

Passion and Drama in German Literature

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We understand by 'drama' a poetic work that communicates exclusively through its characters, without a narrator. Already Aristotle had identified direct speech as a criterion of the genre;¹ in the early modern period this argument was stressed by Albrecht Christian Rotth, a widely respected scholar of poetics at Leipzig.² Nevertheless, common opinion of the time continued to be influenced by the idea of a *thematic* definition, so that the identity of the genre was rather flexible. This can be seen in the preface published in 1723 with a translation of Hugo Grotius's *Christus patiens* by Daniel Wilhelm Triller, a physician and important connoisseur of literature at Merseburg. Triller lists here several works in which 'the Passion had been represented as a tragedy, or in the manner of a drama'.³ Yet only a single work corresponds to what we would call a tragedy (*Trauerspiel*) today; the others include a madrigalian play (by Johann Jacobi), two *Singspiele*, that is, operas (respectively by Johann Christoph Wentzel and Johann Georg Lippold), a songbook (by Johann Rist), two completely dramatic Passion oratorios (by Beccau and König), the Passion oratorio by Brockes, which is an epic drama, and an academic speech action (*Redeactus*) by Johann Klaj.⁴

¹ *Peri poetikes*, Chap. 3 and 6.

² Albrecht Christian Rotth, *Kürtzliche [...] Einleitung zu den Eigentlich so benahmten Poetischen Gedichten* (Leipzig, 1688), p. 220.

³ Daniel Wilhelm Triller (tr.), *Hugonis Grotii Leidender Christus Trauer=Spiel: Aus dem beygefüigten Lateinischen Texte ins Teutsche übersetzt [...] von Daniel Wilhelm Trillern* (Leipzig, 1723), fol. b6^v-b7^r.

⁴ Hugo Grotius, *Christus patiens* (Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden], 1608); Johann Jacobi, *Der um unsere Missethat willen verwundete/ und um unsere (Sic) Sünden willen zuschlagene und gecreutzigte JESUS/ Nach den Vier Eoangelisten In einem Trauer=Spiel vorgestellt* (Zwickau, 1680); Johann Georg Lippold, *Die Bethrante Unschuld Des Leidenden Jesu. In einem Geistlichen Singe=Spiel* (Jena, 1694); Johann Rist, *Der zu seinem Leiden und Sterben hingeführter [...] Jesus* (Hamburg, 1648); Joachim Beccau, *Zuläßige Verkürtzung müßiger Stunden/ Bestehend in allerhand Geistlichen Gedichten Nebst dem Leyden Christi und dem Hohen=Liede Salomonis. In Cantaten* (Hamburg, 1719); Johann Ulrich König, *Thränen unter dem Creutze Jesus In einem Oratorio* (Hamburg, 1711); Johann Christoph Wentzel, *Der Gott=liebenden Seelen Wallfahrt zum Creutz und Grab Christi/ in einem geistl. SingeSpiel zu Vermehrung Christl. Andacht bey dem in der Collegien=Kirche zu Jena/ auf den Char=Freitag dieses lauffenden 1693sten ErlösungJahres angestellten Gottes=Dienstes eilfertigst verfaßet* (Jena, 1693); Barthold Heinrich Brockes, *Der Für die Sünde der Welt Gemarterte und Sterbende JESUS [...] In gebundener Rede Vorgestellet* (Hamburg, 1712); Johann Klaj, *Der Leidende Christus* (Nürnberg, 1645).

There was also flexibility in theatrical practice. Wentzel's *Singspiel* was adapted as a Passion oratorio for Hamburg with only the smallest revisions;⁵ Hugo Grotius's Latin drama formed the model for Klaj's academic oration. Our modern distinction of genres is thus unhistorical in many ways: it obscures the view of the actual richness and interconnections in the transmission. The following survey will therefore consider the broad range of possibilities and tendencies in the drama-related representations of the Passion.

In his *Deutsche Messe* of 1526, Luther objected to the 'singing of the four Passions', which he considered to belong to Catholic phantasmagoria ('gauckel werck').⁶ He also shunned the dramatic representation of the Passion, because it had too often been accompanied by comic pranks. On the other hand, in 1543 a performance of a biblical Easter play with music by Johann Greff was explicitly approved by Luther, who defended it against criticism.⁷

Throughout the sixteenth century we find in fact no Passion play among Lutherans. Yet the memory of such plays was not extinguished. In 1590, the pastor and dramatic poet Cyriacus Spangenberg mentions them with great respect. In his opinion, Passion dramas had converted more people than long sermons. He defended the value of biblical plays citing Ephesians 5, 19, 'sing and play unto the Lord'. Acted histories were, in their own way, sacred songs, too. They were 'cast in rhyme, decorated with different choruses and songs, and above all not intended for anything other than the proliferation of the glory and praise of God'.⁸

The seventeenth century cast off any shyness with regard to the Passion play. Hugo Grotius's *Christus patiens*, in particular, was staged rather frequently, especially by schools.⁹ This drama concludes the acts with choruses, one of which is enlarged in the manner of an intermedium. Here Jesus sings a song. In addition, there is a lament sung by the mother of Christ in the last act.

On Good Friday 1688 rector Funcke of Görlitz performed a *Mostly Musical Drama of Mourning and Rejoicing*, a revision of *Christus patiens*, for which a student had composed ten extra arias. At certain moments during the performance, the audience sang sacred hymns printed in the programme book.¹⁰

⁵ Georg Bronner, *Geistliches Oratorium, Oder Der GOTT=liebenden Seelen Wall=fahrt/ Zum Creutz und Grabe Christi/ In einer Music* (Hamburg, 1710). See Irmgard Scheitler, 'Geistliche Musikzensur in Hamburg 1710. Ein verhindertes Passions-Oratorium und sein problematisches Libretto', *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch* 88 (2004), pp. 55-71.

⁶ Martin Luther, *Schriften* (Weimarer Ausgabe), vol. 19, p. 112.

⁷ Joachim Greff, *Ein Geistliches schönes neues spil/ auff das heilige Osterfest gestellet* (Magdeburg, 1542), preface; Martin Luther, *Briefwechsel* (Weimarer Ausgabe), vol. 10, Nr. 3862.

⁸ See Cyriacus Spangenberg: *COMOEDIA. Ein geistlich Spiel Vom Euangelio am Sontage Oculi/ von dem besessenen/ tauben vnd stummen Menschen* (Schmalkalden, 1590), preface.

⁹ To give an example: Andreas Beyer, rector of the Gymnasium at Freiberg, staged a *Christus patiens* in 1675. See E. Preuss and K. A. Thümer (eds), *Quellenbuch zur Geschichte des Gymnasiums in Freiberg, von der Zeit vor der Reformation bis 1842* (Freiberg, 1915), p. 249.

¹⁰ See Herbert Hoffmann, *Das Görlitzer barocke Schultheater* (Königsberg, 1932), pp. 39-40, 104; cf. University Library, Wrocław (PL-Wru): Codex Milich II/132, Fol. 384-388, 422-462. Arias by the student Carl Crantz.

An even greater challenge to our understanding of genres is a performance by the Gymnasium of Gera in the local palace.¹¹ To a minimal stage action, consisting mostly of monologues, are added many citations from the scriptures plus their appropriate theological exegeses. But unlike a Passion play this piece is not based on a biblical chapter. The text rather draws on the literary imagination of the author and his theological, biblical and literary knowledge. Most striking is the adoption of sacred hymns. As in many Passions, these appear as responses to the action, whether spoken or sung, or they are a musical accompaniment and explanation of pantomimes; they also function – as in the oratorio Passion – as confirmation and emotional intensification of the action.

To the above-mentioned Triller we also owe information about a ‘Great Sacred Singspiel of the Passion’, performed in Zeitz in 1710, to which Triller, as a student, had contributed arias.¹² These were da capo pieces for the characters and for one allegorical figure. It remains uncertain whether this was in fact an opera.

We know more about two works given at Jena, which were very similar to one another and were called *Singspiele*, that is, operas. The authors were Johann Georg Lippold and Johann Christoph Wentzel.¹³ At least Wentzel’s work has a remark on the frontispiece saying that it was performed in the Collegiate Church of Jena in a Good Friday service in 1693. The texts consist exclusively of recitatives, arias and choruses. They are independent poetic narratives, which augment the biblical model in a few places with free dramatic invention. Wentzel uses a Chorus of God-loving Souls, Lippold the allegories of Justice and Piety, who have particularly many arias to sing. Both works conclude with a funeral hymn for Jesus, sung by a chorus of angels. In Wentzel’s text it begins with the words, ‘Now rest in peace after toil and struggle, you mighty Hero of Glory!’.

A long-forgotten special genre of semi-dramatic character also deserves mention: the academic speech action. The *actus oratoricus* consists of a series of monologues, often with a considerable musical ingredient. Johann Klaj presented such an action at St Giles’s Gymnasium of Nuremberg in 1645, under the title of *Der Leidende Christus* (The Suffering Christ), like others an adaptation from Grotius.¹⁴ In the numerous *actus* transmitted from Nuremberg the narrator (*orator*) has the largest part, but individual characters are also identified. Dramatic music provides variety. Each of the five acts of *Der Leidende Christus* concludes with a choral song, as in a drama. The libretto documents musical settings by Sigismund Theophil Staden. These are for small vocal ensembles with suitable

¹¹ Johann Caspar Zopf, *Die Verlohrne doch Neu=gebohrne Unschuld/ Zu gottseligen Andencken des Hochwerdienstlichen Leidens/ Sterbens und siegreichen Auferstehung Jesu Christi/ In einer Geistlichen Comödie vorgestellt* (Gera, 1676).

¹² *Hugonis Grotii Leidender Christus* (n. 3 above), p. XIV: ‘Folgen einige Arien, welche aus dem grossen geistlichen Singe=Spiel von der Passion, (so der Autor 1710. fertigget,) heraus gezogen, und nicht unwerth gehalten worden, daß sie hier zugleich gelesen würden.’ (12 arias).

¹³ See n. 4 above.

¹⁴ See n. 3 above. Reprinted in Johann Klaj, *Redeatorien und „Lobrede der Teutschen Poeterey“*, ed. Conrad Wiedemann (Tübingen, 1965). The true character of these performances has been made clear by Markus Paul, *Reichsstadt und Schauspiel. Theatrale Kunst im Nürnberg des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 2002), pp. 235-80.

obligato instruments. The publication of the instrumental entr'actes and the choruses was announced, but may not have taken place. There are no traces of this music.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Passion was performed in Catholic areas. Many such popular plays are known from the various localities; that of Oberammergau is by no means unique. As shown by the Passion of the Augsburg poet Sebastian Wild, which was reprinted several times, the Catholic Meistersinger also created Passion plays.¹⁵ It was predominantly the religious orders, together with their pupils, that performed Passion plays each year; they were initially in Latin, but from the mid-seventeenth century also in German. Unlike the popular plays, however, they did not rework the biblical narrative but adopted typological counterparts and allegories that reflect the story of the Passion.¹⁶

A mixture of Jesuit drama and popular play was found in the performances staged annually in the Jesuit church at Innsbruck by a member of the order, Andreas Brunner. Performances from 1644 to 1652 are documented in surviving editions.¹⁷ The plays consist of seven to nine acts, distributed over several days during Lent. The public performances were attended by the citizens and also by the family of the archduke. Typically for the Catholic Passion play, various subjects were offered: the story of Mary Magdalene, the Prodigal Son, the Penitence of St Peter, the Sacrifice of Abraham, and so forth. In 1645 the Passion story itself was performed, although in a stylised form, under the title *Underricht Christlicher Seelen* (Instruction of Christian souls). The characters were Christ, the Soul, the Angel and one other biblical character, respectively. Presumably large sections were sung on individualised melodies. In 1646 Brunner presented the story of the Passion, entitled *Neun Geheimnus* (Nine Secrets) in an even more sumptuous style comprising song and action. The crucifixion and the death of Christ are not shown for reasons of decency; as usual with these and other scenes that were difficult to stage, messenger scenes or sung performances were substituted. A chorus of angels functions as an allegorical character. It comments and instructs, expresses compassion for Jesus and admonishes the audience; it usually introduces and concludes the sections.

¹⁵ Sebastian Wild, *Ein schöne Tragoedi/ auß heiliger Schrift gezogen/ Von dem Leyden und Sterben/ auch Aufferstehung unsers Herren Jesu Christi/ Spilweiß in Reimen gebracht welche mit nutz und besserung zu lesen und zu hören sey* (Augsburg, n.d.).

¹⁶ Karl von Reinhardtstöttner, 'Zur Geschichte des Jesuitendramas in München', *Jahrbuch für Münchener Geschichte* 3 (1889) 53-176, here p. 115. Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. 2.1 (Freiburg i. Br., 1913), p. 683. Anton Dürrwächter, 'Passionsspiele auf dem Jesuiten- und Ordensstheater', *Historisch-Politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 126 (1900), 551-69.

¹⁷ *Underricht Christlicher Seelen* (Innsbruck, 1645); *Deß H. Passion unnd Leydens Jesu Christi neun Geheimnus* (Innsbruck, 1646); *S. Magdalena* (Innsbruck, 1647); *Göttlicher Grichts=Proceß* (Innsbruck, 1648); *Bueßspiegel* (Innsbruck, 1649); *Augenschein Göttlicher Gnaden* (Innsbruck, 1650); *Drey Brunnenquell der Bueß=Zäher* (Innsbruck, 1651); *Dritter Fallstrick der Welt* (Innsbruck, 1652); *Dreyfache Zuflucht Deß Sünders* (Innsbruck, 1653); *Dramata sacra, Oder Hertzrührende Schaubühne* (Salzburg, 1684).

The comforting funereal wish, 'Rest in peace', in Wentzel's text was typical for all poetic versions of the Passion, but in Brunner's case a different *topos* strikes the eye (which we recall from the St Matthew Passion): the ever-recurring curse, 'Devour, o Earth'. Brunner's St Peter, in his touching contrition, exclaims 'O earth, why have you not swallowed me?'¹⁸

At the court of Emperor Leopold I the *sepulcro*, a musical-dramatic devotion in front of a decorated Holy Sepulchre had become customary.¹⁹ In analogy to protestant practice these works were often combined with a sermon. Although there were no costumes, stage props and a backflat were used; the libretto was entirely poetic without pre-existing texts whether from the Bible or a hymn book. Since the *sepulcro*, like the monastic drama, is intended to explain and reflect the essence and significance of the Passion, not to dramatise its story, most *sepulcri* use an action that is to be interpreted as an antitype of Christ's act of redemption (predominantly redemption scenes from the Old Testament, for instance the victorious Joshua). Other such works envisage the situation after the death of Jesus: various biblical figures report on their feelings and their beliefs. Since these characters convey theology and preaching, allegories were often employed. These were omitted only in Metastasio's *drammi sacri*. Allusions to the Song of Songs are frequent, and there is an indisputable similarity with references to the same biblical book in Passion oratorios.

Although the *sepulcro* is entirely dramatic in its form of communication, without any narration, it is short on action and largely meditative. The ensemble is that of *musica da camera*, rather than *musica da teatro*. Usually there is an ensemble piece only at the end of acts. Whereas the protestant Passions are characterised by powerful choruses and chorales, in the *sepulcro* the solo voice dominates.

The vast majority of the *sepulcri* in the German-speaking Catholic areas were performed in Italian. Nevertheless Emperor Leopold instigated, in the 1680s, German performances for his daughter Maria Antonia, which he composed partly himself. The four extant works have a structure that is similar to that of the Italian models, although simplified. Whereas Italian entirely ousted German in Vienna after Leopold's death, there are documented German performances in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in many civic and monastic churches in Austria, Bohemia and Bavaria.

The religious orders performed the Passion in German time and again, for the sake of popularity and for the benefit of listeners who did not understand Latin. This practice was particularly noteworthy at Hildesheim under P. Theodor Crispen as 'Music-Father', who is known from Telemann's autobiography. In the Passion plays of this talented musician we can see the allegorical tendency that characterises Catholic plays: in Holy Week 1714 Crispen produced, for example, a play called 'Daphnis, the good shepherd'.²⁰ The performance is entirely sung and

¹⁸ *Viertes Geheimnis*, fol. G10r.

¹⁹ See Irmgard Scheitler, *Deutschsprachige Oratorienlibretti. Von den Anfängen bis 1730* (Paderborn, 2005; Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kirchenmusik 12), chap. 5.

²⁰ *Daphnis. Der gute Hirt. Das ist Jesus Christus, Sein verlohrenes Schäflein die Menschliche Seel an allen Orten des bitteren Leydens suchend und endlich auf dem Berg Calvariae wiederfindend. Zu Ehren*

has only allegorical characters. The Soul is represented by a lamb. Other plays use the imagery of the Song of Songs, with the Soul or the church as a bride of Christ, resembling Sulamith or the Daughter of Zion.²¹ The German Passion performances staged by the Piarist monks with their students were also entirely allegorical or typological.²²

The so-called 'oratorio Passion' existed from about the mid-seventeenth century. In this genre communication works on two levels: that of an epic presentation of the biblical reading, with drama-like speeches of the biblical characters, and that of the response by the faithful. It makes no difference here whether the responses are simply church hymns or, as was later the case, newly composed arias. Can the two levels, however, be really separated? We shall see.

The insertions signal a change in reception: what had hitherto been the preaching of the Gospel within the ritual, now became, with the increasing weight of the insertions, an independent means of edification. Moreover, the insertions often enter into a relationship with the biblical text. In addition, the Passion becomes assimilated to a drama by a structural change: the work is articulated in single parts or acts which may be separated by instrumental interludes. For contemporaries this rendered the Passion performance more like a drama.

A particularly striking interaction between the two levels is suggested when a biblical character sings a hymn or aria himself, thus expanding the biblical narration. The earliest example of this can be found in a St Matthew Passion from Danzig, 1664, by Thomas Strutius.²³ In the St Luke Passion by Funcke, 1683, the part of Jesus has various rhymed insertions that mostly paraphrase psalm verses.²⁴ The authors obviously believed that they had to enhance the effect of the biblical text with poetic creations. Such manipulations clearly document a tendency towards drama.

From the 1670s onwards newly written so-called 'arias' are also added, and just like the chorales they function as responses of the faithful. These arias are often purely emotional statements or moral conclusions. In Hamburg, where the expansion of the Passions into works with many concerted arias is particularly noticeable, the arias are never assigned to a specific role. In other parts of Germany, on the other hand, 'arias', so named, are also sung by the biblical characters.

des leydenden und sterbenden Heylands in einem Trauer-Spiel vorgestellt von der 5tern Schul PP. Soc. Jesu zu Hildesheim.

²¹ [Anon.], *Die Bande Des gefangenen/ und gebundenen Erlösers der Welt/ Christi Jesu, durch welche Die Christliche Kirche/ Seine einige und getreueste Gespons/ auf dem Weege zum Himmel/ [...] Sich gezogen und verbunden erweist. [...] Am heiligen Char=Freytag Bey gewöhnlichem Trauer=Vorgange füstgestellt/ von der [...] Lateinischen Bruderschaft aus dem Collegio Societatis Jesu zu Schweidnitz* (Schweidnitz, 1691).

²² [Anon.], *Jesus Christus der leydende und streitende Sohn Gottes In der Figur David Von einer löblichen Congregation unter dem Titul Der unbefleckten Empfängnuß Mariae Zu Ettlingen den 7. April 1719 vorgestellt* (Rastatt, 1719).

²³ Scheitler (n. 19 above) pp. 78-79.

²⁴ Scheitler (n. 19 above), pp. 75-77.

The conviction that a dramatic representation had a particularly strong effect on the soul, motivated Menantes (Christian Friedrich Hunold) in 1704 to write the first Passion oratorio.²⁵ The text is a complete dramatisation of the story, as in the Passion plays. The difference lies in the fact that in this case everything was sung, in recitatives and arias. Like the *actus oratoricus*, the Passion oratorio works without acting, costumes or stage-props. Hunold, who wanted to offer a unified work, eliminated the evangelist and the church hymns. But in order not to lose their meditative and faith-expressing function, he introduced – just like the Jena *Singespiele* and the Catholic plays before him – an allegorical character, whom he called ‘Daughter of Zion’ in imitation of the Song of Songs. The traditional mystical exegesis of the Song of Songs would identify the Shulamite woman or the Daughter of Zion with either the Church or the individual soul as Bride of Jesus. This metaphor was completely familiar to contemporaries from edificatory tracts.

Until about 1730 Hunold’s procedure characterised all those works which we call Passion oratorios: The hypertext of the biblical narrative is transformed to utterings of characters in arias and recitatives; in addition to this level of action there is a level of reflection, represented by one or two allegorical figures, usually called Daughter of Zion, the Shulamite Woman (*Sulamith*) or the Faithful Soul, plus perhaps an allegorical chorus. The allegorical actors reflect the events but are not entirely separated from them; they may interfere with the action or communicate with its characters.

Admittedly not all works known as Passion oratorios today are so clearly dramatic as the oratorios by Hunold, Beccau or König (in the first version of his text, set by Keiser). The Passion by Brockes may be called an ‘epic drama’, since it integrates a narrator, the evangelist, in a manner reminiscent of Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*. Nevertheless even this narrator utters a poetic text.

For contemporary views of genre, the epic function of the evangelist did not destroy the framework of the drama. By re-introducing church hymns, Brockes responded to a musical (and theological) requirement: all composers inserted chorales into their oratorios, even if the libretti did not include them. Brockes camouflaged these extra items by transforming them into the ‘Chorus of the Christian Church’, i. e. an allegorical figure. Thus in his famous oratorio text there are four allegorical entities: the Daughter of Zion, the Faithful Soul, a chorus of Believing Souls and the chorus of the Christian Church.

Such a large component of musical comment within a drama was not exceptional. The choruses (‘Reyen’) in many dramas also employed allegorical figures expressing comments, and these were by no means confined to the interludes. As we have seen, church hymns could have the same function in spoken plays.

²⁵ Christian Friedrich Hunold, *Der Blutige Und Sterbende JESUS Wie selbiger In einem Oratorio Musicalisch gesetzt/ Und In der stillen Woche/ Montags und Mittewochs zur Vesper=Zeit aufgeführt worden/ Durch Reinhard Keisern, Hoch=Fürstl. Mecklenburgischen Capell=Meistern* (Hamburg, [1704]).

Picander (Christian Friedrich Henrici) followed in the tracks of Brockes with his *Erbauliche Gedancken* of 1725, which he called an oratorio.²⁶ This relatively short poetical work, which was performed as early as 1729 in Nuremberg,²⁷ combines a small biblical cast with an evangelist. There are no turba choruses. Like Brockes, Picander introduces two allegorical characters, Zion and the Soul, plus a Chorus of the Faithful. It is remarkable that the chorale stanzas to be performed are chosen in such a way as to resemble soliloquies of the biblical soloist. It is also noteworthy that Zion repeatedly addresses the 'Faithful Souls' or the 'Daughters of Zion', namely the chorus.

In the poetry for the St Matthew Passion Picander could only offer a poetical framework, the level of reflection for the biblical text itself. But he did this in a broader and more dramatic way than all other oratorio Passions of which I am aware. Thus his methods were unusual: he added recitatives to the arias, giving them more weight. And, he assigned the arias to an allegorical figure, the Daughter of Zion, whom we know from the Passion oratorio. Further, he renamed the Chorus, as he had already done in *Erbauliche Gedancken*, as The Faithful Souls, thus following Brockes. More consistent with the logic of the text would be to call it the assembly of the Daughters of Zion, a fiction that runs throughout the libretto. Whereas in the work of 1725 the connection between the allegorical figure of the Daughter of Zion and the assembly of the Daughters of Zion consisted only of a few words, now in the St Matthew Passion there are real dialogues following the example of the Song of Songs. Surely the short interjections in Brockes's oratorio were precedents for this: 'Go' 'whereto?' 'to Golgatha'. But Brockes's work is a Passion oratorio - in which communication between characters is the rule. Picander's text however offers only a meditative layer to an oratorio Passion, and this does not suggest dramatic interconnection. Nonetheless, six numbers are dialogues.²⁸

The libretto printing of 1729 does not include church hymns. In the musical work the selection of chorales is remarkable - as it was already in *Erbauliche Gedancken* of 1725. The stanzas are all spoken in the first person, or they address Jesus. Thus the chorales can, like the poetic sections, be read as coming from the Daughter of Zion. The only exception is 'O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde groß' (Oh man, bewail your grave sin), the final chorus of the first part. But this was only introduced in the revised version (probably of 1736) and taken over from the St John Passion. In the 1727/1729 version this place was taken by the simple chorale 'Jesum lass' ich nicht von mir' (I shall not let Jesus go), again with a first person speaking.

²⁶ [Christian Friedrich Henrici], *Erbauliche Gedancken auf den Grünen Donnerstag und Charfreitag Über den Leidenden Jesus, In einem Oratorio*, in *Sammlung Erbaulicher Gedancken über und auf die gewöhnlichen Sonn= und Fest=Tage in gebundener Schreib=Art entworfen* (Leipzig, [1725]), pp. 193-206.

²⁷ *Der für unsere Sünden leidend= und sterbende JESUS/ in einem musicalischen Oratorio aufgeführt* 1729. See Scheitler (n. 19 above), pp. 345-47.

²⁸ Nos 1, 19/29, 27, 30, 59/60, 67/68.

The recitatives and arias of the Daughter of Zion are meditative and emotional – as in a Passion oratorio. Exceptionally, now the allegorical figure often directly addresses the biblical characters, as in ‘Gebt mit meinen Jesum wieder’ (Give me back my Jesus) and ‘Du lieber Heiland du’ (You beloved Saviour). It is also noticeable that quite a few texts are live eyewitness accounts (teichoscopies), as in ‘Erbarm es Gott, hier steht der Heiland angebunden’ (Have mercy, Lord, here stands the saviour in bondage). The Daughter of Zion describes the stages of the story. This provides an intense meditative representation, but it also corresponds to the messenger scenes in plays.

All in all, Picander’s text now offers much more than the earlier additions of arias to an oratorio Passion. He presents not only a lyrical and meditative addition, but brings as much dramatic communication as was then possible.

Bach, on the other hand, has reduced the similarity to Passion oratorios by distributing the Daughter of Zion’s arias to various voices. The use of different male and female voices was a musical necessity for him, although he clearly did not design them as different characters. Indeed he even changed the voices: ‘Ach, wo ist mein Jesus hin’ (Ah, where has my Jesus gone) was originally (1727/1729) a Bass aria, but was later given to the Alto. Bach achieves the same effect of taking away the personal link when he turns a text into an ensemble that had been designed by Picander for a single voice, as in ‘Nun ist der Herr zur Ruh gebracht’ (Now the Lord has been brought to rest), or gives the text to a chorus, as in ‘Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen’ (Come ye Daughters, help me mourn). Bach thus reduces the dramatic functions of the text. As has repeatedly been stated in the secondary literature, the two choruses in the St Matthew Passion create a dramatic effect. This might be true from a musical point of view, but from a viewpoint of drama for which the differentiation of dramatic characters and their communication is essential, this thesis cannot be accepted, for Bach has not separated the personalities of the choruses.

Although Bach’s music may have many dramatic effects, he was little concerned with the literary dramatic elements of Picander’s libretto. The dramatisation of the Passion, or of biblical texts on the whole, was becoming less acceptable in those days. This can be seen in contemporary poetical works as well as theoretical writings. Barthold Feind, although personally fond of biblical subjects, writes firmly that using them is ‘disapproved of by the reasonable world once and for all’.²⁹ In the same way Daniel Wilhelm Triller regrets that common opinion was ‘against representing the secret of our Eternal Happiness on a theatre or stage.’³⁰ Not only did Passion dramas and biblical dramas vanish, but the dramatic Passion oratorio was to have no future. The first composer to react was Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel. He composed cycles of Passion cantatas and allegorical presentations instead. Since the campaign of Gottfried Vockerodt, drama had a bad reputation in Gotha.³¹ Stölzel’s first Passion (most probably the

²⁹ Barthold Feind, *Gedancken von der Opera*, in B. F., *Deutsche Gedichte* (Stade, 1708), p. 82.

³⁰ *Hugonis Grotii Leidender Christus* (n. 3 above), fol. b 3r.

³¹ See Irmgard Scheitler, ‘Der Streit um die Mitteldinge. Menschenbild und Musikauffassung bei Gottfried Vockerodt und seinen Gegnern’, *Alter Adam und neue Kreatur. Pietismus und*

text is also by him) of 1720 bears the title: *Die leidende und am Creutz sterbende Liebe Jesu* (The suffering and dying love of Jesus on the cross). This frequently performed work has no biblical characters at all, and is on the whole not dramatic. There is an evangelist, who presents a poetical and commenting text, there are the meditations of the Faithful Soul and a few chorales for the Christian Church. This work comes near to the *sepolcro* with its few choruses. In 1727 Stölzel wrote 'Jesus the good shepherd suffering and dying for the lost sheep'. Its similarity to the above-mentioned Jesuit opera from Hildesheim cannot be overlooked. Stölzel's experience with Catholic church music in Prague may well have inspired him.

In the eighteenth century the first interactions between the Catholic and Protestant concepts of Passion emerge. In Dresden in 1724 a Protestant Passion oratorio was remodelled into a *sepolcro* by Johann David Heinichen. The text was shortened and the number of characters was reduced to four, two of them being allegorical. The choruses were omitted, as were the sacred hymns.³²

The Leipzig Thomaskantor, Johann Gottlob Harrer, went the opposite way. He undertook the experiment of transforming Metastasio's *drammi sacri* into Protestant oratorios.³³ Harrer had a musical upbringing in Dresden, surrounded by Catholic church music. In making Metastasio's works suitable for music on Good Friday he remodelled them according to Protestant theology, and introduced chorales. Harrer's undertaking had no followers in the Thomaskirche. But it represents the general trend of adopting the *sepolcro*-tradition of the Catholic texts with their tendency towards the reflective and lyrical.

The most popular work of the period, Karl Wilhelm Ramler's *Der Tod Jesu*, is completely lyrical. In its several musical settings – above all the one by Carl Heinrich Graun – it was to become the best-loved Passion music of the later eighteenth century. Graun was setting a text that is free of dramatic mimesis, and above all he gave the direct speech of Jesus to a reporting voice – tenor or soprano (!). Finally Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (General Theory of the Arts) demands a 'totally lyrical treatment' of the Passion story.³⁴

While Protestantism moved away from dramatising the Passion story, we encounter it in Catholicism. In Salzburg, a cultural melting pot resembling Dresden, German Passion music had been sung since 1740. Johann Ernst Eberlin, composer to the court and the cathedral, wrote many works in the tradition of the *sepolcro*, although there is an exception: three works of only one act each, entitled: *Der blutschwitzende Jesus*, (the blood-sweating Jesus), *Der verurteilte Jesus* (the condemned Jesus), *Der gecreuzigte Jesus* (the crucified Jesus). These texts show characteristics of protestant oratorio Passions in language, style and structure.

Anthropologie. Beiträge zum II. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2005, eds. Udo Sträter et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009; Hallesche Forschungen 28/2), 513-30.

³² See Scheitler (n. 19 above), pp. 273-74.

³³ Wolfgang Hirschmann, 'Metastasios Oratorientexte im Deutschland des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Metastasio im Deutschland der Aufklärung*, eds. Laurenz Lütteken and Gerhard Splitt (Tübingen, 2002), pp. 217-45, here pp. 239-40. Arnold Schering: *Der Thomaskantor Johann Gottlob Harrer (1703-1755)*. In: *Bach-Jahrbuch* 28 (1931) pp. 112-46.

³⁴ Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1774), pp. 852-54 (by Johann Philipp Kirnberger and Johann Abraham Peter Schulz).

They could – this is my guess – have come to Salzburg via the Augsburg printer Johann Jakob Lotter.³⁵

Conclusion

The Catholic world had cultivated popular passion plays before and after the reformation, although on a more sophisticated level indirect presentation was preferred. After original reservations about the dramatic presentation of the Passion story, the dramatised Passion found its way into the German Protestant world. Protestant forms of dramatising the Passion could vice-versa be taken over into Catholic culture, since this rarely had objections to drama. In the eighteenth century, however, biblical drama was condemned as profane and died out. The Protestant Passion oratorio abandoned the dramatic form, moving to the indirect representation of the Catholics and adopting a lyrical style by the time of Ramler. J. S. Bach's St Matthew Passion reduces the dramatic tendencies of its libretto and thus stands at the turning point in the literary history of Passion drama.

³⁵ Leopold Mozart's letter to Lotter of 29 December 1755 points in this direction: see Leopold Mozart, *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Max Seiffert (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1908; Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern, vol. 17, Jg. IX/2), preface, pp. XXXI-XXXII.