

BREGENSES SILESII: NEW DISCOVERIES ABOUT THE PLOTZ FAMILY HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

The text presents new discoveries about three members of the Plotz family: Caspar Plotz (ca. 1580–1633), Johann Plotz (1608–1680), and Georg Plotz (1614–1661). All three were involved in music culture, worked as organists in Lutheran churches, and copied and owned music manuscripts. The parish registers from the Lutheran church in Brzeg/Brieg, hitherto not examined by musicologists, have provided new information on the Plotz family, and enabled identification of biographical details. The newly found source testimonies about Caspar Plotz's life in Brzeg, and the baptism records of his sons, confirmed the relationships between Silesian music culture and that of Spiš and Šariš.

Keywords: music culture, music history, Silesia, Spiš, Šariš, 17th century, organ tablatures

At least three members of the Plotz family are renowned for their contributions to the music culture of the Spiš region: Caspar, Georg, and Johann. Thanks to the meticulous work of musicologists, especially František Matúš, Marta Hulková, and Janka Petőczová, many new details about the life and work of the Plotzs have come to light.¹ Before

¹ See e.g. HULKOVÁ, Marta: *Levočská zbierka hudobní. [PhD diss.]* Bratislava : Filozofická fakulta Univerzita Komenského, 1985. MATÚŠ, František: *Plotz, Gašpar (16./17.). Plotz, Ján (ca 1620–1680). Plotz, Juraj (ca 1610 – ca 1660)* [entries]. In: *Slovenský biografický slovník. Vol. IV. Martin* : Matica slovenská, 1990, p. 489. KOCH, Klaus-Peter: *Das Claviertabulaturbuch von Caspar und Johannes Plotz. Bemerkungen zu Samuel Scheidt anhand der wieder aufgefundenen Handschrift Mus. ms. 40056 der ehemaligen Preußischen Staatsbibliothek Berlin.* In: *Beiträge zur musikalischen Quellenforschung. Protokollband Nr. 2 der Kolloquien im Rahmen der Köstritzer Schütz-Tage 1988–1990.* Bad Köstritz : Forschungs- und Gedenkstätte Heinrich-Schütz-Haus Bad Köstritz, 1991, pp. 229–243. KOCH, Klaus-Peter: “In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.” Zur Kompositionsweise von Samuel Scheidt. In: *Schütz-Jahrbuch* 14 (1992). Kassel :

adding some missing elements to the prosopographical puzzle (which I discovered by chance while working on my doctorate²), I briefly present the current state of research.³

Caspar Plotz is known as the owner and scribe of the earliest organ tablature kept in Levoča/Leutschau (SK-Le MUS A 1, *olim* 13990a). The manuscript bears the date '1603' on its first folio, which is more likely to indicate the beginning of the writing process than the end; some of the included compositions were published for the first time a few years later.⁴ It was suggested in earlier literature that Caspar may have been active as an organist in Levoča; however, there is no record of this in the archives.⁵ Together with another member of the same family, Johann Plotz, they were involved in the preparation of another organ tablature preserved in Levoča, SK-Le MUS A 2 (*olim* 13990b). The two tablatures were formerly known as the 'Caspar Plotz Tablature' and 'The Second Tablature of Caspar Plotz'. In 1985, however, Johann Plotz was identified as one of the scribes of SK-Le MUS A 2 by a comparison with his signature from another source, and thus the manuscript began to be called the "Johann Plotz Tabla-

Bärenreiter, 1993, pp. 78-89. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Prešovskí mestskí hudobníci v 17. storočí. In: *Slovenská hudba*, Vol. 19, 1993, No. 3-4, pp. 357-375. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Katalóg hudobníh farského kostola v Prešove z roku 1661. In: *Hudobné inventáre na Slovensku zo 16. a 17. storočia*. Ed. Jana Kalinayová et al. Bratislava : SNM-Hudobné múzeum, 1994, pp. 68-72. HULKOVÁ, Marta: Zhody a odlišnosti Bardejovskej a Levočskej zbierky hudobníh. In: *Slovenská hudba*, Vol. 25, 1999, No. 2-3, pp. 150-200. JOHNSON, Cleveland: *In the Trenches with Johann and Caspar Plotz: a rediscovered Gebrauchstabulatur from the Scheidt circle*, presentation at the DePauw University 2001, available online at <http://acad.depauw.edu/~cjohnson/PLOTZ/index.html> (accessed 6th February 2022). HULKOVÁ, Marta: Muzyczne kontakty między Spiszem a Śląskiem w XVI i XVII wieku. In: *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia*, Sectio L, vol. X,1 (2012), pp. 61-75. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: The Role of Silesia in the Development of Musical Culture in the Towns of Spiš/Zips and Šariš/Scharosch. In: *The Musical Culture of Silesia before 1742. New Contexts – New Perspectives*. Eds Paweł Gancarczyk, Lenka Hlávková-Mráčková, Remigiusz Pośpiech. Frankfurt am Main : Peter Lang, 2013, pp. 161-178. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Hudba ako kultúrny fenomén v dejinách Spiša. Raný novovek*. Bratislava : Ústav hudobnej vedy SAV, Prešovský hudobný spolok Súzvuk, 2014. HULKOVÁ, Marta: Central European Connections of Six Manuscript Organ Tablature Books of the Reformation Era from the Region of Zips (Spiš, Szepes). In: *Studia Musicologica*, Vol. 56, 2015, No. 1, pp. 3-37. HULKOVÁ, Marta: The Reception of the Oeuvre of Composers Active at the Court of Rudolf II in Prague in the Contemporaneous Musical Repertoire of Historical Upper Hungary. In: *Hudební věda*, Vol. 52, 2015, No. 2, pp. 133-157. HULKOVÁ, Marta: Die Messen im *Tabulaturbuch von Johann Plotz* und ihre Verwendung in der Liturgie des evangelischen Gottesdienstes. In: *Musicologica Brunensia*, Vol. 51, 2016, No. 1, pp. 63-77. HULKOVÁ, Marta: Italian Music in the 17th Century in the Region of Spiš and Šariš in the Evangelical Churches of the Augsburg Confession. In: *Musicologica Brunensia*, Vol. 53, 2018, No. 2, pp. 41-60. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Musical Life in Urban Communities of North-Eastern Slovakia in the Period of Reformation. In: *Musicologica Brunensia*, Vol. 55, 2020, No. 1, pp. 39-55.

² SPURGJASZ, Katarzyna: *Kolekcja muzykaliów Joannesa Chrysostomusa Zalaskiego jako źródło do badań kultury muzycznej Śląska w czasach rekatolizacji (1654–1707)*. [PhD diss.] University of Warsaw, 2020 (currently prepared for publication). The archival queries on the music culture in 17th-century Brzeg/Brieg – one of the places where Zalaski was active – led to new discoveries concerning the Plotz family.

³ I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Marta Hulková and Janka Petőczová for sharing the texts of their publications with me.

⁴ HULKOVÁ, Marta: Zhody a odlišnosti, Ref. 1, p. 170.

⁵ See references in: PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Musical Life in Urban Communities, Ref. 1, pp. 45-46.

ture”.⁶ Both Caspar and Johann Plotz were mentioned in an organ tablature linked to Samuel Scheidt’s circle, which is held in the collection of the former Preussische Staatsbibliothek Berlin, now kept at the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow.⁷ At the end of the manuscript there is a reference to both Plotzs: “Johannes Plotz Vom Brieg” and “Caspar Plotz organist zu brieg in der pfarrher Kirch”, which explicitly links the two to the town of Brieg in Silesia (today Brzeg in Poland).⁸ Initially, the researchers were not sure of the identity of ‘the Silesian Plotzs’ and ‘the Spiš Plotzs’, but Marta Hulková convincingly presented possible connections between Spiš and Silesia as regards music culture,⁹ while Janka Petőczová suggested that the initials after Johann Plotz’s signature in the print preserved in Levoča – “Johannes Plotz. B. S. A[nno] 1645 Ad. 10. Sept: In Leutsch p. T. Organista” – stand for ‘Bregen[is] Silesius’.¹⁰ Initially, it was inferred from the latter tablature that both Caspar and Johann Plotz could have been pupils of Samuel Scheidt, then the hypothesis was limited to Johann, who was probably his pupil after 1625 (the manuscript contains references to the organ in Halle built at that time).¹¹

In addition to the tablature SK-Le MUS A 2, there is a further source confirming Johann Plotz’s activity in Levoča. He is known to have worked as an organist there between 1641 and 1648, and is thought to have stayed in the town until the end of his life in 1680 (not without incident: he resigned as parish organist due to a dispute with the town council, and according to the chronicler, Caspar Hain, he was also arrested for public nuisance in 1656).¹² It is not known whether he married or had children; in his testament from November 1680, as regards his family, he mentioned only his sister and her two sons.¹³

The third member of the Plotz family linked to musical life in present-day Slovakia in both the Spiš and Šariš region, was Georg Plotz. He was active as an organist in Kežmarok/Kesmark (1639–1649) and Prešov/Eperies (1650–1661). According to inventories and descriptive sources, while working in the German Lutheran Church in Prešov, he had access to a collection of music manuscripts (with compositions by Alessandro Grandi, Giovanni Rovetta, Johann Rosenmüller, Andreas Hammerschmidt) and prints (Heinrich Schütz, Johann Hermann Schein, Samuel Scheidt, Andreas Hammerschmidt, Melchior Vulpius); he also composed music himself, but none of his compositions have

⁶ HULKOVÁ, Marta: *Levočska zbierka hudobní*, Ref. 1, pp. 47-48. See also PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Musical Life in Urban Communities*, Ref. 1, p. 44.

⁷ Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms. mus. 40056. On the content of the tablature see e.g. KOCH, Klaus-Peter: *Das Claviertabulaturbuch von Caspar und Johannes Plotz*, Ref. 1, pp. 229-243; KOCH, Klaus-Peter: “In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum”. Zur Kompositionsweise von Samuel Scheidt, Ref. 1, pp. 78-89; JOHNSON, Cleveland: *In the Trenches with Johann and Caspar Plotz*, Ref. 1.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ HULKOVÁ, Marta: *Muzyczne kontakty między Spiszem a Śląskiem*, Ref. 1; HULKOVÁ, Marta: *Central European Connections*, Ref. 1.

¹⁰ PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Musical Life in Urban Communities*, Ref. 1, p. 46.

¹¹ JOHNSON, Cleveland: *In the Trenches with Johann and Caspar Plotz*, Ref. 1.

¹² PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Musical Life in Urban Communities*, Ref. 1, pp. 46-51, with references to the sources and extensive citations from them.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

survived.¹⁴ Due to the similar period of activity of both Johann and Georg Plotz, it was previously thought that they were brothers but, as Janka Petőczová has pointed out, this idea has not been explicitly proven by any sources from Slovakia.¹⁵

Fortunately, the sources from Brieg have been preserved to some extent, enough to provide some missing information about the Plotz family. To find the details, one has to look into the parish registers of the Lutheran church of St Nicholas in Brieg, kept today in the National Archive in Opole, Poland. We find in the registers that Caspar Plotz was active as the organist of St Nicholas church from 1603 to 1633. He may have come from the same city: a certain ‘Griger Plocz stadpfeiffer’, active in Brieg around the 1570s–1590s, may have been his father; however, this hypothesis cannot be proved due to the lack of additional sources.¹⁶ Neither baptismal nor marriage registers survive from the time Caspar Plotz was born and married, so the name and profession of his father (and the name of his mother) remain unknown. Caspar appears for the first time in the Brieg records in 1603, the year he wrote on the organ tablature kept in Levoča. There is no direct mention of him, but there is a record of his wife, Anna, who became godmother to a child of Elias Hesteborg *musicus instrumentalis*. However, the note testifies that Caspar was appointed organist at the parish church at that time.¹⁷ We do not know if this was his first place of work, or when he took up his post there; the names of his predecessors are unknown, although it is almost certain that in 1603 organists had worked in this church for over a century. From 1603 onwards, Caspar Plotz appeared in different roles in the parish registers for the next thirty years. He was asked to become a godfather several times.¹⁸ From 1606 onwards, we also find him in

¹⁴ In the inventory of the music collection from the German Lutheran Church in Prešov, dated 25th July 1661, besides a ‘general’ collection of music manuscripts and prints, there is also a list of manuscripts and prints donated to the church *ex legatione p. m. Domini Georgii Plotschii* – it may be assumed that while working at the church, Georg Plotz may have used the collection in its entirety, not only his ‘private’ part. For the transcription of the inventory and more details on Georg Plotz’s work and environment, see PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Katalóg hudobnín farského kostola v Prešove z roku 1661. In: *Hudobné inventáre na Slovensku zo 16. a 17. storočia*. Ed. Jana Kalinayová et al. Bratislava : SNM-Hudobné múzeum, 1994, pp. 68-72. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Prešovskí mestskí hudobníci v 17. storočí, Ref. 1, pp. 364-365. PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Hudba ako kultúrny fenomén v dejinách Spiša. Raný novovek*, Ref. 1, pp. 177-178.

¹⁵ PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: Musical Life in Urban Communities, Ref. 1, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶ Gregor Plotz is mentioned twice in the registers that have survived. On 13th July 1574, his child of unknown name and age was buried (“Griger Plocz dem stadpfeiffer ein kind”, Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu (National Archive in Opole, Poland; hereafter “APO”), Parafia Ewangelicka w Brzegu (PEB), *Totenbuch 1564-1576*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/29, under the date 13.07.1574). Almost 20 years later, 12th July 1594, his wife (of unknown name) became godmother to a child (“f. [blank space left for name] Greger Plotzin Stadpfeifferin”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594-1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 12.07.1594); as she is not stated to be a widow, we can assume that Gregor Plotz was still alive at that time. The baptism records have not survived for the years before 1594 and 1615–1625, or the records of marriages – for the years before 1606, or the records of burials – for the years before 1564 and 1577–1614.

¹⁷ “[ate]r Elias Hesteborg Musicus Instrumentalis, M[ate]r Eva. Infans Eva. Comp[atr]jes. (...) frau Anna h[errn] Caspar Plotzes des Pfarrorganist. hausfrau”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594-1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 11.08.1603.

¹⁸ See e.g. APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594-1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the dates: 5.10.1604, 16.06.1605, 25.07.1605.

the baptismal register as a father and from his first marriage with Anna he had at least four sons (only two survived childhood). From 25th September 1606 and 25th July 1614 there are baptismal records of Georgius, son of Caspar Plotz the parish organist and Anna¹⁹ – which may only signify that the first child died before July 1614 and the second was given the same name (which was not uncommon, especially if the child died in infancy). On 23rd December 1608, Caspar's second son, Joannes, was baptized,²⁰ and two years later, 28th November 1610 – another son, named Caspar after his father was baptized,²¹ who died six months before his eighth birthday and was buried on 9th May 1618.²² As for the godparents, almost all of them belonged to the local church or town elites: clergymen, cantors, organists, town councillors, physicians, and their spouses (according to a local tradition, there were usually five godparents: three godfathers and two godmothers for a boy, and three godmothers and two godfathers for a girl; however, the customs varied with time). The parish records also contain information about a domestic servant of Caspar Plotz and his family – Dorothea Gärtnerin, daughter of a farmer from a nearby village, Jägerndorf (today Strzelniki, 8 kilometres from Brzeg), who in January 1612 married Hans Reichert, a widowed cloth maker.²³ She probably ended her service at the Plotzs to bring up her family.

¹⁹ “P[ater] Caspar Plotz, Organist in der Pfarrkirchen, f[rau] Anna u[nd] I[nfans] Georgius. C[ompatres]. h[err] Martinus Wäber Diaconus. h[err] Melchior Heusler Rathsherr. h[err] Fridrich Bitner, von Strelitz. f[rau] Susanna h[errn] D[octori] Christoffori Röslers med[ici] Hausfrau. f[rau] Justina, h[errn] Ernesti von Berga Stiftsverwalters hausfrau”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594–1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 25.11.1606;

“P[ater] H[err] Caspar Plotz, Organist in der Pfarr Kirchen. F[rau] Anna u[nd] I[nfans] Georgius. C[ompatres]. H[err] Ernestus von Berga, Stiftsvorwalter. H[err] Joannes Sebaldu, Hoff Caplan. H[err] M[agister] Thomas Scholtz, Pfarrer zum Gildenstein. F[rau] Anna, Joannis Porlitzin, Pfarr Cantorin. F[rau] Anna, Michael Schleicherin, Schusterin”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594–1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 25.07.1614.

²⁰ “P[ater] Caspar Plotz Organist in der Pfarrkirchen. F[rau] Anna, u[nd] I[nfans] Joannes. C[ompatres]. H[err] Melchior Heusler, Ratherr. H[err] Ernestus von Berga Stiftsvorwalter. H[err] Joannes Sebaldu Hoffdiaconus. F[rau] Maria, H[errn] Martini Wäbers, Diaconi hausfrau. F[rau] Helena, H[errn] Joannis Schwobij, Diaconi hausfrau”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594–1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 23.12.1608.

²¹ “P[ater] H[err] Caspar Plotz, Organist in der Pfarrkirchen. F[rau] Anna u[nd] I[nfans] Caspar. C[ompatres]. H[err] Martinus Wäber [und] H[err] Joannes Schwobius Diaconi, H[err] Joannes Porlicius, Pfarr Cantor, F[rau] Martha, Joannis Krompischin, Organistin von Namslaw, F[rau] Anna, Melchior Heuslerin”, APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1594–1614*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/1, under the date 28.11.1610.

²² “Ist Casper Plotzen dem Organisten in der Pfarr Kirchen ein Söhnlein von Achte halbe Jahren undt Etliche Wochen gestorben, nichts einkommen”, APO, PEB, *Totenbuch 1615–1621*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/30, under the date 9.05.1618.

²³ “Der fursichtige Hans Reichert, ein tuchknappe undt widtwer alhier: mit der tugendtsamen Jungfrauen Dorothea, Valentin Gärtners, pawers zu Jegerdorff, ehlichen Tochter, itzo des Ehrenvesten undt Kunstreichen Herrn Caspar Plotzens, dieser Kirchen Organistens, trewen Dienerin”, APO, PEB, *Proclamations-Buch 1606–1619*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/3.1/18, under the date Domnica I post Epiphania [1st Sunday after Epiphany] 1612.

Caspar's first wife, Anna, died in March 1622.²⁴ Four years later, at the beginning of 1626, Caspar married Dorothea Ulrichin, widow of Philipp Ulrich, a cloth maker.²⁵ They had one daughter, Dorothea, named after her mother, born on 26th October 1626 and baptized the next day.²⁶ Caspar Plotz died in September 1633 of the plague;²⁷ his wife Dorothea survived, stayed in Brieg, but did not remarry. In her burial record from 5th December 1658, she is still referred to as Caspar Plotz's widow.²⁸

It appears that Caspar Plotz worked in Brieg continuously for 30 years as the organist at St Nicholas church, and did not take a post in another town. He may have journeyed to Levoča and Halle (taking into account the mobility of 17th-century people, which sometimes exceeded the stereotypes by far), but if he ever travelled outside of Brieg, it was only temporary and did not lead to any change in his permanent address or place of work. It is very likely that both tablatures written by him (SK-Le MUS A 1 and part of SK-MUS Le A 2) were created in Brieg and then transferred to Levoča.

We do not yet know – and probably never will for sure – why both surviving sons of Caspar Plotz, and probably also his daughter, moved to Spiš. It is where we find them in the sources next: Georgius in Kežmarok from 1639 to 1649 (and then in Prešov 1650–1661), Joannes in Levoča from 1641 to December 1648 (he probably stayed in Levoča until the end of his life in 1680, but did not work as the organist of the parish church after 1648), and Joannes' sister (probably Dorothea Plotzin, born 1626) mentioned in her brother's will in 1680.²⁹ Both Joannes and Georgius followed in their father's footsteps by becoming organists; it is almost certain that Caspar was their first music teacher, from whom they learnt organ playing. When Caspar died, Joannes was 25 years, and Georgius was 19. It is not known if they lived in Brieg at that time, or if any of them were appointed organist at St Nicholas after Caspar's death; the name of

²⁴ "Fraw Anna h[ern] Casper Plotzes Pfar Organist haus fraw aus geleütet 3 pülste beider leüte gelt undt die stelle ist Ihm verehret", APO, PEB, *Totenbuch 1622–1674*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/31, under the date 13.03.1622.

²⁵ "Der Ehrenveste, Kunstreiche H[err] Caspar Ploz, Burger undt Pfarr Organist alhier ein Wittwer, nimmt zur Ehe die tugendtsame F[rau] Dorothea, des weilandt Erbaren Philipp Ulrichs gewesenen tuchmachers alhier nachgelassenen Wittib", APO, PEB, *Proclamations-Buch 1620–1630*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/3.1/19, under the date: Dominica I post Nativitatis [1st Sunday after Christmas] 1626.

²⁶ "26 Octob[ris] Filia nata & Dorothea renata 27 dito. Pater Casper Plotz Pfar Organist M[ater] Dorothea. Comp[atres] H[err] Johannes Schwoppius Diaconus. H[err] Martin Nitzke alter Stadtpfeiffer. Georg Weiß burger d. Elter. Fr[au] Barbara h[ern] Samuelis Domratz Pfar zur Westebrißen. Fr[au] Margareta Michel [illegible] schustern", APO, PEB, *Taufbuch 1626–1635*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/1/2, under the date 26.10.1626.

²⁷ "H[err] Casper Plotz organist aus leutten", APO, PEB, *Totenbuch 1622–1674*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/31, under the date 6.09.1633.

²⁸ "Fr[au] Dorothea Caspar Plotzes gewesenen Organistes Nachgelaßenen Wittib auß leuten 3 Pulst zur grabe 2 thl", APO, PEB, *Totenbuch 1622–1674*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/31, under the date 5.12.1658.

²⁹ Johannes Plotz mentioned his sister (of unknown name) and her two sons, Georg and Heinrich Gottschalck, in his testament written on 28th November 1680, probably shortly before his death (see PETŐCZOVÁ, Janka: *Musical Life in Urban Communities*, Ref. 1, pp. 50–51). It is not clear, however, whether she settled in Levoča with her family or elsewhere, or whether she was still alive at that time. The reconstruction of Mrs. Plotzin-Gottschalckin's biography requires further research.

his successor to this post is only known from six years later.³⁰ The same year of a source testimony for the next organist in Brieg and for Georgius starting work in Kežmarok – 1639 – may be no more than a coincidence; further sources will be needed to reach a conclusion on this. The elder of the two brothers, Joannes, may have studied with Samuel Scheidt in Halle, which was suggested in earlier literature. Such journeys for educational purposes did occur, for example, Joannes Porlitius junior, son of the cantor at St Nicholas (whom Joannes Plotz certainly knew, as the two families were acquainted), began his studies in 1621 in Wittenberg,³¹ not far from Halle. Attending universities abroad was often considered a natural continuation of education for the alumni of Brieg's Gymnasium Illustre. When educational mobility was restricted due to war, the rector of the University of Leipzig granted the Brieg rector permission to confer academic titles (from 1625 to 1633).³² It is not known in which years (if ever) Joannes Plotz went to Halle to become a pupil of Samuel Scheidt, and where else he went for education and work, before he settled in Levoča. As he was appointed organist in Levoča in 1641, at the age of 33, it is highly unlikely that it was his first place of professional work. On the other hand, it was he who finally inherited the two organ tablatures from his father, which may suggest he was in Brieg after 1633 (perhaps also inheriting Caspar's post for some time).

The 1630s were not the easiest years for the inhabitants of Brieg. They had to cope with the Thirty Years War, and an outbreak of the plague, which lasted several years. The renowned school in Brieg, Gymnasium Illustre, was closed from 1633 to 1637 for this reason.³³ Many people died from the plague, including Caspar Plotz. The social and economic crisis would have been a reason for leaving the town, to find security elsewhere. This may be why Caspar's children moved 300 km further south-east across the Carpathian Mountains.

The Brieg sources provide new details about the Plotz family, some hypotheses can be confirmed, and others dismissed. Caspar Plotz (ca. 1580–1633) was active as the organist in the parish church in Brieg from at least 1603 until the end of his life. During this time, he did not change his place of employment, so he did not work in Levoča. It is highly unlikely that he was Samuel Scheidt's pupil (as they were about the same age and after 1625 Caspar was undoubtedly an experienced organist). Caspar and Joannes Plotz were father and son, not brothers. Joannes (1608–1680) was indeed *Bregensis Silesius*, born in Brieg – as was his younger brother Georgius (1614–1661). The musical contacts between Silesia and Spiš (also Šariš) are seen to be confirmed. Probably the Plotz brothers brought with them not only the two organ tablatures, but also other music manuscripts and prints – and contributed actively to the many musical concordances between their native region and their newly-adopted homes.

³⁰ In the parish registers the next organist, Zacharias Scholtz, is mentioned for the first time in December 1639 due to the death of his son ("Herr Sacharias Scholtzes organists Sohn aus leutt wardt auf Kirch", APO, PEB, *Totenbuch 1622–1674*, shelf mark 45/1237/0/4/31, under the date 21.12.1639).

³¹ See *Album Academiae Vitebergensis 5 (1610–1644)*, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, shelf mark Yo (5), 2°, f. 119v (available online at: <https://digital.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/hd/content/pageview/2530925>, accessed 6th February 2022).

³² SCHÖNWÄLDER, Karl Friedrich – GUTTMANN, Johann Julius: *Geschichte des Königlichen Gymnasiums zu Brieg*. Breslau : Robert Nischkowsky, 1869, p. 113.

³³ DZIEWULSKI, Władysław: Brzeg 1247–1675. In: *Brzeg. Dzieje – gospodarka – kultura*. Ed. Władysław Dziejowski. Opole : Instytut Śląski, 1975, p. 135.