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Heinrich Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*: Reflections on Its History and Textual-Musical Conception

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Premises

No other work by Heinrich Schütz is accompanied by such a wealth of significant and substantial documents as the *Musikalische Exequien*. Not only do these documents touch upon the external chronology of the work's origins, but they also indicate the stimulus behind its commission, as well as the composer's solutions to problems of compositional technique and his text expression. At the same time, this work has for over half a century been covered with a confusing network of contradictory interpretations and hypotheses. This is especially true of the first part of the work, the *Concert in Form einer teutschen Missa*, the text of which is taken from the coffin of Heinrich von Reuß. The important details necessary to understand Schütz's composition—namely the principles according to which the twenty-five-line text is constructed and the composer's role in its distribution—have until very recently been given constantly changing interpretations—occasionally without either clear documentation or sufficient continuity within the discussions of the secondary literature.¹

It is the goal of this article to present, through renewed examination of the sources, as detailed a picture as possible of the succession of events to which the *Musikalische Exequien* owes its existence. We will thus obtain a clearer understanding both of the degree of autonomy allowed the composer and of his artistic decisions.

Let us first summarize what is already known about the genesis of the *Musikalische Exequien*. The principal sources in this regard are: The *Abdruck / Derer Sprüche Göttlicher Schrift vnd Christlicher Kirchen Gesänge* . . . in which the texts sung at the funeral service are given (hereafter referred to as *Abdruck*);² the printed funeral sermon of Superintendent Christoph Richter

(hereafter: Richter);³ the title page of the original print of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* (hereafter: Title);⁴ and Schütz's preface (*Absonderlich Verzeichnüs . . .*) to the original print (hereafter: Preface). These documents provide a framework of known facts whose succession can be arranged in four phases:

1. The Prehistory. About one year before his death and burial (Richter) Heinrich Posthumus von Reuß had his coffin made and inscribed with a series of biblical sayings and chorale verses "Zu erweck: vnd vbung Gottseliger SterbensGedancken" [for the purpose of awakening and exercising his pious thoughts concerning death] (*Abdruck*). He selected as the sermon text for his interment ceremony verses 25–26 of Psalm 73, "Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe" (Richter, Preface), and he expressed the desire to have the coffin inscriptions, as well as other texts of his selection (including the *Canticum Simeonis*), performed musically for the funeral (*Abdruck*, Title, Preface).
2. The Commissioning of the Composition. Heinrich von Reuß died on 3 December 1635; Heinrich Schütz was asked by the Count's widow and sons to set to music the texts selected by the deceased.
3. Composition and Performance. Schütz composed the *Musikalische Exequien*, which "bey herrlicher vnd hochansehnlicher Leichbestattung" [at the splendid and most notable interment] of Heinrich Posthumus is "vor vnd nach der Leichpredigt gehalten/ vnd . . . in eine stille verdackte Orgel angestellet vnd abgesungen" [held before and after the sermon and . . . placed and sung at a quiet, discreet organ] (Title).
4. Publication. Soon thereafter (the title page speaks of the "recent" burial) the original print of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* was published by Wolff Seyffert in Dresden, with a dedication to the widow and sons of the deceased, an obituary poem by Schütz, and an extensive preface.

The reader may perhaps notice the absence of private preperformances during Heinrich von Reuß's lifetime that are mentioned again and again in the Schütz literature.⁵ The assumption of such preperformances is, however, based solely on the misinterpretation of a passage from the title page of the *Musikalische Exequien*. When Schütz wrote, "Musikalische Exequien wie solche . . . Jüngsthin den 4 Monatstag Februarii zu Gera / vor vnd nach der Leichpredigt gehalten / vnd ihrer wolsehligen Gnaden / bey dero lebzeiten wiederholten begehren nach / in eine stille verdackte Orgel angestellet vnd abgesungen worden, . . ." the time indication "bei dero lebzeiten" [during his lifetime] refers to the immediately following words "wiederholten begehren nach" [repeatedly wished for]. If Schütz had intended them to refer to "angestellet vnd abgesungen worden," additional punctuation would have been necessary: "ihrer wolsehligen

Gnaden bey dero lebzeiten / wiederholten begehren nach / in eine stille. . . ." The punctuation chosen—and without a doubt deliberately chosen—gives the text the unambiguous sense that the obsequies—according to the repeatedly expressed wishes of the deceased (the *Abdruck* states "nach Ihr Wolsel. Gn hiebevorn mehrmals wiederholter anleitung"), were "held . . . placed and sung before and after the sermon." The description of the same event using three verbs has a purpose: "halten" refers to the liturgical function of the music; "anstellen" to the disposition of the performers,⁶ for which the thoroughbass instrument, the "quiet, discreet organ," here sets the standard; and the "absingen" to the actual performance. Furthermore, information to the effect that the deceased had already heard his funeral music while he was still alive would not have been appropriate for the official character of the title page. The latter describes the function that the music assumed within the framework of the "state burial" of Heinrich von Reuß; a casual remark about previous private performances would in any case have belonged in the preface, or it could possibly have been woven into the obituary poem.

The notion that Schütz had begun the composition of the *Musikalische Exequien* before December 1635 is as untenable as these theorized preperformances of the music during Heinrich's lifetime.⁷ The following will attempt to trace in detail the course of the four phases in the genesis of the work. Though we will adhere as closely as possible to facts supplied by surviving documents, hypothesis will occasionally be employed to fill some of the gaps in our verifiable knowledge.

The Prehistory

"Prehistory" of the *Musikalische Exequien* will refer here to that phase during which Heinrich Reuß planned his burial, i.e., had his coffin made and inscribed and selected the musical texts to be performed at the funeral service.

Seen from the vantage point of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*, the coffin inscriptions are of central interest. It is from these that the first part of the work, the *Concert in Form einer teutschen Missa*, receives its multipartite textual and musical structure. For a long time, the exact arrangement of the texts on the coffin was a matter of conjecture. Hans Joachim Moser attempted to extrapolate from the composition to the coffin—unsuccessfully, as we now know.⁸ Nevertheless, he was on the right track in that he based his interpretation of the strict alternation between Bible verse and chorale strophe in the "Gloria" section on their arrangement on the coffin.)

We owe our current precise knowledge of the placement of texts on the coffin to the *Abdruck / Derer Sprüche Göttlicher Schrift vnd Chrislicher Kirchen Gesänge*, . . . which Rudolf Henning discovered and first evaluated in his article of 1973. The *Abdruck*, which was presumably sent as an invitation

to those taking part in the funeral service, not only lists the texts for all of the musical pieces intended for the church service, but it also gives such an exact position of the coffin inscriptions that Henning was able to reconstruct the appearance of the coffin in a perspective drawing.⁹ Remarks in the present study are based on table 6.1, which summarizes the arrangement and sources for the twenty-one coffin inscriptions. In order to avoid confusion, the individual texts

Table 6.1 Bible Verses and Chorale Strophes on the Coffin of Heinrich von Reuß

	[No.]	Text incipit	Source of Biblical Texts
			OT NT
coffin lid			
a) top	I.	<i>Christus ist mein Leben</i>	Phil. 1:21 John 1:29b
	II.	<i>Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm</i>	
b) head	III.	<i>Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren</i>	Rom. 14:8
c) right side	(h) IV.	<i>Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt</i>	John 3:16
	V.	<i>Er sprach zu seinem lieben Sohn</i>	
	(f) VI.	<i>Das Blut Jesu Christi, des Sohnes</i>	I John 1:7b
	VII.	<i>Durch ihn ist uns vergeben</i>	
d) left side	(h) VIII.	<i>Unser Wandel ist im Himmel</i>	Phil. 3:20–21a
	IX.	<i>Es ist allhie ein Jammertal</i>	
	(f) X.	<i>Wenn eure Sünde gleich blutrot wäre</i>	Isa. 1:18b
	XI.	<i>Sein Wort, sein Tauf, sein Nachtmahl</i>	
e) foot	XII.	<i>Gehe hin, mein Volk, in eine Kammer</i>	Isa. 26:60
middle section	XIII.	<i>Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand</i>	Wisd. of Sol. 3:1–3
coffin base			
a) right side	(h) XIV.	<i>Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe</i>	Ps. 73:25–26
	XV.	<i>Er ist das Heil und selig Licht</i>	
	(f) XVI.	<i>Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr</i>	Ps. 90:10a
	XVII.	<i>Ach wie elend ist unser Zeit</i>	
b) left side	(h) XVIII.	<i>Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt</i>	Job 19:25–26
	XIX.	<i>Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist</i>	
	(f) XX.	<i>Herr, ich lasse dich nicht</i>	Gen. 32:27b
	XXI.	<i>Er sprach zu mir: Halt dich an mich</i>	

Source of the Chorale Texts. No. V: *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein* (Martin Luther), str. 5; No. VII: *Nun laßt uns Gott dem Herren* (Ludwig Helmbold), str. 6; No. IX: *Ich hab mein Sach Gott heimgestellt* (Johann Leon), str. 3; No. XI: *Nun laßt uns Gott dem Herren* (see no. VII), str. 5; No. XV: *Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin* (Martin Luther), str. 4; No. XVII: *Ach wie elend ist unser Zeit* (Johannes Gigas), str. 1; No. XIX: *Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist* (Nikolaus Herman), str. 4; No. XXI: *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein* (see no. V), lines 1–4 from str. 7, lines 5–7 from str. 8.

Table 6.2 Textual Outline of Part I of the *Musikalische Exequien*

	[No.]	Text incipit	OT	NT	SWV 279
Pro Introitu	1.	<i>Nacket bin ich von Mutterleibe kommen</i>	Job 1:21		"Kyrle" Portion
	2.	<i>[Herr Gott, Vater im Himmel]</i>			
Coffin Inscriptions					
coffin lid					"Gloria" Portion
(a) top	3.	<i>Christus ist mein Leben</i>		Phil. 1:21	
	4.	<i>Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm</i>		John 1:29b	
	5.	<i>[Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn]</i>			
(b) head	6.	<i>Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren</i>		Rom. 14:8	
	7.	<i>[Herr Gott, heiliger Geist]</i>			
(c) right side	(h) 8.	<i>Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt</i>		John 3:16	
	9.	<i>Er sprach zu seinem lieben Sohn</i>			
	(f) 10.	<i>Das Blut Jesu Christi, des Sohnes</i>		I John 1:7b	
	11.	<i>Durch ihn ist uns vergeben</i>			
(d) left side	(h) 12.	<i>Unser Wandel ist im Himmel</i>		Phil. 3:20–21a	
	13.	<i>Es ist allhie ein Jammertal</i>			
	(f) 14.	<i>Wenn eure Sünde gleich blutrot wäre</i>	Isa. 1:18b		
	15.	<i>Sein Wort, sein Tauf, sein Nachtmahl</i>			
(e) foot	16.	<i>Gehe hin, mein Volk in eine Kammer</i>	Isa. 26:60		
middle section	17.	<i>Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand</i>	Wisd. of Sol. 3:1–3		
coffin base					
(a) right side	(h) 18.	<i>Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe</i>	Ps. 73:25–26		
	19.	<i>Er ist das Heil und selig Licht</i>			
	(f) 20.	<i>Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr</i>	Ps. 90:10a		
	21.	<i>Ach wie elend ist unser Zeit</i>			
(b) left side	(h) 22.	<i>Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt</i>	Job 19:25–26		
	23.	<i>Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist</i>			
	(f) 24.	<i>Herr, ich lasse dich nicht</i>	Gen. 32:27b		
	25.	<i>Er sprach zu mir: Halt dich an mich</i>			

Source of the Chorale Texts: See table 6.1.

are given Roman numerals, while Arabic numbers represent the order of performance for the twenty-five texts (table 6.2).

The coffin inscriptions are bound together by a common theme: they encompass thoughts of mortality, dying, salvation through Christ's death and resurrection, and eternal life. The selection of biblical texts is not original; it corresponds to contemporary conventions. Henning was able to find "almost all the passages from the Posthumus coffin . . . on a dozen coffins of baroque princes."¹⁰ On the other hand, the supplementing of bible verses with chorale strophes appears to be peculiar to Reuß's coffin.

Concerning the arrangement of texts on the coffin, certain hierarchical principles can be discerned. First, one can say in general that the chorale strophes are in each case closely related to the Bible verses that precede them. Furthermore, as Henning has already shown, the three spatial directions are polarized and assigned relative values: "above" is of a higher value than "below," "right" higher than "left," and the head end of the coffin higher than the foot. Thus, texts no. I and II, the most concentrated formulations of the Christian assurance of salvation, were assigned to a prominent position on the top of the coffin above and below the crucifix. The position of texts no. III and XII also appears to have been determined through the relationship of the "head" end to the "foot" end. While the latter ("Gehe hin, mein Volk, in eine Kammer"), at the foot of the coffin lid, expresses the fallen nature of man in death, this thought finds its consoling counterpart in the saying introduced at the head, "Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren. . . ." and John 3:16 ("Also had Gott die Welt geliebet . . ."), one of the central biblical statements of the Christian faith, has been given an appropriately prominent place near the head.

The hierarchical ordering is most clearly taken into account, however, in the position of relatively higher value assumed by the New Testament sayings, as is evident from the diagram. The separation of Old and New Testament sayings is carried out with such consistency that one can scarcely doubt the presence of an underlying principle. As for the grouping of texts within the two blocks of Old and New Testament, a certain amount of latitude was possible; it would be difficult to prove that the chosen arrangement was the only sensible one. "Encircling a center" would be a better description for the intellectual interrelation of the sayings than "progression in a straight line."

Schütz's Commission of the Composition

If we trust the statement of the *Abdruck*, according to which the "gracious request" for a musical setting of the coffin inscriptions came from the survivors, then Schütz would have received the commission to compose the funeral music in December 1635. Since nowadays we associate a fixed concept with the

expression "funeral music for Heinrich Posthumus von Reuß," namely the three-part work published by Schütz under the title *Musikalische Exequien*, the content and form of the request that Schütz received has scarcely been considered. However, a few thoughts on the form of this request might prove helpful to an understanding of the finished work.

The request in its literal sense, that is, the written document in which Heinrich von Reuß's survivors asked Schütz to prepare music for the funeral service, does not survive. We can, however, reconstruct much of its content with the help of the *Abdruck*, which in this context proves again to be a key document for the history of the *Musikalische Exequien*. Namely, for parts I and III of the *Exequien* the text of the *Abdruck* differs from that of Schütz. This indicates that at the time of the *Abdruck*'s printing, the performance material of the *Musikalische Exequien* was not yet in Gera. The *Abdruck* must therefore contain the texts for which music had been requested from Schütz and to which, at least in principle, Schütz had apparently already consented.

As it appears in the *Abdruck*, the order of the worship service contained seven texts to be presented musically (the texts of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* are printed here in bold type):

1. *Nacket bin ich von Mutterleibe kommen (Pro Introitu)* (SWV 279, no. 1)
2. **Coffin inscriptions** (SWV 279, no. 3, 4, 6, 8–25)
3. *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*
4. **Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe** (SWV 280)
5. **Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener (Canticum Simeonis)** (SWV 281)
6. *Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin*
7. *Hört auf mit Weinen und Klagen*

The title and layout of the *Abdruck* place particular emphasis on the coffin inscriptions; they are reproduced in their entirety, whereas for some of the other texts only the beginning is given (nos. 3, 5, and 6). According to the wishes of the deceased, these inscriptions were apparently to form the musical centerpiece of the funeral service, and accordingly they formed the heart of the composition's commissioning. It was for their sake that a new composition was absolutely necessary, since an ad hoc collection of texts was involved. It is possible—given the short period of time—that Schütz was left to decide whether to write new music for the other texts, to use earlier compositions of his own, or to recommend settings by others. This last option is particularly plausible for text no. 7, which was perhaps sung in the widely disseminated setting by Melchior Vulpis.

The *Abdruck* is particularly reflective of the composition's commissioning

as it pertains to part I of the *Musikalische Exequien*. It not only informs us about the arrangement of the inscriptions on the various surfaces of the princely coffin, but it also brings these texts into a specific order (that is, Schütz's).

Rudolf Henning thought he could determine through observation of the texts on the coffin "that the sequential order differs from that of Schütz."¹¹ This is inaccurate. On the coffin, the texts have no sequential order at all ("sequential order" is a linear concept); they are instead arranged in three-dimensional space, so that in their relationship to the composition one can speak neither of identity nor of divergence. Rather, the translation of the spatial ordering into the linear, one-dimensional flow of music demands some sort of guideline or rule to determine the hierarchical order and the direction in which the three dimensions are to be considered. The rule according to which the coffin's texts are reproduced in the *Abdruck* consists of proceeding in order of importance from top to bottom, from head to foot, and from left to right. It was apparently in this order that the texts of the coffin were presented to Schütz for his setting, and it was in this order that he composed them.

Earlier interpretations of the *Concert in Form einer teutschen Missa*, in spite of everything ingenious that they have detected concerning the sequential order composed by Schütz, have overlooked one problem: the relationship of the Old and New Testaments as text sources. The New Testament texts, which on the coffin are logically placed *above* the Old Testament ones, come to stand—as a result of the gathering of texts in the order described above—*before* those of the Old Testament. This forces the composer to proceed from New to Old Testament texts. To sure, the Old Testament Bible verses are to a certain extent placed in a Christian light through the chorale strophes that follow them, yet there is a certain strangeness to this order. Schütz complied with the textual sequence, but it is difficult to imagine that he welcomed it.

Composition and Performance

The manuscript parts from which the music was performed on 4 February 1636 are not extant, so we cannot determine what last-minute changes Schütz might perhaps have introduced into the music before its printing. If we nevertheless treat separately the phases of "composition and performance" on the one hand and "printing" on the other, we do so for two reasons. First, the print exhibits a purely textual layer of relatively independent significance (title, dedication, poetic eulogy, preface, and headings for the movements) which in part requires its own discussion; and second, of the seven texts or textual complexes in the *Abdruck* for which musical performance is expected, we encounter three that are not in the print of the *Musikalische Exequien*. Thus it is perhaps not entirely irrelevant to ask whether the texts in this group were also set to music by Schütz and performed during the funeral service.

These three texts (nos. 3, 6, and 7 in table 6.2) involve chorales, so that congregational singing could also enter in these places. For the first of the chorale texts, *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*, one could surely think—with all necessary caution—of a figural composition by Schütz, namely the six-voice setting that he published in 1648 in the *Geistliche Chormusik* (SWV 387). *Herzlich lieb* is so unrepresentative of the predominating type of polyphonic *Spruchmotette* in this collection that one can scarcely assume Schütz composed the work for this opus. The princely burial of 1636, however, would be a possible occasion for its creation. One could explain its omission from the published version of the *Musikalische Exequien* in that its simple style caused it not to fit with the other pieces. Schütz appears to have viewed the *Geistliche Chormusik*, on the other hand, as a reservoir in which stray compositions could also find a place; one might think of the aria *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt* or the motet *Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten*, the latter of which represents a German version of a composition by Andrea Gabrieli.

Whereas thoughts concerning the compositions that are called for in the *Abdruck* but not present in the print of the *Exequien* are of a hypothetical nature, we stand on surer ground with nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5 on the list. In the double choir motet on the sermon text, *Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe*, Schütz is in complete agreement with the wishes of the deceased; in his setting of the *Canticum Simeonis* he goes beyond the requirements of his commission by adding to the main text (*Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener*, sung by the first choir) a second choir with the words "Selig sind die Toten," an addition of frankly theatrical effect which in the preface the composer expressly claims as his invention.

The most difficult task for the composer was undoubtedly the setting of the complex of twenty-one coffin inscriptions. In the following we will attempt to reconstruct the considerations that led from the "raw material" of the texts (see table 6.1) to the basic plan of Schütz's setting. In table 6.2, which reproduces this plan, the individual segments (by now twenty-five in number) are enumerated consecutively with arabic numbers.¹² The texts of the capella sections are in bold type (with textual additions of the composer in square brackets); the slot on the far right, not present in table 6.1, demonstrates the overlaid bipartite division as it is made clear through the two "Intonatio" beginnings and Schütz's statements concerning the analogy to the two-part Lutheran Mass (Kyrie and Gloria).

In planning the work, the most pressing question had to be the way to tie together the large number of individual pieces. Schütz decided to treat the two types of text, Bible verse and chorale strophe, in stylistically different ways. Apparently, the composer's first fundamental decision was to set the Bible verses in the style of the *kleines geistliches Konzert* for few voices and obbligato thoroughbass, with the chorale strophes set for the entire six-voice ensemble using the proper chorale melodies in motet style, i.e., with a basso seguente.¹³

In this way the chorale sections functioned, as it were, like pillars. In order also to being out this function with respect to mode, Schütz decided to let all the chorale sections end on the final of the primary mode (E Aeolian).¹⁴ Only two of the chorale settings allowed transposition to E (nos. 13 and 19); the remainder, on G (nos. 9, 11, 15, 21, and 25) or A (no. 23), are given in each case a coda in the form of a varied repetition of the final line cadencing on E. While in the body of each of these chorale sections Schütz—as he excuses himself in the preface—"aus den Schrancken Noni Toni . . . außschweiffen vnd solchen Kirchen Melodeyen nachgehen müssen" [must digress from the limits of the ninth mode and follow such church melodies], he always returns to the fundamental mode with the codalike constructions described above.

As a rule, a Bible verse is followed in every instance by a chorale strophe. At two points, however, several Bible verses from among the coffin inscriptions stand directly beside each other, namely before the first chorale strophe, *Er sprach zu seinem lieben Sohn* (nos. I–IV in the *Abdruck*, nos. 3, 4, 6, and 8 in the composition) and before the fifth, *Er ist das Heil und selig Licht* (nos. XII–XIV in the *Abdruck*, nos. 16–18 in the composition). Schütz apparently considered the accumulation of Bible verses in the body of the work unobjectionable. In any case he left the given texts untouched and—through musical means (e.g., scoring, harmony, and style of declamation)—fashioned the series of four segments, nos. 16–19, into a large complex that is both varied and coherent.

The opening group of coffin inscriptions was difficult to handle: Here, if Schütz had remained faithful to the original plan for the texts he would have had to set no fewer than four Bible verses in immediate succession before the alternation of verse and strophe could have begun. He chose instead to make an unauthorized textual change: in order also to be able to alternate between few-voiced concerto sections and six-voice capella "pillars" at the very beginning, he added the three parts of the German trinitarian Kyrie. The three Kyrie portions did not fit schematically with the first three coffin inscriptions, since the first Bible verse already contains the name of Christ (which in the Kyrie text is reserved for the second segment). Thus this first manipulation of the given texts occasioned a second: Schütz inserted the verse from Job 1, which in the *Abdruck* was intended for the "Introitus," into the sequence of coffin inscriptions. The first "Kyrie" (no. 2) could easily follow it (no. 1); the two verses on the top side of the coffin lid (nos. 3 and 4) were both attached to the German "Christe eleison" (no. 5), while the words "Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren . . ." were followed by the third invocation, directed to the Holy Spirit—an association that the text from the letter to the Romans neither invites nor contradicts.

In this way the number of textual segments to be set to music had grown from the original twenty-one coffin inscriptions to twenty-five, but the text as

a whole had gained a structure that could serve in its musical setting as the basis for the regular alternation between reduced, soloistic sections and full-voiced, motetlike ones.

Through the bipartite division of the capella portions (A: three-part German Kyrie, B: eight chorale strophes) the whole had taken on a two-part form that was not present in the disposition of the original coffin inscriptions. Schütz made this bipartite form musically clear by allowing the opening segment of each part (nos. 1 and 8) to begin with a monophonic intonation. To lend formal coherence, each of the two parts is enclosed in a frame. In the first part the two outer cries of the Kyrie (no. 2 and 7) cadence on the final E, while the middle one (no. 5) ends on A.¹⁵ The considerably longer second part is also framed, in that in its two outer verse-settings (nos. 8 and 24)—and only here—the entire six-voice ensemble is engaged; at these two places (nos. 8/9 and 24/25) verse and chorale join together to form six-voice blocks.

The Publication

As already stated, the sources offer us no clues for distinguishing between the first performed version of the *Musikalische Exequien* and the version that was published. Therefore, we will assume that the published version is essentially the same as the version heard at the burial service.

The congregation of 4 February 1636 probably followed the music with the aid of the *Abdruck*. The composer's textual additions in parts I and III would in this context certainly not have been felt as something strange but as an enrichment. If our assumption is correct that the Gera listeners were informed about the order of the musical works only through the *Abdruck*, then the first part of the *Musikalische Exequien* would not have been presented to them as a *Concert in Form einer teutschen Missa*, but rather as a setting of the introit text and the coffin inscriptions. Also, Schütz certainly had no interest in bringing the concept of "Deutsche Messe" into play; this would only have diverted attention from that which the deceased apparently considered so important, namely that the inscriptions of the coffin should sound through music.

Furthermore, the way in which, in the preface to the original print, Schütz speaks of the first part as a "Messe" is equivocal. First he leaves no doubt about the source of the texts: they are "Alle die jenigen Sprüche heiliger Schrift / vnd Gesetzlein Christlicher Kirchen Gesänge / welche Ihre Selige verstorbene Gnaden . . . auf Ihren . . . Sarck / verzeichnen vnd schreiben lassen" [all those verses of the Holy Bible and strophes of Christian hymns that the deceased had drawn and written on his coffin]. The composition of these texts, however, is a "Concert . . . in Form einer Teutschen Missa" (the same is stated in the title of the part-books); and to be more precise Schütz continues, "nach art der Lateinischen Kyrie, Christe Kyrie Eleyson. Gloria in excelsis. Et in terra pax &c." If

this formulation suggests terminological reflections concerning the difference between "form" [German: *Form*] and "manner" [German: *Art*] (the "form" of the *Concert* is that of the German Mass, its "manner" that of the Latin), the author undermines such considerations in the following *Ordinantz*, where he writes, "Dieses nach art einer Lateinischen oder Teutschen Missa aufgesetzte Concert. . . ." Between these two formulations, however, stands the heading "Ordinantz des Concerts oder der Teutschen Begräbnis Missa . . .," in which the concept of the "Missa" is placed alongside that of "Concert." At the end of the *Ordinantz* Schütz proposes its liturgical use "in place of a German *Missa*" and mentions as appropriate places in the church year the feast of the Purification of the Virgin and the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

This confusing multiplicity of definitions contrasts conspicuously with the conceptual sharpness with which Schütz generally conceives the prefaces to his other works. The only possible explanation is that the printed edition of the *Musikalische Exequien* served two functions. It was in the first place a document; that is, it preserved in written form the music that was heard in Gera on 4 February 1636, and it demonstrated that the funeral ceremony took place according to the wish of the deceased and the formal request of the survivors (and dedicatees). Second, however, it was Schütz's aim to create for this music an afterlife beyond the original occasion and to reach an outside economic market with its publication. These two functions were easily combined for parts II and III, since their texts were not situation-specific. In part I, the two aims necessarily conflicted. How could a sensible performance opportunity be found for the musical settings of Reuß's coffin inscriptions after the Gera funeral?

Schütz solved this problem, first, by indicating that the piece took the form of the German Mass (i.e., the Lutheran *Missa brevis* consisting of Kyrie and Gloria) and could be performed as such for use in the church service, and second, by attempting to give the first part of the *Exequien* print a more general character. The explanation for the peculiar shifting conceptions of the various passages of the preface cited above lies in Schütz's need to keep sight of the origin of the text and its compositional occasion while effecting this transformation.

On the basis of the preceding considerations, the frequently discussed problem of the Gloria is easily solved. It involves the following: Whereas the transformation of segments 1 through 7 of part I into a Kyrie by means of capella insertions is textually motivated, complex nos. 8–25 offers no such analogous textual reference to the Gloria of the Mass. Until now, much of the secondary literature has attempted to support Schütz's explicit analogy through the text (i.e., to discover the relationship between the textual constellation of the second major portion and the text of the Gloria).¹⁶ Without going into the (widely varied) results of these interpretations, we should note a fundamental, suspicious fact: whereas the possibility of indicating the first major portion as a

troped Kyrie is obvious, the second major portion offers a serious obstacle to all attempts to bring it into clear relationship with the Gloria of the Mass. To be sure, this obstacle can be overcome through interpretational artifice, but only with the resulting cost that an appreciation of its meaning is beyond what even the most attentive listener can experience in the work itself.

Proceeding, however, from the work's history as it can be reconstructed from the sources, one sees clearly that all attempts to trace Gloria-analogies in the texts are exercises in futility. For the textual compilation of part I was not conceived in analogy to the Mass; rather, it arose through a transformation (not without problems, as has been shown) of the coffin inscriptions. To be sure, the composer did expand this succession of texts (which in any case is not in and of itself bipartite) with the insertion of the Kyrie, but he did nothing to tie it in any way with the Gloria text. The Gloria analogy was only later introduced by Schütz into the already-finished work; and it is limited to the analogous nature of its longer, multipartite text, which contains fundamental statements of the Christian faith and which follows a Kyrie. One may find this conclusion disappointing and criticize Schütz's later labeling as misleading, but everything that we know about the genesis of the work indicates that at no stage in the creative process was there any intention of establishing an analogy to the Gloria.

When one attempts to reconstruct the conceptual considerations that guided Schütz throughout his work on the *Concert in Form einer teutschen Missa*, the Gloria portion appears to be less of a problem than the Kyrie portion, i.e., that portion in which the composer moved beyond the given texts. We attempted above to explain the Kyrie insertions based on formal considerations; according to this explanation Schütz would at first have been less concerned with the Kyrie texts than with the possibility of differentiating between solo and capella sections at the beginning of the work. But the Kyrie insertions form at the same time the focal point for his transformation of the coffin inscriptions into the "Deutsche Messe"—a possibility that Schütz must have noticed, if indeed this had not been the impetus for the initial selection of the three introductory capella texts.

The point at which Schütz decided to expand the given texts by means of the three-fold Kyrie could theoretically have occurred between performance and publication, so that the notion of "Deutsche Missa" would have been first introduced afterwards with a view toward a broader market. In this case, however, one would also have to assume the introduction of further alterations; for example, without the two-part structure of Kyrie and Gloria, the two monophonic intonations would make no sense. Since no documents survive concerning the history of the work between the *Abdruck* and the original print of the *Musikalische Exequien*, we know nothing concerning the decisive divergence between the given textual conception of "Introitus and coffin inscriptions" and Schütz's textual-musical conception of a *Concert in Form einer teutschen Messe*.

Conclusions

We have attempted to view the shape of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* against the backdrop of a "simplified" version of the work's genesis as indicated by the surviving documents, without assuming any further underlying plans on the part of the composer. In this way it has been demonstrated not only that such further assumptions are unnecessary for an explanation of the shape of the work, but that they would contradict certain of its features (e.g., the succession of Old and New Testament texts, the problem of the Gloria).

If our inquiry has demonstrated that the text of the *Concerto in Form einer deutschen Missa* is in no way as carefully "composed" or as full of meaning as has hitherto been assumed, this may at first have a sobering effect. In reality, however, it is this recognition that finally affords a clear view of the character upon which the *concerto*'s meaning is actually based, namely the musical shaping that Schütz bestowed upon this textual compilation.

Schütz gave the many-colored and relatively loosely ordered nature of the texts its due. His structural resources are limited to the connection of the whole to a common mode, the "rhythmicization" of the musical flow through alternation of few-voiced *concerto* sections and full-voiced, motetlike chorale (or Kyrie) settings, the subdivision into Kyrie and Gloria parts, and the employment of a musical "frame" within each of these two parts. Otherwise, the variety of the texts is matched by the similarly great variety of musical means with which Schütz gives each of the individual sections its own characteristic stamp.

Particularly important in this respect is the special character that the style of the *kleines geistliches Konzert* attains in part I of the *Musikalische Exequien* (whose composition, of course, falls within the time period during which Schütz was preparing the publication of both parts of the *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* [1636 and 1639]). We know from Schütz's prefaces to this two-part opus that he entertained serious reservations about this type of composition, and turned to the genre in a more extensive way only because of the effects of the war. In this respect, the danger that the small performing forces will be, so to speak, "overstrained" if one attempts to use them in writing independent works of larger proportion (as Schütz's concertos of 1636/39 in fact do, since the adjective *klein* refers only to their performing forces) seems to have played a role. The nature of the task that Schütz faced in setting the coffin inscriptions—with all of the problems of a multipartite form—seems to have held forth a certain charm. For here he could realize the particular possibilities of the soloistic concerto, namely the capacity for both flexible voice leading and differentiation of textual meaning without needing to stretch the individual pieces to such great length. The need, dictated by the large number of texts, to compose *concertos* in miniature format offered at the same time a special opportunity, and Schütz knew how to use it.

The composer's assessment of the work's success is reflected in his decision to make it available for broader use by assigning it (in its heading and preface) the liturgical function of a Lutheran *Missa brevis*. Along the same lines, Schütz also accepted the *Musikalische Exequien* into the sequence of his most important works as "Opus 7" in his catalog of 1647. His attempt to detach the work from its original purpose apparently found little resonance among his contemporaries—as we could conclude from the small number of extant copies of the print—just as the argument in the preface that the opening *concerto* could serve in place of a Mass was textually only weakly supported. The composer's wish for an afterlife for the *Musikalische Exequien* could only be granted by the twentieth-century Schütz renaissance, which has in the fullest sense assigned the work—if for aesthetic rather than liturgical reasons—a place of honor within Schütz's "Opera."

Translated by Paul Walker

Notes

1. The most important literature on Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* is given in the bibliography at the end of this article. A report on the progress of previous research lies outside the intent of this article; agreement and differences with earlier scholarly literature is only noted where it serves to clarify a problem.
2. Only extant copy in the Stolberg Leichenpredigtsammlung, no. 18709; facsimile in Paul Horn, Günter Graulich, and Klaus Hofmann, preface to *Musikalische Exequien*, Stuttgarter Schütz-Ausgabe no. 8 (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1973), pp. xlvii–l.
3. Copies in the Stolberg Leichenpredigtsammlung, no. 18709, and in the Universitäts-Bibliothek Göttingen, Stedernsche Sammlung, vol. 215, 1.
4. Title page and foreword are reproduced in all modern editions of the *Musikalische Exequien*.
5. It appears that Othmar Wessely ("Der Fürst und der Tod," *Beiträge* 1974/75, ed. Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Musik, pp. 60–71) (Wessely, footnote 20) expressed the first reservations about the legend of performances during Reuß's lifetime; the problem is discussed at length in Horn, Graulich, and Hofmann, preface, but in the end the authors were unable to abandon the thesis of the preperformances.
6. In the foreword to the *Musikalische Exequien* Schütz uses the expression in a similar way; further demonstrations can be found within the discussions of performance practice in the prefaces to the *Psalmen Davids*, the *Geistliche Chormusik*, and the *Weihnachtshistorie*.
7. As an aside, an apocryphal contribution to the dating of the *Musikalische Exequien* may be mentioned. In 1962 one could read in the article by Gustav Adolf Trumpff on the *Musikalische Exequien* that "according to a note of Friedrich Ludwig" the *Musikalische Exequien* was composed "between 9 December 1633 and 11 February 1634" (Gustav Trumpff, "Die 'Musikalische Exequien' von Heinrich Schütz," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 123 [1962], pp. 120–21). Unfortunately all indications of when and in what context this note arose and on what source it was based are missing. Objectively, it is unlikely. The reputation of Friedrich Ludwig

- (1872–1930) seemed to Trumpff (as it has to certain other more recent authors) to demand that any such allusion associated with his name be taken seriously. It is more likely, however, that Ludwig himself, a master of exacting documentary research, would have been extremely surprised that such unverifiable information was believed for so long.
8. Hans Joachim Moser, *Heinrich Schütz—Sein Leben und Werk*, 2nd ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954), pp. 141–42. Translated by Carl F. Pfatteicher (St Louis: Concordia, 1959), pp. 157–59.
 9. Rudolph Henning, "Zur Textfrage der 'Musikalische Exequien' von Heinrich Schütz," *Sagittarius* 4 (1973), p. 48. Concerning the coffin itself, the remarkable situation exists that it is preserved and its resting place known—the crypt of the Salvatorkirche in Gera—but because of the architectural situation it is not accessible. (For more detail, see Henning, pp. 45f.) As a result of the thorough description in the *Abdruck*, however, it is unlikely that any surprises would be encountered if the original inscriptions could be studied directly on the coffin. The specifications of the *Abdruck* are in any case verified by two photographs of the coffin from the year 1921 (reproduction in Henning, following p. 56, and in Horn, Graulich, and Hofmann, preface, p. xlv).
 10. Henning, "Zur Textfrage," p. 53.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 12. Our enumeration of the segments, which is oriented toward the textual units, differs from that of the Stuttgarter Schütz-Ausgabe, which is based on musical criteria (not explained in the foreword and not made entirely clear) and arrives at a total of twenty-seven segments.
 13. Only at the beginning of the chorale movement *Er ist das Heil und ewig Licht* is the basso continuo treated independently.
 14. We proceed in this respect from the version of the thoroughbass transposed to E. In order to avoid a sharp in the signature, the vocal parts are transposed a fourth higher to A.
 15. The close of the second Kyrie on A might be the result of the revision process. In any case Schütz, as he set the succeeding verse, *Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren*, appears to have proceeded from a preceding cadence on E; the continuo's unthematic bridge passage with which this section begins gives the impression of a later addition.
 16. See the interpretations of Rudolf Gerber ("Die 'Musikalische Exequien' von Heinrich Schütz" *Musik und Kirche* 6 [1934], pp. 296–310), Hans Joachim Moser (*Heinrich Schütz*), Gerhard Mittring ("Totendienst und Christuspredigt—Zum Text der Musikalischen Exequien von Heinrich Schütz" in *Musik als Lobgesang—Festschrift für Wilhelm Ehmann* [Darmstadt, 1964]), and Otto Brodde (*Heinrich Schütz—Weg und Werke*, 2nd ed. [Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972], pp. 137–48).

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