

Evolutionary postures of the baroque musical discourse. Between *stile antico* and *stile moderno* in *Symphonia sacra* op. 11, no. 25 by Heinrich Schütz

Ioana BAALBAKI¹

Abstract: *The present study represents a historical and structuralist foray into the work of Heinrich Schütz published under the title of Symphoniae Sacrae, with emphasis on the work published in the second volume, op. 11, no. 25. German composer, but also trained in Italy, assimilated the compositional innovations of his contemporaries and integrated them into his own compositions. Living in the German space dominated by Protestantism, he was fully aware of the role of music in the religious context, that of supporting and emphasizing the biblical text. The chance to study in Italy with Giovanni Gabrieli and Claudio Monteverdi broadened his perspective on compositional techniques, joining the antico style of the motet and madrigal of the Franco-Flemish school, the simplified writing of the Lutheran chorale and the expressive richness of the modern style of the Venetian concertato and Florentine dramatic monodies.*

Keywords: *stile antico; stile moderno; baroque music; Heinrich Schütz; symphoniae sacrae;*

Introduction

Throughout the history of music, there are numerous composers whose work made essential contributions to the development of musical art. Only a small part of them are known and studied, and an even smaller part appear in the performance programs of vocal and instrumental artists. However, we must not forget that behind the great composers such as Antonio Vivaldi, Georg Friedrich Händel, Johann Sebastian Bach, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, there are lesser-known creators who gradually built the apparent leap in the evolution of music from Baroque to Classicism. This category includes composers such as Giovanni Gabrieli, Lodovico Viadana, Giacomo Carissimi, Heinrich Schütz, Samuel Scheidt, Johann Hermann Schein, Dietrich Buxtehude, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Stamitz and many others.

Precisely for this reason, I have examined the work of a composer rarely found in the concert programs of musical culture institutions and to observe the elements of novelty that had consequences in the subsequent development of music. In this sense, I focused on the composer Heinrich Schütz, considered in his time to be the most important German composer, and in the history of music, the most important until the appearance of Johann Sebastian Bach.

¹ Musical Department, Romanian Faculty of Arts, University of Arts Târgu Mureș, ioanabaalbaki@gmail.com.

1. Heinrich Schütz in the context of his creation

The analytical approach of a pre-classical musical work presupposes a historical foray into the life and creation of the composer, in relation to his contemporaneity. To date, approximately 500 pieces have been preserved from the composer's vast creation. Most of these are part of the fourteen volumes that Heinrich Schütz published during his lifetime. All these works are numbered by the composer himself in a manuscript catalogue which he sent to Prince Augustus of Brunswink-Lüneburg in 1654². A similar catalogue, comprising only the first ten publications, appears as an appendix to the collection *Symphoniarum sacrarum secunda pars* in 1647.

Most of Heinrich Schütz's works were composed for religious purposes, especially on biblical texts but sometimes also on Lutheran or non-religious texts³. As for the interpretive component, Schütz uses various vocal and instrumental combinations. Thus, we meet from arrangements for solo voice with *basso continuo*, to vast polychoral works accompanied by orchestras. Heinrich Schütz did not compose purely instrumental pieces, instead he created a cappella choral music⁴.

The preference for vocal works is due to the fact that the composer's main interest is in the word, in its own meaning, and in the way in which the music can intensify or emphasize it. Thus, Heinrich Schütz used various formulas specific to baroque rhetoric, including rhythmic, melodic, harmonic formulas and even structural models, to emphasize the text and create a musical affect according to its message⁵.

Schütz's compositional techniques are extremely varied, and this is not surprising when we consider the influences to which he was subjected throughout his life. Living in the reformed German space, he was fully dedicated to the purpose of Protestant music, to interpret the Word⁶. But, given the opportunity from his youth to study in Italy with the maestro Giovanni Gabrieli and later with Claudio Monteverdi, Schütz did not present the text through the Protestant chorale model but appealed to Italian *concertato* style.

In his creation Heinrich Schütz is a "man of synthesis"⁷. This is due to the fact that he summed up all the styles of the era, from the *stile antico* of the motet and the madrigal of the Franco-Flemish school, to the simplicity of the Lutheran chorales and last but not least to the *stile moderno* of the Venetian *concertato* and the Florentine dramatic monody⁸. Due to the combination and application of all these styles, which belong to both the Renaissance and the musical Baroque, but especially due to the influences that this fusion had on future German composers, Heinrich Schütz is a prominent representative of the early Baroque.

² Rifkin, Joshua, & Linfield, Eva. 2001. "Schütz, Heinrich". In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed. Vol. 22. Edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan. p. 837.

³ Ulrich, Homer & Pisk, Paul A. 1963. *A History of Music and Musical Style*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies. p. 26.

⁴ Thompson, Wendy. 2004. *The Great Composers*. London: Hermes House. p. 45.

⁵ Rifkin, Joshua, & Linfield, Eva. 2001. *op. cit.*, p. 838.

⁶ Bukofzer, Manfred. *Music in the Baroque Era*. London: JM Dent & Sons Ltd. p. 89.

⁷ Berger, Wilhelm Georg. 1985. "Arta lui Schütz la orizontul gândirii muzicale baroce" [Schütz's art on the horizon of baroque musical thought]. In *Revista Muzica*, XXXV, no. 9. p. 16.

⁸ Grout, Donald Jay & Palisca, Claude V. 1996. *A History of Western Music*. New York: WW Norton & Company. p. 306.

2. The genesis of the collection *Symphoniae sacrae* by Heinrich Schütz

The term *symphonia* comes from the Greek word *synphone* (*syn* = together, and *phone* = sound) which meant, as a first meaning, sounds sung simultaneously and not successively, and as a second meaning, the perfect intervals (4P, 5P, 8P). In Latin, *symphonia* meant a harmonious joining of voices and instruments.

In the 16th century the notion of *symphoniae sacra* appears in the titles of vocal-instrumental music collections by Giovanni Gabrieli or Kaspar Hassler⁹, probably to emphasize that the works were built on a musical apparatus consisting of instruments and human voices. A century later, the Italian word *sinfonia* denoted various parts of works, including overtures, instrumental *ritornello* from arias, and instrumental works that would later be classified as *concerto* or *sonata*. Analysing retrospectively the works grouped under the name of *symphoniae sacrae*, we can say that they are the basis of the genre that in the middle baroque was called *cantata*¹⁰.

Symphoniae sacrae collection by Heinrich Schütz appeared in three volumes, the first in Venice in 1629, and the second and third in Dresden in 1647 and 1650, respectively. The first volume was created during the period when the composer was perfecting his *concerto* style with Claudio Monteverdi in Italy. The work, dedicated to Johann Georg, son of the Elector of Saxony¹¹, contains twenty sacred concertos composed on Latin texts. In the preface to this collection, Schütz states that the compositional style has changed since his last visit to Italy, a change that is fully reflected in the use of solo voices, with or without *obligato* instruments and *basso continuo*. The pieces, comprising between three and six parts, frequently use the technique of accompanied monody and lyrical recitatives in the Italian style, but also highlight the German-Lutheran spirit of the composer by placing the expression of the word in the foreground, strongly emphasized by elements of musical rhetoric.

The second volume, entitled *Symphoniarum sacrarum secunda pars*, can be treated as a culmination in the composer's work. This is due to the synthesis of the Italian style with the Lutheran one, which is fully evident in the twenty-seven sacred concerts of this opus. Moreover, the composer himself seems to have considered this volume as an important point in his creation, since with its publication he catalogued his previous works¹².

The concerts are composed to texts in German for one, two or three voices. The instrumental ensemble, which often opens the piece with a symphony, consists of two violins, or optionally two similar instruments and two instruments that support the *basso continuo*, the organ and the cello, the latter having the role of intensifying the sonority of the fundamental¹³. From the point of view of compositional techniques, in this part, the creator seems to return more intensively to the German-Lutheran compositional elements of the motet type.

The third volume of the *Symphoniae sacrae* contains twenty-one works composed for larger vocal ensembles. So, in addition to solo voices and *obligato* instruments, double choirs appear in a *concertato* manner¹⁴. The work, through the compositional techniques used, presents

⁹ Rifkin, Joshua, & Linfield, Eva. 2001. *op. cit.*, p. 840.

¹⁰ Bukofzer, Manfred. *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹¹ Ulrich, Homer; Pisk, Paul A. 1963. *op. cit.*, p. 261.

¹² Rifkin, Joshua, & Linfield, Eva. 2001. *op. cit.*, p. 840.

¹³ Bittinger, Werner. 1968. "Foreword". In Schütz, Heinrich, *Symphoniae Sacrae II*, Kassel: Bärenreiter. p. XII.

¹⁴ Bukofzer, Manfred. *op. cit.*, p. 268.

the synthesis between the Venetian concerto style, the Florentine monody and the Lutheran chorale.

3. Structure and musical language in *Symphonia sacra op. 11, no. 25*

Symphonia sacra op. 11, no. 25 is a work for three solo voices – two tenors and a bass, two violins and two instruments supporting the *basso continuo* – organ and violin.

The text, in German, is a compilation made by the composer himself by a selection of the following biblical passages presented here in the order in which they appear in the work: Ecclesiastes 2. 1-2, followed by Psalm 133. 1-3; Proverbs 27.10 and the Epistle to the Galatians 5.14-15; The Epistle to the Ephesians 5. 28, 22, the Epistle to the Hebrews 13. 4 and the Epistle to the Ephesians 5. 32, and finally Psalm 133. 3¹⁵.

The biblical fragments are ordered throughout the work according to a very strict logic, determined by the message of the text. At the beginning is the key phrase "*Drei schöne Dinge sind, die beide Gott und Menschen wohlgefallen*" [three beautiful things bless, and they enveloped God and man]. This raises the question of what are the three things? Three answers are given, each of which is introduced by the key phrase:

1. "*Wann Brüder eins sind*" [...brothers to live together in unity]
2. "*Wenn Hachbaren sich Liebhaben*" [... neighbors love each other]
3. "*Wenn Mann und Weib sich miteinander wohl begehen*" [... husbands and wives live together in harmony].

Each of the three answers presented above is followed by a comment on it, consisting of two or more sentences presenting a conclusion at the end.

The first answer is followed by:

a) "*Wie der köstliche Balsam ist, der vom Häupt Aaron herabfleußt in seinen ganzen Bart, der herabfleußt in sein Kleid*" [...Like the precious ointment from the head, which runs down Aaron's beard, and runs down the edge of his garments.]

b) "*Wie der Tau, der von Hermon herabfällt auf die Berge Zion*" [... like the dew of Hermon descending on Mount Zion]

Conclusion "*siehe so fein und lieblich ist daß Brüder einträting bei einander wohnen*" [Here is how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity]

The second answer is followed by:

a) "*Wenn dir's übel gehet, so ist dir ein Hachbar besser in der Nähe als ein Bruder in der Ferne*" [... better a near neighbor than a distant brother]

b) "*Liebe deine Nächsten als dich selbst*" [To love your neighbor as yourself]

Conclusion "*Denn si ihr euch untereinander beißet, so sehet zu, daß nicht undereinander verzehret werdet*" [If you bite and tear each other, see that you are not destroyed by each other]

The third answer is followed by:

a) "*Die Männer solen ihre Wiber lieben als ihre eigen Leiber. Wenn jemand sein Weib liebet, der liebet sich selbst*" [...husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself]

¹⁵ Bittinger, Werner. 1968. *op. cit.*, p. XV.

b) "*Die Weiber seine untertan ihren Männern, in allen Dinge, als den Herren*" [Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord]

c) "*Die Ehe soll ehrlich gehalten werden bei allen und das Ehbete unbefleket*" [Let the marriage be held in all honor and the bed be undefiled]

Conclusion "*Es ist ein groß Geheimnis vor Cristo und der Gemeine*" [This mystery is great, but I am talking about Christ and the Church]

At the end the key phrase is repeated once more, which is then followed by the general conclusion: "*Denn daselbst verheist der Herr Segen und Leben immer und ewiglich*" [For there the Lord promised his blessing: eternal life].

Regarding the musical form of the *Symphonia sacra op. 11, no. 25*, this somewhat follows the structure of the text. The piece is built of three stanza and a reprise, in which each stanza contains as text the key phrase followed by the response with comments and conclusion. The four musical stanzas are divided into several small stanzas that differ from each other not only by the harmonic-melodic elements but also by the manner of composition and the vocal-instrumental arrangement.

The major stanza A contains five minor stanzas which I have named from A' to E'. The small stanza A' is based on the motif α (fig. 1):



Fig. 1. *Motif α*

The α motif, with its variants, appears initially in the group of stringed instruments – violin I, II and violones – and is then taken over by the vocal group. Throughout the stanza the α motif is exposed in a *concertato* manner, moving from one musical group to another or from one voice to another. In the last two measures of the stanza, as a "reconciliation" of all voices and instruments, the motif is presented simultaneously by the entire vocal-instrumental ensemble, without violins.

Stanza B' is composed in an imitative Renaissance manner that reminds us of the motets of the Franco-Flemish school. The modal harmony and quasi-isorhythm (fig. 2) specific to the antique style contrast with the compositional modernity of stanza A':

The musical score in Figure 2 illustrates the isorhythmic composition technique. It consists of six staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, two Tenors, Bass, and Organ. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The organ part plays a repeating rhythmic motif of eighth notes. The vocal parts (Violin 1, Violin 2, Tenors, and Bass) enter at different points, creating a complex polyphonic texture. The organ part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment throughout the piece.

Fig. 2. *Isorhythmic composition technique*

Stanza C' is composed of two phrases based on the motif β (fig. 3):

The musical score in Figure 3 shows the motif β . It is a single staff in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The motif is labeled "motiv" and consists of two phrases, "a" and "b", each marked with a bracket. Phrase "a" consists of four eighth notes, and phrase "b" consists of four eighth notes.

Fig. 3. *Motif β*

The two phrases contrast both in compositional writing and in the sound apparatus for which they are intended. Thus, the antecedent phrase constructed in a *concertato* manner exposes the β motif three times to the vocal group, then to the violin group and once more to the vocal group. The following phrase, entitled *symphonia*, is entirely dedicated to the instrumental group. Raised in a Protestant spirit, Heinrich Schütz strictly adheres to the principles in which he was educated and gives primacy to the text in relation to the music. And not only that, because in his works, Schütz subordinates the manners of composition and harmony to the idea of the text, giving them the role of accentuating the meaning of the word. One of the most obvious examples of the composer's foregrounding of the text is in this stanza C' in measure 23 first beat. Here, to emphasize the idea of "one" appearing in the German text as "eins" the composer uses unison (fig. 4) to the five voices performing the part:

The musical score for Figure 4 consists of three systems. The first system has three staves: two Tenor staves (treble clef) and one Bass staff (bass clef). The second system has three staves: two Tenor staves (treble clef) and one Bass staff (bass clef). The third system has three staves: two Organ staves (treble and bass clef) and one Bass staff (bass clef). The lyrics 'Wann Bru der Eins seind' are written below the organ part. The music is in common time (C) and the key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Fig. 4. Rhetorical figure – unison on the word "eins"

Stanza D' is composed of three periods. The first period is based on a monody presented by the first tenor and accompanied by the organ and violins. This is composed in the spirit of Florentine dramatic declamation, which the composer acquired following his studies with Claudio Monteverdi. In the second period of the stanza, the monody turns into a *concitato* style performed by the violins and the first tenor. The third period returns to the manner of the accompanied monody, this time performed by the bass. Noteworthy is the quasi-instrumental writing of the vocal melodic line (fig. 5 & fig. 6).

The musical score for Figure 5 is a single staff in common time (C) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a trill-like figure.

Fig. 5. Quasi-instrumental writing in the tenor voice

The musical score for Figure 6 is a single staff in common time (C) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a trill-like figure.

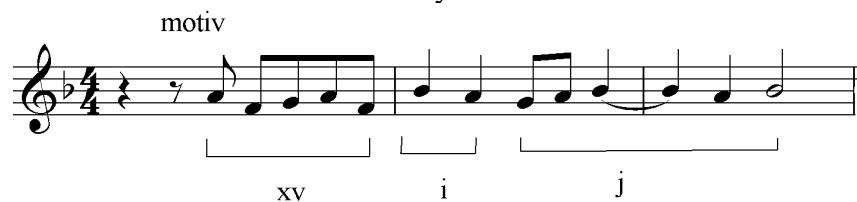
Fig. 6. Quasi-instrumental writing for the bass voice

Stanza E', composed on the first concluding text, is performed by the choral group accompanied by organ and violins. It is built from three asymmetrical phrases, in a homophonic manner specific to the Protestant chorale.

The large B stanza is constructed from four small stanzas, numbered in the score from A" to D". Stanza A" contains two sections composed in a concerted manner. The first section is based on the varied α motif, presented above in the small stanza A'. The α motive is rhythmically varied (fig. 7), appearing in A" as a fast double:

Fig. 7. Rhythmic variants of the α motif

The second section is built entirely from the ϵ motif and its variants (fig. 8):

Fig. 8. Motif ϵ

Noteworthy in stanza A" is the fact that the bass voice has a pause throughout the piece, the interpretation register being relatively high.

Stanza B" is composed in a concerted manner between the vocal group and the violin group, but through the homophonic writing it creates the impression of a chorale (fig. 9):

Fig. 9. Homophone writing

Stanza C" is a monody accompanied by basso continuo, composed of two periods. The first period is presented by tenor II, and the next period is presented by tenor I. The periods have common musical material.

Stanza D" is performed entirely by the vocal group accompanied by *basso continuo*. It is based on three phrases, different from each other both in the motivic material and in the compositional manner. Thus, the antecedent phrase is composed in polyphonic *concitato* type manner on the motif θ (fig. 10):

Fig. 10. Concitato style

The middle phrase, having the same material for all voices, has a declamatory character (fig. 11):

Fig. 11. Declamatory writing

The consistent, polyphonic-imitative, modal phrase creates the impression of a *stile antico*. Also, the doubling of the vocal bass by the violins supports the idea of an ancient style.

The major stanza C, like the previous stanza, is composed of four small stanzas, notated from A''' to D'''. Stanza A''', written in a *concertato* manner, contains two phrases. The antecedent phrase is built on the varied rhythmic-melodic α motif, which appears in imitative polyphony in all the voices and instruments.

The consistent, polyphonically imitative phrase is built on a λ motif carried over from one voice to another.

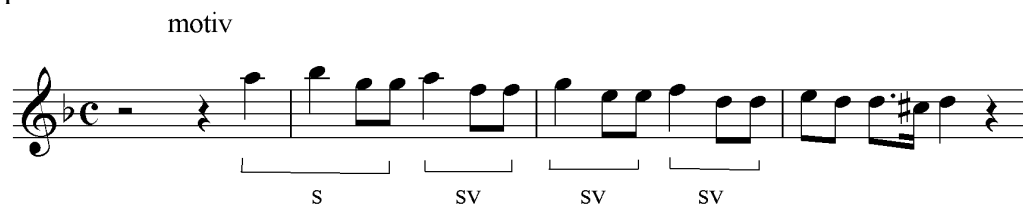
Stanza B''' is constructed in a polyphonic manner from two motifs π (fig. 12) and \omicron (fig. 13), which appear imitatively in the solo voices and violins:

Fig. 12. Motif π

Fig. 13. *Motif o*

Stanza C''' is a monody accompanied by *basso continuo* composed in a declamatory recitative manner. The musical material from the first period is presented by the second tenor and then taken over, varied, in the second period by the bass voice.

Stanza D''' consists of three periods. The first period, imitative polyphonic, entitled *symphonia* is performed exclusively by the instrumental group. The motif τ (fig. 14) is the basis of the whole period:

Fig. 14. *Motif τ*

The middle period, performed by the vocal group with continuous bass accompaniment, is constructed polyphonically. It contains two phrases; the antecedent phrase is based on the motif τ presented above and the consequent phrase is built on the inverted "s" cell (see fig. 14). The last period, composed in a homophonic manner, has a chorale character. It is performed only by the choral group, with continuous bass accompaniment, the violone duplicating the bass line.

The reprise is made up of three stanzas: A', B'v and C'''. I chose this notation because the first stanza is identical to the A' stanza of the A major stanza, and the second stanza is almost identical, to the B' stanza of the A major stanza. The final stanza C''', composed in a manner of Renaissance polyphony, serves as the final conclusion.

4. Conclusions

During the analysis I focused on highlighting the innovative and archaic features of the *Symphonia sacra op. 11, no. 25* by Heinrich Schütz. This approach was due to my desire to know the composer's contribution to the development of the musical art of the 17th century in Germany. I chose this opus because at the time of its creation, Heinrich Schütz was over 60 years old and in full compositional maturity. He had already mastered the new compositional techniques of the Italian schools and could apply them to his creation alongside the old techniques. Based on this idea, I began the analysis of the work to discover the features of the modern and ancient style, paying attention to the vocal-instrumental composition, to the composition techniques, to the harmony and last but not least to the elements of musical expression.

As for the vocal-instrumental composition of the analysed work, it brings the new element through the presence of the continuous bass and the forced instruments. The soloist and not dubbing roles of the vocal line that the instruments play throughout the work is another element specific to the modern style. There are, however, brief moments when the violin doubles the bass line, as in stanza D" the consistent phrase, or A"', feature H

The compositional techniques are as varied as possible, ranging from the Renaissance motet technique in stanza B' to the Protestant chorale pattern in stanza E' and from the concert style of the Venetian school in stanzas A', A" to the accompanied monody in stanzas D', C ", C '" and the *concitato* style in stanzas D' the second period or D" the antecedent phrase.

Harmonically, the work is located both in the modal sphere and in the tonal-functional area. Thus, in stanza B' we have a modal treatment of the musical material, the chains not being subordinated to a tonal-functional logic. Modal zones appear in several stanzas due to their atypical dissonances and resolutions. However, the work shows a clear tonal-functional character, especially in the cadences.

In the work of Heinrich Schütz, the word is primordial and essential in the composition of music. So, the elements used to emphasize certain features or literary ideas are typical of the musical baroque, the modern style and represent one of the innovative features of Schütz's creation.

The analysis of the work that highlights the presence of such different styles as *stile moderno* and *stile antico* within the same piece makes us understand how the art of music developed and what contributions Heinrich Schütz made to its evolution.

5. References

● Books

- Blume, Friedrich. 1963. *Syntagma Musicologicum*. Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag.
- Bukofzer, Manfred. 1947. *Music in the Baroque Era*. London: JM Dent & Sons Ltd.
- Grout, Donald Jay & PALISCA, Claude V. 1996. *A History of Western Music*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Schütz, Heinrich. *Symphoniae Sacrae II*. 1968. Kassel: Bärenreiter.
- Thompson, Wendy. 2004. *The Great Composers*. London: Hermes House.
- Ulrich, Homer & Pisk, Paul A. 1963. *A History of Music and Musical Style*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies.

● Articles (from books)

- Berger, Wilhelm Georg. 1985. "Arta lui Schütz la orizontul gândirii muzicale baroce" [Schütz's art on the horizon of baroque musical thought]. In *Revista Muzica*, year XXXV, no. 9, 10-18.
- Bittinger, Werner. 1968. "Foreword". In Schütz, Heinrich, *Symphoniae Sacrae II*, Kassel: Bärenreiter. p. XII.
- Breig, Werner. 2006. "Schütz, Heinrich". In *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil*. Vol. 15. Edited by Ludwig Finscher, 358–407. Stuttgart, Germany: Metzler.

- Rifkin, Joshua, & Linfield, Eva. 2001. "Schütz, Heinrich". In *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2d ed. Vol. 22. Edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 826–860. London: Macmillan.