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THE PUPIL, THE MASTER, AND DEATH. THE FUNERAL
IN THE DAILY LIFE OF A SCHOOL
IN A HANSEATIC TOWN
(from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century)

I. Introduction

The extensive price list for funeral services held in the church of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Gdańsk (1689) contains, alongside typical tasks performed by the grave-digger, such as lifting the tombstone, the removal of old bones, and the placing of the coffin, also gives information about charges for the presence of a school in the organisation of the funeral procession¹. The family of the deceased was expected to pay 10 florins and 20 groschen for the participation of “an entire school”, and 4 florins and 3 groschen for “half of the school”. The *pauperes* — pupils from the poor forms — received, respectively, 2 florins if the whole school attended, and 20 groschen if half of the school was present. The participation of “schools” in funerals, similar to the Gdańsk example, is recorded rather universally in regulations concerning Church ceremonies performed in early modern towns. It seems worth inquiring into the nature of the contents concealed in the above mentioned term “school” and of the services, for which the “school” received payment? Are we dealing only with a peculiar feature of customs of the past, or do banal notes about funeral expenses hide a deeper meaning, making it possible to recreate that what probably comprises the most difficult task for historiography — the structures of everyday life and

¹State Archive in Gdańsk (further as: AP Gd.),300, R/Q, 5, p. 218: *Ordnung der Pfarr-Kirchen zu St. Marien in Dantzig, was bey Begräbnissen der Leichen abzufordern seyn wird Anno 1689*. See also the extremely detailed and extensive regulations for the church of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Gdańsk from 1612, ed. E. Se h l i n g, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts*, vol. IV: *Das Herzogthum Preußen, Polen. Die ehemals polnischen Landesteile des Königreichs Preußen. Das Herzogthum Pommern*, Leipzig 1911, pp. 197–217. Fragments of the text of the regulations were cited by K. Cie ś l a k, *Kościół–cmentarzem. Sztuka nagrobna w Gdańsku (XV–XVIII w.) (The Church as a Cemetery. Gravestone Art in Gdańsk (Fifteenth–Eighteenth Century))*, Gdańsk 1992, p. 87 passim.

their impact upon the shaping of the mass-scale material and intellectual culture of a given era.

My research deals with the Protestant urban society in Royal Prussia (Gdańsk and Elbląg), and entails a comparison with other centres connected with the range of Hanseatic culture². I had at my disposal copious and relatively easily accessible source material. The following several sentences are envisaged as additional explanation.

In the wake of the Reformation, the municipal commune became a legislator in the domain of religious questions, alongside the entire heretofore sphere of economic and order-keeping regulations. The town authorities tried, with varying success, to fill the normative gap which emerged after the ousting of the Catholic liturgical rite and (to a considerable degree) of the culture of canon law, initially replaced by roughly outlined directives of the reformers. Each independent town (similarly to the great feudal lords) created its own regulations in accordance with specific possibilities and needs, and combined elements of the late mediaeval tradition of life in an urban society with the Lutheran ceremonial³.

As in the Middle Ages, when towns advised each other as regards municipal law, modern Lutheran communes, engaged in constructing their own religious-moral legislation, made wide use of the patterns provided by other administrative centres, often relying on interpretations proposed by chairs of theology and Roman law at the universities of Wittenberg, Rostock,

²This article was written in connection with a habilitation dissertation prepared in the Institute of History at the University of Gdańsk, entitled: *Śmierć w mieście hanzeatyckim w XVI-XVIII w. Studium z wczesnonowożytnej kultury funeralnej (Death in a Hanseatic Town from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century. A Study in Early Modern Funeral Culture)*; on this topic see also: E. Kizik, *Für sich und seine Erben. Kwatery grobowe w nowożytnym Gdańsku (Für sich und seine Erben. Cemetery Blocks in Modern Gdańsk)*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", XLII, 1994, № 3/4, pp. 325-344; i d e m, *Ubiory żałobne w mieście hanzeatyckim w XVII-XVIII wieku (Mourning Clothes in a Hanseatic Town from the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Century)*, *ibid.*, XLIV, 1996, № 2, p. 107-136, here also a survey of pertinent literature.

³In connection with this problem cf. the important article by S. S a l m o n o w i c z, *O reglamentacji obyczajowości mieszczańskiej w Toruniu w XVI-XVIII wieku (Zarys problematyki) (On Regulations Concerning Burgher Manners and Morals in Toruń from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century. Outline of the Problem)*, "Zapiski Historyczne", vol. XLI, 1976, fasc. 3, pp. 87-103. Artistic forms associated with the commemoration of the dead were studied by, i.a.: J. H a r a s i m o w i c z, *Mors janua vitae. Śląskie epitafia i nagrobki wieku reformacji (Silesian Epitaphs and Tombstones during the Reformation)*, Wrocław 1992, especially pp. 13-14; *ibid.*, pp. 166-192, an extensive list of sources and literature; K. C i e ś l a k, *Kościół-cmentarz; e d e m, Epitafia obrazowe w Gdańsku (XV-XVII w.) (Painting Epitaphs in Gdańsk. Fifteenth-Seventeenth Century)*, Wrocław 1993; A. N o w i c k a - J e ż o w a, *Pieśni czasu śmierci. Studium z historii duchowości XVI-XVIII wieku (Songs of Death. A Study in the History of Sixteenth-Eighteenth-Century Spirituality)*, Lublin 1992; E. K o t a r s k i, *Gdańska poezja okolicznościowa XVII wieku (Gdańsk Fugitive Poetry in the Seventeenth Century)*, Gdańsk 1993; M. W ł o d a r s k i, *Ars moriendi w literaturze polskiej XV i XVI w. (Ars Moriendi in Polish Literature during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century)*, Kraków 1987.

Greifswald, and Halle. Consequently, the historian finds himself in the comfortable position of being provided with frequently correlated normative sources. They include cyclically published general funeral regulations (often interpreted for individual cases), as well as school laws and curricula, accompanied by teachers' commentaries⁴, church price lists, and anti-luxury laws, which frequently offer information about the culture of funerals. Subsequently, the historian has at his disposal assorted financial sources, such as lists of church and school accounts, school bills, posthumous inventories⁵, registers of funeral expenses, lists of persons punished for violating anti-luxury laws, and, more rarely, eye-witness reports as well as sporadic iconographic sources⁶. This whole group of sources is supple-

⁴ A list of school regulations and pertinent literature is provided by K. W. Niemöller, *Untersuchungen zu Musikpflege und Musikunterricht an den deutschen Lateinschulen vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis um 1600*, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung, vol. LIV, Regensburg 1969, on Pomerania: pp. 89, 91, 102, ft. 91, on Gdańsk: pp. 128, 132; H. Hettwer, *Herkunft und Zusammenhang der Schulordnungen. Eine vergleichende Studie*, Mainz 1965, an extensive list of school regulations for the German-speaking region from the second half of the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, as well as a list of pertinent literature, pp. 285–291; extremely significant material — also for researchers interested in Prussia, Pomerania, and Great Poland — is contained in the monumental edition of Church regulations (also for schools and hospitals) initiated by Emil Seehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts*, vol. I, part. I, fasc. 1: *Sachsen und Thüringen, nebst angrenzenden Gebieten*, Leipzig 1902; vol. IV: *Das Herzogthum Preußen, Polen. Die ehemals polnischen Landestheile des Königreichs Preußen. Das Herzogthum Pommern*, Leipzig 1911. Importance is still attached to the older edition of sources by R. Vormbaum (ed.), *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen des sechzehnten, –siebzehnten, –achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1–3, Gütersloh 1860–1864, and reprints of regulations in: *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica*, e.g. in vol. XLIV, XLV, *Das Unterrichtswesen der Großherzogtümer Mecklenburg–Schwerin und Strelitz*, publ. by H. Schnell, Berlin 1909.

⁵ As a rule, real estate and personal belongings inventories (together with claims and debts) were made in modern Hanseatic towns after every demise of an adult citizen. The recorded property included documented claims by third persons; subsequently, the inheritance was divided between heirs, taking into consideration the eventual testament of the deceased. The main heir was automatically obliged to cover the costs of the funeral, cf. the eighteenth-century transcript *Kurtzer und gründlicher bericht von Erbfällen, wie es damit in Lande Preußen nach Magdeburgischen, Sachsfschen und Culmischen Recht, [...] und sonderlich was deßfalls det Königlichen Stadt Dantzig recht und gebrauch ist* [1589], Archives in Gdańsk (later AP Gd.) 300, R/Aa, 14, pp. 63–103; T. Maciejewski, *Prawo sądowe w ustawodawstwie miasta Gdańska w XVIII wieku* (*Judicial Law in the Legislation of the Town of Gdańsk in the Eighteenth Century*), Wrocław 1984; cf. H. Piper, *Testament und Vergabung von Todes wegen in braunschweigischen Stadtrecht des 13. bis 17. Jh.*, Braunschweig 1960. Posthumous inventories in the culture of daily life in Gdańsk were analysed by M. Bogucka, *Z problematyki życia "marginesu mieszczańskiego" w Gdańsku w połowie XVII wieku* (*From the Life of the Social Margin in Gdańsk in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*), "Zapiski Historyczne", vol. XXXVIII, 1973, fasc. 4; eadem, *Wdowi skarbz roku 1566. Inwentarz ruchomości Małgorzaty, wdowy po Tidemanie Feldstete (A Widow's Treasure from 1566. An Inventory of the Belongings of Margaretha, Widow of Tideman Feldstete)*, in: *Balticum. Studia z dziejów polityki, gospodarki i kultury XII–XVII wieku, ofiarowane Marianowi Biskupowi w siedemdziesiąt rocznicę urodzin* (*Balticum. Studies from the History of Politics, Economy and Culture from the Twelfth to the Seventeenth Century, Presented to Marian Biskop on His Seventieth Birthday*), ed. Z. H. Nowak, Toruń 1992, pp. 61–66; eadem, *Tod und Begräbnis der Armen. Ein Beitrag zum Danziger Alltagsleben im 17. Jh.*, "Zeitschrift für Ostforschung", 41, 1992, fasc. 3, pp. 321–331.

mented by material constituting the direct artistic effect of the participation of masters and pupils in the funeral cortege, i.a. printed funeral speeches, literary epitaphs, and musical compositions.

II. School attendance in the funeral cortege

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, activities connected with the preparation of a standard burgher burial in accordance with funeral regulations were expected to last no longer than 3–4 days after the time of death. This was also the period in which the family (or heirs of the deceased) was to inform, via a special messenger (described in the sources as the *Leichenbitter*, Old Polish: *proszarz*), a group of private persons and institutions to attend the funeral. The chain of synchronised undertakings, which involved the bereaved household, the funeral messenger, the preacher, the grave-digger, women washing the corpse and keeping watch over the bier, the guild accompanying its member to his grave, the bell-ringer, and the church beggars, also assigned a special role to pupils and school masters.

A burial conducted to the accompaniment of tolling bells and singing school children was regarded as honourable and Christian, and up to the end of the eighteenth century it moulded (without any significant changes) the North European culture of funerals. At least to the turn of the seventeenth century, the *Stille Leiche* — “silent” burial, held in the evening and without the sound of bells or singing school children, was treated universally as disgraceful and unworthy of a true Christian⁷. The honour of a funeral was refused to all those who, according to the Toruń regulations of 1575, sinned

⁶Illustrations presenting school choirs in, i.a.: *Proceßion bey denen gehaltenen Leichenbegängnissen der weiland Durchleuchtigsten Frauen Magdalenen Sibyllen werwittibter Churfürstin zu Sachsen [...] Dresden den 2. May, Freyburg den 4. ditto 1687*, Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (further as.: Bibl. Gd. PAN), N^o 7495 quarto; *Die HochFürstl. Leichenbegengnis Des Durchleuchtigsten Fürste und Herrn Herrn Friedrich Erben zu Norwegen, Hertzoge zu Schleswig, Holstein [...] gest. 10. Aug. 1659, beigesetzt den 30. Jan. 1661*, Schleswig 1662, Bibl. Gd. PAN, Oh. 815 quarto; an excellent survey of illustrated funeral prints is contained in: *Katalog der Lipperheideschen Kostümbibliothek*, vol. 11: R–Z, new edition: E. Nienholdt, G. W ag n e r – N e u m a n n, Berlin 1965, pp. 646–665, 851–863.

⁷On the subject of humiliating burials, i.a.: H. K ü h n e l, “...da erstach sich mit willen selber...”. *Zum Selbstmord im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit, Sprache und Recht. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters*, in: *Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. K. H a u c k et al., Berlin–New York 1986, pp. 474–489; M. L i n n e m a n n, *Armen- und Eselbegräbnis in der europäischen Frühneuzeit als eine Methode sozialer Kontrolle*, in: *Studien zur Thematik des Thodes in 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. P. R. B l u m, Wolfenbüttel 1983, pp. 125–139; J. D i e s e l h o r s t, *Die Bestrafung der Selbstmörder in Territorien der Reichsstadt Nürnberg*, “Mitt. d. Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg”, vol. 44, 1953, pp. 58–231; cf. the methodically important study by F. M e r z b a c h e r in: “Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte”, Germ. Abt., 71, 1954, pp. 505–507; W. D a n c k e r t, *Unehrlische Leute. Die verfeimten Berufe*, Bern–München 1963; numerous examples of burials of victims of suicide in Hamburg are included in the older work by O. B e n e k e, *Von unehrlichen Leuten. Kulturhistorische Studien und Geschichte aus vergangenen Tagen deutscher Geschichte und Dienste*, Berlin 1899.

against their own body and violated religious and secular laws: *sich [...] selbst beleidigen und erstechen, erhenken, erdrücken oder sonst verzeifeln und in ihren sünden ohne busse sterben und verderben, werden zugleich durch geistliche und weltliche rechte von christlicher begräbniss ausgeschlossen [...]. Drum sie auch weder von kirchendienern, schuldienern noch schülern sollen begleiten werden*⁸.

Although the school building was situated in the nearest vicinity of a church, usually within the cemetery, the custom of commissioning a school choir rendered normal work impossible, and distracted the children from their mid-day classes. In order to avoid disorganising school activities and, at the same time, to uphold tradition, the municipal authorities aimed at coordinating funeral regulations with the pattern of lessons. School curricula reserved one and a half or two hours for daily intermissions connected with eventual presence at funeral ceremonies. The school authorities were obligated to excuse the children from their work so that, under the supervision of the masters, they could gather in time at the home of the deceased: *Demnach so oft hinsuro funera furfallen, sollen die knaben zu rechter zeit aus der schulen gelassen, die rectores und conrectores hinten, die collagae aber jeder bey seynem caetu auf der seiten hergehen mit einem weißen baculo, damit sie bey den knaben gute ordnung und disciplin auff der gassen halten, soll auch ein jeder in distributione warten, biß seine knaben durch seindt, und darauff sehen, das sie zuchtig, langsamb und in richtiger ordnung vortgehen [...]* (school regulations from Brunswick, 1596)⁹. Church regulations for Ducal Prussia (1568) recommended that funerals held in towns should take place at strictly “defined periods and hours, without impairing the activity of the school”; in this concrete instance, at nine o’clock in the morning and three o’clock in the afternoon: *damit die schüler an ihren lectionibus desto weniger gehindert werden, sollen die begrebnis, wenn es also bequem were furmittage um neun, nachmittage um 3 Uhr bestellet und ja um 12 der schulen, so viel immer möglich verschonet werden, sonst gehet den kindern ein ganzer halber tag fahin, dass sie ihre lectiones verseumen und nicht studieren*¹⁰. The Greifswald funeral regula-

⁸E. Sehling, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 243; cf. also local church regulations from 1599, *ibid.*, pp. 244–246. Families of criminals and victims of suicide frequently requested the Town Council to alleviate the degrading nature of the burial (so that the body would not be buried by assistants of the hangman) or to entrust the body over to the family. I shall deal with the topic of degrading burials in a separate article.

⁹F. Koldewey, *Braunschweigische Schulordnungen von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Jahre 1628*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica*, vol. I, Berlin 1885, p. 137; R. Vorbaum, *Die evangelische Schulordnungen*, vol. I, p. 360.

¹⁰H. Grün, *Die kirchliche Beerdigung im 16. Jahrhundert*, “Theologische Studien und Kritiken”, 105, 1933, p. 153.

tions of 1623, revised in 1650 and 1672, set the beginning of a funeral for three o'clock in the afternoon in summer, and half past two in winter¹¹. In seventeenth-century Szczecin, the hours were three o'clock in summer, and two o'clock in winter¹².

At times, the participation of children in funerals was regarded as additional school exercises. In sixteenth-century Rostock, burials were organised at one o'clock in the afternoon, i.e. during the music lessons of the lowest forms¹³. The officially designated time for starting funerals in certain Lutheran towns is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Officially designated time for starting daytime funerals in towns from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century

Town/ country	Year	Hours of starting funerals
1. Duchy of Western Pomerania	1542	8 and 15
2. Ducal Prussia	1568	9 and 15
3. Lübeck	1572	14
4. Gdańsk	1578	12.30
	1681	14.30 (funeral of child)
		15 (funeral of adult)
	1705	13.30 (funeral of child)
5. Greifswald		14 (funeral of adult)
	1623	15 or 14 (winter or with larger n ^o of deceased)
	1650	vide supra
	1672	vide supra
6. Königsberg (Old Town)	1578	12 and 15
7. Wismar	1575	12 (Mo.–Fri.)
		13 (Sat.)
		15 (Sun.)
8. Anklam	1670	15
9. Stralsund	1702	vide supra
	1729	vide supra
	1773	16 (from Easter to Michaelmas)
		15.30 (late autumn)
10. Oldenburg	1647	12 (patricians)
		9 and 14 (commoners)

¹¹Printed in: *Eines Erbarh Rahts der Stadt Greiffswaldt Verlobnuß—Hochzeit—Kindtauff—und Begräbnuß Ordnungen*, Greiffswald 1623, Stadtarchiv Greiffswald, Hb 161.

¹²Cf. W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Stettin im 18. Jh.*, [Pommernforschung, fünfte Reihe: Studien zur Musik in Pommern], Greiffswald 1936, p. 5 (according to anti-luxury regulations of 1631, 1654 and 1671).

¹³K. W. Niemöller, *Untersuchungen zu Musikpflege*, p. 78.

SOURCES:

1. E. Sehling, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 365.
2. H. Grün, *Die kirchliche Beerdigung*, p. 253.
3. W. Stahl, *Musikgeschichte Lübecks, Geistliche Musik*, Kassel–Basel 1952, p. 27.
4. W. Faber, *Die Johannisschule in Danzig*, p. 92; AP Gd. 300/R/Q, 5, p. 263–268, Bibl. Gd. PAN, Od. 5717 no. 17 (1681); Bibl. Gd. PAN, Od. 5717 no. 37; AP Gd. 300, 10/62, p. 402–415 (1705).
5. Printed in: *Eines Erbarñ der Stadt Greiffswaldt Verlobnuß-, Hochzeit-, Kindtauff-, und Begräbnuß Ordnungen*, Greiffswaldt 1623, Stadtarchiv Greiffswald, Hb 161 (*ibid.*, revisions of regulations from 1650, 1672).
6. E. Sehling, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 145.
7. E. Sehling, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 314.
8. Printed in: *Der Stadt Ancklamb von Einem Erenvesten Rhat auff Mittbelieben der Deputatorum, Vier Gewercke und geschworen Eltesten auß der Burgerschafti [...] zum öffentlichen Druck beforderte Hochzeit-, Kindtauff-, und Begräbnuß-Ordnung*, Greiffswald 1670, Stadtarchiv Greiffswald, Od. 353.
9. Printed in: *E. E. Raths der Stadt Stralsund renovirte Ordnung. Wornach sich derselben gesamte Bürger, Einwohner und Angehörige in Verlöbñussen Kindtauffen. Hochzeiten, und Begräbnissen nach Unterscheid der Stände zu verhalten Anno 1702*; earlier regulations were issued in 1570, 1595, 1629, and 1649; consecutive edition in 1729, Stadtarchiv Greiffswald, Od. 256; printed in: *Eines Hochedlen Rahts der Stadt Stralsund, Verordnung wegen der Ceremonien bey Leichenbegängnissen*, [Stralsund 1773], Stadtarchiv Greiffswald Rep. 5 no. 6351 (*Acta wegen der Leichenbeerdigung und besonders wegen Errichtung eines Leichenreglements*).
10. G. Linneemann, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Oldenburg*, p. 83–84.

The regulations are concerned predominantly with the maintenance of order among several dozen pupils, standing in pairs, and with the avoidance of loud shouts, mutual shoving and pushing: [...] *von dem kirchhoff die kleinen so lang herausen bleiben lassen, bis die begrebnus fast geschehen, dann sonsten treiben sie unter des in der kirchen allen muthwillen*¹⁴. Attention was paid so that the children [...] *bey den Leichen allemahl still u. sitsam gehen u. sitzen, keine Muthwillen treiben noch ärgerñus geben mögen*¹⁵. The moment the pallbearers appeared in the door, bells started tolling and the choristers intoned funeral psalms at a sign given by the master. Musical instruments were usually reserved for patricians; noblemen and the military were not affected by restrictions of municipal legislation. The cortege, arranged by the *Leichenbitter*, and composed of the school — pallbearers carrying the coffin — the family — guests, invited and uninvited — made its way towards the church or graveyard.

The presence of school pupils endowed Protestant burial with certain quasi-liturgical elements, recalling and referring to the pre-Reformation Catholic ceremony. The school, which by force of habit remained associated with the Church, was subjected to contrasting pressure exerted by the burgher community: the interests of persons honouring the memory of a

¹⁴G. Schünemann, *Geschichte der deutschen Schulmusik*, part I, Köln 1968 [reprint of the 1931 edition], p. 139 sqq.

¹⁵Quoted after: H. Alpers, *Die Altenbrucher Schulordnung von 1685*, "Männer vom Morgenstern" (Heimatbund an Elb- und Wesermündung), 43, 1943, p. 103, ft. 103; *ibid.* the size of teachers' remuneration for attendance at funerals.

deceased family member differed from those of the more prosperous fathers whose children, instead of learning, spent their time in a muddy graveyard. Just as different were the expectations of the parents and children from poor families, who treated funerals as an opportunity for earning money. An attempt at conciliating the interests of those different groups was made, e.g. by the Heidelberg regulations of 1587. Point 9 admonishes teachers of the poor forms to make certain that boys sent to the cemetery should not include lazy pupils who would rather attend all the burials than their classes: [...] *und sollen die Uebrigen, an welchen die Leich nicht ist, zur selben Zeit bei den Lectionibus in der Schule sich befinden, damit durch Einmischung der Faulen, die bei allen Leichen mitlaufen wollen, kein Anlaß zu Versümmniß gegeben werde*¹⁶. The Szczecin regulations of 1573 recommended that in place of the whole school or its half, as was the custom up to then, funerals should be attended by one-third, one-fourth or even one-fifth of the children, depending on the given situation, and added that the same pupils should not always be selected: *damit die knaben eines theils in der schulen bleiben und ihre lectiones ohne verhinderung hören können*¹⁷. The boys, walking in pairs, were usually accompanied by masters of the lower or poor forms, but in order to additionally avoid unruly behaviour, and sometimes for the purposes of exercising control, the teachers were told to make lists of the children present: [...] *der Primus und Secundus sollen die zween Praeceptores sein, die sollen unter einander die Alumnos in zwei gleiche Theile abtheilen und Jedweder die seine auf einem Zettel verzeichnet haben* (Heidelberg 1587).

In order not to increase the already considerable confusion, the pupils were ordered to return to school quietly and immediately after the ceremonies, and not to wander around in the church, the graveyard, and the adjoining streets. Unusual care for ensuring the efficient course of the funeral is disclosed by the Hamburg regulations of 20 January 1660, forbidding the pupils to prolong the ceremony intentionally by choosing the longest way to the graveyard or encircling the church twice. Probably not all the children were eager to return to studying, but it is quite possible that the banned procedures were encouraged by the family of the deceased, who wished to grant the funeral greater solemnity: *Nachdem im Zutragen der Leiche auch die Unordnung wieder eingerissen dass die Schüller eine weile auf der Gassen vor dem Sterbeause bestehen bleiben, ehe sie fort gingen; Nachmals nicht den neherstehenden Weg zur Kirchen, sondern Umbgassen nehmen, und ob gleich das Sterbehaus nicht gar nahe beym Kirchhofe ist*

¹⁶R. Vormbaum, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, 9. 360.

¹⁷H. Grün, *Die kirchliche Beerdigung*, p. 153.

*dennoch zu Zeiten wol mehr als einmahl umb die Kirche gehen, solches aber dehnen hiebevör publicirten Verorodnungen und Mandaten gahr zuwiedern und aus bewegenden Uhrsachen ferner nicht zu gedulden [—] sei*¹⁸.

Boys, who misbehaved loudly, did not sing on time, raced to the church pews, or dropped the seats noisily, were flogged during the funerals¹⁹. In Szczecin, it was advised to delay the punishment until the pupils returned to school in order to avoid disorder (instructions for the *currenda* from 1667 and 1794)²⁰. As a rule, we find out about the thrashing in cases of brutal abuse of authority and parents' complaints, as was the case in Lübeck in 1783, when a church sexton punished a boy weeping loudly and afraid of the sound made by the clattering seats of the church pews, dropped for mischievous fun by urchins²¹. The participation of children in funerals displeased the more affluent parents, who often criticised the low level of teaching; intermissions connected with constant attendance at funerals (despite all regulations) certainly introduced additional chaos into school work. Prosperous fathers were uninterested in the small tips given to the choristers, and irritated by the fact that their children had to walk in a cortege in the company of boys from the poor forms, and were threatened by frequent and vulgar taunts of street urchins²². The very appearance of the children, who often returned home cold and drenched²³, discouraged the wealthy burghers to send their sons to town schools and contributed to the development of private schools (so-called clandestine schools — *Winckelschulen*). Post-inspection sources from Halle (1583) drew attention to the fact that the influx of children from affluent families to private schools meant that the choir was composed of bad singers (*Aus Mangel der Knaben wirdt die*

¹⁸Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Senat Cl. VII. Lit. Lb., № 4, vol. 3.

¹⁹Rules of the Elbląg gymnasium from 1672 warn against instigating scuffles after the completion of the ceremonies, often involving all the school pupils, see: M. Pawlak, *Dzieje Gimnazjum Elbląskiego w latach 1535–1772 (History of the Elbląg Gymnasium in the Years 1535–1772)*, Olsztyn 1972, pp. 161–162; pupils' brawls during funerals held in Szczecin are partially discussed by W. Steffen, *Stettiner Schülerleben im 16.–18. Jahrhundert*, Marburg/Lahn 1957, p. 69.

²⁰W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Stettin*, p. 90.

²¹J. N. H. Rathgens, *Exceß eines Kirchenvogtes 1783*, "Mitteilungen des Vereins für Lubeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde", 10, 1901–1902, pp. 185–187.

²²In October 1773, the rector of the Szczecin school recorded protests of parents complaining that children from decent families: 1. are forced to walk together with the *currenda* composed of pupils from the poor forms; 2. are compelled to sing in front of homes of the poor (*worin Leute von geringen extraction seyn*); 3. are surrounded by urchins and rascals while singing or walking in the cortege (*vom Pöbel oder muthwilligen Jungen umringt und incommodirt [sind]*), W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Stettin*, p. 85.

²³Bremen funeral regulations of 1634, art. II: *die Schulknaben wegen deß langen Aufwartens unnd sings bey dem Grabe sonderlich in bösen regenhafft und kalten winterlichen wetter oftmahls ihre gesundheit verlohren*, Staatsarchiv Bremen, 2–D.20.g.2.

Cantorey übel bestellet)²⁴. In 1628, the rector of the Academic Gymnasium in Gdańsk presented the Council with a memorandum aimed at putting a halt to the tide of boys leaving the town school, and containing a proposal “[...] to set up a special form for those [children] whom their parents prohibit attending [...] schools owing to funerals, during which they stand in mud, rain, storms, and windy and foul weather, to the detriment of their health and learning”²⁵.

The exceptional, and thus worthy of emphasis, concern expressed by the Szczecin inspection recommends to free the youngsters from the duty of singing in winter and during the autumn: *Die kleinen Knaben sollen des winters und herbst mit nach den funeibus zu laufen verschonet sein, wans des sommers gut wetter, können si wohl mitlaufen*²⁶. Naturally, the weather did not spare the teachers, who were often forced to supervise their shivering pupils. It is not surprising, therefore, that wintertime funerals of the poorer people were usually attended by the youngest school children, *inferiores currendarii*, accompanied by suitable teachers of lower forms (Wismar 1643)²⁷. The Greifswald school regulations (1723) also obligated pupils excused from lessons during the four day-long St. James fair to take part in funerals²⁸. School masters (and pupils) who avoided participation in the ceremonies, had to keep in mind the penalty of a fine, also recalled by the authors of the school rules²⁹. These texts bring us closer to a world whose reconstruction is extremely difficult upon the basis of sources, a world of everyday emotions, concealed envy, and banal conflicts between the differently enumerated teachers of assorted forms. For the time being, let us reflect on a dramatic complaint made at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the masters of the St. Peter and Paul school in Gdańsk. Their petition addressed to the Town Council mentions how the lengthy periods of time spent in the malodorous cemetery wind and rain, cold weather and

²⁴W. Sarauky, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Halle*, vol. I: *Von Anfängen bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Halle/Salle–Berlin 1935, p. 278.

²⁵B. Nadolski, *Memorial rektora gimnazjum gdańskiego Jakuba Fabriciusa z r. 1628 (The 1628 Memorial of Jacob Fabricius, Rector of the Gdańsk gymnasium)*, in: *Gdańskie Gimnazjum Akademickie. Księga Pamiątkowa dla uczczenia czterechsetnej rocznicy założenia Gimnazjum Gdańskie-go 1558–1958 (The Gdańsk Academic Gymnasium. Jubilee Book Commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Gdańsk Gymnasium 1558–1958)*, Gdynia 1959, p. 260.

²⁶H. Grün, *Die kirchliche Beerdigung*, p. 153.

²⁷F. Koldewey, *Braunschweigische Schulordnungen*, vol. I, p. 137.

²⁸R. Vormbaum, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 298. Cf. for Elbląg: *Erneuerte und nach den Umständen jetziger Zeit abgefaßte Gesetze Löblichen Gymnasii zu Elbing*, Elbing (13. Aug. 1756), chapter 4 — 5, printed in: AP Gd. 492/525.

²⁹*Wer heimlich fortblieb entrichtet 4 β*, rules of the main town school in Wismar from 1643, R. Kleinger, *Die Geschichte der Großen Stadtschule zu Wismar von 1541 bis 1945*, Kiel 1991, p. 62.

frost cause their clothes to rot and their skin to peel in swathes: *by den funera müssen unser zweene by unssre freystunde besingen ab hora 2 usque 3, in regenn und wind unsre kleider verfaulen, in frost und kelte unsere gliedmaßen erfrieren und allen stanck (wie es dan allhier auff der vorstatt solche gassen giebett) wan wir singen, uns die Derme offtermals im Leibe unblauffen unsere gesundheit in die schantze setzen*³⁰.

III. Funeral ceremonies as a source of income

Apart from the ceremonious aspect, the purpose of the participation of schools at funerals was to guarantee financial foundations for educating the poorer strata. Moreover, it introduced order and rationalisation into the institution of alms for the socially handicapped. A teeming crowd of beggars and urchins obtrusively requesting food and money at the door of the house of the bereaved — a picture typical for the mediaeval town — was to be replaced, at least according to the projects of the legislators, by a group of poor but disciplined pupils — *Kurrendaner*³¹. This intention is reflected in the 1551 Gdańsk regulations about the poor, although an earlier edition from 1525 makes no mention of *die Peupersknaben*³².

The number of children in the funeral cortege as well as the length and number of funeral psalms depended predominantly on the social position of the deceased. The class of the burial was decisive for a distinction into main funerals (*Hauptleichen, General funere*) or partial ones (*Special funere*), known, depending on the payment, as the shilling, or pfennig burials (in Oldenburg they bore the pejorative name of *Penningskringeldoden*)³³. In the small town of Stade, situated opposite Hamburg, and in the seventeenth century already slightly declining, bodies of the poor, who lived in an alms-house or received alms (*Die Armen-Leiche aus den Armen Häusern, oder die sonst Allmosen genossen*) could be accompanied to the cemetery by 40 (20 pairs) pupils and two teachers, if the deceased was an adult, and 15 pairs of pupils and a teacher, if the deceased was a youngster. Servants and hired day workers (the local third estate) were permitted 30 pairs of attending school children and three teachers, or 25 pairs and two teachers, respectively. The town citizens (artisans, merchants — members of the second estate) enjoyed the right to a cortege composed of 40 pairs of boys

³⁰H. Rauschnig, *Geschichte der Musik und Musikpflege in Danzig (Quellen und Darstellung zur Geschichte Westpreußen 15)*, Danzig 1931, p. 59; P. Simson, *Geschichte der Schule zu St. Petri und Pauli in Danzig*, vol. I, Danzig 1904, p. 26.

³¹*Kurrendaner*, from: *Kurrende*, Latin: *curranda, corradare, corradium* — alms, term used in sources interchangeably with *Schule* to denote pupils—choristers singing at funerals in return for petty fees.

³²H. Freytag, *Zwei Danziger Armenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, "Zeitschrift des Westpr. Gesch. Ver.", vol. 39, 1899, pp. 101–130 (without mention of the size of binding charges).

³³J. Hennings, W. Stahl, *Musikgeschichte Lübecks*, vol. II, Kassel–Basel 1952, p. 106.

led by four teachers, or 30 pairs with three school masters. Patricians, i.e. members of the Council, doctors and other learned men (*graduirt und andre gelehrte wol qualificirte Leute*) were buried in the presence of 60 or 50 pairs of pupils³⁴. In larger Hanseatic towns, funerals of prosperous burghers were attended by at least a hundred singing children³⁵. Mayors of Hamburg, who died at the end of the seventeenth century, were accompanied to their graves by stately corteges composed of over a thousand pairs of mourners³⁶. The presence of such a numerous group of school children was costly, as confirmed by funeral charges³⁷ and bills for burials³⁸. According to charges requested in 1545 by the church of St. Catherine in Gdańsk, pupils *die beim Grabe sungen* received 8 groschen *vor essen und trinken*; in 1551, *vor das gesange und die kost 2 Marc*. The teachers and cantor of the St. Bartholomew school (1582) were paid 10 shillings for each psalm sung in the church, and 5 for singing in the cemetery, while the pupils had to be satisfied with buns and small tips³⁹. The Gdańsk church regulations of 1663

³⁴G. G. Ch. Stephany, *Merkwürdige städtische Verordnung bei "Hochzeiten Kindttauffen und Begräbnissen" in der Stadt Stade aus dem Jahre 1660–1662*, "Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen", 1909, pp. 203–204; cf. points 8 and 9 of the Greifswald regulations of 1726: 8. *Bei denen fürnemsten Hauptleichen vom ersten Rang, da die ganze Schule mitgehet, müssen auch alle Schul-Collegen sich einfänden, wie bisher gebräuchlich. Der Baccalaureus gehet zur Seiten der Secundaner und Primaner, der Cantor zur Seiten der Quartaner und Tertianer, der Rector und Conrector gehen hinter die Quartaner. 9. Bey denen Leichen von folgender Rang, müssen allzeit die 3 Collegae, der Conrector, Cantor und Baccalaureus gegenwärtig sein. Der Rector findet sich nach belieben zuweilen auch ein, wie es ihm bequem ist. Bei denen geringsten, von Handwerkern und die unter denen sind so etwa 2 Thlr. und darunter geben, müssen die beiden untersten nothwendig sein und der Conrector kommt, nachdem es ihm gelegen fällt*, R. Vormbaum, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 298.

³⁵In 1647, the number of students attending the funeral of the rector of the University of Königsberg was supposed to total 700; it seems, however, that the person citing this information regarded as students also pupils of the oldest gymnasium forms, who were known as student; cf. F. Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preußen*, vol. 1: *Von Gründung der Stadt bis zum letzten Kurfürsten*, Köln–Wien 1972, p. 454, cf. p. 511.

³⁶K. Koppmann, *Die Leichenbegängnisse im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: *Aus Hamburgs Vergangenheit. Kulturgeschichtliche Bilder aus verschiedenen Jahrhunderten*, ed. K. Koppmann, Hamburg–Leipzig 1885, p. 255.

³⁷Regulations for Gdańsk churches in the second half of the seventeenth century: AP Gd. 300, R/Pp. 4, p. 99–114; 300, 42/20 e, pp. 143–145, see also: P. Simon, *Geschichte der Schule*, vol. 1, p. 17 sqq.: 1530 — *zahlte man 3 mark to s. Joanns lichten den orricianten de darumbe na older gewonheit*; in 1540 — *1 mark den scholers vor den psalter to singn vor dem grave oder in der kerken*. Funeral regulations in Berlin in 1649, H. Petrich, P. Gerhardt, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes*, Gütersloh 1914, p. 325, ft. 193; H. Alpers, *Die Altenbrucher Schulordnung von 1685*, p. 103; for tabular lists of teachers' incidental earnings from the eighteenth century see: E. Beintker, *Zur Geschichte der lateinischen Schule in Anklam*, "Baltische Studien", 4, 1900, pp. 87–89.

³⁸K. Koppmann, *Nachrichten Otto Sperlings über Laichenbegängnisse*, "Mitt. des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte", vol. 3, 1895, pp. 123–124 (*Das Zusingen*); records made by a bell-ringer from the Gdańsk church of St. John at the end of the seventeenth century, AP Gd. 352/19.

³⁹H. Rauschnig, *Geschichte der Musik*, pp. 18, 59.

mention that the presence of teachers from the St. Peter and Paul school, conducting “the entire choir”, cost 10 florins and 6 groschen. Half of this sum was paid for the so-called *halbe Schule*. The poor pupils had to share a single florin and 20 groschen⁴⁰.

Even the costs for the organisation of burying the poor, whose only legacy were rags and unsalable petty items, mention singing pupils. One has the impression that the bodies of the deceased *paupers* were treated better than the living. In such instances, the expenses of the funeral were covered by the town, or at least this was the situation in early modern Gdańsk.

Originally, school children received some food and were permitted to keep the funeral apparel. Similarly, the fabric covering the coffin was divided among the non-affluent participants of the cortege; this custom is echoed in regulations from Wismar, in sources from Gdańsk and Cracow and, on a more universal scale, in dispositions for the rural pastors of Mecklenburg⁴¹.

The customary (but voluntary) meal served to funeral attendants was gradually replaced by a small (but obligatory) payment, foreseen in the charges.

A sixteenth-century source admonished that children should not be given more than one guilder per group, and that the recipients of this sum should not demonstrate their disappointment or dissatisfaction with the size of the payment by their facial expressions, gestures or words⁴². Arranging the price list, the authorities wished to avoid a disorderly division of the food, as well as to guarantee satisfaction for the organisers of the funeral, who would no longer be accused of excessive thriftiness or generosity.

Nevertheless, the sharing of food or petty payment led to frequent disturbances. Clever urchins and young beggars, wishing to pilfer from the table or the basket containing sweet baked goods, mingled with the school-children. Some of the pupils queued up twice, as testified by a note in the school regulations for Stralsund (1561) and Nordhausen (1583): the school-children *sollen aber christliche Gesänge singen auf der Straße langsam*

⁴⁰ AP Gd. 300, R/Pp, 4, p. 110; cf. P. S i m s o n , *Geschichte der Schule*, vol. I, pp. 13, 17–18 (school regulations from 1580), p. 26 (rise of charges in 1616).

⁴¹ I examined the problem of clothes worn by mourners in the article: *Ubiory żałobne*, cf. note 2.

⁴² AP Gd. 300, 42/264, p. 13 sqq., VI: *Von Besingung der Leichen*, XI. *Was der Schulen von den Leichen gegeben wird* (here detailed description of charges), XII. *Was die Pauperes von jeder Leiche bekommen und wie es damit gehalten werde*; G. L i n n e m a n n , *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Oldenburg*, Oldenburg 1956, p. 87; in 1706, revenues from funerals totalled about 13% of the earnings of the town cantor. Tables of funeral fees due to masters of the humanities gymnasium in Anklam are published by E. B e i n t k e r , *Zur Geschichte der lateinischen Schule in Anklam*, “Baltische Studien”, 4, 1900, pp. 87–89; the charge for a school choir conducted by a master of the St. Stephen school was a lump sum, which in 1642 amounted to 15, later — to 30, and from 1692 — to 42 thalers, J. F r. E n t h o l t , *Bilder aus der Geschichte des bremischen Volksschulwesens*, Bremen 1928, pp. 10.

*gehen, und vorlieb nehmen mit dem was man ihnen reicht. Sie sollen auf die Buben acht geben, welch beim Austheilen zwei Mal, oder sich eindringen, ohne Schüler zu sein*⁴³.

In order to avoid crowds pushing rudely in front of the house of the bereaved (it must be recalled that sometimes it was necessary to hand out payments to as many as a hundred boys), the money was paid to the teacher, who subsequently divided it among the older boys upon their return to the classroom (the Wologoszcz regulations from 1622)⁴⁴. To prevent misunderstandings or outright cheating, both universally encountered during the sharing of tips, regulations included additional notes on control, in this way warning dishonest teachers against the embezzlement of the petty sums. Money due to pupils from the poor forms (known in Gdańsk as *Weckengeld*)⁴⁵ was usually spent on bread, divided among the needy children. In the daily life of the school, the afternoon intermission for a funeral coincided with the children's mealtime.

A full perception and appreciation of the role played by incidental funeral charges in the life of the early modern school calls for a study of the sources for financing town schools in the Protestant North. Funds for particular schools were provided by the municipal budget, which, after the liquidation of the Catholic school system, took over the upkeep of the school buildings, guaranteed basic wages for the teachers, frequently covered the costs of accommodation and fuel, and, in the case of the death of a school master, guaranteed year-long care for the widow and orphans (the so-called *Witwenjahr, Gnadenjahr*). Apart from school fees paid by the parents and testament bequests, the town devoted certain funds for scholarships granted to select pupils⁴⁶. Nonetheless, Town Councils intent on widening the range of education for children from the less wealthy strata of the urban population were unable to ensure a suitable living standard for teachers and pupils. The most important and relatively constant additional profits came from fune-

⁴³R. V o r m b a u m, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 383 (Nordhausen), pp. 484–485 (Stralsund). Little is written on this topic E. W a s c h i n s k i, *Das Thorner Stadt- und Landes-Schulwesen vom Beginn der Reformation bis zum Ende der polnischen Herrschaft*, "Zeitschrift d. Westpr. Gesch. Ver.", 56, 1916, pp. 118, 124, according to funeral regulations for the church of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Toruń, 27 August 1599, pp. 90–92.

⁴⁴Printed in: *Wolgastische Verlobnuss: Hochzeit: Kindtauff, Kirchgang und Begrabnuss Ordnungen [...] von dem Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen Fursten und Herrn Philippo Julio, Hertzogen zu Stettin, Pommern der Kassuben und Wenden [...]*, Wolgast 1622, Stadtarchiv Greifswald Od. 353.

⁴⁵W. F a b e r, *Die Johannisschule in Danzig vom Mittelalter bis zum Jahre 1824*, Danzig 1925, p. 92; AP Gd. 300, 42/20 e, p. 143.

⁴⁶For expenses for the maintenance of the Gdańsk school system see: M. F o l t z, *Geschichte des Danziger Stadthaushalts (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Westpreußens 8)*, Danzig 1912, pp. 158–160.

rals. In the seventeenth century, incidental revenue obtained from this source comprised as much as half of the teachers' basic pay.

A particularly privileged person among the teaching staff was the rector, who was obliged to participate only in funerals of patricians, members of the municipal authorities, and all the local *doctores* and *Gelehrte*. Although he was not expected to attend the funerals of members of the lower groups, the rector usually took part in sharing payments for the presence of the school in the procession. On the other hand, sums received by teachers of the poor forms, who were present at all funerals without exception, were relatively small, and constituted a cause of numerous complaints and grievances. The remuneration of the rector and his colleagues from the Gdańsk school of St. Bartholomew (1677) seems worthy of closer examination⁴⁷: the annual income of the rector totalled 800 florins, while a teacher received only 343 florins (Table 2).

Table 2. Annual earnings (in florins) of the rector and master of the poor forms in the St. Bartholomew school in Gdańsk (1677)

Type of revenue	Rector	Master
entrance fee	20	–
for fuel	52	–
quarterly tuition fee	150	–
incidental funeral revenue	200	100
for fuel from church	60	30
quarterly payment from church	52	78
from town treasury	266	166

Source: AP Gd. 300, 42/210, p. 33.

Since school attendance at a main burial cost 6 florins, a school choir could have earned 800 florins at 33 funerals, while modest, two-florin funerals would have denoted participation in as many as 100 funerals annually. Let us keep in mind that in some cases justified requests led to the annulment of certain funeral payments, and the choir performed free of charge⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ AP Gd. 300, 42/210, p. 33; in 1709, pedagogues of the Lübeck Schola Cathedralis earned (in thalers):

	teachers of higher forms	teachers of lower and poor forms
basic pay	322	301
tuition fees	150	150
funeral charges	714	316
total	1189	767

after: F. Praetorius, *Das niedere Schulwesen Lübecks im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, "Zeitschrift d. Vereins für Lübeckischen Geschichte und Altertumskunde", 11, 1909 pp. 47–48.

The level of the incidental funeral earnings of the teachers is distinct in the structure of their wages, but it is easy to ignore the small incomes of the pupils. The essential significance of those sums is testified, however, by the declining number of commissions for so-called Latin burials, conducted to the accompaniment of singing, a trend painfully experienced by people of the period. The beginnings of the crisis coincided with the end of the seventeenth century. In Szczecin, silent burials “in the Swedish manner” appeared after the siege of the town in 1677⁴⁹. In Gdańsk, the change took place in the wake of the “Deluge”⁵⁰, and in Leipzig — after the pestilence of 1680. In Rostock, the reduced number of requests for burials in the presence of a choir were explained by the thriftiness of the burghers: *manche setzten ihre Toten des Abends still bei, um das Geld zu sparen; die Kollegen erwirkten eine Verordnung dagegen*⁵¹.

When the custom of ordering a school burial became less popular, those children whose subsistence depended on participation in funerals ceased attending lessons: *als der Aufwand bei Leichenbegängnissen beschränkt wurde, verliessen die Knaben, welche nicht des Lernens, sondern des Gewinnes wegen die Schule besuchten, zum neuen Verluste der Lehrer der Schule*⁵². Writing about the St. Thomas school in Leipzig, Christian Thomae expressed a rather exaggerated but highly characteristic opinion that the only reason why poor parents sent their children to school was hope for funeral tips (in mid-seventeenth century Leipzig, this form of earnings amounted to 6 pfennigs a week)⁵³. In certain cases, the parents of a pupil who had not attended a funeral for a week simply resigned from sending him to school. The councillors of many Hanseatic towns received memoranda from rectors and teachers disturbed by such a state of affairs. A complaint filed by five Hamburg teachers (1692) mentions that although the majority of the local evening burials were conducted with costly *pompa funebris*, torches, rows of accompanying carriages, and other embellishments, people spared expense for the school choir⁵⁴. The local Town Council was warned: *die Tage Leichen zum Nachtheil des gemeinen Wesens und der*

⁴⁸Church of St. John, AP Gd. 352/19, p. 100 (*gantze Schule — frey, Schul Colegen — frey*, in the costs of a funeral of one Wilhelm Osterstock in 1695 r.), cf. p. 109.

⁴⁹W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 5.

⁵⁰W. Faber, *Die Johannischule in Danzig*, p. 93, writes that the *Generalia* disappeared after the war of 1655–1660, and even the modest *Speciale* proved to be too expensive for some of the burghers.

⁵¹*Das Unterrichtswesen der Großherzogtümer Mecklenburg–Schwerin und Strelitz*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica*, ed. H. Schnell, vol. XLV, 3, Berlin 1909, p. 404, ft. 1.

⁵²E. Ph. L. Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums zu Hamburg*, Hamburg 1829, p. 218 sqq.

⁵³A. Schering, *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs*, vol. II: *Von 1650 bis 1723*, Leipzig 1926, p. 78.

davon dependirenden Kirchen und Schulen zu letzt gänzlich in Abgang gerathen; und diejenige so zwar die Mittel haben ihre Todte bey Tage zu begraben, aber aus Geitz davon gerne dispensiret sind, unter den Vorwand, daß eine Abend–Leiche wobey die Glocken geleutet und gespielet werden, mehr in der mode, und eben so honorable als eine Tage–Leiche sey; sich eines solchen exempels gar gerne bedienen, und dadurch denen Kirchen und Schulen die bisherige Einflüße, denen ihrigen aber die schuldige letzte Ehre entziehen würden [...] ⁵⁵.

In 1712, the rector of the St. John school complained to the Town Council of Gdańsk: Generale (i.e. a request for the attendance of the whole school at a funeral) is *eine rara avis*⁵⁶.

True, the majority of burials in the Gdańsk church of St. John (*ist dann und wann*) was composed of unprofitable *Stille Leiche*, a fact recorded already in Vita Defunctorum registers from the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and a universal phenomenon in the eighteenth century⁵⁷. A rhyme from 1688, cited by F a b e r, seems to suggest that only the school run by the church of the Most Holy Virgin Mary could still depend on a worthy income:

Zur Pfarr eine tägliche Quarr,
St. Johann ist dann und wann,
St. Katharina fine, fine,
St. Bartholomeß dann wenn enes⁵⁸.

Concern with declining incomes was shared with the Town Council by Johannes S. C h o d o w i e c k i, rector of the St. Peter and Paul school, who stressed that in the parish [...] *gar wenige Leichen mit der gantzen, die meisten aber, mit der halben Schule, pflegen bedienet zu werden, uns nebst denen andern Schuldienern dieser Stadt, also viele begüterte Leute wohnen, gar wenig zugetrösten haben. Wann dann um alle wochen, aus unserm Kirchspiel, Leichen nicht nur armer sondern auch ihrem Stande nach, bemittelter Personen, so wol nach H. Dreyfaltigkeit, u. St. Annen Kirchhoff, als auch nach denen Kirchhöffen, außerhalb der Stadt gelegen, nicht allein des Abends in der stille, sondern auch am Tage öffentlich mit bekleideten*

⁵⁴R. Hoche, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der St. Johannis–Schule in Hamburg*. I. Die milden Stiftungen des Johanneums, II. Die Ordnungen der St. Johannis–Schule im 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, Hamburg 1877, p. 1 sqq. Cf. on Hamburg funeral services: J. Whaley, *Symbolism for Survivors: The Disposal of Death in Hamburg in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: *Mirror of Morality*, ed. J. Whaley, London 1981, p. 80–105, K. Koppmann, *Die Leichenbegängnisse im 18. Jahrhundert*, pp. 255–277.

⁵⁵Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Cl. VII lit. Lb. Nr. vol. 3.

⁵⁶W. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵⁷In 1743, only 5 out of 24 recorded funerals were conducted to the accompaniment of singing, see: AP Gd. 352/23.

⁵⁸W. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

Särckern, ohne die geringste entrichtung, unsers Schulgebührrs, zu Grabe gebracht werden; wodurch uns sämtl. Praeceptoren, sonderlich aber denen beyden vorsingenden Collegen, ein mercklicher Abgang an ihrem, ohne dem geringsten Salario, zustoßet (1712)⁵⁹.

In a dissertation dealing with elementary schools in Lübeck, Friedrich Praetorius indicated that inasmuch as in the seventeenth century schools participated in up to a thousand funerals yearly, and the revenue obtained from burials comprised the foremost form of teachers' incidental earnings, in the eighteenth century, nominal profits of this sort dropped to one-quarter of the previous sums⁶⁰. Records made in 1745–1771 by Johan Lange, rector of the gymnasium in Elbląg, indicated that the school choir took part in 627 funerals, with an annual average of merely 23 burials⁶¹, at a time when about 500 funerals were held a year.

The presence of poor pupils at funerals influenced the level of their education, and reduced it to a minimum. Notes made on 28 October 1770 during a school inspection in Szczecin leave no illusions as regards the level of instruction: *in den Obersten Classen scheinen die wenigsten Schueler des studirens halber in der Schule zu seyn, sondern nur um sich durch das Chor-Singen zu ernähren; wie den von 27 Schülern der obersten Classe 22. Choristen sind*⁶². At times, the absorbing involvement of school masters in funeral processions was so great that there was no one available to conduct lessons⁶³.

⁵⁹ AP Gd. 300, 42/204, p. 161 ab; see: *pro memoria* of Johannes Georg Ruxius, teacher at St. Peter and Paul, *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶⁰ F. Praetorius, *Das niedere Schulwesen Lübecks im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, "Zeitschrift d. Vereins für Lübeckischen Geschichte und Altertumskunde", 11, 1909, pp. 43–47, 124–132. In Stralsund, the first "silent" burials of burghers were recorded after 1690, but the custom of paying the funeral tax for the school was retained for the next hundred years, cf. C. Kirchner, *Versuch einer Stralsundischen Schulgeschichte, Zweites Buch vom Jahre 1560 bis zum Jahre 1617*, Stralsund 1823.

⁶¹ M. Pawlak, *Dzieje Gimnazjum Elbląskiego w latach 1535–1772 (History of the Elbląg Gymnasium in the Years 1535–1772)*, p. 171. In the 1750–1772 period, the choir earned a total of 929 florins, *ibid.*, p. 182; see: E. Kizik, *Speculum mortalitatis. Pogrzeby w Elblągu w XV–XVIII w., w: 750 lat praw miejskich Elbląga. Księga Pamiątkowa (Speculum Mortalitatis. Funerals in Elbląg from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century, in: 750 Years of the Towns Rights of Elbląg. Commemorative Book)*, ed. A. Groth, Gdańsk 1996, pp. 157–178.

⁶² The post-inspection recommendations end with the following sentence: 3. *das alte Herkommen, die Schule zur Leiche zu rufen, müßte abgeschafft, und bloß auf die Chor Schüller eingeschränkt werden. Das Singen in der Stadt soll auf solche Zeiten und Stunden verlegt werden, daß der Unterricht nicht leidet*, W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 85.

⁶³ *The teachers welche bei eintretenden Leichenbegängnissen den Unterricht entweder zurücksetzen mussten oder ihn von selbst vernachlässigten* (Council decree of 15 June 1629), cited after: E. Ph. L. Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, p. 99; decrees of the Council regulating the time of participation in funerals from 1684 and 1692, *ibid.*, pp. 111–140, 217.

The lost opportunity for the children to earn money at funerals threatened the St. John school in Hamburg with complete ruin. Aware of the consequences of a reduction in incidental earnings, the local town authorities tried to compensate the loss by decreeing a permanent tax on evening burials (decrees of the Hamburg Town Council of 1692)⁶⁴. This meant that regardless whether the choir took part in a funeral or not, the organisers of an evening burial were obligated to pay a tax for the sake of a suitable parish school. On the spot solutions proved to be rather useless, and the tax offsetting losses suffered by the teachers did not improve the situation of the pupils, who, unable to make additional earnings by singing, simply resigned from going to school. During the New Year of 1714 there was not enough money to buy fuel and classes had to be suspended. A lottery was held in order to improve the financial situation (*Project Von einer Lotterie Zu einem kleinen Fisco scholastico, Bey der Johannes Schule, Vor arme Knaben, die nach Abgang der Tage Leichen, weder das Schul-Geld, noch die Schul-Bücher, noch das Holtz-Geld bezahlen können, und doch gleich wohl in der Gottseligkeit, Gelehrsamkeit und Ehrbarkeit gerne wollen unterwiesen seyn*, Hamburg 1714), and the 2 353 thalers obtained from the sold lots made it possible to continue the activity of the school⁶⁵.

Apparently, the small sums earned by pupils were important enough to be assigned a place even in the organisation of the Prussian military system. In instructions issued for the preceptors of school choirs in Pomeranian garrison towns, King Friedrich Wilhelm I placed special emphasis on assuring children from soldiers' families priority in participating in groups singing at funerals⁶⁶. In this rather unrefined manner, the King transferred direct costs connected with the maintenance of the military estate to the

⁶⁴Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Senat—CL VII. Lb. N^o 4, vol. 4. a: Beschwerden der 4. Prediger aus den Neben Kirchen und 6. Schul-Collegen zu St.Joh. Über das von den Abend-Leichen ihnen entgehende Accidens d. 1734.35. und 36., here a print from 29 January 1692: [...] *mehr Theil der Todten bey Nächtlicher Weile mit vielen Carossen und grossen Pomp zur Erde bestättiget dahingegen fast wenig mehr bey Tage begraben werden, wodurch dann ihnen [denen Schul-Collegen — E. K.], ihnen benöthigte Substantz und bißheriges Einkommen guthen theils entzogen würde*. The necessity of paying a tax on evening burials with carriages is recalled by a Council announcement of 4 March 1715. For similar material with a statistic of "evening bodies" see: Staatsarchiv Hamburg Cl. vn. Lit. Lb. N^o 4, vol. 4 a.2: Acta des Accidens der Prediger an denen 4. Neben-Kirchen und der Schul-Collegen von denen Abend-Leichen betreffend d. 1751. In 1692, a similar funeral tax was decreed in Stralsund, C. K i r c h n e r, *Versuch*, p. 7–9, and in 1719 — in Szczecin, W. F r e y t a g, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 19.

⁶⁵R. H o c h e, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der St. Johannis-Schule in Hamburg*, III. *Die Ordnungen der St. Johannis-Schule im 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Festschrift z. 350 jährl. Jubelfeier des Johanneums, Hamburg 1879, p. 2, see: ft. 1; E. Ph. L. C a l m b e r g, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, p. 28 sqq.

⁶⁶W. F r e y t a g, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 90.

burghers, without detriment to the funeral tradition and, additionally, achieving the integration of the garrison court district with the rest of the town population.

Numerous violent conflicts caused by rivalry among school choirs from adjoining parishes, and concerning services offered to the increasingly smaller number of lavish burials, should not come as a surprise against this backdrop of shrinking school revenues. The reasons for frictions were funerals of persons buried in the church or cemetery of another parish, and of the deceased from suburbs of unclear church affiliation, as well as attempts made by private schools to attend funerals.

In Gdańsk, such conflicts took place at the end of the seventeenth century, and involved the parish schools of St. John and St. Catherine, and in 1715 and 1735 — the St. Peter and Paul and Most Holy Virgin Mary schools⁶⁷. These discords ended with an exchange of complaints and the arbitration of the Town Council, but true outbreaks of emotion were witnessed, i.e. in Bremen and Hamburg. In a well known report from 1688, Joost Wiengarden, teacher in a newly opened school in Deventor, a suburb of Bremen, led the choristers into a true battle against competitors from the parish of St. Stephen⁶⁸, with both choirs trying to outsize each other. The same situation recurred several days later, the single difference being that the two schools were represented by larger choirs, and that their rivalry was witnessed by numerous groups of observers, ready to join the conflict at any moment. Despite attempts to divide the competitors, made by intervening soldiers, a considerable number of “scoundrels and sailors”, as a protocol noted, joined the crowd and provoked a scuffle, leaving behind a few severely wounded men and the abandoned coffin. When on 5 June 1688 a teacher from the St. Ansgare school refused to admit the choir of the parish of St. Stephen into the church cemetery, a similar clash led to the death of two people. The next burial, which took place on 9 June, was conducted in the presence of a large number of soldiers, who this time prevented all skirmishes. On its part, the Council carried out an indispensable delimitation of competence in order to avoid such scandals in the future⁶⁹.

The participation of parochial schools in funerals was known not only in Protestant regions. In return for payments, parish schools attended, e.g. in Cracow the funeral of King Sigismund I⁷⁰. We have at our disposal

⁶⁷W. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 91, *die pekuniäre Lage*, p. 93 sqq.

⁶⁸J. Fr. Entholt, *Bilder aus der Geschichte des bremischen Volksschulwesens*, pp. 15–16.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷⁰W. Urban, *Malopolskie szkoły parafialne wobec otoczenia (pierwsza połowa XVI wieku) (Parish Schools in Little Poland and Their Surroundings (First Half of the Sixteenth Century))*, “Studia Historyczne”, vol. XXXVI, 1993, 4, p. 432.

excellent studies on funeral pomp in Vienna, also testifying to the paid attendance of local pupils in corteges⁷¹. Nonetheless, it is rather too early to embark upon comparisons in view of the absence of works on mass-scale funeral culture in early modern Catholic towns.

The money which changed hands among members of the funeral procession created a mutual feedback effect: a decline in the needs for ceremonious burials, caused either by the pauperisation of the burghers, the diminished prestige of schools, or changes in funeral customs, led to a drop in the school attendance of those pupils whose presence in classes depended on opportunities for earning money at funerals. On the other hand, for whole centuries, and despite numerous attempts at reform, the tradition of the participation of schoolchildren at funerals disorganised the school curriculum, and, in the opinion of men of the period, lowered the level of instruction and discouraged wealthy parents from sending their children to town schools.

IV. The school and the development of funeral literature

Apart from incidental incomes due to funerals, rectors and better known teachers often owed additional earnings to writing assorted funeral works. These prints (next to congratulations and *epithalamia*) comprise mass-scale testimony of exalted emotionalism, whose examples fill our present-day libraries and archives, and meet with increasing interest also among Polish historians of literature⁷². Upon the basis of still incomplete data, Rudolf Lenz, an expert on incidental funeral earnings from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, estimates the exact number of such prints at about 250 000 titles, with an average output oscillating from 100 to 300 copies⁷³. Against this background, the legacy of Johann Georg Möresius, teacher and rector at the St. Peter and Paul school in Gdańsk in 1626–1657, appears to be a norm rather than extraordinary: 129 funeral *carmina* by this author were found by Paul S i m s o n in the Gdańsk Library alone⁷⁴. Thousands of preserved writings differ as regards the size of the output and graphic form, while their similar features include inner arrangement, as well as cited

⁷¹M. Hawlik-van de Water, *Der schöne Tod. Zeremonialstrukturen des Wiener Hofes bei Tod und Begräbnis zwischen 1640 und 1740*, Wien-Freiburg-Basel 1989; W. T. Bauer, *Wiener Friedhofsführer. Genaue Beschreibung sämtlicher Begräbnisstätten nebst einer Geschichte des Wiener Bestattungswesens*, Wien 1988, pp. 219–240 (*Die Entwicklung des Bestattungswesens. Vom Sparsarg Josephs II.*).

⁷²See: E. Kotarski, *Gdańska poezja okolicznościowa (Fugitive Poetry in Gdańsk)*, especially chapter II, pp. 37–151 (*Gratulatoria and funeralia*); R. Lenz, *De mortuis nil nisi bene? Leichenpredigten als interdisziplinäre Quelle unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Historischen Familienforschung, der Bildungsgeschichte und der Literaturgeschichte* (Marburger Personalschriftenforschungen, vol. 10), Sigmaringen 1990, in particular chapter II: “Zur Geschichte der Leichenpredigten”, here pertinent literature; collection of articles edited by R. Lenz under the joint title: *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*, vol. 1, Köln-Wien 1975; vol. 2, Marburg 1979; vol. 3, Marburg 1984.

Biblical and mythological metaphors. Condolence and consolation poems, laments, and dirges were written by colleagues, social acquaintances, pupils and teachers of the deceased⁷⁵. In my opinion, a much more essential feature of this phenomenon consists not in the literary uniqueness of several pearls found among veritable mountains of paper, but rather in the inexpensive, pragmatic (the term: one-time-use suggests itself), and banal character of the recurring models and quotations. The skill of writing and reciting small compositions intended for special occasions was practised in schools. By way of example, during lessons of poetic and rhetoric conducted in the Elbląg gymnasium, pupils of the highest forms — *prima* and *secunda* — wrote *carmina* which, on the day of the funeral of a more prosperous person, were to be delivered to the rector by 10 o'clock in the morning. The texts were then handed over to the *praeceptor pauperes*, who affixed them onto the church door as a form of an ornate obituary, or presented them to the family of the deceased. The pupils—authors of the select works, could count on an additional small treat. The refusal to accept such school compositions by the widow of a councillor in Hartberg became a scandal widely commented at the time (1737)⁷⁶. The municipal authorities tried to limit administratively both the size and the output of funeral literary compositions by resorting to anti-luxury regulations. Suitable resolutions were issued by the Town Councils in Gdańsk (1657, 1677, 1681, 1705 and 1734)⁷⁷, Elbląg, and

⁷³R. Le n z, *De mortuis nil nisi bene?*, pp. 17–21. In his estimates, the author did not take into consideration printed matter from Gdańsk, Toruń, the towns of Western Pomerania, and Livonia. Foreign authors are unfamiliar with the literary funeral culture of the Commonwealth of the gentry, cf. J. A. Ch r o ś c i c k i, *Castris et astris. Kazania i relacje pogrzebowe jako źródła historii sztuki (Castris et Astris. Funeral Sermons and Reports as Sources for the History of Art)*, “Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 30, 1968, № 3, pp. 384–393; i d e m, *Wiadomości o mecenacie artystycznym magnaterii i szlachty polskiej na podstawie panegiryków pogrzebowych od XVI do końca XVIII wieku (Informations about the Artistic Patronage of Polish Magnates and Nobility upon the Basis of Funeral Panegyrics from the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Eighteenth Century)*, “Rocznik Historii Sztuki”, vol. IX 1973, pp. 147–176; generally: B. R o k, *Zagadnienie śmierci w kulturze Rzeczypospolitej czasów saskich (The Problem of Death in the Culture of the Commonwealth during the Saxon Period)*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Historia XCV, Wrocław 1991; i d e m, *Człowiek wobec śmierci w kulturze staropolskiej (Man and Death in Old Polish Culture)*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Historia CIX, Wrocław 1995.

⁷⁴The author of the cited work retained far reaching reserve towards the literary merits of fugitive works by Möresius: *Doch scheint er nicht gerade ein gottbegnadeter Poet gewesen zu sein*, P. S i m s o n, *Geschichte der Schule*, vol. I, p. 37.

⁷⁵E. K o t a r s k i, *Gdańska poezja*, p. 9.

⁷⁶M. P a w ł a k, *Dzieje Gimnazjum*, p. 181.

⁷⁷More attention is devoted to this type of Gdańsk regulations concerning manners and morals by E. C i e ś ł a k, in: *Historia Gdańska (History of Gdańsk)*, vol. III, 1: 1655–1793, ed. E. C i e ś ł a k, Gdańsk 1993, pp. 264, 266 (chapter. X, 4: Family Ceremonies, Social Life, Entertainment); earlier by M. B o g u c k a, *Życie codzienne w Gdańsku. Wiek XVI–XVIII (Daily Life in Gdańsk. From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century)*, Warszawa 1967, p. 124.

Toruń (1722), “prohibiting the printing of exequial poems and their distribution at the church door to those who follow the coffin during the funerals of artisans, with a fine from six to twelve thalers. Nonetheless, merchants who for 10 years held the status of burghers are permitted to print a single sheet”⁷⁸.

In the eighteenth century, costly funeral prints combining the traditional literary epitaph and lament with notation (*Trauer–cantata bey dem Leich Begängniss* [...]; *Trauer–Music*; *Trauer Mottet*) became increasingly popular, making it possible for us to consider once again the service for which school children received payment, namely, singing⁷⁹.

V. The school choir in the history of Protestant music

The Reformation did not hold a uniform view about the place and role of Church music in the new liturgy. In Calvinist Geneva, music was reduced to a minimum within the funeral rite, and singing in cemeteries was usually prohibited. Jacob Bernoulli noted with a certain dose of exaggeration that in 1676 the old and the young were buried like dogs in utter silence: *Jungs und Alts ohne unterschied, wie die Hund unter den Grund geworfen wird, ohne Gesang und Klang, sine lux, sine crux et sine Deus*⁸⁰. Compared to the Calvinist and Anabaptist environments, Lutheran radicalism was considerably weaker, and consisted rather of evolutionary replacement and not a violent destruction of the old rite. Nonetheless, the elimination of the Catholic cult in those towns which accepted the Lutheran Reformation, and the gradual dissolution of monastic orders meant that the only place where it was possible to organise a choir was the school⁸¹.

The school choir, headed by a music teacher or the church cantor, appeared at services and all the ceremonies of the Lutheran liturgical year; it was part of family events: christenings and marriages, and, obviously,

⁷⁸Resumpeja Ordynaczej Szlachetnego Magistratu Miasta Torunia o szatach, weselach, chrzcinach y pogrzebach (*Resumed Regulations of the Noble Magistrate of the Town of Toruń about Clothes, Weddings, Christenings, and Funerals*) (1722), publ. by Z. MocarSKI, “Tygodnik Toruński”, 1924 (29 March), N° 13, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁹G. Schumacher, *Musikbeigaben in Leichenpredigten und selbständig veröffentlichte Sterbekompositionen*, in: *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*, vol. 1, pp. 408–425 (a brief outline of the role of music during funerals); cf. also D. PopiniGis, D. Szlagowska, *Musicalia Gedanenses. Rękopisy muzyczne z XVI i XVII wieku w zbiorach Biblioteki Gdańskiej Polskiej Akademii Nauk. Katalog (Musicalia Gedanenses. Music Manuscripts from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century in the Collections of the Gdańsk Library at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Catalogue)*, Gdańsk 1990; J. Sekulski, *Bibliografia druków elbląskich 1558–1772 (Bibliography of Prints from Elbląg 1558–1772)*, Warszawa 1988.

⁸⁰U. Rohner–Baumberger, *Das Begräbniswesen im calvinistischen Genf*, Basel 1975, pp. 60–61 (cf. also pp. 57–64: published funeral regulations from the years 1676, 1725 in the French original version); for German–speaking Swiss Calvinists cf. W. Illi, *Wohin die Toten gingen. Begräbnis und Kirchhof in der vorindustriellen Stadt*, Zürich 1992.

accompanied the deceased on their last journey. This was the period of the emergence of the Protestant church hymn, and hence the dissemination of the vernacular in Church ceremonies faced certain obstacles. Originally, the choirs sung both old, pre-Reformation Latin songs as well as new German psalms. As late as 1549, the Elbląg Town Council banned singing in German during funerals⁸², although in neighbouring Gdańsk this custom already became an *usus*, confirmed in normative acts⁸³. In particular towns, the creation of uniform collections of religious songs required whole decades. By way of example, Hamburg lacked official song-books, confirmed by the Town Council, as late as the end of the seventeenth century, and the local population used assorted collections of hymns and psalms⁸⁴. Sources from Greifswald show that even at the beginning of the eighteenth century, traditional Latin texts were still performed during funerals.

Although those children who only pretended to sing or misbehaved were bypassed in the division of earnings, a number of sources demonstrates that at times the music performed by the pupils of the local school must have been a truly sorry spectacle. The 1752 school regulations for Bremen and Verden contain an extremely instructive example. The texts harshly ban singing by heart since the absence of notation meant that the children easily began to sing out of tune. Care was to be taken that the boys would not become accustomed to terrible wailing. Moreover, the commentary adds that such howls could easily prove harmful to the children's health, not to mention the fact that they were unpleasant to hear: *das Singen aus dem Kopf*

⁸¹H. Rauschnig, *Geschichte der Musik*, pp. 40 sqq., 59, 217, 313–314 (generally on singing at funerals); D. Krickeberg, *Das protestantische Kantorat im 17. Jahrhundert. Studien zum Amt des deutschen Kantors*, Berlin 1965 — the author maintains that the institution of the seventeenth-century town cantor is examined insufficiently. Numerous works by researchers dealing with Late Renaissance and Baroque music, often written without a suitable historical workshop, should not remain neglected by historians, if only due to cited extensive source material, cf. W. Serauky, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Halle*, vol. I: *Von Anfängen bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Halle/Salle–Berlin 1935, pp. 256–279; vol. II (Erster Halbband): *Von Samuel Scheidt bis in die Zeit Georg Friedrich Händels und Johann Sebastian Bachs*, Halle/Salle–Berlin 1939, pp. 91–175, 260–369; C. Sachs, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Berlin bis zum Jahre 1800. Stadtpfeifer, Kantoren und Organisten an der Kirchen Städtischen Patronats nebst Beiträgen zur allgemeinen Musikgeschichte Berlins*, Berlin 1908, pp. 101–114, 123, 126, 128, 143–148 (source excerpts from Church regulations and charges).

⁸²“Lieder, deutsch vor den Todten nicht zu singen”, AP Gd. 369, 1/104 (Elbląg 1549).

⁸³H. Freytag, *Zwei Danziger Armenordnungen*, p. 125 (regulations from 1551).

⁸⁴Regulations from 1684: *Bei Begräbniss der Verstorbenen sollen christliche lateinische oder deutsche Gesänge und Psalmen mit gebührender Reverenz und Andacht gesungen werden, bis alle Manns Personen die der Leich folgen in die Kirche gegangen und das Grab wieder zugescharrt [ist]*, E. Ph. L. Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, pp. 187–188; cf. J. Geffcken, *Die Hamburgischen, Niedersächsischen Gesangbücher des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 1857, p. XVIII sqq.; C. Schultess, *Die hamburgischen Gesangbücher als Ausdruck der Kultur ihrer Zeit*, “Hamburgische Geschichts- und Heimatblätter”, vol. 1, 1928, p. 172–180.

*mus nicht geduldet werden, weil die Kinder sich dabey leicht gewöhnen falsch zu singen; sondern sie müssen dahin sehen, daß die Kinder sich nicht schreckliches Schreyen angewöhnen. Denn ausserdem das ein solches Schreyen der Gesundheit der Kinder leicht zum Nachtheil gereichen kan, und dißes unangenehm zu hören ist [...]*⁸⁵. The situation in Toruń must have been truly dire if, according to Emil Waschinski, on 12 June 1752 the Town Council discussed the question of singing⁸⁶. A sixteenth-century source from Lübeck says that “boys in the funeral procession sing in a disorderly fashion, one in a high pitch, another in a low one, one slowly, another too quickly, while the older pupils, following in the rear, do not sing at all, regarding it as a dishonour and a disgrace to sing together with the little ones”⁸⁷.

In 1726, the state of affairs in Greifswald was equally unfavourable⁸⁸, and obviously had not changed for the better if a document of 27 October 1780 draws attention to the fact that nothing could be a worse experience for mourners who wished to commemorate their departed relatives in silence than the “wild screams of the pupils”. Further on we read that: “The local town school represents a low level, and singing performed by its pupils is neither uplifting nor skillfully performed, and certainly unpleasant to the listeners”⁸⁹. Thomas Selle, music teacher and conductor of orchestras in four most important Hamburg churches, complained about the lack of suitably trained choristers (1638)⁹⁰.

Despite the amateur level of the performance and the tomfoolery of the pupils, conducting school choirs was an essential source of wages for cantors as well as music and singing teachers; in addition, it co-created financial and organisational conditions for the splendid development of Protestant music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries⁹¹. The level of the choirs themselves, and the significance of musical culture in Hanseatic towns were

⁸⁵R. Vormbaum, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 477.

⁸⁶B. Waschinski, *Das Thorner Stadt- und Landes-Schulwesen*, pp. 90–91.

⁸⁷School inspection in 1579: *Wenn die Knaben in der proceß zur Leiche gehen, so singen sie gar unordentlich, der eine hoch, der andere nidrig, der eine langsam, der andere hastig, und die Großen, so hintenan gehen, singen gar nicht, ja mainen, es wäre ihrer Ehre zu nahe und eine große Schande, wenn sie mit den Kleinen in der proceß singen*, cited after: J. Hennings, W. Stahl, *Musikgeschichte Lübecks*, vol. II: *Geistliche Musik*, Kassel–Basel 1952, pp. 27.

⁸⁸*Lex Secunda Die grablieder sollen der meiste theil teutsch sein, sonderlich auff den gassen, und nicht alzu hoch oder alzu niedrig angefangen [...]*, cited after: G. Schünemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 139.

⁸⁹Staatsarchiv Greifswald, Rep. 5 N^o 6351 (non-uniform pagination — document from 27 October 1780).

⁹⁰L. Krüger, *Verzeichniss der Adjuranten, welche zur Music der Cantor zu Hamburg alle Gemeine Sontage höchst von Nöthen hat. Ein Beitrag einiger archivalischer Quellen zur Kirchenmusik aus der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, “Beiträge zur hamburgischen Musikgeschichte”, 1, 1956, pp. 15–21.

certainly higher than it would follow from contemporary critical remarks. On the contrary, the criticism often voiced by the local teachers permits us to draw conclusions about a generally high musical sensitivity.

Small funeral compositions were arranged for boy performers both by renowned composers such as Heinrich Schutz, Georg Philip Telemann or the family of Johann Sebastian Bach, and cantors from Pyrzyce, Białogard, Koszalin, and Elbląg, known only by name. It seems worth adding that Telemann, who enjoyed considerable recognition already during his lifetime, and composed motets after the deaths of mayors of Hamburg, members of their families, doctors, and pastors, received an annual wage almost equal to that of a mayor. A survey of his musical activity in Hamburg mentions the composition or public performance of funeral cantatas at intervals of almost every few weeks⁹².

Despite his promotion to the post of *director musici* in the chantry of St. Thomas in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach was expected to observe the binding regulations –he attended funerals regularly and supervised the pupils who sung upon those occasions: *in Leichenbegängnißen iederzeit, wie gebräuchlich, so viel möglich bey und neben denen Knaben [herzugehen]*⁹³. In accordance with the regulations of the St. Thomas school, announced in 1723, remuneration for the cantor conducting the performance of a funeral motet, involving the participation of the entire school, amounted to 1 thaler and 5 groschen, and without the motet — to a miserly 15 groschen.

Bach himself saw nothing wrong in this old custom. On the contrary, in a letter to Erdmann, a friend in Gdańsk (1730), the irritated composer

⁹¹L. Krüger, *Die Hamburgische Musikorganisation im XVII. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig–Strassburg–Zürich 1933, pp. 23, 34–35; S. Salmonowicz, *Toruńskie gimnazjum akademickie w latach 1687–1817. Studium z dziejów nauki i oświaty (The Academic Gymnasium in Toruń in 1687–1817. A Study from the History of Science and Education)*, Poznań 1973, pp. 22, 54, 46; G. S. Johnston, *Textual symmetries and the origins of Heinrich Schütz's Musikalische Exequien*, “Early Music”, vol. 19, 1991, pp. 213–224. Cf. also the dissertation on the connections between Lutheran music and funeral culture: N. Bolin, “Sterben ist mein Gewinn” (*Phil. 1. 21*). *Ein Beitrag zur evangelischen Funeralkomposition der deutschen Sepulkralkultur des Barock 1550–1750* (Kasseler Studien zur Sepulkralkultur, vol. 5 = Diss. Univ. Köln 1985), Kassel 1989, in particular pp. 48–105; Holstein, *Zur Musikgeschichte von Pyritz*, “Monatsblätter”, 1918, pp. 21–24; *Das Unterrichts-wesen der Großherzogtumer Mecklenburg–Schwerin und Strelitz*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica*, vol. XLIV, 2, Berlin 1909, pp. 12, 196, 197, 409–410 (teachers’ incomes from funerals, i.a., in Boizenburg and Malchin); Fr. Blume, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchenmusik*, Kassel–Hasel–Paris–London–New York 1965, pp. 147, 180, 219, 262, 265.

⁹²E. Kleßman, *Telemann in Hamburg, 1721–1767*, Hamburg 1980.

⁹³Cited after: S. Schünemann, *op. cit.*, p. 207. See: Ph. Splitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Wiesbaden 1979 (8th ed. of the original edition Leipzig 1930), vol. 2, p. 21 sqq., 35 sqq., 45 sqq.; A. Scheiring, *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs*, vol. II: *Von 1650 bis 1723*, Leipzig 1926, in particular chapter 2: *Die Schulmusik und ihre Organisation*, pp. 43–67; chapter 3: *Der Singedinst der Thomaskantorei, Leichensingen*, pp. 77–91.

complained about the supposedly healthy Leipzig air, which he regarded as the reason for the small number of funerals and the reduction of his own profits. *Die Accidentia leiden Einbusse*, the famous cantor wrote cynically⁹⁴, and probably the suspicions that Bach embezzled funeral payments were not so unfounded⁹⁵. It is quite astonishing that it was precisely such school choirs, trained during funerals, which were the first performers of Bach's passions according to St. John and St. Matthew. The celebrated composer was buried in the local cemetery (the exact site is unknown) in the presence of one-fourth of the school pupils, a farewell suitable rather for a pauper.

The town legislation, which forbade members of the lower estate to commission funeral music, also contributed to a reduction in the incomes of municipal musicians. Christian Fr. Wolf, who in 1696–1721 fulfilled the function of cantor in the church of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Szczecin, complained: *Er sind auch gar viele, welche bey den abendlichen [Leichen — E. K.] Music verlangenn, aber es will ihnen nicht permitiret werden, und dadurch soll ich armer Mann leiden*⁹⁶.

There exists a certain correlation between the development and subsequent crisis of the town school, traditionally associated with the parish church, and the nature of and changes in funeral customs in towns along the Baltic and North Sea coast. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a certain cultural formation, whose crisis began already at the turn of the seventeenth century, became totally exhausted, causing the decline of traditional Protestant choral music and funeral poetry. The Enlightenment-era school reform, administrative prohibitions against burying the dead in churches and cemeteries situated within city walls, as well as demographic growth ultimately lifted from schools the burden of obligatory participation in the sacramental cycle of the life of a town community.

The analysed sources reveal the outline of a standard funeral ceremony. All was meticulously planned, and no improvisation or delay were permitted. Nothing came free of charge. Every person knew his place in the procession. Finally, there are no traces of Baroque exaltation, the sort which inclined the pupils of Jesuit schools intended for the gentry to change into costumes of weeping geniuses, Thanatos and Hypnos⁹⁷.

⁹⁴A. Schering, *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs*, vol. II, p. 78.

⁹⁵Ph. Splitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, vol. 2, p. 22.

⁹⁶W. Freytag, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 95. Remuneration of the cantor of the St. Nicholas church in Berlin, 1778. C. Sachs, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Berlin*, p. 107; according to data from 1706, revenues from funerals exceeded the costs of accommodation in Oldenburg, G. Linne mann, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Oldenburg*, p. 87.

For centuries, funeral corteges in larger urban centres followed the route from the house of the deceased towards the cemetery, accompanied by schoolboys. Death was a permanent part of the school day, and exerted an impact both on the reception of this phenomenon by the pupils, as well as on shaping the later, “adult” image of an accepted course of the whole ceremony. Attendance in burials rendered schoolchildren part of the circulation of currency, and became a practical lesson of music, rhetoric, and religious instruction. For a considerable number of the children, earnings made in cemeteries were a condition decisive for attending classes. The examined material does not reflect an all-pervading psychosis of death, which we would so readily perceive among people of the past. I must admit that although it is highly attractive to explain certain phenomena by proposing psychological diagnoses, such studies say more about their author, his own fears, and the projections of his environment than about those with whom this research was supposed to deal. In the light of a number of sources, stirring facts become banalities easily convertible into money, and moving dirges commemorating the death of a little girl reflect the suffering of only one father.

The macabre motif of funerals, rendered indelible upon tombstones — dancing skeletons, skulls, and bones — is the product of the crafts, executed for special occasions, and often bordering on kitsch; similarly to mass produced funeral printed matter or musical compositions, it remains the backstage requisite of everyday life.

(Translated by Aleksandra Rodzińska–Chojnowska)

⁹⁷Cf. descriptions of funerals of children of the gentry in 1632 and 1718 given by E. Waschinski, *Das kirchliche Bildungswesen in Ermland, Westpreußen und Posen vom Beginn der Reformation bis 1773*, vol. 2: *Die Klosterschulen*, Breslau 1928, pp. 171–172.