

PETRUS WILHELMI DE GRUDENCZ (B. 1392) – A CENTRAL EUROPEAN COMPOSER

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Abstract: According to present knowledge, Petrus Wilhelmi's output numbers about 40 compositions preserved in about 45 sources. Apart from Latin songs (cantiones) he composed polytextual motets and canons (rotula). Petrus Wilhelmi was active almost exclusively on the ground of Central Europe and must be regarded as the most prominent Central European composer of the 15th century.

Keywords: 15th-century polyphony, polytextual motet, cantio, music in Central Europe

Izveček: Po sedanjem vedenju sestoji opus Petrusa Wilhelmi iz ok. 40 kompozicij, ohranjenih v približno 45 virih. Poleg latinskih pesmi (cantiones) je komponiral politekstualne motete in kanone (rotula). Petrus Wilhelmi je deloval skoraj izključno le v srednji Evropi in predstavlja najizrazitejšega srednjeevropskega skladatelja 15. stol.

Ključne besede: polifonija 15. stol., politekstualni motet, cantio, glasba v srednji Evropi

Thirty years ago, in 1975, the Czech musicologist Jaromír Černý announced the discovery of a new composer – Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz. The discovery was based on research into the Bohemian repertory of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century polyphonic music. Černý distinguished in it a group of stylistically related compositions, the texts of which contained the acrostic “Petrus”. However, the key part in the discovery of the previously unknown composer was played by the motet *Pneuma eucaristiarum / Veni vere / Dator eya / Paraclito tripudia*. This was a work composed for four voices, each voice with a different text. One of the texts contained the acrostic “Petrus”, the remaining two the acrostics “Wilhelmi” and “de Grudencz”. Further investigations led Černý to a number of documents which allowed him to sketch a biography of the newly-discovered figure. One of the compositions, recorded in the St Emmeram Codex,¹ provided evidence that he was not only a poet, but a composer as well. Above *Kyrie fons bonitatis*, a work which obviously did not contain an acrostic, the scribe noted the name of the composer, “Magister Petrus Wilhelmi”.

Černý announced his discovery in the journal *Hudební věda*, and then at the international congress *Musica antiqua Europae orientalis* in Bydgoszcz.² His research created a great

¹ München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14274, fol. 11v.

² Jaromír Černý, Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz – neznámý skladatel doby Dufayovy v českých pramenech, *Hudební věda* XII/3 (1975), pp. 195–235; Jaromír Černý, Petrus Wilhelmi of Grudziądz – an Unknown Composer of the “Age of Dufay”, *Musica Antiqua. Acta Scientifica* 4, Bydgoszcz,

deal of interest. Since Petrus came from the Polish town of Grudziądz (Germ. Graudenz), and later studied at the University of Cracow, he was given the label of Polish composer. It was even claimed that some of his compositions contained “strikingly Polish” rhythms of the mazurka. Today, however, we interpret the work and the person of Petrus Wilhelmi somewhat differently. This follows not only from ideological changes, but also from the dynamic progress of research into this composer, research conducted – and this should be emphasised – by musicologists of various nationalities: Poles, Czechs, Germans, Americans. Today we know a great deal more about Petrus than 30 years ago; it is sufficient to mention that the list of his work has grown from about 20 to 40 compositions.³ And although it is still possible to encounter references to the “Polish composer” Petrus de Grudencz, we see in him, more and more frequently and more and more willingly, a “Central European composer”. We also find it quite obvious that those mazurka rhythms in his compositions are more likely to be the result of applying the principles of Latin metrics than inspiration by Polish folklore.

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Petrus was born in 1392 in Grudziądz, which at that time was within the borders of the Teutonic Order State in Prussia, in a region with strong links to Poland. As he himself wrote, he came from a family with a knightly lineage. His father’s name – Wilhelm – might suggest that it was a German-speaking family. In 1418, at the age of 26, which is quite late, Petrus entered the University of Cracow. Seven years later he was graduated “ad gradum baccalariatus in artibus”, and in 1430 – “ad gradum magisterii”. In later documents Petrus Wilhelmi consistently used the title of Master of Liberal Arts, “magister artium”. He was also received into the priesthood; in 1442 he is referred to as a cleric, and in 1452 as the presbyter of the Chełmno (Germ. Kulm) diocese, to which Grudziądz belonged. The oldest sources of Petrus Wilhelmi’s compositions come from the period of his exceptionally prolonged studies. Among them belongs a student’s notebook from Cracow, written in the fifteen-twenties, where we find, among 25 compositions, two Latin songs (cantiones) with the “Petrus” acrostic.⁴

Filharmonia Pomorska, 1975, pp. 91–103. Černý also published the works of Petrus: *Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz Magister Cracoviensis. Opera musica*, ed. Jaromír Černý, Kraków, PWM, 1993.

³ Current index of compositions and full bibliography in: Paweł Gancarczyk, Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil* 13, 2nd edition, Kassel [...], Bärenreiter, 2005, cols 437–439. Among the most recent publications concerning Petrus Wilhelmi the work by Martin Staehelin is of particular importance: Martin Staehelin, *Neues zu Werk und Leben von Petrus Wilhelmi. Fragmente des mittleren 15. Jahrhunderts mit Mensuralmusik im Nachlaß von Friedrich Ludwig*, Kleinüberlieferung mehrstimmiger Musik vor 1550 im deutschen Sprachgebiet 3, Göttingen 2001. It is also worth mentioning that there already exists a reasonably extensive discography of Petrus’s works: first recordings appeared in the early nineteen-nineties (Ensemble Ars Nova / Bornus Consort, Accord 1991; Ars Cameralis / Lukáš Matoušek, Studio Matouš 1993; The Hilliard Ensemble, ECM Records 1995). However, interpretations which deserve special mention are those by Schola Gregoriana Pragensis (various CDs issued by Supraphon).

⁴ Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, MS 2464.

At the University of Cracow the composer must have come into contact with Alexander (1400–1444), a Mazovian prince from the Polish Piast dynasty. The young prince studied there at the department of liberal arts from 1417 and, although he was not awarded any academic title, by 1422 he was nevertheless rector of the university. A year later he was nominated as the bishop of Trent, and he held this office until his death in 1444. What is more significant, Alexander was an enthusiastic supporter of the Council of Basel, as well as a close relative and ally of the German king, and later Emperor, Frederick III.⁵ It may have been Alexander's influence which caused Petrus Wilhelmi to be connected with the royal-imperial court. This happened, at the latest, about 1440: a copy of a poem by Petrus, entitled *Pontifices ecclesiarum*, dates from that time. The poem, preserved without the music, is addressed to Frederick III and calls for support for the Council of Basel. However, direct evidence of Petrus Wilhelmi's presence at the court of Frederick is not provided until 1442, when a document dating from that year is issued to him by the royal office. It is a "littera familiaritatis", ensuring safe travel on the roads. We know nothing about Petrus's life in the next decade. He must have joined the community of chaplains of Frederick III during that time, since in a document dating from 1452 he refers to himself as "domini Friderici imperatoris cappellanus". However, it is almost certain that this function did not involve musical duties. He was probably a chaplain in a more general sense and, apart from church services, may have on occasion acted as a royal envoy, as may be suggested by the "littera familiaritatis" just referred to.

There is no doubt that the period spent at the royal-imperial court played a vital part in shaping Petrus Wilhelmi's biography. There, he came into contact with contemporary music, and a circle of educated singers, humanists and politicians. It is enough to mention that, apart from Alexander of Mazovia, that circle included Enea Silvio de Piccolomini (1405–1464), and also the humanist Johannes Hinderbach, later Prince-Bishop of Trent (1465–1486). One might even speculate that one of Petrus's patrons was Piccolomini himself, who was the bishop of Triest from 1447, of Siena from 1449, and then Pope Pius II (from 1462), known for his talent as a poet and his close connection with Poland and Bohemia. Our information about Frederick's cappella is fragmentary. We do know, however, that many Flemish musicians were employed there, among them Johannes Brassart (ca. 1405–1455).⁶ *Kyrie fons bonitatis*, which draws on the polyphonic style of Guillaume Du Fay, may provide a trace of Petrus Wilhelmi's activities at the court of Frederick III. It has been preserved in three sources linked to Austria: in the St Emmeram Codex mentioned earlier, and in two Trent Codices (90 and 93).⁷

In about 1450 Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz may have appeared in Bohemia. His works achieved great popularity there, dating precisely from the mid-fifteenth century. At that time Petrus probably also went to Silesia, which then belonged to the Crown of Bohemia. Evidence

⁵ See Jan Władysław Woś, *Alessandro di Mazovia. Vescovo-principe di Trento (1423–1444)*, Pisa 1994 (2nd edition).

⁶ See Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, Brassart de Ludo Johannes, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil* 3, cols 756–758.

⁷ Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali, MS 1377 (olim 90); Trento, Biblioteca dell'Archivio Capitolare, MS without call number (olim 93).

for this is provided by fragments from Göttingen, recently described by Martin Staehelin,⁸ which are thought to be of Silesian provenance. These contain as many as 16 works with the “Petrus” acrostic, and are the largest collection of his works known to date. However, evidence for the composer’s stay in Silesia is also provided by a document thought to date from 1448. This is a letter from the bishop of Wrocław, Peter Nowak, to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad von Erlichshausen. In his letter the bishop recommends Petrus Wilhelmi for the post of canon at the cathedral in Frombork (Germ. Frauenburg) in Warmia, which at the time was part of the Teutonic Order State. He refers there to a letter of recommendation by Emperor Frederick III. One cannot exclude the possibility that the Emperor’s letter was brought to the bishop by Petrus Wilhelmi himself, which would tie in with the composer’s stay in Wrocław.

However, Petrus did not obtain the post at Frombork for which he applied, in spite of his excellent connections. His candidature seemed quite weak and, in addition, a little late. There were in total as many as three candidates for the canonry at Frombork, some months before Petrus’s application. In the end the post was occupied by Bartolomeus Liebenwald, who belonged to the Grand Master’s close circle. It may have been the case that an attempt was made to recompense Petrus for his disappointment by granting him another prebend. This may have been the way by which he came to be in charge of the Białogarda parish in Pomerania (near Łębork, Germ. Lauenburg), which was also within the boundary of the Teutonic Order State. However, Petrus Wilhelmi was not satisfied with this benefice, because, as can be seen in documents from 1452, he was trying to have it exchanged. He gave as his reason for resigning from the parish the problems in communicating with the local population, made up of Kashubians, who are Pomeranian Slavs in respect of language different from Poles. He also complained about the burden of farming activities, emphasising the fact that he was already aged sixty. The documents referred to show that Petrus Wilhelmi was in Rome at the time of their writing (1452), perhaps in the retinue of Frederick III. To date, this remains the last documented trace of his activities.

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The area in which Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz worked and lived was thus almost exclusively that of Central Europe. All the sources of his compositions preserved to this day also come from this region. Their distribution on the map, however, looks somewhat different from what one might expect from the composer’s biography. During his life at least a dozen manuscripts containing his compositions had been created: they originate from southern Poland, Silesia, Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Slovakia. The absence of any traces of his work in the areas of Prussia and Pomerania, with which he had quite definite links, is puzzling. However, the majority of the sources containing the composer’s works was written after his death. Characteristically, Bohemian manuscripts dominate among them. One can point in particular to the famous Speciálník Codex, thought to date from the end of the fifteenth century (c. 1485–1500). Apart from more than a dozen compositions by

⁸ Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Abteilung für Handschriften und seltene Drucke, Nachlaß Ludwig XXX, 1; see Staehelin, *op. cit.* (fn. 3).

Petrus, it also contains an extremely valuable and important repertory of Franco-Flemish polyphony, with works by Josquin des Prez, Jacob Obrecht, Alexander Agricola and many others.⁹ A significant number of his compositions can also be found in manuscripts of great importance for Bohemian music, such as the Franus Codex or the Chrudim Codex, both from the early part of the sixteenth century.¹⁰

Petrus Wilhelmi's compositions were highly popular for a long time after his death, undergoing a variety of adaptations and modernizations. These involved replacing the original, Latin texts with new ones, often in Czech. The changes also concerned the musical layer: modernizing the harmonics, simplifying the metrics, or voice transposition. The works which were most often subjected to such procedures were the songs *Prelustri elucencia* and *Phonicorum ethicorum*, which have been preserved in a number of separate versions. The first of these songs even found its way into two sixteenth-century printed songbooks, first into a Silesian anthology by Valentin Triller, published for the first time in 1555, and then into an anthology from 1561 by a Bohemian teacher Christoph Schweher Hecyrus.¹¹ No less popular was the second song, *Phonicorum ethicorum*, copied in as many as 16 Bohemian manuscripts, the last being at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The popularity of Petrus Wilhelmi's works at the beginning of the sixteenth century finds significant confirmation in the use of the melody of one of his works, *Presulem ephebeatum*, as material for building new compositions. We find fragments of *Presulem* in the hymn *Qui pace Christi* by a well-known Silesian composer Thomas Stolzer (1480/90–1526). The same work served as cantus firmus in the recently discovered mass by Heinrich Isaac, which found its way into a manuscript, originating from the area of the Bohemian-Saxon border from the second decade of the sixteenth century.¹² It was copied with a clear indication of authorship (“H. Isac”) and the origin of the melodic material employed, alongside other masses by Isaac, Josquin des Prez and Antoine Brumel. In this way the composition by Petrus Wilhelmi acquired a dimension beyond a local one, becoming part of the great tradition of Franco-Flemish polyphony. Isaac might have become acquainted with *Presulem ephebeatum* during one of his visits to Central Europe: from 1497 he had links with the court of Emperor Maximilian I, the successor to Frederick III; and, in a sense, he himself was one of the successors of Petrus Wilhelmi.

However, in spite of what might be suggested by the case of the *Missa Presulem ephebeatum*, Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz could in no manner be classified as a court composer.

⁹ Hradec Králové, Muzeum východních Čech, MS II A 7; see Lenka Mráčková, Kodex Speciálník. Eine kleine Folio-Handschrift böhmischer Provenienz, *Hudební věda* XXXIX/2–3 (2002), pp. 163–184.

¹⁰ Hradec Králové, Muzeum východních Čech, MS II A 6 (Franus Codex); Chrudim, Městské muzeum, MS 12580.

¹¹ See Martin Horyna, Utwory Piotra Wilhelmiego z Grudziądza w tradycji polifonii późnośrednio-wiecznej w Europie Środkowej a zwłaszcza w Czechach XV i XVI wieku, *Muzyka* XLIX/2 (2004), pp. 21–56 (cf. also: Martin Horyna, Die Kompositionen von Peter Wilhelmi von Grudencz als Teil der spätmittelalterlichen Polyfonie-Tradition in Mitteleuropa und insbesondere im Böhmen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts, *Hudební věda* XL/4 (2003), pp. 291–328).

¹² Praha, Národní knihovna České republiky, Hudební oddělení, MS 59 R 5117; see Heinrich Isaac (ca 1450–1517): *Missa Presulem ephebeatum*, ed. Martin Horyna, Praha 2002.

His work was popular in other circles, and did not serve at all to add to the glory of official celebrations. Judging from the provenance of the manuscripts in which it is preserved, it was performed mainly in university circles – Cracow, Vienna and Leipzig. In the second half of the fifteenth century it also entered the repertory of Bohemian literary brotherhoods, active at utraquists' churches. In the sixteenth century some of Petrus Wilhelmi's compositions, by then in their modernized versions, were also being performed in scholastic circles. Thus, his work belonged among the middle classes, people who possessed some musical education, but were not involved in music professionally. Such an audience determines, to some extent, the musical and literary features of Petrus Wilhelmi works. Although, as is shown by *Kyrie fons bonitatis* referred to earlier, he was no stranger to the style of composition formed in leading musical centres of that time, in his works he turned mainly to local traditions. It is because of this feature that we so readily regard Petrus Wilhelmi as the main representative of Central European music of the fifteenth century.

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The works of Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz can be divided into two main parts. The first of them is constituted by cantiones, i.e., Latin songs for two or three voices, usually characterised by a simple structure and schematic rhythm. As has been demonstrated by Jaromir Černý, these compositions draw on works which were being written in Central Europe at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, Petrus Wilhelmi introduced elements of more recent style (e.g. in the harmonic layer), as well as producing original solutions in the form and the metrics of his compositions. The second, fundamental part of his works is constituted by the motets, which belong to the polytextual motet tradition, alive in the Central European region, in particular in Bohemia. Compositions of this type are designed for three to five voices, with the voices being assigned different texts (it was in one such composition that Petrus Wilhelmi encoded his full name). In some motets we find the use of isorhythmic technique, as well as vestiges of the archaic hocket technique.

One of the best known, as well as the most fascinating of Petrus's motets is *Probitate eminentem / Plotidando exarare*, recorded in the famous Silesian collection – Glogauer Liederbuch (1477–1481).¹³ This work was composed for four voices, and while two of them are provided with texts, the two remaining ones are textless. The basis of the construction is constituted by the tenor, shaped according to the isorhythmic principles which were typical for the fourteenth century, and were still highly popular in Petrus's times (isorhythmic motets were composed by, among others, Johannes Brassart, referred to earlier). The essence of this technique is, as is known, the repeatability of certain rhythmic schemata (called "talea"), and at times also of melodic schemata (called "color"). In the case of the tenor in *Probitate eminentem* the talea is composed of 11 notes and a pause: the composition repeats the

¹³ Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. 40098 (olim Berlin, Preußische Staatsbibliothek). The presence of this composition in Glogauer Liederbuch served as the basis for the supposition that Petrus Wilhelmi was the scribe of the manuscript. However, this hypothesis is untenable for a number of reasons, see Paweł Gancarczyk, Uwagi o genezie śpiewnika glogowskiego (ca 1480), *Muzyka* LXIV/3 (1999), pp. 25–40.

schema in this shape as many as 14 times. It is accompanied by a melodic schema four talea in length (i.e., 44 notes), repeated three times in full and once (at the end) until halfway through. The intricate structure of the composition is supplemented by higher voices with two different texts. The texts are panegyrics, extolling the virtues of an Augustine monk from the Żagań (Germ. Sagan) monastery in Silesia, called Andreas Ritter. They talk about his extraordinary piety and nobility, but during musical performance this sense is reversed. This is because the voices complement each other, in the hocket manner, in such a way that when one voice sings “in templo” (in the church), the other adds “raro manet” (rarely visits), and further on: “est devotus” (is pious) - “in tavernis” (in taverns):

Example 1

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et in tem - plo est de - vo - tus pro ve - ni - a - que

ra - ro ma - net in ta - ber - nis pro

Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz, *Probitate eminentem* / *Ploditādo exarare*, bars 64-68
(ed. by Jaromír Černý)

In this way Ritter is made a figure of fun and in fact, as we learn from contemporary documents, he was not exactly an exemplary character. The chronicle of the Augustine monastery tells us that, while drunk, he entered into a fight with Abbot Martin Rinkenber, whom he wounded with a knife during the struggle. He then, driven to desperation, threw himself out of a monastery window thus killing himself. The event took place on 4th March 1480. It is not certain that Petrus Wilhelmi knew Ritter - *Probitate eminentem* was undoubtedly composed earlier and the protagonist changed a number of times. Evidence for this is provided by the second preserved copy in the so-called Lvov fragments (c. 1485-1490), where instead of Ritter's name there appears the name of another person.¹⁴

Some of the solutions used by the composer are reflected in theoretical-musical writings originating from Central Europe. Of particular significance here are the treatises

¹⁴ Poznań, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, MS 7022; see Mirosław Perz, The Lvov Fragments. A Source for Works by Dufay, Josquin, Petrus de Domarto, and Petrus de Grudencz in 15th Century Poland, *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* XXXVI/1 (1986), pp. 26-51 (cf. also: Mirosław Perz, Fragmenty lwowskie. Źródło dzieł Dufaya, Josquina, Piotra de Domarto i Piotra z Grudziądza w Polsce XV wieku, *Muzyka* XXXIV/3 (1989), pp. 3-46).

dating from the first half of the fifteenth century from Silesia and Mazovia.¹⁵ The authors of these texts, devoted to the theory of mensural music, mention musical forms which, one can suppose, were particularly popular in this area. On the basis of the definitions they employ one could draw the conclusion that some of them were particularly applicable to Petrus Wilhelmi. We thus encounter trumpetum, which consists in imitating the sound of the trumpet (“ad modum tube vel lire”) by using the intervals of the fifth and the octave. Such a solution is employed in at least two cantiones by Petrus: *Presulem eminenciam* and *Preconia etroclita*.

Example 2

31

gi - gas gi - gas gi - gas gi - gas gi - gas gi - gas ip - se ip - se

Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz, *Presulem eminenciam*, bars 31–35
(ed. by Jaromír Černý)

Central European treatises also mention rotulum, a kind of circular canon. Again, among the works of Petrus we find such rotula, as for example in the already mentioned *Presulem ephebeatum*. Another form based on the principle of imitation is katschetum, the Central European equivalent of caccia, consisting of the tenor and canonically led higher voices. In Petrus’s work we meet one such katschetum, undoubtedly belonging to that form, since it is given that name in the manuscript. This is the four-voice composition *Pantaleon leon* preserved in the fragments from Göttingen referred to earlier.

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The works and the person of Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz can probably be analysed in a variety of ways. However, whatever approach one takes, it is impossible to disregard his extremely strong links to Central European culture. Evidence of these links is very extensive: we find it in his biography, and in the features of his compositions, which, as far as we

¹⁵ Wrocław Anonymus (Silesia), see Johannes Wolf, Ein Breslauer Mensuraltraktat des 15. Jahrhunderts, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 1/3 (1918), pp. 331–345; Anonymus Boz1 and Anonymus Boz2 (Mazovia), see Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, Mensural Treatises from the Manuscript WaN BOZ 61, *Notae musicae artis. Musical Notation in Polish Sources. 11th–16th Century*, ed. Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, Kraków, Musica Iagellonica, 2001, pp. 487–532.

have been able to discover, were well-known throughout the area reaching as far as Trent in the south, and Frankfurt in the west. Although Petrus was not unfamiliar with the achievements of Du Fay's polyphony, he drew above all on the Central European tradition, not only with regard to music, but also to the content and structure of his poetry.¹⁶ However, the importance of Petrus Wilhelmi lies also in the fact that in the culture of the fifteenth century he represents a unique phenomenon. In any case, we would search in vain for another composer of that time who could be described as a "Central European composer" so decidedly and incontrovertibly.

Fifteenth-century musical manuscripts originating from Central Europe contain quite a few names of composers who might be regarded as local. However, in majority of cases, we have no additional information about them apart from a few compositions (or sometimes even just one). We do not know where they came from, we do not know what happened in their lives, and the paucity of their preserved output does not even allow us to make a competent judgment about it. Such a composer is, for example, Paulus de Broda, the author of two compositions in Glogauer Liederbuch, who, one might guess, came from Bohemia;¹⁷ another one is a composer called Flemmik, known from the Trent and Bohemian manuscripts, who might, perhaps, have been a member of the cappella of Frederick III. Apart from Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz we really have very few composers active in Central Europe who present themselves to us as clearly rounded personalities. I would like to draw particular attention to two of them. The first of them is Nicolaus de Radom, born in Poland and active there in the first half of the fifteenth century; the second is Johannes Touront, the Flanders-born chaplain of Frederick III, a composer belonging to the second half of that century. Neither of them, however, is comparable to Petrus Wilhelmi, since both composed in Western European polyphonic style. Nicolaus de Radom was influenced by the works of Antonio Zaccara da Teramo, as well as Guillaume Du Fay (he was employing the modern fauxbourdon technique even before 1440),¹⁸ while Johannes Touront belongs to the first generation of Franco-Flemish composers, in spite of the fact that he worked and was copied almost exclusively in Central Europe.¹⁹ These are very important and prominent composers,

¹⁶ The poetry of Petrus Wilhelmi has not been researched as yet. A few remarks on this subject can be found in: J. Černý, Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz Magister Cracoviensis (see fn. 2) and Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *Textdeklamation in der Motette des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Turnhout 2003, passim.

¹⁷ Possibly place of his origin could be Český Brod (Broda Bohemicalis). Paulus de Broda is also identified as a Dutch composer Paulus de Rhoda; cf. Thomas Noblitt, Additional Compositions by Paulus de Rhoda?, *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* XXXVII (1987), pp. 49–63 (see pp. 49–50).

¹⁸ See Mirosław Perz, Il carattere internazionale delle opere di Mikołaj Radomski, *Musica Disciplina* XLI (1987), pp. 153–159.

¹⁹ See Martin Kirnbauer, Touront Johannes, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 25, 2nd edition, London, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001, pp. 660–661. Recent research succeeded in linking Touront with the imperial chapel of Frederick III, see Paweł Gancarczyk, Związki kodeksu Strahov z Austrią i dworem cesarza Fryderyka III, *Muzyka* XLIX/2 (2004), pp. 79–88. The list of Touront's compositions (see Kirnbauer, op. cit.) should be extended by one more mass, which at one time was ascribed to Johannes Ockeghem; see *Missa Primi toni, presumably by Johannes Touront. Missa Quinti toni*, ed. Jaap van Benthem, Johannes Ockeghem. Masses and Mass Sections III, 1, Utrecht 2004.

but composers of international rank. Calling them “Central European composers” would be a misleading, and perhaps even belittling description of their actual status.

I have tried to show that the works and the person of Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz have many interesting aspects. His compositions deserve attention not only because of their construction – as in the case of *Probitate eminentem*, or their curious history – as in the case of *Presulem ephebeatum*, but also because of their undoubted aesthetic value. However, the case of Petrus Wilhelmi also has a message for us. He is a composer who enters into the heritage of many countries and nations of Central Europe. I believe he is as much a “Polish” composer – as was claimed years ago – as a Czech, German or Austrian one. His biography and his works define almost perfectly the boundaries of Central Europe, showing that the existence of this region is not just an academic abstraction, but was a real phenomenon in the culture of the fifteenth century.

Translated by Zofia Weaver

PETRUS WILHELMI DE GRUDENCZ (ROJ. 1392) –
SREDNJEEVROPSKI SKLADATELJ

Povzetek

Pred tridesetimi leti je češki muzikolog Jaromír Černý odkril skladatelja z imenom Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz (1392 – po 1452), katerega zdaj poznani opus šteje okoli 40 kompozicij, ohranjenih v okoli 45 virih. Petrus Wilhelmi, ki je bil tudi latinski pesnik, je deloval skoraj izključno na ozemlju srednje Evrope. Rojen je bil v Prusiji (Grudziądz), državi nemškega viteškega reda, študiral je v Krakowu in bil kaplan cesarja Friderika III. Verjetno je, da se je udeležil koncila v Baslu. Bival je tudi na Češkem, v Šleziji in na Pomorjanskem. Petrusove zveze s srednjo Evropo so razvidne iz nekaterih potez njegovih del, ki se nanašajo na lokalne tradicije. Skoraj vsa besedila njegovih kompozicij imajo akrostih »Petrus«. Poleg latinskih pesmi (cantiones) je komponiral politekstualne motete in kanone (rotula). Petrus Wilhelmi postaja vse bolj znan. Izdajajo se nove interpretacije njegove glasbe, o njej nastajajo muzikološke razprave. Še vedno se odkrivajo novi viri. Iz »poljskega« skladatelja postaja srednjeevropski oz. osebnost skupne srednjeevropske kulturne dediščine.