

# Pasticcio *da chiesa*: Transforming Opera Arias into an Oratorio

## The Case of Contrafacted Oratorios in Wrocław and Żagań from the Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century

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It is widely known and confirmed by numerous sources that operatic music often crossed the boundaries between sacred and profane, being often adopted and adapted for a religious context. Operatic form – with its recitatives, arias, ensembles, stylistic and rhetorical features – was imported to present various *historiae sacrae* in the form of an oratorio. The arias and ensembles themselves were imported to the church and through the *contrafactum* technique, popular for many centuries, the profane text was replaced with a sacred one. The music, however, remained almost the same.

Creating a new opera from different existing arias – a well-known phenomenon and one examined in the present volume under the name of pasticcio – occurred also in the sacred context. In fact, at least in some cases, such a pasticcio was a combination of the transformation of an opera into an oratorio and of a secular piece to a sacred *contrafactum*. The case study in my analysis of this hybrid form will be an oratorio-pasticcio which is preserved in two sources. The first is a music manuscript, containing six vocal and six instrumental parts, now preserved at the Music Department of the Warsaw University Library (PL-Wu, RM 5325). The second is a printed libretto containing the same text, but deriving from a slightly different place and time, and now held at the Wrocław/Breslau University Library (PL-WRu, Gabinet Śląsko-Łużycki, Yu 50/434). Both sources were created in the region of Lower Silesia. The music manuscript was written in the Canons Regular monastery in Żagań/Sagan (about 150 km north-west of Wrocław) in 1764. The libretto print was published twelve years earlier in Wrocław itself, printed in the Jesuits' printing house, documenting a spectacle that took place in the Jesuit church in Wrocław in 1752.

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In my paper I would like firstly to present this oratorio-pasticcio as a musical piece: how it was constructed, and how the pre-existing operatic material was adapted to a new context, both in terms of text and music. Secondly, I will analyze how the two existing sources – the music manuscript and the printed libretto – complement each other and enable us to answer some questions concerning the transmission of the repertoire as well as the cultural context of the two centers in which this oratorio was performed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The music manuscript from Żagań was the first of the two sources that I encountered. It is now stored in the Warsaw University Library among other music manuscripts and prints from Silesian monasteries secularized in 1810 by the Prussian authorities (those sources were transferred from Wrocław to Warsaw in 1952, and that is why they are now stored outside their region of origin).<sup>2</sup> On the title page of the manuscript we can see the title, a list of parts and a provenance note with a date (1764). There is no information about the composer, so at first sight this oratorio remains anonymous.<sup>3</sup> The RISM database however enables the identification of music material due to the resemblance of music incipits, which is now significantly faster and more precise than it used to be in the times of printed thematic catalogues only.

While comparing the musical material of the subsequent arias and ensembles of the oratorio to the resources of the RISM database, it turned out that seven pieces of the oratorio – four arias, one arioso and two ensembles – can be identified as fragments from operas and oratorios of at least three different composers. It is due to that identification that this composition can be classified as a pasticcio. The text however has been completely changed, because the original arias were derived mostly from secular works with Italian librettos, and then transformed into German sacred *contrafacta*. The libretto of this oratorio remains quite conventional, presenting the Soul (“Anima”, soprano) in discourse with different allegorical figures: Hope (“Die Hoffnung”, soprano), Reason (“Die Vernunft”, alto), Divine Love (“Die Göttliche Liebe”, tenor), Faith (“Der Glaube”, tenor) and Envy (“Der Neid”, bass). Their conversation refers often to the topic of redemption of the soul due to the Passion of Christ – as this oratorio was performed at the Holy Sepulchre either on Good Friday or Holy Saturday, being strictly bound to the Holy Week celebrations. The author of the text is not known and both the manuscript and the printed libretto do not bear any attributions.

Let us have a look at the structure of this oratorio, presumably to see which parts of it can be identified as *contrafacta*, and from which operas and oratorios they have been derived. It should be noted, however, that when the resources of incipits in the RISM

2 On the history of this collection see e.g.: MRYGON, 1994, pp. 292-300; BURCHARD, 2005, pp. 91-99; DROŹDZEWSKA, 2012.

3 PL-Wu, RM 5325: [dust cover title:] *Oratorium | pro | S. Sepulchro Domini. | Seu: | Das Mittel zur wahren Glückseligkeit |* [crossed out: *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit [sic].*] | *a | Canto Primo | Canto Secundo. | Alto. | Tenore Primo* [on the right, in pencil, later added: 661.] | *Tenore Secondo | Basso. | Violino Primo | Violino Secondo | Flaut. traversiers 2<sup>b[us]</sup> pro Aria Ultima. | Alto Viola | et | Organo. | Chori Eccles. B. V. | Canon. Reg. Later. | Sagan. 1764.*

database are eventually enlarged to contain more operas and oratorios, the fragments not yet identified may also turn out to be contrafacted opera excerpts.

Table 1: Overview of the oratorio with identified contrafacta and their sources.

| Numbers of the oratorio                      | Identified <i>contrafacta</i> sources                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Introduzione                                 |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Ach ihr flügelreiche Schaaaren” |                                                                                        |
| Aria 1: “Sind Berg und Thäler grün”          |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Wenn wahre Zufriedenheit”       |                                                                                        |
| <b>Aria 2: “Siehe jene Sternen”</b>          | Carl Heinrich Graun, <i>Catone in Utica</i><br>(aria “Se in campo armato”)             |
| Recitativo: “Fröhliche Post”                 |                                                                                        |
| Arioso: “Ich eile ohne Rast”                 |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Thörechte Jugend”               |                                                                                        |
| <b>Aria 3: “Wer vergnügte Stunden”</b>       | Johann Adolf Hasse, <i>Il natal di Giove</i><br>(aria “D’atre nubi è il sol ravvolto”) |
| Recitativo: “Wenn dies allein”               |                                                                                        |
| <b>Terzetto: “Ach! Wohin soll ich”</b>       | C.H. Graun, <i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i><br>(duet “Sia propizia desir tuoi dell’amor”)    |
| Recitativo: “Betrachte das Ende”             |                                                                                        |
| Aria 4: “Wie der Blitz und Donner”           |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Nach solchen Freuden”           |                                                                                        |
| Arioso: “Stete Lust”                         |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Hier siehe den Schöpfer”        |                                                                                        |
| Aria 5: “Siehe an die goldne Sonne”          |                                                                                        |
| Recitativo: “Niemals hat in meiner Brust”    |                                                                                        |
| <b>Duetto: “Ach! Vergnügte Himmels Auen”</b> | Johann Georg Schürer, <i>Astrea placata</i><br>(duet “Ah che fa la pigra Aurora”)      |
| Recitativo: “Undanckbares Geschäft”          |                                                                                        |
| <b>Aria 6: “Siehe jene offne Wunden”</b>     | C.H. Graun, <i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i><br>(aria “Non sa il mio Nume amato”)             |
| Recitativo: “O unermessene Güte”             |                                                                                        |
| <b>Arioso: “Ach wer giebt mir”</b>           | J.A. Hasse, <i>Didone abbandonata</i><br>(aria “Tacerò se tu lo brami”)                |
| Recitativo: “Auf! Auf!”                      |                                                                                        |
| <b>Aria 7: “O! Vermenschter Gott”</b>        | J.G. Schürer, <i>La passione di Gesù Cristo</i> (aria<br>“Potea quel pianto”)          |
| Recitativo: “Unbeglückte Stunden”            |                                                                                        |
| Coro: “Kommet, eilet”                        |                                                                                        |

At present, the other pieces remain anonymous: the instrumental opening part, *Introduzione*, scored for two violins, viola and organ; the first recitative and aria for soprano

solo, sung by the Soul (Anima); the recitative and arioso also sung by Anima; the fourth aria for alto solo, the subsequent arioso, the fifth aria for tenor solo, and the final ensemble for six voices. All the other arias and ensembles have been identified as *contrafacta*.

The first of them is the aria for tenor solo, “Siehe jene Sternen”, identified as a *contrafactum* of Carl Heinrich Graun’s aria “Se in campo armato” from *Catone in Utica* (Berlin 1744).<sup>4</sup> After examining the two versions in a more detailed way, we can observe that the elaboration of the original material consists not only of the change of text, but also of voice (the part has been transposed an octave lower to make a tenor aria from a soprano one), and of the material itself, changing some passages in the middle of the piece to newly composed ones. In the first part of the aria the vocal material has been somehow simplified or adjusted rhythmically to the new text, while the bass line remains almost untouched (see Example 1).

Example 1: “Se in campo armato” (S, cemb) vs. “Siehe jene Sternen” (T, org), bars 8-13.

The musical score for Example 1 is divided into four systems, each showing a vocal part and a keyboard accompaniment. The first system features Soprano and Clavicembalo. The Soprano part has the lyrics "la gran con-te - sa de - ci - de-ra" and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The Clavicembalo part has a consistent bass line. The second system features Tenore and Organo. The Tenore part has the lyrics "die so lieb - lich an - zu - schau" and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The Organo part has a consistent bass line. The third system features Soprano and Cembalo. The Soprano part has the lyrics "i" and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The Cembalo part has a consistent bass line. The fourth system features Tenore and Organo. The Tenore part has the lyrics "en da is" and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The Organo part has a consistent bass line.

4 See e.g. F-Pn, D-5000, manuscript copy of the opera available online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84581965/f149.image.r>, 21.12.2019; see also D-SW1, Mus. 2120 (RISM ID no. 240001955).

The next aria – “Wer vergnügte Stunden” for solo bass – turned out to be derived from Johann Adolf Hasse’s serenata *Il natal di Giove* (Hubertusburg 1749),<sup>5</sup> however also transposed and elaborated; some passages from the vocal part have been totally changed (see Example 2).

Example 2: “D’atre nubi è il sol ravvolto” (S, vl I, b) vs. “Wer vergnügte Stunden” (B, vl I, org), bars 28-36.

The image displays four systems of musical notation, each representing a different vocal or instrumental part. The first system is for Soprano, Violino I, and Basso. The second system is for Basso, Violino I, and Organo. The third system is for Soprano, Violino I, and Basso. The fourth system is for Basso, Violino I, and Organo. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a corresponding instrumental line. The lyrics are in Italian and German. The musical notation includes notes, rests, and bar lines.

The subsequent terzetto with the incipit “Ach wohin soll ich”, identified as an aria taken from another opera by Carl Heinrich Graun, this time *Ifigenia in Aulide* (Berlin 1748),<sup>6</sup> also required a lot of ‘editorial work’ from our anonymous ‘*contrafactor*’, who has not

5 See e.g. D-LEu, N.I.10311 (RISM ID no. 200043801).

6 See e.g. D-DI, Mus.2953-F-1 (RISM ID no. 212009096).

only replaced one text with another, but also moved some melismas to other parts of the text in order to emphasize new significant words. Furthermore, as the new plot required a conversation between three actors at the same time, he changed the original duet “Sia propizia desir tuoi dell’amor” into a terzet – thus the disposition of the musical material between the voices had to be changed; some phrases have been added and some others deleted to meet the new arrangement’s requirements (see Example 3).

Example 3: “Sia propizia desir” (S I, S II, b) vs. “Ach wohin soll ich” (S, T, B, org), bars 15-20.

The musical score for Example 3 consists of four systems of staves. The first system features Soprano I, Soprano II, and Bass. The second system features Soprano, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The third system features Soprano I, Soprano II, and Bass. The fourth system features Soprano, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The score is written in 16th-century style notation with mensural notation and Italian lyrics.

**System 1:**

- Soprano I: me, poi ri-e-di-a me poi ri-e-di-a me.
- Soprano II: Se combat-to te combat-to i miei Al-lo-ri re-che-no re-che-
- Basso: (melisma)

**System 2:**

- Soprano: Eh-ren Reich-thum zie-hen mich
- Tenore: gen, be-tro-gen wer-den willet Reu und Straff, Reu und
- Basso: die-ses al-les ge-be ich
- Organo: (melisma)

**System 3:**

- S I: No-bil glo-ria de gran co-ri bell
- S II: no lo spe-ro a te, no lo spe-ro a te lo spe-ro a te no-bil glo-ria de gran co-ri
- B: (melisma)

**System 4:**

- S: Soll-te denn am Ort der Fies-den, Gall und
- T: Straff er-war-tet er-war-tet dich
- B: (melisma)
- org: (melisma)

Then follows a duet “Ach vergnügte Himmels Auen” for two sopranos, which is based on a piece from Johann Georg Schürer’s *Astrea placata* (Warsaw 1746).<sup>7</sup> The original was also a duet, “Ah che fa la pigra Aurora”, however designed for a soprano and a tenor. In the contrafacted piece the tenor part is transposed an octave higher for the second soprano, and sometimes the disposition of the musical material between the two voices is different. The next aria, “Siehe jene offne Wunden” for tenor solo, on the contrary, has been made of a soprano aria transposed an octave lower, “Non sa il mio Nume

7 See e.g. D-DI, Mus.3096-F-1 (RISM ID no. 212006958).

amato”, from the already mentioned *Ifigenia in Aulide* by Carl Heinrich Graun.<sup>8</sup> The subsequent arioso, “Ach wer giebt mir” for soprano solo, is the second piece by Johann Adolf Hasse, this time from his opera *Didone abbandonata* (Hubertusburg 1742),<sup>9</sup> with the original incipit “Tacerò se tu lo brami”. The last solo aria, “O vermenschter Gott” for soprano solo, has been identified as a *contrafactum* of “Potea quel pianto” from Johann Georg Schürer’s oratorio *La passione di Gesù Cristo* (1746).<sup>10</sup> The original scoring has been maintained, thus only the two flutes play in this aria, which is noted on the title page (“Flaut. traversieus 2bus pro Aria ultima”).

To sum up this overview, we can see that seven numbers of the oratorio have been derived from six different pieces of music-dramatic works, including five operas and one oratorio, all of them with Italian texts. The list of composers, however, is shorter and contains three persons, each of them being an author of at least two contrafacted pieces. Carl Heinrich Graun, Johann Adolph Hasse and Johann Georg Schürer were among the most popular composers in those times, at least in Central Europe. The first of them was active at the Prussian court, and the reception of his works in Silesia was probably to some extent connected to political changes; the region belonged to the Prussian authorities as a result of several wars between 1740 and 1763. Hasse and Schürer were at that time connected mainly to the Dresden court. In the collection of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Silesian music manuscripts from the dissolved monasteries – including those from Wrocław and Żagań – there is a huge amount of sacred *contrafacta* of operatic music.<sup>11</sup> If we made a list of composers of those pieces, we would see that the most popular among them were Carl Heinrich Graun and Johann Adolph Hasse, both with hundreds of contrafacted arias which are still preserved; Schürer, however, was much less popular in this area, with only seven records of his compositions in this collection, among them only three contrafacted arias.

Table 2: Sources of contrafacta (original operas and oratorios) with date of first performance.

|              |                                   |      |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| J.A. Hasse   | <i>Didone abbandonata</i>         | 1742 |
| C.H. Graun   | <i>Catone in Utica</i>            | 1744 |
| J.G. Schürer | <i>Astrea placata</i>             | 1746 |
| J.G. Schürer | <i>La passione di Gesù Cristo</i> | 1746 |
| C.H. Graun   | <i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>         | 1748 |
| J.A. Hasse   | <i>Il natal di Giove</i>          | 1749 |

8 See e.g. D-Dl, Mus.2953-F-1 (RISM ID no. 212009096).  
9 See e.g. D-Dl, Mus.2477-F-35 (RISM ID no. 270000685).  
10 See e.g. D-Dl, Mus.3096-D-9 (RISM ID no. 212006954).  
11 See RISM database, siglum: PL-Wu, genre: “Contrafacta”. See also e.g. Jež, 2012, pp. 341-368.

We can also see that all the original operas and oratorios have been performed for the first time between 1742 and 1749. The music manuscript containing this pasticcio, dated 1764, is quite a late testimony of reception, but the printed libretto from 1752 situates the material more closely in time.

The main question here is whether the other fragments of our oratorio, which are also very likely to be contrafacted, have been derived from other trendy operas by well-known composers – as was the case with many pasticcios – or if they belonged to a more local music production, and their lack of identification is probably the result of the lack of original sources.

The arias used during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in churches were of different musical quality, style and taste. That depended obviously on the composer of the original piece, but not only. The final effect of a *contrafactum* included also its elaboration in terms of the new text, its correspondence with music, affect, rhetorical features etc., not to mention here the skills of the performers. Making a *contrafactum* – especially a convincing one – seems quite similar to a literary translation of a poetic form, where the translator has at once to observe the strict rules of metrics and rhymes, and to find the appropriate words to fill this existing form with meanings and rhetoric in the most perfect way possible. Obviously not all the authors of *contrafacta* were excellent musical translators, but we can observe different attempts at transforming one piece to another, depending on the musical skills of the elaborator.

Observing the arranger's workshop leads us to the question of his identity and the context of his activity. We have plenty of contrafacted arias from 18<sup>th</sup>-century Silesian monasteries, but the authors of those *contrafacta* remain anonymous in most cases. Most of them seem however to work locally, in the monasteries themselves, working as cantors or *regentes chori*, providing musical material for everyday liturgical and non-liturgical performance practice. Some sources bear traces of their 'contrafacting' work, containing both the original, secular text of a piece, and a new one (or more) inserted below. The compiler of our oratorio-pasticcio might also have worked locally, in the Canons Regular Monastery in Żagań, and that was also my assumption, at least until I came across the second source, the printed libretto.

The title page of the libretto does not reveal to us the name of the composer, nor of the author of the text. It contains, however, the interesting information that the oratorio had been "conceived some years ago and set to music by a priest of the Society of Jesus" ("vor einigen Jahren entworfen und in die Music gesetzt von einem Priester der Gesellschaft Jesu"). The performance took place at 7 PM on Good Friday 1752 (31 March), in the Jesuit Academic Church in Wrocław.<sup>12</sup> The performers are not mentioned,

12 PL-WRu, Gabinet Śląsko-Łużycki, Yu 50/434: *Musicalisches | ORATORIUM, | Oder | Christlich-vernünfftige | Gedancken | Uber den | Creutz-Weg, | Als den | Sichersten zum wahren Vergnügen, | Vor einigen Jahren entworfen, | und in die Music gesetzt | Von einem Priester der Gesellschaft JESU, | Welches | An dem Chor-Freytag in der Kirchen SS. Nominis JESU | des Academischen Collegii S. J. zu Breslau Abends um | 7. Uhr abgesungen worden im Jahr 1752.*

but we may suppose that they were all – both vocalists and instrumentalists – from the Jesuit school there.<sup>13</sup>

Our oratorio-pasticcio seems to have moved from 1752 Wrocław to 1764 Żagań, from the Jesuits to the Canons' Regular. Let us add one or two facts to the history of transmissions and cultural relations between Wrocław and Żagań. The music manuscript with the oratorio was written by a single person, but the copyist – according to this source only – is unknown. Fortunately, he has also written some other manuscripts, and through a comparative analysis of the handwriting, he could be identified as Anton Tintz. In the 1730s he studied in Wrocław, and during his education he copied some music manuscripts for the Canons Regular monastery there, S. Maria in Arena.<sup>14</sup> Some years later he became a Canon Regular himself; it is not known whether he entered the convent in Wrocław and then moved to Żagań, but in 1753 he was certainly in Żagań, recorded as cantor and *regens chori*.<sup>15</sup>

The same family name links him to Karl Tintz, a Jesuit, born in 1718, who spent many years in Wrocław. He was a prefect of music in Chomutov/Komotau, Żagań and Wrocław, and his musical skills are documented in different sources.<sup>16</sup> He also had some connections with the Canons Regular monastery in Żagań; as a theologian and Jesuit priest he was in charge of giving the *imprimatur* to a catechismal publication of the Żagań monk Johann Ignaz von Felbiger.<sup>17</sup> The coincidence seems to be very attractive, especially in the context of cultural contacts between the Wrocław Jesuits and the Żagań Canons Regular, but to my knowledge there is no further proof that Anton and Karl Tintz were brothers or relatives. There could also be other paths of transmission between those two *milieux*, as both Jesuits and Canons Regular had their houses in Wrocław and in Żagań at that time.<sup>18</sup>

To conclude, these two sources – the handwritten parts and the printed libretto – may be useful for at least three different research questions. The first is the question of transmission between musical genres: from operas and arias to *contrafacta*, oratorios, pasticcios and finally to contrafacted oratorio-pasticcios, a hybrid form that we can observe in this case, for example in terms of relations between music and text, or in terms of selection of the repertoire used for such a performance; this question is not far from the issues of musical taste or local performance practice.

The second question is about the reception and transmission of a musical piece – in this case of an operatic aria or ensemble – through space, time and performance context. The music moved from theaters to churches, from Dresden and Berlin to Wrocław and Żagań, from a Jesuit school to the Canons' Regular monastery. The networks of culture

13 On the music culture of the Wrocław Jesuits see JEŻ, 2019.

14 PL-Wu, RM 5254, RM 5600.

15 See *Schlesische Instantien-Notitz, oder Das ietzt lebende Schlesien, des 1753sten Jahres, zum Gebrauch der Hohen und Niederen...*, Breslau: Brachvogelischen Erben [s.d.], p. 285.

16 See e.g. *Catalogi triennales Provinciae Silesiae SJ*, I-Rar, Boh. 202, fols. 58v, 152r, 243v.

17 See e.g. CONRAD, 2004, p. 75.

18 See e.g. JEŻ, 2019.

functioned due to the networks of people, who through their personal acquaintances and mutual work environment shared and transferred musical repertoire as well.

The last – but not least – question is about the complementarity of the sources, which enables us to reconstruct some fragments of a lost music collection. In this case – as the music collection of the Wrocław Jesuits has been completely lost – we can reconstruct an oratorio performed there, a libretto of which has been preserved, on a basis of a music manuscript from another center. At the same time, it is also a trace of further reception of such works, proving that typical Holy Week oratorios, performed by students, could have been played more than once and more than in one center. If we had a catalogue of 18<sup>th</sup>-century printed librettos of oratorios, including lists of dramatic roles and text incipits, it would probably turn out that not all the music for them which has been considered lost is actually lost. But at present such a catalogue remains only a prospect.

## Sources

10 Proprium missae; parts: PL-Wu, RM 5600.

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Id., Opera di Catone dell'Sigr. Graun; score: F-Pn, D-5000, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84581965/f149.image.r> (and other sources).

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Id., Il natal di Giove; score: D-LEu, N.I.10311.

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