
Musicus mortalis – Musical Iconography and the Baroque Conceit

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The Print Room, University of Warsaw Library

For those living in the Baroque period, ruminating on death was not only unavoidable but also a natural part of life. The turbulent course of the 17th century, with its high mortality rates, religious wars, massacres, famines and plagues, weighed down the European population.¹ Felt on a daily basis, such experiences naturally led people to reflect on how ephemeral life was. As a consequence, the process of preparing oneself for death became a central element in every person's life, and the funeral became one of the most important events.²

Regardless of religious denomination, music played an important role in funeral ceremonies. In Catholic liturgy, the order of the funeral rites offers a good background for understanding the evolution of the requiem mass. Conversely, the Protestant churches, especially the Lutherans, made it possible for the Lied, the motet, and the cantata to evolve.³ The music composed for specific funerals was very often accompanied by one-off prints that described the funeral ceremony and the sermon. This practice of printing 'commemorative books' (*Leichenpredigtdrucke*) was typical of German Lutheranism,⁴ with some researchers going so far as to draw an analogy between the commissioning of funereal music in Germany and the commissioning of coffin portraits in Poland.⁵ In this paper, I treat the characteristic Sarmatian or early modern Polish penchant for images as a backdrop for my argument.⁶

Polish Baroque prints used for special occasions consist of a variety of images that comprise interesting iconographical material. One of them, known as *Diariusz trzydniowej pogrzebowej pompy I. W. Imci Pana Józefa Siemieńskiego, kasztelana lwowskiego* (*A Diary of the Three-day Pompa Funeris of the Right Honourable Józef Siemieński, Castellan of Lviv*) (1761) – includes a peculiar and unique representation of Death. Siemieński was a member of a well-known and influential family but virtually no information about the man survives other than the fact that he was Castellan of Lviv, which we know from the print.⁷ When he died, his widow organized an ostentatious, three day-long funeral. The *Diary* contains a complete description of the iconographical decorations prepared in the small Franciscan church in Wisznia near Lviv in today's Ukraine.⁸ The print also includes an etching that depicts the Genius of Death, which was used as a decoration for the choir. In the image, the Genius of Death is presented as a musician playing the trumpet – except that the musician is a skeleton, itself made up of a variety of musical instruments (see Figure 9.1). The image is quite extraordinary, and cannot be pinpointed to any existing iconographical type. This is why I have found it appropriate for the purposes of this study to call this unique image the *Musicus Mortalis*, and I believe that the image is an example of a special Baroque conceit which combines a variety of iconographical motives concerning music. To clarify my understanding of the image, a discussion of the background of musical iconography of Death is necessary.

The Dance of Death

The iconography of Death in the Baroque period was closely connected with the interest in reviving the medieval cultural phenomenon known as Dances of Death. The origins of the genre can be traced to two texts, a 13th-century French legend that narrated a meeting of three dead people and three living ones, and a poem entitled *Vado mori*.⁹ In the Middle Ages, the motif became widespread throughout Europe, especially in France and Germany. In fact, it became so popular that phrases like ‘to take part in the *Dance of*



Figure 9.1 Anonymus, *Musicus mortalis*, 1761, an etching from *Diariusz trzydniowej pogrzebowej pompy I. W. Imci Pana Józefa Siemieńskiego, kasztelana lwowskiego* (Wrocław, 1761), p. 6; Cracow: Jagiellonian Library, Early Printed Books Department, entry BJ 915 240 III; published by kind permission of the Jagiellonian Library

Death’ or ‘in the *dance macabre*’ entered common usage as synonyms for dying.¹⁰ Interestingly, in Dance of Death images it is actually quite rare to see the skeletons or the putrefying bodies playing musical instruments. Instead, the representations mainly depict the dead dancing, often inviting all kinds of living people to join in their dance. If they are actually playing an instrument, these are mainly shawms, busines, trumpets, drums or tabors.¹¹ However there are exceptions, such as a woodcut from Guyot Marchand’s *Danse macabre* (1486) representing four skeletons whose role as musicians is evident¹², and the combination and the choice of the musical instruments is worth mentioning – the band includes a bagpipe, a portative organ, a harp, and a pipe and tabor. Another example turns up in *Tod und Stände* (1648) made by Albert Kauw, which is a copy of Niklaus Manuel’s *Totentanz* (1516–1520)¹³ where, as in Marchard’s piece, almost every dead man has his own instrument. Still, those two works should be treated as exceptions rather than as examples of a general rule.

The most important source for the Baroque iconography of the *Totentanz* was *Les Simulachres et histories faces de la mort*, which is a collection of woodcuts made in 1538 by Hans Lutzburger after Hans Holbein’s drawings.¹⁴ This set of individual scenes primarily emphasizes the idea of social equality. What we are dealing with in *Les simulachres* is not so much a dance as an anecdotal description. Compared to the earlier examples, the skeleton increasingly takes on the role of a musician providing accompaniment as he plays instruments such as the guitar, the xylophone, the tabor, the guitar-fiddle, the hurdy-gurdy, the krummhorn, the trumpet, the busine, or the kettledrum.¹⁵ Still, only ten out of the total 48 woodcuts depict skeletons as musicians.¹⁶

In Poland, the theme of the dance of death does not appear as an iconographic subject until the latter half of the 17th century.¹⁷ The best known and influential example of such imagery was a *Dance of Death* painted in the Bernardine church in Kraków (see Figure 9.2).¹⁸ Again, the equality of all social classes forms the central aspect of the painting. None of the dancing skeletons is playing a musical instrument but musicians can be found

among the living people including a Polish nobleman playing a *chorea mortuorum* from a page of music that a skeleton is helpfully holding up for him.



Figure 9.2 A Cracow painter, *Dance of Death*, c. 1670, oil painting from the Bernardine church in Cracow (fragment)

The skeleton as a symbol and *Vanitas* still lifes

The skeleton was a central figure in every representation of the dance of death. It should be noted that the old medieval fascination with horror themes and with all that is repulsive becomes discarded in Baroque art.

In the 17th century, the decaying bodies, the wriggling worms and snakes and the strips of flaking skin are replaced by desiccated skeletons, which are completely rid of flesh and therefore emasculated, metaphorical and arguably more aggressive than they used to be.¹⁹ Significantly, the skeleton became an aesthetic object – sterile, shining, even beautiful – *la morte secca*.²⁰ Thanks to this transformation, the role of the skeleton changed and similarly became a symbol. This symbolic meaning can also be deciphered in its component parts such as the skull, the tibias, and the crossbones.

The second significant iconographical *genre* of Baroque art that combined death with musical instruments was still life. As emblematic knowledge and iconography became increasingly widespread, paintings depicting seemingly ordinary objects graduated to the ranks of a legitimate artistic genre.²¹ There is a special type of painting referred to as *Vanitas*, depicting different objects such as fresh and withering flowers, culinary dishes (food and drinks that are either unfinished or hardly touched during a feast), or precious objects. It is to this genre that still lifes with musical instruments belong. The symbolic meaning of musical still lifes is open to a variety of interpretations: combined with books and scientific instruments or educational aids, musical instruments represented the contemplative life, *vita contemplativa*. At the same time, there were representations of musical instruments accompanied by elaborate gold plate, precious objects and jewellery, which formed a link to the sensuous life or *vita voluptosa*. Finally, musical instruments also existed in depictions of armour, trophies, war attributes or hunting weapons, where they took on the meaning of the active life or *vita activa*.²² The message that all *vanitas* pictures had in common was that things like secular knowledge, luxuries, riches, honours, power and rank counted for nothing at the hour of death – an interpretation that is corroborated by the frequent inclusion of hour-glasses, skulls or bones in such still lifes.²³

There also exist occasional still lifes composed exclusively of various instruments that look abandoned, damaged, or neglected, their strings broken and their bodies covered with a thin layer of dust. This is a special formula of still life as *parergy*, i.e. paintings that depict objects which are apparently

trifling, useless or trivial.²⁴ More than a mere allegory of worldly vanity, the genre was also (indeed, perhaps even primarily) a symbolic image of death.

The Baroque *pompa funebris*

The image being discussed in this article formed a small part of a much larger design for a *pompa funebris*. This was a widespread European funereal tradition in the Baroque period, and its local variant became a major part of the 17th-century Polish tradition. In Poland and Lithuania, grandiose funeral ceremonies were *de rigueur* for wealthy noblemen, and they were practiced on a scale that would only have been suitable for kings or princes in other parts of Europe.²⁵ All noble families aspired not only to commemorate their dead but also to display the power and the elevated status of the family.²⁶ For the duration of the ceremonies (which sometimes lasted for several days), churches or chapels were treated like specially decorated stages. What we might call the ‘scenography’ of such funereal ceremonies always comprised a set of core elements which could vary in type and number. To mention just some of them, the funereal trappings included black fabric for decorating the walls,²⁷ candles for illumination, a raised bier of varying degrees of sumptuousness, painted or sculpted decorations, flags with family crests and black ribbons.

All decoration was subordinate to a main idea or the theoretical conceit. A range of elements such as eschatological symbols, personifications of the virtues of the deceased noble, emblems, poems and inscriptions were scrupulously selected for apologetic purposes, and were prepared in such a way as to surprise the spectator.²⁸ The Baroque penchant for variety, astonishment, wonder and unbelievable contrasts became the principle idea for such decorations.²⁹ The meaning of the overall programme of a *castra doloris* and of the church decorations was primarily connected to the political and social status of the family.³⁰ If there are any musical instruments or musical connotations at all, their appearance is occasional and they share in the same meaning. One exception is worth mentioning, which took place during

the funeral of King Ladislaus IV (Władysław IV) in Cracow's Wawel Cathedral (1649), when Giovanni Battista Gisleni (architect, painter and musician) built a special gallery for the choir, which was decorated with skeletons.³¹

***Musicus mortalis*, Lemma, Imago and iconographical context**

As far as I am aware, the representation of the Genius of Death as a *Musicus mortalis* in *A Diary of a Three-day Pompa Funebri of a Right Honourable Józef Siemieński, Castellan of Lviv* is probably the only such instance in Polish art.³² As mentioned above, the etching is an illustration in one of the two prints published on the occasion of Józef Siemieński's funeral. The first is a very detailed description of the church decorations, and the second, a sort of *pendant* to the first one, reproduces the funeral sermon. Both give us some idea of the highly complicated project as a whole. The decorations for the funeral were devised and made by Franciscan monks. Incidentally, the opulence and splendour of the proceedings was of major importance to the convent since the monastery itself had been founded by Siemieński's family in 1730.³³

In the print we find a description of the complex iconographical conceit filled with visual allegories, quotations from the Bible, Latin mottos and emblems. The ceremony was an amazing *theatrum* of words, light and paintings glorifying the deceased noble, his family, and his spouse, who played the main role in staging the *pompa*. The image of the *Musicus mortalis* was a small part of the decorations. The description states the image's location precisely: 'above the choir screen, in the centre there is visible the Genius of Death'. In my opinion, this choir decoration can, and indeed should, be interpreted as an emblem.³⁴ The *Musicus mortalis* is an *imago* – a pictorial image. The words that are visible as coming out from the trumpet can be read as the *lemma* or the emblem's motto (see Figure 9.1). Also, the emblem has two maxims or musical rebuses flanking the image.

In order to understand the meaning of the emblem, we must discuss each of its component parts. Starting with the *lemma*: the caption in the engraving

is a biblical quotation from the Book of Job (Job 30: 31): *Versa est luctum cythra mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium* (KJV: *My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*)³⁵ There is only one more reference to the Book of Job in all of the iconographical programme of Siemieński's funereal sermon or in his general *pompa funebris*, an inscription from Job 5: 26. The verse reads 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season',³⁶ and it is located between gold candles shaped like corn sheaves that illuminated the *castrum doloris*. Since the overall design comprises a variety of excerpts from other chapters of the Bible we may assume that there was no particular reason for this choice other than for a decorative purpose.³⁷

The verbal description of the image of the Genius of Death is very detailed. Each instrument is mentioned, and every part of the body that it represents is named. We cannot be sure what it was exactly: a sculpture, a quasi-sculpture made of real instruments or a picture. Leaving this problem aside, the choice of the instruments is in itself significant. The lute depicted in the image is ready to be played. Lutes featured prominently in *vanitas* still lifes thanks to their distinctive, elegant shape. In this case, its traditional emblematic connection with love, sexuality and seduction does not seem to play a major role.³⁸ The horn is a hunting instrument, and as such it refers to the image of Death as a hunter: a typical iconographical motif in the *Triumph of Death* presents a skeleton with a scythe, mercilessly hunting for people. The fact that the oboe, a sharp-voiced instrument, is placed at the top of the composition and is connected with the neck of the violin, likewise refers to that theme. This kind of iconography reveals a strong affinity to representations of wars, plagues or disasters. The kettledrum lying under one of the skeleton's 'feet' is another instrument with military connotations. As an iconographical motif it appears on various epitaphs as an element of panoplies. In dances of death, skeletons sometimes play drums and kettledrums with bones for drumsticks. The meaning of the tambourine - i.e. happy play, dancing, or joy - may have been strongly connected with the medieval clownish *Totentanz*. In an inventive, if rather daring move, the artist decided to use the characteristic shape of the violin to represent the

head – the skull, the neck and the shoulders. This somewhat strained and naïve analogy would have probably bordered on the ridiculous were it not for its symbolic potential as parergy since the broken instrument, in itself a paltry and damaged thing, eloquently displays its own marginality in the face of death. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the violin as a musical instrument was closely associated with Death, though not so much in iconography as in the popular consciousness.³⁹ The next group of instruments that are used in this *conchetto* are wind instruments, namely the bassoon and the oboe, mimicking the femur and the tibia. This is significant, since *piszczel*, the Polish name for ‘tibia’, resembles the word *piszczalka* (fife or pipe), a parallel that harks back to the most archetypical way of thinking about music instruments as made of bones. In still lifes, tibiae and recorders are sometimes used interchangeably because of their elongated shape.⁴⁰

Finally, the symbolic meaning of the trumpet needs to be considered. In the image in question, the trumpet seems to be the only real musical instrument, i.e. it is not anthropomorphized, and it does not form part of the skeletal musician; instead, it is actually being played by the *Musicus mortalis*. In the funereal context, it should be pointed out that the trumpet was always connected with the visions of Old Testament prophets as well as with eschatological announcements about the end of time – a clear meaning in Polish Baroque imagery. A good example is provided in a book written in 1670 by Klemens Bolesławiusz, tellingly entitled *Przeraźliwe echo trąby ostatecznej* (The Terrifying Reverberation of the Final Trumpet),⁴¹ a text that was one of the most popular religious texts in Poland, helping to shape Polish culture’s eschatological imagery right until World War II. The trumpet plays a dominant role in the discussed image since it seems to be pronouncing the words – the *lemma* – that form the key to understanding the emblem. The only element in the image that is not associated with music is the hour-glass. A typical vanity symbol, it reminds us of the transitory and temporary nature of human life. In another interesting detail, the hour-glass as a symbol of the impermanence of human life is positioned next to the sheet of music. This symbolizes the extremely transitory character of music, the score being its only durable element.

To reflect on the idea of constructing this kind of image we need to pay attention to the mannerist iconographical tradition of double-images.⁴² The first well-known artist that deserves a mention in this context is Arcimboldo, who engaged in intellectual play with the viewer, and his convention of portrait painting and allegorical representations of the human figure had a major impact on the imagination of generations of later artists. Portraits and human silhouettes comprising the attributes of their respective professions became very popular, primarily in engravings. On a side note, this kind of 'Archimboldeque' style also had an influence on opera costumes. In music iconography, the most important was *Habit de Musicienne* from a large body of images representing different professions in *Costumi Grotteschi* by Nicolas Larmessin.⁴³ We also find this way of thinking about costume in one of the six costume 'grotesques' for opera engraved by Jacques Lepautre after Jean Berain the Elder, in the comic dame as 'leader of the country music' in the *Ballet des fees de la Forêt de Saint Germain* (1653), and in Bonnart's *Habit de musicien* (1721) or Papillon de la Ferte's *Habit d'Apollon-Viollon*.⁴⁴

The maxim – two musical rebuses

The third element of an emblem was its maxim – in this case, the maxim took the form of two musical rebuses. As in other paratheatrical events, emblems had a special status as part of a *pompa funebris*. The two inscriptions were carefully laid out in such a way as to attract the attention of onlookers.⁴⁵ Such musical rebuses belonged to a larger genre of *poesis figurata* or visual poetry, and musical poems of this kind mostly appeared in occasional panegyric prints. In *A Diary of the three-day pompa funebris* we find several examples of such visual poetry which were used as part of the decorations in the Wisznia church. In 18th-century Polish poetry, two authors in particular were known as practitioners of the musical rebus genre. Their names were Klemens Herka and Maurycy Kielkowski,⁴⁶ and their poems belonged to a genre known as the *carmen musicum* or the *griphus musicus*. The two were very similar in terms of their main outlines and titles (*paramytheticon*).⁴⁷

In our case, the image is flanked by two musical rebuses. Compared to the two poets just mentioned, the musical form of the Wisznia rebuses would seem to have been significant. They were both epigrams written in hexameters, a typical form for this kind of poetry. Their meaning is quite mysterious and surprising, and can only be understood in connection with the remaining elements of the emblem. Both poems are shaped like staves, with the musical notes appearing within a single octave in an ascending or a descending order. The point of the rebus is to fill in the missing syllables using the Latin names of their corresponding notes:

The first poem:

**UT REsonem MInitor FACiam iam SOLio LABella
UT REferam MIRum FACinus SOLitumque LATronis**

*I warn that when I sound I will make the funeral bowl appear for a while on the tomb
When I talk about an amazing crime that the criminal had committed.*

The meaning of the second poem is a little less abstruse:

**LAcrima SOLa FACit MINimum REsonanter UT aiam
LAmensis SOLum FATum MIhi fleRE locUTum**

*[Just] one tear makes me speak as softly as possible
the fate that has been predicted for me – to only cry among lamentations.⁴⁸*

The first rebus, using the ascending direction of notes (see Figure 9.3), reveals the object – the trumpet or the ‘person’ (the *Musicus mortalis*) as Death. In its warning, we read the familiar symbolic understanding of music as a deadly influence. When it sounds, a funeral will need to be prepared – a funeral bowl will appear on the tomb because someone will die – and the effect will be the same as the effects of a criminal’s monstrous depravity. The rebus precedes the *imago*, appearing as a sort of announcement. The second rebus is located on the opposite side of the image and is no longer concerned with the deceased. Instead, it relates to the mourners who have remained. The meaning of the poem is that although death is followed by nothing but cries and lamentations, that lamentation brings relief – *just one tear makes me speak as softly as possible*. The idea for this flanking layout and the directionality of the notes (ascending and descending within the space of an

octave to announce death and sorrow) all point to a highly ingenious conceit representing the eschatological connotations of Alpha and Omega.

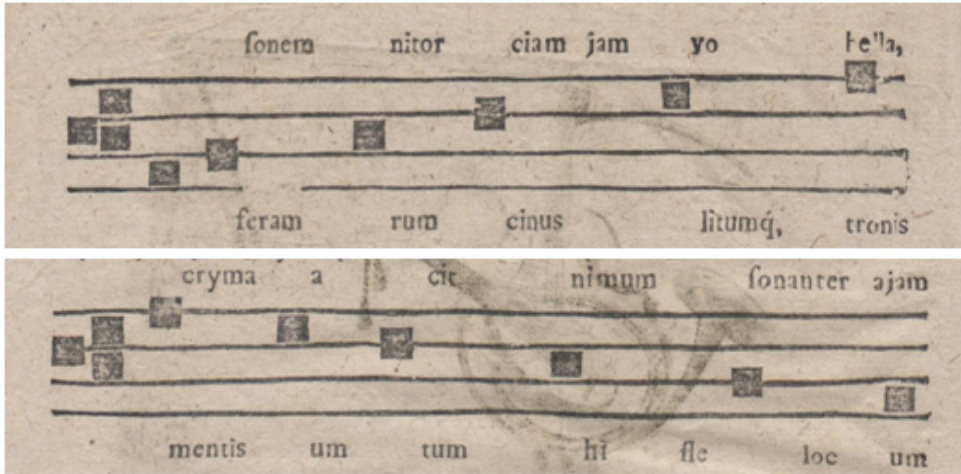


Figure 9.3 Two musical rebuses flanking the image in the woodcut from *Diariusz trzydniowej pogrzebowej pompy I. W. Imci Pana Józefa Siemieńskiego, kasztelana lwowskiego* (Wrocław, 1761), p. 7; Cracow: Jagiellonian Library, Early Printed Books Department, entry BJ 915 240 III; published by kind permission of the Jagiellonian Library

Conclusion

This representation furnishes us with an indication of the level of complexity present in Siemienski's *pompa funebris*. On the face of it, it might seem surprising that the members of a convent in a small town like Wisznia were highly educated enough to come up with such an ingenious conceit but in fact there is nothing amazing about it. Lviv was a major intellectual centre in 17th-century Poland, a place where even private citizens' libraries could boast copies of important iconographical and emblematic publications. The most important examples of the genre such as Alciatus's *Emblematum liber*

(1531), Ripa's *Iconologia* (1593) or Picinelli's *Mundus symbolicus* (1681) were well known in Lviv along with other Polish publications in the genre.⁴⁹

We do not know who was responsible for designing the *Musicus mortalis*. The title page of the print record only the name of the preacher, neither the sermon nor any other part of the funeral decorations contain anything like this evident and direct reference to music in the image of the *Musicus mortalis*. This leads us to suppose that the inventor of the conceit might have been a musician, a conjecture made all the more plausible given the above-mentioned example of Gisleni's work. Also, the inventor was most probably well versed in emblematic conventions, and he decided to tap the major area of death's musical connotations for the choir decorations to accentuate the musical character of the church space, which is what makes the juxtaposition of a very complex and advanced conceit with its relatively slipshod graphic execution so interesting.

To sum up, the image of the *Musicus mortalis* that formed a small part of a large-scale funereal conceit belongs firmly in what was a striking but typical phenomenon of Polish Baroque culture. Nevertheless, the musical subject and the use of musical associations, symbols and elements make this representation unique. With the rich repertoire of Baroque visual poetry to choose from, the inventor chose a form with the most musical of connotations, binding the elements together to surprise and to amaze the captivated onlooker.

Notes

- 1 Paulina Cwalińska, 'Mitten wir im Leben sind, mit dem Tod umfängen... Luteraniska muzyka czasu śmierci (lata 20. XVI – lata 20. XVII w.)', (Mitten wir im Leben sind, mit dem Tod umfängen... Lutheran Music of the Time of Death, 1520s–1620s) *Barok. Historia - Literatura - Sztuka* 11 (2004/2), p. 163; Michel Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu* (La mort et l'Occident de 1300 à nos jours), Polish translation by Tomasz Swoboda, Maryna Ochab, Magdalena Sawiczewska-Lorkowska, Diana Senczyszyn (Gdańsk: Slowo/ obraz terytoria, 2004), pp. 239, 253–68.
- 2 Also worth pointing out is the extreme popularity of *artes moriendi* and numerous treatises concerning spiritual practices and meditations on death. In a 1687 commentary on Loyola's treatise there is a recommendation to display a skull during prayers. Cf. Jan Białostocki, *Płeć śmierci* (The Gender of Death), (Gdańsk: Slowo/obraz terytoria, 1999), p. 82; Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu*, pp. 286–91.

- 3 Cwalińska, 'Mitten wir im Leben sind', p. 164. Some of the Reformed churches curtailed the funereal ceremonies and the music involved. In his last will, John Calvin asked for a funeral without singing. Cf. Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa, *Pieśni czasu śmierci* (Songs of the Time of Death), (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1992), p. 44.
- 4 Magdalena Walter-Mazur, 'Ars moriendi, pompa funebris i muzyka w siedemnastowiecznych Niemczech,' (Ars moriendi, pompa funebris and Music in 17th Century Germany) *Barok. Historia - Literatura - Sztuka* 12 (2005/1), p. 21.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 20.
- 6 Sarmatianism is a term used in Polish scholarship to describe a general lifestyle and ideology of Polish nobility with a specific mentality and culture in the 17th century and in the first half of the 18th century. Sarmatianism was based on a fanciful genealogy linking Polish noble families with the ancient people known as the Sarmatians. The Sarmatian ideology was an integrating influence on Polish and Lithuanian nobility which offered a justification for its political, social and economic privilege, and explained its distinctive ways and customs.
- 7 In early modern Poland, castellans were administrative and judicial officials presiding over a district. From the 15th century onwards, the castellans sat in the Royal Council, and were later automatic members of the Senate, which was connected with a degree of political status and influence.
- 8 Światosław Lenartowicz, 'Kościół P.W. Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Panny Marii i klasztor oo. Franciszkanów-Reformatów w Sądowej Wiszni,' (Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the monastery of the Reformed Franciscans in Sądowa Wisznia) in: *Kościół i Klasztorzy Rzymskokatolickie dawnego województwa ruskiego* (Catholic Churches and Monasteries in the Former Russian Voivodship) (= Materiały do Dziejów Sztuki Sakralnej na Ziemiach Wschodnich Dawnej Rzeczypospolitej 3/ Sources and Contributions to the History of Sacred Art in the Eastern Provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), ed. Jan K. Ostrowski (Part 1, Cracow: Drukarnia Narodowa, 1995), pp. 171-2.
- 9 Adam Organisty, 'Taniec śmierci,' (The Dance of Death) in: *Przeraźliwe echo trąby żałosnej do wieczności wzywającej. Śmierć w kulturze dawnej Polski; od średniowiecza do końca XVIII wieku* (The Terrifying Reverberation of the Final Trumpet: Death and the Old Polish Culture from the Middle Ages to the Late 18th Century) [exhibition catalogue, Royal Castle in Warsaw], ed. Przemysław Mrozowski (Warsaw: Arx Regia - Zamek Królewski w Warszawie, 2000), p. 104.
- 10 Kathi Meyer Baer, *Music of Spheres and the Dance of Death. Studies in Musical Iconography* (Princeton-New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 298.
- 11 Woodcuts from the *Heidelberg Totentanz* (1485). Cf. Erwin Koller, *Totentanz, Versuch einer Textbeschreibung* (= Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft: Germanistische Reihe 10) (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik der Universität Innsbruck, 1980), p. 301, fig. 158-160. Skeletons from the *Klein-Basler Totentanz*, a fresco found in Klingenthal (near Basel). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 302, fig. 161; Albert Kauw's *Totentanz* (1648) after Niklaus Manuel's *Tod und Stände* (1516-1520). Cf. Reinhold

- Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes: die mittelalterlichen Totentänze und ihr Nachleben* (Bern and München: Francke, 1980), p. 150–9.
- 12 Hammerstein, *Tanz und Musik des Todes*, p. 300, fig. 157.
- 13 *ibid.*, pp. 150–9.
- 14 Oskar Bättschmann, Pascal Griener, *Hans Holbein*, German translation by Dieter Kuhaupt (Köln: DuMont, 1997), pp. 53–60.
- 15 Meyer Baer, *Music of Spheres*, p. 303, fig. 162–6.
- 16 *Hans Holbeins Bilder des Tod. Reproduciert nach den Probedrucken und der Lyonner Ausgabe von 1647 in der Kunsthalle zu Hamburg*, ed. Alfred Lichtwark (Hamburg: Commeterche Kunsthandlung, 1893), pl. 1–48.
- 17 Organisty, 'Taniec śmierci', p. 104.
- 18 Jerzy Żmudziński, 'Taniec śmierci,' (The Dance of Death) in: *Święto Baroku. Sztuka w służbie Michała Stefana Radziejowskiego (1645-1705)* (Celebration of Baroque: The Artistic Patronage of Primate Michał Stefan Radziejowski (1645–1705)) [exhibition catalogue, Museum Palace in Wilanów], ed. Jerzy Żmudziński (Warsaw: Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2009), pp. 314–5.
- 19 Cf. Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu*, p. 243.
- 20 Philippe Aries, *Człowiek i śmierć* (L'homme devant la mort), Polish translation by Eligia Bąkowska (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1992), p. 322.
- 21 The Renaissance and Mannerist emblem traditions developed a set of motifs that became symbols of *vanitas*, including the wind, smoke, candles, fading flowers or bubbles. Cf. Białostocki, *Płeć śmierci*, p. 57.
- 22 Pieter Fischer, 'Music in Paintings of the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th Centuries,' in: *Sonorum speculum* 50/51 (1972), p. 65; Białostocki, *Płeć śmierci*, p. 79.
- 23 Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu*, p. 251.
- 24 Antoni Ziemia, *Iluzja a realizm. Gra z widzem w sztuce holenderskiej 1580-1660* (Illusion and Realism. Engaging in a Play with the Beholder in Dutch Art 1580–1660), (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2005), p. 223.
- 25 Juliusz A. Chrościcki, *Pompa funebris. Z dziejów kultury staropolskiej* (Pompa funebris. From the History of Old Polish Culture), (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974), p. 44.
- 26 Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu*, p. 332.
- 27 Cwalińska emphasizes the soft and gentle character of funereal music. The black fabric used for decorating the church interior not only produced a visual effect, but also influenced the acoustics of the space. A similar sound-damping effect was at play in the custom of strewing sawdust on the streets taken by the cortege. Cf. Cwalińska, 'Mitten wir im Leben sind', p. 167.
- 28 Vovelle, *Śmierć w cywilizacji Zachodu*, p. 333.
- 29 Barbara Niebelska, 'Cudowność, paralogizm i concept,' (The Marvellous, the Paralogism and the Conceit) in: *Koncept w kulturze staropolskiej* (Conceit in Old Polish Culture), eds.

- Ludwika Ślęk, Adam Karpiński and Wiesław Pawlak (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2005), p. 33.
- 30 Alojzy Sajkowski, *Barok* (Baroque), (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1987), p. 135.
- 31 Nina Miks, 'Kapela królewska Wazów w rysunku G.B. Gisleniego, architekta i muzyka królewskiego,' (The Music Ensemble of the Vasa Dynasty in Poland as Represented in a Drawing by G.B. Gisleni, Royal Architect and Musician) in: *Sarmatia Artistica: księga pamiątkowa ku czci Profesora Władysława Tomkiewicza* (Sarmatia Artistica: Essays in Honour of Professor Władysław Tomkiewicz), ed. Jan Białostocki (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968), p. 102.
- 32 This image appears as an illustration in three publications: Jerzy Banach, *Tematy muzyczne w plastyce polskiej*, t. 2: *Grafika i rysunek* (Musical Iconography in Polish Art, vol. 2: Prints and Drawings) (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1962), p. 183, pl. 48; Chrościcki, *Pompa funebris*, p. 360; Krzysztof Oleszczyk, *Rebus. Historia* (Rebus. A History), (Konstancin: Krzysztof Oleszczyk Edition, 2005), p. 97.
- 33 The church of the Reformed Franciscan Order or the Reformati had been founded in 1730 by Jan Siemiński, Castellan of Lviv and Józef's father. Completely destroyed by a fire in 1741, the church was rebuilt in 1858. Cf. *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich* (The Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and of Other Slavic Countries), eds. Filip Sulimierski, Bronisław Chlebowski and Władysław Walewski (vol. 10, Warsaw: Nakładem Władysława Walewskiego, 1889), p. 362.
- 34 Janusz Pelc, 'Analogia strukturalna do emblematów oraz związki z emblematyką w kompozycji panegirycznej biografii pochwalnej Augusta II pióra Jakuba Kazimierza Rubinkowskiego,' (A Structural Analogy to Emblems and Relationships with Emblems in the Panegyric Composition on August II, a Laudatory Biography by Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski) *Barok. Historia - Literatura - Sztuka* 10 (2003/2), pp. 109-15.
- 35 *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 36 *ibid.*
- 37 However, the biblical Job, who was a lover of music, is one of the four patrons of music. Cf. Banach, *Tematy muzyczne*, p. 14.
- 38 Lech Brusewicz, 'Pieter Codde. "Czesząca się kobieta",' (Pieter Codde. A Woman Combing her Hair) in: *Ars Emblematica. Ukryte znaczenia w malarstwie holenderskim XVIII wieku* (Ars Emblematica. Hidden Meanings in Dutch 18th-Century Painting) [exhibition catalogue, National Museum in Warsaw], ed. Janina Małkowska (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe, 1981), p. 68.
- 39 When pondering eternal life, Polish Baroque poets of a certain age tended to say that they could 'hear the mortal violin'. The expression was synonymous with dying and had its equivalent in iconography as a violin-playing skeleton, *Mortis ingrata musica*. Cf. *Taniec śmierci od późnego średniowiecza do końca XX wieku* (The Dance of Death from the Late Middle Ages until the End of the 20th Century) [exhibition catalogue, The Pomeranian Dukes' Castle in Szczecin, Museum of Architecture in Wrocław, The Museum of History of the City of Łódź, National Museum in Cracow, „Zamek” Culture Centre in Poznań], eds. Eva Schuster and Ewa Dyżewska (Szczecin: Zamek Książąt Pomorskich, 2002), p. 162.

- 40 The work of Simon Renard-André (1613–1677) is a good example. In his numerous *vanitas* still lifes, a tibia is very often replaced by a recorder. Cf. Michel Faré, *La Nature Morte en France. Son l'histoire et son évolution du XVIIe au XXe siècle* (vol. 2, Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1962), pl. 155–6.
- 41 Klemens Bolesławiusz, *Przeraźliwe echo trąby ostatecznej* (The Terrifying Reverberation of the Final Trumpet) (= Biblioteka Pisarzy Staropolskich), ed. Jacek Sokolski (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich, 2004), p. 29.
- 42 *Disguised vision* [exhibition catalogue, Isetan Museum of Art in Tokio, Hiroshima Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art in Kamakura, Koriyama City Museum], eds. Toshio Yamanashi, Junko Watanabe and Siroto Kanno (Tokyo: The Tokio Shimbun, 1994), p. 25.
- 43 *L'Arcimboldo dei mestieri. Visioni fantastiche e costumi grotteschi nelle stampe di Nicolas de Larmessin*, ed. Stefano Benni (Milano: Mazzotta, 1979), pl. 52.
- 44 Nicholas Anderson, *Baroque Music. From Monteverdi to Handel* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), pp. 68–9.
- 45 Janusz Pelc, *Barok epoka przeciwieństw* (The Baroque: an Age of Opposites), (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004), p. 173–4.
- 46 Piotr Rypson, *Obraz słowa. Historia poezji wizualnej* (Image of the Word. A History of Visual Poetry), (Warsaw: Akademia Ruchu, 1989), p. 189; by the same author, *Piramidy, słońca, labirynty. Poezja wizualna w Polsce od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Pyramids, Suns, Labyrinths. Visual Poetry in Poland of the 16th–18th Centuries), (Warsaw: Neriton, 2002), pp. 134–40.
- 47 Oleszczyk, *Rebus. Historia*, p. 96; see also Barbara Milewska-Ważbińska, 'Hypomnema *Hranciscanum* and the Problematics of Religious Visual Poetry,' in: *Pietas Humanistica. Neo-Latin Religious Poetry in Poland in European Context*, ed. Piotr Urbański (Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 228.
- 48 I was assisted with the Polish translation of the rebuses by Izabela Wiencek.
- 49 Edward Różycki, 'Kultura książki we Lwowie w epoce Baroku,' (The Book Culture in Baroque Lviv) in: *Sztuka XVII wieku w Polsce* (17th-Century Art in Poland), ed. Teresa Frankowska (Warsaw: Arx Regia – Zamek Królewski w Warszawie, 1994), pp. 93–101.