

## HABSBERG QUEENS OF POLAND AND MUSIC AT THE POLISH ROYAL COURT AT THE END OF 16TH AND IN THE 17TH CENTURIES

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### *Abstract*

The main heroines of the article are Austrian archduchesses, wives of Kings of Poland: Anna and Constance of Styria, two consecutive wives of Sigismund III Vasa (1595–98, 1605–31), Cecilia Renata, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand II and wife to Ladislaus IV (1637–44), and Eleanora Maria Josefa, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III and wife to Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1670–73). The main objective is to show how the royal marriages strengthened cultural ties between the Polish royal court and the courts from which the archduchesses arrived. Special emphasis is placed on the gradual »Italianization« of music culture at the Austrian and Polish courts, and its significance for the adaptation and dissemination of opera as a genre in Poland.

**Keywords:** 17th century, Poland, court music, court opera, royal marriage, Anna of Styria, Constance of Styria, Sigismund III Vasa, Cecilia Renata Habsburg, Ferdinand II Habsburg, Ladislaus IV Vasa, Eleanora Maria Josefa, Ferdinand III Habsburg, Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki

**Ključne riječi:** 17. stoljeće, Poljska, dvorska glazba, dvorska opera, kraljevsko vjenčanje, Ana Štajerska, Konstanca Štajerska, Sigismund III. Vasa, Cecilia Renata Habsburg, Ferdinand II. Habsburg, Ladislav IV. Vasa, Eleanora Maria Josefa, Ferdinand III. Habsburg, Mihael Korybut Wiśniowiecki

Although the history of marriages between Polish monarchs and archduchesses from the House of Habsburg starts as early as the middle of the 15th century, when King Casimir IV Jagiellon married Elisabeth, daughter of Albrecht II of Habsburg and Elisabeth of Luxembourg, the unions most significant from a music historian's perspective were concluded at the end of the 16th and in the 17th centuries. During that period, three members of the House of Habsburg were

queen consorts married to elective kings of Poland from the Vasa dynasty, whose reigns were the heyday of musical life at the Polish royal court. Two successive wives of Sigismund III Vasa (King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania in the years 1587–1632) were Anna and Constance of Styria, who had moved to Poland from Graz and were daughters of Archduke Charles II of Austria (d. 1590) and Maria Anna of Bavaria (daughter of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, the patron of the composer Orlando di Lasso). Anna was Queen of Poland from 1592 until her death in 1598, while Constance reigned from 1605 until 1631. The first-born son and successor of Sigismund and Anna, King Ladislaus IV Vasa (who succeeded his father on the throne and ruled in the years 1633–48) married Archduchess Cecilia Renata, daughter of Archduke Ferdinand (Ladislaus' uncle), who was later crowned as Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, and his first wife Maria Anna of Bavaria. Cecilia's reign in Poland lasted from 1637 until her death in 1644. In the second half of the 17th century, Eleonora Maria of Austria, daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III and Eleonora Gonzaga, became the last but one Habsburg queen on the Polish throne. Crowned in 1670 after her marriage to King Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki, she left Poland two years after the death of her royal spouse (in 1673) and married Charles V Duke of Lorraine in 1678.

In the history of music at the Polish royal court the period from the late 16th until the middle of the 17th centuries is distinguished by the domination of Italian music in terms of origin or style, performed mainly by Italians recruited and employed by Sigismund III and Ladislaus IV. At that time, being Italian was synonymous with being the most up-to-date, sophisticated and valued in the court culture of the day. Across Europe, dukes and monarchs competed in recruiting the most famous virtuosos and composers from Italy. In the case of Poland, researchers have devoted much attention to efforts made by Sigismund III to entice the most renowned Italian musicians to work at his court, including famous composers (such as Annibale Stabile, Luca Marenzio, Giulio Cesare Gabussi, Asprilio Pacelli or Giovanni Francesco Anerio).<sup>1</sup>

As a comparison of the royal ensemble of the Polish king, reestablished in 1595, with its contemporary equivalents maintained by Emperor Rudolph in Prague and by the archduke in Graz reveals, according to Polish musicologists Anna Szweykowska and Zygmunt M. Szweykowski, »Sigismund III left [...] the Habsburgs far behind«<sup>2</sup> as regards the percentage of Italians. In the case of Ladislaus IV, Polish musicologists, theatre and literature scholars focused their attention in particular on the royal court theatre, which between 1635 and 1648 staged

<sup>1</sup> For more on the subject see: Anna SZWEYKOWSKA – Zygmunt M. SZWEYKOWSKI: *Włosi w kapeli królewskiej polskich Wazów* [Italians in the royal chapel of Polish Vasa kings], Kraków 1997; Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: *Muzyczne dwory polskich Wazów* [Musical courts of the Polish Vasas], Warszawa 2007.

<sup>2</sup> SZWEYKOWSKA – SZWEYKOWSKI: *op. cit.*, 22.

at least 10 *drammi per musica* with original Italian libretti and music written in Poland. It has been strongly emphasized by theatre historian Karolina Targosz-Kretowa that »the sequence of operas staged during Ladislaus' reign was long and was interrupted only sporadically, while an opera performed in Vienna two years earlier remained a single instance for many years. As far as the reception of Italian opera is concerned, the Polish court was well ahead of all other German courts and 10 years ahead of the French court.«<sup>3</sup> However, at this point it should be added that at the time when Sigismund Vasa was assembling his Italian court chapel in the 1590s, the number of musicians at the court in Graz dwindled slightly after the death of Archduke Charles and continued in a reduced state until his son Ferdinand came of age. Nonetheless, before this period of relative decline and shortly afterwards (during the first two decades of the 17th century), the Graz court belonged to the most renowned centres of music life north of the Alps, in terms of the quality of music performed there and the participation of both Italian musicians and German musicians educated in Italy. As regards music and theatre at the imperial courts in Vienna and in Prague in the first half of the 17th century, new research has revealed that although no music-related documents survive,<sup>4</sup> it is evident that operas and stage performances involving music were performed there.<sup>5</sup> It appears that the richness and variety of opera performances during the reign of Leopold I, relatively well-documented by extant scores and libretti,

<sup>3</sup> Karolina TARGOSZ-KRETOWA: *Teatr dworski Władysława IV (1635–1648)* [The court theatre of Ladislaus IV (1635–1648)], Kraków 1965, p. 159. The author ignores performances that had been staged earlier at German courts, such as Torgau, Salzburg and Prague. However, they were one-off events or were connected with earlier productions of stage works in Italy.

<sup>4</sup> Anyway, the music of the operas performed at the court of Ladislaus IV has not survived either. The extant documents are the librettos or their summaries.

<sup>5</sup> A large bibliography contains among others: Herbert SEIFERT: *Die Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof im 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikwissenschaft, 25), Tutzing 1985; ID.: *Der Sig-prangende Hochzeit-Gott. Hochzeitsfeste am Wiener Hof der Habsburger und ihre Allegorik 1622–1699* (dramma per musica, 2), Wien 1988; ID.: *Die Comoedie der Hof-Musici 1625: Die erste Oper in Wien?*, *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 42 (1993), 77–88; ID.: *Das erste Musikdrama des Kaiserhofs*, in: *Österreichische Musik. Musik in Österreich. Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte Mitteleuropas, Theophil Antonicek zum 60. Geburtstag*, Elisabeth Theresia Hilscher (ed.) (Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikwissenschaft, 34), Tutzing 1998, 99–111; ID.: *Das erste Libretto des Kaiserhofs*, *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 46 (1998), 35–75; ID.: *The Beginnings of Sacred Dramatic Musical Works at the Imperial Court of Vienna: Sacred and Moral Opera, Oratorio and Sepolcro*, in: *L'oratorio musicale italiano e i suoi contesti (secc. XVII–XVIII)*, Atti del congresso internazionale Perugia, Sagra Musicale Umbra, 18–20 settembre 1997, Paola Besutti (ed.) (Quaderni della Rivista Italiana di Musicologia, 35), Firenze 2002, 489–511; ID.: *The Establishment, Development and Decline of Operatic Institutions in Austria*, in: Melania Bucciarelli, Norbert Dubowy and Reinhard Strohm (eds.), *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, vol. 1: *Institutions and Ceremonies*, Berlin 2006, 21–49; (see also ID.: *Texte zur Musikdramatik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Aufsätze und Vorträge*, Matthias J. Pernersterfer (ed.) (Summa Summarum, 2), Holitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, Wien 2014); Stanislav BOHADLO: *Na tropie pierwszych wystawień drama per musica w Pradze. Hipotezy w świetle nowych materiałów źródłowych* [On the track of the first staging of drama per musica in Prague. Hypotheses in light of new source materials], *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Sectio L Artes*, 9,1 (2011), 31–43.

eclipsed earlier accomplishments and diverted scholars' interest from the times of Emperor Ferdinand II and his second wife Eleonora Gonzaga, as well as the reign of Emperor Ferdinand III.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of his reign, Sigismund III probably devoted little attention to his court chapel and was basically satisfied with the line-up inherited from his predecessor, King Stephen Báthory. Sigismund's precarious position at the time left little time for fostering his interest in music as he had to wage war over the Polish throne against Archduke Maximilian Habsburg, face political challenges at home, implement financial reforms to fill the empty royal treasury and finally decide whether to stay in Poland or return to his homeland and claim the hereditary throne following the death of his father, King John III Vasa of Sweden.

It is likely that at the time of his marriage to Anna of Styria, five years after assuming the elective throne of Poland, Sigismund was still uncertain whether Poland would be his permanent country of residence. The celebrations of their wedding took place in May and June of 1592. They started in Vienna, where the marriage was concluded by proxy, and continued in Cracow, where the king officially confirmed the marriage and Anna was crowned as queen of Poland. During the wedding celebrations in Cracow the royal ensemble performed, as well as chapels of high-ranking noblemen, including magnates familiar with Italian culture: Mikołaj Wolski and Piotr and Zygmunt Myszkowski (the last of whom was adopted by Vincenzo Gonzaga shortly afterwards and added the name of the Gonzaga family to his own). In particular, the attention of the participants was attracted by the women's orchestra of Jadwiga Padniewska, the wife of the castellan of Oświęcim. The bride's entourage included musicians, dancers and *commedia dell'arte* performers from Graz (one of the vocalists was Pietro Antonio Bianco, a tenor who would later become chapel master in the service of Archduke Ferdinand). The attractions included tournaments and »choreographed court dances«; at least one of the latter was choreographed by Ambrosio Bontempo, the Italian dancing master of the Graz court. The performance consisted not only of dances, but also of sung passages. Italian newcomers from Graz staged a *commedia dell'arte* in the Senators' Hall of the royal residence on the Wawel Hill, while Cracow's Market Square became the scene of an equestrian tournament described as a mask chase, resembling similar events organized in Italy and known as *giostra* or *sbarra*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Herbert SEIFERT: *Rapporti musicali tra i Gonzaga e le corti asburgiche austriache*, in: *I Gonzaga e l'Impero. Itinerari dello spettacolo*, Umberto Artioli – Cristina Grazioli (eds.) (Storia dello Spettacolo. Fonti, 4), Firenze 2005, 219-229. See also Andrew H. WEAVER: *Sacred Music as Public Image for Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. Representing the Counter-Reformation Monarch at the End of the Thirty Years' War*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Among others: *Kronika mieszczanina krakowskiego* [The chronicle of a Cracow citizen], Henryk Barycz (ed.), Kraków 1930, 126 ff.; Michael HEBERER: *Aegyptiaca servitus: Das ist Warhafte Beschreibung einer Dreyjähigen Dienstbarkeit*, Heidelberg 1610, 526–567; Romano MORLUPINO: *Il [...] Successo delle Nozze di Sigismondo III [...] con la Principessa Anna*, Udine 1592. See also Anna SZWEYKOWSKA: Wi-

Both Italian-style choreographed dances (*balletti*) and *commedia dell'arte* were to remain staple entertainment at the courts of Polish kings throughout the 17th century. As far as *balletto* is concerned, it should be added that from the 1640s onwards, when the second wife of Ladislaus IV (and of his successor John II Casimir Vasa) Marie Louise Gonzaga of Nevers was the queen of Poland, French-style performances were organized in addition to Italian ones (the former also enjoyed popularity at court in the late 17th century during the reign of John III Sobieski and his wife Marie d'Arquien). As for *commedia dell'arte*, it continued to amuse courtiers for the rest of the century, much to the outrage of successive papal nuncios delegated to the courts of Polish kings and of royal secretaries from Italy, who considered such low-brow entertainment to be incongruent with the majesty of the monarch.<sup>8</sup>

In December 1593, King John III Vasa of Sweden died and Sigismund travelled to Sweden with his court, where he was crowned King of Sweden. Because of his Catholicism, he failed to marshal sufficient support to impose his rule on this Protestant country and returned to Cracow in the autumn of 1594. Shortly afterwards, he took steps to reorganize his court, including the employment of Italian musicians. As a result of recruitment missions undertaken by royal agents in Rome, two groups of musicians from Italy arrived in Cracow in 1595, recruited mostly in Rome with the support of high-ranking hierarchs of the Church. It should be emphasized that in his search for musicians Sigismund focused on the Eternal City and not on Venice, a city that most musicians working at the court in Graz were either born in or had connections to. As far as randomly preserved sources allow us to conclude, at that time the transfer of musicians between Cracow and the Styria courts was very limited. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Vincenzo Gigli, an organist and composer who moved from Graz to Cracow in 1595 (known in Poland under the Latinized name Lilius) was a Roman.<sup>9</sup> For a historian of music, Gigli's significance consists in the fact that he compiled an anthology of compositions by members of the ensemble of Sigismund III (a volume titled *Melodiae sacrae*, dedicated to Archduke Ferdinand and published in

dowiska baletowe na dworze Zygmunta III (4 czerwca 1592, 13 oraz 18 grudnia 1605) [Ballet spectacles at the court of King Sigismund III (4 June 1592, 13 and 18 December 1605)], *Muzyka*, 11/1 (1966), 27–36; Alicja FALNIOWSKA-GRADOWSKA – Walter LEITSCH: Gonitwa w maszkarach na Rynku Krakowskim (7 czerwca 1592) [A race held during a masque on the Market Place in Cracow (7 June 1592)], *Rocznik Krakowski*, 51 (1987), 31–56; SZWEYKOWSKA – SZWEYKOWSKI: *op. cit.*, 16–21.

<sup>8</sup> See SZWEYKOWSKA–SZWEYKOWSKI: *op. cit.*, 207; Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: Muzyka w otoczeniu Jana III Sobieskiego [Music in the entourage of John III Sobieski], in: *Primus inter pares. Pierwszy wśród równych, czyli opowieść o królu Janie III*, Dominika Walawender-Musz (ed.), Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, Warszawa 2013, 152.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: The Music-Related Contacts of Polish Vasas' Royal Courts with Rome and Vienna, in: Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska – Lech Sokół (eds.): *Poland and Artistic Culture of Western Europe. 14th-20th Century*, Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2014 (Polish Studies – Transdisciplinary Perspectives, 6, eds. Krzysztof Zajac – Jarosław Fazan), 178.



Cracow in 1604).<sup>10</sup> Vincenzo Lilius spent the rest of his life in Poland, while his son Franciszek, also an organist and composer, became naturalized even to the point of being considered a Polish musician. On the other hand, there are no reasons to believe that the queen of Poland from the House of Habsburg (or her family) influenced the appointment of Luca Marenzio to the position of the royal chapel master at the helm of Sigismund's Italian ensemble.<sup>11</sup> The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that Marenzio's short stay at the Polish court (probably not exceeding two years from November 1595 onwards) had an impact on the reception of his music in Graz and later in Vienna. During his stint in the service of the Polish king, this outstanding composer of madrigals wrote admirable polychoral sacred music. Some of his compositions have survived in unique copies in manuscript choir-books written in Graz at the beginning of the 17th century (currently preserved in the National Library in Vienna).

The exchange of musicians and repertoire between the Polish royal courts and the courts of Austrian Habsburgs went on uninterrupted for most of the 17th century, albeit with varying intensity. In both centres of musical life, Italian musicians and Italian (at least in style) repertoire were considered to be highly desirable assets.<sup>12</sup> As for musicians who performed in the ensemble of Sigismund III and

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 187. See also EAD.: *Melodiae sacrae* (Kraków 1604) – ślad muzycznych związków dworów Zygmunta III Wazy i arcyksięcia Ferdynanda z Grazu [*Melodiae Sacrae* (Cracow 1604) – a Vestige of the musical ties between the courts of King Sigismund Vasa and Archduke Ferdinand of Graz], *Gazeta antykwareczna*, 4 (1998), 11, 34–36.

<sup>11</sup> On the stay of Marenzio at the Polish royal court see: Marco BIZZARINI: *Marenzio. La carriera di un musicista tra Rinascimento e Controriforma*. Promozione Franciacorta, Rodengo Saiano 1998 (English edition: *Luca Marenzio: the career of a musician between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation*, transl. James Chater, Ashgate, Aldershot 2003), SZWEYKOWSKA–SZWEYKOWSKI, *op. cit.*, 24–30; Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA, Annibale Stabile i początki włoskiej kapeli Zygmunta III Wazy [Annibale Stabile and the beginnings of the Italian cappella of Sigismund III Vasa], *Muzyka* 46/2 (2001), 93–99; EAD., Muzycy z Cappella Giulia i z innych rzymskich zespołów muzycznych w Rzeczypospolitej czasów Wazów [Musicians from the Cappella Giulia and from other Roman music ensembles active in the Commonwealth during Vasa times], *Muzyka*, 49/1 (2004), 33–52; EAD., *Missa super Iniquos odio habui* – warszawska msza w formie echa Luki Marenzia? [*Missa super Iniquos odio habui* – a Warsaw Mass in echo form by Luca Marenzio?], *Muzyka*, 49/3 (2004), 3–39.

<sup>12</sup> Hellmut FEDERHOFER: Graz Court Musicians and their Contributions to the *Parnassus musicus Ferdinandeus* (1615), *Musica Disciplina*, 9 (1955), 167–244; ID.: Musikalische Beziehungen zwischen den Höfen Erzherzog Ferdinands von Innerösterreich und König Sigismunds III. von Polen, in: *The Book of the First International Musicological Congress Devoted to the Works of Frederick Chopin. Warszawa 16<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> February 1960*, Zofia Lissa (ed.), Warszawa 1963, 522–526; Hieronim FEICHT: Musikalische Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und Altpolen und Grazer Beiträge zur Polnischen Musikgeschichte, in: *Festschrift der Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz*, Graz 1963, 121–128, reprint in: Hieronim FEICHT: *Studia nad muzyką polskiego renesansu i baroku*, joint edition, Kraków 1980, 518–528; Hellmut FEDERHOFER: *Musikpflege und Musiker am Grazer Habsburgerhof der Erzherzöge Karl und Ferdinand von Innerösterreich (1564–1619)*, Mainz 1967; Herbert SEIFERT: Polonica–Austriaca. Schlaglichter auf polnisch-österreichische Musikbeziehungen vom 17. bis ins 19. Jahrhundert, in: *Muzyka wobec tradycji. Idee – dzieło – recepcja*, Szymon Paczkowski (ed.), Warsaw 2004, 249–258; Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: The Music-Related Contacts of Polish Vasas' Royal Courts with Rome and Vienna, in: *Poland and Artistic Culture of Western Europe. 14th-20th Century*, Barbara

were later transferred to the court in Graz, the most brilliant career was pursued by organist and composer Giovanni Valentini, who joined the ensemble of Archduke Ferdinand in 1614 after 10 years spent in Poland, having already seen a considerable amount of his output appear in print. Later he moved along with the court to Vienna where he assumed the post of the imperial *maestro di cappella*, came to be renowned as a composer of various genres of music, and was responsible for the musical education of the future emperors Ferdinand III and Leopold I, who would later be known as not only patrons, but also composers of music.<sup>13</sup>

It appears that in the 1590s and shortly afterwards, the processes of the Italianization of the court cultures in Cracow and in Graz were taking place parallel to each other. When Archduchess Anna arrived in Poland, Italian was a language known to the king, several magnates and a handful of Italian musicians and other artists active at court at the time. According to an entry in the diary of Giovanni Paolo Mucante, concerning his stay in Poland in 1596-97, Anna herself did not understand Italian. However, she spoke Latin, Spanish, German and some Polish.<sup>14</sup> It is justified to presume that the level of familiarity with the Italian language at the Polish court had significantly improved by the time of Sigismund's second wedding. The process was greatly enhanced by the presence of artists imported by the king from Italy: architects, sculptors, painters and musicians in particular, whose number in the royal ensemble oscillated around 20 in the period from 1595 (a similar number of Italian musicians resided at the court until the middle of the 17th century; even later, when their number dwindled, Italians contributed to musical life in the circle of the Polish royalty. During the period in question, Italian was understood by many courtiers, not all of them native speakers, and certainly by at least some of the Polish musicians). In the late 16th and the early 17th centuries, the Graz court was increasingly familiar with the Italian language, which apart from Archduke Ferdinand's predilection for Italian culture was due to the marriage of his sister Maria Maddalena with Cosimo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany.<sup>15</sup>

Przybyszewska-Jarmińska – Lech Sokół (eds.), Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2014 (Polish Studies – Transdisciplinary Perspectives, 6, eds. Krzysztof Zajas – Jarosław Fazan), 157–203.

<sup>13</sup> See among others FEDERHOFER: *Musikpflege und Musiker...*, 219–225; SZWEYKOWSKA-SZWEYKOWSKI: *op. cit.*, 54–57; Steven SAUNDERS, *Cross, Sword, and Lyre. Sacred Music at the Imperial Court of Ferdinand II of Habsburg*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1995, *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> According to an account by Giovanni Mucante, the papal master of ceremonies who lived in Poland in the years 1596–97, of the negotiations concerning the formation of an alliance against Turkey: 'La regina [...] Anna [...] Intende (come dicono) la lingua latina, la spagnola, todesca et anco la polacca, ma non parla se non la todesca et la spagnola' [Queen . . . Anna . . . comprehends (spoken) Latin, Spanish, German and also Polish, but speaks only German and Spanish], see Jan W. WOŚ: *I due soggiorni del card. legato E. Caetani a Varsavia (1596-1597)*, Florence 1982, 34.

<sup>15</sup> See Katrin KELLER: *Erzherzogin Maria von Innerösterreich (1551–1608). Zwischen Habsburg und Wittelsbach*, Böhlau Verlag, Wien–Köln–Weimar 2012, 171-196 (chapter: Eine viel beschäftigte Mutter: Verheiratung der Töchter, Versorgung der Söhne).

The Italianization of musical life at Austrian courts, which gathered momentum when Ferdinand became Emperor, was obviously facilitated by his marriage to Eleonora Gonzaga, a sister of the Duke of Mantua. Whether in Vienna or in Prague, it was the empress who organized ballets and was involved in operatic activity. Similarly, the kings of Poland left the organization of dance and ballet events to women – usually their wives, sometimes sisters. In all cases, the character of the event reflected the queen's background. The fact that Austrian archduchesses were particularly fond of ballets in Italian style is confirmed not only by the mask chase used as part of the entertainments for Anna and Sigismund's wedding. Similar games were organized when the marriage of Anna's sister Constance was celebrated in Cracow in 1605, as well as in Warsaw (where the royal residence moved in the 17th century) in 1637, when Anna and Constance's niece Cecilia Renata and King Ladislaus IV were celebrating their union.<sup>16</sup>

Austrian scholars have no doubt about the tremendous influence of Empress Eleonora of Gonzaga on the artistic life at the Viennese court, especially dancing *balletti* and *dramma per musica*. Shortly after the arrival of the new empress in Vienna, ballet featuring some sung dramatic parts became the most popular entertainment at court. At least from 1617 in Prague and from 1624 in Vienna, a variety of music-dramatic performances, differing widely in terms of genre and scale, were presented there, but – as has already been mentioned – unfortunately no scores or libretti have survived to our time. It is known that in the wake of the War of the Mantuan Succession, the Viennese court afforded shelter for a large group of individuals from Eleonora's former court in Mantua, including musicians, actors and dancers involved in staging *balletti* and operatic performances (e.g. the troupe *I Fedeli* headed by Giovanni Battista Andreini).<sup>17</sup>

The Polish prince Ladislaus strengthened his ties with his Habsburg relatives during his Grand Tour of Europe in the years 1624–25.<sup>18</sup> In Florence, he was entertained by his aunt Maria Maddalena, who after Cosimo de' Medici's death served as the Regent of Tuscany jointly with her mother-in-law Christina of Lorraine (for Ladislaus' honour among others two *drammi per musica* were performed – *La Regina Sant'Orsola* and *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*, and printed with a dedication to him).

In Vienna, Polish Prince's hosts were his uncle Ferdinand II and Eleonora of Gonzaga. Ladislaus' contacts with his extended family and especially the theatrical performances he witnessed during his travels played the crucial role in bringing opera to the Polish court. The first-ever confirmed performance of a *dramma per*

<sup>16</sup> SZWEJKOWSKA: *Widowiska...*, 28–29.

<sup>17</sup> SEIFERT: *Die Comoedie...*; BOHADLO: *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Adam PRZYBOŚ [ed.]: *Podróż królewicza Władysława Wazy do krajów Europy Zachodniej w latach 1624-1625* [The Journey of Prince Ladislaus Vasa to Western European Countries in the years 1624-1625], Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1977; TARGOSZ-KRETOWA: *op. cit.*, 36–63.





Fig. 1: *La Regina Sant'Orsola*, [Firenze 1625], title page

*musica* in Poland, which took place during the reign of Sigismund III, but at the initiative of Prince Ladislaus, was the staging of a *favola* (narrative) about Acis and Galatea at the Royal Castle in Warsaw on 27 February 1628.<sup>19</sup> The opera was an

<sup>19</sup> Walter LEITSCH: Nowo odnaleziony polski program operowy z 1628 roku [A newly discovered Polish opera programme from 1628], *Muzyka*, 43/2 (1998), 117–128.



Fig. 2: *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*, [Firenze] 1625, title page

extended version – adapted to new circumstances – of a composition used as part of the festivities attached to the wedding of Ferdinando Gonzaga and Caterina de' Medici in Mantua in 1617 (the work in question was *favola maritima Gli amori d'Acie e Galatea* to a libretto by Gabriello Chiabrera and set to music by Santi Orlandi, who was the *Kapellmeister* at the court of the Duke of Mantua).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Alina ŻÓRAWSKA-WITKOWSKA: *Warszawska Galatea* (1628) – fakty i domysły [The Warsaw *Galatea* (1628), facts and supposition], *Muzyka*, 48/4 (2003), 95–118; ID.: *Dramma per musica* at the court

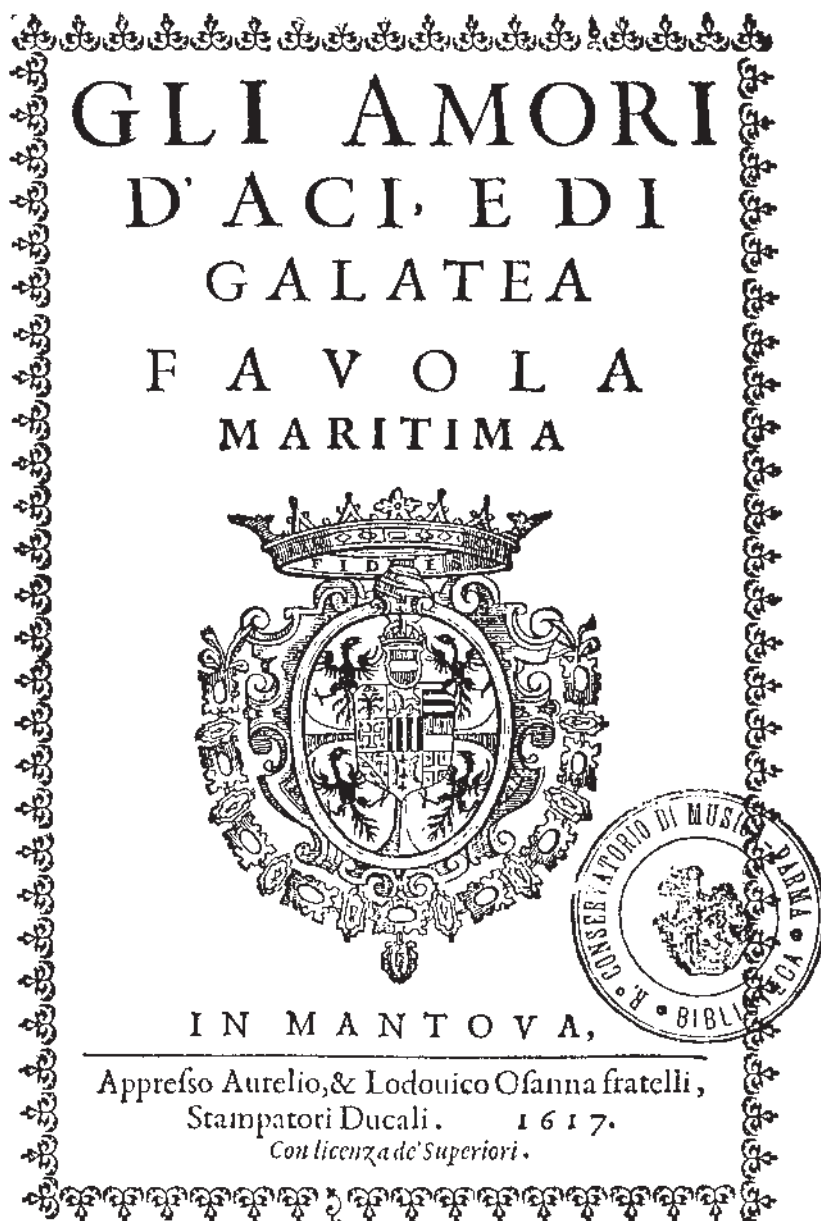


Fig. 3: *Gli amori d'Acì e Galatea*, Mantova 1617, title page

## Summáriuſz Fabuły

Zacnego y ślicznego Młodzieńca ták  
názwanego Aci.

Odprawowana z miłym śpiewaniem w Wárszawie  
dnia 27. Lutego w Roku 1628

Przed Wápeſtatem

Naiáſnieyſzego y Wiezwyćieżonego

Z Y G M V N T A III  
Krola Polskiego y Szwedz-  
kiego &c. &c.



W W A R S Z A W I E

W Drukárni Janá Kossowſkiego J. K. M. Ty-  
pográphá / Roku Pánſkiego 1628.

Fig. 4: Sumariusz Fabuły zacnego i ślicznego młodzieńca tak nazwanego Aci, Warszawa 1628, title page

It is almost certain that the score of the opera, as well as part of the troupe involved in the Warsaw performance (the stage designer is known to have been brought from Mantua) was imported from Vienna, probably with the assistance of Empress Eleonora. It is unclear whether it was Ladislaus or Queen Constance who turned to her for help. It is justified to suppose, however, that courtiers maintained by the queen were among the performers, including the dancing master Georg Dobna.<sup>21</sup> The presence of a dancing master, probably an Austrian, in Queen Constance's circle lends credibility to the conjecture that she also organized choreographed dances at court. Unfortunately, no reports have been found to date to confirm this hypothesis.

Scholars have discovered more about the period in which another Habsburg archduchess, Cecilia Renata, reigned over Poland. Born in 1611 to Ferdinand (then Archduke) and his wife Maria Anna of Bavaria, she had been exposed to Italian culture since childhood. Both in Graz and in Vienna, she would listen to sacred music performed on a daily basis and during church festivities by the ensemble of her father – a staunch Catholic – consisting mostly of Italian singers and instrumentalists. During the carnival, on the birthdays of the members of the imperial family and on important dynastic and state occasions, Cecilia Renata not only participated in dancing events and *balletto* performances organized by her stepmother Empress Eleonora,<sup>22</sup> but also took an active part in the preparations.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to her arrival in Warsaw, three operas had already been premiered by the court theatre of Ladislaus IV.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the most momentous achievement in the history of this theatre was part of the celebrations of the wedding of Ladislaus and Cecilia Renata in September 1637 and consisted in the performance of the newly composed opera *La S. Cecilia* (with a libretto by Virgilio Puccitelli, the

of Ladislaus IV Vasa (1627-1648), in: Melania Bucciarelli, Norbert Dubowy and Reinhard Strohm (eds.), *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, vol. 1: *Institutions and Ceremonies*, Berlin 2006, 21–49. See also Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: Włoskie wesela arcyksiążąt z Grazu a początki opery w Polsce, *Muzyka*, 50/3 (2005), 17–27.

<sup>21</sup> Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: Muzyka i finanse. Nieznane źródła do dziejów życia muzycznego na dworze królewskim polskich Wazów [Music and finance. Unknown sources for the history of musical life at the king's court of the Polish Vasas], part I, *Muzyka*, 44/1 (1999), 95.

<sup>22</sup> Examples include the stage events during Prince Ladislaus' stay in Vienna on 27 June 1624 and on 27 February 1631, the ballet organized as part of the wedding celebrations of Cecilia Renata's brother, Ferdinand (see SZWEYKOWSKA: *Imprezy baletowe...*, 15) and the paly performed at court during the carnival on 5 February 1636 (see SEIFERT: *Die Oper...*, 437–438).

<sup>23</sup> A *balletto* performed by her ladies-in-waiting, in which Archduchess Cecilia Renata led the dancers by choreographing their steps, was staged as part of the celebrations of her brother's Ferdinand coronation held in Ravensburg. An account of the celebrations is found in a handwritten *avviso* dated 6 January 1637, preserved in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (henceforth referred to as BAV), Ottob. Latini 3340 I, c. 36r.

<sup>24</sup> A play of unknown authorship titled *Giuditta* was staged in Warsaw in May of 1635, followed by *Dafne* produced in December of the same year; in September of 1636, a play titled *Il ratto di Helena* was performed in Vilnius with text by Virgilio Puccitelli and music (lost) by Marco Scacchi.



royal secretary, and music written almost certainly by the royal chapel master Marco Scacchi). The idea of staging a music-drama during pre-nuptial celebrations was not new. In this case, it appears significant that twelve years earlier during his sojourn in Florence, Prince Ladislaus Vasa saw a performance of *La Regina Sant'Orsola*, an opera written for the wedding of Claudia de' Medici and Federico, Duke of Urbino,<sup>25</sup> celebrated in the capital of the Duchy of Tuscany in 1621. As is well known, after Federico's premature death Claudia married Leopold V, Archduke of Tirol and another Ladislaus' uncle of the House of Habsburg. Allegedly, it was Archduchess Claudia who suggested a religious subject of the opera to be performed during celebrations in Warsaw (or at least this is what Virgilio Puccitelli wrote in a dedication preceding the printed edition of the libretto). In 1637, Claudia, then Leopold's widow, was the most celebrated member of the imperial family present at Cecilia Renata and Ladislaus' wedding.<sup>26</sup>

The contribution of the bride's family to the celebrations was by no means limited to suggesting the subject matter of the opera. The sources confirm that some of the entertainers came from the Viennese court.<sup>27</sup> Since the court chapel of Ladislaus IV had no women members, two singers from Mantua arriving 'on loan' from the Emperor's court, Margherita Basile Cattanea and Lucia Rubini, aroused special interest (the latter of the two arrived accompanied by her husband Giovanni Battista Rubini, a violinist).<sup>28</sup> Apart from the above-mentioned performers, Cecilia Renata's entourage was joined by German tenor singer and lutenist Johann Nauwach,<sup>29</sup> arriving as a valet. The possibility cannot be excluded that Archduchess Claudia took with her on the journey to Poland the Italian Franciscan monk, singer (tenor) and composer Vincenzo Scapitta da Valenza.<sup>30</sup> In addition, it is almost certain that the Austrian side contributed to the entertainments by dispatching the Italian dancing master and choreographer Santi Ventura to Warsaw.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: *Włoskie wesela...*, 20–21.

<sup>26</sup> Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: *Dramma per Musica at the Court of the Polish Vasa Kings in the Accounts of Foreign Visitors*, in: Norbert Dubowy, Corinna Herr, Alina Żórawska -Witkowska (eds.): *Italian Opera in Central Europe 1614–1780*, vol. 3: *Opera Subjects and European Relationships*, in conjunction with Dorothea Schröder, Berlin 2007, 205–217.

<sup>27</sup> TARGOSZ-KRETOWA: *op. cit.*, 267; SEIFERT: *Polonica-Austriaca...*, 252.

<sup>28</sup> TARGOSZ-KRETOWA: *op. cit.*, 267; SEIFERT: *Polonica-Austriaca...*, 252.

<sup>29</sup> SEIFERT: *Polonica-Austriaca...*, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: Wojciech Dembołęcki, Andrzej Chyliński, Vincenzo Scapitta et al. Franciscan Musicians in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th Century, in: Ivano Cavallini – Harry White (eds.): *Musicologie sans frontieres / Muzikologija bez granica / Musicology without Frontiers. Svečani zbornik za Stanislava Tuksara / Essays in Honour of Stanislav Tuksar*, (Muzikološki zbornici, 13), Croatian Musicological Society, Zagreb 2010, 103–106.

<sup>31</sup> PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: *Włoskie wesela...*, 25–26.

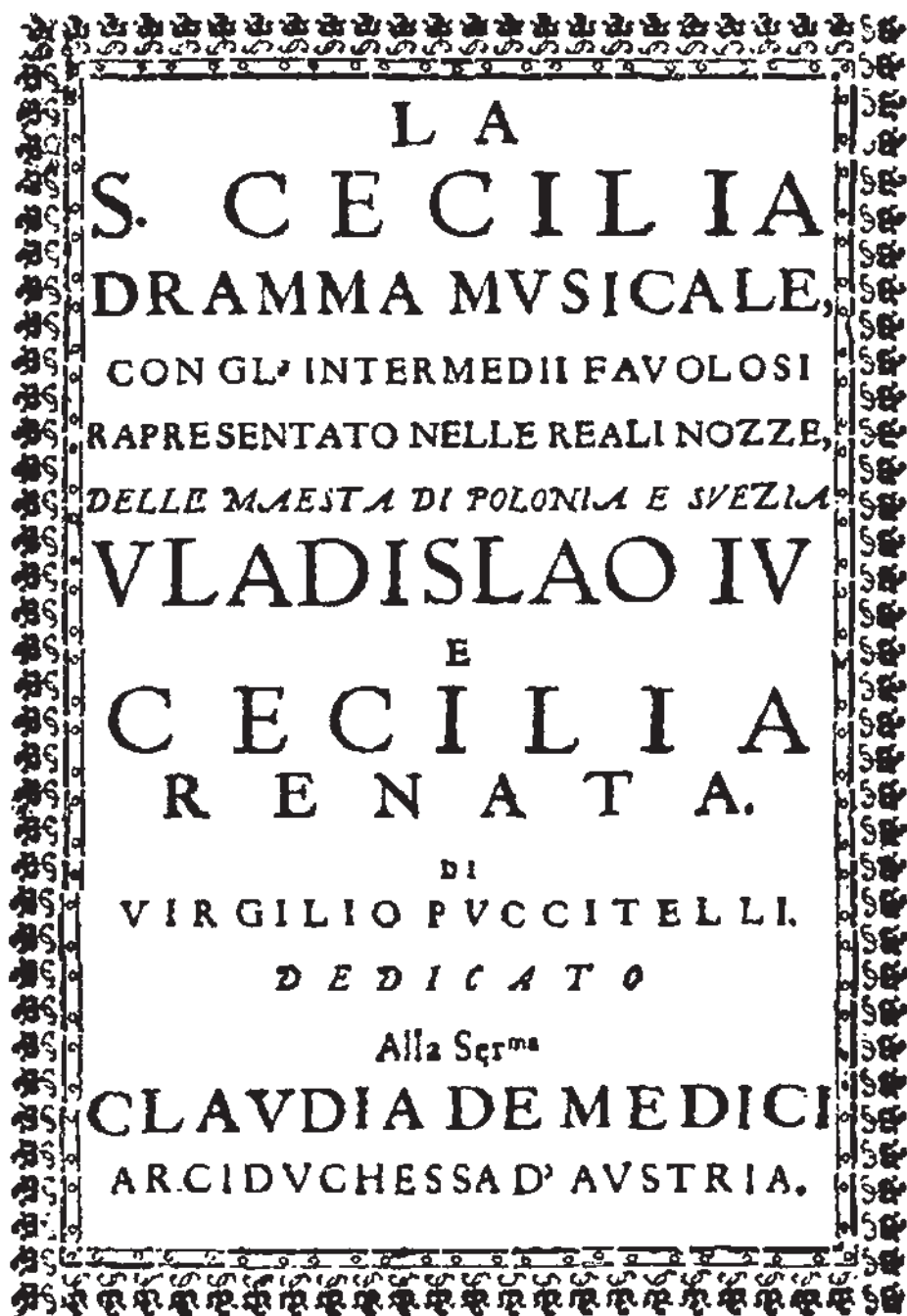


Fig. 5: *La S. Cecilia*, [Varsavia 1637], title page

During Cecilia Renata's lifetime, the performances of one opera were resumed<sup>32</sup> and further four productions were premiered.<sup>33</sup> Like Eleonora Gonzaga in Vienna, the Polish queen assumed responsibility for the *balletti* organized at court and often danced in them herself. Unfortunately, only a few titles and programmes are extant today. For example, during the carnival of 1638, a spectacle titled *L'Africa supplicante* was staged, Italian in style and with sung dramatic parts (the title part was performed by Margherita Basile Cattanea), in choreography prepared by Santi Ventura. Another *balletto* in similar stylistic vogue, titled *La maga sdegnata*, was choreographed for the carnival of 1640. Whenever the queen became pregnant, her role of *balletti* manager was taken over by the sister of Ladislaus IV, Anna Caterina Constance. Her activities in this field were over in 1642, when she married Philip Wilhelm, Duke of Neuburg, and left for Düsseldorf. As the newlyweds bid their farewell to Warsaw, two *balletti* were staged in June of 1642, one of them prepared by the bride and the other by the bridegroom. Unique copies of the printed programmes of those *balletti* remained in oblivion for centuries, kept in the library of the Skokloster Castle in Sweden, and were not brought to light until recently.<sup>34</sup> As for the years that followed, only very general information is available about the ballets which entertained the audiences at the Polish royal court during the carnival. Occasionally, we come across information that the queen herself participated in the preparations. Even the last carnival of her life, spent by Cecilia Renata in Vilnius, was not short on ballet performances. A *balletto* was performed on 7 February 1644 and an opera titled *Andromeda* was staged on 6 March; three weeks later, on 24 March, Cecilia Renata died.

During his final years, after marrying the French princess Marie Louise Gonzaga of Nevers, Ladislaus IV is known to have supported two more operatic productions. The former of the two performances, *Le nozze d'Amore e di Psiche*<sup>35</sup> staged on 15 March 1646, was one of the highlights of the celebrations held in Gdańsk to welcome the new queen on her arrival from France. It was the first-ever operatic performance in this city. The new queen was also interested in *balletti*, but

<sup>32</sup> *Il ratto di Helena* (1638), libretto by Virgilio Puccitelli, music (lost) by Marco Scacchi.

<sup>33</sup> *Narciso trasformato* (1638), *Armida abbandonata* (1641), *L'Enea* (1641), *Andromeda* (1644). In all cases libretti by Puccitelli and music (lost) probably by Scacchi.

<sup>34</sup> *Attioni sceniche* [*Apollo festante, Tancredi dolente, Achille ritrovato, Europa rapita*], *rappresentate nelle reali nozze della Serenissima Infanta Anna Catherina Costanza, principessa di Polonia e Svezia* [...] col Serenissimo Filippo Guglielmo [...] duca di Neuburg, [Varsavia 1642] – libretto by Puccitelli, author of music (lost) unknown; *Atlante languente, introduittione di balletto di dodici eroi*, [Varsavia 1642] – authorship unknown, music lost. See Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: Źródła do dziejów muzyki na dworach polskich Wazów ze zbiorów Zamku Skokloster (Szwecja) [The sources for research into the history of music at the court of the Polish kings from the Vasa dynasty preserved in the collection of the Skokloster castle (Sweden)], *Muzyka*, 56 (2011), 2, 13–15.

<sup>35</sup> Libretto by Puccitelli, music (lost) probably by Scacchi.

LE NOZZE  
D' AMORE E DI PSICHE  
DRAMMA MUSICALE,  
*Rapresentato nel felicissimo Ingresso  
Della Serenissima REGINA di  
POLONIA E SUEZIA*  
LVDOVICA MARIA  
GONZAGA,  
*PRINCIPESSA di MANTOVA  
E DI NIVERS, &c. &c.*  
IN DANZICA.  
DI  
VIRGILIO PUCCITELLI  
*Academico incognito.*  
DEDICATO  
*All' Ill<sup>mo</sup>. & Ecc<sup>mo</sup>. Sig<sup>ro</sup>. Il Sig<sup>ro</sup>,*  
VISCONTE DI BREGI,  
Del Consiglio di Stato di S. M.  
Christianissima, e suo Ambasciatore  
Straordinario, in Polonia.

Fig. 6: *Le nozze d'Amore e di Psiche*, [Varsavia 1646], title page

in a different, French style. She continued organizing them as the consort of Ladislaus' successor John II Casimir, but did not participate in them herself.

After 16 April 1648, when the last premiere of a *dramma per musica* (titled *Circe delusa*<sup>36</sup>) took place, in Vilnius, during Ladislaus' reign, probably no operas were staged at the courts of Polish kings for almost a quarter of a century. Of course, the political situation was not conducive to fostering interest in theatre (wars against the Cossacks, Muscovy and Sweden, aggravated by domestic struggles, including military clashes). Although the country was still in turmoil, operatic performances at court were resumed with the arrival of another Habsburg archduchess, Eleonora Maria of Austria, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III and sister of Emperor Leopold I, who married King Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki. In this case, however, no opera was performed to add splendour to the celebrations of the union, sealed in the Sanctuary of Our Lady on Jasna Góra on 27 February 1670 (the guests included musicians from the queen's entourage<sup>37</sup> as well as from the entourages of other important figures, e.g. Pavel Vejvanovský, a renowned composer and musician at the court of Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn<sup>38</sup>). In accordance with the Viennese custom adhered to by the queen, spectacles were organized during the carnival (e.g. in 1671, the opera *La caduta del gran capitano Belisario* with a libretto by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini set to music by an anonymous composer) and on royal birthdays.<sup>39</sup> It is evident that the queen had a lot to say as far as *balletti* were concerned. They were realized either as independent events (often with vocal-instrumental *intermedii*) or in combination with operas or other dramatic works intended for the stage. It appears that although Eleonora's marriage with Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki lasted only three years, she may have left a much more powerful imprint on musical life at court (not only related to *balletti*) than her Habsburg predecessors. After the king's death on 10 November 1673, the dowager queen stayed in Poland for about two years, after which she returned to her homeland and then married Charles V of Lorraine. Her activities as patron of music during this period, as well as from the time of her second widowhood, are exemplified by her establishment of a theatre at the court in Innsbruck.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Libretto by Puccitelli, music (lost) probably by Scacchi.

<sup>37</sup> Among them were singers Domenico Sarti and don Antonio di Alaram (sopranos), Castelli, Rafael Caccialupi and Giovanni Agostino Bassetti (tenors) and Bartolino (bass), and imperial chapel master Antonio Draghi (see Jiří SEHNAL: Die Musikkapelle des Olmützer Bischofs Karl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn in Kremsier, *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 51 (1967), 79–123 and Anna SZWEYKOWSKA: Notatki dotyczące kapeli królewskiej w XVII wieku [Notes concerning the royal chapel in the seventeenth century], *Muzyka*, 16 (1971), 3, 94).

<sup>38</sup> Jiří SEHNAL: *Pavel Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection. Perspectives on Seventeenth-century Music in Moravia*, Palacký University in Olomouc, Olomouc 2008, 39.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara PRZYBYSZEWSKA-JARMIŃSKA: *The History of Music in Poland*, vol. III: *The Baroque*, part 1: 1595-1696, trans. John Comber, Sutkowski Edition, Warsaw 2002, 407, 414.

<sup>40</sup> SEIFERT: *The Establishemnt...* 19.



In summary, it must be observed that the surviving documents related to musical life at the selected courts of Polish kings in the late 16th and the 17th centuries usually do not allow researchers to determine which matters were initiated and controlled by the king and what could be decided and influenced by the queen consort. Even the organization of ballets, traditionally left for women to manage, could be influenced by the king to some extent. It is natural to conclude that a Habsburg queen, having occupied the Polish throne for a total of 44 years during the period discussed here, must have left a mark on the education of the royal children (including their taste in music) and favoured cultural exchange. It was natural for contacts between the Polish and Habsburg courts to develop (initially between Cracow and Graz, later mainly between Warsaw and Vienna), which facilitated the transfer of musicians and – especially Italian – repertoire, in which both sides shared keen interest. Although the family ties between Polish kings and Austrian archdukes and emperors played a significant role in the process of adapting the Italian *dramma per musica* and various other musical and theatrical genres to the Polish cultural context, they also exerted their influence on the vocal-instrumental and instrumental sacred music performed in Poland.

(Translated by Paweł Gruchala)

### Sažetak

#### HABSBUŠKE KRALJICE POLJSKE I GLAZBA NA POLJSKOM KRALJEVSKOM DVORU KRAJEM 16. I U 17. STOLJEĆU

Iako su poljski vladari počeli ženiti nadvojvotkinje iz austrijske habsburške dinastije već sredinom 15. stoljeća, najvažnije unije sa stajališta povjesničara glazbe jesu prvenstveno one zaključene krajem 16. i u 17. stoljeću. Glavne protagonistice ovoga rada su Anna i Constanza Štajerska, dvije uzastopne supruge kralja Sigismunda III. Vase (1595–98, 1605–31), Cecilia Renata, kći cara Ferdinanda II. i supruge kralja Ladislava IV. (1637–44), te Eleanora Maria Josefa, kći cara Ferdinanda III. i supruge kralja Mihaela Korybuta Wisniowieckog (1670–73). Glavni predmet ovoga istraživanja bio je pokazati kako su kraljevska vjenčanja jačala kulturne veze, uključujući one glazbene, između poljskog kraljevskog dvora i dvorova odakle su nadvojvotkinje dolazile. Posebna je pažnja posvećena postupnoj »italijanizaciji« glazbene kulture na austrijskom Habsburškom dvoru (nadvojvodski dvor u Grazu i carski dvorovi u Beču i Pragu) te na poljskim kraljevskim dvorovima u Krakovu, Varšavi, Vilniusu i drugim gradovima, kao i na transferu talijanskih glazbenika i glazbenog repertora između tih kulturnih krugova. Znatan je prostor posvećen i važnosti posjeta princa Ladislava Vase (kasnije okrunjenog kao kralja Ladislava IV.) dvorovima svoje ujne Marije Maddalene Austrijske u Firenci i ujaku caru Ferdinandu, suprugu Eleonore od Gonzage u Beču, za adaptaciju i diseminaciju opere kao vrste i talijanskog plesnog stila u Poljskoj.