

Spread of Italian Libretti

Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart – a Patron of Roman Operas

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The spreading or migration of different libretti is well-documented in the history of opera during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. A striking case in point is the popularity of Pietro Metastasio's libretti during the eighteenth century: numerous composers throughout Europe and beyond repeatedly set them to music. Sometimes, Metastasio's text was presented in its original form, but more often, it was modified and adapted to a given venue and performers. Many studies have been written on such adaptations of Metastasio's libretti.¹

Another example of libretto migration is the incorporation of fragments of an older into an entirely new text. This was notably the case of the birthday cantata dedicated to the young Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart in Rome in 1719. The title page of that composition, based on a text by Francesco Bianchini and music (now lost) by D. Giovanni Giorgi Veneziano, reads as follows: *CANTATA / PER IL GIORNO NATALIZIO / Della Sacra Reale Maestà Britannica / DI / CLEMENTINA / REGINA*

1 The literature on the spread, multiple settings, and adaptation of Metastasio's libretti is sizeable. The majority of authors who focus on selected composers, operatic works, or themes indicate that Metastasio wrote the original text. Therefore, it is impossible to quote the entire literature: I shall list selected writings that analyze the adaptations of a given libretto, e.g. WEICHLIN, 1956; DEMMEL, 1979; SPRAGUE, 1979; WILSON, 1982; ARSHAGOUNI, 1994; selected articles in HILSCHER/SOMMER-MATHIS, 2000.

*D'INGHILTERRA &c. / In cui si allude alla unione delle due stelle, dette benefice, / che accade in quel dì 17. Luglio 1719. ed all' / Accademia tenuta, e stampata in Roma / l'anno 1687. dalla Maestà della fu / Regina CHRISTINA DI SVEZIA. / In occasione della solenne Ambasciata, spedita alla S. Sede / nell'assunzione al Trono d'Inghilterra della Maestà / DEL RE' GIACOMO SECONDO. / Di gloriosa memoria, / Con riferirsi i sentimenti della celebre Orazione, / e le parole de' Versi allora composti / dalli Accademici Reali / DEDICATA A SUA MAESTA' BRITANNICA. / Da Monsignore Francesco Bianchini Cameriere d'Onore / di Nostro Signore.*² The cantata composed for Sobieska is based on a fragment of a work performed during a musical celebration organized by Christina of Sweden in 1687 in honor of the English ambassador of King James II. Apart from illustrating a certain type of musical text migration, the example also shows that some circumstantial texts with a political character, held in large palatial libraries, continued to be known and reused for many years after their creation.

My MusMig project focuses on a group of selected Italian libretti from the *opera seria* genre that enjoyed great popularity in the Early Modern Era. My research investigates not the spreading of a single libretto set to music in different European centers, but rather the migration of a given operatic theme, usually under the same title. This approach was partly inspired by an article by Robert Freeman, *The Travels of Partenope*, which analyzed the mechanism of spreading of *Partenope*, one of Silvio Stampiglia's most popular texts, in thirteen adaptations.³ Freeman notably analyzed the changes introduced into Stampiglia's original text and their character; the succession of scenes and *liaison des scènes*; the presence of Arcadian ideas in *Partenope*'s performances after 1699 (the premiere was at the Teatro di S. Bartolomeo in 1699); and the usefulness of substitute arias. He also addressed the question of who introduced changes to the original text and for what reasons. It is an important matter because the adapter's person is relevant to any analyzed libretto that adapts an existing text. Contrary to Freeman, however, the analysis of the above-cited issues constitutes only a part of my research; in fact, I am more interested in the phenomenon of popularity or fashion for some texts as well as their political potential. The key questions of my research are the following: Why did some stories in Early Modern opera

2 For more on this cantata see MARKUSZEWSKA, 2014.

3 FREEMAN, 1968, pp. 356-385.

become popular or fashionable? What was it that drew the attention of numerous authors and patrons to the multiple adaptations of some libretti over long periods? Of what exactly did the process of transformation of a theme consist? Could a well-known text be modified according to the current requirements of a patron, and how? What political aims or profits did patrons achieve? Were the libretti a vehicle for ideas, political or other, relevant in a given epoch?

Since the spread of Italian libretti is represented by a quantitatively enormous material, it is essential to find a reference point for my analysis. My choice is the character and patronage of Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart, one of the most renowned, admired and intriguing women in Rome during the second and third decade of the eighteenth century.

Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart

Maria Clementina Sobieska was born in 1701 in Macerata in Italy, the daughter of Hedwig Elisabeth von Pfalz-Neuburg and Jakub Sobieski, the eldest son of Marie Casimire and King Jan III Sobieski.⁴ On her mother's side, she was related to many European courts, and her godfather was none other than pope Clement XI. In 1718, at the request of James III Stuart, pretender to the throne of England, Scotland and Ireland, Charles Wogan became interested in the young Maria Clementina. Wogan was James's devout courtier who traveled the European courts looking for an appropriate wife for his king. It was during the 1718 carnival that he arrived at Oława (Ohlau) in Silesia, where the Sobieskis resided. Of the many different princesses that Wogan came to know during his travels, Maria Clementina made the most lasting impression. After protracted and complex negotiations, with the participation of numerous spies, a wedding contract was signed and young Maria, with her mother and a small court, left for Italy in late 1718, where James resided. Unfortunately, James's wedding contradicted the political plans of the king of Great Britain, George I of the Hanoverian dynasty, who forced Emperor Karl VI to imprison Maria Clementina in the fortress of Innsbruck. Al-

4 About Clementina, see BORKOWSKA, 1874; MILLER, 1965; ROSZKOWSKA, 1984, pp. 106-119; and NOWAK-SOLIŃSKI's fictional biography (to be taken with a grain of salt), 1984; PLATANIA, 1993 as well as works by Edward Corp, a main scholar of the Stuarts in exile.

though the act met with surprise and outrage throughout Europe, the emperor remained impervious to requests to free the princess.⁵ Wogan then decided to do so by ruse and succeeded thanks to an ingenious plan and the effectiveness of several allies. The bold escape of Maria Clementina was the talk throughout Europe,⁶ with panegyric verses composed for the princess, printed accounts of the adventure⁷ and numerous medals produced depicting Maria Clementina:

“Some letters mention that in that city were issued many golden and silver medals, with on one side the portrait of Princess Sobieski, wife to the King of England, with the following words: *Clementina Maria Britannia, Francia, Hibernia, & Scotia Regina*, and on the other side, the same Princess fleeing toward Rome after having freed herself from Innsbruck, while her husband the King sailed from Spain to Rome, with the following motto: *Fortunam, causamque sequor* and underneath *Deceptis Custodibus Anno 1719*. It is said that those medals were and continue to be very sought-after, with everyone describing them according to their fantasy.”⁸

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- 5 Remember that on her mother's side, Clementina was related to the imperial court. The sister of Hedwig Elisabeth von Pfalz-Neuburg was the empress Eleonore Magdalene von Pfalz-Neuburg, mother of two future emperors: Joseph I and Karl VI, the latter to play an important role in Clementina's history.
- 6 Information on Maria Clementina appeared both in private correspondence and in the press; see notably *Diario di Chracas* and *Mercurio Storico e Politico*; Stuart Papers, vol. 7. Clementina continued to be remembered after her death: see LUBOMIRSKI; O'KELLY DE GALWAY, 1896.
- 7 GILBERT, 1894.
- 8 “Alcune lettere particolari dicono, che sono uscite in questa Città molte medaglie d'oro, e d'argento, sulle quali si vede da una parte il ritratto della Principessa Sobieski Moglie del Rè d'Inghilterra con queste parole. *Clementina Maria Britannia, Francia, Hibernia, & Scotia Regina*, e nel rovescio vi si vede pure questa Principessa, che fugge verso Roma, dopo essersi liberata da Inspruck, nel medesimo tempo, che il Rè suo Marito faceva vela dalla Spagna verso Roma con questa divisa. *Fortunam, causamque sequor*, e al di sotto *Deceptis Custodibus Anno 1719*. Dicesi, che queste Medaglie sieno state e sieno attualmente molto ricercate, e ciascuno ne parla secondo la sua fantasia.” *Mercurio Storico e Politico* (October 1720). See also GUTHRIE, 2004, pp. 545f., especially note 9; ID., 2007, pp. 287-312.

Shortly after Sobieska's arrival in Bologna on 9 May 1719, the couple was married *per procura*,⁹ and Maria Clementina shortly thereafter reached Rome¹⁰ where she was greeted like a true queen and accompanied to the convent of the Ursulines, where she held an apartment prepared especially for her. There, she waited for James who was returning from an expedition to Spain:

“On the 13th of the present month, this Princess arrived to Rome in the carriages of the Pretender who claims to be the King of England, and with which she is said to have been married in Bologna *per procura*. She was met outside the gates by the Cardinals Gualtieri and Acquaviva and several other persons of high rank, who retired after the first greetings, while the said Cardinals led her to the Convent of the Ursulines, where an apartment had been prepared for her and a number of refreshments were served to her in name of the Pontiff and that of Cardinal Gualtieri and Acquaviva, who also gave her in the name of the Catholic King a bond for twenty thousand *doppie*.”¹¹

During the following few days, Maria Clementina received visits from church officials and Roman ladies and walked the city with her numerous entourage, universally honored as a queen should be:

“She went to the Capitoline Hill, where she was received at the sound of trumpets and drums, with all the honors due to crowned heads.

9 MILLER, 1965, p. 138. The marriage proper took place on 2 September in Montefiascone near Rome. The newly wed took residence in Rome at the Palazzo del Re on piazza SS. Apostoli. See CORP, 2010, pp. 180-205; Id., 2011.

10 *Diario di Chracas* 291.

11 “Adì 13 del passato arrivò questa Principessa in Roma nelle Carrozze del Pretendente, che si chiama Rè d’Inghilterra, col quale si dice sia stata maritata a Bologna per procura. Ella fu incontrata fuori della Porta da’ Cardinali Gualtieri, ed Acquaviva, e da diverse altre persone di qualità, le quali si ritirarono dopo i primi complimenti, e i suddetti Cardinali la condussero poi nel Monastero del Orsoline, dove l’era stato preparato un Appartamento, e dove fù regalata d’una quantità di rinfreschi tanto in nome del Pontefice, quanto in quelli del Cardinal Gualtieri, e del Cardinal Acquaviva, il quale le diede per parte del Rè Cattolico una Cedola di venti milla doppie.” *Mercurio Storico e Politico* (June 1719).

The same happened when, in the company of Cardinal Gualtieri, she visited the English College, where she was also hailed as Queen.”¹²

Charles-François Poerson, director of the French Academy in Rome, wrote on the occasion of that celebration:

“The Princess was admired on that occasion, as she is in any other. Her vivid and beautiful spirit is highly praised, supported, it is said, by a judgment that would be praiseworthy even with an elder person.”¹³

Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart and opera

Clementina’s passion for operatic art is confirmed by one of the major events of her life. Her marriage to Stuart quickly proved to be a failure for a number of reasons.¹⁴ Significantly, she decided to part with her husband in 1725 and seek refuge in the St. Cecilia convent in the Trastevere district. Baron Philipp von Stosch, a long-time spy of the King of England, wrote that only her passion for opera and the desire to see a new work staged at the Teatro d’Aliberti could push her to leave the convent:

“It appears at present that the desire to see the opera at Aliberti’s would have more effect on the Princess’s state of mind than all the

12 “Ella si portò a visitare il Campidoglio, dove fù ricevuta col suono delle Trombe, e de’ tamburi, e con tutti gli onori, che si praticano alle Teste Coronate. Il medesimo è stato praticato, quando ella è stata a visitare accompagnata dal Cardinal Gualtieri, il Collegio degl’Inglesi, dov’è stata servita come Regina.” *Mercurio Storico e Politico* (July 1719). Charles Poerson wrote about the noise of trumpets, drums, and oboes: “La Princesse Sobieski a été au Campidoglio, où les Sénateurs l’ont reçue au bruit des trompettes, tymbales, hautbois et tambours. Après y avoir vu ce qu’il y a de remarquable, elle fut régallée de magnifiques rafraîchissemens, ainsi que toute sa Suite, qui estoit très nombreuse.” See DE MONTAIGLON, 1889, vol. 5, p. 244.

13 “Cette Princesse se fit admirer dans cette occasion, comme elle a fait dans toutes celles où elle s’est trouvée. L’on loue extrêmement son esprit vif et beau, qui se trouve, dit-on, soutenu d’un jugement qui serait admiré dans une personne d’un âge plus avancé.” DE MONTAIGLON, 1889, vol. 5, p. 244.

14 SKRZYPIETZ, 2008, pp. 238f.

reasoning of Cardinal Alberoni, which in vain seeks to inspire heroism in a lady entirely devoted to entertainment and spectacle.”¹⁵

Another example of Clementina’s fascination with opera, even her voracity in consuming every single operatic premiere, occurred in the year 1720. Late into pregnancy, she was unable to visit the theater, so a performance was arranged for her and her guests at the Palazzo del Re, the Stuarts’ Roman residence. The evening opened with *Faramondo* with a text by Apostolo Zeno and music by Francesco Gasparini – a work actually dedicated to Clementina.¹⁶ The performance coincided with her first labor pains. An extensive account of that event is given in *Diario di Chracas*; we shall quote but a fragment:

“Her Royal Highness, the Queen of England Clementina Subieski [sic], experienced the first slight labor pains on the evening of St. Stephen, at around a quarter to three Italian time, while she was being dressed to meet many Princesses and noble ladies, numbering over 100, at a rehearsal of the opera that is due to be staged at the Theater of Count d’Alibert. The following day, the Cardinals, Princesses, Prelates, the Magistrate of Rome and all other people selected to assist Her Royal Highness giving birth, who did not feel an increase of the labor pains before the evening of the 30th, when in the evening assistants were called to come to her Residence.”¹⁷

15 “Il paroît présentement que le désir de voir l’Opera de Aliberti fait plus d’effet sur l’esprit de la Princesse, que tous les raisonnements fortes du Cardinal Alberoni, qui pretend en vain de semer un héroïsme dans l’esprit d’une femme infiniment adonné aux divertissemens et spectacle.” London, National Archives, SP 85/116 (21 January 1726).

16 *Il / Faramondo / drama per musica / da rappresentarsi / Nella Sala dell’Illm Sig. Conte D’Ali / bert nel Carnovale dell’Anno 1720. / DEDICATO / ALLA MAESTA’ / DI / CLEMENTINA / Regina della Gran Bretagna &c / in Roma 1720.*

17 “Comminciate la sera di S. Stefano le prime doglie leggere alla Maestà della Regina d’Inghilterra Clementina Subieski, verso le ore due e tre quarti dell’orologia italiano, mentre si procurava vestirla in presenza di molte signore Principesse e Noblità numerosa di 100 e più persone, colla prova dell’opera che deve farsi al Teatro del Sig. Conte d’Alibert, furono avvertiti il di seguente li Sign. Cardinali, le Sign. Principesse, li Signori Prelati, il Magistrato di Roma e tutti gli altri Personaggi scelti per l’assistenza del par-

Clementina was a frequent guest at the Roman opera theaters, but had a particular affinity for the Teatro d'Alibert. The Stuarts had three boxes reserved there, symbolizing the three kingdoms to which James pretended: England, Scotland, and Ireland.¹⁸ It is also possible that her bond with the theater stemmed from the relationship with the d'Alibert family of her grandmother, Maria Casimira Sobieska, who resided in Rome between 1699 and 1714. It was in the printed libretto of the above-quoted *Faramondo* that Count Antonio d'Alibert referred to that long-time friendship:

“And the ancient glory conquered by my ancestors who on many occasions served her Highness Maria Casimira, great Queen of Poland, and foremother of M.V., has assured me that She, in whom the virtue of her Husband and the magnanimity of her Foremother glow as the sun's rays, with no less clemency or goodness, she stood to appreciate the tribute of that second drama titled *Faramondo*, which will be performed at my theater.”¹⁹

In total, nine operas were dedicated in Rome to Maria Clementina between 1720 and 1730:

1. *Faramondo*, libretto by Apostolo Zeno, music by Francesco Gasparini, 1720;
2. *Eumene*, lib. Apostolo Zeno, mus. Nicola Porpora, 1721;
3. *Flavio Anicio Olibrio*, lib. Apostolo Zeno, Pietro Pariati, mus. Nicola Porpora, 1722;
4. *Adelaide*, lib. Antonio Salvi, mus. Nicola Porpora, 1723;
5. *Scipione*, lib. Apostolo Zeno, mus. Luca Antonio Predieri, 1724;

to di Sua Maestà la Regina, la quale non senti molto accresciute le doglie, se non la sera del 30, quando furono di nuovo avvertiti gli Assistenti sul tardi per rendersi alla di lei Abitazione.” *Diario di Chracas* 544.

18 CORP, 2011, p. 82.

19 “e l'antica Gloria acquistata da miei Maggiori nel servire in molte occasioni la Maestà di Maria Casimira gran Regina di Polonia, ed Ava della M.V., mi hanno assicurato, che Ella, in cui, come in perfetto Parelio, tutta risplende la virtù dello Sposo, e la Magnanimità dell'Ava, con non minor Clemenza di questi, e con bontà non inferior dell'Altra, sia per gradire il tribute di questo secondo Drama intitolato il FARAMONDO, che pur debbe rappresentarsi nel mio Teatro *Faramondo*.”

6. *Partenope*, lib. Silvio Stampiglia, mus. Domenico Sarro, 1724;
7. *Il Valdemaro*, lib. Apostolo Zeno, mus. Domenico Sarro, 1726;
8. *Siroe Re di Persia*, lib. Pietro Metastasio, mus. Nicola Porpora, 1727;
9. *Artaserse*, lib. Pietro Metastasio, mus. Leonardo Vinci, 1730.

Apart from *Partenope*, staged by the Teatro della Pace, the remaining works were performed at the Teatro d'Alibert, also known as Teatro delle Dame.

After 1727, Clementina gradually withdrew from secular life. She reconciled with her husband and resumed the tutorship of her sons, but she spent more and more time in church, mortifying her flesh and soul, immersed in prayer and talks with her confessor. Her rejection of all the pleasures she had previously embraced is illustrated in the documentation of her beatification, which actually never happened. In the section titled *Della Nascita, pia Educazione, / e Santa Vita / della Ven. Serva d'Iddio / Maria Clementina Sobieski / Regina della Gran Brettagna*, we find the following entry:

“The truth is that after a few years, the God’s servant parted with the convent, and moved to Bologna in the month of July 1727, but having not found His Royal Highness her husband there, who had left in the meantime, she continued to refuse any entertainment, leisure, and feast, be they public or private, which the City and His Eminence Buffo Legate had prepared, striving to receive her with the appropriate honors. She graciously answered the Noblemen that according to the teachings of St. Paul, when the Husband is far away, the wife should be withdrawn.”²⁰

20 “Gualm.te la Verità fù, ed é, che scorso qualche anno la Serva di Dio si partò dal Monastero, portarsi in Bologna nel Mese di Luglio 1727, e non avendo ivi ritrovato la Maestà di Rè Suo Consorte, il quale erasi(s) portato altrove, ricusò costante.te qualunque siasi divertimento, ricreazione, e festa, lo pubblica, come privata, che la Città, e l’Emo Buffo Legato preparate avevano, riceverla con quella proprietà, che convenivale, secusandosi? ella con la grazie, e dicendo a quella Nobiltà, che secondo l’insegam.to di S. Paolo, quando il Marito è lontano, la moglie deve star ritirata.” *PROCESSUS ORDINARIA AUCTORITATE CONSTRUCTUS SUPER ASSERTO MIRACULO A DEO PER INTERCESSIONEM DEL FAMULA MARIA CLEMENTINA SOBIESKI REGINA MAGNA BRITANNIA*. I-Ras, TRIBUNALE DEL CARDINAL VICARIO, BUSTA (VOL.) 338, fol. 640f.

Clementina died in 1735 in Rome, with the reputation of a saint. As one of only three women (the other two being Christina of Sweden and Countess Matilda of Tuscany), she was buried at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. Her character, biography, her evolution from a young girl intoxicated with Roman entertainment to a mortified mystic are all interesting in themselves. In my present article, I shall nonetheless focus on the first period of her residence in Rome, when she was renowned as a patron of music and saw many new opera performances dedicated to her.

Libretti: *Adelaide*

The majority of the libretti dedicated to Clementina belong to a group of popular themes that were set to music with great frequency and presented on the opera stage of Italy and Europe. From these, I have selected the following:

1. *Adelaide*
2. *Eumene*
3. *Siroe, Re di Persia*

In the present article, I shall focus on the group of libretti titled *Adelaide*. In the history of Europe, there have been several outstanding women of that name. In opera, two have been portrayed frequently: Adelaide of Susa, also known as the Turin Adelaide, as well as Adelaide of Italy (or Burgundy; 931-99), also known as St. Adelaide, who was wife of the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto I. She appeared most of any Adelaide as an operatic character. Librettists were particularly intrigued by her early life, when Berengar, Duke of Spoleto, invaded the kingdom of her first husband, Lothair. The beauty, intelligence and intransigence of Adelaide who opposed the aggressors and the attempts at having her marry her own son, as well as her flight from prison and triumphant marriage to Otto I, provided some outstanding material for operatic plots.

Adelaide probably appears in opera for the first time in Venice in 1672 at the Teatro Vendramino (also known as Teatro San Salvatore or di San Luca).²¹ The author of the first libretto dedicated to her was Giovanni

21 *L'Adelaide / Drama per musica / Da Rappresentarsi nel Teatro VENDRAMINO a San/Salvatore. / l'anno M.DC.LXXII / CONSACRATO / ALL'ALTEZZA SERENISS./ Del Principe / GIO: FEDERICO / Duca di*

Francesco Bussani, the music by Antonio Sartorio. Fortunately, both, the libretto and Sartorio's brilliant score, survived to our day at Venice's Biblioteca Marciana (I-Vnm). Subsequent productions included Siena, 1685; Munich, 1722; Rome, 1723; Palermo, 1724; Bologna, 1725; Florence, 1725; Genoa, 1725; Livorno, 1726; Venice, 1729; London, 1729; Mantua, 1730; Padua, 1732; Florence, 1735; Verona, 1735; Graz, 1739; Rome, 1743; Hamburg, 1744; and Prague, 1744.²² In total, the group includes twenty libretti, set to music in the years 1672-1744 and for the most part available for musicological research.²³ We could add to the above-mentioned texts those that cite the story of Adelaide, but have other characters of the plots as title protagonists: Adalberto, Otto, Berengar, or Lothair (in the case of Handel). It is also worth noting that from the year 1722, the one libretto most often set to music is that by Antonio Salvi.

I have already discussed in detail the composition of *Adelaide* (text by Antonio Salvi and music by Nicola Porpora), performed in 1723 in Rome at the Teatro d'Alibert and dedicated to Maria Clementina Sobieska Stuart.²⁴ That analysis shows how a well-known text was used for the Stuart's case. In the present study, I would like to present a few observations that are more general. Antonio Salvi wrote the libretto of the short-lived *Adelaide* (not including the two productions in 1672 and 1685, the popularity of *Adelaide* spanned a period of slightly more than twenty years in 1722-1744).²⁵ What seems notable is that the original version of his libretto written for Munich (1722) was not used as a model for the later operatic productions. Instead, later productions were based on a text produced in Rome by Ignatio de Bonis whose name as an adapter of the libretto was

Bransvich / Luneburgo, &c / in Venetia M.DC.LXXII / Appresso Francesco Nicolini.

22 SARTORI, 1990-1994, vol. 1.

23 After this period, operas used the character of Adelaide increasingly rarely. She did not disappear completely, however, as testified by the composition of Gioacchino Rossini, *Adelaide di Borgonia* (1817) to a text by Giovanni Frederico Schmidt.

24 MARKUSZEWSKA, i.pr.

25 SARTORI, 1990-1994, vol. 1.

until now unknown,²⁶ set to music by Nicola Porpora in 1723.²⁷ This means that the later productions on the subject were based on a libretto dedicated to Marie Clementine Sobieska Stuart. It is possible to draw the following conclusions from that and two later, particularly interesting versions, namely Venice 1729 and Rome 1743. Firstly, the subject was deemed suitable for presentation to people connected with the unofficial English politics (the libretti were dedicated, in order, to Marie Clementine Sobieska, wife of James III Stuart; to the Jacobean prince George Hamilton; and to the Young Pretender or Bonnie Prince Charlie, son of Maria Clementina and James III).²⁸

Secondly, the two later productions of *Adelaide* underwent various changes, reflecting the particular characteristics of their relevant locations. In the Venice production, most of the arias known from 1723 had been retained. For instance, eight out of the nine arias in Act One use the text of the Roman version. Act Two is different (only four arias out of nine share the same text), but Act Three again retains the same text in five of the seven arias. Although the Venice version retained many of the arias, it was also significantly abridged. In particular, the recitatives were trimmed, and some of the scenes were dropped, giving the Venetian *Adelaide* a more dynamic story arc. The Roman version (1743) retains most of the recitatives and the same sequence of scenes (with occasional word-level changes, though retaining the sense of the original), however most of the arias had been removed. Interestingly, the retained arias are mostly arias *di paragone*.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly for the resonance of *Adelaide* relative to the 1723 version in the other two productions and to those written for other places, the final scene underwent the most extensive modification. The closing scene of the 1723 Roman version is the only one to feature the appearance of “Italia in Macchina”, praising the great hero Ottone, his marriage to Adelaide and their future offspring worthy of the parents’ great deeds.²⁹ In the Venice production, the figure of Italy is removed, however a short fragment of her text is retained (the first five

26 “[...] ad Ignatio de Bonis [...] per acomodare l’opera intitolata l’Adelaide”, Rome, Biblioteca Magistrale e Archivi del Sovrano Ordine di Malta, entry CT 441, p. 38.

27 I present the explanation for such a situation in MARKUSZEWSKA, i.pr.

28 The story of Adelaide was also set by Handel in his *Lotario* (1729).

29 The scene is analyzed more deeply in MARKUSZEWSKA, i.pr.

lines, beginning with “Invitto Rè”). This passage is given to one of the characters, Clodimiro, a captain in the army of Berengario, Otto’s opponent; this part in the Venice production is played by a castrato, Domenico Annibali, “virtuoso di S. M. il Rè Augusto di Pologna”. The structural function of this recitative, however, was primarily to create an effective segue to a joyful *ballo*, choreographed by the eminent dancer and choreographer Gaetano Grossatesta. The final chorus comes after the *ballo*, containing quintessentially conventional praise for love ending in marriage. A quite different effect is produced by the ending in the second Roman version, addressed to Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender and son of the deceased Marie Clementine. Another look at the libretto should prove helpful in interpreting the piece. The one person who repeatedly saves Adelaide from the envy and hatred of the usurpers, Matilde and Berengario, is their son Idelberto, who is in love with Adelaide. When the tables are turned and Adelaide is in a position to take revenge, she will be dissuaded from sentencing the usurpers to death by the insistence of Idelberto, who pleads with her to show mercy to his parents. Adelaide spares their lives and Idelberto hands over his father’s kingdom to her. Ottone notes that “D’ogni paterno error la macchia orrenda / D’un Figlio illustre la virtude emenda.” (“The horrendous stigma of every paternal error is corrected by the virtue of an illustrious son.”) This ending portrays the son as the hero in this version of *Adelaide*, an impression that is not removed even by the closing chorus, which praises clemency, the virtue of good rulers. With his courageous heart of a warrior, Idelberto shall certainly be a clement ruler, no less so than Adelaide and Ottone.

It seems that this variant of the ending may have been related to the Stuart’s changed circumstances in Rome compared to 1723. In 1723, the Young Pretender was only three years old, and his father James III was involved in a project calculated to regain the British throne by overthrowing a usurper monarch from the Hanover dynasty. Twenty years later, it was his son, then aged 23, who was preparing to fulfil his life’s mission. Committed and self-confident, courageous and independent, he believed that he could regain the British throne with the help of a group of loyal Stuart supporters. Obviously, in 1743, nobody could foresee the details of his imminent involvement in the Jacobite rising, the battle of Culloden (1746), his expulsion from France and the failure of his life’s project, a disappointment from which he never recovered. At this point, three years previously, the Roman sympathisers of Charles were still painting vi-

sions of his glorious future. Presumably, the 1743 production of the opera was part of that mood.³⁰

Soon after 1743, the Adelaide theme disappears from Europe's opera stages. Why? It is difficult to offer a definitive answer. The changing tastes of the public are one possible answer: stories come and go, replaced by others. In the 1740s, operagoers became fascinated with stories by Metastasio, which pushed many earlier libretti into oblivion (with few exceptions, such as *Eumene* by Apostolo Zeno). However, the disappearance of *Adelaide* from opera theaters also appears to have had a political overtone. This political interpretation is suggested by the dedication in the libretto of the 1735 production of *Adelaide* in Verona with music by Antonio Vivaldi. It includes the following passage:

“It was equally fitting that the work should be dedicated to a Venetian patrician, since the story upon which the action is based cannot be displeasing to a good Italian who, unlike many today, is not an enemy to his Nation. When, following the expulsion of the last Italian kings, poor Italy was brought back under the foreign yoke, never to be free again, the only thing that compensates for this deplorable misfortune is the existence of the most illustrious Venetian Republic, in which Italian liberty holds fast since its beginning to the present day and, God willing, until the end of time.”³¹

This suggests that the story of Adelaide was associated with the history of Italy, whose various parts recognized a sense of shared past (though not shared statehood, despite the use of the word *nazione*). Vivaldi, a Venetian by birth who signed this dedication, regarded *La Serenissima* as a bastion of freedom not available to the other parts of Italy, which have

30 CLARK, 2003, pp. 91-100; CORP, 2011, pp. 240-257.

31 “Era parimente convenevole, che ad un Veneto Patricio fosse questo Drama dedicato, imperciocchè non potendo la Storia, ond'è ricavata l'Azione, che sommamente dispiacere ad un buon'Italiano, che non sia, come tanti sono oggidì, di sua Nazione inimico, facendogli sovvenire, come discacciati gli ultimi Italiani Rè, ricadde la misera Italia, per non più liberarsene, sotto giogo straniero, a tale deplorabilissima sciagura solo dà qualche compenso l'inclita Veneta Republica, in cui dal suo nascimento fino a'nostri giorni l'Italiana libertà si conserva, e voglia Iddio sino al finire de'secoli conservarla.” *L'Adelaide*, Verona 1735, p. A2.

been passed from hand to hand by a series of political powers including Spain, France and the Habsburg Empire. This may be one reason why the immense popularity of *Adelaide* on the stages of Italy and other countries, including Munich, London, Graz and Prague quickly waned with the realization of the story's import, so threatening to foreign powers. In the public theater, Metastasio's lamenting Didos were certainly a safer option.

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