



Some Viewpoints to the Private Theoretical Library of Johann Gottfried Walther (1684–1748)

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Who was J. G. Walther (1684-1748)?

- * Erfurt-born Stadtorganist in Weimar during so called "Bach era".
- * Distant relative to Johann Sebastian Bach through their mothers (both part of famous Lämmerhirt-family)
- * Walther as
 - A composer: organ chorales (282), concerto arrangements to organ, individual preludes and fugues
 - A lexicographer: *first music encyclopaedia in German Musicalisches Lexicon* (published 1732)
 - A theorist: developed the musical rhetorics (affects and figures) in his theoretical *Praecepta der Musicalischen Composition* (ms. 1708). Musical rhetorics also visible in the definitions of *Lexicon* (1732)

Walther's letters and his library

- * J. G. Walther was an avid letter writer**
- * He corresponded thoroughly with his contemporaries.**

- * Lorenz Christoph Mizler**
- * Johan Mattheson**
- * Andreas Werckmeister (correspondence lost)**

- * Most letters to Heinrich Bokemeyer, a cantor in Wolfenbüttel**

- * Together 47 letters from Walther has survived**

Walther's letters and his library

- * *"Catalogus librorum theoretico-musicorum quos possiedo"* is presented in the letter to Bokemeyer 4.4.1729
- * In that letter Walther lists his bookshelf to Bokemeyer, all together 147 titles
- * Titles aren't equal as the actual books: Opera omnia (all books) of Andreas Werckmeister, Johann Mattheson and Wolfgang Caspar Printz.
- * Also references to owned books in other letters were added and some duplicates removed
- * Total amount of books in Walther's theoretical library is then 246.
- * There were also 147 tractates mentioned in his catalogue

Theoretical framework from musicological aspect

- × The great name in music historiography of 18th century in Germany is Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
- × This canonical structure of music history unfavourable to the contemporaries of J. S. Bach
- × Walther has been too close to Bach (relative, colleague, exact contemporary)
- × In Bach's and Walther's time the situation was much more equal.

Unsere lebenden guten Meister und Virtuosen: Bach, Bokemeyer, Bümler, die beeden Graun, Hasse, Händel, Mattheson, Pisendel, Quantz, Schröter, Stölzel, Telemann, Walther, und noch einige andere mehr

- × In my reseach one of the theoretical approaches has been critique of the canons in music history

Microhistorical perspective

- × The historiography of winners and great historiography other way around
- × The notion is focused to the margins of historiography
- × These little (micro) events or otherwise passed aspects usually reflect something much greater and add the value of history
- × Research material or data is usually limited and somehow exceptional by its nature
- × These materials are researched thoroughly. We can find clues like detectives and then interpret the data with new paradigms and viewpoints
- × In my research Walthers catalogue of his library has been microhistorical research material

Defining the framework

- ✦ **The research data did not contain any sheet music or musical material**
- ✦ **Walther's sheet music library has already been analyzed and presented earlier by Kirsten Beisswenger in her article in 1992**
- ✦ **I have chosen to collect the research data only in Walther's letters -> I have not used any outside information**
- ✦ **Focus is in theoretical books**

Methodological background to researching private libraries

- * Enumerative bibliography**
 - creator(s), title, publisher and place of publication, date of publication
- * Historical bibliography**
 - The status of a book to its owner
- * Points of emphasis vary from study to study**
 - The analysis of collections
 - Analysis of publications dates (if chronological organizing)
 - Water mark –analysis (relates to chronological organizing)
 - The analysis of meanings
- * -> Usually in particular study more than one analysis is used**

Private collections and libraries in historical framework

- * The development of book printing added the availability of books (and knowledge)
- * In 17th and 18th centuries the royal and ducal courts around Europe established libraries, which were partly open to public (those individuals connected to courts). For example ducal library in Wolfenbüttel
- * The bourgeoisie imitating the nobility lifestyle
- * Usually not separate rooms or spaces, but only usually book shelves in bourgeoisie home
- * Books were quite expensive
- * J. G. Walther had not by any means high salary -> *How he managed to collect this vast collection of books?*

Private library

- × Reveals usually many visible and hidden aspects of its owner
- × It can tell about collectors interests and also passions.
- × Enlightens cultural milieu
- × Relatively few catalogues of private libraries have been preserved
- × Most frequently there are book fair catalogues from 17th and 18th centuries
- × Some references to private libraries can be found in testaments or in auctions after owner's death.
- × References or catalogues to private libraries are very rare in private correspondence
- × In this respect the letters of J. G. Walther to Heinrich Bokemeyer are very valuable contemporary documents

Earlier studies of composers libraries

* Studies or information of composers book collections:

- *Katalog der Sammlung Bokemeyer* (Harald Kümmerling 1975)
- *Bachs theologische Bibliothek* (Robin A. Leaver 1983)
- *Pietro Antonio Locatelli* (Folter 1987)
- *Jan Dismas Zelenka* (Horn & Kohlhasse 1989)
- *Carl Friedrich Zelter* (Richter 2000)
- *Heinrich Glarean* (Fenlone & Groot 2013)

* Studies of sheet music collections:

- *Johann Sebastian Bachs Notenbibliothek* (Kirsten Beisswenger 1992a)
- *Zur Chronologie der Notenhandschriften Johann Gottfried Walthers* (Kirsten Beisswenger 1992b) / Article in *Acht kleine Präludien und Studien über BACH*

Walther's ways of book acquisition

- * Copying**
- * Exchange**
- * Borrowing (also from ducal libraries for copying)**
- * Purchases from book fairs or private collections**
- * Gifts**
- * Inheritance**

Reconsturction method

* Databases

- Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
- Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek (Weimar)
- Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel)

* Also Google Books

* Enumerative bibliography (creator(s), title, publisher and place of publication, date of publication)

- Also aspect of historical bibliography: the meaning of book

* In my research: search for author, title, subject (if deductable) and earliest publication date

Reconstruction example

letter source	author	title	Nr / W	Nr / TH	Publ. year	Reference in Walther's letter
1. Kircheri Musurg.	Kircher, Athanasius	Musurgia universalis sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X. libros digesta	1	1	1650	4.4.1729 to Bokemeyer

- **Aim to analyze the subject fields of Walther's library**
- **Aim to analyze the publication years (-> where the ideas came from? how Walther comprehended his world?)**

Book sizes in Walther's library

- * Walther has divided his library according to book sizes:**
- * Folio: 10 titles**
- * Quarto: 58 titles**
- * Octavo: 65 titles**
- * Duodecimo 14 titles**
- * It is plausible that Walther shows us here also the actual construction of his bookshelf: heaviest and biggest (Folio) in lower shelves and smaller on higher...**

Tractates

- × Walthers catalogue included 147 tractates
- × There is also a binding in archive of Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna (Sig. 329/29) which has belonged to Walther
- × In this *Collectanea* is shown how Walther made tractates.
- × The definition and concept of tractate has varied in different times
- × Usually a paragraph or abridgement of a book or text
- × It can also mean a study of some subject
- × For example:
 - Baruch Spinoza: *Tractatus Astrologico Magicus*
 - *Alchimistisch Sieben-Gestirn das ist: sieben schöne und auserlesene Tractätlein* (224 pages)
- × In tractates owned and made by Walther can be found both forms – paragraphs and studies



Subjet areas of Walther's library

Music theory 1

* Study books:

- * Athanasius Kircher (mm. *Musurgia universalis* 1650)
 - * Wolfgang Schonsleder (*Architectonice musices universalis* 1631)
 - * J. H. Buttstedt (*Ut, mi, sol, re, fa, la, tota musica et harmonia aeterna* (1715))
 - * Robert Fludd: *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris Metaphysica* (1617)
 - * Andreas Werckmeister: *Opera omnia* (1680-1707)
- > Visible suggestions of speculative music theory (i.e. music has "magical" powers, traces of cosmology etc.)

Music theory 2

- * The important sources used in writing *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732)
- * **Brossard**: *Dictionnaire de la Musique* (1703)
- * **Printz**: *Historische Beschreibung der Edelen Sing- und Kling-Kunst* (1691)
- * **Marcus Meibom**: *Antiquae Musicae auctores* (1652)
- * **Thomas Balthazar Janowka**: *Clavis ad thesaurum magnae artis musicae* (1701)

Musical “rationalism”

- * Johann Mattheson and his writings in Walthers library**
- * Mattheson had very rationalistic approach to music theory**
- * He argued about music’s magical aspects with both J. H. Buttstett (Walther’s teacher) and H. Bokemeyer (Walther’s correspondant)**
- * Mattheson did not approve ”the harmony of the spheres”**
- * Mattheson wrote very videly about music theory and life and part of his writings have very mundane context**

Musical novels

- * Musical novels were part of contemporary "entertainment literature"**
- * Writers such as Johann Kuhnau, Johann Beer, Johann Caspar Printz**
- * In addition to entertainment values they had more serious aspect**
- * In musical novels one can find reflection and aims to improve the position of bourgeois musicians**
- * They also made the musicians more visible in contemporary literary**

***Musica Poetica* i.e. musical rhetorics**

- ✦ **Walther was important developer of musical affects and figures (*Musica Poetica*)**

- ✦ **Most important books about musical rhetorics in Walthers bookshelf were**
 - **Christoph Thomas Walliser: *Musicae figuralis praecepta brevia* (1611)**
 - **Writings of Johann Georg Ahle**
 - **Calvisius: *Melopoeia sive melodiae* (1582)**
 - **Johann Christoph Stierlein: *Trifolium musicae* (1691)**

Linguistic rhetorics and literature

- ✦ **Walther showed some interest to different languages and literature of foreign countries**
- ✦ **Especially France, Greece and Italy**
 - **Vossius: aa. *De imitatione cum Oratoria* (n.1650)**
 - **Julius Pollux: *Onomasticon* (3rd cent.)**
 - **Apuleius: *Florida***
 - **Marcus Antonius Majoragio: *Orationes & Prefationes omnes* (1582)**
 - **Julius Scaliger(i): *Poemata* (n.1580)**
 - **Matthias Martinius: *Lexico Philologicum* (1623)**
 - ***Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue francaise* (1650)**
 - **Tanneguy LeFevre: *Les vies de poetes grecs* (1665)**

Religious literature

- × Multifaceted religious literature
- × **Notable: No mentions about Martin Luther cannot be found in Walther's letters or his book catalogue (Walther was an organist in a lutheran congregation)**
 - Philippe Alegambe: *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Jesu* (1608)
 - Giovanni Bona: *De Divina Psalmodia* (1663)
 - Giovanni Bona: *De Rebus liturgicis* (1671)
 - Antonio Masini: *Bologna perlustrata* (1650)
- × **The drift between Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietsim is shown in collection**
 - Pietist Gottfried Vockerodt (Missbrauch der freyen Künste) VS.
 - Luth. orthodox Johann Beer (Ursus Vulpinatur, Ursus murmurat)
- × **In comparison: The theological part of Johann Sebastian Bach's private library...**

Esoterism

- × **Esoterism (alchemy, teosophy and other (contemporary) sciences that aimed to spiritual growth of an individual)**
- × **Esoterism is shown with Walther especially through practise of alchemy**
- × **He grew to this already in his childhood**
- × **He inherited some books about alchemy from his father and bought them also later**
 - **Basilus Valentinus: several books**
 - **Paracelsus: *De tribus principiis***
 - ***Alchimistisch Sieben-Gestirn das ist: sieben schöne und auserlesene Tractätlein***
 - **Bartolozzi: *Biblioteca Magna Rabbinica* (1675) (handles gematria)**



Conclusions

Some notions of construction of Walther's library

- * Very large, important and expensive collection of books (Walther was not a rich man)**
- * The importance of music theory**
- * Renaissance music theory is very important (Werckmeister, Buttstedt) VS the current streams of music theory (Mattheson, Mizler)**

- * This is shown especially in the pages of Musicalisches Lexicon**

- * Musical rhetorics was very important to Walther**

The nature of religious literature

- * Many writings that connect to Roman Catholic church**
- * Recurrent theme is jesuits (either in titles or authors)**
- * Where are the writings of Martin Luther?**

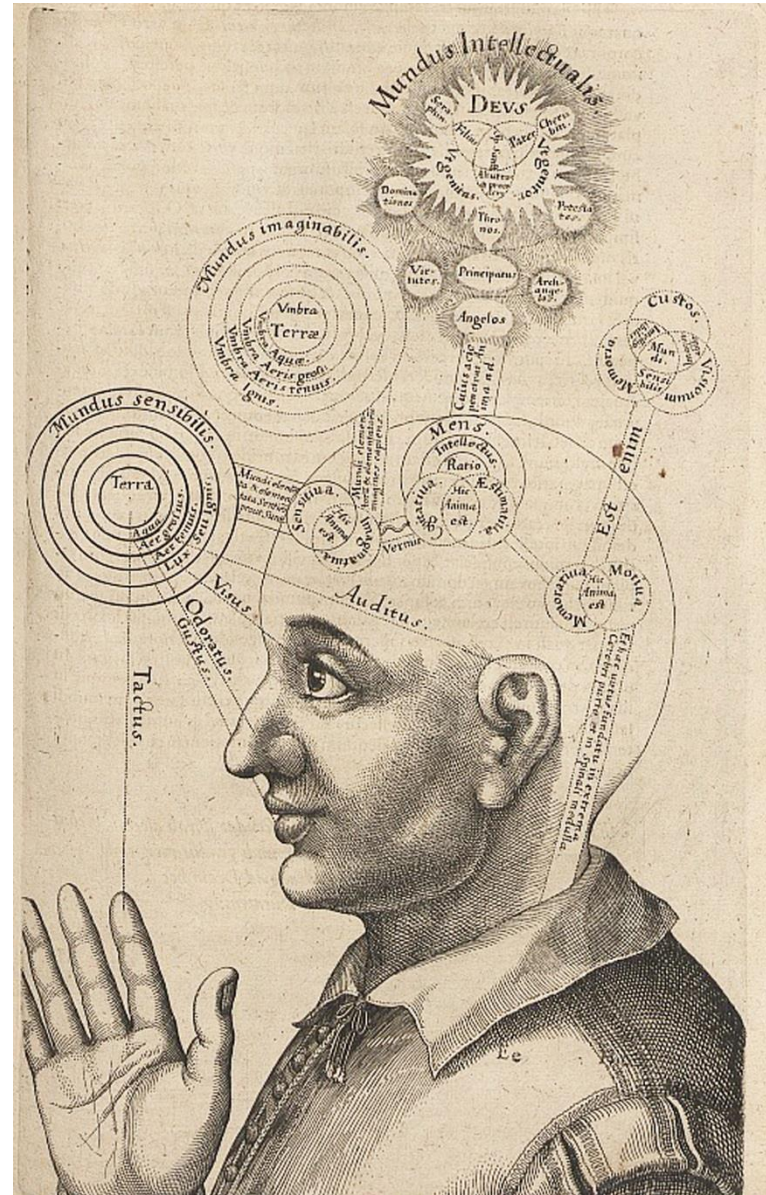
- * Alchemistic literature was important to Walther**
- * The humanist tradition of Western history is visible in Walther's library from temporal point of view**

- * Nearly half of the books in Walther's library have been published prior year 1650**

The “metaphysics” of Walther’s library

- * Walther’s library is multidisciplinary, emphasis of course in music theory**
- * It reflects the characteristics of contemporary worldviews**
 - Cosmology**
 - Nature philosophy**
 - Theology**
- * It is possible to find a nominator to all this:**
- * Nature-philosophical-cosmological world view with the support of tradition and order**
- * Neo-platonistic reflection of Unitas**

**Picture from Robert
Fludds *Utriusque cosmi
maioris scilicet et
minoris Metaphysica***

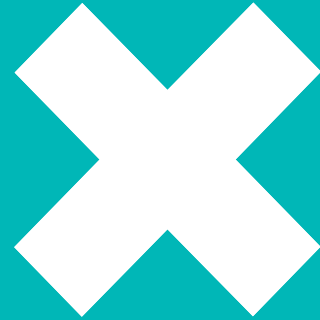


What happened to Walther's library?

- ✦ Walther had to sell part of his sheet music and books because of financial problems
- ✦ After his death the remaining library was divided between his widow, two sons and two son-in-laws or sold
- ✦ Part of Walther's library ended to Ernst Ludwig Gerber and he sold it to the archive of Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna in 1814/1815
- ✦ Parts of it is still in archive, but it has not been systematically catalogued or reconstruced there.
- ✦ Some indications, of which books by Walther Gerber had, can be found in Gerber's *Wissenschaftlich geordnetes Verzeichniß einer Sammlung von musikalischen Schriften* (1804) (digitized)

- ✦ **Walther's letters and library give us the visible link to the thoughts and ideas of a composer in Bach-era**
- ✦ **For example we can hear and enjoy the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, but the person Johann Sebastian Bach escapes from us all the time in the lack of his own writings etc.**
- ✦ **J.G. Walther shows his person and worldviews in his letters**

**Private library is key to
immeasurable worlds**



Thank you