

Article

Music and Religion in the Spiritual World of the Hungarian Aristocracy: The Case of Count Anton Erdődy (1714–1769)

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Abstract: This study deals with the forms and expressions of the Christian piety of the Hungarian aristocracy in the early modern period on the example of Anton Erdődy (1714–1769), a representative of one of the most influential and most ancient Hungarian–Croatian noble families. The personal piety of this socially high-ranking aristocrat was shaped by familial, social, and spiritual traditions, which determined the nature of his artistic patronage. The unique Baroque organ preserved in the chapel of his no longer existing mansion in Trenčianske Bohuslavice, Slovakia (former Bohuslavice, Upper Hungary) is a magnificent manifestation of this patronage. The reconstruction of Anton Erdődy’s idea of the spiritual world and of his piety enables us to formulate a hypothesis that the atypical architectural and structural design of this organ did not result only from the aesthetic requirements of its commissioner, but also had a theological foundation and religious essence in addition to its visual effect. This study is the result of extensive heuristic research and analysis of sources and extant artefacts using the methods of music historiography.

Keywords: the Erdődys; Trenčianske Bohuslavice (Slovakia); organ; devotion; patronage of the arts and music



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1. Introduction

Piety was already associated with musical expression in antiquity, and it has been part of the religious cults of all religions. By singing, playing a musical instrument, or dancing, the ordinary form of communication, i.e., the spoken word, is elevated to a higher form of communication with the transcendent world, in which the individual or the community expresses its relationship to supernatural existence based on their beliefs and system of religious ideas and dogmas. Public (official) forms of religious expression were usually regulated by spiritual authorities, and these regulations were constantly revised depending on the evolution of society, its spirituality, hierarchy, and preference for social and moral values and patterns of behavior. A good example of such continuous revision of rules is musical expression in Western Christian official rituals (Holy Mass, Divine Office). In its beginnings, it was limited to the singing of monophonic chants in the spirit of the Augustinian aesthetic ideal but was gradually expanded to include polyphony and the organ, later also other musical instruments; in some areas, even dance came to be tolerated, and the vernacular language was encouraged in Protestant denominations. The liberalization process of the choice of the musical expression of religious sentiments culminated in the Second Vatican Council, which accepted through its constitutions on sacred music a wide range of musical expressions falling under the category of sacred music, ranging from Gregorian chant, polyphonic music in its diverse historical and modern forms, and music for the organ and other instruments permissible in the liturgy, up to folk devotional singing, gospel music, and various songs in popular musical styles. In contemporary Christian cult, the “sonic range” is very wide and varied and includes all expressions that are produced for the glorification of God, are distinguished by the

sacredness and nobility of their forms, and aim to achieve the glorification of God and the sanctification of the faithful (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1963). The combination of sanctity with nobility and artistic quality has resulted in the existence of a wide repertoire of church music in its more than a thousand years of development, which represents a unique musical gem of the European cultural heritage.

The official liturgy is the center of broadly understood Christian piety as a form of various spiritual practices whose content and forms of expression, including musical expressions, have undergone various transformations and differ depending on temporal, geographical-ethnic, and sociological aspects. The phenomenon of Christian piety (and piety in general, regardless of religion) is thus determined by specific cultural contexts. Today, the expressions of piety in earlier historical periods, whether collective or individual ones, can be reconstructed from contemporary descriptions of events, places, and objects, from preserved sacred buildings and works of art, from the texts of the hymns and the sheet music for various devotions, or from other specific sources only to a limited extent.

This study deals with the forms and expressions of the Christian piety of the Hungarian aristocracy in the early modern period on the example of a representative of one of the most influential and most ancient Hungarian–Croatian noble families, the Erdődys. The authors draw on their own extensive heuristic research and analysis of archival sources and selected preserved sacred objects to find answers to the question of how the personal piety of a socially high-ranking individual was shaped by family and social traditions and how it determined the nature of his artistic patronage in a particular building.

The earliest references to members of the Erdődy family date back to as early as the late twelfth century, but their rise to the high spheres of church and state administration began on the threshold of the modern period with Thomas Bakócz (1442–1521), born in Erdőd, who was a Hungarian primate and cardinal and chancellor of the Hungarian kings Matthias Corvinus and Vladislaus II Jagiellon. We will focus on Anton Erdődy (1714–1769), the great-grandson of the founder of the Hungarian (younger) branch of the family, Gabriel Erdődy (1614/1615–1650).

Anton Erdődy was the first-born son of Georg Leopold Erdődy (1676/80–1759), President of the Hungarian Royal Chamber and President of the *Judex Regiae*. He was not only the heir to the hereditary family estate, i.e., the bearer of the family tradition in the material sense, but his role was also to carry on and further develop this tradition in the spiritual sense. Generally, young aristocrats could choose the life path of a high civil servant or build a military career; a third option in life was clerical ministry in some high ecclesiastical post. The eldest sons did not usually choose the spiritual path because it was their duty, as the firstborns in the family, to carry on the family line and ensure its further development. In young adulthood, they usually served in the army and later acquired important positions in state administration.

This was the life path fate outlined for Anton, too. Just like his father Georg Leopold and his uncle Emeric, he also became an officer in the imperial army, attaining the ranks of general in Maria Theresa's army and First Commandant of the Hungarian Royal Guard.¹ Soon after his enlistment, the War of the Austrian Succession, also known as the Silesian Wars, broke out. After the coronation of Maria Theresa as Queen of Hungary (25 June 1741 in Pressburg, present-day Bratislava), the Hungarian nobility decided to support Austria both financially and militarily and, for the first time, organized military contingents to defend Austria's interests. Extant correspondence between Anton and his father Georg Leopold² reveals that Anton participated in both the First (1740–1742) and the Second (1744–1755) Silesian War and remained in military service until 1748. The exact reasons for his departure from the army are unknown, but he appears to have viewed military service primarily as a duty to his homeland, which did not give him inner satisfaction. In this "tense" military service, he experienced difficult situations: The loss of some of his men, defeat in battle, and poor command. He complained of long marching and constant withdrawals, as well as of an inhumane general. His negative sentiments were compounded by health problems for which he did not have access to medication, and these

circumstances possibly hastened his early death at the age of fifty-five. Anton was raised in a milieu with a sense for beauty, art, and spiritual life, and the harsh military world did not appear to have suited his disposition and interests. After leaving the army, he could therefore focus on areas he felt closer to.

The name of Anton Erdődy has gone down in cultural history as a patron of arts, who had a splendid mansion built in Bohuslavice (Bohuszlavicz in German, Bogoszló in Hungarian; the present-day Trenčianske Bohuslavice) in the picturesque valley of the Váh River in Trenčín County of the then Upper Hungary in 1760–1763. From 1760 onwards, he spent most of his time in Bohuslavice, where he preferred the main family seat, the castle in Hlohovec (Freistadt in German, Galgóc in Hungarian), as well as their residences in Pressburg (Posonium in Latin, Pozsony in Hungarian, Prešporok in Slovak), and Vienna. Many artists (sculptors, painters, carvers, and gilders) from the vicinity collaborated to execute and decorate the interior and exterior of this mansion, including renowned masters, among whom the Austrian painter Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724–1796), a leading figure of Central European painting in the late Baroque period, stands out. Contemporary reports spoke of Anton Erdődy's residence with admiration and spared no praise for the garden and the park, which reminded them of a small Versailles (Korabinsky 1786, p. 65; Mednyánsky 1826, p. 93). The mansion included a "large and noble chapel [...] decorated with gold, silver, alabaster, ivory, and marble" (Balogh 1872, p. 198; Cincík 1938, p. 51) and magnificent artistic frescoes (Divald 1913, pp. 64–70; Malíková 1969). Anton died without descendants, and, after various property disputes, his Bohuslavice mansion fell into the hands of alien owners, who lost interest in its costly upkeep. The dilapidated mansion was finally demolished in 1905. The chapel was saved only thanks to some lucky circumstances, on the initiative of the Slovak painter Jozef Hanula, the local church, and the locals. After its reconsecration in 1905³ and its subsequent comprehensive renovation, it has served in its original spiritual function ever since. By preserving the chapel, not only the precious frescoes of Franz Anton Maulbertsch, but another historical jewel, the Baroque organ, was also saved in the chapel.

While there is sufficient literature on the fresco decoration and the altars of the chapel (see, e.g., Cincík 1938; Malíková 1969; Bubryák 2007, pp. 49–59), the precious musical instrument has not received adequate attention (Gergelyi and Wurm 1980, p. 141; Gergelyi and Wurm 1989, pp. 176–81). Yet, it is a noteworthy object not only from the perspective of historical architecture and fine arts but also from that of organology and musical historiography. At the same time, it can serve as a starting point for speculation about the spiritual world of its commissioner as a possible determining factor for the choice of the unique structural design of the instrument. In this respect, our study has no predecessor. Ever since it entered Christian churches, the organ has not only been a practical material means to express piety through music and an important architectural and artistic artefact but, as an object of intricate construction and abilities, it has become a perfectly tuned symbol of the order of the world, of the harmony of the universe. It is not without reason that the famous seventeenth-century Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher compared the creation of the world to the construction of a six-register organ played by God, creating harmony (Kircher 1650, fol. 366).

2. Results

2.1. The Construction and the Reconstruction of the Organ

The organ in the chapel of the former residence of Anton Erdődy in Trenčianske Bohuslavice represents a unique type of so-called pulpit organ, which was built in a relatively narrowly defined time and region. From this point of view, it is one of the most important historical instruments of its kind.

Extant archival documents do not provide any specific evidence of its planning or of the choice of the organ builder. However, the analysis and interpretation of the few surviving sources enable us to draw certain conclusions and formulate hypotheses to

reconstruct the process of the preparation and execution of the building and subsequent rebuilding of this unique instrument, as well as the motives behind its atypical features.

The building of the organ was presumably planned in conjunction with the construction of the chapel. In general, church architecture provided several options for the placement and construction of an organ. The instrument could be situated on the western gallery (usually on the side opposite the high altar)⁴, in the chancel area, or in the nave in front of the chancel, either on its right or left side. In the case of the Bohuslavice chapel, an organ opposite the high altar was out of the question since that was where the aristocratic oratory was located. Therefore, the only remaining option was to build a so-called choir organ either in the chancel or in the nave of the church. In the Bohuslavice chapel, they decided to build a peculiar type of instrument, a so-called pulpit organ. It was placed on the right side of the triumphal arch opposite the pulpit to form its structural and artistic pendant. Such a solution was unique throughout the territory of former Hungary and, according to the current state of documentation on historical organs, rare even in Europe. Pulpit organs were built mainly in the Danube region between Linz and Vienna (Fischer 1991, p. 50) in the churches of the Cistercians, and their popularity peaked in the second third of the eighteenth century.⁵

In 1763, the building of the organ in Bohuslavice was commissioned out to a Viennese organ builder, Johann Hencke⁶, who was in his prime at that time. However, it is not clear why it was him who was approached, as he had no experience in building pulpit organs, unlike another Viennese organ builder, Gottfried Sonnholtz (Allmer and Fastl 2022; Szórádová 2019, p. 197), for example, who had built the pulpit organ in the Cistercian Abbey in Lilienfeld and whose other instruments, like the ones in Vienna and in the pilgrimage church in Mariazell, Erdődy must have been aware of. It was probably Erdődy's patronage of the Trinitarians of Pressburg, in whose church Hencke had built a large organ in 1751, that played a role here. Another question is why Erdődy opted for a "pulpit" type of organ, as, for the organ builder, this meant tackling considerable technical problems, which resulted in a complicated but, in many ways, unique design.

Although the contract that Erdődy concluded with the organ builder has not survived, Hencke's design can be reconstructed from the current state of the organ and from a number of archival documents. Hencke built a single-manual positive with a pedalboard, with six registers for the manual keyboard (*Copula minor 4'*, *Copula maior 8'*, *Principal 8'*, *Superoctava 2'*, *Quinta minor 1 1/3'*, *Mixtura 1'*) and two for the pedalboard (*Subbas 16'*, *Octava bass 8'*). The instrument was a wind chest system with mechanical tracker action, which has remained, along with the pipes, almost in its original condition, so we may form an idea even of the sound qualities of the instrument. Although Hencke built an organ with a small number of registers (6 + 2), the sound of the instrument is soft but well-timbred.

Hencke installed the organ into the wall at its boundary with the chancel, on the so-called epistle side (to the right of the altar), placing the console separately in a small room behind the wall instead of under the prospectus. The trackers from the back of the organ case to the console in the adjacent room led through a roughly three-meter passage (tunnel) in the wall and under the organist's bench on the floor. The manual and pedal keyboards of the console were oriented in such a way that the organist was sitting with his back to the wall through which the passage led. With its freestanding console, the organ was probably the first of its kind in the territory of Slovakia at that time.⁷ Another unique solution was the placement of the console in a side room, mentioned by the canonical visitations of the time as *chorus pro musicis*.⁸ The organist, sitting facing this small room, could maintain visual contact with a small group of musicians, who could at the same time follow the actions at the altar through a glass door.

The carpentry and carving work were commissioned out to masters in Pressburg, the carpenter Servác Peltz and the sculptor and carver Peter Buchberger, the latter originally from Győr. According to an extant contract of 2 May 1763, two sketches of the organ were available to them for the work, one drawn in ink by the organ builder Hencke, the other drawn in pencil by an unknown person. Hencke's sketch has survived (Gergelyi and Wurm

1989, p. 180, Figure 1a). A comparison of this sketch with the executed work (Figure 1b) reveals that, unlike the design, the execution is slightly more restrained in the rococo ornamentation of the upper part of the prospectus but richer in the lower part of the plinth, and there are also changes in the figural motifs. The central motif of the decoration of the organ, the patroness of music Saint Cecilia playing the organ, which was a popular motif of the organ lofts and organs of the Baroque period, has survived in the central relief of the plinth of the organ, but the motifs of the other, smaller reliefs along the sides have changed. Instead of the originally proposed classicizing stylization of musical instruments, putti playing the lute and the bassoon appeared, in line with the Baroque tradition. There was also a change in the fully sculpted decoration of the top of the organ, whose central figure of an angel with a trombone no longer appears solitary due to changes to the proportions of the upper part of the organ and to the position of the figure itself (Kalinayová-Bartová and Chmelinová 2005, pp. 98–99). The richly decorated rococo organ case made of spruce and linden was subsequently gilded. With its decoration, it also formed a visual pendant to the pulpit opposite.

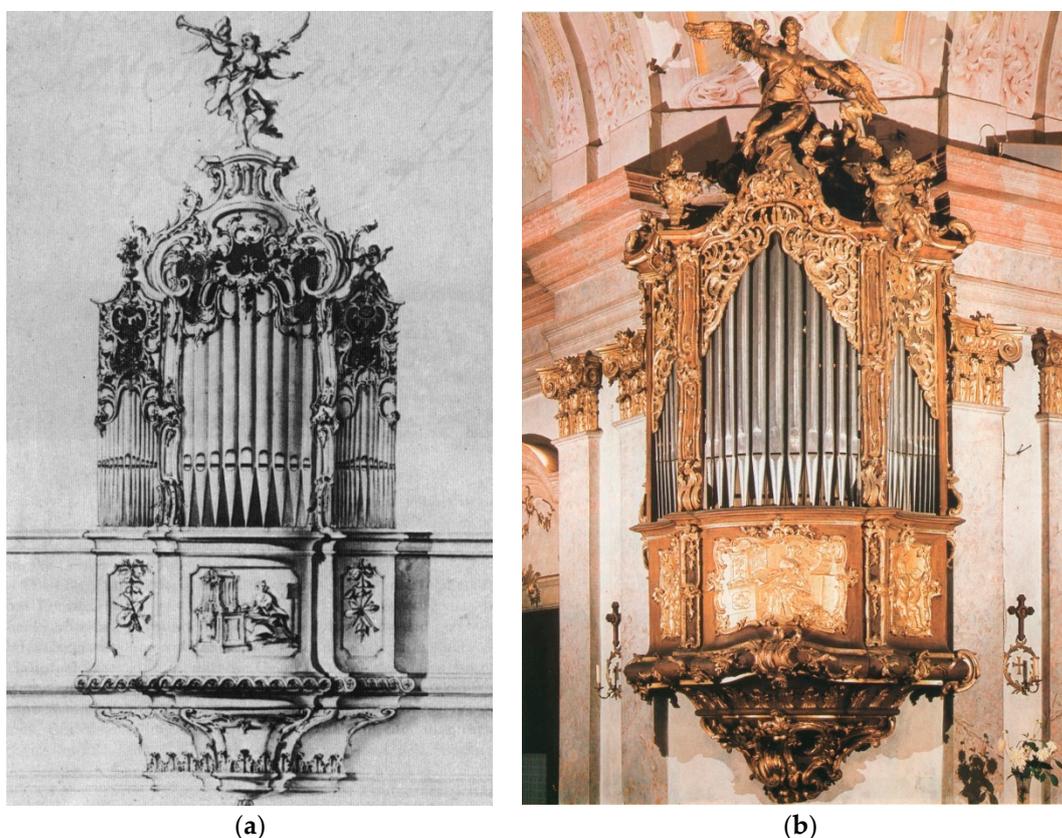


Figure 1. Sketch of the organ by Johann Hencke (a) and the instrument before its current restoration (b). (Reproduction: Gergelyi and Wurm 1989, p. 180).

The organ was first heard by the public during the consecration of the chapel on 8 December 1763, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, its atypical construction design was posing potential problems from the outset. The small room, with an area of over ten and a half square meters, in which the freestanding console was placed, could not accommodate many musicians. However, a large number of musicians was not even necessary for this relatively small church. Around the mid-eighteenth century, singers and instrumentalists could still stand in the chancel during the liturgy, but eye contact with the organist was probably not ideal from there. What may have been a more fundamental issue was the inadequate aural contact of the organist with the organ itself because the organist was sitting in a different room and could not

hear the sound of the instrument well. This problem could not be eliminated completely by opening the door to the chapel area either. Moreover, the freestanding console in the adjacent room occupied too much space. Another problem might have been the fact that the tracker action leading from the keys to the pipes on the floor of the chapel was long and considerably impeded the working of the mechanism. At the same time, it prolonged the delay between the act of pressing the keys and the sound of the instrument. The long and complex construction of the tracker action thus proved to be a drawback, which, along with inadequate aural contact with the sound of the organ, outweighed the other advantages of the atypical design of an otherwise remarkable instrument over time.

In 1768, the time became ripe for rebuilding the organ. Hencke had died in 1766, so Anton Erdődy had to turn to someone else. He contacted an organ builder in Pressburg, Johann Carl Janetschek⁹, who had already worked for the count before the construction of Hencke's organ.¹⁰

Erdődy concluded a contract with Janetschek for rebuilding the organ on 5 October 1768.¹¹ According to this extant contract, Janetschek removed the console from the floor, turned it to the wall, and built it into the case. The organist was thus facing the organ case with his back to the room. This solution shortened the tracker action and improved its functioning, while also freeing up space in the room. Janetschek built a positive with a range of C₂ to C₆ and four registers (*Copel major, Flute minor, Principal, Octave*) into the console. The added positive improved immediate aural perception for the organist and the musicians in the side room. The original keyboard was intended for the organ, and the new one was for the positive. Moreover, Janetschek modified the connection between the organ and the positive so that, when required, both the organ and the positive could be played through one keyboard. The combination of the positive and the main instrument was used mainly for solo organ playing or for accompanying a larger ensemble.

According to the contract, the work on the rebuilding of the organ was to be completed by mid-November 1768, but Janetschek did not meet the deadline. Count Erdődy evidently wanted the organ completed by 8 December at the latest, as that was the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the anniversary of the dedication of the chapel, when a festival was held every year in Bohuslavice. At that time, the organ had apparently already been functional because a grand celebration was held, which was attended, in addition to the local nobility and their fourteen servants, by thirty-two noble guests and their forty-four servants. The music was provided by thirteen musicians. The ensemble had played for the gathering in the mansion on the previous day, and the musical production was also performed two days later by nine and, on the subsequent day, by ten musicians.¹²

With two journeymen, Janetschek continued working on the organ until the end of the year¹³, even during the Christmas holidays, probably until 6 January 1769, when he completed the work and received the remainder of his remuneration, along with a bonus for "extra work" and travel expenses, from Erdődy.¹⁴

Anton Erdődy could not enjoy the rebuilt organ for long because he died in his Bohuslavice residence just three months after the completion of the work on the instrument, on 12 March 1769.

2.2. *The Fate of the Organ after the Death of Its Commissioner*

The fate of the organ in the Bohuslavice chapel from the time of the death of its commissioner until the 1870s is unknown. In the last third of the nineteenth century, however, its technical condition was so bad that it "could hardly be used".¹⁵ There are several extant documents about attempts to repair the organ. Such efforts were made in 1876 by Pavol Rábek, the parish priest of the Bošáca Parish, where Bohuslavice belonged at that time. He appealed in a letter to the then owner of the estate, Count August Breuner, for financial support, noting that the organ could be repaired at relatively little cost by a lay brother from the Franciscan convent in Beckov. Count Breuner asked him to submit a budget. Offers from three organ builders have also survived from a later period, but there

is no evidence that any repairs were carried out. Over the following century, further repairs were made to the organ, whose details are not documented, and many questions therefore arise as to the content and extent of the interventions.¹⁶ According to the testimonies of the locals, repairs to the instrument were carried out secretly and without any documentation, partly because they did not want to provoke repression by the regime at a time when the Church was unwelcome.¹⁷

While a lack of interest by the owners and a lack of funds posed a threat to this precious organ in the past, at present it is threatened by another enemy, the woodworm. Therefore, a plan has been drawn up and a project is currently underway for the comprehensive conservation and restoration of the instrument in the same form as it was built by the organ builder Hencke in 1763. The project is led by the organ builder Ján Valovič and the restorer Peter Gregvorek (Valovič and Gregvorek 2019). The faithful in Trenčianske Bohuslavice also wish to have this precious organ functional and safe, but the rescue of the organ has also become the goal of a much wider cultural community beyond the confines of the small village of Trenčianske Bohuslavice.¹⁸ Hereby, the personal and collective piety related to worship is enriched with the dimension of cultural identity.

3. Discussion

The baroque organ in Trenčianske Bohuslavice raises two basic questions from the point of view of the topic of our study. The first is the question of why the contract for the construction of the organ was awarded to Johann Hencke, who had no experience with pulpit organs. There are not enough archival sources for a definitive answer, but we believe that the choice of the organ builder was related to the good relations of the Erdődy with the Trinitarians in Pressburg, where Hencke built a large organ in the western gallery in 1751. The second, more important question for us is the question of the motives for building this pulpit organ.

Erdődy's demand for the construction of an architecturally unusual instrument evidently led Hencke to choose a complicated but nevertheless best possible structural design for the given space. Considering the problems that arose later, and which resulted in the relatively early rebuilding of the organ, the organ builder was presumably working under pressure from the commissioner and his ideas.

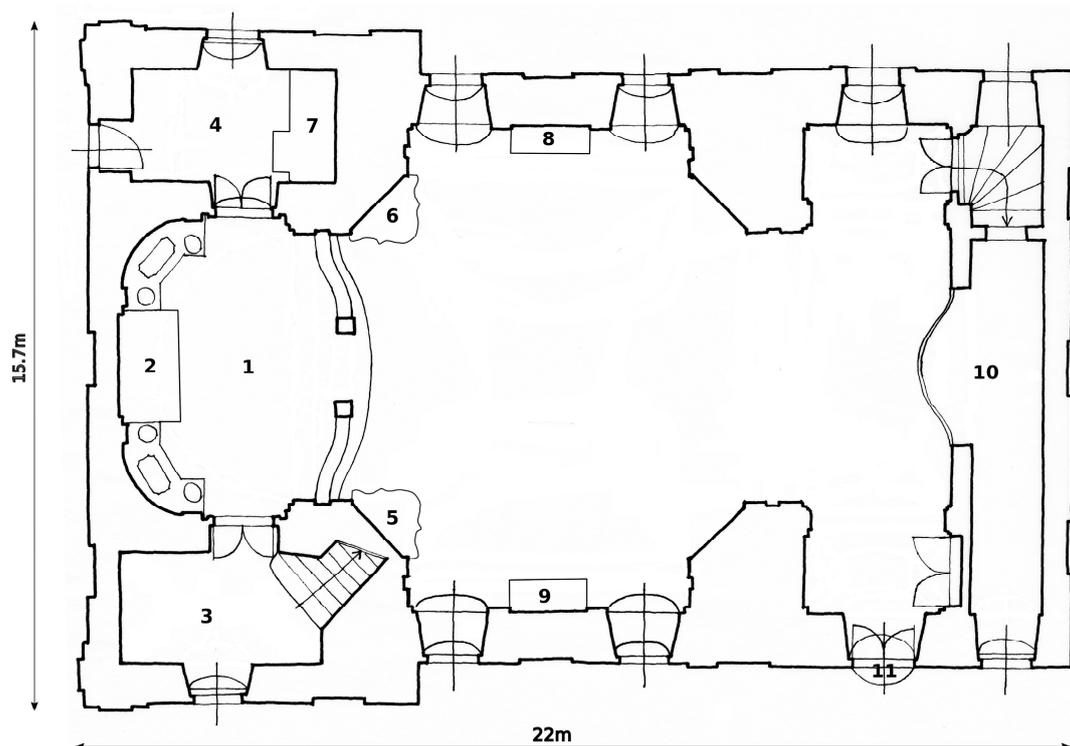
Contrary to other musical instruments, the organ had no conventional, uniform form, and even the character of the instrument allowed for a number of variants. Their selection was generally connected to architecture and the acoustics of the space, contemporary trends in organ building, and the requirements of the commissioner. In our case, the commissioner was not limited in his building intentions by an already given space that he would have had to adjust to. Count Erdődy had that space (not only the chapel with the organ but also the mansion and its whole surroundings) built as a new structure, and he had to adjust only to the natural conditions.

The architecture of the newly built mansion in Bohuslavice, including the chapel, was governed by strict symmetry. Symmetry is generally a sign of balance, harmony, perfection, and beauty, and, as such, it is a category of aesthetics and arts, mathematics, natural sciences, and theology. The emphasis on symmetry is obvious in the architecture of the mansion. The whole residence consisted of three rectangular courtyards and a building, which was single-storeyed except for its two-storeyed front part facing the central courtyard. The chapel was integrated into the architecture of the mansion as a transitional room, which the lords could enter from the residential quarters through the oratory situated at the east of the chapel or from the west, from the entrance vestibule through the aforementioned small room where the organ console was placed. From the perspective of church architecture, it was a so-called non-oriented structure that did not follow the customary practice of orienting the chancel with the high altar to face the east (Hassett 1911). With a slight deviation, the chapel was oriented in the opposite way, along the northeast (the aristocratic emporium with the oratory)—southwest (high altar) axis.

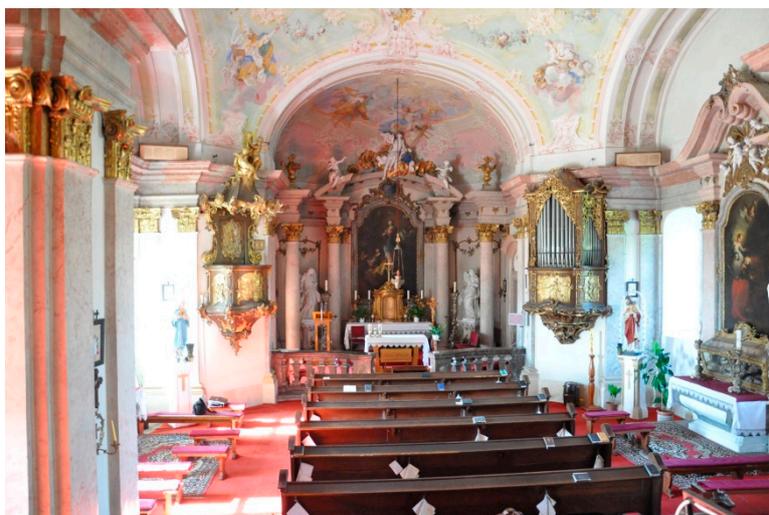
The principle of symmetry manifests itself even in the architecture of the chapel (Figure 2a). Although this is nothing exceptional in the case of sacred buildings, in our case, this principle is emphasized by unusually designed elements. These include, for example, a “double sacristy”, i.e., auxiliary rooms along both sides of the chancel, or the aristocratic oratory, situated opposite the chancel with the high altar. In terms of height, it is placed in a mezzanine, and its front part extends into the floor plan of the nave. Initially, it was a much more spacious room than it is now, where various valuable church items, vestments, paintings, and relics were kept. The elevated oratory, in vertical symmetry to the chancel, provided an imposing view of the church interior to the lords, and it enhanced the effect of symmetry more strongly than by looking from the ground floor of the nave. In the middle of the nave, the lords could view seven rows of pews, two side altars along the sides as pendants to each other (one dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Francis of Assisi, both highly venerated by the family), another pair of pendants behind them along the sides in the form of the pulpit and the organ, and two “sacristies” on the opposite side along both sides of the chancel, again as pendants: The functional sacristy on the left and the room with the organ console on the right (Figure 2b). Had a regular gallery organ been built in the chapel with the console under the prospectus instead of the pulpit organ, it would have been a simpler solution indeed, but it would have significantly disturbed the regularity and symmetry of the architecture of the whole chapel.

The intention to create a visual effect of symmetry was probably so strong that even the technical problems connected to such a design did not discourage the intention to build a symmetric pulpit organ. However, in addition to the visual effect, the decision to build a pulpit organ may have even had another theological foundation. In general, the organ, which was an important item of sacred furniture, was closely linked to the altar in formal visual terms, and it imitated its forms. Ideologically, however, it was much more closely linked to the pulpit as the symbol of spreading God’s word (Kalinayová-Bartová and Chmelinová 2005, p. 85). The idea of synergy between the exegesis of the word (*contio*) and the exegesis of music (*cantio*) was discussed by the Lutheran music theoretician and composer Michael Praetorius in his treatise *Syntagma Musicum* (Forchert 2002, p. 380). The same idea was also present in the post-Tridentine period in the Catholic Church, as it became increasingly aware of the effect of combining the rational interpretation of God’s word with the emotional effect of music and the visual arts to deepen piety. However, another detail that should also be noted is the placement of the Bohuslavice organ opposite the pulpit. Unlike all the other existing designs in Europe, the organ and the pulpit were placed here on the edges of the triumphal arch. In sacred architecture and symbolism, the latter represents the border between the mundane world and the celestial one, between sin and salvation. The placement of the organ and the pulpit at this very spot appears to suggest that God’s word and liturgical music have special significance for man on his journey to eternal life.

Could the religious motives of Count Erdődy lead to special and unique decisions in the construction of the mansion in Bohuslavice? The sources that would definitively affirm this are unknown to us. However, a number of extant sources in the family archive of the Erdődys and of other Hungarian aristocratic families document that Anton Erdődy was a deeply spiritually disposed person and a sincere, devout Christian. He was a graduate of a Jesuit college, having received his complete education of *studia inferiora*¹⁹ at the Jesuit College in Pressburg, and the Jesuits could indeed make effective use of the synergy of *contio* and *cantio*. His expressions of piety and charity were in line with his family traditions. The Hungarian branch of the Erdődys adhered to Catholicism faithfully, even at a time when some other powerful magnate families in Hungary embraced the Lutheran faith. Several prominent figures in the Church were close relatives of Anton Erdődy: his two uncles, Ladislaus Adam and Gabriel Anton, were bishops, and his cousin Maria Anna Ursula joined the convent of the Ursulines in Pressburg and was its mother superior for many years.²⁰



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. (a) Diagram of the chapel. Legend: 1. Chancel, 2. High altar, 3. Sacristy, 4. Room for musicians (*chorus pro musicis*), 5. Pulpit, 6. Pulpit organ, 7. Organ console (with manual and pedal keyboards), 8. Side altar of Saint Anthony of Padua, 9. Side altar of Saint Francis of Assisi, 10. Oratory, 11. Entrance to the chapel. (b) View from the oratory into the chancel of the chapel with the pulpit and the organ on the sides of the triumphal arch. Current condition during the restoration process of the organ. Photo: Jana Kalinayová-Bartová.

Supporting the Church and religious communities, charity associated with care for the sick and the elderly, the education of orphans and children from poor families, and patronage of the arts were all natural parts of the social behavior of the aristocracy at the time. The intensity and extent of charitable deeds depended on the personal generosity of individual aristocrats and on their financial possibilities, so the greatest patrons and donors were usually members of the most prominent families. Patronage and charity thus

became not only a form of public expression of piety but also a manifestation of social representation and status (Kalinayová-Bartová 2020, pp. 73–76).

As one of the most influential aristocratic families loyal to Rome in Hungary, the Erdődys were steady supporters of Church institutions in the process of Catholic Revival, establishing foundations to support Catholic churches, monastic communities, the cultivation of specific cults, and the artistic decoration of churches. Anton's parents, George Leopold and Maria Theresa, née Esterházy (1684–1755), the daughter of the Hungarian Palatine Prince Paul Esterházy of Galanta (1635–1713), were generous donors to the convents of the Franciscans, the Trinitarians, and the Order of Saint Elizabeth in the Hungarian capital and in other towns where convents were active. They were also supporters of the cults of Saint John of Nepomuk and Saint John the Merciful, and, in the spirit of their family tradition, they were devoted to the pilgrimage site in Mariazell (Bubryák 2007, p. 50). Their eldest son Anton continued the charitable work of his ancestors in many ways. He, too, was a generous supporter of the religious, of the cultivation of the cult of saints, and of public piety. For him, the duty to carry on the family tradition and participate in manifestations of moral behavior esteemed by the public was not only a duty forced on him by circumstances but an activity that stemmed from his soul and suited his disposition. From among the three sons of Georg Leopold Erdődy, it was probably Anton who led the most intense spiritual life. The circumstances of his life, including the deaths of his minor daughter and his wife Josefa (died 1757), after which he never remarried, might have also contributed to this orientation. His patronage of the arts, which manifested itself mainly in the construction of the mansion in Bohuslavice with a chapel of exceptional artistic value, was oriented towards the visual support and promotion of the Christian faith, in contrast to his younger brothers Johann Nepomuk and Kristof, who gave priority to the world of the theatre and the opera. Anton Erdődy was a well-read man interested not only in news from the world of politics and society²¹ but he was also ordering literature in the fields of history, philosophy, church history, and theology from booksellers in Pressburg and Trnava (Tyrnau in German). During his years spent in Bohuslavice, his interest in theology and mysticism intensified, as can be seen from the books he ordered to Bohuslavice, which included the works of Saint Francis de Sales and the complete works of Saint Francis of Assisi.²² In his Bohuslavice mansion, he was often kept company by preachers and friars of various religious orders (Franciscans, Jesuits, Trinitarians, Piarists). In 1762, at the age of forty-eight, his interest in spiritual matters led him to join the Third Order of Saint Francis Seraph, which was active at the Franciscan convent in Pressburg.²³ By establishing funds to celebrate Masses for him and his deceased relatives, he was concerned for the salvation of the souls of his family, but he also cared for the souls of the non-noble inhabitants of Bohuslavice. At his request, the public was given access to his chapel in Bohuslavice so that the locals and the inhabitants of the nearby areas could also participate in the liturgical celebrations.

Anton Erdődy took great pride in musical productions in the chapel, especially during holidays, including not only the traditional church feasts but also the feasts of Saint John of Nepomuk and Saint Anthony of Padua, his patron saint. At that time, forty to fifty guests were often gathered in his mansion.²⁴ The participants of the celebrations could thus experience the mystery of the liturgy, along with the visual splendor of the interior of the church and the liturgical music. The organ was regularly played by an organist from Haluzice, occasionally also by others from the vicinity (Stará Turá, Myjava, Nové Mesto nad Váhom). The music was provided by musicians, sometimes as many as ten to thirteen, from the neighborhood (Beckov, Haluzice). One to three trumpeters, probably from a nearby garrison, possibly from Trenčín, were part of the ensemble during major holidays, but sometimes they were also commissioned independently. However, no records of the repertoire of the music they performed have survived.

4. Materials and Methods

The results of the research are based on the study of extant archival materials, which were mainly preserved within the family archive of the Erdődys (today held at the Slovak

National Archives in Bratislava). The materials were acquired through extensive heuristic research. They consist of sources of a legal (e.g., last wills, contracts), economic, and accounting nature (e.g., receipts, inventories of chattels), sources of patronage and church matters (e.g., pious foundations), correspondence, and other sources. Other sources of research consisted of artefacts connected by ownership or patronage to the Erdődy family, especially Anton Erdődy. Among these, we focused on the Baroque organ preserved in the chapel of his former mansion in Trenčianske Bohuslavice. Since this organ has undergone several interventions and has been rebuilt several times, its original form by Johann Hencke and subsequent expansion by Johann Carl Janetschek had to be reconstructed by comparing the current state of the organ in situ with the relevant archival sources.

Extant archival documents do not provide any specific evidence of the motives behind the choice of the organ type and its builder. However, the philological and contextual analysis of the relevant surviving sources and their interpretation enabled us to draw certain conclusions and formulate hypotheses to reconstruct the process of the preparation and execution of the building and subsequent rebuilding of this unique instrument, as well as the motives that led to the choice of these specific, atypical design and features. Using the method of critical analysis of historical texts and the biographical method, we investigated the causes (family background, upbringing, education, personal piety) that shaped the spiritual world of Anton Erdődy and could lead him to opt for the given type of organ. It should also be noted, however, that there has not been a single case when researchers in the field of historical organology could find out the reasons or motives that led to the construction of pulpit organs in other places in Europe (Mitterschiffthaler 1974, pp. 115–16; Hermann Fischer 1991, pp. 48–51). Consequently, we could not use the method of analogy in our reasoning.

5. Conclusions

The expressions of personal and collective piety and the participation of music in its internalization in earlier historical periods can be investigated only to a limited extent. In the case of Count Anton Erdődy, a member of one of the most distinguished aristocratic families of Hungary, the study of extant sources has revealed that his spiritual world, his interest in religion, and his personal piety left their distinctive mark on his patronage activities. An example of this that has been subjected to in-depth research is the still-surviving pulpit organ in the chapel of his residence in Trenčianske Bohuslavice, whose design exhibits a number of unique solutions. The absence of relevant direct sources based on which we could definitively determine the reasons for the construction of an untypical and, in the given geographical area, completely unique organ led us to search for possible motives that stem from general theological premises and the personal piety of the commissioner, the characteristics of the architectural space and the specific features of its treatment, aesthetic requirements, and personal/family representation. To find out the motives behind the design of this atypical organ, we could not rely on any analogies in the motives of other builders of pulpit organs in Europe either, since these have not been investigated yet.

There are several direct pieces of evidence of the sincere piety of Count Erdődy. This appears to have implicitly incorporated the above theological reasons and been the imperative to which all the musical criteria were subordinated. Respecting the principles of scientific correctness, however, we cannot rule out that he opted for an untypical, unique design for purely aesthetic reasons.

The chapel, with its precious historical organ, is the only structure that has remained from this once extensive aristocratic residence. There are many surviving mansions with chapels, some also with organs, in Slovakia and in the whole territory of former Hungary, but this chapel stands out by its complexity and uniqueness, including its atypical organ. At the request of Count Erdődy, it has served not only him and his court but all the faithful in the vicinity, regardless of their origin, ever since its consecration. Therefore, anyone who wished to encounter God during the liturgy could enjoy the sound and visual beauty of the

organ. The current efforts to save the organ and the related activities are the next phase in its story. The soundscape of religion is thus expanded by another dimension, and the organ becomes an object of cultural identity and modern-day charity, with which even Count Anton Erdődy might have delighted.

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Notes

- ¹ From 1751 to his death, he was the governor of Orava County ([Biografický lexikón Slovenska 2004](#), p. 441).
- ² Bratislava, Slovak National Archive (hereafter referred to as SNA), *Rod Erdődy—Ústredný archív [Erdődy Family—Central Archive]*, Korešpondencia [Correspondence], Georg Leopold Erdődy—Anton Erdődy, fols. 7–32.
- ³ A report on the reconsecration of the chapel was published in the [Nyitramegyei szemle \(1905\)](#) newspaper.
- ⁴ Churches were mostly oriented along the west (where the main entrance and the main organ on the gallery above the main entrance)—east (high altar) axis.
- ⁵ The list of documented pulpit organs consists of instruments in the following places: Munich, Saint Peter’s Church (after 1500); Zwettl, Cistercian Abbey (J. Dejobe, 1726–1727); Ljubljana, Cathedral of Saint Nicholas (A. S. Wallenstein 1709/J. Janeček, 1734); Wilhering, Cistercian Abbey (N. Rumel, 1746); Lilienfeld, Cistercian Abbey (G. Sonnholtz, 1747); Meßkirch, Church of Saint Martin (J. N. Holzhey, 1773). The youngest organ of this type was built in Oberdisingen, in the Church of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, as late as 1911 when the church was renovated (1897–1911). See ([Fischer 1991](#), pp. 29–60; [Škulj and Dobravec 2018](#), pp. 284–87).
- ⁶ Johann Hencke (born 1697, Geseke, North Rhine-Westphalia, died 1766, Vienna) was one of the most renowned Austrian organ builders of the eighteenth century. He built several organs in Vienna, Herzogenburg, Eger, Timișoara, and elsewhere. See ([Hopfner and Fastl 2019](#); [Szórádová 2019](#), pp. 88–89).
- ⁷ The demonstrably oldest organ with a freestanding console was the positive of Valentin Arnold in Trnava of 1783, which survived in its original condition.
- ⁸ *Intus chori duo, unus in forma oratorii constructus, idemque pensilis vitris undique clausus. Alter pro musicis ex parte epistolae intra sanctuarium, in quo organum cum pedali, nobile [. . .]*. Bratislava, SNA, *Rod Erdődy—Ústredný archív [Erdődy Family—Central Archive]*, Lad. 47, Fasc. 7, No. 31, fols. 73r–76r: Kópia protokolu z kanonickej vizitácie zo 7. augusta 1766, datovaná 7. apríla 1769 [Copy of the Protocol of the Canonical Visitation of 7 August 1766, Dated 7 April 1769].
- ⁹ Organ builder Johann Carl Janetschek (documented 1759—possibly died in 1783), listed in sources from the year 1759 onwards. See ([Szórádová 2019](#), pp. 94–95).
- ¹⁰ Janetschek’s receipt of six guilders for travel expenses to Bohuslavice survived from 1763. Although it does not specify the purpose of the travel, it was presumably related to the proposal to build an organ there. Bratislava, SNA, *Sekretariát J. N. a J. Erdődyho [Secretariat of J. N. and J. Erdődy]*, Kar. 13, Fasc. 1, Fols. 91r.
- ¹¹ Bratislava, SNA, *Rod Erdődy—Ústredný archív [Erdődy Family—Central Archive]*, Lad. 47, Fasc. 7, No. 30, fols. 71r–71v, 72v.
- ¹² Bratislava, SNA, *Sekretariát J. N. a J. Erdődyho [Secretariat of J. N. and J. Erdődy]*, Kar. 1, Fasc. 3: Taffel Wein Herschafffts Protokoll Pro 1767. Berechnung über die zu Bohuslavitz hie weggegebene Herschafffts Taffel wein pro 1767 d. 1 January, fol. 267r; Officir Taffel Wein Protokoll pro 1768. Berechnung über die zu Bohuslavitz hie weggegebene Officir Taffel wein pro 1768 d. 1 January, fols. 316r–317r.
- ¹³ Bratislava, SNA, *Sekretariát J. N. a J. Erdődyho [Secretariat of J. N. and J. Erdődy]*, Kar. 1, Fasc. 3: Officir Taffel Wein Protokoll pro 1768. Berechnung über die zu Bohuslavitz hie weggegebene Officir Taffel wein pro 1768 d. 1 January, fols. 314r–320r.
- ¹⁴ Bratislava, SNA, *Rod Erdődy—Ústredný archív [Erdődy Family—Central Archive]*, Lad. 47, Fasc. 7, No. 30, Fols. 72r.
- ¹⁵ That is how János Simor, Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary, referred to it when he stopped by in the Bohuslavice chapel. According to a letter of Pavol Rábek, the priest of Bošáče Parish, under which the Bohuslavice chapel belonged at the time. Nitra, Štátny archív [State Archive], *Panstvo Želiezovce—Považské majetky [Želiezovce Demesne—Váh Region Estates]*, Fasc. 140, Letter of 20 August 1876.

- ¹⁶ In 1917–1921, the organ was repaired by the organ builder Karel Neusser. In 1920, the organ was cleaned and tuned by Otakar Važanský. Its overhaul was carried out in 1973 by Pavol Baxa senior. In one of these repairs, Janetschek's positive was removed and the manual and pedal keyboards were replaced.
- ¹⁷ Personal testimony of a local, Ing. Ján Mihala, organist in the chapel for many years, of 7 September 2023.
- ¹⁸ To raise sufficient funds, they have set up a transparent account and organized concerts. A recording of a charity event for the restoration of the organ is accessible online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=325SUWdLRBY> (accessed on 25 March 2024). The project is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic through its support schemes.
- ¹⁹ Esztergomi Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár, *Matrica gymnasii Poseniensis ab anno 1650 usque ad annum 1725*, 386r; *Album studiosae juventutis Gymnasii Poseniensis*, 1725–1765, 5r, 9r, 13r, 16v. Online access: https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/JezsuitaGimnaziumokDiakjai_3_Pozsony/?pg=0&layout=s (accessed on 31 January 2024).
- ²⁰ She was a renowned figure in the history of the musical culture of the town, who promoted church music in the choir of the church and music education in the convent of the Ursulines. Several musicians of Pressburg dedicated their compositions to her (Antalová 2011, p. 19).
- ²¹ In his Bohuslavice residence, he read newspapers from Vienna, Regensburg, Utrecht, Haag, and Schaffhausen (Bubryák 2007, p. 49).
- ²² Bratislava, SNA, *Sekretariát J. N. a J. Erdődyho [Secretariat of J. N. and J. Erdődy]*, Kar. 5, Fasc. 4, fol. 76 (in the case of Francis de Sales, it was probably his popular *Introduction to the Devout Life* alias *Philothea*); Kar. 2, Fasc. 3, fol. 28.
- ²³ As a member of the order, he received the name Francis Seraph. Bratislava, SNA, *Rod Erdődy—Ústredný archív [Erdődy Family—Central Archive]*, Lad. 47, Fasc. 7, No. 5.
- ²⁴ Bratislava, SNA, *Sekretariát J. N. a J. Erdődyho [Secretariat of J. N. and J. Erdődy]*, Kar. 1: *Taffel Wein Herschafft's Protokoll* and *Officir Taffel Wein Protokoll* of 1764–1768.

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