, xiii / 7, 4 July 1840.

It must have been apparent to Schumann's trained ear at the first performance that Mendelssohn had had difficulty in achieving formal balance. The choral finale was simply too long and self-contained to bear any but a superficial attachment to the preceding three instrumental movements. In a letter to Karl Klingemann of 18 November 1840 Mendelssohn himself admitted its imperfections,[19] and his subsequent pains to rectify this are evident in the history of the primary source material - the working manuscript in Mendelssohn's hand - containing as it does layer upon layer of alterations and paste-overs. The extent of the revisions can be clarified with the benefit of a source that has only relatively recently become available, a fair copy of the score of the original version made by Mendelssohn's copyist, Eduard Henschke, now held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.[20]

A comparison of the Henschke score with Mendelssohn's working autograph offers support for Schumann's theory that the final movement was an afterthought, in that it reveals the need to reassess the formal proportions of the work. In the course of revision the choral final movement was extended significantly, and the links between the instrumental movements were tightened. Thus Mendelssohn diverts attention away from the formal awkwardness by actually exaggerating the instrumental movements in their role as an introduction to a much larger choral finale. The implication is that over the different stages of composition a more conventional symphonic structure was transformed into the hybrid form we recognise today.

Although there are no surviving sources as yet identified as relating to a separate symphony in B flat, it seems highly unlikely that, since Mendelssohn mentions such a work as being almost

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[19] *Letters 1833 to 1847*, 219-20.

[20] MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 93.

complete, all the sources could be simply lost. We know from Mendelssohn's usual compositional procedure, indeed from the sources available for the *Lobgesang*, that there must have been early sketches in various stages of completion and drafts, if not an actual autograph working score. Most historians have contented themselves with neutrally acknowledging the possibility that the two symphonies are linked, and Schumann's original theory was clearly no more than an educated guess. However, speculation intensifies with each discovery of fresh sources for the *Lobgesang* Symphony. Douglass Seaton, after analysing the Berlin sketch sources,[21] cautiously supports the possibility that the symphony in B flat was a *Lobgesang* prototype. At least a theory is put forward which cannot be disputed any more than unequivocally supported. He also deduces a range of possible dates for the sketches which allow for their existence before the festival commission.

Seaton's ideas will not be rehearsed here. The Berlin sketch sources, however, are notable for what they lack - most of the choral movement - while at the same time the skeletal structure of the sketched work has altered very little between its initial conception and the final product. The ideas for the 'Allegretto' movement have not changed at all, and there are no sketches for the 'Adagio religioso'. A 'religioso' movement may well have been a later addition conceived after the 1839 commission. This would bring an overtly pious element, inspired by the festival, to add to instrumental movements already composed. All the sketches are advanced and detailed in the ideas they contain with regard to melodic structure, harmonic implications, and contrapuntal problems.

[21]Early sketches in piano score bound with sketches of other late works. Sketches especially of first movement (36-42), also beginning of second movement (43) and ideas used in choral movements (44-48). See note 8.

Those sketches which are relevant to the finale consist of 'Die Nacht ist vergangen', a choral number which is the only one to be found in a completely self-contained early version and in full score, the chorale section which was written after Johannes Crüger/ Bach and the first choral number 'Alles was Odem hat', which is so similar to the first movement on account of the cyclic structure of the work.

One interpretation is that the appearance of certain choral movements here, given the absence of others, indicates their importance as the germ of the choral section, assuming that all these sketches do indeed belong together. These would be the ideas which Mendelssohn had the intention of expressing from the start - an introduction cyclically based on the first movement (no. 2), the passing of darkness (no. 7) and the chorale to herald the return of light (no. 8). These are the essential movements; the rest could have been conceived at a later stage.

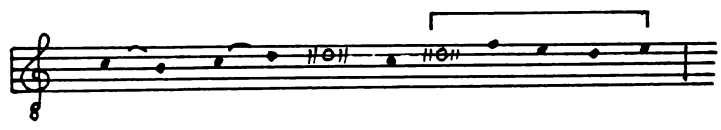
However, there is no proof that anything which is clearly choral was not added later to the other sketches. Furthermore, it is conceivable that, since 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' appears alone in an entirely separate manuscript source and as the chorale is not original, these two could have been individually composed, added to the symphony later and only included among the Berlin sketch sources on account of their later relevance to the *Lobgesang* Symphony as we know it. Another interpretation then is that they would initially have had nothing at all to do with the purely instrumental sketch sources, and the sketches for 'Alles was Odem hat' could then have been conceived to outline a single and simple instrumental finale. Such a movement would have fulfilled the formal objective of cyclic unity in an instrumental symphony in B flat. Even were the latter conceived chorally, a cyclic symphony ending in a shorter 'hymn of praise', with a text from Psalm 150 and without the necessity of referring to the passage of darkness to light, would be the

result. Such a symphony could look as follows:

I:	Maestoso/ Allegro
II:	Allegretto
III:	[Chorale?] Chorus 'Alles was Odem hat'

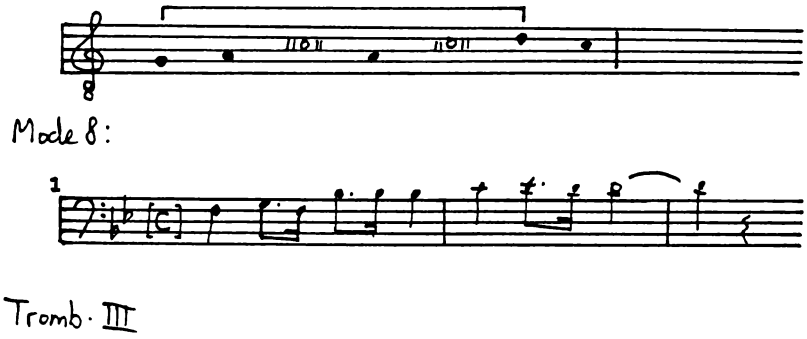
An early preoccupation with late Beethoven contributed to Mendelssohn's formal experimentation with such 'modern' ideas as cyclic unity in his teens.[22] Given the absence of sketches for the 'Adagio religioso', the formal structure would have been very similar to that used in his 1831 Piano Concerto in G minor, op. 25 - a cyclic structure: two movements linked together by way of an introduction to an improvisatory larger finale using thematic material from the first movement.

A cyclic 'symphony of Psalms' may therefore have been Mendelssohn's original intention. Indeed there is an overtly sacred gesture in the plainsong echoes of the symphony's central motif, as if the whole work is welded together with a device of deeply religious symbolism. The examples below compare the first halves of the standard Psalm tones of the two G modes with a quotation of the central motif:



Mode 7:

[22] Joscelyn Godwin, 'Early Mendelssohn and Late Beethoven', *Music & Letters*, lv (1974), 272-85. Godwin's article discusses the influence of late Beethoven on Mendelssohn with particular reference to the former's piano sonatas.



These are examples only. Fiske makes a similar comparison with the 'solemn' version of the second tone as given in *Liber Usualis*.[23] Whatever its precise origins, the central motif was not changed after its earliest appearance in the Berlin sketches. This should not necessarily be taken as evidence that the sketches were not originally intended for a separate symphony in B flat. Furthermore, although the first movement's central motif appears only in sketches for the development section, and two separate ideas are shown as subject material, its presence there at all indicates a prominent role in the exposition. This symphony was always intended to be something out of the ordinary and a little special.

If, however, the *Lobgesang* Symphony and the lost symphony in B flat are two separate and distinct works, Mendelssohn must have worked at a rapid rate to meet the festival deadline. This is entirely possible. As already noted, he had already proved his ability to compose swiftly under pressure when inspired. Furthermore, except for the alterations made after the first performance of the *Lobgesang* and despite its known shortcomings, the symphony's sources are for the most part free of evidence to suggest that the original compositional process caused him any undue difficulty. The Berlin sketch sources are themselves well formulated, and despite the simplicity

[23]Fiske. p. V.

in their representation, show everything that needs to be known including, as noted, such central compositional matters as form, harmony, precise melodic patterns and ideas for working out developmental techniques, especially contrapuntal ones. Thus the essential melodic, harmonic and formal outlines evident in the early sketch sources remain, with certain important qualifications to be discussed, in the *Lobgesang* as we know it.

The revision process

There is unfortunately little in Mendelssohn's correspondence to offer any further clues until November 1840. This was the period after the first two performances, during which the symphony was substantially revised, and compositional problems are more evident. According to correspondence, it is known that major revision had taken place by 18 November 1840. As suggested above, Mendelssohn may have seen the work so far as an interim draft to be improved upon: in fact the symphony only received two authorized performances in this first form. His subsequent revisions are worth a separate study and are the substance of Chapter 4.

Mendelssohn's main reservations concerned the formal balance of the work. Elise Polko's description above gives the impression that it is a cantata based on biblical, in fact mostly Old Testament, texts.[24] Yet this accounts only for the final movement. Three substantial, purely instrumental movements provide the introduction. The problem was always thus, that the instrumental introduction was too long to be an introduction to a cantata, while at the same time the final movement, unlike the first three, departs substantially from the classical symphonic

[24] In fact the texts are not exclusively Old Testament. Parts of no. 6, for example, are taken from Ephesians 5.14.

tradition. The *Lobgesang* Symphony postdated Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* by ten years, but since Mendelssohn's symphony begins conservatively, it is expected to end in the same way. The obvious comparison made with Beethoven's 9th Symphony is erroneous in so far as the choral last movement in the Mendelssohn work accounts for a good two-thirds of the entire work, unlike the more evenly distributed Beethoven.

It should be noted here that a preliminary study of the score of the first version, in conjunction with the autograph working copy, has demonstrated that certain previous assumptions regarding Mendelssohn's revisions were mistaken. In fact the three 'new' vocal sections, nos. 3, 6 and 9, as identified by Roger Fiske in his introduction to the 1980 Eulenburg edition of the *Lobgesang* Symphony, are not at all new to the second version in the strictest sense but are certainly the most reworked and significantly extended portions of the symphony. True, the celebrated 'Watchman Scene', an extension of no. 6, could be regarded as a 'new piece' in itself, and no. 3 has been turned from a solo into a duet. Mendelssohn himself is responsible for this confusion. He described these changes either as his 'four new pieces' or his 'three new pieces' repeatedly in correspondence to Karl Klingemann.[25] Until the availability of the Henschke score, there was no other firm indicator. Thus evidence provided by Mendelssohn in his correspondence, while seemingly straightforward, is not always reliable. The other relevant evidence for this earlier deduction is the Berlin sketch source, which contains no reference to nos. 3, 6 or 9. But then it similarly contains no reference to nos. 2, 4 or 5.

A study of these sources reveals another broad development which relates to Mendelssohn's need

[25]The possible fourth 'new piece' would be no. 10 which is also not new but contains a new fugato to replace an old one.

to reassess the formal balance of the work. According to a bar count, the choral weighting is proportionally increased from approximately half to two-thirds of the entire work. To a large extent this is due to halving the note-values in the 'Allegro' sections of the first instrumental movements and outer choral numbers of the revised version. However, the revised choral section is still 5% longer in proportion when numerical adjustments are made (see Table 1 on p. 48). Although Mendelssohn considered the choral finale unwieldy in its original state owing to its length in relation to the three instrumental movements (see p. 21), during the revision process he actually made it even longer in real terms. At the same time, an attempt was made to unify the three instrumental movements by improving the links between movements. In effect, the revisions, while contributing to Mendelssohn's goal of cyclic unity, make the instrumental movements more like a single introduction. The final movement with its greater length and revisions becomes more of a self-contained formal unit.

In this connection, and to add further to the cantata-like effect of the final movement, two noticeable features are that in the 'four new pieces' the tenor's role has been increased and extended to balance that of the sopranos, and that Mendelssohn has discovered the duet potential of 'Drum sing' ich mit meinem Liede' in the revised version. Despite all the above revisions, however, from many listeners' points of view the formal balance of the work is an aspect which still attracts criticism.

Posterity has come to know the result as the first symphony-cantata - an effective way of side-stepping the formal difficulties while still maintaining allegiance to the classical tradition. Significantly, the idea to give the work such a title was not Mendelssohn's in the first place; it was Karl Klingemann's. The implication of the following quotation supports the theory that the

symphony-cantata evolved by chance and not by any initial grand design.

> By the by, you [Klingemann] have much to answer for in the capital title you hit on, for not only have I sent forth the piece into the world as a 'Symphony-Cantata', but I have serious thoughts of resuming the first 'Walpurgisnacht' (which has been so long lying by me) under the same cognomen, and finishing and getting rid of it at last.[26]

This he did soon after the completion of the *Lobgesang*.

Mendelssohn allowed his ideas to stretch the bounds of practicality. He himself confessed that the *Lobgesang* was not well adapted to performance; that initially he '...had not the courage to [finish with a choral movement], because the three [instrumental] movements were too long for an introduction.'[27]

Despite the likely haphazard origin of the symphony-cantata and Mendelssohn's acceptance of the work's possible imperfections, he was far from dissatisfied with the outcome. 'It lies very near my heart', he wrote to Paul Mendelssohn,[28] and he wanted to know whether Paul shared his feelings. Was he in some way compelled towards the development of the symphony-cantata? For there is a further and underlying reason for the revision of the score. The emphasis here lies entirely in the choral movement and particularly in the 'four new pieces'.

In addition to the *Lobgesang* Symphony's dedication, the title page of the first edition bears a motto taken word for word, as specified by Mendelssohn by letter on 14 May 1841, from Luther's

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[26]Letter to Karl Klingemann of 18 November 1840. See note 19.

[27]Ibid.

[28]20 November 1840: *Letters* 1833 to 1847, 222.

preface to the Wittenberg *Gesangbuch* of 1524:

> Sondern ich wöllt alle Künste, sonderlich die Musika gern sehen im dienst des der sie geben und geschaffen hat. Dr M. Luther.
>
> (I would gladly see all the arts, especially music, serving Him who has given them and made them what they are.)

Mendelssohn himself selected the predominantly Old Testament passages of the finale. A first version draft of the *Lobgesang* text in Mendelssohn's own hand survives in the Bodleian Library.[29] The earlier quotation of Elise Polko sums these up in a characteristically picturesque manner, painting the picture of light triumphing over darkness.

The portion of the work to which her comments are best directed is a sequence in the middle of the finale from the soprano duet 'Ich harrete des Herrn' to the chorale 'Nun danket alle Gott'. In the final version this section is a progression from darkness to light whose dramatic effect is conceived in vividly romantic terms rather than classical. Before the insertion of the 'four new pieces', however, the individual texts seemed disconnected, each setting a self-contained biblical scene of the composer's own choice without logical progression. It seems logical to suppose that Mendelssohn's initial idea was merely to set a series of individual texts from the Bible which appealed to him and possibly had some vague connection with the festival theme of the dawning of knowledge. The revisions almost provide the symphony in its final form with a dramatic plot.

The duet 'Ich harrete des Herrn' sets the scene of gentle piety. Mendelssohn preaches the message that 'blessed are they that hope and trust in the Lord', a hint of advice for what is to follow. Peace

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[29] MS.M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 27, fol. 27.

is disturbed by the tenor solo, 'Stricke des Todes', a dramatic contrast and an introduction to the sorrow of death and terror of Hell. The keystone to the scene of progression, for it is the climax and significantly the genuinely 'new piece', is the so-called 'Watchman Scene', which plunges the music into the realms of the programmatic. *Fortissimo, tremolo* strings maintain the 'terror of Hell' theme, and a lone tenor calls out repeatedly 'Watchman, will the night soon pass?' Despite occasional references to the coming morning, the audience is kept waiting. Then suddenly, from a high angelic soprano without accompaniment, 'The night is departed'. The tension subsides, the music relaxes with the chorus of the original version in joyous spirits, and the episode ends with a chorale in praise of the Lord. The message: the helplessness of man, and the strength of God who triumphs over darkness and evil, and as man's protector brings heavenly light. A more searching discussion of the 'plot' is reserved for Chapter 5.

The theme was either initially obscure without its keystone, or was not really there at all amidst a somewhat disconnected selection of biblical texts which were pious in a general sense. One is tempted to return once again to the idea that the symphony-cantata came into being by stages, and that at the outset Mendelssohn had no over-all idea of the masterly progression which he eventually produced. While the substantial modifications to the choral movement were motivated by the desire to emphasize the cantata-like qualities of the work, the opportunity has been taken to convey the pious/philosophical message. Could this have been motivated by Klingemann's suggestion that the *Lobgesang* might be called a 'symphony-cantata', or *vice versa*? Perhaps Mendelssohn saw in the development of his finale, from a lengthy choral movement on disparate biblical texts to a movement with the coherence of a cantata, an opportunity to seek a deeper, more explicit form of expression than an instrumental symphony generally allows. It is worth noting that Mendelssohn was constantly striving to develop his dramatic expression in music, yet

never managed to complete a serious opera - the comic operetta *Die Hochzeit des Camacho* was the closest he came.

The underlying theme of darkness being superseded by heavenly light has a dual significance. First, the Gutenberg Festival was, as mentioned at the very beginning of Chapter 1, the quatercentenary celebration of printing, a momentous historical event. Such imagery offered the perfect way to celebrate the end of the Dark Ages and the dawning of knowledge. Second, it cannot go unnoticed that this is a deeply pious Lutheran theme. Current research, especially in America, increasingly seeks to exaggerate Mendelssohn's connections with the Jewish faith, building on the work of Eric Werner. Indeed he was born into a Jewish family, but by the age of seven in 1816 he had been baptized to become a devout Lutheran. This question alone is worth further comment, particularly as certain authors have been less than impartial in their concern to emphasize Mendelssohn's Jewishness. Werner, for example, puts the whole issue of Mendelssohn's baptism in the context of an outburst of anti-Semitism between 1816 and 1835, and in particular focusses on one incident involving Mendelssohn and a Prussian prince in 1819.[30]

In summary, while a close study of the sources is surely required before sweeping statements can be made concerning the development of the *Lobgesang* Symphony, it seems as if the final product grew from largely fortuitous origins. It is to Mendelssohn's credit that his dissatisfaction led him to discover a greater potential in the idea that he had chanced upon, so that he set out to realize it by revision. He was soon to return to the idea of the symphony-cantata in a more refined and better-planned second version of *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*.

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[30] Eric Werner, *Mendelssohn: A new image of the composer and his age*, trans. Dika Newlin (London, 1963), 28 ff.

Chapter III

The Source Material: its availability and relative importance

An introduction to the sources

Of several thousand pages of autograph music that Mendelssohn produced during his life, most are now in public collections. The most important sources for a study of the *Lobgesang* Symphony are in Oxford, Berlin and Cracow.

A substantial collection at the Bodleian Library in Oxford owes its origin to the bequest of Margaret Deneke, a close friend of Mendelssohn's grandson Paul Beneke, from whom she received much of her original material.[31] The copyist Eduard Henschke's score of the first version of the *Lobgesang* (**H**), although not part of the original collection, is now contained in these archives. Indeed the majority of the sources required for the current study belong, or are later additions, to this collection.

No sources relevant to this study were found in the Mendelssohn collection at the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in former West Berlin, otherwise another significant centre of Mendelssohn source material. However, a number of early *Lobgesang* sketches (**S**) are located in its counterpart in the former Eastern sector, the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek. Since reunification, the two libraries have been amalgamated and renamed the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer

[31] See Margaret Crum. *Catalogue of the Mendelssohn Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (Tutzing. 1980-83). ii. pp. IX-X.

Kulturbesitz. Former East Berlin may yield more research material in the future.

A number of German treasures found their way to Poland during World War II, originally for safe keeping, and many have remained there to this day as part of war reparation payments. Among these, the autograph full score of the *Lobgesang* (**Aut.**), which originally belonged to the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, is now held by the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Cracow. It may be returned to Germany in the near future.

The following is a complete list of sources available for a study of the *Lobgesang* Symphony to some of which passing reference has already been made in the previous chapter. The essential detail of each source is presented in a single paragraph in note form. An attempt has been made to list the sources in chronological order. Precise order, for example of the autograph text used in the final movement (**T**), an early full orchestral draft of 'Die Nacht ist vergangen'(**BL**) and the Berlin sketches (**S**), cannot be established beyond doubt, and it should be noted in particular that **S** may itself be a compound of varying chronology. Parts of **Aut.** certainly predate **H**. However **Aut.** as a whole is sensibly dealt with chronologically after **H** - the later additions to **Aut.** postdate **H**. Source **P** is a portfolio containing three individual sources; the third of these, the copyist's organ score from the first version (**H°**) is the most significant source and has been selected to determine the chronological placement of **P** as a whole.

T: **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 27, fol. 27**

1 folio (2 sides), 20.6 x 19.8 cm.

A preliminary draft of the *Lobgesang* text in Mendelssohn's hand.

BL: **Oxford, Bodeian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 22, pp. 8-18**

5 double leaves, paginated 8-17, upright 30.5 x 21.5 cm; single leaf (18), 28.7 x 22.7 cm.; 16 staves.

Score in Mendelssohn's hand of version of 'Die Nacht ist vergangen', bound in a volume of autograph sketches. Antedates **H**. In 6/4 time, with note-values double those of its 6/8 counterparts in **Aut.** and **H.**

S: **Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. Ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 19, pp. 36-48**

Autograph early sketches in piano score, bound with sketches of other late works. Sketches especially of first movement (36-42), also beginning of second movement (43) and ideas used in choral movements (44-48).

H: **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 93**

159 numbered leaves, upright 33 x 24 cm. 1-126 Lobgesang. Eine Symphonie für Orchester und Chor v. Mendelssohn Bartholdy (127-9 blank, 130-59 pertain to Psalm 114, Op. 51). Inside cover signed by J. Alfred Novello, September 1840.

Fair copy score of the first version in the hand of Eduard Henschke (the only surviving complete source for the original version), probably used for the first performance. Light pencil and red crayon alterations in Mendelssohn's hand.

P: **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Deneke 114**

Portfolio (originally intended for orchestral parts), *Lobgesang*, Breitkopf & Härtel [1841], comprising:

I. printed soloists' parts of the revised version;

ii. manuscript list of singers invited to take part in a performance of the revised version of the *Lobgesang* 'im Concertsaale des Königl. Schauspielhauses', Berlin, 25 April 1842. 10 leaves, upright 34.5 x 21 cm;

iii.(**H°**) Orgelstimme / zum / Lobgesang / von / Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. 7 numbered leaves. 1-3, 5-7 upright 33.5 x 25 cm., 12 staves; fol.4, Chorale no. 8 in Mendelssohn's hand, inserted later, upright 27.5 x 21 cm., 16 staves.

Fair-copy organ part of the first version in the hand of Eduard Henschke, for use with **H**. Substantial pencil alterations and one in red crayon in Mendelssohn's hand. Probably used for the first performance, it is pitched a tone low to suit the Thomaskirche organ.

Aut.: Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 34, pp. 11-237 (pp. 35-36, 48-49, 68-69, 184-7 lacking)

16 staves; viewed from microfilm, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Mendelssohn's autograph working full score. Many of the original leaves are lost, deleted or pasted over, and new leaves have been added, resulting in various changes in fascicle structure. Bound with organ part of the revised version (see **Aut.°** below) and Handel's 'Dettingen' Te Deum (performed with the *Lobgesang* at the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, on 25 June 1840).

Aut.°: Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 34, pp. 241-8 (242 blank, 248 deleted)

Orgelstimme / zum / Lobgesang / von / Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

16 staves; viewed from microfilm, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Autograph copy of organ part of the revised version.

FE: **Lobgesang / Eine Symphonie-Cantate / nach Worten der heiligen Schrift / von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy / opus 52 ... Leipzig, bei Breitkopf & Härtel. / London, bei Alfred Novello.... [1841]**

Dedication: 'Seiner Majestät / dem König von Sachsen / ehrfurchtsvoll zugeeignet'; motto on title-page: 'Sondern ich wöllt alle künste, Sonderlich die Musica, gern Sehen im dienst, des / der sie geben und geschaffen hat. Dr. M. Luther.' pp. 223, upright 33 x 26 cm.

First edition of the printed score (final version). A special presentation copy (now Bodleian Library, Deneke 112) given to Mendelssohn by Breitkopf & Härtel in October 1841 and bearing his signature, differs only in details of the preliminary pages, the title-page having a pencil illustration signed by Alexander Strahüber.

A number of additional sources must be presumed either missing or destroyed. A work of this magnitude must have required many preparatory sketches. Those available have been introduced in Chapter 2. All surviving sketches are in simple piano score or single stave only; full-score sketches with choral implications are lacking. 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' (**BL**) is the one exception, albeit in an early form which bears only a distant relationship to the final product.

A fair copy of the completed final version, in either Mendelssohn's own hand or that of his copyist, may have been used in performances and also in preparation of the plates for printing. It is unlikely that the printers would have used Mendelssohn's working autograph as their copy-text,

since the revisions for the second version make it complex to negotiate and difficult to read. Unfortunately, it was not standard practice for publishers to return such scores; nor was it standard practice for them to retain early proofs. It is unusual that **H**, for decades lost, should have emerged from the archives of J. Alfred Novello, the first English publisher of the *Lobgesang*, before finding its way to the Oxford Deneke collection via the British Library in London. The parts used by Mendelssohn and the Gewandhaus orchestra for the performance of 3 December 1840 and for the special private performance of 10 April 1841 may have been retained in the Gewandhaus archives. A score and parts produced by Novello in English for the Birmingham performance are also missing. It is important to remember that, as regards the missing German sources, so much was lost or destroyed during World War II and will never be seen again.

The importance of the principal sources

The Berlin sketches: early ideas for a symphony

The **S** sketches, as noted, are crude and in piano score or single-stave, bearing evidence of probably the earliest ideas for the *Lobgesang* Symphony on paper, possibly even, as discussed in the previous chapter, dating back to 1838 as preliminary items towards a symphony in B flat.[32] Nevertheless, they are notable for the extent of basic musical detail which is represented at the very earliest stage in the compositional process - namely a clear indication of melodic line with harmonic implications - and which remained largely unaltered. The sketches show that Mendelssohn must have had a very precise idea of what he wished to achieve musically. He may

[32] **BL** probably predates **S** and bears only a distant relationship to the *Lobgesang*.

have been thinking in full orchestral terms, despite the sketches' lack of instrumental indications. Indeed a letter to Ferdinand Hiller of 15 July 1838 mentions a symphony in B flat which he had in his head.[33]

The sketches which refer to the choral movements use the terms 'chor', 'teno[r]' and 'bass'. These terms depict vocal registers in the sketches for the first choral movement, 'Alles was Odem hat', and the way they are used, as Ex. 1 shows, indicates the composer's early working out of contrapuntal development in the symphony. Similar preoccupation with contrapuntal methods may be seen in the working out of ideas for the development and recapitulation of the first instrumental movement.

The bulk of the sketches pertain to the first movement. While characteristically distinct from the final version, they are unmistakably related. And whether conceived for the *Lobgesang* Symphony or a separate instrumental predecessor, these ideas were later reshaped for use in the *Lobgesang*. Although the 'Maestoso' introduction is not represented in the sketches for the exposition, it does appear, as Ex. 2 shows, in sketches for part of the development and recapitulation. Thus a significant role must have been intended for it in the exposition from the outset. This in turn suggests that these are sketches at least for a special symphony, and whether or not this is quite the *Lobgesang* as we know it, it was certainly imbued with festive spirit from the start.

Only one sketch pertains to the current form of the second movement, as Ex. 3 shows. This gives an accurate early indication of the melodic line in the first few bars, which indeed was not altered

[33]Hiller. 126.

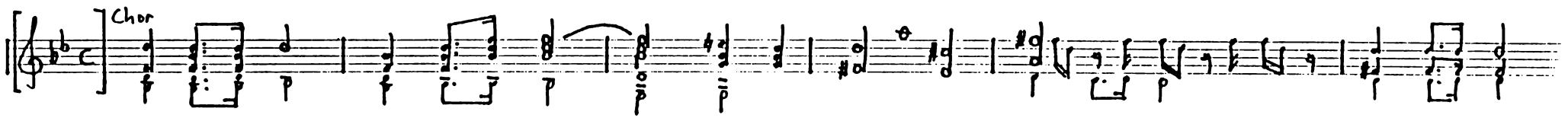
at all, and an early idea for a continuous link with the preceding movement. The movement linkage idea shows how Mendelssohn was aiming to create a continuous structure from the very start of the compositional process; a feature which, as a study of **Aut.** and **H** will show, he was constantly trying to improve throughout the whole process.

Ex. 4 below shows a sketch from **S** which is probably an even earlier idea for this movement. In comparison with **FE**, it is interesting to see how the ideas are refined while the basic shape of the melody and phrase structure remains the same.

No sketches pertain to the third movement, and sketches for the choral movement are limited to four sections: 'Alles was Odem hat', 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' and the chorale 'Nun danket Alle Gott'. Interestingly, their corresponding positions in the published symphony are less easy to identify than their counterparts in the instrumental movements. There is much evidence of the working out of ideas for later use, especially with regard to harmonic movement and contrapuntal development. The 'Alles was Odem hat' opening, shown in Ex. 5, is slightly closer to **H**. Both begin on the down-beat while **FE** begins on the up-beat. Otherwise the sketches are equally applicable to both versions of the symphony. The sketches for 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' (Ex. 6), while giving an accurate preview of the opening melodic line, are in 6/8 time, as in subsequent versions including **H**, rather than the 6/4 in **BL**. This probably provides a bridge, therefore, between the earlier draft for this movement, **BL**, and the first performed version, **H**.

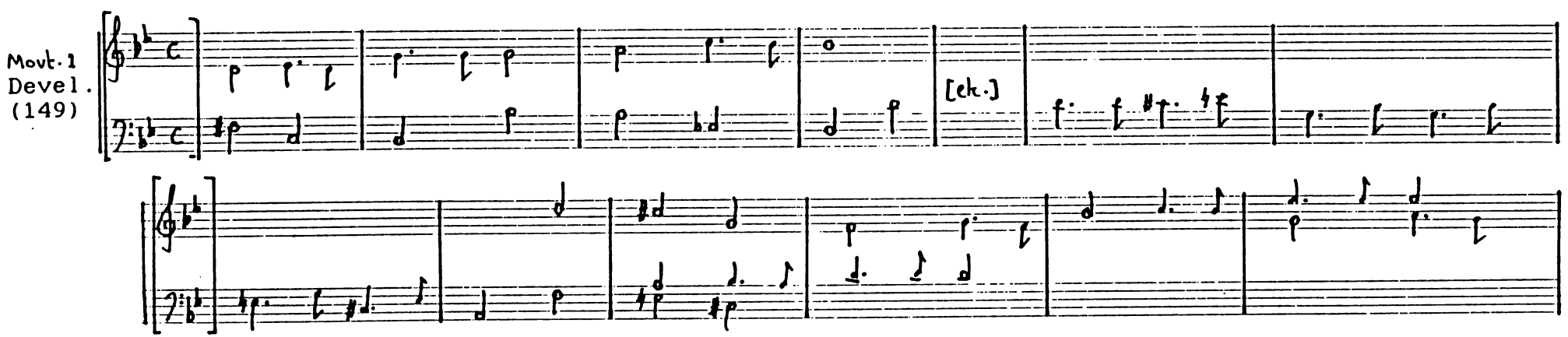
Broadly, **S** reveals, as the given examples show collectively, Mendelssohn's main compositional concerns: to establish a first and second subject, to experiment with ideas for development, to establish a thematic recapitulation, and to provide a smooth link with the second movement. As

'Alles was Odem hat' (harmonic outline 22-25)

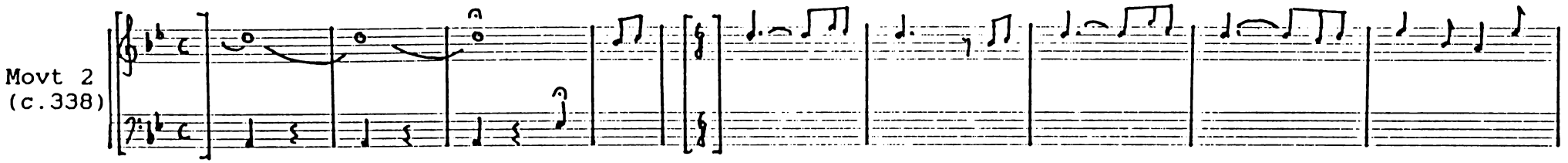


From 'Alles was Odem hat'

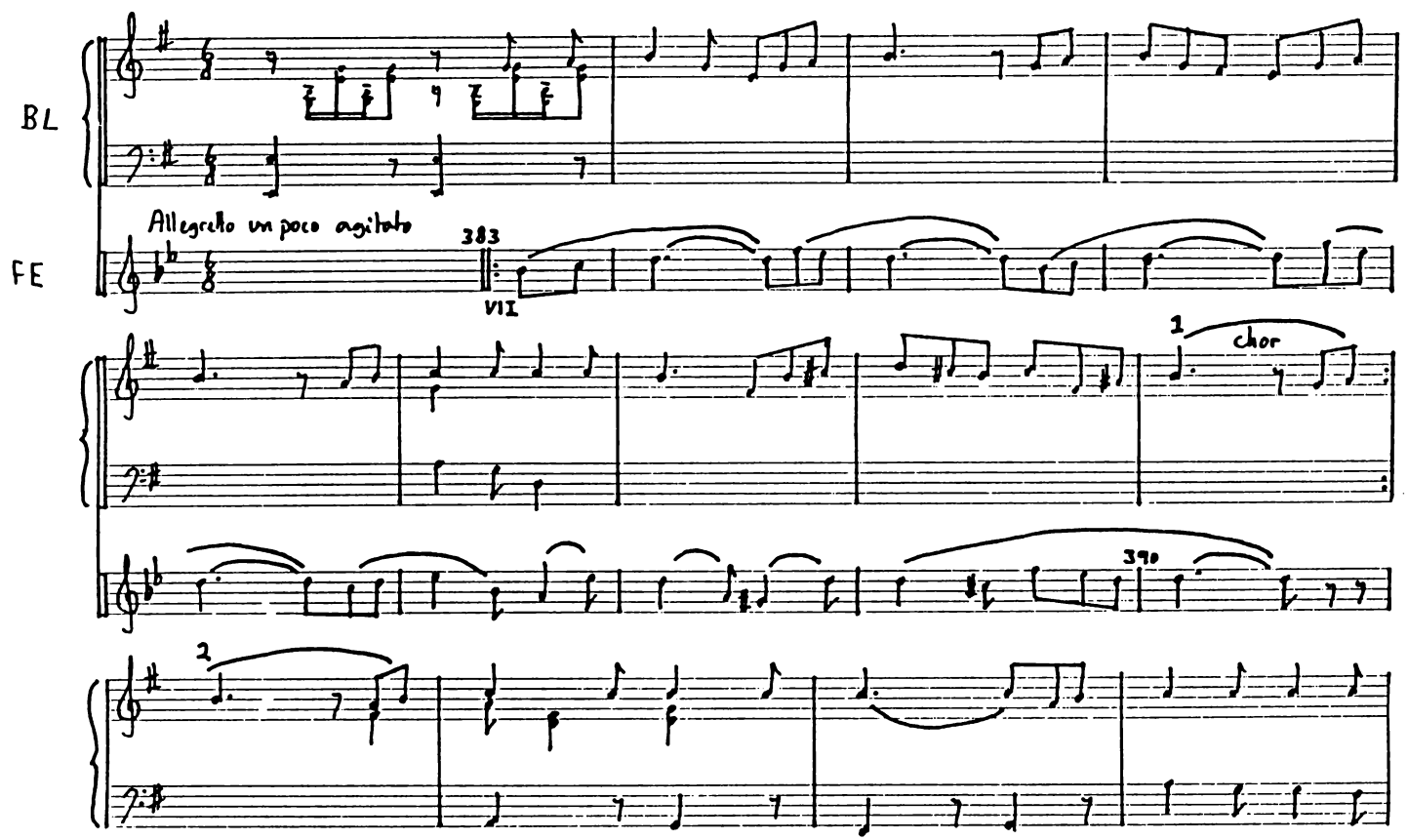
Ex.1



Ex.2



Ex.3

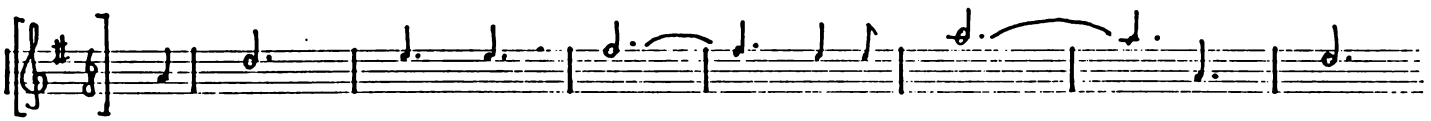


Ex.4:
Early sketch in E minor with VII bb.383-90 as later published.

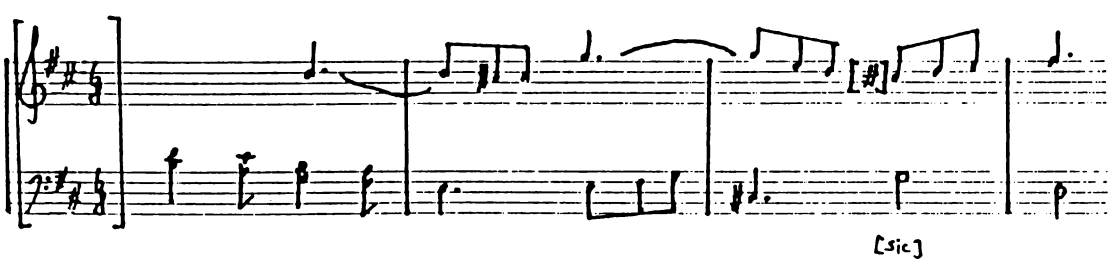
'Alles was Odem hat' (opening)

Ex. 5

'Die Nacht ist vergangen' (opening)

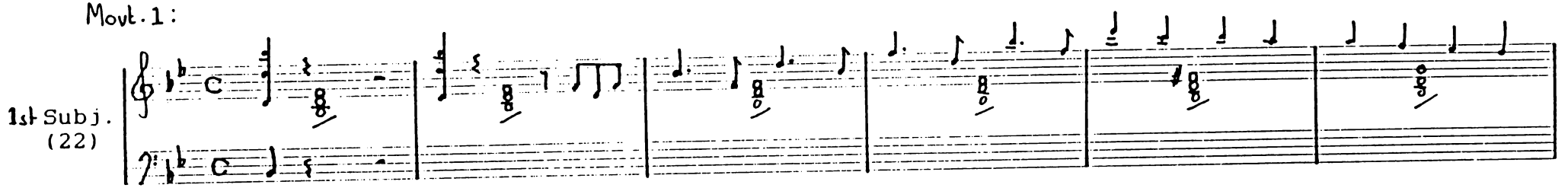


From 'Die Nacht ist vergangen'

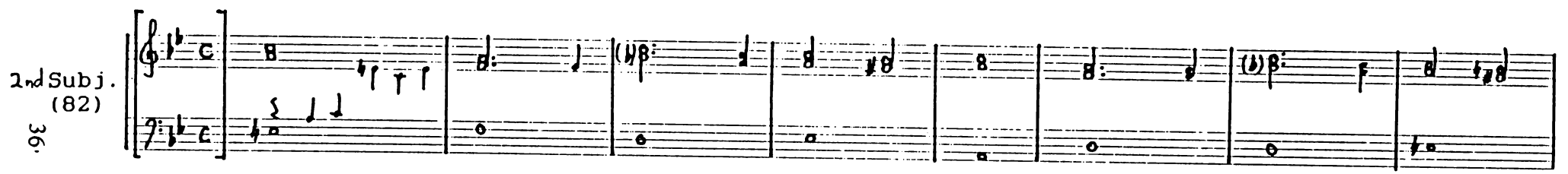


Ex. 6

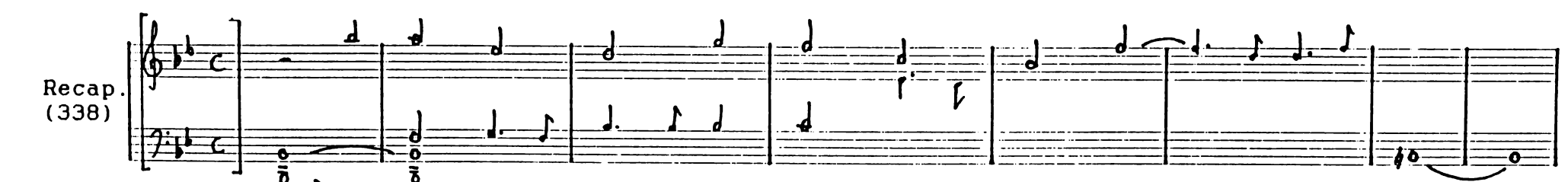
Movt. 1:



Ex. 7a



Ex. 7b



Ex. 7c

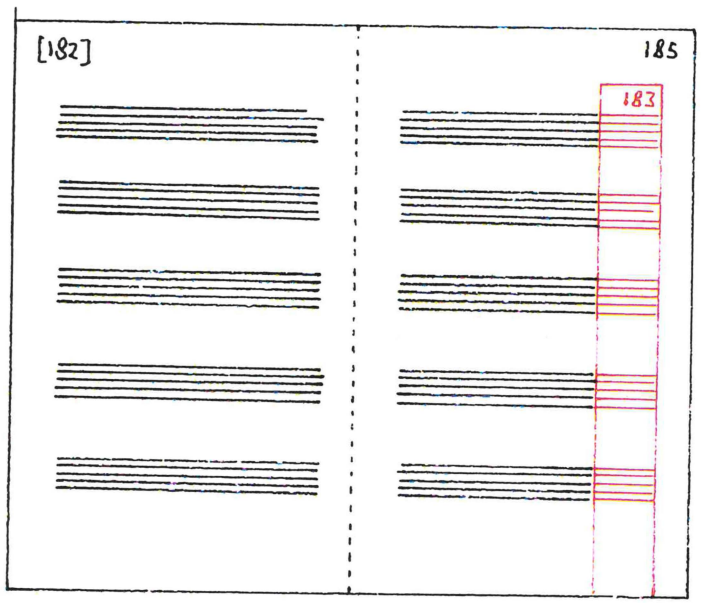
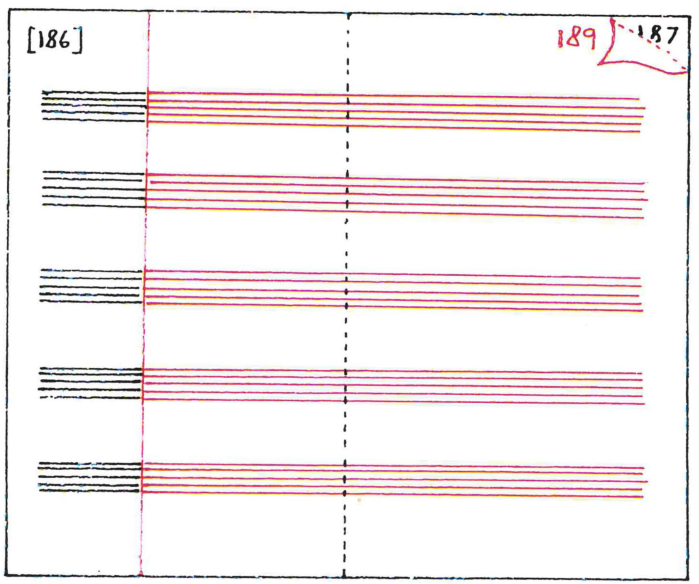


Fig. 1a.

Fig. 1b.



Diagrams showing two consecutive examples of paste-overs (in red) in Mendelssohn's autograph of the *Lobgesang* Symphony, opus 52, in source **Aut.**, and the consequent peculiarity of the page-numbers. Bracketed numbers are not actually shown in the MS and the corner of 189 is not folded as shown.

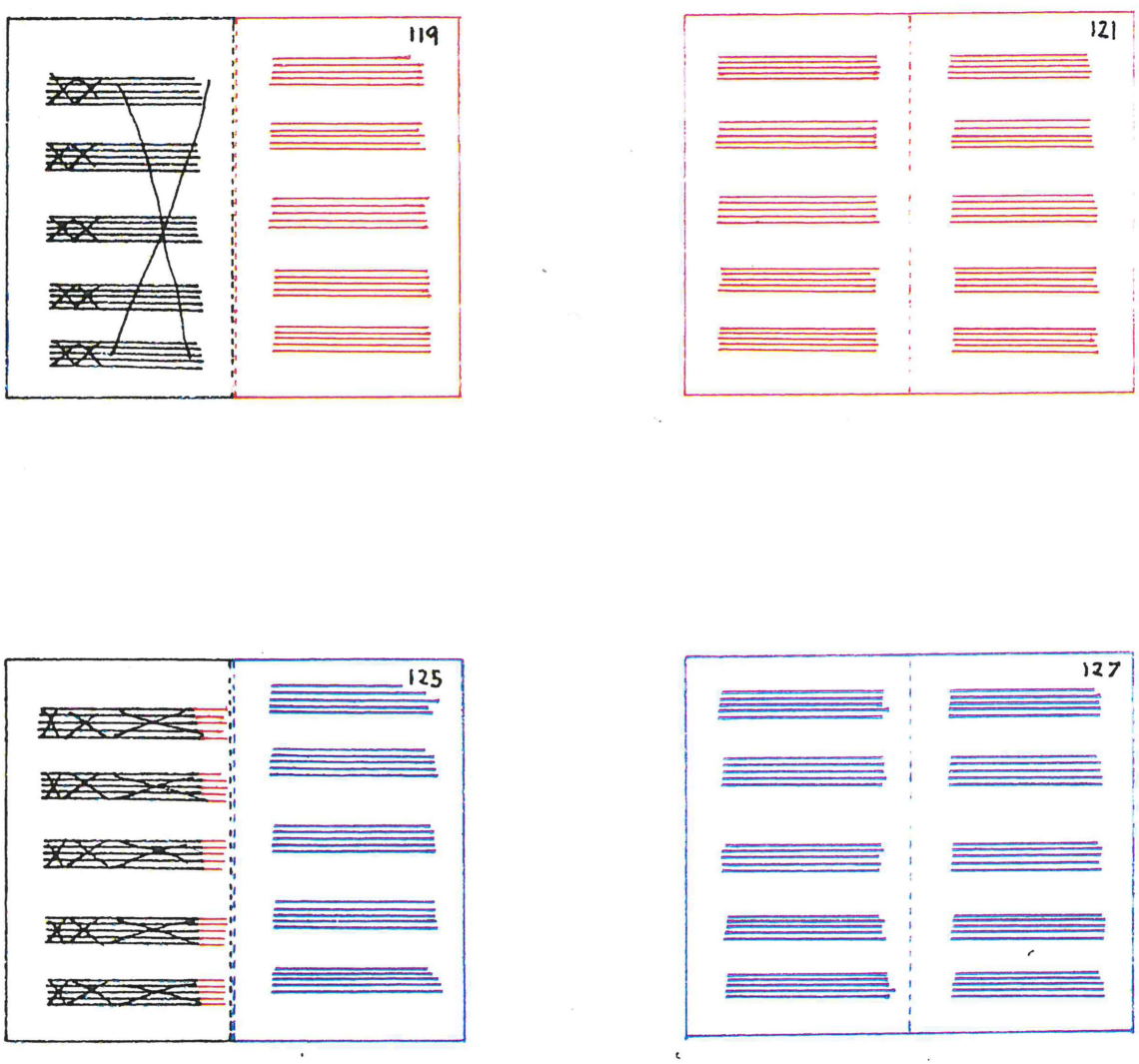


Fig. 2a. Diagram showing the fascicle structure of Mendelssohn's autograph of the *Lobgesang* Symphony, op. 52, in source **H**, pp. 118-27. Different colours represent separate folios. Red represents pages/bars inserted after the first performance.

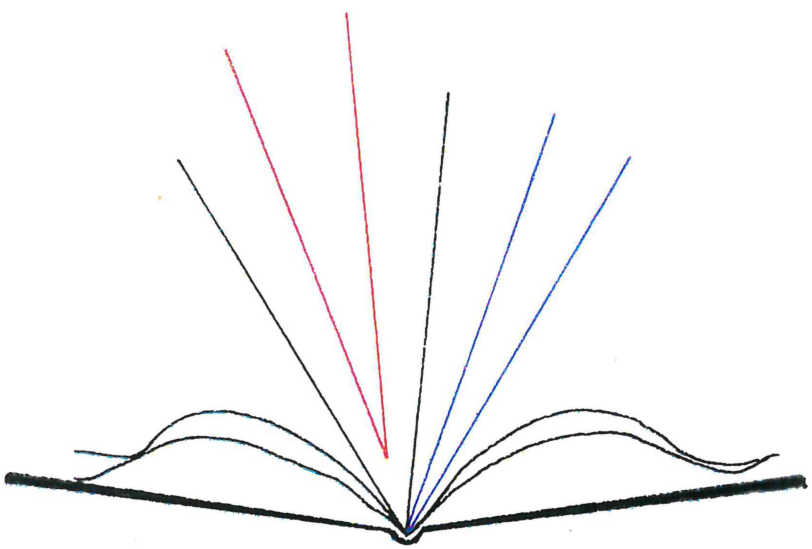
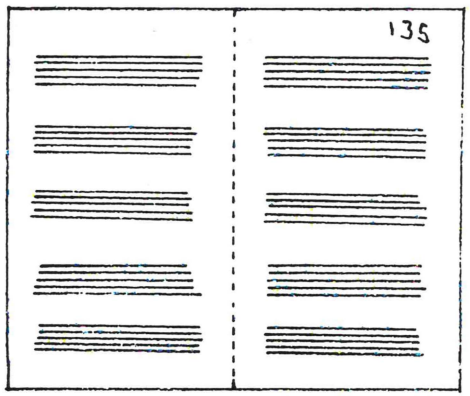
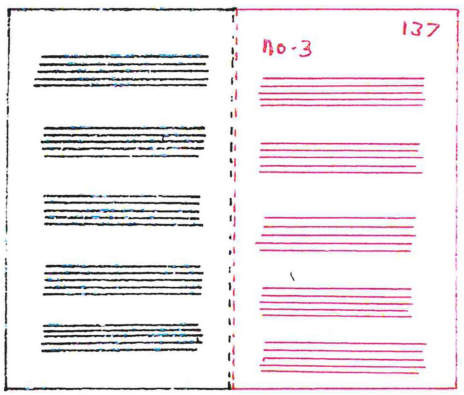
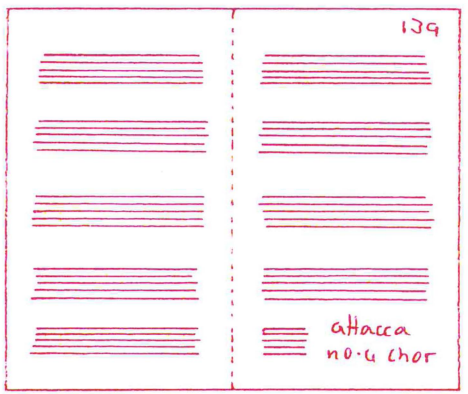
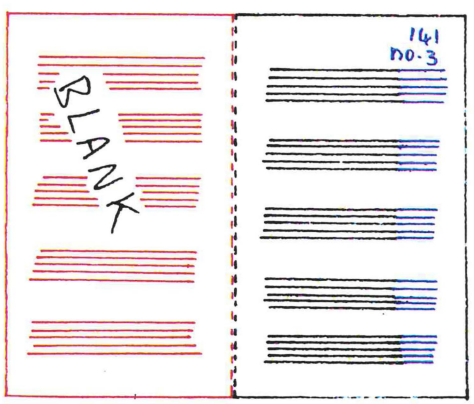


Fig. 2b. A profile representation of Fig. 2a.









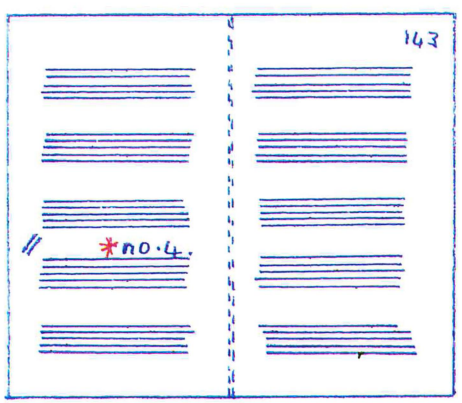


Fig. 3a. Diagram showing the fascicle structure of Mendelssohn's autograph of the *Lobgesang* Symphony, opus 52, in source **H,** pp.134-43. In performance, the new portion (in red) is inserted at the asterisk. The portion in blue, not a single folio, represents the tenor recitative leading into no. 4 as it was performed at the first-performance in Leipzig.

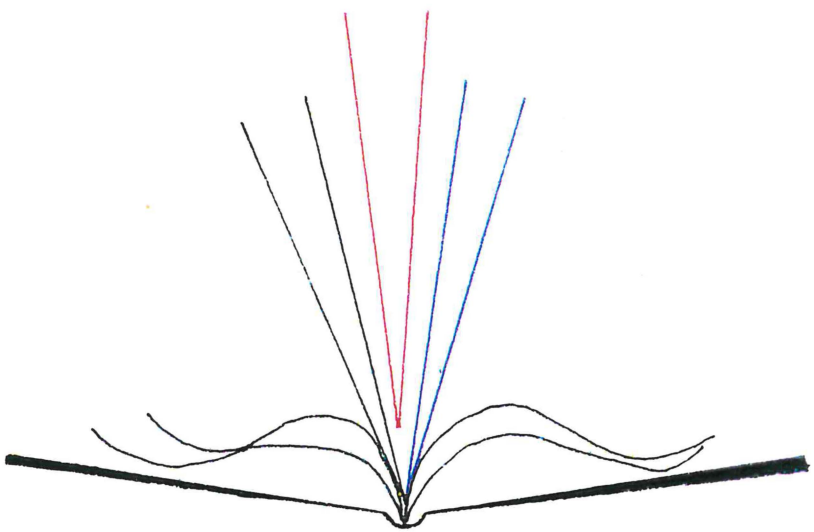


Fig. 3b. A profile representation of Fig. 3a.

a whole, **S** gives a good early indication of the main points of the formal structure. The basic skeletal structure also seems to have altered very little from its initial conception, although it has been improved upon at each compositional stage. The examples show the characteristic themes from each of the sketches and relate them to their counterparts in the instrumental movements. A more detailed study of the Berlin sketches can be found in Douglass Seaton's Ph.D. thesis.[34]

Mendelssohn's autograph score: composition in progress

Aut. is the most complex source.[35] Representing a large proportion of the *Lobgesang*'s evolution, it is a good single guide to Mendelssohn's meticulous process of composition. The score bears witness to many layers of revision, from small alterations to larger paste-overs, and furthermore to substantial restructuring - additions and subtractions which resulted in a significantly revised second version. Individual leaves have been either removed (e.g. the first version of the end portion of no. 5 and beginning of no. 6) or inserted (e.g. the new portion of no. 3) at a late stage.

The numerous paste-overs (Fig. 1) and page deletions are often to be found in portions of the manuscript where whole pages are missing from the original composition, or where new pages have been inserted. Figs 2 and 3, representing pages 118 - 127 of **Aut.**, reveal typically how the fascicle structure has been altered in the course of major revision. The red portions in the diagrams refer to the folios inserted at the revision stage; in Fig. 3 this is specifically the 'new piece', the tenor recitative no. 3. The blue portion of Fig. 3 from the dotted line shows no. 3 in its first version form. This has not been physically removed or deleted from the manuscript score;

[34] See note 8.

[35] What is said about **Aut.** is equally applicable to **Aut.°.**

nevertheless the red portion replaces the blue portion in actual performance up to my red asterisk. Figure 2 is slightly more straightforward, as the superseded first-version portions, here in black, are clearly shown to be deleted. Again red shows a folio insertion at the revision stage, and also a bar squeezed on to page 124 to smooth over the link between the new inserted folio and the old, in blue.

It is not unusual to find in a Mendelssohn manuscript evidence that he has repeatedly adjusted and revised his musical ideas before finding the correct solution. If the printer's proofs and plates were available for study, as we know from correspondence with Breitkopf & Härtel, we should have further evidence of alteration right up to the last minute. Indeed, the opening, designated 'Maestoso con moto' in **FE**, appears in **Aut.**, after several stages of alteration, 'Con moto-maestoso'. Admittedly most of the alterations referred to in correspondence reveal Mendelssohn's meticulous proof-reading, in itself not usual practice in the nineteenth century, rather than genuine late revision. A study of the printer's proofs would also reveal, as his correspondence with his publishers implies, that Mendelssohn had an extraordinary power at this stage to dictate terms.[36]

Henschke's copy: the first version as a point of reference

Alone, **Aut.** can show little more than what the symphony was like after the revisions were made. Although portions of the first version remain, it is difficult to tell exactly how much has been removed, and sometimes difficult to see what was actually added during or even after, as opposed to before, the major revision stage. **H** is the most accurate written representation of the symphony

[36] Many of Mendelssohn's letters to Breitkopf & Härtel are collected in the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek in Darmstadt; the publisher's replies can be found in the Leipzig Staatsarchiv.

at its first performance in 1840, and as such is the basis of the critical edition which accompanies this thesis. It is of prime importance as a clear copy of the symphony at an intermediate stage in its compositional history, thus establishing a point of chronological reference.[37] A great deal, therefore, can be determined in terms of the compositional development of the symphony through a comparison of **H** with **Aut.** and with **FE**.[38] A detailed comparison will follow in the next chapter, but an overview is needed here to set the scene.

Mendelssohn first refers to the substantial alterations he made to the original score in a letter to Karl Klingemann of 18 November 1840,[39] according to which 'four new pieces' have been added to the finale - subsequent correspondence mentions 'three new pieces'[40] - and the instrumental movements have been 'improved'.

Using **H** as a frame of reference, the following outline of these alterations may be offered:

1. The choral weighting is proportionally increased from approximately half to two-thirds of the entire work (see p. 20):

- the first movement has been reduced from 662 bars to 382 bars, largely resulting from the halving of note values in the 'Allegro vivace' section;

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[37] What is said about **H** is equally applicable to **H°**.

[38] **Aut.** and **FE** should be for the most part identical; in fact this is not always the case, as will be discussed in the following chapter where relevant.

[39] See note 19.

[40] Karl Klingemann. *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdys Briefwechsel mit Legatiansrat Karl Klingemann in London* (Essen. 1909). 253.

- the two following movements have each had 7 bars added;

- the choral finale has been extended from 888 bars to 1118 bars.

2. Substantial additions have been made to the opening instrumental movement, especially in a complex development section. It is still possible, however, to discern the basic structure of **H** in **FE**.

3. The 'four new pieces' - a somewhat misleading term: certain items are much reworked or extended, but not entirely new:

- No. 3 tenor solo: 'Allegro moderato'; 'Er zählet unsre Tränen' inserted after the recitative 'Saget es'.

- No. 6 tenor solo: 'Allegro assai agitato' ('Watchman Scene'); replaces a shorter tenor recitative after the solo 'Stricke des Todes'.

- No. 9 soprano and tenor duet: an existing number considerably restructured and extended. The soprano solo has been added to a tenor aria, and a simple recapitulation has been replaced by an extended duet, possibly prompted by the addition of the soprano solo.

- No. 10 Chorus: a 'new' internal fugato - structurally, it could almost be a self-contained piece - replaces an earlier one. This complements a text alteration in this section.

4. Structural alterations for the sake of formal unity, for example the revision of the end of the 'Allegro' to improve the continuous link with the 'Allegretto'. This supports evidence from **S** that this structure was central to Mendelssohn's initial compositional conception. The return of the trombone opening theme complete in the tonic at b. 338 as a thematic recapitulation is made clearer.

5. Reworking of musical texture, especially in the contrasts of instrumentation in most movements.

6. Further alterations:

- Minor changes of instrumentation or minor variations of melody in nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 (**H** numbers). Tenor solo note-values halved in b. 1 only of no. 3, a very small alteration to the double bass part in b. 48 of no. 4, and one note altered in the lower soprano part in b. 14 of no. 8.

- Addition/ deletion of occasional bars in nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 10 (**H** numbers).

Additional sources

The remaining sources, though interesting, are not essential to this particular study of the *Lobgesang* Symphony. **BL**, being a version of one choral number alone and predating **H** and probably even **S**, is not a *Lobgesang* source in the strictest sense. In fact the sketches in **S** show the working-out of the melody in its final version for the solo, which alone announces 'Die Nacht

ist vergangen' by way of a link out of the 'Watchman Scene'. This would incidentally mean that at least this page of **S** post-dated even **H**. Presumably 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' was a number composed as a separate, self-contained work, and was later adapted in considerably modified form for use in the *Lobgesang*. The subject material of the biblical text, 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' is after all appropriate to the underlying theme of the symphony.

P I, the printed vocal parts, would indeed be of significance if they contained pencil markings which could be identified positively as deriving from rehearsals involving Mendelssohn as conductor, whether in Mendelssohn's hand or that of a chorus member. This is not the case. **P ii** is an interesting source in its own right. However, nothing can be determined from it which is relevant to either the history, development or edition of the *Lobgesang*. **T** provides a valuable insight into the origins of the text before **H**, and is occasionally referred to, but is not essential to the critical edition.

Chapter IV

The first and second versions compared

As further testimony to Mendelssohn's attention to the smallest details of composition or scoring, there are few passages of the first version of the *Lobgesang* that have been left unaltered. The following account is therefore intended to be selective, and will discuss only the most relevant details; an exhaustive review of the complete round of alterations would be impracticable here. To avoid confusion between **FE** and **H** in passages where the two scores are or can be directly compared, movement and bar numbers in **H** appear in brackets if different.

The first divergence between the two scores is in the title. **H** is entitled '*Lobgesang eine Symphonie für Orchester und Chor. v Mendlessohn=Bartholdy*', whereas **FE** is entitled '*Lobgesang Eine Symphonie=Cantate nach Worten der heiligen Schrift*', following Karl Klingemann's suggestion.[42] This is of course the first clue that, as has been suggested, the cantata-like qualities of the formal structure were a later development either during the later stages of composition or even during the revision period, and were not part of Mendelssohn's grand design from the outset. The overview of the revisions, in the previous chapter, showed the proportionate increase in the choral weighting, according purely to bar numbers, from approximately half to two-thirds of the entire work, as if in sympathy with this change in title. As already noted, however, this generalization does not take into account for example the halving of note values in certain sections of **FE**. See Table 1 below.

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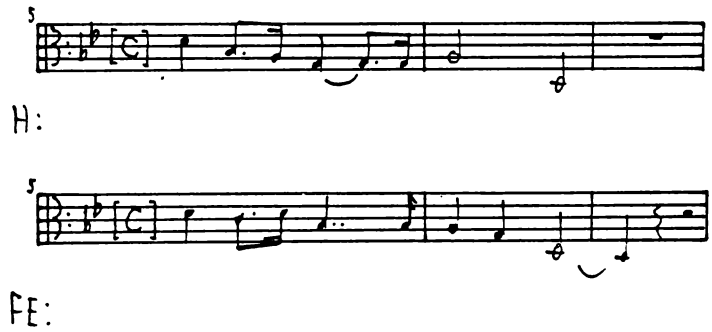
[42] See note 26.

The Sinfonia: *'Maestoso con moto Allegro'*

Table 1 below shows how the Italian terms have been changed in this and certain other movements. The Italian terms used in the opening movement and nos. 2 (1), 4, 7 and 10 are also different in **Aut.** in its final state. This is further demonstration that the compositional process was not over until the work actually appeared in print, and a hint also that another source may exist from which the printers made the plates. It is also possible, of course, that Mendelssohn was directly involved in the copy-editing and directed the copyist to make the necessary changes to the score without referring to an intermediate source. The differences in the Italian terms will not be mentioned further in the following commentary except in order to make a separate point.

The answering phrase, as first seen in the trombones at b. 5, has been refined, as the example below shows, to balance more perfectly the opening phrase of bb. 1-3. The first three notes of the revised answering phrase are an exact reverse of the first three notes of the opening phrase a fifth higher. The revised answering phrase maintains momentum to focus more on the final *d*.



At b. 20, **FE** extends a phrase from **H** by one bar in order better to prepare for the cadence into the Allegro.

Table 1 Comparative overview of Italian terms, time signatures and bar numbers in each version (owing to changes in note-values, real bar numbers are given in brackets where appropriate).

H	FE

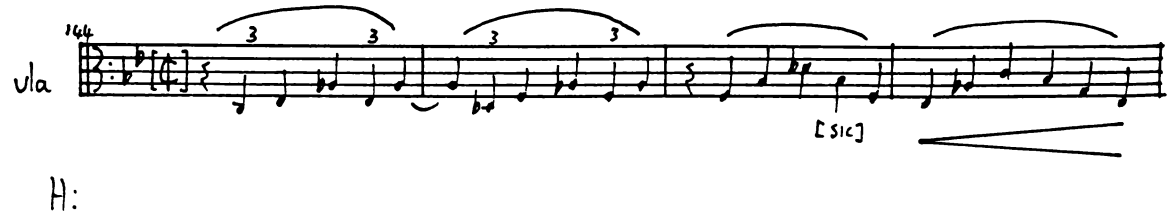
No	Tempo marking	Time sig.	Bar no.		No	Tempo	Time sig.	Bar no.
1	Con moto maestoso/ Allegro vivace	C ¢	672 [346]		1	Maestoso con moto/ Allegro	C C	 382
	Allegretto un poco agitato	6 8	170			Allegretto un poco agitato	6 8	169
	Adagio religioso	2 4	106			Adagio religioso	2 4	113
1	Con moto/ Allo. molto	C ¢	198 [122$_{1-2}$]		2	Allegro moderato maestoso/ Allegro di molto	C C	 138
2	Moderato	C	47		-	Molto piu moderato ma con fuoco	C	47
3	Recit. ------	C	11 ---		3	Recitativo Allegro moderato	C ¢	11 71
4	Con moto	C	56		4	A tempo moderato	C	56
5	Andante	2 4	108		5	Andante	2 4	108
6	Allegro mod^{to}	3 4	82		6	Allegro un poco agitato/ Allegro assai agitato	3 4 C	 129
7	Allo. maestoso	6 8	215		7	Allegro maestoso e molto vivace	6 8	215
8	Choral	C	47		8	Andante con moto	C	47
9	Andante	2 4	63		9	Andante sostenuto assai	2 4	99
10	Allo. mod^{to} Allo. vivace Maestoso come p^{mo}	C 4 2 C	 189 [126]		10	Allegro non troppo/ Piu vivace/ Maestoso come I	C C C	 196

The Allegro, from b. 22 (21), is written in **FE** with notation half the value of the corresponding notation in **H** and with time signature C rather than ¢ as in **Aut.** and **H**. Hence, the number of bars is halved in the Allegro of **FE**. Notably, the note-values in **Aut.** remain as in **H** with no particular indication that they should be halved. Again, there is either a missing intermediate source, or else the revision was transmitted verbally by Mendelssohn directly to the printer's copyist. The Italian term used in **Aut.** is 'Molto allegro vivace' as opposed to 'Allegro vivace' in **H** and 'Allegro' in **FE**.

FE lacks **H**'s bb. 85-6 between bb. 53 and 54, thus tightening up the approach to the cadence at b. 55 (89). Minor variations, for example in wind articulation and texture, and the refining of string arpeggiation, start to increase over the next few bars.

Aut. appears to represent an intermediate stage between **H** and **FE** in b. 62 (103) and even contains six bars, beginning after b. 61 (101) extending the dotted sequence in the bass, which are not present in either of the other sources. Yet corrections in **Aut.** show that this page came before **H**. Perhaps, therefore, a pre-**H** paste-over has come adrift. A copy of this passage of **Aut.** is included as an appendix to this volume.

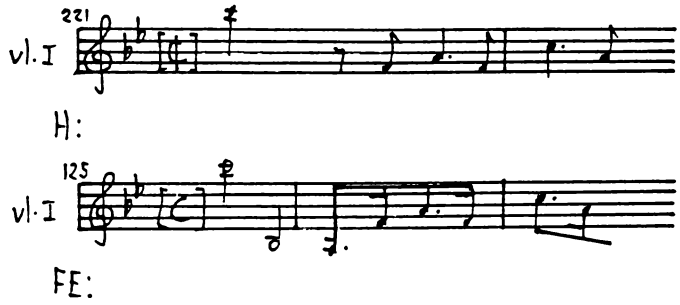
A significant accompanying figure of triplets, as shown below, in the viola and later violin parts of **H** has been removed from bb. 82-105 (144-81) during revision. Notice, however, that similar material appears in both scores in the recapitulation bb. 273-85 (462-86). The deletion presumably was intended to simplify the texture and thereby emphasize the dotted rhythm, which is after all a source of the symphony's unity. Similarly, the string texture has been thickened in this passage by the addition of divided violas doubling the wind melody.



H:

As a good example of how Mendelssohn has reassessed textures and instrumental colours in the second version, from b. 94 (168) the upper string triplet figures of **H** (cf. vla bb. 82 ff. (144 ff.)) have been replaced by string doubling of the flute melody for a richer orchestral sound. The original double bass pizzicato has been replaced by a more solid arco bass line following the rhythm of the upper parts. In this passage, **FE** contains an extra four bars from b. 100/3 (180/1). This provides instrumental contrast with the previous bars, as the strings alone play out a short sequence based on their melody and leading to the original cadence of the first version, in which the flutes join once again.

FE b. 125 is a later addition which increases my impression that the first performance may have been slower. **H** b. 221 involves a leap from *c'''* to *f'* in the violins. This manoeuvre is made simpler in **FE** by moving in minims from the *c'''* to *b* flat, and then to the *f'* as a semiquaver via a dotted quaver *a*. The example below shows the two versions. Besides this, the halving of the note-values visually suggests greater speed in the second version - halved note-values implies a broader sweep in the phrasing structure, which in turn implies a greater flow. Furthermore, the alteration of Italian tempo markings, the more so in many choral movements, points to increased tempos or at least an adjustment and refining of the performance speeds.



A comparison of the first- and second-version development sections in general shows numerous minor changes in articulation or small refinements in the instrumentation for its effect on articulation. Clearly the revision process was more thorough than the original composition process. However, a very substantial alteration in **FE** occurs from b. 164 (295), in the thick of the development section, which makes it impossible to connect the two scores until their close convergence again in b. 189 (298). The latter bar consists of a restatement of the central motif - the trombone theme from the opening bars of the score - played here on oboe, clarinet and violin II.

The **H** section missing from **FE** consists of just three (**H**-length) bars leading to a cadence on E flat. This is somewhat abrupt, but leads into a new section based on a full statement of the central motif in the dominant in violin II, with the triplet figure in violin I (cf. **FE** b. 189 ff.) In **FE** Mendelssohn irons out the structural abruptness and creates a smoother link using imitative sequences, through the different parts, based on the first four pitches of the central motif, rhythmically and melodically its most distinctive portion, and the dotted rhythmic portions of first-subject material.

Many of the revisions are designed to make even more use of the ubiquitous Handelian dotted rhythm, which is central to the unity of the movement and of the work as a whole. This is achieved here in sequences leading to a statement of the first subject in violin I, taken from b. 23,

for four bars from b. 174. This in turn leads to development based on further sequences. A bass pedal on *B* flat, lacking in **H**, is set up, which appears as a dominant as the two versions come together again at b. 189 (298).

An alteration between bb. 191 (301) and 194 (303) loses effectively two bars, and gives **FE** greater unity by creating an extra violin imitation of the central motif. Imitation and contrapuntal ideas, remember, are features that stand out in the Berlin sketches (**S**) as matters of compositional concern in the *Lobgesang*. The descending triads of the clarinet and bassoon parts at bb. 193-4, an idea taken from **H** bb. 301-5, are better integrated into the structure in **FE** and used from b.199 more sequentially to lead to an emphatic *fortissimo* tutti restatement of the opening phrase of the central motif in G minor in the upper woodwind and violin I at b. 205. This in turn provides a dramatic climax towards the tutti halt at b. 209, where the momentum suddenly stops. Based on the ubiquitous dotted rhythm, the static chords alternate antiphonally between wind and strings, and finally diminish almost to a standstill at b. 225.

H has a similar feeling of building up towards the same climactic halt at b. 332. However, the structure is less clearly delineated and the build-up longer. All the elements of **FE** are there - the central motif, the descending triads, the accompanying string triplet figures, the gradual increase in instrumental forces - but for example one cannot pick out the climactic sense of arrival at the tutti in **FE**'s b. 205, and the **H** structure does not so clearly differentiate between the descending triads and the central motif. That is to say, the dotted rhythm of the **H** triads, and their closer interspersal among statements of the central motif, serve to obfuscate the formal lines of the structure. The dotted rhythmic portion of the central motif monopolizes the rhythmic impetus of much of the first movement, and is especially a prevailing feature of the development sections.

The revision process has emphasized this for greater formal unity.

The antiphonally alternating and diminishing portion from b. 209 (332) has itself been subject to refinement during the symphony's revision. Bar 214 has been added. More significantly, at the **H** equivalent of b. 223 (356), a pizzicato *G* in the double-basses stops the action and leads abruptly into a statement of the second-subject material in the flutes and violins in the tonic key. The same return to the second subject is made at b. 230 in **FE**, but only after effecting a more emphasized standstill by introducing a ritardando in two extra bars, followed by a false entry of the second subject in E flat in the violas for five bars. A repetition of this theme in **H** doubled a third higher in the violins at b. 234 (365) is cut from the second version. In effect, Mendelssohn's revision smooths over the link between the two sections for formal clarity.

A further divergence between the two versions at b. 245 (394) illustrates two alternative approaches to a tonic recapitulation of first-subject material in the violins at b. 260 (436), **H** taking 42 bars (equivalent to 21 **FE** bars) to **FE**'s 15. **FE** is structurally the more imaginative. **H** makes much use of the sequential potential of the dotted rhythm contained in this first-subject material, as well as the descending material from the second bar of the subject. **FE**, however, after a two-bar introduction, moves straight into a tonic statement of the first subject, an octave lower than at b. 260, in violin I. This, however, founded on an F pedal, functions as dominant preparation and leads sequentially on until it joins **H** with a true tonic statement of the subject at b. 260 (436). **FE**'s recapitulation is better prepared tonally with a sforzando climax on repeated *c'''*sharps at b. 259.

The recapitulation of the first subject being relatively straightforward, there is no significant

revision of the score until b. 273 (462), from which point the instrumental texture has been revised, giving more in **FE** to the upper strings and flutes, and cutting out the other woodwind parts altogether. This now has the triplet accompaniment cut from the exposition.

A more significant divergence between the two versions occurs from b. 281 (479). In **H**, second-subject material for 16 bars, equivalent to 8 **FE** bars, leads to an unfinished cadence on a held D major chord followed by an echo of the closing strain from the previous bars. In **FE** Mendelssohn withholds this material until its full statement in the tonic at b. 293 at which point the two versions merge. The corresponding passages are virtually the same in length, but the approach to the b. 293 (503) pick-up is different. Thus any material which may have obscured b. 293 (503) as a tonic recapitulation in **H**, and therefore a structurally climactic point, has been replaced. Novello's first English edition of the symphony in 1841, incidentally, includes a double barline at the end of b. 292 (502).

Dramatically, however, the real point of climactic return is the cyclic central motif, once again in the trombones, at b. 338 (587), even though thematic material from the exposition has already been restated in varied order of original appearance, and the tonic has already been re-established. In **FE**, this is further emphasized by bringing out the central motif loudly and clearly in all trombones rather than in just the single trombone II as in **H**.

Thus in summary **FE** makes clearer two different points of recapitulation: the logical point at b. 260 (436), where material from the exposition is first brought back much in its original form and in the tonic, and the dramatic sense of recapitulation created by the distinctive return of the cyclic central motif in the trombones at b. 338 (587).

The following passage of **FE** remains close to **H** but nevertheless demonstrates, in minor revisions of harmony, instrumentation or simply isolated features of notation, Mendelssohn's attention to detail. However, the two endings of the first movement differ considerably from b. 367 (642). Mendelssohn improves here the continuous link with the following movement, this being clearly central to the continuous structure of his formal plan. **H** loses considerable momentum at this point by using the first part of the central motif leading to harmonically static chords, antiphonally alternating between wind and strings, reminiscent of those from b. 209 (332). Thus **H** evaporates slowly over a total of 31 bars from b. 642 into a clarinet recitative which gives an anticipatory hint of the following movement in its minor melodic shape. **FE**, however, keeps the momentum going by using the shape and jaunty dotted rhythm of the first-subject material until the double bar after b. 375. A final statement of the central motif on trombones and an abrupt cadence bring the momentum down to an emphatic and decisive ending. The clarinet recitative has also been refined, but retains the sombre melodic minor shape which makes possible the continuous link with the Allegretto.

To summarize the two versions of the first movement, a primary consideration has clearly been the tightening of the structure. By far the most work has been done on the development section or sections, where many cuts or insertions have been made; there is little change to the recapitulation save for clarifying the main structural points. Many other minor alterations are made in the interest of textural or instrumental variety, improvement of the harmony, or refining of the melodic line.

'Allegretto un poco agitato'

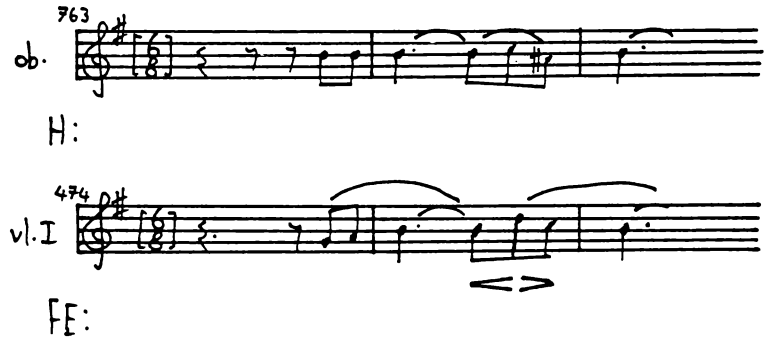
The first 63 bars of the second movement of the Sinfonia are very nearly identical in both versions of the symphony. The differences to be found here - and these are very limited in number - involve for example the removal of an oboe and bassoon accent at the beginning of b. 433 (723). Thus the movement up to the trio section at b. 454 (743) caused few compositional problems even at the revision stage.

At b. 446 (736), the melodic line, which continues in the first violin part in **H**, transfers to the oboe and bassoon in **FE** to create an antiphonal effect: a device which had been prominent in the first movement. The **FE** woodwind continue to play the **H** violin I part and *vice versa* until the double bar at b. 453 (742). **FE** has been extended by the addition of b. 452.

H demonstrates that the rhythmically-altered statement of the symphony's central motif, the trombone theme of the first movement introduction, was not a later addition to the second movement at b. 455, as Roger Fiske speculates in his preface to the 1980 Eulenburg edition of the symphony. It exists in **H** at b. 744, but has been moved from the clarinets in **H** to the oboes in **FE**. This adjustment accompanies further minor harmonic changes in the wind accompaniment parts over the next few bars. A corresponding section at b. 477 (766) does not contain the central motif in **H**, and has been added to **FE**, again in the oboe part, as an afterthought based on bb. 455 ff. (744 ff.)

The instrumental texture has been refined in **FE** at b. 472 (761) by silencing the violins in order to prevent them from interfering with an answering phrase in the wind section. Similarly, the woodwind instruments have been silenced at b. 474 (763) in **FE** while the strings take over. Again Mendelssohn is here emphasizing the contrasts of different combinations of instruments for the

sake of variety. An oboe melodic figure in **H** has been refined and placed in the first violins in this bar of **FE**:



This has been done in order to continue the sequence established in b. 458 (747). It also seems illogical to vary an isolated statement of this phrase, central to the unity of the second movement, in this way.

In order to maintain the antiphonal effect of clean exchanges between the wind and the strings, a bassoon and oboe doubling of the first violins at b. 491 (780) in **H** is removed in **FE**.

The note-values in bb. 506-7 (795) of **FE** have been doubled to slow down the momentum at the cadence towards the double bar leading back to the tonic. A general feature of the middle trio section is the minor adjustment in the block chords of the wind parts to achieve greater harmonic variety.

Returning to the first-subject material at b. 508 (796) caused as few compositional complications as its original appearance in the first section of the movement, and **FE** again remains essentially true to **H**. There are, however, certain minor alterations. For example, a brief imitative exchange added to the oboes and bassoons at b. 515 during the revision process adds one bar to **FE**.

Once again with a view to emphasizing wind and string exchanges, three bars are added to the second version at b. 533 (820). In **FE**, oboe and bassoon accompaniment imitate the strings and flutes of b. 530, rather than all playing together at b. 530 (817) as in **H**.

A very small alteration produces three almost identical chords to end the movement in the second version, with tonic *g'* at the top each time. In **H**, the first two of the chords approach the final *g'* from a *b'*flat at the top.

Mendelssohn seems to have had a much clearer idea of what he wished to achieve in the Allegretto movement from the start, and hence there was much less need for revision than in the opening movement. Even the Berlin sketches in **S** show, as discussed in Chapter 3, that early ideas for this movement, at least the main section of it, were fairly constant. As the previous movement's revisions were centred on the development sections, those of the second movement have been focused on the middle trio section. These are less extensive in scope than in the first movement and feature mainly the emphasizing of instrumental exchanges, especially in the contrasts of combinations of instrumental colours, and refinement in the harmonic movement. Of course, its essentially intermezzo-like simplicity, involving minimal development, was perhaps less susceptible to reworking.

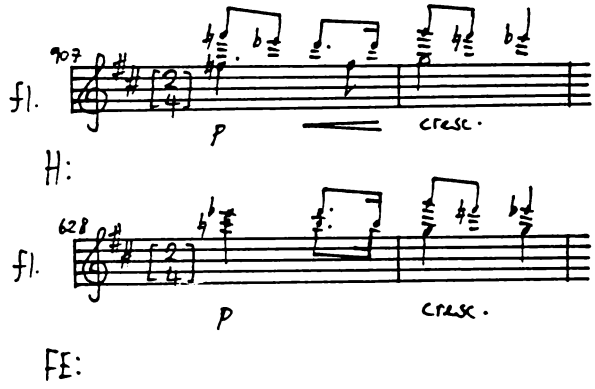
'Adagio religioso'

Revisions made to the third movement are simpler still and pertain essentially to refinements of line and harmony.

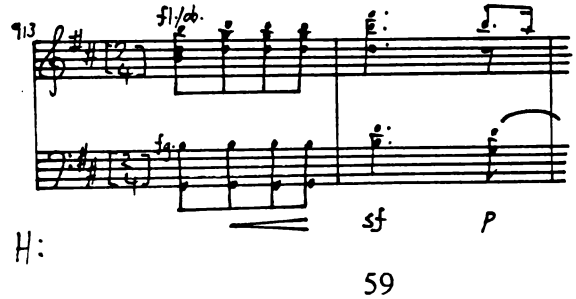
Among other features, the trumpet and drum parts have here been excised from the whole movement during revision, possibly proving to be too intrusive at the first performance for this most serene of movements.

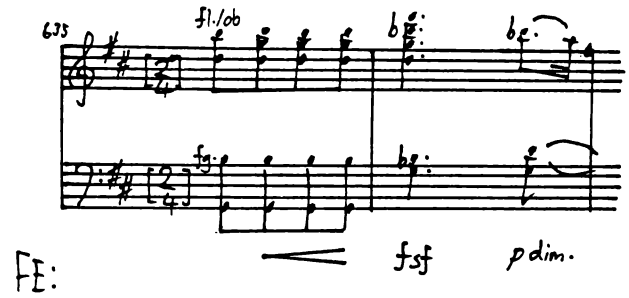
A phrase from b. 579 (862), extended and imitated at b. 583 in **FE** only, adds four bars to **FE**. The two versions are the same again from b. 587 (866).

A bar has been added at b. 623 in order to define more clearly the end of a phrase before the bassoon comes in afresh with a cantabile phrase. The effect of sequential imitation beginning in b. 624 (902) with the cantabile bassoon part is maintained through refinements to the melodic line in the flute part in b. 628 (907).



Bar 909-10 of **H** have been reworked to form bb. 630-32 of **FE** and consequently a more measured return to the first subject material at b. 633 (911). Mendelssohn here uses greater harmonic imagination in **FE** than in **H**. This theme takes an unexpected turn to the minor in b. 636 (914) in **FE** only, as shown in the example below, the chord being held on a *forte* sforzando.





Many other small changes have been made to the harmony and melodic line, for example in bb. 637-8 (915-16), and single bars 652 and 655 have been added to the second version. The latter example, coupled with a small variation to the violin and flutes in the previous two bars, provides a more measured ending to the phrase under the same circumstances as the extra bar 623.

No. 2 (1). Allegro moderato maestoso

It will be seen from the table at the start of this chapter, giving an overview of the symphony's proportions, that the first two choral movements are numbered differently in each version. This is a small matter resulting from confusion in **Aut.**, the composer's working copy. **Aut.** names the Sinfonia as no. 1, does not give the first choral movement a number at all, and names the following movement no. 2. The **FE** publisher realized that something must be wrong, and moved the no. 2 to the first choral movement while leaving the following movement unnumbered. Given how particular Mendelssohn was about small details right up to the point when the work went into print, we must assume that this arrangement had his blessing. The Eulenburg edition of 1980 compromises by calling the latter movement no. 2½, based on all Novello vocal scores, and **H** provides yet another solution to the problem by making the Sinfonia no. 1 and giving the same number to the first choral movement, as if to acknowledge that this finale stands on its own. That might be merely a copyist's decision and, given the number of errors contained in **H** whether accidental or otherwise, we are not entitled to infer that this was Mendelssohn's own solution.

H° and **Aut.°** both concur with **FE**. However, Henschke's numbering has been maintained in the accompanying edition.

In the first choral movement, the lone double bass introduction on a single *d*, the first bar in **FE**, is missing in **H**. The effect of the extra bar, in the context of how the instrumental forces proceed gradually to build up, is similar to an effect mentioned by Judith Karen Silber in her Ph.D thesis on the 'Reformation' Symphony.[43] Mendelssohn is trying to achieve an effect of cumulative voices which build up to a tutti at b. 17 (16) with the full chorus. Silber suggests a desire to imitate the style of singing in a German Lutheran service where all participants would have joined in severally until the whole church was in song. After all, both symphonies carry the same broadly Lutheran overtones. The interesting harmony of the following bars is identical in both **FE** and **H**. The inclusion of an animato marking at b. 32 (31) in **FE** emphasizes a change of mood.

Three separate entries in **H** bb. 39-41 in the trumpet and horn parts, the first two doubling vocal parts, imitate the symphony's central motif which was first heard as the trombone introduction to the first instrumental movement. Although this is just the sort of contrapuntal texture and cyclic use of the central motif which Mendelssohn sought throughout his revisions to enhance, in this case the three wind entries have been left out of the **FE** version. These wind forces have been held in reserve until the climactic arrival, including an organ entry, at b. 43 (42).

As in previous movements, b. 48 (47) is an example where the second version stretches the music by an extra bar in the interests of structural clarity, creating a more expansive approach to the

[43] Judith Karen Silber. 'Mendelssohn and the Reformation Symphony: A Critical and Historical Study' (Ph.D dissertation. Yale University. 1987), 143.

cadence. The delay in resolution and the new turn in the melodic line give greater dramatic emphasis to the start of the Allegro di molto at b. 50 (48). The chorus parts have been altered from b. 45 (44) for the same purpose, and in **FE** maintain a greater feeling of movement until the change of texture at the Allegro. As a result of the changes, the **FE** cadence expands and broadens out towards a clear focal point at b. 50 (48), from where the strings alone take off.

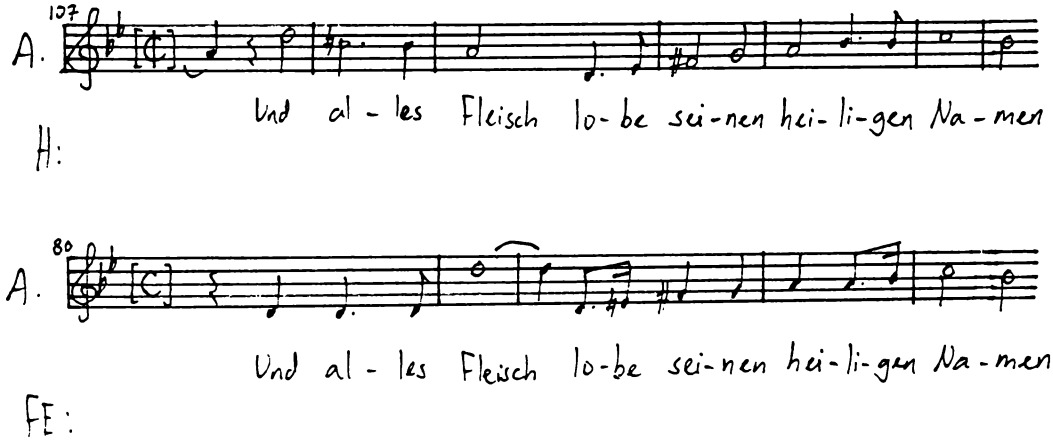
The note-values have been halved in **FE** in the Allegro, as occurred at a corresponding moment in the first instrumental movement at b. 22 (21). A horn, which in **H** hints towards the coming tenor melody, has been left out of **FE**. The first two bars of the Allegro thus appear more as an introduction to the tenor entry.

The woodwind parts continue to double the chorus from b. 60 (69) in **H**, but for textural variety are silenced in **FE** until b. 63 (75). The approach to the chorus cadence has been modified from around b. 69 (86), resulting in the addition of half a bar to **FE**. The two run roughly parallel again from the alto entry in b. 71 (89).

Mendelssohn has given consideration to improving texture and harmony from b. 80 (107). In fact, a complete change of ideas at this point makes the two versions difficult to compare together until b. 122 (171). This portion of **H** runs for 64 bars (in double the time-values of **FE**) as opposed to 42 bars of **FE**.

At b. 80 (107), **H** keeps the *d* cello and double bass part and maintains the contrapuntal flow. **FE** however brings the bass line chromatically down while the upper strings hold the *d'*. More importantly, **FE** marks the new line of text, 'Und alles Fleisch...', by bringing the contrapuntal

movement to a stop with a cadence in the chorus parts, and giving the alto a clear texture to begin again, with the new line doubled by oboes and horns. **FE** is therefore structurally tidier than **H**, where the musical differentiation between the two lines of text is less clear. Indeed, the tenor 'lobt den Herrn' merges uneasily with the new alto line. The new line of text is further differentiated in the second version by providing it with a distinctive new melodic shape based on a decisive and memorable octave leap upwards, as shown in the example below:



The octave leap musically underlines the words 'Und alles Fleisch' as a symbolic gesture and becomes the musical characteristic of the next 42 bars. The melodic shape of the new line in **H**, though treated imitatively, is much less distinctive.

The line of text 'Lobt den Herrn mit Saitenspiel' beginning in **FE** in the alto part at b. 106 is the same as that used in at b. 139 **H**. Again, however, attention has been given in the second version to giving the alto a fresh beginning, while the respective sections of **H** are more merged.

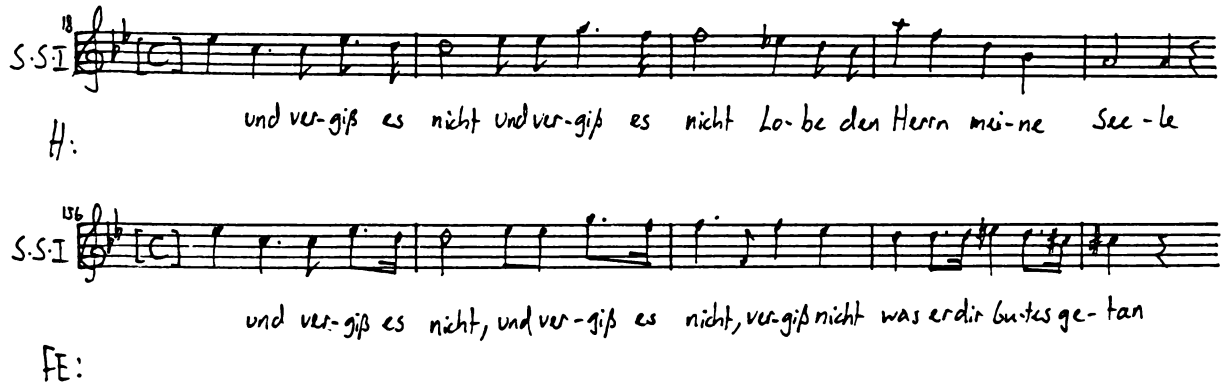
After a climactic point at b. 134 (196) on the word `Herrn' and soprano *g''*, **H** throws away the ending on a simple two-bar perfect cadence descending in the soprano *d''*, *c''*, *b''*flat. The effect

of so doing makes the following no. 2½ (2) less of a separate movement in its own right and more of a continuous extension of no. 2 (1). Indeed the text, though new, features an overlap with 'Lobe den Herrn meine Seele...'. **FE**, however, provides a more extended four-bar ending to no. 2 (1), another line of 'alles was Odem hat' and a more interesting melodic line descending slowly and chromatically from the *g''* through to *d''* in the soprano. The cadence, having been delayed, then brings the movement to a much more emphatic close.

No. 2½ (2). Molto più moderato ma con fuoco

Most of the changes to this short movement during the course of revision are comparatively small and largely concern minor variations of orchestration. With exceptions as outlined below, **FE** remains remarkably true to **H** even to the point of dynamic markings and marks of articulation such as portato.

At b. 156 (18), the chorus continues in **H** to b. 23 but drops out in **FE**. The modification brings the passage into line with similar passages in the movement. An alteration to the melodic line at b. 158 (20) is coupled with a consequent change in harmony. The soprano solo in **H** cadences over the next two-and-a-half bars, via an *a''*, with the line 'Lobe den Herrn meine Seele'. Perhaps this was modified because it proved to be uncomfortably high. In any case **FE** cadences earlier in order to avoid an untidy overlap with the following chorus, and ends with an unexpected swing to an A major chord. The two versions are compared below. The line used in **FE** at this point is 'und vergiß es nicht was er dir Gutes getan hat'. 'Lobe den Herrn...', from **H**, is left in **FE** to the succeeding choral exclamation.



In bb. 34-5 of **H**, where the chorus briefly enters, the soprano solo drops out to create a short antiphonal effect with the chorus. In **FE**'s corresponding bars, bb. 172-3, the two sing together. It is more typical in this work for Mendelssohn to create, not undermine, such antiphonal effects by separating voices or instrumental groups. However, the **FE** version is here more consistent with similar passages earlier in this movement.

No. 3. Recitativo

On the third beat of b. 1, actually the first beat of **H**'s first complete bar, the note-values of **FE** have been halved, i.e. **FE** semiquavers rather than quavers. The alteration to **FE** resolves a numerical inaccuracy in **H**, which has an extra bar-line after 'Saget es', thus creating a first bar with only two beats instead of four to balance the last bar of **H**'s previous movement, which is similarly two beats short. **FE** overlaps the two movements thus: 𝄾 𝅗𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘 𝄾 𝅗𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘𝅥𝅘 in place of **H**'s minim full stop 𝅗𝅥 . **FE** note values are restored to their **H** equivalents again in b. 2. Since this is recitative, the matter is purely a notational one.

The aria bb. 12-82 is lacking in **H**; the text is lacking in **T**. This tenor solo is one of the 'new pieces', and being in the style of a lament to the text 'Er zählet unsre Tränen...' adds a certain

drama and pathos which emphasize the more cantata-like qualities of the work as a whole. This is notably the first text, and significantly in a 'new piece', to introduce a humanizing element, as if a dramatic sequence is about to unfold. From no. 5, it does so.

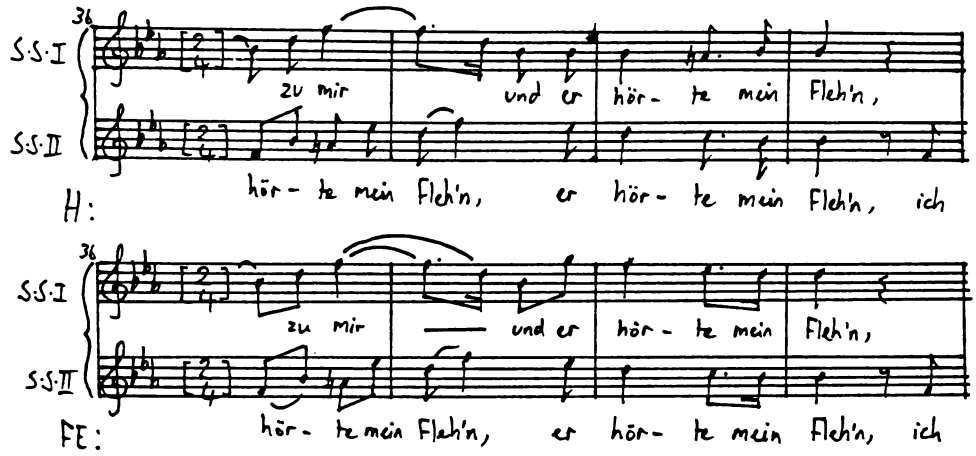
No. 4. A tempo moderato

Very few alterations of any sort have been made to this movement, and none of great importance. The text, similar to no. 3, is also absent from **T**. This was already, in the first version, a movement which could have been intended for an oratorio-style work, and it again alludes to God as redeemer. The chorus, as in ancient tragedy, is an external commentator on the action, shadowy and for the most part implicit though that action is. No. 5 elaborates, and this takes us into the centre of the dramatic sequence.

No. 5. Andante

Up to b. 37 **FE** remains almost totally true to **H**, even to the point of precise dynamics and articulation. Such exact concurrence between the two scores is unusual. Most of the main alterations which follow have been made, not for formal or musical reasons, but to suit a dramatic context. This is the case for most of the middle choral movements.

In bb. 37-38 a small change of melodic line in solo soprano I creates a pleasing harmonic effect between the two soloists, so that the two parts approach the cadence together in thirds from b.37/4. The same effect was clearly aimed for in **H**, but with less harmonious perfection, as the example below shows.



An alteration to solo soprano II at b. 73 achieves a similar effect, with corresponding changes in the flutes and horns.

There is a change of effect for dramatic purposes at bb. 87-88, where **FE** cadences decisively on an accented 'Herrn' and maintains the volume to contrast suddenly with a more plaintive *pianissimo* solo entry in b. 89 on 'Ich harrete des Herrn'. The cadence in **H**, however, diminuendos to a *piano* in b. 88 which is somehow ill-suited to the positive tone of the text 'setzt auf den Herrn!' and does not contrast with the following passage.

A pause has been added at b. 102 to 'Hoff(nung)' ('hope'), and another to 'setzt' to emphasize the final cadence in the unaccompanied chorus.

H and **FE** respectively end this movement differently. Again, the alteration is made for dramatic effect, with **FE** emphasizing the contrast of atmosphere in the music between the gentle ending of no. 5 and the anguished beginning of no. 6. **H** makes a continuous link with the following movement by turning the harmonic progression towards an inverted dominant 7th of C minor at b. 107, with a triplet figure in the strings at b. 108, the last bar. **FE**, by contrast, ends peacefully in the key of E flat, and ties the last E flat chord over an extra last bar. A rest at the end of the last

bar in **FE** is then lengthened by a pause. Both versions establish an upbeat to the C minor and triple time of no. 6.

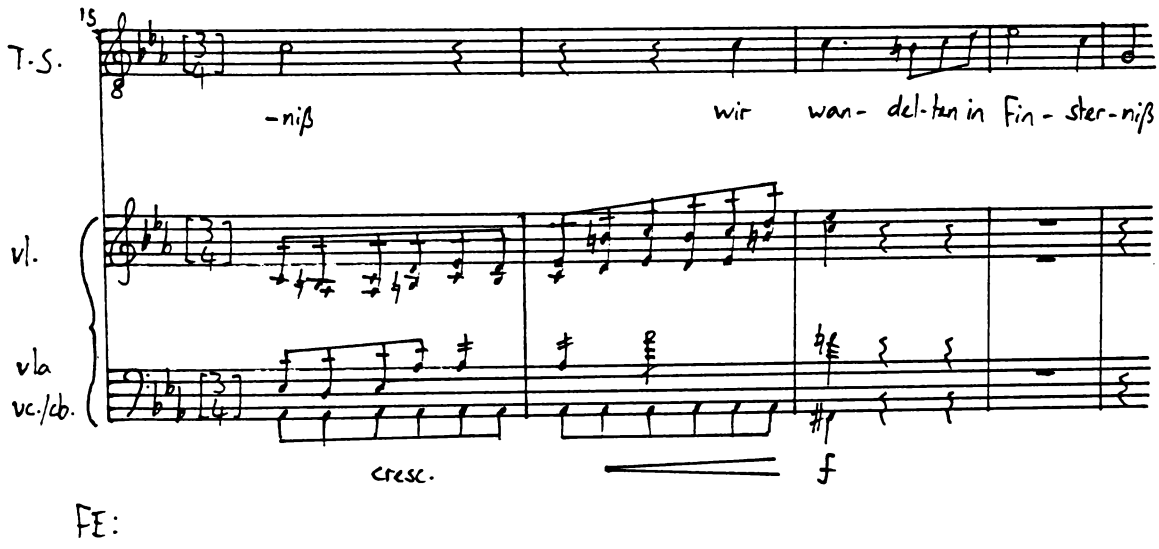
The endings of previous sections have been altered to improve the continuous links between movements, especially in the instrumental movements for purely formal reasons. In the choral movements, however, dramatic progression is more important than musical continuity. Whether the links or contrasts of consecutive movements have been emphasized depends on the dramatic context. In this case, having outlined the mercy of God, Mendelssohn uses the break in momentum and sudden contrast of atmosphere for rhetorical purposes to prepare for a change of mood in the plot. This sets out a situation in which an unidentified character in the cantata needs to turn to the Lord for help. No. 6 sets the scene.

No. 6. Allegro un poco agitato

The contrast is complemented by adding four new bars to the second version at the very start of the new movement. While **H** launches straight into the tenor solo, the new bars in **FE** provide an instrumental introduction to set the scene with a strong, characteristic rhythmic pattern involving a snatch of breath on the first beat of each bar. This rhythmic impulse in **FE** replaces a smoother line of accompaniment in **H**. The two accompaniments remain in this respect very different until b. 39 (31). It is noticeable, however, that a passage from b. 40 onwards corresponding to the first tenor entry has maintained in the second version the rhythmically gentler accompaniment of **H**, although here the chromatic bass line brings added pathos of its own.

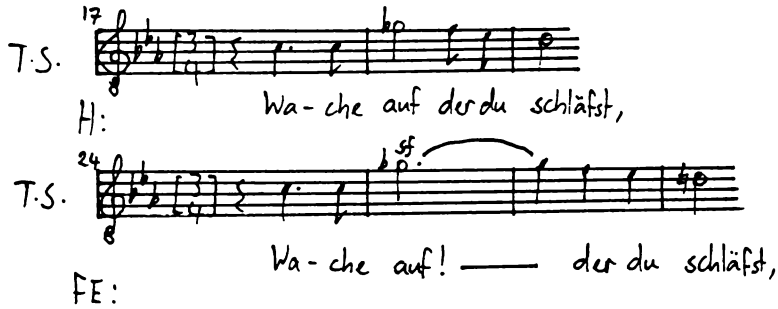
At b. 13 (9), **H** holds the syllable `wan(delten)' for a bar and a quaver. In **FE**, this has been cut

to a dotted quaver, and thus, with additional numerical compensation, **FE** loses a bar. **FE** also delays, by consequence, the mysterious sounding harmony in **H** which moves from an F minor triad in the middle of 'wan(delten)' to an augmented sixth chord founded on a shift to *f* sharp in the violas, with the tenor's *e'*flat at the top. **FE** instead uses essentially a C minor tonic chord in b. 13 (9), slightly delayed by the double suspension in the violins. The upper parts are in turn suspended over a bass line shift from *c* to *B* flat in the following bar, leading to an A flat triad. This leads eventually to an F sharp diminished chord in b. 17, equivalent in function to **H**'s augmented sixth, only after a dramatic *crescendo*. There follows an anguished repetition of 'wir wandelten in Finsterniß' in the tenor without accompaniment. Thus four bars have been added to **FE** from b. 15.



The above passage, used as a rhetorical device with dramatic intent, contrasts markedly with the hushed succeeding phrase that heralds the Lord's response.

Another change for musico-rhetorical effect is the longer-held and accentuated *g'*flat on '(wache) auf' at b. 25 (18) of **FE**, which holds it over four crotchets as opposed to **H**'s two:



Mendelssohn has given attention in this movement to refining certain portions of the accompaniment. This he has done either by adjusting the parts without fundamentally altering the harmony, as in the woodwind parts bb. 19-24 (12-17), or else by adjusting the instrumentation, as from b. 44 (36), where initially **FE** lacks **H**'s first violin doubling of the tenor melody, followed by the rearranging of the other parts.

The same musico-rhetorical device from b. 15 of **FE** is used again at b. 50. This time, however, **H** is very similar in terms of harmonic progression, and although the *tremolo* string accompaniment is similar in both versions, in **H** it is achieved through static chords as opposed to **FE**'s dramatic rising movement. **FE** also lacks **H**'s wind parts in order to contrast the instrumental texture with the return of 'Er aber spricht' at b. 54 (46). The longer holding of 'auf' at **FE**'s b. 60 (51), although now in a different harmonic context, parallels that at b. 25 (18).

The last tenor statement of 'ich will dich erleuchten' begins in **H**'s b. 61, equivalent to b. 71 of **FE**. Although **FE**'s instrumental parts remain unaltered until b. 73 (63), the actual tenor entry is delayed for two bars. The **FE** tenor part is stated over a four-bar cadence from b. 73 which slows down the momentum and emphasizes this as the end of a section. Bars 77-129 are then completely new, self-contained, and, as a total contrast to the preceding section, provide the dramatic and rhetorical high point of the work. This is the 'Watchman Scene' Mendelssohn's second 'new piece'.

H moves into a similarly expressive recitative section, 'con fuoco', at b. 71 with the text 'und ich stand auf und wandelte in Licht'. The intent and the message is the same in both versions, but in the **FE** 'new piece' Mendelssohn has heightened the drama by interpolating the dialogue with the watchman, expressing anguished anxiety at the persistence of night. The expectation of the arrival of light is intensified by delay and by more vivid instrumental effects. For example, triplet strings in **H** become *tremolo* in **FE**, and the *forte* of **H** turns into sharp and sudden contrasts between *fortissimo* and *pianissimo* in **FE**. He has also created a dramatic situation in which a partially-defined character is recounting an ill-defined situation, vague and symbolic as in a dream, in which he was troubled and the Lord turned to save him.

A chromatic bass-line towards the end of **H** leads to an A major chord which provides a dominant upbeat to, and a continuous link with, no. 7 in D major. **FE** is also linked by the A major chord. More significantly, however, Mendelssohn introduces another character in **FE**, this time a soprano 'angel', who alone contradicts the ambiguous pessimism of the Watchman's words by announcing, 'Die Nacht ist vergangen'. Thus there is a sudden release of dramatic tension, and then no. 7, positive, fully orchestrated with organ and chorus, and in D major, clearly a key of hope, resolves the conflict.

No. 7. Allegro maestoso e molto vivace

This is another movement remarkably true in **FE** to its **H** counterpart, and notably the only movement to have a self-contained early source in full score (**BL**).

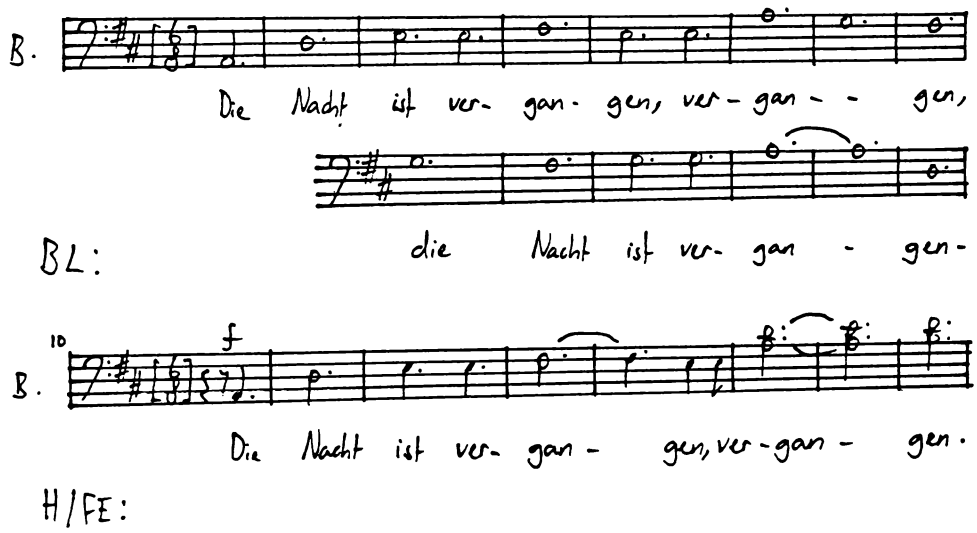
There are various comparatively small changes between **H** and **FE**. For example the parts have

been altered at bb. 94 and 98 with a consequent loss of **H**'s descending chromatic double bass line. Instead, a harmonic focus on G sharp leads to the A dominant of b. 98 in a more melodically integrated bass-line. Mendelssohn has also refined the melodic contour of the parts bb. 113-17, but not significantly.

Source **BL**, however, differs dramatically from both **H** and **FE**. **BL** is an incomplete source comprising 106 complete and retained bars, and a further 19 deleted bars. Both **BL** and **H** use the same text as **FE**. **BL** is in 6/4 time while all subsequent sources, including **S** which possibly therefore post-dates it, are in 6/8.

In the opening bars, the orchestration is varied between **H** and **BL**. In **H**, the woodwind have more of an accompanimental role; in **BL** they share the theme with the brass.

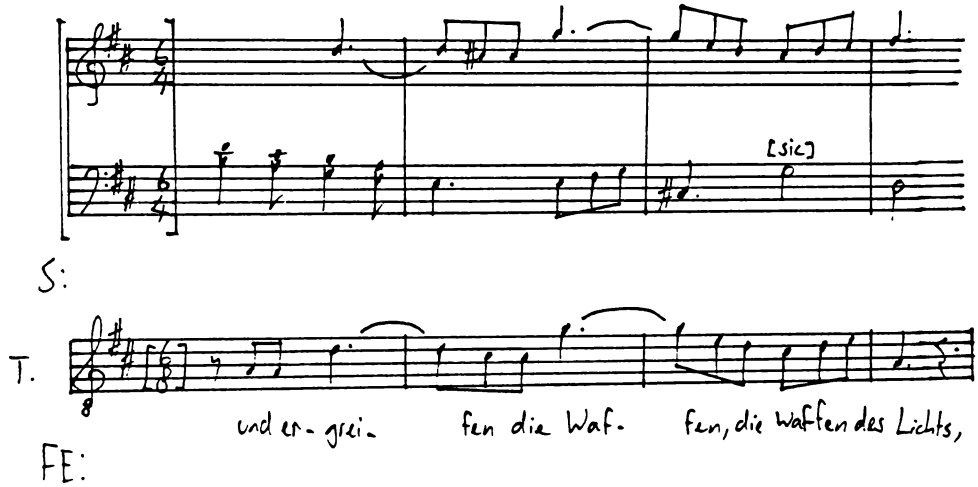
The theme for 'Die Nacht ist vergangen' (see below) is shorter in **H** and **FE** than in **BL**. This means that **BL** is characterized by longer cadential progressions.



The bass part enters alone at b. 10 of **H**, but comes in together and in unison with the tenor in **BL**.

This leads to further changes in part-writing, until eventually **BL** diverges completely from the other sources.

A significant passage, which is sketched in **S**, and present in **H** and **FE** in the tenor at b. 164, is absent from **BL**. **BL** does have a rhythmically similar passage on fol. 12v, but without the distinctive melodic shape with harmonic implications. This is further evidence that **BL** predates **S**, and was most likely composed as a self-contained vocal work with orchestral accompaniment before the *Lobgesang* Symphony was even thought of.



Another passage on fol. 17v of **BL** gives a hint, in the bass vocal part, of a bass-line built on octaves from b. 164 of **FE** and **H**.

No. 8. Chorale: Andante con moto

No. 8 was not substantially affected by the revision.

A pencil 'dim.' mark has been added to the second beat of b. 34 in **H**. This is probably in the composer's hand, and the 'dim.' remains in **FE**.

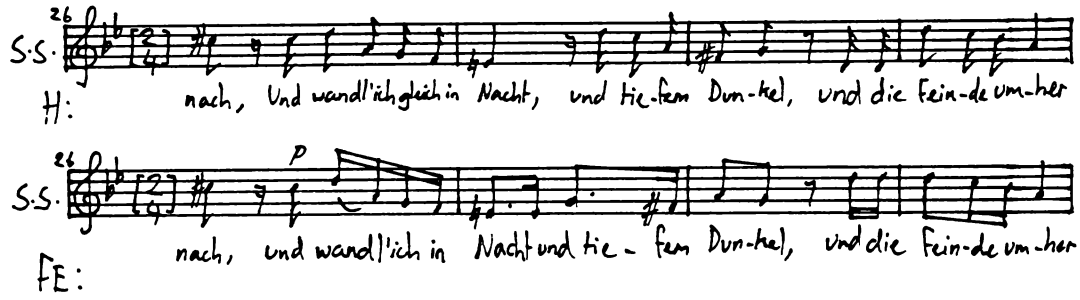
From b. 32 there has been a change of text towards the end of the second stanza in **FE**. The new text is as follows:

(Lob dem drei-ein'gen Gott,)
der Nacht und Dunkel schied
von Licht und Morgenroth
ihm danket unser Lied.

The direct references to light and darkness in the new portion of the text are notable in view of the new portion of no. 6, which dwelt substantially on this theme.

No. 9. Andante sostenuto assai

At the opening of no. 9 there has been some rearrangement and adjustment of the instrumental parts without fundamentally altering the music during the course of revision. For example, the second version lacks **H**'s bassoon part and maintains instead a purely string texture up to b. 20, and thus provides a change of instrumental colour at the point where the soprano enters. Elsewhere Mendelssohn has refined the melodic line as, for example, in bb. 27-28.



The big modification to this movement, however, is the transformation from tenor solo to

soprano/ tenor duet. The soprano, when alone from b. 20, sings of the night and darkness reminiscent of the tenor 'Watchman Scene' of no. 6, and the tenor, no doubt in the wake of God's assistance at the end of no. 6, sings God's praise. The two sing together of God's mercy from b. 35, as if the tenor character has reassured the soprano character through his own experience earlier in the cantata.

The soprano of **FE** enters first at b. 20, where it takes over **H**'s existing tenor line at the change of text to 'Und wandl' ich in Nacht'. The tenor meanwhile drops out. The two coming together in **FE** at b. 35 mark out the fresh line of text, 'so rufe ich'. As the tenor continues alone in **H** at b. 35, the fresh line of text is separated from the previous line only by an extra bar in between.

The true duet section, **FE** bb. 35-68, is the third 'new piece' mentioned by Mendelssohn in his correspondence with Klingemann.[44] The corresponding portion of **H** consists of just nine bars of tenor solo accompanied by strings and bassoon as throughout the movement. The text has also been revised in this portion. After 'so rufe ich an den Namen des Herrn', the tenor of **H** continues 'und der erlöset mich und er errettet mich aus der Hand aller meiner Feinde'.

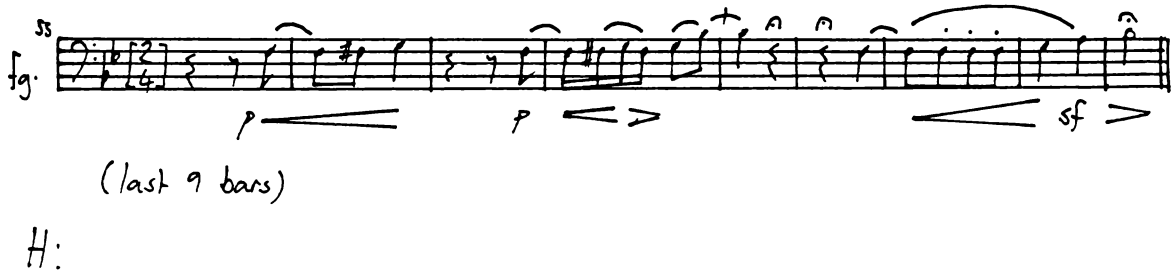
The two versions are similar again from **FE** b. 68 (45) with the return to the melodic line from the start of the movement. However, **H**'s tenor solo has again been changed in **FE** to a soprano solo, which is joined at b. 72 by the tenor to end the movement as a duet.

Alterations have been made to the instrumental parts at this point during the course of revision.

[44] See note 19.

The bassoon part of **H**, for example, almost takes on the role of a second soloist in a duet. The re-casting as a vocal duet clearly made this treatment less appropriate.

From b. 77 (54) the two scores diverge to the end of the movement. Just 9 bars of **H** remain to **FE**'s 22 bars. The former ends less convincingly with a cadence in B flat based on the melodic figure in the bassoon as below:



FE has dropped this figure and settles for a clearer and simpler perfect cadence ending in B flat. The line 'und wandl' ich in Nacht' is used again towards the end from b. 80 in **FE** but not in **H**. The text of no. 9 is lacking in **T**.

No. 10. Schlusschor: Allegro non troppo

To suit the grandeur of a *Schlusschor*, alterations in the orchestration include a filling out of the orchestral texture at the start with the introduction of sustained wind chords, and at b. 24 the inclusion of two trombones to double the melodic line.

At b. 55 'All° vivace' in **H** becomes 'Più vivace' in **FE** - **Aut.** reads 'Più animato' - and the note-values have been halved from this bar onwards in the latter version. This is not shown in **Aut.**.

At b. 59 the line 'Danket Alle dem Herrn' of **H** has been changed to 'Alles danke dem Herrn' in such a way that the 'Alles' falls in the **FE** version on the long, full, sustained chorus chords, and thus becomes reminiscent of the chorus entry of 'Alles was Odem hat' in the first choral movement. This also makes the word-setting sound more emphatic in the **FE** version.

At b. 62, a pencil marking in **H**, probably in the hand of Mendelssohn, changes a *b'*flat in the alto part into a *b'*natural as in the orchestral parts. However, in **FE** all parts are clearly flattened once again. **Aut.** is no help at this point, for the original leaves have been replaced and lost. The progression B flat - C in the alto and cognate parts is clearly wrong, and **FE** is evidently in error. As we know from Mendelssohn's correspondence with his publishers, his copyists were not always scrupulously accurate.

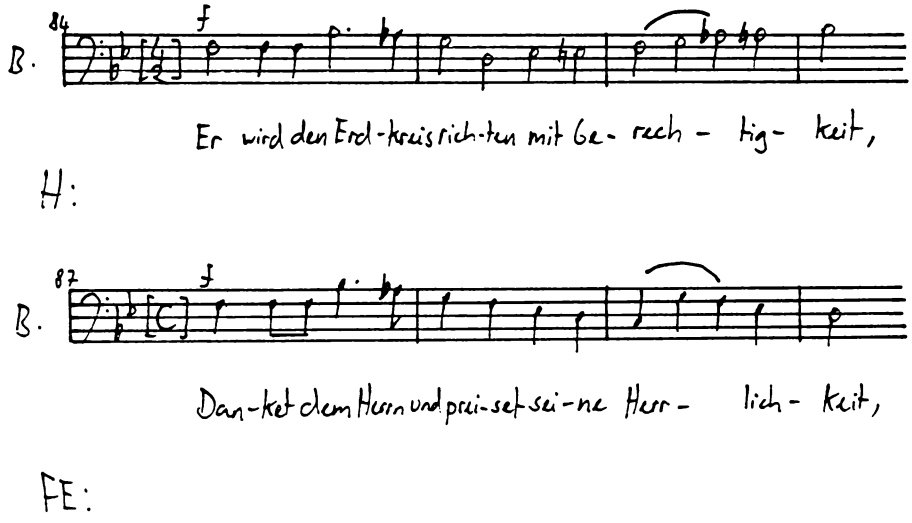
The 'Più vivace' section has been subject to a great deal of revision in terms of adjustments to the parts which do not fundamentally alter the character of the music. However, the two versions begin to differ substantially between bb. 67 and 87 (84), initially in basic harmonic movement, leading to a total divergence between the two scores from around b. 79, where **FE** introduces a new line of text 'und preiset seine Herrlichkeit'.

While **H** remains harmonically static around an F major chord for four bars repeating the text 'und rühmt seinen Namen', there is a greater use of harmonic movement in a longer **FE** passage which leads eventually to the F major chord at bb. 85-86.

The two versions come together again on the upbeat to a fresh bass entry at b. 87 (84), although the text from this bar onwards has been revised. **FE** lacks **H**'s 'Er wird den Erdkreis richten mit

Gerechtigkeit, und die Völker mit seiner Wahrheit', and repeats instead the line 'Danket dem Herrn...'.

Bar 87 (84) begins a fugato in both versions. The subject of **H** continues differently from that of **FE**, as the example below shows, and is more chromatic. Mendelssohn saw this section as a self-contained fugato, and as such it is most likely the fourth 'new piece' referred to in correspondence with Karl Klingemann.[45] The two versions diverge so far as to be incomparable from b. 93 (90).



A characteristic figure which is common to both versions is the octave leaping double-bass line from b. 152 of **FE** and b. 174 of **H**. The octaves are on Fs in **FE** and on B flats in **H**. These are rhythmically very similar to the double-bass octave leaping from b. 164 of no. 7.

The octave-leaping line in the double basses, very similar to the passage from b. 164, followed by a downward scale is the feature by which both versions of the fugato are brought to a similar

[45] Ibid.

end, after 97 bars of **H** and 100 bars of **FE**. **FE**'s slightly different ending slows down the momentum in the last three bars, from b. 184, with five long and impressive *tutti* chords appropriate to the text, 'seine Herrlichkeit!'.

The note-values are again equal in both versions of the 'Maestoso come I' which brings the return of the motto theme at b. 187 (181). From the same point, two bars have been added to **FE** by separating the trombones from the tenor and bass. In **H**, they all state the central motif together, but in **FE** the trombones begin alone, antiphonally answered by the tenor and bass. This is more strongly reminiscent of the introduction to the first instrumental movement, and reinforces the sense of the cyclic structure of the work as a whole.

The bass and melodic lines of **FE** have been slightly altered from b. 191 (183). While the first two bars of the central motif are restated literally in **H**, the individual twists in **FE**'s melodic line and bass line lead to a *D* and first inversion of tonic B flat in b. 192 (183). The effect of both changes together is to create a strong question which must be followed by the most final of answers. The four-bar 'ritardando' phrase which follows in **FE** brings the symphony to a satisfactory conclusion using all available forces. **H**'s cadence, by contrast, follows all too predictably. Mendelssohn has heightened the sense of final resolution in **FE** by eliding **H**'s bb. 184-6 and, as in earlier passages, slowing down the momentum and delaying the final cadence.

Chapter V

The Symphony-Cantata: an expression of Hegel's indeterminate content in music

The *Lobgesang* Symphony as a drama

The Henschke score, which depicts the *Lobgesang* Symphony as it was at the time of its first performance, is very revealing. To see a composition at what can be regarded as a mid-point in the compositional process isolates the composer's main concerns, be they compositional or extra-musical. A comparison of how the symphony was at its mid-point stage and how it ended up can reveal what is lost or ambiguous in the layer upon layer of revision, adjustment, and alteration in the autograph.

In terms of purely musical content, one of Mendelssohn's main aims in revision was clearly to improve the orchestral colour. This is indicated by the many changes in textural detail between the two versions of the symphony, particularly in the instrumental movements. For example, a more imaginative use of the woodwind emphasizes instrumental and textural contrast, and this in turn underlines dramatic climaxes. There are also many examples of added doublings of parts, strengthened bass lines, and small technical alterations. A good example of the latter is the loss of the viola triplet figure in the exposition of the first movement.

Another aim was to clarify the formal structure. Again, this is especially the case with the instrumental movements. Mendelssohn did this by highlighting the main points in the symphony's

framework through contrasts of instrumentation or tone, or improving the links between movements to create a continuous structure, as though influenced by late Beethoven. Indeed the comparison of the two versions reveals constant alteration for the sake of more emphatic articulation - heavier punctuation - by making structural cadences more weighty through augmentation. Concern is given to improving the unity of the work by means such as increased use of the dotted rhythm or highlighting the symphony's cyclic theme, the central motif. The loss of the above-mentioned viola triplets is one of several means by which the Handelian dotted rhythmic feature of the opening has been emphasized for the purposes of unity.

However, the revisions in the choral movement reveal an additional and separate agenda, evinced also in verbal additions and changes: greater contrast of mood and a sense of dramatic progression. In this case, Mendelssohn is trying to convey a message in his music which is primarily religious. Questions regarding Mendelssohn's motivation for the latter classification of changes will relate to both the symphony's and the composer's background.

Chapter 4 referred several times to a 'plot'. If indeed Mendelssohn did have this notion of creating a plot, it was enhanced, if not actually created, by the revision process. Just as the oratorio *Elijah* presents a number of static situations in which the hero's character is unfolded, the *Lobgesang* presents a number of scenes illustrating different facets of man's weakness as if to demonstrate the many facets of God's strength. The overall 'scene' is that of the congregation, an allegory for mankind, in the unseen presence of an all-powerful yet merciful God.

The chorus is used much as a chorus would have been used in classical drama. It sets the scene at the beginning, provides the conclusion or moral of the story at the end, and otherwise

comments on the presented situations throughout.

There are three additional characters, two sopranos and a tenor. None of these characters is identified or well defined, and their only purpose is to provide the medium through which God is perceived. Thus they appear in a series of situations in which either they are presented as weak, needy, surrounded by darkness but saved by their faith, or they recall how God has helped them when they needed it and sing His praise.

It cannot be certain whether Mendelssohn necessarily intended this effect in the original version of the symphony, or whether he set out more simply to set to music a series of random texts from the Bible on a common theme - light superseding darkness. An overview of **T**, the earliest available draft of the *Lobgesang*'s text, suggests the latter: it presents the very broad theme of praising God, but without obviously drawing attention to the light-darkness message. This complements the possibility, earlier discussed, that the *Lobgesang* began as a 'symphony of Psalms', with a text already envisaged even before the Gutenberg theme had been determined. According to G.A. Keferstein, Mendelssohn put the texts for the *Christus* fragments and *St. Paul* together arbitrarily and without inner organic necessity.[46] The same seems to be true of the *Lobgesang* at least until its revision by November 1840. Most likely then, having set a number of disparate texts in the first place, he sought means by which to link them, and hence discovered the cantata element, and the means to express deeper ideas than a superficial light-darkness theme, during the course of revision. The expression of non-musical ideas in music, in this case with a philosophical flavour, is what Hegel would have termed the indeterminate content.

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[46]Donald Mintz, '1848, Anti-Semitism, and the Mendelssohn Reception, *Mendelssohn Studies*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Cambridge, 1992), 139.

As the meaning behind the words is as much conveyed by the drama in the music as in the words themselves, the changes in mood between different numbers have been brought out and enhanced, as Chapter 4 shows, during the symphony's revision. No. 6 is the best example of how the music, including the instrumentation, has been revised so as to draw out the full sense of drama.

The following is a brief synopsis of the 'plot':

The chorus sets the scene in no. 2 (1) by providing a comparatively lengthy introduction, a partly paraphrased setting of Psalm 150, enthusiastically calling upon all creation to praise the Lord.

In the first scene, no. 2½ (2), the first soprano enters to tell how kind and loving God is, and urges us not to forget His benefits. The chorus, as if in the role of a congregation, occasionally joins in with reminders to praise the Lord.

In the next scene, no. 3, the tenor carries much the same message. However, the tone of the music and the nature of the text are much more urgent. Again, there are no specific events, but the tenor talks of darkness, trouble, sorrow and death, and how God is ever present at such times of need. The caring God of the previous scene is now portrayed as a source of yet greater strength and sympathy. There is the hint in the mood of the music and text that the tenor is troubled and experiencing difficulties, albeit undefined ones. A chorus which follows in no. 4, beginning with the tenor, comments on the context of this scene with a similar text, more sombrely than urgently.

The next scene in no. 5 introduces two sopranos who between them portray God to be patient,

listening, and even counselling. This is interspersed with comments from the congregation to say that those who put their faith in God are blessed. The tenor and bass parts of the chorus briefly part from this commentary role in no. 5, bb. 91-97, and join in as if in trio with the two sopranos.

No. 6, 'Stricke des Todes' suddenly changes the mood completely into one of anguish. From this point on in the second version, the scene, subject, and characters having been defined, a story begins to unfold. The tenor is no longer merely troubled, but anguished. Although we are still not presented with a specific situation, fear of death, hell and darkness is evident in the text of **FE**:

> Stricke des Todes hatten uns umfangen,
> und Angst der Hölle hatte uns getroffen,
> wir wandelten in Finsterniß.

Interestingly **T** shows how Mendelssohn hesitated between using the plural 'wir/uns' and singular 'ich/mich'. He settled on the latter in **T**, but reverted back to the former in **H** except for the last line quoted above, only to adopt 'wir/uns' consistently in **FE**. This is not to imply that Mendelssohn at any stage wished to personalize the scene, rather that the eventual use of the plural emphasizes the universality of the allegory.

The images of death, Hell and darkness, introduced in earlier numbers, are played upon in conjunction with the anguished tone of the music to set up a situation in which the tenor character, himself a symbol for mankind, is oppressed by great anguish and must turn to God for his salvation. God interrupts, according to the tenor's account, with 'Ich will dich erleuchten' - 'so wird dich Christus erleuchten' in **T** - taken (as acknowledged in Mendelssohn's own notes in

T) from Ephesians 5,14 of the New Testament. This 'enlightenment' would be symbolic in itself from the point of view of celebrating the dawn of knowledge at the Gutenberg Festival or even a Lutheran sense of religious enlightenment. This suggests that mixed up in Mendelssohn's pious message is the allegory of literature as the foundation stone of education, and Gutenberg's invention of printing, as celebrated at the Gutenberg Festival, as a triumph over ignorance. The defeat of darkness by light carries a dual symbolic significance.

The keystone of the dramatic content of the symphony, both musically and according to the 'plot', is the 'Watchman Scene', which was introduced to no. 6 as one of the 'new pieces' and significantly was not present in the first version. This is the passage which comes closest to painting a picture of action, adding purpose to the settings of otherwise disparate texts. Here, the watchman lends a sense of inevitability to the ever-present threat of night, whose darkness symbolizes deep troubles. The scene also suspends the dramatic action of the story line in a state of uncertainty, which naturally heightens the message. This is matched by music of sudden contrasts in instrumentation and dynamic with an almost theatrical use of *tremolo* and accent. It is with a sense of great relief that a lone soprano, this time as if in the guise of an angel, announces that night has finally departed.

The joyous chorus which follows in no. 7 is like a Lutheran congregation in praise, celebrating the coming of morning and light. They have been saved from the troubles of darkness, and putting on 'the armour of light', as the text states, it is as if they are symbolically armed and protected by knowledge. Being so protected they are all the stronger to fight off the insecurity of ignorance, or as the text puts it, to 'cast off the works of darkness' ('ablegen die Werke der Finsterniß').

Having celebrated, the scene ends with a chorale, no. 8, a hymn of thanks whose Lutheran connotations would have been clear to Mendelssohn's original audience. Significantly, the last three lines have been changed from the original in the first version, as discussed in Chapter 4. Mendelssohn's desire to add more weight to the symbolic images of light and darkness, and to the symphony's message of the former conquering the latter, is clear.

In the tenor/soprano duet that follows in no. 9 there are two elements in the text: gratitude to God introduced by the tenor, and a further reference to wandering in the night and darkness in the soprano. The big difference between this and previous similar references is that the present tense is used rather than the past, and the music has a gentle tone. The message conveyed in the wake of the 'Watchman Scene' is that the symbolic darkness is inevitable and all around, but with faith the tenor and soprano can stand upright in confidence and face all the evil of their enemies. Thus in translation, 'We wandered in night and deep darkness...' becomes 'And though I wander in night and deep darkness...yet I call upon the Lord and he rescues me'. Here too Mendelssohn has made more of the idea during the course of revision, this time by introducing it in a new soprano part, one of the 'new pieces'. The first version contains just one passing reference, 'und wandl' ich gleich in Nacht und tiefem Dunkel'.

Finally, by way of conclusion, the *Schlusschor* joyously celebrates the power and glory of the Lord. If there is a moral or covering message to the whole story, it is contained in the fugato, the last of the second version 'new pieces', also based on a Psalm text: that all should sing and praise His holy name.

We can do no more than speculate on the influences which led Mendelssohn to investigate the

above musical and dramatic possibilities, apart from his inventive imagination. In the field of music drama, he had already enjoyed success in oratorio, so that it was natural for him to adopt similar means in the choral section of the *Lobgesang* Symphony. However, there are some further possible causes.

Mendelssohn as a Protestant: the expression of religion in music

It is clear from the symbolic content and message of the choral section, not to mention the underlining of these features during the revision process and the symphony's motto quoting Luther, that Mendelssohn's religious beliefs lie at the root of the work. He had shown a fascination for the subject before in the composition of his oratorios, and a fascination for Luther in particular in the 'Reformation' Symphony (1832). We also know from references in his correspondence, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, that the composition of the *Lobgesang* turned out to be a personal matter for him according to the ideas he expressed. Whether Mendelssohn was spiritually Jewish or Lutheran is a question too complex to be answered in a study of the *Lobgesang* Symphony. However, in delving briefly into this matter it is possible to make inferences regarding his approach to the subject.

According to many sources of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mendelssohn's Jewishness was central to him. In the context of Central European anti-Semitism, a phenomenon unfortunately not confined to Hitler's Third Reich, it is not surprising that many non-Jewish commentators were as determined to remember him as Jewish, just as Jewish ones were to claim him as their own. Feelings were strong on both sides. Nevertheless there is reason to suggest, looking at the *Lobgesang* and other works, that Mendelssohn was self-consciously Protestant.

Heinrich Heine was a typical example of many Jews who became Christians. Converted in the summer of 1825, he had just qualified as a lawyer and required a respectable Protestant face in order to pursue a successful career in law, a position which Donald Mintz suggests made him uncomfortable ever after.[47] Similarly, Mintz feels Mendelssohn's Christianity to be hypocritical and insincere. Would Mendelssohn have been as successful in his career as a musician, would he have been as acceptable in his exalted social circles, would he even have received the Gutenberg Festival commission, had he not been a Protestant? Certainly, many Jewish men in his position converted for the sole reason of getting round the social and even legal restrictions that Jews had to face at the time, and this was one reason why his father advocated Mendelssohn's conversion in the first place. Literature, not least Werner's writing,[48] is full of accounts of anti-Semitism directed at Mendelssohn.

According to this interpretation, Mendelssohn may have conceived the *Lobgesang* Symphony, not only to express the notion of enlightenment and the dawning of knowledge attached to the Gutenberg occasion, but also calculatedly to express this message in the fervently religious terms that would appeal to his Lutheran audience, sponsors, and publishers, and make him one of them; indeed such terms as would provoke Elise Polko's comment on the degree of piety encapsulated in the symphony.[49] To Mendelssohn himself, it would be a cynical exercise in musical problem-solving and the creation of a drama. After all, why else would he attach himself so strongly to the Mendelssohn name against his father's wishes, rather than his adopted Christian name Bartholdy, if he did not feel Jewish by identity?

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[47] Ibid., 132.

[48] Werner, 28 ff.

[49] See note 5.

To confuse the issue further, the *Lobgesang* offers more clues in favour of Mintz's view that Mendelssohn was not truly Christian. The symphony's text is based predominantly on passages from the Old, rather than the New, Testament, albeit in Martin Luther's version, as selected by the composer himself. For example, the texts for the introduction and finale can be traced to the last verse of Psalm 150, no. 2½ (2) to Psalm 103 vv1-2, and the second half of the 'Watchman Scene' to Isaiah XXI vv11-12.[50] The exception is no. 6, part of which can be traced to Ephesians V,14 of the New Testament.

It is tempting to see the use of the Old Testament as a symbolic expression of Mendelssohn's heritage. Some may go further and see the inevitability of darkness and suffering, as expressed in the *Lobgesang*, as a representation of the great burden of persecution which the Jewish population of central Europe had to face in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and God's protection as the factor which carried them through those troubled times.

There can be no doubt that Mendelssohn had a deep regard for his Jewish heritage. But if he was indeed conscious of expressing this, as suggested above, it need not necessarily suggest that any form of Lutheran self-expression was hypocritical. When he confided to his brother Paul that the *Lobgesang* was the 'the most fervently spirited thing I ever wrote',[51] he may have meant more than is superficially apparent. The answers behind Mendelssohn's way of thinking lie in his background and upbringing. The best clues of all lie in the philosophy of his grandfather Moses.

Moses Mendelssohn, known as the 'German Socrates', was a propounder of the theory of

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[50] Fiske. p. IV.

[51] See note 3.

Enlightenment Judaism which became popular in the following generation. He developed a 'modern' form of Judaism which aimed to reconcile the contradictions between an ancient religion and culture with their roots in the Middle East and a religion which had more naturally developed in the very different culture in those regions in which Jews such as Moses Mendelssohn now lived. In other words Moses Mendelssohn, through his Enlightenment philosophy, became the central figure in a movement which began with the adoption of Western principles in Central European Jewish thought, and which was subsequently to lead to large-scale conversion to Lutheran Christianity.

Since Jews of the time lived largely in isolation, the way in which their faith had developed, or even failed to do so, seemed to Moses Mendelssohn anachronistic. If Jews were to make progress in Central Europe, they would have to learn to relate to it. But they would have to do so in a manner which would not compromise their own beliefs and culture. Moses's form of Enlightenment Judaism could therefore be equated with the Protestantism prevalent in Germany at this time. Indeed many saw the two as coexistent, although Moses probably never intended the logical conclusion that many Jews of succeeding generations should convert to Christianity.

Felix Mendelssohn must have felt strongly about his background and would have been very much aware of his grandfather's ideas and of their implications. He was surely also aware of such works as the Hebrew version of the Pentateuch and his grandfather's translation of the Psalms (1774).

Yet Felix was born two generations further on, by which time the religious views of many Enlightened Jews had merged with those of society at large, and many had even been born second-generation Protestants. In the wake of his grandfather's philosophy, and more assimilated

into society than his grandfather was, he would have been able to worship and express himself genuinely as a Lutheran while believing as a Jew, and more importantly respect his heritage as a Jew while living the cultural life of a German. Felix's father, Abraham, on the other hand would have been more aware of the subtleties in Moses' theories, and would have drawn a greater distinction between the two religions and perhaps questioned whether their respective philosophies might be reconciled. This may help to explain why Abraham was so adamant that a Protestant could not bear the name Mendelssohn as Felix did, and Felix's attitude may help to explain why he nevertheless did so.

The means by which Felix Mendelssohn chose to express his ideas in the *Lobgesang* may owe something to his grandfather's example. Much of Moses's work was presented by didactic and dialectical means; setting up situations to demonstrate a point as if his characters were acting or arguing it out to present a moral from which his readers should learn.

The unfolding of the 'plot' and the use of situations to make a point is similarly the means by which Felix expressed his religious ideas in the *Lobgesang* Symphony. The characters are indeed shadowy and ill-defined, because it is the drama of what they are saying, or rather symbolically demonstrating, and not the drama of their interaction that concerned the composer most. The layers of symbolism contained in his choice of text are all-important to the conveying of a message by such methods. We learn through the development of the 'plot', and then the chorus provides us with the moral and over-all message at the end. This is the essence of the symphony-cantata.

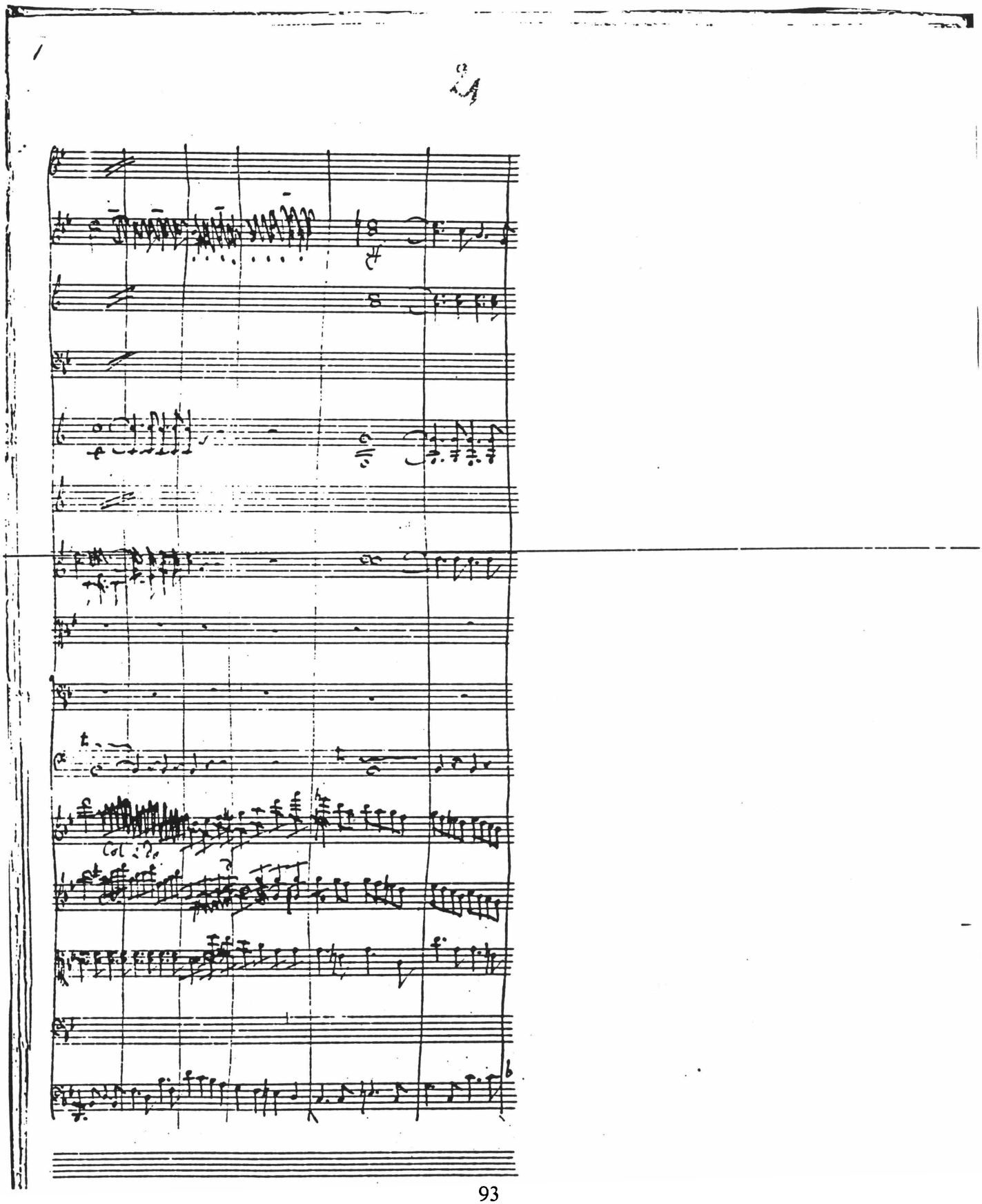
Thus in the *Lobgesang* Symphony Mendelssohn imparts a little of his own light - no wonder it was 'close to [his] heart'. The potential to convey his message by musico-narrative means, if not

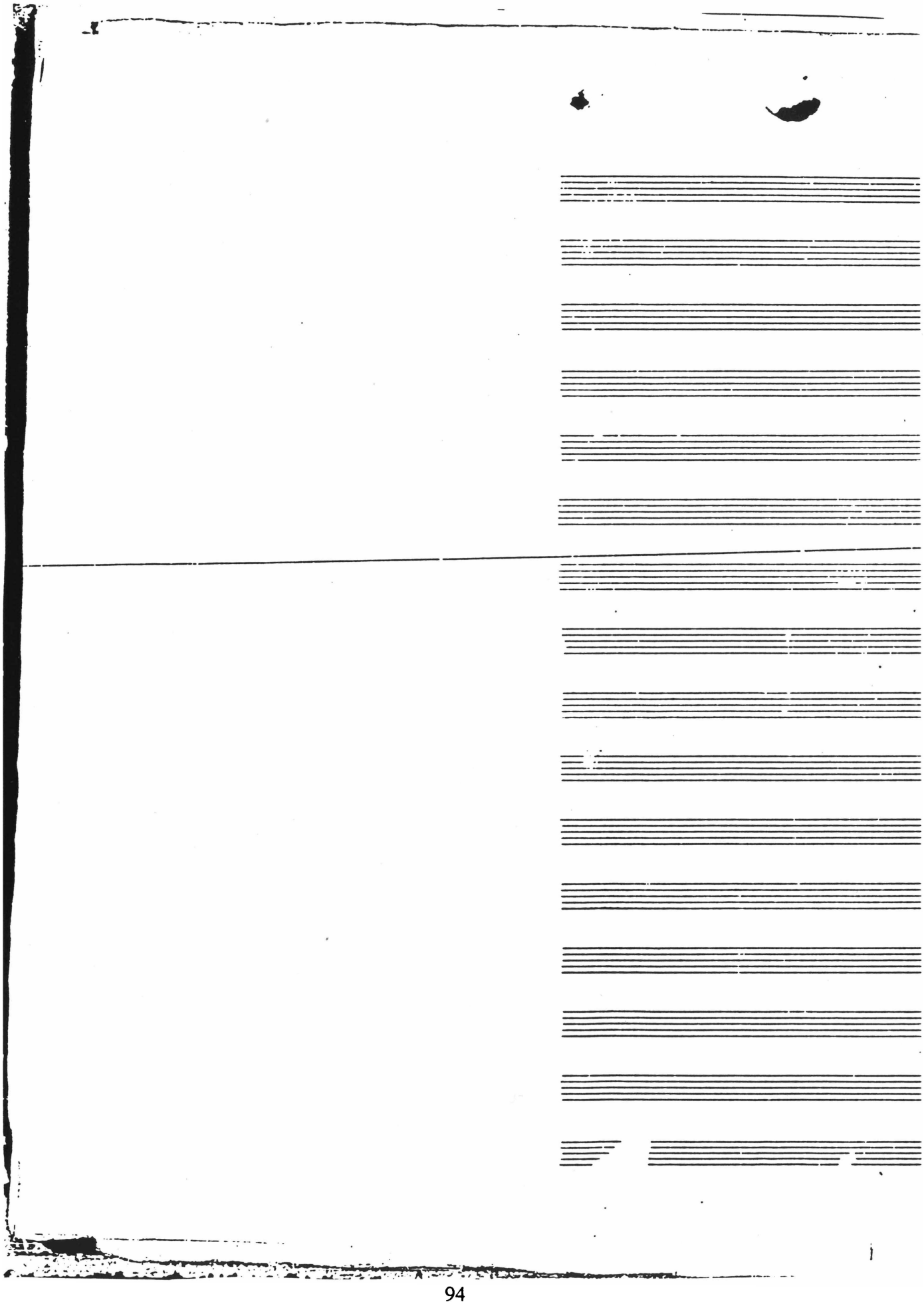
inherent in the first version, was at least discovered during the process of substantial change. Out of a collection of disparate biblical texts is thus moulded in symbolism a narrative which represents the truth logically, not by discussion, but as a kind of drama made vivid to the mind's eye. He combines his ideas to form a logical whole, a philosophical process with which he would have been familiar, not merely through his heritage and education but through his acquaintance with Hegel, with whose lectures on the expression of the indeterminate content in music he is known to have been familiar with.

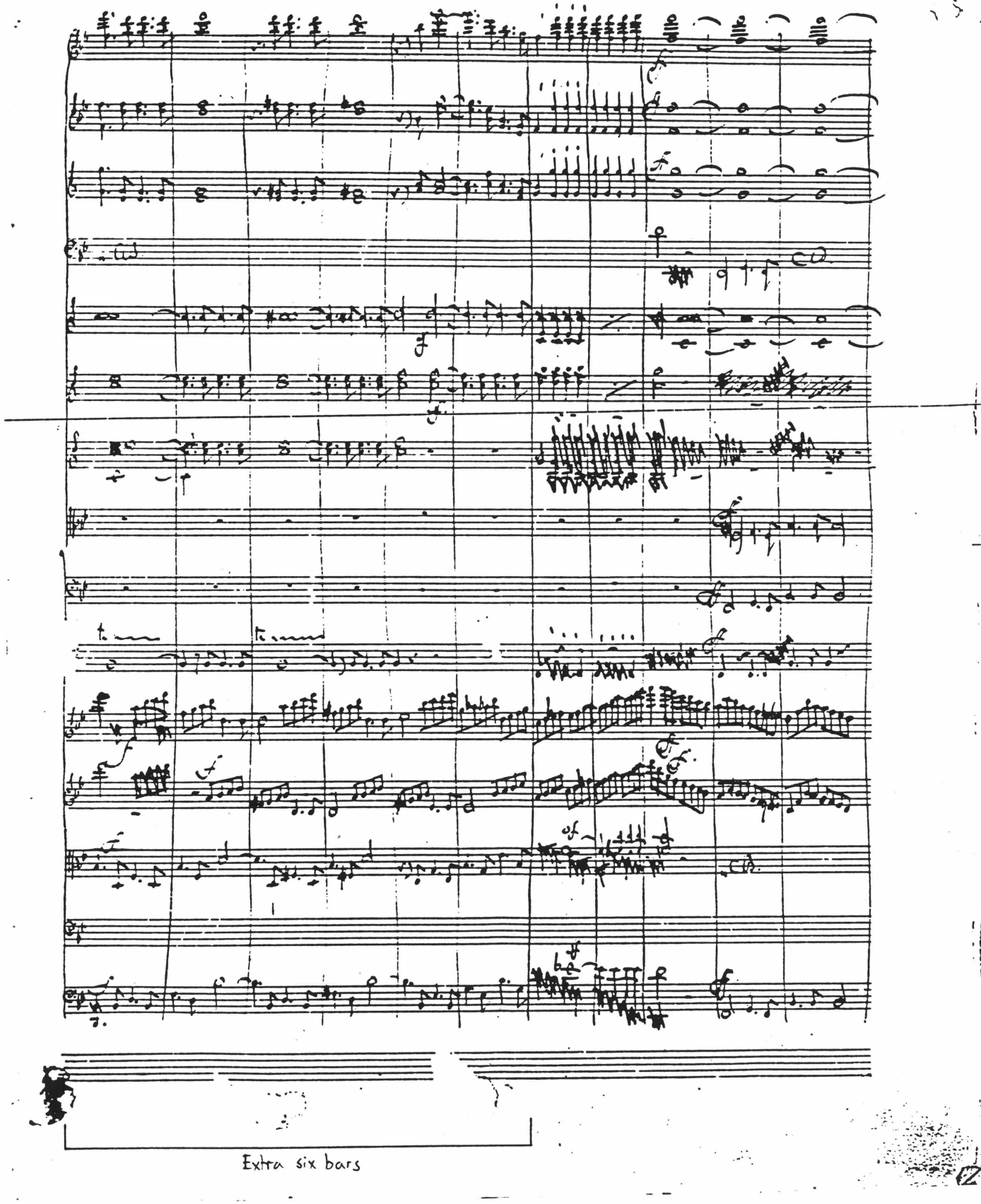
In conclusion, before the revision was contemplated, the *Lobgesang* Symphony had more in common with *Elijah*. Both are works which use symbolic devices inherent in the Old Testament subject-material. In both, dramatic means are employed to deliver the message. *Elijah* presents, rather than true action, a series of situations in which Elijah is the focus of attention. And so it was with the *Lobgesang*, except that man's role as God's protectorate is the offered theme. If this approach was the source of *Elijah*'s unity, it was the source of the *Lobgesang*'s disunity. The revision then replaced static drama with movement of ideas; it replaced scenes with narrative.

This then is the path which led to the creation of the symphony-cantata; surely not the result of deeply philosophical thought-processes, but a personal statement of the composer's philosophical motivation. His second symphony-cantata, *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, completed in its second version soon after the *Lobgesang*, provided an opportunity to delve into a text full of Goethe's philosophical interpretation. Notably, however, Mendelssohn's poetic Romanticism took precedence. The relationship between Mendelssohn's background and compositional ideas is surely worth further investigation.

Appendix: Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. Ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 34, pp. 21-3;
equivalent to **H** 97-107 or Vol. II, pp. 40-41 .






Extra six bars

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S **Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Mus. Ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 19, pp. 36-48.**
Autograph early sketches in piano score, bound with sketches of other late works.

Aut. **Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 34, pp. 11-237.**
Mendelssohn's autograph working full score.

Aut.° **Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn 34, pp. 241-8.**
Autograph copy of organ part of the revised version.

FE **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Deneke 112.**
Special presentation copy of the first edition of the printed score (final version).

P **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Deneke 114.**
Portfolio (originally intended for orchestral parts), *Lobgesang*, Breitkopf & Härtel, [1841], comprising:
[I. printed soloists' parts of the revised version;
ii. manuscript list of singers invited to take part in a performance of the revised version of the *Lobgesang* 'im Concertsaale des Königl. Schauspielhauses', Berlin, 25 April 1842;]
H° iii. fair copy organ part of the first version in the hand of Eduard Henschke.

BL **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 22, pp. 8-18.**
Score in Mendelssohn's hand of version of 'Die Nacht ist vergangen', bound in volume of autograph sketches.

T **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 27, fol. 27.**
A preliminary draft of the *Lobgesang* text in Mendelssohn's hand.

H **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 93.**
Fair copy score of the first version in the hand of Eduard Henschke.

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