



Józef Elsner, the Viennese *grosse heroisch-komische Oper*, and the Origins of the Polish “Grand Opera”

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Abstract: The article explores operas composed by Joseph (later Józef) Elsner in the beginnings of his involvement in the Polish theater, highlighting their significance as a transnational phenomenon due to their being not only, as within the musicology discourse so far, one of the repertoire groups crucial for establishing the Polish-language music theater, but also a part of the operatic landscape of the Habsburg monarchy. The first two of these operas originated within theater environment of peripheral Austrian stage in Lwów/Lviv/Lemberg, where Elsner, hitherto a south-German musician formed in Breslau and Vienna, started his collaboration with Wojciech Bogusławski (in 1796–1798 the director of both Polish and German troupes) and opened his career as a Polish opera composer. The works under discussion were intended to match, at least in scope, the most popular repertoire items such as Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*, or Salieri’s *Axur*, and their novelty within Polish original output was acknowledged by both Bogusławski and Elsner with the term “grand opera” (resp. in Polish and German), employed as suggesting links with Viennese Schikanederian singspiel as well as subgenres of opera buffa in the type of *dramma eroicomico*.

The primary aim of this paper is to present the historical background alongside a theoretical framework that, when considered together, justifies the interpretation of discussed output as a part of broadly defined Viennese operatic culture. The central idea revolves around the concept of “*grosse heroisch-komische Oper*” treated as transnational genre-like category that reflects some aspects of coexistence of above-mentioned German and (adapted) Italian repertoire within Austrian opera theaters, but simultaneously can be employed toward describing the dissemination of these works in Polish-language theaters as well as the outcomes of overlapping of Austrian and Polish theater cultures. The second objective is to give an concise account of four Elsner operas, with a focus on the first of them. Emphasis will be placed on tracing their roots in dramatico-musical conventions and devices specific for Viennese “*grosse*” singspiels and Italian “mixed” offshoots of opera buffa.

The article’s significance is twofold. It sheds some light on so far mostly unexplored (and almost unknown to non-Polish musicology) works by setting them in the proper repertoire context. Simultaneously, it contributes to a transnational approach in research of the

European operatic landscape at the turn of the nineteenth century, highlighting the case where strict adherence to language—or nation—based genre demarcation lines can be misleading.

Keywords: Józef Elsner; Wojciech Bogusławski; Opera; Polish opera; Viennese singspiel; Transnational history; Lviv

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The dominant discourse on the beginnings of the Polish opera focuses on a search for national qualities in the first original works, hence emphasizing the series of “rustic” or “country” operas that flourished in the last decades of the eighteenth century, near the end of Stanisław August Poniatowski’s reign.¹ A later but also well-established path of research sheds light on the importance of Enlightenment-age Warsaw as a Central European hub for the circulation of opera companies and acknowledges the significance of assimilation of the *buffa* repertoire for the origins of the Polish-language music stage.² Still obscure and unclear, however, is the nature of the next step in the development of original Polish music theater: namely, the achievement that one of its principal contributors, Józef (Joseph) Elsner (1769–1854), labeled “grand opera” (*grosse Oper*). In his short history of the Polish musical theater, drafted in 1812, the composer praised the Warsaw adaptation of Salieri’s *Axur* (1794)—an unquestionable climax in the assimilation of Italian repertoire in pre-partition Warsaw—as “the first grand Polish opera,” while he reserved the title of “the first original Polish grand opera” for his own *Amazonki, czyli Herminia* (The Amazons, or Herminia, 1797),³ the first score of which he had composed for the Polish troupe of Wojciech Bogusławski (1757–1829).⁴

Amazonki indeed leads the line of first Polish operas that, due to their lavish staging and musical macrostructure, approximate Schikaneder’s singspiels, such as *Die Zauberflöte*, or “mixed” subgenres of the Italian opera buffa such as *Axur* (in singspiel-like adaptation). In musicology conceived as the history of works, these operas by Elsner may justly be viewed as a major leap forward from the earlier group of original Polish musical plays (structurally more akin to, say, Johann Adam Hiller’s singspiel or the French *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*), or perhaps a new start altogether. Nevertheless, when taken out of the conceptual framework founded on concepts such as nation- and language-

based genre identities or the differentiation between original and translated operas, their absolute novelty proves to be an illusion. “The first Polish original grand opera,” composed by a German musician formed in Prussian Breslau and the Vienna circle, who at that time did not yet even speak Polish,⁵ turns out to be no anomaly within its context in the domestic repertoire of the Polish-German stage of Lwów/Lemberg (now L'viv, Ukraine)—which from the First Partition of Poland (1772) onward was the capital of the Habsburg Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria (the territory having previously belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). The well-established approach of considering different national opera genres separately and interpreting their interactions as a kind of communication—influence or transfer—that occurs between different and well-demarcated cultural spheres seems to fall short of grasping the full meaning of this case.

In this article, I propose a different perspective informed by two theoretical inspirations. The first is the idea of the transnational history of opera, in this case enabling the researcher to resign from the priority of fixed national identification when describing the theatrical life of centers such as late eighteenth-century Lwów. The city was multiethnic and multilingual, maintaining a bilingual theater, which at the time was involved in intense circulation of various repertoires that had frequently wandered through multiple translations or adaptations. (This diversity notwithstanding, Lwów's German-language scene was nevertheless almost fully dependent on the Viennese theater repertoire.) The second inspiration derives from more contemporary genre theories, which conceive of genres as pragmatic and thoroughly conventional categories mediating between producers and recipients. On the basis of these two inspirations, I will present Elsner's first “grand” Polish operas as originating within the tradition of the Viennese *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* (grand heroic-comic opera), viewed here as a transnational genre-like category that reflects some aspects of coexistence with the above-mentioned German and (adapted) Italian repertoire at Austrian opera theaters but can simultaneously be employed with a view to describing the dissemination of these works at Polish-language theaters as well as the fruits of overlap between Austrian and Polish theatrical cultures.

Lwów's Two Operatic Stages and the Beginnings of Elsner's Career as a Polish Opera Composer

Wojciech Bogusławski arrived in Lwów in 1794 as one of the many fugitives from Warsaw, which had fallen to an attack of the Russian army on November 4, 1794.⁶ Though still under forty at that time, Bogusławski was already the central figure of the Polish theater: an actor, singer, playwright, and entrepreneur, creator of the first public stage, the favorite of the Warsaw audience, and a theatrical collaborator in the king's projects of social and political reform.⁷ Not the least part of his merits lay in the operatic field: Bogusławski was the librettist and *spiritus movens* of Warsaw's first original opera, *Nędza uszczęśliwiona* (1788),⁸ and the later prosperity of his troupe was based on the successful project of staging Italian operas buffa in Polish adaptations—an enterprise that would have been hardly practicable had it not been for his own risky decision to become the first Polish-language *basso buffo caricato*.⁹ Bogusławski's previous period, his crucial Warsaw years (1791–1794), brought a number of climactic achievements: the staging of *Axur*, the extremely popular *Cud, czyli Krakowiaczy i Górale*—a call to insurrection in the sheep's clothing of a rustic opera¹⁰—and the practice of adding vaudeville-like songs to his roles in spoken comedies, whereby he openly created his stage persona as a public moral authority.¹¹

Having arrived in Lwów, Bogusławski soon got back on his feet, complementing his troupe mostly by engaging fugitives from Warsaw.¹² Having obtained the local Austrian government's consent to stage Polish-language spectacles, he entered into an agreement with Franz Bulla (1754–1819), director of the Austrian stage operating in Lwów from 1789 on.¹³ When Bulla's theater began to collapse into financial disaster in 1795, Bogusławski took over his enterprise and became the director of both German and Polish spectacles.¹⁴ One of his first steps in this capacity was to establish a collaboration with Bulla's young music director, persuading Elsner not only to remain in his previous post but also to take a part in creating original Polish melodramas and operas.¹⁵

Who was Joseph¹⁶ Elsner at that time—the later pillar of musical life and education in Warsaw, as well as Frédéric Chopin's teacher? Appointed by Franz Bulla as orchestra director of Lwów's theater in 1792, he had moved there from the Austrian theater in Moravian Brünn (Brno), where he had

worked as first violinist from 1791 on.¹⁷ Between the autumn of 1789 and the spring of 1791 he resided in Vienna, whence he had come from his near-home city Breslau with the intention of studying medicine. The plan failed disastrously, as the young man fell seriously ill and, having recovered under the care of his luckily encountered Breslau friend Anton Bundesmann, he spent the rest of his stay enjoying the musical life of the capital and confirming his resolve to become a professional musician.¹⁸

Elsner had arrived in Vienna at the time when the operatic works of Salieri, Mozart, and Vicente Martín y Soler ruled supreme.¹⁹ He may have encountered such titles as *Axur* (premiered in 1788), *Arbore di Diana* (1788), *Don Giovanni* (Vienna, 1788), *Così fan tutte* (1790), and the still successfully performed *Una cosa rara* and *Le nozze di Figaro* (both 1786),²⁰ as well as the even older but unfailingly popular *Il talismano* (1779).²¹ Elsner must also have witnessed the vogue for the “magic” singspiel that conquered Vienna in the autumn of 1789, launched by the extremely popular *Oberon, König der Elfen* and exploited by Schikaneder’s subsequent productions, staged at close intervals: *Die schöne Isländerin* and *Der Stein der Weisen*, as well as *Kasper der Fagottist* and *Das Sonnenfest der Braminen*, written for Karl von Marinelli’s competing stage.²² We are not sure whether Elsner stayed in Vienna long enough to see the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte*, but when he arrived in Lwów towards the end of 1792, he most likely witnessed the first performance of Mozart’s masterwork outside the capital.²³ It is risky to assume that he might have led these performances, which immediately preceded Bulla’s departure for Warsaw, but the repertoire of 1794 was certainly already performed under Elsner’s hand.²⁴ We find here the same works that Elsner must have heard in Vienna: *Axur* and *Il Talismano* by Salieri, both of the above-listed titles by Martín y Soler (all these in a singspiel-like German form), *Die Zauberflöte*, *Oberon* and other magic singspiels, and, above all, *Don Giovanni*,²⁵ about which Elsner wrote: “Having learned Mozart’s opera *Don Juan* in less than half a year, I performed it to great success, which had previously been considered impossible to achieve in Lwów.”²⁶ German adaptations of Viennese operas by Paisiello (*Il Re Teodoro*, *Barbiere di Sevilla*) were also staged, as well as Haydn’s *Armida* and *Orlando paladino*. To sum up, in Lwów’s German-language repertoire from these years, one can hardly find an opera without a clearly Viennese provenance (see the repertoire list in Appendix 2.²⁷

The correspondence between the Lwów repertoire from Elsner’s first year there and his likely Viennese experiences is striking. The psychological

significance of being promoted from an anonymous spectator of Vienna's peak operatic achievements to a conductor leading their performances can hardly be overestimated. He achieved this in a peripheral theater, true, but with reasonably good musicians and in a large urban center. The young musician soon also demonstrated his own creative ambitions by composing two singspiels (both premiered in 1795) openly drawing on the Viennese practice, based on the current vogue for magical and oriental topics, and—as the composer himself declared—musically influenced primarily by Mozartian models.²⁸ When he met Bogusławski and received an offer of collaboration, the young Silesian must have felt like a representative of Viennese operatic culture.

And thus “the father of the Polish theater,” as Bogusławski is called, became (for a two-year period, 1796–1798) an independent director of Lwów's bilingual stage with both German and Polish troupes, a mostly German orchestra, and a young music director whose taste and ambitions were informed mostly by Viennese standards. The earlier connections between this theater and suburban Viennese stages, possibly the Theater an der Wieden in particular, continued under Bogusławski's directorship, with premieres of successive works that had originated on Schikaneder's stage: *Der Königssohn aus Ithaka*, *Der Spiegel vor Arkadien*, and *Die Waldmänner*.²⁹ These links are also confirmed by the movement of some theater staff.³⁰ From Marinelli's stage, the Lwów theater adopted *Das Sonnenfest der Braminen* (for which Elsner composed an additional aria³¹) and *Die Zauberzitter, oder Kaspar der Faggotist*.³² The Polish troupe did not adapt any German works yet, but it enlarged its repertoire of translated Italian operas with more titles highly popular in Vienna, such as *Il Re Teodoro* and *Arbore di Diana*.³³

We have solid reasons to abandon the view of the operatic activity of Austrian and Polish troupes in Lwów as two separate stages with disjointed audiences. Playbills were bilingual.³⁴ The staging of *Die Zauberflöte* was accompanied by a Polish print comprising the sung fragments of the libretto.³⁵ According to surviving testimonies, the Polish *Axur* was highly praised among the German-language spectators, and critics found it better than the local German production.³⁶ Many Polish inhabitants of the city also spoke German, and their number was probably rising systematically, considering the political reality of post-partition Galicia.³⁷ Bogusławski himself, albeit a Polish patriot, but one who embraced the humanistic ideas of fraternity and harmony between nations, repeatedly expressed his belief in the

harmonious coexistence of “both nations”—that is, Polish and Austrian—in terms possibly alluding to the history of the Polish-Lithuanian political union.³⁸ Possibly the most meaningful in this respect were the general trends in Bogusławski’s repertoire policy. On Bulla’s operatic stage in 1794, German adaptations of Italian operas accounted for almost 60% of the repertoire, while under Bogusławski’s direction (1796–1798) it was only 20% (the rest always consisting almost exclusively of Viennese singspiels). On the other hand, the only new acquisitions of the Polish troupe in Lwów were Viennese Italian operas. In Bogusławski’s judgement, it thus seems, Lwów’s bilingual audience could best be served by a German troupe in the sphere of the Viennese singspiel, while the segment of Italian operas fared better in the hands of Polish actors. We can conclude from Bogusławski’s later enthusiastic assimilation of the same repertoire in Warsaw that his reserved stance concerning Polish adaptations of German operas should be interpreted in the light of this concept of the two troupes’ complementarity and not as a reflection of disapproval for the suburban Viennese aesthetics. It was certainly the Lwów experience that led to the Polish theater company radically changing its repertoire in the years 1800–1804, from the Italian buffa to operas such as *Die Zauberflöte*, *Das unterbrochene Opferfest*, and *Palmira*.³⁹

Finally, both the Viennese taste of the Lwów theater audience and Bogusławski’s own adoption of this aesthetic are clearly testified by the Polish entrepreneur himself. In the preface to the printed edition of the libretto of *Amazonki*, he recalled: “Written in the capital, where the taste for Viennese grand operas has pride of place, [the opera] could not do without at least two amusing persons [...] who (in a plot serious in other respects) seem necessary for the sake of merriment.”⁴⁰ And in another place: “After the melodrama [*Iskaha*] I set out to write a grand opera, in the manner of German operas of this kind, since it was an inevitable necessity to conform to the tastes of both nations to which I had dedicated my services.”⁴¹ The intention of emulating lavish singspiels from Schikaneder’s and Marinelli’s theaters (fairy tale-like or exotic, breathtaking and spectacular, but at the same time obligatorily featuring Papageno-like comic characters) seems more than obvious.⁴² Even the expression “amusing persons” sounds like a calque from the German *lustige Personen*, a term usually applied for Hanswurst- and Kasperle-like roles.

The *grosse heroisch-komische Oper*—a Transnational Genre?

Elsner's and Bogusławski's interpretations of the term "grand opera" (*grosse Oper / wielka opera*) do not wholly overlap. The latter used the expression with reference to a type of the Viennese singspiel resembling *Die Zauberflöte*, basically the same that Martin Nedbal groups under the umbrella term of the *heroisch-komische Oper*.⁴³ I follow Nedbal's practice at this point in my discussion, though I insist on including the adjective *gross* in the term, as it is used to describe the vast majority of works that originated in the Theater an der Wieden,⁴⁴ and it is of crucial significance with reference to Bogusławski's statements.

On the other hand, Elsner's usage of the term "grand opera" may at first glance be interpreted as a mere indication of the work's status—possibly its sheer impressiveness, theatrical as well as musical. By praising the Polish *Axur* as "the first Polish grand opera," however, Elsner ignores the earlier Warsaw adaptations of the French opéras comiques *À Grand Spectacle*, *La Fée Urgèle* and *Zemire et Azor*⁴⁵—of which he was likely well aware.⁴⁶ This may suggest that his intention was to link *Amazonki* with the Italian operatic traditions, or at least with the current Viennese music style.

It goes without saying that, from the perspective of the traditional classification of genres, the late eighteenth-century "mixed" offshoots of the Viennese opera buffa such as *Axur* are one thing and the Viennese *grosse* singspiels another. The differences occur on the institutional or social planes as well as in their musical, literary, and dramaturgical characteristics. The Italian *eroicomico* (or *tragicomico*, as *Axur* was originally labeled) in particular is not the same as the Viennese suburban *heroisch-komische*. While the former is strongly rooted in the literary concept of the mock-heroic, allowing satire to undermine the very core of the plot⁴⁷ (as in the title "buffo tyrant" in *Axur*⁴⁸ or mad hero in Haydn's *Orlando paladino*⁴⁹), Schikanederian singspiels freely counterpoint a perfectly serious main plot with ludicrous characters and scenes.⁵⁰

It can be argued, however, that these precise distinctions inevitably do not reflect some practices existing within the Viennese orbit in the late eighteenth century. Italian operas that combined the buffa traditions with spectacular staging and adventurous or heroic plots were played in German

translations and labeled as *grosse heroisch-komische Opern*, while popular suburban singspiels were adapted for Italian stages as *drammi eroicomici*.⁵¹ However deeply rooted in the classical traditions of *poema eroicomico* or otherwise informed by the higher standards of more sophisticated audiences they were, once they assumed a singspiel-like form, works such as *Axur* or *Orlando paladino* easily made their way to the eyes, ears, and hearts of spectators whose expectations had been shaped by Schikaneder's and Marinelli's repertoire, and that was also the case with the Lwów theater audience.

The two types of repertoire were gradually converging. With *Palmira regina di Persia*, Salieri possibly attained the golden mean between the higher musical traditions of Italian opera and the audience attractors developed on suburban Viennese German stages, where Salieri's opera would soon be staged and then played for a long period.⁵² This point of convergence was reached from the other side by Peter Winter and his *Das unterbrochene Opferfest*, which combines the low singspiel tradition of comic persons and scenes with high operatic ambitions, soon to be recognized in an Italian version of that opera.⁵³ Both of these titles would be staged to great success by Bogusławski in a few years' time. As pointed out by Arnold Jacobshagen, the Italian *tragicomici* or *eroicomici* remained in that period a specialty of the German-speaking countries rather than the opera's home country, which suggests some links with the concurrent vogue for the *heroisch-komische* in German theaters.⁵⁴ It is not hard to imagine that, from the perspective of a German-language theater staging both types of repertoire, they could well be perceived as one genre-like category, especially if one takes into account the possible accommodation of Italian originals to local taste through the process of translation and adaptation.⁵⁵ Both provided approximately the same kind of entertainment, were mutually interchangeable as repertoire items, and were together clearly distinguishable from other repertoire segments, such as comic opera of bourgeois or rustic character, drama, spoken comedy, and tragedy.

Such a challenge to traditional genre classification may find some support in a relatively recent understanding of genres—one that no longer perceives them as fixed models or patterns but rather as more flexible concepts of conventional nature, rooted in reception practice and mediating between artists and their audiences, thus projecting the appropriate perception mode for a given work.⁵⁶ For the area under study, one possible implication of this

stance is a license to give priority to a local theatrical context—for example, to consider imported and adapted repertoire in its new local shape and within the local reception practices, thus abstracting it to some extent from its original genre and national determinants.

This opens the door to accepting the label *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* (conceived as Nedbal's standardization of the many different descriptions) as encompassing both Schikanederian *grosse singspiels* and German adaptations of "mixed" Italian operas, provided that we treat the pseudo-generic concept only as a heuristic tool for the description of operatic life in places such as Lwów and its local productions. On the same principle, we can perceive the Polish adaptations of Viennese German and Italian "heroic-comic" works staged in Bogusławski's Warsaw theater after 1800 as one genre-like group,⁵⁷ at a time in which they became by far the most dominant type of operatic repertoire until at least 1810 (a fact that becomes blurred in accounts based on traditional typologies favoring nationality and the original language as the main basis for genre differentiation⁵⁸). We can also argue for including Polish productions based on these works in the same category.⁵⁹

Placing the focus on the reinterpretations or transformations that occur in the course of a transfer of cultural objects between different national contexts, rather than on the original content relocated in this manner, calls for another theoretical framework – namely, the idea of the transnational. Supplementary as it may seem to the observations above, it has crucial significance for the next step in my argument. Following my understanding of the two fundamental texts by Axel Körner,⁶⁰ I adopt this concept in its broad (the author says "inclusive"⁶¹) but nonetheless precise sense: not necessarily as a strong challenge to the very idea of national identities or national cultures as such⁶² but primarily as a postulate of methodically accepting the possibility of areas or lines of communication that can be understood more adequately outside the traditional national framing. "Transnational approaches," explains the author, "attempt to go in between nationally defined categories of analysis, looking for a type of relationship that escapes a mental map based on nation states."⁶³ Thus the concept of the transnational makes us also sensitive to the historical significance of cultural hubs, communities, and metaphorical spaces for which the question of national and linguistic identity was of secondary importance.⁶⁴

In light of the above-discussed complementarity of the Polish and German

troupes' operatic repertoires and their shared audience, the transnational perspective can thus be applied to the bilingual operatic life in Lwów under Bogusławski's directorship, especially if we give up all nation- or language-based genre distinctions between the German *grosse heroisch-komische Opern* (in the recently proposed, broader meaning) and their Polish counterparts—adapted ones but also original ones, such as *Amazonki*, explicitly claimed by their creators to be molded after Viennese taste and models. Though the scope of this German term is thus extended for the second time, I prefer to retain its original-language shape for the sake of clarity, as well as to emphasize the relative priority of the context of German-language theater. (Its English-language equivalent would perhaps be equally justified, however, as would the Polish one in a Polish-language text.) Let me state again that this transnational concept of the *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* is not meant as a challenge to the traditional classification of operatic genres but as a pragmatic tool that has proved useful to the present study of the late eighteenth-century operatic landscape. Applying it to Elsner's Lwów operas brings a twofold benefit. First, it helps us to conceptualize the relation between Elsner's "grand operas" and their most closely related but still nominally "foreign" repertoire context as a direct and immediate one. Second, the concept's wide semantic scope allows us to consider the issue of the accession of Elsner's works to Habsburg operatic culture separately from the question of how closely the composer adhered to specific models—those of the Italian comic opera and Schikanederian *grosses singspiel*. In other words, it helps us realize that Elsner's intention to place his works in the most popular category of his theater's repertoire did not necessarily involve his willingness to imitate any specific and well-defined genre models.

The proposed concept of the transnational *grosse heroisch-komische Oper*, though quite far removed from Nedbal's *heroisch-komische Oper*, retains both the latter term's rooting in period nomenclature and the intention of standardizing its diversity.⁶⁵ Of Elsner's four operas preserved in whole or in substantial parts that can be thus labeled, none originally bore this specific designation. *Amazonki, czyli Herminia* was first staged as a "heroic-comic opera / heroisch-komische Oper" (Lwów, 1797 or 1798), the oriental-magical *Sułtan Wampum* as a mere "comic opera" (Warsaw, 1800), *Wieszczka Urzella* as a "heroic-comic opera" (Warsaw, 1806), and *Leszek Biały, czyli Czarownica z Łysej Góry* as a "magic opera" (Warsaw, 1809).⁶⁶

Towards the end of this paper, I will present brief overviews of the latter three

works. The main focus, however, will be placed on the first of them as on the point at which the Polish “grand opera” can be caught, so to speak, *in statu nascendi* as it was branching off from its Viennese roots. A few brief insights will be aimed at presenting the aspects of *Amazonki* that most openly demonstrate its roots in Viennese (Italian and German) heroic-comic operas. The first three subsections will focus on Elsner and Bogusławski’s use of elements specific to these Viennese genres: namely, such Italian conventions as aria types, devices based on musical topoi, and levels of style, singspiel traditions derived from the low aesthetic of the Viennese *Volkstheater*. The last subsection will deal with the opera’s “discourse” within its close repertoire context: overt allusions to specific numbers from the preeminent opera staged in the Lwów theater—i.e., Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*—and an open imitation of an innovative number from Salieri’s *Palmira*.

***Amazonki* (1797): “Die erste grosse polnische Original-Oper”**

Though the myth of the Amazons was one of the classic topics of opera seria,⁶⁷ in Vienna its popularity seems to have vanished by the middle of the century.⁶⁸ The plot of Bogusławski’s libretto is based on these old seria clichés and can briefly be summarized as follows.

Herminia is the rightful heir of the Amazon Queen Tاليestri. All the same, after the latter’s death the crown is given to Tremizenna, who is to serve as regent until Herminia comes of age. Tremizenna intrigues to keep the throne for his own daughter Arycea. This seems plausible as Herminia loves the Greek king Agenor, by which she has broken the Amazon law and is thus imprisoned, accused of treason, and sentenced to death. Agenor arrives at the Amazon capital Themiscyra with his Greek army, and the play ends with a spectacular attack on the city, the defeat of the Amazons, and the liberation of Herminia.

With its two large finales, eleven solo numbers, and a handful of ensembles, the opera mirrors in its microstructure the general Viennese standards shared at the time by Italian and German “grand heroic-comical operas” in the above-discussed sense of the term (lists of musical numbers in Elsner’s operas discussed in this paper can be found in Appendix 1). Nevertheless, the extensive use of the seria idiom brings *Amazonki* closer to Italian models.

Operatic Amazons: Heroic-Comical or Heroic-Sentimental?

The Amazon myth may look like a perfect object for the facetious excesses of Italian mock-heroic opera cultivated in Vienna at the time, to mention only the Amazon-like gender reversal in Salieri's *Il mondo alla rovescia* (1795).⁶⁹ Bogusławski, however, approaches the theme in the Schikaneder spirit to the extent that he refrains from comic deconstruction of the plot, leaving the humor exclusively to "amusing persons." The semantic dexterity so typical of late-eighteenth century opera buffa, based on an inventive play with musical styles and topoi,⁷⁰ is nevertheless employed here in a different manner.⁷¹ The authors use it to articulate the ideological tension inherent in the tradition of the Amazon opera seria, that is, the struggle between the "unnatural" habits of the masculine and celibate woman-warriors and the "natural" order of things to which they ultimately return by way of love and marriage.⁷² Bogusławski conflated this motif with the Rousseauian idea of opposition between the natural and the social world, making the eponymous Herminia represent the former in her short cavatina, beginning with the words: "Fighting belongs to men, us it behooves to love only."⁷³ The Amazons' rule of celibate life and military ambitions becomes, from this perspective, a form of cultural suppression of nature and, in fact, the favorite object of Enlightenment critique as an unnatural and irrational superstition. When the old Amazon Kleantis accuses Herminia that through her marriage she will make all Amazons slaves to a man, the latter replies: "You are slaves of your own superstitions."⁷⁴

This split in the Amazon identity becomes the object of musical representation in the first number of the opera, multi-sectional and structurally resembling the *introduzione* in Martin y Soler's *Una cosa rara*.⁷⁵ To the sound of an instrumental march, women's troops appear under the walls of the city and begin military exercises, followed by the chorus and terzetto:

Tam słodkie prace i znoje,
Gdzie sława trudów nagrodą,
Uczmy się wygrywać boje,
Które do szczęścia nas wiodą!
Ćwiczmy się w Marsa nauce
I pracą wzmacniamy członki,
Niech wie świat, że Amazonki
Przechodzą mężczyzn w tej sztuce.

Sweet are the labor and toil,
Where fame is the prize for pains,
Let us learn how to win battles,
Which lead us to happiness!
Let us practice Mars's lore,
And strengthen our limbs by labor,
Let the world know that Amazons
Excell men in this art.

The music, however, contradicts these declarations.⁷⁶ The chorus, though introduced by brief motifs of unison strings whose punctuated rhythm seems to continue the military idiom of the march, opens with a cantabile phrase in consonant parallel thirds over a pastoral pedal point (Figure 1). The melodic style of the terzetto is even closer to sentimental medium style⁷⁷ (Figure 2) but is undermined by the inclusion of a military trumpet solo. The interpretation of these incongruities as deliberate becomes more obvious near the end, when both contradictory idioms intensify: the gracious and sentimental in an imitative cascade of brief coloraturas and short motifs and the military in a lengthy trumpet closing (Figure 3).

Allegro moderato

Amazon's choir (SSA)

Corn in G

Archi *ff*

Tam słod - kie pra - ce i

zno - je, gdzie sła - wa tru - dów na - gro - dą, tam

[Sweet are the labor and toil, where fame is the prize for pains,]

Figure 1: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, chorus and terzetto “Tam słodkie prace i znoje” (Introduction, 2nd section), mm. 1–10

[Allegro moderato]

IRENA
ARYCEA

Ćwicz - my się w Mar - sa na - u - ce

HERMINIA

Ćwicz-my się w Mar-sa na - u - ce

Clarino princ. in D

Archi

sf p

[Let us practice Mars' lore]

Figure 2: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, chorus and terzetto "Tam słodkie prace i znoje" (Introduction, 2nd section), mm. 29–43

[Allegro moderato]

IRENA

prze - cho - dzą męż - czyzn męż - czyzn w tej sztu - ce.

ARYCEA
HERMINIA

prze - cho - dzą męż - czyzn w tej sztu - ce.

Clarino principale in D

Archi

[(...) excell men in this art.]

Figure 3: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, chorus and terzetto "Tam słodkie prace i znoje" (Introduction, 2nd section), mm. 56–61

The further course of the *introduzione* represents successful imposition of the “cultural” *eroico* over the “natural” *sentimentale*. The authority of Tremizenna, displayed in a *recitativo accompagnato* and a short aria, finally makes the woman-warriors sing to a return of the military march from the beginning of this number. The opening musical depiction of Amazons as womanly and affectionate nevertheless remains in the listener’s memory, lending support to Herminia’s stance in her later disputes with Tremizenna.

Italian Seria: Arias for Queen Tremizenna

Parti serie include not only those of Queen Tremizenna (soprano) but also those of Agenor’s friend Ifikrates (tenor, much like Don Ottavio, with an aria in high cantabile) and Herminia’s confidante Irena (soprano, with a rage aria in compact ternary form somewhat resembling Mozart’s “Or sai chi l’onore”). Agenor himself, though musically portrayed in a sentimental mode (see below), despairs of Herminia’s fate in the first act in a full-fledged mad scene in *recitativo obbligato*. The clearest sign, however, of Elsner’s attachment to Italian models is Tremizenna’s part, dominated by a set of two arias: the sonata-like (compressed da capo)⁷⁸ *aria seria* asserting the elevated status of this person (first act) and a thoughtful and deeply emotional number approximating the two-tempo rondò (second act). While such a pair loosely resembles some Viennese singspiels (to mention only Mozart’s Queen of the Night), Elsner’s strict adherence to formal and stylistic stereotypes is genuinely Italian, probably indebted to Martín y Soler’s two operas as the main source of the composer’s inspiration.⁷⁹

In the first-act aria, Tremizenna declares Amazons’ military superiority over men. Though the hyperbolic language may be intentionally parodic, the music does not support such an interpretation: it is in pure high style, royal as well as military, in a compressed da capo form virtually identical to Diana’s *Chento se dea* from *L’arbore di Diana*.⁸⁰ Though young Elsner’s composition skills cannot be compared to Martín y Soler, not to mention Mozart, the main theme is genuinely *seria* in its style with some qualities of an *aria di portamento* (Figure 4), and the coloratura passages are truly impressive, especially in the voice’s dialogue with the timpani and clarini (Figure 5).

In the second aria, Elsner refers to a thoroughly conventionalized type in a more inventive fashion. The Queen hesitates whether to execute Herminia, struggling with her conscience as well as her motherly feelings for the girl.

[Allegro]
TREMIZENNA

Świat ca - ły za - drzał zdu - mio - ny, gdy płci, wam wcześ-niej pod-
da-nej wo-jen - ne u - sły-szał dzie-ła, jak w Po - lu Mar - sa sta - nę - ła.

[The whole world shivered in astonishment when it heard about the war deeds of the sex once subordinate to you,
as it entered the field of Mars.]

Figure 4: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria "Świat cały zadrżał zdumiony", beginning of the vocal line, mm. 16–26

[Allegro]

TREMIZENNA

Przed na-szym kłę -

Clarini in D

Timpani

Archi

T.

Clni

Timp

knie

[...] before our [scimitar] it will kneel.

Figure 5: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria "Świat cały zadrżał zdumiony", mm. 112–116

The placement of this aria (before the finale of the second act), as well as the topic and dramaturgic context of the number, makes the late eighteenth-century spectator expect a two-tempo rondò.⁸¹ In the melodic shape of both the first and second stanzas (*Adagio* and *Allegro*, respectively; see Figures 6–7), we also distinctly recognize the hallmarks of this aria type, even if the typical gavotte phrasing is somewhat obscured by shorter upbeat (perhaps due to the metrical structure of the Polish verse). Still, the music form develops in a different manner, following textual meanings and structure (see Table 1): Instead of the expected change of mind, the Queen's stance petrifies in a hackneyed Metastasian simile, musically enhanced by an abrupt third modulation and a musical representation of a storm (Figure 8). The precise repetition of the bipartite *Allegro* section (B) in the reprise-like tonal shift seems to reinterpret the form toward a more static or architectonic one, thus also bestowing a *seria* character on a potentially sentimental number. Though initially suggesting the two-tempo rondò as the musical expression of the internal change (a paradigmatic sentimental utterance, to borrow Hunter's term⁸²), the aria deliberately fails in this role, as Tremizenna carries on with her evil intention.

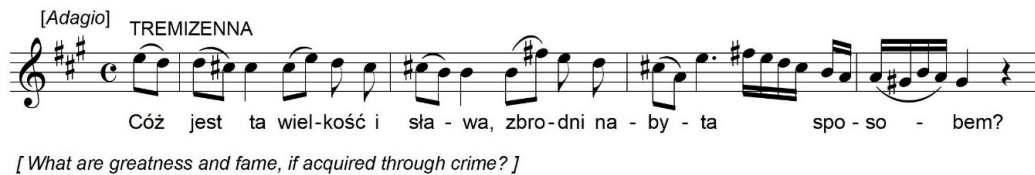


Figure 6: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria “Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława”, beginning of the vocal line, mm. 6–9



Figure 7: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria “Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława”, beginning of the Allegro section, vocal line, mm. 20–23

[*Allegro*] TREMIZENNA

...i zno - wu w głę - bi po - grą - ża.

Clarini (Clni)

Corni *tr*

Timpani

Archi

Tam rzu - ca wi-cher pół - noc - ny, łódź

ff

[(...) now drawing you into its depths. Thus drives wind from the North a boat (...)]

Figure 8: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria "Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława", mm. 33–39

Table 1: Aria “Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława,” text and form

Original text	English translation	Section marks and musical description
1. Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława, Zbrodni nabyta sposobem? Gdy między życiem i grobem Sercu pokoju nie dawa!	What are greatness and fame, If acquired through crime? When between life and grave It gives no peace to the heart!	A: <i>Adagio</i> , 4/4, A major <i>mm.</i> 1–19 gavotte-like melodic line typical of rondò
2. Ach, takie życie jest morze, Na którym ustawna burza, Raz wskaże nadziei zorze, Drugi raz w głębi zanurza.	Ah, such life is a sea On which there's always a storm Now showing the dawn of hope, Now drawing you into its depths.	B₁: <i>Allegro</i> , 4/4, A major <i>mm.</i> 20–35 gavotte-like melodic line typical of rondò
3. Tak pędzi wicher północny Łódź, którą zbrodnia obciąża, Aż wreszcie piorun wszechmocny W przepaść ją wieczną pogrąża	Thus drives wind from the north A boat burdened with crime, Till almighty lightning's decree Pulls into eternal abyss.	B₂: [<i>allegro</i> continued], F major <i>mm.</i> 36–50 melodic line closer to <i>seria</i> style, wide ambitus [+ orch. section returning to E major]
Stanza 2. repeated	B₁' : <i>Allegro</i> , 4/4, D major <i>mm.</i> 51–58	
Stanza 3. repeated	B₂' : [<i>Allegro</i> continued], B-flat major <i>mm.</i> 36–50 [+ coloratura epilogue in A major]	

“Amusing persons”: Strabon

The spirit of suburban Viennese humor is most openly present in the part of Agenor's jester, Strabon. Though his active part belongs to the buffa tradition of a witty servant, his coarse manners and the outpours of abundant rude humor—mostly misogynistic jokes concerning the Amazons' habits—make

him a kind of mediator between the represented world and the lower strata of the theatrical audience, in a rather Hanswurstian spirit.⁸³ The main eruption of such humor comes in Strabon's cross-dressing episode, when, before his attempt to enter the fortress, the jester presents his disguise in words that ruthlessly ruin the earnestness of the play's classical setting:

Otóż jest baba, stara dewotka	Here's a crone, an old bigot hag;
Tak ubranego choć kto mnie spotka,	Should anyone meet me in this guise,
Będzie rozumiał, że chęć mnie bierze,	He will think that I feel the urge
Iść do kościoła klepać pacierze.	To go to the church and patter out my prayers.

When captured on the walls, Strabon tries to maintain his guise by singing in falsetto (much appreciated in cross-dressing episodes in Viennese comic opera⁸⁴) as well as by his vocal style, assumed as part of the characterization⁸⁵ (Figure 9).

Already his first sentence is calmer and has a longer breath than the preceding feverish phrases of the Amazon, but it is Strabon's last-cited statement—"I am a maiden as fine as should be"⁸⁶ – that reaches the peak of musical humor in its assumed naivety, simplicity, and melodic grace. The phrase is like an emblem of feigned identity: when the imprisoned Strabon faces the Amazon tribunal, accused of concealing his gender, he sings a bawdy song opening with precisely the same melody and focusing on a (drag-style) woman's sexual experiences in the successive stages of life, with this racy incipit: "When I was thirteen years old, I loved men very much."⁸⁷ Though the melody combines song-like features and middle style with traces of vocal buffo (Figure 10), textual ribaldry and the verse structure suggest French vaudeville origins.⁸⁸ While the direct lasciviousness of the song may answer to the low tastes of Viennese suburban theaters, even if it was actually not tolerated in the last decade of the eighteenth century,⁸⁹ Strabon's cross-dressing transgressions along with their musical articulation rather seem to draw upon Italian stage concepts.⁹⁰

Mozartian and sentimental

As Mary Hunter claims, each opera that entered the stage involved a kind of "conversation" with other productions presented on the given stage, but also with its wider cultural milieu—other plays, literary works, or even specific

[Allegro]

ARYCEA

To jest męż-czy-zna w kap-tu-rze!

STRABON, *falsetto*

Ja jes-tem bied-na sta-ru - szka, do-pie-rom co wsta-ła

Archi

+ legni, Cor

Archi

KLEANTIS

ARYCEA

A skąd te wą-sy? A bro-da? A twarz gdy-by u He-ro-da?

z łóż-ka.

To jest męż-czy-zna w kap-

tu-rze!

A skąd te wą - sy? A bro - da? A twarz gdy - by u He - ro - da?

Vla

[ARYCEA: It is a man in a hood!

STRABON: I am a poor old woman, I have just got out of my bed.

KLEANTIS: But why these mustaches? This beard?

ARYCEA: And this face like Herod's?

STRABON: Believe me, you are deceived by appearance; aren't there many women with moustaches?

I am a maiden as fine as should be.]

Figure 9: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, first-act finale, mm. 769–784

[Allegretto]
in fistula

STRABON

Kie-dy mia-łam lat trzy - naś - cie, bar-dzo męż - czy - zny ko - cha - łam, i po ra - zy kil - ka -
na - ście, do żoł - nie - rzy u - cie - ka - łam. Mat - ka gdy - by ję - dza z pie - kła wią -
za - ła mnie na pow - ro - zie, jam prze - cież o - knem u - cie - kła, i no - co - wa - łam w o - bo - zie.

ad libitum

A - le da - ruj - cie mi pro - szę, wszak to są mło - dych roz - ko - sze!

[When I was thirteen years old I liked men very much, and more than ten times I slipped away to meet with soldiers.
My mother, like a witch from the hell, used to tie me on a halter, but I escaped through the window, and spent a night in barracks.
But forgive me, please, these are but young girls' delights.]

Figure 10: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria (song) “Kiedy miałam lat trzynaście”, vocal line, mm. 5–28 (whole strophe)

interpretations of roles or individual operatic numbers.⁹¹ In the musical substance of *Amazonki* we can find at least two musical references to *Die Zauberflöte* (still played and invariably popular in Lwów) where the spectators' recognition of the Mozartian allusions seems to have been part of Elsner and Bogusławski's design, as a semantic component that enhanced the emotional significance of the scene. Both of these occur in the parts of the central couple of sentimental lovers—Herminia and Agenor.

In the beginning of the second act, the Greek king receives false intelligence about Herminia's death and orders an attack on the Amazon city.⁹² His friend Ifikrates is opposed to revenge. The controversy, which can become part of opera seria discourse, is presented within a progressive ideological framework, emphasizing not the ruler's responsibility but universal human nature:

AGENOR

So her death has to remain unavenged? And these infernal hydrae will rejoice over their wicked decrees, by which she was sentenced to burn? No... As a knight, lover, and finally as a king, I desire to avenge the harmed innocence.

IFIKRATES (calmly)

But as a man, will you decide to spill the blood of your nation for a thing that is beyond compensation?⁹³

Agenor, who has been persuaded, then sings a short aria which develops the idea of superiority of morals rooted in human nature over royal dignity:

Te świetne tronu ozdoby,
Łatwo nas czynią wielkimi,
Bo nam podają sposoby,
Przez które dobrze czynimy.
Lecz kto miłości wrodzonej
Zrzeka się w ludu potrzebie,
Jest większym nad blask korony,
Bo wielkość swoją ma z siebie

These splendid ornaments of the throne
Easily make us great,
For they provide the means
By which we can do good deeds.
But he who his innate love
Rejects for his people's sake
Is greater than the crown's splendor
For his greatness comes from himself.

It is not obvious, however, why it is Agenor who sings at this point. In fact, it would have been closer to conventions to allot a “persuasion” aria to the admonisher (Ifikrates) rather than a moralizing one to the admonished one. Still, Agenor’s role was written for Bogusławski himself, and the Polish actor was renowned for the roles that allowed him to act as a moral authority, especially as a propagator of the Enlightenment’s moral ideas: the innate goodness of man and brotherhood of all people.⁹⁴

Elsner’s musical response to the text not only remains strictly within the confines of the middle style of a sentimental *mezzo carattere* but also contains a precise motivic allusion to Sarastro’s “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” in the string accompaniment (Figure 11–12):

[Andantino]
AGENOR

Te świet-ne tro-nu o-zdo-by łat-wo nas czy-nią wiel-ki-mi, bo nam pod-da-ją spo-so-by,

[These splendid ornaments of the throne easily make us great, for they provide the means (...)]

Figure 11: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria “Te świetne tronu ozdoby”, mm. 9–14



Figure 12: W. A. Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*, aria “In diesen heil’gen Hallen”, mm. 12–15

A meaningful reminiscence also appears near the end of the number. Though Elsner set the text without any repetitions, its last phrase “ma z siebie” (literally “has [it] out from himself,” translated above as “comes from himself”) is underlined by threefold reiteration, exactly as “ein Mensch zu sein” is in Mozart’s aria. This detail would be hardly specific enough to suggest any Mozartian reference were it not for the obvious textual parallelism resulting from these repeated final words containing the same Enlightenment idea of moral value as rooted in human nature, regardless of social status or position.

Though the Sarastian appeal to give up vengeance has some elements of dramatic situation in common with the message of Agenor’s aria, there is no substantial link between it and the text of “In diesen heil’gen Hallen.”. It is rather the moral image of Sarastro that needs to be recalled and linked to the Greek king—or perhaps to Bogusławski himself, who was always ready to step forward as a public authority and undoubtedly deeply identified with the ideals incarnated in the Mozartian character.⁹⁵ The staccato scale unfolding in imitation between the first violin and bassi, borrowed by Elsner, also links Sarastro’s aria to the Mozartian Tito’s manifesto of generosity in “Del più sublime soglio” and hence can even be read as a musical emblem of “masonic benevolence” personified in both characters, as suggested by the discoverer of this thematic correspondence, David Hartz.⁹⁶

The other Mozartian number is Herminia’s second-act aria, simultaneously a lamentation and a confession of love. After the death sentence, the heroine asks for the image of Agenor, previously taken from her as proof of her crime, to be given back to her. Having recovered the picture, the Amazon princess sings a short aria in the F minor key:

O, drogie wyobrażenie, Przez które dziś śmierć odbieram, Przyjmij ostatnie westchnienie, Niech razem z tobą umieram! ⁹⁷	O, dear representation, Because of which I am dying today, Accept my last breath, Let me die along with you!
---	---

While the concept of singing to a picture harks back to Tamino's portrait aria, the suggestive ostinato accompaniment pattern seems to have been borrowed from Pamina's "Ach, ich fühl's," with perfect harmony and the expressive, lamentation-like character of the text⁹⁸ (Figure 13). Another trace of the Mozartian source can be found just after the central point of the form. After the establishment of a major parallel (A-flat major), there follows a section of tonal instability with shorter vocal phrases and ascending scale passages in the bassoon, introducing successive steps of harmonic progression.

HERMINIA

O, dro-gie wy-o-bra-że-nie, przez któ-re śmierć dziś od-bie - ram, przyj-mij o-sta-tnie wej-rze - - - nie, niech ra - zem z to - bą u - mie - ram,

[O, dear representation, because of which I am dying today, accept my last breath, let me die along with you!]

Figure 13: Józef Elsner, *Amazonki*, aria "O drogie wyobrażenie", mm. 5–12

Elsner does not even try to approximate the refinement of Mozart's vocal line. One may guess that his intention was to enhance the number's emotional impact by invoking Pamina's lament as clearly as possible while at the same time taking as his starting point a clearly different, much simpler, even a little song-like vocal style.

Salierian and *eroicomico*

The aspect of Bogusławski and Elsner's opera that deserves the label *eroicomico* in its more precise sense is, if anything, the presence of four bards:

Conclusion: *Amazonki*—Elsner's last Viennese or first Polish opera?

The primary aim of the short observations above has been to demonstrate the naturalness with which Elsner's first Polish opera can be understood and interpreted by means or tools proper to heroic-comic productions from the Viennese operatic world or interpreted as a kind of metaphorical conversation with musical plays from the latter circle. Still, the opera's qualification as a *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* is meant here not as an identification of genre model but as implying a free and unrestricted use of various, both (Italian) opera- and singspiel-derived tools and means. More precisely, it is tantamount to assigning the work to the circle of production and reception practices characteristic of the *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* viewed as the Lwów theater's (bilingual) repertoire segment—the one that consisted of both Viennese *heroisch-komische Opern* (in Nedbal's sense of the term) and adaptations of Viennese "mixed" subgenres of opera buffa (*dramma tragi- or eroicomico*).

For Elsner's later operas, proposed here as a continuation of the same line, this situation gradually changes: They originated exclusively within the Polish-language scene, though still within a repertoire context dominated by (adapted) Viennese works. A full discussion of this story, for which there is no space here, would probably need to account for the gradual transformation of Elsner's *grosse heroische-komisch Oper* from one functioning within the "transnational" tradition, that is, one situated between languages and nations, toward a more or less "internal" strain within the relatively new phenomenon of the Polish opera. Nonetheless, the Viennese repertoire context and its respective methodological framework fully retains its validity as the most proper background for any research on these works, as can be gleaned even from the perfunctory overview presented below.

The oriental *Sultan Wampum*, based on August von Kotzebue's *Lustspiel mit Gesange* of 1791,¹⁰⁰ combines the clichés of a Turkish "abduction opera"¹⁰¹ with magic content in the vein of Schikaneder's fairy tale singspiels. Bogusławski reworked Kotzebue's play, originally intended as a singspiel roughly analogous in form to *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*, giving it a musical scope comparable to the lavish Viennese singspiels.¹⁰² As a result, Elsner's score includes specifically Viennese music elements such as three arias

of decisively Italian provenance (among them a two-tempo rondo and a buffo “catalogue aria”) and large, multi-sectional finales, the first of which has more Italianate chain-like continuity, while the second brings to mind the kaleidoscopic heterogeneity of Schikaneder’s forms.¹⁰³ In a competent, though perhaps not very original fashion, Elsner provided suitable music for Kotzebue’s characteristic original numbers, adding color to the score mostly with two categories of musical topoi: oriental and magical. The janissary choruses and *Trinklied*-like song represent a musical cliché of *alla turca* virtually identical to Mozartian models from *Die Entführung*.¹⁰⁴ From the arsenal of Schikaneder’s *Zauberoper*, Elsner borrows an extensive coloratura for the supernatural character,¹⁰⁵ instrumental wind music (*die Harmonie*) for the magic scenes,¹⁰⁶ and an impressive *terribile* for Genius’s final appearance amid the sound of thunder.¹⁰⁷ Taken as a whole, Elsner’s *Sultan Wampum* is neither a typical Viennese singspiel nor any other type of Viennese opera; the reference to Vienna’s *Türkenoper* is more than clear, however, while Elsner and Bogusławski’s adaptation strategy comes strikingly close to the Viennese practice related to the import of North German and French librettos.¹⁰⁸

The year 1806 brings Elsner and Bogusławski’s last joint operatic project: the setting of Charles Simon Favart’s *La fée Urgèle*, based to a large degree on a translation by Jan Baudouin (1735–1822), which had been staged in Warsaw with Egidio Duni’s original music back in 1783.¹⁰⁹ The French form of the libretto underwent a similar Italo-Viennese treatment as *Sultan Wampum*, though in the 1806 production new additions belong almost exclusively to the category of ensemble numbers. Thus, *La fée Urgèle* was given a dialogue introduction, a massive action-quartet encompassing the whole of the drama’s key scene of the forced kiss, and a large though loosely constructed finale for the second half of the first act. Among the solo numbers, however, one can hardly find any of the most strictly conventional type of Italian arias or their singspiel descendants, except for an extremely formalized *aria seria* in a compressed da capo form and a few numbers that can possibly be assigned to the rather imprecise category of short sentimental arias.

Elsner’s farewell to the tradition of the *grosse heroisch-komische Oper* came in 1809 and can be interpreted both as testimony to the lasting influence of the Viennese opera and singspiel on the Warsaw stage and as a symptom of the decline of the late-eighteenth century operatic paradigm. The “magic opera” *Leszek Biały, czyli Czarownica z Łysej Góry* (Leszek the White, or

the Witch from Łysa Góra,¹¹⁰ to a libretto by Ludwik Adam Dmuszewski, 1777–1847) originated in a somewhat astonishing conflation of legends about the Polish prince Leszek Biały (as retold in a then popular novel by Michał Dymitr Krajewski, 1746–1817)¹¹¹ with the general concept of Ferdinand Kauer and Carl Friedrich Hensler’s extremely popular singspiel *Die Donauweibchen* (Vienna, Theater in der Leopoldstadt, 1798).¹¹² In Krajewski’s novel, the prince visits the Ruthenian court in Kiev, where he is seduced by Grand Duchess Irene with the help of old witch Paraska’s sorcery. This plot was represented in the opera (as we can glean from the preserved half of the score¹¹³) by means of a broad palette of musical and staging tools borrowed from or inspired by Hensler and Kauer’s “Romantisch-Komisches Volksmärchen mit Gesang,” especially with regard to the witch’s numerous magic disguises. The Viennese comic couple of Larifari and Salome, on the other hand, was borrowed from the Leopoldstadt Theater without substantial changes, appearing as Leszek’s jester Terefer and Irene’s old lady-in-waiting Olechna. The somewhat haphazard macrostructure of *Leszek* is far less consistent than that of Hensler and Kauer’s work, with its strong preference for lied-type numbers and descriptive (hunt- or magic-related) music.¹¹⁴ Elsner’s surviving score (one act only) includes vaudeville-like songs, marches, instrumental illustrative pieces, melodramas, another *quartetto* of male voices in the style of “Silenzio fasciasi,” and a romance-like *dumka*, but also orthodox operatic numbers, such as a “magic” *aria seria* in clearly articulated sonata form and with excessive coloratura.

In whatever manner one might interpret the result of this developmental line, the unmediated adherence of *Amazonki*, as its starting point, to the world of the Viennese opera cannot be questioned. Even this, however, does not entail denying the work its traditionally granted place within the historiography of the Polish opera. Rather, the transnational approach calls in this case for a methodological acceptance of the co-existence of two different but complementary attitudes. It is only by viewing Elsner’s works as immediately steeped in Vienna’s operatic culture that we can accurately grasp those of their qualities that result from the traditions of Bogusławski’s theater, such as the aesthetics of exotic melodrama in *Amazonki* (left out of the present discussion) or the (isolated and artificial) presence of Polish dances in *Sultan Wampum*—as well as account for some other facts, such as the much stronger presence of purely Italian aria models in Elsner’s scores than in works by his contemporaries from German Viennese theaters such

as Wenzel Müller and Paul Wranitzky (here we might hesitate whether the reason lay in Elsner's ambitions or the specificity of the Polish troupe, formed in the years 1782–1794 mostly on Italian models).

On the most general level, Elsner's case offers a valuable lesson in how misguiding or sometimes plainly irrelevant the national- and language-based classifications can be with reference to the operatic culture of Central Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century, with its theatrical life informed by the circulation of various repertoires freely translated and adapted in centers of diverse status and character. Adopting a transnational perspective means something else in this context than focusing on the movement of specific works. Rather, it entails examining a given theater's activity without relying on genre-defining classifications based on the language or national origin of the works, and without rigidly distinguishing between original and translated operas. The assumption that the "native context" for an emerging opera consists of works of the same national/linguistic origin rather than "foreign" works adapted and performed in the same theater may sometimes be true, but it never should be taken for granted. By highlighting these issues, Elsner's case seems to reflect the characteristics of the entire German-language operatic landscape as a transnational area (to use a slightly modified version of Jacobshagen's term¹¹⁵) and resonates pretty well with existing observations about German opera's profound dependency on foreign (adapted) repertoire context around the year 1800.¹¹⁶ The discussed operas' role as the germ and source of a distinctly new trend within a different national operatic tradition makes them into an even more illuminating example.

Part of the insight gained, however, is that the unambiguous view of the composer's meeting with Bogusławski as a pivotal moment in Polish opera tradition is significantly shaped by our knowledge of Elsner's later role in Polish music culture, a role that had not yet been established at the time. On the opposite side, we find the German productions of Elsner's Polish operas in Brünn (unnoticed by scholars for the most part), which seem to confirm the unfulfilled potential for these works' stage presence in the German-language scene.¹¹⁷ In this respect, my brief study is also about the perils of historical narratives, which are always arbitrary constructs to some extent and often privilege narrative coherence over the truth of individual events.

List of sources for Elsner's operas discussed in the article

Scores:

Amazonki, czyli Herminia, autograph score: PL-Wn Mus. [90/1](#) and [90/2](#); vocal score: PL-Wn Mus. [89/1](#) and [89/2](#)

Sułtan Wampum, score: PL-Wn Mus. [86/1](#) and [86/2](#)

Wieszczka Urzella, autograph score: PL-Wn Mus. [83/1](#), [83/2](#), [83/3](#), (also prompter's shortened score: PL-Wn Mus. [83/4](#))

Leszek Biały, autograph score of the first act: PL-Wtm 910

Librettos and auxiliary sources:

Herminia, czyli Amazonki, in: [Wojciech Bogusławski], [Dzieła Dramatyczne Wojciecha Bogusławskiego](#), vol. 12 (Warsaw: Glücksberg 1823), 315-415

Sułtan Wampum, [a fragment of Polish translation]: PL-Wn Mus. [86/3](#);

August von Kotzebue, *Sultan Wampum oder: Die Wünsche*, Leipzig: Kummer, 1794.

[Charles-Simon Favart], [Wieszczka Urzella albo To co się damom podoba](#) [transl. Jan Baudouin], Warszawa: Gröll, 1783.

Leszek Biały, a few numbers printed in: [Ludwik Adam Dmuszewski], [Dzieła Dramatyczne L. A. Dmuszewskiego](#) vol. 4, Wrocław: Korn, 1821, 88–95.

Appendix 1: The lists of musical numbers in Józef Elsner's operas *Amazonki*, *Sułtan Wampum*, *Wieszczka Urzella*, and *Leszek Biały*.

1. *Amazonki, czyli Herminia* (The Amazons, or Herminia)

Libretto by Wojciech Bogusławski (published as *Herminia, czyli Amazonki*)

First performed in Lwów as *Herminia, czyli Amazonki*, probably 1797, the first confirmed spectacle on 8 January 1798. Performed 10 times in this year in Lwów and twice in 1800 in Warsaw.

Persons

Amazons:	Greeks:
Tremizenna (soprano) – queen of the Amazon's	Agenor (baritone) – king of the Greeks
Arycea (soprano) – daughter to Tremizenna	Ifikrates (tenor) – Agenor's friend and Greek military commander
Herminia (soprano) – daughter to late queen Talestri	Strabon (baritone) – Agenor's jester
Irena (soprano) – Herminia's friend	Orobates (basso) – a Greek soldier
Kleantis (soprano) – an old Amazon	The four bards: Bagoas, Orkan, Memnos
	Araspes (tenor, tenor, bass, bass)

Musical numbers

Act, No	Title (performers)	type – character – style
I, 1	"Ćwiczmy się w Marsa nauce" (Herminia, Arycea, Irena, Tremizenna, Amazons)	multisectional introduzione resembling the one from Martin y Soler's <i>Una Cosa rara</i> : instrumental military march – chorus/terzetto/chorus in middle style – recitativo obbligato and short aria – repetition of a march as chorus
I, 2	"Nie ma rozkoszy na świecie" (Arycea)	aria in middle style with some marks of polonaise rhythm, quasi-strophic palindromic form (abba) with coloratura coda
I, 3	"Świat cały zadrżał zdumiony" (Tremizenna)	aria seria in compressed da capo form
I, 4	"Tak zemsta pocziwych ludzi" (Tremizenna, Arycea, Ifikrates):	terzetto of regular, nearly strophic form, marks of seria style
I, 5	"Wojować mężczyzn własnością" (Herminia)	strophic aria in middle style

Act, No	Title (performers)	type – character – style
I, 6	"O zdrado! O dniu straszliwy!" (Amazons)	chorus
I, 7	"Przyjaźń z życiem się nie kończy" (Herminia, Irena)	homophonic duet in Martin y Soler-like song-style (6/8 meter)
I, 8	"Prawda jest gorzka potrawą" (Strabon)	vaudeville-like strophic song
I, 9	FINALE	large multi-sectional finale, consisting of ansambles and choruses, both serious and comic.
II, 1	"Pójdę na mury, na fosy" (Orobates)	Aria seria of parodistic character, in "sonata without development" form with added third section.
II, 2	"Tak Ifikrates twój wierny" (Ifikrates)	Two-tempo aria in high <i>cantabile</i> preceded by short recitative.
II, 3	"Te świetne tronu ozdoby" (Agenor)	Binary aria in middle style
II, 4	"Niech dzielność mego oręża" (Agenor, Ifikrates, Orobates)	Tercetto in military style
II, 5	"Kiedy miałam lat trzynaście" (Strabon)	Vaudeville-like strophic song
II, 6	"Niech zaraz, za pół godziny" (Arycea, Strabon, Kleantis)	dialogue terzetto
II, 7	"Niech ręka najsroższych wrogów" (Irena)	Rage-aria seria
II, 8	"O, drogie wyobrażenie" (Herminia)	Binary aria in middle style
II, 9	"Cóż jest ta wielkość i sława" (Tremizenna)	Two-tempo aria akin to <i>rondò</i> style
II, 10	[march]	instrumental march (repetition of I, 1)
II, 11	FINALE	large multi-sectional finale beginning with long battle scene

2. *Sultan Wampum, czyli nieroztropne życzenia* (Sultan Wampum, or the Imprudent Wishes)

Libretto by Wojciech Bogusławski and Augustyn Gliński after: A. Kotzebue, *Sultan Wampum oder: Die Wünsche*.

First performed in 1800 (the day date unknown); remain on the Warsaw stage to 1816, performed in total 28 times.

Persons

Sultan Wampum (basso, non-singing except at the very end of the play) – lord of Shiraz

Hussein (basso) – superior of Sultan's eunuchs

Nuradin (tenor) – young merchant

Kaled (tenor) – Nuradin's servant

Alma (soprano) – young orphan girl

Genius (soprano)

Two sentinels (oryg. Schildwachen I and II; basso, tenor)

Musical numbers

Act, No	Title (performers)	type – character – style
I, 1	"Nowe i zawsze nowe miłość moja troski rodzi" (Alma)	through-composed aria in middle style
I, 2	"Nieprzebraną niby źródła miłość daje swobodę" (Nuradin, Alma)	duet in the form of diegetic dialogue-song
I, 3	"Niech wszyscy głoszą Pana na wschodzie" (Janissaries)	janissary's chorus
I, 4	"Ach, ten królów król prawdziwy" (Hussein)	buffo catalogue-aria
I, 5	"Precz stąd, wrzeszczące trompety" (Janissaries)	janissary's chorus
I, 6	"Gdy w pobliskiej krainie, z napchanym dobrze brzuchem" (Kaled)	strophic narrative romanza
I, 7	FINALE	multi-sectional finale: ensembles with janissary's choir
II, 1	"Sultan jest słońca promykiem" (Alma)	strophic diegetic song set as through-composed seria aria with cello obbligato
II, 2	"Wielbij wszystkie czyny pana" (Hussein)	two-tempo buffo aria with parodistic use of seria features
II, 3	"Hopsa, hopsa, teraz żyć będę" (Kaled)	aria in <i>alla turca</i> style
II, 4	"Ja mam śpiewać, nie mogę" (two sentinels)	comic duet combining learned style in <i>alla turca</i>
II, 5	"Gdzież jestem? Widzę mury!" (Nuradin)	two-tempo rondò with recitative
II, 6	"Przedwiecznych bogów mocą" (Geniusz)	short aria and recitative
II, 7	"Przedwiecznych bogów mocą" (Geniusz)	short aria and recitative, rep. of II, 6
II, 8	"Śpiewajmy, śpiewajmy, za górnym rozkazem" (two sentinels)	comic duet in <i>alla turca</i> style
II, 9	"Przedwiecznych bogów mocą" (Geniusz, Alma)	short aria and dialogue in recitative (mostly rep. of II, 6)
II, 10	FINALE	Multi-sectional finale, a.o. elements in <i>terribile</i> music style, coloratura aria and polonaise terzetto

3. *Wieszczka Urzella, albo co się damom podoba* (The Fairy Urzella, or What Ladies Like)

Libretto by Jan Baudouin (1782, after Charles-Simon Favart's *La fée Urgèle, ou Ce qui plait aux dames*) revised by Wojciech Bogusławski.

First performed in Warsaw, 7 March 1806. Played in 1806 and 1815 (in total 12 times), also in 1823 (one spectacle).

Persons

Wieszczka Urzella (soprano) – fairy, also in guise of peasant girl Amarylla and Old Woman (in Favart's original: Urgèle / Marton / la vieille)

Druzylla (soprano) – Urzella's companion (Favart's Robinette)

Walczycki (tenor) – a young knight (Favart's Robert)

Zbroynicki (basso) – Walczycki's squire (Favart's La Hire)

Queen Amanda (soprano) (Favart's Berthe)

choir of Quinn's courtiers, choir of peasant women, choir of Urzella's fairy servants

Musical numbers

Act, No	Text incipit (performers)	type – character – style
I, 1	"Prędzej, prędzej" (Amarylla, Druzylla)	dialogue Duetto
I, 2	"Mimo woli kochać muszę" (Amarylla)	short sentimental aria, through-composed
I, 3	"Przyjemna ty krzewino" (Walczycki)	aria in style of military march preceded by short recitativo obbligato
I, 4	"Jak Żyd włóczyć się po świecie" (Zbroynicki)	vaudeville-like strophic song
I, 5	"Kupcie wianeczki" (Amarylla, Druzylla)	homophonic duet in song-style
I, 6	"Miłość?" (Walczycki, Zbroynicki, Amarylla, Druzylla)	large quartet alternating buffo ensemble fragments with homophonic singing in middle style
I, 7	FINALE	large, multi-sectional finale, a. o. pastoral and hunting choruses, the Quinn's aria seria in compressed <i>da capo</i> , long recitativo obbligato
II, 1	"Przeklęty ten szkap" (Zbroynicki)	buffo aria in musical imitation of horse gallop

Act, No	Text incipit (performers)	type – character – style
II, 2	"W jednym pocałowaniu ma być moja zguba? (Walczycki)	short sentimental through-composed aria
II, 3	"Každy to od razu zgada" (Zbrojnicki)	aria buffo
II, 4	"Weselmy się" (peasant women)	peasant chorus with ballet (sequence of Polish dances)
II, 5	"Powiedz proszę tajemnicę" (Walczycki, Zbrojnicki, Old Woman)	dialogue terzetto buffo
III, 1	"Przed trybunał sprawiedliwy" (Queen's court)	chorus
III, 2	"Co płeć piękna zawsze lubi"	through-composed aria in high cantabile closed with short recitativo
III, 3	"Ach, zgadł sekret" (Queen's court)	chorus
III, 4	"Hej, powoli młody panie"	short aria in buffo style
III, 5	[march]	instrumental march
III, 6	"Odważnym bądź, mój panie"	short aria in light low style (rustic 6/8)
III, 7	"O jaka świetność przenika me oczy" (Walczycki – Urzella)	through-composed coloratura aria preceded by short recitativo
III, 8	"Żyjmy na zawsze szczęśliwie" (Walczycki, Zbrojnicki, Urzella, Druzylla – chorus of Urzella servants)	finale quartet and chorus in festive style
III, 9	Ballet	short sequence of non-Polish dances

4. *Leszek Biały, czyli Czarownica z Łysej Góry* (Leszek the White, or The Witch from Łysa Góra).

Libretto by Ludwik Adam Dmuszewski

First performed in Warsaw, 2 December 1809. Played 13 times to 1813, later in 1815, 1817 and 1827.

Persons (featuring in the numbers preserved with music only)

Poles:	Ruthenians:
Leszek Biały (tenor) – Polish prince	Nikita (basso) – a Ruthenian councilor
Goworek (tenor) – Leszek's mentor and friend voivode of Sandomierz	Sudyboj (basso) – a Ruthenian councilor
Terefere (basso) – Leszek's jester	Paraska (soprano) – the Duchess
Nałęcz (tenor) – a Polish nobleman	Irena's old nurse, witch
The ghost of Leszek's father, prince Kazimierz	
Sprawiedliwy (spoken role)	

Musical numbers preserved in score

Act, No	Text incipit (performers)	type – character – style
I, 1	"O dniu wielki, dniu szczęśliwy" (chorus of Kiev people)	festive chorus
I, 2	March	instrumental, music material strikingly similar to "Triumph" section in introduction from <i>Die Zauberflöte</i>
I, 3	"Tak to już idzie na świecie" (Terefere)	vaudeville-like strophic song
I, 4	"Jestem posłanka wieczystej nocy" (Paraska)	supernatural coloratura aria in form of sonata aria <i>seria</i> (compressed da capo form)
I, 5	"Bożeno, miałbym ciebie utracić? (Leszek, the ghost of Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy)	melodrama with musical representation of supernatural
I, 6	"Co słyszysz? Nieba!" (Paraska, Nikita)	dialogue duetto
I, 7	"„Iluz to pragnie zgadnąć przyszłe rzeczy" (Paraska)	vaudeville-like strophic song
I, 8	"„Gdzie szerokim nurtem płynie" (four unidentified solo voices heard from different directions)	stylized Ukrainian dumka, strophic song akin to operatic romanza
I, 9	"Lecha ród mężny" (Nikita)	great polonaise aria in rondo form
I, 10	"Miłości, twe cuda głoszę" (Leszek, Nikita, Paraska, male chorus of Leszek companions and female chorus of Paraska servants)	great multi-sectional scena of magical seduction beginning with an instrumental section, probably ballet.
I, 11	"Ach, ojczel!" (Leszek, Nałęcz, the ghost of Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy)	melodrama and recitativo with the musical representation of supernatural
I, 12	"Skąd to zdziwienie?" (Leszek, Nałęcz, Nikita, Sudyboj)	homophonic quartet modelled on Salieri "Silenzio fasciasi"; a capella texture sporadically enriched with wind instruments, posaune and timpani
I, 13	Allegro	intrumental number combining dance features with <i>terribile</i> topos

The numbers from the second act preserved only in printed texts ([Ludwik Adam Dmuszewski], *Dzieła Dramatyczne L. A. Dmuszewskiego* vol. 4 (Wrocław: Korn, 1821), 88-95):

"Kto chce opisać kobiety" (Terefere) – strophic song

"Witam mego tatuleńka" (little Olechna (?)) – strophic song, marked as "mazurek"

"To dowodzi wielkość duszy" (Paraska, Leszek, Goworek) – terzetto

"Orkiestrą jest świat nasza cały" (Terefere) – strophic song

Appendix 2

Operatic Repertoire of the Lwów German Stage During Elsner's Time

The surviving evidence is complete for the period from the spring of 1794 onward, with a substantial gap in 1795. Therefore the table includes basically the information for 1794 and 1796-1798 (the latter covering the entire period of Bogusławski's directorship), along with scattered information for 1795. **Surviving evidence from before 1794 is given in bold.** The "Vienesse premieres" section includes only performances in the original language.

Opera Title	Composer	Vienna premiere	Lwów number of spectacles, the first known spectacle	Relation to Vienna
German original operas				
<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	1791	9+ 4 , 1792	Singspiels created for the Theater an der Wieden
<i>Der Spiegel von Arkadien</i>	Franz Xavier Süssmayr	1794	9, 1797	
<i>Oberon, König der Elfen</i>	Paul Wranitzky	1789	5, 1794	
<i>Der Wohltätige Derwisch</i>	J.B. Henneberg, B. Schack, et al.	1791	3, 1794	
<i>Die Waldmänner</i>	Johann Baptist Henneberg	1793	3, 1798	
<i>Der Königssohn aus Ithaka</i>	Franz Anton Hoffmeister	1795	1, 1798	
<i>Der zweiter Theil von Cosa Rara oder Die geplagten Ehemänner oder Der Fall ist noch weit seltner,</i>	Benedikt Schack	1790	1, 1794	

Opera Title	Composer	Vienna premiere	Lwów number of spectacles, the first known spectacle	Relation to Vienna
<i>Der Neue Gutsherr oder Hanchen und Gurge, Doktor und Apotheker</i>	Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf	1791	4, 1794	Dittersdorf's singspiels; Vienna premieres (Kärntnertortheater or Burgtheater) in 1786-1791, introduced to the Theater an der Wieden in 1789-1794
<i>Das rote Käppchen</i>		1786	1, 1794	
<i>Betrug durch berglauben</i>		1792	3, 1796	
<i>Liebe in Narrenhaus</i>		1786	1, 1794	
		1787	1, 1794	
<i>Kaspar fagottist, oder die Zauberzitter</i>	Wenzel Müller	1791	8, 1794	Singspiels created for the Theater in der Leopoldstadt
<i>Das Sonnefest der Braminen</i>		1790	3, 1796	
<i>Die beiden Schwestern vor Prag</i>		1794	5, 1796	
<i>Die Neue Sonntagskind</i>		1793	3, 1797	
<i>Gutte Mutter oder das Bürgergluck</i>	Paul Wranitzky	1795	1, 1794	Created for the Kärntnertortheater
<i>Die Maskerade (Graf Balberone oder die Maskerade)</i>	Franz Xaver Gerl	1797	3, 1797	Created for the theater in Brünn (premiere in 1796). The music composed by a former member of Schikaneder's company. In 1797 performed also in the Theater an der Wieden
<i>Die Rauchfangkehrer</i>	Antonio Salieri	1781	1, 1794	Composed for National Singspiel, revived in 1790 in Theater an der Landstrasse

Opera Title	Composer	Vienna premiere	Lwów number of spectacles, the first known spectacle	Relation to Vienna
<i>Der Bettelstudent</i>	Peter Winter	1785	2, 1794	Winter's singspiel much successful in whole German-speaking area, in Vienna staged in the Theater in der Leopoldstadt
<i>Ibrahim und Abdallah, oder Die seltenen Brüder</i>	Joseph (Józef) Elsner	-	1795, 1	(Elsner's first opera compositions)
<i>Der verkleidete Sultan</i>		-	1795, 1	
Adaptations of Italian operas				
<i>Der Talisman (Il Talismano)</i>	Antonio Salieri	1779	4, 1794	works by Viennese leading opera composers
<i>Axur, König von Ormus (Axur, re d'Ormus)</i>	Antonio Salieri	1788	3, 1794	
<i>Figaros Hochzeit (Le Nozze di Figaro)</i>	W.A. Mozart	1786	1, 1792	
<i>Don Juan (Il dissoluto punito ossia Il Don Giovanni)</i>	W.A. Mozart	1788	2, 1794	
<i>Der Baum der Diana (Arbore di Diana)</i>	Vicente Martin y Soler	1788	3, 1794	
<i>Unter zwei Streitenden freut sich der dritte (Fra I due litiganti il terzo gode)</i>	Giuseppe Sarti	1783	1, 1794	Operas by Sarti constantly popular in Vienna since the 1780s
<i>Julius Sabinus (Giulio Sabino)</i>		1785	2, 1794	
<i>Die eifersuchtigen Bauern (Gelosie Villane)</i>		1777/ 1794	1, 1794	

Opera Title	Composer	Vienna premiere	Lwów number of spectacles, the first known spectacle	Relation to Vienna
<i>König Theodor (Il re Teodoro in Venezia)</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	1784	3, 1794	Operas by Paisiello that were brought to Vienna or further popularized there following the composer's arrival in 1790
<i>Der Barbier von Sivilien (Il barbiere di Siviglia)</i>		1783	2, 1794	
<i>Das Mädchen von Frascati (La Frascatana)</i>		1775	2, 1794	
<i>Die schöne Müllerin (La Molinara)</i>		1790	5, 1796	
<i>Das schöne Fischermädchen (La bella pescatrice)</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	1791	2, 1794	Operas by Guglielmi, much popularized by Neapolitan company that arrived to Vienna in 1790 (with famous Irene Tomeoni)
<i>Die adeliche Schäferin (Pastorella nobile)</i>		1790	4, 1794	
<i>Die heimliche Ehe (Il Matrimonio Segreto)</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	1792	2, 1794	Created for Vienna
<i>Die Weinlese, oder Die Unterhaltung im Herbste (La Vendemmia)</i>	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	1779	1, 1797	
<i>Ritter Roland (Orlando Paladino)</i>	Joseph Haydn	-	3, 1794	German version performed in the Theater an der Wieden in 1792
<i>Armida</i>	Joseph Haydn	-	3, 1794	German concert version performed in the Theater an der Wieden in 1797

Opera Title	Composer	Vienna premiere	Lwów number of spectacles, the first known spectacle	Relation to Vienna
Adaptation of French operas				
<i>Zémire und Azor</i> (<i>Zemire et Azor, ou la Belle et la bête</i>)	A. E. M. Grétry	1775	1797, 1	In Vienna revived in German version in 1790 (the Theater in der Leopoldstadt)
<i>Die beiden kleinen Savoyarden</i> (<i>Les Deux petits Savoyards</i>)	Nicolas Dalayrac	-	1796, 2	In Vienna premiered in German translation in 1792, both in the Theater in der Leopoldstadt and the Theater an der Wieden

The main sources of evidence for the Lwów theatre repertoire from this period are, besides a few surviving playbills, two German-language journals: *Allgemeine deutsche Theater-Zeitung* (Pressburg, a periodical supplement to the Pressburger Zeitung) and *Allgemeine Europäisches Journal* (Brünn). These and other diverse materials collected by Jerzy Got during his work on several books concerning Lwów theatres were recently researched for a second time by members of the project "Teatry we Lwowie 1789-1945," resulting in an online database with [the same title](#).

Notes

1. Most recent and representative accounts: Alina Nowak-Romanowicz, *The Classical Era: 1750–1830*, trans. John Comber, *History of Music in Poland* 4 (Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, 2004), Chapter 2: “Opera”; Anna Parkitna, “Opera in Warsaw, 1765–1830: Operatic Migration, Adaptation, and Reception in the Enlightenment” (PhD diss., Stony Brook University, 2020), Chapter 6: “Building National Opera Traditions.”
2. Alina Żórawska-Witkowska, “Eighteenth-Century Warsaw as a Musical Centre between Western and Eastern Europe: 1731–1794,” in *Music Migrations in the Early Modern Age: People, Markets, Patterns and Styles*, ed. Vjera Katalinić, *Serija Muzikološki zbornici* 18 (Zagreb: Hrvatsko muzikološko društvo, 2016), 177–89; Alina Żórawska-Witkowska, *Muzyka na dworze i w teatrze Stanisława Augusta* (Warsaw: Zamek Królewski w Warszawie, 1995). Both areas of research converge in a thorough study by Anna Parkitna (see footnote 2), which for English-language readers remains the chief extensive source of up-to-date knowledge about the beginnings of the Polish opera scene.
3. Original wording: “Von dieser Aufführung [Axur] kann man die grössere poln[ische] Oper datiren” and “Die Amazonen aber waren nun die erste grosse poln.[ische] Original-Oper,” [Józef Elsner], “Die Oper in Polen,” *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 20 (13 May 1812): 326. On the question of Elsner’s authorship of this and other anonymously published texts, see: Lucian Schiwietz, “Josef Elsner als Korrespondent der ‘Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung,’” in *Józef Elsner (1769–1854): Życie—działalność—epoka*, ed. Remigiusz Pośpiech *Musica Claromontana—Studia* 4 (Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego UO, 2013), 215–21.
4. One still relevant study of Bogusławski’s works and life is Zbigniew Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982). See also Barbara Chmura-Żaczekiewicz, “Wojciech Bogusławski,” (2001) in *Grove Music Online*.
5. Józef Elsner was born into a German-speaking family in Grottkau (now Grodków, Poland) in Silesia—the multiethnic region belonging at that time to the Kingdom of Prussia, but in other periods also to Poland, Czechia, and Austria. His regular music education began in Prussian Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland) at a Dominican school and Jesuit gymnasium (on his further music formation, see later in the article). Young Elsner’s familiarity with residues of Polish folk culture in Silesia is undoubtable, while some Polish musicologists’ search for Elsner’s ethnic origins has proved inconclusive and, in some cases, impacted by national sentiment. Be it as it may, his later unreserved accession to Polish culture makes the “ethnic” question not so crucial as a justification for calling him a “Polish composer.” See Alina Nowak-Romanowicz, *Józef Elsner: Monografia*, *Studia i materiały do dziejów muzyki polskiej* 4 (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1957), 9–18; Małgorzata Kowalska, “Postać Józefa Elsner w polskich podręcznikach,” in *Józef Elsner (1769–1854): Życie—działalność—epoka*, ed. Remigiusz Pośpiech *Musica Claromontana—Studia* 4 (Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego UO, 2013), 365–68; Maria Zduniak, “Józef Elsner, syn Śląska Opolskiego,” in *Józef Elsner (1769–1854): Życie—działalność—epoka*, ed. Remigiusz Pośpiech, *Musica Claromontana—Studia* 4 (Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego UO, 2013), 15–42.
6. Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 303–11.
7. Ibid., 161–288.
8. Ibid., 73–79; Parkitna, “Opera in Warsaw,” 235–48.

9. Ibid., 80–120; Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 149–69.
10. Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 256–65; Jakub Chachulski, "Genologia i polityka: Swoistość 'Cudu, czyli Krakowiaków i Górali' w horyzoncie gatunków operowych końca XVIII stulecia," *Muzyka* 66, no. 3 (2021): 117–47.
11. Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 182–85, 221–26, 278–79; Jakub Chachulski "'Tiolemo su'el fagoto' i piosneczki Wojciecha Bogusławskiego: O weneckim pierwowzorze warszawskiej 'Wenecjanki'," *Muzyka* 66, no. 1 (2021): 105–25.
12. Jerzy Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary: Wojciech Bogusławski i teatr lwowski* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 81–82.
13. Bulla's German-language troupe was active in Lwów from 1789 on. In 1791 it transformed into a permanent theater institution (the first one in the city). See Jerzy Got, *Das österreichische Theater in Lemberg im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: Aus dem Theaterleben der Vielvölkermonarchie*, vol. 1, *Theatergeschichte Österreichs* 10,4 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 16–201; Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 215–17.
14. Ibid., 66–78.
15. Nowak-Romanowicz, *Classical Era*, 229–30; Józef Elsner, *Sumariusz moich utworów muzycznych z objaśnieniami o czynnościach i działaniach moich jako artysty muzycznego*, ed. Alina Nowak Romanowicz, trans. Kazimierz Lubomirski, *Źródła pamiennikarsko-literackie do dziejów muzyki polskiej* 4 (Cracow: PWM, 1956), 101–2. (This is Elsner's account of his compositional oeuvre and creative life, written in German near the end of his life, preserved only in Polish translation.)
16. As far as we know, Elsner began to use the Polish version of his first name around 1800. In the time I write about he still belonged to German-speaking culture and used the form „Joseph”.
17. More on the topic in Petr Koukal, "Joseph Elsner and the Brno theater," in *Tradycje śląskiej kultury muzycznej XII*, ed. Alicja Granat-Janki, *Tradycje Śląskiej Kultury Muzycznej* 12 (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej im. K. Lipińskiego, 2011), 49–65. The repertoire of the Brno theater was typical of Austrian provincial theaters and had much in common with Bulla's Lwów stage. See Milada Wurmová, *Repertoár brněnského divadla v letech 1777–1848* (Brno: Archiv města Brna, 1990), 21–23.
18. Nowak-Romanowicz, *Elsner*, 31–32.
19. John Rice, *Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 427–92. On the topic of Vienna's musical life during Elsner's stay, see also Peter Andraschke, "Joseph Elsner und Wien," in *Józef Elsner (1769–1854): Życie—działalność—epoka*, ed. Remigiusz Pośpiech, *Musica Claromontana—Studia* 4 (Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego UO, 2013), 79–90.
20. Rice, *Salieri*, 427–30.
21. Ibid., 495.
22. David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theater* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 335–37.

23. Mozart's opera was shown in Lwów on September 21, 22, and 23; then Bulla set off to Warsaw, where his other troupe was performing from October on. Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 62; Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 219; Got, *Theater in Lemberg*, 57. Elsner arrived in Lwów when Bulla was still there. Elsner, *Sumariusz*, 97.
24. Elsner testifies to the Lwów staging of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in this year. Elsner, *Sumariusz*, 98.
25. For Lwów repertoires from this period, see Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 334–37.
26. "W przeciągu pół roku niespełna wyuczywszy się opery Don Juan Mozarta, przedstawiłem ją z wielkim powodzeniem, co dotąd we Lwowie uważano za niepodobne do wykonania." Elsner, *Sumariusz*, 98.
27. The four main groups in the whole period of 1794–1799 are singspiels created for the Theater an der Wieden, those written for the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, Dittersdorf's singspiels from 1786–1790 revived in the Theater an der Wieden after 1792, and adaptations of Italian operas popular in Vienna in the first half of the decade.
28. *Die seltenen Brüder oder Die vier Zauberkugeln* (lost, libretto by Elsner) and *Der verkleidete Sultan* (the surviving elements being the libretto by Heinrich Gottfried Brettschneider and one aria). According to the composer (Elsner, *Sumariusz*, 42), the former was inspired by *Die Zauberflöte*. On the latter, see Jakub Chachulski, "[Fragment zaginionego singspielu Józefa Elsnera,](#)" *Muzyka* 64, no. 3 (2019): 99–109.
29. Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 401, 391, 401. For the entire known (Polish and German) Lwów repertoires from that time, see *ibid.*, 353–403; also the digital database "[Teatry we Lwowie 1789–1945](#)". The surviving evidence is complete for the period from the spring of 1794 onward, with a substantial gap in 1795.
30. According to Bogusławski, in 1796 the theater was joined by a certain Lehmann, an excellent specialist in stage machinery from Schikaneder's theater (Wojciech Bogusławski, *Dzieje Teatru Narodowego* [Warsaw: Glucksberg, 1820], 108). The Lwów artist Karl Burghauser moved to the Theater an der Wieden in 1797, while in 1806 he was back in Bogusławski's German company in Warsaw. Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 377.
31. *Allgemeines Europäisches Journal*, February 2, 1797, 177.
32. Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 388, 392.
33. *Ibid.*, 369, 374.
34. See the cover picture; more reproductions are included in Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*.
35. *Flet Czarnoxiężki, Wielka Opera* we dwóch aktach (Lwów: [Piller], 1792). The only copy known to me is kept at the library of the Castle Museum in Łańcut (PL-ŁA).
36. *Allgemeines Europäisches Journal*, December 12, 1795, 185–86. An additional advantage of the Polish adaptation consisted in the sung *recitativi*. It was the first, and for a long time the only, opera sung through in Polish. Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 159–61.
37. On the profile of Galician society from the time, see Jolanta T. Pękacz, *Music in the Culture of Polish Galicia: 1772–1914*, Rochester Studies in Central Europe (Rochester: University of

Rochester Press, 2002), 11–31.

38. Got, *Das Österreichische Theater*, 76–77; see also the citation in the next paragraph.
39. This has already suggested by Got (*Na wyspie Guaxary*, 275–76, 280). In Warsaw, the most popular Viennese titles were *Das Sonnenfest Der Braminen* (played from 1800, 10 times before 1810), *Der Königssohn aus Ithaka* (from 1803, more than 20 times before 1810), *Die Zauberflöte* (more than 40 spectacles in 1802–1814), *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* (more than 50 shows in 1802–1814), *Palmira regina di Persia* (30 times in 1803–1810), and *Axur* (played by the troupe more than 100 times between 1793 and 1814). For the Warsaw repertoires, see Eugeniusz Szwankowski, *Teatr Wojciecha Bogusławskiego w latach 1799–1814* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1954).
40. “Napisana w Stolicy, w któręj gust Wiedeńskich wielkich Oper naypierwsze naówczas trzymal mieysce, niemogła obeyść się bez dwóch przynaymnięj krotofilnych osób, [...] które też (ile w smutnej z innych miar osnowie) potrzebnymi, dla rozweselenia, bydź się zdawały.” [Wojciech Bogusławski], *Dzieła Dramatyczne Wojciecha Bogusławskiego*, vol. 12 (Warsaw: Glücksberg, 1823), 418.
41. “Po Melodramie umyśliłem napisać wielką Operę, w sposobie Oper tego rodzaju Niemieckich; stosować się bowiem do smaku obydwu Narodów, którym usługi moje poświęciłem, nieodbitą było powinnością” (Bogusławski, *Dzieje Teatru Narodowego*, 119).
42. The intended meaning of the term “wielka opera” (“great opera”) is confirmed by Bogusławski’s using it subsequently for *Die Zauberflöte*, *Das unterbrochene Opferfest*, and *Der Königssohn aus Ithaka*, labeled as the first, second, and third “great opera” adapted by Polish theater after his return to Warsaw (Bogusławski, *Dzieje Teatru Narodowego*, 166, 170, 172).
43. Martin Nedbal, *Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven*, Ashgate Interdisciplinary Studies in Opera (London: Routledge, 2017), 123–25.
44. Nedbal, *Morality*, 124.
45. Parkitna, “Opera in Warsaw,” 155.
46. The latter was staged also by the Polish troupe in Lwów under Elsner’s music direction. Got, *Na wyspie Guaxary*, 370.
47. Bruce A. Brown, “*Le Pazzie d’Orlando, Orlando Paladino*, and the Uses of Parody,” *Italica* 64, no. 4 (1987): 583–605; Mary Hunter, “The Fusion and Juxtaposition of Genres in Opera Buffa 1770–1800: Anelli and Piccinni’s ‘Griselda,’” *Music & Letters* 67, no. 4 (1986): 363–80. For a more general overview, see also Martin Ruhnke, “Opera semiseria und dramma eroicomico,” *Colloquium “Die stilistische Entwicklung der italienischen Musik zwischen 1770 und 1830 und ihre Beziehungen zum Norden,”* *Analecta Musicologica* 21 (Laaber: Laaber, 1982), 263–74; Helen Geyer-Kiefl, *Die heroisch-komische Oper: ca. 1770–1820* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1987).
48. Rice, *Salieri*, 415.
49. Bruce A. Brown, “*Le Pazzie d’Orlando*,” 592–99.
50. On the poetics of these librettos, see Jörg Krämer, *Deutschsprachiges Musiktheater im späten 18. Jahrhundert: Typologie, Dramaturgie und Anthropologie einer populären Gattung*, Studien zur

deutschen Literatur (Tübingen: Niemeyer, [2012]), 538–91; Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 295–331. For a broader account of different forms of operatic heroic-comic forms at the time, see Geyer-Kiefl, *Die heroisch-komische Oper*.

51. Rice, *Salieri*, 574–75, Martin Nedbal, *Mozart's Operas and National Politics: Canon Formation in Prague from 1791 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 220. For further thoughts on these two types of translation, see Stephen C. Meyer, *Carl Maria von Weber and the Search for a German Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 33–34.
52. "Sung in German by a cast that included Emanuel Schikaneder [...], *Palmira* at the Theater an der Wien must have reminded Viennese of *Die Zauberflöte* even more clearly than the court theaters' original production. The Theater an der Wien kept *Palmira* alive after it had ceased to be heard in the court theaters." Rice, *Salieri*, 558.
53. Meyer, *Carl Maria von Weber*, 35–52.
54. Arnold Jacobshagen, "Das *Fremde* im Eigenen: Die deutsche Opernlandschaft um 1800 als transkultureller Raum," in *Oper im Aufbruch: Gattungskonzepte des deutschsprachigen Musiktheaters um 1800*, ed. Marcus Chr. Lippe (Kassel: Bosse, 2007), 83, 89.
55. On Italian-German opera translation practices, see Meyer, *Carl Maria von Weber*, 33–34; Daniel Brandenburg, "Zur Rezeption des Buffa-Repertoires im deutschsprachigen Raum: Deutsche Bearbeitungen italienischer Werke in Wien," in *Oper im Aufbruch: Gattungskonzepte des deutschsprachigen Musiktheaters um 1800*, ed. Marcus Chr. Lippe (Kassel: Bosse, 2007), 209–19; Anisha Netto, "[Singspiel as Practice: Italian Opera in German Translation 1783–1800](#)" (PhD diss., University of Southampton, 2023).
56. I refer only to the more recent studies addressing specifically the questions of operatic genre: Stefano Castelvechi, *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama*, Cambridge Studies in Opera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–12; James A. Hepokoski, "Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: 'Addio, del passato' (*La traviata*, Act III)," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1, no. 3 (1989): 250–53; Arnold Jacobshagen, *Opera semiseria: Gattungskonvergenz und Kulturtransfer im Musiktheater*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 57 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 12–35; Alessandra Campana, "Genre and Poetics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies*, ed. Nicholas Till (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 202–5.
57. Though the Warsaw theater continued to operate for most of Bogusławski's period of absence from that city (1794–1799), the established discourse of Polish theater history mostly emphasizes the continuity between his Lwów enterprise and his subsequent Warsaw directorship. Having obtained the Warsaw post in 1799, Bogusławski moved there from Lwów along with virtually his entire troupe as well as the new music director (Elsner), together with some outstanding members of the orchestra, the theater library, and wardrobe (both of which he had taken with him from Warsaw in 1794). See Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 311, 347–50.
58. The nationality-based genre typologies dominate in virtually all the literature concerning the Polish operatic stage in the Enlightenment (see footnote 2). Some insights converging with my argumentation can be found in theater history studies, as, e.g., when Raszewski notes that after 1800 the core of Bogusławski's opera repertoire moved decisively towards a new type of works, which were akin in their plot and stage character to the exotic and fairy-tale (magic) drama. See Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 369–71.

59. There is solid evidence for the assumption that the channel of repertoire transfer from the circles of Vienna's vernacular theaters established in Lwów also remained the main source for new operas in Warsaw, so that some Italian and later even French works were adapted by Bogusławski from their Viennese German versions. *Palmira* may have reached the Warsaw theater in an already "singspieled" variant (1802), as Bogusławski lists Salieri among the composers of the genre labeled as the "grand German opera," referred to as Schikaneder's invention and exemplified by the latter's magic singspiels. This typology of opera genres can be found along with his translation of Mehul's *Joseph* libretto [Alexandre Duval], printed in 1820 in the first volume of his collected stage works. [Wojciech Bogusławski], [Dzieła Dramatyczne Wojciecha Bogusławskiego, vol. 1 \(Warsaw: Glücksberg, 1820\), 359–60](#). Even more curiously, the same seems to be true of Cherubini's *Lodoiska* (in Warsaw in 1804), described on the playbill from 1807 as "przerobiona z niemieckiego" (adapted from the German). (State Archive in Warsaw, Zbiór Afiszów, cz. I: wiek XIX [Playbill Collection, section I: the nineteenth century], N-11). More curiously, in his *Dzieła dramatyczne* Bogusławski twice stated that Cherubini's opera was created in German and only then translated into French (vol. 1, 360; vol. 6, 233). Later Grétry's *Raoul Barbe-bleue* (in Warsaw in 1805) was openly described by Elsner as staged "in a Viennese adaptation." ("nach der wiener Umarbeitung." [Józef Elsner], ["Geschichte des polnischen National-Theaters in Warschau," Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung December 9, 1812, 807](#).) Although these titles already bring us to the next, "French" period of Warsaw's operatic stage, they nevertheless seem worth mentioning, as they provide evidence both of how firmly the Warsaw theater remained in the orbit of the Viennese stage and of how elusive the question of genre identity can be when it comes to analyses of works migrating across cultural and national boundaries and undergoing multiple arrangements or adaptations. (Source-based research into the Warsaw adaptation practices in that period was rendered impossible by the almost complete destruction of the Library of Warsaw Government Theaters in 1944.)
60. Axel Körner, "Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States," in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis / International History in Theory and Practice*, ed. Barbara Haider-Wilson, William D. Godsey, and Wolfgang Mueller, *Internationale Geschichte 4* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017), 265–90; and Axel Körner, ["Dalla storia transnazionale all'opera transnazionale: Per una critica delle categorie nazionali," Il saggiaatore musicale 24 \(2017\): 81–89](#). It has recently been proposed to employ the term to describe the circulation of adapted and translated opera repertoire in the German-speaking areas in the period under study. See Estelle Joubert, "Quantitative Approach to Transnational Studies of Opera, 1785–1810," in "Das Singspiel im 18. Jahrhundert," ed. Benedikt Leßmann, Tilman Venzl, special issue, *Aufklärung 34* (2022): 65–66.
61. "Therefore, transnational history does not ignore nation states or interaction between them; and it is not a cosy history without conflict. As a concept, transnational history is inclusive rather than exclusive." Körner, "Transnational History," 275.
62. For this reason I prefer the concept of the transnational to Wolfgang Welsch's "transculturality," as used in Arnold Jacobshagen's study cited above, since the latter seems to positively reject the idea of distinct and self-consistent national cultures. See Jacobshagen, "Das Fremde im Eigenen," 79.
63. Körner, "Transnational History," 269.
64. Körner, "Dalla storia transnazionale," esp. 84, 86, 92.
65. Both original singspiels and translated Italian works of this kind could be labeled as "heroisch-komische Opern," "heroisch-komische Singspiele," "grosse komische Singspiele," etc. Similar variability can be observed in the contemporary Polish practice. It should also be noted

that the Polish term “heroiczno-komiczna” was borrowed directly from German theater terminology, bypassing the existing literary tradition of using the term “heroikomiczny” as a direct equivalent of “*eroicomico*” and “*héroïcomique*” for the Polish *poemi eroicomici*, particularly popular in the classicist circles during the Polish Enlightenment. As for the term “grand,” it is employed here as an equivalent of the German “grosse” and the Polish “wielka,” as used in the contexts in question. Some time later or in other German-speaking centers, the term “grosse Oper” might indicate the intention of creating serious German operas equal in the genre hierarchy to the Italian opera *seria* or the French *grand opéra*, or else anticipating the German romantic opera (Meyer, *Weber*, 30–33). This obviously does not apply to the Viennese *grosse Oper* or the Polish “wielka opera,” where the adjective merely denotes the lavishness of both the stage-theatrical and musical layers of the spectacle. My usage of the term “grand opera” therefore has nothing to do with its French roots or its later, nineteenth-century career.

66. These operas by Elsner have not become the subject of comprehensive research so far. Nowak-Romanowicz’s monograph on Elsner’s life and work (*Józef Elsner*, 59–68, 106–20) includes a rather perfunctory discussion of these works, which, due to its methodology and lack of interest in non-Polish contexts, falls short of today’s standards of operological research. Some of these findings and theses are then repeated in the same author’s fourth volume of *History of Music in Poland* (Nowak-Romanowicz, *The Classical Era*, Chapter 4). Certain aspects of the first two of the above-listed four operas have been addressed in my recent papers, from which I will recall a few findings below, as indicated in separate references. For basic information on the entirety of Elsner’s operatic output, along with sources and a full list of music incipits, see *Józef Elsner, Katalog tematyczny utworów, II: Utwory świeckie / A Thematic Catalogue of the Works, II: Secular Music*, prepared by Jakub Chachulski (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2019), 44–49, 61–195. For a popular introduction to the operas in question, including plot summaries, see Jakub Chachulski, “The Amazons or Herminia,” trans. Piotr Szymczak, *Dziedzictwo Muzyki Polskiej* (accessed February 7, 2024); and, by the same author and translator, “Sultan Wampum, or a Careless Wish,” “Fairy Urzella, or What Ladies Like,” “Leszek Biały or the Witch from Łysa Góra.”
67. Daniel E. Freeman, “*La guerriera amante*: Representations of Amazons and Warrior Queens in Venetian Baroque Opera,” *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (1996): 431–60.
68. Freeman interprets it as Metastasio’s influence: “*La guerriera amante*,” 446–48.
69. Rice, *Salieri*, 537–46.
70. See esp. Mary Hunter, “Some Representations of *Opera Seria* in *Opera Buffa*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 2 (1991), esp. 90–91; Marita McClymonds, “Opera seria? Opera buffa? Genre and style as sign,” in *Opera buffa in Mozart’s Vienna*, ed. Mary Hunter and James Webster, Cambridge studies in opera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 197–231.
71. The findings presented in this subsection were discussed in a more detailed way in the article Jakub Chachulski, “Heroiczne—Komiczne—Sentymentalne: Muzyczny obraz amazonek w najstarszej zachowanej operze Józefa Elsnera i Wojciecha Bogusławskiego,” *Studia Chopinowskie* 4, no. 2, 6–29.
72. Freeman, “*La guerriera amante*,” 439–40.
73. “Wojować mężczyzn własnością, nam kochać tylko przystoi.” All quotes from musical numbers come from the score PL-WN Mus 90/1–2; for an alternative source, see the next footnote.

74. "Wy jesteście niewolnicami przesądów waszych," [Bogusławski], [Dzieła Dramatyczne](#), vol. 12, 391.
75. Some originality was discerned in this Martín-derived number, consisting of a sequence of choral, ensemble, and solo sections, as well as recitativo obbligato. See John Platoff, "A New History for Martín's 'Una cosa rara,'" *Journal of Musicology* 12, no. 1 (1994), 107. A similar scheme is found in the first number of *Amazonki*. *Una cosa rara* belongs to most liked items of Bogusławski's repertoire in the Warsaw years before his coming to Lwów.
76. Nowak-Romanowicz saw Elsner's incompetence there. *Józef Elsner*, 63.
77. I use the concept of style levels (high-middle-low) after McClymonds, "Opera seria?" 204–6.
78. A term coined by Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 276–79. See also Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 139. Charles Rosen calls it "sonata form with trio." Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: Norton, 1980), 56. James Webster names it simply "sonata aria." James Webster, "The Analysis of Mozart Arias," in *Mozart Studies*, ed. Cliff Eisen, *Mozart Studies* 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 115.
79. In Vienna near the end of the century, it became a convention to give the main female *parte seria* a "static" aria, similar to the da capo or sonata form in the first act and a two-tempo rondò in the second. Hunter, *Culture*, 252.
80. Hunter, *Culture*, 137–40.
81. On the two-tempo rondò, see Daniel Heartz, "Mozart and His Italian Contemporaries: 'la Clemenza di Tito,'" *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1978/79), 281–84; Rice, *Salieri*, 354–61, 479–89; Hunter, *Culture*, 147.
82. Hunter, *Culture*, 147.
83. For more on this topic, see Jakub Chachulski, "[Agenor i Strabon, Papageno i Sarastro: Lwowskie meandry operowej biografii Wojciecha Bogusławskiego](#)," *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 71, no. 2 (2022): 88–90; on residues of Viennese Hanswurstian roles in Schikaneder's plays, see Nedbal, *Morality*, 149; on relics of improvised Volkstheater in Lwów practice, see Got, *Das österreichische Theater*, 14, 91–92.
84. Rice, *Salieri*, 302.
85. On disguise as one of the *loci communi* of buffa plots and its musical representation in Vienna, see Hunter, *Culture*, 83–84.
86. "Jam panienka jak należy."
87. "Kiedy miałam lat trzynaście, bardzo mężczyzny kochałam."
88. Nedbal, *Morality*, 53–54. Notably, the verse takes a poetic form specific to the French vaudeville type to which Nedbal's example also belongs, with a strophe consisting of two quatrains plus a concluding couplet with a repeated formula only slightly changed in the subsequent verses. Here: "But forgive me, please / these are but the youngsters' (later: spouses' / widows' / our sex's) delights."

89. Ibid., 54.
90. The latter brings to mind the aria "Quantunque vecchierella, sento fresca e agile" from Salieri's *Il Talismano*, well known in Lwów. For more on bawdy improprieties in the Viennese opera buffa at that time, see *ibid.*, 101–12.
91. Hunter, *Culture*, 247–48. A similar concept was presented by David Charlton, "Continuing Polarities," in *French Opera 1730–1830: Meaning and Media*, Variorum Collected Studies Series 634 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), I, 11–12.
92. The discussion of this scene and the aria that follows is based on excerpts from my earlier article Chachulski, "Agenor i Strabon," 102–8.
93. [Bogusławski], *Dzieła dramatyczne*, vol. 12, 380. Original: "AGENOR: A więc jej śmierć niepomszczoną ma zostać? Mająż te hydry piekielne triumfować z niegodnych podstępów, przez które ją na spalenie skazano?... Nie... Jako rycerz, kochanek, jako król nareszcie, chcę pomścić się niewinności zgnębianej. IFIKRATES (łagodnie): Ale jako człowiek, zechcesz przelewać krew narodu twego dla rzeczy już nienadgrozonej?"
94. Raszewski, *Bogusławski*, 269–70.
95. As a baritone, however, Bogusławski would never sing this part himself, and for the Polish audiences he remained the ideal Papageno. See Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 271.
96. Daniel Hertz, "La Clemenza di Sarastro: Masonic Benevolence in Mozart's Last Operas," *The Musical Times* 124, no. 1681 (1983): 156.
97. [Bogusławski], *Dzieła dramatyczne*, vol. 12, 395.
98. James Webster notes the autonomous role of this instrumental layer in building the expressive meaning of Pamina's aria. Webster, "The Analysis," 125.
99. On the popularity of this number, see Rice, *Salieri*, 551, 560.
100. The day of the premiere is unknown; the year 1800 is testified to by the theater's documents (Szwankowski, *Warszawski teatr*). The opera, however, may have its Lwów and German-language prehistory, as both press sources concerning the Lwów theater report German performances of Kotzebue's *Sultan Wampum* in 1797 with Elsner's music. See *Allgemeine Deutsche Theater Zeitung*, January 1, 1797, 9; *Allgemeine Europäische Journal*, January 1, 1797, 198). However, the lack of such information in *Sumariusz* seems to preclude any possibility of Elsner creating a substantial operatic work to Kotzebue's German text in Lwów.
101. On this category, see, e.g., Mary Hunter, "The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 43–73; Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); Nasser Al-Taei, "The Sultan's Seraglio: Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy in Eighteenth-Century Viennese 'Turkish' Music" (PhD diss., University of California, 1999); Nicholas Tarling, *Orientalism and the Operatic World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).
102. Some sources mention Augustyn Gliński, a Warsaw official and translator, as a joint or sole

author of the translation. Elsner, however, wrote: "*Sultan Wampum* v. Kotzebue (v. Elsner in Musik gesetzt) hatte Hr. v. Bogusl. zu einer komischen Oper so gänzlich umgearbeitet, dass das Stück mehr als Original, denn als Uebersetzung angesehen werden konnte." [Józef Elsner], "[Die Oper in Polen](#)," 327.

103. For a detailed discussion of Boguslawski's additions and the structure of both finals, see Jakub Chachulski, "['Zły smak i gminna przesada': Kilka uwag o muzyczno-dramatycznej konstrukcji opery *Sultan Wampum* Józefa Elsnera na tle oryginalnego libretta Augusta von Kotzebue](#)," *Muzyka* 64, no. 4 (2019), 3–36.
104. On the "alla turca" Viennese music style, see Mary Hunter, "*Alla turca*," 45–47; Nasir Al-Taei, "The Sultan's Seraglio," 162.
105. Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 293, 294, 296, 302.
106. *Ibid.*, 306, 350.
107. I follow David Buch's use of the term (e.g., Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 349, 353), though such material sometimes seems hardly distinguishable from the musical topos known as *tempesta*.
108. See Nedbal, *Morality*, 48–73; Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 25. See also Gottlieb Stephanie's advice for singspiel librettists, as cited in the same place (24–25).
109. Parkitna, "Opera in Warsaw," 155. On the European popularity of the French original, see Betsy Bowden, *The Wife of Bath in Afterlife: Ballads to Blake*, Studies in Text & Print Culture (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2017), 144–145; Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 265.
110. Łysa Góra ("the bald peak") was a spot for witches' Sabbaths in Polish legends and fairy tales, like the German Blocksberg.
111. Michał Dymitr Krajewski, *Leszek Biały Xiąże Polski, Syn Kazimierza Sprawiedliwego: w XII. Xiegach Poema Prozą*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Zawadzki, 1791) and vol. 2 (Warsaw: Bacigalupi, 1792).
112. On *Die Donauweibchen*, see Jürgen Schläder, *Undine auf dem Musiktheater: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der deutschen Spieloper*, Orpheus-Schriftenreihe zu Grundfragen der Musik 28 (Bonn: Verlag für systematische Musikwissenschaft, 1979), 99–227; John Warrack, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 188–90; Kasper von Kooten, "*Was deutsch und echt ...*": *Richard Wagner and the Articulation of a German Opera, 1798–1876*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 66–70.
113. Only the first act of the score with some scraps of spoken dialogues survives. The plot is known from a summary printed in [Gazeta Korrespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego](#), 9 December, 1809, 1528–1529.
114. The preference for lied-type numbers is discussed by Thomas Betzwieser, *Sprechen und Singen: Ästhetik und Erscheinungsformen der Dialogoper*, M-&P-Schriftenreihe für Wissenschaft und Forschung: Musik (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2002), 239–43.
115. See footnote 50.

116. Sabine Henze-Döhring, "Gattungskonvergenzen—Gattungsumbrüche: Zur Situation der deutschsprachigen Oper um 1800," in *Oper im Aufbruch: Gattungskonzepte des deutschsprachigen Musiktheaters um 1800*, ed. Marcus Christian Lippe, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 9 (Kassel: Bosse, 2007), 63–64; Thomas Betzwieser, "Spielarten der deutschen Opernästhetik um 1800: Denkfiguren im Spannungsfeld von Gattungsreflexion und Bühnenkonvention," in *Oper im Aufbruch: Gattungskonzepte des deutschsprachigen Musiktheaters um 1800*, ed. Marcus Christian Lippe, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 9 (Kassel: Bosse, 2007), 29.
117. Milada Wurmová, *Repertoár*, 21–23, 26. According to Wurmová, Elsner's stage works created in Lwów (*Amazonki*, two melodramas, and one of the German singspiels) were performed in the Brno theater, though the years given by this author (1793–1795) seem to result from a mistake.