

C.P.E. Bach: *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*
(Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments)

Study Guide: Summary and Examples
Chapter Two, Embellishments: The Turn

C.P.E. goes into a great deal of detail on the variety of turns and the manner which they should be performed, including at various speeds. He introduces several suggestions for new notations to specify exactly how he wanted an ornament performed. However, none of these came into widespread standard use. Because of this, I found this section particularly informative.

THE TURN

1) The turn is an easy embellishment that makes melodies both attractive and brilliant. The symbol and its execution are shown in Figure 118 with its execution at various speeds.

[Tab. V.] Fig. L.



Tab. V Fig. L Adagio

Figure 118



- (1787 edition) If accidentals are needed, they can be placed over the turn to the left (altering the first note) or right (altering the third tone)

Tab. V Fig. L a.1 (1787 edition)

Figure 118 a. 1



accidental to the left indicates
first note should be altered

Tab. V Fig. L a.2 (1787 edition)

Figure 118 a. 2



accidental to the right indicates
third note should be altered

2) The turn can also be shown with the notation shown in the asterisked example, but C.P.E. prefers the other to avoid confusion.

Tab. V Fig. L ()*

Figure 118 (*)



alternate notation
(C.P.E. prefers other)

3) Uses of the turn:

- Slow and fast movements
- Slurred or detached notes
- Do not use with very short notes since that might impede the clarity of the melody

4) The turn can be found in three varieties, each of which will be examined in detail:

- Alone (paragraphs 5-26)
- In combination with the short trill (the Trilled Turn, paragraphs 27-32, full turn paragraphs 33-36)
- After one or two 32nds in small notation (these differ from the appoggiatura) (paragraph 37)

5) When the turn alone is used, the symbol may appear either directly over the note or after it, slightly to the right

6) Examples of the turn alone:

[Tab. V.] Fig. LI.

The image shows three lines of musical notation, each with five examples of the turn alone. The examples are labeled (a) through (m). Each example shows a different way the turn symbol is used over a note, including variations in placement and accompanying notes.

Tab. V Fig. LI (a)

Figure 119 (a)



turn may be used in stepwise motion

Tab. V Fig. LI (b)

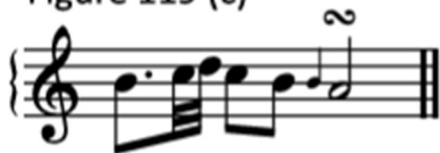
Figure 119 (b)



turn may be used in leaps

Tab. V Fig. LI (c)

Figure 119 (c)



turn may be used in caesurae

Tab. V Fig. LI (d)

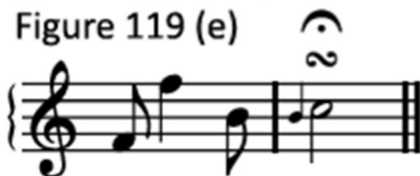
Figure 119 (d)



turn may be used at cadences

Tab. V Fig. LI (e)

Figure 119 (e)



turn may be used at fermatas

Tab. V Fig. LI (f)

Figure 119 (f)



turn used at the beginning

Tab. V Fig. LI (g)

Figure 119 (g)



turn used in the middle

Tab. V Fig. LI (h)

Figure 119 (h)

turn used at the end
after an appoggiatura

Tab. V Fig. LI (i)
Figure 119 (i)



turn used over a repeated note

Tab. V Fig. LI (k)
Figure 119 (k)



turn used over a note preceded
by a repetition (here note is reached
by leap)

Tab. V Fig. LI (i)
Figure 119 (i)



turn used over a repeated note

Tab. V Fig. LI (l)
Figure 119 (l)



turn used over an appoggiatura

7) There is a temptation to overuse the turn. Please do not.

8) In most cases the turn adds brilliance to a note. Do not add turns in sustained passages just because you can. You will ruin the affect.

9) The turn can be considered a normal suffixed trill in miniature, generally used the same way.

10) The turn is usually played quickly. Therefore, do not substitute it for a trill on a long note. The trill would fill out the note, the turn would not.

11) Exception to the above: in a slow tempo, such as in cadences and after an ascending appoggiatura.

[Tab. V.] Fig. LII.



Tab. V Fig. LII

Figure 120



p
written

played at slow tempo
with turn substituting
for trill

Tab. V Fig. LII (a)

Figure 120 (a)



written

played at slow tempo with turn
substituting for trill

12) The turn is better with an ascending following tone (same as suffixed trill). It is easy to move upwards through a series of turns (Figure 121).

[Tab. V.] Fig. LIII.



Tab. V Fig. LIII

Figure 121

Presto

written with trill substituting turn at moderate tempo substituting turn at fast tempo

(1787 edition adds) It may replace the trill where it is technically difficult due to 2 voices in one hand (Figure 121 a). Note this should only be done on a relatively short note that can be filled by the turn.

Tab. V Fig. LIII (a) (1787 edition)

Figure 121 (a)

substituting turns for trills on short notes with multiple voices in one hand

13) The turn can be used with leaping notes (same as suffixed trill).

[Tab. V.] Fig. LIV.
Tab. V Fig. LIV

Figure 122

Turn with ascending leap

Tab. V Fig. LIX (a)

Figure 122 (a)

Turn with descending leap

14) The turn works well over repeated notes.

- Note the following tone should rise a 2nd (1787 edition adds “at least in the case of rapid notes”)
- When the following tone descends, a compound appoggiatura would be a better ornament choice

[Tab. V.] Fig. LV.



Tab. V Fig. LV

Figure 123 (1)



Turn followed by ascending 2nd works well

Tab. V Fig. LV

Figure 123 (2)



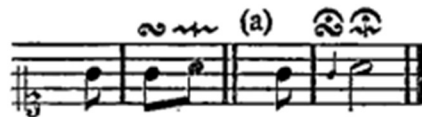
turn followed by
descending 2nd

would be better with
compound appoggiatura

15) Warning: Turns over an appoggiatura—do not decorate the following note

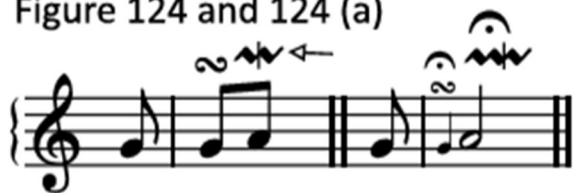
Exception: before a fermata, where notes can be lengthened slightly to clearly show the distinction of ornaments (a)

[Tab. V.] Fig. LVI.



Tab. V Fig. LVI and LVI (a)

Figure 124 and 124 (a)

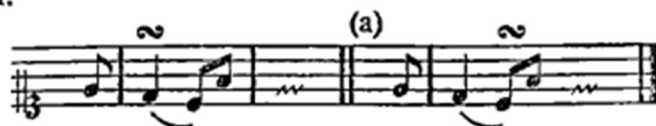


Incorrect	Exeption
Do not add	OK to add ornament
ornamnet on	if following note is a
following note	fermata

16) Warning: Do not place a turn over an appoggiatura that is not a repeated tone

BUT: (a) the resolution after the appoggiatura may have a turn

[Tab. V.] Fig. LVII.



Tab. V Fig. LVII and LVII (a)

Figure 125 and 125 (a)



Incorrect	Correct
Do not add turn	OK to add turn on
if appoggiatura	resolution of appoggiatura
is not a repeated	
note	

17) The symbol for turn is not well known apart from keyboard instruments. It is often indicated by a trill sign or even a mordent sign. Figure 126 shows many examples of the turn vs. the trill.

[Tab. V.] Fig. LVIII.

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains several measures with trills marked 'tr' and an asterisk (*). The second staff continues with more trills and includes a dynamic marking 'pp'. The third staff features four numbered trills (1) through (4). The fourth staff is marked 'Recit.' and includes a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#), with a dynamic marking 'p' and a fermata over a note.

- Examples where only a turn works: (marked *) a, g, p, q

Tab. V Fig. LIII (a)

Figure 126 (a)

A single measure of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a trill marked 'tr' over a quarter note.

Only a turn works here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (g)

Figure 126 (g)

A single measure of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It features a trill marked 'tr' over a quarter note, with a dynamic marking 'pp' below the staff.

Only a turn works here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (p)

Figure 126 (p)

Recitative

A single measure of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It is marked 'Recitative' and features a trill over a quarter note, with a dynamic marking 'p' below the staff.

Only a turn works here
Note also the Recitative style
gives the performer freedom

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (q)

Figure 126 (q)

Recitative

A single measure of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. It is marked 'Recitative' and features a trill over a quarter note, with a dynamic marking 'p' below the staff.

Only a turn works here
Note also the Recitative style
gives the performer freedom

- Examples where a turn or trill are equally suited in fast tempos: j, k, l, m (note the last note repeats the middle one)

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (j)

Figure 126 (j)



Turn or trill work equally well here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (k)

Figure 126 (k)



Turn or trill work equally well here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (l)

Figure 126 (l)



Turn or trill work equally well here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (m)

Figure 126 (m)

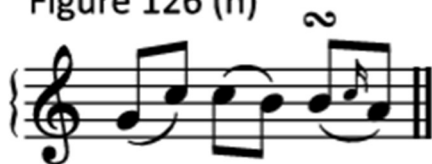


Turn or trill work equally well here

- Example n shows an appoggiatura is occasionally added to the turn in slow tempos

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (n)

Figure 126 (n)



Note that an appoggiatura is sometimes added to the turn in a slow tempo

- Other examples given:

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (b)

Figure 126 (b)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (c)

Figure 126 (c)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (d)
Figure 126 (d)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (e)
Figure 126 (e)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (f)
Figure 126 (f)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (h)
Figure 126 (h)



Turn could be used here

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (i)
Figure 126 (i)



Turn could be used here

18) The trill symbol is often used as an all-purpose symbol to use some sort of decoration. Example (o) shows a typical passage where a trill would be impossible to perform technically due to the speed, and a turn is the appropriate ornament.

Tab. V Fig. LVIII (o) (1787 edition)
Figure 126 (o)



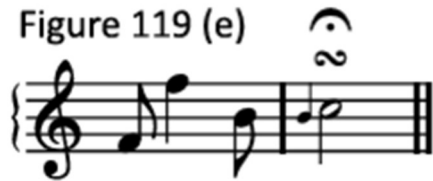
Turn should be played here due to rapid speed

19) Using turns after ASCENDING appoggiaturas

- YES: The turn may appear over a **fermata** preceded by an ascending appoggiatura

Tab. V Fig. LI (e)

Figure 119 (e)



turn may be used at fermatas

- NO: The turn is never used over a **final note** approached in this way (by an ascending appoggiatura)

[Tab. V.] Fig. LIX.



Tab. V Fig. LIX

Figure 127



Incorrect: do not use a turn on a final note approached by an ascending appoggiatura (OK if it is a fermata)

- YES: OK to use it either with a fermata or final note with DESCENDING appoggiaturas

Tab. V Fig. LIX (a)

Figure 127 (a)



Correct: turn on last note OK with descending appoggiatura

Tab. V Fig. LI (h)

Figure 119 (h)



turn used at the end after an appoggiatura

20) Turns vs. Trills: 2 key differences

- The last notes of a turn are played slower, so there is always a small space between them and the following tone (trill last tones played at same speed)
- The turn is sometimes played in a broad manner in slow, expressive movements (without brilliance)

[Tab. V.] Fig. LX.



Tab. V Fig. LX and LX (a)

Figure 128 and 128 (a)



Turn can be played broadly in a slow tempo,
also can be notated as in (a)

21) The turn alone between a note (or appoggiatura) and another note serves to fill out notes and can appear in three cases:

- Case #1: when the note is somewhat long
- Case #2: over a tie
- Case #3: after a dotted note

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXI.



22) Case #1: when the note is somewhat long

- note that stepwise downward motion should be avoided

Tab. V Fig. LXI (a.1)

Figure 129 (a.1)



Turn between fairly long notes

Tab. V Fig. LXI (a.2)

Figure 129 (a.2)



Turn between fairly long notes

- Figure 129 (a *) shows how all turns in example (a) should be played

*Tab. V Fig. 129 (a. *)*

Figure 129 (a. *)



Turn between fairly long notes, also shows turn used to avoid cadential trill (do not add mordent on final note when using turn this way) played

23) Case #2: over a tie

- Note that in a slow tempo a dot is added, in a faster tempo there is no dot
- This frequently occurs at cadences

Tab. V Fig. LXI (b)

Figure 129 (b)



Turn used over a tie

played

played

24) Case #3: after a dotted note

- Notes in the turn are invariable
- Often used at very slow tempos where the dotted note alone would be bare

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXI.

- The turn in Figure 129 (c) should be played the same way as Example 2 (Figure 129 (2)).

Tab. V Fig. LXI (c)
Figure 129 (c)

Turn after a dotted note

Tab. V Fig. LXI (2)
Figure 129 (2)

Turn after dotted note played before cadence

- Example 1: used at caesuras

Tab. V Fig. LXI (1)
Figure 129 (1)

Turn used in caesura

- Example 2: used before cadences when a dotted note is followed by a short one that anticipates a trill
- Warning: do not use this type of turn before descending dotted notes of only moderate length

Tab. V Fig. LXI (2)

Figure 129 (2)



Turn after dotted note played
before cadence

- Example 3: Only a turn works here, a substituted trill would be incorrect

Tab. V Fig. LXI (3)

Figure 129 (3)



Turn in one of its best uses
(substituted trill would not work)

- Example 4: The turn may be placed over the second note as well as the first
- The accompaniment shows that this example requires a slow tempo

Tab. V Fig. LXI (4)

Figure 129 (4)



Turn may be placed on 2nd note
played

- (1787 edition) C.P.E. suggests new notation symbols to indicate a case where he wants the last note of the turn to be detached

Tab. V Fig. LXI (d) (1787 edition)

Figure 129 (d)

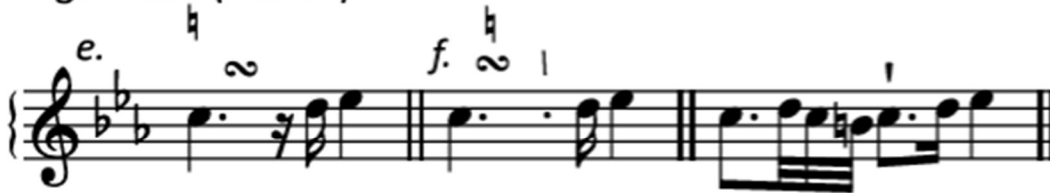


with usual turn symbol C.P.E. wants a way to indicate the last note of the turn be played detached

- C.P.E. suggests notating a rest (e) or using the notation in (f)

Tab. V Fig. LXI (e and f)

Figure 129 (e and f)



suggested new notations to make the desired detached note more clear

C.P.E. wants a way to noate this articulation of the turn

- C.P.E. suggests improving the notation in (g) after a long note
- Suggested improvement: (h) shows the use of ties to be more specific about placement

Tab. V Fig. LXI (g and h)

Figure 129 (g and h)



better

better

25) Accidentals in turns

- Accidentals are used according to context (same as trills)
- Do not use with the interval of an augmented 2nd (same as turns)

Tab. IV Fig. XXX (d)

Fig. 98 (d)



Suffix uses E \sharp

(no augmented 2nds allowed
in trills or suffixes)

26) Choose a fingering that will work technically for the fast execution of the turn

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXII.



Tab. V Fig. LXII

Figure 130



Avoid using the 5th finger for turns

27) THE TRILLED TURN

- This can be thought of as a short trill + a suffix
- It is a miniature version of a trill with suffix, although it is very different and should not be used as a substitute
- C.P.E. tries to introduce a new notation symbol to indicate this type of ornament. It was not widely adopted.
- The large slur in the example only refers to the overall phrasing

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXIII.



Tab. V Fig. LXIII

Figure 131



Trilled turn played
(short trill + suffix)

28) When to use the trilled turn:

- Occurs with or without a preceding appoggiatura
- Used only in a descending 2nd (same as a short trill)
- The first note is tied, becoming part of the ornament as shown in Figure 131 and 132

Tab. V Fig. LXIII

Figure 131



Trilled turn played
(short trill + suffix)

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXIV.

*Tab. V Fig. LXIV*

Figure 132



Trilled turn

- Since the trilled turn has more notes, it fills out longer notes better than either the turn or short trill alone
- Because of this, it is better to use it instead of the short trill in passages such as the first three of Figure 133

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXV.



Tab. V Fig. LXV (1/3)
Figure 133 (1/3)



Turned trill best
to fill out long note

Tab. V Fig. LXV (2/3)
Figure 133 (2/3)



Turned trill best
to fill out long note

Tab. V Fig. LXV (3/3)
Figure 133 (3/3)



Trilled turn best
to fill out long note

- However, the short trill alone is better in the asterisked example when the tempo is allegretto or faster

Tab. V Fig. LXV (*)
Figure 133 (*)



Short trill is best at tempo of
allegretto or faster

- In general, in passages where an unsuffixed trill could be used, neither the turn alone or the trilled turn would work (*i.e. they would not fill out the note*)

(1787 Edition)

- In moderately fast movements the trilled turn can be played as in example (a) (*i.e. there is no tie due to the fast speed*)
- This is fine if it does not create bad voice leading
- If the ornament is intended to be played this way, it is best to use the symbol in (a) (*not C.P.E.'s symbol of the turn on top of the trill*)

Tab. V Fig. LXV (a.1) (1787 edition)
Figure 133 (a.1)



played at fast tempo

Tab. V Fig. LXV (a.2) (1787 edition)
Figure 133 (a.2)



played at fast tempo

Tab. V Fig. LXV (1 and 3) (1787 edition)
Figure 133 (1 and 3)



Correct, no voice leading issues
Used at half cadence

Tab. V Fig. LXV (2) (1787 e.
Figure 133 (2)



Not correct, bass causes
parallel 5ths, a bad thing

Tab. V Fig. LXV (4) (1787 edition)
Figure 133 (4)

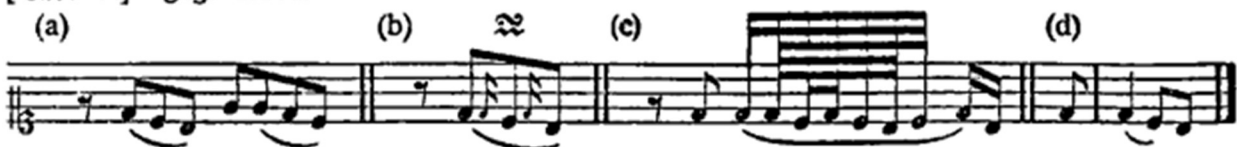


Correct, no voice leading issues,
used at whole cadence

29) The turned trill in the case of three descending notes in a slow tempo

- The second note (which has a trilled turn) and the final note both take appoggiaturas
- The examples show this without ornaments (a), with the ornament symbols (b) and with the execution written out (c)
- Purpose of the first appoggiatura:
 - Helps to fill out notes in a slow tempo (typical use)
 - Helps to make the trilled turn work well, not coming in too soon
- Purpose of the second appoggiatura:
 - Shortens the final tone
 - Satisfies the tendency of the turn to rise
- Reasons NOT to play the 2nd appoggiatura ahead of the beat, making it part of the turn rather than the principal note (C.P.E. feels strongly about this)
 - It is a prefix belonging to the final tone, not a suffix belonging to the trill
 - C.P.E. has already discussed that the turn must always have a slight pause at the end to make it distinct from whatever follows
 - The appoggiatura divides the final tone in a way that makes it similar to other parts of the passage

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXVI.



Tab. V Fig. LXVI (a, b, c)
Figure 134 (a, b, c)

a. written plainly b. written with ornaments c. played

- Example (d) is another example, also noting the last two notes should be played as shown

Tab. V Fig. LXVI (d)
Figure 134 (d)

written plainly with ornaments played

30) Fingering

- To play the turn quickly and clearly, sometimes creative fingerings need to be used
- The turn should be practiced with all fingerings in case there is no alternative to using weaker fingers

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXVII.

(a) (b)

(c)

Tab. V Fig. LXVII

Figure 135



Examples of fingering

Tab. V Fig. LXVII (a)

Figure 135 (a)



Fingering: do not try to connect by crossing finger 3 over the 2, move hand slightly to the left instead

Tab. V Fig. LXVII (b)

Figure 135 (b)



Fingering: 3rd finger will slide from black note to white note

Tab. V Fig. LXVII (c)

Figure 135 (c)



Examples of fingerings in the easiest situation

31) Although ornaments are not as easily added to the bass line, the trilled turn may be used as shown in Figure 136

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXVIII.



Tab. V Fig. LXVIII (1/2)

Figure 136 (1/2)



Trilled turn used in bass

Tab. V Fig. LXVIII (2/2)

Figure 136 (2/2)



Trilled turn used in bass

32) C.P.E. notes that the instrument itself must be in good condition in order for the performer to execute the rapid ornaments (especially the trilled turn and short trill).

33) THE FULL TURN (*C.P.E. does not use this term, but what he describes is often referred to as a "full turn"*)

- This is a turn that starts on the main note, all notes played rapidly
- C.P.E. refers to this as the "snapped turn" to distinguish it from his term of "trilled turn"
- C.P.E. introduces new notation in which he writes a small 32nd note of the same pitch before the principal note with the turn symbol
- This should be used over rapid notes
- C.P.E. notes that he prefers trills to be reserved for longer notes where there is time for several repercussions, and otherwise this "snapped turn" is a better choice to provide brilliance

34) Uses of the full turn (snapped turn):

- Do not use this turn with a descending slurred second (compared to the trilled turn, which can *only* be used with the descending second)
- Figure 137 shows the symbol (a), the execution (b) and a few characteristic uses (c)

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXIX.



Tab. V Fig. LXIX (a and b)

Figure 137 (a and b)



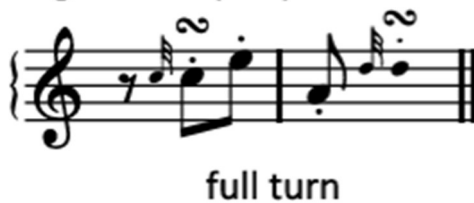
Tab. V Fig. LXIX (c. 1)

Figure 137 (c.1)



Tab. V Fig. LXIX (c. 2)

Figure 137 (c. 2)



Tab. V Fig. LXIX (c. 3)

Figure 137 (c. 3)



- It may appear:
 - At the beginning of a passage
 - In the middle
 - Before stepwise motion or a leap
 - NOT over a final tone (no exceptions, staccato or not)
- C.P.E. notes that this turn is often notated by a trill sign or regular turn symbol

(1787 edition adds the following)

- It may be used in the second of a pair of slurred notes in stepwise ascent, as in example (d)
- In this situation it replaces the ascending trill or ascending turn

*Tab. V Fig. LXIX (d) (1787 edition,
Figure 137 (d)*



**Full turn replaces ascending trill
or ascending turn**

- Example (e) shows the full (snapped) turn over the first of a pair of slurred notes in stepwise descent
- The preceding detached notes make this use acceptable

*Tab. V Fig. LXIX (e) (1787 edition)
Figure 137 (e)*



**Full turn used at fast tempo
preceded by repeated detached notes**

- If the preceding notes are slurred, as they likely may be at a slow tempo, a simple turn or the compound appoggiatura is better, shown in the asterisked example

*Tab. V Fig. LIX (e *) (1787 edition)*

Figure 137 (e *)

Moderato



better to use regular turn or
double appoggiatura at a slower tempo

35) Fingering consideration: this ornament is very difficult to use with notes that require a thumb, fourth or fifth finger. Use the stronger finger combinations.

36) Full (snapped) turn vs. simple turn after a note

- Note these are very different, as shown in Figure 138
- Simple turn is played well after and is found with slurred and sustained notes

[*Tab. V.] Fig. LXX.*



Tab. V Fig. LXX (full turn)

Figure 138



full turn
notation played

Tab. V Fig. LXX (regular turn)

Figure 138



regular turn played
notation

37) TURN PRECEDED BY TWO small 32nds

- These small notes become part of the turn, played rapidly
- The 32nd beamed notes are unvariable (*play them the same speed as the turn notes*)
- This turn variant amounts to a miniature ascending trill
- It can be substituted for the ascending trill over short notes
- C.P.E. suggest calling it the “ascending turn”

[Tab. V.] Fig. LXXI.



Tab. V Fig. LXXI

Figure 139



Turn played
preceded by two
appoggiaturas

(1787 edition adds following):

- When it is substituted for an ascending trill over the second of two slurred notes, it sounds better to tie the preceding note to the first note of the turn as in example (a)

Tab. V Fig. LXXI (a) (1787 edition)

Figure 139 (a)



played with ornament
(note the tie)

SOURCES

Bach, C.P.E. *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*. Translated and edited by William J. Mitchell, W.W. Norton & Company, 1949, pp. 112-127.

Bach, Karl Philipp Emanuel. *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen*. Edited by Walter Niemann, C.P. Khant, Leipzig, 1925, pp. 53-65.