

## Commentary

**Title page.** We propose the **F1** title page, which is faithfully copied by **I**. The title pages of **G** and **E2** are reproduced in *ACCFE* p. 673 Table No. 87, and p. 674 Table No. 88. As for the frontispieces of the Wessel editions, cf. GRAB. [2001]. Initially the *Preludes* were dedicated to J. C. Kessler, as we read in **A**; later, however, Chopin had to change his mind (forced?) and the dedicatee was replaced by C. Pleyel. Bronarski considered the double dedication exceptional; but, as illustrated above, Breitkopf, although warned in time, did not take into account the variation. So the dedication to Kessler in **G** only testifies that the first dedicatee was not Pleyel.

### Prélude I.

No editor seems to have wondered why the German engraver did not follow his antigraph and writes *f* (see apparatus) in place of *mf*, and, what is more, in the first m. of the first *Prélude*. Yet  $C^A$  is clear. In  $BH^w$  Liszt does not correct the error, perhaps thinking, wrongly, that the manuscript used for **G2**, which he considered to be **G**, was the most authoritative. Which confirms, however, that Liszt had no manuscript available. What had happened to  $C^A$ ? According to KOB.[1979], p. 60, the ownership of  $C^A$  had passed to Hermann Scholtz (1845-1918), and in a list prepared in 1939 by the Chopin Institute in Warsaw the manuscript was the property of the widow, Klara Scholtz. Any hypothesis would be as legitimate as it is useless. — Liszt was also supposed to have drawn up the *Revisionsbericht*, but with the refusal of the honorarium his collaboration was over. As for mm. 18÷20, 23, and 25÷26, we have already seen (see above, p. xiv<sup>a</sup>), that they show the text of **G2**, which, collated with **F**, had raised serious doubts in the reviser, who would have liked — as in *Pr.* xxiv — confined it to *ossia*-measures, restoring in the main text the reading of **F**, but the engraver, misinterpreting Liszt's marks, made a mess.

**1.** Here and in mm. 21, 24, and 27 Chopin shows that he wants to distinguish quite well between the triplets and the quintuplets. Uniforming the slurs, as **BR** does, is a serious error both philological and musical, as it misleads the interpreter.

**3.** The line between the slurs in  $F3^D$  means that the mm. should not be joined: it is necessary to remove the hand from the keyboard, in order to give more agitation.

**13÷15.** The shifting of the pedal release is the first of many modifications introduced by Fontana, who made sure that already **F1** contained his alteration.

**21.** Only **PE** (p. 63) points out the vertical line in  $F3^D$  indicating a breath, that is, if you sing the melodic line with your voice, here you have to breathe.

**22.** In **A** Chopin he writes down the number of the triplet, but then deletes it. This means that the triplets under the quintuplets must be distinguished from the others.

**28÷32.** **F** arbitrarily shifts the pedal release to the end of the m.

**34.** **F** follows **A**. The error — evident from the number of ties in **A** — is by Chopin who writes, almost certainly out of fatigue, one too many  $E^2$ , that Fontana does not correct!

### Prélude II.

Of this *Pr.* there is also an autograph sketch (**Sk**) — available on *OCVE* — already published by Bronarski in the volume edited in honour of Adolf Chybiński (Kraków 1930, p. 101),<sup>1</sup> and a copy by G. Sand, which Ekier claims he could not consult, but which Eigeldinger (**PE**) and the authors of *Katalog* must have seen: “In the *Prelude in A minor No. 2* — they write (p. 185) — George Sand introduced a change in the notation of the accompaniment, assigning the highest note to the right hand (*W Preludium a nr 2 George Sand wprowadziła zmianę notacji akompaniamentu przypisując najwyższą nutę do wykonania ręce prawej*)...” A modification certainly suggested by Chopin himself, to facilitate the performance, because we do not believe that Sand's piano acumen reached that point!

**1.** Bronarski (**PW**), despite the concordance of the sources, *i.e.* **A** and  $C^A$ , changes the time signature — like **E2** does — into “common **C**,... for it is better suited to the character of the work, and also corresponds better with the prescribed *Lento*.” In reality, *Lento* refers to canto, while **C** refers to the harmonic background performed by the left h., exactly as in *Pr.* iv. The dull-minded performers, getting an absurdly slow tempo, distort the sense of these two splendid *Preludes*. Note, then, that by arranging the voices of the harmonic base, Chopin wants to mean that the median voice derives from the section (*a*) of the theme of the first *Pr.* (see *Intr.*, p. Va), while the section (*b*), with inverse resolution, is entrusted to the r. h.

**5 & 10.**  $C^A$  arbitrarily adds the slash to all appoggiaturas, as **Mk** e **Tl** do. But we learn from  $F2^S$  (see below m. 17 and 20) that these appoggiaturas must be performed in a different way, *i.e.* they must be sung (see above, p. xiii).

**11.** In **A** Chopin moves the intensifying hairpin three times, each time a little to the right.

<sup>1</sup> Müllemann (**HN**) states that the sketch is dated “Palma 28 9<sup>bre</sup>”, but it is an erroneous information, since the date is on the other side of the sheet next to the tonality (*E moll*) of the sketch of *Mazurka* Op. 41 No. 1; therefore, the date refers to that piece, not to the *Prelude*.

17 e 20. In *A* the composer had not slashed these two appoggiaturas, but he does so in **F2<sup>st</sup>**. Perhaps Miss Stirling was lingering too long, so as to induce Chopin to remind her that these two appoggiaturas are meant, so to speak, for effect, that is: they should to resemble rather to a suffocated sob. This is the reason why we have accepted in the text the correction of **F2<sup>st</sup>**. *HN*, *WN*, *PE* and *BR*, not understanding the difference, follow *A*. Müllemann (*HN*) writes: «In St ♯ is slashed in mm. 17 and 20 (delated?)» (!?), while *BR* remarks with greater sensitivity that the appoggiaturas are “crossed out with pencil, perhaps only as indication of brevity.”

22. *F* omits the vertical squiggle, which Fontana does not restore.

### *Prélude* III.

Of this *Pr.* we have two copies attributed to Fontana.<sup>2</sup> The one rubricated by Kobylańska with the letter (b)—drawn, according to Ekier, from a lost autograph containing an earlier version—is transcribed by *HN* and *PE*; as for the copy (c), *BR*—the only edition to mention it—reproduces the manuscript (p. 56). Therefore, the curious student may consult the cited editions. Since these copies have no value for the constitution of the text, we ignore them (but *see* below m. 31).

The most interesting aspect here is given by the fingering of **E2**.

1. As you can see from the apparatus we have placed above the notes the fingering of **E2**, that contains an error: in fact, for the second *G*<sup>2</sup> it prescribes an unacceptable 4. From which we can deduce that Moscheles was not the author of these fingerings and that that 4 was probably added by the engraver. Note, then, that the fingering in **F3<sup>Z</sup>** is identical to that of Mikuli.

7. From the carelessness of the engraver of **E2**, who, instead of writing + 1 2, copies 1 3 2—*i.e.* 2 4 3 in the British system, in any case not to be proposed—, it is clear that the author of these fingerings wrote them according to continental system; so, they came from Paris. The double fingering in **F3<sup>Z</sup>**, moreover messed up, could hide some small numbers written in pencil

<sup>2</sup> Cf. KOB.[1979] p. 62. There is confusion in differentiating between the two copies. *HN* and *PE* claim to transcribe the copy (b), while *BR* proposes the manuscript of the copy (c), today in Litoměřice, Czech Republic. Kobylańska, though, states that the copy (c) is reproduced in A. WEISSMANN, *Chopin*, Berlin (Schuster & Loeffler) 1912, p. 15 of the tables. But, after checking those tables, we have found a facsimile that does not correspond to the manuscript given by *BR*. Hence, if the editors are not wrong, it is the Polish scholar to be wrong. But she is not the only one, because in m. 31 *PE* transcribes *dim.* instead of *cresc.*!

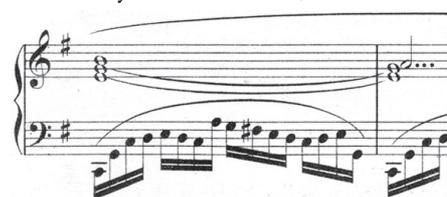
by Chopin, and then traced again by the restless pupil. However, the most curious aspect is that for *B*<sup>3</sup>-*A*<sup>3</sup> the fingering under the notes proposes, as **E2** does, 2 1; or better still, it even seems that initially the fingering was just that of **E2**, that is 2 1 2 3 (4) 5 2 1 3 (instead of 2 as it is in **E2**). In other words, the source seems to be the same, except that the years that separate the two fingerings are too many, unless the source is really the Master! Compare m. 8.

8. Also here **F3<sup>Z</sup>** shows two different fingerings, written, though, by different hands: the first, under the notes, is corrected starting from *B*<sup>3</sup>: 2 1 2 3 4 5, as in **E2** (where, mind you, the engraver inverts the numbers for carelessness and writes + 1 instead of 1 +). But under *D*<sup>3</sup>, in correspondence to a probable 5 that is no longer seen, we read a 3 covering a double correction! Finally, a second hand transcribes over the notes, more clearly, the primitive fingering. Since we do not know Zaleska’s handwriting, we cannot ascribe her this or that. However, it is not unlikely that Chopin was consulted to resolve the uncertainties. Almost certainly the oblique line that separates the last quadruplet—which, perhaps, in the execution of Zaleska was unclear—was traced by Chopin. If so, we would have a justification for the change of fingering: the third finger (3) for *D*<sup>3</sup>, first note of the quadruplet, gives more clarity than 5 of **E2**.

In conclusion, the exploitable fingerings of these passages (second and third quadruplet) are two: that of Mikuli (1 2 3 4 1 3) and that of **E2** (2 1 2 3 4 5, with the alternative we propose: 2 1 3 4 1 3 and 2 1 2 3 1 3). Well, if we consider: first, that—with the exception of Klindworth (for the only m. 7) and Demus (*UT*)—no other editor proposes the solution of **E2**; secondly, that it takes piano acumen to conceive it; and, thirdly, also its singular reappearance in **F3<sup>Z</sup>**; on the whole, the possibility that it derives, even if not directly, from the composer, is real.

17. In *C*<sup>A</sup> the alteration of the quaver in semiquaver (*D* ♯) could be due to a fallacious automatism for analogy with the preceding *F*: in fact a second dot is not added, which would certify the ‘corrective’ purpose. At a glance, however, the chronometry does not balance: which does not eliminate the suspicion.

22÷23. Mikuli adds two ties (*see* here below), which look very suitable. But, unfortunately, we do not have



any support for considering them a variant. Since he says in his Preface that he had had access to documents unknown to us—starting with his own scores—, if we were to believe that, we would have to perform an act

of faith, which in philology is not allowed. Although it is difficult to believe that he deliberately manipulated the Chopin text, his alleged ‘alterations’ are destined to remain an arbitrariness.

25. As can be seen from the apparatus, the fingering of  $F_3^Z$  is the same as that of  $Mk$ . The remark may seem banal, but it serves to confirm that Miss Zaleska did not draw her fingering from  $E_2$ , but that the source of the two fingerings is most likely the same.

28÷31. From  $F_2^{St}$  and  $F_3^D$  (see apparatus) we have here the confirmation that Mikuli’s fingering comes from the composer. And we also observe that the second fingering of the left hand, m. 31, suggested by Mikuli is the same as that of  $E_2$ : it is therefore legitimate to think that their source is the same. As for m. 28, r. h., we propose as an alternative the Zaleska’s fingering; also the one of  $E_2$  starts with the thumb, but without foreseeing the passage of the same thumb on  $A^4$ . If it could be demonstrated that in  $F_3^Z$  the writing is that of Miss Zaleska (the writing of 5, for example, can absolutely not be attributed to the composer), then we could hypothesize that her fingerings were dictated by the Master.

In m. 31 of both Fontana’s copies and in  $C^A$  (therefore also in  $G$ ) instead of *dim.* there is *cresc.*, which Liszt does not change. Obviously it is a deplorable will of the copyist, or, perhaps, Fontana was copying his copy! Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that Chopin himself initially thought of a *crescendo*, with the idea that the performer would create a sound wave. Since, then, he realized that this indication would have been misunderstood—starting with Fontana, who probably ended this ascending figuration  $\#$ —, he opted for a *diminuendo*.

#### Prélude IV.

Of this *Pr.* we also have a rough autograph copy<sup>3</sup> and a second one by G. Sand, unusable because it was clearly copied from  $F$ : it is not possible to establish if from  $F_1$  or  $F_2$ , since the pedal, corrected in  $F_2$ , is omitted. Regarding the pedalling, it should be stressed that Chopin indicates the pedal in only two points, not because he had forgotten it or had carelessly left it out, but because it is necessary only in those two places: the effect is entirely entrusted to the left hand and... to the ability of the interpreter. Our fingering serves to guarantee this effect.

1. The cut time  $\text{C}$  seems to contradict the indication *Largo*, but—as already noted for the *Pr.* II—it refers to the melodic line not to the harmonic background. If pianists and chopinologists studied singing, they would avoid getting lost in fatuous mental masturbations. Nor

could Chopin have used *canto spianato*, because the melody has not a lyrical or heroic tone, but a reflexive and humble one. Therefore, the correct metronome is around 80 = ♩ (that is, every two quavers).

2. Bronarski dwells upon a grammatical remark to justify having changed  $E^b$  into  $D^\sharp$ . It is a fussiness as learned as it is idle, because  $E^b$  means that the melodic line of the left h. is ‘going down’ (from *natural E*), not ‘going up’  $D^\sharp$ . This is a splendid example of how for Chopin—and for every musician—the graphic symbol prevails over grammar.

4. No editor seems to have noticed in  $F_3^D$  the oblique line placed over  $B^b$ . Its meaning, confirmed by the fingering in  $F_2^{St}$ , is that the note must not be elusive, but must be emphasized. — As for the fingering, it allows us to catch the scene of the Master who, sitting next to the pupil—therefore from an uncomfortable position—outlines two horizontal 3! Moving testimony.

11 & 19.  $C^A$ ,  $Tl$ , and  $Mk$  all add a slash to the small note, but they are wrong, because in  $F_3^D$  Chopin could not be clearer (see apparatus), m. 11:



intensive accent from  $B$  to  $A$  + the quaver-beaming from  $A$  to  $B$ . In short, a classic appoggiatura, typical of belcanto, as Kurpiński illustrates in the aforementioned *Systematic Course*; just that appoggiatura that the conductors, without musical taste (even if they are “gifted” with the so-called absolute ear), arrogant and obtuse, by now almost unanimously forbid the singers to exploit. In m. 19 Chopin even binds the small note to the main one by a quaver-beaming (see above, p. XIII). But be aware that the only sure guide for the execution of any appoggiatura is supplied by the taste for belcanto, which suggests from time to time to the executants the correct performance, which has to be not only correct, but most of all beautiful.

12. Finger switching on  $C^4$  is marked in  $F_2^{St}$ ,  $F_2^J$ , and  $F_3^D$ .

#### Prélude V.

A premise is required. If our memory does not deceive us, among the sixty-five Opus numbers published during the life of the composer, we find only two pieces expressly written in  $D$  major: the *Mazurka* Op. 33 No. 3 and this *Prelude*. There are indeed passages in  $D$  major—such as, for example, the splendid *aria* of the third Sonata (first movement, mm. 41÷44)—, but these are transient tonal flows. In any case, the cited *Mazurka* and our *Pr.* are a real exception. Why? The most probable hypothesis is that the key of  $D$  major did not stimulate the imagination of the pianist-poet.

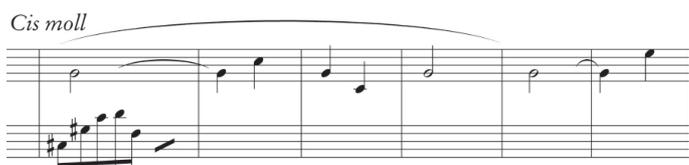
<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kob.[1979] p. 63.

This *Prelude*, however, is a real jewel, even if only an “eagle pinion,” to use Schumann’s happy expression (see above).

The folio with the sketch of *Pr.* II, contains three other sketches, two of which we already talked about (see [www.audacter.it/AudChopin.sketches.e.html](http://www.audacter.it/AudChopin.sketches.e.html)). Here we want to deal with the sketch of six measures, which immediately follows the sketch of *Pr.* II:



Here is our transcription:<sup>4</sup>



According to Bronarski<sup>5</sup> these measures would recall some phrases from the *Fantasy-Impromptu*. We maintain, instead, that from this sketch in *C* # minor came the idea of *Pr.* in *D* major: the intervals are the same. Then Chopin inserted the section (b) of the theme and enlarged the root (c) (see above, p. v).

15 ÷ 16 & 32. In *G* the last *A*<sup>s</sup> of m. 16 is #, while in *F* is ♭. This is due to the fact that, while in *A* m. 16 is written in full, in *C*<sup>A</sup> it is replaced by the signs of repetition. Why? At first sight we could think of negligence by those who copied this *Prelude* from *A*, who did not notice that just because of that *A*<sup>s</sup> the m. 16 differed from the mm. 15 and 14. However, the question seems more complicated. Note m. 32, where the composer, after having transcribed m. 31 (a *dim.* was to be added), transcribes, yes, the r. h. but places the signs of repetition for the left h.; yet also the r. h. would be identical to m. 31. And, in fact, *C*<sup>A</sup> puts the signs of repetition for the r. h. too. Again, why? Third enigma: in m. 16 both Liszt (*BH*<sup>cw</sup>) and, in particular, *Mk*, who, even though they had *F* at their disposal, follow *G*. Why? As for Liszt, he may have been deceived by the naturals integrated by *G* in m. 17. To motivate the choice of Mikuli, more is needed. Well, it is almost certain that, if Chopin in m. 32 put the repetition signs only for the left h., he did so because the text of r. h. had to contain some difference; and the only hypothetical difference is the addition of a natural to the last *F*<sup>s</sup>—in responsive analogy with m. 16—, which he then forgot to insert. As for m. 16, the picture is more enigmatic. Keep in

mind the following: — 1. Fontana’s copies of *Pr.* III were made in Paris before Chopin’s departure for Mallorca; a different hypothesis would be a nonsense; — 2. Gutmann’s testimony cited by Niecks assures that many at least—if not all—*Preludes* had also been copied. It is by no means unlikely that there was some confusion between the autograph sheets and the pre-existing copies, and that, to speed up the work, one copyist used *A* while the other wrote out one of the copies that, for sure, Chopin, not being his own, had not taken with him. Moreover, *C*<sup>A</sup> presents many differences—as we have seen in this same *Prelude*—that negligence alone can hardly justify. Many of these copies, together—probably—with previous versions of Chopin himself, ended one here and there. So, if Liszt did not have any autographs available (see above), Mikuli may well have been in possession of a copy of this *Prelude*, and, without worrying about whether it was an earlier version than *F* (← *A*), he gave it greater authority.

Let us summarize the alleged reading errors. Mm. 4 & 36: the quaver-beaming is omitted; mm. 13-14 (and consequently also 15-16) & 29 ÷ 32: the crotchet stems are omitted; m. 16: the text of the r. h. is not copied, causing the disappearance of *A*<sup>♯</sup>; m. 31: *dim.* is omitted; m. 32: the text of the r. h. is not copied. Well, out of a total of 39 mm., 11 do not correspond to the autograph, that is 28%: an inadmissible percentage! One may wonder if the antigraph for this *Pr.* v was really *A*. Therefore, the hypothesis that the antigraph for *C*<sup>A</sup> was not *A*, is completely legitimate.

### *Prélude* VI.

The fingerings over the notes, apart from Mikuli’s and ours, well recognizable by their font, come from *F*<sup>2st</sup>, the fingerings underneath from *F*<sup>2J</sup>. — (E=) means that the same fingering is found in *E*<sup>2</sup>. — (Z) (m. 3) means Zaleska. — When (St=) precedes Mikuli’s fingering, it indicates identity. — (J) means Jędrejewicz. — *F*<sup>3D</sup> has only two fingered notes (in m. 5, left h.): the fourth semiquaver of the first quadruplet and the next crotchet—just like *F*<sup>2J</sup>.

1. Chopin writes *Lento assai*, after deleting *Largo*. It is recalled that in Chopin these indications do not concern the metronome, but the character of the melody (see above, *Pr.* II, I and IV, I). Therefore, in this *Prelude*, such character has to be meditative.

7. Ekier (*WN*) interprets the signs of *F*<sup>3D</sup> (see apparatus) as *arpeggiato*, which he inserts in the text between brackets (a). Eigeldinger (*PE*) wants to be more precise and suggests how to execute the appoggiatura (b):



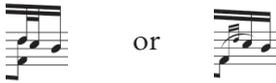
<sup>4</sup> EIGELD.[2000] (→ *BR*) gives a different one. If he had a better reproduction at his disposal, he might be right; but from our photocopy, the third semiquaver (l. h.) does not seem like an *E* at all.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *KOB*.[1979] p. 260.

At this point, however, it is useful to revise  $F_3^D$ :

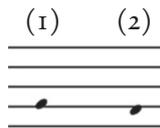


And these two curved, or rather hooked, lines would be the vertical squiggle of the *arpeggiato*? It should be borne in mind that Chopin drew these lines while sitting next to Dubois. They are two lines of which one is the repetition of the other: the outer one, longer, was probably written first; not satisfied with the result, Chopin rewrote a second one, less uncertain, more marked and very close to the notes. If Chopin had written the internal line first, there would be no need to add an external one. Now it is clear that neither  $F_{\sharp^4}$  nor  $D^{\flat}$  are to be played upbeat (as Eigeldinger's transcription seems to suggest): it is the hook that tells us. There are only two possible renditions:



But, in our opinion, the most correct rendering is the first, according to what is taught, not only by the cited Kurpiński's *Course* (see above, p. XIIIa), but by Chopin himself in the *Etude* Op. 25 No. 5.

19. With the exception of *WN* and *BR*, the editors, following *F* (see apparatus), print  $G^{\flat}$  instead of  $F_{\sharp^4}$ . When Chopin places a note on the line, he tends to write it lean against the line (1), never under it (2), as he does here (exceptions are very rare and do not raise any doubt):



So, in *A* Chopin wrote  $F_{\sharp^4}$ , not  $G^{\flat}$ .

21. The only editor who in  $F_2^{St}$  reads *ppp* is Eigeldinger. Ekier reads *pp*, which Ganche (*OX*) sees only in m. 20. From the uncomfortable position in which he was, Chopin wrote, without pressing down, more probably *ppp*, not *pp*: in fact the large slight *p* seem three. The other editors avoid the problem and keep quiet.

### Prélude VII.

There are two copies of this *Prélude*. The first, mentioned in *WN* and *BR* is kept in the National Library of Vienna and would be an earlier version; the copyist is unknown; the indication *Lento misterioso* casts some doubt on the value of this copy. The second, mentioned in *PE* too, is one of the Sand's copies. It would have been a waste of time and money trying to

consult them, so we ignored them. — It is believed that the *Andantino* indication replaced the previous *Lento*, which, however, in our opinion, was written by mistake: *Lento* has nothing to do with this *Pr.*'s character, as, moreover, *Andantino* has nothing to do with *Lento*.

11. The fingering of  $F_3^D$  is the same as that of *Mk*. We have integrated the  $\sharp$  to  $D^{\flat}$ , but in fact Chopin already added it in  $F_3^D$ ,  $F_2^{St}$  and  $F_2^{Sc}$ .

12. Note that Chopin's fingering clearly implies that the chord is not to be *arpeggiato*. In fact Miss Stirling, being unable to play all the notes of the chord at the same time, was suggested an alternative solution, which may be valid for those who have a similar difficulty:



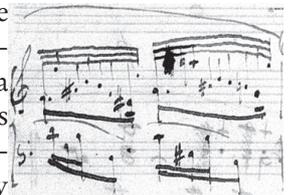
13. Here for the first time we insert the beautiful variant, certainly of Chopin, given to us by Tellefsen, who, more interested in the variant than in the rest, did not notice the omitted natural.

15. Notice (see apparatus) the 'corrective' intervention of *C<sup>A</sup>*, i.e. Fontana, in the last chord of left hand. Both Liszt and Mikuli accept *G*'s 'correction.'

### Prélude VIII.

In order to understand Chopin's somewhat singular criterion of placing accidentals, it would be necessary, firstly, to know what he was taught and, secondly, what was the degree of 'obviousness' by which to some extent he felt little or no responsibility for infringements of the rules imposed by the theory.

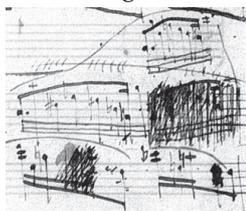
Consider, for example, m. 5 of this *Pr.*: the second  $A^{\flat}$  should have a  $\natural$  that, instead, is left out. Inattention? Negligence? No, because to the following  $A^{\flat}$  Chopin appends the required  $\natural$ . In spite of a very evident  $A_{\sharp^4}$  few notes before, that  $\sharp$  is not undone. Notice the erasure that immediately precedes  $A_{\flat}^{\sharp}$ : since it is a bit too short to cover one of his  $\natural$ , Chopin may have carelessly written a  $\sharp$ , which he deleted and replaced with a  $\natural$ . It would seem, therefore, that  $A^{\flat}$  has its  $\natural$  thanks to a carelessness. Now let us see the analogous passage in m. 1: also here we see an erasure before  $A^{\flat}$ ; it is a rather long deletion that, therefore, covers a  $\natural$ . Two possibilities are given: 1. Chopin appended



the  $\flat$  to  $A^5$ , but, having noticed the previous  $A^{\sharp 4}$ , added it to  $A^4$  and cancelled it before  $A^5$ ; 2. or, after inserting a  $\flat$  before  $A^4$ , he added another  $\flat$  before  $A^5$ , which then, against the rules, he cancelled, considering it useless. Hence, we can establish that Chopin was not used to forget about the  $\flat$ , since, when they were obvious, he considered them useless, not only within a measure (see m. 1) but even within a group inside a measure (see m. 5). And that is not all: in m. 5 the erasure of the accidental—very likely a  $\sharp$ —before  $A^5$  reveals in the process of copying a certain automatism, which escaped the control of consciousness, and which sometimes could be the cause of glaring mistakes, as in m. 5 of the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* (see our *Polonaises*' edition). — By incidence, note in m. 1 the last quaver of l. h., which the engraver of F1 read as  $D$  (see above, *Pr.* VI m. 19), then corrected in F2.

All the above must be kept in mind in a *Pr.* as harmoniously complex as the VIII. In fact, if the copying errors are for the most part easily correctable (and Fontana corrected some of them), in some cases there may be doubt, and their tacit 'correction' turns into a (philological) abuse, which Fontana also committed. — Finally, it should be remembered that useless accidentals are drawn from  $\mathcal{A}$ .

9. Starting from *PW* all modern editors, with the sole exception of Ekier, correct the third beat (left h.) of this measure and put a  $\flat$  before  $G^3$ . Flamm (*BR*) repeats what Ekier writes; the latter, though, seems to want to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, because in the text he accepts the lesson of  $\mathcal{A}$ , but in the commentary he justifies the correction he proposes as a variant! He says, in fact: "The main text is a version read literally from sources. However, the crossings and corrections on this figure in  $\mathcal{A}$  allow for the assumption that Chopin forgot to write  $\flat$  lowering  $g^{\sharp}$  to  $g$ , especially if he made the changes after he had written the subsequent figure, where there is a  $g$  (with  $\flat$ ). We cite this possibility (which in effect gives a version analogous to bar 10) in the variant." Ekier seems not to realize that his second hypothesis ("especially if...") is based on the first, which is only his opinion. If we said: "... especially if what he had eaten had not digested," it would be, logically speaking, the same thing. Now, given that a correction can never be a variant, it is necessary to read, if possible, what Chopin deleted, in order to gather some useful elements for the solution of the problem. Observing very carefully the hatching (here on the left), not without the comparison with the imprint left by the ink on the other side of the page, we can decipher what Chopin had initially written (here on the right): Observing very carefully the hatching (here on the left), not without the comparison with the imprint left by the ink on the



of the problem. Observing very carefully the hatching (here on the left), not without the comparison with the imprint left by the ink on the other side of the page, we can decipher what Chopin had initially written (here on the right):

previous page, we can decipher what Chopin had initially written (here on the right): the 3rd beat (left hand)



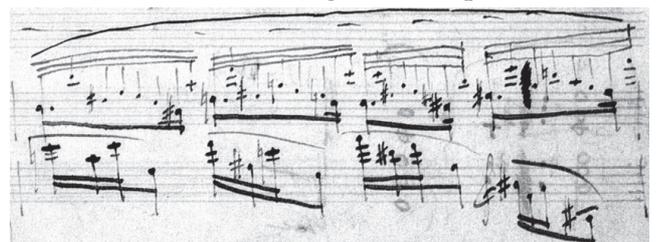
repeated the 2nd, while in the 4th beat (right hand) he had written  $B^4$  instead of  $De^5$ . Well, changing in the 3rd beat (left hand)  $B^{\flat 3}$  in  $G^{\flat 3}$ , it would not have changed much, the chord being the same. The composer was looking for a sound that would create more tension, and found it by inserting that  $G^{\sharp}$  that all editors 'correct.' If you play the four chords of the four beats in sequence, you actually have the impression that the third chord is wrong, that is, to be corrected, but, if you play them diluted in the four figures, you feel that the 'correct' version does not confer the tension that the version of  $\mathcal{A}$ , wanted by Chopin, does. It was a pleasant surprise for us when we found that Liszt ( $BH^{cw}$ ) not only does not correct the alleged mistake, but, in order to avoid any doubt, adds  $\sharp$  to that  $G$ ! And he does that in complete autonomy, since the text of  $G_2$  (at his disposal) is the same as that of  $G$ , *i. e.* without any accidental. For additional backing, consider that the correction of the 4th beat of the r. h., since it does not depend at all on the correction of the 3rd beat of the left h. (it might also be an initial copying error), was probably made immediately after; therefore the  $\flat$  to  $G^3$  would confirm the preceding  $G^{\sharp 3}$ .



17. All the first editions copy the alleged error of Chopin (see apparatus), and  $C^A$  does the same. Initially in mm. 15 ÷ 17 Chopin had written and copied a different reading (here on the right); but then, trying on the piano what he had copied, he decided to change the colour of the harmony: so, he changed  $Bb^4$  into  $Ab^4$  and deleted  $\flat$  before the subsequent  $Ab^4$ . Through an oversight, though, he failed to correct the last  $Bb^4$ .



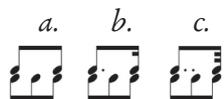
21. This measure offers a good example of what was



said in the introductory note to this *Preludde* about the accidentals neglected for 'obviousness': in fact the first editions in which this measure appears correct—apart from the late reprints of  $G$  and  $E$ —are  $Mk$  and  $BH^{cw}$ .

### Prélude IX.

All the editors, starting with Bronarski, raise a great deal of fuss and become unusually wordy about the vertical alignment of the notes, that is when we see the first and third note of a triplet aligned with a dotted quaver and a semiquaver, respectively. In this *Pr.* we have three cases:



As for case *b.*, Paul Badura-Skoda already noted that the «dotted rhythms in combination with triplets... are often performed, as in Schubert's works, as triplets.»<sup>5</sup> This is confirmed by *F2<sup>st</sup>*, m. 8 (see apparatus), where Chopin in the 2nd and 3rd beat links the third quaver of the triplet to the semiquaver by a dash. The fact that it was a completely normal alignment at the time is demonstrated beyond any doubt by an example of the *Systematic Course* by Karol Kurpiński.<sup>6</sup> The author suggests to the student a simple method to play simultaneously with one hand a triplet and with the other a duplet: "If in one hand there are triplets and in the second hand (corresponding) duplets, that is when a student has to divide three notes between two, he can only play with the first note of the duplet two notes of the triplet and with the second note of the duplet the third note of the triplet... In order not to talk at length and not to waste time, we will dwell on some brief examples." Here is Kurpiński's example:

Obviously, the suggestion is only valid to get going; then the student must gradually, "as far as possible," play the duplets isochronally. But what we are interested in pointing out is the phrase that introduces the third staff: "This bass will (initially) have the following rhythm (*Ten Bas mieć będzie następujące poruszenie*)," that is, a dotted quaver and a semiquaver. It will be difficult to find a more overwhelming evidence—that unintentionally Kurpiński gives us—on how to perform the so-called dotted rhythm combined with the triplets.

About the case *a.* Bronarski properly says (even if he comes to a wrong conclusion): "The upper part has two quavers at the beginning of bar 8, and of these the second should be played with the third quaver of the lower triplet (evidently there is no mistake here, for the dot, which originally appeared after the *Ab*, at the

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fr. Chopin, *Klavierwerke: Impromptus*, hg. von Akira Imai, Leipzig (Peters) 1986, p. 5. The subject had already been dealt with by KAROL HŁAWICZKA, *Reihende polymetrische Erscheinungen in Chopins Musik*, in "Annales Chopin 3" (1958), pp. 88 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Wykład Systematyczny* cit., p. 35.

beginning of the bar, was suppressed in MS), while on the second beat of the bar the customary dotted rhythm appears. Quite clearly then, Chopin wittingly wrote the two rhythms in a different way." That is right! That is why in our text the second quaver is not aligned with the third one of the triplet.

The case *c.*, m. 9 (see apparatus), is perhaps due to inattention: in fact in the following mm. Chopin corrects the position of the demisemiquaver (see m. 10 in apparatus). Which could also mean that in m. 9 the demisemiquaver might actually be a semiquaver!

In conclusion, the only alignment that corresponds to the correct execution is that of case *b.*

7. By the integration signs < > we wanted to point out that those ♯ are Fontana's corrections made while proof-reading. From the philological point of view, such integrations should be rejected. We agree to them, because the musical discourse seems more natural and coherent. After all, G's proofreader (*C<sup>A</sup>*, in fact, copies *A* without naturals) did the same thing. Moreover, it cannot even be excluded that Fontana had made a copy of this *Pr.*, as he did of others.

9. The octaves added in *WN* are absolutely unacceptable. This is a deplorable abuse that, moreover, involves: 1. considering Chopin unable to create the desired sounds using his piano; 2. forcing him to play this *Pr.* outside the keyboard. Such editorial licenses are nonsense and reprehensible, even if some scholars like them!



### Prélude X.

18. The error of reading in *C<sup>A</sup>* can hardly be ascribed to Fontana, who knew well the handwriting of Chopin (see above: *Pr.* VI m. 19). The copyist, however, seems not even to be Gutmann. This could be a clue, albeit faint, of an unidentified third copyist.

### Prélude XI.

6. Note that the fingering of *di F3<sup>D</sup>* is the same as that of Mikuli.

23. Only Eigeldinger (*PE*) tries to explain the meaning of the vertical line in *F3<sup>D</sup>*, "indicating phrase break (i.e. 'breathing with the wrist')." But rather than *phrase break*, the stroke signals that the phrase ends and a close follows. In prose it would correspond to a colon ":".



*Prélude XII.*

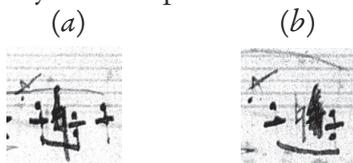
The expression *Presto*—at first *Presto con fuoco*—suggests the correct tempo, which has to be *excited*. The editors quibble about slurs in an almost maniacal way, but in the introduction to our *Polonaises*' edition we have already discussed how Chopin uses slurs and their meaning. Ours come from *A*.

1. Fontana does not correct the error of the engraver, which instead appears evident to the proofreader of *E*. In *F3<sup>D</sup>* seems readable a strange correction: we have the impression to see a *b* before *F<sup>4</sup>*. You also find this error in *TI*!

21÷22 & 24÷26. Liszt inserts in l. h. (*see apparatus*) a second tie, moreover badly placed by the engraver. Unexplainable indeed!

23. Bronarski ascribes to Mikuli the addition of a *b* before *C*. From which we can assume that he did not use the Kistner edition, but the Schirmer edition revised by Huneker, which is unreliable.

24÷26. In the *edd.*-measure we have put the text accepted by all the *edd.*, while in the main text we have followed the text of *A*, before the correction. The reason is very simple: we have strong doubts that the correction is by the composer:



When Chopin corrects an accidental, he deletes it and rewrites it (*b*), and does not make such a mess (*a*); if there is no room, and there is no possibility of confusion, he writes it higher up as in the case of *D<sup>6</sup>* in m. 14 of *Pr. XVI*: . Ekier interprets these corrections on the basis of his opinion: that is, because of m. 26 which is not transcribed but abbreviated (*∞*), Chopin would be confused and “the corrections made... in bars 24-25... were probably intended for bars 25-26;” so, he proposes for m. 24 a variant invented, which has no basis. Initially those *D*s were *sharp*; then Chopin cancelled the *#* of the m. 25 (and 26). Fontana, for uniformity, thought it right to delete even the one of m. 24. But he was wrong, because the mm. are so coupled: 21÷22 (25÷26), 23÷24 (27÷28): therefore while the m. 24 belongs to the sentence 21÷24, the m. 25 begins the sentence 25÷28.

30. *HN*, *PE* and *BR* add a natural to the last *D<sup>4</sup>*, but

they are wrong, since the long and narrow form of the erasure (*see apparatus*) shows that the erased accidental was a *b*. But Chopin failed to add a *#* (*see the introductory note to Pr. VIII*). Tellefsen, who had only *F* at his disposal, gives some help to us, because he inserts two *#*s (*see apparatus*); which means that they were in his copy of the *Preludes*. And Mikuli accepts the reading of his fellow. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the erasure hides an incorrect or imprecise note, as would make you suspect the greater space between the two quavers.

This measure offers a fine example of the bizarre philological principles that some editors are inspired by.

36. The reading of *C<sup>A</sup>* (→ *G*, *see apparatus*), is either an invention of the copyist or comes from another copy of *Pr. XII* (*see below the comm. to the final mm.*). In fact, in *A* there is no trace of *F<sup>#</sup>*. Which is well deduced from the impression left by the ink of the notes on the page of *Pr. XI*. It seems you can read what we propose here on the right. Chopin, after some unsatisfactory attempts, opted, rightly, for the two simple octaves, because, so, the first chord of m. 37 would have been more effective. In other words, the reading of *C<sup>A</sup>* could come from an earlier version.



70. Some editors (Mikuli, Bronarski and Hansen) correct the first octave of the left h. making it uniform to m. 66. But, as Ekier rightly observes, “the deletions and corrections in *A* [*see apparatus*] prove that Chopin did try out several versions (including the *G<sup>#</sup>-g<sup>#</sup>* octave) and wrote down *E-e* as the final one.” In effect, the mm. 70 ff. are not a resumption of mm. 66 ff., but their continuation!

74÷end. The omission in *C<sup>A</sup>* of two mm. (*see apparatus*) is interpreted by all editors as an oversight. Not even Liszt (*BH<sup>cw</sup>*), who should have consulted *F*, considered that he should change the reading of *G*. Mikuli remarks that “some editions [*clear hint at G*] suppress these two clearly authentic measures and deprive the ending of such a natural and organic melodic improvement.” This is true, but it is also true that there is a perfect balance even without those two measures, which Chopin probably added in Mallorca. Together with m. 36 this apparent omission reveals, in our opinion, the existence of a previous version—not necessarily copied by Fontana—, which served as antigraph for *C<sup>A</sup>*. This confirms that the manuscript tradition of the *Preludes*, of which *A* represents the final stage, is very complex and inextricable.



*Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari,  
Iulle, ceratis ope Daedalea  
nititur pinnis vitreo daturus  
nomina ponto.*

## *Appendix*

### *Shamming Chopin*

“Whoever intends to emulate Pindar—Horace thus begins the second Ode of the fourth book—relies, Iullus, upon wings stuck by Daedalean ability [*i.e.* not upon his own wings], destining himself to give his name to the transparent sea [*i.e.* to drown].” This is a consideration that also applies to Chopin.

Some, however, do not seem to have taken advantage of Horace’s warning. For some time now, in fact, there has been an imaginary 27th prelude by Chopin, which a scholar would have deciphered and called it “Devil’s Trill.” And there are at least three pianists who perform it on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

The first observation that arises spontaneously calls into question the title. Everyone knows how much Chopin hated this kind of title!

The documents containing the “deciphered” sketch have been well described in EIGELD.[2000], pp. 155÷167. Eigeldinger, however, deals mainly with the work plan related to the *Preludes*, on the same page of the sketch, from the analysis of which he deduces various stages in the composition of the cycle: “— Before the date of November 28, 1838..., to complete the collection of the future Op. 28, the numbers 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, and 18 are missing. — After this date the numbers 4, 9, and 5 were composed before..., nearly preceded by No. 2. The last ones are Nos. 7 (?), 10, 14, 16, and 18... At the same time, that is, before January 22, 1839..., Nos. 12, 15, 17, and 21 remained to be adjusted.”

On the division into three stages we agree with the Swiss scholar, but we do not agree on the nature of the first stage, that of the missing *Preludes*. We are in fact inclined to consider Gutmann’s statement, according to which the *Preludes* had all already been composed before the departure from Paris, to be correct (*see above*, p. VIIIa). In our opinion, the three stages represent three different levels of re-elaboration that the *Preludes* needed: final drafting, revision (more or less partial), finishing. If in November Chopin had allowed himself to devote himself to the composition of a mazurka, it means that the urgency of composing eight *Preludes* was not so urgent. But eight missing pieces out of 24 are an urgency! On November 15, 1838, from Palma, Chopin wrote to Fontana: “You will receive the *Preludes* shortly (*Dostaniesz Preludia wkrótce*).” Such a statement is not compatible, if eight preludes were still missing and others were to be finished; it is compatible, instead, with the fact that he had begun to put them in a fair copy. Unfortunately, however, he fell ill and wrote to Fontana on December 3: “These last two weeks I have been as sick as a dog,” Thus, he remained inactive, and on December 14, 1838, from Palma, he repeated to his friend: “I think I will send you my *Preludes* and the *Ballade* shortly (*Myszę Ci moje Preludia*

*i Balladę wkrótce postać*).”<sup>1</sup> Because of the quite serious indisposition, nothing had changed since November 15! The only difference between the two statements is in “I think (*myszę*)”: evidently the effects of the indisposition had made him more cautious, less confident.

Nor should we forget that Chopin was working not only on the *Preludes*, but also on the *Scherzo* in C# minor, the *Polonaise* in C minor and the finishing of the *Ballade* in F, which is mentioned in his letter of December 14 (*see above*).

Returning to the alleged 27th prelude, let us look at the sketch:



As you can see, it is written on the left half of the page, which had been folded in half and has a tear: perhaps the torn corner contained—on the opposite side—an irrelevant annotation. Eigeldinger rightly observes that “Chopin saves his music card during his stay in Mallorca” (*ibid.* p. 161).

Well, in our opinion, this is the only draft of a prelude conceived and written in Mallorca. It remains to be seen what the intentions of the composer were. In fact, *Pr. XIV*, in E♭ minor, was certainly already composed and ready to be copied; moreover, his autograph shows very few erasures and only a few accidentals; it is one of the cleanest. Which means that the text did not need any revision. Why would he compose

<sup>1</sup> This phrase is not found in *CFC*, because it was skipped. The translators, in fact, copying and reworking the French translation by Stéphane Danysz (*cf.* Fr. Chopin, *Lettres*, recueillies par H.

Opienski et traduites par St. Danysz, Paris [Soc. Française d’Éditions Litt. et Techn.] 1933, p. 274), forgot to check the Polish text!

another prelude in *E*  $\flat$  minor! The most truthful hypothesis is that for some reason Chopin wanted to replace it, but then—being the time short—he abandoned the idea and renounced to do that.

The writing of the sketch testifies a state of prostration due, of course, to the precarious state of health. Below, we give the transcript. If we had had the opportunity to examine the original document, almost certainly the result would have been better, but we must be satisfied with it, and, for our purposes, that is enough. Question marks indicate places that are difficult to read or not at all easy to read.

*Es moll*

The almost regular subdivision of the measures in the systems (4 + 4 + 4...) makes us think that the composer had an overall idea of what he would have liked to achieve, but in the sketch we can see that the

lower line of the third system (mm. 9 ff.) is wrongly bracketed with the upper line of the fourth (mm. 13 ff.). This confirms that Chopin was in a fit of derangement when he sketched this remake of the *Pr.* in *E*  $\flat$  minor. We can still notice that the mm. 3  $\div$  4 respond to the mm. 1  $\div$  2, and the mm. 16  $\div$  17 recall the mm. 6  $\div$  7. However, if we consider deleted—as it seems—the mm. 21  $\div$  25, the only harmonically sensible sentences can be recognized after the m. 13—but the m. 31 must be excluded. Apart from the ternary time, different from the cut time (C) of *Pr.* XIV, the figuration in triplets—perhaps to be extended to the whole piece—is inspired, in our opinion, just by *Pr.* XIV. This is also confirmed by the chromatic scale descending in mm. 26  $\div$  28, which recalls m. 18 of the cited *Pr.*

But what matters most is that the bricks with which all the other *Preludes* are built are missing (see above, p. va). Below are the first eight measures of *Pr.* XIV: the white notes show that the framework (as in the case of *Pr.* XII, see above, p. vb) is given by the theme of the first *Prelude*, albeit in a minor tonality and with slight deviations:

In conclusion, the decipherer, who is—as far as we know—Jeffrey Kallberg, certainly has the right to compose everything that his inspiration suggests, but he has no right to attribute to Chopin his “Devil’s Trill.” There is nothing in it that remembers, even remotely, Chopin’s compositional style, nor the intrinsic rationality that characterizes all the composer’s works. And what about the pianists who play it, convinced that it is a piece by Chopin? The doubt arises that they totally ignore the musical language. But they are not the only ones: acclaimed pianists play the most foul modern waste. And there are also revered chopinologists who attribute to Chopin banalities composed by strangers: this is the case of Ekier who in vol. 29 of the National Edition (WN) reconstructs a mazurka, of which in vol. 37 he gives the full version, published as op. 112 by Charles Mayer. Klindworth, although convinced that it was a forgery, had to include it in his collection by imposition of the publishing house! Niecks (generically quoted by Ekier) speaks fully of it (II, p. 237 n. 19). So two fakes, the “Devil’s Trill” and the “Souvenir de Pologne,” administered to hopeless music lovers by two eminent chopinologists!

