

## Introduction

In the seventeenth century, Olomouc, a city near today's border between the Czech Republic and Austria, was the seat of a bishopric that encompassed all of Moravia and was one of Europe's largest in terms of area. Accordingly lavish was the cultural and political life. During the Thirty Years' War and an eight-year occupation by the Swedes, the city was largely destroyed and depopulated, the number of inhabitants sinking from over 30,000 before to some 1,600 after the occupation. It was above all thanks to the efforts of Prince-Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn (1624–1695) that Olomouc and Kroměříž, as the official seat of the bishop and as his personal residence, respectively, experienced a quick reconstruction and revival of the cultural life.

A particularly important part of this cultural life was the court chapel in which some of the most famous musician-composers of the time were employed. As a result of Castelcorn's personal connections with the imperial court in Vienna and the Archbishop of Salzburg, there was also an active exchange of musicians and music. Evidence of this is provided by the works in the Hudební Archiv Kroměříž (CZ-KRa), some of which are preserved only there, that represent an invaluable source for the music of the time.

The anonymous and undated Kroměříž manuscript on which our edition is based contains an instrumental suite in two versions, one for violin and one for viola da gamba. Since the manuscript is written very cleanly, it is obviously a copy that, on the basis of the watermark analysis by Jiří Sehnal, dates from after 1680. The version for violin requires an instrument tuned to  $a-e^1-a^1-d^2$ , even though the scordatura is not indicated. The version for viol demands an instrument in the normal tuning  $D-G-c-e-a-d^1$ . Basically, the two versions differ only in the specific exploitation of the viol's better possibilities for chordal playing, whereby also the bass parts of the two versions deviate slightly and contain several scribal errors.

The level of difficulty is at times very high; a large number of technical demands are made on the player, including rapid thirty-second-note passages, wide leaps, chains of thirds, and chords in up to six parts.

The Sonatina begins with an introduction that is reminiscent of the free openings of Frescobaldi's organ toccatas in *stylus phantasticus*, or of those of Biber's violin sonatas. This is followed by eight different sections that are each connected by a short Adagio transition. Thereby, in addition to passage work, the composer also employed pseudo-polyphony with wide leaps and sequential techniques. The Sonatina is followed by several dance movements including variations. These movements (Allemande – Variatio – Courente – Variatio – Sarabande – Variatio 1<sup>ma</sup> – Variation 2<sup>da</sup> – Gigue 1<sup>ma</sup> – Gigue 2<sup>da</sup>), except for the Giges, dispense almost entirely with double stops, and are otherwise also much less demanding in terms of virtuosity. While the dance movements are melodically rather simply structured, the variation movements, which display sixteenth-note motion almost throughout, also exhibit a distinct pseudo-polyphony. Remarkable, finally, are the two concluding Giges, which start monophonic and gradually become more full-voiced, and ultimately consist only of four- and five-voice chord progressions.

In the past, the Sonatina has been attributed to Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644–1704)<sup>6</sup> as well as to August Kertzinger (1622–1678).<sup>7</sup> Stylistic comparisons with other compositions by Biber, some

<sup>6</sup> Marc Strümper, *Die Viola da gamba am Wiener Kaiserhof: Untersuchungen zur Instrumenten- und Werkgeschichte der Wiener Hofmusikkapelle im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Tutzing: Schneider, 2004), p. 320ff.

<sup>7</sup> The attribution to the composer August Kertzinger suggested by Jiří Sehnal in the article "Partitura v17: století na Morvě," *Sborník Janáčkovy Akademie Muzických Umění v Brně* 6 (1972), p. 88, and repeated by Charles E. Brewer in his work *The Instrumental Music of Schmelzter, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), p. 147, is interesting, but not compelling. On the one hand it was made on the basis of a folder – bearing the inscription "Balletti a 3, Violino Solo, Gamba Sola, con Violone, A: R: D: Augustino Kertziger, A 1676 in Febrero" – that clearly does not belong to the composition, and, on the other hand, deduced from the fact that the only virtuoso viol music preserved in Kroměříž with a composer's name is by Kertzinger.

likewise preserved in the Kroměříž archive, make his authorship seem likely. The required technical virtuosity in the present composition goes far beyond that demanded by Kertzinger in his works. Moreover, Biber was known to his contemporaries not only as a composer and violin virtuoso, but also as a gambist. Thus we possibly have here the only known solo sonata by Biber for the viola da gamba. By dint of an entry in the catalogue of the Bamberg and Rudolstadt inventories, the so-called “List of those musical works that were stored at court in the chapel room, but were all consumed by fire in the year 1735,”<sup>8</sup> we know that Biber also composed a number of sonatas for viola da gamba solo, his today no longer extant op. 1. May the present piece perhaps be a copy of one of these?<sup>9</sup> Because Biber was active in Kroměříž only from 1669 to 1670, this could either be a scribal copy of an earlier composition or it could have been composed during Biber’s time as court chapel-master in Salzburg.<sup>10</sup> Even during this period he maintained close contacts at the court of Kroměříž; in particular he was friends with the chapel-master, trumpeter, and copyist Pavel Vejvanovský, and shipments of music from Salzburg to Kroměříž are documented.

Since, however, our attribution of the Sonatina to Biber cannot be substantiated by hard facts, we have designated it *Kremsierer Gambesonate* (“Kroměříž Viola da Gamba Sonata”) for our edition. Regardless of the authorship, this work is an extraordinary composition that occupies a special position in Southern-German-Austrian solo viol music of the late seventeenth century.

Marc Strümper  
Vienna, September 2011

### Our Edition

Our edition is based on manuscript **A 891** in **CZ-KRa**. It bears the title *Sonatina â Viola de Gamba aut Violino Solo* on the folder. Our transcription follows the version for viola da gamba as closely as possible. In cases of doubt, however, we have also consulted the version for violin, since many an error in the viol version apparently came about during the (not very easy) transcription of the scordatura violin version. The Critical Report (only in German) that follows lists all the passages in which we deviated from the model. In many cases, these deviations are justified by the reading of the violin version.

Note values, beams, and clefs are original. The direction of the stems, too, has been retained in most cases. In contrast to the model, accidentals are valid for the whole measure, yet in long measures they are occasionally repeated within a measure. Editorial basso continuo figures are given in brackets, whereby the violin version often served as the model. The meter has been retained and missing bar lines added. The time signature “3” in the Courante was interpreted as 3/4.

Günter von Zadow  
Heidelberg, September 2011  
Translated by Howard Weiner

---

See also Charles Brewer (ed.), *Solo Compositions for Violin and Viola da Gamba with Basso Continuo from the Collection of Prince-Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn in Kroměříž*, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era 82 (Middleton: A-R Editions, 1997). Both versions are included in this volume and attributed there to A. Kertzinger.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted after Ernst Hermann Meyer, *Die mehrstimmige Spielmusik des 17. Jahrhunderts in Nord- und Mitteleuropa* (Bärenreiter: Kassel 1934), pp 114 f. and 189.

<sup>9</sup> Dagmar Glüxam, *Die Violinskordatur und ihre Rolle in der Geschichte des Violinspieles: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Quellen der erzbischöflichen Musiksammlung in Kremsier*. (Tutzing: Schneider, 1999), p. 388, points to the similarity of the introduction of the present Sonatina to the beginning of the fourteenth of Biber’s *Mystery Sonatas*.

<sup>10</sup> In any case, Kertzinger had died already in 1678, well before the time of origin determined from the watermark analysis: “after 1680.”