

The source of the misunderstanding was Johann Gottfried Walther, whose *Lexicon Alte und Neue musicalische Bibliothec (Old and New Musical Library)* of 1728 contains the following entry: “*Albicaastro (Henrici)* a Swiss, actually called **Weissenburg** [corrected 1732 to Weissenburg], was a distinguished officer in the army of the high allies in the Netherlands during the War of the Spanish Succession at the beginning of this century, and as an excellent violinist he had the following works, upon which the letters *D.B.W.* and the word *Cavaliero* stand, engraved in copper by Roger in Amsterdam [...]” Albicaastro was certainly not Swiss, but mercenaries were often labelled as such.

Weissenburg himself left us with three confusing references to his place of birth. When Johan Hendrik Weyszenburgh enrolled as a Musicus Academiae at the University of Leiden on 12 April 1686, he described himself as Viennese. On the title page of op. I, which Estienne Roger published around 1701, he called himself “Henrici Albicaastro del Biswang” (del Biswang later abbreviated as *D.B.W.*), but this would seem to indicate the village of Bieswang near Pappenheim in the vicinity of the Middle Franconian Weissenburg. For his second marriage in 1722 he stated his birthplace ambiguously as the “Castle of Neubourg in the Overpalts”: however, there are several castles called Neuburg.

The combined research of various persons, including the Swiss Otmar Tönz as well as the Dutch Marcel Wissenburg, Rudolf Rasch and Joost Hengst, led in recent years to the discovery of several documents concerning the life of the composer and officer. Today it is accepted that Albicaastro was born in Klosterneuburg near Vienna in 1660 or 1661 as Johann Heinrich Weissenburg.

His first known publication is the first part of *Il Giardino armonico : Sacro profano di dodici Suonate*, that is the first six sonatas as Opera Terza, which appeared 1696 in Bruges under the name Gio Henrico Weissenburg. The term *Sacro profano* was also used by the Viennese composer Johann Heinrich Schmelzer in 1662 and by Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber of Salzburg in 1682, so that it is conceivable to regard at least one of these violin composers as Albicaastro’s teacher. Schmelzer died in 1680, Biber in 1704.

Weissenburg’s activity as a musician in Leiden lasted from 1686 to 1690/1691. Circa 1701 we find him as a cavalryman in the Dutch army. After his promotion to captain lieutenant in 1705 – now calling himself Van Weissenburg – he married

Cornelia Maria Coebergh 1705 in Grave (near Nijmegen in Gelderland), first on 12 September in the Reformed Church, then on 21 September in the Catholic Church. The additional ceremony was necessary, because the Dutch authorities did not recognize Catholic marriages (private communication by Marcel Wissenburg). In Grave two sons and two daughters were born. In 1708 he received the title of Rittmeister. After the death of his wife, he married the Baroness Petronella de Rhoe de Opzinnig in Breda (North Brabant) in 1722 at the age of 61, but this marriage was without issue. He retained his military activity, but in 1728 he was too ill to report for duty. He died on 26 January 1730 in Maastricht.

Although his name appears in various Dutch forms (Weijssenburgh, Weyszenburgh, Weissenburgh, with and without a final h), it is the works published under his artistic name Albicaastro that interest us here. Most of these are sonatas for solo violin with a bass or trio sonatas, and they all reveal Corelli’s influence. After op. 3 of 1696, no publications are known until those printed between 1701 to 1706 by Etienne Roger in Amsterdam. Albicaastro started the numbering of these again with op. I, republishing his old op. 3 as part of the new op. IV. In total, nine chamber music works appeared in print. In addition to these, a motet for soprano and strings and a harpsichord suite have survived, while compositions for oboes and for viole da gamba must be considered lost.

The present edition is the first practical edition of the Sonatas op. 8, which were first printed in 1704. The title page of the four parts (Violino Primo, Violino Secondo, Violoncello, Organo) reads as follows.

SONATE DA CAMERA | à Tre | Due Violini e Violone Col Basso per l’Organo | Del Signore | HENRICI ALBICAastro | OPERA OTTAVA | A AMSTERDAM | Chez Estienne Roger Marchand Libraire

The only copy of the beautiful first edition is owned by the York Minster Library. Generally, but not always, the figured organ part duplicates the independent violone part. Striking exceptions are bar 22f and the chromatic bars 45–50 of Sonata XI. Here in bar 22f of the organ part the remarkable doubling of the second violin is intended and not to be understood as cue notes. The basso continuo figures indicate that these notes are to be played with an accompaniment in the right hand. In the original these notes are an octave higher. The figures contain some unorthodox notations: 6 can mean $\frac{6}{4}$ and 5 also $\frac{6}{5}$; sometimes one finds $\frac{6}{5}$ where $\frac{7}{5}$ is required.