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Response to Jens Dufner's paper on the autograph sources of Beethoven's Opus 131
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First, I want to thank Jens Dufner for his excellent paper. With great care and perseverance he shed new light on the central movement of Opus 131, exploring the later phases of the genesis of this Andante through close study of its two principal autograph sources.

The central insights of his paper stem from his comparison of the "pre-autograph" (Artaria 211), which is among the many Beethoven sources that were displaced after World War II and are now in Krakow, and the more advanced autograph (Mendelssohn 19), which is in Berlin. As Jens pointed out, the second autograph of the Andante was discussed by Robert Winter in his pathbreaking book on the genesis of Opus131. Winter focused mainly on the sketches, with remarkable results, including the existence of five different movement-plans for the entire work, and his discovery that one early idea for the ending of the whole work was to be the theme that became the slow movement of Opus 135! For the Andante of Opus 131 Winter could work with the Berlin autograph, but the Krakow manuscript was not available to him at the time. Which means that what we have heard today from Jens Dufner is a major step forward in our collective understanding of the compositional origins of this movement.

Incidentally, I would like to note that both of these manuscripts, Artaria 211 and Mendelssohn 19, are available on line on the website of the Boston University Center for Beethoven Research, along with many other Beethoven autographs, thanks to the work of Matthew Cron.

It is not common to have two autograph versions of the same Beethoven quartet, even in his last years, when he was working so intensely on the late quartets and sketching so much in

score, not in single-line continuity drafts. Of course, our terminology is rather porous, since a highly advanced Beethoven "composing score" can be almost identical to a "pre-autograph," and we know very well that even in his "final" autographs (over many years) Beethoven made dozens, sometimes hundreds, of last-minute changes, some of them very important.

This Andante is the lyrical centerpiece of Opus 131– it is a late masterpiece among his slow movements in variation form. The symmetrical and well-balanced theme is followed by six highly elaborate variations, ending with a final section that includes portions of the theme in immensely elaborated form. Especially striking to me is the opening of the movement, in which the short subphrases of theme are divided between first and second violins, in dialogue, one measure at a time–as if they are two singers in a duet, answering one another. The earliest known version of this theme appears in a conversation book of January 1826, in which these phrases were actually an octave apart. [Example]. Thereafter Beethoven kept the pitch content intact but moved the dialogue into a single register in the first eight bars, then using the octave-apart version in the restatement. This is a highly unusual way of presenting a lyrical theme in any Beethoven work.

Jens Dufner has introduced us to some of the most significant variants between the two versions of the movement, above all Beethoven's revisions of the inner parts–the second violin and viola–at several key places in the movement. I am especially struck by the changes at m. 80 and following, in the second variation, which show Beethoven rewriting the inner voices while leaving the primary voices–the first violin and cello–intact. In other words, he is working from the top and bottom of the ensemble towards the middle, giving thematic substance to every part. We are reminded of the famous anecdote in which Karl Holz, the original second violin, told Wilhelm von Lenz, that Beethoven said that in the late quartets he intended a "new kind of voice-

leading." Jens's paper brings us closer than we have ever been to understanding the later stages of Beethoven's shaping of this movement. May we hope that similar work will be done on the vast number of surviving score sketches and autographs of the late quartets that have not yet been transcribed and studied, as we peer into the vast and complex world of Beethoven's last major compositions.