

Aneta Markuszewska

Festa and Music at the Court of Marie Casimire Sobieska in Rome (1699–1714)

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Edited by Maciej Gołąb



PETER LANG

Polish queen Marie Casimire Sobieska, French by birth, left the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the death of her husband king John III and settled in Rome in 1699. Supported by her son, Prince Aleksander Sobieski, the queen dowager created at her Roman residence in Palazzo Zuccari one of Rome's most important opera theatres. She used music and drama to uphold her social status and political plans, satisfy her aesthetic needs, and provide entertainment for the granddaughter under her care, along with her ever more ailing son. This is the first monograph about Sobieska's music patronage. The book describes works by such eminent artists as Carlo S. Capece, Filippo Juvarra, and Domenico Scarlatti, along with the atmosphere of Rome of that time, the sociopolitical role of the festa, and the music theatre genres it employed.

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Illustration 1. Maria Casimire around the age of sixty, H. Vincent, A. Odazzi. The National Library of Poland.

Introduction

When Marie Casimire reached Rome on 23rd March 1699, thus opening an entirely new chapter in her life, she was fifty-eight – quite old by the standards of that age, also taking into account about a dozen births and the burden of hard experiences which fate did not spare her. Nevertheless, as in every life story, she had also had her glorious and happy moments. In the beginning she was Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga's favourite maidservant. Later she married Jan Zamoyski, one of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's richest persons. Then she was unexpectedly placed on the throne of her adopted homeland when her second, beloved husband, Jan Sobieski, became king. Madelaine de Scudéry comments: "Here we have a wonderful fortune for a maiden who had no fortune of her own. It is indeed an honour for the French nobility."¹ The couple's years of reign satisfied beautiful Marie's ambitions, among others thanks to John III's military successes and the Sobieskis' rising status in international politics. Still, this period also proved extremely difficult. The deteriorating economic situation and the ineffective system of managing the country both led to eternal conflicts with her subjects and made the Queen engage in courtly intrigues. Combined with Marie Casimire's changeable moods and unsteady character, all this did little to win her favour with the Poles or the trust of foreign envoys residing in the Commonwealth. The death of John III in 1696, which caused the Polish Queen to throw herself into the hurly-burly of politics in order to retain the crown for the Sobieski family, exposed the negative aspects of her personality and her downright scandalous relations with her eldest son Jakub. Having squandered all the Sobieskis' chances to remain in power in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and having brought disgrace on the family name, she chose to leave Poland as the best option still available. Rome seemed ideal as the new place of residence. The Pope venerated the memory of the 'scourge of the infidels,' the Queen Dowager's famous husband, which gave her hopes that her stay in Rome would be calm, but worthy of her status. The Jubilee Year was coming soon and could be used as a convenient official excuse for her retreat. Unexpectedly to herself, but also to the Roman authorities, Marie Casimire's residence in Rome would last for nearly 15 years.

1 Qtd. after K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce w XVII w. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich [Educated Women in 17th-c. Poland. The Intellectual Aspirations of Women from the Courtly Circles]* (Warszawa: Retro-Art, 1997), p. 216.

The Queen soon adjusted to the local environment. The strength of her husband's name, as well as her own royal past, opened for her the doors of palaces belonging to the Eternal City's most important personages. The Queen thus visited the residences of Roman and foreign aristocrats, diplomats, the cardinals (who were all-powerful in Rome), and of noble ladies. She herself held meetings and receptions at her apartments in Piazza dei Santi Apostoli, which Livio Odescalchi, Duke of Bracciano, Ceri and Sirmium, kindly offered to her at the beginning of her stay. She dedicated herself to acts of piety with a nearly Counter-Reformation-style zeal, frequenting Rome's numerous churches. She also derived much joy, however, from purely secular pleasures. Perfectly aware of the impact of art as employed in the service of politics, she took great care to meticulously prepare the theatrical spectacles and occasional pieces staged at the Palazzo Zuccari, which became her permanent residence in 1702. The main purport of those compositions was the recollection and praise of her husband and of the Sobieski family. Though her possibilities in the world of Roman and European politics, dominated by male power, were small, her determination, the desire to make her presence felt in public life, along with her love of splendour and need for admiration, all made a strong mark on Rome's life.

Attracting the attention of the Roman society was, it must be remembered, by no means easy. Marie Casimire had major rivals to compete with in the field of music and theatre patronage. The most important of them, who, however, was always ready to offer his advice, was Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. Another equally important competitor in her quest for fame was Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli, one of Rome's richest citizens at that time and the main patron of both George Frideric Handel and Antonio Caldara. Apart from these two, there were also more or less sumptuous courts run by the ambassadors of various countries, as well as the Teatro Capranica, which was Rome's only public opera house in operation during the Polish Queen's stay in Rome. No less influential than the above-mentioned aristocrats, though no longer alive, was Sobieska's predecessor in the Eternal City, the Swedish Queen Christina, to whom Marie Casimire has been compared both during her Roman period and in later texts dedicated to this subject.

It seems worthwhile to dedicate some space to that latter figure, whose fame cast a long shadow on the assessments of Marie Casimire's own achievements in Rome. Having converted from Protestantism to Catholicism in 1654, Christina abdicated and set out for Rome, where her conversion "was planned to be a massive propaganda victory for the Vatican."² It soon turned out, however, that the

2 S. Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and Her Circle. The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), p. 225.

Swedish queen did not yield easily to the pope's dictates. When the plot which she hatched with Cardinal Giulio Mazzarini³ was uncovered, Christina lost her image of a pious convert,⁴ especially since the Neapolitan marquis Gian Rinaldo Monaldesco, who had divulged the plan of attack on Naples to the pope and the Spaniards, was murdered on her orders. For obvious reasons, the pope tried to find a place for Christina outside of Rome, which led to various concepts, including her candidature for the throne of Poland in 1668. When all these initiatives failed, she settled permanently in Rome, where she gained recognition and respect as a patroness of the arts and of a group of intellectuals who belonged to her circle. She no longer had any actual influence in the European political scene, and this – together with her well-thought-out artistic patronage – makes her story similar to that of Marie Casimire. In Rome, however, the Polish queen was held in much less reverence than her Swedish predecessor, as evident, for instance, from one of the most frequently quoted versified lampoons, noted down by Rome's chronicler Francesco Valesio in the early period of Sobieska's stay in the Eternal City:

A simple hen born of a rooster
lived among the chickens and became a queen;
she came to Rome, a Christian, but not a Christina.⁵

This anonymous three-line poem is a spiteful summary of Marie Casimire's life story. To begin with, the author reminds his readers that she was not of royal blood, thus refusing to accord her the same status that was enjoyed by Queen Christina. Secondly, he suggests in a few words that – though Marie Casimire's piety bordered on the sanctimonious – she lacked the Swede's mental powers and personality. Christina indisputably outclassed the Polish Queen in terms of intellect, scope of interests, and most of all – education. She knew several modern languages as well as Latin and Greek; she studied philosophy, theology, history, and art; she corresponded with the great minds of the age.⁶ As a member of the royal family, unlike the protagonist of this book, Christina had been trained for

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- 3 They planned to launch a military attack on Naples, which was a Spanish territory at that time; it was to become Christina's new kingdom following her victory.
 - 4 S. Åkerman, *Queen Christina*. . . , p. 233.
 - 5 "Nacqui da un gallo semplice gallina / vissi tra li pollastri e fui reggina / venni a Roma cristiana e non Cristina," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, ed. G. Scano, Vol. 1 (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–1979), p. 32.
 - 6 V. Buckley, *Cristina regina di Svezia. La vita tempestosa di un'europa eccentrica* (Milano: Mondadori, 2006).

the role of a monarch from her earliest years. Her vivid and versatile mind made this task all the easier for her. On the other hand, though, the Swedish Queen's musical patronage, though involving such representative Baroque masters as Giacomo Carissimi, Alessandro Stradella, the young Alessandro Scarlatti, and Arcangelo Corelli, is not well documented in sources and leaves much space for conjecture.⁷ In most cases, not only the scores but even the libretti of the *drammi per musica* sponsored by Christina have not been preserved. Most likely many of the operas associated with her patronage were not staged in the palace where she resided, since none of its chambers fulfilled the basic requirements for a theatrical stage. Despite this drawback, Christina's contributions to Roman culture in the second half of the seventeenth century were enormous. Her greatest achievements include initiating such events as the opening of the first public operatic theatre (Il Tordinona), a cycle of Easter oratorios staged in secular settings, as well as the organisation of various academies dedicated to science, philosophy, and art, of which music was a regular component.⁸ She managed to carry out all these projects despite the ever-diminishing funds which she received from the successive popes.

Christina's merits can hardly be overestimated, and it is not the present author's aim to deny them. It seems, however, that Marie Casimire's patronage should not be assessed exclusively in the context of the achievements of the Swedish Queen. Despite their bothersome personalities and somewhat similar, difficult life histories, both monarchs created interesting artistic venues in Rome and initiated works of art which bear witness to their good tastes and continue to delight us with their beauty. These works reflect their aspirations, experiences, and (we should remember) also their financial potential. Poor gentlewomen encountered many limitations in the early modern societies. Marie Casimire overcame them all; her heritage bears witness to the strength of her character and her higher-than-average intelligence. Her attitude should therefore command respect since it confirms the words of one of John III's most recent biographers, Zbigniew Wójcik, who claims that despite numerous faults she "should be considered as one of the most intelligent and outstanding women who shared the Polish throne with their royal husbands in the modern era."⁹ Her Roman patronage of the arts

7 A. Morelli, "Il mecenatismo musicale di Cristina di Svezia. Una riconsiderazione," in: *Cristina di Svezia e la musica. Atti di convegno dei Lincei*, [no editor] (Roma: Accademia Naz. dei Lincei, 1998), pp. 321–346.

8 A. Morelli, "Il mecenatismo. . .," p. 331.

9 Z. Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski 1629–1696* (Warszawa: PIW, 1983), p. 403.



Illustration 2. Christina of Sweden, A van Hulle, P. Pontius. The University of Warsaw Library.

proves that she proudly continued to represent her adopted homeland also after leaving the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Marie Casimire Sobieska's musical patronage in Rome has never been the subject of a comprehensive research monograph; the present study is the first attempt at such a publication. This does not mean, however, that the Polish Queen has not attracted the interest of researchers. On the contrary, she has sparked many emotions and debates among historians who have analysed John III's achievements and failures. The Sobieski marriage was an intriguing and attractive

topic, especially in the realities of Poland under the Partitions. In its steadfast efforts to retain its national identity, the Polish society needed the great heroes of the past. This made Polish historians focus on the champion of the Battle of Vienna with special ardour, while his political mistakes and military defeats were blamed on Marie Casimire. John III was thus idealised at the expense of his wife. One of the nineteenth century writers, Jan Turski, even found her responsible for the Partitions of Poland, when he thus emphatically stated: “Our later ordeals, the cross that we have to bear and death, till the moment when God bids his angels to remove the stone from the entrance to our tomb – it was she who brought all this upon Poland.”¹⁰

Historians’ opinions concerning Marie Casimire began to change after World War I. As Michał Komarzyński explains, “The debate concerning the queen’s political impact has lost its political significance, and only continues to attract the interest of a narrow academic circle. True to the spirit of the time, the Aurora has turned into an embodiment of feminine sensuality.”¹¹ What has also contributed to this process was the reception of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński’s popular novel entitled *Marysieńka Sobieska*¹² (‘Marysieńka,’ a diminutive of Maria, which is how John III addressed his wife). It should be stressed, however, that as a ‘sexual creature’ Marie Casimire has intrigued authors from the very start, which is confirmed by the numerous descriptions of her extraordinary beauty. More balanced opinions about the Queen began to appear in Polish historiography relatively recently, mostly owing to the writings of the already quoted Professor Komarzyński. In the last decade, our knowledge about Marie and her sons has been significantly extended thanks to Aleksandra Skrzypietz and her analyses of hitherto unknown sources.¹³ Abroad, a brief chapter has been dedicated to the works written at the Polish Queen’s inspiration by Gaetano Platania,¹⁴ who has thus underlined her presence in, and contributions to, the musical life of Rome. In musicology, the figure of Marie Casimire is mentioned mainly on the margin of studies dedicated

10 M. Komarzyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera* [*Queen Marie Casimire*] (Warszawa: Arx Regia, 1992), pp. 93–94.

11 M. Komarzyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera*, p. 93.

12 T. Boy-Żeleński, *Marysieńka Sobieska* (Lwów-Warszawa: Książnica Atlas, 1937).

13 A. Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie – Jakub, Aleksander i Konstanty Sobiescy* [*The Royal Sons: Jakub, Aleksander and Konstanty Sobieski*] (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011).

14 G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra sei e settecento (1699–1715)*, Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 1990.

to the life and work of the leading artists whom she employed: Carlo Sigismondo Capeci,¹⁵ both Scarlattis,¹⁶ Silvius Leopold Weiss,¹⁷ and Filippo Juvarra;¹⁸ as well

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- 15 A. Cametti, "Carlo Sigismondo Capeci (1652–1728). Alessandro e Domenico Scarlatti e la Regina di Polonia in Roma," *Musica d'oggi* 1931, No. 2, pp. 55–64; M. Di Martino, "Obligo e recupero di un librettista settecentesco: Carlo Sigismondo Capeci (1652–1728) e il melodrama arcadico," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1996, Nos. 1–2, pp. 31–55.
- 16 Of the many publications that have been dedicated to Alessandro and Domenico Scarlattis, let me list the major ones from among those which mention the figure of Marie Casimire. These are: R. Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953); M. Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti, Master of Music* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986); M. Boyd, "'The Music Very Good Indeed': Scarlatti's *Tolomeo et Alessandro* Recovered," in: *Studies in Music History Presented to H. C. Robbins Landon on his Seventieth Birthday*, eds O. Biba and D.W. Jones (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996); A. della Corte, "'Tetide in Sciro' l'opera di Domenico Scarlatti ritrovata," *La Rassegna Musicale* 1957, No. 4; S.A. Lucciani, "Un'opera inedita di Domenico Scarlatti," *Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1946, No. 4; A.D. McCredie, "Domenico Scarlatti and his Opera 'Narcisso,'" *Acta Musicologica* 1961, No. 1; R. Pagano, *Scarlatti Alessandro e Domenico: due vite in una* (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1985), English edition: *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. Two Lives in One*, trans. F. Hammond (Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2006); D. Fabris, "Le gare d'amore e di politica. Domenico Scarlatti al servizio di Maria Casimira," in: *I Sobieski a Roma. La famiglia reale polacca nella Città Eterna*, eds Juliusz A. Chrościcki, Zuzanna Flisowska, Paweł Migasiewicz (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2018), pp. 220–248.
- 17 D.A. Smith, "A Biography of Silvius Leopold Weiss," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 1998, pp. 1–48; F. Vacca, "Weiss in Rome (1712–1713): First Archival Findings," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 2000, pp. 13–46; J. Žak, "The Sobieskis in Silesia and in Rome: Weiss's First Royal Patrons," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 2000, pp. 1–12.
- 18 E. Re, "La dimora romana di Maria Casimira Regina di Polonia," *Capitolium* 1926–1927, pp. 160–167; M. Viale, "Ferrero, Juvarra tra i due Scarlattis," in: *Handel e gli Scarlattis a Roma. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Roma 1985*, eds N. Pirrotta, A. Ziino (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1987), pp. 175–189; M. Viale, *Filippo Juvarra scenografo e architetto teatrale* (Torino: Fratelli Pozzo, 1970); W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry dla teatru i rzymskiej rezydencji Sobieskich" ["Filippo Juvarra's Designs for the Sobieskis' Roman Residence and Theatre"], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 1984, Nos 2/3, pp. 257–269; W. Roszkowska, "Mecenat królewicza Aleksandra – Teatr Armonte Calidio (1709–1714)" ["The Patronage of Prince Aleksander – the Armonte Calidio Theatre (1709–1714)"], *Sobótka* 1980, No. 2, pp. 311–321; N. Badolato, *All'occhio, all'udito ed al pensiero: gli allestimenti operistici romani di Filippo Juvarra per Pietro Ottoboni e Maria Casimira di Polonia* (Torino: Fondazione 1563 per l'Arte e la Cultura, 2016); A. Scarlatti, *Il Ciro (Roma 1712), dramma di Pietro Ottoboni / scene di Filippo Juvarra*, ed. N. Badolato (Roma: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 2017).

as descriptions of the history of private stages in Rome,¹⁹ the Roman carnival traditions,²⁰ and the reception of works premiered at the Polish Queen's Roman residence.²¹ Marie Casimire is also referred to in the context of her daughter Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska's years spent in exile in Venice.²² Those mentions are mostly very short, and if any of these authors (mostly biographers of Domenico Scarlatti) dedicates a longer passage to the Polish Queen, her contributions are assessed through the prism of opinions presented by Kazimierz Waliszewski in his long-since outdated French-language publication, which for many years was the only one available to foreign scholars.²³

Polish researchers have dedicated a little more attention to Marie Casimire's Roman patronage, mainly thanks to the works of Wanda Roszkowska,²⁴ who,

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- 19 M.L. Volpicelli, "Il teatro del cardinale Ottoboni al Palazzo della Cancelleria," in: *Il teatro a Roma nel Settecento*, Vol. 2, eds L. Buccellato, F. Trapani (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1989), pp. 681–782; M. Viale Ferrero, "Scenotecnica e macchine al tempo di Alessandro Scarlatti. I mezzi in uso e i fini da conseguire," in: *Alessandro Scarlatti und seine Zeit*, ed. M. Lütolf (Bern: P. Haupt, 1995), pp. 55–77; T. Chirico, "Il fondo dei Campello di Spoleto: autografi Ottoboniani e altri testi per musica," *Analecta Musicologica* 2005, pp. 85–178; T. Chirico, "Linedita serenata alla regina Maria Casimiera di Polonia: Pietro Ottoboni committente di cantate e serenate (1689–1707)," in: *La Serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi (Reggio Calabria, 16–17 maggio 2003)*, ed. N. Maccavino (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa Editore, 2007), pp. 397–450; T. Chirico, "Serenate alla corte romana del cardinale Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740) nell'epoca di Arcangelo Corelli: storia e proteizzazione di un genere," in: *Serenata and Festa Teatrale in 18th century Europe*, eds I. Yordanova, P.G. Maione (Wien: Hollitzer, 2018), pp. 137–192.
- 20 F. Clementi, *Il carnevale romano nelle cronache contemporanee sec. XVIII-XIX con illustrazioni riprodotte da stampe del teatro*, part II (Città di Castello: Ediz.R.O.R.E. Unione Arti Grafiche, 1938), esp. pp. 1–29.
- 21 This aspect of the Queen's patronage was of particular interest to Reinhard Strohm; cf. R. Strohm, "Handel and his Italian Opera Texts," in: R. Strohm, *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 34–79.
- 22 B. Over, "...sotto l'Ombra della Regina di Pennati. Antonio Vivaldi, Kurfürstin Therese Kunigunde von Bayern in Venedig (1705–1715)," in: *Italian Opera in Central Europe 1614–1780*, Vol. 3: *Opera Subjects and European Relationships*, eds N. Dubow, C. Herr, A. Żórawska-Witkowska (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2007), pp. 251–97.
- 23 K. Waliszewski, *Marysieńka. Marie de la Grange d'Arquien Reine de Pologne femme de Sobieski 1641–1716* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1898).
- 24 W. Roszkowska, "Mecnat królewicza Aleksandra. . .," pp. 311–321; W. Roszkowska, "Polacy w rzymskiej 'Arkadii' (1699 – 1766)" ["Poles in the Roman Arcadia, 1699 – 1766"], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1965, book 3, pp. 33–78; W. Roszkowska, "Polskie dzieje Palazzo Zuccari i villa Torres-Malta w Rzymie" ["The Polish History of the Palazzo

however, rarely quotes her sources, and frequently reiterates the conviction that the Polish Queen's stage projects in Rome depended on the ideological and artistic activity of Prince Aleksander Sobieski, while Marie's role was supposedly limited to providing her son with funds necessary to carry out his plans and his ever growing ambitions as actual patron of the artists. Considering the constant financial straits to which she was reduced, the Queen could easily oppose her son's ambitions, but she did not. What is more, her letters (preserved at the National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk) prove that she supported her son's theatrical preoccupations as she was aware that they helped him cope with his progressing illness.²⁵ Sobieska's patronage therefore seems to represent a very interesting aspect of the Baroque opera, namely, the therapeutic one, which is poorly represented in hitherto research despite the many works dedicated to the theory of affections and to music's influence on the audience.

The main aim of this publication is to discuss and interpret the works commissioned in Rome by Marie Casimire Sobieska, in the context of the *feste* which she held in Rome, as well as to portray those few composers, librettists and performers whose names have come down to us. Eight libretti of *drammi per musica* sponsored by the Polish Queen have been preserved to our times, as well as those of six serenades, one oratorio, two complete operatic scores (*Tolomeo et Alessandro*, *Tetide in Sciro*), one *rifacimento* of the last opera staged at the Polish Queen's Roman theatre (*Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura*), some individual operatic arias, and a fragment of the score of one serenata (*Clori, e Fileno*). "Owing to the shortage of funds, the Sobieskis usually fell behind with the rent for their Roman residence, and the food on their table was rather less sumptuous for this reason, but their theatre maintained a high standard,"²⁶ writes Aleksandra Skrzypietz, thus demonstrating that the theatre was one of Marie Casimire's key priorities.

For lack of sufficient information, I do not deal in my book with instrumental music which was most likely also performed at the Queen's palace. I will only suggest at this point that the repertoire presented at the Palazzo Zuccari

Zuccari and of the Roman Villa Torres–Malta"], *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 1964, No. 2, pp. 139–153; W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry. . .," pp. 257–269.

25 While working on my doctorate, I was unable to get acquainted with Marie Casimire's letters kept in that archive, and therefore they are not quoted in the Polish version of my book. Changes in the political situation have made it possible for me eventually to access those sources, and consequently I have supplemented the English edition with information derived from the Queen's vast correspondence now kept in Minsk.

26 A. Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie* . . . , p. 501.

probably included solo and trio sonatas, *da camera* as well as *da chiesa* (which were often played in secular venues), written by fashionable and highly regarded composers, both from Rome and from other centres. Teresa Kunegunda may have sent her mother the most recent scores by Venetian artists, including Opus 1 by Vivaldi, whom the Electress valued very highly. It is also highly probable that Domenico Scarlatti improvised his early harpsichord sonatas at the Queen's palace, in the style of those pieces which now bear the catalogue numbers K. 82 and K. 85. He may also have played for her some French suites, though in his own output one can hardly trace the influence of the French harpsichord masters. What we can be quite certain of is that on lonely evenings the Queen did listen to suites, sonatas and variations played by Silvius Leopold Weiss, as confirmed by the so-called Poliński lute tablature surviving in Paris and believed to have been compiled in Venice.²⁷ Apart from the earliest known pieces by S.L. Weiss and his brother, this tablature also comprises works by the French lutenists Jacques Gallot and Charles Mouton, as well as the Czech composer Jan Antonín Losy, all of which Weiss may well have performed for the Queen. Furthermore, we find there compositions by Corelli and, most significantly for our subject, the final chorus *Lieto Giorno* from the opera *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, entered in Weiss's own hand.²⁸ This raises questions about the links between this tablature and the Polish Queen's Roman court.

Marie Casimire must also have been familiar with the sonatas of Arcangelo Corelli, which she may have heard performed with Domenico Scarlatti and Silvius L. Weiss interpreting the *continuo*. But who were the soloists? This cannot be said with any certainty. Apart from the above-mentioned composers, musicians active at Sobieska's court also included those whom she had brought to Rome from Poland. At larger receptions and especially at the *balli* the Queen's guests were

27 F-Pn, Rés. Vmc.Ms.61. This is confirmed by the inscription: *Venetijs.7.Zbr. 1712; cf. J. Żak, "The Sobieskis. . .," p. 9.*

28 J. Żak, "The Sobieskis. . .," p. 9. Another work commissioned by or dedicated to the Polish Queen (as we can see from its title) is the *Bailete Dela Reina de Polonia* (1709; E-MN M.811), preserved as a guitar tablature. Since we do not know the name of any guitarists working in the Queen's Roman milieu, this composition could possibly be by S.L. Weiss, but transcribed for the guitar. How did it reach Madrid, though? Domenico Scarlatti only came to that city in 1729, so he could not have been the one to carry that piece to Spain. At the present stage of studies on lute and guitar tablatures which possibly originated in the Sobieskis' circles, no definitive answer can be given. I am grateful to Mr Grzegorz Joachimiak for making the information concerning this work available to me along with its original tablature notation.

probably accompanied by a small string orchestra, which performed alternating Italian, French, and possibly also Polish dances. Unfortunately, for lack of preserved courtly bills or other sources from the period, instrumental music at the Queen's palace and its potential performers are still a matter of conjecture.

The book *Festa i muzyka na dworze Marii Kazimierzy Sobieskiej w Rzymie (1699–1714)* [*Feste and Music at the Court of Marie Casimire Sobieska in Rome, 1699–1714*] was first published in Polish in 2012 by the Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów as a follow-up from my PhD dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Alina Żórawska-Witkowska at Warsaw University. It has taken several years for the English-language version to come out. In this new version, I have used my best efforts to include all the most recent findings concerning Queen Marie Casimire that have appeared in the meantime in the literature of the subject. Most importantly, however, I have supplemented the English edition with quotations and information from previously unknown letters written by the Queen to her son Jakub Sobieski, and now kept at the National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk.

At this point, I would also like to express my gratitude to Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska and Sławomira Żerańska-Kominek for their precious comments, as well as to Pierluigi Petrobelli, Giovanni Morelli, Fabio Biondi, Jerzy Żak, Berthold Over, Teresa Chirico, Reinhard Strohm, Bruno Forment, Alberto Basso, Norbert Dubovy, and Dinko Fabris, who have helped me gain access to important scores, and exchanged with me their views and expert opinions on the subject.

I also owe my most sincere thanks to Mr Paweł Jaskanis, director of the Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów, for the permission to print materials in the Polish-language version of the book, and for his consent to include illustrations in its present, English edition. My thanks also go to Ms Elżbieta Grygiel, curator of the 'Silva Rerum' programme, for her trust in my project; to the publisher, Peter Lang, for printing the book in English; and, last but not least, to the translators.

I Festa

The Italian word *festa* means celebration, a festival, or a feast. In cultural terms, a *festa* is a welcome disruption of the daily routine, a break in the time which is mostly devoted to work and household chores. Studying the beginnings of the *festa*, Edward Muir noted its connections with the Benedictine canonical hours.¹ First used in monastic context, the hours were also subsequently adopted by broader, secular communities, where they became connected with the social values of punctuality and discipline.² They also contributed to the creation of a feeling of social solidarity, “coordinating the activities of all members of a community according to the same schedule.”³ The members of a given community all had their meals, went about their daily tasks, and went to sleep at the same times. The highly repetitive routine led to a psychological need for occasional breaks in the even flow of days, and this is how the *festa* was born.

While Muir’s explains the beginnings of the *festa* in early modern Europe, it is worth emphasizing that the need to break the daily routine by celebrations did not start in the Middle Ages and already existed in much earlier societies. We find proof of this in Plato’s *Laws*: “so the gods, in pity for the human race thus born to misery, have ordained the feasts of thanksgiving as periods of respite from their troubles; and they have granted them as companions in their feasts the Muses and Apollo the master of music, and Dionysus, that they may at least set right again their modes of discipline by associating in their feasts with gods.”⁴ Cyclical festivals were also the cornerstone of the Roman civilisation, as testified by the phrase *panem et circenses*. This saying, originating in the Roman Empire, has subsequently been applied to describe other cultures, societies and historical periods, including the present. It also brings to mind another important aspect of the *festa*, which is its connection to politics. The *festa* was not only an answer to the psychological needs of its participants – it also served the interests of

1 E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), p. 85.

2 E. Muir, *Ritual*. . . , p. 86.

3 E. Muir, *Ritual*. . . , p. 86.

4 Plato, “Laws,” section 653d, in: *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 10 & 11 trans. R.G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1967, 1968): 4 March 2020 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0166%3Abook%3D2%3Asection%3D653d>.

rulers. Kings and princes used the *festa* as a way of displaying and consolidating their power, achievements and position. A ruler would use the *festa* as one of the tools in the diplomatic repertoire. Its basic function was consolidating the whole community around the person of the ruler, giving the people a sense of identity, unity and purpose. It was an important element of social cohesion and collective memory. It also served as a cyclical celebration of persons or events that were important for the community, and thus contributed to the creation of traditions and collective forms of remembrance. The day of the *festa* was eagerly awaited by the members of the community, who could use the festival to break the rhythm of the everyday reality, bring to light the darker sides of their personalities and also express their aggression or violence in a socially acceptable way. In order not to turn the *feste* into an outburst of social chaos, their organisers tried to control the proceedings by issuing orders and prohibitions.⁵

The *festa* created a common ground where politics and art could meet and intermingle. Their unique symbiosis could be exploited by rulers for political gain, and the most iconic example of this interaction from the early modern period is the reign of Louis XIV of France. The Sun King's image was to a large extent created and reinforced by means of commissions granted to court artists. In his written advice for his successor, the king noted that honest pleasures (*plaisirs honnêtes*) are natural for the human kind, and that they serve many important functions, such as "offering a respite from work, giving one new strength, improving health, soothing trouble and putting to rest unquiet passions, inspiring humanity, lifting up the spirits, mellowing the social mores, and saving [humankind] from certain bitterness, which sometimes renders virtue less sociable, and thus: less useful."⁶

The Sun King went on to explain that public feasts are not the private property of the monarch, but also belong to the court and the subjects.⁷ He stressed that they bring the ruler immeasurable profits. Firstly and most importantly, they

5 In Rome this was done by the means of *editti* (instructions), published every year by the city authorities.

6 "qu'ils délassent du travail, fournissant de nouvelles force pour s'y appliquer, servent à la santé, calment les troubles de l'à et l'inquiétude des passions, inspirent l'humanité, polissent l'esprit, adoucissent les moeurs, et ôtent à la vertu je ne sais quelle trempe trop aigre, qui la rend quelquefois moins sociable et par conséquent moins utile," in: Louis XIV, *Mémoires suivis de Manière de montrer les jardins de Versailles*, ed. J. Cornette (Paris: Tallandier, 2007), p. 168.

7 Louis XIV, *Mémoires*. . . , p. 168.

give the subjects a sense of connection to the monarch, bring them pleasure, and also prove that their rulers have similar tastes as themselves, as they enjoy the same entertainments. According to Louis XIV, this feeling of connection created in fact a more permanent and desirable social bond than prizes, privileges or titles granted by the monarch. Secondly, the *festa* played an important role as a tool of foreign policy: “when it comes to foreigners, in a country that is flourishing and well-governed, the expenses [on feasts], which might seem superfluous, give them a very agreeable impression of splendour, magnificence, strength and wealth.”⁸

The impression of magnificence could in fact be created by the proverbial smoke and mirrors – the splendour might but did not necessarily need to reflect actual wealth of the state. Furthermore, Louis XIV advocated choosing for the *festa* a powerful message or theme. In his case, court entertainments used the self-explanatory but effective symbolism of the sun. Thus, offering a *festa* with a carefully designed programme of artistic entertainments was an indispensable element of politics and government, which served as both a proof and a reinforcement of the country’s power. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, occasions which we see today as primarily family events (such as weddings or betrothals) or as private occasions (such as Christmas or Easter festivities) could be used for the purpose of showcasing the ruler’s prestige.

Louis XIV’s reflections are a unique piece of writing, which testifies to the importance of the *festa*, and to the monarch’s understanding of its uses. Even though some claim that Louis XIV’s reflections are not his original ideas but were strongly inspired by Cardinal Mazarin,⁹ he still deserves full credit for implementing them to great effect at his court. Mazarin’s inspiration also points to the strong Italian influence on the French court. Rome naturally had a long and rich tradition of public celebrations, rooted in the antiquity. In the early modern period, in spite of bans and prohibitions issued by successive popes, the Romans still enjoyed celebrations and public entertainments, in which church notables often participated. Religious feasts and other public events were occasions for festivals, gatherings, pageants and processions. All these events could be used for propaganda purposes.

8 “à l’égard des étrangers, dans un État qu’ils voient florissant d’ailleurs et bien réglé, ce qui se consume en ces dépenses qui peuvent passer pour superflues, fait sur eux une impression très avantageuse de magnificence, de puissance, de richesse et de grandeur,” in: Louis XIV, *Mémoires*. . . , p. 170.

9 M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, “Struttura della *festa*,” in: M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, *La festa barocca* (Roma: Edizioni De Luca, 1997), p. 21.



Illustration 3. Louis XIV, H. Rigaud, imitator. Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. W. Holnicki.

The *feste*, both in Rome and in other European capitals, were strictly associated with the calendar, and most of them were cyclical events. In the case of religious feasts, they were part of the liturgical year, which incidentally also incorporated secular public events which became extensions of religious festivals. The most important of these was the carnival, which constituted one of the oldest and most fascinating *feste*. The carnival was deeply rooted in pagan celebrations, and for this reason the Catholic hierarchy and doctrine struggled for centuries to contain it. The church year, with its feasts and celebrations, was centred around the remembrance of important events from the life of Christ. The calendar was divided into two distinct parts: the first one opened with the Advent (four weeks before Christmas), and closed with the Corpus Christi procession in June. This part of the year included a plethora of celebrations, incorporating Christmas and all the associated feast days (all of which fell on fixed dates), and Easter,

a moveable feast. The second part of the year, from June to mid-November, did not offer as many opportunities for celebration (with the exception of the important All Hallows' Eve, and feasts of local saints). That part of the year was more focused on secular responsibilities and on work (which included, for the large part of the population, agricultural labour in the summer and autumn). However, in Rome also this part of the year was packed with *feste*. In total, the liturgical calendar in Rome included as many as 150 religious feasts per year.¹⁰ Among them, the pride of place, in terms of popularity, opulence, and the role of music, went to the Easter celebrations and the Corpus Christi procession.

The Roman calendar also included local feasts, which accompanied important events in the life of the Curia. One of the most important ones was the papal *possesso*, which marked the accession of a new pope. In terms of pageantry, the celebration was closely inspired by the ancient tradition of the Roman triumph, granted to victorious generals by the Senate. During Marie Casimire's stay in Rome, a *possesso* took place in 1701, one year after Clement XI (born Giovanni Francesco Albani) was elected pope. After the election, the new pope made a horseback tour of the most important locations of the city, in order to show himself to the inhabitants and to symbolically take possession of his domain. He was followed by a large crowd of Roman citizens, eager to see the new pontiff. The most important element of the papal tour was passing under triumphal arches, which were erected in his honour by the Roman populace and by a chosen aristocratic family. The arches, often designed by the foremost artists and architects of the day, were built in the ancient quarter, close to the famous antique arches of Septimius Severus, Titus and Constantine. Very often, the arches built for the new pope would incorporate musical elements: a good case in point is a 1701 arch erected for Clement XI by the duke of Parma. The top of the arch was decorated with "a globe, symbolizing the four corners of the earth, with choirs of musicians and instruments."¹¹

Another, equally spectacular *festa* which also celebrated the papal power was an annual celebration called the *Festa della China*. It involved the ceremonial offering, by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Naples in Rome, of a white mare and a certain sum of money to the Pope, as proof of allegiance.¹² The *festa* thus

10 Ch. Hibbert, *Rome. The Biography of a City* (London: Viking, 1985), p. 204.

11 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, eds. G. Scano, G. Graglia (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–79), Vol. 1, p. 349.

12 The function of the Neapolitan Ambassador in Rome was always filled by members of the Colonna family from the 1680s.

served as an annual confirmation of the diplomatic relations between the Papal State and Naples. It always took place on 28th and 29th June, thus on the eve of the Feast of SS Peter and Paul, and on the feast day itself.¹³ It started with a gun salute fired from Castel Sant'Angelo, followed by a procession of Ambassador Colonna and his entourage from his residence to Saint Peter's Basilica (or alternatively to Palazzo Quirinale), where the white mare was officially (and with much ceremony) gifted to the pope. Every evening of the *festa* ended with a sumptuous banquet for Roman and Neapolitan aristocracy, and with a firework display. For those not invited to the official celebrations, drinking fountains of white and red wine were provided in city squares. During the War of the Spanish Succession, this lively feast was discontinued for a couple of years, but was reinstated in 1722.¹⁴ The tradition was finally abandoned in 1788 by Ferdinand IV, King of Naples, who saw it as a remnant of a feudal, and thus backward-looking, system of diplomacy.¹⁵

Another major group of *feste* were the celebrations of important life events in the lives of the ruling family¹⁶ such as birthdays, name days, and funerals of rulers and their families, which were celebrated with appropriate pomp by their respective ambassadors in Rome and by the cardinals protectors. This group could also include *ingressi*, or rulers' and important aristocrats' ceremonial entrances into the city.

Analysing the importance of *feste* in early modern communities, it is important to remember about their multi-layered structure, which also translated into complex layers of meaning and possibilities of interpretation. In that period, a celebration very rarely meant a simple outpouring of emotion (happy or otherwise). Much more often it took the shape of a carefully designed event, full of intricate symbolism, whose secondary aim was always promoting the prestige of the given individual (the host or the honoree), and which was always ideologically charged. It is safe to assume that the message of a given *festa* was decoded by its participants in a manner related to their social standing, education and

13 J.E. Moore, "Prints, Salami, and Cheese: Savoring the Roman Festival of the Chinaea," *The Art Bulletin* 1995, No. 4, p. 584; M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *La festa*. . . , p. 46, A. Kamińska, "‘Diario di Roma’ Francesca Valesia. Muzyka w Rzymie w latach 1700–1711" ["‘Diario di Roma’ by Francesco Valesio. Music in Rome, 1700–1711"], *Barok. Historia–Literatura–Sztuka* 2006, No. 2, pp. 93–94.

14 J.E. Moore, "Prints, Salami, and Cheese. . ." p. 587.

15 J.E. Moore, "Prints, Salami, and Cheese. . ." p. 587.

16 M. Boiteux, "L'Espagne et les fêtes romaines au XVIIe siècle," in: *Barocco romano e barocco italiano*, eds. M. Fagiolo, M.L. Madonna, (Roma: Gangemi, 1985), p. 121.

position within the system.¹⁷ And thus, the uneducated and mostly illiterate members of the working class could still enjoy the dazzling visual effects such as fireworks, and the magnificent performances of large orchestras and choirs. They could also appreciate wine fountains and marvel at the agility of circus performers. These spectacular displays of wealth and munificence had political functions; they brought the communities together and inspired the participants with a sense of common identity and pride.¹⁸ They would also dazzle the participating outsiders and convince them of the power and generosity of the patron, and thus – make the common folk support the patron’s political goals. Whether the patron was a king, a prince, a pope or a cardinal, maintaining popularity among the common folk meant that their position was safe and that the people would accept their ruler’s decisions and believe them to be for their own good.¹⁹ Each *festa* also carried a more specific meaning, related to the occasion. The more educated among the participants would recognise references to myths, concepts and symbols, and the truly initiated would decipher the secret message. The important political function of the *feste* explains why in the opinion of their sponsors they were worthy of the exorbitant expense, and why their memory was also carefully cultivated and preserved in a variety of publications such as diaries, illustrated pamphlets, drawings, and libretti.

To conclude: a *festa*, accompanied by music, could take place in Rome in practically any location: a religious space or a private aristocratic residence, a public theatre or an open-air location such as a square or a street. Furthermore, it could be organised for a variety of reasons, either religious or political. Likewise, its participants would come from every walk of life; they could be church hierarchs, aristocrats, diplomats, and ordinary people. The *feste* belonged to all the people of Rome, and the events were also open to visitors to the Eternal City.

17 K.P. Aерcke, *Gods of Play. Baroque Festive Performances as Rhetorical Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); F. Piperno, “‘Anfione in Campidoglio.’ Presenza corelliana alle feste per i concorsi dell’Accademia del disegno di San Luca,” in: *Nuovissimi Studi Corelliani. Atti del terzo Congresso Internazionale (Fusignano, 4–7 settembre 1980)*, eds. S. Durante, P. Petrobelli (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1982), pp. 151–208; S. Tcharos, “The Serenata in Early 18th-Century Rome: Sight, Sound, Ritual, and the Signification of Meaning,” *Journal of Musicology* 2006, No. 4, pp. 528–568; M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, “La festa barocca a Roma. Sperimentalismo, politica, meraviglia,” *Analecta Musicologica* 2004, Vol. 33, pp. 1–40.

18 K.P. Aерcke, *Gods of Play...*, p. 20.

19 K.P. Aерcke, *Gods of Play...*, p. 24.



Illustration 4. Entry of the embassy of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł to Rome in 1680, after 1685, Niccolò Viviani Codazzi, Pieter van Bloemen? Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

The Festa as a Political Commentary

In a period when the possibilities of transmitting or broadcasting news were limited or nearly non-existent, ephemeral works of art and entertainment such as theatrical productions, pageants or *feste* could be used to send a message to the wider world, as their creators could certainly count on them being described in various channels of communication. Their international reach was guaranteed by chronicles of various kinds, mentions in diplomatic correspondence, diaries, and by iconography. Martine Boiteux, who researched *feste* organised by the Spanish nation in Rome in the seventeenth century, wrote: “A festival is a political act, and some years carried a heavier burden of festivals than others. The [Spanish] conquest of Roman space, both festive and every day, was also connected to the conquest of the calendar.”²⁰

In a city such as Rome, the diplomatic interests of many countries and of the papacy clashed with each other, and thus *feste* could be used by the competing factions to send their messages. One way to do this, as Boitreaux suggests in the passage quoted above, was to seize control of the calendar and to introduce a new *festa*. For two hundred years, the Spanish excelled at this, and their traditional rivals the French were equally skilful. Celebrating events important for the French nation (just as for the Spanish) had a long tradition, which was linked to the rivalry between these two countries, which for generations vied for the

²⁰ M. Boiteux, *L'Espagne...*, p. 122.

upper hand in Rome and all of Italy.²¹ At the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession, when the former enemies became allies, a third power emerged on the Roman scene, positioning itself in opposition to the Franco-Spanish alliance. That power was the Austrian Empire.

During Marie Casimire's stay, Rome became the arena of many *feste* inspired by current political events. One of the most important took place at the end of April 1701 in the Palazzo di Spagna, hosted by the Spanish ambassador Juan Francisco Pacheco, 4th Consort Duke of Uçeda. It was organised in order to celebrate the accession of Phillip, the grandson of Louis XIV, to the Spanish throne (and also to announce the event to the Roman populace). The hidden agenda of the celebrations, which took several days, was to sound off the opinions of influential Romans regarding the new king. As Anna Tedesco aptly points out, "in the context of the War of the Spanish Succession, a serenata becomes a litmus test making it possible to ascertain who can be counted on as a supporter of the Spanish."²² The attempts to establish who could be relied on as an ally could take very elaborate forms. The ambassador's wife asked the lady guests to go back home with lit torches, which would symbolise their allegiance to the Franco-Spanish faction.²³

The last flourish in the series of *feste* honouring Phillip V as the new King of Spain was a celebration of his name day "with serenatas, fireworks, illuminations and other *divertimenti*, attended by many cardinals and aristocracy, where plenty of refreshments were also served."²⁴ The Roman commoners would also participate in the celebration, drinking complimentary wine which was provided by the ambassador and taking gifts of money which was also generously distributed. The high point of the celebration was the performance of a serenata titled *Applausi delle virtù* (libretto Francesco Noceto, music Severo de Luca,

21 A. Morelli, "‘Alle glorie di Luigi.’ Note e documenti su alcuni spettacoli musicali promossi da ambasciatori e cardinali francesi nella Roma del secondo seicento," *Studi musicali* 1996, Nos 1–2; *Spain in Italy. Politics, Society, and Religion 1500–1700*, eds. T.J. Dandeleit, J.A. Marino (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2007); T.J. Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome 1500–1700* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001).

22 A. Tedesco, "Juan Francisco Pacheco V duca di Uceda, uomo politico e mecenate tra Palermo, Roma e Vienna nell'epoca della Guerra di successione spagnola," in: *La pérdida de Europa. La guerra de sucesión po la Monarquía de España*, eds. A. Álvarez-Ossorio Alvaríño, B. García y V. León (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes 2007), p. 518.

23 A. Tedesco, "Juan Francisco Pacheco V. . .," p. 512.

24 A. Tedesco, "Juan Francisco Pacheco V. . .," p. 511.

performed on 30th April 1701). The event was described in detail by the chronicler Francesco Valesio, who opened his entry with the gossipy comment that the ambassador himself had no reason to rejoice in the accession of the new king, as it lost him the enormous sum of 13,000 scudi, an annual pension which his family had received under the previous monarchs and which Phillip discontinued. Valesio then moved on to the description of the temporary theatre building commissioned by the ambassador. One of the walls carried the inscription “Filippo V Hispaniarum regi,” and the author noted the careless misspelling of the king’s name (which should have been spelled with a “Ph” and not an “F”). He then continued:

Next to it there were two virtues, Fame and Munificence . . . , painted in gold and yellow chiaroscuro, similar to the other virtues and the whole theatre. The mounted portrait of King Phillip, his horse treading on the weapons of his fallen enemies, was also painted in similar tones. The façade of the theatre depicted the labours of Hercules . . . and also showed Hercules Gallicus,²⁵ with chains emerging from his mouth and pulled by various personages: a story which had nothing to do with Hercules of Thebes.²⁶

The figures painted on the walls also included personifications of Music and Harmony holding instruments. Valesio likewise noted how one foreign onlooker quipped that depicting Phillip on a horse was a felicitous idea, because very soon he would have to ride back for Paris. The joker was quickly seized and thrown to the ground, and when he was allowed to get up, he was surrounded by a host of the ambassador’s courtiers. The chronicler also mentions the gratuities provided for the commoners: the Spanish filled the basin of a fountain in the square with

25 Hercules Gallicus was depicted as an old man dressed in a lion’s pelt, holding a bludgeon and a quiver, and trailing behind him was a group of people bound by the ears, whom he was leading on a thin chain made of gold and amber, attached to his tongue. Such a Hercules symbolised wisdom and great deeds achieved thanks to eloquence, oratory and persuasion; Cf. J. Banach, “Hercules Christianus, Hercules Gallicus, Hercules Germanicus,” in: J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus. Studium z ikonografii sztuki nowożytnej [Hercules Polonus. A Study in Modern Age Iconography]*. ch. III (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), pp. 65–66.

26 “A lato . . . v'erano due virtù, la Fama e la Munificenza, . . . dipinte a chiaro oscuro di giallo lumeggiato d'oro, sì come erano le altre virtù et il resto del teatro; di simile colore posada sopra la detta base il ritratto del Re Filippo a Cavallo armato e calcando varie sorte d'armi; nella facciata piana del teatro che era da ambedue le partie rano dipinte varie fatiche d'Ercole, . . . era dipinto l'Ercole gallico, dalla bocca del duale vedevansi uscire catene che traevano diverse persone, fasola che non haveva che fare con l'altri fatti dell'Ercole tebano,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma* . . . , Vol. 1, pp. 366–369.

wine, which earned great appreciation from the crowds. In the evening, the theatre was illuminated with 300 candles, which were placed not only inside, but also in the windows and balconies in order to impress the crowd in the square. The residencies of the notable supporters of the Spanish were similarly illuminated. In contrast – and in order to make a statement – the residences of the Austrian ambassador and his ally, Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani, were surrounded by complete darkness.

The windows and balconies of the ambassador's palace were full of noble ladies, who were served ice-cream, iced water and other refreshments. Sixteen cardinals were in attendance. The Queen of Poland came to listen to the serenata and sat in the last window of the first apartment of the Palazzo di Propaganda Fide, facing Via Frattina ... The serenata commenced two and a half hours after the sunset, sung by five musicians: Pasqualino, Girolamo di Rospigliosi, Paoluccio's nephew and Granari... [sic!], who were accompanied by an orchestra of seventy instruments. The lyrics were written by Count Noceti, a Sicilian, and the music by Severo de Luca, a Neapolitan. The serenata ended at four, with little applause. The wind repeatedly blew out the candles. As there was some fear of riots, fewer guests arrived than were expected even though the hosts spared no expense to make it a splendid occasion.²⁷

The serenata, in which Phillip V was compared to the mighty Hercules, and presented in the company of Fame, Munificence and Music (symbolising the king's desire to rule in harmony and to bring concord to the warring factions), at a deeper level signified the temporary victory of the French political interests over the Austrian, at least on Roman turf. The event also had other, historic significance. Putting Phillip V on the throne marked an end of two hundred years of rivalry between France and Spain. The two countries had often clashed on the international arena and perpetually vied for supremacy in Rome in their relations with the Holy See. At the same time, it also marked the beginning of a new era of enmity, this time between their joint forces and the Emperor's faction. Even if, due to the gusts of wind that kept blowing the candles and the mood of public unrest, the performance of the serenata was not as successful as its

27 "Si incominciò la serenata alle 2 e mezza della note cantata da cinque musici, Pasqualino, Girolamo di Rospigliosi, il nepote di Paoluccio et il Granari . . . , accompagnati dall'armonia di settanta istromenti. Era la poesia opera del conte Noceti siciliano e la musica di Severo De Luca napoletano. Terminò doppio le 4 con poco applause la serenata, essendosi le torcie di tanto in tanto ammorzate per il vento che soffiava. Non vi fu quell concorso di gente che si aspettava in una *festa* fatta con tanto dispendio, perché si temeva qualche sconcerto," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 1, p. 369. Valesio, however, only lists four artists-singers.

organisers had hoped, the news of the event became an important political message received and understood everywhere in Europe. It was the birth of a new power structure.²⁸

The *Festa* as an Expression of the Power of Christianity and of the Leading Role of Rome

The Roman *feste* also played an educational role. The magnificent celebrations dazzled the Romans, showing them the power of the church. The opulent public entertainments kept alive the spirit of Counter-Reformation, which lost much of its impetus in such countries as France, England, and the Netherlands, increasingly taken over by the new ideas of rationalism, empiricism, scepticism, and by the nascent spirit of the Enlightenment. But in Rome the *feste* often involved theatrical performances hosted by religious figures, as well as oratorios performed in seminaries, colleges, convents and monasteries, many of which had been built as a consequence of the Council of Trent. Church-sponsored spectacles and oratorios were usually performed in connection with important religious feasts or during carnival, offering a wholesome alternative to often lewd secular entertainments.

The annual *feste* organised by the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca provide a wealth of interesting material to study. Since 1702 the *feste* were organised under the patronage of Pope Clement XI. They were held on the Capitoline Hill and followed a carefully prepared programme, which is corroborated by the surviving reports of the Academy's secretary Giuseppe Ghezzi. The *feste* opened with a *sinfonia*, or an instrumental piece (up to 1709 it was composed by Arcangelo Corelli, and later by his pupil Matteo Fornari). The opening piece was performed by one hundred musicians (and in some years even more). The cardinals entered the building to the accompaniment of the music. When it ended, an orator would mount the rostrum and deliver a speech. He would typically be one of the poets connected with the Accademia dell'Arcadia. The speech would be followed by sonnet recitations, performed by other Arcadians, and then by the handing out of prizes to the best painters, sculptors and architects. And finally, the guests would listen to a cantata. The composers of the cantatas were Carlo

28 The event was commemorated by the publication of the libretto of the serenata, and also of an official description, contained in a publication entitled *Lettera scritta da un gentiluomo dimorante in Roma*, Roma 1701, which described a series of *feste* organised by Ambassador Uçeda; cf. A. Tedesco, "Juan Francisco Pacheco V...", p. 506 ff.

Francesco Cesarini, Alessandro Scarlatti, Giuseppe Amadori, Antonio Caldara, and Domenico Scarlatti.

On 23rd May 1713 the academy organised a *fiesta* under the telling title *Il Trionfo della Fede* [*The Triumph of Faith*]. Giuseppe Ghezzi's printed report explained that the occasion for the event was an anniversary of the canonisation of four saints – Pope Pius V and three martyrs – Andrew, Felix and Catherine. Pius V was renowned as a defender of the faith and a zealous promoter of the Tridentine reforms. He was also remembered as a Christian warrior, who scored a significant victory over the Turks in 1571. Reminding the Romans about the achievements of his successful predecessor was meant to enhance the status of the current pope. It was especially important in the context of the War of the Spanish Succession, which was a difficult time for the papacy. The other three saints that were honoured in the *fiesta* also came with interesting connotations. Among them, Saint Felix is especially intriguing. He was said to be a simple soul, an illiterate and uneducated friend and advisor of Saint Filippo Neri. It is easy to see how such a figure might have appealed to the common people, giving them hope that their ardent faith and piety were a sure path to salvation. On a symbolic plane, Saint Felix provided a connection between the plebeians and the church hierarchs ruling the city. The celebration of the four saints was the nominal occasion for the *fiesta*, but it was not its real *raison d'être*. Its goal was to remind the participants that the religious heroes and martyrs received eternal glory, whereas the triumphs of secular rulers, such as the caesars, were ephemeral.²⁹ In 1713, the same year that witnessed the signing of the Peace of Utrecht, the pope was reminding the world that even the finest military victories do not last forever, and that the only guarantee of lasting prosperity is the faith. The libretto of the cantata performed on that day, written by Ignazio de Bonis, praised the Catholic religion that conquered the whole world (*la Regina del Mondo*), and Clement XI as its earthly guardian. Thanks to its symbolic impact, the occasion became “a powerful expression of religious propaganda,”³⁰ furthering the pope's secular diplomatic goals. At the same time, as Francesco Piperno points out, it became a prime opportunity for self-glorification, “offering to the people of Rome a magnificent spectacle which showed them their own splendour and munificence.”³¹

29 G. Ghezzi, *Il Trionfo della Fede solennizzato nel Campidoglio dall'Accademia del Disegno Il dì 23. di Maggio 1713* (Roma: Gaetano Zenobj, 1713), p. 4.

30 F. Piperno, “‘Anfione in Campidoglio’...,” p. 154.

31 F. Piperno, “‘Anfione in Campidoglio’...,” p. 154.

The *Festa* as a Mark of Social Prestige

Yet another goal of the *festa* was to show the prestige of its patron and his/her family. “The modern nobleman needed to prove himself magnanimous and liberal: riches were for him only the means to show his generosity, because, unlike greedy merchants, he was always ready to redistribute them open-handedly rather than to hoard them.”³² The requisite level of wealth and carefully managed artistic patronage could bring tangible rewards to the patron, helping him or her to advance in the social hierarchy, be granted new titles, or, in the case of church officials, might accelerate the pace at which they rose in the Vatican hierarchy. It was especially useful for individuals whose family name was not grand enough to guarantee advancement. The pope was not always eager to grant honours and preferment to members of some families. For this reason, Roman aristocrats, such as for example Benedetto Pamphili, exploited the possibilities of self-promotion offered by patronage. Its most important advantage was that the patron’s name would be heard throughout the city, alongside the title of the *festa* or artistic event that he/she sponsored. It allowed the patrons to publicise their ambitions, ideas or plans, albeit in an allusive way. But they could rest assured that the news would reach the ears of the pope and of other intended high-profile addressees. All the same, the cost of artistic patronage was staggering as “a *festa* costs as much as a palace . . . , however, it does not die. It is not ephemeral and it does not vanish forever: it lives on in the publication of images and impressions.”³³ This perception of the *feste*, which stresses their lasting influence on the surrounding world, and their ability to create heroes and myths, makes it easy to understand why they could also become a battleground on which the ambitions of competing patrons would clash.

Without doubt, the master of artistic patronage in Rome, who could skilfully use it to further his personal standing and prestige, was Francesco Maria Ruspoli (1672–1731). He was both one of the richest and most active artistic patrons in Rome in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Born Francesco Maria Marescotti, in 1687 he inherited the title and estate upon the death of his uncle. This event made him the head of a distinguished family, whose existence

32 A. Morelli, “‘Un bell’oratorio all’uso di Roma’: Patronage and Secular Context of the Oratorio in Baroque Rome,” in: *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, eds. C. Reardon and S. Parisi (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), p. 342.

33 M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, “La festa barocca a Roma . . .,” pp. 14–15.

was first documented in the Early Middle Ages.³⁴ In 1709, in recognition for his services to the state, which involved financing a regiment of one hundred soldiers deployed during the siege of Ferrara (an action on the Italian front of the War of the Spanish Succession), Ruspoli was awarded by pope with the lucrative title of Prince Cerveteri. His immense fortune made him one of the most notable Romans, and he was also one of the most interested in using art as a form of self-promotion. Ruspoli's agenda was uncomplicated, mainly focusing on the promotion of himself and his family. Archival research conducted by Ursula Kirkendale proves that Ruspoli was the richest and therefore most powerful patron active in Rome in that period, whose activities eclipsed those of his rival Cardinal Ottoboni. Ruspoli's advantage over Ottoboni is testified by the fact that in 1700 the former lent the latter the substantial sum of 11,300 scudi, which was supposed to be repaid over the period of twenty-one years.³⁵ In the period 1695–1727 Ruspoli commissioned a significant number of pieces, mostly oratorios (over seventy),³⁶ several operas and intermezzi, not counting dozens of cantatas composed by his *maestro di capella* Antonio Caldara, and then by his successor, Francesco Gasparini. It should also be highlighted that it was Ruspoli who became the patron of George Frideric Handel during the composer's sojourn in Italy. Handel spent two years living as a guest in Ruspoli's palace and composing numerous cantatas in honour of his host, as well as the celebrated *La Resurrezione* oratorio (1708).³⁷

34 The information concerning Ruspoli's family history comes from: S. Franchi, "Il principe Ruspoli: l'oratorio in Arcadia," in: *Percorsi dell'oratorio romano. Da 'historia sacra' a melodramma spirituale. Ati della giornata di studi (Viterbo 11 settembre 1999)*, ed. S. Franchi (Roma: Ibis, 2002), pp. 245–316.

35 U. Kirkendale, *Handel with Ruspoli: New Documents from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, December 1706 to December 1708*, "Studi Musicali" 2003, No. 2, p. 333.

36 U. Kirkendale, *Handel with Ruspoli*. . . , p. 334.

37 Ursula Kirkendale, who meticulously researched Ruspoli's surviving papers including his household accounts, notes that even during Lent secular music was played at the Cardinal's residence, though these performances were always marked as "rehearsals." Kirkendale also points out that staging oratorio cycles was exorbitantly expensive. Ruspoli's composer was paid 10 scudi per month, and other musicians participating in the production of the oratorio cycle were paid 76.20 scudi in total. Additionally, more than 18 scudi was paid to the copyist for providing the individual parts and the scores, and 15.30 scudi was paid to Luca Antonio Chracas for printing 1500 libretto summaries for five evenings, and entry passes for seven evenings (300 per evening). Cf. U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara. Life and Venetian-Roman Oratorios*, Firenze 2007, pp. 447–448). Additional expenses included decorating the room, maintenance of the instruments, and cost of refreshments offered to the guests during entr'actes.

Ruspoli excelled at the practice of commissioning music in order to advertise a freshly acquired title or promotion, or to boost the prestige of his family. For example, on 27th August 1709, in order to celebrate the fact that the pope had granted him the title of Prince Cerveteri (before he used the title of a marquis,) he organised the performance of a serenata for three voices titled *Chi s'arma di virtù vince ogni affetto* (libretto by Astilo Fezzoneo, music by Antonio Caldara). Performed by three singers³⁸ and an orchestra including fourteen violins, four violas, two double basses and two oboes, the serenata cost the total of 302.85 scudi, which equalled one fifth of the total monthly expenditure of Ruspoli's household (1493.42 scudi) and was almost the same amount as the total monthly salaries of all the people in his employ (377 scudi).³⁹ This case (of a relatively small-scale production) shows what financial outlays were necessary in order to promote the prestige of a patron. If an artistic performance was supposed to fulfil its primary function and inspire admiration and awe among the carefully selected aristocratic audience, and the Roman populace, who was also used to such entertainments, no expense was spared.

The *Festa* as an Expression of a Personal Passion

Yet another aspect of the *festa* was that it showed the personal tastes of the patron. Its organisation required time and effort, and the final result was a testament to the patron's artistic tastes and also to his or her passion for beauty. During Marie Casimire's stay in Rome, the patron whose *feste* seemed to be the best expression of his personal tastes was without doubt Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni.⁴⁰ The

38 One of the parts was sung by Margerita Durastanti, who later found fame as a performer of Handel's works. In fact, the singer met Handel for the first time in Ruspoli's Palazzo Bonelli, during the composer's stay in Rome.

39 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , p. 67.

40 The body of scholarship on Ottoboni's role as a patron is already substantial and is still growing. The most important publications which I have made use of in my research include: T. Chirico, "Linedita serenata alla regina Maria Casimiera di Polonia: Pietro Ottoboni committente di cantate e serenate (1689–1707)," in: *La Serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi (Reggio Calabria, 16–17 maggio 2003)*, ed. N. Maccavino, Vol. I (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa Editore, 2007), pp. 397–450; P.J. Everett, "A Roman Concerto Repertory: Ottoboni's 'what not?'" *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 1983–1984, pp. 62–78; S.H. Hansell, "Orchestral practice at the court of cardinal Pietro Ottoboni," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1966, pp. 398–403; W.C. Holmes, *La Statira by Pietro Ottoboni and Alessandro Scarlatti. The Textual Sources, with a Documentary Postscript* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983); S. La Via, "Il cardinale Ottoboni e la musica: nuovi

cardinal came from a wealthy merchant family in Venice. In 1646 (three years before he was born) the Ottobonis were raised into the ranks of Venetian nobility in recognition of their involvement in the wars against the Turks.⁴¹ The family fortunes improved even more on 6 October 1689, when Ottoboni's uncle, also named Pietro, was elected pope under the name of Alexander VIII. One month later, thanks to his uncle's support, the young Ottoboni was made cardinal and vice-chancellor of the Holy See, which also made him the cardinal-protector of one of the most important churches in Rome, San Lorenzo in Damaso. In the course of his successful career he accumulated other titles with related substantial incomes, which made it possible for him to provide artistic patronage on a grand scale, as his real interests did not lie in religious life but rather in the arts.

In his letters, Ottoboni often told his correspondents how much he was looking forward to the opera season, and he offered comments on the programme. While he was most involved with the music life in Rome, he also followed the news from other cities. He believed that the theatre is beneficial as it makes everyday life more bearable and provides a remedy for all sorts of difficulties.⁴² He often expressed his admiration for the best musicians and was an especially avid admirer of Alessandro Scarlatti. The cardinal's main residence was the beautiful Palazzo della Cancelleria in the centre of Rome, where he surrounded himself

documenti (1700–1740), nuove letture e ipotesi,” in: *Intorno a Locatelli. Studi in occasione del tricentenario della nascita di Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1693–1764)*, ed. A. Dunning (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1985), Vol. I, pp. 319–526; H.J. Marx, “Die Musik am Hofe Pietro Kardinal Ottobonis unter Arcangelo Corelli,” *Analecta Musicologica* 1968, Italian translation: “La musica alla corte del cardinale Pietro Ottoboni all'epoca di Corelli,” in: *La musica e il mondo. Mecenate e committenza musicale in Italia tra Quattro e Settecento*, Bologna 1993, pp. 85–107; G. Staffieri, “I drammi per musica di Pietro Ottoboni: il grand siècle del cardinale,” *Studi Musicali* 2006, No. 1, pp. 129–192; G. Staffieri, “Pietro Ottoboni, il mecenate-drammaturgo: strategie della committenza e scelte compositive,” in: *Arcangelo Corelli fra mito e realtà storica. Nuove prospettive d'indagine musicologica e interdisciplinare nel 350° anniversario della nascita. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi, Fusignano, 11–14 settembre 2003*, eds. G. Barnett, A. D'Ovidio, S. La Via, Vol. 1, Firenze 2007, pp. 139–168; G.G. Jones, “Alessandro Scarlatti's ‘Il Ciro,’” *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 1978, No. 3, pp. 175–189.

41 L. Salviucci Insolera, “La committenza del cardinale Pietro Ottoboni e gli artisti siciliani a Roma,” in: *Artisti e Mecenate. Dipinti, disegni, sculture e carteggi nella Roma curiale*, ed. E. Debenedetti (Roma: Bonsignori Ed., 1996), p. 37. All the biographical information on the cardinal in this chapter comes from Insolera's article.

42 P.G. Baroni, *Un conformista del XVIII secolo Pietro Ottoboni* (Bologna: Editrice Ponte Nuovo, 1969), p. 139.



Illustration 5. Pietro Ottoboni, eighteenth century, J. Audran, F. Trevisani. The University of Warsaw Library.

with the foremost artists of the day: musicians, painters and architects. His proteges among composers included Arcangelo Corelli, who dedicated his cycle of trio sonatas (op. 4) to the cardinal; Alessandro Scarlatti, who for many years received financial support and composed music for the operas commissioned by the cardinal, including *La Statira* (1690) and *Il Ciro* (1712); Bernardo Pasquini, who composed music for *Colombo overo l'India scoperta* (1691), a *drama per musica* written by Ottoboni; as well as Filippo Amadei, Flavio Carlo Lanciani, Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, and many distinguished musicians and singers. While the cardinal's patronage of music was the most significant, it also extended to other arts; for instance, he supported the painter Francesco Trevisani as well as the architect and set designer Filippo Juvarra.

As a perusal of his household accounts suggests, Ottoboni's artistic passions were mostly focused on *drammi per musica*. Apart from exorbitant financial outlays, that genre also required the cooperation of different kinds of artists,

representing poetry, music, painting and architecture. In spite of the spectacular artistic success of three *drammi per musica* staged at the cardinal's residence in the Palazzo della Cancelleria in the years 1710–1712 (*Il Costantino pio, Teodosio il giovane, Il Ciro*), in 1712 Ottoboni made the difficult decision of withdrawing from producing them. The expense had simply turned out to be too high, even for him.⁴³ The official reasons for his decision were political, relating to frequent periods of public mourning in France, whose cardinal-protector he became in 1709.⁴⁴ “Monsignore Cardinal Ottoboni, sharing in the grief that France feels on account of its losses, decided to absolutely resign from staging comedies and operas. He bid farewell to all his musicians, which brought him a great measure of approbation from all honest people. Many believe that he might next year turn back to the path of real priesthood.”⁴⁵ These pious hopes, expressed by Charles Poerson, the director of the Académie Française in Rome, proved unfounded, as the cardinal in no way renounced his passion for secular music and the opera.

On the contrary, cutting back on the exorbitant expense of funding a private opera theatre, he committed himself to the less costly, but no less satisfying, patronage of public productions. As testified by an excerpt from “Gazetta di Napoli” of 8th August 1714, he became a patron of the Teatro Capranica: “Cardinal Ottoboni took under his protection the Teatro Capranica, enlarging some boxes and commissioning their redecoration.”⁴⁶

Ottoboni thus transferred his personal passion into the public sphere. As a patron of the Capranica, he took decisions (probably together with Prince Ruspoli) about its programme, and commissioned work from his preferred musicians such as Alessandro Scarlatti. The importance of Ottoboni's patronage for Roman musical culture cannot be overestimated, and his private passion for

43 M. Viale Ferrero, “Antonio e Pietro Ottoboni e alcuni melodrammi da loro ideati o promossi a Roma,” in: *Venezia e il Melodrama nel Settecento*, ed. M. T. Muraro (Firenze: Olschki, 1978), p. 276.

44 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 3, p. 322.

45 “Mgr le Cardinal Ottobon, prenant un veritable intérêt dans la douleur que la France a ressentie des pertes qu'elle vient de faire, a absolument renoncé à faire des Comédies et des Opéras. Il a congédié tous ses Musiciens, ce qui lui a donné bien des louanges de tous les honnestes gens, et l'on croit qu'il pourra bien entrer dans l'Ordre de Prétrise l'année prochaine,” qtd. after *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec le surintendants des bâtimens*, ed. A. de Montaignon, (Paris: Noël Charavay, 1889), Vol. 3, p. 87.

46 “Il Cardinal Ottoboni ha preso la protettione del Teatro Capranica, con far accrescere altri palchi, e farvi di nuovo apparenze...;” qtd. after T. E. Griffin, *Musical References in the Gazzetta di Napoli 1681–1725*, Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1993, p. 68.

music and the opera contributed greatly to shaping the Italian musical heritage from that period. In his magnificent library, he collected the scores of works belonging to diverse genres of vocal and instrumental music composed by such artists as A. Scarlatti, C. F. Pollarolo, F. Mancini, P. P. Bencini, B. Marcello, G. Bononcini, T. B. Gaffi, F. C. Lanciani, B. Pasquini, C. Cesarini, F. Gasparini, S. De Luca, and A. Stradella. All these composers worked on Ottoboni's commissions.⁴⁷ Regrettably, upon his death in 1740, his private collection was sold off and dispersed in an effort to pay back the cardinal's debts. But even in its present incomplete state, his archive is a testament of the scale of his ambition and his achievements. In Ottoboni, Marie Casimire found an inspiring and likeminded acquaintance, someone who became her sometime collaborator and sometime rival.

It is important to remember that the various aspects of the *fiesta* in early modern Rome, which I have singled out above, very often coincided. Thus, a *fiesta* became both an expression of the patron's personal tastes and artistic preferences and of his/her political agenda, and both of these were subordinated to the general desire to promote one's (or one's family) personal prestige and social standing. The same convergence of motivations also occurred on the side of the audience: interpreting the *fiesta*'s political meaning did not bar the audience members from aesthetic enjoyment. The uniqueness of the *fiesta* as a social phenomenon in the early modern period lies in the fundamentally different understanding of the public and private spheres as compared to our own times. In Rome in the early 1700s the boundaries between the two were very fluid, and the two spheres were never in sharp contrast. The whole life of a prince or a cardinal belonged, at least partly, to the public sphere. This state of affairs can be illustrated by an event from the life of the Sobieski family. When the two Sobieski princes, Aleksander and Konstanty, were honoured by the French king with the Order of the Holy Spirit (l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit), a large *fiesta* was organised in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, associated, as its name suggests, with the French nation in Rome. The event took place on 19th December 1700. From the printed description of the event we learn that both the façade and the interior of the church were magnificently decorated.⁴⁸ Even though the ceremony was supposed to be

47 P. J. Everett, *A Roman Concerto Repertory*. . . , pp. 64–65.

48 *Raguaglio di quanto si è fatto di solenne nella Chiesa di S. Luigi della nazione francese in occasione della Cerimonia praticata nel conferirsi il Cordone Bleux conceduto dalla Maestà di Lodovico XIV re di Francia alli principi Alessandro, e Costantino Figliuolidel*

private, the church was packed with onlookers. The guests of honour included Marie Casimire and her father Henri de la Grange, as well as the Spanish ambassador Juan Francisco Pacheco IV duke of Uçeda with his wife, and Lorenzo Onofrio I Colonna, Gran Connestabile del Regno di Napoli with his wife as well as “a numerous group of fine ladies whose presence raised the prestige of the ceremony, adding to its elegance, and also provided proof of how many nations are interested in the glorious reign of Phillip V, the new king of Spain.”⁴⁹ The ceremony started at one o'clock⁵⁰ “with a beautifully composed sinfonia of one hundred or even more string instruments, written by Arcangelo Corelli, after which the trumpets of Her Majesty’s trumpeters sounded from the sacristy.”⁵¹ During the mass, “the musicians sang various motets composed by Master Paolo Lorenzani, former *maestro di cappella* to the Queen of France, and currently employed in the same position at the Vatican Basilica.”⁵² After the mass, the choir sang *Veni Creator Spiritus*; an instrumental concert followed, after which both the Sobieski princes made a public oath. The anonymous author of the report praised both princes’ beautiful apparel, as well as their behaviour, which to his mind was both suitably dignified and humble. After the ceremony, a group of twenty-eight selected guests retired to the ambassador’s residence in order to listen to an oratorio celebrating the birthday of King Phillip V of Spain, who had just turned eighteen. “The oratorio had exquisite music, and it was followed by a sinfonia, both of which were accompanied by a magnificent illumination.”⁵³ The ceremony, meant as a family celebration, transformed into a public demonstration of political sentiment. In the presence of the distinguished guests, Marie Casimire and her sons declared their allegiance to France. Such a declaration had to be public in order to carry the desired weight, and hence it was made in a church packed with well-wishers and onlookers.

Regina Vedova Marie Casimire di Polonia. . . , Roma 1701, I-Rc, shelf mark Vol. Misc. 813.23.

- 49 In *Foglio di Foligno* (of 24th Dec. 1700) we can find names of some more important people who attended the event. These include the cardinals d’Etrè, Gianson, Giudice, Coeslin, Novaglie, Medici, and others.
- 50 18 *ore italiane* for the middle of December.
- 51 “fù dato principio ad una ben regolata sinfonia di 100. e più stromenti a arco concerto di Archangelo Corelli, ne molto tardò, che dalla Sagristia fu dato principio al suono delle Trombe da i Tubicini di S. E.”
- 52 *Raguaglio*. . . , p. 7.
- 53 “un oratorio d’eccecente Musica, e Sinfonia con grande illuminazioni,” *Foglio di Foligno* (24th Dec. 1700).

After the solemn part of the ceremony, it was time for merrymaking. The party at the residence of the Spanish ambassador was an occasion for carefree entertainment, whereas the party for the Sobieski princes lasted only for several hours. Its function can be described as carnivalesque; it was a time set aside for amusement, different from the everyday routine. But the religious calendar also contained a real, annual period of merrymaking: the Carnival itself, which was the longest, and the most popular, period of officially sanctioned fun in the early modern period.

The Carnival

If you do not tap a wine barrel and let in some air every now and then, the barrel will explode. We are all like old jugs or barrels untapped; the wine of wisdom would explode inside us if we allowed it to ferment for too long, without any vent of air, by our permanent devotion to the service of the Lord. For this reason, let us devote several days to amusements and frolics, so that after we have had our fill, we can return to our religious studies and spiritual exercises with the more joy and zeal.⁵⁴

These words of Jean-Baptiste du Tilliot (1668–1750), a bibliophile and an erudite interested in ancient history, are a commentary on (and at the same time, a justification for) the French tradition of the Feast of Fools. They also perfectly describe the psychological mechanism behind the early modern carnival. While there are multiple theories explaining the significance of the carnival for local communities, most scholars agree that its primary function was that of a safety valve, which channelled the unavoidable tensions created by the hierarchical social system.⁵⁵

54 “Les tonneaux de vin crèveraient, si on ne leur ouvrait quelquefois la bonde ou le fossat, pour leur donner de l’air. Or, nous sommes de vieux vaisseaux et des tonneaux mal reliés, que le vin de la sagesse ferait rompre, si nous le laissons bouillir ainsi par une dévotion continuelle au service divin. C’est pour cela que nous donnons quelques jours aux joies et et aux bouffonneries, afin de retourner ensuite, avec plus de ferveur, à l’étude et au service de la religion,” in: Joel Lefebvre, *Les Fols et la folk* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), p. 44. Qtd. after S. Chappaz-Wirthner, *Le Turc, Le Fol et le Dragon. Figures du carnaval haut-valaisan*, Recherches et travaux de l’Institute d’Ethnologie No. 12 (Neuchâtel-Paris: Université de Neuchâtel, 1995), pp. 3–52, at p. 9.

55 N. Schindler, “Karneval, Kirche und verkehrte Welt. Zur Funktion der Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert,” in: N. Schindler, *Widerspenstige Leute. Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), pp. 121–74.

Both in Rome and in the whole of Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the carnival period was when the ordinary world turned upside down thanks to the masquerades and street parties. Among many first-hand accounts written by foreigners, there is also one written by the already mentioned Charles Poerson, the director of the Académie Française in Rome. Poerson's account, contained in one of his letters, is remarkable for its utterly unenthusiastic tone:

The Romans are all in a frenzy over their eagerly anticipated carnival. Almost the whole of Rome is donning masks and the comedies are so numerous that the governor issued no fewer than 103 permits, and that is even without counting the carriages driving through the streets in the night, in which comedies are performed by torch light. In other words, it is all complete frenzy. I regret, Monsignore, that I have no more to tell you about this, because I have not even once ventured [into the streets] after supper since the carnival began. I consider the whole affair a monument of extravagance, when even the humblest artisans will desert their occupations and will live for days on bread and water, so that they can run in the streets like madmen, and, safe under the guise of the despicable masks, say aloud all that comes to their heads.⁵⁶

At the same time, both in Rome, in the whole of Italy and in other Catholic countries the church made energetic efforts to imbue the carnival with religious significance. According to Norbert Schindler, this tendency started at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and constituted "the phase of the courtly disciplining and domestication of carnival ... in which, thanks not least to ecclesiastical influence, carnival was gradually stripped of its cruder elements, taken over, both internally (for example, by the craft guilds 'honourable' need for representation), and externally (by the municipal regimes' policy of order and the hegemonic court masques) and increasingly transformed into a public theatrical custom *coram publico*."⁵⁷

56 "Les Romains sont fort occupéz de leur Carnival tant désiré; presque tout le monde de Rome se masque, et les Comédies sont si nombreuses que la Gouverneur a donné 103 permissions, sans compter les chars qui vont de nuit, sur lesquels l'on représente des Comédies aux flambeaux dans les rues. Enfin, c'est un dechainement de folie qui n'a point d'exemple. Cependant, Mgr, de tout ce que j'ay l'honneur de vous en écrire, je ne le sçai que par ouy-dire, car je ne suis pas sorti une seule après-disner depuis l'ouverture de ce Carnival, qui me paroist une extravagance outrée, car les moindres Artisans quittent leur travail et se passent volontiers d'un peu de pain et d'eau pour courir les rues comme des insensés, et, à l'escorte d'un mauvais masque, dire tout ce qui leur vient en pensée," Ch. Poerson to Duke d'Antin, son of Madame de Montespan, the favourite of Louis XIV, (29th Febr. 1710), in: *Correspondance des directeurs*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 372.

57 N. Schindler, *Rebellion, Community and Custom in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002), pp.113–114.



Illustration 6. Via del Corso in Rome, seventeenth century, I. Silvestre, P. Mariette. The National Library of Poland.

In Rome the process of “taming” the carnival can be tracked chronologically in the annual instructions issued by the governors of the city, which were aimed at ordering the behaviour of the citizens during the *feste*. And thus, in the instruction from 1701 the governor Ranuccio Pallavicino banned wearing masks before noon and after one a.m., dressing up as members of the clergy, or donning costumes and disguises which were indecent or provocative. Non-compliance with these rules incurred a fine. It was also forbidden to insult others by word or deed, to harass the members of the Jewish community, to stop one’s carriage for longer than a moment in front of the churches in the Corso, to swear or make lewd gestures, to throw eggs and bitter oranges (*melangoli*) and other similar objects.⁵⁸

The Corso horse-race, which was the highlight of the carnival, was also strictly regulated. The governor’s instructions banned the priests from wearing masks and from coming to the Corso during the masquerades. Women, both the

58 “Bando Sopra le Maschere, e corso de’Palij,” in: *Editti stampati*, I- Rc, shelf mark Per est18.

virtuous wives and daughters and the courtesans, were also strictly forbidden from wearing masks and full-length disguises, and the courtesans were additionally forbidden from driving around the city in carriages and any other vehicles. Apart from regulating rowdy behaviour during the carnival, the church also tried to use the period of public fun as a topic for instruction. The realities of the carnival could be exploited as an example in religious rhetoric and used to shape the behaviour of the flock. The clergy often dwelled on the opposition between Lent and the carnival in their sermons, explaining that it was a parallel for the oppositions so eloquently described by Saint Augustine: between the eternal and the temporal, Jerusalem and Babylon, virtue and sin, soul and body.

The case of Rome proves the theory that the church not so much fought to limit or even eradicate the carnival but sought to use it for its own purposes. To this end, the Roman church created *Quarantore*, a religious branch of the carnival, which was celebrated on the last days of the secular carnival. It involved the performances of oratorios and (although the religious authorities approved of it only with mixed feelings) – theatrical performances. During *Quarantore* some churches in the city became “theatres.” The altar was turned into a stage and the Holy Sacrament was the centrepiece, surrounded by scenery designed by Rome’s leading architects. Using secular symbolism and allusions to contemporary events, the church organisers devised spectacles of veneration for the Holy Sacrament, whose goal it was to win the hearts of the common people and to convince them not to participate in the carnival frenzy.

In the jubilee year of 1700, an especially elaborate presentation of the Holy Sacrament in Il Gesù, with decorations designed by Sebastiano Cipriani, became the talk of the town.⁵⁹ Likewise, in San Lorenzo in Damaso (a church which was under direct supervision of Pietro Ottoboni as cardinal-protector) a magnificent concert was held during the 1690 *Quarantore*. The orchestra, conducted by Corelli, consisted of eighteen violins, seven *violette*, seven *violoni*, seven double basses, two trumpets and five archlutes.⁶⁰ Ottoboni was very active during the subsequent *Quarantores* as a promoter of sung masses and polychoral motets.⁶¹ All these initiatives provided an alternative for secular, plebeian entertainments available in the city during that time, in which members of the upper classes also participated with gusto. Carnival customs offered to the top echelons of society

59 *Foglio di Foligno* (27th Febr. 1700).

60 H. J. Marx, “Die Musik am Hofe...,” p. 89.

61 H. J. Marx, “Die Musik am Hofe...,” p. 90.

a chance to experience life outside their sheltered existence. Hiding behind a mask, it was possible to escape from one's identity and mingle with the crowd.

In 1702, the pope forbid carnival celebrations in Rome. All the funds traditionally set aside for prizes for the winners in the Corso horse race (to the tune of 480 scudi) were reappropriated to support the fine arts. On 25th February, a special celebration was held by the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca, during which the leading painters, sculptors and architects were given awards. The event was attended by many church hierarchs, members of the aristocracy and Arcadian poets. The oration was delivered by Giovan Battista Zappi, and the music was performed by a thirty-three-piece orchestra, who received the total of 69.60 scudi as their fees.⁶² The conductor was Arcangelo Corelli, who thus began his association with the Accademia di San Luca, which was to continue for several years. Corelli received 84.60 scudi for the music composed for the occasion.⁶³ The implicit goal of this and other similar events was to showcase the splendour of the church, and to win the hearts of the populace, turning their attention from secular amusements to the glories of religion.

This strategy of the church began to pay off and finally won the day. Whereas the premise of a "world turned upside down," summarised by Edward Muir as "peasants imitating the kings, artisans masquerading as bishops, servants giving orders to their masters, poor men offering alms to the rich, boys beating their fathers, and women parading around in armour"⁶⁴ might still hold some fascination, many of its actual *manifestations* were perplexingly violent and cruel. During the popular Roman races (the *corso di palio*) it was customary to organise not only horse races (*corsa dei barberi*,) but also races of Jews, naked old men, or children. To make matters worse, tradition required the onlookers to throw various objects at the runners. Rotten eggs and *confetti* made of plaster were on the list of the popular missiles, as were (unbelievably) dead cats. Such barbaric customs were censured by the pope, and the city authorities threatened the offenders with death by hanging. Still, for some of the bolder revellers this proved insufficient as a deterrent. In the rare cases when the offenders were caught by the guards, their executions were also turned into public spectacles.

This is how the carnival was celebrated: luxury, pomp, squandering vast sums of money, unbridled revelry (sometimes of the forbidden kind); all this accompanied by some mandatory murder, public hangings, and whippings. There was an abundance of public

62 F. Piperno, "Anfione in Campidoglio'..." p. 172.

63 F. Piperno, "Anfione in Campidoglio'..." p. 171.

64 E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe...*, p. 97.

proclamations aiming to limit the carnival excesses, prayers and masses offered to propitiate God and give people a good example. All these strategies, however, seemed to work but for a little while: all the people, from the noble prince to the humblest of goods porters, preferred to retain their right to folly – at least once a year.⁶⁵

It is often stressed that the carnival was a much welcome event for the aristocrats, who, donning their masks, could enjoy the rare taste of anonymity and be temporarily free from the constraints of court protocol, and thus they often frequented plebeian events. However, some carnival entertainments were provided exclusively for the upper classes: every year, there were tournaments (usually followed up by balls or banquets), and a parade of decorative, allegorical carriages on the Corso.

The carnival also meant peak season for the theatre and opera. According to Muir, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the carnival moved from the street into the theatre: “now Carnival was not so much presented as represented. Commercial entertainment in the form of theatrical performances and spectator sports supplanted collective participation.”⁶⁶ In Rome the carnival started on 26th December, or on 1st February at the latest and lasted until Ash Wednesday. As Poerson observed in 1711, it completely engrossed the city’s inhabitants: “Everybody’s attention is fixed on the carnival. The whole of Rome talks about nothing but operas, comedies, masquerades and other *divertissements*.”⁶⁷ In the next year, in the middle of the War of the Spanish Succession, things did not change: “Nothing new in Rome – masks, and at night, comedies and operas. This is the sum total of the preoccupations of Italians, who take a break from their political disputes until Lent.”⁶⁸ Whereas the commoners could enjoy puppet theatre shows in the Piazza Navona and the performances of tightrope artists, acrobats and animal tamers, and those better-off attended productions of *drammi di musica* in public theatres, aristocrats preferred performances in private establishments.

65 L. Fiorani, *Riti, cerimonie, feste e vita di popolo nella Roma dei papi*, (Bologna: Cappelli, 1970), p. 211.

66 E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe...*, p. 101.

67 “Le Carneval occupe tellement tout le monde de Rome qu’on n’y parle que d’Opéras, de Comédies, de Mascarades et autres divertissements,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 3, p. 448.

68 “Monseigneur, – Rome est sans grand nouveauté – masque, et, la nuit, aux Comédies et aux Opéras. Voilà toute l’occupation des Italiens, qui ont donné relâche à leurs discours politiques jusqu’au Carême,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 73.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the carnival in Rome could still be seen “as a huge play in which the main streets and squares became stages, the city became a theatre without walls, while the inhabitants became either actors or spectators, observing the scene from their balconies.”⁶⁹ The Roman carnival in that period was a “total feast,”⁷⁰ which had the power to temporarily suspend the ordinary reality. It was a vibrant, colourful time, full of energy and joy, which nevertheless became increasingly controlled and “tamed” by the authorities. It also gradually transformed into a tourist attraction as many well-to-do foreigners travelled to Italy, and specifically to Rome, to participate in the amusements. The characteristic feature of the carnival in Rome, in comparison with other Italian cities, was that it was increasingly influenced by the church agenda. For the common people, it was primarily the time of reckless and joyful abandon, and for the aristocracy (as Peter Burke suggests) – an escape from the Cartesian intellectual universe,⁷¹ and for everyone – the only time in the year when they experienced social integration across the hierarchical boundaries.

69 P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 182.

70 W. Dudzik, *Karnawały w kulturze [Carnivals in Culture]*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic! 2005), p. 44.

71 P. Burke, *Popular Culture...*, p. 285.

II The Life of Marie Casimire

Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien, the future queen of Poland, was born on 28th June 1641 in Nevers and was one of the seven children of Henri Albert de la Grange, Marquis d'Arquien, and Françoise de la Châtre.¹ In 1645, she left France in the entourage of Marie Louise Gonzaga, who travelled to Poland to be united with her husband King Władysław IV Vasa, whom she had previously married *per procura*. This journey, taken at the age of four, determined the course of the future queen's life. But at that point, there were no indications that the little girl, who was sent to live at the court in part due to her parents' financial troubles, would become one of the most influential women in the Kingdom of Poland, and an important personage on the European stage. How did it come about? What circumstances, and what personality traits of Marie Casimire propelled this daughter of an impoverished French aristocratic family to such a position of prominence? It was certainly partly due to the policy of fostering French influences among the Polish elites, which was actively promoted by Marie Louise. The queen championed marriages of her French ladies-in-waiting to Polish noblemen. In return for the privilege of marrying well-connected and aristocratic brides, their husbands were expected to become supporters of the French faction in Poland. Marie Casimire soon became a great favourite of the Polish court on account of her beauty, and she adopted the nickname of Marysienka (a diminutive of the name "Mary" in Polish). At a very early age, her charms became an inspiration for Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, one of the prominent poets from the period:

The first in beauty though the youngest in age,
She was born among the polite French.
Her eyes are such that they could burn both worlds,
The daylight one and the nocturnal one.
Happy the man who leaves his heart in her hands.
Should heavens grant her a long life,

1 M. Komaszynski, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski 1641–1716* [*Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska Queen of Poland 1641–1716*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1983), p. 11; L. de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, Vol. 2, ch. 3, online edition (exact collation of the original manuscripts), ed. Mr. Chérueil: 11 March 2020 <http://rouvroy.medusis.com/docs/0603.html>.

Then her incandescent beauty
 Shall dazzle not only the world but also its royalty.²

The poem suggests that Marie Casimire was never short of admirers, and the mention of possible royal suitors seems almost prophetic. Such a renowned aristocratic beauty was never destined to spend a long time on the marriage market, even in spite of her lack of dowry. Marie Casimire's circle of early admirers included both the future king John III Sobieski, who would become her second husband, and the rich magnate Jan Sobiepan Zamoyski. The latter won Marie Casimire's favour over his then less wealthy and powerful rival and married the seventeen-year-old bride on 3rd March 1658.

Michel Rousseau de la Valette, the author of a tell-all account of life at the Polish court in that period approvingly noted that the bride was young, beautiful and had the honour to be the queen's special favourite.³ The union also had a political significance, as it was widely believed to be a reward for Zamoyski's staunch loyalty to King John Casimir and to Marie Louise (who had married him after the death of his elder brother King Ladislaus IV) at the time of the Swedish invasion in the years 1655–1660, known in Poland as the Deluge. Sadly, the marriage very soon proved to be disappointing for the young bride. Zamoyski's great fortune and many political obligations meant that the newlyweds often spent time apart, and Marie Casimire felt isolated and lonely, staying in her husband's vast residences surrounded only by servants. This led to renewing correspondence with her former suitor John Sobieski, and that relation, born out of affinity of tastes and interests became for both of them the greatest passion of their lives.⁴ While the fact that a married women carried on a friendly (if initially innocent) correspondence with a former admirer would have undoubtedly caused a scandal, but Zamoyski's early death in 1665 meant that Marie Casimire and Sobieski could act on their mutual attraction.

Marie Casimire's new choice of husband met with full approval on the part of Queen Marie Louise, who wanted to bind the increasingly influential Sobieski

2 "Ta pierwsza twarzą, choć ostatnia laty, / Zrodzona między grzecznymi Francuzy / Zdolna jest spalić w popiół oba światy / Od wschodu słońca, aż gdzie się zanurzy / Nie żałuj serca w takie ręce straty! / Jeśli jej niebo żywota przedłuży, / Jej zbytnia gładkość, co dopiero świata, / Przed swym południem i króle pochwyta." J.A. Morsztyn, "Psyche" (stanza 48), in: *Utwory zebrane* [Collected Works], ed. L. Kukulski, (Warszawa: PIW, 1971, Biblioteka Poezji i Prozy), p. 466. Morsztyn also dedicated one stanza to Marie Casimire in a poem titled *Balet królewski 1654 w Warszawie* [A Royal Ballet in 1654 in Warsaw], cf.: J.A. Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane*, p. 232.

3 M. Rousseau de la Valette, *Casimir roy de Pologne* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1679).

4 M. Komaszynski, *Maria Kazimiera*. . . , p. 37.



Illustration 7. Maria Casimire, third quarter of seventeenth century, French painter. Museum of King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

to the French faction. The couple married in secret on 14th May 1665, and a public wedding followed on 6th July of the same year in Warsaw. The following years brought many changes in Poland's political scene. The period of instability began with the death of Queen Marie Louise in 1667, followed by her husband's abdication in 1668, and by the unsuccessful attempts to put a French prince on Poland's throne by means of a *vivente rege* election. Then came the short and rather unsuccessful reign of King Michael I, marked by internal strife and wars with the Ottoman Empire. Throughout this tumultuous period, Sobieski's star was on the rise both as a military leader and a statesman. The day after King Michael's death, Sobieski won a decisive victory against the Turks in the Battle of Khotyn (11th November 1673), which consolidated both his popularity and his status as Poland's most talented military commander. Less than a year later, on 21st May 1647, he was elected king of Poland. According to the papal nuncio Francesco Buonvisi and Louis XIV's French ambassador Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, Sobieski owed much of his success to his intelligent and energetic wife.

Buonvisi characterized her thus: “a woman with a man’s intellect, endowed with an iron will, and ready, as the events showed, for any sacrifice in order to see her husband elected to the highest office in the land.”⁵ In his letters Forbin-Janson also claimed that Marie Casimire must have inspired her husband to put his name forward as a candidate.⁶ Another French politician from the period, Simon Arnauld de Pomponne, likewise wrote about her political aspirations and influence on her husband: “she was full of unbridled ambition which, when circumstances allowed it, she poured into her husband. It was she who first inspired him to think about the crown, who directed his friends to support him in this desire, and who reassured him in all his actions taken with this end in mind.”⁷ It seems that Marie Casimire’s aspirations and talents, and her knowledge of the inner workings of politics acquired at the court of her patron Marie Louise all contributed both to her husband’s rise and to her strong position in their relationship as her husband’s equal partner. Incidentally, the couple’s mutual connection and love for each other became proverbial in the Polish collective memory thanks to their surviving correspondence. All these factors, along with Sobieski’s high reputation following his string of military victories, led to his accession as the king of Poland, with Marie Casimire at his side.

Marie Casimire as the Queen of Poland

In today’s culture, Marie Casimire is remembered as a positive figure: the beautiful French wife of one of Poland’s most famous kings. The Sobieskis’ love story also has acquired a somewhat iconic position, thanks to John’s surviving letters to Marie Casimire. The candid, intimate letters are a testimony to Sobieski’s enduring love for his wife. In the opening lines he addressed her as “My heart’s and soul’s most beautiful and most beloved,” or, mixing Polish and French as “Unique maitresse de mon coeur, my most beloved Marysienka!” and finally “Mon coeur, mon ame et mon tout!!” (“My heart, my soul, my all”).⁸

5 Qtd. after K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce w XVII w. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich* [*Educated Women in 17th-c. Poland. The Intellectual Aspirations of Women from the Courtly Circles*] (Warszawa: Retro-Art, 1997). p. 82.

6 M. Komaszyński, *Maria Kazimiera*. . . , p. 94.

7 M. Komaszyński, *Maria Kazimiera*. . . , p. 95.

8 Jan Sobieski, *Listy do Marysienki* [*Letters to Marie Casimire*], ed. L. Kukulski, Vols 1–2 (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1966).

However, Marie Casimire's contemporaries were less kindly inclined towards her than her husband or the twentieth- and twenty-first-century public. The dominant opinion after the Sobieskis' wedding was that she was a French adventuress who managed to seduce an upright Polish statesman thanks to her intrigues and feminine wiles. She was believed to be unpredictable and impulsive. In their letters home foreign ambassadors wrote that she was not able to inspire the love of her subjects and that "she is more hated than loved by gentlemen and ladies alike, and she does not have even a single bosom friend."⁹ The ambassadors also noted her influence on the king and the fact that it was difficult to negotiate with her. The kindest thing that was said about her was that she "mastered the art of intelligent, well prepared conversation."¹⁰ Among the queen's most virulent critics was Louis de Rouvroy de Saint-Simone, who in his famous *Mémoires* contained an obviously biased evaluation of her reign, saying that Marie Casimire had

a pernicious influence on her husband in the last years of his life, which meant that no one mourned his death, and none of her children inherited their father's throne despite the great attachment that Poles have to the bloodlines of their kings and to the custom of passing a father's crown on to his sons ... In the end, hated by everyone in Poland, including her domestics and children, she took her fortune and her father and removed herself to Rome.¹¹

As the Polish historian Michał Komaszynski pointed out in numerous publications on the subject, most of the contemporary negative opinions about Marie Casimire as a queen could be attributed to slander campaigns conducted by her political enemies, such as Jędrzej Chryzostom Załuski, the Bishop of Płock and the author of *Epistolae*, or the above-mentioned mentioned Saint-Simon. Nineteenth-century historiographers uncritically repeated opinions coined by both these chroniclers, adding their own, highly subjective and often

9 "è più odiata che amata tra Cavalieri e tra le Dame, forse non ha una sola amica," qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra sei e settecento (1699–1715)* (Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 1990), p. 20.

10 *Elenco e relazioni sui primi personaggi del regno*, qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma*. . . , p. 21.

11 "Son humeur altière et son extrême avarice l'avaient fait détester en Pologne; et l'aversion publique qu'elle témoigna sans mesure au prince Jacques, son fils aîné, coûta la couronne à sa famille. Elle ne put donc se résoudre à demeurer dans un pays où, après avoir été tout, elle se trouvait haïe, méprisée, étrangère et sans appui par la division de ses enfants, et prit le parti d'aller avec son père s'établir à Rome," in: L. de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, Vol. 1, ch. 8, 11 March 2020 <http://rouvroy.medusis.com/docs/1108.html>.

misogynistic comments. Similarly negative opinions concerning Marie Casimire survived in the works of Western musicologists, and their source can be traced to the work of the nineteenth-century historian Kazimierz Waliszewski, who published his writings in French, which made them easily accessible to scholars from Western Europe. Waliszewski's view of the queen is as hostile as it is highly peculiar. Here is a sample of his style, from a passage in which he mentions the nicknames by which the queen is remembered (Marysienka in Polish, Mariette in French), where he exclaims: "A pet name for a beloved wife, is it not? Alas! That name will live forever in infamy as the synonym of meanness, moodiness and perfidy. Under this lovely name, she will live forever in human memory as the paragon of a bad woman, bad mother and an evil queen."¹²

The letters and memoirs of foreigners who frequented the Sobieskis' court, such as Abbot Melchior de Polignac, François-Paulin Dalerac,¹³ Philippe Dupont¹⁴ and M[onsieur] de Mongrillon¹⁵ present conflicting assessments of Marie Casimire. The author of an anonymous account from 1687 wrote that "the queen of Poland is intelligent, clever and cunning, active and fond of intrigue. She is also restless, volatile and unbridled in her desires. In order to satisfy them, she is capable of sacrificing even the greatest advantages. She will also suffer losses in order to take revenge on those who hinder the fulfilment of her plans."¹⁶ On the other hand, Monsieur de Mongrillon, the secretary of the French embassy in Poland stated that "no one's mind has ever been more under

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- 12 K. Waliszewski, "Une française reine de Pologne. Marie d'Arquine-Sobieska d'après les documents inédits des archives étrangères," *Le Correspondant* 1884, p. 422. Interestingly, in the same article Waliszewski also quotes Marie Casimire's letter written in 1704, when her sons were taken captive by the army of August II, in which the queen expresses what seems to be a genuine concern for her children. The letter thus disproves Waliszewski's own argument that she was a bad mother.
 - 13 F.P. Dalerac, *Les Anecdotes de Pologne ou Mémoires secrets du règne de Jean Sobieski III du nom*, Vols I-II (Amsterdam, Paris: P. Aubouyn 1700); F.P. Dalerac, *Memoirs du Chevalier de Beaujeu* (Amsterdam: Chez Pierre de Coup, 1715).
 - 14 F. Dupont, *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire de la vie et des actions de Jean Sobieski III* (nakładem Świdzińskich, 1885, repr. Charleston: Nabu Press, 2013).
 - 15 M. de Mongrillon, "Mémoires et anecdotes pour servir à l'histoire de la Pologne contenant l'abrégé de la vie de la reine Louise Marii[s] de Gonzague. . . Portrait du roi Jean Sobieski et l'histoire de la concurrence du prince de Conti et de l'électeur de Saxe, pour la couronne de Pologne," in: *Curiosités historiques ou recueil de pièces utiles à l'histoire de France et qui n'ont jamais paru*, Vol. 1 (Amsterdam: no ed., 1759).
 - 16 M. Komarzyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera [Queen Marie Casimire]* (Warszawa: Zamek Królewski, 1994), pp. 31–32.

the control of the heart,”¹⁷ suggesting that the queen’s emotional nature was not conducive to running a consistent, well thought-out policy. This trait was quickly noticed and exploited by many foreign diplomats coming to Poland and trying to influence the queen in a favourable direction. Marie Casimire’s brother-in-law, Francois Gaston de Béthune, Marquis de Chabris, confirmed that “the Queen is dangerous as an enemy, but she can also be the greatest friend”¹⁸ and intimated that “there are few things which she would not accomplish in her own time.”¹⁹ In 1690 the papal nuncio Andrea Santa Croce described Marie Casimire in the following way:

the queen is tall, with white complexion and beautiful appearance, and although she is over forty years of age, she looks so well that in a gathering of much younger ladies, she triumphed over them all. She is a woman of a penetrating mind, who knows how to keep secrets. She is hungry for ruling. She can address not only the most important issues, as she does in this court, but she could also rule the whole country in her own right.²⁰

The image of Marie Casimire as a capricious schemer, who seduced and then dominated her husband in order to rule the country, is contradicted by her letter to Referendary Stanisław Antoni Szczuka after the death of her husband, written in a highly personal tone: “There is no pleasure in life without him ... In truth, my happiness was connected to his person rather than his crown. He would have relinquished it long ago, as you know, if he had listened to my entreaties and thought of his health, as I had urged him to do. Caring for him was my greatest concern.”²¹ Similarly, in a letter written from Rome to her son-in-law, Maximilian II Emanuel, she confided: “I had my hand in all the matters of the state, since my departed King and Master had more love for me than I deserved. Thus, all his decisions were always guided by my opinion and what he thought would please me. He thought of me as far more talented than I am.”²² Ruling Poland, where the landed gentry had relatively much say in the affairs of the state, and the elective king’s position was weaker than in other European monarchies, was no easy task: a fact that was emphasised by many foreign diplomats in their reports. The later generations of historians perhaps chose to forget this inconvenient truth,

17 Qtd. after M. de Mongrillon, “Mémoires et anecdotes. . .,” pp. 37–39.

18 M. Komaszyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera*, p. 32.

19 M. Komaszyński, *Piękna królowa Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska 1641–1716* [*Beautiful Queen Marie Casimire d’Arquien Sobieska 1641–1716*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1995), p. 125.

20 M. Komaszyński, *Piękna królowa. . .*, p. 130.

21 M. Komaszyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera*, p. 72.

22 M. Komaszyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera*, p. 31.

and thus their assessment of Marie Casimire's role is notably harsh. Komaszyński also believed that the lack of sympathy for the queen might have stemmed from the dislike of women in power on the part of the Polish political class. A queen who wanted to play an active role in politics, instead of serving a purely ceremonial function, and who additionally was a foreigner, was the *summa* of everything that the seventeenth-century Polish magnates would abhor.

A *Precieuse* in Poland

The prevailing negative opinion concerning Marie Casimire's political role overshadows any attempts at appreciating her cultural achievements and her role as a patron of the arts. The queen's personality, tastes and interests are rarely analysed by modern scholars. But even a cursory glance at the correspondence from the period reveals that Marie Casimire's contemporaries had a much more flattering opinion of her taste and cultural interests than of her involvement in politics. Rousseau de la Valette noted down that "the queen [Marie Louise] gave her an excellent upbringing, and she has a sharp intellect as well as a great dose of personal charm."²³

Another Frenchman staying at the Polish court, F.P. Dalerac, wrote that "her mind is one of great discernment and engaging quickness, which gives her a great advantage over all others: she attracts with her charm, disarms with her sweetness and her power is hard to resist."²⁴

Unfortunately, little is known about Marie Casimire's education. Based on a few remarks of people who knew her in her youth, and on the body of modern research on the education (or rather, upbringing) of young girls in her sphere in that time period, we can however draw some conclusions. We know that as a child she spent several years at an Ursuline school in Nevers (1648–1653), where she was cared for by a nun known as Mother Mary of the Mother of God.²⁵ She also stayed with her aunt, the Countess de Maligny. It is the academic consensus

23 M. Komaszyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera*, p. 7.

24 "Son esprit est d'une délicatesse et d'une pénétration insinuates, qui luy donnent un ascendant merveilleux sur tout le monde: on est attiré par son agrément, on est retenu par sa douceur et l'on ne résiste jamais à sa force," (F.P. Dalerac), qtd. after K. Targosz-Kretowa, *Nieznane "portrety" Jana III i Marii Kazimiery pióra François Paulin Daleraca oraz ich autor [Unknown 'Portraits' of John III and Marie Casimire by François Paulin Dalerac, and Notes on Their Author]*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis" 1992, p. 119.

25 K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w.* . . . , p. 53.

that “convent education emphasised piety and morals more than academic subjects, with everything being taught by rote memorisation.”²⁶ The largest amount of time was devoted to the so-called *agrèments*, that is, sewing, embroidery, dance, household management, with reading and writing considered only as extras.²⁷ Komaszynski, however, also added that her education was perhaps less limited than it would seem because as a *fille d’honneur* (maid of honour) to Queen Marie Louise, she was obligated to spend a lot of time in her presence. This meant that Marie Casimire “learned how to assess historical events and respond to them, gaining insights into the inner workings of politics at a very turbulent time [of the Swedish invasion]. She also learned the rules of the diplomatic game.”²⁸ It also seems that Marie Casimire’s mentality was strongly influenced by the culture of the French *femmes savants*, which was passed on to her by Marie Louise, who had been a member of such circles in Paris.²⁹ Thanks to the queen, Marie Casimire became familiar with the ideas and aspirations of the regulars of the *chambre bleue* at the palace of Marquise de Rambouillet, and in numerous other salons, which were established in France after the defeat of the Fronde, modelled on meetings organised by the incomparable Arthénice.³⁰ The circle of the French Savantes was made up of both noble ladies and representatives of the emerging wealthy bourgeoisie, united by their belief in the intellectual capabilities of women, their need for independent judgement and literary abilities. As Dorothy A. Liot Backer put it in her monograph on the heroines of the first wave of French feminism, they “were new kind of women. No longer content to be the passive object of masculine sentiments, she wishes

26 M.E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 149.

27 M.E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender*. . . , p. 159.

28 M. Komaszynski, *Piękna królowa*. . . , pp. 22–23. Komaszynski argues in fact that Marie Casimire might have been preparing for the role of a secret agent of the French at the court of King John Casimir.

29 K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w. . . .*; M. Malinowska, *Sytuacja kobiety w siedemnastowiecznej Francji i Polsce* [*The Woman’s Situation in 17th-Century France and Poland*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008), esp. pp. 195–278; M. Bogucka, *Gorsza płęć. Kobieta w dziejach Europy od antyku po wiek XXI* [*The Inferior Sex. The Woman in European History from the Antiquity to the 21st Century*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2005); I. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant. Feminism in French Literature 1610–1652*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

30 Arthénice was Marquise de Rambouillet’s salon name.

to experience and express feelings of her own.”³¹ In order to achieve this, the Savantes created their own language, in which they could ask difficult questions about women’s rights and about the social position of an unmarried woman, a wife, a mother, and a daughter.³² Using sometimes artificial metaphors and allusions, often understandable only to the inner circle, they debated the nature of love, the consequences of early marriage and of numerous births on a woman’s psyche, as well as discussing female sexuality and rebelling against the fact that it was being controlled by men. The Savantes also argued for women’s right to freedom, which most of them understood, however, in a somewhat limited way, related to their own privileged social position, as the right of paying and receiving visits, taking up hobbies and pastimes that they liked, spending time according to their own tastes, and above all the freedom of engaging in art, conversation, thinking and reading.³³ In an era when epistolography was much admired, ladies who mastered the art of writing fine letters practiced it with abandon. They also gladly read and reread their favourite novels. Among the most popular titles were *Amadis de Gaule* by Garcí Rodriguez de Montalvo in a French translation by Nicolas Herberay des Essarts, Honoré d’Urfé’s *Astrée*, as well as works by women from their own circle, such as Madeleine de Scudéry’s *Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus*, *Clélie*, and *Conversations morales*. Marie Louise brought the Parisian salon culture to Poland, but even more importantly, she also brought with her the proto-feminist ideals of the Savantes, and introduced Polish ladies, as well as her own female courtiers, to a range of new ideas and beliefs. In all probability, she passed on her intellectual enthusiasms to her favourite maid of honour, Marie Casimire.

The future queen of Poland enjoyed writing letters, in which she referred to characters from her favourite novels, and especially from her beloved *Astrée*. In her correspondence with Sobieski, especially in the first year, when she was still married to Zamoyski, she used subtle allusions and metaphors in the style of the French *Précieuses*, referring to her connection with Sobieski as either a tender friendship, or a friendship mingled with love. Together with Sobieski, they also created one of the then fashionable “Maps of Tendre” (*carte de Tendre*), inspired by Mademoiselle de Scudéry’s *Clélie*, and exchanged long descriptions of their acquaintances, which were also inspired by the literary genre of the portrait,

31 D.A. Liot Backer, *Precious Women. A Feminist Phenomenon in the Age of Louis XIV* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 10.

32 D.A. Liot Backer, *Precious Women*. . . , p. 173; B. Craveri, *The Age of Conversation*, trans. Teresa Waugh (New York: New York Review Books, 2006).

33 D.A. Liot Backer, *Precious Women*. . . , pp. 162–163.

likewise practiced by the *Précieuses*. Just like the French Savantes, Marie Casimire loved drawing room games, practising the art of conversation, and reading *romans à clef*.³⁴ The evidence of these personal tastes can be found not only in her correspondence, but also in her personal book collection preserved as a part of the Sobieski family library, where we can find many important texts of proto-feminist literature³⁵ This kind of reading undoubtedly inspired Marie Casimire

34 K. Targosz, *Uczony dwór Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi (1646–1667). Z dziejów polsko-francuskich stosunków naukowych* [*The Learned Court of Marie Louise Gonzaga (1646–1667). From the History of Polish-French Scientific Relations*] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975), p. 357.

35 K. Targosz notes that the library of Marie Louise, which later became merged with that of the Sobieskis, contained the following books: F. de Grenaille, *Les plaisirs des dames* (1641), where the author argued that the value of a woman does not lie in her physical beauty, but in her inner resources such as *esprit* and *vertù*; G. de Scudery, *Les femmes illustre ou les harangues héroïques. . . avec les véritables portraits de ces héroïnes tirés des medailles antique* (1642), which showcased the figures of famous women such as Sappho, who advocated that women should study and acquire knowledge just as men do, and use it for their benefit; P. Le Moyne, *La galerie des femmes fortes* (1647), another anthology presenting the lives of famous women; J. Guillaume, *Les dames illustres où par les bonnes et fortes raison il se prouve que le sexe féminin surpasse en toute sorte de genres le sexe masculin* (1665), whose author made the case for women's superiority over men; and finally, F. Poullain (Poullain) de La Barre, *De l'égalité des deux sexes discours physique et morale, ou l'on voit l'importance de se defaire des préjugez* (1673). The latter was one of the most revolutionary books of the period, which contained a poignant description of the situation of women in that era, blaming the disparity in the levels of education between the sexes on patriarchy, stereotypical expectations regarding gender roles, and cultural mores. De La Barre also said that, according to his own first-hand observations, girls were more intelligent than boys and would make better teachers, since they possess more psychological insight and common sense, and furthermore, they reach emotional maturity earlier. Writing about the differences between sexes, he argued for full equality, or at least for equal access to education, and noted that domestic seclusion makes girls timid and that lack of intellectual preoccupations makes them too much focused on their appearance and therefore vain (this summary of de La Barre's argument is based on K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w. . .*, p. 230). The analysis of the contents of Marie Casimire's library shows that she was familiar with the most influential and controversial proto-feminist texts of the era, and she was probably keeping abreast of the heated contemporary debate about the role, position and nature of women. Reading that kind of material might also have inspired her political ambitions, which might have made her more interested in the matter of the education of her own daughter. Teresa Kunegunda was the only Sobieski princess to have survived infancy (her sister Adelaide died very

with self-confidence and a belief in her own abilities. She felt entitled to her own ambitions, and the feeling of intellectual kinship with the circle of progressive French women no doubt also gave her a feeling of self-satisfaction and a belief in her own uniqueness and brilliance. In reality, just as it was the case with the regulars of the French women's salons, Marie Casimire's knowledge of the world was somewhat superficial and also coloured both by her privileged position and by her fervent religiosity, which, merged with her moodiness and emotionality, hampered her a great deal in pursuing reasonable policies and in acting for the common good, rather than for the particular interests of her family.³⁶ Apart from reading, another important element of the education of the future queen were court celebrations and festivities, during which she could indulge in her passion for dancing and music-making.³⁷ She also accompanied Marie Louise during several sojourns at the French court, which in that period was undoubtedly one of the most important and influential power centres in Europe. Like so many other guests at the court of the Sun King, Marie Casimire was dazzled by its magnificence and treated the French court customs as an inspiration for her life in Poland, first as the wife of Zamoycki, and then as Sobieski's queen consort. At the Polish court, she introduced and promoted French entertainments,

young). Believed to be one of the most eligible princesses in Europe, she married the Elector of Bavaria at the age of eighteen.

- 36 Just like Marie Louise, Marie Casimire did not know Latin. Later in life, in spite of spending several years in Italy, she did not learn Italian, and thus her conversations with the Pope always had to be mediated by an interpreter. However, she learned from her own experience and insisted on providing her daughter Maria Kunegunda with a much more thorough education, including foreign languages.
- 37 Marie Casimire probably played a lute and/or a keyboard instrument. I have found indirect proof of this fact in the collections of the Wilanów Palace Museum, which owns the painted lid of an unidentified keyboard instrument (the instrument itself probably did not survive). The picture on the lid is titled *Minerva among the Muses*, and there exist documents which prove that the instrument was a gift for Marie Casimire, sent to her by the wife of Emperor Leopold I after the Battle of Vienna; cf. M. Gołębek, ed., *Ku czci króla Jana III. Bohaterowie i pamiątki* [*In Honour of King John III. Heroes and Mementoes*] (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, Przedsiębiorstwo Wydawnicze Rzeczpospolita, 2008), pp. 102–103.

adapting them to suit the local tastes. These included new French plays,³⁸ as well as balls, dances and *divertissements*.³⁹

The Sobieskis' art patronage was shaped by John III personal tastes and his wife's aspirations. Theatre and music became Marie Casimire's special domain of influence, as her husband was more interested in other arts (and not much is known today about his musical tastes). Sources from the period note that on 30th May 1694 the king sang vespers⁴⁰ and less than one year earlier, a *Te Deum* was performed in his presence.⁴¹ The king, who was devotedly religious, regularly took part in Catholic celebrations and led the congregation in the singing of hymns.

The court theatre became Marie Casimire particular interest. Initially the programme consisted mostly of French plays. In addition to Racine's *Andromache*, various plays by Molière and Corneille were also performed. The queen, who

38 In 1660 Marie Casimire commissioned a performance of Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* at her husband's primary residence in Zamość. The play was probably translated by the poet Andrzej Morsztyn, even though there are no records of the actual language of the performance. Still, the Zamość production of *Le Cid* occupies an important place in the history of the theatre in Poland as it was the first known production of a French play on a Polish stage. Cf.: K. Targosz, "Dwór królowej Marysienki Sobieskiej ogniskiem recepcji teatru francuskiego" ["The Court of Marie Casimire Sobieska as a Centre for the Reception of French Theatrical Plays"], *Barok. Historia–Literatura–Sztuka* 1995, II/I, p. 48. We can also learn from the accounts of the Italian secretary Cosimo Brunetti that, in order to mark the signing a secret Polish-French treaty, and on the day of the king's name day, Marie Casimire commissioned a performance of another French play, Racine's *Andromaque*. The performance took place on 24th June 1675, exactly seven years after the play's Paris premiere.

39 During her stays in Paris, Marie Casimire admired the *comédie-ballet*, a new theatrical genre pioneered by Molière and Jean-Baptiste Lully. Both these artists were well known at Marie Louise's court, also thanks to the accounts of Marie Casimire, the queen's former protégé, who kept her informed about the French cultural life. But most new information about Molière and his plays found its way to Poland thanks to the letters of P. des Noyers, Marie Louise's long-time secretary, who made it his mission to follow the theatrical events in Paris. Cf.: K. Targosz, "Polsko-francuskie powiązania teatralne w XVII wieku. Kronika wydarzeń w teatrze dworskim 1646–1689 w korespondencji Piotra Des Noyersa" ["Polish-French Theatrical Relations in the 17th Century. A Chronicle of Events Held at the Court Theatre in 1646–1689, Based on the Correspondence of Pierre des Noyers"], *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 1971, Vol. 1, pp. 9–50.

40 K. Sarnecki, *Pamiętniki z czasów Jana Sobieskiego. Dziennik i relacje z lat 1691–1696* [*Memoirs from the Times of John III Sobieski. A Diary and Reports from 1691–1696*] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1958), p. 134.

41 K. Sarnecki, *Pamiętniki* . . . , p. 58.



Illustration 8. Portrait of Marie Casimire on horseback, 1685–1696, court painter. King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

was an excellent dancer, also presided over numerous ballets and balls that often lasted through the night. Carnivals were celebrated joyfully, “with festivities, balls, masquerades and comedies.”⁴² One of such balls, on 27th February 1691 was described by an Italian traveller, Giovan Battista Fagioli:

I was at the royal court where a ball was held, and the Princess, the Princes and other notables danced, many of them in costumes: some dressed up as cardinals, some as nuns,

42 W. Roszkowska, “Diariusz życia teatralnego na dworze Jana III Sobieskiego” [“A Diary of Theatrical Life at the Court of John III Sobieski”], *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 1969, Vol. 4, p. 579.

and some in disguises yet more ridiculous and inappropriate. While they were dancing, the Queen ordered the servants to bring her supper, and ate it while the dancing and music were in progress.⁴³

In the late 1680s, Italian influences began to penetrate in the court. However, the arrival in Warsaw of a Venetian group of *comedia dell'arte* actors led by the director Giovanni Nani did not change the queen's preference for the theatre of her native country. She continued to put on French plays at her court theatre. It is likely that the renovation of the court theatre at the Royal Castle in Warsaw in the early 1690s took place at the queen's behest. It was supposedly the biggest theatre room in Europe, though at the same time it was, in contrast with the tastes of the period, completely lacking any decoration.⁴⁴ Apart from comedies, the newly arrived Venetian troupe also performed operas. Their repertoire must have proved a hit with the audiences, as the papal nuncio in Poland, Giacopo Cantelmi, complained in his letters to Cardinal Alderano Cibo that even during Lent the entire court amused themselves by watching Italian theatrical performances.⁴⁵ There survives a first-hand account of a performance in July 1690 which was attended by the nuncio's secretary Giovan Battista Fagioli (who sadly, was far from impressed):

After dinner, there was a comedy performed by Italian players, which Mons.re attended together with all the court. He sat between Her Majesty the Princess, who was on his left, and His Majesty Prince Jakub, who was on his right. They sat on chairs which were exactly alike, and two young Princes sat on their sides on stools. There is simply no etiquette and no precedence here, as Mons.re had a better seat than the two young Princes, sons of the King. This was simply not fitting, as no one should sit higher than a royal prince. The comedy, furthermore, was thoroughly salacious, and would be more appropriate for the lowest plebeians than for an audience of a King, a Queen and the Princes.⁴⁶

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- 43 G. B. Fagioli, *Diariusz podróży do Polski (1690–1691)* [*Diary of the Journey to Poland*], trans. and ed. Małgorzata Ewa Trzeciak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2017), p. 123. The original Italian diary remains unpublished and is kept at the Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze MS 2695–2697.
- 44 J. Lileyko, "Przebudowa sal sejmowych i pokoi królewskich za Jana III" ["Rebuilding the Parliament and Royal Chambers under John III"], in: *Zamek warszawski rezydencja królewska i siedziba władz Rzeczypospolitej (1569–1763)* [*The Warsaw Castle – A Royal Residence and Seat of the Authorities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1763)*] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984), p. 187
- 45 D. Rosińska, "Jana Sobieskiego życie religijne" ["John Sobieski's Religious Life"], in: *Z dziejów XVII i XVIII wieku. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Michałowi Komarzyńskiemu* [*Studies in 17th- and 18th-c. History. Memorial Book Dedicated to Professor Michał Komarzyński*], ed. M.W. Wanatowicz (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1997), p. 72.
- 46 G. B. Fagioli, *Diariusz . . .*, p. 99.

The troupe's popularity at the Sobieskis' court is also confirmed by the surviving writings of their secretary, Tommaso Talini.⁴⁷ The Venetian actors entertained the court during the carnivals of 1689 and 1690. Thereafter the troupe enlisted the services of two castrati and put on two Italian operas on the occasion of the marriages of Prince Jakub and Princess Teresa Kunegunda. Thus, during Jakub's wedding festivities on 29th March 1692, they performed a *drama per musica* titled *Per goder il amor ci vuol constanza* with a libretto by Giovanni Battista Lampugnani and music by Viviano Agostini. The above-quoted Giovan Battista Fagioli again recorded his impressions of the event:

That evening, a large and well-appointed fireworks machine was placed [on a barge] on the River Vistula, and the magnificent show exceeded all expectations and gave great joy to all the present. From the river we went on to the Theatre, especially prepared the occasion, and there the Italian Musicians from the Royal Orchestra performed an Opera by Dr Giovan Battista Lampugnani, who is also a secretary to Mons.re, titled *Per goder'in amor ci vuol Costanza*, which the Poles liked immensely even though they did not understand it. After the second act, a sumptuous meal was served, after which the Opera recommenced.⁴⁸

Prince Jakub's wedding festivities impressed and astonished Fagioli at every step, and therefore he left a very detailed and vivid account of the event:

In order to give you some idea of the magnificence of the feast, suffice it to say that the mere laying of the tables took six hours, the servants bringing more and more exquisite new dishes. The joys of the table were mixed with other pleasures, as dinner was accompanied by music from two choirs, an Italian and a French one. Even though it is Lent, both tonight and on the two subsequent evenings there will be feasting, and the menu served will be just as during the carnival, since Mons.r Nuncio gave special dispensation for the occasion. When all the present ate their fill and drank till they dropped, dancing commenced. His Majesty the King danced with the Queen, and then with the Bride, and later all the Princes of the Blood, Noble Lords and Ladies followed suit, and they tell me that the dancing went on until dawn. After the feast and after watching the King and the Princes dance, the Mons.re left discreetly, dog-tired and somewhat drunk, and went to bed. His leaving so quietly was a sign of good manners, since, being a man of the cloth, he could not dance, and did not wish to draw attention to himself during an evening of merriment.⁴⁹

Three years later, in 1694, the troupe also gave a performance during the wedding festivities of Princess Teresa Kunegunda. The opera was *Amor vuol il giusto*,

47 K. Targosz, *Polsko-francuskie powiązania teatralne*. . . , p. 47.

48 G. B. Fagioli, *Diariusz*. . . , p. 135.

49 G. B. Fagioli, *Diariusz*. . . , p. 133.

written again by Lampugnani and Viviani. The names of three actresses who appeared on this occasion are preserved in the records: Rosetta, Angiola and Cintia.⁵⁰ The castrati were in all probability Jacopo Jacopetti and Giuseppe Luparini. The latter subsequently served as *musicò della camera* at Marie Casimire's court in Rome, where he used the name of Luparini-Becari. We can also assume that one of the female roles was performed by Livia Constantini (née Nanini), also called La Polacchina.⁵¹

The Polish scholar Wanda Roszkowska attempted to identify other musicians who played in John III's royal orchestra, based on documents held at the Dresden Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv. The list she assembled contains nineteen names of Polish and Italian artists. It proves that the core of the group consisted of musicians playing string and wind instruments. Two organists – Piotr Kosmowski and François de Tilly – were also on the payroll. Apart from Agostini, whom I have mentioned above, the position of composer and bandmaster was also held by Jacek Różycki. The make-up of the ensemble probably changed depending on the repertoire – of which we still know very little – as well as on the royal family's place of residence. In the palace in Żółkiew (now Zhovkva) in Ruthenia, which was the king's favourite estate, the band numbered a mere thirteen musicians, and even that – only after its expansion in 1691. The extension of the ensemble happened partly as a result of the establishment of a boarding school for students of singing and music. The fact that a royal orchestra would employ trainee musicians proves that the family had relatively little interest in the matters of music. John III was not an admirer of the European court music or of the French style, and thus he was not interested in following the latest fashions at his court. "The king's musicality was at exactly the same level as that of the majority of the Polish nobility at the time. They valued emotionally charged and atmospheric songs, such as the *dumka* – a kind of ballad of mainly Ruthenian provenance, and they also enjoyed lively dances."⁵² The king employed a female singer named Kaczorowska, who specialised in his favourite Polish and Ruthenian folk songs, and he gladly listened to Ukrainian and Jewish music. The tastes of the queen were different, and it was thanks to her that French and Italian music could be

50 B. Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, *The History of Music in Poland*, Vol. III *The Baroque*, and Vol. 1: 1595–1696 (Warszawa: SUTKOWSKI Edition, 2002), p. 408.

51 A. Żórawska-Witkowska, *Livia Dorotea Nanini-Costantini, zwana [known as] La Polacchina, Complexus effectuum musicologiae. Studia Mirosława Perza septuagenario dedicata*, ed. T. Jeż (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Rabid, 2003), p. 266.

52 A. Szwejkowska, Z.M. Szwejkowski, "W kręgu mecenatu rodu Sobieskich" ["The Sobieski Art Patronage"], *Muzyka* 1984, No. 3, p. 8.

heard at the Sobieski palaces. Regardless of the royal couple's different tastes, it seems indisputable that the knowledge and experience of being a patron of the arts, which Marie Casimire gained as the queen of Poland, along with her intellectual gifts, variously referred to as her "peerless intellect,"⁵³ "agile mind" and "incomparable wit,"⁵⁴ lay at the root of the artistic decisions she would make later during her sojourn in Rome.

The Journey to Rome

Why did Marie Casimire decide to leave Poland after the death of her husband? Why did she leave permanently, and why did she choose Rome as her place of residence? Answers to these questions are at least partly provided by de Saint-Simon in his memoirs. It seems that the dowager queen's decision to leave the country was rooted in the chain of events that followed John III's death. The king died on 17th June 1696, and Marie Casimire personally passed this news to Pope Innocent XII in a letter dated 26th June, asking him for "his gracious consolation after the loss of her beloved Husband and Ruler of immortal but lamented memory."⁵⁵ She also shared the sad news with Cardinal Carlo Barberini, who was the protector of Polish interests in Rome.⁵⁶ In both letters, she emphasised the role of the late king as a defender of Christianity.

The political situation in the Commonwealth did not, however, allow her to grieve for too long, since the struggle for the throne had already started during Sobieski's last illness. On the one side of the battle was the Queen, who counted on French support for her chosen candidate (after receiving assurances to that effect by Louis XVI), while on the other side there was an alliance against the Sobieski family, led by the nobles of the Lubomirski and Załuski clans. The royal couple's eldest son Jakub Ludwik, who was born while Sobieski was still a hetman, was married to Hedwig Elisabeth of Neuburg, a sister of the Austrian Empress, and thus he could not count on French support. In this situation, the Queen suggested that her son-in-law, Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, might be a suitable candidate for the throne of Poland. The only obstacle was that Maximilian himself did not express any interest in the throne. There were also rumours that the Queen was planning to remarry and to rule the country

53 M. Komarzyński, *Piękna królowa*. . . , p. 130.

54 K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w.* . . . , p. 82.

55 I-Rasv, *Segreteria di Stato, Principi*, Vol. 126, fols 267–268.

56 *Maria Casimira a Carlo Barberini*, letter dated 26th June 1696, qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski a Roma*. . . , pp. 255–256.

by herself as had Marie Louise, her mentor and predecessor. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this solution did not appeal even to her staunchest allies. She then proposed one of her younger sons as a candidate, but such a possibility was never seriously considered. Melchior de Polignac, the ambassador of Louis XIV, who had previously been the Queen's confidant, was eager to turn the situation to France's advantage. Convinced that the Sobieski faction had very slim chances of success, he began a secret campaign (thus going beyond the brief received from his king). De Polignac's ultimate goal was to put a French candidate on the throne, and it seems possible that his actions were inspired (or at least abetted) by the Lubomirski clan.⁵⁷ The chosen candidate was François Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Conti.

In the spring of 1697, the Queen, feeling betrayed and offended by the French, decided to support her eldest son's bid for the throne, holding on to what proved to be an illusory hope that Louis XIV's might still turn around. However, Jakub was a candidate whom the Sun King would find it impossible to endorse. France was at that time involved in diplomatic rivalry with the Holy Roman Emperor, who was the principal player in the Grand Alliance (also known as the League of Augsburg), which was in essence an anti-French coalition. As Jakub was married to the sister of the Emperor's own wife, the French king could not support him due to Sobieski's strong links to the Austrians. Additionally, by 1697 Jakub was not viewed anymore as a favourite in the election, as he did not muster sufficiently high-powered support. There also appeared on the stage a new, serious player in the person of Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony. In the end, it was him who became the next king of Poland and assumed the name of Augustus II. Thus, the struggle for the Polish throne reached its end, and the Sobieskis had lost.

In retrospect, it seems that Marie Casimire herself was her own greatest enemy. She was hindered from reaching her political goals by her impulsiveness, and by the resultant inability to surround herself with reliable allies and trustworthy advisors. Feeling unwelcome in her adopted homeland, and having wound up her financial affairs, the dowager queen decided to leave Poland. In her letters she confessed:

57 A. Skrzypietz, "Maria Kazimiera wobec elekcji po zgonie Jana III" ["Marie Casimire and the Election Following the Demise of John III"], in: *Z dziejów XVII i XVIII wieku. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Michałowi Komaczyńskiemu* [Studies in 17th- and 18th-c. History. Memorial Book Dedicated to Professor Michał Komaczyński], ed. M.W. Wanatowicz (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1997), p. 108.

all I can see here is the past, and these remembrances cost me a very dear price. For this reason, it would be more *à propos* to move to a place where I could spend my time in a house of worship and where I could submit myself to God's will for the remainder of my life, which (as all signs seem to suggest) will not be a long one. In any event, I yearn for it to be less painful.⁵⁸

After some consideration she chose Rome, the capital of the Church and of the whole Christian world, as her new place of residence. She needed tranquillity to gather strength for the fight to preserve the public memory of her husband as the defender of Christianity. Upholding her late husband's international reputation also helped Marie Casimire to consolidate her own status as a queen without a crown. In her correspondence she avowed that she was travelling to Rome in order to find spiritual solace thanks to her proximity to holy places; she was also hoping to live out the rest of her life in a place where she could be calmer in body and spirit.⁵⁹ Her desire for spiritual consolation could be fulfilled thanks to a fortuitous event: the upcoming year 1700 had been proclaimed a Jubilee year by the Pope, and thus the plan to participate in the religious festivities was the official reason for Marie Casimire's departure from Poland.

Her journey to Rome began on 2nd October 1698.⁶⁰ From Warsaw, Marie Casimire went to Kraków. There, she participated in an evening entertainment which included an aria sung with great feeling by Countess Anna Konstancja Małachowska née Lubomirska, and then she commanded her *musicista della camera*, Giuseppe Luparini, a castrato singer who travelled with her large entourage to Rome, to give a show of his skills to entertain her hosts. Those present at the occasion noted that it was all the more pleasant thanks to the presence of the dowager queen's beautiful maids of honour.⁶¹

58 The National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk (hereinafter as: NGAB), 695, op. 1/ 260 c. 10.

59 *Istruzione data dalla Cancellaria della Regina Maria Casimira di Pollonia al Signor Giovanni Battista Scarlatti*. . . , qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski a Roma*. . . , p. 272. The document is held at I-Rbav, Fondo Chigi, Cod. M.V.V., fols 192 r-v.

60 A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma Della Sua Reale M.tà di Maria Casimira, Regina di Polonia, vedova dell'invittissimo Giovanni*, Roma 1700. Marie Casimire's detailed itinerary is also reported in: G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski a Roma*. . . ; G. Platania, "Viaggio in Italia di una dama polacca: Maria Casimira Sobieska," in: *Viaggiatori polacchi in Italia*, eds. E. Kanceff and R. Lewanski, Genève-Moncalieri: Slatkine-CIRVI, 1988, pp. 165–181; also M. Komarzyński, "Il viaggio trionfale di una regina di Polonia in Italia," in: *Viaggiatori polacchi*. . . , pp. 153–163. Because the queen's journey has been well-researched by historians, in my work I relied mainly on their findings.

61 A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 6.

From Kraków, the queen travelled through Silesia and Moravia. She reached Vienna on 25th November and stayed there for nine days. On 3rd January 1699 she was already in the Tyrol, and then went on through Trento to Verona, where on the evening of 8th January she was honoured by *una bell'Opera in musica*, with a prologue celebrating her husband, which – as Bassani reported – moved her greatly. During the performance, however, an accident occurred. When the choir was singing an encomium to the invincible Polish king and when his image appeared on the stage in front of the spectators, part of the decorations and some of the singers' costumes caught fire. Luckily it was quickly put out with no casualties, and when the audience was again suitably composed, the evening continued with a comedy which was greeted with great satisfaction. The entertainments put Marie Casimire in an excellent mood, both because of the “sweetness of the voices and instruments, and because of other charming circumstances.”⁶² Marie Casimire spent a couple of days in Verona. Just as during her previous breaks in the journey, she was paying and receiving visits from the local aristocracy and receiving homage and compliments related to herself and her late husband. She also devoted some time to worship in the city's churches and to sightseeing. On 9th January, after visiting the principal sights of the town, including the Anfiteatro dell' Arena, she participated in a magnificent ball organised in her honour, with nearly two hundred ladies and even more noble gentlemen present.⁶³

The Queen asked her ladies-in-waiting and the gentlemen from Poland to present several dances *alla Rutena*, which turned out fairly well, but not as spectacularly as was expected, since the instruments never allowed for an understanding of the melodies played for the *balletti*: it was only when the Veronese ladies and gentlemen danced, that the instruments sounded pleasant and sweet, which had not happened, as was already said, when dancers of a different nation [danced].⁶⁴

This passage from Bassani's report is the first excerpt which suggests that in order to thank for the hospitality she was enjoying, the Queen ordered a display

62 “Terminato il recitamento, se ne tornò alle stanze molto contenta la M. S., sì per la soavità delle voci, e degl'istromenti, come per altre assai dilettevoli circonstanze,” in: A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 70.

63 A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 71.

64 “Si compiacque la M. S. nel principio d'ordinare alle Dame d'honore, e Gentil'huomini Polacchi, che rappresentassero alcune Danze alla Rutena, le quali riuscirono assai galanti, ma non à quel segno, che si sperava, perche dagl'istromenti non fù mai possibile intendersi l'aria di quei balletti: doppo di che uscite in ballo le Dame, e Cavalieri Veronesi si fecero ben conoscere leggiadri, e soavi, ciòche non poteva riuscire alle Persone già dette di nazione diversa,” in: A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 71.

of Polish dances and music. The example also illustrates how significant the differences were between the ways in which dancers of different nationalities understood music.

On 19th January, Marie Casimire reached Venice, and reported back to her son: "I have come here, my darling son, on Sunday in the evening, after a very smooth journey without stopping."⁶⁵ She broke the journey in Venice because she wanted to meet the Capuchin friar Marco d'Aviano, one of the heroes of the Battle of Vienna. While in Venice, as was also the case in other Italian cities, she was welcomed with all due honours by the authorities, which she noted in her correspondence:

Ever since I came to Venetian lands, everywhere I am surrounded with great honours and marks of the utmost respect and gratitude, all owing to the memory of the late King, your father ... I could indeed say that I meet here with as many expressions of gratitude as I have met in Poland with expressions of ingratitude. This is indeed how I feel about it.⁶⁶

Among other honours, she was invited to the Senate and received a gift of 150 crystal containers, containing such products as wax, sugar, candles, preserves, fruit and wine.⁶⁷ She also took part in church services and private celebrations, meeting with ambassadors, local aristocracy and emissaries of the Pope. She visited the Venetian opera theatres, which were renowned across Europe.

Already on 19 January, the ladies, maids and other members of her court attended the Teatro di S. Luca. The piece they listened to was most likely a *dramma per musica* titled *Il duello d'amore e di vendetta*, whose music is today ascribed to Marc'Antonio Ziani, with a libretto by Francesco Silvani (unfortunately, only a handful of arias from this work have survived to our day). The queen decided to spend the evening in her rooms and rest, but the next day, accompanied by the apostolic nuncio and by her court, she attended the same theatre. On 21st January she again went out and graced the Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo with her presence, attending an opera with an unknown title, and on 22nd January she visited the most refined of all the Venetian theatres, the Teatro S. Giovanni Gristomoso, where she attended an opera titled *Lucio Vero*, composed by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, with a libretto by Apostolo Zeno. In total, Bassani lists as many as five operas performed in Venice at the time, not counting many other magnificent occasional entertainments which honoured Marie Casimire. It

65 NGAB 695, op.1/ 260 c. 21–21v.

66 NGAB 695, op. 1/ 260 c. 21v -22.

67 A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 69.

appears that the dowager queen took a particular liking to the repertoire of the Teatro San Cassiano. Eleonor Selfridge-Field suggested that the theatre put on a performance of the opera *Teodosio* (with music by Ziani and a libretto by a poet whose name regrettably did not survive in the records) especially in order to honour Marie Casimire's visit.⁶⁸ The queen was much impressed with the quality of musical life in Venice, on which she thus commented in her correspondence: "I have been to two very good operas, as they are called here. There are eight theatre buildings, all frequented by people of the best society. In all boxes one sees beautiful ladies accompanied by noble gentlemen. Most of them wear masks."⁶⁹ The queen's younger sons, Aleksander and Konstanty Sobieski, who accompanied her on the journey, were also seen on 30th January at the Teatro di S. Giovanni Grisostomo, attending a performance of an opera titled *Il colore fa la regina* (with a libretto by Matteo Noris and music ascribed to Pollarolo). The composer was very popular in Venice at the time.

Venice left a strong impression on the queen, and her admiration is very visible in her letters to Prince Jakub:

Again on the subject of Venice. Can anyone ever imagine what Venice is? You have to see it first. It is the most beautiful, the most astonishing thing one can ever see: all the imposing buildings and magnificent churches. In short, I am not at all surprised that so many princes leave their native lands to come here, and that they come again and again. People here are very honest and they endeavour to please. And when it comes to life here, there is good food, though bread and wine are disappointing. Meat at the butchers' is very dear, but fowl and venison do not cost more than in Poland, for example two capons cost six livres, which is sixteen and a half livres if one pays in ducats. There is great liberty in manners and customs. One can receive guests when one is so inclined or decide not to when one has other claims on one's time ... All in all, I truly believe Venice is a wonder of the world.⁷⁰

The queen spent approximately twenty days in the city. In early February, she finally crossed the border into the Papal States. From Ferrara, where she was fêted with a ball,⁷¹ she travelled on to Bologna. There, she was welcomed by a gathering of one hundred carriages with eminent citizens of the city, who later

68 This, however, is only conjectural, as the surviving libretto does not have a dedication. Cf. E. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar of Venetian Opera. A New Chronology of Venetian Operas and Related Genres, 1660–1760* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 236.

69 NGAB 695, op.1/260 c. 23v.

70 NGAB 695, op.1/260 c. 22v.

71 *Foglio di Foligno* (21st March 1699).

hosted various entertainments in her honour. Marie Casimire enjoyed her reception so much that she gladly prolonged her visit beyond the original plan. During one of the balls, where a grand orchestra played, she once again organised a *ballo alla Polaccha*, during which her maids of honour danced Polish dances for the entertainment of the Italian guests.⁷² Unfortunately, because of some prior social commitments whose exact nature did not survive in the records, the queen could not attend an opera staged in her honour in the private theatre of Count Silvio Montecuccoli.

Her prolonged stay in Bologna meant that she spent the carnival season in the city, and it was also there that she received the sad news of the death of her grandson, the first-born son of Teresa Kunegunda and her husband, Maximilian II Emanuel, the Elector of Bavaria. From Bologna, the queen's route led through Faenza,⁷³ Cesena, Rimini, Fano, Senigallia, and Ancona. On 16th March, she reached Loreto, where she stopped to admire the famous basilica, which was (and continues to be) an important pilgrimage destination. Her stay in the city was recorded in a report published by Luca Antonio Chracas, which meant that it would also have been read outside the Papal States.⁷⁴ Three days later, she set off on the last leg of her journey towards Rome, through Macerata, Tolentino, Foligno, Spoleto, and Narni. On 23rd March 1699, after more than six months of travel, she reached the gates of Rome. Initially, at the Queen's request, her entry into the city was to be incognito. She preferred to have it so after the long, tiring journey. At the end, however, her wishes were not respected, as the Pope ordered a truly magnificent welcome ceremony, whose scale was comparable only to the earlier royal entry of Maria Casimira's more famous predecessor, Queen Christina of Sweden. After a night spent in the palace of Baron Giovanni Battista Scarlatti, Marie Casimire and her entourage moved to a palace prepared for her at Piazza dei SS. Apostoli, which belonged to Duke Odescalchi, a relative of Pope Innocent XI. Odescalchi had a personal interest in the queen's situation because he had

72 A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*. . . , p. 132.

73 The queen's stay in that city is commemorated in an ode titled *La Maestà pellegrina ossequiosa e pia al solium di Pietro in Vaticano al felicissimo Arrio della Sacra e Reale Maestà Maria Casimira, reina di Polonia in Roma*. . . , Faenza 1699. I would like to express my gratitude to Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka, PhD, for drawing my attention to that publication. Fragments of the ode have been reprinted by B. Biliński in *Le glorie di Giovanni III Sobieski vincitore di Vienna 1683 nella poesia italiana* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), pp. 78–79.

74 *Relazione del trattamento fatto nella Santa Casa e Città di Loreto Alla Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina di Polonia di passaggio alla volta di Roma*, Roma 1699.

fought alongside Sobieski in the Battle of Vienna. Antonio Bassani, who travelled in Marie Casimire's entourage, and faithfully recorded all the details of her journey (including her triumphal entry into Rome, her audience with the Pope, and the so-called public audience organised for the Romans,) also left behind a detailed description of the rooms that Odescalchi prepared for the queen.⁷⁵ He noted that the opulence of the rooms filled the queen and her companions with great awe and delight. Marie Casimire could scarcely believe Odescalchi's generosity:

Duke Donlinio [sic] gifted me a palace, which he rents out, completely furnished with enormous luxury. So much furniture, so many mythological sculptures, so many priceless treasures. He also offered me the use of his carriages and his servants, which I have very gladly accepted. He is a most magnificent prince in the world with a generous heart, and the most munificent.⁷⁶

In the course of the next few days, the queen received visits from the Roman aristocracy, members of the College of Cardinals, including the protector of the Commonwealth, who sent her excellent *rinfreschi* (refreshments).⁷⁷ During that time Marie Casimire and her entourage were also preparing for the most important audience – the official welcome by the Pope. In *Foglio di Foligno*, it was described as follows:

On the 21st [of June], Her Majesty the Queen appeared in public and went [to the Vatican] to kiss the feet of His Holiness. She was preceded by a rich, six-horse carriage *di riserva vota*, two other [carriages], also with six horses, with knights and nobles. The carriage containing Her Majesty was drawn by eight horses and accompanied by a great number of mounted guards, pages and a guard made up of Polish nobles. It was followed by another six-horse [carriage] which contained the ladies of the court. When Her Majesty alighted, she was welcomed by the Prince of Conti, in his capacity as His Holiness's first equerry, who offered her his arm. She was then accompanied to the stairs

75 The queen and her courtiers were especially impressed with the picture gallery, which contained works by Giulio Romano, Carlo Maratta, Peter Paul Rubens, as well as an Arras tapestry, wrought in gold, which used to belong to Queen Cristina of Sweden.

76 NGAB 695, op.1/ 260 c. 30v.

77 "Fu Sabato della passata regalata la Maestà della Regina Vedova di Polonia dal Sig. Cardinal Carlo Barberini Protettore di quel Regno di un superbissimo rinfresco portato da 40. Huomini di cose più rare, che l'Eminenza Sua senza risparmio di spesa ha potuto trovar per tal effetto non solamente in Roma, ma anche in Napoli, & altre parti," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (4th April 1699). A couple of days earlier the Pope also sent Marie Casimire a gift: "Nostro Signore inviò a regalare la detta Regina di 60. portate di varij frutti, Vini, Cera, un Storione, e molte galanterie, e cose pietose," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (28th March 1699).



Illustration 9. Odescalchi Palace at Piazza dei SS. Apostoli in Rome, 1753, G. B. Piranesi. The National Library of Poland.

on foot by Msgr. Colonna the Majordomo, and, in the presence of bishops and servants, she was led halfway up the stairs by the *maestro di camera* Acquaviva, with privy and honorary papal chamberlains. They accompanied her to His Holiness, who gave a magnificent *rinfresco* in her honour.⁷⁸

The audience, characterised – as at all meetings of this type – by a carefully drawn protocol – had clear political overtones: Its goal was the public recognition of the

78 “Il giorno 21. la Maestà della Regina si pose in publico, & andò a bacciar il piede a Nostro Signore preceduta da ricca Carrozza a sei di riserva vota, da due altre parimente a sei con i Cavallieri e Gentilhuomini, e poi seguita quella di Sua Maestà a otto Cavalli accompagnata da quantità di Staffieri, Paggi, e Polacchi di guardia, seguita da altra a sei, con le Damigelle, fù ricevuta allo smontar di Carrozza dal Duca Conti, come Primo Scudiere di Nostro Signore, che le diede il braccio, a piedi alla Scala da Monsig. Colonna Maggiordomo, col li Vescovi assistenti, e Domestici, a mezze Scale da Monsig. Acquaviva Mastro di Camera, col li Camerieri Secreti, e d’honore, e fu condotta da essi da Nostro Signore, che le fece dare splendido rinfresco,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (21st June 1699).

status of Marie Casimire.⁷⁹ In this way, the queen officially began her almost fifteen-year residency in Rome.

Marie Casimire in Rome

Rome must have made a great impression on the queen, since, in a letter written to Elżbieta Sieniawska, wife of the Grand Crown Hetman and her close personal friend, she wrote: “If you could see the beauty of Rome, you would condemn Nero for destroying this beautiful city.”⁸⁰ She spent much time exploring its wonders, including the ancient Roman buildings and ruins, the magnificent Baroque palaces and basilicas, as well as new works of art that were being created, such as Carlo Fontana’s baptismal font in St Peter’s Basilica.⁸¹ Specially for the queen’s use, a canon by the name of Pisani created a guidebook describing the most important attractions of the Eternal City and introducing the queen to their history.⁸²

On 26th September 1699, Marie Casimire met with a group of famous writers and poets, members of the Academy of Arcadia. The meeting was intended to honour “the new shepherdess” (as the female supporters of the Academy were called). On that occasion, Marie Casimire also assumed her new salon name of Amirisca Telea, under which she was thereafter known in the Academy’s circles.⁸³ The meeting was also meant as a celebration of the queen’s family. Very soon after, Marie Casimire also participated in an anniversary of the Academy’s creation on 5th October. “On that day, the gentlemen scholars of Arcadia organised a celebration in the palace of the Queen of Poland, with the participation of eighteen Their Eminences Cardinals. During the celebration, Count

79 G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski a Roma*. . . , p. 101.

80 K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w.* . . . , p. 158.

81 “si parti ne medesimo modo privatamente a visitare la Basilica degl’Apostoli, e si compiacque vedere l’opera nuova Baptismale fatta come si scrisse dal Cavalier Fontana,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (26th March 1699).

82 *Relatione fatta dall’Ill.mo Signor Canonico Pisani alla Sacra Maestà Reale della Regina di tutte l’antichità di Roma*, I-Ru, shelf mark mss. 143. The printed dedications testify to the fact that during her first year in Rome, Marie Casimire was also presented with some musical pieces, for example, *La Fede trionfante nel martirio di S. Agapito* (libr. by P. T. Vagni, mus. by G. Scalmani; 1701), *Il Console in Egitto* (libr. probably by P. Ottoboni, mus. by an unknown composer; 1701), *L’Amor Divino, e la Fede* (libr. by P. Ottoboni, mus. by A. Scarlatti or F. Amadei; 1703).

83 W. Roszkowska, “Polacy w rzymskiej ‘Arkadii’ (1699–1766)” [Poles at the Roman ‘Arcadia’ (1699–1766)], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1965, No. 3, pp. 46–47.

D'Elci gave a speech, honouring the memory of His Majesty the late King and of His Eminence the Cardinal, the Queen's father, as well as in honour of other noble gentlemen. The artists of the Academy recited various pieces which were graciously received by Her Majesty the Queen, who also gave a lavish and magnificent feast."⁸⁴ She herself wrote in a letter to her son:

I organised a *fiesta* here though I had originally had no such intention. The beautiful minds from the academy here, who strive to compose poems about all the events, desired to hold such a festivity so as to heap praise on me, and so they invited me to a certain garden. I excused myself, saying that I cannot stay in a place exposed [to the sun], though they were planning to place a canopy there. Still, the persons who care about me advised me to entirely follow Queen Christina in everything and do what she had done in similar circumstances. The matter was the more important since it was to be my first publicly held function, and so all those masters [of poetry] declared that they would come wherever I like and would prepare for me in a chamber everything that was needed there, as it had been done for Queen Christina. Cardinal Ottoboni helped me greatly in this task and in everything that depended on his [authority], whereas it was my task to inform the cardinals that the academy would be held at my place, though without inviting them, as it had also been done by the said Queen Christina.

Eighteen of them arrived, and they had never been seen in such large numbers at Queen Christina's [court], which greatly angered the ambassadors. I only had two days to have everything ready. I ordered my servants to prepare – apart from the cooling drinks, that is, the waters that one would serve on such occasions – also refreshments such as all kinds of ice cream, sweets and preserves which were served to them [the guests].

You cannot imagine what acclaim I gained with this *fiesta*, and that on the cheap.⁸⁵

84 "In detto giorno li Signori Accademici dell'Arcadia tennero nella sala del Palazzo della Regina di Polonia la loro Accademia con intervento di S. M. E di 18 Sg. Cardin. e vi fece il discorso il Co. d'Elci in lode della Maestà Sua defonto Re, e del Sig. Cardinale suo Padre, & altri Cavalieri, e virtuosi della medesima Accademia vi recitarono varie compositioni gradite da S. M. la quale fece dare un sontuoso, e splendido rinfresco," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (10th Oct. 1699). The meeting of the Arcadians in the queen's residence was also mentioned by Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni in *Notizie degli Arcadi morti*, Vol. 3 (Roma: De Rossi, 1721), pp. 7–8. An extensive account of the Arcadians' meeting with the Polish Queen has also been preserved in the Vatican Archives. That text confirms the presence of musicians at the *fiesta*; they were placed in a box richly decorated with damasks and gold. They played at least three *sinfonie*: one for the opening of the meeting, another after Count d'Elci's speech, and a third one following the recitations of the poems written by the Arcadians. Cf. I-Rvat, Ott. Lat. 3154, c. 584–585. I am grateful to Berthold Over, PhD, for making this account available.

85 NGAB 695, op.1/ 272 c. 18–19v.

Chroniclers who were active in Rome at that time did not note any further meetings of the Academy at the Queen's residence. It is worth highlighting however that on that day one of the poets who recited sonnets dedicated to her was Marie Casimire's future secretary, Carlo Sigismondo Capece, the future author of eight *drammi per musica* performed in her private theatre at the Palazzo Zuccari.⁸⁶

The queen maintained close contacts members of the Academy, and especially with its founder and secretary, Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni, who devoted a passage of his prose poem, *L'Arcadia* (titled after Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*) to her praise. The passage comes from the fourth book of the poem:

'Tell me, he asked, my gentle Benaco, who is the dignified nymph we see painted over the shell on this statue, and who are those who surround her?' 'The nymph which you see is the famous Amirisca. She was born in the rich lands on the banks of the river Seine; before she came to Arcadia, for her outstanding virtues she was rewarded with the throne of Poland; she was the wife of the great king to whom, as you well know, the Roman Empire owes its liberation from the chains of Ottoman perfidy: whose brave and miraculous deeds brought freedom to our compatriots, and are kept in grateful memory by the Venetian Senate which the king liberated. Those who appear next [to the nymph] on her right and left side are Poliarco [D. Annibale], Cleandro [D. Carlo] and Crisalgo [D. Alessandro Albani], cousins of His Holiness [Pope Clement XI].'⁸⁷

86 During the meeting, Count Orazio d'Elci recited an oration in praise of Marie Casimire, mentioning the most important events in her life, such as her first marriage to Zamoyiski, the second marriage to Sobieski, her support for her husband during the royal election and the illustrious marriages of her children. It also dwelled on John III's heroic role as saviour of Christianity during the Battle of Vienna. The speech was published later the same year under the title *Panegirico in lode della Sacra Real Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina di Polonia composto dal Conte Orazio d'Elci, Camerier d'Onore di Nostro Signore di Spada, e Cappa, tra i pastori d'Arcadia chiamato Eveno Traustio*. . . (Roma: Presso la Curia Innocenziana, 1699), I-Rli 171.H.1 (5). During the meeting, the Arcadian poets also improvised sonnets in honour of the queen, and these, too, were subsequently published in a volume titled *Corona poetica in lode di MARIA CASIMIRA regina vedova di Pollonia tessuta dalla Ragunanza d'Arcadia e recitata avanti la Maestà Sua l'aano 1699*, in: G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski a Roma*. . . , pp. 339–348.

87 "ditemi, disse, gentil Benaco, chi è quella Ninfa sì maestosa, che si vede dipinta sopra il nicchio della Statua, e chi sono quei, che le stanno intorno? La Ninfa, che voi vedete, è la gloriosa Amirisca. Nacque ella nelle doviziose contrade, cui bagna la bellicosa Senna; e prima, che venisse a far soggiorno in Arcadia, per le sue sovrumane virtù, meritò di salire al Trono della bellicosa Polonia: Moglie di quel gran Re, cui, come ben sapete, il Romano Imperio ebbe la sua liberazione dalle catene dell'Ottomana perfidia: dalle quale mirabile impresa derivò poi la liberazione anche di queste nostre

Crescimbeni did not forget the queen also after her death, and included her biography (which runs to several pages) in his book commemorating dead Arcadians.⁸⁸

The fact that the year 1700 was a jubilee year meant that the queen could go on pilgrimages to many Roman churches. During these visits and the accompanying ceremonies, she was much admired for her extraordinary piety and modesty. Marie Casimire's religiousness exceeded the standards expected even in a jubilee year. The queen became somewhat ostentatious in her devotions, and she remained so during her entire fifteen-year stay in Rome. Her religious practices might have seemed unorthodox to the Romans because she often publicly behaved in a way that was the cultural norm in Poland, but not in her new home. A description contained in Valesio's diary may serve as an example: "The Queen of Poland, a lady leading an exemplary life, was much committed to piety during the last days of the carnival, thus she has hosted on this day a dinner for thirteen poor people, offering each of them a robe of white fabric and other gifts, and serving them in person at the table."⁸⁹

Marie Casimire's devotional practices included frequent visits to Roman churches and the worship of various saints. One such expedition, which took place on 28th August 1703, was described by Abbot Valesio:

on the occasion of the feast [of the Martyrdom of St John the Baptist] and the ordination of a new nun, the Queen of Poland went to the S. Silvestro monastery, which she left an hour after dusk and, driving through the Colonna square at the first hour, she gave an example of great piety as she ordered the carriage to stop, got out and knelt on the steps of the church of de'Pazzarelli as the bells began to ring.⁹⁰

Compagnie, il coltivamento delle quali il riconosciam noi dal Veneto Senato, che ne fu il liberatore. Quei che le stanno a destra, e a sinistra mano, sono Poliarco, Cleandro, e Crisalgo Nipoti del Sommo Sacerdote. . .," in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *L'Arcadia del Can. Gio. Mario Crescimbeni custode della medesima Arcadia, e Accademico Fiorentino a Madama Ondedei Albani cognata di N. S. papa Clemente XI in Roma 1708* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1708), p. 12.

88 Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni, "Maria Casimira Regina di Pollonia," in: *Notizie degli Arcadi morti*, Vol. 3, pp. 1–9.

89 "La regina di Polonia, signora di vita esemplare, essendosi impiegata in tutti questi giorni di carnevale in opere di devozione, ha in questo giorno dato lauto pranzo a tredici poveri, dandogli una veste di panno bianco per ciascheduno et altre elemosine, havendoli S. Maestà medesima serviti in persona alla tavola," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 92 (28th Feb. 1702).

90 "Con l'occasione della festa e della vestizione di una monaca, entrò la regina di Polonia nel monastero di S. Silvestro, di dove uscì doppo una hora di notte e, passando per piazza Colonna ad hore 1, fece con esemplare devozione fermare la carrozza e scesa

The “Piissima Regina,” as she was called by Crescimbeni, also gave a shining example of Christian piety in giving out alms to the poor. As mentioned above in a passage from Valesio’s diary, two times a year she hosted a magnificent meal for twelve poor people. She also gave generous donations to religious institutions and helped impoverished girls by providing them with a dowry which allowed them either to marry or enter a convent.⁹¹

Some Italian researchers, such as Gaetanina Scano and Filippo Clementi, registered their doubts as to whether the queen’s piety was genuine.⁹² They noted that Marie Casimire participated in numerous secular entertainments, and that by all accounts she was as eager for them as she was for religious practices. However, it should be remembered that sharp contrasts constituted in fact the essence of the Baroque; nowhere were they more visible than in Rome, the capital of Christianity. The hedonistic tendencies of men of the cloth were an open secret; and the atmosphere in the city was shaped by the tastes and habits of church dignitaries. It seems unfounded therefore to level such accusations against Marie Casimire: what seems more likely is that the queen embraced both religious and secular life in Rome with the same kind of enthusiasm. She was, after all, accustomed to the pomp of her royal residence in Poland, and now, as the dowager queen, she was also expected to live and entertain her guests at a certain level. The Romans furthermore took much interest in all her doings, and she was expected to provide suitable entertainments and amusements to her younger sons and her granddaughter. There is no documentary proof to suggest that the queen was a bigot. To the contrary, in one of her letters to her son-in-law, Maximilian II Emanuel, she wrote that she found great pleasure and comfort in prayers and devotions. It also appears that (with a few exceptions) Marie Casimire’s behaviour did not cause any trouble or awkwardness for the Pope who was her official protector.⁹³ What is more, her public religiosity fitted perfectly into the Church’s policy and its expectations regarding the behaviour of Romans. In fact, Marie

a basso, si pose in ginocchio (incominciando a sonare le campane) su li gradini della chiesa de’Pazzarelli,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , p. 684 (28th Aug. 1703).

91 G. M. Crescimbeni, *Notizie*. . . , pp. 5 and 7.

92 G. Scano, “*Dalle pagine di un diario. Visite, incontri e cortesie tra un pontefice e una regina*,” *Strenna dei romanisti* 1964, pp. 451–455; F. Clementi, *Il carnevale romano nelle cronache contemporanee. XVIII-XIX con illustrazioni riprodotte da stampe del teatro*, Città di Castello: Edizioni R.O.R.E.-NIRUF 1938, part II, pp. 1–29.

93 Marie Casimire to Maximilian Emanuel II (de Rome le 23), D-Mhsa, Korrespondenzenakten 754 1/9b. Regrettably, most of the queen’s letters are not dated and it is impossible to ascertain in what month or even year they were written.

Casimire could be seen as a role model thanks to the public attentions she paid to the church. Such outward piety was also connected with the general attitude to religion to which the queen had grown accustomed in Poland.

The Romans often amused themselves with writing pasquinades, or libellous attacks at public personages, which were circulated throughout the city to the annoyance of their aristocratic targets. Marie Casimire was not spared this fate. After the ceremony during which her sons were awarded the Order of the Holy Spirit in August 1700, the already-quoted Valesio noted down in his diary a popular three-verse doggerel about the Polish Queen (which I have already cited in the introduction), painting her in an unfavourable light and pitting her against the saintly Queen Christina of Sweden.

Unfortunately, Marie Casimire's exemplary behaviour in the matter of her religious obligations was overshadowed by a string of blunders and scandals related to her sons and her father. Those were mostly connected with the affairs of the heart. For example, the queen's youngest son Konstanty publicly kept a mistress, a famous courtesan called Vittoria (and nicknamed Tola di Bocca di Leone after the street address of her residence). Called by the disgusted Valesio *publica meretrice*⁹⁴ and *la pricipessa delle puttane*,⁹⁵ she was won over by the besotted prince with costly gifts, lavished on the lady with a generosity that the chronicler called *veramente di polacco*.⁹⁶ The gifts were all the more necessary as Konstanty had to convince Tola to break with her previous protector, Gaetano Cesarino, the son of Duke Federico Sforza Cesarino. Once they became a couple, one night the flamboyant Tola, who by many accounts was a talented singer, dressed up as a man and sang an aria underneath the balcony of the chamber where the queen was having supper with her sons. Her rejected lover Gaetano happened to be at the scene and suffered such a bout of jealousy that he attacked Tola with a sword, and only the rim of her hat saved the lady's face from injury and disfigurement. The next morning, the story was all over the city. Marie Casimire treated the attack as a grave insult on the part of the Sforzas and rejected their initial apology. Finally, Cardinal Ottoboni was asked to mediate, and thanks to his efforts Marie Casimire was finally prevailed upon to receive Gaetano in her palace. The matter was smoothed over, although the behaviour of the queen, who took the side of her son's mistress and entered into a conflict with one of the oldest Roman families, caused understandable astonishment. Marie Casimire's loyalty to Tola came

94 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 1, p. 14.

95 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , p. 55.

96 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , p. 14.

back to haunt her, as the courtesan publicly advertised her intimate relationship with the prince. She showed up uninvited at *feste* organised by aristocratic ladies and participated in crude entertainments in the Corso in mixed company, thereby indirectly hurting the reputation of the queen. As a reaction to this situation, impromptu sonnets were circulated in Rome, whose subjects ranged from lamenting the fact that a prostitute was lording over Rome during a jubilee year, to suggesting that Tola had suffered a miscarriage.

O poor world, your faithful ornament,
 Before it was born, it was already gone,
 And without giving any sign of life
 It disappeared in the breast of lovely Tola.
 The kingdom of Poland sighs in agony
 Because its future king has been miscarried.⁹⁷

Seeing the damage done to her and her family's reputation, Marie Casimire forced the courtesan to leave Rome. On 12th February 1701, the beautiful Tola, well equipped with money and a letter of recommendation addressed to the viceroy of Naples, could be seen in a carriage-and-four (sic) belonging to the Sobieskis, as she was heading south. She spent some time in Naples, entertaining the viceroy's court with her singing and then eventually disappeared from historical record, but the harm had already been done: The scandal caused by Konstany's love affair tarnished the reputation of the queen and her family.

Aleksander did not spare his mother either. On 13th October 1702, Valesio wrote: "On Wednesday, the beautiful madamigella di Tornelle of Venice joined the Queen's household with a small child, fathered by Prince Aleksander, the Queen's son, while he was passing through the city."⁹⁸ Compared to such scandals, other troubles surrounding the Sobieski's household such as the queen and her Swiss guards' insistence on right of way in the narrow streets of Rome, seemed utterly trivial, even though these conflicts could become so heated that they occasionally led to loss of life.

Marie Casimire arranged for her father, who had accompanied her to Rome, to be ordained cardinal, but that newly bestowed dignity did not tone down

97 "Povero mondo, il tuo fedel sostegno / pria di nascere ancora è già sparito, / e senza dar de'suoi natali un segno/nel sen di Tolla vaga ecco è svanito. / Manda sospiri di Polonia il regno / Perchè il futuro re resta abortito. . . ." in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol 1, p. 72.

98 "Giunse fin da mercoledì alla regina di Polonia la bellissima madamigella di Tornelle da Venezia con un piccolo bambino havuto dal prencipe Alessandro suo figlio allhora che passò per quella città," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol 1, p. 307.



Illustration 10. Konstanty Władysław Sobieski, first quarter of eighteenth century, unknown painter. King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

his eccentric habits or his predilection for loud entertainments and beautiful singers. The description of this colourful personage would definitely provide enough material for an interesting article; however, in this chapter, I will only say that Henri Albert de la Grange quickly felt very much at home in Rome and started to enjoy all its charms, which often caused his daughter embarrassment and made it necessary for her make excuses for his behaviour.

In 1702, Marie Casimire and her court moved to the Palazzo Zuccari on the hill of Trinità de' Monti, although for some time afterwards she continued to take advantage of Duke Odescalchi's hospitality and used her former residence in the Piazza dei SS. Apostoli for the purposes of representation, for example, for an audience during which she received Christmas and New Year's wishes from the College of Cardinals. Wanda Roszkowska⁹⁹ published a detailed account

99 W. Roszkowska, "Polskie dzieje Palazzo Zuccari i villa Torres–Malta w Rzymie" ["The Polish History of the Palazzo Zuccari and Villa Torres–Malta in Rome"], *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 1964, No. 2, pp. 139–153.

of Marie Casimire's Roman residences; however, certain facts should also be repeated here. In July 1701, Valesio mentioned that for her *villeggiatura* (country holiday) Marie Casimire rented a villa called de 'Torres, located on the Pincio hill, adjacent to a garden belonging to the Medici.¹⁰⁰ Because the villa was too small to accommodate the queen's numerous entourage (which counted approximately 160 people), she also rented two nearby houses.¹⁰¹ In July, Valesio noted down that for the anniversary of Clement XI's accession, Marie Casimire ordered the villa to be magnificently illuminated, as she wanted to celebrate the Pope's pontificate in this way.¹⁰² The queen spent the whole second half of 1701 in Villa de 'Torres. It was only in 1702 that she moved into the redecorated rooms of the Palazzo Zuccari, which then became her permanent residence in Rome. The palace, which has survived to this day, is located between Via Gregoriana and Via Sistina on the Trinità de'Monti.

Later in the same year Marie Casimire received permission to build a bridge connecting the palace to a house where she housed her father and the nuns whom she had brought from France. The little bridge was thereafter known *as arco della Regina*. Despite the fact that it was planned as a temporary structure, it survived until 1799, when it was finally demolished.¹⁰³ In addition to its purely utilitarian function as a passageway between the queen's palace and the quarters of her father and the nuns, it also doubled as a kind of concert stage, from which the queen's court artists could sing songs on special occasions. Listeners gathered

100 "Si è restituita a questa corte la regina di Polonia, che era passata alla villeggiatura di Castel Candolfo, e si trattiene nel suo casino sul monte Pincio, che, riescendo angusto per l'abitazione di una regina, vi si fa da S. Maestà lavorare continuamente per l'accrescimento d'appartamenti cento huomini," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 2, p. 196.

101 "La Maestà della regina di Polonia ha preso per villeggiare il casino de'Torres, posto sul monte Pincio con giardino contiguo all'altro de'Medici e tal casino ha l'entrata appresso l'ultima casa posta su la sinistra per andare alla porta Pinciana e, perche riesce angusto per la numerosa famiglia, ha tolto in affitto due case contigue avendo ottenuta da N.S. facoltà di far sgombrare dalle case stimate a proposito per il suo servizio e poste in quei contorni gl'habitatori delle medesime," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 2, p. 432.

102 "Havea destinato la regina di Polonia di fare per questa solennità una vaga illuminazione al suo casino del monte Pincio, che si sarebbe goduta da Monte Cavallo et a tale effetto di già dipingere molte tele da pittori, che dovevano illuminarsi; ma, essendo passata S. Beatitudine a S. Pietro, ha stimato superfluo il far questa spesa," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 2, p. 559.

103 E. Re, "L'arco della regina," *L'Urbe* 1948, No. 5, p. 31.



Illustration 11. Palazzo Zuccari in Rome. Photogr. Marcin Wielgo.

directly below the bridge or in the square in front of the Palazzo Zuccari, where they could also enjoy a beautiful view of Rome.

In 1711, another building became the location of musical entertainments organised by the queen. It was a *tempietto* (a small circular chapel) designed by Filippo Juvarra, adjacent to the façade of the Palazzo Zuccari (on the side of the Piazza della Trinità de'Monti). Surviving to this day, the chapel represents Marie Casimire's lasting contribution to Rome's architecture. Today, the *tempietto* attracts crowds of tourists because of its location close to the famous Spanish Steps, which connect the Trinità de'Monti with the Piazza di Spagna, but in the times of Marie Casimire it stood on a sandy hill overgrown with wild bushes and some trees.

The queen once more gained notoriety in 1704, when her sons Jakub and Konstanty were captured by the army of King Augustus II. In a letter to Aleksander dated 22nd March 1704, Marie Casimire poured out all her sorrow:

What a fatal blow, my darling son! Why have I lived to hear such sad news? I would gladly give this last bit of breath, which is still left in my bosom, to save each of you. If it is required to satisfy the implacable hatred that this tyrant [Augustus II] holds against us, I am willing to give myself over into his hands and enter one of his prisons if only my beloved children may stay free and their lives be safe What an indignity! To kidnap the sons of a great king, the Emperor's own brother-in-law! ... If anything could lessen this misfortune, it would be the great care which His Holiness has of you, and which he has shown with such kindness. The entire College of Cardinals, and especially the Cardinals Sacripante, Ottoboni and de Janson, were all greatly moved. And in general, all of Rome, men and women, people of every station, are greatly shaken by the news. Everyone, both great and small, feels considerable consternation. Having heard the unfortunate news, all the convents are praying and I think that perhaps the Lord, as His Holiness put it, wanted me to share in his Passion, striking me down with this ordeal and making my sufferings so acute. I hope that now He will have pity on me and will send me news of the release of my poor children. Tell me if you need anything from me, if there is any need for me to supplicate the high and mighty for help. I would gladly sacrifice myself to save you and ensure your freedom, old and weak as I am, caring for my life only out of my love for you, my dear children, whom I bless, asking God to give you prosperity and embracing you with all my heart.¹⁰⁴

104 "Quel coup mortel, mon très cher fils! Pourquoi ai-je survécu à une si triste nouvelle, moi qui mettrais volontiers le peu de vie qui me reste pour la conservation de chacun de vous. Si c'est une nécessité, pour assouvir la haine implacable qu'à le tyran contre nous, qu'il ait entre ses mains quelqu'un de la famille, pour l'assurer contre elle, je suis prête à me livrer dans ses prisons, pourvu que mes chers enfants soient en liberté et leur vie en sûreté ... Il faut que le Tout-Puissant m'ait soutenue, pour n'avoir pas succombé à la douleur sensible dont je suis pénétré... Quel attentat! Enlever les fils d'un grand roi, le beau-frère de l'Empereur! L'Imperatrice, qui m'a écrit... dans des termes très touchants..., me mande comment se resent aussi Sa Majesté l'Empereur de cette indignité et comment il la prend à Coeur. Nous verrons si les effets le prouveront... Si quelque chose pouvait diminuer ou adoucir un tel malheur, la part sincère qu'y a pris Sa Sainteté avec tant de bonté et tant d'éclat devrait en quelque façon la soulager. Il m'a envoyé le cardinal Sacripanti, d'abord in flocchi, avec une lettre à cachet Volant, toute de sa propre main, où il me console dans des termes très obligeants, me priant d'ajouter foi à tout ce qu'il me dirait de la part de Sa Sainteté, qui a été des expressions que je n'ai qu'à dire... qu'il est prêt à faire tout, à envoyer un courrier exprès, ce qu'il fera dans peu de jours... Tout le sacré college, principalement les cardinaux Sacripanti et Ottoboni ont témoigné tous être très touchés, et le cardinal de Janson. Mais tout Rome généralement, homes et femmes, tous les gens de

Sobieska shows herself in the letter as a tender, loving mother, appalled by the misfortune that has befallen her sons, thus contradicting Waliszewski's hostile assessment of her character which I discussed above. This impression is further reinforced by many letters which she wrote to her son-in-law, the Bavarian Elector Maximilian II Emanuel. In one of them, she complained that she had not heard from him for a whole month, and from her daughter for almost a year:

If you could look into the depths of my heart, my dearest son, you would see how much pain is hidden there, which is caused by the lack of even one letter from you for so many months ... my daughter has developed a habit of not writing to me for over a year ... these demonstrations of her indifference hurt me very much and I cannot think about them without crying, even when I tell you about them, I cannot stop my tears from falling on the page; never has a mother loved her children as tenderly as I do, and seen less reciprocal affection; ... I do not cease to pray constantly to God for my daughter and for your children ... and for you, my dear son, so that you may receive all the blessings, but when you cannot change others, you must change yourself.¹⁰⁵

condition y sont très sensibles. Tous, les petits et le grands, en sont dans une vraie consternation. Ayant appris cette malheureuse nouvelle, tous les couvents sont en prière, et j'espère du Seigneur, comme dit le Saint Père, qu'il a voulu me participer sa passion me touchant par en endroit sensible. J'espère qu'il aura pitié de moi, en me faisant apprendre dans peu la délivrance de mes pauvres enfants. Dites-moi si je suis utile à quelque chose, si vous croyez qu'il soit besoin que j'aie à solliciter les puissances moi-même. Je me sacrifierai volontiers pour sauver et assurer vos vies et vos libertés, toute vieille et infirme que je sois, ne me souciant de la vie que pour l'amour de vous autres, mes chers enfants, vous que je bénis, en priant Dieu de vous combler de toutes ses prospérités et en vous embrassant de tout mon Coeur," in: K. Waliszewski, "Une française reine de Pologne..." pp. 299–300.

105 "Si sous pouviez penetrer mon tres cher fils dans mon coeur vous vesriez de combien de douleur il est plin destre privée de vos lettre de puis tant de mois ... ma filla elle sest fait une telle abitude quelle ne ma pas escript it lia bien un an tout aux moins ... ces marque de son indifferance me touche sansiblement et que ie ne puis y penser sans anverser des larme mesme an vous le exprimant ie ne puis anpescher quelle ne tombe sur le papier iamais mere na aymes si tandrement ces anfans que moy et- lon na iamais espreuver moins de corespondance dieu le permet pour man destacher afin que ie ne soiy qua luy ... ie ne lesres pas de prier dieu touiours pour ma fille et vos anfans ... et sur vous mon tres cher fils toutes ces benedictions mais quant lon ne peut changer les autres il faux changer soy mesme..." D-Mhsa, Geheimes Hausarchiv, Korrespondenzenakten 754 1/9b. In my transcription from the letter I have been struggling to replicate Marie Casimire idiosyncratic style and spelling. I have however decided to divide sentences into individual words even though the queen usually wrote without breaks in one continuous flow (and occasionally divided words arbitrarily, violating the rules of French orthography). She never used any punctuation

Prayers for her children, solicitous inquiries about their health, and blessings for her grandchildren were constant themes in Marie Casimire's correspondence with the Bavarian Elector and his wife. Of course, such displays of affection were also rooted in the epistolary conventions of the time, but their frequent repetitions make the queen's sentiments seem genuine. It seems probable that Marie Casimire genuinely cared for her children and wanted to be near them, even though due to the caprices of fate she had to resign herself to long periods of separation. She might in fact have sought solace for her loneliness in her religious devotions. Undoubtedly, she felt moved when all of Rome, including the Pope, shared her grief and expressed their sympathy after the capture of her sons. The fact that the young Sobieskis remained imprisoned for three years, in spite of all Marie Casimire's efforts and her entreaties for help from the Pope and from other European rulers, is a testament to the weakness of the Papacy and its allies on the European diplomatic stage in that period. It also shows explicitly that, less than a decade after the death of John III, who was a *bona fide* saviour of Christianity, the Sobieskis' position in the international scene was barely symbolic. Neither the queen nor her sons had any real clout in current politics.

Marie Casimire's feelings of loneliness and abandonment further intensified after the death of her father, which occurred in 1707. The queen expressed her grief in a moving letter to Maximilian II Emanuel (whom she often described as the only person in whom she could fully confide): "My beloved son, I have lost my father, and with him the last of my comfort. There is no person as deserted as I am, [deserted] by my entire family; I have become accustomed to a life with him, and without him my existence is unbearable."¹⁰⁶

Despite her sorrows, the queen was still committed to obtaining the Polish crown for one of her sons. Her continued efforts on their behalf are evidenced by two letters sent by Charles-François Poerson, the director of the French Academy in Rome. The first one, dated 28th September 1709, informed his correspondent about an ambitious marriage plan for Konstanty: "Here at the court

and so her thoughts flew freely in a manner reminiscent of stream of consciousness. Occasionally, when moving to a new topic, she marked the transition with a hyphen. Even though her handwriting is quite large, it is still very challenging to decipher. While it seems interesting to show a sample of her original epistolary style, the English translation above is more standard.

106 "Jay perdu mon tres cher fils mon pere et avec luy ce qui me restet de consolacion nan nayant de persone abandonée come ie suis de toute ma famille ie mestes fayte un habitude de vivre avec luy insy ma vies sans la siene est insupportable," (31st May), D-Mhbs, Korr. Akt. 754 1/9b.

of the Polish Queen, there is a lot of talk about the marriage of her third son, Prince Konstanty, to the daughter of Palatine Beltz [*sic!*], who is the wealthiest Lord in all of Poland, which makes it possible for this excellent family to hope for regaining the throne.”¹⁰⁷ In a second letter of 31st October 1711, Poerson mentioned another scheme, saying that “the Queen of Poland has sent the Marquis of B(o)urati to Milan to act as [her] ambassador, to see whether he could find for her some support in a new election; a fact that surprises many people.”¹⁰⁸

In 1707, Marie Casimire could finally celebrate the release of her sons from captivity. The long-awaited news was noted in numerous diplomatic dispatches and diary entries. On 1st January, an anonymous papal chronicler reported: “A servant has arrived with the post, sent by the sons of the Queen of Poland, and in the evening, at Her Royal Majesty’s residence, an illumination was held, with trumpets, drums and other instruments to celebrate the news of their [the princes’] release.”¹⁰⁹ Poerson, who was a frequent visitor to the palace, wrote: “The Queen of Poland has organised an entertainment in order to celebrate the release of her sons the princes, about which she found out from a special courier.”¹¹⁰ On 2nd January, Valesio made a similar entry in his diary:

This morning a courier from Poland’s new king Stanislaus came to the Queen of Poland with the news of King Augustus, the Saxon elector, making peace with him, and he congratulated the queen on her sons, the princes Jakub and Konstanty, now being able to enjoy absolute freedom. By word of mouth the courier added that all the three kings, the Swedish one, Augustus and Stanislaus ate dinner with the said princes. Her Royal

107 “L’on parle fort ici, chez la Reine de Pologne, du mariage du Prince Constantin, son troisième fils, avec la fille du palatin Beltz, qui est le plus riche Seigneur de Pologne, ce qui donne à croire à cette illustre famille icy de remonter sur le trône...” in: *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome avec les surintendants des bâtimens*, ed. A. de Montaiglon (Paris: Charavay Freres 1889), Vol. 4, p. 326.

108 “La Reyne de Pologne a envoyé le Marquis Bourati à Milan en qualité d’Ambassadeur, quoiqu’on ne lui ait donné aucune part de la nouvelle election, ce qui surprend bien de gens,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 46.

109 “Giunse gle Poste Cameriere spedito dai Figli della Regina di Polonia, e la sera da sua Maestà si fecero i Luminarji con Trombe tamburini, et altri Suoni gla nuova della loro liberazione,” in: *Giornale del pontificato di papa Clemente XI principiando dell’anno 1700 alle 1708*, I-Rbav, Cod. Vat. Lat. 13667 foglio 228.

110 “La Reine de Pologne a fait des réjouissances pour la liberté des Princes ces fils, qu’elle a sçeue par un Courier extraordinaire,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 3, p. 201.

Highness forwarded this news to the Sanctum Officium and ordered for *Te Deum* to be sung in the little church of her religious house.¹¹¹

On 3rd January, the papal chronicler reported that “at approximately 10 pm that day, in the church of Trinità de Monti, *Te Deum* was sung as thanks for freeing of the Polish queen’s sons, with many instruments and excellent singers, and with the participation of Her Highness and numerous members of the nobility.”¹¹² To celebrate the joyful occasion, Marie Casimire commissioned a *componimento per musica* to celebrate both her late husband and her sons, called *L’Amicizia d’Hercole, e Theseo* (with libretto C.S. Capece and music by an unknown composer). After the serenata, the *Introduzione al Ballo Della Gloria* was also performed.

From 1709 onward, Poerson noted more and more frequently in his correspondence that Marie Casimire wanted permanently to leave Rome and settle in France. This was partly due to the increasing financial problems that she was facing. On 3rd May 1710, Poerson reported to Louis-Antoine Pardaillan de Gondrin, Duke d’Antin and son of Madame de Montespan, the former mistress of King Louis XIV, that the queen wanted to go to France, because “she couldn’t find money in this city, despite offering very beautiful jewels as a collateral.”¹¹³ He also repeatedly mentioned Marie Casimire’s poor health and her melancholy, although she herself viewed her advanced age and ailments with fortitude and even a certain sense of detachment, writing to her daughter after an illness, that she treated it as “a mark of old age and inseparable from it.”¹¹⁴ In October 1709, the sixty-year-old queen fell ill with measles.¹¹⁵ Almost every year during her

111 “Giunse la mattina corriero a questa regina di Polonia, speditoli dal nuovo re Stanislao di Polonia, con il quale gli dava avviso della pace seguita con il re Augusto elettore di Sassonia e si congratulava della piena libertà nella quale erano gli regii principi di lei figlioli Giacomo e Costantino, et aggiungeva a voce il corriero che havevano gli tre re, suco, Augusto e Stanislao, pranzato insieme con gli sudetti principi. Mandò la Maestà Sua a dare parte al S. Collegio di tal nuova, ne fece cantare il *Tedeum* nella piccola chiesa del suo monastero...” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 3, p. 748.

112 “Verso le ventidue hore del sudetto giorno nella chiesa della Trinità de Monti in ringratiam.lo della Liberat.ne de Figli della regina di Polonia con quantità d’Istromenti e Musici fu cantato il *Te Deum*, e ci intervenne Sua Maestà con molta nobiltà,” in: *Giornale del pontificato...*, foglio 228.

113 “Elle ne peut trouver d’argent en cette ville, quoyqu’elle offre our gages de très belles pierreries,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 3, p. 385.

114 “Mai sie ley fu porte comme une neycessité casy et inceparable de la vielesse” (13th October), D-Mbs, shelf mark 6644.

115 “La Reine de Pologne, qui a soixante-sept ans, est malade de la rougeole,” in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 333.

stay in Rome, she suffered from colds and fevers. According to Poerson, the true reason for her poor health was her deep melancholy.

Marie Casimire spent the entire carnival of 1714 in bed. She appeared in front of the guests at the Palazzo Zuccari only on a few occasions, for example when they gathered to see an opera prepared by Aleksander (*L'Amor d'un'Onbra e Gelosia d'un'Aura*). Finally, a doctor sent from France, named Monsieur Garnier, managed to bring her back to health. On 20th March, Poerson reported that the Queen was feeling better, "which [gives] great joy to everyone in Rome, and much honour to M. Garnier, the Parisian medic, who took her under his care."¹¹⁶ With her health much improved, the Queen decided not to delay her departure to France, reportedly insisting that "only the air of France could prolong her days."¹¹⁷ Her departure from Rome took place on 19th June. After an official farewell from the Pope and after saying goodbye to Prince Aleksander, who did not want her to go, she headed for the coast, where a papal ship was waiting for her. As Poerson noted down, she left Rome without regret, because she was not treated there with the respect due to a person of her rank.¹¹⁸ She left behind her Aleksander, who, only a few months later, at the age of merely thirty-eight, died. Poerson noted that the virulent affliction very quickly turned that the once tall and handsome man into a skeleton.¹¹⁹

Marie Casimire spent almost fifteen years in Rome. While the city and its magnificence had originally thrilled and delighted her, the Romans, who at first tracked her every step and passionately discussed all her actions, gradually began to lose interest. They became accustomed to the presence of the *regina vedova di Polonia* in their midst and also saw that, despite her lofty background and connections, she did not play a significant role in the politics of the Papal States, and her attempts to enter the fray of European politics were unsuccessful. Marie Casimire did not see – or chose not to see – her own growing political insignificance. In any event, both she and her son Aleksander, who accompanied her in Rome in the years 1709–1714, gradually transferred their ambitions from diplomacy to music and theatre. In Rome these arts aroused emotions as intense as politics. After 1709, mentions of Marie Casimire in the Roman papers and diaries

116 "Ce qui fait beaucoup de plaisir a tout le monde de Rome et beaucoup d'honneur à M. Garnier, Médecin Parisien, qui en prend soin," in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 291.

117 "L'air de France servira à la prolongation de ses jours," in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 295.

118 *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 314.

119 *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 344.

appeared mainly in the context of opera performances which she organised, and were mostly dedicated the opera productions and occasional performances that attracted great crowds to the square in front of her residence. Sobieska managed to create in the Palazzo Zuccari one of the most successful private opera stages in Rome, a place that attracted the attention of ambassadors, diplomats, notable foreign tourists and Roman aristocracy, including some cardinals, who in Rome were the most important arbiters of taste. Only in this way could Marie Casimire achieve – and she did achieve – her goal: to be once again the talk of all Rome.

III Rome at the Turn of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

“I think I would prefer to write about the rest of Italy four times over than to describe Rome just once,” intimated Charles de Brosses to one of his French correspondents, relating his impressions of the city.¹ De Brosses’s opinion becomes more understandable in the context of the prevailing opinion that in terms of the intellectual, artistic and religious life, the early eighteenth century in Rome was something of a drab era, and a far cry from the glories of the Renaissance and the Baroque. The period’s bad reputation is also a self-fulfilling prophecy, and the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is also significantly under-researched – precisely because it is believed to be uninteresting. Among the few historians who studied the culture of Rome in that period, there seem to be two conflicting visions. One is exemplified by Hanns Gross, who argues that at the end of the seventeenth century Rome lost the cultural momentum which it had acquired during the Counter-Reformation, when the joint efforts of the Papacy and of the Church as a whole contributed to its dominant position in Europe’s cultural landscape. However, as the post-Tridentine fervour gradually dissipated, the soft power of Rome also diminished. In the subtitle of his monograph Gross called that change “the Post-Tridentine Syndrome,” explaining in the introduction that he defined it as “slow and gradual loss of active energy, marked, among other features, by a perceptible, if not always overt, secularization, and the loss of the associative mode of action inspired and inculcated in Trent, with intermittent efforts of reversing that trend.”² In short, Gross views the eighteenth century Rome as a city in decline, if not a complete cultural backwater.

The rival view of the period is championed, among others, by Christopher M.S. Johns, the author of many publications on the cultural policies of eighteenth-century popes. According to him, the artistic life of Rome in late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries deserves scholarly attention and was not in any way inferior to that of the earlier decades of the seventeenth century. What sets

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- 1 “J’aimerais mieux, je crois, vous faire quatre fois la description de tout le reste de l’Italie qu’une seule fois celle de Rome,” in: Ch. de Brosses, *Lettres d’Italie du president de Brosses*, ed. F. d’Agay (Paris, Mercure de France, 1986, 2005), pp. 7–8.
 - 2 H. Gross, *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The Post-Tridentine Syndrome and the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 11.

apart the eighteenth century, however, are the changed conditions and objectives of artistic activity. Johns points out that it is undoubtedly true that the eighteenth century marks the beginning of the gradual waning of the Catholic Church's political influence, caused by the Papacy's numerous military and diplomatic defeats and by the growing power of absolutist monarchies in Europe. On the other hand, he argues that Rome had to a large degree retained its role as the continent's cultural capital and the fount of the European civilization.³ Still, the disadvantageous political processes outlined above contributed to a change in the role of the popes: "Increasingly, Settecento popes used culture and art patronage to appeal to the good opinion of Catholic (and even Protestant) Europe, promoting the role of the institution as a guardian of monuments and works of art that were almost universally regarded as fundamental to Western traditions."⁴ It was not enough anymore to erect magnificent churches for the glory of the one true religion, or palaces that showcased the power and influence of their aristocratic owners, members of the College of Cardinals. In the eighteenth century the goal became more ambitious: it was all about the importance of Rome as a city for the European civilisation: the Eternal City was fashioned to be the pinnacle of the Western civilization, and a living monument to its glorious past. Hence, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Popes encouraged the renovation of neglected early Christian basilicas, preservation of ancient ruins, collecting of art and antiquities, and the establishment of libraries. They also attracted high profile foreign tourists, who came to visit the famous sights and to take advantage of Rome's flourishing art scene and the market in antiquities.

Undoubtedly, when we compare the achievements of Roman artists in the eighteenth century with those of the previous two hundred years, they seem somewhat underwhelming. For example, no eighteenth-century architects rose to the level of Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini or Francesco Borromini. However, it also seems fair to say that the dearth of spectacular building projects in the period might be related not to the artists' insufficient talent, but to a change in the priorities of the city's authorities. Still, as it happens, two of today's Rome's most recognisable tourist sights, the Spanish Steps and the Fontanna di Trevi, were built in the eighteenth century (1725 and 1735–1776 respectively). The eighteenth century was also a period of growth for painting (especially landscape)

3 Ch.M.S. Johns, "The Entrepôt of Europe: Rome in the Eighteenth Century," in: *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. E.P. Bowron, J.J. Rishel (Philadelphia, London: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2000), p. 20.

4 Ch.M.S. Johns, "The Entrepôt . . .," p. 20.

and for the famous *vedute*, whose popularity was connected to the growing numbers of Grand Tourists that commissioned the fashionable cityscapes and took them home as mementos of their stay in the spiritual and intellectual capital of Europe. On the other hand, there is no denying that the artistic achievements of the eighteenth century in Rome were less spectacular than the Baroque architecture and sculpture, and the paintings of the Seicento.

What was the eighteenth-century Rome's opinion of itself? Was it a city coming to terms with its diminishing importance, and mourning over its past glories? Or was it forward-looking and full of energy, convinced that it still had a bright future in spite of temporary setbacks?

The Political Context

The position of Rome as the capital of the *Mondo Cristiano* was inexorably linked to international politics ever since the reign of Constantine the Great, whose conversion and patronage of the Church marked the beginning of the strong connection between Christianity and the politics of the state. For the later generations of popes and rulers, Constantine became a symbol of their aspirations as a figure whose authority merged politics and religion.

The role of the Pope as the spiritual father of all Catholics gave the incumbents considerable soft power, which was further strengthened by diplomacy and by a range of privileges. The dominant role of the papacy came under threat during the Reformation, which lowered both the prestige of the Holy See and of the city of Rome as the spiritual capital of the continent. The rise of absolute monarchies further complicated the position of the popes on the European stage. The absolute monarchs openly objected to any kind of foreign interference into their internal affairs – even if such interference would come from the vicar of Christ. This turn had its roots not only in the demands of politics, but also in the philosophy of the day. Additionally, the popes themselves were not only spiritual leaders, but also rulers in their own right, pursuing their own diplomatic agendas and often involving the papal states in land disputes on the Italian Peninsula and in wars raging Europe. The Holy See was also an arena where the interests of rival European powers clashed, and where monarchs sought to increase their influence by securing the pope's backing. Throughout the period, representatives of France and Spain were the most active in the rivalry for papal favours. Up to approximately 1700, Spain's status as the papacy's closest ally remained virtually unchallenged, which also translated into the superior position held in Rome by

its ambassadors and Cardinal Protectors.⁵ The Spanish supremacy permeated many facets of life: the *feste* organised by the Spanish community were among the most popular and highly anticipated, as were the extremely opulent Corpus Christi processions, co-organised by their nation's official church in Rome.⁶ The Spanish kings were among the most generous patrons of the arts active in Rome, and their every commission reinforced their alliance with the pope and their special status as defenders of Christianity. This state of affairs changed dramatically, however, with the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701, which followed the death of King Charles II in the previous year. The childless Charles II was the last in the line of the Spanish Habsburgs, and the matter of his succession became the bone of contention between the French and the Grand Alliance of Austria, England and the Dutch Republic for more than a decade. In the opinion of historians of the papacy, involvement in the war constituted one of the most serious crises that threatened the position of the Holy See. Charles II's last will named Phillip d'Anjou, the grandson of Louis XIV as his heir. This decision, which would ensure the ascendancy of France and upset the balance of power in Europe, was extremely unpalatable to other European rulers, and especially to the Austrian Emperor Leopold I. A French king on the Spanish throne was also a threat to the interests of England and of other smaller states. Oblivious to the strong international opposition, in 1701 Louis XIV declared his grandson King of Spain and Philip d'Anjou, now under his regnal name of Philip V, was sent to Madrid to rule over his new subjects. His ascension to the throne became the immediate cause of the war in which the pope also became embroiled. In spite of the papacy's official stance of neutrality in European conflicts, Clement strongly favoured the Franco-Spanish alliance. In this, he picked the losing side, and both he and Rome were severely punished for this by the triumphant Emperor.

The humiliations suffered in international politics paradoxically led Clement XI to redouble his efforts in the sphere of art patronage. He hoped that military and diplomatic defeats could be glossed over thanks to promoting and

5 Cf. T.J. Dandeleat, *Spanish Rome 1500–1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); T.J. Dandeleat, "Politics and the state system after the Habsburg-Valois Wars," in: *Early Modern Italy 1550–1796*, ed. J.A. Marino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp. 11–29; G. Hanlon, *Spanish Regimes in Italy*, in: G. Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800. Three Seasons in European History* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 62–75.

6 Cf. e.g. M. Boiteux, "L'Espagne et les fêtes romaines au XVIIe siècle," in: *Barocco romano e barocco italiano*, eds. M. Fagiolo, M.L. Madonna (Roma: Gangemi, 1985), pp. 117–134.



Illustration 12. The pope Clement XI, 1775. The University of Warsaw Library.

reinforcing the vision of Rome as the fount of European civilization, and thanks to highlighting the glories of its past. Thus, art became a means to an end, allowing the pope, thanks to his artistic commissions and patronage, to express political sympathies. It was used in the same way by the representatives of the warring nations, allowing them to convey their political and diplomatic agendas in a veiled yet powerful way. The “culture war” was joined by the Cardinal Protectors of France, Spain and the Empire and other nations, as well as by church dignitaries, ambassadors, Roman aristocracy and high-profile foreign guests. The inhabitants of Rome also got involved in the heated rivalry between their social betters, as they became spectators and participants in *feste* and other public events whose goal it was to manipulate the public opinion.

An overview of the art commissioned and promoted by Clement XI in that period reveals that two themes were especially prominent: reactions to the fall of the Stuarts in England, which meant that this country left the Catholic family of nations, and the anti-Turkish campaign.⁷ Another recurrent subject were the

7 Ch.M.S. Johns, *Papal Art and Cultural Politics: Rome in the Age of Clement XI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 11.

achievements of the medieval crusades, which were part of the broader theme of the triumph of Christianity over its enemies. To quote just two examples of this policy, the architect Carlo Fontana received a commission for twenty four busts of popes who fought against infidels,⁸ and in 1704 the pope organised an exhibition of paintings commemorating King John III Sobieski's battles, including the famous Siege of Vienna in 1683. The exhibition was held in the church of San Salvatore, and all the paintings on display belonged to the private collection of Marie Casimire, which included both the works she had brought with her to Rome and those commissioned from local artists.⁹ The pope himself graced the opening of the exhibition, touring it in the company of Marie Casimire. Such initiatives, seamlessly merging art with politics, were the cultural standard in the period. Johns aptly observes in the work quoted above that "the employment of culture for political purposes reached new heights under Clement XI and informs every aspect of his art patronage."¹⁰

The War of the Spanish Succession ended in 1713 with the Peace of Utrecht, whose provisions were disappointing for the pope. Even though both sides had to make concessions, the Emperor emerged as the winner, as the peace treaty granted him lands in Italy, including the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples and the Counties of Savoy and Piedmont. Humiliated on the diplomatic arena, the pope turned his attention to the fine arts. He became an increasingly engaged patron of the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca (a group of architects, painters and sculptors), and also championed other causes, such as the renovation of the square in front of the Bocca della Verità, and the preservation of various kinds of valuable antiquities, ranging from Egyptian manuscripts to early Christian churches. In 1719, three years after the death of Marie Casimire, the pope again played an important role in the lives of the Sobieski family, when he came down in support of the match between Princess Maria Clementina, Marie Casimire's granddaughter, and James III Stuart.

Reflecting on Marie Casimire's years in Rome it seems fair to say that she must have found the climate of political quarrels and disputes quite similar to her old life in Poland. The years 1708–1709 were probably the most difficult period, as she became the object of threats from the triumphant Emperor. Such attempts at intimidation and manifestations of hostility were also all undoubtedly familiar to her. The greatest source of sadness and anxiety during her stay in Rome was

8 Ch.M.S. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 8.

9 Ch.M.S. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 11.

10 Ch.M.S. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 3.

probably the consciousness of her own diminished importance and the lack of agency, but also the sense of being treated instrumentally by the papal Curia.

The Social Context

When Marie Casimire came to Rome in 1699, the city had the population of 136,000, which would then steadily grow during her stay, with the exception of the early years of the reign of Clement XI.¹¹ The hostilities during the War of the Spanish Succession, frequent inundations of the Tiber, earthquakes, outbreaks of the plague, and crop failures which led to food shortages and famine all contributed to an increased number of deaths and dwindling population numbers. The data for 1705 show a record low: 132,104 people, but in the following years the numbers again began to gradually increase.¹² The number of permanent residents was bulked up by the steady stream of pilgrims, especially noticeable in the jubilee years, and by foreign ambassadors and their entourages, along with tourists; young Englishmen on the Grand Tour were an especially distinct and numerous group.

Just like the rest of Europe, Rome in the early eighteenth century had a rigid class structure. The top level in the hierarchy was occupied by the aristocracy, which in Rome was a numerous group, as the city drew not only Italian but European aristocrats, who came there for longer or shorter stays (Marie Casimire herself was a representative of that group). The next level was created by the clergy: priests, monks, nuns and church officials. Not surprisingly for the capital city of Christendom, this group was also quite substantial: the census of 1709 recorded 2646 priests and 5370 monks, nuns and other members of the clergy.¹³ The impression of Rome as a city of ecclesiasts was enhanced by the fact that laymen also frequently donned fashionable clerical garments, not to mention the huge number of religious orders, seminaries, and c. 400 churches.¹⁴ The third group of Eternal City's inhabitants were minor craftsmen and workers. The last, most numerous one (about a half of the total population) consisted of the poor. In his already quoted description of Rome's population in the 1730s, the Frenchman Charles de Brosses summed up the situation with savage humour: "a quarter are priests, a quarter are statues, a quarter are people without

11 H. Gross, *Rome in the Age. . .*, p. 55.

12 H. Gross, *Rome in the Age. . .*, p. 57.

13 Ch. Hibbert, *Rome. The Bibliography of a City* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 202.

14 Ch. Hibbert, *Rome. The Bibliography. . .*, p. 202.

any occupation, and a quarter are people with nothing to do.”¹⁵ While de Brosse admired Rome’s architectural beauties, he was very much put down by the level of neglect in areas such as agriculture, manufacturing, and trade. He pointed out the poor condition of the roads that were once the envy of the world, the neglect of the city’s ports and harbours, and the relatively underdeveloped crafts, and he noted in shock that all that bad management and bad husbandry were allowed to happen in a city surrounded by fertile farmland, which also had the benefit of a navigable river, and a steady influx of labour.¹⁶

The newcomers to Rome quickly realised that, paradoxically, the religious life of the capital of Christendom left much to be desired. The behaviour of churchgoers was at times rowdy and disrespectful, and the standards must have been low since a social historian could note with satisfaction that by the end of the seventeenth century food and drink had been successfully banished from the churches, along with dances, games and ritual obscenities.¹⁷ The perusal of church edicts which enumerate banned types of behaviour is quite illuminating, because it highlights the common practices which were viewed unfavourably by the clergy. Churchgoers were warned that unsuitable behaviour in church caused the wrath of God, who would mete out horrible punishment such as plague, famine, war, and earthquakes. An edict of 1701 specifically warned women that they should not appear in church

in indecent clothes, but should display suitable modesty, always remembering that their appearance in church should be pleasing to God’s eye and not causing his wrath. Also, whenever possible, a separate part of the church should be designated for women where they could worship God separate from men. Both sexes should refrain from secular conversations, walking about and making noise and above all from flirting, especially during the Holy Mass.¹⁸

15 “Imaginez ce que c’est qu’un peuple dont le quart est de prêtres, le quart de statues, le quart de gens qui ne travaillent guère et le quart de gens qui ne font rien du tout,” in: Ch. de Brosse, *Lettres d’Italie*. . . , pp. 11–12.

16 Ch. de Brosse, *Lettres d’Italie*. . . , p. 12.

17 N. Schindler, “Karneval, Kirche und verkehrte Welt. Zur Funktion der Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert,” in: N. Schindler, *Widerspenstige Leute. Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), 121–74, Polish edition: N. Schindler, “Karnawał, Kościół i ‘świat na opak.’ O funkcji kultury śmiechu w XVI w.,” in: N. Schindler, *Ludzie prości, ludzie niepokorni. . . Kultura ludowa w początkach dziejów nowożytnych*, trans. B. Ostrowska, *Klio w Niemczech* 9 (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 2002), p. 239.

18 “Le donne d’andare alle Chiese non con ornamenti indecenti, mà colla dovuta modestia, raccordandoli, che alle Chiese si deve andare per placare, e non irritare l’ira Divina, e dove si puole se l’assegna in Chiesa luogo separato dagl’huomini.

Penalties were specified for those who broke the rules.

Some of the priests among the city's large clerical population were also more of a liability than an asset. Contrary to what one would expect in such an important city, many of them were poorly educated – and in some rare cases even illiterate – and would rush through the liturgy so quickly that a mass would take no more than fifteen minutes.¹⁹ Low salaries of the common clergy failed to draw the best and brightest people to the profession, and thus mediocrity prevailed. Naturally, for the more educated and talented, entering the clergy was a tempting proposition, allowing studious intellectual men to lead peaceful lives, devoted to reading, enjoyment of art and fine conversation with their peers. However, only very few clergymen in Rome possessed intellectual curiosity and training which allowed them to engage with the new rationalist trends, and few had a taste for advanced theological debates and for attempting a meaningful reform of the Church. The lack of serious reflection was coupled with folk religiosity among the commoners, which was superficial and steeped in superstition.²⁰

The Intellectual Life

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, France, England and the Netherlands became the most important centres of European science and philosophy. The Papal State and its closest ally, Spain, did not keep abreast of the new intellectual fashions, but engaged instead in the ideological defence of Catholicism, and in trying to safeguard the leading role of the papacy and of Rome. The goal of defending the *status quo* against the rising tide of rationalism required the best efforts of the most brilliant and talented members of the clergy, such as for example the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher.²¹ Though the new ideas of René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and John Locke undoubtedly reached

E l'uni, e l'altre si astenghino di far colloquij profani, circoli, ò strepiti, e molto più d'amoreggiare, specialmente quando assistono al Santo Sacrificio della Messa. . .”
in: *Editto Per la Veneratione, e rispetto dovuto alle Chiese*, I-Rc, *Editti stampati*, shelf mark Per est 18.

- 19 L. Fiorani, “Il secolo XVIII,” in: *Riti, cerimonie, feste e vita di popolo nella Roma dei papi* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1970), p. 230.
- 20 L. Fiorani, “Il secolo XVIII,” pp. 229–231. According to Fiorani, Rome in that period was a city past its prime, where the greatest achievements of European culture coexisted with the disorder of the last days of a dying civilization mired in a crisis. Cf. p. 214.
- 21 Cf. P. Findlen, ed. *Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

Rome, it seems that the fate of Galileo, a supporter of Copernicus, who had been convicted for heresy and sentenced to imprisonment in 1633, was still fresh in the minds of Roman intellectuals and served as a warning against exhibiting too much independence.²² The actions of the Inquisition were naturally targeted at discouraging intellectual dissent, as evidenced by the Jesuit Antonio Baldigiani, a consultant to the Inquisitorial Tribunal, who wrote about the late 1600s as follows:

All Rome is in arms against the mathematicians and physico-mathematicians. The cardinals have staged and are staging unscheduled meetings before the pope, and there is talk of making general prohibitions against all authors of modern physics. They are drawing up very long lists, and among those at the top of them are Galileo, Gassendi, [and] Descartes, as those most pernicious to the literary republic and to the sincerity of religion.²³

Scholarly opinion concerning the freedom of speech in that period in Rome is divided, but statistics seem very telling. They suggest that due to the fact that Rome was home to such famous (or infamous) institutions as the Holy Inquisition or the Index of Forbidden Books, the freedom of expression in the city was significantly limited. In the space of a little over one century, the number of entries in the Index increased from 2100 (in 1596) to 11000 titles in 1707.²⁴ It is difficult to say how many books were added during the reign of Clement XI, but the fact that the index expanded fivefold is in itself suggestive.

At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Rome seems to have been a city bent on celebrating its past glory, uninterested in new ideas, which gained traction only among a small number of intellectuals maintaining correspondence with their peers from Northern Europe. The city's elites could try to keep abreast of international intellectual currents thanks to booksellers, who prided themselves on stocking a few copies of major new foreign releases, but obviously access to such books was limited and often very much delayed. Important scientific novelties were also reported in newspapers, such as *Giornale*

22 In the whole of Italy, Florence was the city which preserved intellectual freedom for the longest period, for a time fighting back against the oppressive influence of the Church. The Medici family, which ruled the city for generations, acted as patrons of progressive thinkers and scientists, and supported scientific inquiry in the spheres of natural science and geology.

23 Qtd. after V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 46.

24 Ch.F. Black, "Censorship," in: Ch.F. Black, *The Italian Inquisition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 166.

dei Letterati d'Italia, published in 1668–1683, which carried reviews of notable foreign publications. Scientific disputes also took place during the so-called *conversazioni*, academic gatherings held at the homes of scholars, in the palaces of their aristocratic protectors, or hosted by various academies.

One of such academies was the Accademia Fisico-Matematica, founded in 1677 by Giovanni Ciampini, which from 1689 came under the patronage of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni.²⁵ Ciampini's goal was to popularise the writings of English scholars such as Newton and Locke among the Roman elite, and to familiarise them with a new methodology that was rooted in experience, observation and sensory impressions. The new empiricist approach could most easily be applied in the field of natural science, but in Ciampini's view it could also be expanded so as to include social and historical studies.²⁶ In his own research, Ciampini demonstrated how one could use an interdisciplinary approach and the new methods that relied on analyses of material artefacts in order to study the history of the Church. His contributions revolutionised views on the Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages.²⁷ After his death, Ciampini's Academy ceased to operate, but his vision continued to be championed by Giovanni Cristiforo Battelli, the librarian to Pope Clement XI and a former member of the Academy, as well as by Alessandro Maffei and Marcantonio Boldetti, two pioneers of archaeology working for the pope, and by Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, a historian of the Church and author of a seminal study on the palaeo-Christian basilicas in Rome.²⁸

Another personage that played an important role in promoting the new science among Roman intellectuals was Father Francesco Bianchini from Verona.²⁹

25 Ch. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 23.

26 While Ciampini was the first to promote the empiricist agenda in Italy, similar ideas had already been circulating in the Netherlands, England and France. Luuc Kooijmans (in "Gevaarlijke kennis. Inzicht en angst in de dagen van Jan Swammerdam," *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 125(1), January 2010, 17th March 2020 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284641116_Luuc_Kooijmans_Gevaarlijke_kennis_Inzicht_en_angst_in_de_dagen_van_Jan_Swammerdam) gives a compelling account of the situation in Northern Europe. This publication is available also in Polish as *Niebezpieczna wiedza. Wizje i lęki w czasach Jana Swammerdama [Dangerous Knowledge. Visions and Fears in the Age of Jan Swammerdam]*, trans. R. Pucek (Warszawa: Aletheia, 2010).

27 Ch. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 23.

28 Ch. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 25.

29 The information on Francesco Bianchini comes from H. Gross, *Rome in the Age. . .*, p. 254.

He became influenced by Ciampini's ideals early in his career and was later chosen by the pope for the task of making minor changes to the Gregorian calendar, which led to his establishing academic contacts with Leibniz. Sent by the Pope on a diplomatic mission to France, Biancini extended his trip to include a visit to England and in Oxford he had three conversations with Newton. After returning to Rome, Biancini became the leading light of the newly founded Academy *di camera* established by Cardinal Filippo Antonio Gaultieri,³⁰ one of whose goals was to "restore the dialogue between modern science and Catholic learning."³¹ To that end, he worked tirelessly to promote Newton's ideas among Roman intellectuals.

Ciampini and Bianchini were two of the most celebrated intellectuals active in Rome during Marie Casimire's stay. Their activities fitted within a broader ambition held by the pope, who wanted to make Rome the centre of Western scholarship and science. The most spectacular steps towards achieving this goal were the opening of the Biblioteca Casanatense and the Vatican Library for scholars,³² which led to a series of important discoveries in their collections. On balance however, it has to be stressed that the intellectual life of Rome was somewhat derivative and mostly focused on disseminating ground-breaking ideas coming from Northern Europe, rather than on proposing genuinely new paradigms and directions.

Accademia dell'Arcadia

5th The fifth of October 1690 marked the historic first meeting of the famed Accademia dell'Arcadia. The fourteen scholars and intellectuals who became its founding members had known each other for some time, because all of them had enjoyed the patronage of Queen Cristina of Sweden, who had passed away the previous year. The meeting took place in the garden of the convent of Franciscan Friars (*frati minori*) close to the church of San Pietro in Montorio. In attendance were Paolo Coardi, Giuseppe Paolucci, Vincenzo Leonio, Silvio Stampiglia, Gian Vincenzo Gravina, Giovan Maria Crescimbeni, Giovan Battista Felice Zappi, Carlo Tommaso Maillard di Tournon, Pompeo Figari, Paolo Antonio del Negro, Melchiorre Maggi, Jacopo Vicinelli, Paolo Antonio Viti, and Agostino

30 M.P. Donato, *Accademie romane. Una storia sociale (1671–1824)* (Napoli, Roma: Edizione scientifica italiana, 2000), p. 44.

31 H. Gross, *Rome in the Age. . .*, p. 255.

32 Ch. Johns, *Papal Art. . .*, p. 28.

Maria Tajo.³³ According to an often quoted anecdote, the name of the group was inspired by the exclamation of one of the members who, a couple of days before the meeting, admiring the view of the Tiber from the Castel Sant'Angelo, declared: "It seems as if we have restored Arcadia today."³⁴ These words reportedly inspired Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni and Vincenzo Leon to launch the Academy, envisaged as a meeting place for writers and poets, which would continue the traditions of its famous predecessor, the Accademia Reale, founded by Queen Cristina in 1656. One of the most important goals of both Academies was safeguarding Italian literature of the day against the prevailing bad taste.

The name of the academy evokes Arcadia, a region of ancient Greece described by Polybius in *The Histories*, and one that was subsequently reinvented and celebrated in Virgil's *Eclogues* as a locus of pastoral tranquillity. For the Renaissance poets and scholars, inspired by Virgil, Arcadia became the synonym of earthly paradise, and in the late seventeenth century the trope continued to serve as a symbol of an ideal society, which its founders called a literary republic (*repubblica letteraria*). Just as the inhabitants of the mythical Arcadia were supposed to live in perfect harmony with nature, dedicating themselves to such pastoral pursuits as lovemaking, poetry and music, so the Roman academics chose as their meeting venues places which were connected with both nature and art, and preferably met in gardens. In the group's own terminology, they always referred to their meeting places as "forests" (that is, the *Bosco Parrasio*, after Parrhasius, a city located in the Greek region of Arcadia).³⁵ The name was supposed to refer to "not merely the physical surroundings, but a state of mind, evoking the nostalgic simplicity of shepherd-poets who convened in the mythological Arcadia of classical antiquity."³⁶ In the spring and summer, the meetings, called academies,

33 M.T.A. Graziosi, *L'Arcadia: Trecento anni di storia* (Roma: Fratelli Palombi Editori), 1991, p. 14.

34 Qtd. after S.M. Dixon, *The Accademia degli Arcadi*, in: S.M. Dixon, *Between the Real and the Ideal. The Accademia degli Arcadi and its Garden in Eighteenth-Century Rome* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), p. 19. The anecdote is also recounted in many other works devoted to the Accademia dell' Arcadia, including M.T. A. Graziosi, *L'Arcadia* . . . , p. 14; D. Predieri, *Bosco Parrasio un giardino per l'Arcadia* (Modena: Mucchi, 1990), p. 30; V.H. Minor, *A Short History of the Academy of the Arcadians*, in: V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque* . . . , p. 116.

35 V.H. Minor, "The Parrhasian Grove," in: V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque* . . . , s. 142.

36 A. Okeeva Smith, *Opera in Arcadia: Rome, Florence and Venice in the "Primo Settecento"*, an unpublished PhD dissertation, Yale University 2001, pp. 23–24. The

were usually held once a week in a garden designated as the *Bosco Parrasio*, and in winter the academics met in palaces belonging to their rich patrons, such as Prince Ruspoli or Cardinal Ottoboni. The Academy members adopted many practices and ceremonies inspired by the pastoral tradition; they used shepherd names and dressed in costumes. Vernon Hyde Minor, an American historian of the Baroque, aptly pointed out a paradox that lay at the heart of Academy's *modus operandi*: while claiming the primacy of "rationality over authority, soundness of judgment over 'capricious' baroque *concettismo*, good taste over bad taste, would take on the masks and the games, the allegories and dissimulations of Arcadian shepherds."³⁷

However, if we take seriously the words of the Academy's first President, Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, it appears that in the vision of the founders, the pastoral customs were not merely adopted to add an element of entertainment and artifice. Their function was much more significant, as they were supposed to help promote simplicity, naturalness, and equality among all members.³⁸ Adopting made-up names and wearing costumes meant that all the existing differences in social status between the members were, at least in theory, left at the door. The Academy did its best to be inclusive, and admitted members coming from different social classes. In a move which was by no means standard practice in the period, it also included some women members. The goal of Arcadia was to create a true republic of the spirit, eradicating privilege, inequality and class divisions, which were an inherent feature of the European society in that period.³⁹ All that was expressed in the Academy's own founding documents: "The Government of

adjectival form of "Parrhasium" is a synonyme for "Arcadian;" cf. A. Okeeva Smith, p. 24. *Bosco Parrasio* therefore should be translated as "Arcadian forest."

37 V.H. Minor, *A short history*. . ., p. 117.

38 "E per togliere ogni riguardo di preminenza, e precedenza tra i Personaggi, che la dovevano fermare, si stabilì d'andar tutti mascherati sotto la finzione de'Pastori dell'antica Arcadia," in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *Lettera all'Illustriss. e Reverendiss. Sig. Padron Colendiss. Il Sig. Sigismondo Leopoldo Conte di Colloniz Canonico della Chiesa di Strigonio*, in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *La Bellezza della volgar poesia* (Roma: Buagni. . ., 1700), p. 217.

39 It seems that the *Accademia dell'Arcadia* was the first institution of its kind that admitted women as active members, cf. S.M. Dixon, "Women in Arcadia," in: *Between the Real*. . ., p. 105; S.M. Dixon, "Women in Arcadia," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 1999, No. 3, p. 371; E. Graziosi, "Revisiting Arcadia: Women and Academies in Eighteenth-Century Italy," in: *Italy's Eighteenth Century. Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, eds. P. Findlen, W. Wassing Roworth, C.M. Sama (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 104.

this Academy is Democratic, or Popular, having neither Protector nor Prince, but only a President (*custode*), who represents the whole Community.⁴⁰ In fact, the Academy eschewed the practice of the times, and instead of looking for a suitably grand and aristocratic official patron, chose as its only patron the Baby Jesus, a symbol of innocence, and the Son of God whose birth was celebrated by shepherds, and who later according to the New Testament was also referred to as the Good Shepherd. The day-to-day business of the Academy was conducted, as it was suggested in the quote above, by the President, elected for a period of four years. He was aided in his work by a College of ten academics, selected by the President himself and approved and appointed for one-year term by a gathering of all members. As the Academy grew and its membership increased, more positions were added such as sub-president (*sottocustode*), vice-president (*procustode*), deputy (*deputato*), and censors (*censori*).⁴¹

In order to become a member of the Academy, one had to meet three conditions: be at least twenty-four years of age, behave nobly and with dignity; and have a reputation as an erudite. There was one additional requirement solely for women, who, in addition to a scholarly reputation, were also expected to write poetry. As the history of the Academy showed, the requirements for the candidates may have not been demanding enough. In an attempt to prove their reputation as writers and intellectuals, the Academy hopefuls covered reams of paper with doggerel poems which they then foisted upon the public in order to secure an admission. As a consequence, some of the literary works published by the less talented Arcadians demonstrated appalling artistic standards and complete lack of originality.

The Academy was conceived as a republic of the mind, founded “for the better practice of science and in order to awaken in large parts of Italy a good taste in literature, and especially in popular poetry, the latter being particularly dormant.”⁴² Generally speaking, the Italian phrase *buon gusto* denoted the ability to distinguish middling artistic or scientific achievements from works of lasting value.⁴³ This was made possible by using as a benchmark the works of Virgil

40 “Il Governo di questa Conversazione è Democratico, o Popolare, non avendo nè Protettore, nè principe: ma semplicemente un Custode, il quale rappresenta tutta l'Adunanza,” in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *Lettera*. . . , p. 218.

41 G.M. Crescimbeni, pp. 218–219.

42 “Per maggiormente coltivare lo studio delle Scienze, e risvegliare in buona parte d'Italia il buon gusto nelle lettere umane, ed in particolare nella Poesia Volgare, alquanto addormentato,” in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *Lettera*. . . , p. 217.

43 L.A. Muratori, *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienze e le arti* (Venezia: Luigi Pavino, 1708), qtd. after A. Okeeva Smith, *Opera in Arcadia*. . . , p. 26.

and the spirituality of the Arcadian Golden Age. The Academy members revered the classic Greek and Latin works and used them as models for their own practice, and they also admired the two giants of Italian poetry, especially beloved by Crescimbeni: Petrarch and Angel Di Costanza. Apart from the pastoral tropes described above, the symbolism of the academy also relied on visual and textual references to ancient Greece and Rome such as bay leaves, syrinxes (Pan flutes) the figures of Apollo and the Muses, and of Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom, as well as allegories of the unity of all arts. The academics also did not forget about their late honorary patroness, Queen Cristina, referring to her as the *basilissa* (a Greek term for “queen”). In their syncretic ceremonies and practices, they combined the culture of the classical antiquity, in which they saw the highest ideal of arts, with the Catholic tropes ubiquitous in Rome (for example, references to the Good Shepherd), and with the memory of their late benefactress.

Reflecting on the reasons for the extraordinary success of the Academy all over Italy, the historian Amadeo Quondam convincingly argues that basing the structure of the Academy on that of the Church may have played a significant role.⁴⁴ It quickly turned out that, despite its overtly proclaimed equality and democracy, the Academy was in fact a hierarchical and centralised structure, and it increasingly became a staunch supporter of the Catholic doctrine (to which most of the members adhered) and of the policy of the Curia.

The Academy’s local chapters (called “colonies”) quickly proliferated, creating a network which spread all over Italy. All the publicly declared principles, such as the ten Arcadian laws (*Leges Arcadum*), according to which each member had the same access to prestigious functions within the Academy, though undoubtedly progressive, turned out to be but a beautiful fiction. The Academy’s nominal democracy concealed Crescimbeni’s authoritarian tendencies and despotism,⁴⁵ the dominant role of those members who were representatives of the clergy, and the betrayal of the publicly praised classical models of classic poetry in favour of the style of Petrarch (whereas it has to be said that the Arcadians’ imitations of the poet’s works were usually somewhat plodding and had none of his genius). It also soon turned out that in this purported “republic of letters,” real writers and poets were in fact a minority. This situation was a source of bitter dissatisfaction

44 A. Quondam, “L’istituzione Arcadia. Sociologia e ideologia di un’accademia,” *Quaderni Storici* 1973, No. 2, pp. 423–424.

45 Crescimbeni served as President of the Academy for almost forty years, since the creation of the Academy in 1690 until his death in 1728.

especially for a group of poets centred around Gian Vincenzo Gravina, who in 1711 decided to launch a schism. The ensuing conflict led to the creation of a new institution, originally named the Arcadia Nova, and then known as the Accademia dei Quirini.

In a calculated insult, Gravina accused the members of the Accademia dell'Arcadia of bad literary taste, which to his mind was exemplified by their naïvely bucolic tendencies, and of focusing too much on minor genres such as *sonettini* and *canzoncine*.⁴⁶ He mounted a vitriolic critique of those academics whose poetry focused on the relatively trivial theme of love, and who thus lost sight of loftier and more fitting subjects, such as the fates of great heroes, modelled on the Greek and Latin epics or on Renaissance drama. To his mind, the literary output of the Arcadians was the opposite of *buon gusto*, and thus constituted a betrayal of the ideals of the Academy. In addition, Gravina, who was openly anticlerical, voiced urgent appeals for a reform of the Church and of the Roman Curia, and was fundamentally opposed to opening the ranks of the Academy to less educated members of the clergy. However, the root cause of the schism lay simply in Gravina's and Crescimbeni's personality clash. The two luminaries vied for the leadership and either of them despised the other. In such a situation a split was unavoidable. Gravina's most promising students and protégés, Pietro Metastasio and Paolo Rolli, left with him. One of the Academy's chief ideologues, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, also had a change of heart and joined the rebels, while Apostolo Zeno withdrew from the conflict-torn Academy and started working independently.

Faced with a schism, the ambitious and energetic Crescimbeni redoubled his efforts to expand his Academy's influence by creating more local branches and accepting new members. The network of "colonies" grew rapidly, encompassing almost all of Italy. The famous literary critic Benedetto Croce argued that the intellectual network created by the Academy was instrumental in fostering the cohesion that more than a century later led to the unification of Italy.⁴⁷ In 1728, the year of Crescimbeni's death, the Academy had forty colonies and in the following years further branches were established.⁴⁸

46 G.V. Gravina, "Della division d'Arcadia," in: *Scritti critici e teorici*, ed. A. Quondam (Bari: Laterza, 1973), p. 472.

47 B. Croce, "La letteratura italiana del Settecento: note critiche," in: V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque*. . . , p. 34.

48 S.M. Dixon, *Between the Real*. . . , p. 21.

The first President also took care to publish and promote the works of the Roman Arcadians. The Academy's publications included poetry written by the Roman members and reports on their assemblies, called *adunanze*, which involved extemporised poems and debates on art, literature, and sometimes also on music. During the tenure of Crescimbeni, who proved to be an extremely devoted chronicler of the Academy's activity, the following publications came out: *Le vite degli Arcadi illustri* in four volumes (1708–1727), *Rime degli Arcadi* in nine volumes (1716–1722), *Prose degli Arcadi* in three volumes (1718), the first part of *Arcadum carmina* (1721), and *Notizie istoriche degli Arcadi morti* in three volumes (1720–1721). The first President was not only a chronicler of the Academy's achievements, but also the author of notable works of literary criticism and on the history of Italian literature, which are seminal for understanding his vision of literature and of the Academy itself. He began his career with *L'istoria della volgar poesia* (1698), followed by *La Bellezza della volgar poesia*, which explored the same theme as his previous book, but did it in the form of a dialogue (1700). His other notable works include *Comentari intorno alla storia della volgar poesia* (1702), and *Arcadia* (1708), modelled on an earlier pastoral romance written by Jacop Sannazzar. In the latter work, Crescimbeni recounts the foundation of the Academy, and elaborates on its mission, also providing the description of the activities and interests of its members (called, in Academy's parlance, shepherds and nymphs) portraying them as an ideal community. Incidentally, *Arcadia* also contained references to Marie Casimire.⁴⁹ Crescimbeni's indefatigable effort ensured that for some time at the turn of the centuries his Academy really became the cultural heart of Rome. However, the schism of 1711 and the exodus of Arcadia's most talented members severely damaged its position and as a result, the *Accademia dell'Arcadia* lost the status of the intellectual powerhouse, in which the brightest minds of the generation engaged in topical debates on art, science, religion and the political and economic situation of Italy. By mid-eighteenth century, its position was forever lost. In 1767 Charles Duclos wrote mournfully that Rome "is greatly in need of regeneration. Literature, the sciences and arts, with the exception of music,

49 *L'Arcadia del Can. Gio. Mario Crescimbeni custode della medesima Arcadia, e Accademico Fiorentino a Madama Ondedei Albani cognata di N. S. papa Clemente XI* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1708), p. 12. Cf. Chapter II above.

are languishing... The Arcadian Academy, with its deluge of sonnets, is a mere parody of true learned societies.”⁵⁰

New Trends in Literature and Theatre

In 1690, the writers and polymaths present at the first meeting of the Academy were confident that their knowledge and talents would bring about a revival of Italian culture. What caused this desire for reform? What circumstances caused the best minds of the generation to decide that changes in the spheres of literature and drama were necessary? Many researchers believe that the root cause lay in the traditional cultural rivalry between Italy and France, and to be more precise, it was a reaction to new ideas proposed by French writers: François de La Rochefoucauld (*Les Maximes*, 1665), Dominique Bouhours (*La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit*, 1687), and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (*L'Art Poétique*, 1674). All these writings were concerned in various ways with the concept of good taste in literature. Not surprisingly, the French theorists glorified the style of French writers and denigrated Italian authors, including Ludovico Ariosto and Torquato Tasso.⁵¹ A group of Italian polymaths led by Marquis Gian Giuseppe Orsi, who were members of the Bologna colony of the Arcadian Academy, responded to these attacks, and their reaction initiated the so-called Bouhours-Orsi debate. As other intellectuals entered the fray, the debate expanded and over time it became no less than a fundamental intellectual dispute between the ancients and the moderns. In a treatise entitled *Considerazioni sopra un famoso libro francese [sic] intitolato “La Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages de l'esprit”* (1703), Orsi mounted an impassioned defence of Petrarch and the writers of the Cinquecento, of Aristotle's *Poetics* and of Italian history. Even though the first battle was unresolved, on the Italian side it launched discussions about the necessity of reforming the national culture,

50 Charles Duclos, qtd. after L. Barroero, S. Susinno, “Arcadian Rome. Universal Capital of the Arts,” in: *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. E.P. Brown, J.J. Rishel (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; London: Merrell Publishers. 2000), p. 49.

51 V.H.Minor, *The Death of the Baroque*. . . , p. 32 and passim; J. Miszalska, “Sytuacja we włoskiej kulturze na przełomie wieków” [“The Culture of Rome at the Turn of the Centuries”], in: M. Gurgul, J. Miszalska, M. Surma-Gawłowska, *Historia teatru i dramatu włoskiego od XIII do XXI wieku*. [History of Italian Theatre and Drama from the 13th to the 21st cs.], Vol. 1 (Kraków: Universitas, 2008), p. 355; A.L. Bellina, C. Caruso, “Oltre il barocco: la fondazione dell'Arcadia. Zeno e Metastasio: La riforma del melodramma,” in: *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Vol. 6, ed. E. Malato, Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1998, pp. 242–243.

and about the concepts of *buon gusto* and national identity.⁵² The social and economic crisis which struck many regions of Italy, most of which still maintained virtually feudal systems of government, only confirmed the need for change. Just as today's real world conflicts often generate a cultural taste for escapism, which brings a momentary respite from the harsh reality, so the crisis which threatened Italy at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also brought about a evident need for cultural change, coupled with a desire to relive the achievements of the past, and with a nostalgia for the idyllic atmosphere and innocence of the imaginary Arcadia. The members of the Academy believed that this turn towards the past could help restore the lost literary splendour of Italian culture, which would be the best way the recover the country's supremacy in European literature and culture.

Examining the reasons behind the crisis of the national literature, Ludovico Antonio Muratori stated that Italy's fall from literary grace was not due to external factors – such as civil wars, an invasion of barbarians, a plague or even the shortcomings of the educational system – but had a more insidious cause. In his opinion, “Italy has somehow lost her way, wandering from the path of virtue, beguiled by sloth, her best minds poisoned by the baroque monster.”⁵³ Other Arcadians, however, had rival theories as to the cause of the crisis: some of them pointed out to the influence of the poetry of Giambattista Marini, or to the activities of Jesuits, who were seen as the driving force behind implementing the Counter-Reformation's cultural pushback, which was based on the simple principle of excess in all spheres of Church influence; for example, architecture, art, ceremonial, rhetoric and allegory. As a reaction against this situation, Gravina's supporters postulated a return to the study of the giants of the literary Antiquity, such as Homer, Horace, Apuleius, Virgil and Ovid, and the followers of Gravina's opponent Crescimbeni in turn advocated using the early Italian models of Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Angelo di Costanza. There was a desire to underscore the Arcadian rationalism by emphasising the necessary balance between nature and reason, imagination and intellect, poetic license and probability.⁵⁴ For many Arcadians, the sonnet became the ideal form, but they were no longer satisfied with the form which it took in the seventeenth century. Whereas the Baroque sonnets relied on startling metaphors and juxtapositions, and on a surprising turn (*volta*) in the final tercet, the modern sonnets penned by the Arcadians were

52 V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque*. . . , p. 39.

53 Qtd. after V.H. Minor, *The Death of the Baroque*. . . , p. 39.

54 L. Barroero, S. Susinno, “Arcadian Rome. . .,” p. 47.

much more balanced and no longer focused on the brilliant final twist. They also tended to favour narrative over juxtapositions and conflicts.⁵⁵ Muratori and Gravina also advocated focusing on what, to them, was the most important task of literature: educating the readers about the matters of morality and history using models and examples taken from antiquity. They put particular emphasis on portraying ancient heroes and myths in an appropriately lofty language. They saw it as their mission to highlight Italy's special role in European literature and to strengthen the sense of national pride. To this end, they published new editions of the classics (both in Italian and in Latin).⁵⁶

Since the Academy was on the rise, both in terms of membership and of its growing prestige, its influence over other branches of the art also increased. From 1702, the Arcadians were actively involved in the celebrations organised by the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca on the Capitol Hill. During those events, members of the Academy gave orations and recited poems eulogising the fine arts and praising the beauty of the ancient ruins and of other important Roman sights. For example, during the first such ceremony dedicated to Pope Clement XI, the audience listened to a speech delivered by the lawyer Giovanbattista Zappi, who argued that “republics find favouring the fine arts both useful and necessary”⁵⁷ and claimed that “the ultimate glory of a ruler comes from offering protection and rewards to artists.”⁵⁸ In the subsequent years, even the very titles of the orations, such as *Roma tutrice delle belle arti* or *Il trionfo della fede*, gave a good indication of the main preoccupations of the Arcadians and their circle. They proclaimed that Rome was the most important source of artistic inspiration, as well as the natural capital of European art and the centre of the Christian world. As a logical consequence, the Arcadians encouraged sculptors and architects to look for inspirations in the world of pastoral allegory. Their insistence on the cultural importance of the city of Rome also translated into the encouragement of landscape (or, to be more precise, cityscape) painting.

55 A.L. Bellina, C. Caruso, “Oltre il barocco. . .,” p. 263.

56 A.L. Bellina, C. Caruso, “Oltre il barocco. . .,” p. 241.

57 “Onde fù ascoltato l'Avvocato Giovanbattista Zappi nostro Accademico di Onore, il quale coll'acute vivezze del suo gran spirito provò in un erudito Discorso l'accennata utilità, e necessità, che anno le Republiche di sempre favorire le belle Arti, e che la somma gloria de' Regnanti si ravvolge particolarmente sopra la protezione, ed il Premio de' Virtuosi,” in: G. Ghezzi, *Le Pompe Dell'Accademia del Disegno solennemente celebrate nel Campidoglio il dì 25. Febbraro MDCCII* (Roma: Gio[vanni] Francesco Buagni, 1702), pp. 15–16.

58 G. Ghezzi, *Le Pompe Dell'Accademia del Disegno. . .*, p. 16.

Additionally, they supported all plans and initiatives whose aim it was to re-connect with the city's past, such as for example the renovation of the early Christian basilicas. Furthermore, they urged to leave behind the Baroque ideals of violence and excess in favour of a more balanced poetics, and thus became the first proponents of neo-Classicism, which subsequently became the dominant tendency in European art in the second half of the eighteenth century. In fact, some art historians of the period claim that the first half of the eighteenth century in Rome deserves to be called Arcadian Classicism.⁵⁹

Were Arcadians able completely to overhaul Roman and, by extension, Italian art? The answer is probably not, even though the lively polemic with the French writers and the creation of the Arcadian Academy influenced the cultural climate of the period and directed the artistic energy towards rediscovering and cultivating the ancient heritage and towards simplifying the literary language in pursuit of the ideals of simplicity and good taste. Additionally, under their influence history understood as a narrative of great heroes and noble deeds became an important inspiration for the music theatre. However, their attempts to foster a revival of Italian drama which would equal the achievements of the French masters – especially those of Racine, Molière, and Quinault – manifestly failed. The moment did not yet come for Italian drama to be born. All the above-mentioned cultural initiatives, however, gave rise to a new cultural climate inspired by the ideals of neo-Classicism and the Enlightenment. It is also fair to say that the ideas of Italian unity promoted by the Arcadian shepherds were ahead of their day and anticipated any sort of political action by many decades.

Arcadians' Views on Music

"In terms of poetic quality and tragedy, modern *drammi* are absolute monsters," opined Ludovico Antonio Muratori.⁶⁰ The famous humanist seems, however, to have been quite isolated in his harsh criticism of the musical theatre of his day. Most Italian polymaths and reformers of the theatre, even when they admitted that the Italian theatre has not yet risen to its full potential, at the same time confessed that personally they were not immune to its charms. Nearly all of

59 L. Barroero, S. Susinno, "Arcadian Rome. . .," p. 47.

60 "I moderni Drammi, considerati in genere di Poesia rappresentativa, e di Tragedia, sono un mostro, e un'unione di mille inverisimili," L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana, spiegata e dimostrata con varie osservazioni* (Venezia: Coleti, 1724), p. 45; 1st ed. Modena 1706; also published in *Opere del Muratori*, (Venezia: Presso Antonio Curti Q. Giacomo, 1790).

Europe also succumbed to its power. The opera, first and foremost the Italian one, became the shared passion of most European monarchs who became patrons of new opera productions, and of the ordinary people who hummed fashionable arias for their pleasure. In large cities such as Venice, Rome, and Naples operas were staged both for the social elite in private aristocratic residences and in public theatres; in smaller towns – usually in aristocratic residences. Diaries and correspondence from the period testify to the extraordinary popularity of the opera as a form of entertainment, which can be seen for example in this anonymous letter sent from Venice in 1697, whose author claimed that “Indeed, today musical operas are so popular in every corner of Italy that not only in big cities but even in small towns they are constantly being sung.”⁶¹ Even if *letterati* such as Muratori sneered at the absurdities of their plots, the violation of the ancient models such as the three unities, or the negative social impact (an often voiced criticism was that the open manifestation of emotions in the opera may render men in the audience effeminate), these voices were very much in the minority, and they had no traction among the vast crowds of opera lovers who queued in front of music theatres.

Even though their arguments seemed to be falling on deaf ears, the Arcadians at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries showed a lot of determination and perseverance in their attempts to improve the art of the opera. The direct stimulus probably came from the aforementioned critique of Italian culture found in the publications of French intellectuals, which wounded their national pride, since those authors demeaned the achievements of Italian and Latin literature, as well as the ancient Roman contributions to the development of drama. The dearth of modern drama in Italy, pointed out by the French critics, was also a point of pride, especially because French literature of the day could glory in the achievements of Pierre and Thomas Corneille, Antoine Houdar de la Motte, Jean-Baptiste Racine, Molière, and others. Attempts to reinvigorate the Italian theatrical tradition were at first focused on translations and adaptations of French plays, which no doubt was a bitter pill to swallow. Discussions concerning the future directions and forms of national drama expanded in scope so as to include also musical theatre and *drammi per musica*, even though the latter did not receive the same amount of harsh criticism as non-musical theatre. Apart from a few minority opinions accusing the opera of debasing the dramatic art

61 Qtd. after H.S. Saunders Jr., *The Repertoire of a Venetian Opera House (1678–1714): The Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Harvard: Harvard University, 1985), p. 368.

and spoiling the public taste,⁶² it was generally accepted that *dramma per musica* was a separate and distinct genre – governed by its own conventions – whose explicitly stated goal was to give the viewers sensual pleasure.

Blame for the disastrous state of national theatre, and therefore for spoiling the taste of the Italian audience, was placed on a variety of influences and phenomena. Some critics indulged in criticising individual writers and artists, who they felt were the most responsible. The historian Robert Freeman mentioned some of the usual suspects:

Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni blamed the degeneracy of Italian libretti during the second half of the seventeenth century on a vogue initiated by the Venice production of Cicognini's *Giasone* in 1649, while others blamed everything from the Spanish romances which had preceded Cicognini to the excessive restrictions of the commentators on Aristotle's *Poetics* and the empty characterizations of Tasso and Guarini; everything from the bombastic style of Giambattista Marino and the introduction of dialects into Italian comedy to the rapid development of Italian scenography, the corruptibility of singers, the cupidity of impresarios, the stupidity of the public, and the unnatural influence of foreign courts.⁶³

Since its establishment in 1690 one of the goals of the Arcadian Academy and of its local branches was to revive the dramatic art in Italy and to restore *buon gusto* both in non-musical theatre and in *drammi per musica*. Unfortunately, not many Arcadians decided to comprehensively and in writing present their views on *drama per musica* or *melodrama*; not to mention other less popular musical genres. This was due to the fact that reforming the musical theatre ranked relatively low on their list of concerns, as they remained committed to their main mission of rescuing literature. The few treatises on the opera tend to present a somewhat bleak view of the subject.

One of the notable exceptions was Crescimbeni, who in a treatise written in the fashionable dialogue form and titled *La Bellezza della volgar poesia spiegata in Otto Dialoghi* (1700) included a short history of the musical drama, which can be found in the concluding section of the fifth chapter. Crescimbeni begins by noting the achievements of the poet and librettist Ottavio Rinuccini, who in his

62 In his essay accompanying the libretto of *L'Epulone*, published in 1675, F.F. Frugoni pointed out that libretti from that period contain many preposterous plot developments and twists which testified to the bad taste of their creators and of opera audiences; cf. R. Freeman, *Opera without Drama, Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675 to 1725, and the Roles Played therein by Zeno, Caldara, and Others*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University 1967, p. 4.

63 R. Freeman, *Opera without Drama*. . . , pp. 1–2.

favole pastorali was inspired by ancient Greek and Latin sources. He stressed that although Rinuccini had numerous followers, none of them lived up to his own standards, which was partly due to the gradual decrease in the quality of acting (*arte istrionica*). Crescimbeni then moves on to praise – perhaps a little surprisingly – Giacinto Andrea Cicognini as Rinuccini's rightful successor, singling out his *Giasone* for special appreciation, and noting that in his opinion it was “to say the least, the first and most perfect drama,”⁶⁴ However, Crescimbeni also criticises Cicognini for combining comic and tragic elements in one work, and for an excessively large cast of characters coming from different social classes and speaking in different registers. Cicognini's success meant that later writers tended to imitate his style which, according to Crescimbeni, led to a fashion for breaking the rules of poetics. In conclusion, Crescimbeni expresses an opinion that “it seems that now Italy is beginning to open its eyes and realise that abandoning the ancient ways has not brought it any benefits.”⁶⁵ The President of the Academy furthermore concedes that, while art in Italy had not yet been completely renewed, *drammi* had improved in quality and their style had become altogether more lofty, as they were now free of buffoonery that had marred them earlier. He recognised the achievements of Domenico David and Apostolo Zeno, as well as of other Roman poets, although he also confessed that personally he could not find much pleasure in listening to operas.⁶⁶

Other critics who published their opinions on the opera, such as Ludovico Antonio Muratori, focused their objections against the genre primarily on one aspect, which was the breaking of the rules of probability. In the fourth chapter of *Della perfetta poesia italiana* (1708) Muratori offered a typology of ignorance arguing that “it can be rooted in nature, in insufficient study, or in the bad taste of the times.”⁶⁷ Muratori called the latter kind “forced ignorance” (*ignoranza sforzata*) and explained that it was caused by the writer's desire to satisfy the needs of others and to adhere to the literary fashion of the time. He blamed the falling standards of Italian dramatic poetry on such ignorance.⁶⁸ Muratori also

64 “Il quale per vero dire è il primo, e il più perfetto Dramma,” in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *La Bellezza*. . . , p. 140.

65 “Pare oggimai, che l'Italia incominci ad aprir gli occhi, e a conoscere il poco utile, che le proviene dall'aver tralasciata l'antica strada,” in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *La Bellezza*. . . , p. 141.

66 “Ma confesso con libertà, che non poco godò nell'ascoltargli,” G.M. Crescimbeni, *La Bellezza*. . . , p. 141.

67 “Altra nasce dalla Natura, altra dal poco Studio, ed altra finalmente dal pessimo Gusto de'tempi,” in: L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta*. . . , p. 24.

68 L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta*. . . , p. 27.

objected to the fanciful plots of *drammi per musica*, which broke with the established traditions of ancient drama and failed to fulfil its time-honoured goal, which was “to move and purify the emotions of the audience”⁶⁹ and to provide *catharsis*. According to Muratori, the opera was overly subordinated to music and reliant on the requirements and capacities of singers and impresarios, and on the tastes of the wide, unrefined audience. His main objection, however, was that it was an art form devoid of truth, which belied naturalness and probability, because in an opera the words are sung and not spoken; the latter being a nobler form, according to Muratori. Just as the prolific French literary critic Charles de Saint-Evremond had done a few years earlier, Muratori mocked as unnatural the convention wherein the characters sing all the time:

Is there a more ridiculous thing than watching two people engage in a singing duel? Or when they are preparing for death or expressing their fury at a fresh insult with a calm and melodious *arietta*? One cannot fail but be amused at a situation when a hero reprises again and again their *canzonetta*, when the sheer common sense would require them to rush instead of instead of pointlessly trilling.⁷⁰

Muratori adds to this scathing criticism the more general observation that excessive reliance on music and the preference for soprano parts made operas effeminate and overly sentimental. Their only goal was to be pleasing to the eye and ear, and thus they completely disregarded the noble roots of drama and its original mission of providing *catharsis*. Thus, according to Muratori, music theatre betrayed its origins and neglected its educational function. Additionally, as can be inferred from the passage above, he maintained that the convention of singing undermined the credibility of the action. Muratori’s negative assessment of the role of music in the opera led him to turn his attention to the use of music in ancient drama. He pondered whether the dialogues in Greek tragedies were also sung, or singing was limited to the part of the chorus. He mourned the fact that the contemporary Italian music theatre was far removed from the dignity and solemnity which he attributed to ancient music. He proposed that if the music theatre was to survive and flourish as an art form, then it should be more closely

⁶⁹ L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta*. . . , p. 41.

⁷⁰ “Ma che più ridicola cosa ci è di quel mirar due persone, che fanno un duello cantando? Che si preparano alla morte, o piangono qualche fiera disgrazia con una soave, e tranquillissima Arietta? Che si fermano tanto tempo a replicar la Musica, e le parole d’una di queste Canzonette, allorchè il soggetto porta necessità di partirsi in fretta, e di non perdere tempo in ciarle?” in: L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta*. . . , p. 40.

modelled on ancient sources and it should strive for more seriousness. On the whole, however, he believed that it would be best if it were cast into oblivion.

Another literary critic who saw it as his mission to reform the opera was Gian Vincenzo Gravina, a staunch admirer and promoter of the classics. Based on his study of Aristotle, Gravina argued that music must have been present in all genres of ancient drama, and therefore should not be eliminated or disregarded if modern drama was supposed to be faithful to its ancient sources.⁷¹ Unlike Muratori, he claimed that all mimetic arts were interrelated and thus, a crisis of poetry also brought about falling standards in music.⁷² Both should therefore be reformed in order to improve the overall quality of art.

The most in-depth analysis of the contemporary musical theatre came from Pier Jacopo Martello, a poet and playwright based in Bologna and the author of several opera libretti. In the fifth part of his book *L'Impostore: Dialogo sopra la tragedia antica e moderna*, published in Paris in 1714 (a revised edition, titled *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, came out in Rome 1715), Martello described the contemporary *drammi per musica*, admitting that – with some exceptions – they were written by mediocre poets who yielded to the demands and directives of the composer, the singers, the set designers, the makers of stage machinery, set painters, and impresarios.⁷³ Martello's ironic observations and his tongue-in-cheek advice for writers – called by him *verseggiatori*, which means “versifiers” – prefigured Benedetto Marcello's influential satire *Il teatro alla moda* (Venice 1720). In contrast to other theorists from the period, Martello saw *drammi per musica* as a distinct type of drama, separate from tragedy and comedy, and possessing its own rules and conventions. The fact that in music drama the text was subordinated to the music, which became a key point of criticism in the writings of other theorists, was to Marcello the defining feature of this genre. Martello was able to see the common faults of the *drammi*, such as improbable and even ridiculous plot developments, but to him they did not constitute a reason for dismissing the opera completely as an art form. On the contrary, he stressed that the music endows *drammi per musica* with a special power which is absent from non-musical theatre, and he saw the potential of the *drammi* in moral education.

71 G.V. Gravina, “Della tragedia,” in: *Scritti critici e teoretici*. . . , p. 557.

72 G.V. Gravina, “Della tragedia,” p. 556.

73 P.J. Martello, *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, in: *Scritti critici e satirici*, ed. H. S. Noce (Bari: Laterza, 1963), p. 279.

All in all, despite the fact that it was literature rather than music that constituted the focus of interest for the Academy, the Arcadians made quite a substantial contribution to reforming the eighteenth-century opera. In their theoretical works, they pointed to the most important faults of the genre and made suggestions for improvements, which could then be acted on by opera practitioners.

Reforming the Operatic Libretti

According to the opera historian Piero Weiss, the process of reforming the libretti, which was inspired by the writings of the Arcadians, can be divided into two trends.⁷⁴ In the first one, pastoral drama was held up as a model for the libretti. It was a literary mode that was very close to the hearts of the Arcadians, and the pastoral drama specifically still enjoyed popularity in Italy, where it had had a long and proud tradition, dating back at least to the publication of Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (1590). This subgenre of drama emerged during the Renaissance and was (in terms of theme and form) a hybrid, inspired by varied sources, from ancient pastoral verse (predominantly Virgil's *Eclogues*) to medieval romances and lyrical poetry, to courtly entertainments, pageants, and plebeian farces.⁷⁵

Pastoral drama relied on the fantastical and the fanciful. The use of such themes seemed to justify the presence of music and so made the transition to the music theatre quite natural. In fact, music was a crucial element of the genre, enhancing the effects of wonder and otherworldliness, which were also reinforced by stage design and machinery, creating elaborate special effects.⁷⁶ This first period in the development of the libretti was the domain of Rome-based writers and can be linked to the preferences and influence of two personages already mentioned above: Queen Cristina of Sweden and Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni.⁷⁷ According to Crescimbeni, the first sign that good taste was returning to Italy was the libretto of *L'amore eroico tra pastori*, authored by Ottoboni in 1696. In the words of the

74 P. Weiss, "Teorie drammatiche e "infranciosamento": motivi della "riforma" melodrammatica nel primo Settecento," in: *Antonio Vivaldi. Teatro musicale cultura e società*, eds. L. Bianconi, G. Morelli (Firenze: Olschki 1982), p. 286.

75 L. Sampson, *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy. The Making of a New Genre* (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Routledge), 2006, p. 2.

76 P. Weiss, *Teorie drammatiche*. . . , p. 289.

77 M.G. Accorsi, "Il teatro nella prima Arcadia," in: M.G. Accorsi, *Pastori e teatro. Poesia e critica in Arcadia* (Modena: Mucchi, 1999), p. 40.

venerable first President of the Academy, “[Ottoboni] was the first to reinstate the ancient principles by introducing the chorus and several other elements of good comedy.”⁷⁸ Crescimbeni’s influential treatise where this quotation can be found, *La bellezza della volgar poesia*, was actually dedicated to Ottoboni, which can be interpreted as proof of utmost respect. Another libretto, which was praised even more highly than Ottoboni’s, was Alessandro Guidi’s *Endimione* of 1691. Due to Queen Cristina’s death in the same year, the music for the opera was somewhat underdeveloped, but the libretto itself received high praise from Crescimbeni for its “perfect mixture of pastoral simplicity with refinement and sophistication of both ideas and style.”⁷⁹ Highly appreciative of the literary quality of the opera, Gravina wrote an essay entitled *Discorso sopra l’Endimione*, which accompanied the printed version of the libretto. Apart from Guidi, Crescimbeni also praised other poets: Silvio Stampiglia, Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, Giacomo Sinibaldi, Pietro Antonio Bernardoni, Carlo Sigismondo Capece, and Girolamo Gigli.⁸⁰ The list of the most important works representing the pastoral trend also includes *La fida ninfa* written by Scipione Maffei (1694), Eustachio Manfredi’s *Dafni* (1696), as well as three libretti by Apostolo Zeno: *Gl’inganni felici* (1695), *Il Tirsi* (1696), and *Il Narciso* (1697).

The second trend in the development of the libretto developed almost simultaneously with the first but differed from it in its source of inspiration. Writers working within this current preferred to base their works on historical inspirations taken from the times of the Antiquity or (more seldom) the Middle Ages rather than on the pastoral tradition. This history-inspired trend increasingly relied on French drama as a source, and appropriated the subject matter of contemporary French tragedies, adjusting it to the affordances of the opera genre. The practice of publishing Italian translations of new French plays was inaugurated in the 1680s in Bologna, Rome and Modena. After 1730, Venice became the uncontested centre for this type of publishing activity.⁸¹ The main

78 “Il quale è stato il primo, che abbia ripigliate le antiche regole, introducendo in essa i Cori, e varie alter appartenenze della buona Comica,” in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *La bellezza. . .*, p. 141.

79 Qtd. after B. Forment, “Moonlight on Endymion: In Search of ‘Arcadian Opera,’ 1688–1721,” *Journal of the Seventeenth-Century Music* 2008, No. 1, 18th March 2020 <https://sscm-jscm.org/v14/no1/forment.html>.

80 G.M. Crescimbeni, *La bellezza. . .*, p. 141.

81 Even though Italian translations of Corneille’s plays had occasionally been published in the previous decades (e.g. *Le Cid* in 1647, *Rodogune* in 1651), the true fashion for French plays in Italy did not start until the turn of the centuries. Cf. N. Mangini, “Sul teatro tragico francese in Italia nel secolo XVIII,” *Convivium* 1964, No. 1; S. Ingegno

buyers of the translations were Jesuit colleges and academies, as well as artistically minded wealthy individuals who staged the plays as amateur theatricals in their salons. In Rome, Italian translations of French plays were most often staged at the Collegio Clementino, especially in the years 1693–1710. The plays produced at that venue were based on translations by Filippo Morelli, which were published in sumptuously decorated volumes by the Chracas printing house.⁸²

Translations of tragedies by Corneille and Racine were usually designated on the title page with the phrase “opera accomodata per le scene all’uso d’Italia” (that is, “opera adopted for the stage in accordance with the Italian taste”).⁸³ The most frequent alterations included reducing the original five-act structure to three acts, introducing new subplots, converting long monologues into dialogues, bowdlerising the most extreme situations and emotions, and above all, tweaking the plot of the final act in such a way as to provide the obligatory happy ending, called *lieto fine*.⁸⁴ In non-musical productions, where the translated text was recited by the actors, the form was typically changed from the rhymed verse of the French original to prose. These spoken productions also included some musical elements such as *balli* and *intermezzi*, which were incorporated into the intervals between acts, thus creating a new type of production, poised mid-way between the French tragedy and the Italian *melodramma*. Additionally, the operatic *drammi* often had different titles from the original French plays, and their style was brought closer to that of original Italian libretti. One of the pioneers of this strand in libretto production was Apostolo Zeno, who, after writing *Feramondo* in 1699, abandoned the pastoral sources and moved to material inspired by the French drama and to strictly historical subjects.

The first example of adapting a French play into an opera libretto in Rome was a *dramma per musica* entitled *La Clemenza d’Augusto*, written by Carlo Sigismondo Capece and based on Corneille’s tragedy *Cinna*, whose premiere was held in 1697 at the Teatro Tor di Nona with music by Saverio de Luca, Carl Francesco Pollarolo, and Giovanni Bononcini.⁸⁵ *La Clemenza d’Augusto* was something of

Guidi, “Per la storia del teatro francese in Italia: L.A. Muratori, G.G. Orsi e P.J. Martello,” *La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana* 1974, No. 1; M. Bucciarelli, “French Tragedy in the Italian Manner: Spoken Translations and Musical Adaptations,” in: M. Bucciarelli, *Italian Opera and European Theatre, 1680–1720. Plots, Performers, Dramaturgies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

82 M. Bucciarelli, “French Tragedy. . .,” p. 106.

83 N. Mangini, “Sul teatro tragico. . .,” p. 347.

84 N. Mangini, “Sul teatro tragico. . .,” p. 348.

85 M. Bucciarelli, “French Tragedy. . .,” pp. 111–112.

an outlier, as the next spate of operas based on historical libretti did not appear in Rome until 1710. They were staged mostly at Cardinal Ottoboni's Palazzo della Cancelleria and at the city's only public theatre, the Teatro Capranica. The first production in the series of operas on historical subjects based on French plays staged around that time was *Constantino Pio* (1710), with a libretto by Ottoboni and music by Carlo Francesco Pollarola. It was followed by: *L'Anagilda* (1711), with a libretto by Girolamo Gigli and music by Antonio Caldara, staged at the residence of Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli; *Teodosio il Giovane* (1711), again with a libretto by Ottoboni and with music by Filippo Amadei, staged at the Palazzo della Cancelleria; *L'Engelbert on sia la forza dell'innocenza* (1711), with a libretto written by Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Pariati and music composed probably by Antonio Orefice and Francesco Mancini (revised for the Roman production by Giuseppe Maria Orlandini), which was performed at the Teatro Capranica. In the subsequent years, many more *drammi* of this type were staged: *Il Ciro* (1712), with a libretto by Piero Ottoboni and music by Alessandro Scarlatti; *L'Eraclio* (1712), with a libretto by Pietro Antonio Bernardoni and music by various composers; *Publio Cornelio Scipione* (1713), with a libretto by Agostino Piovene and music by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo; *Ifigenia in Aulide* (1713) and *Ifigenia in Tauri* (1713), with libretti by Capece and music by Domenico Scarlatti; *Tito e Berenice* (1714), again with a libretto by Capece and music by Antonio Caldara; *Lucio Papirio* (1714), with a libretto by Antonio Salvi and music by Francesco Gasparini. During that decade, Zeno's libretti became more and more frequently used on Roman stages; examples include *Amblecto* (1715), written in collaboration with Pietro Pariati and with music by Domenico Scarlatti, and *Vincislao* (1716), with music by Francesco Gasparini.

Zeno's abandonment of pastoral subjects and his turn towards history, which occurred in 1699, could have been perceived by the Arcadians as a betrayal of their ideals. To make matters worse, his success opened the way for many imitators, which meant that the pastoral model of the opera, championed by the Arcadians, became increasingly unpopular and fell out of fashion. The historical libretto emerged as the dominant model in the battle over the shape of the opera in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Serenatas, Cantatas and Oratorios

The writings of Arcadians do not contain any discussions of such musical genres as the cantata, the serenata, and the oratorio, which is understandable given the fact that the academics had little interest in strictly musical matters. It should also be noted that especially the former two genres were relatively heterogeneous

and that their definitions from the period are vague and ambiguous. While there are some scarce mentions of serenatas and cantatas in the works of the Arcadians, these too are far from definitive. For example, Crescimbeni seemed to suggest that the difference between serenatas and cantatas lay not in their intrinsic qualities but in the different time and place of performance: “currently those cantatas, which are performed publicly and at night, are called serenatas; we have listened to many of them, produced with great opulence and refinement by ambassadors, princes, and other personages of this magnificent court [that is, Rome].”⁸⁶ Regrettably, Crescimbeni does not elaborate on the differences between the two genres, either in this passage or anywhere else in his oeuvre. In my research, I have not come across any comments of the genres of occasional music in the writings of other Arcadians. This omission confirms that music did not occupy a high place on their list of priorities, even though some more general casual remarks seem to suggest that they perceived Italian music and its creators as a source of national pride. For instance, Martello argued that music is no less crucial for the national good than philosophy and poetry,⁸⁷ and explained: “only music ... has the power of separating the human soul from all its cares, at least for the time when the notes are heard, and when the harmony of voices and instruments is artificially imposed.”⁸⁸ It seems, however, that Martello was the only member of the Academy who attributed such a high importance to music. His opinions are in contrast with those expressed publicly and in writing by other Arcadians. It may nevertheless be assumed that Martello’s opinions would be privately shared by some of his colleagues, who were mindful of the pleasure that music gave them when they listened to it in opera theatres, churches, and other public and private spaces.

86 “Ora si fatte cantate, quando si mettono al Pubblico, sogliono farsi di notte tempo, e di dicono Serenate; e molte ne abbiamo ascoltate, che sono fatte con somma magnificenza, e splendore da gli Ambasciatori, e da altri Principi, e personaggi di questa gran Corte,” G.M. Crescimbeni, *Commentari del Canonico Gio. Mario Crescimbeni custode d’Arcadia interno Alla sua Istoria della volgar poesia*, Vol. I (Roma: Antonio de’ Rossi, 1702), p. 241.

87 P.J. Martello, “Della tragedia. . .,” pp. 295–296.

88 P.J. Martello, “Della tragedia. . .,” p. 296.

IV Marie Casimire Sobieska's Capabilities for Financing Art

Clientelism was the fundamental principle that shaped numerous interpersonal relations in modern Europe, including art patronage. The clientelistic relationship involves the presence of two parties, a patron and a client. Their mutual relation has been defined in various ways. For instance, the German historian Wolfgang Reinhard described it as a “relatively stable relationship between persons of unequal status, in which the more powerful partner ensures protection to the weaker party and may require some services in return.”¹ This definition has been extended so as to incorporate artistic patronage, as recently summed up by Roger Freitas in his text on the castrato-diplomat Atto Melani, where he says that what the patron guaranteed to the dependent partner was not so much physical safety as a wide spectrum of privileges, and that clientelistic relationships are part of a philosophy that exceeds the officially accepted social morality.²

Marie Casimire's clients in Rome were members of her court, including officials, courtiers, ladies-in-waiting, servants, and artists. The privileges that lie at the foundation of the clientelistic relationship took different forms: remuneration, provisions such as accommodation and boarding, payment of tuition for foreign studies, creating the possibility for works to be printed, as well as being introduced to some social circles.³ In the case of artists associated with the court of Marie Casimire, they were also permitted to use a title that confirmed their connection with the patron. In this chapter I will focus on a key element which defines and establishes the patron's position, namely, on his or her financial status. Without appropriate financing, Marie Casimire's stay in Rome and her position in the Roman society would have been impossible, though, importantly, a patron's position and influence did not depend exclusively on financial reserves.

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- 1 Qtd. after A. Mączak, *Klientela. Nieformalne systemy władzy w Polsce i Europie XVI-XVII wieku* [*Clientele. Informal Power Systems in 16th- and 17th-Century Poland and Europe*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2000), p. 10.
 - 2 R. Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato. Politics, Patronage, and Music in the Life of Atto Melani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 16.
 - 3 A.K. Guzek, “Mecenat” [“Patronage”], in: *Słownik literatury polskiego oświecenia* [*Dictionary of Polish Literature in the Age of the Enlightenment*], ed. T. Kostkiewiczowa (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1977), p. 335.

Towards the end of his reign King John III owned considerable property, which comprised estates in the Lublin region, the Red Ruthenia, and Podolia, including his beloved Żółkiew (now Zhovkva, Ukraine), as well as Jaworów (now Yavoriv), Złoczów (now Zolochiv), Pomorzany (now Pomoryany, all in Ukraine), and the estate in Wilanów near Warsaw. As a king, he also had at his disposal the income from numerous starosties, salt mines, and woods, and received a large proportion of the spoils of war. Following John III's death, therefore, his family inherited substantial property, but unfortunately, as an Italian source emphasised, Marie Casimire's disputes and disagreements with their eldest son, Jakub, led to the family's fortune being considerably diminished ("furono causa della loro mutua ruina"). They also invested large sums in winning supporters for Jakub as a pretender to the throne. Fortunately the conflict, which affected the Sobieski family's reputation, had ended before Marie left for Rome, and an agreement made the final division of the property possible, with Wilanów falling to Aleksander and Konstany, Jarosław to Aleksander, Żółkiew to Konstany, while Jakub – apart from Oława (Ohlau), which was his wife's dowry – inherited his father's money and many valuables. The dowager queen took over the greatest part of the property, however (though we do not know what exact percentage). Michał Komarzyński reports that while in Rome Sobieska drew profits from interest on sums deposited in Paris⁴ at the instigation of Melchior de Polignac, French ambassador to Poland, after Jakub had sealed the royal treasury and tried to seize all its contents for himself and his brothers. After Marie Casimire's arrival in Rome, the Parisian bank Maison de Ville provided her with substantial funds. Komarzyński also points to income from Poland, mostly from the Tarnopol estate (now Ternopil, Ukraine), which belonged to the queen⁵ and was administered on her behalf by Elżbieta Sieniawska. But unfortunately for the queen the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, badly affected by the Great Northern War, could hardly fulfil the agreements and obligations that it had taken on in relation to John III's widow. Income from starosties and salt mines was delivered with delays if at all. The value of the queen's property in the Commonwealth was dwindling, and France, engaged in the War of the Spanish Succession attempted – fortunately without success – to impose an extra tax on the sums deposited by the Queen in Paris. Also Holland owed large sums to Marie Casimire ("solo scudi

4 M. Komarzyński, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski 1641–1716* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), p. 230.

5 M. Komarzyński, *Maria Kazimiera*. . . , p. 230.



Illustration 13. Portrait of the family of king John III, 1693, B. Farjat after the picture by H. Gascar. The National Library of Poland.

duemila⁹⁶) for grain once dispatched to France. It is not certain whether the annual rent of 30,000 scudi which the Zamoyski family was obliged to provide Sobieska with actually reached her in Rome.⁷ In this situation, the lavish and costly lifestyle that she led in Rome, periodically also joined there by her sons, forced her to run up a debt in the Banco di Santo Spirito.⁸ The queen also had to use the ready money that she had not invested and sell off the valuables that she had brought with her from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which were priced much below their actual value.

The earliest information concerning the queen's financial troubles comes from 1704, when Francesco Valesio reported that due to unrest in the

6 G.B. Scarlatti, *Relazione sopra lo stato della Regina di Polonia a Monsignor Reichard (13 aprile 1706)*, I-Rli, shelf mark 35.D.10, p. 396.

7 G.B. Scarlatti, *Relazione*. . . , p. 388.

8 G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra sei e settecento (1699–1715)* (Roma: Vecchiarelli editore, 1990), p. 153.

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth she did not receive the due income and therefore stopped paying salaries to her noblemen, who nevertheless continue to serve her without payment.⁹ Similar information can be found in a dispatch of October 1704, which informs that the queen dismissed ten courtiers, who in spite of this decided to serve her in return for patronage only (“senza alcun interesse che quello del suo patrocinio”).¹⁰ It seems, however, that these decisions were a purely rhetorical gesture which did not affect the structure of her court in any way, or at least proved ineffective as far as the financial situation of her entourage was concerned. The gesture was important inasmuch as it constituted a kind of appeal from Sobieska to her debtors who put her – the widow of a great military leader – in a particularly uncomfortable situation.

In the beginnings of her stay in Rome, the maintenance of a court consisting of significantly more than 200 persons cost Marie Casimire 6,000 scudi annually.¹¹ Even though after a year's stay she dismissed some of those who had come with her to Rome or sent them back to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, many courtiers still remained in her service. A note printed in *Foglio di Foligno* of 5th May 1705 states that she travelled to Naples – having received the pope's blessing, in accordance with the ceremonial – with “Prince Lubomirski” (actually Lubomirski), her granddaughter, and eighty attendants.¹²

The financial situation of Marie Casimire's court was getting worse. In February 1705 Valesio noted a papal loan of 10,000 scudi, which the pope exempted from the customary 2 % commission.¹³ However, already less than a year later the queen had to sell her valuables: jewellery and silver worth 24,000 scudi, in order to fulfil her basic financial obligations towards *sua familia bassa*,

9 “essendo mancati a questa regina di Polonia gli suoi assegnamenti per le rivoluzioni di quel regno, ha cessato di dare la paga a gli gentiluomini, gli quali nulla di meno continuano a servirla gratis,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, ed. G. Scano (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–1979), Vol. 3, p. 159.

10 Qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski*. . . , p. 151.

11 G.B. Scarlatti, *Relazione*. . . , p. 394.

12 “Domenica N.S. diede Udienza alla Regina di Polonia, che prese congedo dalla Santità Sua per il viaggio di Napoli, alla qual volta parti lunedì alle 18. ore, alloggiata la sera a Velletri dalla Camera, e martedì a Terraccina, facendosi conto, che vi sia giunta questa mattina in compagnia del Principe Lubomirski suo Nipote, e della Principessina con 80. persone di seguito per trovarsi ivi alla nobilissima Festa di San Gennaro,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (5th May 1705).

13 “La regina di Polonia è stata aggraziata da S. Beatitudine di porre al Monte mobili per il valore di 10.000 scudi, da ritraerne tal denaro senza il solito interesse delli 2 per cento.” (5th Febr. 1705), in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 309.

that is, towards her clients.¹⁴ Naturally, Marie Casimire could have improved her finances by adopting a more modest lifestyle and retiring from mainstream social life (“qualche specie di ritiratezza”), but such a solution would have been alien to her personality of a person delighting in the public *decorum* (“questo espediente per contrartio al publico decoro del suo carattere”¹⁵). Such a characterisation of the queen is brilliantly reflected in her own words from a letter to her eldest son: “I would still not be able to stay here without resigning from my court, which would bring me too much shame and which I could never make up my mind to do.”¹⁶

In 1708, Marie Casimire planned to leave Rome for ever since its inhabitants were beginning to lose interest in her person. She also came into new conflicts, this time – with the church hierarchs. She claimed that the Roman air was detrimental to her health. In July 1708 Valesio wrote: “The Polish Queen ordered to put up notices for merchants and other creditors to bring their bills to the congregation at the royal Casino Trinità de’Monti so that they could get satisfied in their claims since the queen has decided to leave Rome.”¹⁷ As we know, she did not leave at that time, but continued to struggle with financial problems. A longer excerpt from a letter to her son, Jakub Sobieski, concerning the challenges she faced, well exemplifies the style in which she would describe her situation:

Payment of life annuities that everyone has at the Hôtel de Ville and on the Parisian salt taxes has been withheld ... I need funds for life and maintenance, and this is aggravated by the excessive exchange rate. Indeed (and Prince Aleksander can be my witness in this) of the forty thousand *écu* of my annuities I lose ten thousand Roman scudi every year on the exchange alone, so that above [?]¹⁸ the sum of forty thousand ... one fourth gets detracted. To live in Rome as I have [so far] I need three thousand a month, which makes 36 thousand Roman scudi a year. Six thousand is [therefore] missing safely to reach the end of the year, not counting some extra expenses for servants, our clothing, all kinds of linen and the like. Indeed, if [only] I received on time all the sums that I should be getting in accordance with the intentions of the king [Louis XIV], who ordered that he absolutely demands that I be getting them and told his intendant that it is his wish that all means be applied to let me receive the money. The minister did not tell the king

14 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 394.

15 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 394.

16 NGAB 695 op. 1/ 331 c. 40v.

17 “Fece questa regina di Polonia affiggere notificazione con la quale fa sapere a’mercanti et altri che hanno crediti con S. Maestà portare gli loro conti alla congregazione nel real casino della Trinità de’Monti, che restaranno sodisfatti, havendo la medesima risoluto patire da Roma.” (30th July 1708), F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 125.

18 Words marked with a question mark are hard to decipher.

that he would not do it, but he did not carry out the orders concerning my payments at all. You know very well how much trouble those ministers have caused us, and I can see that they have the same kind of character all over the world. We do not want to pester the prince all the time, but ministers behave like this less frequently when they see there are complaints about their behaviour. If I could be there on the spot, they would surely show more consideration if they saw me there. But indeed [even] if they paid me the money on time, losing a fourth of my income on the exchange I would still not be able to stay here without resigning from my court, which would bring me too much shame and which I could never make up my mind to do, or I would have to spend all my capital on current maintenance and borrow money, which I do not wish to do. We are here in a country where, while trying to pay interest by selling my jewels [?], I am still unable to get three thousand *écu* [?]. So today is the eighth and I and all my court are getting our food on credit for lack of those funds, though we have been using various stratagems [?] for about six months to obtain a loan of ten thousand Roman scudi from the pope via an ecclesiastical bank, secured against my jewels ... (?) three and five times to the value [of the loan] and paying interest, even until now – this is the lamentable state that I have found myself in. And still I claim that the interest I get from France on that depleted part of the property that falls to me, and which requires my presence [to be paid] has not made me to decide, until this moment, to travel there but only after peace has been established, if only God allows me to live so long. However, the lamentable state of my affairs that I have described to you above does not let me postpone this decision anymore, or else I will be ruined. I wish to leave my property free of any outstanding debts.¹⁹

Since payment of interest had been withheld, the queen had to borrow more and more money, which she certainly did in 1710 and 1713.²⁰ On 1st July 1711 she wrote to her son:

On no occasion would receiving money give me so much joy, and I have never been in such great need before. They only pay me half of my annuities,²¹ of which 28 % is deducted, and this makes the net sums ridiculously small. From Poland I am getting absolutely nothing. None of those who owe me money is willing to pay it back, and so my own debts are growing.²²

The queen was also selling out her jewellery, even if the price she could obtain was lower than expected. This, then, was the financial context in which her theatre had to function. Notably, the sources which describe the *feste* and operatic productions that she held pass over the financial difficulties that accompanied

19 NGAB 695 op.1/ 331, c. 39–41.

20 M. Komarzyński, *Maria Kazimiera*. . . , p. 254.

21 More on the annuities in a letter of 8th Feb. 1709 or 1710, item 331, c. 39, fn.s 21 and 22.

22 NGAB 695 op. 1/ 332 c. 104.

those enterprises. The queen herself must have considered those problems as temporary since in the very same period (1710) she employed Filippo Juvarra as her set designer and commissioned him to design a (presumably costly) *tempietto* which was mostly meant as a stage for occasional music performances.

Since, as I mentioned above, the accounts of the queen's Roman court do not survive to our time, we cannot say what amount of money she assigned for the entertainment staged at her residence. By comparison to data from the courts of other Roman patrons, we can presume, however, that those sums were considerable.

The costs related to maintaining an opera house or holding open-air performances included the following elements: First, the construction of a theatre or conversion of a selected space for the purpose of staging spectacles; illuminating an open-air stage along with the façade of the palace; decorating the square in front of the residence; in the case of Marie Casimire's patronage, this involved adorning the bridge and the *tempietto*. Secondly, the rooms through which guests entered the theatre also needed to be prepared. For instance, we know that for the production of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* those rooms were decorated with tapestries which illustrated the theme and symbolism of the opera. The queen would also highlight the paintings and tapestries representing the Battle of Vienna.²³ She therefore spent considerable sums on the stage sets; that is, design, materials, craftsmen's wages. The librettist, composer and performers of the commissioned piece also needed to get their fees. The instrumentalists received payment for the rehearsals, participation in the premiere and the subsequent spectacles of the given work. Singers were hired for the entire season and expected the patron to cover the costs of their maintenance. For instance, Prince Ruspoli paid 5 scudi for Margherita Durastanti's fortnightly boarding.²⁴ Artists also received expensive presents from their patron; the value of those gifts frequently exceeded the remuneration initially agreed upon through negotiations. In 1711 Antonio Caldara received 99 scudi for his opera *L'Anagilda*; two female singers were paid c. 83 scudi each, while the librettist earned 49.50 scudi.²⁵ Additional costs included repairing and tuning the instruments, copying the parts and the score. For instance, Francesco Lancini, Ruspoli's copyist, received

23 W. Roszkowska, "Mecenat królewicza Aleksandra – Teatr Armonie Calidio (1709–1714) ["Patronage of Prince Alexander – the Theatre of Armonie Calidio (1709–1714)"]", *Sobótka* 1980, No. 2, p. 318.

24 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara. Life and Venetian-Roman Oratorios* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2007), p. 463.

25 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , p. 463.

as much as 19.95 scudi for preparing the score of *L'Anagilda*,²⁶ which was only one of three works staged by the prince in that carnival season. Other expenditure included printing the libretto and invitations. Ruspoli used the services of Antonio de' Rossi, who issued a bill for 65.03 scudi for printing the libretto and thirty two different versions of the invitation to the spectacles of *L'Anagilda*.²⁷ The organiser was also responsible for the guests' safety, the protection of their carriages, as well as the quality and variety of the *rinfreschi* offered.

For instance, compared to the cost of renting the Palazzo Zuccari (Marie Casimire paid 100 scudi a year, as Wanda Roszkowska informs us)²⁸ the cost of staging an operatic work appears to have been very high. Nevertheless, for as long as she resided in Rome the queen never ceased to present operas and occasional pieces.

Staging a serenata was a cheaper enterprise. For instance, Ruspoli had to pay the total sum of 302.85 scudi for the performance of the three-part serenata *Chi s'arma di virtù vince ogni affetto*, of which amount the instrumentalists were only paid 58 scudi.²⁹ Preparing and performing the serenata thus constituted one fifth of the prince's monthly expenditure and amounted to nearly the monthly salaries of the personnel he employed.³⁰

We have no knowledge as to how much the queen spent on the operas, serenatas, improvised comedies, *balli*, chamber and sacred music, as well as the everyday life of her court and on gifts for important Roman personages.³¹ She certainly could not rival Ruspoli (one of the wealthiest Romans) or Cardinal Ottoboni³² in this respect. Be it as it may, life in the Eternal City was costly, and maintaining one's prestige, emphasising one's piety, and obtaining pleasure – to paraphrase Peter Burke's definition of the motives behind artistic

26 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , p. 458.

27 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , p. 460.

28 W. Roszkowska, *Polskie dzieje Palazzo Zuccari* . . . , p. 146.

29 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , pp. 449–450.

30 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* . . . , p. 67.

31 From a note of 10th April 1703, we learn that the queen, in accordance with Roman custom, sent gifts to important personages in Rome, first of all – to the pope. “La regina di Polonia ha hoggi mandato a regalare S. Beatitudine d'un arazzo in cui si vede lavorata a meraviglia con l'ago la testa di s. Giovanni Battista, opera fatta da un cameriere di S. Maestà, huomo singolare in tal lavoro, et il dono fu molto gradito da S. Santità,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma* . . . , Vol. 2, p. 570. In return she also received valuable gifts.

32 It was Ruspoli who lent money to Cardinal Ottoboni.

patronage³³ – all came at a high price, which caused the ruin of many a stately family. Queen Marie Casimire's fifteen-year-long stay in Rome seriously depleted her finances, but also earned her a prominent place in the city's history. Mounting debts eventually forced the queen to leave Rome and set out on her last journey, that to her native France; but rather than visiting the still splendid court of Louis XIV, she ended her days in the derelict castle of Blois.

33 According to Burke artistic patronage was propelled by three factors: piety, prestige and pleasure; cf. P. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 103.

V Marie Casimire's Use of Musical Space in Her Roman Spectacles

The Theatre

The theatre at the Palazzo Zuccari has not survived to our times, nor do we have any drawings or descriptions representing its interior. It is even hard to precisely determine in which part of the queen's residence this theatre may have been located. On Marie Casimire's departure from Rome the Palazzo Zuccari underwent several overhauls which largely altered its original structure.

The majority of information concerning Marie Casimire's theatre – albeit only hypothetical – can be found in Wanda Roszkowska's article.¹ According to her research, the Palazzo Zuccari consisted of three separate parts: Casa Grande in Piazza della Trinità de' Monti; the conjoined Casino with a garden in via Gregoriana; and Villa Torres, comprising several houses in Via Sistina and connected to the main part of the palace via the so-called Arco della Regina.² Wanda Roszkowska proposed two locations where the queen's theatre may once have been: the Casino, which had a pretty though small salon on the first floor (it could have contained stages and boxes for guests) as well as Villa Torres, where the ballroom was situated. Most sources are rather vague about the theatre at the Palazzo Zuccari. Only one note by Francesco Valesio (of 17th December 1708) seems to point to the location at the Casino: "The Queen of Poland initiated the staging of an opera in her exquisite small theatre at the *casino*, where she lives in Trinità de' Monti, or Zuccari."³ It is impossible to establish beyond any doubt whether by the term *casino* the chronicler meant a specific place at

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- 1 W. Roszkowska, "Filippo Juvarra al servizio dei Sobieski," in: *Vita teatrale in Italia e Polonia fra seicento e settecento: atti del VI Convegno di Studi promosso ed organizzato dall'Istituto d'Arte dell' Accademia Polacca delle Scienze e dalla Fondazione Giorgio Cini di Venezia (Varsavia, 14-17 ottobre 1980)*, eds. M. Bristiger, J. Kowalczyk, J. Lipiński (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), pp. 245–290.
 - 2 W. Roszkowska, "Filippo Juvarra. . .," p. 249.
 - 3 "Ha questa Regina di Polonia dato principio alla recita d'un melodramma nel bellissimo e piccolo suo teatro nel casino che ella habita alla Trinità de' Monti, che è quello de'Zuccari," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, ed. G. Scano (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–1979), Vol. 3, p. 203.

the queen's residence, or whether he used a diminutive to emphasise the small dimensions of the Palazzo as a whole. He had used such diminutive forms with reference to the queen's lodgings before, when he referred to the Palazzo Zuccari as a *palazzino*.⁴ True enough, in comparison with the residences of other Roman aristocrats such as Cardinal Ottoboni the property used by Marie Casimire and her court was small.

The term *Casino* can also be found in a dispatch (*avviso*) sent from Rome after the premiere of *Tolomeo et Alessandro*: "On Monday evening the Queen of Poland initiated at the *Casino* in Trinità de Monti the production of an opera which features female singers and good instrumentalists. [The work] is universally applauded as better than any other."⁵ This suggests that the venue could be the salon at the Casino as described by Roszkowska.

In one of the queen's letters (to her eldest son Jakub Sobieski, of 17th January 1711), I found a clue that has proved a kind of sensation. Marie Casimire wrote:

My dear son, let me inform you that the prince your brother is still feeling unwell, but entertains himself by preparing an opera. I am glad I have found such a way to cheer him up. Your child is feeling fine, thank God. There will be no shortage of pastimes in Rome this year. Ottoboni's opera, whose spectacles have been held since the start of this month, is excellent as far as theatrical matters, sets, machinery and music are concerned (they took the best voices from the papal ensemble). The costumes are delightful and very rich. He has selected the best [instrumentalists] for his orchestra and spent an entire year considering what [else] he could make [even] more beautiful. The cardinal wrote the words himself, which by no means makes them better than the music. I haven't seen the spectacle yet. The new Prince of Ruspoli, nephew to Cardinal Marescotti and an exceedingly handsome man also prepared one [opera] at his home. His theatre is very beautiful and everything is magnificent in it as well. He has an annuity of fifty thousand écus,⁶ which leaves him a lot to spend. And, eventually, Capranica launched his [opera], which is a public theatre, rather poor quality in all respects, but big – five rows with boxes. **Ours is a hall to play *raptassé* (harpastum?) ballgames in** [emphasis AM], which I suited to my purpose as best I could. We are holding the first rehearsal today,

4 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, pp. 28–29. Since the word *casino* is ambiguous, I will preserve its original Italian form in the texts quoted here in translation.

5 "Lunedì sera dalla Regina di Polonia fù fatto dar principio à fare rappresentare la Opera Musicale al suo Casino alla Trinità de Monti, ove operano Canterine, e buoni musici, la quale communemente viene applaudita per la Migliore di tutte le alter," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (24th Jan. 1711), qtd. after T.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata in Rome and Naples: A documentary study with emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Los Angeles: University of California, 1983), p. 616.

6 Most likely she meant *écus romains*, also known as *scudi pontificali*.

and on Monday we'll start staging it [the opera] in earnest.⁷ I don't know how we will fare since the whole was composed in [just] three weeks. But it is already said in Rome that the theatre is like Ottoboni's, the costumes – like Ruspoli's, the libretto and music – by the queen, and the freedom – as in the Teatro Capranica.⁸

In this extremely interesting letter fragment, the queen reveals that her theatre had been converted from a hall used to play ball games. I have been unable unequivocally to identify the *raptassé* game or ball and exactly how much space it required.⁹ What is much more important is to see whether this information can help us identify the space used as a theatre venue at the Palazzo Zuccari in the period when Sobieska lived there.

The earliest, still indirect information about the queen's theatre comes from 23rd January 1704, when Francesco Valesio noted: "The carnival is coming close, but without any evidence of merry-making. In the evening the Queen of Poland stages a *comedia all'improvviso* for her entertainment, but *in terra*, not in a theatre, with no other scenery but ordinary movable screens."¹⁰ The room used to stage the comedy had, as we can see, no elevated space and no backstage. On the other hand, this note by Valesio confirms that the queen's theatre already existed in that period. We know from other sources that the person responsible for her theatre was Count Giacomo d'Alibert, previously likewise acting as an advisor on

7 "Today" – that is, on Saturday 17th January, while 19th January was Monday.

8 NGAB, 695 op.1/332, c.5–7.

9 It is possible that the queen – presumably no expert on Roman sports – misquoted the word *harpastum*, which referred to a football/rugby-type game extremely popular in ancient Rome (and revived in the Renaissance Florence as *calcio fiorentino*), but also to a kind of small hard ball stuffed with feathers or hair, rather light, which could be played in a gym. As *harpastum* was cultivated in modern-age Florence, it could also have survived in Rome under its original name. But since it was an outdoor sport requiring a large field or pitch, it is more likely that the term *raptassé* / *harpastum* referred in Marie Casimire's time simply to a traditional type of small Roman ball used for indoor games. Cf. J. McClelland, "Body and Mind." In: *Sport in the Global Society*, eds. J. A. Mangan and Boria Majumdar, pp. 32 ff, EPDF, <https://epdf.pub/body-and-mind-sport-in-europe-from-the-roman-empire-to-the-renaissance-sport-in-.html> (18th Feb. 2020)

10 "Approssimandosi il carnevale, ma senza segno alcuno d'allegria, questa regina di Polonia fa per suo divertimento recitare la sera comedie all'improvviso, ma in terra e non sul teatro, non essendovi altre scene che semplici paraventi di camera," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 19.

theatrical matters at the court of Christina Queen of Sweden.¹¹ His son Antonio probably also had Marie Casimire's theatre under his care, though he is better remembered as the founder of the Teatro delle Dame (1726).¹² Information about his earlier work for the queen comes again from Valesio, who noted on 27th August 1701: "Around midnight the son of Count d'Alibert presented a serenata for the Queen of Poland at the *casino* of Trinità de'Monti, with a great number of instruments, and featuring the famous singer Faustina Perugini."¹³

Further information about the queen's theatre can be found in the same source. On 13th February 1707 Valesio wrote: "This evening the Queen of Poland staged a comedy *all'improvviso* for the first time for the ladies and gentlemen in her little theatre in Trinità de'Monti, where she resides."¹⁴ Other sources also confirm the small dimensions of the theatre. *Avvisi Marescotti* reported on 5th March 1707: "[On Sunday] the said Queen [of Poland] offered a noble *divertimento* to the local nobility. The princess her granddaughter danced several times at the little theatre. The *ballo*, which demonstrated the lively temperament of Her Highness, was preceded by a beautiful *introduzione in musica*."¹⁵

In the following years, the queen's theatre was praised as "beautiful": "This evening the Queen of Poland has presented at her beautiful theatre in the little palace in Trinità de'Monti a comedy *all'improvviso* in French, performed by her *gentilhuomini*."¹⁶ Valesio repeatedly referred to the queen's theatre as small and

11 D'Alibert made a name for himself in the Roman opera history as the one who was entrusted with the task of opening the first public opera house in Rome, the Teatro Tor di Nona (1670).

12 Parish registers show that d'Alibert joined the queen's court in 1703; cf. W. Roszkowska, "Filippo Juvarra. . .," p. 248.

13 "Verso la mezzanotte il figliolo del conte d'Alibert fece una serenata alla regina di Polonia nel casino della Trinità di Monti con quantità d'istromenti e vi cantò la celebre cantarina Faustina Perugini," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 264.

14 "In questa sera per la prima volta con invito di dame e cavalieri la regina di Polonia nel suo teatrino alla Trinità de'Monti, dove essa habita, diede principio al divertimento della comedia all'improvviso," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 3, p. 768.

15 "La sudetta regina [di Polonia] hà dato un nobile divertimento [domenica] a questa nobiltà con haver fatto ballare alcune volte nel suo picciolo teatro la principessa sua nipote preceduta con una bella introduzione in musica al ballo in che hà meravigliosamente spiccata la vivacità e lo spirito di sua altezza," in: G. Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmenta. La vita musicale romana negli 'Avvisi Marescotti' (1683–1707)* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1990), p. 170.

16 "Questa sera la regina di Polonia fece recitare nel bel teatro del suo palazzino alla Trinità de'Monti una comedia all'improvviso in lingua francese da' suoi gentilhuomini," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 3, pp. 28–29.

beautiful, but the most frequent term that he used was “the home theatre” (*teatro domestico*): “The Queen of Poland has presented at her home theatre a pastoral opera with music, which proved more successful than all the other [operas] staged at the remaining theatres.”¹⁷ The same phrase is found on the title pages of the printed libretti.¹⁸ The queen herself also referred to her theatre in similar terms, as when she wrote to her son about “un petit théâtre domestique,”¹⁹ “mon petit theatre”²⁰ and “un simple petit théâtre.”²¹

All the quoted sources clearly confirm the fact that the permanent theatre at the Palazzo Zuccari was small. Research by Mercedes Viale Ferrero proves that it was definitely smaller than Cardinal Ottoboni's stage at the Palazzo della Cancelleria.²² Having analysed the stage directions found in Capece's libretti, the researcher concluded that the queen's stage had no special theatrical machinery.²³ It is only in *Tetide in Sciro* that the scenery needs to be changed *a vista*, that is, in front of the spectators' eyes. This is the situation we encounter in Act 1 (in Scene 7, the view of a seaside hamlet appears, with huts and fishermen's boats) and in Act 3 (in Scene 11, a crack opens in the rock and we can look inside a sea room – Thetis' grotto). This topic is also mentioned by the queen in her correspondence. Having learnt that Jakub Sobieski was planning to spend the carnival season of 1709 in Venice, she ventured a comparison between the operas staged at her own theatre and those presented in the public theatres of Venice. On 9th February 1709 she wrote: “Venetian opera houses may have more theatrical machinery than ours, which lacks it altogether, and may be more spacious too. But they do not [surpass ours] with respect to singers' voices or authors or good music and its composition.”²⁴

17 “Questa Regina di Polonia ha dato principio ad un'Opera Pastorale, che fa Rappresentare in Musica nel suo Teatro Domestico riportando il vanto sopra tutte l'altre che si recitano negli'altri Teatri,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (24th Jan. 1711).

18 Cf. *Il figlio delle selve* (1709); *Silvia* (1710); *Tolomeo et Alessandro* (1711); *L'Orlando* (1711); *Tetide in Sciro* (1712); *Ifigenia in Aulide* (1713); *Ifigenia in Tauri* (1713); *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* (1714).

19 NGAB 695, op. 1/331 c. 25v and c. 128.

20 NGAB 695, op. 1/331 c. 130v.

21 NGAB 695, op. 1/331 c. 131.

22 M. Viale Ferrero, “Juarra tra i due Scarlatti,” in: *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Roma, 12–14 giugno 1985)*, eds. N. Pirrotta, A. Ziino (Firenze: L. S. Olshcki, 1987), p. 185.

23 M. Viale Ferrero, “Juarra tra i . . .,” p.185.

24 NGAB 695, op. 1/327 c. 19v-20.



Illustration 14. Filippo Juvarra, decoration sketch for the opera *Ifigenia in Aulide*, 1713. Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo. Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino.

The scarcity of space as well as the costs related to preparing refined costumes and sets²⁵ were the reasons why the sceneries described in Capece's libretti are rather uniform, mostly representing rural, pastoral landscapes, sometimes also woodland or the seashore. It is only in the two *Iphigenia* spectacles that we find some elements of architecture: the *vedute* then fashionable in Rome with ancient ruins, temples, bridges, etc. Still, as confirmed by opinions of the contemporaries, Filippo Juvarra (employed by Sobieska in 1711 at Ottoboni's recommendation) did an excellent job in this difficult interior which could have restricted the imagination of many an artist. He made use, first and foremost, of painted illusionist

²⁵ The queen reported that, unlike herself, Ottoboni and Ruspoli had large sums of money at their disposal to stage operas, and she added: "This is why we have contented ourselves with a small, simple theatre, well-trained voices and music in a similarly good taste. As for the rest, our costumes are very simple; our actors and voices are not the best, but neither are they the poorest ones." Marie Casimire to her son Jakub Sobieski, NGAB 695, op. 1/331 c. 131.

sets, suited to the changing emotional states of the protagonists. By such simple means he created visually convincing theatrical imagery.

The theatre's small dimensions forced Marie Casimire to limit the audience to a narrow group of carefully selected spectators. The organisation of the auditorium is unfortunately unknown. Did the queen's guests sit in special boxes, in armchairs or perhaps on benches? In a letter to her son, the queen mentions four *balquets*, which can be interpreted (in the context in which these words are used) as benches for spectators.²⁶ The arrangement of the auditorium must have been flexible since the same room at the Palazzo Zuccari was also used for dances. The size of the queen's *teatrino* also implies that the orchestra was rather small in size. Scarlatti's works represent a type of chamber opera that was one of the last artistic landmarks of that period, since private stages would soon become a thing of the past in Italy, giving way to great theatres and the mass audience.

Open-Air Events

The queen also presented music works in other places belonging or adjacent to her precincts. Under the date of 24th February 1707 Valesio chronicled an evening presentation of a carnival *carro* or float (*carro o sia giudiata*)²⁷ shown in the yard of the *casino* in the presence of many people.

Occasional serenade in praise of John III or commemorating important events in the Sobieski family's life were usually presented outside the palace, most frequently on the bridge which connected the queen's lodgings to her father's residence and to the convent which she had founded. At the point where Via Gregoriana and Via Sistina (then known as Strada Felice) meet today, there stood an open bridge (*ponte scoperto*)²⁸ built at the queen's initiative in 1702. It was designed as a temporary structure, as evident from the building permit issued by the officials responsible for Roman streets (*maestri delle strade*).²⁹ The document stressed that the bridge was to serve Her Highness, but when no longer used by the queen it was to be demolished and the place restored to its

26 NGAB 695, op. 1/347 c. 115.

27 "Nel cortile del casino della regina di Polonia alla Trinità de' Monti dalla banda di porta Pinciana si recita la sera un carro, o sia giudiata, con gran concorso di persone. . ." in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 3, p. 771.

28 Thus, referred to in the building permit issued by the Roman street administration; cf. E. Re, "La dimora romana di Maria Casimira Regina di Polonia," *Capitolium* 1926–192, p. 165.

29 E. Re, "Larco della regina," *L'Urbe* 1948, No. 5, p. 31.

former shape.³⁰ Despite such dispositions, L'Arco della Regina – so named by the Romans in honour of its founder – remained on the city's maps for a long time after the queen had left Rome, until it was eventually demolished in 1799. It was most likely on this bridge that the serenata *La Gloria innamorata* honouring Prince Aleksander was staged, as a reporter of *Foglio di Foligno* reported on 17th August 1709: "The Queen of Poland still holds vocal performances on the bridge twice a week, invariably attended by a crowd of people."³¹

Most detailed descriptions of open-air venues in which performances were held appear in the context of the queen's Battle of Vienna anniversary celebrations. Valesio noted on 12th September 1704:

This evening the Queen of Poland commemorated the liberation of Vienna after the Turkish siege, in which her husband, King John of Poland, played such a major role – by beautifully illuminating the *casino* and the convent on the Pincian Hill with olive oil lamps arranged in three rows at the top and protected by wooden shields on two sides, both on the hill where her palace stands and in front of the Church of of the Santissima Trinità [de'Monti]. To the tolling of bells, on the bridge which leads across Strada Felice from the convent to the queen's palace, various *orazioni* were sung, in the presence of a huge crowd.³²

For another Battle of Vienna anniversary in 1709, a beautiful music cantata was performed, as Valesio noted, in the same place as usual – on the bridge across Strada Felice.³³

30 E. Re, "Larco della regina," p. 31.

31 "La Regina di Polonia continua a far cantare due volte la settimana nel suo Ponte, e vi è sempre numeroso il concorso," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (17th August 1709).

32 "La regina di Polonia questa sera, in memoria della liberazione di Vienna dall'assedio de'turchi, nella quale hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni di Polonia suo marito, fece una bellissima illuminazione al suo casino e monastero sul monte Pincio di tutti lumini da oglio, havendosi posti anco a tre fila sopra e da ambidue le bande del riparo di legnami fatto sul monte del suo palazzo sin avanti la chiesa della SS. Trinità. Doppo le campane, sul ponte che traversa la strada Felice e guida dal monastero al suo palazzo furono cantate in musica diverse orazioni con numeroso concorso di popolo," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 168.

33 "Per la memoria della liberazione di Vienna dall'assedio dell'armi turchesche, nel che v'hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni IV [sic!] di Polonia suo marito, questa regina vedova di Polonia fece questa sera bellissima illuminazione nel casino che essa habita alla Trinità de'Monti e nel monte medesimo, essendovi stato gran concorso ad udire una bella cantata in musica fatta nel luogo consueto del ponte che attraversa la strada Felice," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 331.

Serenate were also performed at the centre of Piazza della Trinità de' Monti, as we learn from an agent of the Tuscan court, known as A.M. Fedè: "That evening the Queen of Poland held a gracious serenata in the middle of the square situated in front of her palace, in the presence of high-born ladies and gentlemen of her court."³⁴ At the queen's request Filippo Juvarra added a glazed-in loggia to the Palazzo Zuccari in 1711. Supported by six columns, this structure, known as the *tempietto*, became yet another venue for occasional music performances. The three-part serenata presented on 9th and again on 12th August 1711 was apparently already performed from that place.³⁵ Another one – said to have been rather unsuccessful – was presented there on 19th September 1711.³⁶

The garden adjacent to the queen's palace was likewise used for various spectacles, including carnival-time events. Valesio noted on 9th February 1710:

Among the many *carri* prepared to be staged in various districts this carnival season, the fishmongers presented one entitled 'cassaccia,' which ridiculed all the procedures performed by Jews for the burial of the dead. In response, the Jewish physicians placed a complaint not only with the Cardinal Vicar, but also with the Sanctum Officium, as a result of which showing the spectacle was prohibited under threat of heavy penalties. But since Prince Aleksander, son of the Queen of Poland, wished to see it, he obtained permission for the spectacle to be presented this evening in the garden of the palace

34 "Questa sera Regina di Polonia ha fatto una vaghissima serenata in mezzo alla piazza situata avanti il suo palazzo, con il concorso delle più qualificate dame e nobiltà di questa corte," qtd. after W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry dla teatru i rzymskiej rezydencji Sobieskich," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 1984, Nos. 2–3, pp. 257–269, at p. 262.

35 "Questa Regina di Polonia fece cantare Lunedì sera sopra la Loggia della sua abitazione una Serenata à 3. Voci nuova di parole, e Musica, e per aver ricevuto universale appluso la fece replicare Giovedì, essendovi stato tanta la prima, che la seconda volta numeroso concorso d'ogni grado di Persone," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (9th Aug. 1711).

36 "Alla Ringhiera già fattasi accomodare da S.ua M.aesta sopra il Portone di sua abitazione alla Trinità de Monti, per farvi sentire e cantate, e serenate, la medesima sera di sabato dalle sue due Canterine, et altri due suoi musici, con bon concerto di strumenti vi fù sentita Serenata, che non hebbe grande applauso, tanto più, che la Tramontana in quella notte si fece sentire causò, che più Carrozze di Dame, e Signori si partirono, avanti restasse terminata, nel sentirsi da S.ua M.aesta il rumore, disse, se questo tempo va seguitando, sarà bene tralasciare le serenate, e dar principio ò pensare alle Opere da farsi cantare il Venturo Carnovale," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (19th Sept. 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata*. . . , p. 630.



Illustration 15. Piazza della Trinità dei Monti, seventeenth century, I. Silvestre. The National Library of Poland.

where Her Majesty resides in Trinità de'Monti, where many people arrived [specially] to see [the *carro*].³⁷

37 “Tra gli molti carri che si sono preparati in diversi rioni per recitarsi in questo carnevale, gli pescivendoli ne havevano fatto uno intitolato ‘la cassaccia,’ nel quale rappresentavano ridicolosamente tutte le funzioni che sogliono fare gl’ebrei nel sepolire gli loro morti, per il che, havendo gli medici ebrei fatto ricorso non solo al cardinale vicario, ma anco alla congregazione del S. Officio, era stato proibito a’medesimi il farlo sotto gravi pene; ma, havendo il prencipe Alessandro, figliuolo di questa regina di Polonia, desiderio di vederlo, ottenne di poterlo questa sera far rappresentare nel giardino del palazzino habitato da S. Maestà alla Trinità de’Monti, dove fu grandissimo il concorso di persone che v’andarono per vederlo,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 4, p. 381.

Churches as Venues

The queen's Battle of Vienna celebrations were also held in the little church³⁸ belonging to the convent she had founded: "That evening, the Queen of Poland organised an extraordinary festivity in the little church of her convent, illuminating the Trinità hill with wooden candelabras and placing around it pictures that commemorated the liberation of Vienna, in which King John her husband had played such a major role."³⁹

The music performed on such occasions was usually the hymn *Te Deum*, sung and played by many musicians. It was also with a *Te Deum* that the queen celebrated the news of her sons Jakub and Konstanty having been let out of prison. On 2nd February 1707 Valesio reported:

This morning a courier from Poland's new king Stanislaus came to the Queen of Poland with the news of King Augustus, the Saxon elector, making peace with him, and he congratulated the queen on her sons, the princes Jakub and Konstanty, now being able to enjoy absolute freedom. By word of mouth the courier added that all the three kings, the Swedish one, Augustus and Stanislaus ate dinner with the said princes. Her Royal Highness forwarded this news to the Sanctum Officium, and ordered for *Te Deum* to be sung in the little church of her religious house, while in the *casino*, where Her Majesty lives with Cardinal d'Archien [sic!] her father, illuminations were presented in the evening to the sound of trumpets and explosions of petards.⁴⁰

38 Unfortunately, the available sources do not inform, as far as I know, what saint or divine person this church was dedicated to. It is possible that it was only a chapel located in the nunnery established by the queen in one of the buildings that she occupied. The Benedictine nuns invited by Marie Casimire had arrived in Rome in early October 1702. At the beginning of 1703 Valesio wrote that the queen prayed in French for her nuns and for the success of her 'monastic' enterprise, cf. F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 497.

39 "Fece questa sera la regina di Polonia festa straordinaria alla piccola chiesa del suo monastero, havendo anco illuminato il monte della Trinità con candelabri di legno, contornato di dipinti in memoria della liberazione di Vienna, nella quale hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni suo marito," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol.3, p. 153.

40 "Giunse la mattina corriero a questa regina di Polonia, speditoli dal nuovo re Stanislao di Polonia, con il quale gli dava avviso della pace seguita con il re Augusto elettore di Sassonia e si congratulava della piena libertà nella quale erano gli regii principi di lei figlioli Giacomo e Costantino, et aggiungeva a voce il corriero che havevano gli tre re, sueco, Augusto e Stanislao, pranzato insieme con gli sudetti principi. Mandò la Maestà Sua a dare parte al S. Collegio di tal nuova, ne fece cantare il *Tedeum* nella piccola chiesa del suo monastero, e nel casino dove habita S. Maestà col cardinale d'Archien suo padre ne fecero la sera illuminazioni con suono di trombe e sparo di mortaletti," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 3, p. 748.

Two days later a solemn *Te Deum* was sung at the church in Trinità de'Monti at the queen's order, with "exquisite music" performed by a large instrumental ensemble.⁴¹

Similar festivities were held at the Church of Santo Stanislao dei Polacchi on 9th January, as Valesio reported:

Today at 10 pm in the Polish Church of St Stanislaus, as thanksgiving for the liberation of her sons, the princes Sobieski, and for the special intention of restoring peace in Poland, the Queen of Poland ordered for a solemn *Te Deum* to be performed, with music played by numerous instrumentalists, and in Her Royal Highness's presence. The church was decorated with damasks and velvets trimmed with gold lace, portraits of the pope, the late King John, husband of Her Royal Highness, and the three princes her sons: Jakub, Konstanty, and Aleksander. The queen's *svizzeri* kept watch at the door. The church façade was decorated with damasks and tapestries with the pope's coat of arms and with that of the new king Stanislaus. There was also the head of a buffalo with a ring in its nose, all black against a white background, while on the left customary space was left for the coat of arms of the deceased Cardinal Barberini, protector of the Polish kingdom. In the evening, Her Royal Highness's *casino* in Trinità de'Monti was illuminated to the sound of drums and trumpets.⁴²

The queen frequently took advantage of the interior of the Church of Santo Stanislao dei Polacchi for the needs of her policies; music was only one element of the festivities she held there. Her contemporaries paid great attention to how the church was decorated. The richer and more splendid the tapestries and paintings were with which she adorned the interior and the façade, the

41 "Hoggi nella chiesa della Trinità de'Monti fece la regina di Polonia cantare solenne *Tedeum* con bellissima musica e quantità d'istromenti alle 22 hore per la liberazione de'prencipi suoi figlioli," w: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 749.

42 "Fece hoggi alle 22 hore la regina di Polonia cantare solenne *Te Deum* per la liberazione de'prencipi Subieschi suoi figlioli e per la pace di Polonia nella chiesa nazionale di S. Stanislao de'polacchi con musica e quantità d'istromenti, havendovi assistito S. Maestà medesima. Era la chiesa nobilmente apparsa di damaschi e velluti trinati d'oro con gli ritratti del pontefice, del defonto re Giovanni, marito di S. Maestà, e de' tre prencipi figlioli Giacomo, Costantino et Alessandro, assistendo alla porta gli svizzeri della regina. Al di fuori la facciata era apparsa di damaschi et arazzi con l'arme del pontefice, del nuovo re Stanislao in quartata con l'arme del regno, et era una testa di buffalo con anello al naso tutto negro in campo bianco, havendosi lassata alla sinistra la solita arma del defonto cardinale Carlo Barberino, già protettore del regno di Polonia. E la sera nel casino di S. Maestà alla Trinità de'Monti si fecero illuminazioni con suoni di tamburi e trombe," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 751.

stronger the achieved effect would prove. In that period the Sobieski family was not only spoken of, but most importantly – written about. From the surviving sources we learn how the queen skilfully made use of every space available to her in the Eternal City and how she adopted that space for her policies of self-presentation.

VI The Audience of the *Feste* Held by Marie Casimire in Rome

In accounts of major events in the life of Rome and its aristocratic inhabitants, the matter of audience was frequently dismissed by chroniclers with a laconic comment. They usually stated that a large number of ladies and gentlemen of noble birth had honoured a given festivity with their presence, or simply mentioned the anonymous crowd. The persons reporting such events were probably not always invited to them and were forced to make use of third-person accounts, provided by the invited guests at best, but servants and guards are more likely to have been their typical source of information. In some cases, the chroniclers seem to have been more interested in the various overtones of the given festivity than in listing the persons present. They avoided making their accounts overly detailed and just reported how many people took part in a given event. In those cases, however, where we have precise information as to who celebrated along with the patron, this makes it possible to draw conclusions concerning the relative importance of the given *festa*, and, most significantly, to reconstruct a list of the patron's contacts, which in turn allows us to draw a map of the Eternal City's political and social factions.

The surviving accounts let us clearly distinguish between two kinds of audience in the early eighteenth-century Rome. The first consisted of a group of carefully selected viewers, both laypersons and ecclesiastics, who were invited to come inside the palace. Importantly, even in the case of this kind of audience the events were not purely private in character, since most of the guests held important social functions, and their presence bestowed added status on the celebrated occasion, subsequently ensuring a wider publicity as well. The second type of audience was the crowd (*gran popolo* or simply the *popolo*), which filled the Roman city squares, such as Piazza Navona and Piazza della Trinità de' Monti, as well as the adjacent streets. These "ordinary Romans" flocked to the site to see the spectacle prepared for them, or to listen to an occasional music piece and assess the relative status of the given patron on this basis. The presence of onlookers was, no doubt, very well planned. Already the public preparations for the *festa* intrigued the masses and kept the given venue in the focus of public interest for several days. The two types of audience only met during the open-air events; but even then, under the cover of darkness, they did not make up one social body, and the boundaries did not melt away. During the several-hour-long festive ritual, politicians, aristocrats and clergymen remained seated in their carriages,

by the tapestry-adorned windows or on the balconies of residences facing the square, thus always above the crowd level. Themselves, they became objects of observation, adoration or plain curiosity exhibited by members of Rome's lower social strata. While the privileged ones relished the sight and sound of the spectacle, they also had their palates delighted by the taste of the various snacks and drinks served by servants. After the last official notes of the *festa* had died away, the aristocrats would attend supper together, while the gathered crowds satisfied their thirst for entertainment with wine flowing from the fountains and distributed bread.

The audience to which Marie Casimire addressed her *feste* represented both the above-mentioned types. She hosted well-known and influential aristocrats, diplomats and ecclesiastics, while the square in front of her palace was frequently filled by an anonymous crowd. Most of the surviving accounts are unfortunately of a very general character. In some cases, the chroniclers specify that the audience seated in carriages parked in front of the bridge or the *tempietto* consisted of aristocrats, ambassadors, and cardinals. They also frequently listened to the outdoor performances from the balconies and windows of the queen's palace. Most of the accounts do not mention any specific names. The character and content of each report depended on the chroniclers' interests. About a serenata presented by the queen Valesio wrote laconically: "In the evening the Queen of Poland held a serenata, in the presence of a great number of people (*popolo*) ... on the bridge of her palace, which [bridge] crosses Strada Felice."¹ The author of the dispatches printed in *Foglio di Foligno* provides more detail:

In the evening on the bridge that connects the queen's house with that [house] which faces the garden, a serenata was sang by the famous Nina, singer of Don Livio Odescalchi, along with Giulietta and Giuseppino, Her Royal Majesty's castrato, which attracted the interest of Rome's most notable ladies as well as a large number of people (*popolo*). On this occasion, the gallantry of the Frenchman Abbate di Villanova proved of great service to the ladies' thirsty lips, since he distributed refreshing drinks and various sweets among them.²

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- 1 "La sera la regina di Polonia con gran concorso di popolo fece una serenata . . . sopra il ponte del suo palazzo che traversa la strada Felice," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, eds. G. Scano (Milano: Longanesi, 1977-79), Vol. 3, p. 668.
 - 2 "Nella sera sopra il Ponte di communicatione dalla Casa della Regina à quella che v'è al Giardino, vi fù una virtuosa serenata cantata dalla famosa Nina Cantarina del Sig.re D.on Livio Odescalchi, e da Giulietta, e da Giuseppino Castrato di Sua Maestà, che tirò la curiosità delle prime Dame di Roma, e gran Numero di Popolo. Con questa occasione la Galanteria del Sig.nore Abb.ate di Villanova francese servì di molto ristoro all'arse labra di esse Dame col farli distribuire pretiosi Umori d'acque

Thus, we learn that Piazza della Trinità de' Monti was filled by the people of Rome, numerously represented, but ladies from Rome's most illustrious families also attended the event.

What was typical of chronicles in that period was how they focused attention on social forms and the rules of etiquette. The mention of the names of singers who performed the serenata in this account is an exception.

In August 1703, the evening music performances held by Marie Casimire enjoyed considerable popularity, as confirmed by this note:

On Sunday and Wednesday evenings the Queen of Poland gave a beautiful music concert, sung by Scarpinellina, Prince Odescalchi's famous singer, along with other female vocalists and a very large number of instrumentalists, near her residence in Trinità de Monte. All those present listened to it [the concert] with unspeakable pleasure. Nearly all of the city's nobility attended it, while members of Her Royal Majesty's household offered fruit and jam to the princesses and the ladies, without causing any confusion.³

We still do not know, however, who listened to this concert. On this splendid social occasion, the servants attended on the queen's guests, respecting the due order resulting from everyone's respective place in the social hierarchy. The music was performed by talented singers and a large orchestra. Many similar accounts can also be found in later chronicles, especially in the context of open-air events.

We know who the queen maintained contacts with and whom she visited in Rome; we may therefore assume that these visits were repaid by the same people. These were: Livio Odescalchi; Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (the latter sometimes even came unannounced);⁴ Marquis (later Prince) Francesco Maria Ruspoli with his wife Izabella Cesi; the Spanish Ambassador Juan Francisco Pacheco, 4th Consort Duke of Uçeda, with his wife Isabella Maria de Sandoval y Girón;

rinfrescative, e ricrearle con varij dolci di mano industriosa," *Avvisi di Roma* (4th Aug. 1703), qtd. after Th. E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata in Rome and Naples: A documentary study with emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Los Angeles: University of California 1983), pp. 404–405.

3 "Domenica, e mercoledì sera fece fare la Regina di Pollonia [sic!] un bel concerto di musica, dove vi canto [sic] la Scarpinellina famosa cantatrice del S.ignore Prencipe Odescalchi, con altre cantarine, ed un riempim.ento copiosissimo d'Istrum.enti, vicino la sua habitatione alla Ternità [sic] de Monte e fù ascoltato con indicibil gusto da tutti gli astanti, intervenutati ancora quasi tutta questa nobiltà, et i domestici della Maestà Sua regalorono di frutti, e confettura Le Principesse, e Dame senza che succedesse alcuna confusione," *Avvisi di Roma* (7th Aug. 1703), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata*. . . , p. 401.

4 NGAB 695, op. 1/260 c. 49.

Filippo II Colonna, Gran Connestabile of the Kingdom of Naples, with his wife Olimpia Moidalchini Pamphilj; the Princess of Orsini; Marquis Corsini and his wife; cardinals belonging to the Spanish-French faction: Toussaint de Janson-Fourbin, César d'Estrées, Carlo Barberini, Giuseppe Sacripante, and Alderano Cibo; moreover, Marquis Torres; Prince Tassi (de Tassis?); members of the Sforza, Spada, Rospigliosi, and Pamphilj families; *abate* Pompeo Scarlatti, and possibly also Vincenzo Grimani, who represented the Emperor's interests in Rome. Less known figures include Marquis Silvio Maccarani with his wife Diana Mattia Cenci and their daughter Maddalena; Marquess Ippolita Bentivoglio (the queen's principal lady-in-waiting); Maria Eleonora Sardi, as well as one Nicolassi of Naples, a lawyer whose first name is not listed. The persons listed above, as well as the crowd of Roman commoners that filled Piazza della Trinità de'Monti, together constituted, as one contemporary chronicler put it, an audience "d'ogni grado di Persone."⁵

Concerning opera viewers, the small dimensions of the theatre venue limited their number, though the queen would also refer to this audience as a crowd, evidently in an attempt to emphasise the considerable interest that her theatre enjoyed.⁶ In a letter to her son of 6th February 1712, she stressed that her theatre enjoyed great popularity and was visited by many foreigners:

This carnival season we are staging an opera at our theatre which surpasses, according to all those who have heard it, the other two shown now in Rome. Believe me that it has pleased me greatly, but since my theatre is small and [*illegible word*] in comparison with that of Cardinal Ottoboni and the great Capranica [theatre], I cannot satisfy all those who still wish to see it [the opera] ... Those who have not attended it are curious to see it, while those who have insist on coming back. My theatre, converted from a hall to play ball games, cannot seat such a large number of persons, so that I and my servant are all surrounded by those requesting [entry]. ... Numerous foreigners will also arrive, of whom there is a considerable number in this city at the moment; namely, Englishmen,

5 "Questa Regina di Polonia fece cantare Lunedì sera sopra la Loggia della sua abitazione una Serenata à 3. Voci nuova di parole, e Musica, e per aver ricevuto universale appllusso la fece replicare Giovedì, essendovi stato tanta la prima, che la seconda volta numeroso concorso d'ogni grado di Persone," *Foglio di Foligno* (9th Aug. 1711).

6 On 7th February 1711 the queen wrote to her son: "The Roman operas, masques, which commence today, and the great crowd we have today at our opera, at our little theatre, despite so many other splendid events [going on]," NGAB 695, op. 1/332, c. 15–16.

milords, Germans, including the Duke of Anhalt staying here,⁷ who is not the Duke of Dessau,⁸ as well as many other Germans.⁹

It is possible that the audience was different each evening, though some guests apparently attended every spectacle of the opera regardless of whether they liked it or not. The sources available to us are silent on this subject. Crescimbeni's description and the sonnets published after the premiere of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* confirm the presence of members of the Accademia degli Arcadi at Sobieska's theatre. Francesco Valesio wrote in his diary on 17th January 1711: "This evening a *dramma* by the very highly regarded Carlo Capece, entitled *Tolomeo*, received its first, superb performance at the Queen of Poland's domestic theatre. Cardinal Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli were invited, and they arrived with all their musicians, who are rather exaggeratedly hailed as virtuosi."¹⁰ This information confirms that the queen and the Roman elites mutual visited one another's residences. Of much interest is the mention of the musicians who accompanied their patrons to Sobieska's palace. Listening to music and watching the best operatic spectacles that the city had to offer was part of artists' education, which their wise and generous protectors took care to supply them with. The above-quoted diary entry is of

7 The person is hard to identify, since there were several Dukes of Anhalt (of the House of Ascania) at that time, representing the family lines of Anhalt-Zerbst, Anhalt-Köthen, Anhalt-Bernburg, Anhalt-Dornburg, etc. One very probable guess is that she may have meant Leopold von Anhalt-Köthen (1694–1728), who inherited the title of duke at age of ten from his father Emmanuel Lebrecht (1670–1704). In 1710–1713 the young Leopold went on the customary *grand tour* of Europe, and also visited Italy, where he discovered music and developed a strong taste for the musical art. We know that in 1712 he took lessons from the German composer Johann David Heinichen (1683–1729), who was staying in Rome at that time. The duke could play the harpsichord, violin, and viola da gamba. His court Kapellmeister in 1717–1723 was none other but Johann Sebastian Bach himself (1685–1750).

8 The title of Duke of Anhalt-Dessau was used at that time (from 1693 onward) by Leopold I (1676–1747). During the War of the Spanish Succession he fought in the Prussian army against the French, among others in Italy under the command of Prince Eugene of Savoy, and in December 1712 was commissioned as field marshal of Prussia in recognition of his merits.

9 NGAB 665, op. 1/337, c. 9v-10v.

10 "Questa sera per la prima volta nel teatro domestico delle regina di Polonia si recitò il dramma intitolato il *Tolomeo*, composizione di Carlo Capece, assai stimato et ottimamente recitata, e vi fu l'invito del cardinale Ottoboni e prencipe Ruspoli, che v'andarono con tutti il loro musici, detti abusivamente virtuosi," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, p. 425.

major importance for yet another reason; it suggests that George Frideric Handel, who was employed by Prince Ruspoli, also visited the Polish queen and listened to the music performed possibly by courtiers who had come with her from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹¹ Could it be that he himself presented his abilities to Marie Casimire? The same can be supposed about two other masters of the opera: Antonio Caldara, who in 1711 composed two operas staged by Prince Ruspoli, and Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, the composer of a *dramma per musica* presented by Cardinal Ottoboni in the same year. In 1714, one of the queen's guests at a spectacle of *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* was Maria Bernardina Albani, member of the family of the then ruling Pope Clement XI.¹²

As we can see, in accordance with the habit of the time, Sobieska held the *feste* in order for them to live on in aristocratic conversations, chroniclers' reports, and dispatches of the numerous diplomats residing in Rome. Only rarely do we read that one or another festivity was organised for the queen's private entertainment (*al suo divertimento*). The financial outlay related to these occasions was simply too high for such events to be enjoyed in solitude. Besides, the *feste* always had a specific aim, usually a political one. They helped to cultivate the memory of John III and the Sobieski family. They highlighted her presence in a city that loved to have fun, to bask in luxury and splendour. Marie Casimire wished to be part of that world and command its admiration. Much as the *feste* put a strain on her court's budget, they also helped her live through bitter moments and overcome the numerous adversities that she was faced with as a dowager queen without a crown, residing in a foreign land. The impressive festivities placed her and her family in the limelight at least for a few hours, attracting the interest of both the high society and of the Roman *popolo*.

11 This could be one more reason to trace the influence of Polish music on Handel's oeuvre; cf. A. Żórawska-Witkowska, "Über die vermutlich polnischen Elemente im *dramma per musica* L'Ottono, Re di Germania (London 1722) von Georg Friedrich Händel," *Händel-Jahrbuch* 2011 (57), pp. 49–76.

12 "La Reine de Pologne commence a se mieux porter d'un violent rhume, qui a fait craindre pour la vie de Sa Majeste. On represente cependant chez elle le petit Opera que le Prince a fait preparer pour son Theatre. Donna Maria Bernardina Albani y assista la premiere fois; la Princesse Sobieski en fit les honneurs. Le Cardinal Ottoboni et Don Carlos en furent aussey;" from M. Tausserat' letter to Marquis de Torcy (29th January 1714), qtd. after *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec le surintendants des bâtimens*, ed. A. de Montaignon, Vol. 4 (Paris: Noël Charavay, 1889), p. 276.

VII Artists

Poets

Carlo Sigismondo Capece

Capece was a poet who worked for the Polish Queen Marie Casimire for several years as her *segretario delle lettere italiane e latine*, that is, a secretary responsible for her correspondence in Italian and Latin and the author of numerous operatic libretti and original works presented in the Palazzo Zuccari. He was born in Rome. His father Bernardo Capece was at the service of the pope; therefore, already at the youngest possible age Carlo Sigismondo spent time with the highest dignitaries of the Papal State. In 1664, his father was sent on a diplomatic mission to Madrid, where he took his twelve-year-old son. In the capital of Spain Carlo Sigismondo studied literature. He also studied philosophy at the University of Alcalà nearby Madrid and law in Valencia.¹

Upon his return to Rome he received a PhD degree in canon and civil law (*la Dottorale laurea per la Canonica, e Civile Giurisprudenza*).² Thus, Sobieska's poet-to-be could boast a thorough education that would open the doors to a successful career in the Papal State administration or at the service of an aristocrat. From his early years he was very keen on the humanities, that is, literature, art, and philosophy. It seems that his stay in Spain proved to be inspiring for him first and foremost in terms of literature since the traditions of the golden age of the Spanish theatre were still being cultivated at that time. This is where he found some inspiration for his *dramma per musica* of 1688, *I giochi troiani*.

Following his return to Rome (the exact date remains unknown) Capece devoted himself to law while working as an official for the Roman tribunals. In recognition of his talents and experience he was sent to Paris for a year. His job

1 G. Amati, "Capece (Carlo Sigismondo)," in: *Bibliografia romana: notizie della vita e delle opere degli scrittori romani dal secolo XI fino ai nostri giorni* (Roma: Eredi Botta, 1880), p. 69; A. Lanfranchi, "Capece (Capeci) Carlo Sigismondo," in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, ed. A. M. Ghisalberti (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1975), Vol. 18, p. 408.

2 A. Lanfranchi, "Capece. . .," p. 408.

was to represent the interests of Cardinal Francesco Mardalchini. This is also where he became acquainted with the culture and art of the city, including the latest achievements of French playwrights. Once back in Rome, he worked for several years for Cardinal Girolamo Casanata. In 1689, Pope Alexander VIII awarded him the title *Giudice dello Stato di Ronciglione* for his diplomatic work. It is also known that he served successively as the governor of Ternia, Cascia, and Assisi.

In 1695, after his father's death, he settled down in Rome. He ended his diplomatic career and focused on pursuing his literary ambitions. The earliest known (since they were printed) samples of Capece's poetic skills date back to 1683. Commissioned by *abbate* Pompeo Scarlatti, he wrote a *laudatio* for Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, in which he praised his involvement in the liberation of Vienna (*Tributo di lode alle gloriosissime azzioni del Serenissimo Elettore Massimiliano Emmanuele Duca di Baviera... in occasione della presente guerra dei Cristiani confederati contro l'armi ottomane*).³ In 1686, while Bernard Capece was still alive, Carlo Sigismondo was entertaining guests at his father's house with a libretto entitled *L'Amor vince fortuna* for which the music was written by a composer whose identity remains unknown. This piece was dedicated to the Elector of Bavaria and his first wife, Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria, on the occasion of their marriage. The next piece, the most popular one written by Capece, entitled *Il figlio delle selve*, was also dedicated to the Elector's wife upon her visit in Rome in 1687.⁴ It was probably the success of this libretto that caused Capace to be admitted to the Arcadian Academy, where he took on the name of Metisto Olbiano.

In the years directly preceding his employment at the court of Marie Casimire, Carlo Sigismondo mainly devoted himself to occasional pieces, such as *La contesa delle Stagioni, componimento per musica a cinque voci da cantarsi nel Palazzo Apostolico la Notte del SS.mo Natale* (1698), and *La Chiesa trionfante, componimento per musica da cantarsi nel Palazzo Apostolico per la notte del santissimo Natale nell'ingresso dell'anno di giubileo* (1699). He also wrote two opera libretti, namely the above-mentioned *I giochi troiani* (1688) and *La Clementa d'Augusto* (1697).⁵

3 A. Lanfranchi, "Capece. . .," p. 408.

4 The surviving music for this work was composed by Cosimo Bani; I-MOe, shelf mark Mus.F35.

5 *I giochi troiani* was Capece's first libretto in which he adopted the qualities of Spanish drama to the rules of *dramma per musica*, or, more specifically – those of *dramma pastorale*. As for *La Clementa d'Augusto*, the poet drew on Pierre Corneille's play *Cinna ou la Clémence d'Auguste*, which is notable, since the first Italian edition of this

In 1704, Capece became a secretary and poet at the service of Marie Casimire. Having a soft spot for flattery, Marie Casimire welcomed the artist who was familiar with the course of the battle of Vienna and immortalised it in his poems. She must have hoped that his writing would prove useful for her own purposes as well. On the other hand, Capece was also highly valued among Roman writers and aristocrats. Upon his employment, the Queen gained an individual who was educated, versatile, and held in high esteem in her circles.

In 1704–1714, Capece wrote all the opera libretti performed in the Queen's domestic theatre at that time,⁶ while Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti set them to music. Capece also wrote poetry for most of the occasional pieces staged for Sobieska, but also one oratorio.⁷

Ten years of collaboration must have been satisfying for both the Queen and her son Aleksander. The poet and Sobieska must have got along really well since, on 30th March 1710, Valesio reported that Marie Casimire attended St. Margherita in Trastevere in order to participate in the ceremony of taking the religious vows by Capece's daughter.⁸ In her last will, drawn up in Rome in 1713, the Queen did not forget about the poet, to whom she bequeathed 400 livres a year.⁹ It is also believed that in 1714 the librettist accompanied the

playwright's tragedies known to us today only came out four years later. Corneille's tragedies started being published in Italy in 1701; cf. M. Bucciarelli, *Italian Opera and European Theatre 1680–1720* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2000), pp. 111–112. Music for each act of this work, staged at the Teatro Tor di Nona in 1697, was written by a different composer: Saverio de Luca (Act I), Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (Act II), and Giovanni Bononcini (Act III).

- 6 Two of the libretti, *Tolomeo et Alessandro* and *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*, were later used by Handel for his London operas *Tolomeo* (1728) and *L'Orlando* (1733).
- 7 Capece authored the libretto for Handel's oratorio *La Resurrezzione*, staged at the Palazzo Bonelli by Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli (1708). Saverio Franchi believes that Capece was commissioned to write this text on the Polish Queen's initiative; cf. S. Franchi, *Il principe Ruspoli: l'oratorio in Arcadia, w: Percorsi dell'oratorio romano. Da "historia sacra" a melodramma spirituale. Atti della giornata di studi (Viterbo 11 settembre 1999)* (Roma 2002), p. 291.
- 8 "Essendosi questa regina di Polonia portata alla chiesa di S. Margarita in Trastevere per assistere alla vestizione d'una monaca, figliola di Carlo Capece suo segretario, mentre assiste a quella funzione li sbirri carcerarono appresso il suo palazzo alla Trinità de' Monti dui prenditori al gioco di Genoa," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, ed. G. Scano (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–79), Vol. 3, p. 400.
- 9 "Je laisse aussy à mon secrétaire l'Italian Carlo Capece, quatre cens livres monnoye de France par an, et trois cens livres à sa fille, ma fille de chambre, leur vie durant." Krzysztof Koszarzecki, "Rzymskie testamenty królowej Marii Kazimiery spisane w

Queen on her journey to France.¹⁰ Upon his return to Rome he resigned from writing libretti and began writing theatre plays instead. The only exception was a libretto for the Teatro Capranica (*Telemaco*, 1718). Towards the end of his life, Capece left Rome for Polistena (Reggio Calabria), where he died on 22nd March 1728 in financial straits and far from his children who waived the inheritance.¹¹

Let us dedicate some space to the contemporary reception of Carlo Sigismondo's artistic output. Little information has been preserved until today, so what little we have is precious to researchers. It is possible that the earliest mention of Capece comes from the work by Giovanni Maria Crescimbeni entitled *La bellezza della volgar poesia* (1700), where the curator of the Arcadian Academy places the poet among the most interesting contemporary authors of *drammi per musica* (the others included Silvio Stampiglia, Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, Giacomo Sinibaldi, Pietro Antonio Bernardoni, and Girolamo Gigli).¹²

In the collection of sonnets published after the premiere of the opera *Tolomeo et Alessandro* (1711), one piece was devoted to Capece.¹³ This sonnet, opening with the words *Vidi in nobil Teatro espressa al vivo*, was written by a poet who signed his name as Alessi Cillenio. He clearly stresses that Capece's achievement was the ability to show great characters on stage, characters that cared more

1713 i 1714 roku” [“Marie Casimire's Roman Last Wills, Drawn Up in 1713 and 1714”], in: *Źródła do dziejów Sobieskich z Archiwum w Mińsku i zbiorów francuskich* [Sources to the History of the Sobieski Family Found in the Minsk Archive and in French Collections], Vol. VII *Ad Villam Novam. Materiały do dziejów rezydencji* [Ad Villam Novam. Materials for the History of the Sobieski Residences] (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałaca Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2012), p. 107.

- 10 A. Lanfranchi, “Capece. . .,” p. 408; E. De Tibaldo, *Biografia degli italiani illustri* (Venezia: Tipografia di Alvisopoli, 1837), Vol. IV, p. 374; M. Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti, Master of Music* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 25; B. Forment, “Dall'effeminato' al 'virtuoso': modelli d'identità di genere nel 'Telemaco' (1718) di Alessandro Scarlatti,” *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 2005, Nos. 1–2, p. 91.
- 11 M. di Martino, “Oblio e recupero di un librettista settecentesco: Carlo Sigismondo Capece (1652–1728) e il melodrama arcadico,” *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1996 Nos. 1–2, p. 34.
- 12 G.M. Crescimbeni, *La Bellezza della Volgar Poesia spiegata in otto dialoghi* (Roma: Giovanni Francesco Buagni, 1700), p. 141.
- 13 *Al Signor / Carlo Sigismondo Capece / tra gli Arcadi/ Metisto Olbiano / Per il Nobilissimo Dramma / del / Tololmeo, et Alessandro/ da lui compost / Che si rappresenta Nel teatro Domestico / di Sua Maestà / La Regina di Pollonia*, in: *Rime di diversi autori per lo nobilissimo dramma del Tolomeo, et Alessandro Rappresentato nel Teatro Domestico della Sacra real Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina di Pollonia, dedicate alla Maestà Sua* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711), p. 14.

about virtue than power. However, he also implied that the idea for the piece came from the Sobieskis. It is also worth mentioning here that the Arcadians did not even mention the music composer, that is, Domenico Scarlatti.

In 1714, encouraged by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, Capece prepared a libretto entitled *Tito e Berenice* for the Teatro Capranica. The piece was not welcomed very warmly. A certain monsieur Tausserat presumed it was because of the Cardinal's involvement in the poet's work. It is especially noteworthy to mention the French monsieur's opinion regarding Capece's skills: "anyway, a good poet."¹⁴ A different opinion about Capece is found in Pier Jacopo Martello's work entitled *Della tragedia antica e moderna*. The author placed the poet among the most influential Italian authors of that time and listed several titles of what were, in his opinion, Capece's main *drammi per musica*. All of them were written for Marie Casimire.¹⁵

Twentieth-century authors are not unanimous concerning Capece's achievements. Andrea della Corte wrote an article dedicated to *Tetide in Sciro* where he assessed his poetry as poor. He was of a similar opinion when it came to the whole generation represented by Carlo Sigismondo.¹⁶ At the same time Sebastiano Arturo Luciani regarded Capece's poetry as very good: "Capece's libretto [for *Tolomeo et Alessandro*] has some charm and grace; the verses are smooth and harmonious."¹⁷ Moreover, he believed that Capece's libretti were no inferior to the poetry of the great Pietro Metastasio.¹⁸ Having read a large

14 "On représenta Lundy, pour la première fois, le novel (sic) opéra sur le Théâtre de Capranica. Je cross que, n'estoit légards que l'on a pour le Cardinal otthoboni, la Pièce serait peu applaudie. Il s'en est mellé. Il y a des fort bonnes choses que l'on doit à S.E., el le Sr Capeci, d'ailleor bon poète, parleavec un respect infini des corrections que le Cardinal s'est donné la peine de faire de sa main à la composition de la Pièce," M. Tausserat to Marquis de Torcy (13th Jan. 1714), qtd. after *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec le surintendants des bâtiments*, ed. A. de Montaignon (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1889), Vol. 4, p. 271.

15 "il *Tolomeo*, l'*Achille* e le due *Ifigenie* di Carlo Capece. . ." in: P.J. Martello, *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, in: *Scritti critici e satirici*, ed. H. S. Noce, (Bari: Laterza, 1963), p. 274. *Achille* refers to *Tetide in Sciro*, since the Trojan hero was most frequently represented as the son of Thetis. What is more, on the title page of the score preserved in Venice we find the title *Achille in Sciro*.

16 A. della Corte "‘Tetide in Sciro’ l'opera di Domenico Scarlatti ritrovata," *La Rassegna Musicale* 1957, No. 4, p. 283.

17 S.A. Lucciani, "Un'opera inedita di Domenico Scarlatti," *Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1946, No. 4, p. 436.

18 S.A. Lucciani, "Un'opera inedita . . ." p. 443.

number of works by Carlo Sigismondo and his contemporaries, I find Luciani's opinion more convincing. Reading Capece's libretti is pure pleasure. They stand out as exceptionally melodious; the lines are rhythmical, full of lyrical quality, charming and subtle in phrasing. In many cases, they obviously contain conventional solutions that are typical of the times, mainly in the way the plot is structured. It should be remembered, however, that such were the audience's expectations.

Giacomo Buonaccorsi

Buonaccorsi belonged to a large group of Roman poets who were active during Marie Casimire's stay in the Eternal City. His works were mainly occasional pieces, that is, serenades and cantatas, such as *Le gare festive in applauso alla Real Casa di Francia* (1704) and *La fama festeggiante* (1707). The former celebrated the birth of Louis, Duke of Brittany, great-grandson of Louis XIV of France; it became one of the many pieces to grandly celebrate that event in Rome. The latter piece was written for the birthday of Emperor Franz Joseph I and was staged for the guests of Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani, the Imperial Ambassador. Valesio reported on the event but, interestingly, only gave the name of the text author without mentioning the music composer.¹⁹

Buonaccorsi also wrote the libretti for the oratorios *La Giuditta* (1706, music by Alessandro Scarlatti) and *Il David penitente* (1708, music by Francesco Magini), both staged in the Palazzo della Cancelleria, the residence of Cardinal Ottoboni, whom Marie Casimire visited for a series of oratorio concerts. Perhaps this is where the Queen met the poet for the first time.

In 1709, Sobieska commissioned Buonaccorsi to write the serenata *La gloria innamorata* for the birthday of Prince Aleksander.²⁰ Why did she commission Buonaccorsi if she was already paying another poet, that is, Carlo Sigismondo

19 "La sera nel cortile del palazzo Riarii alla Longara, dove habita il cardinale Grimani, da varii cavalieri tedeschi et inglesi si fece una bellissima serenata per il giorno natalizio dell'imperatore, composizione dell'abbate Buonaccorsi, e terminò alle 3 hore della notte, havendola poi replicata nella piazza di S. Maria in Campitelli avanti il palazzo di monsignor di Cauniz," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 3, Milano 1977-1978, p. 856. Luckily we know from other sources that the music was written by Pietro Paolo Bencini; cf. M. Talbot, "Loving without falling in love: Pietro Paolo Benicini's serenata 'Li due volubili,'" in: *La serenata tra seicento e settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Reggio Calabria, 16-17 maggio 2003)*, ed. N. Maccavino, Vol. I (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa Editore, 2007), p. 377.

20 Set to music by Domenico Scarlatti.

Capece, to produce occasional pieces? It is worth adding that the contact between the Queen and Buonaccorsi did not end with this one piece. Although she did not commission him to write any more libretti, in 1711 Buonaccorsi was among the Arcadians attending a spectacle of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* in the Palazzo Zuccari, which finds confirmation in his sonnet printed after the performance.²¹

Giovanni Domenico Pioli

Giovanni Domenico Pioli worked in many genres. During Marie Casimire's period of residence in Rome, he created *drammi per musica* (*La Nersice overo Il tiranno nel proprio sangue*, 1701), musical comedies (*Il Polipodio overo Li maestri di scola*, 1701), and oratorios (*La forza della fede in S. Grisanto*, 1703).²² After several years' break, the Teatro Capranica resumed its activity with an opera composed to his libretto (*La Dorisbe overo L'Amor volubile e tiranno*, 1710/1711). In 1708, Pioli wrote a serenata for Marie Casimire entitled *La pastorella rigidetta e poi amante* whose text is missing today. The music was composed by Domenico Scarlatti and Pietro Franchi. It seems that, after 1711, Pioli devoted himself mainly to writing theatrical plays. He also prepared *rifacimenti* of operas for the Teatro Capranica.

Monsieur di Prugien (?)

In a letter from Pier Jacopo Martello to Ludovico Muratori, dated 9th August 1710, Pier Jacopo Martello mentions a certain "Monsieur di Prugien," a French poet at the service of Marie Casimire.²³ Unfortunately, nothing more can be said of him today.

Filippo Juvarra (as Stage Designer)

This artist, thanks to his achievements in architecture, is considered one of the greatest artists of the late Baroque period.²⁴ His person and achievements are

21 The sonnet opening with the words "O Tu, che volgi in queste Carte attenti," in: *Rime di diversi autori...*, p.15

22 Information on Pioli's works comes from: S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana 1701-1750* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1997).

23 "Hò poi comunicate queste mie Tragedie a Monsieur di Inglas, che n'è intelligentissimo, ed è amico di cotesto Monsieur di Prugien, trovandosi questo Poeta Francese al servizio della Regina di Polonia qui in Roma. . .," in: *Lettere di Pier Jacopo Martello a Lodovico Antonio Muratori*, ed. H. S. Noce (Modena: Aedes muratoriana, 1955), p. 51.

24 Let me mention just a few of his numerous projects: the Basilica and Abbey at Superga near Turin, the Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi (hunting castle) near Turin,

widely discussed in the literature. Here, however, I focus only on those that are closely related to his stage designing activity in Rome.

In the Eternal City Juvarra first designed the stage scenery for Pietro Ottoboni. His name appears in Ottoboni's bills in July 1709. The Cardinal commissioned him to renovate his domestic theatre and to make it suitable for performing *drammi per musica*. Subsequently the artist designed the sets for three plays performed at Ottoboni's Palazzo della Cancelleria, namely: *Costantino pio* (1710, with music by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo), *Teodosio il giovane* (1711, with music by Filippo Amadei), and *Il Ciro* (1712, with music by Alessandro Scarlatti). When paying for opera performances from his own pocket proved to be too costly for Ottoboni, he decided to find a new form of patronage, and from 1712 became the patron of the Teatro Capranica. It was on the Cardinal's initiative that Juvarra was asked to renovate that theatre as well. He also designed the scenery for several operas performed there.

It was probably as early as 1710 that Marie Casimire and Juvarra signed a contract to create sets for the operas planned for the carnival of 1711 (*Tolomeo et Alessandro, L'Orlando*).²⁵ They won general acclaim, which encouraged the Queen and her son Aleksander to prolong the contract with Juvarra (so as to include *Tetide in Sciro* and both *Ifigenias*). In 1713 the artist left Rome for Turin, where Victor Amadeus II of Sardinia asked him to complete the redevelopment of the city, the capital of Piedmont. Juvarra maintained close ties with Turin until 1734. Then he left for Spain, where he died unexpectedly in 1736. Interestingly, his ties to Rome and his Roman experiences proved useful in Madrid, where one of his friends was Domenico Scarlatti (residing there from 1729).

The audience of the operas performed in the Palazzo della Cancelleria, including poets from the Arcadian Academy, was awed by Juvarra's scenography. This is confirmed in two cycles of sonnets written by the academics, entitled *Corona poetica tessuta da diversi pastori Arcadi per lo nobilissimo dramma del Costantino pio, rappresentato in Roma nel palazzo della Cancelleria l'anno 1710* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1710), which was published after the premiere, and *Compendiosa corona all'inclito ed acclamato* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711),

and the Palazzo Madama in Turin, as well as designs and building projects for the Madrid court.

25 Unfortunately, we do not know how much Juvarra may have earned at the Sobieski court. His monthly salary in Ottoboni's service was 9 scudi. However, he was not permanently employed by the Sobieskis, so most likely he only received fees for specific projects.



Illustration 16. Filippo Juvarra, decoration sketch for the opera *Orlando*, 1711. Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo. Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino.

published on the occasion of the staging of *Teodosio il giovane*.²⁶ On 21st January 1710 Valesio noted the following: “Last night at Cardinal Ottoboni’s theatre in the Cancelleria there was a rehearsal of a *dramma* entitled *Costantino*, with a libretto by His Excellency with beautiful machinery and music; many noble ladies were invited.”²⁷ After the premiere, the chronicler reported: “Last night saw the first public performance of the *dramma* entitled *Costantino pio* [...]. It is an excellent piece not only because of marvellous music and performers but also due to the beautiful stage design with lavish machinery as can be seen in

26 F. Piperno, “Crateo, Olinto, Archimede e l’Arcadia. Rime per alcuni spettacoli operistici romani (1710–11),” in: *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, (Roma, 12–14 giugno 1985)*, eds. N. Pirrotta, A. Ziino, (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1987), pp. 352, 354.

27 “Hier sera sotto titolo di prova si fece dal cardinale Ottoboni nel suo teatro della Cancelleria il *dramma* intitolato il *Costantino*, composizione di S. Eminenza con bellissime machine e musica e vi fu invito di molte dame,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma. . .*, Vol. 4, p. 372.

the printed *dramma*.²⁸ The following year during the presentation of *Teodosio il giovane* it was only the scenery that was judged favourably. The opera itself was criticised for being long and boring, and the singers for being suitable more for the church than for the stage.²⁹

The printed libretti of the *drammi* performed in the Palazzo della Cancelleria from 1710 till 1712 suggest that Ottoboni placed great emphasis on the visual side of the performances. In the first two acts the sets were changed three times on average, while in the last one there were frequently as many as five changes. The drawings in the libretti provide details regarding the diversity of setting. One permanent feature of the background was a landscape with an ancient element, for instance a bridge, a temple, or a palace façade. There was often a forest or some other shadowy place as well as a garden. The greatest variety was represented by the palace interiors, that is, studies, libraries, and salons. Juvarra had the ability to recreate them paying great attention to detail. Thanks to skilfully playing with perspective and combining traditional with most recent techniques, he made the tiny stage in the Palazzo della Cancelleria seem long and transformed it into confusingly real pictures.

The stage of Marie Casimire's theatre could not prove problematic for the artist. It was small and, moreover, Sobieska did not have the theatre machinery that was used in the Palazzo della Cancelleria.³⁰ Juvarra, however, coped perfectly with all these difficulties. To a certain extent it was the general mood of Capece's works that played a role there, as they drew on the Arcadian qualities as an

28 "Nella sera precedente si incominciò per la prima volta pubblicamente il dramma intitolato *Costantino pio* . . . e riesce superbissima cosa, non solo per la squisitezza della musica e de' recitanti, ma per la bellezza delle scene con machine sontuose, sì come apparisce dal medesimo dramma posto alle stampe," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma* . . . , Vol. 4, pp. 374–375.

29 "Fu dato princip.[io] da questi S.ignori a fare rappresentare ne lor belli Teatri le Opere Musicali, quella dell'Em.inentissimo Ottoboni nel palazzo di Cancelleria, per quello si sente non corrisponde si alla composit.ione delle parole, ne a quella di chi l'ha messa in musica, ne meno li Cantanti più da Chiesa che da scena, al veramente belliss.[imo] Teatro con machine, che l'Opera in se riesce lunga, e Tediosa," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (10th Jan. 1711), qtd. after T.M. Gialdroni, *Spigolature romane: lamusica a Roma attraverso avvisi e dispacci del Fondo Albani dell'Archivio di stato di Pesaro (1711)*, "Analecta Musicologica" 2005, Vol. 36, p. 374.

30 M. Viale Ferrero, "Juvarra tra i due Scarlatti," in: *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, (Roma, 12–14 giugno 1985), eds. N. Pirrotta, A. Ziino, (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1987), p. 185; NGAB 695/1 327 c. 19v-20.

aesthetic category.³¹ The play was set outdoors, for example at the seaside, in an avenue of trees, in a forest, or in a village. In the majority of Juvarrà's more than thirty sketches that have been preserved to our times and can be linked to the operas performed for Sobieska, such settings prevail.³² There is one exception, however, since both *Ifigenias*, the operas that draw most extensively on ancient tradition, required the presence of a god's temple, a sacrificial altar, or a harbour full of vessels. Wanda Roszkowska notes one interesting feature that differentiates Juvarrà's sets prepared for Marie Casimire from those for Ottoboni. She claims that the productions at the Palazzo Zuccari fused pastorality with exotic or even Sarmatian elements – that is, characteristic of the Polish nobility – namely tents inspired by those of the Turkish viziers (*Ifigenia in Aulide*), or the thatched cottages of shepherds inspired by the rural architecture of distant Ruthenia (*Orlando...*).³³ Roszkowska interprets what she believes to be the Polish-Sarmatian elements of the scenery as mythologisation of Marie Casimire's favourite and now very distant places: "Hence the fairy-tale-like huts with golden straw roofs. They are an allusion to the lost and now imagined homeland."³⁴

The audience of the Queen's theatre noticed the harmonious interplay of poetry, music, and scenery, and was enthusiastic about all the elements of the individual plays. Such a reception is reflected in a note of 1713: "They continue to show those comedies that are performed both at the Queen of Poland's domestic theatre and at the Capranica. Both of them have earned a lot of acclaim due to the high quality of productions and the beauty of the stage and costumes."³⁵ The same source summarises that carnival as follows: "There have been successful second performances of operas at both the Capranica and the Queen of Poland's theatre, but the one at Her Majesty's place outclasses the one at the Capranica in terms of the libretto writing, music and costumes."³⁶ These opinions differ from

31 W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry dla teatru i rzymskiej rezydencji Sobieskich" ["Filippo Juvarrà's Designs for the Sobieskis' Roman Theatre and Residence," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 1984, Nos. 2/3, p. 262.

32 W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry. . ." p. 264.

33 W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry. . ." p. 266.

34 W. Roszkowska, "Prace Filipa Juvarry. . ." p. 269.

35 "Continuano le recite di queste Comedie, che si rappresentano tanto nel Domesticot Teatro di questa Regina di Polonia, che in quello di Capranica, riuscendo ambedue di sommo applauso per la qualita de Recitanti, e per la Vaghezza delle Scene, e degl'Abiti," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (28th Jan. 1713).

36 "Riesce di sommo applauso la recita delle seconde Opere in questi Teatri di Capranica, e della Regina di Polonia, ma quella della Maestà Sua supera l'altra di Capranica, si

the comments made after the performances of operas at Cardinal Ottoboni's theatre, which stressed first of all the ingenuity of the sets. In the context of the *drammi* performed at Sobieska's place, the scenery constituted an integral part of the opera productions.

From the perspective of later technical solutions, theatre experts believe it was Juvarra who invented a new, better way of viewing the stage *per angolo*. At the same time, in *Il Ciro* (staged at Cardinal Ottoboni's) theatre experts see a foreshadowing of the cult of nature and emotions that became so characteristic of the second half of the eighteenth century, which Juvarra introduced through Arcadian qualities and romantic ruins, as well as by integrating architecture into the landscape. Scholars emphasise the picturesqueness of Juvarra's sets for Sobieska's theatre. Furthermore, experts note the lyrical qualities, the masterful use of chiaroscuro, but also the emancipation of scenery, though still viewed as strictly subordinated to the literary and musical content. Moreover, they stress the fact that Juvarra incorporated the Sarmatian symbolism that were so important for Sobieska. The symbols strengthened the message behind the presented works and stressed the sense of her being the patron. The sensitivity that the artist showed in his theatre works may have resulted from the fact that he was very fond of music.³⁷ It was probably thanks to his efforts that *Ifigenia in Tauri* was revived in Turin in 1719.

From the perspective of Juvarra's later achievements, his Roman beginnings seem humble and they undoubtedly turned out to be less durable. However, they were closely connected with Marie Casimire's court, which proves once again how skilled she was at selecting artists. It is worth mentioning that both Juvarra and Domenico Scarlatti were at that time still young promising authors at the start of their artistic careers. Marie Casimire was closely watching the Roman stage and, whenever it was financially possible, she fished out the best artists.

per la Compositione delle Parole, che della Musica, e degl'Abiti,' in: *Foglio di Foglino* (18th Feb. 1713).

37 Juvarra demonstrated his musical interests, for instance, in *Memorie Sepolcrali*, kept at Turin's Museo Civico di Arte Antica e Palazzo Madama, which is dedicated to his acquaintances and friends, including selected composers. Strangely enough, neither of the Scarlattis is mentioned there, though they were his most frequent collaborators; cf. M. Viale Ferrero, *Juvarra tra i due Scarlatti*. . . , p. 189, but also C. Ruggero, ed., *La forma del pensiero: FILIPPO JUVARRA: la costruzione del ricordo attraverso la celebrazione della memoria* (Roma: Campisano Editore, 2008).

Composers

Alessandro Scarlatti

Due to his incredible productivity and pace of work, along with the ability to obtain more and more novel sound, his contemporaries called Alessandro Scarlatti a musical prodigy (*prodigo musicale*).³⁸ The number of works that he composed continues to amaze us: 114 or 115 operas,³⁹ over 600 cantatas, approximately forty oratorios, almost thirty serenades, *scene buffe*, *intermezzi*, and religious pieces. To this enormous vocal output, we should add instrumental music. To be honest, Scarlatti did not hold it in very high regard, but he managed to leave a mark of his skill also in this area in the form of a set of *concerti grossi*, clavichord toccatas, and individual sonatas. At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Scarlatti's name was well known in the music circles. Towards the end of his life, the composer became a legend. Later generations forgot about him, as they did about many other Baroque artists. Today his achievements attract more and more attention from researchers and ensembles specialising in early music. Interestingly, even nowadays, despite the high number of compositions that have been preserved and are available to researchers, it is still difficult to present an objective image of the artist, as hardly any other Baroque composer is so controversial in terms of their approach to life and art.

Born in Palermo in 1660, he left the city in 1672 with his father and sister, fleeing famine.⁴⁰ He went to Rome, where he spent the next six years continuing his music education which had probably begun in Palermo. In 1678, he married Antonia Anzalone. It was also at that time that Scarlatti's first stage work was composed, an opera of unknown title. It tells a story of a brother and sister forced to leave their native Sicily and begin a new life in Tusculum (today known as Frascati).⁴¹ Another opera entitled *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* (1679) was composed to a libretto by Domenico Filippo Contini. It was a breakthrough in the Scarlatti's musical career. Its success changed Scarlatti's position in the opera

38 L. Lindgren, "Il dramma musicale a Roma durante la carriera di Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725)," in: *Le muse galanti: la musica a Roma nel Settecento*, ed. B. Cagli (Rome: Enciclopedia Treccani, 1985), p. 37.

39 Including in this number also numerous *rifacimenti* of works by other composers.

40 R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. Two Lives in One* (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2006), p. 1.

41 J. Lionnet, "A Newly Found Opera by Alessandro Scarlatti," *Musical Times* 1987, pp. 80–81. The scholar who unearthed this score titled it *Una villa di Tuscola*.

circles overnight from an unknown youngster to one of the most promising and popular composers.⁴²

Christina, Queen of Sweden, took interest in the young Scarlatti. In 1680, he became her *maestro di cappella*. It was for her theatre that he composed his next opera, *Honestà negli amori* (1680). Both this and his successive operas were staged in Rome. *Tutto il mal non vien per nuocere* (1681) and *Pompeo* (1683), along with *Gli equivoci nel sembiante*, belong to a group of his early works that consolidated his position.

In 1683, Scarlatti decided to leave Rome where, because of the strict policies of Pope Innocent XI, the young and ambitious composer was unable to develop his skills. He left for Naples and became *maestro di cappella* at the viceroy's court. His duties included composing new operas (first performed at the court and then for the wider audience at the Teatro San Bartolomeo), adapting Venetian works for the needs of the Neapolitan stage, as well as writing religious and occasional music. Researchers estimate that during his first stay in Naples Scarlatti composed between forty and eighty pieces.⁴³ Among them were the following operas: *Pirro e Demetrio* (1694), *Massimo Puppieno* (1695–1696), and *La caduta de' Decemviri* (1697). In that last one, the composer introduced a classical Italian overture for the first time. Moreover, he included *scene buffe* for his comical characters, as well as solo instruments. Most arias are of the *da capo* type.

Throughout that time Scarlatti maintained contact with Rome, and it is for that city that he composed at least three *drammi per musica*: *La Rosmene* (1686), *La Rosaura* (1687), and *La Statira* (1690).⁴⁴ In 1702, he left Naples, hoping to

42 Characteristic of *Gli equivoci nel sembiante*, but gradually supplanted in the later operas, are arias based on an ostinato bass. Notably, the figured bass part is varied and lively, which foreshadows the arias with obbligato cello typical of early-18th-century vocal-instrumental music. Sporadically the recitatives transform imperceptibly into arioso. Principally, however, the scenes in *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* consist of a sequence of recitatives and arias. Apparently, Scarlatti's librettist and the composer himself did not attach much importance to the distribution of arias. In long passages we only have one singer on the stage, who sings the successive arias. The few duets are more like dialogues between the persons of the drama than like actual ensemble scenes. What seems to have decided about the work's success are the ear-catching melodies, the smooth progressions of brief arias, mostly in fast tempi, as well as the overall dynamics of the work.

43 D.J. Grout, *Alessandro Scarlatti: an introduction to his Operas* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), p. 52.

44 *La Statira* was an opera to a text by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, premiered in 1690 for the inauguration of the carnival in Rome and the reopening of the Teatro di Tor

find employment in Florence at the service of Ferdinando de' Medici. These hopes were boosted by the earlier commissions of the Grand Duke. Indeed, in 1702–1706 Ferdinando commissioned the composer to write five operas: *Flavio Cuniberto* (1702, libretto by M. Noris), *Arminio* (1703, libretto by A. Salvi), *Turno Aricino* (1704, libretto by S. Stampiglia), *Lucio Manlio* (1705, libretto by S. Stampiglia), and *Il Gran Tamerlano* (1706, libretto by A. Salvi);⁴⁵ but Ferdinando unfortunately failed to permanently employ Scarlatti. The music for the above-mentioned *drammi* is now lost in most cases. Nevertheless, interesting correspondence between the composer and the Grand Prince survives, comprising approximately sixty letters written between 1683 and 1708. What do we learn from them about Scarlatti as an artist and a human being? First of all, Scarlatti was highly conscious of his aims. He would carefully read the libretti sent by Ferdinando. Before getting down to work, he already had a clear idea concerning the shape of the arias, and he took great care to urge singers to follow all his instructions regarding the dynamics and types of expression. During his work on *Arminio*, he demanded that singers “in this opera should act in accordance with my written guidelines in appropriate moments in order to convey the idea they were created for. It is because the quality of their performance mainly

di Nona, after the late Pope Innocent XI, who opposed secular entertainment, was replaced by Alexander VIII, of the Ottoboni clan. The work was praised for excellent music, splendid sets and costumes, as well as the singers' abilities. It consists of fifty-three arias and two duets. Compared with Scarlatti's operatic debut, *Gli equivoco nel sembante*, the number of arias is larger, and they had become more extensive. In twenty-six arias the singers are accompanied by the basso continuo alone. In the central and final instrumental ritornello sections, however, we frequently hear the full orchestra. Twenty-seven of the arias employ the entire orchestra and feature the frequent use of the concerto grosso technique. Formally speaking, most arias in *La Statira* take the form of *da capo dal segno*. The text setting focuses on musically illustrating the individual words. Of special interest in the arias from *La Statira* is the active bass line and the virtuosic character of many numbers, which feature long coloraturas. The duets are dialogues between the persons of the drama rather than letting the soloists sing simultaneously. The opera lacks the final ensemble scene and ends with Alexander's aria. Most of the recitatives are *recitativi secci*, though one should note the three instances of using the *recitativo accompagnato* (in Act I).

45 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology of Music in the Florentine Theatre 1590–1750. Operas, Prologues, Finales, Intermezzos and Plays with Incidental Music* (Detroit–Michigan: Information Coordinators, 1978), p. 70. Apart from a few arias from *Flavio Cuniberto*, Scarlatti's Florentine music has not survived.

depends on accurately keeping the time and following my indications.”⁴⁶ When composing *Lucio Manlio* he was even more precise:

where I've marked *grave* I don't mean melancholically; where *andante* it's not *presto* but melodiously; where *allegro*, it's not abruptly; where *allegro*, it's not supposed to make the singer run out of breath and merge the words; where *andante-lento*, there is no space for sounding bombastic but it allows for passionate and pleasant expression which loses nothing of its tunefulness. And no melancholy whatsoever in any of the arias.⁴⁷

Furthermore, Scarlatti shared with the Grand Duke his concept of the theatrical work and the creative process: “when composing an opera my aim has always been for the first act to resemble a child that is learning to walk; the second one is a boy who walks like an adult; and the third one, a youth who is strong and fast and acts bravely.”⁴⁸

The letters also demonstrate that, according to Scarlatti, music was a branch of science or, to be more precise, a daughter of mathematics.⁴⁹ Its aim was, however, to please the listener.⁵⁰ Exposing the listener's soul to various emotions; directing them towards musical ideas depends on a proper performance, namely

46 “che devono agire in quest'Opera secondo gl'accidenti da me notati, ne'luoghi opportuni, per il portamento dell'Arie secondo l'Idèa con cui l'hopartorite; mentre dalla puntuale osservanza del tempo e degl'accidenti segnati dipende principalmente la perfetta dimostrazione de le medesime.” Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (28th July 1703); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti e il principe Ferdinando de' Medici* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1961), p. 51.

47 “dove è segnato grave, non intendo malenconico; dove andante, non prestoma arioso; dove allegro, non precipitoso, dove allegrissimo, tale che non affanni il Cantante nè affoghi le parole; dove andante-lento, in forma che escluda il patetico, ma sia un amoro vago che non perda l'arioso. E In tutte l'arie, nessuna malenconica.” Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (18th July 1705); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 64.

48 “Ho avuto sempre la mira, nel comporre l'Opere da Teatro, difar il Primo atto come un Bambino che cominci a sciogliere, ma debolmente, il passo; Nel secondo, un Giovanetto che adulto camini, ed il terzo, che, forte e veloce, sia un giovane che ardito imprenda e super ogn'impresa.” Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (18th July 1705); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 64.

49 “chè tale é l'Arte del componimento musicale, come figlia di Matematica,” Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (1st May 1706); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 70.

50 “. . . che ha per fine il gradimento di chi ascolta,” Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (1st May 1706); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 70.

singers' accuracy. This is why the composer believed that the most effective method of ensuring correct reception was writing for specific singers.

Ferdinando's satisfaction with the music submitted by Scarlatti must have been gradually decreasing, though. The Grand Duke's and his circle's tastes may have changed, too. This situation finds confirmation in a letter concerning *Gran Tamerlano*, where the Duke asks for the music to be "rather simple and noble and, if possible, rather cheerful."⁵¹ Despite the fact that the composer was doing his best to please the patron, *Gran Tamerlano* turned out to be the last opera commissioned by the Duke, who instead began to commission Giovanni Porta. It may be suspected that his decision was influenced by the fact that two operas written by Scarlatti for Venice, the Italian opera capital, namely *Mitridate Eupatore*⁵² and *Il trionfo della libertà*, proved to be failures.

It is possible that the unfavourable reception of both operas was caused by the changing preferences of the Venetians. It was already in 1698 that Giovanni Bononcini wrote a letter in which he described the Venetians as thugs and rogues who were only after sarabandes and giges and cared very little for pieces of high value.⁵³ Scarlatti was not accustomed to commercial theatres and mass audiences. His Roman audience was a small group of polymaths, aristocrats and academics who appreciated the long moral, political, and aesthetic disquisitions served up in his recitatives. They loved pomp, drama, and playing with counterpoint. The Venetians found them uninteresting and too complex, especially with regard to counterpoint and harmonic language. This finds confirmation in a cruel satire by Bartolomeo Dotti directed against Scarlatti. The lightest accusation made in that text was that the music was putting one to sleep. As a consequence, added Dotti, even a very attentive audience knows next to nothing about

51 "Mi sarà grato assai che lei Faccia una Musica più tosto facile e nobile, e che, nei luoghi dove vien per messo, la tenga altresì più tosto allegra." Alessandro Scarlatti to Duke Ferdinando (8 April 1706); qtd. after M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 69.

52 *Mitridate Eupatore* features, apart from the opening overture, also orchestral sections in the course of Act I, and a *sinfonia* opening Act III. Most arias begin with long initial ritornelli, which combine various types of sound, apply the concerting technique, and demonstrate great rhythmic invention. The *obbligato* instruments include, apart from the violin, also the oboe, the trumpet, and the cello, whose part is frequently separated from the *basso continuo*. The arias are characterised by the *da capo* form, a predilection for fast tempi, and emphasis on selected keywords, which takes the form of extensive coloraturas or sudden harmonic shifts. What attracts our attention most in the score is the prevalence of arias with a full orchestral accompaniment.

53 R. Strohm, "Alessandro Scarlatti and the Eighteenth Century," in: R. Strohm, *Essays on Handel and Italian opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 29.

what is happening on the stage.⁵⁴ Even though the press in Venice printed at least two favourable, albeit short, notes on Scarlatti's operas,⁵⁵ he did not receive any more commissions from Venice. At that time, it meant artistic failure which, however, did not indicate the end of the composer's career. He returned to Naples in 1709 as *maestro di cappella*, and his *drammi per musica* were once again staged in Neapolitan theatres. The Romans remained faithful to Scarlatti's style as well. Nevertheless, his music would be criticised more and more frequently. It was repeatedly said that his style was difficult, too personal and inconsistent with the audience's expectations.⁵⁶ This is undoubtedly an expression of the changes taking place in the musical styles and a move away from the Baroque towards Classicism.

It is believed that in 1709 Marie Casimire commissioned Alessandro Scarlatti to write music for Carlo Sigismondo Capeci's earlier *dramma per musica* entitled *Il figlio delle selve*.⁵⁷ It was very likely Pietro Ottoboni who persuaded her to employ this brilliant artist to inaugurate the domestic theatre in her palace. Ottoboni was Scarlatti's main patron in Rome after the death of Christina, Queen of Sweden. Though the music for *Il figlio delle selve* unfortunately has not survived to our day, the consequences of this collaboration turned out to be of a lasting nature since the Queen offered Domenico, the gifted son of Alessandro Scarlatti, permanent employment as her *maestro di cappella*. As for the father, he decided to go back to Naples in the same year.

Scarlatti's *Il Ciro* (1712) is a piece of utmost importance and a key reference point for Domenico's operas written for Marie Casimire. This opera was written to a libretto by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni and performed in the Palazzo della Cancelleria.⁵⁸ Alessandro Scarlatti maintained contacts with his Roman patrons till the end of his life, most of all with Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli, for whom he would write new operas, such as *Telemaco* (1718), *Marco Attilio Regolo* (1719),

54 R. Pagano, *Scarlatti Alessandro e Domenico: due vite in una* (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1985), English ed.: *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. Two Lives in One*, trans. F. Hammond, (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2006), p. 189.

55 H.S. Saunders Jr, *The Repertoire of a Venetian Opera House (1678–1714): the Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, (Harvard: Harvard University, 1985), pp. 424–425.

56 R. Strohm, "Alessandro Scarlatti. . .," p. 31.

57 A. Cametti, "Carlo Sigismondo Capeci (1652–1728) Alessandro e Domenico Scarlatti e la Regina di Polonia in Roma," *Musica d'oggi* 1931, No. 2, p. 59.

58 This score is further discussed in Chapter 8.1.5, dedicated to the Roman *drammi per musica* in the period when Marie Casimire resided in the Eternal City (cf. esp. fn. 109).

and *Griselda* (1721). Upon their request he would also rewrite his own Florentine operas. In Naples he kept composing new operas and *intermezzi*. Scarlatti even wrote a comic opera entitled *Il trionfo dell'onore* (1718). In the circles of young composers who conquered the stages of Naples towards the end of his life, he was respected mainly as a master of counterpoint and church music. Those skills attracted to him students from different parts of Europe, such as Johann Adolph Hasse and Johann Joachim Quantz from Germany. Despite this fact, Alessandro Scarlatti died penniless.

Historical compendia present Scarlatti as the main representative or even the creator of the Neapolitan school. Obviously, much depends on how we understand the notion of *a school*. If it is defined as a relation between teacher and student, which entails a transfer of skills or sharing fundamental values, then Scarlatti can hardly be considered the creator of any school. First of all, he was known for his reluctant attitude to teaching;⁵⁹ even Domenico, his most skilled child, learnt from other Neapolitan teachers. Secondly, intense research on the style of younger Neapolitan composers shows more differences than similarities between their works and Scarlatti's style. Scarlatti represents the mature Baroque while the music of Nicolò Porpora, Domenico Sarro, Leonardo Vinci and Leonardo Leo marks the beginning of the period of transformation known today as the *galant* style. Therefore, it is difficult to speak about any ideas in common. The exchange between Scarlatti and the younger composers consisted, rather, in introducing them to fundamental secrets of the music industry. To conclude, Scarlatti's music was more different from the style of his successors than from that of his predecessors.⁶⁰

Domenico Scarlatti

Domenico Scarlatti is one of the most puzzling masters of the late Baroque period. Little is known about him. Even those of his letters that survive to our times fail to shed more light on him as a musician and a human being. There are very few historical records for his life. When comparing him and his father we can draw some interesting conclusions, though. His contemporaries perceived Alessandro as one of the most outstanding composers of the era.

59 R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*. . . , p. 41. Pagano claims that presenting Scarlatti as a good teacher is a reflection of just another of the myths that surround this composer.

60 C.R. Morey, *The Late Operas of Alessandro Scarlatti*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University 1965, p. 191.

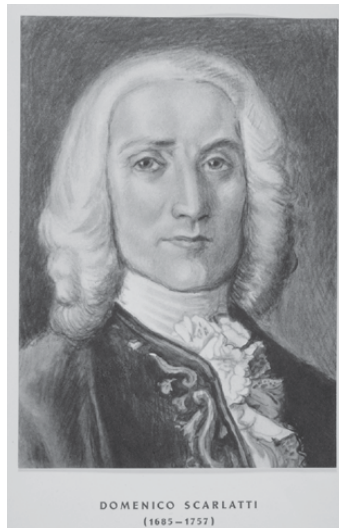


Illustration 17. Domenico Scarlatti. The University of Warsaw Library.

Therefore, there is plenty of information about his life. A source of great value is Alessandro's correspondence with Duke Ferdinando de' Medici of Florence. Still, later generations forgot about him. At the same time, Domenico has stood the test of time and historical memory mainly thanks to his harpsichord works adapted by pianists. Thus, though since the mid-eighteenth century the name of Scarlatti has almost exclusively been associated with Domenico, much less is known about him than about his father. This is the paradox of their artistic biographies.

Domenico was born in 1685 in Naples as the sixth child of Alessandro Scarlatti and Antonia Anzalone. It was there that he received his musical education. It remains unknown, however, who took care of his skills at that time. It would seem that it was the father himself but, as we know, he had little patience for tutoring and at a later stage entrusted his son to the care of Francesco Gasparini. Perhaps it was someone from the musical family of the Scarlattis or one of the many tutors associated with the Neapolitan conservatories. It is unknown how the father discovered his son's talent nor what scores the son was copying in order to learn the ropes of this art. Researchers allow themselves to be carried away and due to the lack of adequate documents create a picture of little Domenico having

fun while playing the harpsichord, and improvising with the singers, librettists and musicians who rehearsed at the Scarlattis.⁶¹

The first key date that provides certain and at the same time precise information related to Domenico Scarlatti's artistic career is December 1701, when the musician was appointed organist and composer to the royal ensemble as well as private harpsichordist to the Viceroy of Naples.⁶² In 1702 he went to Florence with his father. Alessandro hoped to attract his main patron's interest to his son but, unfortunately, he failed there. Domenico returned to his hometown, and it was on the stage of the Teatro San Bartolomeo that he debuted in 1703 as an opera writer with *L'Ottavia restituita al trono* to a libretto by Giulio Convò.⁶³ The second title of that season, *Il Giustino*, is young Scarlatti's *rifacimento* (a remake) of Giovanni Legrenzi's older, extremely popular opera of 1683 to a libretto by Nicolò Beregan, rewritten for Naples by Convò. Domenico's *Il Giustino* with additional arias was performed for the first time in the royal palace on 19th December 1703, for the twentieth birthday of King Philip V of Spain. The opera was then staged again in the Teatro San Bartolomeo.⁶⁴ During the carnival of 1704 *L'Irene*, the original opera by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (1695), was presented with new arias and duos written by Scarlatti. After these three well-received operas, there came a break in Domenico's artistic work. There were at least two reasons for this situation. First of all, the Teatro San Bartolomeo changed its impresario and Nicola Barbapiccola, Domenico's uncle, was replaced by Nicola Serino. Secondly, Alessandro wished, as he expressed it in a letter to Duke Ferdinando de' Medici, to rescue the young eagle from the city that was unfavourable towards his family. "I used force to drag him away from Naples, where his skills could be used but they were not. I took him away from Rome as well because Rome does not welcome the music that is begging for attention. My son who is an eagle, who has grown wings, should not remain slothful in the nest while I should not make his flying difficult."⁶⁵

61 R. Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 22; R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*. . . , p. 93.

62 R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*. . . , p. 96. Most of the information concerning the composer's life comes from this source.

63 Most likely the young Scarlatti was entrusted with the task of composing the opera when his father was absent from Naples. The offer came from Nicolò Barbapiccola, Domenico's uncle, the then manager of the Teatro San Bartolomeo.

64 M. Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti*. . . , pp. 35–36.

65 M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 58.

Alessandro hoped that the noble citizens of Florence, first of all the duke, whom he kept sending new pieces, would show support for his gifted son. Ferdinando, who was nicknamed ‘the Orpheus of Rulers’ (*Orfeo dei principi*),⁶⁶ appreciated Domenico’s skills but not so much as to offer him any form of employment. The duke advised the gifted youth to go to Venice “where talent wins people’s respect and regard.”⁶⁷ He promised to give him a letter of recommendation for the local patricians. Therefore, Domenico left for Venice. It was probably between 1705 and 1708 that he was tutored there by composer Francesco Gasparini.⁶⁸ In the city on the lagoon he met Thomas Roseingrave, the later promoter of his harpsichord works in England. This composer, originally from Ireland, is credited with this laconic description of Domenico’s physical appearance: “a serious, young person dressed in black, in a white wig.”⁶⁹

Moreover, in Venice Scarlatti met George Frideric Handel. According to John Mainwaring, the first biographer of the Saxon composer, Domenico recognised Handel when he was playing the harpsichord in disguise at a carnival party. The outstanding performance left him in no doubt as to the player’s name; it could be none other but the famous *Sassone*.⁷⁰ Mainwaring also describes another meeting between Handel and Scarlatti which took place in Rome possibly in 1708. It was at the request of Cardinal Ottoboni that both musicians participated in a competition for the best performance and improvisation on the harpsichord and organ. The audience was divided as to who won the harpsichord competition. Yet, Scarlatti was the one awarded. However, in organ playing Handel had no equal and was awarded the first prize. From the time of the meeting in Rome both composers held each other in special esteem until the end of their lives. Moreover, Mainwaring added that Handel would often mention Domenico,

66 M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 17.

67 “. . . dove la virtù trova ogni stima e favour,” in: M. Fabbri, *Alessandro Scarlatti*. . . , p. 59.

68 Scarlatti most certainly knew Gasparini’s treatise *L’Armonico pratico al cimbalo*. . . (Venezia: Antonio Bortoli, 1708), which discussed the realisation of the figured bass in detail. One may hypothesise that for instance the *acciaccature* described by Gasparini, which are very characteristic of Scarlatti’s sonatas, entered Domenico’s music thanks to, among others, his lessons with Gasparini, whose teaching – as the treatise demonstrates – turned the ‘young eagle’ into an accompanist consciously applying his skills.

69 Ch. Burney, *A General History of Music. From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789) (London: Printed for the author, 1935), p. 704.

70 J. Mainwaring, *Memorie della vita del fu G.F. Händel*, ed. L. Bianconi (Torino: EDT, 1985), p. 33.

whom he perceived as a highly gifted individual of very amiable personality and exceptionally good manners.⁷¹

There is no doubt that in Venice young Scarlatti met a great number of major opera and instrumental music composers as well as famous performers. It was also in Venice that he experienced the failure of his father's two *drammi*. There is too little evidence to make claims concerning the impact of this experience on Domenico as a composer. Even if he was convinced that for him the harpsichord was the perfect means of expressing his musical ideas, he had to wait for the realisation of this dream until the end of his father's life.

Domenico moved to Rome in 1709. His oratorio *La conversione di Clodoveo, re di Francia* (libretto by C.S. Capece) was well received, and in the same year he was employed as *maestro di cappella* at the court of Marie Casimire Sobieska. The contract between the Queen and the composer did not survive to our times, but on score covers Scarlatti uses the title of *maestro di cappella di Sua Maestà*. Scarlatti composed seven operas for the Queen. He also wrote several occasional pieces, including at least four serenades, two cantatas,⁷² and one oratorio. They have been discussed in this book. He certainly showed off his harpsichord skills to the Queen. Together with Silvius Leopold Weiss and other musicians working for Sobieska he performed chamber music in the form of solo and trio sonatas, duos, and *cantate da camera*. He was also undoubtedly in charge of the orchestra at balls and parties held by the Queen. Since no bills from Marie Casimire's court (or none that we know of) have been preserved to our times, we do not know what salary Scarlatti may have received from Sobieska. What we know is, for instance, that at the beginning of his work at the court of Francesco Maria Ruspoli Antonio Caldara earned ten and – soon afterwards – 20 scudi per month.⁷³ We should remember, however, that the latter aristocrat belonged to the richest and most generous patrons of his times. We may presume that Domenico's monthly salary amounted to about ten scudi, which was not a large sum of money. In 1711, Scarlatti was requested to compose the cantata *La virtù in trionfo* to mark the annual celebration of sculptors, painters and architects

71 J. Mainwaring, *Memorie della vita*. . . , p. 35.

72 Domenico Scarlatti wrote at least 50 cantatas. Most of them come from his Roman period; some may have been composed for Marie Casimire. They are unfortunately undated, were never published, and circulated in manuscripts.

73 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara. Life and Venetian-Roman Oratorios* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2007), p. 71.

organised by the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca on the Capitol. For this piece, unfortunately not preserved, he was paid three scudi.⁷⁴

In 1715 Domenico composed the *dramma per musica L'Amleto* to a libretto by Apostol Zen and Pietro Pariati, performed at the Teatro Capranica.⁷⁵ Initially Domenico's two-part comic intermezzo *Dirindina* – with a libretto by G. Gigli⁷⁶ – was to be presented during the intervals. The character of these sung intermezzi, which were satirical and crudely humorous scenes from the operatic life, exposing its rules and the ambiguous status of castrati who ruled supreme in those circles, caused the singers employed at the Teatro Capranica to rebel. The intermezzi were eventually not performed but replaced by much more polite pastoral scenes. Domenico composed one more opera for the Teatro Capranica; *Berenice, Regina d'Egitto* (libretto by A. Salvi), *dramma per musica* was staged there in 1718 as a result of his cooperation with Nicolò Porpora.⁷⁷

Towards the end of Marie Casimire's stay in Rome, Scarlatti's attention turned towards religious music, since in 1713 he became an assistant to the Kapellmeister and then in 1714 *maestro di cappella* in the papal Cappella Giulia. At that time, he composed masses, motets, and psalms. Among these pieces the most famous one today is the ten-part *Stabat Mater*. In his religious music Domenico drew on the best examples of Palestrina's polyphony.

Under the date of 3rd September 1719, we find a note in the Vatican journal saying that “signor Scarlatti, *maestro di cappella* of St. Peter's Basilica, has left for England.”⁷⁸ It is hard to establish today whether Scarlatti really travelled there. However, he had a reason to embark on that journey as 1720 was the year when his opera *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* was to be shown in London. It

74 F. Piperno, “Anfione in Campidoglio. Presenza corelliana alle feste per i concorsi dell'Accademia del disegno di San Luca,” in: *Nuovissimi Studi Corelliani. Atti del terzo Congresso Internazionale (Fusignano, 4–7 settembre 1980)*, eds S. Durante, P. Petrobelli (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1982), p. 166.

75 Only one number from *L'Amleto*, Veremonda's aria *Nella mia fortunata prigionia* (I,8), I-Bc DD.47, has survived. I am grateful to the staff of the latter library for sending me a copy of this aria free of charge.

76 *Dirindina* has been preserved as a whole, and it has its contemporary edition; cf. D. Scarlatti, *La Dirindina*, ed. F. Degrada, Milano 1985.

77 Of the music composed by Domenico Scarlatti for *Berenice*, five arias remain, all of them from Act I: *Vedi lape che ingegnosa, Che sarà quando amante, Gelo, avvampo, considero, Dice amor quel bel vermiglio*, and *Ruscelletto ch'è lungi dal mare*, D-MÜ, p. 185.

78 R. Pagano, entry for: “Domenico Scarlatti,” in: Grove Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (20.05.2019).

was staged under the title of *Il Narciso* and conducted by his friend, Thomas Roseingrave. However, on 29th November 1719 we come across information regarding the composer's arrival in Lisbon.⁷⁹ Several days later he presented himself at the Portuguese court as a singer (!) whom Queen Marie Anne accompanied on the harpsichord.⁸⁰

In Portugal Domenico Scarlatti was officially *mestre de capela* at the court of King John V. He was also appointed the royal harpsichord tutor. He would visit Italy several times afterwards. However, he was always coming back to Portugal. He left that country only in 1729 when the Portuguese princess Maria Barbara married the Spanish infante Ferdinand. From then on Spain became the new homeland for Scarlatti.

He stayed there until the end of his life, and maintained friendly relations with Farinelli, a castrato who resided in Madrid, as well as local composers. First and foremost, however, he dedicated himself to his two greatest passions: writing and promoting his 555 harpsichord sonatas⁸¹ – and gambling. While the sonatas made him famous and respected by his successors, his passion for gambling caused a lot of trouble. His debts were constantly on the rise while his family, despite Domenico's high position at the royal court, lived in poverty.

If it had not been for Domenico's harpsichord works, the ever-changing preferences would have never ensured to him the position that he holds today in the history of music. Even the operas by such masters as Alessandro Scarlatti, George Frideric Handel and Joseph Haydn were absent from the repertoire for a long time. The case would be similar with Domenico Scarlatti's operas, which were typical of his times. Even now Scarlatti's works are divided into two periods. The first one, which began in Naples and continued in Rome, produced first of all vocal music, that is, operas, cantatas, occasional and religious pieces. The second period began with Scarlatti leaving Italy and focusing on harpsichord music. Researchers studying his harpsichord works believe that it was only after

79 Dated by Gerhard Doederer on the basis of 41 volumes of reports sent to Rome from the papal nunciature I Lisbon; for more, cf. R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*. . . , p. 249.

80 R. Pagano, *Alessandro and Domenico*. . . , p. 249.

81 The two largest collections of his harpsichord sonatas are kept in Venice (Vnm) and Parma (PAc). Outside Italy the most important are those kept in Münster (D-MÜs) and Vienna (A-Wgm). Domenico Scarlatti's first published sonata collection was *Essercizi*, printed in London in 1739; cf. J.L. Sheveloff, *The keyboard music of Domenico Scarlatti: a Re-evaluation of the present state of knowledge in the light of the sources*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Waltham: Brandeis University, 1970).

his father's death that the composer fully devoted himself to keyboard music. As typical of his age, Alessandro prioritised the opera. It has been suggested that his strong personality made it impossible for him to live up to his calling at an earlier date. However, it is to his father's convictions that we owe an episode important for Domenico's career, the history of Roman music, and indirectly for Polish culture, namely – his output of works for Marie Casimire Sobieska's domestic theatre.

Silvius Leopold Weiss

Despite being a highly regarded composer in his own times and an outstanding instrumentalist specialising in playing plucked string instruments such as the lute, the archlute, and the theorbo,⁸² Silvius Leopold Weiss remains famous mostly among lutenists or in guitarist circles who search the archives for every minute detail of his biography. This is probably due to the type of instrument that Weiss wrote his instrumental music for: melancholy and sensitive, suitable for contemplation and intimacy, calling for demanding, dedicated, and sophisticated listeners capable of shutting themselves off from everyday life around them and immersing themselves in the unique sound world of the lute. This is by no means easy. On the other hand, the wonderful tradition of lute music, whose heyday falls on the Renaissance and the Baroque, was later interrupted and forgotten. Thanks to the efforts of contemporary lutenist, who are often keen researchers, the music by Weiss, “the greatest master of the lute,”⁸³ “the world's famous virtuoso,”⁸⁴ which represents the apogee of lute music, is now being restored to musical practice and historical awareness.

82 For the terms applied in Polish for ‘lute instruments,’ cf. J. Żak, “Lutnia, lutniści i muzyka lutniowa w XVIII-wiecznej Warszawie” [“The Lute, Lutenists, and Lute Music in 18th-Century Warsaw”], *Kronika Zamkowa* 2003, No. 2, pp. 147–161, and J. Żak, “Lutnia, lutniści i muzyka lutniowa w XVIII-wiecznej Warszawie,” *Kronika Zamkowa* 2003, No. 2, pp. 147–161.

83 The words of Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched, Weiss's pupil (of Polish descent), and wife to Johann Christoph Gottsched, one of the greatest representatives of the German Enlightenment; qtd. after F. Legl, “Between Grottkau and Neuburg: New Information on the Biography of Silvius Weiss,” *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 1998, p. 73.

84 Johann Mattheson, qtd. after D.A. Smith, “A Biography of Silvius Leopold Weiss,” *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 1998, pp. 1–48; F. Legl, “Between Grottkau and Neuburg. . .,” p. 26.

Silvius Leopold Weiss was born in 1687 in Grottkau, today Grodków in the Polish Opole province.⁸⁵ At the age of seven he was hailed a child prodigy and presented his skills to Emperor Leopold I. It was probably then or soon afterwards that he was employed at the court of Charles III Philip, Elector Palatine, who resided in Brieg, today Brzeg near Wrocław. Therefore, the first years of the composer's artistic career were related to Silesia.⁸⁶ It was at that time that Weiss engaged with the Sobieski brothers, who liked to reside in the nearby Oława.⁸⁷

Meeting Aleksander Sobieski proved a milestone in the composer's career. The former invited Weiss to accompany him on the way to Rome in 1710.⁸⁸ Research recently conducted in the archives of several Roman churches has confirmed Weiss's presence in the Eternal City from 1712 to 1713. On this basis, it can also be established that he was living at that time in an apartment located near the Palazzo Zuccari and married a certain Maria Angela while in Rome.⁸⁹

It can be assumed that Weiss performed solo lute music for the Sobieskis. He was also part of the *basso continuo* section that performed in the Queen's *drammi per musica*, occasional and chamber music pieces. An analysis of the score for *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, with some fragments for solo lute (for example, Elisa's aria *Voglio amore ò pur vendetta*⁹⁰) confirms this thesis.

The lute collection kept in Paris and known as the Poliński Tablature, probably compiled in Venice in 1712,⁹¹ contains – apart from pieces by Jacques de Gallot, Johan Anton Logy, and Charles Mouton – compositions by Corelli⁹² and

85 The information concerning Weiss that I present here comes mainly (unless stated otherwise) from two articles: D.A. Smith, "A Biography. . .," pp. 1–48; F. Legl, "Between Grottkau and Neuburg. . .," pp. 49–77.

86 Early in 1706 Weiss stayed at the court of Friedrich, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, and visited the court of Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine, in Düsseldorf. It is from this period that we have his earliest preserved piece, *Sonata No. 7 in C Minor*.

87 W. Roszkowska, *Oława królewiczów Sobieskich [Oława in the Times of the Princes Sobieski]* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1984).

88 The information (copied by many researchers) that Weiss left for Rome in 1708, comes from Ernst Gottlieb Baron's *Historisch-Theoretisch und Practische Untersuchung des Instruments der Lauten* (Nuremberg: Rüdiger, 1727), where the author claimed that "around 1708 he [Weiss] went with Prince Aleksander Sobieski to Italy," quote after: F. Legl, "Between Grottkau and Neuburg. . .," p. 54.

89 F. Vacca, "Weiss in Rome (1712–13): First Archival Findings," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 2000, p. 15.

90 J. Żak, "The Sobieskis in Silesia and in Rome: Weiss's First Royal Patrons," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 2000, pp. 1–12.

91 "Venetijs.7.Zbr. 1712."

92 J. Żak, "Lutnia, lutniści i muzyka lutniowa. . .," p. 8.

the earliest examples of music by Silvius Leopold Weiss's pieces and those of his brother Johann Sigismundo.⁹³ Among them is a transcription of the final choir *Lieto giorno* from Domenico Scarlatti's opera *Tolomeo et Alessandro*,⁹⁴ probably made by Silvius Leopold.

His stay in Rome turned out to be important for the young composer. Researchers stress that the most inspiring experience was his encounter with Roman plucked string instruments, the archlute and the theorbo.⁹⁵ Moreover, meeting great composers, such as A. Corelli or A. Scarlatti, must have left a significant trace both in Weiss's mind and his musical imagination. In personal life, it was his love for an Italian lady (about whom nothing is known) and marrying her, but also becoming fascinated by the omnipresent religious life, which made him convert to Catholicism. His Roman period ended in 1714, after the death of Prince Aleksander. For the next couple of years, Weiss visited different courts and cities, among others Innsbruck and Prague and, in the end, as a member of the *Hofkapelle*, settled down at the court of Augustus II the Strong in 1718.

Luisa Gottsched was a keen amateur lutenist who corresponded with Weiss. Her husband Johann Christoph Gottsched published the *Handlexicon oder Kurzgefasstes Wörterbuch der schönen Wissenschaften und Freyem Künste* (Leipzig, 1760), in which she wrote in an entry dedicated to Weiss that "to some extent, this brilliant artist can be called 'the father' of the lute since it is thanks to him that it assumed a different shape."⁹⁶ In this, way Gottsched reminded everyone that Weiss enlarged the previously eleven-string instrument by adding two more strings. He also had its neck straightened. As a result, Weiss widened the lute's scale in the bass register and strengthened the sound, which helped to get a fuller and hence better audible sound in ensemble music. These changes proved beneficial especially for concert performance. As Weiss's admirer, Gottsched also believed that his compositions stood out from the existing lute repertoire. They were, first of all, sonatas and suites for solo lute, trios, concertos, along with two exquisite tombeaux. Most of all, however, she was delighted with his performance style.

Thus, in 1710, or perhaps a bit earlier, the Palazzo Zuccari hosted an exceptional musician, who probably performed for Marie Casimire in private. He

93 J. Žak, "The Sobieskis. . .," pp. 8–9.

94 J. Žak, "The Sobieskis. . ." p. 9; the Poliński Tablature may have been compiled for Teresa Kunegunda, daughter of Marie Casimire, who wished to get acquainted with the repertoire performed at her mother's palace.

95 D.A. Smith, "A Biography. . ." p. 8.

96 L. Gottsched, qtd. after F. Legl, "Between Grottkau and Neuburg. . ." p. 74.



Illustration 18. Lute player, B. Strozzi, A. J. Brenner, J. V. Hauch. The National Library of Poland.

might even have played some music with her or tutored her granddaughter. While in the service of the Queen at her Roman residence, he certainly contributed to the music performances presented there, which confirmed Prince Aleksander's artistic intuitions as Weiss's official patron.

Quirino Colombani

Quirino Colombani belongs to a large group of composers working in Rome at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unfortunately, little is known about him.⁹⁷ From 1692 to 1698, he was in the service of Cardinal Pietro

⁹⁷ Information concerning Colombani qtd. after A. Leporo, "Colombani Quirino," in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds S. Sadie, J. Tyrrell, Vol. 6 (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), p. 134.

Ottoboni. He also worked as *maestro di cappella* in a Roman church. In 1696, he was among the musicians employed by Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli. Another of his patrons was Marie Casimire Sobieska, who in 1709 commissioned Colombani to write the music for the serenata *La gloria innamorata*, celebrating Aleksander Sobieski's birthday. The piece, written to lyrics by Giacomo Buonaccorsi, was probably performed in August or September of the same year. The music for this serenata is now lost, but a few pieces by the same composer survive both in manuscript and in printed versions. These include oratorios, a *Magnificat* for four voices, and several small-scale cantatas. His works have attracted little scholarly interest so far.

Anastasio Lingua

This composer came to Rome from Oława, where he worked as Kapellmeister at the court of Jakub Ludwik Sobieski. He was sent to Italy by Aleksander Sobieski. The date of his arrival remains unknown, but between 1712 and 1714 he stayed in apartments which belonged to the Queen's palace.⁹⁸ It is difficult to establish his role at the court of Marie Casimire. He is known as the author of the lost music for the serenata entitled *Le corone amoroze* (1708), to words by Carlo Sigismondo Capece. It is possible that Anastasio Lingua worked as *maestro di cappella* at the court of Marie Casimire until 1709, that is, until Domenico Scarlatti took over this post.

Pietro Franchi

Nothing can be said today about this composer except that he was, with Domenico Scarlatti, the co-author of the music for the serenata entitled *La pastorella rigidetta e poi amante* (to a libretto by G. D. Pioli), performed at the Queen's palace in 1708.⁹⁹

Paolo Lorenzani and Arcangelo Corelli

These two musicians marked their presence in the Sobieskis' circles on the occasion of Marie Casimire's two younger sons being decorated with the Order of the Holy Spirit (French: *Ordre du Saint-Esprit*). As mentioned above, the grand ceremony took place at the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi at the end of December 1700. It began with Corelli's *sinfonia* and *concerto* performed by a hundred or

⁹⁸ F. Vacca, "Weiss in Rome. . .," pp. 25–26.

⁹⁹ S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana*. . . , p. 58.

more musicians.¹⁰⁰ Lorenzani, who was at that time *maestro di cappella* for the Cappella Giulia, was the composer of the motets then performed.¹⁰¹

Lorenzani was well known in the Italian and French aristocratic circles. In Rome, he was held in high regard as a composer of religious music, while the French staying in the Eternal City respected him for his earlier work in Paris, where for seventeen years he was the *maître de la musique de la reine*. Lorenzani was one of the very few Italians widely recognised in France and respected by Louis XIV.¹⁰² Notably, he composed a pastoral opera entitled *Nicandro e Fileno*, performed for the king at Fontainebleau in 1681. This shows that in a period when Italian vocal art was not very highly respected in France, Lorenzani succeeded in gaining the Sun King's highly favourable opinion concerning his music.¹⁰³ When Lorenzani returned to the Eternal City following the death of the Queen of France and disappointing conflicts with Lully, he dedicated himself fully to religious music. It is hardly surprising, then, that his motets were performed at the French church during the *fiesta* in honour of Marie Casimire's sons, as the Queen would often remind everyone in Rome of her French origins. The ceremony was described as follows: "singers performed a variety of motets by Paolo Lorenzani, the former *maestro di cappella* to the Queen of France who is currently [*maestro di cappella*] at the Vatican Basilica. Because of the number of voices and the beauty of the music, the motets were liked so much that the ceremony left both all aristocratic guests and the commoners who came [to the church] fully satisfied."¹⁰⁴

The person and oeuvre of Arcangelo Corelli are well-known in the history of music. There is also a large body of literature dedicated to him. Let me only

100 *Ragualio Di quanto si é fatto di solenne nella Chiesa di S. Luigi della nazione francese In occasione della Cerimonia praticata nel conferirsi il Cordone Bleux Conceduto dalla Maestà di Lodovico XIV Re di Francia alli Principi Alessandro, e Costantino Figliuoli Della Regina Vedova Maria Casimiera di Polonia* (Roma: Per gli Eredi del Corbelletti, 1701), p. 5.

101 *Ragualio Di quanto...*, p. 6.

102 R. Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato. Politics, Patronage, and Music in the Life of Atto Melani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 301.

103 A. La France, "Lorenzani, Paolo," in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians...*, Vol. 15, p. 185.

104 "fù da i Musici cantata diversi mottetti, che per la copia delle voci, & esquisitezza della Musica, studio del Signor paolo Lorenzani, che fù Maestro di Cappella della Regina di Francia, & ora della Basilica Vaticana, piacque in maniera, che terminò con sodisfazione di tutta la Nobiltà, e del popolo concorsovi," in: *Ragualio Di quanto...*, p. 6.

indicate that from the beginning of her stay in the Eternal City Marie Casimire must come in contact with the music of the “Roman Orpheus,” as Corelli was called. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest composers of his time. In 1777 that “Gentleman’s Magazine” wrote the following about him: “this marvellous virtuoso, the son of the Roman School, demonstrated his wonderful skills in selecting and acquiring its lively and valuable rules from which he chose and shaped the most charming and unrivalled style, so much filled with grace and beauty that the human mind could ever be capable of.”¹⁰⁵

It is difficult to determine when the Queen could have heard Corelli’s music for the first time. Since between 1680 and 1709, all orchestras playing in Rome were called Corelli’s orchestras,¹⁰⁶ we may presume that the composer conducted the ensembles that performed at the welcoming ceremony organised by Roman aristocrats for Marie Casimire. Their first documented encounter with his music, however, dates back to December 1700, when the above-mentioned ceremony of the Queen’s sons receiving the Order of the Holy Spirit took place. Nevertheless, from the beginning of her stay in Rome Sobieska must have listened to Corelli’s *sinfonie* and concerts performed during public, secular and religious *feste*, private performances held by Roman aristocrats, meetings of the members of the Accademia dell’Arcadia,¹⁰⁷ and grand events at the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca in the Capitol, which between 1702 and 1709 consistently opened with Corelli’s compositions. It is certain that on numerous occasions she admired his sonatas *da chiesa* and *da camera*, along with *concerti grossi*. Furthermore, Teresa Chirico believes that the serenata entitled *L’Amor Divino, e la Fede* (libretto by P. Ottoboni, music by F. Amadei or A. Scarlatti, 1703), which Cardinal Ottoboni

105 “This great virtuoso, son of the Roman School, has demonstrated his miraculous talent in the choice and absorption of its vivid and precious canons, with which He selected and made a style for the most part delightful and unrivalled, and full of every loveliness and beauty that can issue from the mind of Man,” qtd. after P. Allsop, “‘Nor Great Fancy or Rich Invention’: on Corelli’s Originality,” in: *Arcangelo Corelli fra mito e realtà storica. Nuove prospettive d’indagine musicologica e interdisciplinare nel 350° anniversario della nascita. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi, Fusignano, 11–14 settembre 2003*, eds G. Barnett, A. D’Ovidio, S. La Via, Vol. 1, Firenze: Olschi, 2007, p. 24.

106 J. Spitzer, N. Zaslav, “Corelli’s Orchestra,” in: J. Spitzer, N. Zaslav, *The Birth of the Orchestra. History of an Institution, 1650–1815*, Oxford 2004, p. 115.

107 In recognition of his talent, Corelli was admitted to the Accademia dell’Arcadia in 1706, along with Alessandro Scarlatti and Bernardo Pasquini. They were the only musicians on whom this honour was conferred in that period, since the Academy was, first and foremost, a literary institution.

dedicated to Marie Casimire, features A. Corelli's concerti grossi.¹⁰⁸ It remains possible – though we have no records to support this claim – that the Queen commissioned Corelli to compose music for her or to conduct works that she commissioned elsewhere. What is certain is that the works of the Roman Orpheus constituted a key element of the Queen's musical experience in the Eternal City; they were also well-known to the musicians she hired.

Other Musicians

It is certain that musicians (including composers) accompanied the Queen on her way from Poland to Rome. However, the *Specificazione delle persone d'accompagnamento e di servitù della Maestà della Regina vedova di Polonia* makes no mention of them.¹⁰⁹ In view of the chronicler they may have been unworthy of being listed separately in the 180-people-strong group. A brief list of persons belonging to the milieu of the Queen's father, entitled *Nota della famiglia cha va a Roma con il Cardinale d'Arquien*, does mention one signer, Signor Giuseppino.¹¹⁰ Either musicians were omitted from the travellers list, except for outstanding personages such as the castrato Giuseppino, or they reached Rome at a later stage, possibly accompanying Aleksander or the Queen's other sons.

This concerns first and foremost several French artists known for their later activity at the Sobieskis' residences in Oława or Wrocław. They include Jean De Vienne, Ismael, Allais, and Gabriel Fusièrè. Roman archives confirm the presence in the Eternal City of the former three musicians, along with the Frenchman l'Angloè (Langlois) and the Italians: Floriano Flori and Giovanni Francesco Fritelli.¹¹¹ The information that Gabriel Fusièrè appeared at the court of the Polish Queen in Rome was provided by Wanda Roszkowska¹¹² and repeated by Jerzy Żak.¹¹³ However, Roszkowska fails to provide any source for her claim.

108 T. Chirico, "L' inedita serenata alla regina Maria Casimiera di Polonia: Pietro Ottoboni committente di cantate e serenate (1689–1707)," in: *La Serenata tra Seicento e Settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi (Reggio Calabria, 16–17 maggio 2003)*, ed. N. Maccavino (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa, 2007), p. 441.

109 I-Rbav, Fondo Boncompagni Ludovisi, Cod. F. 42, ff. 60r-61r, qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra sei e settecento (1699–1715)* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 1990), pp. 279–280.

110 I-Rbav, Fondo Chigi, Cod. M.V.V., f.205r, qtd. after G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma...*, p. 281.

111 F. Vacca, "Weiss in Rome..." pp. 24–26.

112 W. Roszkowska, *Oława...*, p. 156.

113 J. Żak, "The Sobieskis..." p. 7.

Singers

The first important source of information concerning the artists hired by Marie Casimire is a text printed in *Avvisi Marescotti* on 19th March 1701, in the early period of the Queen's stay in Rome: "On Tuesday night the Queen of Poland was entertained by musical *divertimento* to which numerous ladies were invited. Since the Sobieskis' family accounts list eight *recitanti* [singers, actors] with monthly salaries, she seems not to be thinking of going back to Poland."¹¹⁴ No names are quoted, but the information about eight actors employed simultaneously suggests that the total number of artists at the Queen's court must have been high. Some new names appear in later sources but, unfortunately, the picture of the Queen's theatrical crew remains only a partial one. Below I discuss several figures mentioned in the sources, which are for the most part laconic on this issue.

Anna Maria Giusti, Otherwise Known as La Romanina

Judging by the nickname *La Romanina* used by this famous operatic soprano, Anna Maria Giusti was born in Rome. It remains unknown, however, where she learnt to sing, where she made her debut, and in what part. Her artistic profile can be reconstructed on the basis of individual pieces of information found in contemporary catalogues of operatic life in various centres. Her first performances probably took place in the season of 1707/1708 in the Neapolitan Teatro San Bartolomeo, where she appeared in operas by Francesco Gasparini (*La fede tradita e poi vendicata*, 1707), Alessandro Scarlatti (*L'umanità nelle fere, ovvero Il Lucullo*, 1708), and in a work written jointly by Gasparini and Giuseppe Vignoli (*La regina di Macedonia*, 1708).¹¹⁵ It is also possible that in 1708 she made her debut in the Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice, in an opera entitled *Arrenione* by Giovanni Maria Ruggieri.¹¹⁶ A scandal involving the singer occurred during that

114 "La regina di Polonia martedì sera si trattenne con un divertimento musicale, al quale furono invitate molte dame, et havendo messo nel rollo della famiglia con provisione mensile 8 recitanti, si deduce lontana la sua sparsa partenza di ritorno in Polonia," in: *Avvisi Marescotti* (19th Jan. 1701), qtd. after G. Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmenta. La Vita musicale Romana negli 'Avvisi Marescotti' (1683–1707)* (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 1990), p. 148.

115 D.E. Freeman, M. Beckerman, *The Opera Theater of Count Franz von Sporck in Prague (1724–35)* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 1992), p. 319.

116 E. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar of Venetian Opera. A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres, 1660–1760* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 285.

performance, which cast a shadow over her further artistic career in this theatre. In one of the scenes in *Arrenione* Giusti engaged in a fight and hair pulling with another Roman, Anna Maria Algieri. Following this shameful yet for some historians rather colourful incident, Giusti was forced to give way to another singer and satisfy herself with supporting roles in the Teatro Sant'Angelo.¹¹⁷ Interestingly, both singers involved in this fight reappeared in the cast of *Edvige, regina d'Ungheria* (1709, to music by an unknown composer).¹¹⁸

In 1711, Giusti accepted an offer to perform as Seleuce in Domenico Scarlatti's opera entitled *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, and from that moment on she officially assumed the title of *virtuosa di camera della S.R.M. Regina di Polonia*. It is possible that she also performed in the second opera, *L'Orlando, ovvero la gelosa pazia*, presented the same year at the Palazzo Zuccari, probably in the role of Angelica, as she sang this part in other operatic versions of Ariosto's epic: *Orlando furioso* (with music by Giovanni Alberto Ristori; Venice 1713), *Orlando* (with music by Antonio Bioni; Prague, Kuks 1724). Possibly in 1712 she also performed at Marie Casimire's theatre in *Tetide in Sciro*. From 1713 to 1717 her name appeared in Venetian productions, as well as in Vicenza and Modena.¹¹⁹

According to Reinhard Strohm, the librettist Grazio Braccioli changed the part of Angelica in his *Orlando furioso* with music by Vivaldi in order to highlight "the acting skills of the performer."¹²⁰ As the researcher stressed, there could hardly be any greater complement for an artist than having changes specially introduced for her in Ariosto's plot.¹²¹

Between 1718 and 1721 there is a gap in Giusti's biography. After that we find the singer in Northern Italy. From 1723, she was part of a troupe under the management of Antonio Denzio. It is very likely that the impresario came in contact with her through Vivaldi, who was in charge of finding performers for Denzio's Prague-based crew. Giusti arrived in Prague in 1724, but in 1725 she was already working for Antonio Maria Peruzzi in Wroclaw, where she stayed until April 1726.¹²² Giusti's last performances took place in the carnival of 1730 in Pesaro, in *Didone abbandonata* (with music by Tomaso Albinoni) where she

117 E. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar...*, p. 286.

118 E. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar...*, p. 290.

119 D.E. Freeman, M. Beckerman, *The Opera Theater...*, pp. 320 ff.

120 R. Strohm, *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Vol. 1 (Firenze: Leo S.Olschki, 2008), p. 128.

121 R. Strohm, *The Operas...*, p. 127.

122 R. Strohm, *The Operas...*, p. 321.

was announced as *virtuosa dell'lettrice di Bavaria*, and in *Crispo* (with music by Giovanni Bononcini).¹²³

Between 1726 and 1730 she probably performed for Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska, Electress of Bavaria (Kurfürstin Therese Kunigunde). It is possible that the singer met Teresa during the latter's forcible stay in Venice between 1705 and 1715. It is also likely that it was the Electress who recommended Giusti to her mother and Aleksander. It seems that Anna Maria Giusti was a singer who spent most of her artistic life working for the Sobieskis, that is, for Marie Casimire, Prince Aleksander, Teresa Kunegunda, and perhaps also for Konstanty in Silesia.

Paola Alari

This is one of the most enigmatic figures connected with Marie Casimire's opera theatre. We do not know what paths led her to the Palazzo Zuccari, but there is no doubt that she sang for the Polish Queen as we learn about it from the sonnets printed after the premiere of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* (1711).¹²⁴ In those sonnets she is called *virtuosa di Sua Maestà*. It might be presumed that Alari, who was an alto, also performed in other operas shown in the Palazzo Zuccari.

Caterina Lelli, Otherwise Known as Nina

According to *Avvisi di Roma* (1703), Nina was Livio Odescalchi's singer and the wife of violinist Giovanni Mossi. In that year she performed for the Queen of Poland as well, mainly in the serenata presented in August.¹²⁵ "In the evenings on the bridge connecting the Queen's house with the one facing the garden, a serenata was performed by the famous Nina, Master Don Livio Odescalchi's singer, as well as Giulietta and Giuseppino, Her Majesty's castrato. This event drew the attention of noble ladies in Rome and a huge crowd."¹²⁶ The serenata itself was

123 R. Strohm, *The Operas...*, p. 321.

124 *Rime di diversi autori...*, p. 17.

125 Saverio Franchi suggests that Prince Odescalchi was in love with Caterina Lelli, since in his last will he bequeathed a life pension to her on the condition that she would not perform in public theatres; cf. S. Franchi, "Il Principe Livio Odescalchi e l'oratorio politico," in: *L'oratorio musicale italiano e i suoi contesti* (secc. XVII-XVIII). *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi* (Perugia, Sagra Musicale Umbra 18-2-settembre 1997), ed. P. Besutti (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 2002), p. 147.

126 "Nella sera sopra il Ponte di comunicazione dalla Casa della Regina à quella che v'è al Giardino, vi fù una virtuosa serenata cantata dalla famosa Nina cantarina del Sig.re D. Livio Odescalchi, e da Giulietta, e da Giuseppino Castrato di sua Maestà, che tirò la curiosità delle prime Dame di Roma, e gran numero di Popolo," in: *Avvisi*

very well received but, unfortunately, a few days later the singer's voice faltered. It was only after some time that she could perform once again on the Queen's bridge. "That night the Queen of Poland gave the crowd the customary *divertimento* in the form of her serenata with the famous Nina, who got her voice stolen on previous nights by envious zephyrs."¹²⁷

A few days later, the Roman *avvisi* reported:

Some wished to see a disagreement between the Queen of Poland and Master Don Livio Odescalchi, because His Excellency refused her [that is, Marie Casimire's] request to let her hire his highly sought-after singer Nina, who was supposed to be at her [the Queen's] service for 15 scudi a month, plus boarding. Her Majesty did not realise how difficult it would be for her to part with this young person who was able to appreciate [her] great care. In the context of losing [of Nina] her Majesty informed His Excellency that mermaids can be heard in all the places where they are well fed. Three [singers] from their number with the clearest voices were at her service.¹²⁸

Nina returned to her patron and probably remained at his service till 1713, that is, until the prince's death. The disagreements between the Queen and Odescalchi occurred not because of their competition for the singer but for political reasons. During the War of the Spanish Succession His Excellency supported the emperor's faction, and therefore was in opposition to the French-Spanish faction which Marie Casimire had supported throughout her stay in Rome. After Odescalchi's death Nina became a *virtuosa* in the service of Francisco de Sá e

giornalieri (4th Aug. 1703), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata in Rome and Naples: A documentary study with emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Los Angeles: University of California 1983), pp. 404–405.

127 "Nella notte questa Reginadi Polonia diede al Popolo il solito divertimento della sua serenata, nella quale cantò la famosa Nina, che nelle sere passate gl'invidiosi Zefiri rubbata le havevano la voce," in: *Avvisi giornalieri* (8th Aug. 1703), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 405.

128 "Vogliamo, che siano nati disapori trà la Regina di Polonia, et il Signore D.on Livio Odescalchi, per haverli S.ua Eccellenza negata Nina sua Cantatrice, che ricercata haveva di haverla al suo servizio con 15: scudi il mese, e la tavola, non considerando S.ua Maestà quanto sia difficile di staccare dal cuore la virtù radicata di questa Giovane, che seppe con essa meritare un tanto patrocínio. In mancanza della quale ha fatto conoscere Sua Maestà all'Eccellenza Sua, che le sirene si fanno sentire in tutti i luoghi ove restano satolle, havendone pigliate tre di più chiara voce al di lei servizio," in: *Avvisi giornalieri* (18th Aug. 1703), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 407. If the Queen really paid Nina 15 scudi a month, she was more generous than Odescalchi, who only paid her 8 scudi – nearly twice less; cf. S. Franchi, "Il principe Livio Odescalchi..." p. 180.

Menezes, Marquis de Fontes, the ambassador for Portugal. At his residence Nina sang, among others, in the serenata entitled *Applauso genetliaco* (1714) with music by Domenico Scarlatti.¹²⁹ Her later life was very turbulent and therefore reported in chronicles. Because of wangling money out of noble patrons and borrowing more and more money, the singer came close to being jailed. It seems that she spent the rest of her life in Venice under the protection of one of the Republic's diplomats.

Maria Domenica Pini, Otherwise Known as Tilla

She was born in Florence in c. 1670/1671 and was active mostly in her home city. She also sang in Prato in works commissioned by her patron, duke Ferdinando de' Medici. They were, among others, operas by Tomaso Albinoni and Francesco Gasparini (*Alarico re de' vandali*, 1701¹³⁰), Alessandro Scarlatti (*Odoardo*, 1701;¹³¹ *Flavio Cuniberto*, 1702¹³²), and Giovanni A. Perti (*Astianatte*, 1701¹³³). In 1704 she was allowed to leave for Venice and participate in the autumn season in the Teatro San Cassiano.¹³⁴ However, her Venetian debut had taken place much earlier, in 1693, when she performed in *La forza della virtù* by Carlo F. Pollarolo in San Giovanni Grisostomo.¹³⁵ All the time she maintained artistic relations with her native Florence, where she appeared in two successive operas by A. Scarlatti (*Lucio Manlio l'Imperioso*, 1705,¹³⁶ and *Il Gran Tamerlano*, 1706¹³⁷), but also in G. A. Perti's opera *Ginevra principessa di Scozia* (1708).¹³⁸ The part of Rossane in *Il Gran Tamerlano* was originally to be sung by alto Giovanna Albertini, but was eventually performed by Pini, who was a soprano. Because of that change Scarlatti had to rewrite the whole of Act I and a half of Act II. Duke Ferdinando, aware of her voice qualities, told Perti to change one of the arias in

129 S. Franchi, "Il principe Livio Odescalchi..." p. 180.

130 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology of Music in the Florentine Theatre 1590–1750. Operas, Prologues, Finales, Intermezzos and Plays with Incidental Music* (Detroit–Michigan: Information Coordinators, 1978), p. 189.

131 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 189.

132 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 192.

133 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 190.

134 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 197.

135 H.S. Saunders Jr., *The Repertoire of a Venetian Opera House...*, p. 266.

136 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 201.

137 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 207.

138 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 213.

Ginevra principessa di Scozia so that it would become *più staccata* and Pini would have more time to take a breath.¹³⁹

From 1705, Pini would sing less and less frequently in her hometown, appearing mainly in Venetian operas. At the same time, she still eagerly introduced herself as the *virtuosa* of Ferdinando de' Medici.¹⁴⁰ In the entry printed in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*¹⁴¹ her professional activity does not go beyond 1710. However, Pini was still active also later, which finds confirmation in Roman records. According to a letter sent from Rome on 11th April 1711, Marie Casimire "is awaiting the arrival of her son, Prince Jakub Sobieski who is accompanied by Tilla, a famous singer, and other good *professori* of music."¹⁴² Jakub received the news of the death of emperor Joseph I and eventually did not reach Rome.¹⁴³ He probably stayed in Florence or, what is even more likely, at his sister's in Venice. It is there that he brought together those musicians, including Maria Domenica Pini. Soon afterwards, her patron requested her back. On 8th August 1711 *Avvisi di Roma* wrote: "On Wednesday night a relay arrived from Florence sent by the Duchess of Bavaria [Violante Beatrice], wife to Duke Ferdinando, asking the Queen kindly to return her *virtuosa* Tilla."¹⁴⁴

Another mention of Pini comes from 4th May 1711. In that month Marie Casimire was planning to revive the operas that had been performed at her theatre during the previous carnival, that is, *Tolomeo et Alessandro* and *L'Orlando*. This was due to the fact that excellent musicians were (temporarily?) present there, including the famous Tilla.¹⁴⁵ The singer also appeared on 9th August 1711

139 R.L. Weaver, N. Wright Weaver, *A Chronology...*, p. 214.

140 T. Colin, "Pini Maria Domenica," in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 3, ed. S. Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 1014.

141 T. Colin, "Pini Maria Domenica," p. 1014.

142 "Attende di giorno, in giorno l'arrivo del Principe Giacomo Subieschi figlio, che conduce con se la Tilla famosa Canterina et altri buoni professori della Musica," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (11th April 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 623. We should remember that the term *professori della musica* referred to professional musicians.

143 Jakub was the late Emperor's in-law through his wife, and therefore considered it his duty to return to the funeral ceremony.

144 "Mercoledì mattina per staffetta venuta da Firenze stara fata spedire dalla Principessa di Baviera consorte del Principe Ferdinando alla medesima regina, si volesse contenere rimandarli la sua Virtuosa Tilla," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (8th Aug. 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 626.

145 "La Regina di Polonia, e Principe Alessandro Subieschi suo figlio vanno allestendo il bisognevole, per fare rappresentare nel Teatro al Casino alla Trinità de Monti per alla

in a serenata of an unknown title: “On Monday night the Queen of Poland held a performance of a three-part serenata with new lyrics and music on her palace balcony. It was received very warmly so she ordered to repeat it on Thursday. Both performances drew a very high number of spectators of different social status.”¹⁴⁶

The source cited above does not mention Pini’s name but her presence seems to be confirmed by the remainder of this lengthy note. Let us summarise it here. At that time Marquis di Prié wished to listen to Tilla during a meeting he organised, which was called *conversazione* by the Romans. He asked Roberto Bellarmini, a courtier of Marie Casimire, to arrange the meeting. Everything was ready but when the noble guests arrived Tilla sent a message saying she would not be able to perform due to her obligations at Marie Casimire’s court. It was Bellarmini himself who refused her the permission, though he blamed another of the Queen’s singers, supposedly jealous of Tilla’s successes, for the whole misunderstanding. Marie Casimire dismissed Bellarmini and offered Tilla an apartment in her palace. Nevertheless, Di Prié felt personally offended by this incident. The conflict was alleviated by Prince Aleksander, who informed the Marquis that in the summer there were plans for operas with Tilla’s participation and he would be granted a special seat in the front row. Aleksander also ordered for Tilla and two other musicians to perform a serenata of an unknown title for the crowd in front of the Palazzo Zuccari on Monday night (9th August 1711). According to another *avviso* dated 22nd August, the disagreement with the Marquis was resolved and Bellamini was blamed for the whole confusion. Tilla stayed at the Queen’s service until the following carnival.¹⁴⁷ It can also be concluded that the singer performed in *Tetide in Sciro* (1712). Until the end of

fine del corrente mese un’Opera in Musica, con essersi provisti di buoni musici, con essere già qua komparsa la Tilla famosa Catarina...],” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (4th May 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 623.

146 “Questa Regina di Polonia fece cantare Lunedì sera sopra la Loggia della sua abitazione una Serenata à 3. Vocinuova di parole, e Musica, e per aver ricevuto universale appluso la fece replicare Giovedì, essendovi stato tanta la prima, che la seconda volta numeroso concorso d’ogni grado di Persone,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (9th Aug. 1711).

147 “Con li boni maneggi del Conte Fede, restorno aggiustate le piccoli pendenze vertenti à conto della Tilla Canterina tra la Regina di Polonia, e Marchese di Prié, datone la colpa di tutto a Roberto Bellarmini, che si trova fuori del servitio di Sua Maesta e la Tilla, restà quà à servire Sua Maesta per il Venturo Carnevale,” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (22nd August 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 630.

Marie Casimire's stay in the Eternal City, her name was not mentioned in Roman records anymore.

Giovanna Albertini, Otherwise Known as la Reggiana

Though Albertini may have never sung for Marie Casimire in the Palazzo Zuccari, an *avvisi* reports that the Queen was highly interested in her. "The Polish Queen is discussing her terms with a famous singer, known as la Reggiana, who is passing through Rome from Naples. The Queen wants her to stay and perform in an opera she wishes to present in May at the arrival of her son, Prince Jakub."¹⁴⁸

La Reggiana was staying at the Colonna family's palace. She also performed at Ruspoli's. The Queen was determined to listen to her voice; she liked both her voice and her performance style. However, the pleasure of listening to La Reggiana in her own palace proved out of reach for financial reasons.¹⁴⁹ At that time Albertini was one of Italy's top singers. She performed in Naples, Venice, and Florence (*Lucio Manlio l'Imperioso*, music by A. Scarlatti; 1705). It is also possible that it was either Ferdinando de' Medici or his wife Violante Beatrice who suggested that the Queen should take interest in Giovanna's skills.

Diamante Maria Scarabelli, Otherwise Known as Diamantina

Scarabelli, born in Bologna, was a soprano and today is mainly known for the vocally challenging role of Poppaea in *Agrippina* by Handel. In 1692, she debuted on stage in Giovanni Legrenzi's *Pausania* (to a libretto by an unknown artist) in Mantua. The success in *Il Perseo* (a *pasticcio* by different composers) staged in Bologna in 1697 brought her fame, as can be read in *La miniera del Diamante*, which praises her skills. In the subsequent years Scarabelli performed both in her home city and in Venetian theatres in operas by Pollarolo, Lotti, and Caldara. In 1710, she performed as Nerina, a nymph of Lazio in the Teatro Nuovo di Piazza in Vicenza in *La Silvia* (libretto by E. Bissari, music by an unknown author, possibly

148 "Essendo di passaggio da Napoli per Roma la famosa cantatrice detta la Reggiana questa Regina di Polonia sta in trat tato di fermarla per l'opera che vuol fare questo maggio in occasione Della venuta del Principe Giacomo suo figlio," in: *Dispacci di Pesaro* (7th March 1711), qtd. after T. Gialdroni, *Spigolature romane...*, p. 383.

149 "La Regina di Polonia va preparando con molta solecitudine l'opera che vuol fare nel prossimo Maggio ed ha voluto sentire la famosa cantatrice detta la Regiana che si trova qui di passaggio in casa Colonna ma si crede siale più piaciuta la di lei voce, e maniera, che la dimanda del pagamento," *Dispacci di Pesaro* (14th March 1711), qtd. after T. Gialdroni, *Spigolature romane...*, p. 384.

F. Gasparini), an opera dedicated to Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska. It is believed that in 1714, she sang at Marie Casimire's theatre.¹⁵⁰ Unfortunately, I have not managed to find any mention of her stay in Rome that year.¹⁵¹ According to a chronicle of operatic productions shown in Venice, she was not present in that city in the stage seasons of 1713 and 1714.¹⁵³ It cannot, therefore, be ruled out that at that time she was singing in Rome, possibly for Marie Casimire.

Lucinda Diana Grifoni

Mainly associated with the Florentine operatic scene, this singer is presented as the *virtuosa della Maestà la Regina di Pollonia* at least from 1713 when, according to Reinhard Strohm's work devoted to Antonio Vivaldi's operas, she performed in the Florentine reopening of E. Bissari's *La Silvia* of 1710, a *dramma per musica* which had originally been dedicated to Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska.¹⁵⁴ Because the singer did not perform in Florence in 1712 or 1714, it might be presumed that at that time she sang in the Palazzo Zuccari. Even as late as 1715 she was still boasting the title of Marie Casimire's *virtuosa*. This finds confirmation in the printed libretto of *Amore e maestà* by A. Salvi.

Victoria, Otherwise Known as Tola di Bocca di Leone

She was better known as a courtesan than as a singer, and she became notorious because of a scandalous love affair with Konstanty Sobieski, which the whole city of Rome was gossiping about. Tola, whose nickname supposedly comes from the name of the street where she was living, was an example that can make us believe even more strongly in the thesis concerning the ambiguous position of women who were professionally dealing with the opera art. Many of them approached their talent seriously but some, like Tola, would use their beauty to further a successful career, and hence frequently changed lovers. On 31st July 1700, she performed a serenata dedicated to Marie Casimire in the Palazzo Odescalchi at Piazza dei SS. Apostoli.¹⁵⁵ In September 1700, the whole city was gossiping about the singer and her love affair with Prince Konstanty who turned her into

150 J. Rosselli, "From princely service to the open market: Singers of Italian opera and their patrons, 1600–1850," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1989, No. 1, p. 16.

151 W. Dean, "Scarabelli Diamante Maria," in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera...*, Vol. 4, p. 199.

153 E. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar...*, pp. 312–319.

154 R. Strohm, *The Operas...*, p. 313.

155 Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 315.

his mistress.¹⁵⁶ Tola, who was indifferent to the criticism and indignation of residents of the Eternal City, proudly walked the streets in the pretty clothes and jewellery presented to her by her lover. She would use his carriage ostentatiously and did not mind having some rough sonnets written about her. She would sing an arietta under the balcony of the Sobieskis' Palazzo Zuccari while the Queen was having dinner with her younger sons. Eventually, Marie Casimire succeeded in removing Tola from the city, and she left for Naples. On that occasion Valesio reported on 8th April 1701: "Victoria, alias Tolla di Bocca di Leone, who we have already written about due to the confusion she had caused, has left for Naples. While she was travelling through Mantua, its duke appointed Tola his principal singer."¹⁵⁷ Several months later Valesio reported that Tola did not spend much time in Naples. However, it seems that she no longer played a part in Marie Casimire's or her sons' lives.

Faustina

In the *avvisi* we come across a certain Faustina, most probably Faustina Perugini, who was to perform in a serenata presented by Marquis Silvio Maccarani as a tribute to Marie Casimire. This piece was one of a series dedicated to the Queen at the beginning of her stay in Rome. In order to organise such artistic performances, aristocrats would employ their own artists or ones hired by the beneficiary. It remains unknown whether Faustina belonged to the group of singers working at Marie Casimire's court. At that time the queen must mainly have employed musicians that had accompanied her from Poland. A source reported on Faustina's performance in 1699: "On Tuesday night Marquis Maccarani wished the Queen of Poland to listen to a serenata. He organised the performance in the courtyard of Don Livio [Odescalchi's] palace. Even though

156 "Si vede continuamente per la città la sudetta Vittoria di Bocca Leone, mantenuta dal prencipe Costantino Subieschi, figlio della regina di Polonia, con carrozza e due staffieri e damigella, con scandalo universale, e viene chiamata comunemente 'la principessa delle puttane,' per il che si vedono in volta molti sonetti, ma laidi e di musa plebea," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 1, p. 55.

157 "Vittoria, alias Tolla di Bocca di Leone, per la quale furono gli già scritti sconcerti, partirà di Napoli, dove si trova al presente, per passarsene a Mantova, essendo stata da quel duca dichiarata sua prima virtuosa di canto," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 1, p. 341.

Faustina performed with another singer, the performance won no acclaim and was unsuccessful.”¹⁵⁸

Livia Dorotea Nanini-Costantini

Her artistic career began in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the court of John III Sobieski.¹⁵⁹ A comic troupe under the direction of her father, Giovanni Nanino, turned up in Warsaw around 1688. In 1691 Livia performed with other family members in *Per goder in amor ci vuol costanza* (libretto by Giovanni Battista Lampugnani, music by Vivano Agostini). This opera was part of the wedding celebrations of Jakub Sobieski, the Queen’s eldest son, who married Hedwig Elizabeth of Neuburg.

After leaving Poland, Livia performed in various Italian cities, including Bologna (1692), which was her birthplace, Naples (1698–1706), Genoa (1706), Venice (1707–1708). She was also active in Vienna (1709), Dresden (1713 and 1717–1720) as well as in Handel’s opera theatre in London (1726–1727). It is very likely that in 1712, she stopped over in Rome and renewed contact with Marie Casimire, while on her way to Naples; where she performed in four *drammi per musica*: *La Cassandra indovina*, music by Francesco Nicola Fago; *I gemelli rivali*, music by Domenico Sarro; *Il comando non inteso et ubbidito*, music by Antonio Lotti and Domenico Sarro; and *Basilio re d’Oriente*, music by Nicolò Porpora.¹⁶⁰ Although Livia specialised in *parti buffe*,¹⁶¹ absent from the operas staged in the Palazzo Zuccari, she could participate in numerous comedies *all’improvviso*. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that, in September 1712, she performed in *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria*, a serenata that was praised by a chronicler for the “rarità de Cantanti.”¹⁶² Another note of 3rd December 1712 presents an even

158 “Martedì sera Il Marchese Maccarani volse fare sentire una serenata alla Regina di Polonia, con haverla fatta cantare nel Cortile del Palazzo di D.on Livio, benché vi Cantasse Faostina con altra femmina, riuscì poco buona, e con meno acclamation,” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (4th Aug. 1699), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 294.

159 A. Żórawska-Witkowska, “Livia Dorotea Nanini-Costantini, zwana La Polacchina,” in: *Complexus effectuum musicologiae. Studia Mirosłao Perz septuagenario dedicata* (Kraków: Rabid, 2003), p. 266.

160 F. Cotticelli, P. Maione, “Cronologie. Teatro dei Fiorentini,” in: F. Cotticelli, P. Maione, *Onesto divertimento, ed allegria de’popoli. Materiali per una storia dello spettacolo a Napoli nel primo settecento* (Milano: Ricordi, 1996), p. 365.

161 A. Żórawska-Witkowska, “Livia Dorotea...,” p. 261.

162 *Foglio di Foligno* (17th Sept. 1712).

more tempting vision as it announces the arrival of “le due famose Cantarine” at the Queen’s Roman residence. They were supposed to participate in opera productions in the upcoming carnival.¹⁶³ Despite the fact that Nanine had a performance scheduled for 22nd January 1713 in the first Neapolitan opera of the year, she might have already become acquainted with *Tetide in Sciro* and brought the arias of the female protagonists (Antiope and Deidamia) to Naples.¹⁶⁴ The suggestion that the singer stayed in Rome and performed at Marie Casimire’s theatre is appealing, but not confirmed by any historical records.

Giuseppe della Regina, that is, Giuseppe Luparini-Beccari (?)

The castrato whom Italian sources variously call Giuseppe, Giuseppino or Pippino, Pippin de La Regina, or Peppino della Regina, was probably Giuseppe Luparini-Beccari, who came to Rome from the Republic of Poland with the Queen. His time and place of birth remain unknown but he was most likely a Florentine.¹⁶⁵ He arrived in Poland in 1690 thanks to the efforts of Cardinal Michał Radziejowski in order to perform in two opera productions in Warsaw, celebrating the weddings of Marie Casimire and John III’s children: Jakub Sobieski to Hedwig Elizabeth of Neuburg (*Per goder in amor ci vuol costanza*, 1692) and Teresa Kunegunda to Maximilian II Emanuel (*Amor vuol il giusto*, 1694).¹⁶⁶ According to Antoni Bassani, Marie Casimire praised the skills of the singer during her long journey from Warsaw to Rome.¹⁶⁷ In the Eternal City Giuseppe performed both in pieces stage on Marie Casimire’s initiative and “hired” by other aristocrats.

163 “Sono di già giunte le due famose Cantarine, cha ha fatto venir quà la Regina di Polonia per recitare nell’Opere, farà rappresentare la Maestà Sua nel suo domestico Teatro, credendosi, che riporterà applauso non inferiore a quello degl’altri anni, mentre li Compositori delle Parole, e della Musica sono l’istessi, e li Recitanti di maggior’espettativa,” *Foglio di Foligno* (3rd Dec. 1712).

164 *Arie della Regina*, I-Nc, shelf mark 34.5.14.

165 A. Szweykowska, “Luparini Giuseppe,” in: *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM. Część biograficzna [PWM Edition’s Music Encyclopaedia. Biographical Section]*, ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1997, p. 438.

166 A. Szweykowska, “Notatki dotyczące kapeli królewskiej w XVIII wieku” [“Notes on the Royal Ensemble in the Eighteenth Century”], *Muzyka* 1971, No. 3, p. 96. In Szweykowska’s article this singer is identified with Józef [Giuseppe] Luparini.

167 “Giuseppe Luparini Musico della Camera un virtuoso concerto,” in: A. Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma Della Sua Reale M.tà di Maria Casimira, Regina di Polonia, vedova dell’ invittissimo Giovanni* (Roma: Tipografia di Casa Barberini 1700), p. 6.

The first mention of his presence in the service of Marie Casimire is late and dates to 1703. The same note confirms Caterina Lella's performance for the Queen.¹⁶⁸

In 1706, Giuseppino sang in *Venere, Amore e Ragione*, a serenata with music by Alessandro Scarlatti to words by Silvio Stampigli.¹⁶⁹ The score of this work states that the singer was a soprano and performed the part of Venus.¹⁷⁰ His three arias and two trios confirm that his voice was comfortable in high registers, a few times reaching as high as b².

Moreover, in March 1710, Giuseppino appeared in an oratorio by Antonio Caldara entitled *Il trionfo della castità ovvero Oratorio per S. Francesca Romana* to a libretto by an unknown poet. The oratorio was written for Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli. According to bills from 23rd March, the total cost of preparing and presenting the piece amounted to 21.87 scudi. The Queen's singer received 4.87 scudi, that is, almost a quarter of the sum. He was given the most generous fee of all the musicians performing in this oratorio.¹⁷¹

Luparini-Beccari belonged to a group of musicians who were the closest to Sobieska. He lived in an apartment in the *Giardino di Sua Maestà*, that is, the Queen's garden,¹⁷² from 1709 to 1713.¹⁷³ It is possible then that he performed in all the works presented for the Queen at that time. After 1713, he is heard of no more. The Queen bequeathed to him in her last will the sum of 300 livres, to be paid out annually till the end of his life.¹⁷⁴

Pippo della Grance

He was another castrato hired by Marie Casimire. We are certain he was different from Giuseppino because on 10th August 1705 at the Roman church of San Lorenzo in Damaso both Peppino della Regina and Pippo della Grance performed together at the same time. No report has survived our times but there is a bill quoted by Teresa Chirico which states: "On 10th August 1705, the Feast

168 Cf. fn. 139.

169 The exact circumstances of performing this work (time and place) are unfortunately unknown.

170 D-MÜs, Sant Hs. 3935.

171 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara...*, p. 70.

172 F. Vacca, "Weiss In Rome...", pp. 24–26.

173 F. Vacca, "Weiss In Rome...", p. 24.

174 "A Jolipino Luparini, par an, sa vie Durant – 300." Krzysztof Koszarzecki, "Rzysmskie testamenty królowej...", p. 105.

of St. Lorenzo, Mr. Peppino della Regina scudi 3 and Mr. Pippo della Grance scudi 1.50.”¹⁷⁵

Giulietta

In August 1703 a certain Giulietta, an otherwise unidentified singer, performed in an serenata for the Queen.¹⁷⁶

The information provided above fully represents the current state of knowledge concerning the singers performing in the Palazzo Zuccari. Unfortunately, printed libretti of the operas performed at the Queen's theatre fail to mention the names of the performers, though in the libretti of the *drammi per musica* performed at the Teatro Capranica and in other domestic theatres, this was already quite a common practice. Hence, the names of many singers associated with the Queen's *teatrino* remain unknown. It seems that Marie Casimire acquired some singers through recommendations by Teresa Kunegunda (who was staying in Venice) and Violante Beatrice (residing in Florence). Sobieska also visited the Teatro Capranica to look for performers and hired the singers of her Roman aristocratic friends. It was at their palaces that she listened attentively to singers' performances with a view to hiring them in the future. In accordance with the practices at that time, persons from her close circle were "hired out" in exchange for other musicians. Therefore, it seems that a high number of singers performing for Prince Odescalchi, Prince Ruspoli, and Cardinal Ottoboni also appeared in the Palazzo Zuccari. There is no doubt that if Marie Casimire took a liking to a person's voice or personality, she could be a generous patron despite her financial struggles.

Looking at the names of the singers hired by Sobieska, we can see that apart from Anna Maria Giusti and Giovanna Albertini they were all stars of a local calibre. There is no reliable evidence to confirm that Diamante Maria Scarabelli or Livia Dorotea Nanini-Costantini ever performed in the Palazzo Zuccari. However, if these singers presented their skills in works written for Marie Casimire, which is very likely, this could let us assert that the *feste* initiated by the Queen featured excellent artists, celebrated on the Italian and European stages.

175 "A dì 10 agosto 1705 per la festa di s. Lorenzo SS.ri Peppino Della Regina s. 3 Pippo Della Grance s. 1:50....," qtd. after T. Chirico, *L'inedita serenata alla regina Maria Casimiera di Polonia...*, p. 431.

176 Cf. fn. 296.

Sonnets as a Tribute to Marie Casimire's Singers

Rime di diversi autori per lo nobilissimo dramma del Tolomeo, et Alessandro Rappresentato nel Teatro Domestico della Sacra real Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina di Pollonia, dedicate alla Maestà Sua is a series of eighteen sonnets composed by poets from the Roman Arcadian Academy after listening to *Tolomeo et Alessandro ovvero la corona disprezzata*. None of the operas presented by Sobieska was honoured in this way. For some exceptional yet today unknown reasons the Queen and the circle of Arcadian poets wished to preserve the memory of this specific composition, believing that the *fiesta* would live on in printed pictures and impressions.¹⁷⁷ *Rime di diversi autori* is certainly a collection of printed impressions of a theatrical *fiesta* that took place on 17th January 1711 in the Palazzo Zuccari. It is also a set of poems that belong to the more-than-one-hundred-year-old tradition of poetry honouring professional singers.¹⁷⁸ The

177 Cf. M. Fagiolo Dell'Arco, "La festa barocca a Roma. Sperimentalismo, politica, meraviglia," *Analecta Musicologica* 2004, pp. 14–15.

178 The origins of this interesting tradition can be traced back to Ferrara, where, at the court of Duke Alfonso II d'Este and his wife Margherita Gonzaga, an ensemble was set up in 1580 which exerted a significant impact on the lives of professional women-musicians, especially singers. This was the famous *concerto delle donne* or *delle dame*, soon to gain fame throughout Italy. It was the voice of one of the ensemble members, Laura Peverara, that Giambattista Guarini described in his poem *Mentre vaga angioletta ogni anima gentil cantando alletta*, subsequently set to music by many composers and madrigalists, including Claudio Monteverdi. Duke Alfonso's poet claimed that Laura's voice could skilfully represent various most extreme emotions; that it seemed to vibrate hovering in the air. Peverara's virtuosity, the spontaneity of her interpretations, and her artistic sensitivity, are reflected in two other collections of poems: *Il lauro secco* (1582) and *Il lauro verde* (1583), by Torquato Tasso (who was probably in love with the singer) and a group of his friends. Cf. I. Emerson, "Ladies of Italy," in: I. Emerson, *Five Centuries of Women Singers* (Westport and London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), p. 5. The emergence of accompanied monody, the genre of *dramma per musica*, as well as of public opera theatres, created a demand in the music market for female singers endowed with a talent for the stage. A model figure in this respect was Anna Renzi (c. 1620–1660 or later), considered by many researchers as the first prima donna in the history of the opera. Cf. C. Sartori, "La prima diva della lirica italiana: Anna Renzi," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1968, No. 2, pp. 430–452. In recognition of her outstanding roles, such as Deidamia in *La finta pazza* (to his libretto, with music by F. Saccati, Venice 1644), Giulio Strozzi dedicated to Renzi an eclogue, and initiated *Le Glorie Della Signora Anna Renzi Romana* (Venice 1644), a collection of verse by various poets who praised Renzi's vocal mastery. Cf. *Le Glorie Della Signora Anna Renzi Romana* (Venezia: Surian, 1644); I-Wnm,

significance of this and other similar collections cannot be overestimated today, since while paying tribute to highly skilled or famous artists, they also describe their theatrical achievements. On numerous occasions these poems are the only record of those persons' artistic activity. On the other hand, such collections provide information concerning the reception of music at that time. In sonnets, sometimes called madrigals, poets would usually describe a selected scene or aria whose content they found especially important or which was especially successful in the interpretation of the singer they praised. What do the *Rime di diversi autori* tell us about music reception? What language or metaphors did the poets use to praise the skills of the musicians, in particular the female singers performing at Marie Casimire Sobieski's theatre?

The collection consists of two parts. Out of the first nine sonnets, eight pay tribute to patrons, that is, Queen Marie Casimire and Prince Aleksander Sobieski, the overwhelming majority being dedicated to the prince. They were written by Domenico Renda, Giacomo Buonaccorsi, Giuseppe Paolucci, and Pier Jacopo Martelli, as well as authors concealed behind their initials or Arcadian names.

The set of panegyric sonnets is followed by poems that pay tribute to the opera performers.¹⁷⁹ These are as follows:

1. Agl. Cid., a *madrigale* dedicated to those singing the parts of Tolomeo and Seleuce and referring to the last scene of act II (II,13);
2. D.R., a *sonetto* for Paola Alari, referring to Dorisbe's aria *La Tortorella* (I,7);
3. Domenico Renda, a *sonetto* for Paola Alari referring to Dorisbe's aria *Vorrei vendicarmi* (II,4);
4. Domenico Renda, a *sonetto* for the performer of the part of Tolomeo, referring to his aria *Torna sol per un momento* (I,11);
5. J. de B. Arcade, a *sonetto* for [Anna] Maria Giusti, referring to Seleuce's aria *Son qual Cerva* (II,11);

shelf mark Misc. 1368.5. From then on, the custom of honouring eminent singers with occasional verse was established, and poems praising other women singers (such as Silvia Manni, Catarina Porri, and Barbara Strozzi) soon appeared.

179 At this point I will omit an analysis of the sonnets written for the two patrons since I have already dedicated attention to them in my paper entitled "Tolomeo et Alessandro' Carla Sigismondo Capecego i Domenica Scarlattiego. Sonety po operze" ["Carlo Sigismondo Capece's and Domenico Scarlatti's *Tolomeo et Alessandro*. Sonnets Follow an Opera"], in: *Od literary do opery i z powrotem. Studia nad estetyką teatru operowego [From Literature to the Opera and Back. Studies in the Operatic Aesthetics]*, eds R. D. Goliańek, P. Urbański (Toruń: Mado, 2010), pp. 407–424.



Illustration 19. Rime di diversi autori per lo nobilissimo drama del Tolomeo et Alessandro, 1711. Collection of eighteen sonnets composed by poets from the Arcadian Academy. Fondazione Cini, Venice.

6. J. de B. Arcade, *madrigale* for [Anna] Maria Giusti, with no references to any specific scene;
7. M. De M., a *sonetto* for [Anna] Maria Giusti, referring to scenes in which the character expresses her pain after a forced separation with her husband (II,12/13);
8. M. O. Past. Arc., a *sonetto* for the performers of the parts of Araspe and Elisa;
9. D'un pastore arcade, a *madrigale* for [Anna] Maria Giusti, referring to her aria *Hai vinto si crudele* (III,3).

As many as four out of the nine sonnets dedicated to the singers pay tribute to Anna Maria Giusti; two of them to Paola Alari; one of them to an unknown artist singing the part of Tolomeo; one for the parts of Araspe and Elisa; and one for Tolomeo and Seleuce. Interestingly, none was dedicated to the composer Domenico Scarlatti, despite the fact that one of the first nine pieces – by Giuseppe Paolucci writing under his Arcadian name of Alessio Cillenio – praised the merits of the librettist Carlo Sigismondo Capece as the creator of characters

that value virtue more than power, while emphasising that these characters are modelled on Jakub and Aleksander Sobieski. This is another proof of the then inferior position of the composer as compared to the poet.

In the group of sonnets that honour singers the ones dedicated to Anna Maria Giusti are particularly interesting and, at the same time, the most closely related to the operatic tradition. The first one refers to the aria *Son qual cerva sitibonda* and its central theme of a thirsty doe running to the water source, to which the protagonist compares her mental state. In the music the running doe is represented by regular quavers played first by the cello and then the whole ensemble. In the sonnet this topic is made to symbolise all the listeners who follow the wonderful and graceful voice of the singer, which one is unable to resist, and which leaves sweet or even wished-for wounds in the heart.

Another piece by the same poet likewise dedicated to Giusti is a madrigal about the voice of the singer that surpasses the nightingale's song and even that of a swan that senses the end of its life. This reference is not coincidental since both the nightingale and the swan are birds symbolically associated with music.¹⁸⁰ Comparing the skills of a singer to the moving vocalises of the nightingale has always been an expression of the highest acclaim for an artist's abilities. The swan as a symbol of beauty and perfection related to Apollo, the patron of art, including music, was said to sing only before its death, which added to a particularly tragic character of its song.¹⁸¹ The author of the madrigal dedicated to Giusti writes that singing as sweet as the one in Seleuce's aria cannot be heard even from:

A pretty swan singing
When it foresees the upcoming fatal day.¹⁸²

Then he adds,

that the shepherd
once chosen to be a great judge
who gave the first prize for beauty
to Cupid's mother,
had he listened to your beautiful voice

180 W. Kopaliński, *Słownik symboli [Dictionary of Symbols]* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990), pp. 390–391, 209–211.

181 W. Kopaliński, *Słownik symboli*, p. 209.

182 "Vago Cigno canoro/ Quando vicino il fatal dì prevede," in: *Rime di diversi autori...*, p. 21.

that makes every heart fall in love
would have given you the first prize.¹⁸³

Giusti's voice of not only outshone the most emotional songs of music-making birds but, in its beauty, it outclassed the exquisite sensual beauty of Venus herself. In the third sonnet, written under the impression of the scene in which Seleuce mourns the fate of Tolomeo, another Arcadian poet, possibly Melchiorre Maggi, writes:

You, Beauty, have taken away the glory from the Sirens
on the Adriatic Stages
and the merits from the swans;
Now, in Romulus' arenas you are working
harmonious magic, oh magic musician.
So, every soul and every heart
is put in Tolomeo's make-believe fetters
And you make others cry real tears
While you only pretend pain and wounds.
If the Nile heard your sweet lamentations
for both Seleuce and your royal husband
it would believe that those piteous events were real;
And out of pity for their cruel fate
It could raise a commander from the waves
Against the king of Cyprus, for plotting your death.¹⁸⁴

Several elements deserve our attention here: the vocal skills of Giusti surpassed the sirens' song; her dramatic skills made the spectators cry since her acting was so suggestive that Seleuce's pain and suffering seemed real. The reference to the sirens, as well as comparing Giusti's mastery to their art, comes as no surprise, since professional singers were often associated with those mythical seductresses and their marvellous voices.

183 "Pastore/Che fù già un tempo al gran giudizio eletto/E alla madre d'Amore/Concesse di bellezza il primo vanto/Udisse il tuo bel canto/Ch'ogni Core inna mora/A' tè darebbe il primo vanto ancora," in: *Rime di diversi autori...*, p. 21.

184 "Rapisti, ò Bella, in sù l'Adriache Scene/ La gloria alle Sirene, à i Cigni il vanto;/ Hor formi à noi sù le Romulee arene/ Armonica magia, musico incanto./ Stringono ogn'alma, ed 'ogni core intanto/ L'aspre di TOLOMEO finte catene,/ E fai negl'occhi altrui verace il pianto,/ Mentre simulì il duol, fingi le pene./ Se udisse il Nilo i dolci tuoi lamenti,/ E di SELEUCE, e del Real Consorte/ Crederia veri i flebili accidenti;/ E per pietà della lor cruda sorte,/ Forse il capo alzaria dall'onde algenti/ Del Rè di Cipro à machinar la morte," in: *Rime di diversi autori...*, p. 22.

The Middle Ages transformed sirens into hosts of angels. In the modern era the mythical sirens had a great impact on how women of music were perceived. The fruits of their art were at that time “either making the (male) listener more noble and lifted to the level of spiritual contemplation and love or ... igniting love and passion that brings [man] death and destruction.”¹⁸⁵ This opinion is best reflected in the profile of Renaissance courtesans, who were beautiful, sensual creatures, frequently skilled in music and performing their love songs accompanied by the lute. They would seduce and infatuate men, destroy their virtue, ruin their reputation, and empty their pouches. A group of professional singers set up at the beginning of the seventeenth century fought long and hard against this stereotype while still retaining an ambivalent position in the society. Pretty women with beautiful voices and acting skills were able to find their way in that world only through relations with a man, be it a husband, a patron, an impresario, or a lover,¹⁸⁶ which obviously did not enhance their status. Referring to the siren metaphor, which is conventional but in Giusti's context highly affirmative, the author of the sonnet confirmed the high skills of the singer. The author of the madrigal closing the collection described her as *vincitrice d'ogni cor*.

The two sonnets dedicated to Paola Alari, entitled *La Tortorella* and *Vorrei vendicarmi*, referred to the arias she performed. Neither of them contains direct praise of her vocal skills. However, both in the first number, which takes the form of a lamentation, and the second one, which is an aria of revenge, the singer had to demonstrate her vocal virtuosity. Moreover, it seems that she moved the hearts of the audience with her creation of a credible dramatic character. The first sonnet contains words of consolation for the character she created, to whom Alessandro was to ensure better fate. Such an ending was clearly directing attention to Prince Aleksander, who may have been the artist's “promoter.”

185 E.L. Calogero, “‘Sweet alluring harmony’: Heavenly and Earthly Sirens in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Literary and Visual Culture,” in: *Music of the Sirens*, eds L.Ph. Auster, I. Naroditskaya (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 140.

186 Even the most independent (working as a professional court musician) and one of the most talented of women artists in the first half of the seventeenth century, the composer and singer Francesca Caccini, could only pursue her career thanks to men; first to her famous father, Giulio Caccini, who introduced her into the music circles, and later – her first husband, singer, instrumentalist and composer Giovanni Battista Signorini. Cf. D. Roster, *Francesca Caccini, Les femmes et la création musicale. Les compositrices européennes du Moyen Age au milieu du XX^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), pp. 33–56; S.G. Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court. Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

From the sonnets we can glean that at least one artist was better than Alari, and it was the singer of unknown identity who sang the part of Tolomeo. Praising his performance in the aria *Torna sol per un momento* that ends Act I, Domenico Renda wrote:

Your sighs contain so much sweetness,
 Your gestures and speech have so much grace,
 That you could also kidnap Her like Orpheus,
 From her place to your own desires.¹⁸⁷

In the context of the artist singing the male protagonist's part, we have a reference to the most perfect of all musicians and singers, the mythical Orpheus, whom Sobieska's artist is claimed to match in his mastery.

A madrigal referring to the final duet *Empia man ci divide* from Act II praised the performers of the roles of Tolomeo and Seleuce. Its author states that the cruel hand that separates the couple is merciful nonetheless, since everyone listening to the scene of their parting, filled with pain and despair, would need to die too, so much sympathy did their fate command. This madrigal contains no praise of the singers' vocal skills. The author pays tribute to the true artists who moved the audience with their presentation of the fate of the protagonists and, consequently, let the audience delight in the principle of lifelike probability on the stage, which the Arcadians found so important.

There is no doubt that *Rime de diversi autori* is a manifesto with a clear political message, sent by the Sobieskis to the Eternal City and then further on to Europe interested in deciphering allusive content in *feste* organised in Rome. This is why they chose *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, a *dramma per musica* which, like no other opera performed in their palace, bore reference to the history of the Sobieski family. The libretto presenting the magnanimity of Aleksander, who allegedly placed brotherly love over power, reminded the Eternal City of the family's royal past and its still unforsaken ambitions, which were slowly becoming forgotten about. In order to revive the quite recent and glorious past, Marie Casimire and her son employed the pens of the Arcadian poets, whose efforts and activity in the field of restoring *buon gusto* in Italian culture had already reached far beyond the borders of Italy. At the same time, they provided an impulse for preparing a collection that today constitutes a valuable source for the study of opera reception among the members of the Arcadian Academy, whose interest in *dramma per*

187 "Pure han tanta dolcezza i tuoi sospiri/ Han tante grazie il gesto, e la favella/ Ch'al par d'Orfeo rapir potresti anch'Ella/ Di là dove soggiorna, a' tuoi desire," in: *Rime di diversi autori...*, p. 19.

musica lay, as we can see from the *Rime*, mainly in the field of dramatic writing. They also situated the *Rime* in the long and interesting tradition of sonnets following operas, thus preserving the memory of more or less passion-arousing operatic divas and Roman sirens, such as Anna Maria Giusti and Paola Alari. This collection is the only proof of these singers' activity in the Palazzo Zuccari.

VIII The Music Genres Practised in the Circle of Marie Casimire Sobieska's Arts Patronage

The Libretti of Operas Staged at Marie Casimire's Theatre

Il figlio delle selve (17th January 1709)¹

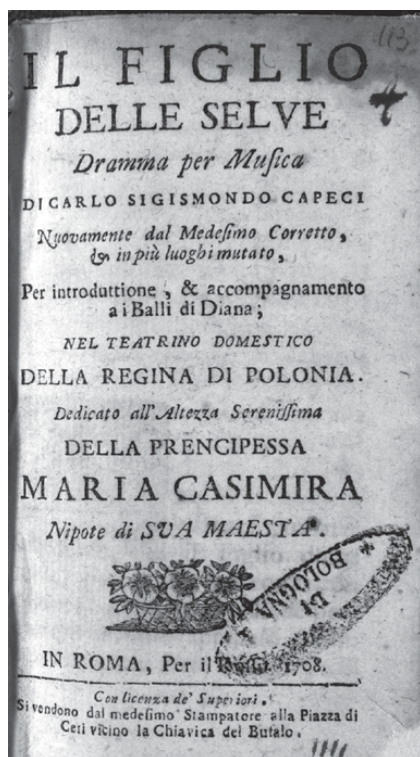


Illustration 20. C. S. Cepece, *Il figlio delle selve*, front page. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

1 I presented an abbreviated version of this subsection at the 13th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music held in Leeds between 2nd and 6th July 2008, under the title of *An Arcadian Tarzan? – Il figlio delle selve* by C.S. Cepece.

The private premiere of the first opera written for Marie Casimire's theatre, a *dramma per musica* entitled *Il figlio delle selve*, with a libretto by Carlo Sigismondo Capece and music probably by Alessandro Scarlatti, was held late in 1708, as we can learn from an entry in Francesco Valesio's *Diario di Roma* (for 17th December 1708): "The Queen of Poland initiated the staging of a melodrama [opera] in her exquisite little theatre located in the house where she resides in Trinità de'Monti, that is, the [Palazzo] Zuccari."² That a performance of this *dramma* was then held is also suggested by a dispatch from Rome, dated 15th December: "The Queen of Poland initiated music and opera spectacles at her apartments, for her granddaughter's entertainment."³ The authors of these notes do not quote the title of the work presented at the Queen's *teatrino*; this title only appears in the context of the official premiere, on 17th January 1709, about which the unfailing Valesio thus informed: "The Queen of Poland showed at her little theatre, in the palace where she resides in Trinità de'Monti, an old *dramma* by Capece, entitled *Il figlio delle selve*."⁴ The Queen herself wrote to her son Jakub in a letter of 9th February 1709:

My dearest son, I would that the place where you are staying be free of the terrible colds and diseases that the city is rife with in this season, which is so harsh and severe everywhere ... Pneumonia is reported to be omnipresent, and many die of it. All of Rome is suffering from the same influenza. Many die, and there is not a single house – let me stress it, not a single one – in which both the masters and servants do not have a cold. I have suffered from it very strongly for several days, and so has Prince Aleksander, and our dear child as well. But she forbids people to talk about it lest she might be deprived of the possibility of dancing. All the same, she is weakened and has become hoarse. I will let her dance a little so as to please her, but I will not let this do her harm, or at least I will do my best [to protect her] and I hope to succeed with God's help. Suffice it to say that both our opera production and the one staged by Cardinal Ottoboni have been suspended since all the musicians are ill, and the illness is so omnipresent that all of them are bedridden.⁵

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- 2 "Ha questa regina di Polonia dato principio alla recita d'un melodramma nel bellissimo e piccolo suo teatro nel casino che ella habita alla Trinità de'Monti, che é quello de'Zuccari," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, ed. G. Scano (Milano: Longanesi, 1977–79), Vol. 4, p. 203.
 - 3 "La Regina di Polonia nelli suoi Appartamenti ha fatto dare principio alle recite di Musica, & Opere per divertimento della Prencipessina sua Nipote," in: *Foglio di Foligno* (15th Dec. 1708).
 - 4 "La regina di Polonia fa recitare in musica nel suo teatrino del palazzo da lei habitato alla Trinità de'Monti il dramma vecchio del Capece intitolato *Il figlio delle selve*," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 4, p. 221.
 - 5 NGAB 695, op.1/ 327 c. 18–19.

Il figlio delle selve was not the first musical setting of this libretto by Capece, which enjoyed extraordinary popularity, especially among the female audiences. Similarly as in the case of the original text of 1687, written to mark the stay in Rome of Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria, the first wife of Maximilian II Emanuel, the Elector of Bavaria, also the new version was dedicated to a woman; namely, to the Polish Queen Marie Casimire's thirteen-year-old granddaughter, who was named after her grandma.

The libretto lists the following *dramatis personae*: Arsinda – Queen of Lesbos, who appears in the opera under the assumed name of Sergesto; Teramene – her husband; Ferindo – their son; Elmira – daughter of Rodaspo, the tyrant of Lesbos; Garbina – Elmira's lady-in-waiting and Shepherd in the Prologue. Capece draws on sylvan themes and the myth of a feral child brought up in the wild, whose roots go back to Greek and Roman mythology or possibly to even earlier times.

Why did this topic prove of so much interest to the female opera lovers of that time? What qualities of Capece's libretto, apart from its undeniable, purely theatrical assets, were valued by the ladies who flocked to see this opera in 1709?⁶ Which threads were attractive to the intellectuals, and in particular to Rome's Arcadians, who praised this work? What functions could *Il figlio delle selve* – a multifaceted, multi-plot *dramma per musica*, which encouraged multiple interpretations – play for the then Roman audience, apart from that of a carnival entertainment?⁷

From the libretto we learn that Teramene had been hiding with his son Ferindo for fifteen years in a woodland area inaccessible to ordinary humans, which symbolises the sanctuary of outlaws and people living outside the social system (exiles, criminals, and the broadly understood Others).⁸ As one who has been deprived of the throne to which he has a rightful claim, Teramene also belongs to the world of social exclusion. He lives in the woods, convinced that his beloved wife Arsinda had drowned during a sea storm which they were both caught in during their escape from Lesbos. However, Arsinda is alive and lives disguised

6 The libretto had previously been used for spectacles staged in Rome (1687), and in Livorno (1695); in each case it was dedicated to specific aristocrats.

7 The libretto won wide recognition from the moment when it was written in 1687. It was staged at least seventeen times in 1687–1755, with music by such composers as Cosimo Bani, Alessandro Scarlatti, Gaetano Boni, Ignaz Holzbauer, and others; cf. C. Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800* (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990), pp. 158–160.

8 R.P. Harrison, *Forests. The Shadow of Civilization*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 61–64.

as a man (Segresto) at Elmira's court. She pretends to love Elmira, but plots to snatch power away from her. Elmira's only companion is her lady-in-waiting and confidante, Garbina. The court is thus dominated by women. The action begins when Teramene and Ferindo are spotted by shepherds in the woods. In the course of further events, the true identity of the protagonists is revealed, and the former order is restored. Teramene and Arsinda regain power as the rightful rulers of Lesbos; Elmira loses her claim to the throne, but marries Ferindo, the wild boy from the woods, though of royal blood. Before this can happen, however, both Elmira and Ferindo undergo a process of initiation, which culminates in their marriage. Ferindo is transformed from a wild and savage but noble man-of-the-woods into a civilised though disillusioned man-of-the-court, conscious of his roots and of the family's history.

By elevating love to the role of the main driving force that enables the protagonist's (spiritual) rebirth, Capece draws on the best literary traditions, such as the story of Cimon and Iphigenia from Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (day V, tale I). Under the influence of Iphigenia, Cimon turns into a man of refinement. "Then, consorting with young men of condition and learning the fashions and carriage that behoved unto gentlemen and especially unto lovers, he first, to the utmost wonderment of every one, in a very brief space of time, not only learned the first [elements of] letters, but became very eminent among the students of philosophy."⁹ The woods, symbolically conceived here as the place of sexual initiation,¹⁰ and marking a turning point in the protagonist's (Ferindo's) life, can also be found in another tale by Boccaccio, about Pietro Boccamazza (*The Decameron*, day V, tale III).

That the second birth of the "wild boy from the woods" is the central motif of the opera staged in 1709 in Rome, we already learn from the libretto's prologue, where, praising the beauty and charm of the youthful Marie Casimire (the Younger), Capece explains it was for her that "in those woods / the most uncouth boy / is to be born again,"¹¹ and experience a better fate. It is not

9 G. Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. J. Payne (London: The Villon Society, 1886; New York: Walter J. Black, n.d.), p. 244, a Project Gutenberg EBook, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm#Page_244 (14th April 2020).

10 R.P. Harrison, *Forests*. . . , p. 89.

11 "Per lei di queste Selve / Hoggi il piu rozzo Figlio/ Havrà nuovo natale, / E dall'inculta sua primiera Cuna, / Con invido stupore/ Sorger vedrassi alla maggior fortuna." Unless stated otherwise, all the quoted excerpts come from Capece's libretto of *Il figlio delle selve* (1709).

without reason that the prologue also features the person of Diana, goddess of virgin forests, hunting and animals, who did not yield to the power of Amor. Diana symbolises virtue, but also – like the Greek Artemis – “the one who presides over young girls’ rites of passage.” Under the influence of contact with Ferindo, Elmira, the opera’s protagonist and worshipper of Diana, discovers previously unknown and unexpected emotions in herself. As a consequence, she abandons the divine archer. She also becomes the force that leads Ferindo to his second birth, awakening in him the desire to understand the world from which he has so far been excluded. What, then, did his metaphorical “departure from the woods” look like?

Its initial stage was to meet a woman. First (I,4) he meets Garbina, Elmira’s lady-in-waiting, from whom he learns that the human world consists of men and women, and that every person has not only a father, but – first and foremost – a mother, as Garbina explains in a rather humorous manner: “things are different in the wide world / and all persons, however illustrious / know who their mother is, though not [necessarily] the father.”¹² Ferindo questions her about the differences between the sexes, and their mutual relations. Garbina replies that men are always a little bigger than women. This definition, though it sounds amusing, in fact echoes the opinions typically found in early-modern-age medical and philosophical treatises, as well as in handbooks which discuss the woman’s body and mind. “Women were seen instead as a physical deviation from the male norm,” which led to the conclusion that “[t]he different body included a different brain, one that was smaller but also one which was a prey to irrationality.”¹³ Ferindo thus concludes that “man is a better product than woman.”¹⁴ When describing relations between the sexes, Garbina refers, significantly, to marriage as the “most desirable” relation in the secular societies of modern Europe; a relation that regulates social order and controls the citizens’ sexual behaviour. Garbina presents this relation as a common good, the union of man and woman, stressing the pleasure than the spouses derive from living together. In her statement there are no allusions to the actual historical relation between the partners, in which the woman was

12 “Nel Mondo usa il contrario / E tutte le persone anche leggiadre / Sanno chi è Madre lor, non chi gli è Padre.”

13 O. Hufton, [chapter] “Constructing Woman,” in: O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her. A History of Women in Western Europe, Vol. 1: 1500–1800* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998), pp. 43–44.

14 “l’Huomo alla Donna/ Superior fù prodotto.”

viewed at best as man's companion but – more frequently – as a creature subordinated to him, of whom he could dispose at will. Garbina does not manage to advertise women to Ferindo, who walks away convinced of his superiority over women, while she describes him as a young savage. In this scene Capece apparently expressed the common opinion concerning persons of Garbina's kind, who belong to the traditional type of a “woman as a heedless chatterbox, gossiping and garrulous, whose tongue needed to be kept under control.”¹⁵ At the same time, as a poet Capece was aware of the existence of a different type of woman – that of a beautiful seductress who reigns supreme in men's hearts. In his libretto, this type is represented by Elmira, who charms Ferindo with her beauty and makes him change his mind about the fair sex. However, when she first meets the “wild boy from the woods,” Elmira calls the heavens for help as protection against this “monster” dressed in the skins of wild beasts. As befits a man-of-the-woods, Ferindo demonstrates great simplicity, even naivety, and is surprised by her violent reaction: “Why do you wish to offend me / if I do not insult you.”¹⁶ It is this primitive but noble wildness that intrigues Elmira, who comes to realise that external looks do not guarantee moral beauty.¹⁷ For Ferindo, the sight of a woman whom he considers as extraordinarily beautiful initiates a series of trials and efforts that he has to undertake to win her heart. It is these efforts that define him as a person of the drama and become an impulse for him to seek self-knowledge.

The process of liberation from the state of ignorance leads to a confrontation with his father, who has so far been his only source of information about the world. Ferindo wishes to know why his father has for so many years concealed from him the fact of women's existence. Teramene responds by beginning to educate Ferindo (belatedly) about the relations between the sexes. He explains that women are men's eternal enemy.¹⁸ He is motivated by a fear for his son's life, which makes him conceal the true nature of women from the young prince. For the trusting Ferindo, his father is an authority that he builds his worldview upon; thus, Teramene's words make his son run away at the sight of Garbina. However, confronting her again is only the question of time, as also is the symbolic breach that occurs between him and his father.

15 O. Hufton, *Constructing Woman*. . . , p. 30.

16 “Perche offender mi vuoi, / Se da me non ricevi alcun oltraggio.”

17 E.B. Holtsmark, *Tarzan and Tradition. Classical Myth in Popular Literature* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 147.

18 “Che nemica giurata all'huomo é sempre.”

What Ferindo learns from Garbina is that his emotions at the sight of Elmira are a sign of love, “an illness from which one is born rather than dying” (I,8). She tells him that love is also a tender longing that leads to a greater joy. She fails to convince the boy, though. The meeting with Arsinda (II,3) leaves him in an even greater doubt as to the true nature of love. Arsinda describes to him motherly love, which is good by its very nature, and gives him a farewell kiss as a token of her own love. This encounter proves a breakthrough in Ferindo’s life. He begins to suspect that in life everything has two sides: People have a mother and a father; women are beautiful, but they are also dangerous mermaids, as his father claims; Amor is a tyrant but also a deity. This discovery seems painful to him since he experiences it in solitude, and there is no one at his side whom he can trust. Nevertheless, he gradually becomes independent.

In the next scene, Ferindo finds out that the language of love is also ambiguous. Elmira does notice that he quickly learnt to long for her, but the kiss and the hug with which Ferindo wished to express his love – seem inappropriate to her. The code of courtly love and winning the heart of a noblewoman-at-court follow a different set of rules. What is more, Arsinda’s teaching proves dangerous, since Elmira begins to suspect she has a rival who is instructing Ferindo in the art of love. From this moment on, he has to fight for the beautiful princess’s heart, which arouses new doubts and questions in him. Can one understand the nature of love? What is love? Ferindo begins to realise that unequivocal answers cannot be found in the sphere of amorous passions either, and he sings about it in the aria *L’intenda chi sà* (II,5).

Towards the end of Act II Ferindo learns that Arsinda is his mother. This scene is a breakthrough in his life. He now knows his own roots, his royal descent; at this stage of acquiring self-knowledge, he begins to take pride in his origins, but also to realise his obligations towards his parents, and his father in particular. This is where his most difficult test starts; that of choice between love and a sense of duty. This classic conflict, experienced by the operatic protagonists, takes place in the scene where Arsinda tries to murder Elmira, who is raving in her sleep. Ferindo saves her from death but it is he whom the princess accuses of an attempt on her life. In this context, we should also note the metamorphosis which Elmira underwent from a fearless huntress given to the pleasures of the forest hunt into a creature taken out of Petrarch’s poems, for whom the woods are a temple of peace and lonely contemplation, “where one can flee from the

hustle and bustle of the human society.”¹⁹ As a single woman and a ruler, Elmira has been independent. She indulges in the typically ‘male’ pastimes, and resists marriage. Such qualities were unwelcome in a woman, in the male-dominated world and according to the social rules of that time.²⁰ When she eventually meets a youth whom she finds attractive, it turns out that he fails to fulfil the necessary requirements for a queen’s spouse, and, even worse, is suspected of treason; a threat that she has not expected to encounter in the woods, the temple of Diana. Elmira calls the guards and bids them to imprison Ferindo, but at that moment Arsinda reveals her true identity, hoping to save her son. The latter stands by his mother. Unable to establish which of the two has in fact plotted her death, Elmira decides to detain them both, adding Teramene as their companion. Each of the three prisoners wishes to die so that the other two could be saved. They are rescued from this dilemma by the soldiers (who had mutinied) and by the old king’s faithful servants, who recognise Teramene as their exiled monarch. Elmira’s status has now changed diametrically. She is a queen turned servant, perpetrator turned victim, free woman turned prisoner. She is saved, however, by Ferindo’s love, which she can now reciprocate since her beloved proves to be of royal blood. She accepts his grace with dignity. Her marriage to Ferindo restores the commonly accepted world order in which women played the roles of obedient wives and good, Christian mothers. She takes the path of virtuous women, handing power over to the men.

In the eyes of the Roman Arcadians who were watching this opera, the subtle praise of Ferindo’s noble simplicity could be interpreted as an ideological return to Arcadia and to life in harmony with nature, or as a practical application and presentation on stage of Cartesian ideals. For Descartes, the woods are a place where one gets lost and abandoned,²¹ and a “broad analogy for all that goes by the name of tradition, which for Descartes means the accumulated falsehoods, unfounded beliefs, and misguided assumptions of the past.”²² This is the place

19 R.P. Harrison, [chapter] “Shadows of law,” in: R.P. Harrison, *Forests*. . . , p. 93.

20 O. Hufton writes that independent women were viewed in real life as something abnormal and revolting. A girl born out of a legitimate marriage was defined, regardless of her social origin, by her relation to the man. Legal responsibility for such a girl lay, in succession, with her father, then with her husband, both of whom she was advised to respect and obey; cf. O. Hufton, [chapter] “Constructing Woman,” in: O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, Vol.1: 1500–1800* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 16.

21 R.P. Harrison, [chapter] “Enlightenment,” in: R.P. Harrison, *Forests*. . . , p. 110.

22 R.P. Harrison, *Forests*. . . , p. 111.

that Ferindo leaves since he has already acquired the necessary knowledge and awareness. He is also not likely ever to return to the woods.

To the young ladies, however, including the Polish Queen's granddaughter, who were watching *Il figlio delle selve*, the process of social initiation may well have been of more interest. Capece used the operatic entertainment to remind his audience of what behaviour is appropriate for either of the sexes, as well as pointing out such important areas of human life as love for the parents, for one's spouse, homeland, and the responsibilities related to those feelings. He also stressed the role of history in the lives of individuals. This is the distinct educational message of Capece's libretto. The new life that Ferindo is about to begin, on his return to the so-called "normal world,"²³ means that he has to leave the forests that have so far "remained an obstacle to human knowledge and science."²⁴ Getting to know his parents, as well as the laws that rule the human societies, leads to his rebirth, an impulse for which is provided by love: the *gran Novità* in the lives of Ferindo, Elmira, and most likely also of the young audience gathered at the Palazzo Zuccari.²⁵

It seems that this libretto's extraordinary openness to various possible interpretations must have contributed to its popularity in the eighteenth century. Ferindo's transformation symbolised the triumph of knowledge and culture in which the eighteenth-century believed so vehemently. On the other hand, though, the eighteenth-century sentimentalists could also have found their spiritual precursor in Ferindo. In retrospect, however, Ferindo's rise to power was tantamount to brutally interrupting Elmira's career, since in the patriarchal society the woman is always the loser. The triumph of knowledge, and with it also of culture, civilisation, and the city – proved an illusion. It was this triumph that was symbolically represented in the eighteenth century by the rebirth of the savage boy from the woods.

***La Silvia* (26th January 1710)**

In a letter to her son dated 7th January 1710, the Queen thus described the preparations for staging this opera:

23 J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, first ed. 1949, Commemorative Edition 2004), pp. 8–9.

24 R.P. Harrison, [chapter] "First the Forests," in: R.P. Harrison, *Forests*. . . , p. 10.

25 It seems therefore that one of the reasons that explain the considerable popularity of this particular libretto by Carlo Sigismondo Capece was its openness to multiple possible interpretations.

We are preparing for them [that is, for Prince Aleksander and Marie Casimire's grand-daughter, who was then struggling with a nasty cold – note by A.M.] an opera at my domestic theatre, so as to offer them some entertainment. They say it is very good, judging by the rehearsals we're holding. Cardinal Ottoboni is [also] preparing one [opera] at his Palazzo della Cancelleria, very spectacular as far as stage elements, machinery, voices [?] and the huge²⁶ orchestra are concerned. [The latter consists of] all the best [musicians], of whom he has deprived [?] ours, which could have been better. The costumes are delightful, but cost a pretty penny, whereas I only have the means [to afford] few things, but appropriate and [selected] after your brother's good taste. I want this [spectacle] to be as it is, if only you can take part in our modest pastime – and perhaps you would like it no less than other such events, [which are] staged with more pomp.²⁷

La Silvia was premiered on 26th January 1710, as confirmed by at least two contemporary sources.²⁸ On 27th January Francesco Valesio noted in his *Diario di Roma*: “The Queen of Poland has already inaugurated a *dramma* production in the theatre located in her palace.”²⁹ In *Foglio di Foligno* of 25th January, and anonymous author informed: “tomorrow evening, an [opera] will be staged, prepared by the Queen for her own entertainment. Then come comedies *all'improviso*, which [the queen] presents in her *teatrino*.”³⁰ Several days later, *Foglio di Foligno* printed a favourable review of the opera staged by Marie Casimire: “On Sunday evening [that is, 26th January] at the Queen of Poland's little theatre, a splendid *pastorale* was premiered, staged by Her Majesty the Queen for the pleasure not only of the princess her granddaughter and Prince Aleksander her son, but also of those of noble birth.”³¹ For the next two weeks (at least), the opera was presented three times a week, and garnered many praises “for the magnificence

26 Marie Casimire used the word *grossissime* (*grossissime* in her original spelling), which is the superlative degree form of the Italian adjective *grosso*. Did she switch to Italian at this point under the influence of her Roman contacts or because of the musical topic?

27 NGAB 695, op.1/ 331 c.128–128v.

28 *Gazzetta di Napoli* informed that the Queen had prepared three comedies for that year, two *in musica* and one *recitativa*; cf. Th.E. Griffin, *Musical References in the Gazzetta di Napoli 1681–1725* (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1993), p. 55. Unfortunately, the surviving records only confirm the staging of *La Silvia*.

29 “La regina di Polonia ha già fatto dar principio alla recita d'un dramma nel suo teatro del palazzo,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 4, p. 377.

30 “Domani à sera si darà principio à quella preparata da questa Regina per suo proprio divertimento, avendo fatto poi incominciare le Comedie all'improviso, che fa rappresentare nel suo Teatrino,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (25th Jan. 1710).

31 “Si principiò Domenica sera a recitare nel picciolo Teatro della Regina di Polonia una bellissima Pastorale, che la M.Sua fà rappresentare per trattinimento, non solo della

of the voices and the orchestra, as well as the good taste demonstrated in the scenes, the small but beautiful machinery, and for the sets.”³²

The above-quoted note and the printed libretto introduce *La Silvia* as a *dramma pastorale* written especially for Marie Casimire Sobieska’s theatre.³³ The action takes place in the countryside in the Greek Argolis (*Nelle campagne d’Argo*), where the memory of Hercules (It. Alcide) is particularly venerated. As we learn from the *argomento*, only male descendants of this god can hold the most important positions among the local shepherds and have considerable property. Women cannot inherit that wealth and honours. Alcone, the hitherto shepherd leader and owner of a fortune, dies while his wife Arezia is pregnant. She gives birth to a girl, but in order to keep the father’s estate and wealth, announces publicly that she has borne a son, Silvio. Only the nanny Garbina knows the child’s true gender. At the moment of her death, Arezia makes Garbina swear that when the girl turns fifteen and it will no longer be possible to hide her womanhood, Garbina will marry her to Mireno, a shepherd who is a distant relative of Hercules. Predictably, the twists and turns of love are the main driving force of Capecce’s three-act libretto.

The protagonists are Silvia – believed to be the boy Silvio; Garbina – her nanny; Daliso – Garbina’s son; Laurinda – a nymph; Mireno – a shepherd. Stylistically, the libretto represents the genre of pastoral drama, which means that the action is set in shepherd society, in villages and the woods, and the main *dramatis personae* are shepherds and nymphs. The name of the eponymous heroine, Silvia, is associated with the woods (Lat. *silva*) and refers to an inhabitant of the forest, but also brings to mind the goddess Silvia, mother of Romulus and Remus.³⁴ However, rather than drawing on Rome’s origin myth, Capecce’s *La*

Prencipissima Sua Nepote, e del Prencipe Alessandro suo Figlio, ma anche per divertimento di questa Nobiltà,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (7th Feb. 1710).

- 32 “riportando infinito aplauso tanto per le qualità delle Voci, & Orchestra, che per il buon gusto delle Scene, e picciole, mà bellissime Machine, e compares,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (7th Feb. 1710).
- 33 *La Silvia dramma pastorale per il Teatro Domestico di Sua Maestà La Regina Maria Casimira Di Polonia. Composto, e dedicato alla Maestà Sua di Carlo Sigismondo Capecce e posta in musica dal Sig. Domenico Scarlatti in Roma* (Roma: il Rosii, 1710).
- 34 R.P. Harrison, [chapter] “The sorrows of Rhea Silvia,” in: R.P. Harrison, *Forests. . .*, pp. 46–52. The association of the name Silvia or its male counterpart Silvio with a protagonist who lives in the woods or a village, is a shepherd or peasant, will live on in the opera at least until the times of Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci*.

Silvia follows the Italian pastoral tradition and responds to the postulates of the Arcadian Academy.³⁵

Pastoral literature is frequently criticised for uninspired reiteration of tales about love between Arcadian shepherds and nymphs.³⁶ This genre, a mixture of many styles, typical of courtly circles and the social elite, and characterised by free structure, provided writers with relatively wide opportunities for commentary on contemporary life, royal and state policies, the behaviour of rulers and subjects, religion, social life, and culture. While describing the idealised lives of Arcadian shepherds and drawing on the Golden Age myth of innocent simplicity and happiness, pastoral texts also revealed the contrast between these ideals and the reality, in which elegant courtly manners concealed base conduct, miserliness, and insincerity. Pastoral drama and “pastoral literature must not be confounded with that which has for its subject the lives, the ideas, and the emotions of simple and unsophisticated mankind,”³⁷ The set of conventional elements used in this genre – such as the Arcadian landscape, the figures of shepherds and mythological deities, the amorous plot – served in fact as a cover for discussing issues currently relevant to the human society.³⁸

The most frequent topics of pastoral literature are nature versus civilisation, life in harmony with nature vs. life in accordance with divine laws, and the country versus the city or the court. The shepherd costumes made it possible to tackle

35 Part of this tradition was also *La Silvia*, staged in May of the same year in Vicenza's Teatro Nuovo di Piazza. The libretto by Count Enrico Bissari was dedicated to Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska. Based on this fact, Reinhard Strohm considers the Vicenza production of *La Silvia* as a form of response to Marie Casimire's Roman spectacle; cf. R. Strohm, *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Studi di musica veneta. Quaderni vivaldiani, Vol. 13 (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2008), p. 313.

36 Cf. R. Alonge, “Pastori senza eros (o con un eros un po'complicato),” in: *Il mito d'Arcadia: pastori e amori nelle arti del Rinascimento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Torino, 14–15 marzo 2005*, eds. D. Boillet and A. Pontremoli (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2007), p. 97.

37 W.W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), a Project Gutenberg online edition, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12218/12218-h/12218-h.htm> (17th April 2020).

38 According to W.W. Greg, pastoral literature tackled the actual problems of its time in three ways: a) through idealised pastoral concepts and postulates of a return to simple life; b) by presenting a realistic contrast between the city and the country, and expressing the desire for freedom, which was associated with rustic life; c) through introduction into an allegory of real figures dressed in pastoral guise, who discussed contemporary problems; cf. W.W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry*. . .

the “riskier” subjects of human freedom, sensuality, and the pagan Antiquity,³⁹ including such topics as the position of women in the society, love, adultery, and faith. Especially after the Council of Trent and the success of *Il pastor fido* (1590) by Giovanni Battista Guarini, religious themes and conscious moral education of the audience preoccupied the minds of many authors of pastoral dramas. This resulted, in many cases, not so much from the artists’ deep-felt need or conviction as from the pressure of the Inquisition’s censors.

At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the pastoral aesthetic was taken up again as an antidote for the Baroque *concetti* in poetry and the theatre, the intricacy and stylistic eclecticism of operatic libretti, as well as for violent elements in sculpture and architecture. Through a return to shepherd themes and the pastoral landscapes, authors attempted to revive the myth of the Golden Age, identified by Arcadians with Classical perfection, ancient tradition, the power of Rome, and in the theatre – with ancient art, uncorrupted by the demands of catering to the tastes of the audience. The shepherds and their songs thus returned to the Roman gardens and palaces, and they made their comeback in the opera as well.

The point of departure in *La Silvia* is the concealment of the eponymous heroine’s true gender identity.⁴⁰ The figure of Silvia herself may have been inspired by numerous ancient tales, such as that of Galatea, whose husband Lampros expected a male descendant. When a girl was born, Galatea therefore dressed her as a boy and called her Leucippus. When the child’s true identity could no longer be kept secret, her mother asked the goddess Leto (Latin: Latona) to change the girl’s sex, and the deity complied.⁴¹ This story is similar to that told in Capecce’s *La Silvia*, but the Roman librettist develops his narrative in a different direction.⁴²

39 L. Sampson, *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy. The Making of a New Genre* (London: Legenda, 2006), p. 90.

40 This is a popular motif in eighteenth century libretti; cf. for instance *Arsilda, Regina di Ponto* (1716) with music by A. Vivaldi, or Metastasio’s *Semiramide*, set by various composers.

41 V.L. Bullough, B. Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 26.

42 Capecce’s *dramma* may apparently have inspired Metastasio to write his *Semiramida riconosciuta* (1729), provided that the emperor’s poet knew Capecce’s text. In Metastasio’s libretto *Semiramide*, whom her subjects believe to be a man, proves to be an excellent ruler of the country, and performs all the duties of a monarch. The Viennese poet alluded here to Maria Theresa; more in: P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles. Gender and Genre in Statius’Achilleid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 49.

For fifteen years, Arezia orders to bring her daughter up as a boy in order to deceive the people of Argos and keep her child safe. Unlike in most operatic plots, this mystification was not Silvia's personal choice. This scheme, however, allows Capece to ask an important question: What if the ruler is not who he claims he is; what is he in fact a woman? Attractive as this concept may have been to the female audience, it nevertheless stood in opposition to the centuries-old distinction between the active male and the passive female principle.⁴³ Admittedly, European history knows cases of female monarchs, but both these historical figures and their operatic counterparts were pressurised into finding a spouse who could rule the country and guarantee the continuity of the dynasty. The opera as a genre, however, undoubtedly "provided an occasion to 'stage' many of the fantasies aroused by carnival, albeit in a stylized and less threatening fashion."⁴⁴

The carnival mask and pastoral aesthetic created an opportunity to signal important ethical and political issues in the opera. The first of such topics belongs to the borderline area between the period's social life and politics. According to the Argive tradition (which, as the audience knew well, also extended to other countries), women were not allowed to rule independently. The second question concerns the relation between the divine and natural laws in the lives of individuals. In Capece's libretto, the gods no longer agree to conceal Arezia's deceit, and order Silvia to be united in wedlock to a descendant of Hercules. This command, however, contradicts her own heart's desires. The third, no less important problem, concerns growing up, understanding and embracing one's own sexuality. All this is enriched by Garbina's opinions concerning human nature and her descriptions of amorous behaviour; she represents practical wisdom and experience. Her witty, sometimes also bawdy comments on the sexual sphere stand in contrast to the behaviour of other *dramatis personae*, whose eroticism is bland and focuses on lamentations.

The understanding of divine and natural laws in that period, which brought a breakthrough in the European ways of thinking, is another extremely interesting topic taken up by Capece in *La Silvia*. Seventeenth-century scholars, and philosophers in particular, dealt with the divine law – reinforced by medieval and later thinkers, to which humans were supposed to subordinate unreflectingly. People were expected, first and foremost, to obey, and the secular ruler was

43 This belief, expressed by Aristotle, survived into the modern era; cf. V.L. Bullough, B. Bullough, *Cross Dressing*. . . , p. 46.

44 W. Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence. Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 8.

viewed as the earthly counterpart of God the Father in Heaven. This strengthened the patriarchal system, but also sanctioned the subjects' uncritical subordination to the royal authority.⁴⁵ In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, following the English Revolution and the overthrow of the Stuarts, but also after the experience of Louis XIV's ruthless policies, thinkers began more and more openly to express their discontent. The greatest minds of the age: Samuel von Pufendorf, John Locke, and Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, inspired by the theories of Hugo Grotius and Thomas Hobbes, began to question this concept of authority. The divine law was also distinctly opposed to the law of nature; the latter offers individuals and nations the chance to take their fate into their own hands.⁴⁶ It also grants humans the right to rebel⁴⁷ and "is one which is so uniformly adapted to all that is sociable and reasonable in human nature."⁴⁸ How, then, did Capecè's *La Silvia* join the debate on ideas current in Europe at that time? In what ways could political thought and the new, budding form of social contract concern the nymphs and shepherds of Argolis?

The divine law is symbolised in *La Silvia* by the words of the oracle and the orders of the gods ("così comanda il Ciel"), by the will of Arezia, which agrees with the voice of the gods ("così dispone la Genitrice tua"), and by the long Argive tradition, which forbid matriarchate. The law of nature, on the other hand, is embodied in Silvia. It is the law of the heart, which guarantees freedom of choice and the citizens' right to self-determination, referred to by Thomas Hobbes as "the right of nature" (*jus naturale*).⁴⁹

45 No wonder that the divine law was explored for several centuries mainly in the spheres of political and social philosophy.

46 P. Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind*, trans. J. Lewis May (New York: New York Review Books, 2013), p. 336. Orig. title *La crise de la conscience européenne (1680–1715)* (Paris: Boivin, 1935).

47 P. Hazard, *The Crisis*. . . , p. 343

48 Samuel von Pufendorf, qtd. after P. Hazard, *The Crisis*. . . , p. 339.

49 T. Hobbes, Chapter XIV, "Of the First and Second Natural Laws, and of Contracts," in: T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1660, https://www.ttu.ee/public/m/mart-murdevve/EconPsy/6/Hobbes_Thomas_1660_The_Leviathan.pdf (18th April 2020), pp. 90 ff. Hobbes associated this concept first and foremost with freedom: "The right of nature, which writers commonly call *jus naturale*, is the liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything which, in his own judgement and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto." *Lex naturalis* (that is, the law of nature), on the other hand, is the principle "by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved." What is meant here is primarily

In Capecce's libretto the divine and the natural laws stand in open opposition to each other at first. Silvia rebels against gods, the oracle, her mother, and tradition. Rebellion could not prove victorious though, and certainly not so in Rome. Capecce therefore devised a different solution. Unexpectedly to all the protagonists, Silvia's lover Dalisio turns out to be Mireno, the true descendant of Hercules, whom she can thus marry without exposing herself to the wrath of gods. In this way, the poet reconciles two orders, as divine law becomes the law of nature and *vice versa*. Silvia will remain the ruler, but her status is now guaranteed by her beloved and powerful husband. This message, full of hope, may have been directed by Marie Casimire to her daughter, then residing in Venice, to whom in May of the same year Count Enrico Bissari dedicated his *Silvia*.

***Tolomeo et Alessandro ovvero la corona disprezzata*
(19th January 1711)**

Officially premiered on 19th January 1711 in the Palazzo Zuccari,⁵⁰ *Tolomeo et Alessandro* was hailed by (anonymous) chroniclers as better than other operas then staged in the Roman theatres. *Avvisi di Roma* of 24th January 1711 reported: "On Monday evening the Queen of Poland began to present at her house in Trinità de' Monti spectacles of an opera featuring female singers and good musicians [instrumentalists]; this opera has been universally acclaimed as better than the others."⁵¹ The anonymous reporter of *Foglio di Foligno* informed that "The Queen of Poland has initiated a pastoral opera, which she has staged with

the avoidance of war. For the needs of the operatic libretto, these rights and laws were transferred from the realm of politics (of preserving relative social order) to that of individual needs (the right to freedom of choice, and to happiness).

50 More on the preparations for, and the staging of, *Tolomeo et Alessandro* can be found in my paper delivered in 2010 in Vignanello: "Rome cet année ne manquera pas de divertissemens." Lettere di Maria Casimira Sobieska da Roma al figlio Giacomo Sobieski" [in print]. Here I will limit myself to a few most important pieces of information coming from the Queen herself. See also Chapter VI, in which I quote Marie Casimire writing that the opera was staged in just three weeks and presented in a room adapted from an indoor ball court.

51 "Lunedì sera dalla Regina di Polonia fù fatto dar principio à fare rappresentare la Opera Musicale al suo Casino alla Trinità de Monti, ove operano Canterine, e buoni musici, la quale comunem.ente viene applaudita per la Migliore di tutte la alter," in: *Avvisi di Roma* (24th Jan. 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata in Rome and Naples: A documentary study with emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), p. 616.

music at her domestic theatre, and it has brought her an advantage over all the other [operas] presented in the other theatres.”⁵² More information about the work itself, and about the circumstances of its performance, can be found in invaluable Valesio’s *Diario di Roma*: “This evening a *dramma* entitled *Tolomeo*, the work of the highly valued Carlo Capece, superbly performed, was shown for the first time at the Queen of Poland’s domestic theatre; the invited guests included Cardinal Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli, who came here with all their musicians, overpraised as *virtuosi*.”⁵³ Among the recently discovered dispatches from Rome, we find the following report: “On Monday morning an opera was presented at the Polish Queen’s [house] for the first time, thus inaugurating [Rome’s] fourth music theatre. It stars three women and three men [singers]. The work won acclaim and attracted a numerous audience on the successive days of its presentation.”⁵⁴ Marie Casimire likewise informed in a letter to her eldest son about the success of her opera:

In our domestic theatre we are staging an opera which is considered very pretty, both as far as the words and the music are concerned. The Kapellmeister and the secretary are mine, while the sets and costumes were commissioned by the Prince [Aleksander], and neither I nor anyone else interfered with this. The whole is regarded as very tasteful. I enclose the libretto. Would to God that you could see this [opera] yourself; I am sure it would prove to your liking.⁵⁵

It should be emphasised that Marie Casimire’s opera had serious rivals in the *drammi per musica* staged that year in the carnival season at the palaces of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni and Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli, as well as at the

52 “Questa Regina di Polonia ha dato principio ad un’Opera Pastorale, che fa Rappresentare in Musica nel suo Teatro Domestico riportando il vanto sopra tutte l’altre che si recitano negl’altri Teatri,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (24th Jan. 1711).

53 “Questa sera per la prima volta nel teatro domestico delle regina di Polonia si recitò il dramma intitolato il *Tolomeo*, composizione di Carlo Capece, assai stimato et ottimamente recitata, e vi fù l’invito del cardinale Ottoboni e prencipe Ruspoli, che v’andarono con tutti il loro musici, detti abusivamente virtuosi,” in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 4, p. 425.

54 “Lunedì sera si fece per la prima volta l’opera della regina di Polonia con che si aprì il quarto teatro in musica. Recitano ivi tre donne e tre uomini ed ha havuto dell’applauso e del concorso nei seguenti giorni nei quali é stata fatta,” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (31st Jan. 1711), qtd. after T.M. Gialdroni, “Spigolature romane: la musica a Roma attraverso avvisi e dispacci del fondo Albani dell’Archivio di Stato di Pesaro (1711),” *Analecta Musicologica* 2005, p. 382.

55 NGAB 695, op. 1/332 c. 9.

Teatro Capranica.⁵⁶ At the Palazzo della Cancelleria one could see *Teodosio il giovane* to the cardinal's own text, with music by Filippo Amadei, most praised, however, for the stage design, prepared by Filippo Javarra. At the Palazzo Bonelli Prince Ruspoli produced, like the Queen, as many as two operas, composed by his Kapellmeister Antonio Caldara: *L'Anagilda* to words by Girolamo Gigli, and *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno* to a libretto by Pietro Pariati. The Teatro Capranica staged the opera *L'Engelberta o sia la forza dell'innocenza* (libretto: Zeno and Pariati; music most likely by Antonio Orefice and Francesco Mancini, adapted to Roman tastes by Giuseppe Maria Orlandini). We know that during the carnival of 1710 more than ninety musical-theatrical works were staged in Rome.⁵⁷ If their number was similar in the following year, then the praise for *Tolomeo et Alessandro* can be considered as proof of the particularly high standards of both this particular *dramma per musica* and of its performance.⁵⁸

In his classic monograph on Domenico Scarlatti, Ralph Kirkpatrick quotes a description of the performance of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* included by Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni in his *Arcadia* (Book VII, Prosa XIV):

The most beautiful was the theatre itself, well-proportioned and ideally suited for this occasion. There were pleasant voices, interesting action, most charming costumes based on a brilliant design; excellent music, an outstanding orchestra, and the poetry commanded the greatest respect of it all. All this made everyone admit that this entertainment was indeed worthy of the royal hand that initiated it.⁵⁹

This opinion refers, unfortunately, not to the original production, but to its summer revival shown in a roofed pavilion constructed outside the palace, most likely in its garden.⁶⁰ In the *argomento* which prefaces the printed libretto of *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, Capece refers to the historical source which he drew

56 The queen wrote about these stage work in a letter of 17th January 1711, cf. Chapter VI.

57 "Così restò terminator il carnevale, contro la commune espettazione allegro e copioso sì di maschere e comedie, ché di queste il governo ne havea date le licenze per più di novanta delle private, senza quelle de'seminarii e de'monasterii, e de festini se ne sono fatti infiniti," in: F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*. . . , Vol. 4, p. 392.

58 This opera was also revived in Fermo (1713) and Rome (1724).

59 R. Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 52.

60 "Vaghiissimo era il Teatro, nè più proporzionato, nè più confacevole alla bisogna poteva desiderarsi: grate le voci: egregia l'azione: leggiadrissimi gli abiti, e lavorati con maraviglioso disegno: ottima la musica: singolare l'orchestra de'suoni; e sopra il tutto degna di stima si fu la composizione Poetica: di maniera che ognuno di poi giudicò, che questo trattenimento fosse ben degno del Real Genio, che l'aveva ritrovato," G. M. Crescimbeni, *L'Arcadia del Can. Gio. Mario Crescimbeni custode della medesima Arcadia, e Accademico Fiorentino a Madama Ondedei Albani cognata*

upon, which was a section of Book XXXIX of *Historiarum Philippicarum ex Trogo Pompeio excerptarum Libri XLIV* by the Latin historian Justin:

In Egypt, Cleopatra, being dissatisfied at having her son Ptolemy to share her throne, excited the people against him, and taking from him his wife Selene (the more ignominiously, as he had now two children by her), obliged him to go into exile, sending, at the same time, for her younger son Alexander, and making him king in his brother's room. Nor was she content with driving her son from the throne but pursued him with her arms while he was living in exile in Cyprus. After forcing him from thence, she put to death the general of her troops, because he had let him escape from his hands alive; though Ptolemy, indeed, had left the island from being ashamed to maintain a war against his mother, and not as being inferior to her in forces. / Alexander, alarmed at such cruelty on the part of his mother, deserted her also himself, preferring a life of quiet and security to royal dignity surrounded with danger.⁶¹

Capece also revealed which subplots he added of his own accord; namely, Tolomeo's sojourn in Cyprus in the guise of a simple shepherd, under the assumed name of Osmino; a series of mishaps that befell his wife, Seleuce, presented to the ruler of Syria as a gift; her lucky rescue and her arrival on the same island, dressed as a shepherdess who called herself Delia; the search for Tolomeo, undertaken by his brother Alessandro, who wished to hand the crown of Egypt over to the former; the love strife between the protagonists; the love of Dorisbe, of royal blood, for Araspe, who had once seduced and then jilted her; Dorisbe living on Cyprus too, disguised as a gardener named Clori. The persons of the drama, listed in the libretto, are as follows: Tolomeo – king of Egypt, disguised as Osmino the shepherd; Alessandro – brother of Tolomeo;

di N. S. papa Clemente XI in Roma 1708, edition of 1711, (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711), p. 326.

61 "At in Aegypto Cleopatra cum grauaretur socio regni, filio Ptolomeo, populum in eum incitat, abductaque ei Selene uxore eo indignius quod ex Selene iam duos filios habebat, exulare cogit, accessito minore filio Alexandro et rege in locum fratris constituto. Nec filium regno expulisse contenta bello Cypri exulantem persequitur. Vnde pulso interficit ducem exercitus sui, quod uiuum eum e manibus emisisset, quamquam Ptolomeus uerecundia materni belli non uiribus minor ab insula recessisset. Igitur Alexander territus hac matris crudelitate et ipse eam relinquit periculoso regno securam ac tutam uitam antepone[n]s," Latin original in: Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Liber Historiarum Philippicarum*, Book XXXIX, 4, *Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum*, <http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/texte39.html#4>, English translation: <http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans39.html> (30th April 2020). Interestingly, Capece omitted the next sentence, in which Justin tells us that Cleopatra favoured her younger son, Alexander.

Seleuce – Tolomeo’s wife, disguised as Delia the shepherdess; Araspe – king of Cyprus; Elisa – sister of Araspe; Dorisbe – daughter of Isaur, Prince of Tyre, disguised as Clori the gardener.

Some researchers see in this libretto an allusion to events that took place in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth following the death of King John III and the imprisonment of the Princes, Jakub and Konstanty Sobieski, by the troops of Augustus II in Saxon fortresses.⁶² Following the abdication of Augustus II, King Charles XII of Sweden did indeed support Aleksander as a candidate for the Polish throne, but the latter refused, to the astonishment of the Swedes and of his own compatriots, who favoured the Sobieski family.⁶³ Aleksander justified his decision with fear for his brothers’ life, referring to Augustus II’s public threats of killing the captured princes, should Aleksander declare himself king. He is reported to have said that he would not “ascend the throne over the dead bodies of his brothers, and wear purple stained with their blood.”⁶⁴ Nor did the letters sent by his mother from Rome manage to change his mind. As Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka rightly observes, “The libretto of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* makes a subversive reference to Polish history by presenting an episode from the life of a man who refused to co-create that history. The piece was meant as a panegyric praising Aleksander’s virtues, which made him perform the heroic deed

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- 62 W. Roszkowska, “Mecnat królewicza Aleksandra – Teatr Armonte Calidio (1709–1714)” [Prince Aleksander’s Art Patronage – the Theatre of Armonte Calidio] *Sobótka* 1980, No. 2, pp. 311–321.; A. Ryszka-Komarnicka, “Polish History as the Source of Plot in the Italian *Dramma per Musica*: Three Case Studies,” in: *Italian Opera in Central Europe 1614–1780*, Vol. 3: *Opera Subjects and European Relationships*, eds N. Dubovy, C. Herr, A. Żórawska-Witkowska (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2007), pp. 111–123; M. Komaczyński, *Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski 1641–1716 [Marie Casimire d’Arquien Sobieska, Queen of Poland]* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), p. 236.
- 63 M. Komaczyński, *Maria Kazimiera. . .*, p. 238. Charles XII at first favoured Jakub, John III and Marie Casimire’s eldest son, but when the latter was imprisoned by Augustus II, the Swedish king focused his attention on Aleksander, who was still free. According to Jacek Staszewski, however, to Charles XII Stanisław Leszczyński was a more convenient candidate because he was less independent and more submissive. Leszczyński was elected the Polish king on 12th July 1704. Cf. J. Staszewski, [chapter] “1696–1795,” in: *Historia Polski [History of Poland]*, Vol. 6, ed. B. Kaczorowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo GazetyWyborczej, 2007), p. 278; U. Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795 [History of Poland 1572–1795]* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008), pp. 775–776.
- 64 M. Komaczyński, *Maria Kazimiera. . .*, p. 239.

of 'disprezzar la corona.'⁶⁵ This interpretation finds its confirmation in a comment by G.M. Crescimbeni, who was a frequent guest at the Sobieskis' Roman residence:

But wise and no less noble Metisto [C.S. Capece] offers an outlet for Armonte's [Aleksander Sobieski's] feelings, turning this story into a fairy tale. He brought to life in his tale, as in a glistening mirror, one of the purest and most heroic deeds of the said Armonte, who, like Alessandro having had the opportunity to take the throne as a result of his brother's death, preferred the life of a private person to a reign made possible by fratricide. Though able to receive his father's kingdom in this way from the hands of the people, he preferred to renounce it rather than harm his elder brother. This, then, was Metisto's true purpose, which he pointed out in the course of his *dramma* in Act 2 Scene 9, where he says that "Alessandro does not crave a royal robe / if a brother's blood is to taint it with a blasphemous colour."⁶⁶

Similar interpretations can also be found in eighteenth-century sources, such as the sonnets *Rime di diversi autori per lo nobilissimo dramma del Tolemeo, et Alessandro Rappresentato nel Teatro Domestico della Sacra real Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina di Pollonia, dedicate alla Maestà Sua*, published after the premiere of the opera, which praise Aleksander as the one who rejected the throne for reasons of superior nature. Sonnet IV, written by a poet whose Arcadian name was Clidemo Trivio, claims that "this magnanimous and noble example / shows that for ALESSANDRO / glory is worth more than his love of reigning."⁶⁷

Aleksander Sobieski's noble motivation is strongly emphasised in a monologue which the operatic protagonist Alessandro delivers in Act 2 Scene 9. Of note is also the conversation between Alessandro and Elisa which precedes this monologue, in which she informs him that she could become his wife only if he promises her the throne, the price of which would be Tolomeo's death (II,8). To

65 A. Ryszka-Komarnicka, "Polish History. . .," p. 123.

66 "Ma il savio Metisto, non men di buono animo diede esecuzione a'sentimenti d'Armonte, fabbricando di questa Istoria la favola; perche ravvisò in essa: come in lucido specchio, una delle più chiare, ed eroiche azioni del medesimo Armonte; il quale, siccome Alessandro potendo stabilirsi nel Regno colla morte del fratello, si elesse più tosto viver privato, che regnar fratricida; così potendo egli avere il paterno Regno da i Popoli, volle anzi rifiutarlo, che al suo maggiore fratello pregiudicare; e che tale veramente fosse stato il fine di Metisto, benègli additollo nel corpo del Dramma Att.2. sc. 9. ove disse *Che Alessandro non vuol reale Ammanto/ Cui dia fraterno sangue empio colore*." G.M. Crescimbeni, *Notizie storiche degli Arcadi morti* (Roma: De' Rossi, 1720–1721), Vol. 2, pp. 85–86.

67 "Che con esempio generoso, e degno / Fai ben veder, che in ALESSANDRO vale / Più di Gloria il desio, che amor di Regno."



Illustration 21. Aleksander Benedykt Sobieski, first quarter of eighteenth century, unknown painter. King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

Elisa, the murder of Tolomeo is to serve as proof of Alessandro's strength and as a way to win her heart. Her true motive for encouraging Alessandro to commit fratricide is the desire to avenge her spurned love for Tolomeo. To Alessandro, however, her demand is unthinkable. His monologue, which is a commentary on this situation, reflects his character: "An affection that knows neither reason / nor law / may be worthy of your heart, but not of mine."⁶⁸ Alessandro admits that he loves Elisa and wishes to reign in her heart more than on any throne – but not at such a cost. Whoever takes the throne illegitimately becomes a tyrant.⁶⁹ Alessandro reveals that he intends to return to Tolomeo both freedom and the throne of Egypt.⁷⁰ Apart from proving Alessandro's noble intentions, this scene

68 "Afetto, che ragione / Non conosca, nè legge. / Se degno è del tuo cor non è del mio."

69 "E la gloria m'insegna, / Che chi per calle ingiusto, ascende al Trono, / Serve Alla tirannia più che non regna."

70 "Che Alessandro non vuol reale ammanto / Cui dia fraterno sangue empio colore, / Porpora tinta in sangue così caro; / Porpora è di vergogna, e non d'onore."

presents one more quality of a reformed Arcadian hero; he can control the impulses of his heart, and follows reason, conscience, and virtue instead.

Alessandro's conversation with Araspe (III,5), on the other hand, seems to allude to the situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the death of John III. News of Cleopatra's death has just reached Alessandro from Egypt. The event leads to an outbreak of riots in the country. Alessandro wishes to go with his brother back to Egypt as quickly as possible, but still conceals his intention of handing the throne to Tolomeo. Anxious about his homeland, he sees Tolomeo's re-enthronement as a chance to restore peace. When Araspe tries to persuade him that returning to Egypt together would be dangerous, and that he should kill his brother, Alessandro protests vehemently. He would not shed Tolomeo's blood.⁷¹

There is yet another scene (III,7) in which Alessandro demonstrates his noble stance. He demands, namely, that his own troops swear allegiance to Tolomeo as their rightful king. He imagines his brother free and in power again: "Yes, he must reign: / My arm shall take pride in this glory, / that it did not let the crown be usurped."⁷² Alessandro will certainly not wear the crown that is due to another. On the other hand, though, it seems that he is not tempted by political power at all. Later in the recitative he calls it "the vain shadow" (*lombra vana*) and "false pleasure" (*falso piacer*). Is it possible, as historians now argue, that Aleksander Sobieski considered achievements in the fields of art, music, and theatre, to which he so willingly dedicated himself in Rome, as more lasting than political power? It seems that his resolute "refusal to co-create Polish history," and his subsequent behaviour in the Eternal City confirm that the ephemeral works of Roman artists were what gave him *il vero piacer* (the true pleasure).

Even though Alessandro's name comes second in the opera's title, it was he who was the central protagonist of this stage work. This is evident not only in allusions to Aleksander Sobieski's stance in the period when he was contending for the Polish throne. Alessandro is also the only male figure in this *dramma* who demonstrates the qualities dear to the reformers of the Italian theatre. He follows reason; he is just, honest, loved his brother, and values family ties as well as rightful authority more than anything else. Even a fervent love does not make him change his worldview. Betrayed by Araspe, he takes action in a truly royal fashion, by waging war on the king of Cyprus. Unlike Alessandro, Tolomeo

71 "Nò Araspe senza horror / Io del suo sangue non potrei bagnarmi."

72 "Sì, che ei deve Regnar: della ragione / Il mio braccio ministro, avrà la Gloria / Di dar altrui non d'usurpar corone."

represents a type of effeminate (*effeminato*) character constantly lamenting his fate and the wrongs he has suffered. He is pompous, frequently effusive; he embodies the very type of dramatic figure that was criticised by Muratori. Araspe, on the other hand, is a slave to his heart's passions, and does not demonstrate even the slightest interest in the affairs of the state. In one of the arias he directly expresses this attitude, singing that "justice and faith are figments of the free soul, to which a mind deprived by Amor of its freedom hearkens not."⁷³ This amorous claustrophobia is further enhanced by the pastoral landscape, which reinforces the erotic tension. Importantly, the action takes place on Cyprus, the island of the goddess Venus.

There was thus only one protagonist who could please the Arcadians present at the spectacles in the Palazzo Zuccari: Alessandro. In a sonnet published after the premiere, a poet known by the initials C.Z. wrote: "But of the three brightly shining Alessandros, I see in him: / the one who lived in illustrious Egypt, the Great one / who conquered Asia, and the one no lesser [than the other two], who has made Sarmatia famous, and Italy – beautiful"⁷⁴

L'Orlando overo La Gelosa Pazzia (1711)

The precise date of the premiere of the Orlando play at the Queen's palace (staged in the carnival season of 1711) is unknown, but her letter of 7th February 1711 suggests that the *dramma* may have been premiered that very night:

Roman operas, masques that commence today, and the great crowd we are hosting today in our little theatre, coming to see our opera despite other splendours [of the Roman carnival] – do not let me tell you more than that the very uncertainty as to your whereabouts would suffice to make my letter short, had I not had those other reasons of which I wrote you above. Thank God, despite our minor complaints, we are all well enough to take part in the entertainment taking place here, and the one that we are staging ourselves.⁷⁵

Be it as it may, *Tolomeo et Alessandro* was shown in January, and already on 21st February *Avvisi di Roma* announced the approaching end of that year's brief carnival, which also marked the end of the opera season. That *Orlando* did get staged in the meantime is confirmed not only by the then printed libretto, but

73 "Sono idée d'un Alma sciolta / La giustizia, e fedeltà / Non le vede, e non l'ascolta / Quella mente, a cui fu tolta Dall'Amor la libertà."

74 "Mà trè chiari ALESSANDRI io scorgo in lui: / Quel, che in Egitto illustre visse; il Grande / Che domò l'Asia; e il non minor, per cui / Sarmazia è gloriosa, Italia è bella."

75 NGAB 695, op.1/ 332 c. 15–16.

also by later news items. *Avvisi di Roma* reported on 11th July 1711: “The Queen of Poland continues [to stage] *Tolomeo* and *Orlando* alternately, despite the very hot season. It seems, however, that the audience has diminished a little, for reason of the weather being too hot.”⁷⁶ Both of that season’s operas were presented again in May, June, and July, which was a very unusual time for the Roman theatre (the heatwave and the Romans leaving for the countryside). On the occasion of this summer revival, the dowager queen shared with her eldest son her joy at the extraordinary success of *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, while also assuring him that *Orlando* had been staged specially for him:

My dear son, I have sent you two booklets comprising the opera *Ptolemy* [*Tolomeo*], which was staged this carnival season. A servant of Prince Aleksander, who has returned from Venice, passed on to us your wish to have one [such booklet]. They have been sold out, the bookseller sold all the copies he had, a great many, and they have been sent to all the foreign lands where they wish to stage it [that is, the opera], for it is surely the daintiest thing one can see and hear. If you came here, we would stage for you this delicious thing so as to please you. The new [opera] in turn, titled *Orlando*, has been devised entirely with you in mind. Your poor brother the prince has taken care of everything, and brought both the singers and good actors, all this with you in mind.⁷⁷

Other sources likewise take note of the May spectacles. On 16th May it was reported that: “Tomorrow night at the Queen’s the first dress rehearsal is held for an opera that will provide entertainment unheard of at this time of the year.”⁷⁸ More can be found in dispatches from Pesaro, which confirm the positive reception of the work by that part of the Roman aristocracy which remained in town. The particularly warm welcome given to *L’Orlando* is confirmed by a passage in the 1714 reissue of Crescimbeni’s *L’istoria della volgar poesia*:

But compared to these *drammi* [that is, *La Cortesia di Leone, e Ruggero dell’Ariosto* – libretto by Giovanni Villafranchi, Venice 1600 and *Cortesia di Leone, e Ruggero*, staged by Tiberio Florillo, Milan 1624 – note by AM], much better is the one magnanimously staged in June 1711 by His Majesty Prince Aleksander of Poland, in a lavish setting

76 “Proseguisce questa Regina di Polonia benché in staggione caldissima le recite delle due opere, il Tolomeo e l’Orlando à vicenda, il concorso però pare un poco diminuito a caggione della troppo avanzata staggione,” in: T.M. Gialdroni, “Spigolature romane. . .,” p. 386.

77 NGAB 695, op. 1/332 c. 54.

78 “Dimani sera si prova per la prima volta con gli abiti l’opera della regina, la quale sarà un divertimento non mai goduto in questa staggione,” in: T.M. Gialdroni, “Spigolature romane. . .,” p. 385. It is not known which opera the author had in mind, but most likely it was one of the carnival productions discussed here.

and with greatly refined taste in all its elements, at the domestic theatre of Her Holy and Royal Majesty Queen Dowager Marie Casimire, his mother. It is the work of Carlo Sigismondo Capece, secretary to Her Royal Majesty, who represented with amazing ease not just the main plot of Ariosto's poem, that is, the madness of Orlando, but also some of the most beautiful episodes. The work has been printed under the title *L'Orlando ovvero la Gelosa Pazzia*.⁷⁹

In an introduction addressed to his readers, Capece himself pointed out that in contexts where he had to observe the unity of time and action, which are required in a tragedy but not in an epic, he derived inspiration from Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* rather than from Ariosto. He also stressed that since both poems were universally known, he omitted the *argomento* otherwise normally included in such publications.⁸⁰ Capece's *Orlando* is important from today's

79 "Ma di questi Drammi molto migliore é quello che l'anno 1711. nel mese di Giugno fece rappresentare in Roma il magnanimo Genio del Serenissimo Principe Alessandro di Pollonia con sontuoso apparato, e con inesplicabil finezza di gusto in tutte le cose, nel domestico Teatro della Sacra, e Real Maestà di Maria Casimira Regina Vedova di Pollonia, sua Madre: fatica di Carlo Sigismondo Capece segretario della M. S. il quale con maravigliosa felicità seppe in essa trasportare non solo l'azione principale del Poema dell'Ariosto, cioè la pazzia d'Orlando; ma anche alcuno de'più begli episodi; ed ella é impressa col titolo L'Orlando ovvero la Gelosa Pazzia," in: G.M. Crescimbeni, *L'Istoria della Volgar Poesia* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1714), p. 340. Considering that, as has been said before, the Arcadians did not dedicate much attention to the music theatre, and even more rarely quoted specific titles from the current operatic repertoire, Crescimbeni's opinion seems to confirm the Romans' acclaim for the work staged at Palazzo Zuccari.

80 The story told by Ariosto in forty-six songs (*canti*) focuses on the eponymous Orlando, a brave Christian knight fighting the pagans, who was driven into madness by his love for fair Angelica. Orlando's descent into insanity after he has learnt that Angelica married Medoro is followed by a description of the valiant knight's follies, such as bestial acts of destruction, murdering innocent people, raiding villages, tormenting horses, etc. These themes are central to Ariosto's epic. The work also comprises other episodes, however, such as those of Rinaldo's sister Bradamante, who, armoured like a knight, looks for her beloved Ruggiero; of Rinaldo following Angelica; of the magician Astolfo who will eventually restore Orlando to his senses; of Zerbino and Isabella, whose love comes to a tragic end as they are united in one grave. Adding colour to all these subplots, we have descriptions of numerous duels fought in the name of faith and love, as well as episodes involving magic (typical of the chivalric literature of that time). What Capece took from Ariosto was the main plot of Orlando's descent into madness, the scene in the love grotto, where Medoro and Angelica pursue their passion for each other, as well as the figures of Zerbino and Isabella. Unlike in Ariosto, however, Capece's Angelica is a much gentler creature who respects Orlando's love

perspective as a revival (as Reinhard Strohm argues) of the Ariosto themes, later taken up in the libretti by Grazio Bracciolini (set to music by Antonio Vivaldi),⁸¹ but also as a text which combines several operatic *topoi*; namely, a scene of madness, a love grotto, and a dream.

Capecè's drama features six *dramatis personae*: Orlando; Angelica – Queen of Cathay (or China); Isabella – daughter of the king of Galicia; Zerbino – son of the king of Scotland; Medoro – an African prince, and Dorinda – a shepherdess. Of the greatest import to this story is the scene of Orlando's madness,⁸² which starts towards the end of Act II,⁸³ preceded by the beautiful theme of the

and is grateful to him for having repeatedly saved her life. she It makes her sad that she is unfortunately unable to reciprocate his affection.

81 R. Strohm, *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi*, Vol. I, p. 116.

82 The first *dramma per musica* to explore the topic of madness was *La finta pazzia Licori* (1627) with a libretto by Giulio Strozzi, with music by Claudio Monteverdi. This piece was most likely never staged, or even (as Ellen Rosand suggests) was never completed by the composer. For this reason, the libretto commonly considered as the first to portray insanity was the same Strozzi's *La finta pazzia*, but set to music by Francesco Saccati, and staged at the Venetian Teatro Novissimo in 1641. Thanks to the brilliant role of Anna Renzi, madness became from then on one of the key elements of the operatic convention. Cf. P. Fabbri, "On the Origins of an Operatic Topos: The Mad-Scene," in: *Con che soavità. Studies in Italian Opera, Song and Dance, 1580–1740*, eds I. Fenlon, T. Carter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 157–195; E. Rosand, "Operatic Madness: a Challenge to Convention," in: *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. S.P. Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 241–287; E. Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice. The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); C. Sartori, "La prima diva della lirica italiana: Anna Renzi," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1968, No. 2, pp. 430–452.

83 Unfortunately, no musical fragment from this opera has survived to our day. From earlier operatic works we know, however, that "[m]adness freed characters from the decorum of normal behaviour" (E. Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*. . . , p. 347), which gave music composers greater freedom of departing (at least for a moment) from the given character's typical way of singing, of dividing the utterance up into short phrases or motifs, of applying unexpected modulations and consonances, complicating the rhythm of musical statement, alternating singing with musical recitation, as well as presenting the text with variable tempi. Regardless of the musical style of a given age, the scene of madness allowed the composers to diverge for a moment from the obligatory musical language and tradition. Only in this way could they make such a scene stand out in a stage work that was sung throughout. Domenico Scarlatti presumably applied the same solutions while setting Capecè's text, as also did Handel in his *Orlando* several years later; Handel's work was partly based on the libretto written by Marie Casimire's court poet.

grotto in which the love between Angelica and Medoro was born and flourished. The idyllic aura (“a laurel grove at the entrance to the grotto; a water spring” – *boschetto di lauri con bocca di grotta, e fonte*) provides striking contrast for Orlando’s tragic fate, which will turn this wondrous landscape into a typically mundane chaos.

In agreement with the tradition inaugurated by Giulio Strozzi’s *La finta pazza* (music by Francesco Saccati), the protagonist’s madness is depicted in poetry by irregular verse length. Poets most frequently composed such passages in *versi sdrucchioli*,⁸⁴ conceived as the metrical counterpart of eccentricity, absurdity, and exaggeration.⁸⁵ The same verse form was also applied by Capece in Orlando’s aria *Già latra Cerbero* (II,11). In the preceding recitative, the eponymous hero claims he is a bodiless spirit, a shadow. He finds Charon awaiting him and recognises the god Pluto; he sees himself among the spirits of the dead in the inferno. This vision culminates in the already mentioned aria: “Cerberus is yapping now / and from Erebus / all the terrible / grim furies / flock to me. / But of the monsters / the impious cloisters / which one is the most dreadful? / Which makes me suffer / the greatest insults!”⁸⁶

Who, according to Orlando, is this cruellest of monsters? It is Medoro, whom the knight attempts to kill. He notices, however, that Proserpine (in whose embrace he finds Medoro) is crying, and this makes his fury abate as he realises that even in the land of death someone still sheds tears for love. This observation culminates in Orlando’s aria *Vaghe pupille, non piangete nò*, with which Act II comes to an end.

The hero’s madness continues in the opera’s last act, where in Scene 6 we find ourselves in what is described by Capece as a village with ruins of houses and fallen trees (*Campagna con ruine di case, ed alberi*). Dorinda laments, singing about how Orlando destroys all dwellings, and how her own cottage has become the grave for Medoro and Isabella. She fears for her own life, too. In Scene 8, Orlando’s insanity becomes even more severe. Having launched into a tirade against Angelica, whom he calls a Venus, Megaera, and Medea, he throws her off a rock in the last spasms of his madness. He is glad that he has purged the earth of unworthy creatures and monsters. This is because, in his imagination, there is no

84 In which the tonic accent always falls on the antepenultimate syllable.

85 P. Fabbri, “On the Origins. . .,” p. 181.

86 “Già latra Cerbero; / E già dell’Erebo/ Ogni terribile / Squallida furia/ Sen viene a me.
/ Ma tra quei mostri / Degl’empìi chiostrì / Dovè il più horribile? / Che l’alta ingiuria / Soffrir mi fè!”

difference between humans and wild beasts. Then he summons Morpheus, since it is only in sleep that he can find solace. This allows Capece to introduce another operatic *topos*.⁸⁷ The Greek god Hypnos, known in ancient Rome as Somnus, son of the Night and twin brother of Death, was one of the oldest gods, associated with the myth of the creation of the world. He was considered as a benefactor of humankind because he brought sleep, which offers temporary forgetfulness and can heal, reveal the future, or even allow contact with the gods.⁸⁸ In iconography, Hypnos was usually represented as “a youth sleeping on an ebony bed in a cave, or a charming boy carrying a poppy head or else a horn filled with poppy seeds, with which he plants sleep throughout the earth.”⁸⁹ The most detailed description of his realm can be found in Book XI of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.⁹⁰ Poppies and other herbs are his permanent attributes, which he was believed to have used

87 My comments on the dream *topos* are taken from a paper which I delivered during the *Tredicesimo convegno annuale Società Italiana di Musicologia* in Turin (20th – 22nd Oct. 2006) as *Sleep and dream in librettos by Carlo Sigismondo Capece written for Maria Kazimiera Sobieska (1710–1714)*.

88 E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Sather Classical Lectures Vol. 25, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); A.H.M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1978); P. Cox Miller, *Dreams in late antiquity. Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); S. Tynecka-Makowska, *Antyczny paradygmat prezentacji snu [The Ancient Paradigm of Representing Sleep]* (Łódź: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2002).

89 J. Zagożdżon, *Sen w literaturze średniowiecznej i renesansowej [Sleep and Dreams in Medieval and Renaissance Literature]* (Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, 2002), pp. 15–16.

90 “There is near the Cimmerians a cave with a long recess, a hollowed mountain, the home and the habitation of slothful Sleep, into which the Sun, whether rising, or in his mid course, or setting, can never come. Fogs mingled with darkness are exhaled from the ground, and it is a twilight with a dubious light. No wakeful bird, with the notes of his crested features, there calls forth the morn; nor do the watchful dogs, or the geese more sagacious than the dogs, break the silence with their voices. No wild beasts, no cattle, no boughs waving with the breeze, no loud outbursts of the human voice, there make any sound; mute Rest has there her abode. But from the bottom of the rock runs a stream, the waters of Lethe, through which the rivulet, trickling with a murmuring noise amid the sounding pebbles, invites sleep. Before the doors of the cavern, poppies bloom in abundance, and innumerable herbs, from the juice of which the humid night gathers sleep, and spreads it over the darkened Earth.” Ovid, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid. Literally Translated into English Prose, with Copious Notes and Explanations*, trans. Henry Thomas Riley (Project Gutenberg Ebook, 2008), Book XI, ll. 590 ff., p. 406, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/26073/26073-h/Met_VIII-XI.html (2nd May 2020).

in order to send soothing sleep on humans. It was with poppies that Capece put Orlando to sleep. I will return to this symbol later on.

The ancient Greeks and Romans believed in prophetic dreams in which gods came into contact with mortals in order to give them instructions and guidelines, but also revealing to them their future fate. So important in their everyday lives, but also so mysterious and vague, sometimes filled with nightmares – dreams became an element of literature and art, even for the rational Greeks. The earliest examples come from Homer's texts, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. In Book XIX of the latter, ll. 560–567, the poet divides dreams into two groups, true or meaningful and deceptive or meaningless:

Stranger, dreams verily are baffling and unclear of meaning, and in no wise do they find fulfilment in all things for men. For two are the gates of shadowy dreams, and one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Those dreams that pass through the gate of sawn ivory deceive men, bringing words that find no fulfillment. But those that come forth through the gate of polished horn bring true issues to pass, when any mortal sees them.⁹¹

In texts by such ancient authors as Ovid, Virgil and Euripides we mainly find meaningful, prophetic dreams. In the fifth century, Macrobius returned to Homer's classification of dreams in his commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. Macrobius again distinguished two groups of dreams, this time – true and false.⁹²

In the Renaissance, dreams took on several new types of meaning, derived from the at least partial adaptation of the Platonic concept of dreams, in which an intellectual, and most of all – an artist, is exposed to the creative *furor*

91 Homer. *The Odyssey*, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1919), Book XIX, ll. 560–567, The Annenberg CPB/Project, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0136%3Abook%3D19%3Acard%3D544> (2nd May 2020).

92 The former were further subdivided into: enigmatic dreams, which called for an interpretation, as their significance might not be clear for the dreamer; prophetic ones, whose meaning was only understood once the prophecy had been fulfilled; and oracular dreams, in which a person known to the dreamer, or (a) god himself, recommended some future action. Cf. Macrobius, as discussed in: M. Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration. Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 15. Among false dreams Macrobius includes nightmares and visions of the mundane reality known to the dreamer. These were usually a reflection of situations experienced in the waking state.

(inspiration) sent down to him by (a) god or the Muses.⁹³ Dreams provided artists with a kind of illumination, since in dreams they could tap into forces inaccessible to ordinary mortals. While not denying the existence of meaningless dream visions, the Renaissance developed an interpretation of dreams as a reflection of hidden longings, a return to one's own world.⁹⁴ Kessels claims that, from the time of the Renaissance on, dreams came to be seen as an illustration of human thoughts, wishes and emotions. They no longer came from outside, from the gods; their origins were now sought in the human psyche.⁹⁵ Evidence of this way of thinking can mainly be found in the Renaissance love poetry, in which poets described the torments of unreciprocated love, or of love lost due to the beloved's sudden death. Emotions experienced in the waking state became incorporated into their dreams; sometimes they soothed their wounded souls and brought the sleeper at least temporary forgetfulness. When the beloved one was dead, nocturnal sleep was the only chance to meet her spectre and unite with her in the long-awaited embrace. It was apparently this kind of dreams, considered at first as false and unworthy of our attention, that were incorporated into the operatic convention and became a major theme of the Baroque *drammi per musica*,⁹⁶ despite criticism from well-educated members of the audience. An excellent example of such educated reactions is Ludovico Antonio Muratori's commentary on the absurdities of the contemporary music theatre:

It may seem ridiculous when we sometimes see a dramatic character in a garden or prison saying that he wants to sleep. And as soon as he sits down, good and courteous sleep, not at all scared away by the serious agitation of the soul in which the character was so engrossed, immediately closes his eyes. ... and that sleeping and sweetly dreaming character is heard singing out his sorrows, and calling in his dream the person

93 While dreaming, an artist is set free and is no longer controlled by his reason, nor is he a slave to his body anymore. In the visual arts from that period we find images of naked men, intellectuals who in their sleep are exposed to the workings of the creative *furor*. Their nakedness symbolises alienation from the world, a focus on meditation, and the perfection of the soul, which is now ready to perform the creative act. No wonder that the Renaissance put clothes on the sleeping shepherd Endymion, who, rather than representing creative energy, was regarded as an epitome of erotic pleasure!

94 E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 118.

95 A.H.M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream*. . . , p. 11.

96 An interesting example of seventeenth-century operatic treatment of dreams that express human desires, reflect the dreamer's past experiences and actions, can be found in Francesco Cavalli's *Il Giasone*.

he loves, whom the Poet in his great charity and circumspection immediately orders to appear in that very place.⁹⁷

Muratori's critical stance, most likely known to Capece (since the first edition of *Della perfetta poesia italiana* came out in 1706 in Modena), did not make authors give up the still highly popular dream scenes, which continued to crop up in that period's *drammi per musica*. In Capece's libretti (*Il figlio delle selve*, *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, *Ifigenia in Tauri*) they take precisely the form that was derided by Muratori. The protagonists fall asleep, wearied by their love torment, and see the apparitions of their beloveds. Such dream scenes reflect the experiences of the human psyche. Capece, however, skilfully exploited the dramatic potential of dreams, using them to spur forward dramatic action, to present a solution, to elucidate a complex plot (in their dreams, the characters frequently reveal their true identity and feelings, etc.), or to emphasise the lyrical quality of the moment.⁹⁸

The first mention of sleep and dreaming in Capece's *L'Orlando* comes in an aria sung by Angelica, *Verdi piante, herbette liete* (II,9). Here sleep symbolises the much-awaited rest and fulfilment in love. Stylistically Capece draws more on the rhetoric of Baroque poetry, as described, for example, in Giambattista Marino's *L'Adone*, than on the postulates of the Roman Arcadia.⁹⁹ The dream scene, most important for the entire *dramma*, comes in Act III Scene 8, where Orlando praises the sweetness of sleep in his aria, since sleep is not disturbed by the cruel love that makes him suffer in the waking state: "Already my dazed eye / that sweet liqueur / invites to repose / Ah you perfidious love / soaring, / joking, / you won't make me wake up."¹⁰⁰ In the recitative that is part of this

97 "Ridicola cosa poi può sembrare a taluno quel rimirare alle volte un personaggio Drammatico, che in qualche giardino, o prigione dice di voler prendere sonno; ed appena s'è posto a sedere, che il buon Sonno tutto cortese, punto non ispaventato dalla grave agitazione d'animo, in cui poco dianzi era quel personaggio, subitamente gl'investe gli occhi. ... e s'ode quel personaggio addormentato, e sognante, soavemente cantar le sue pene, e sognando nominar quella persona, ch'egli ama, e che il Poeta con gran carità, ed accortezza fa quivi prontamente sopravvenire," in: L.A. Muratori, *Della perfetta...*, p. 44.

98 E. Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice...*, pp. 338–342.

99 G. Palma, *In the Arms of Hypnos: The Metaphor of Sleep in Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Literature*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (New Haven: Yale University, 1994), pp. 182–183.

100 "Già l'ebro mio ciglio / Quel dolce liquore / Invita a posar. / Tù perfido amore / Volando, / O'scherzando / Non farmi destar."

scene, Capece refers to Hypnos' regular attributes, namely, the poppies, which symbolise, among others, "night, forgetfulness, ignorance of things, sleep, dream visions, madness, unconsciousness, and resurrection."¹⁰¹ In the same recitative, Orlando also mentions Morpheus, son of Hypnos, whom the ancients believed to be responsible for sending dreams on humans. Obsessed with jealousy, which has turned into a destructive rage, Orlando falls asleep. The dream of forgetfulness is afforded by Hypnos even to madmen.

Capece reverses the logic of Ariosto's dramaturgy. In *Orlando furioso* sleep makes humans lose touch with themselves; uncontrolled by reason, it becomes a prelude for the scene of madness. Capece reverses this sequence of events. In his libretto, sleep and dream mark the end of insanity, and offer a remedy to the mad protagonist. The dream also plays a specific practical dramatic function here. Only in the sleep can a ring be put on the finger of the unconscious and passive Orlando. This ring finally delivers him from the abyss of madness and cures him. The ring is a gift from Angelica, once given to Zerbino, a knight dedicated to Orlando. It is therefore the dream, coupled with mercy and love, that restores health to the eponymous hero.

In his libretti, Capece fondly draws on various operatic *topoi* and explores their potential. He skilfully constructs scenes which link the protagonists' experiences and their psychic needs with the dramaturgy of the entire work. He also plays in a "virtuosic" fashion with literary conventions, both ancient and modern ones. His dream depictions are among the most suggestive. In those episodes, Capece combines the ancient symbolism related to the god Hypnos with representations of the human psyche, which plays the main role in his dream scenes. In this way, Capece turned what Homer considered as meaningless dreams into a regular component of the Baroque opera.

***Tetide in Sciro* (10th January 1712)**

Little information has been preserved concerning the staging of *Tetide in Sciro* and the entire 1712 carnival season in Rome.¹⁰² One of the reasons for this situation is that Francesco Valesio, the unfailing chronicler of Roman life, discontinued his narration.¹⁰³ Fortunately we have a report printed in *Foglio di Foligno*

101 W. Kopaliński, *Słownik symboli* [*Dictionary of Symbols*] (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990), p. 217.

102 The opera was revived in Vicenza (1715); cf. R. Strohm, *The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi...*, p. 116.

103 Francesco Valesio's *Diario di Roma* reports on events that took place between 9th August 1700 and 10th March 1711, after which the diary was suddenly discontinued

on 9th January 1712, which informs that: “This evening, the first opera has been staged at the Teatro Capranica, and tomorrow the opera will be presented by the Queen of Poland in her own palace.”¹⁰⁴ On 16th January we learn from the same source that: “Performances of operas continue at Cardinal Ottoboni’s theatre and the Teatro Capranica, which compete for praise, but the [opera] that was shown at the Queen of Poland’s domestic theatre has attracted all the attention thanks to the harmony and magnificence of all the elements that make it up, thus winning universal acclaim.”¹⁰⁵ In the context of the brevity of these notes, a study of the Queen’s letters proves the more valuable. On 6th February 1712 she wrote to Jakub Sobieski the much telling letter already quoted in Chapter VI (see page 155 and footnotes 9), in which she also adds that,

Your child is feeling well, thank God. The question which preoccupies us now is the proper costumes, though this is supposed to be a masquerade [that is, a carnival] without masks [that is, masked balls]. Still, in order to afford her the pleasure of dancing, I have ordered for [a party] to be held ... on the last three days of the carnival, to which a long list of invited Romans, male and female, will come in masks to dance.¹⁰⁶

On 13th February 1712, Charles Poerson, the director of Rome’s Académie Française, summed up that carnival season, saying that thank God it was finally over, but due to the cold and the city’s overall poor condition it was not as rich in entertainment as in the previous year.¹⁰⁷ This sad image of the year’s carnival was additionally aggravated by the papal ban on holding balls, which, however, did not stop the Polish queen from organising one, for the benefit of her granddaughter. Unfortunately, for fear of arrest and of heavy papal penalties, the Roman aristocrats failed to arrive at the Trinità de’Monti. It was, therefore,

for the next 13 years. Valesio resumed his reports on 24th December 1724 and carried on with this task until 27th March 1742, two months before his death.

104 “Questa sera va in Scena per la prima volta l’Opera nel Teatro di Capranica, e dimani sara quella, che fa recitare questa Regina di Polonia nella propria Abitatione,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (9th Jan. 1712).

105 “Continuano ad andare in Scena l’Opere che si rappresentano nel Teatro del Cardinal Ottoboni, ed in quello di Capranica, che fanno a gara per riportare l’applauso, ma essendo comparsa quella che fa rappresentare questa Regina di Polonia nel suo Teatro Domestico ha tirato a se tutta l’attenzione, mentre per la consonanza, & esquisitezza di tutte le cose, cha la compongono ha riportato Universale sodisfazione,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (16th Jan. 1712).

106 NGAB 695, op. 1/337 c. 9v-10v.

107 *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome avec le surintendants des bâtimens*, ed. A. de Montaignon (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1889), Vol. 4, p. 75.

a short and not particularly varied carnival,¹⁰⁸ during which two musical stage works won public acclaim: *Tetide in Sciro* and *Il Ciro*.¹⁰⁹

The opera staged on 10th January at Marie Casimire's theatre draws on the well-known tale of the love of Achilles and Deidamia, as well as the theme of Achilles being concealed on Scyros in a girl's clothes. In the *argomento*, Capece also refers to Plutarch, from whom he took the figure of Theseus' daughter Antiope.¹¹⁰ The libretto lists the following *dramatis personae*: Tetide – goddess of the sea, mother of Achilles, appearing under the name of Nerea; Licomede – king of Scyros; Deidamia – his daughter; Antiope – Theseus' daughter, under the assumed name of Filarte; Acchille (Achilles) – under the assumed name of Arminda Ulisse.

The myth of young Achilles living on Scyros in a girl's clothing derives from the local insular tradition. It spread throughout ancient Greece¹¹¹ only after the island had been conquered by the Athenian Cimon (510–449 BCE). According to Athenian propaganda, Theseus perished on Scyros, thrown off a cliff by king Lycomedes, which was used as a pretext for the Athenian invasion of Scyros around 476–463 BCE. It was at that time that the two mythologies, Athenian and Scyrian, fused, which led to the appearance of works popularising the episode of the disguised Achilles' stay on the island; namely, Euripides' *Scyrians*, Ovid's *Ars amatoria*,¹¹² Pseudo-Apollodorus'

108 Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli was one of those who gave up staging *drammi per musica* in 1712, while of the two operas planned for that season at the Palazzo della Cancelleria Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni produced only one, the *dramma* entitled *Il Ciro* (libr. P. Ottoboni, mus. A. Scarlatti).

109 *Il Ciro* was the *dramma per musica* staged by Cardinal Ottoboni. Chevalier Chappe (Ottoboni's secretary, cf. J. C. Rule, B. S. Trotter, *A World of Paper: Louis XIV, Colbert de Torcy, and the Rise of the Information State* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2014), Table 7.7 "Pensions to Rome") called it (in a letter to Marquis de Torcy) "one of the most beautiful and accomplished [*drammi*] seen in Rome for a long time" ("c'est un des plus beaux spectacles et des plus accomplis que l'on ait veu à Rome depuis longtemps...," in: *Correspondance des directeurs...* (2nd Jan. 1712), Vol. 4, p. 64.

110 Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, commonly called *Parallel Lives*. *Theseus* (Cambridge, MA and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1914), <https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/home.html> (19th May 2020).

111 Cf. P.J. Heslin, "Transvestitism in Myth and Ritual." In: P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles: Gender and Genre in Statius' 'Achilleid'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 193–236.

112 Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, ll. 1681–1704, English ed. *Ars Amatoria, or The Art Of Love Literally Translated into English Prose, with Copious Notes*, trans. Henry T. Riley

Bibliotheca,¹¹³ and Gaius Julius Hyginus' *Fabulae*.¹¹⁴

The earliest *dramma per musica* drawing on the Achillean motifs was *La finta pazza* (Venice 1641) by Giulio Strozzi (libretto) and Francesco Sacrati (music), staged for the inauguration of the Teatro Novissimo. More operas based on the same theme followed, among others: *Achille in Sciro* (libr. Ippolito Betivoglio, mus. Giovanni Legrenzi, Ferrara 1663), *Tetide in Sciro* (libr. C.S. Capece, mus. D. Scarlatti, Rome 1712), *Achille in Sciro* (libr. P. Metastasio, mus. A. Caldara, Vienna 1736),¹¹⁵ and *Deidamia* (libr. Paolo Rolli, mus. G.F. Handel, London 1741).¹¹⁶ An element which attracts many researchers' attention is the transvestitism exhibited by some of the protagonists,¹¹⁷ understood as a "particular form of masking ... depending on assuming the clothes, and consequently also the behaviour and typical responsibilities, of a (biologically) different sex."¹¹⁸ Transvestitism was by no means a new phenomenon at that time; its roots look back to the ancient times. In Italy it was publicly practised during the carnival,

(1885), Book the First, v. 806 ff., <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/47677/47677-h/47677-h.htm> (19th May 2020).

- 113 Pseudo-Apollodorus, "Library." In: *Apollodorus 'Library and Hyginus' Fabulae. Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology*, trans. R. Scott Smith, Stephen M. Trzaskoma (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co, 2007), p. 66.
- 114 Hyginus, "Fabulae," in: *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus...*, p. 129. Probably the best known and certainly the longest version of this motif can be found in Statius' *Achilleid*, a classical Latin epic which belonged to the literary canon in the Middle Ages and was still read in the Renaissance and Baroque, influencing operatic plots as well. Statius' regrettably unfinished work focuses on Achilles' youth, Thetis' (It. Tetide) care for her son, whom she conceals on Scyros, as well as Ulysses and Diomedes' mission to find the future hero of the Trojan War. Statius also elaborated on the theme of Achilles' relationship with Deidamia, who bore him a son, Neoptolomeus, a would-be local Scyrian hero, whose later fate he did not present, though.
- 115 Metastasio's libretto was later set more than 20 times by various composers, similarly as in the case of many of his other works.
- 116 On departures from Statius' original text in operatic libretti, cf. P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles...*, pp. 9 ff. The changes to the Achilles' myth introduced by Metastasio were studied by W. Heller, "Reforming Achilles: Gender, 'Opera Seria' and the Rhetoric of the Enlightened Hero," *Early Music* 1998 No. 4, pp. 562–581.
- 117 The term 'transvestitism' was introduced by the German scholar Magnus Hirschfeld in 1910. Other researchers enriched the terminology related to this phenomenon, cf. V.L. Bullough, B. Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).
- 118 G. D'Agostino, "Il sesso in maschera." In: *Maschere e corpi. Tempi e luoghi del carnevale*, eds F. Castelli, P. Grimaldi (Roma: Booklet Milano, 1997), p. 146.

as an expression of the idea of the Bakhtinian “inside-out world” which allowed people temporarily to assume different personalities and to suspend the traditional (biological, social and cultural) functions of gender and body. Inspired by the culture of laughter, such transvestitism was based on the opposition between what *is* and what *appears to be*,¹¹⁹ and it was in this form that it found its way to operatic libretti, reinforced by the popular and (in the seventeenth century) still widely recognised theory concerning differences between the sexes, formulated by the Roman physician Galen. The latter claimed that the female sex organs are an inside-out version of the external male genitals.¹²⁰ It was therefore possible for men to become women and vice versa.¹²¹ This one-sex model influenced the emergence of the ambiguity with which gender was understood and represented in seventeenth-century Venetian *drammi*,¹²² and as a consequence – in the Italian opera as a whole. This was coupled with a peculiar performance practice, related to the audiences’ preference for the voices of the castrati, who were sexually ambivalent and intriguing, and frequently set in women’s roles. All these numerous elements were constitutive of the presence of transvestitism in the Italian opera. Changes only came in the early eighteenth century, as a result of reformers’ efforts and a more scientific approach to the question of sex differences. In order to give the operatic entertainment a respectable status, Arcadian erudite authors postulated, apart from transformations of language and structure, also the abandonment of typical seventeenth-century traditions, such as the introduction of comic characters and the mixing of representatives of various social classes, but also dressing-up and identity change, which insulted their sense of *buon gusto*. As a consequence, transvestitism lost some of its charm. Researchers emphasise the groundbreaking role of Metastasio’s libretto for *Achille in Sciro* in this process. The protagonist is consciously represented here so as to demonstrate that “gender is not contingent but essential, in that the masculinity of Achilles is a primal force of nature that cannot be concealed, despite the efforts of his divine mother and his own devotion to Deidamia.”¹²³

119 G. D’Agostino, *Il sesso in maschera...*, p. 146. For D’Agostino, it is an opposition of *essere versus apparire*.

120 Th. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 4. As a consequence, the Galenic one-sex model dominated in thinking about gender till the early eighteenth century. The paragon of that single sex was the male body, of which the woman constituted a lesser version.

121 In this concept, gender differences are constituted by social, not by biological factors.

122 W. Heller, “Reforming Achilles...,” p. 567.

123 P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles...*, p. 2.

In this interpretation, far from being an ambiguous product of carnival culture, gender determines the hero's attitude and actions. Metastasio's Achilles can no longer remain in disguise. He must first regain his masculinity, which he does "through a public rejection of singing and musical instruments,"¹²⁴ identified with typically female roles, and by following the sound of battle trumpets, sword in hand. This does not mean, however, that he has also rejected love. On the contrary, love helps fully to define his masculinity. He will beget a son by Deidamia but will follow his heroic destiny himself.

What is the place of Carlo Sigismondo Capece's libretto for *Tetide in Sciro* in this discourse on transvestitism and in the underlying attitude to the questions of gender? Peter J. Heslin believes that despite some innovations inspired by the reform of the opera, *Tetide in Sciro* belongs to the carnival tradition which treats gender as a mask, under which the protagonist of the ancient tale can fulfil his or her sexual desires.¹²⁵ Heslin stresses that Capece's libretto does not deal, as do Metastasio's or Rolli's later texts, with male heroism, but focuses on Achilles' romantic love which he engages in while disguised as a female.¹²⁶ This is confirmed by Act I Scene II, where Tetide reminds Achilles that Hercules also adopted a disguise to win his beloved's heart. Her statement suggests, however, that she is using her son's love for Deidamia in order to save him from his destiny. She is trying to persuade him that in order to get close to his chosen one, who is strictly guarded by her father, he must put on female clothes. Though the purpose of his disguise is to approach and win his beloved, and love is the dominant theme of this libretto,¹²⁷ the opera does not focus unequivocally and exclusively on Achilles and his amorous passion.

124 W. Heller, "Reforming Achilles..." p. 567.

125 P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles*, p. 2.

126 P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles*, p. 12.

127 Love, in its different variants and stages, is undoubtedly the dominant theme of Capece's libretto. Achilles loves Deidamia, but he also loves war. King Lycomedes is passionately in love with Achilles in the latter's guise as Arminda. Antiope loves the king of Scyros, but her love is permeated by the desire for avenging the memory of her great father. Deidamia, who has not experienced love yet, learns it by observing others, and gradually discovers it in herself. The delightful and extraordinary tenderness of her feelings stands in blatant opposition to Lycomedes' uncontrollable passion. There is also maternal love in this libretto. Other libretti of that period construct similar networks of amorous relations, so this is not the element which makes Capece's work stand out among the others.

Henslin seems to treat the fact that Capece's *Tetide in Sciro* is part of the carnival tradition as a fault. This is evident in that scholar's analysis of a moment central to the whole story, in which Ulysses discovers the boy's identity. Dressed as a woman, Achilles, the would-be hero of the Trojan war, chooses – from among the gifts which sent by Orestes to Deidamia – a sword, which to Ulysses is a proof that he has found the young champion he was looking for.¹²⁸ Despite this, Odysseus does not announce his discovery. Unlike in Metastasio's text, Achilles does not reveal his true identity and there is no public rejection of the female costume and attributes, no “eruption of manhood.” What is more, Ulysses finds himself forced to stop Achilles from following Deidamia. Ulysses tells him of Troy, of the abducted Helen, which was an insult to all Greeks, but also of their general mobilization that followed. He concludes that Peleus' son is not among the warriors, but must be resting in some hiding place, where the sound of Attic trumpets cannot reach him. Ulysses' speech makes Achilles feel both ashamed and indignant: “This rumour is a lie, and so is the outcry; / I am Achilles, and Deidamia's lover / 'Tis only out of love that I'm hiding [here], not out of cowardice; / But even in these clothes, my heart will suffice / to subjugate Troy, and the [whole] world thereafter.”¹²⁹

It was love, then, that kept Achilles on the island in a girl's disguise, far from his male, heroic destiny. It seems, however, that Henslin underestimated the role of the circumstances in which *Tetide in Sciro* was written, and the role of Capece's royal patron in its creation. It should be noted that, despite the allusion to the insular episode from Achilles' life in the title, the opera's eponymous heroine is Tetide, his mother. The title draws the audience's attention to her figure, and the myth itself was to serve specific aims. First and foremost, Tetide is Marie Casimire's *alter ego*, a caring and suffering mother. The goddess is presented in this role through her monologues, dialogues with Achilles and Ulysses, as well

128 Doubt first arises in the mind of the wise man from Ithaca when he hears Achilles' extremely passionate statement concerning the worth of Deidamia's love (Act I Scene 11). More doubts appear directly after the scene in which Deidamia speaks with admiration of the sleeping Filarte (II, 5), which makes Achilles jealous, and only his feminine clothes force him to restrain his anger. Still, Ulysses' keen eye can hardly fail to notice the girl's extraordinary pride and haughtiness.

129 “É bugiarda la fama, il grido mente: / Io sono Acchille, e di Deidamia Amante / Sol per amor, non per viltà m'ascondo; / Mà in quet'abito ancora hò Cuor bastante / Per domar Troja, e dopo Troja il Mondo.”

as through her actions.¹³⁰ Though divine, she complains and reproaches her son as any ordinary mortal might do. Unable to save her son and rescue him from Ulysses' hands, she uses threats as the only recourse left to a desperate mother. She declares herself as the hero from Ithaca's eternal enemy from now on.

The representation of Achilles' stay on Scyros is, thus, a reminiscence of Marie Casimire's endeavours to free her sons (imprisoned in 1704), and to restore her daughter Teresa Kunegunda, who still remained in exile, to the role and status that was due to her. "I'm a goddess, I'm a mother / I will have the love of a mother, and the strength of a goddess. / I'll be able to mock the deceptions / I'll be able to fight with fate / and stop the influence of tyrannical stars."¹³¹ Allusions to talks and negotiations with the pope, the emperor's court, and Louis XIV, as well as to the queen's own difficult personal experiences and decisions, which backfired on her children, can be found in the following recitative (II,11): "What else do you want from me / o, cruellest stars / who toss me about endlessly / from one peril to another? / 'Tis true, I am your open foe; but it is tyranny / to avenge a mother's insults on her son. / O my son, how much else must I suffer for you? / From Ulysses' deceit and Lycomedes' ire / you must be protected / and I can achieve this aim."¹³²

After Ulysses' discovery of Arminda's / Achilles' true identity, Tetide represents Queen Marie Casimire as head of a family that was expected to go down in history thanks to the achievements of her and John III's children. It is undoubtedly proof of her deep confidence in the Sobieskis' destiny and in her own powers that she was able to identify herself with the mother of the mythical hero. As we know, until the very end of her life the queen hoped that her sons would play a major role in the future of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For this reason, like Achilles, she impatiently awaited the time when she would be able to discard her mask and re-emerge in Europe's political scene. Achilles' disguise and his difficult time on Scyros symbolise, therefore, Marie Casimire and her children's Roman sanctuary, which she saw as a place of repose before new

130 As a sea goddess, Tetide proves able to rescue Deidamia after she has been thrown off the rock, thus restoring the obligatory operatic *lieto fine*, which additionally justifies placing her in the title role in this *dramma*.

131 "son Dea, son Madre / Di Madre havrò l'amor, di Dea la forza / Saprò schernir gl'inganni / Saprò lottar col fato / E gl'influssi arrestar d'astri tiranni."

132 "Da me, che più volete / Stelle troppo crudeli / Sempre mi agitarete / Di periglio, in periglio? / Vi son nemica è ver; mà é tirannia / Lonte Materne vendicar nel figlio. / oh figlio, e quanto ancora / Per te debbo soffrire? / Dall'insidia d'Ulisse, e dal furore/ Di Licomede, ti convien schermire: / E ben lo potrei fare."

heroic deeds. The queen, like Tetide, struggled with disillusion by finding comfort in the thought that Deidamia started a line of Achilles' descendants and successors.¹³³ Could it be that her own grandsons would follow in the footsteps of the gallant John III?¹³⁴

***Ifigenia in Aulide* (11th January 1713) and *Ifigenia in Tauri* (15th February 1713)**

In the carnival season of 1713, Marie Casimire presented the Roman aristocratic audience with as many as two different operas. On 14th February 1713 she wrote to her son Jakob:

You can see, my dearest son, by the date of this letter, that we are at the peak of the carnival. Thank God, Prince Aleksander enjoys not just the season, but also its best part in Rome, and that owing to the operas that are being staged at my house under his supervision, which he is an expert on, both as concerns the words, which he checks and sees to being revised, and the music, in which his refined taste makes him correct even the most skilful composer, such as my *maestro di cappella*. Aleksander also takes care of the actors and singers, the costumes, and finally the décor. So this carnival two operas can be seen at my place and theatre, most exquisite and carefully prepared, which is the universal opinion among all the foreigners and all those Romans who have attended [?] all the other events.¹³⁵ I am telling you all these details to show you that the health of the said prince your brother is quite good at present, and may God preserve him so, this is all that we can wish for.¹³⁶

133 “Che dal seno amoroso / Della bella Deidamia uscirà poi / Il chiaro germe di più forti Heroi.”

134 Only one of Marie Casimire's granddaughters, Maria Klementyna Sobieska (1702–1735), had a chance to ascend a throne through her marriage to James II Stuart, son of the dethroned king James. This marriage proved ill-starred, however, just as her husband's hopes to regain the English throne. Maria Klementyna died in Rome, in a monastery, by starving herself to death, and was buried in the Eternal City. In his biography of Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska, Michał Komarzyński claims that Marie Casimire also put her hope in Charles (Karl Albrecht of Bavaria), the eldest son of her daughter and Maximilian II Emanuel, and saw her brother-in-law as king of southern Italy, expressing her conviction that “his generosity and love of entertainment would surely conquer Naples.” Cf. M. Komarzyński, *Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), p. 108.

135 The original is not clearly legible here. The translation should therefore be considered as merely hypothetical.

136 NGAB 695, op. 1/347 c. 114–115.

Capece prepared a pair of libretti¹³⁷ this time, both based on the story of Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, leader of the war expedition to Troy, which the librettist divides, following Euripides' example, into two parts: *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *Ifigenia in Tauri*.¹³⁸ Both share the same eponymous heroine, whose fate makes it possible, as the poet himself declares in the *argomenti* for both dramas, to analyse these two works together as one whole. As for their production, we have the following information: On 14th January 1713 it was reported that “[o]n Monday the dress rehearsal of a comedy was shown at the Queen’s domestic theatre, and it was repeated on Wednesday and Thursday with all due convention. A wide audience was admitted to hear it. [The work] won great acclaim owing to the uniqueness of the voices, and all the circumstances of its staging.”¹³⁹ On 28th January, the same chronicler commented favourably on the opera produced at the Palazzo Zuccari, and compared it with the work shown at the Teatro Capranica: “Comedies are being staged both at the Polish Queen’s domestic theatre and at the Capranica; both have won approval thanks to the quality of the performers and the graceful sets and costumes.”¹⁴⁰ On 4th February, the anonymous author of the source quoted here informed that, because of a slight

137 On the tradition of paired libretti, cf. R. Strohm, “Dramma dualities: Metastasio and the tradition of the opera pair,” *Early Music* 1998, No. 4, pp. 551–561; R. Strohm, “Dramatic Dualities: Opera Pairs from Minato to Metastasio,” in: *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, Vol. 1: *Institutions and Ceremonies*, eds. M. Bucciarelli, N. Dubovy, R. Strohm (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006, pp. 275–295).

138 The Iphigenia story had previously been taken up in such operas as: *Iphigénie en Tauride* (libr. A. Danchet, mus. H. Desmarests, A. Campra, 1704), *Ifigenia* (libr. P. Riva after A. Aureli, mus. A.B. Coletti, 1707). Bruno Forment also quotes one more *Ifigenia* (libr. Tardivello, music by an unknown composer, 1705); cf. B. Forment, “‘La Terra, il Cielo e l’Inferno.’ The Representation and Reception of Greco-Roman Mythology,” in *Opera Seria*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Gent: Universiteit Gent, 2006–2007), pp. 104–109. I am grateful to the author for making this work available. The theme was subsequently exploited by eighteenth-century librettists – C.S. Capece, A. Zeno, B. Pasqualigo, P. Metastasio, P. Rolli, L. de Villati, and M. Coltellini – in their *drammi per musica*.

139 “Lunedì in scena a titolo di prova con gl’abiti la Comedia, che questa Regina fa rappresentare nel Suo Teatro Domestico, e Mercoledì, e Giovedì fù poi replicata con tutte le formalità, essendo stato numeroso il concorso della Nobiltà, che fù ammessa a sentirla avendo riportato un sommo applauso, per la rarità delle Voci, e per tutte le Circostanze, che l’accompagnano...,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (14th Jan. 1713).

140 “Continuano le recite di queste Comedie, che si rappresentano tanto nel Domestico Teatro di questa Regina di Polonia, che in quello di Capranica, riuscendo

indisposition, the queen suspended the spectacles of the comedy at her theatre. The production was revived,¹⁴¹ however, and on 18th February the same chronicler reported on the premiere of *Ifigenia in Tauride*: “The performances of [this season’s] second operas have met with highest acclaim at both the Capranica and the Polish Queen’s venue, but Her Majesty’s opera is better than that at the Capranica both with regard to the composition of words, the music, and the costumes, so everyone is coming here to enjoy such a noble enterprise.”¹⁴²

Marie Casimire’s spectacles thus again proved to take her noble guests’ fancy, successfully competing, and perhaps even winning, with more than a hundred other Roman venues in which carnival productions were staged in that year.¹⁴³

Ifigenia in Aulide features the following *dramatis personae*: Agamennone (Agamemnon) – King of Mycenae, Greek captain; Clitennestra (Clytemnestra) – his wife; Ifigenia (Iphigenia) – his daughter; Acchille (Achilles) – meant to become Ifigenia’s husband; Ulisse (Ulysses) – Greek prince; Pilade (Pilades) – son of Strofilo, king of Phocis, secretly in love with Ifigenia. The protagonists of *Ifigenia in Tauri* are: Ifigenia (Iphigenia) – daughter of Agamennone, priestess at the temple of Diana; Oreste (Orestes) – Ifigenia’s brother; Toante (Thoas) – king of Tauris; Dorisile – his daughter; Pilade (Pilades) – Oreste’s friend, who turns out to be Toante’s son; Ismeno – a Taurian prince of the blood.

In the *argomenti* that precede both libretti, Capece refers to Euripides’ tragedies as his source for the plots of the two operas. He read Euripides in translations by *padre* Ortensio Scamacchi.¹⁴⁴ In the case of *Ifigenia in Tauri*, Capece additionally

ambedue di sommo applauso per la qualita de Recitanti, e per la Vaghezza delle Scene, e degl’Abiti,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (28th Jan. 1713).

141 “E stata per alcuni giorni sospesa la recita della Comedia, che fa rappresentare questa Regina di Polonia a causa di una leggiera indispositione cha la Maestà Sua ha sofferta, dalla quale essendosi totalmente rimessa, ritornò hieri a continuare la recita,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (4th Feb. 1713).

142 “Riesce di sommo applauso la recita delle seconde Opere in questi Teatri di Capranica, e della Regina di Polonia, ma quella della Maestà Sua supera l’altra di Capranica, si per la Compositione delle Parole, che della Musica, e degl’Abiti, onde ogn’uno si affatica per godere di sì nobile trattenimento,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (18th Feb. 1713).

143 “On tiens qu’il y a plus de cent endroits dans Rome où l’on joue diverses Comédies, y compris les Collèges et les Couvents,” Ch. Poerson (25th Feb. 1713), in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 211.

144 Ortensio Scamacca or Scammacca (1562–1648) was a highly prolific Jesuit playwright and poet known for his free adaptations of ancient Greek plays, primarily by Sophocles and Euripides. He adapted forty-five titles published in many volumes in 1632–1648; cf. *Storia letteraria d’Italia, Il Seicento*, eds. C. Jannaco, M. Capucci

pointed to Pier Jacopo Martelli's play of the same title (1709). Between the Greek original and the operatic version, however, there are many differences which result, first and foremost, from the principles imposed on poets by the conventions of the music theatre. The libretto omits the figure of Menelaus, so central to the plot of the tragedy, with whom Agamemnon engaged in a dispute which made it possible to understand the motivations of both kings. Nor does Clytemnestra's faithful old servant appear on the stage to inform her of her husband's decision to offer Iphigenia as a sacrifice to the goddess. Capece's omission of this figure also eliminates the key theme of letters written by the Greek leader to his wife in Euripides' tale, in which Agamemnon bids Clytemnestra to set out for Aulis, and later, to turn back and return home with Iphigenia. In the original Greek play, Iphigenia's fate depended on the written orders of her father, and her sacrifice was thus understood as a written contract.¹⁴⁵ In Euripides, the final scene of this tale is recounted by a messenger, who arrives at Clytemnestra's palace to tell her of Iphigenia's rescue by Artemis (Capece replaces her with her Roman counterpart, Diana).¹⁴⁶ Capece's Achilles is more violent and perhaps less mature than in Euripides; he is bursting with unbridled energy and the desire to avenge the abuse of his name, as well of to save Iphigenia's life, regardless of consequences. Pylades is set by Capece as his opposite. He is a typical operatic lover figure, adoring Iphigenia; his actions lack resolution and determination. In the libretto, the moving force behind the plot that leads to the tragic finale is Ulysses, who resolutely removes all obstacles on the way to Iphigenia being sacrificed. Euripides does not introduce him in person in his tragedy, though his presence is made strongly felt.

Capece's interference in Euripides' original is much stronger in the case of *Ifigenia in Tauri*. It will be interesting to compare the final libretto with the Greek

(Padua: Piccin, 1986), pp. 444–445; M. Sacco Messineo, *Il martire e il tiranno. Ortensio Scammacca e il teatro tragico barocco* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1988).

145 D. Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice. Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 37.

146 It seems untrue that Capece modelled his *Ifigenia in Aulide* on Racine's eponymous play (Italian edition: Modena 1708), especially as concerns the libretto's final scenes, where the Sobieski poet makes use of a *dea ex machina*, an irrational device quite at odds with Racine's highly rational views which he summarised in the introduction to his *Iphigénie*: "Et quelle apparence encore de dénouer ma tragédie par le secours d'une déesse et d'une machine, et par une métamorphose, qui pouvait bien trouver quelque créance du temps d'Euripide, mais qui serait trop absurde et trop incroyable parmi nous?"; cf. J.-B. Racine, *Iphigénie en Aulide* (Paris: Hatier, 1995), p. 192.

source, considered as an ideal model by the Arcadian reformers, since such comparison may shed light on the poet's way of thinking, and on the ways he selected or rejected some themes, adopting them to suit the conventions and tastes of his day. From Euripides, Capece took four protagonists: Iphigenia, Orestes, Pylades, and Thoas king of the Taurians, while leaving out other minor figures and events. He added two new figures: Thoas' daughter Dorisile, in love with Orestes, and Ismeno, who adores her though he has no hope for reciprocation. In his *Ifigenia*, Capece turns Thoas into a ruler in love with Iphigenia, thus converting Euripides' tragedy into a love story. His ending is also different, though modelled on ancient novels.¹⁴⁷ Pylades, who is to be killed, turns out to be Thoas' son kidnapped by Greek pirates in his infancy. This discovery restores harmony in the family and brings the other subplots to a solution as well, as well as suspending the cruel and barbaric ritual of human sacrifice.

Despite the said differences, both of Capece's libretti touch upon the same problems as Euripides' plays: the custom of ritual sacrifice as part of religious cult, its symbolism, and the age-old rift between natural and divine law;¹⁴⁸ the question whether freedom of choice exists at all; revenge, friendship, and the meaning of Tauris as a symbol in the life of the individual.

Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* is, as Derek Hughes rightly observes, a tragedy that "dwells on the irrationality and corruption of war, its greed and mob hysteria."¹⁴⁹ Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter in order to retain the leadership of the Greek army, encouraged to do so by the vain ambitions of other military leaders: Menelaus, Odysseus, and Achilles. Menelaus is additionally motivated by a desire for revenge on a lover who took away his wife, and the hope that he might get her back. Meanwhile, the hysterical and idle soldiers call for booty and victories. Iphigenia must die to satisfy the bloodthirsty crowd, and hundreds of other war victims after her. It is greed and the desire to possess that rule even the most rational and civilised of worlds. The Greeks are a nation of barbarians.

147 Abductions by pirates, leading to separation from the family and the fatherland, were a frequent theme in ancient novels, though most frequently this motif concerned parted lovers. Cf. N. Holzberg, Ch. Jackson-Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel: An Introduction* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995)

148 Agamemnon must choose between obedience to the oracle and love for his daughter. The call of his heart is also at odds with the will of the Greeks and his state duties.

149 D. Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 36.

In *Iphigenia in Tauris* Euripides considers the symbolism of Tauris in human life. Herodotus writes that it is a remote place, hostile to all outsiders, whose inhabitants practice human sacrifice.¹⁵⁰ Tauris divides the world into the civilised lands and those other ones, plunged in ignorance, brutality, chaos, and superstition. Tauris is also a place of exile.¹⁵¹ This was a theme that could appeal to Marie Casimire. The myth of Iphigenia sacrificed to Artemis/Diana, and of her transfer to Tauris, a land hostile to the Greeks, would thus refer not to the Queen's Roman 'exile,' but to the figure and experiences of her daughter Teresa Kunegunda, wife to Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, as she, too, was forced to go into 'exile' in Venice.

Just as Euripides wrote his *Iphigenia* plays during the Second Peloponnesian War, which undermined the power of Athens, so Capece worked on his two libretti during the War of the Spanish Succession. This is hardly a coincidence. In 1713, when countries embroiled in war for more than a dozen years finally began to work towards its conclusion (the Peace of Utrecht), the Bavarian electress Teresa Kunegunda had already spent eight years in Venice, unable to return to Munich, not only deprived of her second homeland and contact with her husband, but most significantly – cut off from her children. When the war had broken out (1701), Maximilian II Emanuel had sided with France, and, despite initial military success, was eventually defeated by the united forces of England and the emperor, and forced to seek refuge in the Netherlands, while his pregnant wife became the regentess of Bavaria, a country now surrounded by enemies.¹⁵² Scholars disagree as to why Teresa Kunegunda left Munich in February 1705 and set out for Italy. All we know is that, exhausted by several months of

150 “the Tauri have the following customs: all ship-wrecked men, and any Greeks whom they capture in their sea-raids, they sacrifice to the Virgin goddess as I will describe: after the first rites of sacrifice, they strike the victim on the head with a club; according to some, they then place the head on a pole and throw the body off the cliff on which their temple stands; others agree as to the head, but say that the body is buried, not thrown off the cliff. The Tauri themselves say that this deity to whom they sacrifice is Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. As for enemies whom they defeat, each cuts his enemy's head off and carries it away to his house, where he places it on a tall pole and stands it high above the dwelling, above the smoke-vent for the most part. These heads, they say, are set up to guard the whole house.” Herodotus, *The Histories*, ed. A. D. Godley, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0126%3Abook%3D3&force=y> (26th May 2020).

151 For more, see: D. Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice...*, p. 121.

152 M. Komazyński, *Teresa Kunegunda...* The information quoted here comes from that monograph.

ruling the country, as well as by the pain of her labour, saddened by news of her husband's lifestyle, she wished to meet her mother, but her hopes for Marie Casimire's arrival at the Bavarian capital proved futile.¹⁵³ In March 1705, mother and daughter met in Padua. Teresa Kunegunda was planning soon to return home to her children but was stopped on the Austrian border. The emperor proved deaf to her and the Queen's entreaties. Marie Casimire's letters, kept in Munich, demonstrate that she cared greatly for her daughter's fate, and that the Queen saw the actions of Europe's high and mighty (the emperor, the pope, and Louis XIV) as a great affront to the Sobieski family and its good name, which is perfectly illustrated by the recitatives and arias sung by Clytemnestra.

Teresa Kunegunda had to return to Venice, which became her enforced place of residence for the next ten years. She spent those years writing to her husband, praying for her children's health and for the end of the war.¹⁵⁴ This sad and lonely period in her life was occasionally enlivened by pastimes such as operas or her own painting gallery, as well as some sporadic contacts with the local aristocracy. In order to quench her longing for her children, and in the hope that she might soon be reunited with them, Teresa Kunegunda adopted a small Armenian child, on whom she lavished all her tender feelings.¹⁵⁵

Every war has its victims. Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska and her children most certainly fell victim to the war of 1701–1714, sacrificed by politicians along with other more or less anonymous figures. Such behaviour contradicted the key values of Christian Europe, including the institutions of the family and of motherhood. Separating wife from husband, a woman from her natural domain – her home – but most of all, depriving her of the chance to take care of her own children, whose birth posed a great peril to a woman's life,¹⁵⁶ ran counter to the

153 The emperor refused to issue the necessary passport for Marie Casimire since he feared that she might be made regentess in Munich till the end of the war (which the Queen actually assented to).

154 This is when Teresa Kunegunda came to be called a "Penelope."

155 "gepuy depuy troy iour un petyt anfan de lapyeta quyna ue que leyn iour que ie fre elueie Cefe auequ leytansyon de pououyr biento retrouue lemien" (Je pris depuis trois Tours un petit enfant de la Pietà qui n'avait que l'un jour que je ferai élever. C'est fait Alec l'intention de pouvoir bientôt retrouver le[s] mien[s])," qtd. after B. Over, "Antonio Vivaldi Und Therese Kunigunde von Bayern," *Studi Vivaldiani* 2004, p. 5.

156 This proverb is believed to have been in use among the French: "Femme grosse a un pied dans la fosse" ("A pregnant woman is with one leg in her grave"); cf. O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her. A History of Women in Western Europe*, Vol. 1: 1500–1800 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 183.

commonly accepted conviction that a woman's destiny is to implement the image of wife and mother ingrained by the church and the society.¹⁵⁷ The Electress was even denied the right to bury her two younger sons.

Teresa Kunegunda's life story is allusively referred to in both *drammi per musica* staged in 1713 at Marie Casimire's private theatre.¹⁵⁸ Especially the first of them, *Ifigenia in Aulide*, strongly emphasises the role of Iphigenia's mother Clytemnestra, with whom the Queen most likely identified herself. What we know for certain is that Sobieska sent the scores and libretti of these two particular works to her daughter, to Venice.¹⁵⁹ The suffering and crying Clytemnestra is, in my view, the counterpart of Marie Casimire, bemoaning her daughter's fate, devastated by the emperor's ruthlessness and by the indifference of other rulers, who decided about the life and death of their subjects just like the ancient gods. This is what she laments in her aria: "Yes, yes, you treacherous deities / Yes, yes, you barbarous stars / you who falsely usurp / the status of divinity, / always

157 Original title: *Histoire de la vie privée en cinq volumes*, Vol. 3 *De la Renaissance aux Lumières*, ed. R. Chartier (Paris: Seuil, DL, 1986). English edition: *A History of Private Life, Volume III: Passions of the Renaissance*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

158 Though Capece does not directly point to Teresa Kunegunda as the model for his protagonist, libretti from that period do present analogies to well-known personages, especially rulers, who were usually at the same time the patrons of the musical works. Staging an opera required considerable financial outlay on the part of the patron. Therefore, apart from providing pleasure for the senses, these compositions had important political objectives to fulfil. Plots were therefore selected very carefully, not only so as to demonstrate the patron and his or her artists' rooting in tradition (history, culture, literature, and philosophy), but also, and most importantly, to achieve the aims of political propaganda. The works had to suit the purposes of self-presentation, underscore the patron's status and position, and make the voicing of opinions possible. Excellent examples of operatic libretti being employed for such purposes can be found in the circles of the patronage of the Barberini family in Rome, Louis XIV in France, the Habsburgs (Leopold I and his successors, Joseph I, Charles VI, and Maria Theresa), and Christina of Sweden. Marie Casimire cultivated the same trend, which is, I believe, amply evident in the libretto pair dedicated to the story of Iphigenia.

159 Cf. B. Over, "sotto l'Ombra della Regina di Pennati Antonio Vivaldi, Kurfürstin Therese Kunigunde von Bayern und andere Wittelsbacher," in: *Italian Opera in Central Europe 1614–1780*, Vol. 3: *Opera Subjects and European Relationships*, eds. N. Dubowy, C. Herr, A. Żórawska-Witkowska (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2007), p. 263.



Illustration 22. Teresa Kunegunda Sobieska in exile in Venice, 1715, C. Asam, J. Kleinschmidt. The National Library of Poland.

unjust to innocence, / forever blind to clemency, / and always deaf to [calls for] pity.”¹⁶⁰

From Marie Casimire’s correspondence we know that she did bemoan her daughter’s misfortunes. In 1712 she wrote in a letter to her brother-in-law: “I pray continually to God ... that he may bring us all back together and restore your

160 “Si si voi perfidi Numi/ Si si voi barbare Stelle/ Sete quelle, che usurpate/ Falso onor di Deità./ Sempre ingiuste all’innocenza/ Sempre cieche alla clemenza/ Sempre sorde alla pietà.”

family to its ancestral splendour.”¹⁶¹ This may be the reason why Clytemnestra’s arias appear particularly genuine and moving. One example is *Per vendicarmi* (I,10): “To avenge myself / I will find the strength and weapons / in my outraged honour, / if to revenge / with greatness sweetness motivates me / a despised love.”¹⁶² This aria is a response to Achilles allegedly rejecting Iphigenia’s hand. An insult to one’s honour was, according to ancient Greek principles, a proper cause for revenge. However, in a wider context, the text of this aria may also be interpreted as Marie Casimire’s appeal to the consciences of European rulers. One can hardly fail to observe that Teresa Kunegunda’s plight demonstrated once again the instrumental treatment of John III’s descendants by politicians who ruled in Europe at that time.

Another of Clytemnestra’s arias, *Morire, ò vincere* (III,9), is an expression of anger and utmost indignation. The Queen declares: “To die, or to win / I am able too. / A tiger that saw / its cubs snatched away / never fought / with such fierce claws.”¹⁶³

Both in Euripides and in Capecce, Iphigenia undergoes a profound transformation of personality. After a spell of despair, she offers her life on the sacrificial altar with poise and dignity. Rescued by the goddess, she spends ten years in barbarous Tauris, which symbolises the Venetian exile of Teresa Kunegunda. Like the mythical Iphigenia’s, the Electress’ time in that city is filled with lonely hours of prayer, longing for her lost homeland, and fear for her family. She is also plagued by the shortage of money. The ending of *Ifigenia in Tauri* foreshadows a happy conclusion to Teresa’s suffering, the *lieto fine*. This came for the Electress on 7th March 1714 with the signing of the Treaty of Rastatt, with which the fourteen-year-long war came to its close. In the following year, she was already back in Munich.¹⁶⁴

Both of Capecce’s *Ifigenie*, drawing on the theme of ritual murder and on the myth of Tauris, slipped a good dose of criticism against the then system of power, which not only sanctioned the outrages of war and the greed of its participants, but also sacrificed one of the greatest social values, that of the family, on the

161 M. Komasyński, *Teresa Kunegunda...*, p. 113.

162 “Per vendicarmi/ Havrò la forza, e l’armi/ Da un oltraggiato honor./ Se alla vendetta/ Con più dolcezza alletta/Un disprezzato Amor.”

163 “Morire, ò vincere/ Anch’io saprò./ Tigre, che vedasi/rapire i figli/ Di tali artigli/ mai non s’armò.”

164 Following Maximilian II Emanuel’s death, Teresa Kunegunda returned to Venice owing to poor relations with Karl Albrecht, who inherited his father’s throne. She died in Venice in 1730.

altar of politics. As Walter Davis aptly observed, “to dramatize the truth of the family is to reveal the truth of a world.”¹⁶⁵ By staging the *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *Ifigenia in Tauri* at her private theatre, two operas that depicted the tragedy of the Atreides, Marie Casimire thus represented her own family’s fate, voiced her sharp protest against war, and joined in a creative manner the budding public debate concerning war, in which the drama of the individual embroiled in war-time conflicts was just beginning to be noticed and discussed.¹⁶⁶ As compared to other operatic productions from that period, these two works seem to sound a very modern note.

Amor d’un Ombra, e Gelosia d’un Aura (20th January 1714)¹⁶⁷

The last opera financed by Marie Casimire and performed at her Roman palace was the *dramma per musica* entitled *Amor d’un’Ombra, e Gelosia d’un’Aura*. From a dispatch printed on 13th January in *Foglio di Foligno* we learn that its performance was impatiently awaited: “the presentation [of the work] at the Polish queen’s domestic theatre is much looked forward to.”¹⁶⁸ Commentators

165 W.A. Davis, “The Play’s the Thing: Censorship, Theatre and Ideology,” in: *Art and Politics. Psychoanalysis, Ideology, Theatre* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 4.

166 Notably, from 1713 onward the story of the Atreides was taken up more and more frequently in operatic works.

167 Cf. also A. Markuszewska, “‘Amor d’un’Ombra e Gelosia d’un’Aura.’ Miłość cienia, czyli czy Narcyz może być szczęśliwy?” [“‘Amor d’un’Ombra e Gelosia d’un’Aura.’ The Love of a Shadow, or Can Narcissus Be Happy?”] in: *Haendel, Haydn i idea uniwersalizmu muzyki* [*Handel, Haydn, and the Idea of Universalism in Music*], eds. R.D. Goliańek, P. Urbański (Poznań: Rhythmos, 2010), pp. 247–260; M. Bristiger, “Domenico Scarlatti: ‘Narciso,’” in *Narciso* [programme book], Teatr Wielki, Warszawa 1978; reprinted as “Scarlatti: ‘Narciso,’” in: M. Bristiger, *Transkrypcje. Pisma i przekłady* [*Transcriptions. Writings and Translations*] (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010), pp. 20–29; M. Bristiger, “‘Świt blask na ziemię splywa...’ Uwagi do restytucji polskiego przekładu libretta opery Domenico Scarlattiego ‘Narciso’ (1720)” [“‘Dawn Brings Light to the Earth...’ Remarks on the Restitution of the Polish Translation of the Libretto for Domenico Scarlatti’s Opera ‘Narciso’ (1720)”], *Res Facta Nova* 2003, No. 6, pp. 221–226; M. Bristiger, Z. Kubiak, “Libretto Domenico Scarlattiego ‘Narciso’” [“The Libretto of Domenico Scarlatti’s ‘Narciso’”], *Res Facta Nova* 2003, No. 6, pp. 227–266.

168 “e si sta con dessorio, che incominci quella, che fa rappresentare questa Regina di Polonia nel suo Teatro domestico, mentre non potrà riuscire che di tutta perfezzione per il buon gusto che hà la M.S. in sì nobile trattenimento, come l’hà fatto conoscere negl’altri anni, che hà sempre riportato un generale applauso sopra ogn’altra Opera in questa Città,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (13th Jan. 1714).

did not doubt that the spectacle “would certainly prove a success, for reason of Her Majesty’s good taste in matters related to this so noble entertainment, of which she offered proof in previous years, invariably commanding applause and making [the works she staged] excel all the other operas presented in that city.”¹⁶⁹

On 27th January, already after the premiere, we read in another dispatch from Rome that the opera “shown at the Polish queen’s domestic theatre garners the greatest praise all the time, and Her Majesty finds pleasure in this pastime.”¹⁷⁰ On 3rd February the same author informed that the second opera staged at the Teatro Capranica was enjoying popularity.¹⁷¹ The public theatre was visited by many people, which was understandable because, as we read in this dispatch, no spectacles were held at the Queen of Poland’s palace for many days due to one of the singers having a sore throat.¹⁷² A week later, towards the end of the then short carnival, the same source reported that music works continued to be presented at Rome’s theatres, both the commercial and the domestic ones, but “the opera performed at the Queen of Poland’s [place] won the greatest success of them all.”¹⁷³ The author of the above-quoted dispatches was not the only one to praise the production shown at Marie Casimire’s palace. A favourable opinion concerning *Amor d’un’Ombra* can also be found in the correspondence of the directors of the Roman Académie Française: “the opera shown at the Queen of Poland’s [theatre] has enjoyed the greatest acclaim.”¹⁷⁴ The same correspondence

169 *Foglio di Foligno* (13th Jan. 1714).

170 Quella, cha fà rappresentare questa Regina di Polonia nel suo Teatro Domestico riporta sempre più maggiore applauso, e la M.S. va godendo di un tale divertimento,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (27th Jan. 1714).

171 It was *Tito e Berenice* with a libretto by C.S. Capece, set to music by A. Caldara.

172 “È riuscita poi di maggior sodisfazione la Second’Opera del Teatro Capranica, alla quale si diede principio Sabato scorso, come fù avvisato colle passate, mentre ha avuto applauso tanto la Composizione delle parole, che della Musica, e si è continuata in questa settimana la Recita di essa con gran concorso, tanto piu, che per molti giorni non è potuta andar in Scena quella, che fa la Regina di Polonia nel suo Teatro Domestico a riguardo d’essere stato indisposto di mal di Gola uno de’Recitanti nella medema,” in *Foglio di Foligno* (3rd Feb. 1714).

173 “Hanno continuato parimente a recitarsi le Opere in questi Teatri tanto Venali, che Domestici, e sopra tutte riporta maggior applauso quella, che fà rappresentare in sua Casa questa Regina di Polonia,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (10th Feb. 1714).

174 “L’Opéra de la Reyne de Pologne a été le plus estimé,” a letter from M. de la Chausse to Marquis de Torcy, qtd. after *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 280. I have not been able to establish the identity of Don Carlos, mentioned in this letter by de la Chausse.

also includes a letter which provides us with important additional information. Its author writes that the Queen was gravely ill at that time and Aleksander thus took care of all the logistics related to the opera production. He also lists a number of persons who visited the Queen's theatre:

The Queen of Poland is beginning to feel better after the sudden cold that made us fear for Her Majesty's life. Despite this, a little opera was shown at her place, prepared by the prince for her theatre. Donna Maria Bernardina Albani was present there for the first time. Princess Sobieska [Marie's granddaughter] received her with due ceremony. Cardinal Ottoboni and Don Carlos came as well.¹⁷⁵

The libretto lists the following *dramatis personae*:¹⁷⁶ Procri (Procris) – Athenian princess; Cefalo (Cephalus) – Prince of Aeolia; Aristeo (Aristaeus) – Prince of Thessaly; Narciso (Narcissus); Eco (Echo) – nymph of Boeotia; Nicandro (Nicander) – shepherd and guardian of the temple of Pan and Amor. The plot draws on two tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from Books III and VII, one concerning Narcissus and Echo, the other – Cephalus and Procris. Capece acknowledges this inspiration in his *argomento*. He also apologises for the changes he introduced in relation to the ancient original, arguing that the happy ending resulted from his desire to cater to the contemporary taste:

Please forgive me that I have altered several elements in the ending, such as that Narcissus will fall in love with Echo and not with himself, and that Cephalus will only slightly wound Procris rather than killing her. I have decided that in this way my opera may end happily rather than tragically, as suits the contemporary custom and taste.¹⁷⁷

175 “La Reine de Pologne commence à se mieux porter d'un violent rhume, qui a fait craindre pour la vie de Sa Majesté. On represent cependant chez elle le petit Opéra que le Prince a fait préparer pour son Théâtre. Donna Maria Bernardina Albani y assista la première fois; la Princesse Sobieska en fit les honneurs. Le Cardinal Ottoboni et Don Carlos en furent aussy...” a letter from M. Tausserat to Marquis de Torcy, in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 275.

176 Cf. the translation of this libretto prepared by Z. Kubiak and M. Bristiger, “Libretto Domenico Scarlattiego...,” pp. 227–266.

177 “mi scusarò solamente di haverne in qualche parte mutato il fine; Come nel far, che Narciso non s'innamori di se stesso, ma di Eco; e che Cefalo non uccida, ma solo ferisca leggiermente Procri; perche così hò pensato poter terminare l'Opera in lieto, e non funesto avvenimento, second l'uso, e gusto modern,” in: C.S. Capece, *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* (Roma: Antonio de' Rossi, 1714), p. 2. There had been other, earlier literary attempts to rewrite these myths and supply them with a happy ending. In Calderon's comedy *Eco y Narciso* (1661), Narcissus mistakes the reflection of his own face for that of the beautiful nymph. Capece may have become acquainted with Calderon's plays during his studies in Spain in the late 1660s.

Combining these two stories into one libretto proved to be a felicitous decision, since it helped to authenticate the love conflict. As Aura, Echo makes Procris jealous of Cephalus, while Procris aggravates Echo's despair, since the latter suspects that the Athenian princess is yet another rival trying to win the heart of the proud hunter whom she loves. The beautiful Narcissus likewise inspires jealousy in Cephalus and Aristaeus; all this is related to the motif of the bow, symbol of Amor, which the opera's protagonists pass on to one another. Since the Hellenistic times Amor has been equipped with an arrow-filled quiver by means of which Venus' naughty son kindled the fire of love in the hearts of humans and gods alike.¹⁷⁸ In Capece's libretto, Procris hopes that Cephalus will defeat the wild beast prowling the neighbourhood, and therefore she gives her beloved a bow. The setting for this metaphorical image of the vicissitudes of love is the pastoral landscape of a land near Athens, kingdom of Artemis.

What contributed to the plot complications in Capece's libretto was also the ambiguous use of the word "aura," which refers both to Echo's assumed name (Aura) and to the gentle breeze (aura) summoned by Cephalus. This device places Capece's libretto in the tradition of the comedy of errors, while he at the same time remains true to the Arcadian ideals. Of the two tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that inspired the poet, the one about Narcissus has played a more important role in European culture, and so it is to this theme that I largely dedicate my interpretation.¹⁷⁹

The story of the beautiful youth who falls in love with his own reflection and pines away for self-love is best known in the version found in Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Narcissus was the son of the nymph Liriope and Cephissus, god of the eponymous river in Boeotia. When the boy was born, Tiresias the seer lived in Greece, and one day Liriope asked him how long her son would live, to which the prophet replied enigmatically that "if e'er he knows himself he surely dies" (III, 350).¹⁸⁰ Narcissus grew up into a beautiful youth who seemed born to inspire love (III, 358), but was unusually cold or even contemptuous towards the girls and boys who fell in love with him. One of the victims of his love was

178 J. March, "Eros," in: J. March, *Cassell's Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), pp. 299–300.

179 The story of Cephalus and Procris was also the subject of other operatic productions, to mention only Carlo Francesco Pollarolo's *La costanza gelosa negl'amori di Cefalo e Procri* (Verona 1688). Its impact, however, was much smaller than that of the myth of Narcissus.

180 This and the following quotations, after: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Sir Samuel Garth, John Dryden, et al., <http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam.html> (5th June 2020).

the nymph Echo, “who in others’ words her silence breaks, / Nor speaks her self but when another speaks” (III, 371). Rejected by Narcissus, she lost her physical form and remained but a pure voice. Eventually, one of the nymphs asked Nemesis, goddess of vengeance and justice, to punish the proud youth, and make him fall in love, but find his passion unrequited. Nemesis granted this request. One day, weary of the hunt, Narcissus saw his reflection in the waters of the lake and fell madly in love with his image. For a long time, he did not realise that the one he was pining for was in fact himself. When he eventually learned the truth, the anguish brought about his death, but even in the waters of the Styx he still saw his own reflection, and so could not find repose in the land of the dead. The white-and-gold flower that grew in the place of his amorous intoxication now bears his name.

This story has for ages inspired the imagination of numerous artists (poets, playwrights, librettists, painters, sculptors, composers, as well as philosophers, and scientists). It is to Ovid that tradition attributes the longest version of the Narcissus story, relating him to the figure of Echo,¹⁸¹ as well as to the motif of self-knowledge.¹⁸² The other versions, though possibly equally important, have played a much less prominent role.¹⁸³

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- 181 L. Vinge, “The Narcissus Theme in Classical Latin and Greek Literature,” in: L. Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century* (Lund: Gleerups, 1967), p. 40; S. Jaworski, “Narcyż” [“Narcissus”], in: *Mit-człowiek-literatura [Myth – Human – Literature]*, collective work [no ed.], introd. S. Stabryła, Warszawa 1992, pp. 133–150.
- 182 S. Bartsch, “Ovid’s Narcissus,” in: S. Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 86–87.
- 183 Conon, who was Ovid’s near-contemporary, writes in the 24th tale of his cycle of fifty stories entitled *Diegesis* about Narcissus, who commits suicide, blaming himself also for the suicide of Ameinias, a young man who fell in love with him. Cf. L. Vinge, “The Narcissus...,” pp. 19–21; E. Pellizer, “Reflections, Echoes and Amorous Reciprocity: On Reading the Narcissus Story,” in: *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. J. Bremmer (London: Croom Helm, 1987, Routledge, 1988), p. 107. Another, though less common, version of this myth appearing in operatic libretti is that presented by Pausanias in his *Description of Greece*: “It is said that Narcissus had a twin sister; they were exactly alike in appearance, their hair was the same, they wore similar clothes, and went hunting together. The story goes on that Narcissus fell in love with his sister, and when the girl died, would go to the spring, knowing that it was his reflection that he saw, but in spite of this knowledge finding some relief for his love in imagining that he saw, not his own reflection, but the likeness of his sister.” Pausanias knew the traditional version of this myth, but it seemed to him

Regardless of whether authors in later eras drew on Ovid or on another source, the figure of Narcissus turned into a flower has invariably inspired successive generations. He was interpreted as an apotheosis of youth and life, an epitome of beauty contained in the human body, the victim of a wonderful illusion, a case of hopeless love (for an unattainable object), a symbol of autoerotic or homoerotic passion. In periods dominated by Christianity, Narcissus was presented as an example of vanity (*vanitas*) punished, of love for mundane illusions, and irrational self-love. In a world dedicated to the cult of the body and matter, Narcissus symbolised a soul losing its true self, and humans losing the possibility of contact with the beauty of the Intellect.¹⁸⁴ The myth of Narcissus also became a point of departure for the study of the human psyche,¹⁸⁵ and for political analyses.¹⁸⁶ Most of all, however, it symbolised the eternal human longing for self-knowledge, as expressed in the Delphic aphorism *gnōthi seauton* (“know thyself”). He was not merely a young man who, as Roberto Calasso put it, “lost himself looking at himself,”¹⁸⁷ but first and foremost, a boy who experienced self-knowledge, and for whom attaining that state meant death.

The earliest operatic adaptation of the story of Narcissus and Echo seems to have been Ottavio Rinuccini’s *Il Narciso* (written in the early seventeenth century, but only published in 1829).¹⁸⁸ Rinuccini’s text was known in the wider circles, as confirmed by the large number of surviving handwritten copies.¹⁸⁹ It may therefore be seen as a model for later operatic adaptations.¹⁹⁰ The main

“utter stupidity to imagine that a man old enough to fall in love was incapable of distinguishing a man from a man’s reflection.” Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Boeotia*, XXXI (Harvard: Harvard University Press 2020), https://www.loebclassics.com/view/pausanias-description_greece/1918/pb_LCL297.311.xml (5th June 2020).

- 184 P. Hadot, “Le myth de Narcisse et son interprétation par Plotyn,” *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse* 1970 No. 13, pp. 81–108.
- 185 Cf. writings by Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, and the continuators of their research.
- 186 Ch. Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1979).
- 187 R. Calasso, *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, (London: Penguin, 2019), <http://maxima-library.org/knigi/knigi/b/296717?format=read> (5th June 2020).
- 188 The preserved manuscript has no prologue typical of the early opera, and no division into acts and scenes. The latter were only introduced by the nineteenth-century publisher, Vincenzo Poggioli. Cf. O. Rinuccini, *Il Narciso*, ed. L.M. Rezzi (Roma: Vincenzo Poggioli, 1829).
- 189 A. Szweykowska, *Dramma per musica w teatrze Wazów [Dramma per Musica in the Vasa Theatre]*, doctoral dissertation (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1976), p. 125.
- 190 Unfortunately, we do not know who was supposed to set Rinuccini’s text to music.

theme of Rinuccini's work is Echo's love, rejected by Narcissus,¹⁹¹ and her metamorphosis into an echo. From then on, the nymph became but a resonating voice that repeated the endings of other persons' words. Narcissus' punishment, that of self-love, inflicted on him by Amor for the disdain which the boy showed for the feelings of others, seems harsh and severe to the other persons of Rinuccini's drama, since the youth was left all alone with his suffering, and had no one to alleviate his pain. Rinuccini preserves all the key elements of the myth: punishment for the rejection of Amor; the source in which Narcissus saw his reflection; the recognition that he is himself the object of his own love; and his transformation into an eponymous flower. The work ends with a sad moral: suffering rules in the world of love; only modesty gives joy to humans. According to Rinuccini, Narcissus was punished for his pride; he was not happy, but condemned.

Several seventeenth-century *drammi per musica* are based on the myth of Narcissus and Echo.¹⁹² These include: *Narciso trasformato* (libr. V. Puccitelli, mus. possibly by M. Scacchi, Warszawa 1638), *Narciso et Ecco immortalati* (libr. O. Persiani, mus. F. Cavalli, Venezia 1643), *Il Narciso* (libr. F. de Lemene, mus. C. Borzio, Lodi 1676), *Il Narciso* (libr. D. Repetta, music composer unknown, Mantua 1689), *Il Narciso* (libr. attributed to B. Pamphili, mus. G. Lulier, Roma 1690), and *Il Narciso* (libr. A. Zeno, mus. F.A. Pistocchi, Ansbach 1697). The history of eighteenth-century operatic settings of this tale starts with *Narcissus*, most likely to music and libretto by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (Breslau 1711 or 1712) and with the work which is the subject of this section of my book, *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* (libr. C.S. Capece, mus. Domenico Scarlatti).

The authors of the majority of the libretti listed above remained faithful to Ovid's version of the myth.¹⁹³ The turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

191 This is a characteristic element of the story of Narcissus in the seventeenth century; the writers of the era focused more and more readily and frequently on Echo's experience of love; cf. L. Vinge, "The 17th Century (2): Echo and Narcissus in the Pastoral Landscape," in: L. Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme...*, p. 206.

192 Unlike its literary, non-musical theatrical, and graphic representations, the reception of the myth of Narcissus in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *drammi per musica* has only been the subject of very few publications so far. The main points of reference are: A.L. Bellina's subchapter on "Orfeo e Narciso: il mito della corte," in: A.L. Bellina, *L'ingegnosa congiunzione: melos e immagine nella "favola" per musica* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1984), pp. 20–27; M.G. Accorsi, "'Narciso' da Ovidio al 'Pastor fido,'" in: M.G. Accorsi, *Francesco de Lemene. Scherzi e favole per musica* (Modena: Mucchi, 1992), pp. XXXVI–XL.

193 One exception was the (now unknown) second version of *Il Narciso*, commissioned from Francesco de Lemene by the Swedish queen Christina. She sent the poet exact

was, as I explained earlier, the time when operatic libretto writing in Italy underwent a reform. The Venetian poet Apostolo Zeno was hailed as one of the initiators of this change. *Il Narciso* of 1697 was his first foreign commission, from the court in Ansbach.¹⁹⁴ The action is traditionally set in Boeotia; there are six protagonists: Narcissus, Echo, Cidippe, Uranio, Lesbino, and Tirreno. Similarly to Rinuccini, a major role in this five-act opera is played by the choruses. In love with Narcissus, Echo pretends she is an enemy of love, but passionate about hunting, which lets her become part of the proud youth's entourage. Cidippe is likewise in love with Narcissus; she is in turn adored by Uranio, to whom she previously swore to remain faithful, but broke this oath once she met Narcissus. Eventually Cidippe, rejected by the beautiful hunter, returns to Uranio, while Narcissus, as in Ovid, falls in love with himself, and dies of this passion, turning into a flower. Owing to divine intervention, he is elevated onto the celestial firmament, followed by Echo, and they both form a couple in the sky. In this way, while retaining the tragic mythical finale (Narcissus' death), Zeno makes use of the well-known seventeenth-century operatic convention of *deus ex machina*, and restores the much awaited *lieto fine* on the stage.¹⁹⁵ However, such a solution lacks dramatic credibility, especially since in Act IV, where Narcissus falls in love with himself, the poet cannot help using a moralising tone, and makes his hero interpret his fate as Amor's punishment for his former pride (*antico orgoglio*) and present meanness (*viltà presente*). Thus, both Rinuccini's text, with which Narcissus enters operatic history, and Zeno's libretto represent Narcissus as a tragic figure. The youth fades away, suffering and longing after himself; this love

comments and specifications, which stipulated that he should base his libretto on Pausanias' version, in which Narcissus falls in love with his twin sister. Christina preferred this version, since it allowed the author allusively to describe the Queen's own relation to Cardinal Decio Azzolini. The libretto, however, was most likely never written, and in 1679 Christina staged at her court de Lemene's earlier 1676 setting of *Il Narciso*. The very fact that such an opera was planned, however, offers important proof of the Roman cultural circles being acquainted with the alternative versions of the myth.

194 A. Zeno, "Il Narciso," in: A. Zeno, *Drammi scelti*, ed. M. Fehr (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1929), pp. 1–47.

195 This libretto proves the presence in Zeno's late seventeenth-century works of irrational plot solutions, and a tendency to flatter the audience's tastes, which led to highly improbable events being shown on the stage. This was the very opposite of what the members of the Accademia dell'Arcadia postulated as their ideal for dramatic works.

that cannot make him happy.¹⁹⁶ Only the Baroque *meraviglia* of a god descending to the earth brightens up the sad finale a little.

In comparison with the earlier operatic settings of the Narcissus myth, Capece's solution seems original.¹⁹⁷ What specific circumstances could make Marie Casimire's poet modify the traditional ending of the Narcissus myth to such a significant extent, introducing radical changes never previously attempted by earlier generations of librettists?

It is a likely conjecture that, as an enthusiast of pastoral tales after the fashion of Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, the Queen had a preference for endings that promoted marital love. In Capece's interpretation, the union of Narcissus and Echo is an apotheosis of legitimate marital relations between man and woman, symbolised by the temple of Pan and Amor, the deities presiding respectively over nature and love. Far from being a mistake, as Procris claims, the juxtaposition of these two gods in one place reflects the law of nature, which bids everyone to love (I,7).¹⁹⁸ It is at the temple that the lovers meet and unite.¹⁹⁹ Capece's libretto emphasises order in this sphere of social life, which was greatly valued by the early modern societies as it was supposed to bring inner peace. The position of the woman in such an orderly relationship, however, was distinctly inferior, as symbolised by Echo's shadow and by her echolalia.

Is Capece's Narcissus happy? He clearly is, thanks to his love for Echo. In this way, Capece avoided the tragedy, albeit not forgetting about the myth's traditional ending, which he brings up in order to emphasise that loving oneself is false and it leads one to hate love even more. This is what Narcissus declares himself on hearing Procris say that if he looked at his beautiful face, he could easily become his own lover. On another occasion, already after his transformation from an Amor-hating hunter into Amor's slave, the youth confesses to Nicander that he had fallen in love with a beautiful nymph he saw reflected in the water (II, 10). The latter responds with these lines: "when on

196 Unless we assume that in these libretti death is understood as liberation from the self, thus leading to happiness.

197 Stölzel's work does not survive. It is possible that he may have introduced similar changes in his libretto, and that both the Sobieskis and Capece became acquainted with his work during Stölzel's visit to Rome in 1713.

198 "Che legge è di natura al fin l'amare," in: C.S. Capece, *Amor d'un'Ombra...*, p. 17.

199 In the London version, Narcissus finds Echo near the lakeshore. They confess their love for each other, and then the nymph insists on honouring the god of love in his temple. They both go to that holy place and sing a love duet there, in praise of Amor's arrows which have wounded them so sweetly.

the shore / You bowed down to drink, / You looked inside the waves; / And because your face is beautiful, / You thought it was a Nymph of the Brook.”²⁰⁰ Narcissus indignantly denies. In the next scene, Nicander tells Aristaeus that the youth had gone mad and fallen in love with his own reflection (II,11). These fragments prove that Capece knew very well the tragic ending of the mythical story, and demonstrated this knowledge to the audience; however, he rejected it as too irrational. To Capece, falling in love with oneself was not only improbable, but it contradicted the idea of love as a passion for another; what is more, self-love leads to madness. The poet repeats in this context the opinion of the then popular Jesuit writer Daniello Bartoli, who in his *Della Geografia trasportata al morale* claimed that loving oneself is madness,²⁰¹ and that self-knowledge, symbolised in the European culture by Narcissus, is impossible. In the early modern era, this view seems to have been opposed only by Descartes with his *Cogito ergo sum*. Capece, educated by Spanish philosophers, and active in the Roman milieu, which were strongly anchored in Christian theology, saw Narcissus’ happiness in his love for Echo. But is the elevation of love not an even more irrational enterprise? It seems it is not, since thanks to love Narcissus not only experienced human happiness, but, most significantly, never saw or recognised himself. To the Rome-based librettist, self-knowledge was an illusion of the human soul, not worth dedicating a lifetime to. This is why, rather than letting Narcissus die in accordance with Tiresias’ prophecy, Capece made him “live happily ever after” with Echo.

Carlo Sigismondo Capece’s *drammi per musica*

The Dominance of the Pastoral Mode

In 1709–1714, Carlo Sigismondo Capece wrote eight *drammi per musica* for the Polish Queen Marie Casimire Sobieska’s private theatre in Rome. All of them represent the ideal of an operatic libretto promoted by the Roman Accademia dell’Arcadia in its early period. In particular, Capece’s texts are written in accordance with the preferences of Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, who called for the choice of pastoral themes, or for presenting known themes in a pastoral

200 “quando alla sponda / Per beber t’inchinasti, / Te stesso dentro l’onda rimirasti; / E perche il volto hai bello, / Lo credesti una Ninfa del Ruscello,” in: C.S. Capece, *Amor d’un’Ombra...*, p. 44.

201 D. Bartoli, *Della Geografia trasportata al Morale* (Roma: Egidio Ghezzi, 1664), p. 47.

setting.²⁰² One exception is the pair of libretti *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *Ifigenia in Tauri*, inspired by Euripides' tragedies, and therefore closer to the concepts of Gian Vincenzo Gravina, who advocated drawing on the tradition of the ancient tragedy. In his other libretti Capece strove to implement the ideas worked out by the Arcadians, albeit differently in each case.

In his *Il figlio delle selve* the action is set in the woods, and the shepherds who inhabit the place are only mentioned in passing. The landscape he creates there has little to do with the spirit of carefree Arcadia, filled with the sound of songs. The grave character of the plot and the presented dilemmas correspond to those known from the libretti of Apostolo Zeno; despite the presence of a comic figure. In *La Silvia* and *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura*, Capece draws directly on the tradition of Tasso's and Guarini's pastoral dramas, and the action takes place among shepherds and nymphs. Also in *Tolomeo et Alessandro* such serious topics as generosity, the legitimacy of political power, family loyalty, and love have been presented through the prism of the pastoral rhetoric. This libretto, however, stands in opposition to Arcadian ideals in that persons of royal blood appear in disguise, which is a device typical of seventeenth-century opera, but contradicting the principles of probability and rational plot development, which were advocated as important by the Academy members. Such a solution demonstrates Capece's strong rooting in the Baroque tradition. In his *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*, the theme, derived from medieval romance, is enriched by the introduction of pastoral episodes and figures. Achilles' tempestuous character is tempered in *Tetide in Sciro* by amorous raptures and truly pastoral laments.

Capece's libretti for Sobieska's theatre are thus undoubtedly characterised by a preference for pastoral themes, and, most of all, for the pastoral mode. This is especially evident if we compare them with the libretti of the operas staged at that time at Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni's Palazzo della Cancelleria and at Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli's Palazzo Bonelli. Research by Lisa Sampson proves that women admired pastoral literature and constituted an important group among the readers of dramas and novels in this style.²⁰³ They themselves frequently took up writing stories about shepherds and charming nymphs. It was

202 M.G. Accorsi, "Ultimo seicento: un poeta galante e spiritoso," in: *Francesco de Lemene. Scherzi e favole per musica*, ed. M.G. Accorsi (Modena: Mucchi, 1992), p. XXVI.

203 L. Sampson, "Imitations and Innovations after Tasso's *Aminta*: Accommodating a Female Voice," [chapter] in: *Pastoral Drama in Early Modern Italy. The Making of a New Genre* (London: Legenda/Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Pub., 2006), pp. 98–128.

presumably his patron's gender and preferences that decided about the character of Capece's stage works. When Antonio Caldara's *Tito e Berenice* to Capece's text was staged in 1714 at the Teatro Capranica, the poet based his plot on ancient history instead.²⁰⁴ For Marie Casimire Capece did not write such dramatic libretti, and ones so closely akin to Zenò's aesthetic. This does not mean, however, that his works for the Queen's theatre lacked an educational and moralising purpose. Their finales demonstrate to what extent they were permeated by the spirit of Roman Catholic piety. Nevertheless, if we compare them with texts which the same author wrote or adopted for the Capranica, we can clearly see the pastoral aesthetic of the former libretti, which reflects Marie Casimire's personal tastes.

Literary Inspirations in Capece's Libretti

The eight *drammi* written for the Queen amply represent both Capece's varied literary inspirations and the personal preferences of Marie Casimire and Prince Aleksander. It should be stressed, however, that with the exception of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* – whose source and pretext was Justin's *Liber Historiarum Philippicarum*, which Capece shrewdly adapted so as to allude to the Sobieski family's recent experiences – Capece's libretti are not based on historical subjects. In his *argomento* for *Il figlio delle selve*, the poet only pretended that the presented events had a historical basis. *La Silvia*, as I have already mentioned, demonstrates the influence of pastoral drama and mythology, since the eponymous heroine is descended from Hercules. Inspiration for *Orlando* can be traced back to two Italian chivalric epics: Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. *Tetide in Sciro* is based on Achilles' myth and the story of the Trojan war; the latter also plays a major role in the two Iphigenia libretti, *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *Ifigenia in Tauri*, drawing on Euripides' tragedies and a play by Piero Jacopo Martello. In his last text written for the Palazzo Zuccari, *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura*, Capece again drew on myths, this time – those of Narcissus and Echo, Procris and Cephalus, both derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Thus, of the eight *drammi per musica* for Marie Casimire, three are based on literary models (*Orlando overo la gelosa pazzia*, *Ifigenia in Aulide*, *Ifigenia in Tauri*), two on mythology (*Tetide in Sciro*, *Amor d'un'Ombra*), one

204 Reinhard Strohm suspects that Capece drew here on similarly titled works by P. Corneille and J. Racine, cf. R. Strohm, "A context for Griselda: Teatro Capranica in Rome, 1711–1724," in: R. Strohm, *Dramma per Musica. Italian Opera Seria of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 46.

on a historical source (*Tolomeo et Alessandro*), and two plots are the poet's own invention.

The sources and themes of the operas shown at the Palazzo Zuccari were by no means accidental. As I demonstrated above in my analyses of the individual libretti, they were selected carefully from among both ancient and modern-age sources, well known to Capece, and subsequently adapted in a creative fashion to suit and refer to the personal and political situation of the Polish Queen, her family and court. The operas staged at the Queen's theatre were thus undoubtedly representative of the tradition of political patronage.

The Protagonists

The varied plots and inspirations provided the poet with space for a rich kaleidoscope of *dramatic personae*. Unlike in the libretti written for Cardinal Ottoboni, whose "protagonists are either enlightened rulers or great leaders of the West, gracious and generous in confrontation with non-civilised (for instance, non-Christian) empires,"²⁰⁵ and their antagonists are usually usurpers – in Capece's libretti one can hardly find one preferred type of dramatic character, or any single virtue specially highlighted in his protagonists. Ottoboni's *dramatis personae* are usually historical figures who engage in political, religious, or amorous conflicts. In Capece's texts we will not find such a clear-cut distinction between good-virtuous and evil-wicked characters. Many of them are motivated by love; but, unfortunately, misguided love leads to perdition or punishment. The plot of *La Silvia* has its roots in deception, which eventually goes unpunished, which does not mean that the libretto itself carries an immoral message. On the contrary, Capece emphasises the superiority of divine law over the laws of nature. In *Orlando* the action propelled by the eponymous hero's madness, of which he is cured by Angelica's healing ring; Angelica helps Orlando, motivated by pity, a sense of guilt, and respect for his love, which she is unable to reciprocate. It is thus empathy that eventually cures Orlando. Contrary to appearances, the madman's actions do not easily yield to consistent and unambiguous judgment. In his later *Ifigenia in Tauri* Capece similarly reminds the reader that the hero cannot be blamed for a fall caused by a sick mind. Deception also underlies the plot of *Tetide in Sciro*, casting a shadow on the otherwise noble figures of Tetide and Achilles. In *Amor d'un'Ombra* Narcissus, who has rejected the god of love,

205 G. Staffieri, "I drammi per musica di Pietro Ottoboni: il grand siècle del cardinale," *Studi Musicali* 2006, No. 1, p. 137.

is punished by being made to fall in love with Echo. First, he evokes terror, then pity, and eventually submits to both the divine and the human orders.

Many of Capecce's figures do not easily yield to moral judgment. Tolomeo, though undoubtedly righteous and faithful to his principles till the very end of his life, is irritating in his passiveness. Such an *effeminato* type is a far cry from the stoic heroes found in the *drammi* of Apostolo Zeno. Another protagonist that defies the image of a powerful ruler is Teramene (*Il figlio delle selve*), whose weakness is counterbalanced by his wife's efforts to restore the throne and the kingdom to her husband. Importantly, in Capecce's libretti women are definitely stronger and more active than men. This seems to have been a form of homage paid to the undoubtedly exceptional personality of Marie Casimire.

What these libretti may be criticised for is the static presentation of the protagonists. In *La Silvia*, *Tetide in Sciro*, *Ifigenia in Tauri*, the conflict is happily resolved, but not through a transformation of the main figures' personalities, only owing to external circumstances, such as pirates kidnapping a child (*Ifigenia in Tauri*), children being swapped as a result of a kidnapping (*La Silvia*), Ulysses' trick which makes Achilles reveal his true identity (*Tetide in Sciro*), or love (*Il figlio delle selve*). On the other hand, Capecce's heroes and heroines are thoughtful persons prone to analyse their own emotions and behaviour. This feature of their characters is perfectly represented in the recitatives which they sing.²⁰⁶

The Structure of the Libretti²⁰⁷

All of Capecce's libretti consist of three acts, with ten to thirteen scenes in each act. Only in *Il figlio delle selve* do we additionally have a panegyric prologue in praise of Marie Casimire, and the *dramma* ends with the *ballo* of Diana and four shepherds (*il Ballo di Diana con quattro Pastori che l'accompagnano*). The number of *dramatis personae* listed in the libretti varies from five in *Il figlio delle selve*²⁰⁸ and *La Silvia* to six in the other libretti. The first two (*Il figlio delle*

206 On the expressive power of Capecce's monologues and recitatives, see also M. Di Martino, "Obligo e recupero di un librettista settecentesco: Carlo Sigismondo Capeci (1652–1728) e il melodrama arcadico," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1996 Nos 1–2, pp. 41–42.

207 Cf also A. Markuszewska, "The Musical Form of Selected Arias in the Libretti of Carlo Sigismondo Capecce (1710–1714)," *Musicology Today* 2009, pp. 44–46.

208 The shepherd who appears in the prologue is listed as the sixth person of the drama, but the action proper involves five singers, and one of them most likely also sang the part of the shepherd.

selve and *La Silvia*) still feature comic figures, but ones related to the main plot; in his later *drammi*, Capece gave up the use of such characters altogether.

The table below²⁰⁹ represents the structure of the individual operatic libretti. I have applied the following abbreviations: l. des sc. – broken linking of scenes (*liaison des scenes*); entr. a. – arias for the entrance; mid a. – mid-scene arias; end a. – arias the conclude the scene, but do not mark the protagonist's exit; exit a. – arias for the exit; d. – duets; t. – trios; q. – quartets; ens. – ensemble scenes, including the soloists' final choruses, performed together by all the protagonists of the opera.

Title	No. of scenes in each act	Set changes	l. des sc.	closed numbers ^a	entr. a.	mid a.	end a.	exit a.	d.	ens. and choruses
<i>Il figlio delle selve</i>	35 (10,12,13)	-	(2,2,-)	52	4	27	14	3	4	chorus
<i>La Silvia</i>	33 (10,10,11)	-	(1,1,2)	45	3	22	10	6	3	chorus
<i>Tolomeo et Alessandro</i>	35 (11,13,11)	6 (3,2,1)	(-, -,2)	45	2	16	13	11	3	-
<i>Orlando</i>	33 (11,11,11)	7 (3,2,2)	(-,2,1)	45	1	21	9	10	2	1 t., chorus
<i>Tetide in Sciro</i>	35 (12,12,11)	7 (2,2,3)	(1,-,1)	46	4	21	9	8	1	2 t., chorus
<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>	33 (11,11,11)	9 (3,3,3)	(-, -,1)	46	2	19	9	11	3	1 t., chorus
<i>Ifigenia in Tauri</i>	35 (10,13,12)	9 (3,3,3)	(-, -,1)	43	1	20	8	12	-	1 t., 1 q., 2 choruses
<i>Amor d'un'Ombra</i>	37 (12,12,13)	10 (3,3,4)	(1,-,4)	44	2	18	4	13	4	2 t., chorus

^a I.e. arias which constitute closed wholes within the given work, and in later operas also duets, trios, etc.; in Capece's libretti these distinct numbers are mostly arias.

209 The table is modelled on F. Giuntini, *I drammi per musica di Antonio Salvi. Aspetti della 'riforma' del libretto nel primo Settecento* (Bologna: Mulino, 1994) and G. Staffieri, "I drammi per musica di Pietro Ottoboni: il grand siècle del cardinale," *Studi Musicali* 2006, No. 1, pp. 129–192.

Capece's libretti consist of usual sequences of recitatives and arias, though in his two earliest operas for the Polish Queen classifying a given number as an aria or a recitative may sometimes be problematic. Such sections or numbers are only slightly distinguished in print from the rest, and they are not followed by repetition of the first verse, indicating an aria *da capo*. However, their metrical structure, regular rhymes, and emotional character of the text have made me classify them as arias.

The number of arias in Capece's libretti varies from 37 to 47, that is, rather fewer than in works staged by Cardinal Ottoboni (1710–1712)²¹⁰ or in Gigli's *L'Anagilda* (1711) staged at Prince Ruspoli's, all of which feature around fifty arias. A similar number of arias can be found in the libretti written in those years by Francesco Silvani,²¹¹ Silvio Stampiglia,²¹² Antonio Salvi,²¹³ as well as most of Apostolo Zeno's texts from his Venetian period.²¹⁴ The dominance of mid-scene arias is a conservative feature of Capece's libretti. The poet gradually reduced their number, however, replacing them with exit arias, which in turn should be considered innovative. This process is particularly well illustrated by *Amor d'un'Ombra*, where, owing to the larger number of exit arias, the *liaison des scenes* is broken more frequently than before, especially in Act III. Overall, however, the dominance of mid-scene arias in Capece's libretti situates him among the representatives of the older operatic tradition, which was criticised by the Arcadian reformers, who claimed that such arias disrupt the dramatic narration.

Most of Capece's arias are *da capo* ones, with repetition of the first line of section A after the end of section B. On the basis of the surviving scores we may conclude that even texts not indicated as *da capo* in the libretti were set musically in this manner by Domenico Scarlatti. In several cases, these arias are interrupted by recitatives. For instance, in *Amor d'un'Ombra* (II, 7) the aria *Aura dolce, aura gradita* is sung by Cephalus with recitatives inserted by Procris, while in *Il figlio delle selve* (III, 7) Arsinda sings *O Dea sempre mutabile* with recitative inserted by herself and by Elmira, who is talking in her sleep. Both *Ifigenie* comprise arias

210 G. Staffieri, "I drammi per musica di Pietro Ottoboni...", p. 173.

211 R.S. Freeman, *Opera without Drama. Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675 to 1725, and the roles played therein by Zeno, Caldara, and Others*, doctoral dissertation (Princeton University, 1967), pp. 126–129, later published by: (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981).

212 R.S. Freeman, *Opera without Drama...*, pp. 151–154.

213 F. Giuntini, *I drammi per musica di Antonio Salvi...*, pp. 84–85.

214 However, in Zeno's *Atenaide* (1714) the total number of arias and ensemble scenes does not exceed thirty-nine; cf. R.S. Freeman, *Opera without Drama...*, p. 184.

with choral sections, probably because of the ancient source that these operas are based on, and because ensemble scenes (such as that of the ritual) are included. Such arias with choruses are those by Iphigenia: *O figlia di Latona (Ifigenia in Aulide, III,10)* and *Vieni, vieni o Dea di Delo (Ifigenia in Tauri, I,1)*.

The distribution of arias in Capece's successive libretti has been represented in the tables below:

Il figlio delle Selve

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Arsinda	3	4	2	9
Teramene	4	4	2	10
Ferindo	3	6	5	14
Elmira	2	4	3	9
Garbina	4	2	1	7
	16	20	13	49

La Silvia

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Silvia	4	5	2	11
Garbina	2	2	2	6
Dalisio	4	3	3	10
Laurinda	2	3	2	7
Mireno	2	2	3	7
	14	15	12	41

Tolomeo et Alessandro

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Tolomeo	4	1	2	7
Alessandro	1	3	2	6
Seleuce	3	2	3	8
Araspe	2	3	3	8
Elisa	2	2	3	7
Dorisbe	2	2	1	5
	14	13	14	41

L'Orlando overo la gelosa Pazzia

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Orlando	3	4	3	10
Angelica	3	3	2	8
Isabella	2	2	2	6
Zerbino	2	2	3	7
Medoro	2	2	1	5
Dorinda	1	2	2	5
	13	15	13	41

Tetide in Sciro

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Tetide	2	3	4	9
Likomedes	2	3	2	7
Deidamia	1	2	2	5
Antiope	3	3	2	8
Acchille	3	2	3	8
Ulisse	2	1	2	5
	13	14	15	42

Ifigenia in Aulide

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Agamennone	3	3	2	8
Clitennestra	2	3	2	7
Ifigenia	3	3	4	10
Acchille	2	2	3	7
Ulisse	2	1	1	4
Pilade	2	2	1	5
	14	14	13	41

Ifigenia in Tauri

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Ifigenia	4	3	3	10
Oreste	2	2	2	6
Toante	2	1	2	5
Dorisbe	2	3	4	9
Pilade	2	2	1	5
Ismeno	2	2	2	6
	14	13	14	41

Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura

Personae	Act I	Act II	Act III	Total
Procri	3	2	2	7
Cefalo	1	2	2	5
Aristeo	2	1	2	5
Narciso	3	2	4	9
Eco	3	3	1	7
Nicandro	2	2	-	4
	14	12	11	37

As we can see from the tables above, the eponymous heroes or heroines are entrusted – with the exception of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* – with the largest number of arias, which is understandable, as it points to their key role in stage action. In some cases, however, as in *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, the number of arias reflected the status of the singers hired for the Queen's theatre. Marie Casimire most likely wished to capitalise on Anna Maria Giusti's vocal and acting abilities, and for this reason Capece wrote more arias for Seleuce (the part she sang) than for the title figures in this particular opera. Also the number of arias allotted for performance by Elisa and Araspe suggests that the singers interpreting those parts, whose names we do not know today, were deemed worthy of being given more space to present their skills.

One excellent example of the link between the protagonists' dramatic status and the number of arias they sing is the libretto of *Tetide in Sciro*, in which the eponymous heroine, Thetis, sings 9 arias, more than any other person of this drama. In operatic tradition, however, it was Achilles who played the main role

in the plot, and therefore Capece lets him sing as many as 8 arias. The seemingly a mere supporting role of Antiope – as she is only involved in the love plot – also provided her with the opportunity to sing eight arias. She is the daughter of Theseus, whom Lycomedes killed on Scyros, and, as a princess of royal blood, she had a major moral and political mission to fulfil in this opera. For this reason, Capece treated her very seriously, and allotted to her the same number of arias as to Achilles. Third with regard to solo numbers (7) is Lycomedes, King of Scyros, while the other two *dramatis personae*, Deidamia and Ulysses, sing five arias each. Deidamia is the object of Achilles' love, but is in fact a passive and secondary figure, while Ulysses appears in the plot in just one specific context (his task is to find Achilles). The successive acts follow a similar model as far as the distribution of arias is concerned. In Act I, each singer is given at least one aria to present the key qualities of the character he or she impersonates. In Acts II and III the main protagonists are the most active. From the viewpoint of the later, Metastasian concept of dramatic structure, a succession of arias sung by one and the same figure would be viewed as formally defective.

The arias in Capece's libretti have one more pre-Metastasian characteristic; namely, the great diversity of metrical structures, number and length of lines.²¹⁵ There can be from four to ten lines in an aria, and the stanzaic patterns are frequently irregular, as when the number of lines in section A differs from that in section B. Most stanzas are brief, however, with succinct lines, closer to the Venetian tradition. An excellent example of this style is Achilles' aria *Atterrato* (from *Tetide in Sciro*, II,5): "Atterrato, / Fulminato / Dal mio sdegno / Quell'indegno / Cadera; / Pur che scudo all'ira mia / Non gi sia / La tua belta." The Roman style, on the other hand, is represented by Antiope's aria *Se da un empio sei stato tradito* (*Tetide in Sciro*, I,9): "Se da un empio sei stato tradito, / Godi, o cor, che sei gia vendicato. / Má il piacere di vedrlo punito / Pur mi dice, ch'è sempre un'ingrato." It was most certainly the emotion expressed in the given aria that decided about the length of verses. Achilles' indignation, which finds vent in the above-quoted *aria agitato*, called for brief lines and fast speech. In Antiope's reflective aria, on the other hand, Capece finds long sentences better suited to the character of the affect.

Standard 8-line arias with a clear-cut division into two four-line stanzas, representing two contrasted types of affection, are rare in Capece's libretti.

215 On the metrical transformations of Italian operatic arias, cf. P. Fabbri, "Metrical and Formal Organization," [chapter] in: *Opera in Theory and Practice. Image and Myth*, eds L. Bianconi, G. Pestelli (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 151–220.

Moreover, sometimes it is difficult unequivocally to define the affect expressed in the given aria. Arias undoubtedly functioned as an emotional, reflective, and sometimes moralising commentary on the main course of action and on the protagonists' experiences. Despite this, it is easier to talk about their sense and meaning than to define one or two definite emotions that dominate in any given aria. Let me illustrate this problem with Deidamia's aria *Sento un certo non so che* (from *Tetide in Sciro*, II,3): "Sento un certo non so che,²¹⁶ / Che fa in me / Gran novita./ A mirare alletta il guardo,/ Al desire / Da l'ardire: / Ma l'ardire e poi codardo, / E che brami ancor non sa." The irregularity of line length and rhyming pattern, typical of Capece, should be stressed here. Section A consists of the first three lines, section B – of the remaining five. The text illustrates Deidamia's discovery of love, which brings her joy, elation, but also concern.

Ensemble scenes are mostly represented in Capece's works by duets. However, in *Tetide in Sciro* and later he also included trios, while *Ifigenia in Tauri* features the first quartet. Closing an opera with a chorus of soloists (of all the protagonists) is a conventional device that Capece adheres to, with the exception of *Ifigenia in Aulide*, which ends with the eponymous heroine's aria calling on the Greeks to sail away and prophesying their victory over Troy. In *Tolomeo et Alessandro* Capece likewise intended to close the opera with Seleuce's aria, but Scarlatti only set the first two lines as a solo, in accordance with the poet's intention, while the next two he already entrusted to the *coro dei solisti*, as we know from the preserved score.

Liaison des scenes

The skilful application of the linking of scenes, that is, of connecting two scenes by the continuous presence of a character, was an important aspect of libretti written in that period. Breaking this continuity was usually related to the change of sets. In Capece's libretti, however, the discontinuation of the *liaison des scenes* is relatively frequent, and independent of the changes of theatrical scenery. In his first two libretti (*Il figlio delle selve*; *La silvia*), Capece did not introduce changes of sets at all, which may be the reason why the *liaison* is broken as many as four times in each of them. This device became less common in his later operas (from three to one occurrences, with the exception of his final *Amor d'un'Ombra*, where it appears five times). It seems therefore that dramatic continuity attained by

216 Notably, the text of this aria resembles the duet of Valetto and Damigella *Sento un certo non so che* from Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and the later aria of Cherubino *Non so più cosa sono* from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.

applying the principle of the *liaison des scènes* was not one of the poet's main concerns. The same could be said of the works of Silvio Stampiglia, Gerolamo Frigimelica Roberti, and Cardinal Ottoboni. On the other hand, Capece's output significantly differs in this respect from the works of other Italian authors active (for a longer or shorter time) in Vienna, such as Pietro Antonio Bernardoni, Pietro Pariati, and Apostolo Zeno. Even in the latter's early libretti (from the Venetian period, comprising more than fifty scenes), disruptions of the *liaison des scènes* are extremely rare (not more than two per each opera).²¹⁷

Another aspect of operatic structure related to the *liaison des scènes* is that of set changes, which interrupt the stage action for a moment and mark a transition to another place of action (albeit not a remote one, in accordance with the Aristotelian unities). In Capece's successive libretti, the number of such changes was steadily growing. While his early operas (*Il figlio delle selve*, *La Silvia*) are dominated by just one setting (and the stage directions comprise no information concerning changes of scenery), in *Tolomeo et Alessandro* there are already six of them, in *L'Orlando* and *Tetide in Sciro* there are seven in each, eight in either of the two *Ifigenie*, and eventually ten in *Amor d'un'Ombra*. This can be explained by the arrival at the Queen's court of stage designer and architect Filippo Juvara, and, most likely, also by Marie Casimire's wish to surprise and impress her audience with the lavishness of her spectacles.

To sum up, Capece's eight libretti written for the Polish Queen's Roman theatre are a major contribution to the development of operatic text writing in the early eighteenth-century, which we consider today as a period of transition in the history of that genre. His works therefore represent the borderland between two eras. What links Capece to the earlier age is the presence of comic figures in the first two libretti,²¹⁸ the dominance of mid-scene aria, successions of arias sung by one and the same character, the relatively large number of (unevenly distributed) *liaisons des scènes*, and *travestimenti*. It should be emphasised, however, that the number of elements characteristic of the newer, reformed trends in Capece's libretti is much higher. These include: giving up the Baroque *concetti* and the Baroque rhetoric in the language of the text; absence of comic figures (from *Tolomeo et Alessandro* onward); the gradual reduction of the number of

217 Cf. R. Freeman, *Opera without Drama...*, pp.155–162.

218 In his later works, Capece no longer introduced such characters, which can most likely be seen as an attempt to adjust his works to the teachings of the opera reformers, who claimed that juxtaposing figures from different social strata, and therefore also high and low types of discourse, in one work and on one and the same stage, was improper.

arias, attempts to adapt the genre of the Greek tragedy for the music theatre, as well as faithfulness to the three Aristotelian unities of action, place, and time.²¹⁹

The coexistence of the elements listed above is a characteristic feature of libretti written at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, while the majority of poets working in that period showed a preference for historical subjects or for the imitation of the French classics, Capece – most likely under the influence of Marie Casimire – remained true to the pastoral style which, as the later history of the operatic genre was to prove, would lose the competition with serious and austere plots based on historical subjects. This may be one of the reasons why Capece's works have attracted less interest among researchers so far. Still, it is to their pastoral character that these works owe their particularly lyrical character, their extraordinary melodiousness, their subtle and gentle, even highly musical qualities. Predictable though they may be, which resulted more from convention than from lack of talent, these libretti can still make for a pleasant reading experience today.

The Music

Source Information

Two complete scores of operas by Domenico Scarlatti (*Tolomeo et Alessandro* and *Tetide in Sciro*) have survived to our times, as well as a *rifacimento* of the last opera staged at the Polish Queen's theatre (*Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura*). Apart from these, we have some individual operatic arias, and a fragmentary score of one serenata (*Clori, e Fileno*). The complete score of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* found towards the end of the twentieth-century at Belton House, Lincolnshire, UK,²²⁰ is a handwritten copy of Italian, most likely Roman provenance, according to Malcolm Boyd.²²¹ Apart from nineteen pages (the aria

219 This is true despite the fact that several scenes could take place in the open air, and the following ones – in the chambers of a palace. In relation to the seventeenth-century opera, where within the course of several scenes we could move to another city, or even country, this newer trend was a manifestation of a truly Aristotelian type of plot organisation.

220 It is now kept in the library which belongs to this private institution. I am grateful to Jerzy Żak for making a copy of the score available to me.

221 M. Boyd, "The music very good indeed': Scarlatti's *Tolomeo et Alessandro* recovered," in: *Studies in Music History Presented to H. C. Robbins Landon on His Seventieth Birthday*, eds O. Biba, D.W. Jones (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 9–19. 51. Böhmer Karl, *Händel in Rom* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2009).

Ditemi voi, dov'è, II,11), the rest of the score was copied in one and the same hand. Before this manuscript was found, the only known part of the opera was Act I, purchased at an antiques auction by Italian researcher Sebastiano Arturo Lucciani in the 1940s.²²² Lucciani argued that the inscription *Ad uso C.S.* on the front page indicated that the volume had belonged to Capece; he also claimed that the manuscript was written in Domenico Scarlatti's own hand.²²³ The analysis below is based on the score found in the UK, but also on a microfilm copy of the first act – whose original is part of a private collection in Italy – stored among the Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers at the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University, New Haven, USA.²²⁴

The only nearly complete, eighteenth-century score of *Tetide in Sciro* (only the last few pages of the duet of Tetide and Achille *Lasciami piangere* are missing) was kept at the former Franciscan monastic library of the Church of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice,²²⁵ where it was discovered in 1952 by Italian Franciscan composer-musicologist Terenzio Zardini, who prepared the piece for its concert performance held on 21st October 1957 in Milan under the baton of Aladar Janes.²²⁶ The manuscript was later borrowed and never returned; the Franciscan Friars do not know who appropriated this unique source. Fortunately, it had previously been microfilmed.

The score was not Scarlatti's autograph;²²⁷ the handwriting is also different from that found in *Tolomeo et Alessandro*. Nevertheless, the opera's attribution is unquestionable, since on the title page we read: *Sinfonia Opera A Sei Personaggi del Sigr. Domenico Scarlatti*. Because of its Polish connections, the work soon attracted the attention of Polish musicians and musicologists. In the early 1960s, one of those studying the Venetian score was Tadeusz Ochlewski, who published

222 S.A. Lucciani, "Un'opera inedita di Domenico Scarlatti," *Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1946, No. 4, pp. 433–445.

223 S.A. Lucciani, "Un'opera inedita..." p. 435. Luciani compared a letter written by Scarlatti to Prince d'Alba with the handwriting in the score. I have not found a confirmation of his claim in the writings of other scholars.

224 US-NH, shelf mark MSS 11, Box 10, Reel 32, The Ralph Kirkpatrick Papers.

225 I-Vsf, as *Achille in Sciro*, shelf mark XIII B.1,2,3. I owe special thanks to Pierluigi Petrobelli of Rome and Giovanni Morelli of Venice for helping me access the microfilm of this score.

226 This performance was recorded and is available on CD under the Naxos Classical Archives label, catalogue no. 9.80957–59.

227 A. della Corte, "'Tetide in Sciro' l'opera di Domenico Scarlatti ritrovata," *La Rassegna Musicale* 1957, No. 4, p. 281.

twenty-six selected arias and ensemble scenes.²²⁸ On that occasion a microfilm and an incomplete paper copy of the score were prepared, with comments proving that preparations for performance were underway. These materials are currently in very poor condition and unavailable to researchers, stored at the PWM Edition's library in Krakow.²²⁹ It was most likely the same copy that was used for the Wrocław production of the opera in 1979 (cond. Ewa Michnik).²³⁰ A twentieth-century copy of unknown provenance, comprising selected arias from *Tetide in Sciro*, can also be found at the PWM Orchestral Materials Library.²³¹ It was this copy that provided the basis for the production shown at Warsaw Chamber Opera (cond. Lilianna Stawarz), and for its subsequent CD recording (2001).²³²

The score of the last opera staged at Marie Casimire's domestic theatre has unfortunately not been preserved, but we luckily have its London version, staged on 30th May 1720 at the King's Theatre under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Music. Scores representing this version are kept in Hamburg²³³ and Berlin.²³⁴ Notably, the contemporary premiere of this work took place in Poland, at Warsaw's Teatr Wielki (The National Opera) in 1978.²³⁵ The score was edited for performance by Florian Dąbrowski; the soloists and ensemble were conducted by Ewa Michnik.

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- 228 D. Scarlatti, *Tetyda na Skyros [Thetis on Scyros]* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1963–1966).
- 229 PL-Kpwm, microfilm No. 105. In the paper version each of the three acts starts with a printed page in Italian, bearing the title: *Tetide in Sciro / opera in tre atti / di / Carlo Sigismondo Capeci / musica / di / Domenico Scarlatti / Revisione e realizzazione di P. Terenzio Zardini*.
- 230 Z. Sierpiński, “‘Tetyda’ w Leopoldinie” [“‘Tetide’ at the Aula Leopoldina”], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1979, No. 12, pp. 2–3, 8–9.
- 231 PL-Wwm, shelf mark 24682.
- 232 Pro Musica Camerata, PMC 030/31.
- 233 D-Hs, shelf mark MA/708. This copy was made by John Christopher Smith the Elder, Handel's secretary.
- 234 D-Bsa, shelf mark SA 1189. On the title page, the title: *Opera Narcissus del Sigr. Scarlatti, 1721*; on the next page one should note the symbol of the crown and the initials SCR. I am extremely grateful to Barbara Jarmańska-Przybyszewska for attracting my attention to this source.
- 235 M. Bristiger, “Domenico Scarlatti: ‘Narciso,’” in *Narciso* [programme book], Teatr Wielki, Warszawa 1978; reprinted as “Scarlatti: ‘Narciso,’” in: M. Bristiger, *Transkrypcje. Pisma i przekłady [Transcriptions. Writings and Translations]* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010), pp. 20–29; In his 2010 publication the author did not correct the mistakes contained in the programme book, such as fusing the identities of two different singers: Anna Maria Giusti (who actually sang at Marie Casimire's theatre) and

The Roman score most likely reached London owing to Thomas Roseingrave, who was a great fan of Domenico Scarlatti's talent and a committed promoter of his works in England. The lengthy Roman title was abbreviated to the brief *Il Narciso*, which had typically been used for earlier works recounting the story of the proud Boeotian youth. Paolo Rolli, who was responsible for rewriting Capecé's text, left out one of the main protagonists, Nicandro (Nicander), and replaced most of the original arias with new ones. He also deleted or significantly shortened the majority of the recitatives, catering in this way to the English tastes. The English, as Giuseppe Riva reported to Muratori five years later, liked "very few recitatives, thirty airs and one duet at least distributed over the three acts."²³⁶ Thus, in order to conform to the local tradition, Rolli cut out many an interesting dialogue from Capecé's text. He kept almost none of the comments concerning love, the laws of nature, and illusion, which are crucial to the myth of Narcissus. Capecé's libretto, originally targeting the Roman aristocrats, who loved erudite discourse, was thus stripped bare in its London version, and lost its initial quality of a text that was also suitable for silent reading.

The next stage of the London *rifacimento*, that is, the process of adjusting the opera to local tastes and traditions, involved interfering with the musical setting of the lost original. Roseingrave added to Scarlatti's score two new arias (*Lozio vil di giovinezza*, II,6, and *Perfido traditor* II, 8) and 2 duets (*Lascia a me sol la pena*²³⁷ and *Rivolgo il passo altrove* II,2), which Burney described as "additional

Marianna Bulgarelli (also known as Maria Anna Benti), both of whom were called 'La Romanina.' Bristiger combines these two into one non-existent Anna Giusti Bulgarelli. Curiously enough, the same text constitutes the core of the article "‘Świt blask na ziemię splywa...’ Uwagi do restytucji polskiego przekładu libretta opery Domenico Scarlattiego ‘Narciso’ (1720)" ["‘Dawn Brings Light to the Earth...’ Remarks on the Restitution of the Polish Translation of the Libretto for Domenico Scarlatti's Opera ‘Narciso’ (1720)"], *Res Facta Nova* 2003, No. 6, pp. 221–226, which is in fact an introduction to the Polish translation of C.S. Capecé's libretto *Amor d'un'ombra e gelosia d'aura*, though Bristiger refers to the title of the English production, *Narciso*. Cf. M. Bristiger, Z. Kubiak, "Libretto Domenico Scarlattiego ‘Narciso’" ["The Libretto of Domenico Scarlatti's ‘Narciso’"], *Res Facta Nova* 2003, No. 6, pp. 227–266.

236 Qtd. after R.A. Streatfeild, "Handel, Rolli, and Italian Opera in the Eighteenth Century," *The Musical Quarterly* 1917, No. 3, p. 433.

237 This duet is missing from the London libretto and the Hamburg score. It can only be found in Walsh's publication *Songs in the new opera call'd Narcissus: as they are perform'd at the Kings Theatre for the Royal Academy compos'd by Dom[eni]co Scarlatti; with additional songs compos'd by Mr. Roseingrave* (London: J. Walsh, J. Hare, 1720; reprinted by Huntingdon: King's Music, 1987).

songs ... composed in the style of his friend Mimeo Scarlatti.²³⁸ Though the alterations introduced by Roseingrave presumably went much further, *Il Narciso* was still advertised in London as a work by Domenico Scarlatti,²³⁹ as evident from, among others, the London libretto²⁴⁰ and the collection *Songs in the New Opera call'd Narcissus...* published by John Walsh.²⁴¹

The Hamburg and Berlin scores of *Il Narciso* differ in some respects. In the Hamburg version, Narciso, standing by the lake shore, recalls the image of his beloved nymph. He hopes to see her at least for a moment, and sings his dream out in the aria *Vieni, o Cara, a consolarmi*, in the key of A major, based on contrasted tempi and changes of time signature. The soloist is accompanied by an ensemble comprising a solo violin, other violins playing in unison, a *viola*, cello, and double bass. Scarlatti's authorship is dubious in the case of this aria. First of all, the names of the instruments are very precisely defined, similarly as in Roseingrave's aria *L'Ozio vil di Giovinezza*. Secondly, after Roseingrave's *Perfido traditore* this is the second aria to apply the concerting technique. Thirdly, the form of the solo violin part is notable. In the initial *ritornello* it consists of long sustained notes against the background of a semiquaver accompaniment of repeated notes in the part of the other violins. In the subsequent measures, the solo melody becomes more varied, reaching its peak of activity in section B, which features figurations in the form of demisemiquaver triplets in a high register, a concept quite absent from Scarlatti's earlier works. Doubts concerning the authorship are further confirmed by an analysis of the Berlin score, in which this aria was replaced by another, well-known piece. Instead of *Vieni, o Cara, a consolarmi* the Berlin version features *Torna sol per un momento*, the final aria of Act I from *Tolomeo et Alessandro*, in G minor and the time of 4/4, tempo *adagio*, which ideally corresponds to the dramatic situation on the stage in *Il Narciso*. In comparison to *Tolomeo*, the parts of *violoncelli soli* are not verbally indicated as such, though the clef does change in the bass line; the inscription *senza*

238 Ch. Burney, *A General History of Music. From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period (1789)*, ed. F. Mercer (London: Foulis, 1935), p. 704. Mimeo is an abbreviated version of the first name of Domenico Scarlatti.

239 Ch. Burney, *A General History of Music...*, p. 706. After *Numitore* by Giovanni Porta and *Radamisto* by George Frederic Handel), Scarlatti's opera was the third to be performed that season under the auspices of the newly founded Royal Academy of Music.

240 "La Musica è del Signor Domenico Scarlatti," cf. the printed libretto, P.A. Rolli, *Il Narciso* (London: Giovanni Pickard, 1720), GB-Lbl, shelf mark 163. g. 16.

241 *Songs in the New Opera Call'd Narcissus...*, in: GB-Lbl, shelf mark H.315.

ceballo (without harpsichord) and an articulation clue are likewise left out, and instead of the tempo indication *adagio e staccato* we only have *adagio*. The other differences between the two scores consist, among others, in separately listing the performing forces for selected arias in the Sing-Akademie manuscript, in choosing a *violetta* rather than a *viola* to play the same part (as in Aristeo's aria *Sento ch' il cor mi dice*), as well as in employing *corni* and *corni di caccia* for the final chorus.

The Structure of Libretti and the Music Composer's Approach to the Text

Like his father Alessandro, Domenico Scarlatti was extremely meticulous and diligent in setting libretti with which he was entrusted. Such an attitude presumably characterised composers working for the court or employed by private managers. The elite audience was more willing to listen attentively to long recitatives than the music fans in theatres of London and Venice. Such recitatives, apart from moving the action forward, always left space for profound reflections and sophisticated allusions.

Of the few preserved operatic scores by Domenico Scarlatti, *Tolomeo et Alessandro* is the closest to the poetic original, but even here there are some minor differences. The most important of them is leaving out Tolomeo's deeply moving aria *Io moro, ah! lasso io moro* (III,10), in which he bids farewell to life and to his beloved wife. In Capece's libretto the protagonist died directly afterwards, but Scarlatti opted for a different solution. He set the poet's monologue preceding the deleted aria as an expressive and dramatic *recitativo accompagnato*, one of two such recitatives in this opera. The second departure from the librettist's idea comes in the finale, which in Capece's version ends atypically with an aria (Seleuce's *Lieto Giorno in cui Sol non si oppone*, III, 11). Scarlatti chose a more conventional solution, entrusting the first two lines to Seleuce, while the two others are sung by a chorus of the reunited and reconciled *dramatis personae*, which enhances the effect of an operatic *lieto fine*.²⁴² In Dorisbe's aria *Vorrei vendicarmi* (II,4) Scarlatti omitted one line, while in the next aria sung by the same protagonist, *Dolce Speranza* (II,10), he added one. Neither of these changes affects the meaning of the whole. Other deviations from the libretto concern, first and foremost, replacing individual words, which does not change the sense of the recitatives or the affections expressed in the individual arias. Similar alterations can also be found in *Tetide in Sciro*. The London version of *Amor d'un'ombra...*,

242 In the analysis below, I classify this section as an ensemble scene.

on the other hand, keeps few elements from the Roman original. In Act I, of the 14 arias, 1 trio and 1 duet written by Capece, *Il Narciso* only preserves the opening trio and four arias: *Ecco il cielo luce adorna* (Procri, Cefalo, Aristeo; I,1); *Cadera la belva ria* (Aristeo, I,1); *Dall' horror di fosco nembo* (Procri, I, 2),²⁴³ and *Non lo credo, non lo spero* (Narciso, I,10).²⁴⁴ Aristeo's aria *Sento, che a poco, a poco* was moved from Act Two in Capece's libretto (II,6) to Act One in the London spectacle. The texts of several arias were changed, though their overall message was preserved. Of Capece's 12 arias in Act II, the London version again keeps just four: *Caro dardo gia l'alma che langue* (Eco, II,2); *Dammi un poco di ristoro* (Cefalo, II,7); *Si si dentro quell'onde* (Eco, II,8), and *Mio bel Sol, tu m' invaghisti* (Narciso, II,10). All the others were written by Rolli, whose modifications are the most far-reaching in Act III, where the individual arias are distributed differently from the original, and only four out of Capece's 11 are used: *Dammi tregua se non pace* (Narciso, III,1); *Amorosa farfalletta* (Narciso, III,1),²⁴⁵ *Morro; ma la mia morte* (Procri, III,5),²⁴⁶ and *Vieni, o Cara, a consolarmi* (Narciso, III,6). For the remaining arias, Rolli depended on his own invention, though he did not significantly change the original meanings of Capece's texts. The duet *Lascia, ch' io vada almen* of Act III is preserved in its original form, but is sung by Eco and Cefalo, not by Eco and Nicandro, as in the Roman production.

The Musical Characterisation of *Dramatis Personae*

Did Scarlatti individualise his protagonists using musical means? Such characterisation, making use of all the key musical components (melody, harmony, rhythm, agogics, instrumentation, etc.), took place mainly in the arias, in which the persons of the drama expressed their feelings, and the composer could employ the richest palette of musical ideas.

Tolomeo (alto) is a type of character who indulges in self-pity, lamenting his own fate and wrongs, and sending his complaints up to the heavens in a frequently pompous manner. He is faithful to his wife, and voluntarily chooses death out of love for her – a moment which Scarlatti highlighted in the extremely moving aria *Stille amare* (III,9). The slow tempo and the even, quaver-based orchestral pulse symbolise the bitter drops of poison which Tolomeo drinks. The

243 Marked in the score as Cefalo's aria.

244 This aria closes Act I in the score.

245 Of Capece's original text only the first line remains, while the following ones were rewritten by Rolli.

246 In the score as *Morirò ma questa morte*.

tragedy is additionally enhanced by chromaticisms. In the aria *Ditemi voi, dov'è* (II,11), written in tempo adagio, the time of 12/8, and typical siciliana rhythms, Tolomeo's love and his search for the beloved are reflected through multiple repetitions of the question *dov'è* ("where is she?"), further enhanced by rests, suspended and broken phrases, and the resulting moments of silence, which additionally emphasises the force of this question, echoing in the audience's minds. Another kind of musical "ostinato" appears in the aria *Torna sol per un momento* (I,11), likewise in tempo adagio, in which the protagonist begs the shadow of his beloved wife, appearing in a dream, to return to him. The expression of this wish initiates the musical motto, after which the first violin takes over with incessant repetitions of a similarly constructed motif in equal semiquavers. The accompaniment is extremely suggestive, and the whole aria – immensely expressive, so that the listeners really come to believe in Tolomeo's wish to see his wife return from the dead. At the same time, the musical setting proves the composer's great sensitivity to verbal meanings and to the protagonist's agony. The use of the same tempo does not mean that the aria settings are all similar. On the contrary, Scarlatti brings out subtle shades of Tolomeo's emotional states. Tolomeo shares his pain which the audience also in the fast arias. In *Cielo ingiusto potrai fulminarmi* (I,2), what attracts attention is the punctuated rhythm, which Domenico's father likewise frequently introduced to accompany addresses to gods, or descriptions of deities. Suffering often finds vent in violence, and so we witness Tolomeo's outburst in *Tiranni miei pensieri* (I,9). Distinct rhythmic drive in small values and fast tempi represent his outburst of sorrow as a response to his own nagging thoughts. Similar emotions are expressed in the aria in which he resolutely rejects Elisa's love. Despite these minor expressive variations, the figure of Tolomeo is unidimensional from the psychological point of view, characterised by suffering, a sense of injustice and of being wronged. Musically, this character shows preference for slow tempi, and the instrumental accompaniment is one of the first and second violins, a *violetta*, and *basso continuo*.

The soprano arias sung by Tolomeo's wife Seleuce count among the technically most demanding ones. Also in slow tempi they abound in complex and lengthy coloraturas, leaps within a wide melodic contour, and chromaticisms. Such settings and the use of such musical means were made possible by the talent of Anna Maria Giusti, the best known of the singers performing this opera. Seleuce's part calls for the ability of moving the audience to feel sympathy for the figure presented on the stage. Her arias are mostly characterised by grief for her (as she believes) lost husband, a sense of that her fate is unfair, and suffering. In her three successive arias – *E un grave martire*, *Non piu stelle, non piu*, and *Non son le pene mie quelle ch' io sento*, all representing a similar type

of affection – Giusti must have delighted the audience not only with her vocal abilities, but also her acting skills, as evident from the sonnets composed by the Arcadian artists, who were under the spell of her stage talent.

The three arias listed above are in the same tempo *adagio*, but they differ in accompaniment. In the first one, the singer is accompanied by an ensemble consisting of the first and second violins playing in unison, a *viola*,²⁴⁷ and *basso continuo*. When the singer presents her vocal display, a solo cello is singled out in the bass. The second aria is only accompanied by *b.c.*, though the orchestra (that is, the first and second violins, *viola*, and *b.c.*) does make its presence in the central *ritornello*. Since the aria is the protagonist's invocation of the stars, the realm of the gods, punctuated rhythms appear in the musical setting. In the last aria, the soloist is again accompanied by the orchestra, consisting this time of violins, a *violetta*, and *basso continuo*. Though very similar in overall concept, these arias differ in subtle detail.

Seleuce's other arias complement the characterisation of Seleuce and the presentation of Giusti's talent. The illustrative *Son qual Cerva sitibonda*, with a long initial *ritornello* typical of arias based on a simile, features brief solo sections of the first violin (or oboe) and a completely autonomous cello part. Despite the strong orchestral drive, which symbolises a running hind (to which the protagonist likens herself) and which might suggest a faster tempo, this aria is to be performed *andante*. *Stelle vi credo, o, no* applies two contrasted tempi, *adagio* and *allegro*, to represent Seleuce being afraid to give way to the hope that overcomes

247 The English score of Tolomeo et Alessandro seems to suggest that Domenico Scarlatti used the words *violette* and *viola* interchangeably for the viola (in the present-day sense of the word), but this is contradicted by the score now kept in the USA, in which Tolomeo's aria *Rendimi ò crudo fato* (I,1) calls for the following instruments: the first and second violins, *violette*, *viola*, and *b.c.*, performed in long sections *senza cembalo* and with a *violoncello solo*. *Violetta* and *viola* are therefore clearly two different instruments, which in the score are additionally distinguished by the use of different clefs, though the demands made on both instrumentalists and the ambitus of their respective parts are similar. *Violette* is a word always used in the plural in the scores, and they play in unison. In some cases, either the composer himself or the copyist uses the term *viole* as an abbreviation for *violette*. Still, we are most likely dealing with different instruments. Baroque instrumentation was characterised by a great abundance, also as far as terminology is concerned. In many cases the same instrument had different variants and names, of which the flute family is the best example. For the purposes of this English version, to avoid confusion, I put the words *viola/viole* in italics, which shows that I refer to the original Italian term, without determining what specific instrument it might indicate in each individual case.

her, but also eagerly seeking solace for her aching heart. The solo oboe and harpsichord accompany her in a slow tempo, while the whole ensemble provides a fast-moving background. The vocal part is distinguished by the presence of numerous trills and coloraturas, and the oboe part unfolds in parallel thirds. Overall, however, Seleuce is characterised by slow and moderate tempi, and the dominant affection is that of sorrow, which does not stop the soloist from presenting displays of vocal skill.

Tetide (soprano) is the wisest and most experienced of the protagonists of *Tetide in Sciro*. As a goddess, she possesses knowledge that is inaccessible to the other persons of the drama, and therefore frequently explains to the others what they really feel. This is done in moralising arias such as *Soffri pur lieto* (I,7), which Scarlatti usually sets in tempo *allegro*, as exemplified by another of Tetide's arias, *Non va mai senza spina* (II,9). The goddess frequently sings of fate and of the gods, topics which emphasise her dignity and nobility, represented in music by punctuated rhythms and slow tempi. Her arias also incorporate instrumental solos of the *viola* (*Non e il ciel*, II,11), and the first violin (*É lontano*, III,1, where the solo section is labelled in the score as a *Capriccio*).

Five out of Tetide's nine arias are set in slow and moderate tempi. In Brown's classifications, most of them are *arie cantabile* and *di portamento*.²⁴⁸ One aria (*Cessino i vostri gemiti*, III,11) bears no tempo indication, but its musical qualities suggest a moderate tempo of performance. Of the three arias in tempi *allegro* and *presto*, two are moralising in character, and only one (*Se tu mi farai piangere*, III,7) expresses the goddess's violently vengeful state of mind. In this aria, Tetide threatens and curses Ulisse for taking away her son. The similarity of tempi does not make Tetide into a unidimensional figure, however; on the contrary, it highlights her divine ontological status, different from that of the other protagonists. The slow and moderate tempi, applied in order to reflect her suffering, seem to make her more human.

Achille (soprano) is a proud young man of violent disposition. Hence his arias are dominated by fast tempi, *allegro* and *presto*, which best reflect his overflowing anger, agitation, and unbridled energy. Achille's arias thus mostly represent the various types and subtypes of *aria parlante*,²⁴⁹ characterised by fast text presentation, large interval leaps in the vocal part, and the singer's coloraturas performed against the background of a strongly rhythmical, usually semiquaver-based

248 J. Brown, *Letters upon the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera Addressed to a Friend* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1789), pp. 36–119.

249 J. Brown, *Letters upon the Poetry...*, p. 38.

orchestral accompaniment. It is only in Act III that Achille reveals the other, more contemplative side of his character. In the aria *Alla pendula prigione* (III,3) he feels like a bird that has escaped from the cage (in his case, the prison of feminine clothes and a false identity), but willingly returns to it, enslaved by his love for Deidamia. Naturally, he had discovered the power of his passion already before. In *Sapro ben il petto opporre* (I,7) he claims he is ready to face all adversities, but not – to reject his love for the girl. This emotional ambivalence is expressed by the use of contrasted tempi – *presto* and *adagio*. However, it is only in *Alla pendula prigione* (III,3) that the more reflective side of the would-be hero of the Trojan war comes to the fore.

The most musically diversified character in this opera is undoubtedly Antiope (soprano), whose arias represent varied emotions and tempi. Apart from very passionate ones, such as *Luccidero* (I,4), or the moving and tragically expressive *Crudi affanni* (II,1), we also have the charming *Sento laure scherzar tra le fronde* (I,1), as well as moralising texts (*Così orgogliosa* III,5), and confrontations with the world of nature (*Quanto in notte procellosa*, II,7). This diversity is primarily reflected in the orchestration. In *Sento laure scherzar tra le fronde* (II,1) we hear two transverse flutes, and in *Così orgogliosa* (III,5) – an oboe. Antiope's complex emotions are well exemplified by her aria *Luccidero* (I,4). In the first part she expresses her wish to take revenge on her faithless lover, whom she suspects of murdering her father; in the second, she reveals her more tender side, that of a person passionately in love. This duality of character, which makes Antiope into musically one of the most interesting operatic figures, is reflected in the aria through the contrast of affections and tempi.

In Capece-Rolli's *Il Narciso*, Narciso is a beautiful youth who disdains Amor and ridicules the slavery of love. In one of the recitatives he comments: "Everyone speaks to me of love / All yield, by force, to its power / but they are all effeminate and soft / Vanquished by the promises and deceptions / Of that flattering Tyrant"²⁵⁰ In his first four arias, Narciso likewise expresses a conviction that his own heart is invincible, free of love, and will not yield to Amor's power. In these arias he is accompanied by an orchestra consisting of the first and second violins, sometimes playing in unison, as in the aria *Vorebbe quest'Amore* (I,4), as well as by a *viola* and *basso continuo*. Tempo indications are not always included in the score, but an analysis of Narciso's arias makes it possible to conclude that

250 "Tutti d'amor mi parlano/ tutti cedono, a forza, al suo potere/ ma sono tutti effeminate e molli/ Vinti dale promesse e dall'inganno/ Del lusinghier Tiranno," in: P.A. Rolli, *Il Narciso*..., p. 7.

most of them are meant to be performed in fast tempi. The youth expresses his resistance to the workings of Amor most powerfully in the aria *Un'Arcier che va bendato* (II,10), where he claims that the strength and courage of his heart make him immune to the wounds inflicted by the god of love. In this aria, which lacks the initial *ritornello*, the singer is accompanied in the first measures only by the *basso continuo*, and later – by an ensemble consisting of violins playing in unison, a *viola*, and *b.c.* All the instrumental parts, including that of the viol, are busy and energetic. The violin line is based in many passages on leaps which emphasise Narciso's indignation, his disdain for Amor, and his confidence in his own power and independence. The orchestra reaches the apogee of its activity in the *ritornello* leading to section B, in which Narciso demonstrates his courage. All the instruments repeat individual notes in fast rhythmical semiquaver movement. Admittedly, Roseingrave's aria *L'Ozio vil di Giovinezza* is a perfect complement to the portrayal of Narciso as a vain youth who admires his own looks and spends the passing time carelessly. However, in his next four arias we meet the transformed Narciso, in love with the shadow of a nymph whom he saw in the waters of the lake. His part now features dance rhythms and is set in the time of 12/8, with *andante* as the dominant tempo. We are thus witnessing two phases of Narciso's life, before and after his falling in love. In the first four arias he is irate, agitated and egocentric; in the next four – subtle and lyrical.

The protagonists of Scarlatti's operas demonstrate individual qualities, though their characterisation is based on subtle musical means. In some cases, Scarlatti's solutions are more typical of chamber music than of the opera, of which the audience expects a grander scale and a wider scope, therefore – also – more strongly contrasted characters. Domenico, however, preferred settings which seem to have been suited to the small theatre venue at the Palazzo Zuccari, and to the refined tastes of Marie Casimire's audience. The impression of chamber-music-like character is enhanced by the static action and the detailed descriptions of the protagonists' experiences. The loss of both *Ifigenie* scores is particularly painful since it is in these works that Capece drew on well-known ancient historical subjects, rarely selected as a subject for the music theatre in that period, most likely because of their gravity and status. In the early years of the Accademia degli Arcadi, erudite authors frequently debated about the ancient tragedy and the functions of music. Some of them argued that the principles of that ancient genre should be adopted in the opera. Capece most certainly took part in such meetings and may have shared his impressions and thoughts with the composer. It would therefore be extremely interesting to see how Scarlatti represented these ideas in his (now lost) scores.

The Overtures

In the surviving scores, the overtures are tripartite and follow the fast-slow-fast sequence of movements. In *Tolomeo et Alessandro* the overture is scored for oboe, first and second violins, *violetta*, and *b.c.* In long passages the oboe and the violin play in unison. *Tetide in Sciro* and *Il Narciso* feature a *violetta* rather than a *viola*. In the first movement of the *Tetide in Sciro* overture we can discern elements of the concerting technique in the alternation of brief solo sections of the first violin and the orchestral *tutti*.²⁵¹ The first movement is usually a “noisy” introduction characterised by a strong rhythmic drive, semiquaver progressions, and slow harmonic rhythms. This section is dominated by tonic-dominant relations. The generally brief central movement introduces a momentary diversion. This movement is usually based on a chromatically descending bass line and/or punctuated rhythms. Movement three, bipartite with repetitions, seems to have originated in a dance. Of special interest is the final minuet in the overture to *Il Narciso*, characterised by symmetrical phrases (8 + 8 measures), simple diatonic harmonic relations, and a homophonic texture in which the multiple instruments in each group play in unison. All these elements identify this *sinfonia* as representative of the early *stile galante*.

The Arias

Aria Structures

Most of those preserved are *da capo* arias, and in six cases in *Tolomeo et Alessandro* the repetition is fully written out in notation. In most cases, the arias follow this structure: A (aa1) B (bb1) *da capo*, and A (aa1) B (b) *da capo*.²⁵² Only in *Narciso*'s aria *Dammi tregua* (III,1) from *Il Narciso* is section A extended so as to include an instrumental *ritornello*, which most likely resulted from the text being limited to just two lines. Procri's aria *Moriro, ma questa morte* (III,4) follows a different pattern: there are two sections (AB), both repeated as in Baroque dances.

251 In the recording of this opera conducted by Lilianna Stawarz, this part of the overture was significantly shortened, in accordance with the version which the Warsaw Chamber Opera had at its disposal.

252 Where A is the first stanza, a – the first full presentation of the text of this stanza, and the next digits refer to successive repetitions of the text; B – the second stanza, b – the first full presentation of the text of the second stanza; the digits signify the successive repetitions of the text.

Another exception is Eco's aria *Caro Dardo gia l'Alma che langue* (II,1), which follows an ABA pattern, without any *ritornelli*.

Of much interest is the way in which Scarlatti sets the frequently very laconic aria texts written by Capece. First of all, he often repeats both entire lines and individual phrases or words. He is also fond of changing the word order in the sentence when elements get repeated. He makes the arias longer by dividing the vocal part with rests, and by inserting brief instrumental passages even between individual words. We should remember that repetitions were used in musical settings by the majority of early eighteenth-century composers, which nevertheless seriously irritated many theoreticians and some other composers of that period, including Benedetto Marcello.²⁵³ Muratori likewise complained about the countless repetitions and, most of all, about their unnatural character (in comparison to speech). He asked rhetorically: "And who has ever seen a person who, in everyday speech, goes on repeating and singing the same word, the same emotion, as it happens in the ariettas?"²⁵⁴ Domenico Scarlatti's operatic practice was part of this tradition, which Muratori considered "absurd." One excellent example is the aria *Non prezzo il tuo dono* Tolomea (II,6), whose text, as written by Capece in the libretto, runs as follows: "Non prezzo il tuo dono / Non voglio l'amor, / Che mal con un Trono / Si compra il mio cor." Scarlatti gives this text the following form: "A: Non prezzo il tuo dono / non prezzo il tuo dono/ non voglio l'amor / non voglio / non prezzo / non voglio l'amor / non prezzo non voglio l'amor / il tuo dono non voglio il tuo don onon prezzo l'amor / il dono non prezzo non voglio l'Amor / B: Che mal per un Trono / si compra il mio cor / mal si compra si compra il mio Cor / che per un Trono mal si compra / si compra il mio Cor / si compra mal mal si compra il mio Cor" (cf. music example 1).

253 Cf. A. Szwejkowska, *Wenecki teatr modny [The Fashionable Venetian Theatre]* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1981), p. 165.

254 "E chi vide mai persona, che nel famigliar discorso andasse ripetendo e cantando più volte la medesima parola, il medesimo sentimento, come avvien nelle Ariette?" L. A. Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana* (Venezia: Sebastiano Coleti, 1724), p. 40.

Allegro

Oboe

Viola

Aria

B.c.

Non prez - zo.il tuo Do - no

non prez-zo.il tuo Do-no non

vog - lio l'a - mor non vo - glio non prez - zo non vog - lio l'a - mor

non prez - zo non vo - glio l'a - mor il tuo Do - no non vog - lio.il tuo

Music example 1.

25

Do - no non prez - zo l'a - mor il Do - no non prez - zo non vog - lio l'a - mor

32

che mal per un Tro - no si com - pra..il mio

38

cor mal si com - pra si com - pra..il mio Cor

45

cor mal si com - pra si com - pra..il mio Cor

Music example 1: Continued

51

che per un Tro - no - mal - si - com - pra si com - pra.il mio Cor

6 6 43

57 Da capo

si com - pra mal - mal si com - pra.il mio Cor non prez - zo.il - tuo

4 #6 6 6 5

Music example 1: Continued

Scarlatti's arias could be divided into those that open with an instrumental *ritornello*, those that have no such introduction, and those that begin with a motto. The greatest group consists of those with an initial *ritornello*, but a large group still starts with a motto, that is, the presentation by the singer of the first key word or phrase of the text, which precedes an instrumental *ritornello*.

Instrumentation

One of the key characteristics of operas written in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the growing number of arias accompanied by an orchestra, as well as the more and more active role assigned to individual instruments. In this respect Scarlatti's operas for Marie Casimire's theatre, for instance *Tetide in Sciro*, with its forty orchestra-accompanied arias and only two with *basso continuo* alone (Ulisse's *Anche i Re*, I, 6, and Achille's *Taccio*, II, 9) are representative of the contemporary tendencies. Such statistics prove that in his works composed for the Polish Queen Domenico Scarlatti joined the trend towards creating a rich, autonomous, and colouristically varied accompaniment for each singer, and in this way, he furthered the development of orchestral

parts in the Italian opera. From the score of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* we know that the composer had at his disposal an ensemble consisting of: an oboe, transverse flute (*traverso, traversiere*), first and second violins, *viola* (at least two²⁵⁵), *violette* (an unspecified number),²⁵⁶ and in the *basso continuo* section: a harpsichord, a lute, a cello, and a double bass. In *Tetide in Sciro*, apart from the string instruments (first and second violins, one *viola*, one *violette*, and cellos in the *b.c.* part) we also find two transverse flutes and an oboe. In *Il Narciso* the orchestra consisted of the first and second violins, one viol, one *violette*, double basses, along with winds – two trumpets, two horns, two flutes, two oboes, and two bassoons – but the full complement of instruments can only be heard in the finale. Roseingrave's aria *L'Ozio vil di Giovinezza* (II,6) is scored for similar forces (without the flutes), while the other arias usually feature the first and second violins, a *viola*, and *b.c.*, or else violins playing in unison, a *viola*, and *b.c.* One cannot help wondering what the role of the wind instruments was in this London production. It is hard to believe that so many wind players were employed merely to appear in two numbers (Roseingrave's aria and the finale). More probably, the trumpeters, horn players, flutists, oboists, and bassoonists also doubled the individual string instrument parts. Oboe was the instrument particularly frequently employed in this role by Domenico Scarlatti and his contemporaries; it doubled the parts of the first, sometimes – the second violins. On the other hand, it is also possible to imagine a situation in which the musicians playing string instruments would occasionally switch over to the winds on demand. The ability to play many different instruments was, after all, still part of the canon of musical education and performance practice in that period.

In most cases, the singers are accompanied by the first and second violins – which often play in unison – one *viola*, and *b.c.* The instruments still frequently double the vocal parts, and the accompaniment is not continuous. In *Tolomeo et Alessandro* we have some *concertante* instruments. In *Tetide in Sciro* this technique is rare, but the score features interesting colouristic solutions, as in Tetide's aria *Non é il ciel* (II,11): “Non é Ciel, / Non son le stele / Che Tiranna fan la sorte. / Con improvviso consiglio / Corre l'alma al suo periglio / E il destin rende piu forte. / Non é Ciel & da capo.” Tetide tackles

255 Some arias in the score require only one *viola*, referred to in the singular form. When more such instruments are called for, Scarlatti uses the plural form: *viola*.

256 Concerning the controversy around the use of the terms *violette* and *viola/viole* in Scarlatti's scores, and the possible interpretations of these terms, see fn. 28 above.

here the fundamental question of who or what is the cause of human misfortune. The grave subject-matter of the first stanza (of the first three lines) is reflected in the use of tempo *adagio*. Notably, especially in the initial *ritornello* we have punctuated rhythms, use of the *tirata*, and French notation of ornaments. Of special interest in this aria are the solo violin passages running in counterpoint to the vocal line.²⁵⁷ In section A Scarlatti focuses on the word *tiranna*, emphasised by the use of a six-measure-long coloratura. The voice first enters into a dialogue with the violin, exchanging scale motifs with the violin part; later the violin and the voice perform in parallel thirds, and towards the end the composer applies imitation (cf. music example 2). In section B (the next three lines of text), the words *improvviso consiglio* (“a sudden decision”) and *corre* (“runs”) inspired the composer to use a faster tempo (*andante*), and to highlight the word *corre* first by the violin’s fast, strongly rhythmical semiquaver movement, and at the word’s second appearance – by an ascending motif of four semiquavers in the vocal line. Another word that is strongly emphasised in section B is *forte*, performed by the singer on just one note, sustained for six measures against fast figurations in the violin. Such an interpretation of the text can be extremely suggestive, as long as the arias are performed by good singers. *Non é il ciel* is another example not only of the composer’s sensitivity to verbal meanings, but also of an unconventional relation between the solo voice and the instrumental parts, which reinforce and complement the poetic meanings (cf. music example 3). Another interesting example of a solo violin part can be found in Tetide’s aria *É lontano* (III,1), where, after a one-and-a-half-measure long orchestral introduction, dominated by the solo violin, the composer includes a freely improvised section designated in the score as *Capriccio*, in which (against a pedal point executed by the *b.c.*) a virtuoso of a now unknown name was given the chance to demonstrate his or her skills (cf. music example 4).

257 The instrument indicated in the score as playing solo is a *viola*, and indeed a lower and darker register would be very appropriate in this piece. However, both the fact of the part being notated in the soprano clef and the choice of register, especially in section B, indicates that this part must have been executed by the violin.

Adagio

Violino

Aria

B.c.

5

8

11

13

6 6 6 7 7 7 7 6 6 6 6 6 6 3

7 7 7 7 6 6 6 7

6 6 5 6

6 6

Music example 2.

Adagio

V

A

B.c.

na fan... la sor - te

4 3 6 6 6 4 3

Music example 2: Continued

Andante

Violo

Aria

B.c.

con im - pro - vi-so con - si - glio cor - re l'al - ma.al suo per -

ri - glio, e.il - des - tin ren - de più for - te, cor - re -

l'al - ma.al suo pe - ri - glio e.il des - tin ren - de più for -

6 6 6 5 7 7 6 7 6 6 16 6

Music example 3.

19

te ren - de ren - de più for - te

6 6

Music example 3: Continued

Adagio

Capriccio

Violino solo

Violino primo

Violino secondo

Violetta

Tetide

B.c.

Elontano

6? 6 4 6 6 6

Music example 4.

Wind instruments (flutes and oboes) perform an illustrative function in these operas and are traditionally associated with texts describing the natural world, providing a suggestive background for the protagonists' experiences. One excellent example is Antiope's aria *cantabile* opening with the words *Sento laure scherzar tra le fronde* (II,1), where a pair of flutes playing in parallel thirds symbolises Zephyrs frolicking among the quiet sea waves; this carefree natural scene is opposed to the heroine's lonely suffering. In general, Scarlatti uses flutes to illustrate subtle and gentle emotions, while anger, thirst for vengeance, and pride are enhanced by the sound of the oboe.

The execution and sound of the *basso continuo* is a separate problem for analysis. The composer changes the sound colour of the figured bass part by suddenly removing the harpsichord from the ensemble (*tutti*) and resuming its part after a while, usually in cadential turns. In some cases, he indicates that the harpsichord should play alone (*cembalo solo*). In Elisa's aria *Voglio amore, o pur vendetta* (III,2),

in section B, the *b.c.* part is only executed by the lute (*lauto solo*); the original performer of this part was most likely Silvius Leopold Weiss (cf. music example 5). In some numbers, passages were similarly assigned to the solo cello or to a number of cellos (*violoncelli soli*). The notation of the cello part frequently switched from the F to the C clef within one and the same aria, which may indicate alternation between the cello and the violone. This is an element that places Domenico Scarlatti's operatic scores within the Roman tradition. In accordance with current fashion, Scarlatti's cello parts were becoming progressively more autonomous. In Seleuce's aria *Son qual Cerva sitibonda* (II, 11) from *Tolomeo et Alessandro* the cello is given a separate part and is exempted from the traditional function of executing the figured bass, which in this case is only heard in the cadences and in *tutti* passages indicated by verbal instructions in the score. Such a melodic-harmonic bass performed by the cello was becoming more and more frequent in vocal-instrumental works of that period. In Rome, it had earlier been applied in Handel's oratorio *Resurrezione* and in cantatas by the same composer, as well as oratorios written by Alessandro Scarlatti.

Music example 5.

Vocal Virtuosity

The vocal parts in Domenico Scarlatti's operas are never meant as mere displays of vocal skill. Even the longest and rhythmically most complicated coloraturas usually fulfil the function of emphasising the keywords or accompanying the semantically crucial phrases. Such a treatment of the vocal parts is what Domenico has in common with his father.

For Domenico Scarlatti, the singer's voice is most important, but it is to form one whole with the orchestral accompaniment. It may be doubled in thirds or in unison, by one selected instrument or by the whole ensemble. The composer likes to interrupt the melodic continuum with rests and brief, one-measure long instrumental 'inserts.' He does it more frequently than his father, who preferred continuous presentation of text. Capecce's poetry may have inspired Domenico to do so, since it contains dramatic questions and some lines have a highly reflective character. In order better to reflect the meaning of such lines, the composer constructs his phrases out of brief motifs based on leaps and followed by rests. To sum up, in these scores the singer performs no long and complicated coloraturas, but is expected to possess dramatic and theatrical skills, be sensitive to musical structure, and find pleasure in discovering and bringing out details.

The Affects

The question of what impact music exerts on humans has preoccupied writers since antiquity. Successive generations of philosophers, physicians, and artists have discussed this subject.²⁵⁸ This question was seldom viewed, however, as a separate problem, with its own intellectual discourse. Rather, it was part of the general debate on human nature. From that debate it transpired without any doubt that our double nature, made up of the body and soul, is subject to the workings of emotions and passions, termed 'affects.' Baroque music, and especially its new dramatic genre, the *dramma per musica*, which aims to generate emotions in the audience by presenting a wide palette of human emotions on the stage – showed a particular interest in the theory of the affections. Music, forming one whole with the text, aimed to emphasise verbal meanings by means of commonly understood and accepted symbols and figures. This also helped the audience to interpret other, more allusive content in the operatic libretti. The

258 Cf. S. Paczkowski, "Filozofia afektów" ["The Philosophy of Affections"], in: *Nauka o afektach w myśli muzycznej I połowy XVII wieku* [*The Doctrine of the Affections in Thought about Music in the 1st Half of the 17th Century*], Lublin 1998, pp. 19–54.

impact of the theory of the affections, grounded in the conviction that humans have a passionate nature, and that the emotions we experience can be codified – is especially clearly evident in eighteenth-century Italian opera.

The most important, or perhaps just one of the most popular theories of human emotions was the one put forward by Descartes in his treatise *Les Passions de l'âme* (Paris, 1649).²⁵⁹ He distinguished six “simple and basic passions” (*les six passions primitives*): wit or admiration (wonder in some modernised editions²⁶⁰), love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness (“l’admiration, l’amour, la haine, le désir, la joie et la tristesse”).²⁶¹ All the other emotions were, for him, combinations (derivatives) of simple passions, or “particular passions” (*les passions particulières*, Articles 149 ff.) Along with rhetoric, which was still the basis of education at that time (including music teaching and academic writings), Descartes’ treatise undoubtedly exerted an impact on the opera at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Roman artists were also influenced by Athanasius Kircher’s analyses of emotions in the context of music. In his *Musurgia Universalis* (Roma 1650) Kircher distinguished eight basic emotions which music can generate in humans: love, grief or pain, joy, exultancy, rage or indignation, compassion or tears, fear or distress, presumption or audacity, and admiration or astonishment.²⁶²

Among the Italian music-theoretical works on the affections and music’s impact on humans, there is none that would form a ready-made, unified and coherent system, of the kind that poets and composers could immediately apply. Especially painful is the lack of a contemporary classification of arias that could be said to have functioned in actual practice. When analysing the operas from that period, researchers usually refer to the later terminology found in John Brown’s

259 Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (London: A.C., 1650), https://net.cgu.edu/philosophy/descartes/Passions_Letters.html (28th June 2020). This website also contains the text of the original French edition. Another theory of the affections, equally interesting though slightly later and polemical towards Descartes, was proposed by Spinoza in his *Ethics* (1677).

260 <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1649part2.pdf> (28th June 2020).

261 Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, article 69.

262 Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis*, Book I, ch. III, 6, quoted in: P.H. Lang, “Musical Thought of the Baroque: The Doctrine of Temperaments and Affections,” in W. Hays (ed.), *Twentieth-Century Views of Music History* (New York: Scribner’s, 1972), p. 195.

publication of 1789.²⁶³ Chronologically speaking, of more relevance seem to be the works of Johann Mattheson, though we should remember that he represented a different cultural environment. In present-day research, the most detailed list of various types of Baroque arias composed in 1680–1720 has been proposed by Alberto Basso.²⁶⁴ They are: *di sortita*; *di bravura*; *di portamento*; *cantabile*; *di mezzo carattere*; *parlante*; *di sdegno* or *d'ira*, also known as *infuriata*, *di strepito*, *agitata*; *senza accompagnamento*; *di caccia*; *di guerra*; *del sonno*; *di tempesta*; *con catene* o *di prigione*; *di confronto*; *di sorbetto*, and *di baule*.²⁶⁵ Several of these types can be found in Scarlatti's operas; namely, arias *di sortita*, *di sdegno*, *cantabile*, *di confronto*, *di sonno*, and *con catene*.²⁶⁶ The arias *di sortita* (exit arias) were becoming more and more common in Domenico's output, which was related to

263 J. Brown, *Letters upon the Poetry and Music*... It is highly probable that his classification of arias was popularised in Europe, and especially in Great Britain, by Charles Burney, in the latter's publications on music history.

264 A. Basso, "L'Aria," [chapter] in: A. Basso, *Letà di Bach e di Haendel* (Torino: E.D.T., 1991), pp. 112–113; A. Basso, *Storia della musica dalle origini al XIX secolo. Dall'antichità al barocco*, Vol. 1 (Torino: UTET, 2006), pp. 397–398. In the latter publication, the author mentions two handbooks of singing popular in the eighteenth century: P.F. Tosi, *Opinioni de'cantori antichi e moderni, o sieno Osservazioni sopra il canto figurato* (Bologna: L. dalla Volpe, 1723), and G.B. Mancini, *Pensieri e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato* (Wien: Ghelen, 1774). It should be stressed, however, that in neither of these works do their authors apply the typology presented by Basso. Still, in my book I do refer to the classification proposed by this researcher because it is a handy analytic tool. The author combined various categories of arias in one list, and thus, next to *di sortita* (which points to the aria's placement in the given scene, not to any specific affection) and *senza accompagnato* (which describes the performing forces), we also find names of arias which describe the affection or the dramatic situation, such as *di sdegno*. Notably, none of the existing typologies accounts for the full wealth of various situations described by poets such as C.S. Capece.

265 Basso then adds other types to this list, such as *di gelosia*, *di commiato*, *di vendetta*, *di scongiuro*, *di seduzione*, *di morte*; cf. A. Basso, *Storia della musica*... , Vol. 1, p. 398. His first seven types are the same as Brown's, while the others result from Basso's own analyses or from compilations of elements from works by the theoreticians of that period and present-day researchers.

266 In the case of *Il Narciso*, analysing the affective aspect of the arias can be problematic, since new poetry was composed here to match existing music. For this reason, asking how the composer interpreted the individual words or the overall affection of the given number seems unjustified unless we find convincing evidence of Scarlatti's presence in London in 1719/20, which would suggest that he indeed took part in the adaptation of *Amor d'un'Ombra e Gelosia d'un'Aura* for the purposes of the *Il Narciso* production.

the structure of the reformed libretti, in which the poets strove to interrupt the narration (presented in the recitatives) as seldom as possible.

Arias *di sdegno* (*d'ira*) illustrating the protagonist's anger and indignation, are characteristically composed in the *allegro* or *presto* tempi, with distinct rhythms and large leaps in the melody. These include Elisa's *Su su mio core* (II,7) and Achille's *Atterrato* (II,5). Some of Elisa's arias combine anger with a thirst for revenge, as in *Io voglio vendicarmi* (III,4). Similar emotions can be found in Antiope's *Luccidero* (I,4).

Cantabile arias convey tender and gentle emotions in a highly expressive manner. Longing for the beloved person is the topic of Tolomeo's *Ditemi voi, dov' e* (II,11) and Seleuce's *Amor tu che lo sai* (I,4). Arias of this type can also reflect the desire for love and admiration (Araspe's *Vezzosi lumi*, I,5) as well as hope (Dorisbe's *Alma avvezza a pene, e affanni*, I,6).

Several numbers in Domenico Scarlatti's scores are arias *di confronto*, illustrative compositions in which the protagonist compares his or her feelings to natural phenomena, such as the stormy sea, the murmuring stream, the swoosh of wind, a gloomy forest, a pastoral garden, singing birds, etc. Examples of such arias are Alessandro's *Sempre qui chiara e tranquilla* (II,1), Seleuce's *Son qual cerva sitibonda* (II,11), and Antiope's *Quando in notte procellosa* (II,7). They frequently contain a moral, a commonly accepted truth, or a warning, as in Dorisbe's *La Tortorella* (I,7) and Araspe's *Destrier, che spinto al corso* (II,4). The plot of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* also includes the scene of a dream, complete with an aria *del sonno*: Tolomeo's *Torna sol per un'momento* (I,11), in which he recalls the image of his beloved wife. In this aria the suggestive repetitive semiquaver orchestral motif in the first violins seems to reflect the protagonist's hope for the dream to come, and for his wife's shadow to return.

At the end of Act II Tolomeo, put in chains (*scena con catene*), sings the final duet with his wife, *Empia man* (II,13). In Act III, already in prison (*scena di prigione*), he drinks the poison while singing his aria *Stille amare* (III,9). This extremely dramatic and tense scene is musically set in *adagio* tempo, the time of 4/4, the key of F minor, and without a harpsichord (*senza cembalo*). The aria opens with a motto which emphasises the protagonist's conscious decision to drink the poison. Most notable in this aria is the abundant use of chromaticisms. The equal quavers in all the orchestral parts may symbolise the drops that fall on Tolomeo's lips.

Young Scarlatti also sometimes juxtaposed different affections in one aria. Emotional contrast was conveyed by means of differentiated tempi, dynamics, and orchestration. Such numbers include Tolomeo's *Tiranni miei pensieri* (I,9), Seleuce's *Stelle vi credo, o, no* (III,8), Elisa's *Voglio amore, o pur vendetta* (III,2), Achille's *Sapro ben il petto opporre* (I,7), and Antiope's *Crudi affanni* (II,1). Both *Ifigenie* likewise comprise arias based on contrasted affections, expressed through variation of tempi, change of key and orchestral setting, or with accompaniment in which some sections lack the *basso continuo*.

An interesting example of focusing on detail is Seleuce's aria *Stelle vi credo, o, no* (III,8). Scarlatti's skilful setting can best be appreciated if we look at the text: "Stelle vi credo, o, no, / Placide vi mostrate / Ma, che non m'inganniate / Ancor pavento. / Godere ancor non so, / E avvezzo nel dolor / Non puo disfarsi il cor / Del suo tormento." The entry of the vocal part is preceded by a bipartite *ritornello*, whose first, four-measure-long section is an *adagio* for solo oboe and *b.c.*, while the second, consisting of five bars, is scored for the first and second violins playing in unison, mostly likely still with oboe and *b.c.* The first line of the aria is sung *allegro*, only with harpsichord accompaniment (*cembalo solo*). The second line is illustrated musically by a return to tempo *adagio*, and the solo oboe again comes to the fore. Lines 3 and 4 restore tempo *allegro*, the violins and the full set of *basso continuo* instruments, but when the words "ancor pavento" are repeated, the orchestra falls silent, and we only hear the solo oboe. The violins return in the central *ritornello*, while on the words "Stelle vi credo, o, no..." and so on till the end of the second line, the tempo changes to *adagio*. Here the *basso continuo* only comprises a solo harpsichord, while an oboe joins in between the first and second lines. A fast tempo, the violins, and *tutti* in the *b.c.* part accompanies the words "Ma, che non m'inganniate / Ancor pavento." In section B, three lines are performed *allegro*. In the fourth, where the textual meanings are illustrated again by a solo oboe, Scarlatti returns to *adagio*. Such detailed and varied text settings are characteristic of this composer's style (cf. music example 6).

Adagio

Oboè

Selence

B.c.

Allegro

Adagio

Oboè solo

Stel - le vi cre - do ò nò pla - ci - de vi mos tra - te vi - mo - stra - te ma

Allegro

che non m'in - gan - nia - te m'in - gan - nia - te an cor pa - ven - to an cor an cor pa - ven - to

Tutti

Adagio

Cembalo solo

Stel - le vi cre - do o mo pla - ci - de - vi nos -

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is divided into five systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked 'Adagio' and features Oboè, Selence, and B.c. parts. The second system (measures 5-8) is marked 'Allegro' and features Oboè and B.c. parts. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked 'Adagio' and features Oboè solo and B.c. parts with lyrics. The fourth system (measures 13-16) is marked 'Allegro' and features Oboè and B.c. parts with lyrics. The fifth system (measures 17-20) is marked 'Adagio' and features Cembalo solo and B.c. parts with lyrics. Fingerings and articulations are indicated throughout the score.

Music example 6.

21

tra - te vi nos - tra - te pla

25

ci - de ma - che - non m'in - gan - nia - te m'in - gan - nia - te an - cor pa - ven - an

Oboè solo

29

cor an cor an cor pa - ven - to

33

go de - re an cor non sò an - cor

37

e, a vvez - zo - nel do - lor non - può dis - far - si il cor del suo del

Oboè solo

Music example 6: Continued

41

f

suo tor-men - to an cor non sò go - de - re non non sò non

* 6 7 7

45

sò non sò e avez - zo nel do - lor non può dis - for - si il cor del

49

Adagio

suo tor-men - to del suo tor-men - to

6

53

Allegro

tr *tr* *tr* *tr*

6 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 4 3

57

7 7

Cembalo solo

Music example 6: Continued

Alessandro's aria *Pur sento (oh Dio) che l'alma* (II,9) stands out for its pompous and movingly dramatic style. Composed in the key of A minor, *adagio* tempo and with *staccato* articulation, this aria opens with an orchestral *ritornello*, and the singer is only accompanied by *basso continuo*. The text is set in the form of brief motifs interrupted by long rests. The broken phrases reinforce the meaning of the words in which the protagonist realises how ruthless his beloved really is. This realisation brings him suffering, which is underlined by the harmonic alterations and dissonances. The deliberate breaks and suspended phrases illustrate Alessandro's reflections on human nature, and they are another characteristic element of Domenico Scarlatti's style (cf. music example 7). *Un guardo amoroso* (II,6), where Ulisse feigns affection for Tetide, features a device not found from other arias. As the singer presents the opening words, the strings hold the note f^1 for several measures. The same note appears in the *b.c.* part as the singer performs a coloratura on the word *incatenar* ("to put in fetters or chains") (cf. music example 8). This undoubtedly creates the musical effect of surprise.

Adagio, e staccato

Aria

B.c.

Pur

sta de

Aria

sen - to oh Dio che l'Al - ma in cal - ma

B.c.

4 7 6 5 7 7 6 4

8

an - cor non sta oh Dio oh Dio pur sen - to che l'Al - ma

4 3 7 4 7 7

15

in cal - ma an - cor non sta in cal - ma non

7 7 4 3 7 6 6 4 3

28

li - sa il bel - sem - bian - te vor reb - be tutt' - A-man - te se-gui - re mà

6 5 6 6 2 4 6

35

ma poi fug - gi - re la sua cru - del - tà se - gui - re vor-reb - be mà

34 6 4 3 6 36 36

42

ma poi fug - gi - re la sua cru - del - tà la sua cru - del - tà

46 6 6 4 3 6 6 3 3

Music example 7.

Allegro

Vnio

Aria

B.c.

8

Un guar-do a-mo ro - so un lab-ro vez-zo so ni pò in ca - te - nar

16

in - ca - te - nar un

24

la - bro vez - zo - so un guar - do a - mo - ro - so più in-ca-te nar

32

mi può in ca - te nar in ca - te - nar

Music example 8.

In many arias the affection is hard to define precisely, and it can only be classified as either sad or joyful. Of the latter there are relatively few in Capece's libretto, since the dominant emotion of Arcadian shepherds presented in pastoral setting is traditionally that of the anguish of love. In some cases, however, even such a simple binary classification proves impossible, and the affection seems neutral.

Ensemble Scenes

Operas by Domenico Scarlatti end with a final chorus of reconciled protagonists. Apart from such a finale, they also feature duets and trios. In *Tolomeo et Alessandro* we find three duets (Araspe and Alessandro's *Verdi piagge Selve amene*, I,8; Seleuce and Dorisbe's *Ma quando mai* dovranno, II,5; Seleuce and Tolomeo's *Empia man* (II, 13). In *Tetide in Sciro* ensemble scenes include two trios sung by Tetide, Deidemia and Achille: *Vorebbe dal tuo cor* (I,3) and *Amando, e tacendo* (I,12), as well as a duet of Tetide and Achille, *Lasciami piangere* (II,12), which ends Act II. The second of the trios, performed *andante* in the key of G major and the time of 12/8, is scored for extended instrumental forces, with violins (in unison), oboe, transverse flute, *viola*, and harpsichord. Interestingly, the instruments are attributed to individual protagonists, and so the trio starts, as in *Vorebbe dal tuo cor*, with Tetide singing to the accompaniment of an oboe and a harpsichord, followed by Achille with transverse flute and harpsichord. Deidamia, joining the trio as the last one, is accompanied by the violins in unison, *viola*, and harpsichord. The singers first present their text separately, and then enter into a dialogue, each singing along with the instruments assigned to him or her, so that this trio can be classified as an aria *a tre* (cf. music example 9).

A man - do e.ta-cen - do si giun - ge.à go-der
 Pe - nan - do.e sof-fren - do chi può mai Ta-cer?
 Se
 par - li se Ta - ci mal - let - ti mi pia - ce da mè non com-pren - do che pos - si vo-ler

Aria
 B.c.

6 6 2 6 2 6 2 6

5
 2 7 6 2 7 2

Music example 9.

In the score of *Il Narciso* we find three duets and one trio, but Walsh's publication indicates that there were as many as five ensemble scenes in the London production, including one more duet. Domenico's ensemble numbers do not significantly diverge from the duets and trios written by his contemporaries. The individual parts have limited autonomy. Solo writing dominates, and the singers perform in succession, only joining forces in the cadences and the coloraturas, which they perform in parallel thirds. Such ensemble scenes are arias *a due* or *a tre* rather than actual fully-fledged duets and trios. The interplay of voices only consists in a dialogue of short motifs and joint singing in the cadences with reduced orchestral accompaniment. These qualities are typical of operatic writing from that period.²⁶⁷

The Recitatives

Most of them are *recitativi secchi*, and they are not very long. Though their purpose is to report action, in many cases the protagonists express in them their feelings, of which Tolomeo is a perfect example. *Recitativo accompagnato* only appears in *Tolomeo et Alessandro* twice, in the last act, before Tolomeo drinks the poison (III,9), and directly before the infusion begins to work and he falls asleep. In the first of these two recitatives, Tolomeo says goodbye to his beloved wife, hoping to meet her soul in the afterlife; in the second, he is aware of the imminence of death. In *Tetide in Sciro* we only have one section which could be interpreted as a *recitativo accompagnato*, which the composer (or the copyist) designated as *Adagio per l'azione* (sung by Antiope, III,9). The first five measures could be classified as an aria with *b.c.*, but this fragment is too brief for an aria proper. The bars that follow are already a typical accompanied recitative. Scarlatti likely envisaged this section as an aria interrupted by a recitative, which explains the label *d'azione*, but the style is more that of an arioso. *Narciso* features two *recitativi accompagnati*, both sung by Eco. The first of these, in Act II, comes when she tries to drown herself. The second, in Act III, follows another unsuccessful suicide attempt. In these recitatives, the singers are usually accompanied by the whole ensemble, which provides a background for their statements in the form of separate, whole-note chords.

267 Cf. e.g. Handel's *Rodrigo* (1707) and *Agrippina* (1709, Caldara's *L'Anagilda* (1711), and Sarro's *Il Vespasiano* (1707).

Domenico Scarlatti's operas, written in the so-called transition period in the history of the Italian *dramma per musica*, exemplify the transformation from the eminently Baroque Venetian opera of the late seventeenth-century to Neapolitan works of the 1720s and 1730s, representative of the *stile galante*. The changes involved: the abandonment of comic elements; the reduction of the number of (brief) arias from more than sixty (usually stanzaic, and frequently interrupted by a recitative) to approximately thirty; placing the aria stably at the end of the scene; enriched instrumentation; replacing the accompaniment of *basso continuo* alone with one of the whole ensemble; more frequent use of the (still rare) *accompagnati*; the introduction of the tripartite Italian overtures (fast-slow-fast movement), scored for a full orchestra of strings and winds (oboes, trumpets, horns, sometimes also flutes); such overtures replaced the various instrumental forms used in the opening sections of earlier operas. Comic elements having been eliminated from the plots of *drammi per musica*, they were relegated to independent intermezzi, thus inaugurating a new, separate genre: the *opera buffa*.

Galant-style operas are thus characterised by: a regular alternation of recitatives and arias; a preference for exit arias and arias *da capo*, whose number was limited to about thirty, but their dimensions increased. The regular, periodic, but highly ornamented melody became the key element of the music, and the homophonic accompaniment of the orchestra, with simplified harmony, was subordinated to the melody. Individual instruments, such as the oboe, violin, cello, and flute, could now play *concertante* solo parts. Accompanied recitatives became frequent.

Most of these changes took place in 1680–1720.²⁶⁸ The so-called Italian overture appeared for the first time in Alessandro Scarlatti's *La caduta de' decemviri* (1697) and later became the preferred form among the majority of composers, though Handel remained faithful to the French model of the overture. Also Bononcini's introduction to *Astarto* diverges from Scarlatti's scheme. The sequence of tempi is the precise reverse of the Italian overture; Bononcini incorporates elements of the French style (punctuated rhythms, use of the *tirata*, a moderate tempo in the first section).²⁶⁹ Caldara likewise slightly modified Scarlatti's model in *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno*, where the third section of the overture is in *andante* tempo.

268 See list of musical sources.

269 This could have been the influence of the Viennese style, since Bononcini resided for 15 years in Vienna, composing operas for the imperial court.

The accompanying ensemble was usually a four-part string orchestra, though five-part orchestral scores were still sometimes composed, for example, in Venice. One example of the latter kind is Alessandro Scarlatti's *Mitridate Eupatore*. An oboe was frequently added to the four-part ensemble (consisting of the first and second violins, *viol(e)*, and *b.c.*) The first composer to introduce an oboe in an Italian opera was Pollarolo in *Onorio in Roma* (Venice 1692). Oboes were usually either *concertante* instruments or they doubled the first violins. The figured bass was variously executed by the cello, double bass (*violone*), or lute.²⁷⁰ Bononcini, Handel, and, to a smaller extent, also both Scarlatti and Porpora, more and more frequently liberated the cello part from its *b.c.* functions, composing arias with an *obbligato* cello. Corelli's achievements in the new genre of the *concerto grosso* were particularly eagerly exploited in Rome, where selected instruments, such as the violin and oboe, were entrusted with the *concertino* part (both Scarlatti and Handel). It should be noted, however, that elements of the *concerto grosso* form had already earlier been applied in Pollarolo's *Onorio in Roma*.²⁷¹ Besides, the ensemble was divided into *solo* or *solì* and *tutti*, also in the *b.c.* section. Notably, the *concerto grosso* and *concertante* technique were rarely applied in Naples (Sari's *Vespasiano*, Porpora's *Agrippina*), though Alessandro Scarlatti was active in that city for many years. Combining human voices with *concertante* instruments contributed to a considerable reduction in the number of arias accompanied by the *basso continuo* alone. In all the listed operas except A. Scarlatti's early *Gli equivoci nel sembiante*, the majority of arias have an orchestral accompaniment, though it does not need to be continuous.

Most arias follow the *da capo* form. The first entry of the voice is usually preceded by an instrumental *ritornello*, but most composers still write arias with an initial motto. Despite the strong tendency to place arias at the end of scenes, mid-scene arias can still be found (D. Scarlatti). The number of arias in operas undergoes a significant reduction in that period, from nearly eighty (in A. Sartorio, G. Legrenzi) to forty–sixty. Bononcini's *Astarto* stands out in that it only features thirty-three arias in fifty-five scenes. A similar number of arias can be found in D. Scarlatti's *Il Narciso*, but here the reduced number of arias results from adjusting Capecè's libretto to the Londoners' tastes. In the works I analyse here, points of special dramatic tension are signalled by *recitativi accompagnati*,

270 As in the operas by both Scarlatti and Porpora.

271 O. Termini, "Stylistic and Formal Changes in the Arias of Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (ca. 1653–1723)," *Current Musicology* 1978, No. 25, p. 119.

whose number differs from one work to another. The greatest preference for such recitatives is shown in the works of Alessandro Scarlatti.

Also the choice of fast or slow tempi depends on personal tastes. In the surviving Act I of Caldara's *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno*, not a single aria has a slow tempo. The choice of key seems similarly individual. In many works, the number of arias in major and minor keys is more or less equal.

In terms of harmony, the Baroque-type fast chord successions with a harmonically active bass are characteristic of operas by A. Scarlatti, while in the stage works of the younger generation, harmonic rhythm slows down, though it is not yet as simplified as in later compositions. As concerns the key, in the arias and ensemble scenes of *Tolomeo et Alessandro* Domenico Scarlatti equally frequently applies minor and major keys. They are usually simple keys with very rarely more than one or two key signatures. One exception is Tolomeo's (failed) death scene. His aria *Stille amare* (III,9), which accompanies the drinking of the poison, is in F minor. Both *Tetide in Sciro* and the later *Il Narciso* are dominated by arias in major keys, whose number grows with every act, which, however, could hardly be explained in terms of dramatic action. Of the minor-key arias, the most moving and harmonically intriguing seems to be Tetide's *Voi Numi severi* (III,6), opening with a B-flat minor chord; meanwhile, the main key is that of F minor. As the aria progresses, it modulates to rare keys, including E-flat minor. Overall, however, it would be hard to point to this composer's preference for any particular keys, or their strict association with any definite type of dramatic situations.

In some of D. Scarlatti's arias the bass accompaniment falls silent in long passages – an element not observed in the operas composed by his father. Malcolm Boyd believes that this is a trace of the Venetian tradition in Domenico's music.²⁷² Indeed, first settings of this type can be found in Pollarolo's *Onorio in Roma* (the aria *Usignoli che cantate*),²⁷³ where this solution was specially marked in the score as *aria con violini soli senz'altro accompagnamento*.²⁷⁴ In Scarlatti's scores we do not find such verbal indications, nor are they used by Caldara, though among the Roman composers of that period the latter most frequently wrote arias without *b.c.* (as in *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno*).

272 M. Boyd, "Domenico Scarlatti," [entry] in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 22, eds S. Sadie, J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 2001), p. 404.

273 O. Termini, *Stylistic and Formal Changes...*, p. 118.

274 O. Termini, *Stylistic and Formal Changes...*, p. 118.

The question of individual taste is also how the different composers set the text in their operas. Some like to repeat individual words, others – entire lines. Some intersperse the vocal line with instrumental *ritornelli* of varying length. Especially in Caldara we find long initial *ritornelli* and instrumental passages inserted in between the successive lines of his arias. This was arguably one of the ways of solving the problem of how the progressively longer arias were to set a text that was frequently limited to just four lines. It was only in the next generation of composers that coloraturas gained importance as a way of demonstrating the singer's skills, amazing the audience, and, indirectly, also of making the arias longer. In the period covered by this publication, however, the main purpose of coloraturas was to underline the meanings and expressive qualities of key words in the text. This having been said, the vocal parts in Bononcini's *Astarto* do not lack in virtuosic elements; his long and complicated ornaments mark the important words. Elaborate and, most of all, technically difficult coloraturas can also be found in Sarro's *Arsace*, where they are likewise an element of musical rhetoric.

Analyses of individual operas can only indicate which keys, tempi, etc., were preferred by the composer in any given work. Still, the number of preserved complete scores is too small to make generalisations possible. The task seems the easiest in the case of A. Scarlatti, for whose output we have the largest amount of comparative material, but his works are not the subject of this book. In the context of the available scores we can say that Domenico Scarlatti's known works follow the dominant trends and fashions. He opens his operas with Italian overtures; scores them for a string orchestra (first and second violins, *viole* referred to in the scores as *viola/violette*) and *b.c.* (lute, harpsichord, cello, or violone). He introduces wind instruments (oboes, transverse flutes or recorders – *flauti*) only in a few arias. Wind instruments are used for colouristic and rhetorical purposes, and they perform brief solo passages. Domenico applies the *concertante* technique also in the string instrument parts, most typically the first violin(s), but in the cello(s) as well. In the aria *Voglio amore, o pur vendetta* from *Tolomeo et Alessandro* we hear a solo lute.

D. Scarlatti's arias are usually in *da capo* form. In the vast majority of them, the singer is accompanied by an orchestra, but his arias with *b.c.* alone also sound impressive and carry a strong dramatic load. Scarlatti approaches the texts of the libretti he was commissioned to set with great diligence, meticulously translating the poetic meanings into the language of his music, and frequently using very subtle means which may escape the audience's attention in modern performance, such as frequent switches in the *b.c.* section from the cello to violone and back. He renders his characters' slightest changes of mood and details of their thoughts by using contrasted tempi, orchestrations, and modes, even in

brief sections. It is probably this quality of his operatic settings that makes him stand out the most from among other composers of his time. On the other hand, such subtle settings mean that his arias represent a chamber-music, cantata-like, rather than operatic style. The composer could afford such an approach, writing as he was for a small domestic theatre and a select audience.

In his arias, he willingly applied dance rhythms, especially those of the *siciliana*, popularised by his father. Domenico's scores also include arias labelled as *alla francese*, which might be interpreted as a homage to Marie Casimire, who was French by birth.

Domenico Scarlatti's operatic style represents the borderline between two epochs: the late Baroque and the nascent *stile galante*. His rooting in the late Baroque tradition is evident in the polyphonically-conceived counterpoint, fast harmonic changes, the large number of solo sections in minor keys, meticulous rhetorical setting of the text, virtuosity subordinated to the representation of affections, chamber-music-like orchestral accompaniment, and the use of the *concerto grosso* technique. On the other hand, a number of qualities in his music, such as the slower harmonic rhythm in some arias, tuneful and simple melodies, lively tempi, and giving up the *basso continuo* in some fragments – already foreshadow the galant style. Steeped in the style of his father, of whom he was a continuator, Domenico nevertheless applies elements that belong to the future: dance rhythms, slower harmonic rhythm, and arias without the *b.c.* accompaniment.

The great acclaim received by the operas staged in Marie Casimire's palace proves that the musicians she employed were capable of meeting the audience's expectations. As concerns their falling into oblivion in later times, Charles Burney's opinion concerning *Il Narciso* seems crucial in this process. Burney, an English historian of music, wrote: "Though there were many new pleasing passages and effects, those acquainted with the original and happy freaks of this composer in his harpsichord music, would be surprised at the sobriety and almost dullness of the songs."²⁷⁵ Burney further added that the composer's talent had not yet developed in full, and that in comparison with his father, Domenico did not have much experience in writing for voices. From the perspective of more than fifty years, Burney viewed Scarlatti Jr as a harpsichord genius but not as a brilliant opera composer. He based his opinion on the conviction that one and the same person cannot achieve equal mastery in both instrumental and vocal music. Burney's assessment became for a very long time the authoritative

275 Ch. Burney, *A General History of Music...*, p. 706.

view with regard to Domenico Scarlatti's stage music; so authoritative in fact that it was repeated nearly two centuries later (1953) by Ralph Kirkpatrick, who is otherwise remembered as an unquestioned pioneer of and authority on Domenico's output and style. Today, works by other authors, such as Malcolm Boyd, Francesco Degrada, and others, slowly but systematically undermine Burney's judgment, while the composer's vocal-instrumental works, restored to concert repertoires in our times, attract great interest from both researchers and audiences.

The Serenate²⁷⁶

Meaning of the Term and History of the Genre

A serenata (It. plural *serenate*, in English sometimes also 'serenatas') is a vocal-instrumental piece written for a specific occasion and forming a part of a larger-scale *fiesta*. Serenate could be performed at such events as royal or aristocratic weddings, the ruler's or his wife's birthdays, the birth of a royal child, end of a war, signing a peace treaty, praise of a victorious military commander, anniversaries of coronations, and similar.²⁷⁷ Each major event provided a suitable

276 The material presented in this subchapter is a revised and supplemented version of papers previously published in English as: A. Markuszewska, "L'Amicizia d'Hercole e Theseo (1707) – a Serenata from the Roman Court of Queen Maria Casimira Sobieska," in: *Polish Baroque, European Contexts. Proceedings of International Seminar University of Warsaw Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies "Artes Liberales" Warsaw, June 27–28, 2011*, ed. Piotr Salwa (Warszawa: Artes Liberales. Instytut Badań Interdyscyplinarnych. Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2012), pp. 127–138, and: A. Markuszewska, "Serenatas and Politics of Remembrance: Music at the Court of Marie Casimire Sobieska in Rome (1699–1714)," in: *La Fortuna di Roma. Italienische Kantaten und Römische Aristokratie um 1700*, ed. B. Over (Kassel: Mersenerburger, 2016), pp. 269–294.

277 Cf. A. Żórawska-Witkowska, "Giovanni Alberto Ristori i jego serenaty dla polskiego dworu Augusta III" ["Giovanni Alberto Ristori and his Serenatas for the Polish Court of Augustus III"], in: *Włosi i italianizm w Europie środkowej i wschodniej XV–XVIII w. [Italians and Italianism in Central and Eastern Europe, the 15th–18th cs]*, eds B. Rojek, S. Redaelli (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2008), pp. 60–74; A. Żórawska-Witkowska, "Serenata na otarcie łez królewskich. 'Il sogno di Scipione' (Warszawa 7 X 1758)" ["Serenata to Console the King. 'Il sogno di Scipione' (Warsaw 7th Oct. 1758)"] in: *Literatura, historia, dziedzictwo. Prace ofiarowane profesor Teresie Kostkiewiczowej [Literature, History, Heritage. Papers Dedicated to Professor Teresa Kostkiewicz]*, eds T. Chachulski, A. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2006), pp. 165–172.

opportunity to emphasise the personal prestige of a patron, his or her faction, or the country that he or she represented. Serenate featured mythological and allegorical figures and had no action proper, which made them an ideal context for the presentation (in the text) of political allusions, moral views, and social laws, as well as opinions concerning some selected, well-known personages, including glorification of the dedicatees. Most of all, however, as Stefanie Tcharos rightly observes in her paper dedicated to this genre, serenate were public acts aiming to strengthen political alliances.²⁷⁸

The word is usually derived from *serus* (“late”) or *serenum* (“serene climate, calm weather”),²⁷⁹ which is supposed to indicate that serenate were meant for performance in the late evening and in favourable weather. Michael Talbot presents a different interpretation of the genre’s name, suggesting that it refers to the Italian custom of serenate being performed outdoors but in artificial light.²⁸⁰ In countries which do not boast such a mild climate, these compositions were performed indoors, in the early evening.²⁸¹ Be it as it may, the performance of serenate on calm and beautiful evenings and nights was associated with the use of hundreds of lamps and candles, which enhanced the visual impact of the event, and, most significantly, advertised the material status of the person who staged the given serenata. When the weather was bad, the performance was moved to beautifully decorated theatrical interiors or to palace salons; theatrical machinery and costumes were then in use. Such an indoor event had a smaller audience and the character of a semi-private celebration; it resembled a concert for selected guests rather than a mass *fiesta*. Marie Casimire liked to stage serenate on the bridge which linked her two residences, or in the *tempietto* specially constructed for her by Juvarra, which was a kind of glazed loggia opening directly onto the square of Trinità de’Monti. Other aristocrats built special theatrical stages for such occasions and decorated the surrounding walls with tapestries or other expensive fabrics. The cost of preparing and staging a serenata, as well as printing a libretto or report in order to ensure that it would be remembered, was frequently exorbitant.

278 S. Tcharos, “The Serenata in Early 18th-Century Rome: Sight, Sound, Ritual, and the Signification of Meaning,” *Journal of Musicology* 2006 No. 4, p. 528.

279 R. Pagano, “La serenata nei secoli,” in: *La serenata tra seicento e settecento: musica, poesia, scenotecnica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Reggio Calabria, 16–17 maggio 2003)*, ed. N. Maccavino, Vol. I (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa Editore, 2007), p. 1.

280 M. Talbot, “Serenata” [entry], in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 23, eds S. Sadie, J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001), p. 113.

281 A. Żórawska-Witkowska, “Serenata na otarcie łez królewskich...”

Early in the eighteenth century, works belonging to the serenata genre were called by many different names. In Rome they were known, among others, as *componimento per musica*, *cantata*, *applauso musicale*, and *componimento drammatico*. Most interesting, but also most problematic were the cases when serenata were referred to as cantatas, which sometimes happened in the circles of Cardinal Ottoboni and his patronage. Serenata differed from cantatas, if at all, by the use of theatrical machinery and elements of stage design, which is confirmed by documents in the case of the former.²⁸² In Marie Casimire's circles these two terms were also sometimes applied interchangeably, even for the same composition. One excellent example is the *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima* (1712), called a three-part cantata on the title page of its libretto, but a three-part serenata on the following card. What decides about a given piece – including those which are referred to as cantatas in C.S. Capecce's libretti – coming closer to the serenata are, first and foremost, its dimensions and the ideological message of its text. Cantatas performed in private settings for small audiences – the so-called *cantate da camera* – are usually brief forms consisting of two arias preceded by recitatives, scored for one or two voices with *basso continuo*.²⁸³ The dominant theme was love, and the characters were shepherds lamenting their unreciprocated passions, mythological, or sometimes historical figures. Their pastoral character invariably allowed librettists to encode an additional message in the cantata texts.²⁸⁴ As we can see, the genres of that time were notoriously difficult to define.²⁸⁵ We do not know any examples of *cantate da camera* for one singer performed at the Queen's palace. Most likely they belonged to her private sphere. We have about fifty such works by Domenico Scarlatti from his Roman period,²⁸⁶ but for lack of dedications and dates we cannot state with any certainty whether some of them were written for Marie Casimire or not. The same is the case with cantatas by Handel. It seems unlikely that this author of the oratorio

282 T. Chirico, "L'inedita serenata alla regina Maria Casimiera di Polonia: Pietro Ottoboni committente di cantate e serenate (1689–1707)," in: *La Serenata tra seicento...*, p. 400.

283 Longer cantatas with orchestral accompaniment were composed for his Roman patrons by G.F. Handel.

284 Cf. E.T. Harris, *Handel as Orpheus. Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2001).

285 What is more, while many cantatas by A. Scarlatti from this period have the kind of compact structure described above, a significant number of Handel's works from his Italian period (1706–1710) are extensive compositions featuring at least two singers.

286 M. Boyd, "Chamber Cantatas" [chapter], in: M. Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti, Master of Music* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 91.

La Resurrezione (1708), composed to Capece's text, did not write any cantatas for Marie Casimire. Nevertheless, there is no information on this subject in the available sources.

Roman serenate of the early eighteenth century usually feature two or three *personae*, who address the audience directly – without the agency of a narrator – in alternating recitatives and arias. Sometimes such works also include ensemble scenes (duets and trios) and a chorus of soloists. Musically speaking, the serenate did not differ significantly from the operatic style of those times, though the singers performed their parts not from memory, but from notated parts, which allowed the composers to apply more complex technical elements.²⁸⁷ Unlike in *drammi per musica*, all the characters appearing in serenate were usually entrusted with the same number of arias. In order to guarantee a festive and solemn character of the music, varied instrumentation was used, and composers would often introduce the shrill sound of the winds. The singers were frequently accompanied by as many as several dozen instrumentalists (fifty on average, but in some cases the orchestra could be more than a hundred strong).²⁸⁸

Composers of serenate written in Rome during Marie Casimire's stay in that city included: Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, Giovanni Bononcini, George Frideric Handel, Francesco Gasparini, Antonio Caldara, Pietro Paolo Bencini, Flavio Lanciani, Giovanni Lulier, and Filippo Amadei. As we can see, some of them were widely recognised, while others were local artists.²⁸⁹ Unfortunately the music of the serenate sponsored by Marie Casimire, similarly as that of other occasional pieces, has not survived to our times. One exception is the fragmentarily preserved two-part serenata *Clori, e Fileno* of 1712. On the title page of a manuscript copy from the period we find a note which attributes this work to Domenico Scarlatti.²⁹⁰ We may therefore assume that *Clori, e Fileno* was written

287 M. Talbot, "Serenata," p. 113.

288 M. Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti...*, p. 104; J. Spitzer, N. Zaslav, "Corelli's Orchestra," in: *The Birth of the Orchestra. History of an Institution, 1650–1815* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 118–123.

289 More names can be found in: M. Talbot, "‘Loving without Falling in Love’: Pietro Paolo Bencini's Serenata ‘Li Due Volubili,’” in: *La serenata tra seicento...*, p. 374.

290 Serenata à 2 / Canto, ed Alto, con VV / Clori, e Fileno / Del Sigr: Domenico Scarlatti / Mro di Cappella di S. M. La Regina di Polonia / 1712. This unfortunately incomplete copy was found in the Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor by Francesco Degrada; cf. F. Degrada, "Tre ‘lettere amorose’ di Domenico Scarlatti," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 1997, No. 2, p. 276. I am very grateful to the staff of that Library for promptly sending me a free (!) copy of the preserved fragment.

and staged on the initiative of the Polish Queen and at her court. The fact that other scores are missing comes as no surprise in the case of this kind of music, written for specific occasions, rarely performed more than once, ephemeral, and whose scores were never printed. Manuscripts are typically unavailable. Of the unspecified number of serenades staged at Marie Casimire's court, the libretti of four works have been preserved: *Il Tebro fatidico* (1704), *L'Amicizia d'Hercole, e Theseo* (1707), *La vittoria della Fede* (1708), and *La gloria innamorata* (1709); all of them are described as *componimento per musica*. We also have two libretti of compositions labelled as cantatas: *Applausi del Sole e della Senna* (1704) and *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima* (1712). Their very titles, which begin with the word *applausi/applauso*, suggest that they, too, belong to the genre of the serenata. They were meant for public performance during two *feste*, the first of which marked the birth of a child in the Bourbon dynasty, while the second commemorated the Battle of Vienna and Marie Casimire's victorious husband John III Sobieski. Considering their purpose and the performing forces involved (two or three singers), these two can also undoubtedly be classified as serenades.

Il Tebro fatidico and *Introduzzione al ballo dell'Aurora* (1704)²⁹¹

Il Tebro fatidico (*The Prophetic Tiber*), the first known libretto written by Carlo Sigismondo Capece for the Polish Queen Dowager, was dedicated to Marie Casimire's nine-year-old granddaughter and namesake. Disappointingly, the identity of the composer and the date of the first performance are unknown. Judging by the fact of the serenata being followed by an enclosed *ballo* (*Ballo dell'Aurora*), the piece must have been composed for carnival celebrations,²⁹² which, however, were officially prohibited in that year by an edict of 12th January issued by the governor of the city, Monsignor Pallavicini.²⁹³ Another argument in favour of this conjecture is the fact that Marie Casimire's sons, Jakub and Konstanty, were arrested on 1st March by a military unit loyal to King August II.²⁹⁴ After this event, Marie Casimire cut down on the number of secular music

291 *Il Tebro fatidico Componimento per Musica & Introduzzione al Ballo dell'Aurora dedicato All'Altezza Sereniss. della Principessa Maria Casimira di Polonia*, Rome 1704, I-Rn, Misc. 34.3.I.5.24.

292 S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana II (1701–1750)* (*Sussidi eruditi* 45) (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 1997), pp. 19–20.

293 S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana II...*, p. 19.

294 M. Komarzyński, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski 1641–1716* [*Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, Queen of Poland*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), p. 236.

entertainments or *feste* organized in her household, and became involved in church celebrations instead, particularly after the summer of 1704, when she received news that her daughter, Teresa Kunegunda, Electress of Bavaria, had been forced to flee Munich because of the War of the Spanish Succession.²⁹⁵ In that year, the only exceptions to that sober rule included the piece under discussion here: the occasional composition *Applausi del Sole e della Senna*, written to celebrate the birthday of a great-grandson of Louis XIV (libr. C.S. Capece, mus. unknown; 1704); and the pieces prepared in September to commemorate the Relief of Vienna (1683) and its hero, John III. The target audience for this music were the foreign ambassadors in Rome, as the Queen sought to publicise the plight of the young scions of the Sobieski family, who were descendants of the heroic defender of Christendom.

Il Tebro fatidico is filled with a strong belief, soon to be shattered, in the incumbent pope's power and influence. Its contents suggest that the piece was intended for performance in January or February 1704, despite the current ban on public carnival celebrations.²⁹⁶ "Havendo questa regina di Polonia replicate le sue istanze al Papa per la concessione di poter far recitare nel suo palazzo l'avvisata comedia, ne ha finalmente ottenuta la gratia, et acciochè riesca di maggiore vaghezza, e sodisfazione degli astanti fa adesso apparecchiare de bellissimi habiti all'heroica colli quali si recitarà solo 3 o 4 volte in questo carnevale."²⁹⁷ *Il Tebro fatidico* consists of one duet and seven arias separated by recitatives, and it has a cast of three characters: Dori – the nymph of the river Po, Nise – the nymph

295 Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, openly opposed Emperor Leopold I's move to raise Hanover to the rank of a ninth electorate (1692), especially since the other electors had not been consulted. Besides, the Elector, who had a claim on the Spanish succession through his son Joseph Ferdinand, also hoped for Bavaria and the Wittelsbach family to gain an upper hand over the ruling Hapsburgs as a result of the war. Encouraged by offers made by Louis XIV, he sided with the king of France against the Emperor in the War of the Spanish Succession.

296 "Approssimandosi il carnevale, ma senza segno alcuno d'allegria, questa regina di Polonia fa per suo divertimento recitare la sera comedie all'improvviso, ma in terra e non sul teatro, non essendovi altre scene che semplici paraventi di camera," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma (I cento libri 48)*, ed. G. Scano, G. Graglia, Vol. 3: 1704–1707 (Milan: Longanesi, 1978), p. 19; "La regina di Polonia continua per suo divertimento a far recitare comedie all'improvviso con intermezzi in musica," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, p. 23; "Continua questa regina di Polonia a fare comedie all'improvviso per suo divertimento con intermezzi in musica," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, p. 24.

297 G. Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmenta. La vita musicale romana negli 'Avvisi Marescotti' (1683–1707)* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 1990), p. 155.

of the Apennines, and the river Tiber, symbolising Rome. The nymphs, whose lives have been rudely invaded by the fury of Mars, are deploring their sad fate. They have fled to Rome looking for respite, but there are still dangers lurking around them. The Tiber interrupts their lamentation to assure them that Rome is ruled by a clement star (“un astro sì clemente”), an obvious allusion to the name and to the coat of arms of the pope, Clement XI,²⁹⁸ the splendour of whose virtue is described as radiating to the furthest corners of the world. The nymphs sing the praises of the Tiber, Lazio’s magnificent river flowing through Rome, the world’s superior court (“Della Regia del Mondo ò fiume altero”). However, the flames engulfing their own homelands are giving them concern. The Tiber calms down the nymphs, explaining that it is the bringer of peace and innocence, effective antidotes for every mortification and injustice, which will make Europe celebrate joyfully once again. The Tiber again praises the pope and shows Dori and Nise the royal nymph of the Polish river Vistula (Marie Casimire), a faithful Christian whose presence graces the city on the Tiber. Dori and Nise admire the splendour (“splendore”) of that great lady and emphasise how lucky she is to be able to enjoy the company of so many magnificent heroes and beautiful souls. Dori pays homage to two Polish women (presumably the two Marie Casimires), and the Tiber invites everyone to join in the festivities so that dance can disperse the memory of their former tribulations. With those words, the *Ballo dell’Aurora* is introduced.

References to the War of the Spanish Succession are obvious ideological elements of this *componimento*. The nymphs stand for regions of particular importance to Italy, namely the river Po (called the Eridano in Rome) and the Apennines, two regions strongly affected by the war and occupied by enemy forces (Turin and Milan, the two main cities on the river Po, had declared in favour of the imperial coalition). Dori and Nise are extremely upset because the years 1702–1709 were a period of successes for the anti-French alliance in the War of the

298 Cf. Händel’s cantata, *O come chiare e belle* (libr. probably by F. M. Ruspoli), Rome 1708; S. Schmalzriedt, “Händel’s römische Kantata ‘Oh, come chiare e belle (Olinto Pastore, Tebro fiume, Gloria)’ (HWV 143),” in: *Georg Friedrich Händel in Rom. Beiträge der Internationalen Tagung am Deutschen Historischen Institut in Rom 17.–20. Oktober 2007 (Analecta musicologica 44)*, eds S. Ehrmann-Herfort and M. Schnettger (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2010), pp. 210–215; S. Ehrmann-Herfort, “Arkadien am Tiber. Zu den Anfängen der römischen Accademia dell’Arcadia,” in: *Musikwissenschaft im deutsch-italienischen Dialog. Friedrich Lippmann zum 75. Geburtstag (Analecta musicologica 46)*, eds M. Engelhardt and W. Witzemann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2010), pp. 161–172, esp. pp. 167–172. The star is part of the coat of arms of the Albani family.

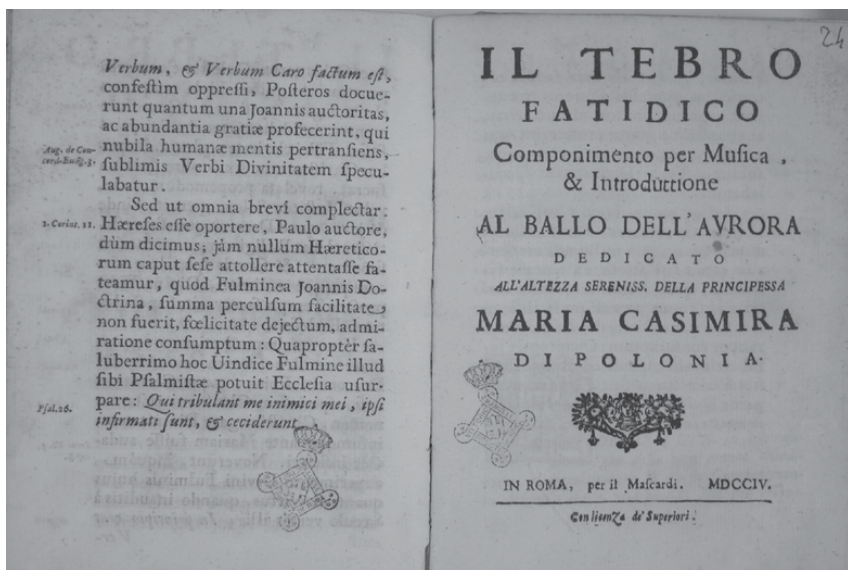


Illustration 23. *Il Tebro fatidico*, the front page of the libretto, 1704. Biblioteca Centrale Nazionale di Roma.

Spanish Succession,²⁹⁹ resulting in much destruction to northern Italy. For Marie Casimire the occupation of Bavaria in 1704 came as an additional shock.³⁰⁰ In the

299 His declarations of neutrality notwithstanding, Pope Clement XI favoured the French coalition. See Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi nel periodo dell'assolutismo. Dall'elezione di Clemente XI sino alla morte di Clemente XII (1700–1740)*, Rome 1933, pp. 13–50. In 1709, Emperor Joseph I threatened to sack Rome unless Pope Clement XI, a supporter of the Franco-Spanish party, recognised the Emperor's brother Charles as the rightful Catholic king of Spain; a clear sign that arguments concerning the divine right of popes to wield secular power (as aired by counter-Reformation theologians) were no longer being taken seriously.

300 G. Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800. Three Seasons in European History* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); A. Tedesco, "Juan Francisco Pacheco V duca di Uceda uomo politico e mecenate tra Palermo Roma e Vienna nell'epoca della guerra di successione spagnola," in: *La pérdida de Europa. La Guerra de Sucesión por la Monarquía de España* (Madrid: Fundacion Carlos de Amberes, 2007), pp. 491–548; Ch. M. S. Johns, "The Entrepôt of Europe: Rome in the Eighteenth Century," in: *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*, eds Edgar Peters Bowron, J. J. Rishel (London: Merrell Publishers Ltd, 2000), pp. 17–45; U. Kirkendale, *The War of the Spanish Succession*

serenata, the prophetic Tiber somehow fails to predict these devastating results for the papacy, assuring the nymphs of the pope's influence and great diplomatic skills.

Il Tebro fatidico is Marie Casimire's way of paying musical homage to Clement XI, produced to assure him of the Queen Dowager's trust in his power and protection.³⁰¹ This is particularly clear in the arias "Mai stella" and "Veder già parmi," the only sections of the libretto where the allusion to the pope's name is emphasised by the use of block capitals: "Veder già parmi / Lalme più fiere / Deposte l'armi, / Tutte adorar della CLEMENZA il Soglio. / Parmi vedere / Di nembi irati / Gl'horridi fiati, / Ch'in bel seren cangian l'usato Orgoglio. / Veder."

The Tiber, confident in its might and trusting its guiding star fails to realise how deeply the political realities have changed. This is evident in the joint dance scene, in which the untroubled Tiber invites the nymphs to join in a *ballo*, a cheerful eruption of naive joy destined to turn into despair before long.

Applausi del Sole e della Senna (1704)³⁰²

This piece was probably first performed in July or August 1704 to celebrate the birth at Versailles of Louis de France, Duke of Brittany and first great-grandson of Louis XIV (25th June). An occasional piece, it was one of three works presented in Rome by the supporters of the French faction.³⁰³ The circumstances of its

Reflected in Works of Antonio Caldara, in: *Acta Musicologica* 4 (1964), pp. 221–233; A. Markuszewska, "‘Roma del Mondo Reina?’ The War of the Spanish Succession in the Music Presented in Rome, 1701–1714," in: *La cultura del barroco español e iberoamericano y su contexto europeo*, eds K. Sabik, K. Kumor (Warszawa: Instituto de Estudios Ibéricos e Iberoamericanos de la Universidad de Varsovia, 2010), pp. 655–663; E. M. Rostworowski, *Historia Powszechna. Wiek XVIII* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009); C. Timms, *Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and His Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

301 As mentioned in the introduction, the piece was officially dedicated to Marie Casimire's granddaughter of the same name.

302 *Applausi del Sole e della Senna, Cantata à due Voci Per La felicissima Nascita Del Serenissimo Duca di Bretagna di Carlo Sigismondo Capeci* (Roma: De. Rossi, 1704), I-Fn, 1055.28.

303 The other two pieces were a cantata for three voices, *La contesa d'onore* (libr. F. Posterla, mus. A. Scarlatti with a sinfonia by A. Corelli), performed on 22nd July in Piazza S. Marco under the patronage of the French Cardinal Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, and a serenata for three voices, *Le gare festive* (libr. G. Buonaccorsi, mus. P. P. Bencini), performed on 24th August in Piazza di Spagna on the initiative of Prince Urbano Barberini.

performance are unknown. We do not know who set Carlo Sigismondo Capece's text to music, or who was involved in the performance.

This text, too, consists of seven arias and recitatives, and a single duet sung by the Sun and the Seine. The Sun is as obviously a symbol for Louis XIV as the Seine is the major river flowing through Paris. In the opening lines the Sun is identified with Helios, the solar god who can be seen every day riding a golden chariot pulled by winged horses. The Seine sees Helios, asks him to restrain his solar steeds and join in admiring the birth of royal offspring. A fourth lily has been born in France, the Seine sings, a small child who is the hope of the land (three lilies being part of the royal coat of arms, the fourth is the new one, recently born).³⁰⁴ The solar god pulls his chariot to a halt to celebrate this momentous event: the birth of a new Hercules, defender of the faith and scourge of hell. The Sun and the Seine discuss the baby's glorious future, and do not fail to mention the Sun King, the baby's great and still-living ancestor whose heroic deeds shine brightly like the sun to the furthest corners of the earth. The Seine and the solar god ask Clotho, one of the Three Fates and spinner of the thread of human life, to spin more slowly and preserve the life of that magnificent monarch before he goes to the place in the sky appointed to him by Helios, Mars and Zeus. The Seine and the Sun wish a long life to Louis XIV and to his great-grandson, hoping that the baby is braver than Achilles and lives longer than Nestor. In the event, their wishes turned into nothing as the prince died less than a year later, but his birth provided an opportunity for a public show of support for France and Louis XIV in the ongoing war.

From the point of view of the patron, the most important elements of the work were the allegorical and metaphorical references to current events, which must have been easy to interpret for a handful of listeners and readers familiar with the convention. Helios's last stop on his daily journey is one such occasional reference in Capece's text. The god stops on his itinerary by the river Tagus, flowing through Spain and Portugal, which clearly refers to the recent enlargement of the French sphere of influence: the last of the Spanish Hapsburgs, Charles II, named Philip, grandson of Louis XIV, was his successor in Spain, and so the boundaries of France would now extend to the river Tagus. In Rome, Marie Casimire presented herself as a loyal supporter of the Sun King and an admirer of the French court and its customs. Comedies in Marie Casimire's native French were often performed in her *palazzo*; she held balls featuring French dances, and she

304 Capece exploits this symbol more extensively in his oratorio *La conversione di Clodoveo re di Francia*.

surrounded herself with her fellow Frenchmen.³⁰⁵ The celebrations of the birth of Louis XIV's great-grandson were an attempt to draw the king's attention to her family's distress. Her extravagant praise of the French king was a petition to help liberate her sons: when her appeals to the pope, the empress and to other influential figures had failed, Louis XIV was Marie Casimire's last remaining hope. However, Marie Casimire's desperate entreaties seem to have fallen on deaf ears, and her praise of Louis XIV failed to bring tangible results.

L'Amicizia d'Hercole, e Theseo

This serenata was performed on 27th February 1707 at the Palazzo Zuccari. On March 5th, the *Avvisi Marescotti* reported: "The Queen [of Poland] provided the local aristocracy with noble entertainment, as the Princess her granddaughter danced on several occasions at the Queen's minute theatre, in a *ballo* preceded with beautiful *introduzione in musica*; her Highness displayed extraordinary vivacity and temperament."³⁰⁶ The *Foglio di Foligno* published a passage phrased well-nigh identically in their printed news from Rome.³⁰⁷

The aforementioned serenata was not the only attraction prepared by Marie Casimire for the carnival of 1707. The Roman chronicler Francesco Valesio wrote in his diary of a carnival carriage, or *carro*, having been shown in the courtyard of the Queen's residence, with numerous ladies and courtiers present.³⁰⁸ The Queen thus celebrated her sudden joy upon having received news (in early

305 "Questa sera la regina di Polonia fece recitare nel bel teatro del suo palazzino alla Trinità de' Monti una comedia all'improvviso in lingua francese da' suoi gentiluomini," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4: 1708–1728 (*I cento libri* 49), (Milan: Longanesi, 1978), pp. 28–29; "La regina di Polonia fa fare le prediche in francese alle monache del suo nuovo monastero sul monte Pincio, essercitandosi essa in questi giorni con fervore in opere caritative e devote," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4, p. 497.

306 "La sudetta regina [di Polonia] hà dato un nobile divertimento a questa nobiltà con haver ballare alcune volte nel suo picciolo teatro la principessa sua nipote preceduta con una bella introduzione in musica al ballo in che hà meravigliosamente spiccata la vivacità e lo spirito di sua altezza," G. Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmenta...*, p. 170.

307 "La sudetta Regina hà dato un nobile divertimento a questa Nobiltà con aver fatto ballare alcune volte nel suo piccolo Teatro, prevenuto con una bella introduzione in Musica al ballo accennato, in che hà meravigliosamente spiaccata la virtù e spirit," *Foglio di Foligno* (5th March 1707).

308 "Nel cortile del casino della regina di Polonia alla Trinità de'Monti dalla banda di porta Pinciana si recita la sera un carro, o sia giudiata, con gran concorso di persone," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 3, p. 771.

January) that her sons Jakub and Konstanty, former prisoners of Augustus II, had been released.

On 1st January an anonymous papal chronicler reported: “A servant carrying letters dispatched by the sons of the Queen of Poland arrived; in the evening an illumination was staged with trumpeting, drumming, and other sounds to celebrate news of their [the sons’] release.”³⁰⁹ Charles Poerson, director of the French Academy in Rome and a frequent guest of the Queen’s, also wrote: “The Queen of Poland organised a feast to celebrate the release of the princes her sons, news of which she received from dispatches carried by a special courier.”³¹⁰ On second January the aforementioned Valesio recorded similar news in his journal:

In the morning, the Queen of Poland received a courier dispatched by the new King Stanislaus [Leszczyński] notifying her of the peace treaty signed with King Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, and congratulating her on the release of the princes her sons Jakub and Konstanty. The courier added that the three kings, the Swede [Charles XII], Augustus [II], and Stanislaus [Leszczyński] dined together with the said princes. Her Royal Highness dispatched the tidings to the Collegium and ordered that *Te Deum* be sung in the small church of her nunnery.³¹¹

On 3rd January the papal chronicler added that “About 10 p.m. on that day, *Te Deum* was sung at the church of Trinità dei Monti in gratitude for the release of the sons of the Queen of Poland, with many instruments and magnificent singers, and in the presence of Her Highness and numerous aristocrats.”³¹² It

309 “Giunse gle Poste Cameriere spedito dai Figli della Regina di Polonia, e la sera da sua Maestà si fecero i Luminari con Trombe tamburini, et altri Suoni gla nuova della loro liberazione,” *Giornale del pontificato di papa Clemente XI principiando dell'anno 1700 alle 1708*, I-Rbav, Cod. Vat. Lat. 13667 foglio 228.

310 “La Reine de Pologne a fait des réjouissances pour la liberté des Princes ces fils, qu'elle a sçeue par un Courier extraordinaire,” Ch. Poerson, in: *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec le surintendants des bâtimens*, ed. A. de Montaiglon (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1889), Vol. 3, page 201.

311 “Giunse la mattina corriero a questa regina di Polonia, speditoli dal nuovo re Stanislaò di Polonia, con il quale gli dava avviso della pace seguita con il re Augusto elettore di Sassonia e si congratulava della piena libertà nella quale erano gli regii principi di lei figlioli Giacomo e Costantino, et aggiungeva a voce il corriero che havevano gli tre re, sueco, Augusto e Stanislaò, pranzato insieme con gli sudetti principi. Mandò la Maestà Sua a dare parte al S. Collegio di tal nuova, ne fece cantare il Tedeum nella piccola chiesa del suo monastero ...” F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 3, p. 748.

312 “Verso le ventidue hore del sudetto giorno nella chiesa della Trinità de Monti in ringratiam.lo della Liberat.ne de Figli della regina di Polonia con quantità d'Istromenti e Musici fu cantato il Te Deum, e ci intervenne Sua Maestà con molta nobiltà,” *Giornale del pontificato*, foglio 228.



Illustration 24. Jakub Ludwik Sobieski, after 1691, Silesian painter. King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr Z. Reszka.

was under such joyful circumstances that the *L'Amicizia d'Hercole, e Theseo serenata* and the *ballo della Gloria* were performed to commemorate the freedom regained by the young Sobieski brothers.

The serenata texts, including four arias, two duets, and intertwined recitatives, were penned by Carlo Sigismundo Capece, court poet and the Queen's secretary since 1704. The author of the music (which has been preserved until today) remains unknown. The content of the composition featuring the two eponymous characters, Hercules and Theseus, can be summed up as follows:

Hercules rescues Theseus, hero of Athens, from Hades. Revelling in the sight of sunshine, Theseus thanks his friend for the assistance shown. Hercules, however, responds that his arm was but a tool for the intentions of the gods. It was Theseus' own innocence that truly helped him. Heaven will always send new Hercules-like heroes to protect virtue.³¹³ Expressing gratitude to his friend again, Theseus reports to Hercules what he saw in Hades. Among others, he

313 "Farà il Cielo in sua difesa/ nascer sempre nuovi Alcidi."

encountered Lachesis weaving the life-threads of heroes whose achievements shall in the future exceed the deeds of heroes of antiquity. Hercules, on the other hand, confesses to his friend that when supporting the heavenly sphere, he saw stars competing to create the most beautiful imaginings of heroes adorning future eras, with both Hercules and Theseus serving as role models. Nonetheless, Hercules was most impressed by the rivalry between Callisto and Alcmene to give new likes of Hercules to the northern world.³¹⁴ Therefore, Theseus asks his friend how it is possible for virtue to shine forth where the sun can barely reach. He learns in response that a single star distant from the sun and supporting the polar zone will one day outshine even the moon. John the Great (*GIOVANNI il Grande*) is the star, for whom a magnificent future has been foretold by both heroes – he shall become the Hercules of Faith and the Empire (*Hercole della Fede e dell'Impero*). In his aria *Tracia belva con l'empio suo dente* which follows upon the previously quoted text, Hercules portrays the image of a wild beast that wounds the breast of Europe with its godless teeth until reached by an arrow from the bow of Sobieski the Invincible Sarmatian.³¹⁵

Theseus proceeds to tell Hercules that he saw other golden threads woven by Lachesis. Hercules supposes that these threads reflected the fate of royal sons resembling their father. Both heroes praise the battle deeds of the young Sobieskis and glorify the avenger of unjust insults and liberator of the descendants of a great king. The protagonists of the serenata believe that the wonderful souls of new heroes will serve to enrich the history of their contemporaries. The heroes' conversation is interrupted by Gloria descending from heaven. Theseus wishes to follow her, but is stopped by Hercules, who explains that they are only fit to admire her. Gloria may be followed by the more famous heroes only – the brothers Sobieski, as implied. In the closing duet, the eponymous characters praise Gloria, inflamer of all hearts. These words are a signal for the *ballo della Gloria* to begin.

To celebrate the release of the young Sobieskis, Capece used the well-known motif of friendship between the two most famous and courageous heroes of antiquity. Most importantly, however, he recalls the story of Theseus' release from the kingdom of darkness by the son of Alcmene. As the myth goes, Theseus descends into Hades with another friend of his, Pirithous, who asked him to

314 “Mà più d'ogn'altra alla grand'opra Intesa / Vidi Calisto, che con dolce pena / Nel gelo ardea dell'Hiperborre notti / Per emulare Alcmena / e per render fecondo / Di nuovi Alcidi un dì l'Artico Mondo.”

315 “Tracia belva con l'empio suo dente / D'Europa languente / Mille piaghe nel seno aprirà; / Mà trafitto dal Sarmata Invitto / Quel Mostro crudele pur vinto cadrà.”

help conquer Persephone, wife of the ruler of the underworld. To the surprise of both Theseus and Pirithous, Pluto seems amicable. They are shown chairs, seated wherein they are to await the decision of the ruler of Hades. Once they sit down, though, they understand they would never be able to rise again. This is how Pluto punished their boldness.³¹⁶ After Theseus and Pirithous have spent four years in the Chairs of Forgetfulness,³¹⁷ Hercules arrives in Hades to perform his twelfth labour as ordered by Eurystheus. This time, he is to kidnap Cerberus from the underworld. In his part of the duet, Hercules specifically mentions the capture of the guardian of the gates of Hades, and the wresting of loot grabbed by Cocytus,³¹⁸ one of the five hellish rivers feeding on the tears of the condemned. In a subsequent conversation, Hercules explains to Theseus that he was protecting his friend's scorned and slighted innocence in the name of the gods.

Theseo, più che il mio braccio
 La tua stessa Innocenza
 Fù, che ti sprigionò dall'empio laccio;
 E se parte v'hebb'io
 Sol Ministro del Ciel fù il braccio mio.

[Theseus, my arm mattered less
 Than your own innocence,
 Which enabled me to release you from evil snares;
 And if indeed I partook in the deed,
 My arm was but a servant of heaven.]

Hercules emphasises the importance of his words in the following aria:

L'Innocenza vilipesa
 Mai di sorter non diffidi.
 Farà il Cielo in sua difesa
 Nascer sempre nuovi Alcidi.

[Innocence scorned/slighted
 Never shall trust in fate,
 Heaven in its protection
 Will always bring new Hercules forth.]

316 V. Zamarovský, *Encyklopedia mitologii antycznej* [*Encyclopaedia of Ancient Mythology*], trans. J. Illg, L. Spyrczka, J. Wania (Katowice: Videograf II, 2002), p. 447.

317 A. M. Carassiti, *Dizionario di mitologia classica. Tutte le meravigliose storie create dai Greci e dai Romani per rappresentare i misteri dell'uomo, della natura e dell'universo. Un mondo affascinante popolato da guerrieri, eroi, divinità, re, ninfe, muse, mostri e giganti* (Roma: Newton & Compton, 2001), p. 311.

318 Carassiti, *Dizionario di mitologia classica...*, p. 63.

The verses quoted serve openly to emphasise the innocence of Jakub and Konstanty Sobieski, imprisoned unjustly and deceitfully by Augustus II, and to name the avenger of insult, who fought to protect the brothers, the new Hercules. The new hero, however, remains nameless in the serenata (I believe the author had King Charles XII of Sweden in mind). Marie Casimire's belief that what Augustus II did was an insult to the honour of the Sobieskis is confirmed in a letter she penned to her son Aleksander, who remained free. On 22nd March 1704, she wrote:

What a deadly blow, my dearest son! Why have I survived to witness such sad news, I, who would gladly give up the short time I have left to preserve every one of you. Should that be required to sate the relentless hatred borne against us by the tyrant [Augustus II] holding family members as protection against that family, I would be ready to surrender myself to his prisons, if only my beloved children could remain free and if their lives could be safe ... What a coup! To kidnap the sons of a great king, brother-in-law to the Emperor! ... I would gladly sacrifice my life to secure and preserve your existence and your freedoms, however old and feeble I am, caring only for this life if it means loving you, my children, whom I now bless asking God to grant you prosperity, and whom I embrace with all my heart.³¹⁹

Finally, news of the release of Marie Casimire's sons after three years of imprisonment allowed justice to triumph. The accomplishments of the Sobieski brothers' liberator also brought relief to her heart, and restored a smile to her face, as described in final verses of the serenata.

Comparing Sobieski to Hercules formed part of a tradition (initiated in the fifteenth century) of identifying European rulers, their strength, gallantry, wisdom, cleverness, unyielding character, and ability to follow the path of virtue³²⁰

319 "Quel coup mortel, mon très cher fils! Pourquoi ai-je survécu à une si triste nouvelle, moi qui mettrais volontiers le peu de vie qui me reste pour la conservation de chacun de vous. Si c'est une nécessité, pour assouvir la haine implacable qu'a le tyran contre nous, qu'il ait entre ses mains quelqu'un de la famille, pour l'assurer contre elle, je suis prête à me livrer dans ses prisons, pourvu que mes chers enfants soient en liberté et leur vie en sûreté Quel attentat! Enlever les fils d'un grand roi, le beau-frère de l'Empereur! ... Je me sacrifierai volontiers pour sauver et assurer vos vies et vos libertés, toute vieille et infirme que je sois, ne me souciant de la vie que pour l'amour de vous autres, mes chers enfants, vous que je bénis, en priant Dieu de vous combler de toutes ses prospérités et en vous embrassant de tout mon Coeur," K. Waliszewski, "Une française reine de Pologne. Marie d'Arquine-Sobieska d'après les documents inédits des archives étrangères," in: *Le Correspondant* 1884, pp. 299–300.

320 The choice frequently attributed to Hercules (the path of virtue and magnanimity vs. the path of succumbing to personal desires) made him a perfect role model character

to the virtues of ancient heroes.³²¹ Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) was among the first monarchs claiming to hail from the line of Hercules. He was followed by the Habsburgs, who with lesser or greater frequency referred to the Herculean symbolism. The tendency distinctly amplified during the reign of Leopold I and his sons, reaching an apogee under the rule of Charles VI (1711–1740). French kings, such as Louis XIV, as well as John III Sobieski of Poland, were also fond of Herculean symbols. No wonder that, as Jerzy Banach tells us, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the story of Hercules fighting the Hydra was adapted for purposes of comparison with battles against the Cossack, Tartar, and Turkish powers.³²² In seventeenth-century Poland and Europe, the Hydra – whom Hercules fought during his second labour – symbolised the Ottoman power as the danger looming in the East, but also heresy – the West’s eternal threat.³²³ John III Sobieski, who slew the Ottoman Hydra in 1683, was not only dubbed the new Hercules or the Polish Hercules, but also the Christian Hercules, as shown in a post-Battle of Vienna painting by Martin Altomonte, who portrayed Sobieski as a heavenly rider, a tool held by God to fight the heathens.³²⁴ Such an image of the king was further confirmed by Wacław Potocki, who wrote after Sobieski’s death: “[He was] a pillar to the Church, and a fiery flame to heathen and heresy. ... The second Hercules, before whom the proud Ottoman trembles.”³²⁵ As Banach points out, the blending of King John III with Hercules into a single symbol³²⁶ began prior to the Siege of Vienna; for example, during the 1676 coronation ceremony in Krakow, as shown in the so-called coronation figure. As recalled by Anna Czarniecka, “[Sobieski’s] royal iconography consistently displayed symbols of mythological gods – of Hercules (a

for kings and rulers portrayed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operas. Cf R. C. Ketterer, *Ancient Rome in Early Opera* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 13.

321 J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus. Studium z ikonografii sztuki nowożytniej* [*Hercules Polonus. A Study in Modern Art Iconography*] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), p. 60.

322 J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus...*, p. 141.

323 J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus...*, p. 141.

324 Wojciech Fijałkowski, “Gloryfikacja Jana III w sztuce czasów baroku” [“Glorification of John III in Baroque Art”], in: *Studia z dziejów epoki Jana III Sobieskiego* [*Studies on the Times of John III Sobieski*] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1984), p. 33.

325 J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus...*, p. 143.

326 The term originally used in Ronsard’s title: *Hercule chrétien*, cf. J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus...*, p. 74.

lion's skin) and Mars (Gorgoneion, a woodpecker, a wolf) – as a reference to *Virtus heroica* and *Virtus bellica*.³²⁷ After the king's Viennese victory, Europe was flooded with renderings (icons, etchings, paintings, medals) and written works (panegyrics, poems, descriptions) showing John III as Hercules, who with his courage secured protection for the Christian Europe.³²⁸ No wonder that Capece's Theseus, when asking after John III, uses the phrase *Virtus l'heroica* originally penned to describe Alcmenē's son, while Hercules, when announcing the birth of the hero of the North, openly refers to him as *Hercole della Fede, e dell'Impero*, and only later as the Invincible Sarmatian (*Sarmata Invitto*).

The use of the phrase “the new Hercules” as a title assigned to Sobieski's sons, and specifically to Jakub, his eldest, also hails back to the Polish Republic of the time, and to the Sobieskis' dynastic policy specifically. Hercules' traits were recognised in the fifteen-year-old Jakub; during a court performance in Warsaw, on the eve of the 1683 Battle of Vienna, he was referred to as “Alcides, ... protector against monsters bred in the swamp of Lerna,”³²⁹ that is, a protector against the heresy of the East. This is how hope for the future great deeds of the young Jakub was expressed. Those sentiments are echoed in Capece's serenata, when Theseus reports:

Vidi un fil sì robusto
 Che appena al quarto lustro si stendea,
 E già gruppi di Palme, e de Reami
 Seco al fuso avvolgea.

[I have seen a son so broad-shouldered,
 Barely twenty winters he saw,
 And already a group of palms and kingdoms
 He wove upon his loom.]

327 A. Czarniecka, *Nikt nie słucha mnie za życia... Jan III Sobieski w walce z opozycyjną propagandą (1684–1696)* [Nobody Listens to Me While I'm Alive... John III Sobieski's Struggle with the Propaganda of His Opposition] (Warszawa: Neriton, 2009), p. 45.

328 “Behold a hero, who learned from Mars as a youth. / A King of Poland, third of that name, / Basking like Alcides in the glory of brave wartime deeds, / The sharpness of his sword arrested the enemy. / Ask the terrified Vienna, a city in tears and with its heart a-tremble, / How that ruler dragged the Turk out by the hair,” in: *Chwała i sława Jana III w sztuce i literaturze XVII-XX wieku. Katalog wystawy jubileuszowej z okazji 300-lecia odsieczy wiedeńskiej IX-XII 1983*, eds W. Fijałkowski, J. Mieleško (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe, 1983), p. 156.

329 J. Banach, *Hercules Polonus...*, p. 143.

No deliberations concerning the coming of new Hercules could fail to mention the figure who was to give birth to them. Alcmene was the mother of the hero of antiquity. In the vision created by Capece's protagonists, Callisto was Alcmene's rival as a mother to the new generation of heroes:

Vidi Calisto, che con dolce pena
 Nel gelo ardea dell'Hiperboree notti
 Per emular Alcmena
 E per render fecondo
 Di nuovi Alcidi un dì l'Artico Mondo.

[I saw Callisto, who in pain so sweet
 Was aflame in the coolness of northern nights,
 To conquer Alcmene
 And to make northern worlds
 Rich in new Hercules some day.]

Thus described, Callisto the mother of northern sky heroes brings to mind Marie Casimire, patron to the serenata. It might be assumed that the Queen enjoyed having her person associated with a woman visited by Zeus himself, who then elevated her and their son to heavenly constellations. The vision was not far from the actual truth, as the Sobieskis' name was part of the revolving night sky ever since a new constellation had been discovered by an astronomer from Gdańsk, Johannes Hevelius. Furthermore, Gloria descending from heaven, who was to be followed by the released brothers Sobieski, was a harbinger of an even more glorious future, and of deeds well surpassing the accomplishments of ancient heroes.

La vittoria della Fede (1708) and *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima* (1712)

La vittoria della Fede and *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima* are the only two surviving works performed at Marie Casimire's Roman court to have celebrated her husband's famous Relief of Vienna in 1683. We know that the Queen Dowager celebrated the anniversary of the battle with other pieces in previous years, but we only learn about their existence from brief references in contemporary chronicles.³³⁰ Perhaps the prints of the other libretti were lost but

330 1703: "In memoria della liberazione di Vienna, per la festa d'una miracolosa imagine di Nostra Signora detta di Cracovia, collocata nella chiesa del nuovo monastero fondato dalla regina di Polonia, S. Maestà nella sera precedente fece fare sul monte Pincio una vaga illuminazione per tutto il tratto della piazza avanti la chiesa della SS.ma Trinità. Su la barricata che è in detto monte posavano spessi lanternoni et

it is very probable that Sobieska could not afford to have the libretti printed. This makes the two surviving texts particularly valuable as examples of her Relief of Vienna pieces. For this reason, I shall discuss these pieces one after the other, despite the fact that they were composed at different dates.

La vittoria della Fede

As stated in the printed libretto, *La vittoria della Fede* was performed in Marie Casimire's palace in the evening of 12th September 1708. It was one of the elements of an annual *fiesta* held by the Queen Dowager to celebrate the Relief of Vienna. Valesio wrote: "Tonight the Queen of Poland held an extraordinary *fiesta* at the small church of her monastery, having also illuminated the hill of the Trinità with wooden candelabra, surrounded by paintings in memory of the liberation of Vienna, in which King John her husband had a part."³³¹

in ciascuno de' travi che sostengono la traversa di detta berricata v'erano conficcati dui lampadini di vetro, essendo a' pie' de' medesimi una lunga fila di lampadini di terra; tutto il palazzo e ponte che attraversa la strada era similmente illuminato. Tal festa però hebbe poco concorso," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 2: 1702–1703 (Milan: Longanesi, 1977), p. 696; 1704: "La regina di Polonia questa sera, in memoria della liberazione di Vienna dall'assedio de' turchi, nella quale hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni di Polonia suo marito, fece una bellissima illuminazione al suo casino e monastero sul monte Pincio di tutti lumini da oglio, havendosi posti anco a tre fila sopra e da ambidue le bande del riparo di legnami fatto sul monte del suo palazzo sin avanti la chiesa della SS. Trinità. Doppo le campane, sul ponte che traversa la strada Felice e guida dal monastero al suo palazzo furono cantate in musica diverse orazioni con numeroso concorso di popolo," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 3, p. 168; 1707: "La regina vedova di Polonia in memoria della liberazione di Vienna, nella quale hebbe tanta parte il defonto re Giovanni suo marito, celebrò la festa ad una imagine di Nostra Signora nella piccola chiesa del suo monastero e la sera fece con lampadini una vaga illuminazione sul monte Pincio, continuandola nelle due seguenti," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 3, p. 883; 1709: "Per la memoria della liberazione di Vienna dall'assedio dell'armi turchesche, nel che v'hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni IV [sic!] di Polonia suo marito, questa regina vedova di Polonia fece questa sera bellissima illuminazione nel casino che essa habita alla Trinità de' Monti e nel monte medesimo, essendovi stato gran concorso ad udire una bella cantata in musica fatta nel luogo consueto del ponte che attraversa la strada Felice," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4, p. 331.

331 "Fece questa sera la regina di Polonia festa straordinaria alla piccola chiesa del suo monastero, havendo anco illuminato il monte della Trinità con candelabri di legno, contornato di dipinti in memoria della liberazione di Vienna, nella quale hebbe tanta parte il re Giovanni suo marito," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4, p. 153.

With a text by Carlo Sigismondo Capece set to music by an unknown composer,³³² *La vittoria della Fede* consists of one duet, seven arias and a final chorus of the soloists, with alternating recitatives. The cast is allegorical and includes the characters of Faith (La Fede), Victory (La Vittoria) and Night (La Notte). Night asks its companions why the sky is so brightly illuminated. They have brightened it up to celebrate a truly momentous day, Faith and Victory explain, and they invite Night to join them in the celebrations. The joyous Night declares that the moon will never rise again in its dark skies (an allusion to Kara Mustapha and the Ottoman symbol, the crescent moon). Vittoria plays down her contribution, noting that she was not directly responsible for the victory over the infidels. The credit for this victory, Faith explains, must go to the Mother of God, who put the enemy troops to flight. Victory recounts how it arrived in the battlefield, the name of the Virgin Mary on its lips, in order to defeat the wicked foes. Night demands to know who exactly carried out Mary's orders to rout the Turks. Victory identifies this person as the invincible Giovanni, the "Mars of Sarmatia" ("Marte della Sarmazia"). Night concedes that its darkness could never hope to overshadow the splendour of Giovanni's virtue or to consign to oblivion the famous memory of that glorious day when he fought for Mary. Were Night to try and engulf Giovanni's triumphs, declares Faith, she, Faith, would still uncover them to all and everyone. Faith narrates the story of how the king discovered in some ruins a beautiful picture of Mary bearing an inscription on both sides promising his imminent victory ("IN QUESTA IMAGO VINCERAI GIOVANNI" and "GIOVANNI IN QUESTA IMAGO É VINCITORE"). Victory confirms that the invincible Jan was indeed a man of great faith, and Faith adds that the king sent a banner, one of the battle trophies, to the Great Innocent (Pope Innocent XI). The memory of the great military leader will never fade in Rome, Faith declares, and it crowns him with a victor's laurel wreath. Joyous Victory sings an aria, "Se vinse Giovanni," describing the victory as historically unprecedented: "A most beautiful victory, / one that the greedy time / in its fleeting course // had not seen / for centuries and for years."³³³ Night shares the festive mood of Victory and Faith, and honours the Mother of God as well as Victory. All the three sing praises of the Virgin Mary.

332 This may have been Alessandro Scarlatti, who in the same year worked on new music for Capece's *Il figlio delle selve*, the first opera performed in the queen's theatre.

333 "Vittoria più bella / Il tempo vorace / Nel corso fugace / De' secoli, e d'anni / Gia mai non mirò."

In 1708, the relations between Pope Clement XI and Emperor Joseph I became hostile as a result of the War of the Spanish Succession, and the Emperor – son of Leopold I, another hero of the Relief of Vienna – threatened to sack Rome.³³⁴ With her serenata, Marie Casimire expressed her support for the Pope, reminding the Habsburgs that Vienna had been saved by her late husband's valour, and that European peace, now under threat in Rome as a result of Emperor Joseph's machinations, had been won by a Polish army. The Queen Dowager must have been convinced that an act of aggression would have disgraced the Habsburg emperor before all Christian Europe. However, the new Emperor proved as unsentimental as his father before him, and the Queen Dowager had to content herself with expressing her personal opinions in the realm of political allegory. The allegory proved useful, as it helped Marie Casimire reinforce her own position through reviving the memory of her victorious husband.

Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima

Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima was likewise performed on 12th September, but of 1712. Details of the production were thus described in *Foglio di Foligno*:

A beautiful serenata was staged by the Queen of Poland in the *loggia* of her residence on Monday evening in memory of the Liberation of Vienna, on the day of the anniversary of this prodigious victory, in which the valour of King John III her husband, of glorious memory, played a great part. It was indeed universally applauded for the composition of the words, for the music, as well as for the rare excellence of the singers; whereupon it is believed that Her Majesty will present it again as soon as Prince Aleksander her Son has recovered from the attack of podagra, which presently inconveniences him.³³⁵

As the chronicler expected, “[o]n Monday evening the Queen of Poland had the serenata repeated, as it is written, on the day of the Anniversary of the Liberation

334 Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, pp. 29–50.

335 “Fù fatta cantare Lunedì sera da questa Regina di Polonia nella Ringhiera della sua Abitazione una bellissima Serenata in memoria della liberazione di Vienna, nel qual giorno cadde l’anniversario di così prodigioso successo, in cui ebbe tanta parte il valore del Rè Giovanni III suo Marito di gloriosa memoria. Riusci universalmente applaudita sì per la Composizione delle parole, che della Musica, come anche per la rarità de Cantanti; onde si crede, che la Maestà Sua farà, che venga nuovamente risentita, dopo che il Prencipe Alessandro suo Figlio si sarà rimesso dalla flussione di Podagra, che presentemente l’incomoda,” *Foglio di Foligno* (17th September 1712).



Illustration 25. Apotheosis of John III Sobieski, c. 1690, Ch. de la Hayr after a picture by J. Eleuter Szymanowicz-Siemiginowski. The National Library of Poland.

of Vienna.”³³⁶ A handwritten dispatch also announced a further performance of the serenata at the request of those who had missed it the first time.³³⁷

Set to music by Domenico Scarlatti, Carlo Sigismondo Capece’s libretto is written for a cast of three singers who represent the allegorical characters of Time (Il Tempo), Sleep (Il Sonno) and Eternity (L’Eternità). The identities of

336 “Lunedì sera fece questa Regina di Polonia replicare la Serenata fatta cantare, come si scrisse, il giorno dell’Anniversario della Liberazione di Vienna,” *Foglio di Foligno* (17th September 1712).

337 “Per appagar il desiderio di molti che non l’avevano sentita,” quoted in S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana II*, p. 89.

the performers are unknown; we can only speculate that two parts may have been sung by singers who were then in the queen's service: the castrato "Peppino della Regina" and Maria Domenica Pini, who probably performed for the Queen Dowager during the carnival of 1712.³³⁸

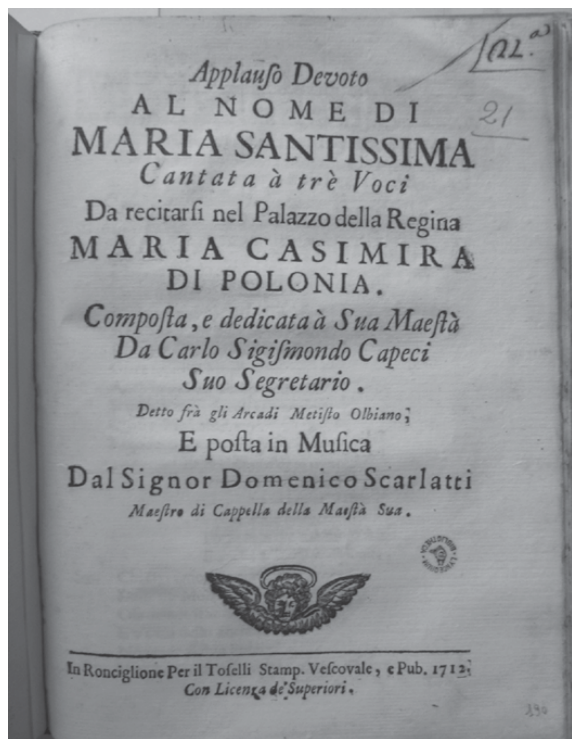


Illustration 26. *Applauso Devoto al Nome di Maria Santissima*, front page of the libretto, 1712. Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana

338 However, we cannot be sure if the singer still remained employed by the Queen Dowager in the autumn of 1712. In the earliest piece of information about the singer and the Sobieski family we read: "Attende di giorno, in giorno l'arrivo del Principe Giacomo Subieschi figlio, che conduce con se la Tilla famosa Canterina et altri buoni professori della Musica" ["We await now any day the arrival of Prince Jakub Sobieski the son, who is bringing with him the famous singer Tilla and other good professional musicians"], *Avvisi di Roma* (11 April 1711), quoted in: Th. E. Griffin, *The Late Baroque Serenata in Rome and Naples: A Documentary Study with Emphasis on Alessandro Scarlatti*, Phil. Diss. (Los Angeles: University of California, 1983), p. 623.

The serenata consists of eleven arias and a closing chorus of the soloists. The opening aria, *Bella Calma dogni moto*, is sung by Time, who is tired of the quick succession of centuries and praises peace, the gift of Sleep. Time asks Sleep to put some drops of Lethe water on its wings and so as to make it Sleep's prisoner. Sleep is angry to be woken up, but it gladly agrees when it sees Time. In its aria, *Dormi pure, e sia mio Vanto* – probably a musical adaptation of a lullaby – it puts Time to sleep, and thus triumphs over the conqueror of all things to become ruler of the world. However, smug Sleep experiences a rude awakening when Eternity arrives. Eternity presents itself as infinite, without beginning or end (“Eternità Infinita / Dell’Increato Nume immobil Trono”). Eternity is surprised that Time fails to recognise it, and worried that Time is asleep when the situation demands action. Eternity thus accuses Sleep of betrayal. Apparently, Time, Death's brother, has been put to sleep to hide from the world's view the memory of the “most beautiful deed” (“della più bella Impresa”). In the aria *Sonno ingiusto, e che pretendi*, Eternity becomes convinced that the aim of Sleep's treachery was not to offend “immortal glory” (“una Gloria, che è Immortal”). Sleep apologizes to Eternity for the mistake and explains that it was not guided by envy or by a desire to embarrass Time. Time implores Eternity to give it an account of that mighty deed which it somehow cannot recall. This scandalises Eternity even more: How unthinkable that anyone might forget the Sarmatian (Polish) ruler who helped the imperial capital in its hour of need and allowed faith to triumph. Sleep remembers this past threat to Europe and awakens Time to celebrate the victory. Seeing the shining light, Time concludes that it must have mistaken night for day. However, those rays are not the rays of sunlight, explains Eternity; what Time is witnessing is the radiance of Eternity. Time wants to know why Eternity might want to cast its light upon the Tiber – the local skies are obviously under Eternity's protection, but would it not be madness to imagine that anything might be safe from Time's scythe? In the aria *Già il Tebro alle Stelle*, Time proudly announces that it has brought many a Tower of Babel crashing down in ruins. Is it not the case, Eternity asks Time, that almost thirty years have passed since banners of war were wrested from unworthy hands at the walls of Vienna, and brought back to decorate the Tiber's temples? Time replies that the Tiber does not claim the right to any of the trophies sent to Rome by a foreign hand. It also says that Sleep lives on the banks of the river, attracting mortals with its peace. Now that Sleep has realised its error, Eternity suggests that perhaps Time should join in the commemorations and celebrations of that magnificent day on its 30th anniversary. In the aria *Dica il Tempo nel corso degl'Anni*, Eternity asks Time if it had ever seen a more magnificent triumph, or whether Sleep had ever woken up in a more joyous mood? That victorious day was more beautiful than anything it

had ever dreamed of, Sleep agrees. The winged god identifies John III of Poland as a role model for those who do not believe in Jason and Hercules. Eternity tells the other characters to proclaim the glory of the great warlike king: “Say that the valiant soul of this great King, / was the support of Europe, / the Shield of Faith, / the terror of Asia, / the lightning of the fight, / and the portent of history.”³³⁹ Eternity does not fail to mention the king’s royal spouse, who implored God to grant victory to the armies of the faithful as she offered her heart to God and to God’s Mother. Time praises the queen’s fervent prayers, which Eternity had recorded for posterity. In its aria, *Stese i dorati Vanni*, Eternity remembers how the battlefield (at Vienna) resounded with the name of Mary, which struck the enemies like a bolt of lightning. King John was that bolt, and the victory was a gift from the Virgin Mary. In the aria *Sotto l’Ombra di MARIA*, Time identifies the Mother of God as the patron of the Tiber. The three characters sing the glory of the Most Holy Virgin. (Eternity: “Viva di DIO la Bella Madre Viva,” Time: “Viva del Ciel l’Eccelsa Donna Viva,” and Sleep: “Viva del Mar la Vaga Stella Viva.”) Eternity sings the aria *Vergine Bella* in praise of Mary and her name, and in the finale the three characters sing their chants of praise again.³⁴⁰

The two works performed on those September evenings in 1708 and 1712 are strongly pervaded by religious ideology, and they seek to keep alive the fading memory of the heroic deeds of John III. They combine the sacred with the profane in secular pieces celebrating the anniversary of the great victory at Vienna. With their classical allegories and religious symbolism, these compositions were perfectly in line with Marie Casimire’s other political spectacles staged in Rome.³⁴¹ Eternity commemorates for posterity the great achievements of King John III Sobieski, which neither forgetful Sleep nor Time’s rapid flow can consign to oblivion. The idea is to leave no one in doubt concerning the historical significance of the Sobieski family and the influence of the Queen Dowager, and to build this awareness through systematic acts of commemoration. On the other

339 “Dite, che del gran Rè l’alma guerriera / Fù d’Europa il sostegno / Fu della Fé lo Scudo / Dell’Asia lo spavento / Il Fulmine dell’Armi / Dell’Historie il Portento.”

340 Educated members of the audience, e.g. members of the Arcadian Academy, may have noticed the influence of Petrarch’s *Vergine Bella, che di sol vestita* on the opening lines of this aria. Both texts praise the Mother of God, but Capece’s aria focuses mostly on praising the name of Mary, whose very sound strikes terror into the heart of hell and brings joy to people on earth.

341 Marie Casimire had a chance to become involved in a papal election very soon after arriving in Rome, when Clement XI (Albani) was elected Pope in 1700.

hand, the multiple references to Mary, Mother of God, are suitable for the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, celebrated on 12th September since Pope Innocent XI included it in the liturgical calendar to commemorate John III's victory at Vienna.

In both libretti, Capecce also makes indirect references to the vision of Emperor Constantine:

About the time of the midday sun, when day was just turning, he said he saw with his own eyes, up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light, and a text attached to it which said, 'By this conquer.' Amazement at the spectacle seized both him and the whole company of soldiers which was then accompanying him on a campaign he was conducting somewhere, and he witnessed the miracle.³⁴²

Constantine pondered on this vision and its possible meaning until he fell asleep and saw Jesus Christ. He saw the cross again and was assured that he would conquer his enemies under that sign. When he woke up and discussed his dream with Christians, Constantine decided to renounce the old gods and to venerate the new One God. The vision came true: Constantine defeated Maxentius, gained control over Rome and kept his promise by making the well-organised Christian minority his political allies.³⁴³ In connection with the Emperor's conversion to Christianity, the gesture meant that Eusebius' tale went beyond the realm of legend to become an influential political and religious event. Constantine's recognition of the One God gave unity to the Empire and supported the Emperor's legitimacy, two aspects of what was seen as a ruler's personal and God-given mission.³⁴⁴ For the future monarchs, including popes, Constantine would thus become a symbol of religion and politics combined in a single person. His famous experience became an influential trope of the power of religious visions, since God's way of communicating with mortals inspired them to achieve great things.³⁴⁵

342 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ed. by A. Cameron (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 81.

343 J. Carroll, "The Vision of Constantine" [chapter], in: J. Carroll, *Constantine's Sword. The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), p. 182.

344 See P. Maraval, "De Constantin à Théodose: de la conversion de l'empereur à la conversion de l'empire," in: *Histoire du christianisme: Pour mieux comprendre notre temps*, eds A. Corbin, N. Lemaitre, F. Thelamon, C. Vincent (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2007).

345 P. Maraval, "De Constantin à Théodose;" Carroll, "The Vision of Constantine...." The importance of Constantine's vision and his role in the history of Christianity is highlighted in the *stanza di Costantino* painted by Raphael in the Vatican Palace.

Arguably, the image of Mary supposedly found by King John – as mentioned by Capece – and the accompanying words of the prophecy about the king's future victory follow the familiar structure of Constantine's vision. The similarities are too strong to be coincidental.³⁴⁶ For Constantine, victory meant the unity of imperial power and religion. Marie Casimire's serenata was to serve as a reminder that her husband had saved that threatened unity in 1683. John III Sobieski expressed that idea in a famous letter written soon after the victory to Louis XIV (whose official title of His Most Catholic Majesty took on an ironic overtone when he failed to turn up at Vienna in the city's hour of need): "de la bataille gagnée et du salut de la chrétienté."³⁴⁷ In other words, Marie Casimire was placing her deceased husband on a par with two legendary Christian rulers who used the name of God in the battlefield and fought enemies in God's name; namely, Constantine the Great and Clovis I, the first Christian king of France.³⁴⁸

However, the works presented by Sobieska to her Roman audiences contain an important modification of the familiar image: Sobieski owes his victory to the protection of the Virgin Mary. Sobieska's belief to that effect may have been rooted

(Raphael died in 1520 without completing this work, which was brought to completion by his collaborators and pupils). The main iconographic motifs included here are the vision of the Cross; the battle between Constantine and Maxentius; Constantine's baptism, and, significantly, the endowment of Rome to the Pope.

346 The notion that Sobieski found a picture of Mary prophesying his victory ("Erit Victor Joannes") was also attested by M. Dyakowski, *Summaryusz okazji wiedeńskiej przez N. K. Jmci. P. Jana III. Z wiekopomną sławą narodu naszego ekspedycywaney, teraz przez W. Jmci Pana Mikołaja na Dyakowach Dyakowskiego Podstolego Latyczowskiego, natenczas w pokoju u tegoż króla służącego i pod Wiedniem osobą swoją będącego, ile przy młodey natenczas aplikacyi, co rozum uważać, oko widzieć, ucho słyszeć a pamięć pojąć mogła wypisany ex Archivo XX. Jmci Lubomirskich na Wiśniczu* [A Summary Account of the Viennese Expedition Undertaken by H. M. John III to the Eternal Glory of Our Nation, now by Sir Mikołaj Dyakowski of Dyakowoy, District Master of the Pantry for Letychiv, Who Was then the King's Room Servant and Was Himself Present at Vienna, at a Young Age, and Has Recorded Everything that the Mind Could Observe, the Eye Could See, and Memory Could Contain, Copied Out of the Archives of the Princes Lubomirski in Wiśnicz] (Wilno 1828), pp. 26–27. The story is mentioned by Antonio Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma*, p. 18.

347 J. Sobieski, *Listy do Marysienki* [Letters to Marie Casimire], ed. by Leszek Kukulski, 2 vols. (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1973), Vol. 2, p. 218.

348 Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, (New York: Fordham University) <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/gregory-hist.asp> (6th July 2020); G. Faber, *Das erste Reich der Deutschen: Geschichte der Merowinger und Karolinger* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1994).

in Polish tradition. The cult of Mary was very strong in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, its roots reaching all the way back to the Christianisation of Poland in the tenth century. Marian devotion intensified even further during the Polish-Swedish war of 1655–1660. When the Polish monastery of the Pauline Fathers in Częstochowa held out under a Swedish siege, the Swedish failure was attributed to the miraculous assistance of the Virgin Mary.³⁴⁹ At the time of the Swedish invasion, Sobieska – then bearing her maiden name of Marie d’Arquien – and the entire Polish court were anxiously awaiting the outcome of the war. She experienced turbulent emotions after the miraculous Polish victory at Częstochowa, just as she would experience enthusiasm after her husband’s victory at Vienna in 1683.³⁵⁰

The connection between the Virgin Mary and Sobieski’s victory also entails the issue of Marie Casimire’s own part in this triumph, providing an extra intersection between the sacred and the profane in these works. Marie was the queen’s own forename, and in effect she was claiming a part in her husband’s military success and glory. The queen exerted considerable influence on her husband, a fact which was known and noted in diplomatic correspondence.³⁵¹ The king

349 As a result, the icon of the Holy Virgin of Częstochowa became the object of special veneration. The town became the most important centre of Marian devotion in Poland. The belief that Mary protects the Polish nation is alive to this day, among others, in the form of a church feast of Holy Mary, Queen of Poland (celebrated on 3rd May). Cf. U. Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795* [*History of Poland 1572–1795*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008); F. P. Dalerac, *Les Anecdotes de Pologne ou Mémoires secrets du règne de Jean Sobieski III du nom*, Vols I–II (Amsterdam: Henry Debordes 1699); M. Komasyński, *Królowa Maria Kazimiera* [*Queen Marie Casimire*] (Warszawa: Zamek Królewski, 1994), M. Komasyński, *Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska królowa Polski 1641–1716* [*Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska Queen of Poland 1641–1716*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1983); L. Podhorodecki, *Rapier i koncerz: z dziejów wojen polsko-szwedzkich* [*Rapier and Sword: From the History of the Polish-Swedish Wars*] (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1985); K. Sarnecki, *Pamiętniki z czasów Jana Sobieskiego. Dziennik i relacje z lat 1691–1696* [*Memoirs from the Time of John Sobieski. A Diary and Reports from 1691–1696*] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1958); J. Tazbir, “Trudne lata Rzeczypospolitej (1648–1696)” [“The Commonwealth’s Hard Times (1648–1696)”], in: *Historia Polski*, vol. 6, ed. by B. Kaczorowski (Warszawa: Biblioteki Gazety Wyborczej, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2007), pp. 55–107.

350 Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien de la Grange, *Listy do Jana Sobieskiego* [*Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*] pp. 243–254.

351 Francesco Buonvisi, the papal nuncio, described Marie Casimire as “a woman with a manly mind, an indomitable will, who, as it turned out, was prepared to do anything to

regularly sent her detailed dispatches about all aspects of his military expedition and of the battle itself. One of the first letters he wrote after the victorious battle was addressed to Marie Casimire: “Know, o sole delight of my heart and soul, my loveliest and dearest Marie, that our eternally blessed Lord God has bestowed upon our nation a famous victory, the like of which has never been known in ages past.”³⁵² In the history of Poland, their marriage could be viewed as one of the first marital unions built on partnership and mutual respect. The king and his queen were open about their cares and fears, and they were ready to help each other. We see evidence of this fact in their letters. Two surviving letters written by Marie Casimire to the king at the time of the Relief of Vienna show that she knew the course of the battle well, and was familiar with later events; she offered advice to the king, and made suggestions for his decisions.³⁵³ As a woman, it would have been out of place for Marie Casimire to take any credit for the victory because it would have narrowed the memory of her deceased husband. For that reason, Marie Casimire claims the credit indirectly, by skilfully using the figure of Mary, Mother of God. In this way, she is killing several birds with a single stone. The Sobieski family is shown as having been chosen by Mary, Mother of God; John III is being portrayed as a heroic figure and a saviour of Europe with

promote her husband,” Cf. K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w: aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich* [*Educated Women in Seventeenth-Century Poland. The Intellectual Aspirations of Women from the Courtly Circles*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Retro-Art, 1997), p. 82; Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, Ambassador of Louis XIV to Poland and Lithuania, had a similar impression, cf. M. Komasyński, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien...*, p. 94. Another contemporary French politician, Simon Arnould de Pomponne, emphasised Marie Casimire's boundless ambition and her powerful influence over her husband: “She was filled with terrible ambition which she instilled in her husband wherever an opportunity arose. She was the first to make him contemplate the idea of kingship; she orchestrated his friends and supported him in all the steps needed to achieve his goal,” quoted in: M. Komasyński, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien...*, p. 95. Louis de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon left an unambiguously negative opinion of Marie Casimire in his famous *Mémoires*. He wrote, not always correctly, that “Personne n'a ignoré la conduite sordide qu'elle inspira au roi son mari dans ses dernières années.” L. de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, *Les Mémoires*, http://rouvroy.medusis.com/docs/0603.html?qid=sd_x_q0 (25th Jan. 2014).

352 J. Sobieski, *Listy...*, Vol. 2, p. 214 (“Jedyna duszy i serca pociecho, najśliczniejsza i najukochańsza Marysienku! Bóg i Pan nasz na wieki błogosławiony dał zwycięstwo i sławę narodowi naszemu, o jakiej wieki przeszłe nigdy nie słyszały.”).

353 In this context, the letter dated 3rd October 1683 (written in Kraków) is particularly notable; cf. M. d'Arquien de la Grange, *Listy do Jana...*, pp. 246–254.

Mary's name on his lips, an analogue for the tradition going all the way back to Constantine; and finally, the victory is ultimately the Mother of God's, but since the Queen shared her name with the Virgin Mary, some of the splendour rubs off on the royal consort. By means of religious symbolism, the patron was able to evoke strong images of Marie Casimire's importance and achievements. At a time when popular religion still had a strong influence over societies, this was one of the ways to emphasise and reinforce the belief in the ruler's unique social position as a man or woman chosen by God or fate. In the case of Marie Casimire Sobieska, whose prestige in Rome was steadily declining,³⁵⁴ the pun on the name of Mary seems like an act of desperation – one that could only be understood and accepted in a city where religion and politics had coexisted for centuries in a state of perfect symbiosis.

La gloria innamorata (1709)³⁵⁵

La gloria innamorata was written to celebrate the birthday of Aleksander Sobieski, so it was presumably performed on 6th December.³⁵⁶ However, the surviving sources for 1709 contain no references to any *feste* taking place in the Queen Dowager's palace during that month. Serenate had been performed in August and September 1709. On 17th August, *Foglio di Foligno* contains an entry stating that the Queen of Poland continues to present vocal pieces twice a week for large audiences on the bridge connecting the two parts of her residence.³⁵⁷ On 7th September, Valesio wrote: "fece questa sera la regina di Polonia al suo casino alla Trinità de' Monti una nobile serenata con gran concorso di popolo."³⁵⁸ On 12th September, Marie Casimire held her customary commemorative celebrations of the victory at Vienna (the title of the then performed composition remains unknown).

354 The chronicles of the time record the beginning of Marie Casimire's residence in Rome in much detail; however, references to the queen gradually fade from this historical record over time.

355 *La Gloria innamorata componimento per musica per festeggiare il giorno Natalizio del serenissimo Principe ALESSANDRO DI POLLONIA parole dell'Abbate Giacomo Buonaccorsi musica del Signor Quirino Colombani* (Roma: Chracas, 1709).

356 Cf. J. Poraziński, "Sobieski Aleksander Benedykt Stanisław" [entry], in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [*The Polish Biographical Dictionary*], Vol. 39 (Warszawa, Kraków: Instytut Historii PAN, 1999–2000), p. 481.

357 *Foglio di Foligno* (17th August 1709).

358 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4, p. 328.

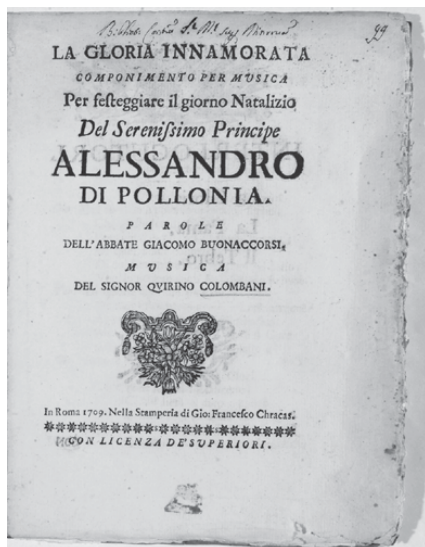


Illustration 27. *La Gloria Innamorata*, front page of the libretto, 1709. Fondazione Cini, Venice.

The libretto of *La gloria innamorata* was written by *abbate* Giacomo Buonaccorsi and set to music by Quirino Colombani. In addition to the recitatives, the composition contains ten arias, one duet, and a concluding chorus of the soloists. There are three characters: Glory (*La Gloria*), Fame (*La Fama*), and the Tiber (*Il Tebro*). The piece opens with Tiber's aria *Con insolito piacere*, introducing a joyous atmosphere of celebration in which Glory joins. Both characters hear the sounds of a *sinfonia*, which later breaks off suddenly. Glory explains that an immortal lady has taken residence on the hills of Rome to save great souls from oblivion: "Quella Donna immortale / Che contro il tempo à guerreggiare attende / E le grand'Alme dall'oblio difende." The *sinfonia* is taken up again after this impressive announcement, followed by the aria *Festeggino* sang by the immortal lady, that is, Fame. Fame announces that "ALESSANDRO" was born on that day, a man of most subtle and beautiful virtue. The Tiber has special reasons to be proud, it adds, since the child was fathered by a hero whose valour saved the faith and brought peace to Austria and Europe: "Felice Genitore / Fù quell'Eroe, che col valor già diede / pace all'Austria, all'Europa, ed alla Fede." Glory joins this apotheosis of King John III, recalling the Sarmatian (Polish) ruler, scourge of the Ottoman horde

(“Ottomano Stuolo”). The Tiber makes approving comments, and Fame sings praises of the Roman river in the aria *De suoi vanti al nobil grido*. Finally, Fame mentions King John’s wife, a worthy spouse for that great man and possessor of the rarest virtues: “Il Mondo ammirator contempla,” Fame declares: “e vede / Della Gran CASIMIRA / Splendor ogn’or nel generoso Core. / Senno, Valor, Pietà, Clemenza, Onore” (“And look / the great CASIMIRE / whose splendour we all praise in a generous chorus / Judgment, Valour, Compassion, Clemency, and Honour.”).

It was the queen, the Tiber points out, who inspired King John’s valour: “Fù ch’ella sol’ diè il moto / Al valor di GIOVANNI.” Fame and Glory sing a duet imitating a conversation between husband and wife to represent the part that Marie Casimire played in King John’s decisions and, consequently, to illustrate her share in the victory at Vienna. Those illustrious parents, Fame and Glory point out, also gave the world Aleksander, Fame’s favourite, who “Col senno, e col saper l’opre misura, / nel giovenil ardor mente matura / Lo governa, e lo regge, e a lui d’intorno / La Clemenza, e il Valor fanno il soggiorno” (“With proper judgment and moderation, / in the young arduous man, a mature mind / governs it, and holds it up, and all around him / Clemency and Valour make their stay”). Fame mentions that Sarmatia (Poland) has high hopes for Aleksander in those turbulent times; that is, this was the period of the Great Northern War, which also affected the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Tiber agrees, prophesying that Aleksander will one day strike a blow to monstrous Asian enemies; an allusion to Alexander the Great of Macedonia. Glory mentions the great expectations nourished by the Catholic religion, which admires in Aleksander the image of his great father: “E mira in esso con ridente ciglio / Già rinovato il Genitor nel Figlio.” In the final chorus, the three characters celebrate the joyous feast of Aleksander’s birthday.

La gloria innamorata is the only known work dedicated to Aleksander Sobieski, or to any other child of Marie Casimire for that matter. Several questions arise: why did Marie Casimire commission such a piece, and why did she do it as late as 1709, given that Aleksander first visited her in Rome (with his brother Konstanty) already in the jubilee year of 1700? Why did she not commission any works dedicated to him when he later settled in Rome? Why was the libretto of *La gloria innamorata* written by Giacomo Buonaccorsi rather than Carlo Sigismondo Capece, as was usually the case?

One possibility is that *La gloria innamorata* was part of an official *fiesta* held by Marie Casimire as a gesture of welcome when Aleksander arrived to settle permanently in Rome. This would shift the date of his move to Rome back from

1710 to 1709,³⁵⁹ a dating which would be more comfortably in line with the fact that Aleksander joined the Arcadia as early as 1709 under the assumed name Armonte Calidio,³⁶⁰ and would also help to explain his involvement in the carnival of 1710.³⁶¹ Since it was Quirino Colombani who composed the music, we can assume that Domenico Scarlatti was not yet *maestro di cappella* at the Queen Dowager's court.³⁶² It is also difficult to offer a good explanation for the fact that the libretto was written by Buonaccorsi rather than Capece, but Capece may simply have been too busy with his other engagements at the Queen Dowager's court. He was working at the time on his first original pastoral drama for the Queen Dowager's opera theatre (*La Silvia*), and was also handling the queen's political correspondence relating to the Great Northern War, which must have taken up his time.³⁶³ Marie Casimire's various actions suggest that Aleksander was her favourite son, and she hoped to see him installed on his father's throne;

359 J.J. Poraziński, "Sobieski Aleksander...", p. 482.

360 W. Roszkowska, "Polacy w rzymskiej 'Arkadii' (1699–1766)" ["Poles in the Roman Arcadia (1699–1766)"], in: *Pamiętnik Literacki* 3 (1965), p. 77.

361 *Foglio di Foligno* (8th March 1710); F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 4, p. 381; *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 275; G. M. Crescimbeni, "Alessandro Principe di Pollonia," in: *Notizie storiche degli Arcadi morti*, 2 vols. (Roma: de Rossi, 1720–1721), Vol. 2, pp. 82–87; G. M. Crescimbeni, *L'Istoria della Volgar Poesia* (Roma: de Rossi, 1714), p. 340; F. Clementi, *Il carnevale romano nelle cronache contemporanee sec. XVIII–XIX con illustrazioni riprodotte da stampe del teatro*, Vol. II (Città di Castello: Edizioni R.O.R.E.-NIRUF, 1938); W. Roszkowska, "Mecenat królewicza Aleksandra – Teatr Armonte Calidio (1709–1714)" ["The Patronage of Prince Aleksander – the Armonte Calidio Theatre (1709–1714)"], in: *Sobótka* 2 (1980), pp. 311–321.

362 Domenico Scarlatti settled in Rome in 1709. After a warm reception of his oratorio *La conversione di Clodoveo, re di Francia* (lib. C. S. Capece) presented in 1709 (precise date unknown), the composer was retained at the court of Marie Casimire as *maestro di cappella*. The employment contract between the Queen and the composer does not survive. We can only speculate that the serenata had been commissioned from Colombani prior to Scarlatti's oratorio.

363 The Queen took a lively interest in the events in Poland-Lithuania since they had an influence on her personal finances. The lingering hostilities delayed remittances of monies from her Polish and Ruthenian estates. Cf. A. Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie – Jakub, Aleksander i Konstanty Sobiescy* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), esp. pp. 247–344. In 1704, Valesio reports that the Queen has not received her income because of unrest in Poland-Lithuania, and she had to freeze pay to her gentleman servants, who continued to serve her anyway without payment: "essendo mancati a questa regina di Polonia gli suoi assegnamenti per le

after all, Poland was an elective monarchy at the time. Marie Casimire had tried to promote Aleksander's candidacy after John III's death, although she ultimately decided to support her eldest son, Jakub, despite their complicated and occasionally downright hostile relations. Although Aleksander did not share his mother's ambitions, repeatedly disappointing or torpedoing her political plans, he was the closest of her four surviving children, and became her only son to follow her to Rome on a permanent basis. The prince's progressing illness may have had something to do with his decision to settle in the Eternal City,³⁶⁴ but his brother Konstanty never chose to accompany his mother even when he became seriously ill himself. With no interest in politics and a close relationship with his mother, Aleksander seems to have enjoyed life at Rome, where he was free to pursue his numerous affairs and artistic interests more easily than he could have done in Poland.³⁶⁵

In this sense, the serenata can be seen as a kind of favour bestowed on Marie Casimire's beloved son. The piece seems to have been part of a carefully planned welcome ceremony, a kind of *ingresso* aimed to mark the arrival of King John III's successor so that his father's fame could be used to ease his way into the world of Rome's aristocracy. According to Wanda Roszkowska, the prince would take over the initiative in the coming years, presiding over the music life at his mother's court in Rome.³⁶⁶

At first glance, *La gloria innamorata* praises Aleksander's virtue, but the text contains no specific references to his achievements, which were actually quite scarce. During his first stay in Rome (1700) Aleksander came to be known as something of a wastrel who kept company with women of easy virtue. Based on extensive research into the sources, Gaetano Platania concludes that "Alexander was a young lover leading a reckless and turbulent life, and together with his brother Konstanty he found himself several times torn between demands of 'form' and 'prestige' and the call of his heart."³⁶⁷ On the other hand, he was also clearly a man of excellent breeding and education, with a lively interest and

rivoluzioni di quel regno, ha cessato di dare la paga a gli gentiluomini, gli quali nulla di meno continuano a servirla gratis," F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, Vol. 3, p. 159.

364 J.J. Poraziński, "Sobieski Aleksander..." p. 482.

365 A. Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie...*; W. Roszkowska, *Oława...*; J.J. Poraziński, "Sobieski Jakub Ludwik" [entry], in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. 39, pp. 490–496; J.J. Poraziński, "Sobieski Konstanty Władysław" [entry], in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. 39, pp. 499–502.

366 W. Roszkowska, "Polacy..." pp. 47–49.

367 G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra sei e settecento (1699–1715)* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 1990), pp. 133–134.

sophisticated tastes in art, literature, theatre and music.³⁶⁸ Either way, when Buonaccorsi was faced with the task of having to celebrate a man who offered hardly any hero material, he made skilful use of the Roman deity Fame,³⁶⁹ symbolising the memory of everything which has transpired in the world and saving great heroes and their deeds from oblivion.³⁷⁰ By being able to discuss the achievements of the prince's parents, the libretto enters safer waters as it prophesies a great future for the prince.

Towards the end of Aleksander's life, which came less than five years later (19th November 1714), several months after Marie Casimire left Rome, Aleksander turned to religion. His sad and lonely end generated much sympathy in Rome.³⁷¹ His final moments and his funeral were commemorated in a printed account.³⁷² But even that obituary presented Aleksander merely as an heir to his father's great achievements. Pope Clement XI financed a lavish funeral at the Capuchin church of Santa Maria della Concezione, where the prince found his final resting place. During that last *festa*, Aleksander's remains were accompanied by high-ranking members of the clergy, the Pope's family, and the usual crowd of curious onlookers. Although he was a mere puppet in the hands of papal diplomacy, Clement XI gave him a truly princely funeral, once again paying tribute to the memory of King John, who was "of much merit to the Apostolic See and the entire Christendom."³⁷³

368 G. M. Crescimbeni, "Alessandro..." (cf. n. 60), pp. 82–87.

369 It was not the first time that Buonaccorsi had used the character of Fame. Cf. S. Tcharos, "The Serenata's Discourses of Duality" [chapter], in: S. Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit. Musical Drama and the Influence of Opera in Arcadian Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 98–152, esp. pp. 134–143.

370 A. M. Carassiti, *Dizionario di mitologia classica...*, p. 117.

371 Charles Poerson to Louis-Antoinéa Pardaillan de Gondrin, prince d'Antin (20th Nov. 1714), in: *Correspondance des directeurs...*, Vol. 4, p. 344.

372 *Relazione dell'Infermità, e Morte del Real Principe ALESSANDRO SOBIESKI Figlio della glo: me: di GIOVANNI III. Rè di Polonia, e della Maestà della Regina MARIA CASIMIRA sua Consorte: accaduta in quest'Alma Città li XIX. Novembre E del Funerale, ed Esequie con solenne Pompa celebrate nella Chiesa de' RR. PP. Cappuccini presente il di lui Cadavere nel di 22. di detto Mese dell'anno MDCCXIV* (Roma: Chracas, 1714).

373 "Tanto benemerito della Sede Apostolica, e di tutto il Christianesimo," *Relazione dell'Infermità...*, p. 7.

Clori, e Fileno (1712)

The two-part serenata *Clori, e Fileno* was written in 1712, according to information on the title page of the manuscript score.³⁷⁴ The music was composed by Domenico Scarlatti to words by an unknown author (presumably Capece). The score discovered in the United States of America by Francesco Degrada³⁷⁵ is fragmentary and comprises: an instrumental *introduzione*; the duet *Quando ò bella Clori*; the *recitativo secco* – *Credi ò vezzosa*; the aria *Amami quanto Clori*; and another *recitativo secco* – *Se disperar degg' io*, unfortunately incomplete. The authorship of the text has not been established, nor has any libretto been found, on the basis of which we could reconstruct the complete piece. It is possible that the text was never published, and the musical fragment has only come down to us by a lucky chance, which is frequently the case with occasional music. The source is fragmentary, and we cannot determine either the occasion for which this work was written or meant, or its dramatic stage setting. I can only present here a few remarks concerning the music itself.

From the title page and the preserved fragment, we learn that the piece was scored for two singers who sang the parts of shepherds, Clori (soprano) and Fileno (alto). The *Introduzione*, featuring the first and second violins with *basso continuo*, consists of two sections, the first of which, 20 measures long, is in the *Allegro* tempo, key of A minor, and the time of 4/4. It is opened by the first violins, and the second violins join in m. 3. From the first beat of m. 11 onward, the first and second violins enter into a dialogue, consisting in the exchange of brief rhythmic motifs. In mm. 11–13, in E minor, we only hear the first violins, and then the dialogue of the violins is resumed. Section II of the *introduzione* is an eighteen-measure *Adagio* in A minor, time of 3/4, characterised by a 'walking' quaver bass. Against this background, the first and second violins perform in parallel thirds motifs consisting of two crotchets and a rest. The *Introduzione* ends in E major.

374 *Serenata à 2 Canto, ed Alto, con VV Clori, e Fileno Del Sigr: Domenico Scarlatti Mro di Cappella di S. M. La Regina di Polonia 1712*, US-AAu, shelf mark MS. M1528, S29 C6 1712.

375 896 F. Degrada, "Tre 'lettere amorose'..." p. 276. Degrada's article is dedicated to cantatas written by Domenico Scarlatti in the period when the composer lived in Portugal and Spain. In fn. 11 he only informs in passing about his discovery of the fragment of the two-part serenata *Clori, e Fileno*. I have not found any text by Degrada containing a discussion of the source which he discovered in the Library of the University of Michigan.

The duet *Quando ò bella Clori*, in A minor and the time of 4/4, without tempo indication, starts with a sixteen-measure instrumental *ritornello* for the first and second violins with *b.c.*, characterised by the lack of bass line in the first three bars, the strong rhythmic drive of the semiquaver progressions in the second violins and quaver progressions in the first violins. This *ritornello* resembles passages from Corelli's *concerti grossi*, such as the fast second movement from his *Concerto grosso No. 1 in D Major* Op. 6 No. 1. When the vocal parts enter, the accompaniment is provided by the *basso continuo* alone, while the violin part is basically limited to brief intermezzi inserted between the successive verses of the text. The duet is opened by Fileno, who repeats the word *quando* many times ("When, o beautiful Clori / will you have pity on my [love's] flames?") Scarlatti sets this text introducing leaps in the vocal melody. Clori asks Fileno to be silent, and in her part, Scarlatti repeats the word *taci* ("hold your tongue"). The shepherdess wants to preserve her freedom. Following the solo presentations of text, the singers exchange individual words and lines, represented musically by means of brief motifs. The orchestral accompaniment becomes richer at this point.

In the recitative *Credi ò vezzosa* Fileno tries to persuade Clori to submit to his love. She replies in the aria *Amami quanto*, in D minor, the time of 3/8 and performed as *Allegro assai*, in which she resolutely defends herself from the shepherd's love, which she represents as a kind of slavery. Clori's aria is preceded by an eighteen-measure instrumental *ritornello*, scored for the first and second violins (playing in unison) and *b.c.* Here, Clori allows Fileno to love her, but she tells him not to expect pity. In section B she adds that if Fileno proves constant in his feelings, his faithfulness will be all the more beautiful for this. In the recitative *Se disperar degg'io* that follows, the desperate Fileno asks the shepherdess to at least attempt to hide her cruelty.³⁷⁶

It is at this point that the manuscript breaks off. This brief fragment testifies to the existence and character of the lost musical works most likely inspired by Marie Casimire. This example is also important for one more reason. In Sobieska's circles, serenate of a typically pastoral character seem to have been performed as well. The preserved libretti reflect the Queen's dynastic ambitions and her struggle for prestige in Rome, which was more and more frequently put in doubt. These are the contents of compositions which Sobieska decided to preserve for posterity by having them printed. Without knowing the finale of *Fileno, e Clori*, we cannot be sure how their amorous affair ended, though we

376 "Se disperar degg'io / la pietà del tuo Amore / alpa il desir mio / e vesti almen d'inganno il tuo rigore / fingi."

may suspect that Fileno's passion and persistence eventually softened the girl's heart. It is possible that also in this case, the pastoral theme and content served to convey some other message as well.

Balli

The Italian word *ballo* ('dance' or 'ball') was applied in different contexts and circumstances.³⁷⁷ First of all, it was the term for a social event which featured a ball as its central point. In this sense, the *ballo* looked back to the Renaissance, to courtly entertainment as described by such authors as Giovanni Boccaccio and Baldassare Castiglione. Secondly, a *ballo* was a sophisticated choreography designed for a professional ballet master, presented during a ball or on the stage. Finally, this term also designated a type of instrumental music composition which made use of dance rhythms or of universally recognisable, well-known dances. The Polish Queen liked to hold *balli* at the Palazzo Zuccari for her young granddaughter Marie Casimire (born in c. 1695). Back in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, she herself had taken pleasure in attending dances. At Sobieska's Roman palace, *balli* were certainly a regular feature of carnival-time receptions, and they were also included in the *feste* held on special occasions, most likely along with refined choreographies.

Of the works performed at the Palazzo Zuccari whose libretti have survived to our day, only two confirm the presence of *balli*. They are *componimenti per musica* entitled *Il Tebro fatidico* which includes the *Introduttione al ballo dell'Aurora* (1704),³⁷⁸ and *L'Amicizia d'Hercole, e Theseo* with the *Introduzione al ballo della Gloria* (1707).³⁷⁹ The titles suggest choreographies specially designed for the Queen by an unknown choreographer whom she employed for that purpose.³⁸⁰ The *balli* certainly provided an opportunity for a display of the young princess's charm and dance skills. They may also have carried some other, extra-artistic types of message. Unfortunately, nothing more is known about the form and themes of the *balli* presented at the Queen's Roman residence, except that their content corresponded to that of the preceding serenata.

Dances were held at the Palazzo Zuccari also in later years, as confirmed by a note of 21st February 1711:

377 I. Brainard, "Ballo" [entry], in: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (19th July 2020).

378 I-Rn, shelf mark Misc. 34.3.I.5.24.

379 F-Pn, shelf mark YD-1193.

380 This kind of *balli*, called *entrées* in French, were well-known to Sobieska from the times when Marie Luise Gonzaga introduced them at the Polish court.

The carnival is nearly over In the evening, operas and comedies are being staged in the same theatres as usual, and the Queen of Poland held a *fiesta* at the Casino on the Trinità de' Monti. After an opera spectacle which started six hours after sunset, and which nearly sixty ladies in masks graced by their presence, the princess, granddaughter of Her Royal Highness, performed dances, appearing in exquisite jewellery, and dancing continued till seven on Tuesday morning.³⁸¹

As we can see, the ladies exhibited great temperament and eagerly took part in the dances.

Sacred Music

Marie Casimire explained her decision to leave Poland for Rome by her desire to find “spiritual consolation and comfort, which she hoped to regain by visiting the Holy Places.”³⁸² She also added that it was her ardent hope to find both spiritual and bodily peace for the rest of her life.³⁸³ This, however, only remained in the sphere of declarations. The Queen soon became involved in the city's life. She took part in social occasions organised by and for the aristocrats, devised political schemes, held musical and theatrical events at her court, and, most of all, ostentatiously took part in religious observances, which were omnipresent in Rome. Already at the beginning of her stay she visited all the major churches and shrines, along with cloisters and nunneries, in which the nuns performed music for her.³⁸⁴ In the company of cardinals, she listened to oratorios and other religious pieces staged at the Eternal City's major churches.³⁸⁵ In this way, she

381 “Terminandosi il Carnovale... la sera furono rappresentate ne soliti Teatri le Opere, e Commedie, con un'festino fattosi al Casino della Regina di Polonia alla Trinità de Monti, doppo la Opera, principatosi a ore sei, ove furono da sessanta dame mascherate, ci ballò la Principessa Nipote di S.ua Maesta, che fece una ricca comparsa con bellissime gioie, e ballarono sin passate le ore 13 del mercoledì mattina,” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (21st Feb. 1711), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 620.

382 “Istruzione data dalla Cancelleria della Regina Maria Casimira di Polonia al Signor Giovanni Battista Scarlatti ...,” in: G. Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma...*, p. 272. The document is kept at: BAV, Fondo Chigi, Cod. M.V.V., f. 192 r-v.

383 “Istruzione...,” p. 272.

384 “Lunedì le monache di S.anta Marta fecero fra loro una representatione in Musica, ove vi fù à sentirla la Regina di Polonia, con altere dame sue Confidenti,” in: *Avvisi di Roma* (21st July 1699), qtd. after Th.E. Griffin, *The late baroque serenata...*, p. 293.

385 “Domenica la Regina coll' Eminentiss. Cardinali Sacripanti, Ottoboni, Barberini, ed Altieri, assistè S.M. al celebre Oratorio di S. Gio: de' Fiorentini, e vi furono bellissime Cantate di materie Sagre,” in: *Foglio di Foligno* (13th March 1700).

became acquainted with Rome's musical culture, its most outstanding composers and performers. She also gladly made appearances at church ceremonies related to political events and occasions.³⁸⁶ Contemporary chronicles report her presence on the regular feast days, as well as at services related to Polish-Lithuanian history, held at St Stanislaus' Church. Valesio informs that at her instigation one of Rome's congregations permitted the unlimited celebration of the Office for the Feast Day of St Hedwig, Queen of Poland.³⁸⁷ The Sobieskis' family celebrations were accompanied by a mass in the church of the cloister she had founded, or by a *Te Deum* performed by a large ensemble.

Having made up her mind to endow a monastery for the Benedictine nuns, whom she brought from France for that purpose, the Queen must certainly have taken care to provide musical settings for their prayers and for the major religious feasts. Unfortunately, apart from some brief mentions of a mass or a *festa straordinaria* being held in the 'little church,' we have no information as to what music was performed there. All that remains is the libretto of one sacred oratorio staged at Marie Casimire's residence, *La Conversione di Clodoveo, Re di Francia*, which represents the genre of the 'palace oratorio' then popular in Rome.

The Oratorio

The Oratorio is a genre of music with religious text and a moralising purpose, aiming to provide – apart from aesthetic pleasure – also encouragement to live in accordance with the precepts of religion, and thus to follow the path of self-betterment.³⁸⁸ In Rome, where the opera was constantly submitted to papal control, oratorios were – apart from cantatas and *serenate* – among the most popular genres of vocal-instrumental music. They were performed in churches (primarily at S. Girolamo della Carità, Chiesa Nuova, and SS. Crocifisso), in *collegia* and seminaries, as well as private palaces. The Swedish Queen Christina's stay in Rome contributed to the development of the so-called 'palace oratorio,'

386 "Giovedì mattina nella chiesa dell'Anima si solennizzò la festa di San Leopoldo arciduca d'Austria con bellissima musica e per tal funzione vi si portò la regina di Polonia che fece variamente discorrere," "Avvisi Marescotti" (17th Nov. 1703), qtd. after G. Staffieri, *Colligite Fragmenta...*, p. 154.

387 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 3, p. 594.

388 A. Spagna, "Discorso intorno a gl'oratori," in: A. Spagna, *Oratorii ovvero Melodrammi Sacri con un discorso dogmatico intorno l'istessa materia* (Roma: G. F. Buagni, 1706); contemporary edition, ed. J. Herczog (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 1993), p. 9.

staged in a secular context, usually as part of the Lenten oratorio cycle.³⁸⁹ The venues used for this purpose were beautifully ornamented chambers or theatre halls in palaces, whose walls were specially decorated, and background sceneries were painted corresponding to the currently staged piece. Despite such lavish surroundings, the singers used no theatrical gestures or elements of acting. Ice cream and drinks were served during the intervals, which, as contemporary chroniclers report, frequently generated more enthusiasm than the presented works. No other musical genre cultivated in Rome blurred the boundary between the secular and the sacred spheres as effectively as the oratorio.

Following Queen Christina's death, the traditions of the 'palace oratorio' were upheld by, among others, the cardinals Benedetto Pamphili and Pietro Ottoboni, Prince Ruspoli, and also by the Polish Queen Marie Casimire. For their oratorio projects, the patrons employed the most outstanding composers active in Rome: Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, George Frideric Handel, Antonia Caldara, Bernardo Pasquini, Filippo Amadei, along with less known masters such as Giuseppe Scalmani, Quirino Colombani, Gregorio Cola, Flavio Lanciani, Mattia Laurelli, Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier, Tommaso Bernardo Gaffi, and Carlo Francesco Cesarini. The libretti could be written by the patrons themselves (the cardinals Pamphili and Ottoboni) or by professional poets: Arcangelo Spagna, Silvio Stampiglia, Giovanni Battista Grappelli, Francesco Posterla, Carlo Sigismondo Capece, and others. The very number of artists – particularly music composers involved in the productions – testifies to the special importance and popularity of the oratorio genre in Rome, especially in the early years of Marie Casimire's period of residence there, when staging operas and celebrating the carnival was forbidden. Oratorios, presented at different times of the year, served at that time as a substitute for the prohibited operatic productions. The two genres differed in the narrative content, but not in musical style.

Arcangelo Spagna, one of the most highly regarded librettists, presented his guidelines concerning the practice of oratorio writing in his collection *Oratorii ovvero Melodrammi Sacri con un discorso dogmatico intorno l' istessa materia* (Rome 1706), in the section entitled "Discorso intorno a gl'oratori." First of all, he criticised the standard form of the *testo* (narrative text portions) for the monotony of formulae announcing the entry of each successive protagonist.³⁹⁰ It

389 A. Morelli, "Un bell'oratorio all'uso di Roma': Patronage and Secular Context of the Oratorio in Baroque Rome," in: *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, Detroit Monographs in Musicology (Book 42), eds C. Reardon, S. Parisi (Michigan: Harmonie Park Pr, 2004), pp. 333–351.

390 A. Spagna, "Discorso..." p. 7 ff.

took up too much space in the structure of the work, which meant that recitatives strongly dominated over arias. Secondly, Spagna argued that, contrary to what his opponents claimed, it was not the form of the *testo* that distinguished the oratorio from the opera, but its subject matter. Oratorios ought to present the lives of holy martyrs and heroes of the church (“Attioni de’Santi Martiri, e de gl’Heroi della Chiesa”). Spagna approved of slight ‘embellishments’ in those life stories, especially in the finales. However, in accordance with Aristotle and Seneca’s model of tragedy, he demanded that the action be contained within one day (“dentro il termine di un giorno naturale”). The suitable number of *dramatis personae* in an oratorio was, according to Spagna, between three and five. He also recommended the use of rhymed recitatives and arias.³⁹¹ With regard to the musical component he called for the abandonment of the practice of using a full complement of voices (SATB), arguing that when the audience hears a classical chorus, they believe that it marks the finale of the whole work, and begins to leave the room noisily, which renders the composer’s displays of contrapuntal skill quite useless. Besides, he observed that not all composers coped well with choral writing and, therefore, proposed that oratorios should end with a joyous arietta (“Arietta allegra”). Interestingly, Spagna’s prescriptions found their practical realisation in the oratorios written in this period.

Early in the eighteenth century both the *latino* and *volgare* varieties of the Roman oratorio consisted of two parts, with alternating recitatives and arias, ending with an aria (as in A. Scarlatti’s *Il martirio di Sant’Orsola* and G.F. Handel’s *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*) or in a chorus of soloists with a mostly polyphonic texture (A. Scarlatti’s *Giardino di Rose*, *La Giuditta*, and *La Sedecia*; G.F. Handel’s *La Resurrezione*). Such oratorios had no narrator, and their action unfolded through dialogues of three to five protagonists, with some occasional ensemble and choral scenes. Other transformations, not mentioned by Spagna in his treatise, were taking place simultaneously in the fields of the opera and the oratorio. The orchestra, which had previously consisted of strings alone, gradually began to incorporate wind instruments as well. The oratorios staged at Prince Ruspoli’s in this period usually featured five to eight violinists,

391 This recommendation is of particular importance in the context of the oratorios, since the earlier works of this type, written in Latin and representing the type of *oratorio latino*, differed from the *oratorio volgare* composed in Italian primarily in that they had prosaic texts. It is not without reason that Spagna dedicated a long section of his treatise to the role and beauty of rhymes.

two violists, one cellist, and one bassist.³⁹² In some productions, however, as in Handel's *La Resurrezione*, the performing forces included as many as twenty violinists, forty violists, five cellists, five bassists, two trumpeters, one trombonist, and five oboists.³⁹³

Most of the arias followed the *da capo* form and had orchestral accompaniment. It was in the arias that, as in the opera, the affections were represented: love, rage, desire for revenge, joy and despair, but also imitation of nature: wind, storm, or birds' songs. Particularly dramatic points in the action were marked by *recitativi accompagnati*. The Roman (or more generally – Italian) oratorios of the first quarter of the eighteenth century were thus very similar to the operas, and they underwent similar transformations. After all, both were in many cases the work of the same artists.

La conversione di Clodoveo, re di Francia (1709)

The oratorio *La conversione di Clodoveo, re di Francia* with text by Carlo Sigismondo Capece and music by Domenico Scarlatti was most likely premiered at the Palazzo Zuccari during Lent in 1709.³⁹⁴ It enjoyed considerable success, which is corroborated by the fact of its revival at Rome's Seminario Romano in 1715³⁹⁵ and by its productions shown in the later years in other Italian cities, such as Bologna and Forlì.³⁹⁶ Capece's libretto also attracted the interest of Prince

392 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara. Life and Venetian-Roman Oratorios* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2007), p. 66.

393 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara...*, p. 67.

394 A. Cametti, "Carlo Sigismondo Capece, (1652–1728): Alessandro e Domenico Scarlatti e la Regina di Polonia in Roma," *Musica d'oggi* 1931, No. 2, p. 60; U. Rolandi, "Opere, oratori e cantate di Domenico Scarlatti," in: *Gli Scarlatti (Alessandro-Francesco-Pietro-Domenico-Giuseppe). Note e documenti sulla vita e sulle opere. Raccolti in occasione della settimana celebrativa (15–21 settembre 1940)* (Siena: Accademia Musicale Chigiana, 1940), p. 85. Saverio Franchi quotes 1709 as the unquestionable date of the oratorio's premiere; cf. S. Franchi, *Drammaturgia romana 1701–1750...*, p. 67.

395 This is the version I have used for my analysis, since the 1709 libretto, held at the Vatican Library, proved inaccessible owing to this institution's temporary closure. *La conversione di Clodoveo Re di Francia. Oratorio del Sig. Carlo Sigismondo Capece. Posto in Musica dal Signor Domenico Scarlatti. Fatto cantare da Signori Convittori del Seminario Romano L'Anno 1715, I-Nc, shelf mark Rari 15.9/13.*

396 M. Di Martino, "Oblivio e recupero di un librettista settecentesco: Carlo Sigismondo Capece (1652–1728) e il melodrama arcadico," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1996 Nos 1–2, p. 46.

Ruspoli, who recommended it to his maestro di capella, Antonio Caldara. On 4th April 1715 and again on 15th March 1716, Caldara's new musical setting of Capecce's (slightly revised)³⁹⁷ text was presented as part of the famous oratorio concert cycle held by that aristocrat at his residence.³⁹⁸

The oratorio staged at the Palazzo Zuccari was a manifest of the Polish Queen's French loyalties during the War of the Spanish Succession, at the time when the imperial forces had won an overwhelming victory over the allied armies of France and Spain. This defeat led to the annexation by the emperor and his main ally, the Duke of Savoy, of the kingdoms of Sicily, Naples and Sardinia, as well as the Duchy of Milan, which had remained under the Spanish dominance for nearly 200 years. In 1708, Emperor Joseph I threatened to attack Rome and occupy the Papal State. Despite the risk of another sack of Rome, Pope Clement XI delayed the recognition of the imperial brother Charles's rights to the Spanish throne. He eventually approved of them on 15th January 1709, which outraged the French ambassador to Rome, who ostentatiously left the city.³⁹⁹ As we can see, the oratorio was presented at the Palazzo Zuccari in a period that was particularly difficult and humiliating for both the pope and the pro-French faction. It is hard to judge what attitude Marie Casimire wished to demonstrate by staging this work. Did she mean to prove her loyalty to her native country? Or flatter the pope? Or support the Bourbon policies and those of her son-in-law, Maximilian II Emmanuel? Or was it something else? From today's perspective, the ideological purport of this work appears as an act of political short-sightedness.

In accordance with the conventions of the day, *La conversione di Clodoveo, re di Francia* is a bipartite work featuring, as Spagna recommended, five *dramatis personae*: Clodovèo (Clovis I, king of the Salian Franks), Clotilde (his wife), San Remigio (Saint Remigius), Uberto, (captain of Clovis's army) and Angelo (the Angel). The composition opened most likely with a sinfonia featuring trumpets, as suggested by the first words of Uberto's aria *Franche trombe, con aure guerriere*, with which the text begins. In Caldara's setting it was a French-style overture;

397 The oratorio staged at the Palazzo Ruspoli was a composition for four voices, unlike the version for five soloists staged at the Palazzo Zuccari. The figure of the Angel was omitted in the Ruspoli version.

398 U. Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara...*, p. 157.

399 L. von Ranke, *Die römischen Päpste in den letzten vier Jahrhunderten (1834–1836)*, Vol. 3 *Achtes Buch. Die Päpste um die Mitte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts. Spätere Epochen 1* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1836), pp. 346–441, http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/ranke_paepste02_1836 (20th July 2020).

significantly, the only such one among the seventeen oratorios which he wrote before 1716, which confirms once again the political context of this work.⁴⁰⁰ It is thus also possible that a similar overture featured in Domenico Scarlatti's now unfortunately lost score. There are eleven arias in either part of the oratorio. In *parte prima* we hear four soloists, while in *parte seconda* one aria is sung by the Angel, who does not feature in part one. Closed numbers (see section 8.2) also include a duet in part two and the final chorus of the four protagonists (without the Angel).

The plot of this work is as follows: In the aria which opens *parte prima*, Uberto anticipates the French victory, and in the following recitative, praises the invincible Clovis, who has made the name of the Franks famous from the North pole to the shores of Africa. In the face of inevitable war with an (unspecified) enemy, the captain is convinced that his commander will defeat the foes, leading his loyal army. Clovis confirms that he is ready for a life-and-death struggle, but first he wishes to see his wife. The latter fears for his life since the king serves false deities, Jove and Mars. His spouse claims he should instead worship “un'increata Essenza, / Perfetta, incomprendibile, infiniti, / Da cui quant'è cerato, ha moto, e Vita” [“the non-created Essence / perfect, incomprehensible, and infinite / from which all that is created takes its motion and life”].⁴⁰¹

Clovis does not understand who the deity thus defined by his wife might possibly be, but Clotilde, who has been taught the principles of the Christian faith, explains that humans cannot comprehend the one who calls himself Infinite and Immortal. They should therefore follow blind faith, which will make them see more and see truly. Clovis bids farewell to his wife with words of love, but remains faithful to his old gods, who, he believes, will bring him another victory. At the same time, Remigius wonders why the belief in Christ has not yet reached the Frankish kingdom, but he hopes the Holy Cross will soon find its way to that nation as well. Clotilde tells Remigius that she is worried about her husband, ignorant of the true God. That conversation is interrupted by Uberto, who tells the queen her husband is bidding her to depart to a safe place. Clotilde intends to follow Clovis, but both Uberto and Remigius attempt to dissuade her, and she eventually yields to their persuasions.

400 U. Kirkendale, *The War of the Spanish Succession...*, p. 230.

401 C.S. Capece, *La conversione di Clodoveo re di Francia* (Roma: Gaetano Zenobj, 1715), p. 5.

In part two, Uberto urges the queen to leave promptly, but her hasty preparations are interrupted by the arrival of Clovis, who had won a victory over the enemy. The king thanks his spouse and claims that it had been her God who let him triumph. When he asked Him for help, the king felt a surge of strength in his breast, and this new strength allowed him to overcome the foes. He is therefore asking Remigius to baptise him as soon as possible. Uberto is similarly fascinated with the new God and His light. Clovis's baptism is held, after which an Angel appears and brings the king a lily as a symbol of pure faith that shall flourish in France ever after. He also prophesies that one of the king's descendants shall surpass Clovis in both deeds and fame. This is a reference to Louis XIV and to contemporary events. In the finale, the protagonists rejoice since they have found the true God.

By recalling Clovis's baptism, a historical event that took place in 496, Marie Casimire emphasised – through the agency of Capecé's text – the role of Louis XIV as a truly Catholic king and defender of Christianity. France's unique position in the Christian world is first prophesied by the Angel when he gives Clovis the golden lilies ("fiori di pura fede"), which from that moment on became the symbol of the French royalty. In the introduction to his translation of St Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, Raoul de Presles wrote in 1371 or 1372 that the three lilies on the French kings' coat of arms are a sign of the Holy Trinity, which was sent by God's angel to Clovis, the first Christian king. The angel told him to erase the three toads that had previously been painted on his shield and paint the three lilies in that place.⁴⁰² This legend proved extremely popular in the following centuries, despite being criticised by seventeenth-century rationalists. Capecé's libretto confirms the continued topicality of the 'myth of the lilies.' What is more, the conversations between Clovis and Clotilde, in which she tries to persuade him to accept her God as his own, prove that Sobieska's poet drew on medieval chronicles.⁴⁰³

For centuries, then, the God-given lilies adorned the French monarchs' attire and coat of arms, reminding everyone of the Holy Trinity's protection over the Kingdom of France. The floral emblem also linked the French royalty to

402 Raoul de Presles; information after: M. Pastoureau, "La symbolique du bois et des arbres dans les traditions médiévales," [chapter], in: *Symboles du Moyen Age: Animaux, végétaux, couleurs, objets* (Paris: Le Léopard d'or, 2012), pp. 309–320.

403 Cf. Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, in: J. H. Robinson, *Readings in European History* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1905), pp. 51–55.

Mary, Jesus's mother, since both were intermediaries between heaven and earth, between God and the subjects. The lilies sanctified the king's power as bestowed on him by the Almighty, and – what is important in the context of Capece's libretto – they underlined the religious dimension of the king's function.⁴⁰⁴ Recalling this legend in the context of the current political situation left the audience in no doubt as to who, according to Marie Casimire, had the right to call himself a Christian king by the will of God Himself. This status could not be taken away either by the victories of Emperor Leopold I or those of his son, Joseph I, or even more so, by the agreement imposed on Pope Clement XI. Louis XIV and his allies' temporary defeat did not affect the Polish Queen's faith in the power of France and in its ultimate triumph. The oratorio which carried this message must have found favourable reception with the pope and his supporters, since it upheld the illusion that the head of the Catholic Church still appointed his allies and protectors. Politically, however, this spectacle did not and could not have any consequences. In mid-February 1709, shortly before the pope's forcible reconciliation with the emperor, Konstanty Sobieski and the Polish Queen's granddaughter Marie Casimire Jr attended a ball held by Marquis de Prié, the imperial ambassador to Rome, dressed in rich costumes 'alla turchesca'.⁴⁰⁵ Such carnival outfits, behind the mask of the carnival conventions, reflected a well thought-out strategy. In both Vienna and Rome John III and his role in routing the Turks and saving Christendom were fading from memory.⁴⁰⁶ The costumes of the young Sobieskis, as descendants of their famous father and grandfather, reminded those present of John III's great victory near Vienna, which was part of the history of the Habsburg dynasty and their city, close to the Sobieskis' memory, but also most likely pleasing to the ball's patron and organiser. Apparently, the political situation did not prevent the Sobieskis from spending time enjoyably in the company of persons who

404 M. Pastoureau, "Vers un nouvel ordre..." pp. 309–320. The cited fragment follows the Polish edition, M. Pastoureau, *Średniowieczna gra symboli*, trans. H. Igalson-Tygielska (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2006), p. 116.

405 F. Valesio, *Diario di Roma...*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

406 Marie Casimire expresses this concept directly in a letter written to her eldest son as early as 1702: "Then I will send you by ordinary mail a cantata made by [name missing], which will be sung here with sumptuous music to mark the anniversary of Vienna's liberation, an event which ought to be reminded of to all those who would rather have everyone forget about it as they have done." NGAB, 695, op.1/ 271, c. 22–23v. I am grateful to Anna Czarnecka, PhD, for attracting my attention to this fragment.

belonged to the opposite faction; or at least that of Marie Casimire's political opponents. In her oratorio, the Polish Queen symbolically praised the heroic deeds of Louis XIV in the hope of reaching the Sun King's ears. It is possible that this gesture helped her earn the monarch's favours and influenced his decision to grant his permission for Marie Casimire to return to her mother country, where she spent her last days.

Conclusions

During her fifteen-year-long stay in the Eternal City, Marie Casimire took every effort to spread the Sobieskis' fame among its inhabitants, but also among Europe's high and mighty. She began by attentively observing the habits of Roman aristocrats and the *feste* held by ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries. Later she used these observations and experiences to create a 'Polish isle' at her *palazzo*, and a centre of John III's cult. She consistently strove to revive the memory of her famous husband and his services for Christendom, thus building her own position and prestige in the Eternal City. Such an approach allowed her to maintain an appearance of still being an influential figure not only in the Roman, but also in European politics.

Marie Casimire Sobieska never gave up the splendour proper to a monarch. Despite her ostentatious piety, she did not shun secular pleasures and consistently played the role of a queen, which led to numerous conflicts, both with the church hierarchs and with great Roman families. She reacted to these situations by emphasising her royal attributes with an even greater determination and demanding special treatment. With renewed energy she staged works which reminded the audience of her royal past and of John III's timeless contributions to European history. Her attitude was hardly surprising, considering the fact that she had spent most of her life at the Polish court, first attending on Marie Louise Gonzaga, and later – as the spouse to King John III. The 'Nobles' Democracy' offered her the crown, and consequently also the highest honours and power, all of which she lost, however, after her husband's death. It must have been difficult for her to get used to the new circumstances, especially since the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not guarantee safety to the family of the deceased ruler, and, even worse, provided no institutionalised respect for representatives of the authority. Though the queen could be accused on many occasions of unstatesmanlike behaviour and an unsteady character, one needs to take into account the difficult situation in which she found herself following her husband's death. Rome at least had no king, though it had a powerful ruler in the person of the pope who, as Marie Casimire was convinced, owed a debt of gratitude to John III. This influenced the Dowager Queen's choice of place in which to settle, and it helped her live with dignity through her first years in Rome.

When assessed from the perspective of her achievements in the fields of music and the Roman *feste*, Marie Casimire's stay in the Eternal City brought highly positive results. Each Christian nation wished to contribute to Rome's



Illustration 28. Double portrait of John III and Marie Casimire, 1739, S. Donnet from the medal of J. Höhn the Younger. The National Library of Poland.

life. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth achieved this goal, among other things, thanks to Sobieska – though she was so unpopular in Poland – and to her son Aleksander. The Polish Queen had several reasons to engage in artistic patronage. One of them was her subjective understanding of the current politics, and her ambivalent position in Rome as a queen without a crown. Another was her passion for entertainment, the theatre and music. She also wished to alleviate the ailing Prince Aleksander’s suffering by letting him supervise operatic productions. Finally, she accepted the principle, which she understood very well and practised with much success, that “there is no glory without melodies, without statues, without paintings, and that only the artistic formulas favoured in Rome could provide that adornment, that brightness without which life would be dull and languid.”¹ Since, however, Marie Casimire’s artistic patronage focused mainly on musical works, which were for the most part ephemera in those times, the material legacy that she left behind seemed of little significance to successive generations of scholars. From today’s perspective, however, her contributions to

1 M. Laurain-Portemer, qtd. after R. Freitas, *Portrait of a Castrato. Politics, Patronage, and Music in the Life of Atto Melani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 44–45.

musical life in Rome doubtlessly appear as a major achievement in the history of European, and indirectly also of Polish art.

If we compare the music events held at the Polish Queen's court, and the compositions which she inspired, with those presented at their palaces by Cardinal Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli, we cannot help but notice a difference between the artists they employed and those working for Sobieska. Ottoboni and Ruspoli hired well-known, experienced musicians, whom in many cases they specially invited to Rome for that purpose (for instance, Pollarolo and Caldara), but also those who were a guaranteed attraction (Handel). As representatives of the wealthiest and most influential Italian families, they could certainly afford it. Marie Casimire, born into a French noble family of modest means and married to an elective Polish king, even one so rich as John III Sobieski, did not have comparable funds at her disposal. In letters which she wrote to her eldest son Jakub Sobieski, the Queen frequently complains about the lack of money, about debts and the resulting bad mood. It was most likely her limited funds that made her choose as her *maestro di cappella* the young Domenico Scarlatti, who, though eminently talented, was undoubtedly less expensive to employ than his father. Marie Casimire's patronage proved to be a major point in Domenico's career, while the works he wrote in that period – and particularly in later years – confirmed that the Queen had made a good choice. The fact of his appointment to that prestigious post testifies to Sobieska's superior intuition. It should be stressed that the compositions he wrote for her are interesting, prove his immense sensitivity to the poetic text, and deserve to be revived and performed in our times. He was not an isolated case among the artists she hired. The same can be said about Filippo Juvarra, though his talent only came into full bloom after his departure from Rome. The hitherto underestimated poet Carlo Sigismondo Capece is likewise gaining recognition nowadays as one of the leading Italian librettists of that age, largely owing to the support he then received from the Polish Queen. Perfectly educated in both culture and ancient history, well versed in modern literature and theatre, he is praised for his creative blend of elements derived from various traditions, which he employed in works conceived as Marie Casimire's artistic responses to the current Roman and European political issues. Without this gifted librettist, the productions shown at the Palazzzo Zuccari would not have gained such acclaim among the Romans and such a positive reception reflected, among others, in diplomatic correspondence.

In the field of *dramma per musica*, Sobieska's patronage has earned a permanent place in the history of the operatic reform. Her name is associated not only with the members of the Roman Arcadia but also with artists who put ideas of academic reformers into practice. The compositions written for and staged at

the Palazzo Zuccari indirectly reflect Marie Casimire's intellectual stance. They indicate her preference for the pastoral aesthetic, but also her understanding and support (probably under the influence of Prince Aleksander) for tendencies which drew on the classical tradition and on the achievements of modern Italian literature and theatre. She may not have been well prepared for the perception of such art at the moment of her arrival in Rome, but she demonstrated a great openness of mind and an ability to absorb new experiences. In doing so she confirmed her mental capacity, once praised by ambassadors and other diplomats in their letters from Poland. Her stay in Rome clearly broadened her horizons, which had been shaped by a monastic school for girls and by the polish she acquired during her life at the court.

It should be stressed again that the works she commissioned, while contributing to the calendar of the Roman *feste*, at the same time reinforced her own policies of self-presentation (*serenate* in honour of John III, commemorating the Battle of Vienna). They demonstrate the links between music and politics in the early modern system of artistic patronage, thus providing scholars with extremely interesting material for analyses. On the other hand, regardless of their political and propagandist undertones, Sobieska's productions fully satisfied her guests' artistic sensitivities. They fitted very well into the musical aesthetics then dominant in Rome, and represented the highest artistic standards, as confirmed by the numerous positive opinions which her contemporaries passed on them.

A full reconstruction of the music life at the Palazzo Zuccari is no longer possible today. The court's documents are lost, as are most of the scores of works once performed there. This gap, now acutely experienced by both musicologists and music performers, will probably never be filled. Nevertheless, we may still count on fresh discoveries in Italy's countless, largely unexplored ecclesiastical and private archives. Future findings may shed light on Marie Casimire's possible links to Arcangelo Corelli, George Frederic Handel, Antonio Caldara, and others, but also reveal the names of other artists who followed her from Poland. Regardless of what the future may hold for this field of research, it is undisputable that the Polish Queen left a permanent mark in Rome, both as a music patron and as a contributor to Italian and Polish Baroque culture. Few persons in Polish history can boast similar achievements. Viewed from this perspective, Marie Casimire Sobieska emerges as an extraordinary and eminent figure.



Illustration 29. Lid painting on Marie Casimire's virginal, H. van Balen? Seventeenth century. King John III's Palace at Wilanów. Photogr. Z. Reszka.

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Library abbreviations:

B-Bc, Brussels, Conservatoire Royal de Musique
 D-Bsa, Berlin, Sing-Akademie
 D-Bsb, Berlin, Stadtbibliothek, Musikbibliothek
 D-Dl, Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek
 D-Hs, Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietzky
 D-Mhsa, Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
 D-Msa, Munich, Staatsarchiv
 D-MÜs, Münster, Santini-Bibliothek
 F-Pn, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France
 GB-BEL, Belton House
 GB-Lbl, Londyn, The British Library
 I-Bu, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria
 I-Fn, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale
 I-MOe, Modena, Biblioteca Estense
 I-Nc, Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella
 I-Nn, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale „Vittorio Emanuele III“
 I-Rasv, Rome, Archivio Segreto Vaticano
 I-Rvat, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
 Rc, Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense
 I-Rli, Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana
 I-Rn, Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II
 I-Ru, Rome, Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina
 I-Vgc, Venice, Biblioteca dell’Istituto di Storia dell’Arte. Fondazione Giorgio Cini
 I-Vnm, Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
 I-Vsf, Venice, Biblioteca S. Francesco della Vigna
 US-NH, New Hampton, Yale University, Music Library

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1.1 *Libretti of drammi per musica for Palazzo Zuccari:*

- *Il figlio delle selve*, 1709

- *Silvia*, 1710
- *Tolomeo et Alessandro ovvero La corona disprezzata*, 1711
- *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazia*, 1711
- *Tetide in Sciro*, 1712
- *Ifigenia in Aulide*, 1713
- *Ifigenia in Tauri*, 1713
- *L'Amor d'un'Ombra e gelosia d'un'Aura*, 1714, i jako *Il Narciso*, 1720

1.2 *Libretti of cantatas, serenatas and oratorios performer in Rome under the patronage of Marie Casimire Sobieska with libretti by C.S. Capece unless otherwise stated:*

- *Tebro fatidico e introduzione al ballo dell'Aurora*, 1704
- *Applausi del- Sole e della Senna*, 1704
- *L'Amicizia d'Hercole, e Theseo ed introduzione al ballo della Gloria*, 1707
- *La vittoria della Fede*, 1708
- *La conversione di Clodoveo re di Francia*, 1709
- *La Gloria innamorata*, 1709, lib. G. Buonaccorsi
- *Applauso Devoto al nome di Maria Santissima*, 1712

1.3 *Libretti of musical works dedicated to Marie Casimire Sobieska:*

- *La Fede trionfante nel martirio di S. Agapito*, lib. P.T. Vagni, mus. G. Scalmani, 1701
- *Il Console in Egitto*, lib. probably by P. Ottoboni, mus. by unknown composer, 1701
- *L'Amor Divino, e la Fede*, libr P. Ottoboni, mus. A. Scarlatti or F. Amadei, 1703
- *Santissima Annunziata*, lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. A. Scarlatti?, 1700, I-Rn

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- *L'Engelberta*, lib. A. Zeno i P. Pariati, adapted for Rome probably by G. D. Pioli, mus. probably by A. Orefice and F. Mancini, adapted for Rome probably by G.M. Orlandini (1711), 1711

1.5 *Libretti of musical works staged in private theaters of other Roman patrons, rivals to Marie Casimiere's opera theatre:*

- *L'Adrasto*, lib. D. Renda, mus. P. P. Bencini, 1702
- *Il Costantino pio*, lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. C.F. Pollarolo, 1710
- *Teodosio il giovane*, lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. F. Amadei, 1711
- *Il Ciro*, lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. A. Scarlatti, 1712
- *La costanza in amor vince l'inganno*, lib. by unknown poet, mus. A. Caldara, 1711
- *L'Anagilda*, lib. G. Gigli, mus. A. Caldara, 1711

1.6 *Libretti of drammi per musica staged in the years of 1710–1715 in Teatro Capranica:*

- *Dorisbe ovvero L'Amor volubile, e tiranno*, lib. G.D. Pioli, mus. A. Scarlatti, 1710
- *L'Engelberta*, see 1.4
- *La fede tradita e poi vendicata*, lib. F. Silvani with modifications probably by C.S. Capece, mus. F. Gasparini, for Rome adapted by G.M. Orlandini, 1712
- *Ataulfo re dei Goti*, lib. D. David with modifications probably by C.S. Capece, mus. G.M. Orlandini, 1712
- *Publio Cornelio Scipione*, lib. A. Piovene, mus. C.F. Pollarolo, for Rome adapted probably by G. M. Orlandini, 1713
- *L'amor tirannico*, lib. D. Lalli with modifications by unknown poet, mus. F. Gasparini for Rome adapted by G.M. Orlandini, 1713
- *Lucio Papirio*, lib. A. Salvi, mus. F. Gasparini, 1714
- *Tito e Berenice*, lib. C.S. Capece, mus. A. Caldara, 1714
- *L'Ambleto*, lib. A. Zeno i P. Pariati, mus. D. Scarlatti, 1715
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- *La Statira* (Rome 1690), lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. A.Scarlatti
- *L'Ottavia restituita al trono* (Naples 1703), lib. G. Convò, mus. D. Scarlatti, I-Nc, Olim. XXXII.2.33
- *Rodrigo* (Florence 1707), lib. by unknown poet, assigned to A. Salvi, mus. G.F. Händel
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- *Il Ciro* (Rome 1712), lib. P. Ottoboni, mus. A. Scarlatti, B-Bc, L. 2351
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- *Astarto* (Rome 1715), lib. A. Zeno and P. Pariati, mus. G. Bononcini, D-MÜs, Sant. Hs. 4137
- *Ottone in villa* (Vicenza 1713), lib. D. Lalli, mus. A. Vivaldi
- *Orlando finto pazzo* (Venice 1714), lib. G. Braccioli, mus. A. Vivaldi
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- *Berenice regina d'Egitto* (Rome 1718), lib. A. Salvi, mus. D. Scarlatti (5 arias), D-MÜs, Sant. Hs. 185
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- *Giovanni Francesco Cecconi, Roma sacra, e moderna già descritta dal Pancirolo ed accresciuta da Francesco Posterla [...]* Aggiuntovi anche in fine un Diario

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