

# Migration and Biography

## The Case of Agostino Steffani

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The subject of this essay is the relationship between the study of musical migration and the writing of musical biography. The discussion revolves around the life of Agostino Steffani (1654-1728), an Italian composer, diplomat and Catholic bishop who worked mainly in Germany but spent time also in France, Savoy and the Netherlands and occasionally returned to his native country. Music was his *métier* during the first half of his career: having studied as a singer and keyboard player, he was employed as a performer and composer in Munich and Hanover. Diplomatic responsibility came his way at Munich and preoccupied him during the second half of his Hanover period. The church dominated the last third of his life, in Düsseldorf and Hanover (again), but his interest in religion had its roots in his youth. Steffani's life prompts the general observations on migration (studies) and biography with which this essay concludes.

### Introduction

The word 'migration' means little more than movement from one place to another. A migrant may be an individual, a group or a mass of people, and the places involved may be large or small – continents, countries, regions, towns or institutions. In the world of nature, 'migration' traditionally refers, in UK English, to the movement of groups rather than individuals. Birds may spend the summer in one country and 'migrate' to another for the winter. Seasonal journeys are undertaken also by some fish and mammals, including *homo sapiens*.

Human beings migrate either because they feel they have to or because they want to. The causes of their migrations are many and varied but include such factors as economic hardship and fear of persecution: the migration of Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and of Jews in the twentieth century are well known examples. Some migrations lead to permanent settlement, others to extended visits. The dividing line between compulsory and voluntary or permanent and temporary migration is not always clear.

When human beings migrate, they take music with them. The Moors carried their music and instruments to Spain when they invaded the country in the eighth century. When Christian crusaders campaigned in the Holy Land a few centuries later, or when Europeans sailed to America, they were accompanied by music and musicians. Sometimes the music of the travelers influenced that of the indigenous population, sometimes the reverse, but in the examples given above the arrival of foreign music in a new land was incidental – a by-product of human migration. Some may claim that music ‘migrates’ in manuscript or print, but the movement of notated music depends on human action and is more accurately defined as dissemination, distribution, publication or transmission.

Musicians have long been required to travel as part of their employment. Members of the chapel of a monarch or magnate had to move with his household. The musicians who accompanied King Henry VIII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 were in this position, as were those, including Monteverdi, who accompanied Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga to Hungary in 1595. A hundred years later the composer and organist Pietro Torri was led a merry dance by Elector Maximilian II Emanuel of Bavaria after his appointment as governor of the Spanish Netherlands, being taken to Brussels in 1692, to Munich in 1701, back to Brussels in 1704 and to several other places between 1706 and 1715. Nowadays, opera singers and concert artists regard travel as an essential part of their job: if they are not flying from place to place, they are not succeeding at an international level. In this sense, their journeys bear comparison with those of their predecessors and of itinerant musicians in any period.

The first substantial migration of musicians in Europe was confined to the mainland and involved northern composers traveling to Italy during the Renaissance. Well known examples include Du Fay in Bologna and Rome, Josquin Desprez in Milan and Rome, Josquin and Obrecht in Ferrara, Willaert and Schütz in Venice, the first as *maestro di cappella* of

St Mark's, the other as a student of Giovanni Gabrieli. The traffic was not immediately two-way, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when opera, concerto, oratorio, sonata and cantata were in the ascendant, Italian composers and performers could be found all over the continent. Opera was taken to France by two Italians, Luigi Rossi and Francesco Cavalli, and the *tragédie lyrique* was created there by their compatriot Giovanni Battista Lulli, who had settled in Paris and become naturalized. Italian musicians also moved in large numbers into the courts of Austria, Germany and eighteenth-century Russia.<sup>1</sup>

Musicians who wanted to travel between Europe and Britain faced the obstacle of the Channel. Not many Britons migrated to the continent in the seventeenth century. Peter Philips and John Bull fled to the Netherlands, William Brade worked in north Germany and Denmark, John Dowland held an appointment at the Danish court, and after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 the seventeen-year-old Pelham Humfrey studied for three years in France and Italy. In addition to the Channel, continental Catholics wishing to travel to Britain were confronted by the question of religion. As Oliver Neighbour remarked, 'London – distant, damp and heretical – would scarcely have been their first choice as a place of employment'.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, they came, even in the 1500s, and the Bassanos, Lupos and Ferraboscos were followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Giovanni Battista Draghi, Luis Grabu, Nicola Matteis and Pietro Reggio, not to mention such north Europeans as Thomas Baltzar, Gottfried Finger, John Ernest Galliard, Jakob Greber, John Frederick Lampe and Johann Christoph Pepusch. These and other migrant musicians enriched the population of one of the largest, most cosmopolitan and most prosperous cities in Europe. If the future of London as the center of the cultural, economic, political, religious and social life of Great Britain was assured by the accession in 1714 of Elector Georg Ludwig of Hanover as King George I, the formation five years later of the Royal Academy of Music offered employment to a large number of foreigners, among them opera librettists, stage designers, singers, orchestral players and composers, including, of course, Handel. Handel could be described as a serial migrant, moving from Halle to Hamburg to Italy to Hanover to London. He may also have been unusual in paying a preliminary visit to London before settling and becoming a subject of his adoptive country.

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1 STROHM, 2001.

2 NEIGHBOUR, 1978, p. 257.

## Steffani's migrations

Steffani, like Handel, was both a visitor and a settler, migrating from country to country and from city to city. His first change of scene hardly counts, because he did not move far from his home town: after early schooling in Castelfranco, he transferred to nearby Padua and became a choirboy at the Basilica del Santo. In an autobiographical letter of 1706 he states that in Padua he was presented to Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria, who was so impressed by his talents that he invited him to Munich.<sup>3</sup> This was not a case of child abduction (Steffani was only twelve years old), nor an entirely voluntary migration. The elector traveled via Castelfranco, where he discussed his proposal with the boy's parents. Acknowledging, presumably, that their son would receive an excellent education in Munich, they agreed to the plan. Steffani moved there in the summer of 1667, and his family followed him in the late 1670s. That he was based there for twenty-one years suggests that the arrangement was a success.

Steffani's migration to Munich was the first of six in which he was a settler. These form the framework of his career (see Table 1). In the same letter of 1706 he claims that he left Munich because of a wrong done to his brother.<sup>4</sup> Details of the incident are lacking, but it is clear that Steffani's acceptance of the post of *Kapellmeister* at Hanover in 1688 was motivated by musical considerations. The duke, Ernst August, was building a new opera house there, with state-of-the-art scenery and machines. He already had an excellent orchestra, with French or Walloon woodwind and string players, and an Italian poet – (Bartolomeo) Ortensio Mauro – who could be persuaded to write librettos, but he lacked a first-rate musician to compose opera and direct its performance. He knew Steffani and may have heard some of his music, and the composer was

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3 “Alla prima [corte] fui condotto giovinetto dal defonto Elettore Ferdinando Maria, al quale presentato in Padova ove studio frà molti altri ragazzi, s’invogliò d’una certa tal qual di me non sò per qual destino [...]” Steffani to Count Antonio Maria Fede, 11 July 1706 (Rome, Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu di Propaganda Fide, Archivio Storico, Fondo Spiga, vol. 39), cited in TIMMS, 2003, p. 317.

4 “Partii da quella corte di mala grazia per un aggravio fatto ad un mio unico fratello dal Conte di Sanfrè, che doveva à me solo tutte le sue fortune.” *IBID.*, p. 318.

ready to move. The works he created for Hanover in 1689-1695 were the high point of Baroque opera at the court.<sup>5</sup>

*Table 1: The migrations and major visits of Agostino Steffani*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Migrations</b>	<b>Major visits</b>
1667	From Padua to Munich	
1672-4		From Munich to Rome and back
1678-9		From Munich to Paris, returning via Turin
1682-3		From Munich to Hanover and back
1688	From Munich to Hanover	
1693-1710		From Hanover to Brussels and back, many times
1701-2		From Hanover to Munich and back
1703	From Hanover to Düsseldorf	
1708-9		From Düsseldorf to Rome and back
1709	From Düsseldorf to Hanover	
1722	From Hanover to Padua	
1725	From Padua to Hanover	

His migration to Düsseldorf in 1703 was also motivated by a desire to develop his career, this time as a man of the church. To explain this change of direction we must backtrack on two fronts. Steffani had served Hanover not only as a musician but also as a diplomat.<sup>6</sup> Even at Munich he had undertaken a diplomatic mission: in 1682-3 he had visited Hanover in order to explore the possibility of a marriage between the new Bavarian elector, Max Emanuel, and Princess Sophie Charlotte. He had become acquainted with the Hanoverian court and impressed the duke and

<sup>5</sup> See KEPPLER, 1968, and WALLBRECHT, 1974.

<sup>6</sup> See KAUFOLD, 1997.

duchess, a granddaughter of King James I of England and therefore an heir to the throne. Thus, when Elector Ernst August recruited Steffani as *Kapellmeister*, he knew that he was also an able diplomat.

Ernst August had need of skilful negotiators. His overriding ambition was that his duchy should be raised to an electorate. To this end the (Lutheran) duke required the backing of the (Catholic) emperor and electors. He had supported the emperor with troops for campaigns against the Turks in the 1680s, and he calculated that his investment in opera would impress his peers and superiors. Knowing that Steffani was well acquainted with Max Emanuel and his consort, Archduchess Maria Antonia, and that he had a flair for diplomacy, he appointed him Hanoverian *envoyé extraordinaire* to the Bavarian court in Brussels, where the elector had resided since 1692 as governor of the Spanish Netherlands. Steffani's mission was to obtain Bavaria's support for Hanover's elevation, which had been agreed in principle, and to negotiate a defense treaty between the two powers. His diplomatic responsibilities increased to the extent that he was unable to compose an opera for 1696 or 1697, and the theater at Hanover was closed on the death of Ernst August in January 1698. During the build-up to the War of the Spanish Succession, Steffani spent all his time and energy trying to persuade Max Emanuel to side with the emperor, not Louis XIV. When, on 8 September 1702, the elector besieged Ulm, Steffani knew he had failed and suffered a nervous breakdown. He recovered his equilibrium by immersing himself in his chamber duets, revising many of them and starting to make a new manuscript collection.

He did not finish this project before migrating to Düsseldorf. Here he was installed as president of the Spiritual Council for the Palatinate and the duchies of Jülich and Berg and embarked with Elector Johann Wilhelm on a mission to convert north Germany back to the Catholic faith. This was less of a change of direction than it may seem. Steffani had been a priest since 1680, Abbot of Löpsingen since 1683 and an Apostolic Protonotary since at least 1695. At Hanover his interest in the church had been constrained by the religious orientation of the court. Music had provided comfort, even therapy, during his breakdown, but the church offered alternative and possibly more reliable prospects for his future. This presumably explains why he moved to Düsseldorf. His appointment in 1706-7 as Titular Bishop of Spiga and in April 1709 as Apostolic Vicar of North Germany ensured that he would serve the Catholic church for the remaining twenty-five years of his life.

His migrations, however, were not over, for in November 1709 he returned to Hanover. There are good reasons why, as Apostolic Vicar, he based himself there. Soon after arriving in Düsseldorf he had been promoted General President of the Palatine Government and Council and charged by Johann Wilhelm with overhauling the administration, eradicating corruption and punishing its perpetrators. In the process he had made enemies and been frustrated by the elector's frequent absence. He had never experienced such difficulties before: at Hanover he had worked closely with the elector and his family and had formed friendships with many members of the court. Lying north-east of Düsseldorf, Hanover was a more convenient center from which to administer his gargantuan parish, as earlier vicars had found. Furthermore, as a condition of the electorate Ernst August had agreed to the construction in Hanover of a Catholic church; since Steffani had helped negotiate this agreement, he wanted to see it fulfilled. All in all, his return to Hanover – the city, not the court – would benefit the cause of Catholicism.

During the next thirteen years his work as Apostolic Vicar consumed nearly all his time, energy and money. By 1722 he was so exhausted and frustrated that he resorted again to migration. His destination this time was Italy: after a short period in Venice he retired to Padua, where his career had begun. He probably did not know how long he would stay, but the fact that he acquired his own accommodation suggests that he intended to settle there. After he had left Hanover, however, conditions for the Catholic community, which had been deteriorating since Georg Ludwig's departure for London, grew rapidly worse. His friends implored him to come back and restore order, and he eventually acceded to their requests. In 1725, at over seventy years of age, he made the long return journey to Hanover – his final significant migration.

## Steffani's visits

Steffani also made six substantial visits, lasting months or even years, to places where he had no intention of settling. Three of these visits took place during his Munich years. The purpose of the first was entirely musical: in October 1672, at the age of eighteen, he was sent to Rome to study composition with Ercole Bernabei, director of the Cappella Giulia. Two years later, after publishing his *Psalmodia vespertina* (Rome 1674),

he returned to Munich with Bernabei, who had just been appointed *Kapellmeister*. Steffani's second visit concerned both his education as a musician and his development as a courtier. The Bavarian electress, Henrietta Adelaide, a princess of Savoy who died in 1676, was a cousin of King Louis XIV. Between July 1678 and May 1679 Steffani visited both Paris and Turin, the courts to which she had been related, and was received as a Bavarian representative. In Paris he played the harpsichord for the king and assimilated the style of French music. His harpsichord playing was also admired in Turin, especially by 'Madama Reale' (the regent, Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoie-Nemours), but his visit was cut short by the illness of Elector Ferdinand Maria, who died before he could get back to Munich. Steffani's third visit was his mission to Hanover on the possible marriage of Ferdinand Maria's son to Sophie Charlotte. That Max Emanuel could entrust this important matter to Steffani reflects the fact that he had known him for fifteen years, as a teenager and a young man, and that the composer was now an accomplished diplomat.

All the visits of Steffani's Hanover and Düsseldorf periods were made for reasons of diplomacy. As Hanoverian special envoy to the Bavarian court in Brussels, he was constantly on the road, not just between Brussels and Hanover but also to The Hague (Den Haag), Liège, Düsseldorf, Nancy, Cologne, Bonn, Koblenz and Antwerp. In 1701, as the War of the Spanish Succession approached, Max Emanuel returned to Munich. So did Steffani, who in the following summer visited Hanover, Koblenz, Bonn, Düsseldorf and Vienna in a last-ditch attempt to bring the elector round. His failure and its consequences have already been mentioned. His most important visit as a servant of Düsseldorf was a mission to Rome to mediate between the emperor and the pope. He arrived in November 1708 and proposed a compromise that was accepted by both parties in January 1709. The pope rewarded him by appointing him a Domestic Prelate and an Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, as well as Apostolic Vicar of North Germany.

Steffani's arrangements for his journey to Rome merit scrutiny. On 16 September 1708 he wrote to Count Antonio Maria Fede, the Tuscan and Palatine diplomatic resident in Rome:

"I shall be leaving [Düsseldorf], therefore, in a few days and using post-horses; but since it is impossible for me to make this journey without stopping at Koblenz, Mainz, Frankfurt, Würzburg, Augsburg,

Innsbruck, Verona and Florence, Your Most Illustrious Lordship can well judge that I will not have the consolation of embracing you before the end of October. I shall only be bringing one chaplain, one secretary, one valet, one cook and two grooms; I shall have to put Your Most Illustrious Lordship to the inconvenience of providing me with the other personnel that I shall need, particularly a good dean. Would you send your response to this [letter] to Marquis Michele Sagramoso in Verona.”<sup>7</sup>

That Steffani and his staff used post-horses indicates that the latter were quick and that his mission was secret: if the party had used private coaches, it would have been conspicuous. The itinerary allowed him to hold discussions with Catholic dignitaries *en route* and make an unplanned detour to Vienna. He probably left Düsseldorf in late September, was in Augsburg on 6 October and Innsbruck six days later; having picked up his post in Verona, he arrived in Rome on 7 November. On the way back he took a different route through Italy. Leaving Rome in late April, he was in Florence on 5 May and Venice by the 13th. There he stayed on the Grand Canal in the palace of Georg Ludwig of Hanover, who had invited him to use it.<sup>8</sup> He then spent two days in Padua before traveling overland to Mainz, where he picked up a sloop belonging to Johann Wilhelm that delivered him to Düsseldorf in early June.

7 “Io partirò dunque frà pochi giorni, e mi servirò di Cavalli di Posta, mà come non è possibile che io faccia questo viaggio senza fermarmi à Confluenza, à Magonza, à Francfort, à Erbpoli, à Augusta, à Inspruck, à Verona, et à Firenze, V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma può ben giudicare che io non potrò haver la consolatione di abbracciarla prima del fine del prossimo Ottobre. Io non condurrò seco che un Cappellano, un Segretario, un Cameriere, un Cuoco, e due Staffieri; il resto della gente che mi bisognerà, e particolarmente un buon Decano, toccherà à V. S. Ill:ma l’Incommodo di provedermene. Habbia ella la risposta di questa in Verona nelle mani del Sig[no]r Marchese Michele Sagramosa.” Steffani to Count Antonio Maria Fede, 16 September 1708 (Fondo Spiga [see note 3], vol. 39).

8 Steffani’s autograph letter accepting the invitation is reproduced in TIMMS, 2003, p. 93.

## Steffani's journeys

In addition to his migrations and visits Steffani made countless other journeys for a variety of reasons. A summary must suffice. At Padua he acquired such a high reputation as a choirboy that he was invited to sing in Ferrara, Vicenza and Monselice and, at the ages of eleven and twelve, appeared on the Venetian stage in operas by his colleague, Carlo Pallavicino. During his Munich years he paid two or three visits to Italy, and when he left Munich in May 1688 he returned to Venice before moving to Hanover. As a Hanoverian diplomat he traveled far and wide. During his first five years at Düsseldorf (1703-8), he made one or more return journeys to Herten (the rural seat of the count of Nesselrode-Reichenstein), The Hague, Bensberg, Bamberg, Hanover and Cologne, and circular trips to Leipzig, Dresden and Heidelberg and to Hanover and Wolfenbüttel.

His most punishing schedule, however, began after his return to Hanover as Apostolic Vicar in November 1709. Some of his journeys during this period were frequent and routine, but in January 1710 he embarked on a two-year programme of visitations to the various parts of his vicariate. That month he traveled from Hanover to Brunswick, to Wolfenbüttel, to Celle and back; in February he returned to Brunswick and Wolfenbüttel; in March he went to Düsseldorf and Cologne and back. And so it went on, for month after month: the details are known, because he made a note of the dates, destinations and distances (in leagues).<sup>9</sup> Many of the visits were to nearby courts, monasteries or missions, but others took him farther afield. In the autumn of 1710 he traveled from Hanover to Bamberg and back and in the following year undertook a three-stage visit to Berlin: from Hanover to Celle to Berlin; from Berlin to Lindenberg (Mecklenburg) and back; and from Berlin back to Hanover via Magdeburg and Halberstadt. He entertained high hopes about this visit to Prussia but received a frosty welcome from King Friedrich I and returned from the capital empty-handed.

During the following ten years the vicar made similar journeys, but fewer of them. He usually spent part of the winter at Neuhaus and part of the summer at Herten. In October 1727 he left Hanover with the intention of returning to Italy. By the end of the month he was in Frankfurt, where he visited his close friend Lothar Franz von Schönborn, prince-bishop of

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9 See TIMMS, 2003, p. 105.

Bamberg and elector-archbishop of Mainz, who had consecrated him as bishop. In January 1728 he was invited to Herten but did not go, and on 12 February he died in Frankfurt.

It is impossible to establish exactly how many kilometers Steffani traveled during his life, but the total may lie between 45,000 and 50,000 – about 800 kilometers a year for sixty years. This is an astonishing number, especially considering the methods of transport available and the difficulties that travel entailed.<sup>10</sup>

## Migration and biography

Although Steffani's career was exceptional, it exemplifies a number of general points. In the Early Modern Period, at least, the main reason why musicians migrated is so that they could study or work elsewhere, often outside their native country. A 'musical' migrant could be anyone associated with the provision of music, whether a composer, singer, instrumentalist, instrument maker, copyist, choreographer or even librettist. 'Study' could mean instruction, more or less formal, with a teacher or at an institution, or simply immersion or participation in an unfamiliar musical culture. Some musicians migrated to take up posts to which they had already been appointed or to offer their services to potential patrons. Others presumably traveled in hope – the hope of finding more and better opportunities to ply their trade and make a living.

The effects of musical migration were no less diverse than the causes and were felt by both the migrant and the host. The principal effect may be summarized, perhaps, as 'the transfer of practices or ideas from one person, group or environment to another'.<sup>11</sup> Such transfers could take place in any of several musical domains, have a local, regional or national impact and make a short- or a long-term impression. One effect of migration in the sphere of composition was the transmission of a musical form or style from one party to another, a process that could be transformative: one example of this, perhaps, is the response of Thomas Morley and his contemporaries to the Italian madrigal, although the changes

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10 A discussion of transport was included here when the essay was read at the workshop.

11 Other effects were felt by those whom the migrant left behind – a point easily overlooked.

undergone by secular English vocal music during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I were due less to the migration of Italian composers than to the importation of sources of their works. In the realm of performance the effects of migration might bear fruit in the design, production and playing techniques of musical instruments, in the composition of ensembles, in the circumstances of performance or in such matters as interpretation and ornamentation.

The effects of migration and travel are illustrated by Steffani's life and works. His early visits to Rome and Paris helped shape the musical language of the music, especially the operas, that he composed at Munich and Hanover in the 1680s and '90s. The effect of his visit to Paris also had more far-reaching and long-lasting consequences. His Hanover operas were staged at Hamburg in the late 1690s, and Roger published the instrumental movements from them at Amsterdam in 1706.<sup>12</sup> As a result, Steffani's music reached a much wider public, including composers and performers, than it would otherwise have done and contributed to the development of a musical language, combining Italian and French elements, that was 'spoken' by the next generation of composers, including Handel, Bach and Telemann. It could therefore be argued that the style of north German music in the first half of the eighteenth century was partly an effect of Steffani's visit to Paris in 1678-9.

When migration plays a part in a musician's career, it naturally belongs in an account of his life. The student of migration and the writer of biography depend on similar sources, many of them preserved in the archives of courts, educational institutions, political organizations or ecclesiastical establishments, or among the private papers of families or individuals. Unless the collection is thoroughly indexed, which is rarely the case, the best way of working in an archive is to examine a complete set of papers from beginning to end, taking note of everything of interest or of relevance to the subject. In this way one develops an understanding of the collection, of the kinds of information it contains or insights it may yield, and of how such information or insights may be interpreted. This *modus operandi* probably suits the student of migration better than the biographer, who is more likely to be looking for information on a particular individual. Unfortunately, leafing through an archive in search of specific information can be like looking for a needle in a haystack: in

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12 *Sonata da Camera à tre Due Violini Alto e Basso del Signore Stephani Abate &c.*, Amsterdam. RASCH assigns this undated publication to 1706.

this respect there can be a mismatch between the demands of archival research and the needs of a biographer.

A biographer's task increases in size and difficulty if his subject traveled extensively. Over the course of his career Steffani met a large number of people in various parts of Europe and corresponded with many more. The majority of the letters that he sent or received, and most of his numerous reports and memoranda on political and ecclesiastical affairs, date from his forty years in Hanover and Düsseldorf. When he set off from Hanover in October 1727, he left behind a large collection of documents that is now in the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv (Standort Hannover), but he took with him three chests of papers which, after his death, were sent to the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome.<sup>13</sup> However, because he was a frequent migrant and a prolific correspondent, documents relating to him also survive elsewhere, in the archives of the many institutions or people with whom he had dealings. It is difficult to imagine any single biographer examining all the collections that might yield information on him, so no monographic biography of Steffani is likely to be complete.

This problem could possibly be solved by a team-based approach to archival research, but the solution could highlight a further difficulty. The idea of 'completeness' is suspect: a document revealing, for example, that Steffani's breakfast included hot chocolate, rather than coffee, would be of interest but might not merit inclusion in a study of his life and works. The construction of biography involves selection, and the selecting must be done by somebody with a view of the subject, based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of all the available information, who wishes to communicate his or her view to other people. This is the task of a biographer. A biographer decides which pieces of information to include, how much weight to attach to each and how to interpret them. Like a sculptor, a biographer chips away unwanted material until the subject is clear.

A biography of a musician is normally concerned with both the person and his or her music. The relationship between person and music can be reciprocal: the music can be regarded as part of the person's character of

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13 Musical papers eventually "passed into the hands of his heirs, who did not take such account of them as they deserved" ("Le carte di Musica passarono in mano degli Eredi, che non ne tennero quel conto, che meritavano"). RICCATI, 1779, p. 26. For discussion of Steffani's estate, see TIMMS, 2003, pp. 134-135.

which it is also, in some senses, a reflection. Like all human beings, musicians are conditioned by their education, training and employment, not to mention the circumstances of their birth and existence, but a historical musician is not merely an example of a kind. One of the most important and rewarding challenges for a biographer is to identify and account for the individuality of the subject. In this respect biography may seem old-fashioned compared with other kinds of musicology, including migration studies; yet it seems likely to survive, because it brings together pairs of individuals – subject with author, author with reader, reader with subject.

This leads, finally, to the main difference between migration studies and biography. The difference has less to do with substance than with emphasis and purpose. Put simply, migration study focuses on a single kind of event or action involving any number of people, while biography deals with many kinds of event or action revolving round a single individual. It is true that there are biographical studies of musical institutions and ensembles, but normally a musical biography is concerned with a single composer or performer. If the musician in question was a migrant, an account of his or her migration will form part of the biography, but the center of attention must be the life and works as a whole. Since so many musicians of the Early Modern Period migrated so often and traveled so far and wide, the study of migration has much to offer to the writing of biography, but so does biography to migration studies: in order to understand any migration as a phenomenon one must understand the context in which it took place, and this context includes the life of the migrant(s) concerned.

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