From the Lutheran Selection: the Surviving Repertory of Vocal-Instrumental Religious Music of the Musicians of the Polish Vasas

Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarnińska

Institute of Arts, Polish Academy of Sciences

In 1984 Anna and Zygmunt M. Szweykowski published in the quarterly *Muzyka* an article about the patronage of the Sobieski family, inspired by a musical manuscript held at the Biblioteka Akademii Sztuk Pięknych in Kraków (ref. *H D 1528/1–3*), written in 1733 in Żółkiew. This incomplete collection of part-books, written by an anonymous copyist and containing vocal-instrumental religious compositions from the first half of the eighteenth century (partially identified by the authors of the article), drew my attention because of the parchment covers used to bind particular parts. Both sides have embossed on them the coat of arms of the Polish Vasas, framed by a double chain of the Golden Fleece. The Szweykowski paper established beyond doubt that the covers came from the collection of the royal court of the Vasas. Perhaps some decades earlier they were used to bind compositions performed by the famous Vasa cappella. Perhaps these were works composed by famous Vasa musicians. Perhaps...

According to our current state of knowledge, there are no surviving musical memorabilia of the cappellas, apart from possibly these covers. We do not have the actual copies of prints which had belonged to the royal library, nor any musical manuscripts which we know to have been used by the court players. All the music from the collection of the royal ensemble have been lost — printed and handwritten, secular and religious, vocal, vocal-instrumental and instrumental, those composed abroad, or in the Commonwealth of Poland.
and Lithuania, or at the court itself by the members of the cappella. We do not know of any copies of musical prints dedicated to Sigismund III or to Władysław IV\(^2\), which we could claim to have been their property. We have no surviving autograph records of works composed by the royal cappella players, nor their copies which would have been used by the Vasa musicians.

As we know, religious compositions constituted the great majority of works known to us today which were written by composers working at the Polish royal court, and thus probably forming a part of the repertory of the cappella of the Vasas. These are partly accessible through printed versions (authorial collections of Vincenzo Bertolusi, Asprilio Pacelli, Giulio Osculati, Tarquinio Merula and Marco Scacchi, and the incomplete anthology of Vincenzo Lilius\(^3\). However, vocal-instrumental religious music composed towards the end of the reign of Sigismund III and during the reigns of his sons, Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz, has survived almost exclusively in handwritten copies produced for the needs of particular cappellas — in Gdańsk or abroad, where they were more numerous: in the vassal Ducal Prussia, in Silesia, Moravia, in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and in Sweden. It is significant that, apart from the cappella of Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorno in Kromieryż (Moravia), for whom were produced copies of two compositions by Marcin Mielczewski, all the other manuscripts were destined for the use of Protestant, or, more exactly, Lutheran, communities.

One could thus claim that we owe almost all of the repertory of religious vocal-instrumental music composed at the Catholic, or even ultra-Catholic (particularly during the reign of Sigismund III) court of the Polish Vasas — defenders of Roman Catholic faith, destined in Papal plans to play a great part in bringing Sweden back to Catholicism and spreading Roman Catholicism to Russia, regarded as the bulwark of Christianity against the Turks — to the Lutherans.

The words “we owe” is appropriate, because, in the absence of any other sources, we owe our gratitude to those who preserved part of the legacy of the musicians of Polish kings. However, we also need to realize that the repertory which is available to us now had been selected by the Lutherans to satisfy their needs, as well as being changed in order to adapt it to their doctrine and
liturgy. Because of this, when we evaluate vocal-instrumental religious music at the courts of the Vasas, we need to remember that this environment must also once have produced such compositions which, in view of their immanent connection with the doctrine and liturgy of the Roman Catholic church, were never copied by Lutheran copyists, or were copied in a significantly changed form. (We know for certain that it was usual to copy only the first two parts of the five-part Mass cycle, but changes were also introduced within particular parts of the cycle⁴; we also know that, in a number of compositions with texts devoted to the Virgin Mary and the saints of the Roman Catholic church, contrafactum texts with different content were introduced, sometimes even in a different language — here, above all, German words were used to replace Latin⁵).

Owing to the Protestant copies we now have, in total, handwritten manuscripts from that period of over 100 religious vocal-instrumental works, composed by the musicians of the Polish Vasas (this includes over 80 church concertos, 7 Biblical dialogues, a few arie spirituali, and 8 Masses, with fragments of a few further ones). This extant repertory might have been partially created at the time when the composers had already left the Vasas’ cappella; this applies particularly to the compositions of Franciszek Lilius. There are good grounds to suppose that these works, preserved in the manuscripts of copyists from Silesia and Ducal Prussia, were written at the time when Lilius was already maestro di cappella at Wawel (he was appointed in 1630). This also applies to the works of Kaspar Förster Jr., known from the copies made in Sweden, Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony and composed, as it seems, mainly during his employment as maestro di cappella at the court of the king of Denmark Frederick III (i.e. during the 1650s and 1660s). Among the preserved compositions I have also included 36 works signed with the monogram M.M., preserved in copies of Silesian provenance, whose authorship I ascribe to Marcin Mielczewski.

Apart from manuscripts written in Gdańsk, which transmit 9 works from this repertory known to us today (among them 6 Masses)⁶, all the other extant compositions were copied by foreign copyists for the needs of cappellas working in foreign communities. These were both court and church cappel-
las. Among the court ones there was the Swedish royal ensemble, for which representatives of consecutive generations of the Düben family created their collection (this collection contains over 30 religious works of Kaspar Förster, and a few compositions each by Marco Scacchi and Bartłomiej Pękiel); there was also the Duke’s ensemble from the Gottorf castle in Schleswig, for which the repertory was collected by Georg Österreich (items in this collection which have survived to this day include copies of two church concertos by Marcin Mielczewski, Bartłomiej Pękiel’s dialogue *Audite mortales*, one Mass by Marco Scacchi, and a few compositions by Kaspar Förster). Silesian copies from the Emil Bohn collection (the repertory of vocal-instrumental religious music preserved there includes, apart from the 36 compositions by M.M., church concertos by Franciszek Lilius and concertos and fragments of one Mass by Marco Scacchi) were made for the needs of church cappellas — the churches of St Elżbieta and first of all St Maria Magdalena in Wrocław.

An analysis of the contents of particular collections of Lutheran musical memorabilia which hold surviving compositions of the Vasas’ musicians shows significant differences regarding the presence or absence of works conflicting with the Lutheran doctrine. In the case of the Düben and Bokemeyer collections, the copies were probably based on originals from Lutheran communities; thus only those compositions had been copied which could function in Protestant churches and there was no need to adapt them any further. The earlier “filtration” and possible adaptation of the compositions to the Lutheran doctrine might have been done in Gdańsk and in Copenhagen. The former town had constant and close contacts with the Polish royal court. The services of the cantor from the church of St Katarzyna there, Crato Büttner, were probably particularly valuable. In the latter Kaspar Förster was employed as royal maestro di cappella. He may not only have made his own compositions available for copying, but he may also have promoted the works of other composers from the repertory of the cappella of Władysława IV and Jana Kazimierz, familiar to him from the days when he was one of its members. Matters were different in Silesia, where the copied compositions were probably obtained directly from the Catholic community (which would have been aided by contacts with the entourage of the Bishop of Wrocław,
a position occupied at that time by Karol Ferdynand Vasa, the son of Sigis-
mund III and stepbrother of Władysław IV, patron of Marcin Mielczewski). A part of the repertory obtained in this way did not conform to the needs of Lutheran cappellas and thus had to be adapted, mainly by the introduction of contrafacta in place of doctrinally unsuitable texts (Marian texts and texts about saints). The process of adaptation is visible in extant sources which contain original versions into which changes were introduced, or where the original Latin titles were preserved in the case of some compositions which today are only known in versions with German texts. The repertory transmitted through Lutheran collections does not allow us to imagine the sound of the musical ornamentation provided for the most important church-state celebrations which took place during the times of the Vasas at Wawel cathedral or the collegiate church of St John the Baptist in Warsaw. I have in mind royal coronations, weddings and funerals. The exception is Missa omnium tonorum by Marco Scacchi, preserved in the Bokemeyer collection. This is a composition for two choirs and a third in ripieno and 2 violins, 2 viols, bassoon and basso continuo, which was copied whole, probably because of Schacchi’s fame, strengthened by his debate with Paul Siefert, and also because of its interesting compositional solution. This Mass was probably performed on 17 January 1649 at Wawel cathedral during the coronation of Jan Kazimierz. It may be hard to believe, but the Mass did not draw any comment from a participant in this ceremony, a well-known connoisseur of music, Albricht Stanislaw Radziwill; in his memoirs, Pamiętnik o dziejach w Polsce [Diary of the History of Poland], he dismissed the coronation of the last Vasa on the Polish throne with the following words:

“What can one say about these ceremonies, which do not change in anything but names; coronations of a Sigismund, or a Władyslaw, or a Kazimierz, follow each other like an echo. It took place on that day [17 January], and then there was a feast, without the presence of a single foreign delegate, with less splendour than at other ceremonies, growing less as the world grows older and the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania grows old.”

And what could one say about the works which were of no interest to the Lutheran music directors, cantors and organists, and which were being
composed in accordance with the Roman Catholic liturgy and in a new style by the royal musicians and performed by the royal cappella? We can say with certainty that they did exist at one time. Evidence for this is provided by the inventories of musical collections of monastic cappellas, recorded in the second half of the seventeenth century. I am thinking of the inventory of the Franciscans from Przemyśl\textsuperscript{16}, the Carmelites from the Kraków monastery at Piasek\textsuperscript{17} and the Piarist brothers from Podoliniec and Prievidza in Slovakia\textsuperscript{18}. All these inventories introduce a classification of compositions according to the type (content) and liturgical purpose of the words. Each of them has a rich section of Masses (the surviving adaptations of Masses known from the Lutheran copies — and they are comparatively few when one takes into account the volume of Masses enumerated in monastic inventories — give us, with some exceptions, only the first two parts, Kyrie and Gloria); also extensive sections of litanies (of which none composed at the court of the Vasas survive, since they were of no use to the Lutheran ensembles); then, usually a small section containing “missae pro defunctis” and other funeral works (mainly Marian antiphones, among them *Salve Regina* and *Dies irae* sequence), and further, in some inventories (Piarist and Carmelite), sections of motets, concertos and hymns “de Beata” and motets and concertos “de Communi Sanctorum”. Sometimes there are sections of “vesperae”, but more usually very extensive juxtapositions of arrangements of psalms and canticles, among which there might also have been works identical to those we know today from the Swedish, German or Silesian copies (I say “there might have been” and not “there were” because the information given in the inventories is obviously insufficient to identify the compositions).

The great majority of compositions in the inventories is given anonymously, but some titles have against them surnames or abbreviations of surnames, first names or monograms, which have allowed scholars looking at these sources to identify the composers of a part of the listed repertory. Among the composers of religious vocal-instrumental music (I specify this in view of the subject of this paper, since the inventories also list vocal works without instruments or purely instrumental ones) there are, among others, the royal musicians: maestri di cappella Marco Scacchi, Bartłomiej Pękiel and Jacek Różycki, also
maestro di cappella of Bishop Karol Ferdynand Vasa, Marcin Mienczewski, and artists who were singers at the court of the Vasas but maestri di cappella in foreign ensembles: Kaspar Förster and Vincenzo Scapitta da Valenza, organist Tarquinio Merula, violinist Aldebrando Subissati, whose works, as we find from the Podoliniec inventory, were not limited to instrumental compositions but included vocal-instrumental ones; and, lastly, Franciszek Lilius, who until 1630 was a musician of Sigismund III, but whose work is represented in the inventories by compositions which were probably written later, at the time when he was maestro di cappella at Wawel cathedral, and Jan Krener, connected to the court of Jan Kazimierz during the final stage of his reign.

The inventories tell us a number of things: they tell us that the contribution of the musicians of the Polish Vasas in the area of Mass arrangements “in concerto” was much greater than is known today; that among the works of Bartłomiej Pękiel and Jacek Różycki litanies represented a numerically substantial section, and that litanies were also being composed by Marco Scacchi and Aldebrando Subissati, and that, apart from the compositions known from the Bohn collection and adapted for the Lutheran doctrine through change of texts, Marcin Mienczewski and Franciszek Lilius wrote other concertos “de Beata” and “de Communi Sanctorum”. The lists which have been analysed do not, however, allow us to decide whether the Requiem arrangements written by the Vasa musicians (more exactly by Marcin Mienczewski, referred to as M.M.) which they mention belonged to prima or seconda pratica. Since the Lutherans did not copy any of the realisations of missa pro defunctis, as their funeral services did not use Requiem, we do not know which and whose compositions were performed during the ceremonies accompanying the funerals of members of the royal family.

We can be certain that a Requiem performed by the royal cappella accompanied the funeral ceremony of Sigismund III and his wife Konstancja on 4 February 1633. The ceremony ended with the king’s body being placed in the famous silver sarcophagus ornamented with instruments in bas-relief. Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł wrote in his memoirs that at that point “the archbishop began a sung Mass accompanied by sweetly-sounding music which inclined one to tears”. We have no other details concerning this event. We
know even less about the music performed during the funeral ceremony after the death of Władysław IV, on 15 January 1649 at Wawel. We do, however, have witness accounts of the performance of a polychoral, vocal-instrumental *Requiem* at Kraków on 22 September 1667, during the solemn funeral of Ludovica Maria Gonzaga, wife first to Władysław IV and then to Jan Kazimierz.

The queen’s funeral was attended by delegates from various states, who expected to persuade Jan Kazimierz to take up one of the marriage proposals presented to him. We know from numerous descriptions of the ceremony that the queen’s body was brought from Warsaw on 16 September and placed on a bier at St Florian’s church. After a few days’ delay, pending the arrival of the ambassador of Emperor Leopold, on 22 September, the funeral cortege set out from the church, with a scarlet hearse drawn by eight white horses preceded by a hundred carriages full of senators and followed by another hundred. The queen’s remains were also accompanied by a hundred noblemen on beautiful steeds, two hundred grooms in black, twelve trumpeters and two guard regiments. An attack of gout prevented Jan Kazimierz from accompanying his wife on her final journey, but he watched the procession from the window of the house of Canon Jan Romiszowski in Kanoniczna Street, and when the mourners reached Wawel he was carried to the cathedral in a litter.

The body of Ludovica Maria was carried into the church and placed on the catafalque, to the accompaniment of funeral music. After the distinguished participants in the ceremony took their places in the cathedral:

> “Monsignor Primate [archbishop Mikołaj Prażmowski] put on his vestments to conduct the Requiem Mass, which was sung by two choirs, with an excellent concerto of voices and instruments, by the best musicians selected out of the whole of Europe — many of whom, having at one time served at this court, returned especially to pay their last respects to the Great Queen”.

Unfortunately we do not know who the musicians were or where they came from to Kraków to make their last farewells to their queen. The most likely supposition is that the majority of them were imperial musicians. Some of the musicians who might have come from Vienna at that time included the castrato Baldassare Ferri (employed by Emperor Leopold from 1655–1675), adored at the courts of all of Poland’s three kings from the Vasa dynasty; he
might have been accompanied by the virtuoso violinist Aldebrando Subissati, since we know that he also served Leopold in Vienna, after leaving the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania in 1654 and a Roman period spent at the court of Queen Christina\textsuperscript{24}. It is possible that the delegates of the Grand Prince of Tuscany were accompanied by those Italian musicians who went back to Italy. It is also possible that the queen’s funeral was attended by musicians working in France, German duchies or Denmark; Kaspar Förster, at one time the alto in the cappella of Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz, might have been one of them. He then became the maestro di cappella of the king of Denmark, but in 1667\textsuperscript{25} he left the court of Frederick III and, after spending some time in Hamburg before returning to his native Gdańsk, he travelled south (he is supposed to have visited Dresden, and he might also have come to Kraków)\textsuperscript{26}. However, all these are suppositions.

Our current knowledge of the sources does not allow us to answer the question: who conducted the royal cappella of Jan Kazimierz, strengthened by the visiting European “stars”, and probably by local musicians from the vocal-instrumental cathedral ensemble, during the funeral Mass? Two names have to be considered, as this task is likely to have been entrusted either to Jacek Różyczki, or — which seems more probable in view of the composition of the ensemble — to Bartłomiej Pękiel, formerly maestro di cappella to Jan Kazimierz and at the time in question in charge of the cappella of Kraków cathedral. He never lost contact with the king and, according to documents relating to the Wawel ensemble, a few years earlier (in 1664) left Kraków for an indefinite period in order to go to the court of Jan Kazimierz\textsuperscript{27}.

And, lastly, one would like to know just what polychoral, two-choir, vocal-instrumental Requiem was heard on 22 September 1667 in the royal necropolis? This question is also unanswerable at the current stage of research. There is no work of this kind among the surviving compositions from the repertory of the seventeenth-century Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania; while among the lost compositions of the Vasa musicians, whose existence is indicated by the inventories, there is only one funeral Mass which may correspond to the Italian account, namely the Requiem by Marcin Mielczewski for 8 voices — copies of which existed in the 1680s in the collections of the Kraków
Carmelites from the monastery at Piasek and the Franciscans at Przemyśl. However, it is hardly likely that the output of musicians working in this area and in this style in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania at that time would be limited to one composition. A polychoral vocal-instrumental funeral Mass might easily have been composed by Bartłomiej Pękiel or Jacek Różycki; it was also possible that the work performed had been composed by a musician unconnected with the court of the Polish Vasas.

In these circumstances we can only regret that, because of their redundancy in the Lutheran liturgy, adaptations of the texts which made up Missa Requiem did not enter the repertory common to Christian churches. Our current state of knowledge of the sources allows us to state that, almost without exception, the only religious works in seconda pratica composed by musicians of the Polish Vasas to survive to the present day through Lutheran transmissions were those which corresponded to the doctrine and had their place in the liturgy of both Catholic and Lutheran churches. The surviving inventories of monastic music collection of Slovakian provenance, a few compositions preserved in the Catholic Moravian collection, and the close cultural ties between the court of the Vasas and the imperial one (which included exchange of musicians and repertories) allow one to hope that some day we will also discover at least some of the compositions by the musicians of Polish kings from the Vasa dynasty. They may not have been of interest to Protestants, but at one time they were part of the repertory performed in Roman Catholic churches throughout Central Europe.

Notes
1 Anna i Zygmunt M. Szweykowscy, ‘W kręgu mecenatu rodu Sobieskich’ ['In the Circle of Sobieski’s Dynasty Patronage'], Muzyka 1984 No. 3, pp. 3–23.
2 For instance, editions of the works of Vincenzo Bertolusi, Pietro Lappi, Asprilio Pacelli, Giovanni Valentini, Giulio Osculati, Tarquinio Merula, Marco Scacchi, the treatises of Francesco Rognoni Taeggio and Marco Scacchi, as well as the scores and opera librettos by Italian authors dedicated to the princes Władysław and Aleksander Karol.
3 See Anna i Zygmunt M. Szweykowscy, Włosi w kapeli królewskiej polskich Wazów [Italians at the Royal Orchestra of the Polish Vasas], Kraków: Musica Iagellonica 1997, pp. 231–253.
4 See for instance Elżbieta Wojnowska, ‘Zwischen Druck und Handschrift: Ein


8 Eventually he passed a part of the collection to Heinrich Bokemeyer; the collection held in Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin is named after him (see Harald Kümmerling, Katalog der Sammlung Bokemeyer, Kassel–Basel–Paris–London 1970).

9 From the old Stadtbibliothek in Wroclaw, now in Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. See Emil Bohn, Die musikalischen Handschriften des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in der Stadtbibliothek zu Breslau, Breslau 1890; Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, ‘Ocalone źródla do historii muzyki w Polsce XVII stulecia ze zbiorów dawnej Stadtbibliothek we Wroclawiu’ [‘Remaining Sources of Music

10 More information about the works of the composers linked to the court of the Polish Vasas held in these three collections can be found in: Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, *Twórczość kapelistów królów Polski z dynastii Wazów w zbiorach Bohna, Bokemeyera i Dübenów [Oeuvre of Musicians of Polish Kings from the Vasa Dynasty in the Collections of Bohn, Bokemeyer and Düben]*, unpublished paper given at the Polish-Russian musicological conference at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1996.


12 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz, *Mus. ms. 30307*.

13 See Aleksandra Patalas, ‘Marco Scacchi’s Characterisation of the Modes in his *Missa Omnium Tonorum>*’, *Musica Iagellonica* II (1997), pp. 103–129. The author’s suggestion (p. 105) that the manuscript of the Mass is of Polish provenance and may have found its way into the Bokemeyer collection because the royal musical collection was transported to Dresden after August II became king of Poland, does not seem correct to me. The watermarks on the paper, although hardly legible, resemble those found on manuscripts from northern Germany held at the Bokemeyer collection. It is also difficult to suppose that a Polish copyist would make a mistake with the year in which Jan Kazimierz was elected as king of Poland, being incorrect by 15 years, and that is the case in the title inscription of the work: “Pro electione Regis Polon. Casimir 1664”. I think it possible, although I have no evidence for it, that *Missa omnium tonorum* was among Kasper Förster’s papers when he was travelling to Denmark, and through contacts between the court at Gottorf and that of the king of Denmark, Frederick III, it might have reached Georg Österreich and then Heinrich Bokemeyer.

14 The title page gives the election of Jan Kazimierz as king of Poland as the occasion for which the work was composed (see footnote 13).


17 Tadeusz Maciejewski, ‘Inwentarz muzykalniów kapeli karmelickiej w Krakowie na


19 The inventories also mention works by many other musicians who are known to have worked in Poland, or about whom nothing is known from other sources but who have Polish-sounding surnames. I ignore all those here, since at present we know nothing about their relation to the Polish Vasas.

20 As we know, Marcin Mielczewski was the author of *Missae Requiem* (*Missae di Morto*) in prima pratica (for alto, 2 tenors and bass), performed in the seventeenth century at the collegiate church in Łowicz, see Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, Marcin Mielczewski — katalog... [Marcin Mielczewski — Catalogue...], No. 89 (pp. 50–51).


23 Manuscript with the ref. Barb. Lat. 5259 in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana in Rome: *Relazione de funerali celebrati in Cracovia alla Maestŕ di Ludovica Maria, Regina di Polonia e Svezia* [no author or date]: “…Monsignor Primati si pari per celebrare la messa di Requiem, che era cantata a due chori con esquisito concerto di voci e di instrum[enti] dai musici piů scelti dell’Europa, molti de quali che altre volte havevano servito in questa corte erano ritornati a posta a rendere l’ultimi ossequii a questa Gran Regina….”.


28 Maciejewski, op. cit., No. 340 (p. 88): “Missæ Martini Mielczewski a 8”.

29 Perz, *Inwentarz...* [Inventory...], No. 247 (p. 62): “Missæ pro Defunctis a 8 M M”.