

**7**

---

# Historic Organ in Lubecko. History and Future

Franciszek Koenig

ORCID: 0000-0003-0285-9081

INSTITUTE OF HISTORY AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OPOLE

## ABSTRACT

The article discusses the organ in Lubecko built in 1780 in Jemielnica and then relocated to Lubecko before 1834 (that year, the organ was already being renovated by Johann Hawel). For many years, it was believed the organ was built by the Scheffler family company operating both in Jemielnica and in the Lubliniec region. However, it has been discovered that a sticker placed in the pallet box of the windchest contains extremely important information that the actual builder of the organ was Franz Joseph Weiss who worked in Pyskowice in Upper Silesia at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. The organ therefore is of high cultural value due to both the person of its builder and the construction solutions used. Currently, the organ is out of use. It requires a restoration plan and being entered into the register of monuments.

## Introduction

The organ in the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lubecko near Lubliniec is an extremely valuable instrument for several reasons.

Firstly, it is one of the few 18th-century instruments preserved in Upper Silesia. In the Gliwice diocese, it is the second oldest instrument in chronological order, right after Gottfried Wilhelm Scheffer's organ in the church of St. Martin in Cieszowa near Koszęcin built in 1770 (WUOZ, card dated 18th June 1997). The organ in Lubecko, as preserved information indicates, is just several years younger than the organ in Cieszowa. Therefore, this instrument has both historical and cultural value as a testimony to the tradition of organ building in Silesia. It is even more important because in recent weeks, thanks to direct instrumentological research, it was possible to establish that the origin of the organ is not – as previously expected – related to the Scheffler family, but to the early activities of Franz Joseph Weiss (1755–1825), a man from Nabburg near Regensburg in Bavaria, who later settled and operated in Pyskowice (F. Koenig 2019: 222–225). As a result of this finding, a decision was made to present this instrument as part of the 8th International Conference on Organ Knowledge *Silesian Organs*.

Secondly, the church in Lubecko is a pilgrimage church. On 14th August 1994, two years after the Diocese of Gliwice was established, the then Bishop of Gliwice, Jan Wieczorek – taking into account the over 250-year-old tradition of pilgrimages of the people of the Silesian region to the famous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the church in Lubecko – made the parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lubecko diocesan Sanctuary of Our Lady in Lubecko (J. Kopiec 1999: 57). The church itself is very old and dates back to the 14th century. It was rebuilt in its current form in 1787 and the tower was built in 1822 (P. Górecki 2017: 118-119). In December 2009, Gothic paintings from the early 15th century were found on the vault and walls of the presbytery, which has been one of the most interesting conservation discoveries in recent years in the field of wall painting in Poland (P. Górecki 2017: 118). Therefore, the preserved material heritage of this temple, so important for the diocese, means that its equipment, including the organ, must be given special care. If restored, it would add to the charm of the frequently visited temple.

Thirdly, the organ has been out of use for decades and therefore does not fulfill its musical purpose. The reason is the destruction of the instrument (due to its incompleteness and poor condition of the preserved elements, a low-quality electronic instrument is used instead for liturgical purposes). The measure of liturgical ceremonies and celebrations requires the beauty of organ music created on a real, pipe instrument. The aesthetics of the sound would add a natural charm to liturgy celebrated in such a noble temple.

Fourthly, the restoration of the organ could be an opportunity to initiate organ concerts in Lubecko, which would be of great cultural importance. The church could become a significant point on the map of musical events for the citizens of Lubecko or of the nearby town of Lubliniec, and perhaps also for the entire Lubliniec region. The instrument could be used for organ or chamber music concerts.

All the above-mentioned arguments call for taking care of the instrument as a matter of urgency. Currently, the organ is in a very poor state, but there is an open path to restoring the instrument and turning it into a real “gem”.

## 1. Description of the organ

The organ in Lubecko is a small instrument, typical of the late 18th century. It is placed in the music choir in the space under the church tower, on the axis of the main altar. The instrument is 3.50 m high, 2.20 m wide and 2.30 m deep.

The instrument is a typical single-section, baroque, rococo-style organ with a 3-tower centered arrangement (Photo 1). The base of the organ case is narrower than the front and the console is placed in its front wall. The side towers are symmetrical and extended on the sides on consoles. The central tower is high and slender, placed on an avant-corps bulging sharply in the middle. Pipe flats between the towers are lower and are based on arches.



Photo 1

Below the line of pipes, there is a horizontal base line covering access to the pallet box. The towers and pipe flats have upper carved decorations in the form of plant tendrils arranged diagonally. The pipes in the organ front are incomplete. The entire organ case and the front are in white and cream, while the carved elements are gold-plated.

The organ's wind system is based on the operation of an electric blower of the simplest design which was usually used in forges (Photo 2). It is located in a tower chamber above the organ. The blower works with one float bellows with a feeder measuring 1.80 m x 1.10 m which is located behind the organ. The preserved cutouts in the boards on the floor of the choir indicate the earlier location of wedge bellows there.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

The organ has a mechanical action with rollers, pull-downs in the form of trackers and angles. The entire action is uniform, which may indicate its complete change when the organ was expanded with a second manual in the first half of the 19th century (to be discussed later in this study).

Each of the three sections has its own slider windchest. The windchests of the first and second manuals are placed at the level of the organ front. They differ significantly, mainly in size, type of wood and construction features. The windchest of the first manual is most likely older and dates back to the beginning of the instrument (Photo 3). It is made of oak wood. The windchest of the second manual is much smaller and lower, and is placed horizontally behind the windchest of the first manual (Photo 4).

The console is built into the front part of the base of the organ case (Photo 5). It has two manuals with the C-c3 range and a pedal board with the C<sup>1</sup>-E range. The organ includes the so-called short octave. Stops are placed symmetrically and vertically on both sides of the manuals. On the right-hand side, there are stops of the voices of the first manual, and on the left-hand side - of the second manual and the pedal board, as well as the coupler between the two manuals.

The organ has 13 voices, as confirmed by the number of stops and places on the windchest.

The specification of the organ's voices is as follows:

Manual I	Manual II	Pedal Board
Principal 8' Flet Portunal 8' Salicional 8' Oktava 4' Flauto 4' Kwinta $2\frac{2}{3}$ ' Mixtura 3x (currently Gamba 4'; the original arrangement was: $1\frac{1}{3}$ ' - $1$ ' - $2\frac{2}{3}$ ')	Flaut Amabilis 8' Princ. Skrzyp. 4' Flettrawers 4' II-I Coupler	Subbas 16' Princ. Bass 8' Violon-Cello 8'

The manuals are largely incomplete (Photo 6). Also, initial examination of the preserved metal pipes indicates different materials were used, which proves that they come from different periods and were supplemented. It is similar with wooden pipes which also come from different times.

## 2. History of the organ

The history of the organ as known until today is based on several sources. First of all, there are historical records that also function in the oral tradition. Important information is then included in the second edition of Ludwig Burgemeister's work „Der Orgelbau in Schlesien" from 1973 (L. Burgemeister 1973: 118, 338; the first edition was published in 1925). Another valuable source of knowledge about the organ in Lubecko

are the inventory descriptions from the 1970s and 1990s prepared by researchers of organ construction, including prof. Wiktor Łyjak and prof. Julian Gembalski. Prof. J. Gembalski also co-created the internal documentation of the former Diocese of Katowice, to which Lubecko once belonged, performing first works on the inventory of the instruments of the Katowice diocese. Moreover, in 2005, at the request of the Department for Church Music of the Diocesan Curia in Gliwice, prof. Julian Gembalski prepared an opinion about the Lubecko organ after examining the instrument by himself. In the document, he indicated the directions of restoration work.



Photo 6

Until now, all that was known about the history of the organ in Lubecko was that it was translocated from Jemielnica near Strzelce Opolskie (Arch1). This information is provided in the WUOZ card of the instrument prepared by W. Łyjak in 1997 according to the ODZ survey from 1970. Wiktor Łyjak also wrote that in the pallet box of the windchest of the first manual there are two stickers placed next to each other which could only be read precisely with the windchest dismantled. However, we already know the date written on the sticker on the right is 30th November 1780. It was assumed that the entry was made by an organ builder named Scheffler who was consequently credited with building this instrument in Jemielnica. The theory that the organ in Lubecko was built by Johann Gottfried Scheffler seemed consistent with information about the activity of the Scheffler family in the Lubliniec region, including Cieszowa (Arch2; the organ was built there in 1770 by Gottfried Wilhelm Scheffler), Koszęcin and Lubliniec.

The second sticker (on the left) provides important information that the organ in Lubecko was repaired in 1834 by Johann Hawel, an organ builder working in Pyskowice at that time. W. Łyjak assumes that he could have expanded the organ with a second manual, as evidenced by the form of its windchest – shorter and constructed completely differently than the main one. Information about the renovation of the organ by J. Hawel was already provided by the editors of the second edition of Ludwig Burgemeister's work titled *Der Orgelbau in Schlesien* published in 1973. Therefore, W. Łyjak's WUOZ card draws the correct assumption that the translocation of the organ from Jemielnica to Lubecko must have taken place before 1834.

The above information cannot be found in the first edition of Burgemeister's work from 1925. The editors of the second edition included this information based on *Katalog Zabytków w Polsce* a part of which was devoted to the Katowice Voivodeship in 1960s (L. Burgemeister 1973: 338).

In connection with the organization of the 8th International Conference on Organ Knowledge *Silesian Organs*, a decision was made to analyze the information gathered so far and to verify it on the basis of several attempts to read the stickers placed on the windchest of the first manual mentioned by prof. Wiktor Łyjak.

The author of this text, with the help of prof. Grzegorz Poźniak from Opole, attempted to re-transcribe the notes on the above-mentioned stickers, as long as they can be read without dismantling the windchest. And it turned out that they convey very significant data.

The writing on the right sticker can be read as follows (probable words or letters difficult to read are written in brackets; Photo 7):

*Mich hat [erbaut?] Orgelbauer gesel. aus der Obern Pfalz von Nabburg [...]r [...]  
[...]ig namens Joseph [Weiß?] den 30 November 1780 [1783?]*

Therefore, the sticker contains the extremely important information that the builder of the instrument was Joseph Weiss, an organ builder from Nabburg in the Oberpfalz region, who at that time may have still been an apprentice. The content of this entry completely changes the knowledge about the organ's history.

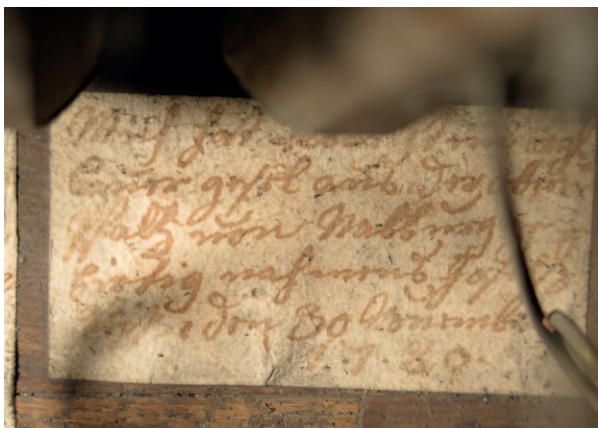


Photo 7

Based on the already read sticker, it can be believed that the organ was built by Franz Joseph Weiss, an organ builder working in Pyskowitz in Upper Silesia who came from Nabburg in the Oberpfalz region near Regensburg (F. Koenig 2019: 222–225). In the past, first and middle names were used interchangeably, so Franz Joseph Weiss sometimes signed himself as Joseph Weiss, as must have been the case here. The organ builder is a figure relatively well described in the literature on the subject, although new information regarding his activity is constantly emerging.

The information obtained is important for several reasons. Firstly, this organ comes from the beginning of his activity in Silesia. The German lexicon of organ builders says that Weiss settled in Pyskowice in 1781 (F. Koenig 2016: 69–70). This may indicate that when he worked on the organ in Jemielnica, he still considered himself an organ builder from Nabburg. Perhaps he was asked to do this work by the Cistercians who owned the church in Jemielnica at that time. The organ located today in Lubecko would therefore be the oldest evidence of Weiss's activity in Upper Silesia. Another testimony of Weiss's work in Upper Silesia is the organ in Kielcza which comes from 1783.

An important confirmation of Weiss's involvement in the work on this instrument is the information provided in the already mentioned second edition of L. Burgemeister's work „Der Orgelbau in Schlesien“ which states that in the 18th century he worked on the organ in Jemielnica. However, in this case, the name of the organ builder was misspelled as „Buss“ (L. Burgemeister 1973: 132). Since no other work mentions an organ builder Buss from Nabburg, Weiss can easily be assumed to be meant here.

According to the same work, as recorded by the editors of its second edition, in 1834, J. Hawel renovated the rococo organ in the Catholic church in Lubecko near Lubliniec (L. Burgemeister 1973: 181; P. Górecki 2017: 275). In Burgemeister's work, it is also mentioned that the organ in Lubecko was repaired once again in 1899. Both pieces of information are confirmed by two other stickers.



The second sticker placed on the windchest provides information that is easy to read (Photo 8). It states that the founders indicated by name and surname, who ask for the „Our Father“ and „Hail Mary“ prayers, carried out a renovation of the organ transferred from the Cistercian monastery in Jemielnica by Johann Hawel from Pyskowice and his assistant Stephan Ring from Ujazd:

*Curt Schubert und Valentin Kukowka und Matthaeus Wiczorek  
wurde diese Orgel, welche aus dem Himmelwitzer Cistercienser Stift her stammt,  
[von] dem OrgelBauer Herrn Johann Hawel aus Peiskretscham  
und dessen Gehülffen Stephan Ring aus Ujest repariert [...].  
hier genannten bitten um Lubetzko den 26ten Mai 1834.  
ein andächtiges Vater unser und Ave Maria.*

The third sticker, located on the back of the front wall of the organ case, mentions a renovation of the instrument in 1899 (Photo 9). However, the text is unreadable.

When trying to determine the exact origins of this instrument, there is a certain difficulty that may shed a different light on the history of the organ. In the years 1777–1778, Johann Gottfried Scheffler built a new organ in Jemielnica. Therefore, the organ transferred to Lubecko could have been either a secondary instrument from Jemielnica, or, more likely, it was an even older organ replaced in Jemielnica by the instrument Scheffler completed in 1778 (L. Burgemeister 1925: CXV–CXVI). The organ dismantled in Jemielnica could have been moved by Weiss to Lubecko in 1780 or 1783 and then expanded by Johann Hawel in 1834. This makes a lot of sense considering that Johann Hawel continued the work of F.J. Weiss after his death in 1825 (F. Koenig 2016: 71).



Photo 8



Photo 9

### 3. Working to save and preserve the instrument

It is clear the historic organ in Lubecko is a monument for the preservation of which decision-makers are morally responsible. However, for now, the instrument in question only has an inventory card and is not entered in the register of monuments, so it is not subject to strict conservation supervision despite its great cultural value. It seems that the time has come to change this situation with the cooperation of researchers, the parish administrator and the conservation office.

At the current stage of recognizing the history and importance of the organ in Lubecko for the region, several basic solutions appear which should lead to the preservation and full restoration of the instrument. This plan can be summarized as follows:

1. Organizing the preserved substance of the instrument (separating the preserved metal and wooden pipes and taking measurements of the scales) should lead to protecting the organ from further destruction. The above-mentioned scope of work can be carried out largely under the supervision of an organ builder and with the involvement of students, e.g. as part of organ studies classes. The organ in Lubecko is too great a heritage to be destroyed in any way.
2. Preparation of documentation needed in order to include the organ in the register of monuments. Such activities are required to obtain financial resources in the future necessary to develop and implement a restoration program. The parish will probably not be able to afford the full scope of work needed to restore the instrument.
3. The basic part of the restoration process should include two stages, which has become clear based on preliminary tests of this instrument. The first stage will involve the restoration of the organ front and the entire case (including the console), and the second one will include the restoration of the manuals along with the reconstruction of the original wind system and key action solutions.
4. The aim of all stages is to restore the organ's external appearance corresponding to the beauty of the historic temple, but also to bring back the instrument's full technical efficiency. This in turn should lead to obtaining positive sound qualities, which will become the most important cultural dimension of the organ.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arch1: WUOZ. Karta zabytku: organy w Cieszowej, oprac. W. Łyjak (18.11.1997).  
 Arch2: WUOZ. Karta zabytku: organy w Lubecku, oprac. W. Łyjak (3.12.1997).  
 BURGEMEISTER L. (1925). *Der Orgelbau in Schlesien*. Strassburg: Verlag J.H.E. Heitz.  
 BURGEMEISTER L. (1973). *Der Orgelbau in Schlesien*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Wolfgang Weidlich.

GÓRECKI P. (2017). *Parafie i kościoły diecezji gliwickiej*, Gliwice – Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.

KOENIG F. (2019). *Budownictwo organowe na Górnym Śląsku od połowy XIX w. do roku 1945. Ewolucja rozwiązań konstrukcyjnych i estetyki brzmieniowej na przykładzie instrumentów w kościołach diecezji gliwickiej*, Opole: Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.

KOENIG F. (2016), *Orgelbauer des 19. Jahrhunderts in Oberschlesien: Franz Joseph Weiss, Johann Hawel, Ernst Kurzer. Neue Erkenntnisse zu Biographie und Lebenswerk. „Ars Organi”*, vol. 64, no. 2, s. 69–75.

KOPIEC J. (1999). *Diecezja gliwicka. Dzieje i współczesność*. Gliwice – Opole: Wydawnictwo św. Krzyża.

## SUMMARY

Organy w kościele pw. Wniebowzięcia NMP w Lubecku koło Lublińca na Górnym Śląsku są niezwykle cennym instrumentem i to kilku powodów. Po pierwsze, jest to jeden z nielicznych zachowanych na Górnym Śląsku instrumentów XVIII-wiecznych, co najpełniej określa jego wartość kulturową. Po drugie, kościół w Lubecku jest kościołem sanktuaryjnym i pielgrzymkowym. Po trzecie, organy od dziesiątek lat są wyłączone z użycia, a zatem nie spełniają swojego zadania muzycznego. Po czwarte, odrestaurowanie organów mogłoby być okazją do zainicjowania w Lubecku koncertów organowych lub koncertów muzyki kameralnej.

Organy w Lubecku są instrumentem utrzymanym w zewnętrznej formie w stylu rokoko. Jest to instrument 2-manualowy z pedałem o trakturze mechanicznej z wykorzystaniem wiatrownic klapowo-zasurowych, odmiennych konstrukcyjnie w I i II manuale. Zespół brzmieniowy jest zdekompletowany. Instrument od kilkudziesięciu lat jest wyłączony z użycia liturgicznego.

Historia organów, jaka znana była do chwili obecnej, oparta jest na kilku źródłach. Ważne informacje zawarte są w drugim wydaniu dzieła Ludwiga Burgemeistra *Der Orgelbau in Schlesien* z 1973 r. Cennym źródłem wiedzy o organach w Lubecku są także opisy inwentaryzacyjne z lat 70. i 90. XX w. wykonane przez badaczy budownictwa organowego. Na tej podstawie do obecnej chwili na temat historii organów w Lubecku wiadomo było tyle, że są to organy translokowane z Jemielnicy koło Strzelec Opolskich. Taka informacja jest podana w karcie zabytku WUOZ opracowanej przez W. Łyjaka w 1997 r. Zapisano tam, że w komorze klapowej wiatrownicy I manualu umieszczone są obok siebie dwie wklejki, które można będzie dokładnie odczytać dopiero w momencie demontażu wiatrownicy. Na wklejce po prawej można odczytać zapisaną tam datę: 30 listopada 1780 r. Stąd pojawiło się przypuszczenie, że zapis jest dokonany ręką organmistrza Schefflera, któremu przez lata przypisywano wybudowanie tego instrumentu w Jemielnicy. Wydawało się to spójne z informacjami o pracy rodziny Schefflerów na ziemi lublinieckiej, m.in. w Cieszowej (tam w 1770 r. organy zbudował Gottfried Wilhelm Scheffler), Koszęcinie i Lublińcu.

Autor niniejszego tekstu z pomocą ks. prof. Grzegorza Poźniaka z Opola podjął próbę ponownej transkrypcji zapisów utrwalonych na wspomnianych wklejkach, o ile są one możliwe do odczytania bez demontażu wiatrownicy. I okazało się, że przekazują one niezwykle ważną informację.

Zapis na prawej wklejce zawiera niezwykle istotną informację, że budowniczym organów jest Joseph Weiss – organmistrz z Nabburga w regionie Oberpfalz, który w tamtym czasie (1780 r.) mógł być jeszcze czeladnikiem. Treść tego zapisu zmienia zatem zasadniczo dotychczasowe informacje odnośnie do budowniczego tych organów. Niemiecki leksykon organmistrzów mówi o tym, że Weiss osiadł w Pyskowicach w 1781 r. Może to świadczyć o tym, że kiedy pracował przy organach w Jemielnicy, uważał się jeszcze za organmistrza z Nabburga. Być może do tej pracy został poproszony przez cystersów, w posiadaniu których był wówczas kościół w Jemielnicy. Organy znajdujące się dziś w Lubecku byłyby zatem najstarszym świadectwem działalności Weissa na Górnym Śląsku. Kolejne świadectwo pracy Weissa na Górnym Śląsku pochodzi z 1783 r. i dotyczy organów w Kielczy.

Druga wklejka po lewej stronie podaje także ważną informację, że wskazani z imienia i nazwiska fundatorzy, którzy proszą o modlitwę „Ojcze nasz” i „Zdrowaś Maryjo”, doprowadzili do dzieła remontu organów przeniesionego z klasztoru cysterskiego w Jemielnicy przez Johanna Hawela z Pyskowic i jego pomocnika, Stephana Ringa z Ujazdu. Przy tym zapisie jest podana data 26 maja 1834 r.

W dokładnym ustaleniu historii tego instrumentu pojawia się pewna trudność, która może rzucić inne światło na historię organów. Otóż Johann Gottfried Scheffler w latach 1777–1778 zbudował w Jemielnicy nowe organy. Zatem przeniesione do Lubecka organy mogły być w Jemielnicy albo pobocznym instrumentem, albo też, co bardziej prawdopodobne, były to jeszcze starsze organy, które ustąpiły w Jemielnicy miejsca instrumentowi ukończonemu przez Schefflera w 1778 r. Organy zdemontowane wtedy w Jemielnicy mogły zostać w 1780 lub w 1783 r. przeniesione przez Weissa do Lubecka, a w 1834 r. rozbudowane przez Johanna Hawla. Układa się to w pewną całość, zważywszy, że Johann Hawel wraz ze śmiercią F.J. Weissa w 1825 r. wchodził w jego prace.

Organy w Lubecku wymagają dzieła pełnej rekonstrukcji przy zachowaniu modelu pracy przeznaczonego dla instrumentów wpisanych do rejestru zabytków.

## Keywords:

organ • organ building • Lubecko • Weiss • Hawel • Scheffler

**Franciszek Koenig** – priest in the Diocese of Gliwice, Dr. habil. in Humanities in the field of art studies, PhD in Theology, Professor at the University of Opole, employed in the Department of Musicology of the Institute of History of the University of Opole; in his scientific work, he focuses on research on the tradition of organ building in Upper Silesia, on the history of music in Silesia and on the issues related to the legislation of liturgical music.

email: [fkoenig@uni.opole.pl](mailto:fkoenig@uni.opole.pl)