

Do We Have a Composing Score of Op. 131? The Genesis of the *Andante* Movement

Jens Dufner

[PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A SUMMARY ONLY OF DR. DUFNER'S COMPLETE PAPER]

Within Beethoven research, the genesis of the C#-minor quartet Op. 131 is not a new topic. Above all, Robert Winter's fundamental dissertation on the *Compositional Origins of Beethoven's Opus 131* of 1978 examined all manuscripts of the work then known — above all, the numerous sketches and score sketches — and gives profound insights into the compositional process of the quartet which are still state-of-the-art. Nevertheless, one crucial source was still unknown to Winter. The autograph score of the quartet had been lost since World War II, apart from a fragment, housed in the *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek* in former East Berlin (*Mendelssohn 19*), containing only 67 pages with movement No. 3 (*Allegro moderato*) from measure 5 onwards and the whole of movement No. 4 (*Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile*).

Only shortly thereafter, but too late for Winter's dissertation, the lost autograph score of the other movements re-appeared in Kraków, together with other valuable Beethoven manuscripts evacuated in Silesia during the Second World War. The manuscript *Artaria 211* contains exactly the missing pages before and after *Mendelssohn 19*: the first two movements and the third up to measure 4, ending at the bottom of a verso page, and the last three movements, beginning with a new recto page.

However the manuscript that reappeared in Kraków not only complements the autograph of Op. 131 in its final stage, but it also contains another source of the C#-minor quartet, incorrectly bound in by a later owner. It is also an autograph score, starting and ending with the same measures as *Mendelssohn 19*, that is, No. 3 from measure 5 onwards up to the last measure of No. 4. But in

contrast to *Mendelssohn 19*, the corresponding manuscript in *Artaria 211* represents an early stage of the *Andante* movement, although the musical substance is almost complete.

My paper discusses this “pre-autograph,” which still awaits scholarly investigation. I examine this document (“first autograph”) in comparison with the final autograph (“second autograph”) as well as several individual leaves that were originally part of the second autograph but were discarded by Beethoven. Through various examples, I show characteristics of the first autograph and its role within the compositional process. The following conclusions were drawn from these examples:

1. Writing out the *Andante* movement (with its opening *Allegro moderato*), Beethoven seems to have realized that he needed an extra manuscript in which the basic structure of the movement is laid out. Obviously, this didn’t cause him much trouble as the music is derived from the cleanly written first autograph.
2. In the next step, he transferred everything to the second autograph. The first autograph was nearly complete concerning its musical substance which, on the whole, corresponds with the final version. Thus, writing the second autograph was in the first place an act of copying. Nevertheless, the composer not only added many accidentals in this stage, but sometimes also modified the musical substance, e.g. in form of rhythmical variations, additions of extra notes, or even minor modifications in the harmonic progression.
3. When transferring the musical text to the second autograph, Beethoven seems to have paid special attention to transitions, since it is in those places where the largest number of changes occur. Besides that, the principal changes are in instrumentation, registers, and harmonic transitions.
4. It is striking that very often the first violin and violoncello parts are unchanged or only slightly changed, while the middle parts (second violin and viola) are fundamentally revised.

So even in this late (and complex) string quartet, the traditional model of melody + bass still seems to have been the basis for the composition.

5. Writing the final autograph, Beethoven avoided deletions. Unlike many other manuscripts, the revisions in the second autograph are not in the form of endless revisions (sometimes leaving the music beyond recognition) — instead, he always tried to re-write passages as a whole. While the physical paper structure of the first autograph is remarkably regular, the structure of the final autograph is the exact opposite: Many leaves were rejected and replaced by new ones. Obviously, it wasn't the general structure of the movement which caused Beethoven problems but the final elaboration. For that, the composer needed the space of an empty (double-)page for his own orientation, even though the differences between discarded and final version are sometimes only marginal. The "writing space" seems to have been necessary for his compositional thinking. The discarded readings were eliminated as much as possible.
6. Although the Kraków manuscript is often referred to as score sketches, it represents a later stage in the compositional process of the *Andante* movement. We don't know of similar composing scores for the other movements of the C#-minor quartet, but they probably never existed. There is sufficient evidence that the composing score became necessary for this movement explicitly, perhaps because of the individual character of the slow movement. It is not motivic-thematic work that is the focus here (as in sonata forms, for example), but sound and the transitions between the individual variations. Beethoven also used different types of composing scores, depending on the individual compositional problems. The first autograph of the *Andante* movement of Op. 131 is a kind of composing score that he seems to have used only in the last years for particular movement types. It is a stroke of luck for Beethoven research that such a rare manuscript is preserved in the case of the C#-minor quartet.