

**DBWE 9, 1/80a. To Ernst Fritz Schmid**<sup>[1]</sup>

Berlin, June 19, 1924

Dear Fritz:<sup>[2]</sup>

Only a few days ago, as I was visiting Held<sup>[3]</sup> and Dreier<sup>[4]</sup> on my trip back from Italy,<sup>[5]</sup> I learned that you very suddenly took the leap to get out.<sup>[6]</sup>

[1.] Handwritten in pencil. Bonhoeffer's address is handwritten at the end of the letter by Ernst Schmid: "Berlin-Grunewald, Wangenheimstr. 14." Letter in possession of Lotte Schmid (Augsburg). First publication in M. H. Schmid, "Befreundest du dich etwas mehr mit der modernen Musik?": Ernst Fritz Schmid in musikalischem Briefwechsel mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, ed. G. Günther and W. Salmen (Munich, 2004), 11:49–61. In the German text, Bonhoeffer's shorthand for "and," "rather," and "against" have been deciphered. Ernst Fritz Schmid (1904–60) was a musicologist who taught at Tübingen from 1935 to 1937, when he resigned as a civil servant; he was president of the German Mozart Society from 1951 to 1958. For more about him, see *In memoriam Ernst Fritz Schmid (1904–1960): Ein Gedenkblatt für seine Angehörigen und Freunde* (Recklinghausen: Bauer-Druck, 1961), and the article by M. H. Schmid cited above. Previously published in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook* 2 (2005/2006): 37–40. Transcription by Lotte Schmid and Ilse Tödt. Edited by Christian Gremmels. English translation by Victoria Barnett.

[2.] In connection with his joining the "Hedgehog" academic fraternity (see *DB-ER*, 48–51, and *DBWE* 9, 1/35), Bonhoeffer wrote his parents at the end of May 1923 about Ernst Fritz Schmid: "I chose my fraternity bodyguard on Thursday. I chose Schmid, the son of the resident philosopher, who is in his third semester and is studying zoology. He also plays violin a lot, so we play music together quite a bit." See also the message of July 7, 1923, to his parents: "I now spend a lot of time with Fritz Schmid. There at the house we play a lot of good music. There are not many concerts here, as you know, so it makes it very nice" (*DBWE* 9, 1/97, p. 61), and Bonhoeffer's curriculum vitae (*DBWE* 9, 1/96, p. 60), a handwritten entry in the Hedgehog fraternity "Foxes Book" in the 1923 summer semester.

[3.] Robert Held was a Tübingen student friend of Bonhoeffer's and a member of the Hedgehogs (see ed. note 8 below) since the 1923 summer semester; he later became an attorney in Stuttgart. On Held, see *DBWE* 9:570; and Renate Bethge and Christian Gremmels, eds., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Life in Pictures*, trans. Brian McNeil, centenary ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 35.

[4.] Wilhelm Dreier was a Tübingen student friend and member of the Hedgehogs (see ed. note 8) after the 1923 summer semester. He later became a merchant in Bremen. On Dreier, see *DBWE* 9, 1/81 and 1/96b, and Bethge and Gremmels, *Life in Pictures*, centenary ed., 35.

[5.] Bonhoeffer's parents made it possible for Dietrich and his brother Klaus to study in Rome (April–June 1924); see Bonhoeffer's Italian diary, *DBWE* 9, 1/57. Regarding the return trip, see Bonhoeffer's letter in June 1924 to his twin sister (*DBWE* 9, 1/80, p. 129): "I also stayed in Zurich for a couple of hours and then traveled on to Horb, where two members of the Hedgehog fraternity were waiting to take me on a short excursion into the Black Forest." [This note combines notes 3 and 6 from the German version published in the *Bonhoeffer Yearbook*.—VB]

[6.] The "Hedgehog Association of Tübingen" (see ed. note 8) informed Schmid on June 2, 1924, that the organization "unanimously . . . approved" his resignation.

Since I am literally [. . .]<sup>[7]</sup> still affected by the case, do write me about what specifically drove you to this; ultimately you are certainly not the only one who was not exactly made happy by the association,<sup>[8]</sup> and now you have simply left those of us who are not an insignificant part of the association, so we will have to work further on the same cause with one less man to support us, for naturally we too could get out for many reasons. That would then leave a pretty assortment of Hedgehogs. Now of course you did not have much in common with many of them at all, so the association also didn't give much to you. But do write me. Since we last saw each other, I have not heard anything more from you. I myself spent the large portion of the w[inter] s[emester] in bed with a slight concussion,<sup>[9]</sup> so I didn't hear anything about you from the others either. Did music lead you along this reclusive path? Someone just told me that you wanted to join the Youth Movement.<sup>[10]</sup> The entire matter is not very clear to me. I just set up a

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[7.] Illegible.

[8.] Bonhoeffer's father had already been a member of the Tübingen Hedgehogs. See K. Bonhoeffer, "Lebenserinnerung," in *Karl Bonhoeffer: Zum Hundertsten Geburtstag am 31. März 1968*, ed. Jürg Zutt, Erwin Straus, and Heinrich Scheller (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1969), 32. At the beginning of May 1923, Bonhoeffer wrote his parents to ask: "Yesterday evening I was up at the Hedgehog fraternity house. . . . I liked the people fairly well and would like very much to join them for the one semester that I am here. Now, I don't know what you would think about my staying here for a second semester. . . . Please write as soon as you can and tell me what you think about my staying here for a second semester" (*DBWE* 9, 1/33, pp. 56–57). Together with his brother-in-law Wilhelm Dreß (see 1/94b, ed. note 7), Bonhoeffer broke from the group in 1933, "after some of its members exalted the Nazi *Gleichschaltung*, or 'synchronization' of society, as a fulfillment of ancient ideals. His resignation is recorded in the March 1936 senior members' bulletin" (*DB-ER*, 49; see also W. Dreß, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Tübingen," in *Theologia viatorum* 12 [1975]: 23–24).

[9.] The result of a fall while ice skating; see *DB-ER*, 56.

[10.] On the events leading up to this, see W. Gerstenberg, "Der Historiker Ernst Fritz Schmid," in *In memoriam Ernst Fritz Schmid (1904–1960): Ein Gedenkblatt für seine Angehörigen und Freunde* (Recklinghausen: Bauer-Druck, 1961), 16: "The young students' spirit, striving for freedom, was later driven out of inner necessity toward the Youth Movement. For many years Schmid was close to the Finkenstein Bund. The Finkenstein Bund, which was committed to the idea of lay music (with song weeks, apprenticeships, youth camps), had a great influence through its initiatives (founding of the magazine *Musik und Kirche* and the rediscovery of the work of Heinrich Schütz) on the renewal of Protestant church music (brass choirs, new organ works). On the Finkenstein Bund, see W. Blankenburg, "Singbewegung," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed., vol. 6, cols. 45–46; and "Die Finkensteiner Bewegung," in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung in Dokumenten ihrer Zeit: Von den Anfängen bis 1933; Auswahl und Zusammenstellung der Dokumente*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri (Wolfenbüttel: Mösel, 1980), 197–324. See also Hans Pfeifer, "Die Bedeutung der Jugendbewegung für Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook* 1 (2003): 74–92.

quintet with Krauß<sup>[11]</sup> and Häring,<sup>[12]</sup> tomorrow the “Trout quintet,”<sup>[13]</sup> I don’t get around to listening much nor to my own production. What are you doing in this regard? Are you becoming somewhat more favorably disposed toward modern music? If you see Weynand<sup>[14]</sup> sometime, tell him that I will write him very, very soon. Did he receive our card from the Black Forest, and did you get mine from Rome? Warm greetings to you from your  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**DBWE 9, 1/85a. From Ernst Fritz Schmid<sup>[1]</sup>**

Morgenholz, August 28, 1924

Dear Bonhoeffer!

Today is the last day in our home up here in the mountains, and I *do want* still to send you a greeting. We will have been here almost 14 days and are hiking through the mountains in the area—unfortunately all too seldom, due to the terrible weather. The card shows approximately the view from our home. Sunday we head back to Tübingen. Best regards,

Your E. F. Schmid, student of music, Tübingen: Hirschauerstr. 3

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[11.] Paul Krauß was a medical student and member of the Hedgehogs since the 1920 summer semester. He later became a professor of medicine in Göppingen; see *DBWE* 9, 1/49, pp. 73–74. [In *DBWE* 9 his name is spelled “Kraus.”—VB]

[12.] According to an April 6, 2003, letter from Lotte Schmid, “this could be the son of the Tübingen theology professor Dr. Theodor Häring. Prof. Häring shows up several times in the Schmid family history.”

[13.] In a June 1924 letter to his sister Sabine, Bonhoeffer wrote: “Tomorrow we will have an evening of music here. We’ll play the *Forellen Quintet* [Trout quintet]. Two members of the Hedgehog fraternity will play the first violin and cello, Miss Rohloff the viola, Klaus the second cello, and I the piano. We intend to practice regularly during the week” (*DBWE* 9, 1/80, pp. 129–30).

[14.] Udo Weynand, a law student and Hedgehog member since the 1923 summer semester; see *DBWE* 9, 1/47, p. 71, and 1/55, p. 79.

[1.] *NL*, C17; handwritten postcard: E. F. Schmid. First published in M. H. Schmid, “‘Befreundest du dich etwas mehr mit der modernen Musik?’: Ernst Fritz Schmid in musikalischem Briefwechsel mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer,” in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart: Gesellschaft für Musikgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 56. Previously published in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook* 2 (2005/2006): 41. Transcribed and edited by Christian Gremmels. Translation by Victoria Barnett.

**DBWE 9, 1/94b. To Ernst Fritz Schmid<sup>[1]</sup>**

Berlin-Grunewald, November 21, 1925

Dear Fritz,

I've let my reply wait a bit, even though I took care of the most important thing right in the two days after I received your letter. Since I do not personally know the director of the cathedral choir<sup>[2]</sup> I turned to the director of the high school choir,<sup>[3]</sup> whom I know very well, with the request that he and his wider circles (naturally he has connections to the cathedral choir) take an interest here. I hope to have some success with this. If I don't hear anything more from him in a few weeks, I will get back in touch with him. I was very happy to hear that you are now marching in seven-league boots toward your goal. I would indeed be very interested in seeing a work of yours sometime, because I simply can't imagine that you have bypassed Brahms and those writing the most recent music entirely unmoved and secretly, as in the time in Tübingen. By the way I apparently have kept up with you more than you have me, since I have heard some things from Dreier<sup>[4]</sup> and Breyhan,<sup>[5]</sup> whom I got to know in Bremen. I am now staying this final semester till my doctoral exams<sup>[6]</sup> here; there is a huge amount of work, so that I don't get around to playing music much. I am this dull studier, as students sometimes have to be, and because one really feels like

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[1.] Handwritten in pencil. In possession of Lotte Schmid (Augsburg). First published in M. H. Schmid, "Befreundest du dich etwas mehr mit der modernen Musik?": Ernst Fritz Schmid in musikalischem Briefwechsel mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart: Gesellschaft für Musikgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 57. Previously published in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook 2* (2005/2006): 42–43. Transcribed by Lotte Schmid and Ilse Tödt. Edited by Christian Gremmels. Translation by Victoria Barnett.

[2.] Hugo Rüdell was conductor and director of the Berlin cathedral choir from 1909 to 1933; see *150 Jahre Staats- und Domchor Berlin: Unbekannte und unveröffentlichte Briefe und Dokumente, ausgewählt und eingeleitet von W. Dinglinger*, Deutsche Vergangenheit: Stätten der Geschichte Berlins 95 (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1993), 86–106.

[3.] Siegfried Ochs was director of the choir of the state academic high school for music in Berlin from 1920 to 1928; see D. Schenk, *Die Hochschule für Musik zu Berlin* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2004).

[4.] Wilhelm Dreier; see *DBWE 9, 1/80a*, ed. note 4.

[5.] Christian Breyhan (1903–77); law student; member of the Hedgehogs since the 1921/1922 winter semester. He became a senior government finance president.

[6.] Bonhoeffer's dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (*DBWE 1*), was completed in July 1927 and accepted by the theological faculty of the University of Berlin on August 1, 1927 (see *DBWE 9, 1/105*, pp. 174–77). Regarding the background of the dissertation, see the comment in a letter of March 13, 1926, from Richard Widmann: "What do you say about this proposition? For once, take the church as a sociological reality seriously and draw the consequences from it" (*DBWE 9, 1/96*, p. 156).

nothing other than a more or less elastic sponge, soon sated, I'd like to be able to work somewhat more independently, i.e., first take care of my postdoctoral exam as soon as possible; then I will see what's next. But I do think that it will still be the academic career path. At the moment I'm reading up together with Dreß<sup>[7]</sup> (who says hello to you). I met Dramblé<sup>[8]</sup> recently; I found him remarkably unchanged. Excuse the pencil; my pen was stolen. So I will keep up my interest in your songs, perhaps something or other will come of it.

With best regards, your  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**DBWE 9, 1/96c. To Ernst Fritz Schmid<sup>[1]</sup>**

Berlin-Charlottenburg, March 25, 1936

Dear Fritz,

Many thanks for the notebook that you sent me a few days ago.<sup>[2]</sup> I was really happy to hear something again from you, even if it's only to receive something you sent,<sup>[3]</sup> but only today have I made myself take it on. I was

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[7.] Walter Dreß, the husband of Bonhoeffer's youngest sister, Susanne. Regarding their preparation together for the exams, see the correspondence between Dreß and Bonhoeffer in *DBWE* 9: 1/89a, 89b, 93a, 93b, 94a, 96a.

[8.] Not identified.

[1.] Handwritten in ink; with an envelope (stamped: "Charlottenburg 2, 25.3.26, 6-7N") addressed to: "Mr. Ernst Fritz Schmid, Munich, Kurfürstenstr. 35." Forwarding address: "Tübingen, Württemberg, Hirschauerstr. 3" (the address of Schmid's parents). Letter in possession of Lotte Schmid (Augsburg). First published in M. H. Schmid, "'Befreundest du dich etwas mehr mit der modernen Musik?': Ernst Fritz Schmid in musikalischem Briefwechsel mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart: Gesellschaft für Musikgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg, 2004), 58–59. Previously published in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook* 2 (2005/2006): 44–45. Transcribed by Lotte Schmid and Ilse Tödt. Edited by Christian Gremmels. Translation by Victoria Barnett.

[2.] "In Partitur Gebrachtes bzw. Herausgegebenes" (M. H. Schmid, in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, 11:58). [This seems to have been either musical scores that Schmid had composed or music composed by others that he was publishing.—VB]

[3.] L. Lechner, *Neue Teutsch Lieder mit fünff und vier Stimmen*, published by E. F. Schmid, Augsburg, 1926 (according to Schmid, in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, 11:59). See also E. F. Schmid, "Bericht über geistliche und weltliche Abendmusik mit Werken alter Meister in württembergischen Städten im Juli 1926," in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung in Dokumenten ihrer Zeit von den Anfängen bis 1933*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri (Wolfenbüttel: Mösel, 1980), 296–300 (cf. *DBWE* 9, 1/80a, ed. note 10).

genuinely interested by the movements. Unfortunately I lack sufficient capacity to imagine how this will sound in a choir. At the next opportunity I will see if I can have it sung for four voices. Yet for me there is something very questionable in all this kind of music; as beautiful as it is in harmony, melody, and voicing, it just doesn't fit the innermost part of us human beings living today. There is absolutely no doubt that it strikes certain parts of us (particularly the desire for the naive), and it's just as certain that this is especially valuable. But I cannot help but see in all this a piece of lost romanticism, which one can love very much, but which, for a human being who has seen a factory and has serious problems on his mind, is simply not possible to listen to with the entire soul. And if you were to say to me that precisely that which is essentially music is only to be found here, then I would have to draw the consequence that the contemporary era is in its innermost depths unmusical. And then to lead such an era back to that which is "essentially music" (and in addition to do so through historicizing, not in one's own productivity!) does seem to me to approach inauthenticity. I would be interested to know whether you don't also think that this old music is basically unproblematic, naive, unbroken, and if that is the case, then, all things considered, I don't believe that it's so easy to find a synthesis for today's broken etc. era. I believe that which can be achieved with this kind of music *has* been achieved, and nothing would be more perverse than to diminish what in its own era were good tendencies, through the drive to collect them and the antiquarian odor.<sup>[4]</sup> Well enough of this. I know that you are of a different view, but it's precisely because of this that I'm writing so clearly. Basically this is not a very pleasant thank-you letter. But you do know how it is intended. I'm doing well. I have a lot to do—since the beginning of the holidays I'm playing more piano again, tomorrow Beethoven with a very good violinist. I'll be here again in summer.

With best regards and thanks from your  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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[4.] With respect to Bonhoeffer's catchwords in his critique of the musical conception in the "Singing Movement" ("desire for the naive," "lost romanticism," "historicizing"), cf. H. J. Kaiser, "Der Erziehungsbegriff in der Jugendmusikbewegung: Ortsbestimmungen," in *Die Jugendmusikbewegung: Impulse und Wirkungen*, ed. Karl-Heinz Reinfandt (Wolfenbüttel: Mösel, 1987), 134–59. On p. 142 Kaiser states: "It is revealing here that the creation of a new musical culture is expected from the new kind of experiencing a *past musical culture*"; a characteristic of this is a "regression' to the existing music," "toward works of art in the emphatic sense of the *past* . . . on the one hand, and toward the folk music of *past* centuries on the other."

**DBWE 9, 1/99b. To Ernst Fritz Schmid**<sup>[1]</sup>

Berlin-Charlottenburg, October 5, 1926

Dear Fritz,

Thank you for your letter. I have learned from this that one should reply to letters quickly, for your great outpouring of temperament would certainly have been more understandable to me a half year ago than today. For a half year in my life always means a very great distance, and I believe that since then I have become rather different, let's say, I hope so in any case. Not that the special opinions have changed that greatly, but what does that matter?—Opinions are superficial. I believe we would recognize each other with difficulty if we could free ourselves entirely of the externals. To speak just briefly to the matter, I believe you can be certain that I am anything but an admirer of a group of people that you somewhat pharisaically dismiss. But: ultimately we belong together with the cynics etc.,—perhaps not gladly, but that doesn't matter. That in itself is a motive for me to regard their production more calmly. In such difficult moments they wish to reject the very ones who scream the most for community with Nietzsche-like violent gestures, and I don't care much for that. The consequence of this feeling of solidarity is naturally not at all resignation or a repulsive genius cult, which would be nothing but dishonesty. As unpleasant as I personally find most of these apparitions, I nonetheless make the effort to like them despite or in their unpleasantness, not the works but the human beings who stand behind them—because they do remain *that* in all their sloppiness. Otherwise I would see myself as a pharisee. I can omit the fact that it appears to me that much in your description simply doesn't fit, for that can't be contested. With all this only *one* thing appears dangerous to me, that one hopes, without contradiction from the other, to observe, support him, and now become the bringer of joy to the people [Volk]. The truth is *never* with *one* human being, who would then become God; that it [i.e., the truth] is there at all is illuminated only out of the contradiction of the other (Socrates). The consequence for every single one of us is the highest modesty and the observation of his own minutiae. One person thinks one thing, the other

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[1.] Handwritten in ink. Envelope stamped: (illegible), 10.26, and addressed to "Mr. Ernst-Fritz Schmid, Munich, Herzogstr. 33 II 1." In possession of Lotte Schmid (Augsburg). Previously published in M. H. Schmid, "Befreundest du dich etwas mehr mit der modernen Musik?": Ernst Fritz Schmid in musikalischem Briefwechsel mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg*, 11:59–61. Previously published in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook* 2 (2005/2006): 46–48. Transcribed by Lotte Schmid and Ilse Tödt. Edited by Christian Gremmels. Translation by Victoria Barnett.

something else; it doesn't help at all that through this both mean the same thing! Each should do in his own place what he can take responsibility for,<sup>[2]</sup> and nothing more can be demanded than that he modestly acknowledge his *limits*.<sup>[3]</sup> But no *limitless* judgment of the other. Perhaps limitlessness will lead once again to a "great man," for which one hopes so longingly; I would decide every time for the limited existence in *genuine community* with *each one* (the neighbor), even if the great man is not forthcoming. There is much less danger in the manifestations of decline than in the limitlessness, and that means the pharisaical quality of the "ideal" plans for remedies. In my view the main thing is genuine life in community, not the heroic and the glittering manifestations of culture.

The entire Bach festival<sup>[4]</sup> is now behind me, and I am still strongly under its powerful effect. Nonetheless it drove me to write this letter; one should wish only to acknowledge the limits! Only in this way does one honor the infinite!

By the way, recently I have almost exclusively played old music, this just to orient you. My qualms consist of many things, but that isn't the issue here. The impression that I receive from Bach<sup>[5]</sup> etc. Schütz<sup>[6]</sup> is overwhelming every time.

Pardon the coarse "stationery," but I didn't have anything else. I am working on my dissertation about "the ideal of Christian sociology and the church";<sup>[7]</sup> I hope to be finished with it around Easter. I get around to music somewhat more during the holidays, admittedly much too little. [IF] you

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[2.] On this, see Bonhoeffer's demand to do what is necessary "in a given place" (DBWE 6:225 and 268).

[3.] This is early evidence of the theme of "limit/limits," the theological implications of which would preoccupy Bonhoeffer throughout his writings: in *Sanctorum Communio* (see the use of the term "barrier" [*Schranke*], DBWE 1:45ff); in his inaugural lecture, "The Anthropological Question in Contemporary Philosophy and Theology" (DBWE 10, 2/7); in *Creation and Fall* (in the discussion of limits and boundaries, DBWE 3:85–87 and elsewhere); and in the *Letters and Papers from Prison* (DBWE 8, 3/137, p. 366 and elsewhere).

[4.] This was the fourteenth German Bach festival, held by the new Bach Society from September 30 to October 3, 1926, in Berlin.

[5.] Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). On Bonhoeffer's appreciation of Bach's music, see Andreas Pangritz, *Polyphonie des Lebens: Zu Dietrich Bonhoeffers "Theologie der Musik"* (Berlin: Alektor-Verlag, 1994), 40–53.

[6.] Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672). On the rediscovery of Schütz's works during the 1920s, see U. Eckart-Bäcker, "Die Schütz-Renaissance aus dem Geist der musikalischen Jugendbewegung," in *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung*, ed. Wilhelm Scholz and Waltraut Jonas-Corrieri, 92–101. For Bonhoeffer's appreciation of Schütz, see Pangritz, *Polyphonie des Lebens*, 25–39.

[7.] *Sanctorum Communio* (DBWE 1).