AN UNKNOWN LUTE MANUSCRIPT IN POLAND
— Kenneth Sparr

The recent rediscovery in Krakow of a lost Berlin Hochschule für Musik manuscript was an important find for Baroque lutenists. Bringing attention to this manuscript is especially important because it is not listed in Wolfgang Boetticher's Handschriftlich überlieferte Lauten- und Gitarrentabulaturen des 15, bis 18 Jahrhunderts (RISM B/VII). When and how this manuscript came into the possession of the library of the University of Łódź, Poland, is not known, but it seems probable to suppose that it was transferred during the last period of the Second World War. Should this have been the case, Boetticher must have overlooked this manuscript when he prepared his dissertation in the late 1930s (Boetticher, Studien zur soloistischen Lautenpraxis des 16 und 17 Jahrhunderts, Berlin, 1943). The Berlin provenance is clear from the faint crossed out library stamp which reads “Bibliothek der ..., [unreadable] Hochschule für Musik Berlin.”

The manuscript consists of 26 folios measuring 24 x 19 cm with music on all but two pages. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get details about its binding and watermarks. The inside front cover carries the inscription Livre de Lhust/1699 [coat of arms]/ aine moy a un tour ie le faite de puissant deitour. Two library shelf marks follow the inscription: beside the stamp of the library of the University of Łódź is the number 3779, below the stamp is II 216/56. The ex-library stamp from Berlin is found on folio 1.

The manuscript shows two different hands: one is professional and nimble (fols. 1-18 and 24v-26v); the other hand seems inexperienced, and was probably copied by a child (inside front cover and fols. 18v-24). All evidence suggests that this manuscript belonged to a student: the teacher copied into the book pieces graduated in difficulty, and the student practiced copying from a copy of Charles Mouton’s first book, Pièces de luth.

As can be seen from the inventory given below, the repertory is French, with music by composers such as Vieux Gaultier, Béchon, Henry Grenerin, Germain Pinel, Charles Mouton, and others. Most of the music has ornament signs (tremblement, martelement, séparé, l'arpège rabattu etc.) and signs for both left and right hands (tenues, barré, etc.). The only tuning used is for 11-course nouveau ton (A-d-f-a-d'-f').

Inventory

The following abbreviations have been used for these tentative concordances:

Saizenay I = Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale 279.152
Saizenay II = Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale 279.153
Müller = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. 823
17706 = Vienna, Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek Ms. Mus. 17706
Pinel = Oeuvres de Pinel (Paris: CNRS, 1982)

Title: Łódź, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka 3779 (crossed out library stamp: Bibliothek der ..., Hochschule für Musik Berlin, and an older shelf mark: II 216/588). Small handwritten label, Lautentablatur 1699 is attached to the front cover.

Provenance and Dating: Inside of the front cover: Livre de Lhust/1699 [coat of arms] aine moy a un i faite de puissant deitour.

Size and Format: 24 x 19 cm., 26 folios, 42 pieces of intabulated music. Five six-line staffs on each page.

Scribes: Hand 1, fols. 1-18 and 24v-26v; hand 2, inside of front cover and fols. 18v-24.

The pieces in this manuscript both provide the beginner with good and easy music for 11-course lute, and serve well as an introduction to the French repertory of the 17th-century. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt to Jerzy Zak, in Lódź, who informed me of this manuscript, and provided me with copies of this valuable find.

Fol. No. Title
1 1 Petit fanae sarabande
1b 2 Tricotay du Balet du Roy
1v 3 Sarabande Languissante
2 4 Sarabande Languissante
2v 5 Marion pleure de la manier

Concordance

Du Breuil

LSA Newsletter
Fol. 8 in hand I showing "Bourée du Sr. Grenerin"