

Some Absent Bars in K470: two cases of haplography?

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The 'Texting Scarlatti' project has demonstrated the importance of looking at text transmission at the level of individual sonatas and not just whole collections. K470 is a case in point. There are five surviving witnesses: Venice 11, Parma 13, Münster 1, Vienna C and New York Cary. Phylogenetic analysis of the variants they present shows close relationships between Venice and Parma on the one hand, and Münster and Vienna on the other, with New York Cary a clear outlier. There are no surprises here: Venice and Parma are both from Queen Maria Bárbara's private collection and were made by the same copyist, almost certainly from the same stack of exemplars; Vienna, we know from contemporary sources, is a direct copy of Münster, commissioned by Tobias Haslinger from Fortunato Santini in the late 1830s (van der Klis 2026); and Cary is an outlier because the restricted compass of this copyist's instrument required a large number of adjustments to the musical text at both ends of the keyboard.

However, there are two types of variant in K470 that might call these conventional, potentially simplistic, alignments into question. The first concerns absent bars: whereas Venice and Parma (and Cary, see below) each have 147 (72+75) bars, Münster and Vienna have 131 (64+67), making them eight bars shorter in each of the two halves. The absent bars are 53-60 and 128-135 in the control text, which in this case is Venice.

One possible explanation for this difference in length could be that it is a fairly rare instance of haplography occurring twice in the same sonata. Haplography is when the copyist's eye jumps inadvertently from one place in the text to a later place that has the same characteristics, leaving the intervening text accidentally omitted: in the case of K470, eight whole bars of music, twice; once in the first half of the sonata and again in the second.

If we look at the Venice MS (figure 1), we can see that in the first half, bar 52 is immediately above bar 60 in the next system, and they are both textually identical:

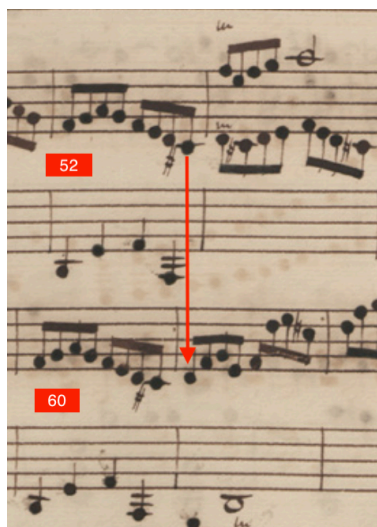


Figure 1 – K470 showing the relative positions of bars 52 and 60 in Venice 11.

The exact same layout is found in Parma, so the error —if that is what it is— could have occurred when the copyist of Münster had been working from either Venice or Parma, or, more likely, from an exemplar common to both such as a loose sheet from the stack of Scarlatti autographs.

In the second half of the sonata, again in the Venice MS, bars 127 and 135, which are musically identical, are immediately above each other at the end of the second and third systems and so the Münster copyist, or the copyist of his exemplar, could have inadvertently missed out an entire system of eight bars (figure 2).

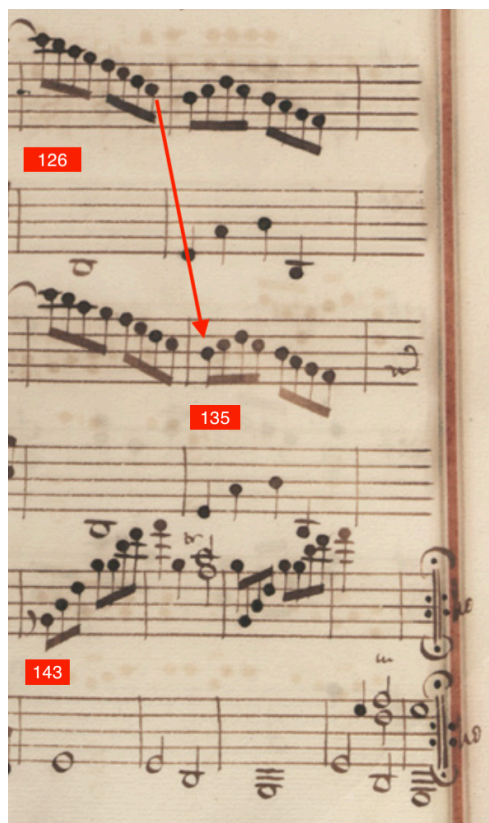


Figure 2 – K470 showing the relative positions of bars 126 and 135 in Venice 11.

But the *mise en page* is not the same in Parma, so we could reasonably conclude that it is less likely that the error occurred when copying from that source. Although Venice and Parma are identical in respect of the total number of bars, in the case of K470, we could align Münster more closely with Venice than Parma due to the differences in layout between them.

But what of New York Cary? The bars absent from Münster, and in consequence Vienna, are present in Cary, but in abbreviated form. This copyist frequently uses silcrows at either end of a stretch of text to indicate that it should be repeated (Figures 3 and 4).

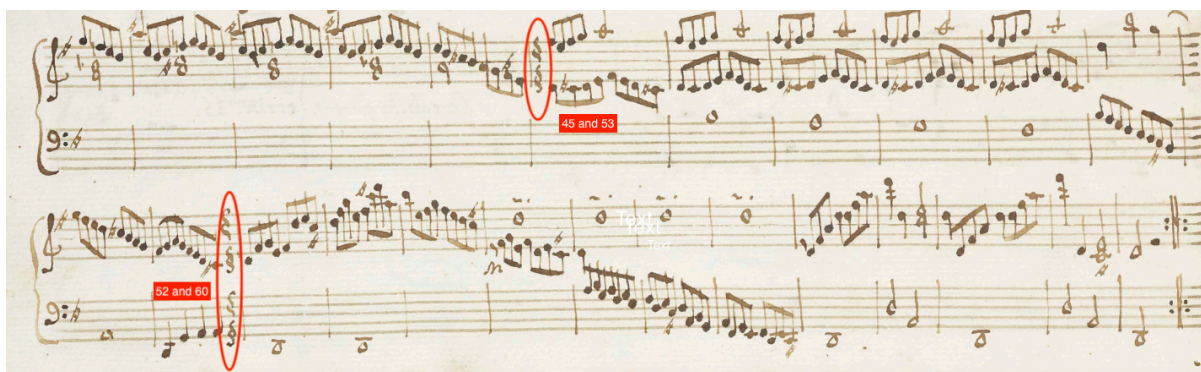


Figure 3 – K470 in New York Cary, showing the silcrows around bars 45-52 indicating that they should be repeated as 53-60.

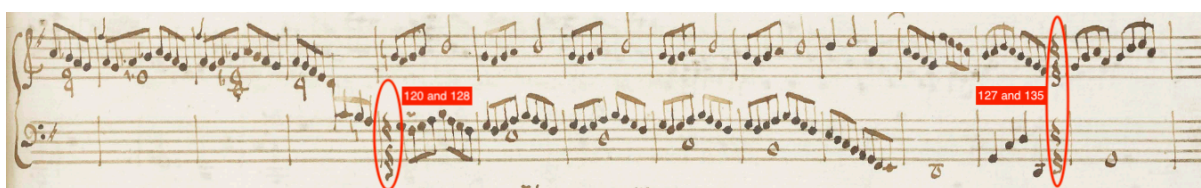


Figure 4 – K470 in New York Cary, showing the silcrows around bars 120-127 (= 128-135).

This use of silcrows to indicate internal repetition opens up another possible explanation for the absent bars in Münster. Could it be that Münster's exemplar also marked these bars to be repeated with silcrows, but their meaning was not properly understood and they were omitted? If so, Münster and Cary could well provide evidence for a text tradition that is independent of Venice and Parma.

A second significant variant can be seen in the final bars of figure 2 where Venice 11 ends the final two g major arpeggios (bars 143 and 145) with a high fsharp'', as does Münster. Parma ends them with a g'', while Cary ends them with a g'', an octave lower.

Which is correct? Venice and Münster both end the arpeggios with a daring leading-note dissonance, quickly resolving to the tonic. Parma and Cary both 'correct' this neatly and tidily. This is clearly not a simple case of Venice and Parma vs Münster and Cary – in the case of K470, the relationships are much more complex. They suggest that there were many more witnesses, now lost, associated with the two royal collections and that the variants between them need to be considered on their own merits, sonata by sonata.